


# Order 66: Star Wars Legends (Republic Commando): A Republic Commando Novel (Star Wars: Republic Commando Book 4)

*By Karen Traviss*

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After the fierce combat of Hard Contact, Triple Zero, and True Colors comes the spectacular culmination of New York Times bestselling author Karen Traviss's gripping Republic Commando series. As a battle-scarred era nears its end, a shattering power play is about to stun the entire galaxy . . . and set in motion events that will alter destinies and resound throughout history.

Even as the Clone Wars are about to reach an explosive climax, no one knows if victory will favor the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) or the Separatists. But no matter who wins, the stakes are highest for elite Special Ops clones like the Republic Commandos in Omega and Delta squads–and the notorious renegade Advance Recon Commando troopers known as Null ARCs.

With Republic forces stretched to the max and casualties mounting, the last thing these beleaguered warriors need to hear is that Chancellor Palpatine is keeping vast armies of secret clone troops in reserve. Sergeant Skirata, a mentor to the clone commandos, has no intention of standing idly by while Palpatine sends them into battle like lambs to the slaughter. Skirata begins to plan the clones' escape from the GAR, but his heroic effort will be in vain unless he can reverse the clones' accelerated aging process.

Caught in the treacherous dealings of their leaders, and locked in the battles of their lives, the disillusioned Null ARCs and Commandos nonetheless fight with everything they've got, determined to wrest victory from the Seps and save the galaxy.

But even the deadliest weapons may not be powerful enough to defeat the real menace. And nothing will stop the apocalyptic horror unleashed when Palpatine utters the chilling words The time has come. Execute Order 66. Translation: The Jedi have tried to stage a coup, and all must be shot on sight.

With their faith in the Republic and their loyalty to their Jedi allies put to the

ultimate test, how will the men of Omega and Delta squads react to the most infamous command in galactic history? All the breathtaking action, suspense, and intrigue of Karen Traviss's Republic Commando series comes alive in Star Wars: Order 66.

Features a bonus section following the novel that includes a primer on the *Star Wars* expanded universe, and over half a dozen excerpts from some of the most popular *Star Wars* books of the last thirty years!

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## Editorial Review

About the Author
Karen Traviss is the #1 New York Times bestselling author of three previous Star Wars: Republic Commando novels: Hard Contact, Triple Zero, and True Colors; three Star Wars: Legacy of the Force novels: Bloodlines, Revelation, and Sacrifice; as well as City of Pearl, Crossing the Line, The World Before, Matriarch, Ally, and Judge. A former defense correspondent and TV and newspaper journalist, Traviss has also worked as a police press officer, an advertising copywriter, and a journalism lecturer. Her short stories have appeared in Asimov's, Realms of Fantasy, On Spec, and Star Wars Insider. She lives in Devizes, England.

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Ba'jur bal beskar'gam,
Ara'nov, aliit,
Mando'a bal Mand'alor–
An vencuyan mhi.

*Education and armor,*
*Self-defense, our tribe,*
*Our language and our leader–*
*All help us survive.*
–Rhyme taught to Mandalorian children to help them learn the *Resol'nare*–the six tenets of *Mando* culture

Arca Barracks, Special Operations Brigade HQ, Coruscant,
736 days after the Battle of Geonosis–
second anniversary of the outbreak of war

Scorch raised his ri?e and sighted up on the two sergeants on the parade ground below the window.

The DC-17's upgraded optics were a de?nite improvement on the last version. The reticule settled on Kal Skirata within a narrow imaginary band level with his eyes and the indentation at the base of his skull; a perfect cranial vault shot, the ideal for instant incapacitation. Scorch could see the Mandalorian's mouth moving as he spoke to Walon Vau.

*Yeah, it's getting like downtown Keldabe around here. It's not as if I don't like the guy. But . . .*

Sergeant Vau–and he would *always* be Sergeant Vau, civilian or not–was the nearest Scorch had to a father. Vau and Skirata seemed to be deep in conversation, both talking at once while they stared down at the ferrocrete surface of the parade ground, no eye contact at all. It was a weird thing to be doing at daybreak.

"I thought you said you could lip-read," Sev said, munching on a handful of spiced warra nuts.

"I can, but he's not making sense."

“Maybe they’re talking *Mando’a*.”

“I can lip-read *Mando’a* just ?ne, *mir’sheb* . . .”

“You’d think they’d have the sense to wear their buckets and use the internal comlink.”

“Maybe it’s nothing con?dential.” Scorch could smell the pungent spice on the nuts from across the room. “Look, you know what happens when you stuff your face with those things. You get indigestion and wind. And I’m not going to put you over my shoulder and burp you.”

Sev belched. “You’ll miss me when I’m gone.”

“Make yourself useful and take a look, will you?”

Sev made a long, low rumbling noise at the back of his throat, ?nished the handful of nuts, and sighted up with his own Deece. He was a sniper. He spent even more time staring through optics than Scorch did.

“They’re reciting something,” he said at last, and leaned his Deece against the wall again to sit on his bunk and resume munching. “They’re both saying the same words.”

“Yeah? And?”

“Don’t know. Can’t make it out.”

For as long as Scorch could remember, Skirata and Vau had been at loggerheads about everything from tactics and how to motivate troops to the color of the mess walls, sometimes to the point of ?st?ghts. But the war seemed to have softened their outlook. There was no affection between them–not as far as Scorch could see–but something kept them together as brother warriors, tight and secret.

Neither of them needed to be here. Vau’s bank raid–and they didn’t talk about that, no sir–had probably netted millions. They were men with a mission, driven by something Scorch didn’t quite understand.

He cranked up the magni?cation. But it didn’t help. “Maybe they’re having a really boring conversation.”

“It’s *names*,” said Sev at last. “They’re reciting names.”

Scorch sighted up again, trans?xed. “How old is Skirata?”

“Sixty, sixty-one, something like that.”

“What’s that in clone years?”

“Dead.”

It was a sobering thought, and Scorch wondered why it hadn’t struck him that way before. He’d never worried about getting old. He never thought he’d survive, for all Delta Squad’s general bluster that the Separatist hadn’t been born who could kill them.

“You think the crazy old barve is going to ?nd his magic cure?” he asked.

Sev tossed a nut in the air and caught it in his mouth. “For what?”

“Our premature exit from this life. He is always talking about it.”

Sev rumbled again. “I still reckon he killed Ko Sai. And I still reckon he got her research, and that’s why he killed her, to shut her up. So yeah, I’d bet on him ?nding a way to stop us aging so fast.”

Scorch suspected that Vau was as deeply involved in the death of Kamino’s renegade cloner as Skirata; he was still ?ercely loyal to Vau, because the man was the reason Delta were all still alive today, one of a handful of squads that had survived intact since the Kamino days. Vau raised *survivors.* “You’re not going to mention that to Zey, are you, Sev?”

“Nah. I hate giving him sleepless nights.”

“But if Sergeant Kal’s got Ko Sai’s research, why hasn’t he started dishing out the cure? It’s been nearly six months since he gave you her head.”

“You make it sound like a birthday present,” Sev said. “Maybe he can’t make some of the formula work. Or he’s just milking the Republic for all he can get before he bangs out with his stash.”

“Kal wouldn’t leave without his precious Nulls.” Scorch turned to look at Sev and met a raised eyebrow. “Would he?”

“If they deserted, would you shoot them?” Sev asked.

Scorch shrugged, trying to look disinterested, but the idea of putting a round through a brother clone didn’t sit well with him. The Nulls were Skirata’s adopted sons, too, his precious little boys even if they were grown men–*big* men, dangerous men–and if any barve so much as looked at them the wrong way, Skirata would have his guts for garters.
*Even us.*

“We wouldn’t have to,” Scorch said. “You heard all about Palpatine’s death squad standing by if we step out of line.”
“Don’t avoid the question. *Would you shoot them if ordered?*”

“Depends,” Scorch said at last.

“Orders are orders.”

“Depends who’s giving them.”

“The longer this war goes on, the less I feel the Nulls are on the same side as us.”

Scorch knew what Sev meant, but he thought it was a harsh judgment all the same. He couldn’t imagine the Nulls siding with the Seps. They were crazy, unpredictable, even Skirata’s private army, but they weren’t traitors.

“Come on,” he said, grabbing his helmet and heading for the doors. “Let’s see what the old guys are up to. I can’t stand the suspense any longer.”

The parade ground was a platform edged with a low retaining wall and a border of manicured bushes, all trimmed to regulation height– there *was* such a thing, Scorch was certain–and it didn't see many parades. More often than not these days, it stood empty except for the occasional impromptu game of bolo-ball. The two veteran sergeants stood in the center of it with heads slightly bowed, oblivious of the commandos approaching.

But Skirata was never really oblivious of anything. Nor was Vau. They had eyes in their backsides, those two. Scorch still hadn't worked out how they'd managed to keep such a close eye on their respective training companies back in Tipoca City. To a young clone, they'd seemed like omniscient gods who could not be deceived, evaded, or outsmarted, and they still came pretty close now.

Scorch could hear the mumbling rumble of low voices. It had a sort of rhythm to it. Yes, they were reciting a list. Now that he could hear, he caught sounds he recognized.

*Names.*

They *were* reciting names.

Sev was the ?rst to hesitate. He caught Scorch's elbow. "I don't think we should interrupt them, *ner vod.*"

Skirata turned slowly, lips still moving, and then Vau looked up.

"You want to join in, *ad'ike*?" Vau said kindly, and he was not a kindly man. "Just commemorating brothers gone to the *manda.* You forgotten what day it is?"

Scorch had, although it should have been etched in his memory. Seven hundred and thirty-six days ago, all ten thousand Republic commandos had been deployed to Geonosis with the rest of the Grand Army at zero notice, a scramble to board ships that left no time for farewells to their training sergeants. Of the ten thousand men who shipped out, only ?ve thousand had come back.

Scorch felt like a fool. He knew what the two sergeants were doing now, and why: they were reciting the names of fallen clone commandos. It was a Mandalorian custom to honor dead loved ones and comrades by repeating their names daily. He wondered if they went through all those thousands every single day.

"You didn't memorize every name, did you, Sarge?" Sev asked.

"We remember every lad we trained, and we always will," Skirata said quietly, but Scorch saw that he kept glancing down at a datapad clutched in his hand. Five thousand names–plus those killed after the Battle of Geonosis–was an impossible feat of memory even for Skirata's devotion. "The rest ...we only need a little prompting."

Scorch couldn't now name half the squads in his bat...

## Users Review

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**Carrie Wakefield:**

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