

The Battle of Hoth, Aftermath © CM John T. Clark, #11690

-“It's going to be simple for you greenhorns!”, the squadron leader announced with a tight smile.
-“Sub-lieutenant Peren, you and your element will be on patrol outside the base. Intelligence suggests that Rebel elements might try to ferry contraband to our sector.”, he took a quick look at Peren's wingman.

-“The orders are simple: Scan every ship that enters the sector and in case of suspicious activity support boarding operations. The rest of third flight will be in reserve in case of emergency.”
The Captain deactivated the holo presentation.

-“Launch time is in 20 minutes. Any questions?”

-“No questions, Sir!” “

-“Excellent. Dismissed!”

Just over an hour later, fresh Sub Lieutenant Michael Peren was strapped into his TIE Fighter, and finally there was some activity in the sector. A group of five transports had entered range and the TIE closed quickly to scanner range.

-“This is Imperial Patrol Alpha, state your business and target sector.” Four of the transports were quick to respond, carrying foodstuffs, but the last one remained silent. A few minutes later it was clear why. The Ship was carrying a large numbers of weapons and other military hardware.

-“Transport Onece you are ordered to stop immediately and prepare to be boarded!”

Of course the Rebel scum didn't listen to that, but a few laser bursts disabled the ship's engines. Just a minute later an Assault transport, flanked by the remaining two TIEs of third flight, left the station. A split second later a number of bright red flashes arched through space, and Michael barely had the time to push his TIE into a tight roll. His wingman wasn't so lucky. Out of the corner of his eye Peren saw the ship explode and a number of Shuttles screaming past the rebel transport.

-“Where the all have those come from?”, the COMM sprung to life. “All fighters move to intercept. Keeps those buggers from the ATR!”

The resulting battle was short but intense. Just when the fighters had started to engage the enemy shuttles another group of three fell out of Hyperspace. It didn't matter, even though those three got lucky once again, killing a TIE from first Flight. But that was the last hit they scored, as they were now outnumbered and easily outmanoeuvred by the remaining Imperial Fighters.

When the last shuttle turned into sparkling dust the ATR commander also reported success, and the captured freighter slowly turned towards the space station.

The rest of the day was routine. No other contraband turned up, but after his shift the shakes started for Peren.

The next day the Situation was quickly deteriorating, the squadron had to deploy to defend against an all out attack by the Mugarii pirates who seem to be behind the smuggling operations.

All of the Squadron would be deployed, and it was just a question of time until reinforcements in the form of the ISD Hammer would arrive.

The Squadron was in the midst of it's briefing as the red alert klaxons sprang to life. A X and Y wing group had just jumped into the system and three minutes later the whole squadron was in space to face them.

Peren was in his TIE screaming down towards the Y-Wings, his flight being tasked with taking out the Bombers, the 'Veterans' concentrating on the Fighters. But it was enough challenge as it were, he thought as he brought his TIE into a sharp turn following one of the Ys. But then at least he could shoot at the enemy ships and was not chasing for proton torpedoes like the other flight element. Then Peren pushed the thoughts out of his mind and concentrated on his prey, to be granted his third bomber kill. The smile on his face faded as he barely avoided a laser salvo fired by a shuttle that seemed to escort the bombers.

-“Two, keep a watch on my flank I am going to intercept that shuttle.” he crisply ordered his new wingman, after checking that this Y had been the last.

The tight formation of TIEs had no big problem of outmanoeuvring the shuttle. Letting his wingman fire the final salvo, Peren was listening to the all clears on the COMM channel. This looked a little too easy for a serious attack. And it was, as suddenly three Corellian Corvettes appeared, laying down covering fire towards the TIE squadron and the Station. But the Corvs weren't to last long as with a brief flicker of pseudomotion the Hammer fell out of hyperspace.

'That's how it goes.', Peren thought on being introduced into the finer controls of the TIE bomber by groundcrew minutes before launch. It was Michael's first time since basic training in such a ship, and he was nervous about not crashing it right into the Modified Frigate he launched from. The job this time was simple. Intelligence had, surprisingly, found out where the attack on the station had come from and now a squadron of TIE-Bs was to demolish everything that vaguely looked hostile. Two TIE-Is were quick to dispatch the couple of Y-wings, who were the only fighter cover except for a couple of Shuttles that died a quick death from the Bomber's Proton Torpedoes. Apart from that Peren hadn't even needed the 'introduction' lining up the sights and volleying a couple of Protons was hardly worth the effort.

Back on the frigate they quickly jumped back towards the station, but there it became clear why Intel had managed to guess the Pirates location. When the bulk of the defence force was away chasing transports the Mugarii had managed to conquer the station.

As, again, the red alerts went of Peren was herded towards one of the new TIE Interceptors. He quickly familiarised himself with the controls which were very similar to the ones on the TIE-F, just that the Speed indicator went a little further. When the squadron had launched Michael was nearly overawed by the number of enemies. The the COMM crackled to life and the CMDR ordered the fighters to brake up into free hunt, to 'Take advantage of the target rich environment'.

And that the pilots followed that to the finest, killing a large number of enemy fighters in the past few minutes. Only one of the TIEs fell victim to an A-wing, and Peren was the one who got it. Then the Hammer arrived and the battle was over, the few remaining pirates fleeing.

Now finally came the time for real revenge. And the chance to fly one of the most advanced combat machines in the Imperial Navy: the new Assault Gunboat. An expert from Imperial Academy was making the members of the squadron fit with the controls, and after a few hours of training flights the squadron departed to destroy the enemy Light Cruiser that had been the origin of the attacks. And now full Lieutenant Peren would be leading the attack flight.

The light jump in the small craft amazed Michael, as he had never really felt so close to hyperspace, but quickly as it had begun the jump ended and the Squadron began the engagement.

There were a few fighters around, but the cruiser was shielded by a sea of mines of the different kinds. Sometimes only the shields of the Gunboats allowed the pilots to sustain the massive laser and missile barrages send for them. But in the end it was just a matter of time, and proton torpedoes. When the last mine exploded around the atmosphere venting Cruiser the Squadron regrouped and jumped back without losses.