



An arena-based shoot 'em up for the C64, developed for the RGCD Cartridge Competition 2019

Important Operating Note

Death Weapon utilises stroboscopic effects during play and a couple of techniques to generate colours which aren't part of the regular C64 palette; these involve either switching between two colours at fifty frames per second or sprite objects only being visible on every second frame.

Although this effect is relatively subtle, the developers would ask that sufferers of photosensitive epilepsy take appropriate precautions before playing this game.

The Epic Space Opera Continues

Having lost their first battle on the journey to Earth at **Stercore 64**, the Repugnant Swarm went eerily quiet, dropping off the radar screens of the entire Galactic Federation and staying well within their own territories. The powers that be made the assumption that the Swarm had given up and, for a few years at least, that seemed to be the case. Fast forward to the space year 2307 however and things aren't looking quite so rosy when long range scanning posts across the galaxy light up like overly enthusiastic Christmas trees as they detect the huge levels of energy required for hundreds or perhaps even thousands of long distance translation jumps radiating from the Swarm's quadrant.

The Galactic Federation throw their most powerful artificial intelligences at the task of working out the likeliest exit point for these jumps, finding it to be worryingly close to an Earth colony on KOI-087.01 - humanity had long ago decided that, if a planet had an Earth-like atmosphere, it belonged to them if they stuck a flag into it and nobody else had argued because they hadn't been particularly worried about these worlds to begin with - so precautions were set in motion and this is where you come into play.

You've signed up as pilot for the **Death Weapon** project, at the heart of which is an agile and robust fighter craft that can hopefully serve you well in the epic space battle that's about to begin. Your own translation jump has fortunately taken far less time to execute since it involved moving just the one craft and you find yourself re-emerging into real space above one of the sections of Earth Station 544D52 where the AIs are confidently predicting that the Galactic Swarm's forces will soon

materialise; in fact you barely get a chance to fire up the weaponry and give everything a quick test fire before the co-ordinates prove to be totally accurate, this being confirmed by a warning siren over your headphones which signals the first arrival...

The Game In More Detail

Death Weapon is an arena-style shoot 'em up for C64 which can be played with a joystick plugged into port 2. The player controls the titular craft and the objective is to blow up anything hostile; the controls are a little more complex than usual, merely moving the joystick causes the **Death Weapon** to react accordingly but it will also fire bullets in the opposite direction to the one it's travelling in. To fire in the direction of motion the player will need to hold the fire button down whilst moving.

Repugnant Swarm craft will materialise one at a time and need to be destroyed in order to defend ES 544D52 and score points; when they initially appear these craft aren't entirely corporeal - they won't move and give off an uncanny light - so the **Death Weapon** can't collide with them, but it's bullets certainly can and, along with helping to manage the current enemies on a stage, blasting a half materialised enemy earns some extra score.

The mission can be paused with the Run/Stop key on your C64's keyboard and resumed by pressing the joystick's fire button. Moving the joystick up and down on the titles page will turn the in-game music on and off, with left and right enabling or disabling the sound effects.

Credit Where Credit Is Due

The original inspiration for **Death Weapon** was the game **Death Dealer** which was developed in the late 1980s by Jeff J Gosden (and exists in a second form as **The Perfect Weapon**) but with a few inspirations borrowed from the **Hallucin-O-Bomblets** sub game from **Batalyx** by Jeff Minter and Andrew Braybrook's **Intensity**, which were released in 1985 and 1988 respectively.

The programming, graphics, "music", general data wrangling, manual writing and hot beverage making were by Jason. The source code for **Death Weapon** is available from the C64CD Github account along with some of the work files.

Source code for this game was edited using **Crimson Editor** and assembled with the **ACME** cross assembler. File compression for the final build was dealt with by **Exomizer**.

The character set, tiles and map data were created with **Char Pad 2** and sprite designs were edited using a combination of **ProMotion 6.5** and **Sprite Pad**.

Death Weapon's music was originally "composed" automagically by a Python script called **Autotracker**, with the results picked apart in **OpenMPT** before whatever survived that process then being manually shovelled into **Goattracker**.

The Extraneous And Patently Ridiculous Legal Disclaimer

This program and its associated source code are provided "as is" with no warranties from the developer, implied or otherwise so, if it actually runs, please consider that a "bonus". Playing **Death Weapon** for extended periods of time can cause bleeding from the ears, temporary or more likely permanent blindness, simultaneous projectile vomiting and diarrhoea or a constant pain in all the diodes down the player's left hand side.

The physical media is not fit for any purpose including loading the game, please do not insert into any bodily orifice. No animals were harmed during the making of this video game, although a cat was startled on a couple of occasions due to some particularly vitriolic swearing from the programmer whilst chasing bugs. **Death Weapon** is completely biodegradable as long as it hasn't previously been stored on physical media (see previous warning) and is at least partially compatible with the C64DTV2, C64GS and TheC64 Mini. Perhaps?