

Sentinel

by Bryan Brandenburg

COMMODORE 64 INSTRUCTIONS

Joystick

The Joystick should be plugged into Port 2.

Cassette

Turn on the computer and place the cassette in the cassette player, making sure it's rewound. Hold down (SHIFT) on the computer keyboard, press the (RUN/STOP) key and then release both keys. When the screen reads "Found", push the (COMMODORE) key. If you have any trouble loading, simply turn the cassette over, rewind, and repeat the loading procedure.

Disk

Turn on the computer and disk drive and wait for the "Busy" light to go out. Insert the disk (label side up), and when the monitor screen is lit;

Type: LOAD "★"; 8,1

Press: RETURN

The program will take several minutes to load.

Note: Game loading and/or play may be affected by multiple peripherals or non-standard modifications made to original equipment. If the game won't boot or play, try disconnecting all non-essential peripherals (printer, modem, etc.).



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TO START PLAYING

When the title page is on the screen, use (F7) or the Fire button to start the game.

Difficulty level (Skirmish, Attack, Battle, Invasion, Armageddon), can be selected with vertical joystick movements. Then push the Fire button once and a message from Starfleet Command will appear. Pressing the Fire button again brings up the Stellar Grid to start the game.

Controls and Options

- (F1)** Pauses the game. Any joystick movement will resume play.
- (F7)** Starts or restarts the game.
- (COMMODORE)** Press this key to manually pull up the Stellar Grid.
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- (CRSR)** This key aborts the Hyperspace jump.
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- (W)** Hold this key down to engage booster engines for warping.
- (A)** If you have warped manually, this key toggles between Short Range Scan and Auto Tracking.
- (SPACE BAR)** Launches Proton Helix Charges, from an initial supply of eight.

THE STELLAR GRID

The 60 sector Stellar Grid is your map of the galaxy, with the world of Jaraloba at its centre. The Grid displays both friendly and enemy forces.

Orange Discs are Enemy Base Stars, stationary space forts that periodically launch Gamma Fighter squadrons until they are destroyed. To neutralise a Base Star, wait until an entrance portal appears and then launch a Proton Helix Charge. Note: In advanced levels the devious Gorganitor will warp their Base Stars in and out of your continuum. You must time your attacks carefully since Base Stars are not vulnerable at all times.

Blue Discs are friendly Base Stations, mighty fortresses that have been tele-transported to your sector by Starfleet. They serve as refueling and repair bases in your fight against the Gorganitor peril, and are prime targets for concentrated enemy attack. When you dock at a Base Station you will get a ship status report before repairs are made. The readout will consist of:

1. Phasor Cannons
2. Long Range Scanner
3. Short Range Scanner
4. Stellar Grid
5. Automatic Tracking Computer
6. Hyperspace Co-ordinator
7. Long Range Scan Sequencer
8. Communications Module

Your ship will then be refuelled and repaired, and one Proton Helix Charge will be added to your armament.

Light Blue Ships are swift and stealthy Gamma Fighters with no protective shields. Their mission is to weaken your resolve and destroy you, so if you linger in an empty sector Gamma Fighters will warp in and attack. You must be ever vigilant!

Light Green Ships are Cruisers. They travel at medium speed and are equipped with Xanthallian shields. These are the older variety, relatively weak shields, and can be destroyed by a direct hit from your Phasor Cannons. The Cruisers' mission is to track down and destroy Starfleet Base Stations. When a Base Station is destroyed, all Cruisers in that quadrant will mutate into Saucers at a 2:1 ratio, due to the massive radiation imbalance.

Purple Ships are Saucers, slow moving and very heavily armed warships with modern Neo-Sophoric Demi-Shields.

They generally require multiple hits at extremely short range to be destroyed. Monitor Saucer movements carefully, for their objective is total destruction of the planet Jaraloba.

Each icon in a sector represents an enemy squadron containing 1-3 ships.

The Status Control Panel is at the top of the screen.

Shields indicates how many energy shields you have left. Shields can be lost in Hyperspace when meteoroids collide with your ship, and enemy Phasor attacks and contact with mines in base sectors also destroy them. When your shields are depleted, the next hit blasts you into oblivion.

Protons tells you how many Proton Helix Charges remain. They are launched by pressing the (SPACE BAR). You must use Proton Helix Charges to destroy enemy Base Stars, and they can also be used to annihilate all enemy ships visible on your screen.

Energy displays fuel/energy status. Energy is used for travelling within sectors and making Hyperspace jumps. Using the meteoroid shields in Hyperspace consumes mass quantities of energy.

Sector tells you where you are by column and row of the Stellar Grid.

Time indicates elapsed time from start of mission.

Targets displays the number of enemy ships remaining in your sector.

At the very centre of the Stellar Grid is the world of Jaraloba, which you must protect at all costs. The planet symbol will flash when it's surrounded by the Gorganitor. If no action is taken, all will be lost.

To move about the Grid, use the Interstellar Tracking Device designated by a darker square outline. Use the joystick to position the Tracking Device on your destination sector, then press the Fire button to engage the Hyperspace engines. The Interstellar Tracking Device will automatically plot the flight path to your destination and make the necessary Hyperjump calculations.

When your ship reaches the speed of light, the Long Range Scanner is engaged. Since the Hyperspace continuum can affect your ship's control systems, there are two things to remember when you make the inter-sector jump: first, your Automatic Deflector System is inoperative in Hyperspace, because the energy drain is too great to maintain the deflectors continuously. Also, due to null time variances, the Automatic Navigation Computer cannot function in the

altered timewarp of Hyperspace. Therefore, you must manually control direction and deflector shields.

When you enter Hyperspace, targets in the destination sector will appear on the Long Range Scanner. You must centre the selected squadron in the Long Range Scan circle and keep it there. Unfortunately the interstellar meteoroids make this difficult, so navigation through Hyperspace becomes a tradeoff between keeping your destination centred and avoiding meteoroids. You may also use the deflector shields if collision seems inevitable. To do this press the Fire button, which will switch on the deflectors and neutralise the meteoroid on impact. However, this causes severe energy drain. If a meteoroid collides with your ship (without deflection), you will lose a shield. If the meteoroid is deflected, your viewport will turn BLUE rather than RED on impact, and you will continue unscathed.

Note: To abort the Grid display once it is on the screen, position the Interstellar Tracking Device over the square indicating your current sector and press the Fire button. In effect, you stay where you are.

Long Range Scan Sequencer

Once in an enemy sector, position the Long Range Scanner (flashing brackets) over the squadron you wish to attack by pressing the Fire button until the desired squadron is selected. This will target the cross hair range read-out (under the cross hair), the X, Y, Z read-out (on the bottom of the screen in the message panel), and the tracking cross hair (in the radar panel) to the enemy squadron selected.

Long Range Scanner

The message panel displays the X, Y, Z co-ordinates of the squadron you are tracking. The cross hair gives a range read-out from your ship to the target. A WHITE cross hair indicates that the squadron is in front of you, and GREEN means it is behind you. The radar panel displays your position as viewed from above, and it indicates the enemy squadron's position relative to your ship. Use the X, Y, Z co-ordinate panel to zero out the X and Y read-outs (reading from left to right, the first two markers on the message panel). When the squadron is in front of you (Z is a positive number), Warp Drive is engaged and your ship swoops in on the unsuspecting enemy. When they are within tracking range, you will automatically shift into Short Range Scan mode and the Auto Tracking Computer will engage. Your radar panel will then display the individual ships in the sector.

Short Range Scanner

You are in Short Range Scan mode when the radar panel is tracking individual ships. You can simultaneously observe all enemy ship movements, and thereby anticipate attacks.

Auto Tracking

Auto Tracking locks your ship onto an individual enemy vessel. If not already in the Auto Tracking mode, press the (A) key. When that enemy ship is destroyed your computer will lock onto the next ship in the squadron. When the entire squadron is destroyed, Auto Tracking will disengage and jump back to Long Range Scan. Note: If there are no enemy units left in your sector, the Stellar Grid will appear. Remember, pressing the Fire button will abort the Stellar Grid if you have not selected a new destination sector. To recall the Stellar Grid, press the (COMMODORE) key. If your Auto Tracking unit is damaged, you will have to pilot the ship yourself. This is very difficult, and novices should head for the closest Base Station immediately.

Phasors and Proton Helixes

Phasors are your normal tactical weapons and are activated by pressing the Fire button while you are in Short Range Scan mode. The Proton Helix Charge is the ultimate defence weapon, and the only way to destroy an enemy Base Star. Pressing the (SPACE BAR) fires a Proton, which will destroy all ships visible on the screen.

Minefields

Both the enemy Base Stars and friendly Base Stations are surrounded by protective minefields. These mines can be avoided by adroit flying, or destroyed by Phasor fire.

WINNING THE GAME

All enemy ships and Base Stars must be cleared from the Stellar Grid in order to triumph over the Gorganitor.

Warning Messages

When Jaraloba is threatened, you will receive an urgent warning message. You must engage the attacking units immediately in order to save the planet.

When a Base Station is surrounded by enemy ships you will also get a warning message, and you only have a short time to respond.

Ratings

At the end of each mission you will be rated on your performance. The rating system takes in account time, amount of energy used, shields lost, number of shots fired, enemies destroyed, Base Stations remaining and level of play chosen (Skirmish, Attack, Battle, Invasion, Armageddon). There are eight classes in each of the rankings, from Space Droid to Star Sentinel.

Playing Tips

When entering either a Base Station or Base Star sector, make sure that the X and Y co-ordinates of your Long Range Scanner are zero (0) and Z is positive (+). Once this occurs, you will be locked into your objective and unable to deviate. Note: This applies only in Base Star and Base Station sectors.

The message panel will display damage reports as damage occurs. Remember, all of your instrumentation is vulnerable. You must decide when repairs would be helpful and when they are absolutely mandatory.