



Flight Training Manual

HYBRID

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*To those pilots who have
just passed the Galactic Space
and Interstellar Pilots' exams,
congratulations!*

*This is an exciting era in which to begin
your career. We wish you the greatest
success and hope this manual will be both
your friend, and your teacher.*

*Please do not let this new life worry you as to live on the
edge is to live to the fullest. We advise that risks should be
taken, but not indiscriminately sought. When opportunity
beckons, grasp it and then, without veering off direction,
move straight to your goal. Accept fate's whims: regret
and bitterness are unhelpful companions in the search for
greatness.*

*To be élite is to be sublime, to feel the intensity of terror
and the calmness of power simultaneously.*

"Fear is only in your head.

So forget your head and you'll be free."

- Citizen 5306, Bowie, D.



The Cobra Mk III

The Cobra Mk III trading and combat craft is the ideal ship for new traders. Despite being one of the older ships it is rated among the best medium range fighter-traders. Cobras depreciate little, holding very good part-exchange prices should sale be necessary.

As is customary, Faulcon deLacy & Rutter Spaceways do not award pilots with only a blank ship. The craft is equipped with one rapid-fire pulse laser mounted on the front hull panel and three homing missiles. Your craft is ready for collection from a Coriolis space station currently in orbit around the planet Lave. A specially arranged orbit shuttle has been prepared to take you there. A pilot's licence will be issued with the Cobra. Please remember to bring your exam certificate.

Even our best students are advised to practise flying the Cobra Mk III before any serious sorties. Cobras are fitted with the latest Motion Usher (Mous) flight control. This has not been introduced to FlightSims so you would be wise to take advantage of the free docking service offered by Lave. GalCop will not reprimand pilots for exploiting this facility.

EQUIPMENT

The Bridge and Console

The bridge has one multi-directional and fairly colourful seat for easy access to essential monitors. These monitors are illuminated with back lights for use on the dark side of planets. The console contains a scanner screen and a display of external readings, (eg, temperature and altitude.) Pilots should collect information while docked by choosing a monitor with Mous on the SelectaBar. In flight Mous is the recommended control mechanism allowing the twelve **F**(lying) keys on the astrogation board to select monitors.

Mous

Each button on Mous is differently named. The far left button is '**SELECT**'. **SELECT GALAXY** instructs *position Mous pointer over Galaxy on the SelectaBar, & press the far left Mous button*. The far right button is **ADD** and the middle button **MINUS**. **ADD** obtains cargo and extra equipment and increases flight speed. **MINUS** sells cargo and decreases speed.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

LAUNCH	TRADE	EQUIP	GALAXY	LOCAL	DATA	STATUS	HOLD	OPTS
--------	-------	-------	--------	-------	------	--------	------	------

Status Monitor

The **STATUS** monitor displays an up-to-date information report and lists equipment, **cash** balance and **fuel** levels. This monitor also shows the current combat **condition**. During flight, **green** suggests that there is no immediate danger, **yellow** indicates that enemy ships are in the vicinity and **red** signals a *high-risk on-going death-type combat situation*.

The **STATUS** monitor is immediately recalled by the touch of **F8** or by selecting **STATUS** when docked.

Present System refers to any planetary system occupied by the ship. The **Hyperspace System** is the target planet onto which the Cobra's drives are locked. Hyperspace selection is via **GALAXY** or **LOCAL** on the SelectaBar.

Galaxy Monitor

The galactic chart monitor contains all registered worlds within the galaxy. **SELECT GALAXY** or press **F5** to see the star field with a standard HoloMap galactic translator. The Cobra monitor's resolution limit renders it impossible to see asteroid fields and black holes. Most large asteroid fields are surrounded by beacons.

The **GALAXY** monitor pinpoints the star system presently occupied with a small green cross. The circle surrounding this cross represents the

Cobra's hyperspace range on the current fuel level. The system selector (the small orange circle) is moved with Mous. To evaluate a system **SELECT** the planet.



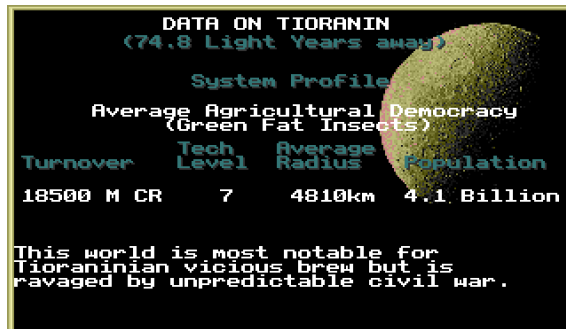
To search for a particular planet press **F** on the astrogation board while docked. (This initiates the planet search process.) In response to the question mark, pilots should enter the planet for which they desire information. When the green cross is locked onto a planet, **SELECT DATA**, to access the data on the world.

Local Monitor

The local navigational chart is the high power map of all planets in the immediate vicinity of the present system. To view this monitor, press **F6** or **SELECT LOCAL** when docked. In a similar way to using the galactic chart monitor, select data for statistics on the danger or attraction of trading with different worlds.

Data Monitor

The **DATA** on system monitor describes the trading portfolio of any planet chosen. The Orbit Space Authority accepts no responsibility for inaccuracy, but allows pilots to trade with the benefit of a little background knowledge. The categories discussed are distance, main life form and degree of agricultural & industrial development. Technological levels are displayed on a scale of one to twelve. The government type, which may range from Anarchy to Corporate State, will be a strong indication of the danger of trade. This monitor may be seen at all times with **F7** or **SELECT DATA** when in a space station.



FITTINGS

The Hold

The cargo hold occupies the bulk of the mid-space area. It has an unmodified capacity for twenty, one-tonne canisters, which is large enough to accumulate a capital base reasonably quickly. The physical packing of the cargo hold is performed by Groigans at the space station. Many love-sick Groigans became packers in an attempt to forget disappointments and terminate thinking about what might have been.

Most traders quickly become disgruntled with the size of the bay and obtain a **large cargo bay**. This increases capacity to thirty-five tonnes (a 75% improvement), but does not affect handling. The High-Yimben Mordahi Chamber is recommended.

The Drive Sector

The drive sector houses the directional thrusts, the System Space Kruger lightfast motors and Thru-Space drives. There are housings for front, right, rear and left lasers, the ECM system, and yaw boosters. This area contains the MagnetoBurst cabinet, which protects the Zieman shield generators and Witch-Space fuel condensers (Quirium). Radiation emissions from Quirium are perilously high, therefore repairs should not be attempted by pilots with vertigo.

The Living Sector

The living and hygiene section is found below the main bridge. The seat descends into this area through a gravity well. Food dispensing and waste disposal facilities, a SynPleasure Relaxapad, video and a HoloDirect communications system for non-flight messages are fully functional. For traders with friends and family planet-side, the bridge is equipped with ThruSpace phones. It remains an offence to broadcast non-emergency messages during flight.

Fuel, Scooping and Snooping

Fuel is available at all equipment-centres. The tank is filled at space stations to the full seven light-year capacity. Hence to become more self-sufficient **fuel scoops** are essential. These are fitted to the Cobra's fore-belly at any planet with a Tech level of 5 or higher. Flying close to the sun at a high velocity enables ships to collect free fuel. Skimming the sun, sun scooping or snooping is the cheapest way of refuelling, but overheating can be disastrous.

Fuel scoops harness powerful force fields in order to drive solar winds into the funnel. These energy fields can also pick up cargo canisters and space debris. To pick up cargo fly up to an object holding it in the bottom quarter of the front monitor. AutoShuttles immediately secure all scooped cargo and will jettison one canister at a time on pressing **Delete**.

MILITARY ADVANCEMENT

The Equip Monitor

The **EQUIP** monitor (**F4**), is easily used to spend well earned credits. A planet's Tech level will reflect the level of hardware which is available. To purchase, **SELECT** an item, this will be redly highlighted and a description shown above the SelectaBar. To confirm the sale apply **ADD** to complete payment. All equipment is fully compatible with the Cobra Mk III and is fitted by skilled Groigans. Any armaments that are upgraded will be refunded to a substantial proportion of their original selling price.



Leaving a Galaxy

To leave a galaxy a **galactic hyperdrive** must be acquired. Their specialised storage chambers are powered by PhotoSpec Nuclear fuels and can only be obtained from planets at Tech level 10+. These are expensive and are no cheaper at planets on the peripheries of galaxies. Each hyperdrives may be employed once and transports pilots to a system in a different

galaxy within GalCo-Op's control. This can be checked with **GALAXY** or **F5**. A jump from the final galaxy returns pilots to Santaari (the galaxy containing Lave). All safety harnesses should be fastened before pilots engage the drive by simultaneously hitting **Ctrl** and **H**.

Projectiles

Lance & Ferman missiles may be bought in any docked system, but no more than four may be carried. The launch rack on the Cobra's belly is shown on the **EQUIP** monitor. **Missiles** are slower than laser bolts, but are effective weapons. After many overhauls the basic guidance system is exceptionally accurate and performs real-time extrapolation thereby reducing contact time. The Cobra's computer will fire missiles in an order which maintains the ship's balance. With two missiles racked on the left side, and one on the right, the computer launches the missile from the outer left side first.

Lance & Ferman are unchallenged in Homing-Body Technology. These experts are presently working on a missile AutoLoc system designed for the military. L&F have developed the first non-discretionary multi-warheaded homing missile - the Mongoose. This will be invaluable for sole Viper pilots attacking Thargoid destructor ships.

The Energy Bomb

The **energy bomb** is a lethal and expensive piece of weaponry. It may be used only once by pressing **Tab**. It destroys all ships, asteroids and missiles in its vicinity with improbable deep-doppler shock waves, leaving the initiator unharmed.

Lasers

The Cobra is fitted with one laser-fire trigger. **SELECT** on Mous commences the proceedings (**A** on the astrogation board.) As a laser overheats the repeat firing will begin to slow, eventually it will stop. When the laser is *rested* external kinetic-absorbers will begin to cool the barrel. The laser temperature bar should be observed in high-density firing sessions.

A laser may be housed in any one of the four monitors: front, right, rear, or left; each laser type has different sights. Commanders should acquire an upgrade to the more powerful beam as quickly as possible.

Beam lasers have never been a more cost effective purchase. After Lance & Ferman improved their Military laser specification to a 1000mm slice factor on Flux-Locked metal, Ingram were forced to modernize their Beam laser. L&F's controversial advertising campaign should be remembered:

"Do your mother a favour: buy a Lance & Ferman Military Laser."

Fire Magazine's definitive chart rates the L&F Military laser as being three to four times more powerful than Ingram's Beam laser.

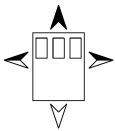
However, Ingram's Pulse laser is still the most popular laser in the Universe. Pulse lasers are offered for sale at Tech level 3+ planets. Beam lasers on sale only at Tech levels 4 upwards. The Ingram Pulse laser, although appropriate for rear and side-long firing is ten times **less** powerful than a Military laser. Despite company produced statistics, Fire state that all three lasers have very similar ranges and sighting capabilities.



Cobra Mk III Flight

FLIGHT CONTROLS

To leave the Space Station pilots must exercise the **F1** key or **SELECT LAUNCH**. The monitor will show the passage from the docking bay to the space station exit. To fly the Cobra trade ship competently requires practice. It is recommended that pilots use Mous, even though FlightSim candidates strummed the astrogation board. One Rantan Pino, a Gravel tanker later to become a pirate, is the only spacer known to have reverted to the keys of the astrogation board having mastered Mous. Flying controls are listed below. Astrogation board equivalents are shown in parenthesis.



Anticlockwise roll - move Mous to the left (<)

Clockwise roll - move Mous to the right (>)

Climb - pull Mous away from the monitor (X)

Dive - push Mous towards the monitor (S)

Damped mode - press CAPS LOCK to toggle

Acceleration - Mous **ADD** button (**Space**)

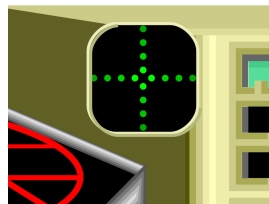
Deceleration - Mous **MINUS** button (?)

(If fitted) Yaw boosters - → or ←

Basic Flight Tutorial

Launch from the station and immediately slow the craft right down to drift velocity with the **MINUS** button (**?**). The dust particles clouding all views are harmless and do not void shields.

Pilots should now try to pull and push Mous (**x** and **s**). A small dot darts inside the compass to the top right of the scanner. While the **S** space station indicator is lit, this dot corresponds to the position of the space station (as opposed to the planet.) When the dot is red the station is behind the Cobra. Observe the space station in the rear view monitor with **2** on the numeric keypad or **F2**. When it is white and in the centre of the compass, the space station can be seen in the front view monitor. Press **8** on the numeric keypad or **F1** to look forward.

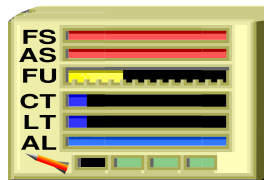


Relax and begin to master the flying controls by rotating the space station off the front view monitor using the compass to pull it back into view. With more confidence try to locate the station in the left view monitor (**4** on the numeric keypad or **F3**) and then the right view monitor. (**6** on the numeric keypad or **F4**.) The auto centering may be toggled with **CapsLock**.

When flying with Mous, while **GALAXY** or **LOCAL** are selected fire, climb, dive and roll are unusable. Take advantage of these monitors before a combat situation occurs.

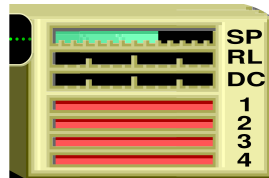
Important Console readings

In common with other non-terrestrial craft, the Cobra is not capable of landing on planets. Entering a planet's atmosphere and colliding with moons or space stations is fatal. The altimeter measures the ship's height above the planet's surface and should not be allowed to fall dangerously low. Cobras will burn before crashing into a sun. When solar winds are clearly visible the cabin temperature gauge on the console should be periodically checked. Its colour bar shifts from blue, through red, finally reaching white. Temperatures higher than this will dissolve the articulated panel seals, and melt the fairly colourful seat. The craft meanwhile will explode.



- FS** Fore shield
- AS** Aft shield
- FU** Fuel level
- CT** Cabin Temp.
- LT** Laser Temp.
- AL** Altimeter

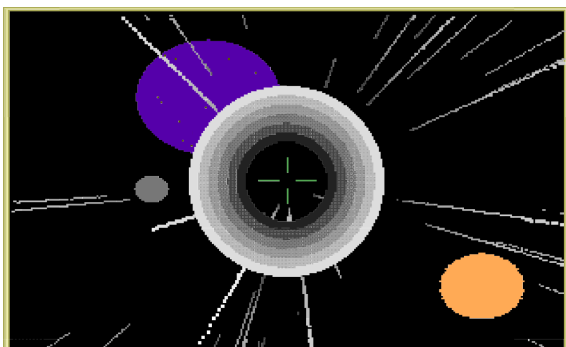
- SP** Speed
- RL** Roll
- DC** Dive/Climb
- 1 - 4** Energy Banks



JUMPS

Hyperspace Jumps

Choose a target world using the SelectaBar when docked or the keys **F5** and **F6** at other times. Use the **STATUS** monitor to confirm selection. Pressing the **H** key during flight will start the Hyperspace countdown. After this short delay pilots will see a blinding white ring, or ring of Apolo, and transportation to the target world will occur.



Interspace Jumps

Hyperspace jumps leap craft to some distance from a planet. Even the safest systems have unseen dangers, pilots are strongly advised to enter the space station zone quickly. To perform the interspace jump, **ADD (Space)** should be applied to increase forward velocity to maximum before **J** is pressed on the astrogation board. To prevent pilots being melted through on-coming objects a **mass locked** message will inform that another ship, planet or sun is too near.



Close Encounters

DEFENCE

The Cobra Mk III has an offensive rating (OffRat) of 4.72 and an uncommonly high defensive rating (DefRat) of 5.05. It combines speed with a very tight turning circle and so is ideal for fighting small packs of enemy vessels. This speed allows it to outrun most attack craft. To shake off more persistent ships a sudden decrease in speed followed by a tight 180° turn and prompt acceleration can open a substantial advantage over pursuants. Unsurprisingly this may be accompanied by a tinge of nausea.

Ominous Vibes in the Area

Receiving a mass locked message could be due to the presence of an enemy ship. This can be dangerous and the **STATUS** monitor should be checked. If the condition is red or even yellow, be prepared to engage in combat.

Innocent Death

Flashing streaks accompanied with a reduction in the fore or aft shields predicts incoming laser fire. Not all pirates are interested in the Cobra class. Often the noise of laser fire is that of other

ships enjoying combat. The craft being attacked may not deserve this treatment - there is a chance the pilot is innocent. Helping the endangered party by becoming involved in the mêlée is risky. However, a display of social consciousness is looked upon favourably by GalCop who constantly seek new recruits for testings, missions and wars.

Destroying Missiles

An Electronic Counter Measure System or **ECM**, is the only effective method of destroying incoming missiles. When a missile hits it can almost void a fully charged shield. Activation of ECM with the **■** key drains energy from the **banks** exploding all missiles in scanner range. Some enemy ships and most pirates will possess this facility and use it against missiles. To halt an incoming missile without ECM is difficult. A cunning ploy is to missile an expensive looking ship. It is likely that this will have ECM, and will wipe-out both the incoming and outgoing missiles.

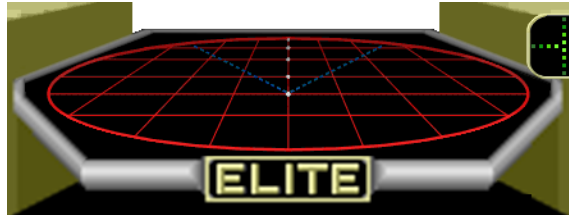
Shields and Energy Banks

Cobras are equipped with fore and aft shields and four central **energy banks**. An **energy unit** is available at Tech level 8+ planets. This doubles the energy bank recovery rate. Shields use classic Zieman-bound positron emissions to protect ships from aggressive fire. These are recharged from the energy banks. Successful laser bolts and missiles hold up the banks and an **energy low** message indicates that there is only one energy bank remaining. More accurate hits will destroy the ship.



Scanning

The scanner provides pilots with 360° perception of surrounding space. The centre of the scanner depicts the position of the Cobra. Objects are represented by clubs whose length corresponds to the height above or below the Cobra. **P** toggles the two magnification levels.



Bailing

Pilots must learn at which point the next hit will be fatal. Life is more precious than cargo and pride, wise commanders will bail. These **escape capsules**, or **Escapsules** can be fitted below the seat at any world, Tech level 8 or higher. When **Esc** is clawed during combat the seat is dropped into the capsule and sealed above. This will then be jettisoned from the ship and automatically zoom to a space station in orbit around the nearest world. Without, the Galactic Navy recommend panic as a pleasurable state in which to face death if not greet her.

Part of the expense incurred by this investment is due to the insurance policy cover which guarantees to replace the Cobra with similar equipment. All cargo is lost and another Escapsule is not provided. Pilot's critical data and cash is transferred into a crisis account. This is established under a new IR signature, thereby cleansing all criminal records.

ATTACK

The Philosophy of Killing

It is easy to become complacent about the Cobra's capabilities. There is little doubt that it is a fierce fighting craft, however alike all machines it is only as effective as its user. Even if fitted with four lasers, four AutoLoc missiles and an energy bomb, Cobras can be easy pickings for experienced bands of pirates. Do not attack unless this is necessary. Not all ships in deep space are pirates. Most pilots live by the *Boltzman equal pressure rule*: they will respond to hostile action with hostile action. Destroyers of fugitives, pirate ships, and Thargoid invaders will receive a bounty payment (particularly high in the case of the latter).

Firing Missiles

To target a **missile** press **T**. One of the rectangular missile status blocks on the console will blush from green to orange. The first object to enter the laser sight in any monitor will be locked onto, turning the block red. Pressing **M** will fire the missile, **U** will disarm it.

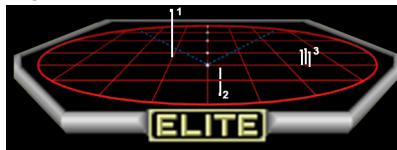


Combat Ratings

This is not a FlightSim - **combat ratings** stem from humble beginnings and a **harmless** label. Survival of the first skirmishes may result in reclassification, becoming **mostly harmless**. Mistakes in space combat are lethal. Ideally traders climb the status ladder to **poor**, then **average**, through **above average**, to **competent**, **dangerous** and **deadly**. Research reveals that a **deadly** rating tends to be an unfavourable omen. **Invincible** does not exist as a rating, nor as a state of mind. **Deadly** is as close to dead as it is to **Elite**.

The GalCop Federal Law Centre collate data from TS ComDirect photographs producing performance-linked ratings. **Combat ratings** are no longer solely based on killing ability. GalCop is reluctant to accredit higher ratings unless pilots have displayed attributes in areas other than killing. Particularly skilful but uncreative pilots have remained at **above average** despite having been more successful destroyers than many **dangerous** fighters.

Locating other craft



- 1 High above, in front and to the left.
- 2 Below, slightly behind and to right.
- 3 Just higher, level to the right.



Space Stations

All space stations are registered with the GalCo-Op at every world and are in orbit at various altitudes above each planet. The first was in orbit around Lave by 2752. The most common type, Coriolis stations, are hexagonal in shape. Vass, Forn and Berger's dodecahedral space stations, known as Dodos, are reliant on Photospec Nuclear fuels and so it is unlikely that they will ever be developed on lower Tech Level planets. Both superstructures rotate around a single axis which rises vertically from the mother planet below. The access tunnel is located on the side of the station facing the planet.

All stations have powerful defensive shields, a huge fleet of Viper fighters, and several larger ships. It is unwise to test lasers or missiles on any station. Combat practise does not exist in space and memories of PraCom should be forgotten. There are more final and painful punishments than detentions for dealing with those who shoot within station zones. The authorities do not ignore unruly behaviour, and destroy within thirty seconds.

THE PROTECTIVE ZONE

As soon as the Cobra's computer receives beacon signals from the nearest orbital Coriolis or Dodo, the familiar **S** will appear. The compass will track this space station in preference to the target planet. Once the Cobra is within the protective range of the station, a grey club will appear on the scanner. This represents the space station and should be used to locate the entrance (or LetterBox). Ships flummoxed by the complex rotation matching are said to be boxing. If the **S** disappears then the Cobra has moved out of the protective range. Be careful, space station's defences are no longer guaranteed to defend the harassed.

DOCKING

Manual Docking

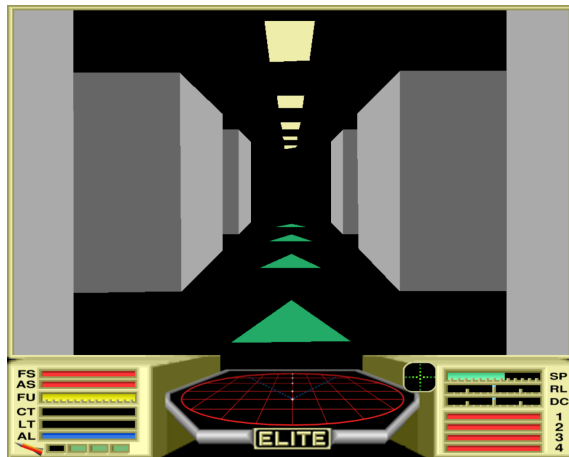
Docking is not easy. The Navy Training Manual offers the following advice:

Locate and approach the Coriolis or Dodo space station. LetterBoxes to all stations face the mother planet. Fly near to the station and then on towards the planet. Note altitude at all times. When the LetterBox can be seen slow to a minimum. Now turn a half circle to orientate the Cobra to face the entrance.

Approach the LetterBox with care. Begin to control the Cobra's roll motion manually to match the rotation of the station. The more accurate boxing will result in the cleanest docking. Ensure that the LetterBox appears to be horizontal.

Computer Assisted Docking

Despite these copious instructions, more lives are lost during docking than combat. This difficult procedure is simplified by **docking computers** stocked at Tech level 8+. This complex unit is fitted to the ship's flight control system and automatically navigates flight to the station, boxing, and docking. During this manoeuvre the pilot has full control for firing and avoiding other ships. Press **C** to engage the unit and **D** to switch off. The computer will use yaw boosters (if fitted) for tri-axial orientation.



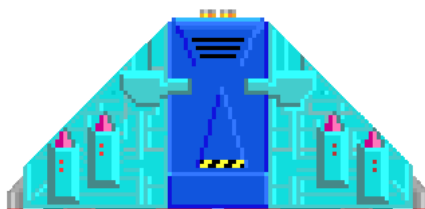
Alternatively for craft without docking computers, stations with a Tech level 9+ offer RentaDock. Activate this with **C** but be warned, certain planets charge extortionate rates for this service.



Trading

THE GAME PLAN

Trading strategies may vary from pilot to pilot but all shrewd tacticians map their trading routes with great care, investing profits into the accumulation of hardware. The Cobra must be armed as fully and quickly as possible.



Study the trading section of this manual, and establish profitable trading routes. Spacers must consider how close to the viper's sting they wish to fly. For the successful fulfilment of more risky pursuits, eg travel to dangerous planets or trade in contraband, may be rewarded with great yields. Conversely, this attracts vicious encounters with powerful ships.

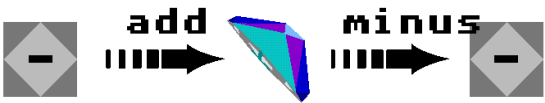
THE TRADE MONITOR

All trading must be with space stations, free-Space trading is impossible. Following new regulations the trading process has been made far easier. The **TRADE** monitor (**F3**) displays **sell** and **buy** prices for each product and the quantity available. The **hold** column shows the amount of each item in the Cobra's cargo hold (**F9**). The **buy** and **sell** prices advertised by a space station are not always fixed. For traders with vast quantities of a sought after product, stations have been known to allow negotiations or *margin squeezing*.

LAVE TRADING DIVISION						
PRODUCT	UNIT	SELL	BUY	QTY	HOLD	
Food	t	4.0	3.8	17t	-	
Textiles	t	6.4	6.2	16t	-	
Radioactives	t	22.0	21.3	22t	-	
Slaves	t	14.4	13.9	16t	-	
Liquor/Wines	t	25.2	24.4	25t	-	
Luxuries	t	94.8	91.9	15t	-	
Narcotics	t	94.4	91.5	39t	-	
Computers	t	90.0	87.0	31t	-	
Machinery	t	60.8	58.9	15t	-	
Alloys	t	41.6	40.3	33t	-	
Firearms	t	77.6	75.2	33t	-	
Furs	t	73.6	71.3	62t	-	
Minerals	t	11.2	10.8	59t	-	
Gold	kg	38.8	37.6	12kg	-	
Platinum	kg	72.8	70.6	22kg	-	
Gem-Stones	g	18.0	17.4	4g	-	
Alien Items	t	53.2	51.6	-	-	
Cash: 100.0 CR Cargo: 0t						

Cargo Exchanges

To sell cargo from the hold to the space station use minus, to buy use add. This is conducted in single unit measures but to speed up trading, press one of the Shift keys on the astrogation board in conjunction with Mous button.



TRADING WITH WORLDS

Ancillary Computer Predictions

It is very difficult to predict demand for carried goods, however the ancillary computer supplied with the Cobra can be used at all times to perform stock market analysis. To enter the computer use **F12** or **DESK** from the SelectaBar.

Insider Trading

To complicate matters further, GalCop prohibit planets from advertising their needs or announcing market prices beyond their own system. *Insider trading* carries the death penalty: a loss far in excess of any profits that could be gained! Without any inside information, all transactions are a risk.

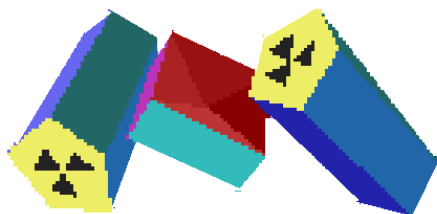
A Trading Formula

With vigilance a trading formula can be calculated: Agricultural worlds by their nature, have excess food produce at low purchase prices and a constant requirement of machinery and spare parts. Rich agricultural worlds produce vast quantities of food and textiles at very low prices. They will buy luxuries and other *population servers* with little concern for price. Industrial worlds have a terrific demand for agricultural produce needed to fill workers' stomachs. They need raw materials for refining and like rich agriculturals require high tech goods and luxuries.

The easiest method for reaping high yields from cargo is rooted in patience. If a price is not as high as expected, trade goods elsewhere or wait for an increase in demand. Hungry worlds do not need luxuries or computers.

Risks vs Returns

To reap substantial profits pilots may occasionally have to journey into unsociable systems. The worst of these are the **Anarchies**, with **Feudal States** following close behind. Traders should have well equipped craft and a great knowledge of pirate ambush patterns. Inexperienced pilots take a chance by travelling through a **Multi-Government** or **Dictatorship** as their policy on traders is in the hands of the largest party or leader. The slightly turbulent world of the Communist and **Confederacy** should not pose any great problem to a **poor** or **average** pilot. Happily, in a **Corporate State** or Democracy spacers are safe. These types of worlds welcome and protect their traders. Whatever the world every journey with cargo is a risk. If a trader is conscious of this, success will be his echo.





The Establishment

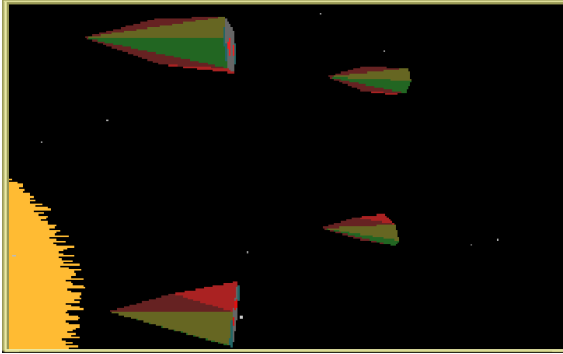
THE GALACTIC COOPERATIVE

The Galactic Co-operative (GalCo-Op) is only one of several planetary federations, maintaining trade and diplomatic links with over two thousand planets throughout eight galaxies. By the time this is printed the Galactic Co-operative may have secured a ninth galaxy, becoming the largest of all federations. GalCo-Op, not to be confused with GalCop, is responsible for publishing eco-political profiles of planets. GalCo-Op planetary descriptions should not be overlooked.

GALACTIC POLICE

The police can be as menacing as they can be helpful. The police departments with which the trader is most likely to be involved with concern: slave and fur trading; arms running; narcotic trafficking; piracy; violence control; and the interference and corruption of young Groigans.

Typically Vipers fly in a formation but this sometimes splits and Vipers appear to fly in opposite directions. Follow one, it is probably ready to attack a fugitive or band of pirates. Much can be learnt from watching this annihilation, but do not become a nuisance.



Criminal Records

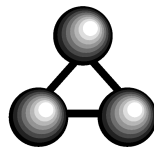
A combateer's Legal Status is determined by the Galactic Police. Clean records attract minimal interference. Pilots who do search for trouble will be noted by the authorities. Some may try to increase combat ratings by attacking innocent traders and Vipers. Resorting to these tactics is foolish. Combat ratings may rise, but **clean** legal records will be stripped and replaced with **offender** status. Persistence in such habits will lead the **offender** into the clandestine world inhabited by the **fugitive**. The Federation Crime Monitoring Authority treats **fugitives** no better than the Seriamente. This status will also be noted by bounty hunters for whom killing **fugitives** is essential for maintaining high living standards. Criminal records can be cleansed by acts of goodwill, or by actively helping other ships in distress.

GALACTIC FAMINE CONTROL

GalFam is a sub-department of GalCo-Op and is responsible for the prevention or at least the confinement of natural disasters. In these times of freak solar winds GalFam deals mainly with floods and famines. Having no employees as such GalFam often advertises for help. In considering employment with GalFam, Cobra pilots should be warned that the implementation of equal opportunities has allowed Groigan accountants to work for GalFam. Miniature wage packets should be expected.

THE TRI-ALLIANCE

The Tri-Alliance consists of vigilantes intent on the destruction all Thargoid construction bases. Under the Garlane Convention these pre-emptive strikes are illegal. Members of the Tri-Alliance have a reputation for collaborating with pirates and sending young pilots into witch-space as laser-fodder. Therefore this is an organisation to be avoided.





Other Space Types

Space is not very safe. All pilots are constantly at risk from other craft. Cobras are the favourite target for loners, packhunters, rogues, exam-failures and bounty hunters.

LIKELY BUT QUITE UNLIKEABLE ENEMIES

Pirates

Twenty years ago piracy was fashionable and appealed to many new recruits. Those recruits are now experienced and protect their territory mercilessly. They are ageing and impatient with newcomers. Thankfully, there are several ways of identifying a pirate ship. This is an essential process as pirates will take any ship from a tiny Caiman to the gallant Urutu. These renegades are feared throughout the universe, but are particularly rife in unstable Feudal or Anarchic systems. Often their ships are daubed with fierce or rude markings and hover at distance to a planet.

Sometimes these rogues are paid off to allow safe passage for ships on trade routes. Neither the space authorities, nor any Cobra pilot should rely on this type of agreement. A pirate's word is less trustworthy than his ship is spaceworthy. GalCop informs us that Thargoids have been sighted flying side-by-side with veteran pirates.

Thargoids

Few are more fearless than the pilots of Thargoid vessels. The captains of this insect race have had all fear glands surgically removed. Individual Thargoid destructor ships have been known to slaughter whole groups of élite pilots. Out of combat the Thargoids are infamous for their poor sense of humour. Cobra pilots have in the past been victim to Thargoids' unfunny phone calls in which they unleash a string of bad jokes.

Most of the Thargoid space fleet is currently battling with the Galactic Navy. However Thargoid strike-raids are becoming increasingly common. These rapid ships are fitted with an anti-missile system and carry many small remote controlled Thargons. Each of these terminator-craft has a single shield voiding laser. The Galactic Navy, who are interested in developing their own remote craft, pay handsomely for any Thargon craft brought to them.

Loners

Those who as children, indeterminate of race, are singled out for their snideness and unsociable character, become mercenary loners or bodyguards. These fighters, often Sidewinders, have one purpose, to exterminate any ship attacking their employer. Orbit

shuttles may appear to be an easy target as they spontaneously release cargo canisters. However, Sidewinder escorts are under instruction to prevent theft, by any means necessary.

Bounty Hunters

Unless a pilot is of fugitive status, bounty hunters are unlikely to show aggression. High combat ratings will also ward off hunters. In a feeble attempt at disguise many bounty hunters have used Cobra trade-ships. Do not be misled, treat all ships as enemies. Professional killers ride the Fer-de-Lance Lightspeeder, in which they can live for months. This vehicle is sleek and highly proficient, it should not be pestered.

Bounty hunters are banned from entering certain space stations and can be found outside Orbit Space. Dangerous worlds act as breeding grounds for these vultures. Hunters are invariably deadly or élite, they are not known for showing compassion to the needy or those obstructing them.

Generation Ships

Before the Berger anti-gravity unit, interstellar travel was made in large self-sustaining environmental ships - Generation Ships. These ships are almost completely organic and are lined with ancient PlastUminium panels. Some of these ships are in their forty-second generation. There is a severe penalty for interfering with such vessels.

Sources linked closely with the Navy suspect that the Ophidian Generation Ship has been taken over by Thargoids and pirates. This could signal the beginning of a terrible Thargoid invasion.

Space Dredgers

Space Dredgers are parasitic. They are found hanging around waiting for natural disasters or impatiently spacing along the perimeter of potential war zones. Dredgers are more similar to cities than ships and exist by consuming debris, biological and chemical by-products and untidy living quarters. These colossal craft are heavily armed and should be tactfully avoided.

LIKEABLES

Belters

Traders using asteroid mining lasers and fuel scoops to fragment and collect asteroids are known as Belters. This derogatory term is often used to insult weak pilots. The splinters are packed in the hold ready for sale. The limitation of scanners (they cannot display positions of asteroids) produces a serious occupational hazard.



By any chance should a Cobra pilot meet a Space Belter at a private party, it is advisable to be courteous but not talkative. Belters never cease craving to hear stories; a habit resulting

from their mothers' incessant story telling (some bouts lasting years). This regressive race can be easily identified by their wide flowering ties. However should one mistakenly tell a Belter a personal anecdote, jape, joke or piece of intergalactic gossip, an unsuitable ending may result in alarming consequences.

Rock Hermits

Many outcasts, recluses and ageing bounty hunters enjoy the quiet life by choosing large fragments of asteroids in which to set up residence. These types power signal beacons to warn off miners. GalCop protects **rock hermits** and it does not appreciate the disturbance of these nature-loving members of society. Mining these asteroids is quite unrewarding as the majority of the rock is hollowed out.

Harlequin Hermits personalise their asteroid homes with garish colours painted in cheap Groigan food colouring.

Missionaries

Waves of missionary craft, in huge squadrons of slothful Hognose ships, fly in the direction of agnostics, Anarchies and violence. Most pirates will listen to these pacifists for a time, and then send the bible bashers to their maker. This sick execution is made more difficult by the fact that missionaries fly in buffalo formation. When one missionary ship is attacked all other ships will scatter. Individual missionaries pose no threat as the Hognose is an outrageously pathetic ship with no lasers, missiles or speed.



Crazy craft

Rich kids and tobacco users will often ride out into deep space and release Mous control. These fungrabbers allow Mous to be guided by nothing but chance and accident. Crazy craft are easily spotted by their wild, erratic flight. Research suggests that these ship-abusers *get a kick out of the g's*.