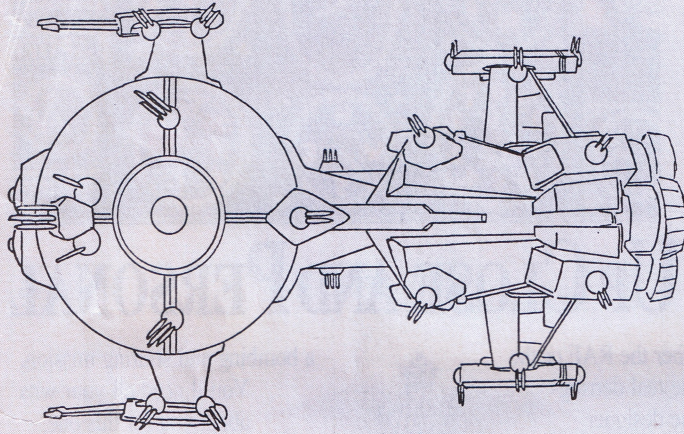


Kilrathi Dreadnought: The Sivar

Named after the Kilrathi warrior god, this unusual warship was commanded by Admiral Thrakra, son of the Kilrathi Emperor. This was the flagship of the strike fleet that attacked the Goddard Colony in *Secret Missions 1*.

- Length:** 550 meters
- Mass:** 25,000 tonnes
- Maximum Velocity:** 200 kps
- Cruise Velocity:** 150 kps
- Maximum Yaw:** 1 dps
- Maximum Pitch:** 1 dps
- Maximum Roll:** 1 dps
- Ship's Weapons:** Turreted Lasers (6), Image Recognition Missiles (quantity unknown).
- Ship's Armor:** Fore Shield: 27 cm equivalent; Aft Shield: 17 cm equivalent; Front: 28 cm; Right: 26 cm; Left: 26 cm; Rear: 14 cm.



All good things must come to an end, but putting that end off as long as possible is certainly the way to go. To that end, players of **Origin's** highly popular *Wing Commander* (rated #1 on our Top 100 Games Chart) will want to investigate the two "Secret Mission" disks currently available. Prolonging one's tour of duty on the intrepid *Tiger's Claw* in the *Wing Commander* universe, players can generate new characters to face the challenges these missions pose or take their heroes out of the original game's Vega system and have them face these daring challenges.

Don't Dream It, Be It

Here lies one of the greatest virtues of *Wing Commander*: the music and graphics aside (and they are both cutting-edge), this would be just another space arcade shoot-'em-up were it not for the engrossing cinematic storyline and strong protagonists with whom to empathize. Whether through brilliant foresight or dumb luck (inside sources suggest the latter), **Origin** has hit the lottery with the impassioned characterizations in *Wing Commander*. The likes of "by the book" Angel, "cold as freon" Iceman, "one with karma" Spirit, "wild man" Hunter and the rest of crew add a personal role-playing element to the game that can best be explained by the phenomenon of players so strongly identifying with their characters that they almost "become" the role they play.

Therefore, not only does a player get more heart-pounding, joy-tick-breaking arcade brushes with simulated slaughter in space in *Secret Missions*, but one also finds out about the continuing ordeals of the *Tiger's Claw*, its vaunted and much beloved crew and the ever shifting fate of the Terran-Kilrathi war. Whatever it is that keeps people tuning into soap operas and walking into video arcades, these two supplements deliver plenty of both.

There's a Saga

Secrets of the Wing

by Alan Emrich

As the World Burns

From any point during operations in the Vega system, the player's character may be called upon to participate in *The Secret Missions*. Essentially, no news is bad news when communications ceased from the Goddard colony. The root of this little snafu with the 250,000 Terran colonists there is that the Kilrathi have developed a "Death Star"-like planet-busting weapon and were "just testing it out" at Goddard. Stealthily following the Kilrathi strike force back into their own space, the *Tiger's Claw* must sneak up on the enemy fleet, cut through it and destroy the new Kilrathi "ultimate weapon." This, the crew bemoans (and the player soon discovers), is just short of a suicide mission.

TITLE:	The Secret Missions and The Secret Missions 2: Crusade
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	\$29.95 each
COPY PROTECT:	Document check
DESIGNERS:	Aaron Allston, Steve Cantrell, Ellen Guon and John Watson
PUBLISHER:	Origin Austin, TX

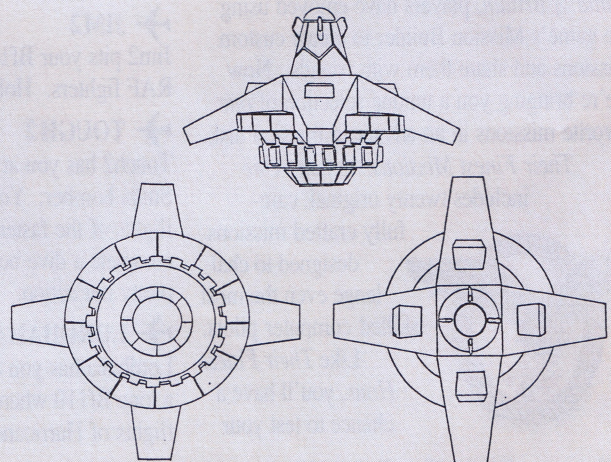
Little New Under the Suns

Unfortunately, the basic *Wing Commander* game system was not modified by the addition of this supplement. While still delightful, all a player really gets is MOTS (More Of The Same). Still, the missions are considerably harder (read: the odds, in terms of

Kilrathi Star Post

Designed to be used as a refueling station, fighter base or a field command post, this starbase design is found exclusively in Kilrathi space, most recently in the Vega sector campaign and during Operation Thor's Hammer (*Secret Missions 1*). Lightly armed and armored (for a starbase), these Star Posts are vulnerable to major attacks.

- Length:** 550 meters
- Mass:** 40,000 tonnes
- Maximum Velocity:** Stationary
- Ship's Weapons:** Turreted Lasers (4), Friend or Foe Missiles (quantity unknown).
- Ship's Armor:** Fore Shield: 20 cm equivalent; Aft Shield: 20 cm equivalent; Front: 18 cm; Right: 18 cm; Left: 18 cm; Rear: 18 cm.



Born Every Minute

Commander Secret Missions

and Mike Weksler

sheer numbers, are stacked more heavily in the Kilrathi's favor) and, at least, one particularly innovative encounter with a Terran "ghost ship" (and a zillion hostile Rapiers) lends an air of excitement to the mounting climax in store for a player during the final flight into glory.

Those final missions involve disrupting Kilrathi supply lines in order to slow the departure of the dreaded *Sivar*-class dreadnought (which harbors the insidious planet-busting beam stitched within the alloyed sinews of its bulbous catgut). Naturally, the climax requires one to cut through wave after massive wave of Kilrathi defenders and pound relentlessly on this enemy battleship until it exclaims those famous Kilrathi words of defiance, "My offspring will avenge me!" (Well, it beats screeching, "You sank my Battleship!")

Interestingly, in spite of playing *The Secret Missions* straight through to victory, these reviewers *did* encounter the eight-man Terran Confederation fighters promised on the back of the game box, but didn't even notice that they were different from any other Terran capital ship needing escort. Oh, there were up-gunned and better protected enemy fighters to face, to be sure, but nothing new for the Terrans.

Holy Crusades, Catman!

After completing operations in the Venice sector of *Wing Commander* (or the Vigrid sector of *Secret Missions*), the player may transfer his heroic persona to the perils which await in the Firekka system, Antares sector. While the Terrans have been cultivating this backwater "nowhere" region of space in order to gain an alliance with the sentient avians (or "bird people"), the Kilrathi have noticed and taken the ultimate offense.

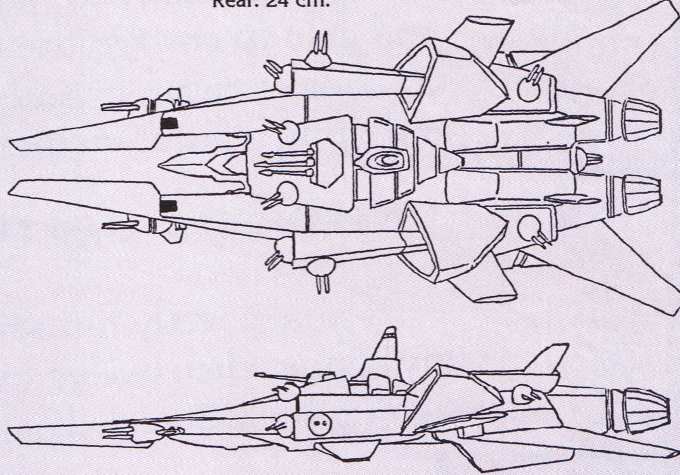
Unlike the gameplay in *Secret Missions*, the second offering has improved AI (with an entirely new executable program). Thus, the Kilrathi strength no longer relies strictly upon the traditional computer game fallback of sheer numbers, but now incorporates varied and improved tactics among their pilots. The Kilrathi Imperial Guard (the "Drakhai") await at virtually every turn to menace players with a special vengeance. Fortunately, though

it might be hard to notice (since everything is relative), the AI for player's wingmen is also improved. One must watch carefully in the heat of battle to really see this new element, but it is there. In effect, the challenge of playing is greater, yet the odds of winning are slightly better due to the decreased numbers of enemy fighters at each encounter.

Kilrathi Carrier: The Snakeir

Several of these carriers were sighted in the Firekka System during the Kilrathi "Sivar-Eshrad" during the *Secret Missions 2: Crusade*.

Length:	650 meters
Mass:	30,000 tonnes
Maximum Velocity:	150 kps
Cruise Velocity:	100 kps
Maximum Yaw:	1 dps
Maximum Pitch:	1 dps
Maximum Roll:	1 dps
Ship's Weapons:	Turreted Lasers (6), Image Recognition Missiles (quantity unknown).
Ship's Armor:	Fore Shield: 37 cm equivalent; Aft Shield: 37 cm equivalent; Front: 28 cm; Right: 36 cm; Left: 36 cm; Rear: 24 cm.



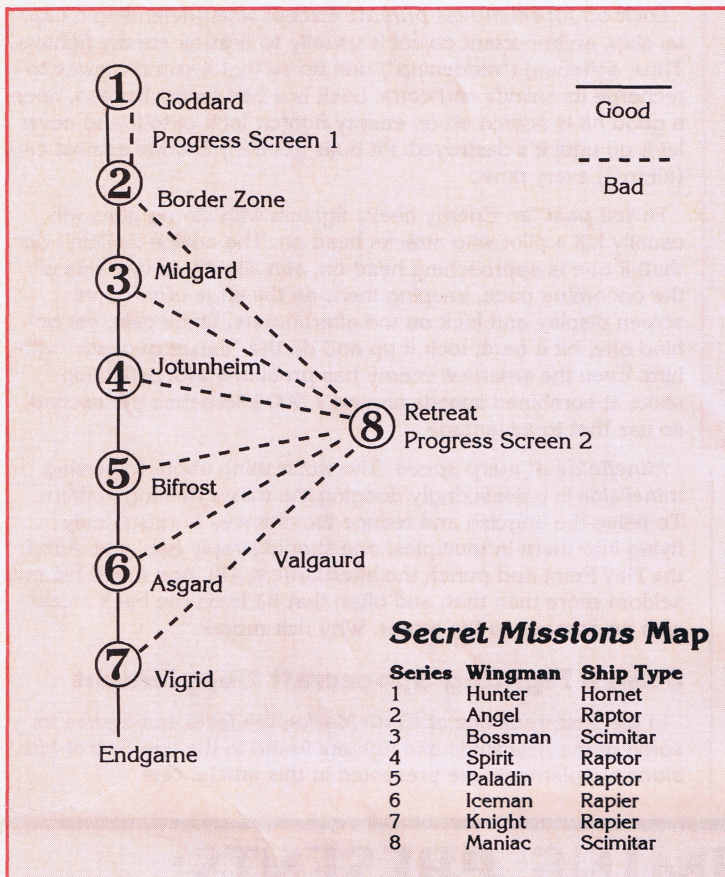
It is also important to note that while *Secret Missions 2* was being designed, the storyline for *Wing Commander II* was also being developed. Thus, the characters were written in such a way as to connect them between the two *Wing Commander* games. Prescient players will see foreshadowing in the discovery of the alien race known as the "double helix" in *Wing Commander* and the derring-do of Maniac. Prince Thrakhath of the Kilrathi (the Emperor's grandson) becomes an important character in the story ahead (is he so reasonable that one could actually negotiate with him?), as does the ever-competent Jeannette Devereaux (Angel)... but we digress.

It is the player's march to glory in the Firekka system which will determine the fate of these avian allies. En route, the player will encounter two new wingmen to fly with (the charming Jazz and a character named Doomsday who is the human equivalent of Marvin the Paranoid Android) and pilot a souped-up, captured enemy Dralhti in "undercover" assignments. These latter fighters are most interesting, as one gets to read a bit of Kilrathi writing on the instrumentation and tries to get a feel for cat-ergonomics. In the end, though, the odds are too long for the Tiger's Claw to overcome this devastating armada comprising the entire Kilrathi fleet (pulled into the sector to take part in a military/religious ceremony). So, the trick is to support the guerrilla efforts of the

Kilrathi Fighter: The Dralhti Mark II

An improved version of the Dralhti fighter, this ship was captured and flown by human pilots in the Antares Sector in *Secret Missions 2: Crusade*. (This fighter is visually identical to the Mark I Dralhti pictured in the *Joan's Fighting Spacecraft* supplement of *Claw Marks*.)

Length:	28 meters
Mass:	14 tonnes
Maximum Velocity:	400 kps
Cruise Velocity:	230 kps
Maximum Yaw:	10 dps
Maximum Pitch:	14 dps
Maximum Roll:	10 dps
Ship's Weapons:	Mass Driver Cannon (2), Heat-Seeking Missiles (3), Dumb-Fire Missiles (2)
Ship's Armor:	Fore Shield: 6 cm equivalent; Aft Shield: 5 cm equivalent; Front: 7.5 cm; Right: 5.5 cm; Left: 5.5 cm; Rear: 7 cm.



mission in any system found in the original *Wing Commander*. This is displayed as a map full of circles connected by solid lines (for success in a given system) and dashed lines (indicating the path of failure). Players can tell at a glance that the storyline has a built-in tolerance for failure within the various systems, allowing the player to get "back on track" and still win in the end.

In contrast, however, lie the paths to success in the two *Secret Missions*. Completely linear, there is no getting back on track after virtually any failed mission. This means there will be a lot of replaying certain difficult missions as players struggle through the inflexible plot line. Some of the more challenging missions might take a dozen or more joystick-strangling, frustration-packed attempts before a player successfully clears all the hurdles. Still, if one is to see the cinematic victory screens, one can never miss a beat in terms of Nav Points and Capital Ships (the criteria for all successful missions).

Narrowing the Odds

Here are a few useful tactics, tips and techniques for those struggling with increased difficulties presented in the two *Secret Missions* supplements. Against greater odds, straight-on shoot-outs are not as viable as they used to be. A bit of *strategy* is needed....

Keep formation! This tactic is used to preserve a wingman's heavy-duty firepower for later encounters when it is needed the most. When told to attack, the first thing wingmen tend to do is squirt off their missiles at the earliest opportunity. To preserve those missiles for use against enemy capital ships, keep the wingmen in formation and never let them loose. Husband their precious missiles for the most hazardous parts of the mission.

Firekka by distracting the Kilrathi as long as possible. In any case, while fleeing, one begins to get the idea that Maniac is definitely slipping *big time*.

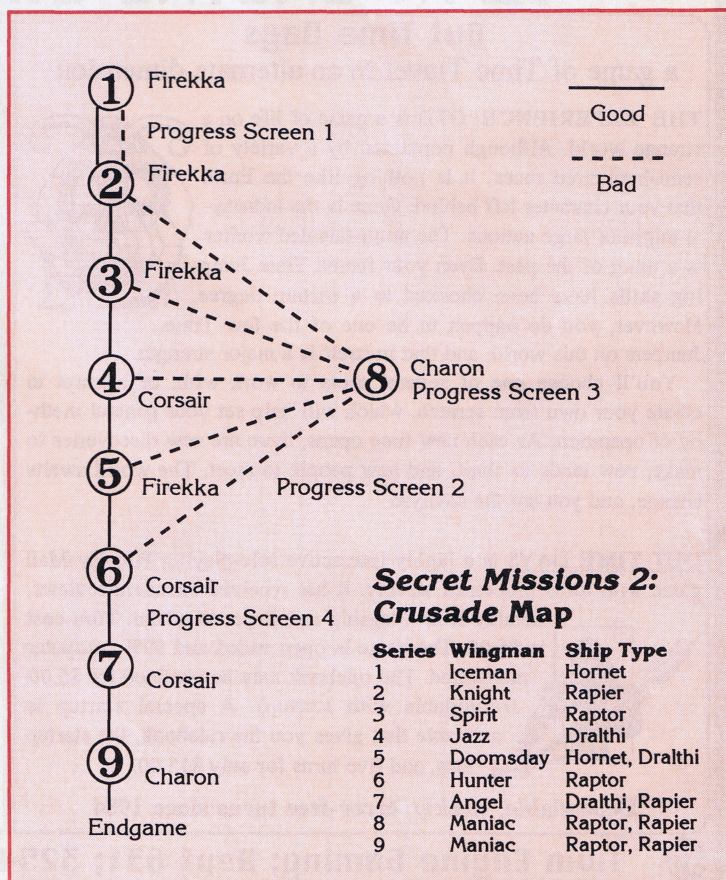
Born-Again Wingmen

At the commencement of either *Secret Mission* game, all the available wingmen are assumed to have survived any previous funeral ceremonies. Thus, even if the player has managed to kill off half the crew of the Tiger's Claw, they will all be back in the bar, relaxing in their own idiom. One crew member, however, dies rather tragically "off-screen" in *Secret Mission 2*, perhaps an important plot device for the next game in the *Wing Commander* series. On a slightly more frustrating note, several players have complained that in *Secret Missions 2* fellow pilots have been dying — unannounced — "off-screen." In fact, both of these reviewers experienced this bug when it killed off Hunter and Angel during their respective tours of duty (Perhaps they were "bitten by the bug?"). The result of this fatal case of "cat scratch fever" was that both "heroes" were forced to fly solo through several harrowing missions. (Perhaps this is why one of their characters managed to win the Terran Medal of Honor upon completion of the campaign!)

Players should note that they do not have to transfer veteran characters to these *Secret Missions* in order to succeed at them. Fresh-faced Second Lieutenants are just as likely to triumph as veteran Lieutenant Colonels. Rank has its privileges, but not when campaigning in *Wing Commander's Secret Missions*.

Narrowing the Plot Lines

One discovery made by players in either *Secret Mission* package is the "Mission Selector" which allows players to replay any



Kilrathi Experimental Fighter: The Hhriss

The newest in Kilrathi spacecraft technology, the Hhriss combines strong firepower with a heavy layer of an experimental lightweight alloy armor. This fighter was first encountered in the Antares Sector in *Secret Missions 2: Crusade*.

Length:	28 meters
Mass:	22 tonnes
Maximum Velocity:	380 kps
Cruise Velocity:	300 kps
Maximum Yaw:	12 dps
Maximum Pitch:	10 dps
Maximum Roll:	15 dps
Ship's Weapons:	Mass Driver Cannon (2), Neutron Guns (2), Heat-Seeking Missile (1), Image Recognition Missile (1).
Ship's Armor:	Fore Shield: 15 cm equivalent; Aft Shield: 18 cm equivalent; Front: 18 cm; Right: 17 cm; Left: 17 cm; Rear: 14 cm.

Attack my target! This tactic is like hurling the ultimate "smart" weapon at a single enemy ship. If one must destroy a large enemy vessel, acquire it on the tracking computer (locking it up is not necessary) and order the wingman to "Attack my target." The wingman will continue to attack that target, unwaveringly, until either it is destroyed or he is forced to break off due to damage. It is important to note that even should the player later acquire *another* target, the wingman will continue to attack the one which he was ordered to destroy and will not change targets. Protecting one's wingman, at this point, is crucial to his survival. Thus, it is a good idea to unleash this tactic only after enemy fighter cover has been thinned out.

Lock on for relentless pursuit. Except when defending a capital ship, an important object is usually to destroy enemy fighters. Thus, softening ("reddening") one up so that it can run away to recharge its shields and come back is a bad tactic. Instead, once a good hit is scored on an enemy fighter, lock onto it and never let it go until it's destroyed. Pit bulls get the job done against cats (almost) every time.

Thrust past 'er. Enemy heavy fighters with strong guns will usually kill a pilot who attacks head on. The advice is: Don't do that! If one is approaching head on, aim slightly to one side of the oncoming pack, keeping them on the edge of the front screen display and kick on the afterburners. Once past, get behind one, hit it hard, lock it up and do the "dance of death" with him. Even the smartest enemy has problems with deflection shots at combined speeds around 1,500 kilometers per second, so use that to advantage.

Minefields at warp speed. The worst thing about traversing minefields is painstakingly dodging the mines floating in them. To relieve the anguish and reduce the chances of mistakenly flying into them in multiples, one should simply haul jets. Aim for the Nav Point and punch the afterburners. Oh, one might hit, but seldom more than that, and often that hit is on the back shield with no damage to the armor. Why risk more?

Joan's Fighting Spacecraft Supplement

In the best traditions of *Claw Marks*, the facts and figures for some of the new ships and fighters found in the two *Secret Missions* supplements are presented in this article. **caw**