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Ghost Squad - Nintendo Wii

Can this bring back the classic shooter to your TV?

by Chris Pickering published on 15 February 2008

It's a bit of a surprise that it's taken such a huge amount of time to find a true old school light gun title on the Wii. Yes, Resident Evil: Umbrella Chronicles was a corker, but it lacked the real immediacy that the likes of Time Crisis and Virtua Cop possessed by the cart load.

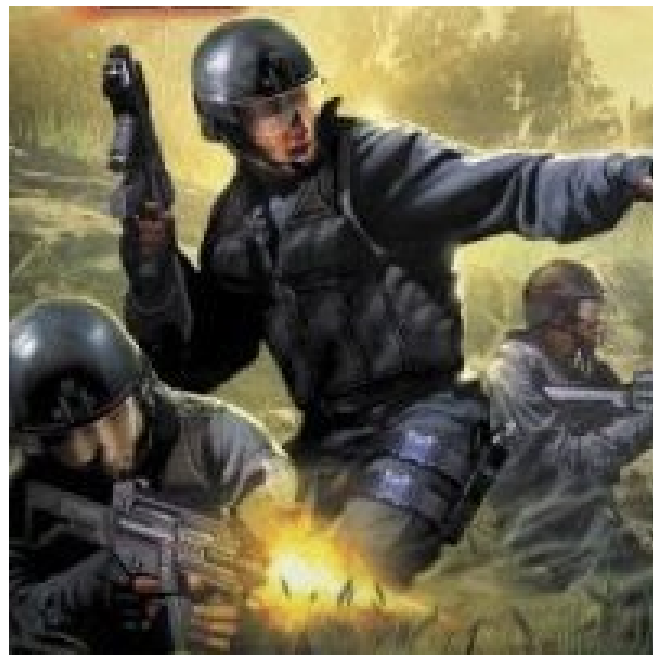
Unlike the aforementioned Resident Evil-based classic, Ghost Squad has little interest in doing anything to progress the genre. Settling down for a swift bash of this certainly brings back all those memories of early-90s arcade visits.

Like the usual light gun formula, your movement is staunchly on rails, unlike the latest Time Crisis release which has attempted to introduce freedom of movement to hide its arcade origins.

With your movement handily taken care of, you simply have to keep your finger on the Wii Remote trigger, and making sure your aim is true once an enemy is daft enough to poke their head into your firing line. The enemies, of course, have not a semblance of intelligence, with their movement staunchly scripted to be sure for ultimate enjoyment and maximal gaming pleasure.

The Wii's shockingly high level of ability to figure out exactly where you're aiming is shown off to wonderful effect here, particular once you turn off the on-screen aiming reticule. It simply makes Ghost Squad such an enjoyable experience, despite the lack of depth available.

Your first play through the game's three stages will take you roughly half an hour until you see the closing credits scroll. And that is that. Certainly a long way from what seems to be a current industry standard for arcade style games which stands at roughly half a dozen hours.



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Not that Ghost Squad doesn't attempt to drag you back time and time again. At multiple points during the short single player campaign you're given the opportunity to choose your own path, dramatically changing your experience of play. Add these multiple routes will no doubt encourage you to return another handful of times and you discover that Ghost Squad isn't quite as short as it first seemed. One choice could see you taking the enemy head on, while another sees you covering for an AI replacement.

Run through the game numerous times and you'll be rewarded with a stream of weird and wonderful modes that change the gameplay on offer. Who wouldn't want the experience of facing a constant stream of ninjas after all?

Don't expect the story to keep you coming back however. This strange over-the-top tale is one of those arcade-style examples that's there purely to keep the loading screens exciting rather than spinning the kind of yarn to expand your mind.

Being based on an almost 4-year-old arcade title, it is little surprise that Ghost Squad isn't the most aesthetically pleasing game on the Wii. Backdrops are mainly drab, characters are blocky, and the less said about the over-the-top voice acting the better.

VERDICT

Despite its phenomenally short single player mode, the budget price makes Ghost Squad an essential purchase for fans of old school light gun -style action. It's dumb, fairly easy, and over-the-top, but each of the numerous times you'll be encouraged to play through will offer constant fun.

Gamers eager for a brand new gaming experience however will balk at its short-lived campaign, its poor visuals, and its gameplay that seems ripped straight from the mid-90s.

At a glance

What is it?

Old school light gun shooter

Good

Lots of fun, real old school blasting action, tonnes of extras

Bad

Short single-player campaign, poor visuals, ridiculous over-the-top story

Verdict

For old school light gun fans, this is an enjoyable, if short-lived, example of the much missed genre

Price £35

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10