

*A Rebirth Project...*

# Alacrity of the Commander

*An extensive guide to the operative specifics of command...*

“Writing Unit Reports”

Serve the Brotherhood —

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# “Writing Unit Reports”

## 1—INTRODUCTION

Report writing is one of the most basic and essential leadership skills, the cornerstone of a solid communication strategy. They are public mile markers for your unit that show your unit’s current activity and provide a basis upon which progress can be measured – they are a historical record of events that have occurred. Finally, unit reports are tools that can be used to track your own progress as a leader.

Definitely, skill in report writing can improve your unit; each report is another chance to influence and engender esprit de corps in your unit. The more effort you put into your report, the more of an impact your report will have. Just because reports are required does not mean they have to be tiresome chores on your to-do list.

Though reports are crucial and vital for all leadership positions throughout the Brotherhood, usually the first position in which substantive reports are required on a regular basis is Quaestor; thus, this document will focus primarily on House reports.

## 2—THE BENEFITS OF WRITING REPORTS

Besides being a public way of showing that you are, in fact, doing your job as Quaestor, writing reports have several other benefits. Foremost, reports engender communication within your unit – people will discuss your report in a variety of ways, from congratulating newly-promoted members, to providing feedback on new project ideas, to continuing the fictional role play section. Reports can spark communication within your House, even when it seems as though everyone is AWOL. Often, reports are the only official communication you will have with your House, so make the opportunity count. Note that some people only read and acknowledge official communiqués – accordingly, it is crucial that you write regular reports.

You can also use reports to drum up activity within your House: communication begets activity, and reports are a form of communication, thus reports beget activity. A good House report has at least one section that details the many and varied competitions open to House members, and some say who has participated in those various competitions. From subtle hints to blaring reminders, reports are a great way to get your members active again.

Reports are also excellent at capturing a snapshot of your House; you can use this snapshot to track your members’ and your own progress over time by comparing other reports. Old reports can show when your House is most active and which types of activities are favored, enabling you to plan the appropriate activities during the most opportune times. You can also use the snapshot as an archive. People enjoy doing historical research—formally or not—and reports facilitate such endeavors. Who was the Rollmaster on April 7<sup>th</sup> of last year? When did Protector 7b00n get Guardian? Old reports can answer these questions. Each individual report may not contribute much, but taken as a set, your reports will greatly help your House’s history and allow for easy progress tracking.

The fact that reports publicly show that you are doing your job should not be overlooked. Both your superiors and subordinates like seeing evidence that you are working for the House – do not discount this. Even if you spend hours chatting on IRC everyday or spam your House’s mailing list, some people prefer to see some sort of formal verification of your efforts. Besides, you do all the hard work of tracking your House’s activity, so why not show it off?

## 3—WHAT COMPRISES A REPORT?

The specific sections within reports vary with the people that write them, but there are essentially three main parts to each report, the introduction, the lists, and the closing. The introduction sets up the report, illuminates salient items of the report, and explains why those items are important. This section is usually written in prose (i.e. sentences and paragraphs). The lists are just that: lists of who got what, what happened, etc: the statistics of the report. Often these things are bulleted lists, but you can write this section out as prose. The closing

summarizes the report and reiterates any important points that were mentioned.

Your superior will determine how you write your reports to a certain extent. Some superiors may want a very detailed and lengthy report, some may want sections unique to your unit, and some may only want brief reports. Before you begin writing your first report, check with your superior regarding what s/he expects in your reports. It is also a good practice to examine the reports of your superiors, your predecessors and your peers to see how theirs are written.

You and your summit partner may – should – divide the labor. Dividing labor is not only a good leadership skill (also known as delegation) in general (see the Alacrity document on working with your summit partner); it has definitely advantages when it comes to reports. For example, an Aedile might be asked to report on the ‘mundane’ items – the lists of activities, awards, roster changes, and competitions – while the Quaestor reports on the ‘flashier’ sections. Another division of labor could be the timing of reports: the Aedile may be asked to report weekly while the Quaestor reports bi-weekly; again, communicate with your summit partner before you begin writing. Dividing the report writing tasks and times defines roles for each summit member, saves time, gives each other a chance to proofread each other’s work (if the Aedile missed something, the Quaestor can note it in his report, and vice versa), and allows both summit members to connect with the House in their own way.

#### 4—BEFORE YOU WRITE

First and foremost, take your time writing your reports, regardless of the unit scale that it is for. Not to say good reports require hours of research and writing, but bad reports are often caused by hurried and uninformed authors. Report writing is just that – writing, and writing is a process that takes time and concentrated effort. Set aside a block of time each week (or every other week or each month, whenever your reports are due), focus, organize yourself, and write. When done, double-check for inaccuracies, omitted parts, and spelling. Revise. Send. For non-writers, this may seem like a lot of work, but it truly is not and it will measurably improve your reports.

Many people dislike report writing because they must dredge through dozens of emails each time they sit down to write a report; thus they spend hours writing each report. If you are organized, you can whip off a solid report in very little time, and you will avoid the dreaded “You didn’t list my medal/promotion/competition!” reply. Activity tracking is perhaps the essence of being a leader, a leader’s *raison d’être*. Read the Alacrity document on activity tracking and member evaluations for an in-depth look at that essential process. For the purposes of this Alacrity document, we will discuss the topic briefly. Report writing compliments activity tracking: you track your House’s work in private, and then announce the relevant information in public. Not all tracked activity should be publicly announced, though. Here’s a sample list of tracked activity and when to include it in your reports:

- Always include any automatically generated emails from the DJB website (promos, medals, transfers, etc). Not only do people love being recognized, but others like knowing who the bar tab belongs to.
- Always mention competition participation: listing participants is great way to subtly encourage others to participate and advertise the competition.
- Include work on various House and Clan projects if the project pertains to the House and/or Clan. Again, this is a subtle way to encourage other people to participate and advertise. However, some projects do not need mentioning, such as a person’s progress towards DJK.
- You may want to include notes on communication (IRC, AIM, email, etc); some people include this, and some do not.

#### 5—FORMAT OF THE REPORT

Reports can come in a variety of formats that can require little or more time to prepare than just regular text. Classy CSS-based or plain text, HTML or non-HTML, Word or Notepad, embedded graphics or ASCII drawings, you can reveal your artistic side (or lack thereof) via the style of your report. The content of your report is what matters most, but a pretty container never hurts. Avoid spending too much time on beautifying your report.

Pick a style and stick with it. You can experiment a few times, but ultimately, consistency is nice.

## 6—SECTIONS OF A REPORT

You do not need to entitle each section as they are below or at all; these titles are strictly to illustrate the content of each section. Also, this is not a comprehensive list of all possible sections within a report – as mentioned above; your reports may contain more or fewer sections.

- **Introduction**
  - Address
  - Role Play
  - Introduction
  
- **Lists**
  - News
  - Activities
  - Awards/Honors
  - Roster Changes
  - Competitions/Battles
  - Roster
  
- **Closing**
  - Keynote
  - Links and Attachments

### **Report Header**

Reports are similar to letters in that they are documents from someone to someone, usually from you to your unit and your superiors. As such, your report should begin with an address. At its most basic, an address for your report should contain your name and the date of your report; feel free to embellish as much or as little as you wish.

### **Role Play**

Role-playing gives your unit soul – a personality, something that draws people in and keeps people coming back. Even a few sentences in a weekly report can greatly affect your members' morale and esprit de corps. During a DJB-wide competition, for example, the role-play section can help put your unit deeper into the storyline of the competition. Some consider this section optional, but even a paragraph of story makes the entire report more readable and enjoyable. The more engaged your members are, the more likely they are to retain the information contained in your report. Obviously, you should write this section in your DJB character (if you do not have a fully-formed character, these sections can help you form one). The one caveat is to ensure that the role-play directly involves your unit and not just yourself.

### **Introduction**

Unlike the role-play section, the introduction is an out-of-character introduction to your report. You can foreshadow the rest of your report ("Quite a lot emails from the Headmaster this week..."), or take the opportunity to discuss – positively or negatively – happenings in your unit since your last report, or talk about your real life if applicable (e.g. You will have or have had much less time for your duties), or whatever; this section is very open. Whereas the role-play section can be difficult, the introduction is very easy because it is natural: one does not simply jump headlong into a long-winded, statistics-filled report without some sort of introduction. Keep the introduction short and succinct. Engage people and get them in the mindset you want them to be in with the introduction; do not bore them before the lists begin. Remember, most people do not read past the introduction, so get your point across quickly and say the most important thing first.

### **News**

The most important part of this section is the news of your unit. Although the news of the groups hierarchically above yours (your House, Clan, and the Brotherhood depending on your unit) can be included, the most

important news is obviously your unit's. Discuss the main activities, competitions, and awards. Embellish each news item a little; if the news item is worthy enough to be spotlighted, then you should explain it a little bit. Some prefer bulleted news items, some like prose. Choice is yours. Do not, however, simply cut and paste the news from the Brotherhood site onto your report. This section should be used to explain how news pertains to your unit; members can read the main page on their own.

### **Projects and Other Activities**

The lists begin. The activities section should list your unit's non-competition projects such as website redesigns, unit possession list, run-ons, and intra-unit improvement courses. In addition to naming each activity, be sure to denote each activity's duration, website (if applicable), and a summary of the details. Also, this is a great place to brainstorm: ask for new project ideas, discuss the details of upcoming projects, gather feedback on what the House is interested in doing, etc.

### **Awards/Honors**

Very simple: list your members' medals, promotions, and Shadow Academy courses passed. Awarding dates and reasons are optional. People love seeing their names in reports – it makes them feel special and personalizes the report for them.

### **Roster Changes**

Again, a simple list: all changes to (i.e. transfers to and from) your unit's roster; again, people love seeing their names in reports. This is another chance to feed their need.

### **Competitions/Battles**

Another easy section: list all competitions relevant to your unit as well as any multiplayer battles your members participated in. Obviously, any competition you or your Clan and/or House summits are running should be noted. Competitions open to your members (such as Order- or DJB-wide competitions) can be listed though a link to the Competitions Center. Because there might be more than a dozen competitions open to your members at any given time, a link to the Competitions Center is often more useful than listing each and every one (besides, you might miss a relevant competition).

### **Roster**

Not entirely necessary as the roster is on the database, but sometimes it is good to remind people who their teammates are. A link at the end of the report also works. Including a roster is also good for historical purposes as the database is dynamic and constantly updated; sometimes people will want a static roster when doing research.

### **Keynote**

Like the address, this section is fairly open. From foreshadowing upcoming projects and competitions to encouraging activity in current activities to working on morale to a summary of the important points in the report, this section is very open to interpretation. Take-away message(s) from each report can also be useful, especially when you want to stress something. "Remember to submit to the GJW!" or "Drinks are on DJK Xy!"

### **Links and Attachments**

Many reports end with a list of links to the unit's website, the Clan's website, various DJB websites – all those are great to link to. You might consider listing all the links you named in your report, too, and be sure to attach any documents you said were attached. We have all sent emails lacking the promised attachment and received several "Where's the file?" replies. This gets very tiresome for both sender and receiver, so double-check before hitting 'send'.

## **7—POSTING REPORTS**

Once your report is complete, proofread it for obvious errors. Once you are satisfied with it, you should post your report to DJB.com. Login to the website and upload your report via the Report Administration function; once uploaded, email your report to your House's mailing list or directly to your constituents. Depending on

your Clan's and House's policy, you can also upload your report to your Clan's and/or House's website(s) and/or message board. Posting your report in multiple places ensures that the maximum number of people will see it, and, should one site or your email fails – you will have access to it on another.

To post your reports to the DJB website:

1. Login
2. Go to the Administration Menu
3. Click 'Report Administration'
4. Click 'Add New'
5. Enter the appropriate date. You can add old reports, which simply need the originally released date.
6. Choose the appropriate format
  - a. Pure HTML: tables, divs, tags, etc. Return carriage will NOT add a carriage return; use <br> instead.
  - b. Some HTML: bold, italic, and underline tags only. Return carriage will add a carriage return.
7. Enter your report. Copy and paste works quite well. You can write your report here, but it is easier to write your report elsewhere (email, word processing program) then copy+paste it.
8. Enter your password. This ensures that you will not lose your work because your previous login to the website timed out.
9. Click 'Submit'
10. View your report on the website to ensure it is formatted as you wanted and that you included your entire report.

You can edit your reports later (e.g. if you notice the formatting is incorrect). Simply follow steps 1-3, then click 'Edit Report'. Edit your report, click 'Submit', check report, and repeat as necessary.

## 8—IMPROVING YOUR REPORTS

Embellishing your reports takes little time, but can have a dramatic affect on how your reports are received. Spotlighting major accomplishments by individual members and/or remarking on how well (or poorly) your members have done recently, maintaining continuity in your role play segments (or even having guest role play section writers), adding graphics and/or following an attractive style, bolding important topics (such as "The **GJW** is on!"), HTMLizing your reports, quotes of the week, trivia contests; these are but a few of the ways you can make your reports more engaging and enjoyable for your members.

As with any other writing activity, review your old reports to see what you can improve upon. Was it too long? Short? Was the tone of your address to your House appropriate? The better your review, the better your report will be.

Some people prefer to list individuals and what each has done ("GRD Jester: [list of activities]") instead of listing topics and who falls into them ("Medals: [list of people]"). This format works well for small units such as Battleteams as these reports have a slightly more intimate feel to them, quite appropriate for small units. Also, reports written in this style for larger units become verbosely lengthy.

## 9—PITFALLS/PROBLEMS

The most common problem by far with a report is incorrect and/or missing information. Such errors indicate sloppiness on your part, and make you look inept, ruin your report, and turn people off from you and your House. Even small errors such as giving someone the wrong rank can severely detract from your report. Remember, reports are written documents, and, like all written documents, require a pre-release proofread.

Length can be troublesome as well – too short, and you probably have omitted a lot of information – too long, and people stop reading and you stop writing them; nobody wants to write or read a three-hour report. Say what needs to be said, list what needs to be listed, and nothing more or less. Again, a good proofread helps: on your proofread, if you feel like something is missing or you cannot finish the report without a nap, you should rewrite your report.

Email your reports to the appropriate members – omitting superiors from your report email list is a major faux pas as is email the entire Clan your Battleteam report (unless, of course, it is Clan policy to do so).

Remember, reports should never be the only communication you have with your members. You should always be in constant communication with your House; reports are a formal means of communication, but not the only means.

## 10—OTHER TYPES OF REPORTS

Each position requires slightly different reports. Clan summit reports often resemble speeches as they omit much of the listing of the individual awards (except promotions and major merit medals). Certainly, House reports contain addresses to the House, but the bulk of a Clan summit report is an address to the Clan stating the direction of the Clan. Battleteam leader reports tend to be shorter; fewer members mean less to report and discuss. Rollmaster reports vary greatly, dependent upon what tasks the House summit asks of the Rollmaster.

Dark Summit and Envoy reports are much like project progress reports in which the Summit member describes the various projects he has completed and is currently working on. As stated above, discuss with your superior(s) what you need to include in your reports.

Internal reports and assessments are addressed in other Alacrity documents: they are private reports to be sent only to your superiors.

## 11—CONCLUSION

Even though you write reports for your constituents and superiors, you still reap a huge benefit from them. Reports are an archive of your House's activity and progress, and show everyone that you are doing your job as a leader. Thus, you might as well write them well and to the best of your ability. With a little time, energy, and effort, people might begin to look forward to your reports, yourself included.

## 12—EXAMPLE REPORT

**Quaestor Report**  
House Turbo of Clan Speedy  
Sith Battlemaster Salmon Eater  
2 December 2010

House membership: 22, down 3 from last week  
"Light has a speed limit. Darkness does not."

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Quaestor Salmon Eater strolled the halls of the VSD *Denied*, his Aedile, Obelisk Prelate Florence, at his side. They tensely argued on the finer points of the ship's cuisine. Their tempers, usually slow to heat up, were near boiling as they had been arguing the topic for days.

"The food sucks, you're a hungry bantha if you don't find the food objectionable," the Battlemaster said.

"Please," Florence rolled his eyes. "You only like seafood. Do you see an ocean around here?"

"Consul Bart denied my fish tank request for no reason!"

"He denied it because it would have cost fifty thousand credits and taken over two supply rooms."

Salmon Eater shrugged. "All great improvements require sacrifici—" His comlink interrupted the debate. He pulled it out and read the message. Nodding to his Aedile, he raced to the briefing room while the Prelate informed the House of their new mission.

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### **Intro:**

That's right, folks, it's battle time! Consul Bartholomew J. Simpson has released the details of the Clan Feud, and we're up first. We're facing House Coma of Clan Tos'e. Five events: a story, a poem, JA and JO ladders, and a three-mission XWA battle. All we need is to score a point for our Clan is to win three events. We push hard these next two weeks, then we get a break as our brothers and sisters in House Nitro go, then we all push for another week. Easy! We can do this!

### **News:**

- Clan Feud!
- The recent AWOL check is complete. Only lost two people, quite amazing for a House our size.
- Herald Robobot IV was promoted to DJM. Our former PCON has finally grown up!
- The DGM announced the next Vendetta will start in early February. Oh boy! Another chance to prove the greatness of Clan Speedy! First place once, first place forever!
- We lost last week's ICTE quite badly due to low participation. I know we've got some MP'ers in here, so go strut your stuff!
- Did I mention the Clan Feud?

### **Activities:**

- GRD Gud B'oi is working on a redesign of our website. If you want to help, email him at [gud.boi@gmail.com](mailto:gud.boi@gmail.com).
- Aedile Florence and Rollmaster Lister have finished the first draft of the House's history. We should see the fruits of their labors quite soon! Excitement!
- Aedile Florence has also created a House teamspeak server. Awesomeness!

### **Promotions:**

- ! NOV Wrekkage to ACO!
- ! ACO Wrekkage to PRT! Two promos in a week! Great job! And she's very close to another promo ☐
- ! KP Zarmn to KAP! I guess all those hours as P:HRLD have finally paid off! Excellent work, Z-man!

### **Medals:**

- ! Wrekkage = DC, CFx2
- ! Florence = CFx1, DSS - Great Dark Voice article! Go read it, people!
- ! Gud B'oi = CFx2, LSS, Cr-T
- ! Salmon Eater = CFx1
- ! Man Manly = CFx12, Cr-D - Our resident JA/JO expert strikes again!

### **Shadow Academy courses passed:**

- ! Wrekkage: Test of Lore, Test of Agility, Leadership Studies, IRC Basics, Sith Core, Sith Flight Studies I: ISET, Sith Flight Studies II: ESET, Sith Tactics - Wow! That's more in one week than I have passed in two years!
- ! Man Manly: Test of Lore
- ! Zarmn: MSN Messenger

### Transfers In:

- Wrekkage (from SA) – Welcome! I'd say 'make yourself at home', but you already have!
- C'll P't (to rogues) – Get well soon, buddy.
- Doop (to Taldryan) – Grr...
- Qwerty (to rogues) – AWOL
- BASF (to rogues) - AWOL

### Order Switches:

None

### Competitions:

- **Clan Feud!** Go to <http://speedy.darkjedibrotherhood.com/feud/index.html> for all the relevant information. Go now!
- Battleteam Quickening is running a **motto comp**. Open to all Turbonians. Ends on the 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Big **ACC competition** sign-ups are open until the 31<sup>st</sup>. The ACC isn't my cup of tea, but even I might deign to compete...
- **Clan Feud!**
- Just two days until my "**Build me a lightsaber**" comp ends. Seven submissions received, but don't let that stop you!
- Did I mention the **Clan Feud**?

### Summation:

I don't think I mentioned it, but there's a CLAN FEUD happening right now! Hop to it, everyone! I've kept this report short so you can spend more time feuding than reading. Submit now!

For the Glory of House Turbo,  
Sith Battlemaster Salmon Eater

### House Turbo Roster

QUASBM Salmon Eater (#1010)  
AED OP Florence (#1011)  
RM OE Lister (#1012)  
Stick Shift BTL DJK Man Manly (#1013)  
Hemi BTL JH Thrawn's Spawn (#1014)  
DA Bomb Speed (#1015)  
SWL Xe Tress (#1016)  
OPM Marmalade Speed (#1017)  
KAP Zarmn (#1018)  
OE Vegemite Speed (#1019)  
SW Cotelin Tress (#1020)  
DJK Ti Tress (#1021)  
DJK Harmful (#1022)  
JH Wii (#1023)  
GRD Gud Bo'I (#1024)  
PRT Wrekkage (#1025)  
PRT Hopediesnow (#1026)  
PRT Triestohard (#1027)  
ACO Luke (#1028)  
ACO Mark (#1029)  
ACO Matthew (#1030)  
NOV Stil (#1031)  
NOV Leren (#1032)

House Turbo website: <http://turbo.darkjedibrotherhood.com>

Clan Speedy website: <http://speedy.darkjedibrotherhood.com>  
Clan Feud website: <http://speedy.darkjedibrotherhood.com/feud/index.html>  
Dark Jedi Brotherhood News: <http://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/dbjedi/news.asp>  
Competitions Center: <http://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/dbjedi/competitions.asp>

## 12—EXAMPLE REPORTS FROM THE BROTHERHOOD WEBSITE

### DARK COUNCIL

GM Report: <http://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/dbjedi/viewreport.asp?ID=8468>

CM Report: <http://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/dbjedi/viewreport.asp?ID=9161>

### CONSUL

Taldryan: <http://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/dbjedi/viewreport.asp?ID=9049>

Naga Sadow: <http://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/dbjedi/viewreport.asp?ID=5075>

### PROCONSUL

Plagueis: <http://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/dbjedi/viewreport.asp?ID=9123>

### QUAESTOR

Ludo Kressh:

<http://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/dbjedi/viewreport.asp?ID=9199>

### AEDILE

Oriens Obscurum:

<http://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/dbjedi/viewreport.asp?ID=9035>

### BATTLETEAM LEADER

Drynwyn's Flame:

<http://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/dbjedi/viewreport.asp?ID=9067>