

The Software Toolworks

Walt Bilofsky, Prop.

14478 GLORIETTA DRIVE
SHERMAN OAKS, CALIFORNIA 91423

TELEPHONE
(213) 986-4885

SPACE PIRATES
Video Action Game
Dr. James J. Gillogly
2520 S. Chard Avenue
Topanga, CA 90290
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Space pirates is an action video game for the H89/Z89 or H8 (with H19) computer. It requires 48K of memory, and comes on a dual format 5" disk which can be read by either the HDOS or CP/M (0-origin) operating systems.

THE STORY

Space pirates infest the galaxy, stealing grain barges that await convoy transport to the starving hordes of Earth. There are twelve such barges ready for transfer at the Delta Pegasi IV Space Station. The convoy is due in 54 minutes and you have drawn the duty. You are one of only two space pilots on the station who are trained to handle the robot patrol ships, and the other pilot has just come off a twelve hour shift. It is your responsibility to protect the barges from the pirates until the convoy arrives.

Your remotely piloted ships are armed with wide-beam long-range lasers. The small pirate ships also carry lasers, but theirs are narrow beam and have a shorter range than yours. The size and maneuverability requirements of these space ships prohibit their carrying effective shields. However, the pirates also have a few shielded juggernauts that have eight wide beam longer range laser emplacements each. The shielding must be destroyed before you can hit the vital central reactor and annihilate these ships.

The space station and the cargo barges are heavily shielded against damage from laser fire, so you may fire on pirates towing barges without risking damage to the cargo.

You can pilot only one robot ship at a time, but the station has a crack crew of engineers and mechanics who can launch a new robot ship as soon as one is lost. The launch takes three seconds to complete before control can be returned to you.

There are four launch bays on the space station, and a new robot ship is launched from whichever bay happens to be ready when your current ship is destroyed. On the screen, your ship will appear as having a round white head and a thin white tail. During

launch, the ship is depicted as a black dot on a white field. It returns to a white ball with white tail when control passes back to you.

An artificially-induced space warp surrounding the space station allows you and the pirates to wrap around the screen. Your ship may go off the bottom of the screen and reappear at the top, or go off one side and come on again on the other side. Pirates with barges in tow generally do not avail themselves of this feature, heading instead for deep space and their hidden base. As long as a barge (shown on the screen as a small white rectangle) is in your sector, it can be recovered by the convoy when it arrives. However, once it is towed beyond those limits, it is lost and will not be seen again until its contents surface on the black market.

Robot ship speeds vary from dead stop to 32 segs/sec. The 12-button keypad on the right of your keyboard contains the robot ship controls (see Figure 1). The space bar is your trigger for firing lasers. Laser fire travels in a straight line along the direction you are traveling (or facing, if you are stopped) at the time the trigger is pushed. The left facing arrow ← turns your ship counterclockwise one eighth of a turn; the right facing arrow → turns it clockwise. It takes four button pushes to reverse your direction and turn the ship 180 degrees. The up arrow ↑ is the accelerator, the down arrow ↓ the decelerator. Each button push increases or decreases speed one notch. Notches are set at the speeds shown below:

# of ↑'s to accelerate from a dead stop	to
1	4 segs/sec
2	7 segs/sec
3	11 segs/sec
4	16 segs/sec
5	22 segs/sec
6	29 segs/sec
7	32 segs/sec

The central HOME key cuts engines cold and brings your ship to a dead stop. The ENTER key is used to refresh your display screen if you experience a hardware malfunction that leaves spurious characters on your screen. (All action freezes while the screen is redrawn.)

Pirate ship speeds can range from 4 to 32 segs/sec. The pirates usually send in their slower ships first. As you prove yourself to be a tough opponent by racking up kills, their faster ships are sent against you. You may encounter as many as four pirate ships in your sector at once.

All ship action takes place around and in front of the space station. A ship flying from left to right across the center of the screen will pass in front of the space station.

Should you find a compelling reason to desert your post under fire, you may use the ESCape key to end your shift early.

Your efficiency rating is based on your number of kills times ten and is recorded as your score in the bottom left corner of the screen. You receive a bonus of 65 for each juggernaut you destroy. If, at the end of your shift, your efficiency rating is among the top ten, you will be inducted into the Space Pilot Hall of Fame. You will be asked to enter your name in the Space Pilot Annals and may include the date and even the time of your great achievement (total entry must be 50 characters or less, all on a single line). The Hall of Fame statistics are kept in the pirates.scr file.

HOW TO RUN THE GAME

Before doing anything, place a write protect label on your Space Pirates distribution disk. Next, copy all the files from that disk onto another disk, which you will use to play the game. (If you have a single drive system, copy them onto a bootable disk.) Then store your distribution disk in a safe place.

To begin your shift of guarding the grain barges from the pirates, boot your system. If your game disk is not bootable, place it in the second drive and mount it (if on HDOS), or type "B:" followed by RETURN (if on CP/M). Then type the command "pirates" at the HDOS or CP/M command level:

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> pirates or B> pirates
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VARIATIONS

To turn responsibility over to the other pilot and monitor his shift, use the -d flag, i.e., type the command

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> pirates -d
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at the HDOS or CP/M level. This is the "demo" mode for the program and can be fascinating to watch. Use the ESC key to abort this mode.

If you find the defense of the Delta Pegasi IV Station too easy or too difficult, you may transfer to another assignment. You may ride shotgun for two convoy ships carrying six barges each (easier) or you may transfer to the remote outpost at Beta Antares VII (more difficult). To transfer your assignment, run Space Pirates with the command "PIRATES BETA.VII" or "PIRATES CONVOY". (This requires that the file BETA.VII or CONVOY be copied onto your disk from the Space Pirates distribution disk.)

You may create your own Space Station using the ED-A-SKETCH program (available from The Software Toolworks) to prepare the graphics file representing the station. The Space Pirates program will recognize as a barge any inverse video space with a graphics "w" (the scaffolding) vertically or horizontally adjacent to it. The program can handle a maximum of 16 barges. New remotely piloted robot ships are launched from the graphics characters "s" (ship will face down) or "u" (ship will face up), or the inverse

video graphics "a" (ship will face horizontally toward nearest edge of screen). You may have as many as 12 launch bays. To run Space Pirates with your new station, execute the command "PIRATES filename", where "filename" is the name of the file with your station on it.

7	↑ speed up	9
<- turn counter clockwise	HOME stop	-> turn clockwise
1	↓ slow down	3
0	.	ENTER redraw screen
<SPACE BAR> fire laser		

Figure 1.

KEY	ACTION
↑	accelerate
<-	turn ship counterclockwise
HOME	stop ship
->	turn ship clockwise
↓	decelerate
ENTER	redraw screen
ESC	abort game
<space bar>	fire laser