

Turrican 3 - The Review

(review approved for versions 1.0 and 1.1)

by Wotnau & _V_



Title Picture

Wotnau's introduction

I feel I owe you readers of C64.sk an explanation of why I've been so sceptical towards AEG's game since the beginning. Here you are.

I played Turrican for the first time in late 1992 and anyone who knows me will have problems believing that - I didn't like it! I kept on falling down some deadly waterfalls and couldn't blast my way through the walkers and the "dragons". I put the game aside after half an hour or so. I returned to it a year later. This time it caught my attention. I got through the first three levels and really started enjoying it. And then I got stuck in 1-3. It just didn't occur to me that the pulsating thing was meant to be shot to call the elevator. Frustrated, I left the game again. And then it all really started.

In the summer of 1994 I was ill. I had to stay in bed for some two weeks and of course I didn't stay in bed but in front of the C=64. Soon I remembered Turrican and decided to give it a try. I got to level 2. And I went mad. The dungeon with its bouncing balls, bonus cubes, the water and piranhas, and then the big piranha... I just had to see more! Getting to level 2 started what I nowadays call the Turriculate Years.

To make it short and simple: I played the game for six hours a day or more until I finished it. I will never forget the feeling I had when I blasted Morgul to oblivion and instead of "Loading Level 5-3" the screen said "Loading the End". For the first time in my C=64 life I wasn't just raving at finishing a game - I suffered a strange fit of sadness that I was leaving that world, the world which needed a hero like Turrican to save it. The world which needed me. And I decided to return there.

I've been through the game hundreds of times. I completed it sweeping all the levels clean - I think the name Everywhereonce is still on the top of my high score. Then I strove for the fastest run - and got down to somewhere around 40 minutes. Finally, I decided that as in this world

death is the end of the life as we know it, I should survive in the world of Turrican, too - and I completed it not losing a single life. I think my best two results in Turrican I are finishing it without a life loss and having some 55 spare lives and finishing the game without a life loss in 38 minutes. Then I moved on to Turrican II.

The sequel brought me even more complicated mazes, wonderful endmonsters



T2 – the initials endmonster

and even increased care for detail (jumpable walkers, football-loving giant walkers in 4-2, Katakis Lives!). And it features a moment, which must bring a strike of atavistic fear to any space explorer - when you see The Machine emerging behind the background, heading for the final confrontation, is an image that's burnt into my mind for ever.



The Machine

From time to time I played the game just to look at that scene. As for the motivation, the game was polished to perfection with the score system - it rewards saved continues, spare lives and laser bars, so that the player is really motivated to both pile up as many bonuses as possible and not to die. And personally I like that there are no more random 1-Ups.

While I think there's no more secret for me in Turrican I, I'm not completely sure about Turrican II. The Turriculate Years ended in 1997 - afterwards I played Turricans only from time to time until summer 2001 when I decided to face

the last challenge left - to finish Turrigan II not losing a life. (And of course I had to start with Turrigan I to get into the mood.) I made it - but what really smashed me down was that while playing, I discovered a new secret room with 3 or 4 bonus lives!

For some reason unknown to me, even though Turrigan II exceeds Turrigan I in all measurable parameters, I still like the first installment a wee bit better. So far about the glass through which I'm looking at the series. It's up to someone else to decide whether Turrigan changed the history of computer gaming (I think so) - but it's certainly changed my life. So far about myself.

I closely followed all the tries to make Turrigan III. After Big User and CKX cancelled the project and AEG put it on ice several times, I didn't believe it was going to happen. In one of the stages when the project wasn't on hold I met AEG in the IRC and asked about it, and while replying my questions, he said something like "Of course all the routines run at full frame rate." That infuriated me. To me it meant something like "Well, yeah, Manfred Trenz wasn't bad but you know, I'm this great demo coder and the game is just a side job for someone like me." You know, I never really cared (and I never will) for whether Turrigans run at 25 or 50 Hz - I care for the playability - and there's no better! Plus I played AEG's Crush, which I found worse than Katakis, even though it was created many years later. And now imagine my surprise when, years later, I read the news that this game, which would of course run at the full frame rate, was going to be released!



Black dressed men

On the one tentacle, I was desperately eager to play it, just because it bore the name of T*U*R*R*I*C*A*N. On the other tentacle, I was going to reproach it every little bug, to point out any teeny weeny imperfection. You know, you simply ask for a direct comparison when you call your game Turrigan 3 and when you claim your coding is better than The Master's. It might be a good game - but it will have to deserve being called what it says it is - Turrigan 3.

Just days before the game was released there came up a discussion on it at C64.sk. To my big surprise, _V_ (formerly Vip) turned out to be a Turrigan nerd of almost the same scale as me. ;-) When I introduced the idea of the Reviewer's Diary, he offered to run a parallel one in the comments section. I liked the idea, especially as I've never

met another real Turrigan lunatic, and I wondered how much our approaches would differ. So the Reviewer's Diary changed into Reviewers' Diaries and as we added more chapters, I liked it better and better. And as I felt that if not _V_'s writing as such, then at least his grasp of the English language is slightly superior to mine, I invited him to do the review together. Thank you for accepting the offer!

V's introduction

Happy to oblige, Wotnau. Thanks for the kind words, but I wouldn't undervalue the quality of your writing - I'd say your form is quite articulate and makes for an entertaining read. You are also right: I am not as fanatic about Turrigan as you. Another genre, survival horror, has me in a stranglehold and won't let go. However, before those times (which would be 1996 and beyond), my videogaming world was all about the heroic endeavours of Armakuni (Last Ninja fame) and Bren McGuire (the brave soldier inside the Turrigan suit).

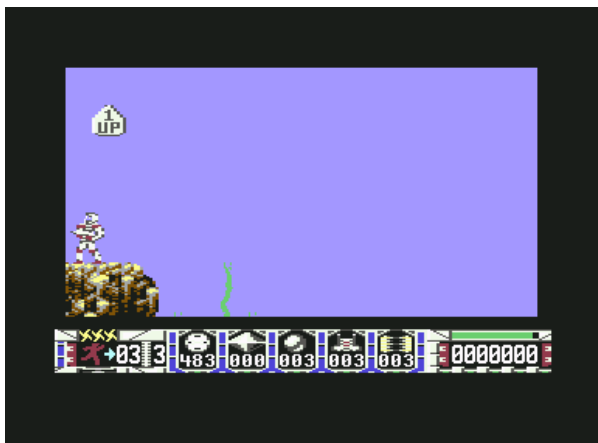


Bren McGuire

The Ninja trilogy was completed repeatedly to the point where I had to buy a second copy of Last Ninja 2 because the first one was all used up (something only eclipsed by Resident Evil years later, where I burned through 3 CDs - and my current copy's running on its last legs). The Turrigan saga was followed from its humble start as the 'Hurrican' preview - which I played so often and for such long times that my little brother eventually thought that my hand was going to melt into the joystick - until the lesser Turrigan 3 on Amiga and Super Turrigan on the SNES. I absorbed all these titles and eventually did 'perfect' runthroughs for all of them: no lives lost, everything killable killed. Curiously, I never felt the urge to try a speedrun (that came during Resident Evil times).

In my opinion, Turrigan 1 is the best Turrigan of them all.

Everything feels much more polished in the original - the layout of the world (and the surprises within) is highly imaginative, Turrigan moves incredibly smooth, the bosses are jawdroppers (yes, the fist, the fish and Morgul) and there are quite a few tricky, but interesting background interactions. Turrigan 2 was a spectacle on Amiga mainly because of Chris Hülsbeck's kicker soundtrack - at least to me it was. In the gameplay department however, the C64 version was much faster and handled better. But I did miss that soundtrack.



Turrigan 1

And those are the only Turrigans that count, really - part 3 on Amiga (barring another gorgeous Hülbeck score) and Super Turrigan were all fodder as far as I'm concerned.

Well, enough bore and snore from my side, it's time to get this review on the road.



Spaceship

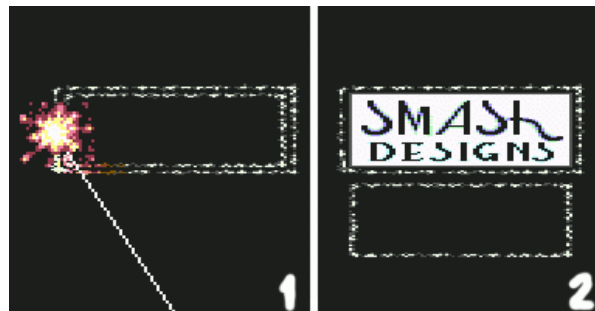
After receiving and reading Wotnau's part of the job, I pondered for a while about what should be implemented next. He already covered so much that it's quite hard to add to it. But eventually, I found a solution (hope you'll like it): at the end of each major section, I'll chime in and add my personal take on things. Also, to give you the merry 'review' feeling, I'll add a rating (when appropriate) which summarises how I value the current part of the game. These ratings are an amalgam of music, graphics, gameplay mechanics (the latter being the most important) and vary as follows: E (Eyargh!), D (Dull!), C (Come on!), B (Bravo!), A (Awesome!) and finally S (Showtime!).

As in my diary, I am going to ignore most bugs appearing in the game, unless they really hamper the gameplay experience. Slowdown, disappearing sprites (after having been visible), etc. will be ignored. This is a gamer review, not a coder review - I'll leave that part to the coders. To me (and if I'm not mistaking, to Wotnau as well), gameplay is paramount, not so much the technical aspects of the game.

Well, another day, another try. Review or Die!

Before we press fire

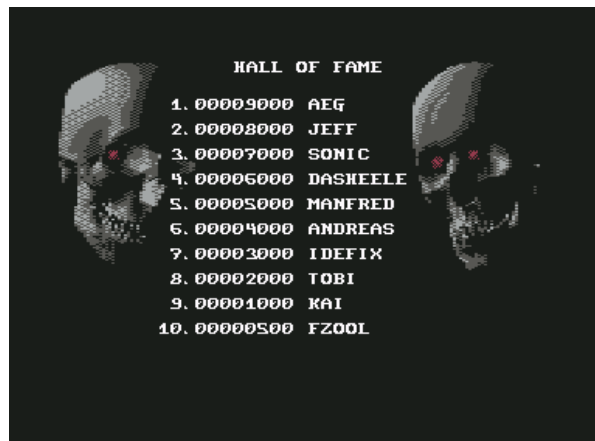
The loader with its traditionally black screen puts you in the right mood and the laser that burns out the steel plate



Steel plate

to reveal an SD logo feels - somehow turriculately appropriate (well, I know Manfred found the name Turrigan in a phone book but I, not knowing this trivia, have always associated it with the word "turriculate" - especially after seeing the end-sequences of the games).

The title screen will grab you by the battlesuit. The logo is so much perfectly Turrigan that it can hardly be better. Again we meet the water effect where credits are mirrored. It's slightly altered to show that this is another game and fits well into the space. Manfred is credited for the original concept. And last not least you'll rock to the Bionic Action theme, converted from the Chris Hülbeck original. I admit having tears in my eyes when the game loaded for the first time. Next to these wonderful ups the preparatory part of the game has also two little downs - first I am not 100%ly happy with the skulls in the high score area,



Hall of fame

and I also miss a high-score tune, which is an indispensable attribute of not only Turrigan but of just any self-respecting C=64 game.

Before I press fire, the overall feeling is: Turrigan!

//// _V_'s Take:

I agree with Wotnau nearly all the way. The logo is a high quality conversion of the Amiga Turrigan 3 logo and the music a high quality conversion of a Turrigan 2 track. As a musician, I like the instruments, which are very close to

what Hülsbeck has done in his C=64 years. As a graphician, I am happy to see some really efficient colour usage on the logo characters. Of the three Turrican logos, AEG's conversion is my favourite.



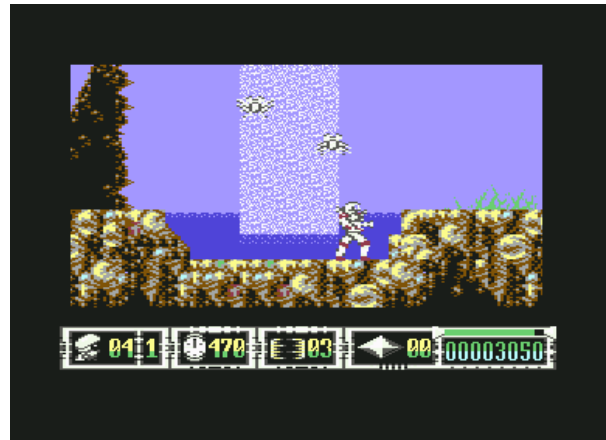
Turrican logos

The skulls, however, are a lot less appealing and they just don't fit to the atmosphere. Which is a slight downer, but nothing dramatic.

By the way, the story goes that Manfred Trenz found the Italian 'Turricano' in a phonebook, and adapted it to 'Turrican'. However, the first playable demo was called 'Hurrican'. Now why would you change 'Turricano' into 'Hurrican' and later on, 'Turrican'? Rather weird...

World 1 - Welcome home!!!

We both agreed on the first impression from the World 1 - it feels like coming home. The main character definitely is Turrican.



Early in World 1

No doubt. As much as the second one differed from the first, this one is different from the second and still is perfectly Turrican. I love him! The first screens copy their counterparts from Turricon I and II - including the first bonus life. You'll soon find your first bonus cube and will taste most of the weapon systems. Walkers are jumpable again. Personally, I miss the trampoline effect from Turricon II where the guy made an additional hop on the walker's back.

The first level is well balanced - if you're an experienced Turricon player, you can get through it just so-so at the first try. If not, you're doomed. And after you learn the labyrinth, you'll find out you have time for searching for hidden caves, diamonds and extra lives.



2 extra lives

Yes, another good news, there are some, even though the game features less of them than the first two. I recognized that the game really caught my interest when I found out I was seeking the exit like mad when the counter started approaching zero.

And I also like there are no deadly waterfalls. Manfred like to have you jumping into nowhere screaming "Banzaai!" hoping you'll end up in a bonus cave and not one life shorter. Fortunately, AEG likes you jumping into nowhere,

too, but you either find a hidden platform, or just fall down and have to get back again.

Where our opinions differ is the boss. To me, Manfred's major monsters have always felt as an integral part of the particular level, which just belongs there. The one here (and it applies for almost all the following levels, too) is biggg, looks good, takes time to defeat but doesn't really belong there. And for my personal taste it's somewhat too easy to defeat. You just stand in the corner with your laser beam activated and fry it for dinner with French frites. Of course, before you realise this, you do get fried yourself a few times. Also, the fist's unexpected rotation is quite cool.



The full-of-stone-balls rocky passage

The second part of the world resembles level 1-2 from the second game - the one with the fast-growing plants. They are missing here, however, first you pass by some waterfalls, meet a full-of-stone-balls (not bouncing, however - sniff!!!) rocky passage where you get two bonus lives.

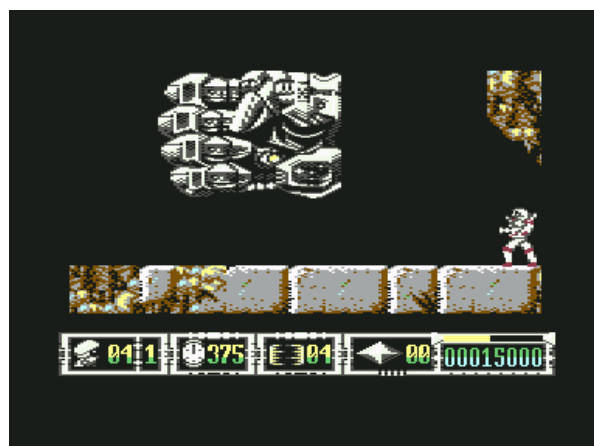
Then enter an underground complex to emerge from there and meet the boss. The graphics are brilliantly done, and, as well as in 1-1, give you the right Turricon feeling. If it wasn't for the boss (again a very nice one, but somehow out of place), there would be nothing I'd pick on in this level.

//// _V_'s Take:

The opening worlds in Turricon 1 and 2 (along with the shooter worlds) have always been my favourites, and these are no exception. AEG made the right move by presenting us a successful hybrid of these worlds, and the return of crowd favourite ol'Fisty.

He got the Turricon 3 facelift and appears in the middle of the level, just like its Turricon 1 cousin. Therefore, I have no qualms with its position in World 1-1. The boss in World 1-2 feels slightly less spectacular, but makes up for it with raw speed.

A slight downer is the fact that you sometimes discover secret areas which contain only a couple of baddies. No diamonds, no bonus blocks, no 1-Ups, nothing - it feels rather unrewarding and, adding insult to injury, consumes time.



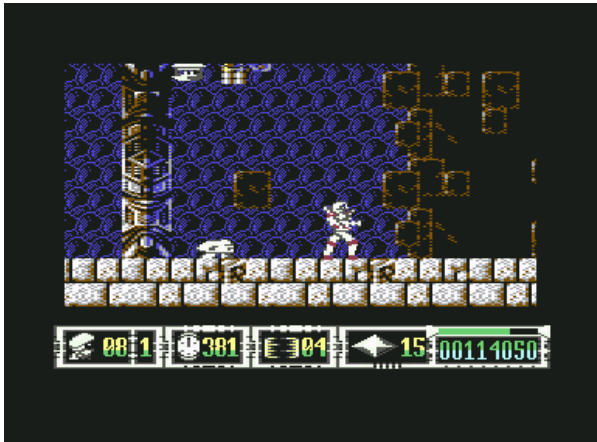
The Fist

Nonetheless, a sound remake of the originals.

Ratings: A (1-1), A (1-2)

World 2 - Return of the Dungeon

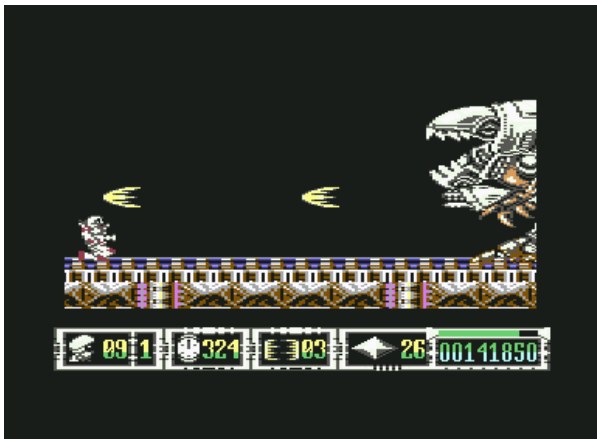
The dungeon made me really gasp for breath with its mysterious atmosphere. Here AEG does an excellent job. Again he manages to remind you of the dungeons from the first two games and still build his own one.



World 2 - Turrigan and a flatten walker

The game again goes perfectly Turrigan with dragging you deeper into its bowels and building a crush on you while introducing more fancy features in higher levels (this process unfortunately is to be rooted out later).

The parallax scrolling is very nice for starters. The music adds to the overall feeling and whips you through the dungeon, avoiding shots and missiles, finding bonuses now and then, and even a few extra lives. Yes, there's a boss, this time a toughie (but don't worry, you can learn the attack pattern) - and you know what Wotnau thinks of it, right?



The boss of Level 2-1

Anyway, I love this level and enjoy being there! And I can enjoy being there even for a bit longer, as the second part of the level is a maze.

Although I've been through it many times already I still don't know my full way through it, as it perfectly suits using the gyro, so you just jump up and rock'n'roll down.



A lot to explore in these dungeons

The role of avoiding the guns is strengthened and we meet even less moving monsters. Not that it would make the level any easier. It's reasonably hard and still quite atmospheric. No endmonster this time and when you finally find your way out of the labyrinth, it's time to lean back and watch...

//// _V_'s Take:

This is an industrial, factory-like level. Your gaze meets stone and metal everywhere it turns. Although I enjoyed a related analogue (World 4 in Turrigan 2) very much, this one doesn't appeal too much to me graphically. I can't pinpoint it exactly, but it seems that the combination of graphical elements seems to offset me in some way.

The gameplay is much better, though. Some of the monsters, which look small and harmless, take long to kill and as such, you are forced to rush through the level in gyroscope form,



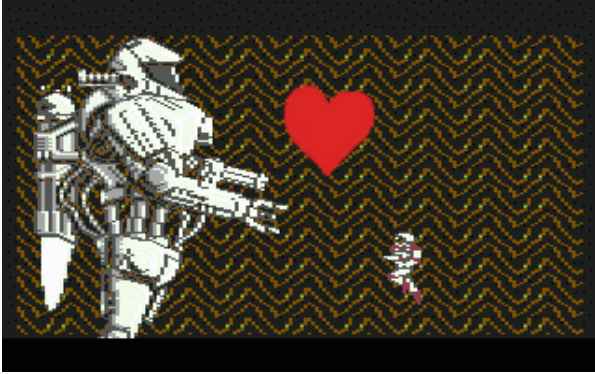
The gyroscope is handy...

as the clock is unforgiving in this world. I like being rushed, feeling the pressure, feeling the need to survive. Awesome stuff, but the reduced intricacy in the second maze (and no boss) was a bit of a letdown.

Ratings: A (2-1), B (2-2)

(No) Level 2-3 - Movie sequence

As you hopefully know from our diaries, there's no level 2-3. Under this name, you'll find a short movie sequence. And as you also probably know from the diaries, this is the only part of the game where we gave a secret away and told you in detail what happens. Turrican makes peace with The Machine



Come here, cutie!

and... The last thing you see is the also-starring Walker (who already got its nomination for the C=64 Annual Game Monster Awards - nicknamed Dr. Fred - for its outstanding performance) - leaving the screen. Then it's time to turn the disk and learn to fly!!!

//// _V_'s Take:

I like this. Short, funny, to the point and fitting to the Turrican universe. Definitely put a wide, big smile on my face. As the legendary Crest team would say: Thumbs Up!

World 3 - Enforcecan, Canakis and T3can

We've already mentioned that the quality of the game is going uphill since the beginning. In the flying world it reaches the peak.

It's just one big reunion of Manfred's monsters. Here you'll meet your favourite beasts and machines from Katakis, Enforcer and Turrican,



Blub le poisson

plus some bonus from R-Type and Gianna. Personally, I miss the football monster (a ball on four legs) from Gianna and Turrican II here, none of my other favs is missing. The spaceship owes the most to Katakis, the bonus lives to Enforcer.

A theme from Enforcer will welcome you in the first level of this world. It resembles the aforementioned game the most by both the mood and majority of monsters used here.



World 3 and its monsters

My only problem was that a Katakis-like spaceship somehow feels rather disproportionally big for an Enforcer-like world but that's probably a matter of personal taste.

The second level offers even two bosses (just like Turrican II 3-2!) - but first we have to make our way to them, right? First the background goes Enforcer - some space and then futuristic industrial constructions. And then all of a sudden the face of the world changes and you're in the biomechanic world of Katakis, including your favourite behated shooting monsters. Now imagine that both these sides of the Level

are populated by all the monsters you've learned to love and hate throughout the years.

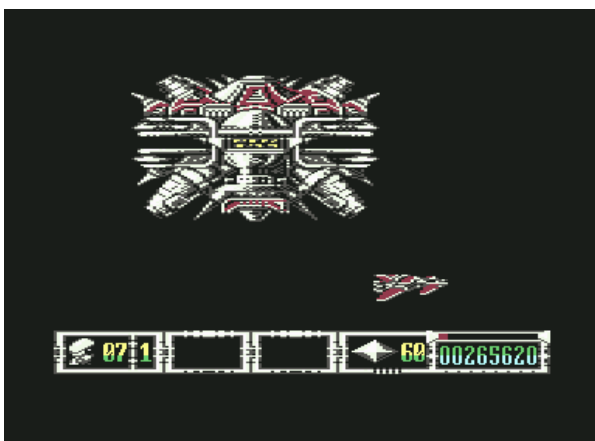


The biomechanic world

The big guns from Enforcer, brain-shaped piles of slime from Turricon II releasing deadly birds from Turricon I - and the nasties from Katakis don't want to be put aside, either... This level will take you to the shoot-em-up-er's heaven.

To make the collection complete, just in the middle of the level you meet a spaceship, which has probably escaped from the world of R-Type, including some surprises concerning its size. AEG has the same sense of punishing the player with bonuses (it will get even more obvious in Level 4) as Manfred Trenz. Sometimes you just can't avoid collecting the shots you really don't want. This applies especially for what I called "the good old red extra turning into the damned old red extra" - meeting the endmonster with this one and with the power laser (green extra) can mean a difference of having or not having 4-5 lives.

After you've taught the spaceship to behave, you make your way through an Enforcer and Katakis and Enforcer and Katakis part again to meet the final monster of this world.



No initials this time

Remember the MT-AE biggie from Turricon II 3-3? This one seems to be its less potent brother at both being sexy and being powerful. However, it's still very well capable of giving you a real hard time, unless you remember the old rule of circulating in the opposite direction. With the right

laser beams the boss is gone in seconds. Otherwise have a nice day!

Both of us Turricon nerds have agreed on that the final level of this flying world features a great moment, maybe the best one out of the whole game, even though AEG saves some surprises for you also for the final fight. But once again, you'll have to deserve seeing it. Even if you've never played Turricon II before, even if it takes a sledgehammer to tickle your sense of deduction, the o-h-s-o-s-l-o-w-l-y scrolling background should give you a hint big enough to gather what's gonna happen. Yes, you're right, soon we'll be moving very fast.

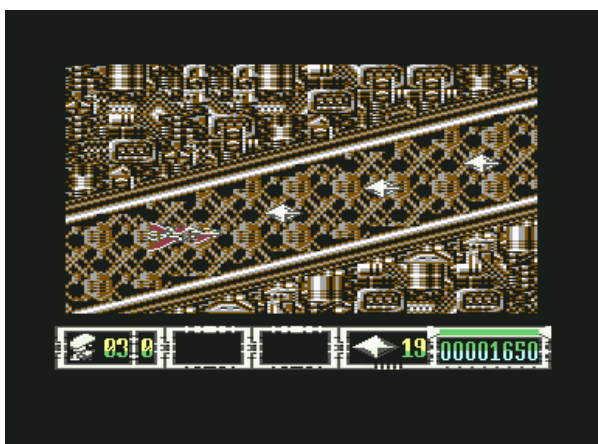
For those 99.5% of us who have played Turricon II, the scrolling squares should remind you of the original hexagons, which you should associate with the breathtaking action level of your life, i.e. Level 3-3.



Fasten your seatbelt

AEG lets you absorb all these feelings while moving pixel by pixel, as if saying to you: "Fasten your seatbelt, get ready, ..." You won't hear the Go! as you'll accelerate too fast for the sound to catch you. Your luck and advantage is that partly, this level is a remake of the original - but you have a much larger spaceship, so judge for yourself whether you're better equipped for survival. Either way, you're going to enjoy this! The level flies at warp speed and just when you get almost accustomed to it, it jams on the breaks. We both have lost lives when this happened for the first time, as we anticipated further movement of the ship - which never took place, and so we crashed into the ceiling of the tunnel. And this is just second malicious wink of AEG.

After the short break, the action takes place once again - you try to keep the ship somewhere within the winding tunnel and if you're fast enough and memorize the level,



Catch some diamonds - if you can!

you'll even learn to get some bonus lives.

When the tunnel finally goes wide and the scrolling stops, you'll know it's boss time. It's time to go fishing. First you'll remember Katakis. Second you'll underestimate the monster. And then something happens. Something so credible for its sheer originality that you are strongly encouraged to let your feelings give in and stare at the screen with your mouth open or drop down on the floor laughing (like Wotnau did) - because it's one of the rare ideas which you won't find anywhere else. If your temporary loss of concentration left you any lives left, take care of the monster and accumulate all of the enthusiasm you've gained in this world - you'll need it for the next one.

//// _V_'s Take:

The first level is the warm-up. Try to get used to the parallax scrolling and determine which background elements don't kill you. Once you've got that down, the level should be a breeze if you keep the laser pickups for last. The boss is, sprite-wise, tiny and, play-wise, unspectacular, which is why I had to settle for an A. The other two levels, on the other hand, are every bit as cool as Wotnau stated. I see no fault there, and thus we have two Showtimes! on our hands. As my friends know, I don't praise or give away high accolades easily, but Worlds 3-2 and 3-3 are top dogs and absolutely deserve it. I don't think it can get much better than this.

Rating: A (3-1), S (3-2), S (3-3)

World 4 - Great Gianna's Brother

V and Wotnau - two Turrican maniacs. If you followed our parallel diaries closely, you saw that despite being of the same Turri-kin, we sometimes differed in our opinion - on the role of music in a Turrican game, on the tuning of this or that level or a particular monster. However, there's no doubt we agreed on one thing: World 4 is a pain in the vital systems of the game.



The bouncing balls return in World 4

It almost manages to take away all the fun you've had with the game so far, which is a pity, as the next world deserves your attention.

We also agreed on that AEG is too good a coder for this world not being a tribute to something. Wotnau thinks it's Gianna, _V_ thinks it's Super Turrican on SNES.

The world knows only side-scrolling, and that only to the right! Yes, you're gonna do some jogging in a post-industrial desert. Concrete, steel and rocks under your feet and ruins of a once-proud city in the background. Under your feet only, because the gyro is not available in this world. Fortunately, in a way, as holes in the ground are introduced and this time falling down there does mean you lose a life. Some of the holes are the topmost parts of a kind of a chimney which lead exhalations out of some underground factories.



Caution! Hot!

Jumping through the exhalations will cost you energy, so you'd better wait for break when there are just puffs of smoke in the air and jump then.

By the way, as the screen doesn't scroll vertically, your ability to jump is reduced so that you don't fly out of the coordinates. Unfortunately, it's reduced so much that now you can't reach for bonuses on the top of the screen, which you would normally grab very easily.



Bonuses easily get out of reach

Your enemies will include walkers wearing a, well, Wotnau calls it a baseball cap, while _V_ sees it as a hard hat. Whatever it is, you have to shoot it first and then the walker. You'll meet the beetle from Gianna - somewhat overgrown, and other beetles who catapult the shooting eggs which I've always hated in the Walker Factory in Turrican II. Finally, bouncing balls will make their appearance (and it's recommended to avoid them, as shooting their nest takes time), as well as the fast bombing spaceships from Turrican I World 1. Finally, there's a huge stone-steel pendulum, which can not be destroyed but has to be jumped over with the right timing (combined with holes in the ground it can be harder than you might think at first).

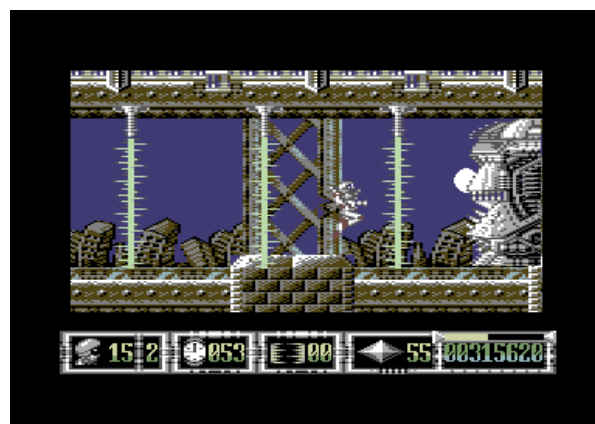
You're going to enjoy it for a while. Maybe for two or three minutes. But the level goes on and on and on and on and on (even more than the heart of Celine Dion - nothing against her crystal-clear voice but that song's horrible :-D) and becomes bloody repetitive and even bloodier hard.



Any similarity to the Smash Star is purely coincidental

This level more than any other else is about avoiding unsuitable extras. On the rare occasion when you're offered some bonuses, if you collect the wrong extra, you're likely to regret it for the rest of that life, which is usually quite short. First it's a bit and then a byte frustrating.

The boss makes up for that a little bit. Remember the BIGGG endmonster from Turrican II Level 1-2? Imagine two of them, each on one side of the screen, plus some lasers moving above your head to make it more interesting. If you still have a couple spare lives, you might make it.



You ain't impress me, neither with lasers nor with your twin brother!

On to the second part of the world.

Unfortunately, this level is very much the same as the previous one, only being even harder, bringing you unshootable enemies hidden in the background. Running only to the right just takes away a big part of Turricanning, or at least T3'ing. The monster combinations are even nastier but if you train a bit, you'll make it to the endmonster, as there's nothing particular to say, which hasn't been said on the previous level.



More flying enemies...

However, it will probably take you several tries and some memorizing of the monster patterns to get through this world.

I'm just wondering if, like in Gianna and Turricans, some of the holes take you to a secret room instead of death - but to be honest I didn't care enough to try out. This world is too frustrating for that.

At the end of the level the story gets another unexpected twist. As we already know, Turrican made peace with The Machine. Even The Machine is a man enough to keep his

promises, but it smartly omitted a little detail - it's got a little brother who's after our hero as much as the original Machine. Good luck - especially if you've got a bad weapon.

The last thing we've agreed on is best represented by excerpts from the original Diaries.

Wotnau: "The end of Level 4-2 is a drama on its own, as I'm wondering whether I'll be sent to another hell of Level 4-3, or if there's a Level 5-1. And to make it even more thrilling, first you have to insert Side 3. Ouff, Level 5-1!"

V: "At this point, I pray to the heavens that there won't be a 4-3. My prayer is answered, as it's time to turn the disk after which World 5-1 begins to load."

... maybe the best fun we've had with World 4 was reading this part of each other's Diary. :-)

//// _V_'s Take:

I'm not going to sugarcoat this or put it in a shiny wrapper so that it's easier to swallow or look at: World 4 is long and repetitive. World 4 is positively, mind-numbingly boring.



...and huge abysses

As Wotnau stated, it's okay for about 2 or 3 minutes, but after that you expect some form of variation to show up and keep you going. World 4 has nothing of the sort. After playing through the game umpteen times, World 4 is the place where I effectively shut down my brain and go autopilot. I don't care for the graphics, the enemies nor the bosses, I simply plow through the ennui to reach World 5. The fact that 4-2 feels more like an extension of 4-1 (4-1b rather than 4-2 so to speak) and that Bren McGuire's mobility has been mutilated, isn't helping much.

Something tells me that this should have been World 1, or better still, World 0. As it stands, it feels like - quoting a generic surfer - a major bummer.

Rating: D (4-1), E (4-2)

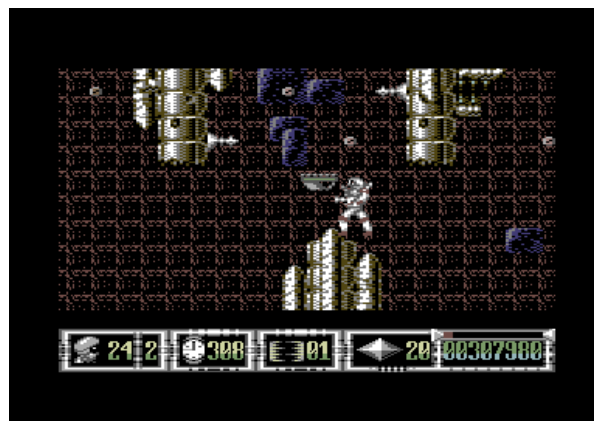
World 5-1 - Up, up and away

This level ports the elevator system from Turrican II 5-2 on Amiga, which was replaced by a simple flying level on the C=64.



Catching bonus lives ain't easy here

As we know from the previous parts, your enemy resides in a huge complex and you'll meet it on the very top of the complex. So, inevitably, your way through the last world has to lead up. Despite being bi-directionally-only-scrolling, this level is completely different from the previous world. The great atmosphere set before entering World 4 is back, being aided by a perfect music for these moments of climbing up to meet the Emperor.

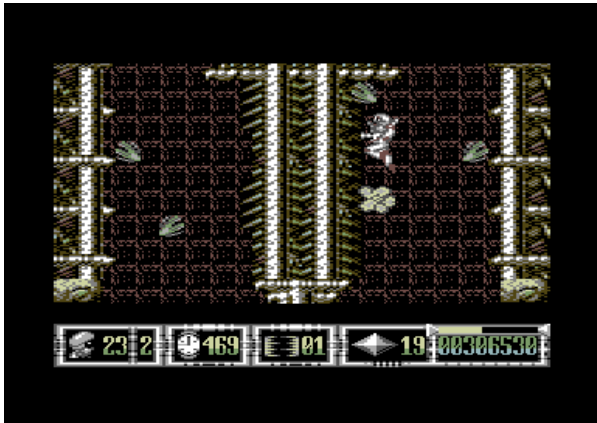


Keep on climbing!

However, be warned! While in the previous world your biggest enemies were boredom and too high difficulty level, in this level there's a fatal bug.

Again we can't serve you any better than quoting our Diaries.

Wotnau: "After a while I'm getting good at it, making progress. The Tower is really almost deserted. Only now and then I meet some blood-thirsty birds and some automatic guns and missiles still haven't given up.



Missiles appearing

Unfortunately, while jumping off an elepad, a meeting with one such bird costs me the rest of my energy. I shall be reborn, still having 5 lives left. HEY! I SHALL BE REBORN, I STILL HAVE 5 LIVES LEFT!!! Nothing happens. The screen is there, the monsters are there but the time stopped and I'm nowhere to be seen. ... This ain't Turricon! This can't be Turricon! This will never ever be Turricon! This bloody game hasn't even got the slightest chance of making a steplet to become Turricon! Because no Turricon would never crash in no Level 5-1!"

V: "I have said that I'd be forgiving about bugs. But not for this one. For a gamer, there is NOTHING more infuriating than a crash _in the final stages of the game_. Especially if you already played for an hour. And VERY especially if you just worked your way through World 4 *again*."

Allow me to capture this glorious moment using the wondrous world of emoticons:

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No, it wasn't LOL at all."

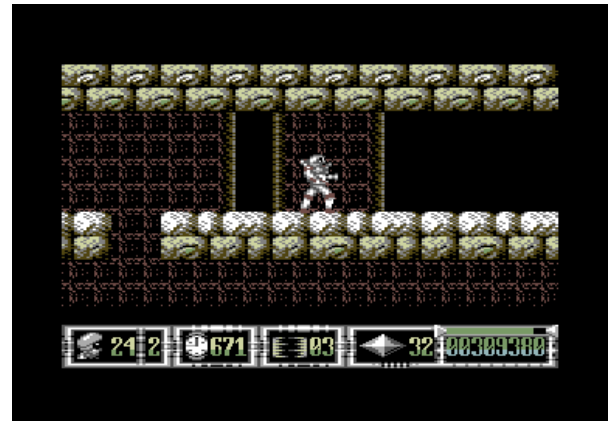
Turric4n N³rds, Inc.'s recommendation of the day is: "Do yourself a favour and do not die while travelling on the elepads or maybe also just jumping. If you're unsure whether you can make it past some stage of the Level, rather wait until the time goes out and your energy replenishes, or have yourself killed, standing on the ground." You'll be rewarded by good atmosphere and safe arrival to 5-2. And since ever, 5-2 means the final confrontation.

Turricon (or Bren for some of you) will be standing in front of the door,

maybe thinking:

"My life so far... Listening to the dreams of my little sister when we both were kids. Her fantastic visions staid in my

head for years and might well be responsible for my decision to travel the Universe for the Freedom Forces. My first mission. The biomechanical world of Katakis. The fight with the alien R-Type civilization, being technically much less advanced - but the Freedom Forces had only old spaceships available and there were moments I thought I wouldn't return. They called me the best. They sent me to penetrate and kill Morgul I - and it turned out to be the most challenging and at the same time wonderful mission



The door to Morgul II

I could have. Some years later, The Machine tried to complete what Morgul left unfinished. I thought that was the Final fight. God knew I needed a rest. That was the first time I realized that the further adventures of the civilization as we know it depends on me. I made it. Later, they sent me to the Dark Part of the galaxy where the evolution brought out another clone of the expansive Katakis life form. I enforced the peace. And now I am here, almost dead of fatigue, knowing that Morgul II is near. He's got nowhere else to go and will surely fight with all the power. If I die here, he'll execute his power over his realm again and the Empire might expand faster than we thought until now - the technology I've seen on the way will make it possible. I gather all my power, I encircle my mind around every living creature whose hopes for the future I embody. Come what may. I enter the door."

//// _V_'s Take:

Well, here's the part where my brain wakes up again and has fun again. Although Turricon's abilities are limited still, the platform jumping here is a lot more fun,



I better don't fall now

if only for the nostalgia - after all, this never appeared on C=64 before, it used to be an Amiga exclusive. Still, the adrenalin from the first three worlds has faded away, and this just doesn't measure up.

Rating: B (5-1)

Oh, and here's what I think Bren might be contemplating before entering the final area:

"I hope this is covered by my health insurance."

World 5-2 - Morgul

Another thing we've agreed on: we won't tell you anything about the final rendez-vous with Morgul II. And although Wotnau once again has his feelings about the tuning of your arch-enemy, we both guarantee you lots of challenging action.



Morgul II himself

Be prepared for everything - Morgul II has some surprises to take out of the hat! Have a nice fight!

And now let's assume you made it. You defeated Morgul II and restored peace in this part of the galaxy once again. It's time to load the end-sequence.

//// _V_'s Take:

Damn, it's hard to present your take on things when you can't actually talk about it. But the heart of the matter is: a long time ago, when I was thinking up ideas for different C=64 games (projects which will never see the day, except maybe one), I had a vision of what a real Boss Fight might look like (of course within the technical limits). AEG has made this Boss Fight a reality - well, not completely the same, but definitely overlapping in certain areas. I recommend all you joystick junkies out there to discover why the final battle deserves no less than an S.

Rating: S (5-2)

World 5-3 - Home again

Neither are we going to tell you about the end-sequence. Anyway, if you're a Turrican fan, you'll feel home again, we promise.

//// _V_'s Take:

zips lips Mmmmm, mmm mmmmm m mm, mmm mmm mmm m mmmmm. So the strategy is mm m mmmmm mmmmm m mm.

Wotnau's catharsis

It wasn't before seeing the end that I toned down my approach to this game. But the end got me. First it was perfectly Turrigan. And second, in the personal part of the final message AEG admits that he's aware of that there are several bugs in the game and apologizes. Somehow, this reconciled me with AEG and his boasting about the frame rate. Now we all know who's The Master. :-)

I said that the game would have to deserve the name of Turrigan in my eyes, and while mastering it, I called it just T3. So - what's my verdict?

The quality doesn't exceed Turrigan I and Turrigan II but let's get real - has anyone expected that? You know, this is not a Manfred Trenz game. On the other, very relevant tentacle, it's as close as you can get. Maybe if Big User and CKX finished their game, it would have been technically better, but more different from the original games. AEG did a tribute game - and that's its main strength as well as weakness. He did an excellent job at remixing the levels, bringing back your old acquaintances, but not much more than that. Not many new monsters, no new weapon system, no evolution. There are just two major Wow!'s - the one in the end of 3-3, and the fight against Morgul. The rest is a slight bit below the original and has some serious bugs. AEG just isn't such a born level-designer and hasn't got Manfred's sense of detail.

On the other hand, he had no executive producer to keep on kicking him and improving the quality, he spent seven year on the development and released the thing as freeware. This game definitely is the game of the year of 2004. I won't play it hundreds of times but I'm sure I'll take my time to explore the levels in detail, I'll enjoy the music featuring in the game to the last note, I'll go through the dark blue long corridors of the Dungeon once again, enjoy all the fantastic action in the flying levels, try to ignore the jogging exercise, then I'll go up, up and away and will re-live the fight with Morgul II. And I recommend you doing the same. The game is coded with deep respect to the original and manages to capture the original atmosphere, sometimes at unexpected scale. I have a name for it: "AEG's Turrigan 3".

This game managed what I thought wasn't possible anymore. It set the old fire inside me alight again. It made me return to the Turrigulate Years. It caught me, grabbed me and refused to release me until Morgul was defeated. You know, I have a confession to make... I'm going to play Turrigan. Then I'm going to play Turrigan II. And then - then I'm going to play AEG's Turrigan 3.

Thank you, AEG!

Turriculately Yours,
Wotnau

P. S.: Special thanks can't go to anyone else than _V_ for being through all this with me. It was a great experience to meet another Turrigan nerd.

_V_verdict

No please, the pleasure was all mine. It's not every day that you meet a gaming nut such as yourself ;), although my

thoughts now dwell in the worlds of Silent Hill and Raccoon City rather than Machine World. But it certainly was a blast to relive the days of the past inside a few new areas of this vast, artificial planet. But now, it's time to relax with a nice cool drink.



Grab a cool drink!

Besides, as I said in my diary, I had to return... because it's Turrigan. Anyway, it's time to present you my final grade on AEG's spadework:

Overall rating (not an average): A-

The A goes to the overall feel of the game, the great music, matching graphics and the Awesome enjoyment I got from it, with a few genuine Showtime! moments (rare by my standards). Sadly though, the '-' is there because of World 4 and the gameplay-related bugs mentioned in the review. Honestly? Without World 4, I'd give this game an A, straight up.

That's it - I'm spent. Before I cease attacking your brain with mindless chatter, one last thing. I agree with Wotnau that this isn't really Turrigan III. A more truthful name would be 'Turrigan Remix', as it mainly is a remix of elements from the first two Turrigans. Which was, mind you, the right call - a straight conversion Turrigan III Amiga wouldn't have excited me nearly as much, since that game didn't capture the beauty and elegance of its predecessors.

Great work, AEG, and thanks for some fun parallel diarying, Wotnau!

V

T3 Assorted Factoids



The station

Price: Despite the intense effort by AEG, this game is freeware, dude! But, I'm sure AEG would love to hear your appreciation about the game. Send him an e-mail to show your appreciation. While you're at it, why not sign up for Katakis 2 as well?

Tribute game: T3 is not a conversion of the Amiga game of the same name. It's a tribute game, borrowing elements from a large portion of the Turrican universe. These elements are T3's main strengths, but also its weakness: those who sought a whole new game, are out of luck.

Sense of detail: Despite all our game related bitching (well, okay, all *my* game related bitching ;), T3 is a great game from the graphical and audial standpoint. The background graphics show very efficient use of character elements, the sprites range from 'Mwoa' to 'Wow' and the music tracks go from above average to excellent. On top of that, AEG made sure to recreate Turrican's most popular elements and added some of his own. Trust us when we say that that's quite a feat.

Not a game to finish without a life loss: World 4. Enough said.

Tips and hints (not spoilers) from V and W:



This is where the attack started

Ever heard of the gyro? You're invincible in gyro form and are still able to shoot. Furthermore, you can get out of the gyro state in mid air and squeeze a full jump out of it to reach a ledge you would have missed otherwise. Last but not least, the gyro is a lot faster than normal running, which is very handy to win the battle against the clock.

Sometimes it's better not to copy the moves of the enemy and stay in place instead - there often are spots, which are safe, or relatively safe, from the boss' attacks.

If non-boss enemies are bothering you, simply go back from where you came, then scroll back. The enemies will have magically disappeared, and you can continue the journey. Watch out, though: this feature also works for 1Ups, diamonds, powerups and bonus blocks. Don't lose your extras by mistake!

Weapons: Go for the laser, or otherwise the bounce shot. After World 1, forget the scattershot - it's too weak to be of any use. It is recommended to have the bounce in 4-1 and during the boss battles in 3-2.

Powerlines: Use those lines regularly! If not during the main part of the level, then at least during the boss fights (World 3 excepted). Since you can only carry a maximum of 5-7 lines (varies in between levels), there's no use in stockpiling them.

Diamonds: Although it's already mentioned in the manual, it's instructive to mention that 100 diamonds = 1 continue. A continue is pretty handy, so be sure to collect as many diamonds as you can.