Starlancer FAQ

by Scottie_theNerd   Updated to v1.1 on Jan 27, 2004

This walkthrough was originally written for Starlancer on the DC, but the walkthrough is still applicable to the PC version of the game.

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=                               STARLANCER                                    =
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=                                   FAQ                                        =
=                                    ~                                         =
=             Written by Scottie_theNerd  (scottie_thenerd@yahoo.com)          =
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Version History
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-v1.1 (Jan 27 2004): Just doing a serious overhaul of the FAQ, including
                     re-editing and reformatting. Also added more information
                     on everything in general, and added new sections for
                     Torpedoes and the Ion Cannon. No additional updates are
                     planned.

-v1.0 (Mar 17 2001): Original FAQ completed.


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1.0 - INTRODUCTION
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The war between the Coalition and the Alliance has worsened and it seems
that the Coalition is getting the upper hand. However, the Coalition declares a
truce and decide to sign a peace treaty at Fort Kennedy, on Titan. The Alliance
is overjoyed and the majority of their forces join in the ceremony of the
treaty. However, Admiral Kulov of the Coalition has a trick up his sleeve.

Later, Fort Kennedy is exterminated. The Coalition's plans of peace were
merely a cover to launch their attack. Behind the Alliance escorts, the
cloaked Coalition fighters followed closely. They moved in to attack at
the order of Kulov and made mincemeat of the unprepared Alliance fort.
One of Kulov's assistants requests more ships for the prisoners. Kulov
mutters "Kill them. We have no time for prisoners...".

With this surprise attack, the Alliance forces are driven back to the
outer planets. However, the leaders of the Alliance make a plan. They
hope to regroup at Neptune and defend their position there. However,
most of the forces are either scattered or lost. Many fighter squadrons
were wiped out, so the Alliance makes a desperate call. They call upon
the civilians for aid. Anyone with flight experience is asked to sign up
and enter the supposedly hopeless battle.

The Alliance needs you.

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2.0 - CONTROLS
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The controls of StarLancer are a tad complicated, and involves button
combinations and menus. However, after a few missions, you will get used
to them and wield them effectively.

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=====================
2.1 - Basic Controls
=====================
A Button:           Fire Primary Weapon (eg. Lasers)


B Button:           Fire Secondary Weapon (eg. Missiles)


X Button:           Target Menu
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Y Button:              Systems Menu.

R Trigger:             Accelerate

L Trigger:             Deccelerate

D-pad Left/Right:      Switch Secondary Weapon.

D-pad Up:              Toggle Radar On/Off.

Dpad Down:             Launch Flares
                       *Use these to shake off missiles that are tailing you.

========================
2.2 - Advanced Controls
========================
L Trigger x2:          Afterburner

R Trigger x2:          Reverse Thrust
                       *Only some fighters have this ability.

L Trigger + R Trigger: Escort Speed
                       *Maintains constant speed with target

L + R + A + B + X + Y:  Eject

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2.21 - Ejecting
----------------
A flight sim would never be complete without the option to get the hell outta
there. Depending on the situation, there may or may not be consequences.

On a not-so-important mission, your squadron leader will call in the
Nanny ship to pick you up and the mission will still succeed, but you
g no credit. On a vital mission, ejecting will get you transferred, and Game
Over. Ejecting when you don't even need to will also get you transferred.
After all, why would you eject right after you launch?


==================
2.3 - TARGET MENU
==================
By holding the X Button, you will bring up a list of possible targets. It also
displays what commands you can execute by displaying it on screen. To use a
command, hold X and press one of the following buttons:

X + A:                 Target nearest enemy.

X + Y:                 Target nearest ally.

X + B:                 Target nearest Torpedo Bomber

X + D-pad Up/Down:     Cycle through list


==================
2.4 - SYSTEMS MENU
==================
Like the Target Menu, the commands are displayed on the screen. They are:
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Y + A:               Toggle Blindfire On/Off
Otherwise known as "laser-lock", it is represented by an icon on the top
left hand corner of the screen resemblind a crosshair. When the icon is
displayed, your lasers will lock onto the target. Only works with two or
one guns.

Y + X:               Display Gun Modes
Various fighters have more than two lasers. Therefore, you can switch
between modes and pick out which guns you want to use, including individual
weapons and Full-Guns.

Y + B:               Activate Special Equipment.
Depending on your fighter, this may or may not appear. Special Equipment
include Electronic Counter-Measures, Spectral Shields and Cloaking
Devices.

Y + D-pad Up:        Order Attack
Orders your wingmen to attack your target. Despite its potential, it's actual
usefulness is severely limited.

Y + D-pad Down:      Request Help
Sends out a request to your wingmen for aid.

Y + Dpad Left/Right: Change camera view
This changes the camera view. "Chase View" is incredibly useful, especially
later on.

Y + L Trigger + Analog left/right:  Roll

Y + R Trigger + Analog left/right:  Yaw


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3.0 - HEADS-UP DISPLAY
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On the top of the screen there are a few icons. From left to right:

-Blindfire (crosshairs)
Indicates whether blindfire is on or off.

-Escort speed (two parallel ships)
Indicates if escort speed is active.

-Enemy threat (flashing red fighter/missile)
This represents enemies approaching your rear. A fighter icon represents a
fighter tailing you, while a missile icon represents a missile tracking you.
Obviously, the latter is more dangerous, so take evasion action.

-Afterburner fuel (yellow fighter + number)
Indicates amount of afterburner fuel remaining.

-Kills (skull + crossbones)
Tallied amount of kills you have scored.

-Flares (spring-type thing)
Indicates remaining number of flares.

In the middle of the screen, there is a crosshair and two bars. The bar
on the left indicates your speed. Pressing R or L accelerates or
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decelerates. The bar on the right represents the lasers. When firing rapidly,
the bar will deplete. When it reaches zero, your lasers overheat and fire more
slowly. To cool down, cease firing for a few seconds. The best way to avoid
this is to do what everyone else does: fire in short bursts. Don't be tempted
to waste your bogey by blasting his backside away. Take your time.

On the bottom right of the screen, there is a diagram of your fighter
surrounded by two dotted circles. The orange circle represents your
shields and how much damage they have taken. Shields can regenerate
slowly. The red circle represents the hull. Taking damage in this area
is serious and you can die. Taking heavy front damage means your lasers
fire less efficiently, or won't even fire at all. Taking back damage
slows your ship down to the speed of a snail.

Next to that is the radar. This indicates the positions of enemies and
friendlies in relation to yourself.

In the bottom right is your target's shields/hull damage. Same as yours.
Coalition ships are red, allied ships are green. Remember though, not all
allied ships are your friends, and not all enemy ships are hostile.

~
4.0 - WEAPONS
~
Each fighter can be outfitted with a variety of weapons, more of which become
available as you progress through the game. Most missiles need to be locked
onto a target for maximum effectiveness. To lock on, select a missile and aim
at your target. A red circle will appear. When it turns white, the target has
been locked-on. Firing the missile at this point means that the missile will
home in on its target.

Screamer

Damage: Low
Speed: Very high
Range: Short
Lock-on time: N/A

Basic, dumbfire missile. Very fast, but poor range and damage. It comes in a
pod of 20 though, so you can rip your foes apart with a barrage of Screamers.

Havok

Damage: N/A
Speed: Average
Range: Average
Lock-on time: 3 seconds

Explodes near target and causes shockwave. Enemies caught in blast will lose
control of their ship and will be vulnerable to attack for a few seconds.
Reasonably useful early on, but lack of damage and difficulty of hitting an
out-of-control fighter reduces its worth.

Bandit

Damage: Average

```
Speed:         Average
Range:         Average
Lock-on time:  5 seconds
```

Penetrates through the hull of the target and explodes. Standard damaging
lock-on missile, no frills.

```
---------
Fuel Pod
---------
Damage:        N/A
Speed:         N/A
Range:         N/A
Lock-on time:  N/A
```

Extra fuel pods to increase afterburner time. Mildly useful.

```
-----------
Jackhammer
-----------
Damage:        Very high
Speed:         Low
Range:         High
Lock-on time:  6 seconds
```

The hard-hitting missile. By far the strongest missile in the game, it has an
extremely slow speed and painfully slow lock-on time. These disadvantages make
the Jackhammer only useful for destroying slow-moving or stationary targets.

```
---------
Vagabond
---------
Damage:        Average
Speed:         Very high
Range:         Very high
Lock-on time:  4 seconds
```

An effective weapon due to its exceptional speed and range, the Vagabond can
also track cloaked enemies.

```
-----------
Raptor Pod
-----------
Damage:        Average
Speed:         High
Range:         Average
Lock-on time:  3 seconds
```

Effective against enemy fighters. Damage and range aren't exceptional, but
these are compensated by the 3-rocket pod.

```
---------
Hawk Pod
---------
Damage:        Average
Speed:         High
Range:         High
Lock-on time:  4 seconds
```

Similar to the Raptor pod, but more suited for long-range targets. Comes in a

```
pod of 4 rockets.


----
Imp
----
Damage:       Disabled shields
Speed:        High
Range:        Average
Lock-on time: 2 seconds


A useful missile with high speed and fast lock-on time. The Imp knocks out the
shields of any fighter caught in the blast. Definitely more useful than the
Havok.


------------
Solomon Pod
------------
Damage:       Average
Speed:        High
Range:        Average
Lock-on time: N/A


Dumbfire rockets. Solomon rockets home in on the nearest target, causing
moderate damage on impact. Comes in a pod of 4 rockets.


------------
Nova Cannon
------------
Damage:       Very high
Speed:        Instantenous
Range:        High
Lock-on time: N/A


A laser-type weapon instead of a missile. Only available on the Phoenix, this
weapon can be selected via the weapons menu. Charge the weapon up by holding
the A button until the laser bar becomes full, then let go. Although it is the
most damaging weapon in the game, it is near-impossible to hit something. Not
worth using.



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5.0 - EQUIPMENT
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Unlike Weapons, Equipment cannot be selected prior to missions, but instead
come with each type of fighter. Equipment varies between fighters.


---------------
Reverse Thrust
---------------
Most of the later fighters come with this ability. Similar to the Afterburner,
but accelerates backwards. Tap R twice to activate.

----------------------------------
Electronic Counter-Measures (ECM)
----------------------------------
A device that jams tracking systems in missiles and throws them off your trail.
Incredibly useful, activate it to shake off a missile.

-----------------
Spectral Shields
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Makes you immune to lasers when turned on.


----------------
Cloaking Device
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Only the Shroud has this option. Turning it on will cloak the Shroud, making
it invulnerable to attack, but is unable to attack in return.



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6.0 - FIGHTERS
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The fighters vary in various stats, including the number of hardpoints, which
determines the amount of weapons carried. Only several fighters are available
at the start. As the game progresses, you can increase your access clearance
by being promoted through exceptional performances in missions. The following
is an overview of each fighter.


---------
Predator
---------
Class: Light      Access: Bronze
Speed:   *****
Accel:   *****
Agility: ******
Shield:  **
Armor:   *****
Afterburner Fuel: 100 seconds
Crew: 2
Guns: 2


An all-around fighter, the Predator is one of the first fighters you start off
with. Not excelling in any particular area, it is an easy-to-use fighter and
ideal for new players.


---------
Naginata
---------
Class: Light      Access: Bronze
Speed:   ******
Accel:   **
Agility: ******
Shield:  ****
Armor:   **
Afterburner Fuel: 130 seconds
Crew:2
Guns: 2


More specialised than the Predator, the Naginata is faster and has slightly
better control, but suffers from weaker defense.


--------
Grendel
---------
Class: Medium      Access: Bronze
Speed:   **
Accel:   ********
Agility: **
Shield:  ********
```

```
Armor:    ******
Afterburner Fuel: 80 seconds
Crew:3
Guns:4
```

The first Medium fighter you have access to, the Grendel is a heavier gunship-
type fighter than its predecessors. Additional guns give the Grendel more
firepower.

```
---------
Crusader
---------
Class: Light        Access: Bronze
Speed:   ***
Accel:   *****
Agility: *****
Shield:  ****
Armor:   *****
Afterburner Fuel: 110secs
Crew:2
Guns:2
Special Equipment: Spectral Shields
```

Another average fighter, the Crusader stands out by having Spectral Shields.
Other than that, nothing too special about this fighter.

```
-------
Coyote
-------
Class: Light        Access: Silver
Speed:   ****
Accel:   ********
Agility: *****
Shield:  *****
Armor:   *****
Afterburner Fuel: 100secs
Crew:2
Guns:2
```

The first Silver-access fighter, the Coyote is quicker than previous all-around
fighters. The strongest point of the Coyote is its large number of hardpoints,
allowing more weapons to be carried.

```
-------
Mirage
-------
Class: Medium       Access: Silver
Speed:   ****
Accel:   ***
Agility: ****
Shield:  ****
Armor:   ***
Afterburner Fuel: 130secs
Crew:2
Guns:4
Special Equipment: ECM
```

Although not impressive in stats, the Mirage comes with ECMs, which make
dodging missiles a lot easier, which in turn extends the Mirage's usefulness.

```
--------
Tempest
--------
Class: Heavy        Access: Silver
Speed:    ****
Accel:    *********
Agility:  ***
Shield:   *****
Armor:    *****
Afterburner Fuel: 100secs
Crew:2
Guns:4
Special Equipment: Reverse Thrust

The first Heavy-class fighter, the Tempest has stronger defense with excellent
offense without suffering too much from a loss in speed.

--------
Patriot
--------
Class: Medium       Access: Gold
Speed:    ******
Accel:    ********
Agility:  ***
Shield:   *******
Armor:    *****
Afterburner Fuel: 110secs
Crew:2
Guns:4
Special Equipment: Spectral Shields

The first Gold-access fighter, the Patriot is substantially superior to
previous fighters, but does not specialise in any particular area. Its Spectral
Shields are mildly useful.

----------
Wolverine
----------
Class: Advanced Heavy     Access: Gold
Speed:    ***
Accel:    ********
Agility:  ***
Shield:   *******
Armor:    ********
Afterburner Fuel: 120secs
Crew:3
Guns:5
Special Equipment: ECM, Reverse Thrust

One of the best fighters in the game, the Wolverine is a pure powerhouse. With
an exceptional amount of guns and the highest defense ratings, the Wolverine
can pour out an amazing amount of firepower while being able to take a lot in
return. Although it suffers in speed, the ECMs can shake off persistant
missiles.

-------
Reaper
-------
Class: Heavy        Access: Gold
Speed:    ****
```

```
Accel:     ****
Agility:   ***
Shield:    ******
Armor:     *****
Afterburner Fuel: 120secs
Crew:3
Guns:4
Special Equipment: Reverse Thrust, Spectral Shields
```

Another run-of-the-mill fighter, the Reaper is a solid fighter, but there are
better fighters out there.

```
-------
Shroud
-------
Class: Prototype Light      Access: Platinum
Speed:     *********
Accel:     ***
Agility:   *********
Shield:    *********
Armor:     ***
Afterburner Fuel: 150secs
Crew:2
Guns:2
Special Equipment: Cloaking Device
```

The first Platinum-class fighter, the Shroud is the most specialised fighter
available. The Shroud is the fastest fighter and also has the most shields.
What makes the Shroud unique, though, is its ability to Cloak. An invaluable
tool, the Shroud is necessary in several missions. Its offensive power is
mediocre at best, so utilise its strengths effectively.

```
--------
Phoenix
--------
Class: Prototype Medium     Access: Platinum
Speed:     ********
Accel:     *********
Agility:   *******
Shield:    *******
Armor:     ****
Afterburner Fuel: 140secs
Crew:2
Guns:4
Special Equipment: Reverse Thrust, ECM, Nova Cannon
```

The best fighter in the game in terms of stats, the Phoenix is the last fighter
you can obtain. Clearly superior to any all-around fighter, the Phoenix also
has the Nova Cannon weapon. However, the Phoenix does not specialise in any
area, and tends to leave a lot to be desired when compared to the Shroud or
the Wolverine.

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6.0 - CAPITOL SHIPS
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Capships for short, these are the big guys: the Carriers and Battleships we
know and love. Capships have individual sub-targets. These include:

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```
Shield Generator
----------------
Unlike fighters, you cannot take out shields by firing on them. To take out
the shields, you must target the shield generator and destroy it. A Jackhammer
is the best weapon to use.


------------
Gun Turrets
------------
These little buggers shoot you. However, there are a few big guns that can
tear apart your ship in one hit, so be careful. Take them out with lasers or
rockets.


--------
Engines
--------
These propel the ship. Destroying these will immobilise the capship.

The sub-targets are colored red when selected, allowing you to pick out
specific targets on the capship. Since capships are either stationary or
slow-moving, Jackhammers are ideal weapons to take out sub-targets. However,
they are heavily defended by fighter squadrons as well as their own guns. Also
note that your own capships are just as vulnerable, if not more. Defend them
well, especially against...


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8.0 - TORPEDOES
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The scourge of StarLancer, only matched in annoyance by the Ion Cannon.
Torpedoes are incredibly powerful and are the bane of capships. Torpedoes are
either launched by capships or torpedo bombers, who tend to jump in and out
a few times each battle. Although you can take out torpedo bombers, you cannot
stop them before they fire their barrage of torpedoes. This is where anti-
torpedo warfare comes in.

It doesn't take many hits to knock out your own capships, which usually means
game over. The key is to put yourself in a position where you can take out as
many torpedoes in go as possible. Pay attention to what's happening, and locate
torpedoes by cycling through the target menu. Once you find them, intercept
them far away from your capship. Enemy fighters are unimportant, and even
harmless. Torpedoes are your number one concern.

The most effective approach is to swing around and fire on torpedoes from the
rear. Firing from the side is difficult and often ineffective, while a head-on
approach is quite dangerous, but still reasonably effective. Make sure
blindfire is on. You don't need heavy artillery to take out bombers, just a
burst of laser. You will most often have to take out several torpedoes at a
time, so be quick and do not spend a long time taking out each torpedo. If you
find that you are falling behind, let the torpedo go and move on to the next.
At least you give yourself the chance to take out other torpedoes while
sacrificing one or two hits.

Of course, when your own capships fire torpedoes, it is a good idea not to get
in the way.


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9.0 - The Ion Cannon
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The second-most annoying enemy in the game, you won't come across these too often. When you do, you'll be up for a frustration-fest.

The only way to avoid the tracking beam of the Ion Cannon is to use the Shroud and cloak when it locks onto you. Extremely agile evasive actions might work, but you do not have the time to do that too often. This is where the Chase Cam is most effective. Although your co-pilot does scream at you when it locks on, there is a glitch in the game where only one communication event happens at a time. Because of this, your co-pilot will alert you either too early or too late. Chase Cam allows your to see the tracking beam yourself and take appropriate action before it is too late.

Destroying the actual Ion Cannon varies with the mission. A few well-placed Jackhammers can blow out critical areas. If you can't destroy the Ion Cannon, you have no choice but to avoid it. The Ion Cannon his a limited (although fairly large) targeting range, so fly out of it's sweeping zone as soon as possible.

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