



Field Commander's Handbook

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GETTING STARTED

Please note that the keyboard commands mentioned in this manual are referenced to the default settings. If the default settings have been changed, the keyboard commands may no longer be true to your system.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

In order to be able to play *GROUND CONTROL II*, your computer should at least be equipped with:

Minimum System Requirements

- ✧ Intel® Pentium III processor or AMD® Athlon™ processor equivalent
- ✧ Processor Speed: 800 MHz
- ✧ Windows® 98/2000/ME/XP
- ✧ 128 MB RAM
- ✧ DirectX® 9.0b or higher
- ✧ 32 MB AGP® video card supporting Hardware Transform and Lighting capability using NVIDIA® GeForce™, ATI® Radeon™, or a more recent chipset with a DirectX® 9-compatible driver
- ✧ DirectX® 9.0b-compatible sound card
- ✧ Up to 1.5GB hard drive space
- ✧ Minimum 56K modem for online play

Recommended System Requirements

- ✧ Intel® Pentium 4 processor or AMD® Athlon™ XP processor
- ✧ Processor Speed: 1.5 GHz
- ✧ Windows® XP
- ✧ 256 MB RAM
- ✧ 128 MB AGP® video card
- ✧ High bandwidth/Broadband Internet connection for online play

INSTALLING GROUND CONTROL II

Northern Star Alliance high command recommends that you take the time to run Disk Defragmenter on the current hard drive before you install the game. Disk Defragmenter is activated via the Start button on the Windows taskbar. Follow its instructions.

Before you install the game, make sure that your computer has the latest hardware drivers installed. Old drivers can stop the game from working properly.

Insert the *GROUND CONTROL II* CD into your CD-ROM drive. The installation program runs automatically. Follow the on-screen instructions. At the beginning of the installation process you are prompted to install Direct®X 9.0b if you do not have Direct®X9.0b or higher. DirectX®9.0b is required in order to run the game.

If the installation program doesn't automatically appear, double-click the My Computer icon on the Desktop, then double-click on the CD-ROM/DVD-ROM drive in which the game CD is inserted. Double-click on the "setup.exe" file to launch the installation program.

BACKGROUND

We haven't always been at war with the Imps, but it's all I've ever known.

– Captain Jacob Angelus, NSA Armed Forces

THE PAST (2093-2418)

- ★ **2093:** Humanity is almost wiped out in the Sixteen Minutes War.
- ★ **2110:** The Order of the New Dawn is the first to emerge from the nuclear fallout shelters and begins to rebuild the civilized world. It is followed by several surviving major corporations, most notably The Crayven Corporation.
- ★ **2207:** The FTL-Drive is created, enabling mankind to begin the colonization of space. Travel distances of up to ten light-years/day are achieved, but the FTL technology cannot be used to leave the outer ring of the Milky Way galaxy.
- ★ **2208–2400:** Mankind manages to terra-form several uninhabitable worlds into colonies suitable for human life. Two groups of colonies are established, the Inner and the Outer Sphere, separated by the **Henrich Barrier**. A string of hadron particles disrupts all non-tachyon-based signals that pass through it. To counter these effects, a belt of **Tachyon Com Relays** are set up to permit communication between the spheres.



THE DRACONIS EMPIRE (2399)

In the wake of humanity's expansion from Earth, one of the new nations emerging was founded by Colony Commander **Marcus Augustus**. Augustus established an independent colony on the planet Draconis-5. The Draconis Empire was declared, and Augustus became its emperor.

Meanwhile the Earth's government, fearful of triggering a massive war in this frontier, refrained from military action against the Draconis. Several awkward political situations arose between the leaders, leading to an increasing use of military power, much of which was composed of mercenary forces.

THE BATTLE OF KRIG (2419-2420)

In 2419 a battle was fought on the backwater planet of Krig-7b between the Crayven Corporation and the Order of the New Dawn. The war escalated from a regular colony acquisition to a dangerous race for the capture of million-year-old alien technology. It was discovered that Krig-7b was the nexus of a galactic network of Xenofacts created for an unknown purpose by an ancient race of unknown aliens. **Major Sarah Parker** of the Crayven Corporation managed to defuse the situation by destroying the largest Xenofact. When she did, a strange beam of light erupted from the spot for a few seconds.

Why Major Sarah Parker sabotaged the Earth's Early Warning Relay two months later is unknown, but it left Earth vulnerable and unable to react to the initial events of the **First Stellar War**.

INDEPENDENCE WARS (2422-2429)

Under the heavy taxation demanded by Earth, it was only a matter of time before the corporations began objecting and eventually seeking independence just as the Draconis Empire had done. They were certain they could survive without the protection of Earth. The Crayven Corporation, **Welby-Simms**, and the Order of the New Dawn already had huge military assets and controlled many colonies.

Welby-Simms Corporation was the first to declare independence in 2422 and so marked the start of the **Independence Wars**. The insurrection spread throughout the colonies like the Black Plague. A few years later, the majority of the colonies in the **Outer Sphere** had declared themselves independent. Several alliances, coalitions and unions were formed. In 2429 Earth's government had lost most of its former power and only controlled a handful of remaining colonies.

No one ever won a battle by failing to take advantage of his enemy's weakness.
—Emperor Augustus

THE FIRST STELLAR WAR (2431-2501)

The Draconis Empire saw the global insurrection as the perfect time to mount an offensive campaign against the crippled Earth Government. A huge war erupted between the two powerful nations. The war did not remain confined, as Crayven Corporation and the other major corporations, coalitions and colonies

saw the perfect opportunity to gain more power and influence. Mankind had experienced war before, but the magnitude and scope of the **Stellar War** was unsurpassed. Several core colonies were annihilated, others isolated. Several deep space Tachyon Com relays and space stations were destroyed, severing communication with the Outer Sphere.

During the First Stellar War, more than 50 colonized star systems fell under Draconis control, economically and militarily. With the end of the First Stellar War, the power and independence of the Draconis Empire was unquestionable.

THE AGE OF SILENCE (2501-2699)

The First Stellar War left all of mankind licking its wounds. The Draconis Empire, though victorious, was forced to commit all its resources to maintaining control over and stability of the Inner Sphere and Earth. With the interstellar com-relays all destroyed, no communications could pass through the **Henrich Barrier**—the string of hadron particles that intersect the Spheres and disrupts all non-tachyon-based signals. The supply convoys stopped coming from the Inner Sphere and the outer colonies were left to fend for themselves. Starvation, disease and petty rivalry left many worlds devastated. Much of the technology built by the old corporations was destroyed or worn out; the knowledge to repair them lost.

But proving yet again that mankind does not suffer defeat lightly, the outer colonies slowly began to recover. Contact between the outer colonies was reestablished. As much technology was salvaged as possible, and space travel between them was again a reality. Alliances were forged and treaties were signed, resulting in the creation of two star-spanning nations: the Intergalactic Trade Guild and the **Northern Star Alliance**.

The Northern Star Alliance is a treaty between twenty-three of the Outer Sphere's twenty-nine star systems. In 2690 a treaty was reached after a historic meeting on **Ariel Prime**, the outer colony closest to the Inner Sphere. A young man named **Warhurst**, from the colony of **Morningstar Prime**, was instrumental in uniting the planets. The Alliance is governed by a democratic council, consisting of representatives from each world. Three times a year the council meets on Morningstar Prime, which has become the NSA capital.

Once the NSA was established, the combined efforts of the colonies enabled a huge space fleet to be constructed, as well as several large cities on most planets in the Alliance. No attempt was made by the NSA to cross the Heinrich Barrier or contact the worlds in the Inner Sphere. What little information filtered through came by way of the Trade Guild, and that information was always vague and unsubstantiated. Rumors of tyranny, indoctrination camps, and other terrors were enough to make members of the NSA cover their eyes and ears and ignore the Inner Sphere. Until one day in 2699 when everything changed.

THE SECOND STELLAR WAR

After the First Stellar War, the Draconis Empire closed its borders to the Outer Sphere by purposely destroying the tachyon com-relays lining the Heinrich Barrier and seeding it with grav-mines. So little information trickled out that the outer colonies almost forgot the horrors of the Stellar War. Many believed that the Emperor had been unable to maintain control and that the worlds of the Inner Sphere had succumbed to internal strife and destroyed themselves.

On October 5, 2699, the Draconis Empire, now renamed the Empire of Terra, struck without warning or mercy. A huge fleet of ships emerged from the Inner Sphere and began methodically attacking the worlds of the NSA. Ariel Prime was the first planet to fall, conquered by a young woman-Imperator Vlaana Azleea. Major cities were obliterated with orbital bombardments followed by the landing of a huge occupation force.

The NSA war machine rumbled into motion to counter the Terran invasion. While the NSA fleet engaged Vlaana's armada in space, plans were set in motion on the colonies to protect the cities from orbital bombardment. Huge electromagnetic energy domes and other defense systems were put in place in many cities. The NSA fleet was able to stand firm against the onslaught.

For twenty-nine years the war continued to be fought in space until, in one decisive battle, the NSA fleet was finally wiped out. With the Empire's forces worn thin and scattered throughout the Outer Sphere, the Emperor charged Vlaana Azleea, now his right-hand agent, with mounting ground wars in the last resisting colonies.

THE PRESENT SITUATION (2741)

Imperator Vlaana has managed to gain control of nearly all NSA worlds and is now laying siege to Morningstar Prime. The brilliant leadership of General Warhurst has so far kept her from achieving her goal. The war is currently at a stalemate. The NSA is backed into a corner and cannot hold out for much longer, but Vlaana's forces are spread throughout the quadrant as she keeps a stranglehold on the rest of the colonies. Something has to give and eventually something will...

QUICK START

This section deals with commanders who are eager to start their military careers as soon as possible.

After the game introduction movie is played, you will see the main menu. Click on the SINGLE PLAYER button. You will see the different options available. Click on CAMPAIGNS and then select the TUTORIAL. It will teach you the basic controls of the game and allow you to get up to speed quickly. When you've completed the tutorial, continue on to the next campaign—the NSA CAMPAIGN.

If you just want to get started with a skirmish battle, select SINGLE PLAYER and then SKIRMISH. This will allow you to select a map and a computer opponent, and get started immediately.

Multiplayer battles are played over Massgate™ – Click on the MASSGATE™ button and follow the on-screen instructions.

GAME MENUS

MAIN MENU



✧ SINGLE-PLAYER

You can play the *GROUND CONTROL II* single-player campaigns (including the tutorial), skirmish battles against computer opponents, or custom scenarios.

★ **MASSGATE™**

In order to play *GROUND CONTROL II* on the Internet, you need to connect to Massgate™. Through Massgate™ you'll be able to play ranked multiplayer games, action oriented drop-in games, or cooperative games.

★ **LOCAL AREA NETWORK**

Play multiplayer games over your Local Area Network. You can play against other players or together in cooperative mode.

★ **PROFILE**

When you start the game for the first time, the default selected profile will be named "Player." Click on the Profile button to create or select a new profile. All save games, campaign progress and game options will be saved to the currently selected.

★ **OPTIONS**

Change the game settings.

SINGLE-PLAYER MENU



★ **CAMPAIGNS**

Click on CAMPAIGNS to start a new or continue a single-player campaign. We strongly recommend that you play the campaigns in the correct order to fully enjoy the epic story of *GROUND CONTROL II*.

✱ COOPERATIVE

Click on COOPERATIVE to start a multiplayer cooperative game, where you can play the single-player missions together with friends over the Internet or on your LAN. To play a game over a Local Area Network, you must have two or more computers connected to an active TCP/IP-compatible network.

✱ CUSTOM MAPS

Click on CUSTOM MAPS to list all separately installed standalone missions. Custom maps can be provided by users who have created their own maps using the GROUND CONTROL II map editor XED.

✱ SKIRMISH

Click on SKIRMISH to start a multiplayer battle against computer opponents. Skirmish battle is a great way to get started on multiplayer tactics without playing against people.

Note that to play against more than one computer AI opponent you should have a fast computer.

✱ LOAD GAME

Click on LOAD GAME to bring up a list of previously saved games.

MASSGATE™



In order to play *GROUND CONTROL II* over the Internet, you need to connect to Massgate™, Massive Entertainment's free Internet gaming service. On Massgate™ you can find players from all over the world to challenge in multi-player games. Climb up the league ladder and earn respect from your fellow players. To log on, click on the Massgate™ button.

★ CREATE ACCOUNT

Before you enter Massgate™, you must first create a new account. Select a nickname (think it over; you will not be able to change it later on), password, country, and finally a working e-mail address. Write down your password and keep it safe.

PLEASE NOTE: Massive Entertainment will never ask for your password!

Also select your preferred region (Europe, North America, or Asia). You can change this later on if you wish, but it allows you to find players around your area.

★ GROUND CONTROL II LEAGUES

In order to play a ranked game in *GROUND CONTROL II*, you need to join a league (note that you can join any number of leagues). Whenever you are playing a game in a league, you will move up or down the league ladder depending on success, defeat, or tie.

★ WAITING ROOM

When you first connect to Massgate™, you'll be taken to the waiting room, where you are able to **Join & Create Games**, **Read Game News**, **Edit Your Account**, **View Ladder Rankings**, **Manage Friends**, and **Chat**.

★ PLAY GAMES

Click on the Games tab to receive a list of available servers. Select a server and click Join Game to join. You can also limit the amount of servers you get in the list by applying different filters. You can access these filters by clicking on the Filters button. You can also host your own server with the Host Game button.

Note that to properly host a multiplayer game you should have a broadband Internet connection and a fast computer.



★ LEAGUE LADDERS

All games played within a league are recorded and displayed in the League's Ladder. Players will move up and down the ladder depending on victory, defeat, or tie in played games.

There is a separate Ladder for normal and drop-in games. In drop-in games, the ranking is based on the number of kills inflicted and losses taken on the battlefield.

★ FRIENDS

In order to keep track of your friends and other players you enjoy playing with on Massgate™, you can add them to your friends list. This allows you to quickly send private messages and see if they are online.

★ PLAYER INFORMATION

You can view player information by selecting a player from the players list and clicking on the Show Info button.

★ CHAT ROOMS

When you enter Massgate™, you automatically start in the currently selected League chat room. You can change or create a new Chat room by clicking on the Chat room button.

★ EDIT ACCOUNT

This allows you to change your account information.

LOCAL AREA NETWORK MENU



To play a game over a Local Area Network, you must have two or more computers connected to an active TCP/IP-compatible network.

✧ **CREATE COOP (GAME)**

Click on the Create Coop button if you wish to host a cooperative game with up to two additional friends. Select the starting map and wait for your friends to join. When everyone has joined and checked ready, click Start Game to begin. Your objectives are exactly the same as in single-player mode.

Note that to properly host a coop game you should have a fast computer.

✧ **CREATE GAME**

Click on the Create Game button if you wish to host a multiplayer game. You'll be taken to the lobby, where the host will be able to set the map, victory conditions, and the option of allowing players to join after the game has started (drop-in). You can also add computer-controlled opponents by clicking on the player slots and selecting an AI (Artificial Intelligence) profile.

Note that to properly host a coop game you should have a fast computer.

✧ **JOIN GAME**

Click on the Join Game button to join the selected game. You will be taken to the lobby, where you can set your color, faction, and team. Check the ready box when you are...ready.

OPTIONS MENU

The Options Menu is where you can change the game settings, audio, appearance and if you need to, change the game to match your computer's hardware.

✧ **GAME OPTIONS**

The Game Options menu allows you to change general game options.

✧ **CONTROLS**

This menu allows you to reconfigure the keyboard shortcuts. Note that you can have a key assigned to several different commands.

✧ **MOUSE OPTIONS**

These options allow you to change the sensitivity and other options related to the mouse.

✧ **VISUAL OPTIONS**

The Visual Options menu allows you to change the quality of the game's appearance. If you experience a slow or jerky game, it could be greatly improved by lowering some of the game's visual settings.

✧ **SOUND OPTIONS**

This menu allows you to change the volume of the sound effects, music, voices, and cinematic sequences.

COMMANDING YOUR STRIKE FORCE

In order to become a successful field commander, you need to master how to order your Strike Force and interact with the battlefield.

CAMERA CONTROLS

The camera is your point of view and it is free roaming, meaning that you can put it anywhere on the battlefield facing in any direction. The camera view position on the battlefield is displayed on the tactical map. Note that even though you can place the camera anywhere, this does not mean that you can see units. Only enemy units that your own units or allies can see are visible in your view.

There are two different camera control schemes that can be used in *GROUND CONTROL II*—you can change between the camera modes in the **OPTIONS** under **GAME SETTINGS** or use the shortcut key (**SHIFT+C**).

FREE CAMERA (RECOMMENDED)

Rotate the camera view by moving the mouse cursor to the left or the right edge of the screen. By moving the mouse to the top or the bottom screen edge, you tilt the camera view upwards or downwards. The camera view is moved forward, backwards, or sideways with the **ARROW** keys.

By pressing and holding down the **CTRL** key while moving the mouse to the edges of the screen, the view will strafe in that direction.

TRADITIONAL RTS CAMERA

Move the camera around on the battlefield by using the **ARROW** keys or by moving the mouse to the edges of the screen. Pressing and holding down the **MIDDLE** mouse button (if one is available) allows you to change your viewing direction. Alternatively, you can also press and hold the **CTRL** button to rotate the camera when you move the mouse to the edges of the screen.

GENERAL CAMERA CONTROLS

The altitude of the camera view can be changed with the **PAGE UP** or **PAGE DOWN** key. If your mouse is equipped with a mouse wheel, you can use it to change the altitude as well.

You can also move the camera instantly to any location on the battlefield by simply left-clicking with the mouse on the minimap. Note that you cannot move the camera view outside the boundaries of the map.

You can order the camera view to track a certain unit by selecting it and clicking with the right mouse button on its portrait. When the camera view tracks a unit, it will follow it around the battlefield. The camera will remain locked until you press an **ARROW** key or double-click on another unit.

CONTROLLING YOUR UNITS

Giving orders to your units is a simple task mainly handled with the mouse. When you get more proficient in commanding your units, you should start experimenting with the shortcut keys.

Left Mouse Button

The LEFT mouse button is used to select units on the battlefield and to use unit options such as clicking on secondary mode, changing formation, etc.

SELECTING UNITS – To select a unit, simply LEFT-click on the unit. To select a group of units, left-click and then hold the mouse button pressed while you drag a box around the group. To deselect a unit, hold down SHIFT on the keyboard and then left-click on the unit you wish to deselect.

If you LEFT-click on empty ground, you will deselect your current selection of units.

Right Mouse Button

The RIGHT mouse button is used to give orders to your units on the battlefield. The mouse cursor is context sensitive so your units will execute their orders depending on what you click on.

MOVEMENT – To move your selected unit, point the mouse cursor to the location where you want the squad to move. Then with your RIGHT mouse button click on empty ground. Note that your units cannot move on all terrain. Some terrain is simply too steep or is occupied by trees or other landscape features.

It is possible to decide what direction your units should face after a move. Click on the desired location with the RIGHT mouse button, hold down the button and you will see a direction vector appear. Move the mouse to change the direction, and when you are satisfied, release the RIGHT mouse button.

ATTACK – If the cursor is over an enemy, it will change to an attack cursor. Click on enemy units with the RIGHT mouse button to issue an attack order. Your units will move towards the target if necessary and attack the target when it gets in range.

STACKING ORDERS (SHIFT + ORDER) – By holding down the SHIFT button on the keyboard and RIGHT-clicking you can give multiple orders. Your units will move through multiple waypoints and attack several targets. It is useful to issue multiple move orders if you want to make sure your units avoid a certain area.

Note that it is possible to stack both move and attack orders. Your units will execute your orders in the order you give them.

GROUPING UNITS (Default: CTRL + number)

You can form groups among your units and assign each group a special shortcut key to enable yourself to quickly select several units. Select the units you wish to add to the group and then press <CTRL> and a number key (1, 2, 3...9). To select the group, simply press the designated number (1–9). If you press the number an additional time, your view will move to the group's location. Whenever a group is created, a squad button appears in the interface.

LEFT-click on the squad button to select the squad or RIGHT-click to move the camera to the squad's position. The Squad button will flash if any squad member is under attack.

THE INTERFACE



- 1 - Unit information
- 2 - Unit orders
- 3 - Tactical panel

- 4 - Mini map
- 5 - Dropship orders
- 6 - Status bar

To use the interface, use the LEFT mouse button. If you are required to select a target (a unit or location), you should also confirm with the LEFT mouse button. For example, to give a move order through the interface, LEFT-click on the move icon and then LEFT-click on the location you want your unit to move to.

UNIT INFORMATION

When a unit is selected, its values and statistics are displayed in the Unit Information panel. If several units are selected, only their icons are displayed.

UNIT ORDERS

This area of the interface displays the orders available to your selected unit(s).



ATTACK (Default: A) – Orders your selected unit to attack. Requires you to select a target. The attack icon is dimmed if the unit lacks attack capability.



MOVE (Default: M) – Orders your selected unit to move. Requires you to select a location to move to. The move icon is invisible if the unit is immobile (for example, the NSA Ravager Terradyne cannot move while in Fortress mode).



STOP (Default: S) – Orders your selected unit to cease current order.



ENTER BUILDING/TRANSPORT (Default: L) – If you have infantry selected you can order them to enter a transport, gun emplacement or building by clicking on the target with the RIGHT mouse button.



UNLOAD UNITS (Default: U) – To unload a unit from a building, simply select the unit and give it a move order. The infantry will leave and move to the selected location. Unloading a unit from a transport or gun emplacement is even easier-select the transport/gun emplacement and LEFT-click on the unit's portrait in the interface.



MELDING UNITS (Default: E) – The Viron faction can meld units to create even more powerful ones. If you have a Viron unit selected and RIGHT-click on a Viron unit that you can meld, the two units will close in and meld. You can see in the interface what the result of the two melded units will be.



An already melded unit can be UNMELED to bring back the original units in the meld. In order to unmeld a unit, select it and click on the unmeld icon. Note that only already melded units can be unmelded. For more information about melding, see the section on Virons.



REPAIRING UNITS (Default: R) – If you have engineers selected and RIGHT-click on a friendly unit, your engineers will move up and begin to repair. Note that engineers are fragile and repairs carried out in the midst of a firefight can be hazardous to them.

UNIT SECONDARY MODE (Default: X) – Some units have two modes, a primary and a secondary. By LEFT clicking on the unit's mode button in the unit order interface, you can change its mode. The unit will stay in secondary mode until manually ordered to change back. Read more about the secondary modes in the unit guide later in this manual.

TACTICAL PANEL



FORMATIONS (Default: F) – LEFT-click on the formation button to display available formations. LEFT-click on the formation you want, and your selected units will move into that formation.



SUPPORT WEAPONS – LEFT-click on the Support Weapon button to display available support weapons.

LEFT-click on the support weapon you want to use and then LEFT-click on the target location. A dimmed support weapon icon indicates that you do not have enough Acquisition Points to spend.



UNIT BEHAVIOR – LEFT click on the Behavior button to display available unit behaviors. Your selected units will use that behavior. Available behaviors are as follows:

FREE FIRE – Your units will attack enemy on sight.

RETURN FIRE – Your units will only return enemy fire. Especially useful in missions requiring a more stealthy approach.

HOLD FIRE – Your units will not attack the enemy unless manually ordered to.



CAMERA TOGGLE (Default: Shift + C) – Left-click on the Camera Toggle to change between the Free and Traditional RTS camera mode.



MISSION OBJECTIVES (Default: N) – LEFT-click on the Objectives button to display your mission objectives. Each active objective is listed, and by LEFT-clicking on an objective a more detailed description appears.

These objectives must be completed in order to successfully complete the map. Objectives are marked on the minimap with blue circles.

MINI MAP

In the bottom left corner is the Tactical Map, the Field Commander's best friend. The tactical map shows you a top-down view of the entire battlefield.

The units you command show up as dots in your color, with the currently selected unit(s) blinking. Other players' units or the computer's units show up in their respective color.

A white cone marks your current camera view position, with your view expanding along the cone. Use the cone to see where your view is on the battlefield.

Blue circles on the tactical map indicate that the position is the location of a mission objective. The blue circle will disappear when you have completed the objective.

White-filled circles indicate a neutral Landing Zone or Victory Location. Green-filled circles indicate a Landing Zone under your control and indicate that you can order a dropship to land at that location. Red-filled circles indicate a Landing Zone controlled by the enemy.

Clicking on the tactical map with the LEFT mouse button instantly moves your camera view to that location. It is also possible to issue orders to selected units on the small map, just as you would do in the camera view.

ZOOM MAP – The + and the – buttons next to the map allow you to zoom in and zoom out respectively to get a clearer view of the battlefield.

MAP SIGNAL – You can give signals to other players on your own team by LEFT-clicking on the signal button (between the zoom in and zoom out keys) and then on a location on the mini map. This can be used to quickly coordinate attacks.

ACQUISITION POINTS (AP)



The Acquisition Points shows you how many AP you have to spend on reinforcements, support weapons, or dropship upgrades. For more detailed information regarding AP, see the section on Tactics below.

MAINTENANCE

The Maintenance Display shows how many units you have on the battlefield and the percentage of AP that you are receiving. As your unit number increases, it will begin to take its toll on the support cost of maintaining your force. The maintenance is paid for directly and comes from your AP income.

TEAM

In multiplayer and cooperative games you can give units to your team members. LEFT-click on the TEAM button. Click on the GIVE UNITS button on the selected team member, and the units you currently have selected will be transferred to that player's control.

CHAT (default: CONTROL + ENTER)

To chat with your fellow players, press CONTROL + ENTER to bring up the chat box. Type your message and then hit ENTER again to send the message.

TEAM CHAT (default: ENTER)

To send messages to your allied team, press ENTER and type the message. Press ENTER to send the message.

SCORE SHEET (Default: BACKSPACE)

Activate the score sheet by pressing the BACKSPACE key on the keyboard. It shows the current score standing depending on number of kills, controlled zones and general score.

CALLING DOWN THE DROPSHIP

Your units are brought down to the battlefield in your dropship, huge transport ships that are capable of taking infantry, vehicles, terradynes and helidynes to the battlefield.



ORDER REINFORCEMENTS (Default: K)

Click on the Reinforcement icon to call down units to the battlefield. Click on the unit you want, and provided that you have sufficient AP to spend, it will be placed in the dropship's cargo bay. Should you change your mind, you can LEFT-click on the units in the cargo bay to remove them—you will be refunded.

Click on the Deploy button (Default: D), and your dropship will move to the battlefield and unload your new units on the currently selected Landing Zone.



UPGRADE DROPSHIP (Default: I)

Click on the Upgrade Dropship to activate the Upgrade interface. It allows you to upgrade your dropship's attributes and make it stronger in battle. Click on the upgrade button next to the attribute to initiate the upgrade. Note that it will take a few seconds before the new upgrades are properly fitted, and during this time, the dropship will not be able to move down to the battlefield.

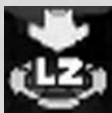


SELECT DROPSHIP

Click on the Select dropship icon to quickly select your dropship. Note that when your Dropship is on the battlefield this icon displays remaining fuel.

ADDITIONAL DROPSHIP ORDERS

The dropship can also be ordered to stay on the battlefield and assist you in battle. The duration it can stay on the battlefield is limited to its fuel tanks—so if you plan to use the dropship offensively or defensively make sure that you upgrade its fuel tanks.



SELECT NEW LANDING ZONE (Default: Z) – During the course of a game, you are likely to capture additional Landing Zones. To assign a new Landing Zone to your dropship, click on the Select Landing Zone button and then LEFT-click on the new Landing Zone on the minimap or directly on the new zone in the main view.

Note that it is not always wise to quickly select the latest Landing Zone since the enemy might try to recapture it. If your Landing Zone is captured while your dropship is in transit, it will abort the drop and return to base with the units.



TOGGLE STAY (Default: V) – Normally your dropship will return to base immediately after unloading its cargo, but with this toggle you can order your dropship to stand by for orders on the battlefield. Left-click on the button to order the dropship to stay. Note that your dropship will automatically return to base as soon as its fuel runs out.



RETURN TO BASE (Default: H) – Order your dropship to return to the base immediately.



NORTHERN STAR ALLIANCE

The Northern Star Alliance is a collection of colonies that still resist the might of the Terran Empire. The capital planet, Morningstar Prime, has now come under siege by Imperator Vlaana's forces, but is managing to hold them at bay.

Originally a colony of the now-defunct Crayven Corporation, Morningstar has survived due to strong leadership and resourcefulness. The colonists are a resilient people, and this shows in everything they do and create. This is why Morningstar Prime was the natural choice when it was time to choose the NSA capital.

Holding true to its philosophy of life even in war, the Northern Star Alliance has an arsenal that is practical and conventional, relying more on resilience and the brute force of projectile weapons. The Alliance's ground-personnel are some of the toughest men and women in the quadrant, and their commanders are some of the most brilliant tacticians.

CAPTAIN JACOB ANGELUS

Captain Jacob Angelus grew up an orphan in Victoria City, and like many NSA children, he was drafted into the military at an early age. The military was the only family he ever knew apart from Alice McNeal, the daughter of Lucretia McNeal and his friend since childhood.

Angelus has adapted well to the harsh realities of war, and he is regarded as a capable young officer and tactician, excelling in his duties. He has an inner strength and confidence that most can only dream of and his thoughtful eyes betray a keen intelligence. But constant fighting has taken its toll on this natural leader of men. Angelus is growing weary of the war. He has begun to see the end of his people looming on the horizon if nothing is done, and it troubles him greatly. Jacob will do whatever is necessary to ensure the survival of the citizens of Morningstar Prime.

Angelus graduated with honors from the NSA military academy at Fort Ike and was sent to serve with the 49th regiment (commonly called The Death Express) of the NSA infantry arm. As is their tradition, The D.E. regards new recruits as cannon fodder until they have proven their worth. The young Lieutenant Angelus proved himself in a matter of days, earning the respect of even the most battle-hardened 49er.

The battlefield prominence of Angelus caught the attention of Major Grant, who took it upon himself to hone his leadership skills to perfection. After leading a spectacularly successful operation to recapture the strategically important Corollia Island, Angelus was awarded the rank of captain and transferred to New Darwin City, the Morningstar capital, to bolster its defenses.

NSA UNITS

Infantry are generally weak, but can be placed inside buildings or forests for additional protection. They are weak against explosive weapons such as artillery, grenades, and chemical weapons. Infantry cannot be targeted by missiles, so they are immune to all missile-firing units (NSA Rocket Terradyne, Viron Missile Troopers, etc.)



Light Assault Infantry – NSALAI-94 “Soldat”

The Light Assault Infantry or simply Rifle Infantry are the backbone of the NSA Military. Rifle infantry fight best on terrain that favors their ability to hide and entrench buildings. The light assault trooper is particularly suitable for defending areas of constricted terrain, such as in cities, ruins and forests.

MISSILE MODE – In secondary mode, the Light Assault Infantry will crouch and activate the missile launcher. The unit cannot move while in secondary mode.



NSA Sniper – NSA/RICI-5 “Raptor”

The Special Forces infantry, also known as Raptors, are snipers capable of killing infantry at great distances. Raptors are almost impossible to detect without sensors. The unit must be placed in sniper mode to fire its weapon.

SNIPER MODE – The Raptor can go into sniper mode. In this mode its view range is vastly improved as well as its weapon range. The Raptor cannot move while in sniper mode and its cloaking will be disabled.



NSA Siege Soldier – M434DHC1 “Dgre”

Siege infantry are heavily armored soldiers in exoskeletons that allow them to carry heavy fire-power and armor. The standard issue Siege Soldier exoskeleton is armed with a P97h Assault Minigun capable of sending a deadly hail of uranium rounds at supersonic speed toward the enemy.

FULLAUTO MODE – The Siege Soldier can fire the minigun in Fullauto, dramatically increasing the rate of fire. The unit is both slower and more prone to damage in this mode.



NSA Light APC – LAPC-780 “Rhino”

The Light APC is an armored four-wheeled vehicle designed to quickly carry infantry into combat. The APC is armored, but will not stand heavy cannon fire for long. It is armed with a heavy machine gun to provide support fire to deploying infantry.

SMOKE SCREENS – When activated, the APC will fire smoke grenades that block the line of sight.



NSA Recon Terradyne – ATPJS90 “Watchman”

The ‘Watchman’ is a wheeled jeep that comes with a mounted Scalletti Industries H-975 AT cannon. The jeep is faster than tracked vehicles and can withstand one or two direct hits from AT weapons. It is designed to quickly move in front of the main NSA forces and scout the enemy. It is not strong enough to take part in major battles, but its speed makes it ideal for hit and run tactics.

STEALTH MODE – When activated, “the Watchman” is extremely hard to detect. It cannot fire its weapon and only moves at half speed in stealth mode.



NSA Rocket Terradyne – AMRLV-320 “Marauder”

The “Marauder” provides the NSA with a missile system designed for the neutralization and destruction of enemy frontline targets, ground as well as air. Its weak armor requires it to be protected from direct assaults. Infantry are too small and too nimble to be targeted by the missile system.

ANTI-MISSILE SYSTEM – The Marauder plays a vital part as a defensive unit due to its Anti-Missile System. It will protect itself and surrounding units from incoming artillery and missiles in AMS mode. It cannot move or attack in secondary mode.



NSA Combat Engineers – ACEUV-905 “Zappers”

The NSA Combat Engineer vehicle is designed to support military units on the battlefield. Inside the vehicle is a full complement of mechanics and medical personnel capable of conducting extensive field repairs and giving medical assistance. Combat Engineers are lightly armored and unarmed.

REPAIR MODE – The Engineer repairs all vehicles within its proximity. The unit cannot move while in repair mode.



NSA Fortress Terradyne – DTU-7499 “Ravager”

A moving fortress, the heavy Ravager stops for no one. It is very heavily armored and its turret carries two powerful large caliber guns that easily pulverize enemy vehicles and terradynes. Its heavy armor makes it a very slow tracked vehicle.

FORTRESS MODE – While the Ravager is impressive by itself, it truly excels when taking up a defensive position in Fortress mode. The side armor slides up front for additional frontal protection.



NSA Main Battle Terradyne SEK-450 “Liberator”

The Liberator Terradyne is the backbone of the armored forces of the Northern Star Alliance. The purpose of the terradyne is to provide mobile firepower with sufficient capability to close in and destroy any opposing armored fighting vehicles.

One of the main threats for Liberators is enemy infantry sneaking up from behind and firing AT rockets at its thin rear armor.

MACHINE GUN – In its secondary mode, the Liberator is equipped with a heavy machine gun to take out enemy infantry.



NSA Assault APC – AAPC-D90 “Volcano”

The Assault APC is a massively armored tracked terradyne designed to carry 8 troopers into hot fire zones. It is heavily armored and can withstand several direct hits before being disabled. It is armed with the Genti GTT-30 Heavy Incinerator—a heavy flamethrower capable of melting both infantry and vehicles at very close range.

FIRESTORM – In its secondary mode, the “Volcano” fires phosphorus grenades that shower the target location with quite a burning sensation.



NSA Mobile Artillery – AFAS-109 “Hailstorm”

The AFAS-109 (Advanced Field Artillery System) consists of a quad-barreled 175mm self-propelled howitzer operated by three crew members. It is capable of firing grenades at extreme ranges, and is lethal to all but heavy armor. The vehicle is lightly armored and fairly slow.

SIEGE MODE – The Artillery vehicle can enter Siege Mode to fire even more powerful rounds at a greater distance. The Artillery cannot move in Siege Mode.



NSA Light Helidyne – IRH45 “Shade”

The Shade is a fast recon helidyne of instrumental value when obtaining battlefield intelligence. It is armed with an advanced AA/AG missile system capable of penetrating heavy armor.

It relies on speed and is only lightly armored. Being an airborne unit, it cannot capture Victory Locations or hostile Landing Zones. Its missiles cannot target infantry.

TURBO THRUSTERS – The Shade can activate turbo thrusters to dramatically improve its speed, but it cannot use weapons in turbo mode.



NSA Transport Helidyne – AVTCH-6 “Bigbird”

One of the drawbacks of the NSA military is its units' inability to cross deep water. For that purpose, the NSA has developed the Bigbird—a transport helidyne capable of airlifting terradynes and other ground units over great distances.

The helidyne is heavily armored and can withstand severe punishment. In order to ensure maximum payload capacity, it has no weapons. Being an airborne unit, it cannot capture Victory Locations or hostile Landing Zones.

MISSILE COUNTERMEASURES – The unit can activate missile countermeasures that will defend against incoming missiles. However, it comes at the sacrifice of flying speed.

DEPLOYABLE STRUCTURES



NSA Sentry Gun – TTP-90 “Sentinel”

The sentry gun provides excellent point defense, capable of dealing with both ground and air units. It is relatively weak against heavy armor, but excels against large concentrations of infantry. The sentry gun is immobile, but can be transported using an APC or Combat Engineer.



NSA KZ Sensor – MSRS-4 “Detector”

The NSA KZ Sensor allows the military a great view of the battlefield. It covers approximately an area 500m around its position. The KZ Sensor cannot move and must be transported using an APC or Combat Engineer.

NSA SUPPORT WEAPONS



Air-Dropped Battlefield Sensor

By air dropping a battlefield sensor the NSA commander can quickly detect any enemy activity within its sensor range. The sensor has no defensive capability at all and is extremely vulnerable.



Smoke Screen

By calling in smoke screens to a location the NSA commander can hide his troops under a veil of smoke. The smoke is actually a combination of electronically charged particles that will interfere with most passive and active sensors alike.



Air Strike

The NSA commander can call in an air strike from a nearby outpost. The bombers will drop fragmentation bombs lethal to infantry over the area.



Heavy Air Strike

The heavy air strike is used to severely cripple large concentrations of enemy forces. The number of bombs deployed is usually sufficient to penetrate most antimissile systems deployed at the target area.



VIRONS

Humans first came into contact with Virons after their space was violated in the 25th century by the rogue corporate agent Sarah Parker. In the years that followed, attempts were made to establish relations with the Virons, but these met with little success. The Virons proved to be extremely reclusive and xenophobic. Little is known about them, except that they are bipeds and are wielders of a highly advanced nano-organic technology.

When negotiations with them failed, reports began coming in of battles being fought in the Ragnarok Nebula, the unconfirmed location of the Viron homeworld. In these reports there are several references to Viron units combining, or "melding" together, on the battlefield to become new units.

Officially, no further human contact has been made with the Virons since that time.

G'HALL VI'CATH

While the Viron race is split into clans, each with its own military and spiritual elder, there is one leader who speaks collectively for all:

G'hall Vi'cath. G'hall has held the position of Viron Overlord for three decades and has established himself through strength and order, using the Viron Code of Honor (No'He'Khum) as a base from which to justify his ideals.

G'hall Vi'cath is a creature of war, always sharing the battlefield with his brethren. Together with his personal guard, the Gr'mehk'Khass (The Tempest Gray), he can strike fear into even the most battle-hardened soldier. G'hall's face and body is covered with scars, remnants of battles and rituals of self-mutilation. He lost his left eye in battle and a patch, stitched directly into his leathery skin, covers the empty socket.



As is typical for Virons, G'hall rarely speaks. He is able to command his troops with mere gestures and glances from his one remaining eye. When he does speak, it is usually to intimidate and challenge his opponents to battle, and he chooses his words carefully. Those who see him say that he seems to walk around in a controlled perpetual rage, always on the verge of losing control of his impatient nature.

Throughout his reign, few have dared to question him, but now tensions have begun to grow between the clans since some Clan Vi'Caths (Elders) are unsatisfied with the direction he is leading them. They have reacted to his recent erratic behavior. Those who have seen it, say that his remaining eye is dilated and clouded, a telltale symptom of addiction to the drug Pronocol. If this is indeed true, it would be an enormous blow to G'hall's power since drug addiction is seen as deeply dishonorable in Viron culture.

VIRON MELDING

One of the unique aspects of Viron warfare is the ability to meld units on the battlefield to create a more advanced unit.

Mortar Clanguard (Missile Clanguard + Missile Clanguard)

Infector Clanguard (Assault Clanguard + Assault Clanguard)

Mortar Centruroid (Engineer Centruroid + Engineer Centruroid)

Missile Centruroid (Gun Centruroid + Gun Centruroid)

Thumper Centruroid (Corruptor Centruroid + Corruptor Centruroid)

Hellfire Centruroid (Penetrator Centruroid + Penetrator Centruroid)

Screamer Helidyne (Fighter Helidyne + Fighter Helidyne)

Corruptor Helidyne (Surveillance Helidyne + Surveillance Helidyne)

VIRON UNITS



Viron Assault Clanguard "Kah'meh"

The Assault Clanguard is armed with a strong Bio-Pulsar gun. The weapon projectile's molecular acid component swiftly eats through any known material before the kinetic impact deals a massive energy discharge well inside the target.

Clanguards are highly suitable for urban warfare as they are capable of taking shelter within buildings. Two Assault Clanguards can be melded together to create an *Infector Clanguard*.

COMBAT DRUGS – They carry capsules of Pronocol, a synthetic combat drug that gives the user a massive dose of adrenaline at command. Effectively boosts the unit's regeneration process.



Viron Infector Clanguard "Maalh'bul"

The Infector is armed with a spore rifle that sends engineered viral spores against its intended target. The Infector is extremely useful against infantry but can also damage vehicles and tanks.

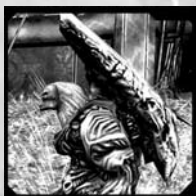
INFECT – the Infector constantly surrounds himself with viral spores dangerous only to the enemy.



Viron Missile Clanguard "Pack'changh"

The Missile Clanguard is the Virons primary anti-air unit. These troopers are armed with "missile launchers" that fire homing objects. They excel in taking out enemy air units but are somewhat less effective against vehicles and tanks. They cannot target infantry. Two Missile Clanguards can be melded together to create a *Mortar Clanguard*.

TORMENT MISSILE – The unit can choose to fire torment missiles that do very little damage but shower the target with acidic spray, temporarily lowering the target's armor.



Viron Mortar Clanguard "Tah'changh"

The Virons have a very flexible unit arsenal, and when dealing with infantry or light vehicles, the Mortar Trooper is an obvious choice. The unit is armed with a rapid-firing mortar mounted on the soldier's back. The mortar fires a seed case containing a highly volatile compound mixed with piercing needles. The mortar's high rate of fire allows it to penetrate enemy missile defense systems.

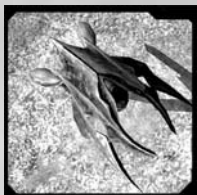
INTERFERENCE GRENADES – In secondary mode, the Mortar Clanguard can fire grenades that release a cloud of highly active spores that will interfere with combat and targeting systems effectively acting as a smokescreen.



Viron Gun Centruroid "Bah'ko"

The fast and furious Gun vehicle uses a direct spike cannon to deliver razor-sharp bio-spikes at its enemies. While the spikes are capable of penetrating the thickest armor with ease, their small size severely limits their damage potential. The Gun Centruroid fills the role as a fast long-range recon unit. Two Gun Centruroids can be melded together to create a *Missile Centruroid*.

FRONT SHIELDS – Like certain Earth reptiles, the "Bah'ko" can extend a hard carapace in the front to protect the unit from frontal attacks. The unit is however immobile while the shields are up.



Viron Missile Centruroid "Haai'tah"

The "Haai'tah" is a fast missile-armed support unit. Its main purpose is to target enemy air units, but it is also useful against vehicles and terradynes. The missile system cannot target infantry. The unit fires a swarm of homing pods against its target.

ANTI-MISSILE MODE – The unit has a second purpose of defending against incoming missiles and ballistic shells. It must change into AMS mode to automatically target missiles within its operating range (approx. 50m).



Viron Engineer Centruroid "Kee'on Rimah"

The Engineer Centruroid is armed with a medium spore thrower and a transport compartment capable of taking up to 8 Clanguards. The unit, which is able to heal friendly units, fills an important role on the battlefield. Two Engineer Centruroids can be melded together to create a *Mortar Centruroid*.

REPAIR MODE – The unit activates its repair equipment and is capable of spraying friendly units with mucous capable of accelerating the Viron regeneration process. It cannot attack in secondary mode.



Viron Mortar Centruroid "Chingh'geh'ohn"

The Mortar Centruroid is the Viron's answer to field artillery. The unit's powerful seed launcher fires a larger version of the volatile seed cases used by Mortar Clanguards. Like its smaller cousin, it is designed to detonate above the target, showering everything below with razor-sharp spikes. The range of the weapon is far shorter than the NSA and Imperial counterpart.

TORMENT GRENADES – Instead of firing its usual volatile seed-cases, it fires an acidic grenade effectively reducing enemy units' armor in the target area.



Viron Corruptor Centruroid "Geom'raah"

The Corruptor tank is a huge lumbering armored infantry transport with a heavy spore thrower mounted topside. It spews forth a huge cloud of bioengineered spores that instantly corrode the material they come in contact with. After a weapon discharge, a huge spore cloud remains on the battlefield. Contact with the cloud results in instantaneous damage every second. Two Corruptors can be melded to create a *Thumper Centruroid*.

SACRIFICE – The unit emits a highly lethal virus that eats through friends and foes alike. Even the unit itself sustains damage during this mode.



Viron Thumper "Bull'gasaalh"

The Thumper tank is a huge Viron unit, heavily armored and fitted with a unique and ingenious bio weapon—the Thumper. With a distinctive “thump” the weapon spews forth a wave of organic mass with supercharged protons that travels along the ground toward the target. As the organic mass travels forward, it loses some of its destructive power.

GUARDIAN MODE – The Thumper projects an energy field capable of enhancing the armor of itself and those units in its immediate proximity.



Viron Penetrator "Hun'muh"

The Penetrator is the Viron Nomad's main armored Centruroid. The unit is a very direct and brutal way to deal with enemy units, especially heavily armored targets. The unit fires a single nano-engineered chitin spike, heated to near cataclysmic temperature. The nano-spike easily penetrates armor up to 200 cm thick. The energy released when the hyper-velocity nano-spike hits its target is equal to that of a small nuclear detonation. Two Penetrators can be melded to create an even more powerful unit—the *Viron Hellfire Centruroid*.

PRECISION MODE – In its secondary mode, the Penetrator is capable of shooting at a greatly increased range. In order to fire accurately, the unit becomes immobile. It requires forward observers to fully utilize its increased range.



Viron HellFire Centruroid "Chee'woh"

The “Chee'woh” is an impressively armored giant of a unit, armed with hard-hitting nano-drones. The unit can deliver a punch even capable of denting a fortified Ravager terradyne. The nano-drones are not capable of hitting air or infantry.

TURBO THRUSTERS – In its secondary mode, the unit's speed is greatly improved at the sacrifice of its weapons, allowing it to reach intense fire zones quickly.



Viron Fighter Helidyne "Geeh'mu'gee"

The Viron Fighter Helidyne is a fast-response unit in the Viron air cadre. The Fighter is armed with a pair of highly advanced seed launchers, which spew forth homing projectiles that are more than capable of tearing any airborne unit into tiny pieces.

Its dominance on the battlefield is however limited to air units, leaving it in desperate need of ground support to take out enemy anti-air units. Two Fighter Helidynes can be melded on the battlefield to create a *Screamer Helidyne*.

IMPROVED REGENERATION – In secondary mode the unit is capable of quickly regenerating its carapace and vital systems. However, it is defenseless during this mode.



Viron Screamer Helidyne "Joh'jack"

The Screamer is mainly a support weapon; used with other Viron units, it truly makes the Virons a foe to fear. It is armed with a weak sonic cannon that utilizes sonic waves to pulverize its target.

TORMENT MODE – The Screamer continuously projects a multi-spectral aura of raw Viron hostility, which disturbs and disrupts the enemy, grating at the edge of their brains like a blunt razor blade being scraped across glass. The aura effectively degrades the target's ability to defend itself.



Viron Surveillance Helidyne "Borah'maar"

The Surveillance Helidyne is capable of attacking both air and ground forces with a relatively weak bio-cannon. It has great perception and view range. Two Surveillance Helidynes can be melded to create a *Contaminator Helidyne*.

RADAR MODE – The unit can extend battlefield sensors capable of detecting all enemies within 400-500m. It cannot move or attack while the sensors are extended.



Viron Contaminator Helidyne "Wan'greh'ohng"

The Contaminator Helidyne is armed with a medium spore thrower gas weapon. The combination of being airborne and armed with a gas weapon strikes fear into infantry holed up inside a building. Its APC capability allows it to gas a fortification and unload a full squad of infantry while the gas dissipates.

ARMOR MODE – Special glands are activated constantly, feeding the armored areas with new nano-material effectively reinforcing its armor. The unit moves slightly slower and is unable to attack in this mode.

DEPLOYABLE STRUCTURES



Viron Prime Sentry Gun

The deployable Bio-Pulsar gun can be used to bolster the Viron's defenses. It cannot move on its own accord and must be transported to its intended position.



Viron KZ Sensor

The deployable field sensor will detect all enemy units within 400–500m. It cannot move on its own accord and must be transported to its intended position.

VIRON SUPPORT WEAPONS



Viron Assault Pods

The Viron commander can deploy Assault Pods anywhere on the battlefield. These pods are launched from the orbiting Clanship and contain 5 Assault Clanguards. Perfect for a surprise attack, the pods can however be destroyed by enemy antimissile systems.



Viral Spore Cloud

The Viron commander is able to call down a highly lethal spore cloud from orbiting Clanships. The spore cloud contaminates an area with viral spores capable of penetrating and disabling most vehicles. Infantry are particularly vulnerable.



Graser Strike

The Viron commander can request his orbiting Clanship to fire its shipboard Graser cannons at a location on the battlefield. While a Clanship's Graser cannons are primarily used against space targets, they are more than dangerous when fired at the planet's surface. A lot of the weapon's destructive energy is however shredded when penetrating the atmosphere.



TERRAN EMPIRE

The Terran Empire, a relatively new empire formed out of the ashes of the old mega corporations, is driving an iron-willed offensive against the outer colonies and is now severely threatening the NSA home planet, Morningstar Prime. The goal of the Terran Empire is to reconquer the outer colonies and reunite mankind at all costs. The end justifies the means, and this surely means the end for Morningstar Prime.

The Imperial military relies on advanced technology, using heavy hoverdrones, lethal plasma weapons, and a seemingly endless supply of fresh legionnaires. It is also capable of bringing down heavy orbital bombardment from its orbiting star cruisers.

Emperor Marcus Augustus has entrusted to his most ruthless and successful agent, Imperator Vlaana Azleeta, the task of bringing Morningstar Prime into the Imperial fold.

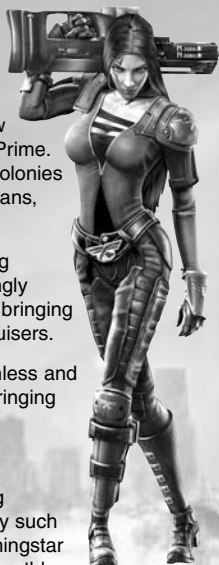
IMPERATOR VLAANA AZLEETA

Vlaana is the Emperor's right hand, charged with bringing Morningstar Prime under Imperial control. There are many such agents in the quadrant capturing other colonies, but Morningstar is the most important and the Emperor has sent his most ruthless agent to do the job, even branding her face with his personal mark of favor.

In her mind she has been tasked by her Emperor with a divine objective—all of humanity must be united and those who resist are not worthy of existence. She follows the Imperial decree with an almost fanatical fervor: give no pardon, accept no surrender. The end always justifies the means.

Few have seen her in person, and of those who have, fewer still are alive. Unless you are one of her most trusted envoys, one look into her cold, dark eyes usually means that you are about to be executed. Shunning human contact, she mainly commands her forces through two agents almost as ruthless as herself: Imperial Centurions Cezarus and Dracus. A rumor often whispered among the lower ranks is that Vlaana doesn't really exist at all, but is a figurehead for these two commanders. This rumor is further intensified by the fact that Vlaana was present in 2699 when the Terran invasion began and that now, forty-two years later, she doesn't appear to have aged a day.

Vlaana is known throughout the quadrant as the Butcher of Ariel. It is said that she, in an uncommon move, walked the battlefield in person on the colony of Ariel, indiscriminately slaughtering military and civilians alike. Terran legionnaires even tell tales of her cutting down allied troops if they got in her path, causing all but the most battle-hardened Terran to shiver at the mention of her name.



BATTLEFIELD TACTICS

THE BASICS

Victory Locations (VL)

Your main objective is to capture and hold victory locations (tactical positions in the mission area). Control of these locations will justify your commanders' requisitions for additional forces. For each victory location under your control you will gain Acquisition Points or AP that can be used to call down additional reinforcements, upgrade your dropship, or call down artillery support. If you (and your team) lose all the Victory Locations—it is all over. You have been defeated.

Landing Zones (LZ)

In order to call down reinforcements you must have control of a landing zone on the map. Victory locations and Landing Zones are captured by moving ground units into the marked zone and making sure no enemy unit is present. **Note:** Air units cannot capture VLs or LZs.

If all your units have been wiped from the map and your last LZ has been captured, you no longer have a presence on the battlefield and you have been defeated.

The Dropship and Reinforcements

You have a dropship to transport your troops to the battlefield—always make sure you have a landing zone. The dropship initially has a limited cargo bay, so upgrading the dropship's cargo capacity is usually a sound strategy because it allows you to bring more units to the battlefield quicker.

Your dropship can also be damaged while delivering units to the battlefield or while performing close air support, so watch its health. If your dropship is destroyed, it will automatically be replaced, but it will take a short time. During this period, you will be unable to drop additional troops.

THE BATTLEFIELD

Only a foolish field commander would send his strike team into a combat zone without surveying the surrounding battlefield. Knowing how the terrain affects your units is a cornerstone on the road to victory.

Line of Sight

To detect enemy units they must be within your own units' view range, and unless your units are equipped with radar, they must also have an unobstructed line of sight to the enemy. Hills and other terrain features block the line of sight. Smaller targets such as infantry can easily hide in small furrows, while large terradynes require larger depressions in the ground to stay hidden. Scout vehicles and other light units have a better view range than the heavier vehicles. Therefore it is

useful to make sure reconnaissance squads support your heavier units. Note that the enemy can always detect your units' presence if they fire their weapons.

Elevated Positions

Units on high ground always have the advantage over units on level ground. Because of the awkward firing angle, units that are forced to shoot up at the enemy often miss. At extreme angles, units on higher ground are able to hit the vulnerable top armor on vehicles, which gives infantry a fighting chance even against very heavy armor. Always try to place spotters on high ground in lookout positions that give the best view of the battlefield. Likewise it is important to prevent the enemy from fortifying the high ground. You can use your artillery to clear hills captured by the enemy.

FORESTS

Infantry have much better mobility than terradynes and hoverdynes. Only infantry is capable of moving around in forests. Units in forests receive additional protection and are much harder to detect. Remember that your infantry is virtually defenseless in the open.

BUILDINGS

While inside a building, soldiers take up firing positions at the four points of the compass; however, not all buildings have openings or usable positions in all directions. In an urban setting it is vital to select positions that provide a good view of choke points and hotspots while providing cover for your own soldiers. The structure provides additional protection for any unit inside. Although a building cannot be destroyed, the infantry inside are especially vulnerable to gas and fire-based weapons.

GUN EMPLACEMENTS

Dotted around the battlefield are gun emplacements that are available to infantry. In order to use a gun emplacement an infantry unit must be placed inside. A gun emplacement cannot be destroyed—only disabled. A disabled emplacement can be repaired and restored by engineer units.

WEATHER

There are several ways that weather affects combat. Rain and other conditions always decrease visibility and thus weapon range. Use the cover of harsh weather to assault far-reaching enemies; this will allow your unit to get within firing range before it is detected.

SUPPORT WEAPONS

Support weapons, a range of "off-map" support weapons and equipment, come at a significant AP cost. Support can be called in to any part of the map at any time, regardless of visibility and accessibility. Delivery to the field takes a while, but the results can be devastating when support weapons hit. They are particularly effective against a defensive and immobile enemy.

MAINTENANCE

A lot of work goes into the production of each new unit that you place on the battlefield. The number of available crews goes down and the Acquisition Points you receive for holding the battlefield are reduced to represent the fact that your army is eating up a large part of the entire NSA war budget. The upper right corner of the interface has an indicator of black slots that fill up with green markers as the maintenance level goes up. When you reach your unit maximum, the maintenance costs will be so high that you will gain no new AP and will not be able to order any more units. Replacing a number of weaker units with more expensive and powerful units can help you to keep a balance.

FLANKING MANEUVERS

Terradynes and hoverdynes have armor thicker in the front than in the rear. It is important to use this wisely; a controlled attack from the flanks or the rear will hurt the enemy a lot more than an all-out frontal assault. It is equally important to deny the enemy the opportunity to attack your units from the rear or else they will quickly slaughter your units. When attacking your enemy, have fast units ready to circle around and attack from the rear.

COMBINED ARMS

You have many different types of units at your disposal; learn their strengths and weaknesses to create a powerful strike force. A force consisting entirely of heavy terradynes and artillery vehicles is extremely vulnerable to helidynes. Similarly, a helidyne force requires ground support to fend off enemy anti-air.

Artillery vehicles have extremely efficient long-range attacks. However, they are very vulnerable to attacks from enemy units. Make certain to have protective units around your artillery vehicles or you will quickly lose them. Be sure that you don't have any friendly units near the target point or the effect will be devastating.

Scout vehicles and infantry have excellent reconnaissance capabilities and will detect enemy units at long range. An artillery strike is much more powerful when forward observers are used to pinpoint the enemy's location.

Infantry are hard to detect and are capable of hiding in forests and buildings. Keep them well protected against fast-firing enemies and use transporters to move them quickly on the battlefield.

UNITS AND EXPERIENCE

A unit receives experience for destroying enemies in battle. When sufficient experience is accumulated, the unit's level will increase. An experienced unit will generally deal more damage than a rookie. You can see the unit's experience level on the marker above it.

HOTKEYS

KEYS	ACTION
Up	Move camera forward
Down	Move camera backward
Left	Move camera left
Right	Move camera right
Page up	Camera Higher
page down	Camera lower
A	Attack
M	Move
C	Hold down for Reverse Move
R	Repair
Z	Select Landing Zone
W	Move camera to currently selected Landing Zone
L	Load APC
U	Unload APC
E	Meld (Viron only)
F	Cycle formations
H	Send dropship home to base
D	Send reinforcements buy order & deploy units
V	Toggle dropship status (return to base / stay on battlefield)
X	Activate secondary mode
I	Activate Upgrade dropship screen
K	Activate Reinforcements screen
B	Cycle fire behavior (Hold, Free, Return)
N	Objectives. Displays mission objectives.
S	Halt. Orders the selected unit to stop moving and cease fire
Backspace	Displays the multiplayer score board
SHIFT-C	Toggle between Free Camera and Classic RTS camera modes
ALT	Hold down to view health and team color of all visible units
ALT	Display view and fire range radius for selected units
SHIFT	Hold down to queue multiple orders
SHIFT	Hold down to select multiple units or groups of units
TAB	Switches selection focus in current selection
ESC	Close active window or abandon game if no window is open
Mouse1 (Left)	Select units
Mouse2 (Right)	Give order depending on context (e.g. attack, move, etc.)
Mouse3 (Middle)	Press to look around freely with the camera
Left Ctrl	Create squad modifier
Pause	Pause
Print Scrn	Screenshot
Zoom in on map	Numpad +
Zoom out on map	Numpad -
Left Ctrl + Enter	Chat
Enter	Team Chat

CREDITS

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Magnus Robertsson

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Kim Nordström

David Polfeldt

HC sqd, C plat, Sierra coy, 5th

Swe Bn, Kosovo

Pizza & Spagetti House No 1

All nearby fast food places

The Coca Cola guy

Espresso House & Coffee

Maniac

The coffee machine (for being open 24/7)

www.homestarrunner.com

All multiplayer beta testers

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Charles Dennis

General Warhurst:

Duane Shepard

Sergeant Rho:

Hank Jacobs

Lt. LaCroix:

Kath Soucie

Centurion Dracus:

Scott Bullock

Centurion Cezarus:

Brian George

Hervon Dreznor:

Phil Lamarr

Drahk'Mar Vicath:

Ron Canada

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