



TOTAL ANNIHILATION

DESIGNED BY CHRIS TAYLOR

A GW Press Mini Strategy Guide

Selby Bateman



The Galactic War

Long ago the galaxy had known peace. Paradise was ruled with the hand of science, and the hand was that of the galactic governing body known as the Core.

Paradoxically it was the ultimate victory, the victory over death itself, which brought about the downfall of their Paradise and started the war that would decimate a million worlds. The process, which was called “patterning,” involved the electronic duplication of brain matrices and allowed the transfer of consciousness into durable machines. Effectively it meant immortality, and the Core decreed the process mandatory for all citizens in order to ensure their safety.

There were many who were unwilling to toss aside their bodies so casually, many indeed who regarded patterning as an atrocity. They fled to the outer edges of the galaxy, where they banded together to form a resistance that became known as the Arm. War broke out, though it was never officially declared by either side. The Arm developed high-powered combat suits for its armies, while the Core transferred the minds of its soldiers directly into similarly deadly machines. The Core duplicated its finest warriors thousands of times over. The Arm countered using cloning. The war raged on for over four thousand years, consuming the resources of an entire galaxy and leaving it a scorched wasteland.

Both sides lay in ruins. Their civilizations had long since vanished, their once vast military complexes were smashed. Their armies were reduced to a few scattered remnants, which continued to battle on ravaged worlds. Their hatred fueled by millenia of conflict, they would fight to the death. For each, the only acceptable outcome was the complete and utter annihilation of the other.

Long ago the galaxy had known peace, and it would soon know peace again.





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Introduction

Welcome to the universe of *Total Annihilation*! You are about to join a fight to the finish, the culmination of a war between two opposing forces that have fought ceaselessly for thousands of years. Your role is to take either of the two sides of mechanized robotic fighters—Arm or Core—and ensure that the other side is reduced to a smoking heap of rubble. Sounds like fun, doesn't it! But there is more.

Total Annihilation is set in a real-time, 3D-rendered universe that looks, feels, and plays like no strategy game you've experienced before. The multiple terrains are truly 3D environments in which every hill, mountain, valley, river, sea, island, desert, and lava pit becomes a part of your strategy. Each of the more than 150 units in the game exists in a real run-time 3D form, interacting with each other and the terrain in very realistic ways. Finally, with a total of 50 single-player missions and some 30 multiplayer and skirmish maps, the variety of new game-play experiences never stops.

Be sure to order the full edition of *Unlock the Secrets of Total Annihilation* to help you get the most out of this rich and challenging universe. For order information go to page 39.

Now, let's get started.

How to Play the Game

Almost everything in *Total Annihilation* belongs in one of these four broad categories: Commander, Construction, Resource Management, and Combat.

Commander

Everything in *Total Annihilation* begins and ends with the Commander. Your Commander is central to all construction, resource management, and combat. The only time this is not a factor is in the opening mission for both Arm and Core, in which the Commander is rescued.

Most of the time, you will be ordering your Commander to build and repair structures and units with a nanolathe on one arm, and to fire his Disintegrator Gun with the other arm.

Construction

Total Annihilation requires you to learn what, when, where, and how to build the 150+ units that make up the game. The construction process is initiated by the Commander, who builds energy and metal generators, Kbot Labs, Vehicle Plants, Aircraft Plants, Shipyards, plus Radar and Laser



Towers—the basics. The Level-1 factories built by the Commander produce units that include Construction Kbots, Construction Vehicles, Construction Aircraft, and Construction Ships. These construct Advanced Kbot Labs, Advanced Vehicle Plants, Advanced Airfields, and Advanced Shipyards, which in turn produce more advanced Construction units. There are three technology levels in all, and the full edition of our guide provides a complete Unit Build Hierarchy for both Arm and Core that includes undocumented units and structures.

Resource Management

Total Annihilation does not force you to concentrate on the details of managing resources at the expense of what you are really looking for—intelligent combat. Both Arm and Core depend on Energy and Metal that are collected and used to create units and structures. While individual sources of Energy and Metal are limitless—for example, a metal mine never runs dry—finding enough Metal sources to tap is a major concern. In fact, Metal is the resource that you'll have the most trouble keeping in good supply. Good thing the Commander can reclaim metal from wrecked units and structures—it helps in a pinch.

Another aspect of resource management is keeping your fighting units and structures strong. The Commander can do this by repairing them, at some cost in Energy and Metal. This becomes an important part of your ongoing management tasks.

Combat

This is the heart of *Total Annihilation*, the most fun and the trickiest part of the game. At first, some players will be overwhelmed by the variety of units they have to choose from, plus those that are used by the enemy. So keep the Arm and Core Unit Build Hierarchies handy, and you'll pick up quickly who's who and what's what. There are various levels of any unit type. For example, Arm's Flash is a Level-1 light tank, the Stumpy is an Arm Level-1 medium assault tank, and the Bulldog is Arm's Level-2 main battle tank. There is also the Triton, an Arm Level-2 amphibious tank. To help you keep things straight, the complete edition of our strategy guide includes a simple tear-out card. Use it as a quick-reference tool while playing the game—it provides basic information on every single unit.

The best way to get started in combat is to simply sit back and watch. When Arm and Core units get near one another, the lasers and explosions start right away. Study how the game's artificial intelligence (AI) leads units under its command as they attack your troops. Pause the game frequently (by hitting F2), and identify which units mix it up at short range, and which stay in the back firing longer-range weapons such as rockets, missiles, and heavy artillery shells.

Good luck commander!



Three TA Commandments

The Arm and the Core have battled for thousands of years, and there is much to be learned about their warfare techniques. As a new Commander, you can benefit from the wisdom of those who have gone before you. The following TA Commandments are the bedrock on which you should base your individual strategies—ignore them at your peril.





Don't Lose Your Commander

The Commander is powerful, but not invincible. In the thick of things, it is easy to lose track of where the Commander is located. Press the Ctrl-C keys to immediately center the screen on the Commander at any point in the game. Early on, use the Commander aggressively to set up resource generators. He will also have to use his Disintegrator Gun more than once when your budding base is seriously threatened by an enemy attack. Once a game is well under way, however, be cautious with the Commander. If the enemy commands the skies, try hiding the Commander under water or in a nearby forest for safe keeping. Be careful, however; placing the Commander under water is very dangerous if the enemy has subs, since the Commander cannot fight back when submerged.

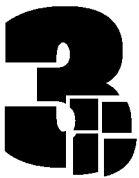


Choose Terrain Wisely

Total Annihilation brings a new real-time 3D environment to life that affects game play in a variety of ways. Mountains, rivers, lava pits, oceans, and forests offer you unique opportunities to use the terrain to your advantage when establishing bases, planning ambushes, and attacking enemy bases.

Mountainous and wooded terrain presents many difficulties along with opportunities. Tanks operate better on open terrain where they cannot get bogged down. Artillery units, by contrast, can take advantage of rough terrain by firing over hills and forests and shooting from mountaintops.

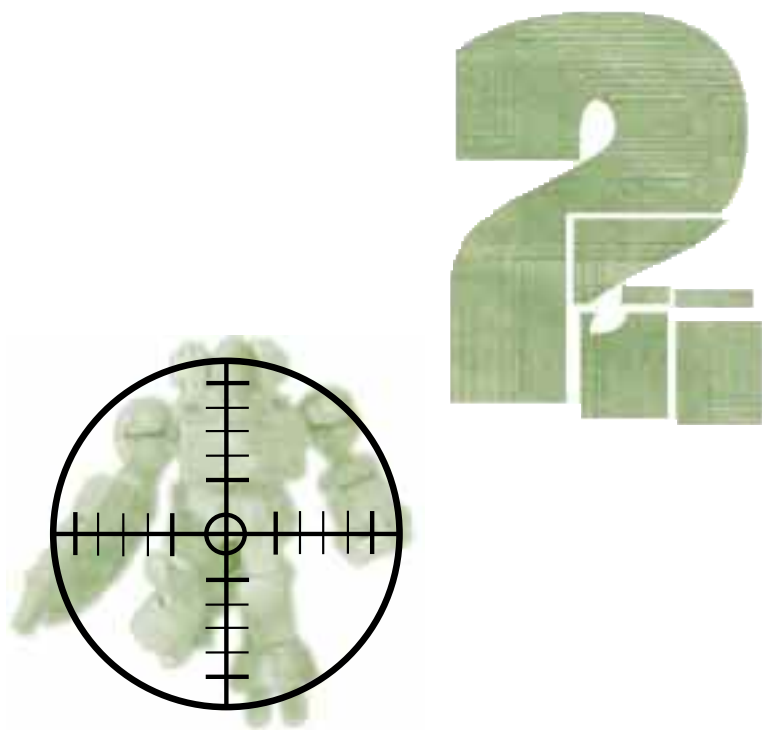
Real-time game play in *Total Annihilation* is affected by terrain in ways that are different from any game you've previously played.



Combine Land, Sea, and Air Forces

It takes time and lots of resources to build up combined forces, but the whole entity is worth more than just the sum of its parts. Land forces occupy territory for you, and provide control of resources. Air and sea forces support and extend the ability of land forces to capture territory, and defeat the enemy. *Total Annihilation* was developed so that you cannot build strong, advanced armies, navies, and air forces too easily, and all at the same time. You have to make informed choices about what you develop first.

In general, build up land forces, first. Establish bases, then consider building air and sea forces next, depending on your strategy. This will depend on the game you play—whether it's land or sea that dominates the map.



Winning Strategies

So, you think you're ready to test your military skills in the constantly exploding universe of *Total Annihilation*. Do you know how to get the most from your Commander? Can you control squadrons of air-craft with deadly precision? Do your enemies attack your bases only to withdraw in confusion and disarray? Check out these winning tips from our *TA* pros.



Making the Most of the Commander

The Commander is both powerful and vulnerable. Since the death of the Commander can mean the end of a game or a mission, where and how you use the Commander is crucial.

- **Speed up construction.** The Commander builds structures two to three times faster than construction factories and units. By adding the Commander's building power to a construction project already under way, his speed is added onto the current speed.
- **Use the Commander's cloaking option.** The Commander can use his cloaking ability to hide. This costs 1,000 energy units (EU) per second if he is moving, but only 200 units a second when standing still. When you have reached a high-production economy, the Commander can stay cloaked all the time.
- **Make the Disintegrator Gun count.** The powerful D-Gun has a short-range blast radius that can destroy more than one enemy unit or structure when close together. Use this to your advantage whenever possible. But be careful not to frag your own troops when using the D-Gun in close combat situations.

Building Strategies

Certain kinds of terrain and particular missions or human opponents will dictate what you build and when. Another building factor is your preferred style of play. Defensive gamers tend to favor pouring more resources into building formidable but expensive stationary defenses that are difficult to assail. Offensive gamers, by contrast, tend to keep bases spread out, expand quickly into new areas for additional resources, and spend more metal and energy on producing offensive weaponry and scouts. Whatever your strategic preferences—offensive or defensive—here are a few fundamentals to keep in mind.

- **Place Radar Towers as high as possible.** The higher the altitude, the better the radar coverage. When you click on a Radar Tower, the mini-map in the upper left corner of your screen will show a circle that tells you how far the radar coverage extends.
- **Build cheap Sonar Stations out front.** Protect Torpedo Launchers behind Sonar Stations when building base defenses on the water. The Stations will pick up enemy subs, and the more expensive Torpedo Launchers will be able to fire without being out front as targets.
- **Construct factories next to mountains and buttes.** For protection from long-range cannons and artillery, build your factories under the protection of any tall hills, buttes, or mountains so that a shell's trajectory will prevent it from falling on top of the factories.



Offensive Strategies

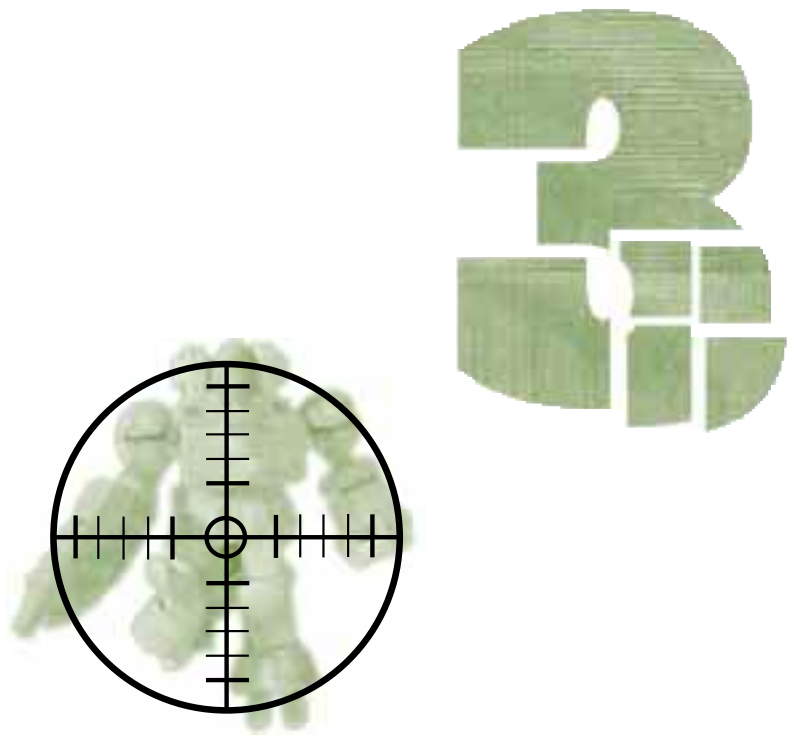
Build your offensive strategies around the strengths of the different mobile units in your arsenal. These vary greatly, depending on whether you're putting together a land, sea, or air campaign. Of course, most of the time you'll be combining elements of all three. Below, we'll look at several different approaches by both Arm and Core. Remember that the order in which you take these actions changes, depending on the single-player mission or the multi-player map.

- **Concentrate your fire.** In close-combat situations, concentrate your weapons on important targets one at a time to get the most effective results. For example, when attacking a base, concentrate tank and artillery fire on one defensive structure at a time to more quickly destroy it. Then immediately move to the next one, and so on.
- **Control squads with the Ctrl plus 1–9 keys.** Whether it's land, sea, or air forces, use the Ctrl and 1–9 keys to build squads of mobile units. This works especially well for aircraft that can otherwise be difficult to control in groups.
- **Use air transports to build secret bases.** An air transport can carry only one unit at a time. Carry a radar jammer to a remote location and set it down. Return to your base and pick up a Construction Vehicle or Construction Kbot, then place it next to the radar jammer. You can build secret bases, protected by the radar jammer, for surprise attacks.

Defensive Strategies

The best defensive strategies in *Total Annihilation* include stationary defensive structures with overlapping lines of fire as well as mobile units that can move swiftly to intercept enemy attacks on your base. Whether you side with Arm or Core, try these defensive approaches:

- **Lay down Dragon's Teeth.** Channel enemy attackers into killing zones outside your base by laying down rows of them that funnel the enemy into the line of your heaviest defensive weapons. Order a mobile construction unit to build several rows of them while you're off taking care of other business.
- **Patrol aggressively.** Scout vehicles, light tanks, and smaller Kbots (PeeWees, AKs) are excellent base patrols—mobile enough to answer threats no matter where they come from. But don't overlook fighter aircraft as perimeter early-warning systems. They patrol more rapidly and can cover more territory faster.
- **Build wisely.** Take advantage of terrain features between your base and your enemy's base by building Light Laser Towers and positioning scout vehicles, Kbots, and light tanks along the way. These emplacements not only reduce the number of your attackers, but also serve as an early warning system and an obstacle course for the enemy's attack units.



Arm and Core Common Structures and Units

Whether you start from the green forests and mountains of Arm's planet Empyrrean or the harsh metal-plated sterility of Core Prime, you'll be using the units and structures in this chapter to build and battle your way to ultimate victory or ignominious defeat. These are the weapons and tools that are common to both sides of the conflict, and each of them has its own role to play in your efforts. Learn them well and you'll prosper; ignore them and you're the other guy's lunch.





Energy Storage

Type: Level-1 storage structure

Description: Your energy and metal resources need to build up, and that cannot happen without storage structures that double, triple, or even quadruple the basic 1,000-unit capacity.



Strategic use: Early on during a mission or multiplayer game, you may not need to build an Energy Storage structure—you can make sure you have adequate supplies by carefully monitoring your resources' inflow and outflow in the Resources Bar at the top of the game screen. Try to keep the Current Usage figure slightly lower than the Current Production figure. In a campaign of any size, however, the ability to stockpile energy and metal can make the winning difference—you will need to produce units in a steady stream.

See also *Metal Storage*



Kbot Lab

Type: Level-1 construction plant

Description: The most basic of weapon-producing facilities, the Kbot Lab provides you with the infantry, artillery, rockets, and anti-aircraft weaponry that you need to get started.



Strategic use: In both solo and multiplayer games, try ordering your Commander to build a couple of Solar Power Plants and a Kbot Lab right away. Assemble groups of PeeWees or A.K. infantry and some artillery or rocket units for backup, and then immediately begin harassing the enemy. This can throw a scare into a human opponent, who usually isn't expecting offensive enemy action so early in the game.

See also *PeeWee*, *Hammer*, *Rocko*, *A.K.*, *Storm*, *Crasher*, and *Thud*



Light Laser Tower

Type: Level-1 laser tower

Description: The Light Laser Towers are among the first group of defensive weapons available when you build a base. Because of their quick, relentless laser fire, multiple laser towers are effective at helping briefly hold back attackers in the early stages of a game. That's especially true if they're sited so that two or three Towers can concentrate their fire on narrow choke points such as valleys, which enemy units can pass only one at a time.

Strategic use: Placing a few laser towers on hills considerably away from home base can play havoc with enemies approaching your base. They give you advance warning and cut down the strength of the attacker. But, their armor is not as strong as advanced laser towers.





Metal Extractor

Type: Level-1 power generator

Description: The basic source of metal resources, the Metal Extractor is easy to build and easy to destroy, too. Since metal is the resource most likely to run short, locating metal deposits and getting metal extractors going is a crucial activity early in the game.

Strategic use: When you place a Metal Extractor some distance away from your base defenses, try setting up a laser tower nearby to ward off inquisitive enemy units.

See also *Solar Collector*



Radar Tower

Type: Level-1 radar tower

Description: Cheap and effective, Radar Towers are good investments early in the game. The Radar Tower provides a window on what your opponent is up to, working especially well when placed on a hill or mountain ridge—at least until the enemy builds a radar jammer.

Strategic use: Always build more than just one Radar Tower. You cannot run the risk of having your radar disabled at a critical point.

See also *Sonar Station*



Solar Collector

Type: Level-1 power generator

Description: The Solar Collector is one of the two basic resource generators—the Metal Extractor being the other one—that the Commander initially builds. Solar Collectors are cheap and quick to build.

Strategic use: Solar Collectors can act as a cheap defensive buffer if sited in a ring around a base. Just remember that once they start getting blown up, your energy production will drop in a hurry.

See also *Metal Extractor*





Sonar Station

Type: Level-2 sonar structure

Description: With the substantial threat posed by submarines, Sonar Stations become a key defensive element in “water” missions and maps featuring plenty of seas. A defensive ring of these stations can prevent surprise sub attacks that otherwise may be undetectable.



Strategic use: Protect Sonar Stations with Torpedo Launchers and submarines against enemy sub and surface attacks when possible. They are vulnerable, and cannot be exposed to attack. Note that the torpedoes launched by attack subs and torpedo launchers have a much longer range than the enemy sub’s sonar. Try placing the number of cheap Sonar Stations in front and longer range structures in back. Thus you can shoot enemy subs without danger, and only lose a few cheap Sonar Stations.

See also *Torpedo Launcher*



Tidal Generator

Type: Level-2 power generator

Description: In sea missions and watery environments, the Tidal Generator becomes an important source of energy. This is especially so if, during an island campaign, you find that land space is at a premium or unavailable.



Strategic use: Try to build Tidal Generators in easily protected areas, even though enemy threats aren’t easy to pinpoint before they actually appear.



Torpedo Launcher

Type: Level-2 torpedo launcher

Description: A torpedo launcher is a stationary water structure equipped with sonar and torpedoes. Effective against both ships and submarines, Torpedo Launchers are excellent perimeter defense structures on sea maps. However, their rate of fire is slow.



Strategic use: Set up Torpedo Launchers in the water along your base perimeter close enough so that their ranges overlap. Any ship or submarine that tries to go between them will attract torpedoes from both sides.



Arm Units

Your base is under attack from enemy aircraft! Quick, is it better to use a Jethro or a Hammer for anti-aircraft fire? Why are Zippers good units for hit-and-run missions? For mountain attacks, are you better off with a squad of PeeWees or a small group of Flash tanks? These are life and death questions for you as you lead the Arm forces. Study their strengths and weaknesses, and then prepare for battle, Commander!





Crusader

Type: Level-1 destroyer-class ship

Description: The Crusader has good anti-submarine capabilities, but is only lightly armored and does not last very long in fierce sea battles.

Strategic use: Use the Crusader to patrol areas of the sea that are vulnerable to submarine attacks. Because of its lack of heavy armor, however, don't try to use it to slug it out against a powerful enemy.

Corresponding Core unit: *Enforcer*



Flash

Type: Level-1 light assault tank

Description: One of your first, and best, weapons is the quick-moving Flash light tank. The speed and relative low cost of the Flash make it a good weapon for recon patrols, against light targets, and for harassing the enemy.

Strategic use: Try building a good-sized squad of Flash, *PeeWee*, and *Hammer* units, then mix in a few heavier weapons such as *Merls* and *Lugers*. Throw them en masse against the enemy. The Level-1 light units will draw initial enemy fire while the heavier units rake the enemy from a safe distance.

Corresponding Core unit: *Instigator*



Hammer

Type: Level-1 artillery Kbot

Description: The heaviest hitter among Level-1 Kbots, the Hammer can deliver significant damage to the enemy. Its short range is balanced by fire-power that is adequate against most units.

Strategic use: In the early stages of a game, try producing a squad of mixed PeeWees, Flash tanks, Rockos, and Hammers, and then send them on a raid against an enemy base. This harassing maneuver can disrupt the enemy's production.

Corresponding Core unit: *Thud*





Jammer

Type: Level-2 mobile radar jammer

Description: This mobile radar jammer blocks radar signals, just like the *Eraser*.

Strategic use: Build several Jammers and have them patrol round your base so that the enemy radar is totally blocked. Also, include a Jammer in small assault groups so that they stay undetected until visual contact.

Corresponding Core unit: *Deleter*



Lurker

Type: Level-1 submarine

Description: The submarine is one of the most effective sea units in *Total Annihilation*. Difficult to spot, the Lurker is relatively fast and its torpedoes are deadly. Most aircraft won't detect it.

Strategic use: Although a sub can withstand some damage, its real power is in its stealth and its firepower. Be aware, however, that the reload time for a sub's torpedo tubes is far from short.

Corresponding Core unit: *Snake*



PeeWee

Type: Level-1 infantry Kbot

Description: The PeeWee is the “grunt,” the infantry Kbot that's the cheapest to make. But PeeWees are a good bargain—they are fast, maneuverable in mountainous terrain, and pack twin Energy machine-guns. PeeWees can see farther than many other ground units, so they make excellent scouts.

Strategic use: Don't underestimate the usefulness of PeeWees. Although they get chewed up quickly by Core forces, when cleverly used en masse they can rapidly climb many tough ridges and attack defending units from several sides simultaneously. Also, use them as temporary perimeter sentries if your radar system isn't operational, or is of limited use because of terrain.

Corresponding Core unit: *A.K.* (albeit an A.K. fires a light laser rather than twin Energy machine guns)





Rocko

Type: Level-1 rocket launcher

Description: This rocket launcher works well in the early stages of a game, supplying medium- to long-range support along with the *Hammer's* artillery, while your *PeeWee* infantry and *Flash* and *Stumpy* tanks handle the short-range combat.

Strategic use: Position your Rockos behind your base perimeter defenses to provide fire support without exposition to danger. Because of their range, Rockos will frequently begin firing before your front troops engage. Be careful with those rockets to avoid friendly fire casualties when your units are right up against the enemy's.

Corresponding Core unit: *Storm*



Stumpy

Type: Level-1 medium assault tank

Description: The Stumpy is a medium assault tank, stronger and slower than a *Flash* light tank, but faster and with weaker armor than a *Bulldog* main battle tank.

Strategic use: Stumpy and Flash tanks work well together in the early part of the game. The Stumpy is not expensive, and has adequate armor plus a powerful plasma cannon for good offensive/defensive qualities. Its biggest drawback is similar to the Bulldog's—the Stumpy is clumsy enough to get bogged down in narrow valleys and among dense wrecks and ruins.

Corresponding Core unit: *Raider*



Core Units

The mighty armed forces of Core await your command. From A.K. infantry to Weasel scout vehicles, the units and structures below will take you to a stunning victory over Arm—if you understand how and when to use them. This is your alphabetical reference guide to Core, including unit type and description, strategy tips, and the corresponding Arm unit.





A.K.

Type: Level-1 infantry Kbot

Description: The mainstay of Core infantry, the A.K. Kbot is an inexpensive and versatile land unit. It handles most types of terrain well, has a respectable spotting range, and is fast enough to be employed as a recon unit. However, the AK's light laser is a weaker weapon than the twin Energy guns mounted on Arm's PeeWee.

Strategic use: Despite its light armor, the A.K. is a good choice for raids on Arm bases early in the game. Accompanied by *Weasel* scout vehicles, it can quickly knock out metal extractors and solar collectors before the enemy has a chance to build base defenses. Later on, the AKs limited firepower relegates it to secondary roles; because of its low cost, it's useful as a sacrificial goat—a unit to draw enemy fire.

Corresponding Arm unit: *PeeWee*



Crasher

Type: Level-1 anti-air missile Kbot

Description: This is Core's first anti-aircraft weapon. Although relatively slow, it can patrol your base perimeter and defend it from incursions by hostile aircraft, especially early in the game. Later on, more sophisticated AA defenses become a necessity.

Strategic use: Include three or four Crasher units in any attack force that you are sending against the enemy base. Crashers provide a measure of AA defense against enemy aircraft attempting to strike your task group; place them in a protective ring around your other units.

Corresponding Arm unit: *Jethro*



Diplomat

Type: Level-2 mobile rocket launcher

Description: The Diplomat is a mobile missile launcher whose missiles have a considerably longer range than those fired by the Level-1 Slasher. The Diplomat's warheads are predictably much more powerful than the Slasher's; however, it is vulnerable, and should be provided with a defensive screen of hard-core combat units.

Strategic use: Include a half-dozen Diplomats in major base assaults. Their long range enables them to hit the enemy base from a distance, while your strike force mixes it up at close quarters.

Corresponding Arm unit: *Merl*





Instigator

Type: Level-1 light assault tank

Description: The Instigator can be a particularly valuable weapon early in a game, especially when used in squads of four to six tanks in open, vehicle-friendly terrain. Mountains and forests limit the Instigator's maneuverability, which is its greatest advantage; its quick-firing laser doesn't do that much damage. It can also serve as a good mobile sentry, patrolling your defensive perimeter.

Strategic use: Recon, patrol, and small scale offensive actions. Instigators are relatively cheap to build (887 energy, 110 metal). Build a half dozen of them early in a game, and use them as a hit-and-run squad. When guarding a perimeter, this kind of squad responds quickly to raids on your base.

Corresponding Arm unit: *Flash*



Raider

Type: Level-1 medium assault tank

Description: The Raider has the best combination of armor, firepower, and maneuverability among Level-1 Kbots and vehicles. However, it's slow enough to be easily surrounded and destroyed on its own by three or four PeeWees. Use the Raider in a squad with other Raiders, Instigators, and Kbots for best results.

Strategic use: Mostly offensive. Early in a game, when assaulting an enemy base, concentrate the fire of half a dozen Raiders on dangerous base defenses, such as Arm's Sentinel heavy lasers and Guardian artillery units.

Corresponding Arm unit: *Stumpy*



Storm

Type: Level-1 rocket launcher

Description: The Storm is a good base defender, and a strong though slow attack unit. Its heavy armor lets it stand up well in furious battles. It's best deployed behind attacking front-line A.K. infantry and Instigator tanks—its rockets have a very respectable range.

Strategic use: Another very versatile unit, equally at home in both defense and offense. Groups of three or more Storms maximize their effectiveness. When the action starts, this helps compensate for the Storm's relatively slow reload time.

Corresponding Arm unit: *Rocko*





Thud

Type: Level-1 artillery Kbot

Description: The Thud is a good weapon early in the game. It is capable of indirect fire over obstacles such as hills, water, lava pits, and other obstructions. The Thud has good armor for a Level-1 unit, although it is not very fast.

Strategic use: Both offensive and defensive. The Thud is ideally suited for early-game offensive actions, when not much weaponry is available. Because it is cheap to produce, you can create attack squads that include from four to six Thuds even for these early attacks. In base defense, Thuds work well when deployed in support of structures such as the Light Laser Tower.

Corresponding Arm unit: *Hammer*



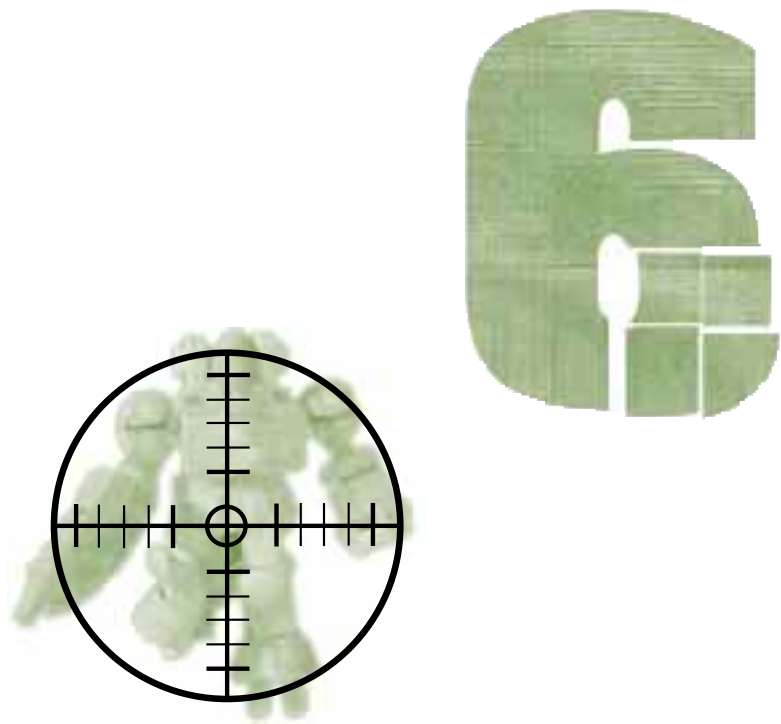
Weasel

Type: Level-1 scout vehicle

Description: The Weasel scout vehicle has several uses early in the game. Because of its speed, this is a good unit to harass enemy Commanders trying to build their bases. The Weasel also makes a good unit to have positioned near Metal Extractors and Solar Collectors early in the game. They can respond quickly to fast-attack units that try to get into your base.

Strategic use: Patrol, recon, and light strike. Use Weasels on patrol around the perimeter of your base. They can engage and slow down attacking enemy units well outside your base perimeter. They are also the best land vehicles for quickly scouting out metal deposits on the map.

Corresponding Arm unit: Jeffy



Arm Missions

The final war between Arm and Core begins among the green slopes and forests of Arm's home planet, Empyrrean. Core invaders have set up bases from which they plan to conquer the entire planet. Some terrain is hilly, thick with trees, and broken by rivers—favoring rugged Kbots that can climb steep mountain walls and artillery units that can fire over hills and across streams. Other areas are more open and level, providing good land for swift-moving scout vehicles and lumbering tanks. As Arm fights back, the action shifts to other planets, including Thelassean where submarines, destroyers, battleships, and cruisers become the weapons of choice for the Arm and Core navies. In all your missions, you must build your energy and metal resources carefully to be able to afford the Kbot Labs, Vehicle and Aircraft Plants, and Shipyards that are the foundation for your armies, navies, and air forces.



Mission 2: Core Kbot Base, Destroy It!

Difficulty Level: Easy

Major Objectives: Build a base, including a Kbot lab. Then, cross the river to the west with a force strong enough to destroy a Core Kbot lab and all defending units.

Starting Forces: Commander, 2 PeeWee infantry Kbots, 2 Rocko rocket-launcher Kbots, and 1 Hammer artillery Kbot



Mission Briefing

This introductory mission enables you to get familiar with establishing a base and a defensive perimeter, building a Kbot lab, and assaulting a Core base. Core units are not overly aggressive. The Core base is lightly defended by three well-placed laser towers and about two dozen Kbots, mostly A.K. infantry, and a few Storm rocket-launchers and Thud artillery bots.



How to Win

- ▶ **Build your base at your starting point (1).** Order your Commander to set up three metal extractors on the three metal deposits there; then build two or three solar collectors.
- ▶ **Prepare for Core A.K. infantry.** A few Core units will approach you from a ridge (2) and from across the river (4). Send a PeeWee and a Rocko to the riverbank and a PeeWee, Rocko, and Hammer to the base of the ridge to defend those positions while your Commander is building energy and metal generators.
- ▶ **Build a Kbot lab at your base (1).** Order the lab to start cranking out an assortment of PeeWees, Rockos, and Hammers. Don't bother building anti-air Jethro Kbots in this mission, unless it is for practice in maneuvering them.
- ▶ **Command the heights.** Have your Commander build two Light Laser Tower (LLT), one next to each Ford at the hilltop that overlooks the river (3). Any Core units that approach that point from south or north will come under the LLTs laser fire. A steady stream varying between five and ten A.K. infantry is patrolling just east of the hill along a narrow north-south valley. They may stray into your perimeter.
- ▶ **Cross the river.** There are two shallow points along the river, one near the southeast corner of the map and the other just to the west of your base (4). The south crossing is fairly well protected by Core AKs and laser towers, which may open fire before your units are out of the water. The passage west of your base (4), however, is only lightly defended, and you'll find a good staging area for your growing army once you've made it across the river. You may also try a simultaneous attack at both crossing points. A decoy attack at one crossing point draws Core troops, allowing your main attack to encounter less opposition.
- ▶ **Attack the Core base.** The Core Kbot lab is located at the southwestern corner of the map (6). Before you get there, you should destroy a Core laser tower (5). To maximize your firepower, attack any laser tower, such as this one, from more than one angle at a time. If, you've been building your PeeWees, Rockos, and Hammers all this time, you should have a good force ready to wade into the outlying defenders and then the base. You can advance your forces straight along the river to take out defenders or turn west and south to destroy the base and then the remaining Core units.



NOTE

In early missions, not all Level-1 units are made available to you. When you move the screen cursor over a deactivated selection, no information about that unit will appear at the bottom of the screen.



TIP

Practice issuing multiple commands to the Commander by choosing a unit in the Build selection box, such as a solar collector. Then, holding the Shift key down, place the build cursor over one or more locations on which you want to build those units. This enables you to have the Commander build multiple units while you're busy with other duties. Remember that you can also line up a production queue in your Kbot lab—just click repeatedly on the unit production icon in the Build menu.



Mission 6: Beachhead on Thalassean

Difficulty: Medium

Objective: Your Commander has just stepped through a Galactic Gate to Thalassean, a windy planet largely covered by water. Secure the island on which the Commander lands, then withstand the attacks of Core naval units. You must destroy all Core units in this mission to win. This is the first step in driving Core from Thalassean in a future mission.

Starting Forces: Commander



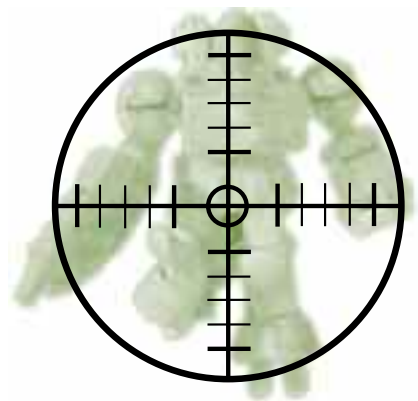
Mission Briefing

This is primarily a siege mission in which your Commander must hold the island, building a Shipyard and a Kbot plant to generate ships, artillery Kbots, and Guardian plasma cannons to repulse the naval attacks. Be ready for immediate defensive measures when the Commander steps through the Gate.



How to Win

- ▶ **Have the Commander shoot the Core welcoming party of AKs.** If you can do it without using the Disintegrator Gun, then reclaim the metal A.K. remains. Build three Metal Extractors and three Wind Generators. Remember that this is a windy planet. You will have to watch for one or two Core Searcher scout ships in the harbor. Have the Commander destroy them. A forest fire may result from your A.K. battle. There is not much metal on Thelassean, so order the Commander to reclaim metal from wreckage.
- ▶ **Get power resources up and running.** Once resource generators are going, build a Shipyard in the protected harbor (1). Order the Shipyard to build two Lurker submarines, followed by a Construction Ship, a couple of Crusader destroyers, and then more subs. There still remain a couple of AKs on the island—either capture or destroy them. You must keep building ships as fast as possible.
- ▶ **Prepare for the onslaught.** Core naval units will come at you from several directions, particularly from east and west. Put a couple of subs at the mouth of the small harbor (2) until you can get your Construction Ship there to build a couple of Torpedo Launchers. The Construction Ship can also reclaim metal from sunken ships. Don't risk using the Commander for this dangerous job. The Commander is slow and has no defenses under water. Build a small fleet of Lurkers and Crusaders, plus a couple of Skeeter scout ships to be able to counterattack against Core ships.
- ▶ **Destroy Core Snake subs and Enforcer destroyers.** These Core units are patrolling just outside the harbor. They will be aggressive. Once your naval operations are going, move the Commander over to the west side of the island (3) to build a Kbot Lab. You need to build six to eight Hammer artillery units to target Core surface ships that will come in to destroy Arm forces on the island. The Hydra missile frigates are the most deadly, but the Enforcers can cause damage as well. You'll also want to build a Construction Kbot that can start creating Guardian stationary plasma cannons along the western shoreline. The Guardians are excellent choices for island defense.
- ▶ **Take subs and destroyers to the west side of the island.** As your navy grows, dispatch a small squad of ships, including two or three subs and two destroyers, around the north side of the island to the west coast. Set up patrols there, up and down the west coast.
- ▶ **Build an Advanced Shipyard.** As soon as the Advanced Shipyard is constructed, build a couple of Piranha attack subs and two Conqueror cruisers. The cruiser's long-range guns will help against surface ships, and the Piranhas are very effective against Core subs.
- ▶ **Keep your units mobile and aggressive.** Core will run out of ships eventually, and the attacks will slow down and then stop altogether. You may have to send out your ships to hunt down the last one or two Core units. Your strategy should be to keep the Hammers busy, moving around the island in response to Core naval attacks. When the Hammers' health drops to half-strength or less, have the Commander or Construction Kbot repair them. Have at least two Guardian cannons pounding Core surface ships; and be very aggressive with your subs, especially when you get the Piranhas.



Core Missions

The first Core missions are played out on Core's metal home planet. Each battle field is a labyrinth of narrow metal canyons; completing the missions depends on how fast you can find your way through the maze. Fields of fire tend to be constricting, and an advance can be quickly blocked by a few metal wrecks. After you successfully fend off the Arm offensive, the action shifts to other planets that feature largely Terran terrain, complete with woods and large bodies of water. You'll quickly discover that using combined arms is absolutely essential to success. Careful resource management is a must in every mission, but particularly so in those that begin with your forces under Arm attack—you may have to build a Kbot lab first, then monitor energy and metal levels as you build units while expanding your base.

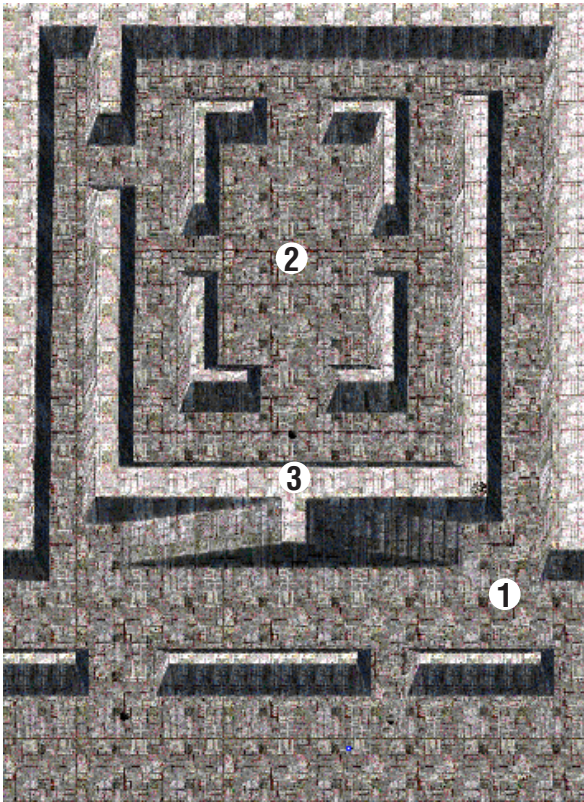


Mission 2: Vermin

Difficulty level: Easy

Objective: Build a base that features a Vehicle Plant, and—you guessed it—destroy all Arm presence in the area.

Starting forces: Commander, 2 AKs, 1 Storm in the southeast



Mission Briefing

Not unlike the legendary Minotaur, the enemy base is contained in the center of a puzzle—like a labyrinth. Consult the map. You start at point 1; the enemy base is at point 2. Each of the four points of entry into the enemy base is guarded by a Light Laser Tower, with supporting Hammers. You can duke it out with those guys, but you will have to do it with just a Vehicle Plant. You cannot build any other factory. This calls for tank and missile vehicles.



How to Win

- **Build and defend.** Build up your base while fending off early attacks, mostly by small groups of determined PeeWees. Energy tends to be in short supply; make sure you have enough Solar Collectors. Build a Vehicle Lab and produce a number of Instigators and Weasels for base defense. Monitor energy and metal levels carefully as you proceed. If you have lots of energy and metal, a few Raider tanks can make base defense even easier.
- **Send out a couple of weasels north and west to scout.** While all this building is going on, your base defense force should have expanded enough to allow an offensive foray. Clear the area northwest of your base of enemy presence (scattered Kbots) near point 3. Build Instigators and Raiders as fast as possible. There are LLTs guarding the approaches to the enemy base, plus their supporting units (mostly Hammers).
- **Hunt down enemy units.** With no radar available and no Level-2 weapons, you must depend on your Weasels, Instigators, Raiders, and Slashers to carry the day. Move forward, step by step, with your tanks and your Commander to sweep the map.



NOTE This mission teaches you to use your Commander in concert with your tanks. Practice selecting your tanks in squads with the Ctrl and 1–9 keys.

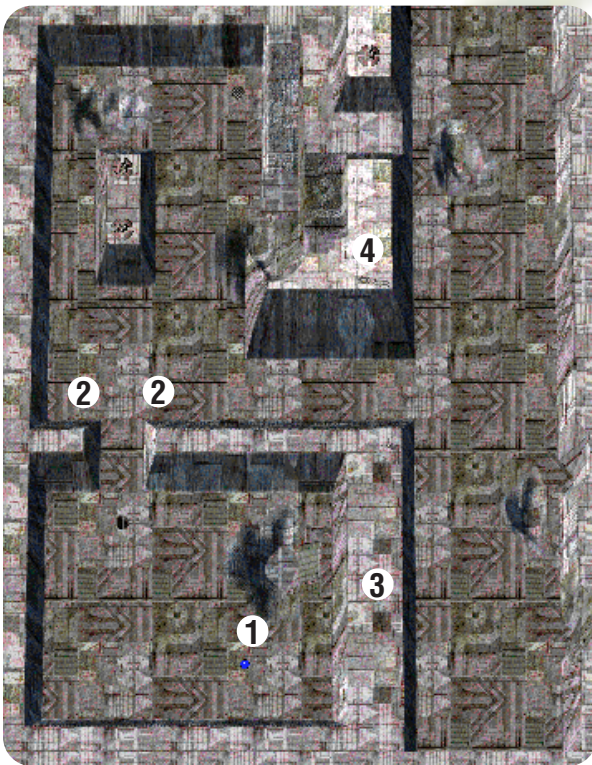


Mission 3: Ambush!

Difficulty level: Easy

Objective: Destroy not only Arm units harassing Core transports on Thoroughfare 405, but any and all Arm units in the battle area.

Starting forces: Commander, 2 Storms; also half a dozen Valkyries on Thoroughfare 405, as well as a Level-1 Construction Vehicle and several Construction Kbots. The Thoroughfare 405 units are beyond your control, but their destruction impacts your score.



Mission Briefing

The enemy doesn't have a base in this mission—just bands of marauding units. Some of these are perched on the two ridges marked 3 and 4 on the map. Others roam at will; some of them may stray into your base. Enemy forces are composed almost exclusively of Kbots—PeeWees, Rockos, Hammers; you also have the capability to produce several Level-1 vehicles.

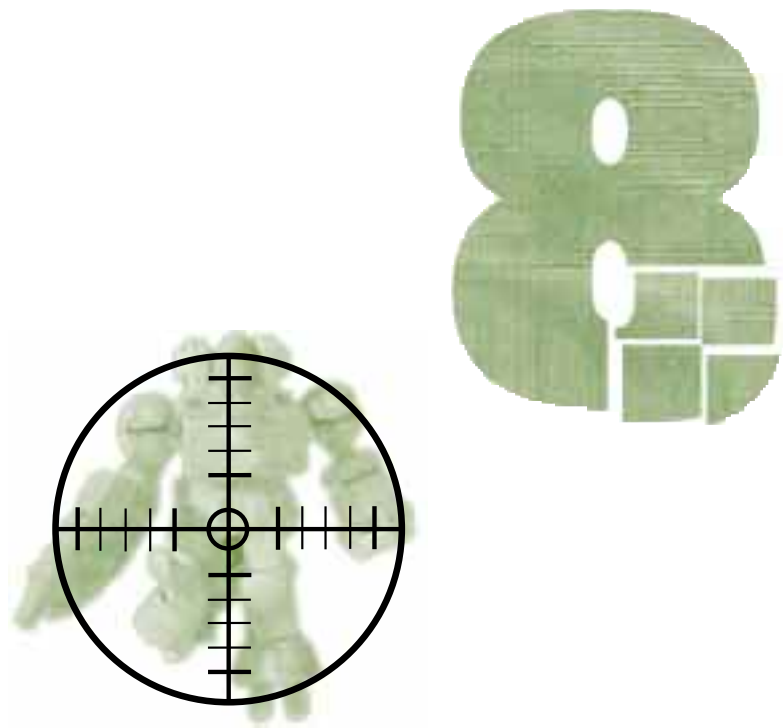


How to Win

- **Build your base and protect it from early enemy incursions.** Start building immediately around your starting point. Remember to leave lots of space between “active buildings,” such as Kbot Lab and Vehicle Plant; storage and resource-producing facilities may be squeezed together. Beware the ridge immediately to the east; if you build within spotting range of the Arm units perched on its top, you’ll put your structures under enemy fire. Additionally, enemy activity includes individual PeeWees and small groups of Kbots (PeeWee plus Rocko or Hammer, two PeeWees and a Rocko) waltzing into your base and starting to shoot up everything in sight.
- **Break out of your starting area.** Build a small base defense force of AKs and Storms even as the Commander is working on the Vehicle plant. When the Vehicle Plant is ready, build several Instigator tanks—they are better at dealing with Hammers than your Kbots, and there are two Hammers guarding the exit from your base area (2). Support the Instigators with Kbots when nearby Arm units launch a series of weak counterattacks.
- **Clear the heights of enemy units.** The two ledges marked 3 and 4 on the map are home to a mix of Arm Kbots—Hammers and Rockos. Use AKs as spotters for your Storms and Thuds. Ledge 4 is inaccessible, and your units will have to fire from below. Ledge 3 can be stormed, though not without casualties. Beware of wrecks halting your advance up the narrow access ramp.
- **Mop up remaining enemy units.** Take personal command of a small squad while setting the other units to “Roam” from the Orders menu. The mission ends only when the last enemy unit is destroyed, and this includes guys lurking half off-screen on both ends of Thoroughfare 405.

**NOTE**

This is still one of the “learning” missions. Its main lesson is learning how to direct long range rocket and artillery fire onto raised ledges from the ground below.



Multiplayer Strategies

The best way to enjoy *Total Annihilation* is to play against other people. Not that the single-player missions aren't challenging in their own right, but nothing beats playing against live opponents. Note: There are two ways to play multiplayer *TA*. There is the Skirmish multiplayer mode in which a single player can compete against up to three AI opponents. The game also has a variety of online multiplayer options, including IPX (for Local Area Network play), TCP/IP for Internet multiplayer games, and modem play for connection over a phone line between two computers. In addition, you can play *Total Annihilation* on selected online game services such as the Total Entertainment Network (TEN), Mplayer, and Kali.



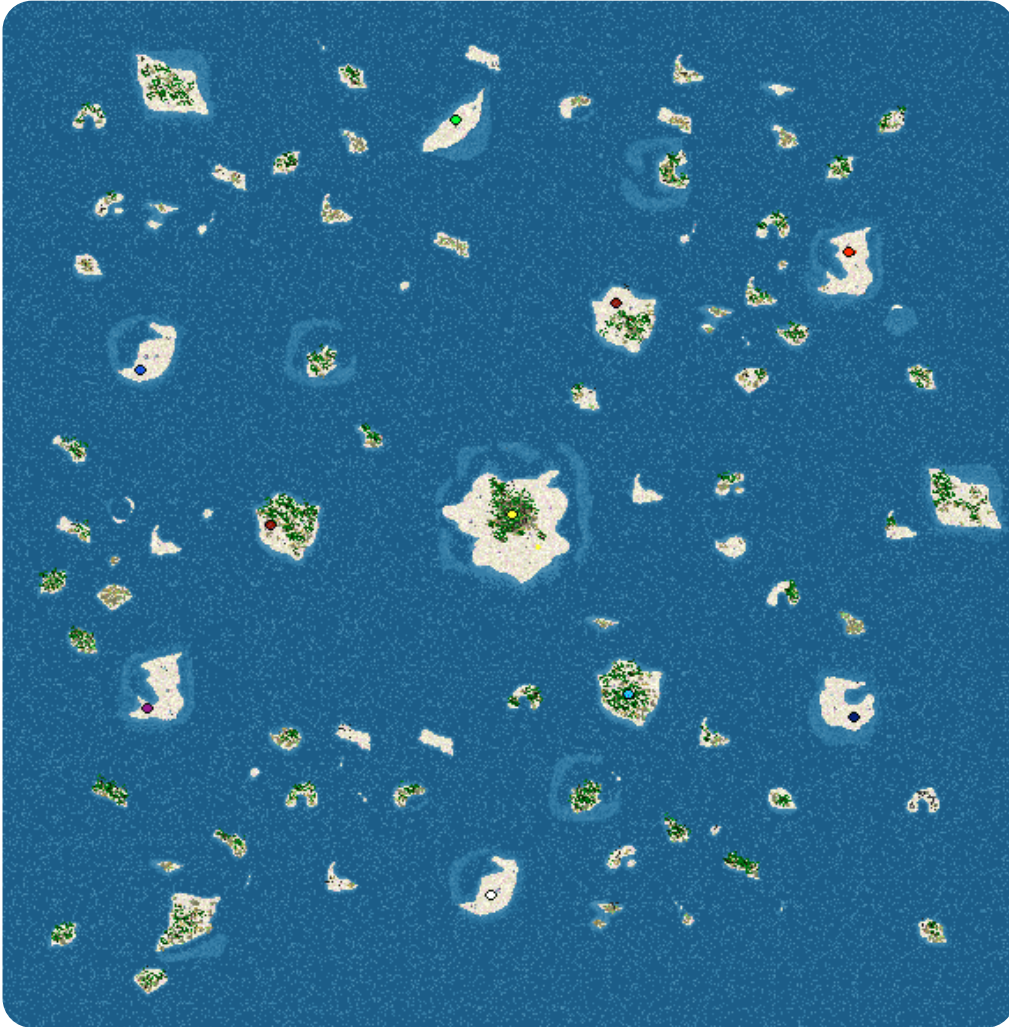
Total Annihilation was built from the ground up to include a flexible menu of configuration options that players can choose from when playing. This means that you can select in advance which units you and other players will use and even how many of each of them you can have at one time. To give you a head start on other multiplayer gamers, try these tips:

- ▶ **Use subs instead of Sonar Stations.** On maps containing large expanses of water, submarines can serve as mobile sonar stations. Choose this option when relocating your base on island-hopping campaigns so that your sonar is as mobile as your base.
- ▶ **Choose an ally from the enemy camp.** When selecting an ally in a multiplayer game, choose someone who is playing the other side—Arm or Core—so that you get the best of both sides’ unique units; for example, Arm’s Zeus lightning-gun Kbot and fast-attack Zipper as well as Core’s Goliath super-heavy tank.
- ▶ **Try an aggressive-defensive strategy.** To throw other players off balance, make your initial strategy aggressive by sending out scouts to find your enemies as soon as possible. Harass them early in the game, even if it means postponing your own base defenses. As the game progresses, you can slowly build your own defensive position *after* you’ve gotten the drop on your enemies.
- ▶ **Replace Level-1 factories to save space.** On island maps, such as the Hundred Isles multiplayer map (see page 37), space is very limited. When building Advanced Construction Plants, have your Mobile Construction Units first “reclaim” the metal from a Level-1 plant. Then place the Level-2 plant at the same location to save space.
- ▶ **Use Chat mode to let allies know when you find an enemy.** Chat capabilities permit allies to converse with one another. When you spot an enemy, use the Chat mode to tell your ally immediately to better coordinate your attack plans.

The full version of *Unlock the Secrets of Total Annihilation* also comes with more than 30 multiplayer- and skirmish-mode maps, broken down by size, number of players, and a brief strategic tip (see figure on page 37). *Size* tells you how many screens the map is wide and high (a “screen” is that portion of the map you see at any one time in the main game screen); *number of players* tells you for how many players the map has been play-balanced.



Hundred Isles



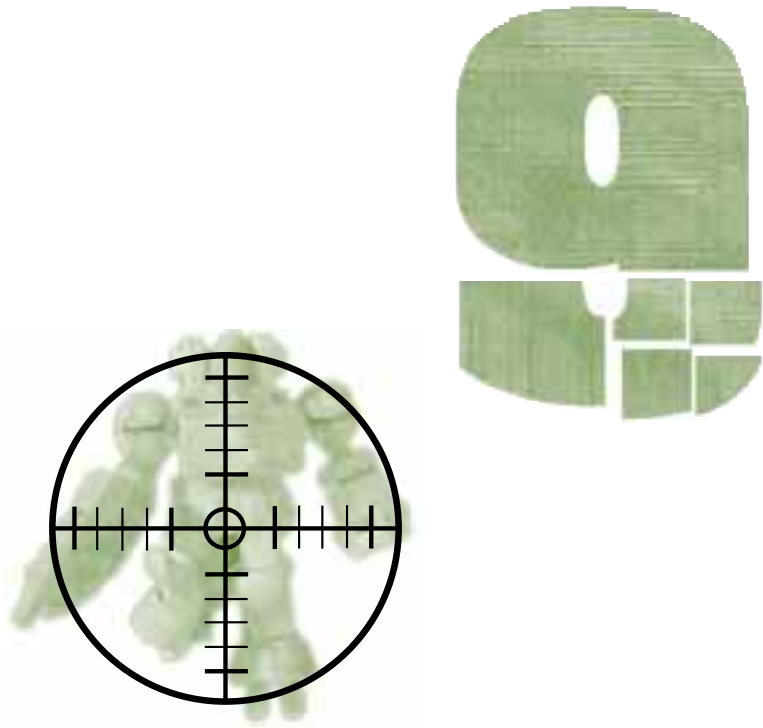
Size: 12 x 12

Number of Players: 2, 3, or 6

Description: There are 106 islands, some of them very small.



A number of the islands have reefs with approaches so steep that amphibious tanks cannot climb them. This can help establish lines of defense. Big ships are powerful on this map. The large island near the center has metal deposits.



Top Secret Hints and Tips from the TA Developers

For your eyes only. Read on at your own peril!



What? Are you already stuck on a particular mission? Or do you just want to see alternative ways to win a mission? Then get the full version of *Unlock the Secrets of Total Annihilation*. It comes loaded with cheats and fundamental concepts for decimating your opponent, including

- ▶ Winning strategies, scenarios, and complete maps for *all* 50 single-player missions
- ▶ Strategic tips and alphabetical listings for *all* major Arm and Core units
- ▶ Detailed Arm and Core unit statistics that you can dig through for comparisons
- ▶ Multiplayer options and strategies, complete with 30 multiplayer maps
- ▶ Insider tips and strategies from the creators of *Total Annihilation*.
- ▶ Behind-the-scenes info from Cavedog producer Ron Gilbert and *TA* lead developer Chris Taylor that sheds light on the development of the game, and how to play *TA* even better

So what are you waiting for? Get the full version of GW Press's strategy guide, and start kicking some serious butt.

Look for *Unlock the Secrets of Total Annihilation* at your local Wal-Mart, book, or computer store, or order directly from:

The WizardWorks Group, Inc.
2300 Berkshire Lane North
Plymouth, MN 55441
USA

You can also reach us toll free at **1-800-229-2714**.

About the Author

Selby Bateman has been writing about computer and video games for more than 13 years. The former executive editor of *Game Players*, *PC Gamer*, *CD-ROM Today*, *Computer Entertainment News*, Selby has been a columnist for *NEXT Generation* magazine, and a writer and reviewer for CNET's Gamecenter.com. He has coauthored two official computer game strategy guides (*SimIsle* and *Ascendancy*), and is a judge for the Software Publishers Association (SPA) Codie Awards.