

Military Recon of TARTHOS

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Pin #264

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VSD Phoenix

Tarthos

The door to the Quaestor's Command and Control room whisked open. Battlelord Hades entered and came to an abrupt stop when he saw his brethren DarkHawk reading a manuscript on Naval engagements by one Fleet Admiral Simonetti.

"Interesting read"

Hades was startled at the fact his Proconsul was not only in the CnC room, but reading a Naval manuscript. "The Admiral has some astonishing conclusions and more so, results. His ability to read an engagement and expose the weak points is uncanny. I never had the pleasure of meeting him, he was captured before I arrived."

Well, I hope we can get him back soon. I feel confident you would enjoy talking shop with him Hades."

"By the way you're here early, I was not expecting you until tomorrow."

"Yes, I had to postpone my trip to Dathomir, and returned to homebase early. Received your call, so here I am."

"Did you run into interference headed to Dathomir?"

"Some, picked up a badly wounded Shistavanen on an old Munificent -class. *Bones* patched him up until we arrived back on Sepros. Then the fancy doc's took over."

"Him and Ty should mesh well together."

"I will never admit that there was some spite in my decision to bring on"

Hades chuckled as he brought up the Holoprojector. A three-dimensional model of TARTHOS floated above the long table where the two Sadowans now sat. "This is the last military outpost that needs recon Sir. It just happens to be the one in the Terra Insoreable. My apologies Proconsul."

"None needed my friend. I am here at your request, I am at your bidding my liege."

"I have a LAAT/i and a platoon of troopers ready when you are. I also took the liberty of initiating the *Tārōn* a flight plan so you are clear to ride shotgun."

DarkHawk stood and bowed, "Thank you Sir. I will leave immediately."

Hades hit the comlink on the table's small control panel, "Hangar four, this is Comm."

DarkHawk could hear a deep voice respond back as he exited the Quaestor's control room.

"This is Hangar four, go Comm."

"Coyote one and *Tārōn* are clear to launch. SITREP every fifteen."

"Copy that Comm, Hangar four out."

VSD Phoenix

Hangar Four

DarkHawk entered the hangar and a trooper with his helmet in hand met the Warlord as he exited the turbolift.

"Sir, we are a green light. My men are locked and loaded."

DarkHawk glanced over the trooper for a moment. The rank insignia stood out to the Warlord. *Hades, put together a crack team he thought to himself.* "Copy that Sergeant Major, take the lead. We have your six."

"Roger that Sir!"

The two men boarded their respective ships, both pilots had their ships in the air before the crew doors shut. Pushing the throttles forward, the Sadowan ships quickly moved down the tarmac and out of the hangar.

The LAAT/i and the Decimator flew in formation with the LAAT/i taking the lead. "*Talon* , this is *Coyote* over."

Ty reached over and hit the comlink button on his pilot's control panel. "*Coyote*, this is *Talon* we copy."

"Target waypoint is at our eleven o'clock and we are fifteen mic out. How copy?"

"Copy that *Coyote*. We will follow your lead."

The ion engines of the two ships spooled up and their thrusters glowed a bright orange. The ships raced forward leaving a small black vapor trail behind them. Cruising at five hundred and seventy five knots, they maintained an altitude close to seventy five meters.

The target waypoint was already insight. "*Talon* this is *Coyote*. We are going to drop down and make a pass over the target area and get an all clear before touchdown. How copy?"

"Copy Coyote, we have your six, will proceed on your mark."

The LAAT/i pilot pushed the ship's nose down and the gunship went into a sharp dive. Ty followed the lead ship and positioned the Decimator at the lead's four o'clock position. The ships made their pass over their target. The target was an old military site the Collective was using to stage out of. This specific site just happened to be at the northern tier and sat in a desolate part of the territory.

Not seeing any sign of a threat topside, the ships circled back around. The gunship's doors now were open and troopers were already staged and ready to deploy. Soon as the ship touched down the troopers began to bail out forming a defensive perimeter. Once the platoon disembarked from the ship the gunship's engines spooled up and made an immediate takeoff. A textbook combat insertion. Ty wasted no time coming in after the gunship, putting the Decimator down on the landing pad.

"Keep the ship ready Ty, and keep that gunship close. We may need air support to get out of here."

"Bollocks Sir, we are in the middle of bloody nowhere. I dare to say that we are the only blokes out here!"

"It's not just a job Ty, it's an adventure!"

"I hate you, bugger off!"

DarkHawk laughed as he exited the Decimator. The Sergeant Major met the Warlord as he disembarked. "Sir, we have a perimeter established around the installation and ready to begin our sweeps."

"Proceed. Keep comms and eyes wide open."

"Roger that Sir. You heard him troopers, move out!"

The Sergeant Major and his platoon began to run sweeps of the installation. First clearing the out buildings before proceeding to the main buildings. Four man teams lined up on both sides of the entrances. One trooper torched the lock and then the four moved in. "Building clear!" squawked over the comlinks.

"Ty, find the generators to this place, let's get some power in here."

"On it." Tytus left his pilot seat and moved over to the ship's main computer terminal and began bringing up schematics of the facility. Pinpointing the generators, Ty began the process of slicing in to the facility power grid remotely. Within a few moments the generators began to start up and soon the lights began to flicker.

"Alright you blokes, you are powered up. We should just hang a bloody sign, We are Here!"

The Sergeant Major came over the comlink, "Sir, buildings are clear, the detachment that was here must have left in a hurry."

"Or were removed in a hurry. Lets hit the lower level of the main facility, if anything is still here it would be there."

"Copy that Sir."

Tarthos
Terra Inesorable
Markosian Military Facility

Two teams of five, plus the Sergeant Major made their way into the main facility and began descending into the lower levels. Immediately you could smell the putrid aroma of death. DarkHawk instructed the other troopers to post up and to terminate anything other than the teams coming out of the lower levels.

Making the way down, the warlord could sense the presence of death. The smell became more pungent, just hanging heavy in the air. When DarkHawk came to the first landing, some of the troopers had their helmets off vomiting from the scene and the aroma.

The regiment that was stationed at the facility were herded down here and slaughtered. Not just shot and left for dead, these men were shredded. blood and entrails painted the walls and floor of the level. Bits and pieces of body parts were scattered all over, like they had imploded in this room.

"Are you getting this Sergeant Major?"

"Unfortunately Sir. Whoever did this is one sick S.O.B."

"The real question is, what did this? No standard issue firearm did this, this was something on a grander scale."

DarkHawk activated his comlink, "Ty, start snooping around. We have a lot of mayhem down here and need to find out what and who caused it."

"That bad eh? Let me see what I can do for you chaps..."

Ty began to frantically work his terminal keyboard. "There are a lot of encrypted files here Sir, may take a few, but I will copy them over to the ship's data banks and we can have the cypher boys and their crack equipment back on the *Phoenix* decrypt it.."

"Do what you can Ty, but we need answers."

"Here is one for you mate, there should be a large control panel with three magna-lock controls. Activate those and that should open up to another room for you."

“On it.”

DarkHawk moved down the steps and moved towards the controls. The floor was slick with blood, feeling like mud underneath the Warlord’s boots. The squishing sound as he walked across the floor, made a few of the troopers gag behind their helmets. Making his way to the control panel, DarkHawk activated the panel and pushed the control levers forward. A muffled sound of moving mechanisms could be heard then the back steel wall began to move.

As the wall slowly began to retract back, DarkHawk began to feel a nudge at his gut, moving up from his abdomen to his head. Something bad was about to go down, DarkHawk spared not a second in yelling “GET OUT!” As the wall opened further the sound of an engine began to wind up. With the aid of the Force, the Equite leapt from the control panel to the stairwell.

In the midst of the Warlord’s acrobatics, laser fire began to reign down through the room. DarkHawk twisted his body around completing a full barrel roll of his body avoiding the beginning salvo of laser bolts. Unfortunately, that salvo of firepower did not let up. One of the laser bolts clipped DarkHawk’s left arm. Causing him to miss the top stair rail he was grasping for. Crashing into the set of rails, the Equite lost his initial grip only to regain a solid grip onto the second rail.

DarkHawk looked over his shoulder to see the wall nearly fully open now. There in a secondary room, a dual-quad rotating turbo laser was mounted on a full rail system. The eight lasers were filling almost every square inch of the far side of the room. The sound was deafening as the bolt ricochet off the back walls in an endless pattern. The system running the turbo laser was equally as loud as it’s constant whine of power fed the weapon. The rail system carried the laser to one side of the room, paused and began to make its way back towards the hanging Equite.

DarkHawk began to pull himself up when the Sergeant Major leaned over the rail and grabbed the Warlord by the shoulders. Yanking DarkHawk forcefully over the rails. The laser was nearly upon them, as they made their way up the stairs. “TY KILL THE FLIPPIN POWER!!!! KILL THE POWER!!!”

Ty startled by the screams over the comlink, the Duros jumped in his seat and began to frantically hit keystrokes on his control terminal. The Sergeant Major and DarkHawk made it to the first landing before the power went out and everything went black. “What the bloody hell is going on down there?”

“Well, a death trap really. Ty can you just turn the lights on, so we don’t like, you know die?”

“No need to throw a wobbly. I’ve told you more times than nor DH, you have a tendency of mucking up a simple sneak-n-peek.” A few moments later the emergency lights kicked in. “That is the best we are going to get out of her mates.”

“Your aces Ty.”

DarkHawk made his way back down the stairs, favoring the arm, still searing with pain. Wading through the blood covered floor once again, the Warlord made it to the secondary room. The

Sergeant Major and a few of his troopers followed behind. "Get a feed of this to the Phoenix, the Quaestor is going to want to see this." The Sergeant Major snapped his fingers and one of his troopers began to upload a live feed. "Quaestor Hades, we found something interesting for you. The Collective has been testing out a prototype weapon. Along with slaughtering some of your Warhost personnel."

The Quaestor watched the live feed closely looking at all the subsystems. His eyes widened and you could almost hear his thoughts. "Amazing, this is most promising. I will send in a maintenance team and more reinforcements. We will get that loaded up and brought back here to the *Phoenix*. The R&D guys can start the reverse engineering process. You and your team did well today DarkHawk, it is much appreciated."

"We will hold the fort until you get here."

"Gentleman, I hate to break up this most pertinent of conversations, but we have multiple bogeys inbound."

"Talon one, this is Coyote, multiple bogeys approaching at your three o'clock."

"Coyote, we copy. Enroute to your location."

Ty scampered back over to his pilots seat, flipping a few toggle switches the crew door began to close and the pitot tubes purged out pressurized air. Ty pushed the throttles forward and pulled back on the yoke. The Decimeter made its way to rendezvous with the gunships.

"Hades, I hate to ask for another favor, you think you could send some more support this way?"

"Already enroute, when you get here, you two owe me some top shelf Corellian whiskey."

"You clear the skies and I will honor that Sir."

Gunships and fighters from the *Phoenix* were already in the air and moving in. Tie fighters from *Sword* Squadron broke off along with Y-Wings from *Sheath* Squadron. The lead Tie Defender identified the incoming as Collective fighters. The sky began to flash with laser fire as the fighters went toe to toe with one another.

Ties outnumbered the Z-95 Headhunters, but they were formidable pilots. Quadrijet bombers made it through and made their first strafing run on the facility. Photon bombs took out the support buildings and the explosions rocked the main facility building.

The Sergeant Major screamed at his men to get to the surface. Moving quickly out of the lower lever and to the surface, they could see how thick the engagement had become. The troopers began to take shots at incoming enemy fighters as they flew their low level strafing runs. Two more bombers were lined up to make another strafing run when a Tie and and Y-Wing flanked them laying blaster fire across their hulls. The two bombers exploded and rolled over, crashing inverted into the ground.

Markosian forces swarmed in overwhelming the Collective. Hades watched all of this unfold from the *Phoenix's* main viewing screen. A small grin broke over the Quaestor's face watching his pilots put on a display of precision flying. A product of countless flight simulator training and actual stick time. They were ready and they were hungry.

One of the flight leads of *Sword Squadron* had just engaged the last Z-95. A volley of ion cannon fire smashed across the Collective fighter's hull. Spinning out of control, the disabled fighter became easy prey for the Tie's laser cannon's. Three quick bursts and the Z-95 exploded in a huge fiery plume.

"Skies all clear *Phoenix*"

"Hey DarkHawk, I will meet you in the cantina!"

"Pick me up Ty, we have some drinks to buy..."

The End