

Thunder Rising

Part II of the Thundersdawn Sequence - By Chaos Eternus

The infant RSS faces it's first trial when the SGC's worst enemy makes a move to seize RSS technology and equipment, amongst the effects of a naquadah shortage.

CHAPTER 1 - REBUILDING

The *Iwo Jima* approached *Thundersdawn* slowly, the latest of the *Prometheus* class vessels to be completed the *Iwo Jima* had only taken off from Earth for the first time 7 days ago, just 4 days after the 'Rogue' Gou'auld's attack She had completed several days of shakedown cruises and was now heading towards *Thundersdawn* for supplies and her orders. *Thundersdawn* still clearly showed the scars of her recent brush with destruction, large areas of the hull were brighter, showing clearly where hull sections had been replaced and construction crews were crawling all over the new Dry-dock 4, and the backbone arms that held the dry-docks perpendicular to the primary hull. It appeared to the *Iwo Jima*'s captain as if several extensions were being built as well as the repairs.

"*Thundersdawn* calling *Iwo Jima*, Come in"

"*Iwo Jima* here, we are under orders to report for supplies and orders"

"Understood, we have your orders here, please dock at L1"

"Location of L1 please"

"Lower 1 is the lowest point on the hull, sending guidance data now"

"Received"

"Roger, you are cleared to dock at L1, *Thundersdawn* out"

"Captain, it's a bit odd they didn't mention anything about supplies, I mean they said they had orders, but not supplies"

The *Iwo Jima*'s Captain was an experienced air force officer, and had always tried to get his subordinates to think, it was in fact one of the main reasons he was selected for command of a *Prometheus* class, it usually paid off, like now for instance. He pondered the Exec's words, orders but no supplies? Had to be a milk run.

"Captain Harris, welcome! I'm Captain Peters, commanding officer of *Thundersdawn*, and this is Captain Dodge USN, our SGC liaison"

"Your appear to have a strong station here, and it's nice to know there is a dry-dock waiting for us if he shit hits the fan"

"That's why *Thundersdawn* was built Captain Harris, now your orders are simple. *Thundersdawn* will be having a major refit courtesy of the Asguard and you"

Captain Harris raised an eyebrow at that, while he liked the idea of *Thundersdawn* being adequately protected, it meant his home was better defended after all, he didn't like the 'courtesy of you' part of that statement.

"It's not what you think, General Hammond has arranged for the *Iwo Jima* to be temporarily transferred to our command, for the duration you will

take orders from me and Admiral Thompson RN. Your main mission is retrieval of technologies. The SGC has given us locations of several abandoned pieces of Gou'auld equipment we need to bring the station up to scratch, these will be relatively short hops only, first up is three sets of transport ring abandoned on PX-659..."

"Conn. – Sensors, new contact inbound!"

"Any ID?"

"Contact dropped out of hyper close to Jupiter, contact firming up now... Profile suggests Asgard design Captain"

"Our delivery boys, and bang on time too, comms, warn the construction crews, our new guns and shields just arrived"

Ground Control, RAF ST Athan

"Admiral, signal from *Thundersdawn*, the Asgard have arrived"

"Thanks, any word from America yet?"

"Just coming through now sir"

The ensign grabbed the printout from the Reuters news service hook up they *didn't* have, officially.

"It's confirmed sir, he just announced he's running, Admiral"

The admiral nodded and told the Ensign to leave. Sighing, he picked up his phone and tapped in an international number.

"Yes?" the voice at the other end was accent less, unremarkable.

"In the immortal words of Tom Clancy, he just became a Clear and Present Danger to the security of this world"

"Authorisation?"

"Lima-Tango-Foxtrot-two-niner"

"Confirmed"

The line was closed at the other end, and the admiral sat back down and prayed that no one would ever know what he had just done.

CHAPTER 2 - INTERESTING TIMES

The sniper was still, silent. She had lain on this rooftop for hours, armed not with a sniper rifle but binoculars and a parabolic microphone. She wasn't here for a take-out, not today, though she thought, a Chinese would be nice around now, no, she was here to observe. This target was going down, but the target was sensitive, if this was screwed up, the repercussions would be disastrous. No, this target had to be taken out and it had to be done right the first time. That meant learning all there was to be learnt about her target. She stiffened suddenly, like a deer caught in a trucks headlights, they could *not* be serious. Her free hand dropped to the Braille readout on her recording device, recording, good, lots of free space, even better, she shifted slightly to get a better view. This had to be recorded and reported. This was big, very big.

The sniper grabbed her equipment and left her snipe post, ahead of schedule this was too important to waste. Once she was a reasonable distance away, she shifted herself subtly. Suddenly she was not a sniper on assignment; she was an office worker, just one of the crowds. A useful skill to learn, just make everyone see what they wanted to and you were home free. She walked to a phone a few blocks away, blending in with all the crowds seamlessly. The security goons who hid amongst the crowds near this house never even glanced twice at her, whilst she once again memorised their positions and identities, ready for her report.

She got to the phone, and dialled. The voice at the other end was still as accent less and unremarkable as when the admiral heard, but there was a slight tint of worry in it now.

“Murielle! Didn’t expect to hear for you for hours, phoning from work now?”

“No, just calling to say I got a present for you”

The control officer stiffened in his chair, ‘a present? What the hell?’

“You didn’t have to do that”

“Well, I saw it, and I couldn’t resist, thought your father would adore it”

A package for the admiral, and the sniper leaving her post ahead of schedule, something was up.

“It’ll have to be sent courier though, it’s too good to lose on-route, oh, heard about your brother by the way, hope he gets out of jail soon, its such a pity”

“It is, well catch you later”

“Same place, same time?”

“Of course”

The control officer sat back in his chair and let out a whoosh of breathe. His brother, that was the signal for the target, with a reference to jail and an important message for HQ. This should be *Interesting*. Aye, he thought with a wry grin, like a Chinese curse.

CHAPTER 3 - IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY!

The admiral’s phone rang, and he reached over, picking it up and holding it his ear without once looking up from his reports.

“Tommy! It’s Murielle here, got a package here for you”

The pen dropped from Thompson’s other hand, and he looked up from his reports with a start.

“Murielle, didn’t expect to hear from you for a while”

“Neither did I, but life hits you that way sometimes, anyway did you hear about Mr strong-and-silent here’s brother?”

“No, I didn’t, why did something happen?” the admiral was cautious; he knew something had just happened.

“The law just got some strong evidence against him; he might just get the chair”

The *Chair?!* Thompson coughed and spluttered, but quickly got himself back under control. If she was right, this was perfect, no illegal orders, no possible international incident, and he would still be out of the way, perfect.

5 Days Later, Washington D.C.

The reporter was not happy; who did he think he was kidding? All the reporters knew about Kinsley, and were trying desperately to prove it, but anytime someone got evidence, they or the evidence 'disappeared'. It was annoying. Her reporter's instinct chose then to tap her on the shoulder, and she turned, looking straight at a number of government sedans that barrelled around the corner and headed straight for the podium where Kinsley was making another boring speech. She tapped the arm of her cameraman, and pointed the cars to him, and he began to record their movements, he too sensed there was an incident about to happen.

The Government sedans stopped, and a large numbers of agents poured out, heading for Kinsley, their jackets proclaiming them to be Secret Service. Their Guns were out, and they did *not* look happy. Neither did Senator Kinsley, those guns were pointing at *him*.

"And just what is the meaning of this?"

The lead agent strode straight up to Kinsley, "Senator Kinsley, you are under arrest"

Kinsley was not amused; he knew the current president didn't like him but arranging false charges? He had him now, this he could use against the president. He never even considered that whatever evidence they had against him wasn't false.

The reporters recorded it all, live on national television.

SGC

"*Hammond to the Control Room! Hammond to the Control Room!*" the jubilant voice echoed through the SGC's corridors. Within moments, SG-1 and Hammond had arrived at the control room, none of them knowing quite what to expect.

"Sir, a report just came in that Kinsley's been arrested"

O'Neill was a happy man and didn't care who knew it, he let out a whoop of joy, Carter and Daniel stood their Gob-smacked, and even Teal'c smiled.

"What are the charges, son?"

"Doesn't say, but the report does say it's a death-row offence"

CHAPTER 4 - THUNDERSDAWN

In the months since the goa'uld attack, *Thundersdawn* had changed enormously. The old pulse lasers had been removed, and the newer design added, they still didn't have the power to take on *Ha'taks* or motherships but their rapid fire rate and high accuracy made them ferocious opponents to any fighter, and could now be used to intercept incoming missiles. Asgard designed shields and Gauss weaponry had been installed and tested as well

as a ring transporter, which further rings set up at the now completed asteroid mining facility, ground control ST Athan and SGC.

Additional dry-docks had also been added, fuelling rumours of warship construction contracts from the SGC and Russia, and the fighter launch bay, designed into *Thundersdawn* from the very beginning, was finally being built in the exposed superstructure at the bottom of *Thundersdawn's* hull, where months before the *Iwo Jima* had docked.

Captain Peters looked out the window, and saw the glimmering navigation lights of a multitude of approaching craft; the *Lancer* class star fighters were now flight-testing in mars orbit before returning to earth. Peters had to admit, the *Lancers* had a savage beauty to them. The body of the craft was sharply defined, with few curves, tapering to a point at the front, before sweeping back past the high-mounted pilots cockpit straight to the two rectangular engines, attached directly to the side of the craft, with the small wings jutting of the side of the engine leading to a long-barrelled pulse laser. Fast, highly manoeuvrable, these craft outmatched all fighters known to the royals, including the USAF's, their only weakness being hostile capital ships.



(With thanks to Shad4c2000 for the image)

“Captain, signal from ground control” The ensign passed over a clipboard, and Peters read the signal on the pink message paper within. Then blinked and read it again.

She looked up and turned to the ensign, “Get me intercom please”

“This is Captain Peters, as you no doubt know, Senator Kinsley was arrested several months ago, today, the secret service announced that Mr Kinsley was being charged with Treason, Conspiracy to commit treason, malicious sabotage of government projects, misuse of funding, and plotting to assassinate the President of the United States.

In better news, Queen Elizabeth the Second signed the papers today, reforming the British armed forces, All space going vessels and personnel, plus RAF ST Athan are now part of a new service, separate from the Army, Airforce and Navy, to be called the Royal Space Service.

That is all”

Peter's turned the intercom off, and turned to the ensign, "any news on the Prometheus Class construction contract yet?"

"Nothing has come through yet, Captain"

CHAPTER 5 - NAQUADAH

Thundersdawn: Pilot's Briefing Room

The pilots briefing room was Spartan even by *Thundersdawn's* standard, rows of comfortable chairs facing a blank wall onto which various information could be projected, a computer to control the projector with and nothing else. The room stank of new paint and many of the chairs were still covered with the plastic protective covering they were delivered with. Still it was the only room set up for briefings, so it would have to the captain mused as she waved Admiral Thompson RSS and General Hammond USAF into the room. Hammond had arrived by ring transporter only 15 minutes ago, becoming only the second person to use the recently completed ring network linking Ground Control RSS/RAF ST Athan, SGC, RSS *Thundersdawn* and the asteroid mining facility, RSS *Coalmine*.

"Sorry about the state of this room gentlemen, tidying rooms that aren't in use hasn't exactly been a priority"

Hammond and Thompson sighed and nodded. Their stars made them used to having rooms prepared for them in advance whenever they went to briefings, but both were good CO's who understood the situation and weren't going to complain. The three quickly stripped the plastic off of 3 front-row seats, and sat down.

"Gentlemen, as you know we have a naquadah shortage. We only have a limited supply, and right now its being used faster than it's arriving through the gate. The Zero-point generators have greatly reduced the SGC and our off-planet installations use of naquadah, but its not going to be enough to allow us to construct more *Prometheus* class vessels for the time being, so the construction contract is currently on hold. According to information gleaned from the computer cores of 1 of the *Ha'tak's* that recently met their demise here, Ra had a naquadah mining operation going on in this system, but *not* on earth"

Peters and Thompson exchanged slightly shocked glances, this was not what they had been expecting, but they could both see where this was likely to be going. All the *Prometheus* class vessels save *Prometheus* herself, where, to put it mildly, busy, and unless the SGC got word of that a hostile force was inbound to earth, could not leave their current missions.

Prometheus herself was in dry-dock, with about a weeks worth of repairs left before it would be safe for her to leave spacedock, and a full fortnight before she would be fully operational. That left the RSS with the only ships free to search for any remains of Ra's naquadah mine, and more importantly, any naquadah.

"Did the computers cores give any clues as to where the mine might have been?"

"From what Carter could gather, it could be in the asteroid belt or in any of the ring systems surrounding several of the planets"

Peters winced; she had a good idea of the space to search, which considering the weak sensors on the 1-4 and 1-5 vessels would make the search a logistical nightmare. The arrival of several 1-6 craft and a squadron of *Lancer* class starfighters would help, both having a set of targeting quality sensors, not just the basic navigational sensors used by the 1-4 and 1-5's.

"Peters, is it doable?"

Peters thought about it, then shook her head, "As it stands, no, but we could rig *Shunter* 1-5-11 with an upgraded sensor array, she already has additional sensor hook-ups set to connect to an underslung sensor platform" Peters turned to Hammond and explained "as well as being used as a tug, 1-5-11 was modified during construction to allow use a sensor test bed"

Hammond nodded, "Use the *shunter* as an Awacs basically, it should work"

"Do we have a sensor array available for that?" Thompson added, mulling over the possibilities.

"No, but we do have *Prometheus's* old sensor array. We were going to break it up for parts but we could rebuild it for this, however it would be helpful to have all the sensor data you have on naquadah"

"I'll have it couriered up to you ASAP" Hammond stood, the meeting over.

CHAPTER 6 - PROSPECTING FOR NAQUADAH

Thundersdawn

The modifications to *Shunter* 1-5-11 took 5 days to complete, 5 days in which the supply of naquadah got lower, low enough to make the SGC contemplate temporarily taking 2 or 3 *Prometheus* class vessels offline until stocks had built up again.

It wasn't that the SGC didn't know where to find the naquadah, in fact the SGC knew where enough naquadah was to keep three times as many naquadah reactors than they were using running. Trouble was, they could only mine from 3 worlds, the other sources were ever under Goa'uld control, and they weren't going to let a naquadah mine just disappear into SGC's control, or were too close to hostile activity to be safely mined. In at least two cases the locals had refused the SGC mining permission, and conditions at a least four of the naquadah containing planets could best be described as 'hostile', if your definition of hostile includes an acid atmosphere, a planet that would make Venus's 740K (467⁰C) look colder than the Antarctic, a place with as much atmosphere as the Bronze after the vampires have been dusted, and a planet whose sun was about to go supernova. Strangely enough none of these were considered good mining prospects y the SGC. Which meant searching for new naquadah sources, and an in system source would be a godsend.

"*Shunter* 1-5-11 you are cleared for priority departure, exit path 5. Be advised your call sign now *Prospector*, on orders of Captain Peters."

"*Prospector* acknowledges, priority departure by exit path 5, out"

Prospecting, as any miner, or oil digger will tell you is a very hit or miss business, and even with the latest equipment, a very time-consuming one. That's true on Earth and even more so if you are trying to find the one small ball of rock in the vastness of the solar system which might, not definitely, *might* contain naquadah in mine-able, or for that matter detectable quantities. Therefore it was of no surprise to the crew of the *Prospector* that the needles of their naquadah sensors never even twitched during a quick pass over Saturn's belts, so they turned around and began a slow and close pass over the belts in a search pattern. They didn't expect to find anything here, nor in any other of the belt systems. If naquadah was going to be anywhere it would be in the asteroid belt, and it would be weeks before they started searching that.

SGC

"Message from RSS *Thundersdawn*, General"

Hammond reached out for the message paper, and thanked the airman with a nod, before turning and entering his office. He was late arriving today, and the number of messages already waiting in his in tray was enough to make him wince. He dreaded to think what his email inboxes were like. He made himself a strong coffee before sitting down at his desk, where he read the message from *Thundersdawn*. Unsurprisingly it was not good news, all the planets with ring systems had been scanned and abandoned, and there was no naquadah there. That left the asteroid belt, the most likely source of the naquadah but the most dangerous to search. *Prospector* would have to enter the largely unmapped asteroid belt in order to be able to search effectively, and run a hugely increased risk of collision. The RSS were certainly the experts in the asteroid belt, they did after all have RSS *Coalmine* stationed on the belts borders, and were regularly going in to the asteroid belt to snatch and grab asteroids to mine out, but no craft had ever stayed in the asteroid belt anywhere as long as *Prospector* would have to, and *Prospector* would be entering areas of the asteroid belt that no-one had any information on, no sensor records, no pictures from Hubble, nothing. That was more dangerous than most of the SG teams missions, excluding, Hammond thought with a wry grin, SG-1's missions. He silently wished *Prospector* good luck, before moving onto the next message.

CHAPTER 7 - CONFIRMATION AND COLLISIONS

Thundersdawn

The position of comm. Officer no longer meant someone who sat a control panel and was responsible for all incoming and outgoing transmissions, *Thundersdawn* had grown, and with it the number of radio channels in use. Nowadays the comm. Officer was responsible for a number of people who monitoring various channels, controlled any inbound and outbound craft much as an air traffic controller would, as well as being responsible for the equipment they used. It left little time for actually listening

to the chatter flowing over the air, well technically *spacewaves*, never less the comm. Officer of the watch, a lieutenant Edwards, always found time to listen in, and check how good the people manning the radios were, which is why he was listening when the call came in.

“*Thundersdawn*, this is *Prospector*, come in *Thundersdawn*!”

The voice crowded out the others on the channel, overly loud and out of turn, a dreadful breach of comm. discipline, Edwards made a note to himself to send a memo to *Prospectors* crew reminding them of basic comm. discipline. The next transmission derailed that train of thought at the station.

“*Thundersdawn*, we are declaring an emergency”

The blaring sound of a hull breach alarm in the background emphasised his words. Luckily this had been anticipated, and a *shunter* loaded with a lifeboat module was shadowing *Prospector* just outside the asteroid belt. The dangerous nature of the asteroid belt made that precaution necessary.

“Hull breach in the cockpit, we lost atmosphere, but we’re all in suits here, the sarge is out for the count, took an knock to the head, request retrieval”

“Roger your retrieval request, Lifeboat is...”

“PEAK! PEAK!” the shouted words from *Prospector* shut down all conversation on that channel, did they mean...?

“*Thundersdawn*, we have a Major peak on the naquadah sensors, and... Shit! The sensors just overshot their scales! We have a major naquadah signal here!”

“Roger your peak, can you I.D. the source?”

“Negative, got a general vicinity, but the pressure lost has knocked a connection lose somewhere, we can’t lock the signal down, get another sensor platform to this location, ASAP!”

“Affirmative on that, Lifeboat signals they are 3 minutes out, switch to lifeboat frequency for retrieval and data-burst your sensor records to GC St Athan and us”

“Wilco”

SGC

The airman rushed up to Hammond’s office, scattering other personnel like bowling balls as he flew up the stairs. He hammered on the door, and all conversation from within stopped.

“Come in” the general voice, the airman thought irrelevantly, had to be a perfect number 45, I.E. you better have a damn good excuse for disturbing me or a posting to Antarctica will be the least of your worries.

The airman opened the door and quickly entered, saluting the general as he did so. He guessed by the presence of SG-1 and the number of closed folders with fingers keeping pages that he had interrupted a meeting, he was right.

“Sorry to disturb you general, but a Critique priority message just came in from RSS *Thundersdawn*”

He handed the message over, before saluting again and leaving. Hammond read the message and smiled.

“Good news, general?” O’Niell asked.

“Kind off, *Prospector* has a general location on an asteroid which caused their naquadah sensors to overshoot their scales, but *Prospector* depressurised and had to leave before they could lock the location down. They are sending everything they can to that location and hope to have the asteroid identified within 2 days”

“So why the kind off? Sounds like great news to me?” Jackson asked.

“The RSS has the only spacedock and asteroid mining facility in this system, within days they will control the only known naquadah supply, and when those defence stations they are planning come online they will pretty much control this system”

“Ahh”

“I do not see how that could be a problem Hammond, you are allied with the British are you not?”

“Teal’c, would you like an ally controlling your home system? Not only is it a bad idea militarily, but it’s potentially a political nightmare!”

“Like telling Apothis that Hathor now controls the space around his favourite planet, even though they are allied at the time, Apothis isn’t exactly gonna like it is he?” O’Neill added.

“I see”

CHAPTER 8 - NID

The very thoughts that were filling Hammonds mind had also entered the heads of several highly placed NID agents. They decided to do something about it, several something’s in fact.

ABC News Broadcast

“...and in further news, a private benefactor just donated one billion dollars to NASA to help fund the beleaguered agency’s space station program. With the collapse of negotiations for the International space station program amongst accusations of deliberate sabotage two years ago, Nasa has been trying to arrange funding for a US only spacestation, with this funding that goal is one big step closer to completion. The donor refuses to be named.”

GC St Athan

“Admiral, flash traffic from Operation Watchdog!”

Thompson strode quickly over to the comm. officers station and grabbed the printout, reading it as spooled of the printer. He frowned, his face turning grim.

“Increase our alert status immediately, I want a full covert deployment of guards and Special Forces through out the base. I also want complete

security checks on all RSS personnel and all other personnel at St Athan. Signal a security alert to RSS *Thundersdawn* and RSS *Coalmine*.”

“Yes, sir” the comm. officer supplied confused. He barely heard the Admirals muttered comment as he turned towards his office.

“The NID are coming”

RSS *Thundersdawn*

“Captain Peters to Command! Flash Traffic from GC!”

Peters cursed quietly as she hurried through the stations corridors to command, struggling to throw her uniform top over her head as she ran, whilst dodging the work parties which crowded this section of *Thundersdawn*’s corridors.

She arrived at command breathless, grabbing the message as soon as she arrived at the comm. officer’s station. She read the message and cursed again, not bothering to be quiet this time. She crumpled the message up and turned to the command centre, “As of this moment we are operating under a class 3 security lock-down. All inbound craft, especially unscheduled SGC craft are to be fully investigated before allowing permission to close. A fighter CAP is to be maintained at all times. That is all”

She turned and left, heading for her quarters, “NID, wonderful”.

Hill overlooking SAS Headquarters, Herefordshire.

The NID agent was nervous. An ex-ranger, he had spent time with the SAS as part of an exchange, so he had a good idea what they could be like, and what they would do if the SAS caught him spying on them. Not much, really, up till the point they found out he was ‘dead’, then they would start to wonder, at which point the NID operatives life would quickly get... interesting.

While the SAS were not the best Special Forces group in the world, he had too much pride in his ranger background to say the SAS were the best; they were certainly a contender for the throne. Decent equipment, not the best but decent, excellent training combined with a malicious deviousness that would make any grizzled veteran master sergeant that had managed never to get caught proud made them worthy opponents.

He looked through the binoculars again, the image was not as sharp as he would have liked, but he had blackened the lenses so they wouldn’t flash light at the SAS, inadvertently giving his position away. No sign of any unusual activity, it looked like the operation still had surprise on its side. If the RSS had word of the upcoming attack by NID forces, the SAS would be among the first units mobilised.

He looked at his watch, 12 o’clock, time to check in. He dialled a number from memory, and as soon as the call connected he said, “Is the party still on for midnight?”

“Yes, you gonna be on time?” the voice at the other end was bubbly, bright and cheerful. The sort of thing you would expect from someone preparing a normal party, not a NID type party.

“Well, my guest is taking his time, we might not make it”

“Pity, ah well, maybe we can catch you next time if you don’t make it this time?”

“We’ll try, catch you again some time”

“See you”

He switched the phone off, and turned back to his binoculars.

The watchful eyes five meters behind him looked at each other, then by mutual agreement, the youngest, slowly cautiously slid on his belly backwards down the hill, never taking his eyes off of the NID operative. As soon as he was out of the operative’s sight, he turned around, checking everywhere for observers before getting up and double-timing it to the small radio hidden at the bottom of the hill.

CHAPTER 9 - RECON

GC, St Athan

The former navy seal was *not* happy. He had been pretty confident that an assault on St Athan would be relatively easy to assault when he looked over the maps, now he was not so sure. St Athan was bordered on two sides by residential areas with large numbers of RAF, Army and RSS personnel living in them, they were out, but the other two sides were bordered by trees, bushes, roads and railways. They could be perfect for this assault, but a recon was needed.

He had inserted at midnight last night for this observation mission, having been dropped off by boat on the rocky beach at Aberthaw power station, and crawled all the way up to St Athan’s perimeter fence and would extract midnight tonight, leaving him in position for 24 hours, not nice but something he could handle. But *this* he couldn’t handle. He held back the urge to scream as he noticed the time on his watch, 16 hours he had been there and the traffic had not let up once. He knew this was a main road but *still*.

He crawled slowly along the perimeter fence, or rather the railway line that ran parallel to the perimeter fence, and made a mental note, this was not the way in. Insertion by boat onto a rocky, for want of a better word, beach, then over the loose and heavily banked rocks to open fields which they would have to cross despite being illuminated by the coal driven Aberthaw ‘B’ power station and its CCTV, followed by a run across a main road which was busy even in the depths of night. No, this was not the way in, but maybe...

As much as you can when crawling along the gravel of a railway line trying to be stealthy, the ex-seal hurried. He followed the railway line across two bridges in quick succession and stopped. Perfect, scrubland, bordered by hedges and trees too. They could come over land disguised as civvies to here, get all their equipment together and follow the railway line to St Athans perimeter. The trees and bushes lining the railway line would keep them hidden from any passers by on the road, and with a Blackhawk on standby for extraction, they were sorted.

As he turned around to head back to his post, he wondered how the other recon was going.

He wondered if he could get away with leaving his recon early, best not. They certainly weren't getting in this way in a hurry. According to their maps there was an open road bisecting the base along here, there was too, also a construction site. He glanced at the equipment, looked like they were moving this apparently very busy road underground. Normally he would consider a construction site a relatively easy way in, he decided not to this time. The number of tan-coloured berets among the guards had absolutely nothing to do with that, oh no, he thought sarcastically nothing at all. Someone here was smart, and knew construction works were a good way in. He looked around, trying to count how many tan berets he could see, but in his heart he knew it was hopeless, for everyone you saw, there was always at least another three hidden.

CHAPTER 10 - MOVING IN

GC, St Athan

Thompson was worried, he knew the NID were coming, that was actually his biggest advantage, it meant he and his people would be prepared when the NID came, but he would almost certainly lose people. Unlike the NID, the Admiral had a problem with that, he didn't like to lose people, but still, he would do what the situation needed, he hoped. He signed, and looked over the report again. Tonight, the NID goons were coming tonight, and as far as Intel could tell, they were all former Special Forces operatives, Seals, Rangers, Force Recon and Delta. Up against them he had a frontline force of 100 SAS, 50 SBS, and when the shooting actually started he would be call upon a full 350 soldiers of the Royal Welsh who were permanently stationed at the base, since before the RSS was founded. However they had no combat-capable aircraft on base, the closest being 5 Longbow Apaches that had quietly hidden themselves over at Landow, in the old WW2 hangers there. According to the latest reports, there were at least 450 NID operatives coming, several local elements had been seen receiving money and guns from NID operatives and both St Athan's and Cardiff-Wales Internationals radars had been having intermittent low level contacts appear all day. The *Swiftsure* class SSN HMS *Sceptre* was shadowing a large freighter just outside the 5-mile limit, which appeared to have been modified to carry Harrier jump jets. The NID had played its entire hand; if they failed here today they would be crippled.

"Admiral! Intel just got word that an *Airwolf* class attack helicopter is in the area and under NID control" The ensign who delivered the message was puzzled, a helo buff, she thought she knew every combat helo type in existence and *Airwolf* class was not one she had heard of before, judging by the curses, she guessed the admiral had though.

Thompson grabbed his mobile, not trusting the landlines, not with an NID attack imminent. Thompson had Hawk and Dominic's number; in fact he owed them a big favour, as they and *Airwolf* had successfully extracted him from KGB hands just four years prior to the fall of the Berlin wall, back when he was only a wet behind the ears Lieutenant.

“Santini Air here, how may I help?”

“Hawk, its Thompson here, you still got the bird?”

“To which bird are you referring Admiral?”

“The one is used last time I visited”

“Still here, and in pretty good shape, why?”

“Nothing much, just a carbon-copy being reported on my doorstep, no biggie”

“Shit!”

A muffled crump disturbed the call, and the admiral switched the phone off quickly, it sounded as if the attack had began, early.

CHAPTER 11 - OPENING MOVES

St Athan

Alarms filled the air all around St Athan as the East Gate burned; showing sparks into the night air. Seconds later erratic gunfire filled the air as the attackers fired upon the injured and helpless guards sprawled upon the burning tarmac. The lone gunner in the pillbox desperately fired on the attackers, trying to kill them before they killed him and his friends. Worse thing was he knew everyone of the attackers; everyone had their pictures taped on the guardroom notice board, never to be allowed on the base. Local hoods, all of them.

Something hit his foot; he glanced quickly down to see what it was.

“Oh, shit...”

A hollow boom came from the pillbox as the grenade detonated, sending flames blazing through the gun slits.

“Sir, Radar reports intermittent inbound contacts which appear to be Harrier Jump jets!”

“East gate compromised, reports indicate its local hoods, not the main attack force”

“The Royal Welsh are arming up now sir! Estimate 15 minutes until complete arm-up”

“The Longbows have left the hanger, and have pre-flighted”

“Remind them to wait till the main attack force arrives” Thompson shouted through the organised din of all the reports.

The muffled din of multiple guns firing could be heard through the control centre.

“Sir! The SBS has engaged the hostiles at east gate”

Colour sergeant Lucien of the SBS was not a happy man. He had seen the number of bodies in army uniforms scattered around the east gate and the burning wreck of a car which had rammed into the guardhouse, the car, judging by the damage had been loaded with explosives, which when they had detonated had killed most of the guards. He dropped to one knee sighting around the corner, careful to keep as much of his body hidden behind the wall as possible. The hoods were firing wildly at him, obviously having little, if any practise with the guns they were using, he shrugged mentally, their loss.

He pulled the trigger, and a blonde haired hood fell, he switched rapidly from target to target, four more dropped before he had to duck behind the wall again. He tapped the corporal behind him on the arm, signalling him to cover him. Lucien peeked around the corner of the wall, clear; he dashed across to the hedge on the other side, covered by the corporal who dropped 2 hoods in quick succession, leaving ten. The corporal quickly joined him; Lucien quickly glanced back over at the wall, signalling to the two SBS men still there. Four SBS versus ten hoods, bad odds, for the hoods. They fired out of their cover, catching the undisciplined hoods in a deadly crossfire. They died quickly.

“Admiral, the Rapier batteries have hard locks on inbound harriers”

“Tell them to make damn sure its harriers, not an inbound to Cardiff-Wales who didn’t get the bloody message!”

“Definitely Harriers Sir, with US Marines IFF’s”

“Warn them off, tell them we are under attack and if they come any closer they will be fired upon! Might *just* be a legitimate flight” Thompson added sarcastically.

“They dropped to the deck, and are still incoming”

“Tell the Rapiers, weapons free”

The harriers approached the Rapier SAM batteries, unaware of the danger facing them. NID’s intelligence suggested only hand-held SAM’s on-site, and with the Rapiers active radars switched off, the pilots never knew they were targeted. Missiles roared off the Rapier batteries, rising into the sky on a pillar of fire guided by the Infrared tracking systems of the Rapier batteries. The harriers had little chance to dodge before they began to fall from the sky, blotted out by the missiles.

A large explosion rent the air as a rapier battery was hit by a massive barrage of cannon fire. The Rapiers turned to engage this latest threat, but were unable to gain an IR lock on the large black helicopter. Another Rapier died. They switched on their search radars; even at this close range they only gained a weak return. It was enough, the Rapiers were able to transmit there targeting data to each other, enabling them to triangulate on the NID built *Airwolf* copy. Missiles left the launchers and blazed towards the unwanted visitor. The pilot was good, and tried all tricks he knew in-order to evade the missiles. It was a valiant attempt, but at this close range, one doomed to failure. The blazing wreck fell from the sky, crashing down onto a row of houses just outside St Athans perimeter.

“Admiral, look-out report the main ground force is crawling up to the perimeter fence now Sir!”

“Signal the *Longbows*, get them on their way, now!”

CHAPTER 12 - BATTLE

The NID operatives were edgy, they had been told to expect regular ground forces in disorganised formations only, with about 70 SAS soldiers in support. They were all from elite forces of some sort or another they all knew

they could take regular army units with no problem, but half their air support had just been smashed from the sky, by SAM batteries Intel had stated weren't there. They had more air support inbound, but it was light attack helicopters and *Blackhawk's* only, and the *Blackhawk's* carried all the pilots for the craft they were here to capture, loss of just one *Blackhawk* would severely compromise the mission.

The rearmost operative jerked, and fell to the ground still, joining a long line of corpses along the railway line. The new rearmost man, hearing him hit the gravel, turned his head to investigate the noise, and saw the bodies. His eyes widened with horror,

"Sniper!" he cursed.

The NID operatives all dodged for cover, and began looking for muzzle flashes, or other signs of the sniper firing. It never came, the SAS sniper realising he was blown, had moved on, leaving 12 NID corpses in his wake.

The NID crawled on, close to the perimeter fence now. Slowly, cautiously they approached the fence through a gap in the hedge line, the only place to get to the fence; it was a perfect ambush spot. They knew it, and knew any sensible officer would know it too and have it covered.

The lead operative snipped the links of the fence, as more NID operatives gathered behind him. Chris Tanner, a former member of Marine Force Recon found himself crowded into the hedge, a small rock digging into his side. He shifted, and grabbed the rock, trying to throw it out of the way. His hands didn't feel a rock however; they felt a curved man-made object. He glanced at it, and his eyes went wide, terrified,

"Claymore!"

GC, St Athan shook as a series of massive explosions rent the air.

"Sir, The SAS just detonated the claymores over at the railway line"

"Think they used enough of them?" the admiral muttered as the explosions finally finished and rapid gunfire began.

"SAS now engaging the hostiles" a lieutenant reported, unnecessarily.

"Sir, new contacts inbound, IFF beacons match those HMS *Sceptre* just transmitted to us"

"Well, they took their time sending the second wave"

"Not complaining Sir, the surviving Rapiers report they have fully reloaded"

"Sir, the inbound appear to be *Blackhawk's* and light attack helicopters"

"Tell the Rapiers to target the *Blackhawk's*, and tell the Stinger teams the Light attack birds are theirs"

"Light Attack Helicopters now attacking the perimeter, Stinger teams en-route"

The admiral frowned, "What about the Stinger teams assigned to the perimeter?"

"KIA already sir"

"Bugger, Signal HMS *Sceptre*, that freights our boy, put him on the bottom"

HMS Sceptre, Shallow, Just outside the 5-mile limit.

“Roger That, okay boys its confirmed, that boy is our target, make tubes 2 and 3 ready in all respects, including opening the outer doors”

“Tubes 2 and 3 ready in all respects aye Sir!”

“Targeting solution confirmed sir, transferring to torpedoes”

“Torpedo room reports tubes 2 and 3 ready in all respects sir”

“Fire”

HMS *Sceptre* shuddered as the two *Spearfish* torpedoes left their tubes and headed at full speed for the NID controlled freighter. Neither missed, torpedo 1 hit the starboard screw dead-on; destroying it, shattering both of the freighters drive chains, and creating a whole through which water rushed into the hull. The second torpedo went in low and detonated just 1 meter beneath the hull. The result was catastrophic; the freighters hull snapped in two, both ends went vertical in seconds, crushing a *Blackhawk* between them before diving to the bottom of the sea.

“Periscope depth!”

HMS *Sceptre* surfaced and began searching for survivors, finding only 12.

St Athan

The tempo of the gunfire increased, the NID becoming savage and desperate. They knew the craft they had come to retrieve were there only way out now, and they were not going to end up in a foreign jail.

The *Blackhawk*'s and light attack helicopters had successfully co-ordinated their attacks wiping out the last of the Rapier SAM batteries, several of the helicopters falling in the process, now they were mercilessly hunting the stinger teams down. Several more helicopters fell from the sky, thanks to the quick shooting of the stinger teams, but they were running out of stingers. Now, two new players made their presence known, in style.

The 5 *Longbow Apaches* swept into St Athans airspace, bouncing a *Blackhawk* / Light Attack tag team and tearing them to shreds, before taking their guns to the vicious fire fight between the SAS and Royal Welsh defenders, and the NID.

A pair of US Marine F/A 18 *Hornets* also arrived, having been diverted from their ferry mission as soon as they heard St Athan was under attack by Helicopters. It didn't matter to their commanders that RAF St Athan was not one of their bases, it was an allies, and that was enough. The *Hornets* blazed through the battlefield at just under mach 1, taking down the last *Blackhawk* and a Light Attack Helicopter with sidewinders.

Slowly, but surely, the Royals were winning.

GC, St Athan

"Sir, from *Thundersdawn*. Sir, they are under attack!"

CHAPTER 13 - SHIP-KILLERS

RSS Thundersdawn

Captain Peters was woken from her sleep by the blaring of the Red Alert sirens. Dressing quickly she rushed to the bridge, to find the usual controlled chaos of a ship at General Quarters.

“SGC shuttle Sierra-Gamma-five you are NOT cleared for approach at this time, veer off and await confirmation of your orders”

“Negative, we are on a time-sensitive mission to...”

“SGC shuttle Sierra-Gamma-Niner, you are not cleared for approach at this time, veer off and await further instructions”

“Captain, I think we have a problem here, we have two SGC shuttles on approach claiming they have priority one medical supplies for *Prometheus*, but sensors indicate they are loaded to the gills with personnel, with no room for medical supplies, they are also refusing to obey the flight controller’s instructions”

“NID?”

“Probably, GC just signalled they are under attack, east gate appears to have been car bombed”

“Clear the pattern! Launch the Alert-5 fighter! Issue weapons to all qualified personnel, where is our CAP?”

“2 minutes out captain, they were investigating a contact”

“Target the Unknowns, controllers warn them off, if they approach any closer they will be fired upon”

“Sierra-Gamma-five, Sierra-Gamma-nine, you are advised to veer off or you will be fired upon”

“Shit!” aloud curse from sensors cut through the room, “Sensors indicate they are packing Naquadah ship killers!”

“Raise shields, tell them to veer off now, if they do not comply, kill them, and... What the hell was that?!”

Muffled gunfire filled the room, from deep within the bowels of the station.

“Security reports intruders in the Ring-room Captain, at least 20 and more coming!”

Peters growled, and ran over to the duty command officer’s station, she removed a key from around her neck, and inserted it into the console. She turned it, and a loud crump filled the room.

“Ring transporters offline, Power couplings appear to have be severed Captain”

Peters removed the Key smirking, “Times like these I’m glad our chief of security is a paranoid schizophrenic”

“25 hostiles on board captain, another 5 appear to have been lost in transit, security is on their way”

The station shook gently as the pulse lasers fired at the approaching shuttles. Beam after beam impacted the shuttles shields, quickly wearing them down. Realising they would not be able to force dock with Thundersdawn the shuttles retreated, firing their ship-killers as they left.

“Vampire! Vampire! We have 4 incoming Vampires, Time to impact 1 minute”

“Switch pulse laser guidance to automatic, target those missiles, reinforce shields, and tell those *Lancers* to get their act together and take those Shuttles out!”

The muffled crumps of explosions once again filled the room, as the NID operatives throw grenades at *Thundersdawn*'s security personnel. The lights flickered throughout the room.

“They've damaged the shields power lines, re-routing power now”

“Brace for impact!”

Thundersdawn lurched in space as the lone surviving Naquadah ship-killer impacted on the shields, detonating in an almighty blaze of light.

“Shields at 65%, and holding”

The sound of weapons fire within *Thundersdawn* bowels renewed louder than before. Warned by their radios, *Thundersdawn* security people were ready when the Ship-killer hit, the NID were not, and the security people were taking advantage. Several NID operatives were killed as they were thrown by the explosion right into the sights of the security personnel, the others died quickly as security personnel rushed their positions. It was soon over, with only 4 NID operatives surviving, as 'guests' of RSS *Thundersdawn*'s security personnel.

CHAPTER 14 - DAMAGE

ATC Tower, St Athan

Thompson locked out of St Athans air traffic control tower as the blazing remains of two blocks of houses, it had been 5 hours since the rogue *Airwolf*, which technically wasn't supposed to exist had crashed onto the houses and still the fire wasn't out. Hawk and Dominic were investigating, trying to find out how NID had managed to get *Airwolf*'s blueprints, but at this time, it didn't look promising. He moved around to look at the east gate, no longer burning, but severely damaged. The whole gate area would likely have to be rebuilt. He signed, even at this distance he could see the number of body bags being moved into ambulances. Too many body bags, too many dead. He moved again to look at the railway lines where the biggest battle between the SAS, Royal Welsh regiment and the NID operatives had occurred. The lines were gone, shredded by the claymores and grenades both sides had used. The bushes and trees which had once lined the perimeter were now burning, sending sparks and ash floating into the early morning air. He road beyond was still closed, and would be for sometime, blocked by a large crater created by a rogue 12" rocket, and all over RSS/RAF St Athan, wrecked helicopters and Rapier Sam batteries burned, surrounded by the body bags of the fallen.

The base itself was largely undamaged, the NID's helicopters and harriers too concerned with their own survival to attack anything that wasn't attacking them, and the NID's ground forces had not managed to breach the perimeter. Several buildings within the base burned, set alight by a crashing aircraft, or a rogue missile, but all the critical buildings, the hangers, the ATC tower were undamaged.

Thompson sighed again, and turned to his waiting assistant.

“Get me the Prime Minister”

White House

President Ordover was not having a good day. He liked his sleep, liked it very much thank you, and didn't like it when his sleep was disturbed. He liked it even less when he was woken up to be informed that a major ally had just come under heavy and totally unexpected attack. His day was about to get much worse.

“Mr President, the British Prime Minister is online 1 for you, sir”

“Thanks” Ordover reached over and picked the phone up, hitting the button for line 1 as he did so.

“Prime Minister, I was just woken up and told about the attack on RAF St Athan” always one to remind others of any indebtedness he added “glad those two Hornets were there to help, anything else we can do?”

“You can tell me what the hell kind of tin-pot government you are running over there!”

Ordover winced as he held the phone away from his ear. He got the distinct impression the Prime Minister was not happy.

“I don't know what you mean Prime Minister”

*“The Harriers, Blackhawk's and Light-attack Helicopters used in the attack against RAF St Athan were all owned by **your armed forces!**”*

Ordover got another distinct impression, this one involving worst day of his existence, and no second term.

“Well I shall certainly investigate that claim, but I don't see why our military would attack St Athan, I certainly ordered no such thing”

“It gets better”

‘It gets better?’ Ordover thought, ‘how the hell can it get better?’

“The attack was authorised by the NID, an intelligence department of your government, and yes we can confirm that”

“One moment” the president turned from the phone and glared at the secret service agent in the corner, a convenient target, “I want all department heads and the joint chief's right here, within 20 minutes. I don't give a damn what they're doing or who they are doing it with, get them!”

“Prime Minister, I can assure you we will get to the bottom of this. No-one has authority to order a major attack on an allied government by themselves not even me. If the NID truly are responsible for the attack then they are rogue, and we will take them down, whatever the cost”

CHAPTER 15 - REPARATIONS

News Broadcast

“Five days have past since the attack on RAF St Athan using stolen US military equipment, and still no organisation has come forward to claim responsibility. The latest figures indicate that at least 750 people died in the attack, most of whom were involved in the attack on St Athan, but we now

have a list of a least 45 names of individuals killed when a burning helicopter landed, and exploded on their block of houses.

In other news, US President Ordover announced the dissolution of the NID, a civilian intelligence gathering agency responsible for monitoring top secret projects on the grounds of wide-spread corruption within the NID. The FBI, in conjunction with the CIA, National Reconnaissance Office, and we are told, MI5 has been conducting widespread raids on NID facilities, and inspecting a number of Top secret facilities, looking for NID operatives. This is the first time that a major government has torn down one of its own agencies, a fact that has caused widespread alarm amongst the American government, along with renewed support for President Ordover for his willingness to take such strong action”

SGC

Hammond listened to his orders and nodded. This was an understandable move by the president, one he could live with. The only worry he had was the increased chance of a leak with all the extra personnel that would be flooding the base. Sure, they were RSS personnel, which meant they had been rigorously checked before hand, but he preferred all people that came into contact with the StarGate to have been security checked by his people, not someone else's. Neither the less, the President wanted a number of RSS personnel on base as liaison, and to be trained in off-world tactics then that's what the president got.

Hammond just wondered what else had been done to keep the RSS quiet over the real cause of the St Athan attack.

GC, St Athan

“Sir, the final list is here”

“How bad is it?”

“85 NID operatives captured, naval intelligence is already working on interrogations, we're bouncing the interesting stuff to Taskforce Lucifer in the US”

“Lucifer, the fallen angel, too apt to be a coincidence”

The lieutenant snorted, privately agreeing with the admiral, never mind codenames were supposed to be randomly generated by computer nowadays.

“We've got another 435 NID operatives in body bags, most of the helicopter crews are in very small body bags though, no survivors found from there. 43 civvies dead, two showed up alive in a local hotel; ironically they were saved by their affair”

Thompson smiled, and shook his head bemused.

“The Royal Welsh lost 75, plus another 50 will probably get medical discharges. The SAS were lucky; they lost only 45 with 24 medical discharges”

“What about the Air Force Regiment?”

“The Rapier crews were wiped out, and the stinger crews didn’t fare much better, 39 dead and 6 injured”

“What’s the word from the American ambassador?”

“A third of a million to each of the families of the dead, quarter of a million to the medical discharges, and ten thousand to everyone who was injured”

“Reasonable, I’m just glad I’m not the one trying to hide that lot in the budget”

“The Royal Welsh, well they will be able to afford to start buying those updated rifles they have been so desperate for, RAF gets replacement Rapiers plus a squadron of F16’s that were going to be shifted to red-lead row”

“Good, the *Tornadoes* F3 may use 90% of the same parts as the *Tornado* G3 bomber, but it’s not exactly the best fighter out there”

“We get enough to start the *Dauntless* project, plus the *Prometheus* construction contract”

“They *really* want us to keep quiet, not complaining mind”

“Shall I pass the word around?”

“Better keep our end of the bargain, yes, any one who talks about who the attackers really were, gets slapped with a treason charge”

Continued in Part 3: *Dauntless*.

Official Archive: <http://thundersdawn.tcfanfic.net>

Mirror: <http://www.angelfire.com/scifi2/thundersdawn/>

Yahoo Group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/thundersdawn/>