

at pseudo-3D, employing it in their other Sega CD title Soul Star, with gorgeous results. Sega CD games are also blessed with CD quality audio and long, arranged soundtracks. In fact, I'd say Battlecorps' OST is the best thing about it.

What about the gameplay, tho? Eh. Like Metal Head, it's a noble attempt at doing something on console that had largely been limited to PCs at the time. But, as I said, it's no Mechwarrior. Battlecorps makes a number of unique design choices: some genuinely interesting, some just plain bizarre. I'll cover those in the Gameplay section.

In conclusion, if you're looking for a no-frills, stompy-shooty mech game with a distinct, Gen 4 console look, give this game a look.

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Like most mech sims, gameplay in Battlecorps takes place in first-person perspective. You are tasked with completing 13 missions, which basically revolve around wanton destruction. Your BAM (mech) is equipped with 6 weapons: a Twin Cannon, a stronger version called the Blast 'Em, Mortar bombs that travel in an arc, a flamethower, and a homing Missile Launcher. The 6th weapon is just a firing mode that allows you to throw 3 Mortars at once in a fan pattern. Every weapon except the Twin Cannon has limited ammo and cannot be refilled during missions, so you will have to carefully consider when and how to use them.

There are no upgrades and no kind of progression system in this game. There are no timers and no score, either. The only major choice you have as a player is selecting 1 of 3 "GunJoks"--combat AIs--to help pilot your mech. Each has different stats that affect your mech's performance.

JACK CUTTER

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DIKA 'A' JANG

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BECKY OJO

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(C) - Cycles thru weapons

Selects menu items; specifically selects GunJok in GunJok menu

(A) - Holding A and using the D-PAD allows you to aim your torso independent of the direction of your legs. This persists even after you release A

If you release A and press any D-PAD direction, your legs will center on your current facing direction

If you double-tap A, you will come to a full stop

The Up/Down controls are inverted and there's nothing you can do about it

Selects menu items

START - Pauses the game

Double tap to toggle Map in-game

START + (A) + (B) + (C) - Soft-resets to the title screen. What a weird idea to make an arcane button combo instead of a menu item.

6-BUTTON PAD EXCLUSIVE CONTROLS =====

(X) - Selects Blast 'Em

(Y) - Selects Mortar

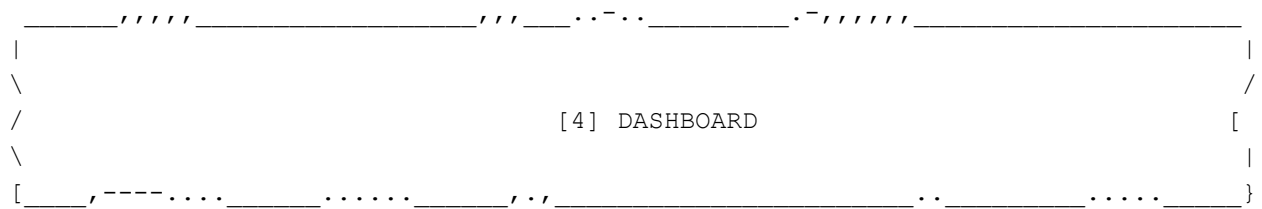
(Z) - Selects Missile Launcher

MODE + (X) - Selects Twin Cannon

MODE + (Y) - Selects Triple Mortar

MODE + (Z) - Selects Flamer

You can choose between control scheme "A" and "B" in the Options menu, but that only changes whether or not your default D-PAD movement controls your legs or your torso. The scheme above is scheme "A"--my preferred scheme. So yeah, while including a torso twist is extremely commendable, the limited radius (90 degrees to either side) and the speed of the mech make it kind of moot. You'll most likely get hit either way and setting up intricate strafing maneuvers isn't intuitive. Instead, you should run past enemies or snipe them from afar. You can test the controls in Practice Mode, in the Options menu.



[5.1] MISSION 1 (LADY-1) =====

OBJECTIVE: Destroy the "infected" radar array

GUNJOK: Becky Ojo or Jack Cutter

RECHARGE POINTS: 3

This game throws a lot at you at once: turrets, towers, lava, mines and other robots. Naturally, you don't want to step in the lava when avoidable. Your HUD will tell you if mines are nearby. They come in two forms: one is a flat, gray circle on the ground with a red light in the center. The other is a floating, round enemy that slowly stalks you. Avoid the flat ones, shoot the floating ones. Always shoot robots in the lower body, if you can. If you only destroy the torso, the legs may continue lobbing Mortars.

There are 3 Recharge Points in this stage: 1 on the first landmass, 1 among the first set of small islands, and 1 just past the first centipede enemy. Stand still on these to repair your BAM. The centipedes self-destruct if you take out the head. If you're lost, make sure your mini-map is ON (double tap Start) and follow the landmasses. Toward the end of the stage, you'll reach a large area with multiple satellite dishes. Destroy all of them with heavy weapons, then the 3 guntowers blocking your path. The exit is a red pad in the middle of a "U" shaped formation of walls. Stand on it.

[5.2] MISSION 2 (ECHO-1) =====

OBJECTIVE: Destroy the generators

GUNJOK: Jack Cutter

RECHARGE POINTS: 1

This stage introduces some new enemies, tho most are just palette swaps. There is a floating, yellow turret that shoots very fast and a new robot with rotating legs. Their lower bodies, if left behind, act as mines. The robots from the previous stage return, but now use Flamers if you get close. Both forms of mines are here, too, so watch your feet. These yellow, floating mines don't follow you, but compensate with a WIDE trigger radius.

You'll have to deactivate 2 force shields during this stage by destroying pill-shaped switches hidden in nooks. Follow the path and take a RIGHT at the fork. The 1st switch is in a corner ahead, behind a Recharge Point. Destroy it, repair, then proceed up the middle, then LEFT. When you reach the "S"-shaped bend, there is another switch in a divot in the LEFT wall, guarded by a bot and turret. Destroy and proceed. Past the area with 2, small streams, make a RIGHT. You'll enter a large area with lots of bots and mines. Do what you can to avoid damage but, if you're low on health, go back and Recharge. The area past this contains the generators, guarded by 4 turrets and half a dozen bots. When you're ready, equip Missiles and start picking them off from a distance. Use the game's limited draw distance to isolate targets (missiles only hit visible targets). After that, only 2 turrets and a bot stand between you and the exit.

[5.3] MISSION 3 (SONIC-1) =====

OBJECTIVE: Escape the sewers using a series of teleporters

GUNJOK: Jack Cutter

RECHARGE POINTS: 2

Here, the game's collision physics are your main enemy. You're tasked with navigating narrow trenches with obstacles littering your path. Every obstacle, no matter how small, will bring your mech to a full stop, so you have to destroy them. Oh, and there are a ton of mines, too.

The first two areas are square chambers. In the first, make a diagonal beeline to the opposite corner and take the teleporter. When you enter the 2nd chamber, go CLOCKWISE around the corners. The 1st corner contains a switch you need to destroy. The 2nd contains the next teleporter.

Now's the annoying part. This long, winding channel is full of enemies. Keep your aim low and centered so you can destroy the unavoidable barrels in your path. Around the first U-bend, there is a gray strip of terrain with a Recharging Point in the center. Stay there and pick off any visible enemies. Carefully travel the trench, destroying enemies from afar. DO NOT rush this. Go back to Recharge, if needed. Around the next U-bend, there is a (literal) wall of turrets you'll want to multi-Mortar. The open area that follows is extremely hostile as well, so put your Missiles to use. First, go LEFT and destroy a switch. Then, go in the opposite direction and take the RIGHT fork. Here's another gray strip with a Recharger. Ahead are 3 teleporters. When you're ready, make a mad dash for the FAR one on the LEFT.

These last 2 areas are a sprint to the opposite side. The first is a small, square room full of turrets and mines. The second is a straight shot, but a small army of enemies surrounds the exit. Blow a path thru them.

[5.4] MISSION 4 (AQUA-1) =====

OBJECTIVE: Navigate the underwater area, deactivating the force shields

GUNJOK: Becky Ojo

RECHARGE POINTS: 2

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Cannot use Mortars, Flamer or Map

This level is one, straight path. Follow it until you hit a shield. The switch is in an alcove just to its LEFT, behind a new robot with submarine legs. Proceed. When you hit another shield, destroy the switch in the nearby corner. It's hidden by a stream of bubbles, so it can be hard to see. You'll eventually reach a large, open area full of new, centipede-like enemies. Run past everything (I picked Becky for a reason) and take the path in the far LEFT corner. Stand on the Recharger and kill any enemies in sight.

Around the bend is a wall of 3 centipedes. Missile them to death, then dispatch the bot and switch in the alcove to your RIGHT. Ahead is another Recharger, followed by another large clearing full of spouts that shoot an endless barrage of Mortar-like blobs. Keep your aim low to the ground and sweep across the area, destroying them from a distance. Take care of the switch in the far RIGHT corner as well. Before proceeding, GO BACK and Recharge. Going forward blocks off this area, so this is your last chance to repair.

The final area is another clearing full of swimming centipedes. You must destroy everything to proceed. Start with the turrets in the corners since they are more damaging. Then, focus on the 'pedes. These do self-destruct if you destroy the head, so one, solid Missile shot is all it takes. Let them swim away from you, then hit them as they circle back around. The exit is just beyond this area.

[5.5] MISSION 5 (INDIGO-1) =====

OBJECTIVE: Deploy the bridges using your Flamer to unfreeze the switches

GUNJOK: Becky Ojo

RECHARGE POINTS: 2

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Infinite Flamer and Twin Cannon only

The only new enemies here are tall, slender, humanoid robots that can be run over and a large, floating UFO. Everything else is standard fare. Your Flamer is slightly left-biased, BTW, so aim right of your target instead of dead center.

Anyway, follow the objective arrow (small, yellow arrow around your reticule). When the path branches off to the left, keep going straight and around the bend. The 2nd corner ahead contains a frozen switch. Fry it with your Flamer, then cross the bridge. On the next landmass, stick LEFT. In the far, left corner is another frozen switch and a Recharge Point just right of it. Cross the narrow bridge, then the wide bridge, to proceed. As you reach the end of the wide bridge, stop and turn immediately LEFT. The next switch is in that corner. Destroy it, then head in the opposite direction, healing at the Recharger along the way. The rest of the mission is a straight, easy shot to the end. Yeah, the difficulty curve in this game is wacky.

[5.6] MISSION 6 (ECHO-2) =====

OBJECTIVE: Ride the conveyor belt and survive

GUNJOK: Dika 'A' Jang

RECHARGE POINTS: 0

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: You're on a giant conveyor belt

You're stuck on a giant, forward-moving conveyor belt for this whole mission. Regardless of who you pick for your GunJok, their speed will be greatly enhanced, allowing you to run past most foes. All the enemies from Mission 2 are here, as well as large rock formations blocking your path.

To start, hop on the conveyor at full speed. After you pass the first set of bots, start going in reverse. The pull of the conveyor will overpower you, but you'll be going much slower. There are floating mines up ahead that you'll want to shoot down. Once they're gone, run again, destroying any rock formations in your path with Mortars. When you see multiple robots in a zig-zag pattern, hit reverse, switch to Blast 'Em or Missiles and prepare to shoot down more mines. After you've passed the mines, run again. Rinse, repeat. After the third set of mines, you should be near the end. Spam your heavy ordnance to ensure nothing stands between you and the exit.

It's not a long mission, but the resistance is heavy. Hence, I chose Dika.

[5.7] MISSION 7 (AQUA-2) =====

OBJECTIVE: Fight your way to the exit

GUNJOK: Dika 'A' Jang

RECHARGE POINTS: 0

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Map not available

This is another war of attrition like the previous map. Running thru with Becky is not an option as the waves-upon-waves of enemies are unavoidable and heavily reinforced. Dika's endurance and firepower is invaluable here, so put it on display and fight your way through. The only enemies you'll want to run past are the flying centipedes as they don't really stand in your way. Everything else: kill. There is one force shield located in a clearing full of ground centipedes. Pop them each with a Missile and it'll deactivate. The exit lies beyond a long stretch of those little Mortar spouts intermingled with round rock things that scold you for killing them lol.

[5.8] MISSION 8 (LADY-2) =====

OBJECTIVE: Get to the exit

GUNJOK: Becky Ojo

RECHARGE POINTS: 1

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: An orbital weapon is following you

This is a pure "get out" mission. You will want to do minimal fighting and just focus on getting to the exit. Have your Blast 'Em equipped to dispatch floating mines and guntowers blocking your path. Step around landmines and avoid lava and flames, when possible. Most importantly, do NOT stop, except to repair at the Recharge Point midway thru the map. I recommend switching to Missiles past that point to increase damage output as the enemy offenses only get more aggressive. You'll also be forced to walk across lava with many floating mines littering the path, so the Missiles are much needed. The exit is right after that part.

[5.9] MISSION 9 (INDIGO-2) =====

OBJECTIVE: Get to the exit, again

GUNJOK: Becky Ojo

RECHARGE POINTS: 1

This is another "run, Becky, run" mission like the last, but with far less resistance. Equip your Missiles from the get-go and only dispatch targets in your path. Step around mines, of course. There is 1 Recharge Point halfway thru the map. Aside from that, there's not much to say. The enemy forces are

comprised mostly of red bots which can be sidestepped or scrapped easily.

[5.10] MISSION 10 (ECHO-3) =====

OBJECTIVE: Get to the exit, AGAIN

GUNJOK: Becky Ojo

RECHARGE POINTS: 1

This map is just a series of force shields with switches hidden in alcoves to either the left or right. The first two shields only have one option. The remainder have 2. You can discern the correct option by looking at your mini-map. A switch looks like a little, black dot in the corner of the alcove. Halfway thru is a Recharge Point. From that point on, the path ahead is obscured by rock walls which will automatically crumble when you approach them. Very easy mission with very light enemy resistance.

[5.11] MISSION 11 (AQUA-3) =====

OBJECTIVE: Navigate the underwater minefield

GUNJOK: Dika 'A' Jang

RECHARGE POINTS: 1

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Cannot use Mortars, Flamer or Map

This place is a nightmare. You absolutely must pick Dika because his enhanced firepower will compensate for the limited weapons loadout. The extra armor also helps. As long as you're careful, you can run past the initial areas up until the Recharger. Past that, tho, it's literally a minefield and you'll have to take it one step at a time, clearing the horizon of hazards before advancing. Honestly, brain-dead level design but it is a needed change of pace after Becky's marathon. Save ALL your ammo for AFTER the Recharge Point.

[5.12] MISSION 12 (SONIC-2) =====

OBJECTIVE: Get thru the sewers, yet again, using teleporters

GUNJOK: Jack Cutter or Dika 'A' Jang

RECHARGE POINTS: 1

Oh boy. Sure missed this place. This is a multi-solution labyrinth with each path offering a different level of challenge. Of course, we want the least resistance possible, so I will take you thru that route. All the enemies are just repeats from SONIC-1.

The first room is full of mines. Tip-toe past them and take the teleporter across the way. You are now in a winding, but wide channel. At the end are two teleporters. Take the LEFT one. In this next area, take the LEFT fork. It's lined with mines, but at least they don't shoot back. Destroy them from a distance. Rush past the 4 robots into the teleporter. The next room is a literal

