ICBM ATTACK CASSETTE DESCRIPTION

Designed and programed by Brett Bilbrey

Version 3.1 (6-11-82) * Date 6-22-82

GENERAL OVERVIEW

ICBM ATTACK is a missile command type game. The objective of the game is to protect your cities from an alien attack, and to score as high as possible. There is a mother ship in orbit (off the top of the screen), that sends ships that drop bombs on your cities and bases. By using the joystick, the player positions where to fire missiles; using the knob, he determines from which base the missile will come; and by pulling the trigger, he shoots.

By destroying all the ships in an attack wave, the player is able to advance to the next board where his supply of missiles are replaced and bonuses for surviving cities and unused missiles are given. An extra city is given if the player is able to achieve a certain predetermined score. As a player advances to harder boards, the aliens will try harder to destroy his cities and bases. The speed of the ships and the number of bombs they will drop will increase. As the player advances further the mother ship will start to send down nermals (like smart bombs). If a player is able to survive longer, then the mother ship would send for reinforcements. This would be in the form of a cartoon, sort of a prize for making it this far in the game.

The sound effects will include explosions, aliens flying by, bombs dropping, a background heartbeat, an oink that indicates that a missile did not fire, and special sounds to indicate the start or end of a board, next player up, bonus city, and game over.

The design of the game will allow a player's status to be stored in ten bytes of memory. This makes it possible to have multi-players and still be able to remember exactly what the position of the game was from the player's last board. The game is designed for one to four players, though more could be possible.

GAME MECHANICS

The player is able to move a crosshair by moving the joystick up, down, left and right. This is how the player determines where the missiles will go. The crosshair is restricted to stay within the sky playfield. This is the area from the top of the screen to just above the cities and bases which are near the bottom of the screen. This is the area that most of the game action will occur. A drawback of this game is that it is difficult to move quickly across the playfield from one side to the other. This is why a joystick (or trackball) handle works well with this game. To select from which base the missile will be fired, the player rotates the knob to pick: left, middle or right. This is difficult when the pace of the game gets going fast. This game was originally designed to work with an analog joystick controller which had an eleven key keypad that allowed the player to push one of three buttons to determine which base to use. If you get the idea that I think an analog joystick with a keypad would be a good idea ...

When a missile is fired, a pixel (the missile), flies from the selected base to the point selected by the crosshair. Currently, four missiles are allowed on the screen at once. If needed this could be increased. When the missile reaches

its destination, an explosion occurs. If this explosion contacts an alien ship or falling bomb then they are destroyed. Missiles will fly thru anything to reach the position where they are to explode. Cities and bases are destroyed if a bomb or nermal reach it. When a base is destroyed, all the missiles left in the base are lost. If all of a player's bases are destroyed, then he is defenseless. Once a player loses all of his cities, and he has no bonus cities left, then the game is over for him.

PLAYFIELD

In this game, most of the screen is used for the playfield. At the bottom of the screen is the scratch pad, above that are the cities and bases, and above that is the sky. It is the sky part that the aliens attack from and the player fires his missiles to. Alien ships appear from the left or right sides of the sky, while nermals appear from the top. There are six cities and three bases arranged: Base-City-City-City-Base-City-City-City-Base.

SOUND

By accessing the sound ports individually, concurrent sounds of explosions, alien ships, falling bombs, and a background heartbeat are possible. Missiles and explosions use the noise and noise volume registers, ship sounds use tone A register, falling bombs use tone B register, and the background heartbeat uses tone C register. The oink that signals that a missile was unable to fire uses all the tone registers and will override the other sounds. There will be sounds to signal the start and end of a board, getting an extra base, game over, player killed, and other special sounds.

OPTIONS

When the user selects the game, he will be asked to choose a difficulty level, the number of players, and the bonus city levels (this may be part of the difficulty level). The difficulty level controls the speed of the game, the number of aliens, and how many bombs the aliens drop. The bonus city level would determine when a player would receive an extra city. All the players have the same difficulty level now, but it would be possible to allow the players to pick different difficulty levels, thus customizing the game like Brickyard does.

POINTS

Points are awarded for destroying alien ships, stopping falling bombs, unused missiles, and cities left at the end of an attack wave. The tentative point values assigned are:

* Unused missiles - 5 points
* Falling bombs - 10 points
* Alien ships - 25 points
* Nermals - 50 points
* Cities saved - 100 points

The point values for the bonus city levels could be: every 5,000, 10,000, or 20,000 points. Also, the option for no bonus city would be available.

MULTI-PLAYER

A player's game status can be saved within ten bytes of memory. With more than one player playing, it is possible to switch between players while maintaining each player's unique game intact and separate from the other players. This means that if you have three cities left after an attack wave, and another player takes his turn, when it comes back to your turn the three cities will be in the same spot, not randomly replaced. More than four players are possible, but this would cause difficulties with having to share handles.

SUGGESTIONS AND ADDITIONAL FEATURES

As a suggestion/feature I would like to suggest that if an analog joystick handle were produced, it would be very easy to put it on the menu as a choice between a normal or a joystick version of the game. This would also prompt users to buy one to find out what they were missing. An analog handle with a keyboard would make possible the design of other expanded games too. I know I've preached about an analog handle, but ICBM ATTACK was first written for one and it plays better on it than on a normal Astrocade handle. (It also hurts to see one's creation not reach its full potential.)

As a possible future feature, when a player reaches a very high level in the game, the mother ship itself could attack or call for reinforcements. This could be a cartoon like occurence that would be a reward to good players. Also, as something to break up the game at a high level, the mother ship could send a suicide ship that would try to crash itself into a city or base. (This would be rare.)

This concludes the cassette overview of ICBM ATTACK. As ICBM ATTACK stands, a lot of work has been done on it, and it is now in a rough form. Suggestions are always welcome and changes are always possible.

I have written many Basic and Z-80 Programs and games, but this is my first attempt at a cartridge. I have spent the last month and a half trying to understand and to use the Terse development system. I'm not making excuses, I'm simply asking for some patience while I learn. I hope to do a lot of good work with the guidance of those wiser than I.

Respectfully summitted,

Brett Bilbrey