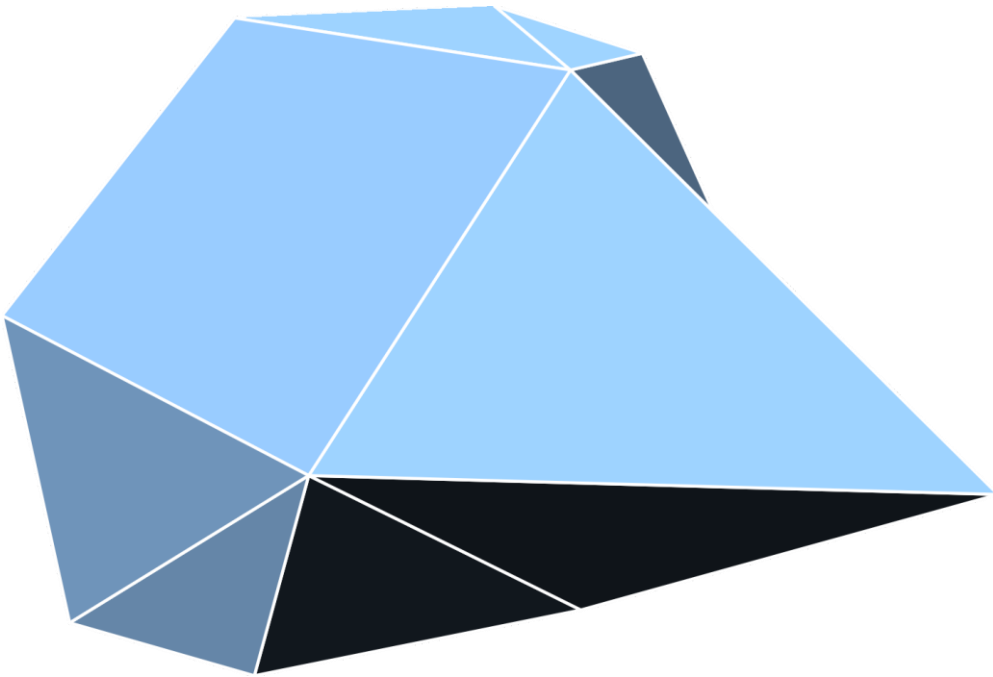


# **Gates of the ANCIENT**



**A C64 Game by DrMortalWombat**

## **Backstory**

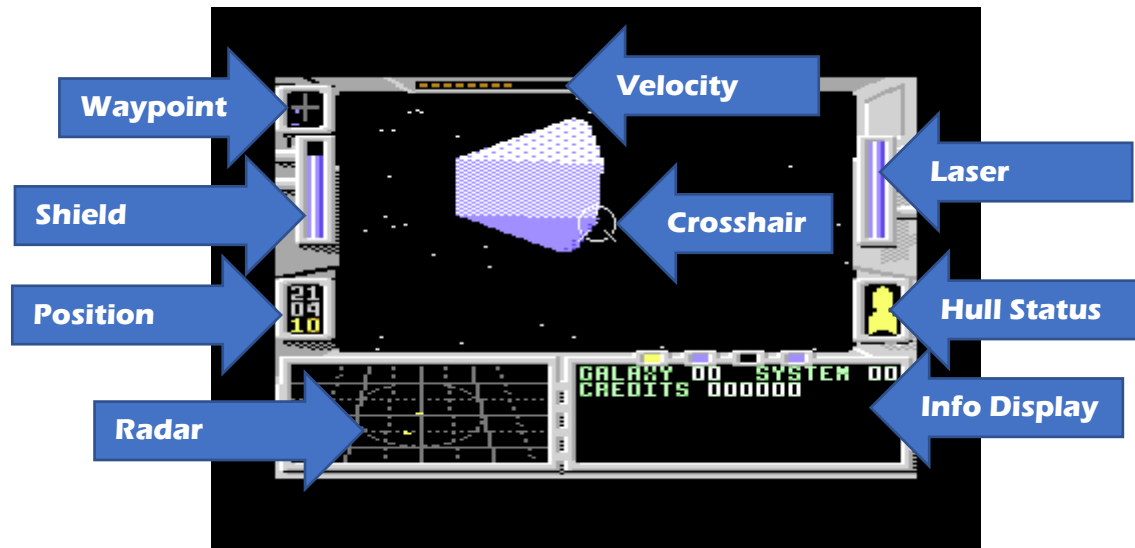
**Rumors about a lost cosmic civilization called the “Ancient” have fascinated you since early childhood and paved your way to a career as a space trader and explorer. Then one day, while on a boring cargo haul from Tau Ceti, you come across a strange wreck and find a unique and mesmerizing device. Asking a scholar who specializes in multidimensional quantum entangled civilizations, unveils that it might be a portable wormhole and of ancient origin. Being the swashbuckler that you are, you pack up a bag of sandwiches, head back into space and press the shiny red button on your artifact.**

**Suddenly you and your trusty little spaceship are transferred into a strange and unknown galaxy. None of the constellations make sense to you or your navigation computer. Not discouraged at all, you decide to follow a sequence of jump gates back home, collecting ancient technology and the riches of the old on the way.**

**Quantum immortality allows you to try again and again to reach your target even if you die a series of violent and horrible deaths in this dangerous environment. Using quantum entanglement between your worldly possessions and your soul improves your chances with each reincarnation.**

## Cockpit Elements

Your cockpit groups various instruments and displays around the central front facing main screen.



### Waypoint direction

The waypoint direction indicator helps navigating towards your next target.



Towards the waypoint



Away from the waypoint

The distance is roughly indicated by the horizontal bar at below the cross.

### Position

The position indicator shows your current x, y and z coordinate in the local system. Yellow digits indicate that your ship is pointed into a strong positive direction of this axis, blue digits show a strong negative direction.



Flying in this direction will mainly increase the y coordinate



Flying in this direction will mainly decreases the z coordinate

The systems are multidimensional toroids, so you reenter them at the opposite side.

### Crosshair

The crosshair serves as the target aiming help for your onboard lasers. A grey color indicates no target selected. When the targeting system has locked onto a target the color will change to blue. A yellow flashing crosshair indicates that

the aim is perfect and the laser ready to fire. A red flashing crosshair warns you, that your laser is not yet sufficiently loaded to fire the next shot.

### Shield and Laser

These two gauges show your main battle energy levels. Blue color indicates a stable state, it switches to yellow when the energy level is actively reduced, e.g. your ship is under fire. A red level indicates a low level which is not sufficient enough to fire the laser or perform a hyperjump.

### Hull Status

The hull is not automatically repaired. So whatever damage you suffer, you will have to live with (unless you have a "Fixit" artefact). Damage to your hull is shown by the hull status display loosing color from top to bottom.

### Speed Indicator

The speed indicator at the top represents your ships current velocity. The maximum speed is limited by the level of your propulsion system. Actual speed is controlled by the "o" and "p" keys.



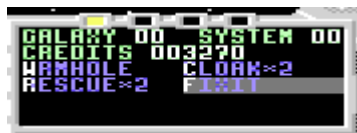
An optional third joystick button can be combined with the up and down direction to change the speed as well.

### Info Display

The page indicator of the current info page will be highlighted with a yellow color. Pages that may contain new or updated information will flash in a blue color. You can select the current info page with the numeric keys 1 to 4. Navigation inside the page is done with the cursor keys.

### Main Status

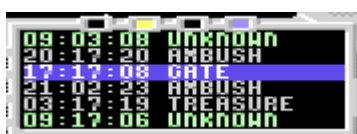
Shows the current galaxy and system in this galaxy as well as your wealth.



The ancient artefacts collected and available can be invoked using the page navigation or by the hotkey highlighted in white if in a hurry (e.g. "w" to invoke the portable wormhole or "c" to cloak your ship).

### Waypoints

Waypoints are locations in the current system that are of specific interest. Their position is already known in the lower levels but has to be detected using the "sensor" device as you move along to higher level galaxies. The type of waypoint is not visible before you reach it. A visited or completed waypoint will be shown in a different color.



The direction towards the current selected waypoint will be shown in the waypoint direction indicator (top left of the cockpit).

## Devices

The devices page is used to customize your ships machinery and equipment.



Your ship uses six different and upgradeable device types:

- **Generator:** produces the energy for the other devices to function. If you are using more energy than what is produced, the device towards the bottom of the list will not work
- **Shield:** replenishes your ships protective shield. A higher level shield will work faster, but will not create a stronger shield
- **Laser:** Used to attack and destroy your enemies. A higher level laser will not only cause more damage, but also reload faster.
- **Propulsion:** Main mean of motion inside a system. A higher level will allow faster flight.
- **Hyperjump:** Advanced way of travelling inside a system. A small hyperjump is invoked using the "j" key. Jumps cause a slight damage to the shield and are only possible if there is no other object in the vicinity.
- **Sensor:** Detects waypoints nearby and adds them to your waypoint list.

Known commercial device levels are "Basic", "Extended", "Professional" and "Advanced". Rumors talk about even more advanced versions used by the military.

The rightmost column displays the amount of energy available after the device in the row has taken its share.

The device level is changed with the left and right cursor key. A device marked in red has not enough energy to function, a device in yellow could be replaced by an upgraded version.

## Target Info

Placing a target in your crosshair will lock onto it and display information in the target info page. Various types of vessels and stationary installments of different levels will be encountered. The information text will provide some basic information and expected behavior.



Known experience levels of vessels are "Rookie", "Apprentice", "Seasoned", "Advanced" and "Proficient".

## Alternative Joystick Navigation

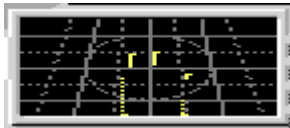
You can also use the joystick to navigate the info pages. Space bar or an optional second joystick button moves the joystick focus away from the crosshair and to

**the page selection bar. You can then select the page with left and right, and enter the page with down. Pressing the space bar again and pointing the joystick up moves the focus back to the crosshair.**

**Main and trading menus can always be navigated with cursor keys or the joystick direction and button.**

## **Radar**

**The radar screen shows all vessels and installments in your neighborhood.**



**Blips with a solid stalk are above the x/z plane, a dotted stalk indicates targets below the x/z plane. The position on the radar is relative to your ships orientation, so rotating your ship will rotate the blips.**

**Objects that are too far away may not show up in the radar screen.**

## Main Menu

You can enter the main menu during normal flight mode with the “Stop” key.



You have only one life, but against common wisdom, you can keep your money and ancient artefacts and bring them into your next quantum incarnation using quantum entanglement represented by a 16 digit alphanumeric code. You can also eat your cake and have it too – it does not matter if you spend your credits or your artifacts in your current live, they will all be part of your replay code and wait for you when reborn.

- **Continue:** return to the game where you left it
- **Restart at Code:** restart a new game with score and artefacts matching the code
- **Full Restart:** restart a game with zero credits and no artefacts
- **Inverse Y-Axis:** change operation of vertical joystick control during flight
- **Engine Sound:** enable or disable the engine humm
- **Code:** Enter the code. Use “del” to delete characters and alphanumeric keys to enter the code – no need to navigate to this field.

It is unlikely that you find your way home in a single run, so building up your inventory of cash and artefacts is crucial to making progress. The wormhole artefact will allow you to skip levels in later runs to give you a head start for the final push to your home galaxy. The trader artefact summons a mobile shop and allows you to buy the crucial power-ups right away.

## Daily Life in Space

### Collecting loot

Destroying ships may result in free floating cargo containers.



You can collect the containers and reclaim the device inside. You will receive an appropriate amount of credits, if you already have the matching device and level. Some containers (around 2%) contain ancient artefacts.

### Travelling by gate

Encounter – aim – enter



You can enter a gate by approaching it from the side of the three by three beacon path. You have to reach the teleport pyramid straight on to trigger the gate.

Gates to systems of the same galaxy are always open. The gate to the next level galaxy must be unlocked before you can trigger it. The lock is in one of the systems of the same galaxy.

### Trading Posts

Trading posts are sprinkled around the galaxy and offer various devices for your ship, that you can purchase with the credits collected by killing pirates, defusing mine fields or reclaimed from cargo containers.

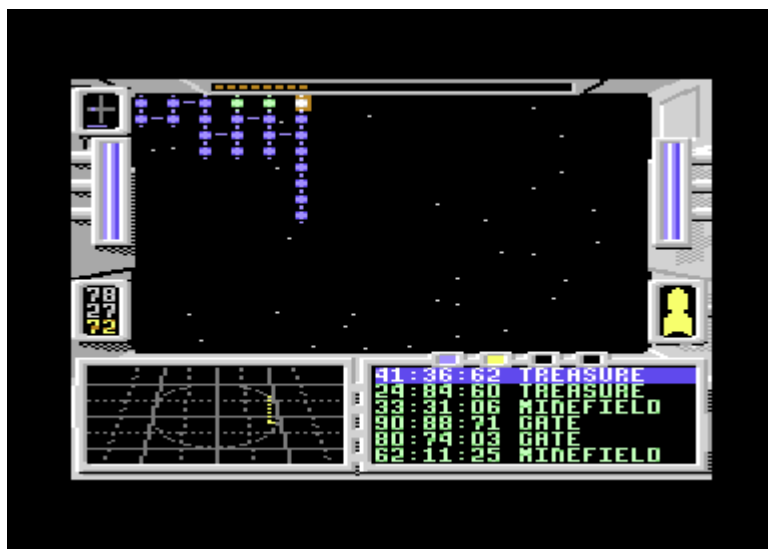




Each trader has a fixed set of goods and prices, so you can come back later if your funds are not yet sufficient (and remember credits spent at the shop will still be in your restart code). Devices that you already own are ghosted in grey, devices that would blow your budget are blocked in red.

## Galaxy Map

The systems of each galaxy are connected with gate pairs and form a ring. One system per galaxy contains the gate to the next galaxy, and one system the gate the previous galaxy. The galaxy map, activated with the “g” key, shows the systems and galaxies that you have travelled or are near, and the connecting gates.



## Hyper Jump

Your ship may be equipped with a low power hyperjump generator that pushes it a good distance into the current direction. The hyperjump is invoked using the “j” key.

Hyperjumps will cause degradation to your shield, and cannot be invoked if the shield is low or objects are in the vicinity.

## **Tips and Tricks – Alive or Dead hacks**

Here are some tips, that may make your live easier or even better longer.

- **Your initial laser is pretty weak and takes a long time to recharge. It is therefore important to only fire it when you see the white in the enemies eyes (see the crosshair flashing yellow)**
- **You start without a shield generator, so better to avoid a fight until you get one. You also want to avoid a hyperjump without a shield generator.**
- **Navigating at a higher speed, trying to get an enemy or cargo box into center will more likely result in circling around the target. Just slow down, take aim and then push the pedal to the metal.**
- **Do not try to play chicken with a pirate, collisions will not make you a successful space fighter.**
- **The waypoints in a system are placed by a simple algorithm to guarantee a minimum distance. So if you get lost in a system, trying to find the last waypoint with your sensor, look at the coordinates of the known waypoints.**
- **Rare goods are more expensive, but they might not be so rare in the next level.**
- **Don't forget to write down your replay code when exiting the game or after uncovering an important artefact.**
- **Keep an eye on the radar when defusing mines under enemy fire – you might miss the next mine.**
- **Do not attack a freighter unless you are sure to survive its guards. Make sure you kill the freighter first or guards will continue to come to its rescue.**
- **Letting scouts get away is a clear invitation to pirates – you have to decide whether this is good or bad.**
- **One in 50 cargo containers will have an artefact, so you will make progress by simply blasting away enemies and collecting loot.**
- **A higher level propulsion system may be sufficient to escape from a pirate attack.**