

# Thunder Force II FAQ/Walkthrough

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THUNDER FORCE II

FAQ/Walkthrough

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"This is Exceliza - Roger. Good luck."

So begins the journey to the center of Nepura, a formerly peaceful planet occupied by the forces of the ORN Empire. The Empire, led by Emperor Reficul, attacked the Galaxy Federation with a huge space battleship, Plealos, wiping out one planet and settling on Nepura.

To restore peace, the desperate federation dispatched an experimental space fighter, Fire LEO-02 "Exceliza." You pilot the Exceliza. Your mission: locate and destroy Plealos and free Nepura from the rule of the Empire.

THUNDER FORCE II is the second in TecnoSoft's series of excellent shooting games, most of which were released for Sega consoles. The third and fourth entries in the series are generally the best-remembered by fans who grew up in the 16-bit time period, but the second is notable for being one of the Genesis/Mega Drive's launch titles in the U.S., for being an early example of the system's technical abilities, and for its innovative use of both horizontal and top-view stages.

Why create a guide for this game more than 25 years after its release? Well, for one thing, GameFAQs had none. There are several video playthroughs of the game available - which helped me to complete it - but there's no telling if those will last forever, and sometimes a bit of written aid can help in how you approach a stage.

Plus, it's fun for me.

This guide contains the following sections:

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Take note that all the enemy names and so forth in this guide were invented by me - just for fun. Hopefully you enjoy them too. The game has a small amount of backstory present in the manual, but I felt like adding a bit more here and there. Again, just for fun.

This guide is complete barring any minor changes.

-----[TFII P01] PART I. HOW TO RETAKE YOUR PLANET-----

Thunder Force II has five stages. Each stage contains two sub-sections. The first will always be an overhead search-and-destroy scenario in which four enemy bases must be located and dispatched. Until the final stage, the second will be a horizontal scrolling scenario which the player must survive, ending with a large boss that must be dispatched. The final stage does not contain a horizontal section.

The Exceliza itself behaves like many other vessels in shooting games. It can fly in 8 directions and fire beams straight ahead. Holding the B Button activates autofire (this can be disabled in the options mode if you are a masochist). Exceliza can't sustain damage - it will be shot down in a single hit, and will explode if it collides with any surface. The player begins with three lives, and extends are granted at the first 20,000 points and every 50,000 thereafter. When respawning, the Exceliza reappears in the same place where it was shot down, and gains a brief period of invulnerability.

The player is also given a generous number of continues, which will come in very handy indeed. Be sure to press Button A at the Game Over screen, however - all other buttons will lead back to the title screen.

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=====|| DEFAULT ABILITIES ||=====

The Exceliza has an impressive array of weaponry at its disposal. Unlike many other spacecraft, it can handle almost every upgrade simultaneously; the player can switch between weapons using Button A or Button C. The Exceliza begins the game with three firing styles:

TWIN SHOT  
RATING: C

The Twin Shot fires two parallel bullet streams straight ahead. Its rate of fire is decent and damage output is also decent, but it's best to replace it as soon as possible, especially in side-view missions.

BACK FIRE  
RATING: C

The Back Fire reassigns the second bullet stream to the rear cannon, allowing the Exceliza to attack both forward and backward. However, this does decrease firepower to both cannons. There are several scenarios in which Back Fire is highly recommended, but again, it's best to replace this as soon as possible.

GROUND SHOT  
RATING: N/A

On overhead missions, the Exceliza will automatically bombard ground targets as it approaches them. This is a short-range weapon, so you must pilot the Exceliza close to its targets in order to destroy them. Some weapon upgrades disable the Ground Shot; it is unused in side-view stages.

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=====|| WEAPON UPGRADES ||=====

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|| OVERHEAD STAGES ||  
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When turrets and bases are destroyed, Command will dispatch blue, flying weapon carriers to the Exceliza's location. Shoot them down to receive upgrades. The same upgrades are always triggered each time the turret or base is destroyed.

Take note that if Exceliza is shot down, it loses all upgrades. However, if Exceliza is shot down in a side-view stage, it will keep the upgrades it collected in the previous top-view stage, and vice-versa.

#### LASER (L)

Rating: C

The standard Twin Shot receives a power boost and becomes a laser beam. The laser deals more damage than the Twin Shot, but is narrow. If this is your only option, take it, but do not risk your life to pick up this power-up.

#### WIDE SHOT (W)

Rating: B

The Wide Shot upgrade replaces the Back Fire. It expands the forward and backward cannons to fire large plasma shots, and adds 45-degree cannons on the left and right sides of the Exceliza. This is a good replacement for both default weapons.

#### FIVE WAVE (F)

RATING: A

The Exceliza generates a gravitational field which expels crescent-shaped waves ahead of the ship from five positions. While it only fires ahead, the waves generate very quickly in a wide field around the Exceliza, creating good defense from enemies approaching from the side. This is a good all-around weapon.

#### DESTROY (D)

RATING: C

The Destroy mode fires three low-power plasma shots straight ahead from the Exceliza's forward cannons. Essentially, it is a less effective alternative to the Five Wave; pick it up only if nothing else is available.

#### CLASH (C)

RATING: A

The Clash mode activates a field of circular heat beams which fire ahead of the Exceliza in a revolving pattern. The beams have a high firing rate and revolve around the Exceliza before flying forward, granting excellent protection from all sides. Highly recommended.

#### HUNTER (H)

RATING: B

The Hunter is an experimental firing mode which tracks nearby enemies and fires a stream of plasma spheres toward them. The Hunter will attack the nearest enemy until it is destroyed, then automatically find a new target. However, the targeting system requires 100% of Exceliza's firing resources, and deactivates the Ground Shot. Therefore, this upgrade is only recommended when faced with multiple aerial targets.

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||SIDE-VIEW STAGES||  
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Orange Carrier units fly slowly from right to left on horizontal stages. Shoot them down to release weapon upgrades. Carrier units always appear in the same place, meaning you can plan your power-up strategies.

LASER (L)

RATING: B

During tightly evasive actions, the Laser becomes a more formidable weapon. Two long, lance-like laser beams fire straight ahead in an undulating pattern. The beams pierce walls and enemies. It replaces the Twin Shot.

MEGA FLASH (M)

RATING: B

Activates a special turret on the Exceliza that fires circular beams in five directions: Straight ahead, 45 degrees up and down forward, and 30 degrees up and down behind. The beams have low power, but are excellent at hitting certain targets. Replaces the Back Fire.

WAVE SHOT (W)

RATING: A

Adds an undulating, fast-firing wave missile barrage to the Exceliza's normal shot. The missiles have high power and pass through walls. Extremely effective against bosses and in tight corridors.

SIDE BLASTER (S)

RATING: C

Adds wave missile pods that fire directly above and below the Exceliza in addition to its normal shot. Useful in some very specific scenarios, but not recommended as a primary weapon.

NOVA (N)

RATING: B

Adds a three-way ring beam gun in addition to the normal shot; the beam gun's targeting system aims in the direction opposite of Exceliza's movement direction. Can be difficult to control properly, but this is the strongest weapon in Exceliza's arsenal.

EXTEND (One-up)

RATING: A

Keep your eyes peeled for these powerups. They increase your life stock by one, but tend to show up in dangerous locations.

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|| UNIVERSAL ||  
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These upgrades appear on both types of stages.

CLAW (Gold C)

RATING: A

An automatic defense pod that rotates around the Exceliza. The pod absorbs most artillery and fires its own bullets in addition to the Exceliza's. If the Exceliza collects a second (C) powerup, a second Claw will appear. These are extremely effective in keeping Exceliza alive.

ROLL (R)

RATING: B

Boosts the power of the Exceliza's Claw, doubling its rotational speed. An excellent upgrade, but does not last forever. If this item is collected without an active Claw, it has no effect.

BREAKER SYSTEM (B)

RATING: B

When you hear "Breaker system online!" know that you are safe - at least for a moment. The system activates a hard-light bubble around the Exceliza which

protects it from all damage, including colliding with obstacles. However the System only has enough power to remain active for about five seconds, and will turn red before deactivating.

-----[TFII P02] PART II. STAYING ALIVE-----

Here are some basic tips to ensure your mission is a success.

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|| You will die. ||  
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Many of the hazards deep below Nepura are not predictable on the first go-round. Simply flying the Exceliza to the wrong part of the screen will result in a quick death on many stages. Be patient and persistent, and don't expect to win immediately.

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|| Know your hitbox. ||  
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On side-view stages, the Exceliza's hitbox is extremely narrow. Many obstacles, enemies, and bullets can pass by its canopy and top fin - keep this in mind as you plan your attack.

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|| Practice difficult areas. ||  
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TFII has a built-in stage select. (See Secrets) Use it to practice on stages that are sapping your life stock. Although if you do use the stage select, you won't be able to access the final stages (at least on normal difficulty), so you'll have to play through the whole game eventually.

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|| Aim for a high score. ||  
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Whether or not you care about increasing your point tally in TFII (and, it's a shooting game, so why wouldn't you?), amassing a gigantic score is in your best interests. This is because the game has a rather benevolent extend scheme, granting extra lives at the first 20,000 points and every 50,000 thereafter.

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|| Move quickly in overhead stages. ||  
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You are awarded large amounts of bonus points for clearing the overhead stages as fast as possible. Learn the layouts of each stage, and aim for completing them in less than one minute - you will get lots of points and extra lives to boot.

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|| Take difficult routes in side-view stages. ||  
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In side-view stages, you're awarded bonus points for how many enemy ships

you shoot down. Some of the stages have multiple routes - try to memorize the ones that allow you to defeat more enemies, and do your best not to let any escape your wrath.

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|| Die strategically. ||  
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Your weapon upgrades are not as important in the top-view stages. Consider losing a life to get to your goal more quickly - in your brief moments of invincibility, it's easy to take out a Base by flying around on top of it, and some locations can be reached more easily by dying and flying through walls. Remember, if you complete an overhead stage in less than 1 minute, you'll gain 250,000 points (that's five extra lives!).

====-[TFII P03] PART III. CHARTING YOUR COURSE=====

The walk through portion of this FAQ will attempt to identify the fastest routes through the overhead stages, profile certain enemy types, and provide advice for obstacles and challenges in the side-view stages.

====-|| AREA I: NEPURA ||=====

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|| 1-1: The Skies of Nepura ||  
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Lone Star forces cover the surface of your homeworld. The planet is sheathed in a web of steel security barriers, and you must find chinks in this armor to locate the best entrance into the underground fortress. Proceed carefully, and watch out for enemy turrets!

#### GENERAL TIPS \*\*\*\*\*

The surface of Nepura can be a confusing environment initially. Enemy ships will appear randomly, and it may seem odd that your shots destroy ground targets only sporadically. You may lose a life or two when you realize the security barriers are obstacles and aren't part of the foreground.

Generally, the enemies here are not too hostile and won't pose a huge threat. On your first playthrough, don't worry too much about clearing the stage quickly - instead fly around for a while until you've learned the general firing patterns of the ground turrets and you've seen some of the enemy ships.

#### NOTABLE ENEMY TYPES \*\*\*\*\*

O> LSS-PF011 Small Biological Suppression Device "Jury"  
THREAT LEVEL: \*  
APPEARANCE: Organic brain-like craft enclosed in a bubble.  
BEHAVIOR: Jury is an aerial computer which scans areas controlled by the Empire. It has no defensive ability but the Exceliza should be careful not to accidentally collide with it.

O> LSS-PF012 Large Aerial Pursuit Machine "Judge"  
THREAT LEVEL: \*\*

APPEARANCE: A large, oval, atmospheric vehicle roughly eight times the size of the Exceliza.

BEHAVIOR: It is the largest enemy that appears on Nebula. Appears suddenly and pursues the Exceliza, attempting to collide with it and firing bullets. Use Back Fire, Five Wave, or Wide Shot to neutralize.

O> LSS-PF001 Swarming Data Collection Machine "Notary"

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*

APPEARANCE: Small, silver, spherical machines that appear in groups.

BEHAVIOR: Notaries will start to surround the Exceliza one after the other. They are impervious to weapons fire. They match Exceliza's speed and continue hovering around the ship until they collect enough data; they will not attack and cannot be collided with. The player must simply wait until they leave.

O> LSS-PF002 Swarming Intruder Suppression Machine "Responder"

THREAT LEVEL: \*

APPEARANCE: Spherical, very similar to the Notary, but reddish.

BEHAVIOR: Responders will often appear during or after a Notary swarm. They are warped in to neutralize threats identified by Notaries. They will surround the Exceliza suddenly and advance toward it. Use a weapon that attacks in multiple directions to destroy these weak enemies.

TARGET LOCATIONS

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BASE 01:

Fly straight up from the starting location to find the first base. Look for a metallic outline in the ground with multiple turrets and a single, large, eye-like structure in the center. This is your target. Avoid bullets from the turrets, and destroy some of them if needed. When the base is destroyed, all of its defenses will be neutralized immediately. Several powerups will appear as well; collect them if desired.

BASE 02:

Fly left and down from Base 01 until you encounter a security barrier that is thinner than the rest. Shoot at the round portion that connects with the other barriers until it disappears. Fly through immediately as it will reappear soon. From here, fly left and up until you discover the second base.

BASE 03:

From the second base, fly right and down to find another weak fence. The third base is to the right and slightly above this position.

BASE 04:

Fly right of the third base to find the final weak fence. Beyond is the final base. Note that once you deal the finishing blow to the final base, the Exceliza becomes invulnerable. Carriers will sometimes appear the screen fades out, so try to catch some of the powerups before the stage is finished.

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|| 1-2: Spaceport ||  
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The fastest route to the city is through an LSS launch base. Command

identified the safest route, but the automated defense systems are still formidable. Choose the best paths forward.

#### GENERAL TIPS

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The game does not pull any punches even in its first side-view stage. Enemies will appear immediately and attack aggressively. Try to learn where the power-ups appear and know that the appearance of one will often signal an enemy ambush immediately afterward.

#### NOTABLE ENEMY TYPES

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##### O> LSS-AF001V Light Interceptor Vehicle "Wave"

APPEARANCE: Blue spaceships.

THREAT LEVEL: \*

BEHAVIOR: These are the backbone of the LSS navy and appear everywhere. They will fly from the right side of the screen, line up in a column, and advance toward the Exceliza, firing bullets. They can be destroyed quickly and should not be feared.

##### O> LSS-GF003 Automated Defense System "Blaster"

APPEARANCE: Small blue or red orb-shaped turrets attached to walls and ceilings.

THREAT LEVEL: \*

BEHAVIOR: Blasters are simple directional turrets that fire bullets at the Exceliza. Blue turrets will track Exceliza's position, while red turrets will fire in a predetermined direction. Take note of where these turrets appear and try to destroy them before they have a chance to fire. These turrets appear in every side-view stage.

##### O> LSS-PF013 Small All-Terrain Pursuit Machine "Bubble Boy"

APPEARANCE: Small blue orbs.

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*

BEHAVIOR: Bubble Boys are dropped into combat zones and automatically pursue the nearest enemy. In this stage, they will fall in a cascade; when they reach the ground, they will roll toward the Exceliza, stop, then fire a spray of bullets. They can easily fill the screen with bullets if ignored; try to destroy them before they commence firing, or use a Claw to absorb their firepower.

##### O> LSS-SF002 Piloted Heavy Load Carrier "Silverfish"

APPEARANCE: Large, oblong, yellow ship. Insectoid details.

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*

BEHAVIOR: When the LSS forces realize what the Exceliza is capable of, they will start sending in more powerful enemies. The Silverfish is a slow-moving cargo transport equipped with a heavy beam cannon that it can fire straight ahead. The Exceliza guidance system will sound an alarm before a Silverfish appears; be ready for them and they can be easily destroyed by flying close and attacking with a powerful weapon.

#### STAGE STRUCTURE AND CHALLENGES

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Waves and Blasters will immediately appear and begin attacking the Exceliza. As you will not have any weapon upgrades, look for a carrier. The first one will contain a Mega Flash, which is an excellent all-around weapon.

The passage into the spaceport will be blocked by a thin barrier wall. Shoot



through it to proceed, and watch out for similar barriers later in the stage. Despite being thin, the Exceliza can't survive a collision with one of them.

The spaceport has one major hazard: Sometimes, the LSS forces will fire anti-aircraft missiles and laser beams at the Exceliza from offscreen. The missiles can be shot down, but the laser beams must be avoided. Take note of where the missiles appear and plan accordingly.

An Extend will appear in a spot where Bubble Boys rain down from above. Don't rush forward - be sure you've neutralized enough of them to collect the powerup safely.

Remember, the Exceliza guidance system will warn you when a Silverfish is about to attack. They aren't difficult, but their beam cannon can be a surprise if you aren't prepared. You will face two Silverfish in the stage, one at about a fourth of the way through, and a second at three-fourths.

At the end of the stage, a large number of missiles and laser beams will fire from the right side of the screen. Don't let your guard down or you'll have to fight the boss without upgrades.

=====/ BOSS BATTLE /=====

O> LSS-SF026S Anti-Battleship Machine "Persuader"

APPEARANCE: Winged assault craft with an exposed core beam emitter.

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*\*

BEHAVIOR: In a last-ditch effort to stop the Exceliza, the LSS forces dispatched a powerful weapon. The Persuader is designed to destroy capital ships and is equipped with a giant forward beam emitter. It attacks in two phases.

PHASE I: The Persuader will move up and down while firing twin laser beams straight ahead. The Exceliza can avoid this by staying generally in front of the ship and between the lasers. After it fires several laser beams, it will activate its primary weapon. Move as far away from the Persuader as possible to avoid the beam. Try to keep the boss at either the top or bottom of the screen to give yourself enough space to escape the beam. Keep firing at its central core.

PHASE II: When the forward beam emitter is destroyed, the Persuader will deploy anti-armor space mines from its rear compartments. These are not terribly effective against a small ship, but many will fly toward the Exceliza. They can be destroyed with sustained fire. After a volley of mines, the Persuader will charge forward, attempting to ram the Exceliza. It will stop before charging; be ready and the maneuver is easy to avoid. Maintain fire and the Persuader will eventually fall.

The (N) Nova Shot is Exceliza's strongest weapon and is highly effective against this boss, destroying it in a matter of seconds with sustained fire.

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====-|| AREA II: UNDERGROUND CITY ||=====

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|| 2-1: Above the City ||  
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The Lone Star Empire has mechanized an entire city to produce its war machines. Excelizer has ordered you to advance to a certain city district to locate a tunnel deep into the planet, but you must first neutralize the area's defenses.

#### GENERAL TIPS

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The City is a sprawling environment with few major landmarks. You will sometimes encounter skyscrapers that will destroy the Exceliza upon collision; there are also corridors of destructible material, but neither of these obstacles need be faced in clearing out the stage's four bases.

#### NOTABLE ENEMY TYPES

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O> LSS-PF003 Biological Pursuit Machine "Antibody"

APPEARANCE: A medium-sized, orange, mask-like ship.

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*

BEHAVIOR: Antibody is the largest threat to the Exceliza in this stage. It relentlessly follows the player while emitting cells that cluster toward Exceliza. The cells can be destroyed, but if multiple Antibodies are present while attacking a base, they can cause Exceliza to quickly lose several lives.

#### TARGET LOCATIONS

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BASE 01: Fly directly up from the starting position. The first base will be slightly to the right of your flight path.

BASE 02: Continue up from the first base. Soon you will notice a diagonal highway. Follow it upward for a short distance. The second base is slightly above this highway.

BASE 03: Fly up and to the right from the second base until you encounter the third base.

BASE 04: Fly left and down slightly. The fourth base is located a short distance from the third.

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|| 2-1: Under the City ||  
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Command has identified a route through the city. Security is on high alert - LSS forces have deemed the Exceliza as a serious threat, so expect to face a challenge along the city streets.

#### GENERAL TIPS

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The second side-view stage is likely to bring about your first Game Over. Clearing this stage without dying is possible with practice, but the many closing shutters and enemy ambushes will catch you off-guard until you memorize them. Practice this stage using the stage select if needed.

#### NOTABLE ENEMY TYPES

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O> LSS-SFED3 Tactical Explosive Device "Star Mine"

APPEARANCE: A star-shaped orb.

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*

BEHAVIOR: Star Mines appear at the edges of the screen, blink for about one second, then burst into a cloud of bullets that fly in every direction. They can be destroyed, but most of the time you will simply have to dodge their shots. They will usually appear in tandem with other enemies such as Waves, so take note of their position and focus on the immediate threat while preparing for oncoming bullets.

O> LSS-SF025 Heavy Aerial Support Machine "Stalwart"

APPEARANCE: A medium-sized starfighter.

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*

BEHAVIOR: Stalwart is dispatched after Exceliza clears the first security gate. It approaches from the left, attacking with forward linear beams and a spread of bullets. Stay at the top right corner of the screen and attack with Side Shot or Nova; dodge the bullets or allow them to be absorbed by Claw. Stalwart is not a huge threat to the Exceliza if approached calmly.

#### STAGE STRUCTURE AND CHALLENGES

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1. The stage will open with several formation of Waves. Take note of the poles along the bottom of the screen: They cannot be destroyed and will destroy the Exceliza on collision. If you don't have Nova, stay at the bottom of the screen (above the street lights) and shoot down the carrier to collect the (N), which will be very useful in this section.
2. Activate Nova and fly to the top right of the screen. Aim Nova downward to destroy the Waves and other ships that appear. Star Mines will also appear; stay cool and watch for bullets flying toward the Exceliza.
3. When you hear the guidance system alert, a security gate is about to close. The first gate leaves several gaps that can be flown through, but future gates close completely and do not reopen, and cannot be destroyed.
4. The carrier after the gate contains a (S) Side Blaster. At this point, Stalwart will approach from the left.
5. After destroying Stalwart, prepare for another fleet of Waves and Star Mines. An Extend will be dropped in the center of the screen as the Star Mines explode. It will pass quickly, so collect it if possible.
6. Following the second fleet, a series of security gates will close. The first gate will scissor shut from the floor and ceiling; the second will close from the top; the third from the bottom; the fourth from the top; and finally one last gate will scissor as the first.
7. After the third gate, a group of Star Mines and other enemies will cluster at the right side of the screen. It's recommended to use Hunter or Side Blaster to destroy the enemies that try to surround you here.
8. A carrier will appear after the final gate and will drop a (C) Claw. Hopefully, you have kept your upgrades, as they will make the boss battle much easier.
9. Just before the boss appears, a wave of missiles will fire from the right side of the screen. Stay left and shoot through them.

=====/ BOSS BATTLE /=====

O> LSS-GFNT-1 Mobile Siege Base "Elephant"

APPEARANCE: A huge battle tank.

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*\*

BEHAVIOR: Elephant units are deployed in every LSS-controlled city to curb revolts by native forces. One is dispatched to destroy the Exceliza before it reaches the planetary tunnel. The Elephant itself is not a huge threat to the Exceliza, as it is designed more for eliminating ground targets. It will roll back and forth along the bottom of the screen, occasionally firing a blast from its main cannon.

The blast can be avoided so long as the Exceliza is not on the same level as the cannon. Elephant will also fire a trio of bullets from its anti-air guns in the Exceliza's general direction.

The Exceliza will also have to contend with a constant barrage of anti-air missiles flying in a straight line from the right side of the screen. These missiles can be shot down, but they move quickly and are easy to collide with as the Exceliza is dodging the Elephant's bullets.

Elephant is easiest to deal with if you have managed to keep a Nova or Side Blaster upgrade. It's also effective to hover just above the Elephant while firing with a Wave Shot. However, it's harder to dodge bullets while floating next to the Elephant.

If all you have is a Claw (or nothing), you will need to fly in front of the Elephant to damage it. Stay wary of its main cannon, and take note that the missiles will pass through the Elephant. The tank can absorb quite a lot of damage before it is defeated. It is a simple battle, but lasts a long while.

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==--||        AREA III: PLANETARY TUNNEL        ||==--

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|| 3-1: Caverns ||  
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You have cleared the Empire's first line of defense and have discovered a passage into the underground fortress. However, the passage is narrow, and several defense bases must be neutralized before it's safe to proceed.

GENERAL TIPS  
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Unlike previous overhead stages, the caverns are mostly linear. Your challenge here will be to keep calm while navigating the narrow corridors, as touching any wall or surface results in death. The stage also features fungal barriers that must be cleared with your weapons. Clash is very effective here. Be especially wary if you have Notaries following you, as they will block your shots and make it more difficult to clear the fungus.

[NO NEW ENEMIES OF NOTE]  
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TARGET LOCATIONS  
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BASE 01: Simply fly up from the starting locations. This base is not

difficult to find. Note that Command doesn't dispatch Carriers upon destroying this base, so don't count on receiving any powerups.

BASE 02: The cavern path continues to the right and below the first base. You must shoot through a fungal wall to reach the second.

BASE 03: Fly down and to the right of the second base, then up and left through the cavern (the upper right path leads to a dead-end).

BASE 04: This base is located above and to the right of the third. There are two ways to approach it. The first is the intended method - fly down from the third base until you locate a narrow, twisting corridor with multiple fungal blockages. It's difficult to proceed here without losing a life. The second method is to fly up and to the right of the third base until the fourth is in view, then simply fly into the wall and use your momentary invincibility to reach the base. If you don't mind losing your weapons, the second method is recommended, as it takes a long time to reach the base otherwise.

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|| 3-2: Abandoned Pipe ||  
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Beneath the caverns lies an ancient pipeline leading to Reficul's base. Despite being abandoned for centuries, its defense systems still function and have been commandeered by the LSS. Strange enemies attack you here.

#### GENERAL TIPS \*\*\*\*\*

This stage is a step up in difficulty from the previous side-view stage, but overall the challenges here are more predictable. There are several new enemy types and a few environmental hazards.

#### NOTABLE ENEMY TYPES \*\*\*\*\*

##### O> LSS-GF004 Automated Defense System "Piercer"

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*\*

APPEARANCE: Cone-shaped ceiling/floor-mounted turrets emblazoned with a skull.

BEHAVIOR: The most dangerous new enemy of this stage. When the Exceliza flies under or over Piercer, it fires a linear beam that reaches the opposite surface instantly. The Exceliza can survive a Piercer attack if it flies quickly past them without stopping, but any hesitation results in death. Piercers are vulnerable to all weaponry; however, they often are paired with other enemy groups and must be dodged.

##### O> LSS-SFED2 Tactical Explosive Device "Missiler"

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*

APPEARANCE: Missiles attached to the floor or ceiling.

BEHAVIOR: Missilers behave very similar to the Piercer: They launch at the Exceliza as soon as it passes by them. They can easily be shot down or dodged, but are often paired with Piercers or other enemies, increasing their danger.

##### O> LSS-GF006 Automated Defense System "Quasar"

THREAT LEVEL: \*

APPEARANCE: Blue orbs.

BEHAVIOR: Quasars are teleported to a target's location and advance toward

them. They can be defeated quickly but many will appear.

O> LSS-GF001D Mobile Frame Defense-Type "Gug"

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*

APPEARANCE: Small, bipedal mech.

BEHAVIOR: Gug is the LSS's primary ground unit. It attacks with "hunter napalm," a special globular weapon that seeks the Exceliza's position. The napalm shots can be destroyed, but Gug will overwhelm the Exceliza if it is not shot down quickly.

O> LSS-PF-X1 Automated Pursuit Machine "Pincer"

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*

APPEARANCE: Twin mid-sized blue spaceships.

BEHAVIOR: About halfway through the stage, two Pincers will appear and attempt to trap the Exceliza between their photon cannons. Pincer is a simple machine and can only fire forward; the easiest way to defeat them is to fly behind the left Pincer and attack its vulnerable backside. The other Pincer will then be easy to deal with.

O> NPS-03 Ancient Defense Organism "Mole"

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*

APPEARANCE: Tall columns ending in a beak-like mouth.

BEHAVIOR: These are ancient, living Nepuran defense systems controlled by the LSS. They live below ground and emerge suddenly, firing several bullets at the Exceliza before retreating.

O> NPS-01 Ancient Defense Column "Worm"

O> NPS-02 Organic Defense Unit "Blob"

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*

APPEARANCE: Metallic tubes ending in spheres.

BEHAVIOR: These are ceiling and floor-mounted tubes which end in a hatch. If left alone, the hatches will dispense Blobs, small tank-like orbs that travel along the ground and fire bullets.

STAGE STRUCTURE AND CHALLENGES

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1. This stage will open with several rows of Bubble Boys advancing in formation. A Mole will appear immediately, followed by several grenade-throwing emplacements and a ceiling-mounted Piercer. Be wary of the Piercers and be sure to fire at the grenades before they overwhelm you.

2. After a swarm of Quasars, the Exceliza will need to fly through several malfunctioning security gates. These gates are quite narrow and constantly open and close. Use good timing to proceed.

3. Multiple enemy types will attack after the gates. Be wary especially for Gug, as its napalm will flood the screen.

4. The enemy swarm will end at a second gate. Beyond this gate are several anti-grav lifts moving in a set pattern. The lifts cannot be destroyed, so dodge well. (!) If you fly through at the top of the screen, be careful of three blue laser beams that fire as you near the end of this section. Three Blasters will fire at you from the top of the screen as well.

4. Following another gate, the guidance system will signal the arrival of two Pincers. Attack them in the recommended pattern (see "Enemy Types," above) and be careful of Moles and Worms. (!) If both Pincers are not destroyed, either or both of them will retreat. At this point, fly to the bottom of the screen and prepare to collect multiple upgrades.

5. The Carriers will contain a full complement of upgrades; be careful of the Blasters stationed above. Right after this, you will need to survive a parade of obstacles:

- A. Two Blaster turrets will attack from above as the carriers pass by.
- B. Four Worm pipes will dispense Blobs. Between each Worm is a Missiler. Hang back and shoot down the Worms, then fly past the Missilers when the next area is in view.
- C. Two anti-grav lifts rotate below a random-firing Blaster. Don't allow these to distract you from the next obstacle, which is the most deadly.
- D. Between three more Worms are a series of Missilers and five Piercers. Wait until all three Worms are on screen, and fly past them quickly to avoid both traps. (!) If you have Laser or Wave Shot, you can shoot through the Worms to destroy the Piercers and Missilers.

6. You will have to fly through another series of gravity lifts. These lifts move straight up or down and continue past the screen boundaries. Fly carefully between them; no enemies will attack during this sequence.

7. Next is another enemy swarm with a row of Worms and orange Bubble Boys roving between them. The Bubble Boys will shoot multiple bullets in all directions; if you have no upgrades, it's easiest to fly toward the right side of the screen to dodge their fire. Otherwise, you can use Laser/Wave Shot to fire through the Worms or Nova/Side Blaster to fire up at the Worms and Bubble Boys. Be careful of Moles that appear mid-screen.

8. Past here, four hidden missile launchers will launch trios of missiles diagonally left.

10. Between two more security gates, shoot a carrier to receive an Extend. Fly past this room right after, as four Moles will ambush you.

=====/ BOSS BATTLE /=====

O> NPS-04 Armored Attack Organism "Gomu"  
THREAT LEVEL: \*\*  
APPEARANCE: Large worm-like creature; centipede-like appendages  
BEHAVIOR: Gomu is a biological weapon used to attack large masses of ground forces. Again, it is not best-suited to defeat Exceliza, so it can be destroyed easily if approached correctly. Gomu will creep back and forth, and has two primary attack maneuvers:

- I: Gomu will launch a fountain of bio-mines from its back. These can easily be avoided as long as Exceliza is not directly over Gomu.
- II: Gomu's appendages will poke out of the ceiling and spray bullets in all directions. These appendages can be destroyed, but appear so quickly that it's better to focus on avoiding their bullets.

If Exceliza is equipped with Nova, Side Blaster, or Wave Shot, use them to attack Gomu's glowing eye cluster from above. If Exceliza has only the basic weapons, you will need to fly down to attack Gomu at face-level. Gomu will launch mines about every 5 seconds, so be prepared to fly to safety after firing. Don't let down your guard and you'll succeed.

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====-|| AREA IV: REFICUL BASE ||=====

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In defiance of Nepuran customs, the Empire has created a base in the planet's ancient, sub-surface ruins. Defense systems lurk in the very pyramids and temples that are the heart of Nepuran mythology.

GENERAL TIPS

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The ruins are a sprawling maze, and the Bases will seem quite far apart if you are flying blindly around the stage. Many solid walls block your way, and overgrown gardens must be blasted through to proceed. Enemies will swarm the Exceliza - like other overhead stages, it's best to complete this one as quickly as possible.

NOTABLE ENEMY TYPES

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O> NPS-07 Automated Defense System "God Warrior"

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*

APPEARANCE: Ancient, humanoid statues.

BEHAVIOR: The Empire built defense turrets into ancient Nepuran statues. The turrets fire three bullets in a wave at Exceliza as it flies by. The statues have high defense and sometimes surround Bases.

O> NPS-08 Automated Defense System "Relic"

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*

APPEARANCE: Large stone heads.

BEHAVIOR: These stone heads were a mystery of Nepuran culture. Now, they are part of the Empire's forces. They will spray bullets at the Exceliza as it passes in front of their face.

O> LSS-AF003 Swarming Attack Machine "Tetrad"

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*

APPEARANCE: Medium-sized ships with four quadrants.

BEHAVIOR: These ships are designed to confuse and disorient. When approaching Exceliza, they will suddenly split into four sections. Several will often appear at once. They are dangerous when attacking Bases.

TARGET LOCATIONS

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BASE 01: Proceed up and left from the starting location. The first Base lies at the top of a pyramid. It lacks defensive support, but it can take a lot of damage and fires multiple bullets. Rush forward if you have the lives to spare.

DETOUR: If needed, fly up and left from the first base and look for a narrow pyramid lined with turrets. Destroy these to receive some powerups, usually a (B) Breaker System.

BASE 02: Fly up and right from the first base. The second is immediately to the right of a wall. It is surrounded by turrets.

BASE 03: Continue right from the second base. When you encounter a wall, fly up. At the end of the wall, fly right until you hit another wall. Fly up and left from here to find the third base.

BASE 04: Fly up from the third base until you encounter a wall. Fly left



along this wall until you see a barrier of foliage. Shoot through this foliage to find the final base. Be careful of God Warriors.

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|| 5-2: Ruined Passage ||  
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You now see what no Nepuran has witnessed in thousands of years: The inside of the forbidden city. Old gods leer at you from behind crumbled walls. But the old gods can't help you now - you have reached the Empire's final defensive line, and it will stop at nothing to prevent you from reaching your target.

#### GENERAL TIPS

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This is the longest and most difficult stage in the game, and the final side-view mission. You will have to survive several difficult swarms of enemies as well as multiple traps and obstacles, followed by a high-speed maze and the toughest boss in the game. You will not be able to defeat this stage easily without memorizing its many areas.

#### NOTABLE ENEMY TYPES

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##### O> LSS-GF002 Mobile Frame Attack-Type "Mego"

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*\*

APPEARANCE: A medium-sized bipedal mech suit.

BEHAVIOR: Mego is a short-range mecha designed to destroy fighter craft. It is equipped with jump-jets that allow it to rise up quickly, and at the height of its jump, it will fire high-speed rockets forward. The rockets can be shot down, but their high speed means they can destroy Exceliza easily if they aren't dealt with quickly.

##### O> LSS-SF031 Anti-Aircraft Missile Carrier "Raven"

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*\*

APPEARANCE: Medium-sized ships with wingtip cannons.

BEHAVIOR: Raven is another spacecraft designed specifically to counter aircraft. As soon as they see Exceliza, they will rise up slowly and fire a barrage of high-speed rockets in a straight line. If Exceliza is equipped with Wave Shot or another powerful weapon, the Ravens can be quickly destroyed. Otherwise, their missile fire can easily fill the screen.

##### O> LSS-GF005 Anti-Aircraft Mobile Battery "Lancer"

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*\*

APPEARANCE: Small, blue, wheeled, orb-shaped vehicles.

BEHAVIOR: Lancers are deployed in narrow areas to destroy large numbers of aircraft. They roll along flat surfaces and fire linear beams straight up. The beams are similar to those of the Piercer emplacements and are very fast. Exceliza must fly over these quickly or destroy them from the side.

##### O> LSS-PF017 Phasing Pursuit Machine "Boggart"

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*\*\*

APPEARANCE: Small, golden, orb-shaped ship.

BEHAVIOR: Boggart is sometimes sent after Exceliza to take it by surprise. These craft always appear by themselves and fly directly toward Exceliza, firing bullets, and have the ability to pass through walls. Destroy them as soon as possible.

O> LSS-SF040X Experimental Medium-Class Warship "Reaper"  
THREAT LEVEL: \*\*\*  
APPEARANCE: Large, black, oblong warship.  
BEHAVIOR: Reaper is an experimental cruiser based on captured Exceliza designs. However, the Empire was only able to replicate Exceliza's Five Wave, and the Reaper was deployed before it was completed. It will appear as the stage's miniboss when Exceliza reaches the Bio Zone. It approaches slowly from the left and hovers up and down while firing a ring of bullets and the replicated Five Wave. After firing two shots of Five Wave, Reaper will charge forward. Exceliza should shoot down the Five Wave shots and concentrate on avoiding the Reaper's charge; Wave Shot or Nova will destroy Reaper in a few seconds.

O> LSS-SF037 Dimensional Transporter System "Egg"

O> LSS-AF005 Massive Attack Unit "Bluejay"

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*

APPEARANCE: Blue floor and ceiling-mounted hatches.

BEHAVIOR: Eggs are hatches linked to Plealos' launch bays. They will dispense a column of Bluejay-class fighter ships which will float toward Exceliza while firing bullets. Destroy the Egg to prevent them from deploying more ships.

#### STAGE CHALLENGES AND LAYOUT

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1. The stage will open with enemies attacking immediately. The first run of enemies include:

- A. Blaster turrets on the floor and ceiling.
- B. One Mego approaching from the right.

2. Focus on the floor Blasters and destroy the Mego quickly. Beware of its fast missiles.

3. Next you will face the following:

- A. Three Ravens in a narrow corridor.
- B. Two rows of Piercer turrets on the floor and ceiling.
- C. Two Eggs mounted on the floor and ceiling.

4. Fly close to the Ravens to destroy them before they fire their missiles. If you have a powerful weapon, use it to destroy the Eggs. Otherwise, focus on one Egg and destroy all the Bluebirds that appear. A Carrier will approach containing a (M) Mega Flash.

5. The third challenge is more difficult.

- A. A Carrier will appear containing a (S) Side Blaster.
- B. You will have to fly through a zig-zag corridor with a Piercer, two Missilers, and a second Piercer.
- C. After the second Piercer, you will have to destroy a wall of bricks above Exceliza.

6. Collect the Side Blaster, and take note of the Piercer above you. Either destroy it carefully with the Side Blaster, or fake out the turret to fly past. Don't fly too fast or you will be shot down by Missilers. Once past, clear out the bricks with the Side Blaster. If you are destroyed in this section, you can use your invincibility to fly through the wall or fly very close to the bricks to clear them out with your Twin Shot.

7. Next you will have to make some choices.

- A. You will enter a room with multiple turrets firing bullets in all directions.
- B. A Carrier will appear at the bottom of the screen. It contains a (L) Laser powerup.
- C. You will need to clear a large area of bricks. You may choose to continue straight ahead or fly down.

8. It's best to clear out the turrets using an all-direction weapon such as Mega Flash. The Laser can clear the bricks out instantly. If you fly below the bricks, you can collect a (C) Claw, but be careful of enemies in the close quarters. Several Gugs and Piercers line the upper path, making it dangerous.

9. Once past this area, you will see:

- A. Another Carrier containing a (M) Mega Flash
- B. A lone Mego in a vertical passage.

10. Collect the (M) and destroy the Mego, but be wary: The area is a trap. Above the Mego is a Piercer, and another one is on the floor just past. When the Mego is destroyed, fly past.

11. Soon, you will see a (W) Wave Shot. This is your cue that the next challenge is beginning. Here is how to proceed:

- A. Equip the Wave Shot or Laser.
- B. Destroy the troop of Gugs that approach from the right, and destroy the enemies below the floor with the Wave Shot or Laser.
- C. Fly forward to activate the Missilers below you; move back and shoot them as they fly up.
- D. Equip Mega Flash or Back Fire to destroy the Bubble Boys that approach from the left.
- E. The screen will stop scrolling. Fly forward and down into the next corridor. Do not fly over the Lancer rolling around here; shoot it down.
- F. Fly backwards into the bottom corridor. The screen will stop and begin moving forward again.

12. Next, you will see a Carrier. It contains a (B) Breaker System. Destroy the Carrier, but wait to collect the (B) until the last moment. When the Breaker System is online, equip a rear-firing weapon and press against the right side of the screen. You will avoid a large number of enemies before the shield runs out. Try to destroy as much as you can see.

13. When the passage curves up, you are nearing the end of the most difficult areas in the stage. Here are the final challenges in this area:

- A. You will fly into a narrow corridor. Missiles will suddenly fire at you from both directions. Use a forward-firing weapon and stay at the top of the corridor, or use rear-fire and stay at the bottom.
- B. The corridor will empty into an open area. There is one Piercer on the ceiling; destroy it.
- C. The scrolling will stop and you will be attacked by Megos from both sides. Don't be caught off-guard.

14. Past this point, the enemy attack patterns will be fairly straightforward. Above all, watch out for Piercers and Lancers.

15. When you see the ruins give way to an organic, brain-like pattern, you

are nearing the Bio Zone. At this point you will be attacked by Reaper, so do not sit at the left edge of the screen. Reaper is not difficult; see its description above.

16. Next, you will have to survive a high-speed maze section. You will see a few enemies crawling around on the organic matter, but after that the scrolling will speed up and you will have to rapidly choose between several paths, a few which end in death. Here is the correct path through this area:

- A. After you pass the first group of enemies, stay low. The upper path is a dead end.
- B. When you pass the first dead end, move to the top path. The top is safe through the rest of the maze.
- C. Try not to just watch the Exceliza, but focus on the whole screen. You may die the first couple of times through here, but overall the section is not that difficult.

17. When the screen slows down, several Bubble Boys will roll in from the left. Following this, the boss will appear.

=====/ BOSS BATTLE /=====

O> LSS-SF001D Ultra Heavy Plealos Defense System "Polyphemus"

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*\*\*\*

APPEARANCE: A huge gun emplacement with a central eye.

BEHAVIOR: Anticipating the Exceliza's arrival, the Empire blocks its route. Polyphemus is the last line of defense, and the most difficult boss in the game. Hopefully, you've managed to bring some upgrades with you.

Polyphemus has a few phases of attack:

PHASE I: It will appear from the left. You can fly between its two halves safely. The core will unite with the outer sections, and begin firing bullets in diagonal waves.

During this phase, you must target the small turrets at the ends of each outer arm. When the turret is destroyed, the arm will begin firing large, rapid projectiles straight out.

PHASE II: When both turrets are destroyed, the bullets will cease, and you will simply need to shoot the two electrical generators that power the shield above and below the core. When one is destroyed, the core will begin firing rapid projectiles and bullets.

PHASE III: Once both generators are destroyed, the true battle begins. In addition to the two arms, the core will now fire three projectiles and resume firing bullets in a wave pattern.

(!) There are several ways to survive this battle.

A. Equip Mega Flash or Nova and fly to the bottom left side of the screen. Here, the lower arm's shots can't reach you and you will need to simply dodge the small bullets, which is easily done if you have a Claw or two.

B. If you have no weapons, there is a safe spot about 1/6 of the way from the top of the screen on the left. Exceliza will be lined up with one of the background patterns. It is difficult to locate this spot, but as long as you stay here, none of Polyphemus' projectiles can hit you, and its core will drift in the path of your bullets. If you can find this spot, stay there, and the battle will be yours. It's easiest to find if you start from the

middle of the screen and fly slowly up. Be careful.

C. If you have good reflexes and remain calm, and especially if you have two Claws, you can stay at the far left-middle and simply dodge Polyphemus' shots while maintaining fire. The Claws will absorb its smaller bullets, but you will have to be fast enough to dodge its other shots.

Once Polyphemus goes down in flames, it's time for your final battle with Plealos.

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====--|| AREA V: Plealos ||=====

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|| 5-1: Lava Field ||

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Hovering over a field of bubbling lava, the Emperor's personal ship is finally in view. But it's not enough to simply witness it - you must destroy the ship once and for all so that no more planets may fall into the Empire's grasp.

#### GENERAL TIPS

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Like the other top-view stages, your objective here is to locate and destroy four targets. However, unlike previous overhead stages, every enemy in Area V is vulnerable to Exceliza's primary weapons. TFII's greatest challenges are behind you, but Plealos's defense systems are highly aggressive, so be prepared to lose several lives and continue the first go-round.

#### NOTABLE ENEMY TYPES

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O> LSS-SF001 Colossal Anti-Terrestrial Battlecruiser "Plealos"

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*\*\*\*

APPEARANCE: A spaceship so large it fills up the whole stage.

BEHAVIOR: The Empire's ultimate weapon, capable of destroying a planet with its primary beam emitter and undergoing instant dimensional transit. Plealos is large enough that it is more of an obstacle than a singular enemy. It can't be destroyed with normal weapon fire, although it does have a weak point.

O> LSS-AF007 Piloted Anti-Intruder Machine "Flea"

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*

APPEARANCE: Silver starfighters.

BEHAVIOR: Flea is a manned starfighter deployed to protect Plealos' flanks. These aircraft fly all around the stage, harassing Exceliza. They are not too dangerous but tend to get in the way while you are firing at more important targets. Don't let your guard down.

O> LSS-SF001B Light Defense System "Guardian"

THREAT LEVEL: \*\*\*\*

APPEARANCE: Gray turrets mounted on Plealos' sides.

BEHAVIOR: The Guardian system fires a constant stream of bullets at any enemy ships in Plealos' perimeter. They are linked to the Starbrain control centers. Some Guardian emplacements drop upgrades when they are destroyed.

O> LSS-SF001S Automatic Defense Control Center "Starbrain"  
THREAT LEVEL: \*\*\*\*\*  
APPEARANCE: Oblong gray computer systems.  
BEHAVIOR: The Plealos' defensive routines are controlled by four  
Starbrains. Exceliza must locate and destroy all of them to proceed. These  
hyper-aware computers are not defenseless themselves and will  
counter-attack with very fast ring beams.

TARGET LOCATIONS  
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You begin the stage flying over a lava field. Fly in any direction and you  
will eventually encounter Plealos (the stage wraps around). Fleas will  
appear immediately and begin harassing you. Here is my usual procedure:

TARGET 1: Fly up and left until you find the bottom right corner of  
Plealos. A Starbrain is located here with several Guardians around it. If  
you don't care about lives, fly directly into the Starbrain, then use your  
invincibility upon respawn to attack it rapidly. Otherwise, you will need to  
carefully shoot down the surrounding Guardians while avoiding the  
Starbrain's ring beams. One of the Guardians drops a (W) Wide Shot powerup.

TARGET 2: Fly left, underneath Plealos' engines. The second Starbrain will  
appear above you. Use similar tactics to the previous one; one of the  
Guardians drops a (C) Claw.

TARGET 3: Fly up along the left side of Plealos. The third Starbrain will  
appear to your right in a small crevice.

TARGET 4: You will need to fly up and over Plealos' bow. Its linear beam  
cannons will fire at you; you can either destroy them or fly between the  
beams. Take note of the crevice below you as you fly over the bow. It leads  
to Plealos' main cannon. You will need to return here later. Target the  
Guardians along the right side of Plealos; look for a (H) Hunter that one  
of them drops. The final Starbrain is in a crevice on the right side. One of  
its Guardians drops a (B) Breaker System, but try not to collect it until  
the final Starbrain is destroyed.

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|| 5-2: Hyperspace ||  
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Once its defenses are disabled, Reficul will attempt a Dimensional Transfer  
to escape Nepura. But Exceliza will be caught in the transfer, and has one  
last chance to destroy the weapon once and for all!

TARGET LOCATIONS  
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Your only target is Plealos' main beam emitter. Destroying it will cause a  
chain reaction, eliminating the entire ship. There are a few ways to do this.

1. Collect the (B) Breaker System and fly straight left from the fourth  
Starbrain. You are invincible, so you will not be destroyed as you fly  
through Plealos; you will see the beam emitter above and left of the last  
Starbrain.

2. If you missed the (B), but you don't care about losing lives, fly left  
and use your invincibility to pass through Plealos.

3. If you are aiming for a no-death run, or you have only one or two lives left, you'll have to do this the hard way. Fly back to Plealos' bow and aim for the crevice. It is lined with Guardians; shoot them with Hunter or another good weapon. The beam emitter is at the bottom of this crevice.

Once you reach the emitter, you will have to fire at it while avoiding its beam, which will occasionally fire straight up the trench. You can avoid it by staying in the small alcove to the left of the beam. This is not easy to do, since Plealos is moving forward and you will have to keep flying up to keep from colliding with it. If you have multiple lives left, you can simply stay on top of the emitter and keep firing. Otherwise, good luck...

When the screen flashes white, you've done it! Enjoy the ending.

===== [TFII P04] PART IV. SECRETS =====

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|| Option Screen ||  
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This isn't a huge secret, but the game doesn't make it obvious how to enter the options mode. At the title screen, hold Button A and press Start. The options screen will appear. Here, you can adjust difficulty (this guide is optimized for Normal; in Hard mode, enemies shoot more bullets), adjust your number of lives, select any stage up to 3-1 (although note that if you select any stage other than 1-1, you cannot complete the game), use the sound test, etc.

As a side note, the game's manual claims that if you change the difficulty to Hard, you can select any stage. This doesn't seem to be true. Possibly this was a mistranslation.

===== [TFII P05] PART V. THANKS =====

Thanks to all of the following for their help in putting together this guide.

O> Tecno Soft, of course, for making such a great series.

O> 1CCLog.blogspot.com for his helpful writeup on this game (and many others).

O> YouTube channels Torne, Media Pool, Amy Rose, and Kirgeez for their playthroughs of this game, all of which helped me learn the fastest ways through the overhead stages.

O> SegaRetro.org for what I think is a more accurate translation of the game's storyline.

O> YOU. Yes, you. And the weird guy standing behind you.

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