ATARI® 400/800™

COMPUTER GAME

MISSILE COMMAND™

ATARI®

A Warner Communications Company

Model CXL4012
Use with
ATARI® 400™ or ATARI® 800™
PERSONAL COMPUTER SYSTEMS

MISSILE COMMAND™

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PREFACE: You Are The Missile Base Commander

As missile base commander, you occupy the "hot seat" in Missile Control. For weeks now Satellite Surveillance has been sending you photographs showing unusual arms buildup and launch base activity in enemy territory. Today, the analysts assure you, the enemy is in battle-ready posture. "Could they be mistaken?" you wonder. "Could this buildup really be exercises? war games?" Don't kid yourself, this is the real thing! It's only a question of time now before the enemy launches ICBM's targeted for the remaining free cities of the world. "How much time?" you ask yourself. "Will it be tonight?" Instinctively your hand moves to the hot line. "Ring, blast you! Get it over with!"

"Better cool it. Think about defense preparations," you tell yourself. When the attack comes you'll have only seconds to ready your antiballistic missiles. The enemy is powerful. Intelligence has kept you posted on the enemy's secret stockpiling of ICBM's in violation of international agreements. His long-range bombers and so-called "killer" satellites aren't news to you either. No, your real . . . say it . . . fear is that the reports of enemy smart missiles may be true. Those treacherous babies can dodge antiballistic missiles and home in on the target. What are the chances the enemy will drop smart missiles? "Pretty good," you think. "Pretty good!"

The situation is desperate. You know it. You're going to have to rely more on tactics than sheer fire power. You'll need all your cunning, all your courage, and more than a little luck. You're suddenly aware you're sweating and freezing at the same time. How long now? How much longer?

"Red alert! Red alert!" screams the hot line. The sudden shock dislodges fear, starts the adrenaline flowing. You lift the receiver and hear "Enemy ICBM's on a heading for . . ." That's it! Move! You press a button on the console in front of you. The base alarm shrieks the alert ABM's in place now. Seconds to go. "Stand by! Ready to launch!" Enemy on the monitor screen. "Fire!"

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1

HOW TO PLAY MISSILE COMMAND™

YOUR MISSION: DEFEND THE CITIES

The enemy is determined to annihilate your cities. Your mission is to defend them as long as possible by destroying the enemy's weapons with your antiballistic missiles (ABM's). The more enemy weapons you destroy and the longer you defend your cities, the more points you score. When the enemy succeeds in destroying all your cities, the game is over.

ENEMY ATTACK WAVES

The enemy attacks your cities and missile base with ICBM's (intercontinental ballistic missiles), MIRV's (branching or multiple-warhead ICBM's), and missile-dropping killer satellites and bombers (see Figure 1). Attacks come in WAVES which last between 30 and 45 seconds. Each wave is more difficult and challenging than the one before. On the sixth wave, the enemy sends smart missiles designed to evade your ABM's and "home in" on your cities and missile base.

The enemy can destroy three cities per wave and blast your missile base as often as you allow it. To protect your cities and base, you have 30 ABM's per wave. Your launch pad accommodates six at a time. Each time six ABM's are launched or destroyed by the enemy, the Top Secret automatic loading device replaces them, until all 30 ABM's are gone or the wave ends. For more information on ABM's see Section 7 YOUR ABM DEFENSE.

At the end of a wave, the cities and ABM's saved from the enemy are counted and displayed, as shown in Figure 2, and bonus points for them are added to your score. Information on scoring is given in Section 8 SCORING.

A game ends when the enemy destroys all your cities and **THE END** appears on your television screen (Figure 3).

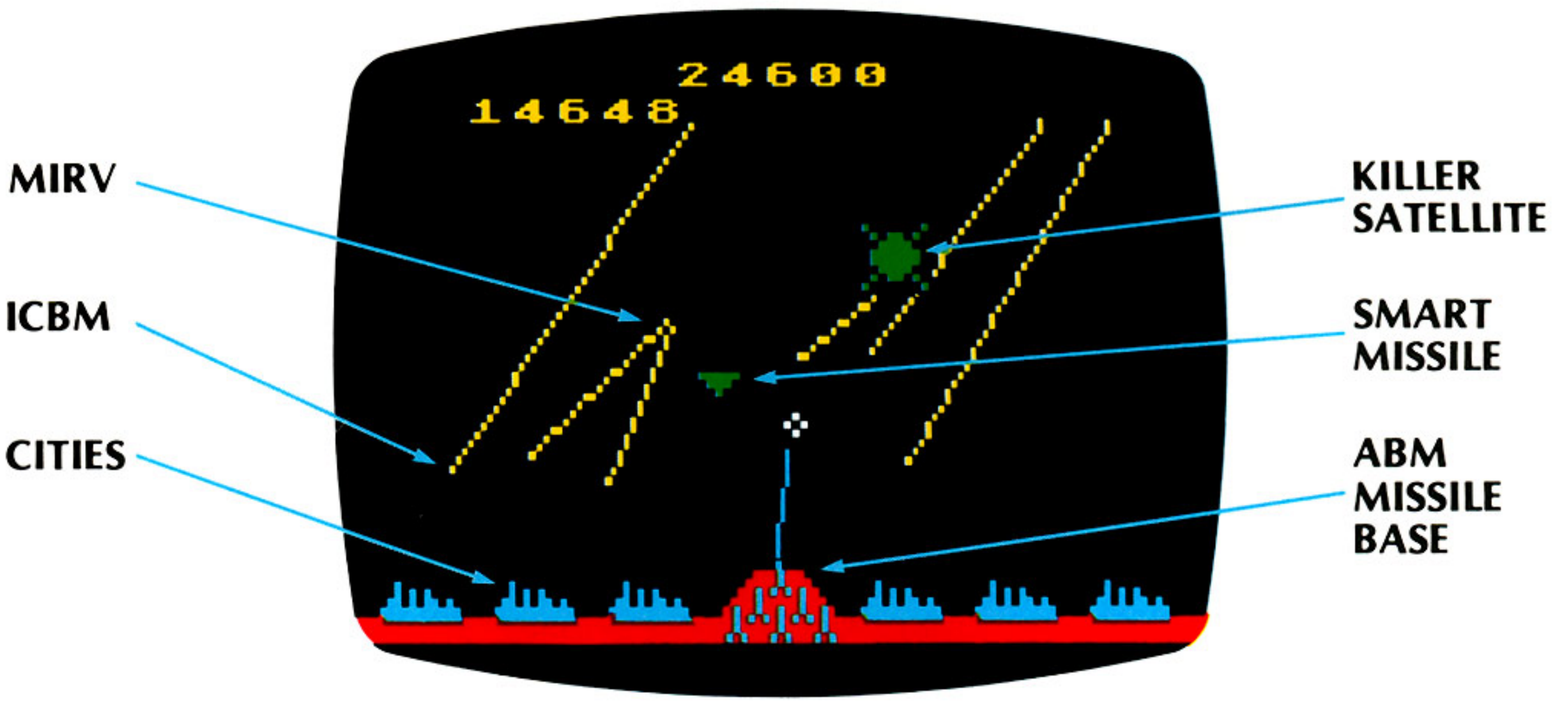

Figure 1 Attack Wave

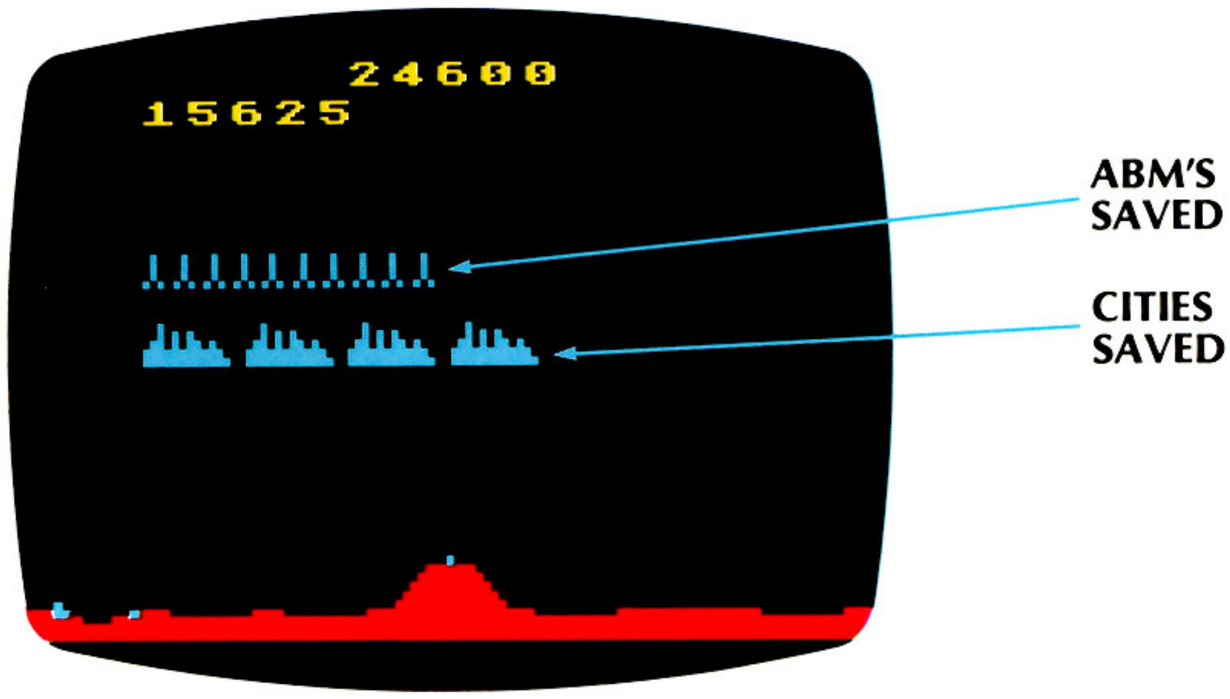

Figure 2 End of a Wave

Figure 3 End of a Game

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

MISSILE COMMAND™ can be played by one or two players. In single-player games the object is to beat your own highest score. In two-player games the object is to score more points than your opponent.

2

LOADING MISSILE COMMAND

To play MISSILE COMMAND you will need the following ATARI components:

- **ATARI 400™ or ATARI 800™ Personal Computer System** with a minimum of 8K Random Access Memory (RAM)
- MISSILE COMMAND Cartridge
- One or two Joystick Controllers.

Loading is illustrated in Figure 4. Follow these steps:

1. Connect your ATARI Personal Computer System to your television set as instructed in your Operator's Manual.

2. Open the cartridge door of your computer system and insert the MISSILE COMMAND Cartridge in the cartridge slot. Use the LEFT CARTRIDGE slot on the ATARI 800 Personal Computer System.

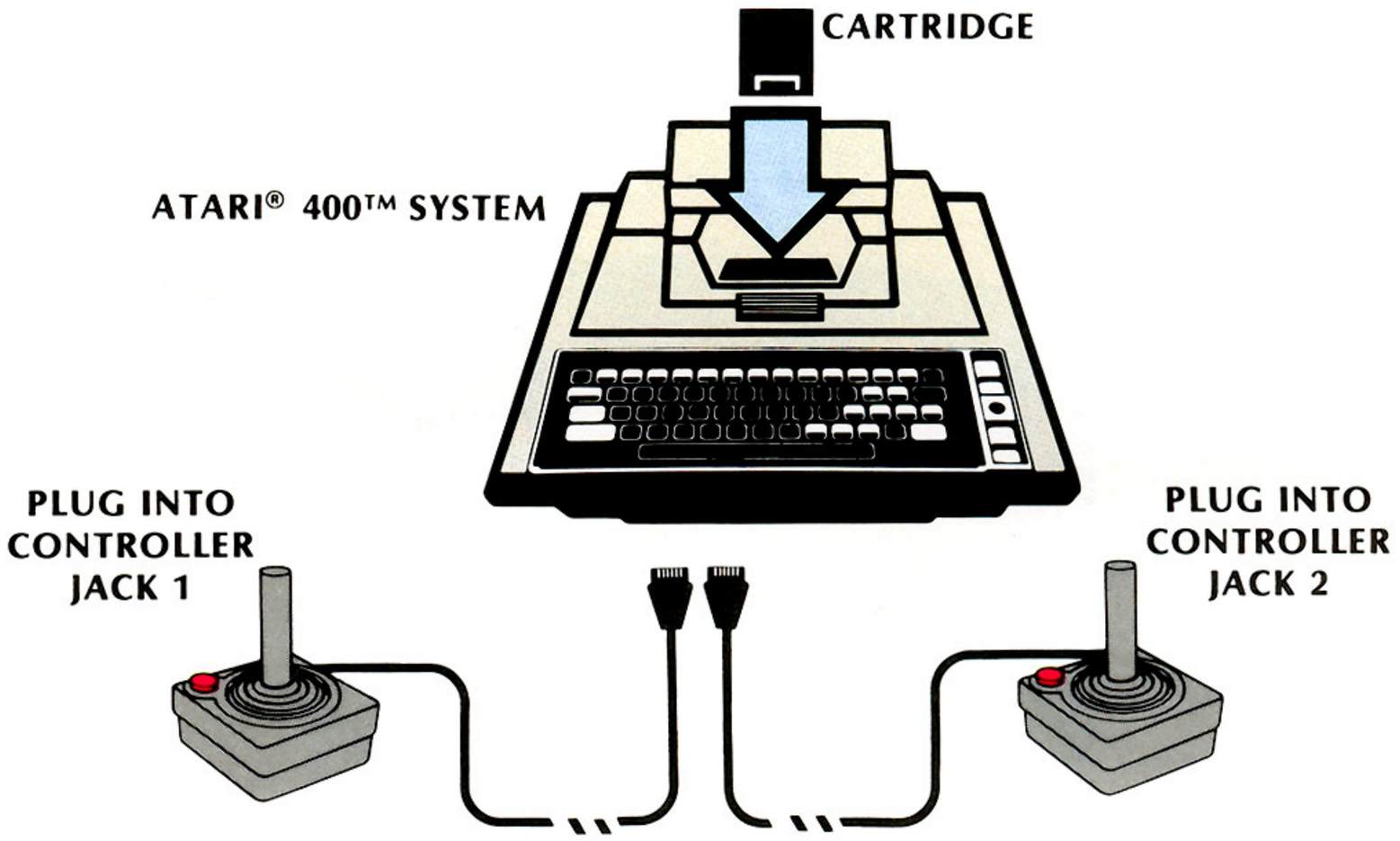

Figure 4 Installation Diagram

3. Turn on your television set and adjust the volume.
4. Turn on your ATARI Personal Computer System. The POWER switch is on the right side of the computer console.

   Note: The cartridge can be loaded either before or after you switch computer power on. Opening the cartridge door automatically shuts the power off to protect electronic components from damage during cartridge loading and removal.

5. If all equipment is correctly connected, the first display of MISSILE COMMAND (Figure 5) should appear on your television screen.
6. For single-player games, connect a Joystick to CONTROLLER JACK 1 on the front of the computer console. For two-player games, connect Joysticks to CONTROLLER JACKS 1 and 2.

Figure 5 MISSILE COMMAND, First Display

3

USING THE JOYSTICK CONTROLLER

Use the Joystick to move the cursor (✣) to the target. Joystick moves are shown in Figure 6. Press the red button to launch ABM's and mark the target for detonation (see Figure 7).

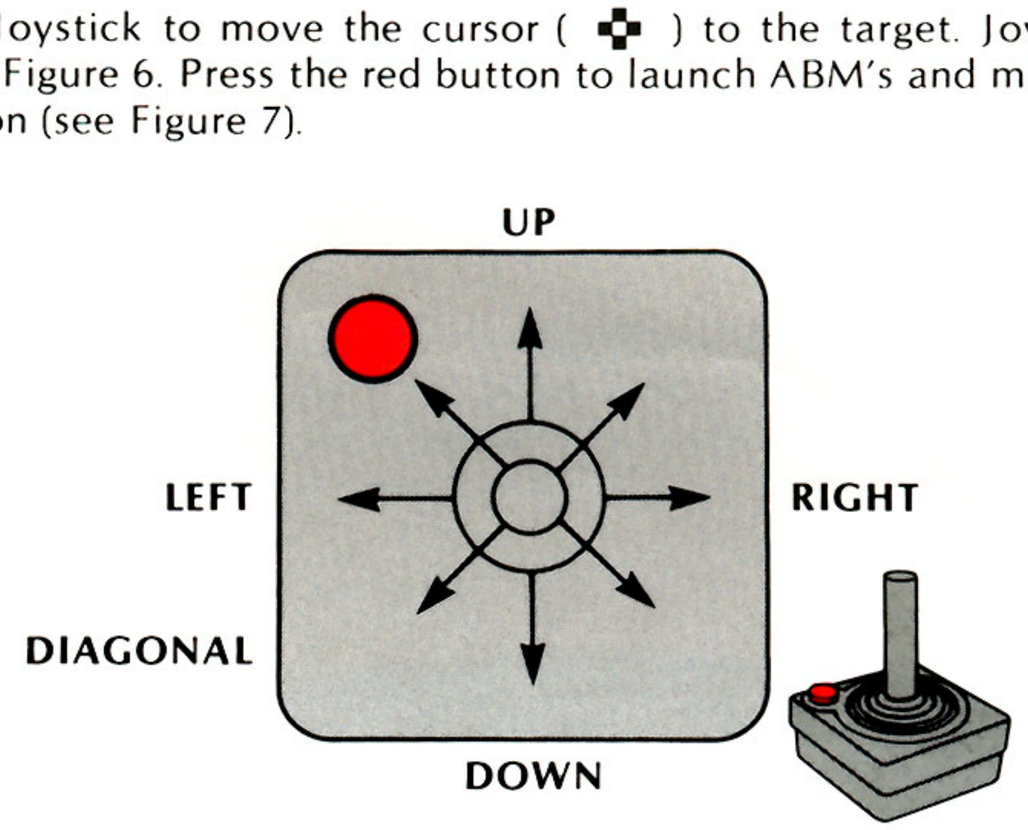

Figure 6 Joystick Moves

Hold the Joystick so that the red button is at top left. Most people keep their left thumb on the button and move the Joystick with their right hand.

Note: You may find you have more control if you hold the Joystick in both hands, place your right thumb on the tip of the Joystick, and use your thumb to move the Joystick.

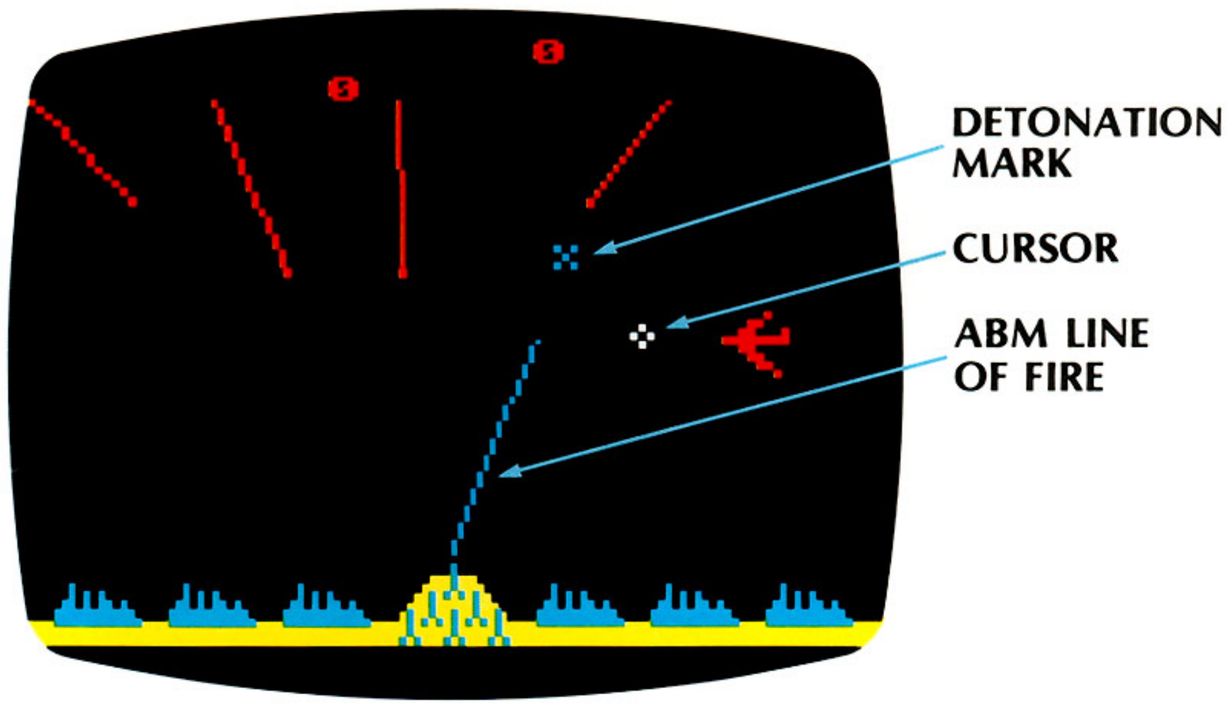

Figure 7 Launching an ABM

4

TO START GAMES

ONE PLAYER

MISSILE COMMAND is already set for one player. Note that when you turn on the computer, **1 PLAYER** appears at the top of the first display, along with **SKIP 0** and **BONUS** (see Figure 5). **BONUS** means that you will earn bonus cities every 10,000 points, and **SKIP 0** means that play will begin at the first attack wave. **SKIP** will be explained in more detail in Section 5 GAME OPTIONS.

To start play in this mode, press the START key. As the air raid siren sounds, the cursor, score counters, and wave point multiplier appear (see Figure 8). A few seconds later, the wave point multiplier disappears and the enemy attacks. Be ready with your Joystick to launch ABM's.

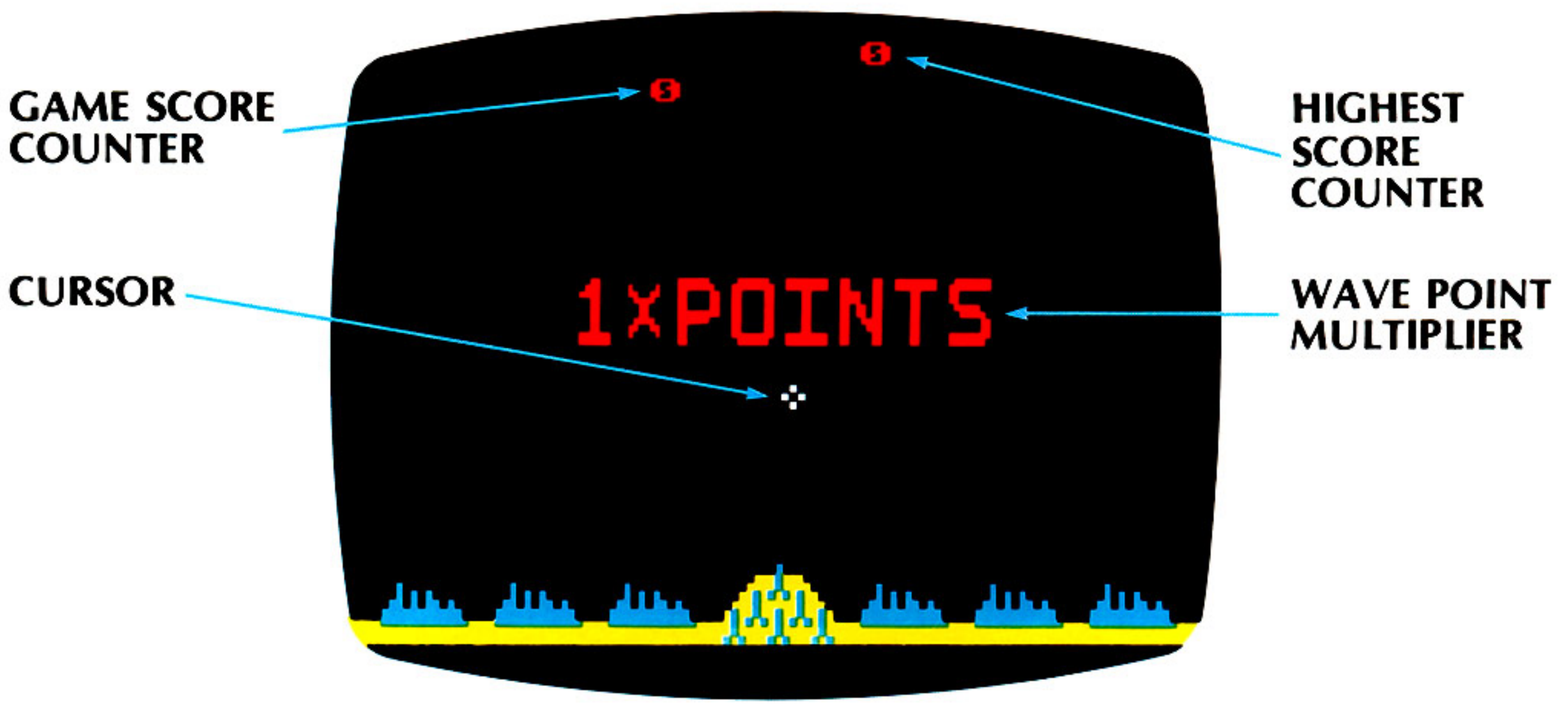

Figure 8 Start of a One-Player Game

GAME SCORE COUNTER counts points scored during a wave.

HIGHEST SCORE COUNTER shows the highest score since the play began.

WAVE POINT MULTIPLIER shows the amount by which points scored during the wave will be multiplied. Points are multiplied by 1 (1 × POINTS) during the first two waves. See Section 8 SCORING for more information on wave point multipliers.

TWO PLAYERS

To set MISSILE COMMAND for two players, press the SELECT key. Note that **2 PLAYER** replaces **1 PLAYER** at the top of the first display (see Figure 9).

To start play, press the START key. The cursor, score counters, and wave point multiplier appear (see Figure 10). Players take turns launching ABM's, starting with the player using the Joystick plugged into CONTROLLER JACK 1.

Note: To reset MISSILE COMMAND for one player, press the SELECT key again. Note that **1 PLAYER** replaces **2 PLAYER** at the top of the first display (Figure 5).

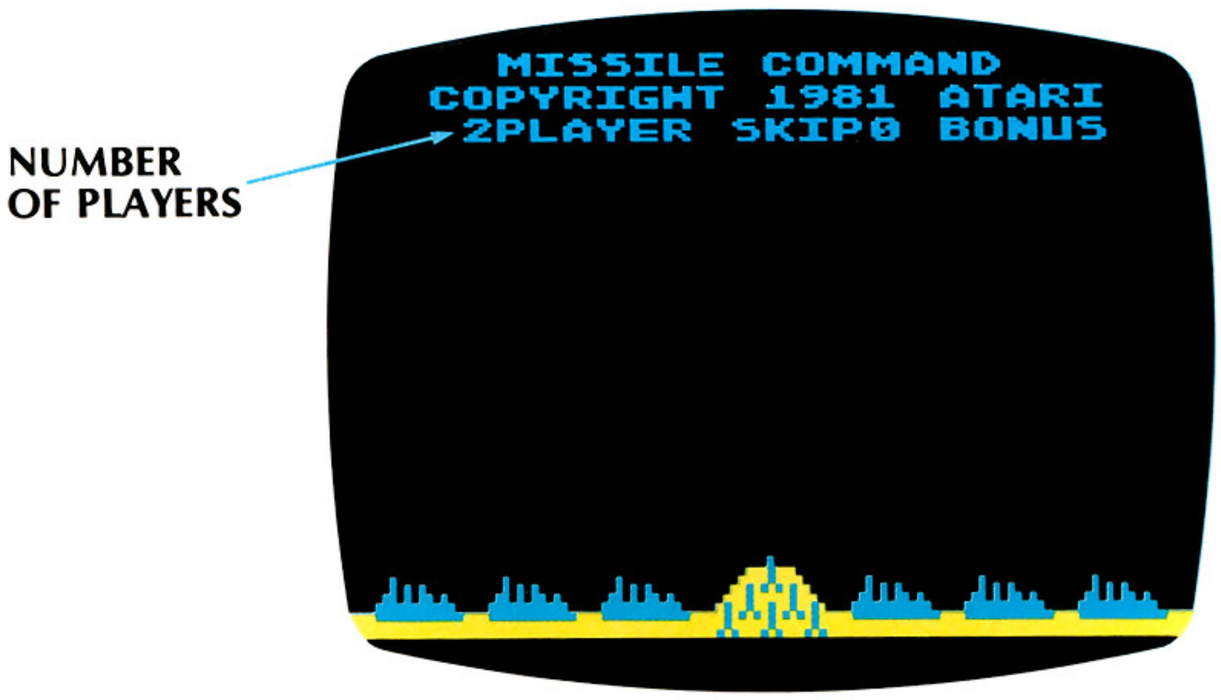

Figure 9 Selecting a Two-Player Game

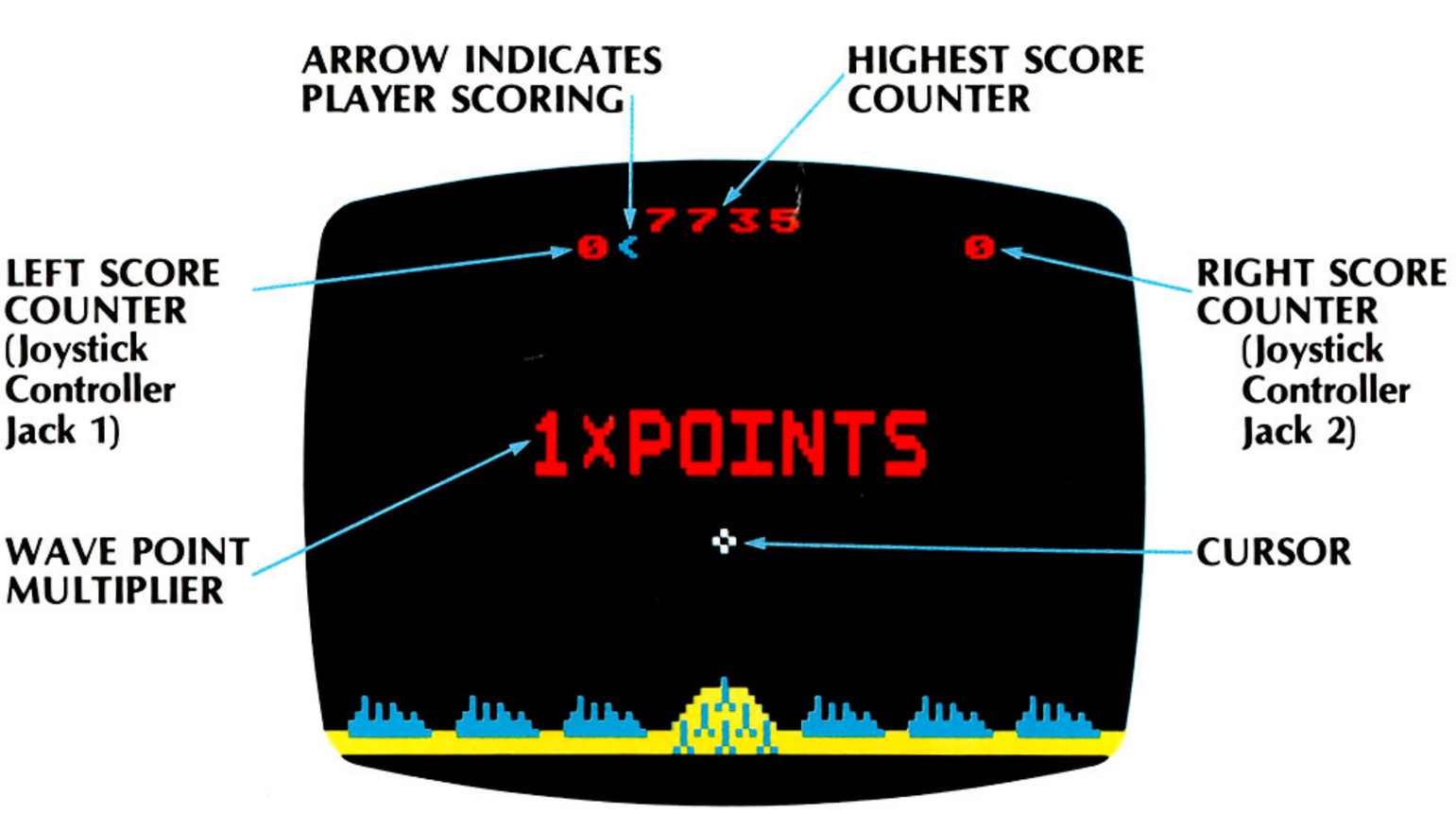

Figure 10 Start of a Two-Player Game

5

GAME OPTIONS

SKIPPING WAVES

If you wish to begin MISSILE COMMAND at a more difficult wave level, use the number keys on the computer keyboard to skip waves. To skip the first wave, for example, press the **1** key. Note that **SKIP 1** replaces **SKIP 0** at the top of the first display of MISSILE COMMAND (see Figure 11). To skip the first two waves, press **2**. Note that **SKIP 2** appears at the top of the first display. You can skip a maximum of nine waves.

After selecting the number of waves to be skipped, press the START key to begin the game. If you skip one wave (**SKIP 1**) you'll start the game at Wave 2; if you skip two waves (**SKIP 2**) you'll start at Wave 3, and so forth.

To return to the first wave, press the **0** key. **SKIP 0** will reappear at the top of the first display of MISSILE COMMAND (Figure 5).

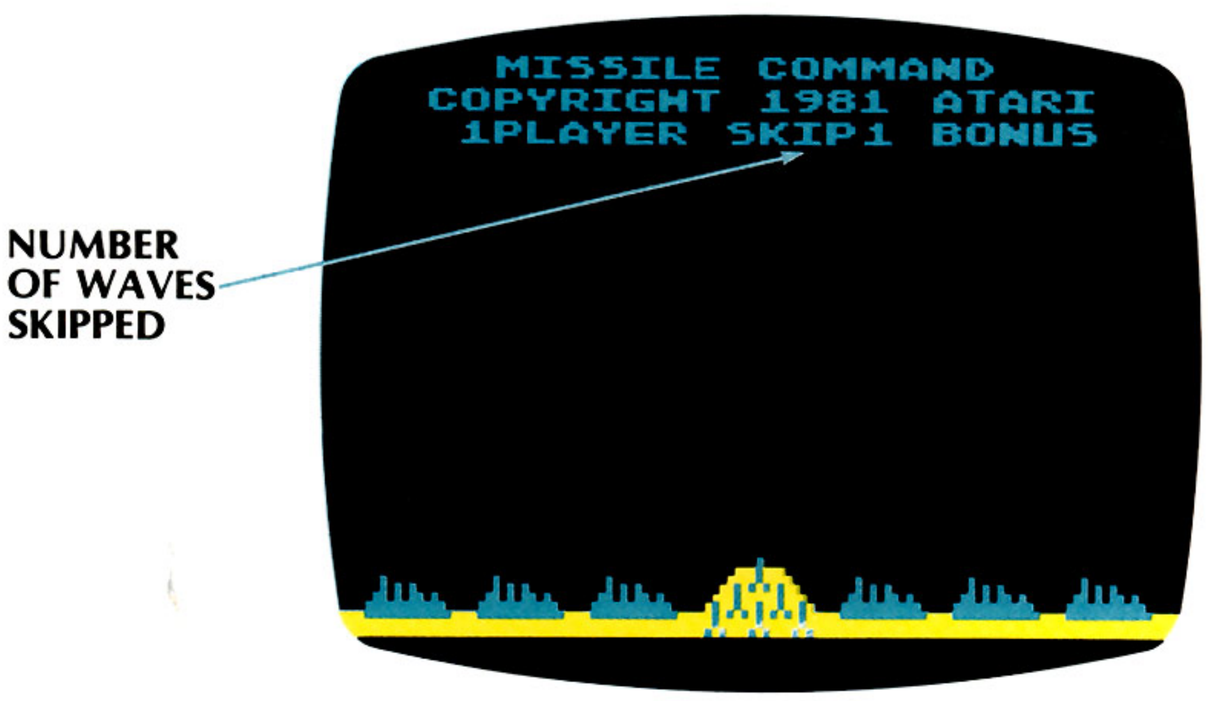

Figure 11 Skip Wave Option

ALL SMART MISSILES

Smart missiles are hard to destroy because they're designed to elude your ABM's and home in on your cities and missile base. If you want to practice hitting smart missiles, press the **S** key on the computer keyboard, then press START. Only smart missiles will appear (see Figure 12). Smart missile games can be started at more difficult wave levels, the same as mixed weapons games. See SKIPPING WAVES.

To reset MISSILE COMMAND for mixed weapons games, press the **S** key again.

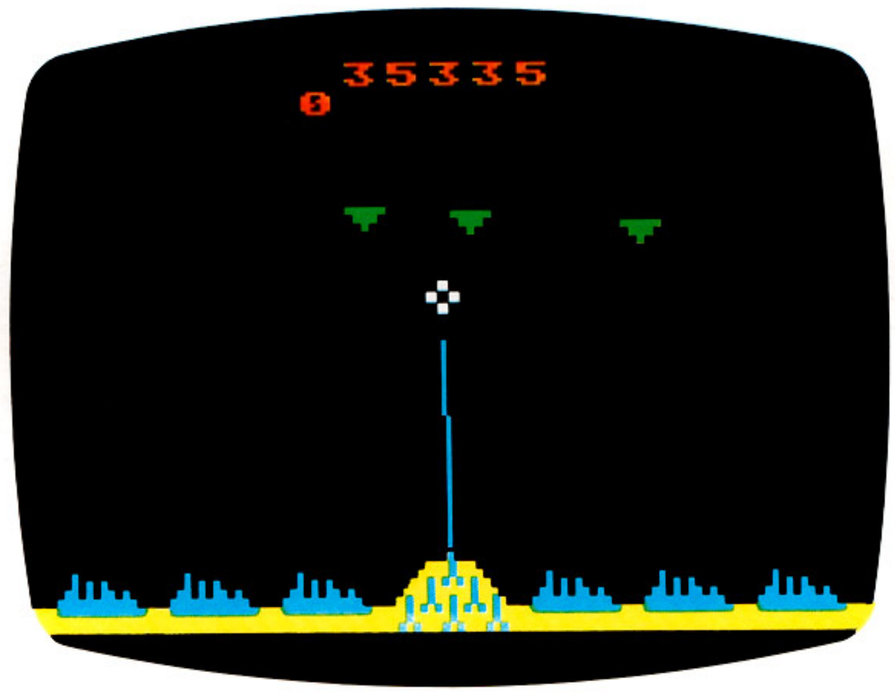

Figure 12 All Smart Missiles Option

NO BONUS CITIES

MISSILE COMMAND gives you bonus cities every 10,000 points. If you wish to play without them, press the OPTION key. Note that **BONUS** disappears from the top of the first display. Press START to begin playing without bonus cities.

To restore bonus cities, press OPTION again.

> **Note:** SELECT OPTION number keys **1** through **9**, the **S** key, and SYSTEM RESET all reset MISSILE COMMAND to the first display and return game score counters to zero. The highest-score counter does not reset to zero unless you turn off the computer.

6

TO PAUSE, RESET, OR START A NEW GAME

PAUSE OPTION

Press any key on the computer keyboard to freeze the display and stop play temporarily. Press any key to continue playing.

RESET

Press SYSTEM RESET to stop a game and return MISSILE COMMAND to the first display (Figure 5).

Note: Pressing SELECT OPTION, number keys **1** through **9**, or **S** will also stop play and return MISSILE COMMAND to the first display.

START A NEW GAME

Press the START key to return MISSILE COMMAND to the wave point multiplier display (Figures 8 and 10) and start a new game.

7

YOUR ABM DEFENSE

You have a total of 30 ABM's per wave for defense of your cities and missile base. Each time six ABM's are launched or destroyed, six more appear on your launch pad. When your last six ABM's are on the launch pad, the cursor warns you by changing from this: ✜ into a solid like this: ✚. Keep an eye on the cursor and try not to run out of missiles before a wave ends or you will leave your cities defenseless.

When an enemy missile slips past your ABM defense, it usually destroys whatever it hits, but occasionally it only inflicts damage. If your missile base is only damaged, you can continue to launch ABM's. Therefore, it's a good idea to keep pressing the fire button on your Joystick after your missile base has been hit. Rely on the "no launch" signal to tell you when you can't launch ABM's.

"NO LAUNCH" SIGNAL

Sometimes all you'll get when you press the fire button on your Joystick is a high-pitched "bleep." That's the "no launch" signal telling you that you can't launch ABM's for one of the following reasons:

- You have no more ABM's to launch.
- Your ABM's are not ready for launching.
- You already have eight ABM explosions on the television screen. (You may never have more than eight ABM explosions on the screen at one time.)

DEPLOYMENT STRATEGY

Here are some rules and tips on ABM deployment. For more advanced strategy, see Section 9 GAME TIPS.

- As soon as you've launched an ABM and marked the target for detonation, move the cursor to another target. Don't wait for the explosion.
- Always "lead" your target. Aim just in front of missiles, satellites, and bombers and let them travel into your exploding ABM's.
- Hit bombers and killer satellites before they can drop missiles.
- Hit ICBM's before they can "MIRV" (divide into multiple warheads or Multiple Independent Re-entry Vehicles).
- Hit smart missiles dead on, since they're designed to evade your ABM detonations. If you're not very good at direct hits, try surrounding smart missiles with detonations.
- Avoid "overkill." It wastes ABM's.
- Hit targets before they cross your radar line (see figure 13). The "radar line" is an invisible line marking the cursor's lower limit. Since you can't position the cursor below this line, any enemy missile that crosses it is beyond the range of your ABM's.

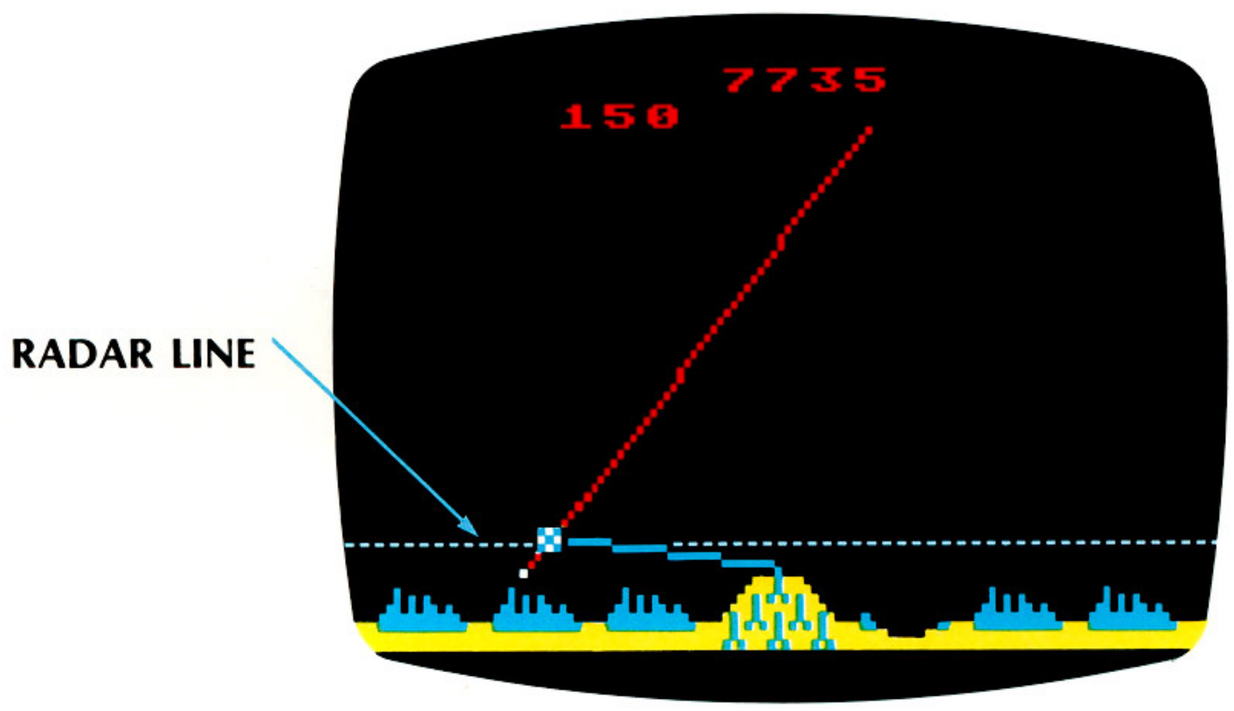

Figure 13 Radar Line

8

SCORING

You score points for every enemy weapon destroyed and bonus points for every city and ABM remaining at the end of a wave. Here is the point system for the first two waves of MISSILE COMMAND:

Points for Weapons Destroyed		Bonus Points	
ICBM or MIRV	25 points	ABM Saved	5 points
Bomber or Satellite	100 points	City Saved	100 points
Smart Missile	125 points		

Any cities and ABM's left at the end of a wave are counted and bonus points are added to your score.

DISPLAY COLORS AND WAVE POINT MULTIPLIERS

Every two waves, the display colors change and the wave point multiplier increases, as shown in the following table:

Waves	Colors	Wave Point Multiplier
1 and 2	Blue and red on black background	1 × Points
3 and 4	Blue and green on black	2 × Points
5 and 6	Yellow-green and red on black	3 × Points
7 and 8	Light blue and yellow on black	4 × Points
9 and 10	Black and pink on blue	5 × Points
11 and 12	Blue and light red on gray-blue	6 × Points
13 and 14	Light yellow and black on purple	6 × Points
15 and 16	Light red and black on light yellow	6 × Points
17 and 18	Light purple and light yellow-green on gray	6 × Points
19 and 20	Light blue and black on red	6 × Points

Note: Colors may vary, depending on the color control settings of your television set.

The table shows that points are doubled (2 × Points) during Waves 3 and 4 and tripled (3 × Points) during Waves 5 and 6:

	Waves 3, 4	Waves 5, 6
ICBM or MIRV	50 points	75 points
Bomber or Satellite	200 points	300 points
Smart Missile	250 points	375 points
City Saved	200 points	300 points
ABM Saved	10 points	15 points

Points are multiplied by 4 (4 × Points) in Waves 7 and 8 and by 5 (5 × Points) in Waves 9 and 10. After Wave 10, points are multiplied by 6 (6 × Points). Wave point multipliers are shown at the start of every wave (see Figures 8 and 10).

Waves continue as long as you have cities left. After Wave 20 the colors repeat. Waves 21 and 22, for example, are the same colors as Waves 1 and 2. Points continue to be multiplied by 6 after Wave 20.

BONUS CITY POINTS

Every 10,000 points you earn a bonus city and a musical salute. Your bonus city is placed on a vacant site chosen at random.

If you are such a good player that you have no vacant sites at 10,000 points (or multiples of 10,000 points) your bonus city is held in reserve until a city is destroyed and a site becomes available. The bonus city is set on the vacant site at the start of the next wave. Bonus cities will be reserved for you until your score reaches one million points. At one million points you lose all cities held in reserve. After all, such a talented player really doesn't need bonus cities.

9

GAME TIPS

DON'T DEFEND DIRT

As a rule, you shouldn't waste ABM's on enemy missiles that are heading for dirt (bomb craters or vacant sites). Defend your missile base and remaining cities. Of course, if all your cities are destroyed or you are on the point of receiving a bonus city, you might as well go for high-score weapons like smart missiles, even if they are heading for dirt.

DESTROY BOMBERS AND SATELLITES RIGHT AWAY

Destroy bombers and satellites as soon as they appear to keep them from dropping missiles and make them return faster. The sooner you destroy them, the sooner they reappear and the more points you can score. You may want to launch "insurance" ABM's at the left and right sides of the television screen even before a bomber or satellite appears in hope that one will travel into the ABM explosion.

DON'T LET SMART MISSILES DISTRACT YOU

Some players try so hard to hit smart missiles they forget to defend their cities and missile base. Remember that a smart missile can only hit one target.

SAVE THE INSIDE CITIES

During easier waves you will naturally try to defend all the cities. But as waves become more difficult, you may have to give up some cities. Give up the outside cities first. Save the cities closest to the missile base; they're easier to defend. When waves are really tough, you may want to defend only one city and go for as many high-score targets as you can.

HINT: The enemy can only destroy three cities per wave. Therefore, after you've lost three cities you can concentrate on destroying high-score enemy targets. Of course, you still have to defend your missile base.

PROTECT CITIES WITH A MISSILE UMBRELLA

A missile umbrella (Figure 14) is a line of ABM explosions spread across the television screen to trap and destroy oncoming enemy weapons.

To set up a missile umbrella, move the cursor rapidly across the television screen, just beneath the enemy missiles, and leave a line of detonation marks. Space the marks close enough to form a chain of explosions beneath the enemy missiles. If possible, spread the missile umbrella in the path of a bomber or satellite, as shown in Figure 14.

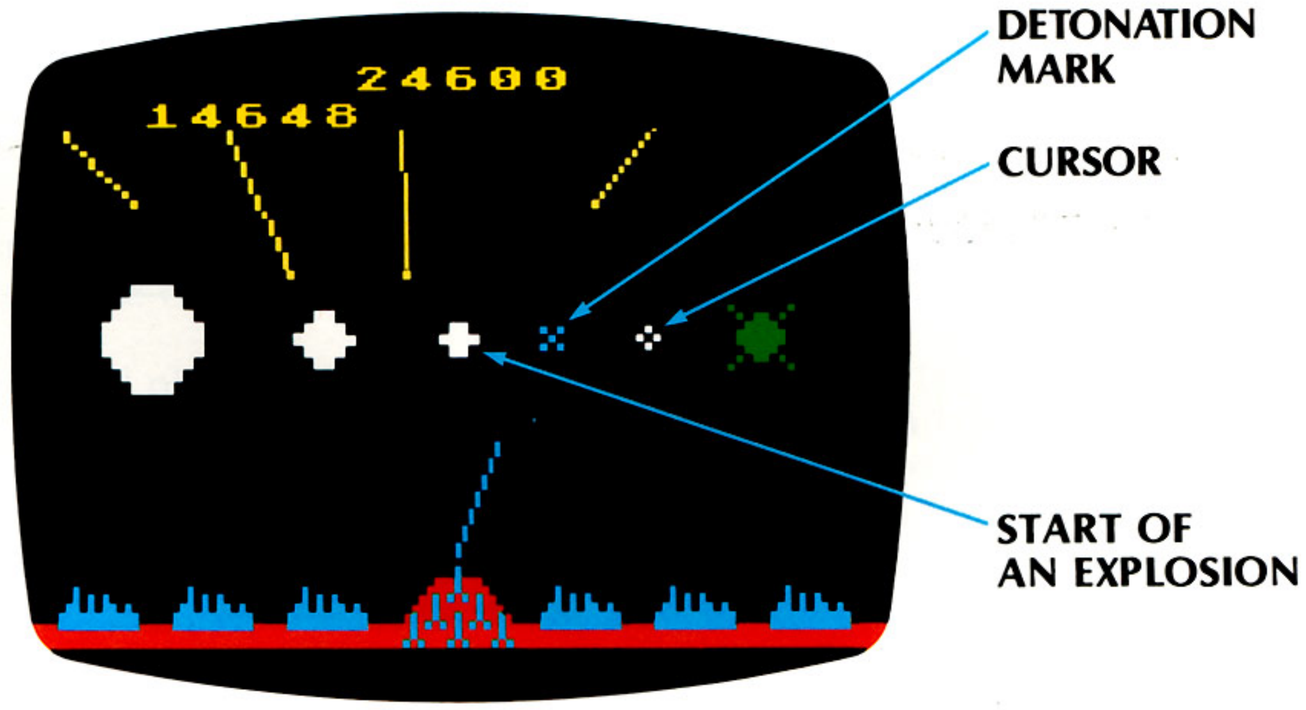

Figure 14 Missile Umbrella