

The Unofficial

Mini-Guide to

DemonStar

By



The Stratos Group



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Credits

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Thank you and have a nice day.



Introduction

In the old days of video gaming, back before the days of 3D cards, gigahertz processors, massively multiplayer online games, and 3D positional audio, there was one genre that boasted almost absolute domination of the industry. Before many people even knew the meaning of the word 'gigabyte,' and well before the rise to prominence of the Internet (or even of computer gaming). This genre is the scrolling shooter. Games such as Galaga and



Zaxxon (pictured at right) were all the rage, and no one even dreamed of games such as Quake. In the early days of computer gaming, many companies successfully brought new games of this genre to the PC. Epic MegaGames (now just Epic Games) brought us such hits as Tyrian (pictured below) and Kiloblaster before focusing on first-person shooters such as Unreal Tournament.



Up until the mid-1990s, this type of game held its ground against newcomer genres such as the first-person shooter and real-time strategy. In the past few years, however, it has all but died. Enter Mountain King Studios, and their 1999 release DemonStar. This

excellent shooter brought back so many memories of the good old days that I just had to do a guide for it, even if it's only 16 pages long. ☺ So here we go...

-Zaxxon-



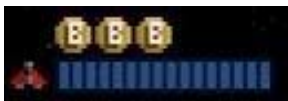
General Information & Tips

General Info

Status Indicators



- This area shows your score, name (in multiplayer), and number of lives remaining. Note that points are very important, as you'll receive an extra life for every 100,000 points you acquire.

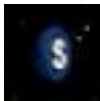


- This section details the number and type of bombs you have stashed, as well as your current shield power.

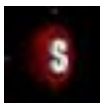


Main Weaponry

Weapon powerups come in 4 types: Proton Laser (yellow), Plasma Cannon (red), Ion Cannon (blue), and Magnetic Pulse (orange). From here on out I'll refer to them by their colors. (Orange becomes available beginning with level 7) Grabbing successive powerups of the same color results in more powerful weaponry, but grabbing one of a color other than the one you're currently using will drop you all the way down to the weakest weapon of that color. When one of these powerups appears, it will cycle through yellow, blue, and red. Note that once the orange color cycles away, it will never go back to orange again; if you want the orange gun, grab it immediately.



- The blue weapon is a powerful wide shot that shoots straight ahead of your ship.



- The red gun is a large forward laser.



- Yellow powerups will yield a small forward shot with diagonal shots to either side. This is my favorite weapon, as it's powerful enough to take out most enemies without much trouble, and is excellent against



bosses because of its diagonal shots. (Though not as good against bosses as the orange.)



- Beginning on the seventh level, the orange powerup will become available. It consists of a barrage of heat-seeking pellets. It's sometimes difficult to pick your target with this weapon since it has a mind of its own, but it's excellent against bosses—all you have to do is dodge their fire as your weapons tear them apart.



- This powerup will bring you to the most powerful level of your current weapon. This is the easiest way to get the orange weapon powered all the way up, as the orange powerups themselves are quite rare. Grabbing a full powerup or a powerup of your weapon's color when you're already at full power will result in a sort of free instant bomb going off for you.

Secondary Weaponry



- The rear- and back-shooting weapon powerups will become available beginning with level 7. These are both in addition to your main weapon; you can pick these up without worrying about what type of main weapon



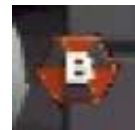
you have. They are additive up to 3 of each type; i.e. grabbing 3 side shot powerups is better than grabbing 1.

Bombs



- Bombs are also in addition to your main weaponry, and you can collect and store several until you need them. The Mega Bomb

(yellow) will kill everything in a circular area in front of your ship; the Scatter Bomb (red) will drop a napalm-like warhead on any enemies



near you. Finally, the much more rare Mega Pulse (blue) will give you a very powerful forward laser for about 5 seconds.



Missiles



- Also in addition to your main weaponry, grabbing a missile powerup will yield a temporary barrage of missiles that spews forth from your ship. The red variety is heat-seeking, while the blue shoots directly ahead.



Shield Powerups



- You won't necessarily die from one hit. If you collide with a small shot, or even a small enemy, your shields will absorb the damage. The little blue diamond will



restore a small amount of your shield power, while the large 'E' will restore your shields to full.

Misc.



- The invulnerability powerup only appears a few times through the course of the game, but it comes when you most need it. Snagging it will make you invincible for a short time.

- The medal powerup will give you some points for every one you carry to the end of the level without dying.



Bonuses



- At the conclusion of every level, you'll receive 1,000 points for every bomb you're holding, as well as 1,000 points for every medal powerup you've collected on that level since your last death.



Strategies

Choose one weapon type and stick with it!

Especially in the later levels, you won't last long with a weak weapon, and switching weapon types will always result in a drop to the weakest weapon for a time. Instead, determine in the first several levels which weapon type you're going to use, and stick with that type for the rest of the game.

Play toward the center of the screen!

Many players like to stick to the bottom of the screen so as to have the most time to react to enemies, but several enemies like to fly off the screen and come back from the side or bottom, making it dangerous to stay anywhere near the edges. Stay in the middle and you'll be safer.

Pick one side of the screen and stay there! (Multiplayer)

In multiplayer games it's advantageous to have one player defend the left side of the screen, with the other defending the right. Powerups tend to come in twos, with one on each side of the screen, so they'll still be distributed pretty evenly, and it will make it much easier to keep track of your ship. (It can be difficult to keep an eye on your ship when you cross each other's path)

Don't Warp!

In the full version of the game, there's a warp available at the beginning of the first level that will allow you to go directly to the 7th level, skipping the shareware portion of the game. However, those first 6, easier, levels hold valuable opportunities to gain points, and thus lives. It's a good idea to play these first levels in order to stock up on lives for when the going gets tough.

Lay off the bosses until you've figured them out!

Never begin fighting a boss full on. Most of them have instant forward lasers or some other nasty way of killing you quickly if you're not careful. Stay off to one



side of the screen, where it's easier to stay alive, and watch them carefully; they all have preset firing patterns. Once you've figured those patterns out, most of the bosses are a piece of cake.

Don't be afraid to use a bomb to save yourself!

If things look like they're getting grim, toss out a bomb; it'll destroy any incoming fire. Wise man say: 'Tis better to lose a bomb than a life.'

Attack grouped stationary targets one at a time!

More often than not, destroying a single unit of a grouped set will set in motion a chain reaction that will destroy the rest; it's much quicker to take one down and watch the rest fall than it is to spread your fire out amongst several.



Mission Tips

Level 1



This level is quite easy; use the time to get used to piloting your ship. If you have the Registered version and decide to warp to level 7, make sure you grab the powerup from the enemy near the rift first; you'll need them. Watch out for the boss's laser and forward missiles.

Level 2 – Desert Base



Another easy level, with a pretty easy boss. Pummel him from below when he shoots his red starfire shots, and then quickly get out of the way to avoid his laser. Lather, rinse, and repeat.

Level 3 – Outer Space



This level has a slightly tricky part in the middle where you'll be overwhelmed by downward-flying jets. If your main weapon is powered up, you'll be ok, but be ready with some bombs in case it gets crowded. Smack the boss down while he shoots his regular shots, and then get out of the lasers' way, like with the level 2 boss.

Level 4 – Fuel Refinery



Now the levels get a little more challenging. The biggest threat on this map is the series of minelayers that will attempt to fly across the screen midway through. Stick to one side and you should be able to



take them out before they've laid enough mines on your side of the screen to be a threat. The boss is a bit trickier than earlier ones as well; stay directly in front of him, between his lasers. If you're quick you'll be able to dodge all of his shots from here, and to take him out rather quickly.

Level 5 – Outer Space



This level isn't so *hard*-- there are just an awful lot of projectiles flying around, and it's very tough to avoid them all. When the end boss comes around, try to stay off to the side if you have the weaponry to hit him from there; otherwise at least hang back until you've figured out his pattern. He has 3 lasers, which are very hard to avoid if you don't know exactly when they're going to fire.

Level 6 – Ore Planet






There's not much to say about this level; pretty standard stuff. The boss isn't much of a problem either, if you're using the yellow weapon and can stay off to the side. If not, just figure out his pattern and have at him. This is the last level in the shareware version; if you're playing the shareware, shell out the \$13 and continue; it gets better with the new weapons introduced in level 7.

Level 7 – Outer Space

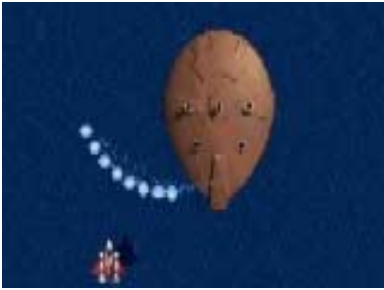


This first registered level is not that tough. You'll begin encountering enemies that take awhile to 'die' after you've killed them; that is, they blow up for a second or so before they're actually gone, and *you can still run into them and die*. Be sure



they're dead before crossing their path. New weapons include the side- and back- shooters, as well as the orange shot.  Grab the new sidearms whenever you see them; like missiles, they won't affect your main weapon. If you'd like to try the orange shot on for size, do it on this level, before things start to get tough. This level's boss can be tricky. He'll shoot 3 forward shots, then 3 yellow starburst shots at you, then engage his lasers, and then fire a large barrage of shots toward the bottom of the screen. You need to move up the side of the screen when he shoots this barrage, or you won't be able to avoid it. Be ready.

Level 8 – Water Planet



On this water level, you won't find anything too difficult, except for one section where enemies pop up out of the water, with a mine layer flying across the screen as well. Fortunately, there's an invulnerability powerup right there too. The boss will pop out of the water, but isn't anything to be worried about as long as he doesn't pop out into you. Just stay in front of him, dodge his shots, and pummel him till he goes down.

Level 9 – Outer Space



This level has a lot of enemies that take a *long* time to die, so be wary. The boss, however, is one of the easiest so far. Just pound him until he falls. He only has one type of shot, and it is easily dodged.



Level 10 – Industry Planet



Here we've got another pretty standard level, however like level 5 there is a lot of flak flying around, and like level 7 there are tons of enemies that take a long time to die. In other words, it's very tough to dodge everything and still kill some of it. Keep your eyes around your ship, making very sure

you check your paths before taking them. The boss isn't particularly difficult: as long as you stay back so you can dodge his rapid shots once they've spread apart.

Level 11 – Outer Space



Back to outer space we go once again. While this boss may look nasty, he continues the anticlimactic trend of boss mediocrity. He'll alternate between his outside lasers and his inside gatling gun. Just hover under whichever he's not using at the time and spank him. Hard.

Level 12 – Research Moon



There is a huge number of point bonuses on this research moon. If you can collect most of them and survive through the level, you can earn yourself an extra life on the boss and bonuses alone. The boss is a little tougher this time around, but only if you don't figure him out quickly. Stay inside his lasers,

dodging the blue shooty things when he fires, and he'll drop more quickly than the last few bosses.

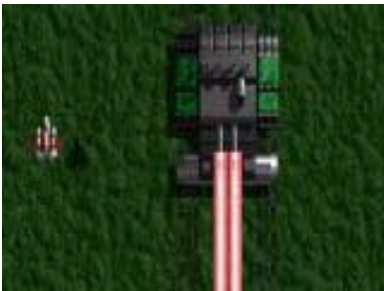


Level 13 – Outer Space



Another level, another boss. Pummel him from below, and then move when he starts shooting. Repeat until desired effect is attained. This guy is a bit annoying, as it's very difficult to stay below him without dying, making the fight drag out as you maneuver out of shooting range when he fires.

Level 14 – Farming Planet



die, but he'll fall eventually.

Nice green level, with a nice green tank boss. He'll shoot 3 rounds of shots aimed at you, followed by a big old laser downward. Stay below him through the first round of shots, then move outward for the 2nd and third, and finally hover just to one side of the laser while pounding on him. He'll take awhile to

Level 15 – Outer Space



Watch out for the comets that fly toward you in the middle of the level; they're very tough (a bomb won't even destroy them). The boss isn't that difficult; he'll alternate between rounds of blue shots aimed at you and rounds aimed downward. Stay below him, and back up when he fires inward; move back up for his other volley, and repeat until he goes down. Those comets are the toughest part of this level.



Level 16 – Volcanic Moon



This level is much like the previous, but the comets are replaced by some heavy stationary artillery. The boss is very well-armed, but is relatively easy. He follows a predictable (and thus dodgeable) pattern. He has a big package, but doesn't know how to use it. He'll fire 2 rounds of little blue shots at you, and then go to his center gatling gun. Finally, he'll resort to his surrounding lasers. Position yourself under whichever he's not using and have at him.

Level 17 – Outer Space



This is another level filled with tons of point bonuses, if you can survive long enough to redeem them at the end of the road. The level's boss is unique in that he actually *maneuvers*, on a level almost equal to that of your ship. Unfortunately his smaller size doesn't mean he's any weaker than his predecessors. You'll need to continually move in order to keep him in your sights, while simultaneously dodging his long rounds of shots.

Level 18 – DemonStar Base



Well, this is it. The DemonStar base. The final level. And on anything but the Easy difficulty level, it's a tough one. You'll face non-boss enemies with instant-hitting lasers for the first time. On the other hand, there are tons of point bonuses as well, and the DemonStar itself at the end isn't very difficult. Stay off to the side and pummel him under one of his side wings, moving to dodge his spray of starfire shots. Once you've defeated him, the game will restart on the next-highest difficulty level. Try playing through from Easy to Insane in one sitting—it's quite a challenge. ☺



Summation & Thanks

Well that was quick. It appears there just really isn't that much to say in a scrolling shooter guide.

First off, thanks to Mountain King Studios (<http://www.mking.com/>) for making the first shooter that I've enjoyed in years. Keep up the good work, guys; I'm looking forward to your next one! Readers: check out their site for cool new levels for DemonStar.

Thanks to everyone here at Stratos for doing what you do so well; thanks to our awesome webmaster (the one, the only, the jGoat) for constantly putting up with our incessant whining and demands.

Any comments on this guide should be directed to zaxxon@stratosgroup.com, as well as any requests for a multiplayer partner to help you get through on the Insane difficulty.