Battle Simulation

WidowMaker
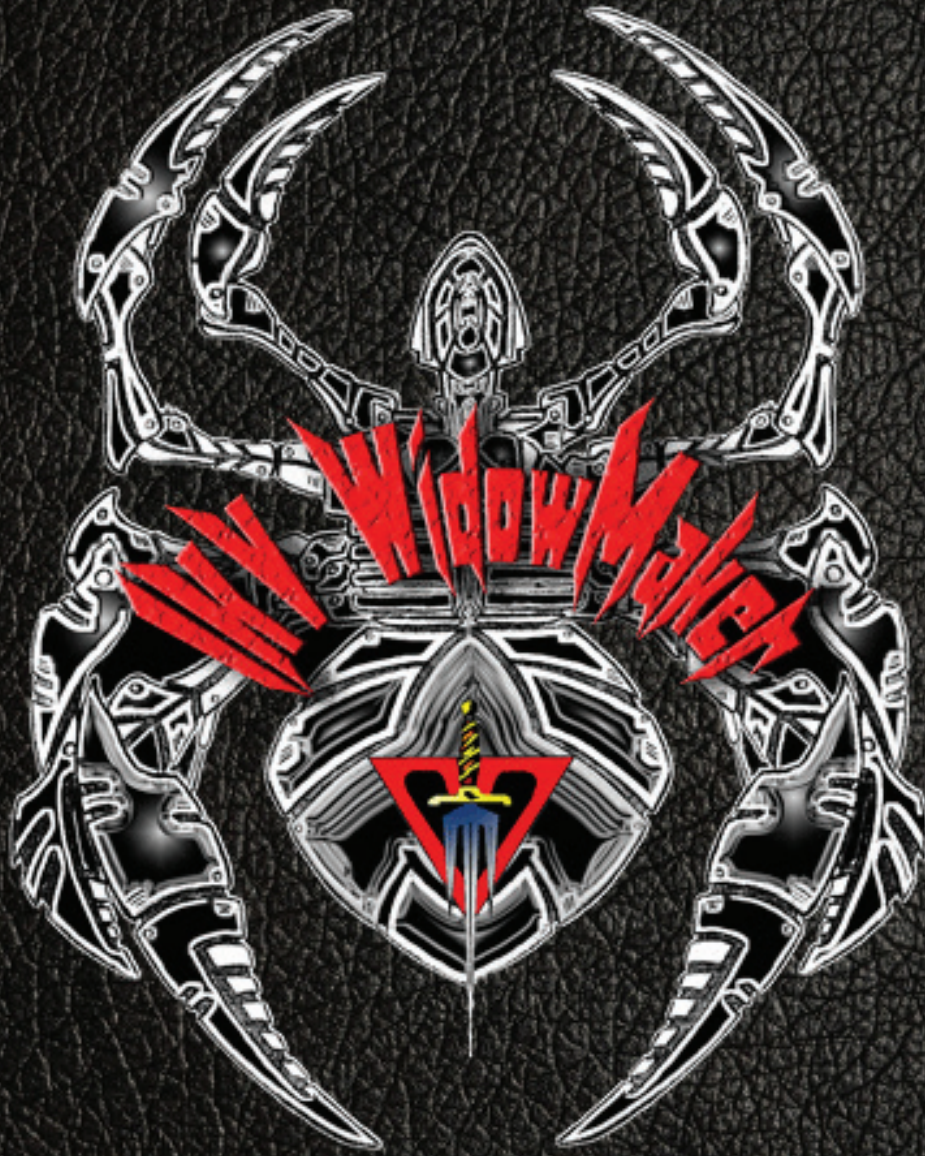
Manual

The Captain:
Command Guide

At first glance, the job of the captain seems odd or unimportant. The captain doesn't have their own computer screen, keyboard, or mouse. Any experienced warrior will tell you, however, that the job of the captain is one of the most important and critical components of the ship. Your ship is a complex entity, and each interlocking role played by the other officers needs the guidance and control of
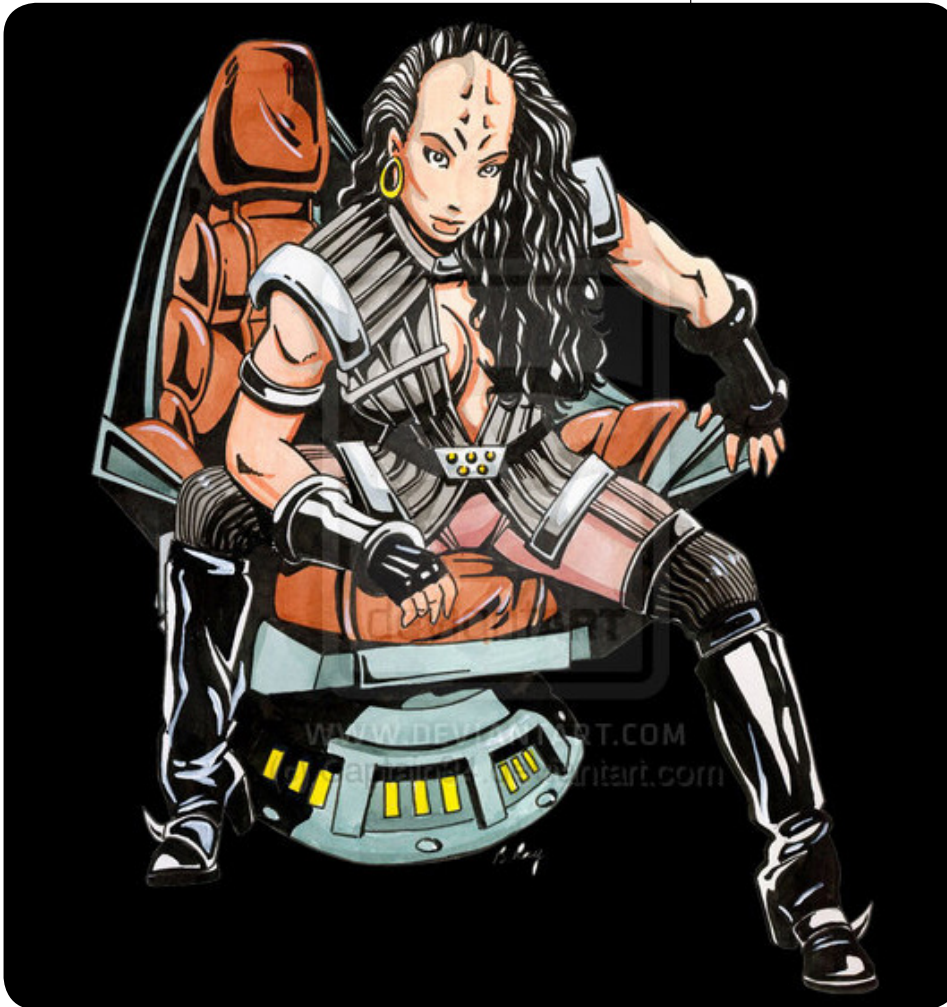
a single mind. The captain makes decisions and provides the overall of vision of what the Widow-Maker is doing, while relaying critical information between each of the stations.

Requirements:

The role of the captain is both outward facing and inward facing. To meet the demands of the mission, a captain must be calm, decisive, and strategic, but they must also be equipped to meet the interpersonal demands of commanding a crew; they must be a clear communicator and an authority figure, especially with a new crew. The crew needs to follow the captain's lead at both an intellectual level (on account of the rank hierarchy aboard a vessel) but also on a gut level, so the captain must be--or be able to project--a strong personality and a appearance of control over the situation on both sides of the viewscreen. In a sense, the bridge crew is playing the game via their stations, while the captain is playing via the bridge crew. The captain must therefore be as deft, accurate, and decisive in controlling their crew as they expect their crew to be in controlling their stations.

Tips:

If this is your first few times training with an inexperienced crew, make sure everyone is on the same page with regard to bridge procedure and communication norms. Effective bridge chatter functions according to principles of brevity that omit superfluous elements, etiquette among them. Saying "please" and "thank you" wastes valuable time when dreadnoughts are blasting your shields away. Become--or at least act as if you are--comfortable in your role as Commanding Officer aboard your ship. Deliver your orders as orders, rather than requests.

Developing a command style and ability to unapologetically sit in the Big Chair can be one of the most enjoyable aspects of surving the battle simulation.

Communication and Brevity:
"Aye, Captain" : Ask your crew to acknowledge orders. If you tell Helm to turn to bearing 180, and they don't say anything, you have to devote your brainpower to figuring out if they are following your order, doing what they think is best, or slipping into a coma. A simple, standard acknowledgement of your order allows you to trust that they are doing their job, and that they aren't doing it if you don't hear them say it. Have everyone agree ahead of time.

"{Station}, {Order}" :
Call your crew by their station name, and *only* give orders when preceded by their callsign. They are looking at their screen, not you, so they might not be sure if you are talking to them or not. I've shouted "Full power to impulse" before, intending my helm to floor it, but the engineer thought I was talking to him, and diverted a bunch of resources to the engines, which I was not intending. Simply preceding every order with the station it is intended for solves this issue.

Roles and Efficiency Strategies:
Maneuvers: Similarly, work out (or at least explain) flight maneuvers with your crew beforehand, so that everyone knows what needs to be done when you want to do something difficult under pressure. This is especially important when multiple stations need to co-ordinate quickly and efficiently.

Main screen control:
Unless you're looking over someone's shoulder the whole time, an important tool for you is the main screen. Ask your tactical officer to control the main screen outside of combat, and the communications officer to control it during combat. Tactical doesn't have a lot to do when they aren't firing missiles at people, but is pretty busy during a dogfight.

Next-step planning:
Work with your intelligence officers (Science, Comms) to plan ahead. Have science identify the bearing and shield frequency to the target or destination while combat is wrapping up, saving time and energy. Check in with them frequently for information to inform your decisions.
Micromanagement: Not all your bridge officers will respond well to micromanagement. Others will require it to be effective. Figure out which of your officers you can trust to do their jobs without interference, and concentrate on making sure that you're giving the right orders to the right people at the right time.

Take care of the big picture:
While everyone else's heads are buried in their consoles, it's your responsibility to pay attention to higher-level objectives. Remember to communicate your intentions along with your orders, though; don't just say what you want the crew to do, but let them in on your plan - it should be a surprise to the enemy, not your people. The captain that "had a plan all along" is for the movies. Your crew might have suggestions for improving your plan, or might point out a critical flaw in your logic.

Above all, have fun!

Helm
Abilities & Responsibilities

- Set heading
- Set impulse speed
- Set warp speed
- Set ascent/descent
- Use jump drive
- Control the main screen
- Raise and Lower shields
- Monitor player Shield strength
- Monitor player Torpedo count
- Monitor player energy level

Basic controls:
Heading can be set by clicking on the desired heading, or with the drag bars, or the left and right arrow keys, or a USB joystick.

Warp (if enabled) can be controlled with the drag bar, or more efficiently, with the number keys 1-4, or with joystick buttons. Warp 4 is as fast as you can go. Clicking on the same number key a second time will immediately take you out of warp and leave you at full impulse speed (100). You can use the drag bar or the up and down arrow keys to increase and decrease impulse respectively.

Ascent/Descent:
The ship can be set to climb above, or dive below, the sector plane. The climb indicator represents the current "height". Neutral indicates that the ship is holding is current height. Climb indicates that the ship is climbing. Dive indicate that the ship is diving. The climb or dive can be stopped at any point between the minimum and maximum ranges show on the Climb/Dive bar.

The jump drive (if enabled) can be used by selecting a heading with the blue horizontal bar, and distance with the green vertical bar, then clicking **"Initiate"** and confirming. After a warm up of default 10 seconds, the ship will jump. All screens will black out and return after a few seconds.
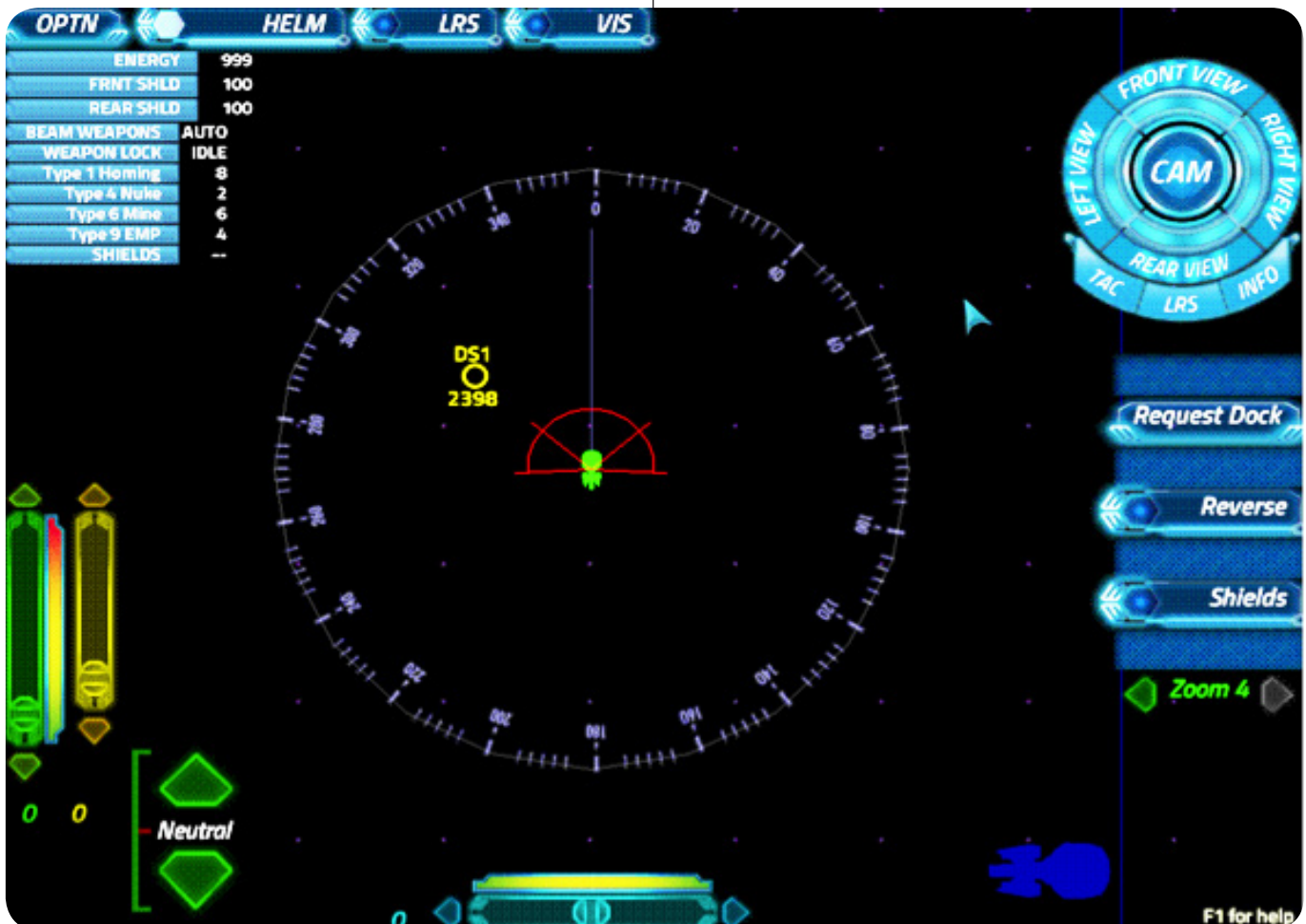
All stop:

When at warp, pressing space will immediately bring you out of warp. When at impulse, space will bring you to all stop.

Combat Maneuvering:

If flying using keyboard or joystick, or if you are dragging the maneuvering bar manually, the ship will continue to turn at whatever rate you leave it at - in order to stop turning, you must reset the maneuvering bar to the center. Clicking a heading will bring the ship to that heading and stop turning, give or take network lag. Ships make tighter turns at lower speeds.

The WidowMaker is generally more maneuverable and faster than enemy ships. Typical enemies seem to move at roughly half impulse, but Elites are faster. Enemies typically will not use warp drive in combat.

Terrain:

Nebulae restrict you to Warp 1, and obscure sensors.

**Asteroids** will damage your ship if you collide with them.

Mines will explode if you approach them too closely.

Singularities will pull you towards them and destroy the ship if you get sucked in. Most enemies cannot escape a singularity. A gutsy captain with a skilled helmsperson can bring a warp-enabled ship close to a singularity and live to tell the tale. This can be an effective tactic for escaping anything but another warp-enabled ship. Only an insane captain would order a jump drive ship to attempt this maneuver.

Science Station
Abilities & Responsibilities

Use the Science scanner to sweep the sector for information.
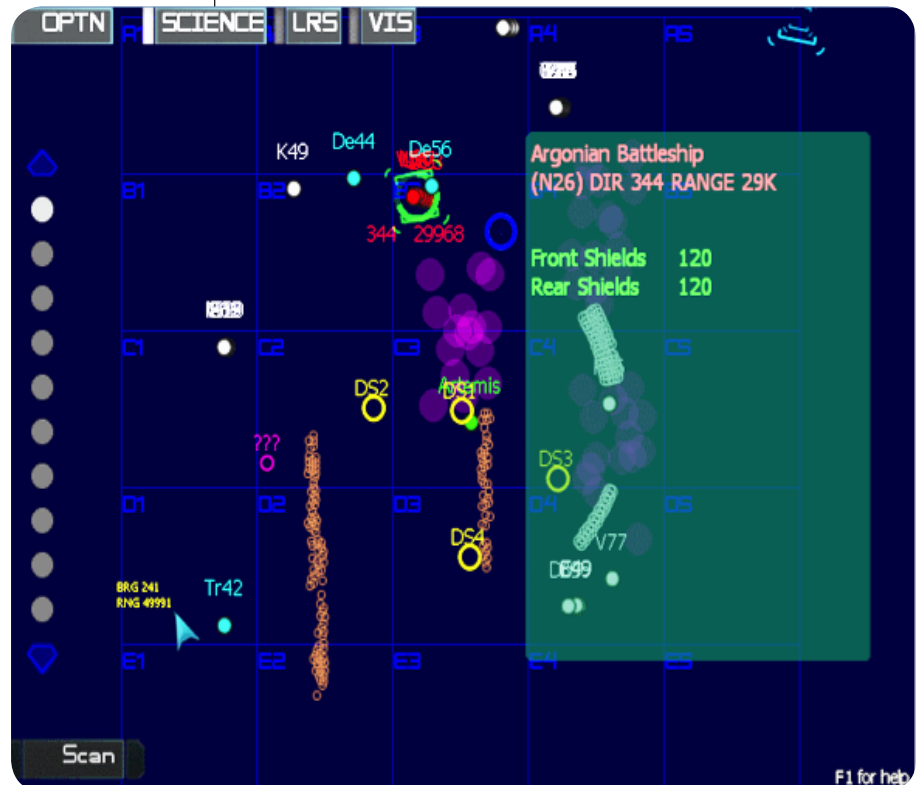
Distance and bearing to friendly and enemy ships, mines, anomalies, black holes, etc.

The science scanner can see through nebulae, and it can see farther than the Long Range Scan when using limited sensors.

When scanning enemy ships then science scanner shows the ID of each ship, and the strength of its front and rear shields. A bar graph depicts the shields' ability to absorb damage at different beam frequencies. The higher the bar the stronger the shield at that frequency, and conversely, the lowest bar is the weakest shield frequency *(and therefore the optimal beam frequency to do maximum damage).*

Science: Basic Role

As a Science Officer, remember that scanning is

your friend - it gives you a wealth of information on your target. Scan everything you can as soon as you can. The second scan of a ship is the most important as it shows the frequency the Weapons Officer's beams should be set to for the most damage.

The Science Officer has access to more information than any other player. Develop a sense of what information would be helpful to who, and be ready to provide it at the moment it is needed.

Handy things to be ready to provide:
If coming out of combat in battle-ready shape: Bearing to the next cluster of targets

If coming out of combat damaged:
Bearing to the nearest starbase (and/or the nearest starbase with nukes)

If getting ready to make a long transit:
Location of any anomalies near the route to pick up on the way

If entering combat:
Composition of the fleet, most dangerous ship, weakest ship, and shield frequencies for each.

The long range scan only shows colored blips with target designations. Only Science can see the type of ship that each blip represents. Remember the hierarchy of enemy ships and help your captain pick his or her battles carefully:

Cruisers are weakest,
Battleships are in the middle,
Dreadnoughts are the strongest.

Science: Advanced Play
In combat, knowing the enemy's shield weaknesses is very important. In fact, poor use of beams can result in dealing just 37.5% the damage that would otherwise be possible. Therefore, it is imperative that the SCI officer coordinate with the WEAP officer to adjust the ship's beams to match the weakest frequency of the enemy

shields. This requires that the SCI officer keep track of the various enemy ships and their frequencies.

Communications Station
Abilities & Responsibilities

Comms can do the following things:
Contact Enemy ships and request they surrender
Contact Friendly ships and request they
    Set a specific bearing
    Set their bearing to the WidowMaker' position
    Engage enemy ship by numeric designation
Monitor communications between Enemy ships, reporting their status, intentions, and whether they have surrendered

Comms: Basic Play Situational awareness:
If the comms officer is silent, they aren't doing their job. Lots of info comes into the comms station, and the captain needs to know about it. The comms station is not for someone who just wants to say "Aye, Captain" - an important part of the comms officer's job is to let the crew know about things happening elsewhere in the game.

    Red Alert
   *Responsibility of coordinating fleet actions.*
This means that the COMM officer needs to know which ships are where, and be able to efficiently issue orders to them.

Taunting and Demanding Surrender: the comms officer can communicate with enemy ships.

You can either:
Taunt the enemy - if you choose the correct taunt, this will get the selected enemy to stop whatever it is doing and chase towards the WidowMaker. Useful for saving a beleaguered base or drawing enemy ships through minefields.

Demand surrender - if the enemy is heavily damaged, they will occasionally surrender rather than be destroyed. In a protracted fleet engagement, this can save precious time and missiles.
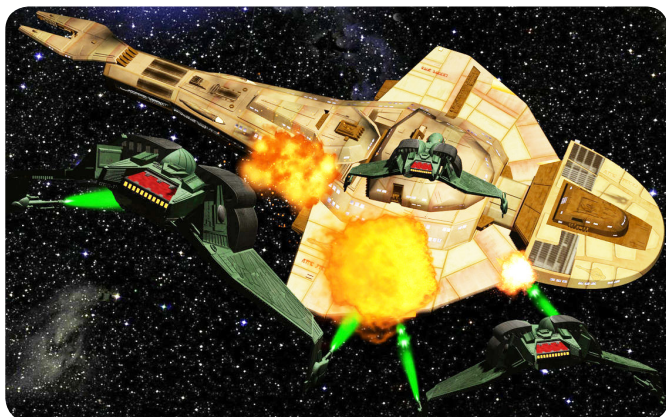
Weapon Station
Capabilities & Responsibilities
Raise and Lower shields
Target enemy ships
Manual target specific enemy systems
    Load torpedo tubes
    Fire torpedoes/ deploy mines
    Fire primary beams
    Adjust beam frequency
    Monitor enemy shields
    Convert Energy to Torpedoes
    Convert Torpedoes to Energy

Weapons Station Targeting:
Target enemies by clicking on them.
A target lock is required to fire beams. A lock is not required for kinetic ordnance, but without a lock a torpedo/nuke/EMP will use its own targeting rules.

Firing a torpedo/nuke/EMP with a lock means that it will go active immediately on launch and seek its target.
Firing a torpedo/nuke/EMP without a lock means that it will fly straight until is passes near any vessel (including enemies, neutrals, friendlies, and stations) at which point it will home in on that target.

If no ship is targeted, beams will not fire regardless of whether they are engaged.

Kinetic Ordnance:
Often collectively referred to as torpedoes, the tubes can be loaded with torpedoes, nukes, EMPs or mines depending on what the tactical situation and the captain call for.

It takes time to load or unload the tubes, and the tubes must be powered and undamaged.

If clicking to load or unload the tubes isn't working, get a status report from Engineering.

Torpedoes, nukes, EMPs and mines are fired manually by clicking the "Fire" button.

Torpedoes have some degree of maneuverability and a range of 5400m (the torpedo range shows up as a grey circle, and is equal to the radius of the compass ring at zoom level 4).

Nukes have a range of 5400m and a 1000m blast radius so can take out several small ships in one shot.

EMPs behave similarly to nukes but only damage enemy shields and not the hull.

Mines do not require a target lock and only travel a set distance before stopping dead in space and arming.

WARNING:
The trigger radius of a mine (500m) is only slightly smaller than the launch range (634m), but both of these are smaller than the kill radius (1000m).

Upshot:
If the mine will go off as soon as it arms (e.g. if you're dropping onto an enemy) you should be moving forward (i.e. not at a dead stop) when you deploy it. Otherwise it's less of a bombing run and more of a suicide bomb.

Beams:
Beams do not need to be fired manually; simply target a ship that is within your beam arc and click the Auto Beams button on the right side of the station screen. If the button is lit, the beam state is ON and beams will fire as rapidly as the current energy allocation allows.

Beams have an arc in which they can fire. They also have a maximum range. This is shown on the display as an arc in front of your ship.

Beams on the light cruiser have a default range of 1000m. Other ships may vary.

Beam arcs often overlap. The light cruiser has two beam arcs which overlap at the front. As a result, only one beam will fire when the target is directly to the right or left, but both will fire when the target is in front.

Beams can be targeted and fired manually by deselecting the **"Auto Beams"** button while a target is selected, which brings up the gun camera.

Click off (deselect) a target to disengage the gun camera. When manual firing is engaged, the beams will not fire unless the Weapons officer clicks.

Firing beams consumes energy. The system will also drain energy at a constant rate when not firing (regardless of whether beams are set to auto or not).

Shields:
Raise shields by clicking the Shields button on the right side of the station view or use Key Binds

> **Q to Toggle**
> **K To Raise**
> **L to Lower**

Shields consume energy when they are up, so drop then when they're not needed. Similarly, having both front and back shields up is twice the drain on the Artemis' energy and cooling systems. If the tactical situation permits, coordinate with the Captain, Helm, and Engineering to drop the unneeded shields.

Monitor enemy shields:
With a few other stations (science? helm?), you have information on the state of the enemy shields. Shield state for fore and aft shields can be determined at a glance by looking for the colored hemispheres around enemy ships.

Green shields are above 75% strength.
Yellow shields are above 50% strength.
Red shields are above 25% strength.
Blinking shields mean they are taking damage