
Super Wing Commander for Macintosh
The Secret Briefings

Sector XR-231.3

Transcription of address to the Graduating Class of '54
by Col. John "Gaijin" Munroe

Every year my old friends at the Academy ask me to forego my life of quiet seclusion in the Honshu countryside to offer a few words of encouragement and advice to the graduating class, and I must admit that much as I enjoy practising the art of tea and the way of the sword, it does the heart good to hop the shuttle out and see the bright young faces, still so full of hope and promise. This is why I forego the hololink to come and speak with you directly. Besides, Rita over at the Cantina has given standing orders to dispatch a Ninja squad for my head the year that I fail to stop by to pull down her shutters and ply her with premium Kyushu sake.

You people already have everything you need to get the job done out there. I'm here today to tell you that nobody expects you to die for the Confederation except the Kilrathi. We expect you to win, and come back in one piece. Your commander may tell you to be cautious, not to take unnecessary risks with your life or spacecraft, and he is right. Your wingmates may insist that mission objectives take priority over personal safety. They are also correct. Every mission you fail can cost the Confederation millions of civilian lives. Every pilot who dies in battle deprives our civilization of one more ray of hope for peace and the survival of humanity. Who knows which pilot will be called upon to save the Confederation in years to come? Your responsibility is twofold: to survive to be that pilot, and to keep the Confederation alive long enough for that day to come.

Before he fell in heroic battle at the McAuliffe debacle back in '34, my wingleader and honored Sensei in the arts of tea and the sword, Akuma (known as Major Shun "Go-Devil" Tanaka to those of you who have studied your history) used to remark that the true warrior is never what he seems. You may see a raging demon with his hair on fire, but inside he will be cool as iced tea by a babbling brook. She may appear harder than durasteel, but inside she is soft and pliant like cotton and silk. Surrounded by fire and death, his heart rests in the peace of the wholeness/emptiness of the universe, where no fear or anger can touch him. She has mastered the only true enemy there is: her own ignorance. Twenty years later, I am still unsure of what my teacher meant; hence my retirement to a teahouse in rural Japan, still chewing on the single koan or Zen question that he left me with: Who is it that flies; what is it that

fears death? For me, war has always been a galactic struggle of wits, nerves, and physical and mental prowess. The technical aspects are simply a matter of practice. It is once these have been mastered and you and your craft merge into one that the real training begins. Honing your will and attention and enthusiasm to a searing white-hot point, then resolutely applying it to the enemy without hesitation or relent.

Successful pilots triumph in the field because they already possess the victory within. A spirit that soars and expands to include every possibility the enemy might resort to, a mind so vast that no adversity--or adversary--can limit or contain it. And an enthusiasm for flying and conflict that knows no greater joy than the thrill of battle in the vacuum. Going up against the Kilrathi in the Vega Sector, you have to be alert, focused, calm, outraged and outrageous, ice-cold, white hot, and boldly determined to down your foe while understanding him from the inside out. Balance, intensity, and a towering spirit of attack will make you feared by cats throughout the galaxy--and keep you alive better than any amount of timidity or caution.

Being too cautious is in fact more dangerous than a little recklessness. To win against great odds, you need a touch of the Maniac, a bit of the berserker, especially in the beginning. When you encounter the enemy, run amok. This will help you overcome your fear. As experience becomes your guide, you will be able to reign in your fury and exercise wise judgement, but for now, ride the dragon of your dauntless inner demons, harnessing them to delete resistance and deliver the mail no matter what the odds. Live to fly, and fly to win.

I salute you, and I wish you Godspeed.

May all beings abide in peace and contentment.

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Message from the Billet Officer

So here you are in the Vega Sector. Congratulations. Think you've got what it takes to fly SWC without a safety net. But wouldn't mind the secret briefing as long as Maniac isn't privy to it. Hey, why not? I only spent a year and 40 kilotons of adrenaline obtaining this intelligence for you. Now they tell me there are cheats. Well, no cheat beats the sheer, abject terror of shields gone, armor at 25%, one gun broken off and all missiles depleted with four Jalathi on your tail and a Snakeir's batteries gunning for your butt--and still making it back to receive a chewing out from Col. Halcyon (thank God for that last increment of fuel!). Yes flyers, here is the famous Gaijin lowdown on all that pertains to the world of SWC, that little-known, less-recognized world of fear and loathing mixed with pure flying bliss in a tin can. Every mission in SWC, should you choose to accept it, is here for your perusal. Read 'em and whip--the enemy if you please. Know that a nerdy bespectacled cat codenamed Invoice Doorways infiltrated Confed and planted the most deadly Kilrathi

weapon to date aimed at the destruction of human intelligence-- codenamed Tinyflaccid Wall-openings IXV. Realize that mankind's only hope rests in a funky little package named for a prehistoric snack from the 20th Century better known as the doubledecker burger with lettuce and condiments.

Okay speed-jaded joystick jockeys from Sol, swallow hard and prepare for the inevitable. Here's the lowdown on the only place to soar in 2654.

ENYO SYSTEM

Lounge: Between each mission talk to Shotgun at the bar, who is morose but affable and makes a mean concoction called Your Usual. Now talk to Paladin and Angel. Try to fit in, for God's sake.

Barracks: Check your medals and ribbons periodically between flights. So you just fly the missions, huh?

Mission 1 (Enyo 0)

Assignment: Killer Bees/Alpha Wing Patrol

Fighter: Hornet

Wingman: Spirit

Mission: Patrol 3 jump points, destroy any opposition.

Obstacles: Asteroids at Navs 2 and 3.

Opposition: Nav 1.....3 Dralhti

Nav 3.....2 Salthi

Comments: Launch and autopilot to Nav 1. Spirit will notify you of enemy ships. Don't be intimidated--remember that the Dralhti are flying pancakes that can be easily outclassed by the faster Hornet (as long as you avoid being pinned between two sets of mass drivers), while the Salthi that turn up at Nav 3 are so flimsy that pilots are often assigned to them as punishment. Use the Hornet's speed and maneuverability, and remember that those lasers can fire an almost continuous barrage of searing death without sapping your energy. Shoot and keep shooting till you crack those catcans. Afterburn to right or left and engage Dralhti from the sides. Order Spirit to attack the Dralhti farthest from you by targeting it and pressing B twice. Stick with one Dralhti until it is defeated (read: atomized), then wax the next one. If you get a lock with your heatseekers, fire guns at the Dralhti's tail until the aft shields are down, THEN fire the missile and watch that baby burn. Once the first two are gone Spirit should be done with her cats, but if not and you are in decent shape, order her to your wing and make short work of the last ship for the extra credit. Gochisou-sama, Mariko-san.

At Nav 2 watch out for asteroids. They come up suddenly with little warning and in the frail Hornet, one or two collisions will grind you into nanodust. Avoid the acroboulders entirely by skirting the field or practice picking your way through the rocks by setting your speed to 290 and heading in, jogging the stick to move the nav crosshairs from one side of

the screen to the other. Don't panic and don't stop jerking that stick. Once you get the hang of it even the thickest swarm of stellar scrap is negotiable. To shoot an asteroid you must have some distance from it (never bother to shoot at an in-your-face rock unless you have neutron guns--DUCK!) and hit it at least twice with your guns. Watch out for the flying debris! Shooting is okay for clearing a path through thick patches. Near Nav 3 you'll find 2 Salthi coming out of the asteroids. Line the nearer one up in your sights, target him with T and taunt him with E. When he comes within 3,000 clicks send a continuous stream of laser fire straight at him until his shots begin to hit you. You should be able to kill him right there if you can aim straight and hold your ground. Balls required! Afterburn away for a second to allow your forward shields to regenerate, then cut your power to zero and turn on the second Salthi, allowing him to attack you while you inundate him with a continuous stream of fire. Forget your dumbfires unless he really closes and laser him to bits. If your shields take too much strain, turn and touch your afterburners to move slightly, then wait for him to head towards you and keep firing until you see that telltale white plume of smoke. "No, nooooooo!" Who says you can't get your Ace stripe first time out! Navigate the second asteroid field and autopilot back to the Tigers Claw. Don't forget to target the Claw and hit R to request landing clearance before you reach 1,000 clicks. Cut your speed to 250 and let Mama reel you in. The ACLS landing system grabs you at about 800 clicks out. The only way to get a chewing out from Col. Halcyon is if you bring your ship back with major armor and VDU/scope damage. Otherwise the Colonel and Spirit vie to make you blush with their gushing praise. Don't bother getting used to it, they like to butter up the newbies in case they come home as hamburger on their second or third time out.

Lounge: Talk to Maniac and Hunter (and don't forget Sam!) Check your score on the killboard. Vow to take pot shots at every wingman who ever called you "rookie" or "kid". Know that Maniac will still be pissing you off when you're crisping pirates in circa 2671 unless you learned how to rewrite future history at the Wing Commander Academy.

Barracks: Check your medals every now and then. Try not to feel smug. After mission 15 you should have full stripes. Medals depend on your willingness to lead the opposition around by the nose while ruthlessly achieving your mission objectives.

Mission 2 (Enyo 1)

Assignment: Epsilon Wing Escort

Fighter: Hornet

Wingman: Spirit

Mission: Escort Drayman transport via Nav 1 to jump point at Nav 2.

Obstacles: Asteroids between Nav 2 and TC on return route.

Opposition: Nav 1.....2 Salthi
Nav 2.....3 Draithi

Comments: The key to keeping the vultures from their prey is in dominating the field with ruthless aggression and tenacity. Never give your opponents a moment's rest. Assign your wingman to attack the enemy farthest from you, and then go for the one closest to the Drayman. Go after him with afterburners and an attitude, pound him relentlessly from all sides. Dictate the terms of battle. Try to avoid firing when the enemy is between you and the transport, since any stray shots you fire will damage it, but nail that sucker FAST. NO dumbfires in the direction of the Drayman! Other missiles should also be avoided but the first priority is to take those ships down with dispatch. Do whatever it takes, including ramming them if necessary (be sure you have full shields and front armor for this and resort to it only as a last-ditch measure and never with afterburners--in your Hornet more than one or two collisions will crack your coffin). Taunt as often and indiscriminately as you can to distract the enemy from its real target. Confuse them, herd them, but waste them quick! When defending capital ships, try to kill your attackers before they get too close. This keeps the battle away from the vulnerable old hog while ensuring that you get the credit instead of the ship's laser turret gunners!

At Nav 2 wait for the Drayman to jump out before heading into the asteroids. If you've taken a lot of damage, reset your nav computer for Nav 1 and return home that way to avoid the rockfield altogether--no joy in there on this mission anyhow.

Commander's Office: Promotion to rank of Captain. Reassignment to Blue Devil squadron and Scimitar fighter.

Jump: McAuliffe System

Hangar Deck: Bronze Star awarded for Drayman sendoff.

McAULIFFE SYSTEM

Lounge: Talk to Iceman and Knight. Get the lowdown on the Scimitar slug. As usual when receiving conflicting advice, both parties are half right. Choose the middle way and benefit from both.

Mission 3 (McAuliffe 0)

Assignment: Blue Devil Squadron/Beta Wing Patrol

Fighter: Scimitar

Wingman: Paladin

Mission: Patrol 4 nav points. Grin knowingly as Halcyon disallows stealth rumors.

Obstacles: Minefield near Nav 3.

Opposition: Nav 1.....3 Draithi

Nav 2.....none

Nav 3.....none

Nav 4.....3 Salthi

Comments: The Scimitar IS a slow old mud pig, but the shields and mass

drivers make it a good place to practice leaning hard on the enemy. You can always kill the first Dralthi or Salthi in line with your guns. Fly to Nav 1 and make short work of the Dralthi. Nav 3 gives you a chance to fly through a minefield--these are decidedly easier than asteroid fields since they damage by exploding rather than impact, and they are much smaller and less easy to run into. Kinda beautiful to look at, too--just don't get so fascinated you run into one! At Nav 4 go straight for the first Salthi after targeting and insulting him, then pummel him with a steady stream of deadly mass driver projectiles. The next two can be killed easily with a hard brake and some well-placed shots. Afterburner around if they pin you between two streams of laser fire. Ram them if they get uppity and watch those tinfoil fuselages pop.

Lounge: Talk to Maniac and Bossman about downing capital ships. Yes and yes. Try every strategy and see what works for you. I say either can be applied, unless you're going up against jump-capable transports like Dorkir or Lumbari in which case they must be greased immediately or they will jump out (none in this mission).

Mission 4 (McAuliffe 1)

Assignment: Theta Wing Strike

Fighter: Scimitar

Wingman: Paladin

Mission: Attack and destroy Ralari destroyer at Nav 1.

Obstacles: none

Opposition: BTW Tigers Claw and Nav 1.....2x2 Dralthi
Nav 1.....2 Krant, 1 Ralari

Comments: There are only two things to remember about attacking large battleships: don't crash into them, and don't run out of fuel. The gunners will pick you off in an instant if you're limited to 50 pseudokilometers per second. A combination of Maniac's kamikaze approach and Bossman's orthodox method will do best--never hurts to burn over behind the ship to let it absorb the enemy's first shots and missiles while you toast a few sections of armor, then spring out to the defense of your wingman. Here though, the Krant fighters are well out in front of the Ralari, and are lean and mean. The thin design makes a difficult target, but your mass drivers and missiles will do them in. Get Paladin on one and fry the other yourself. Clean up for him when you've toasted yours. The Scim lacks subtlety so let them come straight at you and blast their noses with your guns. Use your heatseekers when you've knocked out their aft shields, but save dumbfires for very close range and ships with no shields. Dumbfires should be conserved when you have a capship on your hitlist, since they are ineffective against fighters unless you are so close you absorb half the blast. Next go in for the Ralari with your dumbfires and guns. Fire continuously and consistently and it will buckle before long. Fly at about 250, fire from behind or the sides, turn and burn out to 3,000 and start another run. Order Paladin back to your wing when she looks ready to blow

for an easy credit (he usually lets you take it anyhow). Don't keep him on your side for long while attacking the capship or he'll be a sitting duck for the Ralari's laser turrets. Fly home and gloat once you see the telltale cloud of smoke and debris that says: "She's toast!"

Hangar Deck: Bronze Star awarded for bagged Ralari
Lounge: Talk to Paladin and Bossman--cheers to the Mother Hen, then talk pancake mixing with the legendary Ripper.

Mission 5 (McAuliffe 2)

Assignment: Psi Wing Rendezvous

Fighter: Scimitar

Wingman: Paladin

Mission: Escort Drayman tanker from Nav 1 to Claw. Off Bhurak Starkiller to save TC's sister ship prior to Mission 8.

Obstacles: none

Opposition: Nav 1.....4 Krant prior to arrival of Drayman

BTW Nav 1 and the TC.....3 Salthi including Capt. BS.

Comments: Get in quick and take out the Krant at Nav 1 before the Drayman jumps in. Detail Paladin off to deal with one wing while you burn in to taunt and roast the other pair. Clean and fry Paladin's birds once you've gutted your own. On the return voyage you are jumped by Bhurak and his Salthi thugs. Kill one grunt while sending Paladin off to fence with the other. Be resolute in waxing Bhurak once you've done this--allowing him to live will cost the Claw's mother ship its life with all hands in a few missions. Don't let him escape. Sometimes he appears cloaked (never could tell if this was a fluke of the software or not, but in any case believe your firing recticle and you can off the wily nar Caxki even if you can't see him). Keep an eye on Paladin's lunch and your Drayman to ensure that situation is under control. If the Drayman takes too much damage you may have to let Bhurak bug out while you wetnurse the scurrying Scot. Don't worry, you can rectify the situation later. To do this (or pick off wayward wombats in most any mission where they can't jump out) fly home, reset your Nav computer to retrace your mission (in this case Nav 1) and autopilot back (Drayman and all, unfortunately). Sure enough, when you head home a second time, Bhurak will reappear, minus any hits you may have scored on him. This time make it count and burn after the little prick until you nail him to the wall. He loves a one-on-one fight but will scratch if outnumbered so chop the hairy turd to bits and be done with it.

Commander's Office: Promotion to Major and reassignment to Star Slayer squadron and a Raptor fighter. Oh and Major, cut the cheap sales talk, will you?

Jump: Gimle System

Hangar Deck: Silver Star for Bhurak removal.

GIMLE SYSTEM

Lounge: Talk to Iceman and Angel about the murderous Kilrathi warthog, the Jalthi. Thank Shotglass for his cheerful conversation about grisly Kilrathi hunting rituals in Gimle's jungles.

Mission 6 (Gimle 0)

Assignment: Star Slayer Squadron/Zeta Wing Defend

Fighter: Raptor

Wingman: Angel

Mission: Fly to the defense of Exeter.

Obstacles: none

Opposition: Upon launch.....4 Salthi attacking Claw

Nav 1.....3 Jalthi attacking Exeter

Comments: Welcome to the Raptor, a flying tank bristling with enough shields, armor and weaponry to give any cat distemper to the max. Just don't forget she's a sluggish old lady, something like our friend behind the bar. As soon as you clear the launch bay Angel reminds you of your duty as the Salthi gadflies razz your buzzcut. Do yourself a favor and press G twice to bring up full guns. Do this every time you launch in a Raptor or Rapier, unless you have special reasons to want less but more specific firepower. Fry them fast and auto over to Nav 1, where the real fight is going down. Three Jalthis can easily make toast of you, Angel, the Exeter and any other technology Confed has told us about here in 2654. Angel will tell you the Raptor only has a 34 percent chance against the Jalthi--and that's only ONE of them. Remember, the bold spirit of pure aggressive outrage is what will burst those overblown bagpipes. The withering fire laid down by these feline fragmasters extends only to the front, so blast them from the sides and back with everything you've got. Sic Angel on one at the left or right, then bear down on the opposite extreme with guns ablaring. Get well out of the way when those neutron/laser crispers come your way, and slide around to the side to plant a few shots before taking out the rear shields with some well-placed neutron/mass driver fire. Two can play at this game but you can play it better. Once the shields are down, stuff a heatseeker up the pipes and watch that baby burn. The secret is to use afterburners and stickwork to stay in close so the third furball will hit his buddy as soon as you, and to keep firing whatever you've got at those lardass engines. When your first target bites the kibble, turn hard on the third and clip his whiskers in similar fashion. If Angel is in trouble, going after her puttytat first is also an option. In any case stick close to your prey and blast him relentlessly. Don't take no for an answer until all three cats are kitty litter. Cruise home and feel like a hero. You are, you know.

Hangar Deck: Gold Star presented for saving the Exeter's bacon. Where you gonna put all those chicken guts anyhow? Just don't stay up nights polishing them or Maniac will make you blush on the Victory in about 15

years.

Lounge: Listen to Maniac (as if it would do any good) and Hunter. Sit in on Sam's mutterings about the Rapier prototype (and snicker if you can when you come to mission 26 and go up against five in a Raptor!).

Mission 7 (Gimle 1)

Assignment: Omicron Wing Patrol

Fighter: Rapier (prototype)

Wingman: Angel

Mission: Patrol three nav points and evaluate Rapier.

Obstacles: Asteroids at Nav 1

Opposition: Nav 2.....4 Dralthi
Nav 3.....2 Gratha

Comments: Neutron guns WILL knock out asteroids at close range with one combined blast--better if you hit them squarely and have full guns selected. The Rapier's flimsy armor doesn't leave much room for a second chance if you miss, however. Ducking the rocks is more to the point. Stick to your regular 290 through the field and you'll come out breathing with Durasteel unscratched--watch because you're cruising at 250 when you come out of autopilot and have to speed up to 290 while dodging the moonrocks. Two wings of Dralthi creep up on you a frisbee's throw from Nav 2; send the irritating Mlle. Angelique to see if she can preach them to death while your phenomenal guns and matchless agility slice the other wing to ribbons. Then go order Miss Priss to your wing and slash her stultified survivors if she hasn't bored them into ejecting (sadly for them, not an option since here in 2654 catships have no punchout gizmo). At Nav 3 wax the Gratha duo. These toothy torpedoes are famous for ramming you in a pinch--whether by pugnacious design or through sheer clumsiness I have yet to establish since one or the other of us is usually dead after the encounter. Bringing full guns to bear and letting them charge straight at you will kill the first one if you can land three hits on his nose with full guns. Then pickle his littermate and frag his ass with missiles and guns. Remember to knock down the shields before launching missiles to receive the full 30 dealer rebate. Slide on home to fill the Colonel in on the Rapier's finer points. Try to smile sweetly as Angel pontificates--you'll be sleeping with her in a few years after all, no doubt secretly thanking Sivar she changed her hairstyle.

Commander's Office: Promotion to rank of Major. Enjoy the privileges of rank.

Lounge: Hear Ice out on Dakhath--he knows what he's talking about here--and focus on your drink while Knight salivates over the Rapier and whoever (make sure it's you) gets assigned to the Black Lion squadron coming online in a few missions. Sam likes to mutter about Deathstroke's penchant for lousepopping ejected pilots--you remain mysteriously silent as murky visions of Valkoth and Dragon pilots bouncing off your futuristic fighter shields flash before your eyes....

Mission 8 (Gimle 2)

Assignment: Tau Wing Patrol

Fighter: Raptor

Wingman: Angel

Mission: Attack Dralhti bogies at Nav 1 and kill Dakhath.

Obstacles: none

Opposition: Nav 1.....9 Dralhti in two waves (5+4); Dakhath in 2nd

Comments: Don't believe Halcyon's assurances that info is more important than heroic kills. You're in a Raptor! Wipe the slate clean and head for home. Fry Dakhath last; he's no match for your superior guns, armor, and speed. All in all an inferior pilot although he can do the loop-de-loop better than most. If you've ever flipped flapjacks you'll know what to do. Note that even if you had ejected he wouldn't bother to pop your pod as advertised.

Listen to Attack Force Delta and Blue Devil Five and watch attack on TC's lookalike--watch 3 Krant buy it before you can shout "command-shift-3" if you killed Bhurak Starkiller. If not, a Salthi leads the two Krant and BS himself reduces the carrier to molten slag. Don't sweat it Col. Halcyon, you don't have to command this one.

Jump: Dakota System

Hangar Deck: Receive Bronze Star for cool runnings and Dakhath destruction.

DAKOTA SYSTEM

Lounge: Learn the sad news about Watson's Disease from Happy Sam. Listen to Maniac and Hunter gripe about wingmen. Pretend you don't agree 100% even though you do. Wish Todd hadn't taken so many trips in high school. As you weigh their remarks, note that Hunter is your best wingman for dangerous missions. As if you had a choice.

Mission 9 (Dakota 0)

Assignment: Gamma Wing Escort

Fighter: Raptor

Wingman: Knight

Mission: Escort hospital ship carrying patients from Claw to Nav 1, then escort second Drayman from Nav 2 to TC to get vaccine to Fargo.

Obstacles: none

Opposition: En route to Nav 1.....5 Salthi

Nav 1.....3 Krant

Nav 2.....3 Jalthei

Comments: Greasing the Salthi should present no problem--you could ram all three deathpods with your Raptor if your name was Todd Marshall. You have to get to them fast though to save the hospital Drayman, so hit your

afterburners and engage them at full throttle, sending Knight after those farthest from you. Keep them busy with taunts while you blast them into the void. Zap the Krant at Nav 1 quickly to protect all those innocent civilians. Use Knight liberally to keep other craft occupied as you crisp each Krantnik. Pass the popcorn and get ready for the worst nightmare of all, defending a flimsy vaccine-toting Drayman against three Jalthi. Hello, this is where you come in. Confed is interested in seeing what they got for their investment in your training. The Jalthi love to transect a ship between several streams of laser/neutron fire, so keep them busy or your transport and its vaccine will develop an instant case of terminal scarlet fever. Report to the Hangar Deck when you have the Drayman with the vaccine home safe. Oh, and make sure you get that report in to the Colonel by 08:00, Major.

Commander's Office: Promotion to the rank of Lt. Colonel. Eat your heart out, Maniac!

Hangar Deck: Silver Star for Drayman escort and well's Fargo.

Lounge: Talk to Spirit and Knight. Shotglass has a point on tailing Jalthis. Spirit lectures on the price of freedom being vigilance. Knight is pissed about Maniac's backbiting--but Knight's okay if you use him right. Never let him sit on your wing while you attack and he'll do fine on the milk runs. Needs a little hand-holding, that's all.

Mission 10 (Dakota 1)

Assignment: Lambda Wing Patrol

Fighter: Raptor

Wingman: Knight

Mission: Scout three nav points.

Obstacles: Asteroids at Navs 1 and 3.

Opposition: Nav 1.....2 Gratha

En route to Nav 2.....4 Krant

Nav 2.....2 Krant, 1 Ralari

Comments: Fry the Gratha using standard procedure. The four Krant can be divided up between you and Knight and crisped at your leisure. Barbeque sauce is optional. At Nav 2 kill the fighter cover quickly and cruise in for a Ralari roast. Use missiles to finish job if guns prove feeble (not likely but those firecrackers are so much fun to launch).

Hangar Deck: Silver Star for icing Ralari.

Lounge: Listen to Shotglass and enjoy his sunny disposition. Talk to Paladin and Bossman. Taggart can fill you in on Bakhtosh Redclaw. Remember to get in close behind the arrogant furbag. Boss tries to offer rousing rhetoric. Be friendly since Kien's days are numbered. He means well after all.

Mission 11 (Dakota 2)

Assignment: Epsilon Wing Strike

Fighter: Raptor

Wingman: Knight

Mission: Kill convoys of Dorkirs and terminate Bakhtosh Redclaw.

Obstacles: none

Opposition: Nav 1.....5 Krant, 1 Dorkir tanker

Nav 2.....4 Jalathi including Bakhtosh, 2 Dorkir troopers

Comments: So he's the deadliest shot in the Kilrathi Navy; he's no match for you. Generally with Dorkirs (and Lumbari which come in later missions) it's not a bad idea to get in and kill them first, since they have a bad habit of jumping out before you clear out the fighter cover. Burn past the escort and toast them quick. A few shots with full guns and a missile up the pipes should take care of the little Dorks. Kill the tanker at Nav 1 and the two troop transports at Nav two, and be sure to off the arrogant Nazi elitist because you know he's got it coming. Use afterburners (touch, don't mash!) to flit out of the way of those lava-spitting sixshooters at Nav 2 while you reassign the troops to vacuum breathing detail. Kill each Dorkir; after send Knight to joust with the Jalathi pairs that cover them. Save enough fuel to burn after Redclaw when he showcases his noble gallantry by making a run for home after taking only a couple of hits. Gun him down and end his reign of terror.

Commander's Office: Reassignment to Black Lion squadron and Rapier fighter.

Jump: Kurasawa System (Warach Tha)

Hangar Deck: Gold Star presented for dealing Bakhtosh Redclaw an ignoble death. Or at least blowing up his ship.... These eliminated aces have a way of coming back to haunt you in later missions. At least you get credit for the kill--and usually a medal!

KURASAWA SYSTEM

Lounge: Roll your eyes as Maniac rants. This guy needs help. Then drown yourself in drink as Angel waxes tres philosophique over Rapier performance. C'est la vie, fromage!

Mission 12 (Kurasawa 0)

Assignment: Black Lion/Theta Wing Strike

Fighter: Rapier

Wingman: Bossman

Mission: Kill Dorkir transports, especially the first at Nav 1a.

Obstacles: none

Opposition: Nav 1a.....6 Dralathi, 1 Dorkir

Nav 2.....3 Krant, 1 Dorkir

Nav 1b.....2 Jalathi, 1 Dorkir

Comments: Now Confed is on the offensive, so go for broke here. Nail that first Dorkir no matter what since it is a command staff ship of the Kilrathi fleet. Use Bossman to take on some of the Dralathi--six is a lot

even for an ace like you. Get in there and kill that Dorkir early. Then help Boss flip the remaining flapjacks. At Nav 2 try to pick off the Krants quickly so you can concentrate on the Dorkir when it jumps in. Wait around recharging your guns if you don't see it right away. Auto over to Nav 1b when it's toast and go for the waiting Jalthe escort. Slip around behind the Dorkir when it jumps in and use it for cover while you crack its shell, then latch onto the tail of a remaining Jalthe and blast away. Repeat until you and Bossman are alone. Zip home to accolades and a well-deserved rest.

Lounge: Hear the good news from Shotglass. Listen to Spirit at her warrior best. Knight tries to put the blame for the death of his wingman on ship assignments instead of his mediocre flying. When you fly with Knight, keep that in mind!

Mission 13 (Kurasawa 1)

Assignment: Omicron Wing Escort

Wingman: Bossman

Mission: Escort Ralari destroyer captured at Port Hedland from the jump point to the Claw. Watch for pre-emptive strike force.

Obstacles: Asteroids halfway to the jump point.

Opposition: BTW Claw and Nav 1.....4 Salthi in asteroid field
Nav 1.....3 Gratha

Comments: Fly out and meet the Salthi strike force barreling out of the asteroids. Try dogfighting in the field while dodging rocks Hunter-style; always a good strategy when outnumbered since the enemy is bent on killing you and will often bite on a rock without your help. If you feel the asteroids are too much to handle, call them out and exit the field to battle them in the clear (no credit for bandits killed by space debris). Pick your way through the field (a pretty dense one) and auto over to the Ralari and its single Rapier escort. Two Gratha are attacking from your side of the capship, but watch out for a third coming in from the opposite side. With three Rapiers this mission really is a cakewalk if you didn't run afoul of the rocks in the asteroid field. Just remember to be aggressive in taking out those Gratha before they blast the Ralari back to the waterworld.

Lounge: Enjoy breakfast at the bar and listen to Sam gripe about old newsreels. Listen to Ice wax nostalgic about family life on Vega VII, then listen to Ian give the lowdown on his flying style. His tip about checking out every angle of a mission is right on the money--retracing your steps, changing the order of nav points, and doing things your own way can bag you an extra cat or two, or save your skin when that's about all you have left between you and breathing vacuum. On patrol missions it's never a bad idea to hit all the nav points twice to pick up any stray fighters you missed the first time. Changing your route can help you avoid packs of fighters between nav points on the toughest missions. You can always come back when your objectives have been completed for a little trophy

hunting if your shields, armor, and fuel allow. If you get a failed mission after customizing your route, go back and do it the orthodox way to see what you missed. A good reason to save pref files with sets of 8 missions so you can easily reload and saddle up again!

Mission 14 (Kurasawa 2)

Assignment: Chi Wing Defend

Fighter: Rapier

Wingman: Bossman

Mission: Defend the Formidable, an Exeter-class destroyer.

Obstacles: Minefield between the Claw and Nav 1.

Opposition: Nav 1.....6 Dralhti

Nav 2.....4 Krant

Comments: You asked for this mission, so be sure to win it. You never see the minefield if you autopilot to Nav 1. Taking out six Dralhti can be a bit of a chore (so repetitive!), but with your superior firepower and maneuverability you shouldn't have too much trouble. Finish them quickly to protect the Formidable (which is, in name only!) as it jumps in. Go after the Krant and take them down before they can damage the Exeter and blow your chances with Commander Della Guardia.* Delegate Bossman to whichever fighter is closest to attacking and go after the others.

*Yep, she's a *she* in SWC.

Jump: Venice System

VENICE SYSTEM

Lounge: Talk to Paladin and Hunter, your best pals on the Claw (although personally I've had a crush on Spirit ever since her Dad took my under his wing. We would have been soulmates if Hiro hadn't come along and swept her off her feet with his famous communication skills). Paladin will fill you in on the Toothy Wonder, while Hunter wants some info on the Rapier as he joins you as your wingman. Use him well and you're virtually invincible! On this mission that is definitely a plus.

Mission 15 (Venice 0)

Assignment: Epsilon Wing Patrol

Fighter: Rapier

Wingman: Hunter

Mission: Patrol 4 nav points, eradicate Khajja the Fang.

Obstacles: Asteroids at Navs 1 and 3, mines at Nav 2.

Opposition: Nav 2.....2 Jalhti in the minefield

Near Nav 4.....4 Krant (Khajja), 1 Ralari and 4 Gratha

Comments: Welcome to enemy territory. The rocks at the Exeter flyby are nothing to worry about since you skirt the field for the most part. The Jalhti at Nav 2 are fairly easily dealt with between you, Hunter and the mines. The key to defeating them is to keep a healthy respect for those guns while not letting them intimidate you. They are easily overpowered

as long as you don't try head-to-head brute force. Dance around them, pepper them with combined rear blasts at close range, and watch the fireworks. Pay attention to the mines since they can knock out your shields when it's most awkward, leaving your armor to take a bruising you can't afford on this particular mission. The asteroid field at Nav 3 is uninfested and fairly easy to clear if you keep your eyes open. The real show begins near Nav 4 with the Krant and Ralari. Khajja is probably the slipperiest of customers you will encounter in Vega sector, and his irritating taunts of "That plan will fail like all your others" can drive you to distraction while you turn and burn trying to silence the bastard. Hunter is eager and able to back you up so send him after the Ralari or the other Krant while you run down the Fang and revel in his parting shot, "No sacrifice is too great in my duty to the Empire". Just when you thought it was turkey sandwiches and Miller time, along come the wings of Gratha. If your shields or armor have taken damage, avoid head-on strafing runs since they may ram you and spoil your millennium. On the other hand, if you are low on fuel by this time you may have no choice but to stop dead and slug it out with them. Remember always to tap your afterburners instead of flooring them, since the Rapier is as light and nimble as its namesake but burners eat up its fuel in seconds. Go in for the Ralari when the coast is clear, or use it as a shield to divide and conquer those pesky needlenoses.

Should you ever run out of fuel with a Ralari or Fralthi bearing down on you, try autoing out. If you can't, watch your range for missiles and throw everything you've got at it. Start praying because you're going to need a bit of divine intervention here.

Lounge: Grab a drink and a nod from Shotgun. Talk to Maniac and Bossman about toasting big ships. Again, try all approaches when taking out the big ships and make up your own mind. In many ways Ralari and Fralthi are dry runs for the nearly invincible Snakeirs you will come up against later, so study the dynamics of downing capships carefully.

Mission 16 (Venice 1)

Assignment: Epsilon Wing Strike

Fighter: Rapier

Wingman: Hunter

Mission: Link up with fighters from the Kyoto to strike a Fralthi at Nav 2.

Obstacles: Asteroids at Nav 1.

Opposition: Nav 1.....4 Gratha

Nav 2.....4 Salthi, 4 Krant and 1 Fralthi

Comments: Link up with the two Rapiers from the Kyoto and fly out to Nav 1, watching for asteroids. The first wing of Gratha hit you at the edge of the field, two more lurk among the rocks. Delete them and pick your way out of the meat grinder. Send Hunter after either the Fralthi or the Salthi while you take on the other. Watch for two wings of Krant coming up from below the cruiser. Ride herd on them and try to keep your pals

intact if you can. Land and stay alert at debrief to get a glimpse of how it's going to be from now on.

Lounge: Sam at the bar wants to gloat. Get ready for some hot missions. Paladin and Hunter have interesting comments about leading the enemy down the garden path in the mines. As usual, skilled pilots will emulate Hunter with his ingenuity and initiative. To succeed in scouring the Vega sector you must be at least as resourceful and proactive as good old Ian St. John. Just make sure not to exercise that option for membership in the vacuum breather's club.

Mission 17 (Venice 2)

Assignment: Phi Wing Patrol

Fighter: Rapier

Wingman: Hunter

Mission: Patrol three nav points and rendezvous with the Claw at Nav 4.

Obstacles: Minefields at Nav 1, 2

Opposition: Nav 2.....2 Jalathi in the minefield

Nav 3.....2 Dralathi, 1 Ralari

Rendezvous.....4 Gratha

Comments: This is a standard patrol mission, with the exception of dogfighting in the minefield with a pair of Jalathi. These gun-heavy slugs will bump into more than one mine and lose shield strength. Stay close on their tail and poke when opportunity knocks. The Dralathi and Ralari offer easy pickings as long as you were successful in dodging neutron fire at Nav 2. Proceed immediately to the rendezvous point, where the Claw is under attack from both sides by two pairs of Gratha. Delete the nearer ones first while sending Hunter after the far pair. Scoot on over and clean up for him once you're done slicking and dicing on your end.

Hangar Deck: Gold Star awarded for superb performance in offing Ralari and company, and generally being a hero to the galaxy. Congratulations.

Lounge: Sam is really gloating now. Enjoy it while it lasts. Paladin thinks we're almost out of the woods. Smile enigmatically and indulge the old warhorse. Chuckle to hear Angel lament the lack of surviving Kilrathi aces (thanks to you!) and don't believe a word of it--these cats have been known to reincarnate! Maybe not nine lives, but close.

Mission 18 (Venice 3)

Assignment: Omega Wing Strike

Fighter: Rapier

Wingman: Hunter

Mission: Destroy the command starbase and its fighter cover.

Obstacles: Minefields at BTW Claw and Nav 1

Opposition: Nav 1.....4 Krant, 1 Fralathi

Nav 2.....4 Gratha, 4 Salthi, 4 Jalathi, 1 Starbase

Rendezvous.....4 Gratha

Comments: Try to ignore them, huh? Those fighters have a way of keeping your attention! Still, you first have to deal with the Krant and Fralthi at Nav 1. Conserve fuel and missiles as you dust the furballs, then proceed to the real action at Nav 2. An excellent strategy when attacking bases or large carriers is to leave one fighter from an enemy squadron alive while you delete the main mission objective, since in some cases (such as this one) the next wave of fighters will only appear when the last one has been entirely destroyed. You can sweep up the subsequent wings or bug out at your leisure once your work is complete.

Hangar Deck: Congratulations! You now have a Terran Medal of Valor and are numbered among the greatest heroes of humanity (try to remind Admiral Tolwyn of that if you meet him one day). If your performance was flawless you will now have a complete set of stripes, three each of the Bronze, Silver and Gold, and the Medal of Valor. The only way to top this is to ditch your craft somewhere along the way for a Golden Sun, but watch where you do this since a failed mission at the wrong time could result in loss of the secret missions and ignoble retreat or the destruction of your carrier, leaving you to drift endlessly through the void.

Commander's Office: You are bumped back down to the Killer Bees and Hornet. Don't take it personally, this temporary setback is unavoidable and has nothing to do with your performance. Gripe to Maniac if you're upset--his hull-ramming probably has a lot to do with fighter attrition on this tub.

Cutscene: Massive battle group including the Claw jumps out from victorious Vega sector campaign.

Lounge: Listen to Shotgun and Iceman talk about the ominous events on the Claw this morning. Trouble brewing as Operation Thor's Hammer gets underway. Bossman has an important story to tell about the legendary traitor ship Gwenhyvar. A lead ball drops to the pit of your stomach, your eyes glaze over, a croaking wheeze escapes your suddenly parched throat. The Gwenhyvar...? Vague misty visions struggle to surface: desperate battle with wave after wave of nimble purple ships; the horror of betrayal far from help, hopelessly outnumbered and overwhelmed, shields blown, missiles gone, armor at 20%, and running out of fuel faster than you can say "burnout", all against the backdrop of a dark number 27. You rub your eyes and shrug it off. Got to stop listening to that Maniac....

Deneb Sector (Operation Thor's Hammer)

GODDARD SYSTEM

Mission 19 (Goddard 0)

Assignment: Killer Bees/Alpha Wing Escort

Fighter: Hornet

Wingman: Hunter

Mission: Cover the Hickok as it jumps out. Fly shotgun for a corvette.

Obstacles: Asteroids BTW Nav 1 and Nav 2

Opposition: Nav 1.....4 Salthi, 1 Lumbari tanker
BTW Navs 1 & 2.....2 Salthi in asteroids
Nav 2.....3 Krant attacking the Hicock
Nav 3.....3 Krant attacking the Venture corvette
BTW Nav 3 & the Claw.....3 Salthi

Comments: Col. Halcyon fills you in on the desperate situation at Goddard in the Deneb sector. Notice that your nav computer has a glitch and still shows you in sector XR-231.3, but rest assured that you have jumped out to the Deneb sector and are approaching enemy lines. Your nav computer and radar will continue to act up as you move further from well-charted territory, so you'll have to be on your toes. Get in and wax that Lumbari fast while you send Hunter after the Salthi cover, then help him pop those fleabags. Dance with the Salthi in the rocks, and shoot them down or let the rocks take them out. At Nav 1 take a good look at the Hicock, since it is your only chance to get up close to a Dilligent-class transport except in the cutscenes (not in Clawmarks either). Don't forget to ice the Krant while you take in the view of this unusual ship. Zip over to the Marciano and blow off the trio of Krant here. Watch for the Salthi on the return trip, and grease them with dispatch to protect the green gadfly.

Lounge: You have to make this quick since you have to be up in ten minutes. Talk to Sam about his cousin on Goddard before heading over to preflight.

Mission 20 (Goddard 1)

Assignment: Kappa Wing Strike

Fighter: Hornet

Wingman: Hunter

Mission: Clear a path for the Claw en route to Goddard.

Obstacles: Asteroids between Navs 1 & 2.

Opposition: Launch.....3 Krant, 2 Gratha
Nav 1.....4 Salthi, 1 Lumbari tanker
Nav 2.....2 Krant, 1 Dorkir

Comments: Clear Hunter to attack and go after the Krant. Be swift in dispatching them and the Gratha that follow. You must free up your wingman when flying close to the Claw or he will ram the carrier and die quickly. Afterburner away from the launch bay to prevent collision with

the hull and then turn and attack using your radar scope as a guide. At Nav 1 sic Hunter on the fighters and make a beeline for the tanker, deleting it quickly before you turn to exterminate the Salthi dust mites. Remember when navigating the asteroids that minor adjustments are sufficient to dodge the rocks. If you have a rock sitting in your window you are in trouble, but they can come fairly close to your sides, top or bottom without hitting you. Get a feel for how close you can get with what ships and speeds. This will help in luring enemies into tailing you and crashing

into the rocks in later missions. The trip home is uneventful.

Commander's Office: Promotion to the rank of full Colonel.
Congratulations, Colonel. Reassignment to Star Slayer squadron and Raptors. Get ready to kick ass!
Jump: Goddard system

BORDER ZONE

Lounge: Play dumb as Shotgun tries to get you to leak info. Watch Todd begin his descent into utter hysteria. Keep it to yourself, Marshall. Try to decide if he is more irritating than the fact that you will have to listen to Angelique even in the seclusion of your cockpit. Cheer up, she is a good wingman even if she can't stop ranting about your duty to engage. Guess that's how you two get so close in later years, huh? Get ready for one of the most depressing briefings of your young career, and prepare to jump behind enemy lines.

Mission 21 (Border Zone 0)

Assignment: Star Slayer/Epsilon Wing Strike

Fighter: Raptor

Wingman: Angel

Mission: Fly out to destroy hostiles as the Claw heads into enemy space.

Obstacles: Mines between the Tigers Claw and Nav 1.

Opposition: Launch.....4 Krant

Nav 1.....4 Gratha, 3 Krant, 1 Fralthi

Return.....3 Dralthi attacking the Claw

Comments: At the Border Zone Attack and destroy the Krant immediately. Practice close capship support because the Claw will often be under attack as you launch over the next series of missions. Delete the Gratha and Krant using standard divide and conquer tactic. When the Fralthi jumps in, send Angel after any remaining fighters while you reduce it to molten slag as Halcyon would say. Watch those mines on the way home, especially if you or your wingman has taken lots of damage. When you come within sight of the Claw, burn in fast and take out those Dralthi before the carrier takes too much damage and you are consigned to aimless drifting through the void.

Lounge: Keep a bold face when you get your drink. Ponder Paladin's moral dilemma and try not to think of future heroes named Planet Slayer. Knight is right on the money when it comes to Maniac--watch your six if you are unfortunate enough to be paired with him. At this point in the game you would have a 10:1 kill-to-mission ratio if you had killed every enemy you encountered since shipping out with the Claw (there have been 210 of them). I've tried time and again to make that ratio at some point during the game, but never manage to get past 8:1. Still beats most pilots in history.

Mission 22 (Border Zone 1)

Assignment: Rho Wing Escort

Fighter: Raptor

Wingman: Angel

Mission: Backtrack across the border and escort 2 Reaver Draymans.

Obstacles: Numerous mines between the Tigers Claw and Nav 1, Nav 2.

Opposition: BTW Claw and minefield.....2 Krant

Nav 1.....3 Jalthei attacking the Sleipnir Draymans

BTW Nav 2 & Claw.....3 Gratha, 2 Krant

Comments: Halcyon is a bit harried and calls you Epsilon instead of Rho as your nav computer has it. Get into space and let the Colonel worry about wing assignments. The Krant are not much of a problem. Lead them into the minefield or kill them quickly in the open. The Jalthei at Nav 1 will make short work of your Draymans so keep them busy and waste them with dispatch. Target each Drayman and pass within 1,000 clicks until each ship greets you--otherwise you may auto out leaving one or both behind. The Reavers may require considerable handholding through the minefield. Slow down to 100 and stay about 3,000 clicks behind them, and make sure you never keep them to your left where Angel can bump into them (she will). Nav 2 is clear but wait for the marines to jump system before you head for home. Angel may need assistance when you are bushwhacked by the medium fighters just beyond the mined border into Kilrathi space. Recall her briefly to your wing, and then send her after something that doesn't look too hazardous while you mop up. The cats may attack from several vectors so stay alert.

In any mission where a wingman is dispensable and really in bad shape use your commlink to send them home. Most will obey if they are one or two shots from a permanent night out. Exceptions are Knight, Paladin and Spirit who tend to bug out even if they could easily complete the mission, and Maniac and Ice who will ignore your order even if it costs them their lives. Hunter, Jazz, Angel and Bossman will stick with the mission as long as they are useful but will scratch if they take too much damage. Your order to return to base ensures they do so before it's too late. Should they die on a mission, you will have to fly solo on all missions where they were to be your wingman, and be party to a mystical visitation at the end of the game.

Commander's Office: Reassignment to Blue Devil squadron and the Scim slug. You'll have to watch it after being spoiled in the Raptor. Good luck!

Jump: Midgard system

MIDGARD SYSTEM

Lounge: Sam is having family troubles, while Mariko fears she has lost

her fiance to a Kilrathi attack on Epsilon station. Hunter really is on our side. These two friends really make life on the Claw worth living. The crew is fairly unanimous in pegging Maniac as, well, just that. Watch your back, Jack.

Mission 23 (Midgard 0)

Assignment: Blue Devil squadron/Delta Wing Strike

Fighter: Scimitar

Wingman: Bossman

Mission: Destroy captured Drayman and Ralari destroyer.

Obstacles: none

Opposition: BTW Claw and Nav 1.....2 Jalthe
Nav 1.....4 Krant, 1 Drayman (captured)
Nav 2.....2 Salthi, 1 Ralari
BTW Nav 2 & Claw.....3 Gratha, 2 Krant

Comments: This is really a milk run, other than going up against the Jalthe in Scims. Use your afterburners to execute flanking maneuvers and you should be fine. Killing the Drayman takes a bit of resolution but must be carried out. The Ralari and its escort are as difficult as carving a turkey protected by dragonflies. Chow down and head for home.

Lounge: Commiserate with Sam. Drink up and move on. Maniac continues his decline. Not to worry, the whiner's instinct for self-preservation is a lot stronger than he lets on. Bossman continues to fill us in on the phantom Exeter, the Gwenhyvar. Listen carefully. Bossman never steers you wrong, and if he's right and you run into it, you're going to need all the help you can get. To bad Kien has no tactical on its fighter escort--or when it's going to attack!

Mission 24 (Midgard 1)

Assignment: Chi Wing Defend

Fighter: Scimitar

Wingman: Bossman

Mission: Defend and escort incoming Dralthe captured by the Reavers.

Obstacles: Asteroids at Nav 2, BTW Nav 3 & Claw, but not in flight path.

Opposition: Nav 1.....2 Gratha, 1 Ralari
Nav 2.....3 Dralthe
Near Nav 3.....4 Dralthe
Nav 3.....1 Fralthe
BTW Nav 3 & Claw.....5 Dralthe
Nav 1 (optional).....4 Dralthe, 2 Fralthe

Comments: Col. Halcyon continues to receive sloppy data on wing assignments (he thinks you are Gamma Wing). Comical as those flying flapjacks may seem, going up against this many while trying to protect one can be a nightmare. Keep them busy, make good use of Bossman and

taunts to direct the battle. The key to dogfighting is situational awareness, and when overseeing a larger space battle, it is vital to know what you, your wingman, the ship you are protecting, and your enemy are doing at all times--their movements, strategy, formations, remaining armor/shield strength, everything. Keep your priorities straight--achieving your mission objectives and bringing yourself and your wingman back in one piece. With so many ships to handle, you may need to depart from normal fighter tactics and go after several ships simultaneously rather than single-mindedly downing one craft after another. Be careful however, since if you use visual sighting to attack Dralthi in the heat of battle, you may attack the Reavers by mistake. Keep a finger on the T and target before you attack to identify. You can use your missiles to confuse as well as to kill, but the heat seekers should be deployed with caution and discernment. You will never see an asteroid in this mission as long as you don't cut across from Nav 3 to Nav 1. If you are a glory-seeker and have survived all the way back to the Claw, you might want to tempt fate Hunter-style by resetting your nav computer for Nav 1 and autoing out to take on the Dralthi and *2* Fralthi. Remember that even if you request landing before resetting your nav computer, the Reavers in their captured Dralthi will accompany you, so don't endanger the mission unless you are sure you can defeat those mothers and bring your Dralthi back alive. Good luck!

Commander's Office: Reassignment to Star Slayer squadron and Raptor.
Jump: Jotunheim system

JOTUNHEIM SYSTEM

Lounge: Talk to Sam, but don't let him get to you. You're about the only one who can stay sane out here in enemy space. Spirit has the kamikaze itch, but she's good enough to pull it off and stay alive. Study her flying since she might save your life in a mission or two. Her tip can be useful if you've been practising in the asteroids. Knight is getting weak in the knees but don't pay him any mind. Col. Halcyon knows what he's doing, although he will only succeed if you do!

Mission 25 (Jotunheim 0)

Assignment: Star Slayer squadron/Beta Wing Defend

Fighter: Raptor

Wingman: Bossman

Mission: Defend and escort incoming Drayman carrying remaining Reavers.

Obstacles: Asteroids around Nav 1, Nav 2, Nav 3, but not in flight path.

Opposition: Near Nav 1.....6 Salthi, 1 Fralthi

Nav 2.....4 Gratha

Nav 3.....7 Krant as Drayman jumps in

Comments: Although he finally gets your wing designation right, Col.

Halcyon is in a crappy mood, so don't take it personally. Instead worry

about the large waves of bogies you will have to contend with once you launch and head out for your nav points. Six or seven fighters can give you a run for your money no matter whether they are Salthi, Gratha or Krant. Keep on your toes and try to divide and eliminate them using standard tactics. With these kind of numbers take out the first one in a pack by letting him charge and firing until his shots begin to reach you. Three solid hits with full guns will kill any opponent except a Jalthi (who should never be attacked from the front in any case), thus reducing your work load. To wipe out the final one or two, cut your engines and taunt them, spinning around to blast them out of the sky when they come in for you. Use the afterburners to avoid armor damage. For long range kills switch to mass drivers only and begin firing when they begin their beeline attack on you.

Try to delete as many of the Krant as you can before the Drayman jumps in, then use Spirit and set on them with vigor and enthusiasm before they can do in the Drayman. At least you will have easy sailing once the bolemic wonders are waxed, since there are no other bandits on the return trip.

Lounge: Listen to the crew morale sink to a new low. Paladin is still in pretty good shape, unlike Shotglass who appears to have been listening to Knight. Learn about the Goddard weapon analysis. Although Tactical is correct on the weapon's capabilities, listen carefully to Paladin's warning about Tactical's overall accuracy, since they are the ones who draw up your missions and evaluate the threats you are likely to meet. If they are wrong, you can find yourself in pretty hot water. Angel is her beancounting self, but has a point about the clever Kilrathi. Take a good stiff drink. You're going to need it before long.

Mission 26 (Jotunheim 1)

Assignment: Gamma Wing Strike

Fighter: Raptor

Wingman: Spirit

Mission: Ambush the ambush.

Obstacles: Asteroids everywhere between Nav 1 and 2.

Opposition: Nav 1.....4 Salthi, 1 Dorkir

Nav 2.....3 Krant among the asteroids

Nav 3.....5 Gratha, 1 Fralthi

Comments: Now the guy thinks you are Alpha Wing! Tactical, get your act together! The Salthi and Dorkir present little challenge, just be sure to get over and toast that communications ship before it jumps out. Make short work of the Salthi and head to Nav 2 where you are jumped by the Krant. This is where you can test Spirit's advice about leading the enemy into the path of oncoming rocks--just remember that even a Raptor is no match for a 50-ton slab of space rock. Take too much damage and you may not be able to complete your mission. Then go after the Gratha with a vengeance, waxing the first one or two with direct cannon fire as they

approach. Frag that Fralthi and head for home. If any bandits bugged out and you are still in good shape you can retrace your nav routes to pick off the stragglers.

Lounge: Sam wants you to get to briefing right away. Take a deep breath and slip a bottle under your jumpsuit. Tally Ho!

Mission 27 (Jotunheim 2)

Assignment: Rho Wing Patrol

Fighter: Raptor

Wingman: Spirit

Mission: Defend Exeter-class destroyer, the Johann, from enemy attack.

Obstacles: none

Opposition: BTW Claw & Nav 1.....4 Gratha

Nav 1.....4 Jalthei

Nav 2.....5 Rapiers, 1 Exeter (captured: the Gwenhyvar)

BTW Nav 2 & Claw.....4 Krant, 4 Gratha

Comments: WARNING: This is a trap! Check your nav computer and notice it says patrol, not defend or escort. We're not talking about wing designations here; this time Tactical has really screwed up Colonel, and unless you are extremely careful you are going to come back in a box. This is far and away the toughest mission in the entire game (or any in WCIII or WCIV unless you are set to the highest skill levels), and the only one where I have never once succeeded in killing all bogies, achieving the mission objectives (here that means killing the Gwenhyvar, not defending the Johann!), and making it back with me, my wingman and both our ships still intact. Try flying the mission as instructed and you will arrive at nav 2 low on fuel or missiles and possibly with armor, shield or systems damage, since 4 Gratha plus 4 Jalthei are defeatable but fairly tough. 5 Rapiers are virtually impossible to defeat at the best of times in your tougher but less maneuverable tub. These guys know how to fly! Watch them roll, afterburn, attack in concert, and generally spoil your day. The near-invincible Raptor is reduced to a sitting duck, then to molten space debris, in only a few seconds. Just bugging out will be a challenge since they will come after you right up until the Krant appear unless you lean on the afterburners (they usually run dry before the Rapiers will break off pursuit at 20,000 clicks). Just when you thought you had escaped with your life, you run into two waves of respectable fighters. By this time you are flying on vapor and are in poor shape indeed. Good luck! Not to despair, there are several strategies for cutting this massive opposition down into bite-size pieces. This is where Hunter's advice about being creative with your flight plan comes in most handy. Alter your mission by reversing your nav points, setting the computer to Nav 2 first. Fly out and take on the Krant and Gratha first, since they are easier to handle than 4 Jalthei and 4 Gratha. Mix it up if you like, or better still burn past them and head for Nav 2. If you do take them on fight without missiles and a minimum of afterburners--possible and in this case

necessary. At Nav 2, burn straight in past the Rapiers as you let fly a couple of FF missiles to confuse them, and get around behind the destroyer to ply it with everything you've got--missiles, full guns, taunts, the works. If you are fast and lucky you will be able to take her down while the Rapiers are scrambling in on your tail, hopefully with Spirit to keep them busy. A few of their own missiles and cannon fire might even hit Exeter and help you out. Keep circling the ship as you attack it to keep most of the fighters eclipsed by the ship. Watch because one Rapier stays close to the mother ship and will have at you immediately. Once she blows, you will probably be in no shape to fight the escort, so afterburn out of there at top speed, remembering to order Spirit back to your wing. Should you choose to tackle the Rapiers, use your afterburners to draw one or two away from the battle and outrun their missile barrages. Notice how the Rapiers tend to roll and dive as they attack, ducking under your guns at the last minute. Aim below them as they approach and you can land a few hits. Also recall that the Rapier armor is little better than that of a Hornet or Salthi, so if you can knock down the shields and quickly plant a couple of neutron blasts on the hull you can crack it pretty easily. Hit them with a missile and then follow up with guns, or vice versa. It's hard to get a lock with a heatseeker since they move around so much, so make sure you save your FF and IR missiles for this battle.

If you still have fuel and armor for another fight, reset to Nav 1 and go after the Gratha and then Jalthei, a tough enough fight as it is, but much easier to defeat than the Rapiers. Sets of four fighters almost invariably break off into two wings so send your wingman to take one while you tackle the other. Ganging up on the second wing once yours are toasted is recommended, but watch that you and your wingman don't catch each other with friendly fire. Being a glory hog I tend to recall my wingman and steal his or her kills (thanks Maniac for the idea!). Safer and more fun.

Another strategy for this mission is to watch your Nav computer and maintain a course directly between Nav 1 and Nav 2. I like to sneak around the Nav point by giving it a wide berth and going past the Nav point. It's a bit tedious since you can't fly auto, but this way you arrive at the Gwenhyvar fresh for battle, with armor, fuel and missiles intact. If you burn in the minute the Gwenhyvar comes into visual range, you may catch the Rapier out on the opposite side, giving you one or two precious extra seconds to dispatch the mother hen and her enslaved crew. Later when you listen to Spirit worry about her fiance's fate you will be glad you torched the poor devils and ended their misery. If anyone manages to waste the Exeter AND its escort and make it back to the Claw (forget about the other squadrons of Kilrathi fighters! If anyone can defeat all enemy ships and make it home with Spirit your name is Miyamoto Musashi and you are hired as my personal bodyguard!) please e-mail me at jmunroe@mars.dtinnet.or.jp and tell me how you did it! I've never been able to do both, since there are always one or two Rapiers left when I run out of fuel or those neutron guns slam me through the reactor. I have been able to draw the fighter escort off by going to afterburners right after sighting them, but after

hunting all the fighters down by repeatedly cycling through the waypoints, the Exeter will have jumped out. If you haven't targeted it by then, the debriefing never mentions the Gwenhyvar at all and you claim to have been unable to reach the Johann because of heavy fighter cover. Another problem with this approach is that fuel is at a premium and you tend to burn it all up surviving continuous battles with 21 of the finest fighters the cats and humans combined have been able to come up with. At fifty clicks the Exeter would blow you out of the sky even if you could locate it. Remember that you can avoid any of the enemy marauder wings by striking a course between nav points and flying on manual. If you don't close within about 16,000 clicks, they won't show up on your radar. If you do buy it at Nav 2, stay tuned and watch Spirit tackle the remaining Rapiers- you will certainly learn how they fly and perhaps get some new tactical ideas yourself. In fact, in any mission where you fly with the better wingmen (Knight tends to bug out if you die) you can learn something by dying in the heat of battle and watching at your leisure how your comrades deal with fighters and cap ships. If you slept through the Academy this will refresh your memory! When killed you will be deposited back in the rec room to fly the mission again. Watch and learn (often about what not to do!). In any case they are much better than the Hornet/Dralthi battles in the initial New/Open screen, since these tend to simply fly directly at each other slugging it out until one or the other is toasted. Practice this particular mission again and again and you will become virtually invincible in other missions. Importantly, there is no penalty for failing to destroy the Gwenhyvar other than a slightly different debrief. Your mission path will not be affected. Therefore this mission can also be used to boost your kill count while avoiding the death trap at Nav 2. At least burner in to identify the Gwenhyvar so Maniac will stop snickering at Bossman.

All in all, the Gwenhyvar mission is practically a game in itself, and is worth keeping as a saved game if you enjoy losing a gallon of sweat and raising your blood pressure twenty or thirty points on a regular basis.

Jump: Bifrost system

BIFROST SYSTEM

Lounge: Relax and have a drink, Colonel. You deserve it. Shotgun is still on shaky ground. Cut him some slack and take his advice. Paladin will cheer you up, and he's right on the money here. Hunter wisely notes that ramming capships is not only deadly, but futile as well. Unless you want to be the butt of next month's Clawmarks strategy lesson, cease and desist. It's no better than trying to kill an elephant by throwing your gun at it, whatever Maniac might say (he's all talk and no action anyhow). In statistical news, you have now met 306 enemy ships, and had you been able to destroy them all yourself (still theoretically possible I think although highly unlikely without cheating thanks to ship's gunners,

wingmen, asteroids, mines, enemy collisions, and your own ship's mortality) you would be at a better than 11:3 average (11.33333333~:1).

Mission 28 (Bifrost 0)

Assignment: Psi Wing Strike

Fighter: Raptor

Wingman: Paladin

Mission: Scout nav points, kill enemy, hunt for depot, photograph Sivar.

Obstacles: Asteroids BTW Nav 3 and the Claw.

Opposition: Nav 1.....3 Jalithi

Nav 2.....4 Krant, 1 Ralari

Nav 3.....6 Jalithi, the Sivar (jumps out immediately)

Comments: At Nav 1 take care of the Jalithi marauders using your newly honed evasive skills. After your encounter with the prancing Rapiers they will appear to move like farm animals. The Krant at Nav 2 fare no better against your fearsome prowess with the stick and cannons, and a Ralari always makes for easily bagged wall decorations. Motor over to Nav 3 where the real show is going down. Here for the first time, you encounter an enemy ship that is absolutely unassailable for the time being: that dreaded jump-capable space walnut, the one and only Sivar. If you burn over to the gray square on your radar scope from the moment you spot enemy craft at Nav 3 and keep hitting your T key, you will be able to target it and get a good look, but it jumps out before your cannonfire gets anywhere near it. Your mission does not involve waxing the genocidal war deity at this time, however, so turn your attention to the (count 'em) six Jalithi gunning for your tail. Ride herd over them and they'll start bumping into each other, the clumsy oxen. Waste their bloated behinds and head for home with your precious Polaroids. Basically do some of that pilot shit Mav and you can fly circles around the flocking blasters. Col. Halcyon cautions you to back down from overwhelming odds, but personally I hate to leave a bunch of Jalithi scavenging the perimeter when they could be put to work reducing the vacuum content of the universe with their own accelerated atoms.

The supply depot is nowhere to be seen as of yet.

Lounge: Gloat over your killscore. Be humbled by the fact that it could be 320 (not 321!) by my unofficial field count. Pick up Sam's famous concoction known as Your Usual and listen in as he encourages you to do what you've always done best. Spirit is philosophic if depressed. Say hello to Angel and say goodbye to wistful romantic small talk. She may have a point about clearing out defenders before going in for the mother bird (or in this case, nest), but personally I like to hide behind those ugly round beasts and eclipse the bulk of the fighter cover while I pick them off individually and down the dreaded Mess Star. Consider the starbase to be a bloated Fralithi and you'll have no worries. And remember, whatever the Col. says, guns are more than capable of cracking the weak spots and scrambling that overblown osterich egg. Missiles do pop the shell rather

more elegantly, however.

Mission 29 (Bifrost 1)

Assignment: Theta Wing Strike

Fighter: Scimitar!

Wingman: Paladin

Mission: Destroy supply depot.

Obstacles: Mines BTW Nav 3 and the Claw.

Opposition: Nav 1.....3 Salthi

Nav 2.....4 Krant, 1 Lumbari

Nav 3.....4 Jalthe, 5 Gratha, 1 Starbase

Comments: In a Scim you are in for a fight here. Blasting the Salthi should be easy enough since Paladin will take on one while you cutthroat and blow them to bits or churn 'em and burn 'em. If you do opt for a cutthroat don't forget to fire up your engines to attack speed before going after Paladin's leavings--save your burners for later. The Krant at Nav 2 are a bit of a challenge but nothing too serious. Be sure to burn in (lightly on that pedal Colonel!) and smoke the tanker before it jumps out. Clean up the flying sickles and head into danger at Nav 3. Those Jalthe can be vicious, and even if you deal with them okay you will have five Gratha gunning for you the minute you wax the flying wurstchens. Be resolute in destroying them, but saving fuel is even more important than missiles here. Do keep your dumbfires at the very least, all missiles if you can afford it in the heat of combat. You do have the GET here before you can torch that floating golf ball. Use standard tactics to neutralize the depot, firing from maximum guns range, then firing off your missiles once shields have dropped and you are in close. Keep firing until your range hits 300, then Immelman over and high-tail it out of there with a light burner blast. Once you pass guns range about face and go in for another pass. Keep Paladin attacking so he doesn't get wasted. If you do attack a capship or base with your wingman pinned to your side, be sure to break up or down when finishing a strafing run to avoid slamming into the hapless catbait on your turn. Congratulations, Colonel. You have left your enemies hungry and low on gas. Things are looking up!

Commander's Office: Reassignment to Black Lion Squadron and Rapiers.

Jump: Valgard system.

VALGARD SYSTEM

Lounge: Shotgun is cheering up, thank Sivar. Ice is his overbearing self. Take his warning seriously, since he doesn't hesitate to blast a wingmate if they get in his way. On the other hand, Casey will not be on hand for the showdown, so you have one less thing to worry about. Usually he is a godsend on tough missions, though. Boss still hasn't finished that book--I think he keeps a cybersmut vidcom unit hidden in its pages. For whatever reason, he's happy as a grunt in guts. One thing about your killscore--it's

electronically enhanced and rarely lies except when gunners and wingmates blast your prey around the same time you do.

Mission 30 (Valgard 0)

Assignment: Black Lion Squadron/Sigma Wing Strike

Fighter: Rapier

Wingman: Iceman

Mission: Scout nav points, kill enemy, hunt for depot, photograph Sivar.

Obstacles: Mines if you stray off course.

Opposition: Nav 1.....3 Krant, 2 Lumbari jumping in

Nav 2.....3 Gratha, 1 Ralari

Nav 3.....4 Jalathi, 1 Fralathi jumping in

BTW Nav 3 and the Claw.....3 Krant

Comments: Thought we already nailed those cats in Vega sector.

Whatever, Colonel. Your communication info is also a dud--no peep out of the cats other than taunts as usual.

Now get ready to battle some desperate foes. Your comet patrol takes you out to Nav 1 (coast is clear when you launch). Follow the drill and waste the Lumbari first, then go after the Krant. Watch Ice in action since he's usually one of the best fighter jocks you'll meet: aggressive, in your face, ruthless and relentless. To succeed at this game you have to outjerk the jerk, if you can stand yourself in the morning. On occasion I will buy the farm just to sit back and watch how far he'll push the envelope on his own. Remember that he's a loner but will die long before he would think of bugging out while you are still in the fight. Toasting the Ralari and its escort is child's play as usual, but don't break out the Schlitz yet cause your main fight is still ahead. At Navs 1 and 3 be careful not to burn into the Nav points too soon, or you may find yourself impaling a Lumbari, or worse yet, that Fralathi mother. In a fragile Rapier this is never such a good idea.

Blow that Fralathi's cover and expose its innards for all the universe to see. On the way home play cat and mouse with the Krant stragglers; just make sure it's you who gets to be the cat!

Lounge: Shotglass has closed the bar as per Halcyon's orders. Might as well head on over to preflight. Be sure you are well rested.

Mission 31 (Valgard 1)

Assignment: Mu Wing Strike

Fighter: Rapier

Wingman: Iceman

Mission: Seek and destroy incoming ships. Return via Nav 1.

Obstacles: Mines BTW Nav 3 and Claw; and BTW Nav 3 and Nav 1.

Opposition: Nav 1.....4 Krant (you call them Dralathi!), 1 Lumbari

Nav 2.....3 Jalathi, 1 Dorkir

Nav 3.....4 Krant, 4 Gratha, 2 Jalathi, 2 Fralathi

Nav 1 revisited.....3 Gratha, 1 Ralari

Comments: Not just another day at the office, this one. Cool and cruel sums it up well. You will notice that none of the ships on this mission seem to be performing at their best, however. Use afterburners to outrun and outsmart them, since they are low on fuel and haven't been eating right lately. Pop the transports and frag their escorts as usual. The mayhem at Nav 3 will test your battle tactics to the limit. The poor performance of many of the ships makes it easier, but the sheer tedium of downing that many fighters at once can get on your nerves and make you sloppy. Herd all the fighters around to one side, press them up against the capships, eclipse them or call them away from the pack and pick them off individually while Ice capably handles the rest. Let Mr. Cool do a little profit-taking for his family on Vega VII, or be a glory hog and try to stay ahead of him. Try not to get surrounded, and if you like to divide and conquer, send Iceman after one Fralthi's escort while you tackle the other's. The Jalthei tend not to make their appearance until the Gratha have been toasted. All in all a satisfying day if you can hack it and enjoy your space battles fast and furious.

Returning via Nav 1 of course takes you straight through the minefields Tactical promised you would avoid--and straight into the eager claws of the Gratha and Ralari. Hit Nav 2 again first to avoid the blue bombs if you are in trouble. The final birds are no challenge unless you are lacking one of the following: a) fuel, b) shields, c) armor, or d) your wingman, or e) your sense of humor. At times the sheer number of opponents in this mission is enough to trigger flashbacks of conception (or was that Descent?), and the only way out is to have a good laugh and blast away for the sheer hell of it. If you run out of gas at Nav 3, forget about Nav 1, fly around the mines on manual to head straight for home. At 50 kps that Ralari simply isn't worth breathing vacuum for. Hit the showers and let someone else worry about it.

Lounge: Your potential kill ratio is at over 12:1, even not counting the Sivar (380 killable for 31 missions, with 381 bogies encountered including the Windowless Wonder, all by my unofficial count). My god, Devereaux and her little calculator are getting to me! Still, I say if you and your wingmen are alive and you made it as far as Valgard with your carrier still in one piece, who the hell cares how you got here? You must be doing something right.

Shotglass is concerned about the roughhousing in the bar. Let him do his job while you go over and chat to the ladies. Spirit vindicates you for smoking the Gwenhyvar. Feel better? Angel tips her hand by revealing a hint of concern for you, but immediately stomps on any tender feelings with her usual party line bluster. Give it a rest, Jeannette. It's not as if we were listening or anything.

Mission 32 (Valgard 2)

Assignment: Delta Wing Defend (Halc reads it "Mu")

Fighter: Rapier

Wingman: Iceman

Mission: Close defense of the Tiger's Claw from incoming fighters.

Obstacles: Space debris from all the ships you kill by the launch bay.

Opposition: Tiger's Claw.....4 Krant, 3 Jalthei, 3 Gratha
3 more Krant

Comments: Nothing to do except burn out away from the doors, run down anything you see that isn't Iceman or the Claw, and don't bump into the carrier. Use your scope to locate bogies eclipse by the carrier, and burn over to them before it's too late, but not through the hull of the mother ship! Not such a tough mission but you have to work fast and efficiently. Land and jump out (no worries about the Claw jumping out without you. You can take your time viewing the constellations if you like once the cats are toasted. Col. Halcyon will wait and no further interruptions will arrive after the initial 13).

Jump: Vigrid system

VIGRID SYSTEM

Lounge: Shotglass clues you in on your upcoming mission. Iceman is a bit friendlier and has good advice about missiles. If he calls you kid one more time you might find a chance to use a couple on him! Unfortunately you'll be flying with Knight. He's not as bad as some make out, but don't expect him to stick around if the going gets dicey. He's a real wimp on the vidcom, too. You might want to order him to shut up but then he might buy it or turn tail and make a break for home. Put up with the moaning, keep him with you and direct him well. One good thing, he likes to follow orders if they are within his ability.

Mission 33 (Vigrid 0)

Assignment: Omicron Wing Patrol

Fighter: Rapier

Wingman: Knight

Mission: Seek and destroy Ralari at Nav 1.

Obstacles: Mines BTW Nav 3 and Claw; and BTW Nav 3 and Nav 1.

Opposition: Nav 1.....3 Jalthei, 5 Krant, 1 Ralari
Tiger's Claw.....11 Gratha

Comments: Get in and use the Ralari as cover as you field the wings of fighters. Pick a favorite ploy to take them down with your usual adroitness, and finish off the Ralari. If things get too hot you can take out the Ralari first and burn out to the periphery to take the Krant one at a time, but in your fully fueled Rapier you should be able to dance circles around the vapor-burning opposition. The real show is back at the TC where wave after wave of Gratha try to make meowmix of your carrier. Get in there and mix it up! If you fight too close to the carrier you risk crashing or being hit by friendly fire, or even worse, having those glory-hogging gunners claim your kills. Almost tempts you to let the cats have

their way with the old tin can, but then you'll have nowhere to land so save it for the rec room. Remember to use your scope to identify and locate enemies on the opposite side of your carrier.

Lounge: 413:33 (+1). Shotgun wants us to get on over to preflight, but why not stop and talk to the respective apostles of lunacy and sanity? Todd has increasing delusions of fractured grandeur. Boss offers a sorry vision of things to come. You're not much help, yourself. On second thought, why not head on over to briefing and end this pleasure cruise once and for all, after all.

Mission 34 (Vigrid 1)

Assignment: Omega Wing Strike

Fighter: Rapier

Wingman: Knight

Mission: Destroy the Sivar and any remnants of its support fleet.

Obstacles: Asteroids near Navs 1 and 3.

Opposition: Nav 1.....4 Krant, 1 Fralthi

Nav 2.....6 Krant, 5 Jalthei, 6 Gratha, 1 Sivar

Nav 3.....2 Krant+2 Krant behind Claw

Comments: Enjoy the instructions for all pilots prior to launch. Spirit, Paladin and Ice have particularly snappy comebacks. You may have noticed from the above stats that this mission is one of the tougher ones. This is compounded by the fact that Khumalo would suddenly rather die than bug out--uncharacteristic and inconvenient if you like keeping him on your wing. Send him out and keep an eye on him. The Krant and Fralthi will take care of themselves with a little assistance from you. The waves of fighters can be a real pain in the aft shields, so you might want to get in quick and kill the Sivar so you then have the option to bug out if you are overwhelmed. The Sivar is difficult to kill with all that armor and shielding, but if you are persistent it is no harder than a couple of Fralthis in succession--if you can keep those Jalthei off your tail! Keep aware of your tactical situation at all times. Break off to deal with pesky fighters if they threaten to spoil your fun with an early demise. Once you have toasted the planet slayer (watch out for nasty deja vu coming in for landing on the Victory in future years), head back to the Claw, hopefully with enough fuel in reserve to kill the first two bandits, then burn in to get the other two eclipsing you on the other side of the carrier. Fry their bacon and fly in for commendations and a medal--if you have space left on your jacket to pin one! Gold Star to those who can accommodate one.

Commander's Office: Squadron reassignment. You get an A for attitude. Cheer up, you're still in a Rapier.

Jump: Tartarus system

TARTARUS SYSTEM

Lounge: Here we thought it was time for a celebration, and everyone is closer to the breaking point than ever. Even you sound ragged, Colonel. Spirit is sympathetic, but Bossman is beginning to sound a bit tragic.

Mission 35 (Tartarus 0)

Assignment: Alpha Wing Strike

Fighter: Rapier

Wingman: Hunter

Mission: Destroy Fralthi and Nav 2.

Obstacles: none

Opposition: BTW Claw and Nav 1.....4 Gratha

Nav 1.....3 Krant, 3 Jalathi

Nav 2.....4 Gratha, 1 Fralthi

Comments: Hunter gets dressing down for pulling a bolter. Use the ACLS, you really have no option in this particular game.

This mission is really a milk run after the brutal space battles of Thor's Hammer, but don't forget what a couple of Jalathi can do to your plans for retirement if you get caught in their crossfire. Attack to the side and then from behind, stick with each one until it's roasted, use Hunter efficiently and it's no worries, mate. I always find Gratha the easiest to kill (after Drathi of course!) but the Krant can cause you woe if they get behind you and hit you with a missile/cannon barrage or two. Don't ignore them unless you are seconds from a kill.

Lounge: Shotgun has some good news that sounds rather anticlimactic. Let's hope those cats aren't headed here. Khumaio wants to find out about your secret missions, but you don't have to worry about spilling the beans since you yourself haven't been briefed yet! Jeannette sounds rather hysterical, and no doubt will get to compare notes in the way she least expected!

Mission 36 (Tartarus 1)

Assignment: Sigma Wing Defend

Fighter: Rapier

Reading companion: The Spy Who Came In From The Cold

Mission: Intercept and escort Hobbes and his Dralthi back to the Claw.

Obstacles:

Opposition: BTW Claw and Nav 1.....2 Krant, 2 Gratha

Nav 1.....2 Salthi tailing Col. Raigha nar Hhallas

Comments: The cakewalk to end all cakewalks. Your Rapier is more than a match for the four fighters since you have not met the Dralthi yet. When you meet the Colonel those two Salthi are easy pickings. This is really to warm you up to the idea of flying solo covert missions. They will become more complex before long, have no fear. The key to most of them is waiting for something to happen, or opposition to show up. In one or two of them bugging out is your main objective once you arrive at your nav

point! More on that later. Sit back and contemplate all the years of fun you're going to have flying with Hobbes (not in this game, unfortunately-- you don't even get to see his face!) before you roast him along with Prince Thrakhath on your way to Kilrah in 2669.

Don't feel bad about not receiving a medal for this mission--there's probably no place left on your jacket to hang the damn trinket with all the chicken guts you've accumulated by now.

Jump: Cairo system

CAIRO SYSTEM

Lounge: Sam catches on to the covert nature of our operation. Wish he'd fill us in. Hunter looks to be as close to cracking as he ever will (until the fleet action in 2668, sad to say). Boss thinks you have a girlfriend, and your lame excuses don't seem to help. Wish we knew as much as we were pretending we didn't about this series of missions. One thing for sure, we're not in Firekka anymore, K'Kai! Max kills possible on board: 461 for 36=12.8:1

Mission 37 (Cairo 0)

Assignment: Epsilon Wing Escort

Fighter: Rapier

Wingman: Maniac (lucky you)

Mission: Escort Venture corvette to Nav 2 via Nav 1.

Obstacles: Mines BTW Nav 2 and Claw.

Opposition: Nav 1.....2 Krant

BTW Nav 1 & Nav 2.....1 Ralari

Nav 2.....3 Gratha

Near Claw.....2 Salthi

Comments: Fly out to Nav 1 with the Venture to Nav 1, burning forward to kill the 2 Krant as soon as you spot them. Keep them busy until they are fried to prevent them striking at the corvette. Watch out for Maniac since he'll be happy to start blasting your tail if you keep him on your wing.

Also remember that once you let him lose he will never return while any stray cats are alive. Get in and kill them first, and give him a few blasts with your guns if his shots get too close for comfort. "I'll kill ya, ya bastard" and "You stole my kill, you bastard" will take their place in your memory along with "Ramming speed!" as words you least like to hear.

(Also high on the hit parade are "Go after them, you coward!" and "Nooo, I don't wanna die!") If he really pisses you off, waste the incompetent dickhead since he rarely does you any good on missions. He will magically reincarnate for Wing Commanders III and IV no matter what you do. Just be aware that if he dies, he gets the last word in edgewise at the end.

Auto toward Nav 2 until you come upon the Ralari. Maintain course and do not attack! You'll have plenty of time to do that safely once the corvette has jumped at Nav 2. Keep straight on and ignore Todd's rantings--the

destroyer is unescorted and you can slip by without so much as a peep out of it. When your auto light switches back on, engage the system and shoot over to Nav 2. Take on the incoming Gratha and delete them quickly. The Venture class corvettes may be murder against planetary targets, but they are sitting ducks when confronted by fighters in space. Wait for the green hornet to jump out, and then auto back to the Claw through the mines. About 21,000 clicks from the Claw you will notice and casually swat to death the incoming Salthi. Motor in to the Claw, then immediately do an about-face and reset your Nav computer directly for the Ralari (use the horizontal arrow keys). When retracing my steps in a mission to pick off stragglers, I make a ritual of completing my assigned route and autoing back to the carrier, requesting landing (actually not advised but I like doing it to stay on my toes), doing an about-face Immelman BEFORE breaking 1,000 and being grabbed by the ACLS (if you've hit R), resetting the nav computer for another pass of the nav points, and autoing back out. Auto out to the Ralari once it is blinking on your nav comp, and enjoy your lunch. Auto back to the Claw, request landing, and make it back to the rec room in time for lunch. Your inaccurate report in debriefing is understandable considering you had to put up with the raving Maniac all morning.

Lounge: Shotgun is worried about Spirit, who has lost her fiance. Go do what you can. Say hello to Jazz. Whatever he may become in future years, here he is cheerful, reliable, an excellent pilot and a reliable wingman. His unassuming attitude and superb SA make him one of the best people on the Claw to get to know. The voice is also familiar, check it out! Our first hint of Tolwyn being on the opposite side from us comes from Jazz.

Mission 38 (Cairo 2)

Assignment: Sigma Wing Patrol

Fighter: Dralthi

Reading companion: I Am A Cat by Natsume Soseki.

Mission: Secret mission: infiltrate enemy in Dralthi and transmit data.

Obstacles: Tons of asteroids BTW Claw and Nav 1.

Opposition: BTW Claw & asteroids.....5 Ralari

Nav 1.....4 Jalthi, 4 Krant, 2 Snakeir

Comments: Notice the cool interior of the Dralthi. Check out the moving dual hand controls, throttle on the left and joystick on the right. The mass drivers set so close together seem to work better against asteroids than those of the Scimitar. Note also that the lateral visibility problem Bossman speculated about early in the game is nowhere in evidence. Buzz out to the asteroid belt and come up against *five* Ralari. In your little flying frisbee it is not part of your mission to engage these fighters at all. Burn past them and no harm done. If you do choose to attack them, three will jump out immediately, so go after the two on the right. You shouldn't have too much trouble downing them but save your armor and missiles for Nav 1. A 250 approach and well-placed cannonfire should

down them both no problem. Pick your way through the asteroids and target the Snakeir at Nav 1. These are far and away the hardest ships to take out, even in a Raptor, so forget about killing them unless you have a death wish--that isn't part of your mission anyhow, although you will receive mild and mixed praise from Col Halcyon if you do manage to pull it off. With all those fighters around I've never managed to down even one of them. In fact, killing more than one or two fighters in this mission is a real challenge--and one that is in no way required or even desired unless you are a shameless beancounting glory hog. As soon as you reach your waypoint the Snakeir and Jalthei will open fire, so you might as well hit your burners and hightail it out of there. No difficulty in escaping if you don't dally to dogfight. You do have the option of puncturing the remaining 3 Falari at the border since they have jumped back in by this time. Again, unless you are interested in adding a few numbers to your score there is no reason to do this. On the other hand, any good spy would like to know how the enemy ships handle. So any yahoos in the crowd are welcome to go wild and see where it gets you.

Lounge: Everybody wants buy you a drink except Jazz, who wants to take advantage of your presumed drunkenness to milk you for info. Nothing doing, Colson.

Mission 39 (Cairo 2)

Assignment: Omega Wing Patrol

Fighter: Rapier

Wingman: Maniac

Mission: Three point patrol.

Obstacles: none

Opposition: Nav 1.....3 Salthi, 3 Dralthi
Nav 2.....2 Jalthei, 1 Fralthi
Nav 3.....3 Krant, 3 Gratha

Comments:

The light fighters are pesky but manageable. You have the upper hand in shields, firepower, and overall performance--not to mention your matchless prowess with stick and weapons! Do them in before Maniac can claim all the credit. At Nav 2 use your excellent reflexes and experience to down the heavy fighters, then move in for the kill on the cruiser. Nav 3 has more to offer so make sure you arrive with shields, weapons, and armor intact. Classic dogfighting tactics will make mincemeat of these birds. They are persistent but not very smart overall. Head back to the carrier to receive the sad news about Bossman.

Unfortunately for you, Angel survives to mope about for days. Too bad about the Boss; Kien was a great wingman and friend. Jazz and Doomsday are great additions to the Claw, however. Just wish Devereaux could keep a lid on it. That woman really needs to get laid or something (and guess who's going to do it? But not on the Claw....)

Commander's Office: Reassignment to Star Slayer Squadron and Raptors. Get ready to get mean!

Jump: Anchorage system

Hangar Deck: Silver Star if you still have the proper slot for one on your jacket.

ANCHORAGE SYSTEM

Lounge: Things are beginning to heat up again. In addition to his eulogy to Bossman, Shotgun has some inside data on your objective on this little outing--destruction of a research base and additional revenge for the Goddard massacre. Paladin and you should really pack it in and leave Jeannette to it. If she won't listen to your consoling remarks, there's no need to listen to her syrupy moanings. Lighten up, Angel, or you'll be alone permanently.

Mission 40 (Anchorage 0)

Assignment: Sigma Wing Patrol

Fighter: Dralhti

Inflight movie: Radio Days

Mission: Secret mission in Dralhti--do not attack Fralhti!

Obstacles: none

Opposition: Nav 1.....3 Dralhti

Nav 2.....1 Fralhti (don't touch!),

BTW Nav 2 and Claw.....3 Salthi

Comments: The Dralhti at Nav 1 will attack, so be ready to go after them as soon as they change course to intercept you. Three against one isn't really fair, but they haven't done you any favors so don't feel too guilty about shooting them down. Hit Nav 2 and head for home when you hear the victory music and Mission objective reached. Kill all bogies on this mission other than the Fralhti to protect the mother. If you don't meet the Salthi on the way home, or if a fighter slips away, keep cycling between nav points and flying back and forth until you have killed them all. The chewing out you get for failing this mission really isn't very pretty.

Lounge: Notice Jazz and Doomsday on the killboard. Ask Sam for his specialty. Maniac is in the looney bin temporarily. Rock on, bonker boy. Angel is softening up a bit. At least she's letting up on the stats for a change. She almost manages to sound sweet. Hope you took that shower this morning, Mav.

Mission 41 (Anchorage 1)

Assignment: Alpha Wing Escort

Fighter: Dralhti

Wingman: Doomsday

Mission: Escort troop ship from Claw to Nav 2.

Obstacles: Asteroids BTW Nav 2 and Claw.

Opposition: Nav 1.....3 Jalithi
Nav 2.....4 Krant
BTW Nav 2 and Claw.....2 Saithi

Comments: Get the official word on the offensive. Take your Drayman to Nav 1 and get on those Jalithi before they toast your troops. Protecting the fragile transport from twelve blasters is enough to land even a crack ace like yourself in hot water. The Krant at Nav 2 will take advantage of any damage you or your Drayman took at Nav 1, so stay alert. Let the transport jump out at Nav 2 and it's Miller time. Well, there are the two Saithi lurking in the asteroids, but those are a minor wrinkle. Try not to let their crackling debris scratch that new paint job on your Raptor, Colonel. If you get bored you can always try bouncing them off an asteroid or two to see just how fragile those gadflies really are. Congratulations on protecting the brass, Maverick.

Lounge: Okay, okay, I'm going already. Don't bite my head off, bartender!

Mission 42 (Anchorage 2)

Assignment: Gamma Wing Defend

Fighter: Raptor

Wingman: Doomsday

Mission: Protect Claw by nixing fighters and capships at 3 nav points.

Obstacles: Asteroids BTW Nav 2 and Claw.

Opposition: Launch.....7 Dralithi
Nav 1.....2 Krant
Nav 2.....5 Gratha, 1 Falari
Nav 3.....4 Jalithi, 1 Snakeir
Claw.....1 Dralithi

Comments: Send Doomsday after one wing of Dralithi while you take the others. The Maori warrior is an extremely able wingman, so make liberal use of him as you chuckle at his pointedly maudlin banter. There is little real danger to the Claw here but her gunners will claim your kills if you let the cats stay out there too long and too close to the carrier. Roll on out to Nav 1 and ace those Krants. The Gratha at Nav 2 aren't as tough as they look, but don't take damage because you've got a hell of a fight ahead at Nav 3. The 4 Jalithi can be managed, but the Snakeir is one tough nut to crack, and it fires guns and missiles at you while you fight the Jalithi. Takes quite a few passes to down the bird, she's like the Vesuvius of 2654--with no Flash Pak or torps! Good luck. Make repeated strafing/missile runs on her honeycomb engines and she'll roll over and purr before too long. On your return, a stray Dralithi is making a beeline for home. Run it down with your afterburners and chalk up another kill if you have the fuel and the inclination.

Jump: Jakarta system

JAKARTA SYSTEM

Lounge: Shotgun is crowing since he finally got some intelligence right. Meet Doomsday and Jazz in the rec room. Doomsday is a lot more positive than he lets on--probably the only completely mentally balanced pilot on the Claw, for that matter! And what a paint job. Accent needs work, though. Jazz is eager to brown-nose, but he's a lot better company than many of Shotgun's customers. Try listening to Jazz and yourself conversing without looking at the screen--can you tell yourselves apart?

Mission 43 (Jakarta 0)

Assignment: Sigma Wing Rendezvous

Fighter: Dralhti

Inflight movie: Waiting To Exhale

Mission: Final secret mission. Fly out to cloaked Fralhti, get data.

Obstacles: Asteroids everywhere BTW Claw and Nav 1.

Opposition: BTW Claw and Nav 1.....2 Salthi

Nav 1.....Fralhti (off limits), 3 Dralhti (kill!)

Comments: Destroy everything except for the Fralhti. The Salthi are at about 25,000 clicks from Nav 1, the Dralhti appear with the cruiser. If you don't see them, wait. Kill the fighters and the sidle on up to the Fralhti and cut your engines. If you just target it and auto home, it will be destroyed and you will receive a chewing out you won't soon forget. The operative word in this mission is wait'. You must let the ship jump out before you head for the Claw. Patience, patience.... "Almost there...." (oops, wrong universe!). Do cartwheels, practice your aim on a nearby constellation, do anything leave or kill the cruiser. Not a bad chance to take a few snapshots for posterity with command-shift-3: "Me and Mom", "Fralhti framed by Dralhti", etc. etc. If she's moving follow her at a blazing 50 clicks and see how she handles. Get a few thousand clicks between you and the Fralhti and test your afterburners to see how far you go toward the ship on one light touch of the key. It's not every day you get to sit in enemy territory in a Dralhti with a docile Fralhti in your sights. Be innovative. See if you can pick up any of the local radio stations. Once the ship jumps, head back through the asteroids. Your days as a spy are over. (For this decade....)

Lounge: Sam is his old self. Try out that Goddard Special once you ice that research base. Spirit needs a shoulder. Yours happens to be just the right size. Angel is starting to become a human being. She almost sounds cute. But talk about wearing your heart on your sleeve!

Mission 44 (Jakarta 1)

Assignment: Iota Wing Strike

Fighter: Raptor

Wingman: Jazz

Mission: Three point patrol. Kill carriers and fighters.

Obstacles: none

Opposition: Nav 1.....3 Krant, 3 Gratha
Nav 2.....4 Gratha, 1 Snakeir
Nav 3.....4 Jalthei, 1 Snakeir

Comments: A killer mission. Be conservative with fuel and missiles as you take out the lesser fighters. The Jalthei are the real challenge, and may force you to use up some missiles. The Snakeir are sheer murder to knock out, but will only fire a missile apiece, so as long as you have fuel for afterburners, you can kill them even with guns alone. The missiles won't do more than knock down the shields for a second or two. Get in there with those cannons and blast the tailpipes until she burns! Ditto for the carrier at Nav 3.

Lounge: Have a last drink on the Claw before your final mission in the game. Sam really is a great old bartender. Would have been fun to fly with him, in a Paladin sort of way. Knight is his usual pensive self. Knight makes sure he comes back since he never takes risks, so he has nothing to worry about here. Zach is complimentary. Not bad for a parting shot. Jazz has the coolest phrasings, since everything is a musical metaphor, from "Harmonize on this note!" to "Yeah, I know how that goes." In SWC at least, he's a good buddy to have.

Mission 45 (Jakarta 2)

Assignment: Xi Wing Strike

Fighter: Raptor

Wingman: Jazz

Mission: Convoy strike. Kill weapon-bearing transports.

Obstacles: Asteroids en route to Nav 1.

Opposition: BTW Claw and Nav 1.....1 Fralthi (unescorted)
Nav 1.....7 Jalthei, 3 Lumbari

Comments: The Fralthi is a sitting duck. Not so with the 3 Lumbari at Nav 1, since they have count 'em seven Jalthei riding shotgun. Keep the fighters busy but take those Lumbari out. You might want to ignore the cover altogether and rush in to kill the transports while Jazz covers you, but why not do in the Jalthei at the same time? This is where all your Musashi-style one-against-many combat tactics will come into play. Use their numbers against them, get them to shoot each other, crash into each other, shield yourself behind the tankers as you destroy them, sic Jazz on the most virulent, or on the weakest. Really not much to it by this time. You know how they fly by now, so let 'em feel your steel, turn and churn and watch them burn.

Mission 46 (Jakarta 3)

Assignment: Delta Wing Strike

Fighter: Raptor

Wingman: Iceman

Mission: Revenge!

Obstacles: Minefield en route to Nav 1.

Opposition: Nav 1.....4 Jalathi, 1 Fralthi
Nav 2.....4 Jalathi, 1 Star Post

Comments: For quite a while the only way I could win this mission was to reroute the nav computer to go directly to Nav 2 first, since when you kill the base you automatically go to the final cutscene. It is interesting to try the Fralthi and its escort first and then see if you can still take the 4 Jalathi and the starbase after that fracas. Not for the faint of heart, nor the mediocre pilots out there! It isn't very hard to motor in on the starbase and waste it while Ice covers the cover, and you get that juicy cutscene. Too bad one of the best parts is only there if Iceman dies before you. Good luck and use everything you've learned so far and you should survive. If you could get through the Gwenhyvar mission okay then this is really a cakewalk. May the... oops, there I go again. Good luck, Colonel!

Final cutscene: Here, unfortunately, the more wingmen you have lost in battle, the more interesting this cutscene is. The first couple of times I saw it I thought it was flashback city once again. Surrealistic but cool. I immediately went back and systematically killed off every wingman so I could see what the cutscene was like. It was worth it. You learn something about many of the pilots you wouldn't otherwise have known. Will try to include this saved mission in my pref folder.

Losing Missions

These are the coolest missions! Win by losing, old Akuma used to say.... These are in fact nowhere close to losing in that you must fail at several in succession to actually lose the game, and also in that many of the coolest missions are in this branch of the game. Brimstone 2 will always be a favorite, with probably the best cutscene in the game--even better *if you fail*!!! Go figure. Here are the walkthroughs for these remarkable missions.

To access these missions yourself, eject repeatedly until you get to the Gateway, then start winning to go to Brimstone, or continue losing/ejecting to go to Cheng Du. Now start to win. Once you know the winning path from here, lose and go to the Port Hedland system. In other words, don't be afraid to try every angle in this game to uncover new missions. Watch the mission tree and win/lose at will to visit every corner of the SWC universe. Or you can read these and choose the ones you want to try first.

In the losing missions the Col. likes to address you as Boys and Girls.

Jump: Gateway System (from Enyo)

GATEWAY SYSTEM

Lounge: Introduce yourself to Iceman and Knight. They fill you in on the

Scimitar but you have to earn one first. Shotgun sums them up perfectly.

Mission 47 (Gateway 0)

Assignment: Killer Bees/Delta Wing Patrol

Fighter: Hornet

Wingman: Paladin (but sounds a lot like Doomsday in the cockpit!)

Mission: Fly patrol over three nav points.

Obstacles: Asteroids at Nav 1.

Opposition: Nav 2.....4 Salthi

Nav 2.....2 Gratha

Comments: If you've read the Walkthrough up to this point (or relied on your natural intelligence and inborn talent for flying and dogfighting) then you should be here by design, not lack of ability to win. You had to fail to get here, but now you will go to Brimstone and the alternate path no matter how well you do (unless you fail these missions and wind up in Cheng Du, but more on that later) so let's assume you want to win here. Watch the rocks at Nav 1, simply change your heading every three seconds or so. Actually any speed from 250-300 is quite safe. You can shoot the asteroids but why bother. Just duck and continue on your way. Wax the Salthi at Nav 2 using standard techniques outlined in Clawmarks and in the winning missions of this walkthrough. Likewise for the 2 Gratha, who should be manageable with Paladin's help. Use the Hornet's continuous firing ability to waste incoming wings, then flip around behind them and finish the job. Don't sit still in their line of fire for too long since the Hornet's shields and armor can't take much of a beating. Maximize her speed and maneuverability and you can make short work of the larger fighters. Nice debriefing if you win.

Lounge: Meet Maniac and Bossman if you haven't been to the McAuliffe system and done so already. It's worth talking to people in the rec room on the losing path, because while their conversation sometimes merges with that of the winning path, there are often segments that are entirely new and useful.

Mission 48 (Gateway 1)

Assignment: Kappa Wing Defend

Fighter: Hornet

Wingman: Paladin

Mission: Defend Tiger's Claw.

Obstacles: none

Opposition: Launch.....8 Dralthi

Comments: Burn out from the carrier to get an overview of the situation, then turn and send Paladin to attack a distant wing. Go in for the closest yourself and pursue them diligently until you destroy each on. Use up heat seekers in the beginning if you like, since you warm to the task and can achieve guns kills on the rest.

Hangar Deck: Silver Star

Lounge: This is the same conversation as in Mission 5 (McAuliffe 2).

Mission 49 (Gateway 2)

Assignment: Sigma Wing Rendezvous

Fighter: Hornet

Wingman: Paladin

Mission: Escort Drayman to Claw, kill Bhurak Starkiller.

Obstacles: none

Opposition: Nav 1.....2 Gratha

BTW Nav 1 and Claw.....4 Salthi including Bhurak

Comments: Take on the Gratha and try to put them away quickly since the tanker will jump in in short order. Watch when you auto with the Drayman; you will come out of auto with it directly in front of you, slowing down or at least preventing you from hitting your thrusters and going after the cats without a bit of maneuvering. Get in and wax the Salthi, run after Bhurak only if the other three are already toasted. If you fail to kill him and he bugs out, head for home, reset for Nav 1, at Nav 1 auto toward home, and you will get another shot with any luck. Use afterburners to keep him from escaping, and down the tricky Kilrathi ace. Consult Mission 5 above for more useful information on this mission-- they are similar although not identical.

Commander's Office: Promotion to Captain. Reassignment to Blue Devil Squadron and Scimitar fighters.

Jump: Brimstone System

Hangar Deck: Silver Star awarded.

BRIMSTONE SYSTEM

Lounge: Maniac and Hunter are hanging out. Shotglass has inside info on the situation in Brimstone. This is one great system! Drawbacks? Only one: Maniac as your wingman. Watch your six or the Leto wonder will fry your tail when you least expect it. Nothing personal, he just likes to shoot at anything that moves. Hunter has a useful hint about cat ambushes.

Mission 50 (Brimstone 0)

Assignment: Blue Devil Squadron/Alpha Wing Patrol

Fighter: Scimitar

Wingman: Maniac

Mission: Patrol 3 nav points.

Obstacles: Asteroids at Nav 2.

Opposition: Nav 1.....1 Salthi, 3 Gratha

Nav 2.....2 Krant

Nav 3.....Clear unless you want to blast Maniac!

Comments: Maniac mouths off until we get stuck with the jerk. Don't hesitate to carry out Col. Halcyon's suggestion about attitude adjustment for Maniac--you won't regret it. Burn away, turn on him with cannonfire and a couple of dumbfires. Head for home once he is 50% damaged. You will feel much better for the friendly fire catharsis. The rest of the mission is pretty much a cakewalk. Blast those cats back to kitty heaven!

Lounge: Now the fun starts. as good advice about the radio scope and speed control, but you already knew that. Boss has a thing or two to add, which will help if you haven't figured them out for yourself.

Mission 51 (Brimstone 1)

Assignment: Theta Wing Rendezvous

Fighter: Scimitar

Wingman: Maniac

Mission: Escort Exeter home via Nav 2.

Obstacles: Asteroids BTW Claw and Nav 1.

Opposition: BTW Claw and Nav 1.....4 Salthi in asteroid field
Nav 1.....4 Dralthi attacking Exeter

Comments: To win the mission, kill the Dralthi before they can take out the Exeter. Play with the Salthi and help Maniac out when he blunders into rocks trying to show off. Get ready for the fun on Brimstone II. Gotta love that Maniac with his retro metaphors.

Lounge: Shotgun tips Confed's hand on their strategy for Brimstone. Ice has decent advice, although guns are more than adequate to down a Dorkir. Iceman can head home if he likes, but you can easily strafe transports and tankers to ribbons with your masterful cannonfire. Knight elicits another outburst of macho bravado from our traumatized old friend.

Mission 52 (Brimstone 2)

Assignment: Rho Wing Strike

Fighter: Scimitar

Wingman: Maniac

Mission: Intercept Kilrathi convoy near Nav 1.

Obstacles: none

Opposition: BTW Claw and Nav 1.....2 Jalthi
Nav 1.....6 Krant, 1 Dorkir (not Lumbari, Lion!)

Comments: The greatest thing about this mission is that it's even more fun to lose than to win! Be sure you save the previous mission so you can come back and win, but try losing and watch the cutscene afterward--you'll recognize the Lumbari from the playguide page number graphic (too bad this is supposed to be a Dorkir! Can't get everything right I guess). You do have to survive to enjoy the benefits though. Kill the Jalthi or burn past them if you like. Get in quick and kill the Dorkir--icing the Krant is also optional. Get back home and watch the coolest cutscene short of the

final one of Mission 46. Or fail and watch an even cooler one. BTW, Bhurak Starkiller tends to make another showing here, even if you killed him earlier. No ejectors in the cat ships? Hmmmm. Get rid of him once and for all.

Cutscene: Destruction of Brimstone II bases, or attack force, depending on whether you were successful with the mission.

Commander's Office: Promotion to rank of Major. Reassignment to Star Slayer Squadron and Raptors. Get ready to get blasting!

Hangar Deck: Bronze Star awarded.

Jump: If you succeeded at Brimstone you rejoin the winning path in the Dakota System at Mission 9 (Dakota 0). If you lose, the Tiger's Claw jumps to the Port Hedland System and Mission 53 (Port Hedland 0). This is the path we will take here.

Lounge: Hear about the TCSO show you will be escorting. Save those supplies and fine entertainment. I think he overrates the Gratha, but if we've taken a five as far as the waterworlds of Port Hedland, who are we to talk. Maniac gives his wingmen gripe speech. Hunter joins in, but is a little less abrasive about it.

PORT HEDLAND SYSTEM

Mission 53 (Port Hedland 0)

Assignment: Eta Wing Rendezvous

Fighter: Raptor

Wingman: Knight

Mission: Escort Drayman with supplies and entertainers to Claw.

Obstacles: none

Opposition: Nav 1.....4 Jalathi

BTW Nav 1 and Claw.....3 Gratha

Comments: Do in the Jalathi to make your return trip easier. The Gratha are tough but can be nixed before they hurt the Drayman if you made good use of Knight and go after them with a vengeance. They're trying to kill innocent pinup girls, after all!

Hangar Deck: Bronze Star awarded.

Lounge: Sam congratulates you but warns you about the Jalathi horrors to come. You know what he means, but follow his advice and you can ace them everytime. Spirit is realistic, but would have the same advice even if we were winning.

Knight is as peeved as prior to Mission 10 (Dakota 1). Good for him.

Mission 54 (Port Hedland 1)

Assignment: Xi Wing Patrol

Fighter: Scimitar

Wingman: Knight

Mission: Fly four point patrol; "observe" Fralthi (read kill').

Obstacles: Mines at Nav 2, asteroids at Nav 4.

Opposition: Nav 1.....3 Dralthi
Nav 3.....4 Gratha, 1 Fralthi

Comments: The Dralthi at Nav 1 are eminently expendable--they really aren't very good flyers and the pancakes they come in are easily stacked and cracked. Not so the Gratha at Nav 3, who along with the mines may leave Knight in pretty poor shape. Send the lad home before he gets snuffed. The Fralthi is fragable if you attack from behind at 250, firing continuously and dumping missiles on it once shields are down at about 2,000. Don't run into it but you can get within 300 clicks before you split-S away for another run. Work fast to keep those shields from regenerating. You'll get lots of credit! Despite your debrief bluster, the rocks at Nav 4 deserve your full attention, but personally I find 250 or 260 a better speed for negotiating these than the 290 recommended in the manual--gives you more time to react. Any slower and you'll be clobbered from behind or the top, bottom or sides. The mines at 2 are less difficult but watch cause they are sneaky and can damage your armor even before they take down your shields.

Hangar Deck: Silver Star awarded

Lounge: Chat with Sam about the Rostov System and Bakhtosh Redclaw. Tilt a glass and get the lowdown from the Mother Hen, then pick up a lecture from Kien.

Mission 55 (Port Hedland 2)

Assignment: Sigma Wing Defend

Fighter: Scimitar

Wingman: Knight

Mission: Defend Claw and Exeter, kill Fralthi.

Obstacles: none

Opposition: Launch.....4 Jalthi including Redclaw
Nav 1.....4 Gratha
Nav 2.....4 Krant, 1 Fralthi

Comments: Quite a challenge in a Scim slug. Get in and mix it up with the Jalthi; the other fighters and Claw gunners will help. Be sure to send Knight after one as soon as you launch, and use taunts to keep the attackers distracted. The 4 Gratha will be less of a challenge if you are undamaged, but you must get in fast to save the Exeter. Delete them and go after the Krant, who are fairly fragile if you can plant several hits in succession with your mass driver projectiles. Throw everything at the Fralthi, but make sure to coordinate gunfire and missiles for maximum effect in knocking down shields and cracking armor.

Commander's Office: Promotion to the rank of Lt. Colonel.
Reassignment to Star Slayer Squadron and Raptor class heavy fighters.

Cutscene: Super force fleet jump.
Jump: Rostov System
Hangar deck: Gold Star awarded.

ROSTOV SYSTEM

Lounge: Get some info on Rostov and the jungle world of the system with its grey towns. Shotglass likes Rita's Cantina on Rostov III--too bad Rita has moved round the corner from the Academy and is taken with my Kyushu sake these days! But Sam doesn't have to know. Ice drones on about the situation in system. Hunter cheers things up and lets you in on the secret to his brilliant flying.

Mission 56 (Rostov 0)

Assignment: Star Slayer Squadron/Gamma Wing Patrol

Fighter: Raptor

Wingman: Iceman

Mission: Patrol 4 jump points.

Obstacles: Asteroids everywhere but Nav 3.

Opposition: Nav 2.....2 Dralhti
Nav 3.....6 Gratha, 1 Dorkir

Comments: Watch on launch, since you catapult straight out into the rocks. This is one system where you will have to use your guns to pick your way through the rocks--full guns will blow a rock if you fire soon enough. The asteroids are so thick that they seem to be your real foe on this mission--until you run into the Gratha at Nav 3. Your Raptor is more than a match for them, however, and the Dorkir will crumple under your cannon blasts and missiles with little fuss or muss.

Hangar deck: Bronze Star awarded.

Lounge: Try a Rostov Hairball--on the rocks, of course. Maniac is grounded for misplacing a missile. Take his example of what not to do. Knight has a tip or two worth listening to.

Mission 57 (Rostov 1)

Assignment: Xi Wing Strike

Fighter: Raptor

Wingman: Iceman

Mission: Intercept and destroy Ralari at Nav 1.

Obstacles: Asteroids at Claw and BTW Claw and Nav 1.

Opposition: BTW Claw and Nav 1.....5 Salthi in rocks
Nav 1.....4 Jalthi, 1 Ralari

Comments: Dogfighting in such a dense asteroid field can be tricky, but

the Salthi are more fragile and find it even trickier. The Jalthi are tough but your Raptors are tougher, and Iceman is an invaluable wingman--ruthless, aggressive, and relentless. Wield him as you would a Cobra or a Hawk (for time-traveling Victory and Intrepid vets). Down the Ralari at your leisure and head for home.

Lounge: Sam is right about flying the Raptor--you can afford to emulate Iceman or even Maniac in this ship--in fact, you have to in order to smash the more maneuverable or larger ships you encounter. The Raptor should have been called the T-Rex, since the Rapier is more the light agile/crafty type. Of course, as a bird of prey' the title fits well enough. Spirit and Angel rub it in for Maniac--in his absence, sadly enough. Chuckle at Jeannette's bravado. No encouragement from her is necessary when it comes to burning Kilrathi aces!

Mission 58 (Rostov 2)

Assignment: Tau Wing Patrol

Fighter: Raptor

Wingman: Iceman

Mission: Identify (and kill) Fralthi at Nav 2.

Obstacles: Asteroids upon launch, at Nav 1, BTW Nav 2 and Claw.

Opposition: Nav 2.....4 Krant including Khajja the Fang, 1 Fralthi
BTW Nav 2 and Claw.....4 Dralthi in asteroid field

Comments: Watch the rocks. If you arrive in good enough shape after your encounter with Khajja and the asteroids, downing the Fralthi will be just a little extra work. The rocks and Ice will help you polish off the Dralthi in the asteroids.

Commander's Office: Reassignment to Black Lion Squadron and Rapier fighters as you jump into the Venice System and rejoin the winning path.

Hangar deck: Gold Star awarded. You are now back on the winning path.

This walkthrough now goes to the Cheng Du system, as we follow the worst-scenario paths through systems Cheng-Du, Hubble's Star, and Hell's Kitchen. The mission numbers are arbitrary but useful for keeping track of missions and mission paths.

CHENG-DU SYSTEM

Lounge: Smile at 0 for 5 killscore if you are using my Mac pref files. Don't snicker; getting here was tedious I assure you, as the Golden Sun will attest. Hear about Cheng-Du and the wonderful fauna of Nanjing. Spirit and Angel have a tip or two about shields and weapons that you had to come all the way to this system to hear, unless you have read this walkthrough! The data on the enemy fighters is accurate, Lieutenant.

Mission 59 (Chengdu 0)

Assignment: Epsilon Wing Rendezvous

Fighter: Hornet

Wingman: Angel

Mission: Escort Valkyrie and her Hornet back to the Claw.

Obstacles: none

Opposition: Hornet (Nav 1).....4 Krant+2 Krant, 1 Ralari

Comments: You have the option here of killing the first four Krant and heading for home with Valkyrie (a successful mission), or going out to the Ralari (distant but on your scope when you meet up with the Hornet) and taking her out with her dual escort. Be sure to protect the Hornet if you do so since returning Valkyrie to the Claw is your primary mission objective.

Hangar Deck: Gold Star for killing Ralari.

Lounge: Dakhath is in system? No amount of flipping and flopping can save him from your masterful deathstrokes. This ace is really no big deal, as Ice attests.

Mission 60 (Chengdu 1)

Assignment: Iota Wing Escort

Fighter: Hornet

Wingman: Angel

Mission: Escort Ymir-bound Exeter to jump point.

Obstacles: Asteroids BTW Claw and Nav 1.

Opposition: Nav 1.....6 Dralthi, including Dakhath

BTW Nav 1 and the Claw.....4 Salthi in the rocks

Comments: Usually you want to keep capships off to the side, but in this case the destroyer can navigate the rocks so follow behind through the asteroid belt. Keeping the flapjacks off the Exeter is imperative but manageable. Kill that ejector-blasting needlebrain and smash those other plates as well. The Salthi on the return trip are easy to handle as long as you watch the rocks--asteroids will get as many as your guns if you play your hand well. No credit for asteroid collisions, however, so glory hogs will have to extract their quarry from the rocks (a rare opportunity--for millennia people have been doing just the opposite!).

Hangar Deck: Bronze Star awarded for deathstroking Dakhath.

Lounge: Hear of your new assignment from the bartender. Keep in mind that mass drivers are fine at maximum range against groups of fighters diving straight at you--they're usually too dumb to swerve until it's too late. Three or four solid blasts will do in anything but a Jalthi (you get what you deserve if you spend more than a second or two in the sights of these magma-spitting six-shooters no matter what the reason). Hear Ice and Knight rehash the old argument.

and Knight rehash the old argument.

Mission 61 (Chengdu 2)

Assignment: Omicron Wing Defend

Fighter: Hornet

Wingman: Angel

Mission: Defend Claw by killing Gratha attackers.

Obstacles: none

Opposition: Nav 1.....6 Gratha

Comments: It doesn't get much simpler than this. Get out there and kill those cats! Watch your scope to track bogies hidden by the carrier.

Commander's Office: Reassignment to Blue Devil Squadron and Scimitar slugs, I mean fighters.

Hangar Deck: Silver Star awarded for I know not what before you jump into Brimstone. Succeed there to rejoin the winning path at Dakota. This walkthrough now goes on to greater misery in the Hubble's Star System.

HUBBLE'S STAR SYSTEM

Lounge: Sam appeals to your sense of humanity to turn mankind back from the brink of doom. Good luck.

Mission 62 (Hubble's Star 0)

Assignment: Kappa Wing Patrol

Fighter: Scimitar

Wingman: Bossman

Mission: Scout 3 nav points

Obstacles: Mines at Nav 3

Opposition: Nav 1.....4 Krant, 1 Ralari

Nav 2.....4 Draithi including Dakhath (!), 2 Dorkir

Comments: If you end up in this system by accident rather than design, rank and squadron may vary. Read the rest of this walkthrough for various dogfighting tips and hints. The Krant, Draithi, Ralari and Dorkir are among the easier fighters to defeat as long as you use your head. Be systematic but aggressive, split the enemy by sending Bossman after one wing while you taunt the other, get behind them, attack one opponent continuously so that his shields have no chance to regenerate, and basically by single-mindedly devoted to shooting him down. If another fighter gets pesky there is no harm in blasting him a few times but try to stick with one until he's breathing vacuum. The Ralari and Dorkir are basically sitting ducks unless you are out of fuel or severely damaged.

Commander's Office: Promotion to the rank of Captain.

Hangar Deck: Silver Star awarded for Dakhath deletion.

Lounge: The lowdown is we have another Bakhtosh Redclaw in his heavy

Jalthi fighter. Bossman chastises you for losing your head in battle. Basically if you've landed in Hubble's Star, this kind of comes with the territory since you have to have lost a lot of missions to get here.

Mission 63 (Hubble's Star 1)

Assignment: Omicron Wing Rendezvous

Fighter: Scimitar

Wingman: Bossman

Mission: Escort Draymans tankers back to the Claw.

Obstacles: Mines BTW Claw and Nav 1.

Opposition: BTW Claw and Nav 1.....4 Dralthi in minefield
Nav 1.....4 Gratha

Comments: No sign of Redclaw on this mission. The Dralthi present little difficulty but the Gratha must be waxed with speed and firmness to save both Draymans. The minefield on the trip back is clear.

Hangar Deck: Bronze Star for saving 2 sports.

Lounge: Iceman is his usual crusty self. St. John has a lighter attitude, substance enhanced I'm afraid. Perhaps now we'll get a crack at Redclaw. Drink up, Maverick!

Mission 64 (Hubble's Star 2)

Assignment: Phi Wing Patrol

Fighter: Scimitar

Wingman: Bossman

Mission: Defend Claw from strike force in asteroids at Nav 1.

Obstacles: Asteroids at Nav 1.

Opposition: Nav 1.....3 Krant
Claw.....4 Gratha, 2 Jalthi including Bakhtosh Redclaw

Comments: This mission is essentially a repeat of one of the early winning missions (e-mail me if discover which one!).

Commander's Office: Reassignment to Star Slayer Squadron and Raptor-class heavy fighters. You now jump to the Rostov System and have another crack at the winning path and the chance to win and go to Venice and victory. Silver Star presented in Rostov for offing Redclaw.

The Walkthrough now goes to Hell's Kitchen and the worst of the worst. Find out first hand where the famous rotgut swill got its name!

HELL'S KITCHEN SYSTEM

Lounge: Listen to the depressing comments of friend Shotgun. Toadstool sounds like it's going to get sticky. Paladin is still going on about Khajja.

Mission 65 (Hell's Kitchen 0)

Assignment: Star Slayer Squadron/Beta Wing Rendezvous

Fighter: Scimitar

Wingman: Hunter

Mission: Escort incoming refugee Drayman from Cheng-Du. Kill Khajja.

Obstacles: none

Opposition: BTW Claw and Nav 1.....4 Salthi

Nav 1.....4 Krant including Khajja the Fang

BTW Nav 1 and Claw.....3 Gratha

Comments: The situation is desperate. Get out there and save those refugees. Khajja is slippery and irritating but blasting him to bits and hearing his final noble sentiment will more than compensate for this. Don't forget that your primary duty is to the Drayman with its hundreds of innocent women and children. Swift, uncompromising action will eradicate the Krant and Gratha before the Drayman goes down with all hands.

Lounge: Stop into the rec room for another case of deja vu. Bhurak Starkiller is on his way now too, with all surviving aces in system. Hear about turkey shoot strategies from the Maniac and the Boss. Sound familiar? It will if you've traversed the winning path before.

Mission 66 (Hell's Kitchen 1)

Assignment: Theta Wing Strike

Fighter: Scimitar

Wingman: Hunter

Mission: Shoot out to Nav 1 and kill Fralthi and escort.

Obstacles: Mines BTW Claw and Nav 1.

Opposition: BTW Claw and Nav 1.....3 Salthi including Bhurak.

Nav 1.....6 Gratha, 1 Fralthi

Comments: Planck's Star lost. Fly out and kill the attack ships jumping in from that system. The gnats are a pain but the mines will help. Concentrate on Starkiller until he's dusted, then clean up the others. The Gratha are fairly far apart so kill the first four, then do the final two when they reach you. After that frying the Fralthi is like shooting fish in a barrel as long as you have fuel and shields intact.

Hangar Deck: Gold Star awarded for perfect performance here.

Lounge: Things are really starting to decline in system now. Hear the old familiar Ice/Hunter argument on using mines against the enemy.

Mission 67 (Hell's Kitchen 2)

Assignment: Mu Wing Defend

Fighter: Scimitar

Wingman: Hunter

Mission: Protect Exeter from Dralthi attack. Avoid enemies en route.

Obstacles: Mines BTW Claw and Nav 1.

Opposition: BTW Claw and Nav 1.....5 Salthi in minefields

Nav 1.....4 Dralthi incl. Dakhath, 4 Gratha

Comments: Once more into the breach! There seems to be no penalty for killing the Salthi first unless you take damage that impedes your defense of the Exeter. Ace the ace (the least dangerous of all Kilrathi aces, whatever Intel may think) and the other three pancakes since the Gratha will arrive quickly from behind the Exeter. Get over there and dispatch them with dispatch! Follow the Exeter around the minefields since she knows the way, or get in close until she greets you and auto back through the minefields. Here you will be glad to have killed the Salthi first against orders, since it was a lot easier than doing it with an Exeter to defend!

Commander's Office: Promotion to the rank of Major.

Lounge: Hear about the fall of Toadstool from Sam. Listen to Paladin lament Confed's defeat at the hands of the cats. Angel seems cheerful enough, considering. She fails to gloat about all aces being killed, but lets on that more are on the way.

Mission 68 (Hell's Kitchen 3)

Assignment: Psi Wing Patrol

Fighter: Scimitar

Wingman: Hunter

Mission: Kill Ralari and provide rear guard for Tiger's Claw.

Obstacles: Asteroids surrounding Claw, mines BTW Navs 1&2.

Opposition: Nav 1.....2 Gratha, 1 Ralari

BTW Nav 1 and Nav 2.....4 Salthi including Bhurak

5 Dralthi including Dakhath

3 Jalathi including Bakhtosh

4 Krant including Khajja

Comments: Help the Claw fall back to Proxima Centauri by eradicating the attack force swarming against the Claw. Nav 1 is no big deal, but the continuous wings of fighters and aces of every description will demand maximum fuel-to-kill performance. Be sparing and economical, which means to kill everything as quickly and painlessly as possible. Hunter is a true ace so use him to best advantage. Kill the aces quickly and their comrades will seem easier to destroy. Even if you kill everything, you still get a chewing out from the Colonel for landing while the fighter is still under attack. Doesn't he realize you can't get clearance until the coast is clear? Pilots are just such a misunderstood bunch.... You can wait till hell's kitchen freezes over and that second wing of Krant won't show up. Halcyon has to blame someone for his miserable failure in the Vega Sector, I guess.

If you survive this little outing the Claw jumps to the Goddard missions. In other words, the fate of the Earth is not at stake in this game as it is in WCIII, and the following secret missions are really distinct games except for continued killscores and the survival of wingmen. Retreat to Proxima

is confined to the transports, since you are headed for Goddard after this mission.

This Walkthrough now takes you even lower into the bowels of abysmal failure and ignominious defeat, with the losing missions of Secret Missions 1. These are basically attempts to keep an organized retreat from becoming a complete rout. Good luck!

RETREAT FROM KILRATHI SPACE

Lounge: Get depressed with Sam and the ladies in the rec room.

Mission 69 (Retreat 0)

Assignment: Iota Wing Strike

Fighter: Scimitar

Wingman: Maniac

Mission: Patrol three nav points and destroy all opposition.

Obstacles: Asteroids surrounding Claw, mines BTW Navs 1&2.

Opposition: Nav 1.....4 Krant, 1 Fralthi

Nav 2..... 15 Dralthi

Nav 3.....3 Gratha, 2 Ralari

Comments: Basically another kill everything you see mission. The real challenge is taking on 15 Dralthi at once. Fortunately they come in waves but if you love hopeless odds, this is a mission you can enjoy time and again! You deserve a medal if you can kill them all and make it back to tell the tale.

Lounge: Sam sends you packing. Code Red Alert!

Mission 70 (Retreat 1)

Assignment: Upsilon Wing Defend

Fighter: Scimitar

Wingman: Maniac

Mission: Kill Ralari and provide rear guard for Tiger's Claw.

Obstacles: Mines further out.

Opposition: Launch.....6 Dralthi, 6 Gratha, 3 Jalathi, 5 Krant,

3 more Gratha

Comments: Kill, kill, kill! What more can be said?

Commander's Office: Reassignment to whatever's available. You jump to the Tartarus System.

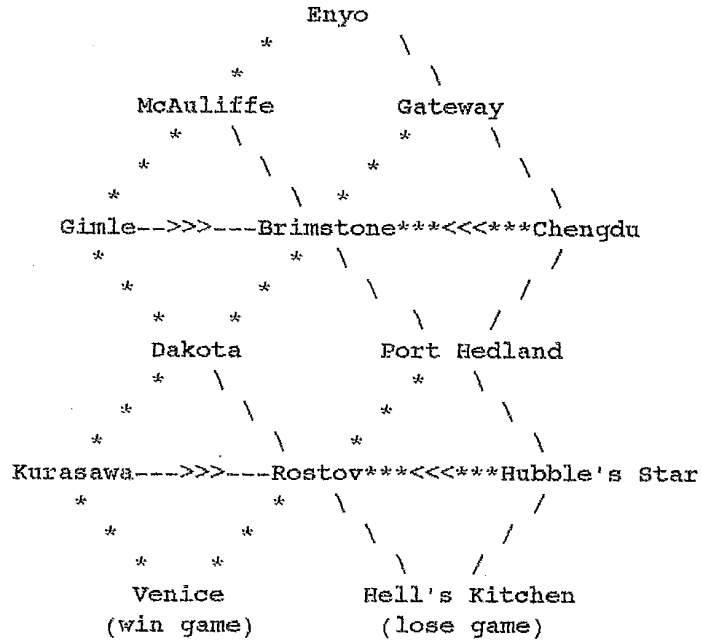
The best I can make out, the final secret missions are not subject to failure other than death or a good chewing out by the Colonel. The research base in the final mission must be destroyed to reach the cutscene and the successful conclusion of the game. Otherwise all you get is a GAME OVER (original, huh) message.

APPENDIX I: MISSION TREES

Super Wing Commander

**** represents the winning path

---- represents the losing path



Secret Missions 1

Losing one later system
forces you into retreat
and loses the game.

```

Goddard
 *
 *
Border Zone
 *
 *
Midgard
 *
 *
Jotunheim
 *
 *
BiFrost
 *
 *
Valgard
 *
 *
Vigrid
 *
 *
(Win Game)
  
```

Secret Missions 2

Failing any mission but
the last has no impact on
the game other than a stiff
dressing down from the
Colonel.

Tartarus
*
*
Cairo
*
*
Anchorage
*
*
Jakarta
*
*
*
(Win Game)

Adapted with thanks from the Wing Commander I Mission Tree found on the Unofficial Wing Commander page operated by Patrick Bryant (bryantpe@vt.edu).

According to the box there are 72 missions in all, which means I have missed two. If anyone locates these missing missions, please e-mail me at ~~jmanroe@mars.dtiinet.or.jp~~ fiddlejam@gmail.com

APPENDIX II: FUN THINGS TO TRY

Watch for Ultima green witch to fly by the rec room window somewhere in the secret missions, just when everyone is close to going bonkers. Got a great screenshot of it but can't remember exactly which mission. Had been sitting around the lounge for five or ten minutes before she turned up. Only saw it once in at least 50 times through the entire game. Allow all your wingmen to be killed by powering down and hovering just outside the launch bay with the Claw to your left (spin around if nothing happens) and letting them ram themselves into it until they die (you can also shoot them with impunity unlike WCIII or IV, but I find this rather distasteful). You'll have to fly all subsequent missions alone so do it at the latest possible point in the game (see this walkthrough to know when that is). Survive to the end of the secret missions and kill the final research base. You will experience paranormal psychic phenomena on an unprecedented scale. Close encounters of the fourth kind. Leave it to Angel to make a pass at you only once she's firmly in the grave! Personally I find Spirit has the best remarks for a bushido warrior like yours truly, but with a moniker like "Gaijin" I guess that's hardly surprising. BTW, the word means 'outsider' or 'outlander'; any guesses on how I got it? Jazz seems hard to kill even if he dies, never have heard his or Doomsday's postmortem peptalks. Bossman of course is written out so he fails to make an appearance here.

On a hunch, tried killing the Exeter at Nav 1 in Mission 15 (Venice 0) to see if it would affect the Gwenhyvar mission later on. No dice, but no demerits or other penalties for downing the destroyer, other than a guilty conscience. I have a feeling I once destroyed the Exeter and its entire escort of 2 Rapiers and then the Gwenhyvar mission failed to appear, but I could never reproduce this so it may have been a bout of whatever disease Maniac suffers from). In any case this is a good chance to practice for Mission 27, and see how much punishment the destroyer can take.

Jaithi packs: Ride herd on them to confuse them and pick them off one by one. Often if you force them around into a swarm they will crash into each other or fry their buddies with their withering gunblasts. Don't let that stop you from helping them finish the job! If things get hot burn away and challenge individuals to a one-on-one. Repeat until their glowing reactor meltdowns illuminate the battlefield. Stay away from their forward guns unless you really know what you're doing (I have won slugfests with them when I made the most of afterburners and watched my shield levels carefully--one or two hits can be withstood in a Raptor but more and you are toast).

APPENDIX III: GAIJIN'S SWC MAC MISSION PREF FILES

0=Start new game to access Mission 1 (Enyo 0)

Pref 1

1=Mission 2 (Enyo 1)

2=Mission 3 (McAuliffe 0)

3=Mission 4 (McAuliffe 1)

4=Mission 5 (McAuliffe 2)

5=Mission 6 (Gimle 0)

6=Mission 7 (Gimle 1)

7=Mission 8 (Gimle 2)

8=Mission 9 (Dakota 0)

Pref 2

1=Mission 10 (Dakota 1)

2=Mission 11 (Dakota 2)

3=Mission 12 (Kurasawa 0)

4=Mission 13 (Kurasawa 1)

5=Mission 14 (Kurasawa 2)

6=Mission 15 (Venice 0)

7=Mission 16 (Venice 1)

8=Mission 17 (Venice 2)

Pref 3

1=Mission 18 (Venice 3)

2=Mission 19 (Goddard 0)

3=Mission 20 (Goddard 1)

4=Mission 21 (Border Zone 0)

5=Mission 22 (Border Zone 1)

6=Mission 23 (Midgard 0)
7=Mission 24 (Midgard 1)
8=Mission 25 (Jotunheim 0)
Pref 4

1=Mission 26 (Jotunheim 1)
2=Mission 27 (Jotunheim 2)
3=Mission 28 (Bifrost 0)
4=Mission 29 (Bifrost 1)
5=Mission 30 (Valgard 0)
6=Mission 31 (Valgard 1)
7=Mission 32 (Valgard 2)
8=Mission 33 (Vigrid 0)
Pref 5

1=Mission 34 (Vigrid 1)
2=Mission 35 (Tartarus 0)
3=Mission 36 (Tartarus 1)
4=Mission 37 (Cairo 0)
5=Mission 38 (Cairo 1)
6=Mission 39 (Cairo 2)
7=Mission 40 (Anchorage 0)
8=Mission 41 (Anchorage 1)
Pref 6

1=Mission 42 (Anchorage 2)
2=Mission 43 (Jakarta 0)
3=Mission 44 (Jakarta 1)
4=Mission 45 (Jakarta 2)
5=Mission 46 (Jakarta 3)--final winning mission; losing path follows:
6=Mission 47 (Gateway 0)--beginning of losing path (still winnable!)
7=Mission 48 (Gateway 1)
8=Mission 49 (Gateway 2)
Pref 7

1=Mission 50 (Brimstone 0)
2=Mission 51 (Brimstone 1)
3=Mission 52 (Brimstone 2)
4=Mission 53 (Port Hedland 0)
5=Mission 54 (Port Hedland 1)
6=Mission 55 (Port Hedland 2)
7=Mission 56 (Rostov 0)
8=Mission 57 (Rostov 1)
Pref 8

1=Mission 58 (Rostov 2)
2=Mission 59 (Chengdu 0)
3=Mission 60 (Chengdu 1)
4=Mission 61 (Chengdu 2)
6=Mission 62 (Hubble's Star 0)
7=Mission 63 (Hubble's Star 1)
8=Mission 64 (Hubble's Star 2)

Pref 9

1=Mission 65 (Hell's Kitchen 0)

2=Mission 66 (Hell's Kitchen 1)

3=Mission 67 (Hell's Kitchen 2)

4=Mission 68 (Hell's Kitchen 3)

5=Mission 69 (Retreat 0)

6=Mission 70 (Retreat 1)

Thanks to:

Origin for the fantastic world of Wing Commander.

For inspiration, hints, thoughtwave synergies, thanks to the following:

Walkthrough and tactical analysis authors everywhere, especially:

Matt "Popeye" Doyel (US Navy F-14 Radar Intercept Officer--thanks for the quotes and the fantastic tactical briefing for 20th Century fighters),

Patrick Bryant, The Wing Commander Aces, Tom Morrison, Akkbar, gcordle, Lt. Col. "Digger" Ward, and many more too numerous to mention.

Thanks to Ben "Bandit (LOAF)" Lesnick for the "technical assistance" and encouragement.

Recommended further briefing materials:

Whatever Maniac may say, the Clawmarks inflight magazine is far and away the best resource for successful completion of Super Wing Commander. If you master the techniques and strategies given here by Taggart and the rest of the fighter squadron members, you will survive and complete your mission objectives time and again. In addition to fully absorbing this comprehensive publication (I think it's the best documentation of any game I have owned), try the following materials. Walkthroughs and strategy briefings are available on the Internet and can easily be located with an Alta Vista search.

Wing Commander Hints and Strategy by Lt. Col. Ward (aka "Digger") is an excellent introduction to the fighters and tactics of the Vega Sector battles, and over 90 percent of what he writes applies directly to Super Wing Commander as well. One area where the SWC world differs is that it is almost always possible to down the first fighter (and sometimes damage the second) in an oncoming wing of cats by firing continuous volleys of cannonfire directly at their noses as they approach, then peeling off to the side as their fire begins to hit you. Begin firing when they are just beyond guns range since they will fly into it, and never, repeat never, try it with Jalthei fighters, who will indeed blow you to bits in an instant if they catch you with those magma-vomiting six-shooters. Also, missiles appear slightly more effective against fighters in SWC than in WCI. Jalthis in SWC are not skinny as in WCI, but Krant sure are!

At the risk of being denounced as a heretic, The Internet Guide to X-Wing Strategy, edited by Nick Vargish, is another guide that will give you some hints on space flying that can be applied to any space flight sim. Makes for fun reading, and I have found that becoming proficient in one space sim has had a beneficial effect on my prowess in the others.

Likewise for the X-Wing Combat Strategy by Adam Pletcher/Greg Cisko. While written for the PC they apply equally to the Mac version of X-Wing, and can trigger new ideas and approaches for SWC as well. Ditto for the Unofficial Walkthrough for Wing Commander III: Heart of the Tiger, by Col. Aubrey "Swiftheart" Chen, Col. Allen "Ninja" Kim Col. Klaus "Gremlin" Weidner, and Mark Meytin. Flying WCIII and WCIV are also a fantastic experience and will enhance your enjoyment of SWC as well. In fact, many of the strategies and skills I have applied with great success in SWC were gleaned from hours in the cockpit of the F/A-18 Hornet by Graphic Simulations Corporation. Unscintillating as we may find her conversation, Angel hits the nail on the head when she advises us to learn from nearly 800 years of combat flying experience. Matt "Popeye" Doyel's Tactical Air Combat Maneuvering in GSC's F/A-18 Hornet (available on the web) was perhaps the most gripping and realistic introduction to dogfighting, since the author is writing with extensive real-life F-14 cockpit experience.

Films such as The Blue Macs, Aces High (with Malcolm McDowell--this one is very close in look and feel to SWC, believe it or not!), Tora! Tora! Tora!, The Battle of Britain, the Star Wars series, Top Gun, and many more are the best way to get a feel for churning burning dogfight tactics. Other films such as Stalingrad (from the makers of Das Boot), The Battle of the Bulge, and especially the phenomenal Patton, provide insight into the gutsy, relentless intensity required to achieve victory in battle.

Patrick Bryant's Wing Commander IV page provided the inspiration and basic format for this walkthrough, and makes for great reading while enhancing game play and enjoyment of that game for both the PC and Mac. Thanks Patrick for your encouragement and inspiration!

For background info the Wing Commander books are worthwhile--although story line, plot and writing quality, and opinions of Admiral Tolwyn are highly inconsistent, they provide plenty of Hardy Boys level detail and color to flesh out your WC experience.

Wing Commander: Freedom Flight

by Mercedes Lackey/Ellen Guon
(circa SWC/WCI, great if you play)

Wing Commander: End Run

by Christopher Stasheff/William R. Forstchen
(circa WCII, haven't read it yet)

Wing Commander: Fleet Action

by William R. Forstchen

(1 year prior to WCIII, fantastic battle action. Tolwyn's a hero)

Wing Commander: Heart of the Tiger

by William R. Forstchen/Andrew Keith

(WCIII-basically a walkthrough and none too engaging. Hard to believe the same person who wrote FF and FA could have been involved)

Wing Commander: The Price of Freedom
by William Forstchen and Ben Ohlander
(WCIV, available soon, looks promising)

In addition, here is a list of my favorite weblinks related to space,
aviation, dogfighting, military and simulations.

Follow the links from Patrick Bryant's site to many fine WC sectors on the web.
Patrick's definitive Unofficial Wing Commander WWW is at
<http://tcu.why.com/>

Introspection's Wing Commander Home Sector (news, links)
<http://home.cdsnet.net/~akkbar/wclinks.html>

The Jump Point (hints, cheats, links)
<http://www.greenapple.com/~gcordle/framebtn.html>

Macintosh Wing Commander 4 (Origin's site)
<http://www.ea.co/origin/english/prod-info/macintosh/wing-4/index.html>

Phoenix - Wing Commander (more cool stuff)
<http://falcon.jmu.edu/~schollks/wing/html>

Vulture's Row Home Page (comprehensive 20th Century fighter site)
<http://www.webcom.com/~amraam/vulrow.html>

F-14 Tomcat's Lair (devoted to the Raptor of late 20th Century!)
<http://www.pantless.com/~vtx/>

Aviation Links (as all-encompassing and complete as its name)
<http://web-hou.iapc.net/~srnh/linksav.html>

Unofficial Mac X-Wing Home Page (if you're openminded you can learn)
<http://life.bio.sunysb.edu/mcb/hunter/xwing.html>

Search Usenet and the web for Mac-related gaming info. Beats the Claw's
onboard computer by a long shot! ;-)

Rishi's Mac Wing Commander 4 Page
<http://www.cyberus.ca/~risgupta/macwciv/>

Tons of links to aviation sites via:
Scott Cherkofsky's Macintosh Flight Simulator Page
http://www.shirenet.com/crusader/html/Flight_Simulators.html

Tom Morrison's definitive Macintosh Flight Simulator Page
<http://www.xmission.com:80/~morrison/MFS/>

Libby's Flight Sim Page
<http://www.cris.com/~sheinfel/flight.html>

Disclaimer

The above walkthrough was written by Col. John "Gaijin" Munroe for the benefit and amusement of would-be Super Wing Commanders everywhere. It is not intended for profit, but rather to increase the enjoyment and popularity of the game in its Mac and 3D0 incarnations. Any errors or omissions are those of the author, and may they be forgiven. Please contact me at jmunroe@mars.dtinnet.or.jp with comments, corrections, additions, or critique of a constructive nature.

I will be happy to amend and update this walkthrough as my schedule of tea and swordfighting allows! ;-)

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Those wishing to publish it or parts of it other than on the Net are requested to contact John Munroe at jmunroe@mars.dtinnet.or.jp
Thank you.

May all beings abide in peace and contentment.

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