

The History of The Galactic Empire: An Empire Reborn

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1 An Empire Reduced

Shortly after the Battle of Endor, an Emperor-class Star Destroyer fell back into the primarily uncharted depths of the Outer Rim region, joining up with a sector fleet stationed there. The small fleet consisted of a handful of Emperor- and Victory-class Star Destroyers, as well as multiple support ships. The returning warship was once part of the sector fleet before it had been drawn off as part of the fleet set to trap the Rebellion. The warship was the flagship of an aged but skilled Fleet Admiral. Now that most of the Imperial Navy was shattered throughout the galaxy and the Empire as a whole left in disarray, the fleet admiral had returned to repair and refit... unsure of his next step.

Within hours of his return, he called for a council of governors, military commanders and Moff's of his domain, to discuss the future and their role in it. The council debated for four days. There had been a great many suggestions to rejoin various Imperial fleets and support them, but both the Fleet Admiral and his most senior officers had seen the disarray of forces at Endor following the loss of the flagship and the second Death Star. Already, news updates were streaming in by the hour, revealing warlords claiming various sectors and even oversectors as their own.

The council could keep a small pocket of Imperial controlled space; its position in space giving them assurance that they would be relatively safe from any rebel attacks. They were Imperials and, if anything, they might be the last remnant of troops still loyal to the old system. There would be no "Prince Admiral", no "Warlord", no contrived "promotions" to Grand Moff or Grand Admiral, and no pretenders to the Emperor's throne. There would be an Imperial council, effectively a small version of the Imperial Senate of old. Some of the old laws were repealed, removing any form of discrimination such that females and non-humans could advance in rank and position solely on their merit. No matter the extent of the changes, one thing remained constant: There would be no surrender to the rebellion!

As the Empire started to gain headway under their new doctrine, it was clear that much work still had to be accomplished. The few bases in their region of space were barely enough to keep their fleet and ground forces in operating condition — at this point in time, increasing their size was out of the question. The Imperial Council agreed to secure, strengthen and crew existing bases, build a working infrastructure for the current troops and to ensure proper training all officers and support personnel. The next phase was to reinforce the sector fleet.

Although only three planets possessed orbital docks, within two years there had been enough changes and additions in sector infrastructure that the first new Strike Cruiser was commissioned. Asteroid and planet mining was at an all-time high. Agricultural technology improved, and soon previously-barren worlds were producing significant exports.

One of the biggest problems the council began to face was the fact that many of its officers came from Core Worlds or even in the Deep Core. For a time, the separation had seemed only temporary and that they might be able to continue with their former lives. A number of officers had already given up hope of ever seeing their loved ones again, unless they wished to spend the rest of their lives in rebel forced-labor camps.

The launch of the first new ship brought with it an immediate increase in morale, and soon a massive recruiting campaign and training programs were launched. Almost immediately, vessel and station staffing levels were nearing the pre-Endor average. Production of materiel climbed as well, beyond the bare minimum level it had remained at for so long. The planets were finally up to wartime production.

Orbital defenses were next to be constructed, and after a few more months, work on a larger orbital dock was commenced. This dock was big enough to give the Empire the capacity to build larger ships, in the size range of Escort Carriers, Dreadnoughts and Victory-class Star Destroyers. In the meantime, the fleet had been augmented with a variety of ship classes: Corellian Corvettes and their tougher sister vessels, Correllian Gunships, Carrack Cruisers, Lancer Frigates, and a small flotilla of Nebulon-B Frigates.

Most vessels new to the fleet were constructed in the new orbital shipyards, but border skirmishes and territorial engagements led to a number of ships being “acquired”. A well-stocked group of pirates made the error of entering the Imperial sector with their small fleet. Soon they found themselves amidst TIE Interceptors and Imperator-class Star Destroyers. Though the majority of the pirate vessels were destroyed in battle, the surviving craft and equipment were assimilated into the Imperial arsenal. The top prize of the day was a well cared-for Dreadnaught — the pirate commander’s personal flagship.

Rumours started to spread outside the sector about this “Imperial paradise”. Disaffected Imperial commanders from a number of other fleets joined this smaller, but prosperous and promising Imperial dominion, far from the reaches and interest of the so-called “New Republic”. Many commanders brought with them their ship and crew, or in exceptional circumstances, the small group under their command. Many had tired of being lone wolves or refused to bow to the unjust or outright insane orders of deluded warlords, earning themselves excommunication or a death

sentence.

The enclave continued to prosper and grow. Planets in the vicinity joined this new incarnation of the Empire of their own free will, as opposed to the old Imperial doctrine of subjugating planets that the Empire wanted to control. This made the bonds that formed the dominion stronger than ever before.

News of the famous Grand Admiral Thrawn did not reach the enclave in the Outer Rim until the end of Thrawn was near. Spies and scouts sent out brought reports that he was no myth — he was nearly bringing the rebellion to its knees. Shortly before the disaster of Bilbringi struck down the Chiss admiral, diplomats were sent to open a dialogue on an alliance. However, they arrived too late, and could only witness the seemingly inexplicable retreat of his forces. Rumours soon became certainty: Grand Admiral Thrawn was dead, murdered by his own bodyguard.

Nearly six years after the Fleet Admiral and his council decided to build an Imperial pocket far from rebel holdings, great strides had been made. The small empire now held nearly two sectors and had accumulated larger fleets and ground forces, as well as large production capabilities. The death of Thrawn had undone much of the good for the Empire's forces the masterful tactician had accomplished when he was alive, and the ruling council decided it best to wait the situation out.

Things underwent a radical shift when an Imperial Star Destroyer entered their space and began broadcasting Imperial codes of the highest clearance. An officer calling himself Grand Admiral Daemon wished to speak to the rulers of this Imperial enclave. The council agreed to grant him this wish and listen to what he was offering. The news he brought was hard to accept on its surface.

His Majesty, The Emperor — resurrected in a new, clone body — had promoted Daemon to the rank of Grand Admiral and commanded him to lead all Imperial forces not aligned to any warlord. The Emperor chose their two sectors as most promising of a base.

Great pains were taken to verify the veracity of the Grand Admiral's claims. Everything seemed to be in order, and no evidence could be found to contradict the claims that he made. A significant body of evidence was assembled to support Daemon's position, and so, the Imperial dominion — as required by their own policies and regulations — accepted Grand Admiral Daemon as their new leader.

The elderly Fleet Admiral — now well past the normal point of retirement for officers of his service history — chose to take that opportunity to bow out gracefully, and upon stepping down as the enclave's leader and transferring command of all his military forces to Grand Admiral Daemon, he officially resigned. The Fleet Admiral departed enclave territory shortly thereafter, and his whereabouts since have been the subject of much speculation...

2 An Empire Reforged

While Grand Admiral Daemon was indeed the Supreme Commander of the territory and forces the Emperor has presented him with, he was in fact not — as he had been told — the Supreme Commander of the entirety of the true Empire. What the Grand Admiral was led to believe was in fact precisely what the Emperor wished the rebels to believe — that another Imperial Grand Admiral had risen with a sizeable fleet, and was attempting to restore the Empire from territories in the outer rim.

The Emperor's plan, meanwhile, continued on its course, as a great fleet was amassing in the Deep Core of the galaxy... a fleet to ensure the restoration of His Majesty's Empire.

Grand Admiral Daemon's forces would merely provide the distraction necessary to divert the rebellion's eyes while the realization of the Emperor's grander plan would plunge a dagger into its heart.

Even with relatively meager resources, especially in comparison to those the Emperor himself possessed, Grand Admiral Daemon's faction grew to exceed the Emperor's expectations. The two sectors of control soon became three, with the third being even more populous than the previous. The Emperor began to consider if his newest Grand Admiral could in fact be a threat to his carefully laid plans.

The truth of the matter was that Grand Admiral Daemon's loyalty to Emperor Palpatine and his Empire was unquestionable; however the Emperor in any lifetime did not ensure his security by relying on loyalty. At the same time, he would certainly not put this new resource to waste. He would simply have to take more direct control of the Grand Admiral.

Shortly thereafter, Daemon came into possession of a Sith Holocron — a holocron that the Emperor was well aware of, for he had imbued it with Sith Power and engineered the events through which it was discovered. Although the Grand Admiral was not a Force-sensitive being in his own right, there were few sentients who could not act as a conduit for the Emperor's awesome powers: powers which enhanced the will and prowess of Imperial forces throughout the galaxy whenever His Majesty commanded them.

This holocron would be a focal point — a manifestation — of that power for the Grand Admiral to use to access such enhancements upon demand and with temporary effect, oblivious to the fact that the Emperor was not only instructing him on how to use the holocron, but that it was a design of his master's own hand he was drawing upon. Oblivious as well to the other effect the device's enchantment was designed to have: for its energies to seep into its user like a slow poison of the spirit, gradually opening enough of their mind to the will of the Emperor that they could be used, via that same holocron and over great distances, as a literal extension of his will when he saw fit. Through it, he would not only make the Grand Admiral one of the most effective commanders at his disposal, but would be able to control him directly — and through him, his

forces — in the event that they did not remain as loyal as he wished them to be.

To the perspective of Grand Admiral Daemon, he now had the holocron in hand, and was being "tutored" in its use by the Emperor. To the surprise of Imperial and rebel alike, both of whom were totally unaware of the powers the Grand Admiral was tapping, his already significant public successes seemed to nearly double overnight, with the rate of military build-up within his territories reaching a level that had been almost unseen since the early days of the Galactic Empire itself. His Majesty would decide what, if anything, was to be done about this Supreme Commander shortly; for the moment, there were more pressing plans to attend to.

Grand Admiral Daemon's forces swelled to three full Sector Groups, with numerous patrol ships, planetary defense forces, and several new shipyards a constant presence. Their three sectors soon became four, and then five...

His forces now were of significant renown in the galaxy, and it was widely thought that his forces represented one of the strongest Imperial factions remaining in the galaxy. Though their size was by no means overwhelming, their efficiency and prowess in battle had made for a fearsome reputation.

Despite all this, the Empire began to suffer some setbacks. A high ranking member of Imperial Intelligence known only as Kardock was captured by the rebellion. A highly secretive infiltration mission was undertaken to rescue him, though this mission resulted in the loss of the Empire's sole Interdictor Cruiser, at the hands of the Empire's own strike team. Nonetheless, Kardock was rescued successfully. The nature of the operation led many to suspect that Kardock was in fact the leader of Imperial Intelligence, but this has never been confirmed...

The more venomous effects of the Sith powers had begun to do their work. In truth, it was working, but at a decelerated rate... and the Emperor was not pleased at the seeming failure of his holocron to fulfill its purpose.

For Grand Admiral Daemon, what had slowed the effects was the one thing that he had always striven to keep hidden from his superiors throughout his Imperial career. He was not entirely human. The makeup of the remainder of his mostly-human physiology, none know for sure — and it is speculation whether or not the Grand Admiral knows himself. Regardless of his origins, it produced in him a mind that was ever so subtly different from that of a full-blooded human, and the Emperor could not have expected this and reacted accordingly...

While resistant, Daemon was by no means immune. With the willpower of the Emperor once again absent from the Imperial forces at large, Grand Admiral Daemon found himself in a position that to keep his forces on the forefront of the battle against the rebellion — and most unfortunately, a selection of Imperial factions who disgraced the name — it was necessary to use every tool and weapon at his disposal. That of course included the holocron, which he was always wary of, but which worked too effectively not to chance its continued use.

The Grand Admiral doubled his efforts, using the holocron extensively to supplement his energy

and stamina to command. Gradually, however, more and more use became necessary to achieve the same results. He knew that discontinuing its use was necessary before it became entirely ineffective and he experienced a breakdown in the process.

There was only a single problem: the poison had finally taken effect. The holocron had finally imbued the Grand Admiral's mind with enough of its energy that two now shared a symbiosis, and one that needed to be replenished; for it was via the holocron that the Emperor's instructions were meant to be transmitted to the mind of its user. After attempting to discontinue use of the device and experiencing headaches, fatigue, mental turmoil and various other ill effects that necessitated sudden, unannounced, and sometimes lengthy departures from the fleet, it did not take him long to deduce the predicament he was in...

To continue to use the holocron would be suicide. To cease using it would lead to insanity. He conducted research missions personally to avoid revealing his illness to the fleet (and potentially his enemies, were word to leak out). Traditional medicine was useless, and certainly none of the Emperor's dark side adepts could be trusted to assist... if any of them could even be located.

The Empire could ill afford an insane Grand Admiral at its helm. Nor would he be any good to the Imperial cause dead. The only remaining option was firmly planted in the unknown: the holocron had to be destroyed.

He was pleased to find that the disassembly of the holocron did not kill him instantly; however, it was inauspicious to learn that the fragments resisted absolute destruction. His final mission with it would therefore need to ensure that they were scattered to the far reaches of the galaxy, in locations to no-one's knowledge but his own. Upon completion, he would return to the fleet and await his fate... Preparations to appoint another Supreme Commander would be made in the event that he began to deteriorate, but to make such an announcement before scattering would be far too dangerous to the success of his mission.

Suffice it to say that being shot down was not part of the Grand Admiral's plan...

3 An Empire Reborn

Grand Admiral Daemon's disappearance stretched on, until he was declared officially "Missing in Action", just short of two and a half years after he assumed command. It was in these days of chaos when a Vice Admiral, as per the emergency clauses in the Imperial Charter, assumed the rank of Fleet Admiral. This new Fleet Admiral, Sirius Polanski, began rallying Imperial forces once more.

The chaos leading up to the disappearance of the Grand Admiral had caused the Empire to fall back on several fronts, suffering territorial and personnel losses to rebels, rogue warlords, and even pirates. The problem had been compounded when a large group of crew resigned en masse

in protest of the Empire's floundering. Though many of the officers who resigned did rejoin Imperial forces in later years, some good officers departed permanently and have not been heard from since...

The majority of officers continued to serve, but morale had plummeted. In the wake of the departures, many young officers were pressed into jobs beyond their experience and level. Though it seemed like the remnant of Daemon's holdings might at last tear itself apart, the Empire held.

Fleet Admiral Polanski began to appoint new commanders and reinstate old ones. It was clear that the Empire needed a reorganization to get it back on its feet. The council, which had fallen into disuse during Grand Admiral Daemon's leadership, was called upon once again.

As a result of the chaos caused by the loss of the Emperor eight years earlier, and then the same result again at the disappearance Grand Admiral Daemon so recently, the old system of centralized power — one person in absolute control — was rejected; a new method was needed. More power was delegated to division and institution commanders than ever before, and in turn, said commanders delegated some of their responsibilities to their staff. This process of decentralization was conceived with the idea of giving the reborn Empire the ability to recover swiftly in the event of the death or incapacitation of any one of its leaders... even the Supreme Commander himself.

As always, progress was slow. Pirates and rogues ran rampant on the fringes of Imperial territory, and the Rebellion continued to eat away at Imperial holdings. To combat the tactics of their enemies, Imperial fleets were re-organized into two major groups. Many high-mobility, rapid-response fleets were organized as the first group. The second group consisted of heavy weaponry and cruisers, capable of smashing enemy fleets.

There still remained turmoil on some of the planets, however, and some worlds elected to leave the enclave entirely. Others declared themselves to be neutral and to wait out the situation. But a core group of planets believed in the strength of the Empire, and remained steadfastly aligned. Withdrawing to the relative safety of its friendly worlds, the Empire needed to stabilize itself. A large amount of technical equipment, much of it related to the internal operations of the Empire had been lost, pillaged, or destroyed.

Grand Admiral Daemon's central control facility — known officially as the Imperial Nexus — deactivated itself in his absence, and for reasons yet unknown, eventually self-destructed. Fortunately, nearly all of the relevant data could be recovered before the Imperial Nexus was lost, but important data was lost nonetheless. The high-priority effort to restore the data onto a new system was successful, and in time, the new system was nearly as functional as the Imperial Nexus had once been.

A series of assaults soon threatened the core worlds of the Imperial enclave. These attacks came from a small-scale militia of a system; they had somehow managed to capture, steal, or otherwise acquire an outdated Mon Calamari cruiser to complement their otherwise unimpressive fleet. Rebel involvement was not suspected, but never discounted as a possibility.

The Empire's crushing defeat of this force proved to be a tremendous confidence-builder, not only for the troops, but also for worlds that had left the Empire not so long ago. In the weeks following, three worlds who had declared themselves neutral opened talks about rejoining. Other elements also began to rejoin, including a number of the officers who had departed some time prior due to the political situation. Their experience and wisdom was of benefit to the rest of the forces. Staffing levels finally began to improve. In particular, the Imperial Army regained much strength, as it had suffered significantly more during the Empire's dark times than the Navy.

With the passage of time, things improved further. Great care was taken in this rebirth process to remain true to original Imperial ideals, but the modifications that were made were almost exclusively updates and modernizations to fit present circumstances or changes in policy. The Empire's military success was prefaced by a restoration of law and order throughout Imperial territories. Though things had lapsed in time of chaos, in general they had rarely strayed far from the earlier situation.

With the Empire's internal politics coming together, the time had been judged right to resume the offensive against the Rebels; with Rebel forces advancing the Empire's only hope lay in turning the war around and seizing the offensive. The first step lay in expanding the Imperial resource base. Thus began the Empire's "Outer Sectors" Campaign.

Turning its attention to the borderlands away from the core, it was clear that this area was a prime target for the Empire. It was found to be nearly untouched by the rebels, and so the Empire chose to capitalize on the opportunity to bring these worlds into its territory. For an Empire still recovering from the recent disorder, this strengthening move was certainly logical. Reconnaissance teams were dispatched throughout the area and a significant pirate presence was detected in the area, as well as scout teams from the rebels! The Empire was soon to be locked in a serious struggle with the rebels for these planets...

Imperial Army commando troops were dispatched to investigate something unsettling on the surface of a planet: The wreckage of an Imperial shuttle and the uniform of an Imperial Grand Admiral were found.

One of the first actions in Outer Sectors was a daring mission by the Imperial flagship — the Emperor-II-class Star Destroyer Chimaera — to prevent the rebels from acquiring an interdicator-class cruiser. To complete this mission required a hyperspace jump deep into enemy territory. Although the mission was successful, the Chimaera itself suffered an extreme level of damage and was barely salvageable...

Plans for an Emperor-class dock were accelerated at that point, given the need to get the flagship back in action as soon as possible. A great amount of effort was expended to get the shipyard operational, and the skill of Imperial pilots fended off numerous attacks. During the refitting of the flagship, her crew was assigned to a smaller, Victory-class Star Destroyer known as the Warhammer, and the next Emperor-class in line — the Nemesis — became the acting flagship.

In the meantime, the Imperial Army, assisted by a number of starships, was making serious gains

in neutral territory. Assaults against pirate targets typically went well. It appeared fairly obvious that the pirates had foolishly angered the rebels, meaning they were pinned on two fronts. Seizing the opportunity, Imperial Forces smashed their way through pirate defences and annexed most of their territory.

With the pirates eliminated as a cohesive force, the Empire had access to the world on which Grand Admiral Daemon's shuttle was found. A holocron piece was recovered, leading the Empire's leadership to try to recover the remaining pieces. However, the Force-user employed to recover the holocron pieces proved to be insane at the best of times, and eventually he stole the repaired flagship right out from the shipyard during the re-launching celebrations. Although he was stopped before he could get far, thanks to the foresight of Imperial Intelligence, he diverted key forces away from the front, and the rebellion captured most of the former pirate territory.

The Empire clearly needed to strike back... and they did. Battles with the rebels generally advanced the Imperial cause, and the final battle conducted over the very world that had started the campaign. The massive military action destroyed nearly all emplacements, forcing the rebels — the survivors — to retreat and cease their aggression against Imperial targets in the Outer Sectors.

Though there remained the occasional border skirmish or other incident, major combat in the Outer Sectors was over. At the conclusion of the Outer Sectors Campaign, it soon became clear what had happened to the Grand Admiral. Daemon's shuttle crash landed in a rocky, barren area. He was injured, suffering a broken forearm and wrist and a variety of cuts and bruises. His injuries were not his immediate concern, however. Surely the shuttle crash had attracted local attention, and he knew he did not have much time before the locals would come to investigate.

Leaving behind the remainder of the holocron and all but the most basic supplies, he fled from the crash site in haste. Before long, the expected local patrol came around, but they were sloppy and did not thoroughly investigate the area. They did an examination of the shuttle, and stole any supplies they thought to be of value. Concluding that any survivors would soon succumb to exposure to the elements, they shortly thereafter left.

After a short time, Grand Admiral Daemon managed to smuggle himself offworld amongst the cargo of a freighter, but he was beginning to feel mentally uneasy — withdrawal from the holocron's energies was beginning to manifest itself. Once offworld, he could not risk attracting attention to himself too soon, nor did he want to reveal to the Empire at large his struggle against the holocron's still-powerful effects on his mind. He then resolved to fall back to a safe place he had set aside as a contingency plan some years before.

With the intention of leading from his small hideaway until the sudden onslaughts of the symptoms receded, he "borrowed" a small vessel and set a course for the hideaway, and had his injuries tended to properly by the medical droid on hand. But before he could address the fleet and inform them of his being alive and well, withdrawal from the energies of the holocron finally caught up with him, all at once. The Grand Admiral collapsed to a catatonic state...

His body cared for by the medical droid, the Grand Admiral's mind slowly recovered over a period of some months, in a more rapid reversal of the symbiosis effect that had been so painstakingly built up over the preceding years. When at last Grand Admiral Daemon had awakened from his incapacitated state, much had transpired in his absence. With his long-term absence, he had been officially declared Missing In Action, and Vice Admiral Polanski, by Imperial Law laid down in the Imperial Charter, rose to the rank of Fleet Admiral and became the new leader of the Empire.

For a short time, from his hideaway, he followed the news of the Empire from afar, and contemplated his return. At last, he came to the conclusion that his part to play in the story of the Empire had perhaps run its course. And so the Grand Admiral took a few hours to get his things in order, and boarded his "borrowed" transportation once more. Not very long after his departure, Imperial troops located Grand Admiral Daemon's hideaway location, and recovered from it a box set aside for Fleet Admiral Polanski. In the box sat a listing of many Imperial records feared lost along with the Grand Admiral, and one datacard containing Daemon's final address to the Empire.

In his final address, the Grand Admiral declared his best analogy of the Empire Reborn was that of a child phoenix: risen from the ashes of the parent, a different phoenix in body, and the same reincarnated in spirit. He concluded that his faction, as it once stood, no longer existed; in the place of that Galactic Empire now stood the Empire Reborn: its evolution.

The former Grand Admiral went on to share some of his wisdom regarding command, give his congratulations and thanks to the officers leading the Empire in his absence, and to note his pride in Imperial forces. He left off with a final, cryptic, warning: another path has already been laid out for him. He would say nothing more about it at the time, except that there are many threats in the universe even greater than pirates and rebels.

However, not long after the conclusion of the campaign, Fleet Admiral Polanski elected to step down from leading the Empire, and focus on his research projects. In his place, he appointed Admiral Tiberius Fel as the next Supreme Commander.

Admiral Fel had already been awarded the Order of the Empire for his service in the Outer Sectors campaign, and Polanski felt certain that the Reborn Empire was in good hands. Thus, Fel received promotion to the rank of Fleet Admiral, and assumed the duties of the Supreme Commander.

With the Outer Sectors campaign a success, the Empire had truly completed its rebirth. The Reborn Empire, forged from the old and the new, stands stronger than ever before. And though it is now nearly ten years since the battle of Endor — the Empire will never surrender!

Without question, beyond the reaches of Imperial territory, more threats no doubt await the valiant officers of the Empire. The trial in the Outer Sectors was only the beginning...