RED PLANET®
OPERATIONS MANUAL

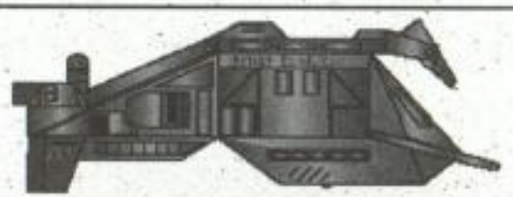
YOU'VE JUST BEEN TRANSLOCATED TO THE RED PLANET. THE ONLY WAY BACK IS TO WIN THE RACE.

Welcome to the VGL and all that jazz. Right now I'd rather be blasting some 'Mechs or cruising down the canals of the Red Planet, but here I am stuck in front of a computer at VGL headquarters writing this manual. As you may know, I used to be a custodial engineer here at the facility, but after I "volunteered" to write the BattleTech manual I got bumped up to assistant to the third assistant archivist. While I have never seen my boss actually in the office I do get memos from time to time which clearly state my duties. The last one I got said "Write a Rud [sic] Planet manual by Thursday." So here I am once again trying to explain the intricacies of interdimensional travel to our heroic associate members. I've tried to make it as clear as possible, but the best teacher is still experience. During the exploration of the mining colony on Mars our intrepid pilots have found that the Colossal Mining Corporation (the CMC) uses a goofy cartoon character named Zero to remind the oppressed miners (who refer to themselves as "slags") of the various safety rules that the company imposes on them. We thought you might enjoy a sampling of Zero's greatest hits (please feel free to ignore any and all advice given by the little green guy). Check out the material and, once again, feel free to comment to yourselves.

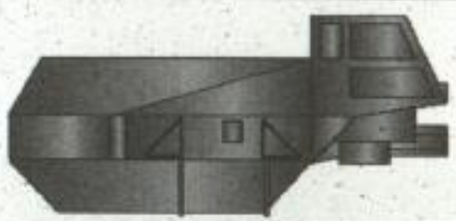
FROM PAWN YOUR ESTEEMED AUTHOR

VEHICLE INTRO

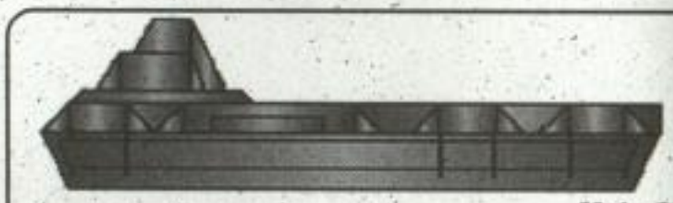
Understanding the characteristics of the Red Planet mining vehicles is essential to good racing. The known vehicle classes, from smallest to largest, are the **Bug**, the **Mule** and the **Bull**. There are many **VTV**s within each class with different combinations of speed, mining tools, and armor. Accordingly, the flight characteristics of each vehicle are distinctive. Beginning pilots will be assigned either a **Grunt** (a **Mule** class **VTV**) or a **Spitter** (**Bull** class) for their training missions. This means that your top speed won't be as high as the **Bugs**, but you will be able to survive a lot more collisions. Be careful, a head-on collision between a vehicle of the **Bull** class and a vehicle of the **Mule** class will almost invariably end up with the **Bull** surviving and the **Mule** in flames. Choose your battles carefully. Both **Grunts** and **Spitters** have rivet guns which can be effective tools in hampering your opponents in their quest for victory, but the object of the mission is to win the **RACE**, so remember: it's speed that wins, not firepower.



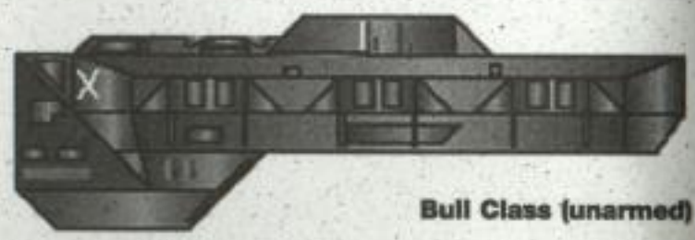
Bug Class (unarmed)



Bug Class (armed)



Mule Class (all vehicles)

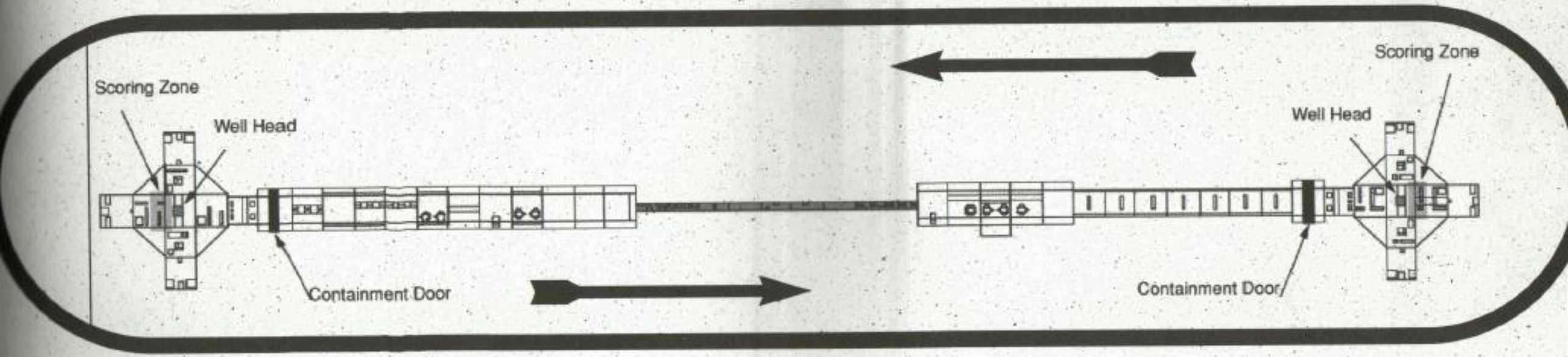


Bull Class (unarmed)

Bull Class (armed)

SCORING

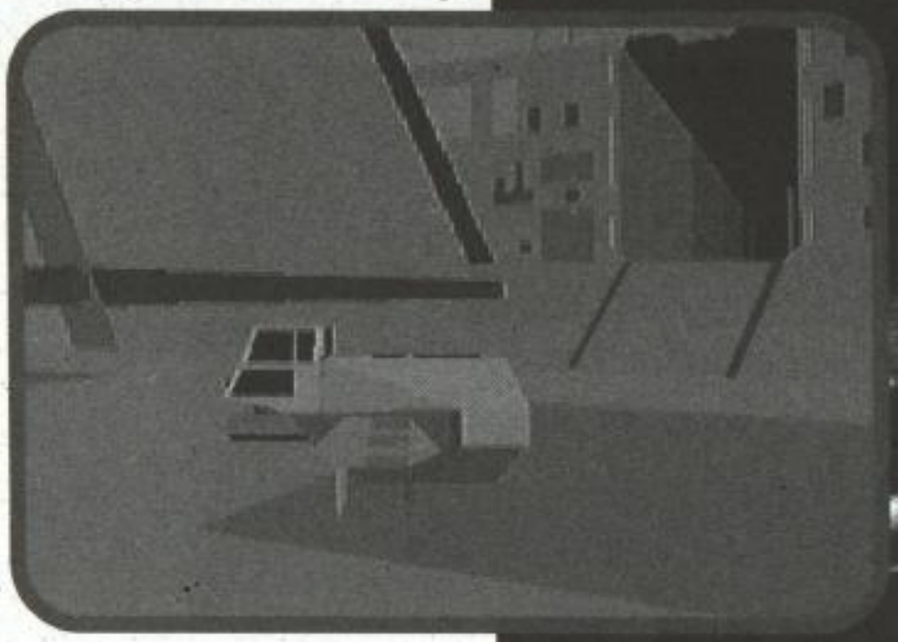
Very simple. Go faster and get around more wellheads than anyone else. Points are gained as a function of the vehicle's velocity squared {P(oints)= V(elocity)2}. This means that going REALLY fast gets you REALLY big points {R(eally)xF(ast) = RxB(ig)xP}. On the other hand, points are lost based upon the relative mass and velocities during a collision. {-P = ΔM(ass)xV}. Crashing while going REALLY fast loses a lot more points, REALLY. Avoid all obstacles (which can also include your opponents) and fly as fast as you can through the canals. The courses have different layouts but the standard ones pretty much follow this basic design: (Check out the Red Planet Data Supplement for more info).



Canal sections connect octagonal rooms called "containment bays". These rooms are protected by automatic fire doors (containment doors) which protect the Slags from chronic Martian Crude well explosions. To minimize risk, the VGL uses only closed canal sections for the races. Pass through the containment doors while they are open and look for the blue outlined box that is located behind the immense wellhead at the center of the room. That is the scoring zone. Go around the wellhead, cross over the box and get your 500 point bonus. A cockpit buzzer will sound, confirming your bonus score.

When you are just starting out in Red Planet, all you need to concern yourself with is the throttle and the joystick. While almost all of the other buttons have a function, you can forget about them for now.

This is your window into the Red Planet. Pretty cool, huh? Here you will see the cluttered canals that wind across the surface of Mars. The many canals that you will encounter are treacherous and dark, a combination that demands quick reflexes and loads of courage. Watch out for the containment doors; they're nasty. Go through them when they are open; many pilots have tried without success to go through them when they are closed.



Here's an armed Bug class vehicle about to launch into the canal called Choices. Notice the tunnel behind the VTV, in order to get into the tunnel in Basic Mode you will have to use the ramp that leads into it.

THROTTLE

At the start of the game, this control should be pulled back all the way before being pushed forward. Pushing the throttle forward until it stops will send your VTV forward at full speed (A good idea in this world where "Velocity = Victory"). As you pull back on your throttle the VTV will slow down. If you pull all the way back on the throttle, your VTV will slow to a stop.

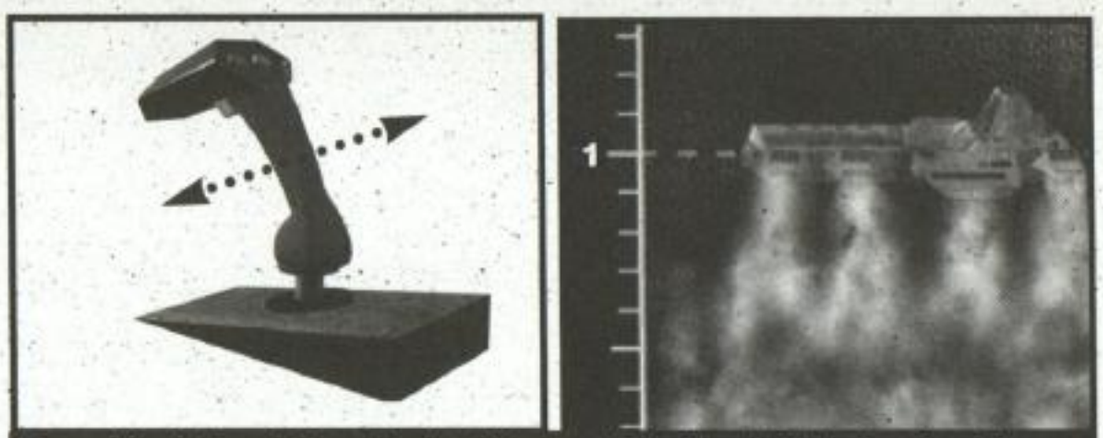
Reverse → **Although rookie pilots don't need to use reverse very often, it is an important part of advanced racing. To switch into reverse just press the throttle button once. You do not need to pull back on your throttle before shifting into reverse. In fact, shifting your VTV into reverse is the best controlled brake you have. If you shift while your VTV is still moving forward the ship will first slow to a stop and then move backward. If you are confused about in which direction you're moving, just check the color of your speedometer (see Secondary Screen for more info). Also, there is a red "Reverse" box on top of the speedometer to remind you that you are in reverse.**

In Basic mode, when the throttle is pulled back the VTV will automatically go into reverse only to stop the vehicle. If you actually want to go into reverse you will have to press the reverse button.

Howdy, happy miners of Red Planet! It's Zero, your friendly CMC safety advisor. Remember to follow all safety rules. Your life may depend on it.

MANUEVERING

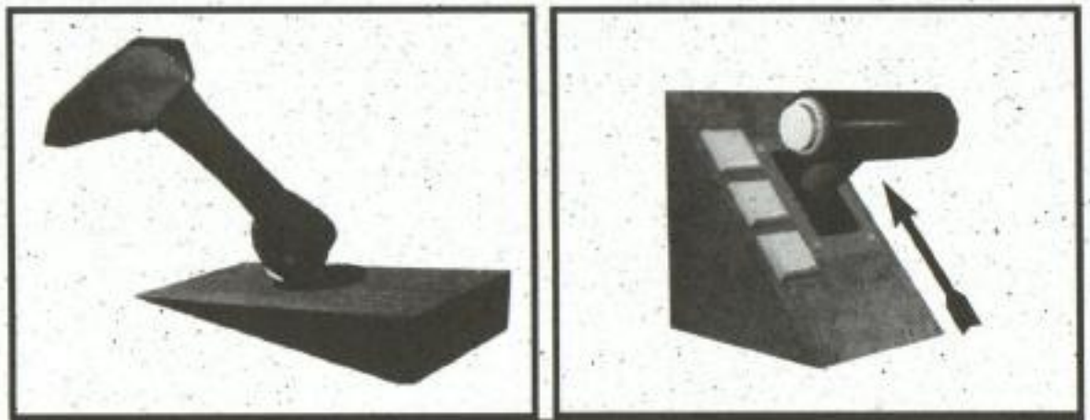
It is important to understand that both the joystick and the throttle control thrusters. While the joystick controls thrusters that push you sideways, the throttle controls your forward and reverse movements. To move your VTV, push the joystick in the direction you want to go. In Basic mode your ability to raise the VTV is limited as the VTV is set to auto-seek an altitude one meter above the surface. This means that if you go up after hitting a ramp or other object, the VTV will automatically return to the set altitude. It will also roll only a quarter as much as VTVs in the Veteran and Master modes. This will allow you to concentrate more fully on going forward in the canals of Mars and will prevent you from spending the race floating aimlessly above the course. As you cruise through the canals of the Red Planet, you will encounter many obstacles. To successfully maneuver around them, you will have to anticipate and react quickly. A light touch on your joystick will prevent your VTV from careening into the walls. In all modes except Master mode, moving the stick will automatically activate the bow thrusters to keep the nose pointed in the direction of VTV motion. This means that if you push left on the joystick the thrust will go left, and the front of the VTV will move left in coordination with the new direction of the vehicle.



By pushing left or right on the joystick your VTV will go in that direction. There is also a one meter auto seek mechanism built into the VTV.

Automated kick turn.

Turning quickly around the wellheads is an important part of good VTV piloting. In order to do this in Basic mode you will have to utilize the VTV's automated kick turn feature. Activating the kick turn is simple, just pull back on your throttle, push your joystick all the way left or right and you will spin your VTV in the direction you are pushing. In later more advanced modes this action is performed by your foot pedals, but the VGL scientists felt that rookies needed this ability without the complication of full foot pedal activation. Warning—if you are heavy-handed with your joystick you may kick turn unintentionally. We strongly urge you to remain in control of your VTV at all times or it will be pancake city.



Engaging the automatated kick turn will spin your vehicle in the direction you push the joystick.

BASIC CONTROLS

When you start the mission, you will have six boosters assigned to each thumb button. If you press a thumb button and no booster goes off, you are probably out of boosters on that trigger. Hit the other button and see what happens. If you still don't get a boost then you are out of boosters. As you advance, figuring out how to maximize your boost power is crucial to getting high scores.

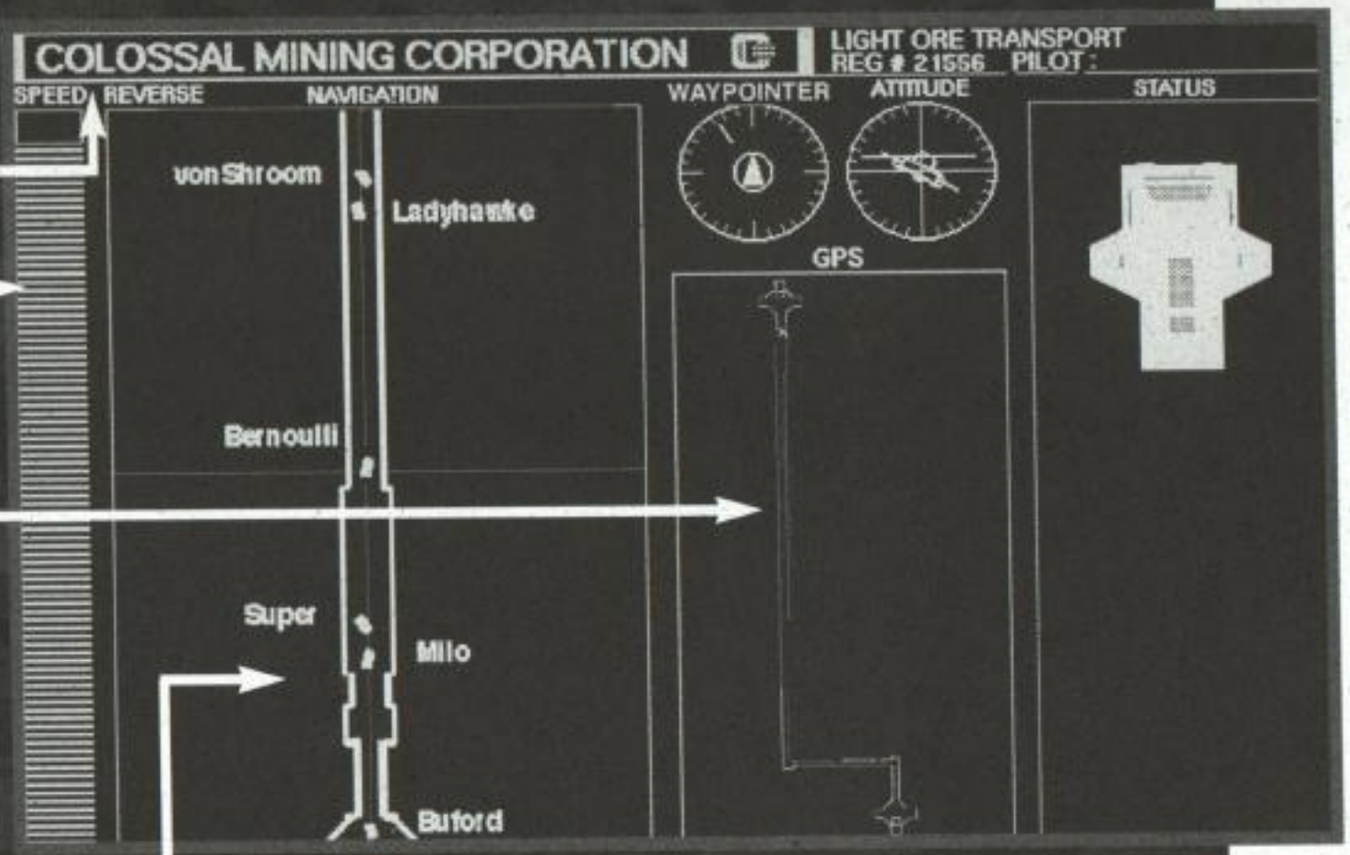
SOLID ROCKET BOOSTERS You can propel yourself forward at break-neck speed by pressing either the green or blue thumb button on top of the joystick. This will fire one of your rocket boosters and you will become a human ballistic missile. The burn lasts for six seconds (five in the Bug class) and cannot be turned off. Unfortunately, this means that your steering will become as difficult to control as an unguided missile- so be careful. Try to use them only when you have a long stretch of canal ahead of you. These mines are full of treacherous obstacles and these boats don't stop on a dime. You have twelve boosters to use during the entire race and there is no regeneration of boosters after you blow up and re-morph. Don't waste them; they really help you rack up speed bonus points.

BOOSTERS = EXTREME SPEED = BIG POINTS

RIVET GUN To fire your mining tool press the red finger trigger. Your VTV in your first few missions will have a rivet gun. For more info on other tools, see the Advanced Mining Tools section.

boosters = bad news. i do not like boosters, they make my friends go toooo fast. don't forget, SPEED KILLS!!!.

SECONDARY SCREEN



SPEEDOMETER The speedometer on the left indicates your speed and the direction of your thrust.

Yellow = Forward Blue = Backward
Flashing Red = Excessive Speed

This instrument shows the VTV's velocity. When the VTV's thrust is reversed, the word **"REVERSE"** will flash near the top of the speedometer. Exceeding the maximum "safe" speed of the VTV (as when boosters are used) will cause the speedometer to flash red.

RADAR DISPLAY This instrument shows the VTV's position in the canal zone, and the positions of all of the other VTVs relative to your VTV. Your VTV icon will move up as long as you are heading for the correct score wellhead. Each VTV type has a unique icon on the display, with the VTV pilot's name beside it. Both are displayed in the pilot's assigned color. The pilot should quickly learn to identify the VTV types to avoid inopportune collisions, or to seek out beneficial ones. If your VTV is heading down on the radar, then you have turned around and are heading toward the wrong scoring zone. Entering a scoring zone will cause the world to rotate 180 degrees. Remember you must alternate between scoring zones to get the 500 point bonus.

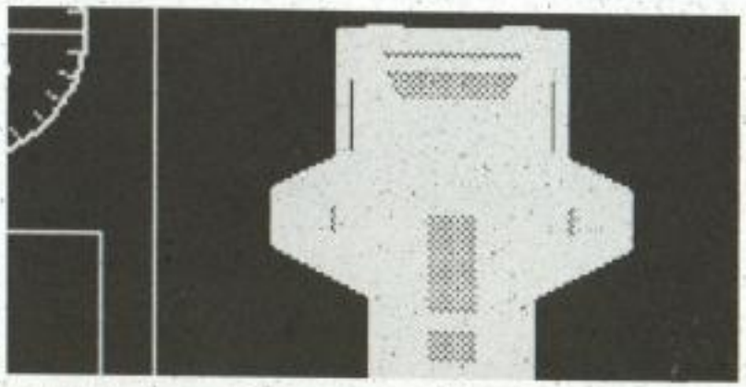
GPS The Global Positioning System will always show the entire course. Your VTV is indicated by an "x" in your VTV's color. Everyone else is represented by a "•" in their color. This is a great way to keep track of everyone else on the course and works as a reminder of the overall layout of the course.

SECONDARY SCREEN

MISSION CLOCK Keep track of the time left or you'll be left in the dust with that last booster wasted in reserve.

WAYPOINTER The red line points in the direction of the next wellhead. In most cases this means that it will be pointing straight up. In more complicated courses it may be pointing sideways. If you're lost, check out where it's pointing.

ATTITUDE DISPLAY This instrument shows the VTV's roll and pitch.



VTV DAMAGE INDICATOR This top-down picture of your VTV will show the damage level of your VTV. This damage is indicated by the color of your VTV diagram.

White = No Damage	Orange = Medium Damage
Yellow = Light Damage	Red = Heavy Damage
	Flashing Red = Critical Damage

COLLISIONS

Understanding how collisions effect your VTV and the overall scoring will greatly aid you in your quest for victory. The best pilots have a saying when it comes to VTV collisions: "My vehicle IS my weapon. Them other VTVs on the course, they're just brakes."

The key to surviving and profiting from collisions is what is known as VTV "tapping". To be a great "tapper" you have to understand what happens in the 2 seconds after the VTV is hit. After a collision any damage taken by a vehicle in the succeeding 2 seconds is awarded as a score bonus to the other vehicle. The best collision is a small "tap" which knocks your opponent's vehicle into an obstacle. You get all of the points from the large collision between your opponent and the obstacle while losing only a few points for your minor collision. Any time you have a chance to cause your opponent to crash into an obstacle, you must take advantage of the situation. It's the only way to score big points quickly and, at the same time, drop an opponent's score.

Every pilot sooner or later hits a wall at 1000 KPH and sees her score drop by 4000 points. Imagine what would have happened if you had nudged that pilot into the wall, not only does she still lose the 4000 points, but you get them added to your score (as well as the 250 point bonus for collision kills). This is the secret to great scores in Red Planet.

When you are behind in a race where everyone is roughly of equal skill, the only way to catch up is with collisions. The right collision will boost your score and if you are very skillful, reduce the leader's. While rivet guns, lasers and demo packs are fun, they don't add points to your total. Only velocity, collisions and scoring zones add to your score.

Tech Info:

All vehicles have their mass rated in terms of Basic Mass Units. The BMU is rated at one for the Bug. Smaller vehicles such as the Speck have BMU's of less than one while vehicles based on the Mule and/or Bull chassis have BMUs of greater than one. The total kinetic energy of the collision (mass times velocity of each of the participating vehicles) expressed as damage points is divided among the participating vehicles on a mass ratio. Thus a large vehicle contributes a lot more energy to the collision than a small vehicle. Since it can withstand a lot more damage, the large vehicle will probably survive the collision with only minor scratches. This does not mean that smaller vehicles can't destroy larger vehicles, it just means that those piloting small vehicles have to be very crafty.

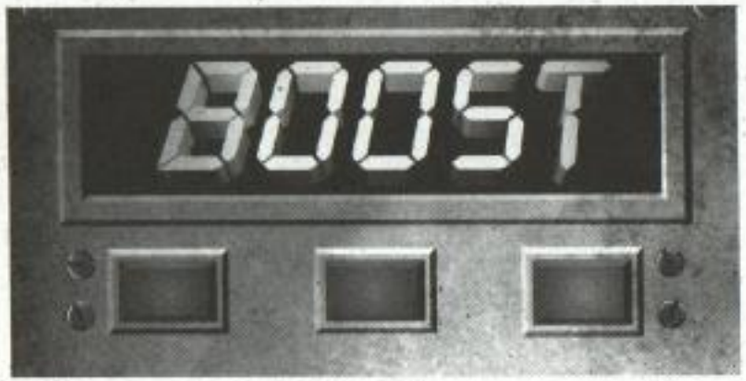
Wreckage on the course is fair game. As long as an object is on the course it scores points. Thus it is possible for a vehicle to crash and be destroyed, but to have its momentum carry the wreckage into a scoring zone or even into another collision and score accordingly.

The VTV's have specially reinforced bottoms so that they can absorb the impact of hitting the canal floor. This allows you to skip off ramps and to skid to a stop using the "lift cut" feature without severely damaging your VTV. This also allows you to drop on your opponents in order to blow them up without blowing yourself up in the process.

Once you activate any of the advanced modes (standard, veteran, or master) you will be able to control the VTV's altitude and use the foot pedals and all of the mining and guidance tools that are assigned to your VTV. Since your joystick controls automatically change, you will not be able to get back to the old basic trigger configuration unless you program it yourself using the Learning Mode.

ADVANCED CONTROLS

All of the tools can be activated simply by pressing any of the three buttons below their entry on the tools panel, or by pressing a trigger which has been assigned to that tool. In Basic Mode it is probably best just to concentrate on the tool which is already programmed on your triggers.



Activating this will give the craft six seconds (only five for the Bug class due to its already speedy characteristics) of extreme acceleration. A craft can use as many boosters simultaneously as it has BOOST slots on its tools display. This means that you can hit both buttons assigned to your boosters and you will get a "double boost" which translates into "double insane" speed.

Activating this will deploy a drag chute out the back of the craft for six seconds, greatly increasing the drag on the craft and thus dramatically slowing your craft down. It is destroyed if the craft activates a booster, and works only to stop your VTV's forward momentum.

The rivet gun fires a rivet which travels in a ballistic arc until it impacts something. The rivet will cause recoil to the firing craft, and will affect the motion of the craft it hits. They cannot be used to set off the demolition charges.

MINING TOOLS

LASER DRILL In order to use the laser drill you must first charge it, by pressing the trigger assigned to it, or by holding down any of the buttons situated beneath its display. To fully charge a laser, hold the button for four seconds. By releasing the button, the laser will fire. The amount of damage done is exponentially proportional to the length of time the trigger is held. This means that if you hold the trigger for only two seconds, you won't deliver half of the damage; you deliver just one fourth of the damage. If the trigger is held for more than four seconds, the laser will overheat, and will be unusable for 10 seconds. Following the release of the trigger, while the drill is inactive, the laser display will blink. Once the laser is working again, you have to recharge it to fire it. In Basic mode, the laser will automatically discharge one second before the laser would overheat. Any time the laser hits a VTV, it will push that VTV along the line of fire based upon the amount of damage done. The laser can also act as a great blinding device. By rapidly firing it into your opponents VTVs you can create a blinding effect on their Main Screens. While this greatly reduces the damage inflicted, it more than makes up for it when your opponent goes flying into an unseen wall.

DEMOLITION CHARGE Activating this will drop a demolition pack out of the bottom of the craft. It will slide to a stop based upon the speed of your VTV and the terrain on which it falls. Armed three seconds after it is dropped, the packs will detonate if any VTV's centerpoint comes within 10 meters of it. The packs will stay armed until they detonate, or until the end of the game. Exploding demolition packs inflict great damage to the craft within 10 meters, and also will give the VTV a push directly away from the explosion. Lasers may be used to safely detonate the mines from a distance.

LIFT CUT Activating this will cause the thrust which holds your VTV in the air to be rerouted forward, backward or sideways. This will drop the ship like a rock, helping to bring the craft to a stop much faster by dragging it across the ground. Lift cut can also provide more power for acceleration and turning by diverting extra power to those engines.

SIDE SLIP Activating this will prevent the bow and stern thrusters from activating when the joystick is moved horizontally. This will keep the craft's orientation constant, and allow sideways motion (for more info see Master mode).

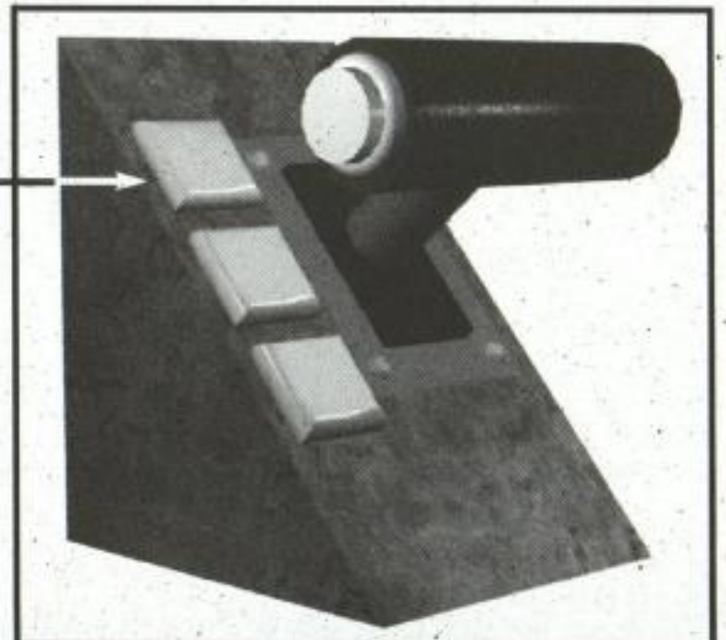
REAR VIEW Activating this will display the view out the back of the ship. All tools fire equally well out the back or front of the craft. Watch out for those walls though; you will still be moving forward.

STANDARD MODE

Standard Mode is the best way to learn how to fly a VTV.
To enter this mode, press the first toggle up.

THROTTLE Pushing forward until the throttle stops will move the VTV forward at full speed. Pulling all the way back on the throttle (to its "zero" point) will eliminate power going to thrust. The friction of the Red Planet atmosphere will eventually slow your VTV to a complete stop, but this is not a very efficient brake. It's like the gas pedal of a car; if you don't push it, you won't go anywhere. If you push it all the way, you'll go pretty fast. Pulling back on your throttle when turning will give more power to the steering engines, thus allowing you to turn faster.

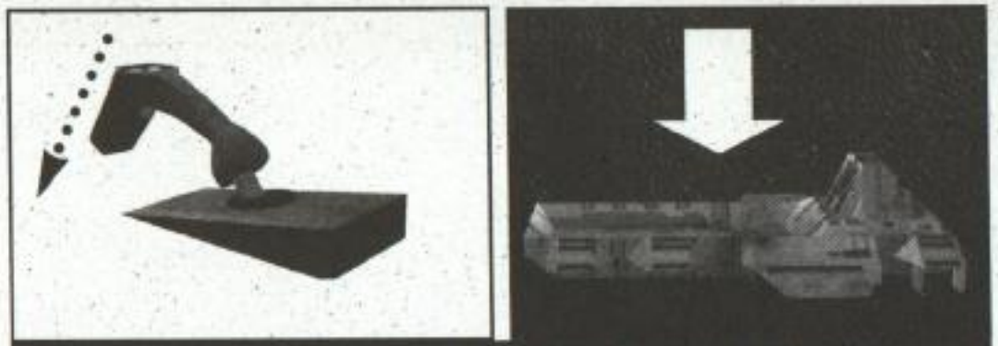
GEAR SHIFT/REVERSE Here is a reminder on how to use the reverse button: To switch into reverse just press the throttle button once. You do not need to pull back on your throttle before shifting into reverse. In fact, shifting your VTV into reverse is the best controlled brake you have. If you shift while moving forward the VTV will first slow down to a stop and then will move backward. If you are confused about in which direction you're going, just check your speedometer. There will be a red "REVERSE" above the speedometer (which will be blue if you are moving backward or yellow if you are moving forward). To return to forward just click the button once again.



Pulling back on the throttle is a great way to redirect power to steering, but it's a lousy way to stop. Use that reverse button for all braking demands.
By the way, if you'd like to use the intercom, just press the red button on the panel next to the throttle. Sending messages of peace and harmony is a tradition for VGL pilots.

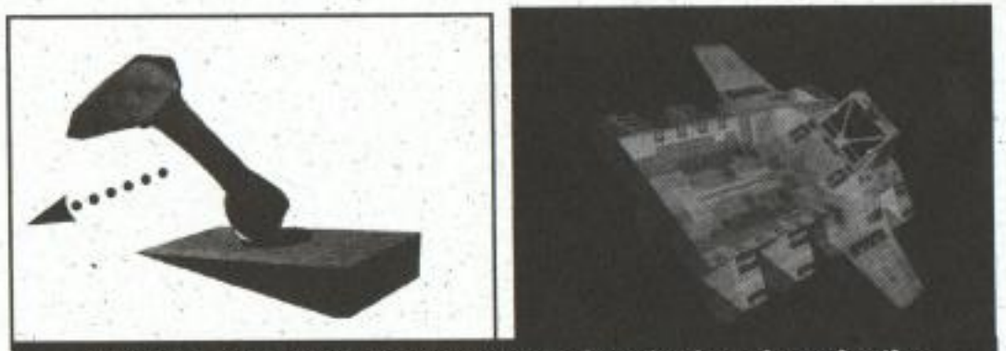
The Red planet is no place for showing off to your friends, so slooow down!!

JOYSTICK (VERTICAL) In Standard mode, a neutral stick position will result in the VTV attempting to maintain current altitude. Pushing the stick forward will result in the VTV flying lower, while pulling back on the stick results in the VTV flying higher. This control has priority for power usage, and will take power from the throttle or steering as needed. Unlike Veteran and Master modes, Standard mode also provides a cap on power use for altitude, ensuring that some power is always available for steering or thrust. Since less power is used to keep the VTV aloft when it is near the ground, the VTV has better thrust and steering performance when the stick is pushed forward.



You now have control over the altitude of the VTV, which means that you can lower your craft as well as raise it.

JOYSTICK (HORIZONTAL) Steers the VTV. Pulling left on the stick will result in the VTV moving left, pulling right on the stick will result in the VTV moving right. In Standard mode, power use for steering has priority over power use for thrust in non-braking situations. Otherwise, steering and thrust power needs are at equal priority in using any power remaining from altitude control. In Standard mode the VTV will roll only half as much as vehicles in Veteran and Master modes.

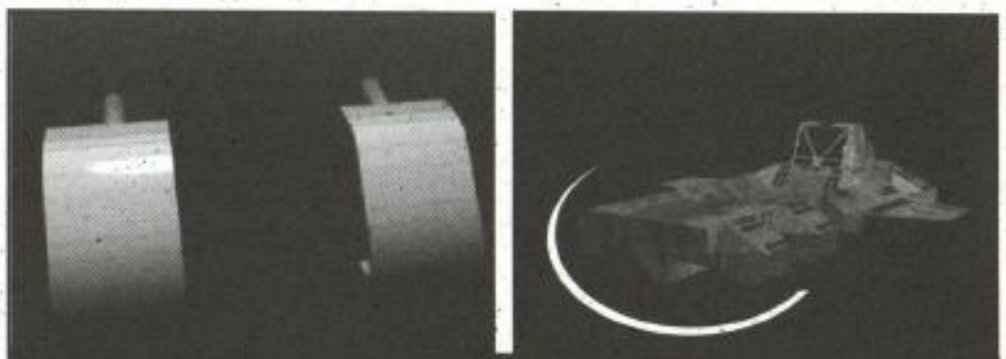


You will notice that severe turns in Standard mode make the VTV turn more. Don't panic, use this newfound slimness to get through tight situations.

please remain in control of your VTV at all times, damage to the vehicles can result in fines, and/or suspension, and/or imprisonment, and/or death.

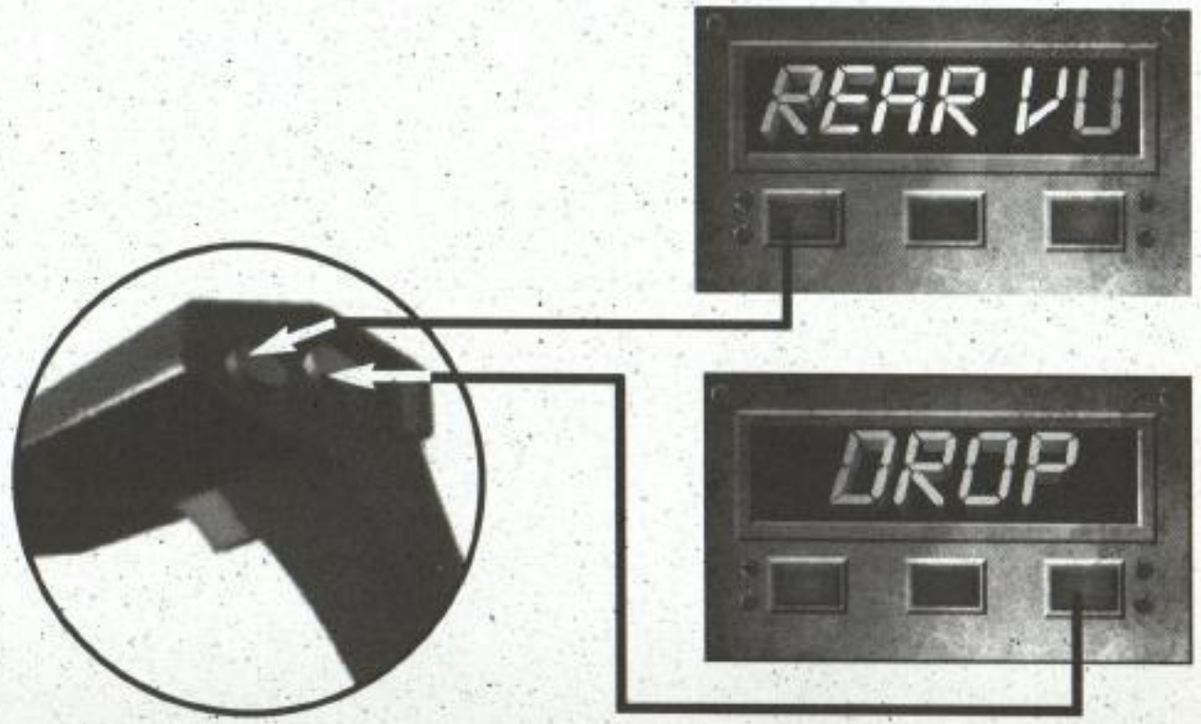
STANDARD CONTROLS

FOOT PEDALS After engaging Standard mode, you will be able to rotate the front of your VTV with the foot pedals which activate bow and stern thrusters. This motion does not change the direction of your boosters, which are still controlled by your joystick and throttle. Using your foot pedals will allow you to kick turn—a great advantage in quickly getting around those pesky wellheads. Using the foot pedals is very tricky when you are traveling at great speed, so use them judiciously.

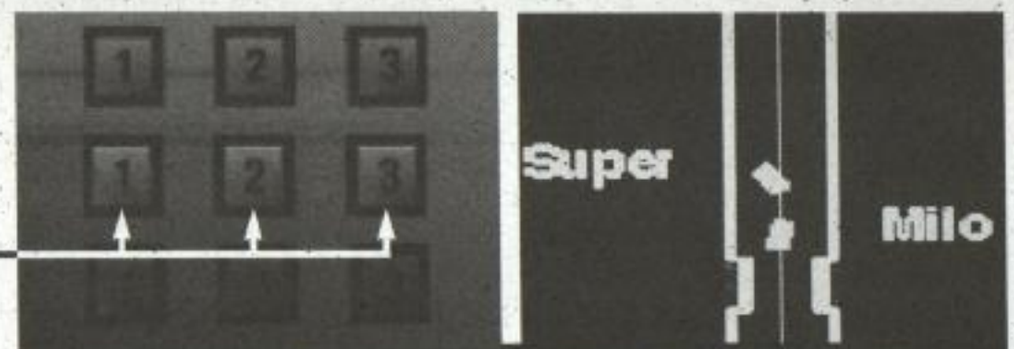


The right foot pedal will rotate your VTV clockwise and the left foot pedal will rotate it counterclockwise.

NEW THUMB BUTTON FUNCTIONS When you engage the Standard Mode, the thumb buttons' functions change. The blue button now changes your main screen to show your rear view (REARVU). This is active as long as you hold the button down and you will return to forward view as soon as you let go of the button. All weapons fire just as accurately out the back as they do out the front. Rear view is also a good way to keep track of the other flyers. But if you spend too much time gawking, you'll end up slamming into one of the many walls in your race course. The green button will now activate "lift cut" (DROP) which will cut all power to your lift engines, dropping your VTV like a rock and increasing power into the other engines for greater steering ability. If you hold down the green button you will soon be dragging your VTV along the floor of the canal. This sudden addition of friction does wonders for slowing down in a hurry. Unfortunately, this will inflict some damage on your VTV, and after a few particularly hard slides you may blow up your vehicle. **Lift Cut = Mega Brake**

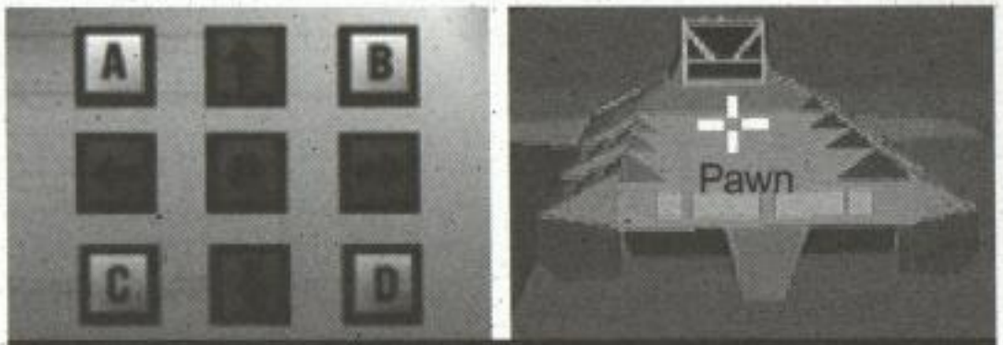


RADAR ZOOM The radar display will zoom out with the green 3 button. It will zoom in with the green 1 and return to the default with the green 2. By expanding the range you will be able to see more of the course, and by bringing the radar range tighter you will get a more accurate picture of where the other VTVs are traveling within the nearby section of canal. Avoiding your opponents can be just as important as crashing into them.



Zooming in on a section of canal can be a life saver if a big nasty Bull is bearing down on your fragile little Bug.

TARGETING CROSS The targeting cross, which appears only on VTVs carrying lasers or rivet guns may be adjusted up or down to suit the needs of the pilot. Pressing the red Up-arrow button will raise the targeting cross one pixel to a maximum of 5 pixels over center point, while pressing the red Down-arrow button will lower the targeting cross one pixel, to a maximum of 15 pixels under center point. Pressing the red dot button will bring the targeting cross to its original position again. The left and right arrow buttons do not affect the targeting cross. To turn the crosshairs off or on for any ship, press the number 5 toggle.



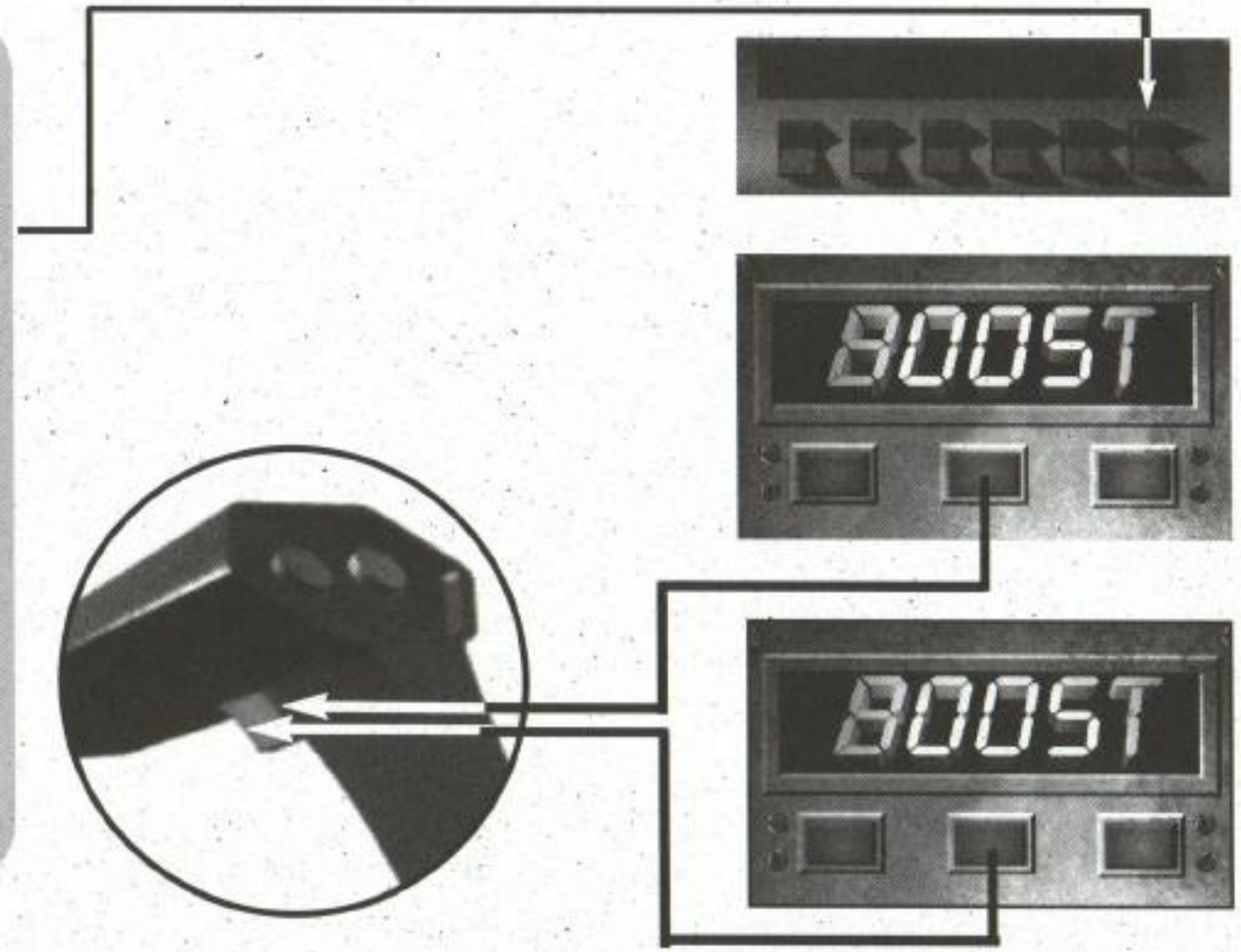
When you have accurately targeted someone, his/her callsign will appear below the crosshairs.

Careful with those lasers, partner! Damage to the planet comes out of <u>your</u> pocket. ouch!

ADVANCED TOOL USE

LEARNING MODE Triggers may be assigned to any of the tools on the tool display. This is enabled by pressing up on toggle switch 6 (make sure that none of the joystick triggers is currently pressed, or the craft will not enter Learning mode). You can enter Learning mode at any point in the mission. When Learning mode is on, all the buttons which can be potentially assigned will light up. However, only weapons which are assigned to a trigger will be able to be used while Learning mode is on. Each tool can have only one trigger tied to it, so pressing the blue button on a weapon that already has the green button lit will result in the green button going dim and the blue button going bright. This signifies that the tool is now tied to the blue trigger rather than the green trigger. Pressing the button which is brightly lit for a tool will result in that weapon no longer being assigned to any triggers. A trigger can have as many tools assigned to it as required. When the triggers have been assigned to your satisfaction, press down on toggle switch 6. This will cause all the unassigned buttons to go dark and you will exit Learning mode.

MINING TOOL DISPLAY USE The tools that you do not attach to a trigger can be fired by hitting any of the buttons beneath the name of the tool. Most advanced pilots end up firing their boosters in this way. Try to keep in mind where your tools are located so that if you need an emergency chute or boost you can fire it with as little delay as possible.

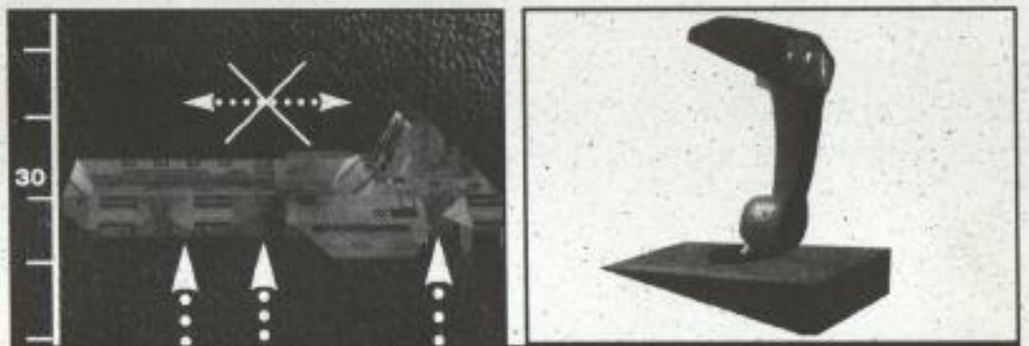


Get used to leaping for the chute, you never know when you'll need one and it doesn't make sense to assign it to a trigger.

VETERAN MODE

Many advanced pilots take advantage of the more precise manuevering abilities of Veteran mode to eke out that crucial bit of performance from their VTV. To enter this mode, press the second toggle button up.

JOYSTICK VERTICAL In Veteran mode (and Master mode) the VTV's altitude control is absolute. This means that the stick is in effect a slider telling the vehicle which height you want it at by the exact placement of the joystick's vertical position. If you pull the joystick up, you will go up; if you push down the VTV will descend. If you let go of the stick, the VTV will rise or descend to a height of 1 meter from the ground based upon its previous position. There is no longer a cap on the height that you can rise in this mode. Be careful about floating at the top of the canals. You will find that you are using so much power to stay up there that you will have no power left to maneuver or even stop. Also, if you attempt to leave the canals by going too high, your VTV will explode due to a nasty CMC anti-theft device.



Floating near the top of the canal can be fun for awhile, but remember you need to stay low to go fast.

JOYSTICK HORIZONTAL In this mode your joystick shares equal power reserves with the throttle. This means that your steering is more sensitive than in Basic and Standard mode where the throttle had priority over the joystick. The nose of your VTV will follow the motion of your joystick so that your VTV will turn right when you press the joystick to the right. The roll characteristics of VTVs in Veteran mode are at their maximum settings.

You'll notice that in this mode you can really get up on the side, so watch out for those edges on ramps and bridges; they can give you whiplash in a nanosecond.

Now don't go too high. For your protection, a small explosive device has been installed in the VTV's that goes BOOOM! *when your VTV leaves the canal. Keep on truckin'!!!*

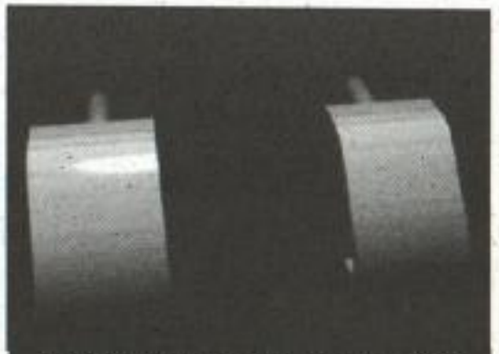
MASTER MODE

This mode is very difficult to control. Those who successfully pilot in this mode call themselves "Thirds" in honor of their courageous use of the third toggle. I think it is because they have only a third of the common sense of the other VGL pilots.

JOYSTICK (HORIZONTAL) The major change in the way the VTV operates in Master mode is the fact that the front of the VTV will no longer swing left or right in conjunction with the joystick. Your joystick will no longer act like a steering wheel so that when you press left on the joystick, only the thrust is shifted left. If you have no forward thrust, your VTV will slide left without the front pointing in that direction.

Only by coming to a complete stop will you be able to go directly left or right in this mode. Master pilots can really fill up a canal's choke point this way, so Bugs beware.

FOOT PEDALS. So how do I turn my vehicle left and right? Easy. With the foot pedals you can activate the bow and stern thrusters to keep your VTV moving in the direction of the thrust. Actually, easy isn't the right word for this mode. Why use it? According to its proponents it allows for very clean and accurate turns in those tricky situations you get into in courses such as Shroom's Lair. For greater control of the foot pedals press the number 4 toggle up. This mode will give you less rotation by damping the effect of the pedals.



Mastery of a light touch on the foot pedals is essential to flying in Master mode. Otherwise you will spend a lot of the race in re-morphing mode.

10 TIPS FOR ROOKIES

1. BE A BULLY! COLLISIONS ARE BIG POINTS WHEN DONE RIGHT.

2. WEAPONS DON'T WIN RACES.

3. TALK TO THE TECHS AND THE VETERAN PILOTS. THEY ARE ENCYCLOPEDIAS OF USEFUL INFORMATION.

4. KNOW WHERE YOUR VEHICLE CAN SAFELY FIT. KNOW THE COURSE.

5. LEARN THE THRUST TRADEOFFS. (I.E. BY PULLING BACK ON THE THROTTLE, YOU REDIRECT MORE THRUST TO THE JOYSTICK, THUS MAKING IT EASIER TO MAKE A HARD TURN).

6. GO LOW TO JUMP HIGH. THE GROUND CAN BE YOUR BEST ALLY.

7. LIFT CUT IS YOUR FRIEND. USE IT OFTEN.

8. USE BOOSTERS FOR POINTS, NOT ACCELERATION.

9. STAY LOW FOR MORE THRUST. THIS MEANS MORE SPEED AND MANEUVERABILITY.

10. SPIT IN THE EYE OF DEATH. NO MATTER HOW BAD IT LOOKS DON'T GIVE UP. IF YOU DO CRASH, REMEMBER THAT SLOW CRASHES COUNT FOR LESS.

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WELCOME BACK. MAY YOUR NEXT RACE BE JUST AS SUCCESSFUL (AND SAFE).