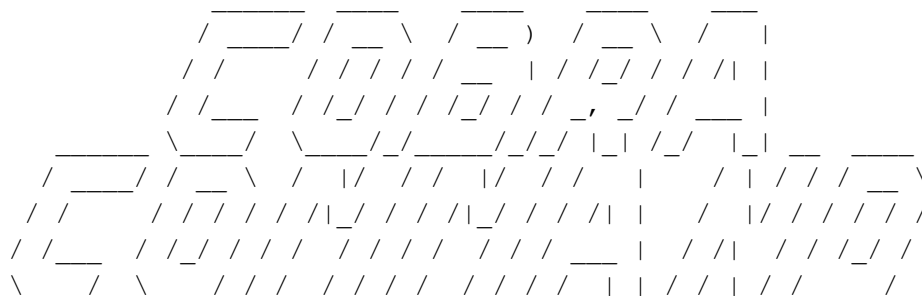


Cobra Command FAQ/Walkthrough Final

by glass_soul

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This walkthrough was originally written for Cobra Command on the NES, but the walkthrough is still applicable to the SEGACD version of the game.



Final Version
A FAQ By
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Well, I'd wanted to be the first to post a FAQ for Data East's Cobra Command, but someone beat me to the punch. Oh well. At least you've got some variety for your gaming assistance now.

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1) INTRODUCTION

The world is in an uproar! An evil terrorist organization, determined to rule the world (think Cobra from G.I. Joe... that really wasn't meant to be a pun considering the name of the game and all, and- oh all right, I'll shut up) is rising and making trouble in Indonesia. All attempts to bring these bad, bad men to justice have failed, with the allied armies being decimated. Those who aren't killed taken have been taken hostage. The powers-that-be have decided on a last-ditch attempt to end the threat and bring peace back to the world.

Their plan: send in an experimental helicopter, called the Cobra, with one daring pilot to see if one person can succeed where armies have failed. Yes, you are General Powers, and you have been selected to pilot the Cobra. Your mission is two fold: rescue all the hostages, and end the terrorist threat once and for all! (And what the hell kind of organization sends a freaking GENERAL into front-line combat?)

2) CONTROLLING THE CHAOS

There are two main screens you're going to have to deal with through Cobra Command; the main screen and the sub screen. Let's start with the main screen, since that's where most of the action takes place. The following section details all of the controls you'll need to navigate through the gauntlet of enemy hardware that the forces of darkness are going to be heaving in your direction.

PRIMARY CONTROLS

Control Pad - Use this to move your helicopter in any direction you feel like. And I do mean any direction. The Cobra is a very nimble craft to pilot; you can fly in virtually any direction as you battle the evil terrorists.

Start - Pressing start calls up the sub screen. Much more on that in a minute.

Select - Because you will need to backtrack in several areas, pressing the select button will make the Cobra turn around and face the opposite direction. Considering the mechanics of the game, this is an extremely useful command.

A Button - Pressing the A button fires the Cobra's selected missiles.

B Button - Pressing the B button fires the Cobra's selected guns.

Your Cobra 'copter is also equipped with a rescue device (first a rope, later a ladder) for saving the multitude of hostages that are scattered throughout the game. Your rescue device will automatically deploy when the hostages come out to flag you down.

NAVIGATING THE SUBSCREEN

The sub-screen has a wide variety of options for you to screw around with. In order, the options are as follows.

Guns - Allows you to toggle between the various kinds of gun-weapons you'll pick up as you cruise through the levels of the game.

Missile - As with the description above, except with your missile weapons.

Armour - Note the British spelling. Anyhoo, armor (hotdogs) is the only thing you don't have to directly equip; armor is activated the moment you pick it up.

Engine - Allows you to switch between the different speeds your Cobra can fly. An invaluable asset, as you'll soon learn.

Rescue - Allows you to toggle between the rope or the ladder for rescuing hostages.

Score - Checking your score will tell you how many points you've earned, how many lives you have left, and how many hits are left on your armor before you'll be shot down.

Hostages - This will tell you how man total hostages are on the stage you're currently on, how many you have saved, and how many are left.

Messages - When you pick up the solo hostages on each level's overland, they'll often have information for you. After plucking one from the jungle, go to your sub-screen and check your messages to hear what they have to say.

Exit - Selecting this exits the sub-screen and returns you to the action.

3) WEAPONS, EQUIPMENT, AND P.O.W.S

As you fly through the terrorist strongholds, you will come to enemy supply depots that you can land on to gain more powerful equipment. Landing on these depots will also repair any damage your helicopter has taken, so it is important to the success of your mission to secure all depots. All new weapons and upgrades (except armor) must be activated via the sub-screen in order for them to take effect.

MEET YOUR UPGRADES

-
- GUNS** - Single - Your basic gun, fires a single bullet in a straight line. Not too powerful, and requires you to repeatedly press the B button for continuous fire.
- Dual - Fires two bullets at a time, widening your firing arc a bit and doing double the damage that your single guns do.
- Anti-Tank Gun** - Look and fires like your typical Single shot gun, but does three times the damage.
- Rapid Fire - Want to shoot fast? No problem! Each single bullet fired by Rapid Fire does no more damage that your starting gun, but the selling point is holding down the B button sends out an endless stream of fire.
- 3-Way - Fires bullets in a three way arc, covering both high targets and low targets.
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- MISSILES** - Single - Your starting Missile selection. Fires a single missile in a straight line. Firing rate is rather slow; you can't shoot another missile until your first has either impacted a target or flown off the screen.
- Twin - Just like the single shot missiles, except you can have two of them on he screen at the same time.
- Firebomb - One of the most useful things in your arsenal, the firebombs drop out of your chopper in a low arc, devastating anything below you.
- Homing Missiles - Sort of a misleading name, these missiles don't actually home in on anything. Rather, holding the A button down will allow you to drop the missile to any height. Releasing the A button will then send the missile hurtling in a straight line. Very useful in certain situations.
- Mines - Firebombs with a twist. Dropping a mine on land results in instant detonation. Dropping one in water will result in the mine floating on the waves a few moments and then exploding... or destroying any boat that runs into them. Need I say primo for taking out surface vessels?
- Homing Missiles 1 - Ahhh, now THESE beauties really do track targets. As with your single missiles, you can only have one of these on the screen at a time. Also their tracking abilities are not infallible, as multiple targets tend to confuse them. Still, they're probably better than anything else you've got in your arsenal when you get them.
- Homing Missiles 2 - Homing missiles squared. Essentially a "twin" version of Homing Missiles 1.
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- ARMOUR** - Normal - Your standard armor plating, you start with his. It allows you to absorb 4 points of damage before going down in flames.
- Armour - A step up from your regular protection. Raises your damage quotient from 4 to 5.
- Super Armour - The next level of protection, this raises your damage

rating from 5 to 7.

Hyper Armour - The best protection you can get, this defensive item raises your damage rating to the maximum level of 9.

ENGINE - Normal - Your standard engine setting. You don't move like a snail, but quicker enemies and heavier barrages of gunfire will necessitate an upgrade before too long.

Turbo - Effectively doubles your speed and maneuverability. Once you get this engine setting, it should become your default setting when maneuvering about inside enemy installations.

Super - Doubles the speed of your turbo engines. Great for out flying enemy jets and ditching enemy homing missiles.

Hyper - Want to fly fast? No problem! Equip these babies and you can essentially out run or out maneuver anything. Though great when used on the over-world of each level, I'd advise against keeping hyper engines equipped while inside enemy bases; it's far too easy to fly yourself into a wall.

RESCUE - Rope - You start with this item to help you rescue the hostages. Though much longer than the ladder you get later, hostages climb it much slower.

Ladder - Hostages scale the ladder very quickly, shortening the time you need to spend hovering in place to pick them up. The trade off is the ladder is less than half the length of your rope.

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT P.O.W.s BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

Of course, blasting the enemy to bits isn't your only goal. You also need to rescue all of the friendly prisoners scattered throughout hostile territory (somehow shoving 29 plus people into one helicopter). When one of these green-clad friendlys needs a lift, he'll pop out of the background and wave to your copter. All you do then is fly over to him, and your rescue implement will automatically deploy. If you're close enough, the P.O.W. will grab onto our rescue item and climb aboard.

Some of these P.O.W.s have "useful" information (note the sarcasm) to share with you. usually, when you pick up a solo prisoner from the over-world, he'll have something to tell you. In order to access this info, after the hostage has climbed aboard open the sub-screen, highlight Messages, and press A.

4) BAD, BAD, MEN

Of course, the terrorists have plenty of men and machines ready to take you down. If they didn't, this game wouldn't be much fun would it?

INCOMING!

There are several kinds of ammunition that the terrorists will be throwing at you.

Bullets - Cousins of what your own copter fires out of its nose, being hit by these will knock off one damage point per hit.

Everything Else - Missiles, artillery shells, grenades, etc. If it's not a bullet, it usually does 2 points of damage.

Traps - There is also a charming variety of ordnance that will kill you on contact. Gigantic fireballs, huge missiles, and those stupid, slinky-looking things on the final level all fall into this category.

STUFF YOU CAN BREAK

Now that that's out of the way, here's a complete breakdown of all the different, fun little things that will be trying to kill you.

Armored Car - 200 pts -

These are wheeled tanks that are basically armed with an enemy version of your three-way guns. They're a touch faster and a bit tougher than your typical tanks, and their gun spread makes them a bit more dangerous.

Artillery - 200 pts -

These guns have no visible wheels, but otherwise are identical to the mobile artillery in that they fire shells in an arc. Why that makes them worth more points, I have no idea.

Destroyer - 200 pts -

These are the biggest water-borne foes you'll face in the South China Sea. The destroyers launch homing missiles at you, one after another, making themselves a huge pain in the ass from the get go. The good news is, if you don't backtrack, you'll only ever encounter one of these bad boys (sometimes it won't show up even). It also moves like a slug and is a nice, big target.

Frigate - 200 pts -

Frigates are slightly larger than the tiny missile boats and they fire artillery shells rather than missiles. Still, they're not very fast, and since they present a larger target than the missile boats, frigates are debatably half as deadly.

Grenade Soldier - 100 pts -

Patrol set areas like all infantry enemies do, but instead of shooting missiles or bullets, they heave grenades in an arc. Grenades knock off two points of damage if they hit, and are a little trickier to dodge due to their arcing trajectory.

Helicopter - 100 pts. -

This is the first enemy you'll encounter in the game. Though cannon fodder on the first two stages, they wise up on the third level and start maneuvering all over the place making swatting them out of the sky a bit harder. Enemy choppers attack with bullets.

Jet Fighter - 150 pts -

After stage 3, these take over the roll of the helicopters as your basic enemies de jour. They only fire bullets, but they're much faster and way more maneuverable than the choppers. Their most annoying attack is simply running into your helicopter.

Missile Boat - 200 pts -

The smallest of the surface vessels you'll encounter on level 4, these little ships fire a constant barrage of missiles at your helicopter. However, the boats aren't fast and their shots don't have homing capabilities, so they really aren't that much of a threat.

Missile Car - 200 pts -

A missile truck squared. It essentially has the same capabilities as the

missile truck, but it carries heavier armor, allowing it to take a heftier beating.

Missile Carrier - 200 pts -

I'm really not sure why this thing is called a missile carrier. It looks like an elongated tank, and maybe it carries missiles, but it only fires bullets.

Missile Soldier - 100 pts -

Another infantry enemy, these guys fire missiles at you from shoulder-mounted rocket launchers. Though their missiles will put the hurt on you quickly, they don't have any tracking abilities.

Missile Truck - 150 pts -

It looks like a truck, and it shoots missiles (c'mon people, this isn't brain surgery). Though it has the ability to shoot missiles at you in several angles, its missiles won't home in on you.

Mobile Artillery - 100, 150 pts -

Any artillery with wheels counts as mobile artillery. There are two different kinds of this enemy. The first kind just sits there, even though its wheels would seem to indicate that it COULD move if it wanted to. The other kind does, in fact, move. Both varieties fire shells in an arc.

Rifle Soldier - 100 pts -

A guy with a gun. Rifle soldiers patrol a set area and fire bullets at your helicopter. As far as threats go, these guys are at the bottom of the totem pole.

Submarine - 200 pts -

These are probably going to be the biggest thorn in your side while on level 4. The subs will surface, spit a few missiles at you, and then submerge again. Unlike the missile boats, the subs' shots will home in on you, making dodging their rocket powered death a difficult task indeed. On the plus side, you can see and destroy the submarines while they're submerged, and they can't fire at you until they surface.

Super Tank - 200 pts -

These are the toughest ground-based enemies you'll encounter in the game. Looking like a large tank with a double barreled square turret, they're fast, they can take a decent amount of punishment, and they're armed with the same three-way guns that grace the armored car. Take them out fast or you'll be in for a tough time.

Tank - 150 pts -

I seem to remember the instruction manual for this game claiming that there are two different kinds of tanks; tanks that carry shells and tanks that carry missiles. No. There are only tanks that carry missiles. Sometimes the missiles will track, but other times they won't. That's the only variable here.

5) THE FACTS OF LIFE

Your helicopter starts out being able to take a certain amount of punishment before exploding. For example, you begin the game with a damage rating of 4. Being hit by enemy fire reduces your damage rating. Most shots will only tick off one point of damage. However, some more powerful things like missiles, grenades, and artillery shells do 2 or more points of damage. When your damage rating has been reduced to 1, your helicopter will

catch on fire and won't be able to maintain altitude, making it harder to control. At 0, you're dead. Running into walls, buildings, or anything else results in instant death, as do certain traps that the enemy employs.

You begin the game with 4 lives. You earn an extra life each time you secure an enemy depot and get new weapons. Dying, of course, causes you to lose a life. Losing all your lives results in the infamous Game Over. You have the option to continue, which will start you back at the beginning of the stage you were currently on. But it also makes you lose any weapons, equipment, and hostages you may have acquired before you continued. Three continues is all you get, and then you have to start the game from the beginning again.

5) THE WALK-THROUGH

Okiee dookie artichokiee, here we go. Cobra Command spans what seems to be a scant six stages. Ah, the golden age of home video gaming, where less than ten levels was all you needed. We're going to move on quickly before I start waxing nostalgic and begin sounding like the old maid I'm becoming.

STAGE 1: SUMATRA

HOSTAGES: 20

EQUIPMENT: Turbo Engines, Dual Guns, Twin Missiles

Take off from your conveniently-located helipad and fly to the right. Soon you'll come to a lake, and your first rescuee will flag you down. Pick him up, talk to him if you'd like then proceed on your merry way. On the other side of the lake, you'll get your second hostage. See the building to your right? It's the first base. Shoot the circle-shaped structure on top of it until it explodes, then fly on down.

Blast the wall you come to apart by aiming for the bright yellow square and go on to your left. Take out the missile truck and then land on that rosy red platform to get your first upgrades; Dual Guns and Turbo Engines. Then go down the shaft to your left.

Down here, you'll be greeted by what the instruction manual called a missile carrier. It's not, it's just a weird shaped tank, so you won't have to worry too much about it. Blow it to pieces and then fly up to the red platform that it was guarding. Three hostages will come out and flag you down. Once you've picked them up, the tank will reappear. Kill it again, pick up three more hostages. Repeat until the music speeds up; that's your cue that you've saved everyone there is to save around here. Time to leave.

Once back on the surface, head fly right again, wasting things as you go. Your next hostage is at a small, brick structure that looks like a well to me. Grab him and continue. Once past the radar array, you'll come to a series of missile launchers that fire in a timed fashion. One hit from these babies kills you instantly, so slip through between blasts.

Aim for the star-thingy atop the next structure to blast your way into the second base, then enter and head left. You'll come to a great big missile. Shoot this thing in the circle area that looks kind of like a porthole, and when it's wasted, fly back to the entrance. Well look at that! There's now a hole in the floor! Fly down it and land on the red platform to your right for Twin Missiles, then go left.

It's the same set-up here: kill guardian, pick up three hostages, repeat. Except this time, you'll be facing a missile car, which actually does fire

missiles, so you'll need to watch yourself. Also, be careful when you fly back to take the car down again that you don't accidentally back into the grenade-tossing soldier who has an ugly habit of appearing directly behind you. Pick up 10 more hostages and you've beaten stage 1.

STAGE 2: JAVA

HOSTAGES: 28

EQUIPMENT: Super Engines, Firebomb, Armour, Homing Missiles

Take off and fly right, as is your wont. Before long, you'll come to a green ruin that has your first hostage waiting for pick-up. Grab him and continue on. Shoot the circular object on the next building (are we detecting a pattern here yet?) and fly inside when it collapses.

Hit the ball on the pillar to destroy it and head to your right. Shoot the circular object on the next building and go down when it explodes. Land on the first blue building you come to for your next set of upgrades (Firebombs! Oh hell yes!), then keep going left. Now a quick word about the Super Engines. While the extra speed does help when out-maneuvering enemies outside, I find that anything above turbo is a no-no when you're in a base. It's just too easy to get going too fast and slam into walls (and other things).

Now, the next blue building is guarded by a missile firing tank. You know the drill. Destroy the tank through several bouts and save all the hostages before backtracking to the surface.

Fly right (don't hug the ground; there's a trap that will spring up out of the sand and kill you if you're not careful). Your next hostage is waiting for you atop a cylindrical pink building that looks like nothing so much as a grain elevator made of bricks (he's another chatty one, if you're interested). Pick him up and keep on a-going.

When you get to the long, pink building, hit the circle thingy again to open it up like a bean can and then dive right in. Shoot the winged lion in the head to blast yourself open a path, then head left. Be careful of this next cage-looking thing; you'll be safe if you pass through it from the top but you can run into it and die from the sides. Land on the blue building for your second dose of power-ups this level, then blast the pillar in the circle and keep moving.

Now here you have a situation identical to the last complex except for two minor differences; the ceiling is falling and the guardian tank fires homing missiles. Despite those two minor problems though, this should still be a snap to complete. On to stage 3!

STAGE 3: BORNEO

HOSTAGES: 27

EQUIPMENT: Hyper Engines, Mines, Ladder, Anti-Tank Gun, Homing Missile 1

Start by heading right again (big surprise, eh?). The enemy helicopters are going to start flying a little better from here on in so you'll have to watch out. Keep flying until you come to a small, pink structure with three divots in the top of it. Don't fly over; those divots will launch missiles at you that track, and are very hard to avoid. Switch your missiles to Firebombs and hit each one with a bomb; this will prevent any rockets from firing. Proceed.

Your first hostage is just past the cabin. Grab him and go (talk to him, if you'd like). The first base in Borneo is directly in front of you, but

there's a bit of a twist first. You have to double back to the small pink building just after the missile platform for the next hostage before you can enter. Once that's done, fly back to the base and shoot the cone-shaped protrusion near it's top (this particular complex spits out an endless stream of missile-firing helicopters, so you really do want to make quick work of it). Once that's done, descend.

Blast the small, raised platform to your right to create yet another hole to go down, then do so. Destroy the armored car and land on the building down there for your next set of new equipment. Then take back off and hit the cone-shaped protrusion sticking out of the wall to your left. Once that's blown to bits, proceed down the tunnel. Use your Homing missiles to take out the crate blockade and the artillery gun beneath you from a safe distance, then fly upwards.

Again, it will be tanks with missiles guarding the hostages in here. Beat the tank, rescue a trio of captives, and repeat until you've got them all. Then make your way back to the surface.

As you fly, the woods beneath you will suddenly burst into flames. So don't go too low. The next complex you come to isn't going to have an obvious weak-point. Instead, hit the central, cylindrical part of the structure. That will open up and allow you to descend.

You need to be careful here, because this place has a few more tricks up its sleeve than most. Blast open the wall to your left (hit the red part) and fly down the tunnel. Here, you'll encounter a trio of barriers that will try to crush you as you fly past. Scoot close enough to trigger them one by one (they only activate once) then continue on your way.

Hit the red part of the wall again, and very carefully maneuver your way down the narrow corridor (switching to normal engines helps immensely). Now we're back to the kill-tanks-rescue-hostages part of the game. But before you get too involved with saving people, see that small red section of the wall above you? Fly up there, and CAREFULLY nose forward into it. It's the last depot of this level and it gives you some nifty stuff. Also, be warned that when you come out of the depot screen, BOTH the tank AND the artillery guns will have returned. Once all the goodies are in your possession, go ahead and complete the level. I'd suggest switching to Homing Missiles and hovering over the spot where the hostages come out to be rescued. When the tank re-spawns, simply drop a missile on it's head. Repeat ad infinitum and it's on to the next level!

STAGE 4: SOUTH CHINA SEA

HOSTAGES: 29

EQUIPMENT: Rapid Fire, Homing Missiles II, Super Armour

Before we get started here, there's a little quirk about your Mines that might be helpful for you to know. Though they will explode immediately, acting just like the Firebombs, if dropped on the ground, when dropped in water, they'll stay there for a moment or two before detonating. At any rate, let's get started.

Fly to your right and when you come to the first big ship, drop down and shoot its front (bow for those of you with a nautical turn of mind) until it blows open. Fly inside of it, save hostages, kill tank, blah blah blah. Then leave and continue to your right.

Keep on keepin' on to the right, and eventually, you'll come to an island with a fort-like structure built on it. Aim for the green square on the

left side of the structure to open the base up, then proceed inside. Head to your right, descend a level, and land on the pink building to get some more weapons for your collection. And now get ready for an extremely annoying obstacle. Flying to your left will bring you to an enemy submarine. An enemy submarine which launches an ENDLESS STREAM OF HOMING MISSILES. UP TO FOUR OF THEM AT A TIME. AND THERE'S N*O*T*H*I*N*G YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT. Dropping mines or firebombs on the sub's missile hatches does nada to stem the flow of explosives aimed at your face. I advise the following: switch your engines to Hyper, and make a kamikaze run to the sub's conning tower. Once you reach this spot, land as close to it as you can. The homing missiles get fired upwards a bit before their tracking abilities kick in, and with you directly next to their launch point, they won't have time to target and hit you. Rescue the here hostages held on the sub, and then get the hell out of there.

Once back to the surface, head right again. After fighting your way past a bunch of warships and super, SUPER annoying jet fighters, you'll come to a battleship. Ignore it. It's a pretty large and detailed sprite for an old Nintendo game, but you can't hurt it and it's got absolutely nothing to do with finishing the level. You'll next come to a mountain with an active volcano at the top. Avoid the magma, blast the green square under the radar array, and enter the next enemy installation.

Head down, down, down. Break the armored car, blast the pink building to open the next hole in the base, and head down, down, down some more. Blast the pink panel with the twin circles to open the way forward. Destroy the super tank, and land on the pink building to secure this next enemy depot. Once you've been equipped with your new weapons, you'll automatically go to the next area of the base. Blast the pink panel again, nose forward carefully into the pink building ahead of you, and get ready for some fun. And if you didn't notice the sarcasm, you need your ears checked.

The last room in the South China Sea is guarded by a missile tank. No big deal right? You've been dealing with those since the second stage. Ah, but complicating this charming room is the fact that three of the four corners of the room are going to be constantly firing missiles at you. Thank God they don't have homing capabilities, but they fire about twice as fast as normal enemy missiles. Equip firebombs since the tank will be below you, and I'd go as high as super engines to out maneuver the missiles, but Hyper is probably still too fast. There's no easy way through this one, you will likely lose a life or two. Once all the hostages are safe, it's on to the next level.

STAGE 5: SIAM

HOSTAGES: 7

EQUIPMENT: 3-Way Guns, Hyper Armour

Alright! We're almost done here! Fly right (as usual) shooting anything that moves. Once you reach the hole in the clouds, you'll automatically descend to the ground level. Keep on flying right. On this charming stage, you'll encounter several entertaining obstacles, such as zeppelins that drop bombs at you as you fly under them, and blue cones that are actually missile silos which launch those damn, agile homing missiles at your head as you pass. After playing with enough of the enemy's hardware, you'll come to a big, brown, temple-looking structure. You know the drill by now. Hit it at it's top, where the circle is to open it up, and fly inside.

The interior of Siam's base is a maze. Drop your engines down to Normal or you'll be killing yourself every five seconds by crashing into the walls. Maneuver your way through this pit, until you reach the second gray

building guarded by a super tank. Blow it to pieces and land to secure that enemy depot. Then continue weaving your way through this place. Once you reach the bottom level, be wary of the six gold plates that line the floor and the ceiling; they fire great big shells, the size of your helicopter, when you get near them. However, like the bar traps in the last building on Borneo, they only get one chance to get you before they're safe to pass. Once that threat is behind you, it's time to break tanks and save hostages again. This time, the prisoners are guarded by a super tank, but you ought to be well-enough equipped by now to deal with that threat fairly easily. All 7 hostage are held in this area, which should make ending this level pretty simple, right?

Nope, this time you're not done yet. When that last hostage climbs onboard your helicopter (incidentally, what the hell kind of attack chopper can hold 42 hostages?) the wall above the building collapses. Like a moth lured to a bug-zapper, can you resist following the path that has just opened before you?

What a stupid question. Of course you have to go that way, otherwise you'll never beat the damn game. Onward.

Heading to your left will bring you to a series of golden panels on the floor and ceiling. The first one's harmless but the second and third one will spew fireballs at you. Scoot forward between blasts until you come to the "boss" of this stage, a doorway guarded by a pair of cougar heads that breath fireballs at you. What you want to here is advance until the door is fully on the screen, then retreat to the first, passive panel. Stay towards the top of the screen; The upper statue won't detect you and this will keep you out of the lower one's firing arc. Now switch to Homing Missiles and control them so that they fly into the eye of the lower statue. Once it's taken enough punishment, the thing will explode, and it's on to the final mission.

STAGE 6: ENEMY HEADQUARTERS

HOSTAGES: 0

EQUIPMENT: None

No hostages here. No depots either. Just you, your helicopter, and the enemy's last bastion of soldiers, tanks, planes, choppers, artillery pieces, ships, and whatever the hell else they can throw at you. Ready?

Head right as usual, and the first thing you'll encounter are these red launching platforms that spew gigantic fireballs upwards. These projectiles are instant death to the touch, and they fire very, very fast. To get past these damn things, hug the ground and scroll the screen as far forward you can go without killing yourself. Then, between blasts, rush through, again staying as low to the ground as you can. I recommend using normal engines to get the maximal scroll out of the screen, and then switching to hyper engines when you need to dart through the fireballs. Once past that hideous ordeal, you'll come to a pair of statue heads. Blast the lower one in the forehead until the ground opens up, then fly down to the next level.

Looks more like ancient Rome than a Para-military terrorist's base, doesn't it. We've got a bunch of more obstacles for you to dodge here. Red towers shoot fireballs vertically, while it looks like the terrorists have borrowed those fireball chains from Bowser's castles in Super Mario Bros. Once past that carnival of idiocy, you'll come to an enemy base. As the orange cylinder moves in and out of the base, lava balls will spew up from the ground as well as from the ceiling. These aren't too accurate, however, so you shouldn't have trouble dodging them. Aim for the red object that

looks like a gun turret on the ledge above the base. Once you've dealt out enough punishment, the base will explode, opening up the way for you to continue further into the enemy headquarters. The only direction available? Why down, of course!

Ready for some more entertainment? See those spooky faces on the tops and bottoms of this level? They'll swing out what looks like a chain of metal balls at you as you attempt to fly past. Again, touch these and die. The first two are located high, so fly low. The last one is low, so, uh, go high. As you approach the final obstacle, you'll pass a pillar in the background. Fireball will launch from the ceiling to the floor along this pillar, but it's only one of the damaging kind rather than the instant death kind, so you're safe to take a hit from it. Line yourself up with the fourth segment from the top, counting the capital as one (the capital of a pillar is, of course what the ornamental top is called, but you all knew that, right?). Now fly slowly forward. A large, pink, statuesque head will start hurling huge sparky thingies at your helicopter. THESE are death to the touch. But wait! Because you followed my advice, you are now not only in a safe zone where the head's bullets can't hit you! You aren't at the perfect angle to drill the thing in its noggin, but that can be mitigated by using Homing Missiles 2. After it's taken enough of a beating, the head will crumble, and you've won the day!

7) ANY SECRETS?

Afraid not. Cobra Command was made back in the good, old days when secret codes and special modes were a genuine surprise and treat rather than a standard equipment in video games. There are some interesting Game Genie codes, but since I've decided not to include such info in my FAQs (these things are usually too damn long as it is) you'll have to go shopping somewhere else for those. Sorry!

8) IN MY OPINION...

It's interesting how your perspectives on things change as you grow older. I remember Mortal Kombat the movie being the coolest flick ever made back when I was 15. I watched it again at 24 and realized while it was entertaining, it was also insufferably cheesy. When I was 6 or 7, I loved the Thundercats. Then I made the mistake of watching it again when Cartoon Network brought the show back on the now defunct Toonami in '96, and caught myself wondering what in the name of all that's holy I saw in the show. I also seemed to think Data East made top-notch games. Oops. Wrong again. That said, let's take a look at the nearly-forgotten title that I just vomited a FAQ for into your lap: Cobra Command. (Of course, I guess it would have been funnier if I'd decided to review Bad Dudes or some other unrelated game here, but oh well.)

Let's talk about the game's audio/visual package first. There are some nice visuals in this cart. The different mug shots of the various P.O.W.s that give you hints are very nice, and the animation of the Cobra turning around is decent as well. Adding splash graphics for crashing into water is a neat touch, one the programmers could have just as easily overlooked, and it's pretty neat when the Cobra catches on fire. The end pic is kind of stupid though, and everything else you encounter, from all the enemies to the hostages in the main game, are all rather small and un-detailed. There isn't much in the way of music here and like most Nintendo games the only things you're going to be hearing are explosions and gunfire, two sound effects that are pretty hard to screw up no matter what home counsel you're

playing on.

Cobra Command is not an easy game. Though there are only a scant six levels, by the time you reach stage three, your patients are going to be severely tested. The final stage may actually cause you to hurl your NES out a window after you've been hit by a death trap for the billionth time, and the limited number of continues ensures that you're going to have to start the whole thing over a time or two before you get it right. Replay value stems from playing through each of the levels over and over again until you know what to expect and can react accordingly. This may be an antiquated method of game programming, but for old NES titles it's standard procedure, so no points off for that.

The real innovation Cobra Command boasts is the ability to save your special weapons and switch back to something less powerful if the situation requires it. The perfect example of this is the difference between maneuvering within the enemy bases and flying around the outside levels. One the overworld, you'll need to move fast in order to dodge the multitude of gunfire and enemies that will be trying to kamikaze your helicopter. However, staying on hyper engines while zipping around the underground is a surefire way to crash into walls. Mines are useful for dealing with surface ships, but worthless in all other situations, necessitating a switch back to something you acquired earlier. This was truly innovative for its time.

All and all, Cobra Command boils down to an average action game with a unique twist to your collecting of power-ups. It's not a bad title. It's not an excessively GOOD title, either, but for a few hour trip down memory Nintendo lane, you could do worse.

6 out of 10

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8)ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND LEGAL MUMBO-JUMBO

We'll start by thanking Data East. The designer always deserves premier credit for making the game in the first place because without the game, there would be no massive waste of time, energy, and limited Internet space called this FAQ.

This FAQ was, unlike my others where I had to do some research, entirely written by me in every way, shape and form. So don't mess with it. Once again, I did turn to GameFAQS to see if there were any codes or cheats hidden within the game's plastic hulk, but there aren't.

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Comments, questions, corrections and other forms of feedback in general are all welcome.

I may be reached at elfuego767@yahoo.com.

Next time, my little friends.

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