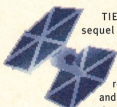


# come to the

It must be one of the most eagerly awaited games of 1994. Dean Evans takes the No.23 bus to a galaxy far, far away to take a final look at the game people are already calling **TIE Fighter**.

**H**ave you ever wanted to fly one of those fragile little TIE Fighters and blow goody-two shoes Rebel pilots into tiny, glistening splinters? Of course you have, and when LucasArts releases the eagerly awaited **TIE Fighter** next month you'll finally have your chance to join the Dark Side...



TIE Fighter, of course, is the sequel to the hugely successful X-Wing, and although at first glance the game looks little more than just an X-Wing rehash with prettier graphics and different spaceships, designers Lawrence Holland and Edward

Kilham have gone back to the game designers drawing board, reversed the X-Wing perspective and enhanced both the graphics and the narrative story engines. Now you're one of the bad guys.

"This time you're flying for the Empire," explains Wayne Kline, TIE Fighter's project manager. "We're not trying to portray you as if you're evil — it's the war seen from the Empire's perspective. It's like the Rebellion is trying to destroy order in the galaxy and the Empire is the galactic police force who've got to

<b>GAME</b>	<b>TIE FIGHTER</b>
<b>PUBLISHER</b>	<b>US GOLD</b>
<b>DEVELOPER</b>	LucasArts — Wayne Kline (project manager); Lawrence Holland and Edward Kilham (design, programming); Peregrine Software (graphics, art, music and additional programming)
<b>WORK STARTED</b>	<b>SEPTEMBER 1993</b>
<b>DUE FOR COMPLETION</b>	<b>JUNE 1994</b>

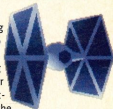
stop them."

But what if you're a loyal X-Wing pilot? Is it going to be difficult to adjust to flying a TIE Fighter? How exactly do you feel about wearing that tight-fitting black body armour (I hear it chafes around the buttocks)? Well, if you haven't played the demo, why not go away and do it now. Go on. Close the magazine, switch on your PC and try and get past those ace-pilots in the gold A-Wings...

Okay, so maybe adjusting to Imperial rule is easy — in fact, there are thousands of people in this country literally dribbling embarrassingly over the carpet in anticipation of it all. But the demo doesn't give you the full story. It's brilliant fun to play, but when I saw the game in mid-April it had advanced a whole lot further. Dare I say it. TIE Fighter looked even better.

Now if I stop wibbling for a moment I'll try and put the game in some sort of perspective. TIE Fighter is set after the battle on Hoth portrayed in The Empire Strikes Back. As the Rebels evacuate the ice planet, the Empire attacks them in a series of huge, sweeping battles. As you can see the actual 3D combat part of the game has remained relatively unchanged — there's no point fixing something that isn't broken, is there? — but I can assure you there is a bucketload of new tweaks and refinements.

One of the first things that grabs your attention is the quality of the graphics. TIE Fighter uses the basic X-Wing polygon game engine, but this time Holland and Kilham have jazzed up the visual appeal with Gouraud shading. Like X-Wing the narrative story unfolds with the aid of cinematic sequences, and the whole game is packed with digitally mastered sound effects, digitised speech and a suitably dramatic iMUSE musical score that changes



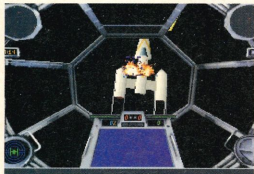
(Above) The Imperial Palace on Coruscant, home to the Emperor and seat of the Empire's power. It's not the sort of place you'd like to go to for a holiday.



LONG BLUE 1000 BUN DESTROYED

# Dark Side

with the pace and content of the on-screen action. As for those new bits I mentioned, Holland and Kilham have added new ships, interactive mission briefings and variable skill levels. "We're trying to address the problems that a lot of people had with X-Wing being very difficult," says Wayne Kline. "In response to this TIE Fighter has three



skill levels; easy, medium and hard, to allow people who just want to load up and play to do just that... and now there are six ships to fly in the game: there's the TIE Fighter, TIE Bomber, TIE Interceptor, the Assault Gunboat, the Advanced TIE which is Darth Vader's ship and a new ship we've made up just for this game, unofficially called the TIE Deluxe..."

It seems that this time around the TIE Fighter team are very keen on making the player feel part of an on-going campaign rather than just flying a disjointed collection of missions.

"The missions are now a lot more three-dimensional," adds Holland, "and things can happen within the missions that can completely change the outcome. You can now call up support troops, you can reload, or you can rendezvous with the mothership. There are more orders you can give your wingmen, and they'll be smarter and more responsive so that you don't feel so much that you're doing all the work."

You see, in TIE Fighter each mission has multiple objectives. For example, you may be ordered

"We're not trying to portray you as if you're evil — it's the war seen from the Empire's perspective."

Wayne Kline, LucasArts.

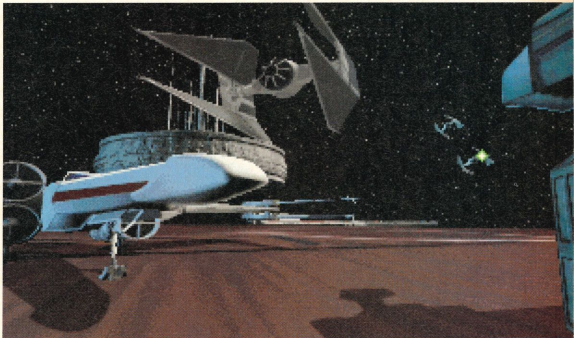
to attack a repair platform and then find you're forced onto the defensive as a Rebel rescue force hyper-spaces in on the counter attack. Beat the Rebels back and then you might have to rescue one of your own stricken cruisers, and so on.

Because of this Holland and Kilham have also revamped the mission briefings, and in TIE Fighter you can have what amounts to an interactive 'conversation' with your commanding officer, asking him questions about your mission objectives.

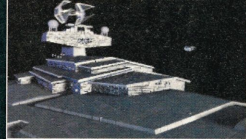
I hope you're ready for a challenge because TIE Fighter plays much harder than X-Wing ever did (the TIE Fighter, for example, has no Hyperdrive or deflector shield). It's only when you fly for the other side that you get to realise just how frustratingly fast the A-Wings are and how those Y-Wings, if left unchecked, can cause a heck of a lot of damage to your fragile Correllian transports.

TIE Fighter is now only a month away from release and will come packaged with a companion book/novella stuffed full of technical information and illustrations of the Empire's hardware. You also won't have to wait very long for the data disks either, as LucasArts plan a TIE Fighter release frenzy, shipping two further campaign disks soon after the initial game launch.

I admit I was sceptical at first but TIE Fighter looks extremely impressive. It's a fact that if you loved X-Wing and go all misty-eyed at the sound of the famous Star Wars theme tune, then this is definitely a game you should start saving your money for. X-Wing, so on a very basic level it's like X-Wing with a TIE Fighter, but who's complaining? Anyone? No, I didn't think so.



Imperial Armada under the command of Darth Vader. Outer Rim Sector near a Rebel Base.



(Top) Imperial ships attack a remote Rebel spacedock. TIE Fighter is chock full of cut-scenes and animated sequences, which pop up from time to time to dramatise any key plot developments.

(Above middle) During missions you can return to your mothership for refuelling and re-arming.

(Above) In TIE Fighter you can target a particular craft and find out what it's doing, whether it's attacking, running away, how much damage it has sustained and what its armaments are.