

It's the year 2085. Only a handful of people have survived the robot wars that rocked the Solar System. In a final desperate bid for survival a Tacheon propelled star cruiser has been developed on Earth to transport survivors to new star system. But the cruiser relies on rare Ionian crystals for its power: crystals which are only abundant on Jupiter's second moon Io. It is your mission to escort the men and their precious crystals safely from the surface of Io to the Dropzone where the landing pad is located.



**Ultra fast action**  
**Exploding volcanoes**  
**High resolution graphics**  
**Scrolling high speed scanning viewer**  
**Super smooth scrolling screen**  
**Nine different alien attackers**



## MISSION BRIEFING

It is the year 2085, and only a handful of the people have survived the devastating robot wars. In a final bid for human survival the peoples of the earth unite to develop the ultimate transportation, a Tacheon propelled star cruiser, capable of overcoming relativistic limitations in travelling to fresh new star systems.

The Tacheon drive relies on bombarding very rare Ionian crystals with quarks. But all the earth's resources of the crystals were used up developing a prototype and so a consignment of men is despatched to the hostile young planet of IO, Jupiter's 2nd inner most moon. It is here that the crystals are found in abundance scattered all over the surface. They are continually thrown up from the depths of the planet by the elemental forces of the three active volcanoes, first discovered way back in the 1980's.

Not long after building a moonbase in the flat bed of a large crater the first wave of aliens arrive from Jupiter to rid their moon of the human invaders.

It is your mission to protect the men and their crystals from the marauding aliens. You have been equipped with the latest pulse laser back pack system capable of carrying an extra man and becoming invisible and indestructible for short periods of time. You must safely escort each surviving man and his crystals back to the Dropzone where the landing pad of the moonbase is located. You must succeed, the future of mankind depends on you alone.

## HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS

Dropzone requires a COMMODORE 64 personal computer with a disk or cassette, and one original Atari style joystick plugged into control port 2 nearest to the power cord.

## GETTING STARTED

### DISK VERSION

To load the disk version, turn off all hardware and remove any cartridges from the computer. Turn on the disk drive and insert the game disk the correct side up. Then switch on the computer and type...

LOAD "D",8,1 (return)

The game will take about two minutes to load and run.

### CASSETTE VERSION

To load the cassette version, turn off all hardware and remove

any cartridges from the computer. Insert the rewound cassette into the player. Hold the shift key down then press the RUN/STOP key then release both keys and press play on the cassette unit.

When the computer finds the game press the commodore key. Load time is about 4 minutes.

## THE CONTROLS

### and Notes on Joystick Type

Dropzone is played with one joystick and to a lesser extent the keyboard. To master DROPZONE you must learn the feel of your back pack because you will have both INERTIA and GRAVITY affecting your movement just as in everyday life on earth. Your reactions to the screen, sound and the joystick position are vital to your prolonged survival.

The best type of joysticks to use are ones with a firm tactile feel to them such as the original Atari joysticks. Some of the large springy types are less manageable since they move too far and give little feel as to when the lever switches have made contact. If you use auto-fire joysticks you will not be able to fire precisely when needed and won't pick up any bonus points. You will also destroy all the men you are battling to protect!

### FIRING

One laser pulse is released for each up or down motion of the fire button. Its direction is usually the one in which you are facing but it is possible to fire backwards by quickly holding the joystick left or right at the instant of firing. This makes it possible to blast aliens in hot pursuit of you when trying to out run them.

### HORIZONTAL THRUST

To thrust you hold the joystick to the left or right. The longer you thrust for, the faster you become. To reverse or stop you thrust in the opposite direction.

### VERTICAL THRUST

To change your height above IO's surface you push the joystick forwards for up or backwards for down. Because of gravity you must continually adjust this to maintain your altitude. If you don't thrust you will eventually fall to the surface.

### STRATA BOMB RELEASE

One Strata bomb is detonated for each press of the SPACE bar. It destroys all aliens except Androids. Also if a spore is released occasionally a few trailers will remain.

## CLOAK ACTIVATION

Your indestructible cloaking device is turned on and off by pressing any key (other than the SPACE bar or the F1 key).

## PAUSING THE GAME

Pressing the F1 key will pause the game. To continue, press any key or move the joystick.

## STARTING THE GAME

When the title page or the Hall of Fame is being displayed the game is begun by pressing the joystick fire button.

## GAME OBJECT

Your mission is to protect the men on planet IO's surface from being destroyed by the invading aliens and to return them one by one to the Dropzone in which the moonbase landing pad is located.

## THE SCREEN DISPLAY

The main part of the screen shows the exact realtime side view of the zone over which you are cruising. Below you lies the time battered surface of IO with its deep crevasses, lava filled trenches, active volcanoes, the Ionian sea and ancient meteorite craters. In the far distance lie the twinkling stars of other planetary systems that await man's visitation. The lower part of the screen shows your instrumentation and status displays. These are man counts, current attack direction indicator, cloaking time remaining, spare lives, strata bombs, score and most importantly a high speed planet scanning viewer.

## INSTRUMENTS

**MAN COUNTS** - These show how many men are currently on the planet's surface and how many have actually been safely returned to the moonbase.

**ATTACK INDICATOR** - This is an arrow that is displayed the instant an android attack begins on one of the men still on the surface or the moonbase itself. It shows the direction and shortest route to the last attack detected.

**CLOAK STATUS** - Shows the amount of time left before the cloak generator runs out of power. A warning signal is sounded 3 seconds beforehand.

**SPARE LIVES** - This shows up to 3 of the remaining lives.

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**STRATA BOMBS** - This shows up to 3 of the remaining strata bombs.

**SCORE** - Your accumulative points score.

**SCANNER** - This is the most important information area. It shows what is happening elsewhere on the entire planets surface and covers six times the area shown on the main screen. Each member of the Dropzone cast has a distinct colour key and size. The landing pad is shown as a bright white cross in the surface detail.

## THE CAST OF CHARACTERS

### MEN

At the start of each attack wave the 'Men Out' count will show how many men are on the surface. They slowly move towards the moonbase in the Dropzone, each carrying Ionian crystals. Whenever the alien Planters lower an Android to destroy a man, he lets out a whistle for help that echoes around the atmosphere. You can rescue men by picking them up one at a time and dropping them off on to the elevated landing pad at the moonbase for bonus points.

### PLANTERS and ANDROIDS

Planters are the most common alien. They are machines piloted by Androids that drift across the surface rising up over volcanoes and the moonbase. They are always on the look out for the men. When you attack, the Android lowers itself to the surface to chase the man, leaving the Planter machine to become a Nemesite.

### NEMESITE

Once an Android machine has landed, the Planter machine becomes a Nemesite, a deadly homing missile set to crash into you at all costs. They evade your pulse laser fire until they are close enough for collision.

### ANTI MATTER

If all the men on IO are destroyed, the Planters and Androids fuse into gyrating Anti-Matter nodules which bounce towards you. IO suffers an earthquake and becomes unstable and the three volcanoes erupt lethal white hot magma lumps.

### SPORE

Spores are fairly harmless until triggered off. When this occurs they release four individual Trailers.

### TRAILERS

Trailers are released from Spores and can be very awkward to handle. Some will wiggle around in space, others will aim straight for you and follow you everywhere you go. They are

hard to destroy and need a direct hit on the heads of their bodies.

### BLUNDER STORMS

These storms are a silent but deadly environmental hazard of IO. They slowly float in the upper atmosphere over the planets surface sometimes raining molecular acid, or they will occasionally rumble and release an intense bolt of proton lightning.

### NMEYES (pronounced N-mie's)

If you have survived an attack wave for too long the aliens send in an Nmeye as their ultimate weapon. Nmeye's watch your every move and occasionally blink. Their motion is erratic, they can move faster than you at full speed, they continually launch bombs at you and successive Nmeye's become harder to destroy.

### VOLCANOES

Generally the three active volcanoes are harmless. They shoot small magma lumps out onto the surface. However, if all men are lost the planet's surface becomes unstable and the volcanoes erupt deadly white hot lumps.

### BOMBS

Planters, Nemesites, Anti-matter and Nmeyes can shoot small bright bombs at you. If you continue moving with the same velocity these will destroy you.

## OTHER FEATURES

You start with a consignment of eight men, 15 seconds of cloaking power, 3 lives and 3 strata bombs. You get 1 bonus life and strata bomb forever every 10,000 point mark that you reach, and 7 seconds extra cloak power for each wave. After one million points has been achieved no more bonus lives or strata bombs will be awarded. (But if you are that good you shouldn't need them!).

A wave is finished by destroying all planters, spores, trailers, blunder storms and landing all the men back at the moonbase. You receive a points bonus at the end of every attack wave for the number of rescued men multiplied by the wave number, up to a maximum of 500 points per man. You also get this for landing each man during the wave.

Every 5th wave a fresh consignment of men arrives. Prior to this round you will have to battle through a TRAILER INVASION wave.

The game has attack waves numbering 1 to 99. After 99 waves 95 to 99 are repeated. Each wave is entirely random in action

and warp-on entry.

If you lose a life whilst carrying a man he will be replaced on the surface.

If you save and land all eight men then no more android attacks will occur for the rest of that wave. BUT if you have saved less than eight men then every now and then one android will actually invade the moonbase by descending on to the landing pad and running into the moonbase.

## HALL OF FAME

If at the end of the mission life you have gained a sufficiently high score you will be asked to enter your initials in to the Dropzone Hall of Fame. This will be accompanied by a special dynamic colour sequence to signify that you are one of the top eight heroes to attempt a Dropzone mission. To select your initials push the joystick to the left or right, to enter the letter press the fire button. You are allowed 60 seconds in which to do this.

## MISSION RATING

Depending upon your performance you will be awarded one of 10 ranks. A beginner might not achieve the 10,000 mark and will not receive a rank. An average score might get you Moon Cadet status. But for the mission to be considered a total success you must achieve the rank of MEGASTAR. This is universally regarded as the ultimate galactic distinction possible and will be awarded to supreme warriors who fight off the aliens to score 1,000,000 points or more.

## STRATEGY

The method you adopt is best found by experiencing the way of life of IO and by mastering the co-ordination and reflexes required to control your back pack with a firm joystick.

For example, you might find that waiting to destroy Androids as they fall to the surface is the best way to build up a score. Or you might rescue all the men as quickly as you can. But remember, the Nmeye will be sent in to sort you out if you take too long. Also the strategy you adopt will partly depend on how far the men are from the moonbase at the start of each wave. This is different for every round except for the very first which is always fairly easy.

The newcomer to Dropzone will probably thrust too much, reducing reaction time to oncoming aliens. It is best to thrust

only occasionally and to clear up each area of activity as you find it.

Listen out for the whistles of help that echo around the planet. On hearing, them use the direction indicator and scanner to locate the trouble. If you have to race halfway across IO to protect a man then keep a watchful eye on the scanner as this will forewarn you of any oncoming aliens. Use your cloak if the attack zone is full of aliens firing bombs at you.

The moment a Nemesite enters the main viewing area it lets off a warning sound. They then zero in on you. To destroy them will take some practice at out circling them, then reversing and firing at exactly the point when they are level with you.

Use of the cloak will help you in many situations such as picking up a man just before he is about to be destroyed by the Android, or landing men whilst being blitzed by an Nmeye.

Trailers have a personality of their own. Once learnt, the Trailer Invasion waves can be quickly completed. The cloak is useful here as well.

Always keep an eye on Blunder Storms. Before they strike they rumble different colours for about a second giving you the chance to get out of the way. When moving fast, check that any oncoming storms are not raining so that you can use your cloak or pass over them.

If all the men die an earthquake occurs and Anti-Matter appears everywhere. Because the volcanoes are now dangerous it is best to stay in one region between two volcanoes and use your cloak if you have to pass over one. If you lose a life from colliding with a lump of magma, you will re-materialise over at the same space. So you must get out of the way quickly or else you will lose another life.

If you use too many strata bombs in quick succession the aliens will send in an Nmeye to retaliate.



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## SCORING

|                |           |                                               |       |
|----------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------|-------|
| Men            | - 100-500 | for rescuing during wave                      |       |
| Men            | - 100-500 | for each man surviving the wave               |       |
| Men            | - 0       | if destroyed                                  |       |
| Android        | - 50      | if shot whilst descending with Planter        |       |
| Android        | - 50      | if shot whilst chasing a man                  |       |
| Android        | - 500     | if shot when falling from a destroyed Planter |       |
| Planters       | - 250     | Spores                                        | - 750 |
| Nemesites      | - 150     | Trailers                                      | - 250 |
| Anti-matter    | - 150     | Nmeyes                                        | - 100 |
| Blunder Storms | - 250     | Loss of life                                  | - 10  |