

TAU CETI

It doesn't take long for a new player of Tau Ceti to become accustomed to the controls of his Skimmer craft and start zooming all over the place and blowing everything he can find to pieces. But the most effective player is the one who figures out how to read his instrument panel properly. Let's start by going through each of the systems, one by one...

The Skimmer

The large viewing panel shows the view outside the Skimmer. You can watch time go by as the sun travels across the sky. Obviously the sun provides less light during periods of dawn and dusk and none whatsoever at night. The Skimmer, though, is designed to operate under all conditions, given a few limitations.

You have an infra-red (IR) imaging system which is ideal for navigating by night. However, things look different with IR: buildings and other shapes become blurred. For this reason it's not a good idea to use it during combat when IR images can look confusing. If you get into a fight and can't escape, switch back to the normal display and fire a flare to provide ambient light. Remember that you only have a limited number of flares and that each one provides light for a

short period of time. Ideally, avoid entering combat at night and the IR system will serve you well.

It's possible to do this simply by landing the Skimmer and waiting for morning (your Status report will tell you when). Robots don't attack landed ships because they can only detect changing energy levels. When you park the Skimmer, your energy level is constant and you're invisible to them.

Whichever mode you operate the display in, side and rear views can be called up. This feature isn't just for show: side and rear views allows you to circle structures (or robots) without losing sight of them. Alternatively, if you're on the run, missiles can still be targeted from these views. Lasers, however, cannot. So don't waste time trying to use them.

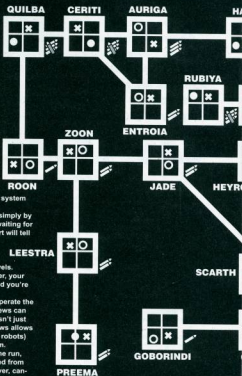
Remember to keep half an eye on the Long Range Scanner when skimming with a side or rear view. You won't be able to see on-coming objects otherwise!

The Scanner is therefore another useful tool. The top of the Scanner always represents the angle in which you're heading. It has both Short and Long range options. While Long range is the most useful travel option, Short range reveals the identity of detected objects. Short range is useful when you suspect that something you're looking for is close by but can't see it (perhaps because it's just on the other side of one of the enormous buildings that keep shooting at you when you're not looking).

Black dots are buildings with which the Skimmer can dock, while white dots represent robots. The golden rule is only fire on something that shows up as a white dot on the Scanner.

When you're moving around, there are three navigational devices to help you. The most obvious and most commonly used one of these devices is the compass. The disadvantage of the compass is that it isn't very good at withstanding damage. One decent hit from a robot and out it goes, for good.

Much more robust are the ADFs (Automatic Direction Finders) of which you have two, in the lower right hand part of the display. The top one always locates



key

- ☐ Home Base
- Civilian Supply Centre
- Military Supply Centre
- ✕ Reactor Substation
- ★ Main Reactor
- Low Defence
- - - Medium Defence
- ... High Defence
- ... Very High Defence

Hunter vs Skimmer

Hunter craft should generally be disposed of as soon as possible. You can tell which ones they are because they appear on the Long Range Scanner when they're still below the horizon. Stay low and you'll be able to line them up with the laser as soon as they appear. But remember not to try entering bases at this level. You'd splatter.

With this technique, you'll find the Hunters quite easy to take out (especially the MkIs which you can ram should the worst come to the worst). On the other hand, the MkVs are agile and have the ability to launch AMMs (Anti-Missile Missiles). So do the control tower robots. The best tactic is to fly as close as possible before launching and the chances are that your opponent won't have time to react.

In the case of the MkV, don't skimp on the lasers if you want to be sure of destroying it. Remember also, that some of the buildings tend to fire off missiles at you while you're not looking. Keep an eye on your sensors. As long as you detect them around the time that they're fired, you should be able to knock them out with laser fire or an AMM.

make sure you have missiles and AMMs. "It's better to be safe than sorry," as the Ultimate Xenomorph said to the planet of harmless furry things he'd just nuked.)

Always make a note of the places you've searched for rods: the last few will then be that much easier to find. If you can resist the temptation, don't re-assemble the rods until you have found them all. For one thing, it means you'll be able to get the job over with in one go. It also means that you won't have to keep track of complete and half rods on top of everything else. And when you do return to the reactor room, you'll be able to insert the rods quickly and minimise your exposure to the deadly radiation.

One of the game's strengths is that you can save your progress. Do this every couple of cities and you will neither have to go back very far if you come a cropper nor spend half the time saving instead of playing. It even means you can afford to spend some time practising fighting MkV Hunters and not worry about getting blasted.

Keep these tips in mind, don't panic, and you'll be well on the road to regaining control of the planet. Earn you a decent pension, that will. What are you waiting for? Set a course for Tau Ceti!

main compass directions. These are shown on the map.

There are another two sensors on board, both of which are indispensable. The Tracking Sensor tells you if any device is using radar on you. Any device which does this can direct robots to follow you and launch missiles against you with greater accuracy. So keep an eye on this sensor until you get the chance to knock out the city's radar base.

The second sensor is your ultra-handry, state-of-the-art Alert indicator. The colour it flashes indicates whether Hunter craft or robots are in the area. The rate at which it flashes indicates whether or not you're being tracked. Don't panic if this thing puts on a big show, just do something about it!

Combat

There's plenty of this and, despite what you may think, you're not equipped to take on everything that moves. Nope, you've actually got to be careful. Here are a few tips.

Your laser heats up with use. When it gets too hot, it will respond sluggishly (probably when you need it most).

Skimmer docks have feelings too. If you accidentally shoot or collide with one of these, it isn't going to let you in afterwards (actually, it will if you leave the city and return again but that won't help you if there are half a dozen robots after you).

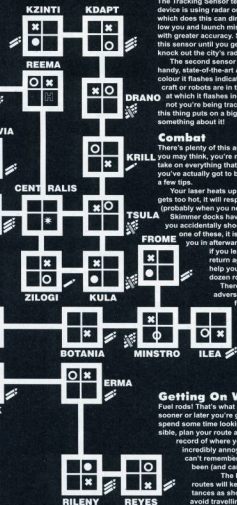
There is one particular adversary which won't fire on you unless you first attack it. Try to leave it alone. It's a mean opponent when it gets upset.

Getting On With It

Fuel rods! That's what it's all about and sooner or later you're going to have to spend some time looking for them. If possible, plan your route and always keep a record of where you've been. It's incredibly annoying when you can't remember where you've been (and can be fatal).

The best planned routes will keep inter-city distances as short as possible and avoid travelling to the same

place more than once. If you do have to travel through a city a second time, remember that the supply centres there will have built new Hunters by the time you return. Just because you may have destroyed them all last time you passed that way, it doesn't mean you're in for an easy return journey. (Some cities only have civilian supply centres so it's really a case of being wary. But just in case,



the centre of the city you're in (but the centre of the city isn't always exactly where you imagine it should be). The bottom one always indicates the direction of the nearest Jump Pad. Using these together should suffice if you bear in mind that the rather regular design of the cities means that the Jump Pads are always situated along one of the four