

FIRETRACK

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THE STORY *(essential briefing for potential pilots)*

At the start of this (22nd) century, the 'Pirate Industrials' funded and built the Asteroid Belt colonies, only then to break away from Earth. Negotiations collapsed, and the 'Pirate Wars' began – Earth's attacks on the colonies' central trading route still continue. This is the FireTrack, spanning the eight mining worlds, separated by CommSpaces, areas of space filled with discarded communication hardware – space junk.

In principle, each world is based on one of four designs – 'Baseworld', 'Dustworld', 'Iceworld' and 'Mallworld' – although there is some variation within each of these design types.

Worlds are individually driven by nuclear power plants, disguised as 'eyes' within the 'Devil Rock' at the end of each colony. Destroying these plants throws the settlement into darkness: you must then re-attack in the blackout to prevent the machine-building mechanisms reconstructing everything.

Variable defence levels have been observed throughout the worlds including two instances of total abandonment – you need only fly over abandoned worlds once to wipe them out.

A routine mission? We're afraid not. Military reports indicate a 'White Light' opening out somewhere within the FireTrack. It's vital that we find it before the pirates harness its astronomical power – it could be developed into a colossal dangerous weapon. You are one of the few security-cleared ex-military personnel open for FireTrack pilot selection. With your experience – and a specially modified HatchFighter – we believe that you can find the White Light. Flying the FireTrack has always been difficult enough – it may well be that Earth itself is now at stake.

THE GAME *(more essential reading)*

You start each mission with a team of three HatchFighters. Fly across the colonies knocking out the power nodes – (+), power junctions – (x), and computer centres – (?). Finally destroy the Devils Rock's eyes to claim your bonus. This starts at 50 creds, adding 50 more for each (+) that you hit, and doubling it for each (x). These are added up in the order they were hit in.

(?)s are the computer centres. Earth Council will allocate you an extra team member if you can destroy at least ten of these. Escape from CommSpace, and they will again award you an extra HatchFighter; if you only have one team-member remaining, this will restore your team-size to three.

Of the eight worlds in the FireTrack, it is possible to access the first three directly – see game options below. The remaining worlds can only be reached by escaping from Shail. Once a section is mastered (that is, you finish it with at least three team-members intact), your computer will skip to just beyond there on the next mission, retaining your team and all your creds, unless you re-enter the FireTrack at one of the early worlds by pressing the relevant key as indicated in the options chart below.

LOADING INSTRUCTIONS

Commodore 64 Cassette: Press SHIFT and RUN STOP keys simultaneously and press PLAY on your cassette recorder.

Commodore 64 Disk: Type LOAD "★", 8, 1 and then press RETURN.

BBC Micro Cassette: Type CHAIN " " and then RETURN; then press PLAY on your cassette recorder.

BBC Micro Disk: Holding SHIFT down, press BREAK.

All machines: while loading, pressing Q turns the loading music off, S turns it back on.

All programs will RUN automatically after LOADING is complete.

In case of LOADING difficulties please refer to the chapter on LOADING and SAVING programs in your computer's user manual.

GAME CONTROLS

(The game works just as well on the BC Micro B+ and Master series computers as on the BBC Micro)

Joysticks	Left	Right	Up	Down	Fast Fire
BBC Micro			*	?	
Keyboard 1	Z	X	:	/	RETURN
Keyboard 2	CAPS LOCK	CTRL	{	*	(UP CURSOR)
			}	:	
CBM64]	?	RETURN
Keyboard 1	Z	X	:	/	
Keyboard 2	A	E	*]	

Press (fire) to start; SPACE starts game using the last used controls. (BBC Micro default controls: Keyboard 1. CBM64 default controls: Joystick in port 2. CBM FIRETRACK only recognises Joysticks in port 2.)

GAME OPTIONS

Option	Freeze	No Sound	Music Only	Stx only	All sound
BBC	£0	£1	£2	£3	£4
CBM	←	1	2	3	4
Option	B & W	World 1	World 2	World 3	Abandon Mission
BBC	£5	£6	£7	£8	ESCAPE
CBM	5	6	7	8	RUN STOP

To unfreeze press SPACE; To flip between black and white and colour, hold the B & W key down as you start playing.

Game instructions: "Fly over worlds destroying – shoot +, x; but kill devil rock eyes to claim bonus!

? shield computer centre, 10 give plus ship ... Escape from Satellite-space restores life! Overall, caution with killing gets highest score – hope for your best game luck ever ..."

PLAYING TIPS

While gaining experience, do not try to shoot at everything in sight. Hold back to give yourself room to move and fire and concentrate more on shooting at defences you need to shoot at in order to escape. Later on, more complex techniques will be needed to tackle the semi-chaos and chaos worlds. As you gain in confidence, try starting on worlds 2 or 3 (Delan or Shail). Holding the fire key down fast-fires: you won't really need this until later, but you can use it anyway. On empty worlds, stay towards the top of the screen and concentrate on hitting the (+) and (x) formations.