

neak Peek: WolfPack

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NOTE: Screen shots and information presented in this article are based on a pre-release version of Wolfpack and are subject to change before final release. This article is not a review.

After sitting still in the murky depths of the Atlantic for what seemed like an eternity, the once constant and ear-pounding explosions from the depth charges have thankfully come to an abrupt halt. Has the American destroyer given up, or is he just waiting for you to make the next move? As you look around the bridge you notice your German officers looking at you....almost studying you, wondering what you'll do next. As you wipe the sweat from your brow, you check the status report....all is not good. The batteries are out, radar is gone, and the dive planes and rudders are slightly damaged. You know you can't sit still forever and let the American destroyer drown you. But without power, you are as good as dead.

Suddenly, one of your officers reports that the batteries have been repaired. Hold on sec, maybe there's some hope you say to yourself. You anxiously yell out the order to take the U-Boat to periscope depth. As the submarine approaches the surface of the water, you raise the periscope in uncontrollable anticipation. Then you see her, dead ahead, at about 2000 meters, the American destroyer that's been following you for nearly 8 hours. She's in about as bad a shape as you are, heading west at about 9 knots. You lower your periscope, and decide to get in a little closer for the sure hit. After a minute, you raise your periscope, and you see her again.....this is it! You compute a firing solution, feed it into the torpedoes' gyros and as you fire your last two torpedos you let out half a smile. Victory is yours this time....

[Only In The Movies](#). You probably think such excitement is possible only in the movies, but recent computer submarine simulations like U-Boat and Sub Battle Simulator deliver some of the same heart-pounding action only previously seen in the classic submarine movies of the 50's and 60's. Into this foray comes NovaLogic's new World War II submarine simulation entitled WolfPack. In typical Hollywood fashion, NovaLogic is launching their first ever Macintosh title with a bang with a game that not only contains exciting gameplay but also features a Mac like interface and high resolution graphics (the PC version is low res).

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Doing It Right. In the past, PC game companies that have entered the Macintosh game market by doing identical-looking ports of their PC games have often left disappointed. A few games like Dynamix's Red Baron and Impressions's Caesar are evidence that straight ports to the Mac often end up being big flops. The Mac user's thirst for high speed, high resolution graphics, and a Mac-like interface (among other qualities) can usually foretell if a game is going to succeed or become an embarrassing flop.

But as more PC game companies enter the Mac game market, they realize that straight ports just don't cut it anymore. In order to succeed you have to do it right the first time. NovaLogic, taking note, has designed WolfPack to take advantage of the Mac's abilities to the max.

Drawing On A Success. Although WolfPack was originally released several years ago on the PC, it still remains a favorite among PC goers to this day, showing its immense staying power. In the game, the player can choose to play either side of the naval conflict during World War II. You can lead the way as an Allied Escort Commander or haunt the depths as the group Commander of a German submarine WolfPack.

If you're on the submarine side, the object is to defeat the Allied side by inflicting as much damage as possible to enemy ships and avoiding damage to your U-boat. Typical missions involve sinking a fleet of Allied tankers and supply vessels. If you are in charge of the surface fleet, you want to fend off the enemy attacks and protect your merchant ships. There are 4 ways to end a game: 1) The mission time limit expires, 2) The convoy reaches its destination, 3) One side is completely killed off, or 4) You quit the game (as only a coward would).

Whether you win or lose depends on your final score. The scoring system is based on a zero sum approach. Whatever the number of ships on the surface, they always equal 50% of the total ship units while the subs add up to 50% of the total ship units. For instance, if you start off with 20 surface ships and 10 subs, each sub sunk equals 2 surface ships. A further 10 percent of the scoring is influenced by overall fleet damage. A tie will result in a loss for the submarines.

Standard Equipment. The control screen in WolfPack contains various controls and displays to help the captain accomplish his or her missions. The main view screen allows the captain to see the outside world. Captains on submarines need to raise and lower their periscopes while the captains on destroyers and freighters use binoculars.

The Tactical Map displays where ships and submarines are currently located. One nice feature that helps the captain determine the heading of the ships are wakes left behind in the form of light colored lines that slowly appear and disappear.

One of the more unique features in WolfPack is the ability to move from ship to ship. Pressing TAB allows you to magically transfer to another ship. This comes in handy if your current submarine/ship is sinking

and you want to continue the battle in another ship.

Other crucial instruments include The Repeater Telegraph, which is used to set the ships speed. The Dive Control (subs only) is used to set the current depth. The Compass/Rudder Control is used to change heading. Other instruments include the Torpedo Control Group (used to compute and fire torpedos), radar, sonar, fuel gauges, hedgehogs (for destroyers), depth charges (for destroyers), damage screen, and more.

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Intangibles. Some of the other excellent features in WolfPack include Auto mode. When set to Auto mode, the ships will follow preset courses and they will be under the control of the captain assigned to that ship. This feature comes in handy when you want the auto-pilot to fight for you and for learning tactics (and how to avoid mistakes).

The game also includes a mission construction set. The construction set allows the player to create new missions or modify the 70 missions that come with the game (although some of the missions are locked and cannot be modified).

Other neat features include one or two player mode (players use the same computer and are given a time limit to play their turn), realistic sounds, and historically accurate game-play where weapons and instruments are precisely keyed to various war years (for example, destroyers during missions before 1942 don't have RADAR).

Captain To The Bridge! Although WolfPack was released some 5 years ago on the PC , it is still an excellent simulation that still garners a huge following on the PC side. Providing exciting gameplay, high resolution graphics, a Macintosh interface, and other unique intangibles, WolfPack is bound to become a classic on the Mac as it has on the PC.

WolfPack will be released toward the end of August (maybe September) and will ship on floppy disk and CD-ROM (the CD-ROM version contains 5 minutes of extra animation).