Written by Amanda Dyar
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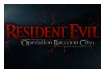
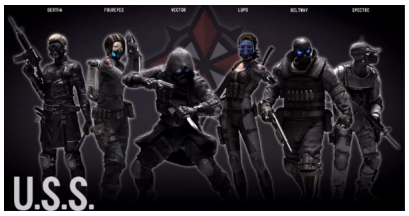


Back in 1996, the first RESIDENT EVIL was a pioneer and important moment of survival horror. Over 15 years later, Capcom has introduced six numbered entries into the franchise (counting RESIDENT EVIL 0), and RESIDENT EVIL 6 is now scheduled for a November 20, 2012 release date. It's pretty evident that the king of the genre is resting comfortably on its throne, and it doesn't look like it will be slowing down anytime soon. In fact, following the release of RESIDENT EVIL REVELATIONS last month, this month will see yet another huge title hit shelves, and Capcom recently gave Fango a special preview of the upcoming release, RESIDENT EVIL OPERATION RACCOON CITY.

The game takes you back to a 1998 Raccoon City, the time of the T-virus outbreak that RESIDENT EVIL 2 was centered around. Rather than playing as heroes Leon S. Kennedy and Claire Redfield however, you'll attempt to rewrite gaming history as members of a special branch of Umbrella security. You've been sent by the infamous company into Raccoon City to initiate a cover up by eliminating all evidence of the outbreak and killing any survivors. Making the mission even more difficult us the US Government, having sent in their own unit of soldiers to find and recover the source of the outbreak. Capcom Game Producer, Rey Jimenez explains, "It takes RESIDENT EVIL, and brings in the squad based shooter. You're playing as Umbrella USS, and these are the bad guys of the series. The premise for the game is that you are there to wipe out any evidence that Umbrella had anything to do with the zombie outbreak. There are several modes available for versus, such as the Team Attack and Biohazard. There are also classes which add an all new element to the game that differentiates it from the others in the series. We wanted to add in the versus element, because it's uncommon in the RESIDENT EVIL universe."

As difficult as all of this sounds, your Umbrella Security Service unit is comprised of six talented individuals, each of whom add their own unique skill set towards your ultimate goal. Looking to continue a trend started many years ago with RESIDENT EVIL: OUTBREAK, RESIDENT EVIL: OPERATION RACCOON CITY'S campaign will be fully cooperative for up to four players online. This means two characters will be left out of the fight, but the those being used can gain experience, level up, gain increased statistical boosts, and learn new abilities and skills. From

the six available characters, you will be able to choose an Assault, Recon, Medic, Surveillance, Field Scientist or Demolitions class.



The game introduces a multitude of new mechanics to the classic franchise and perhaps gaming as a whole. Capcom Producer, Mike Jones explained, "RESIDENT EVIL: OPERATION RACCOON CITY takes place between RESIDENT EVIL 2 and 3. Since you are going back to the old timeline, then all of the old school characters are there, and all the old school enemies. The twist is that you have the choice of whether you want to leave that RESIDENT EVIL history intact or forever change the history of RESIDENT EVIL by killing Leon Kennedy. This game is less about survival and more about destroying bodies."

In OPERATION: RACCOON CITY, you can become infected when you are attacked in close quarters by a zombie. If you become infected, you will only survive for a limited amount of time, but as the infection slowly eats away at your health, you will be nearly invisible to nearby zombies. Another big change results when an infected player dies. Rather than respawning shortly after, you will lose control of your character's actions and begin attacking your teammates until you are killed again. Then, you are allowed to respawn as normal.

Other game mechanics will feel more natural however. You'll notice right away that this is a third-person shooter complete with a cover system not unlike Epic's GEARS OF WAR. Although shooting will be the primary means of attacking your enemies, you'll have powerful melee attacks you can utilize in close proximity of your opponents when you need them. You can also exploit a number of other tactical commands that will come in handy, such as hiding behind zombie hostages (a.k.a. meat shields). RESIDENT EVIL mainstays like herbs and first aid sprays will see their return here as a means of healing yourself, and you'll have an abundance of weapons to unlock.

RESIDENT EVIL: OPERATION RACCOON CITY will also come packed with four different

multiplayer modes for up to eight players. Team Attack is your classic team death match mode where whichever team scores the most kills wins. Heroes Mode sees the return of classic RESIDENT EVIL heroes and villains, such as Jill Valentine and Ada Wong, that will compete against one another in a team death match type mode. Everyone starts the game as a powerful hero or villain, but death will result in respawning as a much weaker soldier. This gameplay continues until only one team has a special character left. Biohazard Mode places two teams against one another in a neutral capture the flag game, only the flag has been replaced with a G-virus vial that must be brought back to the teams' home base. The final mode is Survivors, and it task teams with surviving until a helicopter arrives to take you away from the overrun city.

When the game launches, you can expect the loyal RESIDENT EVIL fanbase to respond en masse, so you may want to preorder your copy of RESIDENT EVIL: OPERATION RACCOON CITY while you still can. A number of retailers are offering pre-order bonuses such as bonus in-game weapons giving you all the more reasons to reserve your copy now. This may not be your typical RESIDENT EVIL game, but it definitely looks like a lot of fun. It hits March 20, 2012 for the Xbox 360 or PlayStation 3.