BATTLEZONE
MAGAZINE

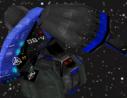## IN THIS ISSUE

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BZ
1.3

Interveiw with Nathan "GSH" Mates

by Jonathan "Lucky Foot" Snyder

In this issue of Battlezone Magazine we get to sit down the Programmer Nathan Mates as he tells us of his adventures in programming and the 1.3 patch.

1. **So, what got you interested in making computer games?**

Generally, a sense of looking at something, and saying "I can do that." When I was pretty young, my parents bought me a bunch of Legos -- starting with Lego Technic kit #950, the forklift, according to Google. (I was also at least 5-6 years "too young" for the set, which pleased me.) A whole bunch more time was spent with more sets. Not too much time later, I got into computers -- by second grade, I was spending recess holed up in the classroom with an Apple][+ instead of doing anything physical. When I was in third grade, my parents enrolled me in a weekend course at a local university that taught LOGO and Basic. The next year, I was staying after school to play in the computer lab. By 6th grade, we had an Apple //e at home, which managed to get located in my room. I played a bunch of games, and did some pro-gramming as well.

2. **What is your favorite part about them (besides playing them)?**

I'd say the ability to go into a store, see what I've worked on, and say "I worked on that." There's a sense that your hard work has paid off, and others are enjoying it.

3. **What was the first game project you ever worked on?**

I'd done some smaller projects before, but the first one I was fairly serious about was aa clone of Minehunter from the Hewlett-Packard HP48SX calculator. That game is a bit like the ubiquitous Minesweeper on Windows, but needed to be played with the arrow keys, no mouse. My family had an Ap-ple IIgs at home, so I programmed in something quite similar, but allowed the mouse. I also programmed in the tricks I'd used for finding where the mines were, so that a lot of the time, the computer could solve the whole map for you. I did that one in High School, then some Tetris variants, etc.

4. **When Battlezone II came around, what were your thoughts about the game?**

"It's a job." But, I seem to have ended up with a bit of a ca-reer doing it. Right after college, I ended up with a job at Adrenalin Entertainment, and worked on two bowling videogames. Those were some of the first to feature realistic physics, and were pretty fun to work on. But, the company was shrinking a bit, so it seemed like I'd be put on bowling title #3. I didn't want to be typecast as being only able to do that, so I interviewed with a bunch of companies. One of them was Pandemic, which had just split off from Ac-tivision. During the interview, I'd mentioned I'd never played BZ1, to which the reaction was pretty much "stab a dagger in my heart." I accepted the job offer from Pandemic, and got a copy of BZ1 for free.

5. **What did you think of BZ1 when you got to play it?**

I got thru a few of the SP missions, but didn't continue it much beyond that. I have to say that's fairly normal for me-- I'd guess that I've properly finished maybe 5-10% of the games I've bought, out of the few hundred that I currently own. (There's at least that **percentage** of games bought and never played, even once. My interests exceed my free time)

6. **What parts of Battlezone II did you program?**

For the BZ2 1.0, I did the low-level network code for sending packets back and forth, plus all the UI for the networking -- all the screens after you hit 'Multi'. There was also a lot of time spent debugging and making the rest of the game code work in lockstep. BZ1 allowed individual machines to do what they want, but BZ2 doesn't allow that. So, I had to fix up BZ1 code, and as one of the few programmers with multiple machines on my desk, I also had to clean up code added/changed during BZ2's de-velopment. The deathmatch and strategy DLLs were my code as well. At some point during development, vehicles were important, so I made the bomber and APC do the right things.

Since v1.0, I've gotten my fingers into a whole lot more parts of the source code. Look over the changelogs for 1.3 -- I've tweaked networking, DLLs, the audio system, AI, and a whole lot more. By my count, I'm up to about 2000 items I've noted in the changelog. I'm definitely not the type to specialize in one small area of code; I'm much more of the jack of all trades. About the only areas that I'm not too comfortable in are 3D graphics and physics. Basically, my "I can do that" sense has never kicked in.

7. **What part of Battlezone II do you like the most?**

From the gameplay side, probably say the depth of the tech tree for things. There's lots of different ways to go about things, so you can be a bit more creative. On the code side, I think years of experience with it give me a lot of familiarity -- it took me about two years to really be able to poke around the codebase, but I think I've mostly mastered that.

8. **In the interveiw with Ken, he said that you were the one that discovered the certain set of characters that crashed multiplayer games. How did you find this? Was it a lucky string of characters that you happened to enter in?**

I think Ken might overstate things somewhat. I don't think I discovered it at all. I might have used part of that sequence at times, and seen some oddities. It eventually became public

knowledge, and fixing it became important.

9. What made you consider opening up the unofficial 1.3 for suggestions and features?

Well, if it tickles my "I can do that" sense, I'm inclined to do something. There's been a bunch of things that have been proposed, and I'm like "that's way too much work" and ignore it. Years later, as I'm more familiar with that area of the code, I see how to make it do that, and I'll add it. Other times, I see hardwired constants in the code, and I'll turn them into ODF options.

10. What is your favorite thing about 1.3?

Probably that it's had a lot more time for cleanup, moddability, optization, and the like. At the end of BZ2's development cycle,everyone involved would have loved to have another 6 months of development time to get the game closer to what we wanted it to be.

Ken and I have been able to spend some of our spare time to add in a lot of features and polish that it's needed. We've also worked a lot with modders to give them a lot of features that make it possible to do a lot of things that just weren't possible in earlier builds.

11. On the forums you here the question "Why don't they make Battlezone III". As a Programmer who works for Pandemic, Why do you think that they probably will never make one?

In a nutshell, (1) name licensing issues, and (2) lack of sales. The name 'Battlezone' is owned by Atari, as they did the original arcade tank shooting game in the early 80s. Activision had to license the name 'Battlezone' from Atari in order to use it on the two titles they published. Their licensing agreement was only for two titles -- during BZ2's development, we knew that any sequel/followon couldn't use the 'Battlezone' name. Thus, the subtitle of 'Combat Commander' was attached. Had there been a followup, Combat Commander would have been a significant part of the title, to try and get people to associate that followup with BZ2. It definitely wouldn't have been called Battlezone 3, unless a fair chunk more money was sent Atari's way.

Since BZ2's development, Atari's been acquired and sold off to companies including Hasbro, Infogrames, and the like. They have no connection to the Battlezone games developed the late 90s. They developed a Playstation Portable (PSP) title named Battlezone, with gameplay much closer to the original 80s title. That's fully within their rights.

Even if the name 'Battlezone 3' had been acquired, or sidestepped by making 'Combat Commander II', the bigger problem was the lack of sales. We were released at an inopportune time -- December 28th, 1999 in the US, when consumer's attentions were elsewhere. Marketing had more or less dried up months before. Yes, stability at release was fairly poor as well, and BZ2 demands a whole lot more system than most people had at the time. And, the reaction by the public wasn't great. A lot of people who had played Battlezone 1, and were expecting exactly more of the same, with larger assets, turned against the game. We saw letters written to the

editors of gaming magazines, dissing BZ2; an unofficial online campaign attacking the game was also seen on forums and the like. All of these factors helped make sure the title died a quick death at retail.

All of the FPS+RTS titles that came out in the late 90s -- BZ1 & 2, 3DO's Uprising 1 & 2, and Microsoft's Urban Assault -- turned out to not sell all that well. (I don't have exact sales numbers for any of these five titles, but BZ1 might have had the highest sales of the lot, because it was bundled with a lot of graphics cards, which counts as a sale to the industry.) When a genre doesn't catch on with the buying public, after that many attempts, it's not going to get funded by game publishers. Game developent's only getting larger and more expensive over time -- the title I'm working on now (Mercenaries 2) has roughly 5-6 times the programmers, artists & desgners that BZ2 did. If the budget is going to get larger, the potential reward has to also increase.

Eventually, I suspect this FPS+RTS genre may get some more entrants, though probably done as a MOD, like Natural Selection did. If anyone does consider doing such a game, I'd think that they'd go for any name other than 'BZ3'. There's just too much baggage, expectations, and emotional investment in the BZ name that it'd be harder to live up to.

12. Though Battlezone II never did well on the market and I've played many older games plus newer ones, but I have never seen a community as tenacious as the BZ1 and BZ2ers. Why do you think it's that way for this game?

Probably because there haven't been the sequel(s?) that they'd like. Despite things not being a huge success at retail, there's a definite, but smaller, portion of the population that likes the FPS+RTS genre. Their options are somewhat limited. So, they stick with what they know and love. As I said above, this tenaciousness can really backfire and hurt things -- if the BZ1 fans hadn't bashed BZ2 for so long, then there might have been more people exposed to BZ2. I see this with different BZ2 versions -- there's an extreme amount of anger directed at anything that changes. That's the worst kind of conservatism: sticking with the past, and not being willing to enjoy (or let anyone else try to enjoy) the present. I don't mind it if you don't like the canges made for BZ1 -> BZ2, or BZ2 1.0 -> 1.3, but please let others make up their minds.

13. Any last words or anything you would like to say?

Just to clarify some things, BZ2 is going to be perpetually in beta. Activision refused to bless the 1.2 patch with a 'non-beta' status; you can see that when you run the 1.2 patch installer. As the publisher, only they can give it that status -- despite their localization & Quality Assurance teams being involved with 1.2. So, unless you're one of the extreme diehards who sticks with 1.1, you're running "beta" software. This isn't necessarily bad -- Google seems to have most of its stuff in that category too. 1.3 is going to be in the same boat -- if Activision didn't want to label things that way back then, why would they now. Don't be afraid of the 'beta' label; I think 1.3 is the best BZ2 version yet.✪

MOD UPDATE

Battlezone Classic
By Avatar

More tweaks and fixings have been worked on. The release of Battlezone Classic is presently relying on things only available in the 1.3pb4 and will not be released until pb4 becomes available to the general public.

BZR
By Roadkill

Battlezone: Reloaded is a brand new mod by Roadkill that is in the middle of development, but has hit a stumbling block with programming. Python has been more trouble then originally anticipated. He also has models to the point to getting skinned and if anyone wishes to help can contact him at:

shotgunsymphony@bistring.com

Hidden Enemies
By JonathanS

Hidden enemies has gone through a complete conversion from 1.3pb3 to the private beta thanks to the help of Nielk1. At present it is trying to release a 0.5 release of there own private beta to the HE testers.

http://www.bz2md.com/smf/index.php?board=47.0

Rise of Jenova
By Raven

Suffering a catastrophic hardware failure, all but two models of the mod have been lost. Raven has expressed no desire to try again from scratch and the mod itself has been official scrubbed.

http://www.ravenmod.com/

Cerberi Revenge
By JonathanS

Cerberi Revenge ran in to a couple very tough walls while trying to get ready to release there own 1.1 patch. The creator found out that they must make major operations to the Cerberi ODFs to make them work for the player and also develop a huge set of AIPs so all races can fight each other. A daunting task. The creator doesn't know when to release it.

STEEVEEO'S RECYLER VARIANT
By Steeveeo

Steeveeo has released a brand new 2.0 version of his Recycler variant to the public.

Jumping to Conclusions

By NR Nookie

I was the happiest guy you've ever seen. Four years of training under the NSDF base on the moon and now I was finally gonna be stationed at a real base. It was on the moon known as Titan. I heard of this place before, I know I dislike the moon but it was controlled by two of the biggest guns in the NSDF-Europe alliance. DSC & NR. I knew I was gonna have to prove myself here. But it seems the boys at NSDF Earth finally recognized my skills. Heck, you don't study text book maneuvers two hours a day, rank top in your class, and get trained to hit a dime from a mile away for nothing. But I also knew that my friend from the academy, DSC Loud pulled a few strings to get me here. I was now known as NR Nookie. Lethal sniper of the Nether Region Forces.

"Welcome man" said DSC-Carebear, "I heard a lot about you from my wingman loud."

"Yea I replied, good to meet ya." I replied. " This place is really amazing huh?"

I asked, "yea it is quite a place, I'm sure you will like it here."

He replied. "C'mon Nook ill introduce ya to the rest of DSC and your new Squad, NR"

"Okay," I said. "lets go mingle"

About after two hours of meeting all the DSC boys I knew I was gonna love it here. But I was still yet to see my NR Clanmates.

"Oh, NR went on a tactical excerise on the other side of the moon bro, they should be back in about 4 hours,"Informed DSC-Midas.

So I then went to my bunker and went to sleep. I knew I was gonna have a lot more welcomes and hand shakings when I woke up. So I decided to rest a bit. About an hour later I started hearing noises, weird ones. I got up to go check it out. I couldn?t tell from where in the hell it was coming from. But I heard a big BOOMM-MMM so I went to check it out downstairs. The door was locked but I could hear people talking inside. I went around outside to look in the window. What I saw horri-fied me. NR & DSC all in the basement tied up and bound to chairs. Being guarded by the Evil SOA mem-bers. I had disliked SOA since the day I 1st met SOA-Cactus jack back at the academy. Him and his SOA pals have been competing with NR and DSC ever since Grade the 1st years at the Academy on the moon. They were all on the same side, but SOA and DSC have never liked each other. And now that some of the few

DSC broke off and made there own clan NR, and since NR and DSC are close allies. NR got caught up in the feud to.

Anyway back to the story, it looked like SOA had finally lost it. Unless it was a prank. But u don't bound men up and guard them with machine guns for a prank. I knew SOA had become stray dogs. And it was up to me to save my new found brothers. I ran to the armory pulled out 2 Mac-10's and my favorite Gun. The AR15 Sniper Rifle. With armor piercing rounds and laser sight. It was the most accurate, the most lethal, and the most EXPENSIVE gun on the Black market. I knew I couldn't pull a John Mclane Die hard flick move. So I decided just to take the 1st 3 SOA I saw out with my snipes and waste the rest with the Mac 10s.

All I had were the guns and my good humor so I was gonna make the best of it.
I began to work, I shot my 1st round, it nailed SOA-Benny right in the eyes. 2nd shot hit SOA-Memphis in the heart. 3rd shot Missed SOA-Killer Clown by an inch. DAMNIT. I quickly pulled out a Mac 10 in each arm and shot like a mad man. Nailing SOA left and right. They were dead. All of them. Except one, SOA-cactus jack stood in horror. "Why did you kill all of my clan mates! It was a training exercise!"

All I did was stand there. I couldn't move. I fainted.

When I woke up I found myself in a jail cell. I was unconscious all through the trial and my bond. I just heard I was court marshaled and sentenced for life in prison for the murder of 16 innocent men. I finally got my big chance and I blew it. I killed innocent men. I was so ashamed. I was just glad my clan mates knew what I was thinking. Now I had a long, long time to think about jumping to conclusions.

Name: Krul
Race: Cerberi Collective
Mod: Forgotten Enemies
BZPatch: 1.2

About:

One of the first ships encountered by the EDF, the Cerberi are a mechanized machine that was believed to be created by the Hadean Crown. The Krul is a heavy tank with a energy spray style weapon reminiscent of the Scion mauler. It also is shielded with a kinetic style shielding making it virtually impervious to light weapons.

Jumping to Conclusions *by NR Nookie*
Powers Best Let Alone *by Lone Wolf*

OVERMINDDL1 CORNER

A brand new version and release for the public is the BZ2 Mesh Veiwer. Modders are able to open and look at the .msh that the Battlezone II engine creates for assets.

For more information visit:

http://www.overminddl1.com/forum/index.php/topic,465.0.html

NOTE: You cannot edit or convert these in to other formats. It's a veiwer.

Battlezone Jokes

"Green side up ..."

A NSA Captain went home on leave and while there decided to have his home repainted. He calls around and finds this handyman company and hires them. The next day the contractor boss and the officer meet and begin going over the work.

NSA Captain "Okay, this first room I want the walls painted a dark blue and the ceiling a light blue , think you can handle that?" he asks.

"Not a problem " he replys then turns, opens a window and yells "Green Side Up!"

The next day the Captain comes home and to his delight the room is just as he had asked for.

NSA Captain "Okay this next room I want the walls painted a burnt dark red and the ceiling a light red , think you can handle that ? "

"Not a problem " he replys then turns, opens a window and yells "Green Side Up!"

The next day the Captain comes home and to his delight the room is just as he had asked for again

NSA Captain " ok this last room I want the walls painted a dark brown and the ceiling a light brown , think you can handle that ? "

"Not a problem " he replys then turns, opens a window and yells "Green Side Up!"

This time the Captain turns and asks the Contractor,"Hey man, I'm not one to get in anyones business but why after each time I changed colors of paint you still yell out Green side up? "

The Contractor smiles and sheepishly replys " I just hired a bunch of unemployed BZ2 pilots and have them out back laying grass ! "

Found at http://www.battlezoneclub.org/forum

Letter From the Editor

Well, this issue took a lot longer then I originally anticipated, but it's a good thing and a bad thing at the same time. I haven't really made a major announcement about it on the forums since I've been saving it for this issue so that everybody who reads this issue will know upfront.

In September I'm heading to ITT Technical Institute to become a Software Application Programmer and the past month (since December really) i've been pre-occupied with finding a place to stay in the city where it's located, getting mentally prepared to leave my family (since I've been living at home all my life) and all the other things that come along with getting ready to go to college.

I don't plan to give up on this magazine, I just wanted you all to know the reason that I've been slow in getting it out and why that this may become a norm. I don't plan to give up on it. I'll need something to ease my mind after studying all those crazy things that programmers have to learn. (I've seen a conversation with OvermindDL1 that explains ways you can program things and it was so cryptic and complicated that I almost wet myself. <grin>

So, without further adieu, I shall get on to more BZ related information. As you have noticed two types of downloads have been made available. The standard .pdf as always, but also a .zip version.

In the .zip version is the inclusion of maps, skins, and other BZ-mag related stuff. My goal is to make sure something is included for everybody from all sides of the BZ universe. It's almost like those goodie bags you can get from the stores where you don't know what's inside them.

Example for this addition is a set of BZ-Mag skins for the ISDF and Scions, A new Strat map for 1.2 & 1.3, and a BZmag Skins for BZ1 altering the NSDF. As I did not have much time putting this together, there isn't a variety, but look for the next issue.

Now enjoy your issue including the interveiw with BZ programmer and 1.3 developer-Nathan Mates!

Until issue five,

Jonathan Snyder
Battlezone Magazine Editor

THE ADVENTURES OF GRIZZLY 1

By Ben Bradley

Want to Submit your Comic/art?

The just send your idea and sample comic to Morg223@jtworld.net and we'll go over your work to see if we will include it. :) All forms and styles of drawing accepted!

Word Search Answers

Powers Best Let Alone

by Lone Wolf

The war is over. The Furies are gone, long gone, thank God. However, without the common enemy to hold us together, we humans are breaking apart. Old tensions and rivalries have, once again, sprung up between the old USSR nations and the United States of America. Guards have been doubled. Security is now an even larger issue. Missiles are being readied on both sides. Fighters stand prepared to scramble. And, most importantly, forces stationed on Europa are being strengthened under the shroud of secrecy.

I'm in command of a large group of hovertanks stationed here at what we call Beta Three. We've also been calling it home for the past few months. New regulations decree that we must be ready to leap out of bed, yank on a space suit, pop into a Grizzly and start hosing down enemy forces. No such incursions have become a reality, and our pilots are starting to lose morale. We've all had enough. If they're going to keep us on an ice ball of a moon for a year straight then they've gotta show us some action.

I was tossing and turning in my bunk, awaiting the assault that would never come, when it came. Alarms screamed all over the base, doors were slammed open, and boots pounded the metal floor till it shook. Everyone was exited and gung-ho. Which also meant that, if this turned out to be a drill, heads would roll. I hastily pulled on the armored space suit that had saved my rear on so many desperate occasions, and joined the horde in its mad dash for the tanks floating peacefully in the low gravity.

I immediately popped the hatch on my battle-scarred Grizzly which had seen many a fight with me behind the controls, and landed in the pilot's seat with a thud. I reached up, slammed the hatch down over my head, and ran an obligatory systems check. Green lights steadily flicked on all over my control board, and when they were all on, an artificial female voice said into my ear, "System stands at 100% readiness. Engaging V-Thruster activation sequence...," a rumble from the rear end of my Grizzly confirmed that the V-Thruster was operational, "V-Thruster systems stand at 100% readiness. All systems are now on standby."

I jammed the ignition switch, gripped the control stick, and floored the accelerator. The much-abused tank flung itself forward like a thing possessed, and slammed my head against my seat. I hadn't been in my tank for thirteen months, and I was determined to have some fun. A nav indicator winked into existence on my HUD, and my radar registered at least twenty contacts in the same direction. Bobcat 7 shouted over the team freq, "This is gonna be a fight to remember. Lock and load, mates!" I responded, "Don't get over your head here, Jack. We're a team and we've got to fight like one. You don't get

many medals for being dead."

"Worry thyself, not," he replied, "Unless they've got Grendels... OH, SHOOT!!" A pair of rocket bombs roared over the ridge ahead of us and detonated on a nearby cliff face.

"Hold it team!" I shout over the freq, "They've got bombers. We call in artillery support, let 'em pick off a few, then heavy armor goes in first. Grizzlies, follow me. We're helping the armor. Bobcats, get behind 'em and take them from there. Wolverines, flank them. We'll go for the old Pound, Squeeze, and Crush. Got that?" A series of 'yes sir's followed this command.

"Howitzers, you heard me, hit him hard!!"

"Yes sir. Mind your head!"

A volley of shells arced from the top of the cliff, trailing white smoke, and drove themselves into the ground, taking several enemy tanks with them. Many barrages followed this one, but the Soviets soon figured out how do dodge the shells.

"Cease fire, Howitzers!"

"Yes sir! Kill some of the commies for me!" crackled from my headset in reply. Meanwhile, while the enemy had been watching the fireworks, the Bobcats and Wolverines had used the series of ridges in this area to outflank the enemy.

"Armor, move up! Wolverines, get a good lock then engage from the sides! Bobcats, when you see the Wolverines fire, charge in like a rhinoceros with an anger issue!"

The Eagles soared over the ridge, hit the ground with a reverberating thud, and released a pair of rocket bombs each. There weren't many Grendels, so as many as three tanks aimed at each one while the Eagles reloaded. The first Grendel took a direct hit from a pair of rocket bombs and turned into a flying column of shrapnel, the second took a glancing blow from one and was sent flying into a third, which subsequently exploded under the barrage of AT-Stabber and Minigun fire, taking the second with it. The remainder of the force turned to face us, when at least seven Hornet heat-seeking missiles soared in from each side and blasted them to hell.

Then the Bobcats roared in as the remaining enemy turned to flee, and destroyed most of them, cornering three survivors against the wall of tanks and bombers. They were about to turn the two Czars and single Stoli into bad memories when the pilot of one Czar shouted over the freq in surprisingly good English, "Stop! Yes, we were on our way to attack your base, but it was merely a supply raid! Ships of unknown configuration destroyed our base, and we are without food, ammo, and

medical supplies. Please, spare us!"

He sounded truly desperate, so I eased my finger off the trigger, the Wolverines toggled off their targets, the Eagles made mechanical grinding noises as the rockets currently in the chambers slid back into their magazines, and Bobcat 7 piloted his vehicle over next to mine, potentially exposing the leader.

"With respect Sir, we should gather their survivors and haul-ass out of here. I don't like the sound of what he's saying."

I nodded consent, and called over the command freq for three APCs to gather the pilots that had ejected from their vehicles. Several minutes later, we raced back to base, with the Czars and Stoli in tow. When we arrived, I recounted the events that had taken place to General Collins.

"You won too easily," was his reply, "Either their trigger fingers are atrophying, or they were desperately afraid. I'm willing to settle on the second option. You have new orders; discover and neutralize whatever threat can make the CCA run like cowards."

I didn't like these new orders, they could easily get my company and me killed. However, I was obliged to comply, like it or not. So, I reluctantly scrambled my company after querying the CCA survivors on the appearance and power of this new enemy. Apparently, something like a giant rift had formed in the sky, and a large, black ship had strafed their base with weapons unknown to them. It was beginning to look like the Furies had somehow survived the destruction of Achilles. That scared me even more.

Our armory launched a Nav Beacon to the coordinates of the ex-CCA base, and we immediately headed in its direction. The trip there was harrowing, as none of us new what to expect and the CCA base had been built in a location ideal to repel invaders. However, we eventually made it up, only to be rewarded with a large, flat surface. I began to wonder where the base was, and began to drive in lazy circles while I thought. My circles were not entirely even, and, eventually, I drifted to the center of the plateau, when my tank ground to a stop! I hit reverse, and smashed into another invisible structure with a reverberating crash.

"The buildings are invisible!" I yelled over the command freq. I was disappointed in a way. This was the kind of thing one was to expect in a bad science fiction story. The armory then sent me a SITE camera, and with it came orders to try and use it to see the buildings. The SITE camera pod was automatically slapped into place, and I eagerly activated it. Sure enough, the buildings were visible through X-Ray. What I saw told of a hard fought, and ultimately lost, battle.

The building I had first rammed into was a dilapidated Comm Tower. A chunk had been blasted out of one side of the main spire, and the tower from that point up was tilted at a ridiculous angle. Everywhere I turned, another sight of woe. Bunkers that had been blasted open and the sleeping pilots

inside mangled. A command tower that had had its thin neck sliced through. A solar power plant that had been hit very hard with something, as there were small solar cells scattered all over the surrounding terrain.

The biggest shock came when I looked up. A blast of pure white light lit the sky, but only in the X-Ray spectrum. It must have been the rift that the survivors were referring to. Still, the mysterious ship had yet to show up. Then, I spotted something. A small, round device that was sitting in the middle of the base that was obviously not of CCA construction. Just out of curiosity, I collected the hardpoints for the AT-Stabber and the SITE camera together and fired on the strange device until in exploded into a million shards of glass-like enamel. The entire picture shuddered, and I switched out of SITE camera mode.

Everything was visible again; the mangled tower, the gutted bunkers... and the hole in the sky. Without warning, something shrieked down from the darkness of the rift and lanced down toward us. As it passed overhead, a pair of blue beams emerged from its hull and pulverized Eagle 3. He ejected, only to be turned to dust by the same powerful beams. Now I was mad. It came around for another pass, and a flurry of rockets and AT shells met it in midair.

The air around the strange vessel warped, then was normal again, except for the fact that our rockets and shells were coming straight for us. Everyone managed to dodge, and a massive explosion obliterated the remains of a Silo. The ship had turned around by now, and fired the beams in short, controlled bursts, walking them steadily towards us. In the process, it took down the Comm Tower of Piza, burned steaming holes in the ice, and hit a resupply depot. While it was directly underneath it.

The resulting explosion sent the mysterious vessel flipping end for end and ultimately grinding to a stop on the frozen ground. Bobcat 7 immediately charged at the intruder, only to be thrown back by the strange shield that had repelled our first attack. Suddenly, It lifted from the ground yet again, and several parting shots were fired after it. One, by a fluke of physics, managed to penetrate the shield, and hit a wingtip. It happened to be a rocket bomb, and the explosion removed the wing entirely. Trailing smoke and flame, the vehicle swung about and slammed into the side of the plateau with a deafening boom.

Blackened chunks of metal soared into the air, and the ice on the ground fractured out from that point like a badly made spiderweb. Then, silence. Not a sound stirred the thin atmosphere of Europa. That is, until my company and I wound our way down the narrow path off the plateau to gaze upon the mass of tangled metal and sparking wires that had once been a strange, black ship from beyond known space. Tugs were called and three, working as a team, managed to drag the shattered machine back to Beta Three.

Research teams were immediately called in from Mars, and arrived several days later, moaning about the rushed trip and the packing, but immediately perked up when they saw the wreck.

"Had a little accident, did we?" happily asked the most surly of the team.

"'Fraid not," I replied, "This is why we dragged you out here. This thing came out of a rip in the sky, leveled a CCA base, and nearly killed my entire company. A stray rocket brought it down. We would've taken it sooner, but it had some kind of shield that bounced all our fire back at us. I just feel I should let you know that your pocketbooks would be much better off if you retrieved some tech from that thing."

Surly's expression had soured upon hearing that it wasn't actually an accident, but a victory, but brightened a bit when he discovered that there was good money here.

"I'll do what I can."

"Good. I'll send in some of our machinists to help pull it apart."

They arrived moments later, with some heavy equipment, and the two groups began to steadily disassemble the strange ship. I retreated to my quarters for a much-needed sleep.

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A very exited engineer woke me up in what seemed like just seconds later.

"Sir! Sir! We found their shields, and their weapons systems! We tried to rig them up, and we're about to test them! I thought you should see, sir."

"Alright, son, I'm coming."

I hurriedly got dressed and donned my spacesuit before dashing out the door to the wreck. It had been reduced to a severely crumpled frame, with piles of parts lying everywhere. Apparently, the engineers had had no shortage of enthusiasm. Then I spotted a hastily constructed metal frame supporting a long, thin weapon with hundreds of cables sprouting from its tail end. They had been spliced together and wired through makeshift cable sorters and plugged into a generator that had been hauled onto the scene. They'd also hauled one of the blackened armor plates in the weapon's line of fire.

"Ready, Sir?"

"Yes. Show me what this thing can do."

The weapon made an ominous, reverberating sound and I, feeling that something was not right, retreated into the safety of my tank. The engineers were too excited snapping switches and mashing buttons to notice the weapon itself shaking dan-

gerously and beams of light sprouting through holes in its casing. When it blew, I was half a kilometer away. All I saw was a blinding flash of light and heard a pealing roll of thunder. How much damage had it done? Would I be able to stomach the cost of trifling with powers beyond my understanding? I was about to find out.

I flew back to base, taking the shortest route I knew, and decided that it was not going to be good when the ground started to turn black. When I returned to Beta Three, there was no evidence of the bodies. The blast had simply vaporised the whole base and everyone living and breathing inside it. Dead. All, dead. Because of my tampering. The comm tower was gone, along with everything else, so that meant I couldn't contact anyone. I was stranded. Alone. On an ice ball of a moon, with only ghosts to keep me company.

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No one ever discovered what happened at Europa, and perhaps it was meant to be that way. All they knew was that the transmissions had stopped. They knew nothing of a CCA base, a rip in the sky, and a power beyond human comprehension. Humans have no wont nor need for such powers, and perhaps it is best to allow the remains of that fantastic machine to stay on Europa, slowly becoming one with the environment, along with the lives it so cruelly cut short.

How To Ban IPs
By Blunt Force Trauma

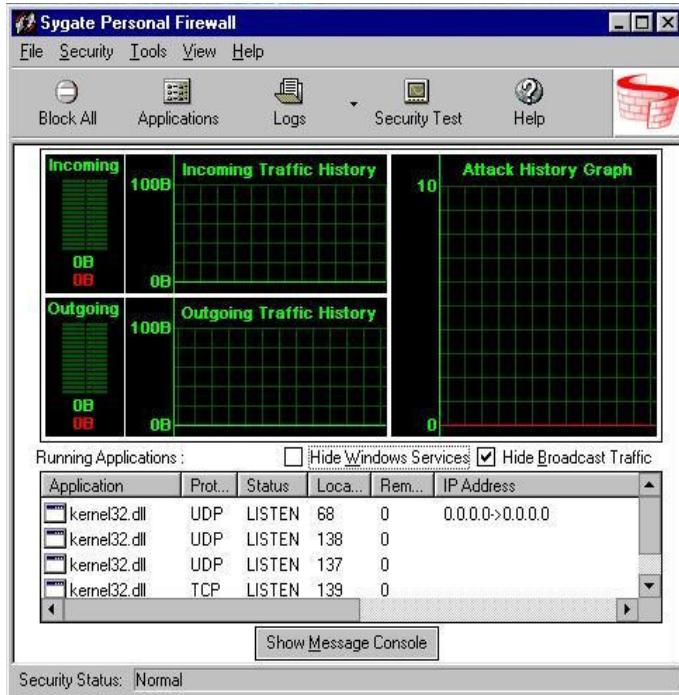**[Tutorial for Battlezone I]**

I have now heard from several in the lobby that they have no idea how to block Ips.

Below is a simple tutorial using the free firewall SYGATE found here:
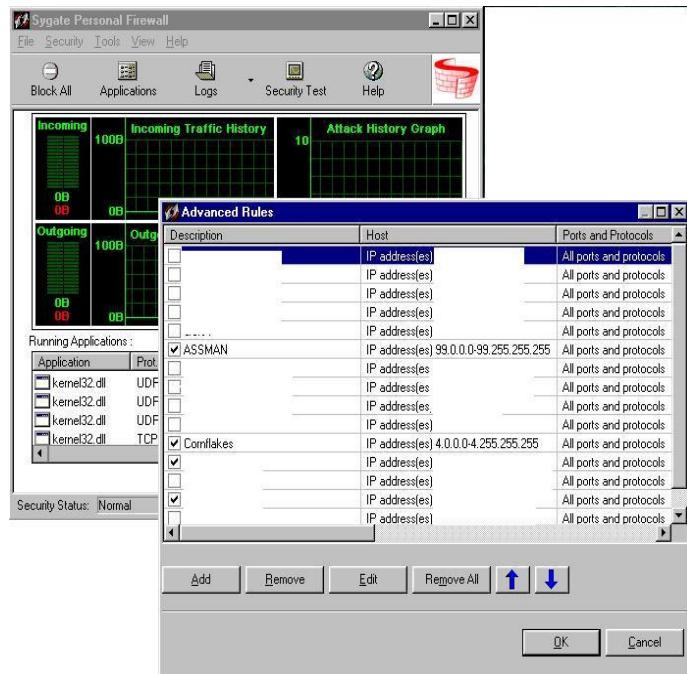
Http://www.oldversion.com/program.php?n=sygate

I include this link because you may want to use the older version, 5.0 as it is only a 5 meg download. I use v5.5.2710 (8 meg) which works well.

First download and install. Once done you'll get something similar to this screen.

Click on the TOOLS pull-down, then ADVANCED RULES, then the Add tab. Under Rule Description give the hack a name, (red rectangle)
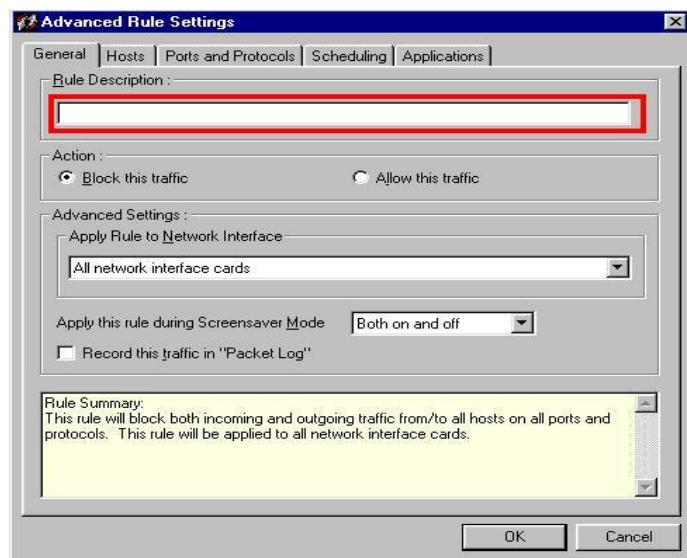
First up you'll go through a 'permissions' dialog screen. You'll get a pop-up every time something new wants access in or out of your PC, (which is a good thing) to the internet. Say yes to most everything it runs across when you initially bring it up. You'll get stuff like your mail server, browser, antivirus updater, etc. You can always block things you don't want later.
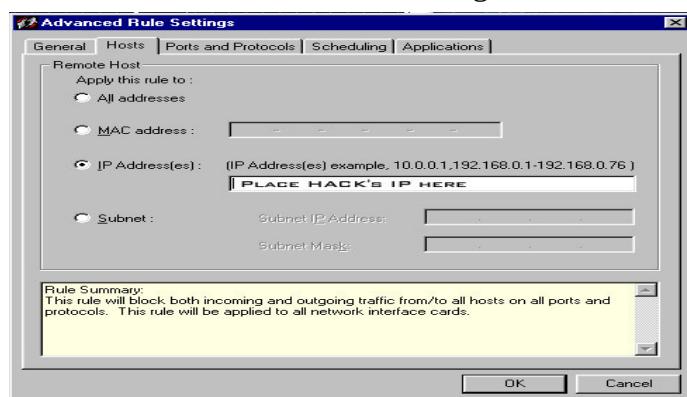
To ban hacks in BZ is straight forward. I have erased all the other IPs for privacy with the exception of two that are known continuous hacks. To add new IPs all you need to do is double click the firewall icon (two arrows in opposing directions) in your task bar in the lower right corner.

Then Click on the Hosts tab. Click the IP address button and add the IP or the IP range.

Example: if you think the hack's IP probably will not change OR it's an IP that has other non hack players in the same range, just put the single number is such as 99.243.265.21. If the hack's IP changes a bit but stays in the same range put in the entire range in this manner: 99.0.0.0-99.255.255.255.

As I've said many times in the past, if even 50% of honest players would do this, the hacks would dry up almost overnight. Granted some hacks will go out of their way to ruin a game by proxy services, taking their laptop to a coffee shop, or have dial-up that changes enough, etc. where blocking a range gets them out from under a block. BUT if half the honest players made it such a pain in the butt to hack, even the most idiot hacks would either leave or get a clue about what 'gameplay' means.

Now you ask, "How do I sniff out the IP to put it in the firewall?!"

That is a little more complicated and there ARE several free sniffers. None that I have found (for free) are easy to use. If you cannot find a sniffer that works well, find a trusted person in BZ that has a sniffer and ask them for the IP you see acting up.

I would also plead that you don't abuse blocking IPs, i.e. you're upset you got honestly beat, someone upsets you by bickering. That is a legitimate part of the game.