



BATTLEFIELD

Welcome to Architectural Warfare • Words: Nick Pino

Every first-person shooter series has a gimmick. For *Halo*, it's the sci-fi weaponry and exclusivity to the Xbox platform. For *Call of Duty*, it's the quick-trigger kills and spectacularly cinematic action sequences. But for *Battlefield*, it's always been about the multiplayer, above everything else: the 12-on-12 matches (16-on-16 if you're a PC player), the ease of jumping in and out of a diverse fleet of vehicles, and the gorgeous, impossibly large maps.

These elements are taken to an even greater extreme with *Battlefield 4*'s multiplayer. The map I recently sampled, "Siege of Shanghai," provided one of the most intense multiplayer matches I've ever had—a massive 32-on-32 Domination game set in a war-torn cityscape, skyscrapers and all. As in previous *Battlefield* games, you're

allowed to spawn at any base your team has captured or on any vehicle with an open slot. By choosing the latter, I condemned myself to an early death, landing in a Humvee that was stuck directly in an opposing tank's line of fire. However, it didn't need to go down this way. *Battlefield 4* employs an improved spawning system that lets you "look before you leap," giving you a real-time view of the area where you'll appear before you make your pick.

In addition, the four main classes from *Battlefield 3* make a return: Assault, the group's heavy lifter and combat unit; Recon, a solitary sniper-type unit; Support, the wildcard wielding a light-machine gun; and Engineer, the maintainers/destroyers of your/your enemy's vehicles. The three factions are China, Russia, and the United States.

Though these classes and other familiar mechanics remain the same, it's the second-screen integration of Commander Mode (see the "Eye in the Sky" sidebar at right) and the reality-emulating Frostbite 3 engine that bring *Battlefield* into the next generation of gaming. After my match commander directed us to seize and bring down the map's central building, we watched in soot-covered awe as the entire 400,000-ton destructible skyscraper—the same one I'd just been standing inside of—crumbled to the ground. Now that's an impressive gimmick. 

