he I.A.S. Reliant

o aid you in your command, your starship has many useful features. The primary ones are described below.

• Long Range Scan: The Helmsman controls this important feature. It displays a view of all known Alliance sectors. Your position is designated by a white blip. Space stations are designated by magenta blips (there are four). Planets are designated by light green blips (there are fifteen currently holding Alliance bases). Any detected enemy ships are designated by flashing orange blips. A white rectangle initally highlights the sector you are in, and may (as described later) indicate your warp destination.

• Sector Scan: Also controlled by the Helmsman, this displays a zoomed-out view of the sector you are currently in. Objects are indicated in the same fashion as the Long Range Scan.

• View Screen: Displays the area immediately around your starship. This is the display mode used when the game starts; it is displayed in the Game Screen picture in chapter 4.

• Radar: Located in the Radar Window, this gives yet another view of the area surrounding your starship. Several things shall be noted:

—The white blip in the center is your ship.

—The blue rectangle in the middle represents the area depicted in the view screen. Thus, the radar displays an area about 8-10 times larger than the view screen.

—The light blue blip located around the rectangle indicates the direction your starship is facing. It moves around the rectangle as you turn your ship.

—Other objects (planets, enemy ships, etc) are indicated in the same fashion as the Long Range Scan. However, the enemy ship on whom the phasers are currently locked will be flashing to indicate this.

Importantly, it should be known that the area of the Radar Window represents the effective range for phaser locking. If the phasers have been locked on an enemy ship, which then leaves the area shown in the Radar Window, the phasers will no longer be locked on that target.

For the other features of the starship, refer to the picture below of an example of the Status Window.

• Energy reserves: This is indicated above by the green bar labelled "Total". Your starship is equipped with energy capacitors capable of holding a fixed amount of energy. Energy is used to support the shields, phasers, and warp drive. When all three are inactive, energy is gradually regenerated; otherwise, it gradually declines.

• Shields: The shields are controlled by the Weapons Officer, and their status is displayed in two locations in the Status Window. On the left side is a small view of the starship, with green lights around it. This is simply the shield indicator; the green lights denote the shields being currently activated. The status of the shields is shown on the bottom in the middle. When the ship is hit, the shields are reduced accordingly. Gradually, as energy is consumed, the shields will rise back to their maximum.

• Phasers: The phasers, controlled by the Weapons Officer, consist of two parts: the phaser energy couplings, which hold and direct the energy charge which is dispensed upon firing, and the phaser banks, which are the locking and firing mechanisms. To use the phasers, they must be charged by the Weapons Officer (in the picture above, they are fully charged, indicated by the red bar labelled "Phaser"). Next, the phaser banks must be locked on a target. The status of the phaser banks is indicated in the Status Window above the shield status. To lock on a target, select the Weapons Officer's command "Toggle Phaser Target Lock". The word "target" will appear in the phaser status box (as shown above). To select a target to lock onto, press the CONTROL key. Upon doing so, the blip representing the enemy ship will flash in the Radar Window, and a small phaser sight will appear in the view screen on top of the enemy ship (if visible). Repeatedly pressing the control key will toggle among all enemy ships which appear in the Radar Window. Now you are ready to fire: do so by pressing the SPACE BAR and holding it down for as long as you want it to fire. As you do so, energy will drain from the phaser energy couplings, and when they no longer hold energy, the phasers will stop firing. Energy will be channelled back into the couplings gradually, as they need time to cool and recharge.

It should be pointed out that the View Screen represents the effective range of the phaser banks. This is not to be confused with the range of the phaser target lock, which is represented by the Radar Window. Thus, you can lock phasers onto a target that is outside the view screen, but you cannot fire until it is visible in the view screen. Likewise, if you are firing on a target which leaves the view screen area, the phasers will stop firing, although the target lock will still be in effect (at least until it leaves the range of the Radar Window).

• Torpedoes: Your ship is equipped with three torpedo bays (2 fore and 1 aft) and a torpedo holding area capable of holding up to 20 torpedoes. The number of torpedoes left in holding is indicated above the phaser status box, while the status of each torpedo bay is indicated on the right side of the Status Window. Torpedoes can be fired at any time by pressing 'F' to fire a fore torpedo bay or 'A' to fire the aft bay. There is a slight delay after firing to allow for reload; this is indicated (as in the picture above) by a red "reload" light.

• Warp Drive: Controlled primarily by the Helmsman, the warp drive allows for swift travel. In the Status Window, the current destination coordinates and warp speed are indicated on the left side next

to the energy indicators. To select new coordinates, you must be able to view the Long Range Scan. While doing so, use the mouse to click on the sector you wish to warp to (or use the OPTION key in combination with the arrow keys to move the selection box); the coordinates are entered automatically. To engage the warp drive, select the command from the Helmsman's menu. Note that the destination can be changed while in warp; if you click the mouse on a new sector, your course will change automatically. The warp engines will shut down themselves when you reach the middle of the destination sector. You may, of course, shut off the warp drive at will by selecting the appropriate command from the Helmsman's menu. The warp speed may be changed using the + and - keys.

Other features of the ship include:

• Steering: Movement of the ship is accomplished with the arrow keys. The right and left arrow keys turn the ship clockwise and counter-clockwise, respectively, while the up and down arrow keys fire the forward and reverse thrusters, respectively. Shift-down arrow is "all-stop", quickly bringing the ship to a halt.

• Communications: To interact with an Alliance base (space station or planetary base), you must interface with it. After positioning the starship nearby the station/base, press the 'H' key to hail the base. You must be in close enough range, and must not be moving (use Shift-down arrow) to establish a proper interface. From there, the base will present you with your options.

• Emergency Warp: Your ship also comes with this important safety feature. If you find yourself in dire straights, press the ESC key to activate emergency warp systems. If your warp drive is not damaged, the warp computer will select at random one of the immediately surrounding sectors and engage the warp engines. Remember that afterward you still might not be out of the enemy ship's range. Also keep in mind that this will not work if the warp drive is damaged.

• Computer: The Reliant has an on-board computer containing a library of information about the Alliance, the Reliant itself, or the enemy for your use. To activate the ship's computer, press the 'C' key or click the mouse on the computer icon in the upper right corner of the Game Screen. The available commands will appear in the Commands Window. Here, you can elect to view the Galactic Map, which is a view similar to the Long Range Scan but only providing the location of Alliance starbases and planets. By clicking on a sector containing a base or planet, you will be presented with information about that particular outpost.

Although the Galactic Map is functional, in the version of the game you have, the ship's computer is still under development and plays little role in the one mission you have available. Future versions of Missions! will contain a full library of information, and will play a more critical role in other missions.