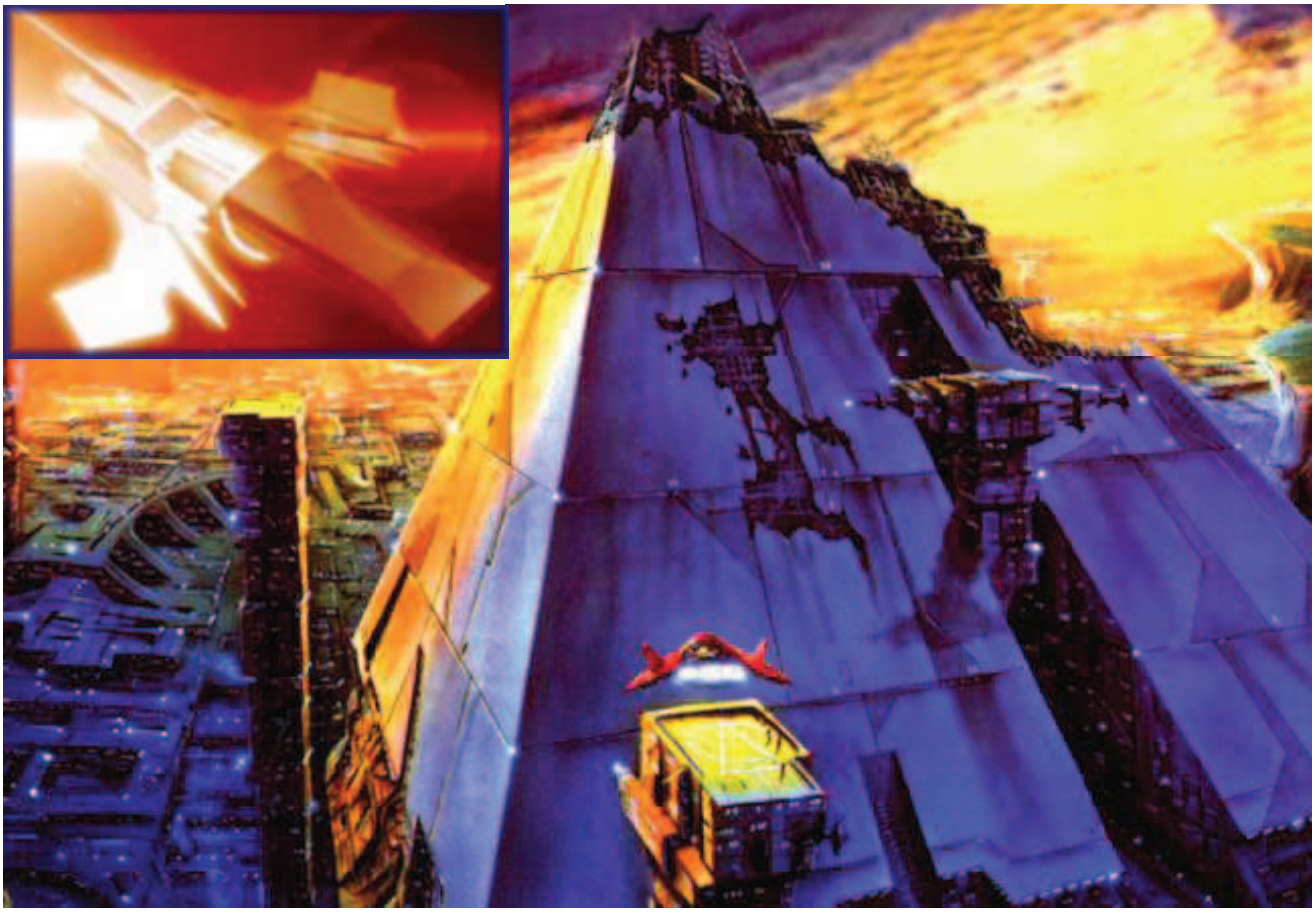
METALDUST ARRIVES!

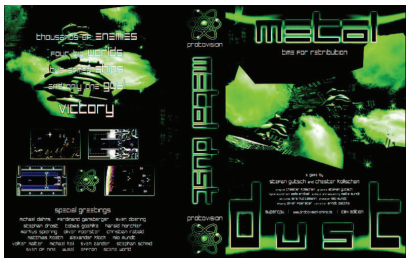


metal dust

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
- CMD SuperCPU 20 mhz accelerator with at least 4mb
- Monitor
- Joystick(s)*
- 1581 or better, the game can be copied to any CMD drive (including the RAMLink) and IDE64 controller.

** Two players simutainiously with two joysticks.*

protovision



And so it finally arrived. To celebrate, Nigel and Shaun spent some time giving it some stick. Here is the definitive review of the one game that every SuperCPU owner must buy...

YOUR MISSION

As the game loads you stand alone ready to take on the world! Well ok, you have a computer and monitor so not technically alone. You have been briefed and debriefed (thought it was cold down there!) you can now put back your briefs for the ultimate battle.You have yourself a small ship, a prototype named “full metal megablaster mk II”, a ship built using the latest in Quantum physics design, built by the only survivors of the Vega 7 battle. You (and a friend if one dare volunteer) are to protect the Earth against alien invasion. Once embarking, there is simply no way back! It is mankind’s only hope. Will you save the world from the awesome firepower of a grieved alien empire? Or would you rather turn of and watch Neighbours with a hot cup of tea? (Anything but that torture - Shaun)

As the game begins to load the title credits roll on the screen, as the music track begins to fade in.

“Many years have
Passed ...
But now is it there:
METAL DUST”

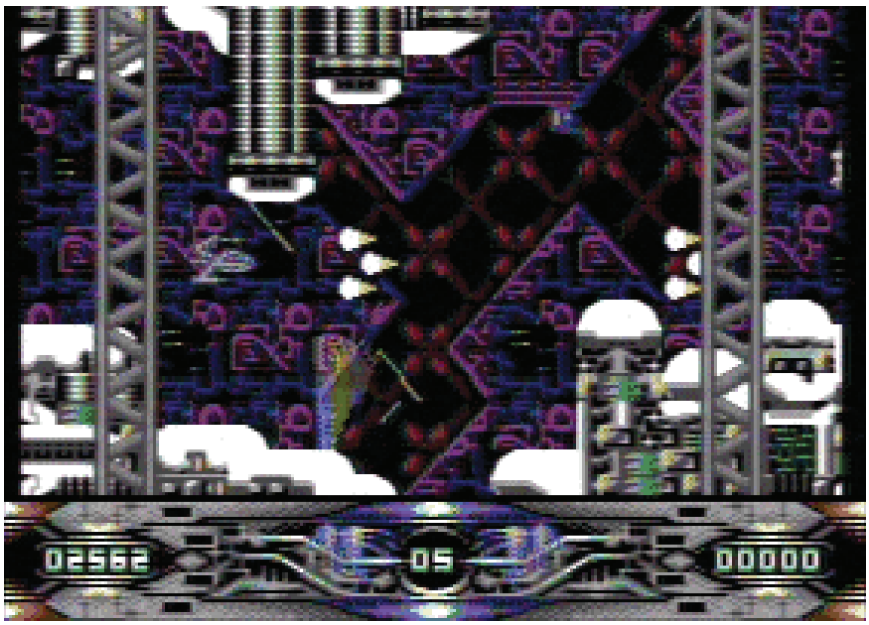
And so it begins...

A BASIC OVERVIEW

Well ok, you get the idea, maybe that should have read “but now it is here”, but lets face it my German is none existent so who am I to complain? After selecting the number of players, if you want in game music and or just sound effects, the game type, “easy, medium or hard” your given a brief “GET READY” screen, pressing the fire button takes you to the main gaming screen.

This game is your traditional tried and tested, horizontally scrolling shoot-em-up game, just like it came straight out of the textbook. Nothing new here to the untrained eye. At certain points, bonuses are up for grabs to upgrade your fire power and occasionally shield yourself from the onslaught of evil. Obviously, your task is to shoot through the various asteroids and aliens to progress further into the game (told you it wouldn’t win

originality competitions) to face the final mega boss.



Nigel's bit . . .

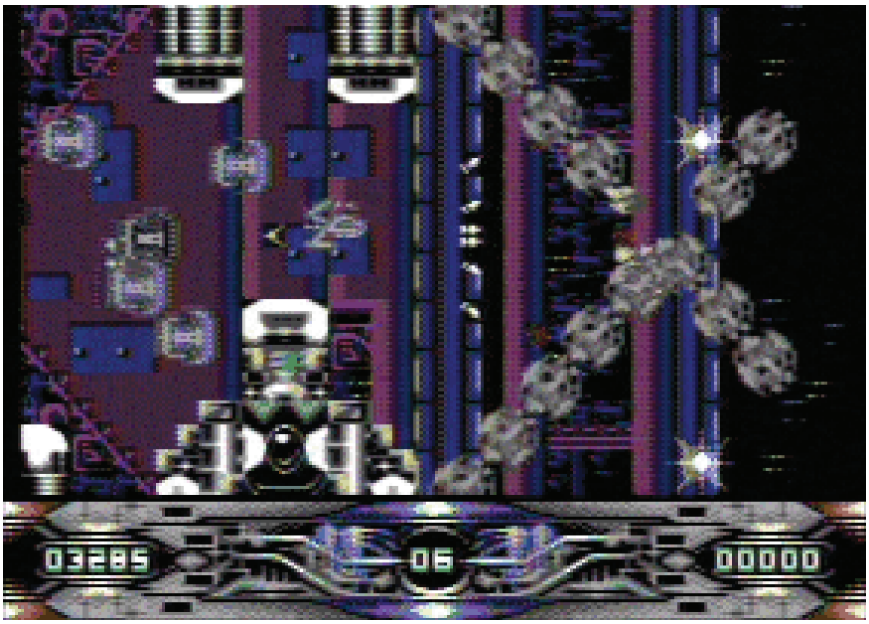
PLAY THE GAME

The game has a few small and annoying design problems. It appears the graphics seem to have been designed on some other system then ported to the 64. The problem is the lack of colours on the 64, with only 16 colours on screen, very careful thought needs go into the screen design and layout. Unfortunately from my point of view, the screen is far too cluttered with items. The alien designs, ship and screens all look breathtaking but when mixed together, I find it difficult to tell what objects are the backgrounds and what is supposed to be a solid objects i.e. landscape or solid unexplodable rocks.

My first game playing attempts lasted literally a few seconds (*mine too - allan*). I can't claim to be a shoot-em-up aficionado, but the screen seems messy and boy is this fast! The amount of data placed on screen and moving with the digital soundtrack, its hard not to think you have loaded up a 16bit system, like an early Amiga game.

When I first played I spent so long looking at the screen and the amount of information, sound and visuals I ended up just saying "WOW" and crashing into the first asteroid to come my way

The sound on this game is amazingly good with nice sampled speech and an amazing techno dance music track. Unfortunately the music gets a little thin after an hour of play and starts to annoy. Not a problem because at least you have the option to turn it off. The music fits the game well, being fast in your face techno remix but seems a little short and then loops to the beginning. I presume memory was a problem for the developers, but the sounds are clear and the sampled speech is recognisable, not just a mumbled underwater argchhhsshh.



The other problem with the game for me was its just to hard, in fact so hard its borderline between being playable and just making you want to give up. Often the game requires accurate route planning through the screen and you seem to need certain guns and ammo at specific points, otherwise you stand little chance of even lasting the first screen scroll. Did I mention that the game is unbelievably hard?

So, now I have put the game down so much, what does it have? For one thing it has an incredible pull, that "one more go" factor is there; on my first load I noticed I had sat playing for over 3 hours. The following day I sat playing well into the night, you just keep going back, so the game structure an engine are excellent, obviously without a pull factor its just AN-other game. The designers must have spent time to get this right; this is classic gaming at its best.

The screen animation and scrolling is super smooth (except for the credits which seems strangely jerky, I

am now thinking this is on purpose not sure why though) if you like hard fast action you certainly got it here. During the game I saw little in the way of glitches the only noticeable thing was my ship disappearing for a split second when something close exploded, not every time and certainly nothing really to get upset about.

I am sure someone will pick this up set the game to hard and zoom all the way through on first attempt, but for the rest of us mortals, its going to take some time to learn the attack waves and routes, at least you get plenty of lives, watch them go down fast though. The game features 2 players simultaneously in a team mode, so pick a friend who excels in shoot-em-ups.

MAYBE NEXT TIME ?

If there is a Metal Dust 2 I would like to see on my personal wish list with borderless action! (I am sure someone will tell me why this can't be done, then someone else who will remover the borders anyway). A sequel will need the screen colours to be given some careful thought, maybe design the graphics on the 64 and use solid colours instead of so much dithering, maybe an enhanced 128 version?? (*Not sure if that'll be possible, though a map drawn onto the 80 column screen or something like that would be cool, that's assuming a sequel is a multi-directional free-moving game ! - Shaun*). Longer music tracks would be nice, varying more instead of just looping. And a final point I would like some sort of super easy mode or a more graduated learning curve. (There's a hidden cheat mode - Shaun)

REFLECTION

The SuperCPU shows a new side to our beloved machine; breathing new life into Commodore gaming, let's hope this isn't just a one off. This is an excellent start to SuperCPU gaming. I suppose everyone know wants to know if they should buy such a game, yes would be the answer, even if its just to support further developments.

Reviewer - Nigel Parker
Email - nigelp2k@yahoo.co.uk
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Shaun says . . .

I think my views on Metal Dust are fairly well known now, but if you missed my reviews in Retro Gamer and Micro Mart, then to briefly sum up each, IT'S BLOODY BRILLIANT!!! The problems Nigel was having with not knowing what was the foreground and background are quite common with games of this nature - the iron test is if you can shoot through it, it's part of the background. For this reason, and the fact that I'm a BIG horizontally-scrolling shoot-em up fan that I had little problem with spotting the difference. I was in awe by how much was going on visually though, but strived to see more through progression. The last time I played, I met the final boss - it's certainly tough to beat him. This was during my last days at Live Publishing. I thought, "Okay, so I've been given redundancy... let's do something productive like beat Metal Dust." Alas, it was never to be, and I still haven't beat it! Though I haven't played it much since. Perhaps this weekend I'll finally be the victor over this bad boy, and save the world at the same time!

Allan says . . .

Well, its all been said already really. This is a superb game, even I go back time and time again - but still don't get anywhere !

I'm not the worlds greatest shoot-em-up player so I can't really do it justice unfortunately.

You HAVE to see this game running to appreciate the quality of it - the end of level baddies are just awesome - and I don't say that lightly !

Buy it right now !

Developed for the SuperCPU

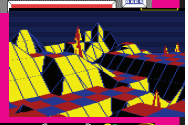
Metal Dust R,X ~ *CS2005 page 139*

Adapted for the SuperCPU

Bburago Rally - R,X,D
Boom - R,X,D ~ *CS2004 page 16*
Last Ninja III - R,D
Oil Imperium (German) - R,X,D
Rescue on Fractalus - X,D
Stellar 7 - X,D
Stroke World - R
The Train - R,D

Benefit from the SuperCPU

3D Pool ~ *CS2003 p69*
Castle Master - D
Chase HQ
Cholo - D
Cyborg 2900 - D,S
Dark Side - D
Driller - D
The Eidolon - D
Elite 128 ~ *CS2003 - p114*
Encounter
Flight Simulator 2
Frogger64 ~ *CS2003 p108*
Hard Drivin'
Koronis Rift - D
Last Ninja ~ *CS2004 - p76*
Last Ninja 2 - X,D
Last Ninja Remix - X
Leader Board Golf II
Moonfall - D
Mega Starforce Remix - Rx,D,X
Mercenary
Outrun
Power Drift - D
Revs - D
The Sentinel - D
Space Rogue - D
Starglider
Star Wars - D
Stunt Car Racer
Test Drive
Thunder Blade - D
Thrust - D
Time Crystal - D
Total Eclipse - D
Total Eclipse 2
Turbo Charge - D



Codes

R = Ramdisk system ~ *CS2003 p68*
Rx = Alternate Ramdisk ~ *CS2003 p68*
X = Extras added ~ *detailed in review*
D = Documents included
S = Solution included