

LAZER ZONE

By Jeff Minter

SCENARIO

It is a dark time for the Terran Federation. The evil Empire of Irata and its devilish Warfiends of Zzyzax have combined forces to attack Terran outposts throughout known space.

The attack consists of the vile Iratian Skullships and the extremely nasty Bugships of Zzyzax.

To counter this horrifying onslaught, the Terrans have constructed the Lazer Zones—upon which two computer controlled plasma cannons deal instant death to the swarming alien hordes with relentless accuracy.

"Fine" you say, "Let the computers destroy our enemies while we stay safe on Earth."

Unfortunately, you just happened to be on Lazer Zone 106-A when the computer failed.

Even worse, hordes of Iratian and Zzyzaxian ships have just materialized and are converging on your Zone.

So now you must manually co-ordinate two very powerful plasma cannons, each capable of destroying your enemies—or each other. You must make the two cannons weave a web of plasma impenetrable to the enemy.

Be warned. You won't find it easy. . . .

STARTING LAZER ZONE

1. Make sure the power to your Commodore 64 is turned off.
2. Insert the Lazer Zone cartridge into the expansion slot.
3. Then turn on the power.
4. Insert the joystick into the control port I.

To remove the cartridge, turn off the power to the computer and pull out the cartridge.

Pause—You may freeze the action by pressing SHIFT P. Press SHIFT P again to re-start.

Training Mode — Press T to begin a training session. Use of the training mode is essential to learn to shoot the two lasers. The training mode is identical to playing mode except that the aliens do not attack. Press SHIFT P to exit the training mode.

THE CONTROLS

The controls of Lazer Zone are quite complex, and must be mastered absolutely to play effectively.

PLASMA CANNON MOVEMENT

Moving the joystick up and down causes the vertically mounted cannon to move. Moving the joystick left and right causes the horizontally mounted cannon to move. Using the diagonals causes both cannons to move—unless you are firing—see below.

FIRING

Pressing the FIRE button unleashes plasma bolts toward your enemy. Each cannon can fire in two-bolt bursts.

DIAGONAL FIRE

Diagonal firing is the key to masterful Lazer Zone play. Holding down the FIRE button and pressing the joystick in a south-westerly direction causes the vertically mounted (or “AXIS”) cannon to fire diagonally, onto the track of the horizontal (or “BASE”) cannon. Similarly, pressing FIRE and pushing the joystick to the north-east causes the base cannon to fire diagonally towards the track of the axis cannon. Releasing the fire button releases any diagonally-firing cannon to normal mode.

The importance of this maneuver cannot be over-stressed. An enemy landing on the Base track will march towards the base cannon and can only be destroyed by an Electro bolt (see below) — or by a well aimed burst from the axis cannon. Similarly, aliens attacking the axis cannon can be destroyed by the base cannon. But be warned: a badly-aimed diagonal burst may destroy the cannon you aim to protect! Don't shoot yourself!

ELECTRO BOLTS

Your Lazer Zone is capable of discharging a limited number of Electro Bolts. Press the COMMODORE Logo key to fire bolts. These bolts destroy all aliens in your Zone. Use them sparingly — supplies are limited! Your store of Electro Bolts is displayed on the right of the screen.

ATTACK WAVES

Attacks come in waves of a specific number of alien ships. Keep an eye on your THRESHOLD gauge. When it hits zero, the attack wave is over. At the end of a wave, you receive bonus points — and if you have fewer than 3 Electro Bolts, an extra Electro — before beginning the next wave. Different types of aliens appear in the attack waves:

- Waves 1-2: Skulls and Bugs
- 3-4: Humanoids and Rabbitrons
- 5-6: Cosmic Cats and Electrocuted Spiders
- 7-8: Manic Mice and Viroids

IRATIAN DEATH SATELLITE

This can appear after the first Zone is cleared. It drifts randomly and unleashes lethal energy bolts towards both bases. It possesses Neutronium deflector shields. Fire repeatedly at it and eventually the Neutronium will destabilize — you will see it change color as it does.

SCORING

Points are awarded as follows:

Skullship or Bugship	100-800 points
Humanoids and Rabbitrons	100-800 points
Cosmic Cats and Electrocuted Spiders	100-800 points
Manic Mice and Viroids	100-800 points
Iratian Death Satellite	1,000 points
Clearing a wave	Bonus + 1 extra Electro

The highest score to date is displayed at top right.

GAME PLAY OPTIONS

There are four game play options.

1. **SOLO/COMPETITIVE.** Use the P1 key to select COMPETITIVE for competition between two players or teams. Player 1 controls Primary Zone, Player 2 controls Secondary Zone, taking alternate turns.
2. **INDIVIDUAL/TEAM.** In individual play, each player controls both cannons. In team games, two players can operate a single Zone. Two joysticks are required for team play. The front joystick controls the base cannon and the rear joystick controls the axis cannon. Use the F3 key to select individual or co-operative.
3. **LEVEL.** There are 20 levels. The first 9 are selectable using the F5 key.
4. **JOYSTICKS.** Set to 1 if you only have a single joystick and want to have competitive play. Pass the joystick back and forth between plays. If set to 2, each player can have their own joystick.

PLAY HINTS

1. Learn diagonal fire! It is your key to success.
2. Use ELECTRO sparingly. Use it if you can see it will push you over Threshold — you'll get a new Electro at the end of the wave.
3. Blast 'em when you see 'em. If you let them land, you'll need fancy shooting, or an Electro, to get out of trouble.
4. The Iratian Death Satellite fires on alternate sides. Attack the side that has not recently fired. Keep at it for a useful 1,000 points.
5. Don't panic, and have fun!
6. Current high score is 101,000 points.

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