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Subject: Re: C&C Tiberium - FPS Game  
Posted by [R315r4z0r](#) on Fri, 21 Dec 2007 00:04:42 GMT  
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You guys ready for the big wall of text? Over the past 2 days I copied word for word the article in GamelInformer. I posted it on the Tiberium forum, but I will post it here for everyone who is too lazy.

If you wish to copy what I post here to some other website please give credit to both GamelInformer magazine, and to myself for taking the time to re-type the entire article.

Here is the article, verbatim, broken up into parts.

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GamelInformer Article January 2008

Tiberium

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Part 1

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It has been 11 years since the end of the Third Tiberium War. The Global Defense Initiative (GDI) successfully repelled the alien invaders from Earth. But the struggle for survival is far from over. The Brotherhood of Nod, despite the disappearance of their enigmatic leader, Kane, still clings to this cancerous resource like it's a gift from God, and the GDI still fights to contain the spread of Tiberium.

The invading civilization, known as the Scrin, may have departed, but not before they completed building an ominous, opaque tower atop the largest ecological disaster in the planet's history -the Tiberium covering the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Italy. For 11 years, this impenetrable towering structure has remained under intense surveillance from all sides. While the GDI monitor it for any activity, the followers of Nod treat it as a religious site of the utmost importance, their Mecca. The devout, blinded by their faith, journey to the uninhabitable region, now classified as a red zone unfit for biological life, to wait for some sort of divine revelation.

Shortly after the end of the Third War, a forward battle commander who played a pivotal role in ending the war, Ricardo Vega, grew disillusioned with this constant struggle between the two human factions. He quit the army and traded in his gun for a hammer to rebuild cities ripped apart by wars. But his respite has hardly lasted long. Something is stirring underneath the massive monument left behind by the Scrin. The threat looms large enough that GDI has convinced Ricardo Vega to reassume his post as a forward battle commander and take on a mission in the area surrounding the Scrin structure. Something is amiss, and mankind's struggle for survival may only be beginning...

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## Part 2

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### ONE UNIVERSE TO RULE THEM ALL

When EA approached Chris Plummer and his EALA development team about creating a new tactical shooter two and a half years ago, it didn't take long for them to gravitate toward the Command & Conquer franchise.

"We're big shooter fans and big sci-fi fans, so that's the place we wanted to start looking," says executive producer Chris Plummer. "Looking at the new ideas and existing franchises in the company, the Tiberium universe immediately attracted us because it has such a legacy and heritage and there was some built-in depth there."

That depth springs from a critically acclaimed real-time strategy franchise that has spawned eight games and expansion packs since its debut in 1995. EA has already created a first-person shooter out of the franchise with the 2002 title Command & Conquer: Renegade, but the game failed to retain the trademark strategic gameplay elements of the series and garnered modest reviews and a lukewarm reception.

To help Tiberium break out as a unique game in the Command & Conquer series, EA knew the company needed to dive deeper into the series mythology.

"We're not Star Wars or Lord of the Rings, but we do aspire to be like that, to be a universe worthy of devotion," says Plummer. "We didn't try to rewrite the Tiberium universe, but we looked for where the holes were and tried to patch them up."

The patching started with the Command & Conquer team creating a Tiberium "bible," a fictitious artifact from the future written by an archivist who had lived through the Tiberium wars. Not content with merely recapping past game plots, the bible dives so deeply into the C&C world that even gets into the scientific explanation of Tiberium. EA hired scientists from MIT and Caltech to help the team understand how an extraterrestrial mineral like Tiberium world work as an energy resource, what would make it radioactive, how it could convert other matter into itself, how it would spread, what its life cycle would be like, and how military engineers could weaponize such a material. Why go to such lengths to understand a fictitious material?

"Tiberium is our Force, it's our One Ring to rule them all, it's our Matrix," says Plummer.

The bible also fleshed out the extensive history of the game's three warring factions: the United Nations-esque Global Defense Initiative (GDI), the overzealous religious faction Brotherhood of Nod, and the Scrin, the mysterious new alien race introduced in the Command & Conquer 3: Tiberium Wars.

But mythology is only one aspect to creating a believable universe. It must also have a distinct look and feel. "I want the world to be a place you want to spend time," says Plummer. "My favorite shooters are the ones where the world is a cool place. The gameplay has got to rock, but it also needs to feel like a believable fantasy that holds together with conviction."

To this end, EA hired a Hollywood veteran to hone the look and feel of Tiberium. Art director Steve Burg is no stranger to sci-fi, having worked on conceptual designs and visual effects for storied futuristic franchises like Terminator 2: Judgment Day, Contact, and The Matrix. With so many prominent sci-fi games on the market, finding a distinct visual style is paramount, and Tiberium succeeds by borrowing lightly from the masters and adding its own flair.

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Part 3

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## RECASTING A CLASSIC

Another challenge facing the the development team was one of practicality-how do you combine the tried and true strategic gameplay of the Command & Conquer series with the intense, in-your-face combat of a first-person shooter?

"In the C&C universe you're always viewing the action from a 'presidential' level. You're very much removed so you can orchestrate large battles from 1,000 feet in the air. It's different when you're down there in the midst of the combat."

To demonstrate just how different the approach to Tiberium is, Plummer and creative director/game design director Dan Orzulak boot up the game and jump into a mission. We catch up with the game's protagonist, forward battle commander Ricardo Vega, as he's bound for the largest Tiberium harvesting, refining, and processing facility in the world, which is located near the Scrin tower in the red zone formerly known as the Mediterranean Sea. Securing this facility is imperative for refueling GDI capital ships. The first Rapid Assault and Intercept Deployment (R.A.I.D.) sent in to investigate the plant failed to report back, so Vega is sent in to finish the mission.

We join Vega as he moves solo through the refinement facility. Bodies of the Falcon R.A.I.D. lay bloodied on the ground surrounding the entrance - someone or something got here before the GDI did. Orzulak navigates Vega deftly from cover point to cover point, careful to stay out of the gaze of the Scrin Shrikes patrolling these hallways. The cover system reminiscent to the one found in Rainbow Six - squeeze the left trigger to enter cover, and let go to resume normal movement. The Scrin enemies ahead are knee-high robots mainly responsible for cleaning up dead bodies after battles, but they also pack a punch of their own with blasters and the ability to self-destruct if you get too close. Orzulak moves around the corner, only to see a Shrike leaping toward him kamikaze-style ready to explode. He quickly activates Vega's energy shield with the left bumper to protect him from the blast. The shield's power meter takes a hit upon impact, but the meter will refill over time. Orzulak moves Vega back into cover and surveys the room - at least four more Shrikes are ahead. He lines up a shot by leaning out from behind cover, and with the squeeze of the trigger the fight is on.

A group of Shrikes are huddled between cover points, so Vega switches his gun its mag rail

setting to the grenade launcher and wipes them out with one shot. Vega then uses his crafty jump-get to move quickly to another cover position closer to the rest of the Shrikes. With the push of a button, Vega blasts high in the air, gaining a new perspective on the remaining enemies before landing again near a new cover point. After wiping out the last remaining ankle biters, he moves to the nearby terminal to unlock the airlock so he can move to the drop zone where is R.A.I.D. is scheduled to arrive. The door opens, only to reveal a large, imposing alien and another group of Shrikes. This beast - which looks part Covenant Elite, part Predator, and part Xenomorph - is known as an Archon, the Scrin's heavy warrior class. Vega empties a clip from his mag rail into the Archon, only to see the bullets repel and spray across the room; a force shield protects the Archon. Vega switches his gun to the energy cannon setting, which can unleash an incredibly destructive beam that brings death to most anything in its line of fire. Vega targets the Archon's soft spot and squeezes the trigger - toast. It's time to move out and rendezvous with the squad.

As Orzulak guides Vega into the wind-swept valley, two infantry squads are dropped and a battle immediately begins versus a group of Scrin Sidewinders-air units very capable of defeating infantry units. Orzulak selects the infantry unit in his view by clicking the right bumper and guides them to cover with another click of the bumper. Squad movement is entirely guided by the player. But even with the cover bonus, the moribund infantry is getting torn apart. As the Sidewinders eliminate the outclassed soldiers, Vega switches his gun to yet another setting, the MLS. He aims toward the sky and paints multiple air targets until they are locked on, squeezes the trigger, and watches his heat-seeking missile split into three and take out each Sidewinder. Ah, the joys of technology. The second squad moves up to engage a group of Archons, who have flushed the unit out by throwing energy grenades toward their cover. Vega runs alongside his infantry unit to join the fight, which gives them a leadership bonus that increases their fighting skills. In a matter of seconds, Vega and his team dispatch the Archons.

No one likes to lose soldiers in a firefight, but in Tiberium it's not the end-all, be-all - every unit is disposable and can be replaced with units of your choice. If Sidewinders just smoked your infantry, you can call in a missile team more adept at fighting aerial enemies and turn the tide.

After laying waste to the archons, Vega and his squad move toward a Tiberium deposit. These fissures are the key to the battlefield; each one you control unlocks another squad slot for your use. Vega informs his command of the Tiberium location, and within a matter of seconds, a Tiberium spike comes barreling down into the ground to begin tapping the liquid Tiberium reserves. At this point Vega can choose his new unit and add them to his burgeoning army.

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GameInformer Article January 2008  
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Part 4

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## SURGING WITH PURPOSE

Plummer hopes this delicate balance of frantic first-person action and real-time strategy will separate Tiberium from the other tactical shooters on the market. While Brothers in Arms and

Ghost Recon have allowed you to guide one or two squads through a battlefield, nothing has recreated the feeling of being a part of and controlling a large force. As the EALA team found, it's much harder to execute than it seems on paper. In the early stages of developing prototypes (see The Art of Iteration sidebar) the team realized that when you increased the battle size too much, players tend to stay in cover and order issues instead of engaging enemies directly. This wasn't the right balance for an action-oriented tactical shooter, so they scaled back and reiterated until they found the sweet spot.

To keep the action varied, Tiberium will scale each mission differently, as well. Depending on the objective, Vega may be fighting the Scrin solo, issuing commands to two squads in tight quarters, or controlling upwards of six squads or units during a large scale offensive.

When we rejoin Vega, he's moved out of the refinery and into a war-torn city. A familiar face to C&C vets, the fiery Commander Michael McNeil, informs Vega that all of the GDI Tiberium reserves have been depleted, and they believe the stores have been rerouted to this desolate city. Given the circumstances, Vega has a green light to call in the heavier military units to assist during this mission. In addition to the standard infantry and missile units, Vega now has access to the Titan, an imposing mech that uses ion cannons to dispatch of surrounding enemies, and the Orca, a fast and powerful gunship armed with missiles that excels at taking out ground installations.

Vega starts this battle with four squad slots, but no drop zone. He must secure a DZ on the map if he plans to receive any reinforcements. To start the fight, Orzulak chooses two mechs and two infantry units and begins his forward assault. He commands the units to advance through the rainy, decrepit streets until they encounter Scrin resistance. The street where the initial encounter begins offers no real cover, so Orzulak commands his Titans to take forward positions so the infantry can use them as cover. The R.A.I. D. advances in this fashion through the street and up to a bottleneck where the Scrin forces have control of the area. Here Orzulak calls up his Battle Control Uplink (BCU) to survey the battlefield. From this map, he can issue commands to his troops just like he was right next to the troops, which is handy when you need to split your forces. Orzulak sees an alley and decides to break away from his R. A.I.D. to flank the enemy position. He successfully moves into an ideal position to eliminate the forces and takes out the unaware enemies who are pinned by the Titan suppressing fire.

After capturing a nearby Tiberium deposit, Orzulak must now make a tactical decision. He can either concentrate all his forces on an assault to capture a drop zone, or he must split his troops and advance while leaving a few units behind to protecting this Tiberium fissure. If the Scrin recapture this area, Vega will lose a squad slot. The soldiers are occupying that slot on the battlefield won't automatically disappear, but if they fall in battle you cannot use the slot to call in reinforcements.

These are the kind of tough choices gamers can expect to find throughout the game. "We want the player to play the mission their way," says Plummer. "We want to give them the choice. Are you a turtler or a rusher? You can always keep your forces with you, but it will change the way the encounters play out. In nonlinear areas you're more likely to get counterattacked, flanked, or get hit by two forces at once. If you split your forces up you have less firepower, but you'll block the aliens from being able to flank you."

Orzulak decides to bring the thunder on the dropzone, leaving the Tiberium spike unprotected. Upon approaching the clearance that would be ideal for a dropzone, the R.A.I.D. encounters a new problem: a towering Scrin turret that begins unleashing powerful energy balls toward the Titans. Orzulak opts to call in an orbital slug, a special attack that devastates anything in its target zone. The player controls the circumference of the attack, meaning you can either use it for a surgical strike against one specific target or a less accurate area attack that can pepper the many forces within the targeted zone. Once the slug eradicates the turret and Vega's units eliminate the remaining enemies, the drop zone becomes an ready for action. Orzulak immediately calls in an Orca, anticipating more ground installations in the areas ahead.

Orzulak's choice to go guns blazing into the DZ proves to be short sighted, as the Scrin begin a counterattack on his forces while another group of Archons moves to attack the Tiberium spike. Orzulak places his squads into a defensive formation and leaves them to protect the DZ - he's going to save the spike by himself. Using the jump-jet to move quickly across the battlefield and back to the spike, Orzulak finds an elevated position perfect for picking off Scrin moving in to assault his precious resource installation.

Vega's tactical decision making has served him well thus far, but the battle is only beginning, and the Scrin tower still looms ominously over the battle pitch. Only time will tell what devious purposes this menacing structure serves, and if Vega has the tactical savvy and accurate shooting to keep our race afloat.

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End of article

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GameInformer Article January 2008

Tiberium

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Sidebars featured in the article referencing key features and background.

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## MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Forget collecting weapons from fallen foes and comrades; a forward battle commander doesn't use scraps when it comes to scrapping with his enemies. In Tiberium, Ricardo Vega is armed with the GD-10, a transformative, four-in-one weapon capable of dealing punishment under any circumstance.

Mag Rail - Consider this your de facto weapon setting. The magnetic rail operates as a standard futuristic assault rifle useful in most battle scenarios.

Energy Cannon - No arsenal is complete without a gun capable of dealing a massive blow from a long distance. This pseudo sniper rifle fires a focused energy beam that obliterates most anything it hits. Use too much and it will overheat.

Grenade Launcher - If you see a group of enemies huddled together, switch to this mode and spray some indirect fire in their direction. This is also the weapon of choice for fighting while using



the jump jet, since accuracy isn't paramount.

MLS - The multi-launch system lets you target and lock onto multiple enemies. After painting your targets, pull the trigger and watch the fireworks; the gun unleashes a missile that splinters and takes out each victim with precision.

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## FANCY YOURSELF A GENERAL?

Forward battle commanders who master the single-player campaign will be immediately ready for player-versus-player online battles; all the major gameplay elements of the single-player game apply directly to multiplayer. The sole multiplayer mode operates like Battlefield's famous conquest mode, which tasks you with gaining control of set points on the map-in this case, Tiberium fissures. The Battlefield ticker has been replaced with a timer, and the time bonuses and penalties are dependent upon gaining and losing territory, respectively. Capture and hold enough positions on the map and the timer will start to count down against your enemy. If your opponent cannot swing the tide of the battle back into balance, the timer will continue to tick down to zero and victory will be yours. When commanders die, they will respawn at either the drop zone or a Tiberium capture point.

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## THE ART OF ITERATION

Since Tiberium is being treated as a new IP by Electronic Arts, the development team was given a much longer development cycle in order to create and test new gameplay ideas. During a visit with Sims creator Will Wright, executive producer Chris Plummer was encouraged to test core gameplay elements with simple board games before beginning production on a console. Plummer's team took the suggestion to heart and created several game prototypes, which were shown off to the entire EALA studio in a science fair-like fashion. One of the stars of the prototypes was a board game (see below) [cannot post image - find a screen shot] that helped the developers find the perfect balance between first-person action and tactical gameplay. The team then developed a low-fidelity version of the game to make sure the squad control and first-person combat worked together harmoniously. The Tiberium team passed the demo to fellow EALA employees and their feedback was used to fine-tune the gameplay.

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## SYMPHONY OF DESTRUCTION

Bringing a battlefield to life is a lot more complicated than just sticking soldiers on the pitch and letting them have at it. To make the Tiberium war feel alive, EALA has invested heavily in state-of-the-art interactive audio/visual technology unlike anything we've ever seen before. Most games use a canned audio background track that makes it sound like a battle is happening. But audio visionary Erik Kraber, best known for his amazing work on the Medal of Honor series, has put together a new audio system capable of mixing every single shot that's happening on the screen. To keep the player from feeling disoriented, a line of sight system will help focus the audio

around Vega's actions and immediate threats.

On the visual side, EALA has created a new atmospheric technology layer that gives the Tiberium action a very realistic feeling. The particle system is so profound it allows explosions and their smoky aftereffects to be affected by other explosions. For instance, a missile trails will cut through smoke clouds left from the smoldered remains of the fallen buildings or enemies. The technology is also capable of creating heavy fog banks, which can create a feeling of claustrophobia and fear as your R.A.I.D. ventures into the unknown.

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