



# SUPER STAR WARS

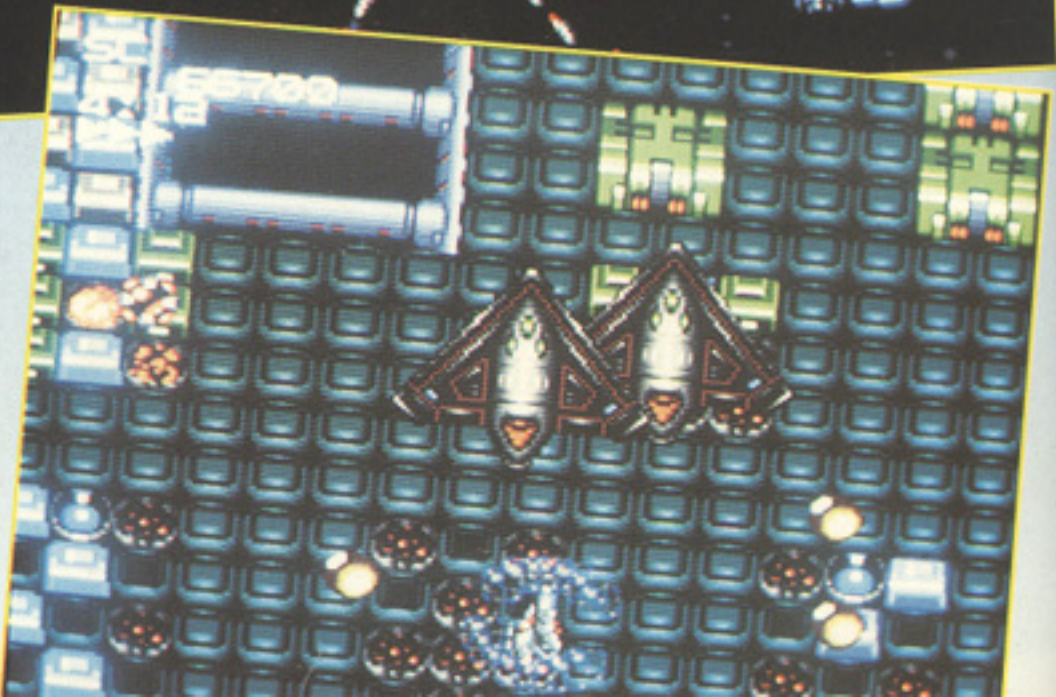
## PC ENGINE

It was about this time last year that I was raving over a PC Engine shoot 'em up called Gunhed, which featured more arcade quality graphics, sound and action than had ever been seen before on a home machine.

Gunhed must have been one of the toughest acts to follow ever, but Hudson Soft, together with Inter State and Kaneko, have put together this sequel.

Once again you are put at the controls of a tiny starship, on a mission to cross vast tracts of space and alien plains, strafing enemy ground forces and gunning down huge numbers of spacecraft and enormous bosses.

As in Gunhed, you start the game armed only with a weedy rapid-fire cannon, but this can be traded in for ripple lasers, a (pretty useless) flame thrower or powerful Tatsujin-like lightning lasers when you run into the appropriately power-up capsule. Keep collecting the same capsule types and you can upgrade your armament at least four times to provide multi-directional shots and rotating shield pods. Once fully toolled-up, any further capsules you pick up instantly explode as smart bombs.



As well as the standard weapons capsules, there are two types of secondary armaments to equip your ship with. Capsules bearing an O contain "options", two indestructible shield ships which can be made to spin around your craft or be stationed at the sides, or in front and behind. Homing missiles, which are launched in sets of two or four come in capsules labeled with an H. Finally, there are the flashing capsules, which don't contain weapons but provide you with "Golden Ship" capability so that your next ship will continue the game from where the last one was destroyed, instead of having to start from the beginning of the level.

The SELECT button controls the speed of your ship, as indicated by the number of arrowheads under the scoreline.

Gunhed certainly was a tough act to follow, and though Super Star Soldier is undoubtedly a superb shoot 'em up, I'm afraid it can't quite match the original for amaze-your-friends value. There's no speech, there are fewer

weapons and the ones you get are much less spectacular than Gunhed's screen-wide electric death beams. What SSS does have over Gunhed, though, is speed and aggression. In spite of its big guns, an average games player didn't have to work too hard to beat Gunhed, so as shoot 'em ups go, it was considered a bit of a softy. The programmers of the sequel have turned up the heat quite considerably for SSS and the playfield is constantly seething with innumerable space scum, bullets, gun emplacements and laser beams - I don't think I've ever seen so many sprites ricocheting around a PC Engine screen before, with no flickering or slowing of pace! As well as the standard mode of play, the game includes two tournament games, a two minute and a five minute game, which are great fun when you're playing in a group.

Hudson might not have topped Gunhed (I'm not sure they, or anyone else, could) but this is still one of the top PC Engine shoot 'em ups around.

PAUL GLANCEY

## RATINGS

**GRAPHICS 90%**

*Visually, very impressive. Terrific backdrops, loads of great monsters, and not a hint of sprite flicker!*

**SOUND 80%**

*Quality tunes and sound effects, but some speech would have been nice.*

**VALUE 86%**

*Plenty of good blasting excitement for your money.*

**PLAYABILITY 88%**

*Slightly more difficult than Gunhed, and very nearly as playable.*

**OVERALL 89%**

*A top class shoot 'em up, which any PC Engine blast fan should add to his cartridge collection.*

# STAR SOLDIER

