MISSILE COMMAND

**An Arcade Video Game**

**Intended ESRB Rating:** E (Everyone)

**Target Age:** Everyone

**Projected Ship Date:** 1980

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1. **Game Outline**

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**1.1 Challenges players encounter and how to overcome them**

The player is faced with a wave of ballistic missiles raining down from the sky. To overcome these challenges, the player must use a crosshair to aim their counter missiles at the ballistic missiles. The counter missiles will explode upon reaching the point that the crosshair was pointed at. If any ballistic missiles are within close enough range of the explosion, they will also be destroyed.

Some of the ballistic missiles also have the ability to multiply into other ballistic missiles. This will put pressure on the player and require the player’s aiming to be more precise if their goal is to take out several missiles at once.

During later levels, new weapons are also introduced; smart bombs that can evade counter missiles launched at them and are harder to take out.

The player only has a limited number of counter missiles. Once they have all been used up, the player cannot fire any more counter missiles and there will no longer be a way to defend the cities. The player will receive audible and textual warnings in the event that any of the three silos are low on missiles.

**1.2 How does the progression/reward system work? How do players grow as challenges increase?**

Players complete a level once all of the ballistic missiles have been destroyed. Upon completion of a level, the player will receive bonus points for every remaining counter missile and any city that has not been destroyed. The bonus multiplier increases by one every two rounds until a certain level, thus giving the player more points for any counter missiles and cities they have remaining. This is countered by the increasing difficulty every two rounds; the speeds of the ballistic missiles increase. The higher a player’s score, the greater their chances of setting a high score.

**1.3 How does the gameplay tie into the story?**

The player is placed in the shoes of a commander who decides to use the counter missile fleets to take out the ballistic missiles headed for the area. Players have to contend with faster missiles, which makes it increasingly harder to defend all of the cities. The player is also expected to use their counter missiles, as they are only provided with a limited amount. The story “ends” if all the cities are destroyed, which meets the game over conditions.

**1.4 What is the victory condition for the player?**

To progress past a level, the player must have at least one city remaining once all of the ballistic missiles have been destroyed. Upon meeting this condition, they move on to the next level. It is easiest to obtain this condition by shooting down all of the ballistic missiles, to ensure that there is no longer any threat. This can still be obtained even if the player has no counter missiles left, such that the ballistic missiles fail to destroy all of the remaining cities.

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**2 Characters**

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**2.1 Commander**

The protagonist, the commander, is not visible in the game because the player has been placed in his shoes. As such, there is no sprite for this character. The commander has made a decision to use the entire fleet of counter missiles in his area to protect the area from the ballistic missiles that are homing in. The player must use the controls on the arcade cabinet to fire the missiles.

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**3 Gameplay**

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**3.1 Controls**

The player moves a crosshair across the screen using the big black trackball on the arcade cabinet. Pressing one of three buttons launches counter missiles at the location of the crosshair on the screen. The silo that a missile is launched from depends on which of the three buttons the player presses once the crosshair is in the intended position; Alpha, Delta, and Omega. Upon reaching the crosshair, the missile explodes. Ballistic missiles raining down from the sky explode upon contact with the range of the counter missile’s explosion. If all of the ballistic missiles are destroyed and there are no other enemies left on screen, the player completes the round.

The “1 Player Start” button begins a one-player game, while the “2 Player Start” button begins a two-player game.

**3.2 How is the game divided?**

The game is divided by rounds. Every round has a set number of missiles flying down from the top of the screen towards the bottom of the screen. Every time all of the missiles are destroyed, bonus points are added depending on the remaining number of cities and/or counter missiles and then the player advances to the next round.

If two players are playing, there is a turn-based system that repeats like a continuous pattern without any changes. Player 1 always goes first, and once they complete a round, Player 2 goes next. Then Player 1 plays the next round. However, if either player gets a game over, this turn pattern breaks and the remaining player plays until they also get a game over.

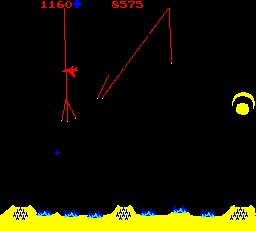
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**4 Game World**

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The world in this game is an area with three anti-missile silos, Alpha, Delta, and Omega, whose purpose is to defend six cities in the area from destruction. The way that the player interacts with this model is reminiscent of a desktop model, comparable to a computer desktop. The entire world is single-screen throughout the entire game. It is like a side-scrolling shoot-em-up, except the background is solid and not scrolling.

The three silos are spread across the screen, with three cities located in between the Alpha and Delta silos, and three more in between the Delta and Omega silos, for a total of six cities.

[](https://strategywiki.org/wiki/File:Missile_Command_screen.png)

**Figure 1: The gameplay screen.**

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**5 Game Experience**

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**5.1 What is first seen when the game starts up?**

When the game starts up, the Missile Command logo is seen in large letters but is destroyed as large holes appear over the letters on the screen, like huge gunshots from a machine gun or a series of digitalized nuclear explosions. Then a tutorial screen appears demonstrating the gameplay and telling the player that the purpose of the game is to shoot down the missiles to defend the cities, clearly marked by arrows.

**5.2 Emotions/Moods meant to be invoked**

This game is intended to provide a fun experience while also making the characters care about the gameplay. This game is set during the Cold War, when tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union threatened to boil over into an all-out nuclear war. Therefore, this game is intended to warn the world of the dangers of war.

**5.3 Use of music and sound to convey emotion**

There will be no game music implemented into Missile Command. Sound effects that will be implemented will be simple and include digitalized explosions whenever a ballistic missile, smart bomb, plane, or satellite makes contact with a counter missile or a city is destroyed. This will add a small sense of realism to the game and make players feel like they are really involved in war and given the task of defending cities.

**5.4 Shell of Game**

Choose # of players

Ballistic missile destroys city?

Yes

No

Shoot   
Counter Missile

# of Counter Missiles - 1

All the cities destroyed?

Out of Counter Missiles?

Yes

No

Destroyed Ballistic Missile?

No

Yes

Yes

No

High Score?

Enter name

No

Yes

# of Ballistic Missiles - 1

All Ballistic Missiles destroyed?

Yes

**Figure 2: General flow of the gameplay.**

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**6 Gameplay Mechanics**

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**6.1 Mechanics**

Players regularly interact with enemies by firing counter missiles at them to take them out. To do this, they press buttons for the silo that they want to fire a missile from. Once a silo is empty, they have to fire missiles from another silo, which requires more precision and aiming.

**6.2 Hazards**

The ballistic missiles are the only hazards without artificial intelligence that can kill or harm the player. They destroy cities and missile silos upon contact. If a city is destroyed, it is gone forever unless the player manages to rebuild it by scoring increments of 10 000 points. If a missile silo is destroyed, it is no longer usable for that round and is replenished at the beginning of the next round.

**6.3 Powerups**

There is minimal use of powerups in this game. The only powerup available to players is an extra city, which the player earns for every 10 000 points they score.

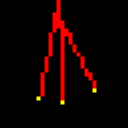
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**7 Enemies**

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**7.1 Ballistic Missiles**

The main visible enemies in this game are the ballistic missiles raining down from the sky. The player can destroy them with counter missiles. If the ballistic missiles make contact with a city, it is destroyed forever, unless the player restores a city, which happens for every 10 000 points earned. If they make contact with a missile silo, its entire counter missile fleet is destroyed and the silo is rendered useless until the next round. Some ballistic missiles also have the ability to multiply into other ballistic missiles.

[](https://strategywiki.org/wiki/File:Missile_Command_missiles.png)

**Figure 3: Ballistic missile sprites.**

**7.2 Smart Bombs**

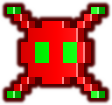
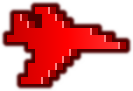
Smart Bombs can evade counter missiles that are not perfectly aimed. They are much harder to shoot down. Whenever the player shoots a counter missile near the smart bomb, it will move slightly to dodge that missile and move farther towards a city. If the counter missile is perfectly aimed, then it will destroy the smart bomb. If the smart bombs make contact with a city, it is destroyed forever, unless the player restores a city, which happens for every 10 000 points earned. If they make contact with a missile silo, its entire counter missile fleet is destroyed and the silo is rendered useless until the next round.

[Missile Command smartbomb.png](https://strategywiki.org/wiki/File:Missile_Command_smartbomb.png)

**Figure 4: Smart Bomb sprite.**

**7.3 Bomber Planes and Satellites**

Bomber Planes and satellites fly across the screen launching missiles of their own to add to the existing fleet of ballistic missiles. Missiles that are launched usually appear far lower on the screen than other ballistic missiles. A special warning will sound out whenever one of these appears on screen.

[](https://strategywiki.org/wiki/File:Missile_Command_satellite.png) [](https://strategywiki.org/wiki/File:Missile_Command_bomber.png)

**Figure 5: Satellite and Bomber Plane sprites.**

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**8 Multiplayer & Bonus Materials**

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This game also has an option for two players. By pressing the two-player option button upon starting the game, the player can play against another player. When one player gets game over, the other player can continue until he/she also gets game over. Once both players get game over, if they both have high scores, they can both enter their names into the system. But if only one player has a high score, only that player can enter their name into the system.

There are no special options for this game, other than the opportunity to enter your name into the system if you obtain a high score. If the player’s score places in the rankings among high scorers, they will be taken to a screen where they use the crosshair to select letters to use in their displayed name. This name will be displayed on the high scores list alongside the high score that the player obtained. The high score milestone is also the only possible achievement in this game.

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**9 Monetization**

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The game will be built into dedicated cabinets, which will be installed in arcades. Players must insert a quarter to start up the game. Once the player gets a game over, they must insert another quarter to play the game again. So, for just a quarter, players are buying time to play the game and a chance to obtain a high score.

Works Cited

StrategyWiki. “Missile Command/Getting Started.” *Missile Command/Getting Started - StrategyWiki, the Video Game Walkthrough and Strategy Guide Wiki*, 2015, strategywiki.org/wiki/Missile\_Command/Getting\_Started.