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QUICK START

This section of the manual will familiarize you with the basics of gameplay: getting around a base, making money, and flying your ship. Experienced players may wish to begin exploration without the benefit of this information. However, *Privateer* takes place in a large and complex universe filled with opportunities and choices. Although you do not have to follow the walkthrough, even experienced game players may benefit from what follows.

NOTE: This walkthrough assumes that you are using a mouse on the bases and a joystick for spaceflight. Experiment with your joystick buttons to determine which button is which. Joystick button one is the trigger button and joystick button two is usually the thumb button on top. These are referred to as #1 and #2 respectively. If you are using the keyboard and/or not using a joystick, see the *Reference Card* for equivalent commands.

After *Privateer* is Installed

When installation is complete, type PRIV [Enter] at the prompt.

The introduction begins. Sit back and watch as you are introduced to your character and are provided information important to the story. If the game doesn't load properly, consult Troubleshooting in the *Install Guide*. If you still have difficulties, call ORIGIN Product Support between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Mon. through Fri., Central time.

When the introduction is finished, the title screen appears. At the bottom of this screen you are offered several choices: NEW, LOAD, OPTIONS and QUIT. To begin a new game, click on NEW or type [N].

When you choose to begin a new game, the Personal Computer appears on screen. You are asked to register your name and callsign at this time. When this is complete, you automatically put your computer down and find yourself standing in the hangar of Achilles, a mining base in the Troy System. The ship in front of you is the *Tarsus* your grandfather left you. To your right is the entrance to the base. Enter the base by clicking on that entrance. *(See p. 36 for a picture of a hangar.)*

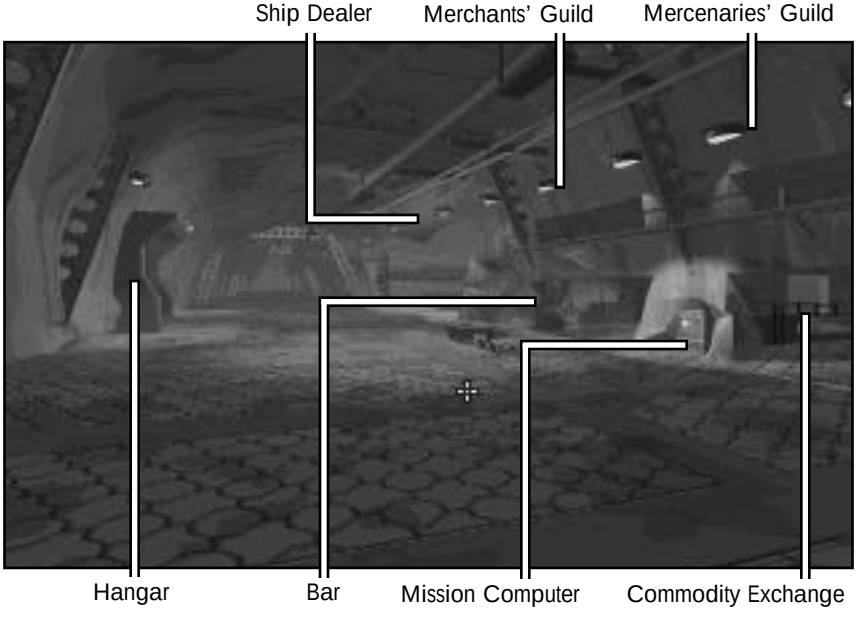


Trade

This puts you in the main concourse. There are occasional pedestrians and carts of ore moving about the concourse. On the left of the concourse is the door to the hangar where your ship is waiting for you. On the right there are doors on two levels: representatives from the Merchant's and Mercenaries' Guilds have their offices on the upper level; the lower level houses the local ship dealer, bar, mission computer and Commodity Exchange.

Buying Goods

Enter the Commodity Exchange (by clicking on its door). When the monitor comes down it defaults to Buy Mode. Scroll through the available items using the arrow buttons until you find goods that you can afford and that might prove desirable to an agricultural planet. Such items might include robot workers or other durable goods. Buy as much as you can afford by clicking on the item in the small screen. *(See p. 42 for a picture of the Commodity Exchange.)*



Achilles Main Concourse

Transporting Goods

Leave the Commodity Exchange by clicking anywhere at the bottom of the scene. Go to the hangar. Click on your ship to launch.

Once in space, press [N] to activate your navigation computer. This displays a map of the Troy system. Nav 1 is selected. All system maps display nav points. A nav point may be a base, a jump point or simply a buoy for navigation purposes — see the information box

beside the map for a description of the selected nav point. Press N repeatedly to cycle through the available nav points until Nav 6 is selected, or use the mouse to select Nav 6. The information box tells you about each nav point as it is selected. Once you have selected Nav 6, the box informs you that Nav 6 is an agricultural base named Helen. Leave the nav computer by pressing Esc that your Autopilot light is now lit. (Your Autopilot light will not light when there are hostile craft nearby. In that case, you may want to check Combat, below.) Press A at this point and you fly automatically to the agricultural planet Helen. If you wish to fly there without the benefit of the Autopilot, center the white navigation cross on your heads-up-display (HUD) and proceed in that direction, using + to increase speed in increments of one-eighth of your total throttle capability.

Helen is a large and watery planet. Once you spot it, fly as close to it as you can. When you're close enough, you are notified by the base that they are ready to engage automatic docking procedures. You land automatically. Once you have landed, enter the base. Be advised that they have withdrawn a docking fee of 50 credits from your funds.

Collecting Profit

Enter the main concourse of the base. (Note that this concourse is different from the last one.) Once there, enter the Commodity Exchange. It is located on the lower level to the right. Use the SELL button to indicate that you wish to sell your goods. Click on the item on the small screen to sell the item displayed. If you made a wise choice, your credits will soon surpass the 2,000 you began the game with. Otherwise, you will end up with a net loss. Either way, let's go spend what funds you do have.

Spending Money

Upgrading Your Ship

Exit the Commodity Exchange. Enter the ship dealer's area. Once inside, observe a large doorway at the back (top) of the room. This is the entrance to the Ship Modification Screen — click on the doorway to access this screen. Use the monitor here as you did in the Commodity Exchange. For example, you might want to upgrade your gun. First, indicate that you wish to sell your existing gun using the SELL button. Scroll through the items on your ship until your laser is displayed. Click on the item in the small screen to sell it. Right now it is automatically dismounted because you have only one gun. Later, when you have multiple guns, you will be asked to point out which one you wish to sell. *(See p. 39 for a picture of the Ship Modification Screen.)*

Switch to Buy Mode by clicking on the BUY button, then use the arrows to cycle through the available items. When the meson blaster is displayed, click on it. If you can afford to buy it, its cost is deducted form your funds and an icon appears. Drag the icon to wherever you want to load the gun on your ship. If you cannot afford the meson blaster, purchase the most expensive gun you can afford. Exit the Ship Modification Screen by clicking on the showroom doorway (at the far left of the screen). Exit back to the main concourse by clicking on either one of the smaller doors in the dealership.

Combat

Getting Work

In the center of the main concourse there is a small pillar with a Mission Computer set into it. Click on the computer to step up to it. To activate the Mission Computer, click on the palm reader in the lower right corner. Once it has scanned all sectors for missions, you can use the arrows in the lower left to cycle through the available missions. Read them all before deciding to accept one. Look for a mission that takes place in Troy. You do not have a jump drive and cannot travel to other systems yet. If possible, accept a Patrol or Defend Base mission anywhere in Troy. You do not need to write the mission requirements down. They appear in your Personal Computer and your ship's nav computer. Exit the Mission Computer by clicking at the bottom of the scene. *(See p. 37 for a picture of the Mission Computer.)*

Return to the hangar by clicking on the door on the lower level to the left of the Mission Computer. Launch back out into space by clicking on your ship.

Preparing for Battle

Before doing anything else, activate your gun. To do this, press G to display your ordnance and select your gun. Your missile launcher is already active, and there are green crosshairs to facilitate targeting. To activate options (p. 10), press Alt O to access the Options Screen and click on the options you wish to activate. You may wish to activate INVULNERABILITY or UNLIMITED AMMO, although you are not paid for missions run with these options activated. Note that each button appears to be depressed when the system is active. Now click on RESUME to re-enter the game universe.

Finding the Enemy

Unless you selected a Defend Helen mission, which would bring the enemies to *you*, your next step is to find the enemy. Press N to go to your nav computer. The nav point or points where you must go to fulfill mission objectives are designated in red. When you have selected a red nav point, you are ready to autopilot into the thick of it. If you need to be reminded of your mission objectives, click on the NAV/MIS button at the lower right (or press M) and your information box lists your mission objectives in bright red. When you have fulfilled a mission requirement, its listing changes to a dull red. Press Esc to leave the nav map and press A to autopilot to the selected nav point.

Engaging a Bogie

When you arrive at the battlefield, gray dots appear on your Radar Screen. These indicate other ships in space near you. Use the joystick to maneuver, placing one of these dots within your crosshairs. Later, when you can afford a scanner upgrade, your HUD should display red brackets around enemy ships and blue brackets around friendly ships. Until then, all brackets will be gray. If you continually fire on friendly ships, their attitude will change and they will probably begin firing back at you. Press joystick button #1 to fire your gun; press buttons #1 and #2 simultaneously to fire a missile. When all the enemy ships have been destroyed or have run away, check your nav map to see

if you have fulfilled the mission objective. Previously bright red nav points are displayed in blue if their objective has been accomplished. A nav point will still be bright red if you have missed someone. Press [M] in your nav computer to view objectives if you are not sure what you might have missed. When you have fulfilled all mission objectives, return to any base for payment.

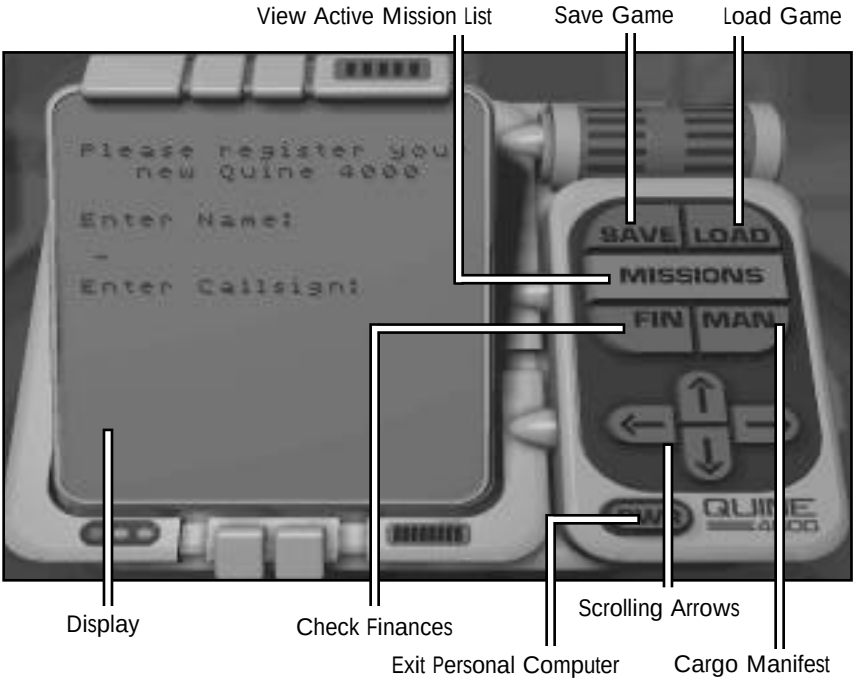
Reaping the Reward

Back at Achilles, or whichever base you wish, you would find that the payment promised for the completion of your mission has already been credited to your account, unless you used the not-for-pay options INVULNERABILITY or UNLIMITED AMMO. Both of these prevent the mission from being flagged as a success. To review your finances, press [Alt][C] or simultaneously click both buttons of your mouse or joystick to view your Personal Computer. Clicking on the FIN button calls up your current financial status. Click on the PWR button to exit the Personal Computer. From here you are on your own, ready to go forth, make money and save civilization on the frontier. And if all else fails, talk to Sandoval, in New Detroit.



PERSONAL COMPUTER

The Personal Computer is as important to you as to your character. Your character uses it to keep track of business obligations and finances. You use it to save and load games. Effective and quick use of the Personal Computer is crucial to both of you.



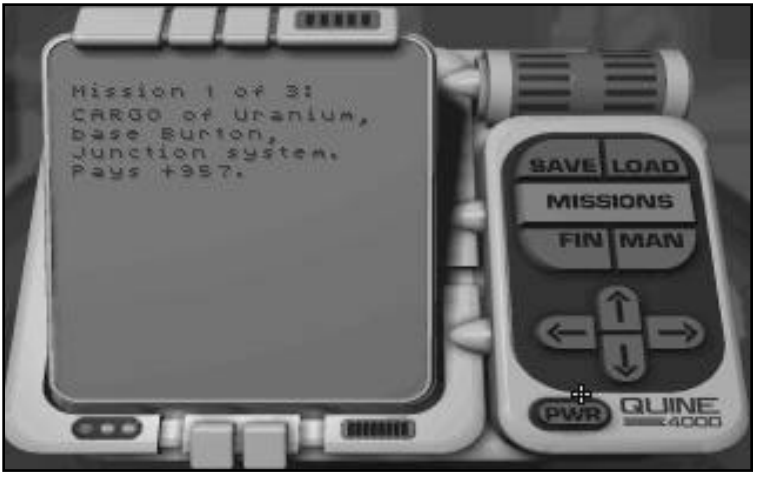
The Personal Computer answers questions like, “How much money do I have?” and “Which missions have I not finished?” and “Just what do I have in my cargo hold, anyway?” It is only available while you are at a base. All the information it provides is available through your MFDs and nav map during space-flight. To pull up your Personal Computer, type Alt C or simultaneously click both buttons of your mouse or joystick. To exit the Personal Computer, click on the PWR (power) button at the bottom of the unit.

The Personal Computer cannot be accessed while you are interacting with another computer. Therefore, you cannot access it while at the screens for the Commodities Exchange, Mission Computer, Ship Modification, Software Dealer's or guilds' computers.

SAVE. The Personal Computer is the only place to save a game, so you can only save while docked at a base. When you click on the save button, the screen says SAVE GAME as: and offers you a box eight characters wide in which to name your game. If you have other saved games, they are listed below the box.

To save your game, name it and press Enter or click on SAVE. To save over an existing game, click on the name of the old one — it appears in the box. The only limit to the number of saved games you may have is the amount of available space on your hard-drive. To exit the Personal Computer, press the PWR button at the bottom of the unit. If the names of your saved games overflow this screen, use ↑ or ↓ to scroll through further pages.

LOAD. You can only load a game from your Personal Computer, which is available only during your stay at a base. When you elect to load a game, the screen reads LOAD GAME: and offers you a box in which to type the name of the previously saved game you are loading. You may select the game you wish to load by again clicking on its name and the LOAD button, instead. If the names of your saved games overflow this screen, use ↑ or ↓ to scroll through further pages. Once the name of the game you wish to resume is typed in, hit Enter or LOAD. You automatically exit to the saved game.



MISSIONS. This selection allows you to review the missions that are currently awaiting your attention. If you have fulfilled all your missions or haven't taken any, the screen says NO MISSIONS. When you still have active missions, they will be summarized on your Personal Computer mission screen. The top line tells you how many missions you have active. The rest of the description tells you where you must go to complete the mission, who has contracted you to carry it out and how much they're paying. To scroll to the next mission in the list use ↑ or ↓. At the bottom of the screen is the total missions to date.

Finance. Clicking on FIN brings up a statement of your current cash in credits. This is a cash-only sector. People don't tend to live long enough to be a good risk for loan sharks and banks. This is all the financial statement you'll need.

Manifest. Clicking on MAN brings up your ship's manifest, telling you what's in your cargo hold. At the top of the screen you are informed how much space in cargo units — roughly a cubic meter — are available in your cargo hold. Below that is a list of the items you have and the units of each. If your manifest goes beyond this screen, use ↑ or ↓ to scroll through the list.

OPTIONS SCREEN

The Options Screen is available from the Title Screen by selecting OPTIONS at the bottom right, or at any time during the game by pressing Alt O.



Options Screen

UNLIMITED AMMO. Weapons in 2670 do not fire hard ammo so much as various forms of energy. They cause a substantial drain to your ship's power supply, which also feeds your shields and afterburners. This option allows you to fire your weapons without using up energy. There is still a refire delay, the time it takes a gun to re-charge between shots, but you are able to continue firing with no penalty to your energy supply. This is a great way for beginning players to get a feel for combat with little personal risk.

IMPORTANT. You cannot get paid for any mission flown with UNLIMITED AMMO *activated. You do not get paid for the mission if this option is active at any time during space-flight.*

INVULNERABILITY. Making this selection allows you to collide with asteroids or other ships, get hit by missiles or guns and never die.

IMPORTANT. You cannot get paid for any mission flown with INVULNERABILITY *activated. You do not get paid for the mission if this option is active at any time during space-flight.*

JOYSTICK CALIBRATION. If you find your mouse pointer drifting or your ship spins uncontrollably through space despite your best efforts to keep it under control, you may need to recalibrate your joystick. To do this, select JOYSTICK CALIBRATION on the Options Screen. Follow the instructions that appear in the center of the screen. If problems persist, consult your joystick's documentation or call ORIGIN Product Support.

MUSIC, SOUND FX. Click on these to toggle music and sound effects — down is "on," up is "off." If you change your sound card or port configuration, follow the *Install Guide* instructions and rerun the install program.

MOUSE, KEYBOARD, JOYSTICK. To move around at a base, you can use the mouse, keyboard or joystick. For piloting through space, however, only one may be used at a time. Depress the appropriate button (MOUSE, KEYBOARD or JOYSTICK) to select the device you want to use for piloting.

RESUME, CANCEL. When you have made your selections on the Options Screen, click resume to return to the Title Screen or to where you left off in the game. Click CANCEL to undo any changes you made on the Options Screen and return to where you left off.

IN THE COCKPIT

This section offers a detailed description of how to use your ship's controls and what to expect when you do. It describes the various camera views and how to make use of your nav computer, as well as the numerous controls for activating and using each of your ship's systems.

You begin the game flying a *Tarsus* you inherited from a relative, but there are three other ship types available for sale in the Gemini Sector. Once you have accumulated sufficient resources, you may also buy a *Centurion*, a *Galaxy* or an *Orion*. You can always find your ship in the base hangar. When you move the cursor over the ship in the hangar, the word ENGAGE appears. Clicking on the vessel automatically launches you into space.

All cockpits feature approximately the same instruments, even though the arrangement of the various gauges and screens may vary from ship to ship. Take a minute to familiarize yourself with the functions of each instrument and its location in the cockpit. The ability to assess your situation and your resources in a split second may mean the difference between life and death when you are navigating in space.

Spaceflight Views

When you launch your ship, you see space directly ahead of you through the front view screen. A green circle with cross-hairs shows you where the guns of your ship are aimed. Any ship you have currently targeted is framed by brackets: Most scanners indicate friendly vessels by blue brackets, hostile ships by red brackets. Poorer grade scanners (see Scanners, p. 57) can only bracket in gray, hostile and friendly alike. When a ship communicates with you, it is shown within white brackets. Retrievable objects and bases are framed by yellow (or gray) brackets. Once a target is locked, it is surrounded by a solid box.

You can shift from the front cockpit view to another view by pressing the function keys:

- F1 Returns you to the fore view from any of the views below.
- F2 Shows you the view to port.
- F3 Shows you the view to starboard.
- F4 Shows you the aft view.
- F5 Switches you to Turret 1. If your ship has no turrets, this has no effect.
- F6 Switches you to Turret 2. If your ship has less than two turrets, this has no effect.
- F7 Toggles the missile camera view on and off, allowing you to follow your missiles in to the kill.
- F8 Switches you to chase camera view, which shows your ship from immediately behind it.
- F9 Switches you to the theater camera, a panoramic shot of your ship and all other objects surrounding it. This view can give you a good idea of the location of hostile fighters surrounding you in a tense dogfight.

Cockpit Gauges

Speed

In the cockpit, speed is indicated by two gauges:

SET indicates the speed your ship tries to maintain during spaceflight.

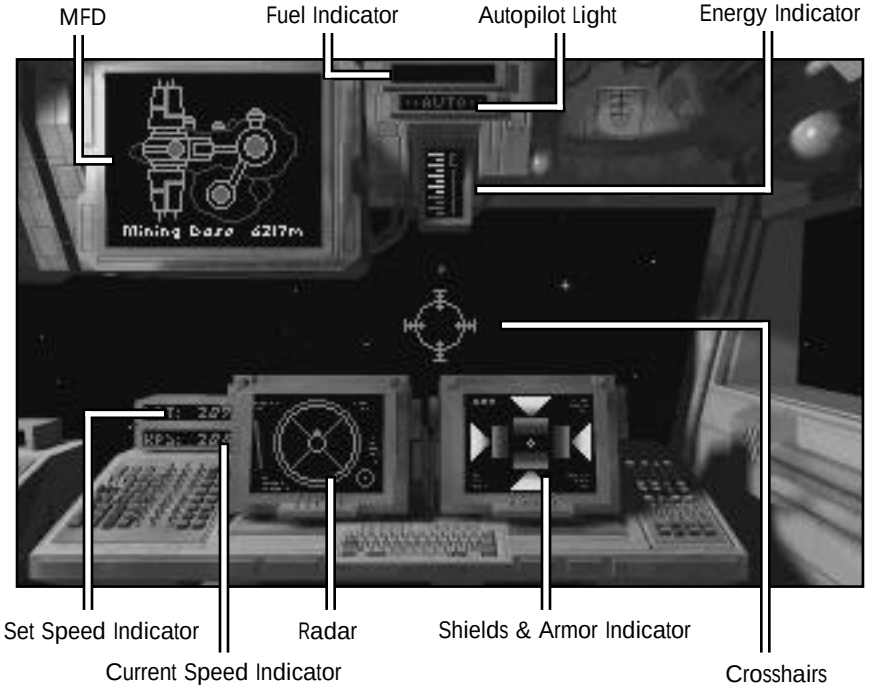
KPS indicates the craft's current speed in klicks per second.

Press [+] to increase your speed. (If you are playing with your joystick, hold joystick button #2 down and push forward to accelerate.)

Press [−] to slow down. (Holding down joystick button #2 and pulling backwards also decreases your speed.)

If your ship has afterburner capacity, press [Tab] to ignite the afterburners. (Double-clicking joystick button #2 or double-clicking the right mouse button also activates afterburners.) The longer you hold the key down, the longer the afterburners remain active. However, afterburners require immense amounts of energy.

Pressing [Backspace] on your keyboard brings your ship to a halt. In some instances, this may be a good strategy to evade enemy fire.



Tarsus Cockpit

Fuel

The fuel gauge indicates how much fuel you have. Fuel is only used by your jump drive. Your vessel uses energy for propulsion and afterburners (see Energy, below). Each jump you make uses up a considerable amount of fuel — a full fuel tank provides enough for only six jumps.

Shields and Armor

The shields display in the cockpit of your ship indicates the current status of your shields and armor. Once you have purchased shield upgrades, you can select how many shields you want to remain active at any point in time. Even though additional shields offer you more protection, maintaining them expends more energy. If you are flying a highly maneuverable ship and are in the midst of a dogfight, you may want to risk deactivating some of your shields so you can use that energy for your blasters. Pressing S on your keyboard toggles you through the various available shield levels.

As your shields take damage, they disappear from the screen, only to reappear as they regenerate. Shields can regenerate as long as the shield generator is intact. Once the shields have been taken out, armor begins taking damage. Unlike shields, armor cannot regenerate.

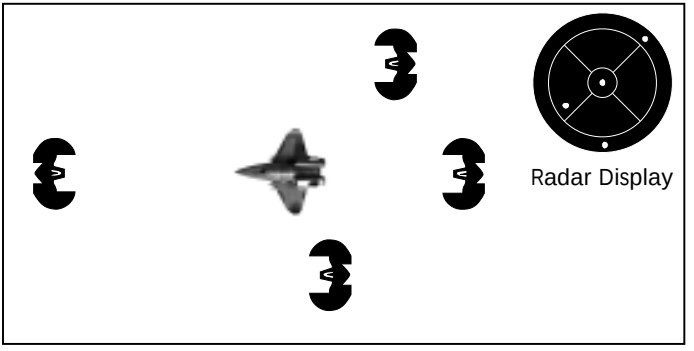
Energy

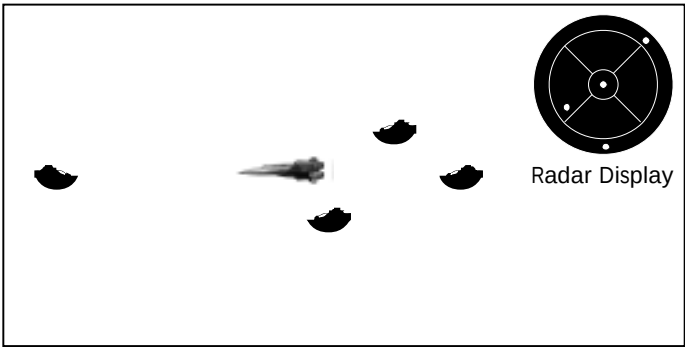
The energy indicator shows how much regenerative power is available for your blasters, tractor beams, shields and afterburners at any given point in time. The power generator restores depleted energy levels quickly. Some guns use more energy than others when firing. Afterburners deplete energy resources very quickly. If you are fighting with higher-level guns, you may want to deactivate some higher-level shields and avoid using afterburners so you can utilize all available energy for your guns. Conversely, you may want to hold your fire and boost your shields if you are flying a slow ship with poor maneuvering capabilities. Purchasing engine upgrades improves your energy levels.



Radar

Every cockpit features a circular radar display. However, the screen does not indicate distance to a particular ship. Instead, the different sections of the display show how far you must rotate your ship to be able to see the object on your radar through your front view screen. The radar display is the most important instrument in your cockpit, but it may also be the least intuitive.





Objects detected by your radar are displayed as dots. A dot in the outer ring of your display tells you the enemy is behind you. The innermost ring indicates objects ahead of you. The other four sections place objects alongside, above or below you.

On a color scanner, each dot on your radar screen is color-coded:

Red indicates a hostile fighter.
Dark Blue indicates a friendly fighter.
Yellow indicates missiles in space.
Brown indicates neutral, retrievable objects.
White indicates a navigation beacon or nav point.
Light Blue indicates a jump sphere.
Gray indicates a base.

Purchasing more advanced scanners provides you with more accurate radar readings. Refer to Customizing Your Ship (pp. 54-59) for more information on available scanners.

Multi-Function Displays (MFDs)

The Multi-Function Displays in each cockpit provide a wide range of information essential to flying successful missions. The *Tarsus* and *Centurion* have only one MFD, while the *Orion* and *Galaxy* give information on two displays. In ships with two MFDs, the relevant information can be pulled up on either display, thus allowing you to view two different displays concurrently. Hitting the appropriate key on the keyboard pulls the information up on one of the two displays.

[and]. In ships with one MFD, you can cycle through all available displays by pressing [on your keyboard. In cockpits with two MFDs, [cycles through the displays on the left MFD, while] cycles through all available displays on the right MFD.

Destination. Pressing D calls up a display indicating the destination you selected on your nav map (see Navigation System for more information on how to select your destination) as well as the system location and range of your destination point. The Destination display also tells you when and why you cannot autopilot, tractor beam or jump. If you attempt to autopilot and there is a hostile fighter in the area, the message ENEMY NEAR appears at the bottom of your Destination display.



Examine Target. Press E to display the condition of the currently targeted object. You can distinguish its shield strength. As shields begin taking damage, they disappear, then reappear as they are regenerated. When the targeted spacecraft takes damage, the display of the damaged section turns red. If your scanner is sophisticated enough, this option screen may also tell you what kind of ship or object you are targeting. The range to the object always appears underneath its display.



Report Damage. Press R to display a damage report on your ship. The listed areas of your ship appear in different colors, according to the amount of damage done:



Green indicates an intact component.

Yellow indicates slight damage to the affected component.

Orange indicates considerable damage tothe affected component.

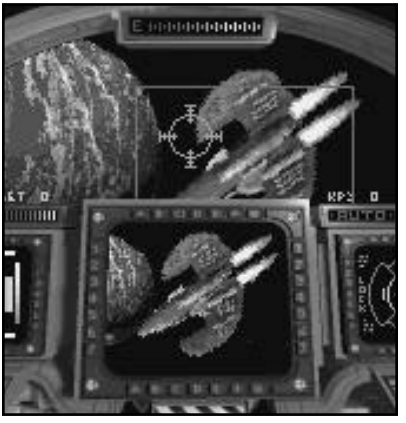
Red indicates that the affected component is completely nonfunctional.

Gray indicates that the component is completely destroyed and unrepairable.

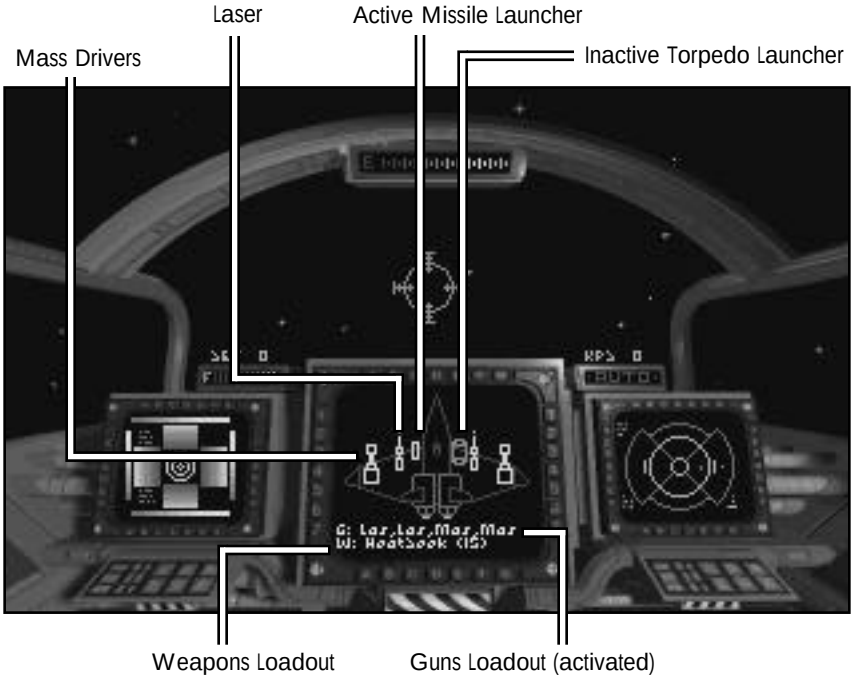
Cargo Manifest. Press M to display what cargo you are currently carrying. This MFD option also tells you how many credits you have in your account. Each cargo type is labeled with a particular number. Pressing the number immediately preceding the cargo description on the display pulls up a different screen with additional information about that cargo type. Pressing \ or M brings you back to the main manifest display.



View Object. Press V to display a camera view of the currently targeted ship or object. Press Z to toggle between a close-up and distant view. You can use this view to watch your shots hit (or miss) their target. This can help you correct your aim.



Weapons and Guns Loadout. Press [W] to display your ship's available weapon systems. Pressing [W] repeatedly cycles through the weapons systems and activates one system at a time. Press [G] to display your ship's available guns. Pressing [G] cycles through all possible gun combinations. The active systems are highlighted in the display and listed below the image of the ship.



Communications. Press [C] to display the Communications MFD and to talk to any pilot in the area. If you are able to communicate when you pull up this MFD, a numbered list of messages you can send appears. Press the number of the desired message to broadcast it. You can communicate with any current target or base in the system. When a pilot decides to communicate with you, his image appears on your MFD. If there is more than one person to talk to, you must press on the number of the person you wish to speak to, then select your message.



Other Cockpit Commands

Jumps

To travel from one system to another, you must purchase a jump drive. If your ship is equipped with a jump drive, you can use the jump points found in various locations. To jump, fly into a jump point and press J to activate your jump drive. The nav map shows how jump points connect individual systems. If you want to jump from one system to another, refer to your Navigation system to determine which jump point to use.

Activating Guns

To quickly activate your guns without going through the Weapons Loadout MFD, use the number keys at the top of your keyboard. 1 activates the first gun type, 2 activates the second gun type, and so forth. Each number key activates not just one gun, but all guns of one type. In other words, if you have three lasers, one number key activates all three.

Ejecting Cargo

If you are carrying contraband and a Confederation patrol threatens to search your cargo bay, you may want to eject your cargo before you are caught. Pressing X expels your cargo into space.

Pausing the Game

If you wish to pause your game during spaceflight, press P. Press any key to resume play.

Adjusting Player Options

If you wish to reconfigure any of your options, press Alt O to pull up your Options Screen (see Options Screen, p. 10). Once you have made your adjustments, select RESUME to return to the cockpit.

Exiting Privateer

Pressing Alt X exits the current game and returns you to DOS. Exercise caution when using this option. If you quit in the middle of spaceflight or from the Options Screen without specifically saving your game, your gameplay is not saved. Alternatively, Alt D self-destructs your ship in flight, taking you back to the title screen.

In-Flight Systems

Targeting System

Your targeting system is automatically activated as soon as you launch into space. If there are several ships visible through your front view window, this targeting feature only targets one ship at a time. Accordingly, brackets only appear around one craft.

Red brackets indicate an enemy ship.

Blue brackets indicate a friendly ship.

Yellow brackets indicate bases or cargo.

Gray brackets indicate that your scanner cannot differentiate objects.



Initially, the targeting system defaults to the ship closest to you. Press [T] repeatedly to cycle through the different ships, bases or cargo in sight and select your desired target.

When your targeting system is active, your tracking mechanism automatically locks onto ships that appear through your view window. Pressing [L] while your target is visible through your front view window causes your targeting system to continue tracking that ship even after it has disappeared from view, if your scanner has lock capability. This feature may prove useful if you wish to keep track of a particular ship you've already damaged. A locked target is framed by a solid box instead of brackets; when you have locked your missile on the target, a diamond will appear inside the square box. Image Recognition and Friend or Foe missiles require the target to be locked — however, the locking mechanism only records the position of enemy ships around you.

Inertial Targeting and Tracking System (ITTS)

The ITTS automatically computes the necessary lead on your target to score a hit. When your ITTS is active ([I] toggles ITTS on and off), one cross per gun type appears on the screen. Line up the cross inside the green crosshairs and you are more likely to make a kill.

The ITTS crosses are color-coded according to gun type:

Turquoise ....neutron gun
Off-White ....meson blaster
Peach .....ionic pulse cannon
Gray .....mass driver
Salmon .....particle cannon
Bright Red .....laser
Dark Red .....plasma cannon
Purple .....tachyon blaster

Tractor Beam

Cycle through your weapons by pressing [W] until the tractor beam is active. When it is active, you can fire it at any targeted cargo. All cargo is framed in yellow brackets (if your scanner can distinguish it). Pressing [Enter] or [Return], or clicking both joystick buttons, initiates retrieval — when you do the same thing again, it turns off the tractor beam. *Be very sure that the tractor beam (and not a weapon) is active before you "fire" at an object you are attempting to retrieve.*

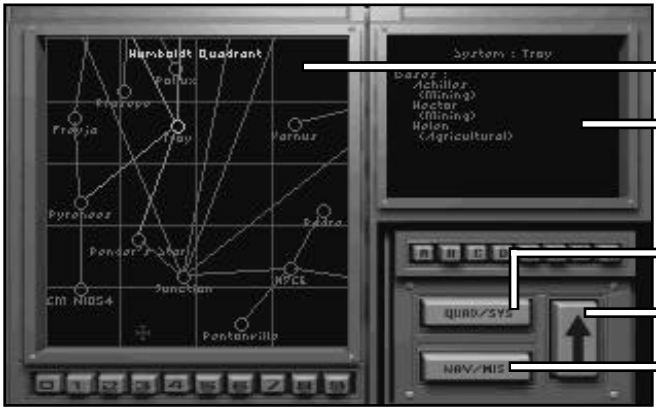
Autopilot

You can shorten the actual time it takes to travel between two nav points by autopiloting from on to the next. The autopilot can only be activated when there are no hostile fighters or asteroids in range. Once you have cleared the area of all enemies and avoided all hazards, the gauge marked AUTO in your cockpit lights up. Press [A] and you see an external camera view of your ship shooti off into space.

The autopilot deactivates automatically when you are approaching a hazard or when you have reached your destination.

Navigation System

Every ship is equipped with a sophisticated navigation system. Press [N] to view your nav map.



Quadrant Maps. Press [Q] to bring up the Quadrant Map. The name of the quadrant is at the top the screen. To scroll through the four quadrant maps of the Gemini Sector, press [Q] repeatedly or click on the large up-arrow button. Notice that the information window gives data on the selected system. If the screen indicates there is no information available for a particular quadrant, that mea you don't have a map of that area — you have to buy the appropriate nav map. On the map:

Blue lines indicate jump tunnels between systems.

Light Blue lines indicate jump tunnels that are currently available to you.

Yellow highlights the system you currently have selected.
If you want to obtain information on a different system, click on it.

Light Green highlights the system you currently occupy
(if it is not also the system that is currently selected).

Red highlights any system containing a mission objective
(if it is not also the system that is currently selected).

System Maps. The QUAD/SYS button toggles you between the quadrant maps and the more detail system close-ups. You can also switch to the system maps by pressing [N]. A system map shows you all nav points in the system you currently occupy. Information about each selected nav poin appears in the information screen to the upper right of the navigation screen. Nav points are color-coded according to their individual characteristics:

Green Circles are nav points — usually a buoy.

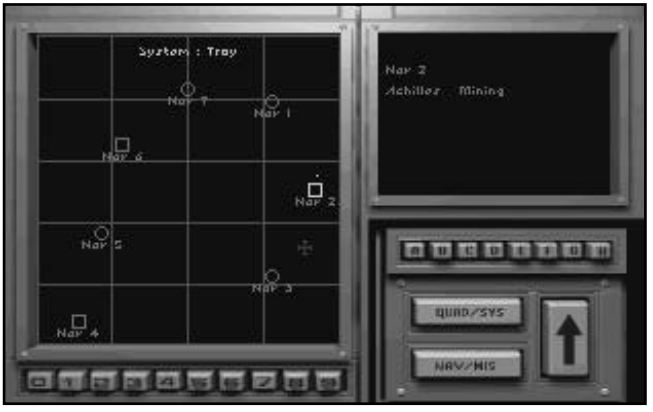
Green Squares indicate a base where you can land your ship. When you select a square, the planet types and base names located at that nav point appear in the information screen in the upper right hand corner of the navigation screen.

Blue Circles indicate jump points.

Yellow highlights the currently selected nav point.

Bright Red Circles highlight nav points containing mission objectives.

White Dot indicates the location of your ship.



Pressing [N] repeatedly or clicking on the large up-arrow button selects different nav points. You can also select a nav point by clicking on it.

Mission Listings. The NAV/MIS toggle button activates your mission listings. Pressing M or the large up-arrow button on the screen calls up a listing of all missions currently assigned to you. You may accept a maximum of three different missions at the same time. If you have already completed a mission task, it appears in dull red. Remaining tasks that have not yet been completed are displayed in bright red. Mission text in yellow contains hints and is not critical to the completion of your mission objectives.

Navigation Information. When you press [I] or click on the NAV/MIS toggle button again while the quadrant map is on display, the Nav/Mis feature lists all planet types and base names of the selected system in the information screen to the upper right of the navigation screen. When the system map is active, this screen displays information on the selected nav point.

To select a mission destination, locate its system on the quadrant map, then determine what jump tunnels you can use to get there. (System close-up maps indicate where the appropriate jump points are located.)

Once you have made your selection on the system map (by clicking on it), return to the cockpit by pressing [Esc].

The last selected nav point is your current autopilot destination. The currently selected nav point/autopilot destination appears as a white cross on the HUD and on the radar. This point is also listed as “destination” on your Destination MFD.

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GEMINI SECTOR

THE FRONTIERSMAN: INTERVIEW WITH A PRIVATEER

As told to Chandra Karr

For the fourth installment of our ongoing series on the young pilots who make a killing prospecting the open space lanes of Gemini, I went to find out what motivates a hotshot pilot to risk it all, to seek out new challenges in our little corner of the war. I was curious what these young people were leaving behind and what they hoped to achieve, knowing the odds against them. I chose Helen, a small agricultural planet in Troy System, to find my subject.

Helen doesn't have much to recommend it, but at least there's a bar. Out in this part of the Confederation there are only three kinds of people in a bar: those looking for the kind of work that doesn't get publicly advertised, those offering that kind of work, or anyone looking to blow a paycheck on some Mjolnarian Stout. I was hoping to attract one of the former by posing as a fixer, and it worked.

I was sitting at a small table near the door, listening to the bartender give advice, when I spotted my target. A young but weathered man walked in with an air of confidence that advertised for him. He lifted his personal computer from his belt with the ease of someone who had performed this gesture a million times. As he checked his mission roster I was drawn to the vertical scar through his left eyebrow. He looked hungry for work so I threw him a morsel.

"You looking for work or just to get drunk?" I asked, winking from my table.

"Both, if that's an option. But I'll settle for either." He smiled, laid his computer on the table, straddled the chair across from me, and asked, "What can I do for you, Ma'am?"

I explained I was writing an article and wanted to hear what had brought him here. He was interested, eager even. What follows is his story as he told it to me over too many drinks in the cheap bar of a nowhere agricultural planet.

[All names have been changed to prevent this from becoming a vehicle for self-promotion. To the best of our knowledge, all the events described actually took place. Ed.]

Six weeks ago I was first mate on the *Scarab*, a bucket of bolts merchant ship held together by bootlaces and luck. We were jumping out to Sheol, a deep space science station. It was a good contract running supplies, food and equipment. We'd made the run before and I was looking forward to spending some quality time with Jo. She was heading an investigation of unstable jump points in the area and we had found each other, well, compatible. I was on the bridge thinking about the phase ball rematch I owed her, not watching the consoles at my station. The heavy sound of Geof Kane's boots clanking on the metal deck brought me to attention.

Kane was a big man who was most comfortable wearing the mantle of command. He was a bull of a man, always moving forward, unable to form the concept of retreat. That's why he went freelance —too many rules of engagement in the military. Kane only obeyed the laws of expediency and profit. He had trained all nineteen of us, forming pilots, gunners and mechanics from the soft clay of street urchins and stowaways. We depended on him for leadership and each of us owed him our life. Kane came in and stood heavily by a large bay window, turning his Academy ring deliberately.

"We'll be arriving soon," he said slowly, "and I want you on your toes. I don't feel good about this run."

"Why so nervous, boss?" I asked. "You know something or just got a feeling?"

"I don't know yet. Maybe it's nothing. I know the captains of the last *Draymans* to make this run. We were supposed to meet back on Baroda for a drink. I still haven't heard from either one of them. They're old pals from my Navy days — I really should've heard something by now."

"Maybe they just stood you up, boss."

"I hope you're right but, just in case, I want you on your toes and ready to get us the hell out of any trouble along the way. I don't think my friends stood me up. There haven't been any distress calls from the base. Could be business as usual, but we should probably expect the worst." He fidgeted with the console next to him, glanced nervously at the windows, and left. Images of Jolene attacked by a faceless enemy that I wasn't even sure existed plagued me for the remainder of the journey.

The trip out was uneventful except for Kane's nervousness. After several days we jumped out to Sheol's system. I was on the bridge. As the streamers of light settled into a more familiar starfield two gray *Talons* raced towards us. I was edgy and damn near fired on them before realizing they were our escort. The huge and ungainly *Scarab* made her way to Sheol's main hangar, the *Talons* moving beside her like remoras on a shark.

The science outpost was made up of a series of hangars off a central hub that housed personal quarters and open office areas for data analysis. They primarily sent out probes or small vessels in search of new jump points and asteroids rich in mineral deposits, as well as the smaller, more esoteric astrophysics work with no exploitable payoff for another generation or two. Because of their isolation there was no one except the researchers — no service personnel. The dingy Apocalypse Bar was staffed by whoever was available, usually someone waiting for a probe to reach its target system or for an automated analysis to finish. Administration, repairs, and distribution of food, clothing and equipment worked the same way. The only full-time position belonged to Lars Furstenburg, who was base captain. He was held accountable for anything that might go wrong and ignored when significant progress was made. Furstenburg was new. He had arrived less than four months ago, well after our last run, and seemed to be still in the midst of finding his footing among the staff and crew.

Furstenburg greeted us in the sparse, unfinished hangar.

"I have regret that I did not find you," he said, "to warn you of our uncomfortable situation. The last two supply ships were destroyed. First one got blown up when leaving, second before it left the jump sphere on its way in-system. But you had pleasant trip, no? We will unload and then have a drink, yes? Thank you."

Geof Kane was livid. "How can you be so flippant? Who destroyed them?" He didn't wait for an answer, "Those were my friends, sir. I'm sorry, but it seems to me that you could have made a little more effort to reach us. Our itinerary was forwarded to you over a month ago and we never deviated from it. You had a responsibility to warn us."

"I will not argue with you. I, too, mourn loss of your colleagues but my responsibility is to the people of this base. It could not be allowed that you not come from fear of being attacked. We have been too long without fresh provisions. We have much work to do. Meet in my office in five minutes, yes? We can use your know-how to analyze base security. We do not know who these brigands are, but we need protect ourselves and find out if possible." He started to head up to his office, turned and said, "I sorry to gamble

with your life, but is only way to get you here." I don't believe Kane was any more satisfied with that answer than I was.

The inhabitants of Sheol moved swiftly and efficiently to unload the supplies we'd brought. I'd assigned a few of our men to security to keep an eye on our goods as they were unloaded, but I now saw that that was unnecessary. The men and women unloading the cargo were careful, organized and visibly relieved that we had arrived. Only one of my security men was having any problem at all — he was being badgered by a woman whose voice echoed throughout the hangar.

"What's your name, sir?" she asked. It was Jo who was beating up my security detail. I crossed under the *Scarab*'s still-cooling engines toward her.

"Uh, Hank," the man stammered, "Hank Slater …." Security personnel weren't used to answering questions.

"And, Mr. Slater, just why in the Sam Hell are you standing around, carrying nothing but that stupid sidearm, when we've got work to do?"

"Well, Ma'am, I uh … my boss says there might be looting, and he says …."

"Hank, be a good grunt and go tell your friggin' boss that there may be violence if he doesn't get you guys into a few waiting cargo loaders." She motioned toward a line of machines standing idle along the hangar wall.

By now, I was standing right behind Jo and figured it was time I announced my arrival.

"What seems to be the problem?" I asked.

Jo answered without turning to face me, her voice filled with contempt. "The problem," she said, "is that this big ape's boss won't let him do an ounce of real work."

"You must mean me."

She turned, looked me square in the eyes and said, "Well, if it isn't Mr. Precaution back from the hinterlands to save our starving village from itself." She smiled. "Will you make these men useful or do you plan on spending your time here alone?" A wink softened the remark but I got the point.

"It's all right, Hank, do as she says. Collect Al and Frank and the others and report to Captain Furstenburg for unloading assignments." I turned my attention to Jo. "Here's a proposal for you, Doctor — you promise to quit harassing my men and I'll buy you the best dinner this tin can has to offer. How about it?"

"How about I make no such promise and we skip dinner for healthier activities?"

"Deal. Oh, and I expect a rematch if you guys still have a phase ball court."

"We do and you're on."

She turned to go settle a dispute that was developing over fuel storage. I watched her cross the hangar, and hoped she was as pleased at our arrival as I was to be here. A kind of awkward tension had fallen over the crew before our arrival, none of us sure whether we would have to fight or if it was all just a false alarm. Jo had pulled me out of my depression. Hustling to unload the ship seemed to be helping everyone else. Finally we had a task with a clear, achievable goal, getting the supplies unloaded and looking into who might be behind these recent attacks — a welcome change of pace.

Kane was taking the whole unloading and base defense operation very seriously. No surprise, given that he thought there was a force out there preparing to assault the base. I figured that if he was right, then it must be a small force — anyone with the firepower to destroy a couple of *Draymans* had the firepower to destroy an outpost like Sheol unless, of course, they didn't have the fuel or munitions to do both.

Once we had arranged for the unloading and distribution of cargo, I headed off to discuss security concerns with Furstenburg and Kane. Furstenburg's office looked out over the hangar and into the void. We could clearly see our staffs cooperating to unload the *Scarab*. I moved into the room, expecting something a little more commanding but pleased to see that Furstenburg was a busy man, definitely not a delegator. He had both a desk and a small conference table, the latter cluttered with chits and tablets that made it clear he only used his desk occasionally — probably not enough surface area to hold the clutter of "current" projects and files.

The two captains were already deep in discussion when I arrived, a small hologram of the base flickering between them. As I entered, Furstenburg began shuffling through the mountains of correspondence on the conference table.

"There is, on this table, a message that did come for you, couple of days ago," he said.

I was surprised to hear this. Who would send me a message? Everyone I knew was here: Jo, Kane, the *Scarab*'s crew. Unless it was some kind of a recruiting message from the Confederation Militia …. Finally, Furstenburg found what he was looking for.

"Ah ha!" he said. "Here is your message sent from the Gemini sector. I see you have frontiersmen friends, yes?" He handed me the disk. "Use the monitor on my desk should you want to take it now."

"That's all right, we've got business to attend to."

I pocketed the disk and joined them at the conference table. I only knew one person in Gemini, my grandfather, and I didn't figure he'd be sending me anything more important than a birthday card, not that I'd ever gotten one from him. The security analysis was top priority. I was hoping that there would be some sort of clue in the transmissions from the probes that Sheol regularly sends out for scientific reasons. Knowing our enemy would be the first step in defeating them.

We all agreed that violence in the system could only imply an impending threat to the base. There were several things we could do in order to seek out the people who destroyed the ships and to protect the base. We divided up these tasks amongst ourselves. Furstenburg took charge of readying the base's launchers and shields, as well as preparing a schedule for the volunteer security team. Kane would coordinate with both Sheol's and the *Scarab*'s pilots to develop a more effective patrol pattern. Analysis of data sent by the probes and missing cargo ships fell to me. I was to work with Jo and Blake Sorensen, an older researcher who would be able to spot anomalies in the transmissions. Furstenburg pulled a monitor over to his seat, nearly knocking over a cup of coffee in the process, to inform the members of our teams of their new assignments and that they had only three hours to report for their first meeting. My group was to meet in Blue Deck, Lab 37, close to my quarters. I had just enough time to eat, shower and read my junk mail from the edge of nowhere.

With the team notified, I headed for my room in Green Deck. There was no intra-base transportation except walking. I passed through halls filled with blue jumpsuits carrying crates of newly arrived supplies. I stopped to help a young man move a too-heavy box into one of the smaller dining areas that were spread throughout the base. With this delay, it took nearly twenty minutes to reach my quarters, but I didn't mind. It was a nice opportunity to reacquaint myself with Sheol's color-coded corridors and windowless workspaces.

My room's dull grayness stood in stark contrast to the bright green of the hallway. The bed, night stand and desk, with its small communication console, all reflected a unified Spartan vision. Comfort was not a priority in the design. All the same, I felt relaxed by the very austerity of the room. As I emptied my pockets of I.D., personal computer and a few loose coins from Baroda, I dropped the disk Furstenburg had given me. It was time I read my mail. I switched on the comm unit, put the disk in and sat back, expecting propaganda or a postcard from Grandpa Mack.

The screen filled with the typical sender information. It was from Mack all right, and had apparently been forwarded six or seven times before someone knew where I'd be. It had been sent nearly a month and a half ago, marked priority one. Better late than never, I thought. I hit the key to proceed. Mack's face appeared on the screen. He took a drink of something that wasn't water and began his message.

"Look, kid, you know I'm not much of a talker so I'll get straight to the point. I'm dead. This is my last will and testament and whatever. You're all I got in the way of family and your mother made me promise to see that you were taken care of. So, here goes …" He paused to take another drink, winced and continued. "I, Mack Christiensen, being an old man and of ill health do leave whatever hasn't been repossessed to you, my only daughter's only kid. Right now I've got a *Tarsus* class ship that I bought from an Exploratory Services officer with too many debts, and a little cash that I plan on spending before you get this. Sorry, but you know how it is. Whatever's left is yours. It may not sound like much, but what I'm trying to give you is an excuse to come see Gemini. I was charting new jump points and getting in bar brawls out here when you were born. There's been a lot of development since then but it's still the best place to make a quick buck. I may not have given you much over the years — now that I'm dead I figure you could benefit from a little frontier action. I guess I better go before I get all sentimental and …" he looked down at his glass and the screen went blank. A small green light indicated that there was a second message waiting.

I went over to the sink, washed my face, took a long hard look at myself as the only heir of an old lush. I guess I needed a minute to take in the fact that Mack was dead. I was sure that the second message was the executor telling me what had happened and how to contact him — details that could wait. It wasn't the first time I'd gotten a message like this. There were still a couple of hours before I had to meet with the investigative team and I was planning on spending them figuring out whether or not Mack's bequest was worth dropping everything to go out and deal with. There was a lot of work coming up for the *Scarab*, and getting to Gemini wasn't exactly a day trip. We had contracts to fulfill. I had a career with Kane, who treated me as a first officer and a son. This was a terrible time to take an extended vacation.

I was pacing, looking over at the faint green light on the communications console, when my reverie was interrupted. It was Jo opening the door.

"What happened to you? You look more confused than a Firrekan hatchling."

"Have a seat, Jo. It's nothing, really. Just that I got this message that my grandfather died and they want me to go out to Gemini, of all places, to take care of the estate," I said, pointing to the console.

"Oooh, an estate? Really? I thought you said Mack was an old drunk, spent his time remembering his glory days for anyone who'd listen and a few that wouldn't." She was shaking her hair, as if its tangles took priority over my dilemma.

“Turns out he had a ship. A *Tarsus*. Maybe even a little cash. Who knows?”

“I think you should quit the *Scarab*. Go out there and get that ship,” she said, with more than a trace of sarcasm in her voice. She started to pace. “I think you should drop everything — me, Kane, the *Scarab* — and run away to where you'll be poor and a nobody.” She stopped pacing, squared her shoulders and glared at me. “Look, seriously, I don't think you should do it. If you decide to leave the *Scarab*, come here and work with us, but don't go taking risks if the only up side is an out-of-date ship. The *Tarsus* hasn't even been manufactured for ten years!”

I didn't answer. I didn't have an answer — not yet — and we had business to attend to. The silence quickly got awkward, but I didn't know what to say. Still in silence, we headed over to our meeting.

We were a good team. We got along well and understood what needed to be done. With all the equipment at our disposal it was easy to set up a detector for non-standard emissions. There was a nearby asteroid field, and that's where we focused our search. We were poring over the data transmitted by a probe that entered the asteroids a handful of hours ago, just before our arrival in system. Though frustrated that we hadn't discovered anything immediately, we resolved to be patient and thorough. It wasn't too long before the slow and steady approach paid off.

Jo spotted it first. There was a small peak in X-ray emissions, as if a short burst had hit the probe. Blake said that he had noticed a similar anomaly a few days ago but it had been dismissed because they were actively searching for something else. He put his tea down to rifle through his notes from the last week and announced that the previous X-ray peak was also recorded by a probe sent to the asteroids. We put the computer to work looking through the last month's probe transmissions for other X-ray spikes. We had to be sure it wasn't a false reading or a natural occurrence. As Blake fired search parameters and commands into the computer, Jo and I set to work breaking down the X-ray peak to see if we could determine whether it was a man-made transmission or not.

Almost simultaneously, Sorensen announced that there had been several X-ray peaks, all from probes to the asteroid field and all within the last three months, and we discovered that it was indeed a man-made emission. The next step was to see if any information could be gleaned about where this message had been sent from. This turned out to be the easy part. The probes automatically report the direction from which they receive any input. Confirming with all positive reports we were able to triangulate on the source. It was us. All the anomalous X-ray peaks had originated from Sheol.

“Can we pinpoint where the messages were sent to?” I wanted to know.

“I don't think so. It was really sort of an accident we caught the transmission at all. Whoever these guys are, they're definitely using the asteroids for cover,” said Blake.

I was curious as to who might have access to equipment on the base that could send such a signal. Jolene and Blake agreed that there was no convenient means available and that whoever was sending these messages must have their own device. It was time to bring the others in on our discovery.

We sent the base captain a report via computer. After we decided to meet again after dinner to devise a way to search the base for an X-ray emitting device, I headed off to inform Kane of our discovery and to get his input on ways to search for the emitting device with maximum efficacy.

Running up to Kane's quarters, I nearly smashed into a harried-looking Furstenburg, who said he wanted to get the *Scarab* fired up and into space to fill a gap in the patrol schedule as soon as I was ready. He wanted to come along. I thought this was a strange request; I could think of no reason he should want to be on a patrol run. Furstenburg didn't seem himself. Still, I agreed.

When I burst into Geof Kane's quarters, he was pacing the room like a caged lion, muttering something about the two other ships that had been attacked as they neared the base. Scratching his once black, now white, crew cut, he mumbled, "Why wasn't the *Scarab* attacked?"

Reluctantly, I interrupted his pacing and filled him in on the message beamed from the base to the asteroid field. His face became even more somber than it had been to start with. I also told him about Furstenburg's request. Kane asked if we had determined when the messages first began. I gave him the three-month figure and he frowned. It all came together.

"It looks to me," Kane said, "like Lars Furstenburg is out to sabotage the base and he needs to ensure safe passage out of the system. He expects us to be that ticket. Let's go …"

Kane rushed from his quarters and toward the *Scarab*'s hangar, towing me along in his wake. Furstenburg was there waiting for us. Kane wasn't one to let talking get in the way of action. He moved toward Furstenburg with the ferocious look of a predator closing for the kill. Furstenburg stood his ground, only his eyes revealing a kind of nervous fear. Kane backed Furstenburg up the ramp and into the *Scarab*'s hold. I was close behind.

"When is it coming?" Kane roared. "When are your people gonna attack the base?"

Furstenburg answered by pulling a blaster from beneath his coat with faster reflexes than I'd given him credit for. He spoke slowly, steadying his nerves, "It does not matter. There is no way this evil font of technology can survive our onslaught. You will pilot me off base. Now! Your lives may be spared despite your high tech alliances."

Despite the obvious danger, Kane hadn't stopped moving toward him. Behind my captain's advancing bulk I was able to draw my gun, an old-fashioned laser that worked well on flesh without damaging a bulkhead.

I dove to the side, firing past Kane on my way to the ground. A burst of brilliant red light sliced into the base commander-turned-Retro. Kane looked down on me.

"I'd have decked him, son. No need to get dramatic."

We had no idea how much time we had remaining before the assault. All we could do was get out and try to stop the attackers before they reached the base. I headed for the bridge as Kane went to assemble a skeleton crew. I had all engines ready for launch when I heard the hatch close and the pounding of gunners' feet on the metal floors as they headed for battle stations. I didn't wait for clearance to launch. The *Scarab* was ready and we were likely the base's only defense. It seemed that Furstenburg had disabled the base's automatic defense systems.

Out in the void we turned toward the asteroids. White *Talons*, Retro ships for sure, emerged from their hiding places and headed to intercept. The Church of Man was continuing its campaign against all things technological and we were its next target. Kane took the helm as I headed for a vacant turret. It wasn't long before we were in amongst them, the all-seeing eye of their agrarian deity emblazoned on their fighters. These were maniacs, unafraid of death, willing to ram you, destroying your ship even if it cost them

theirs. From the turret I could see flames erupt from our hull, a quick burst of plasma destroying an enemy. That reduced the odds to five against one.

Then my radar went red. I thought it was a glitch. There was a swarm headed past us straight for the base. We'd been suckered into a trap, separated from the base the way wolves separate a calf from its mother. Before I could get a lock on any of the ships I was slammed against the inside of the turret. We were out of control, spinning without purpose. I unstrapped myself, clambered from the turret and headed for the bridge.

When I got there, I stopped short. The bridge was filled with smoke and debris, red warning lights flashing in the half light, cables hanging lifelessly from the ceiling where a panel had fallen and crushed Kane. There was nothing we could do for him. There wasn't much we could do at all but fight for our lives. I assumed command, sent most of the crew back to their guns and the rest to restoring our maneuverability. This was too big a job for our one repair droid.

Outside, three *Talons* still circled us, two of them damaged. I knew that, given our condition, we couldn't do much to them but there had to be something. Switching power from guns to shields, I resolved to use the ship's bulk as her defense. It didn't take long for a Retro to make the mistake of flying directly in front of us. I engaged afterburners and sent the *Scarab*'s weighty prow through the tiny ship. I had the comm lines open and shouted orders into the air.

"I'm taking the shields down. Hank and Johansen use the extra power to blast those freaks. Everyone else hold your fire. On my mark … NOW!"

Johansen destroyed his target, but Hank only managed to clip his. Its shields were down but there was no hull damage. The quick *Talon* turned to approach us from behind. Textbook, I thought. I hit dead stop, freezing our position. He blew past and Hank nailed him with a torpedo. We were in the clear for now, but Sheol was dying. Lights blinked out all along its hull as power was cut. We could see they had been boarded — white *Talons* stood out against Sheol's dark hull and the guns protecting the main hangars sat lifelessly by as enemy ships were docked. All I could think of was Jo fighting for her life against those bark-eating, anti-urban, anti-stellar, neo-pagan, hypocritical, knowledge-destroying fanatics. I went red trying to turn the *Scarab* to her rescue. They had to pry me from the controls. Sheol was a loss and we weren't doing much better.

By the time we had jumped back to a civilized world I was numb with grief. Jo was certainly dead, we had buried Kane in space during the trip, and the *Scarab* had received much more damage than we had the finances to repair. We sold the ship for scrap and divided the cash. Some of the crew stayed together, hoping to find financial backing. Some went back to far-away families left waiting months ago. I had no choice. I exchanged work for passage on a small merchant ship, the *Sword of Damocles*, and headed for Troy in Gemini. There I knew I'd find a new beginning, a chance to be the explorer I had admired in Mack Christiensen and the master of his own fate I had admired in Geof Kane.

Mack's bequest had the unfortunate side effect of actually costing me money. The *Tarsus* he left was no longer in working order and I sunk most of my money and what little he left me into repairs and hangar fees. It's been nearly two months since that day I last saw Jo, and I'm ready to move on. I have my own ship and a new destiny as Gemini's newest privateer.

GEMINI SECTOR: AN OVERVIEW

By Lieutenant Gabriel Quentin, Exploratory Services

Gemini is still a newborn sector struggling to find her feet. It has only been 30 years since the military set out to contain Kilrathi expansion by entrenching along the border. It was during this early entrenching period that the Exploratory Services (ES) were first called in to map out available resources, including habitable planets, mineral-rich asteroids and jump tunnels.

Within the first five years of exploration two major factors contributed to the opening of Gemini to public enterprise. The first was the rapid entrenchment of military forces far from established supply lines and support services — they needed access to local resources. The second factor was the tremendous wealth of resources discovered by the ES in Gemini. This was essential in boosting the Confederation's gross worth. As developers and entrepreneurs moved in to exploit the discoveries made by the ES, several standard base types evolved (see below). As the populations grew, Gemini was divided into four political/cartographic quadrants — Potter, Humboldt, Fariss and Clarke, clockwise from bottom right on a standard Gunther projection.

QUADRANTS

Clarke

Clarke is the fortress, the heart of the military entrenchment begun 30 years ago. Today, the seat of all Gemini's naval forces, Perry Naval Base, is in Clarke. This is the front line, dotted with jump points into Kilrathi territory. In this area, ships must constantly be ready to engage in border skirmishes. However, because of our strength,there has not been a full scale battle in Gemini for 11 years. The whole sector owes its existence to the strength of our naval forces, forces that have blossomed under Admiral Terrell's capable leadership.

Fariss

Asteroids. That one word sums up any traveler's experience of Fariss. Here are more mining bases than in the surrounding five sectors combined. There are agricultural planets and refineries, to be sure, but the most prevalent industry is the extraction of minerals from the many large asteroids that clutter Fariss' attractive vistas.

Humboldt

Humboldt is the sparsest of the quadrants. The central hub of Humboldt is Junction, a system with three habitable planets and six jump points. The quadrant is limited in natural resources, but Junction earns its name as one of the most essential nodes in Gemini's web of jump-ways. Aside from Junction, Humboldt offers few mining and refining opportunities and a lot of empty space.

Potter

Potter is the heart of what little civilization Gemini has. The capital, New Constantinople, is located here, as are many other large population centers. The most important of these, New Detroit, is renowned for the wealth of work and opportunity to be had there, not to mention the high quality of alcohol imported from Centauri and

Ceti Prime. Potter is the only quadrant that has more than one Pleasure planet, built entirely on rabid consumerism and providing R&R for the military types. Reports of Kilrathi and pirate attacks in Potter have dropped to the lowest rate of any border sector.

BASE TYPES

As mankind has settled the stars, several types of bases appear wherever we go. As you travel throughout the quadrants you will certainly encounter each of these. Below, you will find a thumbnail sketch of each base type to help you set your expectations and goals before landing at any given locale. Also listed are four of Gemini's most significant places: Perry, Oxford, New Constantinople and New Detroit. Be advised that not every base will buy what you have to sell — for example, it is obviously futile to try to sell unrefined plutonium to an agricultural planet. Trade can be very lucrative if you don't get discouraged and keep your wits about you. Enjoy your stay — may it be full of adventure and profit!

Agricultural



General Notes. These are planets whose primary industry is farming. They are usually large, with a high land-to-ocean ratio. Terraforming is in progress on most of these worlds, but domed cities are still the rule. Life here is a lot of work, and Gemini is trying to encourage colonists to have more children and settle down.

Trading Tips. Furs, lumber, pets, grain and foodstuffs are available here. They have a great need for more equipment and workers, as well as housing for their growing population.

Mining



General Notes. Mining bases are affixed to and carved into large asteroids. This means that flying through an asteroid field is usually mandatory for getting there. Mines are most prevalent in Fariss Quadrant, though they are also found, less frequently, throughout the sector. The bars are generally Spartan and all drinks have been imported (and are therefore expensive).

Trading Tips. Mining bases need food. They have plenty of minerals and not much interest in luxury goods. Mining bases also seek ways to distract their lonely workers. Issues of *Plaything*, games or other entertainment are in high demand.

Pirate

General Notes. With the population boom has come a piracy boom. At times, entire bases have been taken over. These hostile takeovers have been mostly limited to Fariss Quadrant and, therefore, to backwater mining bases, especially those left abandoned due to depleted resources. Pirate bases are a hazard to aboveboard shippers and a boon to unscrupulous dealers in illicit goods. Due to the nature of this type of base, no guild offices are ever available here.

Trading Tips. While I would rather say that it is not possible to trade with pirates, that is not the case. These bases need food and trade in weapons. They deal in drugs such as Brilliance, and continue to trade slaves as if we were living in the 23rd century. Please note that persons known to attack merchants and trade in contraband are considered saboteurs of the war effort and are attacked on sight by Confederation forces.

Pleasure

General Notes. Pleasure planets are the result of high demand, a sudden population explosion and a few lucky prospectors coming into too much wealth too soon in their lives. These are places of hedonistic games, a *tromp l'oeil* of culture. They are also important pressure valves during these tense times.

Trading Tips. Pleasure planets are hotbeds of consumerism. The population is interested in buying drugs, art, furs, games and anything fun or exciting. Unfortunately, they produce little besides movies.

Refinery



General Notes. Refineries are platform-based space stations whose primary purpose is to turn the natural resources of Gemini's asteroids and planets into advanced fuels, durable goods, etc. They are a major employer of skilled labor and are found throughout all four quadrants.

Trading Tips. Like mining bases, refineries have a great need for food and entertainment. They also need natural resources shipped in for processing.

New Constantinople



General Notes. New Constantinople is the capital of Gemini Sector. It is a major population center, with representatives of every major industry. It is located in central Potter and receives fairly heavy traffic. Confederation and militia patrols have a high chance of being around the base to protect it and to police the merchants, preventing the movement of contraband on or off base.

Trading Tips. Almost all art to be found in the area is produced here. New Constantinople is the hub of all political and cultural events. Due to its importance, people come from all over to buy and sell nearly everything. It is a good place to do business.

New Detroit



General Notes. New Detroit is one of the most fascinating of Gemini's urban centers. It is our industrial heart and it beats with the rhythms of heavy machinery. Even from orbit, the pervasive gray of buildings and smog are visible. Before there were refineries in Gemini's space, there was New Detroit. For three decades the central metropolis has been expanding to cover the planet's enormous land masses. Its bars and other businesses sit at the bottom of skyscrapers like the little hunched prophets at the bottom of Hadrian's Gorge. Definitely a place to visit and an even better place to do business.

Trading Tips. Competition is stiff here. There is a glut of manufactured goods. If it's man-made, you can bet New Detroit's got it. They need natural resources and are willing to pay the price to get them. New Detroit's mixture of highbrow and sleaze industry means that there's a nook, out of the incessant drizzle, for any goods you wish to buy or sell.

Oxford



General Notes. The intellectual seat of the sector, Oxford is a university planet, well known for its research facilities. It has been built out to resemble Old Earth, specifically the old English college town. This makes the place a fantastic draw for tourism. It is located far from the front in Potter Quadrant and was one of the first planets terraformed in Gemini. Its library is renowned beyond Gemini's horizons, drawing scholars from distant suns to visit its hardwood halls and well-tended quadrangles.

Trading Tips. They will definitely sell books and other intellectual properties. Aside from that they have the same trading needs as any heavily populated agricultural planet.

Perry



General Notes. Perry, the military center of Gemini, is located in Clarke, not far from the Kilrathi border. Many military patrols originate here and you have a high chance of encountering these forces. Admiral Terrell runs his corner of the war from here. Perry is a model of efficiency and does a lively business in all industries. It is a fine example of starbase architecture as well.

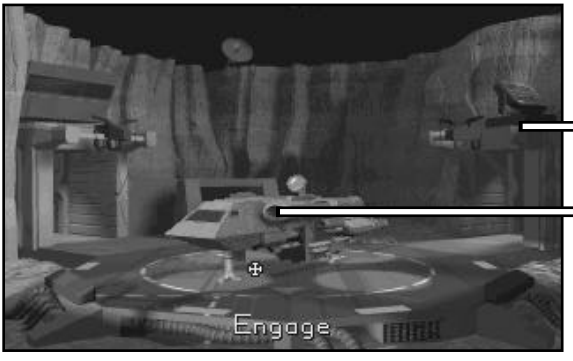
Trading Tips. As the core of all local military operations, many supply lines come into Perry. They need food, medical supplies and the like. They sell lots of out-of-date weaponry here — a good start for a gun-runner. With so many merchants coming here, there is always a chance to pick up whatever you're looking to buy.

COMMON BASE LOCATIONS

As a pilot and an entrepreneur, you need to use all the resources of the bases you frequent. I will profile each of the major industries that will attempt to exploit you as a customer but are essential to your survival. Each of these places has been selected for its usefulness. Some are places that broker for employers while others — like hangars with docking fees — are necessary evils. These private sector businesses are not as convenient or efficient as their Naval equivalent but they sure are more interesting, and they're all we've got.

Hangar

The first impression you get of any base is its hangar. Hangar protection and services are provided by the base in order to avoid racketeering and crowded conditions. They do charge a landing fee that covers the cost of loading ships with jump fuel, staff, equipment and other costs, as well as a small part serving as a tax to pay for the base's maintenance. This fee, while a flat rate, is allowed to drop so as to never charge you more than you can afford. Hangars have always been important to the economy of a base. They employ a large number of people to maintain the automatic docking equipment, as radio personnel, administrators, and cargo loaders and unloaders. Many pilots assume that the hangar is just a place to park one's ship, when in fact it is an industry as thriving as any other — except perhaps more important to spacefarers. Imagine the chaos if the hangars all shut down ...



Bar

Nearly every place in the human universe has a bar. Gemini is no exception. Bars are not only one of the most prolific industries in our sector but are useful to the ambitious privateer. Businessmen in need of pilots to undertake especially lucrative (read "dangerous") missions often solicit them over a drink. Large urban areas are more likely to produce these *fixers* because of the huge number of bureaucrats and middlemen there. Be warned that most employers met this way bind their contracts with only a handshake and often prove not to be legit. Sandoval, in New Detroit, nearly always has something of interest.

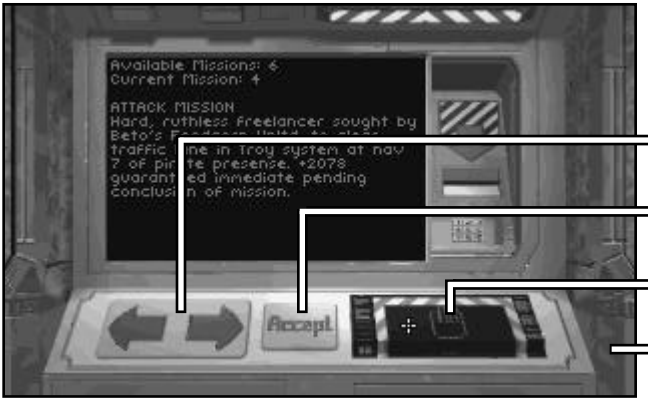
Also of interest in our bars are the staff members. It has been my professional experience that a good bartender knows more about the war than military intelligence types do, and

more about trading than the Merchants' Guild ever will. Learning from bartenders has always been an important part of doing business in Gemini, a part of our culture.



Mission Computer

Mission Computers are ubiquitous. These are the most popular forum for hiring pilots. They are quick and typically built into the base itself. Many pilots rely upon their convenience for work. This automated system offers a variety of missions for widely varying pay. The military also uses this service to solicit mercenaries, a practice they are continuing due to its cost efficiency and the high mission success rate. Whether your ship is a cargo vessel or a killing machine, you can find work here.

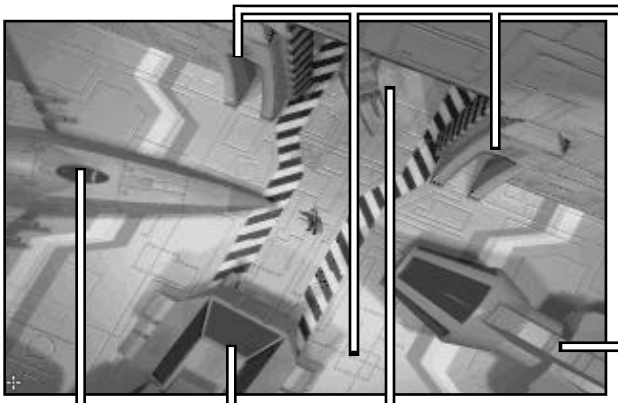


The interface is friendly. After a palm print identification you may scroll through the available listings. If you accept a mission, you may use the arrows to continue scrolling through them. The Mission Computers follow the Guild standard that you probably ought not to take more than three missions at a time. This is for two reasons. First, pilots who regularly accept more than three missions usually end up dropping one and either losing someone money or causing massive casualties due to undelivered supplies or undefended civilians. Second, limiting the number of missions is an attempt to prevent mobsters and shady characters from accepting all the work and doling it out for a cut to flunkies and desperates, cornering the market.

Ship Dealer

The last common location is the ship dealer. These privately held dealerships are where you can buy the latest model ship. Indicating the ship you would like will undoubtedly lead to a sales pitch. Be forewarned — there are hitches that they do not mention in their pitch. Here are a few things you should know before dealing with these shysters:

- When trading-in a ship you also get trade-in value for your upgrades. If you have a turret, two meson blasters, shields and a cargo expansion, your trade-in value is the Joan's Index Value of your old ship, minus wear and tear, plus the current selling price for each upgrade.
- Dealerships refuse to deal with transferring cargo unless it easy on them. You must have less cargo than the capacity of your new ship. If you trade in a fully loaded *Galaxy* for a *Centurion*, the salesman will turn you away until your cargo is less than the capacity of the *Centurion*.
- There's no financing. Unfortunately, the life span of a pilot in Gemini is short enough that they are unwilling to take a risk on you making payments. Not surprisingly, no insurance is available for freelancers. This means saving up a lot of cash before buying much of anything. While inconvenient, the businesses have little choice.

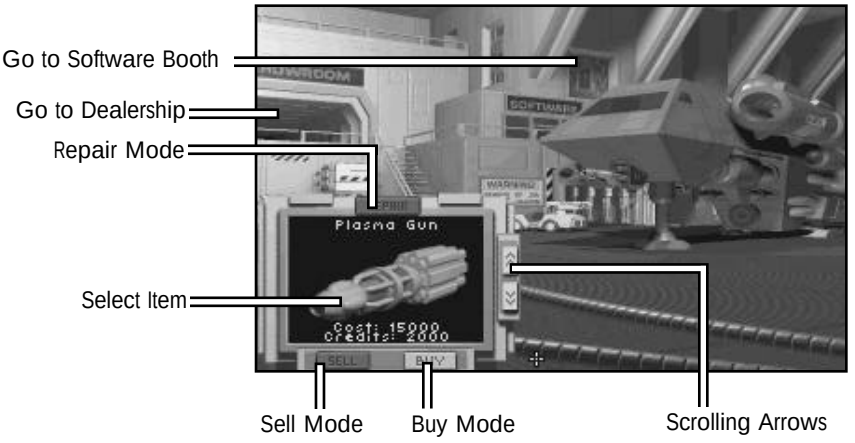


Ship Modification

This is where you buy, sell or repair options. Options include armor, guns, turrets, cargo expansions and anything else that adds to the performance or longevity of your vehicle.

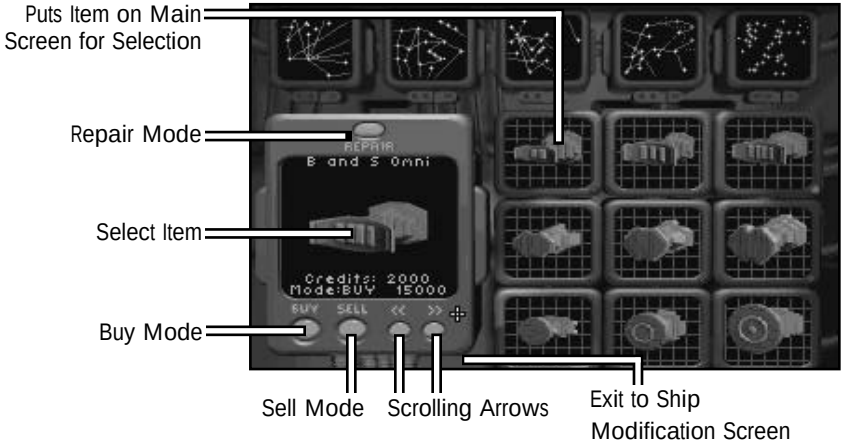
Interfacing with Ship Modification is as simple as using a monitor. Use the buttons at the bottom of the screen to select Buy or Sell mode. Using the arrows at the sides, you can scroll through the available items. When you find an item you are interested in, simply touch the screen to indicate your selection. When you have indicated a gun or other such item, you are asked to pick the location on your ship where you would like it placed.

Please note: You are not allowed to purchase missiles or torpedoes without a launcher. This constitutes intent to sell and is strictly prohibited. Should you decide to sell a launcher that still has missiles or torpedoes allocated to it, the ammunition automatically sells at the going rate. Always buy ammunition last and sell it first.



Software Booth

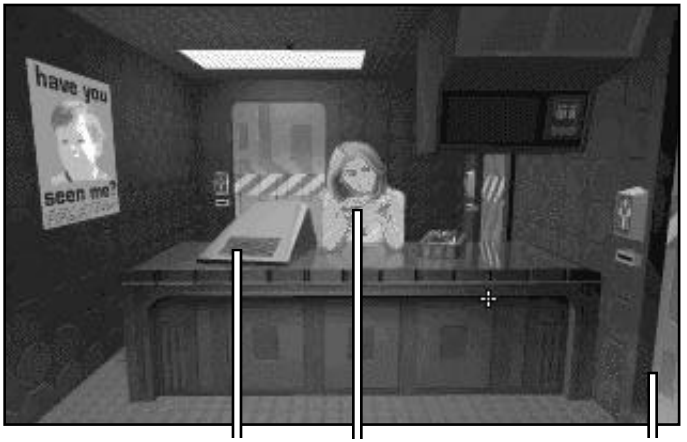
The other useful department in a dealership is the Software Booth. This is where you acquire such essential equipment as maps and scanners. Both are imperative. It seems that this is one of the areas that was too rapidly deregulated. Without a map you may as well be flying blind. In over seven hundred years of space travel this is only the second time we have allowed pilots to fly about with no navigational software. While the manufacture of scanners is competitive (there are three brands each with their own high and low end models), maps are not. Scanners are important, maps are essential. Spend your money wisely.



This listing should give you some sense of the recovery Gemini is making since the lifting of martial law. We are on the economic upswing. This is a sector of opportunity, a frontier for the risk takers of the Confederation. Your contribution is an important part of making us an immovable fortress on the Kilrathi border and a growth-oriented, prosperous community.

Mercenaries' Guild

As a long-time associate of this proud organization, I can personally speak for their integrity and usefulness. For a reasonable membership fee, pilots are able to take a variety of jobs cleared by the Guild. This means no missions are illegal and payment is guaranteed. They also guarantee their clients that all guildmen are registered and can therefore be tracked and penalized for indiscretions. Any one individual may not have more than three missions accepted at any one time in order to prevent racketeering or simply over-committing out of ambition. All members have access to mission listings at any Guild office and are paid as soon as mission requirements are fulfilled. Reporting to an office is not necessary. The Mercenaries' Guild is an honorable society and does not allow maintenance of offices on pirate bases.



View Mercenaries' Mission Computer

Speak to Guild Officer

Exit to Main Concourse



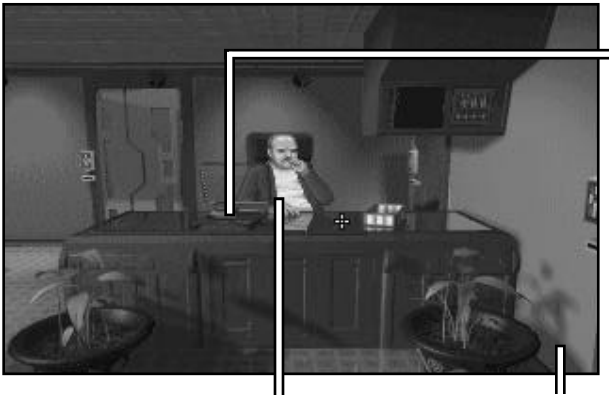
Select Mission

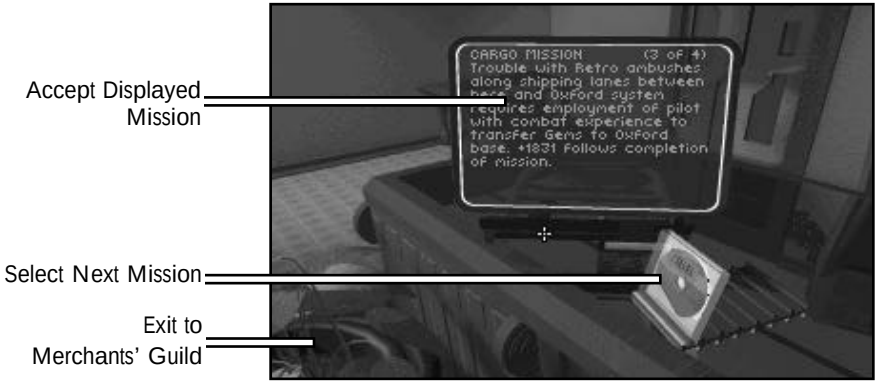
Exit to Mercenaries' Guild

Accept Displayed Mission

Merchants' Guild

The Merchants' Guild has, in the last decade, established good relations with the Mercenaries' Guild. They realized that there is really no competition between them. In fact, each depends upon the other. This is especially true as the supply of pilots increases. With the war effort and the heavy campaign to advertise Gemini's opportunities abroad, there has been an upsurge in prospectors panning for golden opportunities. This has led to more small businesses depending on the lone pilot to transport their wares and protect their flight paths. Not surprisingly, the guild has managed to keep its share of the moneys involved and has almost too nice offices.

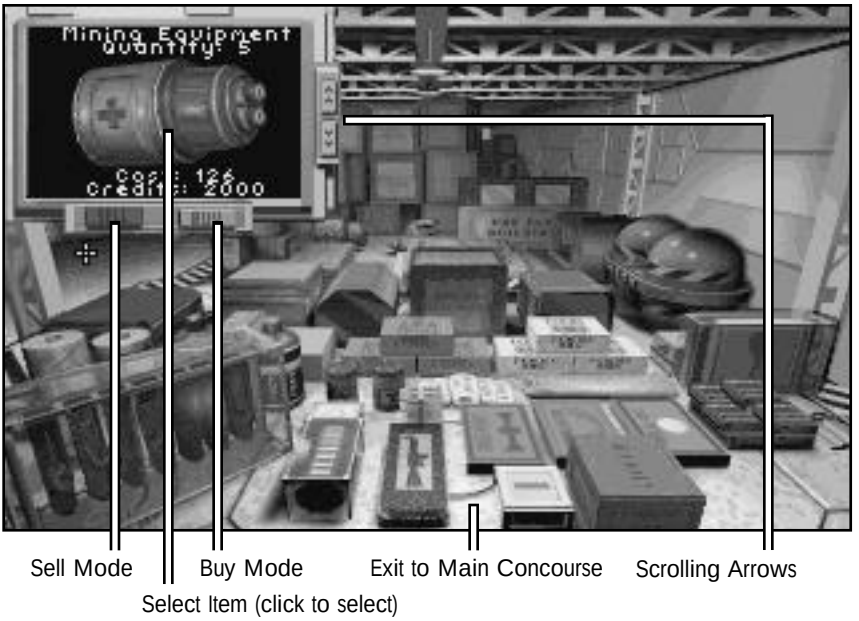




Interacting with the Merchants' Guild is similar to dealing with the Mercenaries' Guild. You are charged to join and then may use their computer to accept missions. Any one individual may not have more than three missions accepted at any one time in order to prevent racketeering or simply over-committing out of ambition. For a mission brokerage firm, they are useful and professional. Do consider the type of work you would like to do before taking missions. For a military pilot with no cargo hold there is only a little work available through the guild.

Commodity Exchange

These are automated centers of trade scattered throughout the sector. They are state run and standardized, although prices are set locally by demand. Using the Exchange is as easy as interfacing with the monitor provided. You select whether you are in buy or sell mode and scroll through the available cargo. Purchasing or selling is as easy as touching the screen when the desired goods are being displayed. Finances are handled automatically. This lack of human supervision has both advantages and disadvantages.



When the Exchange was first standardized, 15 years ago, it was heavily regulated under Governor Meshach's orders. Costs were standardized and all transactions required Merchants' Guild approval. The guild was a part of the Commerce Department at that time. Then changes came … the Meshach administration fell due to the sale of *Talons* to the Church of Man. In the ensuing political vacuum, base leaders did away with the regulations and fully automated the Exchange. Now, a decade and half later, prices have come down and profit is had trading from base to base. The only caveat is that, while you may be able to buy and sell slaves or drugs, they are not legal. If militia or Confeds scan your ship en route and discover contraband, you will be considered a trafficker and summarily attacked. Also, New Constantinople and Perry Naval Base forbid the sale of contraband through their Commodity Exchange.

There are many ways to make a profit through trade. Buying grain at an agricultural planet, selling it at a mining base, buying ore at the base, selling it to a refinery, buying the refinery's plastics, and selling them back at the agricultural world is just one obvious example of a lucrative trade route. The expansion of privatized trade also opens up private interest in keeping the trade routes clear of pirates and Kilrathi. An active and healthy Commodity Exchange spells profit for you more mercenary types as well as for the haulers of cargo.

COMMONLY AVAILABLE SHIPS

There are four basic models of single-person ship available to the general public: the *Tarsus, Centurion, Galaxy* and *Orion.* Recently I went to several dealerships posing as a naive newcomer to Gemini and asked which ship was right for me. The salesman pitched his poor little heart out and managed not to tell me a thing. The best way for you to make the right choice is to be well informed. If you run across a hostile pilot flying one of these vessels, it also serves you well to be familiar with the advantages and drawbacks of each ship.

Below are my impressions of each vehicle, followed by the latest statistics available and its probable loadout if you encounter it in hostile action. The popularity of these four ships makes it easy to obtain parts and service through any dealership.

Max. Velocity/Afterburner Velocity. Ship velocities are expressed in kps. These numbers are always computed relative to a stationary object near the ship, e.g. a nearby planet.

Acceleration. Ratings for ship acceleration range from Poor and Average to Good, Very Good and Excellent.

Max YPR (Maximum Yaw, Pitch, Roll). Yaw describes the ability of a ship to turn to the right or left. Pitch refers to up and down movement. Roll measures the ability of a ship to spin on its long axis. The ratings for YPR range from Poor and Average to Good, Very Good and Excellent.

Armor. The measurement of the ship's defensive armor is expressed in centimeters thickness of Durasteel (centimeters equivalent). The higher the number, the more effective the armor.

Tarsus

The mainstay of the Exploratory Services fleet just a few years ago, these steady craft are now a familiar part of private enterprise. The *Tarsus* has been discontinued. We list it here because of its popularity and general availability in the used markets.

Cockpit. Low visibility, especially through the small side windows. Cockpit placement prevents any over-the-shoulder view. Offers one MFD along with standard radar and armor displays (see illustration, p. 12). Comfort is comparable to the *Orion* but claustrophobic by comparison with the other two models reviewed here.

Speed/Maneuverability. Sluggish in turns and rolls. Can upgrade to Level 1 engine.

Ordnance/Protection. No slots available for turrets. Supports Level 2 shield upgrades. Two gun racks and two weapon or tractor beam racks.

Overall Performance Rating. I would give it a B in peacetime. With the war so close and the rise of piracy, I have to downgrade my rating to a D. Longevity in Gemini is worth the extra expense of purchasing a better ship or paying for protection.

Class	Merchant Scout
Max. Velocity	300 kps
Afterburner Velocity	600 kps
Acceleration	Average
Max. YPR	Average
Weapons	Mass Drivers (2) DF Missiles (3)
Cargo Hold	100 units (150 with cargo expansion)
Armor	
Sides	8 cm equiv. each
Fore	10 cm equiv.
Aft	10 cm equiv.





Centurion

This is the workhorse of the mercenary community. The *Centurion* is a heavy fighter with the ability to do almost any gun-for-hire work. The limited cargo hold can contain more than an overnight bag but not by much. This is a ship for those pilots who love to fly, but it won't make you a living on the trade circuit.



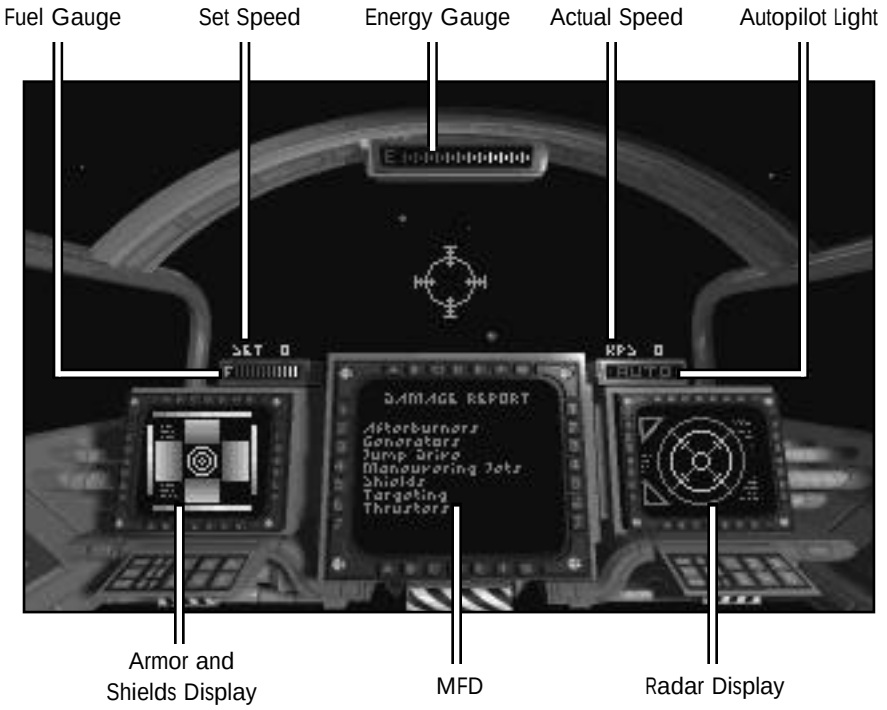
Cockpit. High visibility. The dome cockpit of this single-seater affords the pilot a clear view of his target. Ride is comfortable at high speeds and in tight turns. It has one MFD, along with standard armor and radar displays (see illustration). Instrument placement is intuitive and easy to read; overall design is highly ergonomic.



Speed/Maneuverability. I've been very impressed with the roll rate of the *Centurion,* although light fighters such as the *Talon* easily outmaneuver it. For a fighter of its class, this ship offers clean tight flight dynamics. Supports engine upgrades through Level 3.

Ordnance/Protection. A rear turret is a popular option for this ship. It supports up to Level 3 shield upgrades. There are slots for four guns and two weapons or tractor beams, even without a turret.

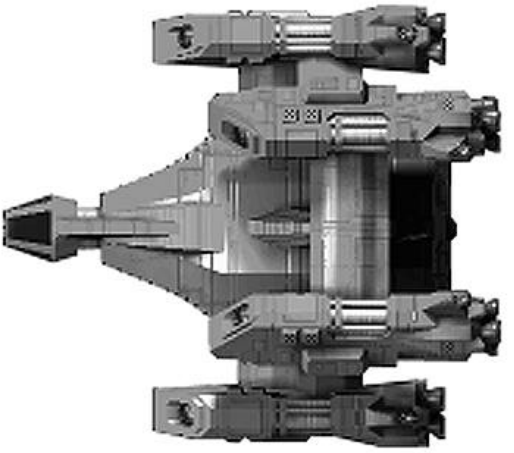
Overall Performance Rating. For the mercenary community this ship earns an A while those with more mercantile ambitions find its small cargo hold, and inability to support a cargo hold expansion a definite turn off. Consider your needs before investing.



Class	Bounty Hunter Heavy Fighter	
Max. Velocity	500 kps	
Afterburner Velocity	1000 kps	
Acceleration	Excellent	
Max. YPR	Good	
Weapons	Mass Drivers (2)	Tachyon Cannon (1)
	Particle Cannon (1)	FF Missiles (2)
	IR Missiles (2)	Tractor Beam (1)
	Turreted Mass Drivers (2)	
Cargo Hold	50 units	
Armor		
Sides	15 cm equiv. each	
Fore	20 cm equiv.	
Aft	15 cm equiv.	

Galaxy

A versatile merchant's vessel, the *Galaxy* is perfect for those with an entrepreneurial spirit. She is by no means a military vessel, but a *Galaxy* can usually protect herself and the large amount of cargo she's able to carry.



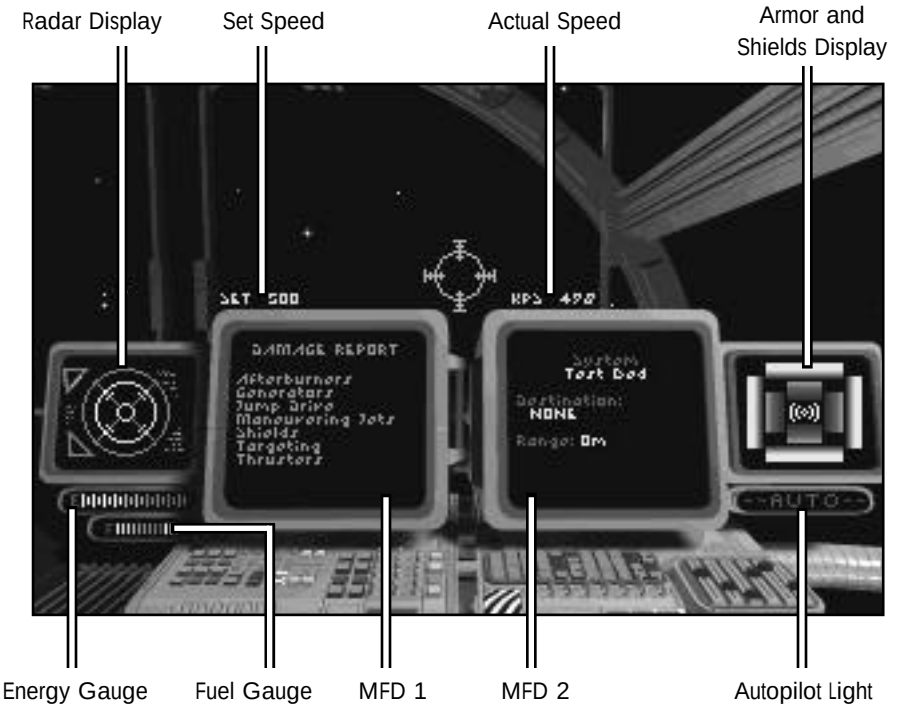
Cockpit. This large, roomy cockpit offers decent visibility despite the bulky ship behind it. Some pilots may take a while to adjust to the limited HUD area. Unlike most modern ships, the *Galaxy*'s HUD is not built into the main window. Instead, it is suspended above the MFDs in front of the window. Dual MFDs have been standard since the 2669 model and are a popular feature (see illustration). All displays are conveniently placed for ease of use.



Speed / Maneuverability. Supports up to a Level 3 engine upgrade. For a ship of its bulk, the *Galaxy* is extremely maneuverable, although not as fast as we would have hoped.

Ordnance / Protection. Due to the large size of this ship, it is able to support both top and bottom turrets. Shield Level 3 is the maximum supported by the *Galaxy.* Without turrets, there are slots for only two guns and two weapons or tractor beams.

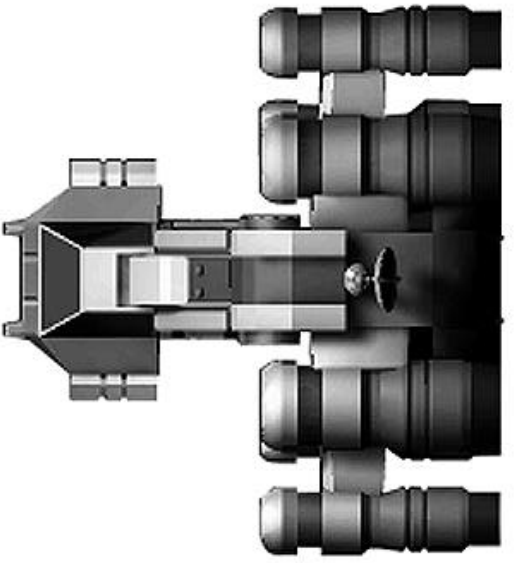
Overall Performance Rating. The *Galaxy* is successful in its role as the top-of-the-line mercantile vessel available to the public. I give it an A without reservation. Trigger-happy pilots are a little disappointed in its moderate top speed, but the availability of two turrets adds a comfortable measure of safety.



Class	Merchant Ship	
Max. Velocity	300 kps	
Afterburner Velocity	750 kps	
Acceleration	Average	
Max. YPR	Average	
Weapons	Mass Drivers (2)	DF Missiles (3)
	HS Missiles (4)	Turreted Mass Drivers (4)
Cargo Hold	150 units (225 with cargo expansion)	
Armor		
Sides	17.5 cm equiv. each	
Fore	25 cm equiv.	
Aft	20 cm equiv.	

Orion

The *Orion* is perhaps the safest of all the vehicles mentioned here. It is can carry the most armor and shields of all ships listed (at the expense of its maneuverability). This is a sturdy ship, designed to last.



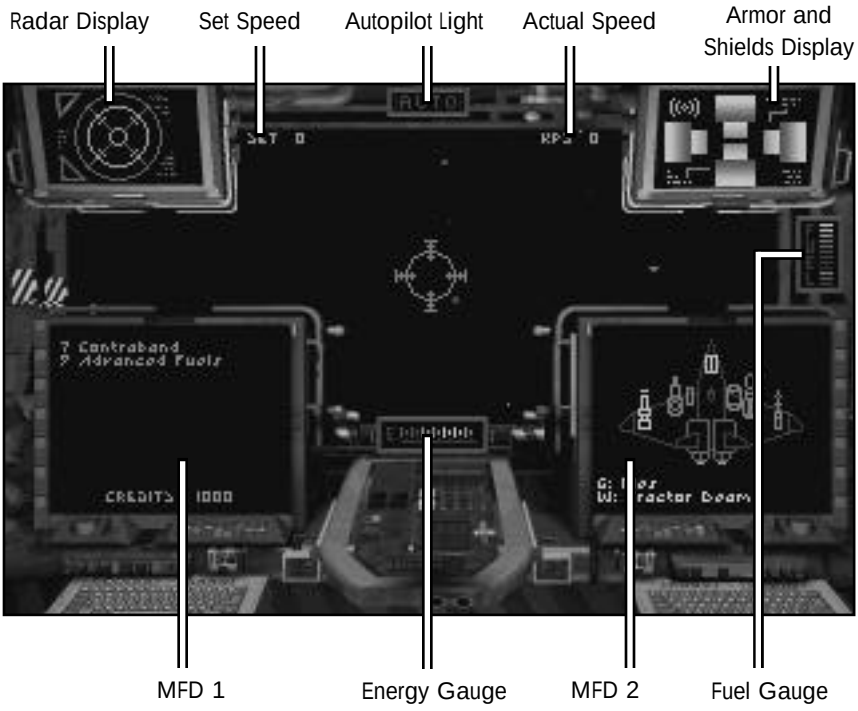
Cockpit. Low visibility. The cockpit is dark and somewhat cramped, with less window area than the *Tarsus.* Dual MFDs are standard and easy to use (see illustration). Instruments are not as easy to use as in the *Centurion,* but are simple to get a handle on.

Speed / Maneuverability. Supports up to a Level 5 engine upgrade. Although the *Orion* has better than average speed, it's difficult to pull through tight turns.



Ordnance / Protection. Supports addition of a rear turret. Even without the turret, there is room for two guns and one weapon or tractor beam. With Level 5 engine upgrades, there is no reason not to pick a high quality gun with a high energy drain. Supports up to shield upgrade Level 5.

Overall Performance Rating. Due to its low maneuverability, limited cargo hold, and the expense of outfitting it, I give the *Orion* a low B. With enough money, though, you can make this ship a high A. I highly recommend the full option package for this ship.



Class	Mercenary Gunship	
Max. Velocity	350 kps	
Afterburners	800 kps	
Acceleration	Average	
Max. YPR	Poor	
Weapons	Mass Drivers (2)	HS Missiles (3)
	Turreted Lasers (2)	
Cargo Hold	50 units (75 with cargo expansion)	
Armor		
Sides	35 cm equiv. each	
Fore	48 cm equiv.	
Aft	50 cm equiv.	

OTHER SPACECRAFT

You encounter a wide variety of ships in the Gemini Sector, covering a whole gamut of designs and functions. Many of the hostile forces operating in this sector fly just one type of vessel and thus are recognizable by the design of their spacecraft. A thorough familiarity with the most common vessels in Gemini provides you with a distinct advantage in combat. Knowing what the advantages and the drawbacks of each ship are allows you to devise a sound combat strategy and greatly increases your chances of survival.

Broadsword



Class	Confederation Fighter-Bomber	
Max. Velocity	350 kps	
Afterburner Velocity	n/a	
Acceleration	Average	
Max. YPR	Average	
Weapons	Mass Drivers (3)	FF Missiles (6)
	HS Missiles (3)	Turreted Lasers (2)
	Turreted Particle Cannon (2)	
Armor		
Sides	17.5 cm equiv. each	
Fore	25 cm equiv.	
Aft	20 cm equiv.	

The *Broadsword* is a commonly encountered Confederation fighter. It is equipped with a deadly array of blasters and several HS and FF missiles, which pose a severe threat to any enemy that ventures to cross its path. The *Broadsword*'s main weaknesses lie in its slow speed, low maneuverability and limited acceleration powers. If you are flying a very maneuverable ship in an encounter with this vessel, the odds are definitely in your favor. A side attack on the weaker port and starboard armor is advisable.

Demon



Class	Bounty Hunter Light Fighter	
Max. Velocity	450 kps	
Afterburner Velocity	1200 kps	
Acceleration	Very Good	
Max. YPR	Good	
Weapons	Lasers (2)	Meson Blasters (2)
	HS Missiles (2)	Torpedoes (10)
Armor		
Sides	9 cm equiv. each	
Fore	14 cm equiv.	
Aft	12 cm equiv.	

The *Demon* combines high velocities and powerful acceleration powers with a wide array of deadly weapons. Its torpedo loadout can even take out capital ships like the *Kamekh* or *Paradigm* with relative ease. If you are forced to fight the *Demon* in a close dogfight, try to make a side attack on that location's weak armor.

Dralthi



Class	Kilrathi Light Fighter
Max. Velocity	400 kps
Afterburner Velocity	1000 kps
Acceleration	Excellent
Max. YPR	Excellent
Weapons	Lasers (3) DF Missiles (3)
Armor	
Sides	12 cm equiv. each
Fore	15 cm equiv.
Aft	13.5 cm equiv.

Most Kilrathi fighters emphasize high velocity and maneuverability, since a majority of all Kilrathi pilots rely on aggressive combat strategies. Similar to the *Gothri,* the *Dralthi* is designed in precisely this manner. Excellent acceleration powers, powerful afterburners and high velocities allow a Kilrathi pilot to close in on his kill quickly and efficiently. When confronted with the *Dralthi,* keep in mind that this ship's blaster loadout is relatively weak. Even though the *Dralthi* carries several missiles, Dumb Fires are more easily avoided than guided missile systems.

Drayman



Class	Merchant Ship
Max. Velocity	150 kps
Afterburner Velocity	n/a
Acceleration	Poor
Max. YPR	Poor
Weapons	Meson Blasters (2)
Armor	
Sides	28 cm equiv. each
Fore	35 cm equiv.
Aft	30 cm equiv.

The *Drayman* is one of the most basic merchant ships you are likely to encounter in the Gemini Sector. This spacecraft is suitable for carrying cargo, but it is also extremely vulnerable to any attack. With poor acceleration, slow max. velocity and no afterburner power, this vessel can hardly hope to evade any predator eager to take over some cargo. Weak shields and a light weapons loadout make the *Drayman* a bad choice if you are traversing unknown or hostile territory.

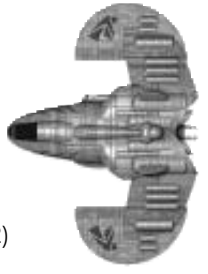
Gladius



Class	Militia Light Fighter	
Max. Velocity	400 kps	
Afterburner Velocity	1000 kps	
Acceleration	Very Good	
Max. YPR	Good	
Weapons	Lasers (2)	Particle Cannon (1)
	HS Missiles (2)	Torpedoes (8)
Armor		
Sides	8 cm equiv. each	
Fore	14 cm equiv.	
Aft	10 cm equiv.	

The *Gladius* combines good velocity and acceleration with an effective and varied array of weapons. Its torpedoes make it an effective fighter for combat against capital ships. With its fairly strong blaster loadout and HS missiles, the *Gladius* is a versatile dogfighting spacecraft. Due to its maneuverability, it is hard to target the one accurately, but just a few on-target hits can down the *Gladius* because of its weak shields.

Gothri



Class	Kilrathi Fighter	
Max. Velocity	450 kps	
Afterburner Velocity	1200 kps	
Acceleration	Very Good	
Max. YPR	Good	
Weapons	Mass Drivers (2)	Particle Cannon (2)
	FF Missile (1)	Turreted Laser (1)
	DF Missile (1)	IR Missiles (3)
	Turreted Meson Blaster (1)	
Armor		
Sides	15 cm equiv. each	
Fore	17.5 cm equiv.	
Aft	17.5 cm equiv.	

The Kilrathi *Gothri* can pose a very real threat to any ship in the Gemini Sector. With its impressive acceleration, it can reach high velocities. When you are facing a *Gothri* in combat, you should concentrate on its weak armor. A few well-placed concentrated bursts of gunfire can severely damage this fighter. However, it is not that easy to close on it. The *Gothri* is very maneuverable and can easily down you first with its array of blasters.

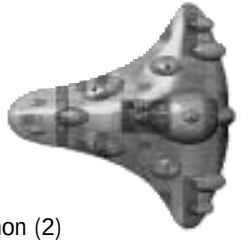
Kamekh



Class	Kilrathi Capital Ship	
Max. Velocity	300 kps	
Afterburner Velocity	n/a	
Acceleration	Poor	
Max. YPR	Poor	
Weapons	IR Missiles (2)	HS Missile (1)
	DF Missiles (10)	Ionic Pulse Cannon (1)
	Meson Blasters (2)	Tachyon Cannon (2)
	Turreted Lasers (4)	Turreted Plasma Cannon (2)
Armor		
Sides	55 cm equiv. each	
Fore	70 cm equiv.	
Aft	40 cm equiv.	

If you are flying missions in the Clarke Quadrant, you are apt to encounter the *Kamekh* sooner or later. This imposing capital ship with its strong armor and heavy weapons load-out is one of the most impressively designed spacecraft in the Gemini Sector. The *Kamekh* is not only equipped with a sophisticated arsenal of guns ranging from meson blasters to plasma cannon, but it can also effectively down enemy ships with its multiple missiles. Refer to Survival Tips (pp. 60-63) for effective attack strategies in combat situations with capital ships.

Paradigm



Class	Confederation Capital Ship	
Max. Velocity	200 kps	
Afterburner Velocity	n/a	
Acceleration	Poor	
Max. YPR	Poor	
Weapons	Meson Blasters (2)	Tachyon Cannon (2)
	Ionic Pulse Cannon (1)	
	Turreted Lasers (3)	Turreted Mass Drivers (3)
	DF Missiles (10)	IR Missiles (2)
	HS Missile (1)	
Armor		
Sides	65 cm equiv. each	
Front	80 cm equiv.	
Rear	50 cm equiv.	

The *Paradigm* is one of the Confederations most advanced destroyers. Featuring almost impregnable armor and shields, it more than compensates for its lack of speed and maneuverability. The *Paradigm* also has a deadly array of weapons at its disposal, making an attack of any sort extremely dangerous. It carries an astonishing variety of blasters, ranging from meson blasters to ionic pulse cannon. Multiple missiles can deter even the most aggressive Kilrathi aces.

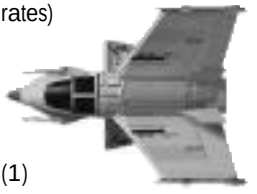
Stiletto



Class	Confederation Light Fighter
Max. Velocity	500 kps
Afterburner Velocity	1400 kps
Acceleration	Excellent
Max. YPR	Excellent
Weapons	Mass Drivers (2) HS Missiles (2)
Armor	
Sides	7 cm equiv. each
Fore	9 cm equiv.
Aft	8 cm equiv.

The *Stiletto* is the fastest ship in the Confederation fleet. With an afterburner velocity of 1400 kps and excellent maneuverability, it can evade even the swiftest Kilrathi fighters. The *Stiletto*'s weakness lies in its extremely flimsy armor and relatively light weapons loadout. If you encounter an experienced pilot in a *Stiletto,* however, you should prepare for grueling combat because his high maneuverability lets him get uncomfortably close.

Talon



Class	Light Fighter (used by militia, Church of Man, pirates)
Max. Velocity	400 kps
Afterburner Velocity	1000 kps
Acceleration	Very Good
Max. YPR	Good
Weapons	Mass Drivers (2) Particle Cannon (1) HS Missiles (2)
Armor	
Sides	8 cm equiv. each
Fore	10 cm equiv.
Aft	9 cm equiv.

The *Talon* is probably the ship you will encounter most often in Gemini. Flown by numerous different factions, it may appear in slightly different designs but its weapon loadouts and dynamics remain the same. You should take extreme care to keep the *Talon* away from your rear, since it is equipped with numerous HS missiles. If you are an accomplished pilot, you should be able to take out a *Talon* with relative ease, especially if you are flying a *Stiletto* or a *Centurion,* since its armor is extremely weak. Try to avoid its particle cannon, since a hit can inflict sizable damage.

CUSTOMIZING YOUR SHIP

Once you've bought the ship that is right for you, you are ready to buy the accessories that make the ship truly your own. Whether this is your first time outfitting a ship or you're an old pro who wants all the latest numbers, this section is for you. I have broken down the vital statistics of each nonstandard item and listed them alphabetically. Guns are listed with other weapons, at the end of the section.

This listing is meant as an aid to your purchasing the best equipment you can afford in the least amount of time. Review your needs, finances and what's available, and you should end up with the ideal vehicle for fun and profit. If only I'd had this kind of information available when I outfitted my first ship …

Afterburner



Afterburners more than double your speed and can mean the difference between life and death in asteroid fields and combat. As they are relatively inexpensive, I highly recommend buying afterburners, especially if you are flying one of Gemini's slower ships.

Armor

There are two types of armor available. Both are repairable if damaged and offer significant protection. Most ship's hulls are built to keep you pressurized and immune from radiation, but they do not do much to stop a mass driver. If you can afford an escort, you may not need armor, but other protection is much less reliable.



Plasteel. Protective equivalent: 10 cm durasteel. Plasteel is the least expensive armor and protects one from the equivalent of four direct laser hits.



Tungsten. Protective equivalent: 20 cm durasteel. Tungsten armor may cost a little more but can stop up to two torpedoes. If you are a courier in Potter Quadrant, working for bureaucrats, you probably don't need this level of protection. As you are clearly a reader of our humble little journal, you are more likely a risk taker who runs guns out to the edge of the Kilrathi border and therefore need all the protection you can get. I recommend you not pinch millicredits and spend the extra necessary to get tungsten armor.

Cargo Expansion



Volume: varies by ship. Not every ship can support an internal cargo expansion — check with your ship's manual before purchasing a cargo expansion. These tend to pay for themselves quickly with the additional profits gained from all that extra cargo.

ECM Packages



Electronic Counter Measures come in three levels, each working to prevent missile locks. (Note that even if they break the lock, they do not prevent missiles from flying straight and hitting you.) In our testing, Level 1 ECM only had about a 25% success rate in breaking a missile lock. Each upgrade seemed to improve the success rate by another 25%.

Engine Upgrades

There are five levels of engine upgrade. Each upgrade is a generator or series of generators that powers your guns and shields. It is our recommendation that you have at least one more level of engine upgrade than levels of shield. Power drain is an important concern that is answered with a sufficient level of generator. Also be aware that the ship you are in may not be able to support as many engine upgrades as you would like. Buy your guns and shields with this in mind.



Jump Drive



This is undoubtedly one of your most important and expensive purchases. Unfortunately, one manufacturer essentially has a monopoly on jump drives (a common problem with many frontier products).

The jump drive is your ticket to interstellar travel. Without it you are unable to travel beyond the system you buy your ship in. All of Gemini's trade, strategic position and illicit industry depend upon jump drives. Jump fuel is automatically topped off as part of your landing fees, so it's just the initial investment that hurts. However, like a cargo expansion, this is an investment that more than pays for itself.

Nav Maps

Gemini's ship dealers have conspired at highway robbery. They require that you buy nav maps at an additional charge. Nav maps are critical to survival as a pilot. Without one you cannot autopilot, you cannot get a directional marker on your HUD, and you cannot obtain any immediate information about the quadrant you are in. If you were to jump from a quadrant for which you have a map into one with no map available, I recommend you jump right back.

If you cannot afford to get the Gemini Sector map with all four quadrants, at least get the map of your current quadrant. Fortunately, the All Quadrant package is sold at a discount.

Repair Droid

While the grizzled old pilots in mining base bars swear only by their own hands, I have seen a repair droid bring a badly damaged ship back from near death. These little gadgets are extremely effective if you just can't wait to land and pay to get your damaged systems repaired.



Scanners

The scanner provides you with radar, target information, friend-or-foe HUD targeting and a target camera. There are three brands, each with a different display and each with its own advantages. Below are the statistics for each level of scanner, listed by brand name. All have a range of 35,000 K, and all have HUD brackets. In general, the brands are comparable except at the high end, in which the B&S Omni is clearly the superior (and costliest) choice.



Iris — Basic radar (all).
- Mk I — 5% chance per second of identifying target.
- Mk II — Target lock. 15% chance per second of identifying target.
- Mk III — Target lock. ITTS. 25% chance per second of identifying target.



Hunter AW — Friend-or-Foe color-coded radar (all).
- 6 — 5% chance per second of identifying target.
- 6i — Target lock. 15% chance per second of identifying target.
- Infinity — Target lock. ITTS. 25% chance per second of identifying target.



B & S — Fully color-coded radar (all).
- Tripwire — 15% chance per second of identifying target.
- E.Y.E. — Target lock. 25% chance per second of identifying target.
- Omni — Target lock. ITTS. 35% chance per second of identifying target.

Shield Generators



There are five levels of shield. Not all are available for every ship. Each uses 100 gigawatts and provides the equivalent of 100 cm of durasteel protective value. Be sure you have enough power to generate any shields you purchase. If other systems need power, you can divert power from your shields by turning them off or, if they are strong enough, decreasing their power by steps.

Tractor Beam



A tractor beam is the key to efficient salvage. Cargo is usually found after a battle, waiting for collection. Items collected are automatically added to your manifest. The energy drain is 4 GJ / second.

Turrets



There are three types of turrets: top, bottom and rear. Availability depends upon the type of ship you are flying. All turrets have room for two guns and a tractor beam. While they come with an MFD for tar-

geting and ordnance, they have no radar.

Weapons

Guns. For many pilots in Gemini, this is the most important purchase you make after your ship. Guns are listed here in order from least to most expensive. Be careful to balance the energy use with the engine upgrade available. Shields and guns combined can leave you powerless and vulnerable. Check to make sure you are getting the most power for your credits and that you optimize your energy use. Buying a gun you haven't got the juice to fire is a painful experience.

The velocity listed is the ammunition speed when shot from a stationary craft. Refire delay is the shortest time in which the gun can recharge for the next shot. Energy use is the amount of energy, in Gigajoules, used by each gun per shot. Armor penetration is based on the durasteel standard, and is listed only for comparison.

Laser	*Velocity*	1400 kps
	Refire delay	0.3 seconds
	Energy use	4 GJ
	Armor penetration	1.8 cm
Mass Driver	*Velocity*	1100 kps
	Refire delay	0.6 seconds
	Energy use	6 GJ
	Armor penetration	2.6 cm
Meson Blaster	*Velocity*	1300 kps
	Refire Delay	0.4 seconds
	Energy Use	8 GJ
	Armor Penetration	3.2 cm
Neutron Gun	*Velocity*	900 kps
	Refire Delay	0.65 seconds
	Energy Use	18 GJ
	Armor Penetration	6.2 cm
Particle Cannon	*Velocity*	1000 kps
	Refire Delay	0.6 seconds
	Energy Use	11 GJ
	Armor Penetration	4.3 cm
Tachyon Cannon	*Velocity*	1250 kps
	Refire Delay	0.4 seconds
	Energy Use	8 GJ
	Armor Penetration	5.0 cm
Ionic Pulse Cannon	*Velocity*	1200 kps
	Refire Delay	0.7 seconds
	Energy Use	15 GJ
	Armor Penetration	5.4 cm















Plasma Gun

Velocity	840 kps
Refire Delay	0.8 seconds
Energy Use	22 GJ
Armor Penetration	7.2 cm





Missile Launcher. Missile launchers are crucial in making a quick kill. Without shields few ships can withstand a missile hit. Missiles are listed in order, from least to most expensive, with a brief description of its locking method. Each launcher can hold up to 10 missiles in any combination. Armor penetration is based on the durasteel standard, and is listed only for comparison. All missiles that can lock but fail to do so simply fly straight ahead (like a DF missile). Refire delay for one launcher is 2.5 seconds — two launchers are twice as fast.

Dumb Fire (DF)

Lock	None (fires straight).
Speed	1000 kps
Armor penetration	13 cm



Heat Seeker (HS)

Lock	Locks onto engines of target; most effective if behind target.
Speed	800 kps
Armor Penetration	16 cm



Image Recognition (IR)

Lock	Locks onto shape of target; effective from any angle.
Speed	850 kps
Armor Penetration	17 cm



Friend or Foe (FF)

Lock	Locks onto nearest hostile ship (or nearest ship not transmitting friendly signal).
Speed	900 kps
Armor Penetration	17 cm





Torpedo Launcher. Torpedo launchers have only one type of ammunition and can hold a maximum of 10 proton torpedoes. Refire delay is 0.5 seconds.

• Proton Torpedo

Speed	1200 kps
Armor penetration	20 cm



SURVIVAL TIPS

by Lieutenant Travis Sanford

When I recently attended a convention on Oxford, I was fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of a young pilot working at the fighter base. Mark Thornton's boundless enthusiasm for his job impressed me so much that I decided to interview him for publication here. What I have compiled is condensation of our conversations about his training at the TCSN Academy. Here are the high points of his advice for rookie pilots.

Use your weapons and blasters wisely. When you are attacking hostile fighters with a combination of different weapons, you should follow a few very basic rules. For example if you open fire too quickly after firing a missile, you might hit the missile while it is still on its way and explode it harmlessly, leaving your enemy unscathed.

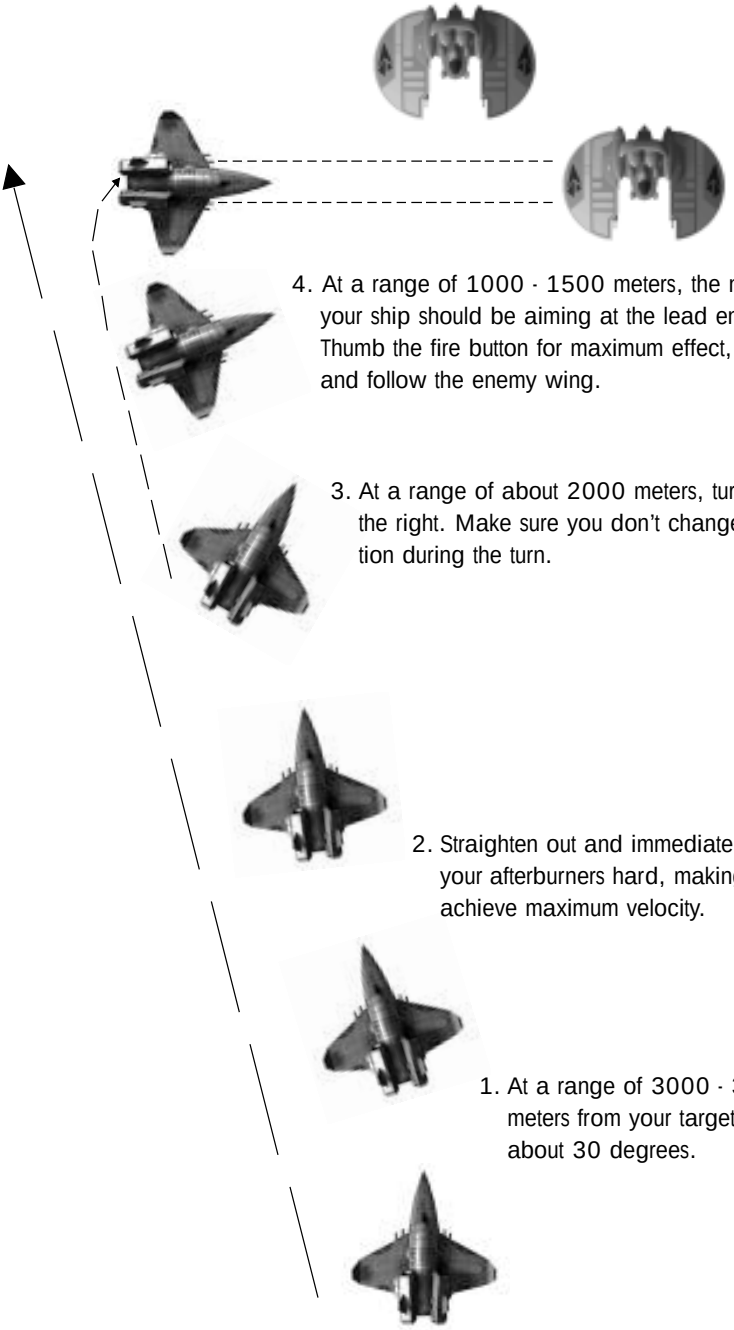
In crowded dogfights, it is always advisable to keep one target locked and systematically weaken its shields with gunfire. Once you have damaged the shield protection, you can easily finish the job with a well-placed missile.

In general, it is crucial to maximize your energy levels at all times. Avoid opening fire randomly and at long ranges, since this wastes valuable energy and can weaken your shields at the same time. If there is no immediate threat in the area, you should probably cut down on your shield protection levels and save the energy in case of a sudden attack. A few well-placed shots at close range with full blaster power are often more effective than a whole barrage of long-range shots with diminished energy resources. You may overtake an enemy ship with superior afterburners, but take care not to use up so much energy that you do not have any resources left for your blasters. Balancing your energy is always a priority.

Target selection. The Examine Target MFD indicates how much damage has been inflicted on the hostile ship. Since you can evaluate shield damage at all times, you know when to launch an effective missile attack on your target. With the View Object MFD option, you can see exactly where your fire is hitting the target.

Afterburner slide. The afterburner slide is one of the most effective space combat strategies. If you are maneuvering at constant speeds, enemy tracking systems have no trouble honing in on you. Even velocity changes are not always enough to escape a deadly missile. If you punch the afterburners, however, and then turn hard to the right or the left, your ship will begin to slide. Since tracking systems have no way of anticipating a movement of this kind, an afterburner slide is one of the most successful defensive tactics. Slides also remove you from the line of fire and place you in a perfect position for a side attack on enemy ships. Most fighters carry weaker port and starboard armor, making a side approach the most obvious choice. When a hostile fighter is at a range of approximately 3500m, begin turning to the right at an angle of 30°. As soon as the enemy craft is barely visible on your viewscreen, hit the afterburners and accelerate to your maximum speed. Then turn hard to the left. Maintaining your current elevation during the slide is absolutely essential. Otherwise you are no longer able to open fire on your target from a side position.

Afterburner Slide



4. At a range of 1000 - 1500 meters, the nose of your ship should be aiming at the lead enemy ship. Thumb the fire button for maximum effect, then turn and follow the enemy wing.

3. At a range of about 2000 meters, turn hard to the right. Make sure you don't change elevation during the turn.

2. Straighten out and immediately punch your afterburners hard, making sure you achieve maximum velocity.

1. At a range of 3000 - 3500 meters from your target, turn left about 30 degrees.

Vary your speed. The most basic evasive strategy in combat is to vary your speed. Spin and turn maneuvers are not always sufficient to shake off a Church of Man terrorist. Using your afterburners for short, unexpected bursts of speed add an element of unpredictability to your projected flight path that make it hard for an enemy to zero in on your vessel. Keep in mind, though, that afterburners expend tremendous amounts of generator power. Similarly, decreasing your speed to zero can mislead even the most experienced opponent. However, you must immediately increase your speed again or you become an easy target for any aggressor.

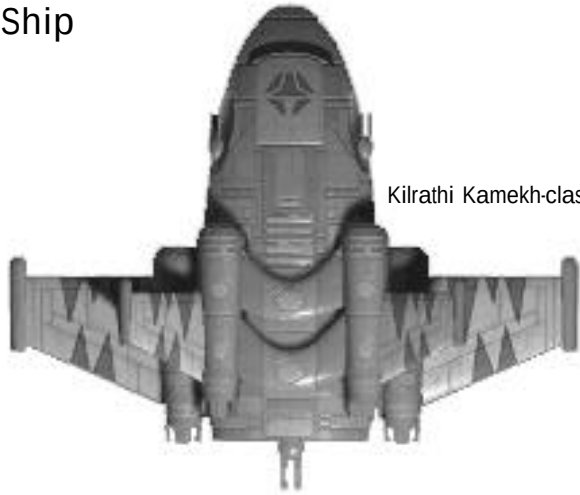
Communications. Communications are an important part of any combat strategy. If you wish to fight a neutral pilot, you can turn him hostile by sending insulting messages over your communications system. On the other hand, you may also successfully appease an incensed opponent by communicating your friendly intentions to him.

Concentrate on one enemy. The ITTS and other targeting features make it easy to keep one ship locked into your sights at all times. Shield generators can regenerate damaged defenses fairly quickly, making it essential to follow up each hit quickly. If you wait too long, you waste your shots. Instead, select one enemy and focus on it. Then try to take it out with quick, successive hits.

Attacking capital ships. Most capital ships are equipped with a formidable array of deadly weapons, which making attacks against them extremely dangerous. In addition, most capital ships are escorted by a contingent of fighters which must be taken out first.

Once you have defeated the escorts, you approach the capital ship itself. The strong armor and shields on these vessels effectively counteract almost any damage inflicted upon them. Due to the blaster power on capital ships, a side attack is close to suicidal. In general, the best strategy for a capital ship attack is a maximum velocity rear attack. There is less blaster fire to the rear and the rear armor is usually the weakest. Make sure you have full blaster power before you start your maximum velocity approach from a distance of 4000m. You should begin firing missiles at a distance of about 1500m. At 1000m, break hard to the left or right and circle back before you begin another approach. This gives you some time to regenerate your blaster power. If you stick with this form of rear attack, you will soon record your first capital ship kill.

Attacking A Capital Ship



Kilrathi Kamekh-class Destroyer

