

MERCENARY

Escape from Targ

INTRODUCTION

TARG is a planet in trouble, the peaceful, native palyars are fighting for their very existence against the invading mechanoids, a race of robots who have siezed the planet.

In the militarily secure colony craft that orbits the TARG, the palyar council plans and waits, while brave palyar resistance-fighters oppose the mechanoids in the central city, TARG's one major area of habitation.

You are a 21st century space cowboy whose intergalactic craft has crashed on TARG. The ship is beyond repair, so you must find another way off the planet. Your interface with the world around you is benson, an almost-human, ninth-generation, artificially intelligent portable Atari computer. Benson, who is always with you, monitors and reports your status, conducts communications between you and the aliens, and displays information on his control panel.

Almost as soon as you arrive, Benson displays a message regarding a ship for sale. You can buy the ship or just take it. But keep in mind that stealing has its consequences!

The next message you receive is from the Palyar Resistance. They have work for you. If you're willing to be a mercenary, meet them in the briefing room of their underground headquarters. later, you also have an opportunity to meet the mechanoid reps, so don't make any hasty decisions.

CRUCIAL INFO

Fly anywhere on TARG; There are no constraints or penalties, even if you crash! if ** shows on your location indicator, good luck! no one knows where you are. but there are a few places of interest, even in the wilderness; you only have to find them!

It's hard to resist zapping things! if you fire at the base of a structure and score a direct hit, the result is an awesome collapse! however, if someone owns the site you zapped; take cover. Unless you knock out the droid missile fired in retaliation, it will find you and will home in for the kill!!! try rapid flight backwards to keep it in view while you aim and fire.

One of the things you notice from the surface of targ is a dot in the sky above the planet. this is the colony craft and you need a special key to get into this stronghold. the key is somewhere on targ.

The Colony Craft has three floors to explore. any room you enter that benson names (other than hangar, bank, briefing rooms, and communications room) offers an "earning" opportunity. for example, gold delivered to the exchequer yields 100,000 credits.

You can build your credits on your visit to the colony craft; but, before committing yourself, consider that the Mechanoids have an interest in some of your goodies and may pay more than the Palyars.

As much fun as fighting and exploring may be, don't lose sight of your ultimate goal: Escape from TARG! There are three ways to accomplish this, but it's up to you to figure them out. just before escaping, be sure to save the game. any winning situation can be used as a starting point for MERCENARY II.

TRANSPORTATION

There are two types of ground-based vehicles (gbvS) and four varieties of aircraft, plus one ship capable of intergalactic flight.

Board a vehicle by walking to its center and pressing B.

Leave a vehicle by pressing L.

Forward speed is controlled by the number keys 1 (low) through 9 (0 is top speed). adjust the power level by pressing the > key to increase and < to decrease.

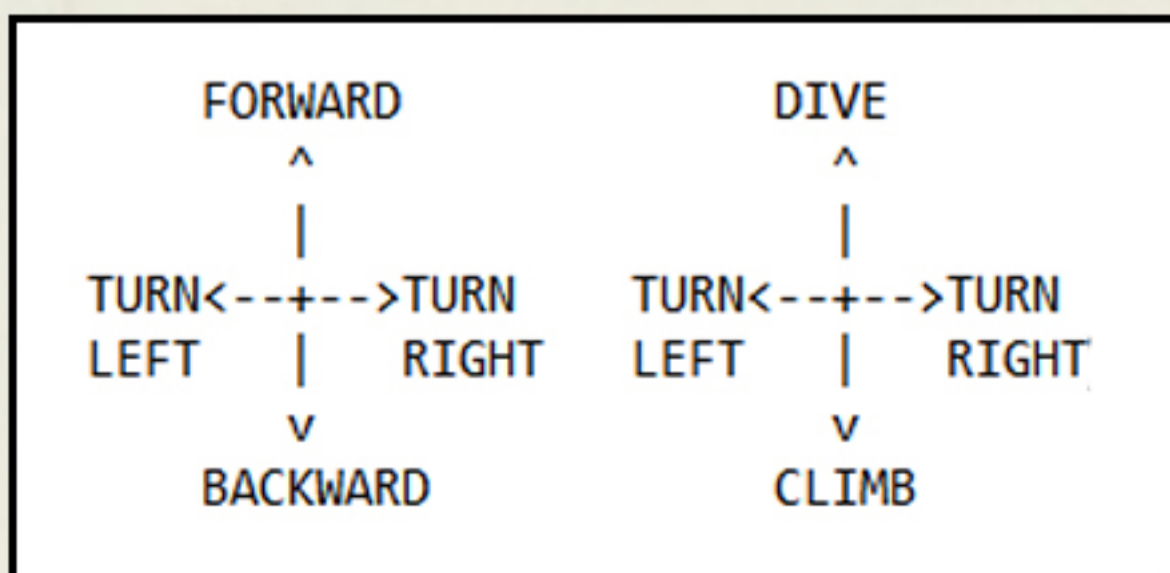
brake by pressing the space bar (in flight, this lets you hover).

flying an airship requires sufficient speed to take off. to gain altitude, pull back on the joystick. dive by pushing forward. landing too heavily results in a crash!

reverse thrust (flight only) by holding down the shift key while pressing a number key.

Weapons are provided on many vehicles. press the fire button to shoot. steering is by use of the joystick. steering in flight is slightly different than when walking or using GBV'S.

JOYSTICK CONTROLS



ELEVATORS

In several locations on targ's surface, there are three-sided cages (elevators) which provide access to underground complexes. an elevator is activated when you stand in the center and press E. Press E again to return to the surface.

OBJECTS

Most of the objects found on TARG are in the underground complexes. Certain objects enhance your capabilities or allow you to perform functions. others have an obvious sales value and some may even seem useless. objects are only identified when they are picked up (not all are identified). it's a good idea to keep a list of items in the order you pick them up. you can carry up to 10 objects at a time.

Take objects by pressing T.

Drop objects by pressing D (the last object taken will be the first object dropped). dropping too many items in one are slows down the graphics.

CONTROL PANEL

Below is an explanaTion of Benson's control panel. colors mentioned may vary depending on your computer or monitor.

EL - elevation indicates whether your airship is gaining altitude (blue) or losing it (green).

SPEED - speed shows how fast you're going in any type of vehicle.

LOC - location displays your co-ordinates on the planet. negative co-ordinates let you know you're on the opposite hemisphere of the planet from the city.

ALT - altitude gives your flying height in feet.

COMP - compass helps you determine which direction you're going. red and green indicate north; red is the western quadrant and green the eastern. black and blue are south; black is the eastern quadrant and blue the western.

SAVING AND LOADING

Save a game by pressing CTRL-S. Remove the game disk from the drive and insert the save-game disk. choose a number from 0-9, as prompted, and press return. CAUTION: never try to save a game on the MERCENARY GAME DISK! You may leave the same-game disk in the drive for easier saving and loading as you play. reusing a save-game number saves the new game and wipes out the one previously saved under that number (it's a good idea to keep a list of game numbers you don't want to lose).

Load a save game during game play by pressing CTRL-L. Be sure the save-game disk is in the drive, select the number of the game you want to load, and press return.

attention: a saved game on the 64k version will only work on the 64k version. the same goes for the 48k version. to avoid confusion, it is best to either keep a list of the games saved from each version, or have a separate character disk for each version.

Pause game by pressing CTRL-RETURN. Press RETURN to resume play.

QUITTING A SITUATION

It's in the spirit of the game that your character is never killed. however, certain circumstances could leave you stranded in the wilderness or in a genuine no-win situation. to opt out of a tight spot without restarting the game, press CTRL-Q. you are then transferred back to the central city, but any objects in your possession are scattered around the planet (scattered objects are often visible as "dots" from a considerable distance away).

SUBTLE HINTS

If you're the kind of rugged adventurer who likes to figure things out for yourself, skip this part!!!

* when first learning how to use aircraft or GBV's around TARG, it's easier to travel on the ground rather than in the air (walking isn't recommended if you want to get somewhere before the turn of the century). flying is faster, but finding specific places from the air takes an aviator's skill and a lot of practice.

* When you crash-land, you're automatically on foot. unless your ship is destroyed, press B to re-board.

* There are eight types of doors in the underground complexes. some lead into darkness (but there is a way to see the light). enter marked doors with caution - you may find yourself in totally unfamiliar surroundings when you emerge! with a little exploration, you can distinguish between the doors.

* Often, the names of objects you pick up give important clues to their use.

* even when you discover one method of escaping from targ, you haven't exhausted all the possibilities. you could conceivably play the game forever!

CRYPTIC CLUES

- *You've found some cheese - utterly incredible!
it's quite useful, but not very edible.
- *There are no nasty spiders on TARG to see;
but a curious web just could be the key.
- *The colony craft is a wonderful place,
and getting there takes an extremely fast pace;
Once you are there, it's great fun if you let it,
for here there are ways to earn heaps of credit.
- *Go to the kitchen for much more than cleaning;
Pick something up that gives objects more meaning.
- *The friendly palyars have a serious flaw:
The commander's unfriendly brother in law;
he isn't pleased with your sudden arrival;
Don't mess with him if your goal is survival!
- *When leaving the planet, if there's one more "lock",
you need to find something to turn back the clock.

KEYBOARD SUMMARY

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|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| B - BOARD VEHICLE | 0-9 - FORWARD SPEED |
| L - LEAVE VEHICLE | SHIFT 0-9 - REVERSE THRUST |
| E - OPERATE ELEVATOR | > - INCREASE SPEED |
| T - TAKE OBJECT | < - DECREASE SPEED |
| D - DROP OBJECT | SPACE BAR - STOP |
| Y - YES | CTRL-Q - QUIT SITUATION |
| CTRL-RET - PAUSE GAME | CTRL-S - SAVE GAMEPLAY |
| RETURN - RESUME PLAY | CTRL-L - LOAD GAME |