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By: Alexandra Dogaru, Editor, Gaming Reviews (PC)

Digital Reality &
10tacle Studios

[War Front: Turning Point](#)

Have you ever imagined a sci-fi WWII RTS game?

The developing team at Digital Reality stood out over the last ten years in the world of RTS games with titles such as Imperium Galactica, Haegemonia, Platoon or [Desert Rats vs. Afrika Korps](#). They have always kept the traditional style that we're all familiar with from Warcraft and [Command & Conquer](#) (that has come to the third title, by the way). The WW II stage was always (and especially lately) the favorite battlefield. If last year we were delighted by [Company of Heroes](#), it's now time to give [War Front: Turning Point](#) its chance to shine. The developers promised an alternative story for the latest great bloodbath in human kind's history. They used the WW II setting for the game but decided to change the facts a little so the game would easily distinguish itself from the bunch of others. **Story** The main idea behind War Front: Turning Point is one of the possible paths that the war would have followed in case Hitler would have been killed early in the beginning of the conflicts. By extrapolation, the developers imagined what the great powers involved in the war would have decided. The two single-player campaigns focus on the actions of the Allied (Britain, France and the US) and the Germans. Without the threat of Hitler's racial cleansing a new enemy arises and the opposing factions find themselves in a situation never seen before - as allies against the Soviets. War Front is definitely a WW II game with a twist (of sci-fi as you'll see later on). Each story is told by the mission briefings and the dialogs between characters and let me tell you, each of them is unique and they tend to have such jolly personalities. I was really captivated by the story behind the French - US alliance and the teasing between Lynch (the yank) and Anna (the posh British Cambridge graduated). **Concept** The settings are all real - settlements, military bases, gigantic environments ready to be bruised in the fire of the war. The three factions in the game are also as real as it gets - the Allied forces, the Germans and the Soviets. The novelty comes from the opposing factions and the concept weapons and prototypes that the game introduces (the science-fiction component). Each campaign will tell you the alternate story on WW II judging from the Allied side and the Germans in the purest C&C way there is (you'll only be able to play the Soviets in multiplayer games). Following the traditional path, you'll have to build up your base and ensure that you get enough supplies to get your troops out of training facilities and factories. You're also granted with heroes - three specific heroes with different special abilities for each faction. These will act as leaders and they'll head into battle flanked by infantry units and tanks on the ground, while different types of planes will clear their way from the skies. You'll get a bunch of real life unit types and a few extra that only Isaac Asimov could have thought about at the time. Besides enjoying a pleasant RTS gaming experience, you'll also be able to shoot down your enemies from the 1st person view offered by the defensive structures (fun, yet rarely useful). **Gameplay** "I can't build on wet soil" - and he didn't, not until the rain stopped. This was the first thing that hit me during gameplay. It was funny, yet felt so appropriate (although I pretty much doubt it to be entirely true since you always see the poor soldiers building trenches during the war while it's raining cats and dogs, but hey, they said some talented Hollywood scenarists worked up the story so there's no argue). As began constructing more and more units, discovering what each of them does, I barely noticed there was no tutorial for the game. My Bazooka Infantry was destroying one tank after another and the hero advanced unharmed to the fist objective point. As I was waiting for the next mission to load I noticed the small hint telling me to upgrade to Tech Level 2 as soon as possible. Upgrade? Where? I haven't seen any research facility that I could build or anything like that. Hmm... this was a rather delicate moment as I was rushing through every unit's options and reading the details of every

building available to build. Well, to save you the trouble, note that the Tech Upgrades are available to you at the Headquarters. Select the HQ and there will be a button in the right upper corner of the details box. Also note that the special unit abilities can be researched at the building where they are produced (so if you want to capture enemy buildings using your MG Infantry be sure to research the Capture skill at the Barracks). Now that the problems are over, you can easily entertain yourself with a classic RTS fast-paced game. Although resources are limited, there are plenty of mines and oil rigs all over the map to keep your military production going without much effort. The units are produced rather fast so there's no real need to build endless rows of factories. The downside is that you just can't really afford to get attached to any of your troops as they are all totally dispensable, even heroes (but don't worry, they can be "resurrected" at the Barracks). Fast production also implies fast action so be prepared to quickly advance your troops towards the mission objectives (and have the next wave of troops prepared). Despite the different unit types that are presented to you with each faction, these are very well balanced. All the same, every unit has strong points and weaknesses. Infantry is good against other infantry troops and if they carry around a Bazooka, they'll easily blast any tank to tiny pieces (if they get a chance to assume the position and fire) or they'll target the selected building to be captured, yet they'll spread like bowling pins if the tank gets to fire a quick round. Just as well they are very fragile when followed by planes (which they can't seem to shot down). Of course there are special troops that take care of keeping the skies clear. And then there are the tanks - this is where the feasting of the game really begins. There are some breathtaking technologies that the scientists managed to come up with and the best moments of the game will be the ones that you see all the destructiveness force behind the special units. You'll probably stare in amazement as the first sonic ray knocks down an entire row of highly trained infantries and you won't realize what hit you as the Ice Spitters (my personal favorites) make their first entrance, yet it will most certainly double the fun. Of course, just like in 99% of the RTS games you'll probably have a few bad words for the units' pathfinding, but at least you'll be able to enjoy the destructible environment - almost everything can go down. Sure it can be annoying that your troops don't engage the enemy on their way (except those that take care of planes - I have nothing but praises for them), but that should serve as a lesson - you're the leader, you should always take good care of your troops. Oh, and never live base without being prepared for everything! The AI has a sixth sense. Also be sure to take care of any secondary objectives (for which you get medals) that you'd like to accomplish before taking care of the primary target. And one more thing: I'd advise you to do the saving by yourself and the autosave tends to get busy in the most inadequate times and takes a while.

Video After seeing what Relic Entertainment has done with their Company of Heroes units, War Front seemed a little old-styled, something like Civilization III unit design. Fortunately they compensated with catchy environmental effects and thrilling blow ups. I was telling you earlier about rain affecting your military campaign. Well, War Front indeed introduces a dynamic generated in real-time cycle of natural phenomena such as rain, fog, snow and lightning that scorch the ground. Similarly, there's a dynamic change of day and night. I loved the head lights of the tanks during the night raids and the pale light that the cursor casts, although they did slow the otherwise fast-paced action of the game. Obviously, the crème de la crème were the devastating effects of the experimental units, although the plane crashes into the enemy base were pretty fun too. The only thing I could really complain about were the still ID-like pictures of the characters that kept popping up whenever there was a dialog. Fortunately once you get passed the briefings you're safe.

Sound Does it count that I found the dialog lines extremely amusing at times? Well, it doesn't shine - not by a mile - yet I can't really complain. All the briefings benefit from voice acting (not so good voice acting, but it's still a lot better than having to stop your crusade to read between the lines) and there is firing and explosions all around. The set of acknowledgements for each unit is also fun in the Warcraft spirit. Lynch is quite a character - he'll ultimately ask you not to "get bossy, OK?" while the engineer truck will ask you during

the night if you "have some lights here". **Multiplayer** Since the factions are balanced in [War Front: Turning Point](#) and there is a counter to each unit in the game, it could only mean that multiplayer fun is guaranteed. Indeed, there is a good choice of maps where up to ten military leaders can match their strategic skills. Of course, just like in the single-player mode, the focus is not on tactical displaying of your troops, but rather on an interesting / surprising combination of units and your abilities to upgrade the tech tree as fast as possible. If you decide to take on the AI in skirmish mode before entering the creativity realm of multi, keep in mind that you can only go head to head with him. **Conclusion** It's not every day that you come across the chance to experiment and get another view on the World War II events. That's definitely a novelty. Most RTS games either concentrate on keeping it real or setting the war in a completely fantastic world. Digital Reality sure proved they are capable of making the action seem plausible as well as get the players' attention by introducing some revolutionary technologies and ideas that would change the outcome. War Front: Turning Point may not be a real "turning point" to the RTS genre, but it surely is a good addition to the traditional gameplay. It is most definitely worth playing if you enjoy the WW II universe.