

**SKY SHADOW** by Casady & Greene, Inc.

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A space age shoot 'em-up game with lots of sounds (500K) and several stages of difficulty based on results and scores obtained.

The Razoropers have invaded your planet and nearly captured it. A single city remains with a landing strip for your space fighter and you fight to rid the planet of the evil invaders and recapture all your lost territory. Your space fighter is outfitted with bombs and protected with shields; it even has smart bombs that destroy aerial targets that threaten your ship.

Your object is to bomb as many of the enemy ground targets as possible, eliminate as many of the aerial targets, either through space fighter gunfire or through the use of the smart bombs, all the while avoiding enemy mines, "screamers" and other devious devices that range through space (i.e., the Jackweasels, Bumboids & Lumbitious Gnozers, to name a few). Each target in the air and on the ground is assigned points. Each time your aircraft is "hit", weaponry is damaged, shields lose effectiveness and your overall ability to manipulate the aircraft is impaired. Your fighter can land on your own landing strip and be 100% repaired and reoutfitted with weaponry or it can obtain repairs during its bombing mission by picking up various bonus objects drifting in space. If you are an "ace" pilot and manage to accumulate at least 10,000 points you are rewarded with a 2 gun fighter ship; if you get 50,000 points or more, a three gun ship is your reward. At 100,000 points you qualify for "Mega Mode" where the game races along at twice normal game speed and all point values are 10 times their normal value. At something like 2,000,000 points, you go to another war zone to fight.

All kinds of calamities can befall you during the mission. You can become so crippled from enemy hits that your shield level falls to zero (instant death). You can run into either the invulnerable Mine or Screamer or you can simply dive too low and blow up or crash just attempting to land on your very own landing strip! If you do well and manage to land on your strip you are rewarded with bonus points according to how well you have performed and then sent on your way to complete the mission. Each mission is comprised of 3 fighter planes and you get to play each to its conclusion (usually, an explosive fireball - your own ship!).

This is a well constructed arcade game with lots of variations allowed during the actual play. The keyboard and mouse control the weaponry and the space fighter. The space bar shoots off the smart bombs, any number key drops regular bombs and any letter key fires the fighter's gun. For the coordinated, these are easily manipulated keys. At the same time, the mouse controls the fighter as it travels through space; whether he dives to avoid a mine or shoot at a target or just glides up to a first aid object to repair damage to his weaponry. The mouse also controls the landing of the fighter on the landing strip. The sensitivity of the mouse control can be increased or lessened with the arrow keys. The escape key puts you into warp speed and the action speeds up accordingly.

Very good sound effects follow the action as the battle rages...the normal explosion sounds, of course, but also some Star Trek-type space sounds warn you when your ship is on the verge of breaking up. If you accidentally bomb your own city, a sound lets you know about your dumb error (and you lose all points accumulated). A tombstone and accompanying "ditty" plays at the end of each game.

Sky Shadow looks great on a color monitor. Before it can run however, the color monitor must be set to 16 colors only.

The instructions do provide a *caveat* for those users who have various INITs warning that certain INITs or background Utilities may effect the smoothness of the game. It suggests that these be turned off while playing to ensure a problem free game. I experienced no problems on my SE with a fair number of INITs (After Dark, Super Clock, On Cue, ATM, Suitcase, to name a few), however Disk Express did affect the playing screen while running on the Mac II.

I have never been a rabid arcade game player but I must admit I found this game pretty challenging. The game has very good on-screen instructions and outlines all of the game options very well. The game did not come with written instructions which I believe would add to it's attractiveness as I had to run through the on-screen directions several times and take notes before I really had all the options, point values, etc., down. Unless these were written down somewhere, I had to look at the screen all over again before playing another game.

For those who are nimble fingered and master arcade players, this game will no doubt become addictive. An on screen scoreboard keeps track of your points and your results are posted if they make it into the top scores. I was not able to get into the 1,000,000+ point league and experience Mega Mode with it's faster action and different battlefields but according to the scoreboard shown at the end of each game, a top score of some 62,000,000+ points has been achieved!! (wonder how many days this guy took to get there and whether he could close his fist after playing!!!). Hopefully this was a human player and not a galactic version of R2D2!!!

A good challenging game.