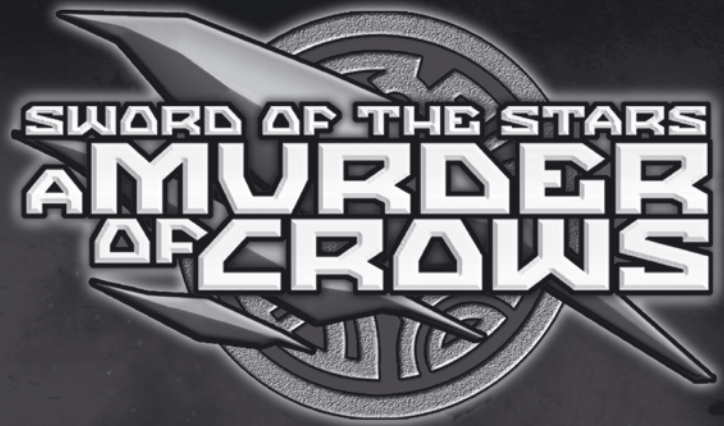


MANUAL



**SWORD OF THE STARS**  
**A MURDER**  
**OF CROWS**



# SWORD OF THE STARS A MURDER OF CROWS

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## INSTALLATION

**NOTE:** In order to play *A Murder of Crows* you must have either *Sword of the Stars* plus *Born of Blood* or *Sword of the Stars: Collector's Edition* installed on your computer.

Insert the *Sword of the Stars: A Murder of Crows* DVD-ROM into your computer's disc drive. The *Sword of the Stars: A Murder of Crows* installation will automatically begin – follow the on-screen instructions. You will be alerted once the installation of the game is complete. You can then run *Sword of the Stars: A Murder of Crows* from the Start Menu or desktop shortcut.

*Sword of the Stars: A Murder of Crows* requires the latest version DirectX® 9 and a DirectX® 9 capable video card with up-to-date drivers installed. The latest version of DirectX® can be found at:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/directx>.

**Minimum System Requirements For *Sword of the Stars: A Murder of Crows*:** • Windows® 2000/XP/Vista™ • 1,5 GHz Intel® Pentium® or equivalent AMD® processor • 1 GB RAM (2 GB recommended for Windows® Vista™) • DirectX® 9 compliant video card with 128 MB RAM • 4x speed PC-DVD-ROM • 3 GB available hard disk space • DirectX® 8.1 compatible sound card • 56 Kbps modem or faster Internet connection • Mouse, Keyboard and Sound Speakers

**Recommended System Requirements For *Sword of the Stars: A Murder of Crows*:** • Windows® 2000/XP/Vista™ • 2,5 GHz Intel® Pentium® or equivalent AMD® processor • 1 GB RAM (2 GB recommended for Windows® Vista™) • DirectX® 9 compliant video card with 256 MB RAM • 4x speed PC-DVD-ROM • 4 GB available hard disk space • DirectX® 8.1 compatible sound card • Broadband Internet connection • Mouse, Keyboard and Sound Speakers

## KEY-CODE

You have already registered your Key-Code because you will need to have *Sword of the Stars* plus *Sword of the Stars: Born of Blood* or *Sword of the Stars Collector's Edition* installed. Without a valid Key-Code you will not be able to play *Sword of the Stars: A Murder of Crows* via GameSpy.

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MORRIGI

Of the sentient species still living in this sector of the galaxy, the Morrighi are one of the most ancient, and have the longest recorded history of interstellar travel. Initially known only by the unique configuration of their low orbital attack drones, the Morrighi were named “Crows” by the first Human spacers to encounter them. These crafts have an aerodynamic avian shape and swooping attack pattern, which brought to mind the predatory scavengers of old Earth. In recent years, more intensive investigation by SolForce Intelligence has revealed that the nickname “Crow” was curiously apt in many respects. The Morrighi have many traits in common with the legendary Raven or Crow of old Earth, and any study of their history and behaviour inevitably recalls a panoply of Terran legends of the divine Trickster bird, which could easily assume a variety of different forms, lead its befuddled enemies into fatal ambush, hoodwink more powerful foes out of valuable treasure, and which served inevitably as an avatar of the gods and goddesses of war.

Look to the skies, Children of the Dust and heed My words.

I am First among Travelers, Lord of the Night Sky and Leader of the clans. I am the Voice of the Star Born.

While you crawled, We flew. While you dreamed of wings, we knew the stars.

We came down to share with your ancestors, but we return to find death. Our females slaughtered, our worlds picked over like carrion.

You have laid us a banquet of sorrow. You have risen from your dark depths, your twisting tunnels, your dung-reeking cities, your pitiful nests of stone, and your fields of blood, to lay claim to the very stars.

Blindly you wander, violating the tombs of My Fathers and turning loose your pestilence upon My wives and daughters. And I say enough!

Real war is coming. The Travelers will yield no longer to any who crawl in land or sea.

Find some other place to build your foul nests and fight your petty battles! These stars are sacred... and they are Mine!

So look to the skies, Children of the Dust, and see My coming. I am the Dragon with a thousand wings.

My people are no longer in hiding. And now We darken your skies...

...Like a Murder of Crows!

The word “Morrigi” roughly translates as “Travelers” in the proto-Creole known as the Trade Language. At this juncture it is impossible to say how long the Morrigi have been capable of traversing long interstellar distances, but biological and archaeological evidence unearthed on Za’xharis, Kao’Kona, Wiira, and Mars suggest that the Morrigi have been “Travelers” for several millennia. Skeletal remains recovered on Wiira have revealed that some members of the Morrigi species have spent their entire developmental lives in space, from late infancy to adulthood, for at least six thousand years. Artifacts recovered from the sites excavated on Za’xharis and Mars suggest that the Morrigi were monitoring and visiting the home worlds of the Human and Hiver races for at least four thousand years before either species went through an Industrial Revolution. The dramatic site unearthed on Kao’Kona indicates that the Morrigi may have attempted to establish residence on the Tarka home world for nesting purposes in the past (see Sidebar, “The Wyrms of Daam’to”).

### Drive Technology

Central to this techno-culture is a highly unique faster-than-light engine called the Void Cutter.

A Void Cutter engine, once engaged, uses gravimetric focusing to warp space-time around the ship to the point where it quickly accelerates to speeds in excess of the speed of light. In so doing, the engine appears to create a ripple of disturbance—a “bow wave” of space-time distortion, which flows around the body of the ship and trails behind it in a wake. This bow wave has several principles which Morrigi shipwrights and pilots have learned to take advantage of over the centuries, the most salient of which is that other ships employing a similar engine can enter into the slipstream of the foremost vessel, conjoin their own “bow wave” to that of the leader, and achieve faster-than-light speed without wasting the majority of their energy to create the initial disruption. All ships following the lead vessel in a Morrigi flight pattern can devote the majority of their energy to forward thrust, rather than using it to crack the void.

The more Morrigi vessels joined to a single flight, the faster the fleet as a whole will move, as the engines of all engines but one, will be applied to thrust, while only the lead ship—the Void Cutter—will be devoting the majority of its energy to disrupting the fabric of space-time. Morrigi travel is slowest alone, and fastest when in large numbers.

For more information on the Morrigi, check out the Races Appendix PDF that comes with this game.

## SWORD OF THE STARS: A MURDER OF CROWS OVERVIEW

Ideally, you have played *Sword of the Stars* before, however you may have just purchased *Sword of the Stars* as well as the *A Murder of Crows* expansion. Don’t get us wrong – we dig your enthusiasm! This manual only contains pertinent information that relates to *A Murder of Crows*. You should take a moment to read the full manual of *Sword of the Stars*, *Born of Blood* or the *Collector’s Edition* if you can. Or at least check out the cool walkthrough videos that accompanied the release of *Sword of the Stars: Collector’s Edition*.

### Changes to Planets, Population, and Production

**Stations** – Long after coming to terms with the loss of the Nova Maria and the orbital platform that built it, SolForce eventually took steps to begin building large, orbital stations again. Other races have begun similar projects, including the Morrigi who, by all reports, have begun building a special, habitat station. Apparently their millennia as a space-faring race have made them completely comfortable with the idea of a living entirely off-world.

There are certain logistic limitations to building stations around a world – orbital mechanics make it unadvisable to build more than four stations, and bureaucratic logistics limit the building of a particular type of station around a world to just one. Each station requires a planet to have a quarter billion imperial and civilian citizens to support it. There is one exception to the one-type-per-planet rule for Morrigi habitat stations, which appear in multiples. It is suggested their simple function, compared to complex functions such as building or CnC, account for this. While impressive, habitat stations are dependant on a nearby world, whereas other station designs can operate around uninhabited worlds.

Stations built around an uninhabited world are limited to one, and are much more expensive to maintain than stations around an inhabited one. Stations can be protected by their own ring of light defense satellites, but only around inhabited worlds – uninhabited worlds do not, obviously, have the technicians on the surface building their complex systems.

**Construction/Repair Station** – A C/R station is a welcome addition to the production facilities of a planet, helping to decrease ship construction costs, improve response times to repair requests, and increase the amount of resources recovered post-battle.

**Science Station** – A great many avenues of research require, or are at least improved upon, by zero-G environments. Science stations provide a bonus to an empire’s research output and allows players the ability to offer other players special Science Missions.

**Sensor Station** – A sensor station conveys its powerful scanning data to a system as if it were a deep scan vessel. The station’s dedicated array, combined with Tunneling Sensor systems, increase the chances of detecting a cloaked enemy fleet on the Galaxy Map.

**Trade Station** – A Trade station is far easier for tradeships to deal with compared to orbit-to-surface transports. They help increase all trade route income to a planet. These stations also allow players to create two additional trade routes to allied or NAP agreed worlds in range. Trade stations in an uninhabited world act like a planet with two trade routes, and are added to that trade sector’s total. Increased alien traffic provides a wealth of information to Xenotech scientists, which helps to reduce the cost of researching Xenotech.

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**Command Station** – A Command Station simply functions as a system-locked CnC ship and is able to command somewhat more ships in battle than a Strikeforce CnC ship, but not as much as an Armada CnC ship. As well, these stations can help with the logistics of military orbital industry, increasing the industrial output of a planet’s Imperial population.

**Habitat Station** – A Morrigi station provides a home for an extra 100 million civilian and 100 million Imperial citizens. As mentioned, this is the only station that allows multiple builds of the same type, at a single planet.

**Station Sats** – Just like the planet their orbit, stations need protection. Each station can maintain a defensive ring of 5 small sats. Stations are outfitted with their sats by building as you normally would for a planet. These light satellites will appear around the planet first, if there is space in its defense orbit, then subsequent sats will appear around stations. Once built however, they can be moved wherever you like using the Defense Manager.

**Building Stations** – Stations are built and designed just like any other ship – you can even outfit some with weapons. Simply open the Build or Design screens, and underneath the Dreadnought tab on the left is a tab for Stations. Clicking that will give you access to your available station designs or allow you to create and save new designs.

These designs can then be accessed by Construction Cruisers, using them to build a particular station. To do this, move your Construction ship to the system in which you want to build – in the special functions list, where you would select “Repair” for a Repair and Salvage ship, you will have the option of “Build”. Selecting “Build” will bring up a mini-version of the Build Manager, which you already know how to use – pick your design, confirm build, and away it goes. Once completed, a station icon will appear on the system card, just as satellites would.



**Defense Manager** – Having a CnC ship or station in-system now allows players even greater control of their fleets, by allowing them to choose the placement of ships, ship groups, and satellites. The Defense Manager is simple to use, as it is very similar to the fleet manager – only instead of moving ships into a formation, the Defense Manager allows you to move fleets and satellites around a planet’s near-orbit and surrounding area. The Defense Manager will also detail other important structures and positions in the game, like the system entry point from nearby worlds – if you spot an enemy fleet in transit, you can now meet them at the door, so to speak. Even handier, occupied worlds will reflect the color of their controlling player.

### Imperial and Civilian Population

When SolForce first took to the stars, everything was done in the name of Earth and SolForce. Over time, as the empire grew and new colonies became more stable and self-sufficient and mankind entered into the trade era

of expansion, the population of worlds became less empire-centric, and new, civilian populations began to take shape. Initially comprised of civilian Humans, civilians from other worlds began to appear. Simply put, the Imperial Population of a planet is largely responsible for the Production and Research output of a planet, while the Civilian population generates income and support for Trade Routes. As in the previous *Sword of the Stars* games, the root, or Imperial Population, work for the empire out of duty. Civilian populations however, are a mixed collection of interests and agendas, requiring careful manipulation using the Population Manager.

In combat, with the right technologies, you can distinguish between the Imperial population and civilian population, each of which will have a bio-counter in the top left corner (unlike the previous games, which had a single counter for population.)

**Population Manager** – Every occupied world has a new button of a little man on its system info card. Clicking this button will bring up the Population Manager, which will give you control of your civilian population. In the manager you can see the current population, maximum population size, and morale of all races living on your world. You can also see the climate hazard preferences of all the races you have encountered, which in turn will allow you to adjust the climate of your world to better accommodate other species – click on a race icon to highlight that species’ preferred climate. Adjusting the climate away from the perfect balance for your race will reduce their potential population maximum. It’s not great for morale either. To adjust the climate of your world, move the white arrowhead along the Climate slider.

Maximum civilian population is typically set to match the maximum of imperial population, however that civilian max can be increased or decreased using the slider. Decreasing the slider makes more room for civilian population from other races. Increasing it also makes more room for new civilians, but past the comfortable, natural limit, the population begins to permanently use up planetary resources. These can be replaced by mined resources from other worlds. Boy, it sure is hard keeping a population happy.



**Morale and Rebellion** – In the early days of expansion, every citizen worked for Earth and by extension, SolForce. But as the years passed and civilian populations grew, morale became more and more important. Morale on worlds can be positively and negatively affected by technology, combat, any number of things, and it is important to monitor these changes in the Population Manager, and react accordingly. When population polls drop to 25%, things can turn critical for a world, and rebellion may take place, turning the planet independent.

Loss of morale can be reduced by the presence of police ships, the starting of new colonies, and even improved with the more money there is in the Empire's bank account. Morale can also be improved by giving the civilian population more freedom, namely by increasing the population limits on a world. However this will slowly erode the resources of a planet. It would be better to avoid negatively impacting morale in the first place, such as when Imperial savings run into the negative. Plus and minuses to morale are reported in the Population Manager – it is important to check on them from time to time, as you might not know there is a problem until the protesters are storming parliament.

A world that falls into revolt will be in chaos for a few turns – if you cannot regain control quickly, they will go independent. You can monitor all race morale on a planet in the planet's Population Manager or see the morale of your primary civilian population (your race) in the Colony Overview list.



**Independent Worlds** – Some worlds have developed or removed imperial influence, and have gone independent. Some may go independent during a game if morale on a world drops too low for too long. In either case, independent worlds are protected by simple defense satellites. Clearing out those satellites and landing representatives of the Empire (through colony ships) will bring the planet and its civilian population under your control.

### Xeno Technology

As more and more races bump into one another in the galaxy, even going so far as to immigrate to the worlds of other alien species, research into alien culture has increased, making the Xenotech tree a necessity.



**Translate Language (Level One)** – Allows you to translate basic military communications from Humans, which in turn allows you to form Cease Fire agreements. The Zuul speak what is succinctly called “Zuul”, Humans speak English, Hivers speak Ri-kap Ken, the Tarkas speak Urdu Kai, Morrighi have a simple mash of language called “Trade Creole”, and the Liir have their simple, non-telepathic Fleet-Song. As before, this technology will also allow you to understand another race in the Comm Panel.

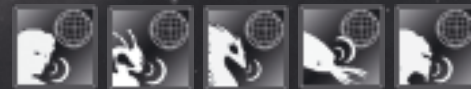
By researching the basic language of another language, the Morrighi are able to establish trade routes with that race, excepting the Zuul, who do not deal in trade. Learning to speak Morrighi Trade Creole makes it that much easier when studying other Xeno-Culture technologies.

**Translate Language (Level Two)** – Allows a deeper understanding of this race's common language. Now able to communicate directly with all aspects of an alien society, you can now form NAP/Alliance agreements, as well as establish trade routes with them, just as the Morrighi were able to with a basic understanding of a language. Better understanding of a language also means a better chance of understanding technology salvaged from the field of battle.

Learning the Female Dialect of the Morrighi continues to aid in your research of Xeno-Culture techs.

**Translate Language (Level Three)** – Allows an even deeper understanding of this race's highest bureaucratic and scientific language, giving you access to the deepest levels of a race's culture and government. With this level of language you can create Science Missions to teach aspects of your technology to other empires. As well, you can try and demand a planetary surrender in the face of overwhelming power. Again, better language skills mean an improved chance of discovering a new technology to research from the wreckage of combat ships.

Provided your scientists can crack the Ancient Morrighi Dialect, you will gain another bonus to your research into the Xeno-Culture techs.



**Incorporate Human, Hiver, Morrighi, Liir, Tarkas** – With a little study, members of other species living in enclaves on your worlds can be fully incorporated into your society. This allows them to be a fully functional portion of your civilian society on any given world. Prior to this level of study, you cannot distinguish between Imperial and Civilian citizens on planet (either in a planet's info panel or via the bio-meter in Combat), but with incorporate you can, opening up new options in dominating a planet (see Planetary Bombardment).



**Addict Human, Hiver, Morrighi, Liir, Tarkas** – A mix of Xeno-culture research and bio-technology allows for the development of alien contraband designed specifically for a particular species. This results in a large bonus for trade routes into their space, and a slow decline in their production due to addiction problems. As well, it has an increased influence on planetary surrender.



**Human, Hiver, Morrighi, Liir, Tarkas Temperance** – Societies afflicted by addiction can work at a number of levels to resist the influence of alien contraband. This mix of social programs and bio-chemical science is tough love however, as it negatively impacts the morale of a population.



**Subjugate Human, Hiver, Morrighi, Liir, Tarkas, Zuul** – Allows you to take full control of an alien culture, which not only allows new possibilities in assimilation, but also allows you a chance to absorb much weaker Human empires into your own without firing a shot.



**Accommodate Human, Hiver, Morrighi, Liir, Tarkas** – Full understanding of alien physiology, coupled with the social sciences, allows you to integrate the life support needs of Humans seamlessly into your culture, thus removing the need to take into account planetary hazard ratings for them.



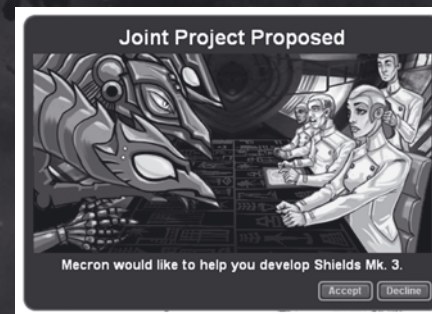
**Proliferate Human, Hiver, Morrighi, Liir, Tarkas** – This technology makes your worlds and culture more hospitable to other races and gives those worlds the ability to spontaneously attract alien civilian populations, and increase the overall alien population limit on all your worlds.

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

**Science Missions** – Having learned the finest details of an alien language, your race is now capable of offering technologies to other races. Not all technologies mind you – depending on the disparities in the level of technology, or the differences between your technology tree and theirs, it is difficult, if not impossible, to explain the scientific principles behind them, regardless of linguistics.

However, there is always something to offer, perhaps as an important deal between two allies, or just as a friendly gesture to a wary opponent. Initiating a Science Mission is very much like initiating the giving of money or research points in the previous games – simply open the diplomacy screen, and click the Science Mission button on another

player's card. Unlike giving money or research points, this will open up an acceptance window, similar to when you offer a ceasefire, NAP, or alliance to another player. They will decide if they wish to accept, at which point, a selection of special research projects is offered. Inter-species teaching is tricky, and the selection may be extremely helpful, or basically just a nice gesture, but regardless, it's the thought that counts, right?



**Drone Technology** – Early AI research has led to new areas of technology, allowing for the building of drones. Initially Drones made for useful tools in the construction of ships, but it did not take long before SolForce learned to put them into combat.

In the Design and Build screens, there are two new tabs – one is for Stations and the other is for Riders. Riders are the nickname for combat drones carried into battle by various classes of Drone ships. Just as with other ships, you can choose their weapons and save their design. Then, when designing your Drone carrier ships, you can click on the Drone icon, and select from your list of designs. The Rider design you select will be the one that type of Drone ship carries into a fight.

In combat, select a target and then click the Rider's weapon icon on the weapons panel – this will launch them. Should carrier ships be destroyed, the Rider drones will remain in combat and fight until they themselves are destroyed.

**Ceasefire** – Inter-empire relations has gotten subtler – Non Aggression Pacts and Alliances require language, but the most basic level of alien language research will allow for two combatants to agree to a ceasefire. Whereas NAP allows for two players to travel through one another's systems, a ceasefire depends on either side respecting the territory of the other. Two fleets from two players in a ceasefire that meet at an uninhabited or third-party world not fight, however should they meet at a planet controlled by either of them, combat will take place. This will not break the ceasefire, rather it is seen as a flare up in a generally hot relationship. A ceasefire is broken when one side or the other returns to the Diplomacy screen and returns their status to War.

**Combat Ceasefire** – In combat, players can opt to suggest that nobody fight. This is handy for when two scout ships meet, and neither side is interested in duking it out. In the bottom right of the combat screen is a list of players, and next to your name is a button. Clicking it will denote to all players that you don't want to fight. If all players click the button, then combat ends immediately and everyone goes their separate ways.

**Spies** – With complex diplomatic relations comes espionage. Spy craft can now play an important role in the galaxy by procuring information from one player and providing it to another. Sounds great, but procuring isn't exactly easy.

To spy in the game, you must have researched Spy Beams, as spies are recruited from the ranks of communications intelligence officers. You must also have Repair and Salvage ships, as they are the only ships capable of carrying a spy ship to another system. Modeled to look like asteroids, spyships are in fact packed with passive comm gear. These ships and their pilots are dropped in-system and left to snoop. Once they have uncovered information, they will signal back for pick-up.

To build a spyship, you must first build a Repair and Salvage ship. Once built, you can select Build Spy in the Special Orders menu (just as you would select Start Mining or Colonize) in the Star Map strategy screen. You will then be presented with a list of Repair and Salvage ships. You can select as many as you like to be outfitted as spyship carriers. The next turn, they are now carrying a spyship – this will be noted on fleet lists.

The Repair and Salvage ships can then be driven to allied or NAP worlds, enemy worlds, or uninhabited worlds that have asteroid belts – spyships rely on asteroid belts as cover. In any system where there is no threat of combat, you can select Deploy Spy, and the next turn, they will be deployed and snooping. Similarly, you can pick them up again later the same way. Deploying and retrieving them under threat of combat is a different matter though.

In an enemy system, the Repair and Salvage ship needs to move to nearby asteroid cover – once close enough, select the spyship slung under its carrier ship. The spyship will appear in the weapons panel with a single icon for deploying it – retrieving the ship works the exact same way. Once in combat, the Repair and Salvage ship needs to get in close, you select the spyship (which will appear in your fielded ship list) and click the icon in the weapons panel. Once retrieved, you may want to make a run for it. If both ships survive combat, return to a planet of your empire, and the information will be processed.

The information you can retrieve from a system, friendly or otherwise, varies. The longer the spy remains in system, the more information types it can retrieve, but the longer it stays, the more likely it will be discovered and destroyed. Even in a friendly system, spies are frowned upon – and by frowned upon, it means they are killed, and your friendly relations get a bit colder.

Spyships can discover the defense layout of the planet they are at, the trade routes in the sector, the last five turns of news events for the player being spied upon, and if they can remain undetected long enough, they can see the other player's tech tree to that point. The spy will message home each time information is discovered, at which point you can decide if you want to go retrieve them. As well, the turn before a spy is discovered, they will essentially break-cover and yell for pick-up, at which point you have one turn to go get them before they are dealt with by extreme prejudice.

Successfully retrieved and returned to a home planet, the information is processed. Defense layouts and trade routes are observed by clicking on the appropriate planet and clicking the Defense Manager button or the Trade Routes button you would normally use for your own empire. News events and the Tech Tree are accessed through the player's card in the Diplomacy screen.

**Planetary Bombardment** – A new button has been added to the combat screen, specifically to the fleet management buttons. This button controls bombardment of the planet. When activated, ships will be able to shoot at an enemy planet, but if for some reason you do not want to damage the planet (for example, you want to clear out defense satellites, so assault shuttle ships can get in close, but not damage the planet in the meantime), you can deactivate the button, and all ships in the fleet will target any enemy other than the planet.

You can only distinguish between Imperial and Civilian population on a world once you have Incorporate. Provided you can see both Imperial and Civilian populations, once you have destroyed the Imperial (military) population of a planet, the game will ask you if you would like to continue bombarding the planet or not. Depending, you may very well want to keep the civilian population that remains alive in order to join your empire as the planet becomes a new colony for you.

**Planetary Surrender** – Previously in *Sword of the Stars*, surrender was limited to an empire level. One player could yield and hand control of their empire to another. Now, with Xeno-technologies, you can demand surrender on a planet-by-planet basis.

With Incorporate, you can attack and specifically bombard the Imperial population of a world – once removed, you are given the option of continuing to bombard the civilian population, removing the entire population (as used to be common in *Sword of the Stars*), or leave them alone. Once the Imperial population is removed, you can land Colonizers – those civilian citizens become members of your society on that planet. If you don't colonize and leave, they will become an independent planet.

With Subjugate, you do not even have to attack. With sufficient presence of arms (approximately 3-1 odds), you can demand the planet surrender. Specifically, you can demand surrender with the possibility of manual or automatic resolution – meaning, if the Imperials refuse to surrender, you can control the resulting combat manually or automatically. If they do surrender, a basic Imperial population is landed by your fleet automatically. All enemy satellites are removed, but enemy ships in-system are still a danger.



The morale of a planet will affect a planet's response to a surrender demand. Even if you can demand surrender, if the planet's morale is high, they may opt to refuse. Should a planet refuse surrender, look out! In the resulting battle, they will fuel up more planetary missiles than normal, as a special way of telling you to take a hike.

You can make the same demands (and conversely, have the same demands made of you) in a Human versus Human meeting at a planet. When one player demands the surrender of another player's planet, the demandee has no say in the matter – it will be decided automatically by the Governor of the colony world. It is in the best interest of a Human player to watch out for player's using Subjugate and be ready to properly defend their worlds.

**Reinforcement Changes** – Previously, fleet ships arrived at a static location, but improvements in CnC technology have made it so that backfield reinforcements can jump into position near the active Command-ship. This means a good CnC ship cannot simply run and hide during battle, but should risk getting into the fight. As dangerous as this is, a well-defended CnC ship can be devastating closer to a planet, as reinforcements jump right into firing position.

**Wild Weasel Changes** – Whereas Wild Weasel ships operated by broadcasting a copy-cat signal to lure away guided weapons such as torpedoes and missiles, they now have the ability to redirect those same weapons back on enemy ships. Make no mistake, Wild Weasels are still a high-risk ship to operate, but properly protected with Point Defense, they are now just as offensive as they are defensive in combat!

**Comm System Changes** – Seemingly a small addition, you can now ask other players, particularly AI players, how they feel about your interactions with them. In addition to the arrow in the Diplomacy Screen indicating whether their opinion of you is rising or lowering, this is a very handy way to get a feel for how things are going between your empire or theirs.

**Slave Changes** – Prior to *A Murder of Crows*, the Zuul were the only race that took slaves. With the new Subjugate Xeno-technologies, the races of *Sword of the Stars* can dominate a world and incorporate their people into their own population... with one exception. The Zuul are truly alien in their concept of diplomacy. Civilization means nothing to them. It is impossible to incorporate Zuul into the general population. So, when a race Subjugates a Zuul world, those Zuul become slaves. Some find it cruel. Some think it is no recompense for the lives and worlds the Zuul have destroyed. But all agree, the Zuul are not to be treated lightly.

## New Encounters

Previously known as Black 13 by SolForce intelligence, the Morigi are now a somewhat known factor, but the galaxy is vast and there are always new threats. Not only threats to security, but threats to fragile trade routes. And there are still threats that have yet to be contained – their “black” status remains active at SolForce, and the work to analyze and understand them continues daily.

But for all its danger, not every surprise the galaxy reveals ends in death and destruction...

## New Weapons

As the five races expand their empires and a new opponent comes to stake their claim on the galaxy, science and progress marches on. Here is an overview of the new weapons found in *A Murder of Crows*. Their relative strengths and weaknesses can be compared in the ship design screen and on the field of battle!



**Green and UV Beamers** – Continuing the work that led to basic lasers, scientists have refined a system that can create a sustained version of the standard, low energy laser beam, which can then be mounted on small turrets. Short on range, they are highly accurate and their power systems are quick to recharge.



**Meson Projector** – This advanced projector technology focuses a wide beam that disrupts all pi mesons in the target area. If the disruption can be sustained for a certain period, then a massive disintegration of matter at the target point results, with the expected devastating energy release associated with such an event. Able to cause heavy damage, a Meson Projector’s main drawback is that a lost or broken target will result in no damage at all. Remember the maniacal SolForce captains learn about facing a Meson Projector; spitter or splitter, meaning take out the turret or move, hopefully breaking the weapon’s line of sight.



**Disruptor Whip** – If the Zuul grappling hooks weren’t a mean enough tactic, recent Zuul encounters have shown that they have modified them to run a disruptor charge through the harpoon, shutting down all weapon systems in the section it hits on a destroyer. Versus Cruisers it only shuts down small and medium turrets, but Dreadnoughts fare the best, losing only their small turrets.



**Gluonic Torpedo** – These self-sustaining collections of charged gluons contained in an EM field are capable of penetrating Deflector shields, as well as circumventing energy absorbers. They cannot be locked onto a target however, so small ships or ships in motion may be able to dodge any incoming Gluonic Torpedos.



**Mesonic Torpedo** – A self-perpetuating Meson field that can be launched at long range, capable of penetrating any defense except Meson Shields. Like Gluonic Torpedoes, these weapons are also dumb-fire. However, being practically unstoppable makes them more than dangerous enough in a fight. If you don't have Meson Shields, get out of the way!



**MW Missile** – Short for “Multi-Warhead”, an MW Missile is a large heavily armoured missile that carries 6 independent mini missiles that burst out and make their own way to the target once the missile is inside Point Defense Range. Capable of less damage individually than a single, standard missile, their ability to stress an enemy's PD system more than makes up for their reduced punch.



**Sniper Cannon** – A very high velocity variant of the gauss cannon that uses a nano-rifled barrel to create an extreme range, extreme accuracy gauss weapon. The speed of the shot and slow barrel tracking makes the weapon less useful at close ranges though.



**Stormers** – A very rapid-fire driver delivery system that fires an intense stream of gauss cannon rounds onto a target. Slow tracking rate, but very effective at hammering away against slower targets.



**Heavy Stormers** – A heavy barrel version of the Stormer mass driver system.



**Mass Shotgun** – Cousin to the Burster, this heavy driver system fires a mass of driver rounds in a cone shaped pattern. Very effective on small, fast moving targets.



**KK Missile** – Short for “Kinetic Kill”, a KK Missile marries a neutronium alloy, non-explosive warhead with advanced ionic thrusters. The KK Missiles use only the impact damage of a very high velocity collision to damage or destroy its target. Targets lucky enough to survive are thrown into an “AOT” maneuver (which is veteran SolForce speak, meaning “Ass Over Teakettle”).



**Complex Ordinance Launchers** – Engineers continue to look for new and better ways to use weapons in battle, and while extremely odd to look at, and definitely improbable on paper, COL systems have exceeded expectations. Advancement in drone engineering and propagation technology allows for the grouping of small ordinance into larger, more durable packages that can be fired deep into enemy territory before dispersal. The basic COL load-package is a small wing of drone fighters. There are three additional load-packages that can be developed for use;



**CryBaby** – This COL load-package is based on Wild Weasel Technology allowing it to affect guided ordinance in its vicinity.

**Cracker** – This COL load-package uses Mine technology, bursting a small minefield at the target point.

**TarPit** – This COL load-package uses grav technology to create a large gravity field at the target point for a few moments, affecting the movement of nearby ships (friend or foe – keep that in mind).



**TarPit** – Not a weapon per se, this technology combines advanced shield technologies and energy projector tech to create a large turret device that can focus energy in a completely impenetrable small disk a short distance from the ship. While relatively tiny in its coverage area, the shield disk created can move within the arc of its turret to block incoming weapon fire.

## New Technology

In addition to several new weapons technologies, *A Murder of Crows* adds a host of new empire technologies that will provide you with new ship sections and new systems for improving or managing your empire.

**Advanced Dreadnought Engineering** – Allows for the incorporation of complex systems into a single Dreadnought module, such as CnC and Electronic Warfare abilities.

**Mega-Freighters** – Trading fleets can now be bolstered with larger, Cruiser-class transports.

**Modular Construction** – This technology takes military construction doctrines and applies it to civilian ships resulting in an increase in civilian income generation. This also results in the ability to make the civilian/military hybrid Q-Ships, which act as trade ships with less cargo room, and more hidden weapons for dealing with Raiders.

**Deep Space Constructors** – Allows for the creation of highly specialized deep space construction ships for the building of structures beyond planetary orbit.

**Orbital Complexes** – Allows for the Constructions of large, special purpose space stations.

**Tarkasian Living Steel** – This brings eons of Tarkasian mastery of steel and armour alloys into the starship age by giving armour an increase in its reflective properties, as well as a limited ability to self-repair damage.

**Hardened Electronics** – Ship constructions techniques that create more substantial insulation against electron flow through ship armour. This reduces the time it takes to recover from EMP weaponry, as well as reducing the damage taken from emitter class weapons.



**Void Cutter Drive** – There are three classes of Void Drive technology that the Morrighi use; Void Cutter, Void Carver, Void Mastery. This faster-than-light technology pulls their ships into FTL channels using focused gravity to infinitely curve space-time, allowing them to accelerate and maneuver sub-light as well without using vented reactor plasma. Each era of the drive tech improves the speed and range of ships, which are then augmented by additional ships in the fleet.

**Grav Synergy** – This technology refines Morrighi drive tech, effectively doubling the number of ships that count towards the flock efficiency bonus.

**Quantum Capacitors** – Utilizing advanced quantum systems to store energy at previously unheard of levels while remaining small enough to be integrated into a ship. Stored energy is then added back into the ship, increasing the rate of fire on beam weapons and the overall strength of shields.

**Smart Nanites** – New generations of offensive nanites have been designed / evolved to recognize unique molecular signatures in the hulls of friendly vessels and to not attack them. This creates a nano-missile that ONLY damages enemy ships. Close quarter use of this system is approved by SolForce command.

**Shield Magnifier** – Increased understanding of high-energy quantum effects allows for focusing much more power through shield generators, greatly increasing their strength.

**Tunneling Sensors** – Using sensors deliberately tuned to the deep quantum tunneling of reactor particle radiation, this technology provides ships with very large sensor arrays, like those found aboard Sensor Stations and Dreadnought Advanced EW Sections, a chance to detect cloaked vessels at interstellar range.

**Flag Central Command** – The ultimate advancement in command and control systems – the Flagship of your fleets. Take care of it – you can only build and maintain one at any given time. If you lose it, you can build another, but you *don't* want to lose it.

**Advanced Robotics** – Autonomous AI driven robots perform simple construction tasks in zero-G conditions, boosting the construction efficiency of your empire.

**Combat Drones** – Modifying construction drones results in combat vessels able to engage and harass targets far away from their command ship. They can be deployed by COL and Drone carrier ships. The command of these drones can be improved by researching Drone Squadrons and Drone Wing Management. Drones can be outfitted with various small turret weapon systems in the Design Screen, just like any other ship.

## New Ships and Sections (All)

**Police Cutter** – With a growing, non-military population, positive civilian morale is aided by having patrols of peace officers. Particularly in a multi-race population, keeping the peace is sometimes just as comforting, or at least helps keep tempers calm, as keeping a system safe from attack.

**Cruiser Freighter** – A cruiser-sized trade transport, tougher and better armed than a Destroyer Freighter, but by no means a replacement for trade patrol ships or the new **Cruiser Q Freighter**, which carries less cargo like a Destroyer freighter, but with hidden weapons. Q ships will fill a tradeship slot in a Trade Sector, but will respond to Raiders as if they were escort warships.

**Construction Cruiser** – As engineers began their planning for orbital stations, the first design they came up with was for a construction cruiser. They are capable of traveling from system to system, and even building stations at an uninhabited system.

**Disrupter** – SolForce lore has it that this so-simple-why-didn't-we-think-of-it-before design came to an engineer mid-shower. The disheveled and soapy shipsmith quickly explained an inspired way to reconfigure a standard Deflector section array to repel matter instead of energy – the whole thing was so stunningly simple, the first Disrupter test section was field-tested less than four weeks later, and battle tested two weeks after that, with perfect operational results.

**Electronic Warfare** – Combining the capabilities of the smaller Wild Weasel, Jammer, and Deep Scan ships, this lightly armed (compared to other Dreadnoughts) goliath compensates with a host of nasty surprises for the enemy.

**Flagship CnC** – Once Flag Central Command has been researched, an empire can build and field a single Flagship. The pride of the fleet!

## New Ships and Sections (Morrighi)

**Gravboats** – These are special, single purpose ships that add to the additive grav effects of a fleet, allowing them to move even faster in Strat movement between worlds. However, in combat, they have the opposite effect, slowing down the movement of enemy ships.

## CREDITS

This Game is entirely a work of fiction. The names, characters, and incidents portrayed in it are the work of the developer's imagination. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or localities is entirely coincidental.

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## HOTKEYS

TACTICAL	
KEY	FUNCTION
<b>0 - 9</b>	Recall selection group (pressing twice focuses on lead ship in the group)
<b>CTRL+0 - 9</b>	Assign selection group
<b>C</b>	Toggle cloaking or intangibility for selected ships
<b>CTRL+C</b>	Toggle follow / free camera control
<b>DELETE</b>	Clear targets for selected ships
<b>CTRL+DELETE</b>	Toggles fleet hold fire
<b>E/SHIFT+E</b>	Cycle forward / backward through enemy ships
<b>ESCAPE</b>	Clear ship selection
<b>F</b>	Focus on object under mouse (same as middle click)
<b>SHIFT</b>	Rotate formation heading.
<b>CTRL+F1</b>	Sets Retreat stance for fleet
<b>CTRL+F2</b>	Sets Break-off stance for fleet
<b>CTRL+F3</b>	Sets Normal stance for fleet
<b>CTRL+F4</b>	Sets Stand-off stance for fleet
<b>CTRL+F5</b>	Sets Close To Attack stance for fleet
<b>H</b>	Toggle HUD visibility
<b>HOME</b>	Focuses on and selects new reinforcements in combat
<b>O</b>	Toggles a tactical overlay that reveals the positions of your distant ships. Default can be set in your profile.ini; DefaultShowTacticalOverlay=True/False
<b>W</b>	Toggle weapon panel and selection list
<b>PAUSE</b>	Pause / Un-pause game in singleplayer
<b>R</b>	Toggle reserves list
<b>S</b>	Issue all stop order to selected ships
<b>SPACE</b>	Open and close Sensors screen
<b>SHIFT+SPACE</b>	Step ahead one frame when paused
<b>TAB/SHIFT+TAB</b>	Cycle forward / backward through your individual ships
<b>CTRL+PAGEUP</b>	Increase time compression
<b>CTRL+PAGEDOWN</b>	Decrease time compression
<b>G</b>	Release all grappling lines for selected ship
<b>B</b>	Toggle Bombard Planet
<b>CTRL+X</b>	Cease Combat (requires all players in agreement)

STRATEGIC	
KEY	FUNCTION
<b>CTRL+A</b>	Toggle Auto-Refuel
<b>B</b>	Open Build screen
<b>CTRL+C</b>	Open Colonize window
<b>D</b>	Open Design screen
<b>CTRL+D</b>	Open Dump Ore window
<b>DELETE</b>	Removes selected ship design (in ship design screen)
<b>E</b>	Open Empire overview
<b>ESCAPE</b>	Back out of screen/mode
<b>F</b>	Open Fleet Manager screen
<b>F6</b>	Open Save Game window
<b>CTRL+G</b>	Open Deploy Gate window
<b>HOME</b>	Focus on your Home system
<b>K</b>	Toggles Rankings window
<b>M</b>	Toggle Fleet Move
<b>CTRL+M</b>	Open Mining window
<b>N</b>	Brings up notepad if a system is selected
<b>O</b>	Toggles Objectives
<b>P</b>	Toggle Player list
<b>CTRL+P</b>	Set AI Policy
<b>CTRL+Q</b>	Quit
<b>R</b>	Open Research screen
<b>T</b>	Toggles Trade window
<b>S</b>	Open Slaves window
<b>CTRL+SHIFT+P</b>	Drop off prisoner slaves at colony
<b>CTRL+T</b>	Ends turn
<b>SHIFT</b>	Override Human waypoint pathing and direct a straight path
<b>CTRL+S</b>	Open Cancel Operations window
<b>Y</b>	Toggles Alliance window
<b>-</b>	Toggle Star Visibility
<b>=</b>	Toggle Fleet Line Visibility
<b>CTRL+SHIFT+A</b>	Toggle Auto-Repair

<b>CTRL+R</b>	Open Refueling window
<b>CTRL+N</b>	Toggle Enemy Node Paths
<b>CTRL+SHIFT+G</b>	Set Selected Fleet as Primary in fleet list
<b>CTRL+SHIFT+R</b>	Open Repair window
<b>CTRL+SHIFT+S</b>	Open Ship Scuttle window
<b>TAB / SHIFT+TAB</b>	Cycle forward/backward through your colonies
<b>SHIFT + LEFT MOUSE</b>	Add ship designs to queue, 5 at a time
<b>U</b>	Open / Close turn news event windows
<b>I / SHIFT + I</b>	Cycle forward / backward through your idle fleets
<b>SHIFT+D</b>	Open Defense Manager
<b>Z</b>	Deploy Spy
<b>Z+CTRL+SHIFT</b>	Retrieve Spy (in system with spyship deployed)
<b>Z+CTRL+SHIFT</b>	Build Spy (in empire world with Repair and Salvage ships)

GENERAL	
KEY	FUNCTION
<b>ENTER</b>	Opens chat window and immediately allows players to type their message. Does not close Chat Window again
<b>F8</b>	Toggle chat window open and closed
<b>CTRL+O</b>	Open the Options Menu
<b>~</b>	Summon tool-tip
<b>SHIFT+PRINT SCREEN (Tactical Only)</b>	Take a screenshot, with HUD
<b>PRINT SCREEN</b>	Take a screenshot, in both the Strategy screens and combat, which will be saved to the Screenshot directory in the game folder
<b>V</b>	Cycle through pre-set camera distances.
<b>CTRL+C (Tactical Only)</b>	Unlocks camera for free movement (using mouse and arrow keys to maneuver - CTRL+ C will snap back to focus object again.)
<b>HOME / END (during CTRL+C - Tactical Only)</b>	Tilt the camera from side-to-side for more dramatic perspectives in your screen shots
<b>DELETE (during CTRL+C - (Tactical Only)</b>	Snaps the camera back if you have been tilting it

## EPILEPSY WARNING

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Certain people are susceptible to epileptic seizures or lose consciousness after exposure to flashing lights or light patterns in our daily environment. Such people may have a seizure while watching particular televised images or when they play some video games. This phenomenon may appear even if the subject has no history of previous difficulties. If you or a member of your family has ever had symptoms related to epilepsy (seizures or loss of awareness) when exposed to flashing lights, please consult your doctor prior to use. We advise that parents supervise the use of video games by their children. If you or your child experiences any of the following symptoms while playing a video game: dizziness, blurred vision, eye or muscle twitches, loss of awareness, disorientation, any involuntary movement or convulsion, IMMEDIATELY discontinue use and consult your doctor.

### Standard Precautions When Playing Video Games:

- Do not stand or sit too close to the screen. Position yourself as far away from the screen as the length of cable allows.
- Play video games on a small screen (preferably).
- Avoid playing if you are tired.
- Make sure that the room in which you are playing is well lit.
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