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## [300: March to Glory](#)

*This is where we play!*

I'm having a bit of a deja-vu here, because watching [300](#) and playing the PSP game with the same name happened just like in the case of Ghost Rider. This time, the movie was far better than the game, unlike the before-mentioned title. In case you didn't know we're dealing with a bunch of Spartans that went on a rampage during the battle of [Thermopylae](#). I'm not going to ruin it for you, as there's a story section below and you'll probably get excited by this little bit of Greek history, but the game won't have the same effect. **Story**It's pretty clear if you already saw the movie, but in case you didn't, let me make this clear: this is pure action! You're going to watch and participate in various combat sequences that are part of the great Battle of Thermopylae. This can be easily called the greatest battle in human history, because of the number of gathered troops and the superb resistance of the Spartans. 200.000 Persian soldiers were almost defeated by 300 men! And those were not average men, but tough Spartans, the direct descendants of Hercules. You'll play as brave king Leonidas, that will have to lead his men through the perilous adventure that will end with a huge blood-bath. The game (and the movie) follows the comics created by the genius Frank Miller, according to the historic events that happened many hundreds of years ago. How could 300 Spartans face 200.000 Persians and still have a decent shot at winning the battle? It was all about strategic advantage, motivation, superior combat skills and lots of courage. **Concept**This is not a complex game, because we're dealing with a PSP title and we all know the limitations of the portable console. The player controls Leonidas, the mighty Spartan king throughout the battle against the Persians. He'll be accompanied by his men all the time and don't expect to waste a lot of time playing 300: March to Glory, because it will take up to 5 or 6 hours of your life, the max. Leonidas can wield a sword, a spear, a shield or...two swords. Not much variety, isn't it? The main currency in this tile are the kleos, that are acquired by slaying foes and you'll use them to upgrade your weapons and unlock new battle skills and combos. You start with a Spartan sword and you can buy a runed blade or spiked Xiphos or whatever sword you like. The costs go up as you progress, but if you're a lethal killer, you'll get all the kleos you need to continue "shopping". Spears are very useful, especially when it comes to breaking armors and impaling enemies that fell to the ground. The shield is vital if you want to survive the lethal wave of arrows that falls from the sky every now and then. That's probably the coolest thing in the game, since the sky will get darker and everyone will get struck by this deadly "rain", so you'd better hide behind your shield in case it gets "cloudy". The armor will also protect you against the enemy attacks and buying new ones will help you get past the beasts you'll encounter later in the game. There are four main battle skills in the game: blood drunk, eye of the warlord, defense and fortitude, each with their unlockable levels of power. It just takes a couple of thousand kleos to unlock them all...Such skills are all about slowing down the enemies or regaining health, sometimes they'll even make Leonidas go berserk and kill all the foes that surround him. Combos are pretty basic, combinations of two or three buttons and they're divided into: sword combos (gut ripper, zeus' furry), spear combos (meteor slam, skullcracker) and dual sword combos ( decapitator). While upgrading those from the game's menu, you'll have a chance to see what Leonidas can do while performing the combos, through an animation on the right side of the screen. Back to the main menu, that has a superb song in the background, you'll notice that there's a replay option that allows you to go through the already played levels in case you missed something. Usually you'll miss lambdas, and I'm talking about some sort of golden pickups in the shape of the Greek letter, that fill your wrath meter and give you health. Also they're pretty good for the game's statistics, if you're

the kind of gamer that goes for the record. What's a wrath meter? Spartans may be brilliant warriors, but their thirst for blood is famous by now and as long as you shed the enemy's purple essence, the meter underneath your health bar will stay full. When it reaches the max, you'll be able to perform all sorts of stunts and abilities by using the directional buttons. In case you can't wait, you'll be able to use some parts of the wrath meter to do special moves that throw the enemies to the ground. All those hardcore battles award you illustrations, film stills, cinematics, concept art and storyboard, all available in the main menu in the Bonus section. Also, because the game was released before the movie, you'll be able to feast upon a couple of the movie's trailers and interviews with Frank Miller, the creator of the 300 comics. Last but not least, the blood thirsty gamer can view the statistics, to see how many enemies he has killed and how many lambdas he has missed. **Gameplay**

300: March to Glory is a fairly easy game, without an AI that could spoil those 5 hours of gameplay. However, the game's difficulty comes with the time spent while fighting those pesky bosses. You might expect some replay value out of this game, since it's on the PSP and we really love to carry that console around and give good old Leonidas a spin every now and then. Well, replaying 300: March to Glory would be silly, since you'll start with the best weapons you got from the first play, making the game easier than it already was. Don't expect variety when dealing with the enemies, since there are going to be about 4 or 5 types of warriors to face. There are the archers, the eternal nuisance and they'll be shooting from high towers or caves, but you'll fend the arrows easily with the shield. Then, there the standard warriors, the skinny almost naked slaves, who are only means to sharpen your blade. The others are warriors with decent armors, shields, spears or some kind of monsters. Some units can poison you, draining your life and slowing you down, while some of the archers can set you on fire. A hilarious aspect of the game can be found in the concept that some may call "pathfinding". I would call it "stumbling", because all the enemy soldiers have the tendency to bump into each other and the archers shoot their fellow warriors more than my Spartans. Sometimes even the most stupid Persian can receive a boost from a couple of men that will use their whips to make average soldiers go berserk. There's not much interactivity in the game, but you'll be able to push huge statues while fighting a huge Immortal or block a path by pushing some rocks. However, the environment can turn against you, specially when rocks and arrows start falling towards our Spartan hero's head. As you progress, you'll meet more aggressive units that take a lot of hits to kill. If you're constantly upgrading and using the move that throws the opponents to the ground and allows you to slay them while they're down, the whole game is a ball. There will be some frustrating moments, during those repetitive and dull hours of gameplay, like when you'll be surrounded by enemies that poison you and you're without a shield. A wave of arrows is just what you need...NOT! Aside from controlling Leonidas, you'll be given a chance to control a Spartan phalanx, made out of a couple of warriors that advance on a certain path dispatching all the resistance that they encounter. Think about this phalanx like a tank made out of people, that hold their shields joint in a large defensive mechanism and strike with their spears anything that appears in their path. When you'll encounter groups of enemies, an event similar to an American football push will be triggered. Mash the circle button and the enemies will be pushed away and ready to be speared. Like in the movie, there are three basic moves to do, while in the phalanx mode (in this order): advance, push with the shields and spear. Since I mentioned button mashing, I must also say that the game's combat sequences tend to become a huge button mashing affair. Press the X for a quick slice, the square button for the main attack and the circle for a strike with the shield. The triangle is used when you want to swap weapons and you'll use it a lot, because the spear breaks a shield and the sword "breaks" one's skull. **Video**

Apart from the falling arrows sequences 300: March to Glory's graphics leave a lot to be desired, even for the PSP. The environments are mostly rocky mountain paths, caves or temples, and there's not much change, even if the sun sets or you're fighting at sunrise. Most of the soldiers look all the same and it's pretty weird since there were 200.000 of them and some variety would

have been really useful in this title. If you think that the enemy units are not varied, wait till you see their attacks....they're extremely similar, usually being just a melee parade of anger and bloodlust. After playing games like Wipeout Fusion, Dexter, even Medieval on the PSP, 300: March to Glory arrives a tad late with its almost antique graphics. **Sound**The game has the same lines that you can hear while watching the movie and they are also the original ones from the comics. It's all rude humor, nerve and strong lines, that define the Spartan personality. Noises made during combat are pretty redundant and I would have muted the whole thing if it weren't for the beautiful soundtrack. The action music reminds me of God of War and that gentle female voice singing Mediterranean tunes sounds a lot like The Gladiator's soundtrack. The clash of swords is the only thing that perturbs the beautiful song, complemented by a couple of growls from the stupid beasts that fall speared at the Spartans' feet. **Conclusion**If you were expecting a game that would be something to play on the bus while going to school, 300: March to Glory is OK. However, if you're a Frank Miller fan and you've waited months for the movie and game...you'll be disappointed. It's sad that 300, the movie is such a work of art and the PSP title does no justice to it, having a lot of flaws, glitches and bad AI.