

Mission Destruct

More than a simple shoot-em-up

By Stephen S. Bagstad

Mission Destruct is a simple looking, mindless shoot-em-up just like a hundred others, right?

That was my first impression of this game, which has proven to be somewhat addictive despite a few minor problems. The program gets off to a bad start with a plain title screen announcing its title as "Mission Distruct" (sic)! It then launches into the instructions, including "Wepons Fire" (sic). Other misspellings noted include "gravite" for gravity, "comming" for coming, and "cnimy" for enemy. Perhaps these were included for added humor?

Anyway, the game is divided into three phases that I will call outer defenses, passage and tunnel. The idea, I think, is that you must penetrate to the inside of a moon to blast its power reactor. So, naturally, you begin by having to defeat the outer defense ships.

Your ship starts in the middle of the screen, while the defenders enter from the top. Your ship can move but not rotate, and you can only fire down. Thus, you must first get to the top of the screen to shoot the bad guys. They maneuver in groups, so watching their "follow the leader" pattern you can eventually handle them pretty well — but don't get too cocky!

Once the waves of nine ships each are blasted, you must descend through a moon passage that zig-zags along your screen. No one shoots at you, but contact with the jagged walls or numerous mines (which you can destroy with bombs) is instantly fatal. I felt that with practice this was the

Review

Report Card

Performance.....B
Ease of Use.....A
Documentation.....C
Value.....A
Final Grade.....A

Cost: \$9.95 plus \$2.50 shipping & handling

Manufacturer: Asgard Software, P.O. Box 10306, Rockville, MD 20849; 703-255-3085

Requirements: Extended BASIC, disk system

easiest of the three sections.

Next comes the real toughie: The tunnel. You must fly down a tunnel with hordes of defenders all intent on crashing into you. Be glad you get four ships at the start — you'll need some of them here!

I found it took practice before I was able to maneuver through without losing a ship, but I was able to do that only occasionally. All that you have to do is maneuver and blast, but just when you think all is peachy, up comes a final contest. Compared to what you've just been through, this final task is a piece of cake. The reactor that we've been fighting to get to has its own last line of defense, a force field that shoots back! This one is handily defeated by maneuvering to avoid its fireballs while shooting to weaken and eventually destroy

the reactor.

Provided you make it this far, you get a bonus ship and start again with the other defenses, facing more numerous and faster defenders. With many games played, I've managed to blast a second reactor and proceed to level 3. Suffice it so say that I've yet to see a third reactor.

The graphics, except for the title screen, are excellent. Response is also excellent. I thought it a nice touch that when you get blasted in phases 1 and 3 you don't have to return to the very start of the phase.

Other than the spelling mistakes, I experienced one fairly serious problem with game — it didn't seem to like my joystick fire button, so I had to play with the keyboard of my Geneve, which worked fine. (This problem may have to do more with the Geneve than the game.—Ed.)

It would have been nice to have some method of variable levels of difficulty. I felt a "non-pro" game player might find it a bit too difficult, particularly the tunnel part. But then, we do want to be challenged by our games, don't we?

Finally, what I think was supposed to be entertaining sound effects sounded to me like an irritating buzzing noise that drove me crazy — I finally had to turn the volume off, it was that annoying.

Overall, Mission Destruct is full of variety and challenge at a reasonable price. If you try it on a Geneve, I recommend using GPL speed 1, as the other speeds are too darn fast. I have thoroughly enjoyed it and think you might too.

TICOFF now called Family Computer Expo

It used to be known as TICOFF, but this year the fair in Roselle Park, New Jersey, will be trying to attract a broader audience of computer users. Now called the Family Computer Exposition and Home Radio Festival, the event is planned for Saturday, March 9, at Roselle Park High School (Exit 137, New Jersey Garden State Parkway). The event is sponsored by students of the high school and the Old Bridge Ham Radio Club.

The event will be open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The admission

price is \$5 per person. The event will focus on the TI99/4A and PCs. Those who purchase their tickets in advance will receive a disk of PC software. Features include workshops, seminars and vendors.

According to organizer Robert Guellnitz, there will be 70 computer vendors and 60 "Ham Flea Market Tables."

For more information, contact the high school at 201-241-4550 or a 24-hour informational BBS at 201-241-8902.