

Crewman's Log  
A Day in the Life  
FL/LCM neurotictim/Beta 3-1/Wing I/ISDII Hammer

Crewman First Class (Operations) CharatI Plooth was not a particularly smart man, and he knew it.

He wasn't an idiot, though. As a Crewman First Class stationed aboard the Imperial Star Destroyer II *Hammer*, Plooth was responsible for making sure the artificial gravity systems throughout the ship operate smoothly, and that isn't a task for an idiot. The fact that it doesn't require a genius level intellect doesn't bother Plooth; he is satisfied with the simple things in life. He doesn't need to stand out, to draw attention. As his old Chief used to say, "the highest aspiration to which one can subscribe is to slumber deeply after an erstwhile and industrious days' work." Or something like that. Plooth might not remember the exact words, but he gets the gist. *Work hard, nap hard.* A motto to live by.

Crewman Plooth enjoyed getting his hands dirty, to repair things. Not once in his 20 plus years of service to the Empire had he stopped to ponder the engineering that made the grav system work. He never stepped back to appreciate the complex beauty of the system. He certainly didn't study the millennia of research on the topic, but neither did he resent the way virtually *everyone* took for granted the fact that they could walk normally on a spaceship while traveling at several times the speed of light. He liked when things worked the way they should, and genuinely enjoyed repairing them when they didn't.

He felt a certain sense of ownership when walking the maze of passageways on this ship, his home of the last several years. He had no need for fancy quarters dirtside, where gravity worked just fine without his help. Here, he was *useful*.

C1(O) Plooth's crew in the Environmental Division of the Operations Department on the ISD II Hammer like and respect him. He doesn't tolerate nonsense, and takes great pride in the competency and consistency of his people. He is free with praise and slow to anger, traits that he feels all leaders should have. He is immensely patient but meticulous, and demands much from his crew. Sure, it takes time for him to consider his words and actions, but the payoff is that he very rarely makes the wrong choice or says the wrong thing. He may never make Chief Crewman, but he figures there is no shame in retiring as a Crewman First Class on some quiet little backwater after faithfully serving the Empire for so long. Some day.

As with all Imperial ships, gravity is required to be kept at the Coruscanti equivalent standard. When he became the leading Crewman of the calibration work center,

Plooth made it his own personal goal to ensure the system was calibrated at that standard to a variation of less than one tenth of one percent.

Achieving this high standard is the easy part. Artificial gravity is a very simple, robust process that has been in use throughout the galaxy for millennia. A simple direct current applied to the metallic mineral *gravitite* creates a field that applies a downward subatomic force to anything with mass, essentially replicating the force of gravity. Field size is dictated by the voltage applied, while current determines the strength of the field. The shape of the gravitite pads determine the shape of the field, and can be a simple square or a wildly convoluted, complex shape depending on the need. Inverting the operating polarity creates a repulsor field, another technology used extensively throughout the galaxy, from simple sleds to complex capital ship positioning systems. The pinnacle of this engineering exists in the rare Interdictor class warship, with massive fusion-powered gravitite compressors and gravity well projectors making up a sizable chunk of the warship's mass. Creating an artificial gravity field hasn't been a problem in a long time, but calibrating and maintaining multiple fields aboard a ship of war is a challenge that Plooth is happy to take on personally. He often roams the ship, performing spot checks regularly to ensure his guys are keeping the ship in working order. Wandering the corridors of the Hammer is also a good way to keep in shape, with well over 100 square kilometers of passageways and spaces to maintain.

Imperial starships throughout the galaxy are built to the same exacting standards, regardless of manufacturer. Those standards include several redundancies, especially with critical environmental systems like life support, inertial dampening, and artificial gravity. For ships as large as the second generation of Imperial-class Star Destroyer, the artificial gravity system is actually a vast network of smaller individual fields, and Plooth's specific workcenter is directly responsible for ensuring each field is calibrated to reinforce adjacent fields. Minor variances can stack quickly, and no one complains more than the Staff Department when things aren't exactly perfect. Over the years, Plooth had developed the uncanny ability to detect tiny changes in gravity without any test equipment and a reputation as the best artificial gravity technician on the Hammer, if not in the entire Fleet.

He regularly dismisses such praise, however true it may be. He is just doing his job, a job he happens to be pretty good at. Many outside his circle wonder if it's false modesty, but those who know him best know better; he is a genuinely decent, humble human being. He doesn't drink often or to excess, never dabbles in the more exotic intoxicants, is careful of thought and deed, and most importantly he is kind and avoids passing judgment on others.

So it was with some trepidation that Plooth approached the Drunken Bastion, the newly christened "recreational space" on the ISDII Hammer. He'd been there several weeks ago, the day after the party when the Wookiee pilot lost control and tried to kill the little Ewok fella, or so he'd heard. He'd had to recalibrate several fields on that day; stun bolts did weird things to the gravitite pads.

Despite his misgivings about the place, Plooth couldn't shake the feeling that something was... off... with the artificial gravity in this general vicinity. Since the only other spaces in the area were storage, it made sense to look here first, whether he liked it or not.

Steeling himself for what may come, he walked up to the door, now bearing the neon colored sign. The paint was fresh, and the colors really popped. The door wheezed and began retracting, somewhat more slowly than a typical door of this type. Plooth was patient, and when the door receded into the ceiling, stopping a mere centimeter above his head, he stepped through into the darkened space, looking for the source of the disruption he felt in the local gravity.

C1(O) Plooth wasn't sure what he expected exactly. It was still relatively early in the day and the place appeared to be mostly empty. This bar was the newest watering hole on the ship and quite popular, but it was patronized mostly by officers. Pilots, in fact. He had listened to many tall tales of the debauchery that Imperial pilots get into, and he wanted no part of it. Especially that Wookiee fella - best as Plooth could reckon, he'd rather fight off a swarm of junior Crewmen mad on spice at a port of call than go one-on-one with an enraged Wookiee. Better odds of survival. As he rounded the corner of the bar, bypassing the bartender and a number of empty tables, he certainly wasn't expecting to find the scene that unfolded before him.

Had anyone else walked into the dance floor area and taken in the situation, it's entirely possible they would have immediately turned around and left without a second glance. The Wookiee pilot - "Cheeks" was his nickname, Plooth recalled - hovered nearly two meters off the ground, above the dance floor, stretched out as though being held in a containment field reserved for violent criminals. There were no binders on his hands or feet, no shimmer to indicate a force field; he appeared to be floating there without anything to sustain him in this awkward arrangement. Judging by the pitiful noises the Wookiee was making, he wasn't terribly happy about it. Plooth could *feel* the dissonance in the gravitic fields, but it felt unlike anything he had experienced before.

"Crewman, if you aren't going to order a drink I would recommend closing your mouth. He sheds a lot when he's stressed."

Plooth snapped his mouth closed, unaware that he had been gaping slack-jawed at the spectacle, and looked towards the voice that had spoken to him. The bartender droid, an unruly amalgamation of parts cleverly named HO-P5, looked over his shoulder at the Crewman, using his upper arms to dust liquor bottles while the lower arms polished the bar top.

"I told that giant mop that altering the RG fields is strictly against regulations, but does he listen? No, of course not. No one listens to the bartender. Told me I couldn't understand how important it is to have that 'extra freedom' and proceeded to nearly rip the panel off its hinges in his excitement."

It took Plooth a few moments to comprehend the ramblings of the droid. Finally his gaze turned to a corner of the room, where a clearly marked panel hung precariously from the single remaining hinge. It was the access panel for the bar's artificial gravity field calibration system.

"The Wookiee changed the artificial gravity fields... himself?" Plooth couldn't believe it. In his 20 plus years of service, it was exceedingly rare to see a pilot that would even acknowledge the people that kept these ships battle worthy, let alone one that would fiddle with ship systems that most rarely even *thought* about. The enlisted ranks were recognized from time to time by some of the line officers, division officers, and department heads, but pilots? *Never*. For them, food just appeared, laundry just got done, and gravity just worked, somehow.

"Oh yes, he was quite excited. Don't know who put him up to it, but I suppose I should call Ops and have them send someone out to fix this mess." HO-P5 was clearly enjoying the discomfiture of the Wookiee, but day shift would be ending soon and he needed to prepare for the evening rush.

"Ummm..." Plooth had learned long ago that volunteering for things in the Imperial Navy meant more work, and tried to avoid it if at all possible. However, if the droid *did* call Operations Department, the repair would be passed down to him anyway.

"Let me go take a look at it first, since I'm here."

HO-P5 shrugged and continued with his preparatory work, while Plooth walked over to the panel and gingerly opened the access. A cursory scan of the calibration settings showed Plooth that while the Wookiee might have managed to accomplish his goal initially, he clearly didn't understand the system and the dangers of arbitrarily altering the parameters.

He had inverted the polarity of the field generator in the warehouse above the bar and the field of the bar floor itself, and overlapped the fields so that the *effect* was a null-g field approximately the size and shape of the dance floor, from floor to ceiling. It wasn't actually null-g, which would be nearly impossible on this ship without major renovations to the entire artificial gravity system, but it was a clever work around. Obviously done by someone who didn't understand the redundancies and interdependence of the system, it was an amateur effort but Plooth found it amusing nonetheless.

It probably worked just fine for a few minutes, maybe half an hour, before the adjacent fields refreshed and the built-in redundancies automatically corrected the polarity and strength of the errant fields.

The poor Wookiee was now trapped in two distinct fields, with gravitic force being directed downward AND upwards as they reverted to a more "neutral" state. It was not uncommon in storage spaces to have double fields; storing parts and supplies on the ceiling as well as the floor was a standard practice in the Imperial Navy. This bar was a storage space until very recently, and still equipped with dual field emitters. Fortunately, the fields were not yet strong enough to rip the giant pilot in half, but they were certainly strong enough to prevent him from escaping.

A half-hearted series of barks, growls, and whimpers erupted behind him, and Plooth turned quickly. The Wookiee had managed to wiggle around until he faced the crewman, and as their eyes met, a series of grunts and whoofs were translated by what appeared to be a piece of jewelry on the Wookiee's bandolier.

{“Please take care with that panel, Crewman. It's gonna rip us in half any minute now!”}

The tinny voice was a poor match for the imposing size of the pilot and Plooth couldn't help the smile that crept across his face.

“Don't worry, Captain. I'll have you down from there in a moment. I hope you've learned a lesson, though. I know better than to try to hop into a TIE Fighter, and now *you* should know better than to fool with things you don't understand.”

The grunts sounded almost truculent, as if the suspended Wookiee pilot wanted to argue, but when the translator droid responded it was in a submissive tone.

{“You are right of course, good Crewman. Cheeks *will* keep that in mind in the future. Now if you would be so kind as to release us?”}

When Crewman First Class Plooth started his shift this morning, he had no idea that he would spend his evening in the Drunken Bastion among the elite pilots of the Imperial Star Destroyer Hammer, telling and retelling the story of how the Wookiee pilot Cheeks collapsed like a sack of wet Dorian passion fruit. But that is *exactly* what it sounded like, when he adjusted the controls to bring the dance floor artificial gravity back into spec.

In hindsight, Plooth considered that he probably could have dialed the fields back into alignment more gradually, sparing the Wookiee's generous backside from an unceremonious bouncing off the dance floor. However, judging by his tortured expression and the uproarious laughter of his fellow pilots, Cheeks' pride was injured far more than his rump, and Plooth figured the lesson was well learned.

Refusing to accept the life debt offered by the Wookiee was a given; the RG fields *probably* wouldn't have *actually* ripped him in half for at least a few more hours. Covering his tab at the bar and promising to accompany Plooth as he made his rounds from time to time was a more than satisfactory compromise; maybe the pilot would learn to appreciate all the work involved in keeping the *Hammer* in good working order. Privately, Plooth thought it could only be a good thing if they learned a little appreciation for the working crew.

Might as well start with the Wookiee.