

**I AM ZOFF**, Lord Dictator of the cosmos, natural superior to any creature within my awesome domain.

They tried to defeat me, pen me up before I could become all-powerful. I admit my inadequacies but even the Enigma Force, who tracked me down in their spacecraft, could not hold me for long.

It was I who, using my psionic abilities, destroyed the reasoning faculties of the Enigma craft's guidance system. The ship began to malfunction but they could do nothing, tucked up in their cryogenic chambers, sleeping.

I thought then, as the escape pod took me towards the Insectoid planet, that they might not get out of the tangled wreck alive. Such hopes were dashed — they crashed into the underground Insectoid complex. And now they are hunting me like some wild animal.

Team leader Zark Montor is a veteran fighter with battle injuries which have left him with a cybernetic arm. I do not underestimate him. His worth was shown in Mission Shadowfire.

Syyik, who's homeworld this is, has a pathological hatred of me. No doubt it was built into him by his insectoid brothers. They too will pay the penalty — my reptiloid allies are at this moment wiping them out.

Sevrina Maris, called Mistress of Mayhem, is the woman in the group. Among her many talents

are a love of guns and an agility with locks. A most interesting adversary.

Maul is a combat droid which carries a devastating array of armaments. Those it lets off at the slightest provocation.

Their aim was to capture me and take me to their emperor. They succeeded in their first task but I foiled the second. Now they are out for vengeance. It is my death they desire.

Little do they know that the republic has sent destructor tugs to wipe out this planet if I am not captured...

General Zoff is on his way through the maze of corridors to find the only ship on the base — a reptiloid craft in a reptiloid area. Your task, controlling the four members of the Enigma team, is to find Zoff and kill him. In order to do that you must find the insectoid leader and befriend him. If you do not, the insectoid forces will remain hostile to you.

The instruction booklet may not be much help in finding your way through the mazelike corridors and rooms, but at least it shows all the controls clearly. The **Shadowfire** booklet was gibberish but the authors seem to have learned from their mistakes.

It provides a mission briefing, followed by an introduction to the icons which are easier to understand than those in **Shadowfire**.

The game is also easier to play and the plot is simpler.

# Enigma Force

Just go through all the corridors, mapping as you travel, kill all reptiloid patrols, make an ally of the insectoids and find Zoff's ship. You have to get off the planet before it is destroyed.

The play screen is split horizontally into three. The top section shows a 3D representation of the underground room or corridor you are in, and the characters who are there. The middle section displays each character's identity icon. There is a small window below each of these which shows the commands you are giving the characters, and special objects when they are picked up.

As with **Shadowfire** you can take on the role of any one of the four main characters. Position the cross-hair cursor over the character icon — which should start flashing — and press ENTER. At that point the screen will change colour to match the colour of the icon you've just selected. That way you know who you are moving.

The bottom section of the screen is the most important. It scrolls across the screen as you move the cursor, uncovering a large variety of icons which are used to manipulate characters.

The character status display is much simpler than that in **Shadowfire**. It contains just a bar chart showing strength — a rating which changes depending upon the character you select.

When you have selected a character you can move using the large arrow icons. Sometimes the characters will not move out of a room, presumably because the programmers wanted to show that the characters have intelligence. That intelligence is best seen when the Enigma characters have run out of ammunition and run into a reptiloid patrol. On such an occasion you will probably find that the team scatters screaming 'Okay, tactical retreat', 'No ammunition', or 'Help, enemy on all sides'. That's no way for a hero to behave.

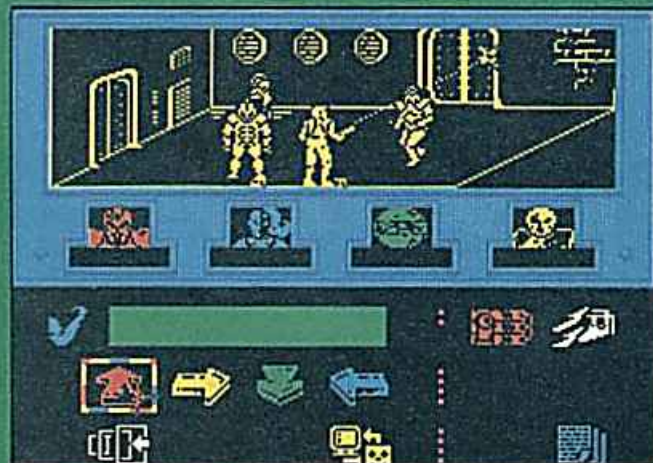
None of the characters has ammunition when the game starts but scattered on the floor of the crash site are cases of ammo. It is common-sense to make each character pick up one case — there are three cases and a red herring — about which more later.

When you've picked up your

ammo you should not all move off as a group. You can afford to split up in pairs. The advance party should include Syyik, although the reason is a secret which, Beyond says, you will have to fathom for yourself — just remember that familiarity does not always breed contempt.

Although **Enigma Force** depends more upon action, movement and mapping, than strategy or adventuring, you will need to pick up objects other than ammo. For instance, there are keys, explosives and that mysterious red herring.

The programmers have used the same **Shadowfire** object manipulation icons for **Enigma Force**. Pick-up is shown as a hand carrying a case and drop is a hand releasing a case. Activate, a finger on a button, will allow you to prime





weapons or use objects such as toolkits and Load Weapon, a gun with powerpack, will make your weapons ready to fire.

Of the objects I picked up I could only activate a key for an electronic lock, explosives and a red herring (Just what is this red herring? Ed). Do you really want to know? (Yes, Ed). Okay, you must experiment. Give the object to each of the team members in turn and activate it. When you hit the correct character the red herring will turn into something a lot more useful and a lot less fishy.

Explosives are fun to use but deadly if triggered in the wrong way. At one point, during a fight with reptiloid guards, I decided to let off a charge. I primed the explosive and then quickly left the room. There was a big bang and I found the character — Sevrina in this case — saying, Goodbye, cruel world. I had forgotten to let go of the charge.

Reptiloids can be just as stupid where explosives are concerned. Although they will

retreat if they run out of ammo they don't appear to run for cover when a primed bomb is placed in full view.

In some instances your characters may not obey your commands and you will have to use the dreaded mind probe. It is a device which will chain the mind of its victim so that you can move him or her manually, by joystick or cursor, and fire without question.

The use of the mind probe can greatly enhance your chances of winning battles. If you use it on a character who is cornered by the enemy you can

fire at will or make a run for it. The main characters are unlikely to run during a fight without the mind probe, even if you tell them to move themselves.

Moving a character around under mind probe control can be a boon at the beginning of the game. Although **Enigma Force** contains fewer rooms and corridors than **Shadowfire**, a map is vital because no floorplan is shown in the game.

Map-making is quicker if you use one of the characters, such as Syllk, to rush around the rooms, avoiding patrols and

finding locked doors. Unfortunately, you cannot pick up objects when using the probe but, as all objects have a definite starting position, you can just log them and retrieve them later.

During the game Zoff may appear almost unnoticed, in the thick of the fighting. Here is your chance to kill him. He wears a purple coloured suit but — on the Spectrum version of the game — he is fairly difficult to recognise unless you are looking intently at your scanners.

You may feel slightly disappointed when you first see the 3D graphics in **Enigma Force**. They are not as colourful as the Commodore 64 version but the action, particularly in the many fight sequences is more realistic. The authors have gone for realism of movement rather than colour clash.

The sound, which unfortunately is only sustained at the beginning of the game, is also excellent. That gives the finishing touch to what is an excellent game — certainly easier to play and more immediately attractive than **Shadowfire**. I am quite enamoured with Maul, the manic droid, and love the way he spins on his axis during the game...

... Not for long. I, Zoff, will put a spoke in his central drive.

So you still haven't caught me. At last I have passed the final sliding door and found the reptiloid ship which will get me off this planet. That's handy...

Excuse me while I sniff into my prototronic hankie. I'm getting tired waiting here. I'm going to have a sprint down the corridor. Perhaps we'll meet around the next bend.

General Zoff/John Gilbert

## SINCLAIR USER CLASSIC



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