

Video Game Review: Shooter 'Homefront' Offers Brief, Explosive Thrill Ride

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on March 16, 2011 - 5:17pm

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CHICAGO – Do you judge a game based on quality or quantity? When players get to the end of the shockingly-brief single-player campaign of "Homefront" (under 4 hours on normal difficulty), they're likely to think they're being punked and the fact is that the multi-player is a kid's wading pool compared to the depth of a title like "Call of Duty: Black Ops." And yet, I like a lot of what "Homefront" has to offer. It may be brief, but it's memorable and the multi-player may be shallow but it's still a fun pool in which to play.



Video Game Rating: **4.0/5.0**

Written by John Milius ("Apocalypse Now," "Red Dawn"), the seven-chapter story of "Homefront" details a resistance uprising in 2027 after the North Koreans have taken over control of the United States and mass-murdered millions of Americans. After being bussed through a town undergoing occupation, you are rescued by some freedom fighters and forced to fight your way through the suburbs and, ultimately, to a climactic battle on the Golden Gate Bridge.



Homefront

Photo credit: THQ

The game designers offer a nice mix of classic shooter elements along with vehicle-based moments, although the latter are often shockingly brief. Everything in "Homefront" feels brief. The game features a wide array of weapons, which allows for some interesting replayability I suppose but also creates a somewhat manic feel. You're always picking up a new toy, blowing some people away, jumping in tank, jumping out, etc. The game flies by, which is nice in that it never gets boring or repetitive but could easily add to the feeling of being ripped off by its brevity. It's not just a 3.5-hour game, it's a FAST 3.5 hours that doesn't so much end as stop like a "Part 1" movie with another part already filmed.





Homefront

Photo credit: THQ

There are some amazing, theatrical-caliber moments in "Homefront." As your Goliath goes off on tanks and explosions rock a street that looks not that dissimilar from the suburban one probably outside your front door, the game approaches that visceral "whoa" that we all want from shooter games. And the title has an emotional hook that can't be denied. There's a gravity in fighting for freedom that's a bit different than other shooters. And the final moments on the GG Bridge are spectacularly conceived, designed, and executed, despite not closing nearly enough threads to be a satisfying conclusion. I enjoyed every minute of "Homefront" and noticed the difference in having a quality screenwriter behind the project. It looks spectacular and sounds great as well.

But it's SO brief. The game ends and it feels like there should be not just another chapter, but half a game left to go. Players are going to be furious when the credits roll after seven chapters, a number shockingly low even for an FPS. It's not just the brevity but the feeling that there's more story to tell. You ever get to the end of a movie that you know has left plot threads hanging so they can take your money again for a sequel? Prepare to feel that again at the end of "Homefront."

The multi-player makes up for it, right? Yes and no. "Homefront" features a spectacular multi-player, one that I will enjoy playing for the next several weeks, maybe even months, and should pull me away from my addictions to "Homefront" and "Call of Duty: Black Ops," but it's also surprisingly thin. There are really only two variations — "Ground Control" and "Team Deathmatch" — and a limited number of maps, some of which feel shockingly similar.



Homefront

Photo credit: THQ

I loved the maps — any game where you can sniper shoot someone on the roof of a Hooter's while you stand on the roof of a White Castle has some value — but some of them start to blend together and I wished there were more of them. We're also in a time when a game needs more than two multi-player modes, which is essentially all "Homefront" has (although, to be fair, there are "Battle Commander" variations on both modes).

To make up for the lack of depth in multi-player, Kaos inserted an insane amount of leveling up bonuses. Every level provides a new option, whether it be a different weapon, attachment, skill set, or vehicle loadout. I do love the battle points system, in which you earn points for activity in the match which can be spent on items that intensify the combat like RPG Launchers all the way up to tanks. It adds a bit of balance in that new players can earn the battle points and even the playing field a bit, although it's still going to be hard for a single-digit level to match up with a 30+.

How do you judge a great meal that still leaves you hungry? That's the best way to look at "Homefront." A few more hours of single-player and a few more maps or gameplay variations in multi-player and this would be one of the best games of the season without question. And yet I can't deny the quality of what is offered. It's like a love affair that's all-too-brief, but I still love it.

"Homefront" was developed by Kaos Studios and released by THQ on March 15th, 2011. The version reviewed was for the PS3 but the title is also available for the Xbox 360 and PC. It is rated M (Mature).



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