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## War Rock

*After its release in Korea, War Rock is ready to enter the EU/US market*

The War Rock project presented itself as bold and full of innovation, when trying to create a fully functional massive multiplayer online game of the first person shooter variety. MMOFPS is a startling new concept that has only begun to show its potential and War Rock might very well be the first one of its kind to be released. Unlike most MMO games, War Rock is free for download and will remain free even after the official launch. Players will never be required to pay monthly fees in order to enjoy the official servers. After its release in Korea, K2 Network purchased the rights for Europe and the US so the game recently entered open beta stage. Softpedia had a sneak peak at this intriguing title.

**Concept** Although not many things are known about what started the fighting, the consequences of war are ever present and peace is not an alternative in the skirmishes between the Derabaran Regulars and NIU Mercenaries. Come closer stranger, and take up arms steadily, for if you're not with us, you're against us. Sneak your way into the enemy territory and use bombs to blow up strategic targets, take the fighting to the streets and defend every wall and every crossing or simply ride the airborne death and hunt every one of them down. A handful of men will be your allies, with machines ready to carry you over ground, air and sea, towards victory! Once connected to the server, players must choose one of the three game modes and are then they are directed to the lobby area, a good place to set off a game with your friends or clan mates. There is also a random game generator, where people just join in and are queued automatically, so when enough players come online, the game starts. It's not a bad idea if you hate waiting but the beta servers are quite generous as far as player base is concerned. Regardless of game type, you will be prompted to pick one of the five fighters: an engineer, medic, scout, combatant or heavy weapons unit. Each of them fares better in certain setups, depending on map layout and game type, so choose one who better suits current purposes. Don't spend too much time thinking about it, since you can choose again after death. Unique items are available to each class, pretty much like it would be in a RPG. Engineers can use a spanner and repair vehicles, medics can heal themselves should need, and the heavy weapon experts are the only ones capable of wielding an M-60 or a rocket launcher.

**Gameplay** War Rock comes with three mission types at this stage. The Mission Mode is based on a one round - one life small scale scenario where opponents battle it out until only one team remains standing. To spice things up, pretty much like a terrorists versus counterterrorists scenario, there are map objectives that can't be ignored. You'll have to either defend the bomb site or storm the building with your team in an attempt to disarm it. The four maps have a 16 player limit, respawn occurs only once per round. Pretty much like a Counterstrike mod, War Rock is more than able to present its fans with new action filled scenarios where team play is more important than individual effort. Strategy and coordination are key elements in taking the enemy down, and nowhere else in the game will one find better use of their initial pick, be it an infantry man or a sniping scout. Maps are really small so you can't successfully hide for long. Toe to toe fighting is the name of the game. Infantry Combat is a deathmatch, so players respawn shortly after death. It is here where vehicles will be available for the first time as you'll be able to enjoy medium tanks, small anti air tanks, covered trucks, jeeps or motorcycles. The seven medium maps are designed in such a way that large vehicle movement is hindered by the environment, which in turn stimulates players to engage in a regular FPS frag hunt. In a realistic fashion, bullets and generally all projectiles take some time until they reach their intended targets. Characters can roll over, avoiding enemy fire and it's generally a bad idea to hunt people with a rocket launcher, since chances are a well aimed gun shot will

leave you dead on your tracks. In this respect, the deathmatch is the proper mode for frenzied FPS fans looking for a fast kill. Vehicle Combat is even more ferocious, because here, infantry wandering about aimlessly is nothing more than an easy mark. It will soon become clear, when you find yourself firing a sub machine gun at the approaching bomber. Have no fear though; there are plenty of ways to cut down to size such enemies, including your own airplanes, man-handled anti air guns or tanks. This time maps are large, allowing every member of the team to mount a vehicle and start the fight in what is a king of the hill scenario. Small camps are scattered across the map and ripe for conquering. Players have to spend some time on the premises, supposedly defending them against enemy attacks. When thirty seconds have passed, the base is captured and will start contributing to your team's endeavors as the game ends when your opponents counter reaches zero.

Developers didn't run short of ideas while implementing vehicle replicas. The additional head count is impressive: humvees, motorcycles, covered trucks, Gepard, Wiesel and Lynx Tanks, the K1A1 tank, Mark V and LSSC boats, A10 Warthog and F15 Eagle planes as well as transport and gunship helicopters. Heavy metal has never been so easy to handle, but planes and choppers are a nuisance. I didn't die as much from enemy fire as I did due to my ineptitude at flying the damned machines. Practice makes perfect though and, one day, that Blackhawk will be a deadly weapon in my hands. There's nothing funnier than stomping around a large tank with one of your buddies operating its machine gun. The first player to enter the vehicle is the driver and also shoots the main cannon, while the others can join in for the ride with the additional benefit of freely aiming the Gatling fire. It opens up good team possibilities, although it's twice as bad when a bomb kills us with one shot. As far as the environment goes, War Rock is very flexible. In certain points across the map, supplies such as ammo crates, medical kits, engineering and ammo bases can be found and used. It is especially helpful to find a med kit once you've been seriously injured as health decays in time and one can die from the loss of blood. As expected, map architecture allows for different play styles. It's never a problem to sneak through buildings in order to strike the enemy from behind, or even find a good spot on a roof top and use the sniper rifle. Running through the rubble of a ruined city you'll find plenty of places to camp, should you require one for retreat. There's only one thing bothering me, and that is side movement. You can move perfectly fine as long as you walk forward, but once you move sideways, walk speed decreases significantly. When you're under heavy fire, that same speed could have saved you the trouble of walking back after respawn. The good thing about game continuity is the experience reward, hence level ups. Whenever the game ends and the map changes, you are prompted with a score table. On the basis of your in game performance, such as kills, deaths and the number of strategic points captured, you will be awarded a small experience bonus as well as some dinars for currency. In fact I've seen level being displayed for players, while waiting in the lobby. The rank system is exactly 100 ranks to acquire, ranging from Private to General. At higher levels, extra weapons are said to be unlocked, seeing that early within the game your equipment selection is limited to only one set of pistols, automatic guns and so forth. Basically, this is a very important feature for the developers. The game is supposed to be free to download and free for online play. One doesn't have to pay the developers a dime, directly or indirectly, unless they want to. How so? The plan is to raise some money with the selling of in game content, such as new gear or special features. Exactly what will those be, it is unknown at this stage, though for the sake of game balance, the developer team desires to keep the bonus system within tolerable limits. Graphics, while appropriate for a FPS, lack massive eye candy. Considering War Rock's bend towards simulating reality, I'd say this is a good thing. Since the action sees such a fast pace, I doubt players will have time to thoroughly study models, textures or effects. They look fine the way they are, considering the game runs alright on older computers. There's one thing that won't go unnoticed though: Sound. Accurate and effective, it's catchy to such an extent that only seconds into the game you'll feel fully immersed in its gameplay, ready to fight.

**Conclusion** War Rock is a solid MMOFPS, an innovative concept in both gameplay and

marketing. The low system requirements allow players to enjoy it even on older systems, as the game is entirely free to download and free for online play. Offering a variety of combat situations, War Rock brings forth fast paced and immersive action, able to satisfy the FPS gamer's appetite for destruction. Massive vehicle combat is the strongest feature and will carry the player over ground, water and air. Although the game is still in Beta testing, it can very well be released. The developers did promise regular patching to fit the game with new content so the future is looking bright.