

STAR WARS

An Encounter With The Zylons



Galactic Chart



IAN MCKINELL

Star Raiders is a development of the popular computer game Star Trek. Unlike all the other games in this series of Atari classics it was designed specifically for home computers and offers plenty of excitement for both novice and skilful players.

In Star Raiders the player takes the role of commander of the spaceship Star Raider and travels around the galaxy in pursuit of the enemy craft, the Zylons. The game requires the use of the keyboard as well as joystick control. After moving to a sector of the galaxy, pressing the F key will display the forward view from the cockpit. The position of the Zylon ships is indicated by gauges at the bottom of the screen, and by pressing the L key the player calls up the 'long-range scanner', giving a view of the current grid sector with the player's craft in the centre and the Zylons massing in the distance.

The player must then engage the enemy – either by using the standard engines, which may well result in the Zylons escaping, or by going into 'hyperspace' (achieved by pressing H), in which case the distance will be covered in a few seconds. Before engaging hyperspace, the tracking computer must be utilised by pressing T; if this is not done, the hyperspace jump may well result in the player's craft ending up in a totally unknown sector of the galaxy. Other factors to consider are the use of the attack computer (accessed by the C key) and the defence shields of the Star Raider, which are powered by the use of the S key.

Once hyperspace has been left, the computer flashes a Red Alert warning and the battle is on. The Zylon craft attack the Star Raider from all sides, growing ever larger as they approach. Joystick control enables the player to rotate the craft in all directions, and the speed of the ship is set by use of the numeric keys. The measure of control offered enables the player to indulge in dogfights, diving and swooping after the enemy.

But the dogfights use up a lot of energy, and enemy craft will score numerous hits on the Star

Raider, necessitating a visit to a starbase to refuel and effect repairs. The player must then move to a grid containing a star; as the Star Raider approaches, the star will grow into a large yellow flying saucer. The game's hardest manoeuvre then follows, as the player attempts to move into orbit around the base. The starbase must first be fixed in the ship's cross-hair sights, and the player must slow the ship's momentum until the target distance meter registers zero. Once this has happened, the Star Raider may be halted, and if the manoeuvre is successful, the message ORBIT ESTABLISHED will flash across the top of the screen. Great care must be taken during this approach, as it is all too easy to overshoot the target. Once orbit is established, a refuelling pod emerges from the starbase and docks with the Star Raider, enabling the ship to return to the fray.

Every so often a message reading STARBASE SURROUNDED appears onscreen, and the player must then hurry to the beleaguered station to prevent its destruction. When attempting to defend the starbase, the player must exercise great care to avoid hitting the starbase with the Star Raider's weapons.

Star Raiders offers four levels of play, ranging from 'Novice' to 'Commander'. At lower levels, the player does not need to worry too much about damage to the Star Raider, as there are few Zylons and their fire is not very accurate. At higher levels, survival for even a few minutes is extremely difficult.

Star Raiders was awarded the title of Game of the Year for 1980 in the United States and fully deserves the praise it has received. It is a pity that Atari has not made the game available for a wider range of computers.

Star Raiders: For all Atari computers, £9.99

Publishers: Atari Corporation UK Ltd, Atari House, Railway Terrace, Slough, Berks.

Authors: Atari

Joystick: Required

Format: Cartridge



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