



## 'Battlefield 3' wages war on 'Call of Duty'

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On Oct. 25, game studios Electronic Arts and DICE released their latest first person shooter game, "Battlefield 3." The game boasts crisp graphics, an intriguing storyline for single player, a new cooperative mode and includes the multiplayer mode that most Battlefield fans have come to love.

As many fans may know, "Battlefield" and Activision's "Call of Duty" franchises have taken on a "friendly rivalry," often taking pot shots at each other such as in "Battlefield Bad Company 2," when one of the main characters pokes fun at special forces using heartbeat sensors from "Call of Duty." However "Battlefield 3" seems to have taken some influence from "Call of Duty: Black Ops."

In the single player game you begin handcuffed and fighting your way through a hijacked subway train. Upon completion you flash back as Sgt. Blackburn of the US Marine Corps being interrogated by two agents of unknown origin about a claim Blackburn made of a nuclear threat to New York. The interrogation continues throughout the game and you flash back to a different character throughout the world

and play through their experiences as you track the progression of three stolen nuclear warheads.

That sounds very familiar. Perhaps it could be that "Call of Duty: Black Ops" had the same storyline? A soldier goes insane and other mysterious agents are trying to piece together an imminent chemical weapon plot on the United States before it happens.

Despite the almost identical storyline "Battlefield 3" is a lot of fun. Several of the characters you play are a focus on some of the new features in the game, such as jet and tank warfare. In total you play a Marine rifleman, a tank commander, a Russian GRU agent and the co-pilot of a fighter jet.

My biggest issue with the single player campaign is the inclusion of quick-time events where the player must press the appropriate buttons presented in order to successfully pass the event.

Cooperative play offers another view of "Battlefield" that also harkens back to the "Call of Duty" franchise's Special Ops mode. Two people work together to complete a series of missions where both players are required. Missions range from sniper support and a defense against approaching



enemies, to my personal favorite: piloting an attack helicopter. This mission was my favorite because it provides an opportunity for the players to learn how to fly helicopters in Battlefield. With the lack of any tutorials for helicopters or jet aircraft in the past I have always struggled to figure out how to fly. With any luck, this may decrease the amount of times that I or another player I am playing with will crash into a mountain after three seconds of flying.

Multiplayer mode is perhaps the biggest part of "Battlefield 3" that caught my eye. With the major upgrade that DICE gave to the Frostbite engine, the world environment is more destructible and much more crisp in my opinion. Buildings have more points where they can be damaged and with much more debris than has been shown in the past. Several pieces of the world seem to have a more "durable" tolerance to explosions that would make someone raise an eyebrow and ask why they are not looking at a respawn timer, such as empty cargo containers being hit by a high explosive tank round.

DICE also added several character animations that still seem to be in testing, like the one grabbing an edge of a wall and bounding over it. Several times I have become stuck bounding over a destroyed

wall into a staircase.

A body movement that DICE added was the ability to become prone again. This also helps to serve new tools in the game, like bipods on sniper rifles and light machine guns that players can activate to increase their accuracy.

With the addition of fighter jets, increased team sizes, additional tanks and other ground vehicles DICE increased the size of the battlefields dramatically. This constantly leads to times where you are hiking several miles to the nearest battle or objective because there are no teammates to start with or any vehicles to get you there.

Also with the upgrade of the Frostbite and the graphics looking as crisp as they do, enemies seem to blend into the background, making them hard to spot in the distance or until they are right on top of you.

"Battlefield 3" is worth the \$60 you put forward, but the single player story lacked the imagination that can make a perfect game. Cooperative play is short but is a great breather between the campaign and multiplayer. Multiplayer is still the powerhouse that it claims to be with massive vehicular warfare presented with a simple "go forth and figure it out yourself" philosophy.

