WING COMMANDER IV
THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

ORIGIN

ORIGIN'S OFFICIAL GUIDE TO

WING COMMANDER IV
THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

BY
MELISSA
TYLER

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Who says the war is over? Dark ships shimmer into existence off the bow of a lumbering convoy. Within moments the fighter escort is destroyed.

The unthinkable happens next. One of the attacking fighters releases a mysterious device which destroys the civilian transport. There are no survivors.
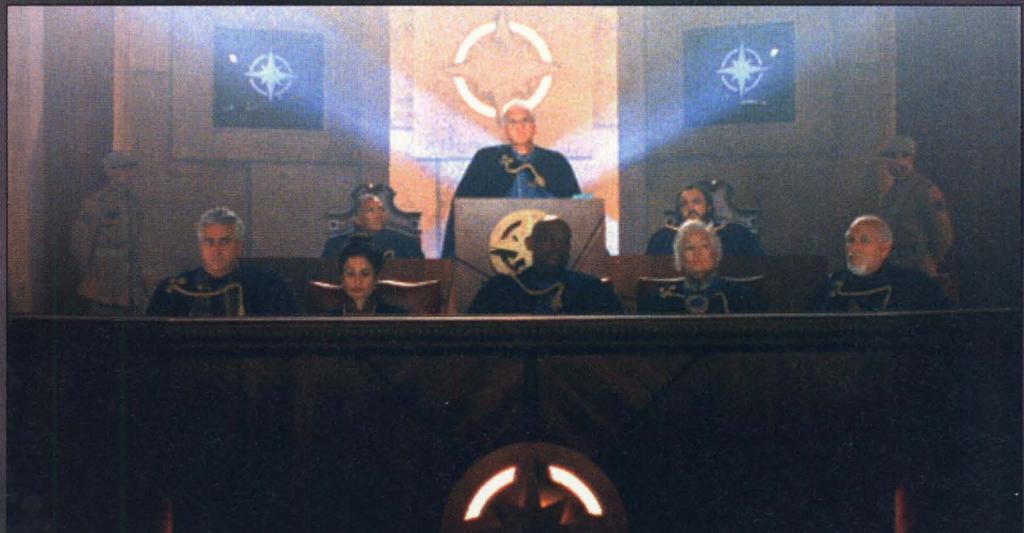
Our old friend Tolwyn has done well for himself. As the Commander of the Strategic Readiness Agency, he voices concern about the Border Worlds to the Assembly.

Veterans left with no civilian skills barter away their self-respect and ideals for low-grade alcohol. There is little Blair can do.

Blair decides to break into the fight — *after all, it is that or listen to Maniac carry on about Blair's farm. He finds the cold-eyed man doesn't care whom he cuts.*

Maniac loves annoying people. *Telling Blair that he's being pulled back into active duty makes the major's day. He doesn't notice that Blair looks pleased.*

Admiral Tolwyn shows off his new toys. He claims the supercarrier would have put the fear of God into the Kilrathi— and implies it will do the same to the Border Worlds.

Eisen and Blair served together during the final, all-or-nothing months of the war. Blair knows Eisen well enough to see the hint of trouble behind his captain's eyes.

Vagabond hasn't changed at all from his tour of duty on the Victory. Same knowing smile, same mysterious attitude, and most of all, the same fast hand at cards.

Catscratch is thrilled to serve with Blair; he's heard about the Colonel's exploits and adventures. The kid's open admiration of Blair gives Maniac a headache.

Vagabond disagrees with Maniac. *The Border Worlds don't have the technology for such bold attacks on Confed ships — they're just handy scapegoats.*
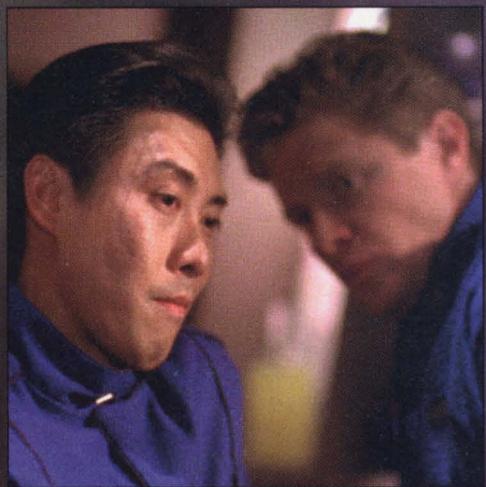
Captain Hugh Paulsen strides aboard, *carrying secret orders and an arrogant attitude. It's a sign of changing times.*

There's a new woman — a scientist — on board. *Maniac makes plans to "bone up on the periodic tables." Blair and Vagabond don't see the elements coming together that way.*

Tolwyn smiles like a shark as he responds to the Border Worlds' announcement of independence. He declares all non-Confederation ships to be under suspicion of piracy.

Paulsen's "secret orders" are that Eisen be transferred from the Lexington. *Eisen takes the news surprisingly well. He looks forward, he says, to new challenges.*

Driven to impromptu reconnaissance, Blair sees the cold-eyed bar-fighter come on board, exuding an air of authority that makes him seem twice as dangerous.

The line has been drawn between loyalty and duty. Blair and Vagabond must decide whether to join Eisen and help him escape, or shoot him down as a spy.

Eisen, Blair and the other new arrivals *get scant attention as Hawk and Panther direct their crew in recovering from a Confederation attack. Fires still burn on the ship.*

First Lieutenant Velina Sosa *brings admirable abilities to the Border Worlds forces: a sharp mind and unparalleled aptitude as a code-breaker.*
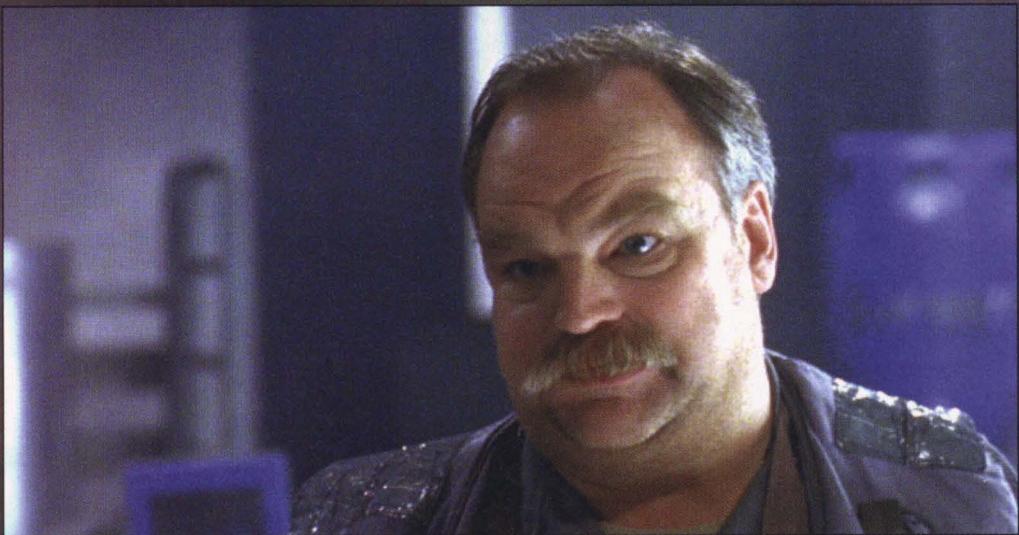
Grizzled Chief Tech "Pliers" works miracles *on the* Intrepid's *flight deck. If he likes you, he'll help you any way he can. If he doesn't, he'll spit on your shoes.*

Sosa is the best decryptor around; *even with paper and pencil she can confirm what Blair already suspects. The Confederation is as twisty as a barrel of snakes.*

Hawk and Panther don't do well sharing control, Blair notes. Observing the breakdown of command, he suggests the obvious: Eisen should captain the Intrepid.

The Chief Tech is as happy as a kid in a candy store. Blair wonders if he should tell Pliers to ask for authorization before he strips a working ship for parts.

Catscratch and Vagabond are both miserably uncertain about their present career paths. Blair advises them to stick with someone they trust ... someone like Eisen.

Seether, the knife-fighter, is annoyed. Paulsen has clearly failed to be useful in any way at all. Seether takes Paulsen's "reassignment" into his own hands.

Sosa can spot a data hole from a parsec away.
Eighteen hours are missing in the communications record
— Eisen hopes a nearby comm station can bridge the gap.

Panther looks around her shattered ship and wonders
if the war will ever end. She's a pilot and a fighter, but she
hates the killing.

It's not a hollow missile, it's a "Manned Insertion Pod." With luck, it escapes observation long enough to deposit passengers into hostile environments.

It's the end of an era. Vagabond has lost at cards, to Maniac. Blair knows Vagabond never cheated in a game of chance, but never figured that he would ever lose, either.

Hawk and Blair share similar military pasts. *When the war ended, Blair tried his hand at peace. Hawk drifted, lost without an enemy to fight.*
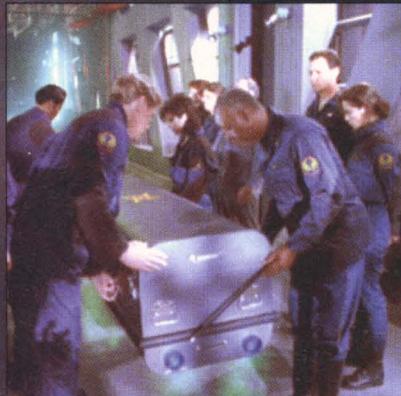
Who can tell? *Did the losing hand at cards indicate that Vagabond's luck had run out, or did he simply not have anything left to live for after having lost to Maniac?*

Saying goodbye to a friend is hardest when there are so few left remaining. Lieutenant Winston Chang's spirit is among the stars.

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Blair's defection to the Border Worlds shocks Paladin deeply. *"The lad" has never been one to act without thought.*

Sosa studies the recently captured information. *It gives her something to do while the rest of the ship waits to see if the Assembly is going to vote for war.*

Hawk recognizes the flying style of a rookie he once knew — "Seether" was his callsign. It's odd, he points out, that Seether was absorbed into Confed Intelligence.

Catscratch isn't sure he signed up for "Catwalking" duty. Escorting the Kilrathi settlers seems insulting to all the people the Kilrathi killed. Panther, on the other hand, is pleased by the gesture of peace.

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Blair squeezes the kitty for all he's worth. *He knows that Melek's people could teach Pliers a thing or two about how to build a better cloaking device.*

Eisen decides to fight politicians with politicians, *and heads out to speak with "friends in high places." Meanwhile, Blair is assigned as acting captain.*

When Blair stops by to tease Sosa and Catscratch
about their new romance, Sosa asks if he's seen the new
"house guest" in the hold. Blair decides to check it out.

The basement's infested with marines.
Both Lieutenant "Gash" Dekker and Blair realize the
Confederation aggression is going to be more than
just a slapping-match.

THE STORY

Funny who you run into in space. *The vet Blair spoke to in the bar has been captured, and has information on the new Confederation jamming technology.*

Maniac hates surprises, *and he's clearly been shaken by something he's seen. A fleet-officer's shuttle has been captured by the* Intrepid, *and Maniac is definitely troubled by its contents.*

Blair explains to the admiral that he didn't "defect" since the Border Worlds aren't the enemy. Tolwyn agrees that Confed forces might be behind the trouble.

Tolwyn says he suspects there is still an active "Black Ops" program left over from the Kilrathi War. Blair must decide to trust Tolwyn or hold him prisoner indefinitely.

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Command choices are difficult. Blair decides whether to send his forces to aid civilians beset by Confed forces or on a much needed shipyard smash-and-grab.

After a few stories about how "soft" marines are compared to seasoned pilots, Dekker can't stand any more friendly overtures. Knowing Maniac, Blair isn't surprised.

Once again, the "mark of Maniac" is emblazoned on another outraged face. Panther complains to Blair about the glandular flyboy's attentions.

Catscratch has found a new hero. Maniac seems everything that a derring-do pilot should be — adventurous, spirited and cocky. And unusually lucky, adds Blair.
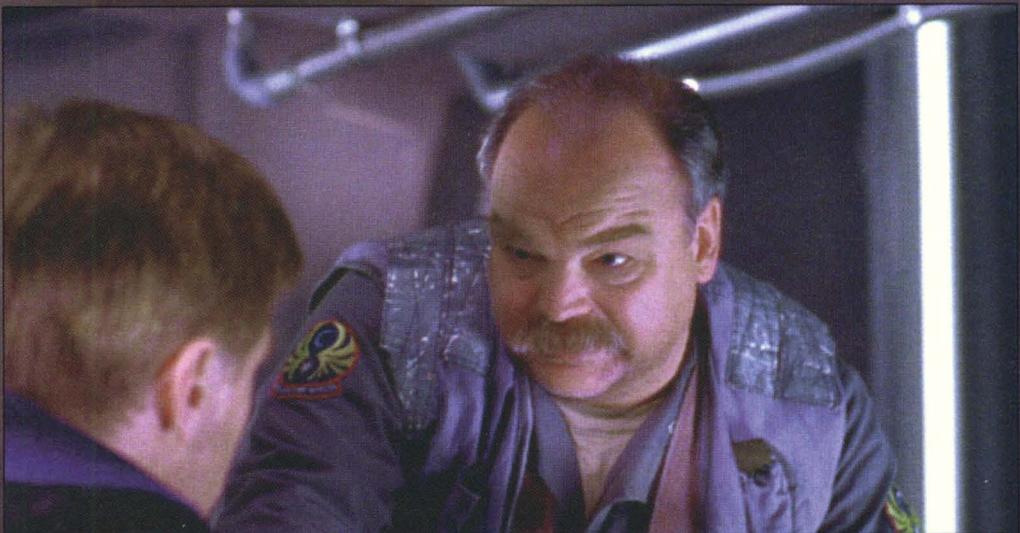
Pliers has improved his cloaking device — now it can run for a much longer time. Unfortunately, the invisible pilot will have no wingman for backup.
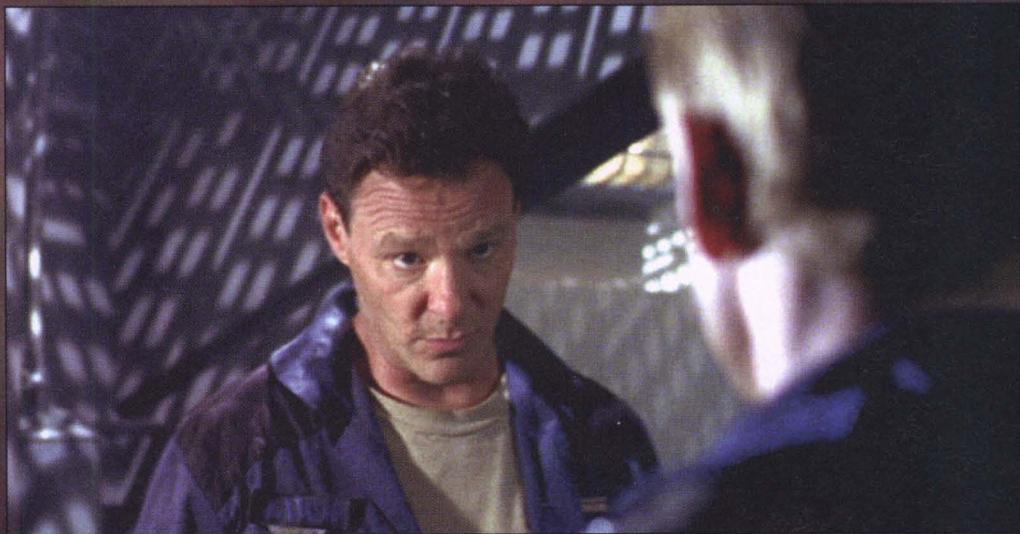
Maniac's charm is making the natives restless, to say the least. Hawk gives Blair an ultimatum: put Maniac in his place, or let Hawk take care of the problem.

While Blair is putting the final pieces of the Black Lance puzzle together, **Pliers uses his own methods** to investigate the Flash-pak and Black Lance ships.

The Telamon distress call is broken and disrupted, but the words "otherwise our world is doomed" are clear enough. Blair heads the Intrepid toward the helpless planet.

Bombs carrying bioweapons have killed nearly all the people on Telamon. Inexplicably, those who survived the attack sustained no damage at all.

Sosa lights a candle for the Telamon victims. It was a ruthless atrocity. The victims were marked for death by "unacceptable" genetic code.

Admiral Wilford believes Axius, a desolate and un-populated stellar system, is an ideal place to grow an army.

It bears investigation; Blair decides to check Axius out personally.

As predicted, there is a starbase within the Axius system. Blair slips in, and witnesses Seether give a peptalk to a corps of Black Lancers. Seether introduces their leader ... Admiral Tolwyn. The admiral radiates pride of his achievements. He congratulates them on being the strongest, the best, the "first line of defense" for humanity.

The true enemy, Tolwyn proclaims, is the element of weakness nurtured within the human race itself. It is time to eradicate the unworthy.

Seether spots Blair in the crowd.

Blair has nearly escaped to his ship when he's stopped by the bioconvergence chemist from Tyr 7. Before she dies, Dr. Brody gives him an info chip.

Hawk, Blair and Panther consider their options. They might be able to catch Tolwyn — but they have to decide whether to Flash-pak a Confed superbase. It would save valuable time, but at the cost of civilian lives.

Blair is close on Tolwyn's heels. *Instead of running, Tolwyn orders the* Vesuvius *to attack. Suddenly a new cap ship arrives and fires on the* Vesuvius! *Tolwyn turns to escape through the jump point.*

Blair is the only witness *that can tell the Assembly about Tolwyn's insane scheme ... and that they've all been led like sheep. He takes a ship and heads for Earth.*

Blair reaches the Assembly Hall as Tolwyn is wrapping up his speech. Declaration of war is postponed as Blair and Tolwyn spar.

Blair knows the way Tolwyn's madness works.
He goads the admiral until Tolwyn begins to declare his true beliefs. The Assembly finally understands what's happened.

All appeals are rejected.

Blair continues to do what he does best — *fully aware of the profound price of freedom.*

ARROW

PIRATE LIGHT FIGHTER (CONFEDERATION)

CLASS
Light Fighter

MANUFACTURER
Douglas Aerospace
(stolen)

LENGTH
20 meters

MASS
13 metric tonnes

MAX. VELOCITY
520 k/s

MAX. AFTERBURNER VELOCITY
1400 k/s

MAX. AFTERBURNER ACCELERATION
1000 k/s^2

MAX. YAW
80 deg/s

MAX. PITCH
90 deg/s

MAX. ROLL
90 deg/s

SHIELDS
200 cm equiv.

ARMOR
Fore/Aft: 80 cm
Right/Left: 60 cm

WEAPONS
Lasers (2)
Ion Guns (2)

MISSILE HARDPOINTS
(2x2 Light)
2DF/2HS

MISSILE DECOYS
16

JUMP CAPABLE
No

AVENGER

BORDER WORLDS TORPEDO BOMBER

CLASS
Torpedo Bomber

MANUFACTURER
Psaab Engineering

LENGTH
33 meters

MASS
21 metric tonnes

MAX. VELOCITY
350 k/s

MAX. AFTERBURNER VELOCITY
750 k/s

MAX. AFTERBURNER ACCELERATION
550 k/s²

MAX. YAW
35 deg/s

MAX. PITCH
50 deg/s

MAX. ROLL
35 deg/s

SHIELDS
400 cm equiv.

ARMOR
Fore/Aft: 250 cm
Right/Left: 250 cm

WEAPONS
Mass Driver (2)
Photon Guns (2)

REAR TURRET
Mass Driver (1)
Tractor Beam (1)

SPECIAL WEAPONS
Leech Lasers (2)
Stormfire (2)

TORPEDO HARDPOINTS
4

MISSILE HARDPOINTS
(2x4 Medium)
4IR/4IR

MISSILE DECOYS
24

JUMP CAPABLE
Yes

BANSHEE

BORDER WORLDS LIGHT FIGHTER
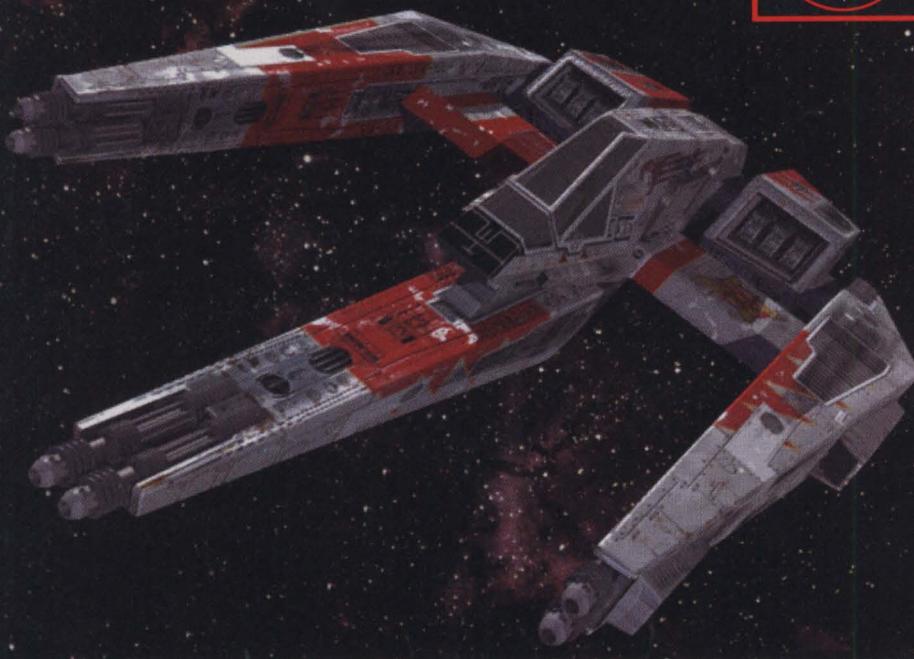
CLASS
Light Fighter

MANUFACTURER
Verier Underground

LENGTH
23.5 m

MASS
18 metric tonnes

MAX. VELOCITY
500 k/s

MAX. AFTERBURNER VELOCITY
1300 k/s

MAX. AFTERBURNER ACCELERATION
900 k/s²

MAX. YAW
100 deg/s

MAX. PITCH
70 deg/s

MAX. ROLL
100 deg/s

SHIELDS
250 cm equiv.

ARMOR
Fore/Aft: 80 cm
Right/Left: 80 cm

WEAPONS
Lasers (4)

SPECIAL WEAPONS
Leech Laser (1)
Scatter Gun (1)

MISSILE HARDPOINTS
(4x2 Medium)
2HS/2HS/2HS/2HS

MISSILE DECOYS
16

JUMP CAPABLE
No

BEARCAT

CONFEDERATION HEAVY FIGHTER

CLASS
Heavy Fighter

MANUFACTURER
Douglas Aerospace

LENGTH
27 meters

MASS
14 metric tonnes

MAX. VELOCITY
550 k/s

MAX. AFTERBURNER VELOCITY
1400 k/s

MAX. AFTERBURNER ACCELERATION
1200 k/s^2

MAX. YAW
90 deg/s

MAX. PITCH
80 deg/s

MAX. ROLL
90 deg/s

SHIELDS
280 cm equiv.

ARMOR
Fore/Aft: 150 cm
Right/Left: 150 cm

WEAPONS
Tachyon Guns (4)

MISSILE HARDPOINTS
(4x2 Medium)
2HS/2IR/2HS/2IR

MISSILE DECOYS
24

JUMP CAPABLE
No

DRAGON

BLACK LANCE HEAVY FIGHTER

CLASS
Heavy Fighter

MANUFACTURER
Black Lance

LENGTH
40 meters

MASS
26 metric tonnes

MAX. VELOCITY
500 k/s

MAX. AFTERBURNER VELOCITY
1200 k/s

MAX. AFTERBURNER ACCELERATION
900 k/s²

MAX. YAW
60 deg/s

MAX. PITCH
75 deg/s

MAX. ROLL
60 deg/s

SHIELDS
500 cm equiv.

ARMOR
Fore/Aft: 300 cm
Right/Left: 300 cm

WEAPONS
Plasma Guns (2)
Tachyon Guns (2)
Fission Guns (2)

TORPEDO HARDPOINTS
2

MISSILE HARDPOINTS
(2x3 Light)
(2x2 Medium)
2HS/2HS/3FF/3FF

MISSILE DECOYS
24

JUMP CAPABLE
Yes

DRALTHI

KILRATHI MEDIUM FIGHTER

CLASS
Medium Fighter

LENGTH
31 meters

MASS
15 metric tonnes

MAX. VELOCITY
430 k/s

**MAX. AFTERBURNER
VELOCITY**
1100 k/s

**MAX. AFTERBURNER
ACCELERATION**
800 k/s^2

MAX. YAW
55 deg/s

MAX PITCH
65 deg/s

MAX. ROLL
55 deg/s

SHIELDS
120 cm equiv.

ARMOR
Fore/Aft: 80 cm
Right/Left: 60 cm

WEAPONS
Particle Guns (2)
Photon Gun (1)

**MISSILE
HARDPOINTS**
(1x4 Medium)
4IR

MISSILE DECOYS
6

JUMP CAPABLE
No

EXCALIBUR

CONFEDERATION HEAVY FIGHTER

CLASS
Heavy Fighter

MANUFACTURER
Douglas Aerospace

LENGTH
32 meters

MASS
18 metric tonnes

MAX. VELOCITY
500 k/s

MAX. AFTERBURNER VELOCITY
1300 k/s

ACCELERATION
1100 k/s²

MAX. YAW
70 deg/s

MAX. PITCH
75 deg/s

MAX. ROLL
70 deg/s

SHIELDS
250 cm equiv.

ARMOR
Fore/Aft: 110 cm
Right/Left: 110 cm

WEAPONS
Tachyon Guns (4)
Ion Guns (2)

MISSILE HARDPOINTS
(4x2 Medium)
2HS/2IR/2IR/2HS

MISSILE DECOYS
16

JUMP CAPABLE
Yes

HELLCAT

CONFEDERATION MEDIUM FIGHTER

CLASS
Medium Fighter

MANUFACTURER
Douglas Aerospace

LENGTH
27 meters

MASS
14 metric tonnes

MAX. VELOCITY
420 k/s

MAX. AFTERBURNER VELOCITY
1200 k/s

MAX. AFTERBURNER ACCELERATION
900 k/s^2

MAX. YAW
60 deg/s

MAX. PITCH
60 deg/s

MAX. ROLL
60 deg/s

SHIELDS
250 cm equiv.

ARMOR
Fore/Aft: 100 cm
Right/Left: 80 cm

WEAPONS
Particle Gun (2)
Ion Guns (2)

MISSILE HARDPOINTS
(2x3 Medium)
3IR/3IR

MISSILE DECOYS
24

JUMP CAPABLE
No

LONGBOW

CONFEDERATION TORPEDO BOMBER

CLASS
Torpedo Bomber

MANUFACTURER
McCall Industries

LENGTH
38 meters

MASS
22 metric tonnes

MAX. VELOCITY
320 k/s

MAX. AFTERBURNER VELOCITY
700 k/s

ACCELERATION
500 k/s²

MAX. YAW
30 deg/s

MAX. PITCH
40 deg/s

MAX. ROLL
30 deg/s

SHIELDS
500 cm equiv.

ARMOR
Fore/Aft: 300 cm
Right/Left: 300 cm

WEAPONS
Ion Guns (2)
Plasma Guns (2)

REAR TURRET
Particle Gun (1)
Tractor Beam (1)

TORPEDO HARDPOINTS
4

MISSILE HARDPOINTS
(4x4 Medium)
4IR/4IR/4FF/4FF

MISSILE DECOYS
24

JUMP CAPABLE
No

RAZOR

PIRATE LIGHT FIGHTER

CLASS
Light Fighter

MANUFACTURER
Martina Nostra

LENGTH
12 meters

MASS
13 metric tonnes

MAX. VELOCITY
550 k/s

MAX. AFTERBURNER VELOCITY
1200 k/s

MAX. AFTERBURNER ACCELERATION
1200 k/s^2

MAX. YAW
90 deg/s

MAX. PITCH
80 deg/s

MAX. ROLL
90 deg/s

SHIELDS
100 cm equiv.

ARMOR
Fore/Aft: 40 cm
Right/Left: 40 cm

WEAPONS
Lasers (2)
Ion Guns (2)

MISSILE HARDPOINTS
(4x2 Medium)
2HS/2IR/2IR/2HS

MISSILE DECOYS
16

JUMP CAPABLE
No

THUNDERBOLT

CONFEDERATION HEAVY FIGHTER

CLASS
Heavy Fighter

MANUFACTURER
Douglas Aerospace

LENGTH
34 meters

MASS
20 metric tonnes

MAX. VELOCITY
380 k/s

MAX. AFTERBURNER VELOCITY
1000 k/s

MAX. AFTERBURNER ACCELERATION
800 k/s²

MAX. YAW
50 deg/s

MAX. PITCH
50 deg/s

MAX. ROLL
50 deg/s

SHIELDS
250 cm equiv.

ARMOR
Fore/Aft: 120 cm
Right/Left: 100 cm

WEAPONS
Plasma Guns (4)
Photon Guns (2)

REAR TURRET
Mass Driver (1)

TORPEDO HARDPOINTS
1

MISSILE HARDPOINTS
(2x3 Medium)
3FF/3FF

MISSILE DECOYS
24

JUMP CAPABLE
No

VINDICATOR

BORDER WORLDS MEDIUM FIGHTER

CLASS
Medium Fighter

MANUFACTURER
Murphy Labs

LENGTH
20 meters

MASS
16 metric tonnes

MAX. VELOCITY
400 k/s

MAX. AFTERBURNER VELOCITY
950 k/s

MAX. AFTERBURNER ACCELERATION
700 k/s²

MAX. YAW
50 deg/s

MAX. PITCH
50 deg/s

MAX. ROLL
50 deg/s

SHIELDS
250 cm equiv.

ARMOR
Fore/Aft: 150 cm
Right/Left: 150 cm

WEAPONS
Lasers (2)
Tachyon Guns (2)

SPECIAL WEAPONS
Leech Lasers (2)
Stormfire (2)

REAR TURRET
Laser (1)
Tractor Beam (1)

TORPEDO HARDPOINTS
3

MISSILE HARDPOINTS
(2x3 Medium)
3FF/3FF

MISSILE DECOYS
24

JUMP CAPABLE
No

PREVIOUSLY...

WING COMMANDER I

Christopher Blair, at the beginning of *Wing Commander I*, graduates top of his class from the academy while the Terran-Kilrathi war is in full swing. In recognition of his obvious piloting talent and scholastic achievement, he is assigned to the *T.C.S. Tiger's Claw*, the largest ship in the Confederation fleet. It is not long before the *Tiger's Claw* is ordered to Enyo System. Rumor has it that the Kilrathi have an unusually large presence there.

Blair quickly becomes acquainted with the other pilots on board the carrier. Spirit is a defensive young Japanese woman — and the pilot assigned to his wing on his first mission. Paladin is a knowledgeable veteran, calm and capable in the roughest situations. Angel, the French national, he discovers to be a strict by-the-book pilot who can be depended on to carry out any order of her wing leader. Bossman, Knight, Hunter and Iceman give him advice on things the Academy couldn't program into the flight simulators. Todd "Maniac" Marshall, the hot-headed fast-talking kid, has been assigned to the *Tiger's Claw*. Blair and Maniac graduated first and second in their class at the Academy. Blair had hoped for separate assignments.

Blair picks up real-life experience on escort and routine duties, and soon the *Claw* is sent to Macauliffe — clearing the way for an offensive strike against the Kilrathi. After six months, the *Tiger's Claw* is sent on a seek-and-destroy mission in Vega Sector. Hidden somewhere is the Kilrathi High Command, and when they make a close pass to the planet Venice, they discover that cats' lair. One fierce battle later, the Kilrathi have come out decidedly second-best. Some begin to hope the war has turned around.
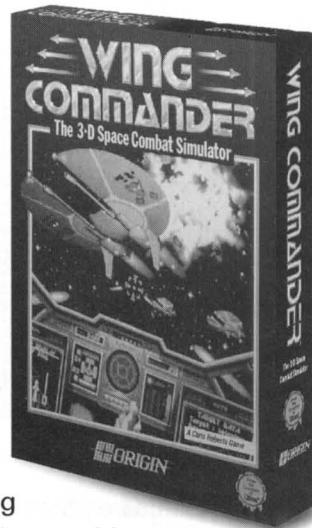
THE SECRET MISSIONS

There is no time for celebration, though. The *Tiger's Claw* receives word that there has been no recent communication from Goddard colony. The authorities are concerned, and the *Claw* heads out to investigate. They have no hope of arriving in time; the Kilrathi have already come and gone, leaving nothing but desolation, ruins and death. The friendly bartender, Shotglass, takes it hardest. His cousin had lived on Goddard. It is hard enough to accept the deaths of friends who fly against the cats, but the wanton massacre of civilians is doubly harsh.

The *Claw* receives their new assignment — track down the Kilrathi strike force, obliterate them and destroy the secret weapon that laid waste to Goddard. The mission is code-named "Operation Thor's Hammer."

This is no simple target-and-shoot mission, and the crew becomes restless and agitated. As the *Tiger's Claw* moves farther and farther into enemy territory, they begin to suspect that they have been sent on a suicide mission. Everyone is aware that there is no force they can call for help. They are on their own, and the odds are against them. Maniac, always high-strung, begins to show signs of serious battle fatigue. It is not long before he is too unstable to fly.

At last the carrier detects the *Sivar*, the dreadnought responsible for the carnage at Goddard. A battle ensues which dwarfs anything the *Claw* has ever seen. Kilrathi fighters swarm around the Confederation ship, hammering away at her defenses. The human pilots respond in kind, and eventually punch through the Kilrathi defenses. It is a hard-won battle, but ultimately both the *Sivar* and the deadly weapon she carried are destroyed. The *Tiger's Claw* returns to Confederation space. Things aren't so simple for the surviving Kilrathi. The admiral of the *Sivar* is held personally responsible for the loss of the experimental dreadnought. In the presence of his father the Emperor, the admiral is executed, leaving Prince Thrakhath as heir to the throne.
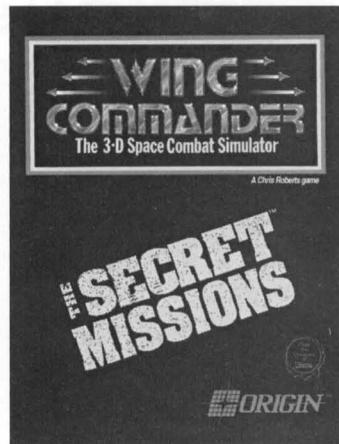
THE SECRET MISSIONS 2

A new race, the Firekkans, are being inducted into the Confederation. During the final stages of the process, the *Tiger's Claw* is assigned as color guard to the Terran diplomats at Firekka. Its pilots all begin to enjoy the peaceful boredom of routine, uneventful patrols. However, time and again, pilots are encountering Kilrathi ships where there should be none. Firekka is located in a remote part of the galactic arm, far from the war. It soon becomes apparent that, whatever the reason, the Kilrathi are massing an enormous force just outside of Firekkan space, led by Thrakhath and his Drakhai (Imperial Guard).

It is only after a Kilrathi captain, Ralgha nar Hhallas, defects to the Confederation side, that the reason behind the unexpected attack force is revealed. It is time for the Kilrathi to rededicate themselves to Sivar, their god of war. Firekka has been chosen as the site of this ritual. Without successful completion of the ritual, Captain Ralgha explains, the Kilrathi believe that Sivar will abandon them. They would be doomed to die dishonorable deaths, an unthinkable horror to a race who strive only for glory in war.

The decision is made to demoralize the Kilrathi by disrupting their religious ceremony. Terran marines jump into the system. Their targets are the Kilrathi priestesses, who have already landed on Firekka. As the battle rages, the death toll rises to staggering levels. Eventually, against overwhelming odds, the marines accomplish their goals and withdraw. The wrath of the Kilrathi focuses on the *Tiger's Claw*, and the Confederation ship begins a desperate fighting retreat to human-controlled space. With the bulk of the Kilrathi fighters distracted, the Firekkans begin a planet-side attack against the Kilrathi. The felinoids are forced to withdraw back to their own space.

Victory, although always welcome, is far from sweet for the crew of the *Tiger's Claw*. Bossman, whom Blair has known from nearly his first day on the *Claw*, is dead. He was killed flying a mission as Angel's wingman. Spirit's fiancé has been captured by the enemy on a remote space station. Maniac is again removed from the flight roster due to his increasing mental instability. Angel is transferred from the *Tiger's Claw* to the *T.C.S. Austin*, soon followed by Spirit. It seems that perhaps the only good thing that happens is Blair's promotion to command of the *Tiger's Claw* fighter squadron.
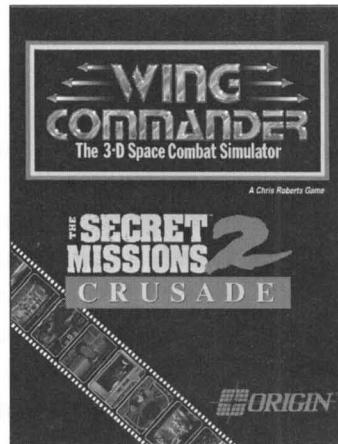
WING COMMANDER II

The "vacation" at Firekka is over; the *Tiger's Claw* is needed to assist in dislodging the Kilrathi from Enigma sector. A strike planned against K'tithrak Mang, the Kilrathi headquarters, is inexplicably fumbled. Within moments, it seems, the *Tiger's Claw* is utterly destroyed. Blair is the only survivor — not a traditionally sympathetic role. When he arrives home, it is only to face courtmartial for negligence and cowardice under fire. His claims that "stealth fighters" had attacked the *Tiger's Claw* are not believed, and in fact are regarded as a pathetic attempt to whine his way back to his former position. Blair is stripped of rank and assigned to an underfunded research station on the back edge of nowhere.
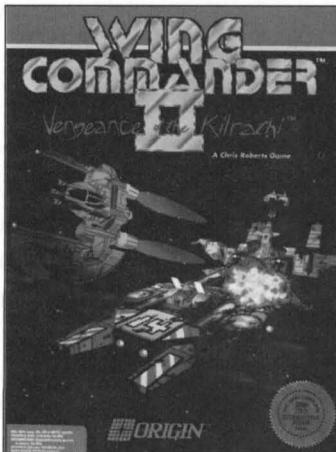
Just when it seems that Blair's career has been flushed out an airlock, the *T.C.S. Concordia* — the largest ship in the Enigma sector — jumps into the sector, pursued by Kilrathi fighters. The *Concordia* is in trouble; its deck is too damaged to launch fighters, leaving Blair and his wingman Shadow as their only hope for survival. A one-sided battle ensues, but Blair and his wingman manage to win the upper hand. When he is able to land aboard the *Concordia*, he is welcomed by several old friends. Chief among them is Angel, now assigned as squadron leader.

Shadow and Blair leave to return to Caernarvon station, but are soon called back by the *Concordia*. A bomb has exploded in the launch deck, crippling their defenses, and another wave of Kilrathi has jumped into the system. Blair and his wingman make it back in time to defend the carrier, but Shadow is killed in the fight. Blair lands aboard the *Concordia* moments before the ship jumps out of the system. Admiral Tolwyn is hardly pleased to see Blair, but cannot dispute the wisdom of temporarily assigning him to active duty.

It is a tense time aboard the *Concordia*. If things do not go well — if the *Concordia* fails to hold the sector — the Kilrathi will have access to jump nodes that would give them a backdoor to Earth. What makes the situation even more desperate is that there is obviously a traitor aboard the ship. The bomb in the launch bay was only one example. A technician has been killed in the communications area, and it's known that an outgoing message was sent to the Kilrathi. Blair is assigned to routine, low-level duties until Colonel "Hobbes" Ralgha demands that he be returned to active duty, and that Blair fly as his wingman. For the first time in too long, Blair is back in the war.

Hobbes informs Blair that despite his current reputation in the Confederation, the Kilrathi regard him as a great warrior. Blair and Hobbes prove to be an effective team, and together they successfully defend the Kilrathi rebels' Olympus Station from an onslaught of Imperial fighters.

Tensions continue to rise aboard the *Concordia*, and the finger-pointing commences. Spirit is accused of being the spy. She denies it, though she confesses to Blair that the Kilrathi attempted to blackmail her into aiding them. When they tried to barter her fiancé's life for her cooperation, she refused. Now he will certainly die a horrible death, just as the *Concordia* is assigned to attack the very station where he is being held. During the attack, Spirit's fighter is damaged, and she makes the decision to sacrifice herself in a kamikaze dive on the station. After the battle, Blair and Angel commiserate over the death of their friend, and begin to forge a relationship that will grow deep.

Once again, the mission to K'tithrak Mang is attempted, but this time the Confederation succeeds. Victory is particularly satisfying to Blair, as he faces down and defeats Prince Thrakhath head-to-head. Thrakhath survives the encounter, and Blair's warrior reputation becomes even more infamous in the Kilrathi empire. He also discovers and defeats *Concordia*'s traitor, re-establishing his reputation and rank.

FREEDOM FLIGHT (NOVEL)

While the *Tiger's Claw* focuses on Firekka, Hunter, along with the Firekkan war leader K'Kai and Hobbes' oathsworn adjunct Kirha, launch a desperate thrust to free Firekkan hostages held near Ghorah Khar.

END RUN (NOVEL)

When the corvette *Johnny Greene* discovers a covert Kilrathi shipyard on the far side of the empire of Vakar Tag, Bear Bondarevsky must lead the end run to evade detection and eliminate this threat to Terran survival.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS 1

The war rolls onward. Within two weeks of uncovering the traitor on the *Concordia*, Tolwyn notifies Blair that he's being reassigned to a Special Ops team. As a matter of fact, the particular operation to which he's assigned is headed by his long-time friend, Paladin. Before Blair begins his new assignment, however, Pembroke Station is attacked by Kilrathi. Blair finally gets the cats clear of Pembroke, only to be told that he must investigate Rigel; for unknown reasons, no one has recently received communication from the supply depot there. Within moments of jumping into Rigel space, Blair is attacked by Confederation mutineers.
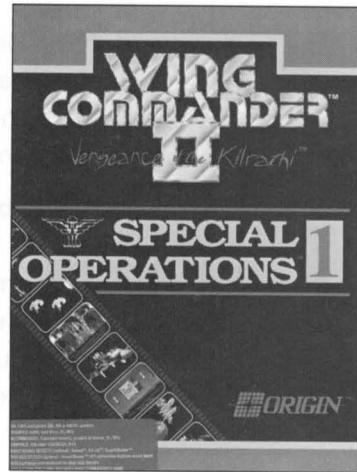
The mutiny, it seems, was sparked by the commander of the *T.C.S. Gettysburg* ordering his crew to fire upon an unarmed Kilrathi civilian transport. The mutiny was successful, and the supply depot was subsequently commandeered to be used as their headquarters. The mutineers are divided into two factions: the pirates who wish to continue their new careers of terrorism, and those who would rather return to the Confederation, if at all possible. Lieutenant "Bear" Bondarevski heads the faction that would like to return. Blair convinces him to agree to a meeting, and then to return with him to the *Concordia*. Blair returns with him to the mutineers and — after a brief visit to their brig — persuades them they will all receive pardons. With the aid of Lt. Colonel Poelma, he leads a strike against the "pirate" faction on the Rigel supply depot. After a rousing success, Blair returns to the *Concordia*.

At last Blair can embark on his Special Ops mission. He and Paladin head for the Ghorah Khar system, where Kilrathi troops are trying to make an example of the Kilrathi rebel planet. At the height of battle at Olympus Station, Blair receives a message from Paladin — he's uncovered news of an assassination attempt against Prince Thrakhath. Blair responds, and is in fact able to capture Prince Thrakhath. He takes him to the *Bonnie Heather*, but the prince escapes soon thereafter. Nevertheless, Blair, Paladin, Bear and some of the *Gettysburg* pilots manage to defeat the Kilrathi attack on the Olympus Station. The planet of Ghorah Khar is saved.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS 2

Not much time passes before Jazz Colson is court-martialed for high treason, found guilty by Admiral Tolwyn and sentenced to death. Blair is given the assignment of escorting Jazz's transhipment to a prison transport, which will shuttle him to a prison planet, where he will be executed.

As always, there are unexpected problems. There is a mutiny aboard the ship Jazz is on, and Mandarin hijackers jump it out-system. That's only the beginning, though. On return to the *Concordia*, Blair discovers that his least favorite wingman, Maniac, has not only been promoted to major, but has been assigned to same ship as Blair. Apparently, Maniac is in charge of a squadron of test pilots. They will be testing the new Morningstar fighters, and will be using the *Concordia* as a base of operations.

Blair gets called in to help the test fighters retrieve one of their pilots who got lost in an asteroid field during maneuvers. The rescued pilot is the attractive Minx. Tolwyn confides to Blair that there may be a Mandarin traitor. During his investigations, Blair flies several more times with the Morningstar pilots. Just before she's fingered as the traitor, Minx steals a prototype ship and makes a bee-line for the Mandarin base at Ayer's Rock. Blair is not surprised to discover that Jazz has also holed up at Ayer's Rock, and faces him in a one-on-one showdown before returning home.

FLEET ACTION (NOVEL)

After nearly 30 years of bloody toe-to-toe combat, the Kilrathi offer an armistice. What happens after is the focus of *Fleet Action*, detailing the Kilrathi strike against Earth itself.
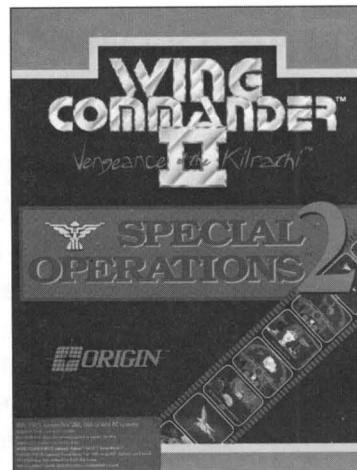
WING COMMANDER III

The war has ground to a bloody stalemate. The *Concordia* is discovered by Blair and Paladin, crumpled off-shore in a shallow sea. There are no survivors. Blair meets with Tolwyn and is informed his reassignment will be to the *T.C.S. Victory* — a much older ship than Blair was expecting. His frustration does not stem solely from his assignment; Blair is unable to discover what has happened to Angel. Their relationship has progressed steadily in the last year, but then she was suddenly assigned to a covert operation. She has yet to return.

On board the *Victory*, Blair meets Captain Eisen, a stern commander who tolerates no nonsense from any of his men. Eisen's second-in-command is Hobbes, the Kilrathi-turned-Confederation pilot. Blair is affronted that Hobbes, perhaps the best pilot who's ever flown beside him, is not on the flight roster. Eisen explains that it is a matter of trust — there are quite a number of people who do not like flying beside a Kilrathi. Blair makes the acquaintance of Flint (a competent pilot), Rachel Coriolis (the chief tech), Vagabond, Vaquero and many others. To his chagrin, Blair also learns that once again he's on the same ship as Maniac. Maniac hasn't changed one iota over the years.

Blair is in command of the fighter squadron, assigning routine patrols and missions to the pilots. Not only does Blair consider himself too young to be promoted out of the cockpit, but with the war going the way it has, there are simply too few pilots available for Blair not to run routine missions.

Flash, a cocky test pilot, arrives on the *Victory* in a prototype version of the new Excalibur. At first he considers himself too important to the war effort to actually fly in defense of the *Victory*, but Blair soon corrects his misperception. Just in time, too. Scouts ships uncover a Kilrathi recon group nearby, and the *Victory* moves to contain it. That accomplished, the carrier is ordered to act as general defense for the area.

None too soon, the Confederation begins planning for its first offensive strike in years. First control of the sector is gained, then rumors of a secret mission begin to circulate. The *Victory* picks up Admiral Tolwyn, who confides to Blair and Eisen that the Confederation has been developing what he calls the biggest gun in the universe, code-named "Behemoth." It's a planet-killer, and if the *Victory* can protect it long enough, they're going to fire it at Kilrah.

As it turns out, that's too large an order to be accomplished. A Kilrathi fleet ambushes the Victory and destroys the *Behemoth*. What's worse is that Prince Thrakhath himself gloats over the Kilrathi victory, and shows a video transmission of Angel's ritual execution. Any hesitation Blair might have felt at destroying a planet is erased by the sight of his lover being disemboweled.

The Confederation offensive has been broken, and now their forces are strung out, trying to restrain the mounting Kilrathi attacks. After hard battles, and demoralized whispers of a losing war, scout ships identify a well-defended jump point that leads directly to Kilrah. The Confederation prepares for one last all-out assault.

Paladin and Blair confer over their chances. Angel's death may not have been in vain, since she reported a seismic anomaly in the surface of Kilrah. If a fighter could drop a specially designed bomb directly on a strategic fault line, the crust just might buckle in a planet-wide upheaval. Blair is the last hope of the Confederation.

He succeeds in dropping the Temblor bomb. Kilrathi civilization is crushed; no structures remain intact from pole to pole. Blair's ship is caught by the tractor beam of an enemy carrier, but he is not killed. Having no other choice, Melek, the ranking survivor, delivers his surrender for the Kilrathi people. The war is over, and Blair begins a well-earned retirement in a galaxy, for once, at peace.
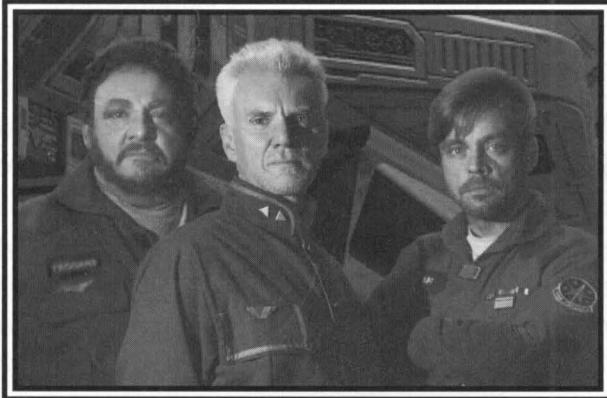
HEART OF THE TIGER (NOVEL)

Think you know everything about the Confederation's final strike against Kilrah? *Heart of the Tiger* fills in the details, both on board the *Victory* and at the other pulse centers of the war's final days.

WHAT'S NEW

Some changes are small, others are sweeping. From the crack programming team that brought you *Wing Commander III*, we get an inside look at the subtle and not-so-subtle changes that were woven into this latest episode of the galaxy-spanning adventure.

MISSIONS

To begin with, the missions of *Wing IV* have more depth. You won't always being flying "shoot-em-up," search-and-destroy flights. There are **reconnaissance and rescue missions** that have never before been available. Watch out, though, because there is a new element of time sensitivity. The universe isn't "waiting for you" to show up at a battle. If you're not on time, you may be too late.

Perhaps the most obvious difference is the fact that the **cockpits** have disappeared. Hardly anyone ever used them, and they only got in the way if you didn't turn them off. Instead, information is presented through heads-up displays (HUDs) that vary in overall look depending on what fighter you're flying.

You'll also notice that cockpits each have a **cockpit color** that characterizes them now. Confed cockpits are predominantly green, Black Lance have red cockpits and Border Worlds' cockpits are blue.

You won't select a wingman based on who's sitting at the "head of class" — or who's more likely to throw a snit fit — anymore. **Wingman selection is roster based**. Weigh the skills and attributes of the available wingmen, then choose the one who is best suited to the mission.

Occasionally missions will call for more than you and your buddy can handle, like being in two places at once. In those cases, you can put out another team. Select the wingman you'll fly with, then choose the **Wing Two** leader and wingman. You'll know you're not alone as you hear them communicate on their own.

SPECIAL WEAPONS

There are several new weapons to help you in your fight for justice: the Scattergun, the Fission cannon, the Leech gun and the Stormfire. For more information on these weapons, see **Ordnance: Special Guns**, page 89.

SHIPS AND LOADOUTS

The **Black Lance Dragon** is a new ship. It's distinguished by the fact that it has two postures — one of which facilitates the super-charging Fission Cannon. The longer you hold down the trigger, the greater the energy burst when you release.

The Border Worlds' **Banshee** is another ship that makes its debut in *Wing IV* (not to be confused with the Confederation Banshee in *Wing Commander Armada*), along with the **Avenger** and **Vindicator**.

The Banshee ship is armed with the new **Scatter gun**. Mounted directly underneath a ship, it fires five projectiles in a diamond pattern, spreading apart at a moderate 5% angle.

The Avenger and Vindicator are now armed with **Stormfire guns** (rapid fire capability): instead of the previous maximum of six projectiles per second, you now have a weapon that shoots approximately 20 rounds per second. That's gotta help.

If you've played through both *Wing II* and *III*, you might have noticed that **tractor beams** and **Mace missiles** from the second adventure disappeared during the *Heart of the Tiger* adventure. Don't fret, they're back. In fact, you'll probably notice that the Mace missile is appreciably improved from the last time you had your hands on it. Its huge blast radius means you can occasionally take out several ships in formation.

MANEUVERS

If you're watching carefully, you'll notice that enemy and allies are both armed with **better Artificial Intelligence** (AI). For one thing, they now have docking capabilities. Ships, Manned Insertion Pods, etc., can bring supplies to other areas, avoid being shot down and still dock up with shuttles and ships. Previously that would have taken place during a non-interactive cinematic sequence.

ON BOARD

Morale is handled differently. **Ship morale** is gone entirely, and only key ship personnel have variable morale. Game plot, on the other hand, is more often radically affected by your choices. These are addressed in **Wingmen**, page 62.

Just to save time, a **conversation map** has been added that allows you to see who is available for talking. You won't have to wander around the ship like you've lost the keys to your Hellcat. Instead, if you choose, you can go directly to where the people are talking, and save more time for flying missions.

SKILL LEVELS

First, you need to know about the six different difficulty levels: *Rookie, Veteran* and *Ace,* followed by *Hard, Crazy* and *Nightmare.* The main difference between the difficulty levels is flying skill and gunnery skill.

ROOKIE

When flying at rookie level, everybody you go against is a rookie. The concept of firing when they actually have a hope of hitting something will be an alien idea to them. They'll miss opportunities to take out an opponent, or will fire without "leading" their shots. They won't work as a team, will tend to over-shoot their opponents, or even better, they'll run into their own people. You, on the other hand, get a bonus for being a rookie. When you "almost" hit something, it'll do you the favor of taking the damage anyway. Theoretically you could blow up a pirate without ever "really" landing a shot on him — just because you're the player and he isn't.

Furthermore, the pilots on your team do double damage for every shot they land, while your opponents' damage per shot is halved.

VETERAN

When you're a veteran, all your normal enemies keep their Flying and Gunnery skill levels of 0. The enemy aces fly with skill levels of 1. They still don't do very well at getting onto and staying on the tails of their opponents, but they hit their targets quite a bit more often than normal pilots do.

You don't get any points for "near misses" when you're a veteran. It is assumed that you understand about leading your shots (that is, you know to aim for the little I.T.T.S. circle — p. 102), and that you don't make basic errors in maneuvering (overshooting, forgetting to use your afterburners, etc.).

ACE

When you rank an "ace," everyone flies at their default setting. Aces are dangerous — they'll often fire missiles in rapid succession — but normal pilots are still basically practice targets for anyone who knows how to fly.

HARD

Hard is where everyone has a Flying and Gunnery skill of 1. They use a lot of guns, as well as missiles.

CRAZY

Everyone has a Flying and Gunnery skill of 2 on this level. The enemy has an enhanced artifical intelligence that allows them to use tricks to get on your tail, and they get markedly better at shaking you off theirs. You can expect to have to deal with missiles on a fairly regular basis.

NIGHTMARE

Your enemies are all equally skilled (level 2), and know exactly what to do to line up and land a shot. The main difference is that this is where missiles really start to fly — and the way these pilots drop decoys, you can't count on your missiles to get you through the experience alive.

ENEMY FLYING AND GUNNERY SKILLS

Game Skill Level	Enemy Skill Level		AI Notes
	Normal	Ace	
Rookie	0	0	Poor aim; die easily; "attract" your shots
Veteran	0	1	Poor aim; die easily; light missile use
Ace	1	2	Default level; moderate missile use
Hard	1	1	Heavy gun use; heavy missile use
Crazy	2	2	Better tactics; heavier missile and decoy use
Nightmare	2	2	Best tactics; heaviest missile use
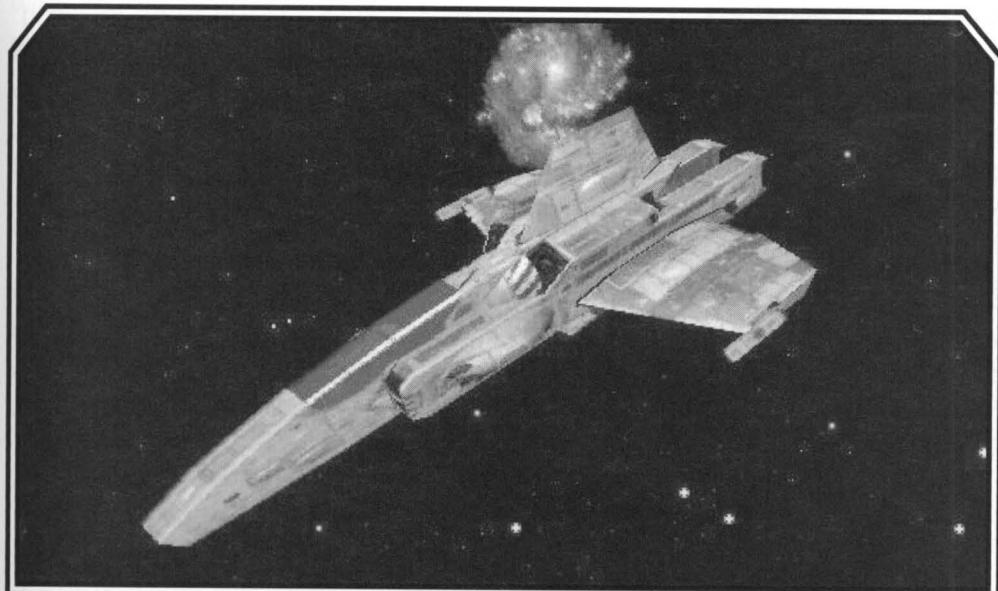
WINGMEN

If you've battled your way through the previous *Wing Commanders*, you already know that flying with your wingman is the real meat of the game. That is, after all, where the name *Wing Commander* originated. You get to choose different personalities and flying types, give orders and rely on having a skilled wingman look out for you.

Your wingman is able and eager to help you win every battle — but you don't necessarily have to let him. It's up to you whether you release him to attack the enemy. The only real reason to keep your wingman in formation through-out the game is if you can't stand to share the glory of the kill. If "Nightmare" mode isn't hard enough for you, then you'll probably relish the challenge of taking on the combined forces of the opponent. It's your choice.

Wingmen, in general, are a very forgiving species. Nothing you do to them, short of blowing them into space dust, is going to make them think worse of you. If they go into battle with high morale, they'll keep that morale throughout, even if you're both having a miserable time. No one back on the ship will sulk if you lose the battle. As mentioned earlier in **What's New**, not all of your pos-sible wingmen have variable morale. Key personalities' flying will be affected, but the secondary wingmen (i.e., the wingmen with whom you never have con-versations) will fly the same, no matter what you've previously said or done.

TAKING YOUR PICK

Selecting a wingman is something more than asking a friend to go joyriding. You've developed your own flying style and method as you've risen through the ranks, and your wingman needs to complement your technique if you're both going to make it back alive. You can choose someone who will fly tight, do what needs to be done, and keep your afterburners out of the cross-hairs — or you can pick a pilot who gets in the way, gets pounded by the enemy or steals your hard-earned kills.

Some elements have changed from *Wing Commander III*. In that game, you would have to take the pilots' feelings into account. If you repeatedly passed over a pilot, not only did his morale go down, but you risked a dressing-down from your superior officer. That was then; this is now. Pick the pilot who is best for the mission and best for your style.

COMMANDING A MISSION

There are two basic ways to send your wingman into battle. "Break and Attack" (hotkey [Alt] [B]) sets him free to take on whomever he chooses. It's best to do this as soon as possible, since if you wait until you're in the thick of things, there's a higher chance of getting toasted by enemy fire. As an alternative to using the hotkey, you can autopilot while your communications channel is open, and therefore immediately choose the "Break and Attack" command. You probably already knew that, though.

The second way to set loose your wingman is to target a ship, then command "Attack My Target" (hotkey [Alt] [A]). This is best used if you want to be sure that you and your wingman don't go veering after the same fighter, leaving the rest of them to take potshots at their leisure. It can also be used if you want your wingman to concentrate on destroying the cap ship — particularly if he has skills in that area — while you clean up the unfriendlies.

If you've played *Wing III*, you might remember that some pilots were invulnerable in certain missions, while others could die if they flew a mission with you. In *Wing IV*, all pilots are "invulnerable" (with a couple of key exceptions, noted in the mission analyses). Enemy fire can hurt, but not destroy, them. They'll either miraculously survive, or eject for subsequent rescue.

You may notice that the bad guys and the good guys are all lumped together in this book. That's because life has gotten more complicated since we wiped the cats' whiskers, and you can no longer say "these are the folks I'm flying with, and those are the ones that we're trying to kill." Someone who is flying on your wing today may be locking a missile on you tomorrow.

WINGMAN STATISTICS

Before you jump in the cockpit and head off to tackle the forces of evil, you're going to need a sidekick. What's more, you're going to need one with the ability to help and not hinder. Note that your own pilots' attributes are no secret in space — most are plainly listed at the bottom on the roster screen. Below, each character is ranked from "0" (low) to "2" (high) in each stat.

AGGRESSIVENESS

Aggressive people are the kinds that get into bar brawls — as well as the ones who are eager in battle. Someone with a rating of "0" has got a steady head on his shoulders. A pilot with an average amount of caution scores a "1." With a rank of "2," you're talking about a ticking bomb of testosterone and firepower.

TRIGGER HAPPINESS

This is basically a reckoning of how controlled a pilot is with his trigger-finger. With a score of "2," he's firing like a lunatic, sending shots all over the galaxy whenever he sees the enemy in front of him. A pilot who only shoots when he thinks he stands a chance of hitting his target is ranked as a "1," and the crack-shot who only fires when he *will* hit the enemy is a "0."

COURAGE

Courage is how well a pilot can face up to adversity. Someone prone to cut-and-run ranks a "0." If he stays in the fight until it looks doubtful that he'll survive, and then retreats, he's a "1." If he's a "2," then it's "death before dishonor," and he'll stick to his target until one of them is dead.

FLYING SKILL

This is a guide to how well your wingman does with a flightstick. A pilot with a rank of "0" is a missile test-target, a "1" is assigned to an average pilot, and someone who scores a "2" has a repertoire of stunts for both evasion and attack situations.

GUNNERY SKILL

The question here is whether he hits his target. Someone who couldn't hit the broadside of a hangar — from the inside — is a "0." An average shot is counted as a "1," and a "2" is a crackshot.

LOYALTY

As a wingleader, you're probably interested in whether your wingman will follow orders. If he's a "0," then he will if he feels like it. A "1" will obey if it makes sense to him, and a "2" would crash into an ocean if that's what you order him to do.

VERBOSITY

This is, essentially, whether he tends to mock his opponent during combat. Taunts are taught at the academy as a way to incite the enemy into making foolish mistakes. A pilot ranking "0" only speaks in response to commands. If he talks occasionally, he gets a "1." A "2" can't keep quiet to save his life.

MANIAC

MAJOR TODD MARSHALL

Maniac and Blair share history all the way back to the academy. Even then, Maniac was a loose gun, too intoxicated on the thrill of adventure to fly by the book. His flying style was effective, his instructors had to agree, but tended to be a hazard to anyone flying at his side. That, along with his lack of propriety — in particular, his habit of trying to "pick up" any female staff at the flying school — nearly had him expelled more than once.

CONFEDERATION PILOT

Aggressiveness.......2
Trigger Happy.........2
Courage 0
Flying..........................2
Gunnery....................2
Loyalty......................0
Verbosity..................2
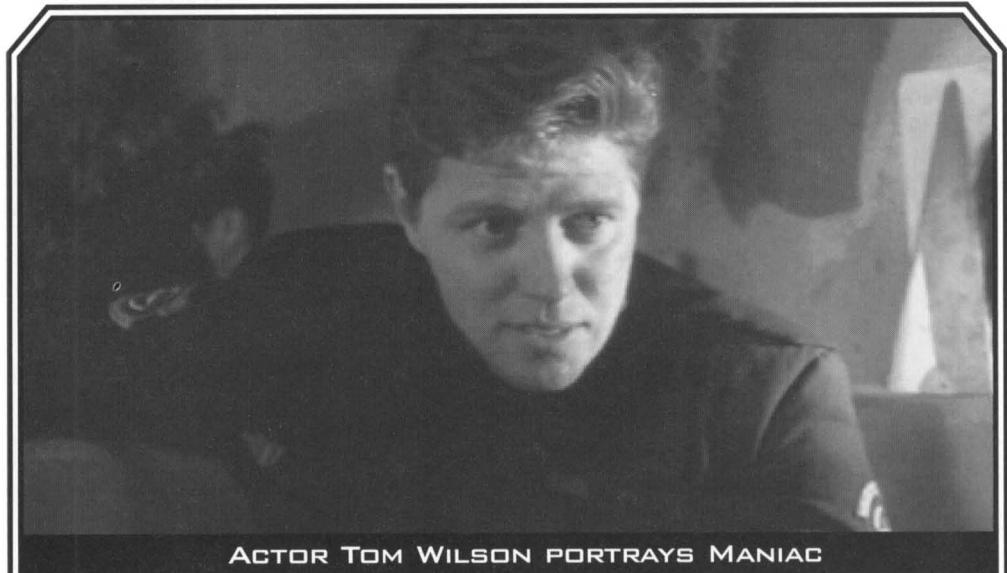
ACTOR TOM WILSON PORTRAYS MANIAC

MANIAC'S RESPONSES

Communication	Response	
Yes	Roger that, Colonel.	Whatever you say, Colonel.
No	That's a negatory, ace.	No can do, Colonel.
No enemy spotted	Looks like nobody's around, ace.	
Enemy spotted (few)	*There's* a few bad guys.	Look what I see!
Enemy spotted (many)	Incoming!	Big time enemy presence, ace.
Ready to engage	Turn me loose, Colonel. This is what I live for!	Ready to strut my stuff.
Engaging	They're gonna wish they were never born.	Gonna give 'em some Maniac-magic.
"Yahoo"	Yaaahoooo!	Yeeehaw!
Taunts	Can't fly — must die!	You've messed with the best — now die like the rest!
Compliment Blair	Not bad ... for a dinosaur.	Hey! Not bad ... for an earthworm.
	Pretty good shootin' ... for a farmer.	
Help needed	Try backing me up, old timer.	Takin' a break, ace? I need some help here.
Want to abort	I think it's time to pull the plug on this one.	We can't win this one, ace.
I am aborting	See ya back at the ranch, Colonel.	It ain't worth it. I'm outta here.
Ejecting	I'm worth more than this tin can — I'm ejecting.	I'm poppin' the top, Colonel. Good luck.
No damage (0%)	I'm lookin' fine ... as usual.	What are you? — My mother?
Some damage (25%)	They got lucky with a couple shots — no biggy.	I took a few hits. A lesser pilot would be sweatin'.
Half damage - (50%)	I got a few more dents than I'd like.	Put it this way: The Chief Tech's gonna be pissed.
Much damage (75%)	Mucho damage, ace. Anybody but me would've bailed by now.	I'm flyin' spare parts!
Killed fighter	Just smoked another one!	Man, I'm good!
	Chalk up another for the Maniac!	
Friendly fire	The old timer losing his eyesight? Can't you see I'm a good guy?	Hey! Watch your fire, old timer.
Annoyed	Do that again and you're history, Colonel.	I'm warning you, ace — fire on me again and you'll pay.
Sustained friendly fire	*That's* it! Maniac's takin' you out!	Try this on for size, Colonel!

VAGABOND

LIEUTENANT WINSTON CHANG

A man with a hidden past, 1st Lieutenant Winston Chang is a top-notch pilot who knows Blair from his previous assignment aboard the *T.C.S. Victory*. Cynical yet honest, Vagabond has seen more than he admits, and observes more than he lets on. He's most often seen shuffling a deck of cards, hoping to lure an unsuspecting crewmember into a quick hand of chance.

CONFEDERATION PILOT

Aggressiveness.......1
Trigger Happy..........2
Courage.....................1
Flying...........................2
Gunnery......................2
Loyalty........................2
Verbosity....................2
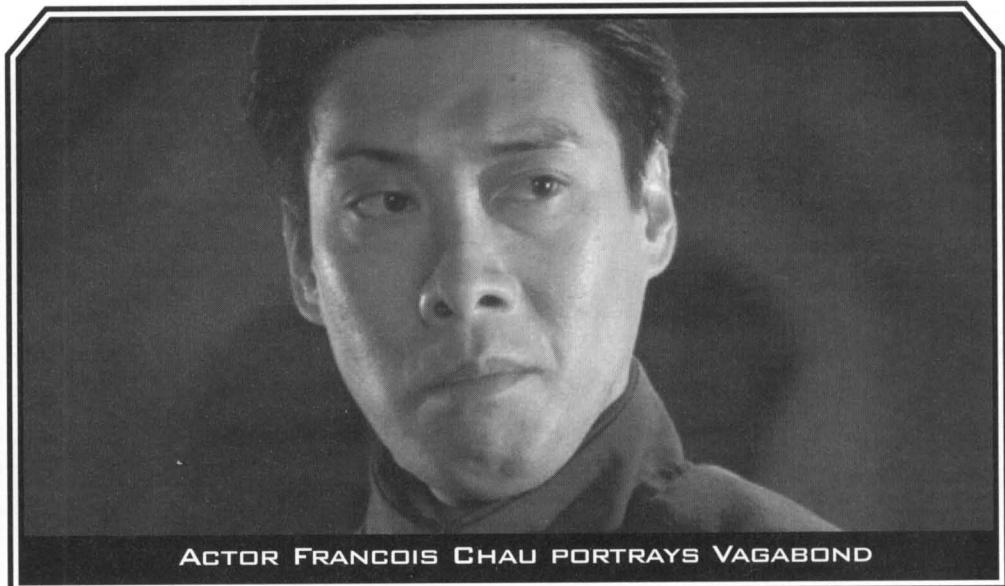
ACTOR FRANCOIS CHAU PORTRAYS VAGABOND

VAGABOND'S RESPONSES

Communication	Response	
Yes	That's a ten-four, pardner.	A-okay, Colonel.
No	Not possible, good buddy.	Sorry, but that's a negative, pardner
No enemy spotted	Looks like no one got our invitation ...	
Enemy spotted (few)	We got some incoming ...	Looks like the competition's here ...
Enemy spotted (many)	We got incoming!	We got lots of company, pardner.
Ready to engage	Ready to deal the cards, Colonel.	Just say go, good buddy.
Engaging	Time to earn my pay.	Takin' the 'safety' off.
"Yahoo"	Ride 'em, cowboy!	Aces high!!
Taunts	I got an ace up my sleeve for these guys.	These guys ain't so tough.
Compliment Blair	Haven't lost your touch, Colonel.	Lookin' mighty fine, good buddy.
Help needed	I could sure use an 'ace in the hole' here, pardner.	Wouldn't mind a little help, Colonel.
Want to abort	Ya gotta know when to fold, good buddy — and now's the time.	I've been dealt a bad hand. I gotta retreat, Colonel.
I am aborting	Hate to leave the party — but I'm outta here.	Time for me to cash in. Aborting mission, Colonel.
Ejecting	Sorry pardner, but I gotta blow the hatch and bail.	It's been fun, pardner, but I gotta bail.
No damage (0%)	My hand's lookin' real fine.	Ain't got a care in the world, good buddy.
Some damage (25%)	Just a few dings. Nothin' to worry about.	Nothin' that's gonna stop me.
Half damage (50%)	I've got some problems.	I'll make it ... I think.
Much damage (75%)	I'm shot up pretty bad.	This ship's just about totaled!
Killed fighter	Nailed that one! / Just pulled an ace out of my sleeve.	Aces wild!
Friendly fire	Cuttin' it kinda close, aren't you, Colonel?	Careful there, buddy.
Annoyed	Hey! Ain't we friends anymore?!	This ain't no fun, Colonel.
Sustained friendly fire	That's it! Time I cash you in!	No more, Colonel! I'm cashing you in.

CATSCRATCH

2ND LIEUTENANT TROY CARTER

2nd Lieutenant Troy Carter came of age just as the war with the Kilrathi came to an end. He'd spent his childhood dreaming of being a warrior, and feels almost as directionless in peace as some older veterans. Nevertheless, he's full of enthusiasm and adrenaline, and impatiently waits for a chance to prove himself.

CONFEDERATION PILOT

Aggressiveness	1
Trigger Happy	1
Courage	2
Flying	2
Gunnery	1
Loyalty	2
Verbosity	1
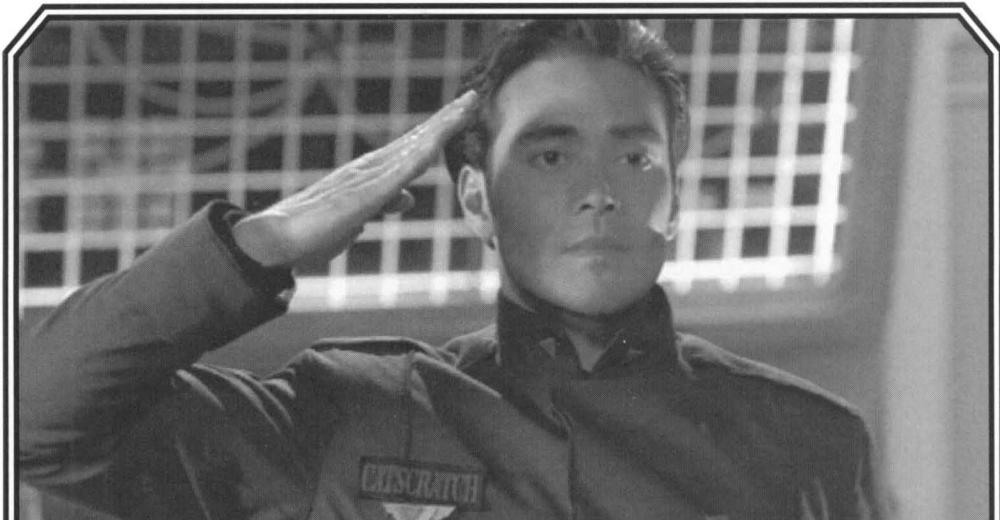
ACTOR MARK DACASCOS PORTRAYS CATSCRATCH

CATSCRATCH'S RESPONSES

Communication	High morale	Low Morale
Yes	Right away, sir.	Affirmative, Colonel.
No	No, sir.	Negative, Colonel.
No enemy spotted	Damn! Nobody's here.	Whew! No enemy spotted, sir.
Enemy spotted (few)	Enemy spotted, sir.	Uh — enemy's present, Colonel.
Enemy spotted (many)	Lots of bogies here, sir.	Uh-oh! Lots of bogies here, sir.
Ready to engage	I got an itch I'm ready to scratch, sir.	What should I do, sir?
Engaging	I'm goin' for it, Colonel.	Uh — here goes …
"Yahoo"	What a rush!	Yeah!
Taunts	Gonna show you how bad a cat can scratch!	Ever get a cat-scratch, you scum?!
Compliment Blair	You *are* a living legend, Colonel.	Awesome shot, sir.
Help needed	Dammit! Need some help, Colonel.	Could use assistance, sir.
Want to abort	This one's pretty hairy, Colonel …	Uh — request permission to abort, sir.
I am aborting	This cat's turning back, Colonel.	Aborting mission, sir.
Ejecting	Ejecting now, Colonel!	Emergency! I'm ejecting!
I'm dead	Don't let me croak for nothin', Colonel!	Oh noooo! I'm gonna diiiiie!
No damage (0%)	This cat is scratch-free!	Not a scratch, sir.
Some damage (25%)	A few hits. No big deal, sir.	Took some damage — but I think I'm okay.
Half damage (50%)	I took damage but they won't get rid of me that easy, sir.	Pretty bad, sir. Half my systems are out.
Much damage (75%)	It's bad, sir. Hope I can make it back.	I'm screwed …
Killed fighter	Chalk one up for *me*, Colonel!	Hey?! I got one!
Friendly fire	This is hard enough, sir, without you firing at me.	I do something wrong, sir? Why're you firing at me?
Annoyed	What's *with* you, Colonel?!	Aren't there rules against firing at your own men, Colonel?!
Sustained friendly fire	Colonel, you leave me no choice — prepare to defend yourself.	War hero or not — you're gonna pay for this …

SEETHER

FULL NAME UNKNOWN

A man with a past more mysterious than Vagabond's, Seether is a consummate warrior. Skilled, quick and merciless, he's used to winning any time he engages in battle. He is just as demanding of himself as he is of his men, and has no leisure activities beyond practicing piloting maneuvers and continuing his studies of technology, military history and psychology.

CONFEDERATION PILOT

Aggressiveness 2
Trigger Happy 2
Courage 2
Flying 2
Gunnery 2
Loyalty 0
Verbosity 2

ACTOR ROBERT RUSLER PORTRAYS SEETHER

SEETHER

Communication	Response
Yes	Off course, Colonel.
No	Negative, Colonel.
No enemy spotted	I suppose no one wants to die today.
Enemy spotted (few)	Enemy in sight.
Enemy spotted (many)	Heavy enemy presence.
Ready to engage	Armed and ready ...
Engaging	Now engaging ...
"Yahoo"	Death is sweet!
Taunt	Border Worlders — prepare to die.
No damage (0%)	Damage? You must be joking.
Some damage (25%)	A few chance hits. Nothing worth mentioning.
Half damage (50%)	Random damage. Nothing I can't handle.
Much damage (75%)	My craft is nearly totaled. But it's not the machine — it's the man.
Killed fighter	One less Border Worlder in the sky.
Friendly fire	Trying to get my attention, Colonel?
Annoyed	Don't cross me, Colonel. You'll regret it ...
Sustained friendly fire	Time to die, Colonel.

HAWK

COLONEL JACOB MANLEY

A veteran from the Kilrathi war, Hawk finds it difficult not to see everything in terms of war. Luckily for him, the universe doesn't wear the mantle of peace very often, and there is always somewhere that needs the talents of a natural-born strategist and commander. Hawk sees every conflict in black and white, and never has qualms about the wisdom of any decisions that he makes.

BORDER WORLDS PILOT

Aggressiveness.......2
Trigger Happy..........2
Courage 2
Flying.........................1
Gunnery....................2
Loyalty.......................2
Verbosity...................1
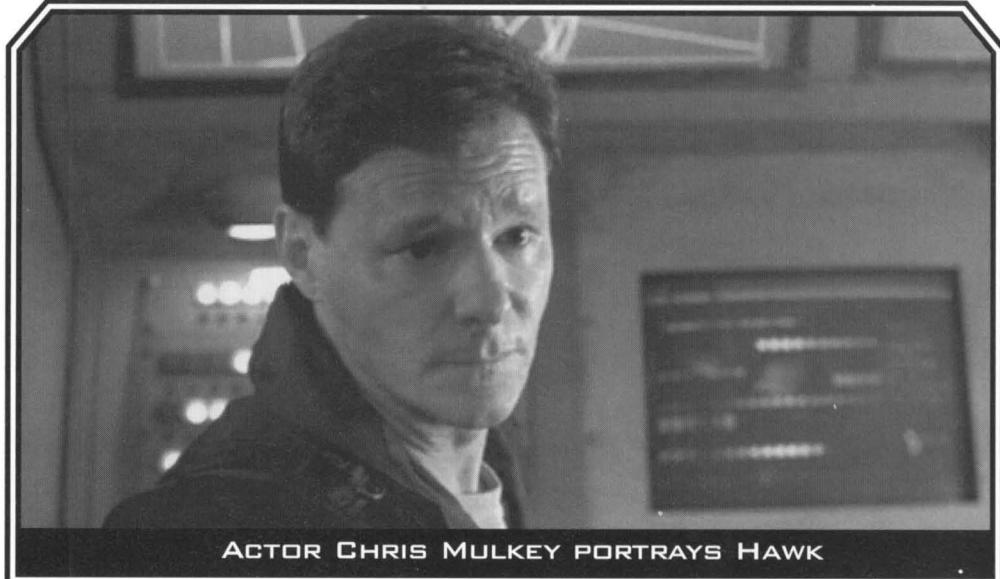
ACTOR CHRIS MULKEY PORTRAYS HAWK

HAWK'S RESPONSES

Communication	High morale	Low Morale
Yes	Affirmative.	Okay.
No	Negative.	Can't do it, Colonel.
No enemy spotted	Looks like they're too scared to show, Colonel.	Guess I ain't gonna kill anyone here.
Enemy spotted (few)	Enemy sighted, Colonel.	There's the bastards.
Enemy spotted (many)	Really gonna raise my kill score here.	Plenty of victims here, Colonel.
Ready to engage	Just give the word, Colonel. Can't wait.	Ready ... and waiting.
Engaging	These guys are history!	Breaking formation.
"Yahoo"	I looove to win!	Down with Confed!
Taunts	Prepare to meet your maker!	Suck vacuum, you scum!
Compliment Blair	Damn good move, Colonel!	Nice one, Colonel.
Help needed	I could use a hand here, Colonel.	Wanna help me out here, Colonel?
Want to abort	Damn! I need to retreat!	Need to abort mission, Colonel.
I am aborting	Heading back to base, Colonel.	I'm outta here.
Ejecting	Ejecting!	I gotta bail!
No damage (0%)	No problems here, Colonel.	Don't worry about me.
Some damage (25%)	Not bad, Colonel.	I'll make it.
Half damage (50%)	Half my systems are shot but I can handle it.	Half my systems are shot.
Much damage (75%)	I'm in *bad* shape, Colonel.	Couldn't be worse.
Killed fighter	Yessss! Look at 'im burn!	Another one down.
Friendly fire	Watch your aim, Colonel.	Watch it, Colonel.
Annoyed	You're shooting at the wrong guy, Colonel.	Hey?! Why you firin' at me?!
Sustained friendly fire	Always knew you were on *their* side! Get ready to die!	I'm taking you out, you Confed-lover!

PANTHER

COLONEL TAMARA FARNSWORTH

More comfortable with moment-by-moment tactics than galaxy-spanning plans, Panther is a tough woman who has more than once proven that she can hold her own against "the boys." Her honesty and commitment to her people have made her a popular commander, although her tendency to lead from the heart (rather than by the book) has somewhat crippled her career.

BORDER WORLDS PILOT

Aggressiveness.......1
Trigger Happy.........1
Courage....................2
Flying.........................2
Gunnery....................1
Loyalty......................2
Verbosity..................2

ACTOR ELIZABETH BARONDES PORTRAYS PANTHER

PANTHER'S RESPONSES

Communication	High Morale	Low Morale
Yes	You got it, Colonel.	Affirmative.
No	Negative, Colonel.	No way.
No enemy spotted	Nobody's home.	I like it when nobody's home.
Enemy spotted (few)	There's the bad guys.	Uh-oh! Enemy spotted!
Enemy spotted (many)	Lots of bogies.	Looks like we're in for a real fight.
Ready to engage	Ready to dance.	Ready to engage.
Engaging	Movin' in ...	Engaging enemy now.
"Yahoo"	Pour it on!	Yessss!
Taunts	Let's dance, you bastards!	Say good-bye, bad guy!
Compliment Blair	Great shot, Colonel!	Nice work.
Help needed	Need some help, Colonel.	I need assistance.
Want to abort	Hate to say it, but I need to pull out.	I need to abort mission.
I am aborting	I'm pulling out. Good luck, Colonel.	Aborting mission.
Ejecting	I'm ejecting.	I'm bailing out!
No damage (0%)	Not a mark on me, Colonel!	I'm fine.
Some damage (25%)	Just a few dents, Colonel.	Only minor damage to report.
Half damage (50%)	I took some hits.	I've had better days.
Much damage (75%)	Sorry, Colonel, but I've about had it.	*Lots* of damage. I'll be lucky to get back to base.
Killed fighter	Score one for the good guys!	I got one.
Friendly fire	Careful, Colonel.	Watch your fire.
Annoyed	Something wrong with your guidance systems, Colonel? That's *me* you're shooting at!	Stop firing at *me!*
Sustained friendly fire	Guess you've decided to go back to their side! Prepare to die!	You leave me no choice, Mr. Turncoat.

QUALITY

JASON YENAWINE

Quality has more than 10 years of experience as a pilot. In terms of combat, he is all business, though he has respect for fighters on both sides of any battle. He's a career man who has always been too smart to see himself as a hero. His friends consider him non-romantic and are aware he has a temper that never explodes — but always feeds his energy.

CONFEDERATION PILOT

Aggressiveness.......1
Trigger Happy 2
Courage 1
Flying........................0
Gunnery 2
Loyalty 2
Verbosity..................1

GAMBLER

TONY MORONE

The most notable feature about Gambler is his mysterious lucky charm. For hours he will sit, staring at the stars outside the officers' lounge viewports, twirling what looks to be a coin between his fingers. When people approach, however, the object disappears, and he glares at the interlopers until they retreat. The second most notable thing about him is that even the other new pilots seem somewhat intimidated by him.

CONFEDERATION PILOT

Aggressiveness.......2
Trigger Happy 2
Courage 0
Flying........................1
Gunnery 1
Loyalty 0
Verbosity..................2

SCAR

MARTIN GALWAY

For a man who claims to be a pilot of long-standing, Scar has a certain hesitance about his assigned ship that either implies a certain lack of experience in the cockpit, or perhaps just an unfamiliarity with the types of ships flown by the Confederation. His knowledge about weaponry systems is excellent, however, as is his skill at hand-to-hand combat. He seems familiar with certain other people on board the ship, although he remains aloof to strangers.

CONFEDERATION PILOT	
Aggressiveness	2
Trigger Happy	2
Courage	0
Flying	2
Gunnery	2
Loyalty	0
Verbosity	2

MOOSE

PATRICK BRADSHAW

Moose is a big, quiet, nice guy, although most people find his size intimidating. In terms of combat experience, he's logged thousands of hours of combat time, but most of the actual combat was the "hot and heavy" variety. He became a fighter because he wanted to see the galaxy first hand, but also "wants to make a difference." He was the first in his family to enter service rather than work in an industrial field.

BORDER WORLDS PILOT	
Aggressiveness	2
Trigger Happy	2
Courage	2
Flying	1
Gunnery	1
Loyalty	2
Verbosity	1

VERO

MADELEINE FOX

Vero has a strong techno-logical background, as well as being a top-notch fighter. Business-like and goal-oriented, she's somewhat introverted and difficult to get to know. When asked why she joined the Confederation, she replies that it was the best way to get her hands on the state-of-the-art technology. Any questions about her background are politely deflected.

CONFEDERATION PILOT

Aggressiveness.......1
Trigger Happy 2
Courage 2
Flying........................1
Gunnery....................1
Loyalty......................2
Verbosity...................1

HAZARD

MARK LEWIS

He is a decent pilot, but has yet to prove himself to be trustworthy. His somewhat sly, shifty demeanor is compounded by the fact that he seems relaxed in any situation. His commanders have always seemed impressed by his flying capacity and sharp intellect, but those who do not like him account this to his ability to "adapt" to what people want to see.

CONFEDERATION PILOT

Aggressiveness.......1
Trigger Happy 1
Courage 1
Flying........................1
Gunnery....................2
Loyalty......................2
Verbosity...................2

STEEL

MARC BAIRD

He wants to do everything. He wants to blow the Border Worlders into dust. He learns fast and seems to have accelerated physical capabilities. No one knows where Steel was born, but he has definitely adopted the *Lexington* as his home. The Confederation is his only family — and sometimes even his superiors can't stand his enthusiasm.

CONFEDERATION PILOT	
Aggressiveness	1
Trigger Happy	2
Courage	2
Flying	1
Gunnery	1
Loyalty	2
Verbosity	2

FHISH

WESTON GIUNTA

Without a doubt, Fhish is the friendliest among the new pilots, but there is always a sense of urgency and pressure in his conversations that makes some people nervous. Unlike the other newbies, he doesn't stick to "his own kind," but seems to circulate throughout the ship, looking for conversations. Within two weeks of his arrival, nearly everyone had met Fhish; none felt as though they knew him.

CONFEDERATION PILOT	
Aggressiveness	2
Trigger Happy	1
Courage	2
Flying	2
Gunnery	1
Loyalty	2
Verbosity	1

SLASH

JEFF SHELTON

An excellent pilot, Slash is very rarely seen away from the ships info terminals when he is not flying a mission. Although the subjects that he accesses seem random, he has the air of a man driven by some unfulfilled need — as though he had to "catch up" somehow on the wealth of information that the ship can provide. Rumors circulate that he never even sleeps, but rests by just reading more slowly.

CONFEDERATION PILOT	
Aggressiveness	1
Trigger Happy	2
Courage	1
Flying	2
Gunnery	1
Loyalty	2
Verbosity	1

EXCELL

PAULINE SAAB

Excell believes in being up front with people — in "telling it like it is." Born and raised on the stellar trader ship *Seeker*, she has seen little of anything "planetside" and doesn't necessarily understand the rules of social interaction. She can easily be thought of as insubordinate, but her attitude is just the result of her background. Most people find her friendly enough, although they never feel completely comfortable around her.

BORDER WORLDS PILOT	
Aggressiveness	2
Trigger Happy	2
Courage	2
Flying	1
Gunnery	1
Loyalty	2
Verbosity	1

BLADE

GEORGE OLDZIEY

Blade has been flying with the Border Worlds for a relatively short time. Before he became a combat pilot, he was a skimmer pilot for reconnaissance groups. He gets the job done, but is more used to seeing combat only at a distance. He's not used to worrying about comrades, or hearing them die. The idea of potential "friendly fire" situations somewhat unnerves him, and sometimes he gets confused in combat.

BORDER WORLDS PILOT

Aggressiveness.......1
Trigger Happy 2
Courage 2
Flying.........................1
Gunnery....................2
Loyalty.......................2
Verbosity...................1

TEX

SEANN HALL

Tex came up through the ranks by being a skilled pilot and has always impressed the "brass" with his abilities. Personally, however, he struggles daily to improve, never being satisfied with his current accomplishments. His attitude makes him somewhat unpopular among the rank and file, as the other pilots feel defensive about their own skills when he denigrates his own.

BORDER WORLDS PILOT

Aggressiveness.......1
Trigger Happy 2
Courage 2
Flying.........................2
Gunnery....................1
Loyalty.......................2
Verbosity...................2

YAEGER

ANTHONY SOMMERS

This guy's philosophy is work hard and play harder. People who think that Yaeger is stupid have either gone away thinking themselves right, or have been shown how far from the truth they can be. He is a self-confident pilot who works best within defined parameters and rules. He'll sometimes admit that he *loves* to blow things up — fighters, cap ships, buildings, anything.

BORDER WORLDS PILOT

Aggressiveness.......0
Trigger Happy.........1
Courage 1
Flying.........................2
Gunnery....................2
Loyalty 2
Verbosity..................1

TURBO

FRANK ROAN

Turbo used to be a jovial person who liked to sing and tell jokes and generally make friends wherever he could. He was known for being able to "shake a good time out of anything." Then his squadron was wiped out, not in battle with the enemy, but in a freak cascade of systems malfunction that Turbo swears was engineered by the Confederation. He lost his sense of humor, but his allegiance to the Border Worlds solidified overnight.

BORDER WORLDS PILOT

Aggressiveness.......1
Trigger Happy.........1
Courage 2
Flying.........................2
Gunnery....................1
Loyalty 2
Verbosity..................1

PRIMATE

J. ALLEN

Friendly but serious accurately describes Primate. He is determined to eradicate the menace and sees everything in terms of the effort against the Confederation. He's been training since he was six, and when the Kilrathi war ended he was only getting started. Now he's channeled his energies toward the Confederation Aggressors. He follows those who lead by example, not by "charisma."

CONFEDERATION PILOT	
Aggressiveness	1
Trigger Happy	1
Courage	2
Flying	2
Gunnery	2
Loyalty	2
Verbosity	1

HIPPIE

DAVID DOWNING

Five years ago, Hippie got burned after turning in a superior for "behavior unbefitting an officer." It was a hard way to learn that politics often mean more than right and wrong. He's been slightly paranoid ever since. He wants to fit in, but can't relax. It gives him an untrusting, "shifty" feel that people don't feel comfortable with — and don't trust.

CONFEDERATION PILOT	
Aggressiveness	1
Trigger Happy	1
Courage	0
Flying	1
Gunnery	2
Loyalty	2
Verbosity	1

MINER

RODNEY BRUNET

Miner gave up on being a "people person" before he hit his teenage years. His home sector has a very dark sun, and he comes from the farthest planet out. The icy and inhospitable conditions didn't allow for very much people interaction. He's an audience — a people watcher. Most people feel he is cold and calculating, never realizing that he has a much clearer idea of events than nearly anyone else onboard.

CONFEDERATION PILOT

Aggressiveness	2
Trigger Happy	2
Courage	2
Flying	1
Gunnery	1
Loyalty	2
Verbosity	2

PLAYER TAUNTS

Time for an early retirement!

I hate easy targets.

You're going home in a box!

What are you? An Academy dropout?!

Come on! Take it like a man!

Geez. At least pretend you know how to fly!

Let's kick some ass!

You won't see tomorrow!

You call *that* flying?!

Better put in for your pension!

ORDNANCE

GUNS

Damage. How many points are subtracted from your target's shields and armor. Remember that you have to go through a ship's shields before you can damage its armor, and that the armor (of at least one section) must be destroyed before you can destroy the ship itself.

Energy. How many Power points (from your current energy pool) are used by firing the gun. The energy pool is constantly replenished, unless your Power Plant is destroyed.

Velocity. The maximum speed, at klicks per second, the gunbolt or missile can travel.

Duration. How many seconds a weapon remains active.

Refire Delay. How long (usually a fraction of a second) it takes before the weapon can be fired again.

FIGHTER GUN STATISTICS

Weapon	Damage	Energy	Velocity	Duration	Refire Delay
Laser	18	10	2000	2.5	0.25
Ion Cannon	30	30	1800	2.5	0.35
Heavy Ion Gun	50	40	1600	2.5	0.35
Mass Driver	45	25	1200	2.0	0.30
Heavy Mass Driver	60	50	1200	2.5	0.45
Particle Gun	43	22	2100	2.0	0.40
Photon Gun	32	30	1800	2.5	0.45
Heavy Photon Gun	74	60	1200	2.5	0.45
Plasma Gun	67	44	1200	2.5	0.50
Tachyon Gun	70	40	1600	2.0	0.35
Light Tachyon Gun	50	30	1900	2.0	0.35
Special Weapons					
Scattergun	30	100	1800	2.5	0.35
Fission Cannon	variable	500/sec	1300	4.0	0.00
Leech Gun	10 *	5	1300	3.0	0.25
Stormfire Gun	4	5	2000	1.5	0.00

* Leech permanently reduces the power supply by 10 points.

GUN ENERGY

In these hostile times, your guns are the key to your survival. Understanding the way they work helps to keep you from expecting too much from them, or not demanding enough.

Forces. Whether the ship is used by the Confederation (C), Border Worlds (B), Pirates (P) or the Black Lance (BL).

Energy. The maximum energy (in nanoJoules) that a ship can hold in reserve for its guns varies. The amount of energy that is released each time the gun is fired is directly proportional to the amount of damage done to the target. It does not vary, regardless of your Weapon power allocation.

Regeneration. The amount of energy (in nanoJoules per second) that a ship can transfer to its energy reserves at the default setting (25% of power). The higher a fighter's regeneration rate, the faster its guns can fire. The rate listed in the table changes as the default power settings are adjusted.

Fighter	Forces	Energy	Regeneration	Fighter	Forces	Energy	Regeneration
Arrow	C/P	500	20	Banshee*	B	500	30
Bearcat*	C	900	30	Avenger*	B	800	70
Hellcat*	C	600	22	Vindicator*	B	300	20
Longbow*	C	800	80	Dragon*	BL	680	80
Razor	P	500	20	Excalibur	C	680	25
Thunderbolt	C/P	750	25				

B = Border Worlds, C = Confederation, P = Pirate, BL = Black Lance

*Ships the player can fly.

These numbers are based on the default setting of 25%. Remember that by increasing the amount of power you are sending to your guns, you can increase the amount of time you can hold sustained fire. Try it — you'll like it. In fact, by increasing the setting to 50%, you can pretty much fire continuously without depleting your energy supply — you might run the risk of having your shields breached, or some other catastrophe, though. Always keep an eye on the consequences of any changes you make to the power allocations.

SPECIAL GUNS

To access, cycle through the list of available Special Weapons by pressing Ⓗ. Although it's not mentioned above, your camera is also considered a "Special Weapon." None of the special guns use the I.T.T.S. circle — they must be aimed manually.

Scattergun. This is essentially an ion "shotgun." Multiple beams are emitted from a single crystal, resulting in a destructive force nearly twice as powerful as the common laser blast. The Scattergun has a wider effective range than most weapons.

Fission Cannon. Select the Fission Cannon, and charge it by holding down your trigger for no more than ten seconds. (After about ten seconds the gun begins to overload and the charge dissipates.) The longer you charge the cannon, the greater the amount of damage it does. Watch the gun power indicator (at the right of your screen) to see when the Fission Cannon's energy pool is at maximum. If you begin to charge the weapon before the pool fully recharged (for instance, the indicator shows 50% of maximum), only the amount of energy in the pool will be available. If the Weapons system is allocated less than 25% of the ship's power, it will take longer for the energy pool to recharge.

Leech. The Leech Gun is a purely defensive weapon. It doesn't actually "leech" energy at all; the opposite occurs. It overloads the target's power system, damaging it beyond repair and often shorting it out completely. This leaves a ship drifting helplessly. When using the Leech gun on capital ships, an indicator will appear next to the gun power indicator that gives you a percent that the ship is leeched (LX%). This is very useful when leeching a ship, to tell you how far you have to go before it is fully leeched.

Stormfire. Stormfire is essentially a smaller, faster version of a mass driver (i.e., it shoots projectiles, not energy). Each individual shot does significantly less damage than any other weapon, but it adds up quickly! Although it has significantly less range than energy-based weapons, it has an interesting side effect. It marks its target — you can see the target sparkle when you are closer than 1500 klicks. This makes it very effective against slippery targets such as cloaked ships.

MISSILES

Damage. How many points are subtracted from your target's shields and armor. Remember that you have to go through a ship's shields before you can damage its armor, and that the armor (of at least one section) must be destroyed before you can destroy the ship itself.

Velocity. The maximum speed, at klicks per second, the missile travels.

Acceleration. The rate, in klicks per second increase, at which the missile achieves maximum speed.

Maneuverability (Man.). An indication (on a scale of 1 to 100, poor to excellent) of how effective a missile's autodirect capabilities are.

Duration. How many seconds a weapon remains active.

Lock Time. How many seconds it takes to lock the missile onto the target.

FIGHTER MISSILE STATISTICS

| Missile	Damage	Velocity	Acceleration	Man.	Duration	Lock Time
Mine	400	—	—	5	1800	—
Friend-or-Foe	250	1200	800	80	20	—
Image Recognition	450	1600	600	80	15	1.0
Leech	*	1400	800	80	20	5.0
Heat Seeker	400	2000	800	80	10	2.0
Torpedo	2000	1000	200	20	16	12.0
Dumbfire	800	3000	1000	—	5	—
Mace	1000	1200	800	—	20	—
Starburst	100	1200	800	80	20	—
Coneburst	100	1200	800	80	20	—
MIP	0	320	200	30	n/a	2.5
Flash-Pak	60000	800	400	60	3600	5.0

* Leech permanently reduces the power supply by 150 points.

MISSILE NOTES

Sometimes, after you've been flying in tight circles trying to swat a particularly pesky enemy, it just feels *good* to get that oh-so-brief lock on him and watch the fireworks. The rest of the time, though, there simply aren't enough hard-points to be able to rely on missiles as a regular combat option.

Dumbfire. Just think of these things as small, fast torpedoes and you've got the idea. Don't try to down a fighter with one, but against a cap ship they're invaluable. Pile them on the racks, find a hard-to-kill ship, and when you can see the whites of its eyes, so to speak, release them. You've got to be close enough so the ship can't maneuver away, but these things carry a punch when they hit. No other missile carries a bigger wallop than a Dumbfire.
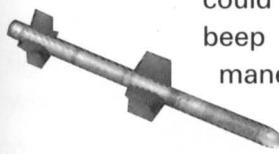
Heat Seeker. The big problem with Heat Seekers is time. These fellows take a long time to lock on their target. You could be blown to space mist before you hear the friendly beep of a target lock. However, if you know you're more maneuverable than the other guys, but their firepower scares you, you should pack a rack or two of heat seeking missiles. They're good against rear-mounted turrets, and they're *great* when aimed at rear thrusters. They don't carry the bang that a Dumbfire does, so if you're trying to take down a cap ship, don't waste time being delicate. Just release them all and hope they hit something important.
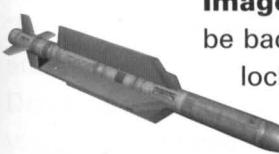
Image Recognition. This is a good "I'm going on a mission, be back in an hour" kind of missile. It doesn't take too long to lock onto a target, and it delivers more damage than any other missile but the Dumbfire. It's fast, too, and less likely to be shaken than most others if you fire within 1000 klicks of your target.

Friend-or-Foe. There's good news and bad news about this missile. The good news is that you don't have to wait for a lock. You see a bad guy, you launch a missile. The bad news is that you probably won't kill him unless he had one foot in the grave already. These are fairly weak weapons, and tend to only frighten someone who's taken serious damage already.

Leech. Okay, this is a missile that doesn't go "boom." Where's the fun, you ask? It's the joy of taking a faster, stronger opponent and cutting him down to your size. A Leech hit reduces power, weakens speed, and hampers gun energy and repair. If he didn't have a big enough energy source to begin with, you might just cut him out of the picture entirely. The best use of the Leech, however, is as a ball-and-chain on a fast, powerful ship that's got you in its sights.

Mine. There are only two rules about mines.

1) Keep an eye on the radar to keep track of where you dropped them, so you don't run into them yourself.

2) Don't run into them anyway.

The best time to use them is when bogeys are popping out of nowhere to gun you down. Seed the area and hope for the best.

Mace. Mace missiles, truthfully, are more fun than they are useful. The trick to a mace missile is that as long as you hold down the missile "trigger" (depending on what control device you used to fire it) it flies straight ahead. When you release the trigger, it explodes. If you wait more than twenty seconds, it will explode anyway.

Starburst. This is essentially a timed, unidirectional grenade. As long as you hold down the missile "trigger," it will fly straight ahead. When you release the trigger (or wait longer than 20 seconds) bullets will explode in all directions.
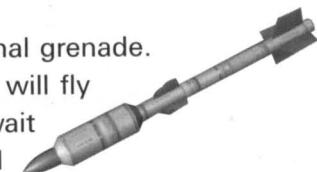
Coneburst. This is a modified Starburst missile. The only difference is that it doesn't just spray bullets in one direction; they go in a generally forward direction. Be careful not to release the trigger before it gets out of range of your own ship. Once again, don't release the trigger when it's close to your ship.

M.I.P. This "missile" has approximately the same lock time as an Image Recognition missile. Try to clean up the battle zone as much as possible, taking out any turrets that might target the M.I.P. Also, spamcans tend to attach better on the upper side of a cap ship, so it's better to aim toward that general area.

Flash-Pak. This is a fairly foolproof toy. Since it's too valuable a weapon to be used against something as small (and quick) as a fighter, its targets are too slow to evade it. Lock onto your target and pull the trigger, then watch it spin end over end until it lands. Then all that's left is sitting back and watching the fireworks!

TORPEDOES

It's a novice move to go flying at a cap ship, firing lasers in a death-defying strafing run. Even if you get past the ship's shields — and you won't — your fighter's guns will be lucky to scratch their paint. You need a weapon packed with heavy-duty explosives. You need a torpedo.

The thing to remember is that big ships are watching for torpedoes. The turrets will swat an enemy fighter for fun and practice, but their primary assignment is to destroy any torpedoes before they get close enough to do damage. Therefore you've got to take the payload in yourself. Don't even think about releasing a torpedo until the cap ship is so close that you can't see anything but its hull. Then fire the torpedo and angle away. If the ship doesn't go "boom," you've got about ten seconds to go back and drop another torp before its shields get back up to full strength. Don't hesitate to call your wingman to help, since you'll make a beautiful target during your attack run for any enemy fighters.
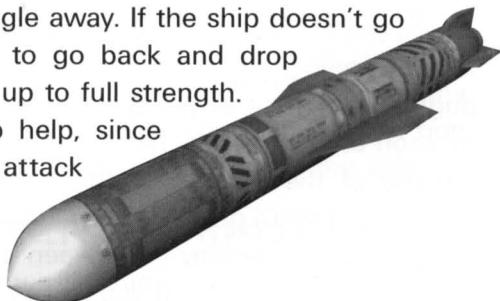
DECOYS

Death is bad. Decoys are good. You are going to die if you don't use decoys.

The basic idea of a decoy is that it distracts a "locked" missile away from you, giving you time to get out of the way. It's a simple concept. A Heat Seeker missile, for instance, focuses on your exhaust and aims for it. A decoy therefore puts out the same heat as a fighter — in fact, it puts out a bit more in order to better entice the missile away from you. In much the same way, a decoy fools Image Recognition and Friend-or-Foe missiles. These weapons don't actually track your ship with a little photograph in their computer brains, they simply record the unique signals that your ship emits, and keep a lock on those emissions. The decoy, therefore, also emits the same signals as your ship, only a bit louder/stronger. In the early days, decoys had to be programmed by hand to match the emissions of each pilot's fighter. That turned out to be problematic, and now each ship's signals are continuously being fed to the decoys through contacts in the hardpoint mountings. When the decoy is released, it emits and amplifies those signals.

You have to release a decoy for it to do any good. Your ship's computer is programmed to recognize when a missile is locked on you. There is a distinctive tone, an attention-riveting yellow dot on the radar display, and if the missile is in view, you'll see the telltale green brackets on the viewscreen. The second you hear the tone or see the yellow dot, drop a decoy. If you think the situation warrants it, drop several.

You've got to help the decoy do its work. A missile that has your tail locked is worth giving your undivided attention, and it takes precedence over a dogfight any hour of the day. You can help the decoy in two ways. First, as soon as you drop it, hit the afterburners and peel away at an angle to get out of the missile's path. It'll confuse the missile, and reduce the chance that you'll get tagged by accident. Second, try to get someone else — preferably an enemy — between you and the missile. That means lean on the afterburners until you've put one or two ships behind you. Third, don't relax until the yellow dot on the radar has disappeared. Remember, missiles are faster than you are.

On Ace level and above, a single missile hit can be fatal. Ace pilots sometimes will fire multiple missiles at you. Decoys will not always be successful, so evasive maneuvers are something you should become good at.

DAMAGE

Every ship is divided in fourths like a pie. There are front, rear, right and left quadrants. Even hits to the bottom and top are assigned to the appropriate quadrant (e.g., underneath the cockpit is considered within the "front quadrant").
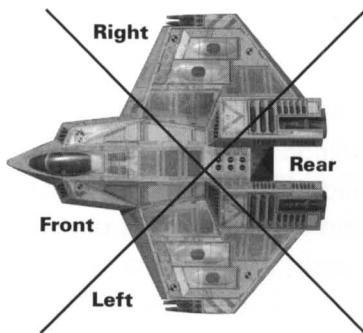
Each quadrant is protected by a separate shield and armor system. As long as the shields for the quadrant under attack are functioning *at all*, your ship won't take any damage. Once your shields are gone, your armor is all that's between you and breathing vacuum. Armor, as in medieval times, just means layers of thick, protective material. It doesn't hold up very long in a laser fight, obviously enough — and once the armor gets blown away, your ship itself starts taking damage.

Ships can take a certain amount of damage before they're destroyed. **Shield Energy** represents how much abuse your ship's shields can take.

Fighter Type	Shield Energy per Quadrant	Fighter Type	Shield Energy per Quadrant
Arrow	150	Hellcat*	220/165
Avenger*	400/340	Longbow*	500/425
Banshee*	80/60	Razor	75
Bearcat*	280/238	Thunderbolt	188
Dragon*	500/375	Vindicator*	100/79

*Ships the player can fly.

You'll notice that the ships that you can fly have two different numbers. One's for you (because you're special) and the other is for everyone else. For instance, if you're flying a Dragon, you can take a beating of 500 points to any quadrant before you turn into space-dust. Your wingman, however, will pop after taking 375 points of damage, even though he's flying the same ship.

YOUR INTERNAL FIGHTER COMPONENTS

When your shields are down and your armor is gone, a well-placed bolt from an enemy could very likely fry one of your systems. What system goes down depends on what part of your ship was tagged.

|	
Right Quadrant Systems	Communications, Shields, Auto-Repair System
Left Quadrant Systems	Targeting, Guns
Back Quadrant Systems	Afterburners, Power Plant, Engine
Front Quadrant Systems	Radar and everything else in your VDU's

If your Power Plant gets damaged, you won't get as much power going to your engine, weapons, shields or damage repair. If your engine is dented, your acceleration is going to be much lower. A component won't necessarily stop working altogether if it gets hit, but it won't work as well. If it's destroyed (takes 100 points damage), you won't get any more good out of that piece of equipment. In other words, if your Guns get completely melted, just go on home — they're not going to get better. (If your power plant or engines get destroyed, they blow up in a deep-space fireworks display, and your friends say goodbye to an empty casket.)

There's no real way of knowing what's going to stop working when your ship gets hit, but some systems are more fritzy than others. The systems in each quadrant are listed "most delicate" first. For example, Communications will go out if an enemy so much as spits at you, but it takes a real pounding before your Auto-Repair system gives up the ghost. Sometimes your ship takes damage, but none of the systems are harmed. It happens. Life can be random.

Your enemies have it rougher. Their ships only register the total damage done. Instead of the systems going blooey one at a time, their ships just explode.

CAPITAL SHIPS

Sometimes you're going to be asked to destroy a ship that's much, much, *much* bigger than you are. You'll recognize one when you see it. In the world of *Wing Commander* a "capital ship" is a huge, city-sized monster. They're as dangerous as they look, too. You'll know when one spots you because all of a sudden there will be half-a-dozen turrets pouring hot death in your direction.
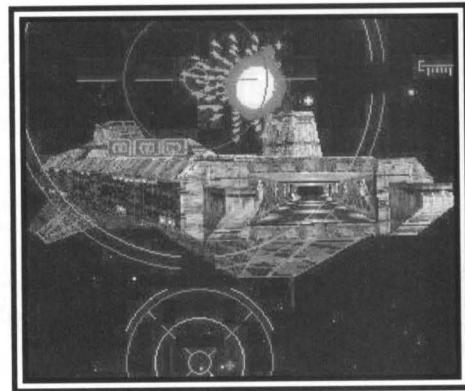
Don't despair. You can actually take one of these things down. First thing you should do is look for its weak points. Your shots will do half-again their normal damage on a weak point. A Dumbfire missile, for example, normally does 800 points of damage. On a weak spot it'll do 1200 points of damage.

Cap ships have three main weak points: the bridge, the rear thrusters and anywhere inside the hull. You can recognize the bridge because it has a lot of little windows toward the front of the ship. The rear thrusters are the big glowing area at the back, (surprise, surprise). Any cap ship that carries fighters has a launch bay just like the carrier you left. Flying into the flight bay is a wonderful way of blowing up these behemoths.

The best things to use against cap ships are guns and torpedoes. Guns are good because you won't run out of them as you will anything else. Torpedoes are good because they pack more punch than anything else you can aim at a cap ship. The best route to go, as you might guess, is a combination of both. Save your missiles for the enemy fighters.

A word of warning: be careful of the defenses. It's usually a good idea to pick off the turrets before you start buzzing around any of these things. If you can find an angle of attack where none of the turrets can hit you, that's fine too. Always keep your eyes open for enemy fighters. You are at your most vulnerable when you're aiming for a cap ship. A wingman who will protect your back while you make a strafing or torpedo run is worth his weight in gold.

Your biggest obstacle, after the turrets, is the fact that as soon as you punch a hole in its shields, the shields immediately begin to regenerate. They're fast; in many cases they'll be back to full strength in a single second. The best thing to do is have your wingman pounding away on the far side of the cap ship. That will reroute some of the regeneration energy to the other side of the ship, and it will take longer for the shields on your side to recover.

Finally, don't lose control when you make a run on a cap ship. Slow down a bit, and pay attention to where you're flying. Cutting engine speed and relying on afterburners for acceleration is usually quite effective.

DAMAGE POINTS

Cap ships and other large targets have significantly higher damage points than other ships. It's handy to know how much damage you're going to have to hit it with before it explodes. Note that the regeneration rate is an overall function. In other words, if your wingman is doing damage on the far side of the ship, it will take the side you are attacking longer to regenerate its shields.

Target	Shields *	Armor *	Body *	Regen Rate **
Carrier	800	300	6000	800
Cruiser	600	400	6000	600
Destroyer	600	400	3000	600
Frigate	600	400	2000	600
Shuttle	250	150	2000	30
Starbase	800	300	3000	80
Transport	600	400	3000	300

* Maximum per quadrant

** Maximum overall shield regeneration rate, per second

POWER SETTINGS

If you don't know the intricacies of adjusting your power settings, the other pilots are going to laugh at you. You should at least understand the basics:

- There are four settings: Damage Repair, Engines, Weapons and Shields.

- Diverting more power to your engines doesn't make you faster, but it does take less time to get to your top speed. Engine power below 25% will slow you down, however.

- Diverting more power to your guns doesn't make them any more powerful, but they do recharge faster, so you get more shots per minute at the enemy.

- Diverting more power to your shields doesn't make them stronger, but speeds up their recharge rate, so you'll need less time to "heal up" a shield breach.

- Diverting more power to Damage Repair, as you'd expect, speeds up your repair rate.

CHANGING POWER ALLOCATION

- Press P to display the power distribution screen.

- Press P again to cycle through the four power points.

- Press [to decrease the current system in 5% increments.

- Press] to increase the current system in 5% increments.

- Shift] sets the current system's power to 100%.

- Shift [resets all power systems to 25% each.

- Ctrl] locks a system's power allocation at its current level.

Adjusting your power settings is where real artistry comes to the fore. Once you learn this skill, it becomes decidedly easier to destroy your enemies, and you become much harder to kill. Those are good goals to have.

The trick is that your supply of energy is limited, so whenever you increase the power to one system, the others' power is decreased. You can see how this works by watching the display in the upper-left VDU. You can control this to some degree by "locking" one system before you increase another— but remember that you'll be taking even more energy from the remaining two systems. If you lock down three systems, obviously you won't be able to change the fourth.

POWER TIPS

Changing power settings is situational, but a few basic tactics are widely accepted:

- If you're being pounded in a gunfight, up your shields and weapons a bit. The more bad guys there are, the more you should raise them. Yes, you're borrowing the power from your engines and guns, but staying alive is more important. On the other hand, don't let your engines drop below 25%, because your top speed will begin to decrease.

- If you're heavily damaged and the fighting isn't over, increase your shields and decrease your weapons and engine power.

- If the fighting is over, pump everything into Damage Repair for a while before you head to the next nav point. No sense in wandering into a warzone when you've got holes in your shields, and it's always best to get the job done as soon as possible. Don't forget to reset your systems allocations before you autopilot, though.

If you want a thrill (and probably a short one), you can play games with the allocation. Strip everything from shields and repair, and put it all into engine and weapons. You can even drain engine power for extra weapon recharge. It all depends on how good you are at maneuvering, aiming and staying alive.

COMBAT TIPS

PREFLIGHT

Rule number one: don't panic! No one is going to courtmartial you if you take an extra moment or two to get everything arranged just the way you like it.

The first thing to do, usually, is to synchronize your guns (Ctrl G). Sure, you can just select full guns or only use your lasers, but synchronizing your guns is the most effective way of hurting the enemy. If you actually do hit the enemy, having all your guns fire at exactly the same time means that you do the most possible damage.

Make sure that you have a good missile ready to go, too. If you don't have a current favorite, consider readying a Friend-or-Foe missile. This missile is a good standby since it doesn't take long to lock, you don't have to worry about tagging your wingman, and it packs a fair punch.

After you launch from the carrier, crank up your speed and psyche yourself to go into battle.

STRAFING RUNS

Strafing is an offensive maneuver that is generally used against targets that are either moving much more slowly than you are (such as a transport), or are non-mobile (such as a ground target). You can either approach at a low angle of attack and open up your guns, or dive in and fire as often as possible before peeling away to begin again.

Keep in mind that you don't want to fire before your shots will do any damage. In general, wait until you are at least 3000 klicks from your target. If you see that your shots have punched a hole in a shield, you might want to fire a missile or two before the target's shields have time to recharge.

If you're in a Banshee or Dragon, the autoslide can help make your strafing attack even more effective. It takes practice, but if you tap Caps Lock at the right moment, you can change the angle of your ship's nose without changing course. This means that you can keep firing longer. (See **Slide & Pop**, below.)

Remember, a strafing run makes you a pretty target for any enemy fighters. They'll try to get on your tail the second you head towards the slower target. Ignore them as long as you can, and then try to maneuver away or behind them. If you run out of juice for your guns, afterburn away from the fighting and let your guns power back up.

SLIDE & POP

Both the Banshee and the Dragon can autoslide, and that means that you've got another maneuver available to you — the Slide & Pop. The beauty of the autoslide is that when you release it, your ship *immediately* heads in the direction that its nose is pointing. That means you can abruptly change your angle, leaving your enemy with the task of trying to arc around to get back on your tail. If it looks like he might accomplish it, Slide & Pop again. There is no limit to the number of times that you can Slide & Pop — you can go around in circles or zigzag like a butterfly.

ACES

Aces are identified by the word "ACE" following their ship designation on screen. If an ace shows up, go after him first. After 10-15 seconds, he will begin firing lots of missiles. Nothing will distract an ace from trying to fry you in your cockpit, and he's got missiles and decoys that work better than the average variety. Watch out for ships that start tag-teaming you, too. Don't get so focused on one enemy that you let his buddies line up on you. Terrain missions are generally considered the hardest missions in the game. The pilots down there are amazing. Be prepared to take the battle to them.

SEETHER & MANIAC

If you find yourself facing either of these two guys in battle, don't be caught daydreaming. They're the best. Make up your mind to kill them, and don't waste any time listening to what they have to say. The longer they live, the more chance they have of getting on your tail.

CHEATS

Don't use the cheats! The cheat codes in *Wing Commander IV* can do serious damage to your hard drive, and run an even better chance of ripping up your saved games. Consider this section as advice from a friend.

Usually, within a year of a game being released, someone discovers the way the designers, programmers and playtesters skipped around inside the game during its creation. The cheat codes get passed around by word-of-mouth, until nearly everyone knows how to jump to certain missions, or kill all the on-screen enemies with a single key-stroke. It sounds like a good idea, doesn't it?

Watch out, though! The cheats for *Wing IV* are extremely unstable. If someone offers you a way to cheat around in *Wing IV*, you're running the risk of losing everything on your hard drive. You've been warned!

GUNS

Guns are great because they're a renewable resource, but don't make the mistake of thinking that you can't run out right when you need them. If you keep your trigger glued down, eventually your energy pool will dry out. That means that unless you allow time to recharge, your firing speed will slow down to a trickle.

Full guns, of course, drains power much more rapidly than firing one gun at a time.

There's only one time that you should hold down the trigger for more than a shot or two, and that's on a strafing run. The rest of the time, you should concentrate on firing only when you can hit something. Three bursts per shot is about maximum. Getting all excited and firing constantly is a novice trait, and a bad habit to establish.

Another rookie move is to pound away at one guy for awhile, then get distracted and take off after someone else. You'll have to wear down the shields of an enemy before they go "pop," and that'll never happen if you give them a chance to regenerate. Once you pick your target, stick with it unless something serious comes up.

TARGETING

Targeting is probably the single hardest skill to learn in fighter-to-fighter combat. The first few times you're in the cockpit, you probably started firing the second you saw an enemy, and stopped when he disappeared from view. If you were lucky, you hit his shields a time or two, and realized that tracking a fighter is hard enough, let alone keeping your I.T.T.S. centered on it.

Here are a few tips to help you keep a bead on your enemy:

Match his speed. The slower you go, the quicker the enemy will zip out of your sights. If you're going too fast, you'll probably overshoot him. Lock your target ([L]) on a ship, then order your ship to match its speed ([Y]).

Watch the I.T.T.S. Trust the little green circle. Don't keep aiming at the ship; you'll only hit it when you get very close. Keep your eye on the I.T.T.S. and train yourself to pull that trigger anytime you see the red "sure hit" bracket light up. If it makes you feel better to fire only when the I.T.T.S. circle is on the ship, that's fine. As a matter of fact, that's great. If your target is that close, or heading directly toward/away from you, you'll probably nail him.

Stay on his tail. As tempting as it is to take potshots at ships that fly across your view, your best bet is to get on someone's tail. That's the only way to ensure you'll hit your target several times in a row.

Practice. Targeting is not a skill you can mail-order. Get out there and work at it.

REAR GUNS

The basic purpose of flying with a wingman is to have someone guarding your back when you really need an extra gun. The Longbow, Avenger and Vindicator come equipped to let you be your own best buddy.

When you switch your view from front to rear, your ship will continue along its course, and manual control switches to aiming the rear gun. The auto tracking of the rear turret is very good, not at destroying enemies, but keeping them off your tail. The Longbow, Avenger and Vindicator all have an auto fire system for the rear turret. If you use the rear turret view to manually shoot an enemy, the keyboard arrow keys will still allow you to maneuver the ship, while the joystick or mouse turns the turret. This allows you to maneuver your ship into position for better shots, or avoid enemies.

FULL GUNS

The playtesters rarely pick and choose one gun over another. The first thing they do when they begin a mission is choose Full Guns, and synchronize the bursts.

Sometimes when fighting smaller, more maneuverable craft, you can unsynchronize your guns so that more shots hit the target, wearing down their shields.

SCATTERGUN

The scattergun would be much more popular if it weren't so greedy for power. It carries a wallop that can really damage the enemy, but the delay between one shot and the next is so slow that the cost and benefit balance.

FISSION

The Fission Cannon is a favorite weapon of season pilots. It requires experience and skill to use, since manual targeting is necessary. However, with a Fission Cannon, two accurate shots can destroy any fighter.

LEECH

The Leech gun is more popular with some playtesters than others. Generally acknowledged as a fine weapon, some people have problems with the amount of energy it requires. Rather than use it in heavy combat, a careful pilot will hold it in reserve for salvage or rescue missions. It's a matter of preference.

STORMFIRE

Not the most popular gun in the game, the Stormfire is a good weapon against slower, heavy ships, or ships with light shields and armor. One good thing about the Stormfire is that it uses no weapons power, so you can divert more energy to shields, damage or engines. Watch your ammo count, though!

MISSILES

The easiest mistakes to make when firing a missile are being either too close or too far. When are you too close to fire a missile? When the ship you've targeted is about to fly by you, making the missile turn in an arc to follow it. By the time it gets back on target, the missile will have run out of fuel and "died." (Sometimes a ship can run into a missile before it passes you, but that's sheer luck.)

You're too far away if the missile dies before it reaches its target. You're also too far away if your enemy can drop a load of decoys and escape. The best route is to be right behind a ship, positioned close enough to hit it with your guns.

Obviously, if *you're* the target of a missile, you'll want to make the missile arc around and die. If you can head toward the missile *at an angle* and fly by it, you can usually stop worrying about it. Dropping decoys, of course, should be automatic. If you're in a fast ship, you can try to outfly the missile. The Slide & Pop (p. 101) is a good last-ditch maneuver.

You can use a missile to scatter a group of enemies, since they'll usually give incoming missiles their full attention.

MINE

Only a few playtesters ever use mines. Those who do, use them against cap ships. At the start of combat, fly close to the cap ship, drop your entire load of mines, and fly away. While you battle the fighters, the cap ship will be plowing through the mines — and will be weakened by the time you take it on.

FRIEND-OR-FOE

Everyone agrees. If you know the mission only has one nav point, but that there are a lot of enemies waiting for you, Friend-or-Foe missiles are what you want. As soon as you hit the combat area, fire them all off. They'll take care of their own targeting. Then you just fly in and mop up what's left. They're also great to destroy several annoying fighters while you concentrate on a carrier.

IMAGE RECOGNITION

Some people like IR's, some don't. An IR does a lot of damage with a relatively short lock time. What's more, it isn't particular how you acquire a target — you can lock it on from the back, the front or the side equally effectively.

LEECH

Leeches are always good. Once you know exactly how powerful they are, you can use them in almost any situation.

HEAT SEEKER

Heat Seekers do a lot of damage, but take a long time to lock. Also, they work much better when you're on the tail of an enemy (locking onto his exhaust heat), then they do at any other angle.

TORPEDO

If you've got four torpedoes, you should be able to vaporize any ship in the game. In fact, the best thing about an Avenger is that it carries so many torps.

STARBURST

It's a nice effect, but don't count on it saving your skin. There are better things to do with your hardpoints.

CONEBURST

Conebursts are most popular with people playing on Rookie level; It seems to do more damage on the easiest setting. Generally, the Coneburst is used against a cap ship. Fire and hold down [Enter]. Track the missile's progress by using [F8]. When it gets close to the cap ship, release [Enter].

STRATEGIC RETREAT & RECUPERATION

Don't die when you don't have to. If tucking tail and running out of the fire zone for a quick breather is what is going to keep you alive, then scoot out of there. It certainly helps if your wingman is still around to cover your back for a moment. Check that you've got a fair amount of power (more than 25%) allocated to shield regeneration, and don't let anybody follow you out of the arena. Drop a couple of mines, use your rear guns, or just wait for a good time to sneak away (such as right after you win a dogfight).

If you've cleared out all the fighters in the area, you might also want to just hold off a bit before heading to the next nav point. Putter around for a bit while your ship builds its systems back up. There's no telling what's waiting for you at the next zone.

SHAKING ATTACKERS

Do whatever works. If you can, use the Slide & Pop maneuver (page 101). Drop some mines. If you don't have mines, slow down a bit and drop some decoys for them to hit. Veer like you can't feel the G's. Hit the afterburners. Swear a lot ... or whatever shakes the enemy off your tail.

M.I.P.S

Manned Insertion Pods are an effective method of getting personnel into position — especially places where fighters would be immediately seen and destroyed. It is up to you to get the M.I.P.s close to position and fire them at their targets. They can maneuver to their exact docking location on their own.

LAUNCH

Whatever you do, don't go down immediately after firing a M.I.P. You will run into it, and that's just embarrassing.

Pause at least a second between firing your M.I.P.s. If you fire them all at once, you run the risk of shooting one right into another.

The guys inside the cans prefer to land on top of the cap ship. They also like a nice, quiet run. Either leech the ship or take out the turrets topside, then fire the M.I.P.s toward the upper half of the ship.

RETRIEVAL

M.I.P.s show up as blue dots on the radar, just like friendly fighters.

Turn on the rear view in your lower-left display (Ctrl 4). If you're lucky enough to line up on a spamcan perfectly, you want to know about it.

Maneuver your ship so the M.I.P.'s radar dot is touching the outer ring. That's as close to right behind you as you can get.

Switch to Rear View (F4).

This is important! Before tractoring the M.I.P. into your ship, make sure the characteristic sequence of expanding haloes is flashing on your rear screen. If your guns haven't switched over correctly to the tractor beam, you want to know about it *before* you aim at the guys in the pods.

Once you have selected the tractor beam and the M.I.P. is in view, it will be surrounded by a white targeting circle, so it is easy to see.

Aim and fire the tractor beam. Keep retracting until you hear the sound of it being locked into your ship.

Always remember that you can use the keyboard arrow keys to maneuver your ship while you're operating the rear turret.

It's important that you retrieve all the M.I.P.s. Leaving someone behind, no matter what the reason, is a mistake that will cost you the mission.

CAPITAL SHIPS

CRUISERS AND CARRIERS

Ships this big are tough to take down. There are several techniques that you can use against them, but by and large you want to have help.

Leech. Smack it with a Leech gun or missile. You'll at least slow it down.

Turrets. If you can take out the turrets, you've got the battle half-won. Concentrate on targeting the turrets on one side, if possible. Even the one portion of a side, like the rear section, would be a big step forward.

Sliding. Once you've got the turrets destroyed, make a strafing run or two. The autoslide is particularly useful, especially if you weren't able to knock out all of the turrets. If you're lucky, the cap ship won't be able to target you, and you'll be able to slide down the entire length of the ship, nibbling away at its defenses.

Double-Team. Because a ship has a finite amount of resources to allocate to its shields, if you have someone firing on the far side of the ship, the shields on your side will regenerate at half-speed (since the other half of its power is being used to regenerate the shields on the other side). That gives you a much better chance at punching through the shields and doing *real* damage.

Back Door. Get in close to the rear of the ship, eliminate the few turrets that are back there and just sit there, pouring your gunfire into the engine area. If you have any Heat Seeker missiles, fire them too. It will take a long, long time, but if you insist on taking out a cap ship all by yourself ....

DESTROYERS

The best thing to do with a destroyer is to cripple it with either a Leech missile or your Leech guns. If you can disable the turrets, you're home free. Fire off a torpedo or two, and make a strafing run, and then hammer with guns and torpedoes at any weak spots you created.

If you can't disable the turrets, by all means take out however many you can. Sometimes the best thing to do is to sneak in from the back, take out the four or so turrets at the rear and then hammer at the engines with guns and missiles.

TRANSPORTS

Transports shouldn't be too difficult. These things have a fair amount of shield points, so firing a spare torpedo at it is the quickest method. They really aren't worth a Leech missile. Once again, you can yank out the teeth by eliminating the turrets before you get too close.

FIGHTING SPECIFIC FIGHTERS

ARROW

Use Image Recognition missiles from behind. Also, try to use your guns unsynchronized so you keep them under constant fire.

BANSHEE

These guys maneuver well — whatever you do, don't let them get on your tail! More than one Banshee at a time is deadly! Make full use of your wingman, and eliminate them as quickly as possible.

BEARCAT

Leech and Scattergun are the most effective weapons against the Bearcat. Don't rely on the sliding maneuver to save your skin; the Bearcat's guns auto-track. Attack from above, and roll often.

DRAGON

Scatterguns work well against the Black Lance ships. When Dragons uncloak, attack the damaged ones first. You can trail a cloaked Dragon by following the "damage" sparks. They're good at getting on your tail, so when you hear the sound of someone uncloaking, prepare to evade. Note that when you are in a Dragon, you can always see other Dragons, even when they're cloaked.

EXCALIBUR

Simple advice: stay behind them, and blast them at your first opportunity.

HELLCAT

Since the Hellcat's shields regenerate quickly, stick with each one you attack until it is destroyed. Don't let more than one get behind you, and try not to lose them if they make a head-on pass.

LONGBOW

Match its speed often to make sure you don't fly past it; it's very slow. Use short afterburner blasts and rolls, plus salvo your missiles in pairs.

RAZOR

Use an Image Recognition missile — it vaporizes one with one hit. Razors tend to circle around, which makes it easy to take them head on. Ramming them also works!

THUNDERBOLT AND AVENGER

Keep in mind that these are very dangerous ships. Leeching them is a good idea. They can turn on a dime, and their turrets adjust their aim to nail you.

The Slap. The trick to handling them is to fly above them, keeping them always at the bottom of your view. To shoot one, briefly dip the nose of your plane down, fire off a few shots, and then pull back up until it is at the bottom of the your view again. The difficult part is adjusting to keep on top of it.

Autoslide. An autoslide strafe is fairly effective against a Thunderbolt, but be careful. Thunderbolt pilots are prone to kamikaze attempts right before they're destroyed. Be prepared to peel away.

VINDICATOR

Don't worry too much about the rear turret, it's only a weak laser. Be especially careful about following them near the ground. They'll try to wreck you.

COLLISIONS

Running into other things is bad! Don't do it on purpose, and especially don't do it by accident. Actually, you'll probably survive a collision with another fighter and come out of it in better shape than the other guy, but at best it will really rip up your armor — you'll have a weak spot right where all your communications and other electronics are located (if you got smashed in the front). Watch out for ships that take damage and suddenly slow down.

Now this is a secret, and certainly isn't suave or realistic, *but* ... if you fly with COLLISIONS OFF, ramming is your best weapon. It does a lot of damage to the other guy (but none to you); it's a great way to make a cap ship go *pop*. It's definitely not playing fair, though.

PLANETSIDE

Ground missions are a lot like space missions — just try to avoid flying directly into the ground and you'll be fine. There are only a couple of differences to keep in mind.

Ground Targets. Taking out targets on the ground is a basic get in, do it, get out scenario. Turrets will not fire at anything lower than they are, so if you get the opportunity to fly in a valley, do it. None of the turrets in the hills will react to you.

M.I.P.s. If you've got to drop off a Manned Insertion Pod, don't go at full speed. You don't want to overshoot your target.

BRANCHING PLOTS

Conversation is the second most important form of interaction in this game, ranking closely behind combat. It moves the plot, defines your own character traits and affects how other characters will act later on. In spaceflight, you can tell how your conversation choices have been affecting other characters by how they respond to your commands and their current situations.

Some conversations occur only if you've made certain choices previously. For instance, if you decide not to put someone in the brig, you'll never have the conversations where you have to defend your choice to lock him up. Some choices have serious effects on how the game progresses, and others have only minimal impact.

Some conversations vary depending on previously made choices. People can treat you warmly, suspiciously or even bitterly depending on command and morale choices you've made. Remember, though, you can't always be nice to everybody.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

If you played *Wing Commander III*, the idea of "conversation branches" is going to be nothing new. Sometimes during a conversation you'll be able to choose between two different responses — and often you'll make new friends and enemies as a result. However, there are differences in the effects of *Wing III* conversations and the ones you'll find in *The Price of Freedom*.

As before, your choice of response might affect the morale of whomever you're talking to. When you disagree with Hawk, his morale goes down. When you side with him, his spirits rise. High morale is a good thing in a wingman, since pilots with high morale fly better than depressed ones. If you find yourself brought into an argument between two crew members, you'll eventually choose one side to support — occasionally raising one person's morale and lowering the other's. At the beginning of the game, everyone (with variable morale) is set at 8. The good news is that winning or losing missions does not affect anyone's morale. In the same way, not all conversations affect morale.

*You should know, though, that **only Catscratch, Hawk and Panther's flying are affected by morale.** Everyone else flies normally.*

Some of your choices will affect the *plot* of the game, rather than character morale. Deciding which side of the war you want to serve is perhaps the best example to offer. There are also conversations branches that actually determine what winning endgame you see at the conclusion of the adventure.

The conversations that affect either morale or plot are listed in pages 114-115.

WRONG CHOICES

Choices generally aren't right or wrong. It's just the same as real life — sometimes you'll make a decision that pleases one person and ticks someone else off. All in all, you can expect that when people don't like a decision that you make, they'll hold a grudge until the stars burn out. Fortunately, the people who approve of your judgments will tend to do you favors. It's impossible to please everyone, so just say whatever seems reasonable to you.

Sometimes, however, you can put your foot in your mouth so far and so hard you'll choke on it. This happens at the very end of the game. For every "wrong" choice you make, you'll be awarded negative points. Correct choices earn positive points. At the end of the scene, the endgame you'll experience will vary according to your score. The more "right" choices you make, the better your endgame will be. (See Series O, page 209, for specifics.)

LOSING TRACK

Wing Commander IV doesn't have winning and losing tracks as previous *Wing Commander*s do. Instead there are plot branches that are entirely up to the player's discretion.

Sometimes you'll get to choose between three possible missions in a series. In those cases, you will be able to "return" and complete one of the two remaining missions. The third, however, will remain unflown. Pick the ones that seem right for you.

HAPPY ENDINGS

If you win, congratulations! You get to view the winning endgame! But wait ... there are two winning endgames. The ultimate outcome of a successful game is based on the choice you made at the end of Series J. If you took the "K" path, and then went on to win the game, you'll see a different endgame than if you undertook the "L" path. The theory is that the kind of life you'll go on to live after the Border Worlds conflict will be strongly influenced by the kind of person you are. The decision at the end of Series J is a strong indication of what sort of person that is. Therefore, the ending adjusts to reflect that specific decision.

MORALE

As mentioned above, only Catscratch, Hawk and Panther's flying are diminished when their morale is low. That doesn't mean, however, that no one else *has* morale. Maniac, Dekker and Pliers are also affected by your decisions. They are just more subtle in how they express it.

Maniac will fly "by the book" if you give him reason to hold a grudge. Keep in mind that "by the book" is not Maniac's best style. He'll fly better towards the end of the mission, though, after he thinks he's made his point.

Dekker will take a little more time to run his missions if he wants to prove a point. That's not necessarily bad, but remember that the longer he takes, the more time the enemy has to line up on your exhaust pipe.

Pliers will still be helpful no matter what you do. He just won't be friendly — and he won't make offers twice when he feels he's been slighted.

Morale is either low (0 - 5 points) or high (6 - 15 points) in *Wing Commander IV*. The best way to tell if your wingman has high or low morale is to check what your wingman says against the Low Morale or High Morale columns in the pilot transmissions on pages 67-77.
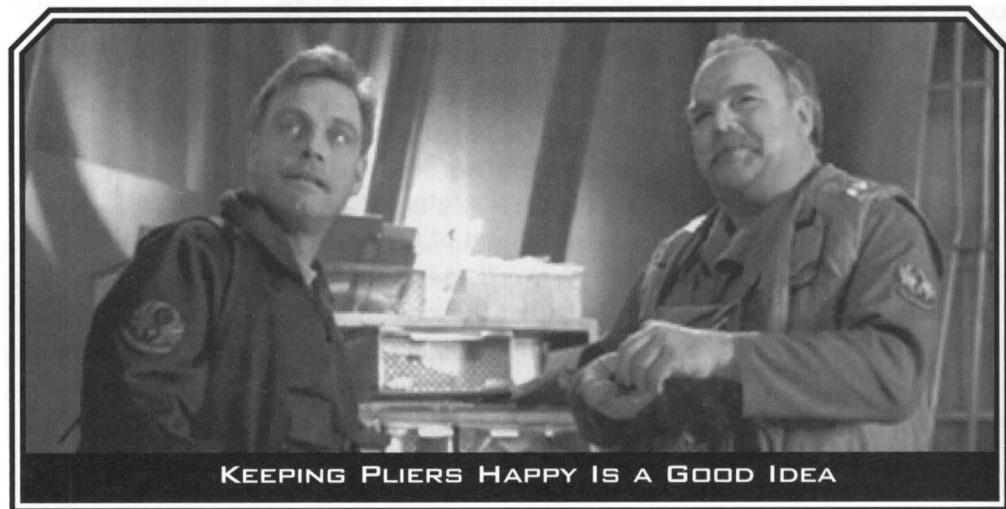
KEEPING PLIERS HAPPY IS A GOOD IDEA

MORALE AND PERFORMANCE

As mentioned before, pilots fly differently depending on whether their morale is high or low — see **Wingmen** on page 62. Pilots with high morale fly normally. Those with low morale will not follow orders well, and their aim and piloting skills will be sluggish and significantly less refined.

PLOT CHART EXPLANATIONS

The chart on the next two pages maps out conversation and decision branches, your possible responses, and any morale or plot effects.

Mission. The cinematic part of the game is named according to the mission you fly *afterwards*. For instance, you meet Catscratch between missions B1 and B2, so that scene is listed as a B2 conversation.

Sometimes you can temporarily skip a conversation without it "disappearing" — you can talk to the same person any time throughout that series.

Where. This is the room where you'll find the available conversation. Note that most conversations are situation based, and disappear after you fly the next mission. (The one exception is in Series D, when Maniac talks about the bridge being destroyed. That conversation is available throughout the entire series.) The plot of *Wing IV* is filled with personalities and events, so you'll want to stay on top of things by talking to everyone who appears.

Who. Different people have varying opinions on the situations that crop up. Sometimes they know things of importance, sometimes they're looking for reassurance, and often their morale is affected.

Your Response. You'll have to decide how to reply. The person you speak to will react differently depending on what you choose to say. Don't assume that the top answer on the game screen is the "correct" one; sometimes the best choice is the one on top, while other times it's the one on bottom. (Just to make things even trickier, sometimes there is no "better" choice!)

Result. Not every choice you make will have an effect on either morale or plot. Sometimes, however, a small decision will have repercussions much later in the game. The ones with no effect are marked with a dash (—) in the Result column.

TALLY

Something a little different happens during Series O, at the end of the game. When you are verbally sparring in the Assembly, giving the wrong answer can prevent you from winning the game. Your opening decision must be correct, or you'll get tossed out of the Assembly. At the end of the scene, your replies must be "correct" at least two out of three times. The more "right" choices you make, the better your endgame will be. See Series O, page 208, for specifics.

Mission/Where	Who	Your Response	Result
A1 Star Port Canteen	Confed Vet	*Help him out.*	Helps you in Mission J2.
		Straighten him out.	Withholds info in Mission J2.
A1 Star Port Canteen	Seether	*This pisses me off.*	—
		Ain't my business.	—
B2 Flight Control	Catscratch	*I like this kid.*	Catscratch +1
		What's this kid want from me? ...	Catscratch –1
C1 Officers' Lounge	Catscratch	*New brass — pain in the ass.*	Catscratch +1
		Kid asks too many questions.	Catscratch –1
C2 Officer's Lounge	Maniac/	*Confed's abusing their authority.*	Vagabond
	Vagabond	*Confed needs to clamp down.*	Maniac
C3 Officers' Lounge	Catscratch	*The kid's got a point ...*	Catscratch +1
		Who's he to question Confed?	Catscratch –1
C3 Flight Control	Maniac	*I need to see what's going on.*	View optional scene.
		I don't feel like spending time in the brig.	Skip optional scene.
D2 Launch Deck	Pliers	*Bet this old coot knows what he's doing.*	Pliers +1
		Here's a guy they should have put out to pasture.	Pliers –1
D3 Hangar Bay	Pliers	*Well, he* is *resourceful.*	Pliers +1
		I knew this guy was trouble.	Pliers –1
E1 Upper Galley	Panther	*Yeah ... You'd think ...*	Panther +1
		She's dreaming ...	Panther –1
E2 Hangar Bay	Pliers	*This thing could be very useful ...*	Pliers +1
		I can't trust this guy.	Pliers –1
E2 C. I. C.	Hawk	*Gotta admit. I did.*	Hawk +1
		This guy's bloodthirsty.	Hawk –1
F2 Officers' Lounge	Catscratch	*What a self-important bastard.*	Catscratch +1
		Everything's going to hell.	Catscratch –1
G2 Galley	Panther/	*Straighten this kid out.*	Panther +1/Catscratch –1
	Catscratch	*Do I look like I have all the answers?*	Catscratch +1/Panther –1
G2 Storage Hold	Hawk	*He's missing the point ...*	Hawk +1
		Bitter guy.	Hawk –1
J3 Storage Hold	Tolwyn	*I owe him ...*	—
		I owe him nothing.	—
J3 Chart Room	Panther/	*Panther's right.*	Panther +1/Hawk –1
	Hawk	*Hawk's right.*	Hawk +1/Panther –1

Mission/Where	Who	Your Response	Result
K1 Galley	Dekker/ Maniac	*Maniac's gonna get creamed.*	Dekker takes longer on his mission.
		This I gotta see ...	Maniac flies "worse" on his mission.
K2 Storage Hold	Panther	*Tempting, but I can't let that happen.*	Panther +1
		Maniac's on his own.	Panther –1
K4 Control Bay	Pliers	*Who needs wingmen?*	Pliers +1
		I prefer a wingman.	Pliers –1
K4 C. I. C.	Panther/ Hawk	*There's always hope ...*	Panther +1/Hawk –1
		We die trying ...	Hawk –1/Panther +1
K4 Chart Room	Dekker/ Sosa	*Shut down the supply line.*	—
		Send Dekker in.	—
L2 Storage Hold	Hawk	*Time to be a captain.*	Hawk +1
		What a whiner.	Hawk –1
L4 Galley	Pliers	*I could use the extra firepower.*	Pliers +1
		I got a need for speed.	Pliers –1
L4 Chart Room	Dekker/ Sosa	*Collect weapons.*	
		Collect fighters.	
M1 Launch Deck	Pliers	*Let me at these babies.*	Pliers +1
		They could be death-traps.	Pliers –1
N1 C. I. C.	Panther/ Hawk	*Panther's right.* *We can't kill civilians.*	Panther +1/Hawk –1 (Winning Endgame 1)
		Hawk's right. This is war.	Hawk +1/Panther –1 (Winning Endgame 2)
N4 Launch Deck	Pliers	*It's now or never.*	Pliers +1
		Too risky.	Pliers –1
O2 Assembly Floor	Tolwyn	*Seize the moment.*	You continue
		Careful. Fools rush in ...	You lose
O2 Assembly Floor	Tolwyn	*You're not sucking me in.*	—
		Two can play that game.	—
O2 Assembly Floor	Tolwyn	*Dance around him ...*	—
		Confront him.	—
O2 Assembly Floor	Tolwyn	*He'll trip himself up.*	Correct*
		He's power mad.	Incorrect*
O2 Assembly Floor	Tolwyn	*Like bioweapons?*	Correct*
		Like secret, unmarked fighters?	Incorrect*
O2 Assembly Floor	Tolwyn	*Tell them more ...*	Correct*
		Attack Tolwyn.	Incorrect*

*see explanation, page 209.

MISSION ANALYSES

Wing Commander IV is subdivided into series, each consisting of up to five missions. A mission contains several scenes, and usually culminates in getting in a ship and heading into space.

Climbing into a cockpit means you have a goal to accomplish. Your objectives are usually explained in a preliminary briefing by your commanding officer, and generally involve patrols, escort duty, defending an installation, and other tasks along those lines. Once you achieve your objective, the mission is counted a "success" and all that remains is to get your ship home intact. The path your game follows is largely dependent on how well you perform in the cockpit.

If a mission carries any hidden effects, such as changing the plot or morale, it will be noted in the **Mission Analysis**.

SERIES CODES

Code. The "true" name of the series, as the computer knows it. Pressing Alt V at any point during spaceflight displays the mission code.

Location. The system(s) you are in, or go through, during the series.

Missions Run. The number of missions that you can run if you follow a linear path (i.e., don't go back and replay parts of the game).

Total Missions. The total missions that exist for all different plot choices.

Code	Location	Missions Run	Total Missions
A	Nephele	1	1
B	Hellespont, Sol, Tyr	4	6
C	Masa	3	3
D	Silenos	3	3
E	Orestes	2	2
F	Silenos	3	3
G	Orestes, Pasqual	3	3
(No H or I)			
J	Peleus	2	3
K	Circe	4	7
L	Speradon	4	7
M	Telamon, Callimachus, Axius	3	4
N	Ella, Sol	4	5
O	Sol	1	1

MISSION TABLE OF CONTENTS

SERIES FLOWCHART

A Go to Blue Point Depot to be briefed on your "reactivation."

→ **B** Rescue the bioconvergence chemist who has been abducted.

→ **C** Be the galactic "cop-on-the-beat" to keep the Border Worlders under control.

C

D Escape from the *Lexington,* while keeping the Confed fighters from destroying the *Intrepid.*

→ **E** Retrieve lost data from the Confederation communications station.

F Capture the *Intrepid,* and hunt down and destroy all deserters.

G Rescue and protect the Kilrathi settlers as they head for their new homeworld.

→ **J**

J Find and destroy the cause of electrical "jamming" in the Peleus sector.

K Assist the legitimate Border Worlds government in its civil war against Confederation-backed forces.

L Gather ordnance vital to the continued Border Worlds resistance.

M Discover the Black Lance ... and who their commander is.

M → **N** Make your way back to Earth and keep *Vesuvius* from getting there first.

→ **O** Take on Admiral Tolwyn's forces, and convince the Assembly that he's wrong.

MISSION FLOWCHART

1 = Losing Endgame 1
2 = Losing Endgame 2

A1 → B1 → B2A / B2B → B3 → B4A / B4B → C1 → C2 → C3 Defect? / Don't Defect?

B4A → L → 1
C1 → L → 1

C3 Defect? / Don't Defect?
→ 2
→ 1
→ D1 → D2 → D3 → E1 → E2 → G1 → G2 → G3 → J1
D1 → L → 2
D3 → L → 2
E2 → L → 2
→ F1 → F2 → F3 Defect? / Don't Defect?
F3 → You Lose
F3 → 2
→ G1

J1 → J2 → Panther? Or Hawk?
J2 → L → 2
P → KA, KB, KC Fly 2 of 3 → Rescue Catscratch? / Continue Mission? → RC → K3A → Destroy Supply Lines? / Deliver Marines?
Continue Mission? → CM → K3B
H → LA, LB, LC Fly 2 of 3 → Rescue Catscratch? / Continue Mission? → RC → L3A → Destroy Supply Lines? / Deliver Marines?
Continue Mission? → CM → L3B

Destroy Supply Lines? / Deliver Marines? → DS → K4A → W
→ DM → K4B → W
K4A → L → 2
K4B → L → 2
→ Black Lance? / BW Fighter?
Destroy Supply Lines? / Deliver Marines? → DS → L4A → W
→ DM → L4B → W
L4A → L → 2
L4B → L → 2
Black Lance? / BW Fighter? → BL → M1A → W → M2
→ BW → M1B
M1A → L → 2
M1B → L → 2
M2 → Wrong Code → 2
M2 → Correct Code → M3 → W → Flash-pak?
M3 → L → 2

Flash-pak? → Y → N1A → W → N2
→ N → N1B → W → N2
N1A → L → 2
N1B → L → 2
N2 → W → N3 → W → N4 → W → O1 → W → Persuade?
N2 → L → 2
N3 → L → 2
N4 → L → 2
O1 → L → 2
Persuade? → Y → Winning Endgame
Persuade? → N → 2

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CINEMATICS EXPLANATIONS

"Cinematics" refers to the part of *Wing Commander IV* that takes place when you aren't in the cockpit. In other words, it's the "interactive movie" part of the game. The cinematics section of each mission analysis is essentially all the information that you'll need in order to make the best choices in this interactive stage.

AVAILABLE CONVERSATIONS

Tolwyn (BR): via communiqué, asks about the situation

Maniac (OL): female scientist

Catscratch (OL): asks about Paulsen
New brass — pain in the ass. → +1
This kid asks too many questions. → −1

The names in bold are the people who are available for conversations. This example shows that in the Officers Lounge (OL) Maniac and Catscratch are available, and also that a communiqué from Tolwyn is waiting in the briefing room.

CONDITIONAL CONVERSATIONS

Seether (EC): we've seen each other before (available only if you chose *"this pisses me off"* in A1)

There will occasionally be an "if" statement in parentheses after a character's name. That shows that a conversation is only available if you made a certain decision previously.

POSITIVE/NEGATIVE NUMBERS

Catscratch (OL): asks about Paulsen
New brass — pain in the ass. → +1
This kid asks too many questions. → −1

A name followed by lines in italic indicates that the character's morale is influenced by a decision you make during the conversation. (Players who remember *Wing Commander III* may notice that there is no "ship morale.")

When a choice affects a person's morale, a positive or negative number will follow the options. In the example above, Catscratch's morale is raised if you choose the first option and lowered if you choose the second. Morale is cumulative. If Catscratch's morale was -2, for instance, choosing the "new brass" option would only raise it to -1 (i.e., he would still be unhappy).

STORY BRANCHES

Maniac (FC): invites to a drink as you are ordered off deck

I need to see what's going on. →

      Paulsen/Seether (FD): Seether comes aboard

I don't feel like spending time in the brig. →

      Maniac (OL): Maniac buys you a drink

When a conversation leads to a branch in the story, the branching options are listed in italic. If a conversation results from the branch, they are indented below the italic options.

ROOM ABBREVIATIONS

The chart below gives two-letter abbreviations of the locations where characters are found. These abbreviations are used in the Cinematics sections of each mission.

Nephele III Bar	NB
Cockpit	CP

T.C.S. *Lexington*

Eisen's Cabin	EC
Officers' Lounge	OL
Briefing Room	BR
Flight Control	FC
Flight Deck	FD

B.W.S. *Intrepid*

Combat Information Center (C. I. C.)	CC
Chart Room	CR
Control Bay	CB
Hangar Bay	HB
Storage Hold	SH
Galley	GL

Black Lance Starship

Briefing Hall	BH
Passageway	PW

MISSIONS EXPLANATIONS

Always keep in mind that flying is an art based on individuality. Optimal wing-man selection and ship configuration varies from player to player. However, some mission elements are set in stone, such as objectives and what consti-tutes winning or losing a mission. Those elements are listed in each analysis.

Other things are less concrete. The "best" ship to fly is always a debatable topic, and who should be your wingman is even more a matter of opinion. The ORIGIN playtesters have given their best recommendations, however, and those are also noted wherever applicable.

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Maniac, Catscratch, *Vagabond*

In *Wing Commander IV*, wingmen tend to eject rather than stay in a doomed ship. In other words, although they might leave you to face the enemy alone, you don't have to worry about them dying. When the playtesters highly recom-mend one wingman over any others, that wingman's name appears in italics.

In the example above, Maniac and Catscratch are available for this mission, but Vagabond is probably the best person to have protecting your back.

Ships Hellcat, Thunderbolt

This line lists all available ships for the mission, with the recommended ship in italics.

Recommended Loadout Heat-Seeker missiles
Usually the default loadout is satisfactory, but when it isn't — watch out! This line tends to appear only when the mission packs a surprise. Generally speak-ing, though, you should discover what weapons work best for you, and stick with those.

SUCCESS AND FAILURE

Success You must destroy 7 ships to be successful. Go to Mission C3.

Failure Transport is destroyed. Go to Losing Endgame 1.

This is the "official line." Usually the summary and "Success" are essentially identical (with "Failure" being the logical alternative), but not always. When you only have to complete part of the mission, that mission's "scoring" system is explained.

At the end of each Success and Failure line, the game's next mission (or cin-ematic finale) is listed.

TIPS

Our playtesters have given suggestions to help you survive each mission. If these guys can't get you flying straight, no one can.

NAV POINTS

For every mission, each possible encounter point is described. If your ship's nav map and the information in this section aren't identical, it may be because not all the nav points are visible on your on-screen map. **New** points are not assigned until after the mission begins, and **Inv**isible points are always a surprise.

For each encounter point, the number and type of enemy ships you'll encounter are listed. Subsequent waves are each noted by a black triangle. When a wave does not arrive all at once, but instead replaces enemy ships as they are killed, the order of their appearance is noted in parentheses.

NAV MAPS

(1)**NAV Points.** When there are two separate nav maps for a mission (or pair of missions), both maps are shown. Otherwise, two views of the same map — top down and side-angle — are displayed.

The maps mark the nav points known at the beginning of each mission with white circles.

(1)**INVisible Points.** If you have to drop out of autopilot due to an ambush, unexpected event or because you strayed from your mission path, that location was probably not marked on your ship's on-screen map. These "invisible" points are designated **Inv 1**, **Inv 2**, etc. — and are indicated on this book's Nav Maps by a number in a black circle.

(1)**NEW Points.** If your mission unexpectedly *changes* during flight, new navigation points will appear, named in continuing chronological order. (For example, on a mission where you suddenly have the option of rescuing a fellow pilot, you might begin with **Nav 1** and **Nav 2**. Then if you decide to go rescue the pilot, the new nav point appears as **New 3**.) New points are indicated on the Nav Map by a number in a gray circle.

(T)**Takeoff.** The location where you begin the mission is marked with a "T" on each Nav Map. It is usually your carrier.

MISSION A1: RECALLED TO DUTY (NEPHELE)

Your mission objective is to fly to the Orlando depot. At the beginning of the mission, Maniac challenges you to a virtual dogfight. Afterwards, you are suddenly attacked by pirates. You must defeat them, and resume your course for the Orlando depot. Seether will blow up the depot just as you reach it, then jump out the jump point before you can attack him. You must then fly to the Blue Point depot.

CINEMATICS

Bartender (NB): you meet all kinds here

Veteran (NB): buy a vet a drink?
> *Help him out.* → He will help you out in J2.
> *Straighten him out.* → Mission J2 just got harder.

Maniac (NB): earthworm or an eagle

Seether (NB): shoves a man against a wall

Maniac (NB): you've been recalled

Maniac (CP): virtual dogfight
> *Affirmative*
> *Negative*

SUCCESS

Survive the pirate attack. Go to B1.

FAILURE

Die.

Tips

- It takes about 30 seconds for your ship's weapons to reconfigure from virtual mode to battle mode. If you fight Maniac, use your afterburners to elude enemy fire when the pirates ambush you.

- The pirates will stay on afterburners, so you should too. Stay on their tails.

- Make sure you tell Maniac to "break and attack."

MISSION A1

NAV 1

(You decline virtual dogfight or dogfight ends)

▼ 2 Razors

NAV 2 — ORLANDO DEPOT

▼ 1 Avenger (Seether)

NEW 3 — BLUE POINT DEPOT
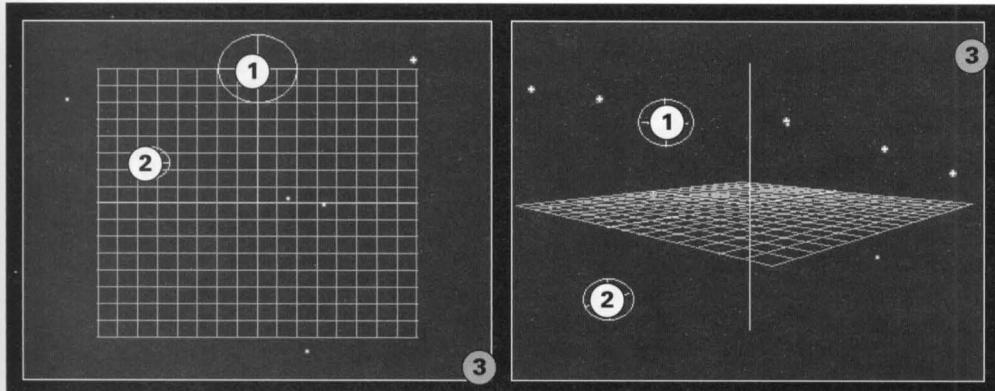
MISSION B1: DISCOVER PIRATE BASE (HELLESPONT)

Your mission objectives are to escort a supply transport to the jump point, then patrol a radar array. At the radar array you encounter pirates, the last of which you are commanded to follow to their base at a safe distance, and then return to the *Lexington*.

CINEMATICS

Maniac: who *was* that?

Tolwyn: it's a sign of the times

Maniac (FD): I could tell you, but I'd have to kill you

Eisen (FC): a few things have changed

Vagabond (OL): game of cards

Eisen (BR): briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen *Maniac*, Quality, Hazard, Primate, Vagabond, Vero

Ships Hellcat, *Longbow*

Recommended Loadout Image Recognition missiles

SUCCESS

Get within sight of the pirate frigate (i.e., get close enough to receive the message, "proceed to next waypoint"), without getting closer than 12,000 klicks. Go to Mission B2A.

FAILURE

Get too close to or fire on the pirate frigate or escorts. If you get too close, the frigate and its escorts will jump, making your next mission harder. Go to Mission B2B.

TIPS

- When pirates show up at the transport they will ignore you and concentrate on the transport. Destruction of the transport does not affect the outcome of the mission, so don't afterburn too much.

- Once you discover the frigate base and get the message, "proceed to the next waypoint," *immediately* turn around and head for the nav point. If you don't, you might close in on the pirates. Getting too close leads to failure.

MISSION B1

TAKEOFF — LEXINGTON

NAV 1 — MEET CONFED TRANSPORT

▼ 2 Razors (pirates)

NAV 2 — JUMP POINT

▼ 2 Razors (pirates) (1 ace)

NAV 3 — RADAR ARRAY

▼ 4 Thunderbolts (pirates) (1 ace)

▼ You will get a comm in the middle of the fight telling you to hold fire and follow the remaining two ships to their base.

NEW 4 — FRIGATE BASE

▼ Pirate Frigate, 2 Thunderbolts (the ones you followed)

NAV 5 — LEXINGTON
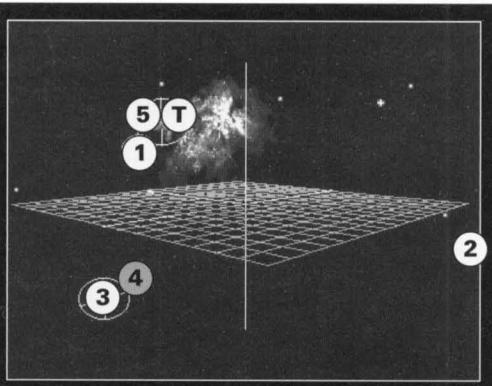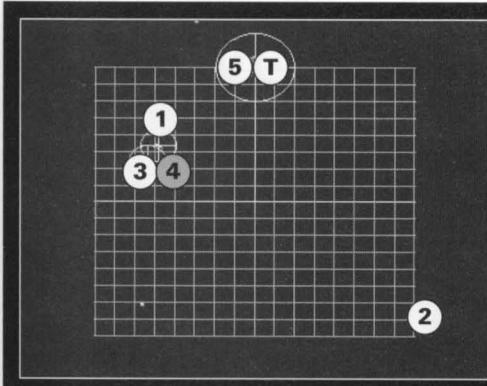
MISSION B2A/B: ATTACK PIRATE FRIGATE (HELLESPONT)

Your objective is to fly a Longbow directly to the pirate frigate (discovered in the previous mission) and destroy it. If you were successful at the previous mission, you fly mission B2A, which is easier. If you failed the previous mission, you fly mission B2B. When you return to the *Lexington*, you are ordered to investigate a civilian SOS call from a transport ship.

CINEMATICS

Catscratch (FC): meet Catscratch

> *I like this kid.* → +1
>
> *What's this kid want with me?* → −1

Eisen (BR): mission briefing

Eisen (CP): SOS from civilian transport

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Maniac, Quality, Miner, Vagabond, Catscratch, Hazard, Hippie

Ships Longbow only

Recommended Loadout Image Recognition missiles

SUCCESS

Destroy the pirate frigate. Go to B3.

FAILURE

The pirate frigate escapes. Go to B3.

TIPS

- You can stick with the recommended loadout — either Leeches or ImRecs work great on Arrows.

- The waves of enemy fighters stop once you've destroyed the frigate, so make it your main target.

- To conserve missiles, let your escort take care of any attackers. If you want to attack the frigate, you'll have to hurry to beat your escorts.

MISSION B2A
(succeeded in previous mission)

TAKEOFF — LEXINGTON

INV 1
- ▼ 4 Thunderbolts (1 ace)

NAV 1 — PIRATE FRIGATE
- ▼ Frigate, 2 Thunderbolts (1 ace), 2 Arrows
- ▼ 2 Thunderbolts (2 aces), 2 Arrows (continuous waves until frigate is destroyed)

NAV 2 — LEXINGTON

NEW 3 — CONFEDERATION SHUTTLE

NAV 4 — LEXINGTON

MISSION B2B
(failed previous mission)

TAKEOFF — LEXINGTON

NAV 1, NAV 2, NAV 3

The pirate frigate appears randomly at one of these three nav points.
- ▼ 4 Razors (at every nav point with no frigate) (1 ace)
- ▼ 3 Razors (1 ace), 1 Arrow, Frigate

NAV 4 — LEXINGTON

NEW 5 — CONFEDERATION SHUTTLE

NAV 6 — LEXINGTON
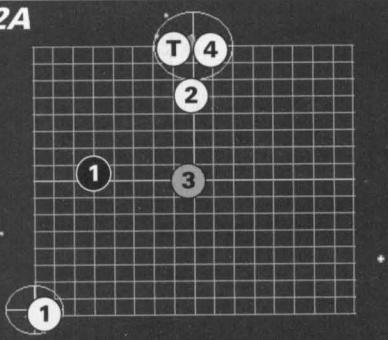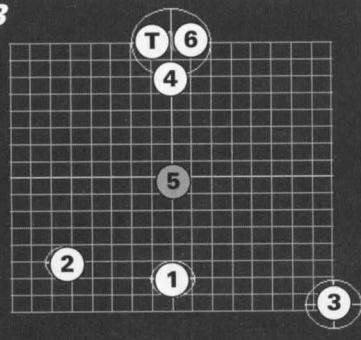
MISSION B3: RECON PHOTOS (TYR)

Your objective is to take reconnaissance photos of a ground base, in preparation for a hostage rescue attempt. You encounter enemy fighters on your way to the complex. If you do not take enough pictures, you also encounter enemies on the way home.

CINEMATICS

Vagabond/Maniac (OL): are Border Worlds behind this?

Eisen (BR): mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Solo mission

Ships Hellcat only

Recommended Loadout 6 Image Recognition missiles

SUCCESS

Take 10 pictures at each nav point that has a complex. Go to mission B4A.

FAILURE

Go to mission B4B.

TIPS

• Save 3 of your missiles for the SAM sites.

or

• At the planet, full afterburn and lob 2 missiles per turret, then concentrate on the Vindicators, and *then* take your pictures.

or

• Use one missile, then finish off the turrets with your guns.

• When Banshees show up, use your afterburner to keep them off your tail.

• Use [H] to toggle between camera and guns. Target the ground building to photograph it.

• Make sure you switch back to guns before heading for the next nav point.

- Remember to watch your altitude bar (center left of screen).

- If a missile heads toward you, turn toward it, drop a decoy, and veer. Use your decoys.

MISSION B3

TAKEOFF — LEXINGTON

INV 1

▼ 2 Banshees

NAV 1 — GROUND COMPLEX 1

▼ 2 Vindicators (1 ace), 1 SAM site

NAV 2 — GROUND COMPLEX 2

▼ 1 Vindicator, 1 SAM site

NAV 3 — GROUND COMPLEX 3

▼ 2 Vindicators, 1 SAM site

NAV 4 — PLANET EXIT

INV 2

▼ 2 Banshees (only if mission is unsuccessful) (1 ace)

NAV 5 — LEXINGTON

space map
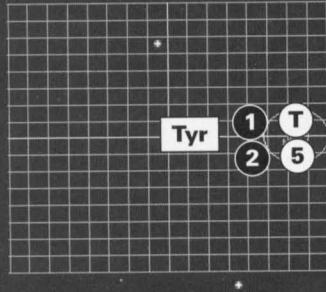
ground map
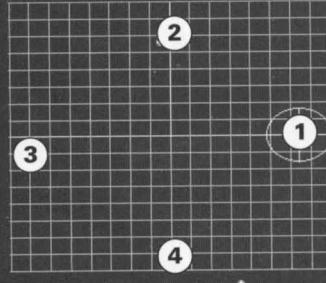
MISSION B4A/B: HOSTAGE RESCUE (TYR)

Your objective is to cover the rescue of a hostage from the ground complex photographed in the previous mission. If you successfully completed your last mission, you gathered enough information to know exactly where the hostage is, and you fly mission B4A. If you failed the last mission, you have to cover a transport as it docks at each complex, looking for the hostage — mission B4B. You encounter fighters on the way to the complex. If you do not rescue the hostage, you also encounter enemies on the way home.

CINEMATICS

Eisen (EC): Eisen hides what he's doing on the computer.

Eisen (BR): mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Maniac only

Ships Hellcat only

Recommended Loadout 6 Image Recognition missiles

SUCCESS

Transport retrieves the hostage and returns safely to the *Lexington*. Go to C1.

FAILURE

Transport is destroyed, or hostage is not retrieved. Go to Losing Endgame 1.

TIPS

- Take out the ground turrets as fast as you can.

- Watch the transport on the object camera, and ask its status *often*. If it's in trouble, get back quickly — keeping it alive is the key to success.

- Use missiles to take out the SAM sites.

MISSION B4A

TAKEOFF — LEXINGTON

INV 1
- ▼ 2 Banshees (2 aces)

NAV 1 — GROUND COMPLEX
- ▼ 2 Vindicators (1 ace), 1 SAM site

NAV 2 — PLANET EXIT

INV 2
- ▼ 4 Banshees (4 aces)

NAV 3 — LEXINGTON

MISSION B4B

TAKEOFF — LEXINGTON

INV 1
- ▼ 2 Banshees (2 aces)

NAV 1 — GROUND COMPLEX 1
- ▼ 2 Vindicators (1 ace), 1 SAM site

NAV 2 — GROUND COMPLEX 2
- ▼ 2 Vindicators (1 ace), 1 SAM site

NAV 3 — GROUND COMPLEX 3
- ▼ 2 Vindicators, 1 SAM site

NAV 4 — PLANET EXIT

INV 2
- ▼ 4 Banshees (4 aces)

NAV 5 — LEXINGTON

B4A — ground map
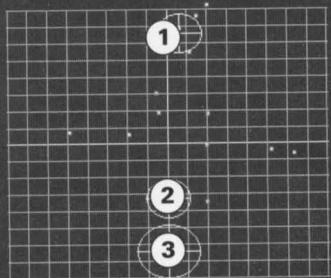
B4B — ground map
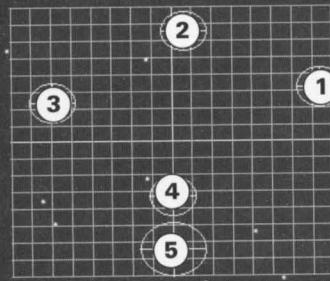
MISSION C1:
RETAKE THE SPACELAB (MASA)

Your objective is to protect a Marine transport as it recovers a hijacked Confederation spacelab. You encounter additional enemy fighters before you secure the installation.

CINEMATICS

Eisen/Paulsen (FD): orders from Regional Command

Tolwyn (BR): asks how the situation is via communiqué

Maniac (OL): female scientist

Catscratch (OL): asks about Paulsen
>*New brass — pain in the ass.* → +1
>*This kid asks too many questions.* → –1

Paulsen (BR): where's Eisen, mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Maniac, Quality, Primate, Vagabond, Catscratch, Vero, Hazard, Hippie, Fhish

Ships Hellcat, *Longbow*

Recommended Loadout Image-Recognition (full load) if you take the Longbow.

SUCCESS

Protect the assault transport until it is finished taking over Spacelab. Go to C2.

FAILURE

Transport is destroyed. Go to Losing Endgame 1.

TIPS

• Watch out for the rear turret on the Avengers.

• After the shuttle has docked and the next two enemies have been destroyed, two more Avengers will sneak in to attack the Spacelab.

- Destroy the attacking Avengers as quickly as possible. If the marines feel that their position is threatened, they will retreat. You have two minutes after they dock to destroy all the enemy fighters.

- Destroy the second wave of Avengers quickly, because once the shuttle docks another wave will arrive, regardless of whether the first two are still around.

MISSION C1

TAKEOFF — LEXINGTON

NAV 1 — SPACELAB

▼ 4 Avengers (1 ace)

▼ 2 Avengers (once shuttle has arrived at the Nav point

▼ 2 Avengers (when the shuttle has docked) (1 ace)

NAV 2 — LEXINGTON
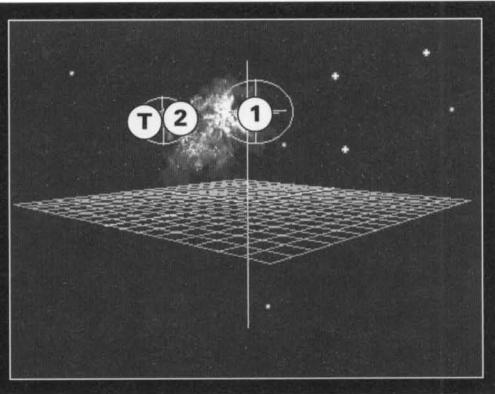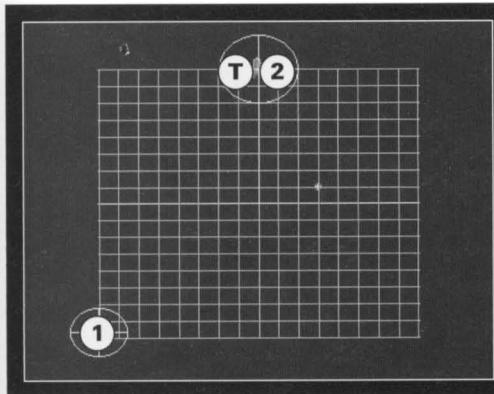
MISSION C2: BORDER WORLDS CONVOY (MASA)

Your mission objective is to warn a Border Worlds convoy that they are in violation of the Confederation airspace edict. If they refuse to obey the edict, you must enforce it.

CINEMATICS

Maniac (OL): puts the moves on the scientist

Newscast (OL): Union of Border Worlds declares independence

Maniac/Vagabond (OL): debate over newscast
> *Confed's abusing their authority.*
> *Confed needs to clamp down.*

Eisen (EC): old man's looking forward to new challenges

Paulsen (BR): mission briefing

BW Lieutenant (CP): you stole our spacelab

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Maniac, Quality, Vagabond, Catscratch, Excell, Hazard, Hippie, Fhish

Ships *Longbow*, Hellcat

Recommended Loadout Default

SUCCESS

Destroy one of the Border Worlds cruisers or all 10 Banshees, either of which will cause enemy to surrender. Go to C3.

FAILURE

Fail to destroy one of the cruisers or all 10 Banshees. Go to C3.

TIPS

- You're a slow target, and vastly outnumbered. If you destroy a cruiser, everyone will surrender (you won't have to fight the Banshees), so afterburn directly to a cruiser.

- As soon as the convoy refuses to surrender, signal your wingman to "break and attack." If you are making a bombing run in a Longbow, allocate nearly all your gun power to shields and damage repair. Do not take power from your engines.

- Fire a salvo of 2 torpedoes at one of the cruisers. (Hit Ⓜ until you have the first torpedo selected, then hit 🄸 to shift to the next torpedo hardpoint without deselecting the first. Then hit 🄸 to arm the torps.) The missiles that are highlighted on your Weapon VDU (top right corner of the screen) are those that will fire in unison.

- Flying between cruisers will often cause them to fire on each other.

- Do not fire on ships after they surrender, or you'll have a new fight on your hands.

MISSION C2

TAKEOFF — LEXINGTON

NAV 1 — BORDER WORLDS CONVOY
- ▼ 2 Border Worlds Cruisers, 4 Banshees
- ▼ 4 Banshees / 2 Banshees (from Cruisers)

NAV 2 — LEXINGTON
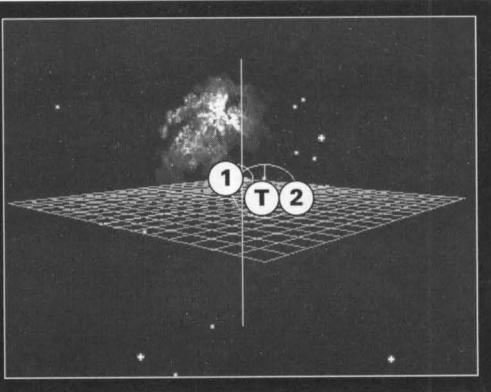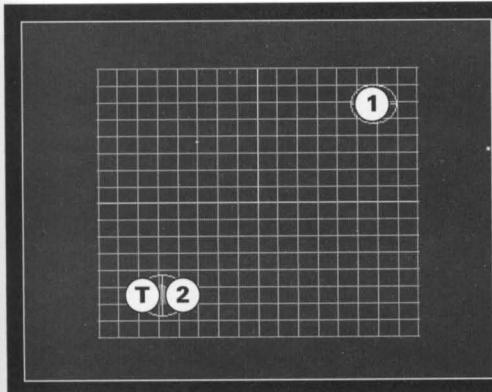
MISSION C3:
DO YOU DEFECT? (MASA)

Your mission objective is to intercept Captain Eisen and return him to the *Lexington*. Vagabond tells you that he is joining Eisen, and you have to decide whether or not to also defect.

CINEMATICS

Tolwyn (BR): communiqué, response to previous comm (if saw previous comm in C1)

Catscratch (OL): he's from the Border Worlds
    The kid's got a point → +1
    Who's he to question Confed? → –1

Eisen (EC): our ultimate duty

Maniac (FC): invites you to a drink as you are ordered off deck
    I need to see what's going on. →
            Paulsen/Seether (FD): Seether comes aboard
    I don't feel like spending time in the brig. →
            Maniac (OL): Maniac buys you a drink

Paulsen (BR): mission briefing, Captain Eisen has stolen a shuttle

Vagabond (CP): I'm going with him, you coming?
    1 *Affirmative* → Miner attacks you
    2 *Negative* → Vagabond attacks you

MAIN TERMINAL

Not available for this mission — you fly a Hellcat

SUCCESS/FAILURE IF YOU DEFECT

If you defect, you must fight Miner and three more of your former shipmates before you reach the *Intrepid*. If you get past them to land on the *Intrepid*, go to mission D1. If not, go to Losing Endgame 2.

SUCCESS/FAILURE IF YOU DO NOT DEFECT

If you do not defect (and survive the mission), go to F1. If you are shot down, go to Losing Endgame 1.

TIPS

- If you *do* want to defect, start firing missiles at Miner and then *immediately* hit ☐ to answer Vagabond's comm. (If the missiles hit before you answer the comm, the computer will label you a traitor — and that's very bad.)

- If you *don't* want to defect, start firing missiles at Vagabond and then immediately choose ② to answer Vagabond's comm.

MISSION C3

TAKEOFF — LEXINGTON

NAV 1 — CONFEDERATION SHUTTLE (EISEN AND MANIAC)

You must choose whether to defect or not.

▼ If you do not defect, Vagabond will attack you; return to the *Lexington* (Nav 2).

▼ If you defect, Miner will attack you; go to New 3.

NAV 2 — LEXINGTON

▼ Only available if you decide not to defect.

INV 1 (Available if you decide to defect.)

▼ 3 Hellcats (Hazard, Quality, Hippie) Your old friends are now enemies, and intercept you on your way to the *Intrepid*.

NEW 3 — INTREPID

▼ This Nav point appears if you decide to defect.

▼ 3 Hellcats
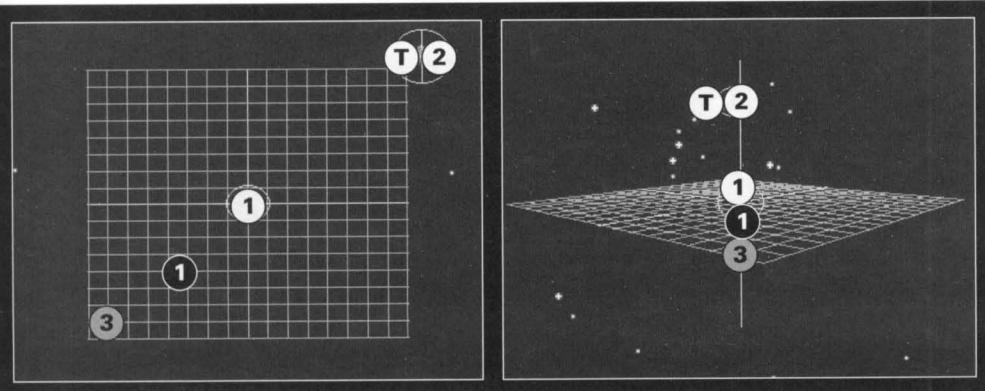
MISSION D1:
DEFEND THE INTREPID (SILENOS)

You scramble to defend the *Intrepid* against invading Confederation fighters.

CINEMATICS

Panther/Hawk/Eisen (LD): I recognize those names

PA Announcement (CB): this is a scramble mission

MAIN TERMINAL

Not available — you fly the Hellcat you defected in (Mission C3) and all pilots
are up

SUCCESS

Destroy all 15 enemy fighters. Go to D2.

FAILURE

Intrepid is destroyed. Go to Losing Endgame 2.

TIPS

• You can't use wingman commands on this mission.

• Do not fire on ships that wingmen are engaging. Choose unengaged targets.

• Enemy Longbows don't use torpedoes this time. They close in from different angles; choose one of them to target.

• Save your missiles for the Thunderbolt wave.

MISSION D1

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

NAV 1 — INTREPID

- ▼ 4 Hellcats
- ▼ 4 Longbows
- ▼ 4 Longbows
- ▼ 3 Thunderbolts
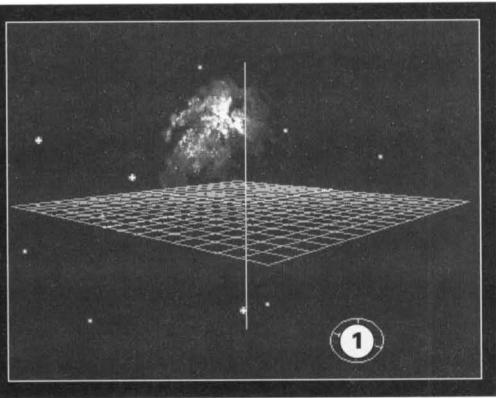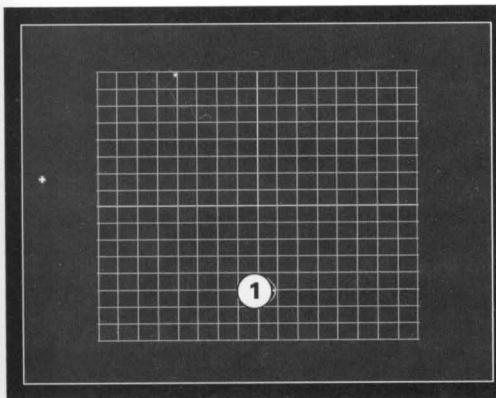
MISSION D2: NEBULA SWEEP (SILENOS)

You are to scout ahead and clear the area of any hostile ships. In the nebula, you will have to rely heavily on your instrumentation.

CINEMATICS

Pliers (LD): meet Pliers
> *Bet this old coot knows what he's doing.* → +1
> *Here's a guy they should have put out to pasture.* → –1

Sosa (GL): Confed's got a lot of skeletons in its lockers

Maniac (GL): a long, hard road ahead

Eisen/Panther/Hawk (CB): I think this ship needs a captain

Eisen (CC): mission briefing

Note: From this point on, **Pliers** will appear at the loadout terminal. Pliers' morale will directly effect the performance of your ship — if his morale is high, your ship will fly a little faster; if low, your ship will fly slower.

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Primate, Maniac, Vagabond, Catscratch, Hawk, Panther, Moose, Turbo, Blade, Tex, *Yaeger*, Excell

Ships Vindicator, *Banshee*, Avenger

Recommended Loadout Image Recognition missiles

SUCCESS

Destroy all of the enemy at each of the nav points. Go to D3.

FAILURE

Fail to destroy all of the enemy. Go to D3.

TIPS

- Autoslide.

- Don't waste your missiles at Nav 1 — save them for the Arrow waves.

- Spreadfire works well on Thunderbolts — don't fly directly behind them, lead them with Spreadfires.

- Don't let Excaliburs get behind you.

MISSION D2

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

NAV 1
  ▼ 3 Thunderbolts

NAV 2
  ▼ 4 Arrows / 4 Arrows

NAV 3
  ▼ 3 Excaliburs

NAV 4 — INTREPID
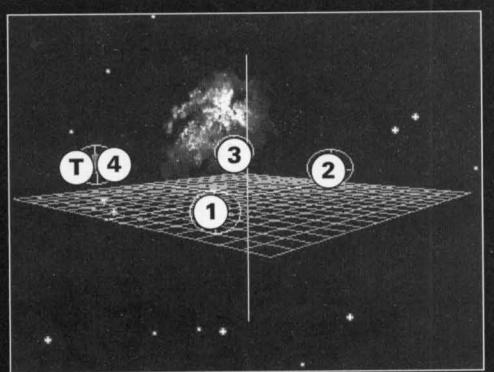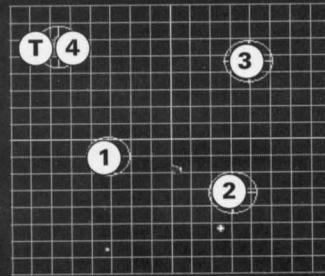
MISSION D3: DESTROY THE LEXINGTON (SILENOS)

Your mission objective is to escort the *Intrepid* to its jump point. You find the *Lexington* blocking the jump point and are forced to destroy it.

CINEMATICS

Pliers (HB): I stripped your ship for parts
>*Well, he is resourceful.* → +1
>*I knew this guy was trouble.* → –1

Vagabond/Catscratch (SH): I don't know what the rules are anymore

Eisen (CC): mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Primate, Maniac, Vagabond, Catscratch, Hawk, Panther, Moose, Turbo, Blade, Tex, Yaeger, Excell

Ships Avenger only

Recommended Loadout Default

SUCCESS

Destroy the *Lexington*. Go to E1.

FAILURE

The *Intrepid* is destroyed. Go to Losing Endgame 2.

TIPS

- Put all Gun and Damage Repair power into shields.

- Tell your wingman to "break and attack" only when you're halfway to the *Lexington*, so that you lure the Longbows away. Afterburn to the *Lexington*, ignoring all other ships. Fire a full salvo (4 torpedoes) at the *Lexington*.

- If you are having a difficult time reaching the *Lexington,* try using Leech missiles on the attacking Longbows before you make your bombing run. Don't forget to shoot down all leeched ships.

• Stagger your "break and attack" commands. It will spread out your wing-men, and make them more effective.

If you kill the *Lexington* first, no more Longbows will arrive at the nav point.

MISSION D3

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

NAV 1 — JUMP POINT

▼ *Lexington*, 4 Longbows

▼ 8 more Longbows
  (1 for each 1 killed)
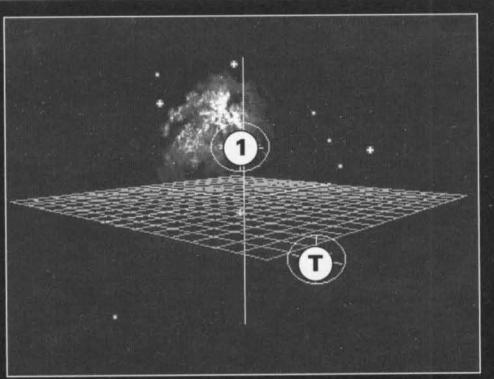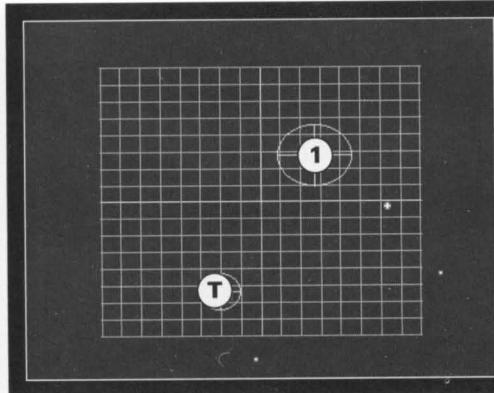
MISSION E1:
CONVOY IN DISTRESS (ORESTES)

Your objective is to save a Border Worlds convoy from the Confederation ships that have followed it into Border Worlds territory.

CINEMATICS

Seether/Paulsen: you're getting reassigned

Eisen/Sosa (CC): we're going on a scavenger hunt

Panther (GL): something better to do than killing
> Yeah ... You'd think ... → +1
> She's dreaming ... → −1

Eisen (CC): mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Primate, Maniac, Vagabond, Catscratch, Hawk, Panther, Moose, Turbo, Blade, Tex, Yaeger, Excell

Ships Avenger, Vindicator

Recommended Loadout Leeches

SUCCESS

Destroy all the enemy cap ships, fighters and cap ship missiles. Go to E2.

FAILURE

Convoy is destroyed. Go to E2.

TIPS

• Look for launched cap ship missiles (a warning will flash on your HUD). Target them, then afterburn ahead of them and select your Stormfire cannon. When they get within 5000 klicks center the cross hairs directly on them or a bit ahead and fire.

• Destroy the frigate as soon as possible because it fires cap ship missiles. Afterburn directly towards it, using your rear turret to shake Hellcats. Destroy it with two torpedoes, and then go after the other capital ship.

• Additional Hellcats launch from the destroyer until you blow it up.

MISSION E1

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

NAV 1 — CONVOY

▼ 1 Destroyer, 1 Frigate, 3 Hellcats

▼ 5 Hellcats (one launches every time one is destroyed

NAV 2 — INTREPID
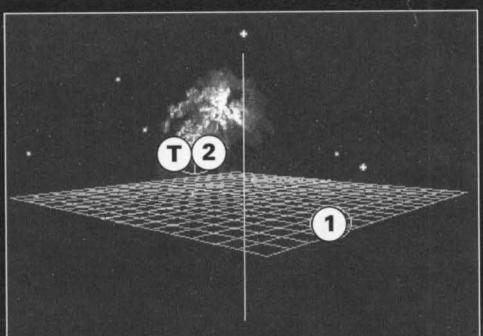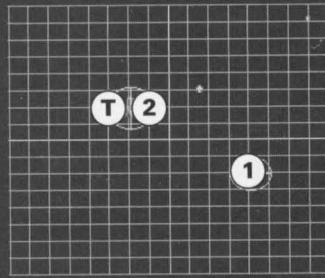
MISSION E2: COMM STATION INFILTRATION (ORESTES)

Your mission objectives are to destroy the station's radar buoy, launch Vagabond and Sosa towards the comm station, and then retrieve them when they have downloaded the data they need. If you fly with Plier's cloaking device, it works until you destroy the radar buoy. The number of fighters you face depends on how quickly you take out the radar buoy. After you launch the M.I.P.'s and they have docked, you get a comm from Vagabond which cuts to a scene showing Vagabond and Sosa inside the comm station. Vagabond dies. You have to retrieve Sosa, while fending off the remaining enemy fighters.

CINEMATICS

Pliers (HB): Pliers shows his "toys"
> *This thing could be very useful ...* → +1
> *I can't trust this guy.* → –1

Maniac/Vagabond (GL): Vagabond loses card game

Hawk (CC): didn't you enjoy blasting cats
> *Gotta admit. I did.* → +1
> *This guy's bloodthirsty.* → –1

Eisen (CC): mission briefing

Pliers (CP): bad news, kid

Vagabond (CP): things have gotten complicated

Sosa/Vagabond: see Vagabond get hit

Sosa (CP) I'm launching, pick me up

Blair (LD): Vagabond's funeral (immediately after mission)

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Solo mission (Sosa and Vagabond in Manned Insertion Pods)

Ships Avenger (with MIPs) only

Recommended Loadout Cloaking device, Image-Recognition missiles for the turret mines

Success

Get Vagabond and Sosa into the Comm station, retrieve Sosa and return to the *Intrepid*. Go to G1.

Failure

Anything less. Aborting an unsuccessful mission will result in destruction of the *Intrepid*. Go to Losing Endgame 2.

Tips

- Cloak before you autopilot. Decloak within 2000k of the buoy, and fire torpedoes (or a full salvo) at 1000k.

- When all the Hellcats are destroyed, charge shields to 75% and retrieve Sosa.

- Use 1 missile on each Hellcat, followed with Full Guns or Stormfire.

- Charge shields to 60% and ignore the mines, or use the Stormfire on them.

MISSION E2

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

NAV 1 — COMM STATION

- ▼ turret fire, radar buoy
- ▼ 2–4 Hellcats (1 ace)
- ▼ 2–4 more Hellcats (if you do not destroy the radar buoy quickly) (1 ace)

NAV 2 — INTREPID

- ▼ 2–4 more Hellcats (if you do not destroy the radar buoy quickly) (1 ace)
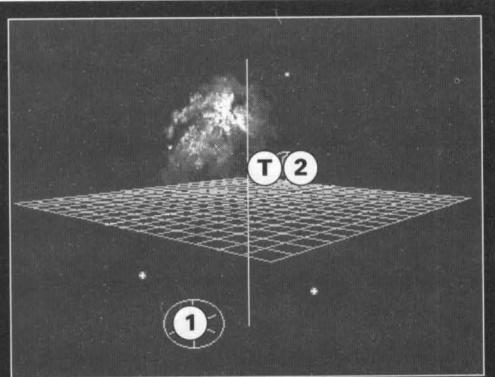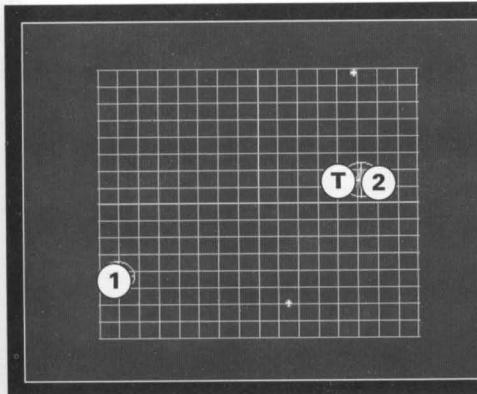
MISSION F1: HUNT DOWN EISEN (SILENOS)

You are to fly a search-and-destroy through several nav points, looking for the Border Worlds ship that picked up Eisen (the *Intrepid*). You encounter resistance at every point. You do not find the *Intrepid*.

CINEMATICS

Paulsen/Seether (FD): the traitor will pay

Catscratch (OL): I don't understand it, sir

Paulsen/Seether (BR): mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Catscratch, Hazard, *Fhish,* Steel, Scar, Gambler, Slash, Vero

Ships *Longbow*, Hellcat

Recommended Loadout A rack of Leeches and a rack of Image-Recognition missiles

SUCCESS

Destroy all of the enemy. Go to F2.

FAILURE

Fail to destroy all of the enemy. Go to F2.

TIPS

• Put more power to your shields.

• If you get everything just right, you'll have one missile per enemy, plus two extra.

MISSION F1

TAKEOFF — LEXINGTON

NAV 1

▼ 4 Razors (2 aces)

▼ 4 Arrows

NAV 2

▼ 2 Banshees

NAV 3

▼ 4 Avengers

NAV 4 — LEXINGTON
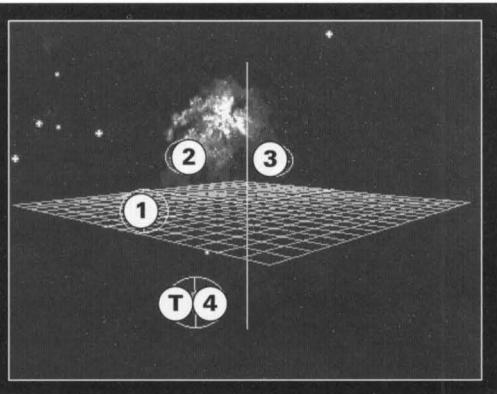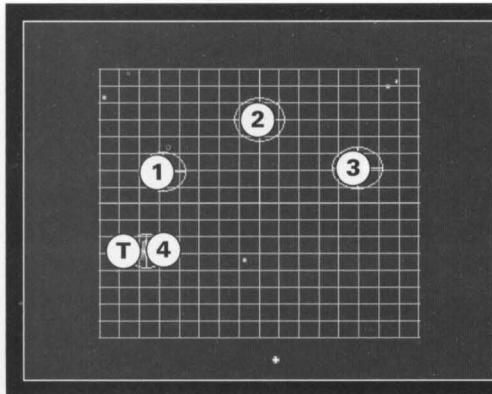
MISSION F2: SEETHER COMES ALONG (SILENOS)

Your objective is to destroy the *Intrepid* and any fighter attached to it. Seether "volunteers" to be one of your wingmen. You fly through a nebula, which interferes with your radar and comm channels, forcing you to fly by sight alone. You do not actually encounter the *Intrepid*.

CINEMATICS

Paulsen (OL): I heard no mention of honor, Captain

Catscratch (OL) Seether has taken over Eisen's cabin
>   *What a self-important bastard.* → +1
>   *Everything's going to hell.* → –1

Seether (EC): we've seen each other

Paulsen/Seether (BR): mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Seether

Ships Longbow only

Recommended Loadout 8 Leech, 8 Image-Recognition missiles

SUCCESS

Destroy all of the enemy fighters. Go to F3.

FAILURE

Fail to destroy all of the enemy fighters. Go to F3.

TIPS

- You shouldn't have too many problems, even if you accept the default choices in everything. It's a standard search-and-destroy mission.

MISSION F2

TAKEOFF — LEXINGTON

NAV 1

▼ 4 Banshees

NAV 2

▼ 4 Avengers

NAV 3

▼ 4 Banshees

NAV 4 — LEXINGTON
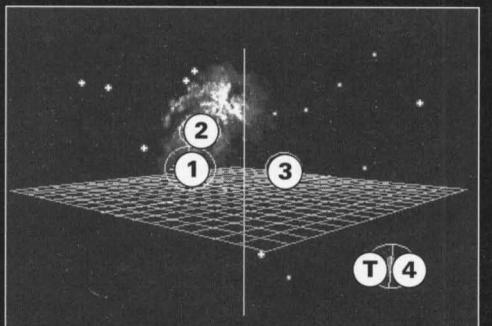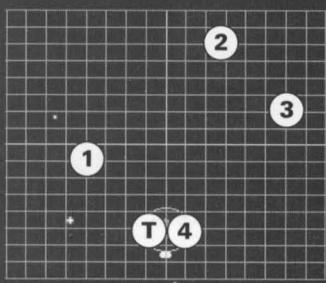
MISSION F3: A SECOND CHANCE (SILENOS)

Your objective is to finish off the *Intrepid*.

After you've taken off, Eisen invites you to join him.

CINEMATICS

Seether (FD): who do you think actually runs this ship?

Paulsen (BR): mission briefing

Eisen (CP): will you join me?
> *Affirmative* → You must destroy the *Lexington*
> *Negative* → You die

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Catscratch only

Ships recommended Hellcat only

Recommended Loadout Image-Recognition missiles

SUCCESS

You must choose to defect, and then destroy the *Lexington*. Go to G1.

FAILURE

If you do not defect, there is no way to win the mission. If you do choose to defect, but fail to destroy the *Lexington*, go to Losing Endgame 2.

TIPS

- Defect — if you don't, the game ends.

- Be prepared to destroy the *Lexington* before you go up.

- When you defect, there should be a wave of Longbows in front of you, headed for the *Intrepid*. Destroy them. Then afterburn back to the *Lexington*. Your Avengers should have severely damaged it by now, so you only need to help finish it off.

- Target the *Lexington* and then order Catscratch to take it out.

- While Eisen is on the comm, stop your ship completely, turn around and lock onto the *Lexington.* This keeps you from going too far and automatically being seen as a defector. Then, after you say you'll defect, you can let loose with all your missiles at once.

MISSION F3

NEW 1 — INTREPID

▼ If you decide to defect, the *Lexington,* 4 Hellcats (1 ace), and 4 Longbows become enemies.

NAV 2 — DESTRUCTION

▼ If you decide not to defect, the *Intrepid* launches wave after wave of ace fighters (especially Maniac) until the *Lexington* is destroyed.
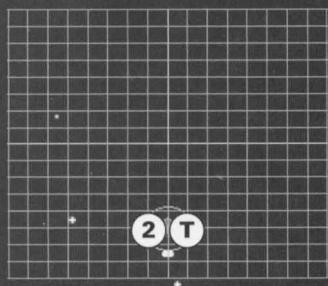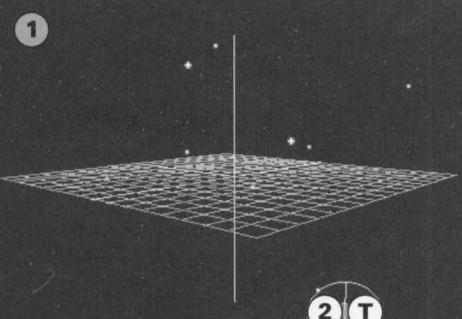
MISSION G1: RESCUE KILRATHI (ORESTES)

Your objective is to answer the distress call of a nearby convoy and bring it safely back to the *Intrepid*. You discover that the convoy is Kilrathi.

CINEMATICS

... if you are coming from series F

Seether/Paulsen: you're getting reassigned

Panther/Hawk: I recognize those names

Tolwyn/Paladin: the great hero has defected

Sosa (GL): Confed's got a lot of skeletons in its lockers

Pliers (HB): meet Pliers
> *Bet this old coot knows what he's doing.* → +1
> *Here's a guy they should have put out to pasture.* → –1

Eisen/Maniac (CB): I tried to blow you both away

Maniac (GL): a long, hard road ahead

Eisen (CC): mission briefing

Melek (CP): do not fire

... if you are coming from series E

Sosa/Eisen (CB): is comm data what you wanted?

Maniac (GL): aces kept coming my way

Eisen (CC): mission briefing

Melek (CP): do not fire

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Maniac only

Ships Vindicator, *Banshee*, Avenger

Recommended Loadout Load up on Image Recognition missiles

SUCCESS

Destroy all enemy fighters. Lose no more than 1 Kilrathi shuttle. Go to G2.

FAILURE

Lose more than 1 Kilrathi shuttle. Go to G2.

TIPS

- Use the autoslide!

- The Arrows cloak, so use Spreadfire and Image Recognition missiles — IR missiles can switch from one Arrow to another if the first one cloaks.

MISSION G1

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

NAV 1 — CONVOY INTERCEPT

▼ 2 Razors (1 ace), 2 Arrows

▼ 2 Thunderbolts, 2 Arrows

▼ 2 Arrows (cloaked)

NAV 2 — INTREPID
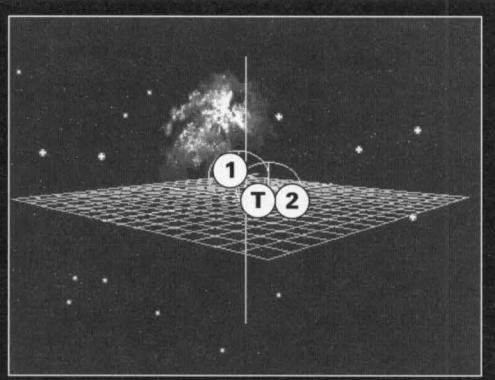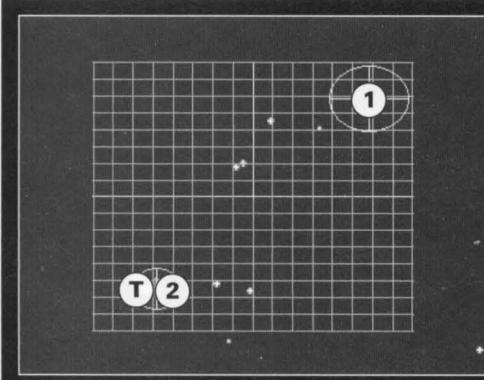
MISSION G2: CONFEDERATION IN DISGUISE (PASQUAL)

Your mission objective is to destroy the Confederation fighters (disguised as Border Worlders) that are attacking a Kilrathi planet, Pasqual X.

CINEMATICS

Eisen/Melek (CC): we've been harassed by unknown forces

Panther/Catscratch (GL): is Eisen making the right call?
    Straighten this kid out. → Panther +1/Catscratch −1
    Do I look like I have all the answers? → Panther −1/Catscratch +1

Melek (GL): what is this word "payback"?

Hawk (SH): I fought those animals in the war
    He's missing the point ... → +1
    Bitter guy. → −1

Eisen (CC): he'll be acting commander

Blair (CC): mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Primate, Maniac, Catscratch, *Hawk,* Panther, Moose, Turbo, Blade, Tex, Yaeger, Excell

Ships Vindicator, *Banshee,* Avenger

Recommended Loadout Leech missiles

SUCCESS

All of the confederation-piloted Border Worlds bombers are destroyed. Go to G3.

FAILURE

One of the disguised Confederation bombers reaches Pasqual X. Go to G3.

TIPS

- Immediately target and attack the Avengers.

- Have your wingmen take on the Banshees.

- Destroy all enemy ships, even if they are Leeched — especially Avengers.

MISSION G2

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

NAV 1 — INTERCEPT

▼ 2 Avengers, 4 Banshees
(disguised Confeds)

NAV 2 — INTERCEPT

▼ 2 Avengers, 2 Banshees
(disguised Confeds)

NAV 3 — INTERCEPT

▼ 2 Avengers, 4 Banshees
(disguised Confeds)

NAV 4 — INTREPID
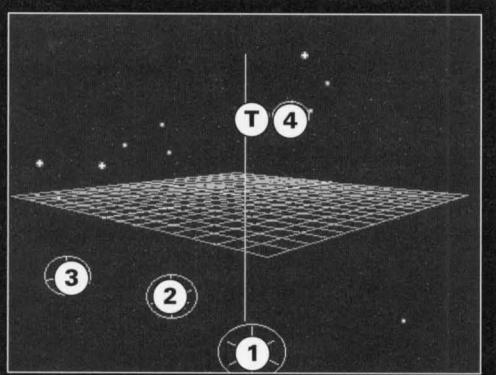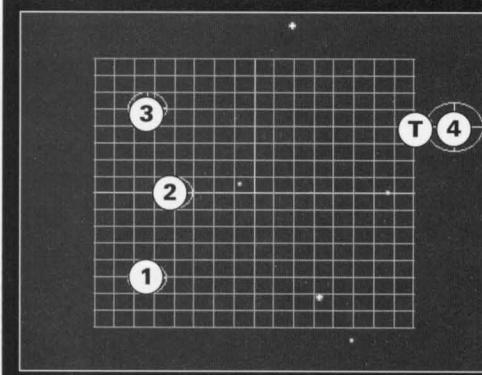
MISSION G3: ESCORT MELEK (ORESTES)

Your mission objective is to clear the area of hostiles, and cover Dekker and Melek's entry into the base.

CINEMATICS

Catscratch/Sosa (GL): I helped straighten him out

Dekker (SH): we're ready to go to work

Blair (CC): mission briefing

only if you came from series E. **Maniac** (GL): aces kept coming my way

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Primate, Maniac, Catscratch, Hawk, Panther, Moose, Turbo, Blade, Tex, Yaeger, Excell

Ships Vindicator, *Banshee*, Avenger

Recommended Loadout 4 Leech, 4 Image Recognition missiles

SUCCESS

Melek lands safely. Go to J1.

FAILURE

Melek's shuttle is destroyed. Go to J1.

TIPS

- Get the pirates who jump you at the first nav point *fast;* they are heading for the shuttles.

- Be prepared — as soon as you send in the shuttles, 4 cloaked Arrows appear, 2 near the base and 2 near the shuttles. Go for the ones near the shuttles first; take out one ASAP with missiles.

- Turn smart targeting off ((Ctrl)(S)) and target a shuttle if you want to find out how damaged it is. Melek's shuttle is the important one, and the pirates go after him immediately. Be sure not to fire at any targeted friendlies!

MISSION G3

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

NAV 1 — ENEMY PATROL

▼ 2 Razors (pirates)

NAV 2 — MELEK'S BASE

▼ initially nothing

▼ 4 Arrows (cloaked) appear after the shuttles are called in (1 ace)

NAV 3 — INTREPID
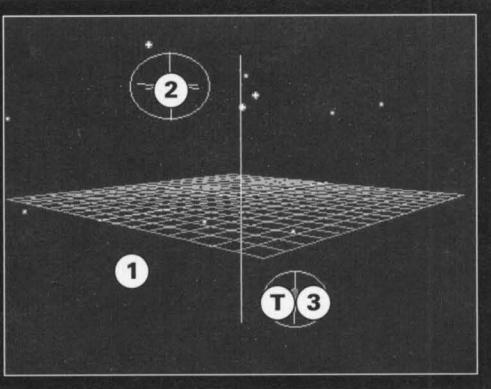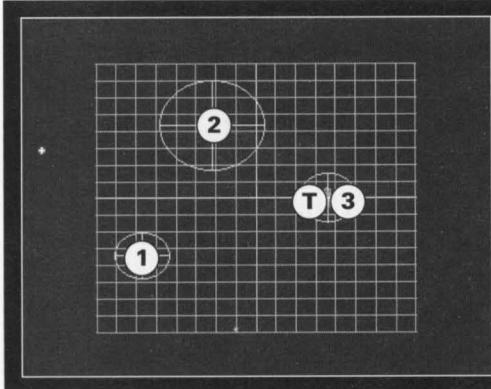
MISSION J1: DEAD ZONE (PELEUS)

Your objective is to find whatever is causing the dead zone and destroy it. Once you enter the dead zone, your radar, shields, comm and arming systems are down. You find nothing at your nav points, but are attacked in between them. Each time the fighters appear right on your tail. Sosa radios a new nav point outside of the dead zone once you reach the third nav point.

CINEMATICS

Wilford (CC): taped message from Admiral

Sosa/Maniac (CC): all the screens go dead

Blair (CC): mission briefing

Pliers (CB): ship advice

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Primate, Maniac, Catscratch, *Hawk,* Panther, Turbo, Blade, Tex, Yaeger, Excell

Ships Vindicator, Banshee, Avenger

Recommended Loadout Dumbfires

SUCCESS

Retrieve pilot (if you're in a tractor-capable ship) or cover the retrieval of ejected pilot (if your ship is not tractor capable). Go to J2.

FAILURE

Fail to pick up the pilot. (This is not a complete failure, since someone else will get the pilot.) Go to J2.

TIPS

- The Banshee has a faster fire rate, more armor, and it's the fastest option. With the Avenger, you can tractor in the pod yourself, which ends the waves of fighters.
- Put your shield power to your weapons and lower your repair power.
- Communications are scrambled — using Alt B to signal wingman to "break and attack" tends to work better than the step-by-step method.
- Use autoslide to put your nose on the bad guys immediately. When you're sliding, you're an easy target, so don't slide for long.
- To find the enemy, use L to lock target, and follow the yellow reticule. Aim your Dumbfires at ships coming directly at you.

- *Don't stop moving.* Use your afterburners in short bursts.
- If you're too close to your target, you'll take damage when it explodes.
- When Sosa comms you at Nav 3, reset your shields and repair allocation.
- At New 4, use Dumbfires as soon as the bogeys are close enough.

MISSION J1

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

INV 1
▼ 2 Excaliburs (1 ace)

NAV 1
▼ Clear

INV 2
▼ 2 Bearcats

NAV 2
▼ Clear

INV 3
▼ 2 Bearcats

NAV 3
▼ Clear

NEW 4
▼ 2 Excaliburs (pilot will eject from first one destroyed)

▼ 2 more Bearcats if you're in a Banshee and can't tractor in ejected pilot

NAV 5 — INTREPID
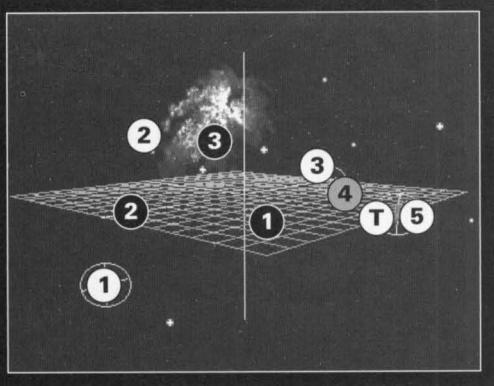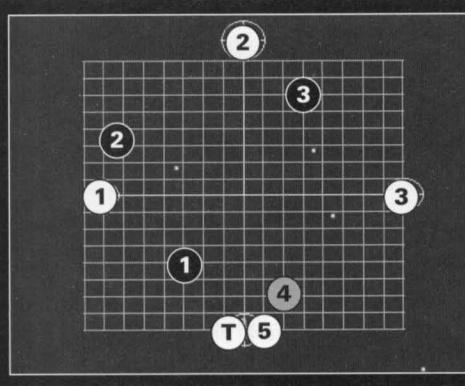
MISSION J2A/B: JAM THE JAMMER (PELEUS)

Your mission objective is to take out the cap ship that is jamming radar and communications. You encounter the same systems failure as before. The difficulty of the mission depends on how successful the interrogation of the pilot is (see Mission A1, page 124). If the interrogation is successful, you have a better idea of where the cap ship is and fly mission J2A. If the interrogation is unsuccessful, you are less certain, and must fly mission J2B.

CINEMATICS

Dekker: sees spacelab, takes off in his shuttle

Panther/Hawk/Vet (HB): interrogate the prisoner

Blair (CC): mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen   Primate, *Maniac*, Catscratch, Hawk, Panther, Turbo, Blade, Tex, Yaeger, Excell

Ships   *Vindicator*, Avenger

Recommended Loadout   Dumbfires or a rack of either Image Recognition or Heat Seeker missiles

SUCCESS

Jamming cap ship destroyed. Go to K1 or L1. (See Hawk/Panther dialogue in **Cinematics** for these sections, pages 166 and 178).

FAILURE

The jamming cap ship is not destroyed. **If you don't destroy it, you lose the game**. If you bail out early, the *Intrepid* is destroyed.

TIPS

- Put Shields and Damage Repair power to Weapons.
- Don't go home without destroying the cap ship, *even if the AUTO light comes on.*
- When you reach the cap ship, take out the fighters first *(don't autopilot).*
- To find the jamming ship, use [L] to target it when you hear the "uncloaking noise." You have all the time in the world; don't waste afterburner fuel. Use Dumbfires to kill it.

- Remember, your missiles will lock and track normally as soon as you kill the cap ship.

MISSION J2A

The jamming ship is always at the last nav point you reach.

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

NAV 1
▼ 3 Bearcats

NAV 2
▼ 2 Bearcats

NAV 3
▼ 2 Bearcats, 2 Excaliburs (1 ace)

NAV 4 — INTREPID

MISSION J2B

The jamming ship is always at the last nav point you reach.

NAV 1
▼ 2 Bearcats, 2 Excaliburs (1 ace)

NAV 2
▼ 2 Bearcats

NAV 3
▼ 2 Bearcats

NAV 4
▼ 2 Bearcats, 2 Excaliburs

NAV 5 — INTREPID
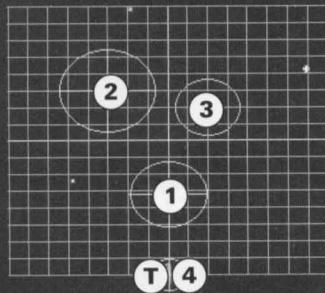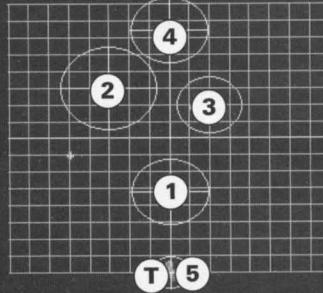
MISSION KA: SHUT DOWN THE TANK OFFENSIVE (CIRCE)

In this series, you choose your first two missions from three available options.

Option A: Shut Down Tank Offensive

Your mission objective is to destroy enemy tanks before they reach the Climate Control Center.

Option B: Cover Transport Boarding

Option C: Search-and-Destroy

K1 CINEMATICS

Maniac (CB): you'll never believe it

Tolwyn (SH): am I your prisoner of war
    I owe him ... → **Dekker** (CB): you let him go
    I owe him nothing → **Maniac/Dekker** (CC): Admiral Tolwyn's escaped

Hawk/Panther (CC): save innocents or get weapons
    Panther's right → Panther +1/Hawk −1 Go to Mission K1.
    Hawk's right. → Hawk +1/Panther −1 Go to Mission L1.

Circe V: a fierce ground war is being fought in the trenches

Maniac/Dekker (GL): I'll kick your ass
    Maniac's gonna get creamed.
    This I gotta see.

Blair (CC): live feed from Wilford, mission briefing

K2 CINEMATICS

Panther (SH): your friend with the overactive glands
    Tempting, but I can't let that happen. → +1
    Maniac's on his own. → −1

Blair (CC): choose second mission, mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Primate, Maniac, Catscratch, Hawk, Panther, Turbo, Blade, Tex, Yaeger, Excell

Ships Vindicator only

Recommended Loadout 6 Friend-or-Foe missiles

Success

Destroy all enemy tanks before Control Center is destroyed. Go to next mission (the second of KA, KB or KC, or K3).

Failure

Control Center is destroyed. Go to next mission (the second of KA, KB or KC, or K3).

Tips

- This is the easiest option — a straight shoot 'em up.

- Let wingmen take care of fighters — go after the tanks (they appear as orange dots on your display). Image Recognition missiles work almost as well as Friend-or-Foe.

- Don't hit the ground — *watch your altitude.*

- Run this mission in VGA if it moves too slowly.

- Stormfire gun does a good job against ground targets.

MISSION KA

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

INV 1
▼ 4 Hellcats

NAV 1 — CIRCE (and Planet Exit)
▼ 11 Tanks, 4 Hellcats at Control Center (1 ace)

NAV 2 — INTREPID
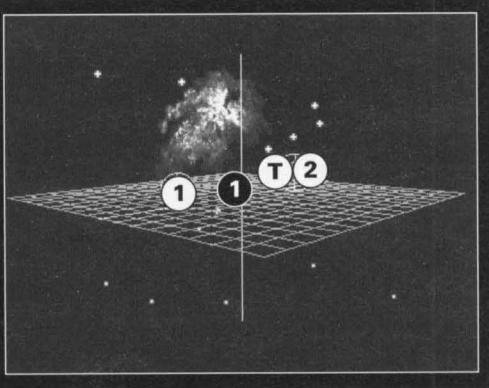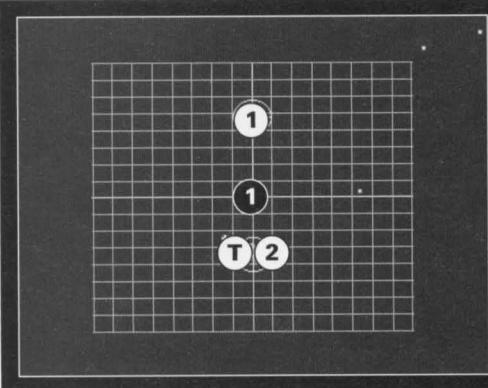
MISSION KB: COVER TRANSPORT BOARDING (CIRCE)

In this series, you choose your first two missions from three available options.

Option A: Shut Down Tank Offensive

Option B: Cover Transport Boarding

You are to escort shuttles from a planetary orbit to the frigates at the drop-off point. You will escort 3 shuttles each run, and make 3 runs. You are attacked at the drop-off point, but not the pick-up point.

Option C: Search-and-Destroy

K1 CINEMATICS

Maniac (CB): you'll never believe it

Tolwyn (SH): am I your prisoner of war
> *I owe him ...* → **Dekker** (CB): you let him go
> *I owe him nothing* → **Maniac/Dekker** (CC): Admiral Tolwyn's escaped

Hawk/Panther (CC): save innocents or get weapons
> *Panther's right* → Panther +1/Hawk –1 Go to Mission K1.
> *Hawk's right.* → Hawk +1/Panther –1 Go to Mission L1.

Circe V: a fierce ground war is being fought in the trenches

Maniac/Dekker (GL): I'll kick your ass
> *Maniac's gonna get creamed.*
> *This I gotta see.*

Blair (CC): live feed from Wilford, mission briefing

K2 CINEMATICS

Panther (SH): your friend with the overactive glands
> *Tempting, but I can't let that happen.* → +1
> *Maniac's on his own.* → –1

Blair (CC): choose second mission, mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Primate, Maniac, Catscratch, Hawk, Panther, Turbo, Blade, Tex, Yaeger, Excell

Ships Vindicator only

Recommended Loadout 3 Image Recognition, 3 Leech missiles

Success

Six of nine shuttles land safely. Go to next mission (the second of KA, KB or KC, or K3).

Failure

Lose more than three shuttles. Go to next mission (the second of KA, KB or KC, or K3).

Tips

- This is the hardest option.
- Each time you are attacked, cycle through your targets for Thunderbolts and take them out first.
- Watch your display for red dots (fighters) near the blue dots (shuttles). Go protect these shuttles first.

MISSION KB

Takeoff — Intrepid

Nav 1 — Shuttles

▼ Clear

Nav 2 — Frigates

You are attacked by **one** of the following, picked at random, on each run:

▼ 4 Razors (1 ace) (pirates)

▼ 2 Razors (1 ace), 2 Thunderbolts (1 ace) (pirates)

▼ 4 Thunderbolts (1 ace) (pirates)

▼ 2 Razors, 2 Arrows (1 ace) (pirates)

Nav 3 — Intrepid
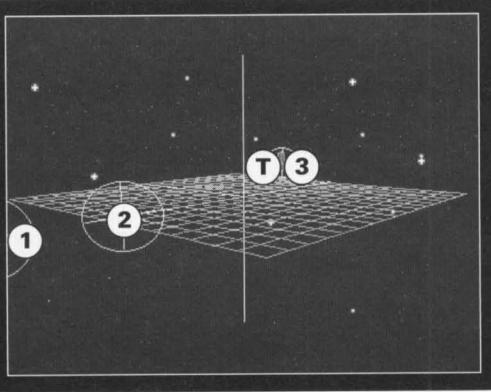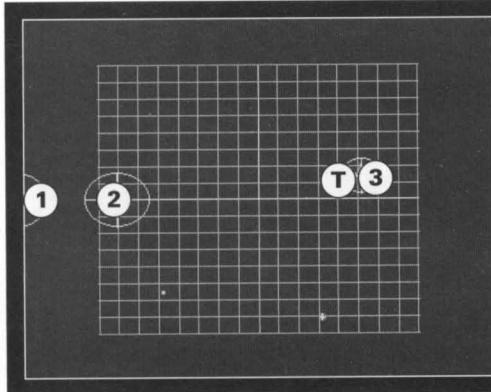
MISSION KC: SEARCH-AND-DESTROY (CIRCE)

In this series, you choose your first two missions from three available options.

Option A: Shut Down Tank Offensive

Option B: Cover Transport Boarding

Option C: Search-and-Destroy

Your objective is to fly through a series of local hotspots looking for enemy ships.

K1 CINEMATICS

Maniac (CB): you'll never believe it

Tolwyn (SH): am I your prisoner of war
> *I owe him ...* → **Dekker** (CB): you let him go
> *I owe him nothing* → **Maniac/Dekker** (CC): Admiral Tolwyn's escaped

Hawk/Panther (CC): save innocents or get weapons
> *Panther's right* → Panther +1/Hawk −1 Go to Mission K1.
> *Hawk's right.* → Hawk +1/Panther −1 Go to Mission L1.

Circe V: a fierce ground war is being fought in the trenches

Maniac/Dekker (GL): I'll kick your ass
> *Maniac's gonna get creamed.*
> *This I gotta see.*

Blair (CC): live feed from Wilford, mission briefing

K2 CINEMATICS

Panther (SH): your friend with the overactive glands
> *Tempting, but I can't let that happen.* → +1
> *Maniac's on his own.* → −1

Blair (CC): choose second mission, mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Primate, Maniac, Catscratch, Hawk, Panther, Turbo, Blade, Tex, Yaeger, Excell

Ships Vindicator, *Banshee*, Avenger

Recommended Loadout 4 Image Recognition, 4 Leech missiles

SUCCESS

Destroy all Excaliburs. Go to next mission (the second of KA, KB or KC, or K3).

FAILURE

Leave before destroying all Excaliburs. Go to next mission (the second of KA, KB or KC, or K3).

TIPS

- At the Inv points, take out the Razors first. You can fly around the Inv points.
- When you see your wingman take on a Thunderbolt, help him out.
- Ignore the destroyer; you don't have to kill it to win the mission. If you kill it, the Excaliburs stop launching, but you die trying.

MISSION KC

TAKEOFF — INTREPID
NAV 1, NAV 2, NAV 3
Whatever order you approach the nav points, you face:

- ▼ at one of the first two nav points (but not both): 25% chance of meeting 2 Dragons
- ▼ at the last nav point:
    - ▼ 3 Excaliburs, 1 Destroyer
    - ▼ 7 more Excaliburs (1 launched as 1 destroyed, no more than 4 at a time)

INV 1, INV 2
There are Inv points between all of the Nav points.

- ▼ 2 Razors, 2 Thunderbolts (1 ace) at each point (Pirates)

NAV 4 — INTREPID
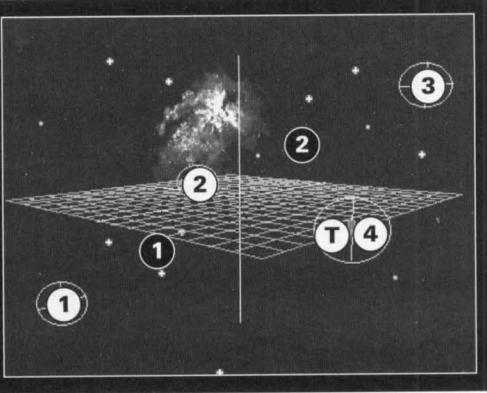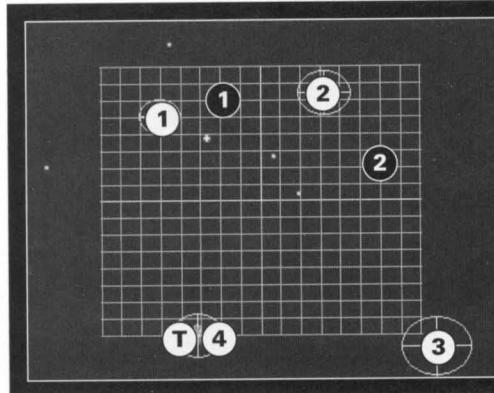
MISSION K3A/B: CATSCRATCH (CIRCE)

Your mission objective is to cut off the enemy's supply line. Catscratch heads in another direction to tractor in a satellite. As you leave INV 1, Sosa radios you that Catscratch is in danger. You must choose whether to rescue him (K3A) or continue your original mission (K3B).

CINEMATICS

Catscratch/Maniac (GL): name on gold watch or coffin

Sosa (CC): Circean comm data

Pliers (HB): one of our MIPs (only if you came from series F)

Blair (CC): mission briefing

Sosa (CP): Catscratch in big trouble (will you help?)
>   *Affirmative* → see K3A below
>   *Negative* → see K3B below

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Primate, Maniac, Hawk, Panther, Turbo, Blade, *Yaeger,* Excell

Ships Avenger, *Banshee*, Vindicator

SUCCESS

If you don't go after Catscratch (K3B): destroy the convoy's transports. Go to K4B. If you go after Catscratch (K3A): tractor him in, or cover him until he is tractored in. Go to K4A or K4B (you choose during the cinematics before the next mission).

FAILURE

If you go after Catscratch, go to K4A or K4B (your choice). If not, go to K4B.

K3A TIPS

- Use ⌐~⌐ to turn on your Afterburn and *then* hit Autopilot.

- Tell your wingmen to break and attack.

- Go for the Longbow; it's targeting Catscratch. Use Image Recognition or Leech.

- When all bogeys are killed, tractor in Catscratch's ejection pod (purple dot on the display near his ship). Destroy his ship once you have him.

K3B Tips

- Take out the Thunderbolt to clear the fighter cover.
- You don't have to destroy the cruiser, just the three transports.
- Take the last transport (i.e., the caboose) first and work your way forward.

MISSION K3A

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

INV 1
▼ 2 Hellcats, 1 Thunderbolt

INV 2
▼ You must decide whether to rescue Catscratch.

NAV 1 — CONVOY INTERCEPT

NEW 2 — CATSCRATCH RESCUE
▼ 1 Longbow, 4 Thunderbolts
(and Catscratch in an Avenger)

NAV 3 — INTREPID

MISSION K3B

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

INV 1
▼ 2 Hellcats, 1 Thunderbolt

INV 2
▼ You must decide whether to rescue Catscratch.

NAV 1 — CONVOY INTERCEPT
▼ 1 Cruiser, 3 Transports, 4 Thunderbolts

NAV 2 — INTREPID
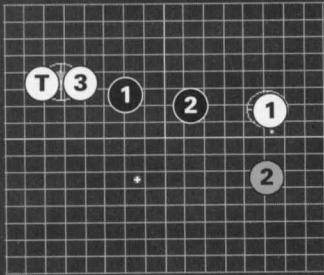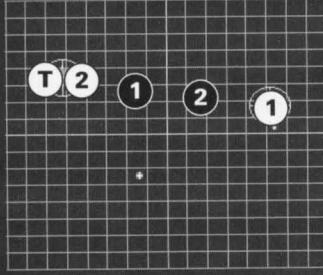
MISSION K4A: SUPPLY LINE REVISITED (CIRCE)

(If you chose not to rescue Catscratch in the previous mission, then you must fly mission K4B. If you chose to rescue Catscratch, you choose between missions K4A and K4B.)

Your mission objective is to return and complete the mission you abandoned when you chose to rescue Catscratch, cutting off a Confederation supply line. You receive a comm after succeeding or abandoning this mission, which directs you to disable a nearby Confederation vessel. Sosa then comms you and offer you Confederation IFF codes.

CINEMATICS

Maniac/Catscratch: you saved my life *or* **Blair**: Catscratch's funeral

Pliers (CB): you wanna try my new cloaker?
    Who needs wingmen? → +1
    I prefer a wingman. → −1

Sosa (GL): it will make you feel better (only available if Catscratch died)

Panther/Hawk (CC): how long since Eisen left
    There's always hope … → Panther +1/Hawk −1
    We die trying … → Panther −1/Hawk +1

Blair (CC): mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Solo mission *or* Primate, Maniac, Hawk, Panther, Turbo, Blade, Tex, Yaeger, Excell, Catscratch (if alive)

Ships Vindicator, *Avenger*

Recommended Loadout 2x2 Leech missiles, 2x2 Image Recognition

SUCCESS

Destroy all cap ships at Nav 1, and then give Dekker enough time to overtake the Black Lance transport by destroying all of the Dragons at New 2. Go to M1.

FAILURE

Failure at New 2 (Dekker's shuttle is destroyed or you otherwise fail to take over the transport) dooms the Border Worlds' efforts. Go to Losing Endgame 2.

Tips

- Easier than K4B.
- You can only use the cloaker 4 times.
- At Nav 1, take out the Hellcats first, and then the transports.
- Download the IFF codes. That will make the Dragons friendly.
- If you accepted the IFF codes, fly past the Dragons and *leech* the transport (don't fire any other weapon first), then fight the dragons.
- **Don't** attack the Dragons first. If you do, you'll be labeled a traitor and fail the mission regardless of the outcome.
- Reset your power configuration right after hitting the transport, because more Dragons will appear after Dekker docks.
- Don't waste missles on the transports.

MISSION K4A

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

NAV 1 — BORDER CONVOY

▼ 3 transports, 4 Hellcats

NEW 2

▼ Black Lance Transport, 2 Dragons

▼ 2 Dragons (after Dekker docks)

NAV 3 — INTREPID
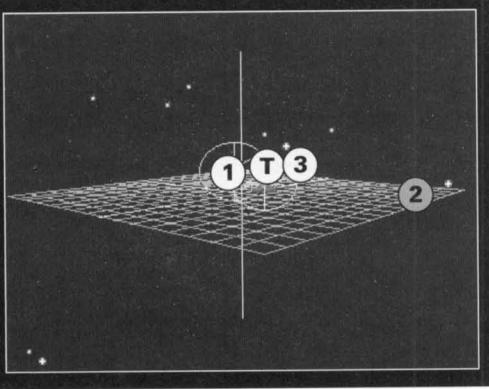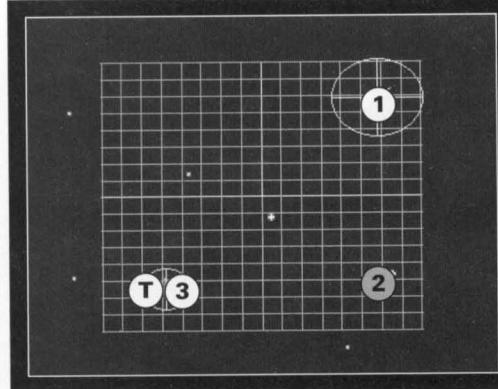
MISSION K4B: SABOTAGE (CIRCE)

(If you chose not to rescue Catscratch in the previous mission, then you must fly mission K4B. If you chose to rescue Catscratch, you choose between missions K4A and K4B.)

You must transport Dekker and two Marines in MIPs to a command-and-control center on Circe V. Once you have completed this mission, you receive a comm from Wilford, directing you to disable a nearby Confederation vessel. Sosa will then comm you offering Confederation IFF codes.

CINEMATICS

Maniac/Catscratch: you saved my life (only available if Catscratch survived)
> or **Blair**: Catscratch's funeral (only available if Catscratch died)

Pliers (CB): you wanna try my new cloaker?
> *Who needs wingmen?* → +1
> *I prefer a wingman.* → –1

Sosa (GL): it will make you feel better (only available if Catscratch died)

Panther/Hawk (CC): how long since Eisen left
> *There's always hope …* → Panther +1/Hawk –1
> *We die trying …* → Panther –1/Hawk +1

Blair (CC): mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Solo mission *or* Primate, Maniac, Hawk, Panther, Turbo, Blade, Tex, Yaeger, Excell, Catscratch (if alive)

Ships Vindicator only

Recommended Loadout 3 Leech missiles, 3 Image Recognition missles

SUCCESS

Destroy all Dragons and disable the transport, so Dekker can take over. Go to M1.

FAILURE

Failure to capture the Black Lance transport at New 3 dooms the Border Worlds' efforts. Go to Losing Endgame 2.

TIPS

- This mission is *much* harder than K4A — ground opposition is tougher, and your ship is harder to fly.

- If you take the cloak, don't use it until you reach the planet.

- At the planet, take out SAM sites, then Hellcats, then ground turrets, and then launch the MIPs.

- Or, use the nav map to autopilot to the planet exit and skip this part — it doesn't affect the outcome of the mission.

- If you accepted the IFF codes, fly past the Dragons and *leech* the transport (don't fire any other weapon first), then fight the dragons.

- **Don't** attack the Dragons first. If you do, you'll be labeled a traitor and fail the mission regardless of the outcome.

MISSION K4B

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

NAV 1 — CIRCE V
   ▼ 3 Hellcats, 5 ground turrets
   ▼ 2 Hellcats (after Dekker docks)

NAV 2 — PLANET EXIT

NEW 3
   ▼ Black Lance Transport, 2 Dragons
   ▼ 2 Dragons (after Dekker docks)

NAV 4 INTREPID

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ground map
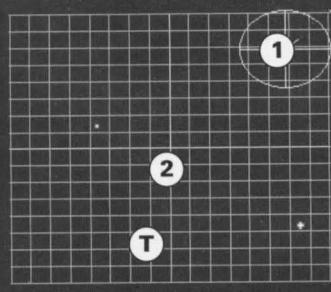
space map
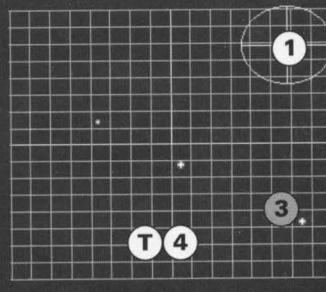
MISSION LA: STEAL FIGHTERS (SPERADON)

In this series, you choose your first two missions from three available options.

Option A: Steal Fighters

Your mission objective is to disable newly built Confed Bearcats at a testing ground in an asteroid belt, so that the BWS *Tango* can come pick them up.

Option B: Attack Manufacturing Plant

Option C: Attack Carrier

L1 CINEMATICS

Maniac (CB): you'll never believe it

Tolwyn (SH): am I your prisoner of war?
I owe him ... → **Dekker** (CB): you let him go
I owe him nothing → **Maniac/Dekker** (CC): Tolwyn's escaped

Hawk/Panther (CC): save innocents or get weapons
Panther's right → Panther +1/Hawk –1 Go to Mission K1.
Hawk's right. → Hawk +1/Panther –1 Go to Mission L1.

Shipyard shot of busy Confederation Shipyard

Maniac/Dekker (GL): I'll kick your ass
Maniac's gonna get creamed.
This I gotta see.

Pliers (CB): you wanna try my new cloaker?
Who needs wingmen? → +1
I prefer a wingman. → –1

Blair (CC): mission briefing

L2 CINEMATICS

Hawk (SH): your friend's really pissing me off
Time to be a captain. → +1
What a whiner. → –1

Blair (CC): mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Solo mission *or* Primate, Maniac, Catscratch, Hawk, Panther, Turbo, Blade, Tex, Yaeger, Excell

Ships Vindicator, *Banshee,* Avenger

Recommended Loadout 6 Leech missiles and 2 Dumbfires

SUCCESS

Disable all of the Bearcats in dry dock area. Go to next mission (the second of LA, LB or LC, or L3).

FAILURE

Go to next mission (the second of LA, LB or LC, or L3).

TIPS

- Choose the cloaking device.
- You will need a torpedo for the radar buoy. Destroy the buoy first.
- At Inv 1, Leech 2 of the 4 fighters; guns are easier than missiles.
- Or use Dumbfires on buoy

MISSION LA

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

NAV 1 — RADAR BUOY
- ▼ Radar buoy, 2 Hellcats (1 ace), 12 Turret mines
- ▼ 4 Hellcats (1 ace)

NAV 2 — SHIPYARD
- ▼ 4 Bearcats (1 ace), 4 Hellcats (1 ace), Dry Dock

NAV 3 — INTREPID
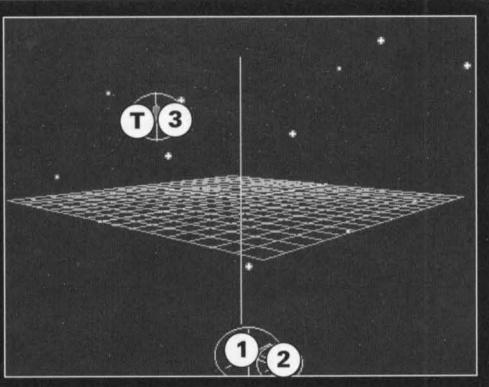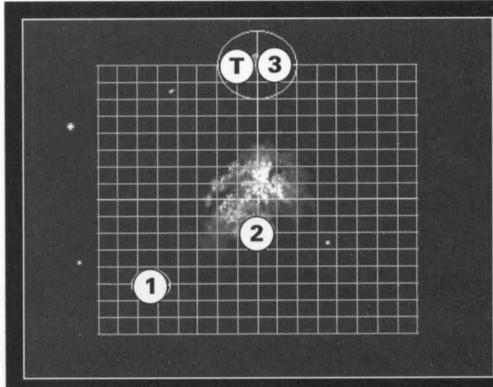
MISSION LB: ATTACK MANUFACTURING PLANT (SPERADON)

In this series, you choose your first two missions from three available options.

Option A: Steal Fighters

Option B: Attack Manufacturing Plant

Your objective is to escort Dekker's shuttle to and from the orbiting weapons plant.

Option C: Attack Carrier

L1 CINEMATICS

Maniac (CB): you'll never believe it

Tolwyn (SH): am I your prisoner of war?
> *I owe him ...* → **Dekker** (CB): you let him go
> *I owe him nothing* → **Maniac/Dekker** (CC): Tolwyn's escaped

Hawk/Panther (CC): save innocents or get weapons
> *Panther's right* → Panther +1/Hawk –1 Go to Mission K1.
> *Hawk's right.* → Hawk +1/Panther –1 Go to Mission L1.

Shipyard shot of busy Confederation Shipyard

Maniac/Dekker (GL): I'll kick your ass
> *Maniac's gonna get creamed.*
> *This I gotta see.*

Pliers (CB): you wanna try my new cloaker?
> *Who needs wingmen?* → +1
> *I prefer a wingman.* → –1

Blair (CC): mission briefing

L2 CINEMATICS

Hawk (SH): your friend's really pissing me off
> *Time to be a captain.* → +1
> *What a whiner.* → –1

Blair (CC): mission briefing

Main Terminal

Wingmen Solo mission *or* Primate, Maniac, Catscratch, Hawk, Panther, Turbo, Blade, Tex, Yaeger, Excell

Ships *Bearcat* (if you've already flown mission LA in L1), Vindicator, *Banshee*, Avenger

Recommended Loadout 8 Image Recognition missiles

Success

Escort Dekker safely to and from orbiting weapons factory. Go to next missions (the second of LA, LB or LC, or L3).

Failure

Go to next missions (the second of LA, LB or LC, or L3).

Tips

- The plant has no defenses. You can get in close and open fire if that's how you get your kicks, but don't destroy it.

MISSION LB

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

NAV 1 — WEAPONS FACTORY

- ▼ 4 Hellcats (1 ace), Weapons Factory
- ▼ 2 Hellcats (once Dekker has docked)
- ▼ 2 Hellcats (1 ace) (if you stopped the Maniac/Dekker fight and then *immediately* flew this mission)

NAV 2 — INTREPID
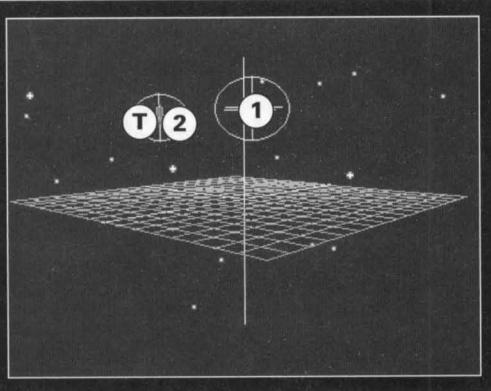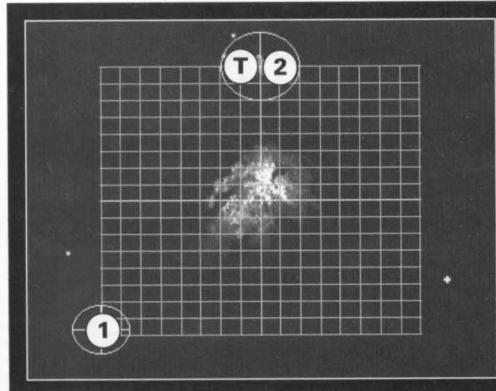
MISSION LC: ATTACK CARRIER (SPERADON)

In this series, you choose your first two missions from three available options.

Option A: Steal Fighters

Option B: Attack Manufacturing Plant

Option C: Attack Carrier

Your objective is to disable a nearby cap ship undergoing repairs.

L1 CINEMATICS

Maniac (CB): you'll never believe it

Tolwyn (SH): am I your prisoner of war?
I owe him ... → **Dekker** (CB): you let him go
I owe him nothing → **Maniac/Dekker** (CC): Tolwyn's escaped

Hawk/Panther (CC): save innocents or get weapons
Panther's right → Panther +1/Hawk −1 Go to Mission K1.
Hawk's right. → Hawk +1/Panther −1 Go to Mission L1.

Shipyard shot of busy Confederation Shipyard

Maniac/Dekker (GL): I'll kick your ass
Maniac's gonna get creamed.
This I gotta see.

Pliers (CB): you wanna try my new cloaker?
Who needs wingmen? → +1
I prefer a wingman. → −1

Blair (CC): mission briefing

L2 CINEMATICS

Hawk (SH): your friend's really pissing me off
Time to be a captain. → +1
What a whiner. → −1

Blair (CC): mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Solo mission *or* Primate, Maniac, Catscratch, Hawk, Panther, Turbo, Blade, Tex, Yaeger, Excell

Ships *Bearcat* (if you've already flown mission LA in L1), *Vindicator*, *Banshee*, *Avenger*

Recommended Loadout 2 Leech and 6 Image Recognition missiles

SUCCESS

Destroy all fighters covering the cap ship and disable cap ship by blasting its turrets and engines. Go to next mission (the second of LA, LB or LC, or L3).

FAILURE

Go to next mission (the second of LA, LB or LC, or L3).

TIPS

- Leech the carrier so that you don't have to worry about its turrets. (It's easier to leech the carrier than to shoot out the engines and turrets.)

MISSION LC

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

INV 1

▼ 4 Arrows (1 ace)

NAV 1 — DAMAGED CARRIER

▼ 6 Hellcats (1 ace), Carrier

NAV 2 — INTREPID
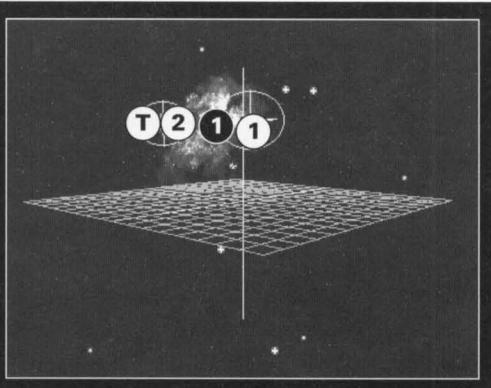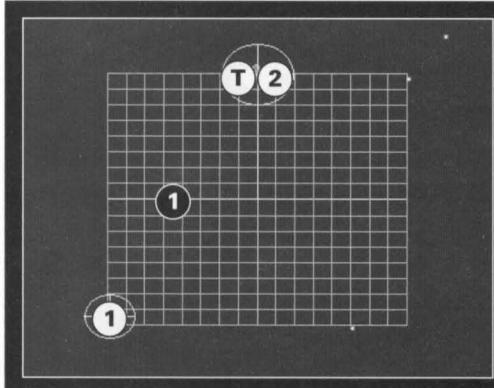
MISSION L3A/B: TOUGH DECISION (SPERADON)

Your objective is to safely insert Dekker into the lead ship of a Confederation convoy. Before you reach Nav 1, Sosa radios you that Catscratch is in trouble. You have to decide whether to rescue him.

CINEMATICS

Pliers (HB): one of our MIPs (only if you went through series F)

Catscratch/Maniac (GL): name on gold watch or coffin

Blair (CC): mission briefing

Sosa (CP): Catscratch is in trouble (will you help?)
> *Affirmative* → see L3A below
> *Negative* → see L3B below

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Primate, Maniac, Hawk, Panther, Turbo, Blade, Tex, Yaeger, Excell

Ships Avenger only

Recommended Loadout 4 Image Recognition, 4 Friend-or-Foe missiles

SUCCESS

(L3A) Rescue Catscratch. Go to L4A or L4B (you choose during the cinematics before the next mission). (L3B) Safely insert and retrieve Dekker from the Confederation cruiser. Go to L4B.

FAILURE

(L3A) Go to L4A or L4B (you choose during the cinematics before the next mission). (L3B) Go to L4B.

L3A TIPS

- Tell your wingmen to break and attack.

- Go for the Longbow; it's targeting Catscratch. Use Image Recognition missiles.

- When all bogeys are killed, tractor in Catscratch's ejection pod (purple dot on the display near his ship). Destroy his ship once you have him.

L3B Tips

- Destroy the fighters, then fire your MIPs.

- Destroy the transports while waiting to pick up the MIPs.

MISSION L3A

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

INV 1

▼ You must decide whether to rescue Catscratch.

NAV 1 — CONVOY

NEW 2 — CATSCRATCH RESCUE

▼ 2 Hellcats (1 ace), 1 Longbow
(and Catscratch in an Avenger)

NAV 3 — INTREPID

MISSION L3B

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

INV 1

▼ You must decide whether to rescue Catscratch.

NAV 1 — CONVOY

▼ 2 Transports, 1 Cruiser, 4 Hellcats

NAV 2 — INTREPID
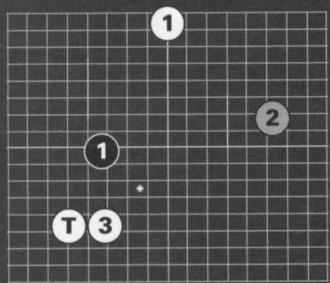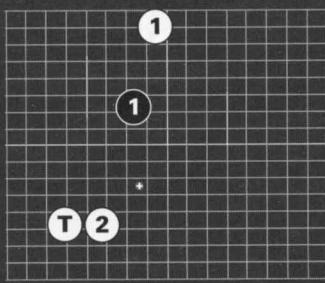
MISSION L4A:
MISSION RESUMED (SPERADON)

(If you chose not to rescue Catscratch in the previous mission, then you must fly mission L4B. If you chose to rescue Catscratch, you choose between mission L4A and L4B.)

Your objective is to resume the attack on the Confederation convoy which you abandoned in order to rescue Catscratch. After you have succeeded or abandoned this mission, Wilford will comm you with orders to disable a nearby Confederation vessel.

CINEMATICS

Maniac/Catscratch: you saved my life *or* **Blair**: Catscratch's funeral

Pliers (CB): want extra punch? (only if at least one L mission successful)
  I could use the extra firepower. → +1
  I got a need for speed. → −1

Sosa (GL): it will make you feel better (only available if Catscratch died)

Panther/Hawk (CC): how long since Eisen left?
  There's always hope ... → Panther +1/Hawk −1
  We die trying ... → Panther −1/Hawk +1

Blair (CC): mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Primate, Maniac, Hawk, Panther, Turbo, Blade, Tex, Yaeger, Excell, Catscratch (if alive)

Ships Avenger only

Recommended Loadout 4 MIPs (required), 1x4 Leech, 1x4 Image Recognition missiles

SUCCESS

Nav 1: successfully insert and retrieve Dekker. This has no effect on the overall outcome of the mission. New 2: disable transport and destroy its escorts, so that Dekker has time to overtake it. Go to M1.

FAILURE

Black Lance transport is not taken. Failure dooms the Border Worlds' efforts. Go to Losing Endgame 2.

TIPS

- At Nav 1, take out the Hellcats first — the transports aren't going anywhere.

- Next go straight for the cruiser with missiles, or with all of your power reconfigured to engines and Leech guns. Then fire your MIPs.

- At New 2, kill the Dragons however you like. Then use Leech missiles or reconfigure all power to engines and Leech guns to disable the transport.

MISSION L4A

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

NAV 1 — CONVOY

▼ 1 Cruiser, 2 Transports, 4 Hellcats

▼ 2 Hellcats (1 ace)

NEW 2 — INTERCEPT

▼ Black Lance Transport, 2 Dragons (1 ace)

▼ 2 Dragons (after Dekker docks) (1 ace)

NAV 3 — INTREPID
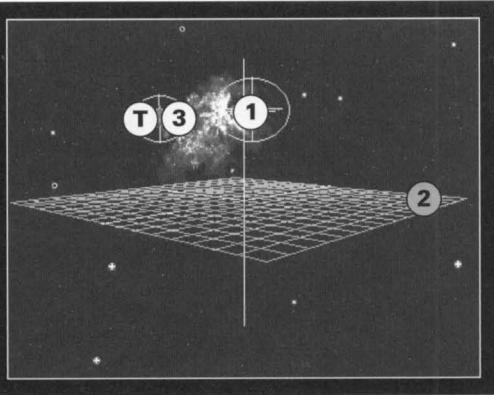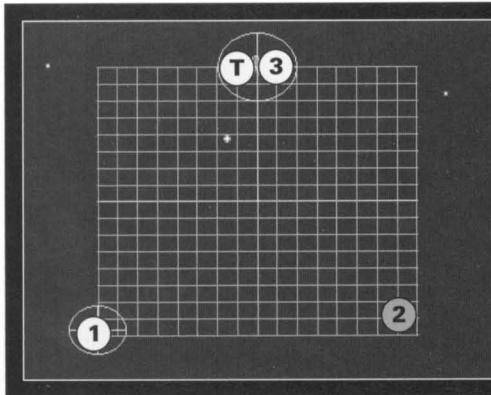
MISSION L4B: ESCORT DEFECTORS (SPERADON)

(If you chose not to rescue Catscratch in the previous mission, then you must fly mission L4B. If you chose to rescue Catscratch, you choose between mission L4A and L4B.)

Your objective is to protect three defecting pilots in Bearcats. As you complete your mission, Wilford orders you to escort Dekker's shuttle to a nearby vessel.

CINEMATICS

Maniac/Catscratch: you saved my life (only available if Catscratch survived)

Blair: Catscratch's funeral (only available if Catscratch died)

Sosa (GL): it will make you feel better (only available if Catscratch died)

Pliers (GL): want extra punch? (only if at least one L mission successful)
> I could use the extra firepower. → +1
> I got a need for speed. → –1

Panther/Hawk (CC): how long since Eisen left?
> There's always hope ... → Panther +1/Hawk –1
> We die trying ... → Panther –1/Hawk +1

Blair (CC): mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Primate, Maniac, Hawk, Panther, Turbo, Blade, Tex, Yaeger, Excell, Catscratch (if alive)

Ships Vindicator, *Banshee*, Avenger

Recommended Loadout 2x2 Leech missiles, 2x2 Image Recognition missiles

SUCCESS

New 2: disable the transport and destroy all of the Dragons. Go to M1. (The fate of the defectors at Nav 1 does not affect mission success.)

FAILURE

New 2: fail to capture the Black Lance transport. Failure at New 2 dooms the efforts of the Border Worlds. Go to Losing Endgame 2.

TIPS

- Leech the Bearcats like crazy. Don't worry about blowing up the shipyard—there's no point.

- At New 2, kill the Dragons however you like. Then use Leech missiles or reconfigure all power to engines and Leech guns to disable the transport.

MISSION L4B

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

NAV 1 — SHIPYARD

▼ 3 Bearcats (friendly defectors), Dry Dock, 3 Bearcats (enemies)

▼ 3 Bearcats (enemies)

INV 1 — MESSAGES FROM WILFORD AND SOSA

NEW 2

▼ 1 Black Lance Transport, 2 Dragons (1 ace)

▼ 2 more Dragons (once Dekker has docked)

NAV 3 — INTREPID
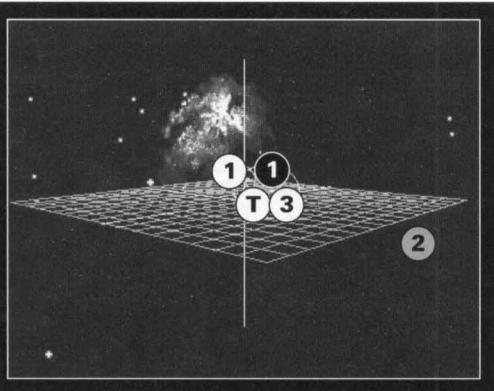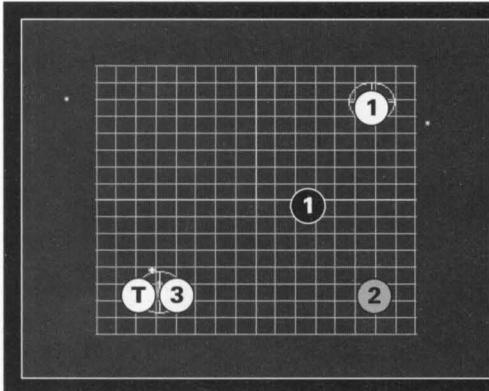
MISSION M1A/B: PLANET FT957 (TELAMON)

Your objective is to escort Dekker to Planet FT957 and land to investigate a distress call. If you are flying a Dragon (mission M1A), you can autopilot past the enemy Dragons, but encounter fire from friendlies. If you fly a Border Worlds fighter (mission M1B), the reverse is true.

CINEMATICS

Pliers (HB): what the heck is this

Pliers (HB): I ain't gonna cannibalize these babies
> *Let me at these babies.* → +1, Gain use of the Dragon
> *They could be death-traps.* → −1, Must fly Vindicator in M1

Sosa (CC): something terrible has happened on FT957

Blair (CC): mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Primate, Maniac, Hawk, *Panther*, Turbo, Blade, Tex, Yaeger, Excell, Catscratch

Ships *Dragon,* Vindicator

Recommended Loadout Image Recognition missiles, with Mace missiles on the heavy hardpoints

SUCCESS

Both you and Dekker's shuttle land on FT957. Go to M2.

FAILURE

Go to Losing Endgame 2.

TIPS

- If you fly a Vindicator, take Image Recognition missiles. You encounter cloaking Dragons and cloaking Arrows, and these missiles go after the next enemy if the first one cloaks.

- In a Dragon, there is no stopping you. Make sure you talk to Pliers, and choose *Let me at these babies.*

MISSION M1A/B

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

NAV 1

▼ Clear

INV 1

▼ 2 Banshees (if you are in the Dragon) (1 ace)

▼ 2 Arrows (cloaked), if you are in a Vindicator

NAV 2

▼ Clear

INV 2

▼ 2 Dragons (1 ace)
(if you are flying a Dragon, you can autopilot past them)

INV 3

▼ 2 Banshees, 2 Vindicators (1 ace)
(If you are flying a Dragon, these friendlies fire on you)

NAV 3 — PLANET FT957
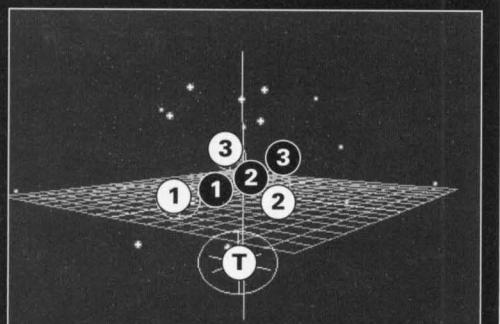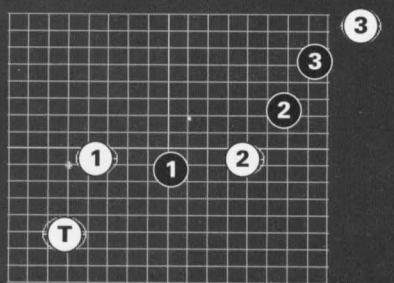
MISSION M2: BLAIR'S JUMP (CALLIMACHUS)

Your mission objective is to jump from the system where the *Intrepid* is stationed to the neighboring Axius System. Two wingmen escort you to the jump point. If you destroy the two Dragons waiting at the jump point before either of them can make the jump, you can jump safely into Axius. Sosa gives you a new nav point just before you jump.

CINEMATICS

Planet FT957: the genetic ax

Sosa (SH): light a candle

Maniac (CC): message from Admiral Wilford

Blair (CC): mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Primate, Maniac, Hawk, Panther, Turbo, Blade, Tex, Yaeger, Excell, Catscratch

Ships Dragon only

Recommended Loadout 2x1 Mace, 2x2 Leech, and 2x3 Image Recognition missiles

SUCCESS

Destroy both Dragons before they jump, and land on the starbase without incident. Go to M3.

FAILURE

Allow either of the Dragons to jump, or open fire around the starbase. Go to Losing Endgame 2.

TIPS

- Try not to use missiles at Inv 1, so you can use them all on the Dragons at Nav 1. Since Nav 1 is the last place you face enemies, you can fire at will.

- You will have a full loadout for M3, but it will be the default loadout for the Dragon.

- Engage your afterburner before going to Nav 1. This will put you closer to the Dragons heading for the jump point.

At Nav 1

• Launch at least two Leech missiles immediately. If either of the Dragons makes the jump, your carrier will be destroyed.

At Nav 2

• Autopilot past the four Dragons at Nav 2.

At New 3

• Don't fire on anything as you approach the base. If you fire on the ships, you will face endless waves of Dragons.

• You will receive a comm message from the base and be asked to enter a code. Both codes the base sends you are correct.

MISSION M2

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

INV 1
  ▼ 2 Dragons

NAV 1 — JUMP POINT ENTRANCE
  ▼ 2 Dragons

NAV 2 — JUMP POINT EXIT
  ▼ 4 Dragons (1 ace)

NEW 3
  ▼ Black Lance Starbase, 4 Dragons

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before jump
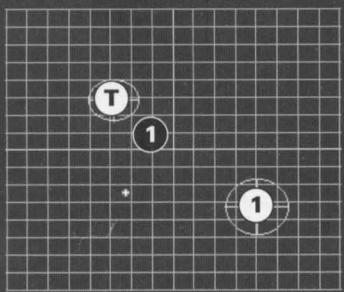
after jump
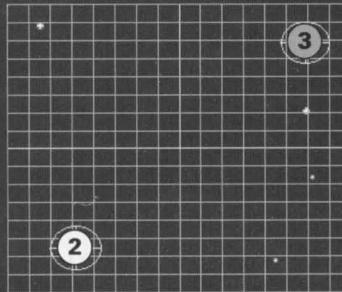
MISSION M3: JUMP BACK (AXIUS)

Your objective is to make it back to the *Intrepid* alive.

CINEMATICS

Tolwyn/Seether (BH): meet the Black Lance

Brody: I know a way

MAIN TERMINAL

Not available.

SUCCESS

Return to the *Intrepid.* Go to N1.

FAILURE

Eject. Go to Losing Endgame 2.

TIPS

- After you take off, cloak and autopilot away.

- At the entrance to the jump point, kill the Dragons.

- Use torpedoes on the Black Lance transport, if you have them.

MISSION M3

TAKEOFF — BLACK LANCE BASE

▼ 4 Dragons

▼ If you don't autopilot within 5 seconds after the auto light comes on, 2 more Dragons will jump in.

▼ Then 1 Dragon for each Dragon killed until 6 more have shown up

NAV 1 — JUMP POINT ENTRANCE

▼ 4 Dragons

NAV 2 — JUMP POINT EXIT

▼ Black Lance Transport, 4 Dragons

NAV 3 — INTREPID

before jump
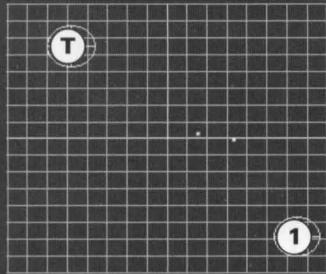
after jump
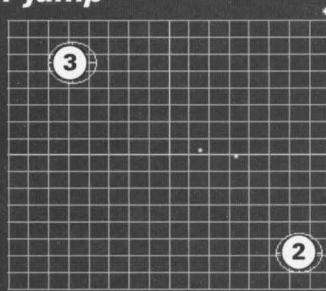
MISSION N1A: SNEAK BY ELLA (ELLA)

Before this mission, you have a conversation with Panther and Hawk about whether to use the Flashpak on the Ella Superbase. If you agree with Panther (*Panther's right. We Can't kill civilians.*), you will fly this mission. If you agree with Hawk (*Hawk's right. This is war.*), you will fly N1B: Flashpak.

Your objective is to escort the *Intrepid* safely past the Ella Superbase. You will encounter Confederation ships at three points before you reach your first nav point.

CINEMATICS

Seether/Tolwyn: there has been a security breach

Dekker/Pliers (CB): what did you find?

Panther/Hawk (CC): should we use the Flash-pak ?
> *Panther's right. We can't kill civilians.* → Panther +1/Hawk –1. Go to N1A.
> *Hawk's right. This is war.* → Panther –1/Hawk +1. Go to N1B.

Blair (CC): mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Maniac, Hawk, Panther, Miner, Blade, Tex, Yaeger, Excell, Catscratch, Primate, Turbo

Ships *Dragon*, Vindicator, Banshee, Avenger

Recommended Loadout No Heat Seekers. Load Image Recognition missiles.

SUCCESS

Escort *Intrepid* to the jump point.

FAILURE

Intrepid is destroyed or jumps without you. (You cannot make the jump alone, even if you are flying a Dragon. Go to Losing Endgame 2.

Tips

- Go for the Longbows first. They're trying to hit the *Intrepid* with torpedoes.

- There is a cap ship at each intercept point. Ignore these.

- *Immediately* request clearance and land after your mission is complete.

- Flying this mission, though longer and more difficult than N1B, will make it much easier on you when you reach mission N4.

MISSION N1A

INV 1
- ▼ Frigate, 4 Hellcats (1 ace)
- ▼ 4 Hellcats (1 ace)

INV 2
- ▼ Cruiser, 2 Hellcats (1 ace), 2 Longbows
- ▼ 2 Hellcats (1 ace), 2 Longbows

INV 3
- ▼ Destroyer, 2 Bearcats, 2 Longbows
- ▼ 2 Bearcats, 2 Longbows

NAV 1 — JUMP POINT
- ▼ 4 Hellcats (1 ace) show up if the *Intrepid* leaves you behind, and you lose the game.
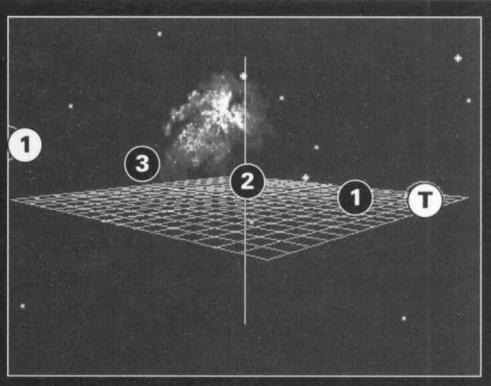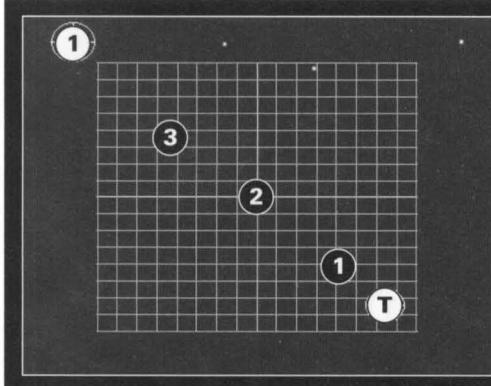
MISSION N1B: FLASH-PAK (ELLA)

Before this mission, you have a conversation with Panther and Hawk about whether to use the Flashpak on the Ella Superbase. If you agree with Hawk (*Hawk's right. This is war.*), you will fly this mission. If you agree with Panther (*Panther's right. We Can't kill civilians.*), you will fly N1A: Sneak by Ella.

Your objective is to hit the Ella Superbase with the Flash-pak, while your other pilots escort the *Intrepid* to the jump point.

CINEMATICS

Seether/Tolwyn: there has been a security breach

Dekker/Pliers (CB): what did you find?

Panther/Hawk (CC): should we use the Flash-pak?
> *Panther's right. We can't kill civilians.* → Panther +1/Hawk −1. Go to N1A.
> *Hawk's right. This is war.* → Panther −1/Hawk +1. Go to N1B.

Blair (CC): mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Maniac, Hawk, Panther, Miner, Blade, Tex, Yaeger, Excell, Catscratch, Primate, Turbo

Ships Dragon only

Recommended Loadout Default (with Flash-pak)

SUCCESS

Ella is destroyed and you land on the *Intrepid* before it jumps. Go to N2.

FAILURE

You autopilot past Ella without destroying it, or the *Intrepid* jumps without you. (You cannot make the jump alone, even though you are flying a Dragon). Go to Losing Endgame 2.

TIPS

- While this mission is easier than N1A, you must use the Flash-pak to destroy Ella. You will not have it available to you for mission N4.

- Ignore the fighters and go straight for the base.

- Land when instructed or you will be left behind.

- Do it quickly. If you take too long, fighters may attack the *Intrepid*.

MISSION N1B

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

NAV 1 — ELLA SUPERBASE

▼ Superbase, 4 Hellcats

▼ 4 Hellcats (If Ella is not destroyed quickly)

▼ 4 more Hellcats (If Ella still not destroyed)

INV 1 (If you don't destroy Ella)

▼ 4 Bearcats (1 ace)

▼ 4 Bearcats (1 ace)

NAV 2 — JUMP POINT

▼ *Intrepid* (If you destroyed Ella)

▼ 4 Hellcats (1 ace) which have already destroyed *Intrepid,* if you fail to destroy Ella
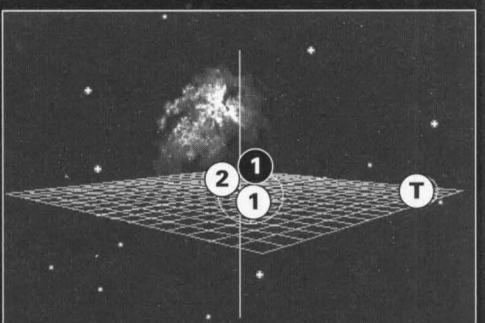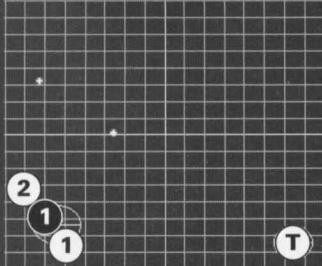
MISSION N2: VESUVIUS (ELLA)

As you close in on the *Vesuvius*, it turns around to launch an attack on you. This is a scramble mission to defend the *Intrepid*.

CINEMATICS

Tolwyn: the *Intrepid* is closing in

Sosa (CC): he's turning around

MAIN TERMINAL

Scramble mission: main terminal is not available. If you flew the Dragon in M1, you fly one again here. If not, you fly a Banshee here.

SUCCESS

Destroy all Hellcats and land on the *Intrepid*. Go to N3.

FAILURE

Intrepid is destroyed or you fail to land. Go to Losing Endgame 2.

TIPS

• Guarding the *Intrepid* is your highest priority.

• Repeatedly use [U] to lock on the closest fighter. This can speed up the battle.

• Have your wingman break and attack as soon as possible.

• Turn off Video with [Ctrl][V] and use VGA for a faster frame rate, or try turning off the music or lowering the detail level.

MISSION N2

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

NAV 1 — INTREPID

▼ 4 Hellcats, *Vesuvius*

▼ 8 more Hellcats
(1 for each 1 destroyed)
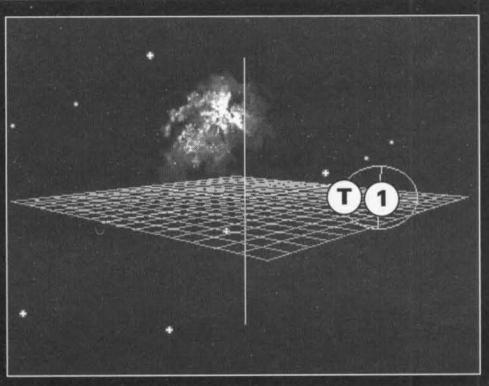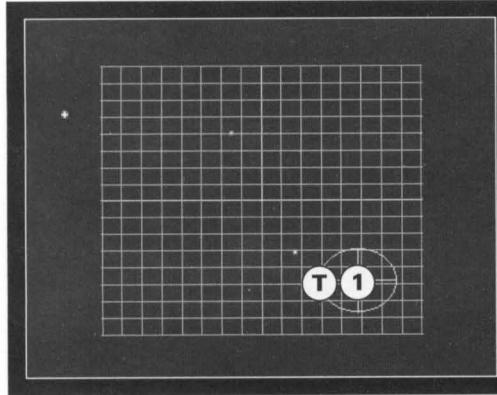
MISSION N3: ST. HELEN'S (SOL)

The *St. Helens* (and Eisen) come to help you renew the assault on *Vesuvius*.

CINEMATICS

Eisen (CC): mission briefing (via hologram)

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Maniac, Hawk, Panther, Blade, Catscratch, Tex, Yeager, Excell, Miner

Ships *Dragon*, Vindicator, Banshee, Avenger

Recommended Loadout Heat Seeker and Image Recognition (in Dragon), Heat Seekers (in Banshee)

SUCCESS

Destroy all fighters from the *Vesuvius*. Go to N4.

FAILURE

Intrepid is destroyed, or *St. Helens* jumps before you land on the *Intrepid*. Go to Losing Endgame 2.

TIPS

- Use the comm screen (C) to tell *each* friendly pilot to attack. (Use 1, 2, 2, 2, 3, 2 to give the command.)

- Let the enemy fighters come to *you!*

- Flying between the *St. Helens* and the *Vesuvius* is dangerous.

- Go to VGA if the mission runs too slowly, or try turning off the music.

MISSION N3

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

NAV 1 — JUMP POINT ENTRANCE

▼ *Vesuvius*, 4 Hellcats (and *St. Helens*)

▼ 8 Hellcats
(1 Hellcat launched to replace each Hellcat destroyed)
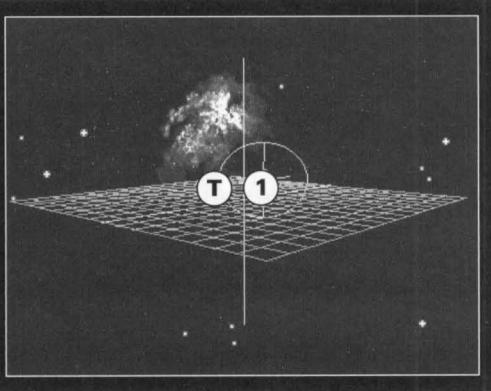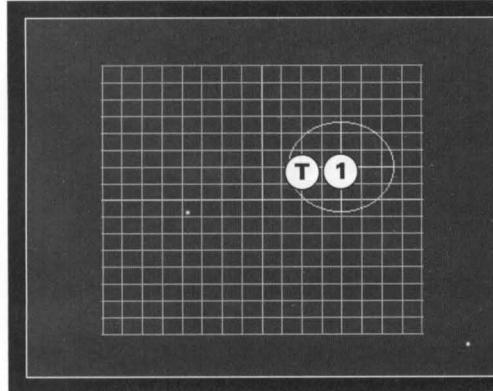
MISSION N4: TRY AGAIN (SOL)

This is your only real chance to destroy the *Vesuvius*. If you did not use the Flash-pak in mission N1, you can fly into the *Vesuvius* and unleash it. If you already used the Flash-pak, you will have to resort to conventional methods.

CINEMATICS

Pliers (HB): I can rig the Flash-pak (only if you have not used it already)
>*It's now or never.* → +1
>*Too risky.* → −1

Tolwyn (CC): I'm the one who's invincible (via hologram)

Eisen (CC): mission briefing (via hologram)

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Maniac, Hawk, Panther, Blade, Tex, Miner, Excell, Yeager, Primate, Catscratch, Turbo

Ships *Dragon*, Vindicator, Avenger

Recommended Loadout Flash-pak and Dumbfires (in Dragon), Dumbfires (in Avenger)

SUCCESS

Destroy the *Vesuvius*. Go to O1.

FAILURE

Intrepid is destroyed. Go to Losing Endgame 2.

TIPS

- If you flew N1A, tell Pliers you want to use the Flash-pak.

- If you use the Flash-pak, you have to drop it *inside* the *Vesuvius's* hangar. Take out several of the turrets before getting that close.

- If you don't have the Flash-pak, try flying *inside* the *Vesuvius* and attacking the hangar with a full salvo of Dumbfire missiles and torpedoes.

- If you destroy *Vesuvius* first, you don't need to destroy all of the fighters.

MISSION N4

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

NAV 1 — JUMP POINT EXIT

▼ *Vesuvius,* 4 Hellcats, *St. Helens*

▼ 8 Hellcats (1 Hellcat launched for each Hellcat destroyed)

▼ *Intrepid* arrives after *Vesuvius* is destroyed
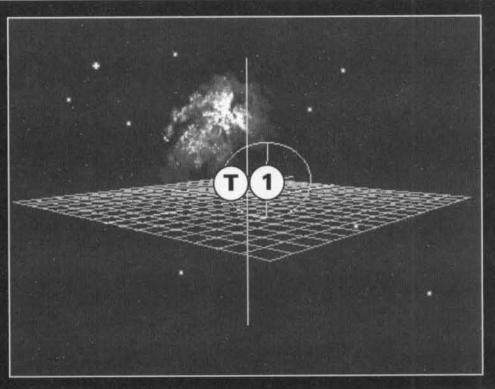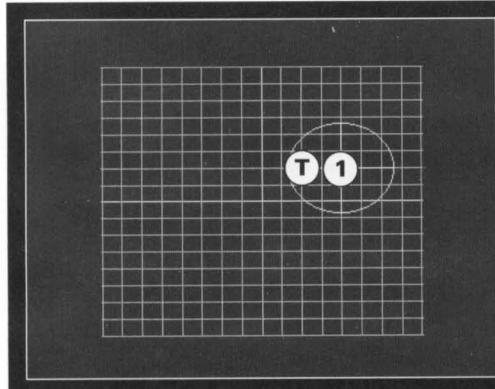
MISSION 01: SEETHER (SOL)

Your objective is to slip through Terran defenses in a Dragon, make you way to the Assembly, and blow the cover on Tolwyn's Black Lance operations. Seether intercepts you midway to Earth, and you must defeat him.

CINEMATICS

Eisen (CC): mission briefing

MAIN TERMINAL

Wingmen Solo mission

Ships Dragon only

Recommended Loadout Leech missiles

SUCCESS

Destroy Seether. Go to 02.

FAILURE

Die or eject. Go to Losing Endgame 2.

TIPS

At Inv 1,

- Seether is a sucker for the Leech missile. Let him make his attack approach, and when he uncloaks, lay a volley of gunfire into the nose of his ship. When he breaks off the attack, use Leech missiles to stop him dead in his tracks.

- Or ... at the very beginning, autoslide around to face Seether. Fire full salvos before he cloaks.

At Inv 2,

- You have to destroy the starbase before you can autopilot to Earth, so you can't just fly around it.

- Once you get past the turrets and the mines, guns and missiles are enough to take out the starbase. Torpedoes also work well.

MISSION 01

TAKEOFF — INTREPID

INV 1 — SEETHER

▼ in a Dragon, of course

INV 2 — STARBASE

▼ Starbase, 5 Turret mines, 2 Arrows (cloaked) (1 ace)

▼ 2 Arrows (cloaked) (after first Arrows destroyed) (1 ace)

NAV 1 — EARTH
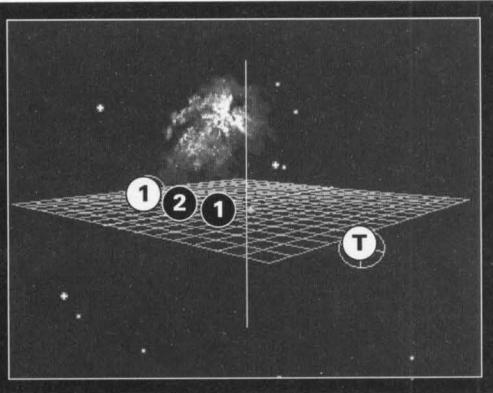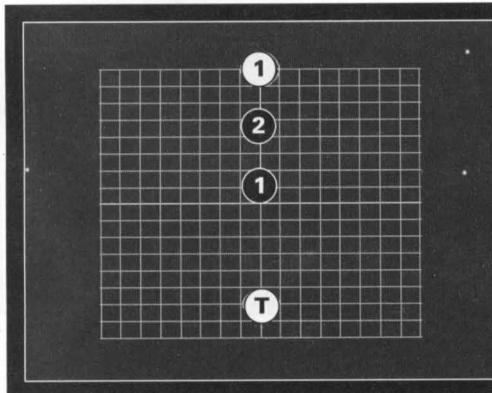
MISSION 02: THE GREAT ASSEMBLY (SOL)

Although not an actual flight mission, this cinematic mission can still cost you the game, depending on the choices you make. Your objective is to convince the Great Assembly not to declare war on the Border Worlds, using your first-hand knowledge of Admiral Tolwyn's covert Black Lance Operations.

All of the action takes place inside the Great Assembly Hall.

CINEMATICS

Tolwyn If there is a cancer amongst us, let us cut it out.
Seize the moment. → Paladin lets you speak.
Careful. Fools rush in …→ Go to Losing Endgame 2.

(If you make the correct choice (*Seize the moment*), Paladin lets you speak.
If not (*Careful. Fools rush in …*), go to Losing Endgame 2.

Tolwyn Do you really believe that this chamber is that ignorant?
You're not sucking me in.
Two can play that game.

Tolwyn Please continue, Colonel.
Dance around him.
Confront him.

Tolwyn Harmony is maintained *through* control.
   He'll trip himself up. → Tolwyn betrays his pride. (correct choice)
   He's mad with power. → Tolwyn answers Paladin calmly. (incorrect choice)

Paladin (to Tolwyn) What are these "Black Lance" forces he's referring to?
   Tolwyn's response is dependent on the last choice you made.

Tolwyn Effective soldiers require effective tools.
   Like bioweapons? (correct choice)
   Like secret, unmarked fighters? (incorrect choice)

Blair The skies are full of criminals, aren't they?
   Tell them more ... (correct choice)
   Attack Tolwyn. (incorrect choice)

If you made the incorrect choices in at least two of these last three exchanges (*He's mad with power, Like secret, unmarked fighters, Attack Tolwyn*), go to Losing Endgame 2.

If you made the winning choice at least two out of three times (*He'll trip himself up, Like bioweapons, Tell them more*), go to the Winning Endgame.

There are two winning endgames depending on whether your command style has been more like Panther's or Hawk's.
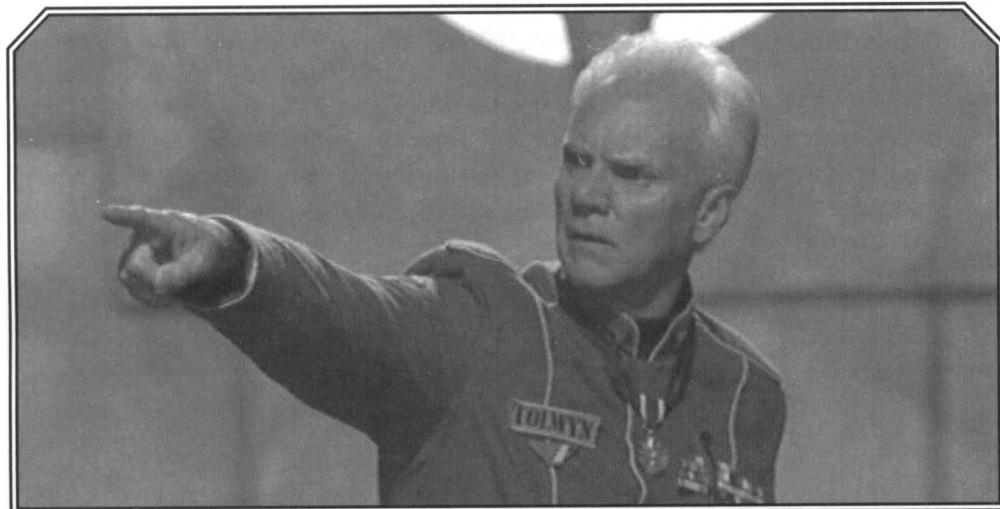
INTERVIEWS

CHRIS ROBERTS, Director / Executive Producer

Q: *How is* Wing IV *different from* Wing III*?*

CR: With *Wing IV* I guess we tried to have better story and gameplay than *Wing III*. We haven't changed the technology that much. Sure, we made the 3-D engine better, put digital sound in, 16-bit Dolby stereo and have a new movie compression technique with 16-bit color. Still, it's all sort of incremental changes. With *Wing III* we made such a big technological leap that we had an entire system that we never really got to exploit because we had to get it in and get it out. Afterwards we said, "Hey, wouldn't it be really cool if we did this and that?" So with *Wing IV* we set out to use the tools better — tell a better story and create a better game.
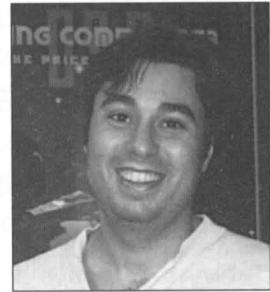
On the production side, the production is far more ambitious and detailed. The story concept is richer. The script is improved. The interactivity between the story and the actual gameplay is far higher. There is more going on out in space. We've got a lot more options ... more strategy and tactics. The missions have more variety. The sum of it all should be a much more involving, engrossing game than *Wing III*.

Q: *How about the Hollywood side? Are you doing anything differently there?*

CR: To make a production with a much higher standard, we had to go to real sets and shoot with 35mm film.

The thing with real sets is that it's easier for the actors to use. Usually on green screen, even if the scene is of a huge room, you just have two guys surrounded by green — it's not the same for them. A real set allows you to fill it with extras, give it some sort of depth, light it, give it a texture. You can move the camera around, which helps tell the story better, plus that allows the actors to have an environment which enables them to slip into their roles more easily. In general I think it helps tell the story far better. 35mm film gives you a better look than video does. In the future, as the platforms get higher resolution, we'll have a source we can go back to that will have a resolution to match it.

Plier's Workshop Set

Q: *Has it turned out the way you envisioned?*

CR: Actually, it turned out better than I was hoping it would be. I think the story works very well with the game. We tried a lot of stuff, and it all works very well. The quality of the movie playback is very high. I wasn't sure that was going to happen when we started out, because I wasn't sure how good the compression was going to be.

Q: *Is there anything you would have done differently, if you knew then what you know now?*

CR: Only a couple of things. More time would have been nice. That was really kind of out of our control. The other thing is, *Wing IV* is a very ambitious story, we had a very short time line to do it, so we ended up running so fast that we didn't have time to sit back and say, "Maybe we don't want 37 sets. Maybe we need to rewrite the story so we only have 20 sets." It would have been easy to do. Generally I would prefer to have less sets that are bigger and more detailed.

Our in-flight comm stuff came out really well — I would have liked to have stretched that out and done more with that.

Q: *What was the most interesting part for you?*

CR: I like the spontaneity of directing live action. I appreciate the fact that you can come in and get a seat and shoot two or three scenes in one day and get it done. Doing the same thing in computer graphics takes a month or so. I had fun just shooting a lot of film. We had a camera, and real sets, and I could stop and do things that I couldn't in *Wing III* because the camera were locked down for the green screen. It was a learning process for me. Towards the end of *Wing IV* I felt more confident of how I was shooting and blocking stuff than I had been on *Wing III*. I wish I had more time on the pre-production side to get the look of *Wing IV* the way I wanted it. It was so short that I had to delegate a lot of responsibility. I would have rather been far more involved. Of course, the game side is always kind of fun. It's kind of cool when you see it all coming together.
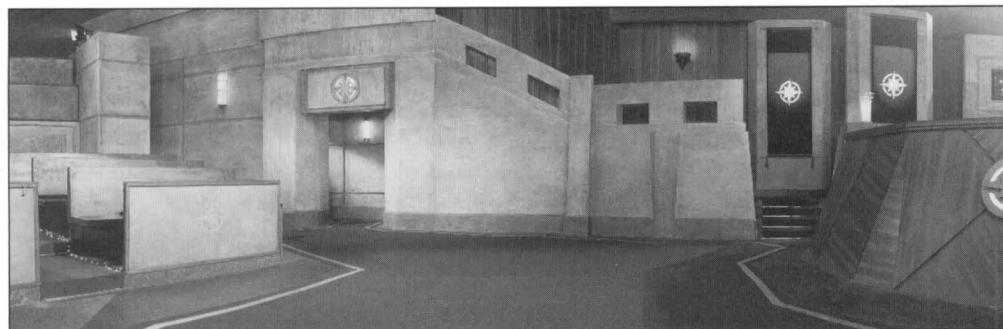
Conference Room Set

Q: *Were there any difficulties in spending half your time in California and half in Austin?*

CR: It's more of the same trouble we encountered last time. Essentially you have two productions going on at the same time. A lot of time we'd have computer graphics artists doing work for the stuff we filmed and also for the computer stuff we do here. When we are shooting out in California the communication between the artists is very important. It wasn't as good as it should have been, but it was better than it was on *Wing III.* Still, it wasn't enough. It would be nice if everyone was in the same place so they could all see what was happening and everyone was up to date. The project was so big, things moved so fast, and there were so many people involved that no one knew what was going on with the rest of the project. Besides me, and I can only be in one place at a time.

Q: *Where do you see the game industry going next?*

CR: It depends. I think the game industry is going to go towards two types of games. On one hand, I think it's going to go towards a multi-player game; the ultimate evolution will probably be something where you go to the Internet. It'll be anything where you just get inside an environment, and you and a whole bunch of other real people fight against each other or work alongside each other. That is always going to be a lot better than computer interactive. It's a lot of fun. That's one of the major components of the future.

Storyboard Panel
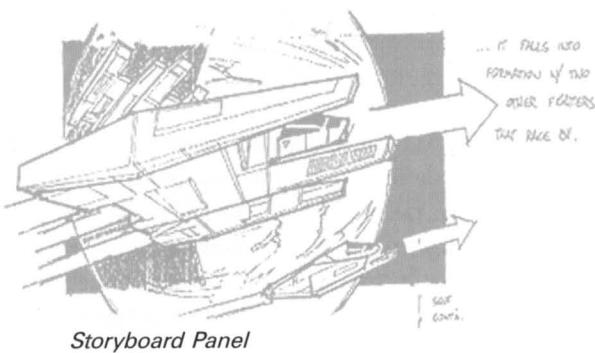
The other major component will be solo games which will evolve around stories; that's something that you won't be able to get with the group. Those will probably involve high production value. I view *Wing Commander* as the "story" kind of game. Those kind of games will have the look and feel of a major motion picture. They'll require a higher production budget than we currently have.

Q: *What are your plans for the future?*

CR: Right now we're working on *Silverheart,* a story/adventure kind of game. I'm also trying to get a *Wing Commander* movie/game put together so we can film the movie and the game together.

CHRIS DOUGLAS,
PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Q: *From an artist's point of view, what are the differences between* Wing III *and* Wing IV*?*

CD: We knew we had a shorter period of time to generate at least as much art work as we had on *Wing III*. We were looking at having to reuse as much of the artwork as we could. At the same time, we wanted people to feel they were getting a very different game — to look at the artwork and feel *Wing IV* had achieved a new level of quality. So we did a couple of things.

For one thing, we got rid of computer generated sets except in a couple of cases. Instead, we used traditional matte painting. That freed up a lot of time to focus on animations and the big, exciting pieces of artwork like starships exploding and cinematic sequences. That's a lot more fun that spending time tweaking cameras to get backgrounds for talking heads in conversations. We definitely have a lot more animation in this game than we did in the previous one.

Secondly, I think the animation is a lot better. In *Wing III* we're working with the 3-D animation package *Alias*, but we weren't very familiar with it yet. We were all learning and experimenting. Now we've all gotten into a groove where we actually know how to exploit some of its strengths. I think that shows a lot. The animation we have is more sophisticated, plus it's better lighted. The cinematics — the continuity and the film-making aspects of it — also improved as we got more familiar with that.

Bearcat before battle ...

Since we had to reuse a good chunk of the *Wing III* spaceship, about half the ships were new, and half were old ships recycled from *Wing III*. On these, we went through and re-textured them, and also made some changes to the geometry, to spruce them up a little bit. We just put a lot of energy into it. *Wing III* was just 256-color, but in *Wing IV* we did it all in true color, with 24-bit texture maps. We visited Air Force and

... and with damage texture.

Navy bases, and the *Lexington* down in Corpus Christi, and shot lots of photographs for reference. That had a lot of influence on the way things turned out. The textures are just much more realistic. In a close-up of the fighters, you can see that there is often a world of difference between the textures of *Wing III* and *Wing IV*.
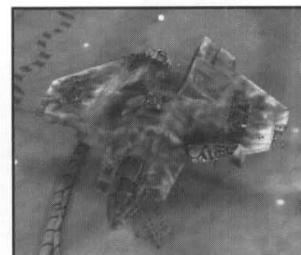
Q: *Besides ships, are any other things animated?*

CD: Most of our effect sequences, of course, are spaceships flying around and things exploding. We also worked where there was a lot of integration between the live action and cut sequences, like in the opening ... times when the pilots are flying around, and you'll see both in the cockpit and outside at other things flying around. A fair amount of things like that, but you know, we aren't doing any character animation or things like that. It's all spaceships. Guns. Special effects. Explosions. Force fields. That sort of thing.

Q: *What's the hardest thing to animate?*

CD: In a *Wing Commander* game? Well, a lot of the effects gets pretty sophisticated ... pretty complex. Like the shockwave explosion effects, with lightning arcing over the ships and particles flying out. Of course Chris Olivia is good at that — he was able to handle a lot of that kind of stuff. It's really technical and very elaborate. Really, the hardest things to animate on computer are characters, but we didn't have to deal with that much.

Q: *When you make a special effect, for instance a shockwave, and you are staring at a blank screen, what stages do you go through to make it actually play?*

CD: There's not any one way you go about it. You can start by layering shaders and geometry, image planes, lights with fractal fog effects, things like that. Layer textures onto textures onto textures — all the textures are animated, doing different things. It gets really elaborate. In some of the animations that Chris Olivia does, like the flash-pak effects, there are 20 or 30 different things going on at once. Different textures and lights and shaders will be animating at the same time, with objects popping in and out of existence. Then explosions get layered onto everything else.

SHOCK WAVE SPECIAL EFFECT
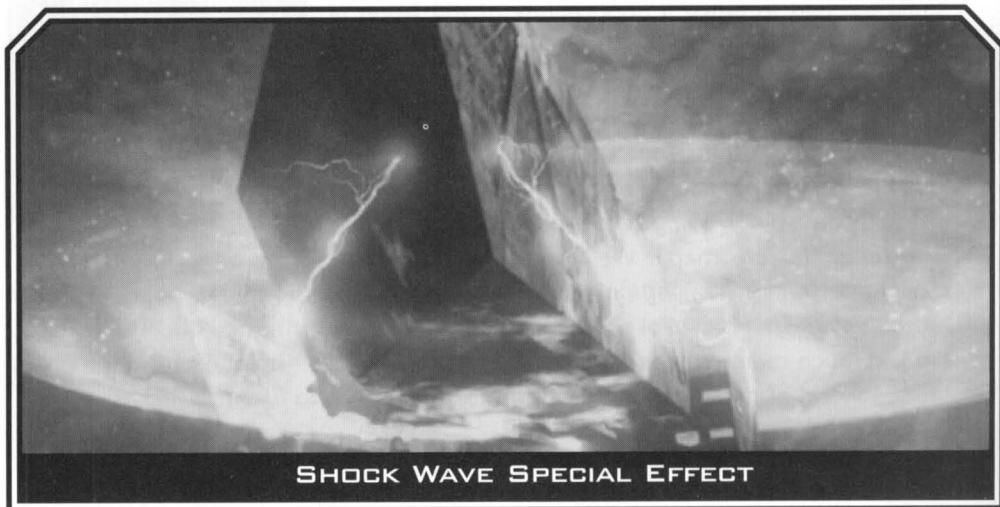
Q: *What tools do you use in coming up with a spaceship? Is there ever a point where you are working with pencil and paper?*

CD: Yes. This is where we get into the production design/art director thing. The production designer is in charge of the look-and-feel type stuff — the conceptual art, making sure that all the Border Worlds ships look like Border World ships, and all the Confederation ships look like Confederation ships, and that sort of thing. I do a lot of sketching. At ORIGIN, we don't do it to quite the extent they do in Hollywood, where they do many, many revisions of a sketch, followed by a full-color copy drafted up by a professional drafter with side views, and all that. You only need to do that when you're going to have four or five people working on the same physical model so everyone is working on the same plan. But it's stifling creatively.

If you are going to have an artist build a spaceship, I think it's good to have the sketches be a little vague so later artists can put some of themselves into it. Even if they didn't design it in the first place, they can look at it and see that there is room for innovation. Artists should be able to feel like whatever they work on is partially theirs. It shouldn't be a mechanical task we've been given: "here's this, build it." So really, I'd like to have more pre-production to do sketches and stuff like that. Not just me; I don't want to do it all myself. I love doing it, but the more you can get the artists who are going to be building objects to do their own sketches, or at least doing their own color comps for things, the better. The problem is, doing that sort of stuff takes time. We didn't always have time to do it. We certainly didn't on this project.

Fighter Concept Sketches
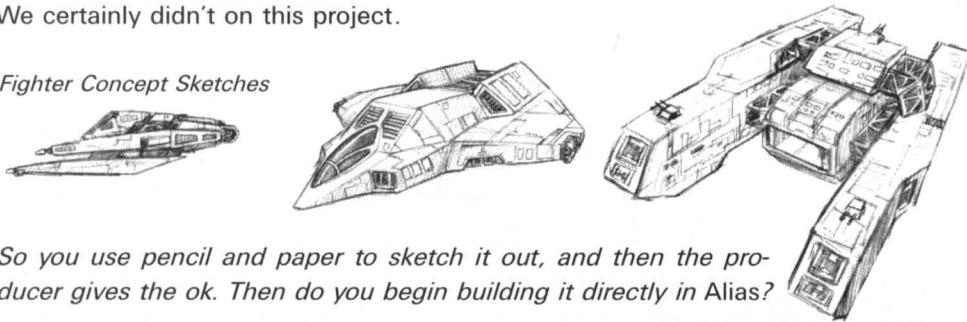
Q: *So you use pencil and paper to sketch it out, and then the producer gives the ok. Then do you begin building it directly in* Alias?

CD: Yeah. We just go from the sketch and start building it up in *Alias*. You build your model first so you have all the geometry, and then draw up your texture maps to go with the geometry and map onto it.

For the actual space flight engine, you give some renders of the spaceship to one of the EOR artists (EOR is our in-house object-building software), and they use that as a reference to build a much simpler version of the ship, and texture from that. Each ship will have two actual versions — the high end, glitzy *Alias* mesh, and the much slower 200-face polygon EOR version that you actually see in space flight. You see the bigger, more elaborate ones in the cinematic cut scenes and special effects sequences.

Q: *If somebody wanted to be an artist working in a game like this, what kind of experiences and skills do you think they ought to have?*

CD: It's changing. We used to be able to just hire traditional artists off the street and train them to do the computer art here. Now, though, we've gotten to the point where it's hard to hire somebody who hasn't had some sort of *Alias* exposure in school, or some other high-end SGI package like *Wave Front* that lets us teach them *Alias* pretty easily. The learning curve on *Alias* is so steep it's really hard to train anyone. It takes a long time. I've worked with it two years now, and there's still stuff I don't know. If it's somebody who hasn't worked with a computer before, you can forget about getting into UNIX — it's pretty complex. It's easy to do a lot of damage if you don't know what you are doing.

Q: *Do you have any plans on how to make the next game look bigger and better?*

CD: To do more of the same. I think we've gotten to a pretty high level of sophistication with the textures right now, and now it's time to go back and put some more energy into the modeling, try to make it a little bit better. Plus, I'm working pretty heavily on my design skills, brushing up on them quite a bit. So we're hoping our conceptual designs will be of a little bit higher level, too. A little bit more elaborate and integrated.
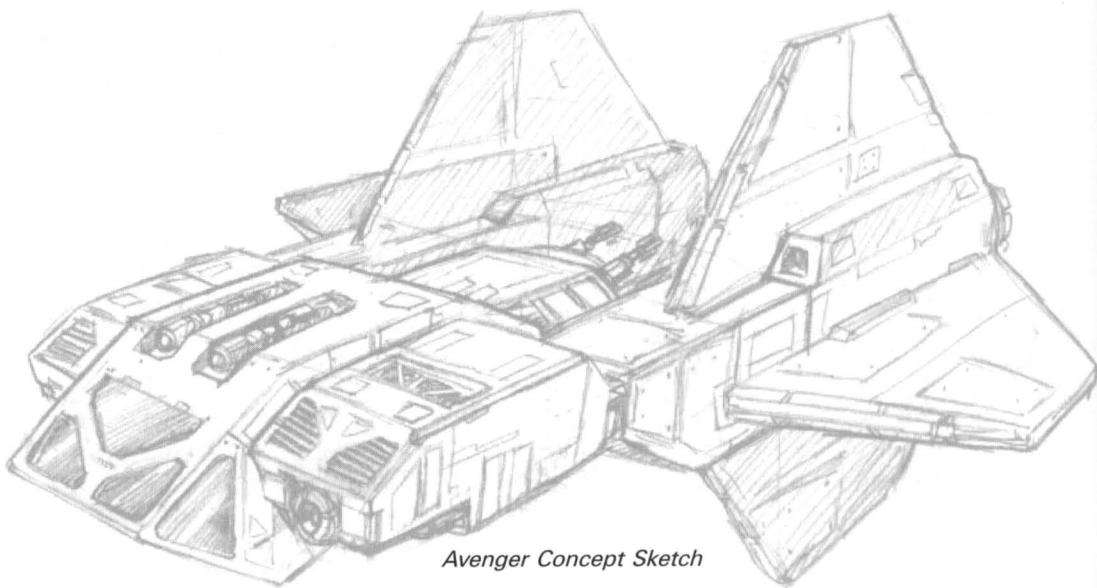
Avenger Concept Sketch

ANTHONY MORONE,
GAME DIRECTOR &

FRANK ROAN,
LEAD PROGRAMMER

Q: *What were the differences between* Wing III *and* Wing IV*? What were the challenges?*

AM: Well, we feel that *Wing IV* was more of an artistic endeavor than a technical

Anthony Morone

Frank Roan

one. Remember that *Wing III* was basically a new medium in terms of developing an engine and using full motion video for the first time. We were so busy developing the technology for that, that the gameplay came second. Whereas in *Wing IV* we didn't have the need to develop the technology again, so we basically spent most of time in resolving gameplay issues. For example, we literally spent about six months doing the mission design. That was before any coding was done on the missions. The Technical Design Assistants (TDAs) worked with the scriptwriters from January until about May or June just doing revisions of scripts, checking for continuity of the game, and allowing for an increase of flow between the space flight and the movie aspects of the game. So basically we've been concentrating on developing a good game.

Q: *You said the TDAs got to work with the writers. Did you get to have a lot of influence as programmers?*

FR: Our titles don't cover everything we did. We sat with the writers for the first month or so. We did more than work with the design; we helped with everything. The TDAs had a lot more input than they ever did on *Wing III*. And Tony and I got to do more designing than we ever had before.

The technology — in *Wing III* we tried to go vertical with the technology, where in *Wing IV* we tried to go laterally with the technology. In other words, with *Wing III* we said "let's do technology," where with *Wing IV* it was "let's take the technology that we have and expand it." *Wing III* had about two gigs of data done in 22 months, where *Wing IV* is about 4 gigs of data done in 11 months. Basically, that's twice the volume in half the time. Everything we did in *Wing III* has been retouched in *Wing IV*. The objects have been re-textured, every byte has been tweaked. Tony says this is what *Wing III* could have been like if we had another year. Actually, I would say beyond that, because we've gone so far beyond the *Wing III* storyline that we've taken it to a new level. This is probably *better* than if we had spent another year on *Wing III*.
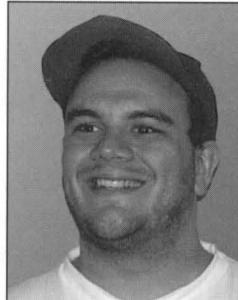
Q: *Because you have a better story?*

FR: Because we had the chance to rethink it. We spent so much time concentrating on technology that even if we had another year we would have just done even *more* technology.

AM: In terms of the code, we basically finished *Wing III*, took a couple of weeks off, and then went back into full development mode on the *Wing III* code base. As far as the code goes, we basically reopened the book and started writing from where we left off. In terms of the content, we included a lot of fresh ideas. I don't want to make people think that *Wing IV* is a cheap rip-off or a cheap sequel. It's definitely a lot of fresh ideas.

FR: We're big gamers. I've been a *Wing* fan since *Wing I*. I played it religiously, both *Wing I* and *Wing II*. It was a thrill to get a chance to write *Wing III*. So when we went to *Wing IV*, we had so many ideas left over ... the way I see it, this is basically the customer getting the chance to write the game. I've always been a game customer, a player. I'm the audience we are writing for. I've been the audience, and I continue to be that.

Everybody enjoys being drawn into the game, and I've found the way to do that is to enhance the environment, make it like you're there. The wingmen are more organic in that there is more life to them. The missions are not always what they appear. You can be flying a mission when it turns out that the mission needs to be scrubbed for something else — something that just pops up. We tried to make it so there was something cool around every corner. We tried to vary the pace. In *Wing III* it was basically fly around and kill things, and once you've played the first five or ten missions you're going to kind of get the feel for them. There were some cool things, but that was basically that. Here there is always something new being introduced, like a new weapon halfway through or ending up in a new place or new ships. We tried to introduce ships all the way through. In *Wing III* you got them all in the beginning.

AM: Everything is really dynamic this time. The wingman-selection interface — you'll see your list of available pilots shrink and grow throughout the entire game. Sometimes you might go out and escort some new fighters back to the base, and after that you will get some new pilots that you can fly with. Then you'll get people defecting and leaving your ranks. It's dynamic throughout the entire game, and that should hold people's interest.

FR: The game's so much more complex now. With the missions — when you add complexity, you also add a number of things that can go wrong. There are so many new problems we've introduced for ourselves by adding new mission commands. For example, we added a tractor beam. So now we have to worry: what happens if he tries to tractor in a capital ship? What happens if he tries to tractor in asteroids? Why should you not be able to? Some say, no, it's a bug; or you say, sure, you just blow up when you do it because the systems aren't capable of it. I don't mind giving someone a knife and letting them cut their own throat if they want to. I don't like saying, here's a knife, but you can't do this and this and this because you "wouldn't want to." Let's see what the user wants to do.

Q: *Is it what you envisioned when you started off a year ago?*

AM: It's always evolving, I guess. You start with a particular idea, and that's a big part of the problem why software products tend to be late. People never really want to stick to their original ideas because when you get into the development of it ...

FR: ... you come up with better ones.

AM: Yeah. You get some momentum going and you say, well, geez, since we've come this far, why don't we do this? And we start adding more features. So really the design goes throughout the entire development process.

FR: It's never complete. A programmer never thinks his code is done. He just thinks it is shippable at that state. And it's the same thing, I'm sure, with all sorts of other mediums. I don't think I've seen anyone say, this is perfect. I cannot add anything else or make it any better. You always can. So we take a snapshot, ship it, and if we have the time we will either keep working on it or go on to other products. When I was designing and working on *Wing III* we got so many game ideas that we just kept jotting things down. By the time we're through with one project we have ideas for 50 more. Also, we have a gameflow programmer that completely redid our gameflow. That looks amazing, too. He's come up with a lot of his own ideas.

Q: *When you say gameflow, you mean the part in between the missions?*

FR: Gameflow is when you are on the *Lexington*, when you are on the *Intrepid*, etc. There is so much you can do with screen layouts. If you make the graphics look better, the game feels better. It's difficult to describe. There's a real passion in the stuff that we've done. It comes out. Look at the gameflow, for example, the nuances and special touches that have been put into it.

AM: We've got a pretty good team because we have a lot of veterans from *Wing III*. We all knew the process and we were able to do things efficiently. We've also added new talent to kind of freshen up some of the things. For example, in *Wing III* when it was time to enter your callsign, basically all you did was enter your callsign. There was a bland little screen where you typed in your name. Jason Hughes decided to spice that up by turning it into a huge log-in process as if you are logging into a huge mainframe computer. You get the feeling that there is more to logging in than just typing in a word — it basically adds to the fictional universe that we are trying to create.

FR: As a gamer you take for granted the main pieces of the game. Of course there is going to be space flight and gameplay and all that. But it has always been the little nuances that you appreciate. It's always the little details that you add that people look for. I've always likened it to the craftsmen who did the great Gothic churches. You've got these workers who did the lattice work in the attic way at the top that no one is going to see. They do it because they are passionate about their work and they believe in it. Some day someone does walk up there and sees it, and he says, "Oh wow, I can't believe someone put this much detail into such a small portion of the project." But they did it because they wanted to, not because they had to. No one came to Jason Hughes and said, "We want you to make this really cool." We said, "Hey, do the gameflow." He slept here many nights and killed a lot of his own time just to put in the details that he thought he wanted to see in it. He loved what he was doing. I think that was true for everyone on the project. That's what really drives people to do a good game. Not the pay ... it's basically just loving your work.
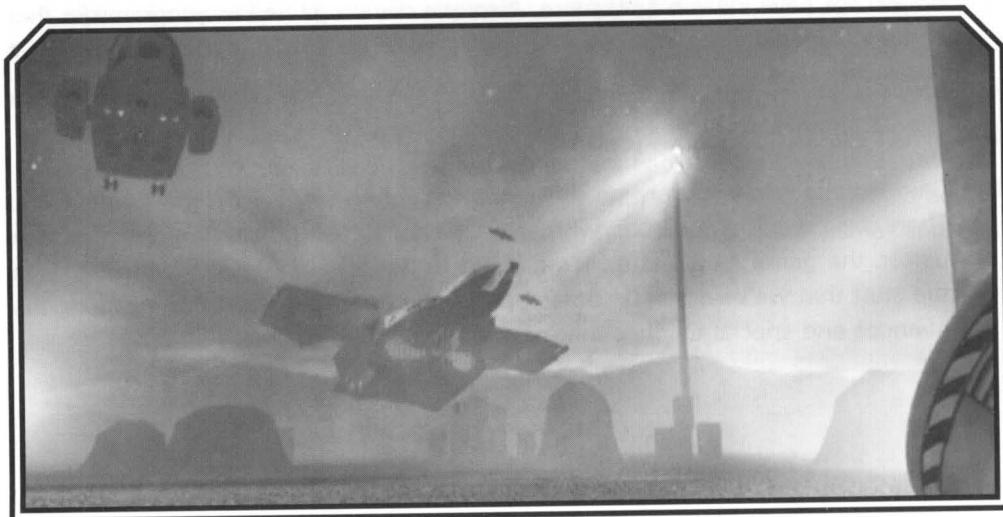
ANTHONY L. SOMMERS,
QUALITY ASSURANCE
PROJECT LEADER

Q: *What does the Quality Assurance team do?*

AS: The QA team is primarily responsible for insuring that the game is up to ORIGIN standards. We're responsible for finding all the problems with the game and reporting those problems to Development so that they can be fixed.
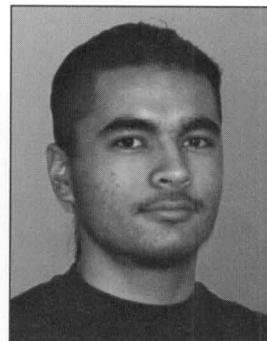
Q: *How long does QA work on a project?*

AS: That all depends on the position. The Project Leader is normally involved with the project from conception to close. The Assistant Project Leader and the testers don't primarily come into the project until maybe three or four months before it's ready to go out the door. I attend design meetings from the beginning. I guess I'm there to represent the customer. I keep what the customer wants and expects from being overlooked. ORIGIN games should be fun, intuitive and should run well on their machine. Customers should get something that they are basically happy to pay for. That's what I want whenever *I* buy a game.

Q: *What's the most fun part about working on games like that?*

AS: Well, since I have no life, basically I just spend all my time here at ORIGIN. The most fun part about it? I like managing a team. I don't play the game as much as some of my testers do. But I am involved in pretty much anything that has to do with testing the project.

It's a lot of work. Some people are cut out for it, and some aren't. But as far as I can see I wouldn't mind doing this again.

Q: *What's it like to work on a big game like* Wing IV?

AS: It's not easy. One, I have to manage a lot of testers. Right now we have 16 people, excluding myself. Two, I have a lot of demands from Marketing, Creative Services, Product Development, my managers, and the test team itself. Being in QA, I'm responsible for a lot of the end result. There is a lot of documentation I have to review. There is a lot of input I need to provide as far as design of the game goes, missions, etc. And then there is the actual physical testing and maintaining of the bug data base. And with a project of this size — six CD's — there are a lot of bugs.

Q: *How does working on a big game like* Wing IV *differ from working on a smaller game, like a 3DO game?*

AS: Well, with *Wing III 3DO*, most of the design issues had already been laid out because the PC version had already been completed. Comparing it with something like *CyberMage* or even *Crusader* — having a smaller test team means you have more communication with the testers, there's more communication with the project leader and his team. With a large team I find that I don't have enough time to devote with each individual tester. And that's one of the drawbacks.

Q: *Do you find that people from QA go on to join the product development side of things?*

AS: The two are very different. In my opinion I think coming from QA is good because you get an understanding from talking on the phone with a customer; you know what they want. By testing games, you know what to look for in designing one. Also, having QA's strong software and hardware background — DOS, hardware, sound cards, CD-ROM drives — you pretty much know what's going on.

THE WING COMMANDER IV QA TEAM

Ken Baumbach
'LEVIATHAN'

Reece Thornton
Kil Torh

Marin Williams

Kevin Matthews
"Backlash"

"Wile E"

Todd Wachhaus
'Viper'

Megan Ouellette
"Rook 'year"

Captain Squishy

"R.O.U.S."

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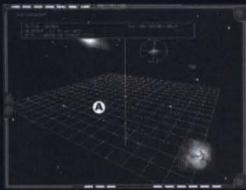
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