

Iridescent flashes of harlequin green and crimson lasers shot across the dark background of deep space. Sleek X-Wing and A-Wing fighters twisted and turned, pursued by even sleeker TIE model spacecraft. With an abrupt explosion, a bulbous cruiser from the shipyards of Mon Calamari is no more - vaporised into sudden nothingness by a Missile Boat's heavy rocket assault.

"Hyper out, now!" yelled I'm-a-Colonel-today Mark Scheuler into his comm. From his vantage point on Theta's command ship, an Imperial Landing Craft affectionately known as *The Bus*, it was clear that their minimum mission objectives had been achieved.

"Can't we mop up the rest?" questioned Major Keth Aalith, who hadn't yet lost the bloodlust of youth.

"No. You know the plan. In, explode, out, repeat" The Squadron Commander would brook no argument.

With a minimum of fuss, the pilots of Theta broke off their engagement and left the sector at light speed. The rumble of their simulator pods slowed, and the wide angle displays in front of each of them dimmed into faint shadows.

Exiting his cockpit a minute later, Gilad "No, it's just a co-incidence. I've never met the other one and we're not related" Pellaeon blinked against the harsh, sudden light. Spotting his fellow Thetan Generals, he wandered over to join them.

Jarek 'COMMY' La'an motioned conspiratorially in the direction of the viewing platform in the room's center. The TIE Corps Admiralty stood upon it, gazing intently upon myriad displays giving up-to-the-second readouts of dozens of simulator metrics.

"What do you think the score is?"

"I think we doing good I dont seem many hamlot today and kaphypehype" blurted Pickled Yoda, in a staccato burst well known to anyone who'd served with him during a major campaign. After a mission, he had a tendency to stay in a time-accelerated mode of thought, but Gilad knew which buttons to press and snap him out of it.

Theta Twelve drew a deep breath. "Thanks. What have you heard about the Hammer crew?"

"I haven't seen Silvius move out of his chair for a week. Nobody has seen the Squirrel though." Gilad spat out that epithet with some feeling.

"We have to assume he'll bring his nuts out at the last minute... you can't use that trick twice in a row."

Further musings on the state of play were interrupted by loud shouting that easily carried across the simulator complex. On the other side of the room, Admiral "Pliffles" Plif stood over a weeping Leocadio, who was suffering from the twin burdens of fatigue and not yet being notable enough for a nickname.

"I SAID DRINK IT". The Warrior's Commodore was brandishing a can of Kappa Hype in an alarmingly violent way.

"Bbbut I've had so many... we we we've been flying for hours."

"I DONT CARE. DRINK THE HYPE AND GET BACK TO WORK. I WANT POINTS. MORE POINTS. CAPTURE THE BEACONS AND GIVE ME POINTS"

"Poor kid" remarked La'an.

"He'll get used to it. But let's avoid the splash zone...". Gilad's voice trailed off, but his meaning was clear. In unison, the veterans wandered over to their Wing Commander, Gilbert H. Frown to seek yet another mission.

Yoda spoke first: "What are my mission objectives?"

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