



Garry Kitchen - a name to instill fear in the heart of evil Johnny Foreigner. Who is he that he should have this Gulf War simulation named after him? A courageous tank platoon leader? Or perhaps a General, overseeing the land war strategy? No, Garry Kitchen is in fact the creator of Donkey Kong.

Super Battletank is a souped-up remake of Garry's ancient Atari classic, Battletank and pitches the budding tank commander right in the middle of the Gulf land war. The action follows actual military strategies in disposing of tanks, helicopters, SCUD sites and, once the main mission is accomplished, enemy strongholds alike. Remember, CNN is counting on you.

GARRY KITCHEN'S

SUPER BATTLETANK

WAR IN THE GULF

FIDDLING WITH YOUR WEAPON

Your tank comes up against some pretty heavy opposition, so it's just as well that there are a number of top class weapon systems available to the player, all of which are detailed below.



▲ General Fatman prepares the troops.

LASER-GUIDED FIRE AND FORGET MISSILES

These are the ultimate in hi-tech smart weapons. Target your victim until the crosshairs flash, meaning the missile has locked on. Then, press the trigger and watch the rocket streak and zig-zag around until it hits its prey. However, laser-guided missiles are hard to come by and can always be confused by anti-missile defences such as chaff.



120MM CANNON

The main armament of your tank - a few hits from this and your enemies should bite the dust. The cannon can be angled upwards to a possible 10 degrees from horizontal, allowing the gunner to fire a straight, low shot at a point-blank target or lob a high one at targets over two miles away. However, even at the highest angle it's pretty much impossible to hit helicopters. Keep an eye out for your limited ammunition reserves, or you may find yourself in real trouble.

7.62MM MACHINE GUNS

The main bonus points of the machine guns are their huge ammo supply and their uncanny ability to target anything on the screen. Sadly, their range and power is a little lacking and they have a tendency to overheat when used for protracted bursts, meaning many cooling-time-related hi-jinks.



▲ A scud missile launcher comes into range.



▲ He shoots... He misses...



We were all ready to get excited over Super Battletank when we saw the early screenshots. It must be said that the graphics are nothing short of stunning, smoothly

RAD

animated and highly detailed. The sound is pretty good too, although the constant engine noise does get a bit annoying and a tune wouldn't have gone amiss. Sadly, this is just about all Super Battletank has going for it. Although the graphics are great, only a tiny amount of the play area is visible at one time through the minute windscreen of the tank. Also, the action is very samey. Drive over to an enemy. He then zooms towards you, guns a-blazing then turns and drives away. This action is repeated, regardless of whether your foe is a tank or helicopter. There is never more than one target attacking at one time, thus no tactics are required at all. Sadly, the attacks on major enemy targets consist of little more than targetting a series of muzzle-flashes before your tank is destroyed. There are only ten missions, all of which are more or less the same, and no password system, so you have to repeat the even-duller first levels every time you play. Battlezone was all very well on the old Atari, but a lot more is required for a machine as sophisticated as the Super NES. This is neither action-packed enough to be a good shoot 'em up or deep and realistic enough to be a simulation.



▲ Fun and frivolity at the Skoda owners club.



▲ Another Skoda on its way to the owners club.



▲ The Abrams Battletank has an enemy in its sights.



▲ It's bombs away!

DIGITAL DESTRUCTION

If some of the graphics, particularly the intermission sequences, look very realistic, it's because they are in fact digitised pictures of both models and real military equipment. Certainly, the sequence when your tank rolls into a friendly base almost lives up to the praise heaped upon it in the instruction book. Also, to take the atmosphere even further, each mission is undertaken at a different time, meaning varying light levels, from daylight to dusk to dawn. Obviously, playing during daylight is easy enough, but pitch black night time makes a lot of targets very difficult to spot against the rolling dunes of the horizon.



▲ The Abrams sights a giant piece of popcorn.



▲ Ready... aim...



▲ The allied base hoves in to view.



▲ Further discussions at the Skoda convention.

BACK TO BASE-ICS

Friendly bases are essential in some of the tougher missions. These havens offer free repairs to any Allied Forces tank commanders, handy, given that your tank only withstands five hits. Those kind chaps at the command post also reload all your weapons systems in preparation for whatever trials await you. However, due to supply rationing, only one visit is allowed per mission, so it's best to save this for before you tackle the end-of-mission boss.

SMOKE SCREEN

Releasing the smoke screen provides excellent defensive cover. The smoke disorients your opponents, leading them to cease fire. Take advantage of this by using your range indicator to help you target them by blindsight and attack uncontested. Hurrah!



▲ A strategic glow in the dark tank...



▲ ...gets blown up!



COMMENT



JULIAN

I remember the Atari VCS version of this years ago, and it was good, simple blasting fun. In trying to make this more complicated, somehow the programmers have lost that

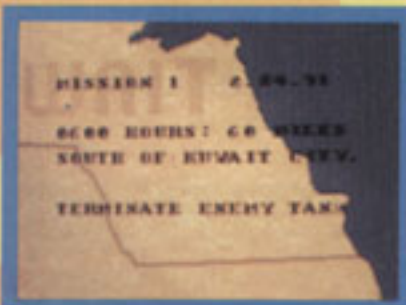
fun. Because you take on targets one at a time in what is basically very simple and straightforward combat there's insufficient action and excitement to get your adrenalin going. Another downer is that there are only ten missions which are all very similar bar graphical differences, and once you've sussed the tank control it takes very little time to go all the way through them. The graphics and sounds are certainly excellent, but it's a shame they're wasted on this rather dull and limited tank game.



▲ Plenty of battle action for the Abrams.



▲ The hated Noel Edmonds comes under fire.



▲ Mission information and a map of the war zone.

MAP IN THE BOX

Pressing the B button calls up your campaign map. This shows a general overview of the battle area, including your position, the position of enemy tanks, choppers, SCUD launchers and minefields. Once these are all destroyed, the secondary target, if there is one, is also indicated. The location of any friendly bases in the vicinity is also shown, for easy repair-finding fun and frolics.



▲ Extract from a Kuwait holiday brochure.



▲ The Benidorm beach patrol are out in force.



▲ Two members of the owners club in conversation.

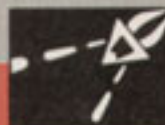
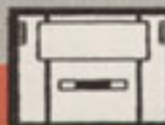
THANKS TO...

Console Concepts for supplying us with this copy of Super Battletank. For more information on the game, or other import games, call them on 0782 712759.



**BY: ABSOLUTE
PRICE: £39.99**

RELEASE DATE: IMPORT
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY
LIVES: 1
CONTINUES: 3
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: TANK-LIKE



PRESENTATION 80%

Groovy animated title screen, intermissions and fab in-game presentation, although the play area is far too small.

GRAPHICS 83%

Great sprites, but they are all the same, and the background is hugely repetitive.

SOUND 79%

PLAYABILITY 57%

Yaaaaawn. The same dogfight over and over again. One or two plays is enough to put most people into a coma.

LASTABILITY 52%

Groovy animated title screen, intermissions and fab in-game presentation, although the play area is far too small.

OVERALL 56%

A nice-looking game which doesn't deliver in the playability stakes. Avoid at all costs.