

THE *WING COMMANDER* UNIVERSE BIBLE



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INTRODUCTION

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The *Wing Commander* Phenomenon...

Wing Commander and its associated products are some of the most wildly successful computer games in the history of electronic entertainment. Created by veteran producer Chris Roberts, the first three episodes of this seminal space opera and its three related titles, including *Privateer*, have already sold well in excess of 2 million units.

A fourth installment in the *Wing Commander* series and a second installment in the *Privateer* series are currently in production.

By positing a *Wing Commander* universe where the resources of the Terran Confederation, led by a heroic young pilot, Christopher Blair, are strained to the utmost in a bitter struggle against an 8-foot tall race of cat-like creatures called Kilrathi, Chris Roberts has captured the imagination of a worldwide audience.

The original *Wing Commander* was a revolutionary game because it combined the heart-pounding action that computer games were already famous for with the cinematic visuals and attention to storytelling of a motion picture.

As opposed to merely flying around and shooting everything that moves, the player gets to know and care about his fellow crewmembers. It matters to the player how well he does in space combat, because if he screws up, his wingmen could die. This emphasis on story gives the end product both *context* and *meaning*—and is precisely what makes *Wing Commander* so compelling for a transition to the big screen.

Wing Commander III is now taking the entertainment software industry by storm—selling faster and in greater quantities than any other title in Electronic Arts' illustrious history. This revolutionary interactive movie accomplished this by once again using all the elements of techniques of feature films. Indeed, unlike any previous computer game in history, *Wing Commander III* contained more than three hours of dramatic, live-action footage and also profited from computer-generated special effects rivaling those of feature films...at a fraction of the budget.

The result is a multiple CD-ROM product delivered on a variety of computer-based platforms and in several languages—a game, an interactive movie and a high-tech vision of the future of entertainment all rolled into one.

Of course, interactive movies on CD-ROM cannot replace the feature film experience. Instead, as with television and videocassettes, interactive entertainment complements the movie industry and provide exciting new outlets for growth.

Wing Commander: The Movie and *Privateer: The TV Series* are linear entertainment projects that capitalize on an established universe, cutting-edge computer technologies and a sizable audience-base around the world.

Origin Systems and Electronic Arts have always been on the cutting edge of entertainment, which has allowed us an unprecedented degree of success in this industry. As the interactive revolution continues to expand in the marketplace, we fully intend to go to the next step.

WING COMMANDER

The Story so Far...

Wing Commander, *Wing Commander II: Vengeance of the Kilrathi* and *Wing Commander III: The Heart of the Tiger* establish a popular universe in which you serve as a 27th-century spacefighter pilot in the Terran Confederation. Beginning as a raw recruit fresh out of Flight Academy, you work your way up the ranks the old fashioned way—by demonstrating exceptional skill and bravery on a daily basis.

Flying missions from interstellar aircraft carriers, you protect the fleet, defend the innocent and take the offensive against your intractable alien/feline opponents, the Kilrathi. It's a tough job, yet nothing beats the satisfaction of painting the incessant blackness of outer space with a multi-colored explosion of Durasteel and cat fur.

Fortunately, you get plenty of help from your fellow Confederation pilots. In each installment of the series there are numerous characters on your ship with whom you interact. Some provide crucial information, color and even romance to the story. Others have distinguishing characteristics that affect their ability to perform when you select them as wingmen on your various missions. Chief among them:

- *Maniac*, a perpetually out-of-control pilot who nevertheless flies with the best of 'em.
- *Angel*, a feisty, tomboyish native of Belgium known for her marksmanship and passion.
- *Paladin*, a seasoned veteran with a protective streak who's liable to save your behind.
- *Admiral Tolwyn*, a hard-assed military bureaucrat who rides you incessantly.

Your inaugural campaign in the Galactic War culminates in a daring mission to destroy a secret starbase of the Kilrathi High Command. With your chosen wingman defending your flanks, you navigate a minefield, penetrate heavy opposition and launch a last, desperate attack on a Kilrathi starbase—obliterating it!

Subsequent campaigns take you to a variety of new and dangerous sectors where the only constant is your ruthless opponent: the Kilrathi. During *Secret Missions 1*, your ship is ordered to a new sector, where a colony is under siege by Kilrathi forces. Before you can full engage the enemy, however, the Kilrathi unveil a devastating secret weapon that destroys the colony and its 250,000 inhabitants.

Hell-bent for justice, you and your fellow pilots play a deadly game of hide-and-seek with the Kilrathi until the secret weapon is finally destroyed.

Secret Missions 2 finds the enemy declaring a holy war, during which one of their leaders—Col. “Hobbes” Ralgha, a legendary Kilrathi warrior—defects and joins the fight against his own kind. In a pirated Kilrathi ship, you fly a series of undercover missions, discover the secret reason behind the holy war and once again save the day.

In this and the following installments of the series, you're ambushed repeatedly, thrust into treachery, joined by a defecting Kilrathi warrior, blamed for actions out of your control, exiled to a forlorn space station and sent deep behind enemy lines.

Later you bring a traitor to justice, discover that your longtime sweetheart has been captured and murdered by the enemy, stand up to the increasingly megalomaniacal Admiral Tolwyn, rescue a scientist from a prison planet, romance a pair of engaging female crewmembers and volunteer for a suicide mission to destroy the Kilrah homeworld.

This is life on the frontier five centuries down the road—10 parsecs from earth, fighting for the security of the universe and just trying to get home in one piece.

PRIVATEER

The Story so Far...

Although set in the *Wing Commander* universe, *Privateer* explores the seedier side of the Galaxy. Instead of focusing directly on the Kilrathi-Human war, the interlocking stories deal with everyday life in the Border Worlds—an indistinct collection of natural (and unnatural) planets loosely allied with and policed by the Terran Confederation.

Like the Wild West before it, the Border Worlds are possessed by a frontier mentality, boom-or-bust opportunities and a constant undercurrent of danger from the barely restrained lawlessness of a melting pot of cultures. Sure, on occasion a Kilrathi raiding party can stir things up, but for the most part you have more to fear from pirates and organized crime and the mutant-next-door than you do from angry 8-foot tall cats.

And just as the American West was pretty much oblivious to the Civil War, the denizens of *Privateer* have only a passing interest in the Galactic War—which basically amounts to how much profit they can make off the two warring sides.

In this almost lawless region of the galaxy, the Confederation can barely keep the peace and doesn't even try to guarantee the safety of space lanes. Which means there's plenty of work for well-armed merchants, bounty hunters or even privates—a group of hard-working, 27-century opportunists known collectively as Privateers.

Privateers make their living braving the perils of space. An agricultural planet, for example, might need high-tech farming tools, while an industrial planet needs food stuffs. Facilitating that lucrative, yet potentially dangerous, back-and-forth trade is what the job's all about. You can make a huge profit by snatching up commodities dirt-cheap on one planet and transporting them to another where their value is incalculable. Like the Clipper captains of yesteryear, Privateers will travel virtually anywhere...as long as there's a profit involved.

Compounding the job is the fact that the speed of light remains an impenetrable barrier. In order to travel the requisite great distances, space ships take advantage of anomalies in the space-time fabric known as "jump points"—where space is literally folded up into itself and a hole has opened up that allows passage to an inconceivably distant spot in space.

Because of the complex and unpredictable astrophysics underlying jump points, there's no telling where they'll lead until someone's gone through them at least once and lived to tell the tale. In one sector, it could take three jumps to travel 20 light years and one jump to travel 1000.

The intelligent use of jump points, of course, is predicated on someone having found, charted and recorded information about them. Which in itself isn't a bad way to earn yourself a hefty chunk of taxpayers' money—although it can be a real bitch to get back "home" when you're stranded 25,000 light years away and don't have the first clue as to how you got there.

In the original *Privateer*, you play a former military pilot who's trying to make a buck and stay alive. Having inherited your grandfather's ship, you set out to earn a living and find that nothing's as easy as it appears.

At one point, surrounded by space pirates, you desperately fight back. In the confusion of battle, you let loose a missile that careens out of control and strikes what turns out to be an antiquated war machine.

The missile inadvertently activates the doomsday device, which could spell utter destruction for you and the entire universe unless you piece together the ancient mystery surrounding it. The solution involves beings who migrated to the next level of existence and who are dead-set against allowing this weapon of ultimate destruction from falling into human or Kilrathi hands.

It's an uphill battle—compounded by the fact that you have to "pay" your way as you go—but in the end you pull off a stunning triumph. Which, in the end, only whets your appetite for even more adventure.

THE NUMBERS

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The Products

Origin's flight simulator product line began with the best-selling space combat game *Wing Commander*. *Wing Commander*'s success has continued with six other products in the Commander line, including the blockbuster hits *Wing Commander II*, *Privateer* and *Wing Commander III*.

In the flight combat computer game market, Origin's *Wing Commander* games are a well-established line of quality products: six years and seven products have built the *Wing Commander* line into a strong creative property with over two million units sold as of January, 1995. Eighteen months after it was first released, *Computer Gaming World* magazine added *Wing Commander* to its 23-game Hall of Fame.

The next *Wing Commander* hit in the entertainment market was *Privateer*, an open-ended game that explores the seamy side of the Terran universe. In the far reaches of space, players are confined to no one's rules but their own. The fringes are occupied by a volatile mix of cutthroat pirates, miners, mercenaries and Kilrathi, all struggling to make a quick buck. Pilots can customize their ships—for the right price—and choose their destiny.

They can also trade with and explore almost 70 systems. The beauty of *Privateer* is that the game remains extremely playable even after the main plot is completed. The add-on module *Righteous Fire* provides even more hours of excitement as an intriguing mystery unveils itself in Gemini.

From *Wing Commander I* through the add-on for *Privateer*, almost every game in this series has hovered at the top of the charts. Still, the most striking hit was to come. Even as Chris Roberts was pushing his *Strike Commander* flight sim to market, he was designing the most explosive game Origin has produced to date. The sketches, storyline and technology were in place for *Wing Commander III*, the final episode in the epic Terran-Kilrathi conflict.

Nothing was spared in this professional Hollywood production, which included the likes of Mark Hamill, Malcom McDowell, John Rhys-Davies, Tom Wilson and Jason Bernard. Professional scriptwriters developed the intense, branching plot line, and a professional film crew spent five weeks shooting the footage for the game. Combined with new technology and incredible, SGI-rendered sets, the film was massaged into ORIGIN's first true interactive movie.

The Reviews

WING COMMANDER I

“Our first six-star review!” (*Dragon Magazine*)

“This game does not use state-of-the-art graphics. The art hasn’t reached this state yet.” (*American Gamer*)

“*Wing Commander* is today’s ultimate in interactive, electronic achievement.” (*Computer Shopper*)

“*Wing Commander* is simply the best space-combat simulation ever made for the PC.” (*Game Player’s PC*)

“*Wing Commander* breaks so many new grounds in computer gaming that Origin has probably just invented a completely new genre of game.” (*ACE*)

“...the most stylish graphics and animation yet to appear in a computer game...edge-of-your-seat drama...and a heart-thumping musical score...” (*OMNI*)

“*Wing Commander* surpasses all space flight simulators in every sense of the word.” (*Computer Gaming World*)

“*Wing Commander* takes electronic entertainment to a new level, creating an experience so involving it’s impossible to describe.” (*Computing Now*)

WING COMMANDER II: VENGEANCE OF THE KILRATHI

“*Wing Commander II* is as terrifyingly addictive as the original. Playing both back to back comes as close to being in *Star Wars* as you can get on your desktop.” (*PC Games*)

PRIVATEER

Best Sound of the Year *Computer Game Review*

3rd place, Simulation Game of the Year *Computer Game Review*

Editor’s Pick *PC Entertainment*

“A little of *Pirates*, a dash of *Elite*, and the usual Origin plot elements combine to create a pretty exciting game” *Computer Gaming World*

On a fast 486 system, the animation can look downright gorgeous....Origin has turned out a real winner.” *Compute*

“You can go wherever your greedy heart takes you: Roam the skies shooting rivals or spend your time smuggling delicious contraband—it’s up to you.” *Electronic Entertainment*

“To all players who want a space combat game above the ordinary, *Privateer* is an excellent choice.” *PC Games Plus*

“Tied together with a moody musical score and brilliant sound effects, *Privateer* creates a very real sense of being Out There, all on your own in a universe full of endless possibilities.” *PC Entertainment*

“It’s one of those rare games you could see yourself playing years into the future and for twelve hours at a time...Truly cool!” *Computer Game Review*

WING COMMANDER III: HEART OF THE TIGER

# 3 Most wanted Software Title	<i>USA Today</i>
5 out of 5	<i>Computer Gaming World</i>
92-99%	All major European magazines
Simulation Game of the Year	<i>Computer Game Review</i>
Best Full Motion Video of the Year	<i>Computer Game Review</i>
Golden Triad Award	<i>Computer Game Review</i>

“A classic space combat game is mated with a competent movie—and a new breed of gaming beast is born.” *Computer Gaming World*

“Undoubtedly the most elaborate and ambitious PC game ever created, and the first to stake a legitimate claim to the holiest of grails—the term ‘interactive movie.’” *PC Gamer (UK)*

“The story you are moving through is so interesting and the characters so well detailed that you almost wish you didn’t have to strap into the fighter just to see what happens next” *Computer Gaming World*

“Even when the basic idea is to blow up bad-guy spaceships, as in the new *Wing Commander III*, the graphics still look better than the special effects on some current television shows.” *Newsweek*

“Believe they hype—the most cinematic game ever.” *PC Gamer (UK)*

“The script and dialogue are Hollywood quality, and the acting and direction is stronger than many a recent movie.” *Computer Game Review*

The Figures

All *Wing Commander* games are initially developed on a PC platform and are distributed throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, Japan and Australia. The numbers below include representative sales of each SKU—they are not complete figures.

NOTE: all sales numbers are in units.

WING COMMANDER I

<i>Released</i>	9/90
<i>Domestic Sales</i>	161,000
<i>International Sales</i>	55,000
<i>Sega</i>	35,000

WCI: SECRET MISSIONS 1

<i>Released</i>	11/90
<i>Domestic Sales</i>	58,000

WCI: SECRET MISSIONS 2

<i>Released</i>	3/91
<i>Domestic Sales</i>	47,000

WING COMMANDER DELUXE (WC1, SM1, SM2)—FLOPPY

<i>Released</i>	3/92
<i>Domestic Sales</i>	11,200

WING COMMANDER DELUXE (WC1, SM1, SM2)—PC-CD

<i>Released</i>	5/92
<i>Domestic Sales</i>	8100
<i>International Sales</i>	3200

WING COMMANDER II

<i>Released</i>	9/91
<i>Domestic Sales</i>	35,750

WCII: SPEECH ACCESSORY PACK

<i>Released</i>	9/91
<i>Domestic Sales</i>	6700
<i>International Sales</i>	6000

WCII: SPECIAL OPERATIONS 1

<i>Released</i>	11/91
<i>Domestic Sales</i>	13,800

WCII: SPECIAL OPERATIONS 2

<i>Released</i>	6/92
<i>Domestic Sales</i>	15,900

WCII: DELUXE (CD)

<i>Released</i>	3/5/94
<i>Domestic Sales</i>	27,000

WC I/II DELUXE

<i>Released</i>	10/20/94
<i>Domestic Sales</i>	16,500

WC PRIVATEER (FLOPPY)

<i>Released</i>	10/20/93
<i>Domestic Sales</i>	89,000

WC PRIVATEER (RIGHTEOUS FIRE)

<i>Released</i>	10/20/93
<i>Domestic Sales</i>	29,000

WC PRIVATEER (CD)

<i>Released</i>	11/23/93
<i>Domestic Sales</i>	19,100

WC PRIVATEER (SPEECH PACK)

<i>Released</i>	12/29/93
<i>Domestic Sales</i>	42,750

WC ACADEMY (FLOPPY)

Released 11/23/93
Domestic Sales 46,400

WC ARMADA (FLOPPY)

Released 10/22/94
Domestic Sales 38,300

WC ARMADA (CD)

Released 10/22/94
Domestic Sales 49,000

WCIII: HEART OF THE TIGER

Released 12/94
Domestic Sales (Reg.) 196,900
Domestic Sales (Premiere.) 2000
Domestic Sales (Sam's) 9,750
International Sales 78,000
Other Platforms (Sega Saturn, 3DO & Sony PSX under development)
Other Languages French & German (fully dubbed)

TIMELINE

TIMELINE

Overview

2629.105

Iason encounters a spacecraft of unknown origin. Commander Jedora Andropolos on board *Iason* transmits a wide-band, non-verbal greeting and waits for a response. Less than twenty minutes later, the still-unidentified ship opens fire with full lasers, completely destroying *Iason* and its crew. Although the identity of the attacking ship is never definitively established, Confederation deep space tracking computers point to a possible point of origin from a previously unexplored planet, soon to be known by its native name, Kilrah.

2630-2634

The Terran Confederation receives numerous reports of unwarranted assault, space piracy, kidnapping and interplanetary plundering, all taking place at an increasingly expanding distance from the planet Kilrah. Frequent attempts to meet with Kilrathi High Command are rejected without explanation. In retaliation, the Terran Confederation Congress votes unanimously to enforce a strict non-aggression policy by the Kilrathi. The leaders of Kilrah are warned that their next transgression could lead to military reprisals.

2634.186

The *Anna Magdalena*, a refitted transport ship ferrying orphans to their new homes on Dieno, is openly attacked by a pair of Kilrathi fighters. No one survives. In retaliation for this and the five-year string of equally heinous abuses of all known laws of civility, the Terran Confederation officially declares war on the Empire of Kilrah.

2634.228

TCN cryptographer Ches M. Penney intercepts and decodes a stray Kilrathi cipher implying that a strike will soon be launched against the planet McAuliffe and its orbiting space station, *Alexandria*. Confederation High Command orders a counteroffensive twice the size of the anticipated fleet, hoping to reach McAuliffe first and ambush the attackers.

2634.235

After a tense rush to McAuliffe, the Confederation fleet establishes a formidable defensive position around the planet. When the Kilrathi fleet arrives, however, it is quadruple the expected size. Several days of bloody fighting all but obliterate the defensive forces.

2639.033

Kilrathi occupation forces land on McAuliffe and hold a quarter of a million Terrans hostage, reinforced by orbital guns. The Confederation regroups under the leadership of then-Captain Geoffrey Tolwyn and brings in an attack force of *Raptor*-class heavy fighters. Simultaneously, TCN fighters drop porcupine mines in a region of space near McAuliffe where a principal jump point is located.

Kilrathi ships stay clear of the mined region, allowing the inception of Phase Two of the operation — in which a scrambled radio signal detonates certain specially modified mines. This clears the way for the arrival of a sizable Terran reinforcement fleet through the jump point. Terran forces make an immediate strike against the gunships threatening the population centers on McAuliffe. After a pounding match, the McAuliffe Ambush ends with the Kilrathi in full retreat. Casualties are nearly identical.

2644

Terran ground forces launch an attack on a fortified Kilrathi colony, only to be routed by unexpected Kilrathi fighter support. The TCS *Tiger's Claw* is detached from its previous station and assigned to intercept the pursuing fighters in a delaying action eventually known as Custer's Carnival. Swarmed and badly damaged by Kilrathi fighters, the carrier distracts Kilrathi forces long enough for the Terran fleet to reach safety.

Despite the fact that three-fourths of its engines are destroyed and half its pilots are listed as casualties, the heroic efforts of the *Claw's* crew allows the carrier to make it back into Terran space. Two Gold Stars and numerous other medals — many of them posthumous — are awarded to the ship's personnel. The carrier itself spends six months in spacedock for repairs and refitting.

2654.287

Terran Intelligence reports that the Kilrathi High Command is directing war efforts from Venice System. Reconnaissance patrols identify Kilrathi ships and boldly give chase, uncovering an Imperial starbase. The Terran patrols are lost — but not before relaying their coordinates back to HQ.

A small Terran fleet of elite fighters is dispatched to the Imperial starbase. The Kilrathi launch a significant resistance, but are eventually overpowered. Badly beaten, the Kilrathi move their central military command back to their homeworld of Kilrah.

Simultaneously, on the far side of the galaxy, the celebrated Battle of Repleetah unfolds. The small research planet of Repleetah has long been home to dedicated researchers from various corners of the universe. Once the declaration of war against the Kilrathi makes its way to this distant outpost, Terran scientists vote to pay a visit to a Kilrathi research facility. The goal of the Terran scientists is to reaffirm their dedication to the unfettered pursuit of knowledge and to offer a peaceful co-existence with their fellow scientists.

Instead, the Terrans are exterminated in a surprise biological attack by the Kilrathi. Marines from both sides of the Terran-Kilrathi conflict rush to Repleetah and engage in the most sustained land-based fighting of the entire war. In trench warfare reminiscent of Earth's ancient World War I, each side fights with dogged determination and in full bio-resistant suits. Meager gains are bought with hundreds of lives, only to be lost to the next counter-attack.

Since Repleetah quickly loses any strategic significance it might have had, it comes to represent what each side can win with as little investment as possible. Neither side is willing to commit anything more than ground troops, even though a single, thorough space strike could end the battle victoriously. The bloodshed continues unabated.

2654.326

Shortly after intelligence reports indicate that Kilrathi engineers have developed a new super-weapon to use against inhabited planets, all radio contact is lost with the Goddard Colony. Fighter wings from the *Tiger's Claw* rush to Goddard and forge a path for transports and corvettes, only to discover that a quarter-million human lives have already been sacrificed by the Kilrathi.

Deeply angered by the tragedy, the crew of the *Tiger's Claw* pursues the Kilrathi strike force into enemy territory, where they are ambushed by a captured Confederation *Exeter*-class ship. Reconnaissance ships eventually locate the dreadnought ship suspected of carrying the prototype weapon. The *Claw* follows and, in a stunning display of deep space logistics and fighting skill, eliminates this *Sivar* dreadnought.

2653-2655

The Confederation pledges to protect a newly discovered bird-like race called the Firekkans, who plan to unite with the Terran alliance. In the interim, a huge Kilrathi battle fleet commanded by Prince Thrakhath and his *Drakhai* (Kilrathi Imperial Guard) moves into the Firekkan system. The fleet's intent is unknown until the Kilrathi defector Ralgha nar Hhallas exposes a plan to use Firekka for a religious ritual in which warriors rededicate themselves to Sivar, the Kilrathi god of war.

The Confederation decides to disrupt the religious ceremony in hopes of breaking enemy morale. Marine troopships jump into the system and stage an assault on the Kilrathi priestesses. The mission is successful, and the *Claw* retreats to Terran-controlled space under heavy Kilrathi pursuit. In short order, Firekkan natives revolt and force the remaining Kilrathi forces to withdraw. Another crisis has been averted.

Meanwhile, the Battle of Repleetah grinds into its third year, with neither side gaining a significant advantage. Despite heavy losses on both sides and the tolls taken by the extraordinarily bitter weather of the research outpost, Kilrathi and Terran Marines refuse to yield.

2656-2667

Over the next eleven years, Confederation forces attempt to remove the Kilrathi from Enigma Sector, where strategic jump nodes lead directly to human homeworlds. An attack on the Kilrathi headquarters at K'Tithrak Mang falls short when the renowned *Tiger's Claw* is ambushed and destroyed by Kilrathi stealth fighters. Still, Confederation forces are able to successfully defend Olympus Station — a Terran starbase established for the

rebel Kilrathi world of Ghorah Khar — from Kilrathi assault. Finally, in 2667, Terran forces daringly jump behind enemy lines and destroy the Kilrathi sector headquarters of K'Tithrak Mang.

During these years, the focus of the Intergalactic War drifts away from the decade-long Battle of Replectah. Supply ships and reinforcements have long since ceased to visit the research planet. Finally, by late 2664, only a handful of troops remain on either side. The sole surviving Terran officer, Lieutenant Miles D'Arby, leads his men in a last-ditch effort to overrun the Kilrathi position. No one lives through this last action—on either side. The Battle of Replectah has finally come to an end.

2667

Confederation forces dispel a Kilrathi attack on Pembroke Station, the gateway system between Enigma and Vega Sectors. These same forces then attend to a mutiny aboard Rigel Supply Depot, where mutineers split into two factions. The pirated ship is eventually gunned down.

The Kilrathi unsuccessfully attempt to quell rebelling planets in Ghorah Khar System, and an Imperial leader tries to assassinate Prince Thrakhath. Thrakhath is captured and brought aboard the *Bonnie Heather*, but eludes his captors through a daringly engineered escape. Finally, a desperate attack against Olympus Station in Ghorah Khar is thwarted, saving the rebel Kilrathi planet.

2668

Terran fleets strike hard against Kilrathi forces on the front lines, eliminating nine carriers under construction, and crippling dozens of transports and four shipyards. Running low on combat ships, the Kilrathi military appears on the verge of retreating for supplies.

As the pendulum of war swings toward the Terrans, a peace accord is unexpectedly offered by Kilrah. All fleets are withdrawn, even those in the midst of combat.

In the following months, several frontier colonies refuse to abide by the armistice rulings, investing both forces and ships in an attempt to search out suspected active shipyards on the far side of the Kilrathi Empire. Using captured stealth equipment, private forces intercept a HoloVid of the rumored facility, along with a message that Kilrathi forces are embarking to attack Earth. The armistice is renounced, and a hastily assembled force of still-intact Confederation ships prepare to defend against the attack, bolstered by private ships and carriers.

The first hits result in total radiation-warhead destruction of Warsaw, Gilead and Sirius Prime. Front-line Marines land on the Imperial flagship carrier, where a few brave volunteers place mines in suicide missions. The volunteers destroy three of the super-carriers, but the remainder of the fleet reaches striking distance. The Kilrathi successfully launch anti-matter rockets on crucial defense cities — Chicago, Pittsburgh, Boston, Miami, Quebec, Berlin, Paris, Kiev and others — then retreat to friendlier space.

2669.019

Following the attack on Earth, the Terran Intelligence Agency deploys a top-secret, tactical search party through a previously uncharted Kilrathi jump point. A heavy carrier (name unknown for security purposes) is equipped with self-sustaining recycling systems, mining apparatus, and a 62-person Special Operations team. This unit leaves Goddard Transfer Station on 2669.011 and passes through a newly discovered jump point. Its mission —

to search out and destroy Kilrathi forces, sector by sector. To date, no known communications have been received from this special mission.

Presently, Kilrathi forces are still challenging the Confederation's front lines. Aggressive enemy forces continue to ravage peaceful, defenseless worlds in their mission to conquer mankind. The war is at a stalemate, with Terran-Alliance casualties numbering into the millions ...

2669.221

Dr. Forbin, a prominent scientist aboard the solar shadow ring station *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, reports gravitometric disturbances in the Tanhauser Nebula. This radiation is determined to be consistent with that emitted during jump point formation. In the midst of investigating what might have been the first ever observations of a jump point formation, the solar shadow ring station was viciously attack by a raiding party of Kilrathi light attack fighters that were apparently using the nebula as camouflage. Despite its total lack of military value, all aboard the defenseless station were slaughtered; many of them inexplicably tortured to death. This marks the eighteenth such occurrence that has been reported in the last two years. Forbin's discovery later leads to peacetime TCN task force designed solely for the purpose of observing and analyzing jump points.

2669.233

The Trafalgar Outerworlds report a devastating outbreak of disease that eradicates in excess of four percent of the system's population. The disease vector is proven to be human blood, most commonly found in the world's contaminated blood supply. Trafalgar Disease Control halts the mortality rate at 23 deaths per day and identifies biochemical weaponry as the guilty carrier.

Simultaneously, the Kilrathi mount a constant series of similar bioweapon attacks in Locanda and Delius systems. The presence of the *Victory* spared all but one of the Locanda worlds, but several colonies in Delius were eliminated before Confed forces could respond to the attacks. The accountable death toll was last reported at 2,867.

Linguistics specialists at the University of Hawaii on Earth make marked progress in deciphering the intricacies of the Kilrathi language and begin publishing their research in leading journals. Civilian research to these discoveries becomes sharply restricted after this news causes Kilrathi forces to adopt another encryption scheme.

2669.242

Confed forces liberate the enslaved population of Cabrea System. But the TCN Human Relations Agency clamps down on all vid-transmissions from the system, citing "the interests of Confed-security." Report emerge that horrific conditions exist within the system. A psychological assistance team en route to counsel survivors and deliver supplies is obliterated in a surprise attack as they pass through a normally peaceful asteroid belt. Transmissions from the cargo ship indicate that the Kilrathi have developed a new fighter that is nearly indistinguishable from a small asteroid chunk.

TCN headquarters orders a strategic withdrawal from outlying Confederation sectors as part of a larger operation to give up sectors of minor importance. It is hoped that the Kilrathi will spread themselves too thinly across the galaxy. Military strategists receive great criticism from those who claim that the withdrawals are only an improvised response to the advance of the enemy. The criticism lessens, however, with the advent of the new *Excalibur* fighter and with successful pushes into Ariel System.

2669.247

Confed Intel tests its new secret weapon, the *Behemoth* super gun, on a Kilrathi colonial planet. Humanists argue against its use to no avail, and the test run disintegrates an entire planet in just under five seconds. Approximately 1,500 Kilrathi settlers are eradicated, raising critical judgments from the Terran Diplomatic Association. An internal security leak reveals design information to Kilrathi forces, who intercept and eliminate the prize offensive weapon.

Several weeks later, *Victory* squadrons support a Marine-led effort to liberate Dr. Harold (?) Severin from a Kilrathi prison planet. A key player in TCN detonation technology, he immediately begins research on another weapon, the Temblor bomb. (Details remain classified at this point in time.)

TCN military police fighters squelch a civilian attack on Rampart military station in Enyo System, where organized protesters attempted to damage communication facilities and 27 fighters parked for repairs. The leader of the protest, Alexander Romorin, was killed by one of his own followers during the hand-to-hand melee as he struggled with minimally armed personnel. Participants are questioned and sent to a minimum security holding moon. This event marks a swelling current of civilian unrest after forty years of the Terran-Kilrathi conflict.

2669.262

Confederation forces break through Kilrathi lines into Freya and Hyperion Sectors, where they meet heavy Kilrathi resistance. Facing an imminent homeworld invasion, the enemy boosts its forces here and eases up attacks on outlying colonial worlds. Construction begins on temporary bases, and Confed transmissions in and out of the area are encoded with the newly developed UUENSX-17 encryption system. The conflict index reaches 10.2, the highest average posted in the war's history.

Galaxy Red Cross troops run medical supplies, food and fuel dangerously close to the front lines, losing approximately 1/3 of their transports to ambushes. The Civilian Pilot's Association volunteers troop and supply transport runs as the war progresses closer and closer to the Kilrathi sector.

The Temblor test project enters the completion stage and the prototype model is successfully detonated on a seismographic fault in Hyperion System. Dr. Severin is subsequently named as an honorary captain in the Terran Navy and awarded a research bonus of 1.2 million credits.

2669.267

The President and the Scientific Warfare panel approve the use of the Temblor bomb in six instances, including that of attacking the aggressive Kilrathi home planet. Having expected this decision, the *Victory* pushes into the far region of Hyperion sector. Col. Christopher Blair, Maj. Todd Marshall, 2nd Lt. Mitchell Lopez and 2nd Lt. Robin Peters launch from the carrier at 0545 hours. With the aid of covert fuel depots, they penetrate Kilrah's atmosphere and launch the Temblor into the V'rakath fault. All but one pilot join K.I.A. ranks, with Col. Blair as the only returning member.

In a devastating tectonic blast, the bomb rips Kilrah along its three major faults, killing millions of inhabitants. Aboard the (insert carrier name here), Kal Shintahr Melek nar Kilra'hra formally surrenders to TCN officials. After decades of loss, 4.2 quadrillion credits' worth of war materials, and a total count of 12,432,187 deaths, the Terran-Kilrathi war is finally over...

2669.322

In the ensuing months, a P.O.W. exchange is implemented, and sectorial diplomats begin negotiations with Kilrathi colonial settlers. Eight-six new bills are introduced in the 1,234th Confederation Congress, all of which pertain to the rights of Kilrathi survivors. Riots driven by racism among Terran colonies peaks, paralleling the integration of blacks in the early 20th century.

M'ragrakath nar Hhallas is appointed as the main Kilrathi spokesperson, and is assassinated during an international conference on Alliance Rights in Venus. Following his death, an overwhelming percentage of Kilrathi survivors commit Zu'kara, a popular form of ritual suicide. In an effort to ease tensions, the Terran Diplomatic Association sets up eighteen reservation worlds and fights to incorporate them into the Alliance.

The Terran Navy concentrates peace efforts on outer worlds, where renegade forces stage brutal attacks on the Kilrathi colonial worlds. Many of the rebels are from Sol System, where unemployment has skyrocketed to 22.3 percent since three-quarters of the TCN enlistees were decommissioned.

Analysts predict that recovering from half a century of warfare will be long, consuming task that requires at least two decades of economic and social adjustment in every facet of life ...

2669 (Righteous Fire: Simultaneous Action)

The Terran Confederation assigns eighteen reserve marine units to civilian trade bases in Gemini Sector, where reports filter in concerning contraband activity. Gemini has long been a problem area for patrolling forces due to the large number of Kilrathi inhabitants and the localized Free Trade Agreement. The move sparks unrest among the Merchant's Guild after over half the trading force relocates across enemy lines. Military officials step up patrols along the Kilrathi lines as attacks on civilian merchant ships reaches an all-time high.

A team of sociologists and archeologists en route to Gemini Sector are captured, and vid-transmissions of their torture beamed back to Sol. News leaks out to the general public, who becomes outraged and demands reprisal on Kilrathi P.O.W. The four men aboard were undertaking the dangerous trek to investigate rumors of a Steltek alien "rosetta" stone believed to contain valuable information about uncharted sectors.

2670 (Righteous Fire cont.)

Mordacai Jones, leader of the Church of Man temple, is exposed as having headed up an attack on a Terran super-weapon tested in a nearby sector. The church, which vehemently preaches anti-technology measures, denied responsibility for the attack, which was led by several squadrons of Kilrathi ships. All 25 technical assistance crew members that were working on the weapon's components were killed when three squadrons of Kilrathi fighters ambushed the light fleet.

Six months later, Jones is reported as missing by his Retro church followers, and his temple is bombarded. Following his death, TCN officials inspected the remnants of Base Gaea and find detailed accounts of over 35 attacks on orbital guns and scientific research outposts.

NOTE: The following narrative of events in the Human-Kilrathi struggle are the results of first-person experience and observation by Lt. Colonel Carl T. LaFong (TCSN Retired)

Wing Commander I

2654 (NEARING GRADUATION)

As we dissected recent successes in the Kilrathi war, I noticed that the name of the TCS *Tiger's Claw* kept appearing. Everyone at the academy had heard in history class the story of the *Claw's* shakedown cruise in 2644, when they unexpectedly encountered and routed a superior Kilrathi invasion force. More recently, the Confederation's largest carrier had fought an unbelievable delaying action known as Custer's Carnival. It set up the escape from Kilrathi space of 10 Confederation Draymans carrying more than 2000 ground troops.

Other than the six months spent in spacedock for repairs following Custer's Carnival, the *Tiger's Claw* had been in the Vega Sector for 10 years. Since 2650, enemy activity had been sporadic, and most of us felt the Kilrathi had simply probed the system to test our strength and resolve. Soon after my arrival on the *Tiger's Claw*, however, Intelligence scanners indicated an enormous buildup in Kilrathi strike forces. According to analysts, the Enyo System, which the Kilrathi abandoned following an engagement in 2639, was the first target. We jumped there three days later.

2654.085-03 (ENYO SYSTEM)

My first patrols. A real rush, but little of lasting consequence.

2654.121 (MCAULIFFE SYSTEM)

The Confederation is preparing for a major offensive, and the Killer Bee Squadron must clear the way for supply and transport ships to enter the McAuliffe System. Mission Control reports that a large bogie has jumped into the system and is heading toward the *Claw*. It's an unknown ship at this time, but all indications point to its being a well-guarded warship. Flying Scimitars, Paladin and I have been ordered to thwart the approach of the massive enemy ship and any other bogies we encounter en route.

2654.124

While the *Tiger's Claw* is scheduled to jump out of McAuliffe System tomorrow, the battle here will continue, and additional Confederation transports and tankers are arriving hourly. A Kilrathi carrier has been spotted, and we expect heavy resistance as we escort the larger ships to their positions. The worst news is that Bhurak Starkiller, the Kilrathi's leading ace, with 64 kills recorded, is known to be patrolling the area. This is one instance where I hope the Intelligence analysts have missed their mark.

2654.132 (BRIMSTONE SYSTEM)

The twitch at the corner of the Colonel's mouth betrayed his anxiety. I could tell the failed sabotage operation was squeezing the Confederation's resources in Brimstone System. Unsure of the strength of Kilrathi forces, Halcyon ordered Alpha Wing to gather intelligence on the enemy forces on the second planet.

2654.140

Halcyon entered and cut the conversation short. "We're gearing up for a major assault on Kilrathi bases in the system," he said. "HQ is sending in extra warships and we're going to escort them back to the *Tiger's Claw* for rendezvous."

2654.157 (DAKOTA SYSTEM)

We were covering medical transports as they delivered a new Watson's Disease vaccine to the settlers in Fargo Colony. We'd escort one Drayman to its jump point, then cover another on the way back to rendezvous with the *Tiger's Claw*.

2654.164

Colonel Halcyon was all business at the mission briefing. An enormous Kilrathi convoy was moving into attack range, and we were immediately launching 20 fighter wings to head them off. The orders were simple: seek and destroy.

2654.187 (KURASAWA SYSTEM)

We were finally on the offensive in the war, and moving on Kilrathi bases after halting the enemy's advance in the Dakota System. According to Intelligence reports, the enemy was trying to ferry ships and supplies into the bases. They were preparing to make a defensive stand, but we weren't going to let them.

2654.198

Halcyon reported that Terran forces had captured a Kilrathi Ralari-class destroyer in Port Hedland. Incredible!

Sector command wanted to bring the Ralari to the Kurasawa System and use it in the siege against the Kilrathi bases. Imagine that, using their own destroyer against them. The only problem was that the Kilrathi knew we had control of their ship and they would pull out all the stops to keep us from getting our hands on their technology.

2654.208

It was gut wrenching when Colonel Halcyon said the *Formidable* was in bad shape and needed assistance. I'd served aboard the destroyer during my final year at the academy. In an experimental program started just five years into the war, prospective pilots passed their final tests in a sort of trial-by-ordeal, on-the-job training aboard the Exeter.

2654.237 (ROSTOV SYSTEM)

The Rostov System was an interesting place for our next battle with the Kilrathi. Because it was inhabited by the Mopoks, a sentient species, Confederation law forbade colonization of any of the planets. The system, though, is rich in mineral resources, and when a scientific expedition indicated a Kilrathi presence here, we knew we had to protect it.

2654.265

It was Marshall's misfortune to be the first pilot in the carrier's 10-year history who mistakenly destroyed a friendly.

2654.271

While we'd been successful in halting the supply ships the Kilrathi had deployed throughout the system, their military presence was increasing daily. Tactical had reported several new bogies in the system, including a Ralari-class destroyer. Eliminating the Ralari was critical to our success.

2654.287 (THE FINAL ASSAULT)

It was a healthy tension that permeated the *Tiger's Claw*. We all knew the Venice System was vital to the Kilrathi's effort and that a victory here would signal a turning point in the war. Terran Intelligence had reported that the Kilrathi High Command operated from a starbase located in the system. If we could destroy that base, we would remove the brains of our cat-like enemies.

2654.289 (VENICE SYSTEM)

The first Terran missions in the Venice system were reconnaissance patrols used to identify Kilrathi ships and their locations. We were hoping to find their starbase, the operations center for the High Command, but realized the chances were against us in the early stages.

2654.296

The *Tiger's Claw* fighter patrols had identified multiple Kilrathi targets in the Venice System. With the assistance of fighters from the carrier *Kyoto*, we were ordered to engage and destroy specific ships and escorts throughout the system. Nu Wing would rendezvous with Rapiers from the *Kyoto* and head out in search of a Fralthi. According to Intel reports, Gratha, Salthi and Krant were protecting the 500-meter cruiser.

2654.309

Terran Command had discovered the location of the Kilrathi starbase and the *Tiger's Claw* was moving into position to launch her fighter wings against the final target. Significant resistance was expected, and Phi Wing was ordered to take out any enemies encountered on a three-point scouting patrol ahead of the carrier. Then we were to return and guard the starboard side against the fighter attacks that were sure to come.

2654.315

This was the mission we had all been waiting for. Take out the starbase and destroy the Kilrathi High Command for the entire sector. Terran Intelligence believed the Kilrathi would expect us to attack with our capital ships, but we were sending in fighter wings instead. If we could punch through the Kilrathi defenses, our speed, firepower and maneuverability would allow us to destroy the starbase.

2654.325 (AFTER THE VEGA CAMPAIGN)

It was the first time I had ever seen the Colonel enter the pilot's bar, much less hoist a mug of Goddard's Special. The party had started as soon as word came down that the Kilrathi had abandoned the Vega Sector. Halcyon held up his mug and asked for quiet. "I'd like to propose a toast!" he yelled.

It took a while to get everyone's attention. People were hooting and hollering, dancing and drinking. Knight was balancing a glass of champagne on his forehead and trying to limbo. He was drenched from previous attempts. Eventually, a semblance of order was established and the Colonel could at least be heard.

"I've been fighting the Kilrathi for almost 20 years," the colonel said, "and this is the first time the Confederation has ever claimed a major victory. We've won our share of battles before, sure, but this could be the real turning point in the war. Those blasted cats will never look at humans in the same way again."

When I returned to my cabin, I flipped the switch on the computer, activated the comm network, and scanned for the latest war news. After all, Vega Sector wasn't the only place we had been fighting the Kilrathi. The main story, filed just moments before I logged on, caught my attention. All communication had been lost with the colonists on Goddard in the Deneb Sector. The cause was unknown.

Just as I finished the story, I was notified of a priority message on the intra-ship network. Those messages were seldom good news, and this was no exception. Everyone was ordered to their comm stations for a general announcement at 0900 tomorrow. A pilot's briefing would follow at 1000 hours.

I shut down the system, hit the showers and headed for my bunk. *Damn, I thought, it doesn't look like anyone will see home in the near future.* I was almost in tears.

Secret Missions 1

2654.326 (HEADING TO GODDARD)

The Colonel's announcement and briefing didn't add a whole lot to what I had read the night before concerning the loss of communication with the Goddard colonists. Terran Intelligence Command's scan analysis indicated the use of a new Kilrathi weapons technology against the planet. At this point, however, they weren't sure what effect it had had beyond the disruption in communications. Scouting teams were being sent to the planet's surface to investigate.

The *Tiger's Claw* would jump to the Deneb Sector tomorrow, make her way to the Goddard System, and provide whatever support activities were required. We wouldn't know whether our posture would become offensive or defensive until the planetary investigation was completed.

Rumors ran rampant on the carrier as we prepared for our jump out of the Vega Sector. There were reports that the new weapon had wiped out the use of all electronics on the planet with an advanced Electro Magnetic Pulse (EMP) generator, but that the colonists remained alive. Others swore that the entire colony had been wiped out by a "beam" weapon of unknown origin. No one knew for sure, but we were all stunned by the turn of events.

2654.346 (GODDARD SYSTEM)

Halcyon was frantic. We would launch as soon as the *Tiger's Claw* reached Goddard Colony. The fate of the colony was unknown, but the Confederation was bringing in supplies in case relief efforts were needed. Hunter and I, flying Hornets, would make sure the transports reached their destinations.

2654.348

The *Tiger's Claw* was streaking toward Goddard and the fighter wings were ordered to help clear a path in front of the carrier. We still didn't know what would be found when we arrived at the colony.

2655.006 (BORDER ZONE)

Now we knew that the Goddard colony had been completely destroyed by the Kilrathi weapon. A quarter-million civilians had lost their lives. We would chase the departing Kilrathi fleet and attempt to destroy the vessel carrying the new weapon.

2655.022

Colonel Halcyon nervously told us that the Kilrathi had captured the *Falstaff*, a Drayman carrying weapon design specifications, troop movement information, and tactical maps. We would move against it, even though doing so would tip our hand that we were following the Kilrathi fleet. It didn't bode well for the future.

2655.029

The Kilrathi knew we followed, and we expected a greater concentration of enemy fighters as we continued our missions. The Reavers, an elite corps of Marines, had captured a Dralthi but needed assistance in bringing their prize back to the carrier. We really needed the information from the enemy ship.

2655.057 (JOTUNHEIM)

Confederation Intelligence thought the Kilrathi were setting up an ambush, so they decided to launch all our fighter wings in an effort to counteract their strategy. Spirit and I would take the bait, flying right into the middle of the anticipated melee.

2655.081

Colonel Halcyon said we had an emergency. The *Tiger's Claw* had received a distress call from the *Johann*, an Exeter-class transport. Apparently the ship needed protection while under repair.

I don't know how Intel could have been so wrong. This mission was the most bizarre I'd ever flown. As it turned out, the mission was the result of a bogus radio message from the Kilrathi. It wasn't the *Johann*, but the mythical *Gwenhyvar* (an *Exeter*-class ship that had been captured by the Kilrathi while in dry dock) that appeared at Nav 2. They were trying to draw us into an ambush and they almost succeeded. I knew something was wrong when Rapiers attacked our position before we reached the *Exeter*, so I was prepared for something unusual.

2655.105 (BIFROST—KILRATHI SPACE)

We were pretty sure the ship carrying the new Kilrathi weapon was in the area. In addition, Tactical thought that a fuel depot was located here.

Paladin and I would scout three navigation points, searching for the Kilrathi fuel depot. We were ordered to engage and destroy any enemy ships encountered during our patrol.

2655.121

So many Raptors had been damaged that we were reassigned to Scimitars while the techs attempted repairs on the heavier fighters. Previous patrols had pinpointed the location of the supply depot. It would be our ultimate goal.

2655.139

The Killer Bees had captured a Kilrathi ship that yielded strike assignments in the Vega Sector. If we could get back to Vega, we would be able to set ambushes against their fighters.

2655.155 (VALGARD SYSTEM)

The super-dreadnought *Sivar*, carrying the secret weapon, was near and running low on fuel. We couldn't go after it yet, because too many Kilrathi fighters and transports were around to provide protection. We would take care of that on this mission.

2655.159

With the destruction of the fuel depot/starbase, many Kilrathi fighters were stranded in space with nowhere to go. The Colonel was positive they would launch an attack on the *Tiger's Claw*.

2655.186 (VIGRID SYSTEM)

We had discovered the location of the *Sivar*, and the Kilrathi knew it. Their only chance to save the secret weapon was to launch a massive attack on the *Tiger's Claw*.

2655.199

This was the mission we had been working toward. We knew the location of the *Sivar* and we were ready to blow it away. Colonel Halcyon decided to launch strike wings from two different locations, hoping to confuse the *Sivar's* defenses. Omega Wing was part of the first launch, then the carrier would move to Nav 3 and send more fighters into space.

2655.211 (AFTER THE SECRET MISSIONS)

I was tired of combat, of death, of flying and of space. I wanted to feel grass under my feet and wind against my face. I wanted to talk about things other than ships, weapons, strategy and tactics. People who hadn't experienced war in space could never understand the complex emotions it evoked. I wished I hadn't either.

I never had any doubts about our goals. I was ecstatic that we'd destroyed the Kilrathi weapon that had taken the lives of a quarter-million colonists. The Confederation had no choice in the path it had taken. I guess it was the conversation with Paladin, where he brought up the issue of genocide, that started me thinking.

How can you really win a war when the only apparent solution is the outright destruction of an entire species? That's one issue that had never come up in the ethics classes at the space academy. It's also an issue I'd never considered when I signed up to become a combat pilot.

I'd only been in space for 18 months, but I felt like a 20-year veteran. At this point I realized that the steely look I saw in the faces of pilots when I was young actually revealed a numbness born of living with death and destruction. It was something you could never get used to. The thrill I felt the first time I blasted a Kilrathi ship had been replaced by the realization that I was also destroying a life. An evil life, perhaps, but a life nevertheless. I wondered if Kilrathi pilots felt the same way.

Looking back at my feelings at the time, I realize I was exhausted by the intensity of the missions in Kilrathi space. Becoming a fighter pilot hadn't matched my expectations, but I knew the job we were doing was one that had to be done. You really can't worry about the destruction of a species that's intent on eliminating you.

Secret Missions 2

2653.500-2655.230 (THE FIREKKA TREATY)

It was really kind of a fluke that led the Confederation to the discovery of the Firekkans. Long-range scans hadn't revealed any mineral resources in the isolated system and it was far from any established trade routes, so it wasn't on the priority list for scientific exploration.

The Firekkans might have remained isolated if there hadn't been a war between the Confederation and the Kilrathi. Several years ago, our Marines were searching for a location to practice massive splashdown landings and assault maneuvers. Since they were employing new technology, they needed a safe location that the Kilrathi would not be monitoring or patrolling. They were also looking for large areas of water in a low-gravity environment. The Firekkan system fit the bill.

Before the maneuvers began, our forces sent an exploratory patrol to the system. That's when we found a friendly, intelligent and highly evolved sentient avian race. It ruined the Marines' immediate plans for training exercises, but it led to a burgeoning relationship between leaders of the Terran Confederation and the Firekkans.

Impressed by the Firekkan culture, our Diplomatic Corps started negotiations designed to expand the Confederation. It had taken almost three years, but we had reached the point where an official treaty between the two groups was imminent. That's why the *Tiger's Claw* had jumped to the Antares Sector.

After the hard-fought confrontations in Vega and Goddard, we were relieved to be spending some time as the Honor Guard for the Confederation Diplomatic Corps. It looked like our pilots, technicians, communications operators and mechanics would finally receive some shore leave during the treaty conference. A little escort duty, far from the Kilrathi battle fleets, would be a welcome respite.

The main topic of conversation on the carrier came from those who had already taken their shore leave. Everyone was impressed by the physical beauty of the planet, the sensitivity and intelligence of its inhabitants, the unusual technology found in its cities, and the diverse nature of its culture. For those of us who hadn't yet been granted leave, it served to whet our appetites even more.

2655.236 (FIREKKA SYSTEM)

The treaty signing was only days away when Terran Intelligence reported the sighting of a Kilrathi convoy moving through a nearby star system. Concerned about a disruption of the activities, Halcyon ordered watch patrols while we began escorting our diplomats to the planet's surface.

2655.249

The appearance of the Kilrathi Imperial Guard had us baffled. We didn't think the Kilrathi had tracked the *Claw* here, and we couldn't find any strategic element in the war that would lead our enemy here. We were still searching for the convoy.

2655.261

Incredibly, we've discovered that a stray convoy was not our biggest concern. An entire battle fleet was headed our way. It is smaller than the one we'd battled in Goddard, but we still didn't know why they were in this system.

Since it was the first time we'd encountered them, the Hriiss caused the most problems on this mission.

2655.265

We didn't know what was going on. Confederation High Command reported that all Kilrathi fleets were headed toward the Firekka System. Reinforcements were being sent, but we would begin evacuation of our diplomats from the system immediately.

2655.271

At first, I wasn't sure I'd understood Halcyon's briefing. High Command had intercepted a vid-link from Captain Ralgha, a Kilrathi commander, asking for asylum on the carrier. The officer was willing to bring in a Fralthi and its 20-fighter escort. Pilots from the TCS *Austin* had already rendezvoused with the capital ship and placed a human crew at the helm.

2655.278

Two more enemy battle fleets were on the way to Firekka. After receiving a vid-link from Kilrathi Prince Thrakhath, we had some understanding of the situation. His message indicated that we were trespassing on the holy ground of Lord Sivar, the Kilrathi war god. He gave us one planetary rotation to leave. Command ordered us to retreat to a nearby star system, hoping the Kilrathi would think we had abandoned the area.

2655.281 (CORSAIR SYSTEM)

This mission was going to be strange. We would fly the Dralthi that we'd captured when Captain Ralgha came in to seek asylum. The ships had been refitted with Terran weapons and targeting systems, but our technicians hadn't had time to install ejection systems.

2655.293

We finally understood the situation. We had ended up right in the middle of a military-religious ceremony that the Kilrathi held every year. The fact that it would take place in the Firekka System this year was just plain dumb bad luck on our part. Captain Ralgha had come up with a plan to disrupt the ceremony by launching an assault on the Kilrathi war priestesses on the planet's surface.

2655.300 (NEAR FIREKKA)

Since elite Marine forces were going to launch the ground assault against the Kilrathi war priestesses, the carrier's fighter wings were going to clear jump points for Drayman troop transports. I was assigned to fly with another pilot from the TCS *Austin*, Lt. Etienne Montclair, also known as Doomsday.

2655.301

We had received word that one of our Draymans, the TCS *General Powell*, had never arrived at its rendezvous point. Soon after, an emergency communication indicated that it had been overrun by the Kilrathi, but that officers, led by Major Kristi Marks, were trying to retake the ship.

2655.304

The Marines had completed a successful splashdown on Firekka and were preparing an assault against the Kilrathi war priestesses. Several fighters were returning to the carrier.

2655.307

The Marines were in position for the attack and we were going to support their mission by intercepting Kilrathi troop ships as they moved toward Firekka.

2655.315

After the Marines' victory on Firekka, the Kilrathi were making every effort to prevent our Confederation troop transports from leaving and making their way to the protection of the carrier. Since the ceremony had been disrupted, we were sure the Kilrathi prince would fear mutiny if he ordered a general attack.

2655.320

The Kilrathi were in trouble, but we knew they would inflict as much damage as possible before they left, to retaliate for the disruption of their military/religious ceremony. Millions of Firekkan lives were at stake.

2655.346 (BORDER ZONE)

The Kilrathi were right on our tails as we headed back toward Vega Sector, but a strike fleet in our path was a greater concern. We would go after the strike fleet first.

2655.351

In a last ditch effort, the Kilrathi were launching an assault on the *Tiger's Claw*. It didn't take a genius to figure out what our missions would be.

2656.001 (THE FIREKKA TRIUMPH)

We'd saved our feathered friends from the Kilrathi, but we'd paid a heavy price. We had all lost friends.

Bossman was dead, killed by the Imperial Guard while flying on Angel's wing. Spirit's fiancé had been captured by the enemy. Hunter had lost a brother, a Marine who died in the assault on the war priestesses. Maniac was back in sick bay, and no one expected him to ever return to active duty again. Angel had left the *Tiger's Claw* to command the fighter wings on the TCS *Austin*.

I really didn't know where I stood. Colonel Halcyon had said he wanted me to command the wings on the carrier after he left to work at Tactical Command. He hadn't left yet, and I hadn't heard anything since the fighting had stopped.

One of the most difficult moments during the campaign on Firekka came up during a conversation with Iceman. I could never track down the source of the information, but he mentioned the possibility that we had traitors aboard the carrier, and he didn't mean the Kilrathi who had been granted asylum by the Confederation.

I couldn't even fathom the possibility. How could any Terrans align themselves with the alien race that had destroyed a quarter-million lives on Goddard Colony? History has shown only three reasons that people become

traitors: sex, money and idealism. I couldn't imagine the first or last as a reason, so money must have been the motive. It made me wonder about the future.

We reached the Vega System and settled in for what Halcyon called "routine patrol duty." It would prove to be anything but routine, and would create drastic changes in my naval career.

Wing Commander II

2656.016 (ENIGMA SECTOR)

After cruising around Vega for a couple of weeks, where the maintenance and tech crews had been kept busy with repairs, the *Tiger's Claw* had been ordered to Enigma Sector for a move on K'tithrak Mang. Halcyon explained that we would be mounting an all-out assault on the enemy's headquarters. "Pilots, get some rest in the next two days," he barked. "We'll be scrambling every wing on board as soon as we complete our leap."

2656.033

The colonel wasn't kidding when he said he was sending every pilot out on our assault. In fact, our roster was so thin that many of the pilots would fly solo. We were really thrilled about that turn of events. "Sorry, team," Halcyon said, "but we've got an awful lot of space to cover." I was one of the solo missions, and my patrol was the most isolated of all. I would be 75,000 kilometers from any other fighter wing at the closest. I knew I'd have to stay alert, because help was a long way off.

I hit the first nav point without seeing an asteroid, Kilrathi mine or enemy ship. It was kind of fun just cruising along at 250 kps and letting autopilot handle all the navigation while I scanned the radar. I was running through a check of the arming sequences on the guns when a large red blip flashed on the radar display. I wasn't sure whether I'd seen ships or just caught a reflection from the auto-pilot light out of the corner of my eye.

I was just starting to relax, thinking that the blips had been a chance reflection, when six fighters materialized in front and to the left of me. They were too far away for a visual ID, and the right VDU still didn't show anything. It just sat there while six enemy ships passed right by.

Either the enemy ships hadn't seen me or they were ignoring my presence, because they kept to their course. I turned to follow and had just taken up a position on their rear when they disappeared. There was no flash, so I knew they hadn't jumped anywhere. There were no explosions, no debris, nothing at all.

I started a classic search route, flying larger and larger concentric circles in an attempt to locate the enemy fighters. "Damn," I grumbled. "This is a fine time to be without a wingman." I never saw another enemy ship, even though I searched a circular area almost 8000 kilometers in diameter. It took an hour at full speed.

My flight to the last nav point in the patrol route was uneventful and I was now almost 110,000 kilometers from the *Tiger's Claw*. Suddenly, through the crackle of static in my headset, I heard a distress call. It was the *Claw*.

"Mayday, Mayday. The *Tiger's Claw* is under attack. All Confederation craft please assist."

I slammed my new destination into the nav computer, turned hard to the left, and kicked in the afterburners. I didn't have enough fuel to keep them lit the whole way back to the carrier, but I hoped I could get close enough to head off any other Kilrathi pilots who were racing to join the battle.

I could tell the carrier was in trouble when the comm operator stopped using the normal protocol. "They've got us surrounded. There's four _ no, five _ I can't tell how many wings are out there. We're getting hammered here! Launch bays destroyed. Conning tower heavily damaged _ help us out here. We're losing power _."

That was the last thing I heard. I desperately hoped it was just a communications problem, but as I neared the carrier's last known location, the only blips on the radar were blue and represented other fighters.

From the silence, Iceman's whisper seemed like a roar. "There's nothing to be done, pilots," he said. "Form on my lead and head for the *Austin*. The coordinates are already in our nav computers. Keep radio silence, and watch your six. Iceman out."

The flight to the *Austin* was the worst of my life.

2656.034 (A CHARGE OF TREASON)

The debriefing was long and brutal. I had been the only pilot to encounter any enemy fighters before the assault, but my story of ships that mysteriously appeared and disappeared was met with disbelief. About an hour into the session, a warrant officer entered and whispered something in Colonel Fratworth's ear.

"Lieutenant, where's your flight-data recorder?" the colonel asked. "You know it's against regs to tamper with the black box."

"I didn't tamper with anything," I replied defensively. "As soon as we hit the deck, I came straight to the briefing room."

Intel didn't just visit, they grilled me like a piece of swordfish. Apparently, the *Claw's* data recorder had been recovered and revealed enough information to identify the enemy pilots who had hit the carrier as coming from the sector I had patrolled.

I explained that the electronics on my *Rapier* hadn't been completely repaired before we had to scramble. I recounted the story over and over again of the phantom enemy ships I'd seen near Nav 2 on my patrol. It was obvious from their expressions and comments that I was being blamed for the loss of the carrier.

"How can you expect us to believe such a preposterous story?" Major Pyle exclaimed. "No Confederation pilot has ever reported anything even vaguely similar to what you're telling us right now. We've had your *Rapier* checked out, and your radar system was in perfect operating condition. Your data recorder is missing. We're recommending charges."

They left me to my own thoughts after making sure I understood that I was under house arrest until further notice. No one was allowed to communicate with me, and my computer access privileges were suspended. The court martial papers were delivered the next day, charging me with treason. In normal circumstances, the charges

and papers would have taken months to prepare, but Admiral Tolwyn, under the War Powers Act of 2634, had speeded up the process.

2656.250 (CAERNARVON STATION)

I won't bore you with the details of my trial. If you're really interested, read *A Treacherous Hero*, by Janet Williamson. Published in 2657, it was on the best-seller list for 11 months. Suffice it to say that the treason charges were reduced to mere negligence for lack of evidence. My rank was reduced to captain. Immediately thereafter, I was ordered to a meeting with Admiral Tolwyn, who had come to Sol Station, near Earth, for the military tribunal.

Tolwyn's face was a brilliant red, and the vein in his forehead looked like it was about to burst. "I can't force you to resign, Captain, but I can make sure you spend the rest of your career on the most remote outpost in Terran-controlled space," he said. "I'm transferring you to InSystem Security. Enjoy your duty on the Caernarvon Space Station. At least there, you won't be able to stab the Confederation in the back again. Now get out of my office. I hope I never see your face again."

2656-2666 (TEN YEARS OF BOREDOM)

Caernarvon Station was the pits. It was one of the oldest active space stations and my quarters reflected its age. Looking back, it's hard to believe I made it through 10 years of the most boring duty in the Space Navy.

Caernarvon Station was originally designed as a research outpost for the Intergalactic Science Council (ISC), but in the year preceding my arrival, its scientific staff had been sent to a newer facility in another sector. When the TCSN took over, it was put into commission as a monitoring and reconnaissance station for the Enigma Sector of space.

I tried to keep track of the war, the pilots I had known on the *Tiger's Claw*, and any new information on the Kilrathi through the computer network. It was, in some ways, my only direct connection with the war effort. I wasn't flying much any more, but I always scanned the databases for the latest dope provided by our intelligence services for combat pilots. If I ever did run into the Kilrathi again, I wanted to be ready.

In the last nine months I spent on the station, I discovered that, after a lull of almost nine years with only sporadic contact with the enemy, the action was heating up again. Of course, new data from Tactical increased at the same rate.

2666.195 (GWYNEDD SYSTEM)

Captain "Shadow" Norwood and I headed out for our required monthly patrol around Caernarvon Station. Since we hadn't seen an enemy fighter in 10 years, we weren't expecting trouble. I couldn't believe it when Shadow's shrill voice announced the appearance of enemy ships.

The comm officer thought I'd gone mad when I radioed our report before landing at the station. Actually, it felt great to be back in the cockpit.

2666.199

Shadow, who was a TCSN reservist, was a wreck after our last mission. According to regs, she wasn't supposed to fly in combat. Sometimes, however, it isn't planned. The enemy just appears. On our next mission, she knew a dogfight was in the cards.

I was on communications duty when a Mayday came in from the TCS *Concordia*. Her escort had been destroyed, her launch bays damaged, and enemy fighters were moving in for the kill. Shadow and I raced to the flight deck, jumped into our Ferrets, and were catapulted into space.

After the fight, we were ordered to land on the carrier, and I couldn't believe it when Colonel Jeanette ("Angel") Devereaux, commander of the carrier's fighter wing, met us for the debriefing.

2666.202

Things had really changed since the old days on the *Tiger's Claw*. Enemy capital ships now carried armor that prevented their destruction by anything less than a torpedo. Only our Broadwords and Sabres carried the heavy armament.

With few fighters functional after the attack, Colonel Devereaux had no choice but to ask us to escort a wing of Broadwords in an attack on a Fralthra cruiser. We were ordered to take out the fighter escorts, then back off while the Broadwords did the heavy work.

2666.202

Admiral Tolwyn was on the *Concordia*. When he found out I was flying combat missions from the carrier, he went nuts. I was ordered to return to Caernarvon Station.

Shadow and I had just requested a landing at the station, when another Mayday was transmitted by the *Concordia*. This time an internal explosion had wrecked the newly repaired launch bay, and enemy fighters were racing in to take advantage of the carrier's inability to launch. We arrived in time to save the *Concordia*, but Shadow did not survive.

2666.217 (NIVEN SYSTEM)

Still on the carrier, Colonel Devereaux assigned me to run a solo reconnaissance patrol in a Broadword equipped with a trace analyzer. We were looking for information on Kilrathi capital ships in the area.

2666.228

Ordered to an immediate launch, I jumped back into a Ferret, hit space, and awaited my patrol route. As it turned out, communications had been lost with the colony on Niven. I was to deliver a communications packet to the colony's leaders, and was told not to deviate from my course. I would fly alone.

As I tried to find sleep, I thought of how quickly my fortunes had changed. Just a few days ago, I'd been sitting behind a desk on a space station. Now, here I was on Niven, flying again, and meeting the Kilrathi in combat.

I wanted a permanent assignment on the *Concordia*, but I knew Tolwyn would fight me all the way. There wasn't any love lost between the two of us. Even though Angel was on my side, I knew I faced an uphill battle to get back into a fighter wing as a regular pilot. Stranger things, though, had happened before.

2666.245

General Snell, commander of Niven Colony, wanted me to help out with an escort mission before returning to the carrier. I would escort two transports carrying medical supplies to their jump points, then proceed to the *Concordia*.

2666.246

There was a tremendous uproar on the *Concordia* while I was gone. I finally heard the full story the following day. Communications Specialist McGuffin had been killed by a spy who, apparently, had used our system to transmit a message to the enemy. There was reason to believe that the spy was a fighter pilot.

I wanted to stay aboard the *Concordia* and help the investigation in some way, but we still had missions to fly. Angel ordered me to complete a scout pattern through the Niven System, searching for traces of a strike fleet headed toward Ghorah Khar.

I couldn't believe it when three ships showed up on the radar just under 20,000 kilometers from Nav 1. The right VDU couldn't identify them, but they looked familiar when I finally cruised close enough for a visual ID. "Good grief," I muttered. "These are the same type of ships I saw ten years ago near K'tithrak Mang." When they disappeared I knew I was right. They were Kilrathi stealth fighters, and I wasn't going to let them get away this time.

"This proves it," I thought. "I'll just take in my flight recorder." Then I checked damage and noted that the recorder had taken a direct hit.

2666.263 (GHORAH KHAR SYSTEM)

We knew the Kilrathi had flown through Niven System to get to Ghorah Khar. We didn't know where in the new system the Kilrathi would be found. I would fly a recon patrol as wingman for Colonel "Hobbes" Ralgha, the Kilrathi pilot who had sought asylum during the Firekka campaign.

2666.269

Hobbes wasn't happy when Angel ordered us to protect a Free Trader carrying vital information back to the *Concordia*. I guess he was looking for more action. He found it.

2666.278

Angel was telling us that we were to meet two Broadswords and then take on a Kilrathi task force headed toward Olympus Station, when the *Concordia* came under attack. We couldn't have launched any faster.

2666.284

We hadn't been on the space station for an hour when the launch klaxon sounded. Olympus Station was under attack and all fighter wings would launch immediately. Since our ships were still warm, Hobbes and I blasted off first and ran right into five Drakhri.

The station survived the attack, and we headed back to the *Concordia*.

2666.200-300 (BETWEEN MISSIONS)

The unusual set of circumstances that brought me to the *Concordia* had led to the renewal of old acquaintances from the *Tiger's Claw*. I saw Angel (now Colonel Devereaux), Spirit, and Paladin, and received some amazing news about Maniac.

I had been stunned when I discovered Angel, now Colonel Devereaux, was commanding the fighter wing on the carrier. She had always been a close friend and I knew she believed my story about the Stealth fighters that had destroyed the *Tiger's Claw* years ago. In fact, I had heard that she had made many attempts to change Admiral Tolwyn's mind about me. They were unsuccessful, but at least she'd tried.

Angel and I had flown together many times on the *Tiger's Claw*. As a young pilot, I had made some clumsy attempts at taking our relationship a step beyond friendship, but Angel was all business at the time, and always rebuffed my advances. I would have liked nothing more than to renew those efforts, but she was now a colonel and I was just a pilot in her command. I wrote it off as wishful thinking on my part.

While never a carefree person, Spirit seemed more troubled than I remembered. When her fiancé was captured by the Kilrathi 11 years before, part of Spirit had died. She always hoped she would have a chance to rescue her fiancé, but I thought that after all this time, those hopes must have ended. I couldn't put my finger on a reason, but I had the feeling that Spirit would never love another man. Life had given her only one chance.

When Paladin told me that Maniac was flying in Deneb Sector, I could have cried. "This is great," I remarked. "Imagine, 'The mad man of Firekka' and 'the traitor of K'tithrak Mang' both coming back! We have reputations to live down, you know."

"I think Maniac's already lived his down," Paladin replied. "He saved the entire strike fleet in Deneb Sector when he forced two Ralatha to collide in space. No one's sure how he did it, and some think he was on autopilot when it happened, but there weren't any Broadswords or Sabres out there to take down the capital ships with torpedoes. If those two ships hadn't collided, this war would have taken a real turn for the worse, and our efforts here would be meaningless."

2666.305 (NOVAYA KIEV SYSTEM)

The Kilrathi had retreated from Novaya Kiev by the time we arrived, but they'd left a supply depot behind. We wanted to take it out in case they ever returned to the system. Doomsday was my wingman, and we would fly Broadswords. The distance required a refueling stop after we jumped out of the system.

2666.323

I was as nervous as a mouse stuck in the corner of a litter box. Doomsday and I were headed out on a search and rescue mission in Broadswords. Stingray had bailed out and we had to get to him before the Kilrathi pilots did. I was nervous because I'd never before used the tractor beam to rescue a pilot and I remembered hearing of a gunner who had forgotten to switch the rear turret from neutron to tractor beam. He killed one of his best friends.

The fact that I had disobeyed orders to pursue Stingray's rescue did not earn the reprimand I'd expected. In fact, Tolwyn's reaction was the first sign of approval I'd gotten from him.

2666.330

It was a rough briefing, and Angel ended up giving Stingray and Jazz a garbage detail after their disruptions. Doomsday and I were ordered to jump out-system and assist the *Hector* in an attack on a Fralthra.

2666.343 (HEAVEN'S GATE SYSTEM)

We were starting the liberation of Heaven's Gate from the tyranny of the Kilrathi, but we had run into a snag. It took the form of a large Kilrathi strike force in the system.

Angel paired me with Spirit for a patrol of a jump point and two nav points in and around Heaven's Gate. (Too many of the other pilots suspected her of being the traitor for anyone else to risk flying with her.) It was my first time in an Epee, the light attack fighter that had replaced the Hornet just five years before. I was ready to take it through its paces.

2666.348

A Confederation convoy needed an escort to the jump point. Then Angel wanted us to investigate enemy movements at the point marked "unknown" on our navigation map.

2666.350

The *Concordia's* inventory of missiles was really low, so I was sent out to meet a freighter and escort her back with her full complement of Javelins, Pilums and Darts.

I was 13,000 kilometers from Nav 1 when targets designated "Unidentified" showed up on the right VDU. Right away, I knew these were the stealth fighters and this time my flight recorder would allow me to prove their existence. I really wished Spirit hadn't been sick so I could corroborate my story with my wingman's visual ID. This was a solo mission, though.

The only downside to the mission was a malfunctioning flight recorder. I guess it just wasn't in the cards for me to prove that these stealth fighters exist. I'd just tell everyone I never met any enemies on this mission.

2666.356

It was successful, but the mission against the Heaven's Gate Starbase was one of the saddest experiences of my life. The traitor had tipped the Kilrathi off to our upcoming attack, and a strike fleet was moving to intercept our attack force. Angel sent three wings to meet the strike fleet, while ordering Spirit and me to make an end run and attack the starbase.

As we approached the starbase, an explosion rocked Spirit's ship, and she radioed that she was losing air pressure. I ordered her to eject, but I saw her afterburners fire and she rolled and turned on a path that took her right at the starbase. I watched in horror as she plowed straight into the center of the base. The impact of her ship evolved into a fireball as the starbase, the Sabre's fuel tanks, and all her missiles exploded. At least it was quick, and she had died with her fiancé, a prisoner held on the starbase.

The rest of the mission was a blur.

2667.011 (TESLA SYSTEM)

We were back in Rapiers in the Tesla System. Stingray was my wingman. Our mission started as a simple three-point patrol, but ended in escorting Paladin's Free Trader back to the carrier.

2667.016

It was an emergency launch, and we didn't receive our orders until we were already in space. The communications operator told us to make speed and destroy two Kilrathi troop transports that had strayed from their escorts.

2667.018

Paladin was ready to leave Tesla System, but with all the Kilrathi in the area he had requested an escort to his jump point. Colonel Devereaux honored his request, assigning Stingray and me to the mission. After the jump, she told us to check out some bogeys before returning to the *Concordia*.

2667.027

It was a code red alert, so I didn't even put on my shoes before racing to the launch bay and catapulting into space in the Rapier. A Kilrathi strike fleet was headed for the carrier. The *Concordia's* defense was our first objective.

2667.041

I'm not sure why Tactical Command felt it necessary to attempt a dangerous double-jump. We'd just lost the *Tell* during a similar move (not lost on the winning path), but I guess the people with all the rank must have reasons for the things they order us to do. We needed to clear a path for the *Concordia* and, after the loss of Downtown, Angel would fly the patrol route with me in Broadswords.

Our route would first take us to check out an "unknown." Then we would proceed to a jump point and head out-system to Enigma, where we would again meet the carrier.

2667.045 (ENIGMA SYSTEM)

We were hiding in the asteroids, while our technicians and mechanics completed repairs and maintenance on the *Concordia* and her complement of fighters. It left us vulnerable to attack.

Intel had reported a Kilrathi listening post on the edge of the asteroid field. Angel and I would go after it, but take a roundabout course to camouflage the location of the carrier.

2667.054

A Kilrathi strike force was cruising by the edge of the asteroid field where the carrier was hidden. If we could track them back to K'tithrak Mang, we could obtain the tracking data, and might be able to jump in behind enemy lines.

I would fly again with Angel. Our mission was to find the enemy, engage the fighter wing, then allow the *Ralatha* to jump and quickly follow in our Broadswords.

2666.200-2666.290 (BETWEEN MISSIONS)

Knowing there was a spy among the complement of fighter pilots on the *Concordia* made everyone wary. I longed for the first months I'd spent on the *Tiger's Claw*, when I was able to respect everyone on board. The atmosphere on this carrier was quite different, and it was difficult to sit back and relax after a mission. I was always looking over my shoulder and wondering if my wingman was going to turn on me in the middle of a dogfight.

My relationship with Angel had really changed, and I often reflected on where it might lead. Since she had spurned my early advances while we were stationed on the *Tiger's Claw*, I wondered, and she did too, whether our closeness was based on love or on the fact that we were the only two people on board who really trusted one another. We had shared many experiences in the last 11 years, and that fact alone, in the emotional turmoil of war, could have been enough to throw us together. We hoped it was the former, but we were enjoying each other's company too much to spend a lot of time analyzing the situation. That could wait.

Now that we had the tracking data that would take us behind enemy lines in K'tithrak Mang, we knew we faced the final confrontation in the battle for the Enigma Sector. After my first mission in the sector, 10 years before, I wanted more than anything to be a part of the final assault. I wanted revenge.

I was worried that Angel might try to protect me from harm by assigning me to support missions. I respected her knowledge, opinions and background, but I knew that our personal relationship could easily overshadow a logical decision. The fact was that no other pilot could match my own experience and success as a combat pilot. Even after spending 10 years on a space station, I had proven my skills in all the new fighters, against all the new enemies, and with all the new weapons. I'd been the wingleader on the most dangerous and important missions flown from the *Concordia* in the last two months. I wouldn't be denied the opportunity to finish the job.

2667.060 (K'TITHRAK MANG SYSTEM)

We were deep in Kilrathi territory and preparing for the final approach to the headquarters of the Kilrathi Empire's Enigma Sector fleet. We needed to soften up the enemy's defenses, and our next patrols would try to achieve that objective. In Sabres, Jazz and I headed out to torpedo a Ralatha destroyer. We expected significant resistance, and that's exactly what we found.

After returning, I checked the tally list and found that Jazz had scored fewer kills than any other pilot. I was suspicious.

2667.063

Jazz and I, flying Sabres, drew the assignment to fly a four-point patrol and clear the area of enemy fighters. It was the type of mission we'd flown many times before.

On this mission, my flight recorder worked perfectly and I knew I had finally proven the existence of the Kilrathi stealth fighters to Admiral Tolwyn. What a relief. After 10 years carrying the reputation of a traitor, I was close to proving my innocence in the destruction of the *Tiger's Claw*. Angel and I celebrated with a few glasses of bubbly on the Observation Deck that night.

2667.069

Although the evidence was circumstantial, Angel accused Jazz of being the traitor. Jazz didn't even try to talk his way out of the situation. Instead, he pulled a gun. Angel managed to knock the gun away, and Jazz ran. He launched in a Sabre, and I got the order to go after him.

I had engaged almost every Kilrathi ace in a dogfight at one time or another, but my confrontation with Jazz was the toughest of my career. When fighting the Kilrathi, I always felt that I had the best flight technology on my side. Against Jazz, the technology was dead even, and only skill would lead to victory.

Jazz made a mistake by pulling the same brake-and-afterburner stunt three times in a row. The last time I was ready, and hit him with three shots from the full guns. I saw him eject from the debris, and although I really wanted to dust him with my guns, Angel used her tractor beam to pull him in.

After returning to the carrier, Sparks told me that the original flight disk from my last mission on the *Tiger's Claw* had been found in Jazz's locker. I was finally cleared.

2667.077

Just what I was afraid of happened. Angel ordered me to fly a forward patrol protecting the carrier, instead of flying with the strike force against the Kilrathi headquarters. I wasn't going to put up with that—I ordered Sparks to refit my ship with torpedoes, and load the strike force's navigation information into my computer.

I think Spirit, Downtown, Bossman and all the other pilots who had lost their lives were in the cockpit with me. Even though six Drakhai came after me, they really didn't stand a chance. Every tactic I'd ever learned came out instinctively. I turned to run, then took out three with the turreted neutrons on the rear. The others fell to dumb-fires, particle cannons and mass drivers.

The destruction of the headquarters was almost anticlimactic, although it was my last torpedo that finally caused the biggest explosion I'd ever seen in space. I was elated by my success, but knew I still had to face Admiral Tolwyn's wrath for disobeying orders.

After landing on the *Concordia*, I saw the welcoming committee on the flight deck.

2667.077 (AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF K'TITHRAK MANG)

I knew I was going to get a load of guff from the Admiral when I returned, and I was right. He told me I'd disobeyed orders, had been derelict in my duty, and was guilty of theft of government property and endangerment of personnel. Then, for the first time in my life, I saw him smile.

"Nice work, Colonel," he said.

"Colonel?" I asked myself, and then I realized that he was going to rectify what had taken place 10 years ago.

"I never thought I'd say this, Colonel, but I'm proud to have served with you."

It was a relief to hear the Admiral say that, but, to be perfectly honest, his opinion really didn't matter much any more. Angel's thoughts were much more important to me.

"Colonel, I'm cutting new orders for you," Angel said with a smile. "You're to report to my quarters immediately _ and make sure you remember the champagne."

After a few days of R & R, I began to think of all the lives in the past 30 years that had been affected by the war. Virtually everyone living on a Confederation planet, station, outpost or colony knew someone involved in the conflict.

I wish I could say the war ended with the destruction of K'tithrak Mang, but nothing could be further from the truth. We had removed a few claws from the Kilrathi, but they still had their fangs. Prince Thrakhath had been rescued, and I knew we would fight again another day.

I had always sought the complete destruction of the Kilrathi Empire, but after meeting Colonel Ralgha, I realized that, so far, this war had been like many others throughout history. It wasn't being fought against the people of Kilrah, but against the tyranny of their Empire. It wasn't the people of Kilrah who sought to rule the galaxy, it was their rulers.

I hoped that some day we could return Colonel Ralgha to Kilrah and have him lead the reconstruction of their government. I could imagine the day when the talk would no longer be of war with the Kilrathi, but of peace. We could learn a lot from each other, if only we were given the chance.

BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND

Fiction

Wing Commander is set in the distant future, and tells the tale of a fighter pilot in a fierce war between two interstellar empires. On one side of the conflict are the humans of the Terran Confederation, a vast collection of planets and small interstellar governments organized to provide common defense as well as a unified economic community. On the other side is the Empire of Kilrah, an expansionist military dictatorship of the Kilrathi.

The home planets of the two cultures, Terra and Kilrah, are both located within the Orion arm of the Milky Way; Kilrah is [18 months' travel] to spinward—in along the arm—of Terra. Both cultures have had interstellar flight for at least a hundred years, and have expanded onto hundreds of worlds around their home planets. Though each had encountered some form of life in almost every planetary system it explored, neither had met another race advanced to the point of spaceflight—until they met each other. Until they met, each had believed itself unique among the cosmos.

Both cultures had experienced warfare within themselves prior to meeting one another, and therefore had already developed the technology that made interstellar war possible. In fact, for both the humans and the Kilrathi, the discovery of an outside enemy was the first event to inspire total cooperation among their member states.

Cosmology

Our universe is not alone; scientists have proven the existence of three universes which exist “simultaneously” in the same “space.” All three were created simultaneously, at the time of the Big Bang. First is the universe of matter, in which we live. The second is its opposite, the antimatter universe. The third is the tachyon universe, which somehow “surrounds” the other two.

Each of these universes has its own, unique properties regarding space and time. In our universe, nothing can exceed the speed of light, and time moves forward. In the tachyon universe, nothing can be slowed below the speed of light, and at least apparently, time stands still. Because of this, all light that has been and ever will be produced in the tachyon universe is visible at any moment, filling that universe with incomprehensibly brilliant light capable of instantly blinding a human being through his own shut eyelids.

Objects in our universe also exist in the tachyon universe, or at least have tachyon-based analogues. Thus, there is a tachyon equivalent of the Milky Way, which matches the galaxy with which we are familiar on a star-for-star, planet-for-planet, asteroid-for-asteroid basis. Because of the timeless nature of tachyon space, all the light ever produced by a star during its lifetime exists throughout time, as does the shadow cast by a large, non-luminous object such as a planet. The flow of such a tremendous amount of light creates physical currents in tachyon space strong enough to carry "small" objects—such as starships—at speeds which, in fact, far exceed the speed of light in our own universe.

Though the antimatter universe is theoretically more similar to our own than is the tachyon universe, we have little empirical data regarding its nature. Physicists know that antimatter predominates in the antimatter universe, just as matter does in our own, and that nothing in the antimatter universe can be accelerated past the speed of light. They further theorize that time moves backward in the antimatter universe, at least relative to the progression of time in our own universe. Because of the violent reaction of antimatter and matter, we have been unable to send even an unmanned probe into the antimatter universe to prove this theory. Yet were this difficulty somehow overcome, it might be possible to travel to any point in history by switching back and forth between the matter and antimatter universes.

The Kilrathi

In this war of cultures, it is critical to understand the thinking behind the enemy's actions. We must analyze their thought processes if we ever hope to anticipate their reactions and prepare for their tactical moves.

Evolution of the Kilrathi

The Kilrathi are a vaguely mammalian race from a planet several hundred light years from Sol. Kilrathi civilization arose from the harsh deserts of Kilrah, where the species' predatory forefathers first learned to hunt. Later, they used their forepaws and emerging intelligence to fashion crude shelters from the scalding acidic ash that frequently followed massive volcanic eruptions in their tectonically unstable world. With this tool-making ability came the capacity to construct traps for their more evasive prey (particularly a small, intelligent, chimp-like creature which remains to this day a Kilrathi delicacy) and ultimately, weapons.

With the advent of intelligence, territorial conflicts among hunters were inevitable. The Kilrathi learned early in their social development the art of killing other Kilrathi. In fact, the whole of Kilrathi history is an extended chronicle of civil wars so brutal that they make those in human history pale by comparison.

This unrestrained carnage continued until two centuries ago, when a devastating war erupted between the two most powerful Kilrathi Empires. This resulted in the utter destruction of one and established the uncontested supremacy of the other. The current ruling family came into power at the cost of millions of warriors and several sterilized worlds. United under one rule, it was only natural that the Kilrathi's territorial ambitions should turn outward to other life-bearing worlds. Now, they aggressively claim what they find and take by force what does not bow to their claim.

Bred as warriors and raised for battle, the Kilrathi hold little regard for pleasantries. Their entire culture is based on war and aggression, elevated to religious levels. Both Kilrathi aesthetic and technological design reflect the species' fanatical focus on death, conquest and domination.

Kilrathi history never experienced cultures paralleling those of Earth's ancient Egypt, China, Greece, Renaissance Europe or the Utopian Underground of 2200—cultures that knew prolonged peace, reflection and artistic development. Because of this, Kilrathi aesthetics remain (by human standards) primitive, more like those of aboriginal cultures on Earth.

When the Kilrathi met humankind, they finally encountered a race whose technology and power rivaled their own. Unfortunately, half a millennium of experience made it impossible for the Kilrathi to accept another race as their equal—their only method for dealing with alien cultures was to conquer and subjugate them. Over four centuries, the Kilrathi built a martial state two hundred light years across, ruled by the Emperor of Kilrah.

Kilrathi Language

Thrak'hra are the noble class of Kilrah, with *Kilra'hra* being the non-noble scum. Prince Thrakhath refers to them as "Kilra'hra scum" in the introduction to *WC2*, as the scum are in the process of kicking his Kilrathi loyalist troops off their planet during the First Battle of Ghorah Khar.

Thrak itself means "noble," which is why it's the first syllable of Prince Thrakhath's name. (*Thrakhath* means "noble warrior.")

Nar is a Kilrathi word implying "native of." Hobbes' name, for example, is actually *Ralgha nar Hhallas*.

Kilrathi written language is first seen in *Secret Missions 2*, in the cockpit of the captured *Dralthi* fighter. The language is written in series of four vertical lines, each line comprising a full line, a split line or a shorter line with a dot above or below it. This set of four lines creates a single syllable. Vertical sets of the four-line "kanji" equivalents are sentences.

Social Structure

Kilrathi warriors bear some similarity to the old Imperial Army of Japan, never giving up honor even at the cost of their lives. In fact, it is not at all uncommon for disgraced crew members to commit *Zu'kara* (ritual throat-slashing suicide) for something as simple as insulting their superiors.

A Kilrathi's future, both as a warrior and a citizen, is determined by his or her social status from birth. The entire population of Kilrah swears allegiance to one of eight clans, each with a unique social status. Every clan swears loyalty to its current leader, and even the Imperial bloodlines themselves are subdivided into clans of sorts. The Emperor holds absolute power, and can casually order executions and banishments. Coups and assassinations are commonplace political maneuvers.

All clans in Kilrah and its surrounding moons take the phrase “born leader” quite seriously, passing royal bloodlines down from one generation to another. *Kiranka* is the noblest clan of Kilrah, with clan members holding chief positions in the loyalist troops and in government. The Emperor holds absolute power, and can casually order executions and the like. Coups and assassinations are commonplace political maneuvers. Presumably the current Emperor came to power in a similar fashion. We never state it at any point in the games, but he lost his left eye (replaced with a prosthetic eye) in a politically motivated battle. The Emperor, during *WC2*, was most often found at the Kilrathi Battle Command Center near the world of Hhallas, in the M’shrak Sector, but came to K’Tithrak Mang at Thrakhath’s request at the beginning of *WC2*.

Not much is known about the remaining Kilrathi social structure, except that Kilrathi women are in charge of religion, especially the priestesses of the war-god Sivar. Females control all religious factions on Kilrah and direct all offerings and religious festivities, such as those that occurred during the Sivar ritual on Firekka.

Uniform

Kilrathi designers never developed an appreciation for order and symmetry, and therefore their designs are frequently asymmetric and discordant by our standards. The imagery is iconic and bold, oriented almost entirely towards glorifying previous battles and intimidating foes. The standard warrior’s attire is unrefined, a peculiar mix of functionality and ornament, high-tech and primitive.

As the Kilrathi remain strongly clan-oriented, uniforms are prominently decorated with symbols and insignia identifying the warrior’s clan and family. Favorite colors include reds, blacks and maroons. Metallic textures lean toward gold and blood-red. The natural, coppery color of Kilrathi plastisteel (of which their spacecraft are also constructed) is frequently found in personal armor.

Ship Design

Kilrathi starships are designed around both lethal functionality and psychological warfare. Almost always asymmetrical, most Kilrathi vessels incorporate fang or claw-like curves and points to accentuate their formidable look. Engines and weaponry are always placed on conspicuous display, and eerie paint schemes or other aggressive markings are common.

Kilrathi ships often resemble ornate cutting weapons. It is not uncommon for inexperienced human pilots flying markedly superior ships to become intimidated at the first sight of a gun-bristling Kilrathi fighter.

Architecture

Kilrathi architecture is driven by many of the same barbaric principles found in other aspects of their culture. The Kilrathi’s roots as rock-dwelling creatures are evident in their dwellings — mesa-like pillars and protrusions are often found rising from unlikely locations. Exposed machinery is common, and ceilings are rarely enclosed, leaving cables and ductwork exposed.

Lighting is usually dark and murky, and the high temperatures and zero humidity favored by the species often results in decidedly dusty atmospheric effects. And, as with clothing, trophies of war play a prominent role in interior decoration — skulls of victims or blasted hull fragments of conquered starships are often placed on garish display.

The War

In 2634, the Emperor committed the entirety of the Kilrathi to the defeat or destruction of humankind. The ferocity of their initial attacks caught the Confederation by surprise; thousands of worlds and billions of lives were lost before the Confederation could marshal any serious opposition to the alien onslaught.

The desperate struggle between man and Kilrath has pitted the determination and ingenuity of human defenders against the specialization and fanaticism of the genetically-engineered Kilrathi war machine. Through desperation as much as genius, the humans have fought back after their early losses. By 2654, twenty years after the war broke out, the conflict has devolved into a bloody stalemate, typified by a constant stream of dirty little skirmishes over war-torn worlds.

Premise

You are one of the Imperial Navy's finest—a hot, young starfighter pilot, fresh from the Imperial Academy on Terra and combat flight training in the Vega system. All your life, you've heard the stories of the brave Imperial pilots, defending humanity against the vicious Kilrathi monsters. As you arrive on the Kilrathi frontier, your heart soars in anticipation of a life of glory and adventure.

A newly-commissioned officer, you've been assigned to a strike carrier, the TCS *Tiger's Claw*. One of the Empire's fastest carrier ships, the *Tiger's Claw* fulfills a troubleshooting role in the 36th Confederation Battle Fleet. It is one of the Fleet's "first response" vessels, usually the first Confederation ship to encounter the enemy in a combat situation.

Spaceflight and Combat

The core of *Wing Commander* is a state-of-the-art spaceflight combat simulation in which you and your wingman dogfight with the fighters, corvettes, cruisers, dreadnoughts and other ships of the Kilrathi Imperial Force.

The Environment

Beyond the spaceships, missiles and asteroids, at the very limit of *Wing Commander* space, are a variety of celestial bodies. Though they are so far away from the player's vessel that they seem fixed in place, these planets, stars and nebulae provide the game with a colorful and realistic background, as well as offering points of reference for the pilots. For example, one battle may take place in an alien solar system; the star would be visible in the distance on one side, while its planets could be seen in other directions. Of course, the inner planets, whose dark sides would be turned to the battlefield, would appear as only crescent-shaped slivers, while those farther out are nearly-full spheres, since it is their lit faces that are turned to the combatants.

In the Cockpit

But the breathtaking realism of *Wing Commander* doesn't end at the edge of the pilot's windshield—the interior of his ship is also depicted in vivid detail.

Control Panels

In fact, each of the fighter-ships you can fly has a different interior. Arranged around the control panels are a variety of functional scanners, readouts and displays. One scanner shows the position of other ships. Other displays indicate the ship's available power, its shield level and its armament. As your ship is damaged, various displays will spark, explode or go dead, depriving you of vital information.

The Pilot

The heart of a starfighter is its pilot, and the ships in *Wing Commander* are no exception. Unlike other airplane and spaceflight simulators, which show—at best—the pilot's hand on the joystick, *Wing Commander* offers a full-body, over-the-shoulder view of an animated pilot. Not only does his right hand steer the on-screen joystick along with your maneuvers, but his whole body moves in response to your actions and the environment. When the ship pulls a tight turn, the pilot's head tilts with the G-force of the maneuver; when the ship is hit by lasers or missiles, his whole body shakes with the impact. If you hit a key to drop your shields or fire a missile, the on-screen pilot reaches with his left hand to hit the appropriate button on his control panel.

Radio Communications

One of the most important parts of any dogfight is the radio chatter that accompanies and describes the action. This, too, is reflected in *Wing Commander*. A video screen on the pilot's control panel displays a close-up shot of whoever happens to be speaking to you at any given moment—your commander back on the *Tiger's Claw*, your wingman or the alien ace you've met in previous battles. The speaker's situation is reflected on the video screen—if he's been damaged, the image is fuzzy and flickering. If he blows up, the screen flickers white, then goes dead.

Wing Commander III takes communications one step further. When a pilot sends you a transmission, an actual video image appears in your VDU screen. Enemies also appear, and when they die, you see their cockpits fill with smoke.

Coming Home

If you managed to survive to the conclusion of your mission, whether successful or not, the screen will cut from the cockpit view you saw throughout the battle to an exterior view of the *Tiger's Claw*.

Your ship, and that of your wingman if it survived, can be seen approaching in the distance, returning to the carrier after the mission. As you draw near, your Automatic Carrier Landing Systems (ACLS, an auto-guidance system in your ship that links with the carrier's computer) from the *Tiger's Claw* usually guides your ships into the landing bay on the flight deck.

Next, the scene cuts to a view of you climbing out of your fighter while an attentive mechanic inspects the ship for damage. When you leave the landing bay, you report to the briefing room for a mission analysis and debriefing. There, your squadron commander briefly analyzes your performance, and assesses mission success. He offers his congratulations if you've done well, or chews you out if you performed poorly. After debriefing, if you've performed especially well, you may be awarded a promotion or a decoration. These honors are conferred by the commander of the *Claw* in an awards ceremony with simple animation.

(Note that in *Wing Commander III*, however, medals and promotions were passed over in favor of other new abilities — interactive conversations, choice of ship and ordnance, enhanced cockpit features, and more.)

Following the debriefing, the game may take you to any of a handful of inter-scenario scenes, showing you sharing a drink in the officer's club with your fellow pilots, enjoying a brief shore leave planetside, or watching the news in the *Claw's* recreation hall.

Of course, the lead story on the newscast is the latest update on the war against the Kilrathi. The holovision newscast will show highlights of your most recent battle as a miniaturized, holographic dogfight over the holoprojector in the rec hall. You and your fellow pilots can be seen sitting around the projector, watching the program.

TECHNOLOGY

TECHNOLOGY

JUMP DRIVE

Introduction

Compounding the military and civilian jobs in the *Wing Commander* universe is the fact that the speed of light remains an impenetrable barrier. In order to travel the requisite great distances, space ships take advantage of anomalies in the space-time fabric known as “jump points”—where space is literally folded up into itself and a hole has opened up that allows passage to an inconceivably distant spot in space.

Because of the complex and unpredictable astrophysics underlying jump points, there’s no telling where they’ll lead until someone’s gone through them at least once and lived to tell the tale. In one sector, it could take three jumps to travel 20 light years and one jump to travel 1000.

The intelligent use of jump points, of course, is predicated on someone having found, charted and recorded information about them. Which in itself isn’t a bad way to earn yourself a hefty chunk of taxpayers’ money—in *Privateer*, although it can be a real bitch to get back “home” when you’re stranded 25,000 light years away and don’t have the first clue as to how you got there.

Pre-Jump Travel

Prior to jump travel, “human space” consisted of just four habitable planets: Terra; Venus (terraformed from 2079 to 2354); Mars (terraformed from 2106 to 2224); and Leto [Proxima Centauri IV] (colonized by slowboats from 2325 to 2416). Most of the race was trapped in the Solar System, fiercely competing for its dwindling resources. Life for the majority of Mankind’s 30 billion souls was nasty, brutish and short.

Within 20 years of the discovery of the Akwende Drive in 2416, the teeming billions had exploded across the stars, settling worlds as far as 30 light-years from Sol. Today, the Terran Confederation consists of half a hundred worlds, and the Core Worlds—the colonies within that original 30-light-year sphere—have grown to the

point where they themselves are sending out explorers and colonists. Not since the development of the plow, beginning the Agricultural Revolution, has any single innovation had such impact on the quality of life for so much of the race.

History

Many technological developments were invented—that is, some scientist perceived a way to apply his theories, and with constant effort toward that goal finally managed to realize his vision. The steam engine, the automobile, the airplane, the gravity polarizer—history abounds with examples.

The jump drive wasn't invented. It was discovered.

The Grand Unified Theory, perfected in the late 2000s, led to the development of antigravity vehicles. Unlike modern “antigravity” vehicles, which simply divert and channel gravity, these vehicles actually negated gravity, by projecting a field in which the gravitic mass of every particle was suppressed. This meant that the occupants of the vehicle were weightless, and thus subject to all the inconveniences and discomforts that condition causes. Naturally, there was immense commercial pressure to develop a more comfortable alternative.

In 2414, Dr. Shari Akwende, a subatomic engineer working for *Aérospatiale Afrique*, was searching for a solution to that exact problem. The Grand Unified Theory implied the existence of antigravitons, counterparts to the gravitons that carried the gravitic force. These antigravitons have half-lives of many microseconds—very short in “real-world” terms, but quite long in the subatomic field. Like many researchers of the time, Akwende assumed that generating a sufficient constant antigraviton flux would push something away, in the same way that *graviton* flux pulled things toward the generator. This would result in vehicles that were no more weightless than 20th century airplanes, but that retained all the advantages of antigravity.

Akwende had already made a significant advance, putting her years ahead of her competitors. She had already determined that matter-antimatter collisions *conducted in a suppressed-gravity field* would produce antigravitons. But so far, her antigraviton generator had produced no thrust whatsoever, in spite of generating what was, in theory, a large enough flux. In the course of trying to detect any thrust at all, Akwende discovered that the antigravitons showed a very slight tendency to head in a single direction. That direction changed over the course of the year, and when correlated with Earth's motion, pointed in the rough direction of Alpha Centauri. Repeating the experiments on Pluto enabled Akwende to triangulate on the exact point in space, a small patch between the orbits of Pluto and Neptune, where the antigravitons were heading.

Akwende (with *Aérospatiale Afrique*'s funding) chartered a high-speed spaceship and headed for the spot. She tracked the anomaly down to an exact location—a location that was slowly drifting through space—but was completely unable to detect anything there. Once it was near enough that the antigravitons reached the anomaly before decaying, the generator finally started producing the thrust Akwende had been seeking—enough thrust that the generator was ripped from its mounting and hurled against the bulkhead, damaging the device beyond repair.

Aérospatiale Afrique duly filed a patent on the device as a reactionless drive, albeit a highly limited one, and proceeded to survey the anomaly thoroughly, in the hopes of reproducing whatever characteristics resulted in the antigravitic thrust. On 2416.013, desperate to turn the “Akwende Effect” into something commercially useful (and thus justify the millions of yen the increasingly displeased officers of *Aérospatiale Afrique* had sunk into the

project), Akwende mounted a large, well-braced antigraviton generator in the hold of the survey vessel *Haile Selassie*. She fed the generator over three times the fuel previously attempted. The ship sped toward the anomaly and vanished in a burst of light.

Lloyd's of London listed the ship as "lost with all hands," and duly paid Aerospatiale Afrique's insurance policy. They weren't out of pocket for long, though: On 2416.187, the *Haile Selassie* reappeared in a burst of light at the anomaly. The ship was returning unharmed from a voyage to Alpha Centauri; the six month delay was the amount of time it had taken Akwende to travel from the Alpha Centauri anomaly to Leto, pick up a selection of goods and messages from the Letan colonists, and find the now-moved anomaly for the return flight.

Dr. Shari Akwende had achieved the signal honor of being not only the first human to travel to another star *and return*, but also of being the discoverer of the drive that made the trip possible. That year, she received the Nobel Prize for Physics. Seven years later, as the massive colonization drive propelled by the Akwende Drive began, she received the Nobel Prize for Peace.

On 2429.226, the research ship *Haile Selassie II*, carrying Akwende and a crew of 30, vanished while studying the migration of jump points. Dr. Akwende achieved a final, dubious distinction: she became the first of the 43 scientists to date who have died while investigating the Akwende Effect.

Theory

Even today, only a small fraction of the Akwende Effect is truly understood. There are three competing theories, each of which requires the suspension of a different fundamental law. However, a large body of empirical research has been compiled, and the Effect can be described, if not understood. The following explanation, simplified for a non-scientific audience, is transcribed from a lecture given by Dr. Jerome Lubyantov of the Akwende Institute for Antigraviton Studies.

"First of all, let's start by calling it a 'jump drive' instead of the Akwende Drive. I mean no disrespect for Dr. Akwende, but jump drive is the common parlance, and it's easier to say. (I have yet another name for the drive, but we will come to that later.)

"Okay. The reason *why* it's called that is because the ship 'jumps' between stars: It starts out in one spot, turns on the engines, and—*poof!*—instantly it arrives at another spot. It doesn't cross the intervening space, it doesn't spend any time in flight, it doesn't even move, really. It just disappears *here*, and reappears *there*.

"Of course, nothing is ever that simple. It can't just turn on the engines anywhere. It has to start out at a jump point. (The real name is "antigraviton tropic anomaly," but that's more of a mouthful than Akwende Drive!) Similarly, it doesn't arrive just anywhere. The destination is determined by the departure point.

"Think of jump points and jump lines like tram stations and monorail tracks. You go to a station, get on the tram, and it takes you down the tracks to the end of the line, where you get off. Each station only connects to one line, and the line only has one other station—the end. If you want to go to a different place, you pick a different station and get on a different line.

“If the place you want to go is someplace other than a tram station—as it usually is—you hop on the tram line that is closest to the place you really want to go, then walk from there. And if you’re not already at the right station, you’ll have to walk to get on the tram as well.

“Now, if you or I were laying out the tramlines for a major city, well, we’d put all of the stations downtown, where they’re easy to get to. And we’d make all the lines go to interesting places, or at least other cities; if nothing else, there would always be a line connected each city to its nearest neighbor. And the bigger the city, the more lines we’d put in. And, above all, you’d make sure the stations were always open, and always stayed in one spot!

“But God built his tramlines on some higher plan than mere human convenience. The stations are all out in the suburbs, at the very edges of star systems. And most lines go to empty fields (planetless stars) or ghost towns (black holes, neutron stars and such). And it’s the *really* empty cities — the big gas giants like Sirius or Betelgeuse, or the really massive black holes like Enigma — that have the most jump lines, while the places we humans like to live, like Proxima Centauri or Capella, or even Sol itself, only have one or two lines. There’s also no guarantee that there will be a line at all to the nearest star; only by pure fortune does the Terran jump line lead to our nearest neighbor, Proxima Centauri. And the stations wander around, sometimes by as much as many million kilometers. Sometimes the stations close, vanishing altogether. But still, inconveniences and all, the system works, and it’s better than walking.

“We can carry the analogy a little further. Just like monorail tracks, the jump lines generally only run straight — as far as we can tell, they curve back and forth a little bit, following the “terrain” in deep space. And like the monorail, there are only a few trains each day, and each can only carry a limited number of passengers. If more people want to go, they have to wait until the next day, for the next trains. Of course, there are no real “trains” involved in jump travel—what really happens is that each jump weakens the jump line, and it takes time (about one standard day for most lines, but it varies) for the line to renew itself.

“But our monorail analogy is useless for even getting a glimpse of *how* jump travel works. To describe some of the physics involved, I’ll use a different analogy. The analogy is easy to visualize but hard to understand, so follow closely.

“Stretch a large cloth, like a bedspread, tight. Now put two rocks on it, some distance apart. You’ll notice that each rock is sitting at the bottom of a deep dimple in the sheet. If they’re close enough together, the two dimples intersect, with a saddle-shaped “ridge” between them. If you put a marble next to one of the rocks and push it hard enough toward the other one, it will roll up out of the dimple, across the ridge, and down into the other dimple, winding up next to the second rock.

“Take the whole assembly and start lowering it into a pool, keeping the cloth stretched tight. Stop when the two rocks are just covered in water. Everything is the same, except that the water slows down the marble, and it becomes much harder to push it up out of the dimples. In fact, for the sake of this discussion, we’ll say it’s now impossible to push the rock out of the dimples. So, to repeat the marble trick, you’ll have to start with the marble out of the water, but still on a line between the two rocks.

“Replace the bedspread with deep space, the rocks with stars and the marble with a jump ship, and you’ve got a fairly good model of jump travel. The pool is the “antigraviton potential field,” and the water level the “Olivarez equilibrium boundary,” but we’ll call it sea level.

“Remember that we’ve replaced the two-dimensional bedspread with three-dimensional space. Those of us trapped inside that space view it as flat. So rather than seeing “sea level” as some line above our heads, we see it

as a sphere enclosing each star at a constant radius. (To picture this, take the bedspread out of the water and take the rocks away. You've got two large wet circles.) If we draw a line from one star to another, we'll find the jump points at the precise intersections of the "sea level" sphere and that line.

"Or at least we *would*, if space had just two stars. But even this one galaxy has billions of stars, and nearly every star has planets, and the gaps between the stars are filled with gas and dust and rocks. Every single piece of matter, right down to a single gas molecule, makes its own dimple in the bedspread—and every piece of matter is *moving*, so the dimples wander around. What that means is that the line between the two stars is not precisely straight, nor is it constant or even predictable. So the intersections of that line and sea level move around. Plus, sea level isn't constant—the planets have their own, moving dimples that make the sea level sphere irregular. Here at the Institute, we think we've even detected "tides" in the antigraviton sea, adding to the variation in sea level.

"Back to our bedspread. The closer together the two rocks are, the closer to the water the ridge is. In fact, if the rocks are heavy enough, and close enough together, the ridge will be underwater. No jump line. On the other hand, if the rocks are light enough, they won't dip into the water at all. Again, no jump line.

"This is a place where the analogy breaks down. The marble views the water as nothing but a hindrance. The jump ship, however, *needs* the antigraviton potential—it needs the exact right amount, not too much or too little. That's why the big stars have more jump points than the small ones—they dip deeper into the antigraviton well.

"Now we'll mix metaphors. If something large enough to dip below sea level passes between two stations, it sets up a new station. Jump ships will find themselves arriving at an unexpected destination and having to survey out the second jump point to continue. This is why jump flights are occasionally delayed—the jumps themselves are still instantaneous, but the ship has to take time at the "transfer station." If the intervening body is too close to one of the stations for a jump line, then the jump ship has no choice but to return to port and wait until the "weather" clears.

"This phenomenon, called "equipotential eclipsing," happens more frequently than one might expect, since jump lines aren't straight. As I mentioned before, the lines can twist every which way, following the contours of space. Bodies heavy enough to eclipse a jump line—and something as small as Luna can do it—are also heavy enough to attract the line toward themselves.

"Let's change the bedspread a little. Make it out of plastic instead of cloth. Now it returns to its normal flat condition more slowly. When we roll a marble across a ridge, the marble makes its own dimple as it moves. The bedspread takes time to resume its normal shape after the marble has passed. With a small jump ship, this isn't much of an issue. With a large jump ship, however, this can severely distort the jump line—even enough to shift it to a different destination, or erase it altogether.

"Our marble analogy has one major flaw. A jump ship *doesn't actually move*. It doesn't cross the intervening space the way the marble rolls along the ridge. The ridge line is a physical thing that the marble follows. The jump line is a fictional construct that helps us predict where (and whether!) the jump ship will arrive. The passage of the marble warps the bedspread behind it; thus, the marble has no effect on its own journey, but only on the journeys of marbles that attempt to follow it. A jump ship's journey, however, is instantaneous. There is no "before" or "after"—the ship warps the jump line, and if the line shifts its endpoint, then that endpoint is where the ship reappears. And if the line vanishes altogether, then so does the ship.

"Jump ships are safe because jump pilots are careful, *not* because jump travel itself is safe. Quite the contrary: jump travel is almost insanely dangerous. The speed of light is one of God's most fundamental physical laws, and

He never tolerates our violating it. If we push against the limits of jump travel even slightly, we are immediately punished for our temerity.

“At the beginning of this lecture, I said I had another name for the Akwende Drive. That name is the Voodoo Drive. Voodoo, for those of you who don’t know, was a religion in the Caribbean, on Terra, back in the 16th to 20th centuries. Voodoo magic relied on following pre-set rituals as closely as possible to achieve some desired effect. These rituals were never varied from nor experimented with, lest the voodoo priest suffer the wrath of the gods. And just like voodoo, Akwende Drive engineering is a matter of following the recipes and rituals as closely as possible. We know the rituals work because we’ve been using them almost daily for two centuries.

“Perhaps someday we’ll come to understand the principles behind the Akwende Effect. When that happens, we may learn where vanished jump ships go; we may learn how to predict jump point migration; we may even learn how to jump from anywhere to anywhere, not just at jump points. But until then, we’ll just keep shaking the rattles, and sprinkling the chicken blood, and performing our voodoo rituals just so. And just think—*this* is the cornerstone of our civilization.”

Practice

A jump-ship has three essential components. The first is an Akwende Drive itself. The drive is usually mounted in the center of the ship, securely braced. The second is a set of fusion engines, for maneuvering to and from jump points. The third is a containment vessel of antiprotons, fuel for the antigraviton generator. Most large ships also carry the equipment to create more antiprotons and recharge the tank, but this isn’t strictly necessary.

To begin a journey, the jump ship must first *find* the jump point. In settled systems, the jump points are carefully charted and tracked—a ship will know what section of space to search, but it must search nevertheless. To find a jump point, the drive is switched on at a very low level, producing a slow trickle of antigravitons. Sensing equipment around the edges of the drive determine where the antigravitons are leading. All jump ships are fitted with this equipment, but most civilian craft can only home in on jump points within a few hundred thousand kilometers. Military or exploration vessels can plot jump points across many millions of kilometers.

Once the location of the point is determined, the ship starts its fusion engines and heads toward it. As the ship gets closer to the jump point, the attraction of the antigravitons toward the point becomes stronger and stronger. When the ship is close enough to the point that the antigravitons can actually arrive at the point itself before decaying (a distance of about 500 meters), the jump drive starts to produce real thrust, though at this point that thrust is very small.

The ship stops at the edge of the jump area to get a precise bearing on the jump point, including its drift rate. It then kicks in the engines, gets as close as possible to the jump point, and activates the jump drive at full power. The high thrust provided by the jump drive drags the ship to the exact jump point. Once the source of antigravitons coincides with the jump point, an antigraviton field is created with a roughly 500-meter radius. (The radius is a constant, based on the half-life of antigravitons.) If the intensity of this field is sufficient, based on the mass contained within the field and the speed with which that mass is moving, then everything in the field vanishes at the point of departure and arrives at the point of arrival, keeping all its original momentum.

All parts of the jump-ship must be subjected to roughly the same amount of antigraviton flux. Because of the short lifespan of these particles, this effectively translates into a maximum ship radius of about 500 meters. Since

particles have a half-life, this radius is not fixed, and to a certain extent the power of the drive determines the radius of the sphere. Ships bigger in radius than 500 meters take vastly more power than ones smaller than this threshold. If a ship is too big for its antigraviton flux, then only the parts that are within the field complete the jump—and if that means the bow of the ship is caught outside the field, then it's left behind, and a serious damage-control problem ensues.

Since the speed of the ship affects the amount of antigravitons required to initiate the jump, a ship can reduce the jump's energy needs by carefully maneuvering to the exact location of the jump point, and matching vectors with the jump point's drift, before turning on the drive. This results in the minimum-energy jump for a given mass, but can take quite some time to achieve. However, for ships that are close to the 500-meter maximum, this is the safest way to make a jump.

Each jump draws energy out of the jump line used. This energy is proportional to the energy required to initiate the jump. Thus, a minimum-energy jump takes less energy out of the jump line. Reducing the energy of a jump line may make it connect to a new destination, or it may disconnect it entirely. When a ship attempts a jump that depletes the line's energy, it will either arrive at the wrong destination, or it will simply disappear. No one knows where ships that vanish this way go; they are presumed destroyed.

When a ship generates more antigraviton energy than it needs for the jump, the excess is dissipated in a burst of light and neutrinos at both ends of the jump. This burst is easily detectable from long range. If the ship takes time to calculate the exact amount of energy required, and is equipped with a "variable-flux engine," it can make a "stealth" jump, eliminating the flash at both ends. Under normal conditions, ships seldom bother with this; in fact, very few civilian ships are even equipped with the gear necessary to calculate the antigraviton flux.

As has been mentioned several times, the jump takes no time at all, in either the frame of reference of the jump ship or that of an outside observer at either end. The only time required for jump travel is that of traveling to and from jump points.

FUSION ENGINES

Within a system, the jump drive that makes travel between stars economical is useless. Instead, ships carry huge fusion engines, which create thrust by the same centuries-old process once used to generate electrical power. These engines get much of their fuel from space itself, by sweeping up the gas that makes up the "solar wind" produced by stars. Fusion engines provide high thrust and low fuel consumption, and have become almost the sole engine type used on spacecraft today.

The fusion engine actually consists of two elements. The first, and most important, is the engine itself. This consists of electromagnetic field generators mounted at the stern of the ship. Hydrogen gas is released into the field created by these generators, where it is compressed under force comparable to that in the center of a star. The compression creates "hot fusion," the same process that drives stars. (This is related to, but very different from, the "cold fusion" used by the energy cells that power nearly all modern equipment.) That energy, in turn, propels the ship, at thrusts from 8 standard gravities for light fighters to 1 or 2 gees for large freighters and battleships. The fusion reaction also provides power for the ship's weapons, shields and other systems; backup power is provided by standard cold-fusion cells.

The second element is the ramscoop. This also consists of electromagnetic field generators—in fact, small ships use the same generators to create both fields. The ramscoop field, projected for up to several kilometers around and ahead of the ship, sweeps hydrogen gas into large intakes in the bow of the ship, where it is filtered and stored in the ship's fuel tank. The faster a ship goes, the more fuel gets swept into the tank. At low speeds, the fuel swept up is fairly insignificant. At high speeds, the fuel is enough to maintain the ship's engines indefinitely, without dipping into the tank. A ship must always use tank fuel for acceleration, but once at speed it can rely on ramscoop intake for operation. A very large ship moving at moderate speeds actually sweeps up more gas than it uses, and can recharge its tanks as it flies; small ships like fighters usually run at a slight deficit, and must refuel from their carrier or a tanker.

One side effect of the ramscoop is drag—sweeping up the gas actually acts to slow down the ship. This drag is greater the faster the ship goes, and must be countered by thrust. Thus, ships have a maximum speed based on their thrust and size, and cannot accelerate beyond this speed. (The maximum speed of a bulky freighter, for instance, is about 150 kps; for a sleek fighter, it's 500 kps.) When a ship shuts off its engines, it slowly coasts to a stop.

Small ships such as fighters have “afterburners,” which adjust the ramscoop field. The opening of the field is reduced, to reduce drag, and the gas is routed *past* the ship rather than into the tanks. At the stern, the ramscoop field compresses the gas to fusion, acting like an extra set of engines. The result is 50% more thrust and a nearly 200% higher top speed. However, no fuel is being swept into the tanks, and thus using afterburners rapidly depletes the small fuel tanks that fighters carry.

If a ship doesn't need to maneuver, it can reduce the size of the ramscoop field while maintaining normal thrust. This reduces drag and drastically increases the ship's maximum speed—up to 200,000 kps! However, the ship becomes virtually incapable of maneuvering. Ships maneuver by manipulating the engines' fields to redirect the exhaust. The higher the thrust (and therefore speed), the higher the maneuvering thrust. Under normal operation, ships make sweeping, constant turns like atmospheric craft, rather than the clumsy turn-and-burn turns made by 20th century chemical-fueled spacecraft. But when a ship is traveling faster than its max speed, it has to fall back on primitive maneuvering, wasting time and fuel. Thus, ships only use reduced-scoop speeds when they do not expect to need to maneuver, such as when traveling from a world out to the general area of a jump point.

The complex, sophisticated electromagnetic fields used by engines and ramscoops are created by “magnetic monopoles.” These are like regular magnets, except that where a normal magnet has two poles (north and south), a monopole has only one pole (either north or south). Most monopoles are very weak; they are used like amplifiers to control and redirect much larger fields produced by standard electromagnets and such. Monopoles are an artifact left over from the Big Bang billions of years ago, and can no longer be created in the normal universe; they are thus a very valuable strategic commodity. The complexity of a ship determines how many monopoles are required; the mass and size of the ship determines how powerful each monopole must be. Thus, a typical fighter requires thirty microgauss monopoles; a cruiser needs a dozen milligauss monopoles; a large passenger liner requires four centigauss monopoles.

SHIELDS

The word “shields” most commonly refers to the defensive systems found on most spacecraft. However, these shields are actually just one application of a far more subtle and far-reaching technology: state control fields.

All matter is made of subatomic particles. These particles have various characteristics: spin, charge, mass and so forth. State control fields allow a ship to actually alter those basic characteristics for all particles within a region of space. These fields are used in a jump drive (q.v.) to suppress gravitic mass, for example. Other uses include generating antimatter and improving the efficiency of fusion engines. The most subtle and ingenious applications of state control fields, though, involve the various incarnations of shields.

Air shields. To reduce the amount of time required to launch and recover fighters, carriers leave their hangar bays open to space. To reduce the amount of time required to ready and repair fighters, all carriers keep their hangar bays pressurized, to create a “shirtsleeves” working environment. This seemingly-impossible combination works because of air shields. These shields use state control fields to align the magnetic axes of all the air molecules near the hangar bay door; sophisticated electromagnetic field generators then trap the air, pushing it back into the ship.

Gas-charged shields. Basic air shields only keep in slow-moving molecules of oxygen and nitrogen. The system is completely insufficient for defense against anti-ship weaponry, because the energy requirements of an electromagnetic field large enough and strong enough to stop fast-moving incoming particles would be exorbitant. Only powerful forces such as the strong nuclear force are adequate for these needs; unfortunately, the strong nuclear force has an extremely short range (the diameter of a molecule).

Most ships use gas-charged shields to solve this problem. The ship uses an enhanced form of air shield to trap a thin spherical shell of gas around the ship. State control fields then manipulate the molecules in the gas to amplify atomic forces, forming an impenetrable wall to stop incoming attacks.

When something collides with the shield, it is instantly stopped. Its kinetic energy is transformed into heat energy, vaporizing the attack and dissipating some of the shield’s gas. The gas loss degrades the protection of the shield; when all of the gas is gone, the shield is unable to stop any attacks. To counter this, the ship carries a tank of gas, which is injected into the spherical shell to replenish the shields. Xenon is the best shield gas, because of its atomic properties and because it is inert. Civilian ships, concerned more about economics than efficiency, use hydrogen instead, making their shields much weaker; however, most civilian ships are large enough to carry heavy shield generators, compensating for the inefficiency. (As a side benefit, using hydrogen as the shield gas means the shields replenish quicker, since hydrogen is floating free in space naturally.)

Stealth Technology

(Introduced in WC2, Prevalent in WC3) Rumors of Kilrathi stealth fighters, invisible to human or instrument detection. Details to follow.

SPACECRAFT

SPACECRAFT

This is the latest update from *Joan's Fighting Spacecraft*, specifically revised for Terran personnel in the Vega Sector. This supplement contains the latest specifications on both Terran and Kilrathi spacecraft, particularly the types of craft most commonly encountered in this sector. All servicemen are urged to familiarize themselves with these specifications. Computer files of this material are available in the ship's library.

Since the last edition of *Joan's Fighting Spacecraft*, several new Kilrathi ship-types have been encountered and several new Confederation craft have been added to the fleet. The *2664.128 Update* provides a description of each spacecraft you are likely to fly or encounter in the current conflict, followed by notes on the offensive and defensive systems currently active in the Terran-Kilrathi conflict. This material could mean the difference between a successful mission and a quick death.

Though most of the information presented in *Joan's* evaluations is self-explanatory, some data types may require additional explanation. (The following text is reprinted here with the permission of Ivan Borger, Jr., publisher of *Joan's Fighting Spacecraft*):

MAXIMUM VELOCITY/CRUISE VELOCITY

These are the settings for the ship's governors. This is always a relative velocity; a ship's computer calculates it relative to (a) the flagship, (b) an escorted vessel, (c) a nearby planetary body, (d) a Confederation beacon or (e) a value derived from radar positions of all visible ships. Velocity is expressed in kilometers per second (kps). The higher the values, the faster the ship.

ACCELERATION

This shows the *Joan's* evaluation of the ship's acceleration rate, described as "Bad," "Poor," "Average," "Good" or "Excellent."

MAXIMUM YAW, PITCH AND ROLL*

These characteristics, measures of a spacecraft's maneuverability, are expressed in degrees per second (dps). The higher the number, the more maneuverable the ship.

* Yaw—ability of a ship to turn to the right or left. Pitch—ability to change direction up or down. Roll—ability to rotate around the length-wise axis.

SHIP'S ARMOR

Joan's evaluation of a ship's defensive armor is expressed in centimeters thickness of Durasteel. Fore and aft shields are given in values equivalent to centimeters thickness of Durasteel.

The effectiveness of phase shields is classified—listings indicate which capital ships are equipped with these technological wonders, but no Durasteel equivalents are provided. The higher the shield and/or armor rating, the better.

Confederation Ships

Terran Confederation military aircraft represent the pinnacle of achievement in the latter half of the 27th century. This is due largely to the two key disciplines responsible for each aeronautical effort.

Aerospace Engineering evolved from primitive powered flight back on Earth. Now, it is one of the most exact sciences in the universe. At the same time, Advanced Materials Manufacturing has exploded into an industry that continues to expand at a pace that rivals the airspeed of today's top fighters.

An average of 8,000 man-years goes into the design and implementation of each plane listed below. As if this wasn't enough of a challenge, Confederation scientists are required to perform aerodynamic miracles under the urgency of an ongoing war and in conditions hampered by a scarcity of trained personnel and occasional material shortages. Despite the obstacles, these men and women are responsible for creating the most devastating flying weapons of destruction imaginable.

Fighters

P-64C FERRET

In Service	WC2
Class	Patrol Fighter
Length	10 meters
Maximum Velocity	500 kps
Cruise Velocity	360 kps
Acceleration	Good
Max. VPR	8 dps
Mass	10.5 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Mass Driver Cannon (2)	
Ship's Armor	

<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	6 cm equivalent each
<i>Front and Rear</i>	6.5 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	4.5 cm each

F-36C HORNET

In Service	WCI, SM1, SM2
Class	Light Fighter
Length	20 meters
Maximum Velocity	420 kps
Cruise Velocity	300 kps
Acceleration	Good
Max. VPR	8 dps
Mass	12.5 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Laser Cannon (2)	Dumb-Fire Missiles (2)
Heat-Seeking Missile (1)	
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	3 cm equivalent each
<i>Front and Rear</i>	3 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	3 cm each

F-54C EPEE

In Service	WC2
Class	Light Attack Fighter
Length	12 meters
Maximum Velocity	480 kps
Cruise Velocity	250 kps
Acceleration	Excellent
Max. VPR	10 dps
Mass	13 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Particle Cannon (2)	Dumb Fire Missiles (2)
Heat-Seeking Missiles (2)	
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	6 cm equivalent each
<i>Front and Rear</i>	3.5 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	3 cm each

F-44A RAPIER

In Service	WCI, SM1, SM2		
Class	Medium Fighter		
Length	24 meters		
Maximum Velocity	450 kps		
Cruise Velocity	250 kps		
Acceleration	Excellent		
Max. VPR	10 dps		
Mass	13.5 tonnes		
Ship's Weapons			
Laser Cannon (2)	Neutron Guns (2)		
Dumb-Fire Missiles (2)	Image-Recognition Missile (1)		
Friend or Foe Missiles (2)			
Ship's Armor			
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	7 cm equivalent each		
<i>Front</i>	5 cm	<i>Rear</i>	4 cm
<i>Right and Left</i>	3 cm each		

F-44G RAPIER (MARK II)

In Service	WC2		
Class	Medium Attack Fighter		
Length	19 meters		
Maximum Velocity	450 kps		
Cruise Velocity	250 kps		
Acceleration	Excellent		
Max. VPR	10 dps		
Mass	15 tonnes		
Ship's Weapons			
Laser Cannon (2)	Dumb Fire Missiles (2)		
Particle Cannon (2)	Heat-Seeking Missiles (2)		
Chaff Pod (1)	Friend or Foe Missiles (2)		
Ship's Armor			
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	8 cm equivalent each		
<i>Front and Rear</i>	6.5 cm each		
<i>Right and Left</i>	5 cm each		

F-32D SCIMITAR

In Service	WCI, SM1		
Class	Medium Fighter		
Length	25 meters		

Maximum Velocity	360 kps
Cruise Velocity	150 kps
Acceleration	Good
Max. VPR	6 dps
Mass	16 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Mass Driver Cannon (2)	Dumb-Fire Missiles (2)
Heat-Seeking Missiles (3)	
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	4 cm equivalent each
<i>Front and Rear</i>	6 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	5 cm each

A-14B RAPTOR

In Service	WCI, SM1, SM2
Class	Heavy Fighter
Length	36 meters
Maximum Velocity	400 kps
Cruise Velocity	250 kps
Acceleration	Good
Max. VPR	6 dps
Mass	20 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Neutron Guns (2)	Mass Driver Cannon (2)
Heat-Seeking Missiles (2)	Image Recognition Missiles (2)
Friend or Foe Missile (1)	Porcupine Space Mine (1)
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	7 cm equivalent each
<i>Front and Rear</i>	8 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	6 cm each

F-57A SABRE

In Service	WC2
Class	Heavy Attack Fighter
Length	24 meters
Maximum Velocity	400 kps
Cruise Velocity	220 kps
Acceleration	Excellent
Max. VPR	8 dps
Mass	22 tonnes

Ship's Weapons

Particle Cannon (2)	Image Rec. Missiles (4)
Mass Drivers (2)	Friend or Foe Missiles (2)
Chaff Pods (1)	Dumb Fire Missiles (2)

Turret

Neutron Guns (2)

Ship's Armor

<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	10 cm equivalent each
<i>Front and Rear</i>	16 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	11 cm each

A-17D BROADSWORD

In Service	WC2
Class	Heavy Bomber
Length	36 meters
Maximum Velocity	320 kps (jump capable)
Cruise Velocity	150 kps
Acceleration	Poor
Max. VPR	5 dps
Mass	100 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Torpedoes (4)	Friend or Foe Missiles (3)
Mass Driver Cannon (3)	
Turrets (3)	
Neutron Guns (2 per)	Tractor Beam (1 to rear)
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	18 cm equivalent each
<i>Front and Rear</i>	15 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	13 cm each

New Ships: Armada

Arrow
Flving Arrows

Your only assets are your speed, maneuverability and small size. As the fastest ship in the game, the *Arrow* is a pilot's fighter, and your survivability will be gauged directly on how adroit you are at staying out of the enemy's

sights. Your defensive capability is enhanced by the fact that you're also the smallest fighter in the game. Your armor and shields, however, are frankly puny. The moral to this story — don't get hit.

With a little practice, you can learn to fly the *Arrow* "sideways" — perpendicular to the enemy fighters. By turning sideways, you can often fly *between* the most powerful guns of a larger enemy.

Keep behind your enemy and chip away at his rear armor. You don't have much firepower, so you have to make those shots count if you want to chip through the enemy's shields and use your missiles.

Avoid collisions at all costs. This is harder than it sounds, because your speed can sometimes run you into a slower ship before either you or your enemy realizes what happened.

Sometimes an *Arrow* can go *too* fast, moving so quickly that it's almost impossible for the pilot to get a steady shot at the enemy. Therefore, some *Arrow* pilots prefer to keep the basic speed low, and accelerate and maneuver by occasional taps on the afterburners, relying on size, rather than speed, to keep the enemy from hitting.

Fighting Arrows

Don't waste missiles on an *Arrow*. Your guns should have plenty of power to take him out (but don't let him flip sideways and fly between your main guns). Realistically, the *Arrow* shouldn't have much of a chance one-on-one against anything larger than a *Dralthi*, but this doesn't mean they can be taken for granted! An *Arrow* can do serious damage with its two missiles if you're not on your toes.

Speed, size and maneuverability make the *Arrow* hard to hit and even harder to tail. Fortunately, with the *Arrow*'s light armor you don't need to hit too many times.

Sometimes when the *Arrow* flips you get a moment of zero motion — watch for those moments and time your shots to take advantage of them.

In Service	WC Armada
Class	Light Fighter
Length	18 meters
Maximum Velocity	795 m/s
Cruise Velocity	500 m/s
Acceleration	Excellent
Max. VPR	6/6/7 dps
Mass	4350 kg
Ship's Weapons	
Laser cannon (2)	Dart dumbfire (4)
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	1.7 cm equivalent each
<i>Front and Rear</i>	1.2 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	1.2 cm each

Phantom

Flying Phantoms

Run and strafe. You combine small size and speed with an effective offensive gun array for a ship your size.

Your IR missiles can often take out a smaller foe in a single shot. This is important, because *Dralthi* (or *Arrows*) can outrun you, and it's in your best interest to take them out quick rather than let them chip away at your defenses during a running dogfight.

Your best bet against a larger foe is to break his rear shields with your guns, then finish him off with your missiles. Keep moving and don't get hit — if you fail to effectively use your speed against a larger opponent, you're toast.

Fighting Phantoms

Phantoms aren't as quick to kill as *Arrows*, but with patience and good flying you should be able to take one out with guns only — save your missiles. Try to target the side shields when the *Phantom* is sliding.

A *Shok'lar* has a stronger advantage against a *Phantom* than any other matched pair of fighters. The *Phantom* simply has nothing that comes close to the *Shok'lar*'s cloaking device. Even without the cloaking device, the *Shok'lar*'s guns are markedly superior to the *Phantom*'s.

In Service	WC Armada
Class	Heavy Fighter
Length	40 meters
Maximum Velocity	695 m/s
Cruise Velocity	475 m/s
Acceleration	Good
Max. VPR	5 dps
Mass	8025 kg
Ship's Weapons	
Laser cannon (2)	Mass Driver Cannon (2)
Dart dumbfire (2)	Image-recognition (2)
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	2.1 cm equivalent each
<i>Front and Rear</i>	2.1 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	2.1 cm each

Wraith

Flying Wraiths

The *Wraith's* Leech missiles make it a serious threat against all other fighter types. The *Wraith* is the smallest Confederation fighter capable of mounting a serious threat against opponents of any size.

Start your attack by locking and firing Leeches, then finish the enemy with your guns or dumbfires. But save those IRs for emergencies. The Leech-IR one-two punch is a potent and seductive combination, but use it sparingly, or you might find yourself fresh out of IRs just when you need them most. The dumbfire is much more powerful than the IR, and you have a lot of them. If you can aim your dumbfires accurately, always try to use them for the kill. (Dumbfires are also your only real hope of taking out a cloaked *Shok'lar* with a missile.)

After you've used up your Leeches, run and strafe. Don't be afraid to use your dumbfires at the end of your strafing run — you have lots. Your offense is definitely superior to your defense, so keep pounding. But remember, your *Wraith* can turn faster than its afterburners can change direction. Watch out for collisions on those strafing runs.

Be careful with your long-range cannon — it's an excellent gun, but if used carelessly it can shoot down your own missiles.

Fighting Wraiths

Don't let yourself get lured into going head-to-head with a *Wraith* ... its overwhelming dumbfire loadout means that engaging a *Wraith* head-on is playing right into its hands, regardless of what you're flying.

The *Shok'lar* is the bane of the *Wraith's* existence. If the *Shok'lar* pilot uses his cloak effectively, there's virtually no way for the *Wraith* to lock on with either his Leeches or his IRs. The *Wraith* can, however, take out a *Shok'lar* with a lucky (or smart) shot from his dumbfires or his long-range cannon, so the *Shok'lar* pilot can't rely on his cloak exclusively — he's also got to use his speed and maneuverability to the best advantage.

The *Wraith* is definitely oriented towards offense. Its shields and armor are, at best, adequate, and its speed and maneuverability are not particularly outstanding. Therefore, the goal when fighting *Wraiths*, particularly with smaller fighters, is to maneuver constantly to keep out of its sights, while hammering it continuously.

When fighting multiple opponents, it's always a good idea to take out the *Wraith* first. Ideally, you want to destroy the *Wraith* before it can fire its Leech at you. Failing that, you want to keep the *Wraith* in your sights so if it does fire a Leech at you, you can have the best chance to shoot the missile down before it hits. Your best bet is to target the *Wraith's* side shields when it slides.

In Service	WC Armada
Class	Medium Fighter
Length	35 meters
Maximum Velocity	595 m/s
Cruise Velocity	450 m/s

Acceleration	Excellent
Max. VPR	5/4/5 dps
Mass	6700 kg
Ship's Weapons	
Particle cannon (2)	Reaper cannon (2)
Dart dumbfire (6)	Image-recognition (2)
Leech (2)	Chaff pods (3)
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	4.0 cm equivalent each
<i>Front and Rear</i>	3.2 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	2.2 cm each

Gladius

Flying the Gladius

The *Gladius* is a marksman's fighter. If you can make your extensive dumbfire loadout count against the enemy, you can take on absolutely anything.

Turn and roll, don't let your profile remain exposed to the enemy. Aside from the *Arrow* and *Dralthi*, you're the fastest fighter in the game, so use it. Keep the pedal to the metal.

You have lots of firepower. With good shooting and intelligent gun usage you can pound an opponent virtually continuously. All those guns drain a lot of energy, however, so time your shots carefully.

You have lots of dumbfires ... don't be afraid to use them, particularly at the end of your strafing runs. But try to save your HS missile for emergencies.

Your lack of self-targeting missiles can be a liability against smaller, hard-to-hit fighters like the *Shok'lar* and the *Jrathek*. The solution? Improve your aim. If you are a dead shot, the *Gladius'* dumbfires are an excellent answer to the *Shok'lar's* cloaking device.

Because of its speed, the *Gladius* is an excellent choice for carrier attacks.

Fighting the Gladius

Like the *Wraith*, the *Gladius* has a plethora of dumbfire missiles, so avoid head-to-head engagements at all costs.

With the *Gladius'* strong defenses, there are no quick kills against this fighter. To take out a *Gladius* you have to be a good enough pilot to avoid its dumbfire missiles, or a good enough marksman to shoot them down. Preferably both.

With its three types of guns, the *Gladius* can pound you from virtually anywhere. Keep moving and rolling — don't let it concentrate its fire on any one of your quadrants.

Sometimes the *Gladius* flips just like an *Arrow*, exposing the top or bottom for a vulnerable instant.

Avoid collisions. The *Gladius* is tough enough to shrug off most rams, but you might not be so lucky.

In Service	WC Armada
Class	Medium Fighter
Length	36 meters
Maximum Velocity	750 m/s
Cruise Velocity	500 m/s
Acceleration	Good
Max. VPR	3/4/5 dps
Mass	6900 kg
Ship's Weapons	
Laser cannon (2)	Particle cannon (2)
Tachyon cannon (2)	Dart dumbfire (8)
Heat-seeker (1)	Torpedo (1)
Chaff pod (1)	
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	5.0 cm equivalent each
<i>Front and Rear</i>	4.0 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	3.7 cm each

Banshee

Flying Banshees

You're too big and slow for any fancy maneuvering. You have to trust your shields and try to take out the enemy quick before he can ram through your defenses.

Since you're so slow, you can't run down the enemy and strafe him. You have to wait for him to come at you, then blast him as he approaches.

You have lots of self-targeting missiles, more than any other Confederation fighter.

You can save a little precious time by maneuvering with roll-and-turn. This can also give you a little extra defensive edge. It's not much, but it's virtually the only evasive tactic you have.

You're just a little faster than the *Goran*, and sometimes you can get behind one in a dogfight. This is important, because head-to-head the *Goran*'s defenses are stronger than yours.

You have a lot of offensive potential, but all those powerful guns drain a lot of power, so time your shots.

Fighting *Banshees*

Think of the *Banshee* as basically a floating bunker. It's big, effectively immobile, hard to crack and just bristling with all kinds of unpleasant and painful objects. There's really only one way to take out a *Banshee* — stay out of its sights and keep pounding it until it pops.

Try to tail it and break its rear shields. Sometimes, however, the *Banshee* can be almost too easy to tail ... it's so slow that you might find yourself crashing into its rear before you realize it. The *Banshee* can probably take it, but you probably can't, so avoid collisions at all costs.

In Service	WC Armada
Class	Heavy Fighter
Length	43 meters
Maximum Velocity	395 m/s
Cruise Velocity	350 m/s
Acceleration	Poor
Max. VPR	3/2/3 dps
Mass	8345 kg
Ship's Weapons	
Neutron gun (2)	Ionic pulse cannon (2)
Photon cannon (2)	Dart dumbfire (2)
Heat-seeker (2)	Friend-or-foe (2)
Leech (1)	Torpedo (2)
Chaff pod (2)	
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	7.0 cm equivalent each
<i>Front and Rear</i>	5.0 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	5.0 cm each

New Ships: Privateer

Tarsus

In Service	WC Privateer
Class	Merchant Scout

Length	--
Maximum Velocity	300 kps
Afterburner Velocity	600 kps
Acceleration	Average
Max. VPR	Average
Cargo Hold	100 units (150 with cargo expansion)
Ship's Weapons	
Mass driver cannon (2)	Dart dumbfire (3)
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft</i>	10.0 cm equivalent each
<i>Right and Left</i>	8.0 cm each

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 three 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.

In Service	WC Privateer
Class	Bounty Hunter Heavy Fighter
Length	--
Maximum Velocity	500 kps
Afterburner Velocity	1000 kps
Acceleration	Excellent
Max. VPR	Good
Cargo Hold	50 units (75 with cargo expansion)
Ship's Weapons	
Mass driver cannon (2)	Tachyon cannon (1)
Particle cannon (1)	Friend-or-foe (2)

Image-recognition (2)	Tractor beam (1)
Turreted Mass driver cannon (2)	
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	20.0/15.0 cm equivalent
<i>Front and Rear</i>	15.0 cm each

Demon

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.

In Service	WC Privateer
Class	Bounty Hunter Light Fighter
Length	--
Maximum Velocity	450 kps
Afterburner Velocity	1200 kps
Acceleration	Very Good
Max. VPR	Good
Ship's Weapons	
Laser (2)	Meson blaster (2)
Heat-seeker (2)	Torpedo (10) (Really?!)
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	14.0/12.0 cm equivalent
<i>Front and Rear</i>	9.0 cm each

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.

In Service	WC Privateer
Class	Merchant Scout
Length	--
Maximum Velocity	300 kps
Afterburner Velocity	700 kps
Acceleration	Average
Max. VPR	Average
Cargo Hold	150 units (225 with cargo expansion)
Ship's Weapons	
Mass driver cannon (2)	Dart dumbfire (3)
Heat-seeker (4)	Turreted mass driver (4)
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	25.0/20.0 cm equivalent
<i>Right and Left</i>	17.5 cm each

Orion

The *Orion* is perhaps the safest of all the vehicles mentioned here. It 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.

In Service	WC Privateer
Class	Mercenary Gunship
Length	--
Maximum Velocity	350 kps
Afterburner Velocity	800 kps

Acceleration	Average
Max. VPR	Poor
Cargo Hold	50 units (75 with cargo expansion)
Ship's Weapons	
Mass driver cannon (2)	Heat-seeker (3)
Turreted laser (2)	
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	48.0/50.0 cm equivalent
<i>Right and Left</i>	35.0 cm each

Stiletto

The *Stiletto* is one of the fastest ships 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.

In Service	WC Privateer
Class	Light Fighter
Length	--
Maximum Velocity	500 kps
Afterburner Velocity	1400 kps
Acceleration	Excellent
Max. VPR	Average
Ship's Weapons	
Mass Driver Cannon (2)	Heat-seeker (2)
Turrets (3)	
Neutron Guns (2 per)	Tractor Beam (1 to rear)
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	9.0/8.0 cm equivalent
<i>Right and Left</i>	7 cm each

Talon

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.

In Service	WC Privateer
Class	Light Fighter
Length	--
Maximum Velocity	400 kps
Afterburner Velocity	1000 kps
Acceleration	Very Good
Max. VPR	Good
Ship's Weapons	
Mass Driver Cannon (2)	Particle Cannon (1)
Heat-seeker (2)	
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	10.0/9.0 cm equivalent
<i>Right and Left</i>	8 cm each

New Ships: WC III

Arrow

The current version of the venerable *Arrow* fighter is a sleek and dangerous fighting machine. Although it's the smallest and least-armored Confed fighter, many ace pilots still prefer the *Arrow* to the heavier *Hellcat*.

The *Arrow* is the single fastest fighter in the game. Its speed makes it hard to shake, and its low silhouette makes it hard to hit.

The *Arrow* is a pilot's fighter. It's just plain the most *fun* fighter in the game. It's the perfect dogfighter. If you're still a little bit uncertain about your piloting abilities, you'll definitely want the extra protection offered by the *Hellcat*, but if you feel you've completely mastered the art of combat flying, you may find you're best able to make full use of your expertise in an *Arrow*.

- It's one of only two fighters in the game with an afterburner slide, allowing it to make quick jogs and dodges. This is especially useful to avoid a target at the end of a strafing run.
- Its armament is equivalent to the *Hellcat's* (though it doesn't hold out as long at full power) and it actually mounts two more missiles.
- It carries a decent complement of decoys, and even if it runs out, a top-notch pilot can often evade a missile.

- The *Arrow* can fire a volley of about a dozen shots at full guns without running into energy trouble.
- The *Arrow*'s useful whenever you're up against Skipper missiles — you'll be able to catch up with them in a pinch if you miss your first pass.

In Service	WC3
Class	Light Fighter
Length	20 meters
Mass	13 metric tonnes
Max. YPR	75/70/75 dps
Max. Velocity	520 kps
Max. Afterburn Velocity	1300 kps
Acceleration	1000 m/s ²
Weapons	
Lasers (2)	Ion cannon (2)
Missile hardpoints (4 x 2)	
2 HS/2 HS/2 IR/2 IR	
Missile Decoys (16)	
Shields	200
Ship's Armor	
80 Front and Rear	
60 Left and Right	

Hellcat V

The *Hellcat* is the current workhorse of the Confederation fleet. A baseline fighter, the *Hellcat V* is a solid vehicle in any combat situation. Most are deployed in attacks against smaller fleet ships or serve as escorts. The ship's responsive speed controls and quick turn radius make the latest *Hellcat* the best all-around ship in the fleet. It balances offense, defense, speed and maneuverability into an efficient and economical package.

- It's the perfect ship for a beginning pilot on a mission where he doesn't know precisely what to expect. It's fast and maneuverable enough to go head-to-head with light fighters, and well armored enough to withstand simultaneous attack by multiple foes.
- It features a nice, low silhouette that makes it hard to target from the front, rear or sides.
- Like the *Arrow*, it can fire about a dozen shots at full guns without having to worry about energy drain.
- Even veteran pilots often prefer the *Hellcat* when they suspect they're going to be facing a mixed force of fighters and light cap ships. The *Hellcat* is fast and maneuverable enough to hold its own in a dogfight, and its superior armor and shields make a crucial survivability difference when going in against a cap ship's turrets.

In Service	WC3
Class	Medium Fighter
Length	27 meters
Mass	14 metric tonnes
Max. YPR	60 dps
Max. Velocity	420 kps
Max. Afterburner Velocity	1300 kps
Acceleration	900 m/s ²
Weapons	
Neutron gun (2)	Ion cannon (2)
Missile hardpoints (2 x 3)	
3 IR/3 IR	
Missile Decoys (24)	
Shields 200	
Ship's Armor	
100 Front and Back	
80 Left and Right	

Thunderbolt VII

Less maneuverable than the *Arrow* or *Hellcat V*, the *Thunderbolt VII* has a formidable set of guns and missiles. It has a markedly lopsided success rate against light capital ships and medium-to-heavy fighters, though light fighters tend to outrun its fire. Most pilots agree that the *Thunderbolt* can satisfy most mission requirements outside of running scout missions. Although not as sleek or sexy as the *Hellcat* or *Excalibur*, the *Thunderbolt* is very good at what it was designed to do — go head-to-head with heavy targets.

- A traditional heavy fighter, the *Thunderbolt* has massive armor and shields and a potent gun attack.
- Its speed and maneuverability (while nowhere near *Excalibur* class) are respectable for a ship its size.
- In the hands of a good pilot, the *T-Bolt* is quite capable of bulling its way through multiple smaller opponents (the rear-mounted mass drivers are handy for shaking particularly speedy gnats off its tail).
- The *Thunderbolt's* weak spots include a hefty silhouette and a curiously sparse missile loadout.
- Also, while its three sets of forward guns pack a formidable offensive punch, they have a very high energy drain and must be fired in three or four round bursts, with pauses of one or two seconds between.
- Most pilots prefer to fly something a little more sleek than the *Thunderbolt*, unless they absolutely know that they're going to need to use a torpedo. But if that's what it's going to take to get the job done, they know that the *Thunderbolt* will deliver the goods.

In Service	WC3
Class	Heavy Fighter
Length	34 meters
Mass	20 metric tonnes
Max. YPR	60/50/60 dps
Max. Velocity	380 kps
Max. Afterburner Velocity	1000 kps
Acceleration	800 m/s ²
Weapons	
Photon cannon (2)	Plasma gun (2)
Meson blaster (2)	Mass Driver cannon rear (1)
Missile hardpoints (2 x 3)	
3 HS/3 HS	
Missile decoys (24)	
Shields	220
Ship's Armor	
120 Front and Back	
100 Right and Left	

Excalibur

This heavy fighter was experimentally tested in WC3. Once proven successful, it becomes the Confederation dream machine. The *Excalibur* rivals any Kilrathi fighter to date, combining the offensive punch of the largest bombers with the speed and maneuverability of an *Arrow*.

- Its gun combination is overwhelming, particularly its twin reaper cannons.
- Its missile load-out is enormous, and its shields and armor are rock-solid.
- Then there are those little extras that mean so much — the fastest acceleration in the game (giving the fighter it's afterburner "super slide" for quick maneuvering), the most missile decoys, jump capacity, Corinthian leather seat covers and a dashboard clock that works (OK, we're lying about the seat covers and the clock).
- In the final missions of the game, the *Excalibur* even gets an experimental cloaking device and (get this) a planet-buster torpedo, making it truly the fighter from hell.
- In fact, virtually the only weak point this fighter has anywhere is its fairly beefy silhouette, but with its extra armor, who cares?

In Service	WC3
Class	Medium Fighter

Length	32 meters
Mass	18 metric tonnes
Max. YPR	80/70/80 dps
Max. Velocity	510 kps
Acceleration	1000 m/s ²
Max. Afterburner Velocity	1400 kps

Weapons

Tachyon gun (4)
 Reaper cannon (2)
 Missile hardpoints (4 x 3)
 3 HS/3 HS/3 IR/3 IR
 Missile decoys (30)

Shields 750

Ship's Armor

250 Front and Back
 200 Left and Right

Longbow

There's something about the *Longbow* that seems to invite nautical metaphors. "Beached whale," "dying walrus" and "sitting duck" are a few of the choice descriptions applied to this ship by those who have to fly it.

The *Longbow* bomber has a single purpose — to deliver torpedoes to enemy capital ships. Otherwise, its lack of maneuverability and acceleration attract light enemy fighters like hornets. The *Longbow's* massive firepower bolsters any offensive force involving capital ships, as long as light fighters are along for protection.

- There's one reason and one reason only to fly a *Longbow* — overwhelming torpedo offense against heavy cap ships.
- The *Longbow* is a big, slow, lumbering target. Your only real strategy is to blast to the target, drop your egg and blast out again as quick as possible.
- For what it's worth, the *Longbow* is the only Confed fighter with multiple torpedoes, so if the target doesn't pop the first time, you can come around and try again (assuming you're still in one piece). Also, if you have to torpedo more than one ship in a single mission, the *Longbow* is your only choice.
- You do have a few offensive and defensive assets in addition to sheer defensive bulk, and you're going to need every one of them. You have a plethora of decoys, and the largest missile load-out in the game.
- Those missiles are particularly important; however you feel about using missiles in lighter fighters, the simple fact is that the *Longbow* isn't fast or maneuverable enough to track and nail an evading enemy, but a

missile is. Let your missiles go after those enemy fighters while you concentrate on barreling toward your primary target.

- Your guns are reasonably powerful, though not overwhelming.
- A particularly useful feature is your rear-mounted particle gun, because at your size and speed enemies will definitely try to crawl up your tail pipe.
- Your rear turret has limited self-targeting ability. It's not particularly fast or accurate, and you're awful lucky if your rear turret takes out even a single enemy on its own, but it will discourage enemy light fighters and give them something to think about besides blasting your rear shields.
- If the enemy rear attack becomes particularly heavy or threatening you can take manual control of your rear turret with the 4 command.
- If your armor is intact and your shields are at maximum power, try ramming lighter enemy ships. Your shields are stronger than theirs.

In Service	WC3
Class	Torpedo Bomber
Length	38 meters
Mass	22 metric tonnes
Max. YPR	30/40/30 dps
Max. Velocity	320 kps
Max. Afterburner Velocity	700 kps
Acceleration	500 m/s ²
Weapons	
Reaper cannon (2)	Neutron gun (4)
Particle cannon rear (1)	
Torpedo hardpoints (2 x 2)	
Missile hardpoints (4 x 4)	
4 FF/4 FF/4 HS/ 4 HS	
Missile decoys (24)	
Shields 280	
Ship's Armor	
160/140 Front and Back	
160 Left and Right	

Capital Ships

In addition to a name, all ships have an alpha-numeric callsign. This callsign is based on the ship's class and how many ships of that class have been built. Thus, the *Concordia* is BAH-63, designating "heavy armored battleship #63." (This system is drawn directly from modern U.S. navy usage; see any of several current references for more details.)

"Armored" (as in "BAH-63") means equipped with phase shields.

Venture-Class Corvette

Other Names In This Class: These ships have only informal names; they are officially referred to only by a callsign (such as PC-9432).

In Service	WCI, ?		
Class	Corvette		
Length	80 meters		
Maximum Velocity	200 kps		
Cruise Velocity	150 kps		
Acceleration	Poor		
Max. VPR	3 dps		
Mass	1,000 tonnes		
Ship's Weapons			
Laser Cannon (2)	Friend or Foe Missile (1)		
Heat-Seeking Missiles (2)			
Ship's Armor			
<i>Fore Shield and Aft Shield</i>	10 cm equivalent each		
<i>Front</i>	9 cm	<i>Rear</i>	8 cm
<i>Right and Left</i>	8 cm each		

DO-139 Exeter-Class Destroyer

Other Names In This Class: Named for geographic regions of Terra. Includes *Texas*, *Tashkent*, *Zagros*, *Punjab*, *Gobi*.

In Service	WCI, ?
Class	Destroyer

Length	360 meters		
Maximum Velocity	150 kps		
Cruise Velocity	100 kps		
Acceleration	Poor		
Max. VPR	2 dps		
Mass	8,000 tonnes		
Ship's Weapons	Classified		
Ship's Armor			
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	25 cm equivalent each		
<i>Front</i>	22 cm	<i>Rear</i>	20 cm
<i>Right and Left</i>	20 cm each		

DA-204 Gilgamesh

Other Names In This Class: Named for mythic heroes. Includes *Born-For-Water*, *Siegfried*, *Herakles*, *Agamemnon*.

In Service	WC2		
Class	Destroyer		
Length	312 meters		
Maximum Velocity	250 kps		
Cruise Velocity	150 kps		
Acceleration	Poor		
Max. VPR	2 dps		
Mass	10,000 tonnes		
Ship's Weapons			
Flak Cannon (2)	Anti-Matter Guns (2)		
Ship's Armor			
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	Phase Shields		
<i>Front and Rear</i>	250 cm each		
<i>Right and Left</i>	200 cm each		

CA-74 Waterloo

Other Names In This Class: Named for land battles. Includes *Gettysburg*, *Stalingrad*.

In Service	WC2		
Class	Cruiser		

Length	504 meters
Maximum Velocity	200 kps
Cruise Velocity	100 kps
Acceleration	Poor
Max. VPR	1 dps
Mass	19,500 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Flak Cannon (3)	Anti-Matter Guns (4)
Light complement of fighters	
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	Phase Shields
<i>Front and Rear</i>	300 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	250 cm each

Waterloo-class cruisers are configurable as carriers, with these modifications:

CVA-91 Jutland

Mass	21,300 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Flak Cannon (3)	Anti-Matter Guns (2)
Full complement of fighters	

Other Names In This Class: Named for sea battles. Includes *Jutland*, *Trafalgar*.

BAH-63 Concordia

In Service	WC2
Class	Confederation
Length	984 meters
Maximum Velocity	100 kps
Cruise Velocity	50 kps
Acceleration	Bad
Max. VPR	1 dps
Mass	73,000 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Flak Cannon (3)	Anti-Matter Guns (8)
Phase-Transit Cannon (1)	

Full complement of fighters

Ship's Armor

<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	Phase Shields
<i>Front and Rear</i>	500 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	400 cm each

CVS-02 Tiger's Claw

Other Names In This Class: Earlier ships named for felines. Once the Kilrathi war was fully underway, subsequent ships were named for canines, e.g. CVS-13 *Wolfhound*.

In Service	WCI, SM1, SM2
Class	<i>Bengal Strike Carrier</i>
Length	700 meters
Maximum Velocity	130 kps
Cruise Velocity	100 kps
Acceleration	Poor
Max. VPR	1 dps
Mass	80,000 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Dual Laser Turrets (8)	Fighter Complement (104)
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	21 cm equivalent each
<i>Front</i>	24 cm
<i>Right and Left</i>	25 cm each
	<i>Rear</i> 20 cm

CV-40 Victory

In Service	WC3
Class	Strike Carrier
Length	700 meters
Maximum Velocity	120 kps
Cruise Velocity	120 kps
Acceleration	Poor
Max. VPR	5 dps
Mass	78,000 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Dual Laser Turrets (11)	Fighter Complement (85)

Ship's Armor

<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	3000 cm equivalent each
<i>Front and Rear</i>	1000 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	1000 cm each

Support Ships

Drayman

Other Names In This Class: Named informally by crews. Officially, use only callsigns, e.g. TM-14931.

In Service	WCI, SM1, SM2
Class	Military Transport (configurable as either Freighter or Tanker)
Length	96 meters
Maximum Velocity	150 kps
Cruise Velocity	100 kps
Acceleration	Bad
Max. VPR	2 dps
Mass (dry)	2,000 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	Classified
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	9 cm equivalent each
<i>Front and Rear</i>	8 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	6 cm each

Free Trader

Other Names In This Class: Named informally by crews. Officially, use only callsigns, e.g. TC-9122.

In Service	WC2
Class	Merchant Marine Transport (true civilian transports are unarmed)
Length	83 meters
Maximum Velocity	150 kps
Cruise Velocity	100 kps
Acceleration	Poor
Max. VPR	2 dps

Mass	2,000 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Flak Cannon (1)	
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	10 cm equivalent each
<i>Front and Rear</i>	9 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	7 cm each

Clydesdale

Other Names In This Class: Named informally by crews. Officially, use only callsigns, e.g. TM-24772.

In Service	WC2
Class	Military Transport
Length	73 meters
Maximum Velocity	150 kps
Cruise Velocity	100 kps
Acceleration	Bad
Max. VPR	2 dps
Mass	4,000 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Flak Cannon (2)	
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	25 cm equivalent each
<i>Front and Rear</i>	12 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	11 cm each

Star Base

In Service	WC2
Class	Space Station
Radius	1,200 meters
Maximum Velocity	10 kps
Cruise Velocity	10 kps
Acceleration	Poor
Max. VPR	NA
Mass	230,000 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Flak Cannon (4)	

Full complement of fighters

Ship's Armor

<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	Phase Shields
<i>Front and Rear</i>	700 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	700 cm each

Paradigm

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.

In Service	WC Privateer
Class	Capital Ship
Length	—
Maximum Velocity	200 kps
Afterburner Velocity	—
Acceleration	Poor
Max. VPR	Poor
Ship's Weapons	
Meson blasters (2)	Tachyon cannon (2)
Ionic pulse cannon (1)	Turreted laser (3)
Turreted mass driver (3)	
Ship's Armor	
<i>Front and Rear</i>	80.0/50.0 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	65.0 cm each

Kilrathi Ships

The Kilrathi have possessed spacecraft technology for over six centuries, following nearly the same timeline as us. Engineers have decided that presently our technologies are almost equal, with the Kilrathi having more access to raw materials for ship construction.

Fighters

Salthi

In Service	WCI, SM1, SM2		
Class	Light Fighter		
Length	24 meters		
Maximum Velocity	480 kps		
Cruise Velocity	300 kps		
Acceleration	Excellent		
Max. VPR	12 dps		
Mass	12 tonnes		
Ship's Weapons	Dumb-Fire Missile (1)		
Laser Cannon (2)			
Ship's Armor	3.5 cm equivalent each		
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>			
<i>Front</i>	3 cm	<i>Rear</i>	2 cm
<i>Right and Left</i>	1.5 cm each		

Sartha

In Service	WC2		
Class	Light Fighter		
Length	8 meters		
Maximum Velocity	400 kps		
Cruise Velocity	220 kps		
Acceleration	Good		
Max. VPR	4 dps		
Mass	12.5 tonnes		
Ship's Weapons	Dumb Fire Missile (1)		
Neutron Guns (2)			
Ship's Armor	5 cm equivalent each		
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>			
<i>Front and Rear</i>	4 cm each		
<i>Right and Left</i>	3 cm each		

Drakhri

In Service	WC2
Class	Medium Fighter
Length	12 meters
Maximum Velocity	400 kps
Cruise Velocity	200 kps
Acceleration	Good
Max. VPR	7 dps
Mass	14 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Laser Cannon (3)	Chaff Pod (1)
Dumb Fire Missiles (4)	
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	5.5 cm equivalent each
<i>Front and Rear</i>	4 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	3.5 cm each

Dralthi

In Service	WCI, SM1, SM2		
Class	Medium Fighter		
Length	28 meters		
Maximum Velocity	400 kps		
Cruise Velocity	230 kps		
Acceleration	Good		
Max. VPR	11 dps		
Mass	14 tonnes		
Ship's Weapons			
Laser Cannon (2)	Porcupine Mines (3)		
Heat-Seeking Missiles (2)			
Ship's Armor			
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	5 cm equivalent each		
<i>Front</i>	4.5 cm	<i>Rear</i>	3.5 cm
<i>Right and Left</i>	3 cm each		

Krant

In Service	WCI, SM1, SM2		
Class	Medium Fighter		
Length	32 meters		
Maximum Velocity	360 kps		
Cruise Velocity	200 kps		
Acceleration	Good		
Max. VPR	8 dps		
Mass	16.6 tonnes		
Ship's Weapons			
Laser Cannon (2)	Friend or Foe Missile (1)		
Heat-Seeking Missiles (3)			
Ship's Armor			
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	8 cm equivalent each		
<i>Front</i>	9 cm	<i>Rear</i>	10 cm
<i>Right and Left</i>	8 cm each		

Gratha

In Service	WCI, SM1, SM2		
Class	Heavy Fighter		
Length	36 meters		
Maximum Velocity	320 kps		
Cruise Velocity	200 kps		
Acceleration	Average		
Max. VPR	6 dps		
Mass	18 tonnes		
Ship's Weapons			
Laser Cannon (2)	Mass Driver Cannon (2)		
Image Recognition Missile (1)	Heat-Seeking Missiles (3)		
Porcupine Mines (2)			
Ship's Armor			
<i>Fore Shield</i>	11 cm equivalent	<i>Aft Shield</i>	10 cm equivalent
<i>Front</i>	15 cm	<i>Rear</i>	14 cm
<i>Right and Left</i>	10 cm each		

Jalkehi

In Service	WC2
Class	Heavy Fighter
Length	25 meters
Maximum Velocity	360 kps
Cruise Velocity	200 kps
Acceleration	Average
Max. VPR	2 dps
Mass	20 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Particle Cannon (1)	Image Recognition Missiles (4)
Laser Cannon (4)	Dumb Fire Missile (1)
Turret	Neutron Gun (1)
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	15 cm equivalent each
<i>Front and Rear</i>	13 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	11 cm each

Jalthi

In Service	WCI, SM1, SM2		
Class	Heavy Fighter		
Length	32 meters		
Maximum Velocity	280 kps		
Cruise Velocity	200 kps		
Acceleration	Average		
Max. VPR	5 dps		
Mass	22 tonnes		
Ship's Weapons			
Neutron Guns (3)	Friend or Foe Missiles (2)		
Heat-Seeking Missile (1)	Laser Cannon (3)		
Ship's Armor			
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	16 cm equivalent each		
<i>Front</i>	20 cm	<i>Rear</i>	10 cm
<i>Right and Left</i>	17 cm each		

Grikath

In Service	WC2
Class	Heavy Fighter
Length	18 meters
Maximum Velocity	330 kps
Cruise Velocity	200 kps
Acceleration	Bad
Max. VPR	3 dps
Mass	27 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Torpedoes (3)	Chaff Pods (3)
Neutron Guns (3)	Friend or Foe Missiles (2)
Turret	Neutron Guns (2)
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	17 cm equivalent each
<i>Front and Rear</i>	16 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	14 cm each

Dralthi

Flying Dralthi

Practice rolls to get used to your offset cannons. Once you've mastered the art of rolling while staying on target, you'll present a much smaller, more confusing target yourself.

Your flat profile makes you hard to hit. To get the most advantage from it, avoid flips or head-to-head charges.

Your best assets are your speed and maneuverability. Try to tail your enemies and take out their rear shields.

Fighting Dralthi

They're hard to tail because of their speed and maneuverability. Make certain of your aim and time your shots.

The extremely flat profile of the *Dralthi* makes them hard to hit when they're coming straight at you, but their large wingspan can make them a much easier target than the *Arrow* if you can get slightly above or below them.

Sometimes they flip, giving you a shot at their top or bottom, and sometimes giving you an instant of motionlessness.

Watch out for collisions, particularly if the *Dralthi* is flipping. A *Dralthi* will usually survive a collision with an *Arrow*, due to its heavier armor. Collisions with other ships will probably destroy the *Dralthi*, but may do serious damage to the other ship in the meantime.

Class	Light Fighter	
Length	XX meters	
Mass	8150 kg	
Max. Velocity	600 kps	
Cruise Velocity	200 kps	
Acceleration	Good	
Max. YPR	5 dps	
Weapons	Mass Accelerator Gun (2) Paw Dumbfire (2)	
Ship's Armor		
	Fore and Aft Shields	2.5 cm equivalent each
	Front and Rear	3 cm each
	Right and Left	2 cm each

Shok'lar

Flying Shok'lar

Your best weapon is your cloaking device. You're the only ship in the game that has one. You can't fire while cloaked, nor will your targeting missiles target under cloak. Therefore, your best bet is to use the cloak to get in close, uncloak long enough to squeeze off a few blasts or a missile at your opponent at close range, then re-cloak and re-manuever before the enemy can return fire.

You will regenerate shields and repair damage while cloaked, making the cloaking device an excellent bolt-hole when you're in trouble.

Your cloak makes you the smallest fighter in the game capable of mounting a serious threat to enemy fighters of all sizes. It does not, however, make you invulnerable. The enemy can't lock his missiles on a cloaked *Shok'lar*, but he can hit you with gunfire or dumbfire, if he's lucky, or if he foresees your tactics.

Your primary tactic is always to run and strafe. Conserve your missiles — save them for certain kills, after you've punched a hole in the enemy's shields.

Your defenses are substandard, so keep moving and stay on the offensive. If you must take damage, try to take it on your strong fore-and-aft shields. Don't let the enemy fire at your sides, and don't let him get through to your armor.

Fighting *Shok'lar*

His cloak will keep your targeting missiles from getting a lock, so you have to rely on good shooting with guns and dumbfires to take him out.

Their armor is weak, so once the shields are down, don't hesitate to let a missile fly — it will probably finish him for you.

For all its tiny size and puny armor, the *Shok'lar* is a serious threat to every other fighter in the game, due to its cloaking device. Even without the cloak, the fighter is fast and so are its guns, and if you don't fly sharp it can do a lot of damage before you can finally take it out.

Shok'lars often take a long time to stalk and kill. It often takes longer to finish off a *Shok'lar* than to destroy a much larger fighter. Therefore, when fighting mixed groups that include *Shok'lar*, it's usually a good idea to take out the other fighter types first, just to reduce the enemy firepower arrayed against you, before you settle down into your *Shok'lar* hunt.

Class	Medium Fighter	
Length	XX meters	
Mass	8150 kg	
Max. Velocity	600 kps	
Cruise Velocity	200 kps	
Acceleration	Good	
Max. YPR	6/6/dps	
Weapons	Mass Driver Cannon (2)	Stalker Missile (2)
	Claw Image Recognition (3)	
Ship's Armor		
	Fore and Aft Shields	1.5 cm equivalent each
	Front and Rear	3cm/2 cm each
	Right and Left	2 cm each

Jrathek

Flying *Jrathek*

The *Jrathek* is another good all-purpose fighter. It doesn't have any fancy tricks like the *Shok'lar*'s cloak or the *Wraith*'s Leech. It does have an excellent balance of speed, defense and offensive punch.

Because your guns are powerful but short-ranged (and your missile supply is strictly limited), the *Jrathek* has to be flown aggressively. Don't try to fight a defensive battle with a *Jrathek* — go in for the kill.

The *Jrathek*'s missiles are all self-targeting, but it only has four of them. Therefore, it's important to make every missile shot count. Don't waste your missiles against an opponent's shields. You have good guns — use them to punch a hole in the shields, then send a missile through it to finish him off.

Try to get behind the enemy, if you can, and punch through his rear shields. Don't let yourself ram him.

Be careful with your missiles. But your guns also take a long time to recharge, so if you're in close and you're recharging, that's probably a good time to let a missile go.

The *Jrathek* have a strong offensive asset in the centered placement of their twin photon cannons. Because they're so close together, the cannons are almost one double-strength gun. Because of the photon cannons' power, some pilots like to turn off their flux cannons entirely, to save power, making the *Jrathek* the most common exception to the "always use all guns" rule-of-thumb.

Fighting *Jrathek*

Jratheks have excellent speed for a fighter of their size, so stay sharp.

Jratheks are very good at avoiding your shots, but their guns take a long time to recharge, so your locked missiles have an excellent chance of getting through between salvos.

The *Jrathek* has few missiles, and its guns, while quite powerful, are very short range. Therefore, if you're smaller and faster than a *Jrathek*, try to stay at extreme range and pick at him from a distance.

The *Jrathek's* centered photon-cannon make it impossible to fly between his guns with a small fighter.

Class	Medium Fighter	
Length	— meters	
Mass	8150 kg	
Max. Velocity	600 kps	
Cruise Velocity	200 kps	
Acceleration	Good	
Max. YPR	5 dps	
Weapons	Photon Cannon (2)	Plasma Gun (2)
	Claw Image-Recognition (1)	Fang Friend-or-Foe (1)
	Chaff Pod (1)	
Ship's Armor	Fore and Aft Shields	2.5 cm equivalent each
	Front and Rear	3 cm each
	Right and Left	2 cm each

Korlarh

Flving *Kor-larh*

Like the *Dralthi*, it takes some practice to get used to rolling with your offset cannons, but it's a skill well worth learning. It can make you a much more confusing target, and heavy fighters need all the edge they can get when it comes to maneuverability.

You don't have as many guns as the *Gladius*, but the guns you do have have slightly more firepower. Your biggest disadvantage is the extremely short range of your guns.

Think of the *Kor-larh* as a flying battering ram. You come in, pound the enemy once hard, back off and do it all over again.

With two torpedoes and its relatively high speed, the *Kor-larh* is an excellent fighter for carrier attacks.

Fighting Kor-larh

The *Kor-larh* can flip, giving you a quick shot at his top or bottom.

Kor-larh are tough. Avoid colliding with one.

Kor-larh aren't quite as fast as the *Gladius*, but their speed at least equals that of any other fighter in the game except the *Arrow* and *Dralthi*. Keep moving, don't let a *Kor-larh* run you down and strafe you — with its firepower, a strafing run from a *Kor-larh* is extremely deadly.

Kor-larh are most deadly up close. A good marksman will always try to keep them at arm's length.

The *Kor-larh's* two long range guns are mounted on his front lower left corner. Therefore, try to engage a *Kor-larh* from above or from his right side.

Class	Heavy Fighter	
Length	XX meters	
Mass	kg	
Max. Velocity	kps	
Cruise Velocity	kps	
Acceleration		
Max. YPR	dps	
Weapons	Flux Cannon (2) Paw Dumbfire (4) Chaff Pod (2)	Phase Blaster (3) Claw Image-Recognition (2)
Ship's Armor	Fore and Aft Shields Front and Rear Right and Left	2.5 cm equivalent each 3 cm each 2 cm each

Goran

Flying Goran

You have the potential to do more damage than any other ship in the game, but you have to be patient. Time your shots, then use your missiles for the kill.

Your best defensive tactic is to roll and flip. Don't think you have to just sit still and let them come to you — your maneuverability isn't your strongest asset, but you can still surprise an enemy with a well-timed dodge or jog. *Gorans* are excellent ships to maneuver with afterburners.

You have the best armor and shields in the game, particularly in the front. If they want to ram you, let them ram you — you'll win. If you go head-to-head with a *Banshee*, odds are your armor superiority will allow you to come out on top — assuming both sides are hitting with equal efficiency.

Fighting Goran

The *Goran* is the slowest ship in the game, but it can surprise you with its maneuverability.

The *Goran* is also the most heavily-defended ship in the game. Because of its low speed and heavy defenses, the best place to be is behind a *Goran*.

It has a lot of missiles that don't require a lock, meaning it can fire them at you fast.

If the computer is flying a *Goran* against you, and you can avoid its guns early in the battle, it will usually drop to two laser cannon to conserve energy.

Class	Heavy Fighter	
Length	meters	
Mass	8150 kg	
Max. Velocity	600 kps	
Cruise Velocity	200 kps	
Acceleration	Good	
Max. YPR	5 dps	
Weapons	Laser Cannon (2)	Flux Cannon (2)
	Electron Gun (2)	Paw Dumbfire (4)
	Claw Image-Recognition (4)	Fang Friend-or-Foe (2)
	Chaff Pod (2)	
Ship's Armor	Fore and Aft Shields	2.5 cm equivalent each
	Front and Rear	3 cm each
	Right and Left	2 cm each

Gothri

In Service	WC Privateer
Class	Medium Fighter
Length	—
Maximum Velocity	450 kps
Cruise Velocity	1200 kps

Acceleration	Very Good
Max. VPR	Good
Mass	—
Ship's Weapons	
Mass driver (2)	Particle cannon (2)
Friend-or-foe (1)	Dumbfire (1)
Image-recognition (3)	Turreted laser (1)
Turreted meson blaster (1)	
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft</i>	17.5 cm equivalent each
<i>Right and Left</i>	15 cm each

New Ships: WC III

Since the dawn of warfare, it has been self-evident that the more you know about your enemy, the better equipped you are to prevail against him.

Although the Kilrathi discovered the basic principles of aerodynamics comparatively late in their history, their fierce aggressiveness has driven them to devote a disproportionate amount of resources to drawing even with Terran technology. With the advent of stealth technology, this gap grows smaller.

Each Kilrathi military aircraft has specific strengths that pilots need to guard against. Likewise, each has weaknesses that can be exploited during battle. Your efforts at understanding both could mean the difference between victory and defeat every time you're sent into battle.

The information found in these blueprints about Kilrathi warships was gained at great cost. Legions of TCN pilots, Covert-Ops specialists and even civilians have paid the ultimate price in order to gain detailed knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of our opponent's military hardware. We owe them our gratitude. We owe them ultimate victory.

Darket

The Kilrathi *Darket* is a light fighter with jump capabilities and an incredibly fast turn rate. Its light armor and shielding are counter-balanced by its speed and acceleration, making it difficult to track during battle.

The tiny, diabolically quick *Darket* is much, much less powerful than any of the Confederation ships, but that doesn't mean it's not a threat.

- *Darket* are explicitly designed with a single tactic in mind. They exist to gang up on Confederation fighters. While one *Darket* engages the enemy from the front, evading his shots and missiles with its formidable speed

and maneuverability, the other *Darket* line up behind him and nibble him to death with guns or blast him with heat seekers. (*Darket* get much better at actually implementing this tactic at higher skill levels.) The moral to the story is; keep the *Darket* in front of you.

- Once you've whittled down the enemy *Darket* to the point where they're one to one, they're no longer any sort of effective threat, but they can still be devilishly hard to run down and smash. If you're not fanatical about missile conservation, you may want to tag a slightly-wounded *Darket* with an IR missile, just to save time. Even a single missile shot is usually enough to take a *Darket* out of action.

In Service	WC3
Class	Light Fighter
Length	24 meters
Mass	12 metric tonnes
Max. YPR	80/75/80 dps
Max. Velocity	520 kps
Max. Afterburner Velocity	1350 kps.
Acceleration	1000 m/s ²
Weapons	
Meson gun (2)	
Missile hardpoint (1 x 4)	
4 FF	
Shields	80
Ship's Armor	
60	Front and Back
40	Left and Right

Dralthi IV

Having endured decades of revision, the fourth version of the *Dralthi* medium fighter is comparable to the *Thunderbolt*. It's slightly faster and more maneuverable, but has mediocre shielding and armor. Jump capabilities make it an expected foe anywhere near charted jump points.

Earlier versions of the *Dralthi* were able to take on an *Arrow* one-on-one at even odds. No more. Today's *Dralthi* has fallen significantly behind the *Arrow* in terms of speed, maneuverability, offense and defense. Despite these relative weak points, however, the *Dralthi* remains an effective baseline fighter on its own terms, particularly in teams or packs.

- Although not as specifically oriented toward the rear attack as the *Darket*, the *Dralthi* still loves to sneak up on an otherwise-occupied enemy from behind, and in that position it can be deadly.
- There are no special tricks to taking out a *Dralthi*. Keep it in your sights, don't let it get behind you, be ready to drop a decoy against its missiles.

- At higher skill levels the *Dralthi* like to launch most or all of its missiles at you right away, as you close to attack. Watch out for this and be ready to drop a decoy or three and afterburn away from the enemy at an oblique angle before turning to close if you see missiles approaching.
- *Dralthi* tend to dodge up at the end of a strafing run. If you keep that in mind it becomes easier to keep them in your sights.
- *Dralthi* almost always pull up if you go head-on with them. If you fly straight at them, aim up to increase your chance of a hit.

In Service	WC3
Class	Medium Fighter
Length	31 meters
Mass	15 metric tonnes
Max. YPR	55/65/55 dps
Max. Velocity	430 kps
Max. Afterburner Velocity	1100 kps
Acceleration	800 m/s ²
Weapons	
Particle cannon (1)	Meson blaster (2)
Missile hardpoint (1 x 4)	
4 HS	
Shields	120
Ship's Armor	
80	Front and Back
60	Left and Right

Vaktoth

The *Vaktoth* is a heavy Kilrathi fighter whose performance is comparable to that of the Confederation *Thunderbolt*. With its jump capabilities and auxiliary meson guns, this fighter is primarily used for escort and scout missions that do not involve tangling with capital ships.

It's very slow, but very well armored (for a Kilrathi). You can probably take a *Vaktoth* with just about any Confed ship, but you can't take it for granted.

- The *Vaktoth* has a formidable gun array, including a couple of rear-mounted meson gun flyswatters. Try to approach it from an angle, to stay out of its sights.

- Because of their armor, *Vaktoth* take a bit longer to destroy than other Kilrathi fighters. When fighting a mixed group of Kilrathi that includes *Vaktoth*, it's probably a good idea to take the *Vaktoth* out first, to neutralize the threat from those big guns.

In Service	WC3
Class	Heavy Fighter
Length	36 meters
Mass	19 metric tonnes
Max. YPR	40/50/40 dps
Max. Velocity	380 kps
Max. Afterburner Velocity	950 kps
Acceleration	600 m/s ²
Weapons	Tachyon gun (1) Plasma gun (2)
Ion cannon (2)	Rear Meson guns (1)
Missile hardpoints (2 x 4)	
	4 FF/4 FF
Shields	200
Ship's Armor	
100	Front and Back
100	Left and Right

Strakha

The only stealth fighter in mass production, the *Strakha* is a recon ship that relies more on secrecy than firepower. Two meson guns and a duo of lasers serve to defend it from enemy fighters, and a lone *Strakha* has been known to eliminate four *Hellcats* in the space of ten minutes.

Stealth fighters are such a pain. In cloak, out of cloak, in cloak, out of cloak, zap, in cloak ...

- The good news is that the *Strakha* is the weakest-defended fighter in the game, making even the *Darket* look tough. You can probably take it out with just one or two good blasts at full guns. The problem is getting it in your sights for even one blast.
- One missile hit would take out a *Strakha* easy, but just forget about getting a missile lock through its cloak.
- If you're attacked by a squadron of *Strakha*, fire a salvo of FF missiles. Even if one ship cloaks out, the missile will search out another one and reassign itself to a visible target.
- *Strakha* will always cloak up as soon as you turn to face them, and won't uncloak until they get around to your rear or flanks. The only way to get a *Strakha* in your front sights is to wait until he uncloaks to attack you, then whirl around and surprise him. Get those shots off fast, because you won't get many before he cloaks up again.

- Rear turrets are very handy against *Strakha*, because they only cloak up when they're in your front sights.
- Remember, even if you can't see a *Strakha*, he's still there, and if you get lucky and hit it, it will take damage. So don't hesitate to squeeze off a couple more shots after the *Strakha* enters cloak.
- *Strakha* pack a lot of FF missiles for their size, and FF missiles don't need a lock to target you, so watch out for that surprise quick missile attack. The FF barrage is the *Strakha's* deadly ace-in-the-hole.
- The only way to take out a *Strakha* is to play cat and mouse until you can run it down and blast it.
- Chasing down a fighter this small and fast would be time-consuming enough without the cloak — with the cloak it becomes an exercise in patience. Against mixed squadrons that include *Strakha*, save the *Strakha* until last, just because the other ships, whatever they may be, can be taken out so much faster.

In Service	WC2, WC3	
Class	Stealth Fighter	
Length	30 meters	
Mass	16 metric tonnes	
Max. YPR	70/65/70 dps	
Max. Velocity	480 kps	
Max. Afterburner Velocity	1200 kps	
Acceleration	1000 m/s ²	
Weapons	Meson gun (2)	Laser (2)
Missile hardpoints (1)		
Shields	60	
Ship's Armor		
40	Front and Back	
20	Left and Right	

Paktahn

The Kilrathi *Paktahn* is similar to the *Longbow* by virtue of its torpedo attack capabilities. With 8 missile hardpoints and an equal number of guns, this bomber can engage several fighters at once during a single run. Terran intelligence reports that *Paktahns* most often fly with *Dralthi* or *Darket* escorts. It's the best armored offensive ship in the game. *Paktahn* are veritable floating bunkers.

- Always take out the *Paktahn* first in any Kilrathi squadron. After all, the only reason to send a *Paktahn* out at all is because it's after one of your cap ships. Killing all *Paktahn* will certainly cripple the Kilrathi plan of attack.

- Also, it's just good sense to be firing at the *Paktahn* rather than waiting for the *Paktahn* to fire at you. They have impressive arsenals front and back, and a plethora of FF missiles that they won't be at all shy about sending your way.
- Always try to approach the *Paktahn* from an angle, preferably an angle in their rear quadrant. (Just remember not to let the *Paktahn's* *Dralthi* or *Darket* escorts line up behind you while you're pounding away at the bomber.)
- Don't waste your missiles against a *Paktahn*, just nibble away at his rear shields with guns. (Save the missiles to scatter those pesky escorts.)
- Since the *Paktahn's* four main guns are located at the far ends of its four "arms," it's possible for a smaller opponent to position himself during a frontal assault to actually fly *between* the beams of the *Paktahn's* main guns. Of course, this tactic will also put you squarely in the path of the *Paktahn's* centrally located secondaries, so its utility is limited.

In Service	WC3	
Class	Bomber	
Length	37 meters	
Mass	30 metric tonnes	
Max. YPR	35/40/35 dps	
Max. Velocity	340 kps	
Max. Afterburner Velocity	600 kps	
Acceleration	400 m/s ²	
Weapons	Lasers (4)	Plasma Gun (2)
Rear Meson gun (2)	Torpedo (8)	
Shields	300	
Ship's Armor		
180/110	Front and Back	
180	Left and Right	

Ekapshi

Ekapshi are light fighters used by the Kilrathi for ground support and other atmospheric operations. They're small, but very fast and maneuverable, and can be a real pain when they outnumber you. Although the armor and shield ratings are unimpressive, the *Ekapshi's* speed, maneuverability and offensive capability make it an effective opponent, particularly in groups. For detailed advice on fighting *Ekapshi*, see p. XX.

In Service	WC3
Class	Atmospheric Fighter
Max Velocity	430 kps
Acceleration	800 k/s ²

Weapons	
Laser (4)	Meson gun (2)
Missile hardpoints 1X4	
4 HS	
Missile decoys 6	
Max. YPR	65/55/55 dps
Max. Afterburn Velocity	1100 kps
Shields	128 cm equiv.
Ship's Armor	
Fore/Aft: 80 cm	
Right/Left: 60 cm	
Jump Capable	No

Sorthak

Call it iron-butt. The super-heavy *Sorthak* occupies a dangerous middle-ground between a bomber and a corvette. It's just barely too small to lock a torpedo on, but definitely big enough to be a major threat. It's remarkably fast and maneuverable for a ship its size, and of course it's armored to the teeth, but what really makes the *Sorthak* a menace are its twin, independently turreted meson guns. It can effectively engage several Confederation targets simultaneously, from virtually any angle, and its extra-powerful shields make it hard to destroy, even against multiple opponents. This is the only fighter in the game whose rear is every bit as dangerous and well-defended as its front. Fortunately, it has a fairly bulky silhouette, which helps during flanking approaches, but taking out a *Sorthak* is still a tough job from any angle.

In Service	WC3
Class	Superheavy Fighter
Max Velocity	400 kps
Acceleration	800 k/s ²
Weapons	
Ion gun (4)	Meson gun (turreted) (2)
Meson gun (rear turreted) (2)	
Missile hardpoints 2X4	
4 HS / 4 IR	
Missile decoys 10	
Max. YPR	65/55/55 dps
Max. Afterburn Velocity	950 kps
Shields	400 cm equivalents
Ship's Armor	
Fore/Aft: 180 cm	
Right/Left: 180 cm	
Jump Capable	Yes

Asteroid Fighter

An Asteroid fighter is basically a heavy fighter covered in a few thousand tonnes of rock. They're usually used to mine and patrol approaches to secret Kilrathi bases hidden in asteroid fields. These rock fighters have lots of armor, not much shield. Missiles are mostly good against Asteroid Fighters if you have to take one out quickly, but don't expect anything to happen on the first one. Do not, under any circumstances, collide with the asteroid fighter in a lighter ship. Also watch out for the large chunks of solid rock debris they throw off as they take damage.

In Service	WC3
Class	Heavy Fighter
Max. Velocity	380 kps
Acceleration	600 k/s ²
Weapons	
Reaper gun (2)	Meson gun (rear?) (2)
Missile hardpoints 2X8	
8 mine / 8 mine	
Missile decoys 8	
Max. YPR	50/40/40 dps
Max. Afterburn Velocity	950 kps
Shields	200 cm equivalent
Ship's Armor	
Fore/Aft: 500 cm	
Right/Left: 500 cm	
Jump Capable	No

Vaktoth

The *Vaktoth* is a medium Kilrathi fighter whose performance is comparable to that of the Confederation *Thunderbolt*. With its jump capabilities and auxiliary meson guns, this fighter is primarily used for escort and scout missions that do not involve tangling with capital ships.

The *Vaktoth* is very slow, but very well armored (for a Kilrathi). You can probably take a *Vaktoth* with just about any Confed ship, but you can't take it for granted.

- The *Vaktoth* has a formidable gun array, including a couple of rear-mounted meson gun flyswatters. Try to approach it from an angle, to stay out of its sights.
- Because of their armor, *Vaktoth* take a bit longer to destroy than other Kilrathi fighters. When fighting a mixed group of Kilrathi that includes *Vaktoth*, it's probably a good idea to take the *Vaktoth* out first, to neutralize the threat from those big guns.

In Service	WC3
Class	Heavy Fighter
Length	36 meters
Mass	19 metric tonnes
Max. YPR	40/50/40 dps
Max. Velocity	380 kps
Max. Afterburner Velocity	950 kps
Acceleration	600 m/s ²
Weapons	Tachyon gun (1) Plasma gun (2)
Ion cannon (2)	Rear Meson guns (1)
Missile hardpoints (2 x 4)	
	4 FF/4 FF
Shields	200
Ship's Armor	
100	Front and Back
100	Left and Right

Paktahn

The Kilrathi *Paktahn* is similar to the *Longbow* by virtue of its torpedo attack capabilities. With 8 missile hardpoints and an equal number of guns, this bomber can engage several fighters at once during a single run. Terran intelligence reports that *Paktahns* most often fly with *Dralthi* or *Darket* escorts.

In Service	WC3
Class	Bomber
Length	37 meters
Mass	30 metric tonnes
Max. YPR	35/40/35 dps
Max. Velocity	340 kps
Max. Afterburner Velocity	600 kps
Acceleration	400 m/s ²
Weapons	
Lasers (4)	Plasma Gun (2)
Rear Meson gun (2)	Torpedo (8)
Shields	300
Ship's Armor	
180/110	Front and Back
180	Left and Right

Capital Ships

Kamekh

In Service	WC2
Class	Corvette
Length	135 meters
Maximum Velocity	200 kps
Cruise Velocity	100 kps
Acceleration	Poor
Max. VPR	3 dps
Mass	1,300 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Flak Cannon (3)	Image Recognition Missiles (6)
Torpedoes (4)	
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	Phase Shields
<i>Front and Rear</i>	300 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	280 cm each

Ralari

In Service	WCI, SM1, SM2		
Class	Destroyer		
Length	344 meters		
Maximum Velocity	150 kps		
Cruise Velocity	100 kps		
Acceleration	Poor		
Max. VPR	2 dps		
Mass	18,000 tonnes		
Ship's Weapons			
Turreted Lasers (6)	Porcupine Mine (1)		
Ship's Armor			
<i>Fore Shield</i>	20 cm equivalent	<i>Aft Shield</i>	12 cm equivalent
<i>Front</i>	20 cm	<i>Rear</i>	9 cm
<i>Right and Left</i>	18 cm each		

Ralatha

In Service	WC2
Class	Destroyer
Length	394 meters
Maximum Velocity	250 kps
Cruise Velocity	150 kps
Acceleration	Poor
Max. VPR	1 dps
Mass	11,000 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Flak Cannon (2)	Anti-Matter Cannon (2)
Light complement of fighters	
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	Phase Shields
<i>Front and Rear</i>	500 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	500 cm each

Fralthi

In Service	WCI, SM1, SM2		
Class	Cruiser (configurable as Cruiser or Light Carrier)		
Length	500 meters		
Maximum Velocity	180 kps		
Cruise Velocity	120 kps		
Acceleration	Poor		
Max. VPR	2 dps		
Mass	20,000 tonnes		
Ship's Weapons			
Turreted Lasers (6)	Light complement of fighters (20)		
Ship's Armor			
<i>Fore Shield</i>	27 cm equivalent	<i>Aft Shield</i>	17 cm equivalent
<i>Front</i>	28 cm	<i>Rear</i>	14 cm
<i>Right and Left</i>	26 cm each		

Fralthra

In Service	WC2
Class	Cruiser
Length	612 meters
Maximum Velocity	150 kps
Cruise Velocity	100 kps
Acceleration	Poor
Max. VPR	1 dps
Mass	20,500 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Flak Cannon (3)	Anti-Matter Guns (3)
Light complement of fighters	
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	Phase Shields
<i>Front and Rear</i>	700 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	600 cm each

Support Ships

Dorkir

In Service	WCI, SM1		
Class	Transport (configurable as either Freighter or Tanker)		
Length	104 meters		
Maximum Velocity	150 kps		
Cruise Velocity	100 kps		
Acceleration	Bad		
Max. VPR	2 dps		
Mass	2,000 tonnes		
Ship's Weapons			
Turreted Laser (1)	Porcupine Mines (3).		
Ship's Armor			
<i>Fore Shield</i>	17 cm equivalent	<i>Aft Shield</i>	10 cm equivalent
<i>Front</i>	9 cm	<i>Rear</i>	6 cm
<i>Right and Left</i>	9 cm each		

Dorkathi

In Service	WC2
Class	Transport (military)
Length	95 meters
Maximum Velocity	200 kps
Cruise Velocity	100 kps
Acceleration	Poor
Max. VPR	2 dps
Mass	5,000 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Flak Cannon (2)	
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	19 cm equivalent each
<i>Front and Rear</i>	17 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	16 cm each

Dreadnought

In Service	WC3
Class	Super-destroyer
Length	2,200 meters
Maximum Velocity	100 kps
Cruise Velocity	NA
Acceleration	10 k/s ²
Max. VPR	5 dps
Mass	290,000 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Turreted laser (38)	
Full complement of fighters	
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	8000 cm equiv.
<i>Front and Rear</i>	1500 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	1500 cm each

Supply Depot

In Service	WC2
Class	Space Station
Length	806 meters
Maximum Velocity	NA
Cruise Velocity	NA
Acceleration	NA
Max. VPR	NA
Mass	40,000 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Flak Cannon (2)	
Light complement of fighters	
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	Phase Shields
<i>Front and Rear</i>	400 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	300 cm each

K'tithrak Mang

In Service	WC2
Class	Space Station
Radius	1,100 meters
Maximum Velocity	NA
Cruise Velocity	NA
Acceleration	NA
Max. VPR	NA
Mass	240,000 tonnes
Ship's Weapons	
Flak Cannon (4)	Anti-Matter Guns (2)
Full complement of fighters	
Ship's Armor	
<i>Fore and Aft Shield</i>	Phase Shields
<i>Front and Rear</i>	700 cm each
<i>Right and Left</i>	700 cm each

WEAPONS

WEAPONS

What *Joan's Fighting Ships* does for spacecraft, Ivan Borger does for weapons systems. The following excerpt from *Borger's All The Sector's Weapons Systems* is presented as a crash course for those new to the fighting front.

General Ordnance

Ship ordnance is categorized into two types — energy guns and weapons. Guns include all multiple-fire blasters that draw energy from a ship's reserves to function. Weapons, on the other hand, include all single-shot munitions, both dumb-mechanism warheads and those equipped with targeting systems. Having observed the enemy for several decades, we've found that Kilrathi forces possess about the same gun and weapon technology as we do.

Energy Guns

All fighters and cap ships in modern fleets use energy guns as their primary armament. Those on fighters are quick-firing and have relatively short range. With the added advantages of high velocity, fast refire rates and advanced guidance systems, hits are virtually guaranteed for any pilot with a few kills under his belt. Cap ship turret guns fall into the same category — keep yourself safely distant from them.

The basic premise of an energy gun is simple — when a hit occurs, massive amounts of energy transfer to the target. It doesn't take too many shots to down a fighter, but guns are nearly useless against larger ships in the fleet.

Below, you'll find descriptions of each gun type and its associated statistics.

Penetration. Armor/shield penetration expressed in tenths of a cm (0.1cm = 1 armor unit).

Energy. The amount of energy used for one shot (in nano Joules).

Range. Range of the gun (in meters).

Refire Delay. The gun's optimal recharge rate (in seconds) after each shot.

Flak Gun. Fighters provide the bulk of a capital ship's defense, but the largest ships in the Terran and Kilrathi fleets lay down heavy flak barrages which can bring down any ship in space.

(WC2) In addition, flak cannon are used for point-defense against torpedoes.

Laser Cannon. Lasers don't do a lot of damage. Still, nearly all pilots have at least one story in which the long range of the laser allowed them to get first strike on a foe. Despite their low damage potential, lasers are reliable, versatile, and effective—they have probably accounted for more enemy kills than any other weapon.

Consistently improved upon and perfected over the last half-century, the laser provides the standard against which most other blasters are judged. Low maintenance, low energy cost and quick refire rates make it standard armament for almost every ship in existence. The laser is ideally suited to deep-space combat (in atmospheric conditions, rays refract and lose their effectiveness), and has no effect against shields on larger ships.

Penetration	<i>18</i>
Energy	<i>8 nJ</i>
Range	<i>5000 km</i>
Refire delay	<i>.10 sec</i>

Mass Driver Cannon. The basic fighter weapon—medium range, medium damage, nothing special. The mass driver cannon is reliable and accurate. Though lasers and neutron guns are more effective in certain situations, no pilot ever went wrong activating a mass driver.

The mass driver cannon is common on both fighters and light defender ships in the fleet. It uses a linear accelerator to fire projectiles of metallic mass at a target. The mass driver is a staple in the Terran arsenal and has even been used against planets and asteroids. A long-range gun, it requires more energy per blast than most blasters and has a medium refire rate.

Penetration	<i>26</i>
Energy	<i>12 nJ</i>
Range	<i>2000 km</i>
Refire delay	<i>.25 sec</i>

Meson Blaster

The meson blaster is a unique, powerful gun that utilizes subatomic particles with a short half-life. These particles, called mesons, are accelerated and flung toward a target. The most damage occurs once the particles decay inside the target — they cause internal explosions and give off radiation. Energized shields can stop these particles, and atmospheric conditions render this gun ineffective.

Penetration	<i>32</i>
Energy	<i>16 nJ</i>
Range	<i>4500 km</i>
Refire delay	<i>.25 sec</i>

Neutron Gun

The neutron gun was specifically created as a weapon for medium and heavy fighters when the war first began. It releases energized blasts of charged neutrons, drawing more power than either the ion cannon or laser. The damage potential for this gun type is slightly less, but the extended range of the neutron gun more than makes up for the difference.

Neutron guns do heavy damage, but only at close range. The down side is that neutron guns heat up rapidly and eat up power at an alarming rate. Also, the neutron gun's lack of range has led many fool-hardy or underskilled pilots into close-quarter combat for which they were ill-prepared. Some of those pilots never made it home.

Penetration	62
Energy	36
Range	4000k
Refire delay	.45 sec

Particle Cannon

The particle cannon is perhaps the most significant energy technology we possess. Prototypes were first developed three years into the war, when a similar cannon was extracted from a captured Kilrathi fighter. Engineers built a comparable version capable of hurling minute nuclear particles at high speeds. Any impact results in a small nuclear explosion that gives off blast, heat and radiation damage. This gun is useless, however, in atmospheric conditions.

Penetration	43
Energy	22 nJ
Range	4200 km
Refire delay	.35 sec

Photon Cannon

When Terran forces first went to war, the photon cannon was the most popular gun next to the standard laser. It emits laser pulses and solicits similar effects upon impact. However, the photon cannon drains more energy and has a slower refire rate. This gun requires little maintenance — the mirror robotics are the only adjustable component — and functions best in deep-space combat.

Penetration	37
Energy	21 nJ
Range	2500 km
Refire delay	.35 sec

Tachyon Gun

A power-hungry blaster, the tachyon gun is the most devastating energy gun found on Terran fighters. It slows down tachyon particles, which naturally travel faster than the speed of light. Once these particles are decelerated

and forced into streams, their potential damage increases monumentally. In several documented cases, the long-range Tachyon gun has been used to attack the shields of capital ships.

Penetration	<i>50</i>
Energy	<i>16 nJ</i>
Range	<i>3200 km</i>
Refire delay	<i>.25 sec</i>

Ion Pulse Cannon

Found mainly on fighters and also used as an anti-fighter gun, the ion cannon imparts energy and radiation damage to targets. Charged atomic particles are magnetically accelerated to high speeds, then discharged in pulses. This cannon delivers more damage than a laser and can cause severe pilot injuries. Additionally, the ion cannon has lower energy consumption, but a slower refire rate than the laser.

Penetration	<i>54</i>
Energy	<i>30 nJ</i>
Range	<i>4500 km</i>
Refire delay	<i>.35 sec</i>

Plasma Gun

The Plasma gun was originally developed to attack heavy fighters and corvettes with light armor. It uses electrically charged hydrogen molecules that are in a state of near-fusion. These molecules are similar to those found in the inner plasma of most young stars. Upon impact, plasma projectiles cause radiation, blast and heat damage.

Penetration	<i>72</i>
Energy	<i>44 nJ</i>
Range	<i>3000 km</i>
Refire delay	<i>.40 sec</i>

Reaper Cannon

(This gun will be available as soon as it completes its test cycle.) The reaper cannon evolved from the standard ion cannon, but its refire rate is seven times faster. This gun delivers high-speed pulses of charged atomic particles that give off energy and radiation damage. Fighters find this gun especially useful against ships with shields that regenerate quickly, and any ship with slow shield generation is sure to take damage. The only drawback to the reaper cannon is that its energy consumption is quite high — one pass is often enough to temporarily drain all the energy from a fighter.

Penetration	<i>54</i>
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Energy	17 nJ
Range	4500 km
Refire delay	.05 sec

Kilrathi Flux Cannon

The flux cannon emits magnetic pulse techniques that are capable of tracking and identifying enemy ships. It first appeared on the heavy fighter *Kor'larh* and, according to Confed Intelligence, isn't popular among Kilrathi pilots. The flux cannon's main claim is its low energy cost, but the weapon delivers only average damage at medium range.

Damage	200
Range	1200 km
Speed	2000 kps
Refire delay	.14 sec

Kilrathi Electron Gun

The electron gun is the Kilrathi counter-stroke to the Confederation's tachyon cannon. Energized atomic coils accelerate electrons to a maximum threshold, then release timed bursts every .15 seconds. Though not particularly destructive in and of itself, the electron gun breaks down shield power and attacks armor directly.

Damage	25
Range	3500 km
Speed	2500 kps
Refire delay	.15 sec

Kilrathi Mass Accelerator Gun

Based on the antique Kilrathi super-collider, the mass accelerator gun delivers light damage at close range. Sub-atomic particles — typically baryon quarks — are magnetically accelerated and passed through a linear feed. These particle blasts are most effective against light fighters or transports.

Damage	15
Range	2000 km
Speed	2500 kps
Refire delay	.1 sec

Kilrathi Sonic Accelerator Gun

Still in the prototype stage, the long-range sonic accelerator gun uses a sonar tracking system to identify and track targets. The damage potential for this weapon is low, but will no doubt improve with time. Confederation R&D is currently attempting to dissect its design and develop a jamming system. Currently, however, this weapon ranks as one of the most effective long-range guns.

Damage	18
Range	4400 km
Speed	2400 kps
Refire delay	.13 sec

Kilrathi Phase Blaster Gun

The Kilrathi phase blaster gun operates on a principle vaguely similar to that of a leech missile. The blasts are split into two elements — one for shield disruption, the other for an actual damaging blast. The first entity interrupts the electrical phasing mechanism of energy shields and weakens their defensive abilities. The second inflicts heavy damage at medium range.

Damage	30
Range	3000 km
Speed	2200 kps
Refire delay	.13 sec

Missiles

Energy guns are the preferred choice for attacking or defending ships and can deliver multiple shots. Missile weapons, on the other hand, have a one-shot life and often use complex guidance systems. Though phased out on larger fleet ships, missiles continue to be a staple among fighters. They're capable of damaging heavily shielded fighters or capital ships.

Penetration. The penetration of the weapon expressed in armor/shield units.
Speed. The top speed of the weapon in meters/second.
Acceleration. The acceleration of the weapon in meters/second/second.
Maneuverability. Maneuverability of the weapon (pitch, yaw and roll) in degrees/second. (Mines are rated in degrees per minute.)
Duration. The time (in seconds) before the weapon self-destructs.
Range. The effective maximum range of the weapon (in meters).
Lock time. The time (in seconds) the weapon requires to recognize and lock on to the target.

Dart Dumbfire (DF)

A simple weapon, the Dart dumbfire (DF) missile is a point-and-shoot weapon carried on almost every fighter in the Terran fleet. It is unjammable due to the absence of guidance systems, and costs less than any other missile type. The dumbfire doesn't require any type of lock and has no homing capability. Pilots find it most useful against targets with predictable reactions — at close range, a single dumbfire can diminish shields enough to plant a few devastating shots from an energy gun.

Penetration	<i>600</i>
Speed	<i>1200 m/x</i>
Acceleration	<i>400 m/s²</i>
Maneuverability	<i>0 dps</i>
Duration	<i>30 sec</i>
Lock time	<i>0 sec</i>

Javelin Heat-Seeker (HS)

The Javelin heat-seeker (HS) is an inexpensive, simple weapon that has served in various armed forces since the late 1900s. The engines of fighters and capital ships generate significant heat, a fact that the HS uses to its advantage. The operation is simple — the missile tracks down the thermal signature of the target's engines. This requires the lock to be acquired from the rear. Heat-seekers, along with dumbfire missiles, are the most common missile carried on fighters.

Penetration	<i>400</i>
Speed	<i>1200 m/s</i>
Acceleration	<i>400 m/s²</i>
Maneuverability	<i>30 dps</i>
Duration	<i>60 sec</i>
Lock time	<i>2 sec</i>

Leech

TCN weapon engineers developed the leech missile in order to capture Kilrathi fighters intact without damaging them. The leech is not an explosive — rather, it is a sophisticated electronic weapon system capable of disrupting a target and draining its energy. Power drains slightly upon impact, but soon leaves targets dead in space.

Penetration	<i>-na-</i>
Speed	<i>1600 m/s</i>
Acceleration	<i>600 m/s²</i>
Maneuverability	<i>-na-</i>
Duration	<i>60 sec</i>
Lock time	<i>0 sec</i>

Mine

A mine is a stationary or slow-moving variant of a missile. Although non-descript, it's useful for booby-trapping areas that the enemy may pass through — jump points, gaps in asteroid fields and pulsar shadows. Some mines also have simplified guidance systems that can seek out disabled ships. Since mines move so slowly, ship detection systems are unable to track them with sensors or radar. Because of the danger of friendly casualties, most mines are now set to self-destruct after a 30-minute active period.

Penetration	200
Speed	40 m/s
Acceleration	40 m/s ²
Maneuverability	30 (degrees per minute)
Duration	1800 sec
Lock time	0 sec

Pilum Friend-or-Foe (FF)

The Pilum friend-or-foe (FF) missile was developed once ship systems were able to distinguish between friendly and enemy ships. Capable of identifying the distinctive Confederation ship signal, it makes a beeline for the nearest ship that isn't broadcasting that signal. This has resulted in the destruction of several Terran ships whose communications systems were damaged. In spite of this inherent danger, both sides continue to use the FF as standard armament for medium and heavy fighters. This missile doesn't require a lock, and it will acquire a new target if the current one is destroyed before detonation.

Penetration	200
Speed	1200 m/s
Acceleration	400 m/s ²
Maneuverability	30 dps
Duration	60 sec
Lock time	0 sec

Spiculum Image-Recognition (IR)

The Spiculum image-recognition (IR) missile uses computer imaging to identify and "memorize" a targeted ship. Once a fighter gains a lock and launches the IR, electronic and visual signatures specific to that target are copied to the missile's AI program. It's difficult to evade — even chaff pods won't distract it. Although quite effective, the IR missile requires a lengthy lock time.

Penetration	300
Speed	1200 m/s
Acceleration	400 m/s ²
Maneuverability	30 dps
Duration	60 sec

Lock time *2.5 sec*

Torpedo

A mainstay in both Terran and Kilrathi fleets, the torpedo is a large, maneuverable warhead used against capital ships and bases. It has a built-in image-recognition system that locks onto the target, and even laser turrets can't shoot it down. Although the lock time is longer than that of any other missile, the torpedo is the only fighter weapon that can easily destroy carriers.

Penetration	<i>10,000</i>
Speed	<i>1600 m/s</i>
Acceleration	<i>600 m/s²</i>
Maneuverability	<i>10 dps</i>
Duration	<i>120 sec</i>
Lock time	<i>5.0 sec</i>

Chaff Pod

(Introduced in WC2) The Confederation recently developed chaff pods, sophisticated electronic devices that fool enemy missiles into diverting away from your ship. There are some drawbacks to chaff pods, of course. You must deploy chaff pods at the last moment before missile impact, because the pods' effect lasts only a short while. Chaff only works on missiles that are currently targeted on your ship; any missiles launched after you drop the pod aren't fooled. Finally, chaff doesn't destroy the enemy missile, it simply diverts it. If you're too close to the chaff when the missile hits it, you might take damage anyway. It's best to be moving at least 150 kps when you drop a pod.

Decoy

(Introduced in WC3) Chaff pods remained popular for several decades, but engineers continued to tweak the device. The newest model, the DX-42 decoy, performs essentially the same function. All Confed fighters mount plenty of decoys, and you should be ready at a moment's notice to drop one as soon as your Missile Lock warning light comes on, or a missile shows up on your tactical display (unlike chaff in earlier *Wing Commander* games, there's no reason to wait to deploy the decoy once you know the enemy has launched a missile). Make sure to afterburn away at an oblique angle for at least a couple of seconds after dropping a decoy, to get yourself out of the incoming missile's flight path.

The odds of a decoy working are markedly in your favor. There's normally a 70% chance that your decoy will attract an enemy missile, but only a 30% chance that an enemy's decoy will attract yours.

Temblor Bomb

(Introduced in WC3) Statistical information on the newly developed Temblor bomb remains classified at the time of this printing. Intel has revealed, however, that this very bomb was instrumental in the destruction of Kilrah. Its mode of operation is seismic, making it useful only in geographically vulnerable locations. This small nuclear device detonates into thousands of uranium-based charges, each capable of toppling 2.2 square, urban miles.

Torpedo. *(Introduced in WC2)* Both Terran and Kilrathi capital ships now have phase shield technology that renders missiles and fighter-scale guns useless. Terran scientists developed powerful torpedoes capable of penetrating the new shields; soon thereafter, spies leaked the new technology to the Kilrathi. Torpedoes are not without disadvantages: they can only lock on to capital ships; they are slow and can sometimes be shot down by the target ship or its fighter escort; and they take approximately twenty seconds to determine the phase pattern of the shields, leaving the firing ship vulnerable to attack for extended periods. But when all the conditions are satisfied, torpedoes' large warheads can be very effective.

Tractor Beam. *(Introduced in WC2)* A tractor beam locks onto a small target (an ejected pilot, for example), pulling it to your ship. The tractor beam is a vital tool in search-and-rescue missions.

Turreted Laser. Terran and Kilrathi destroyers, cruisers, dreadnoughts, carriers, and bases are equipped with heavy, turreted lasers linked to advanced targeting systems. Only the most maneuverable ships have any chance of surviving concentrated fire from these formidable weapons.

Turret. *(Introduced for fighters in WC2)* Only in the game is it necessary for the pilot to control the turret guns. In real life, gun crews handled the turret guns (one crewman per turret).

Capital Ship Guns

Capital ships, including the *Victory* and its friendly and enemy counterparts, rely on energy guns just as much as fighters do. They support fleet actions with stepped-up versions of those found on many popular fighters, including the tachyon gun, particle cannon and laser cannon.

Phase-Transit Cannon

(Introduced in WC2) This weapon actually forms the keel of the new Terran Confederation-class dreadnought; it is too large to be mounted on any other ship in the Confederation Navy. The phase-transit cannon bypasses shields and is capable of destroying any ship with a single shot. It is a refinement of a similar weapon found in the wreckage of the Sivar, the Kilrathi dreadnought that single-handedly destroyed the Goddard colony in 2654. Presumably the Kilrathi have more Sivar-class dreadnoughts, but none have been spotted since that first appearance.

Phase Shield

(Introduced in WC2) The latest in defense technology, these capital ship shields are impervious to damage from all fighter-mounted missiles and guns. Torpedoes are the only fighter-mounted weapons capable of getting through. Unfortunately, the number of torpedoes available to Terran Confederation forces is low. Pilots are advised to use them wisely.

Anti-Matter Gun (AMG)

The anti-matter gun is a more powerful version of the particle cannon and comprises the secondary armament of most friendly and enemy capital ships. This weapon can punch through the heaviest shields, and it delivers four times as much damage as the most powerful gun on any fighter. Capital ships rely on the anti-matter gun to defend against corvettes, heavy fighters and bombers that are attacking. Although not effective in atmospheric conditions, the small nuclear explosion and resulting heat and radiation from one shot are often enough to down a fighter in space.

Penetration	300
Energy	130 nJ
Range	8000 km
Refire delay	1.5 sec

Laser Turret

Capital ships are especially vulnerable to concentrated attacks by incoming fighters. For this reason, laser turret guns were mounted to provide point-defense for particular ship surfaces. This weapon can both engage light fighters and destroy incoming missiles. The capital-ship version of the laser can hit a fighter with twice the normal damage (two regular lasers are mounted on each turret), and the quick refire rate is more than twice that of regular lasers.

Penetration	25
Energy	15 nJ
Range	4000 km
Refire delay	.2 sec

Plasma Field

A powerful version of a keel-mounted plasma gun, the plasma field uses the nose of the ship to energize a large ball of nearly fused hydrogen molecules. Once the fusion point is reached, a ball of plasma is discharged toward a target. This weapon is used mostly in against enemy capital ships. The damage potential of the plasma field is tremendous, and any target in the way of this blast may be vaporized or severely damaged by the blast or by resulting heat and radiation.

Penetration	300,000
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Energy	<i>750 nJ</i>
Range	<i>4000 m</i>
Refire delay	<i>12.0 sec</i>

Capital Ship Weapons

Only one missile type exists for capital ships — the CapShip missile.

CapShip (CS) Missile

The CapShip missile is a huge, lockable missile that carries a powerful anti-matter warhead capable of taking out other capital ships and destroying tactical planetary targets. Mostly found on launch racks on older carriers, this missile is highly effective and not easily destroyed by fighter weaponry.

Penetration	<i>60,000</i>
Speed	<i>1000 k/s</i>
Acceleration	<i>400 k/s²</i>
Maneuverability	<i>20 dps</i>
Duration	<i>120 sec</i>
Lock time	<i>5.0 sec</i>

WC ARMADA WEAPON DAMAGE

Gun	Damage	Energy Used
<i>Laser Cannon (C)</i>	13	15
<i>Neutron Gun</i>	18	22
<i>Mass Driver</i>	20	18
<i>Particle Cannon</i>	23	25
<i>Tachyon Cannon</i>	25	30
<i>Ionic Pulse Gun</i>	33	37
<i>Reaper Cannon</i>	40	50
<i>Photon Cannon (C)</i>	37	43
<i>Laser Cannon (K)</i>	10	15
<i>Mass Accelerator</i>	15	18
<i>Flux Cannon</i>	20	28
<i>Electron Gun</i>	25	30
<i>Phase Blaster</i>	30	25
<i>Matter Disrupter</i>	33	37
<i>Photon Gun</i>	37	43
<i>Photon Cannon (K)</i>	40	50

CHARACTERS

CHARACTERS

ANGEL

CAPTAIN JEANNETTE DEVEREAUX

(WC1) “I cannot stand ‘rebels,’ or hot-doggers, or any of these so-called intuitive know-it-alls,” explains Angel. “We have used flying craft in warfare since 1914. As a race, we have nearly *eight centuries* of combat flying experience, and we’ve had nearly eight centuries to define, refine, and perfect the rules by which we fly. These are rules designed to keep us alive, keep our wingmen alive, and win our wars, *n’est-ce pas?*”

“But every class that comes out of the Academy is stuffed full of these talented fliers who think that, because they can do new and interesting things with their machines, they must be smarter than eight centuries of military thinkers—and so the rules don’t apply to them. They shut up fast when they start seeing their classmates eat missiles—and it is at *that* point they join the human race and begin to contribute to winning this war.”

The 28-year-old Devereaux is a native of Brussels, Belgium. She is widely known for her marksmanship: Her accomplishments with ship’s weapons dot the *Tiger’s Claw* performance records.

(WC2) Angel is a beautiful French woman in her mid-thirties, an excellent combat pilot. In the original WC, she was a “by the book” type tactician, and basically rather cold to our hero. During the Firekkan missions (Secret Missions 2), Bossman died while flying on her wing. This has changed her whole personality—she’s much more emotional now, and vulnerable, especially to the death of close friends. When Spirit is killed in WCII, her grief will prompt the love affair between herself and Bluehair.

(WC3) Angel is assigned to a covert operations unit. Her last mission takes her into Kilrah, where she gathers geographical data that eventually leads to the planet’s destruction. She dies at the hands of Thrakhath.

BEAR

LIEUTENANT JASON BONDAREVSKY

(SO1) Bear is a fiery young pilot completely devoted to the ideals of the Confederation. So devoted, in fact, that he faked his credentials and joined the military even though he was underage! Even when Bear finds himself taking part in a mutiny against a ruthless, lawbreaking commander, he never strays from the laws which make the Confederation what it is. Passionate, yet cool under fire, Bear is a good man to have on your wing anytime!

(Novel) When the Kilrathi declare an “armistice,” Bear joins forces with Tolwyn, who has received a dishonorable discharge. He is a leading force in exposing the false armistice offered by the Kilrathi. He eventually hangs up his wings and settles for a captain’s seat in one of the *Victory’s* escort destroyers.

BOSSMAN

MAJOR CHEN KIEN

(WC1) Major Kien is known as Bossman to the spacecrews, but that wasn’t always the case. “When I was young—er, younger—they called me *Ripper*; my old friends still do. I was a lot like Hunter, pushing everything to the limit. But I might have been a little too good, or at least lucky, at it. Replacement crews coming in, bright young second looies, took my lead—and got themselves shot to hell. When I started burying young pilots who had been killed for behaving like me, I decided to give them an example that would not get them blown out of space. It is sort of a vicious cycle: You try to act as an example, and young pilots start coming to you for advice. That is when they started calling me Bossman. I do not regret all these changes—but there are times I miss the old days.”

The 39-year-old native of Kaohsiung, Taiwan, has a degree in aeronautical engineering from the Confederation Net university system. He is married to ergonomics engineer Chen Mingxing and, last March, became the father of a baby girl.

Died, *SM2*. (While flying on Angel’s wing).

COBRA

LIEUTENANT LAUREL BUCKLEY

(WC3) If everyone’s hatred of the Kilrathi could be bundles into one personality, it would be Laurel Buckley. Cobra *lives* to kill cats, and can barely tolerate living on the same ship as Hobbes. Of course, she did spend the majority of her childhood in a Kilrathi slave camp ...

Cobra is a sharpshooter, and her flying style is aggressive and unsubtle. She'll follow your orders as long as they keep her in the heat of the battle, but she might balk if you order her to pull back or ease off in any way. Low morale makes her fight crazier and less carefully.

Died, *WC3*. (But not before revealing Hobbes as the traitor).

CROSSBONES

LIEUTENANT MARKHAM COLT

(*SO2*) A handsome guy in his mid-twenties with blond hair, Crossbones is one of the test pilots in the Wild Eagles squadron and flies "just like Maniac, his teacher." He dies in the explosion on the Flight Deck, set by Minx as she escapes to the Kilrathi with a prototype Morningstar.

DOOMSDAY

CAPTAIN ETIENNE MONTCLAIR

(*WC2*) Doomsday is a Maori in his early thirties—black, with the distinctive facial marks of a Maori warrior. In personality, he's closest to Eeyore—if anything can go wrong, it surely will. Despite this glum attitude, he's a very skilled pilot and good wingman.

Transferred to *Tiger's Claw* from *Austin* in middle of *SM2*.

DOWNTOWN

LIEUTENANT ROSS BALDWIN

(*WC2*) Downtown is a young black man, roughly mid-twenties. His family, when fleeing from their home planet during a Kilrathi invasion, was captured and sent as slave labor to the Kilrathi planet of Ghorah Khar. Years later, when Hobbes was working undercover on that planet for the Confederation, he helped the young boy escape. The relationship between Downtown and Hobbes is unique—Hobbes is all the family that Downtown has. In personality, Downtown is fiery and impulsive, and very vocal in defending Hobbes against anyone who badmouths him.

Died, *WC2*.

FALCON/PHOENIX

CHRISTOPHER BLAIR, THE BLUE-HAIRED HERO OF THE GAMES.

Blair begins the game with call-sign "Falcon," but changes to "Phoenix" following his vindication in the Tiger's Claw disaster. (He receives several promotions in the course of the games.) He starts out as a rookie, but develops into a seasoned pilot by the time K'thrinak Mang is destroyed. In *WC2*, he falls in love with a beautiful French pilot named Angel, who is eventually captured and dies (in *WC3*).

In *WC3*, he attains the rank of Colonel and directs squadrons aboard the TCS *Victory*. He becomes the Confederation's most famous hero to date when he leads the successful Kilrah attack squadron and delivers the Temblor bomb into a Kilrathi fault.

FLASH

1ST LIEUTENANT JACE DILLON

(*WC3*) Brash, rude and arrogant, Jace Dillon has connections, namely a certain relative in Confed who's managed to find him a cushy test-piloting job. He arrives onboard the *Victory* with the new *Excalibur* super-fighter, a fine piece of machinery Flash prefers to keep on the Flight Deck. He talks a good game, but underneath his ego he's scared to death of combat. In fact, he doesn't exactly endear himself to Blair when he sleeps through a scramble alarm. However, a training sim challenge soon teaches him a little humility and places him on the combat roster.

Flash only has one problem as a pilot; he knows how good he is. He doesn't particularly want your job, but he has no doubt he could do it, probably better than you. If you're willing to give him his head, he makes a top-notch wingman. He's too egotistical to be affected much by ship morale.

FLINT

LIEUTENANT ROBIN PETERS

(*WC3*) Flint is an ambitious pilot who's eager to prove herself to you. At 27, she's a skilled, careful fighter who continually voices her conviction as a pilot. She's unusually astute as far as the regs are concerned...her father was a pilot for his entire career, and her brother met an untimely end in the war. Flint, like Rachel, immediately finds herself attracted to Blair, but she has the tact to hold off until after he learns of Angel's death.

Up in the air, Flint will follow your orders explicitly. If her morale suffers, Flint becomes less sure of herself, more hesitant in battle and more insubordinate. She's had her share of bad judgments, especially when the action heats up her home system, Locanda.

COLONEL HALCYON

Colonel Peter Halcyon is the tough but occasionally sympathetic squadron commander aboard the *Tiger's Claw*. A former combat pilot who moved up the ranks, he was about to be promoted to Tactical when the *Claw* heads to K'Tithrak Mang for that appointment with destiny. Halcyon goes down with the ship in the *Claw* disaster.

HOBBS

COLONEL RALGHA nar HHALLAS

(WC2) Hobbes is a renegade Kilrathi, who defected to the Confederation in Secret Missions 2. He's in mid-thirties equivalent for a Kilrathi. He left the Kilrathi Empire because of overall disgust at how the Kilrathi had changed—turned into ruthless expansionists with no concern for their honor. Hobbes is VERY honorable, and loyal to those he considers friends. In personality, the best way to describe him is volatile. He has a temper, and is very opinionated, and won't hesitate to show it.

(SM2) Defects to Confederation.

(WC2) Assigned Confederation combat duty,

(WC3) Transferred to TCS *Victory*, WC3. He becomes less temperamental and requests to be taken off the flight roster. Eventually, Blair reinstates him. Hobbes kills Cobra and is revealed as an identity-overlay experiment after he re-defects back to his own kind.

HUNTER

CAPTAIN IAN ST. JOHN

(WC1) Hunter is one of the best pilots in the service, and has racked up an impressive number of kills in the years he has been stationed on the *Tiger's Claw*. He's known as a seat-of-the-pants flier, and Kilrathi opponents tend to be baffled by his unpredictable, spontaneous flying style.

The 27-year-old native of Brisbane, Australia is sometimes accused of excessive independence and a casual attitude toward regulations. "Maybe so," he explains, "but I'd never leave my wingleader hanging. However, every [expletive deleted] thing we're given—ships, weapons, training, and standing regs—is there for us to push to the limit, and maybe a little further, if we're going to get the job done. Notice I say 'push to the limit' and not 'break.' Maybe there's not much of a difference, but it's usually *the* difference between dusting a furball and sucking vacuum."

Died in *Tiger's Claw* disaster.

ICEMAN

MAJOR MICHAEL CASEY

(WC1) Iceman has racked up more confirmed kills while serving on the *Tiger's Claw* than any other pilot in the carrier's history. In the cockpit, he is known for calm under fire, letter-perfect flying technique, and deadly aim with ship's weapons, a combination which guarantees disaster for Kilrathi opponents.

Angel, frequent wingman for Iceman, describes flying with him: "You must learn to listen for Iceman. On the comm unit, in a large engagement, everyone is either shouting or at least very excitable; Iceman is *whispering*. You have to strain your ears to hear him. It's always terse little statements: 'Moving in.' 'Rolling right.' 'Target in sight.' 'Objective accomplished.' 'Head for home.' And I will tell you: He talks ten times as much in the cockpit as he ever talks on the carrier."

Iceman, 31, is a native of Vancouver, British Columbia.

(WC1) Died in *Tiger's Claw* disaster.

JAZZ

MAJOR ZACH COLSON

(WC2) Jazz is a very handsome man from the Terran colonies, early thirties, an outstanding pilot and jazz pianist. He's good, he knows he's good, and he expects you to know it as well. VERY confident in his skills. He and Bluehair have a mild antagonism between them, a one-ups-manship contest. This should not be very obvious, though, as we don't want to point fingers at him as the traitor. (Because, of course, he *is* the traitor.)

(SM2) Transferred to *Tiger's Claw* from TCS *Austin* in middle of SM2.

(WC2) Revealed as traitor and captured, WC2.

KNIGHT

CAPTAIN JOSEPH KHUMALO

(WCI) Knight admits that his piloting accomplishments don't dot the record books. "I'm not a cockpit genius like Hunter or a marksman like Angel. I'm an ordinary man. I'm a pilot. It's my job."

Yet wingleaders tend to breathe a sigh of relief when they draw Khumalo as wingman. Knight has a reputation of utter reliability in combat. "I got my nickname in the Enyo Engagement. The Kilrathi were swarming like flies. I was a second looie assigned as wingman to Captain Maria 'la Doña' Alvarez. We were hugging the deck of this transport and strafing it, did a tight turn going from its back to its belly, and ran right through a swarm of fighters headed the other way. Any defensive maneuvering in those quarters would've cut me off from la Doña, so I just fired as fast as I could, and got lucky: I was an ace coming out of that pack, and had picked off a couple of fighters going after my wingleader. La Doña put on her thickest accent and said, 'Ooh, eet's my White Knight,' and the name stuck.

"But, honestly, I don't feel that way. I'm not a knight-errant. I'm a soldier. Not all of us can be geniuses-- but I'm going to do the best I can with what I can." Khumalo, 36, hails from Kroonstad, South Africa.

Died in *Tiger's Claw* disaster.

MANIAC

2ND LT. TODD MARSHALL

(WCI) Fresh from the Academy is 2nd Lt. Todd Marshall, known as *Maniac* by his graduating class.

Marshall, 23, tries hard to live up to his moniker. "Plodding along with your joystick in one hand and a copy of the naval regs in the other is not going to impress the Kilrathi," he says. "They know our regs. They know the Book, they know how we do things. If we're going to put them on the ropes, we have to adapt our rules, tactics, and flying styles. We have to outfly them, outfight them—we've got to *want* it more. And I want it.

"I'm a Proxie—homeworld Leto, Proxima Centauri IV. When the colonization started, anyone with any brains or skills high-tailed it off Earth, and most of them ended up on Leto. That's why Proxies kick homeborn Terrans around in the ratings."

Despite his creative interpretation of colonial history and comparative Naval Academy standings, Marshall was one of the highest-rated Academy graduates of the '54 class and promises to be a worthy addition to the *Tiger's Claw* pilot roster.

(SO2) Maniac was off on "medical leave" when the *Tiger's Claw* was destroyed. After he returned to active duty, he was promoted for heroism in the Deneb Sector. The stories on this are conflicting—some people say that he deliberately forced two Kilrathi capital ships to collide and explode, others say that his fighter was on autopilot at

the time. In any case, he's a major hero and media darling now. He's also been promoted to command the Wild Eagles squadron, a group of top test pilots entrusted with the testing of the *Morningstar* fighter prototype.

(WC1) You are paired with Maniac in a Scimitar. You will soon find out this is far from a pleasant experience.

(WC2) Maniac, after two years of therapy, is declared fit for duty and transfers to a carrier in Deneb Sector.

(WC3) He finally reaches the rank of Major and ends up flying under Blair on the *Victory*. He survives, but barely, when Kilrah is destroyed.

MINX

CAPTAIN MARIA GRIMALDI

(SO2) A beautiful test pilot flying in Maniac's Wild Eagles squadron, she also happens to be a Mandarin working for the Kilrathi. If you destroy Ayer's Rock, she dies horribly in a radiation-damaged lifepod after the destruction of Ayer's Rock. Otherwise, she lives to fight another day.

PALADIN

MAJOR JAMES TAGGART

(WC1) "The laddies coming out of the Academy think I was born old," says Paladin. "But when I took my commission—not too long after we *discovered* the Empire of Kilrah—I was just a kid. I was charged up on stories of knight-errantry, on *The Death of Arthur* and *The Song of Roland*. So when we ran into the Kilrathi, I knew I was going grab up a lance, hop into a cockpit, and change the course of history. Naturally," he jokes, "I did."

Taggart, 55, is a native of Ares, the self-sufficient space station built in permanent orbit around the planet Venus; his parents were terraforming engineers from Wick, Scotland.

Though an effective wingleader, Taggart is especially appreciated for his wingman skills. He has a reputation for protectiveness when flying wing. On an average of three times a year, pranksters get to his spacecraft, scrape the name "Paladin" from his cockpit and replace it with "Mother Hen."

"Appreciate it while you can," he grins. "Combat flying is a young man's game, and I'm having trouble convincing the medics that I'm still 25. I'll be flying a desk before too long if I can find one with afterburners and smart missiles."

(WC2) Paladin is a Scotsman in his mid-fifties, very calm and self-assured. He knows he's good, and has no need to prove it to anyone. He's a definite father figure to our hero, very supportive during Bluehair's trials and

tribulations. Between the end of *Secret Missions 2: Crusade* and the beginning of *Wing Commander II*, Paladin “officially” retired from the Terran Confederation Navy but in reality became a spy for the Confederation, running courier and clandestine missions with his Free Trader ship, “The Bonnie Heather.”

(*WC2, SO1*) Paladin becomes a spy with the cover of a civilian transport pilot.

(*WC3*) He becomes deeply involved in Intelligence operations and takes charge of the Temblor test project that is successfully launched against the Kilrathi’s home planet. Paladin occasionally briefs Blair in *WC3*, and leads him through the final mission of the game.

RACHEL

CHIEF TECHNICIAN RACHEL CORIOLIS

(*WC3*) Rachel is one of Blair’s possible love interests, and doesn’t hesitate to throw little innuendoes at him whenever possible. She’s around 25, tough, competent and cute...everyone’s favorite little “grease monkey.” Rachel isn’t particularly concerned with acting feminine, but she’s sincere and does her best to ensure the safety of “her” pilots.

The *Victory* has been home to her ever since she enlisted and graduated first in her class. She’s earned bragging rights to the Chief Tech position and knows her ordnance inside and out.

RADIO ROLLINS

1ST LIEUTENANT TED ROLLINS, COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

(*WC3*) Rollins is the most pessimist crew member of the *Victory*, and thinks his position qualifies his opinions as “correct.” Though it’s true that Confed doesn’t exactly own up to how badly the war is going, Rollins feels that his morale duty is to spread the bad news of the day. The upside to this normally irritating character is that he always gives Blair a thumbs-up after a successful mission.

SHADOW

CAPTAIN ELIZABETH NORWOOD

(*WC2*) Shadow has been Bluehair’s closest friend since he was assigned to the space station ten years ago. She’s a competent, but not exceptional pilot. Her main motivation is to get out of the Navy (she’ll retire soon), and rejoin her husband (a doctor) and her young son in their colonial farming community. She’s an older sister/mother figure to Bluehair, very supportive and concerned about his career.

Died, *WC2*.

SHOTGLASS

(*WC1*) Shotglass used to be a combat pilot aboard the Claw, until he reached mandatory retirement age. Not wanting to go back into civilian life, he signed up as the barkeep on the Claw. He's full of advice for the younger pilots and reminisces frequently about his days of combat. Shotglass was his callsign when he was still a combat pilot, so he uses it now as a nickname. In *SM2*, he displays some of his younger toughness when he suggests tossing the defector Captain Ralgha out the airlock. Shotglass dies in the *Tiger's Claw* disaster.

SPARKS

CHIEF PETTY OFFICER JANET MCCULLOUGH

(*WC2*) A female mechanic, roughly late thirties, who's seen it all. She's a lady who speaks her mind, very self-confident and assertive. She'll be supportive of Bluehair because Angel vouches for him, and a genuine friendship will develop between our hero and this lady.

(*Novel*) After the false armistice is called, Sparks joins up with Bear in Tolwyn's secret forces.

SPIRIT

1ST LT. TANAKA MARIKO

(*WC1*) Spirit is a rough translation of *Kami*, as she's called by the Japanese pilot instructors responsible for her initial training. In the cockpit, Spirit is known for her deceptive, defensive piloting, her ability to sense and avoid incoming fire, and her habit of creeping in as close as possible to a target before cutting loose with ship's weaponry.

A native of Sapporo on the Japanese island of Hokkaido, Tanaka is a third-generation military pilot. Her father, Major Tanaka Shun (affectionately remembered as *Go-Devil*), died twenty years ago in the brutal McAuliffe Ambush of '34.

The 24-year-old ace explains, "I did not join the armed forces for revenge. I have no fantasies of personally gunning down the pilot who killed my father. It is a matter of tradition and duty. The tradition is my family's, and the duty is to the Earth—I am often asked if I think of myself as a modern *samurai*. The answer is no. I am a military pilot, not a feudal retainer. But there is nothing to keep a modern pilot, Japanese or not, from trying to

adhere to the best elements of the warrior-codes of the past: The code of the samurai, the code of the knight-errant, any code of honor and service.”

(WC2) Spirit is an attractive Japanese woman in her early thirties, a good combat pilot. The best way to describe her is quiet but spunky. She and Bluehair are very close friends, in a big brother/younger sister kind of relationship. Spirit was Blue's first wingman on the *Tiger's Claw*. In personality, Spirit tends to be quiet, often dependent on Bluehair for advice and reassurance. She dies midway through WC2.

STINGRAY

CAPTAIN DIRK WRIGHT

(WC2) Stingray is a young pilot in his mid-twenties—courageous, impulsive, skilled. He's a typical “angry young man,” filled with hatred for the Kilrathi, which provokes the confrontations between himself and Hobbes. He's basically everything that Bluehair was, ten years ago.

TALON

LIEUTENANT JEFFREY BURKHEIMER

(SO2) Talon is a craggy-faced brown-haired man in his thirties, another Wild Eagle. He's wounded in the explosion on the Flight Deck, but recovers enough to go in search of Ayer's Rock, the secret Mandarin base, with Bluehair, Maniac and Paladin.

ADMIRAL GEOFFREY TOLWYN

(WC2) Admiral Tolwyn is a handsome English man in his early fifties. He's tough, competent, and extremely loyal and supportive of his underlings. When he hates someone, like Bluehair, it's a position that he'll stand by, that most logic can't break through. He's convinced that Bluehair is a coward and would like nothing better than to see Bluehair undergo a second court martial and be put out to dry. However, when Bluehair proves himself at the end of the game, Tolwyn will change his attitudes completely.

(WC3) Before *Wing III*, Tolwyn is reinstated as an admiral and resumes his cold, tough rule over the Confederation's space forces. He still dislikes Blair and assigns him to backwater duty aboard the *Victory*. Tolwyn temporarily ousts Eisen as captain during the game. However, his power-hungry ego takes a beating when his prized *Behemoth* gun project is destroyed by the cats.

LONE WOLF

(RANK) KEVIN TOLWYN

(WC2) The nephew of Admiral Tolwyn, Kevin Tolwyn began his career as a spoiled favorite of his uncle. However, Jason "Bear" Bondarevsky changes all this when Tolwyn falls into his squadron. Once a brash, rude kid, Lone Wolf develops into a talented pilot who respects his superior officers and overcomes his cowardice.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM EISEN

(WC3) In command of the TCS *Victory*, Eisen is a seasoned veteran of many conflicts, something like the original skipper of the *Caine* in "The *Caine Mutiny*", a man whose command style is one of quiet strength rather than flashy heroics. In his early fifties, he looks like most modern naval commanders of advanced years — receding hairline, weathered face which denotes seasoned wisdom, hard eyes that suggest strength.

He's tough on the outside, but he sincerely cares about the welfare of those onboard his ship. His loyalty stems from the fact that he started his career as a communications officer during the *Victory's* maiden voyage. He expects due respect from everyone onboard, and takes unspoken offense to Tolwyn's takeover of *his* carrier.

VAGABOND

LIEUTENANT WINSTON CHANG

(WC3) An Enigma sector native, Lieutenant Winston Chang is a play-hard, die-hard type of pilot who doesn't let the grimness of his surroundings diminish his spirits. He realizes the seriousness of the Confederation's plight, but is always one to boost morale when it flags. His specialty onboard the *Victory* is card playing, especially against unwise rookies with a wad of pay. He's pretty secretive about his combat records—with good reason.

Despite his protests to the contrary, Vagabond loves to fly and loves to fight. He has a high-energy, creative flying style. Sometimes, in combat, his excitable nature might get the best of him and he'll blow off one of your orders, at least the first time you send it. If his morale drops, Vagabond becomes even more insubordinate and his flying becomes more wild and erratic.

Later in the game, Blair finds out that Vagabond worked for Dr. Severin, who was testing biochemical weapons on innocent civilians. He's felt guilty all these years, but finally breaks through it when he punches the newly rescued Doctor.

"I'm so used to going from here to there that the only place I can settle down is on an old tug that'll do the wandering for me. When you've seen as much as I have, you develop a sharp appreciation for quality. This ship is filled with fine people, as well as skilled pilots. If I had a complaint, it would be that my crewmates play cards like a ship full of grandmothers."

VAQUERO

LIEUTENANT MITCHELL LOPEZ

(WC3) Twenty-seven year old Lieutenant Mitchell Lopez, better known as *Vaquero*, has only one passion, and that's music. His family resides in Dakota, where generation after generation has built guitars for living. He's a fair pilot, and his respect for Blair is apparent. In the air, *Vaquero* is a competent, no-nonsense pilot whose only goal is the get the mission done and get back home in one piece. He can be counted on to follow your orders. If morale suffers he becomes more timid and erratic in combat.

"Sometimes I try to write music to capture the feel of the *Victory*, but I can't. My hands aren't good enough to bring it out of the guitar. But it's there. I feel it every time I hit an E major. That's why I like the lounge. I can see the people, and try to hear their part ... try to make just that one riff come into being. In my mind, I can hear many different chords creating harmony. It is deep, an ocean of sound and feeling that I almost can't explain."

BAKHTOSH REDCLAW

(WC1) Bakhtosh Redclaw is a rash on the comm units; he is best-known for extremely sarcastic gloating during combat engagements. It appears that he belongs to an aristocratic Kilrathi family and has been trained in the politics of superiority from birth. He flies a *Jalthi-class* Heavy Fighter.

Strengths. Bakhtosh is the best Kilrathi shot in Vega Sector, bar none. His accuracy with ship's guns is becoming legendary even among Terran pilots, which is another strength: Some Terrans feel intimidated when confronting the legendary Bakhtosh, and consequently their flying suffers. Additionally, he is a master of the crowning insult, the patronizing remark, and the racial slur. He often goads Terran fighters into bad tactical errors.

Weaknesses. Bakhtosh's piloting is nothing special. Like one legendary figure of Terran combat aviation, the Red Baron, he is an excellent marksman but a mediocre flier. Additionally, his insults and better-than-thou attitude are *not* a pose; he believes himself to be superior to all Kilrathi as well as all humans.

Tactics. Bakhtosh prefers to fire at a distance. He will get at the maximum effective range for his weapons and chew his target to pieces. The extra distance allows him a little time to cope with the maneuvers of superior fliers. If forced to close with a foe, he will launch one of his missiles.

Recommendation. Close, firing continuously, then try to outfly him in standard fashion. Do *not* be daunted by his substantial reputation.

(WC5G) Bakhtosh RedClaw, flying a Jalthi-class heavy fighter, considered himself to be the best Kilrathi pilot, although we placed him at the bottom of the list. His greatest strength was his accuracy with the Jalthi's six-guns, but his flying skills left a lot to be desired. He responded to taunts and hated being called cat-face. Died, WC1.

BHUK “BLOODMIST” NAR HHALLAS

(WC3) Bloodmist is a dangerous *Paktahn* bomber pilot who picks his targets carefully, cannot be taunted into action and packs a big punch. He has serious firepower at his disposal and is a deadly shot from his rear turret. Approach Bloodmist cautiously—just because you can outfly him doesn't mean it'll be easy to bring him down.

BHURAK STARKILLER

(WC1) Best-known among the Kilrathi aces is Bhurak, called Bhurak Starkiller. He is regarded as the best living pilot among the Kilrathi in this sector. He flies a *Salthi*-class light fighter.

Strengths. Bhurak's an excellent pilot and shot. He has optimal reflexes and there are no serious weaknesses to be detected in his flying style.

Weaknesses. Psych profiles indicate that Bhurak is probably addicted to speed, thrills, and sport. Though a courageous pilot, he is not without a survival instinct: A sufficient number of opponents or a sudden turn in fortune could panic him into retreat.

Tactics. Bhurak likes the dogfight. He prefers a maneuverable foe and standard dogfight tactics. He almost always uses his ship's laser cannon, reserving his standard dumb-fire missile for stationary targets.

Recommendation. If possible, put several pilots on him at once; deny him a fair fight or anything he would consider fun. He might become disgruntled and choose another target, or rout. If you're forced into single combat with him, don't try to outfly him: You might do best by going stationary, spinning to keep him in your sights, and trading licks. He doesn't appear to consider that fun and may choose a new objective.

(WC3G) Bhurak Starkiller, flying a *Salthi*-class light fighter, carried a reputation as the finest pilot in the Kilrathi space navy although the number of confirmed kills he claimed was unknown. He was an unusual character who seemed to consider dogfights a pleasurable pastime. When the fighting ceased to be fun, he would often run and hide.

Died, WC1. (Killed by Iceman).

DAKHATH

(WC1) Dakhath, whose name translates literally as Deathstroke, is one of the most dangerous pilots alive. According to our (incomplete) records, he has 55+ confirmed kills on file. He pilots a *Dralthi*-class medium fighter.

Strengths. Dakhath appears to be utterly without fear. He never retreats from an engagement until every enemy within 1,000 clicks is destroyed, and will not abandon a wounded enemy until that enemy is destroyed. This courage and lack of self-preservation instincts make him particularly dangerous. So does his apparent affection for inflicting pain.

Weaknesses. Dakhath lives only to kill and will not retreat or change targets until his first target is dead. If at all possible, use his single-mindedness against him-- if only by leading him away from a strategically-important target so that he can concentrate on *you*.

Tactics. Dakhath launches his missiles at maximum range (he appears to like explosions), then closes for the kill on one target. He will cling to that target until he destroys it, then choose another, as methodical as clock circuits.

Recommendation. It might be possible to lead him into the path of fire friendly to you, and is equally possible that he won't notice new pursuit on him until it's too late. (*Important Note:* If your ship takes a lot of damage and looks shaky, do not eject if you're in the vicinity of Dakhath. One of his hobbies is target practice against ejecting pilots.)

(*WCSG*) Dakhath, flying a Dralhti-class medium fighter, had recorded 55 confirmed kills before the Vega Campaign even started. He was the most ruthless of the enemy pilots and wouldn't break off from an engagement while any Terran ships were still able to fly. Similarly, he wouldn't break his attack on a specific Terran ship until it was destroyed.

Died, *WCI*. (Killed by Paladin and Angel).

KHAJJA THE FANG

(*WCI*) Khajja the Fang is not-so-affectionately called "the Machine" by Terran intelligence. He is the most efficient, mission-oriented pilot the Kilrathi have. He pilots a *Krant*-class medium fighter.

Strengths. Khajja's greatest asset is his clear thinking. He never panics or falters and appears to have utter confidence in his wingmen. He is not vulnerable to taunts, goads, or insults.

Weaknesses. Khajja's faith in his wingmen may be misplaced. Analysis indicates that some Kilrathi pilots may be afraid of him. He will single-mindedly ignore incoming ships in order to concentrate on a strike objective, meaning that he might ignore *you*.

Tactics. Khajja prefers straight-in, straight-out strafing approaches. He uses his laser cannon for most encounters, saves his heat-seekers for mission objectives or particularly troublesome enemies, and saves his friend or foe missile for emergencies.

Recommendation. If he's approaching a mission objective, you might get a free shot by eluding his wingmen. If he's moving in on you, utilize classic dogfight tactics: Try to outfly and outshoot him, or lead him toward unengaged friendlies. He doesn't like bad odds.

(WCSG) Khajja the Fang, flying a Krant-class medium fighter, was known as the most single-minded of the enemy aces. He wouldn't respond to taunts, and always went right after the mission objective, often ignoring fighter escorts.

Died, *WC1*.

KHASRA REDCLAW

(WC2) Khasra is a young Kilrathi nobleman, the younger brother of the famous Bakhtosh Redclaw from Wing Commander 1. He's clever and calculating, but not quite clever enough—the Emperor knows of Khasra's attempts to convince Prince Thrakhath to stage a coup and take over the Empire, and the Emperor will make sure that Khasra is not allowed to continue this.

Died at end of *SO1*.

KUR RAK HUMANKILLER

(WC2) A Kilrathi ace. Died, *WC2*.

MARJAKH "STALKER" NAR KUR'U'TAK

(WC3) Keep your eyes open for Stalker, who pilots a *Strakha* stealth fighter. He won't announce his presence in advance. The first time you'll know he's there is usually when he opens fire. Little is known about Kilrathi stealth technology, but it's believed that the *Strakha* possesses inferior armor. The challenge, of course, is drawing a bead on the fighter in the first place.

NAJJI "FIRECLAW" RAGITAGHA

Preferred craft: *Darket* light fighter

(WC3) Although Fireclaw is not a pilot to be taken lightly, the relative lack of weapons and shields in his fighter of choice might render him vulnerable to coordinated attacks. He usually retreats when outnumbered or obviously outgunned.

RAKTI BLOOD-DRINKER

(WC2) Another Kilrathi ace. Died, WC2. (Killed by Spirit before she commits suicide).

PRINCE THRAKHATH

The Prince can generally be considered to be the product of a bad childhood. His grandfather is the Emperor of Kilrah, a ruthless, cold-blooded dictator. Thrakhath's father was the Admiral in charge of the attack against Goddard Colony—though he survived that dismal failure, he was executed by the Emperor upon his return to the Imperial Palace. Thrakhath treads a fine line between ambition and survival, having resisted his cousin Khasra's attempts to lure him into a coup against his grandfather er during WC2. Which is good for him, since the Emperor knew all about Khasra's plans, anyhow. In *Special Ops 1*, Thrakhath's refusal to work with Khasra results in Khasra attempting to assassinate the Prince, an attempt which Bluehair and Paladin interrupt and which eventually results in Khasra's death. Thrakhath is smart, politically savvy, a good combat pilot, and overall a survivor. He will achieve the Throne of Kilrah, but not until he's certain he'll survive it.

(WC2) Thrakhath is a proud young Kilrathi warrior, grandson to the Emperor of Kilrah. He's smart, ambitious, an incredibly good combat pilot, and has very little scruples about getting what he wants—what he wants is the Throne of Kilrah.

(WC3) Even though Prince Thrakhath rarely flies anymore, when he does he invariably means business. Thrakhath's skills as a pilot are legendary and will require every ounce of your skill and energy to thwart. His ship of choice is the personalized *Bloodfang* heavy fighter, which is said to be pound-for-pound a match for the new *Excalibur*-class fighter.

DRAKHAI (IMPERIAL GUARD)

The Drakhai are the elite of the Kilrathi pilots, recruited from the Imperial Guard. Their most common feature is undying loyalty to the Emperor and a desire to kill humans. Until *SM2*, they had never been encountered outside of Kilrathi space, but for the Sivar ritual, they were used as the advance task force, ordered to clear the Firekka System of any opposing forces. Beginning with WC2, the Drakhai are used extensively in combat in the Enigma Sector, probably because of a shortage of other pilot squadrons.

SYSTEMS

SYSTEMS

WC1

MCAULIFFE

Primordial world. Teaching and research colony, population 26,000.

A developing terran world, with an ammonia-methane atmosphere featuring primitive organic compounds. The human population is divided evenly between an orbital station and a ground-based research facility. Many of humanity's greatest minds are present at any given time, and virtually the entire body of human knowledge is available in the orbital station's libraries.

BRIMSTONE

Volcanic world. Kilrathi military installation, population unknown.

Rocked by volcanic eruptions and violent earthquakes, Brimstone is a hostile and forbidding environment. Because of its strategic location, the Kilrathi have built a military base on the planet; the extent of Kilrathi settlement of the planet is not clear.

DAKOTA

Savannah world. Agricultural colony, population 135,000.

A hospitable world of rolling grasslands. Dominant lifeforms include huge grazing mammals, similar to buffaloes, but two to three times as large, and small, fleet-footed grazers analogous to antelope. The population is widely dispersed, and consists mainly of independent homesteaders working towards complete self-sufficiency.

ENYO

Water world. Agricultural colony, population 450,000.

People live on manmade platforms constructed on top of submerged reefs and mountains. Major export products include fish and edible seaweed; Enyo is a major food producer in the sector.

DIENO /

Desert world. Precious metal mining compounds, population 200,000.

Dienoans are mostly rogue prospectors, scouring the rocky hills and shifting sands of this barren planet for metals such as silver and gold. Very dependent upon Enyo for supplies, including both food and water.

GATEWAY

Temperate world. Diverse industries, population 27,000,000.

One of the most heavily populated planets in the sector, Gateway is the industrial hub of the sector. Important products include starship parts, computers, ammunition and small arms.

GODDARD

Goddard was colonized in 2512 by descendants of the North American continent of Terra, many of whom were scientists and educators. The colony is named after Robert H. Goddard, generally considered to be the father of rocketry science. Every year, 12,000 rockets are fired to celebrate Goddard's birthday.

In 2618, Eduardo Rosado, a Goddard native, invented the neutron gun, one of the Confederation's most effective weapons. Another Goddard scientist, Gordon E. Thorn, developed a high-quality beverage. The result was Goddard Special. The colony exports 75,000 kiloliters of Goddard Special every year.

Goddard is famous for its Conservation Forest, spread out over 12,500,000 square km. An estimated 7225 varieties of Terran trees have been transplanted to Goddard to prevent their extinction on Earth. Visitors to Goddard should contact the Bureau of Tourism for more information about Goddard's birthday and other local events. Ask for publication #16548 version 5.11.

(Colony destroyed at beginning of *SMI*.)

KIROV

Jungle world. Native sentients, human population 1,500.

A verdant jungle planet, Kirov V appears extremely inviting to human habitation at first. Unfortunately, its atmosphere contains traces of toxic gases, which are also found in the water as well as the flora and fauna of the planet. These poisons are easily filtered by a lightweight breathing mask or water filters; food must be imported or heavily treated.

A more important factor limiting the habitation of Kirov is the presence of a primitive sentient species. Small, vaguely simian bipeds, the Kirovites live as stone-age tribesmen, hunting and gathering in their planets jungles. They do build villages and use an extensive array of stone-age tools, including bows and atl-atls. The Terran

Confederation has authorized only a handful of colonists on the planet—mostly anthropologists, xenobiologists, sociologists, and other scholars. General colonization is thus far prohibited.

Enigma Sector Worlds

FIREKKA SYSTEM

Forested world with approx. 50% ocean. Discovered during military training exercises, population of 15,200.

A peaceful world, Firekka is inhabited by a bird-like race that resemble a large emu. The world joined the Confederation in *SM1*, and many pilots join the war effort. K'kai and her niece are both major characters in one of the *WC* novels.

WC2 Systems

GWYNEDD

32 million clicks from Sol. Planet count: 32 (4 inhabitable)

Major uses: Mineral mining, military installations (Caernarvon Station), colonial agriculture

NIVEN

12 trillion clicks from Sol. Planet count: 8 (all inhabitable)

Major uses: Solid Confederation stronghold, originally colonized in 2633. Top export consists of food staples such as rice and grain. Amek furs are also traded when in season.

GHORAH KHAR

Adjacent to Niven System, 12.5 trillion clicks from Sol. Planet count: 9 (4 inhabitable)

Major uses: Free trade installation, shipyards, orbital supply warehouses.

NOVAYA KIEV

3 million clicks from Sol. Planet count: 32 (none inhabitable)

Major uses: Former Kilrathi territory that is expected to become a military warhead test station.

HEAVEN'S GATE

9 trillion clicks from Sol. Planet count: 15 (2 inhabited, under Kilrathi rule)

Major uses: Liberated from Kilrathi rule in WC2. All slave camps converted into functional agricolonies for cattle, donkir pigs, Firekkan eels.

TESLA

11.5 trillion clicks from Sol. Planet count: None other than large asteroid chunks

Major uses: Vital transport route to Enigma

Privateer

GEMINI SECTOR: AN OVERVIEW

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.

MISSIONS

MISSIONS

By David S. "Center" Raley—86 Missions, 706 kills

Wing Commander I

There are a total of seventy-four missions in *Wing Commander I*, grouped together in twenty-nine series and three campaigns. These missions vary from the incredibly simple to the practically impossible.

The most important grouping of missions is the series—a group of missions with the same wingmate. The path you take for a campaign will be based on how you do in each series, which in turn depends on how well you do within the missions of each series. Once you progress from one series to the next, your successes and failures in previous missions are no longer relevant—your path is determined by what you do in the present series.

MEDALS

Many missions also include medals. For each mission that I know has an medal, I list the medal and the criteria for earning it. Medals require you to gain a given number of kill points. The number of kill points required for a medal are those earned personally by you for killing Kilrathi ships, and those earned for surviving friendly ships (Kilrathi aces are not a factor in awarding medals). Note that I list the minimum requirements in which I have actually won the medal, so it may be possible that you can win the medal with fewer points than I list. If I have determined that there is no way to win a medal in the mission, then I will specify "No medal" in the decoration section. If I don't say anything at all, it means that I never won a medal there, but that I haven't proven it to be impossible. I will not include the Tiger's Claw in any of the medal kill points counts, even if your primary mission is to protect the Claw. While this might not always be what's happening within the program, losing the Claw makes the medal question a moot point. The value listed for Confederation ships includes those that are captured by the Kilrathi.

Kill Point Table

Salthi7
Dralthi/Krant10
Gratha/Jalthi/Hhriss/Dorkir15
Ralari25

Fralthi50
Snakeir70
Star Post75
Confederation Ship-	1
Friendly ship saved	25

Promotion Points

Missions also award promotion points. Promotion points are earned for reaching the maximum number of victory points possible in a mission, reaching or passing a number of total kills that is divisible by five, and for killing a Kilrathi Ace or a Drakhai. In some missions, you LOSE one promotion point if your wingmate dies during the mission.

Promotion points accumulate from mission to mission until they exceed a random number generated at the end of each mission. If you pass this number and are eligible for promotion, you will receive the next rank. Whether or not you are eligible for promotion, the promotion point total will also be set to zero. Note that you cannot become a Lieutenant Colonel in the Vega campaign.

The TrainSim

The TrainSim is a good place to practice outside the context of a mission. If your main trouble is shooting accurately, this is a good place to improve your skills. It's also a good place to see how you are progressing, if you're willing to keep a record of your highest scores.

There are ten fighters of each type (Salthi, Dralhti, Krant and Gratha), divided into four waves (first one fighter, then two, then three, then four). If you complete the fourth wave, you proceed on to the next fighter. If you manage to complete all four sets (has anyone done this in a Hornet?), you will get the victory screen, complete with fireworks.

You are in a Hornet, so victory is not an easy matter (I'm presently working on four Gratha). For variety, I create different EXE files, each with a different ship in the Hornet slot. While I don't use these for missions, they are good for use in the TrainSim to get practice with other types of ships. If you'd like to try the same, use WCVIEW to copy the fighter you want into the Hornet position. The game is a cakewalk with a Raptor or Rapier, so I base those versions on SM2.EXE and replace the Krant with Hhriss.

Points

Completing Salthi wave 1	10,000 + 20 * Time
Completing Salthi wave 2	20,000 + 20 * Time
Completing Salthi wave 3	30,000 + 20 * Time
Completing Salthi wave 4	40,000 + 20 * Time
Completing Dralhti wave 1	10,500 + 40 * Time
Completing Dralhti wave 2	21,000 + 40 * Time
Completing Dralhti wave 3	31,500 + 40 * Time

Completing Dralhti wave 4	42,000 + 40 * Time
Completing Krant wave 1	11,000 + 60 * Time
Completing Krant wave 2	22,000 + 60 * Time
Completing Krant wave 3	33,000 + 60 * Time
Completing Krant wave 4	44,000 + 60 * Time
Completing Gratha wave 1	11,500 + 80 * Time
Completing Gratha wave 2	23,000 + 80 * Time
Completing Gratha wave 3	34,500 + 80 * Time
Completing Gratha wave 4	46,000 + 80 * Time

You have 2400 time units for each of the first two waves, 2800 for the third wave, and 3200 for the final wave of each set. This means that the theoretical maximum score is 2,580,000. Of course, such a score is totally impossible. I have reached 2,000,000 in a Raptor (before I did the Hhriss substitution), but I doubt that score is possible in a Hornet. I'd say that if you make it to 1,500,000 in a Hornet, you did extremely well.

ENYO (WCI, SERIES 1; HORNET, SPIRIT)

This series is a warm-up to what follows. You are a rookie pilot entering into the Vega campaign, not knowing how much a difference you'll be making in the war effort. These two missions will teach you all the basics for Wing Commander, so that you'll be ready for the more difficult missions that follow.

1A. The patrol is the usual fare that a Hornet pilot should expect—check out the Nav points and report what you find. The asteroids are there just to give you headaches, and I'd love to hear the astrophysical explanation of how they are able to exist.

No medal.

1B. Personally, I think that Hornets and escort missions don't mix. But if there are more transports to be escorted than other fighter wings available, then there is little choice in the matter. Fortunately, you don't meet enough to give you too much trouble, as this mission is mainly here to get you used to protecting friendly vessels.

Bronze Star for 52 kill points (Save Drayman; kill 2 Dralhti, 1 Salthi)

MCAULIFFE (WCI, SERIES 2; PALADIN, SCIMITAR)

Now that you've warmed up, it's time to start the real war. The missions here are the first ones I found to be a challenge, and it took me a long time to solve everything in it (fortunately, you don't need to solve everything to progress on the winning track).

2A. There is no fighter less suitable for a patrol than a Scimitar, but that does not exempt the Scimitar from that duty. In this case, the assignment is reasonable, as a Scimitar is more suitable for penetrating a minefield than a Hornet (I presume that the Raptors are otherwise engaged).

No medal.

2B. The trouble with strike missions is that the Confederation didn't have a really good strike fighter until the Rapier went into service. The Hornet was a bit small for the role, the Scimitar was a bit slow, and the Raptor

lacked range. While the Raptor was the best of the lot for the role, the Scimitar often found itself with the honors. Well, here's your change to prove what you can do with a Scimitar.

Bronze Star for 65 kill points (Ralari and 4 fighters)

2C. Ah, an escort mission—finally something where the Scimitar's heavy weapon/slow speed design works to its advantage. The only trouble is Bhurak Starkiller, who eluded me for a long time before I figured out how to do him in.

Silver Star for 86 kill points (save Drayman; kill all fighters)

BRIMSTONE (WCI, SERIES 5; MANIAC, SCIMITAR)

The war is in the balance, and you must lead your fellow pilots to victory. There are three middle path missions (Enyo, Brimstone, and Rostov), and when you play either of these, you must play well or find your way to the losing path.

You are paired with Maniac in a Scimitar. You will soon find out that that is far from a pleasant experience. The second thing you'll find out is that finishing this with Maniac alive is quite an effort in its own right.

5A. The first mission is a routine patrol. Things are rather quiet, except for the ambush attempt at Nav 1.

No medal.

5B. In your next mission, you have to rendezvous with an Exeter and escort it back to the Claw. Actually, it'd be pathetically easy if it weren't for the battle in the asteroids with the Salthi. If there's a ship that shouldn't fight in asteroids, it's the Scimitar, so you're at a bit of a disadvantage.

No medal.

5C. The final mission is an strike against a missile freighter. My best advice here is to stay near the freighter and attack it if Khajja decides it's time to dance. He's a tough one to kill, but he won't flee and occasionally gives you time to get about your business. Whatever you do, don't allow the Dorkir to get out of sensor range, or you have lost.

Bronze Star for 90 kill points (Dorkir, 1 Jalthi, 6 Krant)

DAKOTA (WCI, SERIES 7; KNIGHT, RAPTOR)

The campaign is going pretty well, but Kilrathi is not the only thing you must fight against. If there's anything worse to compound a plague than a war, I don't know what it is. Here on Dakota, you have a plague on your hands, and it's your job to protect the beleaguered citizens and supplies that may save them from their affliction.

7A. Your first mission is to escort a hospital ship and a vaccine ship. While it's possible to win the series without them, the moral victory of saving the people of Dakota is too important to allow the ships to perish. Fortunately, the vaccine ship itself isn't all that difficult to defend.

Silver Star for 150 kill points.

7B. The second mission is a typical sweep patrol. With all the hospital traffic, you have to make sure that there are no Kilrathi in the area, so the patrols are being conducted in the heavy Raptors.

Silver Star for 105 kill points (Ralari, 5 Krant, 2 Gratha)

7C. The final mission is a strike against a Kilrathi tanker and several transports. It appears that the Kilrathi are immune to Watson's Disease and are planning a little invasion, but it's your job to keep the troop transports from arriving at their destination. Note that this is the critical mission, as it is impossible to win the series without taking out at least one troop transport.

Gold Star for 135 kill points (3 Dorkir, 3 Krant, 4 Jalthi)

KURASAWA (WCI, SERIES 9; BOSSMAN, RAPIER)

With the win in Dakota, you are pressing deep into Kilrathi territory. Can you keep the pressure on and drive the Kilrathi out of the Vega sector?

You are paired with Bossman in a Rapier. Yep, those new Rapiers are finally ready for action, and you are one of the first to be assigned to one. The trouble I have with this fighter is that it's just TOO maneuverable. I also have trouble with its rather pathetic missile array (I like Heat-Seeking missiles). The Rapier is a strike fighter (hence the Dumb Fires), with 2 Friend or Foe and an Image Recognition for dogfighting.

9A. You start with the Rapier's specialty: a strike against freighters. It's not really all that tough a mission, though don't count on taking out all three of the Dorkir personally.

No medal.

9B. The second mission is the toughest one on the winning track—the infamous Ralari defense mission. Some people have stayed here a long time before either giving up or finally eking out a victory. There's so much advice given on this one, I better just say that you'd best be served to use the Friend or Foe against the Salthi (as the Friend or Foe will treat the Ralari as an enemy target) and to act as quickly as possible when dealing with the Gratha. I've yet to win this one. According to ORIGIN, this one was made especially tough to shake up those who think the Vega campaign is an easy glide to Venice.

Silver Star for 98 kill points (Save Ralari; kill 3 Gratha, 4 Salthi).

9C. The final mission is a cinch compared to the previous one. As far as I can tell, the minefield does not exist, so follow the route as ordered. I occasionally have trouble with navigation after fighting the Krant, so make sure where you and the Exeter are going before hitting the autopilot.

No medal.

ROSTOV (WCI, SERIES 10; ICEMAN, RAPTOR)

There is one problem with this series: asteroids. No matter where you turn, you will find more chunks of rock than an astrophysicist could ever explain. Fortunately, most of the fields are reasonably navigable.

You are paired with Iceman in a Raptor. Yeah, I know that two patrols and a strike cries out for a Rapier, but they are still evaluating those after the Rapier's failure to help us win at Kurasawa.

10A. The first mission is a straight patrol with Dakhath and a Dorkir thrown in. Of course, the odds of Dakhath still being alive at this point are slim, but there is always a chance.

Bronze Star for 135 kill points (all Kilrathi).

10B. The second mission is a strike against a Ralari, sort of an analog to the saving of a Ralari at Kurasawa. Except for a battle in the asteroids, this is fairly straightforward.

Silver Star for 113 kill points (Ralari, 4 Salthi, 4 Jalthi)

10C. The final mission is to check out a large bogie at Nav 2. I have no idea how they detected the Fralthi before it jumped into the system, but they managed it somehow.

Gold Star for 120 kill points (Fralthi, 4 Krant, 3 Dralthi)

VENICE (WCI, SERIES 12; HUNTER, RAPIER)

You are paired with Hunter in a Rapier. Frankly, I don't like flying with Hunter, but he seems halfway decent in a Rapier.

12A. The first mission is a simple patrol to get you warmed up.

Silver Star for 155 kill points (Ralari, 2 Jalthi, 4 Krant, 4 Gratha)

12B. The second mission is the only joint assault in *Wing Commander I*. Frankly, I'm not impressed by the pilots at Wing Foxtrot. Sheesh, these guys make Maniac and Hunter look good. The real goal here is to get close enough to determine the location of the starbase, though I suppose someone else will manage the task if you fail.

No medal.

12C. The third mission is listed as a patrol, but is more accurately described as a sweep. If you want to be screamed at hard enough to make the paper curl off your walls, then touch only Nav 1 and return to base.

Bronze Star for 125 kill points (Ralari, 2 Jalthi, 1 Dralthi, 4 Gratha).

12D. The final mission is the big one: the assault on the starbase. While the base will eventually fall no matter what you do, it's best to be the one to do it. That Pewter Planet's a tough medal to get, but it gives you a nice feeling when they pin it on.

Medal of Valor for 243 kill points (Starpost, 2 Krant, 4 Gratha, 4 Salthi, 4 Jalthi).

Secret Missions 1

GODDARD (SM1, SERIES 1; HUNTER, HORNET)

The purpose of this series is to set the stage for the campaign proper. As you are not called to the site until Goddard is under attack, and you have no way of arriving at Goddard until it is destroyed, the series itself is impossible to win (if you won, there'd be no campaign).

You are paired with Hunter in a Hornet. Despite the alliteration, the combination is far from harmonious. Then again, I don't get along too well with Hunter no matter what ship I'm assigned to.

1A. The first mission is very busy: Patrol the area, defend a ship about to jump out, and escort another ship that's jumping in.

No medal.

1B. The second mission holds the record for the mission where I've lost my wingmate most often. I almost always go after the transports on my own, as Hunter just can't handle the confrontation with the Gratha (assuming he gets that far). How I'm supposed to defend both Hunter and the Claw is beyond my ken. At least once you've taken care of the Gratha, the rest is easy (four Salthi alone, easy?).

Silver Star for 117 kill points (Lumbari, Dorkir, 5 Krant, 2 Gratha, 1 Salthi).

BORDER ZONE (SM1, SERIES 2; ANGEL, RAPTOR OR SCIMITAR (?))

You are now heading into Kilrathi space, and the Kilrathi don't like the idea that you're going there. First you must get across the border. I suppose that this is really a star system in which the Confederation holds one jump point and the Kilrathi hold the other jump point. I have no idea how the Kilrathi have managed to mine so much of this region (I don't want to see the mine allocation in their annual budget), but perhaps they only seeded the most convenient routes.

You are paired with Angel in a Raptor. Since she tends to be a better gunner than pilot, I prefer to stay out of her way and let her take care of herself. Since Angel is more likely to die from a collision than enemy fire, such an approach works well.

2A. Your first mission in Kilrathi space is to take out a Fralthi. Let's forget about this warm-up stuff and get right down to business, shall we?

No medal.

2B. The second mission demonstrates how much the power of the Jalthi is exaggerated. Here you are, arriving to see three Jalthi attacking a pair of Draymen, and you wipe out all three Jalthi before they can do significant damage to the transports. _ Speaking of Angel, I suggest you pull a little ahead of the Draymen as you approach Nav 2, so that Angel won't feel obliged to run into the transports. Who else would stay at the regulation position even if it kills her?

No medal.

MIDGARD (SM1, SERIES 3; BOSSMAN, SCIMITAR)

This series has the word "turnabout" written all over it. In one mission you attack a Drayman, and the next you defend a Dralhti. Weird things happen when you penetrate Kilrathi space, don't they?

You are paired with Bossman in a Scimitar. The result is generally a dead wingmate. Just when you thought you'd never have to see another Scimitar in your career, they pull out a few to use during a fighter shortage. This is the unfortunate result of going on a dangerous mission without a supply line home. All you can do is fight your best and live to see a better fighter.

3A. You must destroy the Drayman to win, and do so quickly, as it will jump out of the system if you spend too much time playing with the Krant.

No medal.

3B. This is one of those scenarios where you have to quickly knock out the enemy fighters if you expect to win. The Jalthi and Fralthi are a bit tough, and I've never managed to knock them out. There's probably a medal for knocking out everything and saving the Dralhti, but I don't expect to prove that in the near future.

JOTUNHEIM (SM1, SERIES 4; SPIRIT/3-BOSSMAN, RAPTOR)

All right, you've had enough time playing, now it's time to make things a little tougher.

4A. The first mission starts with a battle against a Fralthi. I'm always suspicious about missions that start that way, as you have to wonder what they do for an encore. In this case, you must protect a Drayman from several Krant. Actually not that tough a mission, assuming that you have Spirit along with you.

4B. The strike against the ambush pits you against another Fralthi. In this case, you have to stick close to the Fralthi, as it tends to slip away if you allow the Gratha to lead you astray.

4C. The mission briefing has nothing to do with what actually happens, as the entire emergency situation is a hoax prepared by the Kilrathi.

Bronze Star for 0 kill points.

BIFROST (SM1, SERIES 5; PALADIN/3-ICEMAN, 1-RAPTOR/2-SCIMITAR/3-RAPIER)

Oh, you thought the last series was easy? Well, you'll lose all illusions of simplicity when you hit BiFrost. It's time to find an enemy fuel depot, and you can be sure it's well defended. You are paired with Paladin in a Raptor. Well, officially, at least. Unfortunately, the second mission is in a Scimitar.

5A. The first mission is a strike against an unknown enemy ship. Well, there is a Ralari you can take out, but the Sivar will jump before you even get near it. I am not sure what criteria is used for identifying the thing, but getting close to it before it jumps does improve your chances. As for victory, I don't know what makes that possible. The Jalthi at Nav 3 aren't worth any points, and taking out the Sivar is impossible, so either there is a hidden victory point somewhere, or victory is impossible. As for a challenge, try to take out all those Jalthi at Nav 3. No medal or victory music for it, but it's still quite an achievement.

No medal.

5B. The second mission is the most ill-assigned mission in all Wing Commander. A strike against a priority target requires either a Raptor or a Rapier, but here you are in a Scimitar.

The Star Post alone decides the issue of the series. One more thing, I cannot believe that such an important mission that's in such difficult circumstances has no medal associated with it. I think a Gold Star for 225 kill points would have been quite fair.

No medal.

VALGARD (SM1, SERIES 6; ICEMAN, RAPIER)

With the fuel depot destroyed, the Kilrathi will be finding a rude surprise when they arrive to refuel. As such, you sit and wait until the Kilrathi come and find that something's not quite right. You are paired with Iceman in a Rapier. It's one of the better combinations you can get, so smile while it lasts.

6A, 6B. The first two missions are variations of the same theme: search and destroy. This is the ideal mission type for the Rapier, so don't blame your ship if you blow this one. The first is the easier of the two, as the second has stiffer opposition and a Lumbari that likes to jump out.

No medals.

6C. The final mission requires you to defend your mother ship. Since you can't continue if you lose, it's quite logical that this mission counts for no victory points. As for the medal, I think you can win it with a minimal number of kills, but I haven't gotten around to proving this yet.

Bronze Star for 170 kill points (probably for even much less).

VIGRID (SM1, SERIES 7; KNIGHT RAPIER)

Time to close in for the kill. There's a Sivar out there, and it's your duty to wipe it from the face of the galaxy. There are two versions as to what generally happens with Knight: he always runs, or he always gets killed (I'm one of those who often watches his funeral). In either case, it means that he's little help in these missions. If he's still alive after the Sivar is taken out, then you've accomplished more than I ever did.

7A. The first mission is basically a "let's prevent the enemy from attacking the Claw but they manage to get to it anyway" scenario.

7B. The final mission is the big one: can you take out the Sivar? The Sivar means everything here, and you'll win or lose the campaign based on whether or not you can take it out. The Sivar is quite tough to take out, but it can be done. It's weakest in the front, but easiest to hit in the rear—it's your choice.

As for the medal, 220 is the minimum in which I counted the total and won, a count I made when I didn't nail the Sivar. I presume that the Sivar is itself worth at least 75 points, so nailing it pretty much guarantees you'll get the medal.

Gold Star for 220 kill points (11 Krant, Fralthi, 4 Jalthe).

Secret Missions 2:

FIREKKA (SM2, SERIES 1; ICEMAN, HORNET)

As with Secret Missions, we start with a warm-up series that has only one path, but this time the path leads to high hopes, not to despair. Ah, but alas this would be short lived, as a mighty Kilrathi fleet arrives to ruin the party. The assignment of the Hornet is quite logical here, as there is no way a significant Kilrathi presence could be found so far from their turf. Right? As for the Scimitar, I'm sure that Iceman isn't the only one cheering when they announce its retirement at the start of the second mission.

1A. The first mission is a simple escort, with orders to check out a possible Kilrathi presence. What you get is the first taste of what's to follow: deadlier Dralhti and the Imperial Guard. The challenge in this mission is that Ralari. If you are able to wipe out the Gratha (a tough assignment as it is), then you better act quickly before the Ralari jumps out.

Bronze Star for 120 kill points (save Exeter; kill 4 Dralhti, 2 Salthi, 3 Gratha).

1B. The second mission is a typical patrol looking for a Kilrathi convoy. I have a feeling that tactical is getting suspicious at this point, as three Fralhti never have made up a convoy in any meaning of the term (a task force, yes; but a convoy, no).

FIREKKA (SM2, SERIES 2; KNIGHT, RAPIER)

All right, now that we know that there is something more here than a stray convoy, it's time to find out what's really going on. Just how strong is the Kilrathi presence and what can we do about it?

2A. In the first mission, you encounter a new class of fighter: the Hhriss. These things are highly maneuverable, which make them tough to take out (especially for someone like me, who gets outmaneuvered by Fralhti). If you think that's bad, you should see their charge—a rather impressive looking carrier that must have sent the rest of its fighters elsewhere (probably figured a CAP of three Hhriss was more than adequate).

2B. The second mission is the start of the evacuation effort, since the diplomats cannot be left here if there's real trouble brewing.

Bronze Star for 200 kill points (kill all Kilrathi, save all Terran).

FIREKKA (SM2, SERIES 3; SPIRIT, RAPTOR)

Things are getting curiouser and curiouser. A defecting Kilrathi? This brings up a point that I always wondered about, as we know so little about the Kilrathi in general. Perhaps it's possible that the main part of the population are decent people who we could get along with if we had a chance. Our defecting Kilrathi captain has decided that the ways of the Kilrathi military are wrong, and that someone should stand up for decent Kilrathi kind.

Okay, so why this war if Kilrathi are really decent folk? Simple, the real enemy is the Sivar cult. Since they presently control the military and the Imperial family, it is no wonder that we are fighting this bloody war. Of course, *WC II* will most likely throw this theory down the drain, but it's worth a shot.

The only thing that scares me about flying with Spirit is that the missions I get with her seem always to be tough ones (excepting those introductory missions in Enyo). Ah, it is nice that she knows you well enough to speak with you as a friend, instead of as some mythical god.

3A. The first mission is to save a defecting Fralthi. Just to make sure that you are paying attention, they also throw in a Fralthi you are supposed to destroy at the same Nav point. In this mission, ignore the first Krant you encounter and go for the ones attacking the Fralthi. Also, after you save the Fralthi, you'll probably be set for Nav 1. Remember to reset the Nav computer to the Tiger's Claw before activating the autopilot, or else you'll lose the Fralthi as it heads for the Claw and you head in the opposite direction.

Gold Star for 200 kill points (save one Fralthi; kill the other Fralthi, all other fighters).

3B. The second mission requires you to help a couple ships get out of the system safely. You don't have to worry much about the Exeter, as hitting the Nav point practically guarantees that it'll get away safely. The Drayman is another matter. As in the previous mission, ignore the first Krant you encounter and take out the ones nearest the Drayman. Also, act quickly against the Dralthi (better yet, rout the last Krant to avoid the Dralthi). Oh, if you lose the Drayman early, you only encounter 2 Salthi.

CORSAIR (SM2, SERIES 4; JAZZ, DRALTHI)

Well, we're still trying to figure out what's going on, so it's time to go undercover and see if the Kilrathi would tell us themselves. You are paired with Jazz in a Dralthi—the flying bull's-eye you've been laughing at since your third mission. With a little luck, you can accomplish your mission without being detected and not worry about the low visibility and large target size of the Dralthi. What do you mean nothing's ever as simple as it seems? One more thing—don't start these missions unless you intend to complete them, as you cannot eject.

4A. The first mission is a recon to check out a pair of Snakeir. Your best bet is to touch Nav 1 and return home, especially if you are in no need for a promotion (there are more promotion points in this mission than any other, due to its superabundance of Drakhai). If you are really up to fighting off all those Drakhai, be my guest, but bug out when you're in trouble.

4B. The second mission is another undercover patrol. The most interesting feature of this mission is the mixed battle at Nav 1. This is the only battle in *Wing Commander* that has the enemy flying more than one fighter at a single encounter, which they manage to do only because some of those fighters are the same type you are flying. In other words, make sure you only fire at a targeted Dralthi, as you don't want to kill Jazz.

FIREKKA (SM2, SERIES 5; DOOMSDAY, 1-HORNET/2-DRALTHI)

We just can't sit here while the Kilrathi forcibly convert our new friends, can we? It's time to send in some troops and disrupt this ceremony. Are you up to a little blasphemy? You are paired with Doomsday in a Hornet. Don't even ask who's idea that is. Doomsday is such a pessimist that he'd call Candide's adventures happy events.

5A. Your first mission is to escort a pair of transports. The first one is easy and the second one is a bit of a challenge. My main suggestion is that if one of the Gratha tries to run away—let it. While the Salthi are not all that dangerous when they are the only opponent, they have a habit of turning the balance against you whenever they show up. Stay close and defend the transport, especially during the Dralthi battle. Note that if you lose Doomsday at Nav 1, there'll only be two Dralthi at Nav 2.

5B. The second mission is in a Dralhti. Here you should keep quiet until you are nearing the second Nav point. At that time, position yourself just behind the Jalthi as they start firing, then blast away. How well you do here usually makes the difference in winning and losing the mission. Note that there is only one Drayman in this mission, and that it mini-jumps from Nav 1 to Nav 2 during the mission.

CORSAIR (SM2, SERIES 6; HUNTER, RAPTOR)

As the marines prepare their attack, you must wreak havoc on Kilrathi ships to reduce the Kilrathi strength. You are paired with Hunter in a Raptor. With me, that usually means a dead wingmate before this is over, as Hunter is one of three pilots that has a high death rate with me.

6A. The first mission is to defend the Claw and then seek out any enemy ships in the area. You can often get away with fighting only a pair of the Jalthi at a time—don't head for the idle pair until you have finished off the active pair.

Gold Star for 270 kill points (Ralari, Fralthi, 4 Jalthi, 3 Gratha, 7 Dralhti).

6B. The second mission is to take out troop transports that are heading to Firekka. These are important, as these are the troops that will be fighting the marines you escorted to the planet earlier. As these transports are prone to jumping away if you dally too long, try to take them out as quickly as possible.

CORSAIR (SM2, SERIES 7; ANGEL, 1-DRALTHI/2-RAPIER)

With the ceremony disrupted, it is time to leave the system as quickly as possible. Yet we cannot abandon our new friends, can we? The only thing we can do is try to inflict so much damage on the Kilrathi before they leave that they'd be unable to hold Firekka.

7A. The first mission is to find any of the escaping marine transports and escort it back to the Claw.

7B. The second mission is an attempt to get rid of as much enemy hardware as possible. At least this time you are in a Rapier, which is quite suitable for the task. In this mission, you will meet each type of enemy fighter in the game, assuming you invoke all subsequent waves. This is essentially a final opportunity to boost up your kill total. Since you cannot lose this mission, it's up to you whether you want to go down fighting or survive to see Vega once again.

CHARON (SM2, SERIES 9; MANIAC, 1-RAPTOR/2-RAPIER)

Well, the party's over and it's time to leave. Please let the cat outside before you jump out of the system. You are paired with Maniac in a Raptor, and then a Rapier. Doesn't matter, of course, since Maniac is mostly trouble no matter what fighter you're in.

9A. The first mission is a strike against any enemy ships you find. I've never managed to get the Snakeir, so I must consider that to be the great challenge of this mission. Since winning is absurdly simple, I suggest you go for the Medal of Valor.

Medal of Valor for 165 kill points.

9B. The second mission is a simple Tiger's Claw defense. Just fly well and knock out or rout whatever enemy you can.

Wing Commander II

The *Wing Commander II* campaign works very differently from that of *Wing Commander I*. In general, it is linear, as with the *Secret Missions*, but it does allow for various branches depending on how well you do. Unlike *WC I*, which depended on Victory Points, success or failure in each series of *WC II* depends on the results of a single major mission.

GWYNEDD (WCII, SERIES 1; SHADOW, FERRET)

This series is both a warm up for those new to the game and an introduction to the campaign in general. In short, it tells how you get to be posted on the Concordia in the first place.

Shadow's only a reservist, so you can't expect her to be the best pilot in the game, but she seems a good sight better than anyone was in the original game. It is unfortunate that her death is a part of the plot, as it's good to see some people return from a war alive. As for the Ferret, it's a nice fast ship, but its armament is pathetic; in other words, good for recon and courier missions, but not much more.

1A. The first mission is very similar to Enyo 1, so it should give veterans little trouble, unless you are rusty.

1B. The second mission brings on the Concordia, which is being chased by Sartha. What can Sartha do to a carrier? Simple, tell a Fralthra where it's at. What do you think recon fighters are for? And look who are the two principal officers of the Concordia: your best friend and your worst enemy. Isn't this going to be an exciting stay?

***1C.** The third mission is the most important in the series, as it decides which path you take. It's a simple escort of a pair of Broadwords against the Fralthra that sent out those Sartha. Don't laugh at those Sartha, as a couple of those and a capital ship's big guns can tear a Broadword to pieces. Take on those fighters and let the bombers do their job. Remember that this is not the old game, where a few Mass Driver shots will take out an enemy capital ship—don't even bother trying.

1D. In the final mission, you once again defend the Concordia. This time a Fralthra is along, just so that you know that the carrier can really be destroyed. While you cannot do anything against the carrier, I presume that if you were not there, the carrier would launch Grikath as soon as it had air superiority. Too bad you lose Shadow when the second wave hits.

NIVEN (WCII, SERIES 2; NONE, FERRET/1-BROADSWORD)

There is treachery aboard the Concordia. While you are out on a mission, someone transmits the Concordia's position to the Kilrathi. Just to make things worse, the traitor also kills someone while performing the foul deed. Well, look at the bright side—no one can blame this one on you. Isn't it nice to be in the clear for a change?

My opinion is that the Ferret is the best recon fighter in the game. Unfortunately, it falls short in other types of mission.

2A. Your first mission is a patrol, but in a Broadsword. Why a Broadsword? Either Angel wanted to give you some flight hours in one, or the jump tracer can only work if installed on a fighter with a hyperdrive. Normally, I'd only recommend a Broadsword for a patrol requiring a jump.

2B. Your second mission is to deliver a message to Niven for the Admiral. Well, it at least puts you away from the scene during the murder. It also gives you a chance to land on a planet instead of a carrier/base.

2C. The third mission is an escort. Believe it or not, the fate of those medical supplies has no effect on the war. I suppose the supplies are replaceable (the lives are not—at least not to the families of the crews). Well, at least it's not Watson's Disease again.

2D. The final mission is a patrol. You run into several stealth fighters (Strakha), but someone destroys your data recorder! Someone out there doesn't like you—most likely whoever killed that communications specialist.

GHORAH KHAR (WCII, SERIES 3; HOBBS, RAPIER)

Though everyone is jittery over the murder, you must continue to fight on. You are now in the one Kilrathi world that has joined the Confederation. I knew that not all of those cats could be all that bad. Though a Kilrathi, Hobbes seems to be a loyal member of the Confederation. The player character seems to be a bit prejudiced against him, and I hope that it's an attitude he loses in the end. I mean, how can he expect anyone to give him a fair shake if he won't give Hobbes one? As for the Rapier, the model G has a better weapons load than the model A, but I still can't get the hang of it.

3A. The first mission is a simple patrol. Simple? Hah! Those Grikath are tough, especially when that Kur is piloting one. He's good—real good. The guy is flying circles about me, and I'm in a Rapier. I don't want to know what the Sartha ace would be like.

3B. The second mission is escorting a civilian transport. What's important is not what's being carried, but who's piloting it. Seems like we have once again met our old friend Paladin, and he's doing well enough. He seems to be in the spy business these days—fortunately for our side. Remember that Jalkehi can knock out a transport, though I suspect that the Bonnie Heather is designed to survive the campaign. As for the attackers, I count six ships in all, most of which are Jalkehi, but I do notice at least one Grikath in the group.

***3C.** In the third mission, the Kilrathi plan to attack Olympus station with a task force. You are thus escorting a pair of Broadswords that would be knocking out the task force. I have yet to see the capital ship and suspect it is a Kamekh, but leave it to the Broadswords anyway.

3D. The final mission is to defend Olympus. I've yet to see anything here that could hurt it, but if they get air superiority in the area, you can be sure that the Grikath would soon follow.

NOVAYA KIEV (WCII, SERIES 4; DOOMSDAY, BROADSWORD)

Time to keep moving and to strike the Kilrathi wherever you could. Doomsday is the first wingmate you have that you've flown with before, and he's as depressing as ever. I'd love to be around when he finally says something cheerful. As for the Broadsword—it's slow but powerful. Personally, I think the bomber should only be used in missions that require you to jump, as I feel the loss of AB use is only worth it in that case. Also, note that the Broadsword has the slowest shield regeneration rate in the game.

4A. The first mission is a long one from the pilot's point of view, so that the fuel requirements are more than you can hold in a Broadsword's tank. Fortunately, you are able to rendezvous with a fuel tanker after the first jump, allowing you to continue. As for the attack on the base itself, I suggest taking out the Dorkathi first, as it's easier to kill and its demise would mean fewer guns to run up against.

4B. The second mission is a patrol that gets interrupted for a search and rescue mission. Okay, Stingray's not the most pleasant pilot on the Concordia, but we might as well save him. How things've change since Vega. There you got medals left and right, and now you earn reprimands!

4C. The third mission is an attack against a Fralthra. Seems to me that the Hector is little help in this battle.

4D. The final mission is a solo attempt to get a communications pod (the ship that you were supposed to escort was destroyed before you got there). I have no idea why I find this one so tough, but many suggest grabbing the pod and running. Oh, if there was a mission built for using Friend or Foe missiles, this is the one. Save them for the Sartha and let them loose.

HEAVEN'S GATE (WCII, SERIES 5; SPIRIT, EPEE)

It's time to go out against an enemy base. Doomsday says that its a hopeless suicide mission, but then doesn't he feel the same way about everything? Spirit's a good wingmate, but she's distracted by something. You'd think she'd have forgotten her fiancé in these ten years, but Spirit seems to be the slave to duty. As for the Epee, it's a fine vessel: almost as fast as a Ferret, very maneuverable, and reasonably well armed. Its only weakness is its light armor, but a good pilot should never depend on Durasteel.

*5A. The first mission is a simple patrol of a jump point and two nav points. Here you learn that a Kamekh does not have phased shields, no matter what Joan's says.

5B. The second mission is an escort followed by a recon on some unknown bogies. The escort mission is simple, but the bogies prove to be quite a battle. As for Jazz's abrupt appearance, that resulted in one of my most confusing moments in the game.

*5C. The third mission is a solo that requires you to escort in a missile freighter from the Agincourt. To emphasize how bad this missile shortage is, you have none for this mission. Of course, you also run into some stealth fighters (or are they pink elephants with wings?), just so everyone thinks you're crazy.

5D. The final mission is an assault on an enemy starbase (*strike* load). This is your first mission in a Sabre. Here you meet the second Kilrathi ace—one who likes to call himself "Blooddrinker". Hey, the Sartha ace isn't that bad after all. As for the actual assault, can you say "Kamikaze"? Farewell Spirit, may you find Philip where you now are.

TESLA (WCII, SERIES 6; STINGRAY, RAPIER)

Okay, you spend the next two weeks relaxing in Angel's arms. After that, it's time to get to work. There is a war on, remember? Stingray is not my favorite wingmate, but perhaps that's because he and I have not gotten along very well during this game. I find him very tough to work with. No matter what target I choose, I manage to hit him while I'm firing at it, even if I selected a target where he was nowhere near.

6A. The first mission is a patrol, with a surprise escort following it. As for the battle with the Jalkehi—why in Kilrathi space would they hide one of those in an asteroid field? I suppose they depend on their shields to protect them from collisions. Yep, it looks like Paladin is back, and he needs to get to the Concordia. Missions like this make me think that Paladin has a ship regeneration machine in the Bonnie Heather. Several times I hear the sounds as if the Heather was destroyed, but it always survives. I think the 25 kill points for saving him are earned only if you never have to rely on that special device, but you at least know that Paladin will be back.

6B. The second mission is an assault on some enemy transports. Not much more we can say on that. Dorkathi are dangerous opponents if you aren't careful, but dead meat if you are.

6C. The third mission is to escort Paladin outsystem and then to check out some bogies. As for the bogies—stay out of the flak of the Fralthra and blow Khasra out of space.

6D. The final mission requires you to escort the William Tell on an assault on a Ralatha. Hey, we finally get to use a capital ship for an offensive strike. Amazing! The Grikath at launch are the more dangerous opponent, as they are the ones equipped with torpedoes. I wonder, though. If the Confederation can refit other fighters to carry torps, can the Kilrathi do the same with theirs? Not something that'll inspire peaceful sleep for admirals.

ENIGMA (WCII, SERIES 7; ANGEL, BROADSWORD)

The Kilrathi are close to your heels and you must protect the *Concordia* as it evades the enemy. Yes, your CO and lover is now your wingmate. And you thought you'd feel bad if another one of your wingmates got killed, eh? As in the original game, you have to make sure you don't get too close to Angel. It's tough to kiss through a Broadsword.

7A. The first mission is a strike on some unknowns and then a patrol of the other side of a jump point. Yes, that's what a Broadsword is for—bait before a jump.

7B. The second mission is a strike against the Korah Pakh listening post. I find this the toughest mission in the entire game. First you have to wave your way through asteroids (well, I tend to blast my way through when in a Broadsword), then you reach a well defended listening post. Those Drakhri might not be much against a fast fighter, but they are a pain when they are piloted by Drakhai and you are in a Broadsword. Worse yet, your movements are hampered, as you must avoid getting too close to the starpost. I found that getting the third Drakhri is usually a matter of taunting and firing. SUCKER. The Jalkehi are easier, if you aren't too battered, and the post is duck soup once the escort is knocked out.

***7C.** The final mission (yes, there are only three in this series) is a strike against a Ralatha. Strangely enough, this time you have to let it jump away so that you can learn the way to K'tithrak Mang system. Once you follow it, though, you can then blow up the Ralatha, which is now without an escort. If you fail to get the data and make the jump, then you will be making a trip to series 12, where you return to Gwynedd.

K'TITHRAK MANG (WCII, SERIES 8; 1,2-JAZZ/3,4-NONE, SABRE)

You have now penetrated into enemy territory and are about to strike against the principal Kilrathi base in the Enigma Sector. If you fail here, you'll be stuck in hostile territory, so this series counts. You are paired with Jazz in a Sabre. Yes, that piano player who has done nothing but insult you since you came on board is now your wingmate. Too bad you can't just blow him out of space. As for the Sabre, it is a fine ship, and suitable for any

type of mission other than recon and courier (due to its lack of speed). If you plan a strike that doesn't require you to jump out of system, then the Sabre is the right fighter to choose. Oh, when attacking a capital ship in one of these, do not approach too fast, lest you crash into its phase shields (embarrassing).

8A. The first mission is an attack against a Ralatha (*strike* load). This is one tough mission, as you must face Jalkehi Drakhai. And just when you thought it was all over, you then have to face Grikath attacking the Concordia. And you thought this would be easy?

8B. The second mission is a patrol through some asteroid fields (*dogfight* load). As for the Strakha, you finally have a witness that they are real. You even get a good recording of them to show Angel.

8C. All right, so you get to blow Jazz out of space after all, or at least out of his fighter. Seems like your guardian Angel keeps you from solving the entire problem with a shot of a particle cannon. I hope his punishment for his treachery is severe. By the way, have you read the messages you can send to Jazz during the battle? (*dogfight* load)

8D. The final mission is a patrol with Nightshade. Huh, I'm not on the strike team? Well, I can fix that: "Hey Sparks!" Okay, now attack that starbase. My, she gave me six torpedoes. I'll have to get her a golden wrench for that (*heavy strike* load). As for the heir to Kilrah, I think he's less a proficient fighter pilot than he claims.

WC Armada

SECTOR 1

Confederation

- You want to establish your defensive line at **Yanebba**, **Mimka** and **Quaser**.
- Notice the line of high-resource worlds that runs from **Raha I** through **Vehati**, **Tiedye**, **Crystal** and **Yanebba**. Obviously, your first goal is to develop these four planets. The problem is that if your defensive line is breached, it's very easy for the Kilrathi to chew their way down this line, undoing all your work.
- Therefore, a strong defense is important, particularly at **Yanebba**.
- Because of its isolation, and in order to protect the attractive cluster of worlds **Gestal**, **Swarm** and **Orange**, **Quaser** might be a good planet to defend with a fortress.

Kilrathi

- You want to establish your defensive line at **Sainz**, **Pladar** and **Liz**.
- You have a tremendously fertile cluster in worlds **Lufer**, **Monguer** and **Kain**, which you should develop first.

- There's another fast cluster (though shorter-lived) in worlds **Zavha**, **Zativa** and **Atrapi**, and this should be your second objective.
- When you have enough defensive ships, you may want to cautiously push your line out from **Sainz** to **Osimil-Savis-Eftenkay**, to give you control of the fertile cluster **Veelide-Osimil-Savis-Eftenkay**.

MIDGAME

- Both sides want to push their lines forward to take control of the line through **Qatar II-Qatar III-Treadway-Piece-Liz** in the middle game.

SECTOR 2

This is a peculiar and challenging sector, because it offers neither side an obvious or attractive defensive line.

Confederation

- Your best starting defensive line is **Menthal II-Drachir III-Telzey-Tavibad**.
- Because of the difficulty in establishing such a tenuous defense quickly, this is one time where you might be justified in strip-mining a planet out early (perhaps **Vesper V**, or more conservatively, **Menthal IV**), to produce enough ships to establish and hold the line.
- Once past the initial line, your only possible advanced position is **Funim-Wunch-Yelkin II-Eikel IV**, an extremely remote and attenuated line of defense. Therefore, speed and aggression are called for.
- Your only assets in this sector are two good lines of high-yield worlds: **Vesper V-Vesper II-Talgot III** and **Menthal IV-Drachir III**.

Kilrathi

- Your initial line is **Aneia I-Wraist I-Nuotens-Xenxis I**.
- You don't need to strip mine as badly as the Confederation does (especially since it doesn't have nearly as good an early supply of resources), but you might want to anyway, particularly if you want to mount a strong offense early on.

- You should definitely develop **Nih V** and **Scheren** first. Then, if you do decide to strip-mine, you should look to **Nih III** or **Quin**, while leaving the high-yield worlds of **Nih V** and **Scheren** for more conservative and efficient exploitation.
- Once the starting line is firm, you can move **Wraist I** to **Xantick II**, **Nuotens** to **Xantick I**, and **Xenxis I** to **Baylor-Eikel IV**.
- **Intygo** and **Wunch** are attractive midgame targets, if they can be taken without over-extending the line.

SECTOR 3

Confederation

- You have two distinct defensive options in this sector. You can establish your line from **Pyrelia-Fortmosh-Grish-Joplat-Sivar**, which is an extended but unified front. This first option gives you control of the rich planet **Paradoks**.
- Or, you can defend **Mara II-Spandrel** and **Grish-Dewby**, giving you two short but widely separated fronts. This second option gives you control of **Mara II**, and puts you in easy reach of the equally valuable **Isilibt** (which can be defended from **Zartoff-Cartel**).
- Your eventual goal should be a line at **Zartoff-Cartel** and another at **Grish-Nomel-Trekath III**, but you have to be careful not to overextend yourself getting there.
- The Kilrathi carrier has lots of room to maneuver, so once the enemy's defenses are penetrated, you may find it more efficient to search in extended waves of fighters, rather than in compact sorties.

Kilrathi

- You should establish your first line at **Solstice-Leverett II-Brenn II-Sergry**. This gives you two good lines of high-yield worlds at **Arbit-Xastar** and **Brenn I-Sergry**.
- If possible, you should make it an early goal to advance from **Sergry** to **Zartoff**, and from there onward with the objective of taking the rich worlds at **Isilibt** and **Mara II**. This may result in a bloody pitched battle for control of those two worlds, but if you can take this region without unreasonable losses it's well worth the effort.
- Since **Isilibt** and **Mara II** will be in constant dispute, you might be well-advised to build *only* mines on these worlds, using transports to ferry resources back to shipyards at **Zartoff** or **Cartel**.

- Your best offensive tactic to win the game is to take your line at **Solstice-Leverett II-Brenn II** and steadily advance it across the sector. That is, from **Solstice-Leverett II-Brenn II**, advance to **Trekath II-Christa-Brenn III**, and then **Trekath III-Arapelli-Luxy**, etc. This strategy requires patience, but it has the advantage of letting you keep your offense and defense in a single line, thus maximizing the effectiveness of every fighter.

SECTOR 4

Confederation

- You should establish your first defense at **Quartz II** and **Kyron I**.
- Your first developed planet should be **Cikker**.
- As soon as you can, you should expand your defense at **Quartz II** to **Kenjevec-Piglet**, giving you control of the medium-yield cluster beyond **Forest**.
- Next, you want to move your defense at **Kyron I** out along the line between **Rollins I** and **Rollins III**, to gain control of the high-yield planets **Rollins I** and **Kyron II**.

Kilrathi

- Establish your first defense at **Centar III** and **Grigor IV**.
- You have a spectacular line of high-yield planets at **Regexp IV-Trint-Grigor II-Grigor IV**.
- Your next objective is to expand your defense at **Centar III** to **Celtic** and **Prime III**, giving you control of the valuable **Celtic** and **Xober**.

MIDGAME

- The midgame for both sides will be a mad scramble for planets **Dannen**, **Klondar III** and **Endigo**, and either **Celtic** or **Rollins III**. Whoever can control this line will have a decisive advantage.
- The endgame strategy for either side is to advance from the middle line to the opponent's starting defensive position, from which the carrier can be quickly pinned by a strong two-pronged assault and destroyed.

SECTOR 5

Confederation

- Your first defense is **Lisacc-Kientith-Reno-Tepit I**.

- You have a lot of high-yield worlds to start, although they're not particularly well grouped. You should move to **Sunder** first, using it as a platform to reach the high-yield worlds at **Layter**, **Drundar** and **Dallas**.
- Once the starting line is developed, your strategy for the rest of the sector is all offense. You should move to **Endo** and **Moq** as quickly as possible, to block Kilrathi advancement, then if possible converge on and take **Donner**. This gives you an excellent line of attack through **Keltar**, and also denies the Kilrathi the high-yield worlds **Endo**, **Gundel** and **Repton**.
- If you can then take **Telcorra** and **Anrtope**, the Kilrathi is sealed up and ready for the kill.

Kilrathi

- Your defense starts at **Telcorra-Anrtope** and **Donner**.
- You should move your carrier directly to the high-yield line **Bator II-Anrtope**.
- As soon as possible, you must expand your defense at **Donner** to **Endo-Gundel** to get control of the rich arc of worlds behind that line. A pitched battle is likely to ensue for control of this arc, and the side that wins it will come out with a decisive advantage.

SECTOR 6

Confederation

- You start out by defending **Zokka V** and **Boyo**, and developing **Rostek** and **Zackra**.
- You can then push **Boyo** to **Fulder II**, and **Zokka V** to **Zokka IV** and **Pagan III**, giving you control of the high-yield **Pagan III**.
- From there, you can push **Zokka IV** to **Anterlay**, and **Pagan III** all the way out to **Choth**, giving you a fully developed defense.
- Eventually, you want to bottle the Kilrathi up by taking and holding **Mopac I**, **Ulvatta** and **Kronos II**, but it's important that you not over-extend yourself in the process. You need to build your offense carefully, then sweep patiently through the middle of the sector.
- Even after the enemy is sealed off, you can still expect a long and bloody endgame battle up the line from **Ferior** to **Cunning**.

Kilrathi

- You have an easy starting defense at **Budoll** and **Kronos II**.
- From there, you can expand your defense at **Kronos II** to include **Kryndyn** as well, then move your defenders at **Budoll** up to **Pygmalion**, giving you a couple more high-yield worlds (**Mopac I** and **Pygmalion**).
- You have an excellent strategic advantage in control of the long, isolated string of planets between **Ferior** and **Cunning**. This includes several high-yield worlds, notably **Zanthia I**, **Zanthia VI** and **Turoc**. This arm should be the seat of your production, and can also be used as a bolt-hole if the Confederation mounts a premature assault against the carrier.
- To win against the Confederation, expect to have to steadily sweep through the sector. Fortunately, you have enough resources to successfully mount such an extensive offense. You have a definite strategic advantage in this sector, but only if you develop your forces steadily and patiently.

SECTOR 7

Confederation

- Your starting defense is **Clark-Daemon II-Muroq**.
- Because **Clark** is so far out from the home-world, aggressive Kilrathi explorers can sometimes get into the **Kluge I-Kluge III-Kluge IV-Kilmier** cluster before you get your defense set up at **Clark**. Watch out for enemy fighters unexpectedly appearing behind your lines early on.
- You should develop the high-yield planets **Poxav**, **Fosterz** and **Muroq** first.
- When you're ready, you can expand **Daemon II** to **Frote** and **Yarra**, then complete your defense by moving **Muroq** to **Lister**.
- Your offense should consist of a drive to get control of **Luro II**, then using **Luro II** as a platform to mount a pitched battle for control of **Lambo**.

Kilrathi

- You start out by defending **Zazbot-Xavier-Zinga**.
- While it's attractive to quickly advance your defense from **Zazbot** to **Luro II** early on, it's really a low strategic priority (but if you don't secure **Luro II**, you should send out some ships to patrol around **Dilvekio** and **Austin**, to warn you if the enemy decides to attack through **Medebane**).

- The real meat of your defensive development — the cornerstone of your strategy — is the move from **Xavier** to **Lambo**. From there you can begin a strong, steady push to get control of **Luro II**, **Frote**, **Bindovr**, **Yarra** and **Savanah IV**. If you can take and hold that beachhead, it's only a matter of time.
- Once again, you have to push steadily and carefully into enemy territory, never over-extending yourself, and never letting up the pressure.

SECTOR 8

Confederation

- Your first defense centers on **Vantage** and **Abel I**.
- Expect some initial skirmishing to see how far up the line between **Gluon I** and **Emmit** each side can get. Try to get as far along the line as you can without getting stuck in a pointless pitched battle.
- The cluster at **Werdup-Rathman I-Witanek-Wretch** is your first development priority. The defensive strongholds of **Vantage** and **Abel I** are also resource rich. **Vantage** is a good planet for a mine, a shipyard *and* a fortress.
- This sector is all offense. You want to seal off the Kilrathi behind **Kalisto**, giving you control of the bulk of the sector. In order to win this sector, you'll have to seal off **Kalisto** and get control of the resources of **Abel II**, **Forist**, **Kalisto** and **Bariad**, plus the rich worlds beyond **Yoxa IV** and **Qillion**.
- If, late in the game, Vantage falls but Kalisto is secure, move your carrier near Noged and establish a new defense somewhere between Abel I and Rathman I.

Kilrathi

- Your starting defenses are at **Kalisto** and as far up the line as you can get between **Cain** and **Vantage**.
- Your ability to win the sector depends almost entirely on your ability to hold **Kalisto** — it's a good place for a fortress!
- There are several short lines of high-yield worlds between **Palefire** (your home-world) and **Abel I**.
- Just as the Confederation *has* to take **Kalisto** to beat you, you *have* to take **Abel I** to beat the Confederation. In both cases, the winning side will be the one that can deny the enemy the rich cluster of planets to the "southwest" of the sector.

SECTOR 9

Confederation

- This sector is a defensive dream. You only need to defend the bottleneck that begins with **Simkin VII**.
- If possible, you want to quickly advance your defense to **Lod**.
- You have lots of fat, juicy high-resource worlds behind your lines. The **Moonbeam-Relox-Jalpor** cluster is particularly attractive.
- Your offensive goal is to control **Hephar** and **War I**, pinching off the Kilrathi and giving you an overwhelming resource advantage.
- Once **Hephar** and **War I** are secure, you can go ahead and move your carrier into the fertile worlds behind **Hephar** and **Darah**, to quickly build an overwhelming offensive force.
- Even after **Hephar** and **War I** are secure, however, you still need to maintain a defense at **Lod**, perhaps by building a fortress.

Kilrathi

- You'll establish your first defense at **Halo** and **Pox I**.
- You need to quickly develop the high-yield **Pox II** and **Cabowabo**, then **Dicon** and **Daedalus**.
- You must move as quickly as you can to **Darah** and **War I**.
- If you can take and hold **Lod**, you'll have effectively crippled the whole Confederation offense (those bottlenecks cut both ways!).
- Since the Confederation has to pin you in behind **Hephar** and **War I**, obviously your chief mission is to deny the enemy those objectives. Even better for you if you can bottle up the Confederation behind **Darah** and **War I** and take the fertile worlds out past **Alula I** and **Wreksta I** for yourself.

SECTOR 10

Confederation

- Your first line of defense is **Passion-Zenun IV**.

- Develop planets **Sparrow II** and **Zenun IV** first, then work your way out to **Chiffon**.
- As soon as possible, you need to expand your defense out to **Mememine-Declan-Veep**, giving you control of **Mememine**, **Zenun II** and **Zenun III**.
- You can confuse the enemy by moving to Rippez and Nimbus, and building a fortress on Rippez. (The carrier should *not* try to enter this area until it has been thoroughly swept by fighters.) Once the fortress is established move the carrier back to your original area (perhaps after building a shipyard on Izdar). The fortress will concentrate the enemy's attention on the worlds behind Rippez and Nimbus, giving you a chance to mount an assault in another direction.
- Another way to create confusion is to mount sorties and feints through **Sanctuary III**. This is particularly effective if the fortress at **Rippez** is holding.
- All this confusion is designed to distract the enemy long enough for you to build up a sufficient force from your original territory to sweep through the entire sector.

Kilrathi

- You start out by defending **Nexus II** and **Sanctuary III**.
- You should develop **Yusarak II** first.
- Build a fortress on **Sanctuary III** (develop **Wolf** on your way there), so you can concentrate your fleet on expanding from **Nexus II** to **Nimbus-Courtland**.
- Once you've secured that line (**Nimbus-Courtland**), you have more resources than the enemy, so go on the offensive.
- Watch out for the Confederation feints and tricks listed above.

SECTOR 11

Confederation

- You start out defending **Freeport** and **Phios**.
- Develop **Pathos VI** first, then move out towards **Elmire** and **Freeport**.

- As soon as possible, you should move your defense at **Phios** up to **Worram III**. This gives you control of five more high-yield worlds.
- If you must, you can pull back from **Freeport** to **Elmire**, but **Elmire** should be defended vigorously.
- If you can hold **Freeport** and **Worram III**, you'll be in excellent position to throw a strong assault at the enemy bottleneck at **Worram I**.

Kilrathi

- Defend **Fliat** first, then rapidly advance your defense to **Worram I**.
- You should quickly work out to the high-yield pair **Zebdar I** and **II**.
- **Splant** is an excellent fallback position in an emergency.
- In order to win the sector, you *must* take and hold **Worram I**, **Worram III** and **Pandora**. Once you have those three planets secure, it's your choice whether to sweep up through **Worram III**, or thrust down past **Pandora**.

Wing Commander III

After destroying K'Tithrak Mang and defeating Jazz Colson, you were assigned to a covert S&R unit. After exploring dozens of planets and performing various search-and-recovery missions, you make a heart-wrenching discovery — the wreckage of your carrier *Concordia*, off the mistral coast of **Vespus**.

At this point, Confederation forces are suffering. The war is going badly, and Tolwyn assigns you to command squadrons aboard an older carrier, the TCS *Victory*, under the command of Col. William Eisen. Now that you're in command of a fighter group, you're responsible for assigning routine patrol and cargo escort missions to your pilots. Aboard the *Victory*, you meet new pilots and several old acquaintances, including Hobbes.

ORSINI SECTOR

When you settle into your new quarters, you find a holo-message from your lover, Angel. She doesn't say much, other than that she's off on some covert-op assignment for Tolwyn. Not much time passes before Eisen summons you to the briefing room. There, you find out that your first assignment as CFG (Commander Fighter Group) is to assign your pilots and fighters to a routine patrol and escort sweep of the Orsini Sector.

ORSINI MISSION 1 (ORS-1)

Briefing. Make a three area sweep and destroy any Kilrathi fighters you find.

After every mission briefing, Rachel appears by the Loadout Terminal in Flight Control. Also, practically every time you land, Rachel will have something to say to you on the Flight Deck. These conversations won't be listed in later missions.

ANALYSIS

- Before you autopilot from the *Victory*, redistribute your power. If you've got good aim, allocate the majority of power to your weapons and lower engines, damage repair and shields. If you're new to the game, increase your shield and damage settings and decrease engines and weapons.
- At Nav 1, set Hobbes free to *Break and attack*, then take out the *Darket* with full guns, or by wearing out their shields with the guns and then popping them with an IR missile. (HS missiles will also work, especially if you've already tagged the rear shields.)
- If you're having trouble staying with the *Darket*, use Y and occasionally afterburn. Take them on head-on if you want to — your shields are better than theirs.

ORSINI MISSION 2(ORS-2)

Briefing. Sweep three areas. This mission is similar to ORS-1, but you will encounter a wayward Kilrathi logistic hull with a few escorting light fighters.

ANALYSIS

- You don't have to take out the transport. But if you want to anyway, activate full guns and afterburn in toward the ship. Aim for the turrets (bracketed in yellow). A transport has two turrets, and once you take them out the ship is defenseless. For the killing blow, unleash your guns, or use a missile.
- Try to tail the *Darket* and match speed with them. Don't forget to lock onto a targeted ship — this activates your I.T.T.S. targeting system. Aim for the green sight to hit the locked ship.

ORSINI MISSION 3 (ORS-3)

Briefing. You must escort a cargo ship from Nav 1 to a jump point at Nav 3. Your mission is to destroy any Kilrathi fighters you run across and protect the cargo ship at all cost.

ANALYSIS

- As soon as you see the transport, do a fly-by to establish contact with it. Otherwise, it won't autopilot with you, and you'll fail the mission.
- Stick close to your transport — the Kilrathi fighters are way more interested in destroying it than you.

- The corvette at Nav 2 can be fatal if you don't avoid its turrets. The best way to take out the corvette is to position your ship behind it (about 10,000 kilometers out) and match its speed. This is just out of its gun range, and you'll be safe. Then, afterburn straight toward the center rear super-turret. You'll definitely want to take this one out first.
- Don't forget to afterburn away once you hear the death cry of a capital ship. It's about to blow, and you'd better get out before your ship is damaged.

ORSINI MISSION 4 (ORS-4)

Briefing. In this mission, you must escort a transport to jump point. The Kilrathi will be testing their experimental Skipper missile on your transport.

ANALYSIS

- Change out HS missiles for IR missiles. Time is critical, so you can't wait for the optimal HS shot.
- Set and lock your engine power to 25%, the minimum necessary to attain full speed. All that higher engine power does is speed up your acceleration time. Give more power to weapons and less to damage (if your ship's in good shape).
- At Nav 1, rendezvous with the transport or you'll fail the mission.
- Send your wingman after the corvette.
- While waiting for the Skipper missile, shoot half your IR missiles off at fighters. They'll take care of the enemy ships, while you go after the Skipper.
- To hit the Skipper, afterburn toward the corvette, pull a 180-degree turn and get behind the Skipper. Afterburn in short spurts to stay around 600 kps (this matches the speed of the missile). When the missile cloaks, use T to quickly cycle through targets and find it again. It will always make a beeline for the transport.
- Don't try ramming the Skipper missile.

TAMAYO SECTOR

Jace "Flash" Dillon, a test pilot recently transferred from Vega Sector Research and Development, arrives on the *Victory* with a prototype version of the *Excalibur* heavy fighter. He exhibits all the behavior of a hair-on-fire test pilot — cocky, self-centered, overconfident, and marginally insubordinate — even Maniac comments on his brash attitude. Over a series of missions, Flash refuses to fly his *Excalibur* when Kilrathi fighters threaten the *Victory's* survival.

Meanwhile, the *Victory* is sent to Tamayo in a defensive move to interrupt Kilrathi operations there. You and your pilots face a tough series of patrol, escort, defensive and offensive missions.

TAMAYO MISSION 1 (TAM-1)

Briefing. In this mission, you don't search out the Kilrathi — they come to the *Victory*. Enemy fighters will swarm and attack the carrier. This will result in the *Victory* leaving the system and failing the mission unless you destroy most of the attackers.

Analysis

- If you're an expert flier, leave the *Darket* and attack the *Paktahn* first. The light fighters will try to distract you, allowing the bombers to sneak in and attack the carrier. Once you've taken out the bombers, your fleet is fairly safe.
- If you're a novice and would rather take on light fighters, let your wingmen soften up the *Paktahn* first. Then, go in for the kill — you'll get the credit, but not the damage taken by your wingmen.
- Be wary of the highly accurate rear turrets on the *Paktahn*. When fighting them, position your ship behind them and slide back and forth and shoot your guns. Or, go head-on, then break to one side and slide before shooting.
- Fire 2 IR missiles at each *Paktahn*. Or, if you can launch behind them, use a Heat Seeker.

TAMAYO MISSION 2 (TAM-2)

Briefing. The Kilrathi mount a second wave in their attack on Tamayo system, striking the planet Tamayo II. The attack fleet includes a large number of enemy transports guarded by Kilrathi fighters. If you allow the transports to reach the planet, you lose. You have to punch through heavy fighter cover and open the transports up to attack by the *Victory* and additional fighter groups.

Once you clear a path, the *Victory* launches three intercept groups. Your group is directly responsible for eliminating fighters at Nav 1. Then, you must continue your sweep of all remaining nav points. Destroy any enemy transports you see.

Analysis

- Talk to Flash before this mission, then to Rachel. She offers you a "joyride" in the *Excalibur*, which is definitely the ship of choice anytime it's available.
- The *Vaktoth* at Nav 1 have rear turrets, so attack their side shields.
- If you took the *Excalibur*, use missiles liberally after the second wave — it carries a load of them, and one or two missiles can easily take out a *Darket*.

- At Nav 2, you shouldn't have any problem taking out the four transports. Assign your wingman to one, then take on a second one yourself. You can take out the turrets first and then shoot at will, or try evading their turret fire. Missiles work well if you don't want to risk going in with your guns. Transports have pretty weak shields, and it won't take long to knock them out.

TAMAYO MISSION 3 (TAM-3, OPTIONAL)

Briefing. As squadron commander, you call Flash down for being a prima donna hotshot who refuses to follow orders, and you agree to a challenge in the simulator at high noon to see who has his hand on the biggest stick.

Analysis

- You definitely want to accept Flash's challenge. This both raises ship morale and lowers his morale. If you win, ship morale goes even higher. If you lose, however, ship morale drops by 4. If you win, morale raises by 2.
- To beat Flash, immediately activate full guns and arm a full salvo of missiles. Get behind him and let all your missiles fly. If this doesn't work, you'll have to dogfight him. He's quick, and you'll have to afterburn after him. Allocate more power to shields and weapons if he starts taking head-on passes.

LOCANDA SECTOR

The *Victory* is sent to the Locanda Worlds in response to a stiff Kilrathi presence there. Once there, scout ships discover a Kilrathi Recon In Force (RIF) group operating in the sector. The *Victory* and its escorts will guard the jump point and prevent the RIF from getting away, while fighter groups patrol Locanda's other sensitive areas (planets and convoy routes).

MISSION LOC-1

Briefing. You must fly a routine patrol mission, navigating around asteroids and clearing out all nav points.

Analysis

- Before autopiloting from the *Victory*, lock engine power at 25%, and dump the remaining power to weapons and shields.*
- At Nav 2, go after the *Vaktoth* and watch out for their devastating rear turrets. Try to avoid using missiles now — save them for later in the mission.
- If you're flying a *Thunderbolt*, use your rear turrets against an enemy who is tailing you. Your auto-tailgun computer is pretty accurate — but it's a challenge to shoot down bogies with your rear guns.

- At Nav 3, freely use your FF missiles if you loaded them — they'll acquire new targets after targeted *Strakha* cloak.
- Keep moving and turning constantly with *Strakha*, because they tend to uncloak behind you.
- Target a *Dralthi* at Nav 4 and send Maniac after it and the other three while you go after the destroyer.
- Switch all your power to shields before you make a torpedo run, then use your rear turret to take care of any enemies that are following you in. Then, arm your torpedoes and afterburn in toward the destroyer. When you acquire a lock, fire your torpedo. Afterburn out in a hurry after you launch it ... an exploding capship can harm your ship.
- At Nav 5, go after the ace Fireclaw first in order to rack up your first ace kill. His ship has red and gold markings, and is fairly wimpy. If your wingman tries to steal your ace kill, launch your missiles to take Fireclaw out quickly. One successful HS should do the job. Since this is your last nav point, you can use up all your missiles here.
- Even though he's weak defensively, be wary of Fireclaw's offense — he'll launch lots of missiles at you. Whenever you fight an ace, keep your finger on the E decoy button. You've got lots of them, so don't hesitate to drop them whenever you see your missile lock light on.

MISSION LOC-2

Briefing. A Kilrathi destroyer is traveling through the sector, and Intel believes that the enemy plans to test its new biological weapon against a nearby planet. You must shoot down the warhead before it strikes the planet.

Analysis

- This is a time-critical mission with up to 3 biological missiles.
- Take the *Thunderbolt* so that you can torpedo the destroyer. Switch to your torpedoes before autopiloting to Nav 1.
- As soon as you drop into Nav 1, hit ~ and go for the destroyer. You need to take it out first so it won't launch more than one Skipper missile (it can launch up to three). Swing by the destroyer long enough to launch a torpedo, then chase down the first Skipper missile.
- To hit the biological missile, use T to quickly cycle through targets and find it. Lock onto it, then chase it down. If you miss its initial pass by you, toggle on your afterburners and catch up with it. (This can take anywhere from 30 to 60 seconds.)
- If you don't blow up all biological missiles that are launched, you fail the mission. If you don't get the destroyer on the first run, it can launch up to three missiles.

- Don't be too quick to request clearance and land at the end of this mission. Once you radio in for a landing, Eisen asks if you'll go after Flint. If you hit autopilot (to land) too soon, you won't get the chance.

MISSION LOC-3

Briefing. Before you land on the *Victory*, you get a call from Eisen. Flint has gone over the edge and has launched in pursuit of Kilrathi stragglers headed for the jump point. She's taken on more than she can handle, and you have to decide whether or not to help her out of her predicament. This is an optional mission, but there are morale consequences no matter what you decide. You'll have to find her (she could be in any of four areas), radio her, bring her back to her senses and get back to the *Victory*.

A secondary mission objective is to destroy any Kilrathi you encounter.

Analysis

- If you want to raise ship morale, go after Flint. (She'll live even if you don't chase her down, but ship morale will decline because you, the Fearless Leader, didn't think she was worth saving.)
- If you customized your power setup, you'll have to redo it when you autopilot after Flint.
- Avoid the cruiser — you don't have to kill it to win the mission.
- Once you land, you get a pep talk on the Bridge from Eisen if you won LOC-2 and brought back Flint. If you lost either mission, you get a downer conversation with him instead (at the beginning of the first Blackmane mission).

BLACKMANE SECTOR

Next, the *Victory* and her escorts go to Blackmane Sector to bolster defenses at a base (and jump point) there. If you went after Flint earlier, you must decide whether to ground her or not for this series. In these missions, you are responsible for protecting the sector base, as well as supply convoys traveling in and out of the sector.

BLACKMANE MISSION 1 (BLK-1)

Briefing. In this first mission, your fighter group must defend the base in Blackmane Sector.

Analysis

- Don't take the *Dralthi* head-on if you're flying an *Arrow*. If you're in another ship, allocate more power to your shields.

- When facing Bloodmist, activate full guns and arm your IR missiles. Assign your wingman to any ship besides Bloodmist's, then lock onto him. If you took Cobra, she'll stay on her target and will stay near the base. In the meantime, go after Bloodmist and launch a couple of missiles at him.
- Don't forget to use your decoy button when Bloodmist launches missiles at you.
- Once the ace is gone, afterburn back to the main battle and take on the other *Paktahn* that are attacking the base.

BLACKMANE MISSION 2 (BLK-2)

Briefing. Eisen assigns your fighter group the task of ensuring the safety of inbound convoys. You're to fly out to two areas, destroy any Kilrathi there, and then do a fly-by of the freighters to establish contact. Once you do this, you are to return to the base area with the convoy. At the third nav point, you'll need to do another fly-by of the freighters to establish contact.

Analysis

- If you grounded Flint, put her back on the Flight Roster. Otherwise, Eisen will do this for you, and her morale won't be raised a point.
- Don't worry about linking with the transports at Nav 1, until you've eliminated the *Dralthi*. There's no time limit on getting hooked up with them.
- Beware with the second set of transports at Nav 3 — the Kilrathi captured the convoy some time ago and rigged both freighters to explode when you're close enough. The blast will damage the shields and your ship, and put you at a disadvantage when four *Strakha* uncloak nearby.
- *Strakha* won't cloak when they're behind you.

BLACKMANE MISSION 3 (BLK-3)

Briefing. You're to meet a special convoy en route to Blackmane base, carrying a sizable stash of weapons. Once you meet it, follow the nav points back to the base (in order) and protect the convoy at all costs. The Kilrathi will be bent on destroying this cargo and will have fighters waiting at every nav point.

Analysis

- Take the *Arrow* — it's a good choice for protection missions, and it's fast.
- Be sure to link with the transports. You can't autopilot unless you do this.
- Use the Shelton slide maneuver against the *Sorthak* at Nav 1. Whatever you do, don't get behind them — their rear turrets are deadly.

- Use IR or FF missiles on the *Strakha* at Nav 2 — they'll target the nearest uncloaked enemy.
- At Nav 3, don't get behind the *Vaktoth's* rear turrets. Instead, use your IR missiles against them (if you went with them on your loadout).
- If you get really damaged, wait to autopilot, and dump your power to damage repair. This is a good tactic if you've already cleared all Kilrathi out of your current nav point.
- At Nav 4, drop off your transports at Blackmane base. The *Victory* left here and has already traveled to a nearby nav point. Autopilot there to land.

ARIEL SYSTEM

In Ariel System, the *Victory* is assigned to be the core of an RIF (Recon In Force) group. Your fighter groups will compose the main striking arm and will provide cover for the scout, two destroyers and the *Victory* herself. Once control of this sector is gained, a top-secret covert operation can begin.

ARIEL MISSION 1 (ARI-1)

Briefing. Your first mission is to enter Kilrathi space in Ariel system and destroy the garrison there. You have one advantage, and that is that the Kilrathi here are spread out. Your fighter groups must patrol several nav points and engage both fighters and capital ships. Any escaping ships will warn the Kilrathi that a major force is present, thus rendering an RIF mission useless.

Analysis

- Allocate more power to your weapons, less to shields. The *Longbow's* shields are exceptionally strong.
- If you didn't bring a bomber to go after the cap ships and have to use your guns to destroy them instead, go for the fighters first in every case. But, don't forget to save some of your missiles for the impending waves, especially at Nav 3.
- Use your rear turret against the cloaking *Strakha* at Nav 1.
- At Nav 2, take out the transports with your guns and save your missiles — they're weak and only have two turrets. Don't forget to afterburn out when they're about ready to blow, or you can really hurt your ship.
- Before you leave Nav 2, arm both of your torpedo hardpoints. You'll find a carrier lurking as soon as you drop out of the next autopilot sequence. If you destroy the carrier quickly at Nav 3 using your torps, you can avoid any more waves of fighters — they won't be launching without a flight deck.

- To attack the carrier, park yourself about 13,000 km out from the capital ships. When you arm both torpedoes, they try to acquire locks at the same time. Once you fire the first one, you can fire the second one immediately, with no delay for a second lock.
- After you unload your torpedoes, release a few FF missiles. They'll acquire their own targets while you chase down other ships.
- Correct your damage between waves by afterburning away from the scene and temporarily boosting your damage repair system power allocation.

ARIEL MISSION 2 (ARI-2)

Briefing. A nearby nebula in Ariel System is being used by the Kilrathi to screen convoys going to and from the front. The *Victory* and her escorts are to lie in wait in the shifting clouds of dust and gas, and ambush whatever enemies come along. There will be several battles, all inside the nebula, where you will ambush Kilrathi convoys and their escorts.

Analysis

- The nebula effect turns your screen pale red. This makes it harder to identify cloaking ships.
- At Nav 1, take out the transport and send your wingman after the destroyer. If you do this, however, make sure you take someone invulnerable. Once you eliminate the transport, worry about the destroyer (if your wingman hasn't already taken it out).
- If you lose a wingman (here, or in any mission), use more missiles to take out enemies early before they have a chance to damage you.
- Fire FF missiles to deliver preliminary damage to the larger ships. Or, you can use HS missiles.
- When attacking the corvette at Nav 2, stay about 10,000 kilometers out. It can't touch you with guns at this distance, but you're close enough to get a lock.
- Don't land without killing all capital ships in the mission. Otherwise, you don't accomplish the mission objectives.
- If Hobbes or Flint is flying on your wing, they're likely to eject if heavily damaged.

ARIEL MISSION 3 (ARI-3)

Briefing. Since at least one Kilrathi escaped before you saw him in Mission ARI-2, the enemy is now aware of the RIF mission. Somehow, they have managed to "close" the jump point through which you arrived — it's possible they've developed a new technology. In any case, the *Victory* will be hard-pressed to make it past wave after wave of Kilrathi. You must help the *Victory* find an alternate jump point.

Analysis

- If you knock out the carrier at Nav 1 fast enough, you prevent subsequent waves from attacking.
- Before you autopilot to Nav 2, arm your torpedo. There's a corvette waiting for you. Since it has a Skipper missile, you need to use the torp instead of relying on your gunpower. Once you drop out of autopilot, watch closely for the Skipper missile. At the same time, try to launch a torpedo. Afterburn in, then wait for a tone and let the torpedo fly. Duck under the ship and head straight for the *Strakha*.
- If you destroy the corvette soon enough, you can prevent it from launching a Skipper altogether.
- You'll know you've found the new jump point when you try to autopilot and get a *Landing clearance required* message instead.

CALIBAN NEBULA

The *Victory*, with the Kilrathi fleet in hot pursuit, races toward Caliban Nebula. The ride will be rough due to the physical and electronic effects of the nebula. In this series, the *Victory* is assigned escort duty for the Confederation's top secret weapon, code named "*Behemoth*." This powerful planet-killing device will be used to destroy Kilrah from space. The *Victory* and its crew will meet heavy opposition, but it is essential to press forward, refueling at pre-arranged secret stations along the way.

CALIBAN MISSION 1 (CAL-1)

Briefing. The objective of this mission is to shake off the enemy's pursuit by retreating through the newly discovered jump point in the nebula. Once inside the nebula, the *Victory* and her escorts divide up into groups. You are assigned to protect two destroyers against the pursuing Kilrathi fighters.

Analysis

- To be thoroughly rational, you should side with Cobra against your old friend Hobbes. Lowering his morale won't affect how well he flies, while raising hers will improve her skills.
- You can't lose this mission if you stay out of the action. Park by the *Sheffield* at Nav 1 and match its speed. Let the Sheffield and your wingman do the work while you enjoy the show.
- Use the same "parking" tactic as above at Nav 2, but duck behind the *Coventry* so you can admire its turrets in action.

CALIBAN MISSION 2 (CAL-2)

Briefing. By this time, the Kilrathi have found the jump point through which the Confederation fleet is escaping. The enemy scout force is making its way back to the main fleet command to transmit the information

(communications are scrambled by the nebula's strong electromagnetic fields). Your fighters must stop the retreating fighters to protect the last of the Confederation ships.

Analysis

- If you find several *Dralthi* on your tail, don't hesitate to switch to your rear turrets every so often. Your automatic tailgunner is pretty accurate, but you might consider taking over if you've only got a couple of enemies left.
- Send your wingman after the corvette at Nav 3 while you take out the destroyer with your torpedo. Next, take out the scout ship. The best way to do this is shoot its turrets first, then gun it to death.
- When cooking capital ships at Nav 3, sprinkle liberally with missiles. You don't have any more nav points or enemies to worry about.

CALIBAN MISSION 3 (CAL-3)

Briefing. Your small force is massed once again and headed for the escape jump point. Your fighter group is to escort the *Victory* and its accompanying ships through the jump. The Kilrathi, however, have also regrouped and are coming after you.

Analysis

- When you take off, the *Victory* is under attack. Take out the fighters first and leave the corvette until last. It's too far away to attack at the moment, and you don't *have* to kill it.
- Save your missiles for the last nav point since you'll face lots of enemy waves there.
- If you've taken armor damage, allocate more power to shields and less to engines. In most cases, you can get by with minimal engine power — the exception being when you're chasing down capship missiles.

TORGO SYSTEM

After picking up Admiral Tolwyn, the *Victory* (under Tolwyn's command) makes a rendezvous with another ship in Torgo system. Tolwyn explains to you and Eisen the purpose of his visit. During the past year, he's been in charge of an important R&D project, the building of the largest gun in the universe. In the next series, the *Victory* is responsible for escorting the weapon (code-name *Behemoth*) during its test run. Your squadrons must protect the *Behemoth* at all cost.

TORGO MISSION 1 (TOR-1)

Briefing. As you arrive in Torgo, the *Behemoth* is already under attack. As the fleet deploys for battle, you order a magnum launch (all fighters away) to protect the Confederation's last hope.

Analysis

- At Nav 1, don't attack the rear of the *Paktahn*. Instead, angle off and slide to the side. Try to knock out all the bombers before you worry about the *Strakha* fighters.
- Try for the *Vaktoth* first — they're more maneuverable and can hurt you more than the *Paktahn*. When you're going head-on with them, break off about 20 degrees and slide to one side.
- If you've been after the same fighter for awhile or are taking lots of damage, use some missiles. But don't forget to save some for subsequent waves.

TORGO MISSION 2 (TOR-2)

Briefing. The Kilrathi have been driven away for the moment, but the *Behemoth* must undergo minor adjustments before proceeding with the secret mission. You must use your fighters to defend her as the Kilrathi close in. You will mine the jump points into the Torgo System, all but the one you need to use to continue the mission. Watch out, though — some Kilrathi may be jumping in as mines are being deployed.

Analysis

- If you're down to three or fewer enemies, use the *Longbow*'s rear turrets against anything that's tailing you.
- Keep an eye on your shield strength (keep it displayed in the Left VDU). If you find your shield power is diminishing, switch more to shields and less to engines. After all, you shouldn't be too concerned about speed in a *Longbow*.
- If you're really getting dogged, send a *Help me out here!* message to your wingman. This usually works, but Maniac won't always comply.
- To shake off a pursuing enemy, use your afterburners to vary your speed.
- Lay 2 mines at each nav point in this mission before you autopilot. It's best to lay them after all enemy ships are dead. That way, they won't run into them.

TORGO MISSION 3 (TOR-3)

Briefing. The *Behemoth* is ready to jump (with escorts) to the final refueling point, topping off for the next leg of the trip. There's only one catch — you don't have any nearby fuel depots. To make up for this shortcoming, you'll need to hit a Kilrathi convoy and capture its fuel by disabling three Kilrathi tankers. The tanker escorts include a Kilrathi battle rider squadron (minus tender) and several heavy fighters. You must destroy the escorts, disable the tankers without destroying them (using a delicate touch with your guns). The *Behemoth* then "steals" fuel from the tanker for the next leg of its journey.

Analysis

- Tail the asteroid fighters at Nav 1, but keep your distance. They're likely to drop mines, so be ready to avoid them at a second's notice. Running into one will kill you instantly.
- After you eliminate the first wave of fighters, leave the rest for Cobra while you go after the tankers.
- Take out the turret guns first on the tankers, then fire your guns at their engines until you get a *Transport disabled* message. Whatever you do, don't shoot missiles. They're likely to destroy the transport, not disable it.
- Watch out for the mines — they stay around long after the fighters are dead.

LOKI VI, OPERATION *BEHEMOTH*

You and your fighter group embark on an offensive series of missions as you begin to penetrate Kilrathi space. The *Behemoth* will be tested in Mission LOK-2, but is currently present in the immediate area. The super weapon is complete, and final plans are being made for the assault on Kilrah. It becomes obvious that you cannot take a huge ship like the *Victory* to Kilrah — it would easily be destroyed by network defenses. Consequently, you and your team must take your ships into Kilrathi space without a carrier and avoid patrols by hiding on the surfaces of asteroids and other cover. The fighter squadrons will bleed the objective and try to clear a path before *Behemoth* comes in to deliver the coup de grace.

LOKI MISSION 1 (LOK-1)

Briefing. Your fighter group is assigned the task of destroying everything in the base area (and surrounding areas) except for the base itself. In the next mission, the actual weapon test will take place on the planetary base.

Analysis

- Use the slide tactic while you have full guns activated, especially against the *Vaktoth* at Nav 1.
- If a *Vaktoth* comes at you head-on, pitch up over his fire. Then, tap your afterburners, engage the slide, and pitch back down to shoot at his rear shields.
- Take out the *Dralthi* in this mission by tailing them and unloading full guns. Be careful, though — although *Dralthi* don't have rear turrets, they're fond of double-teaming you. If you find the heat's too much, hit your afterburners and slide into a 180-degree turn to shake them.

LOKI MISSION 2 (LOK-2)

Briefing. If any Kilrathi survive from Mission LOK-1, they flee. Tolwyn orders the *Behemoth* to fire, and a world ceases to exist. The remaining Kilrathi, including several cloaked ships, have lurked behind for the sole purpose of attacking the *Behemoth*. Several even perform suicide runs trying to blow the thing up, since they have little to no chance of escaping from Loki VI anyway. Your mission is to protect the *Behemoth*.

Analysis

- Take out the *Paktahn* as quickly as possible, before they have a chance to attack the *Behemoth*. Since time is critical, launch missiles at them instead of using your guns.
- If you start getting hammered by corvettes after the *Behemoth* fires, increase your shield power setting. Take out a super rear turret first, then swing one direction and take out another turret on the top. If you're good, you can destroy two turrets in a single pass.
- Save some missiles for the last two waves of fighters. You're more likely to be damaged at this point, and missiles allow you to fight from farther away.

LOKI MISSION 3 (LOK-3)

Briefing. The *Behemoth* is one jump away from Kilrah, and the Kilrathi forces are taking no chances. When you escort the super-weapon through the final jump point, you land in a minefield. A huge Kilrathi fleet is waiting, and attacks the *Behemoth* on sight. Despite your efforts, the *Behemoth* is destroyed by attacking Kilrathi fighters.

To add to the agony, Prince Thrakhath shows up to gloat and transmits a movie depicting Angel's unfortunate, gory demise. Once the *Behemoth* is gone, the *Victory* begins preparing to jump out of the sector. You've got two choices — chase Prince Thrakhath or return to the *Victory* within 90 seconds for the jump. If you go after Thrakhath, you're sure to die.

Analysis

- Send your wingman home. This is a hopeless mission, and you don't want to risk losing a wingman here. Instead of fighting the *Paktahn*, sit back and let them blow up the *Behemoth*.
- Don't bother with Thrakhath. He's brilliantly positioned himself just outside the range of your missiles, and you can't catch up with him, destroy him and make it back to the *Victory* before it jumps sector.

ALCOR SECTOR

After the *Behemoth* debacle, the Confed fleet scatters to divide the pursuing Kilrathi forces. The *Victory* finds herself in a new sector with a new assignment — to rescue a Confederation explosives scientist who is being held on a prison world. The *Victory* jumps into Alcor with a scout, two escorts and a troop ship, then heads for the target prison world. Once in orbit there, your fighters are to destroy resistance on the surface, clearing the way for Marine troops to land and free the scientist for transport back to Confederation territory.

ALCOR MISSION 1 (ALC-1)

Briefing. Several Kilrathi forces are still pursuing the *Victory* and attack it as it heaves to for field repair. With the drives shut down, the *Victory* is unable to move, and all fighters scramble to defend their carrier. If you are in the Rec Room drinking and mulling over Angel's death, you'll be forced to fly inebriated. (Your reflexes will be slowed, and it will be harder to fight.)

Analysis

- This is by far the hardest mission in the game. Whatever you do, don't fly drunk. Otherwise, your controls will randomly switch left/right and up/down, and your gun will fire sporadically and sometimes not at all.
- At Nav 1, move to intercept the incoming armada. Try a few slide-bys with a vertical twist — fly straight over a capital ship, then activate the slide and drop your nose 90 degrees. You'll slide over the ship nose-first, in perfect position to attack any turret guns.
- In the second wave of ships, hang out with the destroyer and let the enemy ships deal with its turret fire. Each time the destroyer takes out a ship, it says *Enemy target destroyed*. It'll even take out the corvette for you. After a few minutes, however, the destroyer jumps sector and you're forced to fight the rest of the mission.
- Go after the *Paktahn* first at Nav 2, but stay off their rear turrets. Match their speed, move slightly to one side, and fire at will using your leading I.T.T.S. gunsight.
- Load up on FF missiles for the *Strakha* at Nav 3 — they'll target whichever ship is closest.
- The *Sorthak* fighter-destroyers at Nav 5 are tough — don't try taking them from behind or head-on. Instead, use the slide tactic. Hopefully, you conserved some afterburner fuel and missiles for this round.
- If you flew drunk, Flint chews you out at the end of the mission, and you have the option of raising or lowering her morale (see **New Morale Conversations** in ALC-2).

ALCOR MISSION 2 (ALC-2)

Briefing. Now that you've defended the *Victory* from a vicious Kilrathi attack, the fleet continues on its way to Alcor. You're to scout ahead of the formation, paying particular attention to asteroid fields and other concealing features. When you meet several Kilrathi ships, you must prevent any ships from escaping (thus revealing your presence). Additionally, the Confederation scout formation is flying five minutes behind you, and they're bound to fly straight into an attack. You must protect these ships as well when they arrive.

Analysis

- Punch out Paladin in Gunnery to raise ship morale.

- Against the corvettes at Nav 1, target one and order your wingman to attack your target. After he or she weakens it, afterburn toward its rear to take out its super turret first, then worry about the other lasers. If you take a lot of hits, retreat to recharge your shields and repair damage before making a second run.
- Against the second wave, attack the corvette only after you've eliminated the fighters.
- Use HS missiles against the *Darket*. Otherwise, you'll spend all day trying to catch them on the run with your guns.
- At Nav 2, ramming the asteroid fighters is a good way to take them out—but watch out when they drop mines.

ALCOR MISSION 3 (ALC-3)

Mission (Optional)

Briefing. Between missions, Cobra has been clawed on the Bridge and is close to dying. She reveals that Hobbes is the traitor who transmitted the *Behemoth* plans to the Kilrathi. Hobbes, in the meantime, has escaped in a Confederation *Thunderbolt*. You can take off and chase him now in a one-on-one battle, or you can let him go and fight him later.

Analysis

- If you do chase Hobbes, go after him as you did Flash in Mission TAM-3. Activate full guns and arm a full salvo of missiles. Then, afterburn in behind Hobbes and toast him with a few missiles.
- While you're off chasing Hobbes, the *Victory* falls under attack. You shouldn't have a problem taking out the *Strakha* if you've saved some of your FF missiles to this point.
- Against the *Paktahn*, weave back and forth and attack their vulnerable sides. You can't slide in a *Hellcat*, so you'll have to avoid their rear fire and get in what hits you can.

ALCOR MISSION 4 (ALC-4)

Briefing. The *Victory* slides into elliptical orbit around Alcor V, leaving you to your main objective — to provide cover for the Marines while they rescue Dr. Severin. You must hit the ground targets around the base, including heavy ground vehicles and AAA emplacements. But before you can descend to the planetary surface, you must defeat the enemy air cover in the stratosphere of Alcor V.

Once the fighters are destroyed, you descend to the surface of Alcor V and destroy ground emplacements in and around the prison complex. After you do so, you'll get a *Mission Objectives Accomplished* message and begin your ascension back to the *Victory*. Once you land, the mission is complete.

Analysis

- Before you take off, be sure you've talked to Vagabond in the Rec Room. He'll tell you all about Dr. Severin, and you'll learn why his combat record is so thin.
- You lose your power settings when you autopilot down to the planet's surface, and again when you come up. Don't forget to reset them.
- The *Ekapshi* at Nav 2 are really tough — the best way to fight them is to keep adjusting your speed. Only chase them if you need to. To shake one off your engines, hit your afterburners, slide, and afterburn back into a 180-degree turn. Then, you'll be in perfect position for a few head-on shots.
- Guns are your best bet for the buildings and tanks — save your missiles for the *Ekapshi*.
- Destroy all the ground tanks before you worry about the buildings. Skim low to the ground with full afterburners, then level out and gun the tanks when they're in range.
- To take out all the buildings at Nav 3, make a low approach and watch out for the mountains. When you're close to a building, stop completely and shoot with full guns activated.
- At the last nav point, you don't have to destroy the tanks or the building. You've already accomplished the mission objectives. (You get the message twice, once for ground targets and once for air targets. Don't return to the *Victory* until you get both messages.)

FREYA SECTOR

Confederation scout ships have identified a jump point leading directly to Kilrah that is currently under enemy control. The *Victory* has been assigned to remove the Kilrathi presence in Freya sector and guard the area until a base can be built to serve as a rallying point for the final assault on Kilrah.

FREYA MISSION 1 (FRY-1)

Briefing. Your first task is to remove the Kilrathi presence in Freya. You'll encounter the new class of Kilrathi warship here, their heavy destroyer leader. You're better off taking a sturdy ship, such as the *Longbow*.

Analysis

- Attack the *Darket* first at Nav 1, then concentrate on the destroyer. To attack it, strafe its side. Retreat in order to let your guns recharge, then afterburn back. Always make your attack to the same side to continue weakening it.
- If your wingman asks for help, tell him to form on your wing. It keeps him alive longer.

- In this mission, don't try to take out the turrets on corvettes. The two ships are so close together that one of them is bound to nail you. Your best bet is to use missiles to destroy one of the corvettes, then gun for the other with your tachyon cannon active.
- If you're in the *Excalibur*, keep your tachyon cannon active, not full guns. You'll get off more high-power shots than you will with all guns.
- At Nav 3, fly inside the carrier and stop. You can toggle on the slide and fire at will. (Your guns will do more damage inside because you don't have to break through the ship's shields.) Keep your finger on the afterburner button and be ready to hit it when the ship is ready to blow. Watch the Right VDU closely — when it's mostly red, make your escape.

FREYA MISSION 2 (FRY-2)

Before your briefing, you find out from Rollins that Vagabond's little escapade landed him in the Brig. With a little persuasion, you can talk Eisen into letting him fly again.

Briefing. After takeoff, you finally reach the jump point, but it is enveloped by a shield generated from a nearby planet. To destroy the shield, you must fly the newly shipped *Excalibur* ground fighter down to the planet's surface and blow up the generator. You'll face ground combat and lots of Kilrathi fighters. If the ground assault fails to do the trick, the high command has authorized the use of orbital bombardment.

Analysis

- At Nav 2, take out the *Ekapshi* with your missiles.
- The *Excalibur* has a rudimentary altimeter. Keep an eye on it and know where the ground is. If you drop too low, you can crash and die. For the same reason, don't use the Shelton slide much while on the surface — you may run into a mountain.
- At Nav 3, look for a building with a blue electrical arc. This is the enemy generator. Attack it with guns, not missiles. Once you take out the generator, you've won the mission if you make it back alive.

FREYA MISSION 3 (FRY-3)

Briefing. You managed to destroy the ground base, but Kilrathi are still pouring through from the jump point in force. Your fighter group has to hold the jump point against all the incoming Kilrathi — a long, grueling engagement that is necessary to progress in the game.

Analysis

- Take care of the fighters with your tachyon cannon. Though the *Excalibur* has plenty of missiles, you're better off saving them for the *Vaktoth* near the end of the mission.

- Don't forget that you can slide in the *Excalibur*. Afterburn toward the corvette and take out the rear super-turret with the usual slide tactic. Once you've done this, you can park behind it and gun for the other turrets, or perform a series of sliding fly-bys.
- Make head-on passes against the lighter fighters and save as much afterburn fuel as you can. That way, if you take heavy damage, you can afterburn away and let your shields and guns recharge.

HYPERION SECTOR

Now that the planet is secure, the Confederation can test a new weapon developed for the sole purpose of destroying an entire planet. But you've got other problems, namely Flint and Rachel. You can choose to be involved with either Rachel or Flint, or brush off both of them. Of course, there's a cost to pay either way.

HYPERION MISSION 1 (HYP-1)

*You can choose between Flint and Rachel in the Rec Room (but you can't choose both). If you kiss one of them, the other gets angry with you. Flint will refuse to fly on your wing, and Rachel will quit configuring your loadouts after this mission.

- If you choose Rachel, she'll continue to do your loadouts for you, and Flint will get angry at you.
- If you choose Flint, her morale goes up and she'll fly better. But, she may die before the game is over. And of course, Rachel will make you configure your own loadouts from this point on.

Briefing. Once the *Victory* jumps into Hyperion Sector, you drop to the surface of the planet in your modified *Excalibur* with the weapon of doom (Temblor test bomb) locked and loaded. The Intel reports during your briefing said the planet was deserted; Intel was wrong, as you soon find out.

Analysis

- Your best choice between Flint and Rachel might be "none of the above." Choosing either one embitters the other. Better yet, avoid these scenes altogether — going through them without choosing still lowers each woman's morale by one.
- Of course, even fearless wing commanders have hearts and souls (at least most of them do). How can life be truly fulfilling without a soulmate by your side?
- Save your missiles until you've taken heavy damage or are almost finished with the mission. You've got several *Ekapshi* to shake, and using missiles when you're damaged is less riskier than chasing them down with your guns.
- Take care not to accidentally fire off your Temblor bomb! If you do, you'll fail the mission. It's treated as a missile, so keep a close eye on your Weapon VDU.

- At Nav 4, take out the 2 *Ekapshi* and find the fault line on your radar (it shows up as a yellow dot). Arm the Temblor and lock onto the fault. Stop just in front of the fault, wait for the tone, then drop the Temblor.

HYPERION MISSION 2 (HYP-2)

- * Options vary if you kissed either woman in HYP-1. If you chose Rachel, Flint won't appear as a wingman selection. If you chose Flint, Rachel won't appear by the Loadout Terminal.

Briefing. You must defend a jump point again, only this time you will be going to Hyperion sector to intercept a Kilrathi fleet before they reach the point. This mission is the first of a series of fleet actions. Your fighter group will protect the capital ships from other fighters and let them (your fleet ships) concentrate on destroying other capital ships.

Analysis

- At Nav 1, take out the *Darket* with your tachyon cannon. Then, let the *Sheffield* take care of the enemy destroyer with a capship missile. Make sure you stay out of the line of fire!
- The same tip goes for the next nav point. Take out the *Dralthi* and let your wingman and the *Coventry* duke it out with the capital ship while you handle the arriving *Paktahn*.
- At Nav 3, get rid of the fighters and let the capital ships battle it out again. This can be quite a fireworks display.

HYPERION MISSION 3 (HYP-3)

- * Options vary if you kissed either woman in HYP-1. If you chose Rachel, Flint won't appear as a wingman selection. If you chose Flint, Rachel won't appear by the Loadout Terminal.

Briefing. The Kilrathi are pressing hard through the jump point, and Freya Sector is under heavy attack. The *Victory* and its escort group must proceed to the Freya point and defend it by running a series of search-and-destroy actions aimed at disrupting the focus of the Kilrathi drive on Freya. Win, and the road to Kilrah is open. Lose, and the war is over.

Analysis

- Use your tachyon cannon on the capital ships.
- Conserve your missiles for the destroyer, cruisers and transports.
- Cruiser method #1: When attacking the cruiser at Nav 3, position yourself to the ship's rear at about 10,000 km out. You'll be outside the range of its guns. Then, afterburn in to under 500 km and start to slow down. If you can sneak in right behind the cruiser's rear engine, it won't be able to shoot at you. You can then fire at will or launch several missiles. As soon as you hear its death cry, spin around and make tracks away from the explosion.

- Cruiser method #2: If you're more of the daredevil type, take advantage of the *Excalibur's* slide capability. (With sliding *and* plenty of missiles, you should definitely choose this ship.) Afterburn by the ship's side, slide and try to knock out the turrets. Once they're gone, you're assured of a capital ship kill.

INTO KILRAH

Paladin discloses various details about Angel's final mission, including the discovery of a seismic anomaly in the crust of the Kilrathi homeworld. This information was deciphered by Confederation Intelligence from Angel's last transmission during her covert operation on Kilrah. This discovery leads to a "long shot plan" that might yet save the Confederation.

Under this plan, R&D has long been developing a device that could be deployed, via a single fighter, directly onto the surface of Kilrah. The resulting impact, if delivered precisely on a strategic fault line, could effectively level every structure on Kilrah's surface.

After handing the Kilrathi forces defeat on several critical fronts, the *Victory* is finally ready to take this secret weapon, the Temblor bomb, into Kilrathi territory.

This last series is actually a single mission, divided into three parts — two depot landings, a space battle involving Thrakhath, then a descent to the surface of Kilrah. (Each of the three parts has a separate analysis.) You're to carry the Temblor and drop it into a geographic fault. If you succeed, the Kilrathi homeworld will be blown out of existence. If you fail, you'll be forced to retreat to Earth, where both you and the *Victory* die.

KILRAH MISSION 1 (KIL-1)

Briefing. This mission marks the beginning of the run to Kilrah. You (in the *Excalibur*) and your wingmen will travel through several jump points to reach a refueling/rearming depot. This new station was planted deep in Kilrathi territory several weeks earlier by Paladin's covert forces. You must push on to the depot and remove any Kilrathi presence to complete the mission.

Analysis

- During each leg of the run to Kilrah, you'll lose one wingman out of whoever's left. You get to choose three wingmen for this run (assuming you have that many left). If you chose Flint over Rachel and want to see her alive again, *don't choose her*.
- All of your wingmen will follow your orders in this mission (yes, even Maniac). Don't hesitate to assign targets or call for help. Just don't send them back to base ... unless you're hot enough to fly this one solo.
- In this entire series, you have to reset your power and weapons after each leg of the mission if you want them to be different from the default.
- At each nav point, assign all surviving wingmen to one corvette. They'll be able to destroy it quickly, and without taking as much damage.

- To land on the depot, keep an eye out for a large dot on your radar. The depot itself looks like a large asteroid. Target it and request clearance to land. If you flew a successful leg of the mission, you're granted clearance.
- If you make it to the depot, you won't have to replay this part of the mission even if you die later.
- If you eject at any time in this series, you get tractorbeamed in by Melek and he guts you or disintegrates you.

KILRAH MISSION 2 (KIL-2)

Briefing. Fight your way through to a second depot and land to rearm and refuel.

Analysis

- You've got a loadout terminal on the depot. Once you're set up, click LEAVE DEPOT to take off.
- Don't forget to reallocate your power distribution after takeoff.
- At all nav points, you should concentrate on eliminating the fighters first. Send all remaining wingmen after a single corvette. They'll be able to destroy it much more quickly, and will probably take less damage in the process. If you mop up the fighters before all capital ships are destroyed, afterburn in and give your wingmen a hand.
- Once the fighters are gone at Navs 1 and 2, take out the shields of any surviving corvettes with the tachyon cannon, then launch a few missiles for the killing blow. Save a couple for the destroyer at Nav 3, but don't be afraid of blowing too many missiles on this mission — your stash gets reloaded again when you land on the next depot. Likewise, your ship gets repaired.

KILRAH MISSION 3 (KIL-3)

Briefing. The last leg takes you directly to Kilrah, where you must take on Thrakhath (and possibly Hobbes) in a face-to-face battle above its atmosphere. If you succeed, you'll then descend to the planet. The final stage of the mission consists of fighting *Ekapshi* atmospheric fighters, then dropping the Temblor Bomb into a planetary fault to win the game.

Analysis

- Your last wingman will die in this leg of the mission.
- This is the one mission in the game where you're allowed to use your *Excalibur's* cloaking device. You cloak twice — once in space, and then again on the planet.

- Consult your map at every nav point and read the text box for each point. This tells you when you must cloak (you must do so at Nav 3, and again at Nav 5). Cloaking temporarily turns the game screen black-and-white.
- Save as much afterburn fuel as you can during your orbital battles. You'll need all of it when you descend to the planet.
- At Nav 1, use your tachyon cannon against the *Paktahn* — it shouldn't take more than 2 shots.
- Be careful not to fire the Temblor by accident. Disarm it until you get to the ground.
- Activate cloaking just after you complete your autopilot descent to Kilrah. If you don't, you'll have a difficult time dropping the bomb.
- Ignore all ships other than Thrakhath and Hobbes. This includes capital ships, which don't have any bearing on whether or not you win the mission.
- The first thing to do after you cloak is locate Thrakhath. Maneuver in behind his ship while cloaked, then uncloak and waste him with a full salvo of missiles or full guns.
- After Thrakhath dies, chase Hobbes down with the tachyon cannon. Once both of these aces are destroyed, you descend to the planet.
- On Kilrah, do this:
 1. Activate cloak a second time.
 2. Select and arm the Temblor bomb.
 3. Max out your speed and lock your ship on full throttle.
 4. Follow the white nav cross (be careful to climb above the mountains). Eventually, you'll see the fault as a dot on your radar.
 5. Target the fault and lock onto it.
 6. Wait for the lock tone, then stop about 300km away from the fault.
 7. Uncloak and fire the bomb, then punch your afterburners to escape the *Ekapshi* (and Kilrah's shock wave after the planet explodes).

Mission Briefings

Immediately prior to every mission, you will be briefed about your objectives and available resources on that mission. You may get information during an organized briefing, or when your character discusses a mission with others prior to takeoff, or even when you're already in space.

However you find out about the mission, you will usually learn about your objective, your navigation route and your wingman assignment (though some missions are flown solo).

(WC3) You can choose your wingman in almost every mission. Similarly, you'll get to pick out a ship and customize your loadout if you desire. The only exception occurs during scramble missions, when you don't get to do either.

Tactical Tip: Don't bother writing down the details of your navigation route—this information is automatically loaded into your ship's computer.

Mission Types: Combat

Space Warning and Control

<u>Purpose</u>	To gain information concerning a particular area
	To eliminate stealth craft
	To interdict trade routes or convoy operations

Warning and Control missions usually deploy fighters divided into two to four patrols. Smart commanders often hold back a reserve of five or more ships, just in case patrolling ships run into trouble. With several squadrons, the fighters can patrol as much area as possible, using radar and other scanning techniques.

Objective Raid

<u>Purpose</u>	To attack/destroy/disable a tactical target
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In Objective Raids, a squadron of fighters attacks a known primary target, such as a starbase or planetary installation. This type of attack is best executed while enemy fighters are minimal or absent. Light and medium fighters may knock out the carrier support ships and clear the way for bombers, or all fighters may cooperate and attack along with a carrier in a coordinated strike.

Superiority

Purpose To eliminate enemy fighter presence

Usually deployed in fours, fighters on Superiority missions primarily perform search-and-destroy runs to take out enemy scouts. Two or more escort fighters should remain behind to protect the carrier while the strike is carried out.

Main Force Support

Purpose To support front-line forces

On the battle front, losses among fighter units sometimes require that reinforcements be sent in from other carriers. Nearby capital ships that are out of action send a complement of fighters forward to replace lost ships on the front lines. When this happens, the fighters land, refuel and rearm on the host carrier. The role of Main Force Support is mainly filled by older carriers removed from the front-lines. Enemy forces, however, will sometimes send a destroyer or two to put MFS fleets out of action.

Recon In Force

Purpose To divert attention away from main fleet operations
To intercept enemy logistics
To destroy secondary targets

Recon In Force fleets are composed of a light carrier, two escort ships, a fast destroyer (for supplies), a cruiser and one or more scout ships. This well-stocked group forges its way through or around the main front and operates independently as long as possible. It searches out enemy forces and destroys whatever targets it finds on the way. These missions are highly dangerous, and many RIF forces are never heard from again.

Escort

Purpose To defend a mobile asset

Escort missions involve the ship or item being transported, and five or six light-to-medium fighters. The squadron is dedicated to protecting the asset in tow, and it operates in conjunction with other escort craft and the home carrier. Any enemy fighters encountered along the way are engaged once they approach the asset; capital ships are avoided at all cost.

Fleet Defense

Purpose To defend the fleet against a major attack

A fighter pilot's nightmare, fleet battles involve dozens of ships in simultaneous combat. Usually, enemy fighters on an OR mission located the opposing carrier and stage a surprise assault. Capital ships can be destroyed in a matter of minutes by torpedoes and concentrated fire, and fighter squadrons may be rapidly depleted.

Fighters participating in Fleet Defense are launched in fours. Each group is responsible for shooting down incoming missiles, taking out enemy fighters, and acting as diversionary, expendable targets. They land frequently in order to rearm and cycle out for a fresh squadron.

COCKPITS

COCKPITS

During a *Wing Commander II* campaign, you will fly several types of ships. Though each cockpit has a slightly different arrangement, they all have basically the same screens and provide basically the same information. A picture of each cockpit is provided to allow easy identification of controls and gauges.

VIEWSCREEN

The viewscreen provides a clear view of space directly ahead of you. A green circle with crosshairs shows where your ship's guns are aimed. Brackets indicate the position of a ship you currently have targeted. Hostile ships have red brackets, friendlies have blue brackets. When other vessels communicate with you, white brackets appear around them. When a target is locked, the brackets turn into a solid box.

RADAR DISPLAY

The circular screen in every cockpit is a radar display. This display, divided into six sections, shows how far you have to rotate to bring a target into your front viewscreen. Radar contacts are displayed as dots. A dot in the outermost ring represents an enemy behind you; the center circle shows the position of enemies ahead of you; and the four middle sections represent enemy positions alongside, above or below you.

The color of each dot indicates what it is: red is for an enemy fighter, blue for a friendly fighter, orange for an enemy capital ship, gray for a friendly capital ship, white for your carrier or home base and yellow for a distress beacon (an ejected pilot or a data capsule or an enemy missile targeted on you). The shade of the dot indicates its range: the brighter the dot, the closer it is.

Tactical Tip: To head toward a target, select the dot on the radar display that represents that target. Maneuver your ship until that dot is centered in the inner-most circle of the display. A dot centered in the radar display represents a ship directly ahead of you in your viewscreen.

LEFT VDU (VIDEO DISPLAY UNIT)

On the left VDU is a profile of your fighter, showing its current status. This display has two modes, for weapons and for other components.

Pressing W or G brings up the weapons display. The text at the top of this display tells you what guns and weapon systems are currently active; the graphics below show where the weapons are located and how many remain undamaged. Repeatedly pressing W cycles through the available weapon systems (missiles, torpedoes and/or chaff pods); W (for "guns") cycles through the available combinations of blasters. A fighter's blasters can include laser cannon, mass driver cannon, neutron guns and particle cannon. For maximum firepower (and power consumption) the "Full Guns" option fires all of a ship's blasters at once.

For more about blasters and weapon systems, see **Weapons**.

Repeatedly pressing D cycles you through screens displaying damage your ship has taken. Most undamaged systems appear in green. Damaged systems are in red, with a description of the system.

Note: The first ship you fly, the *Ferret*, is a primitive patrol fighter and has no left VDU. On this fighter, the W, G and D keys have no effect.

RIGHT VDU

The right VDU displays the Targeting screen, the Navigation screen and the Communications screen.

Note. The *Ferret*'s one VDU, in the center, is considered the "right" VDU.

TARGETING SCREEN

Press T to display the Targeting screen. This screen gives the status of the ship you are currently targeting (including any damage it may have sustained) and appears automatically when you fire your ship's guns.

When the targeting feature is activated, an enemy ship in your view screen will be automatically targeted. Brackets appear around the enemy ship. You can only target one ship at a time. Normally, you lose the lock on a target you are no longer facing. If you want to keep a target locked even when you are not facing it, press L to lock onto a target when that target is on the screen. A locked target is indicated by a solid box, rather than the open brackets.

You must have your current target locked to use the I.T.T.S. or fire a torpedo. (See **Improved Target Tracking System, Torpedoes** as appropriate for more information.)

Tactical Tip: If you've just dispatched an enemy in the midst of a crowded dogfight, and you don't want to divert your attention from the viewscreen to look at the radar, just set your fighter into a spin or tight turn. Out of the corner of your eye, you can see whenever the right VDU switches from its neutral status to the Targeting screen.

Even if the next target is just out of sight, (left, right, up or down from where you are currently looking), the Targeting screen will come up and you'll know you are facing an enemy.

NAVIGATION SCREEN

Press N to display Navigation information and to see how far it is to the next Nav point.

When you press N to enter Navigation Mode, the Nav screen shows your currently selected Nav point and the distance you must travel to reach that objective. Pressing N a second time brings up the full-screen Navigation map, so that you can give it a good look. While you view the Nav map, game time is suspended—you can study the mission in as much detail as you want, for as long as you want.

Each mission you fly consists of several objectives at different Nav points. Using the joystick, you can move the pointer to any Nav point in your current mission. When you point at something, it will be highlighted, and notes about it appear on the right side of the Nav map. You can also scroll through the Nav points (and the information about them) by repeatedly pressing N. Pressing E exits you from Navigation Mode and returns you to the cockpit screen.

The last Nav point you highlighted becomes your new destination. Also, when you reach a Nav point, the navigation computer intelligently (and automatically) selects the next assigned Nav point for you. You can either fly there manually or activate the autopilot and let it take you to your next objective (see **Autopiloting System**, below).

Tactical Tip: The Nav map is drawn in only two dimensions, so it is possible for your ship to appear to be right on a Nav point while your ship's systems indicate that you are thousands of kilometers away from your objective. This simply means that you are "above" or "below" the Nav point.

Autopiloting System

When you activate Navigation Mode, a white cross appears on your radar display and in your heads-up display. Both crosses represent the location of the current selected Nav point relative to your starfighter. To reach your selected Nav point, maneuver your ship until these crosshairs are centered in their respective displays. (Centering one centers the other automatically.) Keep the crosshairs centered and you will eventually reach your destination.

In practice, you will want to shorten the trip by activating the autopilot. If there are no hazards (enemy ships, asteroids or mines) in the area, the autopilot light (marked "auto") goes on. Press A to elect autopilot. Your ship, wingman and any escorted ships form up and proceed to the Nav point automatically as a group.

Autopilot automatically disengages a few thousand meters from your destination. It also disengages when you encounter enemy vessels or hazards (asteroids, etc.), allowing you to deal with them.

COMMUNICATION SCREEN

Press C to activate the Communication screen. This presents you with a numbered list of potential recipients for your message, and incoming video from other ships when they communicate with you.

Select a receiver by pressing the corresponding number key, and a second numbered menu appears listing the messages you can send to that person. To send the message, press the appropriate number key.

The communications system checks your current situation and determines who you can communicate with and what messages you can send. If there is only one pilot who can receive your communication, no menu is presented and the message goes to the sole eligible recipient.

When other pilots send a message to you, a white box appears around their ship in your viewscreen. Their messages appear at the top of the screen, unless you have a digitized sound board supported by *Wing Commander II* and have installed the optional *Speech Accessory Pack* (sold separately). In that case, you will actually be able to hear their radio messages directly.

To exit Communications, press C or -.

Tactical Tip: The most frequently used messages can be sent instantly, without entering Communications mode, simply by pressing 'a' and a single letter key simultaneously. These 'a' combinations are listed below.

Wingman Orders

Wingmen sometimes disobey, but you can give them the following orders:

- o *Break and Attack* (aB). A command to leave formation and engage enemy fighters within 12,000 meters. Your wingman will not attack a capital ship until you do. (See "Attack My Target" command, below.)
- o *Keep Formation* (aF). Denies a wing-man's request to break and attack on his own initiative. This only applies to a wingman who is currently in formation.
- o *Form on My Wing* (also aF). Tells your wingman to return to formation and follow your vessel. This only applies to a wingman who has broken formation, either to attack or to return to base.
- o *Return to Base* (no a combination). A command instructing your wingman to immediately head for home. If this order is obeyed, your wingman won't be available to help you for the duration of this mission.
- o *Help Me Out Here* (aH). A command to your wingman to engage the enemy attacking you.
- o *Attack My Target* (aA). A command telling your wingman to engage the enemy you have currently targeted. This is the only way your wingman will attack an enemy capital ship, but remember that certain capital ships can only be attacked with torpedoes—if your wingman won't be able to harm a target, he'll refuse this command.
- o *Keep Radio Silence* (no a combination). A command telling your wingman to send no messages until you send a "Broadcast Freely" message.
- o *Broadcast Freely* (no a combination). Allows your wingman to talk to you. This negates "Keep Radio Silence." In *Wing Commander III*, the command is *Lift Radio Silence*.

o *Damage Report* (aD). If possible, your wingman broadcasts to you a damage display of his ship, which appears in the right VDU. This display remains on and is constantly updated until you press T or N, at which point the link is broken. In Wing Commander III, you must *Request Status* to find out your wingman's condition.

Taunting the Enemy

When you have an enemy ship targeted, you can activate Communications to bring up a menu of taunts. Select one of these and your insult is sent to the target. You can send a random taunt by pressing aT. If you're playing *Armada*, you can record your own taunts and send them.

Tactical Tip: Taunts sometimes attract enemy ships to you, drawing fire away from a ship you are protecting, or perhaps saving a wingman whose ship has been damaged.

ARMOR AND SHIELDS INDICATOR

Bars on this screen indicate the status of your ship's armor and shields. These bars diminish as armor and shields take damage. Shields gradually regenerate unless the shield generator is destroyed. Once damage gets through a shield, armor begins taking damage. Armor doesn't regenerate.

FUEL INDICATOR

This bar shows how much fuel you have. It becomes shorter as you use up fuel. Afterburners boost speed dramatically, but expend fuel at a ferocious rate, so use them sparingly. If you run out of fuel, you will coast on reserves, unable to use afterburners until you return to base.

SPEED INDICATOR

There are two speed gauges. "Set Speed" shows the speed your fighter tries to maintain on its own (like a car's cruise control). "KPS" shows your ship's current speed, in kilometers/second.

To increase your speed, press + To decrease it, press -.

For a sudden burst of speed, double click joystick button #2 to momentarily ignite your afterburners. The longer you press, the longer they remain lit.

Tactical Tip: The safest speed for negotiating asteroid fields is 250 kps.

BLASTER INDICATOR

This gauge shows the power level of your ship's gun capacitors. Frequent use of guns runs down your power. When you run out of power, your guns stop firing until the capacitors have at least partially recharged. Guns recover power gradually. (Recovery is slowed if your shields are also regenerating.)

EJECT WARNING

This light flashes if your ship has sustained significant damage. When the eject warning starts flashing, you must decide how serious the situation is and whether to eject or not. If you decide to eject, press E.

Tactical Tip: In certain circumstances, such as when you and your carrier are deep behind enemy lines, enemy activity makes it impossible to recover ejected pilots. In those cases, ejecting will prove fatal! You will be warned during the mission briefing if it will be too dangerous to eject during the upcoming mission.

Weapons

Depending upon which ship you're flying, you may have blasters, chaff pods, missiles and/or torpedoes available to you. In larger ships, like the *Broadsword* and the *Sabre*, you can switch from the front viewscreen to turrets positioned at the sides and rear of the ship. Each weapon type serves a different purpose and is used in a somewhat different manner than the others.

BLASTERS

These are the basic spacecraft weapons. To fire your blasters, line the target up in the green crosshairs on your viewscreen and press joystick button #1.

CHAFF PODS

To use a chaff pod, press W until the pod is selected. Then press e or both fire buttons to drop the pod, as if it were a missile. The pod falls behind your ship, and all enemy missiles targeted on your ship fly toward the chaff pod instead of toward you.

Tactical Tip: Be sure to drop the pod at the last possible instant and kick in your afterburners. Don't wait too long, or you'll be in the missile's blast radius anyway. Use chaff near the beginning of a large dogfight, when there are several missiles targeted on you—it works on every enemy missile at once! When there's just one missile coming in, you're usually better off dodging, or just taking the hit, than using up one of your precious chaff pods.

MISSILES

There are four missile types—Dumb Fire, Heat-Seeking, Image Recognition and Friend or Foe. Press W until the missile you want is selected. Then fire by pressing both joystick or mouse buttons simultaneously or by pressing e on the keyboard.

- o With the *Dumb Fire* missile, you line up a target by eye, then fire.
- o The *Heat-Seeking* missile automatically locks on a target when you're on his tail. When lock is possible, a red circle (the lock indicator) appears on your viewscreen. Maneuver until this is positioned on your target. When the lock indicator blinks and the words "Missile Locked" appear in the right VDU screen, fire the missile.
- o The *Image Recognition* missile automatically locks on a target when you've held it in the viewscreen for a few seconds. Wait until the red, circular lock indicator blinks, then fire.
- o The *Friend or Foe* missile automatically targets the nearest enemy ship. When launched, it seeks out the closest enemy (or the nearest ship with a damaged communication system!).

TORPEDOES

Capital ships are equipped with special shields that are invulnerable to the weapons fighters normally carry. Special missiles called *torpedoes* are necessary to penetrate these shields.

To fire a torpedo, press W until the torpedo is selected. Then press L to lock the target ship. If the target is a valid torpedo target, the lock indicator will slowly move toward the target. From this point onward, until you complete the lock, you must not maneuver your ship too quickly. There's a little leeway, but you must fly mostly straight toward the target—any significant deviation will break the lock, forcing you to start all over again. (For this reason, only turret-equipped ships, the *Sabre* and *Broadsword*, carry torpedoes, even though any of the other fighters could theoretically handle the missiles.)

When the lock is complete, the red targeting crosshairs begin to flash. At that point, press e to launch the torpedo. A single torpedo will generally kill a freighter or corvette, unless the target's flak cannon shoot down the incoming missile. It takes one or two torpedoes to get through the armor on the larger capital ships, followed by another torpedo or two into the now-unprotected side to finish the ship off.

Tactical Tip: Once you start the torpedo run, reduce your set speed and switch to the turrets. Your autopilot will keep a straight course and will inform you when the torpedo lock is complete. If there is any enemy fighter cover, your only defense during the torpedo run will be your turrets.

TURRETS (*BROADSWORD, SABRE*)

Two of the ships you fly, the *Broadsword* and the *Sabre*, have multiple guns. In addition to the standard complement of front-firing weapons, the *Sabre* has a turret in the back, and the *Broadsword* has three turrets (one to the rear, one to the left and one to the right).

To access a turret, use the view keys @-\$.

@ switches you to the *Broadsword's* left turret

switches you to the *Broadsword's* right turret

\$ switches you to the *Broadsword* or *Sabre's* rear turret

From the turret, you can fire turret-mounted blasters and use the tractor beam.

BLASTERS

When you switch to a turret, your ship goes on autopilot—flying straight as possible while attempting to avoid ships and other obstacles. The joystick (or mouse or keyboard) now controls the horizontal and vertical movement of the turret. White tick marks on the turret's radar screen indicate the limits of turret movement. When a white line is centered in the radar screen, you have rotated the turret as far as it will go in a given direction.

As in the front viewscreen, crosshairs appear in the middle of the turret screen. Center your target in the crosshairs and press joystick button #1 to fire. As you fire, your blaster indicator shows the power level of your ship's gun capacitors. When you run out of power, your guns stop firing until the capacitors have at least partially recharged.

TRACTOR BEAM

In addition to standard turret-mounted weapons, the turrets in the *Broadsword* and *Sabre* are equipped with a new device—a tractor beam.

First, maneuver next to the target and match speeds with it. Access the rear turret as described above and press G to change from your active weapon to the tractor beam. Line the target up in the crosshairs and press the fire button. As long as you keep the target centered in the crosshairs, it will be pulled closer and closer to your ship. If the target moves too far from the center, it is lost and the beam shuts off.

Once the item has been pulled close enough to the ship, an animated sequence is triggered, showing the retrieval of the item. You then return automatically to the front viewscreen and control of the ship returns to you.

OTHER FUNCTIONS

ALTERNATE CAMERA VIEWS

You start each mission with a view from inside your ship's cockpit. From the front viewscreen, you can use the function keys !-(to view the action from a variety of angles:

- o ! (*Cockpit View*). Returns you to the forward view from any other view.
- o @ (*Left*), # (*Right*), \$ (*Rear*). These views allow you to look out the left and right sides of your ship as well as out the rear. Good for tracking your wingman and spotting enemy ships during dogfights.
- o % (*Chase Plane View*). Puts the camera directly behind your ship. Hold % down to cycle between following your ship closely and hanging back a little. This is a good view for flying through asteroid fields.
- o ^ (*Battle View*). Displays a long-distance view of an entire battle.

- o & (*Tactical View*). Always keeps you and the ship you have targeted (or the most significant threat) in view.
- o * (*Missile Camera View*). Gives you a missile's eye view of the action. Select this option and the camera tracks the next missile you fire to its target.
- o ((*Tailing View*). Positions the camera behind any ship in the area. Press F9 repeatedly to change ships.

IMPROVED TARGET TRACKING SYSTEM

The Improved Target Tracking System (I.T.T.S.) is a feature available in the most advanced fighters, such as the *Epee* and *Sabre*. This advanced targeting system calculates the amount you must lead your target in order to maximize the chance of a hit.

When you lock onto a target while flying an I.T.T.S.-equipped ship, a special red cross appears on the screen. Keep this cross inside your main crosshairs and you will be virtually guaranteed to hit the target, unless the target is particularly quick and evasive.

JUMPING OUT

A hyperspace jump is the quickest way to travel from one part of the universe to another. Of the ships you fly, only the *Broadsword* bomber is capable of making such a jump. Press J at a jump point and your *Broadsword* jumps to another jump point. This works *only* at a jump point and the destination of each jump point is predetermined; your briefing officer will tell you whether jump points are available and your Nav map shows you where they are.

REPLAY

Press R any time you're in the cockpit of your ship to watch the Instant Replay. Replay records everything automatically, from the time you begin a dogfight until you leave the area or press R. You can only watch a replay once. Once you've seen the sequence, the "gun camera." Pressing R again only replays what took place since the end of the last replay sequence. You cannot save replay sequences.

If you want to end a replay sequence and return to the cockpit, hit -.

Depending upon when you activate it, this replays all of your actions since:

- 1) the beginning of the mission;
- 2) the last time you came out of autopilot;
- 3) or the last time you watched the Replay.

The default Replay view is the Chase Plane View % but you can switch to most of the other camera views during a Replay. However, the Missile Camera View * is disabled.

LANDING

If you complete your mission successfully, head back to base. At the base, target the ship upon which you want to land (*don't fire!*) and use the Communications system to signal the ship's traffic control officer to "Request Landing."

Often, if you follow your mission plan, the mission will end automatically at this point and you don't have to worry about coming in for a landing—the carrier's automatic landing system handles that for you. At other times, particularly when there are enemy ships present or you're trying to abort your mission, go through the following procedure to land:

After you request landing, the carrier's traffic control officer decides whether you will be allowed to land. To land, the space around the carrier must be free of enemy ships and one of the following must be true:

- 1) you have traveled to any Nav point;
- 2) you have achieved any mission objective;
- 3) you have killed at least one enemy ship; or
- 4) you have taken a large amount of damage.

If you are cleared to land, you must pilot your ship in close to your destination. Once you're close enough, the carrier's automatic landing system takes over, ending your mission.

If your landing request was denied, check to see if any enemy ships are around. If so, you must destroy them before landing. If not, you haven't fulfilled any of the above conditions and must continue the mission until you fulfill at least one.

Landing, whether automatic or upon request, takes you back to the hangar, where you can see any damage your ship has sustained. From the hangar, you go to a debriefing. This may be quite formal, with staff officers present, or informal, possibly during a casual conversation with another character.

STRATEGY

STRATEGY

by Lt. Colonel Carl T. LaFong (TCNS Retired)

WC1

AVOID THE INITIAL WAVE OF ENEMY FIGHTERS

It's been obvious from news and military reports that TCSN fighter pilots are greatly outnumbered by their Kilrathi counterparts. Luckily, the Terran pilots' skill and their access to more advanced technology help even out the odds. The fact remains, however, that you will stare into the gun ports of more enemy ships than a Kilrathi pilot will. You'd better be ready.

When a wing of flying cats turns to attack as a group, they present a lethal array of firepower. If they're Jalthi, each ship carrying three neutron guns and three laser cannons, they are the most devastating offensive force in the arena.

Kilrathi pilots don't get cute in their initial blitzkrieg of a wingleader. Instead, it's a straight-on wave of gunfire and missiles, with each ship slightly behind and to one side of the leader. It's intimidating as hell.

Rookie pilots often try to slug it out the first time they discover a group of cat-carriers heading straight at them. The adrenaline is pumping, the pulse is racing, and who knows what other reactions the brain is stimulating. It's known as "Furball Fever," and it has cost the Confederation more first-mission casualties than any other form of pilot error. Be patient, and take evasive action until you can gain a tactical advantage.

EMPLOY DISCIPLINED FIRING METHODS

Even veteran combat pilots must fight the impulse to just cut loose with the guns when enemy targets appear in the viewscreen. Among students flying in the simulator and rookies on early missions, it's almost compulsive behavior. It's also one of the least effective tactics in combat.

The power of the laser, mass driver, and neutron guns on TCSN fighters is generated by blaster generators. Every time you fire, stored blaster power decreases, with the amount dependent upon the type of gun. As power

decreases, the power of a shot is weakened. If you deplete blaster power, your guns aren't functional until the storage capacitors have regenerated.

The current thinking among combat analysts suggests that pilots who make a serious effort to keep blaster power at a maximum are the most successful. They sneak in close to enemy targets and fire three- or four-round bursts at full power, never wasting shots when enemy ships are out of range. They spend hours in the TrainSim, learning to anticipate enemy maneuvers and practicing the amount you must lead an enemy ship from varied distances, angles, and speeds. Practice!

USE SPEED CHANGES IN YOUR EVASIVE MANEUVERS

Too many pilots rely on rolls, spins, loops, and turns when trying to escape an attacker, without considering speed changes in concert with these aerobatics. No matter how polished your twisting evasive maneuver might be, Kilrathi pilots can match your moves if you maintain a constant speed. Eventually, they'll roll in behind you and open up on your rear shields.

Slamming on the afterburners in the middle of a spin or roll shifts the odds of escape in your favor. Now you're adding an element they can't anticipate. Recent studies have shown that a dramatic decrease in speed is just as effective, and the backspace key on all computer keyboards in TCSN fighters has been reprogrammed to allow such a move. The exact effect varies depending upon the ship you fly, but hitting **b** is like standing on the brakes in a ground vehicle. It automatically sets your KPS to zero. Be careful, though. If you forget to immediately increase speed, you're a sitting duck.

GIVE YOUR MISSILES A CHANCE TO STRIKE

When Lt. Colonel Blakely spoke of his own experiences in combat, the focus often shifted to a single dogfight. He told us of taking on the Kilrathi Ace Dakhath in a pitched battle that lasted more than 60 minutes. An astounding length of time, since most dogfights last less than five!

"You have to realize that Dakhath was younger and less experienced when I ran into him," said Blakely, "but he was already an ace with nine confirmed kills. I was so scared that the joystick almost jumped out of my hand. It was just Dakhath and me.

"We went round and round for about 40 minutes, each just feeling the other out and evaluating the performance of the other's fighter. Finally, Dakhath made a mistake, and I found myself right on his tail. I couldn't miss. The Javelin tracking system locked on to his engines and I quickly launched the heat-seeking missile.

"Now I'll deliver the coup de grace. I flipped back the fire cover and started thumbing the fire button for the lasers. I figured two weapons were better than one. I saw the missile swing into position, and just then I realized my mistake. The missile exploded when my laser fire caught up with it. Dakhath escaped from the explosion and fled. I couldn't catch up with him. I've never made that mistake again," Blakely said to the class, "but one of you probably will. I hope it doesn't cost you."

STAY READY TO USE YOUR AFTERBURNERS

Few tools in the cockpit offer as much flexibility as the afterburners in both offensive and defensive scenarios. The best pilots always keep a finger on the afterburner fire key.

Lighting the afterburners on a confederation ship rapidly burns through your fuel reserves. Using short bursts, instead of sustained burns, typically offers the same tactical advantages but reduces fuel consumption.

Afterburners don't always help. Anxious pilots sometimes hit the afterburners as soon as they decide to attack an enemy wing. It's like they can't wait to start the fight or see how it ends. When you rush into battle, you're eliminating a strategic advantage. At slower speeds, and before an enemy wing is in range for auto-targeting, it's easier to determine the direction traveled by the enemy. How can you identify a strategy if you don't know which way they're heading?

TAUNT THE ENEMY

If you can make them take the battle personally, Kilrathi pilots often lose sight of their primary objective. When trying to protect a capital ship from an attacking force, target the enemy and taunt them with as personal an affront as you can muster. It's probably the younger ones who can't ignore it, and about 50 percent of the time they'll turn from the target to attack the pilot who insulted them. This is also a good tactic to protect a beleaguered wingman.

DON'T LEAVE TCSN CAPITAL SHIPS UNPROTECTED

When your palms drip from the constant tension in a one-on-one confrontation, you can concentrate so hard on your target that you lose track of the ship you're escorting. Realizing that tendency, veteran Kilrathi pilots intentionally try to draw you into a dogfight and lead you away. They leave the dirty work of destroying the main target to the rest of the wing.

Escorting pilots must make a conscious effort to stay within 5000 kilometers of the ship they are protecting. If you venture farther, it's unlikely you'll be able to return in time to stop the destruction of the TCSN capital ship.

As wingleader, ordering a wingman to "break and attack" instead of "attack my target" helps ensure protection while you chase a retreating enemy. It's not a fail-safe measure, since your wingman might chase a decoy at the same time, but at least you're not ordering your wingman to follow your lead.

FOR TIGHTER UP OR DOWN MOVEMENTS, ROLL AND TURN

The arrangement of thrusters on Hornets, Scimitars, and Raptors produces an unusual flight characteristic: up and down movements cannot be completed in as tight a radius as a turn to the left or right. Aerospace engineers are trying to correct the flaw in the new Rapier class, but it is still unknown whether their efforts have been successful.

The effect isn't pronounced, but pilots have recently started employing a roll-and-turn maneuver instead of just pulling or pushing the stick to move up and down. The end result is the same. You end up turning toward the same location. But this movement is faster and more difficult for enemy pilots to track.

The diagram below shows the basic movement and the decreased radius of the roll and turn compared with a simple nose-down or nose-up.

Once you've decided to make the move, don't forget to combine it with speed changes for optimal results. Hitting the afterburners during the turn adds that extra element of surprise. Above all, practice the tactic until you can accomplish the two movements without thinking. Then experiment in the TrainSim with speed changes in different parts of the turn.

TURN AND SLIDE USING AFTERBURNERS

If you punch up the afterburners and turn hard to the left or right, your ship begins to slide. The movement is transparent from the cockpit, but understanding it is the foundation of the most effective tactic in space combat.

The integrated gun targeting and firing schemes on Kilrathi ships allow them to consistently hit one of our ships moving in almost any kind of simple turn, roll, or spin at normal speeds. Speed changes are an effective defense, but hardly foolproof. When one of our ships is sliding, however, the movement is not translated perfectly by the Kilrathi's computer systems. The slide is an outstanding defensive tactic. It can also be an offensive weapon.

When a wing of Kilrathi approaches directly from the front, you can use the slide to avoid their fire and put yourself in a perfect position for a side attack on the lead and following ships (see adjacent diagram). The following procedure details the steps:

1. With the enemy at 3500 meters and approaching from dead ahead of you, begin a turn to the right. Take care to avoid any diagonal movement.
2. At about a 30-degree angle, or when the enemy ships are just barely visible on the left side of the viewscreen, punch the afterburners hard. Get to top speed.
3. Turn the ship directly to the left (avoid any elevation changes). The rear end of your ship begins to slide.
4. If your timing is correct, you quickly slide into the perfect position for a side attack with your guns. You're close, the enemy is powerless and vulnerable, and blaster power is full. What could be better than that?

USE TARGET LOCK TO DIRECT THE FIGHT

Author's Note: The following tip really has nothing to do with what I learned at the academy or during the war. I discovered it while I was working as a consultant on the new Wing Commander holo-vid and thought I should include it for the benefit of the game players who purchased this book. After all, I'm old, retired, and tolerated, and I can try whatever I want.

Due to memory and storage considerations, Roberts had to limit the communications options in his game. You can order your wingman to do a lot of things, but you can't tell him to hit a specific target while you go after another. Or can you?

This method is limited in scope, but it is possible to use your targeting system to direct your wingman to attack a specific enemy plane: and it leaves you free to direct your guns against a different enemy ship. The procedure really comes in handy when you want to finish off a target you've already weakened, but you have to break and go after another ship that's pounding your shields. Here's the procedure:

1. Before you break your attack, press L to lock in your target. The bracket indicating a targeted enemy becomes solid. No matter which direction you fly, the locked target remains identified by the computer.
2. Tell your wingman to "attack my target." Now he will go after the locked target until it's destroyed, you change your target, or you transmit another order. With just a few well-aimed shots, your wingman can finish off the target.

3. You are free to pursue other enemy ships with your guns or dumb-fire missiles. Spiculum IRs and Javelins need a lock, and therefore a bracketed enemy target, but your guns and dumb-fires are effective at close range against any ship you can place between the crosshairs.

4. To ensure the success of this tactic, don't forget that you must leave the original target locked. If you press T and select another enemy, your wingman will break and attack the new target.

ATTACK ENEMY CAPITAL SHIPS FROM THE REAR

Highly maneuverable turreted lasers are the primary defense on Kilrathi capital ships. Hundreds of Terran pilots have fallen when the sophisticated targeting system that directs the guns locked onto their signature. Porcupine mines are also found on some of the destroyers, cruisers, dreadnoughts, and carriers, but they are more a nuisance than a real threat. Since the first attack by Confederation pilots on these massive enemy ships in 2634, controversy has surrounded the best tactic for taking them out.

The one point that every pilot agrees on is that the fighter escorts must be eliminated first. It's hard enough to dodge the turreted lasers from the capital ship, much less do that while also eluding the guns and missiles of nimble fighters.

The first successful attacks on capital ships targeted the right and left sides. While armor is more substantial on the sides than in the rear, pilots didn't have to break through shields before causing damage. Most pilots weakened the armor with gunfire, then launched Spiculum IR and dumb-fire missiles to finish the job. The tactic was successful, but casualty rates were unacceptably high among Terran pilots from the laser defenses.

The current thinking among combat analysts is that a rear attack is preferable. While you'll have to dodge an occasional Porcupine, you won't run into as much laser fire from the rear. You must break through the rear shields, but the weakness of the rear armor makes it worth the effort.

Begin your maximum-velocity rear approach from long range, beyond 4000 meters, and make sure you have full blaster power. If you have any missiles left, you can launch them from between 3000 and 2000 meters. Watch out for Porcupines and lasers as you approach, and cut loose with your heaviest gun starting at a distance of 1500 meters from the rear of the ship.

When you reach 1000 meters, break hard to the left or right and hit your afterburners. You should be traveling straight away from the rear of your target. Circle back with another hard left or right turn and you should be aiming at the rear of the capital ship again. Since you fired your afterburners, you're far enough away that you don't risk a collision during a hard turn, and have plenty of time to regenerate blaster power and shields before resuming the attack. Be patient.

WC2

The changes in space combat and other operations in the 10 years since I'd been assigned to the *Tiger's Claw* were based on advances in technology. Confederation pilots hadn't come up with any new acrobatic maneuvers that would guarantee a kill. Tactically, the afterburner slide was still the most effective move in a dogfight. The pilots in 2664, however, had to approach dogfights with a new respect.

WATCH THE REAR TURRET GUNS ON HEAVY FIGHTERS

The two most powerful fighters in the Kilrathi fleet are the Jalkehi and Grikath. They are both extremely heavy ships with an impressive array of forward guns. The Jalkehi carry a particle cannon and four lasers. The Grikath carry three neutron guns. Firepower alone doesn't alter the way we fight against the heavy fighters, but a change in the location of their guns has a significant impact on our strategy and tactics.

Other than capital ships, the Grikath and the Jalkehi are the only ships that have rear turrets. While we have always looked to approach the first heavy fighters (Jalthi and Gratha) from the rear, the presence of the neutron guns on the backs of the new fighters alter our game plan. After recent engagements against these ships, our pilots have abandoned our tactic of using Javelin Heat-Seeking missiles and our most powerful guns from close behind. Attacks to the sides of the ships are the most prudent.

Acceleration and maneuverability have become the weak links in the defensive capabilities of the Jalkehi and Grikath. Their acceleration ratings are average and bad respectively, so only our Broadwords have any trouble keeping up. Over the years, our pilots have determined that attacking from the side with the most powerful gun in the arsenal is the best course against these fighters. When a pilot does attack from the rear, the afterburner slide is employed to reduce the chances of being caught by the rear-turret neutron guns.

USING THE TRACTOR BEAM

Confederation Sabres and Broadwords are equipped with a tractor beam that is used in rescuing pilots and retrieving other objects in space. The tractor beam can only be operated from the rear turret. The tractor beam is extremely powerful, but there are a couple of points that ensure success.

Since the rear turret is used for both the tractor beams and neutron guns, a switch (G) is used to toggle between the two functions. In the heat of a dogfight or rescue operation, it is easy to forget to change from the default "guns" setting. Nothing could be worse than putting yourself into position for a pickup, then blasting the object or individual away with your guns. Always be certain that you check the setting before engaging the tractor beam with the fire button.

Tactical Command issued a recommendation for the use of the tractor beam. The safest method to retrieve an object is to fly past it, hit b to bring your engines to full stop, then switch to the rear turret and begin the pickup sequence. If your engines are still running when you move to the rear turret, they automatically accelerate to maximum velocity and increase the time needed to tractor the object.

ENGAGING STEALTH FIGHTERS

Author's Note. This information is not found on the computer network at this point in time, since I am the only pilot who had ever seen a stealth fighter. Instead, the information comes from my own encounters with them.

The Kilrathi Stealth fighters might be the most difficult enemies to engage unless you are aware of the chinks in their shields. When an invisible Stealth fighter reappears, its shields haven't yet had time to regenerate. Experts theorize that the cloaking device is an application of shield technology, and that the two systems cannot be active simultaneously.

At any rate, Stealth fighters are most vulnerable when they first reappear in space. Pilots who keep a close watch on their radar screen, and turn and fire quick volleys at the first sign of their presence, are often rewarded with a one- or two-shot kill. If you know Stealth fighters are in the area, don't fly in a straight line for more than 10 seconds. That would allow them to reappear in a perfect attack position.

RUN-AND-GUN

The appearance of rear turret guns on our Sabres and Broadswords spawned a new tactic in space combat, commonly known among our pilots as the "run-and-gun." Kilrathi pilots, even those on escort duty, have a tendency to chase anything that runs away from them. In the past, we never wanted to turn our engines toward the forward guns on any enemy fighter. Now, however, we can take advantage of our rear turrets and bait the enemy into a rear attack, then blast them away.

TORPEDO RUNS

When phase shields first appeared on Kilrathi capital ships, Confederation pilots were stymied. It is impossible to break through the shields using our conventional missiles or guns. It didn't take long, however, for our research and development teams to design a weapon that would slice through the shields. The torpedo is the weapon, but it requires specific procedures to ensure successful delivery.

The effectiveness of torpedoes is affected by the range at which they are fired. The power of the torpedo blast increases as the range at which they are fired decreases. In addition, our torpedoes can be destroyed by flak cannons. When torpedoes are fired at longer ranges, it is more likely that Kilrathi gunners can destroy the weapon before it connects.

Since it takes a long time for torpedoes to lock onto a target, Confederation engineers have determined that only ships with turret guns have any chance of delivering the weapon. The turret guns are needed to engage Kilrathi fighter escorts that attack during a launch procedure. Tactical Command has produced a procedure for our Broadsword and Sabre pilots that increases the odds of success:

1. Destroy enemy fighters before starting a torpedo run. It doesn't guarantee that new fighters won't appear later, but it leaves fewer enemies to worry about.
2. At a range of 8000 to 10,000 meters, select the torpedo (W) and lock the target (L). This starts the torpedo-lock sequence, which takes about 20 seconds to complete. Staying at long range, either by stopping the engines or moving at slow speed, prevents your ship from taking heavy damage until the lock sequence is completed.
3. When the torpedo-lock sequence (not target-lock) is completed, increase speed and head straight for the target. Your path can't waver, or you will lose the lock with your weapon.
4. At a range of 2000 meters, launch your torpedo.

While the above procedure increases the odds of a successful torpedo strike, Kilrathi gunners are still able to knock a torpedo down about a third of the time. Since only one torpedo can be launched per run, if a torpedo is destroyed, the procedure has to be started again from the beginning.

WC Armada

A few important general tactical principles:

- One important tactical difference between *Wing Commander Armada* and earlier *Wing Commander* games is that when the computer is playing the enemy, taunting does *not* provoke any change in tactics. (Whether it does so against a human opponent, of course, depends on who you're playing against.)
- Don't fire your missiles directly into enemy gunfire — veer off.
- Beware of the *Wraith*. It's missile power is overwhelming, and the Leech missile can be devastating.
- There's an art to hitting with dumbfires, but if they hit they're the most devastating attack in the game. If you're fighting an expert marksman, watch out for dumbfires.
- The more sophisticated and quick a targeting missile's targeting mechanism, the less damage it does. The FF is the weakest missile in the game, the dumbfire the most devastating — if you can hit with one.
- Remember to look for good angles when firing. For missiles, look for an oblique rear angle. For gunfire, try to get on his tail, go head-to-head or hit him while he's turning.
- Don't waste gun fire when the enemy is more than 3,000 km away.
- Don't let one side take all the damage. If the enemy opens a hole in your shields on one pass, try to force him to concentrate his fire on a different side on the next pass, while the original vulnerable side is recharging.
- With sharp piloting, it is sometimes possible to fly so close to an enemy that the missile pursuing you hits him instead. Sometimes you can even get a missile to go off against the ship that fired it.
- Fast ships can avoid missile hits by hitting the afterburners and flying away at a hard angle.
- Your best friend against targeting missiles is your chaff pod. Chaff pods are particular life-savers against the deadly Leech missile.
- When you're fighting multiple opponents, and you kill one, do *not* turn directly towards your next target. Instead, assume he's firing a missile at you and take evasive action — fly perpendicular to your next enemy for a second or two before turning to begin your attack.
- If you're playing with a sound card, there's a specific sound effect when the enemy gets a missile lock on you, and another when he fires a missile at you. Learning to recognize these sounds and react appropriately will save you from kills.

- The word “lock” also appears just above your sensor display when the enemy gets a missile lock on your ship. You should always be aware when that indicator is on, and take appropriate defensive measures.
- The very best fighter pilots know how many targeting missiles the enemy has, and he’ll stay on the defensive and count them as they fire, much like an old-west gunslinger counting shots from a six-shooter. When the enemy has expended most of his targeting missiles, that’s when the ace pilot will move in for the kill.

WC3

PREFLIGHT

There’s a reason the game starts out each mission on the hanger deck, rather than in space. Your time on the carrier is provided so you can get your ship into the exact fighting condition you prefer.

Your cockpit sure is pretty, isn’t it? Hit 1 and turn it off anyway. An invisible cockpit greatly enlarges your field of vision, making it much easier for you to keep a dodging enemy in your sights.

Set your guns to full (or whatever setting you prefer, though full is recommended). Make sure that your favorite general-purpose missile is ready. Make any adjustments to your power settings that you want to make.

Once all that’s done, go ahead and hit your jets or autopilot out of the carrier. Before you start for the first nav point, however, make sure your ship is set to your preferred combat speed. You may also want to open a communications channel with your wingman before engaging autopilot, so you can release him quickly if there are bogies waiting for you on the way. (Once you do release your wingman, get in the habit of immediately hitting the M key, to return your left MFD to the screen.)

- Save after you land each time. That way, you can go back and affect conversations differently before you begin a new mission.

I NEVER TOUCHED HIM!

Sometimes you’ll see an enemy blow up while you’re still closing, before you ever fire a shot or even release your wingman. This happens when two members of the enemy squadron collide, usually right after they come out of autopilot (or wherever Kilrathi come from). Since this is most likely to happen when there are a lot of enemy heading your way, don’t let it bother you too much.

STRAFING RUNS

The basic offensive tactic in *Wing Commander* is always the strafing run, where you move toward your target at high speed, firing guns and missiles at him all the way in and veering off at the last possible instant. Against other fighters, your target will generally be heading directly at you, guns blazing, at the same time, creating a "joust" situation. Either that, or he'll be heading away from you, putting you on his tail — a highly desirable place to be.

The secret of a successful strafing run is to time your shots to maximize the possible damage for the run. Don't start firing if you're more than 3000 km out. Beyond that point you're just wasting gun energy that would come in more handy at the end of the run. Some of your heaviest guns won't even reach beyond 3000 km. Ideally, you should time your run so that you run out of gun energy with your very last shot before veering off.

If you're flying an *Arrow* or *Excalibur*, practice maneuvering with the afterburner slide. If you tap your afterburners at the exact right moment, the afterburner slide will slip you slightly out of line with your opponent, letting you zip past without ever changing course. This in turn allows you to keep firing longer and get away faster.

At the end of your run you have two choices, either to afterburn away from the enemy for a second or two to give your guns time to recharge, or to pivot as quickly as you can to try to get on his tail before he can turn. The second tactic is most attractive to quick, maneuverable fighters against heavier opponents. It's always better to be behind an enemy than in front of him, but if you don't have any reasonable chance of staying on an opponent's tail, there's no point in rushing into the next pass. If you're fighting a cap ship, you'll definitely want to afterburn away after a strafing run, to get out of range of the target's turrets.

HITTING WITH MISSILES

There is an art to hitting with missiles. It's not just a matter of waiting for a lock and then letting go. You want to release a missile when you're close to an enemy. Otherwise it's too easy for him to drop a decoy and slip out of the way.

At the same time you don't want to be *too* close. If you're too close to a target (particularly when he's not heading straight toward you) the enemy can zip right past both you and the missile before it can get to him. This causes the missile to have to turn around to stay on target, and turning around takes a long time out of the short life of a missile. If the missile has to turn around, there's a good chance that the target can just afterburn away, and the missile will run out fuel before it even reaches it.

How close is close enough, and how close is too close? Well, that depends on your opponent, your flying and fighting style, your ship and your relative speed. In short, it's something you have to get a "feel" for. Hit that simulator.

The ideal angle of attack for a targeting missile is a short, shallow arc or straight line from point of origin to point of impact.

All of the above, of course, assumes that you're actually firing a missile to hit, and not just as a decoy. If you're just firing a missile into an oncoming wave of enemy to scatter their formation, you don't need to worry about targeting subtleties.

- IR missiles pack a bit more firepower than FFs. HS missiles are the hardest to get a lock with, but provide the biggest damage potential.
- If you have several targets in view, target a ship and fire one FF or IR missile. Switch targets and then fire another.

GUN CONTROL

Wing Commander III is not a video game. You can't fire continuously until you happen to accidentally tag an enemy. You have a finite amount of gun energy and it's up to you to make sure you get as much damage potential out of it as you can. Most sharpshooters agree that Full Guns is the way to go for maximum offensive punch, but Full Guns sucks up a lot of energy.

So the first principle of effective gun combat in this game is *always time your shots*. The best marksmen never allow their gun energy to deplete to the point where their damage potential starts to decline. Instead, they plan their volleys so that they can be at full power when they most need offensive punch, then recharge when the enemy backs off for a moment.

To time your shots effectively, you first have to know how long your gun energy will hold out for your fighter type. Some figures and estimates are given for that purpose on p. XX, but the actual amount of time you can keep going at full offense will depend on your reflexes, your chosen power settings, and your firing strategy, and so can only be accurately determined by you.

- Concentrate on one enemy at a time so that you can wear down his shields and destroy his ship. If you start attacking one ship, then switch to another, you're giving your first victim a chance to repair his damage.

Timing Strategy

There are basically two strategies for timing your shots to maximize your gun energy.

Berserker Charge. This is when the fighter begins an assault at full gun energy, attacks as fast and furiously as possible until his gun energy is exhausted, then breaks off the attack and retreats for a couple of seconds to recharge. This strategy absolutely maximizes the fighter's destructive potential, but can leave you stranded without any gun energy just when you really need it.

Burst Attack. This is when the fighter establishes a set pattern where he squeezes off about 3 to 5 shots as fast as he can, then pauses for a second or so while his guns recharge, then repeats the process. This strategy isn't quite as offensively overwhelming as the Berserker Charge, but it does allow the fighter to lay down a constant stream of fire without ever completely depleting his gun energy reserves.

Targeting Strategy

There are three fundamental targeting strategies, one of which is worthless.

The Sweep. This is the worthless one. If the enemy is crossing your screen from right to left, you pan your crosshairs across the screen left to right, hoping to score a hit where they meet in the middle. This is often the easiest way for a novice marksman to score a hit, but it's a bad habit to get into. Not only is it desperately wasteful of gun energy, it also spreads your shots out so thin that you're unlikely to ever get through the enemy's shields, much less inflict any real damage. Because of shields and their inconvenient habit of regeneration, the most important shot is usually the second or third consecutive hit, the one that actually takes off a chunk of armor.

The Bouncing Ball. This is where you try to center your crosshairs on the green ITTS dot and keep it there for as long as your gun energy holds out. If you can actually do it, you can make every single shot count for the entire duration of your volley. The only problem with this strategy is that the ITTS dot is an even smaller and more erratic target than the enemy ship itself — it's *hard* to keep it square in your sights, particularly when your opponent changes direction suddenly. This strategy is best suited to the "Berserker Charge" timing strategy described above.

The Cool Hand. This strategy requires nerves of steel, but is extremely efficient. It involves keeping your crosshairs centered on the enemy ship itself. But since you know that the ITTS doesn't lie, you hold your fire until the ITTS and the target line up (indicating the target is either coming straight for you or blasting directly away). When your shot is lined up, then you open up with full guns. If your opponent tries to veer off, it's your call whether to try to stay on him or let him go until he lines up again.

This is an extremely efficient and economical strategy (which works rather naturally along with the "Burst Attack" timing strategy described above), but if facing multiple opponents (particularly smaller, quicker ones) you have to be on the lookout for the possibility that the enemy is just dancing in front of you while his buddy sneaks up on your tail. When this happens you have to be ready to switch to a "Bouncing Ball" targeting strategy fast (or do a quick flip and try to take out the rear attacker fast).

REAR GUNS

Rear-mounted weapons are actually miniature turrets, able to track their target independently of the ship's vector. So tracking an enemy with rear guns does not change your ship's direction — your ship will keep moving forward along the same vector. When you switch from front to rear view, your input device (joystick, keyboard or mouse) automatically switches from steering the ship to just aiming the rear guns. Even if you don't have time to take out an enemy with rear guns, a few well-aimed shots will probably serve to get him off your tail for at least a few seconds.

PROMOTIONS

PROMOTIONS

Ranks, Ribbons and Medals

SERVICE RIBBONS

Service ribbons are not awarded for individual deeds of exceptional merit, but for service, special training and qualification, and career accomplishment. Two ribbons—Academy Graduate and Flight Training—are awarded before the campaign begins.

Academy Graduate. Awarded upon graduation from the Terran Confederation Naval Academy on Proxima Centauri IV.

Flight Training. Awarded upon satisfactory completion of flight school.

Vega Sector Campaign. Awarded upon completion of the first mission aboard the *Tiger's Claw*.

Fighter Qualification Ribbons (4 total). Awarded upon completion of first mission in each of the four fighter types: Hornet, Scimitar, Raptor and Rapier.

Ace. Awarded after five confirmed kills

Ace of Aces. Awarded after twenty five confirmed kills

Mission Ribbons. Awarded for completing five, ten and fifteen missions

Medals

Medals are generally awarded for deeds of exceptional merit or bravery. When a medal is awarded to the same pilot a second or subsequent time, a bar is added to the original ribbon, rather than cluttering his chest up with a bunch of redundant hardware.

Bronze, Silver, and Gold Stars. Awarded for exceptional bravery; the Bronze Star is the lowest of the three, the Gold Star the highest. Exceptional performance during a mission will result in the player's winning the appropriate medal. Of course, the player has no idea how difficult a mission is, or what medal it carries, until after he has won the medal. When a recipient wins an additional Silver Star, an extra bar is affixed to the top of the ribbon area.

Golden Sun. Awarded for having your ship shot up, and then ejecting, without getting killed (equivalent of a Purple Heart). Just getting into combat and ejecting won't do the job—you've got to keep fighting until your ship is fairly chewed up. Like the real Purple Heart, the Golden Sun is a dubious distinction.

The Golden Sun is only awarded once, to keep people from wasting good ships just to win medals.

Terran Confederation Medal of Honor (Pewter Planet). The highest medal awarded to military personnel. It is awarded only upon successful completion of the final mission in the two "best-case" final series on the campaign tree. (Successful completion of the last mission in the other three "final series" will earn a Gold Star.) The Pewter Planet is only awarded once in a lifetime.

Rank Insignia

2nd Lieutenant (Gold Bar) (starting rank)
 1st Lieutenant (Silver Bar)
 Captain (2 Silver Bars)
 Major (Gold Leaf)
 Lt. Colonel (Silver Leaf)
 Colonel (Gold Eagle)

Lieutenant Colonel is the highest rank you can achieve as a player in *WC1* and the Secret Missions; the squadron commander is a colonel. In *WC2*, you are a colonel.

(*WC3*) Due to the state of the war and a severe lack of natural metals, no promotions or medals are given in *WC3*.

Comparative Military Ranks

Confederation Navy		Confederation Space Force		Kilrathi Armed Forces
<i>Enlisted Ranks</i>		<i>Enlisted Ranks</i>		<i>Enlisted Ranks</i>
Spaceman	(E1)	Spacehand	(E1)	Least Claw
Veteran Spaceman	(E2)	Spacehand, 2nd Class	(E2)	Third Claw
Petty Officer	(E3)	Spacehand, 1st Class	(E3)	Second Claw
Chief Petty Officer	(E4)	Senior Spacehand	(E4)	First Claw
Master Chief Petty Officer	(E5)	Staff Sergeant	(E5)	
		Tech Sergeant	(E6)	

Confederation Navy		Confederation Space Force		Kilrathi Armed Forces
		Master Sergeant	(E7)	
		Senior Master Sergeant	(E8)	
		Chief Master Sergeant	(E9)	
<i>Officer Ranks</i>		<i>Officer Ranks</i>		<i>Officer Ranks</i>
Ensign, 2nd Class	(O1)	2nd Lieutenant	(O1)	Fourth Fang*
Ensign	(O2)	1st Lieutenant	(O2)	Third Fang
2nd Lieutenant	(O3)	Captain	(O3)	Second Fang
1st Lieutenant	(O3)	—	—	—
Lieutenant Commander	(O4)	Major	(O4)	First Fang
Commander	(O5)	Lieutenant Colonel	(O5)	Shintahr
Captain	(O6)	Colonel	(O6)	Kal Shintahr
<i>Flag Ranks</i>		<i>Flag Ranks</i>		<i>Flag Ranks</i>
Commodore	(O7)	Brigadier General	(O7)	Kalahn
Rear Admiral	(O8)	Lieutenant General	(O8)	Khantahr
Vice Admiral	(O9)	Major General	(O9)	Kal Khantahr
Admiral	(O10)	General	(O10)	Kalralahr
Space Marshal	(O11)			

* Most Kilrathi pilots attain at least the rank of fourth Fang. First Fangs and higher usually go on to command ships and squadrons. Kalralahr is the Kilrathi equivalent to the Confederation Space Marshal — he controls whole sectors or commands large fleet operations.

Typical Medal Ceremony Dialogues

“For meritorious conduct in confronting the Kilrathi enemy, In consideration of his valorous service to humanity, leading the forces of the Confederation against the Empire of Kilrah, taking a decisive role in the Vega Sector Campaign, and commanding the squadron which accomplished the pivotal victory _____.”

“For bravely sacrificing his vessel and endangering his life in combat with the Kilrathi enemy in the _____ System, on or about _____, the Terran Confederation is proud to present the Golden Sun to _____.”

“Your courage is exemplary of the Confederation’s finest defenders.”

“History shall number you among the greatest heroes of humanity.”

“Your devotion to the Confederation honors all humanity.”

“Good job, _____. Congratulations.”

VARIATIONS

VARIATIONS

WC ARMADA

Game Objectives

BATTLE

- Choose a ship and fly against another joystick jockey (Split-Screen, Net Play or Modem).

In a Multi-Player Battle game, you take on another pilot via modem, a network connection, or a split-screen. Each pilot chooses a ship, then both pilots battle it out until one player dies.

GAUNTLET

- Face 15 waves of enemies (One-Player) or fly against them with a friend (Split-Screen, Net Play or Modem).

In One-Player Gauntlet, you go directly into battle against waves of computer-controlled ships. Multi-Player Battle is your basic shoot-em-up dogfight game — you can choose a ship and face off with another player via modem, Split-Screen or network. Or, you can also choose a Multi-Player Gauntlet game (on a network or modem) to fight *with* a friend *against* the computer.

When playing the computer in a Gauntlet game, you (and possibly a wingman) face 15 gauntlet levels of fighters. Each level has three waves, and each wave consists of one or more ships. If you're playing the Kilrathi side, you fight Confederation ships. If you choose to fly for the Confederation, you face Kilrathi ships.

After destroying all fighters in an action sphere, you autopilot to a new area (press A) where more enemies lie in wait. After every three waves, you can request landing on the carrier (press C, then 1, 1) and reload your missiles. If you survive all 15 levels, you win.

ARMADA/CAMPAIGN

- Move from planet to planet as you explore a single sector.
- Build mines on planets to gain resources.
- Build shipyards to bolster your fleet.
- Build fortresses to defend strategic planets.
- Send out “scout” ships to find the enemy.
- Battle enemy ships as you encounter them.
- Attack the enemy carrier with heavy fighters and watch a cinematic endgame.
- (Campaign only) Acquire enough points to win (and watch a cinematic explosion of the enemy homeworld).

Introduction to Armada

Armada is a short, strategic game in which you explore an unknown sector with a carrier. Your carrier is orbiting a planet on one side of the sector, while your enemy begins on a planet on the opposite side. Neither of you know the other's location. The object of the game is to build a fleet and move through the sector to attack the enemy's capital ship. Along the way, you can mine to build up your *resources* (units of raw materials that you use to build installations and ships).

When the game starts, you control one planet, on which you possess a mine and a shipyard. Each planet in *Wing Commander Armada* has a set amount of raw resources. When you build a mine, the mine turns these raw resources into usable ones. The mining rate varies — some planets produce 2 per turn, others can turn out as many as 5. You can also operate strip mines — mines that produce twice as many resources per turn. However, strip mines diminish a planet's raw resources much more quickly.

Once you mine resources, you can load them on your carrier and/or transport ships and move them anywhere you wish. You can use them to build more mines, shipyards, ships or fortresses. Each planet can simultaneously support one installation of each type — one mine, one shipyard and a single fortress. If you build a shipyard, you specify what type of ships you want to build. Constructing a ship can take several turns and requires a certain number of resources.

After you build ships, you can load them on your carrier or send them out to explore unmapped parts of the sector. If you run into an enemy ship, a spaceflight battle commences. If you win, you get possession of the planet where the battle occurred and half of its mined resources (if any exist). If the planet is strategically positioned, you might even buy a fortress to defend it from enemy attacks. (Fortresses automatically launch fighters whenever a planet is attacked.)

Your enemy does all this at the same time. If you and your opponent move to the same planet, you automatically enter a space battle. Eventually, one of you must destroy the other player's carrier. When this happens, the game is over.

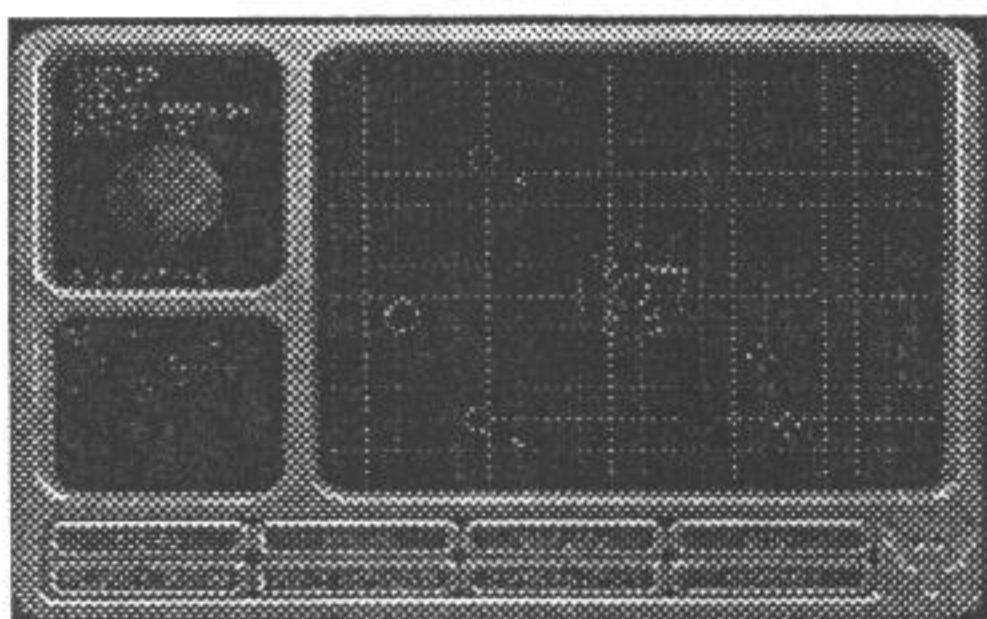
Note: When you start an Armada game, you can adjust the number of planets in the randomly created sector. Small sectors have approximately 20-30 planets, medium 30-40, and large 40-50.

ARMADA INTERFACE

The Armada interface consists of a strategy screen that is divided into several sections, each with a specific function. When you enter spaceflight, this screen temporarily disappears.

(A) Planet Box

The Planet Box shows a spinning planet, as well as resource information about that location. The CHAT indicator at the top of this box flashes if you have unseen information in the chat window. The rest of the Planet box gives abbreviated information on the selected planet, along with turn and player information.



(B) Strategy Box

This box displays a close-up view that shows your carrier, orbiting fighters, enemy ships, mines, shipyards and fortresses. The map is automatically updated during play. You can see all planets adjacent to your current or previous ship positions, and all of your ships and installations. You can also see enemy ships on planets adjacent to your current ship locations. You can scroll the map in any direction.

Arrow	Squadron of fighters with the same destination planet (green=friendly, red=enemy)
Circle	Planet (blue=unvisited, green=friendly, red=enemy)
Circle	Visited planet with no orbiting ships or installations (white)
Cross in circle	Friendly planet with a mine (green)
Double circle	Friendly planet with a shipyard (green)
Triple circle	Friendly planet with a fortress (green)
Triple circle w/cross	Friendly planet with a mine, shipyard and fortress (green)
Solid line	Jump line that allows ships to move freely between two planets (blue)
Dashed line	Destination jump line (blue line that animates when you select a destination planet for a ship)

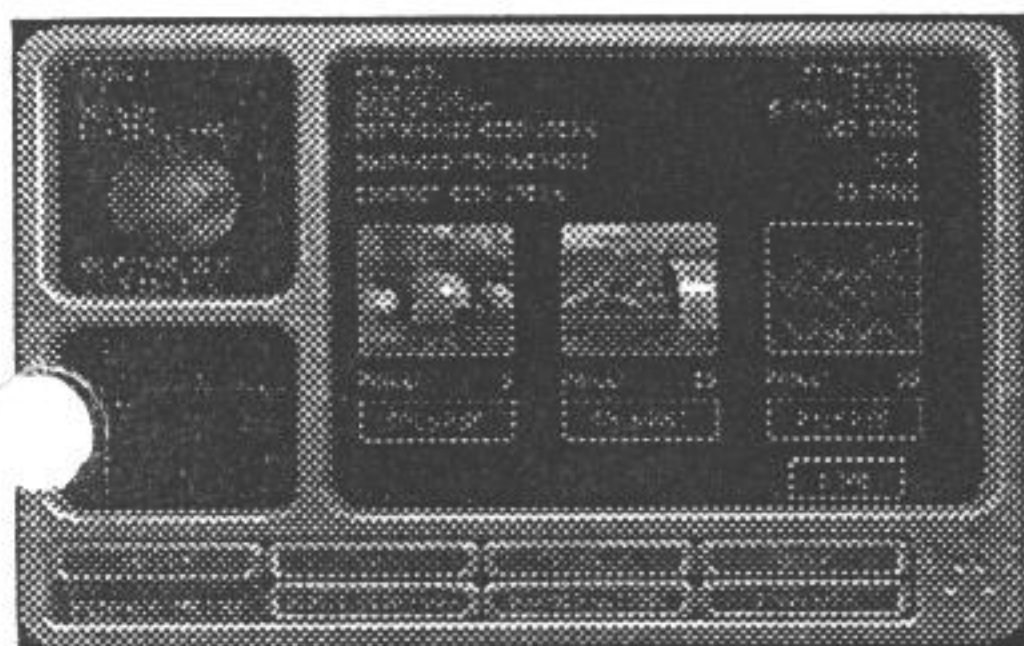
(C) Overview Map Box

This box keeps a current map and plots planets that you have visited or that are adjacent to your current or previous ship positions. The map updates after every turn. Friendly planets (that is, planets with orbiting ships, mines, shipyards or fortresses) show up as green dots, while other explored planets are white. Adjacent, enemy-held planets with orbiting ships appear red.

PLANETARY INTERFACE

The Planet menu displays the number of raw and stockpiled resources on that planet, the rate at which they are mined, what ship type is in production and other useful information. Click PLANET MENU to bring up a screen that shows information about the planet your carrier is currently orbiting. When you're ready to return to the Armada screen, press DONE. You can also access Planet menus for other planets using the Catalog feature mentioned earlier.

Planet Menu



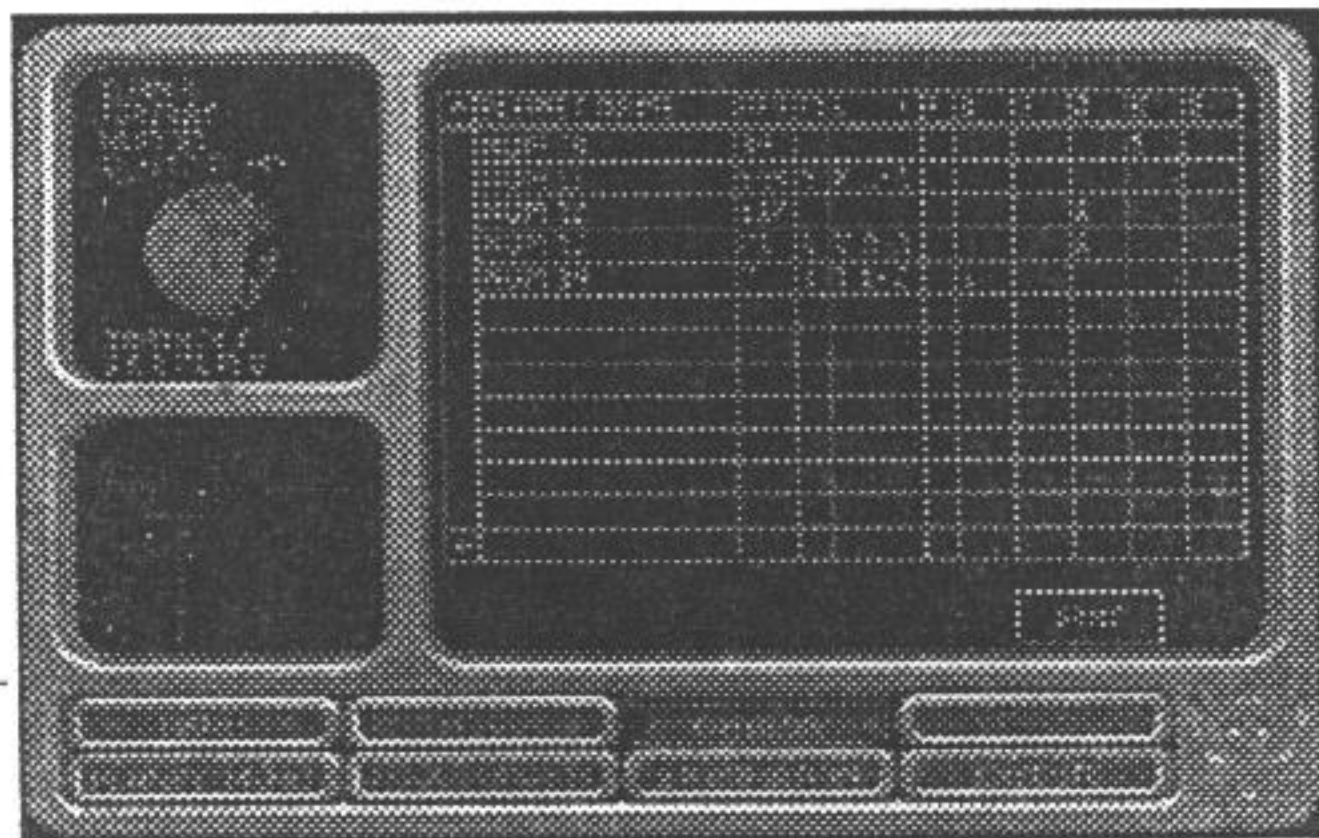
Catalog Button

The game keeps track of all planets you visit and compiles this information for you in a list. To view these planet names, click CATALOG from the Armada screen. This feature lets you access planet information for multiple planets, even if your carrier is elsewhere.

To choose a planet, click CATALOG and click on a planet name. The PLANET MENU key will glow if that planet has a mine, shipyard, fortress or orbiting ship — click on it to view that planet's information. You cannot BUY or SALVAGE anything if your carrier is not currently visiting that planet.

However, you *can* change mine, shipyard and fortress types.

When you display the CATALOG screen, planet names display in the left column. Information about that planet, if any, appears in the other columns:



WHAT CAN I DO IN A TURN?

The Armada game consists of a series of turns. When the game starts, you occupy a single planet. On this planet, you control a mine and a shipyard, and you're carrying 20 resources aboard your carrier. A *resource* is a unit of raw material — you spend resources when you build mines, shipyards, ships and fortresses. Planets have a set amount of raw resources when you first visit them. By building mines, you convert these raw resources into usable

ones that can be transported elsewhere or used to build installations and ships.

During each turn, both you and your opponent plan multiple moves and perform various resource tasks (listed in the following section). Docks, launches and resource transfers occur immediately. However, all ship moves are executed simultaneously after the last player finishes the turn, presses EXECUTE, and confirms the turn.

Move Ships

- Plot a fighter, carrier or transport jump. (Ships can only jump to neighboring planets connected by jump lines.)
- Dock or deploy one or more fighters.

Manage Resources

- Build or salvage a mine (building costs 10 resources, salvaging returns 5).

Note: You cannot use raw resources to build installations — you must use resources that have already been mined and are on your carrier.

- Move resources between your carrier or transport and the planet you are orbiting.
- Build or salvage a shipyard (building costs 20 resources, salvaging returns 10).
- Build, salvage or upgrade a fortress (building costs 50 resources per level; salvaging returns 25 no matter what level the fortress is).

Other

- View planet statistics.
- View results of previous battles.
- Battle enemy ships or attack the enemy carrier.

Resources

Each planet has a certain number of raw resources. Resources are the basis for an Armada game — you'll need them to construct facilities on planets.

MINES

You use mines to convert raw resources into usable ones and increase a planet's stockpile. The stockpile, in turn, can be used to build other mines, shipyards and fortresses. Once you use up all a planet's raw resources, a mine becomes useless (although you can salvage it). A mine costs 10 resources to build. When building a mine, these resources must be onboard your carrier.

Mining rates (the number of usable resources produced per turn) differ between planets and change once a planet's resources drop:

<u>Resources</u>	<u>Mining Rate/Turn</u>
120+	5
60 - 119	4
30 - 59	3
15 - 29	2
1 - 14	1

Two mining modes exist — normal mining and strip mining. Normal mining removes resources at a consistent rate and ecologically mines a planetary surface. Strip mining, however, tears up large chunks of land. It doubles the mining rate (the rate at which resources are mined, such as 3 resources per turn) and quadruples the resources subtracted from the planet.

Strip mines produce twice as many usable resources per turn (for example, 10 per turn if the mine normally produces 5) but "use up" a planet's raw resources four times as fast. This type of mining is useful when you need a quick stockpile of resources, but you can't operate them for very long without ruining the planet.

- You must have resources on your carrier to purchase mines, shipyards or fortresses. You can use a mine to convert raw resources into usable ones, but you must transfer them onto your carrier to purchase another mine (elsewhere), a shipyard or a fortress.
- A planet with a shipyard must have enough resources to build ships. Planets have raw resources, but you can't use them until they're mined.
- You can mine resources on one planet and deposit them elsewhere by loading them on your carrier or a transport. (Transports can only carry resources, not fighters.)

How Do I Get Resources?

You can acquire resources by doing the following:

- **Build a mine on a planet.** After every turn, the mine converts some of that planet's raw resources into usable ones. If you stay on or revisit that planet, you can load some or all of its mined resources onboard your carrier and move them to another planet.

- **Take over an enemy planet.** By moving to an unguarded planet with installations or winning a battle there, you gain control of the planet and automatically destroy its mine, shipyard and/or fortress. In the process, you destroy half the planet's stockpiled resources. You can, however, pick up and use the remaining resources.
- **Salvage a mine, shipyard or fortress.** Your carrier must be visiting that planet to do this. Once you salvage something, half of that installation's cost transfers back onto your carrier. You cannot salvage individual ships, and salvaging a fortress (regardless of its level) returns 25 resources.
- **Capture an enemy transport.** You can do this by moving to the same spot as an unguarded transport or by winning a battle against enemy fighters and a transport. If you don't attack the transport, it and all resources onboard remain intact. After you destroy its fighter escorts, you acquire the transport.

SHIPYARDS

When you start the game, you possess a shipyard. The first thing you must do is specify what ship to produce (click and drag on the shipyard icon, then drag down to select a type). Before you can build another shipyard on another planet, you must have 20 resources on your carrier.

One of your first game priorities should be to build shipyards and mines on resource-rich planets. Mines "feed" the stockpile, which in turn supports shipyard production. Each ship takes a certain number of turns to build. Light fighters take one to two turns to produce, medium fighters and transports take two, and heavy fighters take three turns. Different ships subtract different numbers of resources from the stockpile after the required number of turns have been executed. If the planet runs out of mined resources, ship production halts until you place more resources on the planet.

<u>Ship Type</u>	<u>#Turns to build</u>	<u>Total Resource Cost</u>
<i>Arrow</i>	1	10
<i>Phantom</i>	2	14
<i>Wraith</i>	2	18
<i>Gladius</i>	3	22
<i>Banshee</i>	3	26
<i>Dralthi</i>	1	9
<i>Shok'lar</i>	2	14
<i>J'rathek</i>	2	19
<i>Kor'larh</i>	3	24
<i>Goran</i>	3	29
<i>Transport</i>	2	12

FORTRESSES

Fortresses are especially useful in combat, although they're expensive. (An initial fortress costs 50 resources, and so does each upgrade. Salvaging a fortress, regardless of level, returns 25 resources.) You should place fortresses in strategic positions, such as a "bottle-neck" planet that cuts off access to part of the sector. Fortresses defend planets by automatically launching three fighters whenever a planet falls under attack. You don't have to build these fighters — they come with the fortress. If at least one fighter survives the attack (or dies at the same time as

the last enemy ship), the fortress remains intact and three new ships appear if the planet is attacked again. As long as you retain possession of the planet, all fortress ships regenerate between attacks.

Three levels of fortresses exist — LIGHT, MEDIUM and HEAVY. Each actually describes what type of fighters guard the planet, not the level of defense. If you have a light fortress, the planet will be defended by light fighters. Medium fortresses use medium fighters, heavy fortresses launch heavy fighters:

<u>Fortress Level</u>	<u>Fighter Type</u>
Light	<i>Arrow/Dralthi</i>
Medium	<i>Wraith/J'rathek</i>
Heavy	<i>Bansheel/Goran</i>

Planets

The things that really matter when exploring planets are *resource count* and *rate of production*, and the only way to discover those stats is to explore each planet.

There are three different planet sizes — small, medium and large. A planet's size gives some indication of its resources. The following table lists the percentage chance of a planet's resources falling within each of several ranges, based on its size. (Note that columns add to 100%, not rows.)

<i>Resources</i>	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	<i>Overall</i>
0-49		9%	6%	— 5%
50-99		35%	24%	— 20%
100-149	28%	20%	28%	25%
150-199	28%	20%	28%	25%
200-249	—	24%	35%	20%
250-299	—	6%	9%	5%

These values will always hold true in *Armada*, where the planets are generated randomly. However, in *Campaign* there are a few atypical planets which do not fall within these values. These atypical planets have been placed there by the designers, just to keep things interesting.

Planets with more than 175 resource points are the treasure chests of *Wing Commander Armada* — grab them fast, hold on to them and use them.

Planets with more than 100 resource points are workhorses. Develop them as soon as you can, after building mines on the most valuable planets.

Planets with less than 100 resource points are small potatoes. Leave them alone until you've got *all* the more productive planets in your reach up and running.

WC Privateer

Privateer takes place in a large and complex universe filled with opportunities and choices. Basically, you're a mercenary pilot with a freedom of choice when it comes to what type of missions you want to fly. You'll travel from base-to-base, where you can meet "fixers" and accept or decline missions. And if you can make a buck, you'll even be able to outfit your ship with new gear.

COMMON BASE LOCATIONS

As a pilot and an entrepreneur, you need to use all the resources of the bases you frequent. 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 you'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 percentage 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 known universe has a bar. Gemini is no exception. Bars are not only one of the most prolific industries in the 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 the bars are the staff members. A good bartender very often knows more about the war than military intelligence types do, and they know more about trading than the Merchant's Guild ever will. Learning from bartenders has always been an important part of doing business in Gemini.

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 continue 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 can 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 don't 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 can 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 dealers 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're 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.

CUSTOMIZING YOUR SHIP

In *Privateer*, you must purchase a baseline ship and equip it with options. 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. 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.

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. If you're more of a risk taker who runs guns out to the edge of the Kilrathi border, you'll need all the protection you can get. Recommendation: don't pinch millicredits; 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're 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 basically 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 can't autopilot, you can't get a directional marker on your HUD and you can't obtain any immediate information about the quadrant you're in.

If you can't 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, repair droids have been known to 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. Each has a range of 35,000 K, and has HUD brackets. In general, the brands are comparable except at the high end, in which the B&S Omni is clearly the superior choice.

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, by 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 targeting and ordnance, they have no radar.

Weapons

Guns. For many pilots in Gemini, this is the most important purchase you make after your ship. 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.

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. The sector is 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 it an immovable fortress on the Kilrathi border and a growth-oriented, prosperous community.

MERCENARY'S GUILD

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 accept more than three missions at a 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 Mercenary's Guild is an honorable society and does not allow maintenance of offices on pirate bases.

MERCHANT'S GUILD

The Merchant's Guild has, in the last decade, established good relations with the Mercenary's 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 Merchant's Guild is similar to dealing with the Mercenary's Guild. You are charged to join and then may use their computer to accept missions. Any one individual may not accept more than three missions for all the usual reasons. 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, then 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 Merchant's 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.

WC3

WHAT'S NEW

In addition to simply being the most intelligent and sophisticated combat simulator in the *Wing Commander* series, *Wing Commander III* also has several more subtle differences from earlier *Wing Commander* games.

The most basic differences are probably the slower afterburner acceleration and the lack of an afterburner slide in many fighters. If you're an experienced pilot who's used to maneuvering with the afterburner slide, you may want to stick with the *Arrow* as much as possible until the *Excalibur* becomes available. The *Arrow* and the *Excalibur* are the only two fighters available with afterburner slides. The *Excalibur's* "super slide" is particularly marked.

In *Wing Commander Armada* all the fighters, on both sides, had equal yaw, pitch and roll values. In *Wing Commander III*, these values differ widely. Knowing the *exact* maneuvering tolerances of your fighter and the enemy fighters is an important mark of an ace pilot in this game.

Also in *Armada*, the aspect ratio of the enemy ships was "fudged" a bit for collisions, so that you had to run into the enemy's center of mass before you or he would take collision damage. If you just "brushed his wing," there'd be no collision. In *Wing III*, however, aspect ratios are at 100%, so if you brush any part of the enemy ship with any part of your ship, a collision will result.

Finally, in *Armada* it was possible to shoot down incoming missiles. This is not possible in *Wing III*, except for the skipper missile and other capital missiles, which can be targeted and shot, and the torpedo, which can and will be shot down by enemy turrets if you release it too early.

TAKEOFFS/LANDINGS

Unlike the earlier games in the series, WC3 allows manual takeoffs and landings from the Flight Deck. The autopilot feature is still available, but you can actually throttle your way in and out of the hangar. However, you still have to request permission to land.

Press A for an automatic takeoff, or take off manually. For a manual launch, press + to increase throttle speed. Steer straight ahead to exit the launch bay. When you've cleared the launch bay, press A to autopilot to the first nav point.

Before landing, you must obtain permission (described below). Then, you can land automatically by pressing A, or attempt a manual landing.

To land manually:

- Bring the *Victory* into view.
- Press C to open the Communications screen in the Left VDU.
- Press the number corresponding to the *Victory*.
- Press the number of the message that reads "Need clearance."
- Wait for "You are clear to land."
- Maneuver so that your ship faces the launch bay.
- Slow down below 100 kps and glide into the launch bay.
- Once you've passed halfway through the hull, you've landed.

Note: If you try to land manually without permission, you can't do anything besides fly through the Launch bay.

POWER DISTRIBUTION

In WC3, each ship can store a certain amount of power to operate engines, shields, guns and the damage repair system. You can adjust the amount of power allocated to each of the ship's four power points — Engines (E), Weapons (W), Shields (S) and Damage Repair (D). Distributing more power to one point decreases power allocated to the other three points.

Press P to display the power distribution screen. Press P consecutively to cycle through and select one of the four screens. Pressing s] sets the current system's power to 100%, while s[resets all power systems to 25% each. [decreases the current system in 5% increments,] increases it in 5% increments. Whenever you decrease (or increase) the allocation to one system, other systems receive more (or less) allotted power.

- The more power you allocate to Damage Repair, the faster damaged systems are repaired.
- If you set engine power to less than 25%, your maximum speed decreases.

<i>Display/cycle through power systems</i>	P	
<i>Reset all systems to 25%</i>	s[
<i>Increase current system to 100%, all others to 0%</i>	s]	
<i>Reduce current system by 5%</i>	[
<i>Increase current system by 5%</i>]	
<i>Cancel screen</i>	q	

CLOAKING (EXCALIBUR ONLY)

Later in the game, the experimental *Excalibur* fighter is equipped with a defensive cloaking mechanism that makes it invisible to other ships for short periods of time. To activate cloaking, cycle through the *Excalibur's* guns (press G) until you see *Cloaking* above the Left VDU.

Once you fire guns, your ship temporarily disappears from view and from your enemy's radar screen. An electrified blue line appears around your ship profile in the Left VDU, and your gunsight turns blue when you're fully cloaked. Cloaking lasts as long as you have blaster power and hold down the fire button. If you've already drained a lot of blaster power, you won't be invisible for long.

While cloaked, you cannot fire missiles or normal guns. Any enemy missiles that are already locked onto your ship will remain locked until you're completely cloaked. After you're invisible, enemy missiles cannot initiate or maintain a lock on your ship. To deactivate cloaking and use guns normally, release the fire button and press G to activate another gun.

WEAPONS

Chaff pods have been replaced by decoys, which perform a similar function.

Once an enemy has locked a missile onto your ship, the missile lock light in the cockpit glows (similar to what occurs in WC2). If that missile is in front of you, a green box will appear around it. When this happens, you can release *decoys* to distract missiles that are chasing you.

In the Left VDU, decoys show up as "D," followed by a number. Once your missile lock light glows, press E to release a decoy, then afterburn away. Note that you have a finite number of decoys (all of which are identical).

LOADOUT TERMINAL

For the first time in the *Wing Commander* series, you can choose your ship and weapons. (Rachel will also do this for you most of the time.) You can pick ships and specify weapon loadouts by left-clicking on the Loadout Terminal on the Flight Control level.

Arrows (WZ). Select mission (or move mouse or joystick up/down).

PREVIOUS (P), NEXT (N). Cycle through ship types and specifications.

PROCEED (e). Close terminal screen, load ship and return to gameplay.

Click the top arrows or use A and S to switch hardpoints (slots for missiles). The number of hardpoints varies between ships. The missile slots available on each hardpoint is indicated by text — "loaded: 1/2" means 1 of 2 hardpoint slots is occupied. If you add a second missile to this hardpoint, it reads "loaded: 2/2."

Click the bottom arrows (or press sA and sS) to cycle through missile types and mines.

**INTERACTIVE
MOVIES**

“+” (on the screen) adds one missile of the selected type to the current hardpoint.

“-” (on the screen) removes one missile of the selected type from the current hardpoint.

DAMAGE REPAIR SYSTEM

When your ship takes damage, WC3 allows you to specify what systems should be repaired first (if repairable). Press D to display the damage screen in your Left VDU. A description of any of your damaged ship components, along with the percent damage taken, appears (such as “Radar 30%”).

If multiple systems are damaged, you can specify which one to repair first by pressing J (this cycles through damaged systems, highlighting the currently selected one). Text describing the currently selected system is brown. Completely destroyed systems cannot be repaired. When engines take 100% damage, your ship explodes.

Press D again to view a ship profile. The color of panels on the ship profile (or text, if in text damage mode) varies as follows:

<i>Yellow</i>	System is damaged
<i>Red</i>	System is destroyed

INTERACTIVE MOVIES

Are They Really Making Interactive Movies?

(Excerpted from the Wing Commander Strategy Guide, by Mike Harrison.)

The structure of ORIGIN's Product Development department and the release of the first two games in the *Wing Commander* series provide a unique view of the software industry's relationship to the movie-making business.

It's apparent that many of the resources are quite similar, with software professionals taking the roles of producers, directors, cinematographers, script writers, set designers, and editors. It's just as obvious that basic differences exist between the two industries. After all, filmmakers don't have to deal with creating an interactive medium, in which the consumer actually becomes a main character.

In comparison with the filmmaking industry then, where in time is the entertainment software business? Is *Wing Commander II*, with speech synthesis, the *Jazz Singer* of the computer world?

"You can't make a perfect correlation," explained Dallas Snell, "because we could be right where the movie industry is if we had the technology with us. But it isn't. We don't have enough space to store the sound and graphics."

Snell noted that the software industry already knows how to make movies. It has all of Hollywood's experience to borrow from. "We already know how to set camera angles to achieve different emotional responses," he said. "We know how to position characters, how to use backdrops effectively, and how to put scenes together. We have producers and directors already working at ORIGIN."

Snell added that *Wing Commander I* has the concept that brings software the closest to an interactive movie. It contains a segment of movie-like scenes and storyline, and then a segment of arcade-like action in simulator style where reality is modeled. "Compared to the movies, we're probably in the 1950s," said Snell, "but we could easily be in the 1990s if it weren't for the technology."

Warren Spector, who co-produced *Wing Commander I*, has a different perspective. His background is in film history, theory, production and criticism. "I look at what we're doing at ORIGIN and I keep saying, hey, this happened in the film business in 1910, and that happened in 1920," Spector explained. "When I came to ORIGIN two years ago, we were wrestling with many of the things the movie business was trying to do in 1912."

Now, we're already up to 1926, when sound was coming in, and we're doing partial talkies just the way they did."

Spector noted that Chris Roberts was the game designer who put a finger on the fact that the industry could tell a story, move people, and touch their emotions. "I think we're still learning how to tell stories on the computer, though," Spector noted. "We're figuring out where we can be cinematic, and where trying to be cinematic just flat doesn't work. We're finding out where you want interaction, and where you want the player to sit back and watch the action."

"In the future, people are going to be scared in games, laugh in games, and cry in games," Spector said. "We're creating whole new worlds, and it's not just beep, beep, zap, zap, zap, kill the monster anymore. What's that line from Mary Tyler Moore? *A little song, a little dance, a little seltzer down your pants*. We're doing that now. We're telling stories and we're letting the player actually take part in it — and that's a whole new ballgame."

Yes, They Are!

Toward the end of the original *Wing Commander* project, the development team began to prepare for a "special edition" of the game. Extra *Secret Missions* were designed and developed, mostly alongside the main project. Chris Roberts likened it to other modular games, such as *Dungeons & Dragons*—a way to expand the adventure without having to purchase an entire new game. It was a good idea, and quickly grew into a second expansion. *Secret Missions 2* was created, and took the player down yet one more path in the war against the Kilrathi. The next stage was obvious: *Wing Commander II*.

The second installment of the *Wing Commander* series was produced by Chris Roberts, but was mostly directed and handled by Ellen Guon. He retained a certain amount of creative control about which direction the story should take and which directions had the wrong "feel" to them. He discussed with Ellen Guon which storylines remained true to the overall *Wing Commander* universe, and which concepts were shaky. Always his basic measuring stick was "would I like to play this game—is it something that I would really enjoy?"

For *Wing Commander III*, though, he reclaimed his role of creator—only this time he directed not just the project, but the Hollywood production.

As much input and creativity as Chris Roberts invested in *Wing Commander III*, he could not have done it on his own. His designers and programmers worked long hours to produce the best gameflow and space-flight conceivable. They are the unsung heroes. When a production is as ambitious and ground-breaking as *Wing III*, the nuts and bolts of the game itself can sometimes get lost behind all the Hollywood glamour. It can easily be forgotten that an Interactive Movie is as much a computer games as it is a movie.

The team of people who were assembled was unusual. All highly skilled and enthusiastic, the most distinctive common denominator was that they were all *Wing Commander* fans from long before they worked at ORIGIN. They were not introduced to the game in retrospect. No one had to write out a list of "this is what impressed the customers." They had been in the cockpits from the beginning of the epic adventure, and they were ready to make the game all they had ever hoped it could be.

WC3: Original Concept

Chris Roberts, Designer/Director/Producer

The physical world of *Wing Commander* is a series of offices and cubicles behind an unadorned gray door set in a purple wall. The nameplate on the third door to the left reads simply "Chris Roberts," but an anonymous team-member has taped up a sign: PUSH BUTTON FOR INTERACTIVE.

Inside his office is a sprawling desk, some cushioned seats for visitors—and in the corner is a souvenir from the Los Angeles shoot, a canvas chair with his name and "Director" printed across the back. On the windowsill behind the desk are the two angular, pale rocks. Chris picks one up and displays it. "This is the asteroid from *Wing Commander I*. We hung it by a string from the ceiling and bit-mapped it. We actually had a moon rock that we looked at, but this worked much better...and we just picked it up off the ground."

Q: What did you actually envision with *Wing Commander III*?

CR: The goal was to finish up the *Wing Commander* trilogy of fighting the Kilrathi. Plus, since we were going to CD-ROM format, we wanted to do a CD-ROM game right. The *Wing Commander* games have always been done that way—*Wing Commander I* was designed to use a 386 VJ properly. For the CD we decided to do an interactive movie with live action. Everyone's been talking about interactive movies, but we hadn't heard of anyone doing it right, so we wanted to go out and do it properly. With *Wing III* we tried to apply the production value to an interactive movie that we'd applied on the computer side with the previous *Wing Commanders*. The goal was, if someone said, "What's an interactive movie?" we'd just hand them the CDs from *Wing Commander III* and say, "Here, check this out."

Q: What was your perception of how *Wing I* hit the market? Do you think there's going to be a lot of parallels?

CR: I think *Wing I* came just as 386s started truly coming into the home, and as people really started buying VGA cards. Before that it was all 8086s or straight IBM PCs with 286 and VGA. We hit on the crest with sound cards and saw PCs becoming game machines—really powerful game machines. If you wanted to show your hot machine off back in 1990, *Wing I* was the game to do it. I think that right now we are in a phase where CD-ROM is becoming standard and everyone is getting a multi-media machine, but I don't really think the software is out there yet that truly shows it off. That's what I think *Wing III* is going to do.

Q: What are the major differences between *Wing I*, *II* and *III*?

CR: There are a bunch of them. First off, in space flight *Wing III* has real-time 3-D art instead of bit-map polygonal 3-D. Shape and texture are a lot smoother in space flight. We can also do Super VGA in space, as opposed to VGA, so there's a lot more detail and resolution. It's smoother and more detailed. We have a lot of "incremental features" out in space flight, you get more options in terms of the different controls you have. You can control your attitude levels, etc. Everything that the *Wing Commander* players have been asking for — for a long, long time—is in *Wing Commander III* ... and then some.

On the story side, we have live action for the story-telling part of it. Instead of having the face of the character there and the words he's saying appearing below, we filmed actors playing out the scenes. We captured those shots and put them directly in the game, so that the whole storyline gives context and meaning to the space action in *Wing Commander*. In *Wing III*, the storyline is more engrossing — you have more of an emotional connection.

There are real people on the screen, instead of simple cartoon characters. That should move the game experience to the next level.

I think on both ends, space flight and the story side, there are significant differences between *Wing I* and *Wing II*. I would say that there is probably more of a jump between *Wing III* and *Wing II* than there was between *Wing II* and *Wing I*. But I think in its own way *Wing III* is probably as revolutionary as *Wing I* was.

Q: What were the difficulties with such a radical departure from the “simple cartoon characters” in *Wing II* to the way it was in *Wing III*?

CR: The biggest difficulty was the whole video side. No one here at ORIGIN had ever done anything like that. The computer game industry had never done anything to that scale. We didn't even have any technology for playing back the video on CD. So we had to do a lot of the story/movie side on blind faith and guesswork. We decided that we were going to try and get fresh-out-of-Hollywood screen writers to get the script ready. We knew we needed to try to do it out in L.A., and get it done right — with well-known, good, established actors. We hadn't done it before, so it was a real learning experience.

The space flight/game side was a lot easier because basically we'd been working with that for a long time. We'd been learning from our mistakes and improving on them, so we had that down pretty well. Basically we jumped into the movie industry and had to learn fast or sink. I would say that was probably the biggest challenge.

The other challenge was to get across the idea of how it was going to fit together. Everyone was kind of skeptical. “Oh, yeah, live action. That kind of thing sucks.” We had to face attitudes like that. Still, I would say the video was probably the biggest challenge.

Q: Was *Wing III* something that grew in concept after you started working on it?

CR: No, I knew the story we were going to do on *Wing III* before we started. I designed the *Strike Commander* technology with *Wing Commander III* in mind, to do all the space flight. That's one reason the space flight stuff was easier for us. We just upgraded the Super VGA to make it faster. *Strike Commander* was developed so we could get the technology for *Wing III*. Since it went on a lot longer than I had anticipated, I had a lot of time to sit around and think about what I wanted to do on *Wing III* ... and how cool it was going to be. So I had thought out the storyline, the basic concept and everything in *Wing III*, long before we started.

Except for the video ... I only decided to go with video in it once we started doing *Wing III*, and so that stuff was new. I had a pretty good idea of how everything was going to be with the exception of using video instead of drawing characters.

Q: Comparing the actual sit-down-and-think-out design stage of *Wing I* and *Wing II*, to the design stage of *Wing III*, what changes were there in the way you designed the game?

CR: *Wing III* was designed much more up-front. I knew how *Wing III* was going to work before I started on it. I had also honed a lot of my ideas. My ideas on what makes this kind of game work had evolved, and so it was becoming more than just guesses. *Wing I* was just a whole bunch of ideas that we put down, saw how it worked together ... it kind of grew as we went along. By the time we started *Wing III* — after *Wing I*, *II*, and *Strike Commander* — we had a good idea of what things were going to work. It was just a matter of designing it right.

Also, we were forced to plan everything out front before we did the movie shoot. Once you're shooting, you're committed and you can't change anything. So we needed to have everything in the game designed by about February. The script had to be finished. So from that date on, everything was just a matter of being finished and slotted into place. That's good, because it stops you from tinkering. With most computer games I've worked with in the past, it has always been that you're designing until the day before it ships. It's probably one of the biggest

reasons why games slip: people play around and try to do different things. This time we were forced to commit to something we designed.

Q: What was the most interesting or fun part about creating *Wing III*?

CR: There were a lot of interesting and fun parts. It's great to come up with an idea and hand it out to a lot of really creative, bright and talented people and watch them come back with stuff that's cooler than you imagined. The sum is greater than the parts. That's one of the very cool aspects.

Personally, I think one of the best aspects was going out and directing the whole shoot...and kind of putting it together. My biggest kick about computer games is that you take a picture in your head, and you get it onto a screen. Directing live action was a lot like that, but condensed. You'd start off with an idea of how a scene would go. In the morning you'd talk it over with the actors, you'd block the angles of the camera and shoot it, and the next day you'd be seeing a rough cut of the scene.

Traditionally, with computer graphics, it would take a month before I'd see a rough cut. So for me it was a distillation of everything I liked in making computer games. Directing was a big rush. Movies and computer games are my two favorite things. If I weren't doing one, I'd be doing the other.

Q: What differences did video bring to the game?

CR: I think it makes the game far more interesting. It makes you care about the story. I always liken it to the days when I played Infocom games...I used to love textual adventures. Then Sierra came out with graphic adventures and all the people liked graphic adventures. Now everyone playing adventure games have a new experience — they can see and interact with the world. Before, they had to imagine what was going on. Video just opened the audience up wider. The people who liked the adventure games in the old days still play the new ones, but now a whole bunch of new people who didn't used to play the old ones have come along because the experience is a little closer to what we are used to seeing on TV and movies. We have achieved the third stage: first text, then graphics and now CD-ROM. It makes the story much more compelling because it has real people, with real emotion. An actor can say something with a look that you can never really get across with text on a computer screen, with just a computer face there.

I think that really makes a difference. The story end of it really means something now. You'll be interested. You'll want to watch. You'll want to know what happens in the story. People will get into the story, and maybe they'll like or hate a certain wingman—they'll give a damn what happened to him out in space. That will make a big difference when you are fighting out in space. Your actions will have a real effect on the people back on the ship—and now these are real people that you talk to and associate with. That heightens the whole impact of the story.

Q: What difficulties did video production throw at you?

CR: It was just so new for us. Organization, new technology, everything...we hadn't done any of it before, so we had to learn fast. We had to talk to dozens of different people and find out what was the best way to do things — in their opinion—and judge those against what we heard from other people. Then there was just getting organized. Basically we shot over a hundred hours of footage and the end result was between two and a half to three hours of footage on the computer.

All the scenes had to have computer sets and backdrops. That was such a huge, vast amount of art that just having to organize the backgrounds with the footage was a real nightmare. Most movies have maybe five to ten percent special effects shots—where 100% of our shots were, in essence, special effects shots. Anyone on our staff who was working on the video side could get a job anywhere, organizing anything. We had to do an incredible amount of work on that end. Plus there was a lot of new equipment. The movie player wasn't fully

running until a full month after we finished shooting. There was a lot of stuff like that. Everything worked out, but it was tough.

Q: Why did you assemble the particular team that you did?

CR: With Frank (Savage, the Game Development Director), it was pretty easy. Warren (Spector, The Senior Producer) told me about him. "Yeah, we've got this guy up in Chicago whose license plate reads WNGCMD 1. We need to hire him to work on the next *Wing Commander*." So we brought him in on *Strike Commander*. He was just awesome on that. Frank was probably one of the biggest fans of *Wing Commander*, so for him to do *Wing Commander III* seemed real natural. He's definitely incredibly talented. Frank pretty much built the team up. All the programmers were Frank-picked and hired to work with him. He looked for programmers who were game players, who liked *Wing Commander* and who shared the same kind of vision.

We got Chris Douglas to be the Art Director, and it was the same kind of deal. He came in to do a bunch of the *Wing Commander II* art. He knew *Wing Commander* intimately and he has a really good artistic and stylistic look ... kind of jagged. We found him working on *BioForge* and dragged him to *Wing Commander*, and he helped out immensely.

Then there's Martin Galway. I've known Martin for a long time. He did the sound background for *Times of Lore* and *Styker's Run*...so he's a really good and organized at getting the job done. The rest of the people on the team I can't take credit for, because I really only pick the key people, and let them pick who they want to work with.

Q: *Wing I* had a lot of little touches that made it a different experience from all the other games out there. Are there any little touches in *Wing III* that make it competitive?

CR: There are a lot of similar touches in *Wing III*. I don't know if people just expect them now, because *Wing I* did them and now everyone does them, too. As far as I'm concerned, each little thing you do that pulls you into the screen and makes you feel like you are there ... anything that helps you suspend belief when you want to do it, that's what we tried to include. In *Wing Commander III* we position our "cameras" in the cockpits. Your MFDs break. You have little sparks when you cut something. Everything is richer than it was in *Wing Commander I*. We still have the scramble take-off sequence, but it's got far more to it than *Wing Commander I* had.

It's tough for me to put my finger on any one "touch." I think the most I'll say is that we applied a movie production value to every single scene, no matter how small or unimportant it was, so everything had the same production value from start to finish.

Usually on a computer game the intro looks really good and the end sometimes looks good, but what's in between doesn't get near the attention that the intro got. We gave the same priority to everything. We filmed everything back to back so each little scene has the same production value that the opening and the end does. Which is really cool, actually. People will play the game just to lose so they can see what the losing end game looks like. That has some animation that's just as good as the winning track, which is very unusual for a game. So I would say that is probably the biggest thing that people will notice. Just the attention to detail everywhere.

Q: This is the third game of the trilogy. How long have you known how it would all wrap up?

CR: I think since the second one. During the first one I really wasn't thinking about doing a trilogy. But after the success of the *Wing I* everyone clamored for a sequel. So we did *II*, but I was thinking that I wanted to finish it, and finish it right. While I was thinking it over I formulated what I wanted to do with it. During the course of *Strike Commander* I cleared up all the ideas. So I would say back in *Wing II* and *Strike Commander* was when I knew.

Q: What other elements in the game, besides the video, do you feel carry a lot of the impact of the game?

CR: Well, there's no question that the space flight also looks great. Everyone went to great pains to make sure the space flight was like the video. I haven't seen any other game, even on Super VGA, with this level of detail. Especially out in space. Our ships — you can fly inside and outside huge capital ships. We don't even need to put video in this game. It could just have been space flight and it would be seen as being the best *Wing Commander* yet. I think people will be getting a huge bargain. This is typical ORIGIN style, where we say, "Never mind what we need to do. Let's just do the biggest, baddest thing we possibly can." And that's what I think *Wing Commander III* achieved. We figured, as much money as they'll give us, we'll do as much as we can. And we'll have fun with it.

Q: Is there anything that you wish had been done differently, as far as quality or feel or anything?

CR: No...there are things that I will do differently on my next project. On this project, I still agree with why we made each decision. Space flight-wise, I wouldn't do anything differently.

Maybe there is one thing. With the video, we ended up spending so much money and attention on shooting the scenes that if we had spent a little more money we could have also gotten a movie or a TV show out of it. That's probably one of the things I might have done differently. It's all a matter of money. Doing a movie version we would have seen our investment returned. That's part of it that I would do differently.

And another thing is, I think that even though using computer sets for everything is very cool, it's also a real pain. I would like to do it in a traditional movie style...10% of the movie in special effects, using high end SGI stuff—really, really cool stuff—and the other stuff would be filmed on traditional sets. Because we wouldn't have to match computer backgrounds, we could have a little more fun with lighting and moving the camera, etc. We were using computer sets for mainly for "impression" reasons. I don't think that will be an issue in the next year or so. So that's pretty much what I would be doing differently.

Q: Was there any one point in the creation of the game when you thought, if this happens, then the game is going to be really great...but if this doesn't happen, then the game isn't going to be as good as it could be?

CR: To be honest with you, I always try not to worry. You sit around and worry and it gets to be gales of problems. I could spend way too much of my time stressing. Making a computer game has a lot to do with blind faith...just believing that it's all going to work out. You have to have faith that you're going to be able to fix the bug, and you'll be able to make it work. It's as though when you worry about things happening or not happening, you'll never get it done. You'll sit and worry about it all the time, instead. So I really tried not to worry. My biggest concern was the movie player-machines, and whether we would be able to play back all the stuff that was shot. We had an idea it could, but we didn't know, and we just went ahead and shot it without having a movie player. They worked on it and did a fantastic job. We shot with blind faith that yes, it will work...we can make it work.

Q: Next, the classic "last question." What are you planning to do next?

CR: Go to Disneyland! I don't know. I have one project that I want to start developing, but I'm not quite sure what the storyline is going to be yet. But, yeah, it will probably be a movie/game project. I'm going to try to put it together.
