

The Yar'Zanti Invasion 8: Sky Battles

By

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Near the middle of the Pacific ocean was the island chain of Hawaii. At one point it had been the playground of the United States. A tropical paradise where people came to forget their lives back home.

Yet after the Yar'Zanti invasion, the island chain had been dramatically changed. Initially during the invasion, the aliens swept in and decimated everything. The various military facilities located there were obliterated while the surrounding forests was leveled. Then afterword, the aliens saw little use for the islands and moved on.

Before long, small pockets of humanity survived the decimation. For a while they hid in the cave systems embedded within the island chain. Once they were sure the Yar'Zanti were not coming back, these people emerged to behold the utter destruction that had been rained down upon them. In the end, those pitiful few tried to rebuild.

Upon the split between the Yar'Zanti loyalists and clan, the insurgent aliens swept across the islands. Instead of enslaving the remaining humans, they simply slaughtered them. Then the bodies were transported to their captured gestation centers.

Afterword, the clan used their automated builders to construct a huge fortified central base from Oahu to Hawaii island. In some cases they filled in waterways connecting the smaller islands. Others they leveled mountains and built bridges. The few active volcanoes in the chain were tapped for energy and silenced.

Then, Gala's flag ship landed on the much flatter Oahu. From there the clan built numerous construction and repair facilities out of the mammoth vessel. Deep within the complex, atop what had been a few smaller islands, was a vast ship yard.

Upon that spot were six sky cruisers being assembled. In a sense these new vessels seemed similar to the loyalist's air cruisers. However, instead of designing in aerodynamics like the loyalists, the clan went with more anti-gravity systems and armor. The result was that these ships had a much more boxy

leveled appearance with only the barest of attempts to make them aerodynamic.

While the clan's security forces were still using the older invasion machinery, deep within a monolithic structure upon Hawaii island, new weaponry were being designed. The clan's new mechs were reminiscent of the loyalist's to the point that the rebels might have used stolen plans. However, there were some differences. Chiefly, instead of having a pair of guns and a pair of grappling claws, these mechs now had four grappling claws with small cannons attached to their forearms. Along their backs were retractable heavy cannons that were bigger then seen on the tanks. Above their upper left shoulders, each had a refillable missile bank.

In another part of the mammoth building, assembly lines were cranking out new fighter craft. Unlike the older pyramid shaped machines, these had a much more plane like appearance. Each had semi long thick wings attached to a squared tube like center armored body. Upon their bellies was a sizable tank cannon. Plus, each wing sported missile banks built into their tops.

Deep in the heart of what had been the mother ship, now referred to as central command tower, was an expansive briefing room. This semi dark space had numerous huge displays showing various videos from assembly lines to far flung lands. While in the center of the room was a long rectangular table with a holographic display above its surface. A holographic clan cruiser floated above the table.

"From what our spies have leaked to us," reported a studious female captain in green armor. "The loyalists will be vulnerable to our new cruisers maam."

"How so," questioned another female in green armor. The rank on her upper shoulders indicated she was a grand admiral, a rank she had recently awarded herself. The wolf's head patch on her upper left breast, along with a few other identifying marks, all indicated she was Gala, leader of the clan. The senior Yar'Zanti stood pondering the diagram. Her long flexible tail softly twitched back in forth in contemplation.

"Well maam, what we can tell is that they chose to make their cruisers more plane like. Thus, they lessened their armor and weapon emplacements. Our designers indicate that if our

ships can get close enough, we should be able to punch holes through their sides."

"Yet, what's the speed difference," astutely asked Gala.

"We were not able to ascertain all of the loyalist's cruiser specs but we figure they may have a slight speed advantage. However, we compensated with new ship to ship missiles which should overcome that difference."

"Thank you captain," Gala replied dismissing the female. She then contemplated another officer in the room. This time the woman was a blue armor captain. "Doctor Adik, how is our gestation program coming along?"

The doctor walked over and touched something on her armor then the hologram table. Within moments the ship diagram was replaced with a floating outline of a Yar'Zanti. "Yes maam, currently we have not found a way to improve on the gestation process beyond what our foremothers designed. The few attempts resulted in failures which had to be terminated. However, we did change the memory implants a bit from the original set."

"Understood, what are they learning now," asked Gala who studied the diagram.

"On the one hand, they're still learning the basic Yar'Zanti history. Plus, we've decided to keep their human memories intact so they can make use of them. Yet, we've introduced new memories which should make them utterly loyal to you and the clan. They should come out hating the loyalists, humans, and anyone who would coddle them," the doctor reported with a bit of pride to her voice.

"Have any of these new Yar'Zanti emerged yet?"

"Yes maam, We decanted the first batch a week ago and so far the mental changes took hold."

"Very good, will there be any more attempts to improve their bodies?"

"We're still researching that, but as of right now it's very doubtful."

"Keep a few scientists on it just in case something does work out."

"I will maam."

"Dismissed," Gala waved the woman away. The captain saluted then crossed the dark space and exited a side door. For a moment Gala stood before the table silently contemplating the floating diagram. She had hoped her scientists could have made

stronger and faster troops. Yet, hearing the dismal results caused her to put that idea in the back of her mind.

Then her rear eye saw something being displayed on one of the screens behind her. It was from one of the satellites the clan usurped that was orbiting over north America. The video displayed a trio of loyalist air cruisers gliding up the east coast towards New York. Surrounding them were squadrons of the older triangular fighters.

"What's going on there," Gala asked pointing behind her towards the screen. She turned around to study it for a moment. Then with a touch to a console to her right, the grand admiral sent the image to the room's gigantic main screen.

"Yes maam," answered an admiral walking close to the table. Her voice held a studious and reserved tone. "It seems the loyalists are sending forces against our New York city stronghold."

"That pitiful force," scoffed Gala. "They'd need numerous battleships just to even think of cracking that city's defenses? Have any been detected in the vicinity?"

"No maam, at the moment they've deployed their battleships in defensive positions over their remaining holdings."

"A wise move after I took their Vancouver base," muttered Gala. "Then what do you think they're doing?"

"I assume testing our defenses," answered the admiral.

"What a waste of resources. Do we have any of our own cruisers in the area?"

"Yes maam, we've got the Fire Talon and Night Spear currently flying over Boston," the admiral studiously replied. She touched something on the holo-table causing it to show a diagram of the east coast of North America. There it displayed the three loyalist cruisers slowly making their way north. Then it indicated the two clan cruisers.

Briefly, grand admiral Gala was silent as she contemplated the diagram. "Reroute those two cruisers to intercept the loyalists. I want to see how they fair against the opposition's new machinery."

"Yes maam."

"And make sure this occurs away from the city. I want this to be a relatively fair test. No need to bring in our heavier weapons unless absolutely necessary."

"Yes maam," quickly answered the admiral before relaying Gala's orders.

Gliding softly over New Jersey were three loyalist sky cruisers in a V formation. They were the Sky Raptor, Blazing Eagle, and Falcon. Each had deployed a squadron of fighters that flanked their respective ships.

"Think they'll take the bait," casually asked a female Yar'Zanti pilot over her group's channel.

"I hope so Alu, I've heard rumors that the clanners have been cooking something up," answered another female.

"Same here Xyru," gossiped Alu. In her glass enclosed cockpit, while she held on to a few joysticks with a pair of arms, the yellow armored ensign used her free hands to adjust some switches. That caused a semitransparent screen to appear before her. It was a sensor system that displayed the entire group. Briefly, she reached her right foot out, grasped the steering peddle, and pushed it forward for a moment to adjust her fighter's course. Satisfied, Alu went back to commenting with her other pilots. Her tail softly swished back and forth in boredom. She checked behind her with her rear eye and made sure her tail was not touching any of the screens behind her.

"So, is it true they've got new fighters," asked another pilot, a male this time.

"Intel reports suggest they do and we're gonna find out soon," answered Xyru.

"I've heard they look like old human planes," Alu chipped in.

"That's what I hear as well," agreed the other female.

"Ok, cut the chatter folks," gruffly ordered their commander.

Just north of New York city, flew the clan ships Fire Talon and Night Spear. Each had been patrolling over Boston when they got the call to intercept the loyalist incursion. Both were paired up and flew at near supersonic speeds to make up time.

Deep within the Night Spear, crew members were running around getting the armored cruiser ready for battle. The layout of the ship had been designed around two major bays. The forward most cavernous space were for twelve mechs. While the next space aft was for twenty fighters. On either side ran two long transverse corridors. Further outboard was a ring of heavy weapon emplacements with crews manning each.

Through the hectic activity, two male yellow armored Yar'Zanti paused to greet the other. One male's armor showed he was a lieutenant from the one-oh-first Dark Rangers platoon. While the other's proclaimed him an ensign in the five-two-eighth Screaming Eagles squadron.

"Are you ready for this Aziz," questioned the lieutenant. He reached out a few arms to grasp the other male.

"Sure thing Hordak, I've been waiting a long time to finally engage those fools," Aziz eagerly proclaimed. His last assignment had been a security platoon which had not seen any real combat.

"Just be safe and follow your commander's orders. She's seen a few of these battles already."

"Sure thing, but what about you? Are you going to be stuck on the sidelines missing the fun?"

"Seems like it," Hordak paused to listen to an announcement over his helmet's systems. "But we've got to go. Stay safe."

"You too," joked Aziz as he rushed back towards the fighter hanger. Once there he found the space a beehive of activity.

While most of the giant open bay deck was clear, along the aft wall were two racks of ten fighters, one above the other, each with their wings folded over themselves. Throughout those racks, numerous techs and pilots were moving over the machines. Each was preparing the fighters to launch.

After climbing a set of stairs, Aziz approached his own plane along the upper rack. He saw that two enlisted techs were already finishing up their preflight duties. The ensign silently saluted them before hopping into the cockpit. There, once his rear backpack had attached to the seat, he began flipping switches. Within moments he had his plane's engines running.

"Alright folks, time to deploy and kick some butt," eagerly announced Aziz's female commander.

Once everyone was ready, techs standing on the deck began motioning for the lower planes to leave their racks. Each softly glided out, unfurled their wings, and waited. Then within moments a huge portion of the open floor began to slide aside exposing the air and ground below the ship. Then two by two, the planes taxied and dropped through the openings.

When it was Xziz's turn, he grasped the steering peddles with his feet and held the throttle in one hand. Keeping the ship straight, he softly nudged the ship forward. Free of the rack, Xziz pressed a switch unfolding his wings. Then he waited for his turn to drop out of the ship. When it came, he readied himself and pushed the throttle forward a bit more.

With a sudden jarring motion, Aziz's plane dropped through the hole free of the ship. His training kicked in causing him to increase his throttle while adjusting numerous systems. Soon he was comfortably flying away from the Night Spear towards his squadron.

"Alright folks, the idiots feel they can take on New York city's defenses with their puny cruisers. We're here not only to show them they can't, but also to beat the ever living snot out of them. Our two cruisers, plus these new planes, should be more than enough to smash them. Show no mercy," preached Xziz's female commander.

"Yes maam," they all quickly replied.

The two cruisers had the squadrons form up in front, above, and below the ships. Aziz was tasked with flying above them. Adjusting a few systems, a small holographic screen appeared to his right. It showed a magnified view far ahead of him. Within that screen he could see the three loyalist ships and their own older fighters.

Hearing something over the tactical frequency caused Aziz to briefly peer below him. He saw two hatches slide open along the top of each ship. The pilot knew each went down into the mech bay. Then as expected, the humanoid machines were pushed up on top each ship. Their pilots walked their machines towards specific spots. Once there, they deployed their heavy cannons. Those dual long barrels lifted up over their shoulders and locked in place facing forward. Then they waited for the incoming assault.

"Will you look at that," whistled someone over Alu's tactical frequencies. "I've never seen any of those before."

"Just as the intel suggested, those cruisers are heavily armored," commented another pilot.

"Plus will you look at those fighters," added another.

"What're those atop each ship," asked Xyru.

"Mech's I think," Alu responded.

"They sorta look like ours."

"I know, eerie huh?"

"Cut the chatter folks and put your game faces on. We've got a dog fight ahead of us," reminded their commander.

"Yes maam."

"Lieutenant commander Thyra, you may commence your attack," ordered the Sky Raptor's captain.

"You heard the woman, let's go get 'em," called Thrya.

With that, Alu pushed the throttle fully forward. The thruster in the back blazed a bright blue. That caused her ship to rocket ahead with the other fighters.

"Here they come, go get 'em girl's," yelled Xziz's commander. He grinned, threw his throttle forward, and raced towards the oncoming loyalist fighters. He was especially confident as knew the specs on his craft were superior to the older fighters his opponents flew.

"Come little girls, come and get it," he eagerly muttered as he urged his craft to go faster. A helmet display counted down the distance towards a fighter ahead of him. With a flip of a thumb, Xziz selected one of his missiles. He figured he would fire one, let it do its job, then move to another target.

Seconds passed achingly by before his indicator flashed green. In that moment, Xziz fired the missile with an upper hand. He watched the thing blast out of his missile banks. It zoomed across the open air towards his intended target.

He assumed his missile would take out its target so he could move on to the next one. Yet, his sensor system yanked him back to focusing on the loyalist he fired upon. Peering at his computer, Aziz saw the other fighter fire off a cloud of countermeasures and juke out of the way. The missile went

through the cloud and found its sensors completely dark for a moment. That allowed the other pilot to destroy it with a quick twisting blast of its guns.

Yet, before Xziz could fire off another missile, his sensors started blaring an alarm. He realized the enemy pilot was now targeting him. "Oh so you want to play do ya," muttered the male.

The other pilot fired off a pair of bolts from their cannons. One missed but the other hit him. However his armor absorbed the hit.

For a couple moments the other pilot chased Xziz as he executed a few tight turns attempting to throw off his pursuer. Yet, they effortlessly followed him through each pivot. Every so often his pursuer fired again, but he was able to juke out of the way.

Alu was having fun with her opponent. As she expected, the pilot had fired off a missile at her. Yet her training and experience kicked in allowing her to pop off a countermeasure then snipe the missile out of the air. Afterword, it was just a matter of stalking her prey.

As she flew behind the other pilot, her sensor systems were scanning every bit of the craft. They told her that the clan plane had a much more powerful cannon and a lot more missiles. Yet the one shot that impacted against the other's wing told her more. The hit told her that the thing was much more armored then her nimble plane and thus the clanner was a bit slower.

When the pilot tried juking her off their tail, Alu easily stayed on them. Both her Yar'Zanti and human pilot experiences allowed her to predict their attempts. At one point the pilot tried diving for the water hoping she would blink first. Yet to dissuade her enemy of their foolish idea, she fired off a missile. Suddenly seeing that projectile zooming at them caused the pilot to hurriedly bank upwards while firing off his own countermeasures. Alu watched the missile go through the cloud, get confused, and harmlessly impact the water.

At first Aziz was toying with the other pilot. He figured the dive towards the water would shake them. Then he could flip around and blast them with his heavy cannon finishing the dog fight once and for all.

Yet the other pilot called his bluff and fired one of their own missiles. Reactively he shot out a countermeasure and banked upwards. He watched as the missile hit the water.

Xziz now realized he had a fight on his hands. He also grasped that the other pilot knew how to handle their craft and counter his more powerful weapons. His instilled training next advised him to limit his enemy's ability to move around.

While evading another attack, Xziz witnessed one of the mechs atop the Night Spear open up with their main cannons. Both were as powerful as a battle cruiser's guns. Each bright blue beam lanced out at a nearby loyalist sky cruiser. Yet the nimble ship dove out of the way.

A plan formed in Xziz's mind causing him to grin. He led his pursuer towards one of the mechs hoping they could assist him. However, the other pilot noticed what he was trying and scored a hit with their guns. Within seconds his right missile bank began flashing malfunction warnings.

Alu wanted to laugh at what the other pilot's attempt to bring her close to those powerful mechs. Yet the clan pilot had unwittingly opened themselves up to her own guns. When she scored a hit, Alu was pleased to see there were parts of the armored craft which were less armored. Smoke started pouring out of the destroyed missile bank.

Now the other pilot went full evasive on her. Yet Alu kept up and used the pilot's heavy aircraft against them. She easily stayed with them and was able to score another hit against the other missile bank.

Briefly consulting her own sensors, she realized the only weapon the clan fighter had was their large cannon. Something too unwieldy to use against another fighter. Thus she chose to stay behind and shoot its thrusters. Finally, Alu had an opening to fire off another missile.

Taking careful aim, she launched the thing and watched it zoom towards the dying craft. Then suddenly she witnessed the

warhead slam into the plane blowing it up while clan pilot ejected. For a second she watched the male pilot float down to the ground due to his antigravity survival system.

Ignoring the descending pilot, Alu assisted her fellows as they worked over the other clan fighters. Before long they had a hard fought two to one advantage over their enemies. Plus she witnessed that while the loyalists sky cruisers had sustained some damage, all three were still very much intact. Yet they seemed to have scored some hits against the clan's heavy ships. One seemed to be trailing some smoke out its rear thrusters.

Then she witnessed a change in the battle. For a long while the two sides had been fighting ship to ship and plane to plane. The mechs on top of the clan ships acted as extra gun batteries. Yet when it seemed like the battle tide was beginning to turn away from the clan, they chose to shift tactics. The heavily armed mechs shifted from their spots atop the cruisers and aimed downwards. After that the clan began to pummel the ground with their heavy cannons. Each one sent up big plumes of dirt with each impact.

"Sky Raptor to Lieutenant commander Thyra," Alu suddenly heard over her tactical frequencies.

"Go ahead," urgently replied the woman.

"We've detected an enclave of humans near the battle. The clan's actions suggest they are trying to kill them. I want your squadron to harry those mechs while we drop our own to protect the humans."

"You got it captain. You all heard that, go after those mechs!"

Alu grinned and flew away from the remaining clan fighters. Each was attempting to evade two chasing loyalist craft. Within moments she had a mech in her sights.

While the thing had powerful cannons attached to its back, they were not suited to repelling nimble planes. The clan mech pilot did try to with their main cannons. Yet each shot ham-handedly missed.

As the mech was focused on Alu's fighter, its pilot missed the other loyalist craft zooming in behind it. Alu's fellow pilot scored a direct hit with a missile to the machine's back. However, the mech's heavy armor deflected most of the blast with only a minor amount of smoke being admitted from the thing.

Alu swooped her craft around to avoid a shot from her opponent's smaller arm cannons. They seemed like small anti-personnel weapons. Yet the weak guns did nothing against her own craft.

After another missile strike, its pilot walked the thing back towards the center of the ship while stowing its big cannons on its back. There it aligned itself on a red rectangle. Within moments the mech was lowered back into the ship. At the same time, the clan cruiser turned around and flew away.

More than once a loyalist fighter tried to fire a missile into the open hatch. Yet the mech was quickly lowered inside while the armored doors slammed shut above it. Within moments, all of the clan's remaining fighters and mechs were retrieved.

"All fighters provide air cover for our mechs on the ground," commanded the Sky Raptor. Alu banked her craft away from retreating cruisers and began flying circles over the ground. She watched the three loyalist machines surround the humans. While she could not hear what they were saying, Alu assumed the pilots were trying to reason with them. Then suddenly one of the mechs fired off a stun bomb. The thing exploded with a bright white blast. When it cleared every human within its radius were on the ground unconscious but alive. After that, numerous yellow armored troops streamed out of recently landed transports and began picking up the people. They then carefully carried them into waiting transports. At the same time, a retrieval ship flew in and began teleporting as many of the dead humans as they could.

With her rear eye, Alu pondered the screens behind her. The sensors back there were alerting her to something. Zooming in showed that a small clan transport was trying to speed towards the ground unnoticed.

"Command, this is Ensign Alu."

"Go ahead ensign."

"I've picked up a clan transport heading towards the ground."

"We saw that too. Our techs report they're retrieving their downed pilots."

"Want me to go after it?"

"No, leave it alone and protect our retrieval operation."

"Understood," softly replied Alu.

"Incoming," screamed someone over their tactical frequency. All of the sudden, off to the side, slammed a huge bright blue bolt. It impacted the ground nearby with the same force as a mega bomb. Alu knew that sort of blast could only come from a powerful battleship.

Then suddenly another slammed squarely into the Falcon. The sky cruiser was not built to withstand such a hit. The shot blasted through the craft causing it to immediately explode.

"Hurry hurry, get away," screamed someone. The mech pilots were hurriedly retrieved and stowed safely inside an intact transport. With that Alu, along with the retrieval ship and transports, zoomed out of the area. Each pulled alongside a fleeing sky cruiser. Then they darted from the heavy battleship that was slowly descending through the air towards the spot.

Once safely away from the battleship, the remaining two cruisers picked up as many of the transports and fighters as they could. Those that could not fit inside instead flew alongside. Afterword, the group flew southward back towards their base down in Atlanta.

Once Aziz had ejected from his plane and landed on the ground, all he could do was watch the battle above. At first he had hoped the clan would destroy the loyalists. Yet despite being seemingly weaker, the loyalists were still able to counter the clan.

Over time, Aziz witnessed many of his fellow pilots shot out of the sky. Then he next saw his mech pilots pummel the land off in the distance. Not being able to communicate with the clan through his ship meant he was unsure what they were doing.

"Ensign Xziz, do you read me," called out a female over his built in armor radio.

"I got you," he eagerly called back.

"Good, you survived your ejection. I've got your coordinates and we'll be there in a moment."

"Understood," Aziz hastily replied while watching the battle around him.

Within minutes a small retrieval shuttle landed near him. Jumping into the machine, Aziz joined a few other pilots who had

ejected from their destroyed planes. Flying away, they tried to figure out how they could have lost to the loyalist's weaker planes? Each figured their superior armor should have protected them.

Plugging into the transport's communication, Aziz heard that the battleship Star Fire had arrived on the scene and chased the cruisers off. He cheered with the others when they witnessed one loyalist cruiser destroyed. Though, hearing that the loyalists had escaped instead of being utterly destroyed, his hate for them only grew deeper.