The night sky of Selen was cloudless and calm. The bright lights of the citadel stood proud. The sounds of celebration could be heard throughout the rings; from dances throughout Capac, to the wild parties of Sinchi, to the cultured toasts on Huscar. Everyone in Estle city celebrated the end of immediate hostilities. Arcona had once again been through a bloody fight, and once again it had emerged defiant as ever before.

Time marched on however, and the work of the clan was never done. In a simple courtyard within the walls of the great Arcona Citadel, a few people did not share in the revelry beheld by the rest of the city.

Arconan defense forces, an honor guard, lined the edges of the courtyard. Stoic, yet grimacing faces marred them even in the dark evening. A few quiet individuals and groups moved among the yard, searching in vain for what they hoped never to find. Among that haunting scene was a solitary human, with nothing more than a datapad to go about his morbid work as he moved along the line.

The coffins of the unknown, the unidentified, the missing in action, the unclaimed, and the unknowable were placed into the square enclosure with upmost efficiency and care. All of these Arconan soldiers lost in the fighting on Nancora, the lucky few that the clan had managed to carry back upon their shields. No more a succinct silence could one find in all of the galaxy; these sons and daughters, mothers and fathers-

“Stop….stop it.” Koliss dared not speak more than a whisper for fear of what his words might mean to the other inhabitants of this resting place. He hated how his thoughts always became philosophical and washy when he had to do this. So soon after returning from the terrible visage of Nancora his mind simply wasn’t responding quite right just yet. Koliss tried to steel himself again as he continued on with his recording.

He looked down to his datapad once more; pressing a few buttons to connect and see the information he needed to see.

**Name: [Unknown]
DOB: [Unknown]
Unit: Arcona Expeditionary Force, 2nd Regiment, 4th Battalion-**

*“…final flight is inbound; they are close air support only from now on.”*

*“Is high command that out of this conflict!? We’re already behind on medevac calls even with the LAATs touching down after their runs! They stop, our assault will literally grind to a halt as our line regiments choke on their dead and wounded!”*

*“High Command’s orders sir, just informing you to prepare your contingencies. Good luck.”*

*“LUCK!?! What d-” Koliss topped the emerging words as the staff officer had already disappeared into the storm of dust and sea of wounded sentients that made up the landing zone.*

*“Kriff, frack, fracking kriffing high command-“ Koliss cursed as knelt in the blasted landscape of Nancora. His job had suddenly gotten a whole lot harder, on top of being nearly impossible to start with.*

*“Radio!” A young human quickly appeared at Koliss’ side, a long range radio all ready to key up a message. “Contact the nearest speeder bike patrol and divert them to landing zone Rakert, Immediate Priority.”*

*“All speeder patrol priorities ar-“*

*“****I know the fracking priorities!*** *I am changing them! Do it, Now!” The technician jumped at the sudden increase of volume, and went about his order to avoid the now wrathful Koliss. Meanwhile the doctor had turned to watch the skies for the last LAAT medevac flight that he would have for the foreseeable future.*

*The whole invasion had gone exactly within parameters as far as Koliss knew, that included casualty estimates. Before even stepping off the Acclamator, they had been overrun from wounded that had jettisoned during the space battle or had been clipped upon landing in their target zones. It had been exactly what Koliss expected from such a gamble; it didn’t make the sight of hundreds of dead and wounded around his feet any easier.*

*Finally on the horizon a sight of 16 distinctive silhouettes of landing crafts; Two LAAT platoons ferrying the bloodied and the broken.*

*“Radio!” Koliss barked again, and a new radio and a new technician was at his side as he quickly swiped the radio mouth piece.*

*“Designate aircraft inbound to Arcona controlled zone, respond on frequency 1345: identify or be neutralized.”*

*“Designate Arcona flight, LAAT dash eye, identify 33125, platoons nine and ten from supporting task force Sentinel, requesting priority for LZ Rakert.” The broken mechanical voice of a pilot managed to soothe Koliss’ nerves more so than he thought. Exactly as they needed to respond; Koliss was glad that situational awareness hadn’t died off yet.*

*Koliss responded quickly. “Arcona flight designated and identified. You are cleared on priority landing at LZ Rakert. Identify medevac class?”*

*“Uh, medevac classing…” A pause as the other voice seemed unsure before answering. “Medvac classing stands as Thermal, Heat, Inhalation, Chemical Agent. Category, um…”*

*Koliss heard no other words as he switched the radio to a local announcement system the medics had managed to rig for the area.*

*“Inbound flight, priority alpha! All surgical and burn technicians to the landing area, priority alpha!” Koliss couldn’t stop the panic that rose in his voice as he tossed the radio haphazardly away and began moving as quickly as he could to the actual LAAT landing zone. He could hear his ad-hoc communications squad following him with little success, and more than a few others joined them in their frantic flight, dashing through the walking wounded and unmoving prone bodies that littered the area, all heading in the same direction….*

**Medical credentials identified-COD: Organ failure-shock/3rd and 4th degree burns**

Koliss could not stop rereading that line a number of times before he had canceled out the blurb. The Collective elite forces, cyborg jump-pack bastards, flame throwers and heavy anti-infantry weaponry. There weren’t many, but those they had caused plenty of damage. That last LAAT flight would haunt Koliss for quite a while; over a hundred Arconans had been caught in one of their ambushes, the results were not pretty. The doctor had not seen such terrible burn wounds in quite a long time. It almost seemed like the cyborgs had been in point blank range when they activated those flame throwers. It was stomach twisting to think about. Koliss showed no outward signs of emotions as he continued down the row, quickly selecting another connection point.

**Name: [Unknown]
DOB: [Unknown]
Unit: [Unknown]…**

*“…Enemy flyer!”*

*“The interceptors have it, put pressure on the wound!”*

*Koliss’ hands moved as quickly as they could to close the wound through the bulky suit. He did not know if had even made it in time. It didn’t help his patient seemed to be focusing on everything except his own health.*

*“It…it’s..crashing.” His patient moaned again; Koliss could not stop himself from snapping. “We’ll give the flyers all big medals after this, now stop squirming!”*

*“Hey… hey.. where ya goin huh?” Koliss finally snapped his hands from the wound to the helmet of the delirious soldier. “What in all of cre-.” Koliss trailed off as he saw a look of abject fear through the heavily dusted helmet, pointing in vain to something behind them. Koliss turned quickly, and he could feel a similar terror well up in his gut.*

*An enemy craft being pursued; it was on fire and Arcona interceptors were turning away, apparently satisfied with the kill. This was no enemy fighter craft though; it looked too fat to be such. It was on a steep diving angle from high in the atmosphere, but its destination seemed to be locked onto a large surgical tent Koliss had been in not ten minutes ago. The doctor felt a small grain of knowledge in the back of his mind about the enemy’s choice of suicide tactics. The realization hit him like an angry rancor.*

*“Radio…” he whispered in a state of shock. His fear only grew as the aircraft was not diverting from its diving path.*

*“RADIO! Where’s the radio!?”*

*“Techs aren’t here, they’re down the ridge.” A fellow Arconan medic had remained focused on a second patient, not knowing why Koliss had apparently lost it.*

*“Who gave that order!?”*

*“You did!” The medic threw a nasty glare at Koliss as he turned back to his own patient, still oblivious to what Koliss and his own patient were witness to.*

*He wanted to scream, to sprint over and stop it somehow, to be able to stop what was about to happen at the last second. Koliss couldn’t move though, he felt like he couldn’t breath as he watched the inevitable descent. Time seemed to crawl as Koliss looked on, helpless more than he had ever been in this battle. It was going to happen, and there wasn’t a thing he could do.*

*Koliss felt the last shuddering breath of his patient. Maybe the man had the same dreaded feeling Koliss had and simply couldn’t fight it off in his weakened state.*

*200 meters…*

*100 meters…*

*50 meters…*

*The horizon flashed brightly in all the wrong colors…*

**Medical credentials identified-COD: Unknown, assumed explosive related**

Koliss couldn’t know for sure, that was the whole point, but staring down at the pad, all Koliss could recall was that icy dread and feeling of helplessness. Such tactics were not alien to him, but to see them enacted on such a scale against a defenseless target shook even his nerves up.

‘That collective bastard couldn’t have known, they had simply aimed and let gravity do the work.’

Koliss shook himself visibly from his thoughts, again acutely aware of the fact that he was not alone in this newly hallowed ground, he decided to push quickly again to his next point and check his pad.

**Name: Jorda Welcott-**

*“You need to get out of here doc.” A tired voice spoke in a raspy whisper.*

*“If I had known you had brain damage I would not have wasted the riser tablets.” A terse tone, in the same whisper, spoke back.*

*The woman chuckled. How could she chuckle? This wasn’t a time for chuckling.*

*“Nice doc, but maybe stick to the stitching up? Ot gets me a sight of a friendly face at the least right? I’ll need to think of some way to thank you-.”*

*Koliss interrupted, “If you aren’t going to shut up, then perhaps you’d be content to stop squirming as you do!”*

*That chuckle again, this time a bit weaker. Koliss cursed in his mind. The push into Axio city had been a slog, but ultimately the Arcona legion had managed to push through most of the Eastern sector. Koliss had assumed that the area he was passing had been secured; he should been more alert. He had almost stumbled into the collective group head on, and just barely managed to squeak by. Koliss had stumbled onto this lone woman in the rubble, an Arconan apparently left to die, though she seemed entirely to unworried about the entire experience for Koliss’ preference. What had shocked him most of all, in fact the entire reason he had even stopped to stare at what ultimately appeared to be a corpse, was the similarity to his sister Jorda.*

*Koliss could swear he had been hallucinating. Even though the sealed helmet he could swear that the freckled marked face as that of his big sister, supposed to be light years away from all of this death. The corpse twitched and Koliss had stopped, he heard a moan and moved quickly to help with what he could. Things were not looking good for this soldier, and the fact they were pinned down in a pile of rubble with some nasty cyborgs and an even nastier pipsqueak of a crimson twi’lek outside closing in on them made it even worse.*

*Now she was insisting Koliss leave. None of this situation made any sense to Koliss in his fatigued, adrenal fueled state.*

*“Whats-ever out there sent you scrambling in here, so it’s nothing good waiting. I sit here much longer I’m a goner. I can’t even remember losing feeling in my legs.”*

*She had already mentioned that, Koliss did not correct her.*

*“I’m not leaving-.”*

*“We’ll both die here doc, what good’ll that do us?” Koliss felt a twitch in his eye at the interruption. He felt the need to speak out and disagree, but he found himself staring at her eyes. He felt a cold sensation go down his spine as he saw his sister in those eyes again.*

*None of this was right.*

*“Get going doc, I’ll be fine.” She sounded so sure, so confident, yet so reassuring. It was Jorda; it wasn’t Jorda. Koliss felt his mind begin to twist and turn in on itself. His legs began to move against their will.*

*“I’ll be back, with a lot of angry friends, don’t worry Jorda.” Koliss heard no response as he started to move quietly through the rubble in the aim of getting to the nearest line company and return guns blazing.*

*His sister was counting on him, he wouldn’t fail.*

**\*CRACK\***

The respectful silence in the courtyard was broken suddenly with the sudden crash of glass breaking. All eyes turned to the lone human, now bleeding profusely from his hands and a broken datapad at his feet. Koliss froze with the realization of all these sullen and sunken eyes focusing squarely on him. He turned and rushed out of the courtyard while grasping at his hands.

He couldn’t think straight as he found himself stumbling along; the alcohol he had consumed before his going to that sacred place was catching up with him.

He HAD gone back there with the meanest Arconan troops he could find. There was nothing there except the rubble of a quite run down building. No evidence of there ever being a soldier trapped there, no evidence it was his sister at all. He had every reason to believe he had a manic episode from nearly a day of nonstop medical work with only combat adrenals to keep him up. His sister was still fine and alive thousands of light years away still on his home planet.

So why could he not breathe?

*“…above and beyond the call, mate. Congrats, you deserve it.”*

*Koliss stared down at the shining gold metal piece; something so small was meant to represent the total effort he had put forth in the ground war on Nancora; a conflict that Koliss had frighteningly intimate details on the casualty rate. The doctor felt like he should not even be looking at this medal.*

*“I did as I was told, nothing more-“*

*“"Ya did a damn sight more than that, lad. Tha summit knows, tha troops know it. Number o' dead and bured would be a lot bigger without yer hands bein' involved. Ya deserve it for your part more than any other, aye."*

*Koliss simply exchanged a stare with his Ryn Proconsul, trying to make sense of the words. The human finally nodded and dropped his gaze again to the floor. He couldn’t tell how Kordath might react to this, but he simply could not bear to hold anyone’s gaze at this point.*

*“Was there anything else required of me?” Koliss spoke in a raspy voice. He wanted nothing more than to turn on his boot and get to a dark corner, but his old officer training forced him to stay rooted until he was dismissed.*

*“"Nae, Doc, just wanted ta share that with ya. Sorry it could nae be with all tha pomp that usually goes wit' it. Get yerself a rest, eh?"*

*Koliss did not respond any further than turning around a quickly marching from the office, making his way through the still rebuilding Citadel. Selen had suffered for their war, but they had come out the other side alive. Though that could not be said for many of the Arconan volunteers that had been lost to the wasteland of Nancora, or the few lucky ones they had managed to drag back on their battered fleet to return home.*

*The crisp late evening air served as no comfort as Koliss tried to control his breathing. He didn’t know where he was going; only that he had to get there before something bad happened. It was then he laid sight on an familiar sight. An imposing trandoshan and wookiee marked them out, but the inclusion of a twi’lek, human, pantoran, umbaran, and echani were a familiar sight to Koliss. A group he had to depart from some time ago, with old friends and new additions he had a passing knowledge of during the conflict. A group where he would be welcomed back with open arms should he return to frontline duty.*

*Koliss strode toward the group; a few heads turned in apparent recognition. He did not stop as he passed them by.*

Koliss remembered rushing away from his little ‘medal ceremony’ and finding a group of celebrating troops. He quite literally stole the drinks from their hands. He remembered resolving himself to do something good in settling the unknown soldiers and their information. The whole time the small weight of the medal in his pocket kept a constant reminder of his many failures.

 He could not remember finding a stray medical bay that held no one in it. He did not remember where he had gotten the death stick that now hung loosely from his mouth unlit, though Koliss would give anything to have it be so now.

In his hand he held that small glinting medal, staring back at him unblinking. It was mocking him, he knew it was. He had to do something about it.

Koliss reached and placed the medal down in the container. He took a few more minutes to think, before shutting the door violently and begin to press buttons on the nearby console. He wasn’t quite sure, but the incinerator kicked on with a small roar and quickly climbed in temperature to burn away the hazardous materials inside.

The good doctor stared at the incinerator; he could not see inside it, but he could feel its heat building. He could also swear to see that damn glinting medal in there, still mocking him. It took longer than he though, but eventually that shining became a dull luster, that soon became nothing at all. He sat motionless, though he could say exactly how long. It might as well have been for days on end with the whirlwind of thoughts traveling through his head.

It was sights like the Battle of Nancora that had spurned him to his life as a freelance doctor in the first place. He had seen more sights like that than he ever wished to remember. He accomplished what was supposed to be impossible in escaping the First Order, and he vowed to himself he would never allow himself to see such a sight again.

He had lowered his guard, he had become lax, he had somehow allowed himself to be caught up in a war of giants while the brothers and sisters of the galaxy burned for the cogs to turn.

**\*CRUNCH\***

He did not remember slamming his face into the console as he collapsed to the ground, blood pouring from his almost certainly broken nose. He brought his hands to his face, only to gasp in pain at the feeling of glass digging into his fingers surprisingly deep. He hated those thoughts, those damn philosophical thoughts… idealistic thoughts. What good were they in his line of work? What was he if he wasn’t the ‘good doctor’? What did any of the death he had to drive his fingers through on a daily basis mean in the big picture?

Koliss didn’t know. All he knew at that moment was that he really needed a smoke.