

Alpha Squadron: Into the Abyss #1 - Hell Revisited:

ISDII: Hammer, during post Ishtari engagements.

The klaxon and the intermittent red lights that came after the unexpected blur could only mean one thing: the fleet was interdicted and was about to be attacked. He had a natural fear of being called upon...and it didn't last long until his unit was called.

Why just Alpha? He wondered, squinting his eyes as if it'd help him find the answer. Still on his bed, looking at the ceiling, he knew the procedure would demand Pryde would take care of this. He'd find out soon enough otherwise though. A few minutes later, the door hiss wakes Araujo up to the sight of Narven Task accompanied with troopers and a medical officer. He knew he was in trouble, he tried to quickly run a list of possible issues and what would be his initial answer to try at least to save himself from execution.

- "Sir" Araujo stands up and salutes, still half-asleep and thankful he fell asleep with his uniform on.
- "We have a situation and we only have Alpha available for this job" - Said Task coldly.

The revelation came as both a relief and a bother to Araujo. Relief at figuring out he is needed and won't be executed at least for now, and bother as he just wanted to lay on his bed.

- "Sir?" He replied, trying his best not to show annoyance. He failed though as he almost involuntarily rolled his eyes for a fraction of second, then by instinct looked down before catching up and looking straight ahead of him.
- "You cannot escape this time Araujo" Task caught the brief gestures. "We had enough of your depression" he added in his usual annoying bureaucratic tone. If there was a casualty Araujo wanted to see happen during war sometimes, it was Task. And it was mutual. Task gestured to the medical officer who handed Task and Araujo each one a datapad. He then tapped the one in his hands and started reading "From your own reports...". Araujo received the device, looked straight into it to avoid eye-contact with the rest, taking a brief moment to sigh while actually being a bit curious about what was going to be said about him and then tapped the datapad in his hands

2022-11-03, Report #304.

About October: Observation: At least I did my expected flying quota and the squadron, 70% of the squadron, flew during RtF. Not much, but it is honest work. RL again got the best of me this month.

2022-12-18, Report #305

About November: Observation: Due to a shocking personal incident where I lost my best friend, I am back into severe depression. Doing my duties means a huge effort but it helps me try to stand up and keep going.

2023-01-09, Report #306.

About December: Observation: Horrible month, physical heartaches reflecting my extreme emotional pain, but I did my part to serve the Empire above all others. Long live the Empire!

2023-02-12, Report #307.

About January: Observation: Another nightmarish month, even worse. Still here doing paperwork. I had to Base-Delta-Zero my entire social life. I hope to feel better.

2023-03-20, Report #308.

About February: Observation: I tried the unthinkable but I survived. I decided to stand up and fight back. Still fighting...

There were more excerpts from his reports but he looked at those he wrote during the times of the *incident*. He really felt he was making progress. Task gave him a few seconds to familiarize with the content, then continued.

- "However, from there, you decided to resume weekly reporting and have been increasingly improving, refining and enhancing your reports along with your own drill activity. You also volunteered to participate in some engagements during our crisis with the Ishtari. I'd say you're reasonably fit for combat." the man added in an authoritarian tone. Even compliments from this man can be obnoxious.

Wishing with all his heart he could reply without being court-martialed but also knowing he didn't have the mental strength to come up with something smart, he conceded. -"AH-11929 ready for orders" he said with a robotic tone, staring firmly into Task's eyes.

- "Good. Gather your squadron and report to the secondary hangar. We are under attack by unknown hostile forces using a combination of an interdicator and a flotilla of capitals, we need you to do something about this". Task's tone switched from authoritarian to stressed, almost begging for help. - "Yes sir" replied Araujo. Reaching for his comm-link he signaled the rest of his squadron to be ready for combat in the...secondary hangar?
- "Ah, yes, while you were...resting... our main hangar was rendered unusable by Solohan50, again. We need you to use your personal ships for this mission" said Task almost as an afterthought.

So that was it. At the moment, only his A-Wing could be fielded. Most personal ships were under maintenance but the main hangar damage could have switched all technicians' attention to full repairs there "And the rest?" added Araujo with the intention of not putting up with bothersome obstacles to his work.

- "We can only field a shuttle and your pesky captured rebel fighter" Task truly enjoyed insulting Araujo at every single opportunity or so he felt that way. At this time, Araujo would expect Task to give him all the details but the bureaucratic man still hasn't grasped the experience needed for field operations.
- "Yes sir. Any special orders?"

- “Get us out of this mess, now” Task signaled the rest and left Araujo alone. He reached his commlink -”This is Alpha One, meet me in the secondary hangar in 5 minutes...and bring all your toys my penguins.”