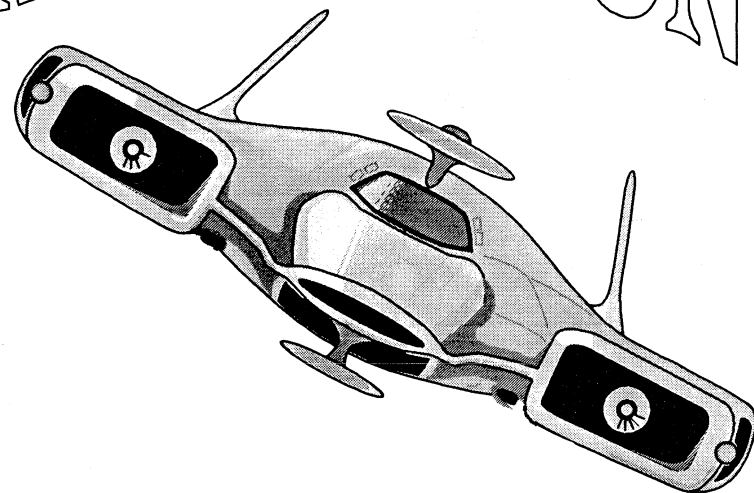


TUNNELS OF ARMAGEDDON™



User's Manual

CALIFORNIA
Dreams™

HOW IT ALL BEGAN:

You sit in your craft, your hands cold and wet like a melting ice cube. While you *understand* that in a few minutes the fate of the world, and its 10 billion people, will be in those clammy hands, you still don't *feel* it. It's probably good, you decide, to be a little detached, or the weight of what you have to do would overwhelm you. You have just enough time to review everything one more time. This time you'll start at the very beginning....

Jealousy, that's what started it all. You just couldn't take watching those six men and women driving and flying on Mars while you were still putzing around in a 30-year-old Earth-orbit shuttle. You imagined your whole life that you would be one of the first people on Mars, and you worked, connived, and sacrificed your way into the Space Academy. If they had delayed the mission only two more years you would've had the space hours necessary to qualify for consideration. And you knew you would've made it. Now these other six were getting all the glory.

You realized, however, that dwelling on your jealousy could lead to self-destruction, so you turned it inward, turned it into dedication and professionalism. While you could no longer be the first on Mars, you could still get there. You devoted yourself to your missions, accepting any offered and excelling on each one.

In the meantime, you learned all you could about the astounding discoveries being made on Mars. Both of the first two missions discovered hieroglyphics, very similar in look and design to those on the plains of Nazca, in Peru. This seemed to prove those notions, previously thought to be science fiction, that spacefaring beings visited the solar system in times past.

After a year or so of study, scientists and archeologists stunned the world with an amazing announcement: The hieroglyphics on the two planets, when read together, appeared to spell out a message. If they were right, the message indicated that these beings left an outpost on Earth, buried beneath the ice of Antarctica. Just as with the Mars missions, a joint United Nations task force was dispatched to the indicated location.

Drilling beneath the ice, they found a massive door, made of an alloy not previously found on Earth. Next to the door was what appeared to be a button. The task force cleared the site, and press from around the world gathered there. With the eyes of the world watching, the Secretary General of the United Nations prepared to press the button.

You remember watching the scene on the wall screen of your barracks. As the Secretary General pressed the button, you felt a voice in your head. You weren't hearing it, but you could understand it. You later learned that everyone who was at the site or who was watching the event felt the same message, each in their own language.

“Greetings from your spacefaring brethren,” the voice began. “We have left your fledgling world alone these many years to allow you to develop and mature without outside influence. The fact that you are here demonstrates that you have acquired the ability to go into space yourselves.

“We are a close-knit community of various species and races dedicated to preserving peace in the galaxy. We are prepared for you to join us. We offer you the secret of faster-than-light travel; with it, the galaxy is yours. However, you must first prove that you are worthy of this prize.

“Beyond this door is a test for your planet. If you have sufficiently developed your science, your physical abilities, and your intellect, you should have no difficulties. However, should you be lacking in any of these areas, you are not fit to join us. Advanced technology in the hands of underdeveloped species has nearly destroyed the galaxy in the past.

“Thus beyond this door is a series of tunnels which you will have to successfully negotiate. In addition, when you open the door you will trigger an alarm. When this alarm reaches the end of the complex, it will detonate a device which will destroy your world. We will give you the prize only if you can eliminate the device before it goes off.

“Because we do sincerely wish for you to join us, we will provide you some details of what lies beyond the door. But the selection of the pilot is your task. Be sure to choose well. You have one year from now to enter, or we will trigger the device. When you are ready, press the button again. We look forward to your joining us.”

You instantly knew your destiny. You *must* be the pilot chosen to navigate the tunnels. You knew that you were the best, and had both the reflexes and the skill required for the job.

After an intensive selection process with candidates from around the globe, you were indeed selected. You trained for as long as time permitted, refining and honing your already sharp skills. You worked with the engineers to design a craft that not only would do the job, but which actually became an extension of yourself.

You now sit in the *HERMES*, wiping your wet palms on the leg of your flight suit. Your craft has been designed so that you can open the door to the complex with your first shot. As a final thought, you determine to prove wrong the name which people have been calling what lies beyond the door. You determine to master the **Tunnels of Armageddon**.

UNITED NATIONS REPORT:

Report of the United Nations Special Task Force on Alien Contact - Synopsis of the Technical Specifications for the *HERMES*, Mark I (Hypervelocity Extraterrestrial Reconnaissance and Magnetically Elevated Scoutcraft).

From the information supplied by the aliens, we have determined the general nature of the complex behind the door and how to construct a craft which can survive the passage. Of course, there are undoubtedly items which we do not fully understand or which have not been described to us by the aliens. Thus the selection of the correct pilot is of supreme importance. We have designed the *HERMES* to help the pilot as much as possible, and to give him as much information as will be available.

I. General nature of the complex.

Organization. The complex appears to be composed of a series of 20 tunnels, broken into 5 zones of 4 stages each. In turn, each stage consists of a various number of segments, allowing the pilot to choose alternate paths through that stage. There are three different types of segments: short, moderate, and long. The shorter the segment, the more difficult it is to fly through. In general terms, all segments get more difficult as the pilot progresses farther into the complex.

Transitions. Between each stage, there is a short transition. In this transition the aliens will report to the pilot so that he will know how well he is doing. In the transition between zones (between every fourth stage) the pilot will be able to send information outside the complex to let us know his progress. We have installed a telemetry device in the HERMES so when a signal is sent we will receive all information from the zone just completed. Thus we will know more about the complex if the aliens permit us to try again with another pilot.

All structural damage to the HERMES will also be repaired in each transition - see Structural Repair below.

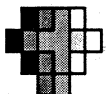
The alarm. As the aliens mentioned, once the door is opened an alarm is triggered. This alarm is sent through the complex at nearly the top speed of the HERMES. Within each stage are generators which relay the alarm along the complex. If a generator is destroyed, the speed of the alarm will be slowed. If the alarm is ahead of the HERMES, then the pilot will encounter more fire from tunnel guardians.

Disintegration Sequence. The main function of the alarm, however, seems to be as a trigger for the destruction sequence. If the alarm reaches the end of a zone before the HERMES does, the sequence is initiated. Once the sequence is initiated, the pilot will only have a limited amount of time to complete that zone before the sequence is completed and all life on Earth is destroyed.

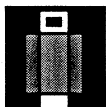
Final Device. Very little information has been provided to us about the final device and how to disarm it. There is a mention of a "puzzle" near the end of the complex, but no details have been provided.

II. Objects to be encountered.

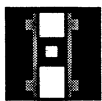
In General. As the HERMES flies through the complex, it will encounter various objects on the walls which protrude into the tunnel in front of it. Some items are useful and helpful, but there are also tunnel guardians which will fire at the craft. To pick up an item or to destroy a guardian, the pilot has to successfully shoot the object on the wall. The following is a list of the objects which will be encountered and their apparent effects.



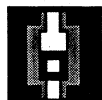
Generators. This is what a generator appears to look like. Destruction of it slows down the alarm.



Guardian 1. This type of tunnel guardian appears to cause structural damage to the HERMES.



Guardian 2. This type of tunnel guardian appears to cause loss of energy to the HERMES.



Guardian 3. This type of tunnel guardian causes both structural damage and energy loss.

BENEFICIAL OBJECTS:



Ammo Type 2. As mentioned below, type 1 ammo will not kill some of the guardians. Type 2 ammo, however, will kill all types of guardians.



Ammo Type 3. Type 3 ammo will kill all guardians and can also be used to blow away walls in front of the HERMES.



Energy Supply. Shooting one of these will increase the energy level of the HERMES.



Invisibility Shield. Once picked up, the HERMES will be automatically invisible from all guardians for an unknown length of time.



Plasma Bomb. The aliens will provide the pilot with three plasma bombs each time he successfully shoots the bomb object. These can later be exploded by the pilot to eliminate objects in his path, with each bomb eliminating one wall and any object on it.



Autopilot. Once acquired, this object can be turned on and off at the pilot's command. When turned on, the aliens will help the pilot by controlling the movement of the HERMES until turned off or the allotted amount of time has run out.



Superbooster. This object works just as the autopilot does. In addition, when turned on, the speed of HERMES will be drastically increased.



Destructive Force Shield. Once acquired, this object can also be turned on and off at the pilot's command. When turned on, a force shield will be placed in front of the HERMES. This shield, which is visible to the pilot, will destroy all objects in its path. Again, we have not been able to determine its duration.

III. General design and operation of the HERMES.

Maneuvering. The walls and floors of the alien complex are made of an unknown metallic alloy. We have designed the HERMES to be magnetically levitated above the floor. Besides the large thrusters in the rear, there are small side, front, and bottom thrusters which allow the craft lateral and vertical movement. Thus the HERMES can maneuver to either side, can rise up to get over obstacles, and can move backwards.

Energy Level. The energy level of the HERMES is represented by the Energy Level Gauge. As long as the gauge is at a high level (green), there are no harmful effects. As mentioned, certain types of tunnel guardians cause a loss of energy. When the gauge falls into the first red area, the running lights will turn off. When the gauge falls into the last red area, the instrument reading will begin to fade. There is a warning beep when each red segment is entered. When the energy level reaches 0, the craft will be destroyed. More energy can be obtained by successfully shooting an Energy Supply object.

Structure. The overall structural integrity of the HERMES is represented by the Structural Damage Gauge. As long as the gauge is at a high level (green) there are no harmful effects. As mentioned, certain types of tunnel guardians cause structural damage. In addition, structural damage is caused by the HERMES impacting head-on into the tunnel walls. As the gauge falls into the red area the following systems will be affected:

Steering System. Steering control responsiveness will be reduced.

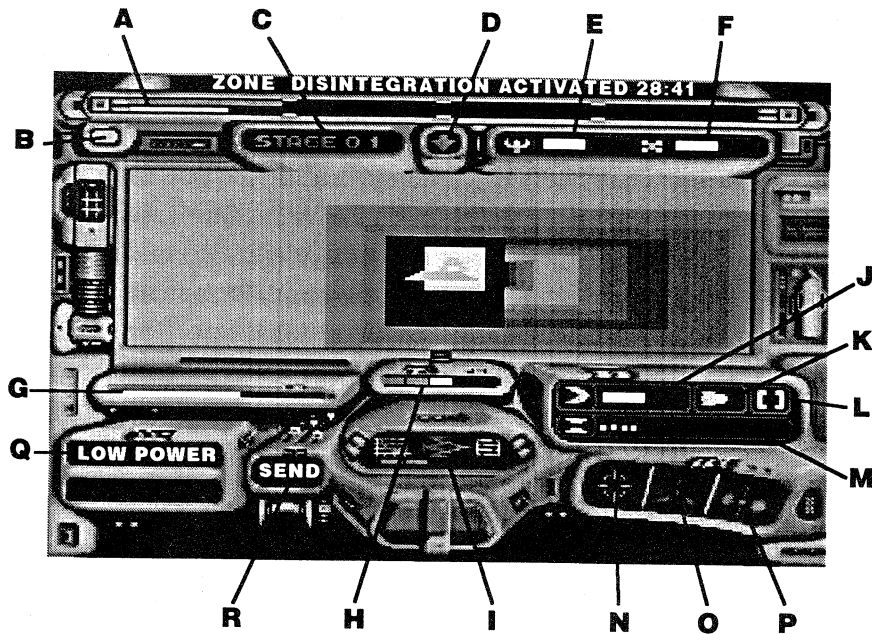
Propulsion System. The maximum speed of the HERMES will be reduced.

Targeting System. Firing accuracy will be reduced. When structural integrity reaches 0, the craft will be destroyed.

Structural Repair. The structure of the HERMES can only be repaired by stopping the craft so that on-board computer and energy systems can be devoted to the task. Since both the HERMES and the alarm stop while in a transition, the aliens will automatically repair all structural damage during each transition. In addition, the pilot will be able to repair structural damage between transitions by stopping and transferring energy to the structure.

Types of ammo. The HERMES is designed to carry 3 types of ammunition. Type 1 is the most advanced ammunition known to mankind today; type 2 and 3 will be supplied by the aliens. (Receptacles for the last two types have been designed according to the aliens' information.) We have provided the pilot with what appears to be more type 1 ammo than will be needed for the entire passage; he should not run out of this type. It appears, however, that this type of ammo will not be able to destroy the tunnel guardians. In addition, type 3 ammo can blow away obstacles in front of the craft. It is therefore necessary for the pilot to obtain types 2 and 3 ammo as he progresses through the complex. The craft is designed to use the best type of ammo currently available. Thus, if the pilot has all 3 types of ammo, all of type 3 would be used first and then the HERMES would switch to type 2 ammo.

HERMES - COCKPIT



IV. Cockpit layout.

On the preceding page is a diagram of the Cockpit for the HERMES. The various displays have been labeled and are explained below. Note that for any bar gauge the leftmost position is zero. As the gauge increases it will grow to the right.

A. Alarm and HERMES Progress Gauge. These two bars show how far through the current zone the alarm (red) is, and how far through the current zone the HERMES (green) is. If the red line reaches the end of the zone before the green one, the Disintegration Sequence is activated. This gauge is reset at the start of every zone.

B. Alarm Speed Indicator. This light indicates whether the alarm is travelling at its normal speed (red), or at a slower speed (green) due to destroyed generators.

C. Stage Indicator. Indicates which stage the HERMES is in.

D. Centering Mark. This mark designates the center of the pilot's field of view and can be used to assist in aiming.

E. Autopilot Gauge. This bar shows how much autopilot time remains.

F. Destructive Force Shield. This bar shows how much destructive force shield time remains.

G. Speed Gauge. This bar shows the relative speed of the HERMES from stopped to the maximum speed of 4.

H. Energy Level Gauge. This bar shows the relative level of energy in the HERMES.

I. Structural Damage Gauge. This bar shows the relative level of structural damage sustained by the HERMES.

J. Superbooster Gauge. This bar shows how much superbooster time remains.

K. Bomb Level Indicator. The 3 lights on this indicator show how many of the 3 plasma bombs remain to be used.

L. Invisibility Indicator. If this indicator is highlighted, it means that the HERMES is currently invisible to tunnel guardians.

M. Ammunition Supply Indicators and Gauges. As mentioned, the HERMES has an unlimited supply of type 1 ammo; therefore, this ammo is not represented by a gauge or indicator. The HERMES can hold a maximum of 20 shots of type 2 and 20 of type 3.

M1. Type 2 Ammo Indicator and Gauge. When this type of ammo is acquired, the bottom row of the ammo indicator will show how many shots of type 2 ammo remain to be used.

M2. Type 3 Ammo Indicator and Gauge. When this type of ammo is acquired, the top row of the ammo indicator will show how many shots of type 3 ammo remain to be used.

If the structural integrity is low enough to cause damage to the following systems, the appropriate indicator will become highlighted:

N. Target System Damage Indicator.

O. Propulsion System Damage Indicator.

P. Steering System Damage Indicator.

Q. Low Power Indicator. If the energy level is low enough to cause damage, this indicator will flash.

R. SEND Indicator. This indicator will light up when the pilot is able to send a signal outside the complex.

HERMES - FRONT VIEW

