

Balloon War

By John Morrison

INTRODUCTION: Imagine, if you will, that it is 1942. The war was going bad for the Allies, but now they are on the offensive. The scene is North Africa. You are an agent of the American Foreign Service, and you have a mission to get to the British forces trapped deep in Libya and inform them of the impending offensive. If you can't get the Allies plan's to the British, the offensive may fail due to lack of a rear effort.

The question is how to get to them? The British division is effectively cut off from radio communication. Also, the German forces have a tight land blockade of the area between the allies and the remnants of the British Expeditionary Force, therefore camels are out.

There is hope though. The underground resistance movement has arranged for a balloon to be placed on a remote Southern Mediterranean beach behind German lines. It is entirely possible that you can fly over the Germans to the British force, because the German army is devoid of air forces.

Both the Allies aircraft and the Germans are engaged in a battle for air supremacy at the front lines. The rear of both armies is uncovered. You will land on the shore during the day from a submarine, and travel the long thirty miles inland to the British over hostile terrain.

The British HQ is an abandoned castle located next to a forgotten desert spring. Along the way are German supply dumps, camouflaged as boxy houses (the German officers in charge of camouflage don't realize there are no boxy houses in the desert). Because of the condition of your balloon (leaky), you may be forced to destroy any German forces guarding these dumps with bombs, land, and replenish your fuel. and sand bag supply.

If you land in hostile territory (an area that still has enemy troops in it), you will be captured and shot. Good luck.

REQUIREMENTS: TI-99/4A console Disk drive and controller
Extended BASIC cartridge

LOADING

(1) Place the XB cartridge in the cartridge slot, turn on the computer and the peripherals, and press any key to advance to the master menu.

(2) Place the program disk in the disk drive, and select Extended BASIC, option #3 on the TI-99/4 or #2 on the TI-99/4A. The program will automatically load and run. To QUIT, press FCTN "=" at any time.

INSTRUCTIONS

There are three levels of difficulty. These levels reflect the accuracy of the enemy fire, and the condition of the balloon. Choose appropriately.

It is recommended that first time users opt for level one. When the game screen appears, press the fire button to begin. Once the balloon is in flight, you have five controls available to you;

"FIRE" button - use your kerosene burner to increase altitude.

pull "LEFT" - To cause your balloon to tack against prevailing winds (towards the sea).

pull "RIGHT" - To cause your balloon to move forward faster.

pull "UP" * - To release a bomb

pull "DOWN" * - To release a sandbag, in order to escape enemies while in flight, or to pull out of a dive during rapid deflation.

[* The software supplied used the opposite: UP to release a sand bag, DOWN to release a bomb. There may be two versions.]

A number of these options use varying amounts of fuel, replenishable at supply dumps. Bombs and sandbags are limited too, but can also be replenished at supply dumps.

Using these controls, you can ride the prevailing winds directly to the British HQ. Along the way, you will be fired at by German infantry, armor and artillery. If you are hit, you will begin to sink fast. You must quickly release a sandbag to recover from the fall.

After being struck the balloon will leak more; descend more rapidly.

You may repair most of these leaks at a supply dump. To land at a dump, destroy any enemy units stationed around it by bombing. Then land anywhere on the same screen as the dump. Supplies then will be replenished. To take off again, depress the "fire" button. This results in the loss of a sand bag. Once in flight again, you may not return to a previous dump. The game ends when your balloon is destroyed, or you reach the HQ

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