

■ GROUP: 4MHZ. CODING: Javier Garcia Navarro, GFX: Rafa Castillo, SFX: John McKlain
 ■ REVIEWED BY: Douglas McGregor



OPERATION ALEXANDRIA



which blow my mind and create new and wonderful experiences. Operation Alexandria is one of those games! Javier Garcia Navarro, Rafa Castillo and John McKlain have created a true gaming masterpiece which deserves to sit up there in the company of the very best Amstrad CPC games. If this had been released in the mid to late 1980's I believe it would feature on many gamers' top ten Amstrad lists, it's that good!



The opening reminds me of Metal Gear in all the right ways!

I always think back to my Amstrad gaming days with fond memories. There are a few magical moments that reside in your brain from early childhood. In the forefront of mine is Christmas morning of 1984. Waking up as most youngsters do around 4 a.m. to find my father getting ready for his early shift and showing me my present in all of its' glory. A full colour monitor Amstrad CPC 464.

PLOT AND GAMEPLAY

We loaded up Harrier attack and he left for work after showing me how to use it. In the coming 4 or 5 hours (before my brother got up) a lifelong gaming obsession was forged in my soul. Could life get any better? The answer was a resounding "YES!" Still, countless CPC games are being released

The creators of the game, 4mhz describe the plot as follows: "In October 2016, Russian scientists discovered a secret Nazi base in Alexandra Land, an island belonging to the archipelago Franz Josef Land, within the Arctic Circle. The existence of this military base was known thanks to the documentation seized from the Nazi regime at the end of World War II, but not its exact location. This base was called Schatzgräber, (in English "Treasure Hunter") and, according to the official documents of the time, its main purpose was to serve as a meteorological station to get more accurate weather forecasts and thus provide a military advantage to Nazi Germany in the battles that took place during

World War II. When Russian scientists arrive at this base in 2016 they find a kind of time capsule. Weapons, ammunition, supplies, food cans, even personal effects of all kinds and half-written journals. Everything intact!

We embody the protagonist of this story, Mihail Mashkov, a Russian army officer who is a member of this mission. During one of our usual patrols by Alexandra Land, the base informs us of some strange radio signals near our position, and asks us for visual confirmation that everything is in order there. Upon reaching our goal, we discover that these mysterious radio signals come from an old abandoned Nazi base. An unexpected



Shoot to kill but make sure you get closer and crouch down lower to kill off those red orbs

snowstorm complicates our return to our camp and makes all radio communication impossible, so we choose to take refuge in the mysterious building and wait for the storm to subside. We soon realize that we are not alone.

Your goal is to unravel the riddle that resides inside this ancient military base. Go as far as you can and discover why the Nazis built the base in this location and who are the mysterious beings that inhabit it. You must avoid the dangers that the base contains.

To deal with so much adversity you have your old but reliable AK-47 and, of course, your intelligence. You can also find certain objects that will give you an immediate advantage, such as the medikit, which will reset your health points, or a genuine "Tommy Gun", with which you will achieve a greater range in your shots. Keeping you alive will require skill and the invaluable help of your AK-47, but in order to advance, your brain will be your best weapon. During the game you will find certain objects that must be collected to be used in other parts of the game and so unlock access to new areas in the base. In the HUD you will always have information about how much health you have left or what object you are currently carrying. You can also see the score you have in the current play and the best score of the session."

As you can see from the synopsis above the game is steeped in storyline which is engrossing and engaging throughout. The opening credits immediately make you think of Metal Gear Solid while the style and gameplay are more akin to the Amstrad classic Dan Dare.

The soundtrack is fantastic throughout and further adds to the experience and atmosphere of the game. Now and again when you play a game for the first time and a huge smile spreads across your face. It's when everything is just right. The graphics are great, the controls are responsive and you know you are experiencing something special. That is exactly the case with Operation Alexandria. The effort that has gone into every aspect of the gameplay is outstanding. Even the storyline is based on real events. The base is real and was indeed discovered in 2016. As for the rest of the story...

As with many action platformers, you are equipped with a health bar which means medical packs become a necessity. As the game progresses these become few and far between and you will require some considerable skills to reach the end. The quality of the experience on hand here though ensures that you will persevere and hone your skills to beat it even if only to see how the fantastic story concludes.

WHAT I LIKE

Fantastic storyline which provides a deep and rewarding gaming experience, seldom seen in the 8-Bit era. Outstanding action platforming which requires both skill and thought to progress. Excellent music and graphics which round off the perfect package.

WHAT I DIDN'T LIKE

As in every game with a health bar to be replenished finding medi packs can be a



A 64k CPC masterpiece!



Watch out for the animated enemy above it opens up and fires at you



The outstanding story keeps you engrossed throughout

chore and can distract from the otherwise excellent and engrossing gameplay. It's not a short game by any means but I still found myself wanting more! A compliment of sorts but I would have liked even more levels.

VERDICT

If you are going to play one game on the Amstrad this year. Make it Operation Alexandria. The game won the CPC RetroDev competition for 2018 for a reason. It is truly the greatest accomplishment on the CPC for years and deserves to be played by as many people as possible. What are you waiting for?

SCORE

"If you are going to play one game on the Amstrad this year. Make it Operation Alexandria"

GFX	96%
SFX	95%
FUN	97%
STAYING POWER	93%
OVERALL	95%