**game** advance wars: dual strike for nintendo ds

Brace yourselves for the **handheld wars**

**LIN ZHAOWEI** is hooked on the latest instalment of Nintendo’s turn-based strategy game series

*There are several commanding officers to choose from in Advance Wars: Dual Strike.*

**PLOT**

Advance Wars I and II were easily two of the best games released for the Gameboy Advance system. This Nintendo Dual Screen (DS) version has plenty to live up to, and it does, with a refreshing mix of new units, characters and gameplay elements.

The story picks up where the previous game left off. The Black Hole forces have been defeated and the antagonist nations have decided to form the Allied Nations to guard against future attacks. And true to nature, the villains have mysteriously amassed new forces and units to launch yet another attack on the world. It is up to Jake, a young commanding officer (CO) and his allies to thwart the Black Hole’s plans for world domination.

**ACTION**

In each turn-based battle, you will select a CO — each has his own unique strength and weakness to take charge of your troops. A huge variety of units are at your disposal, such as artillery, rockets, infantry, tanks and bombers.

Players have to strategise meticulously, buy sufficient units, and beat the stuffing out of the opponent. The new feature here is that you can now use two COs in each battle, during which you can switch between the two to take advantage of their abilities.

Like the prequels, COs can unleash “CO superpowers” which enhance troop performance in different ways. With the new dual CO system, you can unleash a devastating Tag power that allows you to use both COs’ superpowers in one turn! It is even possible to turn the tide of the battle if you use the Tag powers at the right time.

Dual Strike also introduces new units in every department, such as the pipe runner, the most powerful ringer weapon yet, and the stealth bomber, which can bring in the element of surprise attacks.

The dual screen is used to good effect with the introduction of dual-screen battles. This is where a secondary battle on the top screen of the DS. It is not necessary to win the top screen battle, but if you clear that, the CO in charge of that battle will join the fray on the touch screen battle, giving you a distinct advantage over your opponent.

You are most likely to spend time on the campaign mode at the start, as it allows you to get familiar with the game’s new features. In addition, there is also the “War Room”, where you can play against the artificial intelligence (AI) on standalone maps.

You can also test your military astuteness against your friends through

**CRAVE FACTOR**

Fans of the previous two games should not hesitate in getting this version. Newcomers have little to fear, as the tutorial levels will get you up to speed in little time. With an intelligent AI, plenty of maps to play through and multi-player mode, Advance Wars: Dual Strike is likely to keep you battling on for many hours.

Lin Zhaowei is a first-year student at Singapore Management University.

* $56
* Get it from games shops