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It's easy to forget that the first-person perspective shoot-em'-up popularized by Doom, Marathon, and Dark Forces was preceded by remarkably similar tank games like BattleZone, Arctic Fox and Spectre. Reality Bytes raises the ante on these types of game significantly with HAVOC, a Spectre VR-like game that is surprisingly addictive.

The story involves some of the usual SCI-FI stuff about corporations taking the place of nation-states and waging aggressive warfare. None of that's important. What's important is that your mission is to travel through several worlds and blow up everything you see from passive, unarmed structures to active enemies out to destroy you.

You get to choose one of three vehicles: a heavily armored but slow hypertank, a zippy hovercraft with medium armor, or a very speedy and maneuverable battlecycle with minimal armor and shielding.

You start off with a laser and a rocket launcher but don't worry, you can pick up more effective armaments as you blow up enemies and buildings. You'll find everything from doubled lasers to cruise missile launchers. Your energy weapons are unlimited but projectile weapons need ammo which you'll also find in varying levels of abundance. You'll also find shields, timed invulnerability modules, targeting enhancement modules, and other goodies.

### [hen The Going Gets Tough...](#)

HAVOC is anything but easy. While the learning curve for guiding your craft is low, figuring out how to survive takes some doing. Unfortunately, this is one of those games that only lets you save at certain points (after Bonus and Boss rounds). You'll find yourself going over the same territory time after time. There are random elements, though. Enemies seem to pop up randomly, and the goodies are also assigned randomly. One time you might pick up a mortar while the next time you get the cruise missile launcher.

The object on each world is to pick up the three well-guarded keys and then proceed to the jump gate which takes you to the next level. On Bonus levels, you have a limited amount of time to find all the letters of the word HAVOC and make it to the gate. On the Boss level you face one particularly nasty bad guy. No power-ups, no additional weapons or shields. Just you and the Boss.

There are three different worlds to get through each with at least three levels as well as a Bonus and Boss round. Difficulty can be adjusted which gives HAVOC a fairly high replay value. The three worlds are just a start, though, because HAVOC is networkable across multiple platforms.

In fact, the game comes with two CD-ROMs: one for you and one for a friend. Both work on either Windows 95 or Macintosh systems, and you can play either on a network or over a modem. HAVOC is rated for up to 16 players, but the manual promises that games of up to 32 players are theoretically possible.

I wasn't able to try either of the two network games: elimination or team capture. In

elimination, the goal is simple: destruction. In the team capture game, the goal is to capture the opposing team's keys and bring them back to your gate.

### HAVOC Is Not Paradise

HAVOC is great, destructive fun. The landscapes are challenging and atmospheric ranging from parched deserts to frozen wastelands to radioactive hell. Your enemies are crafty and dangerous. The music is catchy and addictive and blowing things up is just fun. The game is not perfect, though. The most glaring fault is the inability to save whenever your situation is good. That's slightly compensated for by the fact that you don't lose any weapons you've picked up when you get blown up. Also, your three vehicles are supplemented after every Boss round, and shield recharges, which can be the equivalent of a new vehicle, are fairly abundant.

I've had a great time with HAVOC. If you liked Arctic Fox or Spectre, you'll love this.

### Pros

- Good, destructive action
- Compelling music
- Challenging terrain
- Smart enemies
- Networkable with either Windows 95 or MacOS machines

### Con

- Can only save after completing certain levels