



You're in command of the most advanced Russian submarine in service today - the Typhoon-class Red October. Carrying a massive complement of missiles along with a near-impregnable layer of defensive armour, the Red October is the most feared sea-faring vessel in the world. But what really gives it its edge is the use of the Cavitation Device - a piece of equipment that makes the sub invisible to all forms of radar.

As commander of the Red October, you are extremely worried about how the powers-that-be plan to use your vessel. So, you decide to defect to the West, taking the hi-tech sub with you! Understandably, your Russian commanders are more than a bit concerned about this move and decide to dispatch their entire sea-faring fleet to blow you out of the water.

As you've probably guessed from examining the screenshots, The Hunt for Red October is a horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up, with you piloting the ship through many levels of sub-aqua excitement, pitting your wits against the entire Russian navy. Adding to the already considerable problems are a number of deadly obstacles submerged in the deep - look out for sub-aqua mines and steel walls that spring out from nowhere. Contact with any of these hazards results in the loss of some of the Red October's armour - and when all of that has gone, it's goodnight Vienna.



TORPEDO TOMFOOLERY

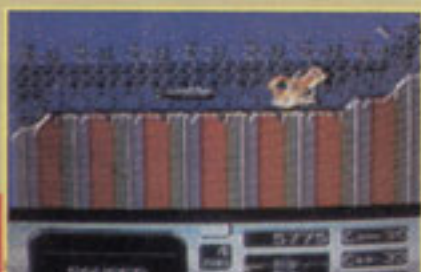
Two sorts of missile are on offer in The Hunt For Red October. Pressing button A results in a forward-firing missile being propelled through the ocean. Button B, on the other hand, dispatches a vertically firing missile - essential for annihilating surface targets.

POWER-UP!



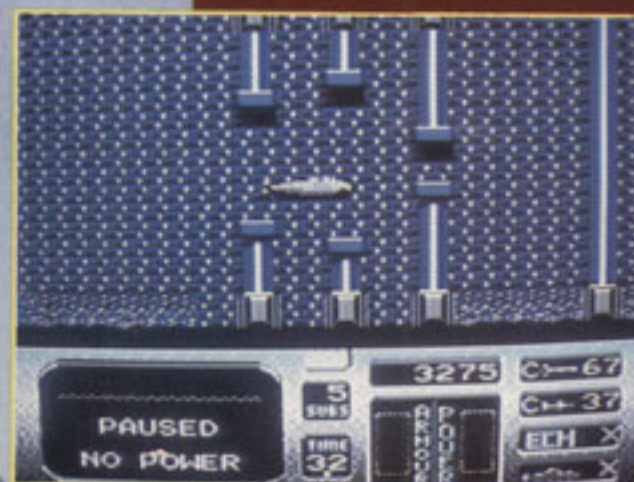
Plenty of icons are left on the sea bed. Collecting these has different effects. Your weaponry may be powered-up, resulting in deadly homing missiles being fired at your command. You might just get a new complement of torpedoes, extra armour, or more power for your Cavitation Device.

THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER





▲ A massive metallic wall blocks the Red October



A SMART BOMB

Pressing both buttons down together unleashes the Red October's deadly ECM (Electronic Counter Measures) device. This handy piece of equipment blows up any enemy missiles on-screen. Hurrah!



CAVITATION DEVICE HORSEPLAY

Simply by pressing the SELECT key, the Red October is made invisible to enemy radar. This means that the Russian fleet cannot track you or fire missiles at you. Any torpedoes that are homing in on you instantly lose their sense of direction. The only problem is that this device saps the sub's power, and has to be switched off after a short period of time while power is restored.

◀ The electrical field signifies that the Cavitation Device is working.

COMMENT



JULIAN

What a shame. Behind the supremely ghastly, deformed graphics and absolutely abominable sound is a pretty decent shoot 'em up desperately trying to get out. It's a tricky and challenging game, with hectic action as you battle through fleets of enemy ships and dodge swarms of missiles. But the problem is that the graphics and sounds are so utterly, utterly bad that it really ruins the atmosphere and enjoyment of the game. Had there been better audio/visuals, I think Hunt for Red October could have been great. As it stands, though, its horrible looks and sounds will put most players off.

◀ There are even moving hazards in the deep.

COMMENT



RICH

Basically, the programmers have converted a brilliant suspense thriller movie into an average horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up. The game itself plays quite nicely, with a good sense of underwater inertia on the sub and high compulsion to complete a level. Unfortunately, the game is ruined by two factors. The first thing to really put you off is the completely awful "soundtrack" that accompanies the proceedings. This sad, booming, jarring musical monstrosity sounds like some kind of retarded animal let loose on a Stylophone. The game is also let down by appalling graphics. Indistinct sprites, coupled with childish, blocky graphics do nothing for the game at all. Perhaps if the game had graphics and sound that were up to the quality of the Gameboy version, we might have received this game more favourably. As it is, you can't help but feel saddened at the great waste of potential.



BY: HI-TECH

PRICE: £34.99

RELEASE DATE: MAY

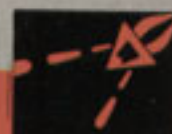
GAME DIFFICULTY: TOUGH

LIVES: 3

CONTINUES: 0

SKILL LEVELS: 1

RESPONSIVENESS: GOOD



PRESENTATION 50%

A fairly decent intro kicks the game off, but other than that, Red October is very lacking.

GRAPHICS 29%

Sad, malformed backdrops and below average sprites abound.

SOUND 9%

A sonic debacle that could easily disturb small children. Turn that volume right down when playing.

PLAYABILITY 73%

Initially quite compelling, but getting further into the game is very difficult.

LASTABILITY 59%

Should you wish to persevere, there's quite a lot of fun in this game, but the high difficulty level

OVERALL 64%

A playable shoot 'em up that could have benefited from better graphics and sound.