

= Solar Jetman =

Solar Jetman : Hunt for the Golden Warpship is a multi @-@ directional shooter video game developed by Zippo Games and Rare and published by Tradewest . It was released in North America on 14 October 1990 and in Europe on 26 September 1991 for the Nintendo Entertainment System . The game is the third instalment of the Jetman series and was later re @-@ released by Nintendo for their NES @-@ based PlayChoice @-@ 10 arcade system in the United States in 1990 .

In the game , series protagonist Jetman must manoeuvre his small craft through caverns of various planets whilst searching for pieces of the Golden Warpship . The game is presented in a horizontal side @-@ view environment and has ranging gravitational pulls for each planet , which subjects Jetman 's craft to various forms of inertia . Similar to its predecessors , Jetman must keep his craft topped up with fuel in order to progress through levels .

The game was developed mostly by Mancunian developer Zippo Games under the name of Iota before being ordered to change the game into a Jetman title by Rare . Ports of the game for the ZX Spectrum , Commodore 64 and Atari ST were completed but not released due to poor sales of the NES version . The game received mostly positive reviews upon release , with critics praising the game 's presentation and graphics , however criticism was directed at the game 's difficulty . It was later included in Rare 's 2015 Xbox One retrospective compilation , Rare Replay .

= = Gameplay = =

The game is a multi @-@ directional shooter that is presented in a horizontal side @-@ view , in similar vein to earlier instalments of the Jetman series . The game is set after the events of Lunar Jetman and involves series protagonist Jetman on his quest to gather all pieces of the Golden Warpship , a mythical starship that allows interstellar travel . The player controls Jetman 's pod in either a clockwise or anti @-@ clockwise direction . The pod is subject to inertia but not drag physics depending on the level of gravity of the set planet . The constant pull of gravity changes every level , which makes stable flight challenging and manoeuvring the pod more difficult as the levels progress .

Solar Jetman has twelve planets and one hidden planet , each with its own gravity and system of enemy @-@ infested caverns . The goal is to navigate these caverns with small jetpods launched from an immobile mothership , on each planet bringing back a piece of the Golden Warpship and enough fuel to journey to the next one . Items are collected with a tow cable that makes flight more difficult due to the drag of the item , and are released over the mothership or deposited in small wormholes deeper in the caverns . Points are earned by retrieving valuables and destroying enemies , and can be spent after every other stage to buy power @-@ ups for Jetman 's pod . If a pod is destroyed , Jetman will eject out of the pod and walk around in an agile but vulnerable spacesuit . The player may be able to return to the mothership in order to collect a new pod . If the player dies outside of their pod , a life will be lost .

= = Development and release = =

Solar Jetman was developed in @-@ joint by Mancunian developer Zippo Games and Leicestershire @-@ based Rare . Founded by brothers Ste and John Pickford , Zippo Games was known for developing Ironsword , a sequel to Rare 's 1987 game Wizards & Warriors . Impressed by the success of Ironsword , Rare purchased Zippo Games and commissioned them more development projects , a decision which was viewed unfavourably by Ste Pickford , as he wanted to focus on developing games independently . After the buy @-@ out , the Pickford brothers started development of Iota on 1 June 1989 , a game which was conceived by programmer Steve Hughes to be an arcade @-@ shooter inspired by the Atari ST game Oids . Despite having initial creative control over Iota , Rare ordered Zippo Games to change the game into a Jetman title halfway through development .

During the late 1980s , the Stamper brothers sold the rights of Ultimate Play The Game to U.S. Gold and shifted their focus from the British home computing market to broader home console games . Solar Jetman was the first game to be released under the re @-@ branded Rare . The company became one of the first western developers to be granted a licence by Nintendo to produce games for the Nintendo Entertainment System , during which Rare began employing more staff and expanding their operations in order to develop more games for home consoles .

After development switched to Solar Jetman , the Pickford brothers received little input from Rare , with Ste Pickford later speculating that the Stamper brothers had confidence in their abilities , despite being entrusted with their most " revered " series . In a retrospective interview , Ste Pickford stated that he drew inspiration for the mechanics of Solar Jetman from a ZX Spectrum game , Scuba Diving , admitting that the gravitational pulls of Jetman 's pod were reminiscent of the way a scuba diver manoeuvred . Development of Solar Jetman lasted around a year and started from a standard two @-@ man team to a workforce of several people as the game eventually grew larger in scale .

Shortly after release , Sales Curve Interactive announced ports of Solar Jetman for the ZX Spectrum , Commodore 64 , Atari ST and Commodore Amiga , all developed by Software Creations and intended for release on the STORM label . The Commodore 64 , Amiga and Atari ST versions were complete and the ZX Spectrum reached a playable demo state before the project was cancelled due to poor sales of the NES original and perceived unsuitability for the home computer markets . The Commodore 64 version has subsequently been discovered and made available for download . Despite the cancellations , Solar Jetman was later re @-@ released by Nintendo for their NES @-@ based PlayChoice @-@ 10 arcade system in 1990 . The game was later included in Rare 's 2015 Xbox One retrospective compilation , Rare Replay .

= = Reception = =

The game was received positive reviews from critics upon release , despite the poor sales of the NES version . Reviewers of Mean Machines praised the game 's playability and gameplay , stating that it was " second @-@ to @-@ none " and the different gravity pulls of each planet provided " unique challenges " . Richard Leadbatter of Computer and Video Games similarly praised the gameplay , comparing it to that of Thrust . Leadbatter found the gameplay challenging and stated that the addition of power @-@ ups boosts the game 's playability . Steve Jarrett of Total ! asserted that the gameplay was simplistic but addictive as exploration of the game 's twelve planets would " set the player at it for weeks " .

The graphics and sound were also praised . Reviewers of Mean Machines stated that the graphics were " simply brilliant " and presented an " artistic accomplishment " , whereas the sound was similarly " excellent " . Leadbatter stated that the sound and graphics were " functional " rather than outstanding , despite stating that the graphics appeared " fast and smooth " . Jarrett regarded the graphics as simple but " dead smooth " in appearance , also praising the smooth animation of the enemies and the movement of the player 's ship . Jarrett also praised the sound , heralding the soundtrack as " eerie " yet " great " . The game 's playability and replay value were praised by a reviewer of Mean Machines , stating that the number of levels and items will last a " couple of months " . Jarrett similarly stated that the game 's twelve levels provides good replay value due to the game 's difficulty .