

QUARXON

ENTERTAINMENT

Break through the boundary and destroy
the Droids



For ages 7 and up

CONSUMER-WRITTEN PROGRAMS FOR

ATARI®

HOME COMPUTERS

APX

ATARI Program Exchange

QUARXON

by
Scott Ludwig

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Overview

You no sooner discover friendly droids in a new galaxy, QUARXON, when your scanner picks up enemy movement. Headquarters orders you to defend the droids against enemy attack. You have only one laser-equipped spaceship and your wits to outmaneuver both the enemy ship and the cosmic laws unique to QUARXON's atmosphere.

Your objective is to fire your laser through randomly occurring openings in the center boundary line to break through the multilayered blockade protecting the enemy's droids, who want to take over the galaxy. At the same time, the enemy is trying to wipe out your droids. If the enemy's laser hits your ship, you face the immediate and often fatal danger of the crushing wall. QUARXON's atmosphere contains other precarious conditions. For example, if you shoot through the boundary line twice from the same spot, you create a temporary free shooting zone for the enemy, so you must keep moving at all times. And, if your shot misses an opening in the boundary line, the laser fire rebounds into your blockade! The battle ends when one player destroys all his opponent's droids.

QUARXON has one- and two-player options, or you can watch the computer battle against itself. Other game options include choosing from three difficulty levels, varying the thickness of the blockade, and varying the number of droids. Fewer droids make for a more difficult battle, since the number of droids determines how many lives you have.

Required accessories

One ATARI Joystick Controller per player

- Cassette version
16K RAM
ATARI 410 Program Recorder
- Diskette version
24K RAM
ATARI 810 Disk Drive

Contacting the author

Users wishing to contact the author about QUARXON may write to him at:

601 Signer Boulevard
Hickam AFB, Hawaii 96818

Getting started

Loading QUARXON into computer memory

1. Remove any program cartridge from the (left) cartridge slot of your computer.
2. For a one-player game, plug your Joystick Controller into the first (the leftmost) controller jack at the front of your computer console. For a two-player game, plug a second Joystick Controller into the second controller jack at the front of your computer console.
3. Turn on your TV set.
4. *If you have the cassette version of QUARXON:*
 - a. Have your computer turned OFF.
 - b. Slide the QUARXON cassette into the program recorder, press rewind until the tape rewinds completely, and then press PLAY.
 - c. Turn on the computer while pressing the START button.
 - d. When the computer beeps, release the START button and press the RETURN key. QUARXON will load into computer memory and start automatically.

If you have the diskette version of QUARXON:

- a. Have your computer turned OFF.
- b. Turn on your disk drive.
- c. When the BUSY light goes out, open the disk drive door and insert the QUARXON diskette with the label in the lower right-hand corner nearest to you.
- d. Turn on your computer. QUARXON will load into computer memory and start automatically.

The first display screen

After QUARXON loads, the player option/demonstration-game screen displays, and if the volume is turned up on your TV set, you'll hear the introductory theme play. The text on the playing field of QUARXON will disappear whenever you start a game and reappear whenever you end a game.

Playing QUARXON

Choosing your options

As the text on the screen explains, you use joystick #1 (in the leftmost jack) to select three options: (1) difficulty level, (2) number of droids, and (3) number of layers in the blockade. (You choose number of players by pressing the OPTION key.) This is the OPTION screen and by pressing the OPTION key during a game, you can return to it to reselect your options.

Difficulty level → pull joystick #1 toward you

QUARXON has three difficulty levels: BEGINNER, INTERMEDIATE, and EXPERT. The game is preset to the BEGINNER level, but you can change the level by pulling joystick #1 toward you.

The difference in the levels is in the speed of the boundary line openings, the speed and composition of the crushing wall, and the difficulty in defeating the computer player. (All these game components are described under GAME PLAY.) The harder the level, the faster and more challenging everything is.

Number of droids → push joystick #1 rightward

To win the game, you must destroy all your opponent's droids before he destroys yours. The game is preset to eight droids, but you can change this number by moving joystick #1 rightward. You can choose from one to eight droids. The fewer droids, the harder the game.

Number of blockade layers → push joystick #1 leftward

Between your spaceship and your droids is a blockade composed of seven layers, each layer in a darker or lighter shade of one color. These are the layers you and your opponent must blast through to hit droids. The game is preset to seven layers, but you can change this number by moving joystick #1 to the left. You can choose from zero to seven layers. The fewer the number of layers, the faster the game.

Number of players → OPTION key

You can play QUARXON against the computer or against a friend. You can also watch the computer play against itself. The game is preset to two players. Press the OPTION button to change to a one-player game (you against the computer) or a zero-player game (the computer against itself).

Starting the game

After choosing your options, start the game by pressing the joystick fire button or the START button on the console.

You may restart the game at any time by pressing the START key. All selected options will remain intact. (Note. If you press the SYSTEM RESET button, the OPTION screen displays with your current options intact.)

Game play

Playing field

After you press the START key, the game screen displays. Figure 1 below roughly depicts this display. The screen is cut in half by the horizontal boundary line (labeled 6 in Figure 1). On either side of the boundary line is each player's spaceship (1 and 2). At the top and bottom of the screen are each player's droids (3). Between the droids and the boundary line are the blockade layers (4), which protect the droids from oncoming laser fire. Between the blockade layers and the boundary line are the spaceship playfields (5).

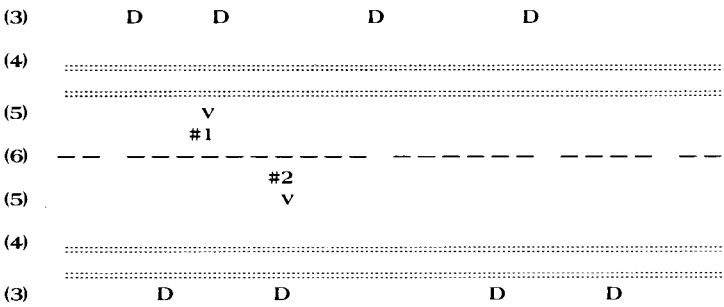


Figure 1. QUARXON Playfield

Objective

You must shoot through the boundary line to blast away at the opposition's blockade layer, positioning your shots so as to destroy his droids beneath the blockade.

Moving your spaceship

Player 1, whose spaceship is on the upper half of the screen, moves his spaceship with the joystick plugged into jack 1, and player 2, whose spaceship is on the lower half of the screen, moves his robot with the joystick plugged into jack 2. Hold the joystick with the red fire button at the top left, towards the TV screen. Movements are as follows:

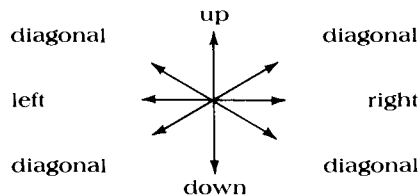


Figure 2. Joystick Movements

Shooting

Press the red joystick button to fire a laser from your spaceship. You must shoot it through the random openings in the boundary line. When a hole opens, move your spaceship over it and then press the red button to shoot your laser through the hole to your opponent's side of the screen.

If you miss the hole and hit the boundary line instead, you break Law #3 of the Cosmic Laws of QUARXON, described below. Your laser will reflect off the boundary line, sending your laser toward your own droids. WATCH OUT!

The cosmic laws of QUARXON:

Law #1: Do not shoot while keeping your spaceship stationary.

Consequence: Shooting twice in the same location creates a "free passing zone line" on your opponent's side of the boundary line. Only your opponent can shoot through the boundary line while the free passing zone line is there. Each player's free passing zone line matches the color of his spaceship. These lines last from 3 to 12 seconds.

Suggestion: To avoid breaking Law #1, move your spaceship after each shot. Any movement at all keeps your spaceship from breaking Law #1. Therefore, by moving your spaceship straight up and down, you can fire at the same droid more than once without creating a free passing zone line for your opponent.

Law #2: Do not let your spaceship get hit by your opponent's laser.

Consequence: If you're hit, the crushing wall appears and starts hemming in your spaceship. To escape, you must work your spaceship through holes in the wall. The wall moves at different speeds and contains different size holes, depending on the skill level you selected.

If the wall has no holes big enough to get your spaceship through, you must create holes by firing at the vulnerable spot that scans the wall. If you hit this spot, a hole appears in the wall at the point at which you fired. You must make enough holes (two is sufficient) to create a big enough void to ease your spaceship through. If your spaceship touches or gets crushed by the wall, it is destroyed, and one of your droids is destroyed. (The wall has no effect if it touches only your laser.) You get another spaceship if you haven't run out of droids.

Law #3: Shoot only through openings in the boundary line.

Consequence: If you fire your missile against a solid segment of the boundary line, your missile rebounds into your own blockade layer, blasting part of it away and thereby helping your opponent reach and destroy your droids.

The small line dividing your droids shrinks by one unit every time you hit the boundary line. If you hit the boundary line eight times, you lose the layer closest to your droids.

Pausing during game play

If you're in the middle of a game of QUARXON and you want to answer the phone or go make a sandwich, press the SPACE BAR to freeze the action. When you're ready to resume playing, press any other key.

End of the game

When one player has defeated the other by destroying all of his opponent's droids, the winning spaceship flashes different colors while the "defeat" song plays. Six seconds later, the game automatically displays the OPTION screen.

To start the game over (with the same options), press the red button on joystick #1 or press the START key.

Strategy

1. To fire repeatedly, hold the joystick button down, but be sure to move between shots.
2. To penetrate deeply into your opponent's blockade layers, fire repeatedly from the same location by moving up and down as you fire.
3. The scanning vulnerable spot in the crushing wall scans from left to right. If you shoot your opponent while his crushing wall is "in action", the vulnerable spot will start its scan over at the left side of the screen. This will keep your opponent from shooting at the vulnerable spot, thus preventing him from making holes in the wall.
4. When you play against the computer, the computer is easier to beat in the beginning level, but harder on the higher levels. Here are some tips to help you beat the computer.
 - a. Take the offensive when playing the computer, especially in the higher levels, where it's tough to beat.
 - b. The computer's spaceship avoids your laser fire, but sometimes you may hit him. If you do, the computer's spaceship will *always* be destroyed by a crushing wall.
 - c. Stay out of the computer's way when it's attacking your droids. This is especially important in the higher levels, because the computer will hit you while shooting at your droids.
 - d. The best way to beat the computer at the EXPERT level is to be dexterous with your joystick and take a massive offensive, but also stay *out* of its way.

Creative ideas

With the options and difficulty levels in QUARXON, you can introduce a lot of variation in game sessions. One interesting idea is to play with all eight droids, but without any blockade layers. This game doesn't last long, but the tension is high!

For a *really* challenging game, play the computer on the EXPERT level. You must be quick and good!



ATARI Program Exchange
P.O. Box 3705
Santa Clara, CA 95055

Review Form

We're interested in your experiences with APX programs and documentation, both favorable and unfavorable. Many of our authors are eager to improve their programs if they know what you want. And, of course, we want to know about any bugs that slipped by us, so that the author can fix them. We also want to

know whether our instructions are meeting your needs. You are our best source for suggesting improvements! Please help us by taking a moment to fill in this review sheet. Fold the sheet in thirds and seal it so that the address on the bottom of the back becomes the envelope front. Thank you for helping us!

1. Name and APX number of program.

2. If you have problems using the program, please describe them here.

3. What do you especially like about this program?

4. What do you think the program's weaknesses are?

5. How can the catalog description be more accurate or comprehensive?

6. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being "poor" and 10 being "excellent", please rate the following aspects of this program:

- _____ Easy to use
- _____ User-oriented (e.g., menus, prompts, clear language)
- _____ Enjoyable
- _____ Self-instructive
- _____ Use (non-game programs)
- _____ Imaginative graphics and sound

7. Describe any technical errors you found in the user instructions (please give page numbers).

8. What did you especially like about the user instructions?

9. What revisions or additions would improve these instructions?

10. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 representing "poor" and 10 representing "excellent", how would you rate the user instructions and why?

11. Other comments about the program or user instructions:

From

STAMP



ATARI Program Exchange
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Santa Clara, CA 95055

[seal here]

QUARXON

by Scott Ludwig

- Use your hunter-killer spaceship to defend droids against enemy attack
- Fire lasers through random openings to penetrate the multilayered blockade
- Avoid obliteration by the crushing wall

Just as you discover friendly droids in a new galaxy, *Quarxon*, your scanner picks up enemy movement. Headquarters orders you to defend the droids against enemy attack. You have only one hunter-killer spaceship and your wits to outmaneuver both the enemy ship and the tricky elements unique to *Quarxon's* atmosphere.

You fire your laser through random

openings in the center boundary to break through the multilayered blockade protecting the enemy. At the same time, the enemy is trying to wipe out your droids. If the enemy's laser hits your ship, you face the immediate and often fatal crushing wall. And you have to keep moving at all times, because if you shoot through the boundary line twice in the same spot, you create a temporary free-shooting zone for the enemy. To add to the challenge, if your shot misses an opening in the boundary line, your laser fire rebounds into your own blockade! The battle ends when one ship wipes out all his opponents droids. *Quarxon* has one- and two-player options, or you can watch the computer battle against itself. Game options include difficulty level, blockade thickness, and number of droids.

Requires:

- One ATARI Joystick Controller per player

Cassette

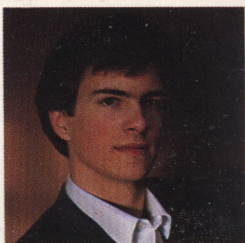
(APX-10174)

- ATARI 410™ Program Recorder
- 16K RAM

Diskette

(APX-20174)

- ATARI 810™ Disk Drive
- 24K RAM



About the author

SCOTT LUDWIG

Quarxon earned Scott Ludwig of Hawaii first prize in the Consumer category of the autumn 1982 APX contest. A recent high school graduate, Scott has been programming since he was thirteen and is completely self-taught. He worked at a series of odd jobs to earn enough money to buy his first computer. After some experimentation, Scott decided to move up to an ATARI Home Computer. As his fascina-

tion with his ATARI Computer grew, he decided to try marketing his work. *Quarxon* is his first program to be marketed, and its arcade-style action and beautiful color and graphics amply demonstrate Scott's programming skill. After taking a year out to work on more such programs, Scott plans to enroll at Georgia Institute of Technology to study computer science and electrical engineering.