

General Syndulla stood on the deck of the *Everant Trader*, an old, partially refurbished [Sphyrna-class Hammerhead](#) corvette. It, along with a pair of [CR90 Blockade Runners](#), was the lead gunship of this engagement and the most powerful ship assigned to this rescue mission. She leaned on a console, watching through the main viewport as the ship was carved through hyperspace. She deliberately ignored the itch to take the pilot's seat she felt crawling up her arms, as well as the nagging feeling in the back of her head that she should be flying the *Ghost*, not directing the battle from on high.

She knew her position was important, and she wasn't silly enough to think that she wasn't helping where she was, rather than throwing herself in danger with the rest of her people. As much as she wished she could, she had a responsibility as a general, and leaving her people without a proper leader because she couldn't resist the urge to man the front lines was unacceptable.

Didn't make it easy, though.

"General, two minutes until we drop from hyperspace, reading green across the board," The sensor specialist called out, as she had asked him to. "*Brilliance* and *Lasting Change* are both confirming charged weapons and full shields."

"Send the warning to the rest of the fleet. Then send the final all-hands alarm," She said with a nod.

The final warning echoed through the ship, though at this point, people were mostly already where they were supposed to be. The goal of the larger ships was to guide and cover the smaller freighters down to the surface of the planet, keeping any of the heavier Imperial ships off them. With any luck, though, they wouldn't even have to fire a shot, but that was unlikely. All they could really hope for was that their intelligence was right and no large ships were near the target.

"Dropping out of hyperspace in five, four, three, two, one... Dropping!"

The Hammerhead corvette shuddered as it suddenly decelerated, the shimmering, hypnotizing light show of hyperspace slamming back, revealing the large moon of Yavin, its much larger parent beyond it. The gas giant itself was part of their plan, the massive planet throwing all sorts of interference that was key to staying hidden for as long as possible.

"Bring us in! Confirm the rescue fleet stays in formation," The green-skinned Twi'lek ordered her command to filter through the comms channel chosen for the conflict.

Together, the fleet of nearly thirty ships slowly accelerated, making a beeline for the planet, the smaller freighters and modified civilian ships staying vaguely inside the large triangle the fleet's three heaviest ships formed. Among them, she could see Han Solo's ship, the Millennium Falcon, which she knew Princess Leia, Luke Skywalker, and Ahsoka Tano were on

board. The old, seemingly broken and barely holding together ship would serve as the spearhead of the rescue efforts.

"No signs of being detected yet, General," The same sensor specialist called out. "Sensors show two Star Destroyers and their escorts on the other side of the planet, with a third and fourth moving out to switch with the larger fleet around the Death Star debris field. Our window is still open."

"Keep me updated," The general ordered, knowing that they would have even without her asking them to. "Arrival time?"

"One minute, twelve seconds until we hit the outer atmosphere, General," The pilot called out.

"Comms, any sign of the beacon?" She called out, looking to her left to the comms station.

"Negative General, no sign of the beacon."

General Syndulla nodded, returning her eyes back out of the central viewport, watching as the large terrestrial moon grew larger and larger from their perspective, completely filling the viewport. The beacon was a critical part of the plan and one of the most dangerous aspects as well. Without the beacon, they would have no way to locate the still-running Rebel forces besides knowing the general evacuation plans. However, the second they turned the beacon on, every Imperial Force in the system would be able to see it and would immediately home in on them. More than anything, the beacon was the start of the timer. How much time was set on that timer, only time would tell.

As the fleet moved and entered the atmosphere of Yavin IV at max speed, turbulence started to vibrate and bounce through the ships. The Hammerhead was large enough to be mostly impervious to the rough treatment, but the smaller ships had a bit more difficulty staying precisely on course. Still, their formation was maintained, even as shields started to absorb the energy that entering at such a steep angle and high speeds generated.

The pilot kept the General updated as the ships cut deeper into the planet's atmosphere, calling out altitude. The comms reported any changes that came from the rest of the fleet, of which there were thankfully few. When they reached their target height, they leveled off.

"Send out the pulse," The mission leader ordered. "Start us off at low power."

"Sending low power pulse!" The comms officer responded, tapping his console to activate a series of clicks and static meant to signal their arrival to the waiting ground forces.

The entire bridge was silent, everyone waiting for the comms officer to speak up. When half a minute passed, Hera opened her mouth to order another pulse, this one at a higher strength, when he finally did.

"Beacon Detected! Coordinates sent!" He shouted, furiously tapping on his console.

"Destination thirty-seven seconds away!" The pilot quickly responded after feeding in the coordinates. "Burning atmo!"

The rumble of the engines, ever-present on a ship this size, seemed to double, then triple as the pilot pushed the ship to its maximum speed, redlining its engines. The rest of the fleet kept up, pushing their ships to get to their compatriots as fast as possible.

"Imperials detected! Tie fighter patrol... three squadrons inbound!" The sensors officer reported. "Two from the south and one from the east! One minute thirty!"

"Make sure the rescue teams remember to ignore them and focus on getting to the ground!" the General ordered. "Intercept the southern squadrons, send the *Brilliance* and *Lasting Change* to intercept the eastern. System control, scramble fighters, direct them to follow the *Everant Trader*!"

As she gave the final command, General Syndulla looked over at the modified console, and the [Arkanian](#) Rebel who manned it. This engineer and programmer had control over the six droid ships that were attached to the *Everant Trader*, four [vulture droids](#) and two [tri-fighters](#). Similar consoles existed on the two CR90s, controlling two more trifytters and eight more vulture droids between them. Soon, the droid starfighters were whipping around the Hammerhead as it surged to intercept the enemy starfighters before they could get to the much more delicate freighters and carriers.

As the Hammerhead turned away from the other two heavier ships, it only took a few seconds for the small, speedy starfighters to come into visual range, then a bit longer for them to come into weapons range. By then, the vultures and tri-fighters from all three ships had formed up on the corvette, using it as a way to cover themselves and ambush the speedy Imperial starfighters. The ship clashed above the thick rainforests of Yavin IV, explosions erupting as the new, modern fighters tried to outmaneuver the older, droid-piloted ones.

Now, while the tie fighter was undoubtedly currently one of the most maneuverable and fastest starfighters in space, they had a serious flaw in the atmosphere. Their large, flat wings acted like large airbrakes the second they deviated in any direction, massively decreasing their maneuverability. This put them at a similar level of combat effectiveness as the vultures and far below the performance of the tri-fighters. Between them and the occasional lucky hit from the *Everant Trader*, the tie fighters were soon reduced to so much hot metal debris, raining down on the forest below.

With the first wave of threats taken care of, and only three vultures and one trifoighter down, General Syndulla ordered the ships back into position above where the freighters and carriers had gone to ground to meet with the stranded rebels. All the General had left to do was hold the line against the next wave of Imperial forces, while waiting for word from Ahsoka that the freighter were ready to lift.

As the three corvettes took up defensive positions, Ahsoka and Luke Skywalker jogged down the ramp of the Millennium Falcon, meeting with [General Dodanna](#), who seemed to be armed for combat rather than escape.

"Commander Tano, it's good to see you, though I'm afraid we have a problem," He explained, the older man leading the two Jedi into the camp, even as people frantically packed up and prepared to leave. "Imperial ground forces were much closer than we anticipated when we set off the beacon. I'm preparing a group of volunteers to hold them off. I will lead them to-"

"There's no need, General Dodanna. We came prepared," Ahsoka, who had winced at being called Commander. "They should be unloading now."

Immediately after landing, the fleet of freighters and carriers began the process of disgorging dozens and dozens of battle droids. Soon, over a hundred B1s were on the field, as were around thirty B2s. There was even a trio of [DSD1s](#) dwarf droids crawled out of a large transport vessel. All of the droids, who were now painted red and white, quickly formed into groups, ignoring the watching Rebels. A pair of B2s walked up to Ahsoka, stopping beside her.

"Run a patrol and scan of the nearby forest. Halt or slow down any Imperial forces that come within range," She ordered, the metal fighters not moving. "Your primary objective is to cover us so we can retreat. Follow the directions from General Dodanna and his staff."

"Orders confirmed." Both of the droids said simultaneously in their deep, robotic voices. "Engaging."

With that final word, all the droid groups marched into the jungle as one, spreading out in all directions and quickly focusing on the incoming Imperial troops that the Rebels had detected. General Dodanna couldn't help but sag in relief.

"That... Thank you, Ahsoka. I was preparing to lead my friends on a suicide mission to hold them off..."

"It's not over yet, General. We still have quite a few people to load up."

The General nodded, a new sense of vigor and determination coming over him. As more Rebel soldiers exited the ships, the previously stranded Rebels, ranging from grunts to officers just below the General himself, were quickly ferried onto the ships. There were dozens of wounded, some sporting simple cuts and bruises while others were in much more serious

condition. Luckily, this was expected, and the wounded were loaded onto separate ships, all of them with medics waiting to help stabilize any at-risk casualties.

It didn't take long for the sounds of explosions and laser fire to echo back from the forest to the small, temporary Rebel base. The droids had engaged the Empire, which meant time was quickly running out. While the droids could hold out for a while, they had no heavy assets besides the dwarf droids, so it was only a matter of time before they were overwhelmed.

Almost eighty percent of the stranded rebels were loaded up into the escape ships when the Empire finally broke through the droid forces, Stormtroopers breaking through the treeline and immediately opening fire.

Both Ahsoka and Luke turned and sprinted towards the breach, while dozens of other Rebel soldiers, the ones who were fresh from the rescue team, turned and returned fire. They took cover behind crates of supplies, sandbag walls and inside several trenches. Ahsoka and Luke, with their lightsabers, ignited, blocked blaster bolts by the dozen, covering the tired, beaten, and often injured members of the stranded Rebels. While Luke's movements were not nearly as fluid and clean as Ahsoka's, he was still able to block quite a bit of laser fire, and with much more accuracy and consistency than he had only weeks ago. His progress under Ahsoka shined even brighter when, still deep in the flow of the Force, he reached out and flung his hand forward, sending a half dozen crates tumbling through another emerging line of stormtroopers.

Still, as hard as they fought, taking down scores of stormtroopers between the Jedi and the Rebels, there were always more. Even worse, Ahsoka knew their time was running out. Not only would there be a constant stream of more ground-based reinforcement sent to their location, but if they delayed much longer, their window to escape the planet would soon close as well.

Suddenly, a heavy bolt of energy slammed into an encroaching stormtrooper, lifting them off their feet and slamming them into their compatriots. Luke turned to find Chewbacca standing behind a large crate, firing his [bowcaster](#). Beside him was Han Solo, his [DL-44](#) in his hand, picking off any Imperials that got too close.

"It's time to go, kid! The only ones left are the ones fighting!" The smuggler turned Rebel shouted, looking at Luke. "Everyone is clear!"

Ahsoka, hearing Han's words, raised her comms to her lips.

"Retreat! The evacuation is complete, retreat to your ships!" She nearly shouted, waving everyone back with her white lightsaber.

The remaining Rebels, as one, retreated backward, leapfrogging between the cover and laying down suppressing fire, slowly making their way onboard the nearest ships. Ahsoka and Luke, along with Chewie and Han, made it back to the *Falcon* unharmed. With another

command, the freighters lifted, blaster bolts peppering the ships as they took to the air. Thankfully, the stormtroopers were unable to bring anything heavy enough to take the freighters and carriers to bear.

The freighters continued upwards, the three Corvette escorts rising with them. The corvette had successfully defensed the ground forces, and only one of the CR90's was damaged, having lost two of its point defense weapons. As they moved, many of the droid starfighters reconnected with the corvettes, though several vultures stayed deployed.

The fleet of ships rose higher and higher, quickly leaving the atmosphere of Yavin IV behind. It was a race between the Rebels and the larger Imperial ships, as two-star destroyers and their escort attempted to intercept the escaping Rebels.

Just as the Imperial fleet was arriving in weapons range, having swept around the planet in an attempt to stop them, the fleet of Rebel ships finally escaped the gravity well of the planet. They promptly left the planet behind as they jumped to lightspeed, leaving Imperials to stew in their failure. Only six hours later, the Imperial Super Star Destroyer *Executor* arrived at the planet, only to find its target long gone.