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New features in beta refresh 0.3 (build 1821):

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1. Gameplay changes:

Two new game types:

Capture the flag. Every friendly starting station has a flag position well above it. Steal the enemy's flag and return it to your base to get a flag point. The game ends when enough flag points are earned.

Artifact hunt. All neutral sectors start with one artifact. Grab the artifact and return it to your base to get an artifact point. The game ends when enough artifact points are earned. You create games that have both flags and artifacts.

Special rules for flags and artifacts:

A ship can only carry a single flag or artifact (and can not carry both).

A ship carrying either a flag or an artifact is always visible to everyone in the sector.

A ship carrying a flag or an artifact can not teleport.

When a ship carrying a flag or artifact is killed, the treasure drops where they died.

You can not carry or move the flag belonging to your own side.

2. New toys:

Scientists have been working feverously to solve the endgame enigma and the research labs have turned up three advances:

First: the teleport probe (researched at the tactical laboratory 2). It is dropped by the scout and acts, briefly, as a teleport receiver. If the enemy has blockaded the entrances to their territory too strongly, sneak a scout in and make a new entrance. The downside is that they are expensive (\$1000 each) and last for only a minute.

If you did not know it, by the way, you can pick which teleport receiver you will jump to. Press and hold the 'R' key and, while the timer is counting down, pick the sector you wish to go to in the map. Red circles indicate sectors with teleport receivers of either type. If you pick a sector without a red circle, the closest teleport receiver will be used.

Second: cruise missiles (researched at shipyard 1 & 2). Missiles for both frigate, destroyer and cruiser that trade power off for range. They do only a quarter of the normal damage but have a range of over 3000 so they can attack stations immediately on leaving the aleph.

Third: lots of general advancements (ship hull 1 - 10 at supremacy center 1 & 2, ship shield at tactical laboratory 1 & 2, gun damage at expansion complex 1 & 2 and missile damage at shipyard 1 & 2). Each advance improves an attribute by 10% (so that buying all 10, for about \$60,000, advancements is a 250% improvement). If you can afford it and the other team can not, these advancements can be used to buy a decisive edge.

Bombers and advanced stealth fighters now use the same missiles in the anti-fighter role. This missile has a range over 2000. Happy plinking.

Heavy cloak which is usable by the stealth fighters, stealth bomber & heavy bomber. Over twice as effective as the cloak 2, but has a significant energy drain (such that no ship can use it for more than about 40 seconds before running out of energy).

General advancements 1 & 2 for top speed, acceleration, station hull, station shields, turn rate, signature, sensor range, ship energy capacity, missile turn rates, He3 mining, particle weapon speed, and energy weapon range. Each advance is 10 or 20%.

Balance changes:

Scout changes: Missile capacity reduced to 2. Probe capacity reduced to 1. Energy capacity reduced so that a scout can only fire its weapon continuously for 25 seconds before running out of energy. Mass is reduced (which means that the scout will be more heavily penalized for carrying missiles, mines & probes).

Advanced scout changes: as with scout plus top speed reduced to 180 and hitpoints reduced to 225. Both types of scout can drop the teleport probe.

Stealth fighter change: reduced energy capacity to 30 seconds (though only 13 seconds if using a cloak 1 or 2).

Advanced stealth fighter change: energy capacity is now 60 seconds (but only 17 seconds if using a cloak 1 or 2).

Cruiser: gains the ability to teleport. If this doesn't seem sufficient, consider two words: teleport probe.
The cruiser loses the ability to cloak.

Bombers and heavy bombers now cost \$500.
Stealth bombers now cost \$250.

Gunships are now significantly faster (100) so they can keep up with the fighters, constructors and miners.

The range of turreted weapons has been significantly increased.
1500 for bomber & heavy bomber turrets.
2000 for gunship, frigate & cruiser turrets.

Troop transports are now free.

Missile ranges, accelerations and turn rates adjusted.
The dumbfire missiles have a shorter maximum range but should be more effective within their range.
The seeker missiles should be more effective in general.
Seeker and anti-base missiles increase your signature more when mounted.
All missiles (and especially the seeker missiles) are more vulnerable to chaff.

Weapon damage/damage modifiers have been adjusted. The best way to describe the changes is with the following table:

	Anti-utility 2	Sniper 1	MG 2	Disruptor 2	Cannon 1	Mini-gun 2	
Adv Scout	12.1	14.3		13.8 16.3		9.4	7.5
Enh Fighter	15.2	17.9		16.3 21.3		11.5	9.1
Interceptor	36.4	21.4		20.0 20.0		12.5	13.3
Stealth	13.7	16.1		18.8 15.0		11.5	9.1
Bomber	57.7	39.3		41.7 34.2		25.0	24.3
Miner	21.3	39.3		35.0 47.5		25.0	33.2
Frigate	273.3	214.3		250.0 150.0		114.6	166.0

The numbers are the number of seconds a single weapon to kill a target (so, for example, an enhanced fighter with 3 MGs will take about 20/3 ~ 7 seconds to kill an interceptor). Take these numbers with a grain of salt: they do not account for shield regeneration, assume you are hitting 100% of the time, and that you will not run out of energy or ammo.

Most of the actual changes are small (under 10%). The largest change is that disruptors have been made less effective against capital ships.

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New features in beta refresh 0.2 (build 1813):

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1. Balance/techtree changes:

Asteroids now regenerate He3 slowly.
The amount of money in the universe has been cut in half
The existing tower has been significantly weakened, and a new tower has been added
There are three versions of the booster now; the two new ones are in the supremacy path.

2. A new map type, HiLo, has been created.

3. Damage from collisions with "wimpy" objects has been reduced.

4. Fixed numerous server crashing bugs.

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New features in beta refresh 0.1 (build 1808):

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1. The game settings button flashes when mission settings are changed, signaling other players to look at them again.
2. Sound performance improvements (primarily having to do with memory usage).
3. Graphics performance memory usage and software rendering improvements.
4. Numerous changes to the tech tree and to ships and weapons.
5. Fixes to server crashes.
6. Better loadout and investment icons.
7. When you go to the team pane (F6) and click on the column heading to sort by Pilot Callsign, non-human pilots are sorted to the bottom of the list.
8. Slowed down message of the day scrolling.
9. Commands automatically rejected after 5 seconds if not accepted.
10. For ships that cost money to players who do not have money, an automatic command is sent to the commander asking for money. If the commander accepts within 5 seconds, the money is given and the ship is purchased. Commander is defined as the person to whom the player is auto-donating his paydays.
11. Added support for password-protected games.
12. Got rid of the annoying chat sounds for chat messages not send only to an individual (MANY people asked for this!).
13. Added a "lock lobby" button, so team commanders can disallow any new team members from joining.

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The rest of this document describes known issues with Allegiance.

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1. Playing Allegiance

Allegiance is a space-based action and real-time strategy game. This is a beta version, and a number of features are not fully implemented or will be found to have bugs in them. We hope you enjoy participating in the Beta program and that by helping us to perfect the product you will want to play the final product even more.

Known issues:

- 1.1 The Iron Coalition frigate can't dock anywhere.

- 1.2 Items in the investment pane can't be seen because of the bright green overlay indicating it has been invested in.
- 1.3 New players can't be accepted by a team if the commander turns autoaccept off prior to the game starting.
- 1.4 Running ICQ chat at the same time as Allegiance has been reported to cause Allegiance to crash when receiving notifications. We recommend that you close ICQ (as well as other software programs) before running Allegiance.
- 1.5 In a game using the lives limit and conquest together, the game doesn't end when one team loses all its lives.
- 1.6 When playing Allegiance, sometimes autopilot doesn't activate because the joystick moves after pressing the key to activate it. Try to center the joystick first, and then press the autopilot key.
- 1.7 You must have an Internet connection established prior to starting Allegiance. If you normally use the Internet settings that let you automatically connect to the Internet when an application attempts to use the Internet, disable that if it normally brings up a connection box. You will not see the box and will appear to hang.
- 1.9 Allegiance makes use of functionality provided by your installed Internet browser. We have not done extensive testing on systems with any browser other than Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.0. If you experience repeated problems either getting to the Zone Club screen (after clicking Play Zone) or with AutoDownload, try using IE5, which is included on the Beta CD.
- 1.10 In some versions of Windows 98, the system clock runs slower than real-time. This affects the performance of Allegiance as well as your computer. If the game seems to be running too slowly, press ALT+F and note the number after Sync. If that number stays steady at something less than 95, you're probably experiencing this problem. To resolve, go to <http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com/> and download either the Windows 98 System Update or the Windows 98 Customer Service Pack. The latter contains the former plus some additional features.
- 1.11 Playing online after playing Training Missions may cause problems. To avoid this, restart Allegiance after playing Training Missions.

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2. Input Devices

Allegiance was tested with a wide array of input devices; however, due to the nature of the game, some devices work better than others. Generally, if the device appears and is configurable via the Game Controllers icon in the Windows Control Panel, then the game should support it just fine.

Known issues:

- 2.1 Using game pads such as the SideWinder Freestyle Pro is acceptable, but for the Beta0 release there is no support for throttle ([,], \, and BACKSPACE on keyboard) or roll (SHIFT+RIGHT or LEFT ARROW on keyboard).
- 2.2 If you are using a joystick plugged into a game pad port, you may not be able to stop your ship from spinning in circles. If this happens, plug your joystick directly into your computer game port, not through your game pad port.
- 2.3 If you are using a SideWinder game pad, make sure the game pad is set to game pad mode before you start Allegiance. Game pad mode is on when you see a green light on the game pad. The mode is toggled on and off with the Mode button on the game pad. If game pad mode

is off when you start Allegiance, navigation of your ship will be severely limited.

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3. Sound Cards

Allegiance has been found to work best with SoundBlaster audio devices. We have experienced intermittent problems with other sound cards and DirectSound and are working diligently to correct these as soon as possible. One workaround is to disable hardware sound acceleration by pressing ESC, clicking Sound Options, and then setting Hardware Acceleration to Disabled.

Known issues:

- 3.1 With Yamaha and Ensoniq sound cards, sometimes the application just disappears. This is a symptom of a driver bug.
- 3.2 Whenever a player with an Ensoniq Audio PCI sound card takes a bomber, he cannot hear his turret gunners firing. Similarly, if he takes a frigate, he can hear all turrets firing except the tail gunner. Any other pilot with a different sound card can hear all the turrets firing.
- 3.3 With the Soundblaster card installed, weird noises--such as random background music/sound effects playing over and over--are heard while buying miners and wingmen in the Loadout screen.

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4. Video Cards

Allegiance is a very rich graphical game. We have tried hard to add features in such a way that we can provide a rich experience for users with high-end machines and at the same time maintain high frame rates for users with legacy machines.

Known issues:

- 4.1 Allegiance is designed to run best in 800x600 or higher resolution. The game supports 640x480, but various game elements don't fit correctly on the screen. This will be fixed in future builds. You can adjust your screen's resolution from the ESC menu.
- 4.2 To play Allegiance, users should have at least a Pentium 200Mhz computer with a 3D graphics accelerator card, or at least a Pentium II machine if you don't have a 3D accelerator. We recommend at least a Pentium II 300Mhz with 64M RAM and a 3D accelerator for the best all-around experience. If you experience low frame rates, you can try turning off various options in the Graphics Options or Sound Options sections of the ESC menu.
- 4.3 Allegiance will not run in a window in 32-bit color mode: normally, Allegiance will run in a window by pressing ALT+ENTER while in the game. If the display settings are set to 32-bit color mode, then the game can only be minimized or run full-screen.
- 4.4 To improve the experience for high-end computers, Allegiance can utilize the features of these machines as well as graphics adapters. In addition to turning graphics features on and off by pressing ESC and then clicking Graphics Options, users can increase the graphics mode through the whole range of options supported by their graphics device.
- 4.5 Graphics adapters such as the Matrox G400 support dual monitors. This Beta release of Allegiance has been tested to run in this environment, but not heavily.
- 4.6 Using the Diamond Fire GL 1000 Pro card based on the Permedia2 chipset, no debris is visible. Also, the grid will flash various colors

as different objects in the background come into and go out of view. You can try turning off posters and environments in the Graphics Options section of the ESC menu.

4.7 With some graphics cards, animation in the Hangar may not work. This does not affect using the Hangar options.

4.8 With the Permedia video card, the game has been known to crash with large explosions and other debris effects. There is no resolution for this yet.

4.9 With the TNT1 graphics card running under hardware acceleration, you may experience the game hanging. Try running the game in software mode. To run in software mode, right-click the Allegiance icon on your desktop, click Properties, and then click Shortcut. In the Target box, at the end of the existing command line text, type a space and then the following: -software

For instance, if you installed Allegiance to its default location on drive C, your command line will now read as follows:

"C:\Program Files\Microsoft Games\Allegiance\Allegiance.exe" -software

5. Windows 2000

Allegiance has been tested on Windows 2000, RC2 (build 2128). Several problems were encountered, mostly centering around the beta drivers that are still in development for sound and video cards.

Known issues:

5.1 With a RIVA TNT or TNT2 card installed with Windows 2000, Allegiance crashes while trying to enumerate Zbuffer formats, because none are returned.

5.2 With a Permedia2 card installed with Windows 2000, you may experience graphics problems.

6. Troubleshooting

For help with Allegiance or the MSN Gaming Zone, go to the MSN Gaming Zone Allegiance pages (<http://www.zone.com/allegiance/>), where you'll find numerous links to general news and update information as well as to known issues and FAQs.

If you need additional assistance, email Allegiance@Microsoft.com. We want to know of any issues or problems that you are having with the game, so please write us!