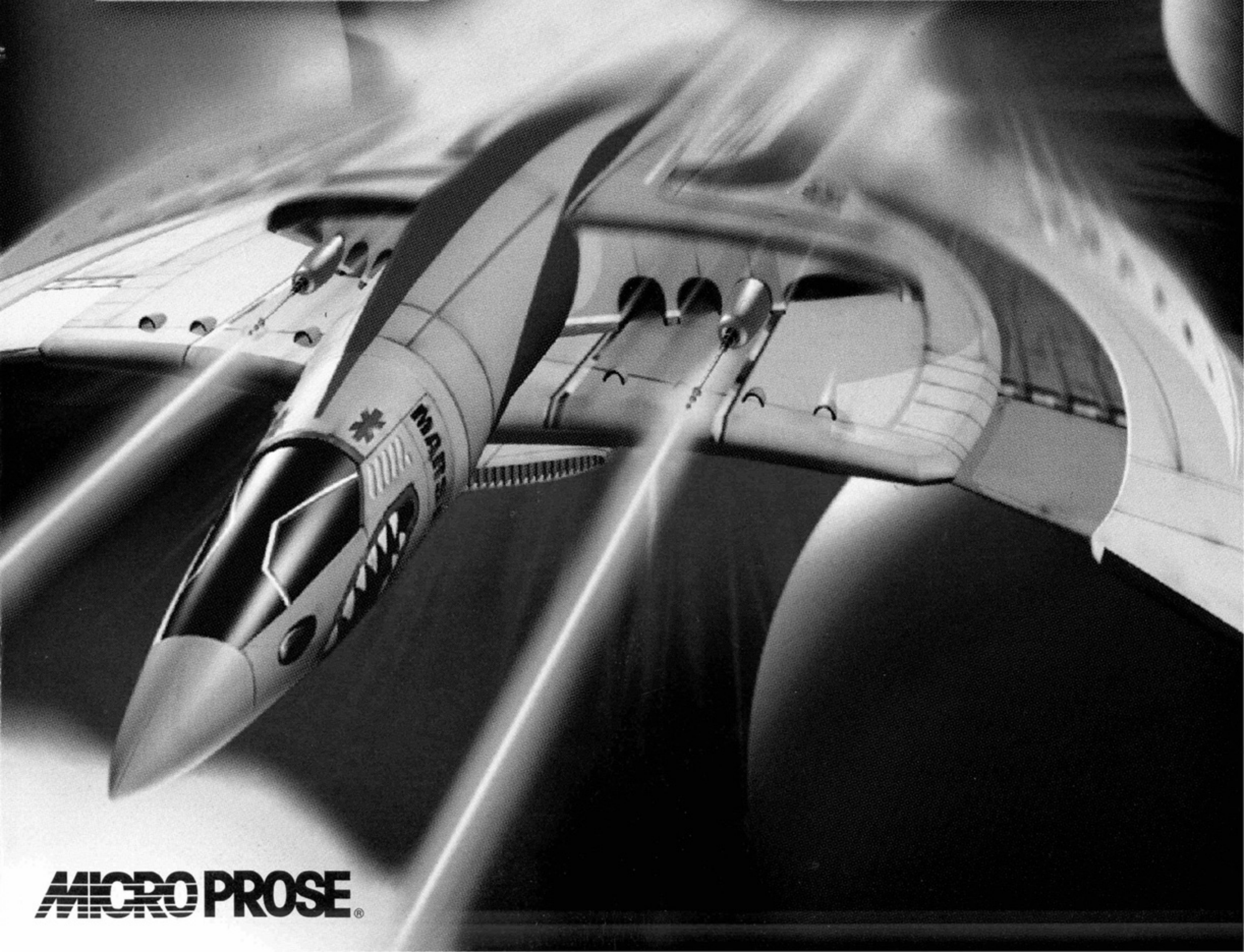# A Word About This Game

We would like to thank you for purchasing one of our products. Please remember that the developers of this product are relying on you not to give away copies to others. They have spent a lot of time, effort and money to bring this software to you, and are depending solely upon royalties from sales in order to make a living. Your purchase will allow them to invest the time and energy necessary to produce additional high quality software in the future.

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Gilman G. Louie
MicroProse

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CHAPTER 1:
PROLOGUE

PROLOGUE

Huddled under the Number Two cooling tower, the inside of her light vacuum suit claustrophobic with sweat and the outside covered with grease and a thick layer of pulverized asteroid, Theresa Brizzi brooded on how much she hated repair tours. The platform shuddered again, and she saw the Number One tower slant at a very wrong angle. Torpedo, she thought silently, one more of those and I'll have to walk back to the outpost. Brizzi normally talked to herself without reserve—all the mining techs in the Frontier did. What with the distance between things in deep space and the frequent reassignments, it was a lonely job. The only companionship you could count on out here was your own, and that suited her just fine. Right now, though, she kept quiet because she didn't trust her radio—not with attackers this close. No telling what they'd do with a female captive. Being captured by Kabron pirates would be bad enough, but even the *thought* of aliens made her skin crawl.

The Number One tilted further, then began to languidly twirl away. Brizzi could see that it had been sheared off messily near the base. It exploded in utter silence, and the snow started soon after. That's when Madison started yelling.

"Brizzi!" he screamed; he sounded terrified. She had no idea where Madison was, but he was broadcasting on every frequency their suits could manage. Not for the first time, she cursed the outpost manager for assigning work partners at random. She'd never even met this guy before today, and now he had become a threat to her life.

"Brizzi!" There was nothing she could do, and she wished he would just shut up.

"Brizzi!" No way she was leaving her hiding place to look for him. Let him get himself killed, what did she care? Then again, she thought, what makes me think the Number Two is any safer than the Number One was? She unrolled herself and scrambled out from under the tower—and into a twinkling cloud of floating particles.

Deadly beam emits from Eyeball Thingy

Pulsing Glow

ALIEN BEAM MINI 7
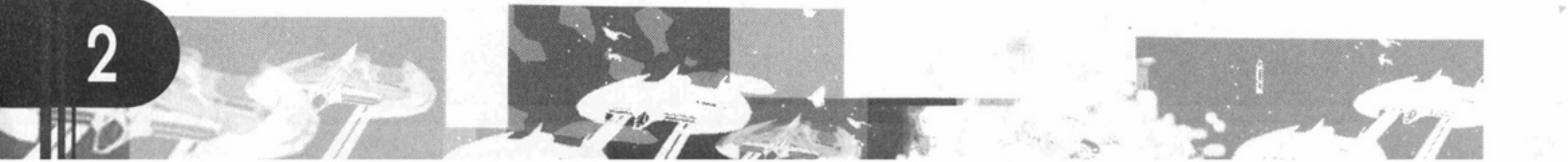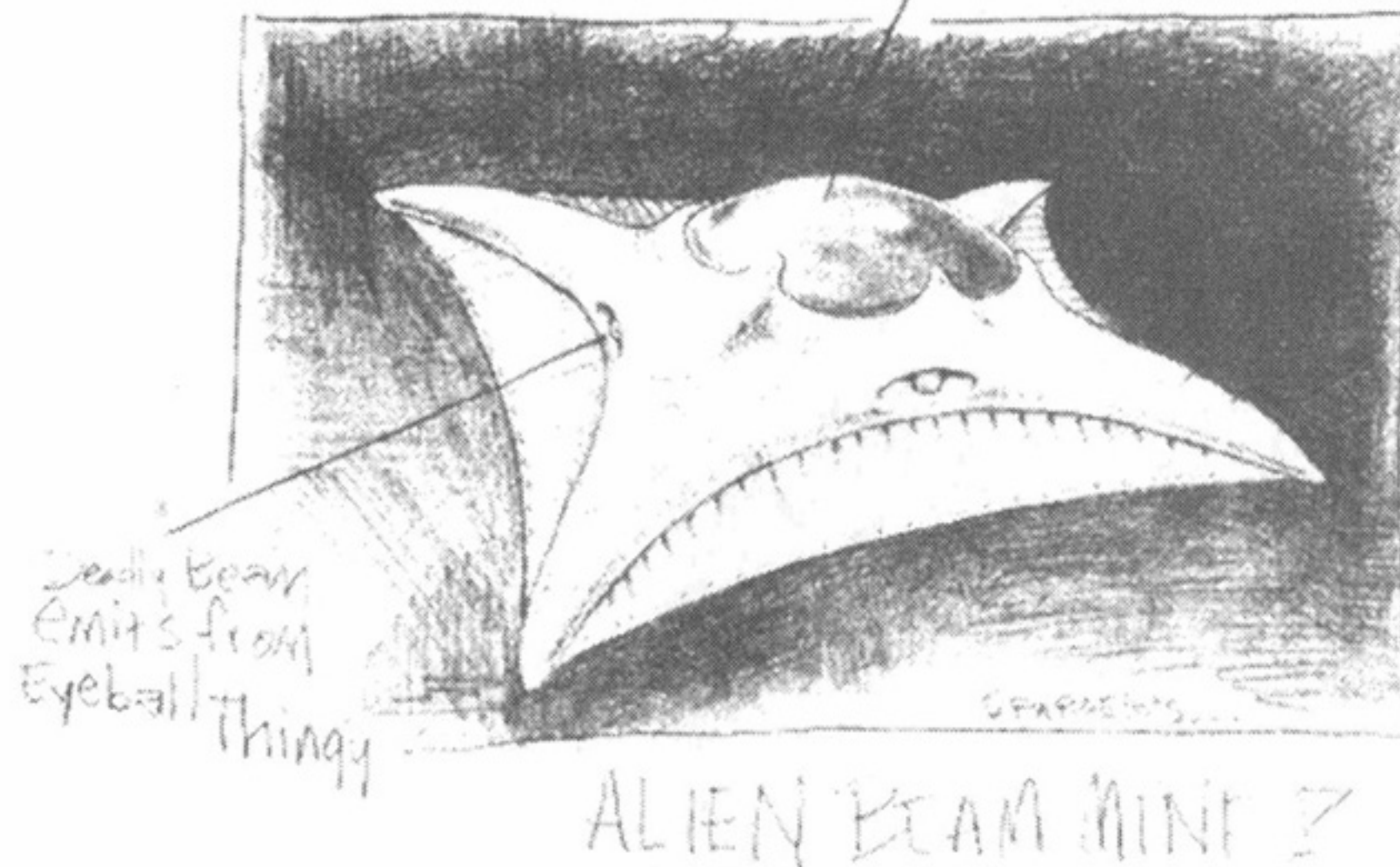
In another situation, she might have found it beautiful. Fine like snow, in turns twinkling darker and brighter, dust hung suspended all around her, swirling where her passage had disturbed it. Might cover me from their sensors for a while, she thought. Madison was nowhere in sight, and his signal was breaking up.

"I heard the wo…" he sounded like might be passing behind the reactor core, "…rik howl in the bitter cold night." Brizzi decided right then that her partner had lost it. Stories she'd heard of the Alien Wars described alien mind control devices—maybe she shouldn't go looking for him after all. She felt the platform rumble behind her, and that decided it. Anywhere's better than here, she thought.

There was no safe way to move quickly; the only things holding her to the surface of the ore processing plant were the soles of her magnetic work-boots and her self-control. Taking careful steps, she headed for the far side of the core. Brizzi tried not to notice how much it was like running in a nightmare.

"…narok, the final battle, is upon us!" Madison sang at the top of his lungs, and Brizzi swore that if she found him before the attackers did, she'd kill him herself. "The rain of dust he…crackle…end of the gods, and…" his radio fell silent.

Finally! Brizzi sighed. Now all she had to do was find the big idiot, save his pathetic life if he wasn't already dead, and somehow escape from the doomed platform before the aliens or pirates or whatever blew the whole thing to bits. Feeling her way through the thickening asteroid dust, she made her slow, clanking way to the core module.

She found him just as the smaller rumblings, which she recognized as the regular pattern of energy beam impacts, stopped abruptly. She followed the vacuum emergency drill and checked the body methodically. The dark blue repair coverall showed no sign of damage or injury, the fishbowl helmet wasn't cracked. The air supply was next, and that's where she found the reason for his silence and unconsciousness, and maybe for his dementia, too. His oxygen supply tubes had been sliced open—probably too near one of the explosions. The filters were filled with dust, and his tanks were empty.
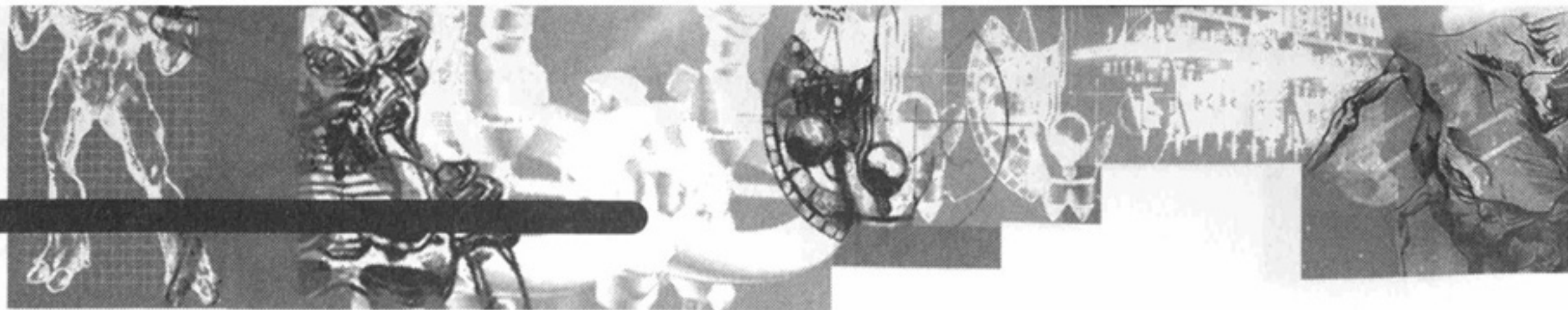
Without hesitating, she disconnected the entire breathing assembly from his suit and tossed it aside. She switched her secondary oxygen feed off, unplugged it from the seal on her helmet, and shoved it into place on Madison's. When she reactivated it, the telltales on his chin plate turned yellow. When they switched to green, she let herself relax. He was out of the woods. Then she frowned, because she realized that they were linked together for the duration of the action—for better or worse.

That's when a ship she didn't recognize flashed silently overhead, followed closely by one of a type she *had* seen before.

"Interceptor!" she shouted.

From where she sat, crouched over Madison's unmoving form, she could only see part of the action, but it was enough. Caught by surprise, the bizarre alien saucers didn't have a chance to put up much resistance. The sleek, forward-swept X-COM fighters had pinned down and destroyed every one within minutes.

Much later, a tiny craft with the ancient red plus sign on the sides landed only a few meters away. After Madison—still unconscious but alive—was safely loaded aboard, Brizzi climbed out of her safety harness and into the copilot's seat.

"Our radios don't have that kind of range," she asked him without preamble. "How'd they know we were still here?" After a few seconds, the pilot reached up to switch radio frequencies. She repeated the question.

"Squadron leader told me it was like this," he said as the vacuum doors sealed. "Just after they arrived on the scene, Ensign Cooper—he was the second wingman, last one in, you know—he picked up a miniature blip on his sensors. Turned out to be the breathing assembly off a SolTech 6970 Vac-Tuff vacuum-rated coverall." The pilot paused to switch frequencies again and shout at somebody, then ignited the engines. "Y'ask me, that was a hell of a good idea, throwing that thing out where they could see it."

As the rescue runabout lifted off, Brizzi twisted around and managed to get a brief glimpse at what was left of the OPP. Looking at the twisted wreckage and how little area was left undamaged, she grudgingly admitted to herself that there were worse things than repair duty.

-:-

Ensign Wayne Zeller picked his way briskly through a rainbow tangle of color-coded cables and temporary structural members. Hangar Bay 3 would be finished later today, and all the nonessential equipment stowed tight, but right now it didn't look at all like an ultramodern launching, arming, and repair facility. It looked like an electrical supply depot had exploded—and smelled like burnt metal, sweat, and grease. His watch on communications duty would be over in a few minutes, and he wanted to get back to station and sign off on time. Zeller paused next to a disassembled missile loader and scanned the hangar-to-be for the Acting Commander. He found him halfway up a tall ladder, haranguing whoever was standing above him with his head inside the fuel pump assembly. Zeller hurried over.

"Commander!" he shouted when the ACX paused for breath. The officer glanced down, then turned and slid down the rails to the deck without touching any of the rungs in between. The tech with his head in the hole wiped his forehead in relief.
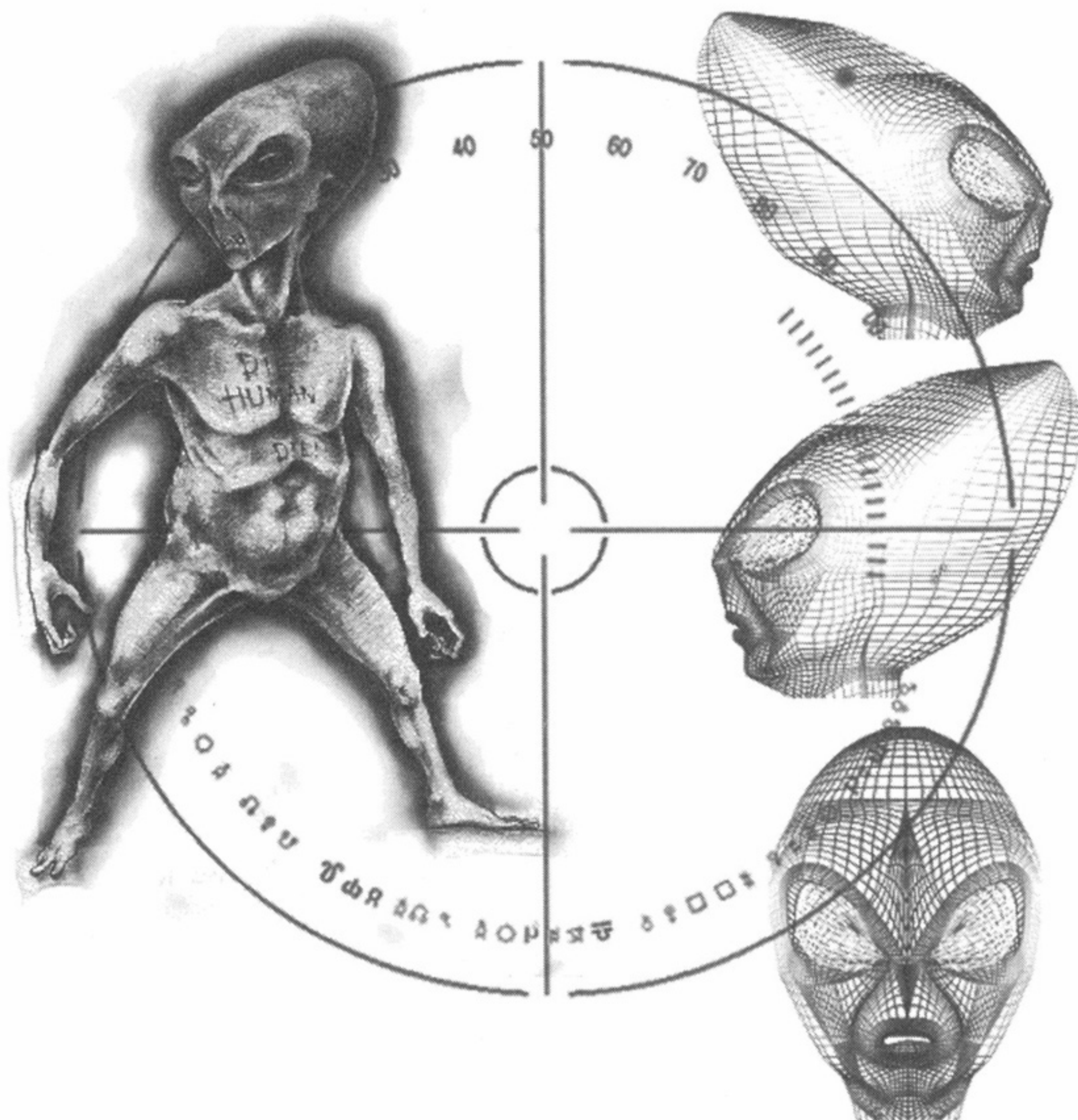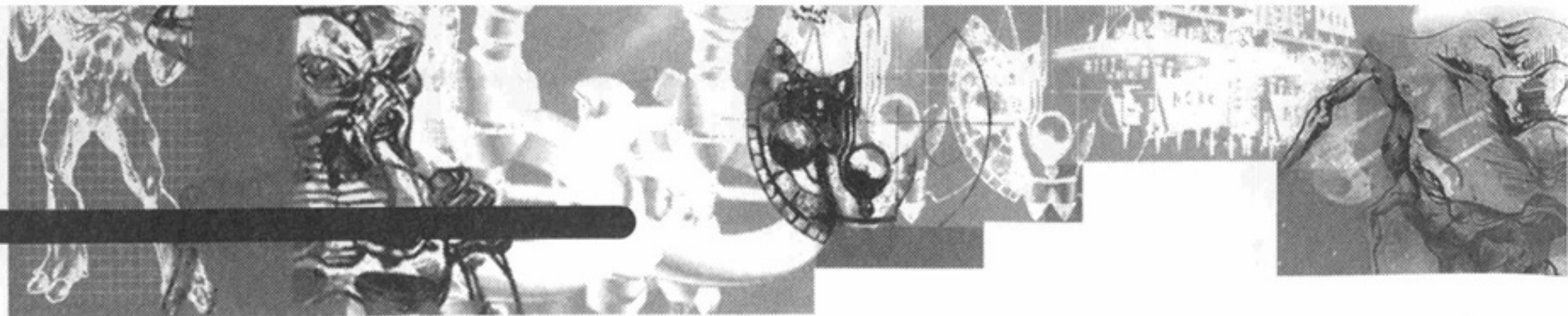
"Report, ensign," the ACX demanded.

"Sir. Message from the Sector Manager for the OMS. Letter of complaint, sir." He handed over the remote display and remained at attention. Didn't pay to stretch the rules when the boss was already hot over something.

"Orbital Mining Syndicate," the commander mused, "That was fast."

Zeller stood at attention and watched as the Acting Commander: X-COM scanned the letter. The fumes from nearby welding stung Zeller's eyes. The ACX finished reading, tapped his forehead a couple of times, then smiled thinly. He poked at the FILE NO REPLY button and handed the display board back.

"OPP near Regulon damaged by alien attack a few hours ago," the commander said, removing his hard hat momentarily to run his big hand over cropped black hair. "Our interceptors got there a little late. No casualties, but some damage to the plant. Shortsighted scumbag only cares about the equipment. He's threatening to cut funding come end of month."

"Reply, sir?" Zeller asked. He hoped there was none. More paperwork just meant longer until he got off shift and back to his bunk.

"No, ensign. Not my problem anymore." At that moment, the ACX seemed as tired as Zeller had ever seen him. He looked old. Hard to believe he was barely two years out of training, just 18 months ahead of Zeller himself. What was he talking about?

"Sir?"

"New Commander's due in tonight. I turn over the reins at twenty-four hundred. New year and a new boss, ensign. Better hope they sent us a good one. Dismissed."

As the messenger picked his way out of the hangar bay, the ACX said softly, so softly that no one could possibly overhear, "...'cause if they didn't, we're all dead."

CHAPTER 2:
First Things First
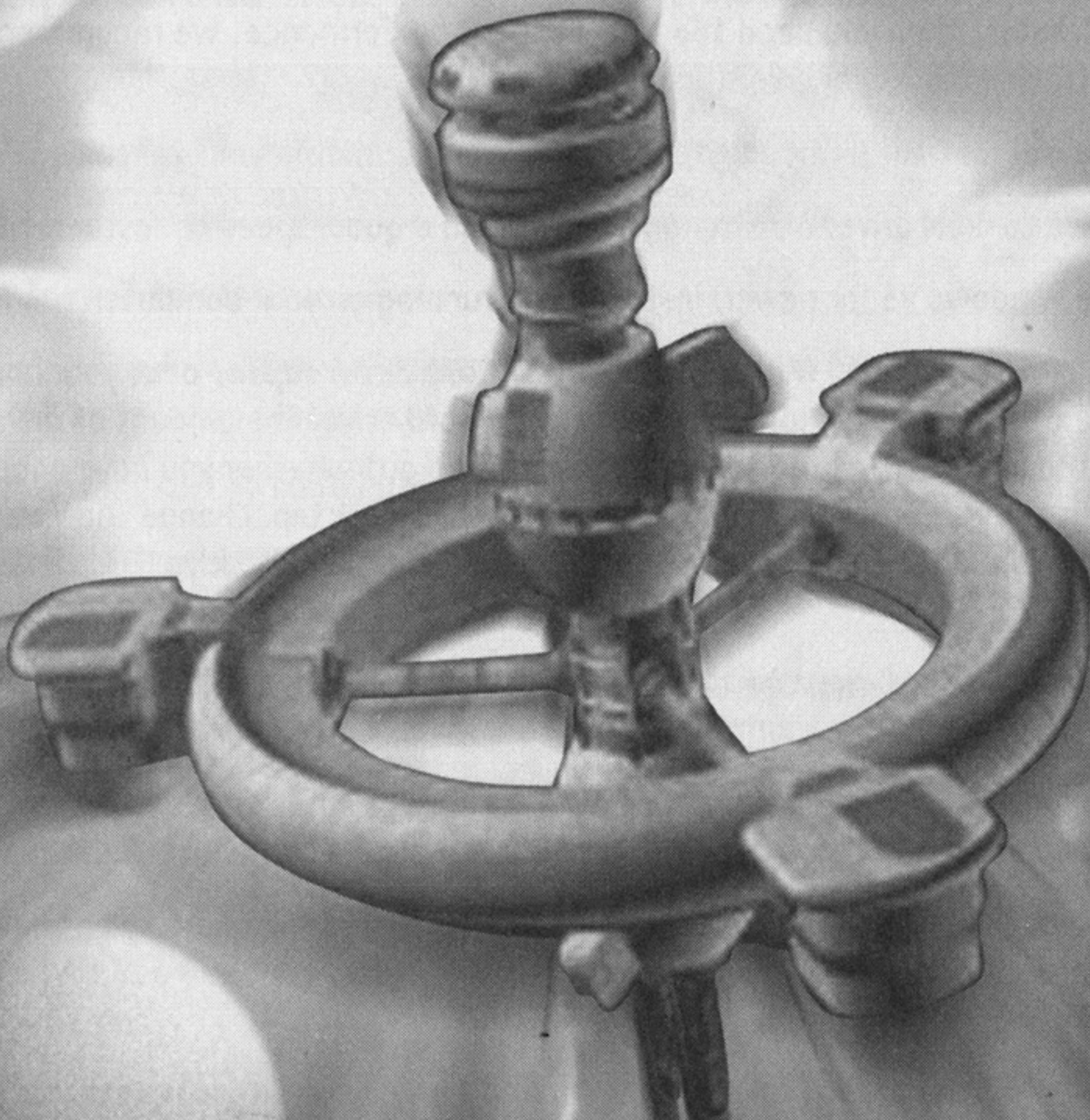
FIRST THINGS FIRST

Ready to defend the human species from vicious aliens yet again? Let's get going!

Technical Stuff

For *X-COM Interceptor* to work, there are a few things your computer must have.

✖ The processor has to be a Pentium (or compatible) or better. If you have a compatible 3-D accelerator card, the system speed should be at least 133 MHz (megahertz). If you don't have an accelerator, then you need 166 MHz. For best performance, we recommend at least a 166 MHz Pentium with 3-D acceleration.

✖ You must have at least 16MB (megabytes) of RAM (working memory) installed.

✖ You must have a CD-ROM drive. We strongly recommend a quad-speed or faster drive.

✖ You must have Windows 95 (or newer) installed and running on your computer.

✖ Since the installation program will copy parts of *X-COM Interceptor* onto your hard disk, you must have a lot of empty storage space on your hard drive. The amount of drive space required is noted in the installation instructions. To find out whether you have enough space, double-click on the My Computer icon on the Windows 95 desktop. Change the View setting to Details, and the amount of empty space on your hard drive (usually drive 'C') is listed under Free Space.

✖ Your computer (video card) must be capable of 16-bit graphics (High Color) and have a minimum of 2MB of video RAM.

✖ There must be a working mouse (or a device that fulfills the same function) attached to the computer.

If you think you have all of these, but still have a problem running the game, please contact MicroProse Customer Support for assistance.

Installing the Game

Before you can play **X-COM Interceptor**, the installation program must copy some files onto your hard disk. To have it do so, follow these instructions:

✖ Turn on your computer.

✖ Open the CD-ROM drive, place the **X-COM Interceptor** disc in it, and close the drive.

✖ **X-COM Interceptor** is a Windows 95 "AutoPlay" CD-ROM. That means that just putting the disc in the CD-ROM drive for the first time starts up the installation program.

> Note: If, for some reason, the Autoplay feature does not work, double-click the My Computer icon on your desktop, then double-click your CD-ROM drive. Lastly, double-click the file **Setup.exe** to begin the installation process.

✖ Click on **Install** to continue.

✖ As is usual in Windows 95 installation procedures, there are two decisions you need to make before the installation process can begin.

✖ The first is what sort of installation you want to do. Pick one of the options presented:

Typical installs the required program files, plus some of the luxury items: animations, sounds, and that sort of thing.

Compact installs only the required program files. This option requires the least hard drive space, but slows down load times and slows the game performance overall.

Custom gives you control of what gets installed. How much disk space this takes up depends on what you select. (You *must* install the program files for **X-COM Interceptor** to work.)

✖ The second decision is to what directory you want to install the game. You can accept the default, type in a directory path, or use the **Browse** button to seek out a directory. Click **OK** when you're done.

✖ **X-COM Interceptor** will now copy the files you selected to your hard drive from the CD-ROM.
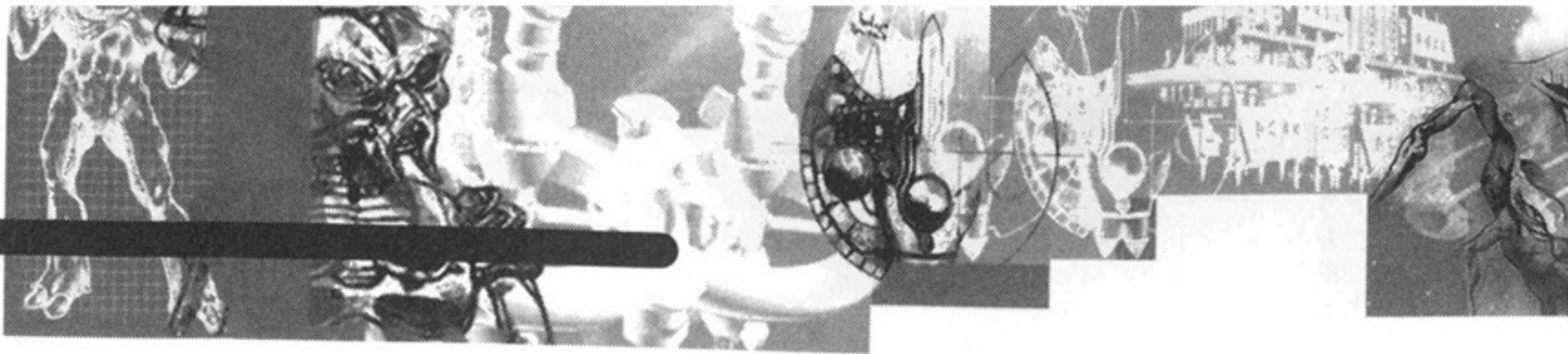
✖ After the game itself has been copied over, **X-COM Interceptor** gives you the option of installing a version of Microsoft's DirectX drivers that is compatible with the game. Unless you have a newer version of DirectX, you must install these drivers. The space these take up was included in the total noted when you selected what files to install.

✖ Lastly, you have the option of putting an **X-COM Interceptor** shortcut icon on your desktop. If you choose not to do so, you'll need to start **X-COM Interceptor** from the Windows 95 Start menu.

Once the installation is complete, the game is ready to play.

To play the game:

✖ Make sure that the **X-COM Interceptor** CD-ROM is in the drive.

✖ If you put an **X-COM Interceptor** icon on your desktop, just double-click the icon.

If not:

✖ Open the Windows 95 Start menu, then open the **X-COM Interceptor** sub-menu.

✖ Click the **X-COM Interceptor** option.

Have fun!

CHAPTER 3:
THE CONTROLS
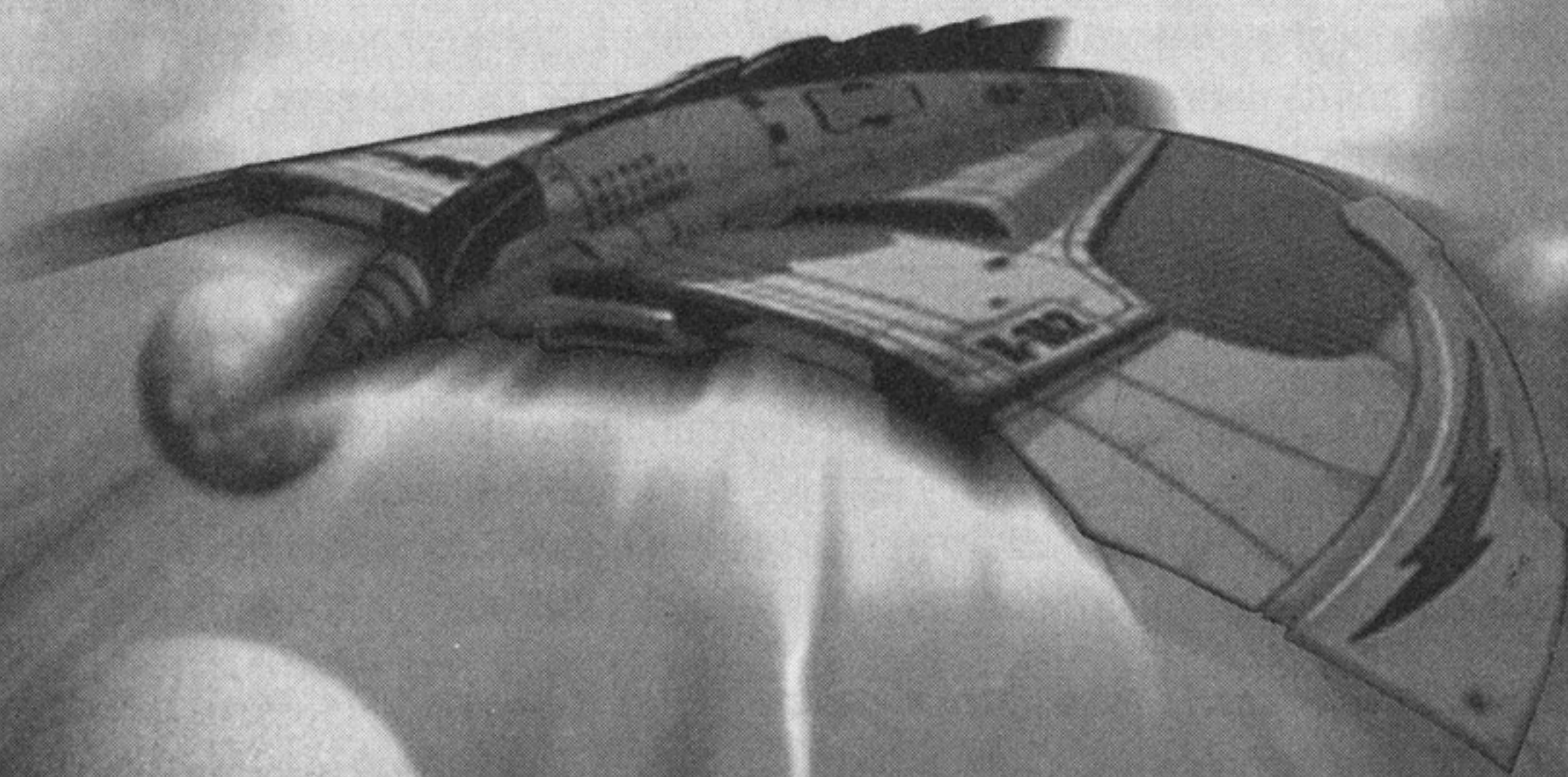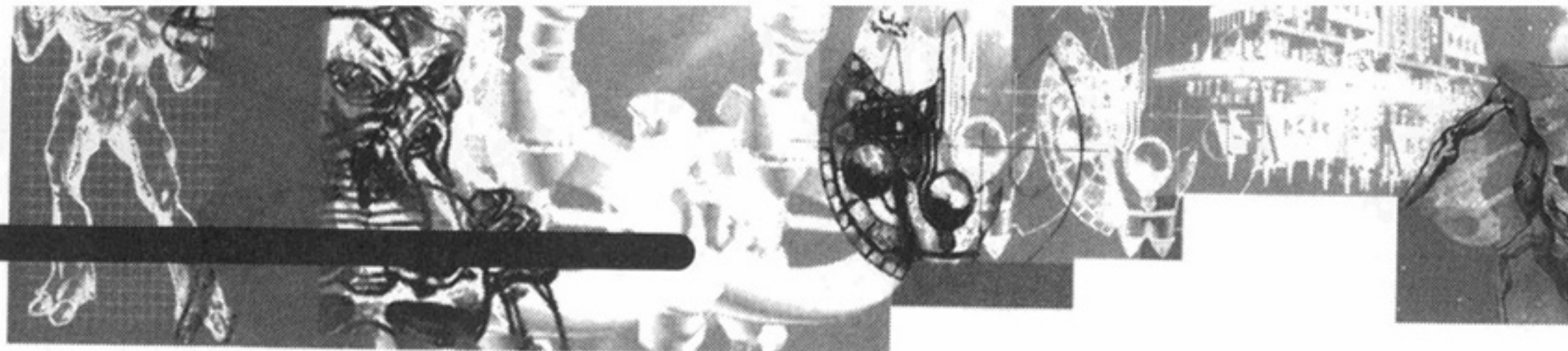
THE CONTROLS

To play **X-COM Interceptor**, you must have both a keyboard and a mouse attached to your system. Otherwise, you won't be able to take full advantage of the game's many options and settings. Although you're technically good to go as long as you have these basics, most players find that a joystick comes in handy once they climb inside the cockpit.

For those who prefer the fancier stuff, the game also supports other pieces of equipment compatible with Windows 95—including throttle control, rudder pedals, and a number of alternative output devices—but these are strictly optional. As long as you follow the installation instructions included with the peripheral device, you shouldn't have any trouble. In the event that you do, Customer Support will likely be able to help.

The following sections describe the basic control devices (keyboard, mouse, joystick) and detail how you go about configuring the game to your liking. (Experienced gamers can probably afford to skim the details.)

Keyboard
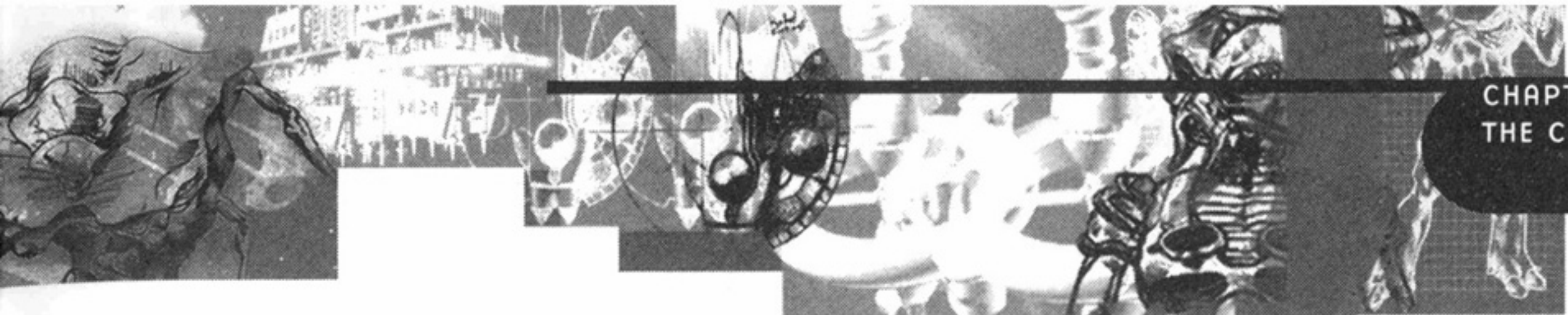
Much as anybody familiar with word processing would expect, the keyboard is essential for entering text at certain points during the game; however, in **X-COM Interceptor**, this is not the keyboard's primary function. More often, your keyboard serves as a cockpit control panel. With the press of a key, you can change your throttle setting, select a target, punch the afterburners, and do just about anything else that combat pilots need to do. You can also maneuver your craft using the keyboard, but that can prove a trifle tricky.

Throughout the manual, we refer to keys as they are found on a standard keyboard. For example, a function key appears as F1, the Tab key as Tab, the letter "a" as A, and so forth—just as you'd see it if you were to look down while typing. In keeping with convention, we show all letters as capitals. This does *not* mean that you enter a capital letter.

Occasionally, you might need to press more than one key at the same time. When this is the case, keys appear connected by a "+" sign, as in Ctrl + Alt + Del.

Most keyboards come equipped with a numeric keypad. Keys on the numeric keypad have different functions than their counterparts on the standard portion of the keyboard. To distinguish between the two, just look for the word "Numpad" (as in **Numpad** 8). If a number is referred to *without* **Numpad**, we mean for you to use the number keys along the top row of the standard keyboard.

Many of the keyboard commands are explained in the relevant sections of the manual, but you'll find the most complete listing of the keyboard controls on the **Key Chart**—and remember that if you customize the key commands (see **Configuring the Game**), your keystrokes might be different from those listed.

PAUSING

There might be times in the heat of battle when you need a breather. If you're in a multiplayer game, you're out of luck—the action is relentless. In simulator and single-player missions, though, pressing P calls a halt to the action. You can't make any flight adjustments, but then neither can the enemy. Tap P again to reenter the frenzy.

QUITTING

There are several ways of abandoning a game, depending on where you are and how seriously you want to quit. In the most drastic of cases—when you wish to return directly to Windows 95— press Ctrl+Q. Your mission is terminated at once, you skip the standard debriefing, and you forfeit any chance to save the game.

Selecting **Quit** from the *Game* menu or **Exit** from the *Main* screen also ends your current session and sends you back to Windows. Make sure to save the game beforehand (when possible) if you wish to pick it up again at a later date.

There are, however, less extreme measures. From the cockpit, try H if you want to terminate a mission without leaving the game entirely. This propels your ship out of the battlefield and into hyperspace, on a heading back to base. Unfortunately, unless you have completed the objective, your mission ends in failure—but at least you're still free to embark on a new voyage if you so choose.

To quit a Single Player campaign from the *Campaign Strategic Display* (*CSD*), choose **New Game** or **Load Game** from the *Game* menu. This abandons your current campaign, so be sure to save it first if you hope to resume play at some point.

Mouse

The mouse (or whatever device you have that performs the same function) serves the same purpose it does in any program, which is to say that it helps you move around the screen and interact with the game. You use the mouse in the opening stages of play to select game set-tings, and in single-player mode to negotiate the screens in the strategy portion of the game. The mouse is never used in flight.

In this manual, we use the standard terminology for controlling the mouse. For those unfamiliar with the terms, they are:

Click   Click the left mouse button (LMB). Synonyms include "press" and "select."

Right-click   Click the right mouse button (RMB).

Drag   Hold down the LMB while you move the mouse.

Right-drag   (Well, you get the idea.)

Double-click   Click the LMB twice rapidly.

The term "highlight" also crops up frequently, most often in reference to lines of text, although it can apply to other options in the game as well. Highlighting is a standard way to make a selection; to highlight something, click it—or in some cases, you might need to double-click. After you successfully highlight something, that item should change appearance.

To exit each of the game's many interface screens, click this icon, which is normally in the lower right-hand corner. We refer to this as **Exit**. When a certain screen requires you to use another method, we let you know.

Joystick

Although the keyboard can certainly be used for maneuvering in flight, a joystick is the more common and instinctive means of controlling your craft. In addition to letting you dive, dodge, and roll, your stick can also fire weapons, scan possible targets, and even initiate communications (depending, of course, on the button configuration and programming you select). With the joystick, you feel more like you're actually at the controls.

Most of you will want to learn about your joystick by testing it out in flight. That is, after all, the single best way to familiarize yourself with how it works—but it never hurts to have a heads-up before you climb into the cockpit. The standard joystick movements are:

Stick Forward   Dive

Stick Back   Climb

Stick Left   Bank to the left

Stick Right   Bank to the right

The degree to which you move the stick determines how steep your climb or dive and how sharp your bank. You can combine these basic movements to initiate more complicated maneuvers. You'll find that you need your entire range of motion (and a healthy dose of innovation) to pin the enemy down in battle.

A number of functions are automatically assigned to the joystick buttons at the start of the game. For example, by default **Button 1** (usually the joystick trigger) fires your beam weapons, and **Button 2** (often the button on the top of the stick) fires your missiles. Many newer joysticks have numerous additional buttons that you can custom configure to perform any function normally initiated using a keyboard command. For details on configuring joystick buttons and calibrating the joystick, consult **Configuring the Game**.

Configuring the Game

Before playing **X-COM Interceptor** for the first time, you might want to tinker with some of its details, like the level of sound or the layout of the keyboard commands. Using the game's **Setup** feature (found on the *Main* screen) or the **Game Configuration** option (on the *Game* menu), you can conform the game to your own specifications. The more comfortable you are with the different features, the more fun you'll have, so check into your possibilities.
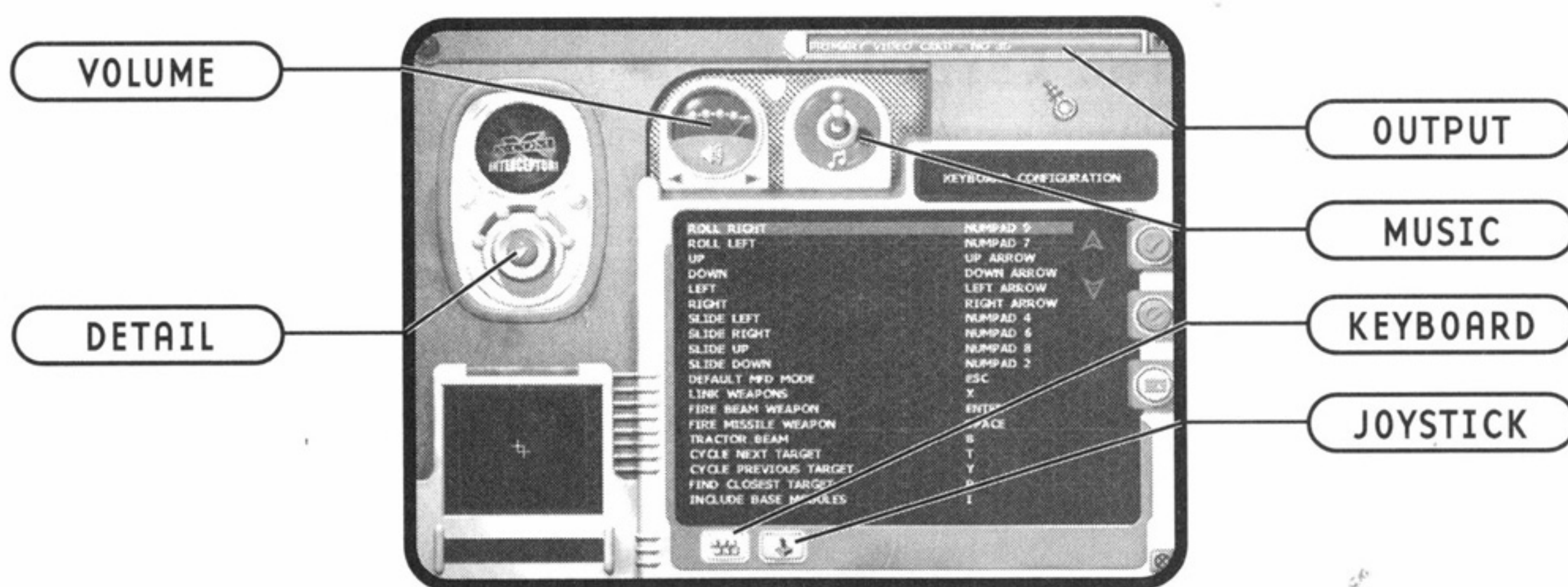
Detail Level	Change the level of detail displayed in the game. The detail level affects the appearance of the different objects and effects, as well as the speed of the game itself. Slower machines usually perform better when details are set to **Low**, whereas faster models should handle the higher settings just fine.
FX Volume	Click the left and right arrows to decrease or increase the volume level of **X-COM Interceptor**'s sound effects and digital speech.
Music On/Off	Allows you to deactivate (and reactivate) both the in-game music and CD audio background music with the flick of a switch.

Output Devices Use this to enable a 3-D accelerator card or other special output device. (Remember that you can't use equipment that you don't have installed.) To view the list of installed output devices supported by **X-COM Interceptor**, click the arrow at the right. Change the selection by highlighting the option you want.

Configure Keyboard Click this button if you wish to customize any of the keyboard commands used to control your spacecraft. For details, read **Configuring the Keyboard**. The *Configuration* menu defaults to this mode.

Configure Joystick Click this if you want to adjust the sensitivity of your joystick and assign functions to its buttons. You can also designate the functions of the buttons on a throttle control or other add-ons, if you have them (see **Configuring the Joystick**).

Once you've tailored each of the options on the *Setup* screen to your liking, click the **Exit** button. This records and saves any changes you have made, then shunts you back to the previous screen.

CONFIGURING THE KEYBOARD

X-COM Interceptor comes with a standard set of keyboard commands already programmed and ready to go. (For easy reference, these are listed on the **Key Chart**.) That's not to say, however, that you must stick with this configuration—if you want to change things around, go right ahead. What matters most is what works best for you.

To change the commands, click the **Keyboard** button on the *Setup* screen. This opens the *Configuration* menu's *Keyboard Configuration* panel. The left column lists the available commands (like "Fire Missile") and the right lists the corresponding keystrokes. Since the full lineup is rather extensive, you'll need to scroll down to see all of the listings.

When you're ready to make a change:

✖ Double-click the desired command on the scrolling menu to highlight it.

✖ Press the key (on your keyboard) that you want to assign to the selected command. Your new key mapping is reflected on the menu.

Occasionally, you might choose a key that is already assigned to another command. When this is the case, the game warns you that you are about to re-map a key that is already in use. Since the same keystroke cannot enable more than one feature, you must decide which of the two actions to link with the key in dispute. To retain the original key command, answer **No** when prompted. If you want to go ahead and make your change, however, answer **Yes**—but remember that you will have to assign a new key to the other command as well.

You can customize the keys for as many commands as you like. Don't forget to keep track of the changes you make, though, since the new commands will differ from those shown on the **Key Chart**. (You can return to the default control mapping at any time by clicking **Set Default Configuration**.) Once you've finished tailoring the keyboard configuration, click **Exit** to return to the *Setup* screen.

CONFIGURING THE JOYSTICK

Just as you can change which keys do what in the game, you can also assign commands and actions to the buttons on your joystick (and other add-on equipment). You can also set the sensitivity and dead zone of the joystick to fit your particular style of play. To begin, click the **Joystick** button on the *Setup* screen. The *Joystick Configuration* panel of the *Configuration* menu opens.
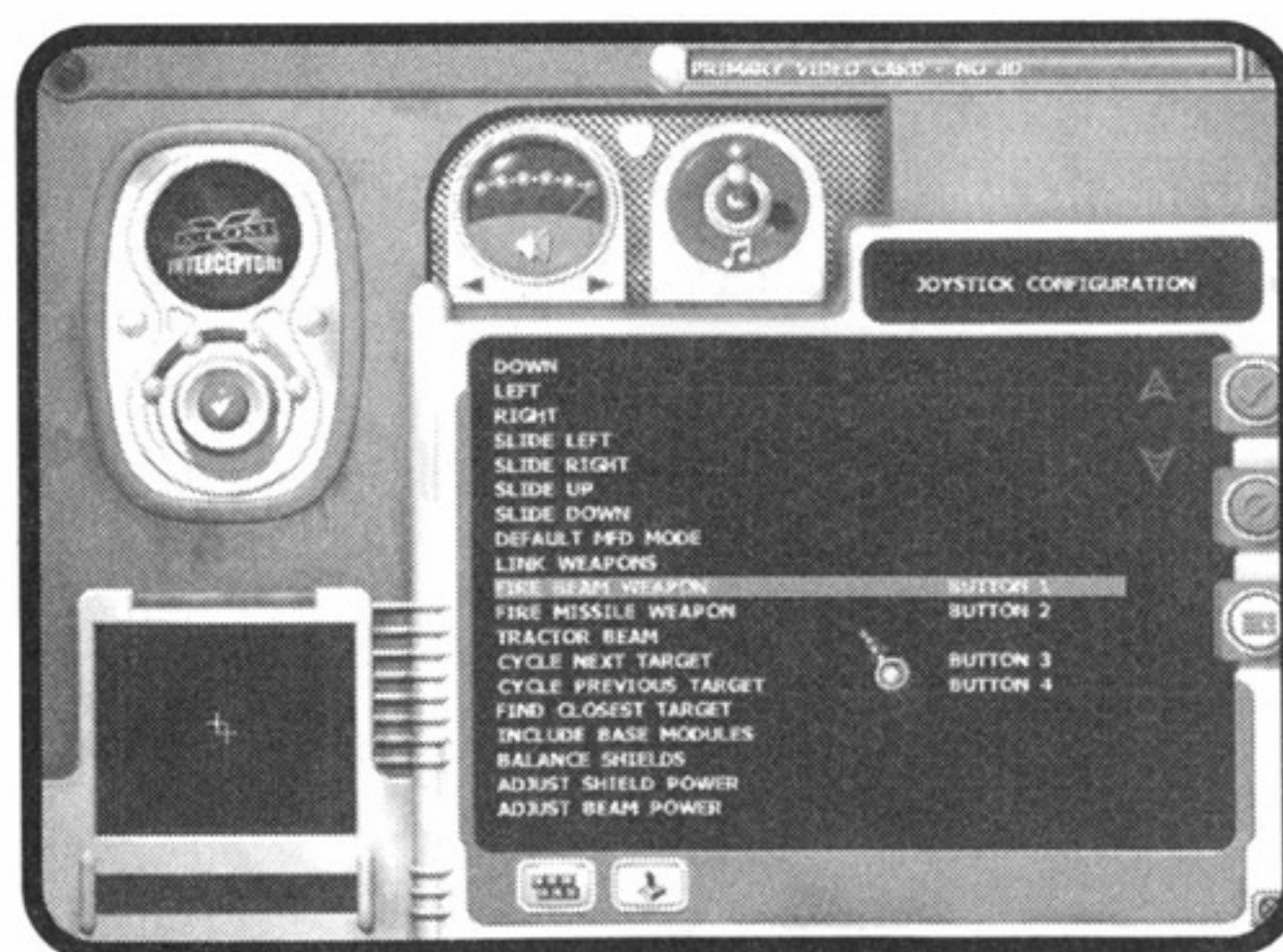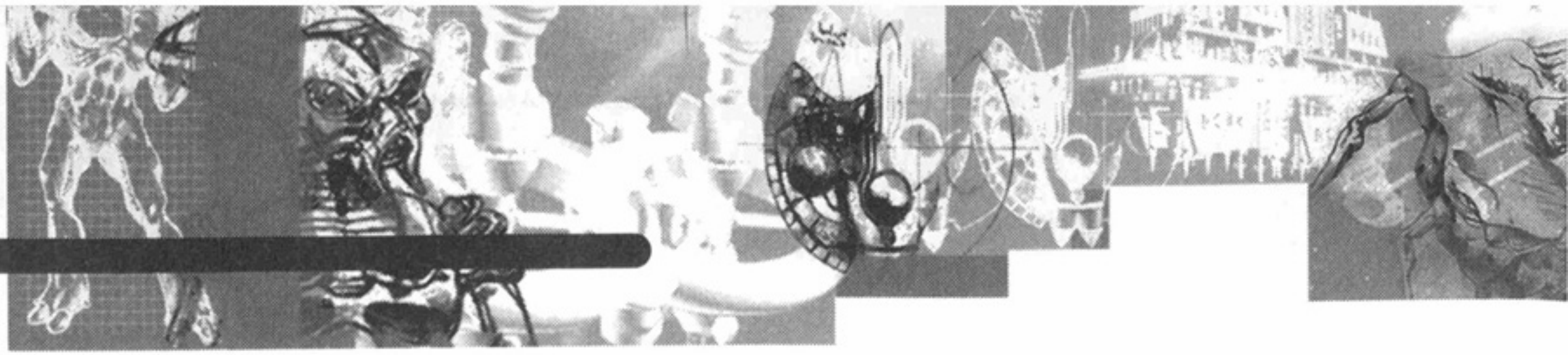
The panel lists all the available commands in the left column (just like the *Keyboard Configuration* panel). The right column lists (by number) all the available buttons on your joystick (and any other controllers) next to the default command to which they are mapped. If you're not sure which number corresponds to which button on your controller, click the button in question. The menu immediately centers on and highlights that button in the list. To change the task assigned to a button:

✖ Double-click the command you wish to re-map to highlight it.

✖ Click the button you want to assign to the selected command. The menu changes to reflect your choice.

Repeat these steps for as many of the buttons as you wish. As is true of the keyboard, only one command can be mapped to each control button. If you map a new command to a button that already performs a function, the new function replaces the existing one. (To reset all controller buttons to their default mapping, click **Set Default Configuration**.)

You can also adjust your joystick's sensitivity here. Sensitivity determines how much you need to move the stick before your ship reacts—the higher the sensitivity, the smaller the movement needed. This is purely a matter of preference, and you could find yourself coming back to make further adjustments once you've flown a mission or two. Use the slides at the lower left to fix the joystick sensitivity. You can get some idea of how quickly your ship will respond by watching the white cross hairs in the box as you move the stick around.

Once you have configured the joystick to your liking, click **Exit** to return to the *Setup* screen.

CHAPTER 4:
GETTING STARTED IN THE FRONTIER
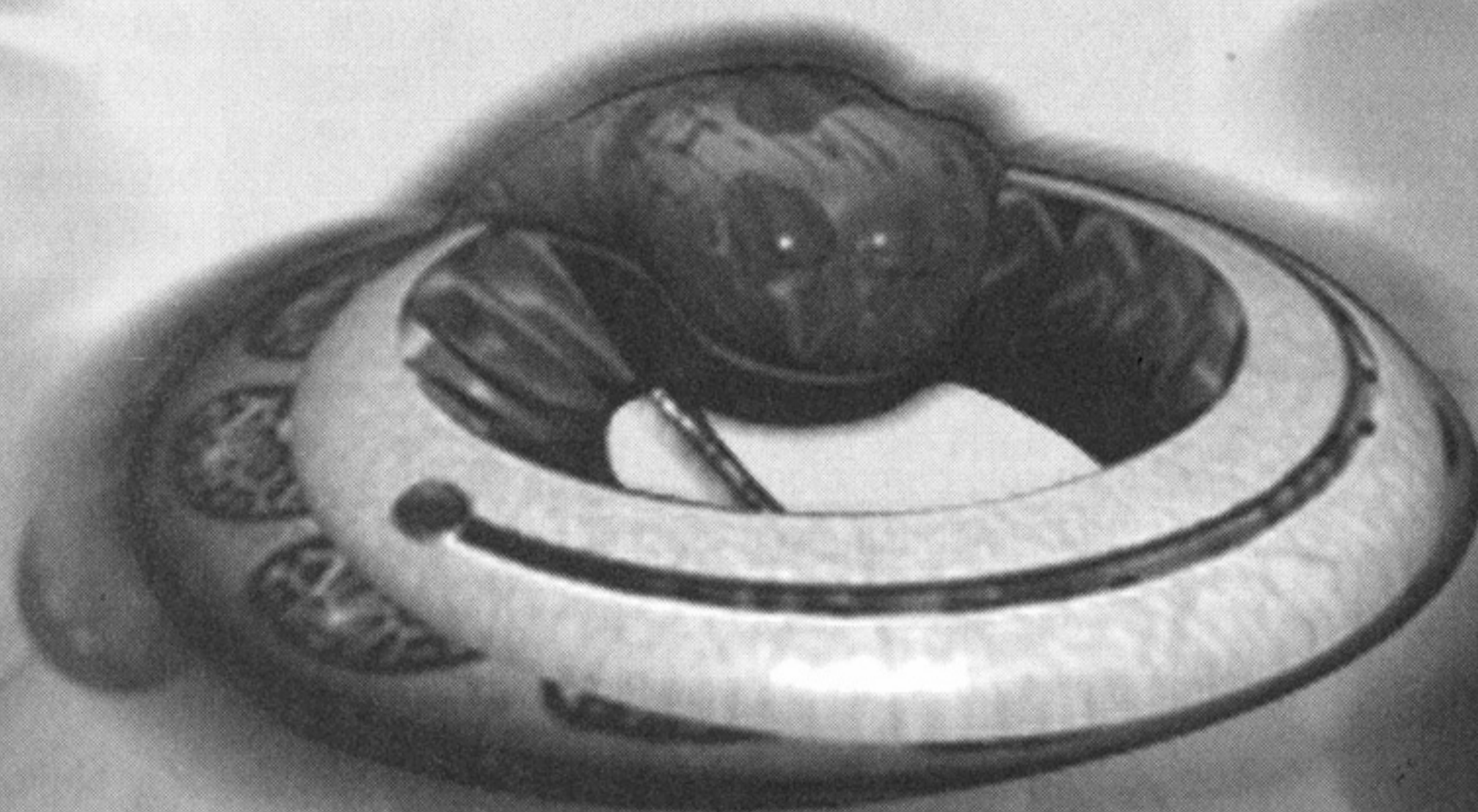
GETTING STARTED IN THE FRONTIER

So you've fired up the game and can't wait to train your sights on those aliens, but how? What is *X-COM Interceptor* all about, anyway, and what do you need to do to get started?

The Main Screen

Your first order of business is to negotiate the *Main* screen, where you have eight different options, each activated by clicking. Your choices are:

Single Play	Embark on a solo campaign. In addition to duking it out with the aliens, your duties include managing your bases, personnel, research, and financial resources.
Load Mission	Resume a previously saved Single Play campaign.
Multiplay	Battle your friends in a free-for-all dogfight to the death or blast an opposing team into submission.
Combat Simulator	Set up and fly simulated missions to help you learn the ins and outs of piloting an interceptor in combat.
Setup	Configure the game's volume levels, detail, and controls to suit your preferences.
Play Intro	Replay the opening animation. (To stop it and return to the *Main* screen, press Esc.)

Credits	View the game credits. (Pressing [Esc] returns you to the *Main* screen.)
Exit	Shut the game down and return to Windows.

The Menu Bar

Since there could be times when you're not on the *Main* screen, yet would like access to some of its functions, we've included the *Menu Bar* to help you out. It's available any time you see the mouse cursor—except on the *Main* screen, naturally. During Single Play campaigns, you can access the *Menu Bar* at almost any point other than when you're engaged in combat. In other modes of play, it's available only during the initial setup sequences. On occasion, however, you might find it necessary to finish a particular task before you can actually pull the bar down.

The *Menu Bar* is a system of pull-down menus, each controlling a different set of features. It functions like any standard Windows-style menu bar. To open the *Menu Bar* and view the possibilities, move your cursor to the top of the screen. Once the bar drops, you can click any of the menu names to open a list of options. To hide the bar, either highlight a selection or click another portion of the screen.

The specific menus and options available depend on the mode of play you've opted for, so you might not always have the full range. Your options can include any of the following.

GAME

For most intents and purposes, the *Game* menu acts like the **Main** screen—in fact, one of its options returns you there. The others let you carry out **Main** screen operations right where you are. You can configure the game, embark on a new mission or campaign, load a previously saved Single Play campaign, and quit. Two other options, **Save Game** and **Pause**, are available only in Single Play.

New Game	Quit your current mission or campaign and return to the *Main* screen. If you're in the midst of Single Play operations and wish to resume the campaign at some point, you had best save before doing this—you won't have another opportunity, and any unsaved progress is lost for good.
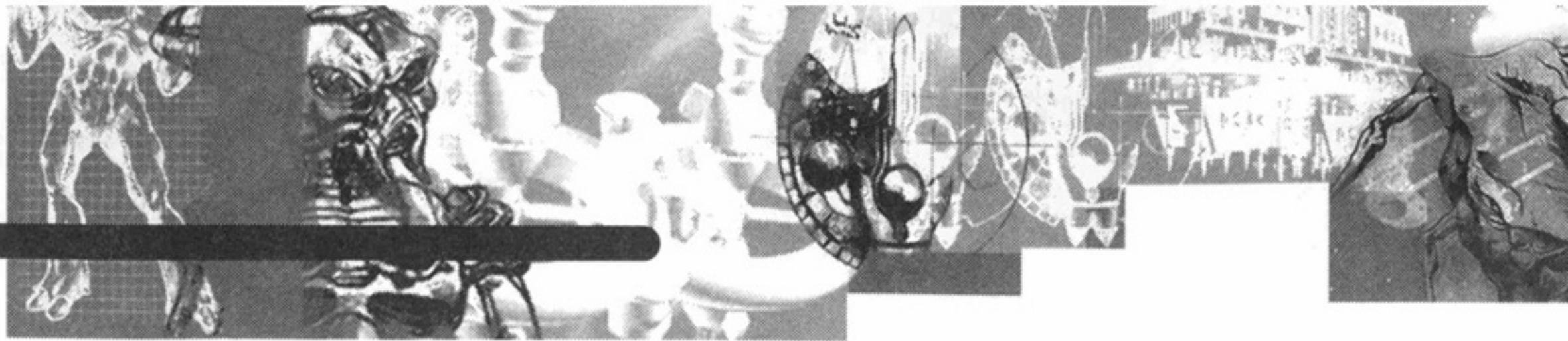
Load

Load one of up to 10 previously saved Single Play campaigns in progress. When the mission list appears, simply highlight the game you'd like to head back into. The action picks up exactly where you left off. If you are already in the middle of a campaign, you might want to save that one before you try to load another one, or you risk losing whatever you've accomplished since you last saved.

Save Game

This feature, which is available only in the single-player campaign, saves the campaign in progress. All you've got to do when the list comes up is highlight one of the numbered fields, then type the name you want to give your campaign and click **Save Game**. Once that's done, everything is set for you to reload and continue at a later date.

Save Note: Beware of highlighting a slot that already houses a saved game, as this will permanently replace the earlier save with the present one. Should you highlight the wrong field by accident, click **Cancel.** You'll still need to save your current game, but at least you won't have erased anything.

Game Configuration

Configure the game to your liking by adjusting the volume settings and detail level, selecting alternative output devices, and changing the settings for your joystick, keyboard, and throttle controls. For the complete rundown on how this all works, see **Configuring the Game**.

Options

This option calls up a list of sub-options. Each of these allows you to customize some aspect of the game.

Pause

Using the **Pause** option, you can temporarily suspend the flow of action in a Single Play campaign while on the *Campaign Strategic Display* (CSD). This disables all other controls until you click **OK**. If you ever want to pause in the middle of any kind of combat mission—unless you're engaged in Multiplay, that is—just press P. Then, when you're ready, press it again to return to the fray.

Quit

Shut the game down and exit to Windows. Any unsaved Single Play information is lost, so be sure to save beforehand if you wish to pick things up again later.

HELP

Got questions about a campaign strategy screen? Get the answers from the *Help Wizards*, available any time you call up the *Help* menu in Single Play mode. Although you can often sort things out on a particular screen just by experimenting, on occasion you might need a little guidance. The *Help Wizards* provide an overview of a screen's function and even give you a detailed tour of the various screen controls on command. (To learn more, see **The Campaign Strategic Display**.)

SCREENS

Using the *Screens* menu, which is available only in Single Play mode, you can hop quickly between many of the different strategy screens without having to return to the *CSD* in between. Your choices include:

CSD Return from your current screen to the *CSD*—the main operations center of the Single Play campaign.

Equip Ships Alter the weapons load-out and change the internal systems mounted on any of the interceptors in your fleet. You can also hand out new ship assignments to the pilots under your command.

Research Stay on the cutting edge of technology by downloading research information on alien technology from the computers back on Earth. With any luck, this new technology will help you to develop the advancements you'll need to defeat the aliens.

Bases After the *CSD*, the *Bases* screen is the single most important when it comes to Frontier operations. Your options there include building new bases and making structural improvements at your existing facilities. From the *Bases* screen, you also have direct access to the *Equipment and Personnel*, *Equip Ships*, and *Base Information* screens.

Equipment and Personnel Recruit pilots and place orders for supplies you need in the struggle for supremacy in the Frontier.
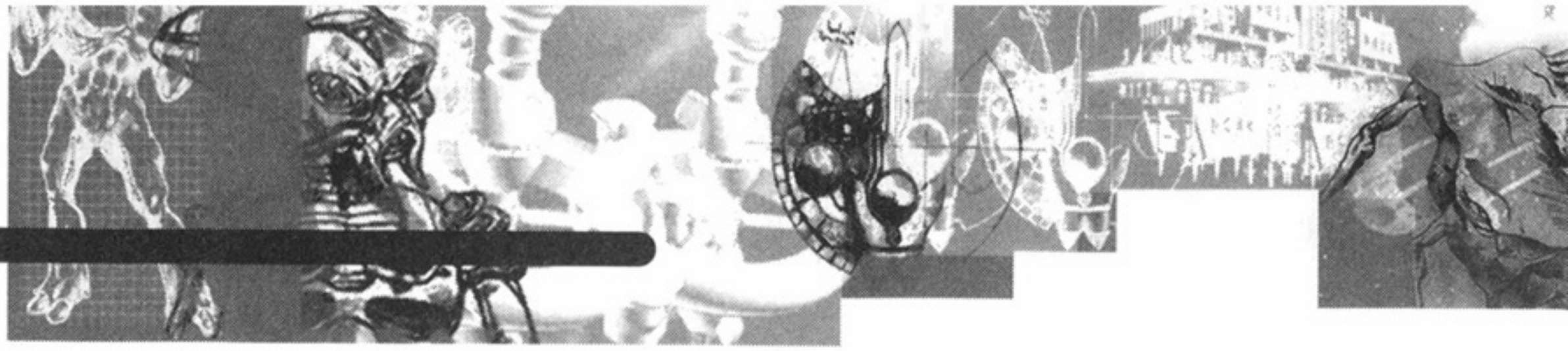
Status Reports   Refer to a batch of six reports that summarize the overall state of affairs in the Frontier. These include bulletins on Income, Finance, Alien Activity, X-COM Activity, Outpost Information, and Player Stats.

For more details on what each of these screens does and on how they all function, refer to **The Campaign Strategic Display.**

UFOPEDIA

Like the *Screens* menu, the *UFOpedia* menu is available only during Single Play campaigns. It grants you access to a whole slew of information that you might find useful—everything from a quick synopsis of the two previous Alien Wars to a rundown of the latest research. The UFOpedia is constantly upgraded as new discoveries are made in an effort to keep the most current data on file and readily accessible. The UFOpedia is divided into a number of easy-to-access categories, including:

X-COM Ships   Learn about the various ships and installations employed by humans in the Frontier, and read up on their relative strengths and weaknesses. As new craft are developed, their entries are added to the log.

Ship Weapons   This listing of X-COM's tools of war is, bar none, the most informative source available. Learn of the possible applications—and potential pitfalls—of each weapon type, so that you can make the best use of your arsenal.

Technologies — A catchall category of technologies and background history on a wide array of topics, this is the place you want to go to learn about the technology behind your weapons and equipment. This is also where you can learn more about the history of X-COM and the organizations with whom they are associated.

Ship Equipment — As with the weapons you can install on an interceptor, the internal systems and on-board equipment undergo continual modification as your technological prowess increases. This UFOpedia category keeps on top of the latest developments in defensive Interceptor technologies.

X-COM Base Modules — Because your bases are all-important to your survival in the Frontier, you are forever in search of ways to enhance them, be it through better defenses, increased communications capabilities, or more powerful defensive emplacements. As quickly as scientists design new modules, you want to be able to put them to use—but it pays to do a little fact checking before you plunge ahead.

Alien Operations — This UFOpedia category keeps track of all the information you uncover concerning the aliens, their current operations, and their overall plot against Earth. Any time you spend reviewing this information is well spent.

Alien Ships — Like X-COM, the aliens are constantly developing more effective craft. This UFOpedia category stores all the information you manage to gather regarding alien ships, as well as information concerning some of their larger installations.

Alien Bases — Alien bases are, if anything, even tougher than those you can build, so you had best get the skinny on how they're constructed and on the functional details of alien base components. This information, if used wisely, can give you an idea of how best to stage an attack on an alien stronghold.

Probes and Mines — Get a heads-up on alien mines and probes (unmanned craft that serve any number of insidious purposes) and learn how to put your own probes to best use.

To learn more about the UFOpedia and how it works, consult the **Research** section.
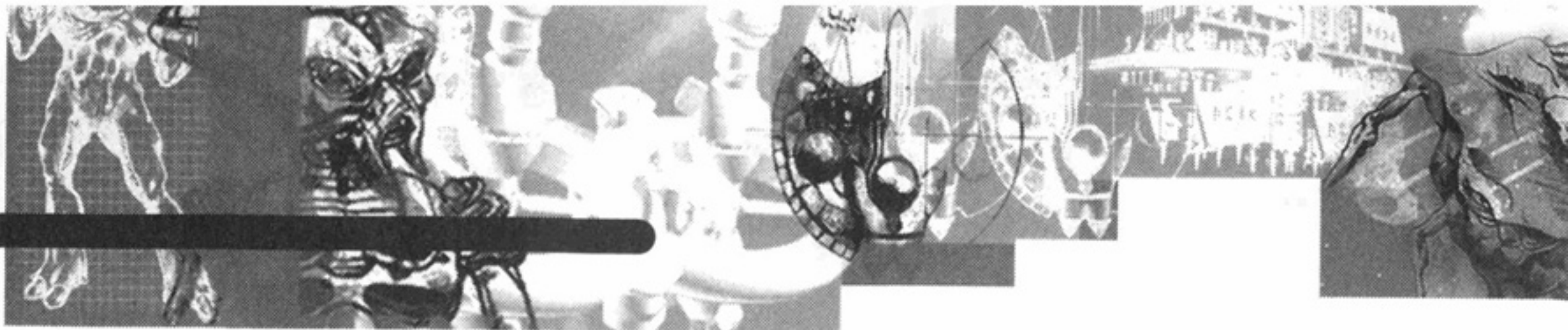
The Three Modes of Play

X-COM Interceptor incorporates three different game types. Two of these are strictly for the individual player, while the third pits two or more players against each other—solo or in teams. The three basic modes of play are:

Combat Simulator
Combat Simulator missions are practice runs based on the types of skirmishes you might encounter during a campaign, including dogfights, escorts, base defense, and so on. The Combat Simulator provides a safe training ground where you can gain all sorts of in-flight experience before venturing into the world of real combat.

Single Play
Single Play campaigns include not only the hair-raising, teeth-clenching battle action found in the Combat Simulator, but also an underlying strategic element. You're in charge of all X-COM operations, responsible for everything from the most basic decisions (like how many missiles to order) to the more complex issues (like whether to go on the offensive and which of your interceptors to send out on a mission)—and when it comes to the actual combat, of course, you're still right there in the cockpit.

Multiplay
In multiplayer mode, you can take on up to seven other people in a free-for-all dogfight to the death. You can also form teams to duke it out against each other.

In all likelihood, you'll want to practice on your own before making your first forays into the cut-throat world of multiplayer matches. Thus, this manual is structured around the Single Play campaign. Sections on Combat Simulation and Multiplay options are clearly marked, and when necessary we provide references to Single Play passages that bear on those game modes. Read on to discover how to start each of the three modes.

COMBAT SIMULATOR

Think of the Combat Simulator as your personal space flight school, a place not only to master the ins and outs of piloting your ships, but also to test your limits and limitations. It's more than just grasping the basics or experimenting with a new weapon—the Combat Simulator is also about inventing the maneuvers, strategies, feints, and deceptions that could turn the battle in your favor. Learn just how much you can get away with, but don't be afraid to die in the trying— you are never actually in mortal danger. This high-tech training tool is a simulator, remember? Regardless of the outcome of a combat sim, you emerge from your training session unscathed and a better combat pilot for the experience you've gained.

PILOT ROSTER

DIFFICULTY DIAL

BEGIN
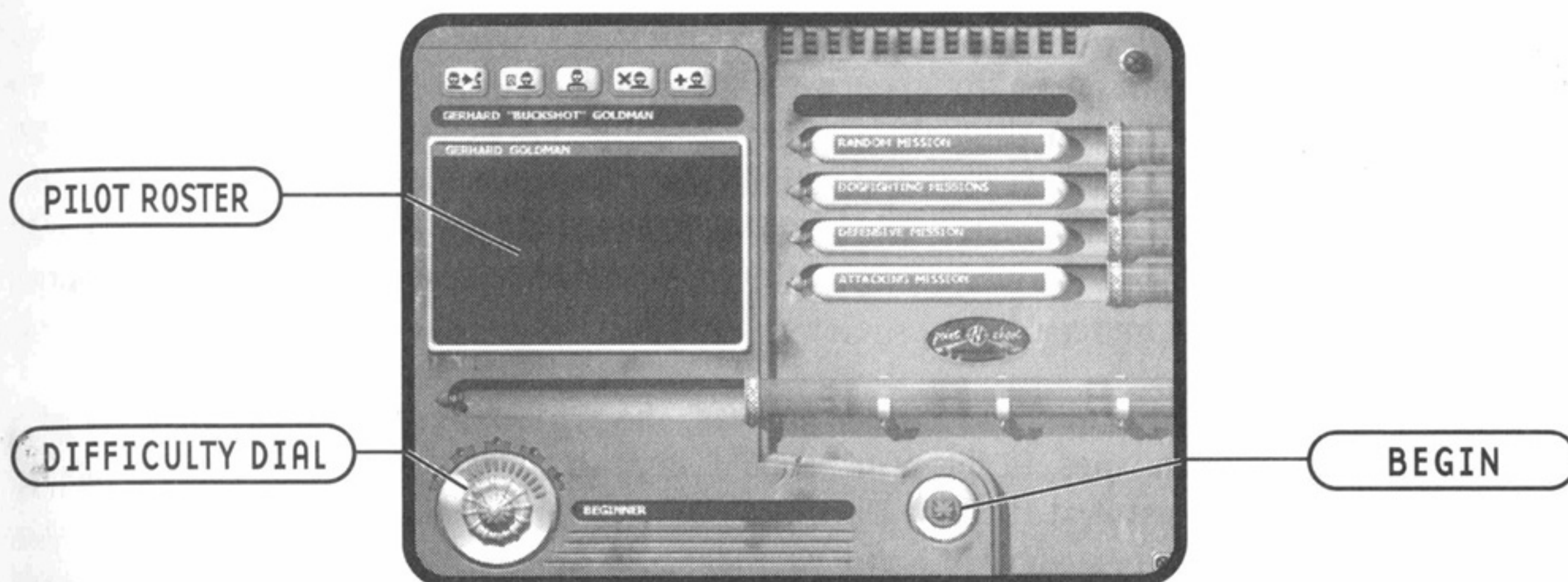
Don't expect anyone to walk you through the paces in the Combat Simulator, because there's no formal instruction here. Personal experience is, after all, the best possible teacher. Remember how your eyes used to glaze over in the classroom? (You'd better not try that in combat!) It's the things you discover on your own that leave the strongest imprint. In the Combat Simulator, you've got the freedom to try and fail and then try again, so make of it what you will. One thing's for sure—you'll depend on the skills learned here to save your skin in a Single Play campaign or Multiplay match.

To begin a simulation, click the **Combat Simulator** option on the *Main* screen and prepare to set up the conditions under which you'll train. You get to choose everything from the mission's difficulty and goals to the systems and weapons loaded on board your ship. (Alternatively, you can choose to accept the defaults instead and hasten straight into the field of combat.) These initial decisions go a long way toward determining what skills you'll learn during your training run.

Don't forget that unless otherwise noted, the **Exit** feature is located in the bottom right-hand corner of each screen.

CHOOSING A PILOT

The Combat Simulator allows you to track your progress—but in order to do so, you must have a pilot identity. When you enter the *Combat Simulator* screen, you're assigned a default identity. Of course, you can always rename this pilot or even add new pilots. Every pilot you create is automatically saved and added to the roster, and is available in future missions. To select another pilot identity, simply highlight the pilot name on the roster. The following controls are available for manipulating the pilot roster:

Display Selected Pilots
During the mission selection process, the pilot roster is replaced with a list of mission types. At this point, should you wish to fly under a different name, you must first click the **Display Pilots** button to call up the roster once again, then highlight a new pilot identity to make the change.

Pilot Stats
This feature allows you to assess your performance and chart any improvement in your skills. Highlight a name from the roster and click the **Pilot Stats** button to view that pilot's record. This file supplies data on the current number of kills attributed to the pilot, as well as a breakdown of overall proficiency with both missiles and beam weapons. Use it to see just how good a pilot you are—or how poor, as the case might be.

Rename Pilot
This simply allows you to rename any pilot currently listed on the pilot roster. To rename a pilot on the roster, highlight the name, click **Rename**, and type in your changes.

Delete Pilot
You might at times want to wash a pilot out of the program as an underachiever or an old dog who's beyond the age of serviceability. To expunge the pilot's files from the Combat Simulator's archives, simply highlight the name and click **Delete**.

Create Pilot
This is how you add a new name to the pilot roster. When you click this button, you are prompted to enter a name and pilot call sign. Once you have done so, the new pilot is added to the roster.

SETTING THE DIFFICULTY

Establish the difficulty level of your simulated mission by clicking one of the five possible settings on the dial. Initially this defaults to **Beginner**, but you can also choose **Experienced**, **Veteran**, **Genius**, or **Superhuman**. While you obviously want to challenge yourself (the whole point of training is to push yourself to a new level of competence), you don't want to wildly overshoot your capabilities, lest the exercise prove futile.

In a simulated mission, you never know ahead of time whether you're facing the enemy alone or you'll have the company of other X-COM operatives flying along as wingmen. Generally speaking, the harder the task at hand, the more likely it is that fellow pilots are assigned as support, but there's no way to tell until you get into your briefing (see below). All the more reason to give a realistic assessment of your current competence. If, for some reason, the level of difficulty proves too extreme for your current level of skill, however, you can always change it before your next sortie.

SELECTING A MISSION

Decisions about the type and the scope of your simulated mission are of paramount importance, since the mission type ultimately determines what kind of skills you'll need to get the job done. Choices include each of the many different sorts of missions that you're likely to encounter in a full-scale Single Play campaign. The available missions fall into four basic categories:
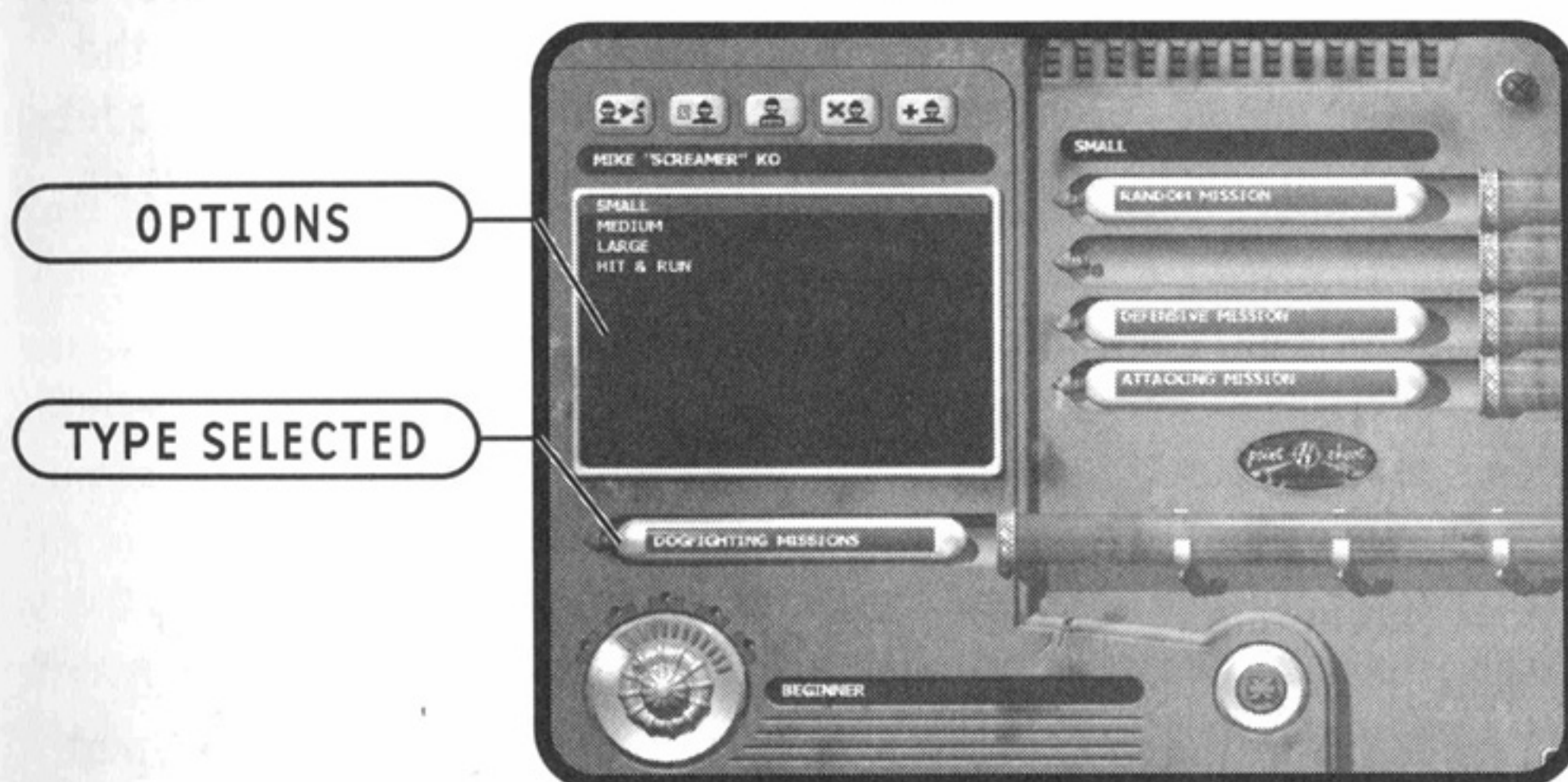
Random

Let the *Combat Simulator* generate a random mission. This is the default when you first enter the simulator. You might head out on an offensive strike or patrol the skies for marauding aliens. You could even find yourself alone amid a swarm of enemy craft—it all depends on what the simulator throws at you. Your briefing gives you a quick summary of the mission goals before you set out, so you know what's expected of you. Then it's up to you to carry the plan out to the best of your abilities.
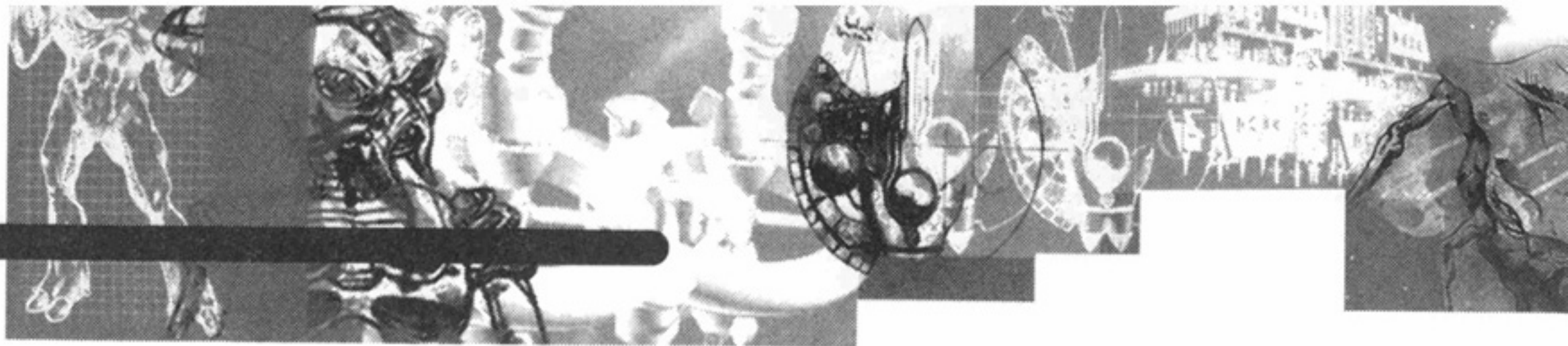
Dogfight   In a dogfight, you're out for alien blood, pure and simple. It's a duel to the death. To emerge victorious from the fray, you have to down every last alien ship—except on a hit-and-run dogfight mission, in which you're charged with disabling and capturing a particular model of enemy craft. Once you have done so, your mission is complete and you can hyperspace home.

Defensive   On a defensive mission, you must attempt to protect the X-COM or corporate holdings under your watchful eye—a freighter convoy, OPP, outpost, base, or anything else that might happen to be in the vicinity. To be successful, you need to shoot down all the attackers before they destroy either you or the assets in your care.

Attack   This is your chance to go on the offensive and squash those overgrown arthropods with the full might and force of your weaponry. Alien probes, freighters, convoys, mining platforms, outposts, and bases are all fair game—as are, of course, the enemy ships swarming the area. Your orders are to liquidate the primary objective and all defenders lurking nearby. The sole exception is a hit-and-run mission, in which you must target and disable specified modules on an alien base.

After you have programmed your mission, click the **Begin Simulation** button to continue toward the field of battle.

OUTFITTING A SHIP

You're almost good to go now, but before you set out there's one little detail awaiting your attention—loading up your ship. After you click **Begin Simulation**, a menu appears showing three different interceptor models that the simulator has outfitted for the mission. The ship at the top of the list is the one officially endorsed for the outing, but each of the three is furnished with the minimum weapons you should need to take care of business. Of course, you might have an entirely different take on things, which is why you can also customize your selected interceptor to your liking. Highlight the ship you want to fly, then choose:

OK   Accept the selected model as is and head out to see what the aliens have in store for you.

Equip Ship   Refit the selected craft. Using the *Equip Ships* screen (described in **Managing Your Bases**), you can load up your interceptor with any equipment and weapons you choose—subject to the usual space restrictions.

Although the *Equip Ships* screen is essentially the same for both Combat Simulator missions and Single Play campaigns, there are a few notable differences—foremost among them that in the Combat Simulator you have access to even the most advanced equipment and weapons right off the bat. See the **Equip Ships** section of **Playing a Single Campaign** for the particulars on how to refit your craft.

BRIEFING

Now that you've gotten your ship squared away, your next—and final—stop before battle is the *Briefing* screen. It wouldn't do to bolt off into the fray unprepared, and so your intelligence officers have drawn up a report on the current state of affairs and what you need to do to get the job done. The mission briefing lets you know what to expect in the way of enemy forces. Once you have absorbed the most critical details, click **Engage** to get your flight underway (or **Exit** if you change your mind about flying this mission). For further information on what to expect in flight, see **Taking on the Aliens**.

WINNING

Simulated sorties are meant to raise your blood pressure in the shortest amount of time—they're designed to tax your skills to the utmost and give you a taste of what combat will be like in the Single Play campaign and in multiplayer sorties. Although the most important thing you carry away from a training mission is the experience you absorb through combat, you're graded only on your ability to go in, take care of business, and get out. If you fail to handle the threat, or if you let yourself get killed, then you lose. It's that simple. Think about it—when you fall short of completing your objective (no matter how much damage you inflict along the way), you allow the aliens to continue their operations in the Frontier. Any way you look at it, that spells disaster for Earth. Better to fail here than when the fate of the Earth is hanging on your every move!

THE SINGLE-PLAYER CAMPAIGN

The most complex of the three modes of play is the Single Play campaign. You've got to patrol the Frontier and protect both X-COM and corporate investments, but you're also responsible for building, maintaining, and defending up to eight X-COM bases. Your duties include everything from monitoring research, finances, and personnel to planning and carrying out the missions that will lead you on toward victory. To be successful, you must figure out what the aliens are up to and spoil their master plan.
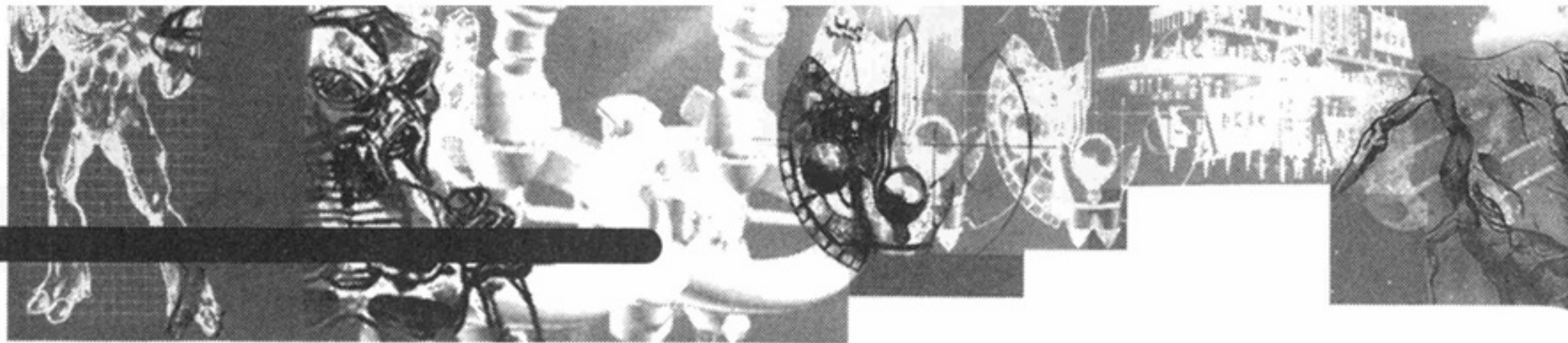
To begin a Single Play campaign, click the **Single Play** option on the *Main* screen. You are prompted to set the difficulty level—choose from **Beginner** (the easiest), **Experienced**, **Veteran**, **Genius**, and **Superhuman** (the most challenging). Click your choice and (when prompted) name your first base to start the campaign. See **Playing a Single Campaign** for details on how to play a campaign.

If, instead of starting a brand-new campaign, you want to resume one already in progress, click **Load** on the *Main* screen and choose from up to 10 previously saved games. Highlight a slot to see details on the campaign (including the difficulty level, the current date and time in the Frontier, and the amount of money in your treasury) and then click **OK** to reenter the selected campaign or **Cancel** to return to the *Main* screen.

TYPES OF MISSIONS

In general, Single Play combat missions break down into three types. Many are in direct response to an alien threat. For instance, when the aliens attack an outpost, ore processing plant (OPP), freighter, or base, you've got to spring into action and defend these installations. Losing them could mean the loss of valuable funding and supplies, not to mention the death of many civilians. (If the aliens destroy your only base, it means you *lose the game!*) Likewise, you might be called on to disable or destroy enemy probes encroaching on X-COM territory.

You're not confined merely to addressing alien-provoked crises, however—you can also take the initiative and order preemptive strikes on the enemy. Unless you take the bull by the horns, you're gonna get gored, so attack enemy outposts and freighters to disrupt their supply lines. If you *really* want to do some damage to the aliens' military power, take a shot at wiping out an entire base. Use whatever means necessary to destroy the alien presence in the Frontier.

There is a third and final type of mission, one found only in Single Play. These are special missions of lesser priority that crop up now and again. When you receive notice of a special mission, consider dispatching some interceptors to check things out—as long as you have the resources to spare. If you're worried about spreading yourself too thin, then ignore the message; it's far more important to carry on with your main objective—the ruination of the aliens' master plan.

WINNING

In a single-player campaign, victory is not a matter of winning or losing a single battle. You're in the war for the long haul. If staying in a battle means placing the whole of X-COM operations in jeopardy, you might do better to cut your losses and run for hyperspace. A single defeat is not the end of the world—at least not in the early stages of the war.

Your prowess in battle is the key to amassing points during an individual mission. Your score goes up for everything from taking out an alien base to shooting down one of their freighters, and you also receive credit for such actions as responding quickly to a distress call or retrieving items from the battlefield after a firefight. The battle performance of your fellow pilots comes to bear on your final mark, but—sadly—kills made by outposts, OPPs, freighters, and other civilian craft do not.

As far as behavior that hurts your performance rating, you can bet that acts of recklessness and stupidity will get you penalized. Loss of allied ships and facilities carry heavy point penalties as well. Friendly fire could do far worse than knock a few points off your score; in the heat of battle, a stray shot here or there goes unpunished, but if a pattern emerges, you could be branded a traitor. Who has time for court-martials? Frontier justice is swift and comes at the hands of your fellow pilots.

So much for your score on individual missions, but what of winning the whole shebang? Simply put, you win a campaign by preventing the aliens from destroying X-COM and the Earth. Sounds easy enough when it's said like that, but it can take a while. Meantime, there are uncounted ways to falter. Run into a deficit situation for too many consecutive months, and X-COM operations are terminated altogether. Likewise, if you fail to provide adequate defensive support for outposts and OPPs, your funding dries up. You also lose if the last X-COM base is destroyed or the aliens complete their ultimate goal before you can stop them. You've got to manage your limited resources to the best of your abilities and hope that the aliens give up sooner rather than later.

MULTIPLAY

There are different types of multiplayer contests, and it's up to you and your friends to choose which one suits your fancy. In Free-for-all missions, it's kill or be killed, plain and simple. Your objective is to rack up points by shooting down anything that moves—your friends are your enemies, and there are no holds barred in the quest for bragging rights, so you'd better be on your toes. You can also engage in a team free-for-all, in which players form multiple teams and battle it out.

To start up a multiplayer match, press the **Multiplay** button on the *Main* screen and get ready to head off into battle.

COMMUNICATIONS SETUP

Before you do anything else, you must determine your connection parameters. The *Communications Setup* screen appears when you choose to start a multiplayer game. The connection type you should use depends entirely on the configuration of your system, and it determines what other information you need to provide. Select the connection option you need by highlighting it on the menu and clicking **OK**. Your choices are:

IPX Hook up to a local area network (LAN) using the IPX protocol.

TCP/IP Play in a game on a LAN or over the Internet, using the TCP/IP protocol. Once you have selected this, you must also fill in the IP Address for the game. (That is, the Host enters his or her own IP Address, and anyone joining enters the Host's address.) Click the text field, type in the address, then press [Enter]—or simply use the *Phone Book* (described below).

Because keeping track of multiple IP addresses can be something of an inconvenience, you can store this information in the *Phone Book*, a scrolling menu of names and IP addresses that you use most frequently. It saves you the trouble of having to type the information in every time you want to access a specific site or computer. Click the **Phone Book** button to choose an address or update existing entries.

Add Addresses To enter a new address, click this, then type in the name and IP address that you wish to include. Tap [Enter] to move from field to field, or simply click a field to position the cursor there. After entering the salient details, click **Add** again (or press [Enter] when the cursor is in the last field) to save the information.

Delete Addresses Expunge the highlighted address from the phone book (pending final verification, of course).

Select To choose the connection address, highlight an entry and then click **OK**. This closes the *Phone Book* and inserts the information you chose into the correct communications setup fields.

Cancel Close the *Phone Book* without making a selection.

Once you have chosen the type of connection and filled in any other related information, click **OK** to proceed or (as always) **Cancel** if you change your mind. After you've closed this screen, you can reopen it by clicking **Comm Setup** on the *Multiplayer Setup* screen.

HOST OR JOIN?

Once the setup is done, the first decision you need to make is one that you and the other players should set up ahead of time. One of you—normally the person with the fastest computer—will be the "host" of the game. The rest of you will join the game.

PREVIOUS

SELECT SKIN

OUTFIT SHIP

NEXT

MISSION INFO

HOST/JOIN SWITCH

COMM SETUP

START MISSION

SELECTION BOX
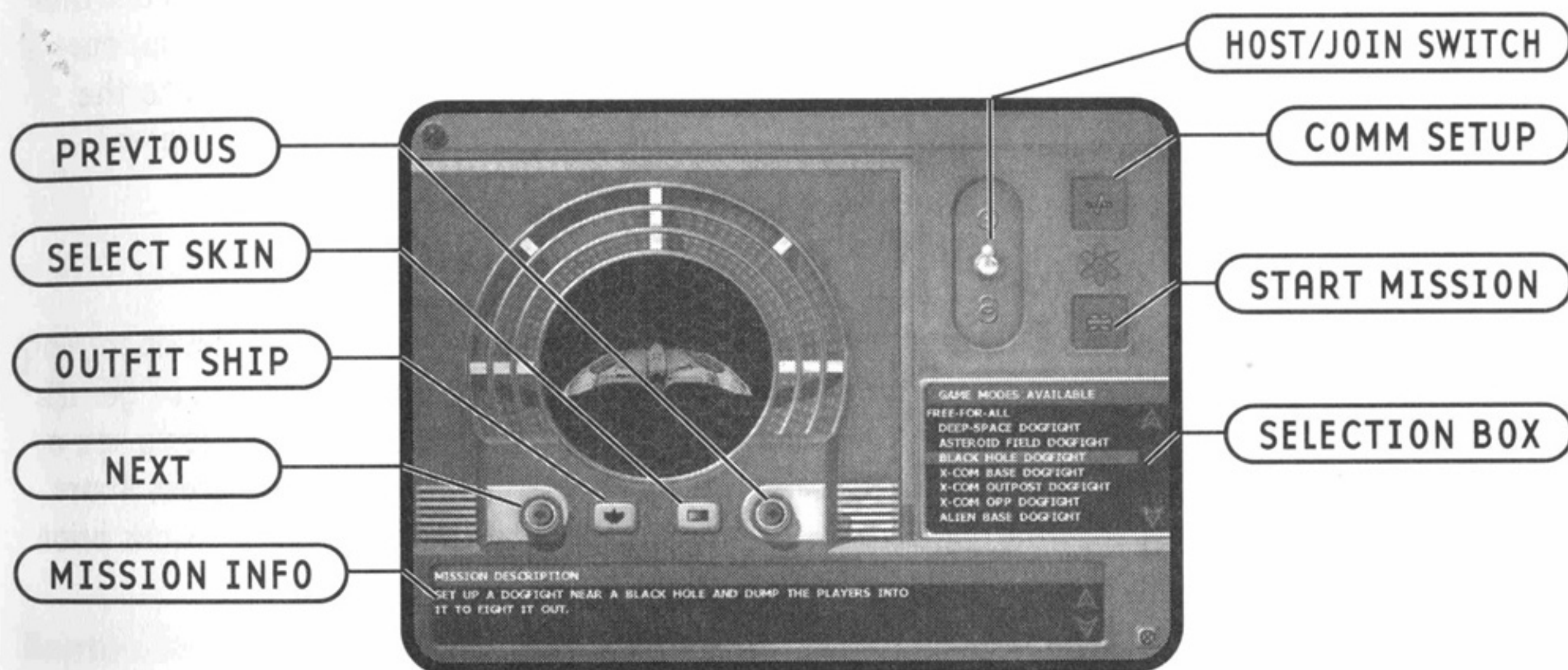
If you're hosting, make sure that the *Host/Join* switch is set to **Host**. If you're planning to join a game, toggle the switch to the opposite position (**Join**).

HOSTING A GAME

Which of the remaining options on the *Multiplayer Setup* screen you need to bother with depends on whether you are hosting a game or joining one hosted by someone else. Hosting a game gives you the power to establish the type of game, the number of players allowed, and even whether specific players are allowed into the game or excluded.

If you haven't already, flip the toggle up to the **Host** position.

SELECTING A SHIP

One of the more vital tasks you face before setting out on a Multiplay mission is selecting and outfitting your interceptor. Just as before a *Combat Simulator* mission, you have your choice of customizing your own ship or accepting one of the three stock configurations presented to you at the outset (see **Outfitting a Ship**). Should you elect to customize the load-out and systems, you do so with the same *Equip Ships* screen as for a Combat Simulator run. You get to that screen by clicking the **Equip Ship** button.

There's an additional option in Multiplay, however. To help you distinguish one craft from another in battle, each ship can wear one of eight different "skins." That is, you can alter the appearance of the ship's exterior. After you've finished outfitting your ship and have returned to the *Multiplayer Setup* screen, click the **Select Skin** button to toggle through the eight different designs.

PICKING THE TYPE OF PLAY

Once you have your interceptor all squared away, it's time to turn your eyes toward the upcoming match itself. On the *Multiplayer Setup* screen, take a look at the various possible types of games (you might need to scroll by clicking the arrows alongside the list) and highlight any one to see a brief description of the battle situation. After selecting whichever suits your fancy, press **Start Mission** to call up the *Host Information* screen, on which you make the final few decisions prior to entering the fray. Depending on the type of connection, these could include:
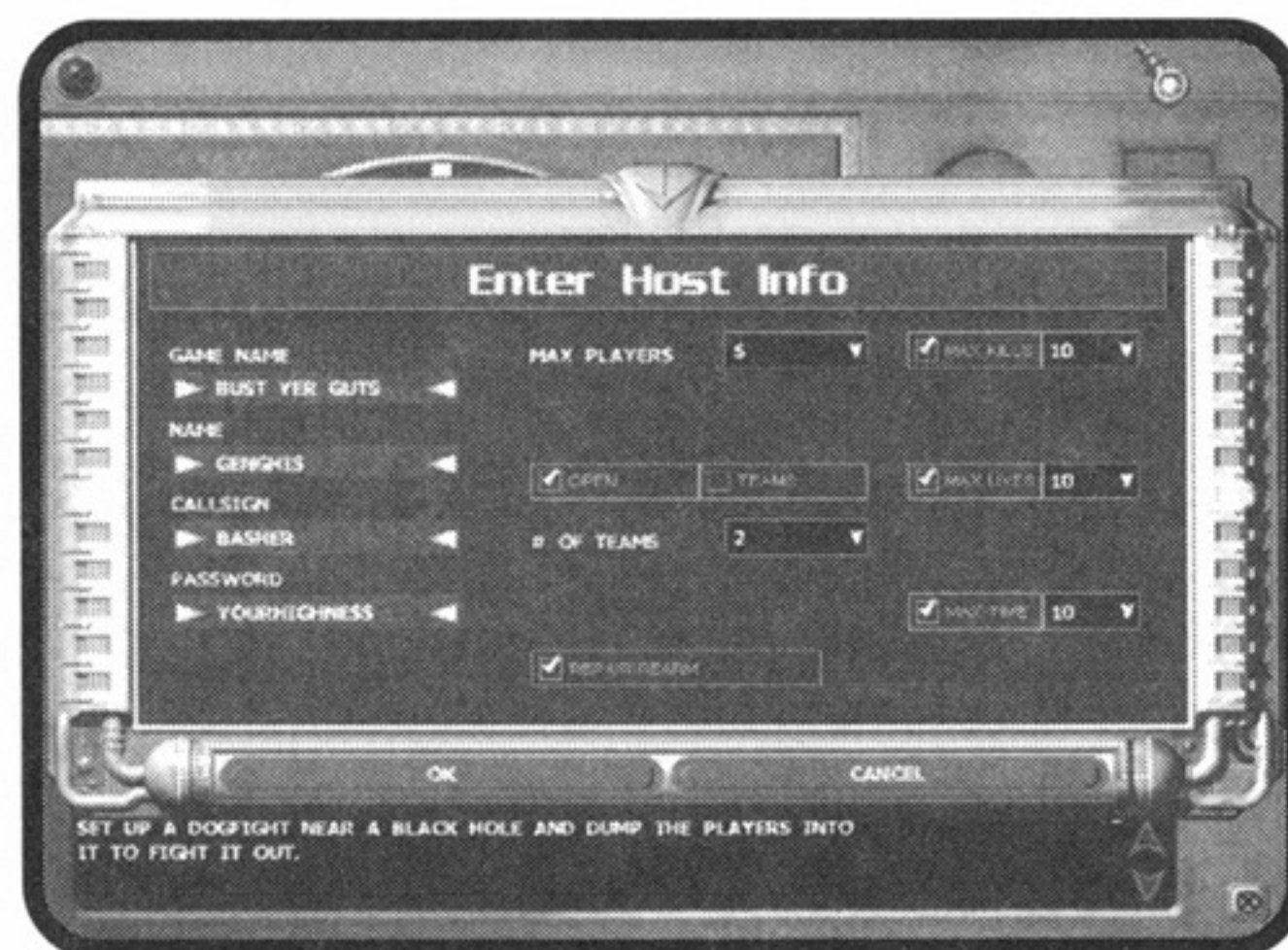
Game Name	Enter the name under which the game will be listed for those players who wish to join.
Name	Type in the name by which you want to be identified in combat.

Call Sign   Type in a call sign for yourself (optional).

Password   The **Password** option comes in handy for controlling just who can enter your game. In a closed game, no one can get in on the action without first typing in the operative code word.

Max Players   Select the maximum number of players you want in the game—up to eight total.

Open   Sometimes, you might want to keep a game just between friends instead of welcoming any and all. If this is the case, deselect (uncheck) the **Open** toggle to screen out undesirable elements. (Closing a game also keeps players from entering the fray in mid-contest.) To close a game, uncheck the **Open** box *and* enter a code in the **Password** box. Any player who wishes to join must now type in the correct password in order to gain access to your game. (Team games must be closed, but all other games are open unless you deliberately close them.)

Teams   Use the **Teams** toggle to turn the cooperative play option on or off. When teams are disabled, it's every man for himself, but during team play you can have between two and four groups fighting it out against one another. When the **Teams** toggle is checked, you also need to set the number of teams you'd like. Team games are by definition closed games.

Repair/Rearm   When this toggle is checked, players can top off their arsenal and restore their ship to tiptop condition by visiting a landing pad (see **Rearming and Repairs**). Otherwise players must make do with what they've got. Note that when pilots are shot down and return to the field of battle, their ships are fully operational and their ammunition at full capacity.

OK   Accept the mission conditions as they are, pull the cosmic dust cover off your ship, and prepare for combat. You're directed to the *Player List*, where you make a few final preparations before giving the okay to start the match.

Cancel   Return to the *Multiplayer Setup* screen.

WAITING FOR PLAYERS

So much for setting the game up. Once you click **OK** to post the game, it's a matter of waiting for people to join before you kick off the festivities. Here on the *Players List*, you can monitor who has thrown their hat into the ring, just to be sure that everyone you're expecting has arrived.
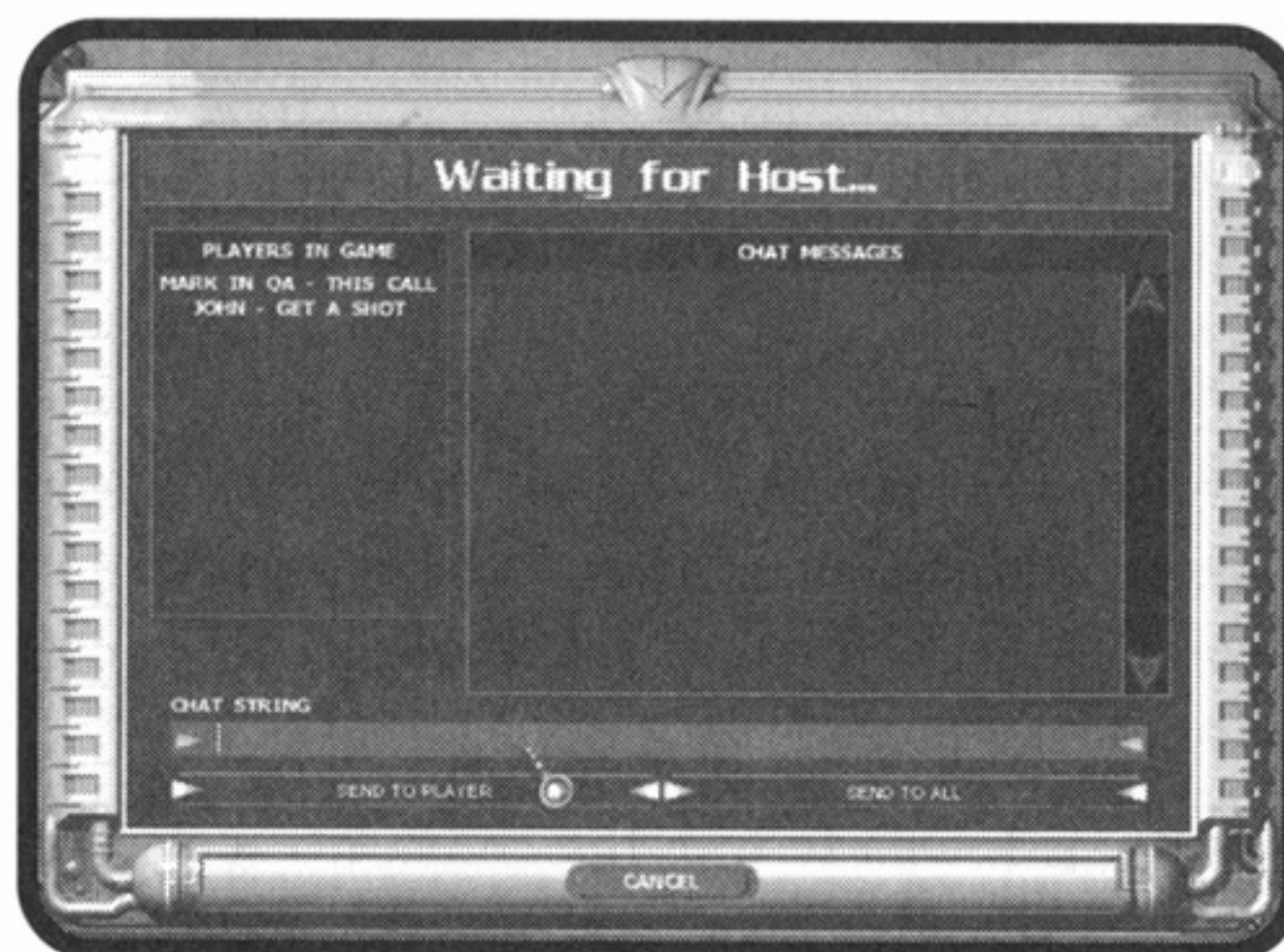
While you're waiting for things to begin, you can pass the time by chatting with other players. Simply type a message in the *Chat String* area and send it off. Clicking **Send to All** broadcasts your message to anyone currently on the *Players List*, while the **Send to Player** option allows you to forward the missive to only those pilots you choose to highlight. Both the *Chat Messages* box and the *Players List* have scroll bars that you can use to review longer lists.

When everyone has joined the game—or when you get tired of waiting for them to get up and running—click **Start Game** to head out. Remember, though, that once you take this step in a closed game, no one else can join. When hosting a team game, you have one last task before seeing action—setting up the team—but in all other cases, you hop straight into the cockpit. For details on combat, refer to **Taking on the Aliens**.

SETTING UP TEAMS

In team play, before you actually hit the skies, you've got to pick sides on the *Team List* screen—and as host, that's your job. You place individual players on teams by clicking their name on the list, highlighting a team, and then clicking **Add Player**. You can also reassign a player from one team to another by highlighting a name, clicking **Remove Player**, and going through the process all over again.

As host, you also have the honor of coming up with team names; highlight the default name and type in an alternative, then press (Enter). Before leaving the *Team List*, don't forget to assign yourself to a team, too!

JOINING A GAME

If, instead of hosting your own Multiplay game, you opt for one that's already set up, getting up and running is a much simpler affair. When you join a game, your choices are much more limited than when you're hosting; you can choose which game to enter, but you set none of its parameters. You do still get to outfit your ship. After establishing the type of connection you want and switching the toggle to **Join**, you have only a few decisions to make. These include settling on a spacecraft and selecting a game.

CHOOSING A SHIP

The process of selecting and equipping your ship is much the same as before a mission in the *Combat Simulator* (see **Outfitting a Ship**), with the additional possibility of individualizing the exterior of your craft, not merely its internal systems and weapons. For this latter, click the **Select Skin** button on the *Multiplayer Setup* screen to cycle to the desired skin—all the better for the enemy to spot you by.

CHOOSING A GAME

After toggling to **Join**, you are presented with the rundown of the contests currently on line. (If nothing is posted on screen yet, but you're expecting a game, just sit tight; the host is probably still setting the game up.) These are the games that others have established. Highlight a specific listing to call up the mission conditions—that way you know more or less what you're getting into before you plunge into the fray.
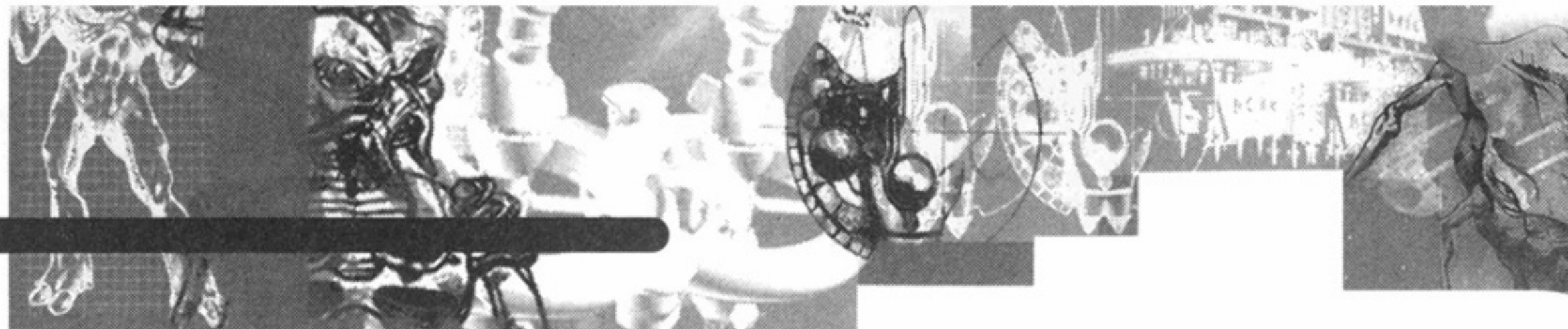
You can join any open game—or any closed game for which you have the password (see the **Picking the Type of Play** subsection of **Hosting a Game**). Just click the particular match and press **Start Game**. Your next move is to enter your pilot name and call sign, as well as a password if it's necessary (for a closed game). Once you have typed in the data, click **OK** to join the game; **Cancel** returns you to the *Multiplayer Setup* screen.

HANGING OUT

The game's host is the one who actually decides when to get the action underway, but while you wait on the *Players List* screen for that decision, you can pass the time by talking on-line with other players. Type messages in the *Chat String* box and then fire them off with the click of a button; **Send to All** broadcasts a message to everyone on the *Players List*, while **Send to Player** passes it on only to the highlighted pilots. That way, you can form informal alliances and plot out strategies—or simply amuse yourself and others until the battle commences.

Any time before the host engages the game, you can still back out and change your ship, choose another game, or quit altogether by clicking **Cancel**. For details about combat in the Frontier, check out **Taking on the Aliens**.

WINNING

Winning a free-for-all or team dogfight is strictly a matter of who has the most kills at the end of the game. The more interceptors you shoot down, the better—unless they're on your own team, of course. You'd also do well to avoid getting shot down yourself in the process, but that goes without saying. In team play, you receive both individual and team results.

CHAPTER 5:
PLAYING A SINGLE CAMPAIGN

PLAYING A SINGLE CAMPAIGN

You're the new X-COM Commander, charged with heading up operations in the Frontier. Welcome aboard; we're glad to have you at the helm. Allow us to present this preliminary compendium to help you get settled into your post as quickly as possible. Armed with this information, the handy historical timeline, and a healthy appetite for combat, you'll be good to go in no time flat. Study up! You'll be taking command of X-COM's first Frontier base soon, and you'll have precious little spare time after that.

Economic Underpinnings

Before you arrive in the Frontier, it wouldn't hurt you to understand how X-COM operates—where its funding comes from and what its primary goals and responsibilities are. This will help you set your priorities and form a perspective, and both of those will help you make the tough decisions in the event that your resources begin to dwindle away.

BASES, OUTPOSTS, AND OPPS

The Frontier is populated by several different types of space stations, both manned and automated. Of these, the two most important for your purposes are *outposts* and *ore processing plants* (OPPs). Outposts are orbiting factories placed in the Frontier by major Earth-based corporations. They are responsible for the coordination of local mining efforts, including the processing and storage of raw materials harvested from nearby planets and asteroid fields. In addition, outposts also serve as your equipment merchants, production stations, central personnel recruiters, and shipping depots. They maintain the freighters that ensure the flow of staff and supplies to X-COM holdings. As such, outposts are vital to your daily operations.

Your dealings with OPPs are less frequent but no less important. OPPs are the individual mining facilities located in the same system as and maintained by each outpost. They're the orbital factories that extract the raw ore used to manufacture goods on both Earth and the Frontier. Though OPPs must ship the minerals to an outpost for end-stage processing, they are nonetheless indispensable to the whole affair; after all, they—and not the outposts—carry out the actual mining.

Both outposts and OPPs are corporate business ventures. Being primarily civilian operations, they are equipped with little in the way of weaponry. Their personnel is trained only in rudimentary defensive tactics, and the stations are ill-prepared for any concerted attack. X-COM bases, on the other hand, are fully armed military stations staffed by professional soldiers, including the best available weapons experts, military tacticians, and technical support crew. Bases exist in the Frontier for two specific purposes—to safeguard outposts and OPPs and to wage war on the aliens.

You'll notice right away that all of the outposts are clustered in systems near your base. Few corporations are foolhardy enough to build an outpost far from the protection offered by an X-COM facility. That's one of your secondary responsibilities—opening up the Frontier. Every new base you can establish means another volume of space the corporations can mine for Earth's benefit.

FUNDING AND FEES

In return for protection, the corporations that own the outposts and OPPs offer considerable financial support to X-COM. In fact, most of your revenue comes straight from these private interest groups, whose parent corporations disburse funds to you on a monthly basis. Generally speaking, your subsidies increase with each new outpost that comes under your protection, so the more outposts you can entice to set up operations in the Frontier, the more money deposited in your treasury.

That's the theory, at least. In practice, it doesn't always work out that way. You see, corporations have a great deal of latitude in deciding how much they want to contribute to X-COM each month. There's no set minimum that they must pay for protection, so as a rule, less profitable ventures chip in less money—while expecting the same amount of protection.

Your funding also tends to fluctuate according to your success (or lack thereof) in fending off threats. When you demonstrate the ability to keep attackers at bay, an outpost could well increase its donations. (Fear is a great motivator.) Better yet, other corporations might be encouraged to invest in Frontier operations, leading to entirely new sources of income and materials. Remember, though, that a company can also reduce its financial support—or withdraw it altogether—if you fail to provide satisfactory protection. As you might imagine, the definition of "satisfactory" is a highly subjective one. Every facility in the Frontier, no matter how insignificant, fancies itself the center of the universe.

The ultimate sanction, of course, is for an outpost to shut down entirely. It's not a decision that's reached lightly, but if a corporation gets too discouraged about its chance for survival and profit, it will quickly call a halt to mining operations. Once an outpost or OPP is closed down by its parent company, it will never again be reopened—you've lost that source of funding for good. When an outpost or OPP is destroyed, however, there's a chance that the corporation might rebuild, provided you made a good-faith effort to defend the original structure.

The lesson here is that you'd better keep outposts and OPPs happy, even at significant cost to X-COM. Make no mistake about it, though—you have the final say over how to deploy your units. When your resources are stretched too thin, there's nothing wrong with ignoring a plea for help from a weak contributor in favor of responding to one sent by your strongest backer. It's an unpleasant reality of life in the Frontier—money talks.
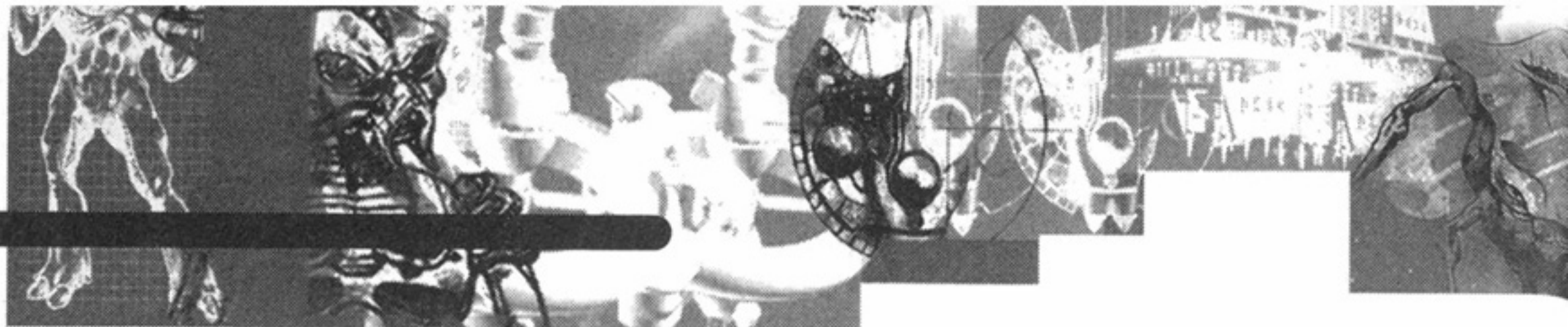
If necessary, you can always scrounge some additional funding for X-COM operations through the sale of surplus or outdated weapons and equipment. When you clear your Cargo Modules of obsolete technology to make room for newer and more powerful items, you can sell the old stuff. (Rumor has it that your castoffs sometimes end up in the hands of arms dealers on the black market, so you might not want to get rid of anything too powerful.) You can make a tidy profit on equipment that's collecting dust, and that might be just the thing to bail you out of a tight financial spot. (For more information, see **Equipment and Personnel**.)

Weekly and monthly reports keep you abreast of X-COM's financial fitness, summing up the overall mood of the corporate outposts and detailing both increases and decreases in their contributions. This gives you a rough idea of where you might want to concentrate your efforts in the upcoming weeks. Weekly reports also tend to offer specific suggestions for how best to proceed, so be sure to read them carefully.

The bulk of your income goes toward operating expenses—primarily pilot salaries, maintenance fees for ships and bases, and the replacement cost of equipment. The remainder is credited to your treasury. From this you deduct the purchase price of any new weapons or systems you order in a given month, as well as the cost of improvements made to your bases. As is often the case, there's rarely enough money to cover everything you'd like to buy, but that almost goes without saying.

Based on what little we've discovered about the aliens so far, we believe that they operate within a system remarkably similar to ours. They, too, seem to have outposts, orbital mining facilities, and bases which they upgrade as needed, and they appear to rely on similar supply and transport lines. As far as we have been able to determine, however, the aliens don't suffer any of the same financial constraints—evidently, their "citizens" work for free in the name of the common good.
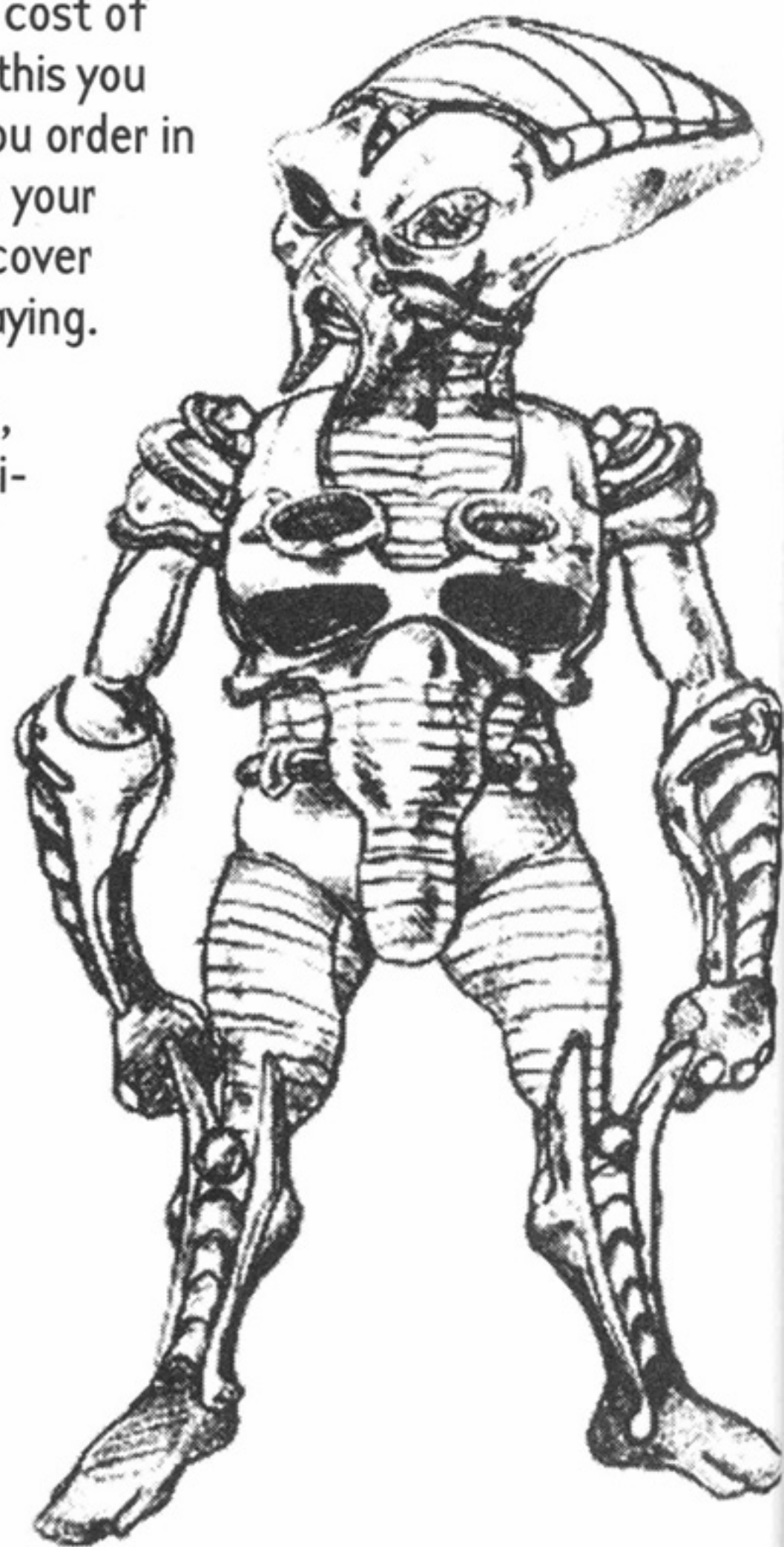
The Campaign Strategic Display (CSD)

On your arrival in the Frontier, you have a single base under your control. You first duty is to give the base its official name. This facility comes equipped with all the essentials you need to get started—and not much else. You've got limited cargo, hangar, and living space, some communications and sensor capabilities, and even a small start-up force of intercept craft and pilots. Still, you'll probably want to check out the possibilities for expansion early on. Aliens don't practice population control (except where humans are concerned), so you can bet they're proliferating at this very moment.

ZOOM CONTROLS

FRONTIER MAP

CONTROL PANEL

CAMPAIGN MAP

TIME CONTROLS

LAUNCH CONTROLS

PAN BALL

MESSAGES

00:01

SATURDAY
JAN 01, 2067
$5,000,000

INITIAL BASE BUILT
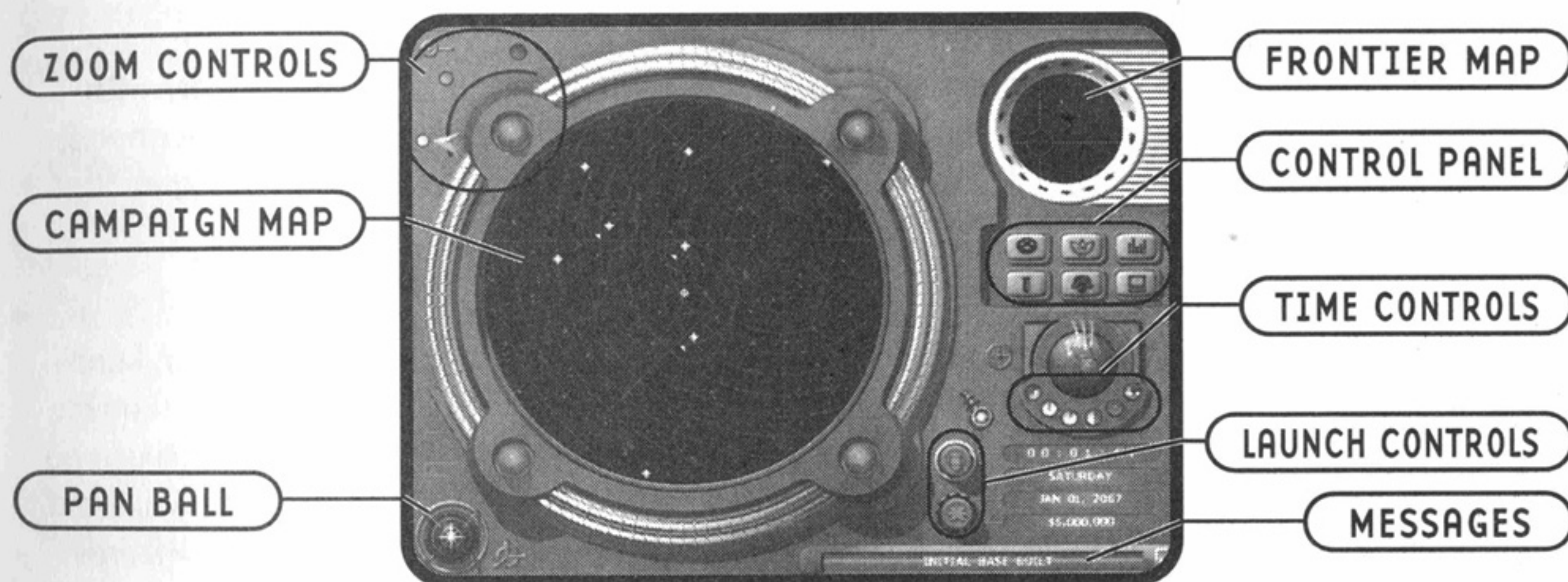
As far as your official duties go, three Earth-based corporations are currently maintaining nearby outposts and OPPs. More might come along later if your performance inspires confidence, but for now these are your principal responsibility.

When you're not actually flying a mission, your primary station is the *Campaign Strategic Display*, or *CSD*, a central computer from which you attend to the bulk of your administrative duties. This system is one of the most powerful and flexible yet developed. It's part of a Frontier-wide web linking everything under human control. Bases, outposts, OPPs, and both manned and unmanned spacecraft all transmit reports directly back to the *CSD*, which then integrates the data into the system for use in all of its applications. The information is available to you within a fraction of a second of when it was received.
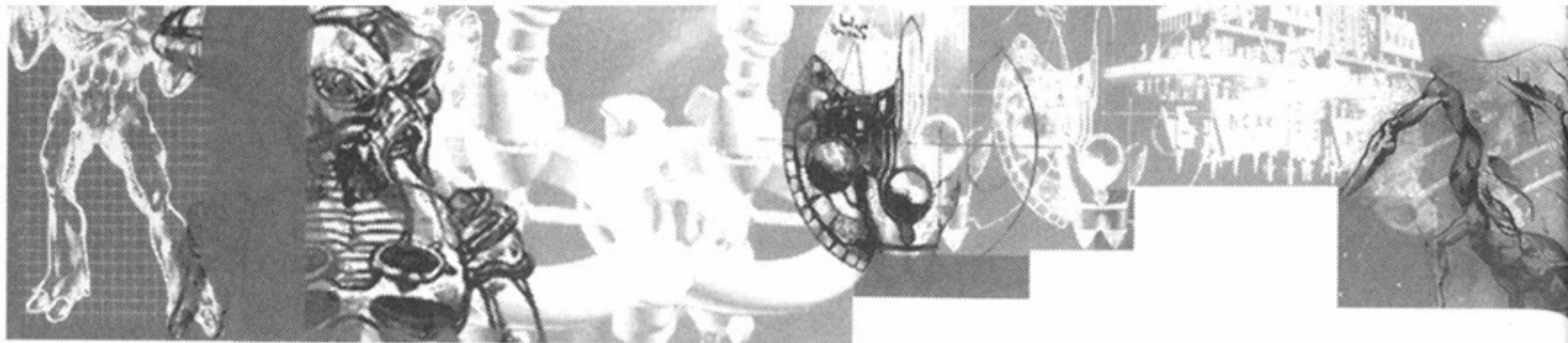
The *CSD* is the first screen you see when you enter a campaign. From here, various applications let you order supplies and pilots, outfit your ships, conduct research, and see to other routine operations. In addition, you can coordinate all X-COM missions. For your benefit, the *CSD* also provides an overview of activity taking place in the Frontier; you can track the positions of different objects and keep an eye on the status of your bases and their neighboring outposts and OPPs.

> For those of you who fought in the earlier Alien Wars, the *CSD* is analogous to the *Geoscape*. It does not exist in the *Combat Simulator* or *Multi Play* missions.

HELP WIZARDS

Depending on how much experience you have at the helm of an organization like X-COM, your adjustment period here in the Frontier could take some time. If you're a veteran officer with years of service to your credit, you'll have no trouble learning the ropes. If, on the other hand, you have no prior experience, it will take you that much longer to get your bearings. Expect things to be a trifle bewildering at first, but fear not—like most things, it gets easier with practice.

To ease the transition a bit, the *CSD* includes an on-line guide to its many applications and controls. The very first time you log onto the *CSD* in any Beginner level campaign, this guide (known as *Help Wizards*) appears on your monitor. It provides a brief rundown of the screen's intent and offers a few pointers about controlling the various options available. Take all the time you want to read through this—nothing's going to happen in the Frontier until you close the *Help Wizards* window.

Still have questions? For specific help on every control at your fingertips, press **Screen Tour**. This calls up a helpful tool—as you move the mouse over the different features on the panel, descriptions pop up indicating the specific use and function. To quit your tour of the screen, press **End Tour**.

> At higher difficulty levels, the *Help Wizards* remain hidden unless you specifically enable them—the reason being that seasoned commanders generally prefer to pick things up by trial and error. If you do get stuck and need a quick tip, you can always turn the *Help Wizards* on using the *Menu Bar* (see **Menu Bar** for instructions). For a hint of what a button or control does, even when the *Help Wizards* are disabled, simply pass the cursor over the feature, and a small text field pops up naming the control's function.

When you have finished with the *Help Wizards* for your current screen, press **OK**. This closes the window but leaves the guide active. For every new screen that you view, you continue to receive tips. If you prefer to turn the feature off entirely, click **Don't Show Wizards** instead. To re-enable the option at a later time, you'll need to select **Help Wizards** from the *Menu Bar* (see **Menu Bar** for further details).
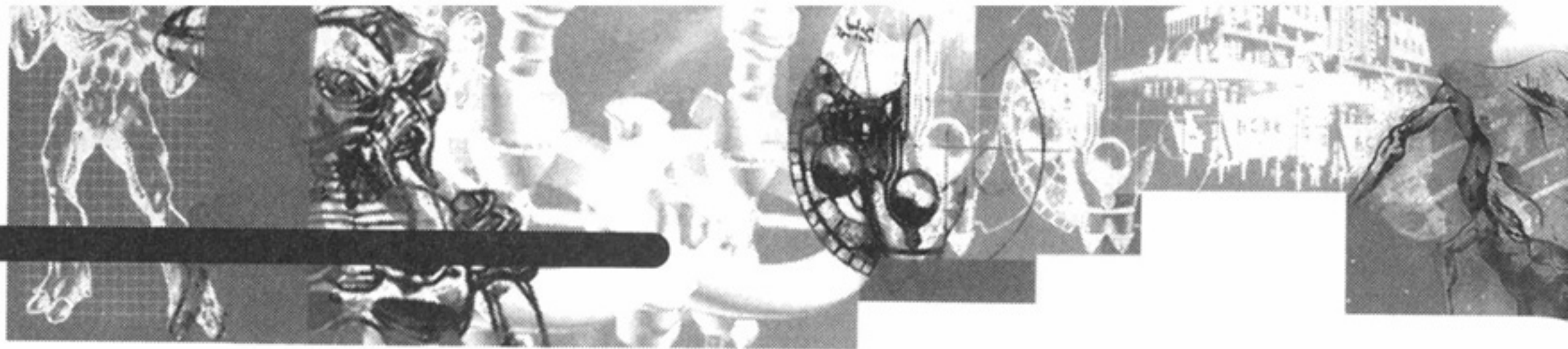
CAMPAIGN MAP

The most prominent feature of the *CSD* is the large *Campaign Map* on the left side of the screen. At first glance, this appears to be little more than a computerized version of your basic, everyday map. It plots all the known stars, planets, and other natural phenomena in the region, as well as the locations of any bases, outposts, and OPPs. A series of faint rings around each of your holdings indicates the range to which their sensors can detect other objects.

SPACE

In the Frontier, space is just as empty as anywhere else—meaning that it's filled with stuff, but that stuff is pretty well spread out. In addition to the visible stars, there are (among other things) planets, outposts, ore processing plants (OPPs), nebulae, black holes, probes, asteroid fields, and ships. The larger objects (stars, planets, nebulae) are no threat to you in piloting situations. Anything smaller is something you must avoid on your own. Otherwise, you'll find out the hard way how much damage an asteroid impact can do to your ship.

All that is useful enough, but X-COM's programmers didn't stop there. In fact, the *Campaign Map* constantly incorporates every piece of data sent to the *CSD*, for an ever-changing image of the Frontier. You get the most up-to-date report available, including the precise position of all X-COM ships and probes, as well as those of known enemy vessels and structures. In a war, that counts for a lot; if you know where the enemy is, it's easier to head him off or stage preemptory attacks.

Of course, a computer program—no matter how user-friendly—is only as good as the person at the controls. As Commander of X-COM, you're responsible for monitoring the developments as they come in. Even though there are automated warning systems to alert you in the event of an imminent threat, you've got to plan ahead, which you can't do if you're asleep on the job. Your best bet is to keep an eye on the *Campaign Map* and watch for patterns of activity.

Because every delay can cost you dearly, the *Campaign Map* has been designed for ease of reference. Different icons represent distinct classes of objects, letting you tell instantly if, for instance, you're facing an enemy squadron or merely approaching one of your own patrols. Passing the mouse over an icon calls up its designation, and if that's not enough information, you can review a dossier compiled by the reconnaissance engineers. Click an object for a brief summary of the most salient details, or try a double-click for something slightly more in depth. (Double-clicking one of your own bases brings up the *Base Information* screen; see **Managing Your Bases**. Double-clicking an X-COM flight allows you to redirect the ships with a minimum of fuss (in most cases); see **Launching Probes and Missions**.)

> In some instances, objects might be clustered together in a relatively small area of the map. Never fear—when you click a cluster of entities, a menu appears on the map from which you can then select any one of the objects.

As you're scanning nearby space, you might find it helpful to zoom in on the map for a closer look. The slider at the top left of the *Campaign Map* lets you do just that and then back away again for the bigger picture. You have your choice of three magnification levels for star systems. (The highest level of magnification is not available for other objects.) You select a magnification level by clicking one of the buttons provided—the higher the level of magnification, the larger objects on the map seem to be. To reach the highest level of magnification, you've got to click a specific star system on which to center the view.

Since you never know what could be lurking just out of sight, you'll probably also want to pan across the map now and then to check on areas not currently in view. It's easy to forget what you can't see, but ignoring it could have deadly consequences. To scan around, click the *Pan Ball* at the lower left corner of the map. Then, while holding down the LMB (dragging), move the mouse to one side or another and watch as nearby regions slide gradually into view. The *Pan Ball* is inactive when you are zoomed in to the highest level of magnification.

Sometimes, panning just won't give you quick enough results—you need to check on something all the way across the Frontier, and you need to do it pronto. That's what the *Quick Finder* is for. You can shift the entire focus of the *Campaign Map* to any X-COM base or squadron by right-clicking on the *Pan Ball* to call up the *Quick Finder*—a system of menus letting you choose precisely where to center the map. Next, simply click to make your selection.

THE FRONTIER MAP

The *Campaign Map*'s diminutive cousin, the *Frontier Map*, depicts the entire Frontier (albeit not in great detail) and gives you an overall idea of where large installations lie in relation to each other. The cross hairs on the *Frontier Map* show you what area the *Campaign Map* currently has in focus and lets you zip instantly to a whole different sector. This is, in fact, the map's primary function. Click anywhere on the *Frontier Map* to recenter the *Campaign Map* on a new location. You can also click and drag the cross hairs to pan broadly across the entire map—as you do so, watch the more detailed *Campaign Map*. The *Frontier Map*, like the *Pan Ball*, operates only when the *Campaign Map* is at either of the two lower magnifications.

> **STARS**
>
> Stars are the most common visible large objects in the Frontier. This volume of space is unusual in that it includes stable stars of various colors and sizes—stable on human time scales, that is—and most of these stars have multiple mineral-rich planets in orbit around them. Some, of course, have fewer planets than others. The shields and armor on X-COM vessels provide complete protection for the pilot from whatever radiation and stellar wind a stable star might emit.
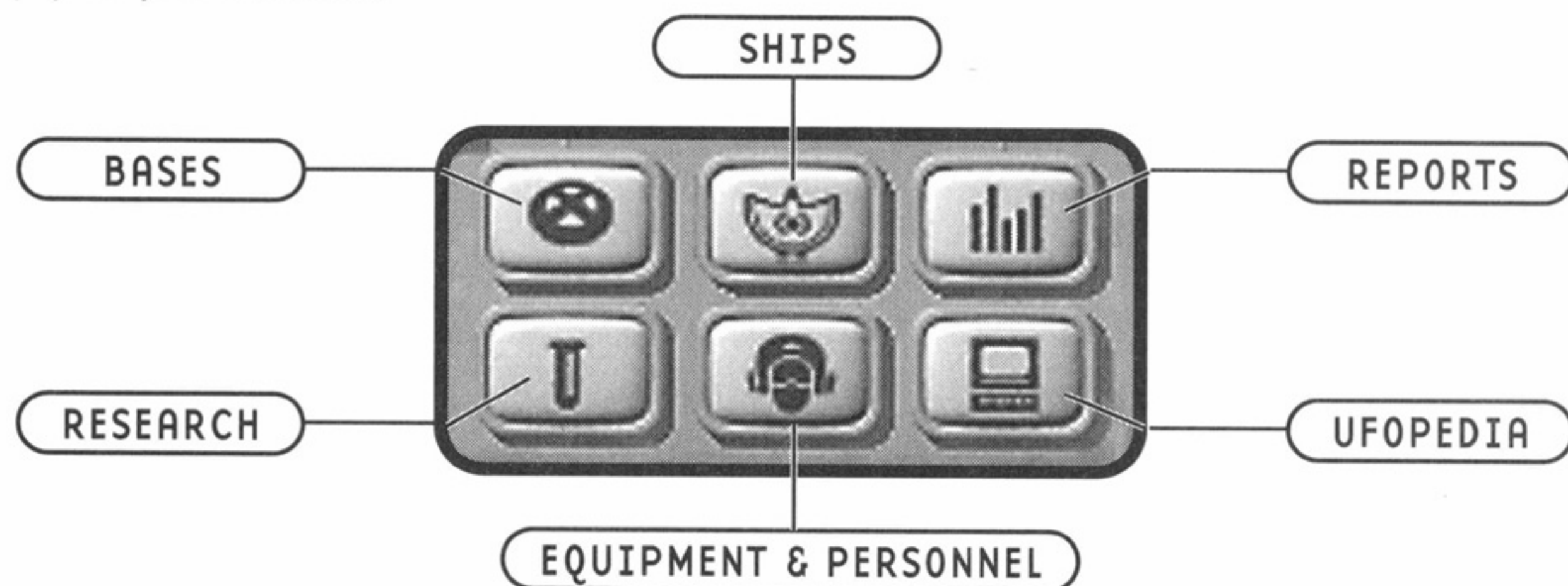
TIME CONTROLS

Despite the many advances in space flight over the past few decades, travel through space takes a while. Given the great distances to be covered in the Frontier, you could find yourself with some time on your hands in between actions.

Fortunately, while on the *CSD*, you can opt to speed things up using the time controls located directly under the globe at the right of your display. These should help eliminate the "hurry up and wait" that's characteristic of most wars. Click any of the six buttons to set your rate of time—the slowest position is at the far left, and things get progressively quicker as you move along the line. You can get some idea of how rapidly everything is moving along by observing the speed of the spinning globe.

Note that the time controls do not affect combat, nor, in fact, does the current setting remain in effect once you leave the *CSD* for any reason. All encounters with the enemy take place in real time (if you ever need a breather, try P to pause the action, and press it again when you're ready to reenter the frenzy), and time comes to a complete halt when you're on any screen other than the *CSD*—and when any prompt or box is open. Afterwards, it generally reverts to the slowest setting possible, although on occasion you can elect whether to let it continue at its previous rate.

CSD CONTROL PANEL

One of the benefits of modern technology is that you can carry out the hands-on management of X-COM with a hands-off approach—which is to say that throughout the process, you never actually come into contact with other people. In the Frontier, everything is computerized, from ordering supplies and recruiting personnel to outfitting your bases and ships. You don't have to cope with any middlemen, nor do you have to face the consequences of, say, sacking an irate pilot in person. It is your command prerogative, and right or wrong, your orders go through exactly as you place them. Just remember that if you screw up, the entire human species stands to pay for your mistakes.

SHIPS

BASES

REPORTS

RESEARCH

UFOPEDIA

EQUIPMENT & PERSONNEL

The six buttons sitting just above the time controls on the *CSD* are your keys into the world of management. They let you work on your bases, equip your ships for battle, and supervise both supplies and personnel. Other options include carrying out research, reading up on new technologies in the *UFOpedia*, and scanning the status reports painstakingly prepared to help you parcel out your limited resources in the wisest possible fashion. Click any button to set to work.

Unless otherwise noted, you can close each of the management screens by pressing the **Exit** (or **OK**) button in the bottom right-hand corner.

Bases

You're going to need bases. Look back through history, and you'll see that no commander worth his salt attempts a war without a large enough or well enough equipped base of operations. You've got to have a secure place to stash your supply of weapons and other equipment, and there's the minor issue of from whence to launch your missions. The more bases you have, the wider your area of defense and the broader your possibilities for attack. As long as you have at least one functioning base—and assuming of course that you're not flat broke—X-COM continues to operate in the Frontier.

The *Bases* screen lets you begin construction on a new space station or build additional facilities (like a hospital bay or even an advanced training wing) at existing bases. You can also review the status of each X-COM structure, including any damage to it and the conditions of its defenses. This lets you know just how well you're holding up against the aliens. Other functions of the *Bases* screen include keeping tabs on your supply and personnel needs and reequipping vessels as needed. (For a complete run-through of the options, refer to **Managing Your Bases**.)

Equip Ships

A fully armed and armored base can fend off even the most determined of attackers with relative ease, thanks in part to its sheer immensity—as well as its thick protective skin and seemingly indefatigable power reserves—but whereas bases have the advantage of size, strength, and firepower, they suffer from a total and utter lack of maneuverability. (They can't move.) That's where your ships come in.

Interceptors are tough, agile, and fast, a mainstay of military operations in the Frontier. Without them, your hands are tied. It's up to you to ensure that you always have enough spacecraft to deploy and that each is outfitted with the best weapons and internal systems for each mission. Since you're the one in charge of the overall strategy and tactics, you're the one who knows what equipment is essential to the effort.

The actual ordering of supplies and vessels takes place elsewhere (see **Equipment and Personnel**), but here on the *Equip Ships* screen, you decide how to alter the load-out and configuration of any ship. You might want to outfit an interception craft with the very finest weapons available—or you might choose to strip it to the bare bones and dispatch it as a decoy. Crews of mechanics are on standby around the clock, awaiting your orders to install different equipment. You can also hand out pilot assignments from this screen. (For more details, see **Managing Your Bases**.)

STATUS REPORTS

Part of your responsibility as commander is to keep tabs on the current state of affairs in the Frontier. Your adjutants are proficient at warning you when the aliens are knocking at the door, but they won't keep you posted on other developments. In particular, they are notoriously reticent to criticize your strategic decisions, and—except for the general information provided in the weekly and monthly reports—they don't update you on financial matters. The only way to be sure that you have the whole scoop is to study the available reports yourself.

INCOME — X-COM ACTIVITY

FINANCE — OUTPOST INFO

ALIEN ACTIVITY — PLAYER STATUS
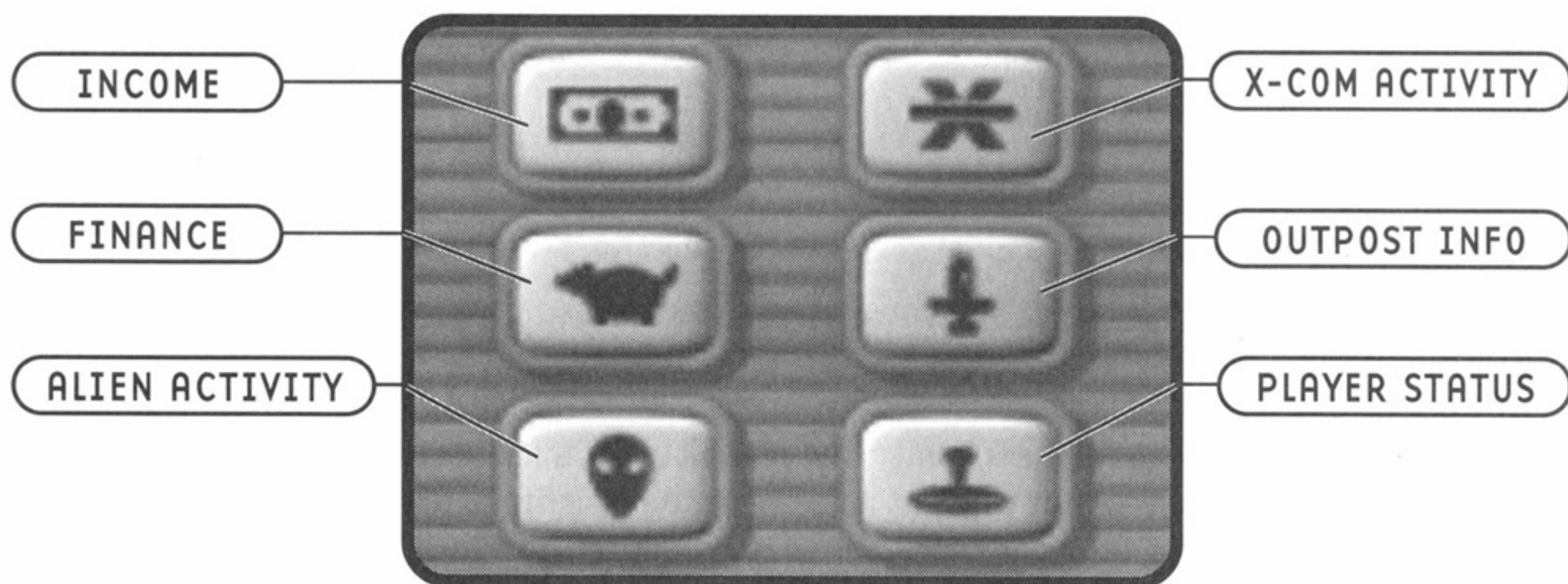
The *Status Reports* are a series of six briefs touching on how your funding is holding up, whether your books balance, what your outposts are doing, where the enemy seems to be most active, and so forth. Click the **Status Reports** button to open a panel with your different options. You can call up any of the individual reports by pressing the appropriate button, then browse the documents at your leisure. To make the best use of the data, it might be necessary to compare two or more reports. Just click the **Previous** and **Next** buttons to cycle through the lineup. When you've had your fill of graphs, charts, and all, you can return to the *CSD* by pressing **Exit**. From there, you can click the arrow to close the *Status Reports* panel.

> While the slide-in *Status Reports* panel is open, time continues to move at its current speed until you actually select a report. That means that you might want to slow the action before clicking **Status Reports**—or else think quickly once you open the menu.

The available reports include:

Income

The income report breaks down the amount of money X-COM has taken in from its various contributors, either from each individual outpost or as the sum total of all funds received. Periodically reviewing this monthly earnings statement can help you make projections about future income and decide where to divert your attention in upcoming weeks. You might want to concentrate your resources on those outposts that give the most, or you could examine overall trends to figure out where you most need to improve your efforts. Just remember that whatever strategy you choose could have far-reaching ramifications, not only for those in the Frontier, but also for Earth and her many inhabitants.

Click on an outpost to plot its donations, or press **Total** to graph the combined contributions. Depending on what you wish to compare, you can chart any or all of the data at the same time. Removing data from the graph is just as easy; reclicking an outpost's name causes its statistics to disappear.

Finance

In a perfect world, there would always be enough cash to cover your expenses, but let's be realistic. With funding tied as it is to X-COM's monthly performance, you're on a tight budget. Because outpost managers are notoriously shortsighted, you must shoot for effective solutions in the immediate. That means a careful balancing of your books.

Since you get no bonus for having surplus funds available at year's end, the trick is to make the most of every dime in your reserves without overspending. To help you stick to a budget, the financial report tracks your various credits and expenses. This report includes Gross Income, Expenditures, Maintenance Costs, and Net Income. You can also graph your monthly score. You might want to glance at the report now and again to be sure that you're not in danger of a budget shortfall. Click one or more of the options to display it on the chart; click it again to remove the data from the display.
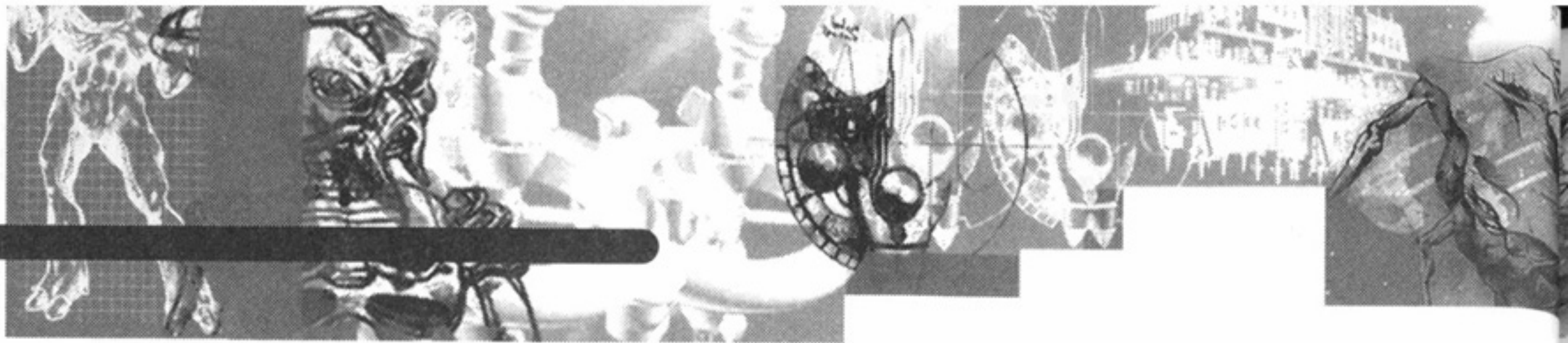
Alien Activity

Of all the status reports compiled by your staff, the one on alien activity is perhaps the single most important. That's because it takes all alien sightings detected and reported, then plots them on a graph which you can use to guide future missions. It's the only such compilation available. For your convenience, the report has two modes—*Outposts* and *General*. Switch between them by clicking the **Mode** button at the bottom of the screen.

Outposts mode charts the number of alien sightings around each company's holdings, allowing you to compare on a graph the relative defensive needs of each outpost under your guard. This gives you a fairly good idea of where you should concentrate your forces—holdings that are under constant attack demand attention, while you might be able to ignore (at least for the time being) an outpost that has seen relatively little alien activity in recent weeks. To add an outpost's data to the chart (or to remove it), simply highlight its name.

In contrast, **General** mode displays not a graph but a grid of the Frontier, depicting which areas have experienced the greatest number of extraterrestrial sightings and which the fewest. The color of each sector on the map indicates the level of alien activity picked up in the area. If there is no colored overlay, the sector is outside your scanning range. By pointing out where the aliens are most active, the map can call your attention to patterns of movement that you might otherwise not have noticed.

There is also a button that you can use to toggle between this map and the corresponding one of X-COM activity. Comparing the two can highlight whether you have effectively deployed your ships or not. If the busiest sectors in terms of alien activity are also the sectors to which the most X-COM flights have been dispatched, then you're using your vessels wisely. If, on the other hand, you have sent most of your pilots gallivanting off to regions where little is happening, then you might want to rethink your strategy.

X-COM Activity

All friendly missions, whether offensive or defensive, are entered into computer logs and graphed on an activity report. Designed to be used in tandem with the alien activity report (see above), the summary of X-COM activity functions in exactly the same way. Compare the two reports to determine whether you are adequately addressing the needs of the outposts and OPPs you're protecting—and whether your offensive momentum is carrying you in the right direction.

Outpost Report   Most of the corporations operating in the Frontier are testy, somewhat irascible, and prone to convenient memory lapses insofar as your services are concerned—and their boards of directors control your funds. If an outpost isn't satisfied with your performance, your funds could dry up—although, on the positive side, outposts are almost as quick to increase their contributions when you provide them with adequate protection. The situation is much like prewar Earth's stock markets, where one small ripple could create wild price fluctuations across the board.

All told, your biggest challenge might be not defeating the aliens but keeping the many outposts happy. Given the limited resources you're working with, one thing is certain; you probably can't satisfy all of them at any one time. Juggling their many demands will be difficult, but the alternative is ugly.

The *Outpost Report* is perhaps your best way to judge where the need for attention is greatest. "Need" in this sense is a relative term; it can mean your need for a reliable flow of cash, in which case you curry favor with your biggest contributors, or it can mean one outpost's need for defense weighed against that of another.

On the outpost report, you can view general statistics about each outpost and its holdings just by clicking the controlling corporation's name. When you do so, the outpost system is highlighted on the map provided, and up-to-the-minute details indicate the integrity of the outpost's shields and hull, as well as the number of technicians on staff. (Why should you care? The more technicians there are at work, the quicker you get the products you've ordered for manufacture.) In a pinch, these are precisely the types of minutiae on which you'll base your decision of which outpost gets defense priority.

Player Status   Although this is a team endeavor and only by working together with your fellow X-COM pilots can you hope to defeat the aliens, there are still those who are more interested in admiring their own accomplishments. Not that there's anything wrong with pride in your successes—everyone needs a good ego massage now and again. The *Player Status Report* helps you to assess your personal contribution to the effort with a running tally of such things as your kills, losses, and missions flown.
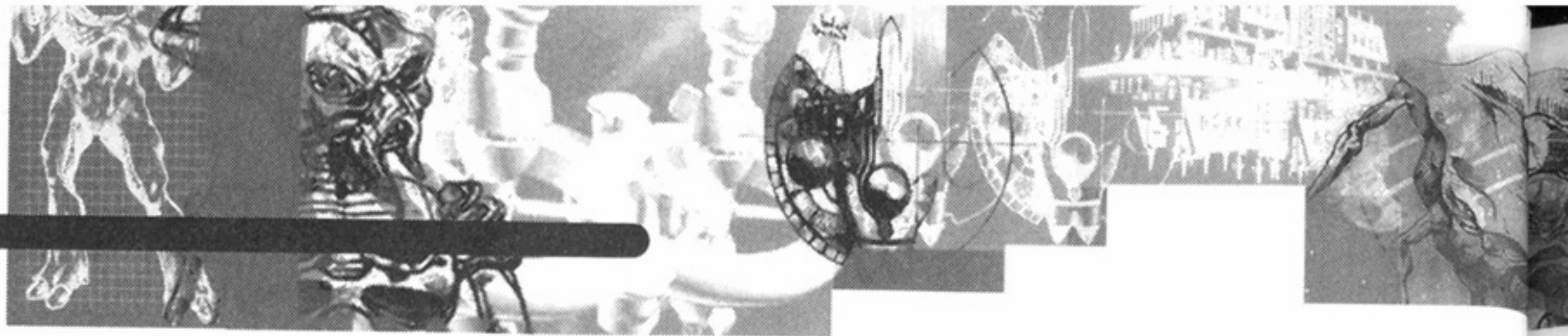
RESEARCH

When you first take command, your arsenal is stocked with the most up-to-date equipment available, but, realistically, that stuff isn't going to cut it in the long run—not if our suspicions are correct and the aliens have more advanced equipment than we do. They're probably churning out new weapons left and right even now. If you want to stay in the race for supremacy, you'd better get cracking on a little research of your own.

Actually, from your standpoint, things couldn't be easier, since the research takes place in laboratories back on Earth. As topics reach completion there, they are added to a list of the developments ready for download to your bases. All you have to do is schedule the downloads and then wait for the information to arrive. Transmission can prove a lengthy process, though, so you'll have to set your priorities carefully.

PLANETS

Planets are the primary source of the minerals needed on Earth. The more planets there are in an area and the richer they are in natural resources, the better the potential for mining there—and the more likely it is that outposts and OPPs will be established there. All outposts and OPPs need defending, which means they will pay for defense. Minerals and mining, therefore, are the keys to the financing of X-COM operations.

From the *Research* screen, you can look into the weapons, systems, technologies, and other findings that you'll need to defend against the alien threat. Slate new projects for download or monitor the progress of any transmissions currently underway. You should still check in periodically to make sure that things are proceeding as expected; it's absolutely imperative that X-COM remain on the cutting edge of technology.

EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL

The **Equipment and Personnel** option on the *CSD* serves primarily administrative purposes. It concerns all those niggling little chores like ordering the supplies necessary to keep things running smoothly or reviewing the files of potential new pilots. The decisions you make here are vital to your success.

What's more important than ensuring that you have the right equipment and personnel on hand? If you haven't got a store of missiles, then how are you to rearm your craft after a mission? Kamikaze tactics aside, if your ships aren't armed, they won't pose much of a threat to the enemy. So, staying on top of your supplies should be one of your top priorities. Everything is consolidated into one screen—buy, build, sell, hire, fire, or transfer as you see fit, and then get ready for the action. (Refer to **Managing Your Bases** for additional information.)

UFOPEDIA

The *UFOpedia* is an on-line reference guide summarizing the relevant discoveries and innovations that might come to bear in the Frontier—and the documentation department continuously updates the files to include the results of all research you've successfully downloaded. Organized into nine convenient categories, the *UFOpedia* is quite simply the most current and accessible source material you have.

Consider spending some of your spare time here reading up on special equipment, weapons, and technologies—both alien and X-COM. Entries often include the strengths and weaknesses of an item, as well as its potential uses. That kind of preparation could stand you in good stead when you enter the field of battle. If you pay close enough attention to the information here, you might even unveil clues on how best to win not just individual skirmishes but the entire war. Every bit of knowledge helps. (For further information, see **Research**.)

LAUNCHING PROBES AND MISSIONS

The final pair of options on the *CSD* permit you to launch probes and squadrons of ships at the touch of a button. As you might well imagine, these two little buttons are among your primary tools of war.

The need for a means of unmanned space exploration and reconnaissance has long been recognized as a top priority. Because trained personnel are at a premium, you can't afford to waste reserves on high-risk missions with uncertain benefits. Fortunately, even before negotiations were complete for the establishment of an X-COM presence in the Frontier, scientists were hard at work tailoring existing near-Earth probes for deployment in deep space. The result is a low-cost, zero-maintenance model suitable for your immediate purposes.

Probes are perfect for long-range mapping and discovery, but they can also serve as an early-warning system in the event of an impending attack. Probes, when employed effectively, can extend the range at which you can sense enemy activity, giving you precious time in which to marshal your forces. Bear in mind that probes only have enough power for limited operation. They can last anywhere from a few days to a couple of weeks, depending on what they encounter, but don't be surprised if they cease functioning earlier. Still, with the cheapest factory-loaded interceptor bearing a price tag of well over a million dollars, you can buy a whole mess of probes and still come out ahead.

When you start your tour of duty in the Frontier, your base is already stocked with a few of the basic sensor probes, and more are readily available for a fee. You can confidently expect additional models with diverse capabilities to become available as scientists make further inroads into probe technology.
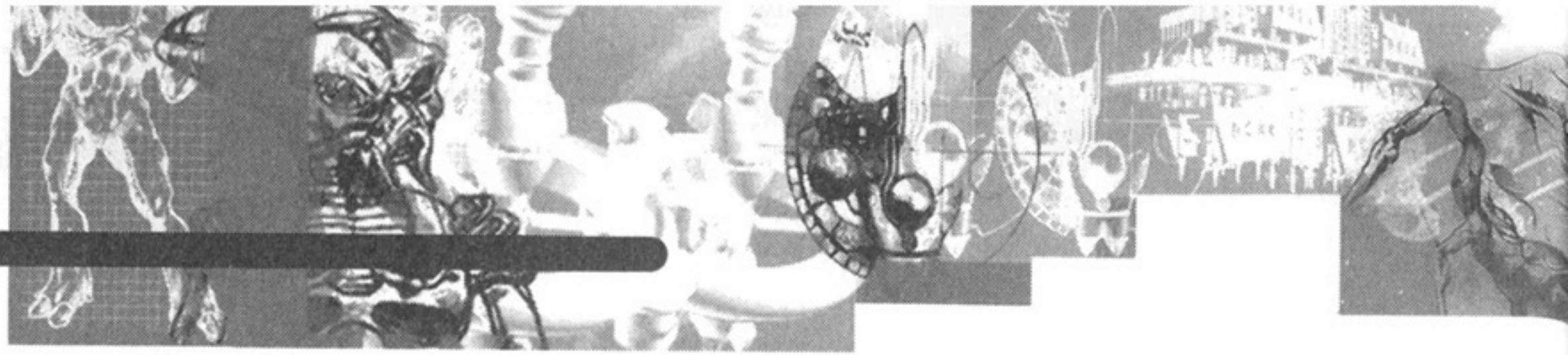
Sending a probe on its way is a simple matter; just click the **Launch Probe** button on the *CSD* and follow the prompts. First, pick the base from which you wish to launch the probe (assuming that you have more than one base, that is), then choose the type of probe you intend to send out. Finally, click anywhere on the *Campaign Map* to set the probe's destination. Pretty basic. Both the Campaign and Frontier maps are fully functional when you're selecting a target site, allowing you to pan and zoom as needed. Depending on the type of probe selected, you might have to search around a bit for an acceptable destination, so be sure to know the capabilities of each model. Once the destination is set, press **Launch** to send it out or **Cancel** to return it to storage.

ASTEROID FIELDS

Other than planets, the next major source of minerals and mining income in the Frontier is asteroids. The matter orbiting many stars includes a relatively dense ring of these, generally near the orbit of a gas giant. The prevailing theory is that the nearby mass of the giant planet disturbs the orbits of the asteroids enough to prevent them from agglomerating into a planet, but not enough to fling them out of orbit entirely.

Asteroid fields are dangerous to pilots. Smacking into big rocks at combat speeds causes damage to your ship—and your reputation for skillful piloting.

Sometimes an automated probe just isn't good enough—you need the option of instant military intervention should anything turn up in a given sector. That's when you ought to consider sending out a full-fledged military patrol, complete with combat pilots. Patrols scout an area, much as your basic probe does, but they offer the flexibility of heading straight into action when called on, and in a war that can be all-important.

Ordering your vessels aloft is a fully automated process similar to the one used to launch a probe. Click the **Launch Mission** button on the *CSD* and follow the sequence of prompts. The available spacecraft are grouped by home base. Just highlight those you'd like to dispatch, then pinpoint their destination. You can send missions out to an actual target (an alien base, for example) or to patrol a region in space. You cannot, however, choose a star or planet. (Interceptors are not built for those environments.) If you need to target something inside a system, zoom in until you can select the actual target. Interceptors can fly for a full 24 hours before they reach the turn-around point in their fuel supply and are forced to head back to base.

Though you can launch a mission whenever it suits your fancy, often the orders will come in response to a particular warning. When an alert flashes on-screen, you generally have several choices. Depending on the situation, these might include:

Launch Mission Set out to meet the threat without a moment's delay. You can assign individual ships to respond (for your convenience, the warning system identifies the base closest to the scene), but before you do, be sure each ship has the proper weapons aboard. Once you've launched a vessel, it's too late for any changes to its load-out. Prior to clicking the **Launch Mission** option, it's also a good idea to pass the cursor over the threat on the *CSD* to find out the approximate strength of the enemy—that way, you can estimate how many of your ships to send out in response.

Defend Site In cases when an alien fleet has arrived at the doorstep of one of your bases, a freighter convoy, an OPP, or an outpost, you can order X-COM military vessels to defensive positions around the structure, in the hopes of fighting off the enemy onslaught.

Center on Site Shift the focus of the *Campaign Map* to the detected threat and slow time to five seconds. This lets you gather your wits and make last-minute changes to ships and personnel before sending them out to do battle.

Ignore Take no action at this time. Now and then, you might be forced to ignore a warning, when all ships are otherwise occupied or no pilots are currently available. It's best to avoid this whenever possible, however, because outposts, OPPs, and even your bases could start dropping off the map if left undefended for too long.

OK—5 Seconds Slow the passage of time, but leave the *Campaign Map* centered where it is. Again, this lets you marshal your thoughts before rushing into anything.

After you launch a flight, the ships voyage in hyperspace toward their objective. While covering the long distances necessary to reach the site, they are visible only on the *Campaign Map*. You can continue to manage your bases, assign research, review listings in the *UFOpedia*, and perform any other such tasks. You can even launch other missions and probes while you're waiting. The amount of time it takes for a ship to travel between two points in hyperspace is determined by the mass of the ship—larger ships travel more slowly. (FTL, or faster-than-light, drives let ships travel faster than light, but they can't do anything to reduce a ship's mass.) When ships of different masses are traveling together through hyperspace, the entire fleet moves at the speed of the slowest ship present.
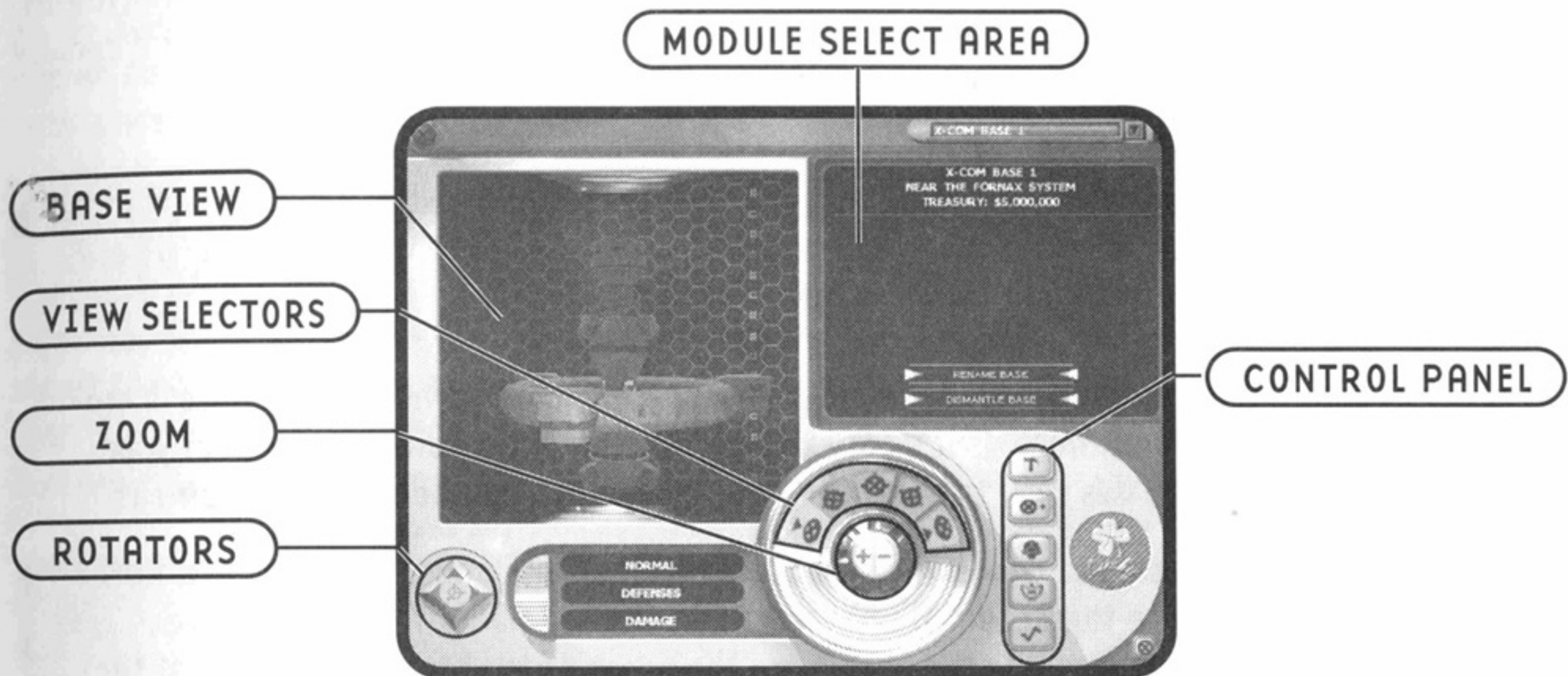
When your ships reach their objective, they notify you and request further orders. At this point, you can carry out the mission as planned, abort it, or direct the craft to an entirely new destination. To change a squadron's destination, you don't actually have to wait for the ships to arrive; to order them to a different course while they are en route, click the flight's icon on the *Campaign Map* and choose **Select New Destination**. Note that you can only change a squadron or ship's course in mid-flight if their home base is equipped with a Communications Module. Craft also check in for instructions when they lose sensor contact with their objective. In this case, you can tell the pilots to head for home, turn toward a different target, or continue on the same heading toward the last known enemy coordinates in the hopes of picking up the trace anew.

If you decide to assault the target, it's time to prep for battle. First, select the pilot you wish to fly as, then sit down with your intelligence officers for a spell. This last-minute, on-the-spot briefing is where you get the full rundown of what you expect to face. You see, until you get there, you can't know exactly what the mission is all about, and until you do, it's hard to formulate any sort of plan. Once you've got the objective firmly fixed in your mind, it's time to get ready to take on those aliens. Then click the **Engage** plunger (under a flap in the lower right corner) and head for the battlefield. (For instructions on how to fly, see **Taking on the Aliens**.) To call off the mission, click **Exit**.

Managing Your Bases

When you first join the effort, X-COM owns and operates a single base in the Frontier. Over the course of time, however, you can establish a firmer foothold in the region by building up to seven additional bases of operation. These bases are key to the successful defense of corporate mining operations and your assault on the aliens—primarily because they expand the potential scope of your activities. They provide billets for additional pilots, hangars to house interceptors, and the storage space needed to stockpile the weapons and other equipment you need. Perhaps more importantly, they also increase your range of detection and thereby improve your response time.

The *Bases* screen allows you to start construction of new bases and add modules to existing ones. It also serves as your primary tool for managing your many base-related resources. Here, you can oversee virtually all X-COM operations. Many of the options (such as the **Equip Ships** feature) are also available directly from the *CSD*, but the *Bases* screen conveniently packages them together for ease of use.

MODULE SELECT AREA

BASE VIEW

VIEW SELECTORS

ZOOM

ROTATORS

CONTROL PANEL

X-COM BASE 1
NEAR THE FORNAX SYSTEM
TREASURY: $5,000,000

RENAME BASE
DISMANTLE BASE

NORMAL
DEFENSES
DAMAGE

Your options fall into two categories. They are:

Base Views   View any base from a number of perspectives. Using the controls, you can rotate the base to different angles, zoom in for closer look, and zoom back out. You can even assess the damage meted out by the aliens on their latest raid, to see how well your structures are holding up and oversee the status of the base's defensive systems.

Base Controls   Attend to the hands-on management of your bases. Depending on your needs, you might consider building a new facility or making improvements to those already operational. You can take stock at each location and arrange when necessary for deliveries of both equipment and personnel. The Base Controls also help you to outfit your spacecraft for battle.
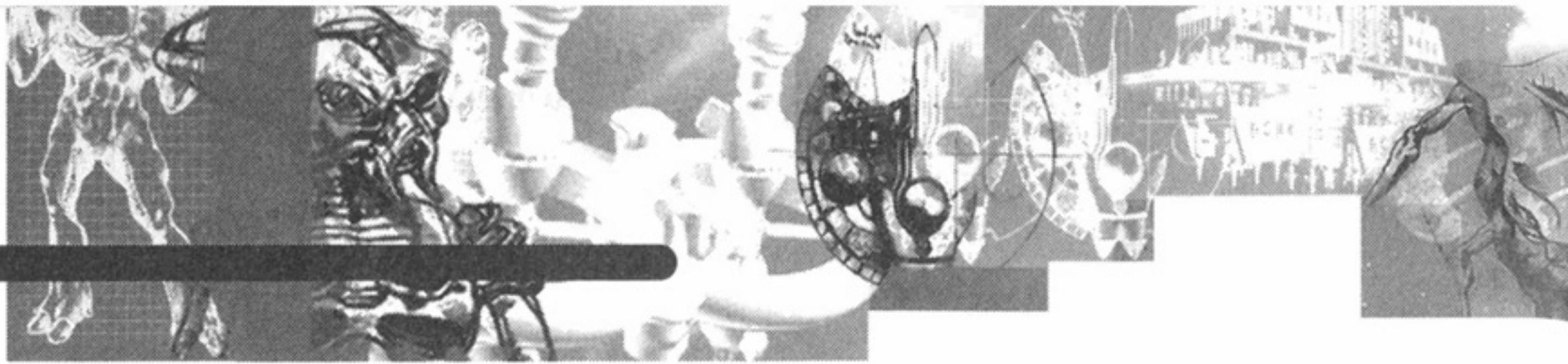
VIEWING A BASE

Exposure to the elements always causes a certain amount of wear and tear, but in the Frontier this is even more of a problem. After all, "the elements" out here include not just natural phenomena, but alien ones as well. (If you think meteorite showers are hard on the bulkheads, try a rain of enemy missiles.) Even though the exterior casing on your bases is specially constructed to take a beating, it will surely suffer some damage at some point. You'll want to conduct a cursory inspection after every battle in which the base is involved.

> Base systems are repairable—up to a certain point—but they can still be destroyed in battle. The destruction of a base module not only eliminates the module itself, but also any personnel, ships, and supplies located within the destroyed module.

To help you assess the external condition of your bases, a holographic view of the base is projected in the *Base View*. Inasmuch as it's easy to lose track of the sprawling growth of your bases, you might also use this view to help plan a more balanced approach to development.

Your first order of business is to choose which base to inspect (assuming that you have more than one). To do so, locate the **Select Base** feature at the top right of your display—it's a box listing the base currently in view. (Listed near it are the name of the star system nearest that base and the total amount of money in your treasury.) Click the arrow next to the current base to open a roster of all X-COM facilities in the Frontier. You can select the base you want to work with by highlighting its name in the list.

> Many of the command screens accessed from the *CSD* have a similar **Select Base** option, allowing you to flit between bases whenever it's relevant. Note that whenever this option is present, any actions you take on that screen affect only one base—the one listed.

The *Base View* has five preset positions, centering on any of the three hangar nodes off the main hub or looking at the structure from straight above or below. You can change to one of these viewpoints by clicking the corresponding **View Selector** key on the large dial provided. The two **Zoom** buttons in the center of this dial instruct the camera to close in or back out. If you prefer, you can move the view freely around the base; you control its movements with the **Rotator** arrows at the left. Click any arrow and watch the image rotate.

As an added benefit, the main computer can manipulate the virtual image to pinpoint specific areas that might require your special attention: the base defenses and recent damage to the facility. Use the three-way switch directly below the view of the base to switch between **Normal**, **Defenses**, and **Damage** modes. All the other view controls continue to function, so you can move and zoom around at will. When the defenses overlay is active, all weapons turrets on the base are highlighted in red. On the damage overlay, green modules are A-OK, but red is a sign of some structural difficulty. Once you've appraised the situation, you're ready to get down to business.

THE BASE CONTROL PANEL

The heart of the *Bases* screen is the **Base Control Panel**, a set of buttons that permits you to supervise operations at any of X-COM's bases. With a simple click, you can request information about the bases under your control and modify existing structures—or build entirely new ones, if that's what you feel the need to do. In addition, you can equip your ships for battle and oversee both your personnel and your supplies. The buttons are:
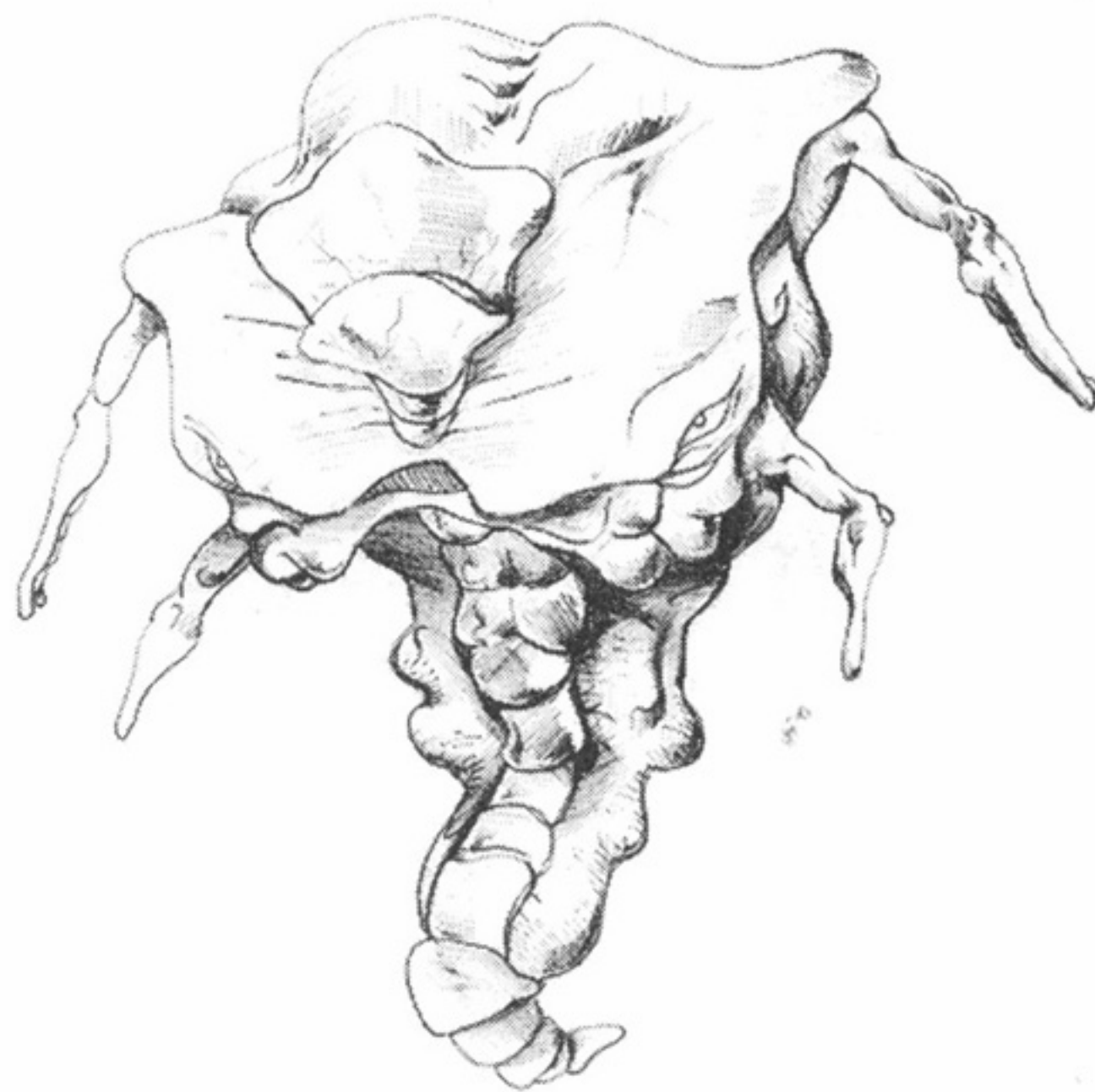
Build New Base

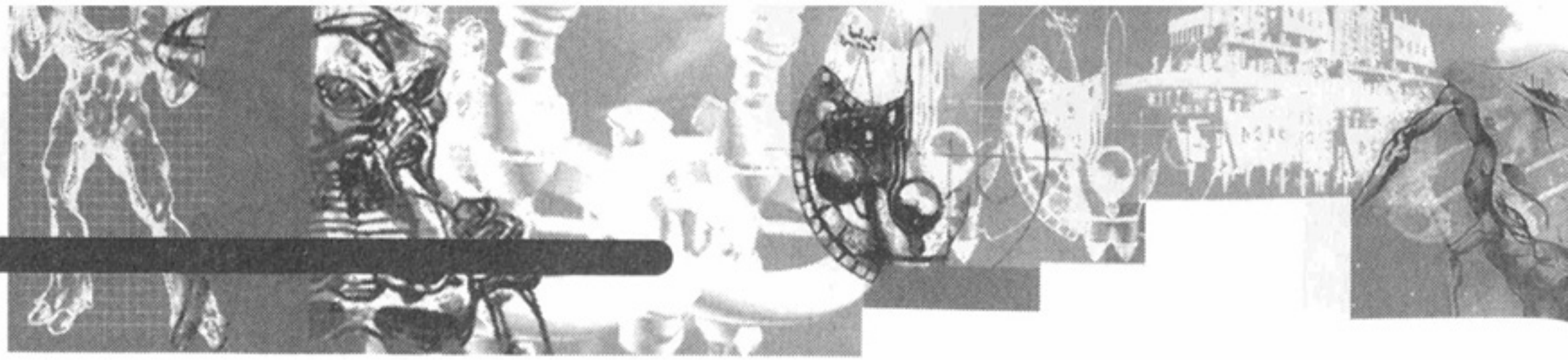Add Base Module

Equipment and Personnel

Equip Ships

Base Information

BUILD NEW BASE

In the initial weeks of duty, you have a single base under your command. In the long run, this will hardly be enough against the aliens—especially since you're on their turf—so it's a good idea to expand as soon as it's financially feasible.

Just where you choose to establish your new seat of power is another matter. There are no hard and fast rules when it comes to locating your new base, except that it must be within a specified range of an existing base. (That range is indicated on the *Campaign Map* by a shaded circle.) Other than that, the decision is pretty much up to you. You could reward a particularly strong contributor by establishing a base nearby, or you might try to entice new corporations to invest by protecting an entirely different region of space—preferably one that includes lots of star systems. For that matter, you could even build a base as a stopping point on the way to a distant corner of the Frontier that you suspect might be infested with aliens.

Press the **Build Base** button to begin the base construction process. When the *CSD* appears, both the *Campaign Map* and *Frontier Map* are fully functional, allowing you to pan and zoom as usual. Click anywhere within the shaded circles around your present base(s) to position the new structure, or click **Cancel** if you change your mind about the venture. Construction begins as soon as you type in a name for the facility.

In addition to the main hub, a number of vital modules are included as part of every new base. It takes some time to get the new structure up and running. Just sit tight and keep on top of your other duties. When the base is finished, you'll receive notification.

ADD BASE MODULE

Bases are composed of individual *modules*, units that attach to the main structure and perform a specialized range of tasks. There are communications modules and defense modules, medical units, cargo holds, weapons and sensor modules, you name it. (For a description of all the available modules, check the UFOpedia.) What you decide to install goes a long way toward determining the role each base plays in the war effort.

Outfitting your base means more, however, than merely choosing which modules to install. Since poor design can expose individual modules—and even the base itself—to attack, the overall layout is just as important. To a certain extent, a module's size and function dictate where on the base it can fit; each hardpoint (module mount) is designed with a certain class of module in mind, and the supporting equipment and systems connections differ accordingly. Thus, the number and placement of attachment points for certain modules could be limited. Beyond that, though, you have free rein in laying out the module arrangement.

To begin construction on a module, press the **Add Base Module** button on the *Bases* screen. A panel slides in showing thumbnail sketches of the various attachments your technicians know how to build. (You might need to use the scroll arrows to view the entire range of selections.) If you recognize the modules at a glance, great, but at first, you'll likely want to pass the cursor over each image to learn the unit's name, its cost and the anticipated time for completion. For further information, you can also right-click a module to open its entry in the UFOpedia (see **Research**).

Initially, the list of modules available is pretty basic; you can order all the fundamentals, but not much beyond that—until your scientists begin to make inroads into new technologies (see **Research**). Once you begin completing research, the possibilities expand to include a number of powerful and specialized components. Advancements come at a price—the more high-tech a module is, the more you have to shell out for routine maintenance and operating costs, and the units can take longer to build than their predecessors, as well. Nevertheless, they're often worth the investment of time and money.

As for the actual construction, you've got it easy. Your work crews are the best money can buy—efficient, knowledgeable, and dedicated—and there isn't a slacker among them. When your very existence is riding on the quality of your work, motivational levels tend to skyrocket. All they need is a work order, and that's where you come in. To set the wheels in motion:

1) After studying the modular possibilities, click the thumbnail of the module you'd like to build.

2) Use the *Base View* as an active blueprint (of sorts) to assist you in planning and choosing where to mount the new component. Pan around the base to check for those empty hardpoints which have all of the necessary attachments—they're marked in yellow on the image. Moorings that already house a module also appear (highlighted in red), so that you can track the overall scheme of development.

3) Just click the hardpoint on which you want to mount the new module to begin construction. Barring any unforeseen complications (like the destruction of the base), work continues at a steady pace until it's completed. You receive notification when the module is up and running.

Repeat these steps for each additional unit you wish to add to a base. Once you've finished handing out work orders, click the check mark below the thumbnail sketches to close the panel.

> To remove a module from one of your bases, click it on the *Base View*, then press **OK** to dismantle the unit (or **Cancel** to halt the demolition).
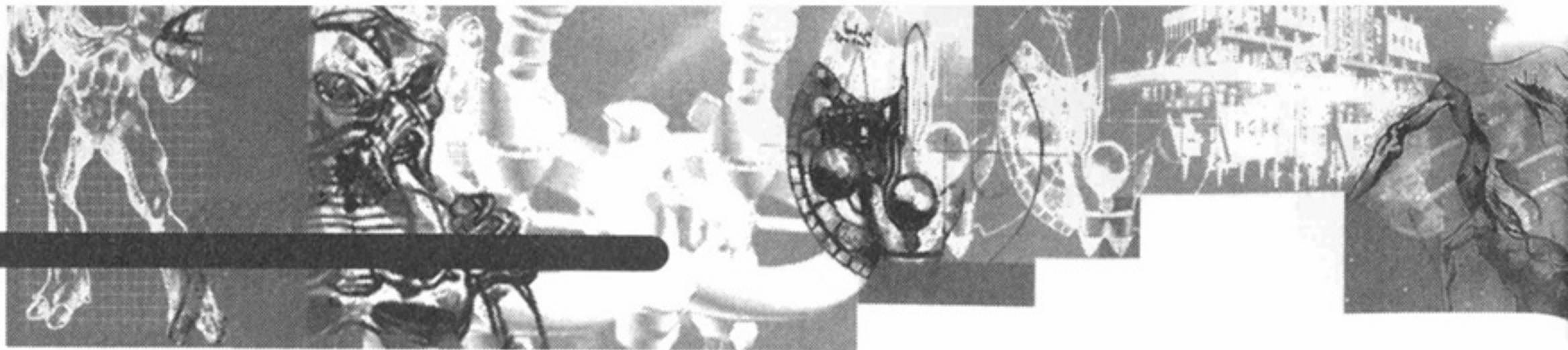
DISMANTLE BASE

What happens if, say, you're running out of funds and need to shut down an entire base? This can save you big bucks as far as your monthly cash outlay, and you'll also profit from the sale of materials for scrap—although on the downside, any equipment remaining on the base is lost when you raze the physical plant and all pilots stationed there are discharged and shipped home. If you're willing to accept the terms, go to the *Bases* screen, select the base you've tagged for demolition, and press the **Dismantle Base** button. Protocol demands that you confirm such a drastic step before proceeding, but the base is obligingly demolished as soon as you give final authorization.

EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL

It's going to take plenty of skill and a healthy dose of luck to defeat the aliens, not least because they have the home field advantage. You don't want to grant them any further leverage by failing to be suitably prepared. Simply put, if you don't have the right pilots for the task at hand or if you lack the right equipment to outfit your ships, then you're in a bit of a jam. After all, the equipment and personnel on tap at each of your bases directly impact what you can do to stem the flood of aliens into the area.

As its name suggests, the *Equipment and Personnel* screen (accessible from the *Base Control Panel*, *CSD*, and the *Menu Bar*) allows you to take care of your staffing and supply needs across the Frontier. In *Equipment* mode, you can buy, manufacture, sell, or transfer goods. In *Personnel* mode, you can hire, fire, or reassign pilots—without worrying about disgruntled employees going postal.

When you first call up the screen, it defaults to *Equipment* mode, but you can switch between the two modes at will by clicking the corresponding buttons at the right of the display. To conduct transactions at a different facility, select the base you want using the **Select Base** control at the top right.

EQUIPMENT MODE

Bases don't themselves have the capability to manufacture equipment. In the initial stages of planning, developers felt that X-COM's only priority ought to be protecting the Frontier. Certainly, with three corporations already firmly entrenched and even more clamoring to set up operations, it was imperative for X-COM to establish a safe perimeter within which the companies could carry on business. Since several outposts and OPPs were by then fully functional, they offered to step into the void and act as your suppliers of equipment.

EQUIPMENT INFO   ORDER INFO

BASE NAME

PILOT MODE

FUNCTIONS

TREASURY

SUBMIT

MANAGER

CANCEL
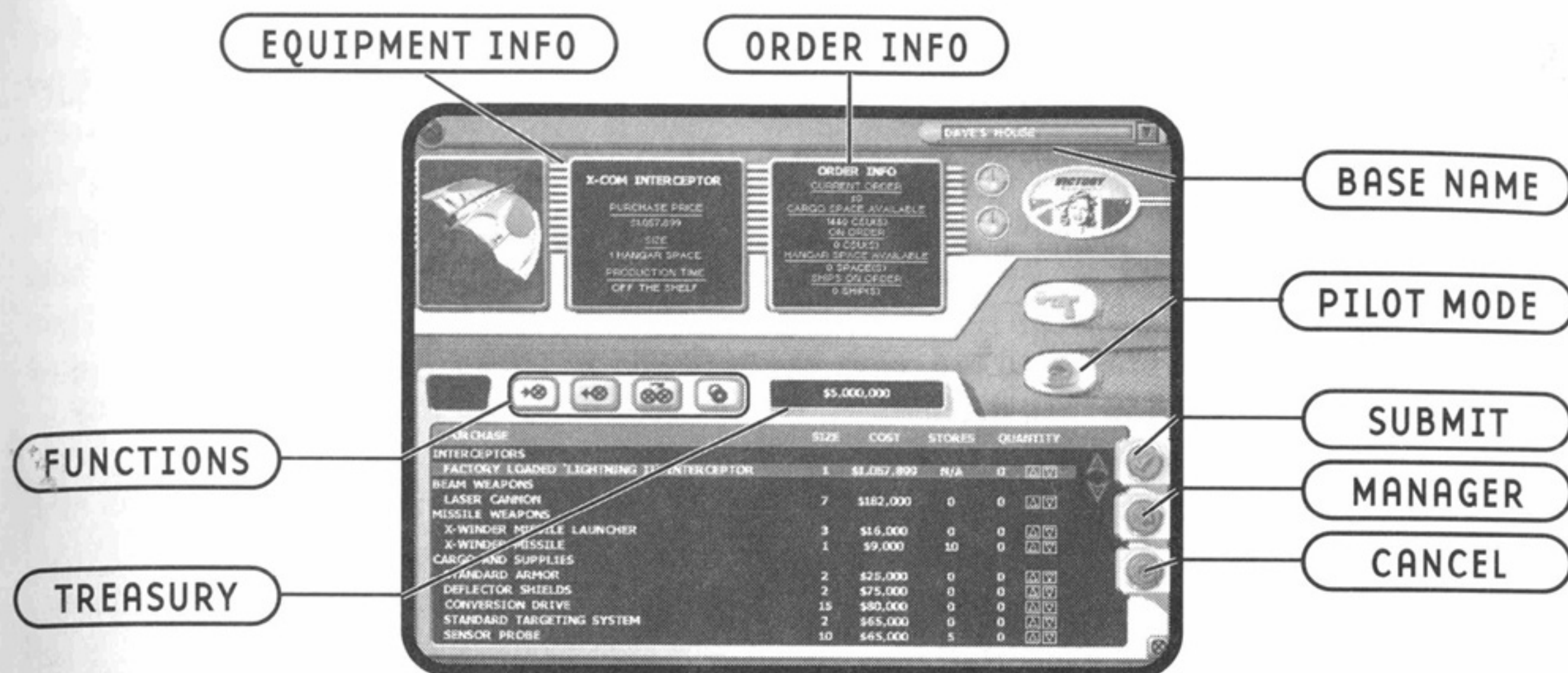
Outposts tend to keep a number of the most basic items in stock and available for purchase at any time. Things like standard Sensor Probes and X-winder missiles can be shipped within hours of when you place an order—subject to transport availability, of course. Most specialty items, however, are assembled only on demand; you must submit a formal request before they are manufactured, and it can take quite a while before they are actually loaded and shipped out. Luckily for you, you can stockpile equipment and weapons at your bases, or you could have a real predicament on your hands. The more storage modules you have, the larger the supply of items you can keep around for everyday or emergency use. (A running tally of the equipment, weapons, and ships stored at each base is kept as part of the *Base Statistics* report.)

Okay, ready to manipulate your supplies? If you're not already, get to the *Equipment and Personnel* screen, then take the following steps:

1) Click one of the four control buttons to begin your transaction—purchase, sell, transfer, or manufacture.

2) Scan the inventory of the available items; you can use the large arrows to scroll up or down the list. When you're ready to place a piece of equipment on the order, click the small arrows next to each item. These increase and decrease the number of that item slated for delivery, transfer, or sale. As you fill out your order, you can monitor the amount of cargo room available at the base, as well as the space that will be used (or freed up) as a result of your orders.
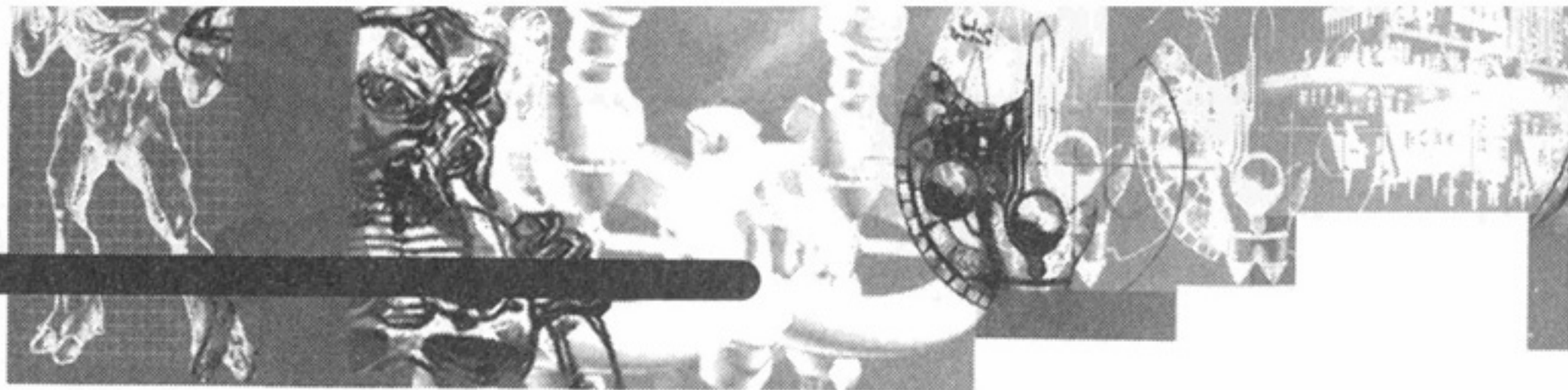
3) Once you have completed the requisition, click the **Submit** button (or **Cancel** should change your mind). Note that if you fail to submit your order before attempting to car any other operation, the request for supplies will not go through. Don't worry, though are prompted any time you try to move on without sending the requisition through prop channels. (Press **OK** to go ahead without submitting it or **Cancel** to return to the parti completed form.)

4) As soon as an order is processed and ready to go, the items are loaded onto corporate freighters and shipped to their destination. If the aliens destroy a freighter in transit, cargo or personnel aboard is lost, and you're out whatever money you spent on it. The freighter itself is replaced by the outpost that maintained it. For a nominal fee, you co a (non-X-COM) fighter escort to guide any freighter safely to its destination, although i aliens launch a determined attack on a convoy, the corporate pilots escorting the frei might not be up to the challenge of defending your cargo alone. That's what your flee When you're prompted, click **OK** to send the convoy on its way undefended or **Hire Es** you want to play it safe.

Just how long it takes for your goods to arrive depends on how quickly a freighter becomes able to carry the load, how far it must travel, and whether it encounters any alien resistar short, the journey might take a while. It can take even longer if an order exceeds the carg capacity of a single freighter; the remainder could end up sitting in a loading bay somewhe awaiting transport. When looking ahead to upcoming missions, you'd do well to budget for kind of delay, or things might not arrive before you need them.

To monitor manufacturing projects in progress, click the **Production Manager** button. He can check the status of the items you have on order and rank them all by priority. This is the way to ensure that you get your hands on the most important things in a timely fashion—the porate types are anything but military tacticians, and left to their own devices, they fill ord a first-come, first-served basis. Luckily, they do follow orders when you submit a priority list

The *Production Queue* lists products awaiting manufacture and indicates how many of the number ordered have been completed to date. In addition, it shows the percentage of the able workforce assigned to each project. You can gauge how quickly an item might enter p tion by its relative position in the queue—things are produced in the order they're listed, fr top down. One way to hasten a project's completion is to click the item and drag it to a hig position. Dragging it all the way to the top puts it first in line for manufacture and bumps c things back. Conversely, you can delay a project by dragging it lower on the queue.

To further speed things up (or slow them down), you can also change the percentage of the working engineers assigned to a project—and hence how quickly the job can be completed. When you click an item on the *Production Queue*, additional details appear on your display, and these allow you to set a project's priority level. Choose between **Normal**, **High**, and **Urgent**. This affects not only the percentage of the available outpost workforce allocated to a project, but also how many total projects are being worked on at any given time. **Urgent** status draws every available engineer to the selected endeavor, while the others allow the construction managers to parcel out workers to several projects at once.

One note of caution: You might think that assigning **Urgent** priority to the 10th item in the queue would guarantee the project instant attention. Actually, though, it only changes the number of technicians who will be assigned once the project makes it to the top of the list. Since the engineers never look ahead on the schedule to see if there's something more pressing to be done—they're not paid to think, you know—you must still drag the item to the top of the queue or wait for its turn to come.

From the *Production Queue* screen, you can also call off a highlighted order altogether by pressing the **Cancel** button. Be forewarned that this discards whatever progress you have made on partially completed equipment. It's like this: Say you've ordered 10 Heavy Lasers, of which four are completely done. If you cancel the production, the four finished lasers get shipped, but the other six are scrapped. If, on the other hand, you cancel something like a targeting system (even one that's 99% complete), the *whole thing* gets tossed.

How long it takes to complete a project depends heavily on external factors, like the availability of resources to your outposts. Any time an outpost or OPP suffers damage, mining operations are interrupted, and the flow of materials can trail off. When this happens, the number of technicians devoted to manufacturing tasks might be cut, as well. The moral is that the better you protect outposts and OPPs, the quicker they'll be able to fill your supply requisitions.

When you're ready to leave the *Production Queue*, press **Exit**.

PILOT MODE

Just as outposts are responsible for furnishing you with all your material goods, they also serve as recruitment centers for your pilots. Your funding corporations scour the Earth in search of trainees, then sign them to a short-term contract and ship them to the Frontier on regularly scheduled flights. Once there, recruits live and work at the outposts until they are either called for active duty or released at the end of their term.

ORDER INFO

BASE NAME

PILOT INFO

EQUIPMENT MODE

TREASURY

SUBMIT

FUNCTIONS

CANCEL

For each of the pilots presently in the Frontier, the outposts prepare and maintain a dossier you can pore over when you're hunting for additional personnel. You can view a pilot's dossier by highlighting that pilot's name in the list. Find pilots that fit your need, submit an official request, and wait for them to arrive. You pay only for those people who actually end up in your employ, so you're spared the expense of supporting and housing the entire applicant pool. (Of course, in the end, the outposts still make a tidy profit off their recruitment fees, but that's to be expected.)

To commission, sack, or transfer a pilot, first switch from *Equipment* to *Pilot* mode by pressing the appropriate button (be sure to submit any supply requisitions beforehand, or they are voided in the process). Then:

1) Choose the base submitting the order, then use the controls to select the kind of business you'd like to carry out—hiring, firing, or initiating a transfer.

2) Next, scan the list of pilots to compare their merits. The large arrows allow you to scroll up and down through the catalogue, and by highlighting a particular name you can call up the pilot's photo, monthly salary, and qualifications.

3) When you're set to make a move, select a pilot by clicking the box next to the name listing. A check mark appears, indicating that the pilot has been added to your requisition. As you fill out the order, you'll want to keep an eye on the amount of living space available, as well as the quarters to be filled (or emptied) by the transaction; if there is insufficient living space for a new or transferred pilot at the selected base, the transaction cannot be initiated.

4) When you have selected the last of the pilots to be affected by the order, press the **Submit** button (or click **Cancel** to call the whole deal off). The same freighters that drop off your equipment and supplies also deliver pilots to their new stations.

5) If you are transferring pilots, you are prompted to select the base to which the pilots are to be transferred. If there is insufficient living space available at the selected destination, the transfer cannot be initiated.

The pilots who fly your ships are the key to victory. They've got to be more than merely competent, more than simply capable. At an absolute minimum, they must show the promise of achieving greatness—given proper training and enough combat experience. For the most part, the real duds were turned down in the initial selection process, so (in theory) every one of the pilots posted to the Frontier for possible duty can serve you at least reasonably well. It's simply a matter of knowing what your needs are at any given point. The only way to gauge the abilities of potential pilots is to examine their statistics.

Rank	Generally speaking, the higher a pilot's rank, the better his or her combat skills—but the higher the salary you've got to pay, too. The thought of staffing X-COM entirely with experienced lieutenant commanders might be enticing, but financially, it's probably not the wisest decision.
Intelligence	Intelligence isn't one of those things X-COM training can improve with time. Either a pilot has it in the brains department or not, and the more smarts you've got to work with, the better. The more intelligent the pilot, the better his or her general performance in combat situations.
Stamina	Stamina measures how well a pilot withstands the physical rigors of combat. Over the course of a prolonged engagement, pilots get fatigued, and as they do their stamina drops. If it falls below a certain point, the pilot's reactions could turn unpredictable, and as we know from earlier wars, the aliens have ways to prey on the weak and tired.
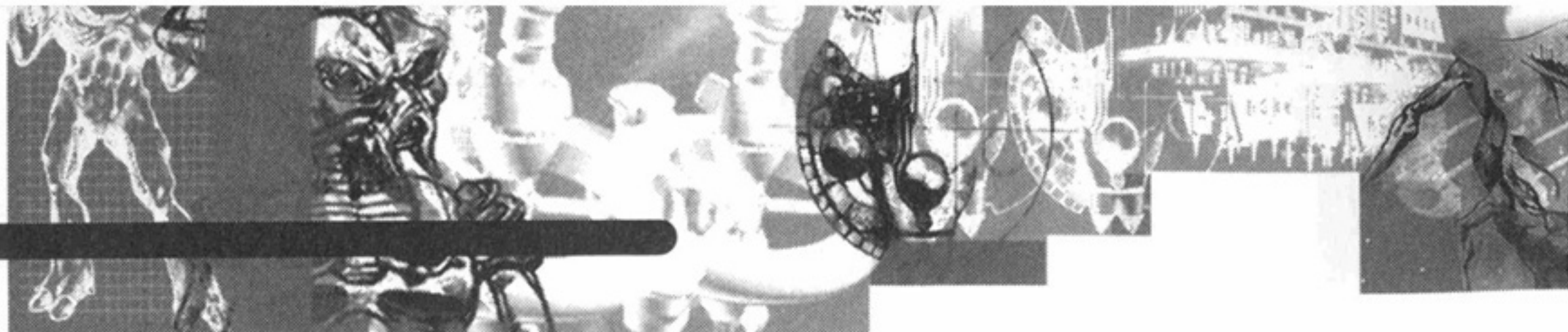
Firing Accuracy Can the pilot slice and dice an alien with a laser beam from three kilometers off, or is it a challenge even to hit an enemy base at point-blank range? Obviously, greater accuracy is a benefit, but it's not the only consideration—even strictly average shots can make excellent combat pilots if their other skills are up to snuff.

Flying Ability The ability to maneuver an X-COM fighter craft in battle is absolutely critical. A pilot might be a phenomenal shot, but that's of little use without commensurate talent in controlling the craft. On the other hand, mediocre marksmen can dramatically improve their chances in combat just by knowing what they're doing in the cockpit.

Aggressiveness Aggressiveness is a tricky one—too much or too little and a pilot can be a liability, yet depending on the circumstances, both can also lead to flashes of brilliance. Put plainly, there's no one standard that fits. Every level of assertiveness (or passivity) has its advantages. Only you know which will serve you best.

Bravery Bravery is the measure of a pilot's ability to endure the mental strain of battle. It dictates whether a pilot panics at the first hint of danger or keeps cool even in the face of extreme peril. Of all a pilot's characteristics, bravery is the one most likely to change over the short term; some battles can reduce even the most courageous person to sniveling fits.

Psionics Psionics—the ability to repel and project thought energy—is one of the most subtle yet powerful forms of attack out there. It's the ultimate test of will, pitting your pilots against the enemy's in a battle for mental control. The psionic rating indicates both how skilled the pilot is at initiating this type of attack and to what extent he or she can resist the aliens' efforts at mind control.

Health Health points don't reflect how frequently the pilot calls in sick, but rather how much damage he or she can withstand in combat. Health points might drop sharply if a pilot's ship suffers a direct hit; too dramatic a drop, and the pilot could become unconscious or, worse, kick off altogether.

Some things, like bravery and health, prove highly changeable depending on the course of battle, while others stay more or less steady in the short term. As with most things, however, practice is the key to improvement. Given enough combat experience, most pilots will better their skills over time. To accelerate the learning process, you can also send pilots back to school for further instruction by assigning them to a *Training Module* (see **Equip Ships**). Pilots also receive periodic promotions based on their performance in combat.

Never take personnel issues lightly. Because the stakes are so high and others' lives are on the line, you cannot afford to ignore problems that crop up. Motivation isn't usually the issue—the corporate recruiters tried to weed out all the real whiners and weenies in the initial battery of exams—but that's not to say that you won't get the occasional underachiever in your ranks. Remember, this is war. You must hold everyone *instantly* accountable for his or her actions—no excuses and no exceptions. There are always more pilots eager to step into the breach.

EQUIP SHIPS

When a brand-spanking-new fighter arrives straight from the factory floor, what you're getting is the basic, factory-equipped model. It comes with all the latest weapons and equipment, but the load-out is not always particularly imaginative. Often, to get the ship up to snuff or to make it suitable for a particular type of mission, you've got to install the extras yourself. More precisely, you've got to assign your mechanics to the task; they're the ones responsible for the upkeep and routine maintenance on all interceptors docked at a base. For the most part, these workers attend to the rearming and the necessary after-care in the wake of a battle, but they also reconfigure ships on command.

Using the *Equip Ships* screen, you can prepare for any eventuality by retooling a craft's arsenal and defenses and by adding or replacing special systems. You can also rename each ship and replace the ship's assigned pilot at this screen (see **Handling Pilot Assignments**). For that, you need to be familiar with every ship, you need to know in what areas the fleet is lacking, and you've got to predict ahead of time what you'll need in order to meet the next crisis. It could take some time to learn how to plan far enough in advance, but rest assured that you'll get the hang of it eventually.

OUTFITTING INTERCEPTORS

With the range of technologies at your fingertips, it's no surprise that you want to retrofit your fleet to take advantage of it all. You'd be nuts not to; if each of your interceptors carried the same systems and load-out, the aliens would figure that out pretty quickly. Sure, the abilities of your pilots will come into play, but the limits of your crafts' capabilities will nonetheless become all too evident. The aliens don't miss much.
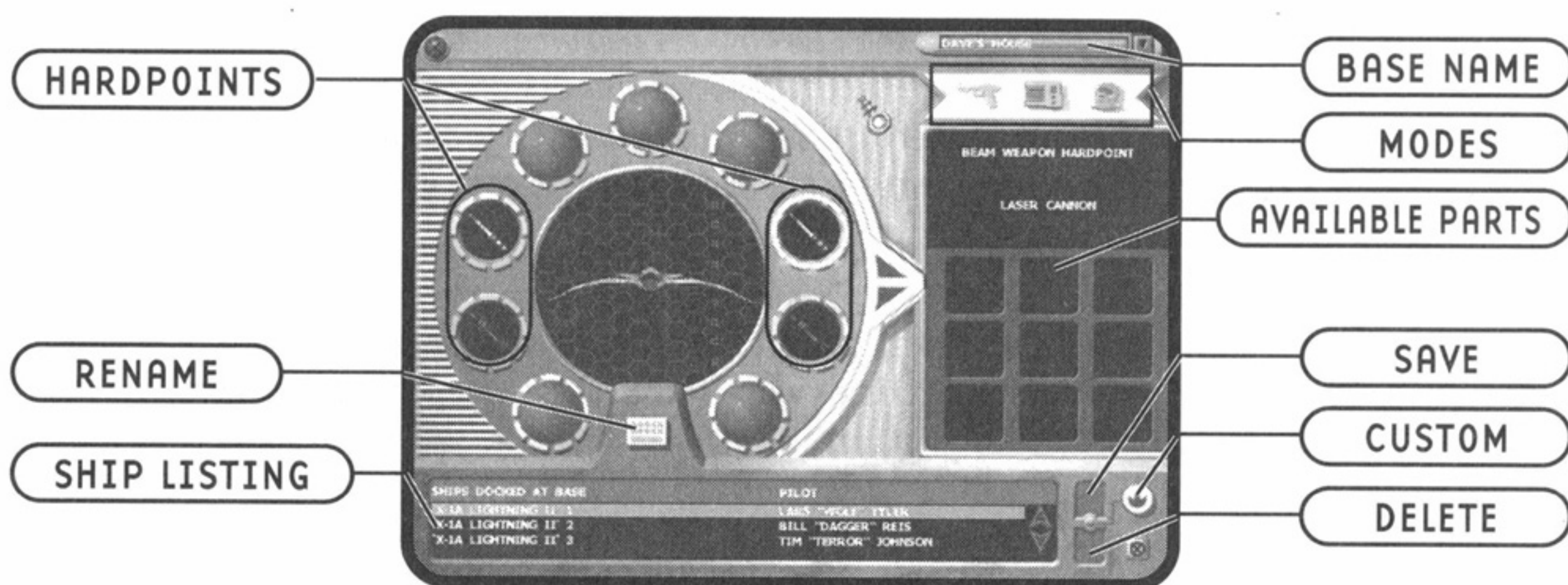
When you regularly change the weapons load-out on your ships, you'll keep the enemy guessing. You can freeze their reactions for valuable seconds just by mixing things up a little. As for those missions in which your objective requires a particular and highly specialized piece of equipment, well, you can make damn sure that every single one of your ships has it on board. The one fly in the ointment is that you can't install what you don't have—that is, if it's not in your base stores, then you're out of luck.

To retool an interceptor, open the *Equip Ships* screen and try the following steps:

1) First, since ships are docked at individual facilities, pick the base where you want to begin work, using the **Base Name** control in the upper right.

2) Next, highlight the interceptor that you're going to customize in the listing at the bottom. If there is a whole slew of ships docked at your base, scroll through the list by clicking the arrows until you see the craft you have in mind.

3) Now decide what it is you'd like to alter about the craft, then click the corresponding icon—**Weapons**, **Systems**, and **Pilots**. (For details on using the **Pilots** option, see **Handling Pilot Assignments**.) You can shuttle between these options at will, so it's simply a matter of where to begin.

4) Items currently loaded on the craft appear in the hardpoint displays surrounding the ship view, as do all empty moorings reserved for additional equipment. Because of the different systems needs, each hardpoint accepts only one category of equipment—either beam weapon or missile launcher, for example, but not both. To install a piece of hardware, click the hardpoint onto which workers will mount the new system. (Note that different ship types have a different number of hardpoints; those not available for the selected ship are closed and inaccessible.)

5) Once you've selected a hardpoint, the appropriate equipment items in stock and available for installation on the selected mounting point appear at the right. By passing the cursor over individual equipment boxes, you can see what each item is and how many you have in stock. For further information on an item's capabilities, you can right-click it to review the pertinent entry in the UFOpedia. Clicking an item installs it on the selected hardpoint and simultaneously returns to storage any equipment replaced by the new installation.

You can also mothball equipment without installing anything in its stead. Highlight the hardpoint and click the red double-arrow (**Remove Item**) between the ship view and the equipment menu to have your crews offload the hardware and stow it away in a cargo hold.

> In combat simulation and multiplayer play, the *Equip Ships* screen functions slightly differently. Neither the **Base Name** option nor the **Pilots** button exists, for example, and since you don't have to carry out any research or worry about manufacturing goods, you don't have the same kind of limitations when deciding what to install. You may choose whichever weapons and equipment you'd like and in whatever quantity. (See **Getting Started in the Frontier** for other important distinctions.)

While you're changing things around, you might want to rename your craft for easier identification. If you've created unique ship configurations, this can also help you keep them straight in your mind so that when it comes to sending them out on the fly (so to speak), your choices are clearer. To make the switch, click the **Rename** button and type in the new name.

CREATING CUSTOM CONFIGURATIONS

If you find that you are constantly making modifications to the stock interceptor models you order from your outposts, it might save you some time to try designing your own customized stock models. Once the spec list is on file with the outposts, you can then order the these custom ships for manufacture as you would any of the default models. Since the equipment that you requested now comes standard, you are spared the effort of completely overhauling every craft that arrives, and you still have the option of making all the additional adjustments that you please once the ship is in your possession.

To set up a custom order, click the **Custom** button and then proceed as if you were outfitting any interceptor—select the basic stock configuration you want to modify and add any weapons and equipment you want (subject to your current technology level). Of course, since you're designing a standing factory order and not one particular craft, you can't assign a pilot. When the ship is to your liking, press **Save**, confirm that you wish to file the design with the outposts, and enter the name under which the model will be listed on future supply requisitions. That's it. Next time you order ships, you can pick the custom build straight from the order form, and that's true for the remainder of the current game. (Note that custom designs are not carried over from one game to another.)

If you find that you want to delete one of your custom designs, you can do so by highlighting the design in question and clicking **Delete**. Note that, while you can delete any design of your own creation, you cannot delete any of the three default factory stock interceptor configurations.

You leave this screen by reclicking the **Custom** button.

HANDLING PILOT ASSIGNMENTS

All the equipment in the world can't help if you don't have the right person at the helm of the ship. Pilots have to be both skilled in flight and trained to use the weapons loaded on their craft, else they'll suffer a quick and ignominious demise. To help ensure that your interceptors are manned with the best possible personnel, click the **Pilots** button on the *Equip Ships* screen. This lets you hand out ship assignments, pack substandard pilots off for remedial training, and send injured pilots to the base's Medical Module (if there is one).

> You do not hire pilots at this screen. You do that from the *Equipment and Personnel* screen.

You'll be shuffling pilots at the base currently displayed in the **Base Name** control, so be sure to select this before you toggle into *Pilot* mode. Once you're in that mode, select a ship.

The *Pilot Roster* gives you a rundown of each pilot stationed on the selected base. Scroll through the list using the arrows and peruse each pilot's dossier. The icons beneath the pilot's statistics permit you to hand out assignments as desired. In addition to the small arrows which direct you to the next (or previous) pilot on the roster, your choices include:
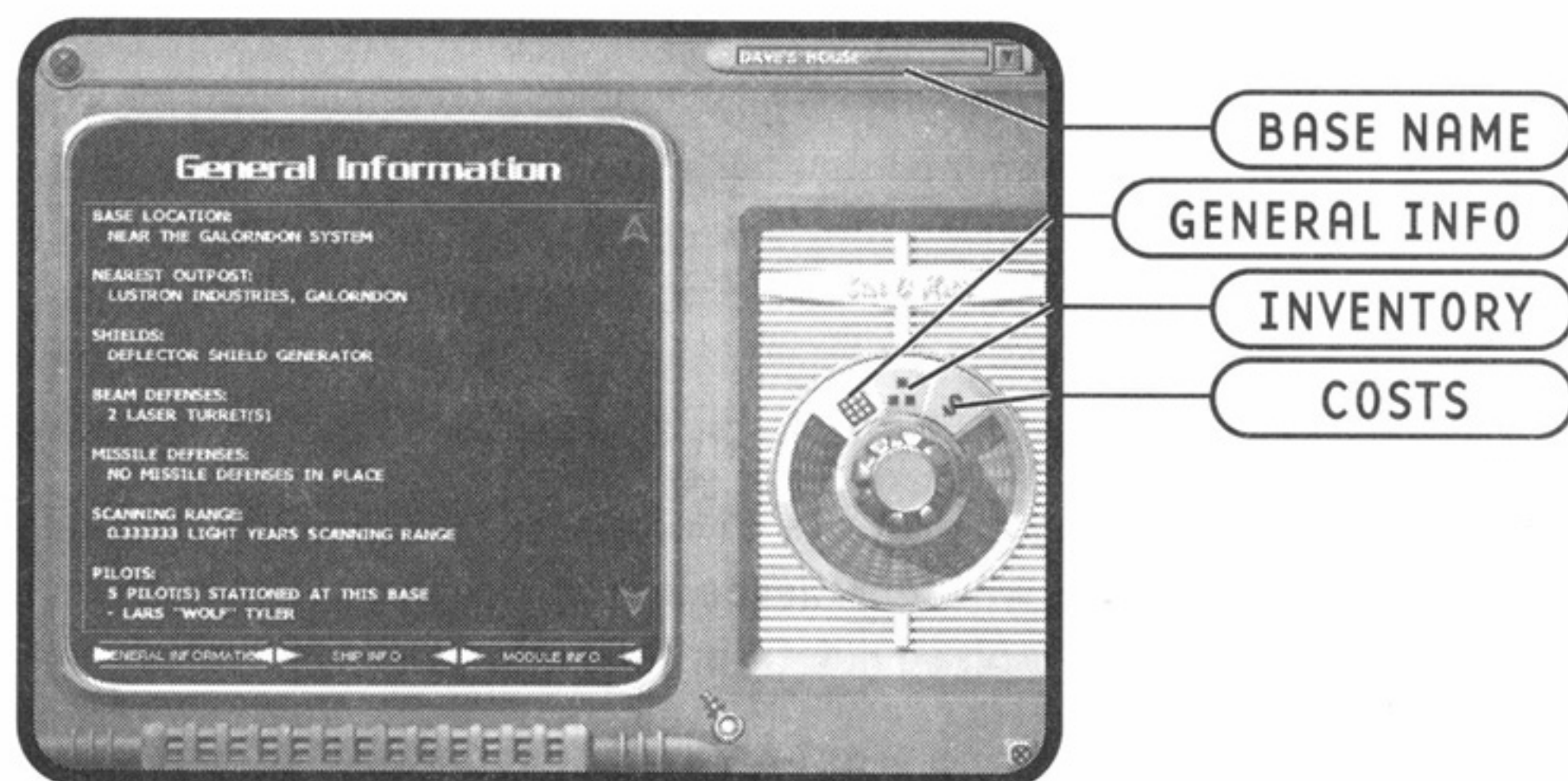
Assign Pilot
Order the selected pilot to take command of the selected interceptor. The next time you send the ship out on a mission, this pilot will be at the controls. If you transfer the pilot from one vessel straight to another, don't forget to fill the vacancy thus created since the empty ship will be grounded until you do.

Training
Assign the pilot to a Training Module (if one is available on this base) for additional instruction. For those whose skills aren't quite up to snuff, this can be just the thing to set them on the right track; a little classroom learning is one way to upgrade a pilot's abilities without the risk involved in actual combat. The longer pilots stay in training, the more they'll learn (to a point) and the more skilled they'll become. You can have up to five people in each Training Module at any one time. Once sent to training, a pilot remains there until you give another assignment. To remove a pilot from the module, you must either assign that pilot to an interceptor or use the **Unassign Pilot** button.

Medical
Assign the pilot to a Medical Module (if one is available) for healing. Injured pilots who convalesce in a Medical Module heal much more quickly than those left to bleed quietly in their quarters.

Unassign Pilot
Relieve the pilot of his or her command without giving further orders at this time. The pilot remains on base and available for duty unless you decide to sack him or her.

Incidentally, just as you can give new names to any of your ships, you may also rename the pilots under your command. (Their parents are too far away to complain.) Try the **Rename** button (in *Pilot* mode, it works on the pilot, not the ship), and enter a new name and call sign for the selected pilot.

Close the *Pilot Roster* by clicking one of the two equipment buttons or leaving the screen.

BASE INFORMATION

Some commanders like to think only on the large scale—"How the hell am I going to save the entire known universe?" for example—but it could be the most basic, everyday decisions (whether to install a new weapons targeting system or to save instead for a more powerful downlink module so that your research goes faster) that give you a real leg up on the aliens. How do you know what you can afford? How can you assess your needs base by base? Simple; the *Base Information* screen can help you with all that. You can open it from the *Base Control Panel*.

General Information

BASE LOCATION:
NEAR THE GALORNDON SYSTEM

NEAREST OUTPOST:
LUSTRON INDUSTRIES, GALORNDON

SHIELDS:
DEFLECTOR SHIELD GENERATOR

BEAM DEFENSES:
2 LASER TURRET(S)

MISSILE DEFENSES:
NO MISSILE DEFENSES IN PLACE

SCANNING RANGE:
0.333333 LIGHT YEARS SCANNING RANGE

PILOTS:
5 PILOT(S) STATIONED AT THIS BASE
- LARS "WOLF" TYLER

GENERAL INFORMATION   SHIP INFO   MODULE INFO.

BASE NAME
GENERAL INFO
INVENTORY
COSTS

The *Base Information* screen is similar in many ways to your *Status Reports*, except it concentrates on each base individually to give you an idea of what's going on at the local level. It lists all those niggling details that you can't get anywhere else, including in-depth reports on ships, personnel, and supplies. It might offer clues about where you can cut expenses, and it could also show you where you should increase spending to bring a base up to code.

Once you open the *Base Information* screen, use the **Base Name** menu to choose which facility to inspect. The information display has three modes. Select the one you want to see by clicking the corresponding position on the knob at right. The modes are:

General Info   Read up on the miscellany associated with a base—its location in the Frontier, its complement of interceptors, and the existing modules. Use the buttons at the bottom of the display to further filter the information displayed. **General** includes such details as the location of the base and the nearest outpost, the type of shields and defenses installed, its maximum scanning radius, and the number of combat pilots stationed there. **Ship Information** catalogues the name, type, and condition of each interceptor in the base hangars, as well as the pilot currently assigned and additional notes when warranted. **Module Information** provides the vital statistics of every module installed and the status of each. You can scroll through lengthy entries by clicking the arrows alongside.

Inventory   This offers an accessible and comprehensive itemization of the current stores in each cargo module and the amount of space (measured in Cargo Space Units—CSU) occupied by each type of item. This lets you review what you have and in what quantity, as well as in which cargo bay the items are stored.

Monthly Costs   Get the complete rundown of the monthly maintenance costs and other expenses incurred by the base. Use this to help you pare down spending or increase your budget as necessary.

Research

As it was in both of the previous Alien Wars, research is vital to your success in the Frontier. Without some major technological advances, how are you to thwart the aliens? Right now, you couldn't decipher the aliens' master plan if they hand-delivered it to you! Besides, you're going to need swifter ships, improved weapons, and stronger defenses. The aliens are surely doing everything in their power to get the upper hand in the war. Hadn't you best follow suit?

At the start of your operations, a core of Earth-based technologies is already available for study—things that didn't quite get wrapped up before you had to leave for the Frontier. You'd better look into them. In the first place, they'll complement your current systems, and since research often opens up whole new lines of inquiry, additional topics could well appear as you complete investigation of the earlier ones. That way, you can continue to improve on technologies, increasing the power and capabilities of existing equipment or coming up with radical and heretofore untested systems to fill your needs. All it takes is time.
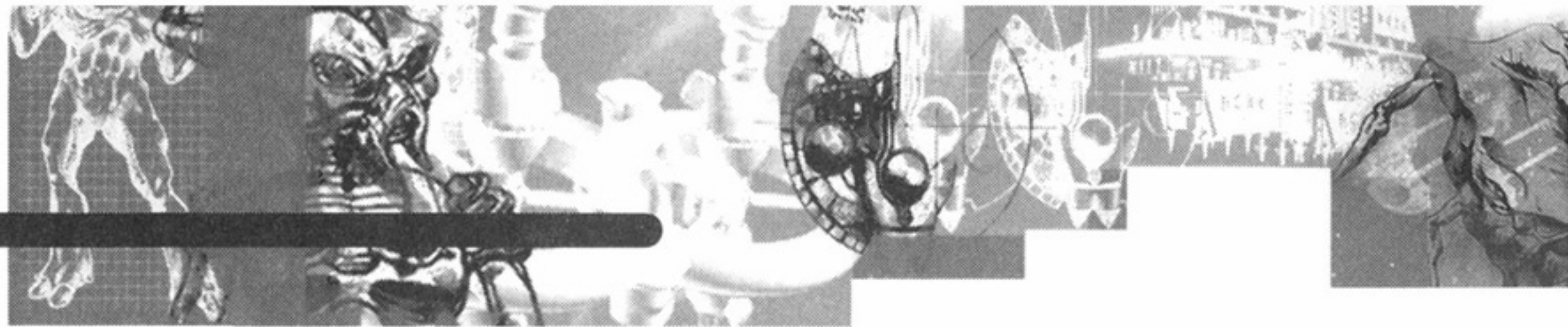
BLACK HOLES

There are more black holes in the Frontier than is usual in a volume of space this size. A black hole is not difficult to find—if you're near one, you know it—but they do not show up on long-range sensors. The only ways to identify and map the locations of these dangerous objects is by the gravitational effects on probes launched too close to one and by accidentally flying a ship through hyperspace near one.

For piloting purposes, you don't need to know the physics behind a black hole. All you need to know is that its gravitational field is intense. If you fly too close, your ship and everything inside it will be drawn out into a strand of subatomic particles several million kilometers long. Sounds painful, and it's not recommended.

Since the aliens have, historically, stayed several steps ahead of Earth when it comes to technology, you've also got to get your hands on some of their designs and inventions. There's no shame in saying that they've got great ideas. Capturing alien hardware is often the quickest way to gain use of a technology. The lesson? You might not always want to obliterate your target—but even if you do, you can generally pick up something of value. Following a successful mission, any battle wreckage is gathered and transported back to base for study or to add to your stores. Captured spacecraft and intercepted alien transmissions can also lead to potential projects.

As research progresses, the scientists on Earth will no doubt become more skilled at melding alien and human technologies into innovative hybrids of the two. With a bit of perseverance, they should be able to take the best facets of each, discard the flawed concepts, and develop some truly unique new technologies that even the aliens will be hard-pressed to defend against.

DOWNLOADING

All research takes place in lab facilities back on Earth, where the work environment is a little safer—not to mention cheaper. Housing costs next to nothing (compared to the Frontier), you pay no deep-space transport fees, and you avoid combat pay to boot.

When it comes to the facilities and work force, governments have pledged to spare no expense to keep research going at full tilt. The very best scientists and engineers have been culled from across the globe and recruited by the Galactic Science Corps (GSC). From their labs on Earth, they are churning out data at a record pace. The catch is that, although the research is accomplished relatively quickly given the enormous wealth of resources devoted to the task, the data doesn't actually become available to X-COM until you download the research files to one of your bases in the Frontier—and unfortunately, there's no quick way to do so.

ARTIFACTS

Aside from natural phenomena, there are any number of man-made and possibly alien-made objects cluttering up the Frontier—your bases, corporate outposts, ore processing platforms (OPPs), spacecraft, probes, minefields, and so on. The better your sensor network is at tracking everything in the space you're responsible for protecting, the better job you'll be able to do.

The GSC labs on Earth initiate transmission of a topic as soon as you give the order, sending the files via a series of uplinks. How quickly your bases receive and process files from Earth depends on a number of factors, the most important of which are the size of the file and the number and type of Downlink Modules receiving the transmission. Each of your bases can be equipped with up to three Downlinks at any one time. As a general rule, the more Downlinks, the quicker the file arrives from Earth. That's not a hard and fast rule, however, because the type of Downlink can also impact the time it takes—more advanced models significantly enhance download speed—as can the complexity of the data. (The more advanced a topic, the larger the file to be downloaded, and hence the longer it will take.) It behooves you to keep on top of the technology and install the best equipment you can afford, or you'll get left in the dust.

A far more insidious problem, and one less easily solved, is that of enemy activity, which can not only disrupt but also completely close down your avenues of data communication. From time to time, those pesky aliens will try to jam your Downlinks with a probe, and whenever they have the opportunity, they'll train their sights on your Downlink Modules when attacking your bases. Any time they knock out a Downlink—or, worse, an entire base—your research progress can slow dramatically.

In order to clear a jammed Downlink, you must destroy the alien probe that's mucking up the signal.
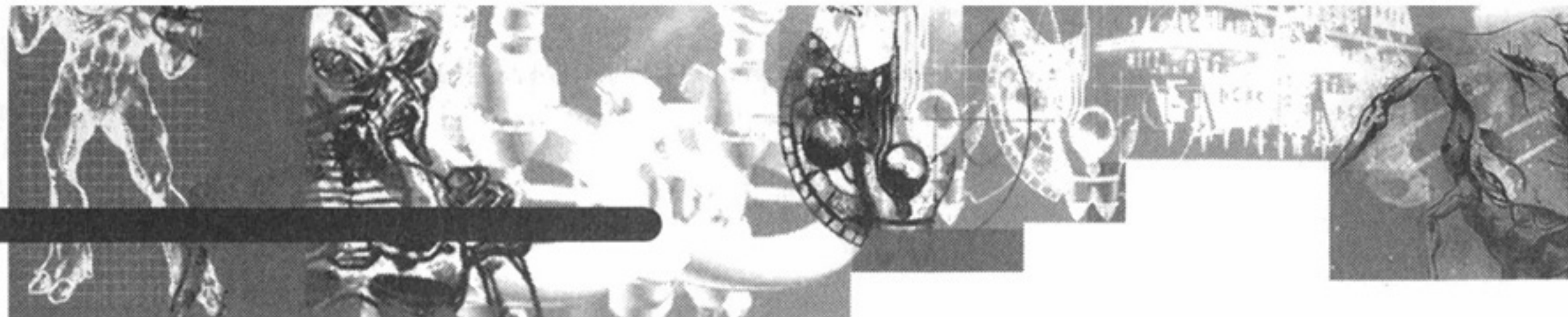
THE RESEARCH SCREEN

Your chief role as far as research goes is to coordinate which projects are downloaded, in what order, and when. There are many different paths from which to choose, and only you know what fits best your overall strategy. To help you sort out and implement your plan, open the *Research* screen from either the *CSD* or the **Screens** option on the *Menu Bar*. This display catalogues the topics available for transfer to your databank in the Frontier. It lets you coordinate all downloads to your bases and allows you to oversee the progress of individual downloads.
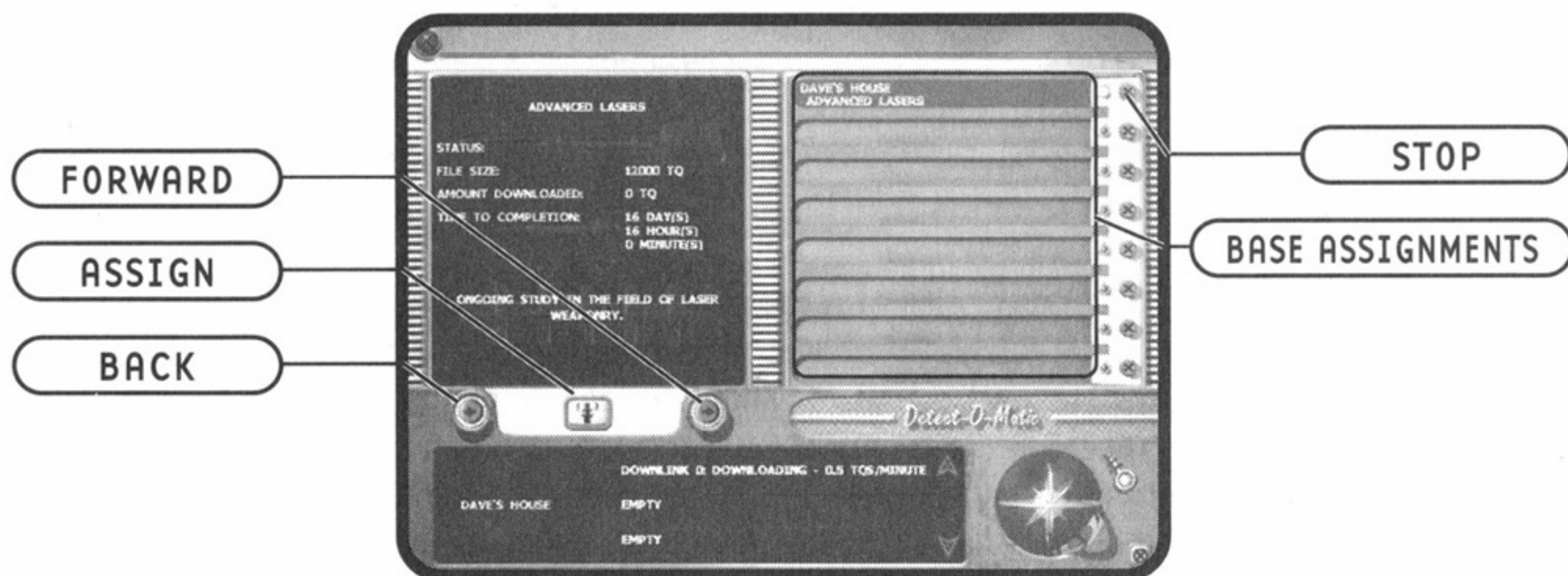
Any base that is equipped with at least one Downlink Module can download a research topic. All of the functioning Downlink Modules at the base work in unison; therefore, each base can download only one topic at a time. When the download is complete, you are notified and given the opportunity to start another download at that base. To help you determine which projects are worth the time, the GSC scientists on Earth provide you with a quick summary of their research. Page through and review the available files using the **Forward** and **Back** arrows. The brief description gives you an inkling of possible future applications for the technology. You can also see the file size, whether the topic is actively downloading or not, how many teraquads of data have been sent to date, and the anticipated time remaining until the project reaches completion.

To request a download, page through the list to the desired technology. Highlight the base that you want to perform the download (in the list on the right), then click the **Assign** button to begin the data transfer.

You can call a halt to a project at any time and at any or all bases by pressing the red **Stop Download** button next to each facility. Bear in mind, though, that nothing is actually stored in the database until the entire file has arrived (data can be saved only as complete files, not partial ones). This means that if you cancel a project across the board, you lose whatever headway you had made. That can be quite a setback, so think before you act.

> The same loss of data holds true when a base is already downloading information on one topic and you assign it to work on an entirely new one—when you replace the current download with a new topic, you lose any progress you had made on the project. Make sure you think carefully before switching topics in midstream, else you'll foil your own research efforts.

With everything else that you have to supervise in the Frontier, it's easy to forget about research and let your Downlinks sit idle, but that could have deadly consequences down the line. To avoid that eventuality, you receive periodic reminders on the *CSD* that you need to allocate research. You are also notified each time a new topic becomes available for download, in order to ensure that you stay on top of the possibilities.

If you go back and look at a topic after you've assigned it for download, you'll notice that the display is tracking the progress of the download. The box below that notes the condition of the downlinks at one specific X-COM facility. This monitor provides a quick report of each downlink's current state—whether idle, downloading, or being jammed by an alien probe. This makes it easy to assess whether you are employing your resources to the fullest possible extent. To scroll from base to base, try the large arrows at right.

Note that, during the installation of a more powerful module in place of an older one, your research speed remains largely unaffected, thanks to the unique construction of these units' duplicate connections and interchangeable couplings. X-COM technicians can effect the necessary changes without interrupting the transmission in the slightest. As soon as the upgrade is complete—even in mid-download—you benefit from the improved speed and performance.
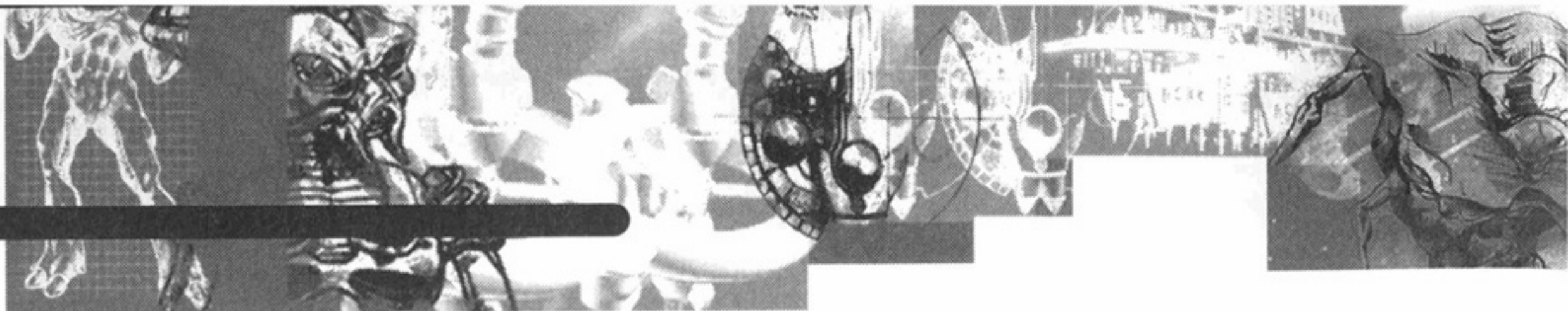
THE UFOPEDIA

Having the data isn't always enough, though, without the commensurate ability to make use of your new technologies—and you might well need a crash course on an item to know how it works and what it's good for. That's where the UFOpedia comes in handy. It's an on-line collection of abstracts written in plain English, and as such it's the most detailed account you have at your fingertips.

The work is organized into categories of similar subject, and it comes complete with full-color images of each entry. Individual topics appear on-line once you have successfully completed a download of the associated files. To call up an index of subjects (from the *CSD*), click the **UFOpedia** button on the **Control Panel**. Then, when the panel slides onto the display, click the icon for whichever of the subjects you'd like to investigate. If you prefer, you can also access the full array of possibilities directly from the *Menu Bar*.

> When you finish research on a project, its UFOpedia entry pops up automatically. After scanning the details, you can either return to the *CSD* by pressing **Exit** or start another research project straight away by clicking **Allocate Research**.

Once you open the UFOpedia, a directory of all primary subject headings shows the current category and lets you cycle through to each of the others by pressing the arrows on either side. There's no need to return to the *CSD* if you wish to browse through many different topics. Directly underneath is an index listing everything under the current heading that you have successfully researched—the results of the individual downloads from Earth. You can use the **Previous** and **Next** buttons to call up an entry and read it, or simply highlight the particular topic that you'd like to learn more about. (For lengthy lists, you can scroll line by line with the arrows or jump several at a time by clicking the scroll control.)

You can't expect the UFOpedia to give you every salient morsel of information, but you can count on it to supply you with at least the rudiments. For everything else, you're going to have to experiment on your own. In addition to a photo or film clip of the item, you have access to a full write-up on the subject, through which you can scroll. In many cases, you can also view a list of the relevant vital statistics—dimensions, range, cost, and the like. Click the toggle switch to move between the two modes. The more you can learn about something before you attempt to make use of it, the better—so study hard.
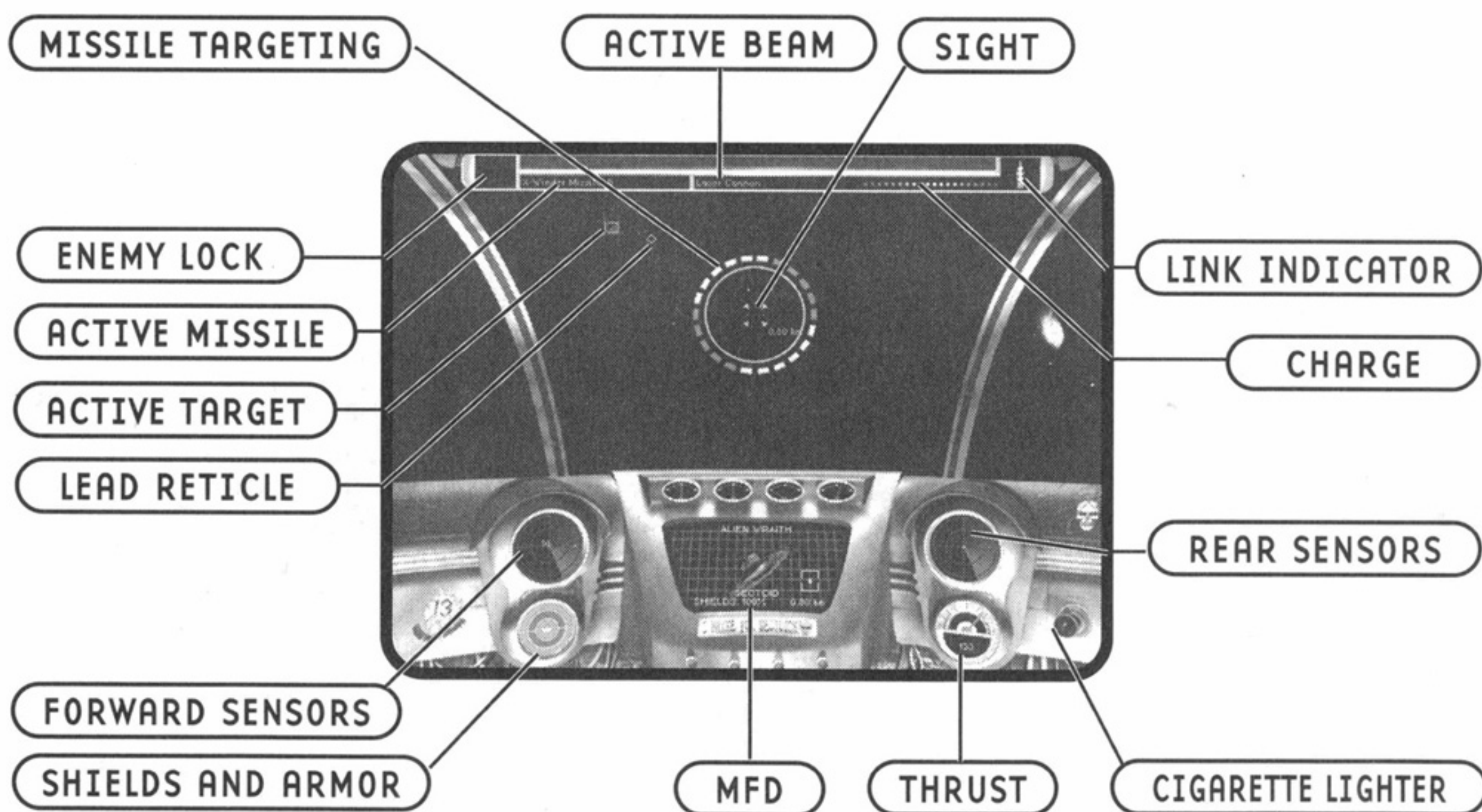
CHAPTER 6:
TAKING ON THE ALIENS

TAKING ON THE ALIENS

Okay, now that you've climbed into the cockpit, it's time to get your flight and combat skills up to snuff. Learning about your interceptor (as about any piece of complex machinery) will be based largely on trial and error—hands-on experience is the best teacher. Consider this guide your troubleshooting reference to help you over any hurdles you might encounter along the path to combat proficiency.

The Cockpits and Controls

You'll be spending a lot of time in interceptors, so it behooves you to get accustomed to the ship as quickly as possible. The more familiar you are with the cockpit and controls, the better off you'll be. Eventually, in-flight routines will become second nature, but don't expect to get the hang of things the first time out.

MISSILE TARGETING   ACTIVE BEAM   SIGHT

ENEMY LOCK   LINK INDICATOR

ACTIVE MISSILE   CHARGE

ACTIVE TARGET

LEAD RETICLE

REAR SENSORS

FORWARD SENSORS

SHIELDS AND ARMOR   MFD   THRUST   CIGARETTE LIGHTER

Right now, there is only one type of interceptor, but in the future, you might be called on to fly different ships, each taking advantage of the different technologies at hand and designed specifically for certain types of missions. Their appearance and style will surely vary, as will their performance. Though the craft might differ in many ways, X-COM engineers and designers have strict orders that all interceptors are to have the same basic cockpit controls. Some of these are installed on the dashboard, while others (primarily those used for targeting your weapons) are part of the Head-Up Display (HUD) projected on your front canopy.

> If you choose to fly the ship in Full Forward mode (without the physical cockpit visible), the major displays normally located on the cockpit dashboard itself are replicated as HUD overlays.

What follows are descriptions of the most important gauges, dials, and readouts found in an interceptor. To react without a moment's hesitation, you'll need to know how to read these reflexively. In some cases, the key commands associated with an instrument are provided, but you'll want to check the **Key Chart** for a more complete listing—and remember that if you customized the commands (see **Configuring the Game**), your keyboard and joystick controls could vary greatly from those listed.

BASIC CONTROLS

Your first forays into the cockpit can be rather bewildering, with so many things competing for your attention. Generally speaking, so long as you don't forget about the aliens zipping around, you're off to a good start. As for the rest, here's a rundown that should help you sort things out.

ACTIVE TARGET INDICATOR

With the way things shift around in the frenzy of combat, you'll need all the help you can get to single out your own objective. The *Active Target Indicator*, a set of brackets that rings your current target whenever it's in your field of view, makes it that much easier. Locate the bright brackets, and you've found your mark. (For details on selecting an active target, see **Taking Aim**.)

LEAD RETICLE AND TARGETING SIGHT

Ferreting out the enemy is only part of the problem, though; in order to have a clean shot at him, you also have to bring him into your direct line of fire. The *Lead Reticle* and *Targeting Sight* work in concert to help you do just that. The targeting sight remains fixed in place on your HUD and shows the point at which your beam weapons are aimed. There is a pointer located on the outside edge of the reticle—the *MMP Target Finder*. Any time your selected target is out of view, this rotates to point in the direction you need to fly in order to track it down.

Once your target crosses into your field of vision, the lead reticle comes into play. The lead reticle moves around the HUD in relation to your mark and, by taking into account your vector relative to that of the enemy (for you rookies, that's the result of comparing your speed and direction of movement to your target's speed and direction of movement, adjusted for range and acceleration), calculates precisely where you should aim your beam weapons in order to score a hit. Simply line the lead indicator up with the targeting sight and fire away. The lead reticle disappears from the HUD when your beam weapons are inactive or if you are not locked onto a specific target. (For more on targeting, see **Taking Aim** in the **Combat** section.)

ACTIVE BEAM INDICATOR

Because different beam weapons come in handy for different things, you might want to load more than one model onto your interceptor at any given time (see **Equip Ships**). To help you keep straight which is presently set to fire, check the *Active Beam Indicator*. You can cycle through the other possibilities with the W key. Fire your beam weapons by using Enter or Joystick Button 1.

WEAPONS LINKED/UNLINKED

When you first enter the cockpit, your beam weapons are set to fire individually. That is, if you have one Laser Cannon mounted on each wing, one side fires first, then the other fires. You can reconfigure them on the fly so that two beams of the same type are linked together and fire in tandem, thus increasing the power of any one blast from your guns. To link your beams in this way, press X. The *Link Indicator* changes to reflect your current configuration. If your ship is equipped with more than one type of beam weapon, you can switch to **Full Guns** mode by pressing X a second time. In full guns mode, all your beam weapons fire simultaneously. This is great for delivering a truly powerful punch, but it drains a lot of weapons energy—use this mode sparingly. To unlink the beams, press X a third time.

> Note that missile weapons *always* fire singly; you cannot link them.

BEAM POWER INDICATOR

Beam weapons draw their power from the weapons capacitor, a rechargeable battery of sorts that stores the energy needed to fire off your salvos. If the battery runs dry, you're more or less out of luck until it can again build up a sufficient charge. The length of the dotted *Beam Power* line (informally referred to as the "Charge") indicates just how much you have left in your power reserves; the longer the line, the more firepower you've got left. The line recedes into red as your energy stores are consumed.

ACTIVE MISSILE INDICATOR

Just as you can load different beam weapons onto the same interceptor, you can also outfit your ship with a variety of missile launchers (see **Equip Ships**). The *Active Missile Indicator* shows which of these is currently on line and ready to fire, and it also notes the number of missiles you have remaining in the autoloader for that launcher. Press [M] to cycle through your launcher choices and use [X] or Joystick Button 2 to send a missile on its way. Missiles always fire singly; you cannot link your missiles to fire in tandem.

MISSILE TARGETING

The *Missile Targeting* sight represents the lock-on zone for the current active missile. While the exact function depends on the specific missile targeting system you have on board, what you need to do is line up the active target within the confines of the sight, keep it there until the sight indicates a positive lock—there's always an audio and visual cue—and then turn loose the missile. If everything seems to be squared away, but you still can't get a missile lock, you're probably out of range. Try drawing closer to the target; beyond a certain range, the targeting system is unable to achieve a lock. For more details, read about targeting in the **Combat** section.

ENEMY MISSILE LOCK INDICATOR

This light is activated in response to a direct enemy threat; it begins to flash whenever an enemy ship tries to establish a missile lock on your craft and glows steadily once the lock is achieved. The light continues to burn until the missile detonates, is destroyed, or loses its bead on you.

FORWARD AND REAR SENSORS

Your enemies are far from willing victims, and they'll try anything to rebuff your attentions—so you're going to need some help sniffing them out. That's where the *Forward Sensors* and *Rear Sensors* come in. These devices track the units detected in your vicinity—even those not in your line of sight—and let you know where everyone is at all times. Friendly vessels are green, while alien ships and installations appear in red. Your current target is bracketed for quick identification. Other detected objects are indicated by different colors, including yellow for missiles and blue for neutral or civilian targets.

There is a catch, of course. If your sensors can't detect a ship, it doesn't appear on screen—so an alien craft with an engaged cloaking mechanism is visible only if your system happens to capture a stray signal from it. (X-COM ships, on the other hand, have hyperwave transponders allowing all other X-COM craft to locate them, even when cloaked.) As for pilots suffering from the effects of mind control, they temporarily turn the color of their master—for example, an X-COM pilot under mind control shows up as red until the symptoms abate.

POWER LEVEL INDICATORS

The set of dials across the top center of your dashboard monitors four things (from left to right): the recharge level of your beam weapons, the recharge level of your shields, the power consumption of the special systems installed on your craft, and the power level of the engines. Use these gauges to calculate and monitor your precise power needs (see **Power Management**).

THRUST INDICATOR

The *Thrust Indicator* shows the setting of your throttle. When the needle is centered, you're at zero throttle, meaning that the engines are idling. The needle moves to the right of center to reflect forward throttle, while the amount of reverse thrust is registered to the left of center. You can also consult the digital readout of your current velocity—the numerical display is yellow for forward motion, red for reverse.

SHIELD AND ARMOR STRENGTH INDICATOR

Since your ship is the only thing standing between you and oblivion, you'd best keep an eye on how it's holding up. This gauge keeps tabs on the state of your armor and shields, and it also registers the structural integrity of a fighter's hull. Its outermost circle represents your shields, the middle one your armor, and the inner ring the ship's hull. As the condition of each system worsens or improves, the circle's color changes to reflect this. In general, red indicates heavy damage, and when a ring goes black the system has either gone off-line or been destroyed. Other colors show the various gradations of damage.

Because both shields and armor are installed in two sections—fore and aft—the strength indicator is also divided in two, representing the level of damage to each individual section. In the case of shields, this can help you evaluate where and when to shift the balance of power, since you can differentially allocate energy to forward and aft shields (see **Power Management** for more information).

MESSAGE DISPLAY

Incoming communications are captured and shown on the *Message Display* at top center. It carries taunts from your adversaries and requests or encouragement from your wingmen. In addition, updates on your ship's systems arrive from the on-board computer via this display. When you balance your shields, for instance, the new level of power flashes briefly across the display. To recall the text of the most recent communication, press L.

In multiplayer games, the *Message Display* also shows messages and taunts received from other players. (See **Using the Radio** for the full details.)

OTHER DISPLAYS AND CONTROLS

In addition to the standard cockpit dials, additional indicators might be rigged up when certain special equipment is installed on your craft. For instance, hooking up Vector Control Thrusters (see **Maneuvering Your Craft**) adds a set of directional arrows to your display panel; these arrows light up to indicate the direction of motion imparted by the thrusters. Installation of an ECM Jammer—activated and deactivated by pressing E—also calls up its own unique indicator (when the system is functioning).

THE MULTIFUNCTION DISPLAY (MFD)

Embedded in the center of your dashboard is a computer known as the *Multifunction Display*, or *MFD*. As its name suggests, this extension of your on-board computer houses a number of different utilities—from advanced communications software to programs updating flight, target, and systems data. A few of the more vital modes self-activate in response to events in the field of battle. You can't miss them—which is a good thing given the critical nature of their data. To access each of the other modes on the *MFD*, use the > key ("greater than") to cycle forward through the options or < ("less than") to cycle backward.

Some of the programs on the *MFD*, like the **Alien ID** mode, are off-line during multiplayer contests and in other specific situations. At these times, the *MFD* skips over **Alien ID** directly to the next mode as you cycle through.

TARGET INFORMATION DISPLAY

The primary *MFD* mode, and the one to which it defaults, is the **Target Information** display—a video image of your current target, be it a fighter, freighter, or any other valid mark. This mode not only identifies the object, but also displays the condition of its shields, armor, and hull, so you can see just how much (or how little) damage you've done to the object up to now. To return to **Target Information** from any other *MFD* mode, press Esc.

TARGET TRACKING MODE

This display shows the sweep of your forward sensors across the field of combat and helps you reel in your target—the large blip—for the kill. The closer the blip is to the bottom of the screen, the closer your mark is to your ship. **Target Tracking** can be just the thing you need when trying to funnel the enemy into your line of fire.

ALIEN ID MODE

Since different alien species tend to adopt different techniques in battle, it's useful to know what you're up against before you actually go for the jugular. Otherwise, you might be the one at the wrong end of the food chain. As you draw within range of your target, your ship's sensors attempt to identify the species of the alien at the helm. Following a successful scan, **Alien ID** mode kicks in, briefly flashing an image of the pilot before the display returns to its prior mode. Until a successful scan is made, this display mode remains off-line.

DAMAGE REPORT

The **Damage Report** mode gives you a detailed rundown of every system on your craft and its level of repair, so you know just how bad a predicament you're in. Damage is generally presented as a percentage, except for those pieces of equipment (beam weapons, missiles, and special systems) that have their own dedicated display on the *MFD*. For these, the report states only whether the equipment is OK, damaged, or destroyed.

BEAM WEAPON INFORMATION

This utility monitors the status of your various beam weapons, listing the amount of damage to each. The currently active weapon(s) appear in yellow, since they're of primary importance. The screen also indicates the level at which the beams are currently recharging (as a percentage). Refer to **Power Management** for more detail.

MISSILE WEAPON INFORMATION

The **Missile Weapon Information** display functions like its correlate for beams, tracking the damage to each missile launcher installed on your interceptor. The currently selected launcher(s) are highlighted in yellow, so that you can see at a glance how they're holding up. This mode also keeps track of the number of missiles remaining in the auto-loader for each.

SPECIAL SYSTEMS INFORMATION

Just as for beam weapons and missiles, the condition of your special systems is also monitored on the *MFD*, and so is the amount of power allocated for their operation.

MISSION REPORT

The **Mission Report** lists particulars like your name (in case you forget), rank, and call sign, as well as the number of missions and kills to your credit. Perhaps more importantly, it indicates how your own health is holding up and how long you've been on the mission. The length of a mission can be critical—especially where freighters are concerned, since they usually attempt to flee into hyperspace to save their cargo.

MISSILE VIEW

When you fire a missile, the *MFD* switches to a mini-camera in the nose of the missile as it flies toward its target. If you decide that you don't want to watch the destruction of the target from this bird's-eye view, you can switch to another *MFD* mode in the usual way or by pressing (Esc). **Missile View** is an automated function; once you deactivate the mini-camera, you can't return to it. Of course, you get another camera when you fire another missile.

RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

Unlike the other utilities on the *MFD*, your radio is not accessible via the usual keys. Instead, you must press (I) to jeer at your enemies or (I) to communicate with one of your allies. A menu appears listing those to whom you can direct your missive, followed by a rundown of the various things you can say. Test the system out on your own, or else consult **Using the Radio** for directions on how to proceed.

> In multiplayer games, the radio functions somewhat differently than in the other modes of play. Since there are no wingmen per se, you can't order people around in the same fashion, although you can still taunt your enemy just as during Single Play. There is an additional communications tool; by pressing (Shift)+(I), you open a Chat box in which you can type messages to other players (see **Using the Radio**).

Equipment and Weapons

The best introduction to the individual weapons you've got on tap is to take an interceptor out for a spin, but in the meantime, here are some of the basics to get you started.

ARMOR, SHIELDS, AND CLOAKING

It's a veritable rat's nest out there in the Frontier. The aliens are lying in wait, eager for any opportunity to ambush you. They're armed to the hilt with lasers and missiles and who knows what else—but whatever it is, it's sure to be unpleasant. To top it off, you're winging around with only a thin hull separating you from hard vacuum. It stands to reason that you want to take any possible measures to make that skin thicker and more resilient. Hence the need for armor and shields.

Armor is essentially a structural reinforcement grafted directly onto the interceptor's hull. It's installed in two plates, one fore and one aft. While these plates reduce a craft's speed and maneuverability slightly, they considerably increase the damage it can sustain. Armor is not invincible—it suffers some battle damage with every hit that makes it through the shields, and it can eventually be destroyed—but as long as the ship itself can be patched up, the armor, too, can be repaired. Simply return to the hangar and let the maintenance crews work their magic. (Unlike most ships systems, armor doesn't repair itself in combat.) To get rid of the armor plating from your interceptor or to upgrade it to something stronger, use the **Equip Ships** screen as you would for any other piece of equipment (see **Equip Ships**).

Unlike armor, shields are not physical panels, nor are they mounted directly on the framework of the craft. Rather, a shield generator in a protected area of the ship projects an energy field (the shields) around the hull, forming an invisible yet potent buffer. Shields deflect or absorb the damage from most weapons and explosions, preventing that damage from affecting the armor, hull, or interior systems of your interceptor. The strength and abilities of a shield's protective field vary depending on the type of generator installed. When you're ready to improve your shield defenses, remove the old shield generator and replace it with a newer model.

As with armor, shields have two distinct sections, but because shields are a projected field of energy, you control the way power is distributed between these two regions. Press S to increase the defensive capability of one section or another, depending on damage levels and your specific needs in combat. (Your choices are full forward shields, full aft shields, or equal power.) As long as you supply the shield generator with adequate power, damaged shields regenerate constantly (as long as the shield generator itself is not damaged or destroyed)—see **Power Management**.

> There is no provision for armor on bases, outposts, or OPPs, but their hulls are already far tougher than those on a fighter. On the other hand, shield generators can be installed as added protection at any X-COM base. Base shields work just like those on an interceptor, but they're proportionately stronger. Outposts and OPPs are also equipped with minimal shielding systems.

BEAMS AND MISSILES

Your weapons fall into two categories: beams and missiles. These are mounted separately, allowing for their joint operation on the same craft. As they are based on different technologies, each has strengths which complement those of the other.

Beam weapons, as their name would suggest, rely on concentrated energy rays (like lasers and particle beams) to damage a target. Their power is drawn from the weapons capacitor, an energy bank that replenishes as necessary from the main power plant on board your vessel. Beam weapons have the advantage of a rapid rate of fire and, generally speaking, a relatively low energy cost. (The most powerful beam weapons, however, tend to draw far greater energy than their weaker counterparts.) Beams are especially effective against alien ships and other small targets. Except for the most powerful varieties, they are relatively inefficient against large, armored installations.

Press W to cycle through the different on-board beam weapons, and use Enter or Joystick Button 1 to discharge them. The beams are initially set to alternate their fire, but by pressing X, you can link beam weapons to fire together. In this way, you can link twin beams or have all the beam weapons on the ship fire simultaneously. (The same command key unlinks the beams.)

Missiles are not energy rays; they're guided, self-propelled projectiles with the potential, shall we say, for explosive results. Used against smaller targets, some of the more powerful missiles can be overkill. Their warheads are bigger and more destructive than beam rays, but like most heavy artillery, they sacrifice speed for the sake of pure muscle. Nevertheless, the smaller, faster missiles can be essential to winning a dogfight against the more powerful alien fighters. Because missiles take longer to get going, you'll need an extra cushion of time that you don't normally have in close combat, and as a result they are primarily distance weapons.

X-COM missiles are "smart," meaning that they're equipped with IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) capabilities to minimize the chance of shooting down one of your own guys by accident. Missiles rely heavily on the ship's targeting array until their own independent system takes over in flight. That means you have to wait for your targeting system to lock onto the active target before you fire to ensure a hit. Once launched, a missile continues on course until it detonates, is destroyed, or runs out of fuel.

Although your arsenal of beams is capable of recharging itself when the energy supply fails, your stores of missiles are finite. You can carry only as many as will fit in the missile racks installed on board, so use these babies sparingly—once they're gone, they're gone (and they tend to be pretty expensive). To cycle through the missile launchers on board, press M. Use the Spacebar or Joystick Button 2 to send one on its way.
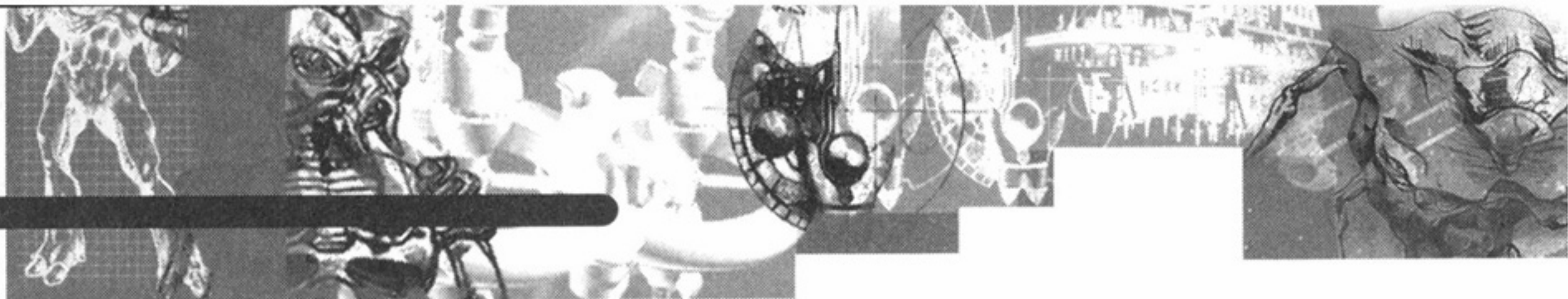
SPECIAL SYSTEMS

In addition to mounts for missiles and beam weapons, your ship has hardpoints for a number of special systems—advanced equipment that serves in any number of roles. Special systems are the result of hard work and plenty of research, but they're usually worth the effort. (In Combat Simulator missions and multiplayer contests, you don't have to carry out the research, so they're an even bigger bargain.) There's not room here to cover every possible special system; your best bet is to read about them in the UFOpedia, study the **Key Chart** for the specific controls, and then experiment until you get the hang of it.

PROBES

Both X-COM and the aliens make extensive use of probes. While not weapons per se, probes are nevertheless valuable tools of war. These unmanned exploratory craft are roving computer labs designed to explore distant regions of the Frontier. Launched from your bases, they serve both to gather intelligence on regional alien activity and to act as an early warning system to detect alien craft. Most probes remain at the specific destination to which they are launched, although technology might someday provide models that are self-propelled and can roam around within a limited area.

Probes are cheap, quick to manufacture, relatively low-maintenance, and entirely expendable. They're not known for their durability or longevity, but they can still reach the farthest corners of a region—when the financial cost and the drain on personnel incurred by a manned mission would be prohibitive. In an effort to make probes as efficient as possible, technicians construct them of the very same materials and systems as those used to fashion your interceptors. In addition, scientists designed them around a modular concept, thereby allowing for easy modifications as technology advances. Technicians install the very best equipment available at the time of manufacture, and the actual cost, range, and design of a probe vary with the systems used.

In addition to exploration and detection, early intelligence suggests that the aliens can and will use probes for a variety of other purposes, including the disruption of X-COM research downloads. Any alien probe you detect, regardless of its function, is a potential threat and should be dealt with as soon as possible.

Although X-COM engineers do not believe that equipping our own probes with weapons is cost-efficient, we can never be sure that the aliens accept the same theory. Therefore, be prepared for the worst when approaching an enemy probe.

Combat

So you've got a handle on the cockpit display, and you've familiarized yourself with the basic types of equipment and weapons that you're likely to encounter. Now for all the other fundamentals you need to know: how to operate your ship, how to allocate your power reserves, even something as basic as how to look around the cockpit. Read on for the details.
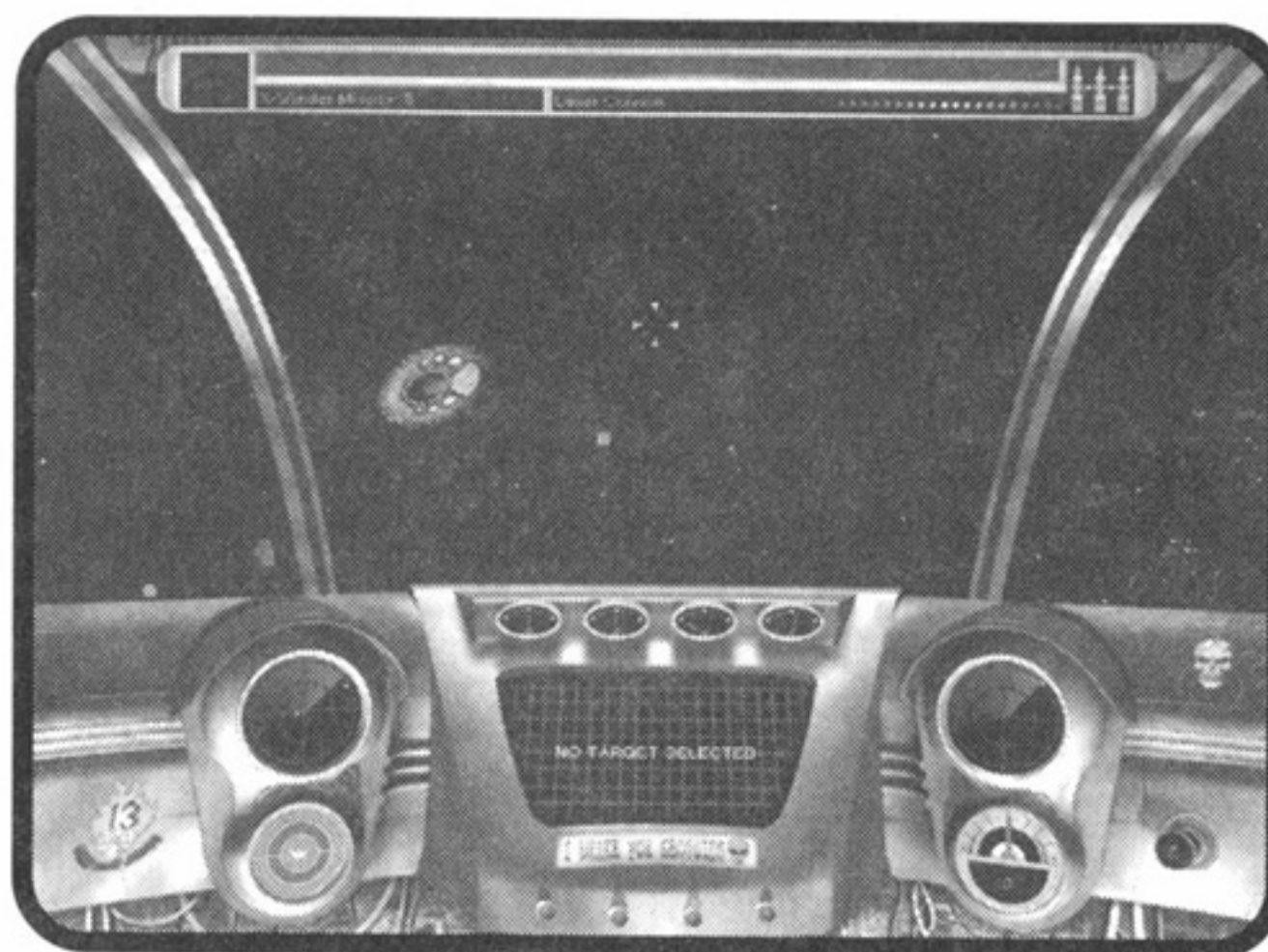

Remember that in the Combat Simulator or on a Single Play campaign—but unfortunately not in multiplayer games—you can pause the game and take a breather by pressing [P].

MANEUVERING YOUR CRAFT

Personal preference dictates whether you want to control the ship with your joystick or the keyboard, but either way, flying an interceptor goes pretty much as you'd expect—except, of course, that you're in space, so things don't always work as you think they will. Practice will teach you what to expect and how to react. In the meantime, the basic commands for maneuvering your craft are:

Nose Up	⬇	Stick Back
Nose Down	⬆	Stick Forward
Bank Left	⬅	Stick Left
Bank Right	➡	Stick Right
Roll Left	NumPad 7	—
Roll Right	NumPad 9	—
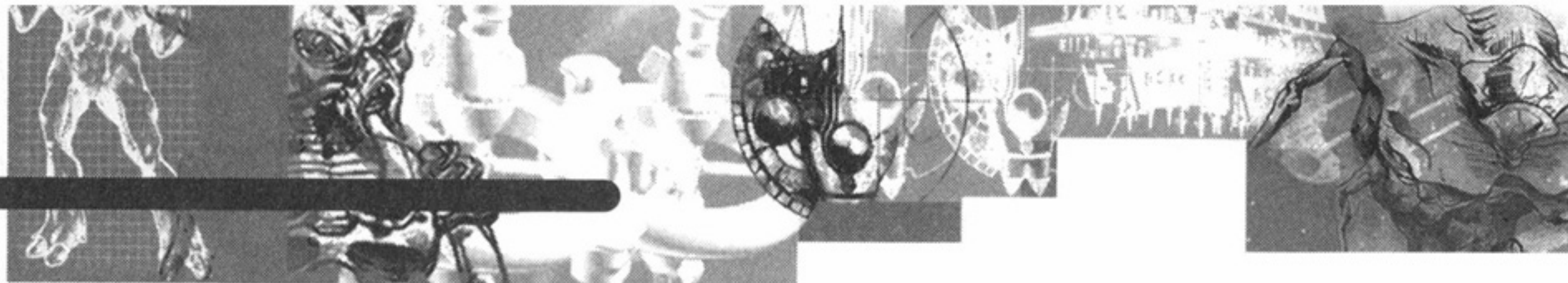
Note: To roll without using the keyboard commands, you must have rudder pedals, a joystick with rudder control, or some other means of ruddering.

For more complex maneuvers, try a combination of the different commands. Pressing the ← and ↑ together, for instance, causes your ship to dive down and to the left—just as if you had pushed the joystick to the upper left corner. You might even want to develop your own flight maneuvers or modify those used by other fighter aces through the ages. Out in the Frontier, it's survival of the fittest—adapt or die.

Sooner or later, you might have the chance to research and develop an advanced propulsion system known as Vector Control Thrusters. (In the Combat Simulator and Multiplay, of course, you don't have to wait around for the technology to become available—it's there from the get-go.) Moored to one of your special systems mounts, Vector Control Thrusters supplement your standard maneuvering controls and allow you to fly in directions not usually accommodated by traditional craft, like straight up or directly to the side. Craft equipped with the thrusters are remarkably nimble, capable of slipping in and out of the enemy line of fire as needed or sneaking up on a target out of the blue.

The keyboard commands for the Vector Control Thrusters are:

NumPad 8	Up
NumPad 2	Down
NumPad 4	Left
NumPad 6	Right

If your joystick is equipped with a "hat," the Vector Control Thrusters are controlled by the hat.

Ships furnished with the Vector Controls have a readout on the HUD that other ships don't—a set of four arrows that light up as you fire one thruster or another, showing the direction of travel imparted by the thruster. Consult these to help you sort out which end is up (so to speak) and don't be afraid to experiment.

POWER MANAGEMENT

Interceptors have an unlimited supply of fuel for their sub-light engines, thanks to an on-board power plant that supplies a steady flow of energy for all of the systems. Deeply integrated into the ships superstructure, this power plant is virtually impossible to destroy unless the craft itself is reduced to space dust.

Having your own generator means you never have to stop to gas up, but the problem is that your beam weapons, shields, and special systems all draw energy from the same pool that powers the engines. The more power you divert to one task, the less you have available for the others.

To coordinate your power consumption, keep an eye on the *Power Level Indicators*, which reflect the amount of power devoted to each of the ship's major systems. Beam weapons get their energy from the weapons capacitor, a battery that is refreshed based on the percentage of power allocated from the central power plant. Shields, too, recharge in direct relation to their allotment of power from the main source. The beam weapons and shields dials (the first and second meters from the left) indicate at what percentage of capacity each is recharging. At the lowest setting, no recharging is happening at all. At the highest, the recharge is proceeding at 100% of capacity. The higher these percentages are, the greater the draw on the overall power supply, but even when both are at peak, there is still some energy available for other things.

The special systems indicator (third dial) registers how much power is currently available from the central power plant for the operation of the special systems. This is, essentially, the amount of energy not currently allocated for the charging of beams and shields. As a general rule, special systems (such as the Cloaking Device and the Tractor Beam) require a vast amount of energy to operate. If the power available for special systems reads less than 50%, it's a good bet that there is insufficient energy to activate even one of these systems. When a special system is in operation, the available engine power is likely to drop—except in the case of Vector Control Thrusters, which draw on an independent, self-contained power source.

The fourth dial shows the amount of power available for propulsion. The engines, essentially, get any power that is left over after all other systems have drawn energy from the central power plant. When the engine power level dial is at its lowest setting, only minimal power is currently available to the engines—that means it's pretty slow going, especially if you have a particularly massive ship. At the highest setting, the engines are capable of their maximum possible output.

Thus, you can see how important it is to identify your energy needs and balance the power allotments accordingly. The commands to divide the available power between systems are:

F9	**Beam Recharge**	Adjust the recharge rate of your beams (cycle through five settings)
F10	**Shield Recharge**	Cycle through the five settings for the shields' recharge rate
;	**Transfer to Shields**	Shift 10% power from beams to shields
'	**Transfer to Beams**	Shuttle 10% power from shields to beams

Special systems generally consume a great deal of energy, and unlike for beams and shields, you cannot alter how much energy a special system spends. Activating the system allocates the necessary power automatically—drawn first from the engines, then from the beam weapons if more is required, and as a last resort from your shields. Before turning a system on, you could be forced to drastically reduce other settings or even shut them off altogether to garner enough power.

> Beware of reallocating power while a special system is in operation; the system will shut down if you draw too much energy away from it.

Your throttle setting controls the percentage of available engine thrust (based on current power levels) that is actually being put to use. The higher the percentage, the faster you go. If you find that the ship isn't moving fast enough for you, you might want to allocate less energy to beams, shields, and special systems. If that still doesn't cut it, your only option is to upgrade the engines—unless a brief shot from the afterburner will do the trick.

You can regulate your speed with the following commands:

+	**Plus 10%**	Increase throttle by 10%
−	**Minus 10%**	Reduce throttle by 10%
D	**Match Speed**	Adjust your speed to match that of your active target
Bksp	**Max Throttle**	Apply maximum thrust
\	**Zero Throttle**	Set your engines to idle
Z	**Reverse Throttle**	Keep the same throttle setting, but switch from forward to reverse thrust, or from reverse to forward

Every ship comes equipped with an afterburner—fire it for that extra burst of forward momentum in an emergency. Afterburner power is siphoned from the weapons capacitor, the power reserve that supplies your beam weapons. As long as you hold down the [Tab] key, it continues firing. When the capacitor runs dry, both your afterburner and your beam weapons are disabled until the system has time to recharge, so make sure to release [Tab] before the energy pool is fully depleted.

VIEWS

The view from the front of your cockpit might be the single most important perspective, but it's not necessarily the only one you'll need or want. Life is often easier when you can explore the periphery and prepare for what's ahead. Use the following controls to have a look around:

[F1]	**Cockpit Forward**	Return to the standard view inside the cockpit (including the instrument panel and HUD). This is the default view each time you step into an interceptor.
[F2]	**Full Forward**	The same view as Cockpit Forward, but without the cockpit. The HUD and both forward and rear sensors remain in your field of view, as do the most vital displays from your cockpit panel.
[F3]	**Face Left**	Look to your left. (Objects in mirror may be closer than they appear.)
[F4]	**Face Right**	Take a peek to your right. (Ditto.)
[F5]	**Left Shoulder**	Glance back over your left shoulder.
[F6]	**Right Shoulder**	Look back over your right shoulder.

In addition to views from the pilot's seat, you have the luxury of an external camera that follows your vessel wherever it goes. This can be handy for checking out your ship and its surroundings, but it might not be the wisest choice in close combat. You can choose between the **Auto Chase** mode, which fixes itself directly behind your craft, and the **Manual Chase** mode, in which you guide the camera's movements.

[F7]	**Auto Chase**	Have the external camera follow your craft at a set distance and perspective
[F8]	**Manual Chase**	Go to the camera view, but retain control of the vantage point (using the controls listed below)
[Ins]	**Orbit Left**	Circle left around the ship
[Del]	**Orbit Right**	Circle right around your vessel
[Pg Up]	**Orbit Up**	Circle up, over, and around the interceptor
[Pg Dn]	**Orbit Down**	Circle down, under, and around your craft
[Home]	**Zoom In**	Get a closer look at things
[End]	**Zoom Out**	Back away from the ship
NumPad [5]	**Reset**	Return the camera to its starting position (directly aft)

The final perspective, **Letterbox**, is really more a mode of play than a view—which is to say that in **Letterbox** mode, you can still use all of the other viewpoints, including the camera modes. The advantage of this mode is that, because it uses only part of the screen, **Letterbox** tends to increase the frame rate on slower machines. To toggle **Letterbox** mode on and off, press **Numpad** [+].

USING THE RADIO

Your radio is your lifeline in combat situations—the only way to call for help (and have someone actually hear the request, that is) and your sole means of orchestrating group tactics on the fly—so it behooves you to know how it works. You don't want to be fumbling for the buttons when the slightest delay could mean certain death.

SINGLE PLAY AND THE SIMULATOR

As you'll find out soon enough, anyone can talk to you over the radio—bases, outpost, OPPs, fighters, and freighters—even alien pilots can initiate communications. Their periodic chatter crosses the ether to be relayed by your *Message Display*, and in some cases by live audio or visual feed. The images are often scratchy, the translations from alien languages nonexistent, but what do you expect in the heat of battle?

You, too, can fire off missives. For starters, you can bark out orders to your wingmen. Choose from a list on the *MFD* or try one of the keyboard shortcuts. To send an order from the *MFD*:

1) Press ⦁ to initiate wingman communications.

2) A list of possible recipients appears on the *MFD*. Type in the number corresponding to your choice or ⦁ to send the message to everyone. (In Multiplay, every message is transmitted to all players.)

3) Now enter the number matching the particular command you want to fire off. The message goes out as soon as you make your selection, and your wingmen respond accordingly.

In the heat of battle, you might not have time to exercise such fine control over your outgoing communications. That's when you should resort to the shortcuts, which can cut precious seconds off the process. The trade-off is that you can't direct your orders to individual pilots; shortcut commands go to all friendly fighters in range. The keystrokes are:

Shift + A	**Attack My Target**	Concentrate fire on my active target.
Shift + C	**Cover Me**	Provide me with defensive cover (i.e., Help!).
Shift + E	**Evasive Maneuvers**	Take action to avoid the immediate threat. Continue until the danger has passed.
Shift + F	**Fire at Will**	Attack any enemy at any time.
Shift + I	**Ignore My Target**	Leave this one to me.
Shift + R	**Retreat**	Engage hyperdrive and get the heck out of here!
Shift + U	**Radio Silence**	Quit your yammering! (Your wingmen remain silent until you select the "End Radio Silence" command on the *MFD*.)
Shift + S	**Status Report**	Inform me of your current situation
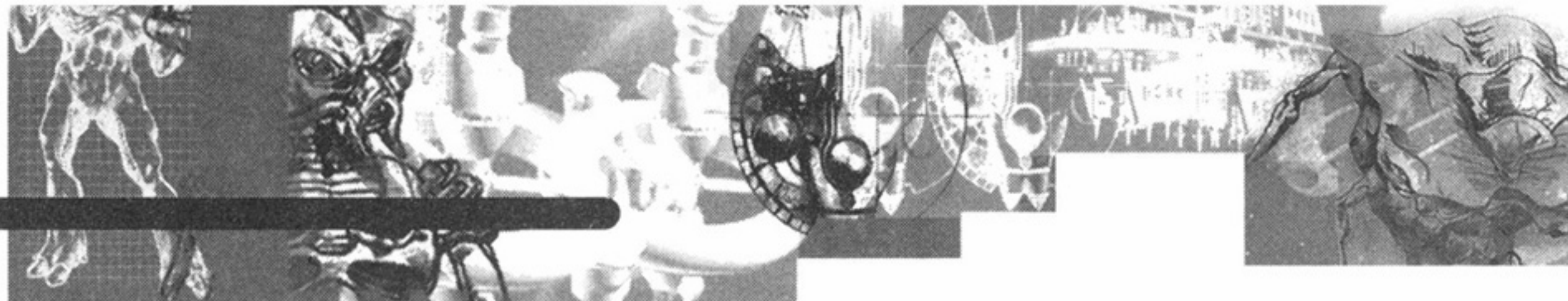
Besides orders, you also have an array of taunts that you can fire off at enemies. (Hey, they're constantly jeering at you, so why not give them a taste of the same?) The ultimate statement is, of course, shooting them down. Until that happens, you can hurl verbal barbs to distract the enemy and (maybe) throw off their game. At the *MFD*, press [followed by the number of the particular insult—it goes out to all enemies at once. You can also use [Shift]+[1] through [Shift]+[5] to send the same taunts with a single key combination.

> Taunting the aliens has no real effect on their performance. Sure feels good, though...

MULTIPLAY COMMUNICATIONS

In multiplayer games, you do not enjoy the military chain of command that obliges your fellow fliers to obey your every command. Thus, the menu of wingman orders and shortcut keys you use in Single Play are not available. However, you can still use the same keystrokes to issue taunts to the enemy (see above). In addition, you can send personalized messages to other players any time you wish. The process goes like this:

1) Press [Shift]+[to open the *Chat* box.

2) Type your message. (You must use the keyboard to enter the text, so all cockpit controls cease to function while the *Chat* box is open.) As soon as you tap [Enter], the signal gets sent on its way. Chat messages are sent to all other players simultaneously.

3) Close the *Chat* box (and re-enable the keyboard controls) by pressing [Shift]+[.

When a chat message arrives, you're notified via the *Message Display*. To read the full text, open the *Chat* box ([Shift]+[). While the box is open, [Shift]+[>] cycles forward through the messages in the box, and [Shift]+[<] moves you back up the queue. When you're done, you can close the *Chat* box again with [Shift]+[.

TAKING AIM

You can fire most of your weapons without designating an active target, but your chance of a kill is much improved when you make use of your interceptor's target tracking systems. Though your ship's computers give you every advantage as you try to draw a bead on the enemy, they can't work if they don't know what you're aiming at. To take full advantage of the technology on your interceptor, you've got to select an active target. Use the following keystrokes to choose from among the many possibilities:

T	**Cycle Forward**	Switch to next target. (Repeat to cycle forward through all possible targets.)
Y	**Cycle Back**	Switch to previous target. (Repeat to cycle backward through all possible targets.)
G	**Target Centered**	Designate the target nearest the center of your sights (on the HUD) as your active target.
R	**Nearest Enemy**	Make the enemy vessel closest to your ship the active target.
I	**Target/Ignore Modules**	Use this toggle once to eliminate individual base modules from the list of potential targets. Use it again to put them back on the list.

As you cycle through to find your mark, the *Target Information* display pops up on the *MFD*, showing each potential victim and noting its vital statistics. The active target is marked with brackets on both sensor displays and on the HUD whenever it's in your line of sight. When your current mark is destroyed, the targeting system automatically targets the closest remaining enemy.

BEAM WEAPONS AND TRACTOR BEAMS

Even though the different types of beam weapons all have their own unique characteristics, the targeting procedure is essentially the same for each. Once you choose a target, you're set to take aim and go for the kill. Position your ship so that the lead indicator is centered in the targeting reticle, then squeeze the trigger. Assuming that you're in range and can manage to keep the target in your sights, that should do the trick. Strafing the skies at random is also an option, although your chances of hitting something decrease dramatically (not to mention, it's a good way to deplete your energy rather quickly).

Although it isn't a weapon per se, the Tractor Beam is similar to the beam weapons, and you use much the same procedure with it. Line up your target as always, but when you're ready to fire, tap B to power up the Tractor Beam. (Bear in mind that your beam weapons could go off-line while the Tractor Beam is in operation.) Use Enter or Joystick Button 1 to train the beam on the target. If the Tractor Beam captures the target, the beam remains active; otherwise, it disengages and returns to Ready status. To disengage a successful beam manually, click the fire key again.

Based on testing of the prototype, we strongly advise that you first disable a target before attempting to capture or tow it with a Tractor Beam. Tractoring a "live" target can result in severe damage to your engines, especially if the target is more massive or has more powerful engines than you.

MISSILE WEAPONS

Missiles, like beams, all operate on the same general principles, regardless of model. Once you select a target, you must line it up inside the missile targeting reticle—the counterpart of the targeting reticle for beam weapons—and keep it there until the system confirms a lock. (Just how long that is depends on the targeting system you're using.) As soon as you have confirmation (there are both visual and audio cues), you can fire with confidence.

As with beam weapons, you can also fire a missile "blind" (with varying success). Missiles launched without a lock are inertial—they continue along a straight time-space path until they detonate (hit something), run out of fuel, or are destroyed. Blind firing shouldn't be your first choice—your chance of hitting anything plummets—but when your targeting system has been shot to bits, what do you have to lose?

The Doppelganger Missile and the Nova Bomb operate somewhat differently than other missiles with regards to targeting. Consult the UFOpedia for the details.

APPROACHING ENEMY INSTALLATIONS

It's one thing to shoot down a fighter or a freighter, but another thing altogether to take on alien bases, outposts, and mining platforms. Against other ships, you are more or less on a par. They might have better armament or superior maneuverability, but you're not likely to be hideously outmatched. The same cannot be said for the gargantuan alien installations sprinkled throughout the Frontier, which have advantages in size, firepower, and defensive capabilities—not to mention that they're usually surrounded by a fleet of fighter craft. It takes more than a couple of blasts from your beam weapons to defeat these fortified monstrosities. You need a strategy.

From what little we already know, it's clear that alien bases, outposts, and mining platformss have hull plating far superior to that on any ship (just as ours do). After all, the extra mass is not a problem, since immobile installations don't have to worry about maneuverability. However, some areas seem to be more vulnerable than others. Among them are the individual base pods (the designation for the alien analog to modules). You can target these in order to disable or cripple the base, rather than destroying it outright. This is a perfectly acceptable strategy when you just don't have the firepower to take out the whole thing.

As is true of their human equivalents, alien outposts and mining platforms aren't nearly as well defended as bases, and thus they are easier marks. When an outpost is destroyed, all the freighters docked there or inbound are slagged or stranded. Those already en route finish their deliveries, but for some unknown reason, the aliens then decommission them. Speculation is that the freighters are somehow linked to a miniature control brain in their home outpost, a setup similar to that of the AW-1 Cydonia base. Therefore, it might slow the aliens' economy if you focus some attacks on their outposts.

A final word to the wise: The aliens are quick to begin repairs on any damage you mete out, so it's best not to delay too long in finishing up your business at a particular structure. In a matter of weeks, those busy creatures can have an outpost back up and running, even in the wake of near-total devastation.
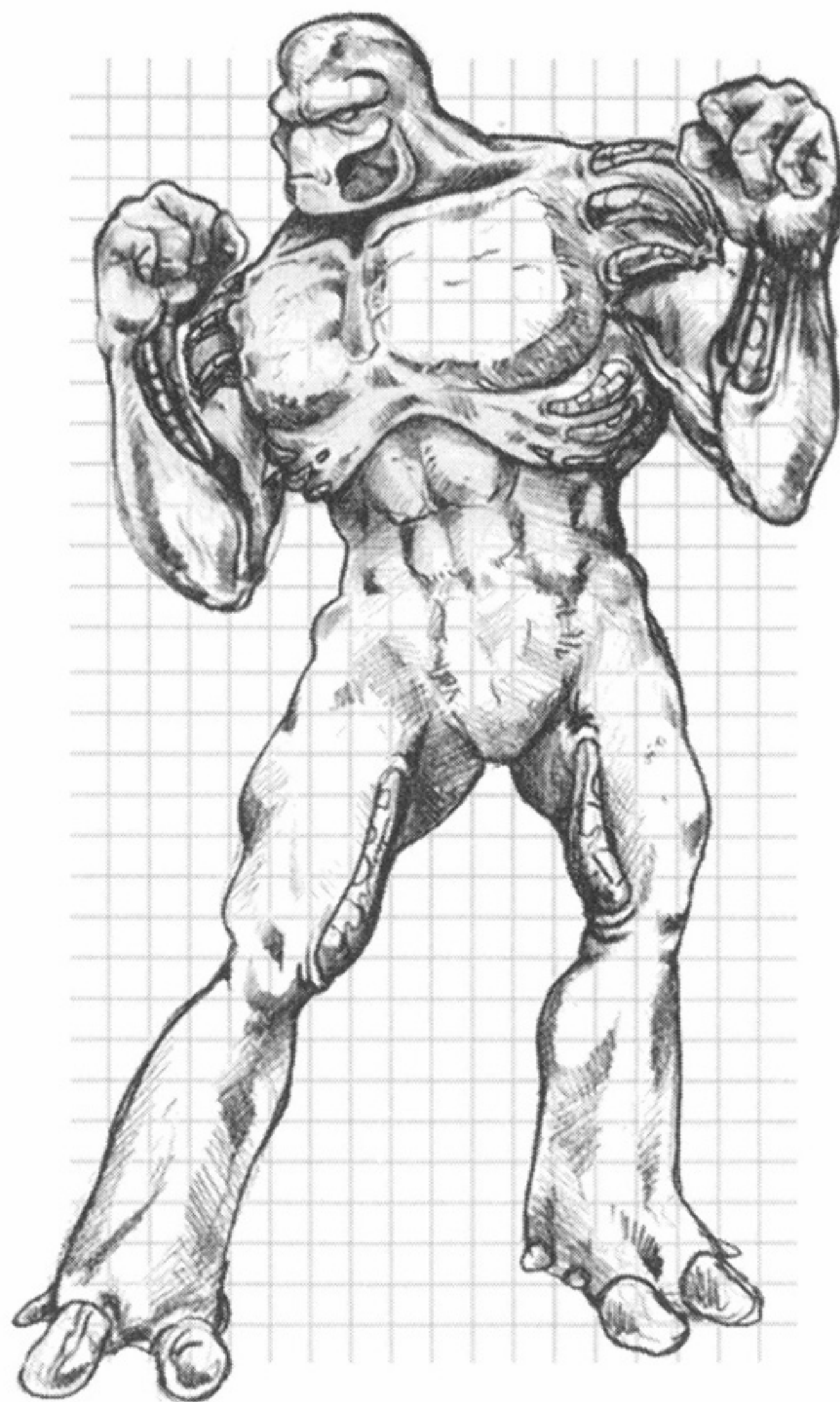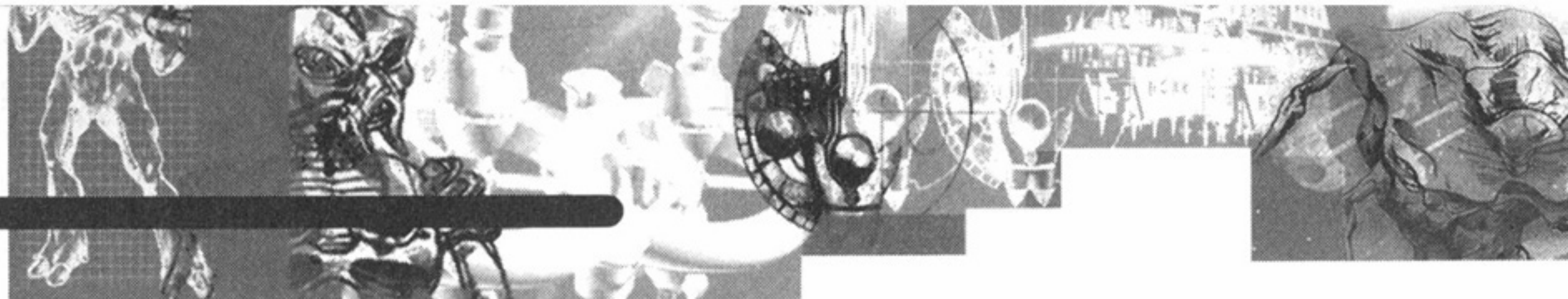
REARMING AND REPAIRS

X-COM ships and installations are self-repairing, given enough time. In fact, many systems on your interceptor will often begin patching themselves up in-flight. The longer you stay out, however, and the harsher the fighting, the more likely it is that you'll need to make a stop back at the hangar to repair and rearm your craft.

During a Single Play campaign, you've got no choice but to return home at this point. Once they're nestled inside the Hangar Module, your ships are returned to full operational status much more quickly than they would be if you left them to their on-board repair systems. The deck crews also reload all of the missile racks on the ships when they dock—if the requisite ammunition is available, that is. If there is insufficient ammunition in base stores to rearm a ship, or if no systems are in stock to replace those destroyed in combat, you are notified immediately so that you can order replacements.

> Bases, outposts, and OPPs also repair themselves, given time, but until the repairs are completed, the installation could be more vulnerable to attack than usual.

In Combat Simulator missions and certain multiplayer dogfights, the only way to repair and rearm your ship is to leave (quit) and reenter the mission. Some Multiplay contests allow you another option; you can seek out a remote base—a landing pad large enough to accommodate a single ship—where you can land, repair all systems, and load up your weapon racks once more. Touch down on the pad and set the throttle to zero, then sit tight until you are notified that the rearming process is complete. When you power up again, you're in tiptop shape, just as you were at the start of the mission.

QUITTING AND RETURNING HOME

The hard part of any Single Play or Combat Simulator mission is completing your objective. The easy part comes afterward, when it's time to head for home. As soon as you get the "Mission Accomplished" on your *Message Display*, tap [H] to activate the hyperdrive and return to base. You can also use the hyperdrive to get out of a sticky situation, but think twice before you do—your mission is likely to be regarded as a failure should you leave before the enemy is eliminated, and you're vulnerable to fire during the several seconds it takes the hyperdrive to engage. Immediately after entering hyperspace, you receive a report on the results of your excursion (see **Debriefing**).

> If you accidentally strike [H] and initiate the countdown to hyperdrive ignition, press it again within five seconds to abort the jump.

Entering hyperspace is a tricky maneuver. If your initial course calculations are off by the slightest fraction of a degree in any of 10 dimensions, you could end up flying through a nebula or shearing too close to a star—and that would end your trip real quick. Your interceptor's flight computer takes care of the course vector for the slingshot entry into hyperspace; automatic systems engage and point you toward a region of space that is empty of all stellar, planetary, and man-made obstructions before the jump is initiated. On rare occasions, there might be no clear path to the calculated jump point. In these instances, the jump is automatically aborted. Maneuver the ship into a clear region of space and try again.

Entering hyperspace is an option in multiplayer contests, as well. When an individual pilot punches out of battle, he or she is out of the game. (If the game is an Open game, they always have the option to rejoin if there's a free slot.) Play continues until the host engages hyperdrive.
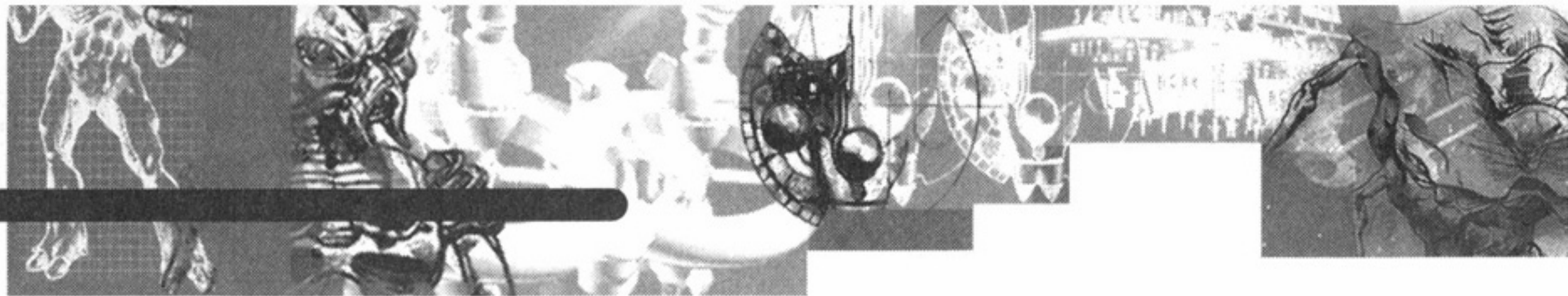
GETTING SHOT DOWN

The effects of getting shot down ("down," of course, being a relative notion in space) are more transitory in some situations than in others. If an interceptor is destroyed in a simulator mission, it's no big deal. The results go on the permanent record, there for all to see, but the pilot survives to fly another day. You get to sit in on the official debriefing before choosing whether to set out on the same mission or choose another one (see **Debriefing**).
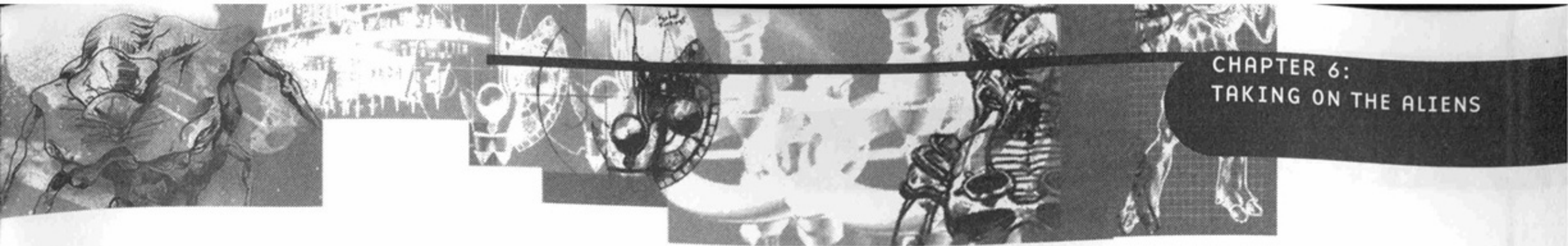
In Single Play when your interceptor gets shot to bits, all wingmen disengage from battle and beat a hasty retreat, while you receive a debriefing and return to your command post at the *CSD*. From there you can opt to send your forces back in for the kill or let the aliens get away—this time. Even if you lose all the fighters on a given sortie, your overall campaign continues—X-COM can survive the death of many a pilot before it ceases Frontier operations.

Being knocked out of commission in Multiplay doesn't mean you're out of the game for good. When you die, you rejoin the fray moments later in a refurbished craft of the same make and configuration as before. When you choose to leave the game or the host ends the match, you're deposited in the debriefing area for one last report on your performance.

DEBRIEFING

Following every mission, pilots are subjected to a full debriefing that recaps, among other things, the type of mission you just flew, its specified objectives, and your final score. Studying this can tell you not only how well you did, but also what you need to work on the next time around. When you're ready to leave the debriefing, click **Exit**. From a Combat Simulator mission, you return to the mission selection screen; from a Multiplay game, you go to the main *Multiplayer* screen; those in the midst of a Single Play campaign head back to the *CSD*.
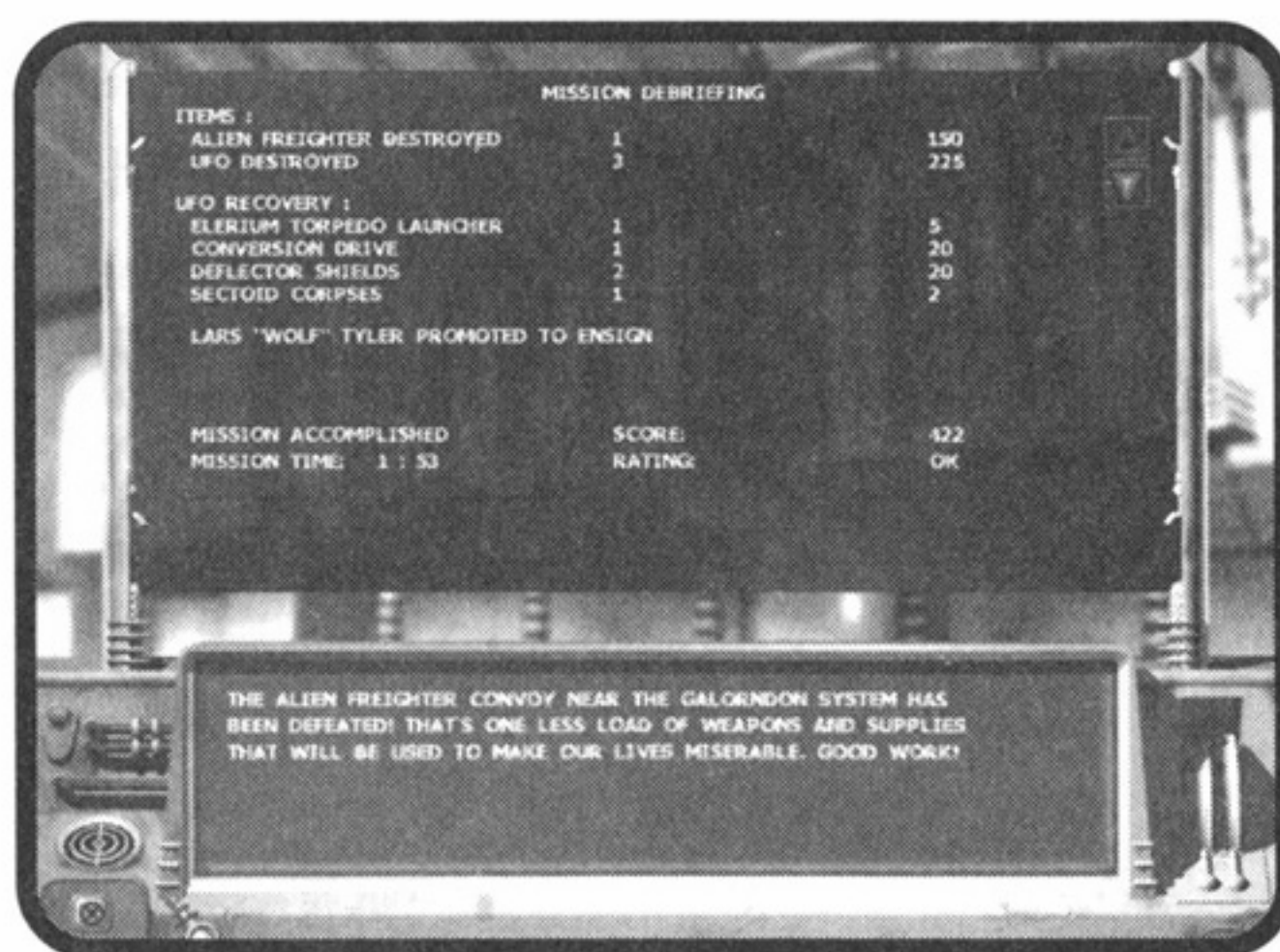
In the debriefing that accompanies a Combat Simulator mission, there is a convenient option available that could save you from having to re-create the mission parameters. The **Fly Again** button (which is strikingly similar to the **Engage** button on the Briefing screen) allows you to set out again immediately—same ship, same goals, same scenario as before—so that you can take another stab at it if your results were less than stellar the first time around.

SAVING A GAME

Let's say you're in the middle of a game and get called away for something more urgent. (As if. What could be more pressing than X-COM?) If the interruption is too long for you to simply pause the game, then you need to save your current situation so that you can pick it up again later. Simply put, if you're in the Combat Simulator or out in a multiplayer dogfight, you can't. Saving a game is an option only in Single Play, and even then only from the strategy screens. You can never save a mission mid-combat. You've either got to quit the mission (in abject failure) or complete your objective before punching into hyperspace.

In Single Play, any time you launch a mission, your game is automatically saved for you. Then, if for any reason you need to quit at an inconvenient moment, you can simply reload your game from the **Autosave** slot—the last slot in the list of saved games—and have another go at it.

You don't have to wait until you launch another mission to save a campaign, though, and you probably shouldn't if you've just picked up a rare tidbit from the field of battle or discovered an amazing new technology. To save from any Single Play strategy screen, open the *Game* menu from the *Menu Bar* and click **Save Game**. You'll see a list of the campaigns currently on record (up to 10). You can either save over an existing game—this writes over the previous file, effectively deleting the earlier campaign—or save in any empty space. Later, you can load any game on the list to resume the action right where you left off.

CUSTOMER SUPPORT

If you have any questions about *X-COM Interceptor* or any of our other products, please contact MicroProse Customer Support at:

✖ MicroProse
2490 Mariner Square Loop
Alameda, CA 94501
ATTN: Customer Support

✖ (510)864-4550
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You can read the latest news and information about MicroProse on our World Wide Web page at www.microprose.com. Download files from our FTP site at ftp.microprose.com. Send electronic mail to Customer Support at support@microprose.com.

CompuServe:

To reach our Customer Support board in the Game Publishers B Forum, type **go gambpub** at any "!" prompt. Then select "Section 2" for MicroProse. In addition to posting and reading messages, you can download files from the "Libraries (Files)" menu. Send electronic mail to Customer Support at 76004,2223.

How to Get Help:

If you are having problems with **X-COM Interceptor**, we can best help you if (1) you are at your computer when you call and (2) you have the following information handy:

✖ Version number of **X-COM Interceptor**

✖ Your computer's processor and its speed (such as a 166MHz Pentium)

✖ Your computer's brand and model

✖ Total RAM installed in your computer

✖ Version of DirectX drivers

✖ CD-ROM brand and model name

✖ Video card brand and model name

✖ Sound card brand and model name

✖ Mouse brand and version number of mouse driver

✖ Joystick brand and model name

✖ Any error message you see in the game

How to Return Defective Materials:

If your game manual or CD-ROM is damaged or defective, you can return that item to Customer Support for a replacement. Send only the item to be replaced, not the whole game package. You must also include a photocopy of your receipt showing the date of purchase, not the date when you "registered" your game with MicroProse. Your 90-day warranty period begins with the date of purchase as shown on your receipt. MicroProse is not responsible for items lost in the mail. We suggest that you insure, register or certify your mail.

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Additional Art	Mike Schmidt
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X-COM INTERCEPTOR KEY CHART

P	Pause/Continue

Flight Controls

↑ or Stick Forward	Dive (Nose Down)
↓ or Stick Back	Climb (Nose Up)
← or Stick Left	Bank Left
→ or Stick Right	Bank Right
Numpad 7	Roll Left
Numpad 9	Roll Right
+	Increase Throttle 10%
−	Decrease Throttle 10%
Z	Reverse Throttle Toggle
Backspace	Maximum Throttle
\	Zero Throttle
Tab	Afterburners (Hold)
D	Match Speed To Active Target
H	Hyperspace (End Mission)

Vector Control Thrusters

Numpad 4 or Hat Left	Slide Left
Numpad 6 or Hat Right	Slide Right
Numpad 8 or Hat Up	Slide Up
Numpad 2 or Hat Back	Slide Down

Targeting and Weapons

T or Stick Button 4	Next Target
Y or Stick Button 3	Previous Target
R	Target Closest Enemy
G	Target Object In Sights
I	Include/Exclude Base Modules
W	Cycle Beam Weapon
Enter or Stick Button 1	Fire Beam Weapon
X	Link/Unlink Beam Weapons
M	Cycle Missile Weapon
Spacebar or Stick Button 2	Fire Missile Weapon
>	Next MFD Mode
<	Previous MFD Mode
Esc	Default MFD Mode

Special Systems

E	ECM Jammer On/Off
B	Tractor Beam On/Off
C	Cloaking On/Off

Power Management

F9	Toggle Weapon Charge Rate
F10	Toggle Shield Charge Rate
S	Cycle Shield Balance
;	Transfer Power to Shields
'	Transfer Power to Weapons

Communications

]	Initiate Wingman Communications
[	Initiate Taunt
Shift 1 through 5	Quick Taunts
Shift A	Attack My Target
Shift F	Fire At Will
Shift I	Ignore My Target
Shift R	Retreat
Shift E	Evasive Maneuvers
L	Review Last Incoming Message
Shift C	Cover Me
Shift U	Radio Silence
Shift S	Status Report

Cockpit Views

F1	Cockpit Forward
F2	Full View Forward
F3	Cockpit Left
F4	Cockpit Right
F5	Cockpit Left Rear
F6	Cockpit Right Rear

Chase Camera Views

F7	Chase View (Auto-Tracking)
F8	Chase View (Manual Tracking)
Ins	Move Camera Left
Del	Move Camera Right
Page Up	Move Camera Up
Page Down	Move Camera Down
Home	Zoom In
End	Zoom Out
Numpad 5	Reset Camera Location