**34 ABY – Sullust, returning from his assignment as a Knight**

**Knight Sparky von Wagglehorn III**

The Lambda-Class Shuttle ascended through the Sullustan atmosphere towards the starry canvas above. Knight Sparky von Wagglehorn III sat strapped in to a jump seat in the passenger cabin inside the shuttle. He heard the steady thrumming of the engine as it fought against physics to ascend into space. The small craft shuttered and jumped as the physical force of breaking the atmosphere buffeted the shuttle around. With a satisfying punch, the shuttle shot into open space and continued its flight towards the *Vanquisher,* an Acclamator class Assault Ship assigned to Clan Scholae Palatinae.

Two TIE Fighters streaked towards the approaching shuttle and formed up as escorts. Sparky glanced out his viewport at the Starfighters, yearning inside to be sitting in the cockpit as pilot instead of passenger. His old bones seemed to creak as he shifted uncomfortably in his seat. The physical demands of combat as a Knight seemed far more demanding of his frame than his previous assignment, standing on the bridge of a capital ship. He remembered back to his younger days as a pilot and soldier for the Empire. Sparky chuckled as he realized the last time he’d been on Sullust had been during the Imperial occupation during the Civil War. He leaned back in his jump seat and remembered…

**3 ABY – Battle of Sullust/Siege of Inyusu Tor**

With a mechanic whine and a deafening slam, the foot of an AT-AT Imperial Walker slammed into the rocky ground of Sullust as it advanced towards the Inyusu Tor mineral processing facility. Sparky’s white Stormtrooper armor reverberated around his whole frame as the ground shook in response. Sparky glanced around him and took a quick mental snapshot of the situation.

The AT-AT was advancing slowly but surely towards the factory through a narrow valley. The valley was composed of slabs of grey-black rock, with a slow flowing line of magma flowing down the center of the valley floor. The steep rock created a single avenue of attack that the Empire was fighting through to approach the factory. Dark black smoke boiled into the sky 50 meters behind Sparky’s position, marking a burning hulk where the rebels had destroyed the only other AT-AT walker making the assault. TIE Fighters streaked through the sky, pounding Rebel positions with spears of green laser. A single Rebel A-Wing dove towards the advancing Imperial troops, peppering them with angry red fire. At the far end the valley, Rebels utilized crew served weapons and heavy turrets to sling ordnance and heavy lasers at their approaching enemies.

Sparky forced himself to inhale and exhale, and continued advancing with his squad. Glancing down, he was pleased to see his E-11 carbine rifle still maintained a healthy charge. His white armor was pockmarked and scarred from the past day of the campaign. A long thin crack was showing from his knee to his hip, the result of a concussive blast from an explosive shot from rebel infantry. The armor had almost certainly saved his leg from being broken.

His squad advanced quickly along the far side of the valley, using the jutting rock formations as cover as they advanced towards a hangar-like structure ahead of them.

Sparky’s squad leader barked orders through his comlink, “Squad, advance at all costs. Let’s show this rebel scum who they’re messi-“

The squad leader’s message was cut short as heavy blaster fire poured in from a heavy blaster emplacement across the valley. A blaster bolt impacted the leader’s helmet instantly penetrating the armor and leaving a smoking hole as his body was hurled against the rock outcropping, crumpling on impact and sliding to the valley floor. Sparky’s squad immediately dispersed, taking positions of cover among the rock formations. Once in cover, they immediately sent reactive suppressing fire in the vague direction of the Rebel weapon emplacement. The blast-whine of E-11 carbines firing filled the air as the squad poured fire towards the enemy.

Sparky attempted to peak his head above the rock he was hiding behind. He could clearly see a heavy blaster emplacement far across the valley sending bolt after bolt of lethal energy searing through the air towards Sparky’s squad. He unslung a Smart Rocket launcher from his back, and took careful aim at the emplacement. He fired, his rocket streaking towards the target in a high pitched whine. The rocket impacted the weapon emplacement, sending the entire part of the ridge up in a cloud of stone and smoke. His squad mates cheered and began to cautiously advance again.

Their joy was short-lived. Further down the valley, an enormous metallic grown filled their ears as rebel fire slammed continuously into their single remaining AT-AT walker. Sparky and his squad helplessly watched as Rebel aircraft, turrets, and infantry continued their assault on the walker. The walker, emitting another long metallic grown, seemingly a death sigh, collapsed towards the rocky ground.

It seemed silent for a moment, though the fire continued. Sparky’s comlink crackled to live as the retreat code was sent out immediately to all remaining Imperial units.

**3 ABY – ISD Herald, in orbit around Sullust, post battle.**

Sparky sat alone in the conference room aboard the Star Destroyer. He sat upright, stiff sitting in the matt black chair. He permitted a glance around the room. The metallic gray walls seemed to reverberate with the thrum of the *Herald*’s engines. The door behind him opened with a snap-hiss of noise. A man, in a black Imperial Army uniform entered the room. Sparky immediately noticed the “Colonel” rank bar on his chest and he snapped out of his chair to attention.

“At east, Sergeant. You may sit.” the man said. After they both sat down, now facing each other across the flat black table, he continued, “I am Colonel Morr. I’ll be brief with you, as things are a bit…chaotic right now with the loss of the battle. During the last campaigns at Sullust, Hoth, and Tatooine, you’ve served your Emperor with skill.” He paused, putting his hand up before Sparky could acknowledge the compliment and continued, “You haven’t seen it yet, but your transfer orders came through in the immediate aftermath of this battle. You’re officially transferred to my command as a Shadow Trooper. I make it a point to meet each of my troopers individually. Welcome to the team.”

**34 ABY – Shuttle on approach to *Vanquisher***

Sparky smiled at the memory. That had been one of the hardest and best days of his early life. In the day, he had experienced terrible loss. He’d realized in that moment that the Empire was not invincible. Yet his elevation to the Shadow Troopers was the win that placed him in his unique position of skill and training. He leaned forward in his seat as the shuttle docked and wondered what his next mission would be…