

Grudge Warriors – Sony PlayStation

Developed by: Take2 Interactive (<http://www.take2games.com>)

Published by: Take2 Interactive (<http://www.take2games.com>)

Reviewed by: Tim Maxwell

Official Site: N/A

Genre: Action

Number of Players: One or Two

ESRB: Teen

Overall Rating: 4.5

Graphics: 5/10

Sound: 4/10

Documentation: 6/10

Getting Started: 4/10

Gameplay: 5/10

Value: 7/10

The Good Press: \$10 for a game – not too shabby; lots of explosions.

The Bad Press: Blotchy graphics; headache-inducing sound; muddy control; boring and unbalanced missions.

Supports: Memory card, vibration function, analog control

Overview: Only the miniscule price tag keeps *Grudge Warriors* from the scrap heap.

Tips:

If you find yourself getting pummeled near the edge of the map, simply fall into the water. You'll be repositioned near where you fell, but it just might give you enough time to get back on track.

Don't bother fighting the other tanks as you'll waste valuable ammo and energy. Stick to the objectives and you'll live a lot longer.

What can you buy in the gaming industry for under \$10? A used controller or memory card perhaps? Heck, you might even be able to find a used copy of an ancient *Resident Evil* clone that simply never caught on. Believe it or not, I'm here to tell you that you can now own a legitimate, brand new PlayStation game for an MSRP of only \$9.99. That's right, a mere ten spot can afford yourself one of a handful of titles in Take2 Interactive's new no-profit-necessary line of games. Sure, the price is right, but unfortunately, that's about the only redeeming quality in *Grudge Warriors*.

The story in *Grudge Warriors* revolves around the recent revival of devastating gang warfare. A sudden outbreak of cold-blooded deaths around the world has signaled the return of gang-related violence. Some gangs battle simply to prove their dominance, while others are hoping to earn some recognition among their peers. In any event, the eleven predominant gangs have recently taken residence on various secluded islands around the globe. Here, they build sophisticated war machines and outfit them with some pretty advanced weaponry. Your gang's job is to infiltrate the enemy bases and neutralize their power sources—an often overwhelming and boring task.

The first order of business in *Grudge Warriors* is to select the gang you wish to control. Each gang has created their own battle tanks along with one special weapon. Although the special weapons have some cool names—such as “flower bomb” and “infinity ray”—they all seem to do similar amounts of damage. In fact, just about every weapon is pretty much the same in terms of damage—laser turrets seem to go down after one or two hits, while enemy tanks seem nearly invincible. This makes gang selection a somewhat pointless exercise and further proves that this game isn't the deepest around.

At the beginning of each level, your tank is dropped behind enemy lines and the “fun” begins. The first thing you'll notice is that you're all alone in your attack—it's you up against countless laser turrets and enemy tanks. And if they don't kill you, either the shoddy controls or your own boredom will. The tanks

plod around at a snail's pace, yet it's still difficult to keep yourself from constantly falling off ledges and losing enemies as a result. Luckily, in order to alleviate some of the frustration involved with the slippery controls and abundant difficulty, Take2 Interactive severely dumbed down the AI in *Grudge Warriors* to give you a fair shot. If an enemy tank is taking it on the chin, he'll often turn away and head back to base. This sounds like a smart move in theory, but the tank will do little to defend himself during his retreat, making him yours for the taking. Too many intense firefights (which feature about as much entertainment as you'll find in this game) end with the enemy running off with his turret between his legs.

If you manage to neutralize the enemy forces, there are basically two strategic objectives to accomplish: destroy the island's power generators, and find as many tokens as you can. As you might guess, the generators aren't just sitting around in plain sight; they're hidden all over the island. Some of them are pretty easy to find, while others will have you repeatedly trying (and often failing) to maneuver your vehicle into some ridiculously cramped or barely-reachable location. Searching for the tokens is also rather pointless—even if you manage to find all of them (you get a weapon powerup if you do), much of the enemy threat will have already been dispatched.

Aesthetically, *Grudge Warriors* doesn't exactly shine, but I've seen and heard much worse. The tanks themselves are a bit blotchy and clipping problems abound, but the game maintains an acceptable framerate throughout and keeps things interesting with some decent explosions and graphical effects. The same goes for the audio—sometimes things sound fine, other times you'll be frantically reaching for the volume controls on your television. The music is generally fairly annoying too in my opinion, but I suppose this is a matter of preference. If you enjoy having your brain rattled by techno-style metal music while you play games, you might enjoy this.

When all is said and done, *Grudge Warriors* wouldn't hold a candle to many games in the crowded vehicle shooter genre if it weren't for the rock-bottom price tag. Still, just because a game is almost cheaper to own than it is to rent, that doesn't mean you should buy it. I for one would much prefer to spend \$20 extra on a quality game that I can get some enjoyment out of. The fact is, *Grudge Warriors* relies too heavily on boring trial and error and frustrating exploration, and not enough on combat. If you're dead set on a vehicle shooter and you're severely strapped for cash, head over to Blockbuster, rent something in the *Twisted Metal* series, and go home happy.