Starship Command

for the BBC Microcomputer Model B

As the Captain of a battle starship, it is your duty to fight off invading enemy spaceships. After each battle, your performance will be reported to the Star Fleet Admirals and they will then decide whether you deserve to be awarded another battle starship.

Before going into combat, you are given a briefing on the facilities available on the battleship. . . . . . .

COMBAT PREPARATION

Once the program has been loaded and you have read the introductory screen, press the RETURN key to display a list of console parameters. You must now select the appropriate function keys to determine whether:
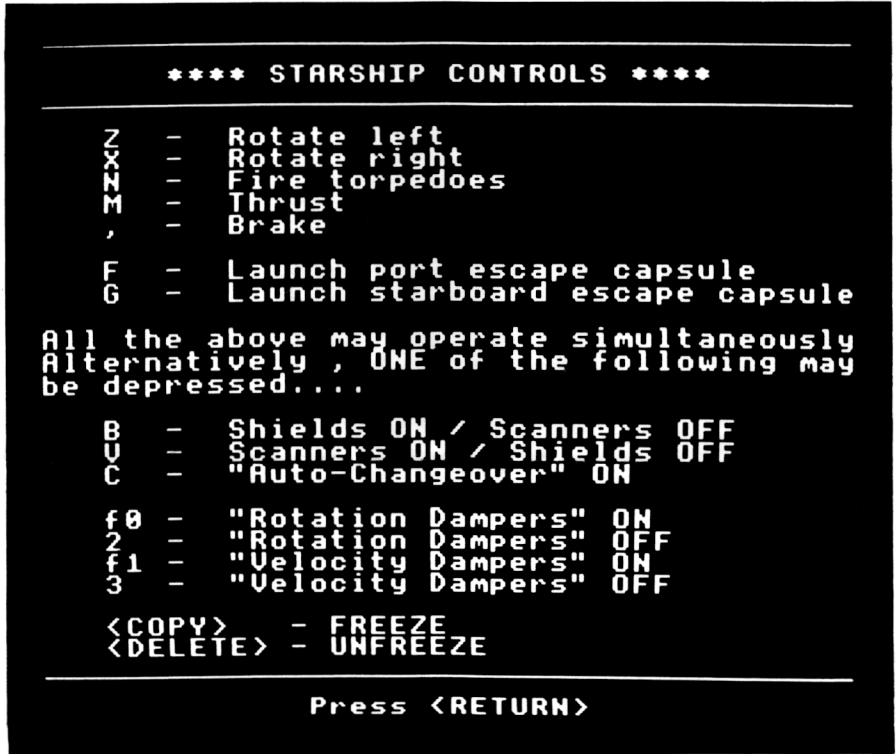
 - the sound effects are turned on or off

 - you use joystick or keyboard control

 - your enemies have small or large torpedoes

 - your starship has small or large torpedoes.

The size of the torpedoes has no effect on the game itself, but alters the size of the torpedoes on the console display, and so determines visibility.

When you have decided on all these, press RETURN again to begin your mission.

STARSHIP CONTROLS

Your ship can accelerate (use 'THRUST') decelerate (use 'BRAKE')
rotate and fire torpedoes. There is a shield which you can activate to
protect your ship from enemy fire, and two escape capsules either of
which can be launched before your energy banks are drained empty.

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**** STARSHIP CONTROLS ****

     Z  -  Rotate left
     X  -  Rotate right
     N  -  Fire torpedoes
     M  -  Thrust
     ,  -  Brake

     F  -  Launch port escape capsule
     G  -  Launch starboard escape capsule
All the above may operate simultaneously
Alternatively , ONE of the following may
be depressed....

     B  -  Shields ON / Scanners OFF
     V  -  Scanners ON / Shields OFF
     C  -  "Auto-Changeover" ON

     f0 -  "Rotation Dampers" ON
     2  -  "Rotation Dampers" OFF
     f1 -  "Velocity Dampers" ON
     3  -  "Velocity Dampers" OFF
     <COPY>   - FREEZE
     <DELETE> - UNFREEZE

           Press <RETURN>
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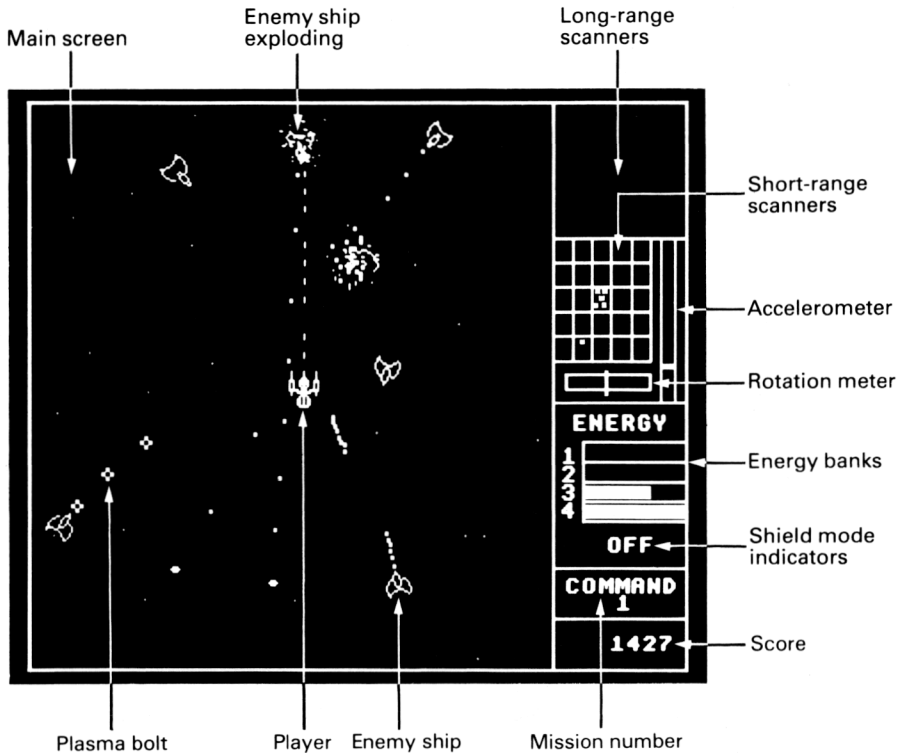
Joystick controls

Joysticks can be used to move the ship in any direction, and the Fire
button fires torpedoes. You should use the keyboard for the other
controls as listed in the screen photo above.

Playing Starship Command

On the right of your screen, there is a panel which displays long and
short range scanners, the accelerometer and the rotation meter, the
state of the energy banks and the shield mode indicators.

Main screen | Enemy ship exploding | Long-range scanners

Short-range scanners
Accelerometer
Rotation meter
Energy banks
Shield mode indicators
Score

ENERGY
1
2
3
4
OFF
COMMAND
1
1427

Plasma bolt | Player | Enemy ship | Mission number

Each starship has four energy banks which recharge continuously at a constant rate. Energy is drained if the ship:

- is firing torpedoes

- is accelerating, decelerating or turning

- has working shields

- is being hit by enemy torpedoes

- crashes into enemy ships

Occasionally, after a severe energy loss, the shields and scanners will break down, resulting in interference on the long range scanners. While this persists, your shields are DOWN, and you are very vulnerable to attacks. Here you must keep your wits about you to avoid enemy shots and collisions. After a short while, the shields and scanners will auto-repair.

The shields can be in one of three states:

- shields permanently on; this is probably the least-used shield command

- shields permanently off; this has the advantage that your energy will not drain so fast: for example, when a hostile ship is on the main screen, but not firing at you

- AUTO mode; probably the most-used shield mode, where the shields come on automatically whenever something hostile appears on the screen.

Scanners cannot operate when shields are on.

There are two types of enemy ships: the larger ones can be invisible on the main screen at the same time as being visible on the long and short range scanners. Larger ships are worth more points when destroyed than the smaller ships.

More points are gained by shooting them rather than ramming them. Both enemy ships have different firing techniques: their torpedoes can be fired in a continuous stream or in plasma bolts.

Score

- small space ship: 8 points if hit, 2 points if rammed.

- big space ship: 12 points if hit, 3 points if rammed.

Ships are destroyed if their energy runs out completely. This applies to both your starship, and the aliens' ships.

As soon as you consider yourself to be in danger, launch one of your escape capsules such that you can return to the starbase. Here the Star Fleet admirals will review your mission, and then decide whether you are a fit person to command another of their Starships.

The missions get progressively harder, as you deal with more and more vicious aliens. Also, for added zest, you are sent further and further from your home galaxy; your ship may be able to manoeuvre faster, but then the same is true of the aliens' ships!

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