

# STAR WARS®

## A-Wing Down

By Peter Schweighofer

### Introduction

Four to six SpecForce characters can take part in this mission. The ship they're traveling aboard is a modified Corellian corvette. With its two A-wing escorts, the vessel is investigating new Outer Rim worlds which might be suitable for Rebel bases. Everyone is aware that both A-wings are outfitted with specialized sensor arrays of a design the Rebellion would rather not have fall into Imperial hands.

Describe their situation to the players, making necessary changes to fit these events into an existing campaign if necessary. Then read aloud:

The corvette you're traveling aboard has entered orbit around one of the last worlds to be surveyed. Alarms suddenly ring out, and you hear reports of an Imperial *Strike-class* cruiser appearing from behind a nearby moon. The crew members also spot a squadron of TIE fighters swooping down on the A-wings scanning the planet. In a fight like this, there isn't much for you to do but sit tight and hope for the best.

At least until one of the senior bridge officers runs up to you and starts ushering you toward an escape pod. "Those TIE fighters took out one of the A-wings," he explains. "But they've forced the other starfighter to crash on the planet's surface. We have to make sure that

experimental sensor array is destroyed before the Empire captures it. The corvette can't stick around with that cruiser out there—the captain's already calculating the jump to hyperspace. The best we can do is drop you in an escape pod. Find the A-wing, destroy it, and rescue the pilot. We'll try to send someone back for you in a few days." With that, he finishes cramming you into the escape pod, seals the hatch, and jettisons you.

Running Time:  
4 hours



## Episode One: Trencherclaw

The escape pod streaks through the atmosphere, breaking jets firing occasionally, until the pod slams into the surface. When it skids to a halt, the hatch automatically pops open. The characters get a good whiff of dry, sandy air. As they emerge from the pod, they notice they've landed in rocky badlands. The ancient sandstone has been eroded by centuries of rain. Looking down the ravine, they see a grassy plain stretching to the horizon. If they squint (or use macrobinoculars), they can just see a few wisps of smoke indicating the A-wing's crash site.

Without notice, the ground beneath the pod rumbles and shakes. The loose sandstone it's sitting on begins crumbling. Unless the characters moved away from the pod before the tremors began, they each should make a Moderate *climbing/jumping* roll to leap for safety. Those who fail fall with the pod into a 10-meter hole, taking 3D damage. Getting out requires another Moderate *climbing/jumping* roll, unless one of the characters on the surface helps out with some syntherope. Ask anyone in the hole to make an Easy *Perception* roll. If they succeed, they hear digging sounds underground, as if somebody...or something...is burrowing beneath the surface.

The characters don't have to wait long to find out. Once they've rescued any com-

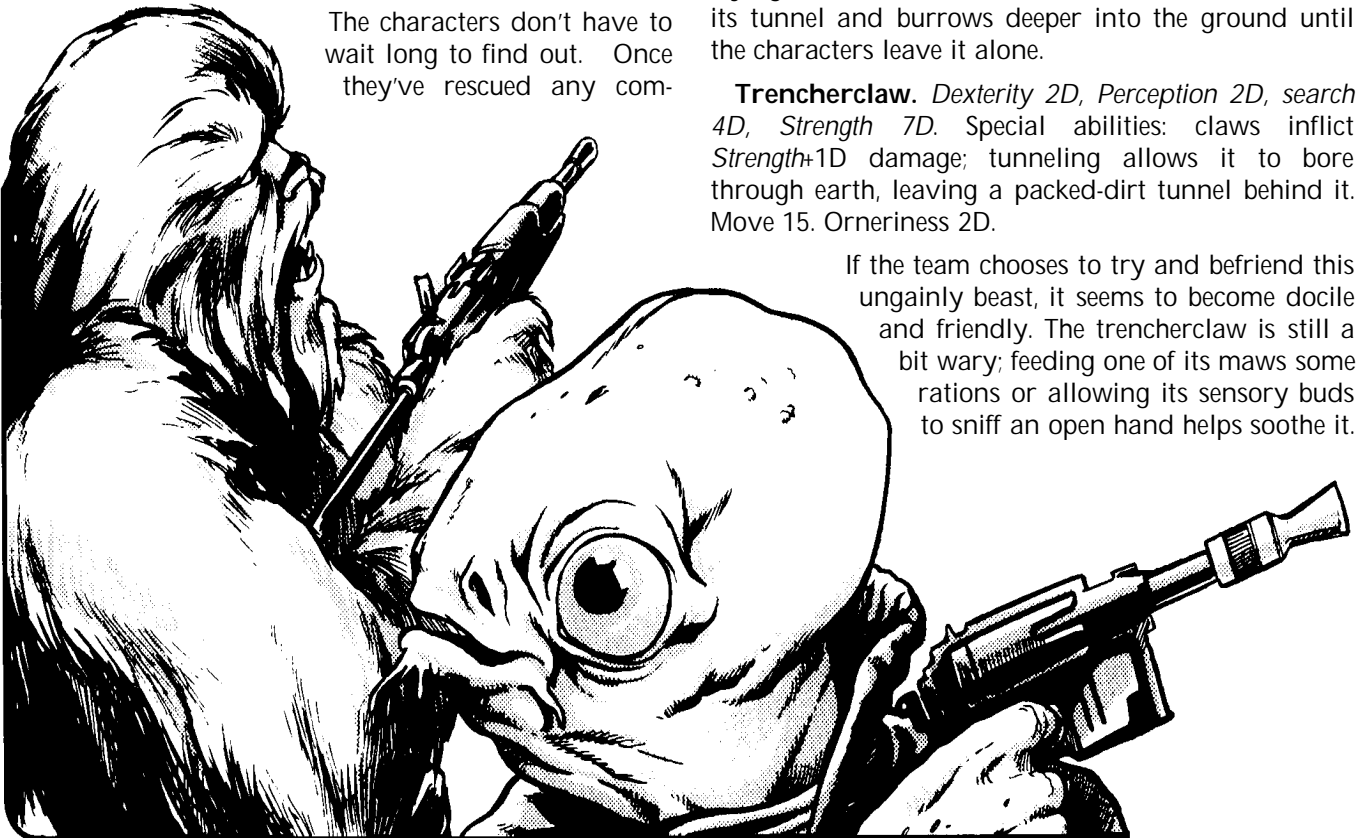
rades from the hole, one of the nearby rock walls blows open from within. A grotesque creature emerges from a tunnel. Its snout is black and covered with sensory buds which exude a gooey mucus. Several stalks extend from just behind the nose; each is about a meter long, and ends in a circular, toothy maw. The bulk of the beast follows. Powerful forelegs end in shovel-like digging paddles, with a longer, pointy claw on each side. The paddles dig into the sandy ground and pull the creature forward. The bulky body is covered in hardened skin plates. Two huge paddle-legs near the back push it farther out of its tunnel and toward the characters.

The trencherclaw is a native omnivore which burrows underground in search of small animals, water, and nutrients in the soil. It's relatively harmless, though the characters don't know this. The trencherclaw is curious about the hard metal object which landed near its burrow. Before the characters have a chance to do anything, it pulls itself forward, "sniffs" one of them with its sensory buds, and emits a low-pitched nasal growl.

If the characters attack the trencherclaw, it naturally moves to defend itself. It's not very coordinated above-ground, but anyone getting hit by its claws is going to be seriously hurt. After a few rounds feebly trying to defend itself, the creature shuffles back into its tunnel and burrows deeper into the ground until the characters leave it alone.

**Trencherclaw.** *Dexterity 2D, Perception 2D, search 4D, Strength 7D.* Special abilities: claws inflict *Strength+1D* damage; tunneling allows it to bore through earth, leaving a packed-dirt tunnel behind it. Move 15. Orneriness 2D.

If the team chooses to try and befriend this ungainly beast, it seems to become docile and friendly. The trencherclaw is still a bit wary; feeding one of its maws some rations or allowing its sensory buds to sniff an open hand helps soothe it.



After a few moments of petting the creature, the characters hear repulsorlift engines in the distance: Imperial scout troopers investigating the downed escape pod. The trencherclaw senses them, too, lifting its snout into the air and sniffing around. The creature suddenly turns from the characters and begins burrowing into the soft rock. It quickly disappears into a tunnel; its foreclaws dig through the rock and soil, while its massive body and rear paddles compact the burrow walls. Although the entrance seems in danger of collapsing with the weak surface rock, the interior is a stable passage the characters can follow. And if their sense of direction is correct, the trencherclaw is headed toward the downed A-wing...

Should the team stick around to take out the scout troopers, they're in for a challenging engagement. Two biker scouts pull up to the hole into which the escape pod fell. They dismount and cautiously investigate. Two biker scouts? No problem. Except for their four companions who dismounted a few hundred meters back and hiked through the badlands to cover their comrades. When the Rebels emerge to attack the two scouts, they suddenly discover they've been ambushed. The four biker scouts are spaced out around the clearing, behind very good cover. The two other scouts use the hole for cover.

**Scout Troopers.** *Dexterity 2D, blaster 4D, brawl*ing parry 4d, *dodge 4D, Knowledge 2D, Mechanical 3D, repulsorlift operation: speeder bike 3D+2, Perception 2D, Strength 2D, brawl*ing 3D, *Technical 2D.* Move 10. Hold-out blaster (3D+2), scout armor (+2 physical and energy), blaster pistol (4D), blaster rifle (5D), 2 concussion grenades (5D), survival gear.

If the team defeats all the scouts, they can search around for their speeder bikes. They make the journey to the A-wing crash site and the scout base easier, but they're more noticeable to the patrolling probe droids and any base personnel.

## Episode Two: A-wing Wreckage

If the team followed the friendly trencherclaw, they can approach the A-wing underground. Should the characters decide to ignore the creature (or kill or chase it off if they attacked), they must climb down through the rocky badlands and cautiously make their way across the open plains. Although the grass is tall, they're still out in the open, with no cover and nowhere to run. Keep them on their toes by asking each team member to roll *sneak*. They need to avoid the notice of a probe droid on an outer perimeter patrol of the area.



**Probe Droid.** *Dexterity 3D, blaster 4D, Knowledge 2D+2, planetary systems 4D, Mechanical 3D, sensors 6D, Perception 3D, search 4D, search: tracking 7D+1, Strength 4D, Technical 2D+1.* Long-range sensor (+1D to search for objects 200 meters to 5 km away), movement sensor (+2D search for moving objects up to 100 meters away), blaster cannon (4D+2). Move 14.

Characters following the trencherclaw's underground tunnel can get very close to the A-wing. The creature suddenly emits a squeal, then abruptly changes its course and veers away from the direction it was heading. One of its claws grazes the surface, and the characters see daylight streaming into the tunnel from above. When they peer through the hole, they see the A-wing only about 100 meters away. The starfighter doesn't look as damaged as one would expect. Still, it left a short, scorched trench where it touched down.

If the team doesn't thoroughly check out the crash site from a distance, they won't notice a second probe droid lurking in the A-wing's shadow. It's been posted here to make sure nobody disturbs the vessel until a technical crew can come out and tear it apart. The droid has a good chance of noticing anyone approaching; if they're not Imperial personnel, it waits in the shadows until the right moment for a surprise attack.

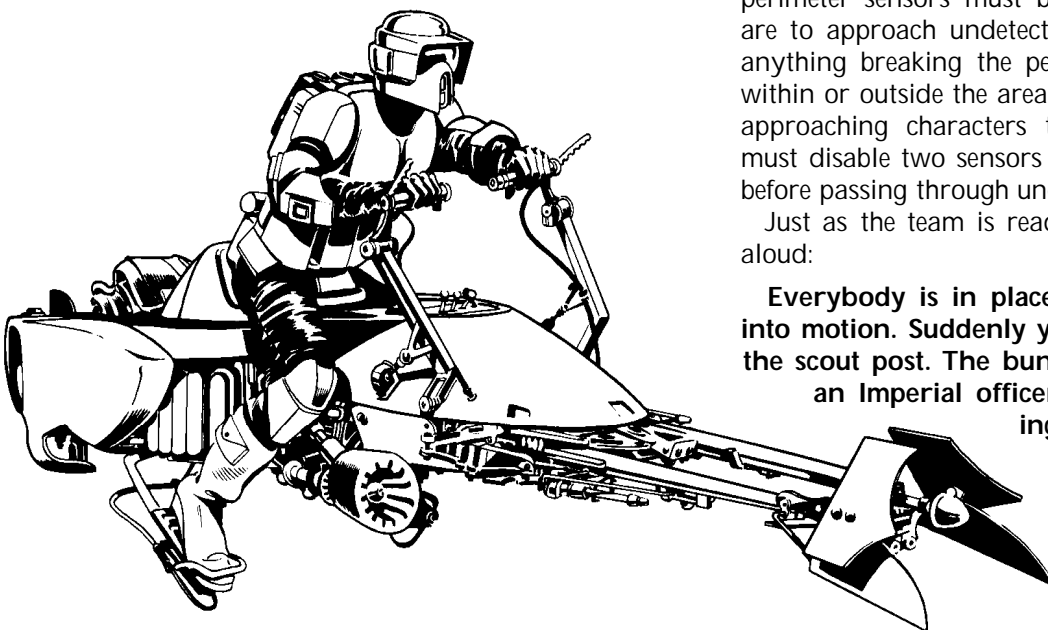
Once the team has taken out the probe droid, they can more closely examine the A-wing and set the charges to destroy it. There are some odd things about this starfighter that clever characters might notice.

Anyone examining the ground nearby and making an *Easy search* roll notices the pilot's tracks. The matted grass leads toward the Imperial scout post visible on the horizon, though the trail is joined by more footprints, then disappears (presumably they loaded the pilot into a speeder of some sort).

Although it's apparent the pilot escaped, the A-wing's canopy is closed. Any team members going to open the canopy should make an *Easy Perception* roll. If successful, they notice some extra electronics around the canopy seal. They also see a red light on the control console inside. Since the ship is powered down, this can only mean one thing: the A-wing is rigged to blow should anyone open the canopy. Disabling the self-destruct device is going to take a *Difficult demolitions* roll. Should this effort fail, anyone within five meters of the ship take 10D damage. If the characters open the canopy, they find some puzzling signs: the pilot forgot to take along his survival pack, and the distress beacon's been disabled.

The team can still plant its own explosives without entering the cockpit. A few *Moderate demolitions* rolls allow them to figure out the best placement for the charges, and set the timers along whatever range they'd like: from one minute to two hours. If they're thinking of rescuing the pilot, they might plan on setting the explosives to detonate when a diversion might be most helpful.

Anyone examining the A-wing for damage might discover some interesting information. Characters making *Moderate starfighter repair* rolls realize the damage done to this ship was not enough to force it to crash land. In fact, the few laser hits seem only to have scorched the hull and the stabilizer wing.



## Episode Three: Imperial Scout Base

The scout base on the horizon is a temporary post. The Empire is considering using this planet for a military installation or agricultural colony, and the scouts are here to determine how best to exploit it.

Assuming the team approaches the scout post carefully (ask for a few *sneak* rolls), they can move close enough to get a good look from a grassy hill nearby. The base consists of two pre-fabricated barrack units, a sturdy tent set up as a repulsorlift vehicle bay, and a reinforced bunker for electronics, sensors, communications, and command operations. A square of grass has been cut and four landing lights placed in the corners—they're not blinking now, but are meant to guide incoming craft. The tall grass 100 meters around the base has also been cut, with several perimeter sensors set at even intervals to alert the post of intruders.

More details about the base require a closer look; either the team must move in closer (almost to the perimeter), or they must use macrobinoculars. A more detailed reconnaissance reveals the base personnel consists of about eight Imperial biker scouts, two technicians, and an unknown number of others (including officers) inside the bunker. Careful examination of the speeder tent shows the A-wing pilot sitting on a pile of crates, two biker scouts standing guard.

The team must plan its attack if it's to rescue the pilot. Allow the players to view the map and devise some kind of attack strategy. Positions of all relevant base personnel are shown, except for one officer and two more technicians in the reinforced bunker. The perimeter sensors must be disabled if the characters are to approach undetected. They're rigged to detect anything breaking the perimeter, but not movement within or outside the area. Still, it's a good idea to ask approaching characters to make *sneak* rolls. They must disable two sensors with *Moderate security* rolls before passing through undetected.

Just as the team is ready to begin the attack, read aloud:

Everybody is in place, ready to put your plan into motion. Suddenly you notice some activity in the scout post. The bunker door slides aside and an Imperial officer steps out. Without waiting for his guards, the A-wing pilot gets up and approaches the officer. The two salute each other, then shake hands as if they were old friends reunited.

The scout troopers on guard detail go about their business, unconcerned that their prisoner is chatting casually with their commanding officer.

The pilot is actually an Imperial spy who's delivered an Alliance A-wing and its special sensors right into the Empire's hands! Make it clear to the team that, besides destroying the scout post, they now must eliminate or capture an Imperial spy.

**Imperial Officer.** All stats are 2D except: *Dexterity 2D+2, blaster 4D+2, dodge 4D, Knowledge 3D, bureaucracy 4D, planetary systems 3D+1, Mechanical 3D+2, Perception 3D+1, bargain 5D+1, Strength 2D+1, brawling 3D+2, Technical 3D.* Move: 10. Blaster pistol (4D), comlink.

**Captain Davvik Gralle, Imperial Spy Pilot.** All stats are 2D except: *Dexterity 3D, blaster 6D+2, brawling parry 5D, dodge 5D, melee combat 5D+1, pick pocket 4D, bureaucracy 3D, planetary systems 4D, streetwise 2D+2, tactics: starfighter 3D+1, Mechanical 4D, astrogation 5D, communications 6D, repulsorlift operation 4D+2, sensors 5D+2, starfighter piloting 7D, starship gunnery 6D+1, Perception 4D, con 6D, forgery 5D, investigation 5D+1, persuasion 4D+2, search 5D, sneak 6D, Strength 2D+1, brawling 5D, Technical 2D+2, computer programming/repair 3D, demolitions 4D+1, first aid 3D+2, security 3D+1.* Move 10. Character Points 4. Blaster pistol (4D), pilot's flight suit, vibroknife (STR+1D).

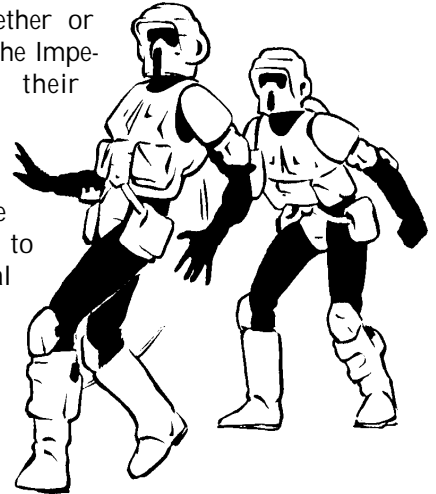
As soon as the team puts its plan into motion—including blowing up the A-wing as a diversion, or firing into the base—the entire post goes on alert. The technicians dodge for cover, the eight scout troopers return fire, and the officer and Imperial spy head for the speeder bikes. If you really want to challenge the characters, send another probe droid out into the tall grass to hunt them down and attack from behind.

The characters have only a few rounds before the officer and spy reach the tent housing the speeder bikes. The each hop aboard one and speed off into the plains. They're betting whoever's shooting up the base doesn't have any fast repulsorlift vehicles. Of course, if the team moves quickly, they have six more speeder bikes inside the hangar tent.

**Imperial Speeder Bike.** Speeder scale, maneuverability 3D+2, move 175; 500 kmh, body strength 2D. Weapons: laser cannon (fire control 2D, 3-50/100/200, damage 3D).

Once the two Imperials realize the team's pursuing them, they veer off toward the badlands' craggy canyons. If they reach them, everyone's going to have to do some fancy flying and roll some high *repulsorlift*

*operation* scores. Whether or not the team catches the Imperials depends on their speeder abilities and their strategy. It's okay if they kill both adversaries, but more important for them to capture the Imperial spy who almost delivered an A-wing to the Empire.



## Alternate Endings

Getting off the planet offers a variety of ways to end the scenario. Here are some ideas:

- The team must wait for the Rebels to return and pick them up. If they wait at the scout base, they're bound to have a visit from more Imperial forces checking up on things. The characters might want to hole up in the badlands, where there's plenty of cover.
- If for some reason the team didn't destroy the A-wing, they can repair it (*Moderate starfighter repair*), but only one of them can fly to get help.
- Assuming the Empire sends more ground forces to figure out what went wrong, the team might be daring and try hijacking one of their landing shuttles. They're

### Captain Gralle: Imperial Spy

Captain Gralle was seeded with the Alliance soon after the Battle of Yavin. He was a member of a freighter escort crew which joined the Rebellion in the wake of its victory against the Death Star; but Captain Gralle kept his Imperial loyalties hidden. Even before joining the Alliance he had been an Imperial Intelligence informant. Now he was in an even more advantageous position to help the Empire. With his starfighter ability he was soon assigned to a squadron of X-wings. When the new A-wing starfighters became available, Gralle maneuvered to get a transfer into one of the new squadrons.

His efforts at feeding the Empire sensitive Alliance information have been only marginally successful: some fleet movements, a little technical data on starfighters, and tidbits of personnel gossip. With his assignment as an A-wing escort for a scout corvette, Gralle saw his chance to deliver a nearly undamaged starfighter to his superiors—complete with an experimental new sensor system.

not going to get far, though, unless the shuttle is hyperspace-capable.

- If they rummage through the scout base records, the characters discover there's a small colony here already. The settlers came here during an exodus from the Core Worlds 200 years ago. They're idealistic isolationists bent on their own self-sufficiency, so they might not be too friendly. But if the team can convince the colonists of their cause, they might help. The settlers could shelter them from any Imperial investigations, or could help pay for passage aboard the rare freighter that comes to these parts.

## Character Rewards

Once they've hit the scout post, the team may scavenge any needed supplies: communications equipment, vehicles, or weapons. They're not getting off the planet anytime soon (see sidebar "Alternate Endings" above), so they'll need to make preparations for an extended stay.

Otherwise, award each player five Character Points. Add three more if the spy was captured, and two more if they suspected the pilot was involved in espionage before they reached the scout base. If they managed to repair the A-wing and fly it to the Alliance, give everyone another two Character Points.

## Staging Tips

You can easily work *A-Wing Down* into your existing SpecForce campaign. After the Battle of Yavin, the Rebellion is desperately searching for new worlds to use as bases. The Rebels are also short on ships, so it would make sense to use some as both scout ships and transports, to survey systems along the way between ports.

The characters could simply be passengers aboard the corvette, heading back to base from a mission. They might be coming in from an extended tour in a cluster of tightly held Imperial systems with important military objectives. Or they could be in transit between assignments. Maybe they're from several different units; this could be a good way to mix characters from different branches of SpecForces.

The team might also be assigned to this ship as a substitute for much-needed scout teams. Although they don't have the scientific training to properly survey a world, they have the survival skills to last long enough to plant sensors and do some basic reconnaissance work. They'd normally be sent in after the A-wings performed a preliminary scan, but in this case, they'll be useful to keep delicate technology out of the Empire's grasp.

## Espionage Campaign

This adventure can be used as a climax in a longer campaign where the characters are charged with rooting out Imperial spies from their Rebel base. This doesn't exactly fit well with the duties of SpecForce personnel; however, you could alter your SpecForce storyline to include episodes of mysterious sabotage, Imperial ambushes, and leaked information all hinting at a spy in their organization. Or you could use this adventure in a non-SpecForce campaign in which the characters are chasing down and eliminating an Imperial spy ring within their part of the Rebel Alliance.

