

= Star Wars : Rogue Squadron =

Star Wars : Rogue Squadron (known as Star Wars : Rogue Squadron 3D on the PC) is an arcade @-@ style action game co @-@ developed by Factor 5 and LucasArts . The first of three games in the Rogue Squadron series , it was published by LucasArts and Nintendo and released for Microsoft Windows and the Nintendo 64 in December 1998 . Rogue Squadron was one of the first games to take advantage of the Nintendo 64 's Expansion Pak , which allows gameplay at a 640 × 480 display resolution , instead of that system 's standard 320 × 240 resolution .

Set in the fictional Star Wars galaxy and inspired by the Star Wars : X @-@ wing Rogue Squadron comics , the game takes place primarily between events in the films Star Wars and The Empire Strikes Back . The player controls Luke Skywalker , commander of the elite X @-@ wing pilots known as Rogue Squadron . As the game progresses , Skywalker and Rogue Squadron fight the Galactic Empire in sixteen missions across various planets .

Rogue Squadron received generally positive reviews . Critics praised the game 's technical achievements and flight controls , but its use of distance fog and the lack of a multiplayer mode drew criticism . The game 's sales exceeded expectations ; by August 1999 , more than one million copies had sold worldwide . It spawned two sequels developed and released for the GameCube ? Star Wars Rogue Squadron II : Rogue Leader and Star Wars Rogue Squadron III : Rebel Strike ? as well as Star Wars : Episode I : Battle for Naboo , a spiritual successor released for Windows and Nintendo 64 .

= = Gameplay = =

Unlike the Star Wars : X @-@ Wing computer game series that emphasizes space combat simulation , Rogue Squadron is a fast @-@ paced , arcade @-@ style action game . Each of the game 's sixteen levels introduces mission objectives that must be completed to progress to the next level . These objectives are divided into four categories : search and destroy , reconnaissance , rescue , and protect . Enemy aircraft are primarily composed of TIE fighters . Ground defenses are more varied and include three different walkers , laser and missile turrets , tanks , probe droids , shuttles , stormtroopers and speeder bikes .

The heads @-@ up display features a health meter , a radar and an ammunition count for secondary weapons . The player can control five craft : X @-@ wing , A @-@ wing , Y @-@ wing , snowspeeder and V @-@ wing . Each vehicle offers a unique armament arrangement , as well as varying degrees of speed and maneuverability . The game initially restricts the player to a particular craft for each level ; however , after a level is completed , it can be replayed with any available craft . Levels set on non @-@ atmospheric moons expose the player 's craft to space ; thus disallowing the Speeder and V @-@ Wing (which are repulsorcraft) from being used ; but as on other levels , the craft is vertically confined . Nine bonus power @-@ ups are hidden in different levels throughout the game . These bonuses improve a craft 's weapons or durability and are applied to each eligible craft for the remainder of the game .

The player 's performance is measured throughout the game , and performance statistics are checked after each level against three medal benchmarks . Each benchmark contains five categories : completion time , number of enemies destroyed , shot accuracy , number of friendly craft and structures saved and number of bonuses collected . If a player 's performance exceeds one of the level 's three benchmarks in all five categories , a medal ? bronze , silver or gold ? is awarded on completion . Acquiring these medals promotes the player 's rank and helps unlock hidden content .

= = = Unlockable content = = =

Rogue Squadron includes a number of unlockable secrets . The player can unlock three bonus levels : " Beggar 's Canyon " , " The Death Star Trench Run " and " The Battle of Hoth " . These levels are made available when the player obtains all bronze , silver or gold medals , respectively ,

on each level . Alternatively , they can be unlocked via password . Unlike the game 's primary levels , the bonus levels are adaptations of events from the Star Wars films . " Beggar 's Canyon " allows the player to reenact the race mentioned in A New Hope , while " The Death Star Trench Run " allows the player to execute an alternate version of the movie 's climactic battle . In the " Battle of Hoth " bonus level , the player can join the Rebel Alliance 's combat against Imperial troops , as depicted in The Empire Strikes Back .

Several craft are also available when unlocked . Both the Millennium Falcon and a TIE interceptor are initially present in the craft selection screen . However , neither may be selected until the player enters the correct passwords or achieves all bronze or silver medals , respectively , on the bonus levels . Two other craft can be unlocked , but each is confined to a specific level . One is the T @-@ 16 Skyhopper in " Beggar 's Canyon " , and an AT @-@ ST is playable in a basic demonstration level unlocked only via password . A playable model of a 1969 Buick Electra 225 based on a car owned by the game 's sound designer , Rudolph Stember , is also included in the game as an Easter egg .

During Rogue Squadron 's development , Star Wars Episode I : The Phantom Menace ? the first new Star Wars film in more than 15 years ? was less than one year from its scheduled release date . To take advantage of this marketing opportunity , Factor 5 included content from the upcoming film in Rogue Squadron . LucasFilm provided the developers with design art for the Naboo Starfighter , a ship prominently featured in the new film . These designs were used to create an in @-@ game model . Because the game was scheduled to be released six months before the film , Factor 5 was required to keep the ship 's inclusion a secret . As a result , most of the game 's development team at Factor 5 and LucasArts were not informed of its inclusion . A complex scrambling system was also developed to help hide the ship 's code from gamers using cheat cartridges such as GameShark or Action Replay . More than six months after the release of Rogue Squadron , LucasArts unveiled the code to unlock the Naboo Starfighter as a playable craft . The code has been named the Nintendo 64 's most well @-@ hidden code because of the length of time before its discovery .

= = Synopsis = =

= = = Setting = = =

Star Wars : Rogue Squadron is set in the fictional Star Wars galaxy , where a war is fought between the Galactic Empire and the Rebel Alliance . The game 's first fifteen levels occur six months after the Battle of Yavin ? as depicted in A New Hope ? and before the events of The Empire Strikes Back . As the Empire gathers strength for an all @-@ out assault on the rebel forces , Luke Skywalker and Wedge Antilles form Rogue Squadron , a group comprising twelve of the most skilled X @-@ wing pilots from the Rebel Alliance .

The sixteenth and final level of the game takes place during Dark Empire , six years after Star Wars Episode VI : Return of the Jedi 's Battle of Endor . The Rebel Alliance has established the New Republic , which now controls three quarters of the galaxy . After the deaths of Emperor Palpatine and Darth Vader , the Galactic Empire collapsed , but was reborn under a mysterious new leader (who is actually a clone of Palpatine) . Rogue Squadron , now under the command of Wedge Antilles , continues to fight the Empire to protect the newly formed Republic .

= = = Plot = = =

The story is divided into four chapters , each of which starts with an opening crawl resembling those featured in the Star Wars films . Further story details are presented through the game 's instruction manual , pre @-@ mission briefings , character conversations during the game and in @-@ game cut scenes . The game begins with Rogue Squadron briefly encountering the Empire at the Mos Eisley spaceport on Tatooine . The team then executes escort and rescue missions on Barkhesh

and Chorax , respectively .

The Rebels learn that Imperial officer Crix Madine wishes to defect to the Rebel Alliance . The Empire launches an attack on Corellia , where Madine is stationed , to prevent his departure . Rogue Squadron , with the help of Han Solo and Chewbacca in the Millennium Falcon , fights off the Empire and helps escort Madine safely off the planet . Soon after , Rogue Squadron is joined by Gold Squadron , a group of Y @-@ wings now led by Crix Madine ; they are dispatched to the moon of Gerrard V to aid its quest for independence from the Empire . They encounter the 128th TIE interceptor Squadron and disable Kasan Moor 's TIE . When Rogue Squadron tells Moor that she has been taken prisoner , she offers to defect and provide the Rebel Alliance with Imperial intelligence .

With the help of Kasan Moor 's intelligence , the Alliance launches three consecutive attacks on Imperial bases throughout the galaxy . After an assault on the Imperial Enclave , a facility on Kile II supporting the Empire 's Naval operations , Wedge Antilles is ambushed by a group of TIEs and is taken captive . The Rebel Alliance tracks Wedge to an Imperial prison complex on the planet of Kessel . The remaining members of Rogue Squadron travel to Kessel and rescue him and other Rebel prisoners .

With Wedge Antilles free and Rogue Squadron again at full strength , the Rebel Alliance turns its attention to a new Imperial threat ? Moff Kohl Seerdon . Seerdon is consolidating Imperial power in preparation for an attack aimed at capturing Thyferra , a planet which produces the healing substance bacta . Rogue Squadron is ordered to disrupt his operation with hit @-@ and @-@ run missions against key targets on Taloraan and Fest . In retaliation , Seerdon attacks and holds a city on the planet of Chandrila hostage . Rogue Squadron and the Alliance strike back by initiating a Kasan Moor @-@ engineered raid on an Imperial base located inside a volcano on Sullust . While still on Sullust , however , General Rieekan informs the Squadron that Moff Seerdon has used their raid as a diversion and begun his attack on Thyferra . With Seerdon in control of the planet 's bacta and their own supply threatened , Rogue Squadron quickly reaches Thyferra , kills Seerdon and frees the planet .

In the final chapter , the game moves into the future , six years after the Battle of Endor . Rogue Squadron , now under the command of Wedge Antilles , continues to fight the wounded Empire . On the planet of Mon Calamari , new Imperial weapons called World Devastators are destroying the planet . Rogue Squadron is deployed , disables all three Devastators and destroys the Imperial presence .

= = Development = =

After the success of Star Wars : Shadows of the Empire on the Nintendo 64 in 1996 , LucasArts began planning a follow @-@ up . At the time , Factor 5 was developing a game engine to create large terrain maps . LucasArts , pleased with earlier collaborations with the company , decided to use Factor 5 's engine for its new game . The game 's focus would be space combat ; this direction was inspired by a level of Shadows of the Empire in which the player flies a snowspeeder during the Battle of Hoth . Rogue Squadron and Factor 5 production manager Brett Tosti stated , " That whole scene was actually the genesis for Rogue Squadron because everybody said , ' Why don 't you do a whole game like that ? ' So we did . " Factor 5 initially pitched a concept to allow gamers to play through missions similar to the fans ' favorite action sequences from the Star Wars films . This proposal was rejected , however . At that time , LucasFilm was not comfortable with video games drawing directly from the films .

During the early stages of development , the designers at LucasArts were inspired by Rogue Squadron and later Star Wars : X @-@ wing Rogue Squadron , a series of books and comic books set during the years of the original film trilogy . They began developing the story and gameplay with a similar setting that would include characters from the films participating in new , original missions using Factor 5 's terrain map engine as the base . In May 1998 , a demo of the game was displayed at E3 , but the game was so incomplete at the time that Tosti considered it a tech demo . It rendered a basic heightmap and an immobile AT @-@ AT model , while TIE fighters lacking artificial

intelligence flew and fired in a predetermined path . When " playing " the demo for audiences , Tosti followed a very specific flight path of his own to give the illusion that he was actually battling with the TIEs . Despite the demo 's barebones presentation , response from gamers was largely positive .

Factor 5 appealed to Nintendo to use the Nintendo 64 's newly developed memory Expansion Pak . Nintendo was reluctant , expecting the technology to be reserved solely for hardware peripherals . However , after Iguana Entertainment used the Expansion Pak to achieve a higher display resolution for Turok 2 : Seeds of Evil , Factor 5 was given the green light . The Expansion Pak is used to increase Rogue Squadron 's N64 resolution from 320 × 240 to 640 × 480 .

LucasFilm was hesitant to grant access to the Star Wars library of sound effects for the game 's sound designer , Rudolph Stember . As a compromise , the company provided Stember with sounds sampled at the relatively low rate of 22 kHz , half the standard rate . Stember objected , claiming that the clips sounded worse than effects he had lifted from VHS tapes for a previous Star Wars project . The game includes voice work from several notable persons , including screen actors Olivia Hussey and Raphael Sbarge as well as voice actors Bob Bergen , Neil Ross and Terence McGovern . Instead of using Nintendo 's default sound drivers , Factor 5 developed its own tool called MOsys FX Surround . The Factor 5 drivers use Nintendo 64 processors , but tax them less ; advanced compression techniques were also employed . As a result , the game includes over 80 minutes of high @-@ quality stereo sound .

In November 1998 , a month before the game 's scheduled release , LucasArts signed a worldwide agreement with Nintendo concerning three new Star Wars video games . It granted Nintendo the rights to market the games and hold exclusive , worldwide distribution rights for five years following each release . Rogue Squadron was the first game released under this agreement .

= = Reception = =

Many reviews compared Star Wars : Rogue Squadron to one of its inspirations , the Battle of Hoth flight combat level in Star Wars : Shadows of the Empire , considered one of that game 's best elements . GamePro remarked that Rogue Squadron " enhanced the flight model with true pitch , roll , and bank mechanics " . IGN praised its inclusion of " upgrades , more enemies , better sound , and stunning second @-@ generation graphics " . The Nintendo 64 version received mostly positive reviews , and received an aggregate score of 85 percent from both GameRankings and Metacritic . GamePro named it one of the best games released in 1998 . In a 2008 retrospective , IGN 's Levi Buchanan stated that the game revived the Star Wars license on consoles through well @-@ paced gameplay , a story tied into the Star Wars canon and visuals that made it " one of the generation 's top stunners " .

The game 's technical aspects were singled out for acclaim . Its visuals were called " respectable " in the standard resolution , but highly praised in high @-@ resolution mode (achieved via the Nintendo 64 's Expansion Pak) . GameSpot remarked that in a higher resolution , " [the] textures of the landscapes , the ships , the lighting effects ? everything looks so much better , " while IGN 's Peer Schneider said , " After playing the game in the optional high resolution mode (640 × 480) once , it 's impossible to go back to the still respectable standard resolution . " Citing details such as decals , Rebel markings , R2 units , cockpit views and exhaust flames , Schneider described the game 's 3D ship models as " gorgeous " . IGN 's Matt Casamassina said that the game was the best @-@ looking Nintendo 64 game to date .

Reviewers also praised the game 's sound design . Powered by the new Factor 5 audio drivers , Rogue Squadron features about 40 minutes of speech and 40 minutes of music . GameSpot 's Ryan Mac Donald believed that the game 's inclusion of extended voice work helped create a " movie @-@ like " atmosphere . IGN noted that in addition to being technically impressive , the game 's Dolby Pro Logic surround sound was an important gameplay element . The audio signals helped players determine enemy positions and direction of travel . IGN awarded the game three sound awards , including Sound Effects , Best Voice and Best Overall Sound of 1998 on the Nintendo 64 .

Some reviewers complained about aspects of the game 's visuals ; critics disliked the heavy reliance on distance fog . Another common criticism of the game was the lack of multiplayer modes .

GamePro 's review called the omission a " serious , unforgivable sin " ; Schneider believed that while adding these modes would have extended Rogue Squadron 's replay value , the game was still enjoyable for its medal reward system and large number of secrets and unlockables .

Although nearly identical , the game 's PC version garnered lower review scores than its Nintendo 64 counterpart , with an aggregated GameRankings score of 80 percent . This version enjoyed many of the same praises for its gameplay , but handling and graphics were cited as problematic . Directly comparing the two versions , AllGame 's Brad Cook wrote that PC version 's handling is more difficult than the N64 version . He believed the PC 's " choppy " feel made it difficult to target enemies . In contrast to its opinion of the N64 version , IGN 's PC review was not enthusiastic about the game 's visuals . IGN staff remarked that Rogue Squadron 's " graphics and special effects aren 't spectacular " and that they had " seen better graphics " on the PC .

= = = Sales = = =

When Rogue Squadron was released in early December 1998 , the title 's Nintendo 64 incarnation was the second @-@ highest @-@ selling video game for the first half of the month (behind Nintendo 's The Legend of Zelda : Ocarina of Time) and the holiday season . Delayed until after Christmas in the United Kingdom , the game was released mid @-@ January and debuted as the second @-@ best @-@ selling game of the month , ahead of Ocarina of Time . In August 1999 , Nintendo added the title to its best @-@ selling Player 's Choice collection , while the PC version was re @-@ released as a part of the LucasArts Archive Series in May 2001 . Rogue Squadron 's retail success was not anticipated by the game 's producer Julian Eggebrecht , who said that the game sold " about 100 times better than anybody expected " . The Nintendo 64 version sold over 1 million copies in the United States , and over 44 @,@ 000 in Japan .