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THE KILRATHI HAVE INVADED THE MAC

BUT IT JUST MAY BE TOO LATE! by Brian Sexton

WING COMMANDER III

Publisher:

ORIGIN

P.O. Box 161750, Austin, TX 78716
512-335-5200

Developer:

LION SOFTWARE

87%

SILVER
3

The good news for Macintosh gamers is that Origin's Wing Commander III is finally available for our, all too frequently, neglected computers. The bad news is that it took so long for this to happen. Since Wing Commander IV for PC/MS-DOS computers should be hitting the shelves within the next few weeks, I can't help but wonder why Origin waited so long to port Wing Commander III to the Macintosh. If gamers perceive Wing Commander III as an old game (and they undoubtedly will when they see Wing Commander IV for the PC over on the next shelf), its sales could be drastically reduced. If Origin decides not to release Wing Commander IV for the Macintosh, based on those sales, they may not be accurately gauging consumer demand.

Wing Commander III can be played with the keyboard, the mouse or a joystick. As with most flight sims, space or otherwise, I highly recommend a joystick for the best control. If you don't have a joystick, don't worry, because this game is still very playable.

Although Wing Commander III claims to be an "Interactive Movie", the heart of the game is really an arcade style space combat simulator. You fly a long series of missions to accomplish various goals (patrol, intercept, etc.); but, before you can reach almost any of those goals, you must engage the Kilrathi in fast action dogfights (or in this case, cat-fights). The Kilrathi will often attack in groups of several fighters; but, you don't have to sweat it out alone. At the beginning of the game, you have one wingman available to accompany you on your missions. As the game progresses, more wingmen will become available, so you can try their different combat styles, to find the best one to pair with your own.

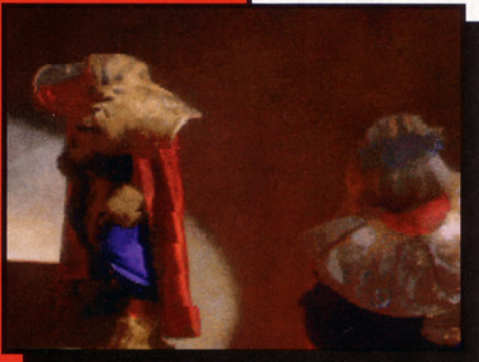
Between missions, there is a fair amount of interaction with the other characters. Choices made



in conversation scenes do affect the path of the game, but usually only slightly. All of these scenes are conveyed by way of full motion video of live actors (mostly recognizable, no less) placed over computer generated backgrounds. To make the "Interactive Movie" package complete, you are able to walk freely about the Victory, by choosing the room to which you want to go.

Wing Commander III for the Macintosh is right on par with its PC progenitor. Most everything seems to be the same, or very close to the same, right down to the grainy 256 color video. In that respect, both of these versions fall short when compared to the less grainy, seemingly more colorful 3DO version (and certainly with the coming PlayStation version). The nice high resolution cockpit graphics seem like a fair trade, though, since that is where most of the game is really played.

Wing Commander III is a couple of levels above Super Wing Commander and is easily one of the best (and the few) space combat games available for the Macintosh. If we all show this fine game the support it deserves, maybe Origin will be quicker about porting over the next installment. I can't wait!



Virtual Mac