You know, I never thought I’d give up flying every day. It was my escape and I was damned good at it. I’d never considered the possibility that my fighter could get blown out from underneath me – of course, I’d seen friends die in combat, but the machismo of youth just let me ignore the threat.

And then my family came along. I got married and had kids. Everything changed then – I started having more difficulty pushing the close calls out of my mind and was struggling to perform at the level I had been at for years. Friends kept dying and I knew that axe was getting closer and closer to my neck.

I had been preparing myself for that painful day when I quit being a combat pilot, but I kept dragging my feet. I got the kick in the ass I needed – it came in the form of a message from my dead mentor who pointed me to the resurgent Taldryan.

I made my escape with my family under the cover of darkness and hung up my flightsuit, changing it for battle armour.

I know what you’re thinking – way safer, right? At least this way I’m not dependent on mechanics and wingmen to keep me safe – it’s entirely my skill and talent. That’s why I can sleep at night again, comfortable with the knowledge that I *will* get home after every mission.