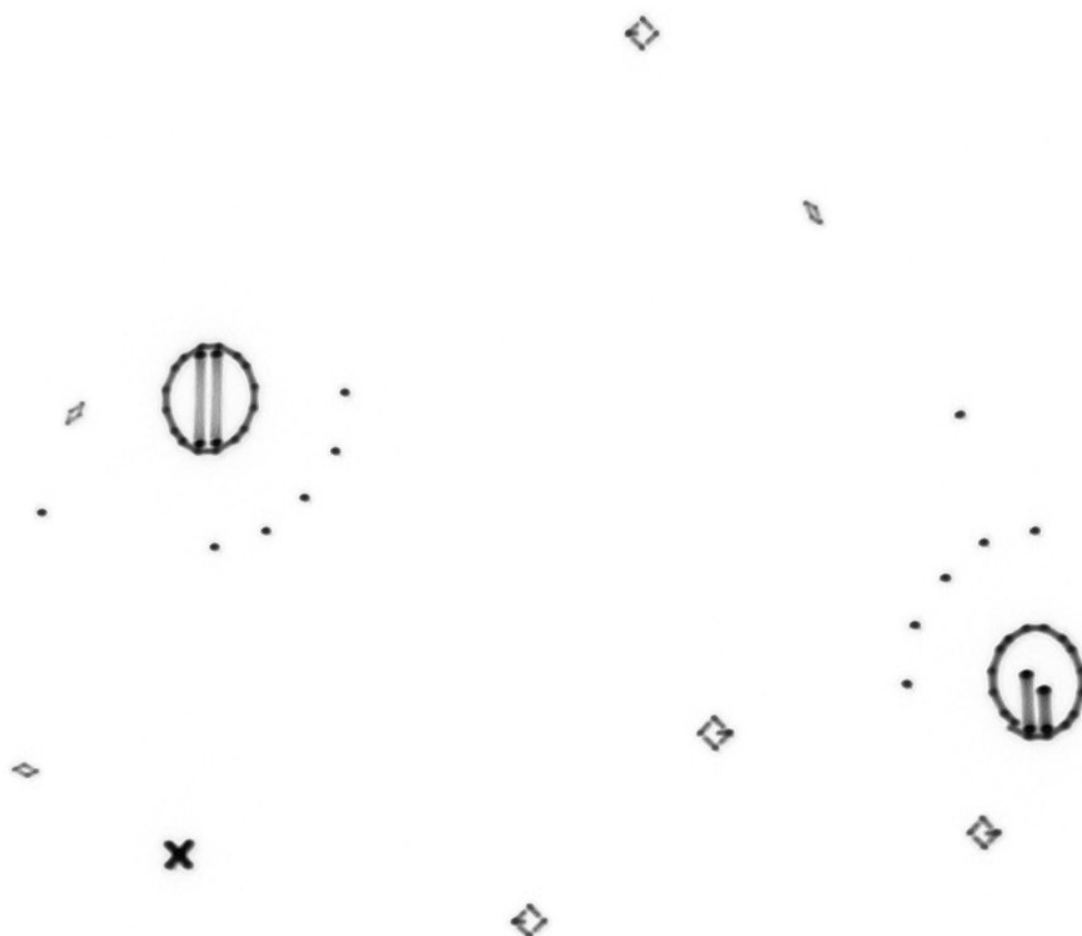# NEBULA COMMANDER

Craig Aker

Mission Goal

Your goal is to command your sector of the nebula by conquering opposing forces. You do this by mining space crystals to build up your energy reserves. These reserves are used to construct combat vehicles, deep space missiles and to power your mining beam and system defense shield.

Nebula Commander can be operated player 1 vs. the Vectrex, or player 1 vs. player 2 simultaneous if you have 2 gaming controllers (highly recommended!).

Game Selection

After the Vectrex has finished its power-up, the user can select game options on the player 1 controller. Toggle between 1 player game and 2 player game using button 1. Toggle between the different game types using buttons 2 and 3. Game options are:

Game 1: Best-of-3 Competition
Game 2: Best-of-5 Competition
Game 3: Marathon

When you are ready to begin press button 4.

In the *Best-of Competitions*, a winner will be declared once the designated number of combat rounds has elapsed. Both nebula victories and total score are tracked so try to win in both!

In the *Marathon* game, there is no limit to the number of combat rounds. Game stats will be presented between each round. To exit Marathon mode, press reset on the Vectrex.

Space Stations

Each player is in command of a space station. This station is a circular planetoid, with player 1 always appearing on the right side of space, and player 2 appearing in a complementary position on the left side of space.

The players' health and energy reserves are displayed inside each space station. The station's health is represented by the left bar. When this bar is full, the station is safe. When this bar is nearly gone, the station is about to explode. Health is non-recoverable, so guard it well. The station's energy is displayed by the right bar. Operating the station and building combat items consumes energy. To regain energy capture space crystals that float into your sector of space or wait for solar panels to charge the energy tanks very slowly.

How to Mine

To fuel your war machine, you must receive a constant supply of energy. A small part of this energy is supplied by solar panels, but the largest reserves come from space crystals.
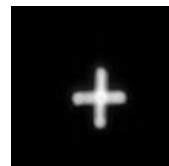
Space Crystals

To collect a crystal, it must pass over your space station. You can use your tractor beam to help pull space crystals toward your station. Move your targeting cursor onto the space crystal and press button 4. If you have enough energy to activate the tractor beam, it will fire to your cursor. If your cursor is close to a space crystal, the beam will lock on and the crystal will begin to move toward your station.
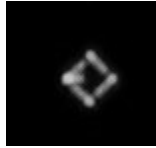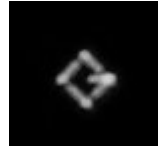
Player 1 Cursor   *Player 2 Cursor*

The beam will continue to tractor the crystal as long as button 4 is held.

How to Build

To build a missile or space destroyer, you must move your cursor onto your own space station. Then press button 3 to build a missile or button 2 to build a destroyer. You may at any one-time command up to 5 missiles and 2 space destroyers. Each destroyer can command 1 additional missile.

Player 1 Space Destroyer   *Player 2 Space Destroyer*
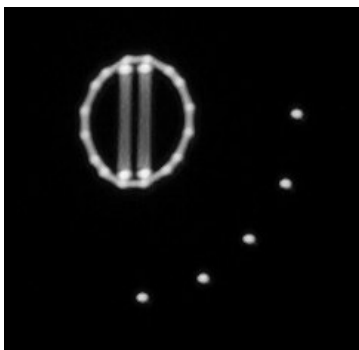
5 missiles ready to deploy

How to Deploy

To fire a missile, or to redirect a missile already in flight, move your cursor to the desired target and press button 3. Each time you press button 3, the next missile in turn will be targeted at your current cursor location. You must plan ahead since you cannot specifically choose to target and re-target a certain missile before its turn. Note that missiles cannot target precisely from far away and may need further targeting once they get closer to their targets.

To launch a space destroyer, or to retarget a space destroyer, move your cursor to the desired target and press button 2. Each time you press button 2, the next destroyer will be targeted at your current cursor location. You must plan ahead since you cannot specifically choose to target and re-target a certain destroyer before its turn.

Once a space destroyer comes within range of its target it will begin to fire missiles. Each destroyer can command only 1 missile at a time. Space destroyers can be eliminated with several shots from the opponent's missiles.

How to Defend

If you are under imminent attack, you may choose to deploy the station's deflector shield. The shield consumes a fair amount of energy, but eliminates all damage from missile impact.   To activate the shield, press button 1. The shield will continue to operate while button 1 is held, and also for a short time after it is released. This time is required to shut down the plasma reactors safely.

Score

On your quest for nebular domination, points are awarded for successful combat events as follows:

Destroy an enemy space station: 1000 points
Build a space destroyer: 150 points
Destroy an enemy space destroyer: 100 points
Hit the enemy space station with a missile: 50 points
Collect a space crystal: 25 points
Build a missile: 25 points
Deflect an opponent missile with the shield: 25 points

Tips

- Don't run your energy all the way down. You will be forced to wait for solar energy to charge your tanks enough to begin operating the tractor beam again. The beam does not consume a lot of energy, but it does need some.
- The deflector shield takes a moment to shut down. Try to time the release of the shield button to minimize shield energy consumption.
- You don't have to tractor the crystals all the way to the station. Just get them on a collision course.
- You can play tug of war with the opponent over a space crystal. Learn when this is advantageous, and when to let it go.
- Space destroyers are a real threat since they continually generate missiles. However they have no shield and limited structural integrity. Eliminate destroyers quickly before they do too much damage.

Distribution

You may freely distribute this game to other collectors for use on personal Vectrex systems or use on an emulator. You may not profit from the sale of this game without specific permission from the author, however you are permitted to sale this game on an "at-cost" homebrew cartridge. This game may be distributed in bulk with the rest of the known Vectrex games, but should always remain free to download. By running this game on your emulator or Vectrex you assume all responsibility for results of that action. This game has been tested for many hours on PC emulators and my personal Vectrex, but your mileage may vary. Enjoy, and your comments are welcome! caker137 AT yahoo.com

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