

BLAZING ANGELS 2: SECRET MISSIONS OF WWII

Down in flames

PUBLISHER: **Ubisoft** DEVELOPER: **Ubisoft** GENRE: **Action** AVAILABILITY: **Retail, E-tail (<http://digitalstore.ubi.com>)** ESRB RATING: **Teen**
 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS: **2.4GHz CPU, 1GB RAM, 7GB hard drive space (gamepad recommended)** MULTIPLAYER: **2-16 players** VERSION REVIEWED: **Retail Box**

REVIEW

Y The *GFW* style guide states that reviewers are to avoid using unnecessary profanity. This presents a problem, since it's difficult to discuss *Blazing Angels 2* without expletives...but I'll try if I must.

Why is profanity necessary? Because *BA2* is so obviously a clumsy, careless Xbox 360 port—a frame-a-second crawl, even on extraordinarily powerful systems. Because it inexplicably stopped playing voiceovers halfway through the game and nothing—not even reinstalling—made them come back. Because even though it's a 360 game first and foremost, it flatly refused to acknowledge my 360 USB controller. Because gameplay is slug-

gish and unresponsive, to the point of ignoring frantic repeated clicking of mouse and keyboard while your craft screams toward the unforgiving ground.

But it's also necessary because an obviously awesome arcade flight-combat game lurks somewhere in there. *BA2* makes you *feel* the dogfights, the dizzying, vertigo-inducing combat, the wail of air raid sirens, the *nyyyaaarrrrooooww* of diving bombers, and the puffy flak blossoms. Somewhere inside the ruin of unmanageable controls and awful performance is a game experience that would qualify as nearly exquisite...if it worked.

Cooperative multiplayer breathes extended life into the 18-mission campaign, and a variety of competitive modes are available for aerial fraggers. But whether you're playing



• **Awesome boss battles, like with this monster German zeppelin, round out clever missions.**

online or off, you just can't shake the feeling that the PC version of *Blazing Angels 2* is a messy afterthought, made all the more disappointing for wasted potential. • **Matthew Sakey**

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VERDICT

• **Beautiful visuals; inventive missions; impressive variety of craft.**

• **Unresponsive controls; tortiselike performance; annoying checkpoint save.**

4/10

BAD



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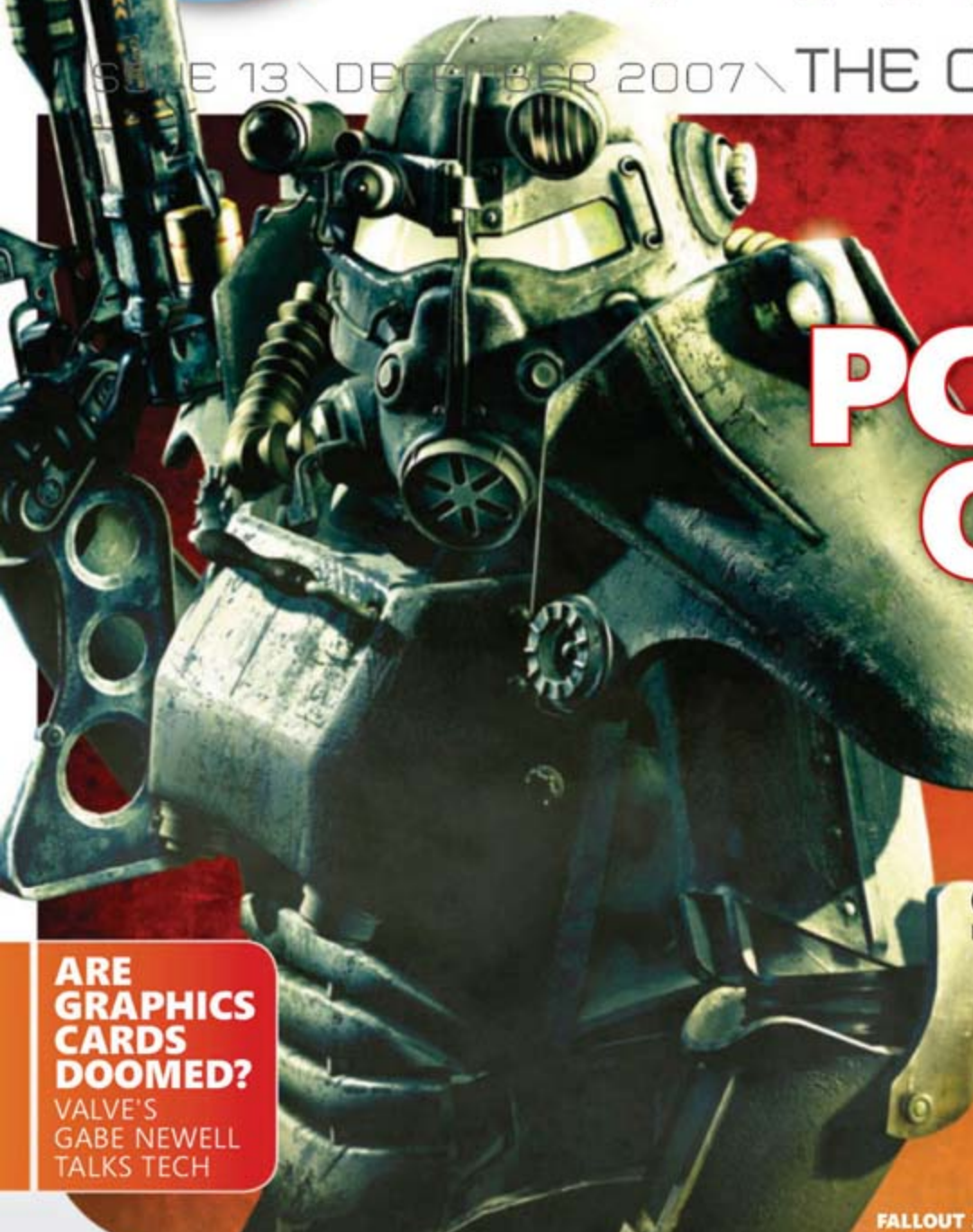
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