

TaskForce

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COLLABORATORS

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Chapter 1

TaskForce

1.1 TaskForce Gamer's Manual

TaskForce V0.21 (28.04.98)

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Introduction

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1.2 What is TaskForce?

TaskForce is a strategy game in the tradition of Laser Squad, Act of War, or Jagged Alliance. If you aren't familiar with any of these, just imagine a bunch of mercenaries packed with some mean equipment and operating in enemy territory.

In TaskForce you take control of such a group of soldiers and try to accomplish certain objectives by wise employment of your powers. Your opponent will be either the computer, another human player, or time itself.

A special feature of TaskForce is the mission editor included in the archive. This way you can easily design your own maps and define individual mission objectives.

1.3 Distribution and Disclaimer

TaskForce is Mailware. If you like the game, you should feel obliged to send me a short notice, by either email or snailmail. You may copy and use TaskForce for free, but I retain the copyright for all files included in this archive, unless otherwise noted.

TaskForce may be redistributed for non-commercial purposes provided no changes are made to the archive.

DISCLAIMER:

USE OF THIS PROGRAM IS ENTIRELY AT YOUR OWN RISK. THE AUTHOR CANNOT BE HELD LIABLE FOR ANY DAMAGE DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY CAUSED BY USE OR MISUSE OF FILES IN THIS DISTRIBUTION.

This program makes use of the ReqTools package which is ©1991-1994 Nico François, 1995-1997 Magnus Holmgren.

TaskForce and all related files are ©1997-1998 Jens Granseuer.

1.4 Requirements

To run TaskForce you need any Amiga model with at least Kickstart 2.04 and about 0.5 MB of free RAM.

reqtools.library V38 or higher must be installed on your system. The library is included in this archive.

To make use of the install script you must have Commodore's Installer utility, which is part of your workbench since release 2.04.

1.5 Installation

To install TaskForce to your harddisk, simply execute the install script provided with this archive.

If you want to install the required files manually, copy the TaskForce directory to the place of your choice and reqtools.library to LIBS: if you haven't got it, yet. That's it. Simple.

1.6 How to play.

On the options screen you can select the number of players and the difficulty

settings, enter your names and choose the mission you want to set out on. Before playing a mission, you should have read the appropriate briefings so you know what you are expected to do. After accepting the current settings, you will find yourself right on the playground.

Apart from the main playing area, there are three others of some importance to you and your troops. To the right you see a list of all mercenaries under your control. The colour they are printed in tells you about their current condition. Black means everything is alright, while yellow indicates critical health and red unconsciousness. If a name appears in green, that character is poisoned.

The small area below contains more specific information on the currently selected

character
, like hit points or weapon.

Below the status bar is a small map of the area of operations. Pressing the left mouse button on a spot of this map will take you to the selected part. All mercenaries under your control are represented by yellow dots, while all enemy and neutral characters are displayed red. You better make sure if it's really an enemy before you take him out.

At the bottom of the screen important messages will be displayed.

Your characters are controlled either by keyboard, by mouse or by a combination of both. To command a mercenary, he must be selected. This is indicated by a red cursor drawn around him. To deselect him simply press space or click the left mouse button on his image. Do the same to select him again.

For most actions in TaskForce action points (AP) are required. If a character has no AP left, he can't do anything. AP are regained at the beginning of a new turn.

You move your characters using the number pad or the mouse. If you want to move using the mouse you must guide your characters one step after another, as there is no pathfinding for player characters, yet. Any kind of movement costs 1 AP.

Pressing 'i' or the leftmost gadget at the bottom of the screen will bring up the inventory. Here you can pick up and drop objects and select another weapon as well as inspect items you found.

If you have a gun equipped as your current weapon, you can enter firing mode by pressing 's' or the second to left button. Move the cursor over a target and press '5' or the left mouse button to release a shot (costs 2 AP).

The third button (n) will select the next of your mercenaries, and the last (e) will end your turn.

All other actions can be accessed by pulldown menus (Action menu). Some objects may be operated (doors or computers, for example). This action is also used to talk to other characters. In TaskForce there are no real conversations, but you may provoke some reaction from that character.

Certain items you may find have special abilities. You usually use (u)

these

items

(2 AP). This is possible on and outside of the inventory screen. However, the latter is the only way to use items such as Medkits on units other than the active one. If you use items on the inventory screen, they will always be applied to the item carrier.

There are two ways to engage another character in close combat. You can either just try to walk onto the occupied square, or you can step up next to him and then press 'a' (2 AP).

If you expect to be attacked you may set your soldier on guard (g). This enables him to return fire if he is shot at during the next turn. It is only possible to enter guard mode if the mercenary has at least 4 AP left. This decision is final, that means, all his AP are cleared and he can't act again until the beginning of your next turn. If somebody shoots at him, he will return fire and, even better, if he has got a higher Perception rating than the attacker, he will shoot first! Guarding won't help against thrown weapons, though.

There are still a few other actions but these are left for you to find out.

A mission is considered completed if one of the players has scored 100 points. Points are awarded on reaching certain goals which are usually described in the mission briefing. If you play against a computer opponent, the mission is considered a total failure if all your mercenaries are killed. This is not necessarily the case in a two-player scenario.

1.7 Character Information

All characters you can control in TaskForce have some values that represent skills and other aspects of their personality. These values decide how well that character performs in a particular situation when the skill is needed.

All skill values may range from 1 (worst) to 10 (best) and can be inspected in the inventory screen ('i').

Strength is used to determine how much a character can carry around with himself and how far he can throw items. The damage dealt in close combat also depends on the strength value.

Firearms is a measure for the character's marksmanship. The higher this value the better the odds to hit a target with a gun.

Close Combat is similar to the firearms skill, but defines the chances to hit an opponent in close combat.

Stealth is currently not used in any way and will probably be changed into something more sensible or even removed altogether. Any ideas?

Perception has two main purposes in TaskForce. First, during a mission a character may be required to make a Perception test. The result of this test determines what happens then. You will not be informed about such a test taking place, so if the character fails you won't even know about it. Second, if a character is attacked when in guard mode and he has a higher Perception rating than the attacker, he may "return" fire first.

If a character has zero HP, one additional point of damage will be inflicted each turn, and he will eventually die from his wounds unless he regains some of his hit points.

1.8 Difficulty Settings

In TaskForce there are three different difficulty settings.

As a Rookie you will always see all of your enemies. This spoils a lot of the fun and is only recommended for absolute beginners. Therefore Intermediate is the default setting.

An Intermediate will only be aware of enemies that enter his line of sight. You never know what's waiting behind the next corner. You should always try a mission on Intermediate or Advanced level, and only switch to the next lower setting if this proves too difficult for you.

Advanced players finally suffer from some malfunctioning of the eyes and their perception radius is limited to eight squares. What do you think you've got this seventh sense for?

Unless there are really vast differences in skill or a heavily unjust mission setup it is highly recommended that both parties are set to the same level.

There is absolutely no point in making the computer player a Rookie. In this case he will immediately throw all his troops into the battle.

1.9 Special Items

Some items in TaskForce have special uses. These are:

- * antidot: If you are poisoned application of antidot will reduce the poison level and possibly cure you.
 - * explosives: A nasty and powerful weapon, explosives have to be primed before use. If you use them you are asked for a value to set the counter to. This value is given in turns, that means if you set it to 1 the fireworks will start at the end of your turn, 2, at the end of your opponent's turn, etc. Don't forget to drop them once you have set the timer!
 - * keycards: They are sometimes needed to open doors. If you carry the keycard when you try to open a door it is required for, it will automatically be used.
-

- * medkits: Well, what do you expect?
- * protective suites: On some occasions you will have to deal with dangerous chemicals or other poisonous substances. While you are wearing a protective suite you will be immune to the most unhealthy follow-up effects.
- * radio transmitters: With the help of radio transmitters you can call for air support. A plane will pull in and launch an attack on a target you selected, which may be anywhere on the map! The bombs are not as powerful as grenades and you should not expect clinical hits, so be careful and don't stand too close. Radio transmitters only have a limited power supply.
- * steroids: If you take these, they will increase your available AP for a short time (until end of turn).

1.10 History of TaskForce

V0.21 (28.04.98)

- * fixed serious bug in scrolling routines
- * didn't close sfx file
- * Grenade Launcher didn't accept grenades but knives as ammo
- * increased disadvantages when shooting at distant targets
- * new item

Radio Transmitter

to call in air support

- * added teleporters
- * slightly improved computer player again
- * added some more sound effects

V0.20 (15.04.98)

- * now supports a third player (computer controlled only)
- * removed another Enforcer hit
- * reduced explosion power to make it possible to survive a blast it's still not very likely with average hit points, though
- * fixed some minor bugs

V0.19 (10.04.98)

- * TaskForce would crash if it didn't get the audio channels it wanted
- * units can be selected even if they have no AP left
- * <Esc> cancels firing mode
- * the game can be controlled entirely by mouse now
- * on the mission selection screen the first mission is selected by default
- * two more weapons available

V0.18 (06.04.98)

- * if the active unit's HP sank below 0 it only pretended to become unconscious...
 - * shot down units blocked line of sight and line of fire
 - * time limit didn't work properly
 - * use of items didn't reduce the unit's load
 - * removed some Enforcer hits
 - * TaskForce no longer terminates if the allocation of the audio structures fails, but will remain silent
 - * using <shift> number pad you can now scroll half a screen
-

- * in a single player game, you will be informed of explosions in the gap between two turns if one of your units can observe them
- * major change in AP system and reduced HP values
- * you are notified when you successfully activated an event of the type Find Item
- * clicking on one of the names will take you to that unit
- * slightly improved computer opponent
- * new item
 - Steroids
 - V0.17 (06.03.98)
- * first public release

1.11 Contact

If you encounter any bugs, have some ideas for improvements, or just want to tell me how much you (don't ?) like TaskForce, send your comments to this address:

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59071 Hamm
Germany

Email: jensgr@gmx.net

If you create any missions for this game, feel encouraged to send them, too. If I like them, I may include them in the archive.

Have fun!