Cain, Billy

Version Nov 19 (or so) with the bug in the start up box.

A couple more hours last night.

Thoughts on motivation
Wing 5 doesn't have the motivations of Wing 4, and so it needs to work doubly hard to ensure that the player motivations in Wing 5 are emphasized.

Wing 4 motivations: be a hero; be Mark Hamill/Luke Skywalker; kill the cats; see the epic (movie) unfold; plus some in-mission motives.

Wing 5 motivations: less of a hero role (unclear situation, less back story); be Casey (no history, an unknown actor); kill faceless bad guys (who don't seem as understandable or cool as the cats); get to the next level (but the epic movies are 1/8 as epic); plus some in-mission motives.

Recommend for motivation:
* add a scoring system. Could be as simple as 100 for mission completed, plus bonuses for kills (2x for "bosses"), low damage, and low use of munitions, all times a multiplier for difficulty level (.5 for rookie, .75 for vet, 1 for ace, 1.5, 2). Need to add a Mission score and Game score line to status screen. should be easy to accumulate, since the game already accumulates kills, and saves mission stats.
* make it harder to be #1 on kill list. Suggest that it should take 2/3 of the game to get to #1, if I'm doing great, and 90% of the game to get to #1 if I'm barely getting by. Right now it may be too realistic a simulation (too low score for wingmen). By the way, do my wingmen purposefully stop shooting at aliens when they turn red, if I'm also in the hunt? They seem to. That may be why my kills are accumulating so much faster than theirs.
* add a science officer text page to briefing "what we know about the "unknown enemy". Clarify that the mystery of the bad guys is purposeful and cool. This should help player see even more improvements in enemy design than are even there (rather than less). Info could include:
- body type
- ship type A: 3D view and outline
        - max speed, g's, munitions, armor, tactics, special capabilities
- ship type B:
etc
Fill in the blanks as the game unfolds. this could be "hard wired" on a mission by mission basis.

More thoughts on non-expert game design
* Any requirement to use the keyboard is a negative. Remember, many of these players grew up on video games (at least we hope so). Recommend:
                - moving "Return" (fire missile) to button #2
                - moving "E" (chaff) to onscreen button
                - moving "G" and "M" (cycle weapons) to onscreen button
                - add pop-up titles to all onscreen gauges. get there by right mouse button
                - may need to take some things off screen, into pop up windows, such as radio commands, power allocation

Black Widow mission
Played at Veteran instead of rookie.
* Veteran mode felt more fun than rookie. Longer dogfights. More pressure to avoid pincers from multiple enemies. More pressure to save missiles.

* Alien "sss" instead of talking is cool.
* I'm playing in Full Guns mode. Lasers alone seemed too lame. Is there any cost to using full guns? Any advantage to lasers? Do you intend for the gamer to figure this out thru trial and error alone? Or should there be some kind of directive strategy (eg lasers to take down shields, missiles or mass drivers to take down armor and finish him off)?
* After first Nav point, I asked "give me status". No response from my wingmen. (I had turned off "noncritical plot" comms). Seems like I should still get comms when I ask direct questions, or give direct orders, even if they're not

plot critical. Otherwise it seems like all my wingmen have died, already.
* In veteran mode, enemies seemed to circle more slowly when they are close in (compared to same enemies in rookie mode). Is this correct, or is something else causing this? Again, an example where more clarity to player would help direct his appreciation of the game design.
* Finished mission with 39 damage, 28% gun accuracy, 75% missile accuracy, 11 kills. I had 1 pixel of red left in engine gauge on power allocation window.
Questions:
      - what does 39 damage mean?
      - is it possible to fix damage mid-mission? (unclear docs on this)
       is it possible to reallocate power to fix damage?
      - I hit "D" for damage and got something like "asommers debug damage 49" or some number other than 39. Is that correct?
* Why is clock time recorded in game save? And what time is it exactly, Greenwich? Latest save was "11/25 at 6:31" when it was 11/24 at 11:30pm at my house. If you're making the cool fiction that this is GMT for all confed spacers, shouldn't you announce this somewhere to gamers?

Clearing the way
* Couldn't finish -- had to eject. Bummer. couldn't handle the head-on attacks from the multi-flash enemy.
* Weird info: I had to eject, but my status was only 62 damage! What's going on here?
* Question: "form on my wing" command. Does this improve my defense (keep bad guys off my six). Does it decrease wing offense? Right now I'm using this when I've started to take some damage, and using "attack my target" when I find a tough enemy, or am low on missiles. How can I tell if this is a good or bad strategy?

that's all. I just got version 1.21B dated 11/24. More comments tomorrow.
Bing