

= Bismarck (video game) =

Bismarck is a turn @-@ based strategy video game developed by Personal Software Services and published by Mirrorsoft . It was first released for the Commodore 64 and ZX Spectrum in 1987 for the United Kingdom . It was ported to Amiga , Apple II , Atari ST and Atari 8 @-@ bit home computers in both the United Kingdom and the United States the following year . The game is the tenth instalment in the Strategic Wargames series . In the game , the player can choose to control either the German battleship Bismarck or command the pursuing fleet of Royal Navy ships .

The game is set during the Last battle of the battleship Bismarck of World War II and revolves around the Bismarck attempting to escape a perusing fleet of Royal Navy ships , who desire to avenge the deaths of 1 @,@ 412 men in the sinking of the flagship and " pride of the Royal Navy " , HMS Hood . The game received positive reviews upon release ; critics praised the graphics and presentation , though one reviewer found difficulty with the controls .

= = Gameplay = =

The game is a turn @-@ based strategy and takes place during the Last battle of the battleship Bismarck on 27 May 1941 . The battle is a sequel to the Battle of the Denmark Strait , in which the Kriegsmarine ships Bismarck and Prinz Eugen sank the Royal Navy flagship , HMS Hood , resulting in the deaths of 1 @,@ 412 men . Incensed by the loss of the " pride of the Royal Navy " , a large British force was dispatched in order to pursue and destroy the Bismarck and its support ship , the Prinz Eugen .

The player has the option to choose which side they wish to command at the beginning of the game . If the German side is picked , the objective of the game is to evade the Royal Navy fleet by either sailing to Iceland or heading to the safety of Nazi occupied France . The player will only have the ability to control the Bismarck itself , and must defend themselves against Royal Navy and Royal Air Force attacks if compromised . If the British side is chosen , then the player must command the hunting Royal Navy fleet in order to search and destroy the Bismarck . To achieve both these ends , the player will be able to access an in @-@ game command centre , which will give out alerts depending on the side chosen . If controlling the Bismarck , the player will be reported of hostile British U @-@ boat sightings . If controlling the Royal Navy fleet , they will be told of radio intercepts , which will pinpoint the Bismarck 's approximate location .

If the Bismarck has been intercepted or compromised by Royal Navy ships , the game will automatically shift to an arcade sequence which will give the player an opportunity to defend the ship against a British attack , or alternatively , if playing as the British , the sequence is utilised in order to destroy the Bismarck . The feature can be displayed at any time , though it is automatically enabled if either side comes into conflict . The interface of the feature is split into three sections ; the upper part of the screen shows a view of the ocean in front of the ship and any hostile ship in the vicinity . The middle section contains buttons and icons which are used to control ship movement and to fire weapons . The lower part of the screen displays a diagrammatic representation of the ship from the side chosen (Bismarck or Royal Navy ships) ; the diagram will change colours once the ship receives damage from shelling .

Once a hostile ship is in range , the player will have the choice to either open fire or outmanoeuvre the enemy . The Bismarck is able to withstand 99 points of damage ; internal fires may break out during battle and will risk destroying the ship if the fires are not contained quickly enough or if they reach fuel tanks . If fires occur , the player is given the option to order fire @-@ fighting crews to contain the blaze , although it will cause the ship to disengage from combat . The game proceeds in real time , and has the option to change speed from slow to fast at any time .

= = Background = =

Personal Software Services was founded in Coventry , England , by Gary Mays and Richard Cockayne in 1981 . The company were known for creating games that revolved around historic war

battles and conflicts , such as Theatre Europe , Iwo Jima and Falklands ' 82 . The company had a partnership with French video game developer ERE Informatique , and published localised versions of their products to the United Kingdom . In 1986 , Cockayne took a decision to alter their products for release on 16 @-@ bit consoles , as he found that smaller 8 @-@ bit consoles such as the ZX Spectrum lacked the processing power for larger strategy games . The decision was falsely interpreted as " pull @-@ out " from the Spectrum market by a video game journalist . Following years of successful sales throughout the mid 1980s , Personal Software Services experienced financial difficulties , in which Cockayne admitted that " he took his eye off the ball " . The company was acquired by Mirrorsoft in February 1987 , and was later dispossessed by the company due to strains of debt .

= = Reception = =

The game received positive reviews upon release . Peter Berlin of Your Sinclair praised the presentation of the game , stating that it was " good to look at " and well organised . Philippa Irving of Crash asserted that the graphics and interface were " rather bland " but " pretty " . Despite stating that the map of the game was " unexciting " , Irving noted that it was offset by " pretty touches " and new graphical additions . A reviewer of Computer and Video Games stated that the game was " historically good " . Their only criticism was the unsuitability of using a joystick for the game , which they deemed " virtually unusable " . David Buckingham of Computer Gamer considered Bismarck the best game Personal Software Studios had released at the time , and added that the two genres of strategy and action work " very well " .

Gary Rook of Sinclair User heralded the gameplay as an " exciting " blend of strategy and arcade simulation . Berlin suggested that Bismarck was a good introduction for players who were " bored " with the arcade genre and preferred " something a little bit tougher " . Irving praised the gameplay as smoothly @-@ presented and " undemanding " , stating that the type of game Personal Software Studios were creating was " successful " . She also considered the rules of the game to be detailed in all important respects , well @-@ presented and " helpful " , albeit " not voluminous " . Regarding the arcade aspect of the game , Rook noted that the level of action in it was sufficient , but was sceptical that it was a " true " wargame .