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Silent Thunder: A-10 Tank Killer II

Troubleshooting Guide

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****Note: While this troubleshooting guide contains a great deal of helpful information, you can also find assistance with game play issues as well as technical hints in the on-line manuals and guides placed in the Sierra group and the CD's "Help" directory.**

SECTION 1 - HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS

REQUIRED

486DX66

8MB RAM

Double Speed CD ROM

100% Soundblaster compatible sound card

SVGA (640 x 480 x 256 colors)

Mouse / AT Keyboard

Windows 95 **RECOMMENDED FOR BEST PERFORMANCE**

Pentium

Quad speed CD ROM Drive

SECTION 2 - INSTALLATION PROCEDURES

Insert the CD into your CD ROM drive. Windows should prompt you with a message: "**A10-II Silent Thunder has not been installed yet. Would you like to install it now?**" Select **Yes**.

If Autoplay is disabled or not supported by your computer, insert the CD and click on the Start button. Click on Run and type D:\SETUP in the command line, (assuming your CD is your D:\ drive--substitute your drive letter if necessary). Click on the OK button and follow the onscreen messages to install the game. We recommend choosing the full installation option if you have enough hard drive space. If you fail any of the tests, see Section 3, Common Installation Problems.

Once you are in the Installation program, select **Test Hardware** to see if your computer and its present configuration will be sufficient to play the game. If your system passes the Hardware Test, click on the **Main Menu** button, then click on **Install**.

SECTION 3 - COMMON INSTALLATION PROBLEMS

Problem: When installing the game, you receive the message "Error reading drive D". Message will vary depending on what drive you are installing from.

Solution: There are several factors that can cause a "read" error of this type. The most common is a dirty or scratched CD. You should check the CD to make sure that there are no smudges, fingerprints, scratches or cracks on it. If you see any smudges on the CD, clean it off with a soft cloth and try it again. If the disk is scratched, it will need to be replaced.

If cleaning the CD doesn't help, the problem may lie with the CD ROM drivers. When using Windows 95, use version 2.95 of MSCDEX in the C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM directory. You should also check with the CD ROM drive manufacturer to make sure that you have the latest version of their CD drivers. Outdated or incompatible CD drivers can cause this type of problem.

If you need to replace your CD, replacement is FREE for the first 90 days of product ownership. After 90 days there is a \$10.00 handling fee per program. Mail us the CD, a copy of your sales receipt dated within 90 days or the \$10.00 handling fee, and a note detailing your computer hardware and the problem that is occurring. Please include your full name, mailing address, and daytime telephone number so we can contact you if necessary. We will then send you a replacement CD. The address is: Sierra On-Line Customer Service, PO Box 485, Coarsegold CA 93614-0485.

Problem: Your computer fails the Display test; you get a message saying "Your video display supports 16 colors..."

Solution: Sierra's Windows games require that Windows is running in 256 color mode. Even though your monitor and video card may be capable of displaying 256 colors, Windows may not be set up to use this resolution. To check, right-click on the desktop and choose Properties from the pop up menu. In the Settings section, if the *Color Palette* section reads 16 color, you will need to change to 256 colors. **Do not use more than 256 colors with A10-II Silent Thunder. Although the game will run, you will not be able to view some of the visual effects in the game.** If your system will support 800 x 600 at 256 colors, change the *Desktop Area* to 800 x 600 pixels.

Warning: *Be careful when changing video drivers!* If you choose one that is not designed for your particular monitor, Windows will not display properly. If this occurs, restart your computer and hit [F8] when the words "Starting Windows '95" are displayed. Choose Safe Mode from the options list. While you are in Safe Mode, right-click on the desktop and select Properties from the pop up menu. Change the *Color Palette* and *Desktop Area* to a setting supported by your system.

Problem: Your computer fails the Display test; you get a message saying "Your video display supports 256 colors at a resolution of 800 x 600 and a speed of XXX K pixels/sec..."

Solution: The display rate of your computer is not fast enough to satisfactorily play the game. If you are running 800 x 600 resolution, switch to 640 x 480 at 256 colors. Right-click on the desktop and choose Properties from the pop up menu. In the Settings section, if the *Desktop Area* section reads 800 x 600, or higher, change to 640 x 480. Click on the OK button and follow the onscreen prompts from Windows '95. Once Windows has resized, click on the Start button and choose Settings, Control Panel. Double click on the System icon, then click on the Performance tab and the Graphics button. Make sure the slider for Hardware Acceleration is all the way to the right. Restart Windows and run the setup program and test your display. If your computer still fails the display test, you may be able to play A10-II Silent Thunder on your system with some limitations. In the game, turn down all of the display options. Also be aware that the game may play jerky.

Warning: *Be careful when changing video drivers!* If you choose one that is not designed for your particular monitor, Windows will not display properly. If this occurs, restart your computer and hit [F8] when the words "Starting Windows '95" are displayed. Choose Safe Mode from the options list. While you are in Safe Mode, right-click on the desktop and select Properties from the pop up menu. Change the *Color Palette* and *Desktop Area* to a setting supported by your system.

Problem: Your computer fails the Memory test in Windows; you get a message stating you do not have enough memory to run A10-II Silent Thunder.

Solution: First, create a A10-II Silent Thunder boot disk using the instructions in Section 8. Reboot the system using the boot disk, then create a clean Windows environment. Make sure that there are no other Windows programs running. Disable all screen savers, virus scans, etc. Wallpaper can sometimes take up a considerable amount of memory, so turn it off. Right-click on the desktop and choose Properties from the pop up menu. Make sure None is chosen for Wallpaper and click on OK. These steps should give you enough memory to run the game. If they do not, please refer to Section 4, Windows Memory Troubleshooting.

Problem: Your computer fails the Sound Card test.

Solution: Your sound card may be incorrectly configured for DAC (Audio) or your sound card drivers may not be properly installed or configured. Make sure your speakers are turned on and run the Windows mixer program for your sound card so you can increase its volume levels for MIDI (music) and DAC (Audio). Also check the Audio and MIDI settings in the Multimedia section of Control Panel. The Audio setting defines what driver will be used to produce digitized sound (DAC). Speech and sound effects in a game are usually DAC sounds. The MIDI setting indicates what driver is being used for music playback. The following examples are for the SoundBlaster 16:

AUDIO: SB16 Wave Out

MIDI: MIDI for Internal OPL2/OPL3 FM Synthesis

The names of the Audio and MIDI drivers will vary, depending on your sound card. However, they should be similar to these SoundBlaster 16 drivers. For complete information (including driver names and installation instructions) for Windows 95 drivers for your sound card, contact your sound card manufacturer.

SECTION 4 - WINDOWS MEMORY TROUBLESHOOTING

If you are having trouble getting enough memory to run A10-II Silent Thunder, these steps should help you.

Create a Boot Disk: Section 8 contains boot disk instructions.

Disable any hardware cache: Some CD ROM drives, such as the Teac 4x, install their own cache. This cache may use as much as 2 MB of memory. Consult with the manufacturer or your hardware documentation if you do not know how to disable this cache.

Create a Clean Windows Environment: Make sure that there are no other Windows programs running. Disable all screen savers, virus scans, etc. If you are using an alternate Windows desktop (Norton Navigator, etc.) use plain Windows 95 instead. If you have sound-related Windows programs installed (IconHearIt, SoundBits, etc.), make sure they are disabled before starting the game. Also, turn off your Wallpaper. Wallpaper can sometimes take up a considerable amount of memory.

SECTION 5 - ILLEGAL OPERATION ERRORS

An Illegal Operation is a generic Windows 95 error message that can occur in any Windows program. Insufficient memory, conflicts between two or more drivers or programs, or corrupted files can all contribute to this type of error.

- 1) Create a Windows 95 boot disk. See Section 8 for boot disk instructions.
- 2) Disable any and all other Windows programs (if any) that are running prior to starting the game. This includes all screen savers, wallpaper, etc.
- 3) Set your Video Display to 640 by 480, 256 colors. (Consult the steps given for changing display settings in Section 2 - Common Installation Problems.)
- 4) Run SCANDISK on your hard drive by clicking **Start**, then **Programs**, **Accessories**, **System Tools**, **Scandisk**. Let Scandisk correct any errors, then uninstall the game and re-install it.

- 5) Disable Video Acceleration. Click on **Start**, then **Settings, Control Panel**. Double-click the **System** icon, choose **Performance**, then **Graphics**. You should see a slider bar labeled Hardware Acceleration. Lower the bar a notch (slide it to the left), then restart Windows when you are prompted and run the game again. Continue doing this until you cannot lower the bar any more or the problem is corrected. If this corrects the problem, you should contact your video card manufacturer to obtain updated video drivers.
- 6) Free up memory by lowering your CD ROM Supplemental Cache Size. From **Control Panel**, click on **System**, then **Performance, File System**. Click on the tab for **CD ROM**. Adjust the slider bar for Supplemental Cache Size from "Large" to "Small", then click on OK.

SECTION 6 - COMMON GAME PROBLEMS

Problem: Parts of the game display incorrect colors or certain screens are mostly black.

Solution: A10-II Silent Thunder requires 256 color mode in Windows. Right-click on the desktop and choose Properties from the pop up menu. In the Settings section, if the *Color Palette* section reads more than 256 colors, you will need to change to 256 colors. If your system will support 800 x 600 at 256 colors, change the *Desktop Area* to 800 x 600 pixels.

Warning: *Be careful when changing video drivers!* If you choose one that is not designed for your particular monitor, Windows will not display properly. If this occurs, restart your computer and hit [F8] when the words "Starting Windows '95" are displayed. Choose Safe Mode from the options list. While you are in Safe Mode, right-click on the desktop and select Properties from the pop up menu. Change the *Color Palette* and *Desktop Area* to a setting supported by your system.

Problem: The screen image is distorted or has horizontal white lines.

Solution: This problem can be corrected by changing display drivers. Right-click on the desktop and choose **Properties** from the pop up list. Click on the **Settings** tab, then click on the **Change Display Type**. In the Adapter Type section, click on **Change**. Try a different driver from the list of drivers. For instance, if you are using the ET4000W/32; use the ET4000 driver. For information on what drivers will work with your video card, contact the video card manufacturer.

Problem: Cannot utilize full screen mode in simulation.

Solution: You must have DirectDraw installed. Sierra's Setup utility should auto-detect for DirectDraw and install it, if necessary when you install A10-II Silent Thunder. However, you must reboot before the changes can take effect. To use DirectDraw during the game, go into the preferences menu from the main screen menu and activate the full screen option.

Problem: The game freezes or crashes to the main Windows screen when flying in a full-screen mode.

Solution: Not all video cards support direct draw properly. DirectDraw only affects A10-II Silent Thunder when running with full screen enabled in the Preferences Menu. If you are running Windows in 640x480 mode, you can play the game in a full-screen window without using the full-screen mode and DirectDraw being present on your machine. Please contact your video card manufacturer for updated drivers and to verify that they support DirectDraw.

Problem: The mouse disappears or exhibits erratic behavior on the menu screens so that I cannot select anything.

Solution: Animated or 3D cursors can cause this problem. To avoid these problems, simply double click the MOUSE icon under the Control Panel, select the Pointers, and chose the Windows Standard.

Problem: Certain keys do not work to bring functions up.

Solution: This can happen if the joystick was changed without changing the joystick configuration in the Control Panel. See the A10-II Joystick Information file located in the game directory.

Problem: When you click the mouse outside of the game window, the game stops functioning normally.

Solution: Click back on the game window, or return back to the Main Window in the game and restart the mission.

SECTION 7 - SOUND CARD CONFIGURATION AND SOUND ISSUES

Improper sound card configuration will cause problems with some multimedia applications. Check your sound card's documentation, or with the manufacturer of the card, to ensure your sound card is properly set up for Windows 95. If your manual does not cover configuration for Windows 95, you should get updated information from the card's manufacturer. This information may be available online through CompuServe, America On Line or another service.

A10-II Silent Thunder requires a 100% Soundblaster compatible sound card. Not every sound card is 100% Soundblaster compatible. If you encounter any problems, check the documentation for your sound card to ensure it is correctly setup in Windows '95. You may be able to play the game without the voice recognition feature if your sound card is not 100% Soundblaster compatible. Re-install the game without accepting the voice recognition feature to see if this makes any difference.

For your sound card to be 100% Soundblaster compatible, it must be supported directly by Windows '95. If your sound card is not directly supported by Windows '95 and requires lines in the CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT to function, you need to check with the manufacturer of the sound card for the availability of Windows '95 drivers.

Problem: No music in the Main Menu or in the simulation.

Solution: Make sure you have the Music Option enabled in the Preferences Menu. Also make sure that the Windows CD Player is closed prior to loading A10-II Silent Thunder. If you continue to have problems, make sure you have a CD Audio cable connected between your sound card and your CD-ROM drive, or an audio cable leading from the CD-ROM drive's headphone port to the sound card or external speakers in order to hear game music. Consult your sound card documentation for more information on connecting an audio cable to your CD-ROM drive.

Problem: Consistent problems with sound in A10-II Silent Thunder or sound does not play correctly in other Windows applications.

Solution: Please check to make sure your sound card is setup correctly and is using the latest drivers for your brand of sound card. See Section 7 Sound Card Configuration.

Most sound cards that function properly in Windows 95 experience no problems, however, some sound card may experience problems when attempting to use DirectSound which is a feature

supported by A10-II Silent Thunder. You can bypass the DirectSound drivers by opening a DOS window, changing to the A10_II directory, and typing the command: A10SIM -D0 and then press the [Enter] key. This should allow your sound card to play using the default drivers. To re-enable the DirectSound drivers, type the command A10SIM -D1. Please note that the letter "D" must be capitalized.

SECTION 8 - BOOT DISK INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1 - FORMATTING THE DISK

To make a boot disk, you must system format a high density diskette in the A: drive. This procedure will transfer the "system files" to the disk and allow the computer to boot up correctly. The disk must be in the A: drive; the computer will not boot from the B: drive.

To format a disk in Windows '95, insert the disk, open **My Computer**, then right click on the A: icon. From the menu, select **Format**. Under "Format type" select **Full**; under "Other options", choose **Copy system files**. Click on **Start**.

After the disk is formatted, you must copy the MSDOS.SYS file from the hard drive to the floppy disk. To do this, leave the floppy disk in the drive, open **Windows Explorer** and find the MS-DOS.SYS file in the root of the C: drive. Right click on the file, then select **Send to** from the pop-up menu. Send the file to the A: drive.

NOTE: If you don't see the MSDOS.SYS file in Explorer, the file is hidden. To make the file visible, select **View, Options**, then **Show all files**. If you do not wish the hidden files to remain visible, you can hide them again after you've made the boot disk by choosing **View, Options, Hide files of this type**.

When this has been completed, leave the disk in the drive and restart the computer by clicking on **Start, Shut Down, Restart the Computer**. When Windows 95 is restarted, start A10-II Silent Thunder. If the CD-ROM and/or the sound card does not work then follow the following instructions.

STEP 2 - LOCATING THE CD ROM DEVICE DRIVER

Most CD ROM drives are supported directly by Windows '95. If your CD ROM drive is supported you can skip STEP 2. To determine if your CD ROM drive is supported by Windows '95, click on the **Start** button, then choose **Settings, Control Panel, System**. Now double-click on the **System** icon and then click the **Device Manager** tab. If CD ROM appears in the device list, your CD ROM drive is supported by Windows '95. You can click on CD ROM to find out what type of CD ROM drive you have. If CD ROM does not appear in the list, follow the instructions below.

If your CD ROM is not supported by Windows '95, you should first check with the manufacturer of the CD ROM drive to determine when the drivers will be available. Until then, the CD ROM drives requires a device driver to be loaded in the CONFIG.SYS file. This driver must be loaded correctly or you will be unable to access your CD ROM drive. To make sure that the device driver loads correctly on the boot disk, look at the CONFIG.SYS on the hard drive and copy the

driver line from there. To display the CONFIG.SYS, click on the **Start** button, then choose **Run**. In the command line, type **SYSEDIT**. The SYSEDIT window will appear. Click on the CONFIG.SYS title bar to display the CONFIG.SYS file. Look for the line that loads the CD ROM device driver. The line should look something like this:

```
DEVICE=C:\DRV\CDROMDRV.SYS /D:MSCD001 /P:220  
DEVICEHIGH=C:\DRV\CDROMDRV.SYS /D:MSCD001 /P:220  
DEVICEHIGH /L:14652 =C:\DRV\CDROMDRV.SYS /D:MSCD001 /P:220
```

The device driver in your CONFIG.SYS may differ slightly from those listed above. Write down the line for your boot disk.

NOTE: If you cannot find your CD ROM driver in the CONFIG.SYS file, you may need to look in the CONFIG.DOS file. To access this file, choose **Start, Run**, then type **NOTEPAD C:\CONFIG.DOS**. If you still cannot locate the driver, check your CD-ROM drive documentation, or contact the drive's manufacturer.

STEP 3 - LOCATING THE SOUND CARD DRIVERS

Like it does for CD ROM drives, Windows '95 also provides direct support for most sound cards. If your sound card is not supported by Windows '95, you should first check with the manufacturer of the sound card to determine when the drivers will be available. You will not be able to play A10-II Silent Thunder unless your sound card is supported by Windows '95. If there is no Windows '95 drivers available for your sound card, you may be able to use the Windows '95 driver for a different sound card. (You'll need to check with the manufacturer or in the support forums for the sound card you are using).

STEP 4 - CREATING THE CONFIG.SYS FILE

If your CD ROM drive and sound card are supported directly by Windows '95, (and do not add any lines to the CONFIG.SYS file), you will not need to create a CONFIG.SYS file on your boot disk. Go to the Step 5.

To create the CONFIG.SYS file on the boot disk, choose **Start, Run**, then type **NOTEPAD A:\CONFIG.SYS** in the command line field. This will start the Windows Notepad program. Add the CD ROM device driver as you wrote it down in the "Locating the CD ROM Device Driver" section. If you need to load any sound card drivers, copy them from the "Sound Cards" section now. Save the file by clicking on **File, Save**. Close Notepad by clicking on **File, Exit**.

STEP 5 - CREATING THE AUTOEXEC.BAT FILE

If your sound card does not require lines in the AUTOEXEC.BAT go to STEP 6.

To create the AUTOEXEC.BAT file on the boot disk, choose **Start, Run**, then type **NOTEPAD A:\AUTOEXEC.BAT** in the command line field. This will start the Windows Notepad program. Copy the lines from the "Sound Cards" section now. Then save the file by clicking on **File, Save**. Close Notepad by clicking on **File, Exit**.

STEP 6 - REBOOT THE COMPUTER

Leave the disk in the drive and restart the computer by clicking on **Start, Shut Down, Restart the Computer**. When Windows 95 is restarted, start A10-II Silent Thunder.

SECTION 9 - IF YOU STILL HAVE PROBLEMS...

If you continue to experience any problems with A10-II Silent Thunder, or if you have any questions, our Technical Support Department will be happy to assist you. You can reach Technical Support at (206) 644-4343 between 8:00 am and 4:45 pm, Monday through Friday. We can also be reached by fax at (206) 644-7697 or by mail at the following address:

Sierra On-Line Technical Support
PO Box 85006
Bellevue, WA 98015-8506

In Europe, please contact our office in England. The Customer Service number is (44) 1734-303171, between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. The BBS number is (44) 1734-304227 and the fax number is (44) 1734-303201. Customer Service can also be reached at the following address:

Sierra On-Line Limited
4 Brewery Court
The Old Brewery
Theale, Reading, Berkshire
RG7 5AJ UNITED KINGDOM

You can also contact our Technical Support Team on one of the following services:

Sierra BBS	(206) 644-0112
CompuServe	GO SIERRA
America Online	KEYWORD SIERRA
Internet	support@sierra.com
	http://www.sierra.com

If you decide to write or fax, please fill out the attached "Technical Support Request" form and return it to Sierra Technical Support. This will give us the information we need to help you as efficiently as possible.

Sierra Technical Support Request

To help us help you, please fill out this information and fax it to Sierra Technical Support at 206-644-7697

Name:
Fax number:
Phone number:
Address:

Game name, version number and UPC Code (from box).

What problem are you having? Be VERY specific. Is there an error message? What is it?
Where does it occur? Does it happen the same way each time?

Type of computer (386, 486, etc.)

Brand of video card (Trident, Diamond, etc.)

Amount of RAM (4 meg, 8 meg, etc.)

DOS version (MS-DOS 6.0, PC-DOS 6.2, etc.)

Brand of sound card and sound card settings (SoundBlaster Pro, Forte16, Mozart, etc. Please be VERY specific with the brand name. Sound card settings include DMA, IRQ and I/O values.)

Any disk compression? What kind? (Doublespace, Stacker, etc.)

Any third-part memory manager? What kind? (QEMM, 386MAX, etc.)

What have you tried so far? (Boot disk, no sound, etc.)

If possible, please attach copies of your CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT. Thanks!