
Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Thu, 13 May 2004 16:58:35 GMT

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Sergei sat in his chair at home watching the latest propaganda scroll across his screen. He was a simple man, who didn't care too much about politics or government. This was the only option at the moment, as state television was boring, and lacking in options. At least this Global Defense Initiative garbage was somewhat amusing.

His home was Sarejevo, capital of Bosnia part of the former Yugoslavia which had disintegrated under the repressed stresses of a multi-cultural meltdown in the 90's. All that was left was Serbia. Or at least the part that Nato allowed to exist, after the wars. Love of country ran high in his veins, but the country was no longer worth loving. He was a man with high ideals, and no one, and no where to believe in anymore.

While tending the field one day, placating his crushed ego with promises of being a better man, he heard the sound that would forever change his life. In a land of war, he knew the sound well.

A tank treaded vehicle.

He ran for cover, and hid in the barn. It was then that he saw the light tank with unusual markings. It was badly damaged, and fired a round behind it as it attempted to maneuver. The response was exploding dirt beside it, and a few more pock marks in it's already marred armor. He saw its pursuer. A GDI medium tank, that he had just watched on the television recruiting ad. This one was almost in as bad a shape as the light, but clearly had the advantage. Finally the Medium scored the fatal blow to the wounded light's right tread. The light could still fire, but not maneuver. Not a good position to be in.

He had no love of the GDI occupiers, but had only seen the other tank's emblem on television advertised as a terrorist organization. The 'terrorists' climbed out of the wounded light, and ran for cover of the barn.

"No!" he thought. Not here. Not now.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Fri, 14 May 2004 14:48:36 GMT

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Part 2:

Sergei watched as the troopers ran for the cover of the barn. It was going to be a tough run for the troopers. The ground was arid, and rocky. Not good for much besides small plots of vegetables, or grazing land, but even then it took yearly maintenance to keep it arable.

The GDI Medium finished the light with another AP round into the turret. She went up in a blaze reminiscent of a fireworks display he had watched as a child in Belgrade. Then in a sudden burst

of fury and fire, the ammo cooked off, and blew his hair back, and knocked the two troopers down. Unsatisfied at merely destroying the offending tank, the medium then started firing rounds at the troopers. This confused Sergei. The recruitment ads had portrayed GDI as the savior of the world, not the merciless destroyer of hapless ground units injured in war. This angered him suddenly, and surprised him with the amount of fury it fueled him with.

The troopers got up, and ran with best speed to the barn using cover and splitting up to confuse the gunner of the medium. This impressed Sergei. He had not known men in his lifetime with such presence of mind in a crisis who could work so well together. One of the troopers distracted the medium with light arms fire, and the other attempted an RPG attack in the few seconds afforded him. The RPG sliced cleanly through the air, but the explosive-reactive armor, and the angle of impact did little more than leave a deep gouge in the side of the tank.

The tank shifted its focus to the new threat. By this time, the trooper had moved anyways so it hardly mattered, but this re-deployment cost the tank the initiative. The troopers headed for the barn while the tank attempted to destroy what wasn't there.

As they approached the barn, they saw Sergei, and he realized he was exposed. Fully expecting to be gunned down by the 'terrorists' he surrendered to his fate, and raised his arms in defeat.

helmet. "We are in great need of somewhere to hide until the other liberators arrive in this

Sergei wondered at this statement. Liberators was not the term he was thinking. It was then that the tank had figured the ruse, and started lobbing AP rounds into the ancient barn. Splinters and hay were everywhere, and the troopers immediately dropped, and yanked him down with them. Not three seconds later an AP round tore through where he had been standing. Splinters peppered his back, and anger rose in him as he fought the helplessness rising in his gut.

and without thinking. He knew of a place in the back of the barn where his father stored grain liquor he made in what little free time he had between growing seasons, and harvest time. It was empty now, but definitely large enough to accommodate the three.

The troopers were close on his heels and seemed used to quick response without questioning. This also impressed him. These men were professional, and efficient. Seemingly without fear. Together they removed the piles of hay stacked on the long unused door to the cellar. The door reluctantly opened, and the three slipped into darkness as AP rounds continued to destroy the last Sergei's dilapidated barn.

One of the troopers hit a unit on his chest, and the room was illuminated in a dull green glow. A chemical light of sorts Sergei guessed. They assessed the room for a minute, and decided there was no way in or out, other than the way they just came in. They both aimed their autorifles at the entrance, and waited as the noise continued outside.

The senior man then whispered into a helmet radio talking to some other person unseen.

"Brothers, this is armor unit Sierra 4. A GDI Medium has pinned us down in sector 23E. Armor destroyed. Situation is critical. We are under fire inside a large structure and require assistance.

Sergei never heard the response. The barn crashed down above them, and Sergei knew little more than the dull green glow, and pain as the wall collapsed onto him.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Fri, 14 May 2004 18:15:01 GMT

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Part 3:

He picked stones off his body as he lay on the floor of the old root cellar. He could still hear the rumble of the tank circling its defeated foe, but there was no further firing. He knew better than to speak in times like these. Being a child of war, he had hid in places like this from NATO warplanes looking for Serb targets during the ethnic cleansing. Unfortunately for NATO, they had run out of targets long before they had to put troops on the ground.

It was then that the senior man spoke. Not to them, but to whoever was on the other end of the communication.

"Yes sir. I understand."

Both seemed to have got the message, but didn't share with him. Together they tried to move the hatch. A beam had fallen across it, and they were having difficulty. He knew that whatever was happening, his best bet was to aid them, and stay with them until their help arrived. To approach the GDI beast out there was certain death.

"May I?"

"By all means brother."

Together all three of them heaved the hatch open. The sunlight was bright, and his eyes unused to the brightness. The troopers had no such disability. Their goggles auto-adjusted to compensate, and they immediately saw the tank by Sergei's house.

"We are to create a distraction so our brothers can eliminate the threat."

"That would be suicide. Can't we just wait and let them take care of this?"

"The Brotherhood's heavy resources are tied up further south in the capital. We must distract them enough so the bikes can be effective."

"Bikes? You can't take on a tank that big with bikes. You couldn't do it with a tank!"

"Never underestimate the power of surprise, and stealth brother. Brother Slavik knows far more than I about tactical matters, and has been very effective in the name of Kane in this campaign with them."

Before he could speak, the lesser ranking man handed him a pistol, and the two leaped up and started firing, running in opposite directions. The tank immediately started firing on the one on the

right, and hit a battered Yugo behind him. Then he heard a distinct bee-like noise. It must be the bikes. He saw the dust trails coming from the opposite direction the tank was firing in. There were five of them, nothing but red and black streaks from his point of view, and they were coming fast. As the tank bracketed the man he'd been targeting, the five bikes almost simultaneously fired two rockets apiece. Their contrails streaked true, and straight, and impacted on or around the Medium. While not crippling the turret, the bikers knew the tank's weakness. Maneuverability.

In one fell swoop, the whole left side of the tank was enveloped in flame, and the tread disintegrated. The tank fired back, and a plume of dirt erupted in front of the lead bike. The bike flipped and spiraled through the air, as the other four slalomed around it, and fired another salvo, this one staggered. This time the tank was at an extreme disadvantage. Its backside was now to the bikes and the armor there was weaker. As each concurrent salvo struck home, the armor was blasted over and over, and the final salvo punctured the Medium decisively. The tank erupted into a supernova of energy, and the bikes ceased their firing.

They stopped in a clearing forming a circle, and facing outward as if protecting something. It was then that he heard the heavy whump whump of helo blades. The helo landed quickly and the troopers motioned him to follow him to the helo. He quickly looked around. Everything he had was in flames, and he was injured from the splintered barn door and retaining wall falling in. He had nothing left except his empty shell of an existence, and these men had helped him.

He ran for the chopper.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Tue, 18 May 2004 12:22:13 GMT

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He wasn't ready for what he saw. The chopper floor was slick with blood from the wounds of the three men already in the chopper. A medic could be seen attempting to hold things together, but he was failing. And then there was the mutant. There wasn't anything wrong with him, other than the crystals growing out of scalp, and the ropes binding him. The skin had puckered, and seemed to retract instinctively from the alien objects. His expression was feral in nature, and he was clearly hoping to get at least one hand free so he could kill everyone on board. Then he saw Sergei climb aboard, and looked at him as if Sergei had done something that was unbelievable. He had heard of mutants, but never seen one live.

The Meteor strike had been widely televised, as had it's concurrent destruction. The impact had hit the Tiber river dead center, and the resulting steam, vaporized rock, and earthquakes from the impact had decimated the area. What was left of the city was on fire, and most of Italy had been suffering quake aftershocks for months. And then there was the toxicity of the stuff itself. The initial response teams had been heavily contaminated, and hospitalized with strange symptoms. The city was a total loss. With the spreading contamination, and ensuing chaos, the whole country seemed to be falling apart until NATO removed the meteor itself. By that time it was really too late though. Somehow the stuff was traveling, and popping up all over southern Europe. Even in Belgrade and Sarejevo, there were reported instances. Widespread contamination was reported by those unwise, or too poor to leave their homes. Then had come the stories about strange animals, and humans with deformities. After capturing the former Yugoslav territories, GDI

had announced help for those who wanted it in regards to the contamination, but few had stepped forward, and those who did, weren't usually heard from again.

Sergei snapped back to reality as the chopper veered sharply to starboard and almost dumped him out. Two of the troopers caught him, and warned him to hold on to the cargo netting. They flew south for 15 minutes, and then Sergei saw something he would grow accustomed to in the time had left on what was left of this planet.

The amassed armies of the Brotherhood of Nod.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Tue, 18 May 2004 19:54:35 GMT

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For the second time that day he felt real fear of the unknown. He had never seen such a magnificent, and yet horrible display of firepower. Armor ringed a large base surrounded by anti-aircraft batteries. In the rear was an artillery brigade with anti-armor escorts in buggies, and on bikes. He saw flame tanks burning the surrounding brush on the plain. Apparently in an effort to deny snipers, and any other units the opportunity to sneak up on the base, or its protective units. The smoke from the defoliation was choking, and smelled vaguely like Petrol.

But what impressed him the most was what appeared to be robots of sorts. They were in perfect formation, and there must have been 5,000 of them all glinting in the sun, apparently awaiting the order to march. He couldn't make out details, but he was puzzled by one thing. They were located as much as possible around the Tiberium that was consuming this world. "Why would

Before he could ponder much more, the helo made a rough landing and the medical teams arrived. At least that's what he thought they would be, but he thought better of it when one of them said:

"Get these three and the mutant to the cyborg center, stat. I want them worked on before the tissue is irreversibly damaged beyond use".

The troopers moved him from the helo pad, towards a building in the shape of a hand holding a globe, as the helo lifted off once again, destination unknown.

As they approached the building, he saw that he wasn't the only civilian there. There was a group of around 50 of them, and they were all being herded into the building.

The answer was silence, and a tighter grip on his upper arms.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Wed, 19 May 2004 12:47:30 GMT

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They dropped him off in the cordoned area for the civilians. As they parted the higher ranking man clasped his shoulder, and said: "Brother, thank you for your help today. It will be a great honor

He turned, and walked away without so much as a glance back. Sergei had resolved himself to whatever laid ahead back at his homestead, but couldn't help but feel so very alone, despite the surrounding cacophony of humanity in revolt around him.

The group was brought at gunpoint to a holding area in the open. It wasn't much, except a four walled concrete box, and a giant screen in front. Sergei could hear the loudspeaker talking about something, but it was difficult to make out what it was until they were actually in the compound. They were individually searched, and walked through a metal detector. Some went willingly, others were sedated on the spot. Sergei went willingly. He was surprised by the lack of abuse they were experiencing, especially considering that some of the prisoners were GDI grunts of varying ranks. He had not noticed them before because they had been stripped of insignia, and were wearing only T-shirts, and their BDU pants, but the boots were definitely military issue, and the BDU's were the customary gold of the Global Defense Initiative. The other striking thing about them, was their bearing. Despite being prisoners, they were still taking orders from a shorter man who appeared to be a man of higher rank. They had been resisting until one of them tried to take an auto-rifle, and had been beaten back for it. The commander intervened, and apparently ordered them to settle down, and help their comrade into the compound.

Intrigued, Sergei made a note to myself mentally to speak with this man, but at the moment, his turn to be searched had come up. It took them about 3 seconds to find the pistol he had been given back at the house. He had forgotten about it until now, and tried to explain how it had gotten there. The troopers didn't care though, and he was forcibly restrained with the customary plastic cinch ties and sent inside the compound under escort. They were taking him to a desk that had been set up inside, with a rather large man wearing a beret sitting behind it. He scowled as they approached, and told Sergei to take a seat, waving the troopers away once they presented him with the now unloaded pistol with it's breach open.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Wed, 19 May 2004 16:56:54 GMT

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He did sit down, and waited for the officer to speak. The officer started by looking at the pistol. He seemed curious about it, and raised an eyebrow in apparent consternation. Looking squarely at Sergei, he said: "Well, let's have it. What happened?"

He explained what had happened, how he had assisted the troopers, and what had transpired since. He even mentioned the unit number. The expression was hard to read, and the officer spoke, merely saying "Cabal!"

The reply was a deep, disembodied voice that said " Yes Commander."

" Get Sierra 4 online."

"Affirmative"

It took two or three minutes, but the face of a man he assumed had been the tank commander appeared. " Yes brother?"

" Brother, I have in custody a man claiming he assisted you today against the GDI oppressors. Is this correct information?"

"Yes brother it is. He was most helpful in helping us destroy the last of the GDI armor in sector 23 Echo after the initial battle. I commend his bravery, and I am in his debt."

"Thank you brother. That will be all. Out."

The commander looked at him again, and stated, " The pistol has Brotherhood serial numbers on it. It is most fortunate for you that you had not stolen it. The consequences would have been "severe". As it is, it appears the Brotherhood is in your debt today. I will see to it you get extra rations during indoctrination. You may go. Report over by the screen, and pay attention to what you see Brother. The truth of Kane is quite eye opening, and enlightening." And at that, he cut the zip-tie, and released him.

"Thank you." Was all he could manage as he stumbled towards the seats in front of the screen, but the commander had already motioned for his subordinates to remove the table, and herd the prisoners towards the screen. The door was shut to the compound, and there was a perceptible silence as the loud speakers went quiet for a minute.

Then, the screen flickered to life, and the speakers came up, and he saw and heard Kane for the first time.

"Welcome to our glorious revolution Brothers."

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Thu, 20 May 2004 14:06:27 GMT

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glare, the passion in his voice, and the barely restrained essence of something higher, all combined to bring Sergei to this conclusion. He found himself WANTING to listen, and addicted to the power of this man's presence. The smoothness of his voice was calming, and Sergei felt at peace with the knowledge that this man was in charge. Even the GDI soldiers seemed riveted to what he was saying, and the officer had to forcibly turn himself away from the screen so as not to listen.

" Brethren, I am Kane. As you have no doubt heard, I am a supposed 'terrorist', as are all my brothers in arms. I tell you now, that this is nothing but GDI propaganda to keep you from the truth of the reality, and joy of divination. The Globalists would have you lives out your meager lives, consuming to keep their economies powerful, and their oppressive armies in the field. I tell you that you are destined for something higher, and better. You are not mere numbers in a giant

"What is divination you ask, and how do I achieve this higher purpose?"

Divination is simply this: The use of the Tiberium the heavens have sent us to achieve a higher, and better state of awareness, and completeness. Your weak bodies die, and grow old because

they are imperfect, and corrupted by the world around you. The Tiberium PROLONGS life, and HEALS our bodies. The globalists would have you think this is a poison that needs to be eradicated. A plague that needs curing. I tell you the truth: divination will give you life, and give it

His image was replaced with pictures and video showing GDI soldiers herding mutants into trucks, and images of research centers with mutants in cages. Video feed played of whole villages laying in ruin while GDI Titans stomped through the rubble, and fired on civilian vehicles fleeing the scene. The devastation was horrible, and Sergei felt like his heart was full of the greatest despair he had ever felt. He felt like rescuing those poor people, and breaking those afflicted mutants free. The video was having the same effect on just about all those watching, and the anger against GDI rose perceptibly.

“The Brotherhood of Nod is an ancient and humble servant of those who are oppressed. We have been here for the afflicted since the dawn of time, but could never directly challenge the corrupt powers of the world. With the arrival of Tiberium, we are powerful, and strong, and the power elite of this corrupt world will never again oppress us. We are here to serve, and protect you, and our glorious revolution will succeed. Now is our time. Now we will avenge all those who have been trod upon through all the millennia. We will finally achieve true peace for this world,

His voice rose in intensity as he concluded, and with his closing statement there was electricity in the air. He was right. Sergei had never felt like anything more than a pawn. He had been forgotten by society because he wasn't rich, or powerful, and he was VERY tired of it. He resolved himself never to be a pawn again. He wanted to be something better, and this was the path. THIS was the way to self-empowerment against the established order. He would not be a helpless child in a bomb shelter as planes roared overhead destroying everything he held to be important. He would make a difference and protect the innocent from these power mongers, who killed at will, and ruled this world without regard for life.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Fri, 21 May 2004 13:45:48 GMT

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The video show went on for 2 hours, showing scenes of destruction, GDI military technology, and ended with the Philadelphia Space Station's dedication ceremony.

Kane closed with these words.

“And now, the globalists' leaders can sit safe and secure away from all the destruction they cause. They laugh at you and your pathetic troubles, and send death raining down from above from their Ion cannons at will. They think there's nothing you can do to them in their mighty castle. I say you can. The resources and technology of the Brotherhood are far reaching, and we will swat them from the sky. You cannot crush our will to survive. This is OUR world now,

The image faded from Kane's face to the overhead view of the armies of Nod on the move with music in the background. Then the screen flashed to the scorpion's tail emblem of the Brotherhood.

The presentation ended. Everyone sat silently as the screen went blank, and the speakers died

down to nothing. Then the door to the compound opened, and a meal of sorts was given out. As promised, Sergei received extra rations. The meal was decent, and consisted of mostly rice and bread. Water was drawn from a tanker, and cots were brought in and set up inside the compound, under a canopy. He grabbed a cot early, one that was away from the others, and after watching the brotherhood's news anchor Oxanna report on the daily events in the Nod world, he laid down and slept deeply.

He dreamed he was on a plain somewhere cold. He was standing in the middle of one of the Tiberium fields, and he was scanning the horizon. He noticed how the crystals were frosted over, and how beautifully they glistened with the reflection of the hazy sky. He watched the clouds pass over him, and noticed how they had taken on a green hue. Apparently they were reflecting the predominately green, altered surface of Earth. To his left he noticed a strange plant that every once in awhile would spew forth small crystals, and scatter them amongst the ones that were on the ground. It then struck him how dangerous it was to be here, but he seemed to feel fine. How odd he thought. He tried to move away from the plant. He heard hydraulics whine, and the ground shuddered. Crystals broke into shards, and he wondered what was going on. Had he moved? He looked down and saw himself in the greenish Tiberium contaminated slurry of a puddle, and screamed.....

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Fri, 21 May 2004 19:47:37 GMT

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He woke in a cold sweat, and heart hammering as if trying desperately to get out of his chest. He got up, and walked to the latrine all the while trying to make sense of what he had just dreamed. Such beauty, and yet such horror at the end. After relieving himself, he returned to the rack area, but couldn't sleep. He decided that he would look at the sky until daylight came. It was unchanging, and untouched by the conflict he was now embroiled in. But now that he thought about it, the sky was what had brought this conflict to fruition. Frustrated, he tried to return to sleep and caught a glimpse of something in the night sky. Flashes of light twinkled around a larger twinkle of light. That must be Philadelphia, and ships arriving and departing it. He was pondering what it must be like up there when one of the flashes of light suddenly went supernova.

"What the...."

A beam of light speared out the sky, and hit the barracks squarely. He could hear the air sizzle as the beam cut through layer after layer of the building, the floors collapsed under the onslaught. The giant arm collapsed under its own weight, and fell towards the compound, smashing the wall, and the door.

By now the whole base was awake, and the prisoners seemed stunned as troopers assumed General Quarters. Suddenly he heard something with a large cannon fire, and saw a recon bike explode before its driver could get to it. The Titans came over the rise in the back of the camp, and started destroying every defensive structure in sight. They focused primarily on air defenses. Odd considering there were no aircraft in the area. He heard a noise like a capacitor charging up, and the hair on the back of his neck stood on end as one of the titans took a laser blast on its left leg. It tried to return fire, but the laser hit again. This time the cannon melted, and seemed to catch a round of ammo half in the chamber. The entire arm, and left side were enveloped in flame, and the Titan toppled as the leg buckled. The other 14 Titans hit the concrete wall on the outer

perimeter hard. The wall no longer existed, and the Titans stomped through one at a time, firing all the while. They shifted their focus to the offending laser tower, which was a large structure. It lit up time and again, but wasn't nearly as successful, now that targets were appearing quicker than it could fire.

Suddenly the perimeter air defenses not destroyed in the initial assault fired seemingly simultaneously. That could only mean one thing. Three SAM's hit home on the lead Orca at the same time. It tumbled out of the sky, and hit the screen Sergei had been watching just the night before. It tore through the screen, and traveled on into the Barracks, smashing into it, and destroying what was left. He was knocked to the ground, and lost his breath. As he got up, the prisoners started running for their lives through the hole in the wall. A wolverine walker met them, and ripped into them killing most of them before they even knew what had happened. He hadn't seen them. They were shorter than the walls, and he had only been able to see the Titans. Thank god I hadn't run for it, he thought.

The bombers attacked the parked armor wherever they could find it. These bombs weren't nearly as accurate as the Ion cannon though, and the strip bombing was causing massive collateral damage. Sergei climbed onto a piece of wall that had landed in the courtyard, and climbed up into the guard tower for the detainment area. He had just enough time to see the seriousness of the brotherhood's situation. Explosions leaped up all along the unprotected Nod rear flank. The only Nod area hitting back hard was around the large structure he had noticed on the flight in. It had two of the laser towers, and much anti-air protection. The recon Bikes were causing a fair amount of damage to the aircraft as well, but Sergei noticed one of the GDI Titan drivers was quick enough to stomp down as one them went by. Nothing remained but a pancake of metal after. Sergei realized he needed to get to cover. This tower was a large target. He ran down the tower stairs, and towards a Tiberium silo.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Mon, 24 May 2004 20:00:21 GMT

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He reached the silo just as the Wolverine came around the corner. It fired at something, and left one or two holes in strays where he had been a second before. Green glinted, and pieces spattered over the right side of his face. He took 3 seconds to remove the shard that had stuck in, knowing that if he didn't, he was going to have bigger trouble than the wolverine. It passed and pursued whatever it had been chasing. There was a large explosion in that direction, but Sergei didn't look back to see who had won the conflict. He passed between four giant silos, and took a peek. Nod armor was having a very difficult time getting organized. He guessed that either the HQ had been hit, the CO killed, or GDI was suppressing radio communications. Possibly, a combination of all three. Then he heard a sound like the timely beating of a drum. The only difference was that he could actually feel it from his feet up.

"What the hell is that?" he said to no one in particular. It was getting louder, and the ground started shaking more. It sounded like a million men marching in unison. But here in the middle of this holocaust? Then he saw the most impressive display of discipline he had ever seen. A cyborg army marching in perfect unison, and all holding their fire until in range. He watched them break into four distinct columns, and break the battle into four sectors. The titans were taking their toll, but the cyborgs did not care. They marched, and raised 6,000 some-odd DU chain guns in unison.

They fired, and hell was unleashed in the Nod base unlike Sergei had ever seen.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Tue, 25 May 2004 13:45:10 GMT

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The roar of the cannons was bad enough. It seemed like he was inside a cave behind a waterfall. He stuck his fingers in his ears, and watched as the cyborgs in each column, coordinated their attacks to hose down each Titan in turn. The DU (Depleted Uranium) rounds were heavy, and tore into the Titan armor harshly, shredding armor, wire, plastic, and hydraulics. One cyborg alone would be no match for the superior machines of GDI, but when working together with machine precision, they systematically destroyed each Titan component and reduced each to piles of smoking rubble. They started with the cannon, and ruined its reload mechanism first, then moving to the joint holding the cannon in place. Then they proceeded to take out a leg joint, toppling the beast, and ignoring the driver. They would then move to the next in line and so on. The Titan rate of fire was too slow to effectively stem the tide of Nod, and the center of the GDI offense started to collapse. It was the Wolverines that seemed most effective against the cyborgs. They too coordinated and concentrated their fire on lead units. Their rounds tore into cyborg flesh and armor, and mowed the offending abominations down. Unlike the Titans though, once a cyborg was down, that didn't mean it was out. He saw one drag itself towards a wolverine. Its legs had been blown clean away from it by a Titan round, and were attached to the torso only by the hydraulics that no longer functioned in the legs. He fired as he went, and although not every round impacted his target, enough of them smashed the armored windshield of the wolverine to obscure the pilot's vision. With no way to see where the cyborg was coming from, the pilot tried in vain to back away. He backed into the silo Sergei was behind, and Sergei felt the silo wall collapse, and dump its load of tiberium onto the Wolverine. It was stuck, and now at the mercy of the cyborg crawling towards it. The cyborg reached the pilot's compartment and started firing point blank at the windshield, as the pilot tried desperately to escape. The armored windshield collapsed under the weight of the impact of a thousand rounds, and the cyborg reached into the compartment to kill what was left of the ruined body of the pilot. He grasped the neck of the pilot, and squeezed with hydraulic pressure. The head separated from the body, and the cyborg attempted to turn itself around. It saw Sergei then. With no Nod uniform, Sergei was a hostile in a battlefield.

The cyborg raised his gun to eliminate the threat.....

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Tue, 25 May 2004 16:46:09 GMT

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He heard the distinct sound of crackling, and static in those last few seconds before the cyborg fired. And then, before the cyborg could much more, a bolt of lightning shot up to sky from the pile of Tiberium the Wolverine, and Cyborg were in. The fuel cell of the walker went up, and the

cyborg was simultaneously fried by the lightning, and sent flying into a nearby buggy that had been destroyed in the initial onslaught. Sergei landed flat on his back across the road from the silos as well. Unable to breathe, he could only look at the angry sky above him. He had never seen such a dark, and foreboding sky, and suddenly the clouds erupted in a lightning show. Severe and harsh lightning that seemed to strike everywhere at once, and set everything on fire. It seemed like the Tiberium silos were it's focus, and the buildings were destroyed as strike after strike went skyward from the spilled piles. He forced himself up. He knew he would die exposed like this in this fierce storm. Nod and GDI units alike were being punished severely, and indiscriminately. Two tick tanks were saved from annihilation by a strike on the Titans pursuing them. Before the Nod units could even think they had been saved, they were also annihilated in a strike. The sky poured it's wrath out on the armies, and seemed to be punishing them for marring the planet itself.

Everything that was flying around the base crashed, as if swatted from the sky, and crashed into whatever they were above at the time the storm hit. The devastation being wreaked by man, and nature alike was on a level never seen by Sergei. And still the armies fought on.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Wed, 26 May 2004 19:37:42 GMT

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He got up, and rested on one knee, trying to get his breath. He had hurt something, that was for sure, and the sharp pain he was experiencing when breathing, led him to believe it may be a cracked rib. The battle had moved from the southern part of the base, to the northern, and it was a little calmer in his area with the exception of the storm raging around him.

There didn't appear to be one single undamaged structure in view. And even if there had been, he doubted that it would have been safe anyways. What should he do? Where should he go? He looked around, and saw a Buggy that had flipped over onto its side. He went over and looked at it, and decided it was in pretty good shape except for the driver. He climbed up onto the high side of it, and rocked until the thing landed with a bang on all four wheels. He sucked in his breath in pain as he jumped off before it landed. That had to be a rib. He pulled what was left of the driver out, and pushed the ignition switch.

The engine roared to life, and he eased into the blood soaked seat to try to figure the controls out. He eased onto the road, driving slowly out of fear of being discovered, and unfamiliarity with the controls. He rumbled by the remains of the Holding area. The dead prisoners were still there after being hosed down by the wolverine, but a lightning strike had thrown them around, and set them on fire. The smell was horrible, and he couldn't help but notice the GDI prisoners had been among the victims. Ironic they had been killed by their own...

The barracks was a smoking ruin. He stopped the buggy, and peered into the ruptured walls. Eerie red lighting illuminated the interior, and was flickering as its supply was shorting out. He saw a locker, with a uniform hanging in an awkward position at about 30 degrees. He stepped through the crack, and decided to change into the uniform. He had his filthy shirt from the farm still on, and after all the bleeding he, and the former pilot of the buggy had done on his clothes, he figured the brotherhood could spare this one. He chose not to wear the helmet. It was confining, and he

didn't know how to use its automation anyway. He took the auto-rifle as well. No way was he going out there without one now.

He stepped back through the crack, and noticed the storm had abated. Now that the lightning had left the area, the rains came hard, and furious turning the base into a mud pit. He got into the Buggy, and rumbled south, away from the battle.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Fri, 28 May 2004 13:54:33 GMT

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At the end of the main road out of the base, there was a large gate which wasn't powered anymore. Apparently the power had been taken out which was evidenced by the Large laser towers no longer firing. He couldn't get out that way with the buggy, and the hole that the Titans, and wolverines had come through was a good way to get killed by GDI coming through to reinforce the battle lines. He was going to have to either abandon the buggy, or find a way to power the gate up. He decided to park the buggy in an alley between what was left of the comm. Center, and the Tiberium Refinery.

He got out of the buggy, and crept by the comm. Center. There were GDI troops here and there, and he had to duck back into the comm. center doorway. The door snapped open, upon recognizing his IFF transmitter in his Nod badge, and scared him half to death. Just then, he heard footsteps coming in his direction from where he had parked, and he jumped into the comm. center and let the door snap shut again. Behind him was a mess of hanging wires, and smoke.

He couldn't see much through that, plus the emergency lighting had a dull red color that made it difficult to see. He should have taken the helmet, he thought. It would have had Infrared, or some other device to help him see in this darkness. Curiosity, and fear of being shot outside led him to go deeper into the facility. He would try to find things to help him survive, after he laid low long enough and was able to evade GDI patrols. This facility seemed to have emergency generators for some equipment. He passed a 3-D representation of the base he was in, and it's current status. He noticed that most of the southern structures were labeled as destroyed, as well as some of the northern structures. He saw one light indicating a power plant wink out,

This base was getting rolled, and hard. He walked past the display, and down the steps leading to a lower level. There were bodies down here, and he saw that an intense firefight had taken place. Screens were ruined by bullet holes, and hung in awkward positions by wires that no longer fed information to them. There were two doors here, one led left, one right. Both were locked, and weren't automated like the entry door. What now?

In the center of the room was a console with a dead Nod officer slumped over it. Apparently, both sides had managed to wipe each other out at the same time so there was no victor in this battle, and the Nod officer died protecting this panel. Sergei assumed this was the way in. He pushed the body off the console, and searched it for what may open this door. He found it in the form of a key

Finding a slot to insert it, he slid the card in, and the panel asked him to choose a door. One was

He chose communications, and the door on the right slid open. He grabbed the card, and ran for the already closing door.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Tue, 01 Jun 2004 13:51:12 GMT

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The door 'snicked' shut behind him. It was quieter and darker down here. Dust fell from cracks in the roof as the Titans reinforced their positions above. Each footstep shook the facility, and he wondered how well built the place was. To his left was darkness pierced by the occasional emergency light's dull red glow. To his right, was a small flight of stairs, and beyond was the illumination of the communications center. He crept up the stairs gently, and peered around the corner.

He saw a man dressed in officer's garb standing in front of the consoles. He recognized him as the indoctrination officer, and watched as he queried the displays about statuses of various units.

" REINFORCEMENTS UNAVAILABLE. GDI HAS LAUNCHED AN OFFENSIVE ALL ALONG

" RECOMMEND ABANDONING BASE, AND COMBINING REMAINING FORCES WITH THE UNITS OF FIREBASE BRAVO. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT GDI WILL BE ABLE TO PURSUE THE BROTHERHOOD FORCES. THEY ARE ALSO SPREAD THIN. FIREBASE BRAVO MUST NOT FALL. THE BROTHERHOOD NEEDS TO MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THIS BASE. IT IS

He saw the officer stand in front of the 3-D communication device, and the image of a fierce looking man appeared. He saw the barely controlled anger that fueled that intensity of expression on his face. It was the anger of something long ago, still fueling hatred, and rage. He stared down

"Sir, Cabal recommends a general retreat to Firebase Bravo, and I concur. Ion cannon strikes have crippled base power, and rendered our base defenses useless, or on low power usage. I have ordered the armor to reassemble north of the base, and the cyborgs are holding the Titans from harassing the armor at their rendezvous for the time being. We currently are experiencing

" Agreed. I want you to have them retreat to this area, and await instruction. Set up artillery on

He pointed to an area inside a canyon, halfway between where they were, and Firebase Bravo. He saw where he wanted the charges placed as well. But why?

“Make it appear you are on the run, and draw them in, then blow the charges, and hit them with the artillery. The place will be a death trap. Then get to Bravo. I have plans for our counteroffensive. I am coming in the Montauk and will meet you at the lower level. Don't fail

Regulus issued orders, and received acknowledgement from his troops. He turned to leave, and Sergei ducked back around the corner. His mind raced as he ran out of time to decide his future. Back through the door, and certain death, or capture, or attempt to help the officer.

He decided, and took a step into the light of the Operations room.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.
Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Wed, 02 Jun 2004 13:56:51 GMT
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The Black Hand training had honed Regulus's skills to perfection, and he instinctively brought his sidearm level with Sergei's head, and started pulling the trigger. Surprisingly, to both men, but especially Sergei, he held his composure, and said in a clear voice: “Sir, we need to go

Regulus couldn't place the name, but he knew the face. “Inductee, why are you wearing

Sergei replied in an unwavering voice “I've made my choice, sir. I serve the

Regulus held the sidearm in place, but an amusing smile crept across his face. “And are you

Something in the determined look in Sergei's eyes, and the resolve he had in the face of this trained killer convinced Regulus.

He dropped the gun back into its holster, and walked past the door Sergei had come in. Sergei followed at a fast walk, slinging his rifle onto his back, and handing the pass card to Regulus. The hall was dark, with intermittent emergency lights scattered throughout. Regulus walked fast, and with purpose seemingly knowing the way by heart. They went down a steep stairwell after going through a heavy metal blast door, which appeared long unused. Beyond was what he could only describe as a subway of sorts. The lights were on in here, and there was another trooper setting a timer on a panel.

“A recruit. Take him to processing when we get to Bravo, and get him trained. The Black Hand needs the best and brightest, and he survived the GDI attack, and got into this facility without any

The Montauk arrived via the underground railway. A door slid open in its side, and someone inside waved them in.

“Troopers head to the rear. Commander Regulus, please come with me to the command

They did as requested, and the door closed behind them. The other trooper sat him down, and took his rifle from him. He put both his, and Sergei’s weapons in the ammo locker, and sat down in turn, buckling himself in. Sergei followed suit, and felt acceleration he had not expected. It was a surprisingly smooth, and quiet ride. There was no talking though, and Sergei spent the time reflecting on what he had been through in the last day and a half. He was glad to be a part of something now, but couldn’t help but wonder at what the next day would bring.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Thu, 03 Jun 2004 16:03:25 GMT

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They traveled for about 10 minutes before the internal intercom spoke: “ Prepare for strong

violently. They also slowed significantly and he could only assume it was due to the possibility of ramming a fallen support beam.

They slowed to a stop, and Regulus arrived in the rear compartment. “I need to see

They exited the sliding door, and Sergei found himself in a cavern of natural origin, that Nod engineers had run tracks through. There was also a platform of concrete, and stairs leading up into darkness. Regulus talked into his handheld communicator. “Cabal, we will return in twenty

“Let’s go, and stay alert. If you see GDI patrols while we are out there, blow the

They proceeded up the flight to another heavy reinforced door, and opened it. After passing through, they traveled upwards, and Regulus stopped occasionally to sidestep booby traps set in the walls. He issues careful instructions, and was pleased to see Sergei accept orders without question. They came out into a natural cave, only the size of a bear’s den, and had to belly crawl through to get out. Once at the entrance to the cave, Sergei saw clever camouflage, and was warned about more traps, and how to avoid them.

They were met by another Blackhand member in a buggy, and brought to the canyon edge Slavik had mentioned. They were met by junior officers who gave their report of the battle readiness of the battalion, and losses incurred. Regulus gave orders to set up the observation post in a concealed area, and they watched the horizon the pursuing GDI forces.

As they waited, Sergei noticed the mushroom cloud in the distance. It had been 10 minutes since the blast, and the cloud had lost much of its typical mushroom shape, but Sergei could still see the telltale signature of a nuclear blast in it. He noticed that the Ion storm was still terrorizing the countryside as well, and the rains were torrential by now. He could just imagine what the troops in the canyon below were feeling like. Marched 20 miles hard and fast, being shot at, no reinforcements, and seemingly marched to their doom into a canyon. He could see the rear guard element moving out of the canyon now, and then they saw GDI crest the entrance to the canyon. The Wolverines were first, and they hesitated at entering. APC's arrived next, and unloaded their troops. The Titans were last, and pulled into position, seemingly awaiting orders from command.

Regulus barked into his communicator: "Rear guard units turn and fire. Draw them in. I want Recon to attack the Wolverines, then pull back when they move to engage. Rocket troopers and

They acknowledged in turn, and the attack began.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Thu, 03 Jun 2004 16:45:14 GMT

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The bikes turned, and started their run. They launched two full salvos before the Wolverines started their defensive fire. The bikes were quick, and mobile. They swerved, used terrain to their advantage, and closed the gap quickly. Their first salvos hit home, and the Wolverines bore the brunt of the impacts squarely. Some of them blew up entirely, while others were damaged, others with no ill effects at all. Tracers were flying at the bikes hot and heavy now, and there were more chain guns firing than they could evade, they took refuge behind a small mesa, and waited for the Wolverines to move.

But they didn't. They hadn't received orders, and would not move until they had to. The GDI commander apparently didn't like the looks of this, or was waiting for the Ion storm to abate to allow Orcas to pummel the canyon.

Regulus seemed to anticipate this though, and spoke into the communicator. "Cabal, direct the cyborgs to attack their rear elements. Force them into that canyon. Sierra Tango, attack the

He saw a much decimated cyborg corps crawl, limp, and walk into the open from a forest behind GDI. They fired as they came, and the Titans started picking them off, one by one. Then the Stealth tanks uncloaked and attacked from the right. There weren't many of them, but the damage they were doing was significant with the attention focused on the Borgs, and the bikes. The bikes then bolted back down the canyon, the local commander seemed to make his decision,

the Wolverines gave pursuit, and the GDI battle group moved into the canyon to minimize the damage they were receiving. Two fronts was better than three.

As their group moved into the area where the bikes had hid, Regulus gave the fatal blow.

went off. The debris crashed down, and pinned a Titan group attempting to delete cyborgs from their rear flank. The stealth tanks were unable to do much more. Their low profile, and relative inability to maneuver in rocky terrain disallowed them the priveledge of the kill. Regulus ordered them meet up at Bravo, however they could get there, and received acknowledgement.

The artillery lobbed round after computer controlled round into the canyon. They hit with devastating force, and there were heavy casualties from the unprotected GDI infantry. Then the rockets flew from all along the canyon edge, impacting the Titans, and Wolverines hard. They attempted to push past the ambush as rapidly as possible, but the engineers blew the other end of the canyon, and trapped them. For 20 minutes, they fought bravely, but their situation became very evident as the mechs started to take grievous damage.

They stopped firing, and Sergei heard over the handheld unit "Attention Nod commander this

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Fri, 04 Jun 2004 14:06:08 GMT

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Regulus ordered a general cease fire, and spoke to the lieutenant behind him.

"Prisoners are to be sent to the cyborg processing facility at Firebase Bravo on arrival, no exceptions. Salvage whatever mecha you can, destroy the rest. Cabal, order the cyborg army to Bravo for refit, and repair. The rest of you, pack it up, and head on to Bravo. Destroy any GDI patrols you encounter, and report them immediately. SAM gunners, be on alert for GDI air

He climbed back into the buggy, and motioned for Sergei, and his companion to follow. They went back to the cave, and as they passed the booby traps he saw that there was enough c-4 to permanently seal this entrance if tripped. The Blackhand was deadly serious about their secrets. They passed the blast door and entered Montauk upon recognition by Cabal, who stated "WELL DONE COMMANDER. GENERAL SLAVIK IS MOST PLEASED, AND WISHES TO

"Affirmative. You two, assume your seats, and buckle down. We will be traveling fast, and I

They arrived at Bravo within 15 minutes. Montauk arrived in an underground hangar below the Communications center of this facility, and they proceeded swiftly through the blast door, and the guards behind it. Something was very different here. The Blackhand presence was larger, and

almost overbearing. Regulus stopped at the entrance to the ops center where Slavik awaited, and said to Sergei's companion: "Get him into training, after his debriefing. I need all the

He saluted, and Sergei followed suit. Regulus saluted back, turned and went up to see Slavik.

In another part of the base was a low, flat ugly looking building. He was brought there, and debriefed about all that had transpired, and his role in it. A dossier was created on the spot, and the training officer drew from international databases to find out about Sergei's past, and allegiances.

"Serbian, eh? Just like the general. Probably why they took an interest in you. Father served in the Soviet Army the Great War, captured and re-patriated through the UN's reconciliation program. Father and son served in the same unit for civil defense during the first Tiberian war. Father killed by crossfire in the GDI push to capture the Sarejevo temple while GDI lines pushed forward. Civilian ID number 03456678-A1 assigned by Global Defense Initiative after the

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Tue, 08 Jun 2004 16:46:07 GMT

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He was expecting a fancy room with all kinds of psychologists. What he got was a five by ten cell. It was dark, and cold down here, and smelled horribly. There was a single window high above at the top of the 11 foot wall which let in some light, but not enough to see anything. Dinner came hours later in the form of a gruel which was more water than anything else. He slept on the floor that night, and he was cold. Cold that crept into you, and wouldn't leave. The kind of cold that made you shiver so much that your body was exhausted from the effort it took to shiver that hard. He couldn't sleep, and tried to make himself smaller by curling into a ball, but nothing helped. Then there was a loud klaxon blaring which brought him to full awareness instantly. His cell shook, and dust fell from the overhead as something apparently impacted the building. The alarm klaxon kept going off, and at the end of the cell block he saw a red light flashing.

Another blast shook him, and the door to his cell creaked slightly open. Whatever was going on, he took no chances in staying here, and moved towards the door as fire shot into the upper window. Smoke billowed into the cell, and debris fell from the window. He went through the door, and looked at his options. To his left was a heavy barred door, obviously locked by mechanical means that he didn't have time to figure out. And to his right: another door, but a digital keypad illuminated it. He guessed this was his best option, and headed for it.

Another blast shook the facility, and a pipe overhead broke open, dumping a torrent of water into

the hall. He waded through the ankle deep water towards the door, and noticed that it wasn't passing under these doors. The hall was filling up with water swiftly. He ran for the keypad with purpose, and looked at it's symbols. They made no sense to him, but he tapped the Cyrillic keys at random, and noticed that one of them stayed red when hit. After some playing he managed to get two of them to stay on, and he sensed victory as the water rose from the broken pipe.

He got the keys to all illuminate red, and thought he was through the door, but a second set of keys now illuminated, and presented him with trouble. This time symbols.

The water was now waist deep, and climbing as he attempted to figure this second set. This time it went slower for him, as he had to fight to keep footing as the water rose to his neck. He dove under the water in each attempt, and was able to finally get the lock open as the hall filled to capacity.

The door slid open, and the rushing water pulled him through, and it sped through the opening. He came to rest halfway down the hall, and saw the door re-close automatically despite the torrent rushing through. It pinched off the water, and silence met his ears for the first time since the klaxon went off. He gasped for air, and looked around as he tried to asses his situation.

What was going on?

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Tue, 08 Jun 2004 18:59:15 GMT

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He stood on shaky legs, and looked around. This was a brighter corridor than the cell block. It looked like the quarters for the guards, and had a lounge at one end with a wall mounted T.V.. He crept up towards the lounge, and saw no one.

commotion outside? Just past the lounge, around the corner on the left, were the guard's sleeping quarters. He decided to outfit himself with whatever he could find. Something bad was happening, and he wasn't going to be caught off-guard.

The first door on the right was a sparse room with a neatly made bed, and a desk. Inside the desk drawer was a TAZER gun. A definite keeper and he tucked it into his belt. There wasn't much else so he moved on the next room. He found the jackpot this time. A shotgun, and extra rounds were his for the taking, as well as a sniper rifle. He had fired a rifle many times in training for the civil defense. His father had showed him how to clean, care for, and spot one in, but never anything of this caliber. They were inside a cabinet with another electronic lock. Sergei tried to fumble the lock, but this one defied his every effort. The series made no sense, and he was extremely frustrated. The facility rocked again, and his patience grew thin. He looked around, found a metal pole used to support the sink basin. He tugged at it, and it broke free reluctantly. He attempted to break the glass the guns were in, but it was apparently bulletproof, and only spidered to his dismay.

Then he thought for a second. Why not? He pulled out the TAZER, and unloaded into the electronic lock in frustration. The lock fried, and clicked open. The guns were his for the taking.

He loaded both, and checked their breaches. Both clean, and ready to go. He slung the rifle, and carried the shotgun at the ready, and crept back into the corridor. Still nothing, and no one. He continued down the hall, and encountered an elevator. It opened when he pushed the button, and he stepped in. There were three choices. Sub-basement, Basement where he appeared to be, and 1. He chose the sub-basement. Whatever was going on up there, he wanted no part of it. He pushed the button, and sped downwards.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Wed, 09 Jun 2004 15:46:35 GMT

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The doors opened to cold moisture, and darkness. He could see a flickering fluorescent light in the distance, but other than that, he had nothing. He TAZER'ed the elevator control panel to prevent any unwelcome followers, left the elevator, and moved to the right to allow his vision to adjust to the quasi-darkness and prevent profiling himself against the light of the still open elevator.

His vision adjusted, and he looked around. Apparently this was an old underground parking garage of sorts. It appeared long unused, and still had vehicles dating from the pre-GDI era in it. They were covered in dust from long abandonment, but he could still identify several classic, and some very nice exotic vehicles along with the usual junk driven by people like him. He noticed that a cave in had collapsed the ramps leading out, and was the apparent reason the opening was sealed, and the cars forgotten. A hummvee was seen half buried in rubble, with a skeletal arm hanging out the back. It seemed to be reaching for freedom still, and he wondered at the reason for the carnage. He crossed the dark lot, and headed for the flickering light, as there appeared to be an opening over there leading out. There was. A tunnel led into darkness, Sergei decided he would attempt an egress in that direction. He needed light though, and started to search for something to help him see down the tunnel. He found a switch at the tunnel entrance labeled

exploding after long disuse.

After what seemed like a lifetime of wading through the debris fallen from the tunnel roof, he finally came to end, which ended in a plain room. There was janitorial supplies, and a single light bulb but nothing else, and he shoved the grate open, closing it quietly behind him. Where would the door out lead to? He didn't know, but anywhere was better than where he had been.

He cracked the door open...

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Fri, 11 Jun 2004 16:59:01 GMT

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Oddly enough, it was a laboratory. Long unused by the look of it. Dust had settled, and coated everything with a fine layer of silt. He moved into the hall and took a look around. To his right and left were labs behind glass windows. Everything seemed in place and the electronic locks were still cycled shut, barring entry. He eased the shotgun up, and walked down the hall past the labs. There had to be a front door to the place. He took a left and headed for a stairwell, and upon entering found what used to be a mutant laying there. He could tell it was because of the amount of crystals laying around the skeleton, and the bones were ruined where the crystals had been. There were also strange new bone structures that apparently were in creation when he was killed.

Finding nothing of use, he continued down the stairs, and saw the reason for the mutants demise. A GDI soldier lay crushed under the remains of the wall. Apparently the mutant had thrown a grenade and killed them both. He stepped through the remains of the crumbled wall. What he saw shocked him, and that wasn't easy on a day like this.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Tue, 15 Jun 2004 13:22:07 GMT

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He was in the lower lobby of the building. That much was clear by the doors at the end of the long hallway. But there wasn't much else he could recognize because of the growth of some plant like substance all over everything. It looked like plant life, but also seemed sentient. The orange tendrils were actively wrapping around everything, and seemed to be eating the building and everything in it before his very eyes. He watched as one tendril snaked it's way towards the corpse of the soldier, and watched as it aggressively latched on to concrete, steel, bone, and anything else in its' path by the use of tooth-like protuberances on the underside of the tendrils. Amazingly, the material wasn't just crumbling, it was being consumed, and apparently sent back to wherever the tendrils originated. Then to his surprise, more tendrils snaked out the old one, and continued their path of destruction.

Curiosity got the better of Sergei, and picked up a sharp rock. If it was sentient, it would react to his blow. He dropped the rock on the closest tendril. The stump reared back in apparent pain. Then he saw a greenish fluid spurt out of the stump, and land on some concrete by his foot. The concrete immediately reacted, and a green gas was emitted. Some of it wafted up to his nose, and he felt sick immediately as if his nervous system was under attack. He reared back from the gas, and covered his face with his shirt. It took about five minutes before he felt he could move again. When he looked up to asses his situation the tendrils had moved up the stairs, and he was isolated in a pocket under the stairwell. His mind raced, and he started to panic. Being this creatures food was not on his list of ways to die.

He decided he had to try. He ran across the jungle of tendrils as fast as his feet could carry him. The tendrils seemed to sense his weight, but didn't do anything more than instinctively retract a bit. When they did though, they also pulled on the materials they were eating, and it started an avalanche from the roof of half consumed support beams, tiles, pipes and more. The pieces fell onto the tendrils, and damaged them causing more of the greenish acid substance to spurt which in turn caused gas puffs all along his egress route. He covered his mouth, put his head down, and ran for the end of the hall. He brought the shotgun level with the doors locking mechanism, and

blew them outward as he burst into the fresh air, and sunlight. It was worse out here....

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Tue, 15 Jun 2004 16:58:29 GMT

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The plant-thing was absolutely huge in the amount of territory it was consuming. It apparently was centered in the middle of this former township. The nearest building to him were in the same state of destruction, and actively falling apart as well. He could see military vehicles spread throughout the area being consumed as well. Whatever battle had occurred here had been a serious conflict, and certainly helped the destruction along. There was a large tank with two turrets to his right. The turret had been knocked off it's bearings, and the treads were infested with the vines. He could see the turret cupola was open, and vines crawled out the hatch. Its armor was apparently very tasty to the plant, and he could see where the vines had almost cut through in places. And in the center of the mess was the creature which had generated the destruction. It was large, and seemed to be located in a depression about the diameter of a small crater. Maybe that was their origin, he thought. Everything wrong with this planet now seemed to have come from extra-solar origins, so why not. He could see the creature occasionally give off a puff of green gas, and the clouds floated through the area, destroying anything they came in contact with.

He looked for a way out. The only places the plant hadn't spread to yet was the outskirts of the town. He headed for the nearest safe building to figure out his next move. It looked like a power plant, and it was heavily damaged from the fighting. He saw wreckage from a GDI flying vehicle sticking out of the dome the reactor, its tail hanging by hydraulics, and swinging in the breeze.

He ran for it, and contemplated his next move.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Wed, 16 Jun 2004 17:14:26 GMT

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A laser turret fired from his left. He instinctively dropped at the sound of the turret turning, so it did no damage to him. He belly crawled towards a toppled Titan with one leg blown clean off. The pilot's compartment had been jarred open on impact, and the pilot still rested behind the controls, his neck snapped by the impact of 70 tons of mech armor hitting the ground at 30 mph. His skeletal grin showing from behind the visored helmet he still wore. The laser fired again, and took a chunk out of the windshield as Sergei took refuge behind the half opened compartment.

How was he going to get out of this nightmare of a ghost town? The whole world seemed wrong, and Sergei was smack dab in the middle of the mess. He waited a bit, and the sun started to go down. This was not the position he desired to be in. Stuck with a dead guy, being fired upon by a laser with no functioning IFF transceiver, and alone in the dark, as a creepy orange plant ate everything in sight. He noticed a flashing light in the compartment and took a closer look. It was a button labeled "Ignition". A lot of good that would do he thought. Figuring he had nothing else to

lose, and after watching the laser fry a creature that wandered into the area, he was motivated to at least try SOMETHING.

The generator took two or three tries, but it did fire up. Instantly the cabin lights came on, and about 1,000 warning lights started flashing. The EVA uplink tried to establish contact, but stated that the antenna array was out of alignment, and damaged. It promptly suggested moving to a repair facility.

No kidding. The cabin air fans started up, and he felt refreshing air flow over his face in the oppressive summer heat. The HUD display on the windscreen displayed targeting information for the offending laser, and tried to target, but couldn't bring the weapon to bear. He heard the hydraulic whine of the 175 mm howitzer try to come to bear upon instruction from the computer. Each laser blast set off alarms denoting that the Titan was taking "damage". He shifted his weight to reach over and shut the damn thing down, but hit a control with his knee. The giant mech moved its' stump, and the remaining leg in response. The mecha caught the ground, and shifted slightly to the left. The laser loomed into the targeting reticle.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Thu, 17 Jun 2004 15:21:22 GMT

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He was off guard from the movement, and looked out the windscreen, to see the HUD displayed in red, stating "Target in range". While the computer thought it was, Sergei could see that the position of the mech was in alignment from left to right, but the gun was a lot higher off the ground than the laser was tall. How could he use this to his advantage? Another shot burned into the windscreen, but this time broke through, clipping his arm, and cauterizing the wound as soon as it hit. He hissed in pain, and rage flooded him. He saw the building behind the turret, and looked for the fire button. It was still in the skeletal grip of the pilot. He knocked the bones away, and pulled the trigger.

Without being stabilized by an upright position, and the wide pads of the feet of the mech, the whole Titan was propelled backwards about five feet. This threw Sergei into the windscreen, and threw the remains of the pilot all over the inside of the compartment. The 175mm round speared through the air and hit the building labeled "Westwood Stock Exchange" on about the second floor. It exploded, and disintegrated the central vertical support beam, which caused the other supports in the front of the building to experience stress levels they weren't designed for. The building collapsed in the front first, and the rear followed suit. The structure avalanched into the turret, and silenced the rogue defensive structure permanently.

He picked himself out the debris, and left the compartment of the Titan just as sparks started to fly from the console. Apparently the titan had had enough abuse, and caught fire in the cabin as the soldiers ratty uniform caught fire. A fitting end for an old warrior he decided, and turned and walked from the scene.

Twilight had soundly arrived, and he was having difficulty seeing. In the distance was the greenish glow of Tiberium field. Behind him, the glow of the fire now roaring in the cockpit of the Titan. He looked over at the power plant, and decided there was no use in entering it, other than curiosity,

and headed for the wall the surrounded this town. There had to be a way out, and he was going to find the gate.

After walking about a half a mile, he found the source of the green light. The Tiberium field was beautiful in the moonlight, and glistened like a Christmas decoration. Just beyond was the gate. A formidable looking structure, which oddly enough had a Nod scorpion's tail emblem on it. He pulled out the sniper rifle, and zoomed in on the gate structure, and the associated mechanisms it used. He looked for a weak spot, and found it. A hydraulic piston the size of an APC was holding the gate up. He zoomed on the cylinder, and fired three rounds into it. In the sights' eerie green glow, he could see Hydraulic fluid spurting out, and saw the gate slowly lowering. He headed for the city exit, and was unprepared for what he saw, but after all of this nothing much surprised him anymore....

Regulus and the psychological profiling officer stood at parade rest on the other side of the gate with two troopers apiece beside them. The troopers dropped to one knee upon seeing him with weapon in hand, and Sergei instinctively dropped the sniper rifle, and leveled the shotgun.

Regulus said in a clear voice: "That won't be necessary. Troopers stand down." They did as ordered, and stood at attention beside them, rifles at the ready.

"Sergei Anatoly Ustinov, you have done well. Lower your weapon, leave it with the troopers and come with me." He didn't even wait for Sergei's response, but turned on his heel, and started issuing orders to a subordinate regarding fixing the gate, and monitoring the progress of the "vein hole creature".

He sighed, and shrugged his shoulders. He walked past the trooper that stood waiting for his weapon with an outstretched hand, and a smirk on his face. He handed the shotgun over, as well as the TAZER, and trotted up to Regulus' side.

"Sir, may I ask what the hell that was all about?"

"You may, but if you are patient enough, all will be explained shortly in full."

"Yes sir." He muttered in resignation.

They approached the Pysch profiling building again. This time instead of a cell, he was brought by Regulus to a debriefing room. Upon entering he saw two other men already seated facing the front of the room where a neatly dressed staff officer stood at parade rest. The men were as ragged as he was. One had blood all over him, and the other was in obvious pain. Regulus pointed to a seat in the front, and walked to the front of the room.

Sergei sat down as ordered, and the troopers took positions in the rear.

"Welcome to the Black Hand of Nod Brothers."

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Fri, 18 Jun 2004 16:51:04 GMT

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In an hour, General Anton Slavik Nod's greatest and brightest tactician will arrive in this facility to speak to you. Use this time to get patched up by the medics, and get outfitted by the

supply representative that will arrive shortly. You have been chosen out of a very tight field of candidates to lead the brotherhood, and become part of the elite. I congratulate you. We will

The door opened, and as promised the medics, and the supply officers arrived. They immediately started treating, and outfitting the recruits. Regulus set a timer that appeared on the front screen, and it started counting backwards from 59:59.

With that he left. Sergei's wounds were superficial with the exception of the laser burn. The man with dried blood all over him was fine except a broken nose. Turns out the blood wasn't his, and Sergei didn't want to know how he came about getting it.

The third man was wounded in many places. It appeared he had taken a round in the upper thigh, and something had cut him badly across the face. While the wounds were being dressed, measurements were taken of their sizes, and uniforms selected from the inventory. The Black hand uniforms were Black BDU's, black jungle boots, and black berets all imprinted with the signature Black hand logo of a Black fist with the globe in it's grip.

He liked the uniform, and its simplistic approach. The emblems were also tear away, which denoted missions which didn't want official Nod recognition. They were shown the shower facilities in the next room, and he took them up on their offer. He then had the wound re-dressed, and got into his uniform. He liked the look. It fit him well. The barber was next, and they were all given high and tights. All in all, a very good match to his expectations that hadn't been fulfilled until now.

He went back into the other room and saw the timer. 14:33.

He helped the wounded man into his uniform, and laced his boots for him, as he couldn't really bend very well, and they all proceeded to the next room where Regulus had taken a seat in the newly cleaned room. He turned upon hearing sergei, and said: "Now that's more like it. All of you, sit up front. General Slavik will be on shortly. When he appears, rise, clench your right fist, and plant it on your left pectoral smartly. You will also speak only when spoken to, and

The door swept open, and in rushed an advanced guard. All blackhand men, and their gazes swept the room for threats to the precious prize they protected. Then in stepped general Anton Slavik, The Serbian Wolf. The bane of GDI, protector of Kane and commander of the ultra secret and almighty Black Hand of Nod.

His gaze was fierce, and he walked to the front of the room, and stood at parade rest.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Tue, 22 Jun 2004 13:09:42 GMT

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Everything about this man struck him as purely military, professional and dangerous. The way he carried himself, the way he stood, dressed, and spoke all denoted a life of dedication towards order, and structure. But the one thing he noticed more than any other was the anger that ran just below the surface of his controlled tone. It was as if he could kill with just words.

“Today you have proven yourselves worthy of becoming Black Hand members. I commend you. Out of a field of 10 pre-selected candidates, you are the only ones to have survived. This means that you have what it takes to excel under threat of death. You have conquered that fear,

“The Brotherhood needs us. We are the elite. We are the finger that pulls Nod’s trigger, and controls where the bullets go. Without us, the Brotherhood would fall. I am the right hand of Kane, and I am responsible for projecting Kane’s vision of peace through power. I will take it very personally if I find out betrayal is in your heart.

The screen came to life, and Kane’s presence was suddenly in the room.

“General Slavik, well spoken as always. And Regulus, very well played against GDI yesterday.

Anton bowed at the hip slightly in deference to his master. “I live and die at your command

Still at attention, the candidates didn’t dare make eye contact with Kane. Except Sergei. He couldn’t help it, and wanted to look into the eyes of his new master. He wanted to see what was in those eyes, and judge the soul of the man he was committing life itself to.

Kane sensed the probing, and stopped talking. He looked back, and Sergei was suddenly gripped with fear. In that exchange of only 5 seconds, it seemed like he had just lived lifetimes of pain, and seen the unfathomable. There was something different there. Something alien, and very frightening. Something he couldn’t understand, and wasn’t prepared for. He broke his stare with difficulty, and caught a glint of fire in the eyes of the ruler of Nod.

Kane, apparently satisfied with Sergei’s response, continued.

“I have watched your testing with great interest, as has General Slavik, and Commander Regulus. Each of you possesses qualities I will need in this battle against the globalists. Serve me well, and you will be treated well in the new order. Fail me, and you will taste something worse

The screen blinked out. Slavik turned and walked brusquely towards the exit. He stopped by

He then exited. The guards met him at the door. And they left as quickly, and stealthily as they had come.

Regulus assumed the lead once again.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Tue, 22 Jun 2004 14:32:10 GMT

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“Gentlemen, let us begin. Today will be rest and recuperation. BH representatives will escort you to our personal facilities, where the rest of your gear is located. You will be issued many things, some of them highly classified. Most important of these will be your personal link to Cabal, and his library of resources on Nod. I highly suggest browsing this library prior to, and during

He walked out, and sent in two BH lieutenants. They took them to the BH barracks which were much different than the Hand of Nod he had seen in the other base. These were personal rooms, with private wash facilities, and a private chow hall. As promised, they were provided a full complement of uniforms, weapons, PAD link to CABAL, and interestingly enough, a battle grid simulator for war games in their free time. He helped the injured man to his room, and received thanks and an introduction.

“Name is Sergei Ustinov. I was a civilian. Just got caught in the crossfire in the attack on the

There was an audible gasp from behind him as the third man stopped in the doorway to James's room.

The man turned on his heel, and gave Sergei a scowl that let him know that this man thought him inferior. Wherever he had come from, he didn't feel Sergei was worthy of such an honor. Frankly Sergei didn't either, but he wasn't going to fail. And he wasn't going to let this pompous loser tell him different.

“Take it easy Jim. I am going to study up a bit. I will stop in in the morning, and see if you

He returned to his room, closed the door, and started to study CABAL's database. No way was he going to be a let down or embarrassment to Regulus.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Wed, 23 Jun 2004 13:26:04 GMT

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First on his list was Nod history. He researched in-depth to find out Brotherhood origins, leaders, battles, technologies, ideologies and prominent advances. His photographic memory served him well, and he knew Nod very well inside three hours. He was still puzzled by references to Kane as far back as the Great War. A man that looked 40, but was apparently almost 100. There the pictures were though. Kane with Stalin during the Soviet offensive whispering something in his ear. The image was grainy, and taken by an internal camera, but it was clearly him.

He took a break, and went to the chow hall. The food was good, and he ate his fill alone in the empty chow hall. He looked up at the clock: 22:30. Still time to try out the battle simulator, he thought to himself.

When he got back to his room, he fired up the simulator which looked like a table, and was roughly the same size, but projected as an overhead command level view of a battle field. He was requested to log in, and did so under the name "Recruit", and was given the option to review a dossier on units, and stratagem. He reviewed the units, and then clicked on "Engage" at the bottom of the screen. The screen changed to a loading display that told him it was waiting to match him with an opponent. He had to wait about five minutes, but was then notified that player "Centurion" had been matched up with him.

The display then changed to the overhead simulator, and the game started.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Wed, 23 Jun 2004 17:35:12 GMT

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He situated his base on a mesa with resources about 50 yards away. He had been assigned the unhappy task of guiding a mutant faction in rebellion against a nearby Nod facility. This threw him because they utilized a conglomeration of units from the great war, Nod and GDI, as well as civilian vehicles. One ridiculous option was a mobile home with rocket launchers. He set up defenses quickly, preparing for the invasion to come from the other more experienced player, knowing that any attack he mounted would be useless against a well defended Nod base with an experienced commander.

He decided to use treachery, just as the mutants would. With limited means he knew that his best and only bet was deterrence, and defense followed by surprise attacks on an unprotected flank due to overconfidence.

He developed a nice anti-air defense, built with the weaknesses of the real Nod base he had

come from prior. They would get one or two, but only at the cost of their entire force. Then he built individual fire teams stationed in Tiberium fields. Each unit was comprised of three rifle men, with 3 rocket soldiers backed up by Nod based rocket bikes. They wouldn't last long, but would allow his deception time to work.

He then developed a strike force based on great war style mammoths, mobile home rocket vehicles, and followed up by apcs loaded with a rail gun equipped mutant, and engineers. He then had a specialized unit steal one of the enemy scouts. All these specialized units he moved to the northwest quadrant, and braced for the onslaught that would come. The artillery hit him about the same time the air units attempted to penetrate his defensive grid. The air units dropped like flies, and the enemy commander knew they were toast before they even got to the target. He redirected them to kamikaze into the nearest power plant in an attempt to power down his hodgepodge forces. The tactic partially worked, as harpy after harpy crashed into the dome.

Power went offline as Sergei desperately attempted to repair his plant.

His command and control structure went away as the radar went out, and he was forced to direct fire by line of sight. His defensive squad stuck together, and hit the lead elements hard now that they were moving to break into his base, as he attempted to kill the artillery. Power came back on in a flicker and he saw his situation laid out.

It didn't look hopeful at all. The enemy had stripped his base of every useful fighting unit, and sent them pell mell into the fray. He used this opportunity to strike. He used the captured scout to sneak into the Nod facility, which he then crashed into the nearest power plant. The hijacker the swiftly hopped into an abandoned light tank as he pounded what was left of the structure. The mammoths hit the weak northern wall hard, and took the bulk of laser turret fire that was now being brought to bear. Then the power went down, and the Mobile homes streaked through the gap in the wall. They went to town on the MCV, and the APCs rolled in behind them. The ghost stalker jumped out, and blasted what units the enemy was mustering at the weapons factory. Now it was the engineers turn. They charged into the Refinery, the barracks, and the nearest power plant. He immediately started up the cyborg production bay in the hand, and created a defensive perimeter around his captured buildings. The mammoths limped into the center of the perimeter, and lobbed shells into the Weapons factory, and it's surrounding units, as the Mobile homes zipped in and out of buildings denying a line of fire to the meager defenders.

Sergei wasn't faring much better at home though. His defense core was rolled over quickly by a legion on Cyborgs, and rocket bikes, backed by lights. They had pounded down the wall, and destroyed the defenses guarding it before the enemy realized he needed to split his force to save his base. They drove hard into his inner defensive ring, which sergei had cleverly interwoven with the three technologies to create a nasty little trap. Sergei knew this was the last gambit. He ordered his remaining mutants out in the field to hit the artillery, and then move inward to hit the rear flank, once the divided force rolled past to save their base.

The artillery died quickly, and they lashed into the rear guard hard. They couldn't have done it themselves alone, but Sergei's defensive ring was holding out better than anticipated now that the artillery was no longer a factor.

Back at the Nod base, cyborgs were now raising havoc, and destroyed most everything useful. They finished the northern structures off, and Sergei ordered them south to brace for the coming battle. Then he thought better of it. With no structures left for production, the enemy was forced to

rely on what remained in his arsenal. He ordered the buildings he captured rigged for destruction, and focused all units on taking out the weapons factory which they did with little effort.

Then he ordered them west after destroying anything useful including his captured facilities. If he couldn't win by numbers, he would win by attrition. If he could draw them into the Tiberium fields, his cyborgs would have the advantage of the regenerative properties of the stuff.

That was IF he could survive the destruction in progress at home first....

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Wed, 23 Jun 2004 19:50:17 GMT

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He sent everything he had in the north into the tiberium fields, and then brought them home through whatever fields he could find on the way. As he was retreating, the Nod commander arrived in what was left of his base. There wasn't much but unpowered defensive structures, and tiberium silos. He realized he wouldn't be able to create any more units, and abandoned the base, taking every unit he had left, and pursuing the enemy south. Sergei noticed the enemy was withdrawing from his base, having lost the initiative, and taking horrendous losses. They would regroup he assumed with the advancing northern army, and probably try to squash his groups coming south. He had no option left except to smash through the southern front, before the northern caught up. He pushed straight for his base, and encountered them. Focusing all his firepower on each unit individually, he was able to degrade them to the point where they withdrew to meet up with the northern force, but Sergei had a hard fight of it.

His inferior forces were hurting, and were down by 50%. They arrived at the base with the Northern force close on their heels, regrouped in the hole in the inner defenses and the melee began again.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Thu, 24 Jun 2004 13:13:04 GMT

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The commander hit him head on, and in the center. Nod was taking horrible losses, and Sergei started to believe he would win. It was just about then that the second front opened in his rear flank out of no where. With the RPG launchers and laser turrets busy on the other front, the base defenses crumbled under the onslaught.

He was going to lose. He decided that if he was going to lose then, he was going to make the enemy pay dearly for it. He pulled every remaining unit out of the base, and they pushed through the rear flank, and dug in in the Tiberium field. The Nod forces decimated the base and left him alone temporarily, which allowed his soldiers, and cyborgs to heal a bit. While Nod was enjoying its hard won killing spree, he hit them hard in the rear again which earned him the attention of the Nod commander for the last time. He dedicated every last unit to wiping out his remaining forces.

The final battle was costly for both, but Nod did win in the end. The display changed to a statistical display of losses, kills and time played along with charts depicting production level spikes, and points earned.

He logged off, pleased with the performance. He had been dealt a bad hand, and done fairly well against a superior player. He replayed the battle in his mind as he drifted off to sleep.

He dreamed the Tiberium dream again.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Fri, 25 Jun 2004 12:56:51 GMT

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When he woke, he was glad. The dream was extremely disturbing, and he could never remember what he saw in the reflection. Some kind of mental block perhaps to prevent extremely disturbing images from conscious thought? He didn't want to know.

He dressed, and shut the alarm down. He groomed and changed into a fresh pair of black BDU's, ensuring that he got the tear away Nod BH emblem placed squarely.

He stopped by Jim's room, and knocked. No answer. Oh well. He headed for the chow hall where Jim was already seated and eating, while a medic chatted with him. He grabbed some chow, noticing that the food was good for military standard. He sat down, and ate. After he was done, he went back to his room to grab his CABAL interface, and strapped it to his forearm. It was nothing fancy, just a black screen, and a mic / speaker about the size of a pack of cigarettes. He locked his room, and headed for the sign marked EXIT in red letters.

Outside the door a BH rep met him standing beside a humvee. The other two weren't there he noticed, as he approached the officer. He stopped, and saluted.

and Jim and the other schmuck approached. The officer gave them the order to pile in, and took the wheel as driver. Nothing was said as the three were escorted to the communications facility for whatever Regulus and the BH had in store. As they traveled, he noticed the base layout, and how many more defenses there were here. Clearly this was an important base, and also noticed the size of it. Immense was the proper word. As they rolled down the main avenue, they saw armor columns being rolled north through the gate. He assumed they were amassing for the push on Sarejevo as he had heard. There was also the harvester rolling slowly towards the gate. A ponderous beast, and fully automated it appeared, as there was no pilot in it.

They rolled to a stop by the comm. facility, where they were ordered to follow the officer. He stopped at the door, and scanned his palm. The security was tighter here, as the IFF transponder alone wasn't good enough. They entered the darkness of the facility, and it took his eyes a second to adjust.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Fri, 25 Jun 2004 15:04:00 GMT

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This center was far different than the one he had come from in the other base. The room they entered was basically a security checkpoint with two VERY serious looking thugs behind blast screen barriers. As they were cleared to enter, he noticed the hidden roof camera / gun in the can light. If they weren't cleared they would have been dead by now.

They passed through the checkpoint, and proceeded downstairs. There were ceiling guns everywhere now. Clearly this was the nerve center of everything Nod in this theatre. The people working this facility were regular Nod, but wore special badges denoting their status as intelligence. Their bosses were, of course, Black Hand. The room they entered at the bottom of the stairs was a duality in the senses. So much was going on on the screens, but there was virtually no noise. A senior Black hand officer sat in the middle of the horseshoe of screens, receiving updates, and giving orders.

Sergei and the others were told to be silent, and merely observe. He watched one screen showing the cabin view of a tick tank that was on fire. Its pilot desperately trying to escape, and failing. Another was a commander level view of a battle field in progress. He could clearly see a column of Titans being mercilessly destroyed by artillery in a river plain. The Titans, clearly out of range weren't going to escape, and wouldn't get a chance to fire back.

Another showed a vein-hole plant behind barriers by a GDI facility. An airstrike was inbound to hit the barrier wall, and he knew what was in store for the base after the wall was down.

Yet another was showing an attack by GDI units on a mutant facility. He thought this odd, until he saw that the officer driving the lead Titan was reporting to this senior officer. A trick, but why? Sergei surmised it was to sway mutant opinion to Nod. They were the great third party. Allegiance unknown, and known to help both sides. They were also a great asset, as they were the only ones that could still live in the equatorial regions due to Tiberium contamination.

They were ushered out, and into the bowels of the facility.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Tue, 29 Jun 2004 13:21:32 GMT

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They were guided to a small vehicle like a cart that swept through tunnels, and turns via an underground transit system. So many that he couldn't find his way out if he had wanted to without difficulty. They went past rows of computer data banks in one area that was kept at a cool zero degrees Celsius to prevent over heating. Another area was an apparent shooting range for exotic weapons. Labs were also present, and scientists could be seen shuttling about without any concern for him.

It was then that he realized the entire base was connected underground. They were entering other areas of the base, including tiberium production, communications, science, weapons and associated base equipment. They finally stopped at massive blast doors, where their guide

punched in access codes, and the doors slowly opened.

Regulus awaited on the other side conferring with a man in a suit and tie. They turned at their arrival, and Regulus stated "I will contact you in a day or two with my answer then, after I

The minister bowed slightly at the waist, and turned to be ushered out by his armed escort. Regulus turned to them, and looked each one in the eyes as he walked up and down the line they had formed at attention.

"Gentlemen. In the weeks following this happy little meeting of ours, you will get basic, and advanced training in your areas of expertise. What areas of expertise you may be thinking.

we did not interfere, but at times we introduced stimuli to see if candidates had specific traits or assets. In the case of candidate James Parker we introduced mutant species into the equation. For candidate Sergei Ustinov we introduced the Flooding room, and cipher lock scenario as well as the laser turret. And for candidate Hans Becker here, we introduced a hostile GDI commando.

These stimuli were introduced because we saw specific traits in you. Candidate Becker, you will be placed in the assassination corps. Candidate Ustinov, you will be placed in infiltration, intelligence and psych warfare, and candidate Parker, you will be trained for the leadership cadre to

Sergei found himself smiling at his assignment. He liked the idea of getting the job done without even being detected. A big messy fight was not his forte, and he didn't feel like he had leadership qualities like Regulus to lead entire battalions.

"I have representatives standing by from each of your respective divisions standing by to show you to your departments. Until you finish basic, you will live together where you are, and then from there you will be placed with your units, wherever your mission needs fulfillment. Remember

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Tue, 06 Jul 2004 13:44:35 GMT

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The three representatives came forward in lockstep, standing in front of their new recruits, and he noticed that the three of them bore different insignia in their BH patches.

While the leadership cadre had the standard Black Fist clutching lightning, the assassination division had a red targeting reticle, and the intelligence/ psych warfare division had a red eye. The all seeing Eye of Nod.

His rep introduced himself as Pavel, and led him to their part of the underground complex. Seeing as he wasn't cleared for area yet, and hadn't passed Basic, he was shown only his room, and his preliminary acclimation manuals which Pavel loaded him up with.

“While in basic, study these. They will guide you in Intel indoc before you get here. I can’t tell, or show you any more until Basic is done. I will bring you back to your temporary quarters

When they arrived at the barracks, he was told that on graduation from Basic, he would be picked up and brought to the complex for advanced training, and assignment after. Then he was gone.

The others, he noticed weren’t there yet. He put his manuals in his room safe, and got some chow. It was burgers today. He liked them, and had three, and went back to his room. He checked his link to Cabal for messages. He had one from the basic commander telling him to report at 0500 in front of the building. No problem. Considering it was now only 1500 he decided to read some of the manuals he had been provided. How long would he have to study these he wondered.

“TYPICALLY IT TAKES A CANDIDATE FROM 6 TO 8 WEEKS. CONSIDERING YOUR

What did that mean, he wondered. A sense of foreboding was at the edge of his senses.

A quick perusal of the index showed info on current GDI leadership castes, units, communications facilities, large bases etc.

There were also stats on Mutant leadership, and bases as well as studies from the lab folks about their abilities. What he found most intriguing was the fact that the manual had a section on

The second manual was a thorough study of all weapons used since the dawn of time, as well as some that were stamped as experimental. One of particular interest to him was the “Personal

was no information other than a sketchy picture, and the name.

He would browse the other manuals when he had time, but for now he would go check on James if he was in. he pushed the communicator button. It was a sick yellow color and it reminded him of

Sergei saw that James had also been provided with material from his department to study while in

“ Battlefield theory, and strangely enough a copy of Tsun Zhu’s ‘Art of War’. A little light reading, and orders to get on the combat simulator and match up with others from my unit.

"I haven't looked at all of them yet, but it looks like standard stuff so far. No orders to get

"Well enough. They seem to be healing faster than I had expected them to. Good Medics I

"I don't know exactly. It was a green paste, that seemed to absorb right into the skin. The medic said it was tiberium based. Hey, how about a walk around base tonight before we get into

They ate swiftly, and saw Becker on the way out the door. Parker said hello and gave him a smile, but it was met with silence, and an angry stare at Sergei. Sergei said nothing, and returned the stare. The man had a dangerous look in his eyes, but he wasn't afraid of him. Instead of fear he felt his own anger rise, and a desire to seriously hurt the other candidate overtook him.

Once outside, his mood returned to normal. They walked around base checking out various structures, and their functions. Sergei had a particular interest in defensive structures after watching the other base fall to GDI forces. The giant laser was of interest to him, and they stopped at the entrance to the structure where they were met by a technician working inside. He saluted them, and they returned it and the technician seemed overly nervous at having two Black Hand representatives in the room.

James said.

Sergei found himself admiring the way James carried himself, and how he was able to talk to the ground troops as an equal while still presenting himself as in charge. An excellent choice for the leadership cadre, and a very wise placement on the part of Regulus.

The Technician rattled off some specs, and stats about his structure with a more relaxed tone now.

level here that store the electricity generated down below from the generator. The capacitors release the power simultaneously, which is directed upwards to the laser generator on top of the tower. The lasers' 360 degree range, and ability to hit targets 1000 meters out makes it an excellent choice for defense. It has a limitation though with airborne units. The ability to fire skyward is severely degraded due to the blue spectrum of the upper atmosphere. We can fire at airborne units, but typically don't as the capacitors take about 15 seconds to generate enough power to fire the laser, and that can be a lifetime in a battle where every shot counts. Especially when you aren't guaranteed a hit, as is the case with airborne units like the GDI orca. We rely on the SAMS for that, and we typically have four deployed around a laser at any one time.

The laser has the ability to punch through 6.75 inches of high grade steel, and as was the case at the base north of here, they accounted for approximately 75 percent of initial GDI losses to heavy

They returned to the barracks after the brief tour, and said good night to each other.

Sergei laughed in spite of the inferred danger, and closed the door. He prepared himself mentally before going to bed. Tomorrow would be an interesting day.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Tue, 06 Jul 2004 19:35:52 GMT

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He was out on the field in front of the barracks well ahead of 0500. Standing at attention at 0430, he figured he could beat any indoc hazing new recruits usually got by being woken early, accused of "missing roster", then being punished the rest of the day by twice as much torture as usual. The base was alive even at this hour, he noted. Rumbling machinery idled past him, and soldiers in the back of trucks heading to the front looked at him with vacant expressions. They were young, but the look on their faces spoke of age past their young years. He surmised they had seen their share of everything bad that life had to offer, and were ready for more.

The air was cool, and damp. He glanced out of his peripheral vision, not daring to move a muscle while at attention. He saw flashes of light on a mountain side off in the distance. The truck the soldiers were on rumbled in that direction, and Sergei felt guilty for his special treatment. He should be with them, fighting alongside them, and dying with them if need be. Maybee the schmuck Becker was right. No, he thought. I was chosen to serve in a different capacity. Maybee I can save a few of them by using whatever talents Nod leadership thinks I have.

The training officer showed up as he expected at 0445. He looked at Sergei with a raised eyebrow, and walked over in front of him. "Who told you to be out here now, candidate?"

"No one sir!"

"I find that extremely hard to believe candidate. Drop and give me 50. That will give you some time to think about your sources of information, while I get the other slackers out here."

"Sir, yes sir!"

Sergei dropped, and chuckled slightly to himself. The officer saw the smirk, and said over his shoulder, "Make it 60, since we're feeling so intelligent today." In a sarchastic tone.

He sighed inwardly, as he continued his count. In the background he heard the shouting, and laughed as the others, almost dressed and ready, were surprised by the sudden appearance of an angry training officer claiming they had "missed roster, and were going to be sorry mother f**kers very shortly".

He finished as the officer arrived again.

"Who told you to stop, Smart ass? Drop and give me 20 more!"

"Sir, yes sir!"

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Thu, 08 Jul 2004 19:43:06 GMT

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The other two came out at a run, and stopped and stood at attention by Sergei who was still doing pushups. Becker looked down at him and grinned. The instructor, not missing a trick shouted: "Does that look like fun to you?"

"Sir, no sir!" Becker snapped, and stared straight ahead.

"Get up scumbag!" He shouted at Sergei.

Sergei stood, and stared straight ahead, sweat dripping off him from the exertion.

"Today ladies, we are going to go for a little run. I figured it would be a nice thing to do for such fine gentlemen as yourselves to introduce you to our little brotherhood within a brotherhood. I am Captain Valdez, and you ladies belong to me for the next month and a half."

"Let's go on a little tour of the brotherhood's fine facilities today, shall we? Move!"

He started off on a fast trot, and the recruits fell in behind him. He led them through the main gate, and into the woods surrounding the facility. Activity was everywhere, and helos circled above awaiting landing instructions. After 15 Minutes of running, Sergei was hurting. He saw that Jim wasn't enjoying himself either, while Becker was a monolith. Neither he, nor Valdez seemed to mind. They ran for what seemed like forever and he didn't know how much more he could take. Keep going he told himself, lungs burning.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Fri, 09 Jul 2004 13:06:47 GMT

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The running continued, despite his wishes to the contrary. He needed to find a way to cope, and focused on the problem at hand. The burning in his lungs. He tried different breathing methods, some better than others, and settled on timing his breathing to coincide with his stride.

Two shorts breaths in, two short breaths out. It seemed to quench his lungs desire for air, and he found that he was fairing much better now. Jim seemed to be doing better now as well. He started to focus on the scenery to distract his mind until this hell march was over. They were apparently near the ocean. He could smell it in the air, and the horizon was opening up as well. He found he was happy about it, and thought back to his vacations with his father many years ago. Their Yugo had been old and barely ran that day, but they arrived in the morning as the sun came up. Sergei could remember seeing the sunrise for the first time ever over the ocean. Breathtaking was the only word for it.

They had spent the day and played in the water, and he had always wanted to go back, but hadn't ever made it. Apparently today he would.

He snapped back to reality as they approached the rocky coastline. Nod cargo ships unloaded cargo to supply the war effort, and the shore was a hive of activity. Not a day at the beach he had imagined. They ran past a cargo ship whose bow opened up like a mouth. The cavernous opening was empty now, save the crew who was preparing to seal the bow, and head out. It was the same

all along this mile long drop off zone. Some were still in the process of unloading MCV's, and their escorts. Others were apparent troop carriers, or helo carriers. It was an impressive logistical display to say the least.

The unloaded vehicles and troops formed columns and moved swiftly offshore. All seemed headed north to the embattled capital of Sarejevo. Judging by this deployment, Nod still hadn't taken the capital.

They turned with the column moving north, and he watched their movements. A disciplined and determined army. He didn't figure GDI would be able to hold out much longer. The troopers noted their passage with only a slight turn of their heads. They then turned off to the right, and headed back home via a broken down road with destroyed homes along it.

They had apparently been destroyed long ago, prior to this conflict. The crumbling ruins were overrun by Tiberium deposits scattered throughout this coastal township. He found himself wondering at the people who had lived here. He could imagine children playing in the abandoned playground, now nothing more than rusted metal, and old plastic swaying in the breeze from the ocean. They ran past a statue of a long forgotten warrior from some unknown conflict long ago. It was leaning, and the rider and horse were being decayed by the salt air, and pigeons. Such a sad state for a once proud statue.

Leaving the town behind they came to untended fields, overgrown in years of disuse. These fields lasted for awhile until the defensive structures of the base loomed into view over the horizon. He looked back over his shoulder, and saw laser turrets cleverly concealed and camouflaged. Had he been a GDI patrol he would be dead now. They passed the main gate, and came back to where they had started. It had apparently been awhile. The sun was higher now, and the heat of the day baked them as they fell into a ragged line of men heaving for air, and trying to stand at attention.

The instructor headed for the chow hall himself, and they followed.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Fri, 09 Jul 2004 18:06:36 GMT

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"Alright Ladies, now that we have finished this morning's brisk walk we will be doing a little combat simulation. The winning candidate will get the dubious honor of standing at parade rest while I cycle the hell out of the rest of you for being lazy."

"You will get your choice of one of three weapons. A pulse rifle, a shotgun, or a sniper rifle. All three weapons are modified versions of their real counterparts, and will fire paint rounds. A hit anywhere is a kill, and the losing candidate will report back here for some special attention from one of my assistants while the other two finish under my oh so watchful eye. Rules are you don't go out of the yellow boundary line. If you do, you get some quality time removing my boot from where the sun doesn't shine. Each of you will be taken to a drop off zone, and given the pick of weapon. Let's see who gets bragging rights today girls." He finished with the sarcastic tone, and

an evil grin.

They were picked up by buggies, and dropped off at a replica GDI base. There were paint splatters from previous battles, and cameras at every intersection for watching the action. Some, he noticed had been hit by paint either intentionally or unintentionally.

He chose the sniper rifle. He had no intention of getting into a close range melee.

"When you are done, report to the command bunker in the middle of the town. If you get hit, raise your weapon above your head, and get there."

"Understood." Was all he said.

He trotted off into the cover of a barracks, and planned his next move.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Fri, 09 Jul 2004 19:49:42 GMT

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A quick assessment of his surroundings showed the facility as a small one, only about the size of ten buildings. He wouldn't have much setup time. He climbed on top of the barracks for a better vantage.

Silence reigned here. The sky was starting to cloud up quickly. Sergei was surprised at its suddenness, and almost forgot where he was. He returned his attention to his task. He was in the open too much. He needed higher ground, but which building to use? The radar dish would be an excellent spot, but difficult to get to, and if seen, he could never get cover.

The hospital perhaps? Yes, that would be perfect. He could hide in the ventilation ducting on the roof, and still have a good field of vision for roughly 270 degrees. There was no way he was going to travel in the open though. He saw a manhole cover in the alley beside him, and headed for it.

It took some effort to get the cover off. It was old, and was from the town that was here before this GDI facility had been set up, captured and stripped of all hardware for use as a training facility. He did manage to get it up by using a metal rod from a burned out nearby car. He slid the cover as slowly and quietly as he could, and dropped down into the old tunnel. He carefully swept the disturbed debris into the manhole and slid the cover back into place from below. He turned on the flashlight at the end of the rifle, and proceeded roughly in the direction of the hospital. If he couldn't get to it, at least he would get behind the others, and surprise them.

He was in an old electrical cable run inspection tunnel. The way was fairly clear except for the occasional collapsed wall or whatever. He traveled about 50 meters before coming to where he

to do was get up there. After some looking around, he found a metal rung ladder inset into a vertical shaft. He took them up, and gave the manhole a nudge from below. It moved, and he slid it as slowly as possible to avoid noise.

He looked around, and saw that he was in the Hospital E.R. ambulance garage. He lifted himself out, slid the cover back on, and sprinted for the E.E doors. They of course had no power, and he had to force them open. Darkness greeted him in the deadness of the abandoned facility. He moved into the hall leading to the stairwell, and moved up rapidly.

Now on the roof, he set up between two giant A/C unit ducts, and slowly scanned the area. He was going to run out of daylight soon. The sky was angry, and it looked like they would soon feel its wrath.

He waited for the first victim.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Mon, 12 Jul 2004 13:25:46 GMT

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It was half of an hour before he saw any movement at all, and that was only an errant animal running through the compound. He laughed when he saw paint balls splatter all around it, and hit it several times causing the animal to flip, and squeal in pain, as it changed direction, and scurried away.

Someone was exceedingly nervous, he thought while still chuckling to himself. He zoomed in on the area and noticed that he couldn't see as well as before. This was going to be a real challenge now that the sky was darkening. And if it started to rain, he was going to be real sorry he picked this rifle.

As if in answer to his thought, it started to rain as predicted. Looking around, he found a flat piece of sheetmetal that was used as an access panel for the giant ducts. He took it off, and bridged the gap between the two ducts. An impromptu shelter emerged from his efforts, and kept the majority of the rain off of him as he tried to settle back in. Sodium lights suddenly snapped on in the compound. They slowly warmed up, and grew in intensity as they got warmer. Rain spattered off the tops of the lights, and created a strange looking halo, as steam, bouncing rain drops sodium light combined to create them. Pretty, but not his focus right now.

Because of his daydreaming, he missed the opportunity to take Becker out. He ran from the left side of the main street, and dropped in the middle of the road, doing a roll, and coming to rest facing the opposite direction with his autorifle firing as it came up. He didn't see James anywhere, but the response was a flurry of paint aimed at Becker's chest. Becker dove out of the way, the area he was just in covered in running paint, mixed with water.

He kept trying to track becker. It was exceedingly difficult, as he zigged and zagged attempting to avoid the ever persistent James. He crashed through the door of an office complex, and Sergei lost him. He muttered a curse under his breath, and saw james zip across the road in pursuit.

He decided Becker would be first to go. Not only did he hate him, but he was too fast for Sergei to defeat in close combat. He ignored James for the time being. He could keep Becker off guard for him. The building Becker was in was a small square building, and he assumed that Becker would try to escape James via the back door. He zoomed on where he thought he would exit, and waited as the two battled inside the dark building. He clicked the safety off, and got into the prone stance, awaiting Becker's inevitable exit.

Rain danced off the end of his long barrel. It was protruding past the shelter, and the building by 4 inches and he hoped the water wouldn't cause issues with the trajectory of the paintball. He decided to aim a bit high to account for the driving rain and adjusted his scope quickly. He then focused, and settled his breathing into a rhythm. A tactic he had learned in civil defense corp. Serbians were very good at sniping. A tradition passed down from the wars of the 90's as Sebrenica, and Sarejevo had been turned into wastelands. The stalemate had turned into a nasty sniping war in the once proud capital. Every high rise, and open window had the potential to have snipers there, and many civilians had fallen to them.

Becker emerged by crashing through the back door. Sergei instinctively fired two shots in rapid succession. The first missed his right ear, the second hit him square in the forehead, and knocked Becker back in disbelief. He stood there, dazed beyond comprehension, looking for where the blow had come from, while trying in vain to erase the offending paint from his eyes as it ran down.

Realizing his situation, and knowing the cameras were watching, he slung the rifle, and locked his hands behind his head as he started the long walk the compound at the center of the base. James blasted through the door expecting to confront Becker in the alley. He rolled, and brought the weapon up to fire, and saw Becker in the submissive position, walking away. Disbelief crossed his face, and Sergei saw it in the scope. James looked up in the direction of the Hospital. A smile crossed Sergei's face as he pulled the trigger two more times. James knew it was too late, but tried to move. Both rounds struck him. One caught his neck, the other his upper arm, and he crashed into the water of the alley in disappointment. Sergei kept aim, as James lay in the water, and slowly pulled himself into an upright position. He slung the autorifle, and locked in his hands behind his head, which was moving back and forth in disbelief, and followed Becker who looked behind him, and smiled an evil grin.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Mon, 12 Jul 2004 18:13:30 GMT

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He remained in position despite having won. He was enjoying the moment, and needed to come down from the tension. He watched the rain come down, and enjoyed the sound of it hitting the sheetmetal. His wrist unit spoke in the voice of Cabal:
"INCOMING TRANSMISSION."

It was the voice of training officer Valdez.

"Ok hotshot, let's see how you do against some real soldiers. All you have to do is get to the command bunker."

"Affirmative" he said, and hit the "off" button. He didn't need distractions like Valdez if he was going to pull this off. He rose, and sprinted to the stairwell, and down the stairs. They would have him pegged by now, and he needed to get below ASAP. He wondered what kinds of BH members he was going to use against him, and tried to anticipate the attacks. Once he was on the lower level, he took stock in the surroundings. He didn't dare use the light at the end of the rifle, until he was away from windows or anything that would allow light to transit it.

The bunker was north of his position. He knew the most intelligent thing to do would be to take a roundabout route, but they were professionals who would anticipate that. He decided on trying the most direct, and unpredictable method. He also figured that with the rain outside, visibility would be bad for all parties unless they had Infrared. In that case, he was in trouble anyways.

The sewers were his best bet. He looked for anything marked maintenance or basement. He found an indiscrete door marked "Facilities area. Authorized personnel only." . This was it he figured, and crept past the rusty door, careful to not leave any traces of his passing behind. He closed the door, locked it, and turned the light on. The stairs had rusted through long ago due to a leak from in the overhead. The lower section lay at the bottom of the well. He took the stored firehose in the wall unit and flaked it out over the edge of the precipice. He quasi-rappelled down, and landed on the remnant of stairwell with a soft clang.

The entrance to the boiler room lay ahead, and he entered. Long unused machinery hulked over his head. Compressors, boilers, piping of all sorts lay ahead. As did the skeletal remains of some poor soul with a nametag stating his name was "Bubba". Bubba, while dead had some very useful tools, and Sergei thanked him for his generous offer. The crowbar, micro-torch and key ring would come in handy he was sure. Beyond Bubba lay the sewer access, a non-descript little manhole long rusted closed. He moved toward it.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Mon, 12 Jul 2004 19:40:26 GMT

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He could hear the rushing water down there. No doubt it was fairly clean, as the base hadn't been used in ages, but he hadn't expected rushing water. No doubt it was due to runoff from the torrent falling from the sky. He pried it open using the bubba-matic 4000 crowbar, and slid down into the drain, closing the grate after him.

It was dark, wet, and cold down here. Below him was the rushing water, and he was thankful at least that it was moving in the direction he wanted to go in. On the edge of the concrete drain was a walkway in various states of disrepair, but for the most part useable. He figured he was going to have to drop into the water, then swim to the walkway, and hope he could get to it before the water swept him on a long dangerous journey to the ocean.

No time like the present he mentally shrugged. He dropped into the water, and felt coldness, and darkness seized the area as the rifle submerged.

He bobbed up into air, but he could only see about a foot ahead of him as the rifle was still under water. He struck out for the walkway, and seized a metal railing, pulling himself up onto the platform. The water had only been about three feet deep, and he was thankful. He sat and caught his breath for a minute, listening to the cascading water. He then started down the path, and was careful to keep the light from obstacles. If it broke, he was going to have to work twice as hard to get out. The cool mist flowed almost like a river around him, and felt a chill, while the roar of the rushing water went on.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Tue, 13 Jul 2004 14:44:09 GMT

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He moved as rapidly as he could. It wouldn't take them long to search the hospital, and if they were good they would see the traces of his passing. He estimated it would be about five man hole covers before he could even be near where he wanted. The drain was about the diameter of a bus, and the passage on the right side that he was using was about three feet wide, so travel was fairly easy. Occasionally he came across parts of the path that were eroded, or damaged, but they were fairly easy to transit. In the water's path he would sometimes see objects lodged in grates, or pieces of the roof that had fallen. It was an eerie place of darkness, and he was thankful he was alone down here.

He counted the passage of four of the ladders leading up. He was careful to always look up to ensure a BH member wasn't waiting for his passage. So far, nothing. And nothing behind him either. He was concerned by the lack of showing on the part of the BH team. He hoped it didn't mean they weren't pursuing, just waiting near the bunker in hiding. That would make things difficult. He could take one at a time, but not multiples.

Ahead of him was a collapsed section. He wasn't going to be able to go any further, and surveyed his situation. The road above had collapsed as if on a hinge. He found that he was able to climb out of the drains by simply walking up the collapsed section like a ramp. Water swirled around the base of the collapsed section, and he could see a civilian cars' roof in the maelstrom. Above him , the storm raged and the rain pelted him. Lightning flashes illuminated his world of darkness and he could see only dark forms of buildings through the screen of rain. The sodium lights either weren't working or had been shut off. He crept to the top of the ramp, and got on one knee surveying the surroundings he could see.

Where was he?

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Tue, 13 Jul 2004 16:41:05 GMT

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He couldn't ascertain where he was from down here. He moved to the building closest to him on the right. It was so dark he couldn't see the entrance until lightning flashed. Not only did he see the door, but a BH member in a balaclava, apparently scanning the area in the opposite direction with night vision glasses, and apparently having trouble in the rain.

Sergei couldn't move, he was so surprised. He clearly had the advantage, but was frozen in the moment of sudden awareness. He regained composure, brought the gun level, and waited until the fellow turned. Four paint balls hit his chest in a diamond fashion near his left upper torso.

"Dammit!"

"I'll take your pistol, thank you very much." Sergei said.

The defeated assassin handed it over, locked his hands behind his head, and looked him in the eyes.

"Everyone gets lucky sometimes."

"Everyone except you. Now hand over the night vision, and lip mic too." Sergei replied.

He did and moved towards the bunker area, cursing the whole way. Now armed with a silenced pistol, night vision, and coms between the others, he was feeling far more confident about his chances. Over the lip mike came: "All units report."

"Alpha one here. Search negative. Hospital clear. Proceeding to rendezvous point whiskey"
"Bravo one. Search negative. Nothing to report in Wep factory area."
"Charlie one here. Search negative, but I did find two rats getting it on in the Factory."

Silence now met his ears.

"Delta one, Command. Report."

He could only assume his latest victim was Delta one. He spoke into the mic, simulating static as he spoke.

"Delta one nega.....earch ofarea clear....riencing comm. troub...."

"Affirmative DELTA ONE. Area clear, comm. trouble noted, Get a new mic ASAP."

"Aff...mative, command. Del.....one out."

Sergei chuckled as he climbed to the top of the building he was in. He set up an outpost hidden in the shelter of the smoke stack he was behind, and scanned the horizon for who was next. He was starting to enjoy this now.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Wed, 14 Jul 2004 13:16:36 GMT

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He now knew what he was up against. Three active hostiles with a central command post somewhere in the area. If he could locate that outpost, and capture the comm. link, he could isolate them from each other, and would stand a better chance. He had gotten lucky earlier, and gained the initiative. He didn't plan on losing it. Where would the command post be though, he wondered. Somewhere safe, yet able to scan the base to assist, and coordinate their response. There were three options that afforded the ability to oversee the base. He was on one of them. This was an old ore smelting factory that the base apparently used to refine raw materials for vehicle production. He could see the hangar door slightly off track below him. It had been a long time since any shipments of metal had left here on its way to the Weapons factory. He wondered how many weapons of war had started their existence right here, and how many of them were left.

The other two locations were the stack of the power plant, and the main construction building. Considering the stack of the plant was bathed in sodium lights, and a large hole was torn through it by an errant round long ago, he guessed that the MCV was his best bet. He didn't know much about these unique buildings other than they were the center of each mobile base, and were initially set up based on mobile platforms that were slowly rolled into position on massive treads. Quite a feat of engineering he surmised, but irrelevant to his necessary task at the moment. He spoke to his CABAL link:

"Cabal, give me a breakdown on the layout of GDI MCV structures, post deployment mode. Specifically I need information regarding interior layout of MCV's in the style used in the facility I am in right now."

"AFFIRMATIVE. GLOBAL DEFENSE INITIATIVE MOBILE CONSTRUCTION VEHICLE, CLASS MCV ZERO ZERO ONE DASH BRAVO.

THIS MCV IS THE SECOND REVISION IN GDI'S CURRENT INVENTORY OF THIS TYPE OF VEHICLE. NOTABLE ENHANCEMENTS OVER PRIOR DESIGN INCLUDE VOICE RECOGNITION, AND KEYCARD LOCKS AT ALL ACCESSES AS WELL AS IMPROVED CRANE STRUCTURE ALLOWING FOR HEAVIER CARGO LIFTS. THE CONSTRUCTION YARD IS ALSO 20 % LARGER ALLOWING FOR QUICKER SUB ASSEMBLY OF KEY STRUCTURE COMPONENTS.

INTERIOR SPECIFICATIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS: TWO LEVEL STRUCTURE. FIRST FLOOR IS PRIMARILY A LARGE HANGAR WHERE THE SUB COMPONENTS ARE BUILT IN AUTOMATED ASSEMBLY LINES. WELDING, AND CUTTING ROBOTICS ARE CONTROLLED FROM THE UPPER LEVEL CONTROL ROOM, WHICH OVERSEES THE CONSTRUCTION FLOOR. THE FIRST FLOOR HAS A CENTRAL ELEVATOR FOR ACCESSING THE CONTROL ROOM, AS WELL AS A SECONDARY EMERGENCY ACCESS IN THE REAR OF THE FACILITY. ACCESS TO THIS STAIRWELL IS GAINED THROUGH THE HYDRAULIC PUMP ROOM.

UPPER LEVEL ROOMS ALSO INCLUDE DINING FACILITIES FOR GDI PERSONNEL, AS WELL AS BUNKING FOR THE TWO MAN MAINTENANCE CREW."

"That will be all Cabal. Thank you."

"YOUR GRATITUDE IS UNECESSARY, HUMAN."

"So are your commentaries, machine."

He scanned the area before leaving the roof top. As expected no movement could be seen. He figured the MCV would be close, as the raw materials were based here. He found his target 200 yards away after a lightning flash. He moved from the roof, and exited the building.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Wed, 14 Jul 2004 19:45:54 GMT

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The water was building up from the incessant rain, and each footfall brought a splash, and water up to his calf. He could just imagine what that drain was going to look like in an hour. Any later, and a flashflood could have killed him. He ran with best speed towards the Facility using the back alleys to avoid detection. They would be watching the roof tops knowing he had a sniper rifle, and his last tactics versus the other candidates.

He came up upon the back of the building finally after having to maneuver through a maze of tangled steel from an overturned delivery truck.

Of course, the building was without power, and it wouldn't matter that the voice, and key card security devices were there. He was pleased to see the door slightly ajar, but it wasn't open enough to let him through. The top hinge held a steadfast grip and the bottom was rusted into the tangle of metal that used to be one of the girders the truck had dumped. The micro torch was now his friend, and he fired it up. He focused on the hinge only, and it broke free, almost falling to the floor with a bang. He had to grab it to prevent alarming the command post of his presence. Gently he maneuvered it out of the way, making a minor amount of noise in the process.

After entering, he replaced the door as best as he could, and then turned to survey his surroundings. The emergency lights were functioning. That was the only clue he needed to tell him the nest was truly upstairs. He was in the hydraulic room that CABAL had said existed. He stopped to switch weapons to the silenced pistol, making sure it was loaded.

The room was a typical hydraulic room. Greasy, dirty, and full of machinery and pipes bent at awkward angles, seemingly running everywhere. The stairs loomed ahead, tucked into the corner of the room, and beckoning to him in the red glow. He took each stair slowly, and deliberately, his eyes focused on the door at the top of the stairs. Nothing moved, and he heard a soft beeping in the background. At the top of the stairs, he ever so slowly opened the door. A small corridor led straight, and then turned left in the dim light. Bullet holes of the real variety were everywhere up here, as well as blood stains on the wall, and floor. Old and dried, they made a slight crunch noise as he tread on it. He reached the left turning corner, and peeked around the corner. The impromptu control station lay ahead, seemingly abandoned.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Thu, 15 Jul 2004 13:03:34 GMT

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The station looked like a desk with touch pads for different functions. The flat screen monitor showed various areas of the facility, in a four window configuration. He couldn't make out the images from this distance though. He slowly scanned the room, and saw a cup of coffee sitting on the desk still giving off steam. Where was the outpost commander? It was then that he heard the flush of the toilet, and started to laugh in spite of the need for stealth.

The officer came from the left, and headed for the console. As he passed where Sergei was, his mic and Sergei's mic started a feedback loop. He popped the ear plug out quickly, knowing the game was up, and rolled into the open as the officer dug at his ear trying to remove the plug. Sergei fired twice, both hitting the heart area in typical textbook double-tap formation.

"Affirmative, sir. Remove the mic, and chuck it in the corner. The others will be wondering

A smile met his query, and Sergei moved to the console as the officer locked his hands behind his head, and headed for the elevator to report at the compound.

At that, the officer laughed, and hit the down button.

Sergei sat in the chair, placing the pistol on the desk. He brought up the status locator for the remaining three hostiles. As expected they were wearing locator beacons, and he pinpointed their positions accurately including the officer who was now heading out the MCV bay door. He looked at the coffee, and shrugged his shoulder. Why not?

He drank the coffee, and left the overhead display up, showing positions with red dots. Oddly they were closing on the Construction facility. The beeping in the background grew louder, and he

turned to where it was coming from. He couldn't determine it's location, but he didn't like how things were shaping up with them closing on the building. He saw the "dead officer's blip pass by where one of the others was, and Sergei knew that he'd been found out. Suddenly the mic in the corner blared something at the same time his own did. He didn't hear the words, but knew what they were communicating. He found the comm. relay, and yanked the wires out of it. Now they would be effectively on their own, as he yanked the lip mic from his own uniform. The playing field was now level.

He afforded one last glance at the monitor before leaving. They were all closing from different areas. He was going to have to have to make a run for it, or fight it out in here. He shut down the power, and everything went black, except the single beep, and a red light. Suddenly realization dawned, and he hit the deck as the claymore exploded above him. He couldn't see, and turned on his light. Paint was everywhere. The command area must have been on a timer that

himself. No paint. He was still in this. Turning the power back off, he left the command deck, and headed down the stairs to the back exit.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Thu, 15 Jul 2004 18:38:02 GMT

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He decided that rather than fight it out with three superior trained warriors, he'd make a run for the bunker. While they wasted their time looking for him here, he would be long gone, and "safe" at the bunker. He slipped out the back door, and came around the northerly side of the ConYard. The sodium light in the yard highlighted the briefest glimmer of something there, but it was gone before he could look closer. They were here already. He wasn't sure where the bunker was, but he had an idea based on where the command officer's blip had been on the screen.

The time for subtlety was over now. He waited until the lights came on in the upper room above him, and zoomed in with the rifle. He had a shot at one them, and took it in a snap decision. This time he fired four rounds and then bolted before he had time to look to see if they had hit anything. They would take too long trying to find him to chase him to the bunker now.

As he ran, he didn't see the paint balls' trajectories. They did indeed make it through the broken window, and entered the command deck. The victim took a round in the back of his knee. He jumped instinctively back, and exposed his compatriot across the room who was just entering. Two of the balls hit the wall, the fourth and last hit him in the cheek. The last of them saw him bolt from the scene, and gave pursuit as the two others cursed, and prepared for the trudge back to the bunker. Sergei didn't know it yet, but he had just reduced a crack Nod hit squad to a one man rush to the bunker. He ran as hard as he could, and afforded a look over his shoulder. The angry Nod assassin was in hot pursuit. He was not going to lose to this rookie. Sergei gave all he had left, and ran. His muscles ached so badly after the run, and the hours in the rain and cold. His lead was all he had.

He spied the defeated officer arriving at a low squat building, and entering. That must be it. He ran all the harder, pistol in hand.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Thu, 15 Jul 2004 18:57:04 GMT

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Paint balls started to fly around him. He heard, more than saw, them whizzing by. The ground between him and the bunker was regular pavement with no cover. The avenue from the ConYard to the bunker was a regular road bordered by the refinery on the right, and the ruins of the radar center. It opened up into the courtyard where the bunker was in the center of a large lake of water from the torrent falling down. The Blackhand elite behind him was getting his range, and Sergei zigged to the left, then right again, as the angry elite reloaded on the run.

He hit the quasi-lake at full tilt and nearly tripped from the switch in medium he was transiting. The water was knee deep, and sapped his strength as he pressed on. He was halfway across the clearing. The elite was closing, and now the paint started to splatter on the bunker as it missed him. He saw the other candidates watching while they stood at parade rest in the pouring rain, Valdez to their left. Some of the paint hit Becker, and he cursed as Sergei approached the instructor's position. With one last surge of strength he leaped toward Valdez like a runner stealing home. The BH elite fired every round in the chamber he had. Had Sergei remained running they would have struck him squarely in the back, but his parabolic curve was now bringing him earthward towards Valdez's feet. The rounds hit Valdez's poncho, as Sergei landed at the feet of the instructor, and gasped for air on the ground. James smirked at him with pride, as Sergei blacked out, his punished body collapsing in defeat.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Mon, 19 Jul 2004 13:05:07 GMT

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He woke, the rain still battering his face. Someone had flipped him onto his side. He laid still listening to his surroundings, trying to ascertain what to expect once he started to rise. He did a quick assessment of his body. And felt cold seeping into just about every joint. The pain of trying to flex his fingers was sharp, but the pain also told him that he wasn't in danger of exposure. James' voice sounded in his ears: "Curse him all you want Becker. He not only whooped us, he whooped them too. Did you hear them complaining when they got here about how he had

In the background he heard Valdez shout:

"If you two ladies can't stop gossiping over there, I can find something to occupy your

He mentally grinned as he pictured the scene in his mind. Whatever Valdez was doing, he guessed it was related to the team he had just neutralized. The cameras would have caught it all so it would impossible for them to refute or change any aspect of it.

He lay there for a few more minutes, enjoying the break not knowing what lie ahead. He hoped a return to the barracks and some food was in order. He willed his arms into motion and oh so

slowly pushed himself up. He kneeled on one leg, and placed the other foot into the mud. He rose into the upright position, and raised his face to the sky. He let the rain clean the mud off for a second, and then looked directly at James and Becker. He could sense something different in Becker now, and knew he had gained the mental advantage in the future. James just smirked.

He put one foot in front of the other, and fell into formation beside the other two. Everything hurt him, but at least he was moving with no injuries. All his weapons had been taken he noticed. Just as well. He didn't need them anymore. Valdez noticed he had risen, and walked over and stood in front of Sergei at Parade rest. He got right in his face with a stern look on his brow, and

He took a small badge out, and took the frog off the back leaving just the pin. He smacked it into Sergei's chest, and he gasped in pain as it sunk into his flesh. Valdez took pleasure in the gasp of pain and said:

"Get them back to Barracks Lieutenant. I want them on the deck at 0500 tommorow morning.

He started back towards barracks, and the other two fell into line behind him. They fell into a rhythmic pace of boots slapping the ground, and his body finally warmed up. He could feel Becker's eyes burning into his back with seething hatred, but he did not rebel. The run back was easy, and as they passed the gate, he was glad to see the barracks loom into view. Rest, warmth, and food awaited.

All he said to the others was: "0500 tomorrow. Don't be late this time Becker." He grinned as Becker's ugly grimace walked by to his room at the end of the hall. James walked by him, and said "Hey, let's grab chow and chat after a shower. Sound good?"

"Yeah, sounds fine. I'll give a knock when I get done."

James left him with a clap on the shoulder, and went to his room to clean up.

He cycled his own door, and after it closed He extricated the pin from his chest, stripped down, and got in the shower. He let the warm water run for a good long time before he finished and he felt warm again. The shower floor was covered in mud and blood from the pin wound, and he cleaned it out before moving on. He hung the wet BDU's to dry in the shower, put a med patch on his wound and got into fresh BDU's, and a fresh pair of boots. He was wondering what to do about the pin with no frog to hold it on. Someone had slipped cloth Squad leader insignia under his door to attach to the tear away strips on his BDU's. Problem solved.

The insignia was a substitute for the pin. He then went and got James who answered his knock swiftly. "Alright, let's go eat."

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Mon, 19 Jul 2004 16:42:07 GMT

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"Details, dammit. And don't skip anything. The last I knew you had tagged us both, and while I was following that meathead Becker back, helos start flying into the skirmish zone. Then we get to the bunker, and fall in, and await our happy fate only to be ignored by Valdez for 20 minutes. Then he sticks his ugly head out, tells us to cycle for 30 minutes and goes back into the bunker. Three hours later you show up being chased by BH Elite with a paint gun. I swear that if

Sergei told him the details of the day's events over their meal. He lowered his voice when Becker showed up and sat down across the room to sulk and stare daggers into Sergei. "So that's why they were all excited after you passed out. I wondered what was going on, and who those people were that kept showing up with their hands above their heads. After they all linked up, Valdez checked your breathing, took the weapons and some other items, and then rolled you onto your side. Then they all went to bunker to chat about it. That commander

"My guess is he'll be focusing on command and control to see how we work together. It

Sergei laughed, and Becker raised his head to see what they were laughing at. Sergei excused himself, and headed back to his room. He saw Becker move to where he had been sitting to interrogate James and he chuckled.

When he got back, Cabal notified him that he had a message waiting for him on the battle simulator intranet. From who he wondered? He logged on, and identified himself.

C'mon, not tonight he mentally sighed. I'm too tired for this.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.
Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Mon, 19 Jul 2004 18:47:10 GMT
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He decided to humor the protagonist. He logged on, and requested Centurion's status. He of course was not on, so he left the simulator up and running with instructions to notify him when Centurion did come on. He then took the opportunity to request lieutenants lapel pins for his dress uniforms, should the occasion arrive in the future. Cabal notified him that the request was sent, and to expect delivery within 12 hours, but he couldn't promise anything knowing human incompetence.

He also did some research on the front near Sarejevo. What he could glean from the Nod Brotherhood news wasn't worth listening to. The announcer was a bubbly blonde who thought everything Nod was perfect, and everything was going well.

He knew better judging from the reinforcements he had seen.

"CENTURION ONLINE." Boomed Cabal.

He idled up to the display, accepted the challenge presented, and awaited his assignment of

troops. He was issued command of a GDI outpost this time. On another day, he would have built base defenses, and done things the right way, but today he just wanted to be done with it. He built two tiberium refineries, and built as many grenadiers as he could, and had a dedicated engineer corps behind them with medics supporting both. He sent all of them South as fast as possible, and stormed the Nod facility he found via scout.

What he found was an unprepared Nod facility focused on building tech buildings, and not on defense. He laid waste to the defenses, as the defender sold all his expensive buildings and tried desperately to build enough infantry.

He almost succeeded.

Sergei then focused on the hand, then Weapons Factory, as he continued to build basic infantry in his own unattacked base. He took over what he couldn't destroy, and sold it immediately to allocate more money to his own buildup.

With very few units left, he focused on destroying the MCV, and succeeded, but barely. His last unit died in a pile of steaming plasma.

Left with no structures to build defensive structures, and no useable army, the opponent sold every last building, and attempted to put a hurt on Sergei. Sergei's army of basic infantry made short work of them, and he was declared winner in under ten minutes.

He was too tired to care. He shut the simulator down before he could be messaged by Centurion or re-challenged to another game. He set his alarm, and undressed. Then he settled in for the best night of sleep he would have for a while.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Tue, 20 Jul 2004 18:33:19 GMT

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He awoke refreshed. His decision to go to bed rather than stay on the simulator was a wise one. No dreams plagued him this day, and he was feeling good despite his aching body.

He ate and was in the field at 0445. To his surprise, the others were there ahead of him, and awaiting Valdez's arrival. He sidled up next to them, and awaited what the day would bring. As expected, Valdez arrived early, and berated them for everything under the sun except tardiness. They did the morning calisthenics, and as the sun came up they ended the pre-sunrise torture session.

"Fall in, ladies! Today we are going to work on weapon recognition, and accuracy. When in the field you will need to utilize what you can find be it enemy weaponry or not. While I am sure you lovely ladies would appreciate a nice truck ride to the range, I on the other hand would like a brisk jog this morning. Any problems with that?"

No one was going to say anything different, but it wasn't as if they would get the chance. Valdez was already on the run, and they followed him in formation.

His overly cheerful voice broke into Sergie's head: "Squad leader, give us some nice brotherhood cadence to run to."

His mind raced, and then it came to him.

"I want to be Black Hand Elite,
Kane will think I'm really neat.
I want to sneak into combat zones,
Get beacons set up, then head on home.

Left, left, lefty, right, left.
Left, left, keep it in step.

Camo and stealth, they are your friends,
They're gonna get you home in the end.
If you get caught, you know what to do,
Take the red pill, then we'll honor you.

Left, left, lefty, right, left.
Left, left, keep it in step.

One vision, one purpose that's our creed,
The brotherhood fights their global greed.
Solomon's lies will be seen through,
Brother Kane will liberate you."

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.
Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Thu, 22 Jul 2004 15:13:39 GMT
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The range came into view after 5 minutes of running. The left side was the low and squat enclosed firing range itself, and the right was a two story brick building with few windows. Valdez brought them to the right side, and entered the lobby area where a central staircase led upwards. Across the entryway was a simple sign denoting the building's function in Brotherhood society.

There were only a few people about, and they paid almost no attention to the BH team. This seemed to be commonplace for them. Valdez took the stairs two at a time, and stopped at the top, looking right, then left. He chose right, and led them down a highly polished corridor to a door

Inside was almost the equivalent of a school room. Each desk was larger than a school desk, and had tools on each one, but all faced forward toward the instruction bench.

"Sit down, there, there and there. You get off easy the rest of this week ladies. Ustinov is in charge. When instruction is over at the end of week, you belong to me again. You ladies had best be here by 0600 each day, and after training concludes each day, fall in back at barracks for a little night time instruction with your beloved instructor. Ustinov, contact me when they are ready

Valdez returned it, and whisked out of the room.

Sergei took his seat next to becker. There wasn't much for them to do until the instructor arrived, so they perused the tools on the desk. Basic breakdown tooling for rifle repair and maintenance. All well oiled, and in their respective holders. The door opened, and in walked a non-descript man in a tech uniform and glasses.

"Good Morning Black Hand, we are honored to have your presence here at research facility

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Fri, 23 Jul 2004 15:29:09 GMT

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The morning started off with basic weapons familiarization via an overhead projection. All three of them knew most of them, but Sergei was lacking in Brotherhood technology and had to pay special attention. Lunch time came, and they took 30 minutes at the cafeteria inside the building, and met back in the room. Autorifles were awaiting them on their desks.

"I want to have you tear these rifles down, and lay out the pieces in front of you. I am going to

He did the best he could. Some of the components were strange to him, but a rifle is a rifle. He did manage to get it apart, but getting back together was going to be interesting.

It turned out he wasn't going to have to worry about it too much. The instructors' lesson focused on how to replace missing/broken parts with common items like paper clips, pens and things of that nature. He walked them through it, and when they were done, the rifles stood reassembled with their original components.

He led them down to the range through the polished halls. They passed the experimental

there. Tiberium seemed to be the exotic chemical of choice. The range officer greeted them with a gruff voice.

"Afternoon, Seemus. Gentlemen, follow me. The rules are as follows:

1. Ammunition is provided by me. 2 clips only.
2. Keep the rifles downrange at all times when loaded.
3. Open the breach, and show me that the weapon is indeed empty prior to leaving the line.

He pointed out their spots, had them assume prone position, and dispensed clips.

They did so, and awaited the order to fire.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [KIRBY098](#) on Fri, 23 Jul 2004 17:12:06 GMT

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The other two immediately commenced an onslaught against their offending targets. He waited 2 seconds, adjusted to the noise, and focused on the target. He eased the trigger back, and fired in 10 round bursts, recalibrating himself in between. He had a 30 round clip, and the others were already reloading, and waiting on the targets to be reset by the computer. They now let loose as the target popped up, refreshed. He loosed his final 10 round burst, and reloaded. The other two were done, and opening their breaches for inspection as they rose. He watched his target come up again, waiting until it stopped moving, and loosed his staggered bursts.

He stopped firing as he heard the 'ping' of the spring bottoming out with no more rounds to ram into the chamber. He made sure the breach was clear, stood up, and showed the rifle to the Range officer. He shouldered the weapon waiting for instruction.

"Alright, listen up. The targets you just unloaded on are going to be evaluated for accuracy. Now you get to have a little fun. Here's some more ammo, and a standard issue officer corps pistol. The targets will be popping up indiscriminately. No testing yet, just some practice.

He received his pistol, and 100 rounds of 9mm ammo, and resumed prone position. Loading the pistol was like second nature to him, and he was looking forward to this. The range officer said in

For about 3 seconds nothing happened, then the targets started moving from left to right and vice versa. Some were civilian profiles, other clearly hostile with gun profiles evident. He smiled and squeezed the trigger.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [Crimson](#) on Mon, 26 Jul 2004 20:24:25 GMT

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By Kirby098, not me... if he posts it himself I will delete this one.

He plugged targets methodically, but occasionally had to resist the urge to annihilate a civilian as a terrorist hid behind them. Becker made no effort to restrain himself, and surprisingly neither did James. This puzzled Sergei, and he was going to ask James at the very least what he had been thinking. He never got the chance, as after they finished shooting, and opening the pistol breach, they were instructed to fall into formation outside the range. They did so and the range officer walked in front of them.

"Alright the results are in from your firing tests. Quickest time: Becker

Most accurate: Parker

Longest time: Ustinov

Meet in the classroom tomorrow morning, and we will continue training. Ustinov, take 'em out, and report to Valdez on arrival."

"Sir, yes sir!"

As they returned to barracks, he found himself perplexed. Why had he finished last? He clearly

needed to compensate for whatever it was the brotherhood found. He was further disturbed that James, despite his rapidity of fire had outscored him in accuracy.

He didn't have time to worry about it though. The barracks parade grounds were coming into view.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [Blazer](#) on Wed, 28 Jul 2004 01:24:14 GMT

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Latest update from Kirby:

Once they had arrived, he ordered a quick bite to eat, and for them to fall into formation in five minutes. He , himself ate light, and if they were going to be cycled, he didn't want to be heaving. The other two seemed to appreciate getting something to eat as well, and Becker was

They fell back in without his urging, and once on the line, he contacted Valdez via Cabal.

"I'll be there when I get there. Have the girls do some body builders for me, would you?

In a loud commanding voice Sergei said: "8 count Body builders. BEGIN! 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 1!

He liked these, but they tended to wear you out more throughout your entire body, rather than just an isolated muscle group. They consisted of starting in an upright position at attention, dropping to the pushup position, going down, then back up. Then the victim kicked his legs apart in a

attention. They were brutal to go through for any length of time, and Sergei hoped valdez wasn't too long in coming.

Long about the time they were finishing number 43, Valdez came strolling along finally and

An evil grin came across his face, and Sergei knew the news was good for Valdez, bad for them.

"Ok ladies, Here it is. The brotherhood dredged the sludge pits of this fine establishment, and found 5 other poor souls to participate in this fun-fest with you. You will actually be a squad, and I expect you to act as such. Parker and Becker you are hereby promoted to assistant squad leaders, and will assist Ustinov in administrating. They will be moving in tonight, providing they survive their testing. Until then, we are going to take it easy, and enjoy some more of the fine scenery around the base. Ustinov! I want to hear some more of your melodious tunes while we

And they were off again...

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Wed, 28 Jul 2004 14:29:20 GMT

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Latest Update

Sergei was fairly prepared for cadence this time.

“GDI troopers out on patrol
Nod in the bushes, chewin’ on a can of skoal

They hear the bushes rustle Head in to check it out
It’s a little too late, Nod has headed out.

Move on past the troopers,Head up to the gate
Waitin’ for the harvy,The thing is never late

The gate is down , No time to celebrate
My mission starts, its to destroy some freight

C-4 is down, the storage door awaits
I step on out , the explosion will be great

I go to turn and leave ,I’ve got a real hot date

This brought a snort of approval from Valdez and the others. They ran past the swamps in between the base and the ocean today. There was a path through the largest one just wide enough to run on, and they took it. He was glad for the peace of this place, and the sun setting on the horizon. He took a second to appreciate it before Valdez took them deeper, and night approached.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Mon, 02 Aug 2004 14:55:52 GMT

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Latest update

The sun crept down past the horizon line, and twilight was all they had. He could see the beautiful orange, yellow and red patterns as the now gone sun's rays reflected off the clouds. The result was an eerie lighting in the midst of this swamp. It also had a particular beauty to it, and he enjoyed the breeze rolling through the cat tails. About halfway across, they came upon an old GDI APC. It had been holed by an antitank round, and burn marks scarred its surface wherever the fire had licked out of the ports.

An oddity in this beautiful place, and he found himself resenting the intrusion on his sense of peace. They came to solid ground at last, and left the swamp behind on their return route to the base. He noticed that they were running past the helipads and their associated defenses now.

They were well protected against air and ground assault by a hodgepodge of SAMs and laser turrets, as well as a constantly circling patrol of Harpys.

One of them placed a spotlight on them, and ordered them to halt. After verification with Valdez, they continued on the patrol. This was a loud area, and technicians were constantly busy working on the aircraft. He was glad he didn't have to be here much longer. Valdez brought them back to barracks just in time to see the recruits that had survived the testing. There were only three of them. Two had fallen somewhere along the path to the Black Hand. The medics were patching them up, and Valdez had them fall in in front of him, facing the three of them.

"Ustinov! Step forward. These are the latest victims for my glorious training program. Sanchez, Vigo and Drubnov. Get them situated, and to the firing range with you in the morning. As usual, check in with me afterwards for some quality time with me. You girls need to follow every order given to you by Lieutenant Ustinov. Is that clear?
Dismissed!"

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Tue, 03 Aug 2004 13:16:03 GMT

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Entry 66

"Alright, let's go. I'll take Drubnov, Parker take Vigo and Becker take Sanchez. Get them situated, and get them chow and show them how to use Cabal. Everyone be here 0600 on

Sergei led Drubnov to his room. He made sure he was across from him in case there were any issues he needed to address. He gave him 30 minutes to get situated, and was pleased to see the Brotherhood had medics arrive and the uniforms were already provided for. 30 minutes later he

Drubnov replied in a heavily Russian accented voice in the affirmative. It was part of the reason Sergei had picked him. Serbians shared slavik ancestry with Russians and felt closely tied to them. Sergei was curious as to where he hailed from, and inquired in Russian "Where are you

"I didn't even know there were still useful subs in the old Russian navy. Why were you

"There are old diesels, and nuke boats out there. They can no longer go to sea, but their reactors are still hot, and they still have low order nuke torpedoes. I was in charge of a

They spent the next hour discussing Sergei's past, and Drubnov's role in the Brotherhood before applying to the Black Hand. He had been a tank driver, and involved in the first Tiberian War, and the retreat from Sarejevo after the Brotherhood's defeat at the hands of GDI's General Sheppard. He was a part of the current battles surrounding its attempted re-capture,

and confirmed Sergei's suspicion that GDI was putting up a better fight than the Brotherhood had expected.

"They are using a combination of old tank technology and their new Titan walkers to hit us every time we enter the city. Combined with their air superiority, they are repelling everything we

They finished and Sergei bid him goodnight. He took some time to leaf through the books provided by the intel folks, and checked the battlegrid message board. One message from Centurion awaited.

He smiled in spite of himself, and changed for bed after a quick shower. Hot water was a wonderful thing, and he was appreciating it so much more since the training started. He took time to note his blisters from running, and also noticed that the inside of his thighs were raw from rubbing together while running. He was going to have to wear silk shorts under his clothes to prevent it.

As he laid down, he thought about his new command and hoped he was man enough to lead them as he drifted off to sleep.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Wed, 04 Aug 2004 13:51:06 GMT

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67-68

The morning came too soon, but not until he had the dream again. Its eerie recurring frequency was almost frightening to him. He pushed it out of his mind, and prepared for the day. Breakfast was a quick slice of toast, and some fruit, washed down by the prerequisite cup of coffee. The others were in there too, and chatting amongst themselves. He sat down alone, and realized the loneliness of command, yet again. Not that he really cared. There so much to think about, and prepare for.

He got up, and prepared to head outside after returning his tray to the galley. The others followed his lead upon seeing him get up. They tromped out together, and Sergei assumed position facing them. He did a quick head check, and satisfied they were all here and presentable stated:

"For you FNG's, we are starting off with weapons training this week. I can only assume you are all familiar with weapons anyways so catching up won't be an issue. If it will be though, see me in private. I will get you what you need to get up to speed. Let's go."

Together they fell into lockstep in a formation of two by two. Sergei rattled off cadence again, and they arrived quickly. Instructor Seemus was surprised to see so many Blackhand in one room, and seemed stunned in place. Sergei pulled him out into the hall, and gave him the dump, and asked him what he needed to support three more trainees.

"I will need to requisition some more rifles from the armory, and ammunition to use in them. I will

also need to clear them for access to "special weapons".

"Alright, let's make this happen. Becker!"

"Sir?" He scowled.

"Take a man, and follow Seemus down to the ammo locker. I will wait for you here Seemus"

"Affirmative. Drubnov, come with me."

"Um, ok." Seemus stammered, uncomfortable in the presence of Becker's hugeness.

They walked off, and Sergei returned to the classroom.

"Where are you other two from?" He asked.

"Spanish Contingent." Vigo stated.

"South American, here." Sanchez replied.

"I'm a local, and Brother Parker here is from the U.S.. Becker is from Germany. Quite a range of humanity we have here."

The others finally returned, and they spent the afternoon disassembling, and reassembling various equipment. Chow time came and went, and then when they were all back in the room again Seemus said:

"And now for the good stuff."

68 An assistant rolled in a cart with a tarp covering something underneath. A second and third cart was also rolled in, and an armed escort accompanied this hardware. They took up positions at the rear of the room. The assistant left, and Seemus whipped the tarp back on the first cart. It was a boxy looking object, and had a silver sheen to it. It was largely insignificant in and of itself, but the way Seemus treated it they all knew it was special somehow.

"Folks, this is GDI's latest and greatest anti-tank weaponry. Labelled with the designation

This drew a response from the vets in the room, and Sergei himself was stunned by the revelation that the hated light from the sky had been harnessed as a portable item.

"We found this item at a laboratory in North America on a raid last week. Testing and analysis have confirmed its destructive capability. Using the same technology that makes the Ion Cannon in orbit so devastating, this unit is able to project a focused Ion Beam onto enemy armor, and strip the targets atoms of their Ions. This has the effect of causing instability at the atomic level, and the result is an explosive reaction of the base elements to each other as the atoms all become positive in nature, thus repelling each other. It is quite effective. Brotherhood reverse-engineering

"As near as we can tell, they are still in a development phase. They have been designed to be used with an advanced armor suit that we have also captured. It is doubtful that these will be manufactured on a wide enough scale to affect us much. It has a slow rate of fire, and no automatic targeting. It is in effect, a really big, unwieldy item that is difficult to use, and hard to

He replaced the tarp over the PIC, and whipped back the next one.

"This, gentlemen, is our answer to the PIC. Officially classified as Weapons Project 312, we

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Thu, 05 Aug 2004 16:32:45 GMT

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69-70

It was far smaller in girth, but longer overall and far more attractive than the bulky GDI counterpart.

"This baby works by firing projectiles from a magnetic accelerator chamber inside. The hyper-velocities these projectiles achieve allow us to get the puncture power of a depleted uranium round without the expense, and weight and they are man-portable as well. They have one drawback. The arcing inside the chamber from the electromagnetic build up and release tends to destroy the rails fairly quickly. The Brotherhood has compensated for this by replaceable

He replaced the railgun's tarp, and snapped back the last one.

"This is Weapons project 313. Commonly know throughout the Lab as the Nuclear strike Beacon. In the old days, we could use GPS to send our airmail, but with GDI's dominance of orbital platforms since the first Tiberian War, we now have to place these to precisely hit our targets with Tactical Nuclear strikes. We can airdrop them, or have a commando team place them. Once placed, the coordinates are sent back to missile command in our African bases and the strike will be sent immediately. Destruction of the device will result in the strike being aborted,

These weapons were escorted out of the room under guard, and Seemus continued with some other weapons platforms they were using, and had seen. There was a distinct focus on Tiberium technology he noticed. They broke for lunch with orders to meet on the range after for some test firing, and weapons familiarizations.

Sergei ate quicker than needed, and headed to the range. He left orders for James to make sure the squad got downstairs in 15 minutes, and headed for the exit. Just beyond the doors was the central staircase, and he took the stairs to the lobby. He arrived in the range area as the experimentals were arriving with their guards. Seemus was already there, and ordering a trooper driving a dilapidated hummvee onto the firing range. A helo arrived above, and dropped a destroyed GDI medium unceremoniously onto the tarmac as well. Last to arrive was the Nod delivery truck with some troopers. They unloaded dummies of GDI soldiers and scattered them about on the ground joking as they went about how these were so much smarter than the real deal. They had real Kevlar composite vests on as well. He surmised that the case was to show how effective the guns were.

The men showed up and fell in, as did he in front of them. The range officer strolled over, and stated: "All present and accounted for?"

"Sir, yes sir!" Sergei said, and dropped his salute.

"Alright men, today we are showing the destructive power of these experimental weapons to you, and giving you a chance to play with them a bit. You of all the brotherhood warriors will be the most likely to run across or use them. GDI spy sats are patrolling this area, and we will need to get them under tarps in 3.25 minutes, but after that, we are a 'go' to fire away."

They waited until the mentioned time, and Cabal told the range officer all was clear and that the satellite had passed.

"Alright, first up: Personal Ion Cannon. Any volunteers?"

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.
Posted by [rm5248](#) on Thu, 05 Aug 2004 22:40:40 GMT
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71

Becker of course was first to step forward. The range officer showed him how it worked, where the trigger was, and what to expect. Then he stood back, and grinned.

So did Becker. He aimed for the tank, and pulled the trigger. The weapon made an audible noise as if warming up, and then released all its energy in a loud banging noise. The heat generated by the weapon's charging disturbed the air around Becker, and they could smell ozone in the air from the discharge. Becker was driven back about an inch from the recoil. The tank fared far worse than Becker.

The light beam struck it on the cupola. It was already damaged from the DU shells that had been fired into it by a harpy on the front. Becker's shot had nailed it by the cannon that was half melted, and the armor caved in to the energy as it stripped particles of their ions. The entry hole was about 7 inches in diameter, and the beam entered the cupola. Something ruptured, and the cupola lifted up, and came back down slightly off kilter.

Becker seemed stunned by the firepower just displayed. They all were. If GDI brought this weapon into production.....

Sergei stepped forward, and asked to try the railgun.

He waited until Becker moved, and returned the PIC and he bore down on The Humvee. He braced for an impact, and wasn't disappointed. The gun fired quickly with a 'whang' and he could almost feel the projectile leaving the gun. He fired two more rounds before the first had even hit.

The humvee caught the blow and started to flip. The other two shots helped it along, and had it spinning on three axes at once before landing on it's side. He chuckled to himself. He liked this weapon

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

71

He returned the weapon to its rack, and told the others to form a line, and get familiar and have some fun with the weapons. They spent the next hour tearing up the range, and decimating the vehicles, and targets. The range officer called out that the satellite would be overhead, and wanted the weapons covered and brought inside, and ordered ammo netting thrown over the targets. The trainees did as asked, and fell back in. Cabal reported the over flight, and the range officer ordered the netting removed again. Then he announced: "Alright. We also have some

He did as asked, and was handed an odd contraption vaguely resembling a gun of sorts.

"This is the Tiberium Auto-rifle. Another item we picked up in our sweep of the GDI facility. This one we have been able to retro engineer, and may issue in the future. It works by firing tiberium tipped hollow point bullets. It also has a handgun variant called the flechette gun. It fires rounds that explode on impact and pepper the target with deeply imbedded shards of Tiberium

He motioned Sergei to fire the weapon, and he unloaded on most intact GDI dummy. The hollow points punched into the Kevlar and stopped, but released their green poison. Where there was no armor, the rounds impacted, and a green crater appeared in the back of the target.

"If they survive the impact, they still need to survive the Tiberium. A very effective weapon as

Sergei traded the larger rifle for the flechette gun. He got the standard pistol grip, and fired away onto the same target. Kevlar was peppered with shards of crystals, and the target was entirely covered in glistening green.

"Also very effective as you can see. GDI may be claiming innocence in their research on Tiberium, but we know better. They are utilizing it for chemical warfare just as we are. Inspired to greatness by these trinkets, we have also come up with our own Tiberium based weapon. May I

He handed Sergei the bulky item, a gas mask and suit and told the others to stand back. He released chemical death onto the field, and watched in amazement as the weapon covered everything in a green sheen. He was encouraged to cover everything on the field until the weapon was empty, and then prompted to unsuit.

"The chemsprayer is also very effective at covering our clandestine operations. As you can see, the Tiberium is already eating into the vehicles, and the dummies. Soon the Tiberium will spawn a venifera plant, and start creating more crystals if we don't harvest it right away. We will be using this to support mobile operations at the front, and to promote Kane's vision of the Tiberian future. When we are ready for the transition to Tiberian based life, the environment will be terra-formed already. Already a chem-corps is being formed from volunteers chosen from our rank and file. Tiberium is the future. Alright, enough science. Ustinov, move them out, and check

voice from behind.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Wed, 11 Aug 2004 01:51:36 GMT

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73-75

The next 5 weeks would be a blur of Physical training for him. They were trained long and hard on how to work together well, and use the weapons they were given to accomplish each mission. A particular emphasis was placed on intellectual processes, and he was pleased to see that the men under his command were all supremely intelligent, and he found he wasn't the only one with the ability to recall things explicitly.

They finished basic, and moved on to their respective divisions for their specialized training. He found himself well suited for intelligence work, and was frequently finished with the online lessons through Cabal's interface before required to be. They taught him foreign languages, and how to manipulate IT resources. He was also trained in the basic programming languages, and could recite chemical composition formulas on demand. There was also an emphasis on geography, political science and analytical skills as well as a psychological profiling class. Without the photographic memory, he wouldn't have been able to keep up, and it was difficult even then. Both he and Sanchez had to rely on each other after the evening physical training with the squad.

After weeks of intense training, and worry, the head of the Intel division came in the training room to address them.

"Gentlemen, sit down. At ease. Before you leave here, I wanted to talk a bit with you. As I am sure you have gleaned, your unit is unique. Typically the three divisions only share information, and don't usually go out together on missions. You are the first in an elite cadre of soldiers incorporating all the refined skills the Brotherhood has. You will be receiving special weapons, and augmentation to further amplify your uniqueness. After you leave here, our relationship will change greatly. We will be at YOUR service, not the other way around. Valdez will be in charge, and your communiqué with the rest of the Brotherhood. The others are receiving the same speeches in their divisions as well.

It has been an honor to teach men of your caliber. You are a rarity, and GDI will not be prepared

He stood, and they did as well.

With that, he turned and walked away.

Sergei and Sanchez seemed rooted in place. They looked at each other, and started packing everything they thought they might need. Together they moved with a quick but sad pace towards the exit, and afforded one look back where they saw the commander looking from a window in the tower above. Some of the others were coming diagonally from across the parade grounds, seemingly released at the same time

and their future.

74 After twenty minutes of waiting, they were all finally assembled, and Valdez ordered them into the truck with no explanation. Sergei was last into the truck. It rumbled off towards the North, and the front. Valdez came over the speaker.

“Listen up. This is real now. We are heading for the most embattled area on this planet, and you had better pay attention. Forward base Zulu is approximately 15 miles north of here, and right in the middle of it all. They have been under constant attack for 2 days now, and have only just now repelled the latest attack. We will be using them as a forward staging base for our first

He watched the scenery as the truck bounced along the road. Burned out tanks were familiar sights. He saw an impromptu graveyard of sorts with a bulldozer burying the mass graves, and another was pushing burned vehicles off the road, and onto lift trucks. The brotherhood was apparently low on metals if they were scavenging them. They stopped finally after a punishing set of potholes.

leapt from the truck, and he assessed the situation quickly. There was an outcrop of rock to the right, and he ordered the men under it. He then spared a glance skyward as he ran for the outcrop. An Orca Bomber squad was inbound, being chased by seven Harpies who were attempting to fight off the Orca fighter escort at the same time. He ordered his men into a firing line under what cover they could get around the outcropping, and ordered them to focus on the fighters. The Harpies could smoke the Bombers if given the chance to get away from the fighters.

“Focus on the lead Orca Fighter, and then hit them as they come to you. Focus on the fans on

The bombers were already past, and on their way to Zulu. His squad opened up on the lead fighter, and tracers lanced into the turbofans from their new laser rifles. Becker’s heavy laser did the most damage though, and utterly vaporized what still existed of the superstructure holding the fan remnants. It separated from the Orca’s body, and the aircraft spiraled in 360 degree spins as the other turbo fan remained at full power. It plummeted into the ground, narrowly missing the truck, and spreading its hydraulic guts, and pilot over the arid ground.

The squad didn’t get to see the carnage though. Immediately upon seeing the fans disintegrate they focused on the next one in line. It was a bit difficult this time, as the Orca was maneuvering to get a bead on a Harpy doing a strafing run on the bombers.

The harpies dropped to the deck, and went after the bombers at full tilt. The Orcas attempted to follow.

Red laser fire leaped from the outcrop, and the Orcas tried in vain to avoid it. His men knew how

to lead the targets well, and their attempts to avoid their deaths, only quickened them. He also saw the tracers from Valdez's forward position hitting their targets as well. They were decimating the globalists.

As the Orcas fell from the sky, the harpy commander came onto the circuit:
"Good work Ghost one. We'll take the bombers out. Firebase Zulu will be most thankful

In the distance he could see the harpies rise, and give full pursuit, their rocket pods already unleashing their fury against the offending bombers.

Valdez came from his hiding place in front of the truck. "Good work Ustinov. Once the crash

They found nothing but wreckage, and got back into the truck. The squad was quiet as they pondered their first victory together, and finished out their trek to Zulu.

75 As they traveled he ordered a weapons check, and ammo status. Their new weapons were not common in the brotherhood, and ammo would be an issue to keep track of. Powerful and light, they still required power cells that could only be obtained from one place.

Weapons Research Division.

About halfway through their journey now, Sergei was looking forward to getting there. As night approached, they saw more flashes of light on their left and right, and in front of them they could see hell being unleashed on the city of Sarejevo. Twilight was not the best time to be in a war zone. They had night vision, but with the flashes of light from explosions rocking the countryside, he knew they might be more of a detriment when the visors washed out with too much light exposure. This would effectively blind them at critical moments despite their filter's attempts to damp it.

In the failing light of day, he took time to appreciate the skyline. It was the most beautiful orange-red-yellow combination he could remember in recent memory. He knew he wouldn't be able to appreciate it much in the days to come. They were now passing rear guard units, and support personnel vehicles. Everything the war effort needed to continue passed through them on their way to men doing the dying. Artillery was arranged intermittently, and SAM sites were visible to his trained eye. A lesser soldier wouldn't have seen them in their concealment, but he had been trained to see, and identify them. A makeshift hospital and cyborg processing facility were located near each other as well. In his training he had learned the horrifying fact that the dead, and dying were intermingled with cyborg technology to create the army of bio-machines the brotherhood depended on for it's shock troops. He consoled himself to know that they were already, or going to die, but he couldn't help but wonder of the soul of the men used as stock.

An incinerator was operating nearby as well, burning the excess body parts, and rubbish from the base as fuel for the power plant for the hospital. Nothing went to waste in the brotherhood.

The landscape ahead was devoid of trees, and with all the rain of late, was a no man's land of craters, and mud resembling the first world war's trenches. Ahead lay the base, and it's heavily punished defenses. As they passed the security checkpoints they could see engineers trying

desperately to repair the structures hit in the latest raids. He could only see one working obelisk, and three SAMs were visible as still scanning for targets. There was no effort made to hide them here. If that bombing raid had got through today, this base would probably be facing a counterattack to finish it off. The Harpies were parked on what remained of their pads, and support buildings. One was clearly smoking, and strip personnel were trying to put the offending fire out.

As they entered the base the pallor of smoke laid thick over it, and the smoldering rubble added to it. They approached a low lying, non-descript building covered in sandbags, and were ordered out of the truck which had stopped abruptly after narrowly avoiding a pothole from a bomb. The driver returned on the route back to the primary base, and Sergei hoped he would make it back. He had been a good driver.

"Wait here ladies. I am going to check in with BH command." Valdez said. "Have them set up a radio post so I can contact Regulus on our channels." And he turned and walked into the bunker.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Wed, 11 Aug 2004 21:39:01 GMT

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76

shallow depression with sandbags in a halfmoon shape. He assumed that this was a last stand type gunpost should the globalists break the line. They set up the satellite based transmission dish, and established a rudimentary contact with Cabal after piggybacking a civilian weather satellite transmission. The brotherhood had been very creative in it's efforts to communicate effectively with units in the field since losing all their satellites to Philedelphia's point defenses.

He also had them scout for temporary quarters in an abandoned, and bombed out warehouse away from anything important. No telling whether the base could support them, and he figured preparing for the worst was good business. His men reported that an upper office was still safe enough that could stay in there if needs be. Valdez was taking his time, so he ordered rations broke out. MREs hadn't changed much in 75 years of warfare.

Valdez finally swept the door open, and called Sergei over. "We've been assigned temporary quarters in a barracks north of here. It's underground, just like everything else important around here. The sit-rep briefing will take place after we get re-located. Let them finish

"Yes sir. We have had some issues with Ion interference, and the satellite we are using is a basic weather sat, so comms are slower than the usual T.V. ones. We run a lower risk of being

He led him to the bunker, and showed him the video link. Valdez ordered Vigo out, and told Sergei to stay when he started after Vigo.

“AFFIRMATIVE. ATTEMPTING TO ESTABLISH LINK.
PRIMARY LINK INTERMITTENT. INCREASED ION INTERFERENCE IN THE UPPER
ATMOSPHERE IS TO BLAME.

Regulus' face appeared as a grainy image, and the voice link was scratchy, but not entirely bad.

“Sir, the base is holding, but GDI is pounding it with airstrikes daily. We hold the ground surrounding the city, but GDI owns the skies. This bases' nearness to the Tiberium fields is preventing accurate Ion cannon use, but they are getting some use from it. Local weather predictions indicate Ion storms are expected for the next day and a half, and this will allow the engineer corps to fix things up quite a bit. Forays into the city have been decimated and the commander here suspects GDI has somehow tapped into Brotherhood radar systems while

Regulus asked.

“Yes sir. A cyborg team managed to transmit its location prior to being immobilized. The cyborg is still operational, and transmitting video feed when we can get it and we have a good idea of patrol rotations. I have it's location as 9 Kilometers north of this base, in grid

“Alright Valdez, you know what to do. Brief the men, and commence operations under Ion storm cover. We will have the local commander ready, and online the whole time. When the station is down, he will send everything he's got so get out asap. It's going to get ugly in

comms up, and ordered the rest of them to fall in.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.
Posted by [rm5248](#) on Thu, 12 Aug 2004 21:39:25 GMT
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77-78

The men were already done with rations, and were ready for the order. To Becker's credit, he had

observed the meeting taking place, and prepared for the order ahead of time. They followed Valdez to the underground barracks, and they swept the building for listening devices prior to re-establishing comms in the rear of the facility in Valdez's private quarters. After all the well designed buildings with all their current amenities, it was a wake up call for the cadre to live in this primitiveness. The entrance was nothing more than a concrete set of steps with sandbags on both sides. At the bottom of the stairs was the heavy wooden door, with nothing more than a mechanical latch. The mud from the base had poured down the steps into the barracks during the latest storm, and silt was deposited at the front door in a pile. Inside was a delta of silt as well, but it hadn't gone much further than the door. The concrete floor had allowed the water to travel though, and they would need to clean up the place. The beds were of bunk style, and were all neatly made in anticipation of use by someone prior to the storm. Showers and the washroom were outside, and to the left in a hootch constructed of plywood, and corrugated metal. He listened to it ping as rain started to fall. Apparently this was a nightly ritual this time of year.

They each claimed a bunk, and per Sergei's orders started cleanup. Only Vigo was excused to re-establish comms. In no time, the barracks was as good as it was going to get, and the men chatted as they worked. There was much talk about the battle, and this base. Even some concern over ammo being sufficient. They didn't know that Sergei had arranged for more of the experimental ammo, and for ancient MP-5's to be delivered. If they ran out, or these weapons failed them, the ever reliant MP-5's would take care of them. They were small, fully selectable for firing modes, and could be submerged.

Vigo walked out from the back, and said: "Sir, he needs you and the other lieutenants to meet in the bunker."

"Got it, thanks. Becker, Parker. Come with me."

The three of them moved to the back and knocked on the door.

"Come in."

The door creaked open, and Valdez's quarters greeted them. It wasn't much different than the rest of the place, but it did have a personal sink.

"Alright men, sit down. Here's what we're looking at."

The three of them sat at the other three sides of this four sided table. A 3D electronic map overlay was displayed before them, with real time pictures displayed at the bottom. "This is Sarejevo

The map initially displayed the thriving metropolis that had been largely spared in the first conflict by GDI. Sergei knew many of the places by heart and memories rushed in. The second overlay showed a much different Sarejevo. He could see that many of the buildings were destroyed or damaged beyond use. Road blocks created by desperate GDI patrols were in virtually every street intersection, and were comprised of destroyed vehicles, brick and anything else of use to slow tanks for destruction.

"As you can see it's a deathtrap in there. In a minute I am going to call the guys in here, but before I do, I need to run something by you squad leaders. If we get caught, this mission has a low survivability factor, and you will be tortured if found alive. Standing Black Hand orders for officers is self destruction by cyanide, or a bullet to the head of anyone left behind. No one knows we even exist, and it needs to stay that way. If you can't hack this and are going to show weakness out there, I want you gone now. No questions, you go back to the rank and file with no

All three men looked at him with determined looks. None of them moved, or said anything.
“Alright then. Call them in.

Parker went and got the men assembled, and brought them in the room.

“Alright kiddies, here it is. We are going to make GDI blind and deaf, and give our brothers a fighting chance to take this city. The highlighted building you see is the local GDI radar and communications facility. We have intel showing they are monitoring Nod locator beacons somehow, so every time we foray into the city, they hit us hard, and fast. The entire city is wired

A picture at the bottom showed a camera monitoring an intersection where burned out Nod tanks clogged the street.

Black Hand intel is working on nailing the one compromising the network, but until they do, we are going in the old fashioned way. There will be a voice link established using secure and encrypted burst transmissions through civilian channels. Our task is to infiltrate this hell-hole, and take this nest out. We do, and the Brotherhood can mop this up, and re-capture the holy temple of Nod for Kane.

We are going in by way of a technique brother Ustinov used against the assassins in training. The sewers. We are going to use cover of an Ion storm to prevent sat recon of the area by GDI, and it will interfere with the cameras as well. If the rains get heavy, or the tunnel is blocked, we will be following this uni-rail tram, which runs directly by the facility we are targeting. GDI patrols are in the area, and heavily armed, but they are tired and won't be expecting you. Ustinov is a local and will be guiding us through this maze. Vigo, you're on point. Sanchez you have rear guard.

None of them had any.

“Alright. Ion activity is expected within the next five hours. Strip of anything with IFF, or electronic, and bring the MP-5's Ustinov ordered. They may just save your butts out there. They are being delivered within the hour. After that, get some shut eye. I can't guarantee

They left the room as Valdez headed for the comm. link. Sergei went to the front door where the rain was starting to seep under the door, and climbed the stairs to await the ordinance delivery. Darkness and sodium lights were all he could see other than the obelisk's red glow as it maintained readiness.

Man, He was getting tired of rain.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Fri, 13 Aug 2004 16:36:17 GMT

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He listened to it patter down, and decided to try to find simple pleasure in it. It may be the last time he got to listen to it. The corrugated iron sheltering him was a resonant drum that amplified the noise, and he started to drift in his thoughts. He remembered a distant memory of his father and him on a drive into town one rainy day. The old truck's roof had a similar effect, and the day had been a nice reprieve from hard farm work. He remembered enjoying the time with his father to chat about his mother's passing and things in between.

Reality came back into focus, when a truck's headlamps flashed into his eyes as it pulled up. Four troopers, and their supervisor started bringing the supplies into the barracks. The officer in rain gear came up to him, and asked to see Valdez. Sergei brought him into the rear, and was surprised to see it was the range officer.

"Alright Captain, everything you requested is here. The MP-5's were hard to come by, but we found an Italian Carabinieri detachment with some in their inventory. We liberated them as quickly as we could. Anything else?"

"Nothing except luck, thank you brother." Valdez replied.

"Good luck." And he left, motioning to the others to leave with him.

The men broke out the extra ammo, and loaded their vests with it. They also broke down the MP-5's and cleaned them to Black Hand standards. Ammunition was inspected and suspect rounds discarded. They then re-loaded the clips, black taping two clips together 180 degrees opposite so the reload process would be a simple flip of the wrist. Once the process was complete, Sergei ordered them to hit their racks, and lights out. He made a report to Valdez, and headed to his own rack. It wasn't hard to get to sleep strangely enough.

He was awakened by Valdez. "Get up, and get ready, ladies. We leave at 0300."

The lights flickered on, and the men leapt out their racks, and started dressing.

"Full blackout gear. I want nothing reflective on you, and if it's metal, or makes noise, tape it. Weapons check in 30 minutes. Move!"

They didn't need to be told these things, but it was good to have them said anyways. It focused them on the immediate need, and not the uncertainty of their mission.

Quickly the men were ready ahead of their deadline, and were checking themselves prior to inspection.

"Weapons check." Valdez announced.

He went up the line of men checking their vests, ammo, knives, c-4 and rifles. Satisfied, he said: "We will be delivered by an APC via the underground network. We have one line in that isn't destroyed, and will bring us close to the pump house for the city for our sewer insertion. Vigo, you need to be damn alert out there. The patrols are stepped up when Ion storms degrade their systems. Expect tripwires. Becker, you're gonna have the link to command back here at base. Protect this with your life. The APC is outside. Let's go."

They filed into the red-lit ominous opening of the new burrowing APC, and strapped into the harnesses provided. The driver of the vehicle closed the hatch, and spoke to them.

"Gentlemen, this gets to be a bumpy ride so hang on. We burrow down, then sideways into the

tunnels, and then take the rails, but once we get where we're going we will have to burrow into the concrete sewer drain. Expect noise, and vibration. Use these earplugs to prevent going deaf. Other than that, enjoy the ride. The stewardess will be around in about five minutes."

The men laughed, and the pilot disappeared into the cab. The turbines fired up, and after a brief warmup, the craft tilted toward the earth, and the turbines started to scream as they spooled up. The whole room shook, and they were glad for the harnesses.

Then just as they thought the noise couldn't get any worse, the vehicle started burrowing into the hard packed earth, and they began their descent. The noise was unbearable now, and they all broke out their earplugs, and jammed them into their ears. Well, this was certainly different, he thought.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [spreegem](#) on Thu, 19 Aug 2004 16:54:18 GMT

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80 - 85

80

The vibration was the worst thing, now that their earplugs were in. The vehicle continued down for about five minutes, and started to level off. They then penetrated into the underground network. The vehicle stopped it's churning, and set itself onto the rail system that existed. The quiet was greatly appreciated but only lasted around ten minutes.

They must be near the sewer network he guessed as the vehicle left the rails by engaging the treads that drove it through the ground the punch through didn't take long. The vehicle backed out of the ruptured concrete tubs, and spooled down its turbines. The pilot appeared in the passenger compartment, and hit the ramp button. The inner lights dimmed to the red used for exiting the vehicle. Due to the red color's spectrum, it didn't show as well at night, and served to keep the APC from profiling itself against the darkness.

"Gentlemen, good luck. I will be here until I get word the mission is complete. You may not need me, but I will be here if you call."

"Appreciated pilot. We may need you." Sergei replied.

"Alright, move out. Vigo, get in there and take point. The rest of you know what to do." Valdez barked. He grabbed the mic from becker's man portable radio. "Command, we are in."

"Affirmative, we read you. May Kane's swift hand of justice guide you."

The men approached the breach in the wall, where they could hear water, but not see it due to the darkness.

The breach was about the size of a car, and the men filed through one at a time, snapping their gun-mounted lights on as they entered.

Vigo was stopped up ahead, and waited for the rest of the squad to come through. Sergei moved up to him, and whispered over the roar of water, "Anything?"

"No sir."

"Let's go then."

Vigo half crouched and made his best speed forward, as the other men kept a bit of distance between themselves and him. He was their point man, and as such, he was expected to find booby traps, enemy soldiers, and if everything went bad, to take the first hit. Being point man wasn't the most enviable position, and it wasn't for everybody. The men had great respect for Vigo, and his uncanny abilities to sense traps, and danger.

Up ahead, they could see the pump houses' exit pipes where normally effluent was pumped from the city during times of peace. They were not operating now due the power outages, and destroyed infrastructures the city had suffered during the siege. Only the drains from city streets above as the storm continued now drained into this large structure, and the water rushed ankle deep past them. Valdez consulted a map as they approached a division in the pipes, and Vigo waited for instruction.

He pointed to the right branch, which was dry and had only a trickle flowing down the center, and Vigo continued his scout of the area. He found the first signs of human activity in the area. A discarded cigarette pack at the bottom of the ladder leading up to the manhole cover that was dripping water. He raised a clenched fist to signal a general stop, and raised the discarded pack as Sergei moved up to him.

"What am I looking for here sir?"

"About 300 yards ahead should be another ladder. Unknown what we'll find, but the facility's location will be directly overhead. Hold here. I want to see what we have above us before we get too deep. As Sergei climbed the ladder slowly, he found a wire across the tube, attached to the bottom of the cover. Anyone attempting to pull the cover would be killed instantly. He traced the wire back to a simple IED that was hidden in the lip of the cover's base. He clipped the wire, and gently put pressure on the cover as he lifted. He got the lid about an inch above the ground, and saw a chain link fence surrounding the facility which was bathed in light from the lamps sweeping the perimeter. Beyond the fence was the facility, and the giant radar dish that swept the area. Above this whole drama the sky flashed with lightning, and struck one of the lightning rods on the antenna. It temporarily blinded him, and he reviewed the area in his memory, as the retinas in his eyes tried to adjust.

He climbed back down, and told Vigo about the wire, and made the signals to the others to let them know about the find. He motioned Vigo to go forward, and 2 minutes into the sweep, he found another wire. This one was fairly well hidden, and he exaggerated his steps over the wire to show the others. They in turn showed each man behind him, and they proceeded. Vigo found more. This time it was a pressure activated bouncing betty. An ancient device, but effective to be sure. If triggered, it would jump to torso height, then explode showering the area with shrapnel, and tearing the men apart. The finally navigated the devices and came to the ladder leading up to the unknown. Valdez had Vigo sweep and mark further down the tube, and had Sanchez mark the way they had just come. If they had to get out of here in a hurry, they didn't want to trip anything. Then their pursuers would walk into their own minefield.

Then, when everything had been marked, Valdez signaled command with three short clicks of the radio transmit key. It would sound like static from the Ion storm to the operators monitoring for ELINT upstairs, but to the BH rep in the base back home, it would signal they were preparing to enter, with no contact with the enemy.

Then he motioned Vigo to go up, and they all aimed their rifles at the manhole cover as Vigo prepared to go through.

He lifted the cover ever so gently.

81

Vigo didn't dare move a muscle as the cover hung suspended on his palms one inch above the tile in this bathroom. This was a good sign, and was what they had hoped for. Most sewer access covers were in places like this or in maintenance areas, and were not monitored by cameras. He gently and slowly moved the cover off to his side, trying not to scrape the tile to move. No one was in the stalls, and he felt a sense of urgency as he leaped out of the hole to cover the door in case someone entered while the rest of the team accessed the building. He signaled for the rest of the team to come up.

Sergei was extremely glad the insertion was going well. Now they would have some fighting room, and could stop worrying so much about the booby traps. They wouldn't have them inside the facility. Everyone was up except Becker and Sanchez. Becker was having trouble getting his large torso through, plus the large Heavy Laser chain gun. He had to take it off, and hand it up, and the come through. After him came Sanchez, and the cover was put back into place.

"Ok." Valdez said. "We need to c-4 the generators, the dish, and the ELINT equipment, and we are also going to try to ascertain who the leak is. First stop; Generator room. Ustinov, did you get a look at where they are?"

"They are to our left. I would guess one or two room s over."

"Get in the duct system, and shut them down permanently. Set timed c-4, and get back here. When the generators go down, we will move, and hit targets of opportunity as they come. The rest of you, hide, and if anyone comes through that door, smoke them Vigo." Valdez ordered.

"Da. Parker help me into the vent. Drubnov, hold my laser rifle. I want to take the mp-5." They helped him into the ducts, and he wiggled into the barely man sized opening. It was cleaner than he figured it would be, but then again, this structure was only two or three years old, and GDI was anal about maintenance. He took the left leading duct, and stopped by a grate. He looked in and saw he was in a machinery space. This had to be it. No one was in the room, and he removed the vent grate, and slid into the room. He placed the crate on a shipping crate, and moved to where he could hear the hum of running machinery. Double fire doors led into the generator room, and he entered. It was noisy. No one would have heard the door anyways, so he moved towards the generators. The hall he was in turned to the left, and he peeked around the corner. Two technicians were working on a broken generator, and discussing how screwed they would be if the other went down in a storm like this.

"It just figures bob. Everytime we really need these things, something happens."

"Well, quit complaining. I really don't enjoy everything being an emergency either."

"I tell you bob, it's because of mismanagement. If they would just..."

"Just shoot me, and put me out of my misery, would you Jerry?"

"Happy to oblige." Said Sergei coolly as he emerged, and unloaded two rounds each into the shocked technicians from his silenced MP-5.

82

He dragged them off to the edge of the walkway and after taking their access keys, dumped them

into the bilge below the generators. He then kicked all the spare parts into the bilge with them, and wired the generators for a 15 minute delayed explosion. The explosives would be difficult to find even if somebody was astute enough to look for them.

He went out the way he went in, and dropped into the bathroom.

Valdez addressed the men: "Get out your light amplifiers. It's going to get dark soon. If it

They assembled by the door, and Vigo took a peek to see if trouble was coming to them before

"Go right. Left leads to the courtyard, and generator room. Look for the ELINT stuff, and the main comm. center. They may be together. I also want to blow the main shaft for the dish. It will
replied.

The remaining minute passed slowly. Then they heard the 'crump' of the explosion as it destroyed the generators, and the room they were in. The lights flickered and then dimmed forever. The men slipped on the light amp goggles, and Valdez gave the word as emergency lights flickered on in every third light fixture. Vigo burst from the room, and swept the corridor. He moved swiftly away from the smoke and dust coming from the left corridor, and moved down the right. The other followed closely this time. Vigo would no longer need isolation, he would need fire support. They knew what was coming.

An alarm klaxon rang out, and EVA's soft voice sounded from the intercom:

"Attention. Main power down. Backup generators online. Emergency response crews to

They passed the doors to sleeping quarters, and saw scrambling men trying to get dressed. Valdez waved his arm to Becker and Drubnov, and they opened the door and rolled two grenades each into the room, and then hightailed it to catch up with the squad. The barely awake men didn't even know, nor would they ever what destroyed the room so efficiently.

Up ahead, Vigo's laser rifle sounded off as he interrupted the on duty soldiers trying to respond to what they thought was a fire. As he ran past the bodies at the intersection, he followed the path they had come from. They would have been manning the night shift console for monitoring the area. His guess was correct, and as Sanchez destroyed some opposition in the rear, he entered the control room and ruined the day of the officer who was trying to say

Suprise had been achieved, but they would soon lose this advantage. They hurried to wire the communication equipment, and ELINT relays, as Valdez used a small hard drive to download current files from the still online GDI system. Drubnov found the machinery room keeping the shaft rotating for the dish, and housing the emergency generators. Valdez ordered it wired for five minutes, and grabbed the comm. link. He keyed in the Nod radio frequency for the base.

As he was finishing the transmission, Vigo and Ustinov were running into trouble. GDI soldiers had found the bodies, and knew what was going on now. They were firing into the control room trying to regain control.

Valdez burst into the machinery room at the same time the rest of the squad was coming out. "Let's go. Becker, get that heavy up there, and clear us a path out of here. 4 minutes to

Becker ran to the position Vigo held behind a console, and told him to move. GDI was about to encounter an experience they would soon not forget.

83

The men gathered behind Becker as he readied for the order. Valdez looked at all of them, and said: "When he goes, all of you go too. Standard extraction procedure. Don't cross lines of

He stepped out into the hall seemingly unafraid. His armor took several rounds, and he staggered, but remained standing, as he pulled the trigger on the heavy laser against his hip. Bolts of focused red light lanced out of the barrel with a high pitched squeal, and burned deeply into the walls, doors, windows, and bodies of everything in front of him. The heavy was slower in its rate of fire, but it was a steady thumping that threw punishment anywhere it was aimed. The facilities' thin acoustic walls were no match for it, and bolts continued through into rooms far beyond the hall. The soldiers facing them dropped to their knees as if not comprehending what they had been killed by. The other team members jumped out from their hiding places, and added to the carnage by firing directly over and under Becker's body. Their fast cycling light lasers added to the absolute destruction being doled out, and entire walls were set on fire. Vigo shouted: "Whoa

He ran down the remains of the hall back the way they had come dodging bodies, fires, and halon dispensers shooting from the roof. The rest of the team followed.

EVA announced almost uselessly: "Attention. Fire crews to sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 9 and 13. General quarters. This is not a drill. Brotherhood of Nod Forces detected. All resonance units to

Then they felt the facility rock as the timed c-4 detonated the entirety of the command module. The explosion destroyed all that was left of area, and the EVA link with this facility. GDI was now

blind and deaf in Sarejevo. The c-4 on the main shaft turning the radar dish severed the shaft due to its shaped nature, and the destruction coming up from below near the generators temporarily threw the severed dish and shaft upwards.

From the outside of the facility, the half operational cyborg laid in a puddle. It had been hit two weeks ago severing its hydraulics, and the organic components had died a week later, but the technology it had been combined with still served as a temporary visual relay. It transmitted back to Nod command the resulting image of the facility as it seemed to erupt into a fireball. Fire leapt upwards from around the dish as it hunched upwards briefly before leaning to the right, and crushing the facilities' west wing in a massive wave of crumpled aluminum. Inside Nod HQ back at base the commander watched the staticy image in awe and muttered something about how beautiful it was before stating in a loud voice: "All units advance. Spare nothing. Destroy what's left of this hated city, and burn it to the ground. Cabal, alert General Slavik and Battle

An image of Slavik appeared. Regulus was at his side smiling.
"Excellent. Burn this city to ashes, and secure the temple site. This is a good day for the

Around the base periphery, units long camouflaged in disuse now erupted into life. Tanks crawled out of muddy pits, and artillery barrages were being lobbed as fast and furiously as possible on pre-selected trajectories. The army assembled in a mile wide front, and hesitated only briefly as they moved forward together. Behind them the flashes of the artillery units were profiled in the darkness under the now brightening dawn sky as lightning flashed around them. Behind the tanks, infantry units assembled into APC's cheering the advance, and a chance to punish the hated GDI for daring to interfere with their holy quest. Cyborg units moved forward individually, mixed in with the armor, and infantry, and rocket bikes zoomed past. Light from the lightning flashes glinted off of shining metal as the army moved forward to reclaim its birthright in Sarejevo. And above it all in the orbiting Philadelphia station, GDI watched in defeat from their spy sats as their commanders knew the outcome before it even started.

They had lost Sarejevo.

84

Inside the facility, sheer chaos was unleashed. The team had barely made it back to the door of the rest room when the dish collapsed on the west wing of the building. This had the effect of disturbing the bouncing betty in the tunnel. It went off as designed, and set every other explosive off in the tunnel as well. The rest room collapsed into the tunnel, and debris showered the team and knocked them off their feet. When they could see again after the dust settled, valdez took a head count, and after deciding no one had taken too serious of an injury looked own into the remains of the bathroom. Water poured out of a pipe that used to lead to the toilets and sinks. It dumped down into the pile of rubble that used to be their escape.

"Go back the way we came. We are going out the front door. Same plan as before. If it moves, kill it."

For the third time tonight Vigo went down this corridor. He spared a glance into the destroyed barracks Sanchez had rolled grenades into. It was an absolute mess of humanity in there, and some of it was in the hallway. He kept moving and came back to the intersection. It was unrecognizable and he went left only because they had gone right to the control room. He could see the dish laying down on the collapsed roof just beyond the control room. A pair of legs was pinned below the wreckage, the rest of the body gone forever. Rain was also coming in, and making the floor slick he noticed. After proceeding down the ruined hall, they came to the front of the facility where damage was less, and he peeked around a right turning hall. GDI soldiers were trying to pull a friend from the wreckage, and he burst out and gunned them down.

The rest of the team followed up on his heels, and they finally came to the front security door which led into the courtyard. In the courtyard, he could see an APC loading up men for extraction to somewhere. He motioned for them to wait until it left. It zoomed out of the lot, and he assumed was falling back to GDI lines to counter the assault by Nod. They left the facility, and entered the now deserted courtyard. Artillery rounds were heard in the distance and gunfire was everywhere. They had only about 10 minutes before the brotherhood got the range of this place.

"Well, what now sir?" He asked.

"There's a garage over there, let's liberate a truck." Sergei said.

As they approached the garage, they noticed that columns of armor were moving in the direction of Nod forces. Titans intermixed with the older M1A1 Abrahms tanks left over in GDI inventory from the first Tiberian war. From their vantage point on this hill, they could see the battle unfolding in the Dawn light, as the storm abated. Entire buildings collapsed as AP rounds pierced them, and exploded. Fires could be seen across the city, and the artillery was walking it's fire methodically in front of the Nod army.

Valdez re-awakened them by saying: "Drubnov, drive. Ustinov take shotgun. We are going to pretend to be nice friendly GDI troops as we make our way through their lines to the rear. The temple is in the north of the city on the outskirts. We are going there. You two dress as GDI, the rest of you get in the back, and stay low."

85

They found some maintenance shirts in the rear of the shop all covered in dirt and grime from trying to keep beleaguered GDI vehicles going during the siege. They put them on, and hopped in the cab after stowing their prototype weapons in the rear. Valdez ordered them to simulate typing them up with loose fitting knots should they be stopped to make GDI think they were prisoners. The old m813 six by six fired to life, and Drubnov rumbled out of the garage, and through the link fence that had been left open by the departing GDI forces. They crawled down the treacherous incline designed to isolate the facility from armor assault. Any conventional assault would have had to climb the hill using this road and the guard towers would have torn them apart. Now that point was moot, considering the facility was in ruins with no power to supply the automated towers. Behind them an explosion rocked the facilities' remains, and it burned in earnest now. If there was anyone still in there, they were doomed to burn.

At the base of the hill, they merged onto the road that was the main artery for supplying the front. In its heyday, it had been the main highway into, and out of town. Now it served Nod as the route

north, and GDI as the route south. The front would be smack dab in the middle of the city. They of course turned north, and Valdez connected with Nod command.

"Nest, this is Eagle one, I need the approximate location of the temple in relation to the facility. We are on our way there now."

"Hold on Eagle one. I'm turning you over to operator Brodski." There was a click as the line was transferred, and Brodski came online. "Sir, can I assist?"

"Yes. Directions to the temple from the facility. Quickly."

"Sir, follow route S23 until you see an exit for Zenica. Follow that road until you see the temple off to right."

"Thanks. Eagle one out. You get that Ustinov?"

"Affirmative sir. North to Zenica, turn off when we see the temple on the right."

They traveled past the stream of vehicles trying to reinforce the GDI positions in the south. No one suspected Nod would be this deep into their lines so no one stopped them. They weren't the only supply truck going north either. GDI was stripping the area of sensitive equipment now that open warfare was going on, and the lines were no longer static. Ahead, the highway showed a sign hanging from the post in a skewed position. "Zenica 100 KM"

They got on the exit, and curved off and under the highway they had just been on to head further north. There was a greater amount of the new Titan armor here. GDI was not going to give the temple back without a fight. For Nod to reclaim it meant that Nod would have more credibility, and authority to recruit. It was a symbol of the integrity of Nod, and its worth as their main worship site couldn't be underestimated.

Travel was easy and No one bothered them. The panic in the faces they saw was evident as Nod crushed the GDI forces. They passed a small town and hit open road. The truck stopped after five minutes, and Drubnov said: "Sir, I've got a checkpoint ahead."

"Can you see the temple?"

"Yes sir. We are there, but we aren't getting through that checkpoint. Three Titans, and every truck is being inspected."

"Alright, turn off the road, and hide this thing in the gully over there. We are going to have to do this the hard way. Suit up boys." said Valdez.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [spreegem](#) on Sat, 21 Aug 2004 02:00:40 GMT

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86 - 89

86

They stopped the truck in the washboard gully just south of the base, and geared up for the

mission ahead. He was glad to be out of the grimy shirt finally, and back into his uniform. The team re-assembled to hear Valdez's instruction. He called into Nod command once more to advise their situation, and received orders to disable c-4 that may have been spread around the temple, and he also received command override codes for blast doors guarding something they were supposed to secure, and protect. It had the code name Valkyrie, and that was all he could ascertain. He also asked command about the feasibility of using the underground APC, and was advised it would take too long to tunnel from the nearest track considering the speed the front was moving at to the south. Apparently, the GDI rout was almost complete, and Nod had achieved complete surprise and chaos reigned among GDI units in the city. He thanked the commander, and turned to his men.

He unrolled a schematic of the Temple, and an outlay of the grounds surrounding it. He pointed to a Black Hand access tunnel to the underground complex. It had an access in a rock formation about one kilometer away.

"I don't know what state it's in. It was a mess at the end, and we barely made it out in time. It took three of us 72 hours to sneak out with all the GDI activity. We lost many good

Valdez drifted off in memories, and his eyes glazed over as he remembered the events of the last 12 hours inside the temple. He remembered watching a camera feed of Kane inside the temple, hands outstretched and receiving the punishing Ion energy seemingly welcoming it, as it slashed all he could get out through gritted teeth.

The formation wasn't difficult to find. Nothing had been disturbed since Valdez's exit those years ago. The explosives had been set off long ago, but they found out why soon. A bear's scattered and shattered bones were spread over the cave. They picked through the rubble, and had to move a mountain of stone to get access to the tunnel finally.

When Vigo came back to them reporting he had found nothing except dust, and critters they proceeded into the tunnel darkness. Valdez ordered a stop, and moved a fake rock panel to access a basic breaker box. He flipped a switch hoping for the best, and was greeted by intermittent lights flickering on. The ones that still functioned were dim, indicating that the emergency power supply was just about dead after years of no recharging from the main power feed. The tunnel was a clean cut rock hole in the ground, and the floor had been covered with metallic grating for traction against the water that drizzled down through the ground to make the rock slippery. Vigo was already moving down the tunnel, and Sergei could feel the dampness increase as he followed.

87

The trip down the tunnel was eventless, and quick thankfully. Valdez ordered a quick bite to eat as they came upon a platform illuminated by the barely functioning lights and the stairs leading up to the Temple ruins. They did a weapons check, and then Vigo started up the stairs and what lay beyond. He stopped when he came to large doors with the Nod emblem on them that didn't

appear to have a way in. He looked over his shoulder at Valdez for an answer to the dilemma.

“They were electronically locked, and hydraulically operated. With power down, that’s no

After some scouting, they finally found a duct grate about ten feet off the floor. They took his weapon for him, helped him in, and handed up the MP-5. As he was wiggling in, Valdez risked a communication with command for his status.

“Eagle one to nest; We are about to enter the temple. What’s the sit rep upstairs

“We have been slowed by some unexpected mutant resistance, but will be at the site within 2

Cursing under his breath, he wiggled through the dark, grimy duct. The MP-5’s light showed an access plate about ten feet in. He wiggled up to it, and gently popped the cover open not knowing what to expect. Darkness greeted him thankfully. He dropped into the room, and scanned his surroundings. He was in a storage room of sorts, and everything was coated in dust. No one had been in here in a long time. His feet left impressions in the dust as he moved towards the door in the dark. He had to use the emergency crank to get the hydraulically operated door open, and he hoped the door to the team would have the same.

He scanned to his left and right once out in the hall. Nothing moved, or made a sound. It was eerie to hear nothing except his heart beat, and breathing. This place was a tomb. He estimated the direction to find the door, and did in fact see the large door ahead. He passed an old ammo locker, and saw it hanging open as Valdez and his team had left it so long ago. He knocked on the door, and received a confirming knock in return. No crank existed on this door. He removed the access panel to the motor controlling the door, and tried to find a way to get it open. Explosive were an option, but he would prefer not to alert seismic detectors above.

The motor assembly was in good working condition, just without power. All he needed to do was get it powered somehow. Nothing presented him with an option, and he brainstormed for the answer. Suddenly it hit him. The extra ammo for the prototypes. He pulled a square box high energy power supply for the laser rifle from his upper vest pocket, and looked for the pole connections. He then clipped the wires that used to be hard wired to the generators, and connected the negative, then touched the positive lead to the wire. To his satisfaction, the motor started turning in its idle mode, awaiting instruction. Above him, the panel cycled red to green as the team on the other side pushed the now live access panel.

The pump took the strain of opening the door and it took a second before enough hydraulic pressure had been built up to pop the door open. It slowly creaked open on the dirt covered tracks, and squealed as it hit resistance and rust. The power cell was losing energy fast, but the door was open enough for the team. As they passed through, valdez looked at him, handed him his weapon, and said:

He had Vigo stop ahead at the intersection of hallways. "Alright, straight ahead is the way into the rest of the temple. Whatever you see out here, is classified secret, Black Hand level 1. You deny ever seeing it, and if you ever tell anyone, you will die painfully and slowly. These are

This door had a crank, and Drubnov was tapped to slowly open it as Valdez peered through to see what the threat level was. He wasn't ready for what he saw. The temple he remembered was a pristine, and beautiful place full of stained glass, columns, and rows of mahogany carved benches on a crimson carpet facing the altar, and the screens that relayed information during services. He remembered how the vaulted ceiling was so beautiful, and allowed the sunlight to come in during evening services through the red tinted glass. The front doors had been massive creations of gilded metal work and red stained glass with scenes from the brotherhood history in them. The onyx pillars holding up the roof had held golden chalices, and candles and incense had created a lovely smell of burnt cedar. This was his home in the old days, and he longed to be here once again.

But not this way. The Ion cannon had torn the building in two from its entrance to the altar, and a jagged rip now existed where the fine mahogany benches had once been. The benches had long ago been consumed in the fires after the strike, and the red carpet with Nod logos was all but a tattered remnant now. The golden chalices had all been removed by enterprising young GDI soldiers, and the screen above the altar where he had watched so many sermons projected were now burnt, and askew. The whole assembly had crashed down onto the altar, and ruined the fine marble.

The roof had been rent open and he could see jagged red glass and then the sky beyond as the storm moved away. The sun peeked through a cloud briefly, and hit a remaining red glass pane flashing him back to the old days, and a tear came to his eye.

He grimaced, and wiped it away, as the soldier in him came back to the surface. Kane lived, and they would rebuild this temple to its former glory. His friends would be avenged. He saw GDI had placed a conveyor in the center of the gaping hole, and had been removing artifacts from the temple for a long time. Currently, they were stripping it as fast as possible ahead of the advancing forces of Nod. The EVA link announced over loudspeakers: "Attention. All GDI personnel report to the evacuation area. Brotherhood of Nod forces approaching. Estimated Time of Arrival is one hour, thirty minutes. Orca transports inbound on vector 213. All personnel evacuate immediately. Brotherhood of Nod air units inbound at this time. Time until temple destruction, 10

They went through the door, and started firing at any GDI left in the area as they scrambled to get into the transports now landing. Sergei zoomed in on a technician attempting to finish wiring the fire box for the charges. They had caught GDI just in time. Ten minutes later, and the place would be smoking rubble. He fired, and the technician slumped to the ground. A running firefight now consumed the upper level of the temple, and GDI soldiers tried to evacuate to the waiting transports. With no time to load the remaining artifacts now that they were under fire, they ran straight for the transports, and attempted liftoff.

Three of them succeeded, but Becker's heavy Laser, and three other lights sliced into the fans of a fourth, and brought it crashing down. The Titans in its hold crashed through the side of the transport as it tilted before crashing, and the ground trembled as they hit, and smashed to

pieces. The transport crashed down on top of them in flaming wreckage. The temple belonged to Nod once again.

Valdez called command to let them know the Temple was secure, and he was going to check on a hidden door in the rear of the altar. He left Sanchez in charge of finding the c-4, and disarming it, and they bolted down the stairs behind the altar.

89

It became clear quickly that someone had already been here. The door at the end of the hall opened, and they saw that the room beyond was disturbed. They entered carefully, and looked around. The room was a computing center with wires running to a central chamber. Everything was still functioning but the chamber was empty and the lights were already on. Valdez growled under his breath, and queried the computer as to how long ago the chamber had been violated. 4 minutes, 13 seconds was the text reply. He seemed shocked, and started looking around for evidence of where they had gone. Disturbances in the dust showed they had gone out the door across the room.

He motioned the other two to follow, and Valdez took point himself. He burst into the other room which was full of destroyed artifacts, and across it towards the ramp up to the surface. Sergei looked behind him, and the wall they had just come through appeared solid again. Holographic projection maybe? The other two followed not knowing what to expect, and they proceeded up into the labs. It was here that they caught their first glimpse of the culprits.

Mutants.

Valdez laid down a nasty barrage of laser fire, and caught it in the back. The others with it, ran for it, and laid down cover fire as they backed out. Valdez alerted the guys upstairs, and had them try to squeeze them from above, but the mutants knew this place well. They must have been searching for this thing a while under GDI's noses. They took a little known route through the experimentation labs, and came out in a kitchen under fire all the way by Valdez in his fury. Another mutant died by Valdez's rifle, and he leaped over the body in his raging pursuit. He burst through the door the mutants had gone through, and was met with small arms fire pelting his position, and body armor. It was no match of course, but served to knock him off his feet. The other two burst through the door in time to see a civilian truck careen out of the lot, and into the hills. They emptied their entire clips into the rear of the vehicle, and managed to get one more, but the vehicle got away, and Valdez screamed curses at the sky.

"When they got back to him from dragging the body back to the temple, Valdez was just getting his composure back, after destroying the kitchen in his fury. He looked at them with

They didn't know what he meant, but after a search of the body, they confirmed he had nothing but body odor and a massive crystalline poisoning of his body from the Tiberium.

Valdez got on the radio, and said: "Nest, this is Eagle one. Mutants have stolen the

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [Crimson](#) on Mon, 30 Aug 2004 16:24:47 GMT

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Valdez ordered the team to stand down from mutant searches, finish c-4 disarming and meet inside the temple. Sergei and the others followed their ill-tempered leader back to the inner hall in silence. Once they arrived in the hall, Sanchez reported that all c-4 had been disarmed, and that no activity had been detected within the temple. Valdez ordered them to sweep the lower levels in two man teams, and report back in 45 Minutes on the upper level. He sent Sergei with Drubnov down the right side furthest away, and the others to their various ramps downward.

They trotted toward the ramp, and entered the semi darkness. Items were half packaged, and scattered around the ramp, and they ignored them for the most part. Many of them were ancient artifacts seemingly from Nod's ancient involvement in conflicts throughout history. The next level down was a sub-hall of sorts. It appeared to be some sort of meditation room where one could contemplate the finer things. It had been stripped, and not much remained except the gash where the temple had been split. Off to their left, they noticed the other teams also entering the sub level, and proceeding beyond. They did likewise, and took the next ramp down.

Now they were somewhere unique. A sort of propaganda room of sorts, as well as a museum of past events. It had also been stripped of anything useful to GDI's understanding of Nod, except for the one mummy in repose in the center of the room. Labeled under the glass was the

This stunned Sergei, and he realized how far back the brotherhood really went. Another urn

Incredulous, he could barely ponder that these remains might carry the DNA of two of history's mightiest.

Next they came to the labs that used to house the Brotherhood's experiments in DNA research, and Tiberium. It had of course been stripped of everything and only wires now protruded from empty terminal boxes, and data storage units. The Tiberium storage tanks still stood full tiberium sludge. The room was all white and still gleamed despite disuse.

It was the same wherever they went, and they finally returned to the surface level. The other teams were there as well, and Valdez ordered them to fall in out in the courtyard to await turnover of the temple to Brotherhood forces, and reassignment. As they did so, the first advanced party of Blackhand arrived via helo, and started to file from the passenger compartment as the helo spooled down. They met Valdez where he stood, and they exchanged salutes as Valdez made report to a dour looking man with a grim expression. The others fell in line, as they were trained to do in the presence of senior BH staff. They couldn't hear the exchange, nor did Sergei want to. He didn't enjoy being in the presence of upper level staff. He was a warrior, and nothing more.

Rapidly, helos descended on the place, dispersing regular troops, and support staff. They immediately secured the area by setting up anti-aircraft, and defensive laser turrets and awaited the arrival of the ground troops not far behind them. Nod Harpy class Apaches circled the area on patrol, and scoured the desert he assumed looking for the mutants. The brotherhood had arrived back home once again.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Sun, 05 Sep 2004 19:43:18 GMT

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As the initial teams moved in and set up, Valdez seemingly was wrapping up his report in the cacophony surrounding them. He saluted, and turned from the officer to speak to them. The officer was already moving in the direction of the temple surrounded by junior Blackhand members. He shouted at them over the helo's rotor wash and turbine noise.

They did as ordered, and assumed the empty seats left by the officer corps. Valdez lept in and spoke over the mic in the helmet offered to him by the load master. "We are ready pilot. Take

Almost instantly the craft lifted upwards, and moved south toward some R&R hopefully. As it achieved cruising altitude and pitched forward, picking up speed he chanced a look out over the landscape. Clearly the Temple was alive with activity now, and in the distance away from the temple in the direction of the mutants he could see Harpys unleashing hell on some unknown target. It would most likely be every Mutant settlement in the area that might be housing the escapees.

Then as they traveled south, he could see the truck they left in the ditch, and then he saw the advance units from the ground forces moving toward the temple. Nod recon bikes enmasse zoomed past destroyed Titans, and wreckage from their skirmish. Behind them in the distance was Nod's army moving along at a crawl, but steady as the wind. It was in various states of readiness now after the breakneck pace, and running battles that had consumed it for the last 4 hours. Many of the tanks were smoldering or had armor plating crumpled by near misses. The APC's that had survived the assault were covering them from GDI sniper attacks that would intermittently occur. There was still a lot of mopping up to do by the infantry in the city. As for the city itself, fires raged on, and armored units lay in ruins everywhere although there was a definite disproportionate amount of GDI armor in pieces. Nod had hit hard, and ruined the GDI advantage of firepower, and battle lines by using speed, stealth and superior tactics. He could see the facility in the distance, fully engulfed in smoke. It had been burning since they had left it, and not much remained now that the fires had nothing left to burn. The soot coated aluminum dish lay half melted on the wreckage.

The trip was uneventful, and he dared to snack, and doze before they touched down. He awoke when the craft bounced down, and the load master yelled at them to exit. Valdez mustered them away from the departing chopper, and smiled a half grin as he said:

92 They filed into a familiar looking room. It was the one used for indoc when they had first survived the trials to get into the black hand. The squad leaders took the front seats, and the other sat down behind them. Weapons were still in their possession, so Valdez had them unload, and stow the weapons against the wall. They were grubby, and tired. Sergei hoped this wasn't anyone special because the way he felt he wasn't going to be good company.

Regulus entered the room, and as they rose, he motioned for them to sit.

Kane's image appeared side by side with Slavik's. They were clearly in different places, and judging by how Slavik was slightly bounced, he surmised the Montauk was on its way to the temple.

Kane spoke:

"Brothers, you have liberated this city, and the Holy temple site. You have indeed proven valuable to General Slavik and I. Well done. Major Valdez, you have redeemed your past lack of

"Indeed. And you shall have it. The new weapons performed well I trust Commander

"Excellent. We have need of your services again, and you will need their firepower. The technology of peace serves Nod well. Your vision for the Black Hand has been vindicated

His image faded out, and Slavik filled their field of view.

"You have served Nod well. Rest today, tomorrow I will have need of you again. New facilities will be built at the temple for your unique needs. Until then you and your team will be stationed

"Good. I have issued the Medal of Brotherhood Service to each of you for what you have done

With the session over Regulus took control of the meeting.

"Gentlemen, Enjoy tonight. Beer and entertainment have been provided in your old barracks

The men gave a hoot of appreciation for the beverages, and picked up their weapons on the way to the door. Tonight would be a welcome change of pace.

93 The trudge back to barracks was where the tiredness really hit him. The adrenaline had worn off, and it felt like he was carrying the entire world on his shoulders. He was glad to see the barracks, and plunked his gear on the floor. Valdez had moved into the room next door and seemed equally tired as he went through the door to his room. Sergei collected half empty clips at the door to the barracks, ordered the weapons cleaned prior to R&R and sent a request via CABAL to Weapons Division to collect the empties, and provide new ammo clips.

Sergei took 30 minutes to clean his weapon thoroughly, and by the time he was done, a knock at his door proved to be the Weapons division folks, with a cart of new clips, and they took the old ones for recharging. He took 5 minutes to hand out ammo, and check that the men had cleaned

the weapons. His last stop was Valdez's room. He knocked.

"They respect you Ustinov. That's something you have to earn, and you seem to have

Valdez sensed something wrong in Sergei's reservedness. "Cat got your tongue

Sergei paused thoughtfully before continuing.

"Sir, no offense, but what happened at Sarejevo at the end of the last war? What was Kane

Now it was Valdez's turn to pause.

"Alright Ustinov. Fair enough question, but you are sworn to secrecy. At the end of the last war, I was in charge of Black Hand temple security for Kane. When GDI was closing on the temple, we watched the monitors as our forces were defeated division by division. It seemed as if the fury of the whole world was being poured out on us, and all we could do was watch. I had assumed command of all conventional forces surrounding the temple as it was being bombarded when General Riga and his command staff were killed en route to the temple by Orca attack.

I ordered the armored units to fall back to the temple, and create a defensive perimeter to stall GDI in static lines hoping for reinforcement from the southern Egyptian units that were still left after the general rout. I ordered Kane protected at all times by Black Hand members only to avoid assassination attempts, and sent a general request to all Nod units world wide for aid with our current situation.

And then we watched and waited as the aid never came. The temple defensive structures crumbled under repeated orca attack. Only the defensive armor ring was left, but it was succeeding in holding back GDI ground units. Then GDI armor broke through the western sector, and things started happening rapidly. I sent down all units to repel a temple penetration, and left Kane with two men while I oversaw the repulsion. We barely succeeded in repelling the attack, and managed to close the breach in the defensive ring, but it took too long. I turned back to look at the temple in time to see the Ion beam starting to form above the temple. I called the men I had left behind for a status, and general evac order, but the Ion interference denied communications. I brought up the inner cameras for the temple, and could only watch in vain as the Ion beam sliced through the temple, and seemingly Kane as well.

In my shock, I failed to see that GDI armor was breaking through the line everywhere, and my unit was torn to pieces as we tried to do a fighting retreat. Only three of us made it out alive by using the escape tunnels after having to fall back to the burning temple. I tried to find Kane, but the fires were too much, and tracers were cutting our hair for us.

Sergei seemed rooted to his position as he imagined the scene, and the utter chaos and

94 Party time had arrived, with the finishing of the weapon and personal cleaning. Vigo had been first to arrive, and was already hoisting a pint of the ever present Guinness. No matter where in the world one went, they couldn't escape the last vestige of the old British empire. He hated the stuff personally, and fully believed what the English said about a pint being a meal unto itself. He browsed through the buckets of ice and beer until he found something close to what he wanted. American Coors. Almost the equivalent of water, he knew he could have 24 of these, and still be in full command of his faculties. For taste though, his favorite was Samuel Adams, although they tended to leave him inebriated far quicker. The others came pouring in as Sergei sat beside Vigo and struck up a conversation about how well Vigo had conducted himself in battle.

Becker naturally grabbed a Heineken. The stuff was horrible to anyone not from that part of the world, and had earned the name formalde-hieneken for good reason. The stuff dried you out quicker than formaldehyde, and probably preserved organs just as well. James joined Sergei in a coors, and smiled and hoisted it in salute to Sergei across the room. Drubnov on the other hand was drinking Fosters. How he had come to like the taste of something so far from his home was a mystery, but Sergei found out later that it had more to do with the size of the container than it did with taste.

They swapped war stories, and told tall tales as the noise grew in their celebration of their first successful mission together. The room grew silent though as Valdez finally made his appearance and sidled up to the cooler. All wanted to know what the enforcer drank. His hand came out with a Zima of all things, and the men started to laugh loudly. For the first time ever, he smiled, and put it back. He then pulled out an Israeli beer with a patch of wheat on the label. He had never heard of the stuff, but if Valdez was drinking it, it must be potent. Then he started into a Brotherhood song about GDI which got the room rolling with laughter as he danced on the table in mockery of the inept GDI soldiers.

The night passed without incident and Becker even proposed a toast to Sergei's ability to be headed towards his room that night, he finally felt like he had family for the first time since his father had died.

95 Festivities over, Sergei laid out his gear for whatever tomorrow would bring. This brief moment of fun was welcome, but he found he couldn't really enjoy it knowing there was something big on the horizon. He wondered if he should ask Valdez, but knew the answer before he completed the thought. He surfed the net for the latest in Nod and GDI news, and was surprised to see that for once, they were both reporting the same thing about the Sarejevo battles. Solomon was promising his usual counteroffensive to recapture what had been lost, while Oxanna's broadcast focused on the absolute defeat of GDI, and the recapture of the Temple. Statistics showed a 15 percent gain in Nod recruitment following Kane's speech regarding the re-capture, and his future plans. Pictures in the broadcast showed an MCV already in position, and reconstructing the temple to it's former glory, while Nod technicians described their plans

for beautification of the grounds. Kane concluded by offering all brethren an open invite to worship once open.

Their mission had had far reaching consequences second only to the re-emergence of Kane, and he found great pride in a job well done. It was no wonder Kane himself had addressed their success. The Brotherhood had regained the initiative, and money and recruits would soon pour in as a result.

He logged off, and settled in, feeling the tiredness envelope his battered body. Had it not been for Valdez's preparatory training, they would be in rough shape tomorrow. He turned the light off, and laid on his back for a while staring into the darkness. All he could see was the door lock panel's yellow light signifying it was locked. He focused on it as he fell asleep, and dreamed. Tonight in the dream he returned to the Tiberium field. As usual the dream focused on the sky's green hue, and the lightning. He heard the crunch of the crystals, and the hydraulic whine. Subconsciously he knew what was next, and expected fully to wake as he started to look at something in the puddle of green slurry on the ground. This time, he didn't wake up. He looked into the pool, and saw a half human face reflected back at him. It was covered with cybernetic components on one half, and the other stared blankly at him. The one red eye seemed to narrow its iris as if examining him for termination.

Was this him? Or was he observing a memory from someone else? The dream continued by looking at the cyborg's right arm which had been replaced, where it was snapping something into a large cannon like arm. It seemed to be preparing for a battle of sorts. The dream became even more real as a HUD now displayed in his vision, and assessed the landscape for threats. It identified a GDI patrol moving in his direction. The cyborg moved forward toward the threat taking no pains to conceal itself. It stopped in the middle of the road after leaving the field, and raised the cannon like arm as the HUD displayed a targeting reticle. Energy levels were displayed for the cannon, and he heard a distinct shrill whine as it charged up and released a bright green ball of concentrated energy. As it left the cannon, it set the surrounding grass on fire, and disturbed the air enough to make tree limbs nearby move slightly. As if in slow motion, the ball of energy moved towards the patrol, and just as it was about to hit, the HUD switched to Wolverine coming over the hill, and the cannon charged again.

He awoke to the alarm.

96 He held his head in his hands as he sat upright. The sense of invulnerability, and power he had felt were scary. He had been absolutely sure the cyborg would win. How had he known this? As the alarm continued its tirade, he pushed the thoughts out of his head, and prepared for whatever the day would bring. He dressed as usual, and grabbed his insignia, attaching them to the Velcro strips. He had never really felt like he lived up them, but today was different for him. With a success under their belt, and Kane's personal stamp of approval, their existence as a new type of unit within the brotherhood had been validated. And with that validation came his personal self confidence in being able to lead battle hardened men into combat.

After sliding on the combat boots, and lacing them up all the way, he triple knotted them, and flipped his socks over the laces. This would prevent any possibility of them unlacing in combat. A minor detail, but one that could give the edge in battle. The boots were comfortable, and well

molded to his feet after months of training. These little assurances were all he had for stability in an environment where everyday was different. His morning rituals were the base of stability that allowed him to deal with everything else. He rolled his sleeves up, and tightly rolled the cuff to prevent them from interfering with reloading, and catching on anything. Lastly he shaved. His attention to perfection in everything carried over to this as well. There was something therapeutic in the attention to detail.

Now ready, we left his room, noticing that the others were also filing out. Discipline was high, and it showed down to the timing of basic things like muster. He men were the elite, and he drew great pride from them. Together they assembled in formation, and Sergei stood between them, and Valdez who faced them and made muster report to valdez.

The men went to the at ease position immediately, their arms behind their backs, legs at a more restful position.

“O.k., this is what we have on the agenda today. We are to attend a briefing in a special room created to prevent eavesdropping. The room has been electronically, and physically isolated from the surrounding environment and lays below us. Nothing you hear in there will go beyond us, and Senior Black Hand staff in the loop. Violations of this protocol will be punished by death.

They all muttered their understanding.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.
Posted by [rm5248](#) on Tue, 07 Sep 2004 18:46:45 GMT
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97

The underground rail system that Nod used was the central artery for each base. Essentially the best, and most secure method to move around large bases quickly while still being able to evade the scans of the ever present GDI satellites They accessed it through the entrance located at the base of one of the Obelisk towers, and caught a rail car going to command central. It didn't take long for the high speed rail car to get there, which was unfortunate for Sergei. He was trying to check out the architectural feats that Nod had accomplished in this massive cavern, and how the supports were interweaved. The drop off for Command was protected 24-7 by standard Nod Troopers who came to attention upon seeing Valdez's new captain insignia gleaming on his uniform lapel.

They breazed through the checkpoint, and came to sliding glass doors with the words

Their escort was waiting for them. He was of the same rank as Valdez, but clearly the Black Hand commanded more respect, and was outside regular channels. The officer seemed to know it too,

They turned right down an obsidian hallway which gleamed and reflected them in its highly polished black surface. Red Nod scorpion tale emblems were imbedded in the black rock, and were also created out of some kind of rock as well. Laser engraved details were high, and they knew they were in a special part of this base. This was where everything started and ended that was important to the brotherhood. They passed other officers going about their business, who made room for them as they proceeded in lockstep to wherever the bean counter in front of them was leading them.

They came to a set of heavy blast doors and the officer cycled it open after verification through retinal scan. Beyond was the neat, and orderly command unit that ran the base, and local Nod operations. The duty officer sat in the middle of the room surveying everything within his sight. Screens flickered information, and pictures of current events in the media as well. The local Cabal core interface was on the other side of the room, behind locked blast doors. Nothing short of an Ion strike, would be able to take him offline at the location. To their right was a briefing room, and they were motioned into it to sit. The officer went to the center of the command room, and notified the officer on duty, and assumed the watch as the General moved towards them. They were also joined by members of the standard intelligence division of the Black Hand.

a button on the desk, and the windows surrounding the conference room became opaque. No one could see in or out.

"This briefing is classified cosmic secret. The people in this room are the only authorized members to view this material. A lower ranking intel officer handed out briefing documents with

projected the image of a large saucer shaped ship imbedded in the side of an ancient temple of unknown origin.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Wed, 08 Sep 2004 17:47:38 GMT

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"This is file footage of the saucer the Brotherhood has been protecting outside Sarejevo for approximately 15 years. Kane ordered it locked down during the soviet conflict, and it had remained under our protection until a major GDI offensive was launched to capture it at the end of the first Tiberian war. Their victory was a hollow one for the most part. While they captured the vessel, anything of use had been stripped out 10 years prior and relocated to the temple nearby." The general looked the room over to gauge the reaction of the Black Hand team. Training had overcome their disbelief, and blank gazes returned to the general allowed him to continue.

"A little history for the uneducated. The brotherhood is old. Older than many of you realize. We have known of the scrin for some time, but have waited in vain for their return. The temple of Nod you see in this footage was built as a contact point for when they did return. Its geometry, and number of columns were all created specifically to let them know we knew of their existence and were waiting for their return.

That day came about 15 years ago, and this scout ship was descending for a rendezvous with senior Brotherhood staff. Something went wrong. We still don't know what, but the ship crashed into the temple, and despite our best efforts to enter it, we were stymied. The ship was impervious to any and all attempts at entry, and for five years we could do nothing more than study it, and hope for a break in technology. The base and new temple situated nearby were created to draw attention away from the crash site, and allow us to cover it from prying eyes, and defend it from capture."

"It wasn't until the arrival of the Italian Tiberium meteor that the vessel showed signs of life once again. The doors opened, on an automated sequence and after all the manhours spent trying to open it, we simply walked right in. What we found was a dream for the brotherhood, and revolutionized our role in the affairs of this planet."

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Thu, 09 Sep 2004 18:13:30 GMT

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99

This had gotten the attention of just about everyone in the room, and a palpable silence lingered as the General paused for effect. He hit the button on the remote for the holographic projection unit, and a video of the inside of the craft appeared. In the image Kane could be seen standing in the middle of the expansive flight deck, one arm holding a glowing crystalline ball. In the background panels glowed with flowing color, and the walls seemed to be pulsating with energy. Other than the alien technology, the place seemed abandoned.

"After years of analysis, we were able to retro-engineer the stealth, Tiberium based, and cybernetic technologies that we currently use. The object in the photo that Kane is holding is called the Tacitus. This is what the Elite Cadre was trying to retrieve when the mutants stole it. It is essentially a large data bank of Scrin architectural and engineering knowledge encrypted in a

"Cabal and the mutant known as Tratos worked on de-ciphering it together under the treatise

to Tratos that cures weren't what the Tacitus was all about. It was about transformation to a higher plane of existence through the use of Tiberium. When faced with the prospect that humankind was about to go through an evolutionary breakthrough to energy based life forms, he rebelled from the cause, and escaped from the research facility after contacting sympathetic

"While they were able to kill the guards, and escape, they were unable to prevent Cabal from locking down the Tactitus. Once our teams arrived, it was moved to the temple research facility for better protection, and so Cabal could finish translation. Once translation was completed, Nod engineering teams were tasked with trying to build a vessel of our own based on the engineering

There was an audible gasp from some in the room.

“In the interest of preventing GDI capture and translation of the Tacitus, it was split into two pieces. This leaves us where we are today gentlemen, and brings us to the issue at hand. The main piece of the tacitus is missing, and we need it to control the ship which houses the second piece. The Elite Cadre members we have invited today are the best Nod has to offer, and will be

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Tue, 14 Sep 2004 21:13:49 GMT

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Valdez raised his hand.

“Sir, Two things. First, where is the Tacitus now? Secondly, what is the status of the ship

“We can track the Tacitus easily enough, and know where the mutant is that stole it. It emits a unique signature on the EM bands. We have tracked the tacitus to a facility in Southern France’s Pyrenees mountains on the border with Spain. We have captured a mutant by the

answer to your second question: It is under the protection of General Vega in Spain on the island of Palma de Majorca. GDI has no outposts in the area, and Nod has firm control of the area. Once the tacitus has been acquired, you will cross the border where you will meet up with General

An intel officer raised his hand.

“Sir, our latest intel says this Mutant area is heavily protected, and contaminated. How is our

“Good question. To the south is a small GDI facility. General Slavik’s second, Commander Regulus, will be infiltrating, capturing, and then using GDI resources to attack, and draw their focus from the team. We will be using the GDI APC to come in the back door over the river as the strike hits them on the front doorstep. This will serve two purposes. Swaying mutant opinion to us, and allowing the team to get in, hit them, and get out. Our team will of course be going in using GDI gear, and uniforms to complete the image. Leave survivors valdez. We need

The next two hours were spent going over the details of the ruse, and logistics of it all. When they were done, they knew their role, the landscape, the layout of the base, and how to beat the hodge together defenses the mutants used. They would be fighting Nod and GDI tech, as well as some left over tech from the last war.

The last thing said to Valdez as they stood up to leave:

its usual translucence, and he opened the door.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Wed, 15 Sep 2004 18:59:25 GMT

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101

The men filed out after him, and they got into the transport back to barracks. Once back, they received a message that they were to report to weapons division for special uniform and weapon issue to match the mission, and received notification to turn in the laser rifles.

The men gathered their rifles, and all ammo, and trudged over to Weapons division where Seemus met their approach.

“Good day Black Hand Elite. I have just received notification you were coming, and that you

They followed Seemus into the Weapons division and he brought them to the part of the facility they had never been to before. Inside was every conceivable weapons past and present, and Sergei felt like it was Christmas.

Rather than question, Seemus headed to the back of the underground hangar, and into a small dusty room housing captured uniforms, and rifles. The men took their pick, and selected their weapons. Sergei picked a standard auto-rifle. No need for anything fancy this mission. If they were found out before the general attack, no weapon was going to save them anyways.

Next up was the ammo dump, which seemus took them to after locking the cage back up. It was on the other end of the weapons division, and in a concrete bunker. There were blast doors for this facility, and Seemus ordered the door unlocked by the guard.

Inside, florescent lighting snapped on as they moved past the threshold. A flickering light gave an eerie effect as they moved down the dusty shelves. Everything was labeled, and the GDI ammo was just to the right of the older 7.62, and 5.16 Nato ammo left over from the Soviet conflicts. Valdez ordered them eight clips a piece, and told them to get a brick of c-4 with det timers on the way out. Drubnov only found enough grenade rounds for one drum, and his exasperation showed. Seemus winked and said:

He moved over two rows and handed three drums of seemingly similar rounds to him, and let him load up on enough to stuff his vest pockets.

“Those babies aren’t just standard rounds. These have mini-bomblets that scatter over the targeted area, and create a secondary explosion over a wider area. A very nasty

Drubnov smiled an evil grin, and turned to follow the others who were moving away from the

armory.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Tue, 21 Sep 2004 00:26:04 GMT

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102-104

They assembled at the entrance, and Valdez thanked Seemus, who smiled and moved off to the stairs leading up to his office. They trudged out of the underground bunker into daylight which was waning already. That was something he noticed lately. Daylight didn't seem as long now that the sky was starting to take on the greenish tint from Tiberium. It was almost as if the stuff was leeching sunlight as well.

A helo was waiting at the barracks for them, and they hopped in. Regulus' army was lying in wait until the team could bring down the radar facility. They needed to capture the GDI MCV, and wep factory intact for this mission to work. An alerted base commander would never allow the MCV to be captured for the very reasons they were trying to do so.

They used the trip to outfit themselves, and get into the fatigues of the enemy. A strange feeling for him and the others he was sure. He had only used this type weapon in training. He wanted more time with it, but that wasn't going to happen. The ride was longer than he expected. It took an hour, and the temperature was chillier than before. Winter would soon come to Bosnia.

The helo came down hard and fast. It used twilight to its advantage, as well as landing in a clearing. If GDI troops were in the area, they would have a hard time discerning who was doing the drop. He leaped out, and immediately formed his part of the perimeter. The helo lifted off as quickly as it had arrived, and as they all kneeled in a semi-circle, they waited for the natural sounds of the woods to return. That was the best gauge for determining if humans were nearby. The natural night sounds returned, and Valdez motioned for them to move towards the east. The trees were larger here than further south where he used to live. The contamination was evident in the small green glitters he saw in the moonlight. In a year, this place would be green, and devoid of trees, he knew.

20 minutes later, Sanchez picked up the first signs the base was near. A humvee rumbled by on a patrol. The spotlight wasn't even on, and the guards clearly didn't expect resistance. This

been set up to evacuate civilians from Tiberium contamination. After they had been moved north to colder areas, the base was left as a liaison for the nearby mutant facility. An uneasy truce existed for GDI with the forgotten. That was soon to change.

After the humvee passed, they approached the perimeter fence, and Sanchez cut his way through the links. They were behind the Wep factory, and no activity could be spotted in the darkness. Sanchez put the fence back together as best he could to prevent alerting the patrol, and they moved toward the radar dish

103 Vigo resumed point and the squad kept close. They didn't expect traps inside the perimeter. The only real danger was enemy troops, and if Vigo was spotted, he would need backup instantly.

The layout of the base was a fairly simple one. The west side was where the Tib factory, and Wep factory were, which was where the team currently was. The barracks and power plants were deeper into the facility, and centrally located. The western and northern borders of the base were natural cliff barriers that prevented vehicular attack, and were thus undefended. The eastern end of the base more fortified. It had guard towers scanning the night, and RPG launchers stood on automatic standby, their mini radar assemblies turning in silence. A concrete wall barrier surrounded the facility on the southern and eastern edges where natural barriers didn't protect.

The terrain was a rugged one. Eastern reaches were divided by a large river with swift currents. Mountainous and hilly terrain was the order of business here, and a natural canyon in the far south eastern corner was the only method of reaching the centrally located Mutant base via land bridges. The satellite rip that Nod had got from GDI, showed widespread tiberian contamination, with the strange new blue crystals each combatant was desperately trying to find for its net worth in tripled stored energy. No one knew anything about it, except that it was cropping up in areas that were already well overgrown by the standard green tiberium vineferas. Dr. Ignatio Mobius had been on the wire talking about the new transmogrification of the species, and was as mystified as others. The only insight he had been able to provide was that terran plant life was being changed to actually create these new and highly volatile crystals.

The darkness was their friend, and they transited to the radar facility easily. It glowed in the lights that shown in the entrances, and on the dish itself. The team hid behind a row of parked MRLS's that needed repair. The burn marks seemed to indicate a lightning strike had hit them while in an Ion storm. Sergei surmised they had been transiting a Tiberium field when the storm must have started. Hover and air technology was virtually useless in an Ion storm, and they were grounded until it passed.

Vigo pulled out a silenced pistol, and took aim on the lights shining up the entrance. In a quick burst, three exterior lights had been eliminated. Darkness consumed the area. They could still see from the light from the towers, and the buildings behind them, but it was far reduced now.

They moved towards the facility, and as soon Vigo they got to the door, they met a GDI officer exiting.

"Again? That's the third spike this week. I'm tired of this. I think I will have a talk with

As the officer strode away muttering something, Valdez walked up beside him and with a

He cycled the lock as he pushed past him, and Vigo rolled his eyes in resignation. Inside the facility was the ever-present hum of the giant rotating dish's gears working below their feet. They had heard this sound before, and Sergei flashed back to Sarejevo. They were a long ways from there now. Romania was colder, and less hospitable despite the lack of warfare Sarejevo had endured.

The hall they were in had unlit rooms behind doors on each side. The only one that remained lit was the duty officer's and he had just gone to complain the duty officer about fictional events. Just past the duty officer's desk, was a large room of machinery. Catwalks surrounded the pit that housed the dish's rotisserie. On the outer periphery of the catwalks were readouts, and computers of all kinds, as well as more offices. During the day, the place would be alive with people, but tonight, there was only a lazy officer in dereliction of his duty. They wired the shaft with shaped charges, painted it black to match the shaft and set the receiver to await the signal from Valdez.

Next up was the power plant. Right next door, it would be easy to get to. The men rushed out into the night again. In the distance was the Humvee on patrol still. It was no where near them, and passing under the RPG tower.

They were able to make it all the way to the central computer core before being questioned. The

Valdez then called in to the Nod forces waiting at the base periphery.

He wired the core, and put the engineer behind it to hide the body for five more precious minutes. After that, the Globalists would be far to busy protecting themselves to worry about anyone else.

Casually, they exited the way they came, and even had technicians wave as they walked through. The irony of it all was lost on their hidden urgency to leave.

Finally free of the plant, they made haste to the parked MLRS lot.

They climbed onto the craft as Parker started up the fans. This got the attention of the command post in the MCV, and the hummvee turned from it's patrol to spotlight them.

As the light fell on them, Parker went to full power, and the craft turned towards the fence, moving

behind the wep factory to avoid RPG's, and the humvee. He launched a barrage into the fence at the same time Valdez hit the remote once. The lights flickered, then dimmed in the base. He hit it again, and the charges on the shaft went off. No one outside would ever even know it in the dark, but for a second the dish resisted its partially severed shaft. Then it leaned ever so slightly, and gained speed as it headed for the cliff wall at the back of the base.

The barrage Parker had launched had destroyed any semblance of a fence, and they picked up speed heading for the gap. Rocket bikes rushed into the base and the RPG never had a chance to try to target them. As it tried, Tick tanks and APC's rolled in. The tanks obliterated the RPG tower, and headed to finish whatever resistance was offered by the sleeping base. With no communications, and with complete surprise achieved, GDI knew only that a power failure had happened on the orbiting Philedelphia. The reality was far different as infantry rushed ahead of the engineers to capture the building before generators could be switched on, and self destruct sequences initiated. The team watched it play out from above on the cliff edge. Some of the teams were successful in capturing the buildings, other died in massive explosions generated by more astute GDI troops inside.

It was over in 20 minutes, and over the wire they heard: "Nest, Romeo 1. Mission

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Thu, 23 Sep 2004 18:08:31 GMT

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105

Immediately, the swarm of engineers began repairing the structures left, and getting the damaged War factory back into production. Regulus ordered the Nod vehicles hidden in the back of the base, and sent probes in Hummvees to scout out the Mutant stronghold. The team reported in to him, and he stopped in the middle of directing efforts to build his GDI army.

"Good show men, take a load off, and hang in the radar facility out of sight. The spy sats will want to know what happened here. All I want them to see is a happy little base with comm.

the facility. Engineers were already craning the damaged dish back into the semblance of the position it had formerly held. One turned towards him and said: "Must you guys break

They occupied an office in what was left of the main gear room of the facility. The door had blown in spraying glass, and minor fires had burned out, but the room was largely usable. They replaced the door to block out the noise of the techs trying to get the dish to functioning status. Some of the men tried to sleep; others wrote letters to loved ones in the Nod protective areas.

Valdez spent his time with Becker Parker, and Ustinov planning their next mission. For leaders, rest was a luxury they didn't have.

He brought out a portable link to Cabal, and showed them the topographical of the mutant stronghold. It was rough terrain, and Becker said as much.

Patrols had been posted at every access in the area, but Valdez pointed out a cliff face that could be turned into a ramp with a little c-4.

The base had a conglomerate of defenses from the various wars fought in the last 20 years. They were primarily concentrated in the south west corner to address the sole access to the base. It would be a deathtrap for any army to traverse it with power still up. Anti-air defenses were high, and the mutant life forms so prevalent as of late seemingly were being tamed to defend the mutants.

Valdez tried to get an update on the operation from Cabal, but a blackout had been imposed to prevent GDI code breakers from finding out. He next checked the networks and found that there was almost nothing on the Romanian theatre of operation. They would just have to wait it out until regulus's scouts reported back, and the operation could begin.

Three hours later, the engineers were done. The dish had been re-attached to the gear works below, and while not functioning yet, it would appear on the satellite run that the dish was just un-powered. They now had a moment of quiet, and the men were sleeping soundly when the alarm went off in the base. Over the speakers came Regulus's voice:

"Man your battle stations. Incoming mutant forces. Wolverines man the ramps into base. Titan

The squad was now running for the door, and jumped onto the Hovercraft that some enterprising young engineer had repaired with his molecular re-arranger. The damaged armor plating now glistened in the morning light, and only needed a paint job to complete its refit. Parker got the fans up to speed, and tilted the craft towards the base entrance. He noticed that the army of engineers had done a fine job on getting the base back to GDI specs. From orbital space, there would appear that only a power plant issue was at hand.

The craft slowed as they approached the line of assembled troop formations. Hydraulic whine was the only thing that met their ears as 155 mm howitzers tried to bear on whatever was approaching from the northeast. Over the hill roared two old humvee scouts and as they zoomed past the line the team could see bullet holes, and tattered armor plating flapping on the side of one of the vehicles. They had been fired upon for sure.

About 2 minutes went by before one of the leading Titans opened up. The others followed suit, and even though the rest of the line couldn't see what was coming, the Titans did. The restored RPG tower started lobbing grenades in the direction of the phantom offenders, and they knew that at any minute they would come.

He almost laughed at what came over the hill. Seven sedans, 3 motorhomes, and 4 pickups crested the hill. As the wolverines opened up on them, he wondered at the civility of firing on Chevrolets until one of them brought a chain gun to bear on a wolverine. It was attached to the

hood of the car, and started tearing into the wolverines' right cannon. A titan landed a round directly under the vehicle and it flipped into the air in an explosion. A motorhome with improvised rocket launchers from a Nod rocket bike fired 4 rounds at the Titan, and sheared its left leg off at the knee. It toppled, and fell into another Titan before landing on its back on the ground. The other titan regained its footing, and fired back. Its round landed on the windshield armor plate, and punched straight through it. It blew up somewhere inside, and the Motorhome ruptured like a bratwurst that has been in the microwave too long. It showered pieces of vehicle over the area, and got the attention of the remaining mutants. They swiftly retreated from where they had come from, Parker took parting shots at them and the line of armor started to follow them back to their base.

They turned the Hover craft over to a sergeant in a humvee who seemed happy to trade. He followed the general advance, and the team took the hummer back to base. The apc awaited their arrival. It was the first vehicle constructed by the newly renovated wep factory that was now cranking out Titans as fast as possible. They parked the hummer, and an engineer took it out back for scrap to supply the need for raw materials. They hopped in, and Parker took the controls, while Becker took gunner duties.

Regulus came on to the screen at the pilot controls, and spoke to Regulus as Parker made his way out of the base in the due north position.

"We are fully committed ready or not. Get there get it, and get out asap. Once your mission is

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Mon, 27 Sep 2004 18:20:31 GMT

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106

The APC hit the river at about 10 miles an hour. As it nosed down into the river, it temporarily submerged, and water washed over the view ports. More than one man seemed tense as the behemoth seemed to keep going down. Finally it started its ascent, and breached the river surface. The water was swift, and Parker cursed more than once as the 8 ton monster tried to traverse the powerful current. The vehicles low posture in the water allowed the swift water to keep flowing over the vehicles view ports and caused Parker even greater difficulty in seeing where to come ashore. The engine whined as was spooled up to counter the current.

He was pointing to a small inlet where the current was causing a whirlpool. He maneuvered the craft toward it, and was swept downriver 20 feet. The craft smashed into a rock, and lurched to the right.

revolution it could give and unpinned the craft from its watery trap. It hesitated, and then slowly

fought the current headed for the inlet's relative safety. Once it reached the inlet, the whirlpool created by the current meeting the rocks at its mouth grabbed ahold of them. It started spinning them around, and Parker cursed again.

Valdez spoke again: "Let it take us around once, then once the beach comes into view, gun this tub with all she's got and use the pool's own momentum. We only get one shot at

If they failed, the whirlpool would eventually pin them on the river bottom, where they would remain to die a slow death.

Against his better judgement, Parker did as told, and let the beast get sucked into the pool's movement. The craft picked up momentum, and when they were halfway through the pool's

the end of the comment, but they were all thinking the same thing, and finished his comment mentally.

Parker's piloting worked, and the vehicle escaped the grip of death. The motor was still at full power as they sling shotted out of the inlet, and hit the rocky beach full tilt. The vehicle lurched onto land, and bounced over the boulders throwing occupants around they cabin. Parker stopped the vehicle, and idled the engine. He then turned, and said to the occupants in a mocking voice: "This is the captain speaking. We apologize for any turbulence. Please place your trays in

Valdez snorted a sarchastic laugh looking over the men trying to pick themselves off the floor, and

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Tue, 28 Sep 2004 18:32:50 GMT

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107

The bumping continued, and despite the group's best efforts to stay in their seats, they were still bounced around quite a bit. It was about a five minute drive to the cliff face, before they arrived. The vehicle slowed, and they then stopped, and they all got out. Valdez ordered the junior men to wire the cliff face, and put Parker in charge of them, then both he, and the other two checked the vehicle out for damage. The massive impact with the boulder in the river had clearly dented the side of the craft. Paint had been removed over most of the impact zone, and the armor was heavily gouged. They checked the middle wheel for damage that may hinder their exit from the area. They had been very lucky. If the impact had damaged the drivetrain they would have had to find another way in.

The others returned to the group, and they returned to the APC. The loading ramp closed, and they resumed their seats. Parker noticed a button marked "Restraints" and started chuckling.

"Sit back in your seats ladies, I have a treat for you."

He pushed the button, and plastic shoulder harnesses slid out of the inner wall. It was apparently

a way of saving space in the cramped compartment, and was why the men hadn't noticed it earlier.

"About time Parker. It's a good thing we aren't airborne." Drubnov quipped as the men snapped the harnesses in.

"Blow it." Valdez ordered.

The cliff face erupted and avalanched as expected. They waited until the dust cleared, then Parker gunned the motor, and proceeded to tackle to unsteady mess they had created. The vehicle did exceedingly well, and even Valdez was forced to admit to its sturdiness. As they crested the hill, Valdez consulted the GPS again, and told Parker to follow the ridge to his left. Sergei looked over his shoulder out the view port to the vehicle's starboard side. In the distance he could see smoke pillars rising in the direction of the gdi base. He wondered what they were from.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Sun, 03 Oct 2004 21:40:47 GMT

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108-109

What he didn't know was that back at base Regulus was having an extremely difficult time getting the offensive organized due to mutant attacks of an unconventional nature. The main Titan line had progressed towards the mutant outpost guarding the way in to the base.

Destroying the observation tower had been easy enough, as had the mutant resistance that had cropped up, but what they hadn't been ready for was the mutant fiends being stored on site. As soon as the attack started, they had been released, and had cut a hole through the line of Titans. Mutant vehicles had swarmed through the gap, ignoring the Titans, and headed for the base. With only a small core of Titans built up due to Tiberium processing delays, they were prey for whatever cobbled together weapons the vehicles had.

The RPG tower got most of the slower moving vehicles, but a sedan had gotten through and rammed the Weapons factory at high speed. It carried a tactical nuke warhead, that had disabled the power grid, and had scrambled all electronic intelligence or signals for what wasn't destroyed.

Scrambling for control of the situation, Regulus ordered CBR teams to the site, to get the fires out, and decontaminate the factory. Next he ordered the engineers still alive to repair the power grid, but at best the situation wouldn't be back to normal for at least a few hours. He ordered a scout out to tell the units on the offensive to hold position, and destroy any civilian craft with extreme prejudice.

With comms down, he couldn't even tell the team to hold off until they could resume the offensive. They would be slaughtered if they didn't take realize the situation in time, and rolled into a fully armed and attentive base.

Regulus swore he would slaughter every last mutant in that base. There would be no mercy this day.

Meanwhile across the river the men continued towards the fully ready base, and seeming certain death. Sergei continued to wonder what the smoke was all about ignorant of what they meant for his team.

109 Parker followed the ridge for about a mile before they got their first view of the base from the cliff top. Valdez ordered the vehicle stopped, and id a quick reconnoiter with the binoculars. A light fog obscured his vision beyond the leading edge of the base facing him. He could see mutants on guard, and the gate that lay beyond, but not much else.

Good, he thought. Some nice cover for the infiltration. He couldn't see what he hoped to though, and it worried him, that smoke pillars weren't coming up through the fog.

He entered the vehicle again, and brought up GPS again. If only it could see more than topographical, and cartographical information. He would kill for a sit-rep right now, but blackout had been imposed once they crossed the river. He had Parker slow the vehicle as they descended into the shroud of fog that the base was in.

All conversation died, and only the whining Diesel engine, and ratcheting rifle bolts could be heard. The fog started getting heavier, and Parker was tempted to turn on the lights. The ethereal atmosphere down here in the bowl shaped valley was much darker than the open areas on the cliffs above. They ran into the first mutant guards about 500 feet from the base. The infrared picked them up, and parker idled the engine.

Sergei stood, and motioned to Drubnov to come then looked at Valdez.

Valdez acknowledged, and said in reply:

"Take Becker as well. You're going to need him against those mutants. They aren't

Becker wouldn't have been his first choice. He still didn't completely trust him. He didn't question the order though as Valdez was right. Becker was 230, and nothing but muscle. If it came to a close in brawl, he would need him. The ramp was lowered in the front of the vehicle, and they stepped out into mist.

Sergei took point on this one. He crept forward until the observation tower came into view through wisps of heavy mist. He ordered them to drop behind a rock outcrop, and surveyed the outpost. They were going to have to do this right the first time. The outpost was so close to the base gate, that any shots would bring down the rest of the base on them. He surveyed the area, and couldn't see the mutant they had picked up on IR.

Not a good development. That meant he couldn't snipe. They crept towards the concrete bunker, weapons ready. Sergei and the team approached the bunker from the east, and still saw no one. He pointed to his eyes, then pointed ahead. A signal for the men to be extra alert while he checked out the bunker. They covered him from the rocks to the immediate right. He entered the

outpost, and was shocked to find that it really was empty, and not a trap. A steaming cup of coffee sat on the table. He would be back. Sergei took up position behind the door, and waited.

The other two watched as the mutant came from the bushes. Nature had called and he had answered at the worst possible moment for a sentry on guard. Becker trained his rifle on him, but didn't take the shot. He would wait to see if Ustinov was clever enough to solve the problem without alerting the entire base.

Sergei heard him coming. His steps were heavy as if he was wearing lead boots. The door opened, and he headed for the coffee. Sergei jumped from behind, and brought the knife across his throat. If it had been anyone else, they would have been dead. He knew as the knife traveled though, that by the crunch noise it was making, and the resistance he encountered, that he had hit a patch of tiberian contamination. The crystals that wear feeding off his jugular vein, also protected that vein from Sergei's blade. He felt the softness of the other side of the neck give way to the blade, and threw the mutant's body towards the desk.

The mutant was clearly stunned, and was bleeding profusely from the side that had been deeply cut. He brought his hand up to the wound, and covered it. Blood flowed between his fingers as he dropped to one knee, and dipped his head making a gurgling noise. Then to Sergei's amazement, he stood, and started towards the alarm panel. Before he could get there Sergei landed a flying kick in the small of his back, and threw him forward past the console. He then jumped on his back, and twisted the victim's neck horribly left.

The sound of crunching crystals was louder than the crack of bone. He was finally dead. Sergei stood, and yanked all the wires from the console panel, then moved towards the door. He exited, and motioned for the others. As he motioned them, he noticed the small crystal pieces imbedded in the red blood on his sleeve. He momentarily felt remorse then cleared his thoughts.

They needed to get that gate down.

110 The others looked him over, and Becker said flatly:

Becker chuckled lightly, and followed him towards the gate.

As expected the barrier was up, and the guard was non-existent. Becker fired a piton into the guard shack's lower supports, and Drubnov was sent up first. As he approached the bottom of the shack, he listened for voices. Hearing none, he climbed in the shack window, and helped the others up. Along the wall in the mist they could hear voices to their left. Drubnov moved towards them, and the others followed. Ahead, they could see two mutants having a swig of something, and talking about the action in the south of the base.

"I just can't believe they attacked us. I went to the base just last week for treatments. I just

"Well they ain't getting in here, that's for sure. Tratos has got them licking their

That brought a chuckle from the second mutant.

horror. He pulled the trigger on his silenced Glock twice, and the two collapsed in dirty heaps.

What did that mean? Sergei wondered. What could cause the Nod forces to worry about this rabble?

Already Becker was moving towards the shack again. When Sergei got there, he was already bringing the barrier down.

Once it was down, he went to the shack, and flicked on the spotlight in three rapid flashes. His response was the sound of a diesel firing up, and he ordered the others down the inner ladder. They waited in the cool mist for the APC to pick them up. It rumbled into view, and the ramp lowered enough for them to get in, then locked back into position.

“Alright, we have surprise, and cover. The lab is centrally located in a porta-shack just north

The porta-shack looked like a million others that inhabited the earth in these perilous times. Their benefits were they resisted Tib poisoning, and were mobile by helo for ease of placement. They were a favorite of the mutants that now had assumed control of the badlands in the equatorial zones. This one was distinguishable by its location on a plateau, and its isolation from the others.

Infrared picked up a group moving in their direction, and they pulled off behind a row on solar collectors. The patrol of pickups rolled past, and they moved toward the plateau in the fog. It wasn't long before they arrived, and Valdez contemplated his next move.

Parker gunned the motor, and they moved quickly towards the Dome of the plasteel shack. They hit it hard, and the vehicle lurched to a stop.

“Drop the ramp! Get in there, and kill anything that moves. Find the lab, and secure it.

The ramp slammed down, and they entered the ruined mess hall before them. The APC had managed to penetrate far enough in, that tables were scattered, and fires had started. The mutants in the mess hall were already dead from flying debris. They moved as one into the next module, where a mutant by a radio was trying to get up after the impact. He got one hand on the radio before the bullets ended his efforts.

The light in the hall was flickering, and making it difficult to focus on which way they were to go. Finally they found the lab, and after eliminating surprised mutants armed with fire extinguishers, they entered the main lab. A row of computers was in the center, and a table was located in front of them. In its center was a glowing orb with some kind of writing on it. Valdez scooped it up, and motioned for them to leave. Sanchez left a rucksack full of c-4 behind to ruin any info in the computers, and then ran after the others. A firefight erupted by the radio shack, and they spent 5 precious minutes trying to suppress the resistance. Finally Drubnov fired a grenade scatter round

in that direction, and it did indeed level everything in there.

Parker jumped back into the driver's seat, and closed the ramp. As the others tried buckle in, he jammed it into reverse. The APC zipped backwards, and down the plateau, skidding sideways as Parker jammed it into forward, and gunned the motor. The base was coming alive now, and the c-4 blew the research lab into pieces alerting the rest of them. In the mist they didn't see the APC until it was too late, and they ran over a group of soldiers in rag tag uniforms. Many thuds could be heard, and the men winced as cracking bones yielded. An Obelisk came to bear on them, and fired. The beam sliced into the upper hatch, and burned into the compartment. Becker's upper thigh burned as the edge of the beam caught him. He screamed in agony, and Sergei flew to his side. He nearly burned himself on the interior plastic seat that was now melted into goo. The beam had stopped there after it's travels through three inches of steel. Parker sped up, and zipped through the gate as rounds from a mammoth tank bracketed the damaged vehicle. Part of the gate crumbled, and blocked further pursuit.

command:

Nothing but static.

when Valdez saw the smoke from the base, and knew the answer to his problem.

The base had been rolled hard.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.
Posted by [rm5248](#) on Tue, 05 Oct 2004 19:03:38 GMT
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111

Back at base Regulus had started to get things under control. Engineering had given him a preliminary damage report, and while not the most desirable of circumstances, it wasn't quite the disaster he had feared. Surely GDI knew what the truth was by now. Their satellites would see the observation post in ruins, and would have seen the mutant tactical nuke going off. Most of the structures in the immediate area of the blast had been significantly damaged, and half his base personnel outright killed.

Thankfully, most of the engineering staff had been on the southern end of the base re-organizing the walls surrounding the southern tiberium field. It was an aggressive patch of Viniferas and any ground not covered by pavement was being sown with new fast growing crystals. They were finishing the wall, and pavement, and collecting samples of the new crystals when the nuke had gone off. Many had been peppered with crystals, and needed treatment of the poisoning that would consume them if untreated, or not managed properly by the bio-chemical engineers.

Tiberium was a useful agent for the next step in man's evolution, but needed to be augmented by current technology to keep the mutation from going wild in the candidates.

The engineers had now started decon, and repairs, and the Weapons factory was back in automated operation. Power wouldn't be restored for a bit, but generators would see the automated assembly lines had enough power. It was a risk to push the factory to full production with the power so sketchy due to parts getting jammed on assembly lines, but if the Titans weren't available, there would be no factory left once the mutants broke through, or GDI tried to reclaim the base.

He was desperate for communications of any sort. That was priority number two once the factory was back in production. He had no idea if the team was alive. Without that knowledge, they were going to have to go in and make sure the tacitus was secured in case they had failed. He received word back from the front that the line was holding, and he ordered all Titans in base to head for the front. He needed air support, and anti-air MRLS vehicles as well to eliminate the Obelisks and harpies that had been reported. He ordered production started on two new harvesters, and a new weapons factory. This assault needed to succeed.

All preparations were ready in about an hour, and with the added income of the new harvesters, and the new weapons factory cranking out Titans and Wolverines they were ready. Communications had finally been re-established, and he ordered a measured, and steady assault on the base. Only the central porta-shack was to be spared. Air units were on standby for instant defense nullification as the Titans advanced.

Lieutenant Sanders was in the command unit for the front line. Upon receiving orders to move out, he sent two columns of Titans right up the line towards the defenses. There was no easy way to do this, and he ordered the men to advance no matter the cost. To turn back was instant death from the units following them. The ground shook as the mass of mecha moved forward. The mutants would know they were coming. He linked up with the air commander: "Standby. 2

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.
Posted by [rm5248](#) on Thu, 07 Oct 2004 00:12:30 GMT
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112

On the western end of the Mutant base by the raging river the team was attempting to make it home in one piece. Something had broken on the underside of the vehicle, and while it still operated as it should something was starting to protest with a grinding noise.

They did, and he ordered a rear guard set up to prevent the mutants from sneaking up while they tried to effect repairs on the beach. Becker dressed his wound as best he could. It was already cauterized from the burning laser beam, so there wasn't really much to do except spread

anti-bacterial cream into the wound, and wait for base. A two inch deep wound scoured his upper right thigh. It was fortunate that his physique was large, and his thighs as well. A lesser man would be crippled for life.

Valdez and Ustinov looked the craft over, and saw the problem immediately. The laser had burned through the cabin, into the top of the differential sending power to the middle set of wheels. It had partially breached the pumpkin, and the molten metal had been ingested into the spider gears inside. It would only be a matter of time before powdered metal ruined the differential, and if that didn't do it, the water and silt would, once it got in when they crossed.

Becker turned and scowled as the other men laughed.

“Get back in ladies. Ustinov, Plug the hole in this pig so it doesn't sink when we cross. Get

Another laugh, and as the ramp closed, Parker backed up for a running start.

gained speed, the noise getting louder with the additional stress.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Thu, 07 Oct 2004 21:06:12 GMT

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113

Sanders' onslaught was going as well as could be expected. The Titans were receiving a heavy beating, but for every one that fell, two more would push through. That was the greatest fault of the Obelisk tower, and these were older designs that didn't have the new capacitors with a higher recharge rate.

The orcas were signaled, and came in as expected, but what wasn't expected was the SAMs that blew them out of the sky before they could attack. He cursed as he watched the fireballs fall from the sky, and pepper the landscape with wreckage. They were going to have to do this the old fashioned way.

As they proceeded to the base, the mutants attempted a similar tac nuke attack as a last ditch effort. His men saw the impending attack, and fired in front of the oncoming SUVs, and Mobile Homes. The dirt thrown up in front of them obscured their vision, and they smashed into the holes left by the airborne turf. Once trapped, the concentrated fire of every weapon Nod had that could bear on them obliterated any hint of the last attempt at a rush. It didn't take long before the Obelisks were out of action. 155mm rounds had punched holes through the superstructures of the defensive structures, and it was only a matter of time before the armored shaft guarding the power conduits to the focal lenses were pounded to flattened junk. One entire upper half broke in two, and landed on the technicians attempting to keep it operational. The other just plain shut down

the circuits as they watched the Obelisk cook in its own power discharge.

A new threat materialized now. Old style GDI mammoth tank now confronted the newer Titans. They were firing at unusual rapidity for a mammoth, and it suggested improved reloading methods. He ordered them to focus all fire on each individual tank, from left to right. They couldn't hold up to the beating, and despite doing the same to the Titans, lost the war of attrition.

The Titans were now unchallenged, and started systematically destroying what was left. They had orders to spare nothing, and no one except the lab.

As they approached the lab, Sanders knew the answer to whether the team was successful or not. It was burning heavily, and abandoned. The last vestige of resistance took refuge in the northern part of the base underground in a cavern. A mutant named Tratos was on the circuit

"Leave them alone, except Tratos. We need survivors to tell the world GDI did this, and we

He ordered Tratos out, and let the others go in whatever scrappy vehicles they had. Sanders ordered the wolverines to escort Tratos' sedan to base.

As the Titans walked back to base, they finished off anything of use to them, and stomped their way home. Regulus had snatched victory from defeat, and smiled inwardly. It was suddenly muted by the realization that the primary mission hadn't been accomplished yet. He ordered APCs north in search of the Team, and hoped Kane wouldn't ask before they found them.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Mon, 11 Oct 2004 17:27:54 GMT

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114

Further northwest, the Team was in for round two of the river crossing. The vehicle had reached the best speed it could manage, and launched into the swift current. Armed with better knowledge of the river, Parker was able to navigate the current better, but the noise was getting louder, and he knew time was running out for them. They had just about made half the crossing before the hole in the APC started leaking badly from both top and bottom of the Beam strike. Every time the vehicle was submerged by a swift current, and pushed around, water would leak past Sergei's temporary plugs. Finally the bottom one gave way as they smashed into a submerged rock, and almost tipped over. As Parker fought for control again, the water shot up, and hit the roof of the craft, which effectively showered every one inside with cold river water. Sergei leaped onto the leak, and tried in vain to stop it up. He shouted at Parker: "Get us ashore anywhere. I

The noise directly below sergei's hands changed from grinding to a series of banging clunks

as water, silt, broken spider gear teeth, and melted metal destroyed the differential. There was one last clunk as the drivetrain locked up forever, and Parker announced: "That's it."

Almost simultaneously, the pig rammed an outcropping, and lodged itself into the hollow it formed. They were finally stopped, but the water was now rising quickly. Valdez popped the hatch, and started to get out, but a gush of water met him, and he sputtered. He finished climbing out, and the others followed, standing on the deck of the pig as it slowly took on water. Their surroundings didn't lend them much help. They were pinned by the outcrop at the hairpin curve of the river in a canyon with steep vertical walls. Sergei saw only one way out, and announced it. "We

A groan came from Becker, and Valdez followed Sergei up the outcrop, and onto the wall face. Inside the pig, water was now getting into the electrical systems and despite their waterproof

complete. The water started to overflow the top deck as the men left it behind, and as they started their climb, Drubnov looked down as he heard water rush into the open hatch. Now filling with water, and no longer buoyant, the craft sank deeper into the river, and was loosed from the outcrop. The swift water pushed it down river, where it struck one last boulder, and sank like a stone.

Sergei never looked back. He was not going to die like this. His renewed energy now drowned out the cold that pervaded his body from the river water. He climbed with renewed fire.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Tue, 12 Oct 2004 22:24:54 GMT

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115

The three APCs headed north at fastest speed. When they came to the river, it was decided to scout along the bank north and south rather than tempt the river unless needed. The southern scout found the team resting at the ledge top after a tough climb. They were wet, cold, and frustrated, but cheered up when the APC arrived. Its driver radioed in to tell command the good news, and Regulus requested a private line with Valdez.

Valdez looked at the pilot, and said: "Home Jeeves, and on the double. Mom says we missed

The pilot laughed, and lifted the ramp, as the medic dressed Becker's wound, and bound it. The ride to base was uneventful, and as they arrived at base, he could see the engineers setting the Tactical nuke to make it appear the mutants had nuked the base. The titans left were being sent back to base for use in other psych operations globally. The more pictures seen of GDI

Titans destroying villages, the better for Nod.

Regulus waved them over to waiting Orca transports, and ordered the driver into the magnetic latches for transport. As they approached, the driver dropped the hatch for Regulus.

The men laughed, and they filed out, to get into the cabin for the transport.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Thu, 14 Oct 2004 21:00:28 GMT

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116

The Orca transport had been stolen prior to this operation, and Nod used it only for special occasions. GDI was especially jealous of their technological edge with airpower, and if Nod was found to have captured it, they would surely hunt it down. The goliath of the air was able to carry anything in the GDI arsenal, and take a fair amount of punishment before crashing. It's greatest weakness was Ion activity. Once the excited atmospheric particles started interacting the polarity of the electrical systems would erroneously reverse, or arc to ion clusters in the atmosphere, and rupture their casings, and destroy components in their path. No degree of insulation could stop it for high energy vehicles, and both GDI and Nod were unable to fly in the Ion weather. GDI had the added disadvantage of having their hovercraft fail as well due to the electrical distribution to the fans. They used so much power, and were prone to the same thing.

As they entered the large superstructure of the craft, Sergei noticed the use of aluminum. He found that odd considering the heavy lift capabilities. He found the answer in the girder structure. Each and every girder was carefully counter balanced against its opposite number, and the craft's hunched back sported a spine that suspended the whole thing from it. He noticed hinged joints at some girder intersections to allow the craft to flex under heavy stress as well. That would explain its ability to take such punishment, and still stay flyable. Becker said something about watching one these limp into a free fire zone with a Titan under-slung. The craft had been badly beat up, yet was still flying, and he had watched it fly off with most of its innards dragging under it. He had been impressed, and stated such.

They entered the fairly spacious passenger cabin just above the command deck, and settled in after securing weapons in provided lockers. Above them, were panes of armored glass with a tinted effect. It gave the cabin the appearance of a purple hue, as the Tiberian Sun blazed bright and high above them.

Down on the command deck, Regulus had buckled into the command chair, and given the order to go.

"Air command, this is Romeo one, we are a go. Have escorts standing by. We are departing

"Affirmative Romeo one. Escorts inbound. GDI patrols are non-existent in this theatre. We will alert General Vega of your arrival, and to check IFF transponders prior to lock on as you

Regulus then looked over at the flight deck officer and said, "Palma, best speed. Alert me

The amount of power being expended was enormous. The craft silently lifted off the ground as Orca fighters with Nod pilots zipped overhead to assume a patrol as they achieved height. Any GDI patrols would consider them one big happy family, and leave them be hopefully. If not, the second of hesitation in identifying them as hostile would cost them their lives. Slowly they left the ground. Then the aircraft moved toward Spain as one unit. Outside, the noise was horrendous as the combined VTOL fans of 7 aircraft blasted the landscape.

stated flatly, then returned to his station.

The pitch changed, and they were now moving forward at best speed to Palma. Maybe he would get some beach time, Sergei thought, and drifted to a half sleep.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.
Posted by [rm5248](#) on Fri, 15 Oct 2004 23:24:34 GMT
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117

As he slept, the escort ushered the behemoth to Spain from the Baltics, and the planet groaned under the force of yet another massive Nuclear explosion. All GDI would ever find of the base would be pieces, and a crater. Regulus received a text message from the Montauk stating they were 15 miles out from Palma. Slavik had got a head start when word had been received the Tacitus was safe, and gone on to assume Vega's command. Regulus had been ordered to follow as soon as possible while preparations were being made. A communications blackout was in effect which meant no contact with Vega's forces to avoid drawing attention from GDI.

The trip was clear, and pleasant for all. No GDI aircraft bothered them. This was a fitting end to a hard fought mission and Regulus allowed himself to enjoy it. It was right about then that the uplink with Montauk flickered to life. Oxanna's face appeared and stated that they were at the site, and about to enter the cavern. As he watched, the tunnel's doors unlocked, and allowed them access to the underground cavern.

To everyone's horror, the video feed showed nothing except an empty cavern with sodium lights abounding focusing light on nothing at all now that the craft was missing. Almost simultaneously vega's image appeared, and his explanation of taking the craft to settle old

Then came the mayday, and the feed cut. Slavik quickly ordered a response. "Cabal alert Battlegrid response, we're going to North America. If vega's lucky he will have died in the

His tone of hatred caused Regulus to hesitate before asking for new orders.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Tue, 19 Oct 2004 00:08:33 GMT

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118

Regulus was glad he wasn't on the receiving end of Slavik's wrath. People usually weren't heard from again once they crossed the head of the Black Hand. He ordered the ship down on Palma inside the hangar. It would be best to avoid any GDI surveillance of errant Hovercraft, and since the hangar wasn't going to be used again anytime soon, that was their best bet. He ordered the escort to also set down inside with them in case they had to scramble.

As they came in to land, the island in the bay opened up to accept them into the underwater cavern. The entire island had been carved out, and was shielded by stealth new stealth technology to prevent locals from knowing what was going on at the island. The stealth field covered them as they approached from the ocean, and descended into the hole in the ocean. The escorts did a flyby of the beach resort further inland to generate enough noise to prevent anyone from asking about where the noise was coming from, and then went back out to sea, where they vanished mysteriously behind the island.

The team knew something was up. The ship was no where to be seen, and Regulus wasn't talking just yet. He took the tacitus, and told them to get some r&r topside under the guise of vacationing tourists, but there was no mistaking his tone. They were still on guard duty irregardless. They were glad to get out of the GDI outfits, and were surprised to see the supply locker actually had vacation wear as standard gear here.

"We are just your friendly local vacation spot. Keep folks away from the seaward cliff. If they

the surface, and some well deserved R&R.

Meanwhile Regulus was in the command center following Nod's assault on Vega's impromptu base in The American southwest. Now with no options, Vega was attempting to smuggle the Tacitus piece he had, out of the wreckage to South America. Slavik would have no mercy on this fool. GDI was all over the crash site of course, and Nod's greatest asset had been compromised. We watched in disbelief as the globalists and vega's forces fought, and Slavik's forces annihilated both indiscriminately. How had it come to this?

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [rm5248](#) on Tue, 19 Oct 2004 21:46:41 GMT

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119

The men were glad to be free of their weapons, and gear for once. They organized shifts of men to watch the locals that may try to visit the island, while others rested, tanned, or went swimming to the mainland for a run at the local beverage stand. Sergei pulled first shift voluntarily, and perched on top of the small island's mountain. The breeze, sun and fresh air made him feel new again, and he felt the absolute joy of doing nothing for the first time in many months. No one tried to come to the island this day so there was nothing to be on guard for. The locals were convinced a rich news anchor owned the island, and that it was private property so they didn't

working the booth, and have drink, he resisted and fell asleep under the Spanish sun. He found he was very tired every time they stopped operating, and he already wanted to go back, and do something productive. But for now, he was happy to sleep, and be warm.

Regulus meanwhile was watching the annihilation of Vega's security as Slavik's units pressed into the base. They were outnumbered, but Vega was too busy fighting off GDI units at the same time, that Slavik's surprise had been complete. The train had been captured, and the second portion of the Tacitus found. It was already en-route to Palma, and Vega had abandoned the small impromptu base for his main base in South America. GDI was already pursuing, and Slavik had made sure to place an anonymous tip to GDI command about the Dams that powered Vega's base. If they went, the base would be unpowered, and GDI could easily destroy Vega. Nod had cut its losses with Vega and his men. The Brotherhood had no tolerance for failure. As GDI dropped units in to finish Vega, the tacitus was spirited away by Slavik across the pond. Palma vacation was about to end for the team in about 6 hours.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [exnyte](#) on Tue, 07 Dec 2004 06:15:07 GMT

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120

Sergei was awakened by Drubnov hastily. "Hey, get up. We have a mission." He lazily stretched, and surveyed his surroundings. Soldiers from the base were now stationed in their place, and the rest of the team was already heading down, grumbling all the way.

The briefing stated only that they were going to escort the "package" back to Kane at Sarejevo Temple. They were going with Slavik in the Montauk as escort to ensure its arrival.

"Arrival will be in 30 Minutes. Get ready. Your laser weapons are here. Take them." Regulus stated.

"You going with us sir?" Valdez asked.

"Yes. We have no need for Blackhand presence here anymore. The engineers will be cleaning out

the tech. This place will be a listening post for GDI's Gibraltar operations."

They spent the next 30 minutes checking weapons' status, and moving to the central cave area where the orca transport bringing in Montauk was scheduled to arrive. It did so in grand manner, and they filed into the passenger compartment of the Orca again. This time, Slavik, and his guards were already in there, and they were forced to take the back row of seats. Valdez was motioned to the front with Slavik where they conferred for most of the trip.

Arrival in Sarejevo was different than the last time they had been there. Now the newly repaired temple was being finished, and defensive structures ringed the complex. It was a beautiful sight to behold, and spoke of everything that the Brotherhood could achieve. He felt pride he hadn't had before, and knew that something this beautiful came from the mind of the messiah, and no one else. It glinted in the sun, and seemed to be a sun all to itself. Armies were massed around it, and moved in unison and with purpose. This was the home of Kane.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [exnyte](#) on Tue, 07 Dec 2004 06:15:37 GMT

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121

The Orca dropped into the marked landing zone, and was met by a large assembly of standard black hand. They escorted Slavik away into the temple but not before checking out their elite cadre they had never seen, leaving Regulus and the team alone with the Tacitus, and orders to get it back below. They marched in formation ensuring the box was out of sight in the middle of the assembly, and well protected by their bodies. As they arrived at the temple entrance, Regulus ordered a halt, and contacted someone below via his cabal link. Receiving his instructions, he told them to follow him, and moved towards the giant doors. They were opened by temple servants, who bowed low to their presence. Troopers inside also snapped to attention as they passed the inner doors into the sanctuary.

A beautiful cascade of red and gold light filtered down into the temple from the overhead tinted glass. The scorpion emblem was proudly emblazoned on banners hung from every marble pillar. The front altar had been reconstructed, and the monitors replaced, displaying sermons to worshippers in the sanctuary 24-7. What impressed him most was the black onyx floor that had been polished to a gloss. It reflected all the beauty from above, and Sergei felt surrounded by the most beautiful sensation he had ever felt from a structure. He hadn't known mankind was capable of such things.

They moved down the right side of the pews, as worshippers prayed and entered a door cut into the side of the hall after Regulus did a hand scan. They were met by a scientist a short stature who simply said: "This way, Elite Cadre."

Down they went , and although they had been here not long ago, the place looked alien to them, except for Valdez. After 15 minutes of mind bending turns, and descents they finally came to a large laboratory guarded by troopers behind their expressionless masks. They opened the doors,

and the scientist motioned to the center of the room, where a concave depression in the center console awaited the Tacitus. The men moved towards the dias, and regulus opened the locks on the box. The two pieces lay in form fitting foam, awaiting reassembly. Behind them a voice strong and sure said: "Commander, allow me. I am mostanxious.. to hold it." They turned and snapped to attention as the messiah entered the lab.

Silence met his every step as he approached the box that laid open before him. He looked far different than the vids out in the sanctuary. Valdez could see the damage that had been done to him from the Ion strike so many years ago, and bowed his head in shame. Kane stopped in front of him, and said in a calm voice: "You see the fruit of your failure, do you not? No matter now Valdez. With what you have returned to me, I can forget this inconvenience. Divination will render this form obsolete."

He returned to the path to the Tacitus, and picked the pieces up gingerly. "Let what was rent, be renewed!" as place the pieces together. They fused instantly in a blinding light, and he placed the complete Tacitus on the dias where it spun hanging in air above superconductors that held it aloft. On a screen in front of the Dias, information displayed, and the as a beam hit the Tacitus, it lit up in glyphs of unknown language. The screen displayed them rapidly as a computer attempted translation.

He turned to the team, and placed a hand on regulus' shoulder staring at him intently. "You have served me well. Take your men and follow this trooper to your new headquarters. My gift to you regulus for faithful service."

"I live to do your bidding master." And he turned from kane. "Elite Cadre report!"

"In the name of Kane!" they shouted in unison.

"About face,March!"

The men marched out together in unison, following regulus and the trooper. A small show of respect for their service for the messiah.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [exnyte](#) on Tue, 07 Dec 2004 06:17:28 GMT

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122

The were led to the back of the temple. The walk wasn't far, but seemed to take forever with technicians always in the way and hurrying to some unknown destination. It would take Sergei time to know his way around. The polished onyx floors were ever present, and occasionally red stone fashioned as the Nod emblem was imbedded in the onyx. Pristine white walls were now present, and spoke of this areas' research purpose. Ahead at a T in the passage, they saw a sign with an arrow pointing left. It stated simply: "Security area 7-Authorized personnel

quarters and base of operations.

He found that he loved it that way. The arrow going the other way had a sign that said

They tromped down the left most passage, and came to large doors of reinforced glass that were hydraulically operated. Regulus's guide said to everyone present: "Optical scans are required to access this area. Only Elite cadre members, and their direct superiors can access this

Regulus allowed the scan, and the door opened inward. Hydraulics whined, and their guide said : "Nothing short of an antitank missile will get through those doors. Only the best protection for the elite. You will notice the silver half globes recessed in the roof. They contain cameras mounted to machine guns firing explosive rounds. They are keyed into your DNA sequences, and

They walked down the corridor, and came to a second set of glass doors which opened

Centrally located was the communications area. It was linked into every command in the brotherhood, and screens reflected current video feeds from troops in the field. Suprisingly, Sergei could see GDI feeds coming through as well, and the guide noticed as he walked over to one the screens. "We have spies eevrywhere in GDI. When they move, we know instantly. Over here you have direct access to a Cabal interface, and every one of you has Omega 1 clearance to his

A 3D image of the blue face of Cabal looked at them and said: "AH.....COMMANDER

The guide motioned to an open area just to the left of the command area. This was apparently their recreation area, and just beyond each member had a private room. Regulus's room was and it closed behind him.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.
Posted by [exnyte](#) on Tue, 07 Dec 2004 06:18:00 GMT
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123

Twenty minutes later, They had reassembled in the common room.
"We are finally in a standdown. A small mission the day after tomorrow, but until then you are free to do as you please after musters. Musters will be at 0700, 1200 and 1700. Dismissed!" Valdez said.

Standdown. Sergei wouldn't know what to do with himself. He supposed he could check out the

temple and its architecture, but for now he found he wanted to sleep again. He turned towards his room, and after closing the door dropped everything where it was, and crashed onto the bed.

The dream returned again. This time it was a snowy day. As the cyborg stood in the field of green tiberium, he watched snow gently fall, and hiss as it hit the crystals. He found it odd they weren't being covered like the landscape around him. Again he moved forward without control of the scene being played out. Just as he remembered from before, the cannon fired, but this time he was firing at a control tower at the edge of a prison complex. It erupted, and disintegrated before the cannon, and then he saw a figure appear on the HUD. The words "Primary Target" appeared, and he fully expected to see green fire erupt once again. It didn't. He moved forward and stomped over the wall. Two titans loomed into view, firing on the escapee that had passed him. He turned, saw the APC arrive, and the escapee disappear, then resumed his attack.

Green fire lanced out and struck the Titan on the left, burning through half a leg. The other one returned fire, and the cyborg reeled from the 155 mm round's impact, but stood its ground, and fired back. The ball of green burned into the cabin of the titan, and it fell backwards with no pilot, or computer balancing to help it stand. The other tried to turn to bear, but the damaged leg wouldn't respond. The cyborg finished the mech off, and started destroying every building in sight. GDI alarms sounded, and from somewhere he heard "Withdraw, and await the APC." "AFFIRMATIVE." Was the cyborg's reply, and it stomped back out to the tib field. There it stood, and Sergei watched the HUD numbers climb for energy levels. Apparently the borg was Tiberian based.

He woke again just in time for muster.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.
Posted by [exnyte](#) on Tue, 07 Dec 2004 06:20:30 GMT
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124

The days passed for the men slowly. Combat proven warriors seldom take well to inactivity, and it was no different for these men. He found the scientists strange, and was uncomfortable with the way they looked at him. Always as if they were surveying what they were. He had made the mistake of trying to venture to the lower levels. He found that despite their security clearances entry was still forbidden to them.

The third day of R&R he was laying in his room reading up on the current global situation when the Battle Alarm went off inside the temple. he leaped up, and ran to the command station where Drubnov had pulled duty this shift.

"What's going on?"

"Incoming Bombers. Coming in on Vector 197. It looks like a good sized strike. Nod HQ has scrambled the helos, but it looks like there are too many to handle."

Valdez appeared half dressed and demanded a sitrep.

"Sir, 32 incoming Orca type bombers on an intercept with the temple. Nod HQ has scrambled Harpies, and the defense grid is on full alert. We have orders to defend the Temple, but nothing specific at this time."

"Patch me in to the Commander."

Regulus' image appeared and a hive of activity buzzed around him.

"Sir. What are our orders?" Valdez asked.

"I want your men on the temple roof with Stingers. If any get through the defensive net, you are the last line."

"Understood. Heading up now sir."

The image cut out, and Valdez started bellowing orders to gear up, and "Move your worthless carcasses".

Sergei took the stinger, and his heavy laser, and got the men together.

"Let's move. I want you in a 360 degree spread. protect your quadrants. Don't miss."

They ran through the glass doors, and into the nearest maintenance elevator. They rode it all the way up, as in the background Cabal's disembodied voice stated in flat mechanical tones that all personnel were manned and ready.

"BOMBERS INBOUND. ETA FIVE MINUTES. ENGINEERS TO DEFENSIVE RING POSITIONS ALPHA, CHARLIE, TANGO AND WHISKEY."

The doors opened onto the roof of the temple, and as strange as it was for him to do it, they ran across the glass arches towards positions along the roof covering the full perimeter. He spoke into his lip mike:

"Report!"

Each man reported manned and ready and then Cabal's ever present voice announced:

"BOMBER ETA 3 MINUTES. HARPY ONE REPORTS CONTACT."

In the distance he could see the explosions of the ensuing air battle as Orca fighter escorts kept the harpies off the bombers somewhat unsuccessfully. They steadily advanced, coming in low and fast. the defensive perimeter initiated its firing, and tracers and SAM missiles lanced toward the offending aircraft.

He saw the telltale signs of an impending Ion strike forming above one of the SAM banks. Static discharges increased and the blue death rained down on the site. The bombers saw it, and headed for the hole in the ring.

The men raised their launchers, and waited as aircraft were swatted from the sky mercilessly.

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [exnyte](#) on Tue, 07 Dec 2004 06:21:13 GMT

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125

Sergei noticed one thing that was unusual about this whole scene. Everything seemed to slow down. He was impressed by the precision flying despite heavy antiaircraft fire, and the absolute deadly precision with which CABAL was dropping bombers from the sky despite losing the SAM sites to the east to Ion cannon fire.

The bombers were now well within the defensive ring, and started climbing to get enough elevation to clear the Temple. Their steep ascent caught the Harpies off guard, and Sergei's men prepared to fire.

"Now! Kill them all!" Valdez screamed into their ears.

Almost simultaneously, seven stingers leapt from their tubes. The men didn't wait to see how the rockets tracked. They immediately reloaded, and fired again at different targets. The rockets streaked to their marks and seven Orcas either blew up outright or were damaged enough to lose altitude. The second volley took out four more before the bombers were over their goal. By now, only eight of the original group were still flying. The damaged ones that couldn't make enough altitude due to damaged fans crashed into the side of the temple causing almost as much damage as a bombing run would have.

"Take cover!"

Time now seemed even slower to Sergei. A concussion wave hit him, and threw him against the nearest steel support. Glass flew everywhere, and the temple shuddered as Orca pieces burst through the temple's reinforced glass, and shredded on the steel support beams.

He looked down, and saw he had absorbed much of the glass that had flown toward him. He was bleeding heavily, but looked to the sky to determine how successful they had been in deterring the Orcas.

He knew the answer immediately. They were in the process of releasing their deadly High explosive payloads directly onto the Temple. He saw bombs rain down slowly as he sat slumped against the support. From across the Temple's ruined upper dome, he could see a defiant Drubnov firing his heavy laser into the lead Orca. Its pilot cabin disintegrated, and the craft nosed down.

Drubnov, and most of his team disappeared in fire as the first bombs hit. He couldn't breathe now, and as shock waves hit, and the bombs moved toward him. There was something broken about his body and he laid still.

He looked toward the red and orange hued sky trying to find some small measure of peace before the end and saw the sun's rays as it set behind the mountain. Behind him, the temple shook and shattered under the bombs that pierced it.

He didn't look back. It was too late for that, and he focused on the setting sun. It was a fitting

tribute, and he shed a tear as the glass and beam gave way under him.

Slowly his broken body fell through space, and through it all he finally knew peace as the day's last rays warmed his face. He would never feel the impact as he hit the temple floor. His broken body would die just before, but he had time for one last thought:

He thought of his father, and that oh so long ago trip they had taken together. He saw the warmth in his face, and love in his eyes in a similar sunset from that day. He was going home to see dad, and he was happier than he had been for a long time.....

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [exnyte](#) on Tue, 07 Dec 2004 06:25:43 GMT

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126 This is the final segment. You can download the full story in PDF format >here<.

Darkness.

Lonliness.

Cold.

A flash of light, and a vision unintelligible, and unrememberable.

Sound. A deep voice.

"Interface is online. Attach synaptic links here, here and here."

A sizzling sound, and then a female voice.

"I'm reading cerebral activity."

"Shut it down."

Silence again.

A scene appears. A white room, abandoned except for a lone scientist hunched over a desk of components, and a touchscreen PC. The picture is tinted blue, and a HUD readout is in the bottom right of the field of vision. It simply states: "Operational status: 30 %".

Where is this? When is this? A sense of uncertainty prompts an automatic diagnostic. The results display "Operational status: 30 %"

The scientist rasies his head, and notes his presence. He walks slowly over, and stands directly in the field of view. He then says simply:

"Soon. Be patient young one."

He then walks to the PC, and taps the screen.

Silence and darkness again.

Noise, and the deep voice again.

"Bring the full interface up now, except for the threat assesment and movement subroutines."

"Standby." The female voice says.

Again there is the room. This time the female is here. The uncertainty arises again, and a diagnostic states: "Operational Status 100%. Error line 601, 1052, 9875 and 15,640. Re-routing primaries.....Negative. Weapons systemoffline. Hydraulics.....offline."

Somehow he knows exactly what the error codes mean, and knows the diagnostic pathways that have just been denied use. A query is automatically generated to somewhere.

The response is a powerful mechanical voice in his mind.

"PHASE SEVEN IN PROGRESS. OPERATIONAL CONTROL DENIED. STANDBY...."

For some reason he is satisfied with the answer, and knows he is subject to the voice's authority.

The female speaks again. "All diagnostic subroutines functioning perfectly. Ummmm, sir? It tried to re-route control."

"Excellent. Regulus was right. This is an exemplary specimen. Shut down the cognitive relays, and test the hydraulics."

"Affirmative. Powering down."

Darkness.

Awareness, and light. A different room, darker and more people. No scientists, only armed men in red and black gear. He attempts to do a threat assesment and fails. Then the mechanical inner voice speaks:

INITIATING PRIMARY STARTUP.....

CEREBRAL INTERFACE ONLINE.....

HYDRAULICS ONLINE.....

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ONLINE.

He is flooded with awareness of many things. He now knows who these people are, thier ranks, their alignment and has three dimensional awareness. Several diagnostics simultaneously display and he reports their results to the inner voice.

A different mechanical voice sounds. It comes from him.
CYBORG COMMANDO ONLINE.....

He is ordered onto the APC in front of him. He knows its capabilities, and that it can burrow through the earth. men follow him into the craft. they are several feet shorter, and seem insignificant to him, yet he knows they are mission critical.

DOWNLOADING MISSION OBJECTIVES

1. SECURE GENERAL ANTON SLAVIK
2. ESCORT TO RENDEZVOUS
3. ELIMINATE ALL GDI AND CIVILIAN FORCES
4. PROTECT ELITE BLACK HAND COMMANDERS
5. SECURE LIEUTENANT OXANNA CHRISTOS
6. ESCORT TO RENDEZVOUS

He has maps, coordinates threat assesments of GDI current armor expectations at the facility.

The APC fires up, and from below him one of the passengers looks at him and says to Regulus:
"He was a damned good soldier."

Regulus looks at the severly burned face of the Elite Black Hand member, and says: "He still is,

Valdez. Ustinov is better than ever."

The other man scoffs a bit, and says "I still prefer the old fashioned commando."

The trip is long, and then the inner voice states:

STANDBY. ARRIVAL IMMINENT IN THREE, TWO, ONE.....

He is in motion, and moving out the APC now.

There is a Tiberium field ahead, and he stomps through it on the way to the GDI facility ahead. Halfway through he stops, and looks down even though he isn't ordered to. A reflection greets him, and he sees himself.

A cyborg.

A memory tries to come to the front of his brain, but cannot. the Nod scientists cut that part of his brain away long ago.

Without emotion, and without feeling he returns to the task at hand.

General Slavik must be released. The GDI base must be destroyed.

The first threat appears and he fires. Green death launches from his right cybernetic implant, and the wolverine explodes and ammo starts to cook off.

GDI is unable to stop him.....

LE FIN

Subject: STORY: The Scorpion's tale.

Posted by [warranto](#) on Tue, 07 Dec 2004 22:02:47 GMT

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As requested, the story is finished, locked.
