
In the name of Kane!

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So last week I picked up C&C3. This isn't because I got tired of Supreme Commander as much as the fan-boy inside of me demanded it. I did have the e-mail address of "nodboy@hotmail.com" (it's suspended - don't try e-mailing it) for a while after all. I'm done with the Nod campaign, and are about 40% through GDI I think. Once I finish off GDI I'll move on to the alien Scrin and give them a go. My plan at that point is to try some skirmishes and then make a call as to which game I'd rather play online: C&C3 or Sup Comm.

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I want to finish the campaigns and play some skirmishes before I say for sure, but so far C&C3 seems on par with Supreme Commander and whether you'd like one more than the other is based off preference. C&C3 has Sup Comm beat in story presentation and length, but Sup Comm definitely has it beat in unit individual unit AI and depth of game play. You know those times where you have to baby sit your units to tell them NOT to attack something until you want them to? This is not a problem I have with Supreme Commander, and yet it's very much an issue in C&C3. More on comparisons another time though for now I'll just discuss C&C3.

For those of you not familiar with the C&C universe, there are actually three different universes to Command and Conquer games. The "Command & Conquer" games are most commonly referred to as the "Tiberium Series," after the strange green crystal you collect for a resource. The games chronicle the wars between the Global Defense Initiative (GDI) and the Brotherhood of Nod (NOD) over the alien crystal and control of the Earth. Those games so far have been "Command and Conquer: Tiberian Dawn" (which most people only know as Command and Conquer), "Command and Conquer: Tiberian Sun," and now "Command & Conquer 3: Tiberian Wars."

Two spin off series exist: "Command & Conquer: Red Alert" and "Command & Conquer: Generals." Red Alert is a real-world-alternate-reality setting where Einstein goes back in time to kill Hitler before WW2 starts, resulting in the Soviets rising to power instead. It had been suggested that Red Alert was a prequel to C&C:Tiberian Dawn (especially when Kane shows up at the end of the Soviet campaign), but Red Alert 2 more or less shoots that theory down since it took place in the late 90s and there was no Tiberium on Earth. Command & Conquer:Generals was a complete off shoot game that envisioned another alternative reality based off the current "war on terror" where the USA and China struggles with each other and a incredibly organized Arab terrorist nation called the Global Liberation Army (or GLA).

While I tend to favor USA in C&C:Generals, I find I like GDI and Nod about the same in the Tiberium games. I think NOD is more fun than GDI more or less just because they have Kane and Kane is pretty much the coolest RTS hero/villain ever (either Kerrigan or Fenix is like a close second). However, GDI is more in line with me personality wise and tactically. Still, it is "tradition" at this point to at

least attempt, if not beat, the NOD campaign first. This was what I did in each Tiberium game previous, so I saw no need to change that tradition, even if the game tries to tell me to beat the GDI game first.

The campaign seems to take a similar approach Supreme Commander does – there is one story, and choosing your faction only alters from whose side the story it told and (I imagine) who wins in the end. At this point, I've only finished NOD, but I can't imagine that the GDI game would let NOD win the last mission and call it a campaign victory. I guess I'll just have to wait and see. Of course, I am also looking forward to unlocking the Scrin campaign once I have finished the GDI campaign.

GDI and NOD feel like a combination of their C&C:Tiberian Dawn selves with bits and pieces of C&C:Generals thrown in. Gone are almost all the units that made Tiberian Sun unique, like burrowing APCs, Devil's Tongue burrowing Flame tanks, hover MRLSes and most of the walker units. Instead we get units that are a throwback to their original C&C:Tiberian Dawn days like the Mammoth Tank or a normal Flame Tank. Many of the new units in the game, like the Nod Venom and Nod Fanatics, mimic a unit from C&C: Generals (in those cases, the USA Apache and the GLA Terrorist).

The Scrin are interesting.

At this point I am not playing as them until I unlock their campaign so that the accomplishment has more weight.

However, I've fought a number of battles against them, more than once Kane has charged me with stealing their technology so I've used a few of their units. I don't fully get how they work

yet, but they are an interesting and refreshing development for a C&C faction. They make good enemies: they

are mysterious and powerful and completely different looking than anything you have fought by the time they show up in the campaign. However they also function enough like GDI and NOD that they fit in the game's mechanics.

In fact, they have come to earth to take its Tiberium, so they even have reason to harvest the same resources. Generally

speaking, their infantry and vehicles don't seem as nice as GDI or NODs, but their ability to dominate with aircraft looks to be pretty good when executed

right. They have a lot of powerful aircraft that don't need to return to the airbase to reload (and by a lot I mean two, which is more than anyone else). And even if not, an army of Annihilator

Tripods (their "Mammoth") seem able to do more than enough damage to pretty much anything they come across except air units. Good thing Orcas and Nod Avatars with an extra beam cannon make short work of them.

Overall C&C3 is quite enjoyable. I am noticing a frothing demand to keep playing the campaign even after finishing a chain of missions. I have every intention of coming back with a more final review and a more-complete Supreme Commander comparison once I finish the game. Until then, I hear my EVA console warning me NOD is on the move again – time to fire up the Ion Cannon.

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Edit: Cleared something up - GDI doesn't get Nod Venoms. Bad typo bad!