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COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

The Premier Computer Game Magazine

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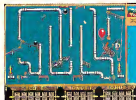
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ELECTRONIC ARTS®

SSI And StormFront Reveal The A's Up Their Sleeve In



Tony La Russa BASEBALL II



by Johnny L. Wilson

Sneak Previews are not designed to be reviews. They are feature articles based on "works in progress" that CGW's editors have deemed worthy of early coverage. These articles are not intended to provide the final word on a product, since we expect to publish appropriate review coverage when the game is finished.

Babe Ruth never got to manage a major league baseball team. Walter Alston, the manager who led the Dodgers to seven National League and four World Series championships, only had one "At Bat" in the major league. He failed to get a hit. Billy Martin, who won divisional championships as manager of the A's, Tigers, Twins and Yankees (as well as a world championship with the Yankees), only managed to hit .300 once in his career and that was in 1955 when he played in a mere 20 games. Tommy Lasorda, the manager who led the Los Angeles Dodgers to their last world championship, had his longest "cup of coffee" in the majors during a stretch with the Kansas City Athletics where he appeared

Park (leading the White Sox to a divisional championship), as well as with some obscenely talented Oakland A's teams, never managed to keep his major league batting average over a .250 season average (except for a brief five game stint in 1968 when he went 1-for-3 with the Oakland A's and didn't make any other major league appearances).

What these managerial stories should tell us is that one does not have to be a great player in order to become a great manager. Though there have been excellent players that did become great managers (Casey Stengel and Alvin Dark weren't particularly shabby), there are plenty of Hall of Famers who did not manage successfully. *Tony La Russa Baseball II (Tony2)* (developed by StormFront Software, formerly Beyond Software, and published by Strategic Simulations, Inc.) potentially meets the needs of those who want to play a computer baseball simulation and/or those who want to manage on-screen players who perform realistically.

Scouting Report (Differences Between *Tony1* and *Tony2*)

Those who revere action above statistics will find the game play significantly enhanced. Players no longer have that hesitation caused by the fact that the program kept going through other calculations before it would try to read the keypress.

Now, the action is smooth, even if one is using the keyboard. Further, the game now allows players to use the mouse to direct the on-screen players in two ways: 1) to point to the position where the fielder should get under the ball and click or 2) to "drag" the on-screen player along with the mouse with free (as opposed to program directed) movement.



Those who "manage only" will enjoy the ability to change defensive positions with a couple of quick clicks on the mouse button. Statistically, *Tony2* has added balks and wild pitches, as well as "Pick-off" and "Release" ratings for pitchers to the statistical model. The rosters have been expanded to 40 positions, and using rookies after a simulated September 1 should allow gamers to simulate the rookie phenomemans seen in their major league "cups of coffee." This is a particularly



in only 18 games. His ERA was 6.15. Tony La Russa, a manager who proved he could win in a turn-around situation in Comiskey

important feature for a game named after Tony La Russa, since he has always been noted as a manager who uses all of his personnel and, as a result, both builds morale and gets more out of his talent pool. *Tony2* even has Morale and Leadership ratings for each player so that trades can impact teams with regard to potential inertia or bad streaks. Further, the ability to link seasons together makes the game that much more versatile for statistics buffs, as does the fact that one can change the league set-ups to have only one league with one division and any number of teams (as opposed to being locked into the actual league configuration of a *Tony1*). Also, some purists didn't like the way certain old-time ballplayers were abstracted in the original game. Now, for example, Roger Bresnahan's batting average as a catcher is used, as opposed to his BA as an outfielder.



In addition, stat-oriented gamers will enjoy the capacity for designing a managerial profile for each team used in a seasonal replay. This profile will allow gamers to use sliding scales to set the artificial manager's baserunning aggressiveness, lineup and pitching rotation priorities, batting tendencies and defensive tendencies.

All gamers will enjoy the fact that *Tony2* does not monopolize one's hard disk in the same way as its predecessor. Now, all the data files are compressed on the hard drive and decompressed as needed and, according to Hudson Piehl (*StormFront's* lead programmer), the program should have selective installs so that a gamer only has to put desired files on the hard drive. The game also has some useful defaults that help gamers who do not want to micro-manage their teams. For example, the outfield will automatically play deep whenever a batter with a power rating greater than 8 comes to the plate. If one wishes to override, it is possible to do so, but Piehl states the programming team's goal with regard to defaults as allowing gamers to play realistic games with the fewest possible overall keystrokes.

Welcome To Connie Mack Stadium (Graphics)

Many gamers didn't like the unattractive

way information was displayed on the screen of *Tony La Russa Ultimate Baseball* (the superlative has slipped out of the title, allegedly due to the design team's discomfort with a certain review that was headlined "Not Quite The Ultimate" — wonder what publication printed that?). Now, game information is displayed very unobtrusively, most of it popping up as one needs it.

In addition, *Tony2* has a tremendous emphasis on Old-Time Baseball. The classic stadiums which will be available include: Baker Bowl, Connie Mack, Ebbets Field, Sportsman's Park, Old Comiskey and even the L.A. Coliseum (among others). The stadium dimensions and appearance were carefully researched from multiple sources and lovingly rendered by art director David Clemons. Indeed, there is even a "View Stadium" feature so that Old Time Baseball fans can "tour" the famous stadiums of old without having to look at the interactive part of the screen. Clemons wanted to feature the skylines behind some of these stadiums, but the rest of the design team was skeptical. The skylines, after all, don't really affect play. Yet, Clemons felt that they gave the stadiums their unique character so he drew a few and left them on the computers in the office until the design team couldn't bear to give them up. The stadiums are so real that one individual had visited Connie Mack Stadium in his youth and was able to locate the section where he sat from the *Tony2* screen.

The instant replay feature pops up with figures the size one would expect to see in a baseball telecast. They were captured from video by Clemons' team, roto-scoped



and composited with new backgrounds and, often, other figures from additional footage. The team usually used a 1:2 ratio of animated frames to video frames in order to get the movement to look right. Sometimes, because of odd body angles in the videotape footage, various positions would have to be re-rendered in order to look more natural. Then, Clemons and animator Steve Perris worked with Hudson Piehl to make sure that the instant replays kept the right colors for the teams that are playing in any given on-field situ-

ation. Clemons explained that even with the extended palette available in 256 colors, one has to make compromises on color gradients because it is difficult to switch distinct colors over the same backgrounds.

There are baseball card style profiles that appear on the lower area of the screen for the pitcher and batter. These are not sim-



ply digitized versions of classic or current baseball cards, although they have been drawn in that style. This is definitely a nice touch and pushes a sentimental button for most baseball fans. In addition, I liked the radar gun feature that tells a manager how fast each pitch travelled to the plate.

One concession to game appearance is actually less realistic than the same feature in *Tony1*. The original game had AI routines which required every outfielder to back up every play realistically. This meant that one regularly had three fielders lined up in a row behind each other as one backed up one who was backing up another. To many fans it looked unrealistic, most likely because we are used to seeing games from a camera's view. We don't usually notice the way fielders back each other up. So, the authentic style of backing up plays looked phony to many *Tony1* players. Now, the back-up routine isn't quite as realistic, but it looks more natural.

The Crack of the Bat (Program Model)

In another way, the system model for *Tony2* is significantly more realistic. The physics model for the game has been revved up. *Tony1* did not use much air resistance modeling, but *Tony2* figures in the effects of humidity, temperature and altitude as well as wind, speed of the pitch and stadium distances. I expressed skepticism about the overall impact of humidity on a 162 game season and was rewarded with the details about how a 5% rise in humidity (all other factors being equal) will shorten a 400 foot home run to approximately 392 feet. The research on the physical model also brought about a new insight to this writer. Fans often assume that higher humidity reduces the distance for a hard-hit ball because of the heavy air. In point of fact, the vector of the ball is

changed because the ball absorbs moisture from the air and is heavier itself.

Other changes for *Tony2* included more substantive AI adjustments for fielding and running. In addition to the cosmetic change in fielding mentioned earlier, Piehl had to solve plenty of special case programming issues. In *Tony1*, for instance, fielders would throw to the cut-off man every time, even in situations where there were two out in the bottom of the ninth with the game tied. Worse yet, they would sometimes throw behind the lead runner to try to get unnecessary outs. *Tony2* has added code to reflect these special situations.

Further, the trailing baserunners in *Tony1* rarely took advantage of special opportunities to advance on overthrows or attempts to throw out the runner at the plate. In *Tony2*, the trailing runners will take advantage of fielding lapses more often. In *Tony1*, gamers complained that it was extremely rare to throw out baserunners on a team managed by the computer. The design team explained that this is because the computer manager was so conservative in the original game. (Would that have anything to do with the 1983 American League Play-Offs where La Russa had five baserunners (four in scoring position) thrown out to Baltimore's one?) Now, the managerial profile will enable some managers to be as aggressive as the real Tony was in 1983 (and we'll find out if he was wrong or unlucky), while others are as conservative as the computer manager in the original game.

Pre-Season Predictions (Conclusion)

Frankly, if *Tony La Russa Baseball II* had a modern-play option, I would suggest that SSI put the "Ultimate" back in the title. When I saw the original *Earl Weaver Baseball* (produced by Don Daglow, president of StormFront) on the Amiga, I didn't think it could possibly be improved upon. Now, it appears to have been superseded by this upcoming release.

One must always be careful when looking at pre-release software. It is entirely too easy to assume that certain bugs, problems and design clumsiness will be straightened out before the product is released. Still, it seems safe to take a big lead off my generally careful editorial base with regard to this game. Barring an unforeseen pick-off move, I think this version of *Tony La Russa Baseball II* is going to be a steal.

Tony La Russa Baseball II has been selected to receive our first *CGW* Editors' Choice award. An explanation of this new awards series can be found in this month's editorial. **CGW**

The Man in the Dugout

CGW Talks With Tony La Russa

CGW: You played for several of the great managers of our lifetime: Hank Bauer, Dick Williams, John MacNamara and Chuck Tanner. Which one had the most influence on your managerial style?

La Russa: Actually, it was a fellow you probably never heard of. His name was Loren Babe. At the time, he was a AAA manager and advance scout for the White Sox. He is the one that really got me excited about managing and taught me a lot. Paul Richard of the White Sox was also a key person in my transition from player to manager.

CGW: During your days in the major leagues, do you feel like you learned a lot on the days you weren't playing? Did you absorb insights while you were on the bench?

La Russa: I suppose there is that classic mold for a successful manager being a mediocre ballplayer who had to pay as much attention to the game as possible, just to survive. I'm not sure how much that really fits. I think the basic requirement for becoming a successful manager is just to love the game and learn as much as you can.

CGW: Some say you're the best in the league at getting the most out of your players. Do you think your limited playing time has translated into the way you use your personnel?

La Russa: I guess I've picked up on the ability to sense needs. Even the mediocre player very much needs to be part of the action.

CGW: The computer game builds on your reputation as a morale building manager. They figure in two factors: Morale and Leadership. How do you define leadership and who were some of the great team leaders you have managed?

La Russa: A leader is someone who is willing to stand up in the middle of the clubhouse and say something is wrong. Then, say "Let's change it!" I always try to assemble a number of team leaders. You always end up leaving somebody out of these questions, but Greg "The Bull" Luzinski, Jerry Koosman and Carlton Fisk were terrific leaders with the Sox. They were older players and used their experience as an asset. With the A's, they would have to be Coney Lansford, Dave Hender-

son, Dave Parker, Dave Stewart and, of course, Dennis Eckerley.

CGW: The design team for the computer game says that there is a real suspension of disbelief when you see the simulation. They say you start making moves just like you would in real life.

La Russa: I was totally foreign to the idea of simulation at the start. I was skeptical, at first, but then I was fascinated at seeing how they could implement what I tell them in discussions.

CGW: The default managerial profile in the game (so far) seems to be more conservative than your reputation would warrant. Do you think you've gotten more cautious since the '83 playoffs, for example?

La Russa: The key is gauging your personnel. If your ball club has limited ability to run, you obviously can't give the green light as much as you want. Milwaukee had about six guys who can steal at will, so you can use it a lot. Right now, we have about three who can

steal at will and two or three (others) if everything is right. I'm not less aggressive, it's just that they don't keep stats on the Hit and Run. So, it's difficult to gauge. Frankly, the hotter the club, the less the manager has to get involved. You just let the players play.

CGW: Your teams historically seem to have exceptional second half records. In '83, '86 and '88 in particular. Do you do anything special to accomplish that or is it just a result of team leadership?

La Russa: It's nice of you to recognize that. We try to start fast, but it's definitely my goal to use personnel in the first half in such a way that we get as fresh a club as possible in the second half. The star should probably only play five or six games per week as opposed to seven. That way he's still fresh in August and September. I try to manage early for the whole season.

CGW: What do you think is your most important contribution to the computer game's design?

La Russa: Time. I don't think they expected that I would spend as much time with them as I have. I got turned on by how committed Don's team was to making this game special. So, I decided to make sure I committed myself, too. **CGW**



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What's New in 1993?

More Gossip from the Consumer Electronics Show

from the CGW Editorial Staff



Any Consumer Electronics Show is a good chance to catch up on news, and WCES '93 was no exception. One major piece of good news for gamers concerned Accolade's ongoing legal entanglement with Sega. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals has modified its October 20, 1992 opinion in *Sega v. Accolade* and Accolade happily announced that the court had decided to dismiss Sega's principal arguments for a rehearing on the opinion which was favorable to Accolade. The modified opinion gives further breathing room to Accolade and should ensure no further problems.

Dark Futures (Role-Playing)

The worlds of role-playing, as portrayed in both speculative future and fantasy past, are likely to be a little darker in 1993. Empire's *CyberSpace* (mentioned last issue), Electronic Arts' *Syndicate* (briefly previewed in CGW #103) and CyberDreams' *CyberRace* will take gamers into the dark world of cyberpunk. Science fiction (and sometimes, cyberpunk) author Norman Spinrad (*Little Heroes*) may believe that cyberpunk is dead as a genre, but it is very much alive in computer games.

As previously noted, *CyberSpace* is based on the Iron Crown Enterprises "people and paper" role playing system. All action

takes place in interior locations or in cyberspace itself. The fiction holds that all characters have implants and that the cyberspace network is the "final frontier" for characters to explore for fame, fortune and adventure. The program uses a limited amount of artificial intelligence to keep the entire population of the city to their appropriate schedules, and hardcore cyberfans will be able to shoot innocent bystanders as part of the gritty, dangerous feel.

Syndicate (EA's latest project from Bullfrog) was briefly described in CGW #103. In addition to its graphic look (that would give Ridley Scott a wicked grin), gamers will be challenged to manage NPC agents controlled by AI routines and featuring diverse strengths and weaknesses. *CyberRace* is expected to feature more of a *DeathRace 2000* meets *Mad Max* appeal.

Not only are the science fiction games bordering upon "dark" roleplaying, but so are the fantasy-oriented CRPGs. Dark Sun: *Shattered Lands* is Strategic Simulations, Inc.'s CRPG set in the world of Troy Denning's as yet unfinished pentalogy, *The Prism Pentad*: (*The Verdant Passage*, *The Crimson Legion*, *The Amber Enchantress*, *The Obsidian Oracle* (6/93) and *The Cerulean Storm* (9/93)). Two types of magic exist in this fantasy world which is



Dark Sun: Shattered Lands

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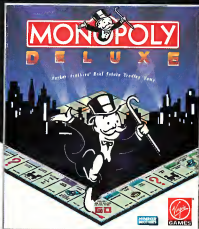
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almost as barren as Frank Herbert's Arrakis or most of Edgar Rice Burrough's Barsoom. One form of magic draws its strength from the soil and its plant life while the other draws its strength from sentient creatures. Indeed, this world has been exploited by the ruthless expenditure of magic. Beyond the rich universe of this role-playing system is a brand new computer game engine to drive the adventure.

SSI and MicroProse also plan to publish CRPGs in the horror genre. SSI's entry is called *Veil of Darkness*. *Veil of Darkness* is being developed by Event Horizon Software and looks to be the best yet in a continually improving line of rich products. This particular story is not as long as that in their last product, *The Summoning*, but features more to do (i.e. interior locations are much more detailed), as well as having more music and some new "pop-up" animation sequences. *Legacy: Realm of Terror* is the MicroProse entry into the field of horror. As in **HorrorSoft's Waxworks** (published by Accolade in the U.S.), the player's character has the job of visiting an eerie old edifice. Strange events are occurring in an abandoned house, and the protagonist has a set time limit in which to explore the 3-D maze in order to find and confound the entity controlling the bizarre happenings within the house. Being developed by the U.K. division of MicroProse, *Legacy* features a pop-up interface with colored bars indicating the status of the hero's main attributes.

In more traditional dungeon romps, the news can be summarized in terms of design and presentation, as opposed to subject matter. **Interplay's Stonekeep** features a full-screen first person perspective with pop-up interface. The roto-scoped monsters are beautifully presented and the real-time combat is responsive and

convincing, even on a 386/33 machine. If the story has as much punch as the special effects, this game is likely to be the true heir to *The Bard's Tale* series.

Origin's Ultima Underworld II will build on its successful formula, but will offer a 30 percent larger view screen and two slots for spells. Gamers will experience eight new worlds in the game, including the ice world pictured on the box and, in a bizarre twist, the world of *Ultima I* from a new perspective.

Eye of the Beholder III: Assault of Myth Drannor will also build on past technology.

Based on a story and designed by Dave Lucca, an associate producer on *Eye II*, the latest entry in the successful series is supposed to be 50 percent bigger than either of the previous products in the series. It will feature six fully scored musical pieces and several musical segues, as well as cinematic sequences and short cut scenes with limited animation. It features an extensive outdoor area in which gamers can bash 35 monsters and explore ruins, guild halls and temples.

Mindcraft's Gryphon Masters of Havlar (due at the end of the year) will feature the company's new game engine, complete with 3-D isometric views, cutaway sequences and digitized voices. It will be a totally new universe where the eponymous gryphon masters are the "knights" of the realm. With the latter in mind, it should not be a surprise that members of the player's party of characters can mount gryphons and fly into combat.

Realms of Arkania is a role-player's CRPG. **Sir-Tech** has elected to translate Germany's #1 CRPG, *Das Schwarze Auge (The Black Age)*, and present it for U.S. audiences. Based on Germany's premier "people and paper" role-playing game, *Blade of Destiny*, *Realms of Arkania* not



Realms of Arkania



Veil of Darkness

only features more than 50 skills and 80 spells, but (as in the best RPGs) characters actually have to work around negative attributes (avarice, bad tempers, various phobias, etc.). CRPG purists will also enjoy the ability to split, save and recombine the party of characters and the fact that combat is strictly turn-based with no arcade elements.

Gametek's *Dæmonsgate* looks like a very big CRPG. It has plenty of detail (characters build up their knowledge base about the game's universe as they play) and has a graphic look similar to *Ultima VII*, except that the game environment is displayed within a curtained frame.

CRPGers who play on the Amiga will want to check out *Hired Guns*. Up to four players can control their characters from the same keyboard in this *Psygnosis* release. The screen splits to show the action from up to four perspectives, and the combat is heavy on the action elements.

Finally, there is something familiar about the following three CRPGs. *Serpent Isle* is, of course, *Ultima VIII*. It continues the study of evil introduced in *Ultima VII: The Black Gate* and uses the same basic engine. *Mindcraft's* *Legends of Drakka* also uses the same engine as was used in previous games, in this case *The Magic Candle* system. Instead of being a sequel, however, this story is essentially the pre-history to *The Magic Candle* universe. It is, by analogy, sort of a *Silmarillion* to *The Magic Candle's* *Lord of the Rings* and is set in the dwarven culture. The game features two competing dwarven tribes and two different endings depending on which tribe is chosen by the player. According to Ali Atabek, there are several moral dilemmas that will drive the plot.



Strike Commander

Unlimited Adventures bears a striking similarity to the Gold Box Series from SSI. This is because *Unlimited Adventures* is actually a "Gold Box Construction

Set" that allows gamers to create their own dungeons using SSI's old game engine. The upside is that the product is packed with useful tools (e.g. 250 monster images and scanned TSR artwork to be used for character portraits) and helpful modules, but the

downside is that fellow gamers will have to own their own copy of *Unlimited Adventures* in order to play in anyone else's dungeon.

Sim Antics (Simulations)

Simulations have always been a hot category for computer gamers, and it looks like 1993 will be no exception. *MicroProse* just launched *F-15 Strike Eagle III* and *Domark* released *AV8B Harrier Assault* (see *F-15SE* review in this issue, page 142), while *Novalogic* and SSI are ready to follow up successful launches with support products. *Novalogic's* *Comanche: Maximum Overkill Mission Disk* will include 30 new missions (10 for heavy duty players, 10 typical of the initial release and 10 quick and dirty scenarios) and several new types of terrain, including arctic and alpine topography. SSI just released *GNBNA: Super Ships of the Atlantic*, which not only adds ships but upgrades the game itself to Version 1.1. SSI plans to upgrade the program to 1.2 with their *America in the Atlantic* data disk and should add the South Pacific Theater to the system with the third set of data disks.

Four of the simulations displayed at the show looked very familiar. *Psygnosis'* *Armour-geddon*, a six vehicle combat simu-



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lation (helicopter, fighter, light tank, heavy tank, hovercraft and bomber) originally published on the Amiga, has made the transition to the MS-DOS world. The game allows players to team up or go head-to-head over a serial hook-up. Naturally, **Origin's Strike Commander** (which features terrain detail even more impressive than that in *Comanche: Maximum Overkill*) and **LucasArts' X-Wing Fighter**, both originally promised for Christmas of '92, were demonstrated at the show, as was **Novalogic's** previously showcased *Armored Fist* (originally called *Battlefield 2000* and featuring M1A2 Abrams and Russian T-80s, among others).

We were particularly impressed with **Tornado (Spectrum HoLoByte)**. The shaded terrain has probably pressed the limit of traditional 3-D polygon-filled technology by creating over 16,000 objects in a 100 by 100 mile simulated world. Gamers will be able to fly both the air-to-air and air-to-ground configurations of the British plane, and the AI for one's fellow pilots is intricately woven into the fabric of the missions. In addition, gamers can enjoy an extremely well-designed pilot/vehicle interface, which offers extremely realistic displays and systems to manage from both the front and back seat of the plane.

From the U.K. comes *Jump Jet*, a Harrier simulation to be published by **MicroProse**. The 3-D environment looks nice, and there is a role-playing element to the game (i.e. flying too many missions per day will cause a pilot's performance to deteriorate), but the real beauty of the game for sim fans will be using that vectored thrust in combat.

Perhaps, the most unique simulation that we saw at the show was EA's *SEAL Team*. This game, being produced by Paul Grace (of *Chuck Yeager Air Combat* fame) is a first-person perspective on squad-level combat. Players take on the role of a commando leader involved in the Vietnam Conflict. The player attempts to survive four campaigns of 20 missions each. Said missions are all based on actual combat reports from authentic experiences during the Vietnam Era.

Finally, one must mention *SimFarm* and *El Fish*. Although neither use a first person perspective and the former does not require the manipulation of filled polygons, they do follow the tradition of **Maxis'** other software toys in allowing the player to control a model of a real-life system. In the case of *SimFarm*, naturally, the real-life system is a family farm (not to be confused with the current state of Agribusiness in states where the family farm has ceased to be). Players can make choices with regard to crop selection, irrigation, crop rotation, use of insecticide, selection of livestock, sale of crops, and more. The product is almost a rural version of *SimCity*.

In a similar manner, *El-Fish* allows gamers to select the "breeding stock" from a gene pool of electronic fish and allows them to create their own eugenics program of looks and characteristics for future fish. Then, one can sit back and watch "real-time" behaviors in an electronic aquarium that serves as the "ultimate" executive toy. It may not be a traditional simulation, but that seems to be the best way to describe this software toy.



Tornado



Maniac Mansion 2



Ringworld: Revenge of the Patriarch

Deja "View" (Adventures)

The big news for adventure games in 1993 is likely to reflect the emphasis on sequels, remakes and licenses. Adventure gamers seem to enjoy returning to the same environs time after time, and this year the publishers are going to serve them well. In CGW #103, we looked "Behind The Screens" at **Activision's Return to Zork**. This sophisticated rework of the most famous **Infocom** world (The Great Underground Empire) not only boasts new technology, but it also has returned to the challenging puzzles of yesteryear and a sense of good, old-fashioned storytelling. In addition to this return, **MicroProse** is pulling back the curtain on *Return of the Phantom*. Though the game is not a licensed version of the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical nor uses any of the popular score, it draws liberally from the book that inspired several films and the magnificent stage production. One still must rescue the lovely ingenue from the clutches of her once well-meaning mentor turned jealous monster.

LucasArts celebrates yet another return. *Day of the Tentacle*, essentially, a sequel to *Maniac Mansion*. Although only one of the heroes has returned from the original MMI, Dr. Fred and Cousin Ted are back. This time, the zany influence of **Tim Schafer** and **Dave Grossman** (co-scriptors of the dialogue for **Ron Gilbert's** *Monkey Island* adventures) is unleashed in an adventure inspired by classic cartoon humor.

As if this preliminary roster of games was not nostalgic enough, **Tsunami's Blue Force** (to be distributed by **Accolade**) pairs the talents of **Jim Walls** and **Cheryl Loyd** (**Jim Walls** was the designer of the first three *Police Quest* games from **Sierra** and **Cheryl** drew the original storyboard for *Police Quest 3*) in another law enforcement adventure game. Police procedures and tough puzzles will still be part of the formula in *Blue Force*, but driving (a major part of the **Sierra** games) is not a part of this game. Indeed, there are no action sequences in *Blue Force*. The protagonist of *Blue Force* is a motorcycle patrolman who, by a series of circumstances, ends up as an investigator. This portion of the game requires procedural puzzle-solving, but the latter portion of the game becomes somewhat more free-form in its investigation. The design of the game has changed somewhat, as well, since all text information will be presented below the graphic area so that none of the animation is covered up.

Another fertile ground for the familiar is the realm of literature. **Tsunami's Ringworld: Revenge of the Patriarch** (described in the first part of this report in CGW #104) and **Legend's** upcoming *Xanith* game (based on the hilarious works of **Piers Anthony**) both ensure that science fiction and fantasy fans will be able to explore the worlds via the computer that they have already visited in the popular novels.

Naturally, television also serves as a realm of the familiar. **Spectrum HoLoByte** expects to launch their *Star Trek: The Next Generation* game by the end of the year. The game's story was written by an author of

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several *Star Trek* novels and promises to have a few surprises in game design. **Capstone** plans to unveil a *Wayne's World* adventure game. *Wayne's World* finds the Mirthmobile cruising the beautiful land of Aurora and the guys facing the Decent Organization Of Dedicated Obscenity Opponents (DOODOO) via the use of a plentiful number of digitized images.

Another source of the familiar is history.

Two games use, at least, a pseudo-history to drive the adventures. **Maxis' Rome: Pathway to Power** (see the description of Rome AD 92 in this issue's "Over There" column) is a British import that allows gamers to go from street quarrels to senate laurels. **Merit Software's Kronology: The Nazi Paradox** (developed by **Castleworks**) takes the view of an alternative history. The action takes place in AD 2020 in a world where, akin to *Fatherland*, the Nazis won World War II. The game features 20 MB of digitized images, a score by Dallas musical talent Randy Talman and the digitized voices of professional actors from a Dallas-based theater group.

Tsunami's Protostar: War on the Frontier is a hybrid game which draws from some of the successful formulae found in **Electronic Arts' Starflight** and *Starflight 2* (both from **Binary Systems**) and **Aeolade's Star Control 2** (by Paul Reich). All three games place great emphasis on exploration (there are supposed to be hundreds of planets in *Protostar*), interaction with alien races (15 alien species wend their way through the latest game's storyline), economic achievement (bartering, scavenging and investments play a significant role in the latest space game) and space combat (*Protostar* features 3-D combat).

Finally, the animated adventure design group at **MicroProse** unveiled a beautifully rendered self-running demo of *DragonSphere*. The company offered no details as to plot or play mechanics, but should the demo's musical score and the artistic presentation carry through into the final product, this will be a showpiece for the genre.

For Every Reaction (Action Games)

Of course, many games do not stick in one simple category. **Tsunami's Wacky Fighters** is just such a product. The game parodies computer games and video games right and left in a vicious satire that is both adventure game and action game. Most of the sequences require manual dexterity and good reflexes, but some require quick (or, at least sharpened) wits. Everything from graphic adventures through racing games to shooting galleries and street fighters are satirized in this game. We will offer a warning to the sensitive, however, the humor is so vicious and the violence so overblown, at times, that some gamers are sure to be upset over the satirical slaughter of every cute and cuddly species by "Blambo" and the splatting of innocent animals in the "Roadkill" game sequence. It is humorous, but it's "Wayne's World" on PCP and synergized with steroids.

Three specific games in the action category are expected to be straight ports from video game consoles. **Inudo: Way of the Ninja** is Koel's SNES and Sega dungeon romp, expected to be brought to the IBM platform prior to the end of the year. Set in feudal Japan, it features 18 different dungeon mazes and builds on the historical maps/data generated in the production of the company's mainline

of historical-strategy games. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was mentioned last issue as a CD-ROM on both the Sega and MS-DOS platforms. As noted then, the game is basically a horizontal-scrolling "shoot-'em-up" game with actual video footage from the film



Kronology

intwoven in the segues between arcade sequences. The MS-DOS version will be published by **Pygnosis**, while the Sega *Genesis* CD-ROM will be published by **Sony Electronic Publishing**. *Flashback* is a platform-style action game, based on a popular Sega *Genesis* title. SSI has redone with the game with an expanded color palette and brought it to the MS-DOS platform. Reversing the trend, **MicroProse** will take *Sid Meier's Pirates* to the Sega *Genesis* as *Pirates! Gold* (not to be confused with the upcoming new version of the game on the computer).

Two action games will come to the computer using slightly modified versions of existing game engines. **Origin's Privateer** will add some economic strategy and freebooting spirit to the *Wing Commander* universe and *Special Forces* (**MicroProse**) will pick up where *Airborne Ranger* left off.

Worlds at War (Wargames)

Wargames should offer a variety of new looks during the upcoming year. **MicroProse** will introduce *Fields of Glory: Waterloo*, a Napoleonic wargame with something of a miniatures feel. It will use several different zoom levels and will enable gamers to play four different battles leading up to the climactic conflict at Waterloo. The game is supposed to have a battle editor so that gamers can adjust orders of battle according to "What if..." scenarios.

Koel plans to release *Liberty or Death*, a game based on the American Revolutionary War which uses an engine similar to their most successful games (*Nobunaga's Ambition*, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *Bandit Kings of Ancient China*). Though the game is slightly behind the rest of the market in graphics (it uses EGA color), these games are usually worth looking at in terms of strategy. Also, though they were not demonstrating software at the show, **Simulations Canada** plans to market a tactical naval game covering both the revolutionary era and the Napoleonic Epoch, called *Man of War*.

The American Civil War is back in vogue among wargamers. **Impressions' Ed Grabowski** is hard at work on a new American Civil War game that uses his miniatures-style animation (*Conquest of Japan*, *Cohort*). Entitled *The Blue and the Gray*, players will be able to refight a campaign game of the entire ACW. In addition to the campaign game, historical battles will be included on subsequent data disks.

Meanwhile, **Sid Meier** plans to finish a campaign game which integrates political, economic and military command elements into a strategy game which involves the campaign from roughly Harrisburg, PA to Richmond, VA (See the interview with Meier in this issue's *Computer Wargaming World* section).

The Pacific Theater of World War II is also getting plenty of attention. In addition to the acclaimed *Gary Grigsby's Pacific War* from SSI, **Koel** plans to release their long-awaited *P.T.O.* (Pacific Theater of Operations) and **Three-Sixty** is rumored to be at work on a concept for *Pacific Command* from the designers of *High Command*. The former emphasizes sea and air power, while the



Liberty or Death

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latter would be expected to be a detailed command simulation of the entire theater.

In the European theater, **Three-Sixty** will release their third game in the successful *V for Victory* series, *V for Victory: Market Garden* and are coming along nicely on their *Victory At Sea* strategic naval game, designed by Jim Dunnigan and being developed by a team led by Dave Merconi (watch for an upcoming "Behind the Screens" article).

In a more generic setting, **QQP** is nearing completion on its *Greatest Battles of the 20 Century* disk for *The Perfect General*. It contains scenarios for both theaters of World War II, as well as Korean, Vietnamese and Middle Eastern scenarios.

For those who want something a little further in the future, **Impressions** plans to release an interplanetary warfare game. Entitled *When Two Worlds War*, the game will feature speech recognition for commands (allowing gamers to program their command set via a Windows program), two-player linked competition (via serial port for certain and, possibly via modem) and custom world generation via player-established parameters. The publisher will also release a sequel to **Omnitrend's** popular tactical space combat game, *Rules of Engagement*. *Rules of Engagement 2* will feature tree structured campaigns where gamers can not only play existing campaigns, but can edit their own campaigns and add their own animation sequences between scenarios using *PC Animate Plus*.

Finally, the world of fantasy wargaming will find the armies

from **Mindcraft's** *Siege* moving from the castle to the countryside in *Ambush!*, and diplomacy players may want to watch for the Fall '93 game of economics, politics, diplomacy and war — *Dominion* — from the same company.

Playoff Tickets (Sports)

Although sports is a fascinating category, **Tony LaRussa Baseball II** from **Strategic Simulations, Inc.** (see the Sneak Preview in this issue) was the only product which we actually got to view at the show. **Brett Hull Hockey (Accelade)**, **Pele Soccer (Accelade)** and **David Robinson NBA Action (Spectrum HoloByte)** were announced, but not demonstrated.

Live and in SVGA Color (Conclusion)

The general impression which we received at the show was that the entertainment software industry is very healthy and that companies have, in general, scaled back the number of titles which they are developing for personal computers in favor of a limited number of premium titles. We hope that this will accomplish several very important objectives: 1) help get software back on time and reduce the number of vaporware products; 2) lessen the number of programs released with crash bugs; and 3) place more attention on the design and production of each individual game to raise the quality level of the entire industry. This may, indeed, be happening. We certainly hope so! **eww**



V for Victory: Market Garden

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Forging Ahead

or Fit to be Smashed?

Any perspective on the future of CD-ROM entertainment that is not somewhat ambivalent is less than honest. The imagery for this section juxtaposes new technology and an anachronistic craftsmanship to communicate the idea that CD-ROM entertainment products either need to forge into new directions or may be passed over like yesterday's horse and buggy.

In this special section, *CGW* tries to provide a current answer to the title question. We begin with a special editorial, then follow with a look at CD-ROM products as they fit into three major sections: Shovelware (products where the added value comes from putting several existing products on a disk), Multi-media Expansions (new releases of existing products with extra graphics, sound and, often, digitized voice) and Original CD-ROM products. Then, Chuck Miller invites readers to become *The 7th Guest* and Charles Ardai launches into the *Space Quest IV* CD-ROM. Tony Reveaux is committed to *Reflexion II: Museum or Hospital?* and finds himself within the wonderland known as *Alice*. Finally, M. Evan Brooks assumes *Coalition Command on Compton's Desert Storm* CD-ROM, while 'CGW's' sleuth in editor's clothing solves the mystery of *Who Killed Sam Ruper?*



Forging Ahead For or Against Fit to be Smashed?

We have already admitted that the image of a blacksmith forging a CD may provide something of a mixed message. Yet, we firmly believe that any other message is misleading. Possibly more than any medium since television, CD-ROM products are in a position to be (to paraphrase Fred Allen) called a medium because they so very rarely offer anything outstanding. To be sure, there are still blacksmiths that make a living in the U.S., but they are not exactly cutting edge. Is this the fate that awaits CD-ROM?

The wonders of CD-ROM technology have been well-delineated in earlier articles. CD-ROM provides extra storage space which, in turn, makes possible the lavish use of graphics and digitized speech. The use of CD-ROM technology can simultaneously reduce the cost of goods for software publishers and provide part of the solution to the piracy problem. The extra storage space can allow for on-disk, interactive documentation and tutorials, as well as new gaming features. Finally, CD products could allow a smaller, standardized packaging which could benefit both gamers and retailers by allowing space for more titles on store shelves. The technology's promise is tremendous.

There is, however, a dark side. This struck the editorial staff strongly as we previewed an original CD-ROM product with its lead designer. The animated graphics were flashy, the sound incredible, but the game play seemed a bit weak. We asked the designer about the game design concept and he confidently stated that the game play was "very much like Pac-man." Pac-man?! Have we come all this way to go back to '80s arcade designs?

The comment took us back to an editorial written by Chris Crawford, game designer and official industry "voice in the wilderness," in his *Journal of Computer Game Design*. He expressed strong doubts about the future of CD-ROM because, as he stated, the CD-ROM is "a data-intensive technology, not a process-intensive one." The CD is data-intensive in that it can provide huge amounts of quality

sound and graphics, but this, of course, is secondary. Graphics and sound can enhance the gaming experience, but the heart of any product is the game play. CD-ROM technology does nothing to enhance the core elements that, in a good game, translate into "play" and "replay-ability." Crawford's fears were that the increased emphasis on the secondary aspects of game design would create a general trend toward less interesting games. Our experience with the recycled Pac-man design certainly does nothing to allay such fears.



The warning to the industry is thus, the focus must be gameplay, gameplay, gameplay. Take one look at the *CGW Hall of Fame* and consider the games' common element. Though widely divergent in style and subject matter, all but one game has the "game-lock" factor. Among *CGW* editors, the phrase "I've got game-lock" is a good sign for a game company and a bad one for their social lives. These games, by virtue of their richness, depth, "process-intensity," what have you, pull the players into their world so strongly that they become "locked-on" with little hope of salvation. The advantages that CD-ROMs

promise do nothing to enhance this core aspect of game design, and do everything to distract from it. Though it is still early for CD-ROM games, the current signs suggest that the publishers may be losing their focus.

Why the proliferation of shovelware titles and "enhanced" CD-ROM version of existing games? The industry is cautious. All the major players are watching and waiting and reaching out into an unknown market with sensitive antennae. They are afraid to commit resources to new CD-ROM products before the market has proven itself worthy of an investment. But this creates an industry double-bind. The consumers are also waiting — waiting for the publishers to create products worth another hardware upgrade. More than 63% of *CGW* readers (who responded to the demographic question for the Top 100) stated that they had not yet purchased a CD-ROM and were looking for a good deal. They were also, we suspect, waiting for a compelling reason to purchase one (i.e. the breakthrough game which could only be purchased in CD-ROM format). Quality software drives the hardware market, and until someone is willing to take the risk of producing original, quality products for the platform, the consumers aren't going to buy. Still, the publishers wait, and re-publish games that the majority of their market has already played. Unless someone breaks this stand-off we'll all wait around until the whole enterprise quietly fades away.

Yet, there is still hope. Many of the major publishers have CD-ROM projects on their list for '93. And, while there are many multi-media enhancements of old products on this list, there are a few original titles. Groups like ICOM and small Macintosh developers have been unequivocal in their dedication to the CD-ROM. And some major publishers seem to be tired of having CD-ROM projects on their tentative schedules and are finally moving on their plans, despite evidence suggesting that the market is not as strong as hoped. **eww**



A Walk on the CD Side of Town

A Survey of CD-ROM Entertainment

Repackaged Software (aka Shovelware)

Access: The Collector's Edition (Access) — This disc offers nostalgic gamers the entire "back issue" collection from Access's early days as a publisher of games for the MS-DOS platform. On this rather dusty menu one will find Access's brutally violent action game, *Crime Wave*, which features some of the very first partial-motion digitized video seen on the PC. One will also find their first interactive story, *Mean Streets*, and the spiritual father of *Links*, *World Class Leader Board*, along with three *Famous Courses* expansion modules. Finally, *Echelon*, their pre-*Wing Commander* space flight simulator, can be dusted off and joyridden about the galaxy for a few kicks. IBM (\$99.95).



CD Game Pack (Software Toolworks)

— This package offers a quick way to build up a young software library, albeit with games that were mostly mediocre even in their prime. The one excluded case is *Chessmaster 2000* which held the title of "Strongest Chess Game" for a brief software season. One can experience again its former greatness in stunning CGA graphics. Also included is the action game, *Bruce Lee*, a product of the martial arts game explosion in the mid-80s, as well as *Beyond the Black Hole*, a collection of action games in migraine inducing 3-D, and a *GinKing/Cribbage King* double pack. And finally, there will be plenty near-death experiences in *Life & Death*, a surgery simulation where one can never earn "extra lives." IBM (\$79.95).

CD Game Pack II (Software Toolworks) — An illustration of this game box accompanies the entry for "Shovelware" in CGW's unofficial gaming dictionary.

The five games mentioned in the entry above are included, except that *Chessmaster 2000* is replaced by *Chessmaster 2100*, the expanded sequel. Other new additions include: *Loopz*, an abstract strategy/puzzle game where the player attempts to create the most complicated configuration of blocks; *Backgammon* and *Checkers*, everyone's coffee house favorites; *Puzzle Gallery*, a huge collection of traditional word and maze games; and finally, *Robot Tank*, a slightly more complicated and marginally better looking version of the Atari 2600 "classic," *Tank!* IBM (\$99.95).



Cybergenic Ranger (Mainstream America) If one missed the first opportunity to beat up buddies as the world's first cybergenic man (and if one has deep regrets about it) then galactic vengeance can be had with a spin of this disc. Featuring VGA graphics and RealSound, Access's pe-speaker sound system, this grand scale action game is served up *a la carte* (i.e. with no enhancements). IBM (\$49.95).

Rotor, Airball, and Time Bandit (Mainstream America) — From the deepest, darkest recesses of the collective hard-drive come these three action antiques on a bright and shiny CD. *Rotor* is a clone of the side-scrolling arcade game's where one had to pilot a spaceship through a severely armed cavern. *Time Bandit* is an action game of grand scale, spanning across several time periods. And *Airball* is an action strategy game where the player leads a ball through 150 levels of visual/spatial puzzles in the 3-D isometric view (*a la Populous*). As added incentive (as if the games weren't enough!) the CD also includes 40 MBs of space photos that can be viewed with the included slide show program. IBM (\$29.95).

Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe (LucasArts) Software Toolworks, the reigning king of CD repackaging efforts, presents LucasArts's excellent simulation of the air war over Germany. Along with the bizarre experimental aircraft included in the original game, the package includes the four plane add-on disks, adding the Do335 Pfeil, the P-38 Lightning, the He 162 Volksjager, and the P-80 Shooting Star jet fighter to the pilot's destructive roster. An excellent package for the fan of flight and "What if?" historical speculation. IBM (\$99.95).

Ultima I-VI Series (Origin) — After defecating the foaming horde of *Software Etc.* salespeople, you search their bodies to discover a chest. Opening the chest you find this collection of the first two trilogies of the *Ultima* series. Venture back, young one, to the days when software was sold in sandwich bags and best selling games could be written by college students in their spare time. (Everyone who remembers *Akalabeth*, raise your hand. Please buzz the nurse if you need assistance.) The complete history of *Ultima* is here from the simple, single character huck-fest in *Ultima I*, to the graphically and philosophically sophisticated (in computer game terms, at least), *Ultima IV*. Distributed by Software Toolworks. IBM (\$99.95).



Wing Commander with Ultima VI (Origin) — The two biggest hits of Origin's big hit list can be had with one fell swoop of the credit card. *Wing Commander* was the most highly rated game in CGW's history before being topped by *Civilization*, and *Ultima VI* is considered the best *Ultima* in the series by *Ultima* aficionados, even surpassing the glory of its successor, *Ultima VII: The Black Gate*. Dis-

tributed by Software Toolworks, IBM (\$79.95)

What the Diskette Can Do, the Disc Can Do Better (Enhanced Games)

The Adventures of Willy Beamish (Sierra) — Since the goal of *The Adventures of Willy Beamish* was to create an interactive cartoon, it should be obvious that the addition of new frames to smooth the animated sequences and digitized voices would add to the entertainment experience. There aren't any new puzzles, but the entire effect is more convincing than that of the original. IBM, SEGA CD (\$69.95).



Arthur's Teacher Trouble

BattleChess Enhanced (Interplay) — If one enjoyed the twist that the twisted minds of Interplay added to the great-granddaddy of games in their original *BattleChess*, then one will certainly be tickled with the new level of warped humor achieved in this multimedia upgrade. Forty-five minutes of CD-quality music, 31 MBs of new animations and a 25 minute chess tutorial have beefed up this popular tongue-in-cheek chess system. MPC (\$79.95).

Chessmaster 3000 (Software Toolworks) — Along with *Activision's Sorcerer* chess series, the *Chessmaster* series is one of the oldest and most respected chess systems around, going through three revisions over the years. The fourth edition is this enhanced multimedia package which offers: a broader choice of computer opponent strength, several new chess sets to choose from, the ability to save and review old games, advice in spoken English, and enhanced music and sound. MPC (\$99.95).

Conan the Cimmerian (Virgin) — Robert E. Howard's hulking hero of the Hyborean Age hacks apart hostiles in this role-playing game with a heavy emphasis on action oriented combat. As in the DOS version, Conan must search the cliché and confused land of Howard's creation, searching towns for the powerful goodies necessary to defeat Thoth Anon and avenge the death of his wife. New to the game is a good deal of CD audio which enables the narrator and characters to speak to the

player. The CD music is of decent quality but the voice-acting is often strained and injurious to the sensitive ear. IBM (\$39.99).

Cosmic Osmo (Cyan) — *Cosmic Osmo* was one of the first free-form exploration games for young children, and, despite its lower-quality graphics, remains one of the best. In this Carolian world Mice play cheese pianos and pilot bathyspheres, potatoes speak and vegetables sing of vinaigrette in this delightful little environment where anything and everything can be a portal to a different world. Mac (\$59.95).

Jones in the Fast Lane (Sierra) — As if there wasn't enough stress in your life, Sierra offers gamers the chance to run a simulated rat race in this computerized family boardgame. Player's determine their own victory conditions in terms of "life goal's" which one must meet and surpass to win. This enhanced CD-Rom version offers animated video clips of five actors and digitized speech, though the acting falls victim to the "Front Office Stars" syndrome. IBM (\$69.95).

Loom (LucasArts) — Brian Moriarty's masterfully woven tale of Bobbin Threadgood and the Guild of Weavers has



BattleChess Enhanced

been dressed up in its Sunday best for its appearance on the CD. Now, along with its stunning art work by Mark Ferrari and its enchanting Swan Lake soundtrack, players are treated to the best voice-acting yet seen in this young genre. This game was meant for the CD-ROM, and, if players don't mind the brevity of the game, it is a must-have product. IBM (\$99.95).

the Manhole (Cyan) — This was the first and most well-known children's exploration program designed by Cyan, the creators of *Cosmic Osmo*. Like the world of *Osmo*, the alternate universe through *the Manhole* is a cute, funny, and bizarre world of improbabilities in the spirit of Lewis Carroll that will appeal to any preschool/early grade school child. The CD-Rom version appears to have a few extra sounds and musical bits. Mac (\$34.95) IBM version distributed by Activision (\$79.95).

Mixed-Up Mother Goose (Sierra) — An already excellent children's program from Roberta Williams only gets better with

the addition of children and adult voice actors playing the inhabitants of Mother Goose Land. Each mini-quest that a child completes in this animated 3-D world accompanied by a cute sing-song nursery rhyme and a spoken thank you from the characters. It's a great way to teach kids the ol' classics. How much is that CD in the Windows? IBM (\$59.95).

Secret of Monkey Island (LucasArts) — Guybrush Threepwood's original showdown with Le Chuck has found its way into Optical Media Land. Along with the original graphics, the highly regarded SCUMM interface, and wonderful self-deprecating wit, players can now play the game in five languages (the text comes in English, German, Spanish, French and Italian flavors) and are treated to a CD culypro/reggae soundtrack. Que bueno, mono! IBM (\$79.95).

Stellar 7 (Sierra) — Dynamix's '90s version of the classic coin-op tank game *BattleZone* has been garnished with a new



Where in the World is Carmen SanDiego? Deluxe Edition

CD soundtrack and a byte-sized portion of spoken word audio for its CD-ROM release. Now, as the player views the rotating 3-D enemy vehicles during the pre-game briefing, a sexy cybersque female provides a spoken description of the enemy's capabilities. IBM (\$59.95).

Space Quest IV (Sierra) — As reviewed on page 34 & 36 of this issue, Roger Wilco's battle against the Time Rippers is now narrated by Garry Owens, the voice of *Loft-In, The Gong Show*, and the cartoon series, *Space Ghost*. Owens's contributions to the game take the twisted humor of designers Mark Crowe and Scott Murphy to a new level. IBM (\$55.95)

Where in the World is Carmen SanDiego? Deluxe Edition (Broderbund) — She's everywhere else, so why no CD-ROM? Carmen has really been dolled up for this version of the penultimate edutainment product. The cosmetics include more countries, more location graphics, more animations, more clues, spoken parts for interactions with most characters, foreign language clues and authentic recordings of ethnic music at every location. Highly recommended. IBM (No suggested price — see your dealer).

Authenticated Originals (Fresh CD Products)

Alice (Cameo Interactive) — As reviewed on page 40, this interactive artwork is a visually stunning interpretation of Lewis Carroll's best known literary creation. Though not really much of a game, the imaginative sight and sound discoveries in store for the Mac CD-ROM owner certainly qualify it as entertainment. Mac (\$599).



Chessmaster 3000

Arthur's Teacher Trouble (Broderbund) — You know a kids program is good when you can't keep the adults away from it. This is the second book in the Living Books series that began with the young children's hit *Grandma & Me*. This product moves the audience age up from preschoolers & kindergartners to the early grammar school kids. Indeed, Arthur is a third grader faced with a tough teacher and an inter-school spelling bee. Each "page" in the story is read aloud to children as they follow the highlighted text, and each screen is alive with hotspots that reward mouse clicks with amazing sounds and animation. It is a beautiful program and should be at the very top of any parents list. Comes with an illustrated book upon which the program is based. IBM, Mac (\$59.95).

Beyond the Wall of Stars (Creative Multimedia Corp.) — Although this product is really more of an interactive novel for juveniles than a "game" per se, it does feature some game elements. Gamers get a chance to select their crew and make command decisions that will determine the direction of the plot. The interactivity is more limited than traditional computer gamers are used to experiencing, but is more satisfying than that in a "Choose Your Own Adventure." Mac (\$49.99).

The Case of the Cautious Condor (TigerMedia) — Though the story was manufactured in the Orient Express Murder Mystery machine, this interactive comic book is novel enough to warrant a serious look. Combining a full spoken dialogue with hundreds of cartoon frames, Condor may have the audio-visual continuity necessary to make this an engaging story. One must round up the usual suspects (which includes

a wide though cliché variety of characters), listen to their alibis, search for physical evidence, and then guess whodunnit. A multimedia diversion for the whole family. IBM, CDTV (\$49.95).

Desert Storm with Coalition Command (Compton's New Media) — As reviewed on pages 42 & 44, this product is a database of facts concerning the Gulf War, along with an ill-wrought game of command. The database is comprehensive and includes excellent digitized images from the Desert Storm/Shield conflict, but the game *Coalition Command* appears to be a hastily designed afterthought that will please neither the casual historian or the hard core wargamer. IBM (\$49.95).

Just Grandma and Me (Broderbund) — The first *Living Book* in Broderbund's acclaimed series, this product helps early readers by reading the story aloud and highlighting written text as it is spoken. However the real magic is in the dozens of cute animations that reward a child's explorations with the mouse. The quality in this series of game is unmatched and goes with the highest recommendation. Mac, IBM (\$49.95).

L-Zone (Synergy) This bizarre 3-D environment hails from Japan and offers its users the opportunity to roam around a deserted space station, pressing buttons and twirling dials to create all kinds of visual havoc. Though there are a few elements that a generous person could call puzzles, it is more like a museum of animated graphic effects than anything else. Mac (\$99.00).



L-Zone CD-ROM

Museum or Hospital (Synergy) — As reviewed on page 38, this production is a surrealistic exploratory experience for the Macintosh. Players wander the futuristic halls of a museum or hospital (you make the call?), clicking on items to invoke bizarre animated sequences. Game or art? Who knows? The real question is — would you pay a hundred bucks to experience it? Mac (\$99).

Murder Makes Strange Deadfellows (TigerMedia) — TigerMedia wasn't the first to come up with the idea for interactive comic books, but they are the first to have the technology capable of adequately

implementing the concept. In this product, we're in familiar literary territory — the haunted house. Yes, the old geezer has once again kicked off and left several scheming heirs to figure out who gets what of the inheritance. Spooks and murders abound as players explore the comic book-style renderings of Steere Manor. The combination of a spoken-dialogue story, a nice sound track, and the novelty of the medium saves this one from its hackneyed story. IBM, CDTV (\$49.95).



Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective

Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective (ICOM) — ICOM has been dedicated to the CD-ROM from day one and their games are designed to take full advantage of the CD's capabilities. In their first multimedia production, players direct the actions of Conan Doyle's classic character. As player's interview the suspects in this game's three mystery scenarios, they will be treated to 90 minutes of full motion digital video running at approximately 15 frames per second. The game was produced more like a film than a traditional game, requiring 50 acting roles and several Victorian sets and costumes. The acting is a bit over ambitious in parts and the replayability is limited, but on the whole this one of the best "interactive movie" experiences available. TurboGrafx-16, IBM, Mac, CDTV (\$69.95).

Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective II (ICOM) — The sequel to the product above, this interactive mystery game offer three more scenarios for sleuths to solve. As in the original game, this product claims 90 minutes of 15 frame per second video. This new version adds some much needed features to the video viewing mode, namely fast-forward and rewind buttons, making fact gathering and checking much easier. It also adds an acting judge, whereas the original was "played" by a static picture. IBM, Mac (\$69.95).

Spaceship Warlock (Reactor) — Mac owners can butter the popcorn, curl up with their favorite mouse, and go on a wild multimedia ride with this interactive science fiction flick. Upon waking in the dark streets in a dark city in a dark future, the player must escape the violence of urban life by catching a lift on a snazzy space

liner, where he or she will eventually have a run in with the dreaded SS Warlock. Beautiful graphics and digitized music/speech/sounds are the players constant companion. One of the first commercial CD entertainment product on the Mac and still one of the best. Mac (\$95.00).

Victor Vector & Yondo (Sanctuary Woods)—From a brand new multimedia developer that boasts Shelley Davall among its staff comes this light-weight adventure of paradoxical time-meddling. The player commands special agent Yondo, the cybernetically enhanced St. Bernard, and his human, Victor Vector, as they try to save the history (while butchering established notions of space & time) by nabbing artifacts of power from the past for safe keeping in the future. Heavy on the flash and light on the substance, this product is more of a talking comic book than a graphic adventure. The music score is nice but the digitized speech suffers from the common ailments of poor voice-acting and weak script. Mac (\$59.95).



Who Killed Sam Rupert? (Creative Multimedia Corp.): As reviewed on page 46, this is yet another game in the murder mystery mold. Players investigate the murder of Sam Rupert, restaurant owner, by conducting forensic research and interviewing suspects. The voice acting is decent and the digitized photos give it a very realistic feel. It's interesting while it lasts, but, like many of the games in this style, doesn't last very long. Mac (\$39.99)

Up and Coming (Near Future of CD-ROM)

Beyond Shadowgate (ICOM): In a CD-ROM sequel to *Mindscape's Shadowgate* (developed by ICOM), the point-and-click adventure series will continue. In its latest incarnation, the adventure will feature continuous scrolling whenever the player's character is exploring, but the capacity to freeze action whenever the protagonist is examining an object. In addition to the IBM CD-ROM, the game is expected to be available on the TurboGrafx-16 as a CD product.

Bram Stoker's Dracula (Psygnosis):

Actual footage from the Francis Ford Coppola film is used to interface action and story. Early indications are that the game will be primarily an arcade "shooter" that loosely follows the film's plot. In addition to the IBM CD-ROM, Sony will release a Sega CD-ROM version.

Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space (Interplay): The CD-ROM version of this space race strategy game is expected to feature more animation and more digitized film segments than the floppy disk version of the game. As noted in CGW's sneak preview of the product (#101), this could be the most ideal use of multi-media yet for a computer game.

Dune CD-ROM (Virgin): Not only has the design team added footage from the film, but they have rendered the entire planetary surface of Arrakis. This makes the travel required within the game much more enjoyable and less likely that gamers will opt to jump from one locale to another. The digitized speech also adds to the suspension of disbelief.

The Iron Helix (Spectrum HoloByte): This upcoming action/adventure game was previewed in CGW #104. Gamers explore a huge spaceship as they try to avoid and then, expunge an evil security probe. It is *Alien* meets *Fail Safe* in terms of plot.

Jutland (Software Society): In many ways, World War I was the grand era of naval surface action. *Jutland* builds upon the eponymous battle and rich tactical engagements of this era, while also providing a cinematic look and role-playing aspect to the game.

Kasparov's Gambit (Electronic Arts): The multi-media version of the upcoming chess game will feature more digitized footage of the World Chess Champion providing tutorial information than the floppy disk version, as well as more 3-D chess sets. The additional storage space may also allow the library of annotated matches to be expanded beyond the 500 in the standard MS-DOS version.

Legend of Kyraandia (Virgin): The CD-ROM version is expected to feature the same excellent game with the addition of digitized speech.

Lord of the Rings (Interplay): In addition to the use of digitized speech and the inclusion of film footage from Ralph Bakshi's full-length animated film version of the Tolkien classic, Interplay has cleaned up the interface and animation such that even those who did not like the regular version of the game may enjoy the multi-media version of their *Fellowship of the Ring* CRPG.

Micromegas (Psygnosis): *Fantastic Voyage* meets *Inner Space* in this fascinating action/simulation. Players must travel

through a human body with reflexes swift enough to drive their probe through an organic "rollercoaster" without causing any damage.

Out of this World (Interplay): There will be more game play and the storyline will be extended. The intent is to make it a bigger game, not just the same game on CD. Anyone who played the floppy disk version will want to play this expanded version.

Power Modeler Series (Revell-Monogram): More than a set of assembling and painting instructions on CD, each release in this series will feature a simulation of driving or flying the three vehicles covered on each CD. Early looks at the products make them seem like much more than we initially expected.

Rebel Assault (LucasArts): Imagine a *Star Wars* action game with a 3-D perspective. The action sequences will be familiar to anyone who has seen the film trilogy, from rodent hunting in the canyons of Tatooine to the asteroid-filled obstacle course of *Empire Strikes Back*.



Return to Zork (Activision): The CD version of the upcoming adventure game should have a 7th *Guest-style* walk-through of each location. However, once the gamer has been through a location, it will be possible to skip over animations and conversations. The design team expects to use 45,000 digital images for the animation sequences in the CD game.

The 7th Guest (Virgin): Trilobyte's artistic/programming masterpiece is previewed in this issue and a sequel is rumored in this issue's Rumor Bag (see page 88).

SimCity CD-ROM (Interplay): Interplay has acquired the rights to produce a multi-media version of the best-selling simulation/strategy game of urban planning. Early indications are that there will be film footage of simulated newscasts and, possibly, a new game element.

Total Distortion (Pop Rocket): Total Distortion is an adventure game where gamers take saved elements of an adventure game and use them to create a bizarre music video. Ideally, this should be a game that's made loud to be played loud. **eww**

Slow Screen Redraw Needn't Be Par For The Course...

You know what we're talking about... those *other* golf simulations that seem to take forever to draw the screen. Well, *Wilson® ProStaff® Golf* puts an end to all that waiting with *fast-action* screen redraws! So what does this get you? Faster game play and less frustration, for one thing. Need we say more?

O.K., since you asked, we should also mention the wide variety of side-game options — things like Shoot Out, Stroke Play, Match Play and Best Ball. You get eight options in individual play, a whopping 13 in team play... simply pick and choose to create your own personal playing style.



Wilson® ProStaff® Golf is an ideal game for golfers of all levels, from beginner to expert. Making a shot is quick and easy — just select a club and adjust your stance, take aim, then choose your power level and

ball spin and watch it fly! An undulating grid shows every curve and contour of the fairways and greens, for greater accuracy as you plan your shot. Finally, one game brings it all together to give golfers what they've been looking for — a challenging course, intuitive controls and realistic game play. So don't get teed off at the competition, go with a real winner...

Wilson ProStaff Golf.

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Making a Guest Appearance

A Sneak Preview of Virgin's *The 7th Guest*

by Chuck Miller

Few games have created such anticipation during the past year as has *The 7th Guest* (*Guest*), an Interactive Drama on CD-ROM co-produced by Virgin Games and Trilobyte. Fortunately, the wait for this long anticipated release is almost over. In fact, many readers may already have a copy in hand by the time this preview hits print (*Guest* is presently scheduled for release at the end of February).

Inside the House on the Hill

My first exposure to *Guest* was at a press showing during the 1992 Summer Consumer Electronics Show at Virgin's private suite, an experience I will long remember. A section of their suite, behind black curtains, was constructed to resemble an old, abandoned Victorian house complete with fireplace, grandfather clock, tufted high-back chairs and sufficient cobwebs to create the perfect environment to preview *Guest*. The room even had that distinctive musty smell expected of an old, dilapidated structure. In other words, the atmosphere was ideal.

In the center of these haunting accoutrements sat two computer monitors, their screens framed with antique picture frames, and two rodents of the digital variety. While a video of the introduction to *Guest* was projected on a large, framed screen above the fireplace, visitors were allowed to investigate the computerized drama firsthand. I was clearly impressed, as were most attendees.

The Stauf Dreams are Made Of

Old man Stauf, an evil toymaker, built a house—one holding

a sinister secret. The story, however, began long before this less-than-saintly gent became a wealthy toymaker. Stauf, at one time, was a drifter and thief, roaming from one town to the next. His wretched lifestyle continued until one night when he had a vision, a dream about a doll.

When he awoke the next morning, Stauf carved the doll from his dream. The dreams continued, as did the fame of this new-found toymaker. Each time he dreamt of a new toy, he would reproduce it. That is, until a series of mysterious deaths occurred among children who bought one of his toys. The plot further thickened when Stauf himself suddenly met an untimely demise. Now, the drama commences when six guests are summoned anonymously to Stauf's hilltop mansion, the player being *The 7th Guest*.



Calling Upon a Medium

To date, few developers have taken advantage of the CD-ROM medium. Most have simply used the extra storage capacity to serve as a repository for compilations of previously released works (referred to in the industry as "shovelware") or as the means of providing audio enhanced versions of their disk-based products. This, however, is not entirely negative. It simply fails to fully exploit the benefits of CD-ROM.

Apart from several cutting edge titles on the Macintosh platform (*Spaceship Warlock*, for instance) and a few products from ICOM, *Guest* is one of the first games for MS-DOS compatibles that has been designed from the ground up to take full advantage of the potential that CD-ROM has to offer. In fact, not only does *Guest* consume an entire CD-ROM (disc one contains

Puzzled and Perplexed

approximately 619MB of data), it actually requires TWO. Not only from the sheer volume of data, but from the first screen to appear, the player knows that *Guest* is a substantial offering—if just on sight and sound alone.

An Apparition of Beauty

Few games have taken full advantage of high resolution SuperVGA graphics, but *Guest* sets a graphic adventure precedent in offering superb, photorealistic images rendered in 256-color SuperVGA (640 x 320). The images created for this eerie adventure appear in a letterbox format centered vertically on the screen with a black "void" above and below the image area.



The computerized world of *Guest* is also three dimensional in its orientation. When the player travels through the 32 rooms of this mansion, movement is realistically represented just as it would appear in a movie from a first person perspective. So much so, that it seems difficult to believe that this house exists only within the computer.

Key to the realism evident in *Guest* is the full motion video employed. All movement through the house, including the numerous spectral appearances, occurs at 15 frames per second (on an adequate machine. See below.). In total, more than 30 minutes of smooth-flowing video are used to illustrate the ghostly apparitions, not including the time necessary to explore the entire mansion itself. Thanks to over two years of work producing the detailed graphical renderings employed, at a cost of over a half-million dollars, *Guest* offers the player a true 3-D environment to explore with scenery that scrolls and rotates perfectly as the player changes his or her point of view.

Creaking Doors and Dripping Faucets

As striking as *Guest* looks, it sounds even better. The musical soundtrack, presented in CD quality audio, is the creation of The Fat Man, well known and respected for his work on *Wing Commander II*. *Guest* is destined to become the new standard for his musical talents. If I were to single out the strongest and most distinctive contribution to the unparalleled atmosphere created in *Guest*, it would be the music employed. Turn off the lights, turn up the volume and prepare for that inevitable chill to run down the spine. *Guest* is that affectively evocative.

Also key to the aural heights achieved is the superior quality of the digitized audio accompanying the ghostly video footage. Recording and reproduction of live actors' voices has been handled with meticulous attention by the game's audio engineers. No "snap, crackle, pop" or other audio distortion is present.

Guest is described as an Interactive Drama, but just what does that mean in relation to game play? Well, I will clarify up front that *Guest* is not an animated adventure in the traditional sense, nor is it a role-playing game. It may be best described as a puzzle-based, free-form graphic adventure. If the player understands this in advance, he or she will not be disappointed.

Successfully completing the game revolves around solving 20 puzzles, primarily of the logic variety. One can expect to find word-based puzzles, those of the Rubic variety, spatial puzzles and at least one maze. As far as the story's development is concerned, the player is allowed pretty much free reign in following characters, exploring the mansion and in solving the numerous puzzles. This all lends a non-linear feel to the game.

Skeletons in the Closet

In light of all *Guest* has going for it, one must ask if there are any rotting corpses lying around this digital dwelling? Well, to be precise, yes and no. Those who were expecting a quest-style game along more traditional role-playing or animated adventure lines, may find less than they had hoped for in *Guest*. Conversely, players desiring to immerse themselves in a puzzle-based world of gothic horror will be quite elated with their discovery. In the final analysis, though, I expect most gamers with an MS-DOS compatible and a CD-ROM drive to eventually purchase a copy of *Guest*. It is a must buy product with, I believe, a very broad appeal.

The only significant barrier to enjoying this groundbreaking product concerns hardware, a result in part of the diversity that exists on the PC platform and due to the requirements imposed by the game itself. *Guest* should not even be considered unless one owns a 386DX system, a fast 16 bit SuperVGA card and at least 1MB of RAM. Though not required, the minimum I suggest is a 386/33MHz system with 2MB of RAM, a fast SuperVGA card with 1MB of video RAM and a CD-ROM drive with at least a 150K transfer rate. Anything less will be incapable of providing optimal performance.



Won't You Be My Guest?

The 7th *Guest* is a special treat for fans of Gothic horror, setting new standards for graphic and audio quality in computer games. It is a stunning product. Virgin certainly has high hopes for *Guest*, as well, since a sequel is already in the works for release later this year (encompassing Stauf's house and the surrounding town of Harley).

At \$99.99 retail, *Guest* will require a substantial investment. However, what the player receives in enjoyment will more than compensate. I look forward to pitting my wits against Stauf as his guest and solving the puzzles in his mysterious house. I believe many others will welcome the invitation, too. **eww**

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In Space, Now Everyone Can Hear You Scream

Sierra's CD-ROM Edition of Space Quest IV

by Charles Ardai

TITLE	Space Quest IV
SYSTEM	IBM with CD-ROM
GRAPHICS	VGA
PRICE	\$69.95
PROTECTIONS	None
DESIGNERS	Mark Crowe, Scott Murphy
PROGRAMMER	Sierra
	Costa Mesa, CA
	(909) 326-6634

People love *Space Quest IV* not for its puzzles, which are all pretty simple, nor for its storyline, which is a deliberately hokey space opera, but for its gags (the best of which rival Douglas Adams for sheer silliness) and, even more, for its lavish spectacle. The animation, the movie-quality soundtrack, the exciting settings, and the imaginative visuals make *Space Quest IV* one of the most attention-grabbing games to come along in years.

To begin with, most of the game takes place against gorgeous, painted backgrounds. This raises high expectations which are amply met in the foregrounds, where one finds scenes filled with the kind of two-fisted, hold-on-to-your-hat action that used to occupy Buster Crabbe's time in the old Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers serials. Our hero, the intrepid Roger Wilco, escapes from the clutches of the dreaded Sequel Police! He's carried off to the eyrie of a giant pterodactyl! He goes mano-a-fisho with a giant sea slug! He's kidnapped by the luscious Latex Babes of



Estros! It's enough to give a guy a heart flutter.

On the gag side, people in the industry are still talking about the in-jokes the game makes at the expense of software publishers and retailers. The game also skewers many of science fiction's sacred cows and parodies arcade games mercilessly with a simulation called "Ms. Astro Chicken." Add a bit of Benny Hill (at one point Roger has to cross-dress to fool a computer), a pinch of Mel Brooks' "Spaceballs" (Roger

finds a copy of the *Space Quest IV* hint book), and a taste of "Back to the Future" (the plot has Roger traveling from one *Space Quest* sequel to another to rescue his yet-to-be-born son from arch-villain Sludge Vohaul), and one ends up with a Mulligan stew of satire, pratfalls, and nonsense that may not be *haute cuisine* but is certainly filling.

Good news: the CD-ROM edition is even more filling than the original. It accentuates and improves all of the game's strong points. The gags are funnier when read aloud; the graphics are even better without paragraphs of yellow text obscuring them; and the elimination of reading as the player's main activity gives one more freedom just to watch, listen, and get drawn into the adventure.

The Sounds of Science (Fiction)

Space Quest IV not only talks, it coos, belches, vomits, throbs, threatens, shrieks and, twice, almost curses. Every word that was displayed on the screen in the original edition is now spoken, even down to the incidental text. ("It would serve no purpose," "You can't use that here," etc.)

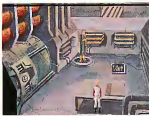
Of course, the big question is how good the voices are, in light of the somewhat wooden line readings for which Sierra has become known as a result of the CD-ROM edition of *King's Quest V*. The answer is that the voices Sierra chose this time are

**ROME WAS'NT
BUILT IN A DAY**

How long will it take you...



excellent — not stiff, not unpleasant — and that the readers' performances are a delight.



The character from whom one hears most often is the narrator, an unattributed performance by Gary Owens of *Laugh-In* and *The Gong Show* fame (as well as the voice of Saturday morning cartoonism's *Space Ghost*). That's excellent since Roger, appropriately enough, sounds like the hapless, nervous, bewildered lunk he is. Sludge Vohaut, looking and sounding like a Vogon refugee from *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, puts in a couple of sinister, holographic appearances. The Latex Babes, arguably computer gaming's most sexist creations, squeal "Our hero!" when Roger rescues them. On top of all these there is a legion

of robots, aliens, and assorted spear carriers, all with something to say.

Normally, comic readings are harder to pull off than straight readings, but these voice actors manage it. Except for a few who try too hard to give their characters character (two of the robots sound like water-cooler impressions of Mae West and Inspector Clouseau) and the fact that the narrator stumbles once or twice over scientific doubletalk (he has trouble saying "the powerful quad-quark drives rev to life" — but who would't?), the game's audio track is a complete success.



Not as clear a success is the gameplay, which still suffers from the shortcomings reviewers noted when *Space Quest IV* first came out. Being on a CD does nothing to make the game longer, for instance; there are still only seven sequences, each con-

sisting of only two to seven puzzles. There are also too many situations which depend on good timing and hand-eye coordination. I had to die and restore 43 times before I managed to navigate Roger through a zero-gravity shootout.

While this means that there are better adventure games than *Space Quest IV*, there are few games that are more entertaining. Fewer still are improved so much in the transition to CD-ROM.



In some ways, *Space Quest IV* is the perfect multimedia game: it looks and sounds great and it offers an experience one could not get from a floppy-based game. With a few more games this good on the market, CD-ROM naysayers will have to eat their words. With this game, they can already start nibbling. **cww**

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Tales from the Hacked Museum

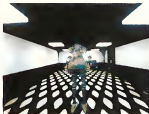
Reflexion II: Museum or Hospital — Macintosh CD Experience

by Tony Revenux

Reflexion II: Museum or Hospital is an exploratory CD-ROM that is an odd mixture of adventure and monodromy. It is a skillfully produced demonstration of spatial investigation and three-dimensional design in motion using *Macromind Director* and *QuickTime*. One may find it difficult to determine what the point of it all is, especially when approached in a gaming frame of mind. One would fare better looking at *Reflexion* and its artistic kin as multi-media design for multi-media design's sake — and the design in *Reflexion* is tantalizingly intriguing.

Using a *QuickTime* playback utility such as **Apple's** *MoviePlayer*, one can access and play the *QuickTime* "MooVs" of *Museum or Hospital* through the Data folder on the CD-ROM. Hiroyasu Yaguchi's music is heard continuously in the background as one traverses the interiors, or one can hear the 14 music tracks directly from the CD-ROM by using the Play utility provided on the disk. These can be heard only through the audio output of the CD-ROM player, either with headphones or externally powered speakers.

The curtain rises on a mysterious futuristic building. When the user enters through the doors, his or her point-of-view is taken up immediately as seen through the eyes of a fly as it buzzes and darts around the interior of a waiting room. When one has seen enough of this excellent *QuickTime* loop, one can click and explore the different paintings on the walls. They are weird, anatomically ambiguous images that look like valentines from an android factory. Some of them will animate with gray, blobby bodies trying to get out.



TITLE SYSTEM PRICE PROTECTIONS DEVELOPER DESIGNER PUBLISHER	Reflexion II: Museum or Hospital Color Macintosh 3 or greater, 4 MB RAM, CD-ROM drive \$39 None Synergy/Tequila Ltd Mosaic Graphics Camera Interactive, Ltd, Tokyo U.S. distribution by EastWest Communications
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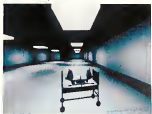
After clicking on the plate on the iron bars of the prison gate, a key will appear. It will open a lock and the door will swing open. A series of high-ceilinged stone corridors are flanked with steel doors. As one clicks on each door, one is brought up close where they can open a viewing slot. An actor, often wearing the mask of a rabbit, monkey, frog or camel, is seen through the slot groping, staggering or dancing around like a convict gone stir crazy in solitary. In the background of each is a different device of industrial machinery of cogs, chains or pistons, rendered in a 3-D that looks almost like a moving hologram. These inmates from industrial hell begin to get old after one experiences the theme repeatedly in cell after cell.

Through another prison gate, one is in a room with cabinets in the walls that contain complex 3-D animations. Three hospital beds hold collapsed gray figures. When clicked upon, each reveals the same scene where the screen blacks out and a tiny armless figure walks aimlessly around

in the void. A stairway whisks the viewer up in a dizzying ascension to a cupola where three massive pedestals support boxes that twitch around a few times when clicked — hardly worth the trip. Returning to the ground floor, another staircase plunges one down into a dank, shadowy corridor. Here, the cells confine exquisitely rendered 3-D solids that slowly rotate in scintillating rainbow reflections. Yet, while all the machinery in the cells above had unique sound effects signatures, these spheres spin in silence.

Another waiting room is found and another movie sequence is triggered. Here, four figures that look like rookie startups for the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles are hurled out of a door onto a bench. Each takes a turn leaping and hopping around the room to no apparent purpose. Then, they are yanked back through the door. When the viewer follows them, he or she will find a modern gray corridor where a gurney bearing a double-headed dog body (that's right, you heard me) appears, hurtling and spinning around the corridor a few times (just for the hell of it, apparently) and then disappears.

Museum or Hospital is an ambitious and interesting project that is really more like an extended demo reel than a completed concept. Other exploration CD-ROMs like *L-Zone* and *Alice* (see pg. 40) may suffer from some of the same elusive ambiguity, but they succeed in the multi-layered depth, range and complexity of their constructed universes. Most important, they give one a high level of interactive discovery compared to the passive, tour-guided, *Twilight Zone* continuity in *Museum or Hospital*. **CDW**



Anything You Want...

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THROUGH THE MACINTOSH GLASS

A Trip Into The Odd Land of Multi-media

by Tony Revenux

Alice is based in spirit on the playfully whimsical, but deeply intelligent, fancies and visual puns of Lewis Carroll's stories, *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*. Haruhiko Shono's *Alice* has many of the elements of a game, with playing cards used as milestones and markers, but most of one's playing time will be occupied in finding things, trying them out and discovering where other things may be hidden. *Alice* is advertised as an "interactive museum" or "electronic coffee table book." A museum, however, makes everything visible and clearly marked and a book has a table of contents and page numbers. This *Alice* is more like some charmingly weird and elusive scavenger hunt where one is never really quite sure where they may be going or what they are looking for.

The disk package displays a map of Alice's world, where four quadrants of three rooms each are designated as under hearts, spades, diamonds and clubs. This means that the cards that one will find — when one can find them — will be marked as such. When one finds a card, clicking on it will reveal a stanza of verse, such as; "Alice as Rabbit: Beyond a door closed tight Alice in a Rabbit's skin hand in hand with a bony hand." And that's just one of the less obscure phrases. Yet, that riddle is an eerie preview to what happens when one climbs up inside the chimney beyond the Final Room.

Authored in *MacroMind Director*, much of the exploration in *Alice* is achieved through activating different objects and entering into the many paintings which fill every room. When a painting is activated with a mouse-click, it opens a window which blanks out the rest of the screen. After exhausting all of the interactive possibilities therein, one gets out of the painting and returns to the room by clicking outside of its frame.

When the white rabbit pops up at key junctures, it usually means a hop in hyperspace to another room, even if the explorer hasn't finished scoping out all the possibilities. There are some doors that will not open until the explorer has completed some series of tasks. What the map doesn't

TITLE	Alice
SYSTEM	Color Macintosh II or greater, 4 MB RAM, CD-ROM drive
PRICE	\$59
PROTECTION	None
DEVELOPER	Synergy/Touch to End!
DESIGNER	Haruhiko Shono
PUBLISHER	Comarc Interactive, Ltd. Tokyo U.S. distribution by EastWest Communications



show are the surprise shortcuts to special areas, such as selecting that last bottle in the wine cellar under the kitchen that whisks one up two stories to the Atelier (studio), or the top hat that leads to the Bar. To get through the door of the Final Room at the top of the stairs, one has to remember some of the card clues to crack the bunny's combination lock. Unfortunately, as in many other exploratory "games," it is impossible to save one's positions in the game.

One disadvantage of searching through screen after screen for "switches" is that after a while one develops a case of "clickitus" of the fingers as one repeatedly punches that mouse button like a chicken pecking at a farmyard. This is a case where the use of a "hot spot" interface — where



the cursor changes color or brightness when it passes over a switch area — would be a welcome relief and make the game less tedious.

The sound effects of *Alice* are part of the data that is read by the computer as spot events, and are heard through the computer's internal speaker. The music is digital audio and can be heard only through the audio output of the CD player, either with headphones or externally powered speakers. Unlike a CD-ROM such as *Spaceship Warlock*, where the music track is continuous, Kazuhiko Kato's compositions provide lively introductions to certain rooms and areas which end as soon as the user clicks on to the next step.

The paintings and designs of Kuniyoshi Kaneko form the visual universe of *Alice*. It is a very elegant and richly rendered environment that makes it a browser's paradise and worth the thousand mouse-clicks it will take to see it all. Photographic scanned images and computer graphics combine with the paintings to convey beautifully detailed images that support the fantastic realism of this house of illusions. Kaneko seems to be influenced by the surrealist paintings of Rene Magritte, where familiar objects combine in impossible situations.

One opens a drawer in a cabinet — it is full of water. Click again and a fish jumps out. Open a door — a mountain landscape appears. Click on the faceplate of a skin diver, and a pair of elephants trumpet out of it. A plaid vest hangs on a chair. Click on it — a pocket watch falls out and enlarges.

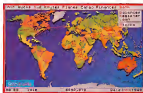
Alice should be considered an adult title because of the recurring frontal nudity of both men and women in the paintings. However, Kaneko's sense of eroticism is one which is very cool, detached, and ambiguous. Dreamy, sophisticated slackers, the wide-eyed figures could pass for pale, porcelain mannequins.

Readers who are looking for game play in a CD-ROM title will have to look elsewhere. Those who are looking for a surreal electronic toy may have found just the place for their "very important date." **eww**

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97	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
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99	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
100	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

Detailed data on plane demand & costs is easily accessible

Among the many other enhancements made to the game are: *Upgraded economic model & computer player AI, sound effects, personalisation of airlines, check register, better mouse & typing handling, city sizes now from 1 to 100 & vary thru time, print to paper options & lots more!*

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Storm'in Without Norman

Compton NewMedia's *Desert Storm*

by M. Egan Brooks

Desert Storm is a multi-media presentation of the Gulf War. The primary program consists of the official report from the Pentagon to the Congress delineating the preparations, conduct and aftermath of the Gulf War. In addition, the product includes *Coalition Command*, a game in which the player takes over as CINCENT (Commander, Central Command).

Documentation

Documentation consists of two small manuals: one for the main report and one for the game. For those familiar with CD-ROM, the manuals are the usual installation instructions; for those new to CD-ROM, however, the manuals may best be described as "somewhat cryptic." Both DOS and Windows versions are included on the same disk, although this is not made clear in the manual. The primary emphasis of *Desert Storm* is the Official Report. The game has been added as a graphic assist/interface for non-wargamers to understand the mechanics of the Gulf War, and the two products should ultimately enhance one another.

Graphics And Sound

The graphics and sound of the Report are simply outstanding in their imagery. The scanned pictures, in all their SVGA glory, reflect the "state-of-the-art." The sound, ranging from the speeches of President Bush, General Schwarzkopf, etc., to actual sounds of battle, are as clear and distinct as when initially heard on CNN. The only flaw in the pictures is that they are unlabeled and often their appearance in the text is ambiguous at best.

TITLE	Desert Storm (w/Coalition Command)
SYSTEM	IBM with CD-ROM
GRAPHICS	VCARS/SGA
PRICE	\$49.95
PROTECTION	None
DESIGNER	Quanta Press, Created by Dave Arneson
PUBLISHER	Compton's NewMedia Carlsbad, CA 619 429-7500



Insofar as the game is concerned, the graphics and sound are much more primitive. Most of the "game" takes place in the Command Trailer, and one can merely switch between the computer, the maps, the television and the Hot Line. With the slow access time of CD-ROM, this can often become disheartening. Sound is better. When Washington calls, the voices of

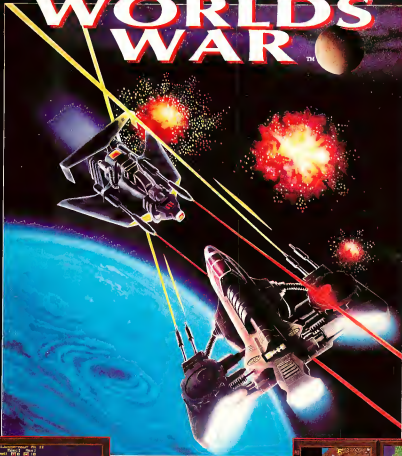
Vice President Quayle, Secretary of Defense Cheney, and General Powell ring out loud and clear. Although actors were used for these voices, they are akin to their historic personage; sadly the same cannot be said of President Bush. With all of the Dana Carvey-wannabes about, I simply could not understand why there was not an attempt to replicate the President's vocalisms. At least, however, it is easy to understand what is being said.

Mechanics

This is an "Official Report" from the Pentagon to the Congress, with all that implies. There has been no editorial condensation, no additional facts submitted — this is the document in its entirety. Its content is variable, with certain subjects being covered well and others virtually ignored. For the person with an intense desire to learn about Desert Shield/Storm, much of the information is enlightening.

However, some of the information may charitably be described as "misleading"; in other cases, it is wrong, and even more important, there are issues of import that are not mentioned. In Command and Control Relationships it is noted that NAVCENT (Navy Central Command) was subordinate to CMEF (Commander, Middle East Forces). This was incorrect; NAVCENT was a one-star admiral, with ostensible command authority in-theater "when the balloon went up." CMEF, a two-star admiral, would not become subordinate to NAVCENT. Therefore, the NAVCENT "flag" went from the peacetime NAVCENT (now converted to NAVLOGSUPFOR [Navy Logistical Support Force] to Seventh Fleet (commanded by a three-star admiral). Simi-

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larly, the Saudi-American Agreement regarding EPWs (Enemy Prisoners of War) is mentioned, but there is no discussion of the ramifications of the United States acting as an "Occupying Power" in regard to territory in Iraq.

This was an important issue; the Army military lawyers contended that the United States was not an "Occupying Power" in southern Iraq and therefore, it had no legal



obligation to the Iraqis in its territory. Numerous Army officers contested this initial decision, and it was only after the media began raising questions as to the treatment of Iraqi civilians that the military establishment reversed its position.

Thus, the Report is an interesting starting base. However, there is no dictionary included. If one seeks a search for "Schwartzkopf," no record will be found — the General spells his name without the "t". This lack of a dictionary and the literalness of the database search routines makes it difficult to use. It is full of information, but it is difficult to access.

Game Play

As noted before, the game is for non-wargamers. After playing it, one quickly discovers that it falls into the "taint" — that is, it ain't for wargamers and it ain't for non-wargamers. For the grognard, it lacks the ability to meaningfully change the outcome; for the neophyte, it is simply too slow and cumbersome to have repeated play value.

If the player takes no action, then the deployment will be "historical." The game assumes that the Coalition Forces would have to win; the only variable is how major the victory would be. Forces may be deployed in four options: left, center, right or broad attack.

However, the amphibious assault is not a viable option by itself. The game assumes that the amphibious assault would hit the Kuwait coastline and range into Iraq (near Basra). As a participant in the Gulf War, I found this somewhat limiting. On 2 January 1991, I attended a conference in Dhahran. Anyone with a security

clearance less than "Top Secret" was forbidden to attend. The primary assault was to be an invasion at the Kuwaiti port of Al-Shuaiba (south of Kuwait City). If this is what the military had put out in classified briefings, it is hard to understand why the option has not been reflected in the game. (Note: the above information has been cleared for public release by the Department of Defense by letter to the author dated 15 December 1992). Similarly, casualties in the "first wave" were estimated to be 60% or greater. Thus, for those of us "who were there," the game assumes much that we did not know.

Insofar as gameplay is concerned, one must carefully manage the media. Proper press accessibility and use of press releases are critical. Any telephone calls to Washington initiated by the player request clearance for the air war or ground war to begin. However, one is stuck with the historical deployments.

Between August and November 1991, I was assigned to the EOC (Emergency Operations Center) at 18th Airborne Corps (Fort Bragg, NC). The TIPPID (Timed Phased Deployment) was not a given; the decisions as to who would go when would constitute a volume by itself. Overall, though, the lack of ability to tailor unit deployments must be regarded as a negative.

Most Hot Line telephone calls by Washington before the war commences will be negative. The Secretary of Defense is "dis-



appointed" in the player, only commencement of hostilities will relieve such calls. However, a premature request will simply not be acknowledged. It is hard for the player to lose; historically, the 82nd Airborne referred to itself as a "speed bump" pre-December 1991. If the Iraqi Army had moved south, we had little assets to stop them. Again, the messages become repetitious. The CG (Commanding General) has a role other than to move troops, but there is virtually no interaction with the HN (Host Nation).

Dan Quayle is provided as the "Gabby Hayes" of the Gulf War. Calling continuously from the "thirteenth tee," he simply



No need to desert those Saudis, General. RIGHT

wastes time. But the Hot Line cannot be ignored. While Mr. Quayle's reputation is somewhat tarnished, I have heard that he did an admirable job behind the scenes. As incongruous as it sounds, his performance was praiseworthy; the cheap shots in the game do little except provide comic relief and aggravation for the player.

When the air war begins, one should check BDA (battle damage assessments) and allocate air wings to primary targets. Sadly, this cannot be done in an easy fashion; while one can easily change a single wing, it is impossible to determine coverage of all targets unless one maintains a separate written log. Designer Dave Arneson admits this shortcoming, and notes that even he has to maintain such a log.

The ground war, once it commences, ends quickly with a Coalition victory. A more detailed rendition of armor engagements completes the land war. This tactical scene was to be part of a more ambitious land phase, but design specifications limited the game.

After victory is achieved, one will learn how well he did, ranging from "so-so" to election as President of the United States (another military hero as President? What would Douglas MacArthur have said?)

Conclusions

Overall, *Desert Storm II* is a curious product. The database provides more than sufficient detail for most users, while the game may provide an interlude for a non-gamer. However, the game may also permanently deter such non-gamers from ever looking into historical simulation gaming again.

Discussions with the designer reveal that the specifications were for the non-gamer market. Given the slow access times of the CD-ROM media, I doubt that the game will receive much play. Given the attention span of the American public, I doubt the database will be carefully perused.

If Saddam continues in his policy to make Kuwait the "Nineteenth Province" and Desert Storm II is required, then this program will become a mega-hit; absent that, it is an also-ran. **CDW**

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Slay Him Again, Sam?

CMC's *Who Killed Sam Rupert?*

by Johnny L. Wilson

I didn't have to be Los Angeles. It could have been any stinking town where the sewage of human greed and ambition flooded to the surface of respectable society like fountains after a storm — any town where the flashpoint of violence sparked into firestorms of human passion. It was an interactive mystery and I was a police detective, clicking on a Macintosh with CD-ROM as I tried to get to the bottom of a murder.

Who Killed Sam Rupert? is an interactive murder mystery on CD-ROM. Though it has elements of a game, it is better understood as a work of fiction. Indeed, its appeal would be more to the mystery aficionado than, for example, the dedicated adventure gamer. As a product, it is well-designed enough to underscore both the strengths and weaknesses of CD-ROM entertainment software.

The Maltese Simulacrum

What *Who Killed Sam Rupert?* does well is to place the reader/viewer/gamer in the position of a police detective with an impossible job. A very important citizen has been murdered and the police chief wants action within six simulated hours (easily playable in an hour and half). Naturally, the time limit is not realistic, but it serves the function of putting the player/viewer/detective under a political gun and not being able to explore clues at his/her leisure. So, each action which is undertaken by the player-detective causes a certain amount of time to be assessed against the simulated clock. By the final half hour of the six, the player-detective must be ready to hold a press conference and

TITLE	Who Killed Sam Rupert
SYSTEM	Macintosh CD-ROM
PRICE	\$39.99
DESIGNER	Sharon Gilligan
PUBLISHER	Creative Multimedia Corporation 514 NW 13th Ave., Suite 203 Portland, OR 97209



prove, by fielding questions thrown by a mob of reporters, that he/she knows enough about the case to request an arrest warrant. Once the press conference is held successfully, the player-detective may interrogate from one to three witnesses in a more detailed fashion than in the preliminary investigation or apply for a warrant.

The preliminary investigation requires the player-detective to visit the scene of the crime. There, one clicks on objects to be investigated in detail and the camera zooms in to the accompaniment of a camera's automatic winder sounds. Once the camera zooms in on the appropriate object, one can click on appropriate icons to collect fingerprints, perform serological analysis, analyze blood stain patterns, examine fibers, scrutinize wound patterns or undertake a laminal analysis. Being able to order these types of tests provides an interesting wrinkle in helping the player-detective suspend disbelief and place oneself at the center of the investigation. If there were more mechanisms of this type in the game, it would be even better.

The detective must also interrogate the eight most likely suspects. It is wise to take notes on particular times and any names which are mentioned. The notes are not necessary in order to solve the murder, but some of the

trivial details collated in the investigation will be required to answer the reporters' questions during the press conference. All of these interrogations are hard-wired, free-running Quick-Time movies of the suspects. The acting is, in most cases, surprisingly good and the soundtrack is easily understood. This would-be detective would have enjoyed having more free reign during the interrogation, but discovered that the final interviews offer more interactivity than these preliminary "sessions."

The player-detective needs to make use of material evidence. It is very important to take note of blood types and other information to be found on the Non-Testimonial Evidence screen and within the Autopsy Report and source book on vintage wines. Those who do not take notes will find themselves lost come press conference time.

The Long Hello

The press conference brings us to the negative aspects of this otherwise interesting program. The reporters will ask a string of detailed questions regarding the player-detective's investigation. If the player selects an answer before the program is done "reading" the question to him/her, the answer is counted as an incorrect answer (even if it is correct). This underscores the fact that CD-ROMs have slow access times and the more a disc has to be accessed, the less fun it is to play. CMC needs to work on swapping data from disc to RAM in a more economical fashion.

Further, the game features a computerized "Notebook" feature. The player shouldn't bother with this feature, however, since it is not only terribly slow, but it is *not* accessible during the press conference when it is most needed. Old-fashioned pen-and-paper are best for this game.

Once the detective passes the press conference section, he/she has a choice of performing more in-depth (and more interactive) interviews or going for the victory (applying for the warrant). The final interviews require selecting individual questions from an on-screen notebook and applying for an arrest warrant demands one to select; suspect, alibi condition, motive, weapon and time.



Farewell, My Lovely

Who Killed Sam Rupert? is projected to be the initial release in the *Virtual Murder Series* from Creative Multimedia Corporation. It is to be hoped that future titles will involve more interactivity than is in the present package, but *Who Killed Sam Rupert?* is a promising start. It is more satisfying than a television mystery, but not quite up there with Raymond Chandler, Dick Francis and Elliott Roosevelt (three of the very best mystery writers). Here's to more cases! **cmw**

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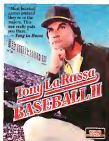
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Scorpion's Mail

Ultima VII ■ Crusaders Of The Dark Savant ■ Legend Of Kyrandia
Dungeon Master ■ Indiana Jones/Atlantis ■ Spellcasting 301
Monkey Island II ■ The Summoning ■ Might & Magic IV

Just the other day (or so it seems), Fred and I cleaned out some of the old mail sacks, but the place is filling up again. Personally, I think it's time we hired a dump truck and did a thorough job. Fred's against it, though; he enjoys doing this himself, mainly because his claws are such perfect paper shredders and he likes keeping his, ah, hand in on the reading and tearing business. It brings back such fond memories for him (he'd be a sentimentalist at heart, if he had one).

Anyway, the turn of the year was not a good time for prompt mail delivery. Of course, with the Christmas rush, I expected that letters in the early part of January might be a little slow in arriving, but it has taken most of the month for things to get back to near-normal. One example (of many): six days for a letter to get from Pennsylvania to New York, Sigh.

So a lot of replies during January went out a bit late. While I do my best to answer promptly, there's not much I can do until the letters actually get here, and over that I have no control. Sorry about that, folks. We just have to hope that things will get better as the year progresses. And now, on to the good stuff.

Ultima VII: There has been a surprising resurgence of questions about this game, especially the infamous Hydra room. A lot of people are having trouble finding the way to the darling critter. It really isn't that hard if you take the middle path; trying from the side isn't going to help a whole lot.

Crusaders Of The Dark Savant: Many letters about this one, which is no surprise at all. Lots of ways to get stuck or run into dead ends here. For instance, there's the matter of the Rattkin Ruins. No front door, no welcome mat; obviously, the Rattkin are not eager to have visitors. Finding a way in requires what might be called the Japanese Maneuver, performed in the proper place.

Legend Of Kyrandia: Amateur alche-

mists seem to be having a little difficulty in mixing up the right potions. Remember, it takes two items (of the same color) to make up a basic potion, which has to be one of the three primary colors (and you do need one or more of each color). Then you can mess around with combining them to make what you really need and get on with the game.

Dungeon Master: After my article appeared, I heard from several readers who all said pretty much the same thing, namely that it was easier to trap Lord Chaos when he was next to one or more walls, instead of throwing flux cages hither and yon. Believe me, folks, I tried that, *many* times. It simply didn't work for me; old Chaos just wouldn't stay put long enough in any one place. Maybe my computer was too fast, or I was too slow (me? never! heh). Whatever, a blizzard of flux cages was the only way I could get the job done.

Indiana Jones/Atlantis: Some folks are experiencing a few problems with triangulation in the Cretan ruins. Getting that transit lined up is a tricky matter. You'll know you're correct when you see a dotted line after you come out of the transit view. If you don't see it, go back and try again. Focus the transit on the horn and just move it slightly one way or the other. With a little trial and error, you'll find the right position.

Spellcasting 301: Bullfighting is not one of Ernie's major skills (but we already knew that). The best way to handle the situation is to give Mr. Death On Hooves that old get up and go feeling... while he isn't looking. Ernie's idiosyncrasies on the situation are probably a little inflated, and he may have to resort to ducking, not to mention a bit of spellcasting at the right moment.

Monkey Island II: A number of people would like to get their hands on some carpentry equipment. They know what to do with it, but Woody never seems to leave the place so they can snarf the stuff. Hey, even carpenters will make emergency

house calls on some occasions. Especially if the patient (err, customer) can't come to them. If only you saw what I saw, you (or someone) wouldn't have a leg to stand on.

The Summoning: Some folks have asked about getting into the Jester's Vault. I never managed that myself (sorry!), but from someone who did, I heard that the treasure isn't really all that terrific (no weapons, runes, or other Neat Things) or worth the effort, and there's nothing inside that you need to finish the game. So you can skip this puzzle without any feelings of apprehension. For those who missed my article a few months back on this game, I am repeating my warning about the five white pearls needed on the third level of Citadel. Citadel has only four white ones. You must find and hang on to at least one white pearl from the Broken Seal Four level in order to have all that you need at the Citadel (there is no problem with black pearls; all five are in the Citadel).

Might & Magic IV: Just a reminder to some puzzled players that there are a few areas you can't get into until Dark Side arrives. Only one Sphinx can be entered, for instance. If you haven't been able, no matter what, to find a way into a dungeon or tower, then it's a place reserved for the follow-up, and you'll just have to be patient. That includes the mysterious thingsies in the four corners of the map (I'm really curious about those myself).

That's about it for this look into the mailbag. In the meantime, if you need help with an adventure game, you can reach me in the following ways:

On Delphi: Visit the GameSIG (under the Groups and Clubs menu).

On GEnie: Stop by the Games Round-Table (type: "Scorpi" to reach the Games RT).

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Tinkering with Sierra's *The Incredible Machine*

by Chris Lombardi & Mike Weksler

"Build a better mousetrap," popular wisdom says, "and the world will beat a path to your door." While we can't say how many visitors' have rang at the residence of Dynamix designer Jeff Tunnell, we can expect that a rush of puzzle gamers, hackers, tinkers, and lovers of software toys will be cutting a quick path to their local purveyor of games. This is because Jeff Tunnell has created a better *Mousetrap*, if we're referring to the popular children's boardgame in which players construct a prodigious plastic edifice of household junk — a machine of sorts — the function of which was to capture another player's mouse. The popularity of *Mousetrap* wasn't that it was a cleverly designed game, but rather due to the fact that players got to build and fiddle with this crazy, Rubik's Goldberg-inspired monstrosity and watch it actually work.

Jeff Tunnell's latest creation, *The Incredible Machine* (*TIM*), captures the same mechanical delight as *Mousetrap*, but it is far more than just a rodent catcher. *TIM* is both a puzzle game and a software toybox that involves both solving mechanical mysteries posed in a Puzzle Mode and creating one's own bizarre contraptions in a Free Form Mode. In Puzzle Mode, the player is presented with a pre-generated configuration of items on the screen, a repository of mechanical elements, and a stated objective. For example, in "Put Three Basketballs in the Hoop," the firing of three revolvers must be timed to hit three basketballs such that they fall into a reservoir. So, Puzzle Mode requires the player to figure out how to use the items in their repository in such a way that the goal is met. The items number about 40 and include a monkey on a power-generating "exercycle," balloons, jack-in-the-boxes, treadmills, revolvers, dynamite, cats, mice, hamsters on treadmills, and structural components like girders, pipes, and brick walls — a garage sale without equal. Many of these items will have to be turned, resized, connected to other objects, and painstakingly positioned before one presses the "Start" button and submits one's mechanical hypotheses to a reality check.

Eighty puzzles are included in the game and many are quite devious. They are graduated in difficulty, however, and they slowly introduce new items to the scene, allowing one to methodically become familiar with each item. Players are rewarded for success with points that tick away as time passes and, much more importantly, by the satisfaction of a job well done. The scoring sys-

TITLE	The Incredible Machine
SYSTEM	IBM
GRAPHICS	VGA
PRICE	\$49.95
PROTECTION	Synthetic Lock-Up
DESIGNER	Jeff Tunnell
PRODUCER	Sierra On-Line Glenview, CA 800-326-5454



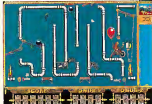
tem seems completely superfluous — rarely did we consult it, nor once did we care. We would have rather had those extra two screen inches for more area in which to build our machines.

Score or no score, these provided puzzles are a blast and are a necessary introduction to the Free Form Mode, where *TIM* really shines. Players will have to work through at least 25 levels or so to learn how each item works, as it is not always obvious and the written documentation will be of no help. The docs are sparse and have no information on the functions of the objects. Granted, *TIM* is the sort of exploratory game where the best way to learn is to dive in and do, but some written introduction to the pieces would have eliminated some initial confusion.

However interesting the puzzles might be, the Free Form mode is where it's at. Here, the curious, tinkering 10-year-old is re-awakened, given a digital toy box and set loose in the backyard of his or her mind. A blank screen, an unlimited supply of objects, a very basic intuitive understanding of physics and a creative subgenius is all one needs to have a ball with this program. We had far too many laughs showing each other our favorite creations. We found that we both had an unnatural predilection for the mouse object (it is the most aerodynamic of the "projectiles" and just so cute), machines being "Moondawg's Synopacted Accelerator," which sent the "mouse particle" on a convoluted journey around the screen.

TIM does a nice job of modeling physics, as objects behave as one's naive notions say they should, though it is not perfect. The one object in particular that would have physicists giggling is the trampoline, which seems to be made out of "flubber" from *The Absent-Minded Professor* in that it generates much more force than is applied to them, allowing one to create perpetual motion devices. However, since such devices are our favorite design "modules," we are more than willing to forgive the inaccuracy.

When we add up our score cards, we find *TIM* to be one of the most innovative and deceptively addicting products to pass this way in quite a while. Aside from a few sticky gears (lack of an "undo" function, inability to aim projectiles, unnecessarily long level passwords), we found *TIM* to be a well-oiled imagination engine with a very broad appeal. **EW**



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No Man Is An Island



Sierra's *The Island of Dr. Brain*

by Charles Arday

Castle of Dr. Brain, to which *The Island of Dr. Brain* is a sequel, was a marvelous game. More than just a collection of brain teasers, it was an educational game in the best sense of the term. It educated, but first it entertained. Designer Corey Cole never lost sight of priorities; first and foremost, to create a whimsical, eye-catching, imagination-sparking computerized busybox. Anything else, such as teaching players about astronomy or offering a primer in computer programming, came afterward. Self-conscious educational do-gooding was left out entirely, and it *wasn't* missed. With such a fine model to draw upon, one wonders how Sierra could have gotten everything so wrong the second time around.

On first glance, *Island* and *Castle* have a great deal in common: the same style of colorful, loony graphics; the same interface and game structure (one puzzle after another, loosely linked through a negligible storyline); and a mixture, in the puzzles themselves, of the old-fashioned and the new-fangled, the classic and the exotic. However, the similarity goes little deeper than the surface. If *Castle* resembled an animated, computerized issue of *Games* magazine, *Island* more closely resembles, at heart, one of those software packages intended to help teenagers prepare for the S.A.T.

It isn't that the new game has no sense of humor; *Island* is as rich in puns and gags as *Castle* was, and most are pretty clever (though some, such as a reference to a "Presidential Bush," are likely to go stale quickly). Nor is it that the visuals and



sound aren't up to snuff (though Mark Seibert's musical touch is sorely missed). The real problem is that the puzzles are more contrived and less fun than in the first game; that educating the player is stressed as an objective in a way that it wasn't the first time around; and that the game loses its right to claim the educational high ground as a result of several embarrassing, sloppy mistakes.

Battery Not Included

In *Castle*, the player had to pass a series of tests in order to qualify for the position of lab assistant to the mysterious Dr. Brain. Here, the player, now a full-fledged lab assistant, is sent on an errand by Dr. Brain to retrieve a special battery hidden on the old man's private island. There is no searching to be done, however, as this is *not* an adventure game. After one lands on the island (which is not a puzzle, just a copy protection look-up), the puzzles un-



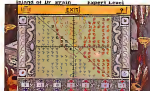
TITLE	The Island of Dr. Brain
SYSTEM	IBM
GRAPHICS	EGA/VGA
FILE PROTECTION	SPI VS
DESIGNER	Discommunication Look-Up
PUBLISHER	Pat Bridgeman Sierra On-Line Corvallis, CA (800) 378-8854

fold in linear sequence, each one popping up after the previous one has been completed. Once the puzzles have all been solved, the player gets the battery. Even more so than in *Castle*, where the player could often choose which of three puzzles to tackle next, the player here has minimal freedom.

The game interface resembles that of other Sierra games, complete with an inventory for the player to access and a number of different icons for point-and-click purposes. However, the more sophisticated elements of the interface aren't used very much, since each location exists only to introduce one or more puzzles. One uses the eye icon to get the computer to crack jokes about various parts of the background graphics (as well as to activate spot animations), the hand icon to activate the puzzles themselves, and that's about it.

The puzzles range from the straightforward (solving ciphers, putting together a jigsaw puzzle) to the more unusual (choosing the right elements to match a given spectrographic analysis, measuring out quantities of liquids of various densities to make a counterweight balance). Some puzzles are repeats from the first game (the word search, though here it is in a foreign language; the magic square; the programming of a robot); others are new to the Dr. Brain universe, though not in

any other respect. (There is a four-disk rendition of the Tower of Hanoi, a search for hidden animals in a forest picture, and a make-a-rectangle-out-of-a-bunch-of-Tetris-shapes puzzle, for instance.)



To my disappointment, quite a few of the puzzles demand specialized knowledge; that is, knowledge not only of spatial relationships, shapes, language, and the like, but also of the periodic table, weights and measures, algebra, physics, musical instruments and literature. As a result, *Island* gives the impression of having been intended for a slightly older player than *Castle* (though both games say they are for "ages 12 and up"). There are some things young gamers just won't know and probably won't pick up from either the paragraph of instructions that precedes each puzzle or from the skimpy, crammed-together compendium of information that comes in the game package under the title, "EncycloAlmanacTionaryOgraphy."

(This document contains some of the game's worst howlers, such as the memorable line, "What are Fibonacci numbers? Fibonacci numbers are cool.") It also repeatedly spells Jules Verne's last name "Vem.")



Even more distressing, some puzzles turn out to be quite difficult, not because the solutions are hard to figure out but because the rules are. Having exhausted many of the obvious puzzle types in *Castle*, and not wanting to repeat themselves too much, the designers strive for novelty; but, in the process, they came up with some set-ups so complex that one must expend a good deal of mental energy just to make head or tail of them.

True, one of the puzzles in *Castle* suffered from this syndrome (the robots-and-whirlpools maze), just as one of the puzzles there (the observatory) demanded specialized knowledge. Yet *Island* is many times worse in this regard. Players

are frequently confronted with situations in which they don't know what to do, either because the rules for a specific puzzle are confusing, because a puzzle requires the regurgitation of specific factual knowledge the player has not yet memorized from the documentation, or simply because it is often unclear after finishing a puzzle what one is supposed to click on to get to the next.

To get the player past at least the first two of these sticking points, the game offers two sources of assistance: a Dick Tracy-style "hint watch," which offers suggestions from Dr. Brain, and a difficulty slider which alters how challenging a given puzzle is. The setting of difficulty levels works quite well; the hint watch is less of a success, if only because Dr. Brain's "hints" too often are simply the answer to the puzzle the player is working on. Granted, this does get one past the tougher puzzles without too much agony, but also without much satisfaction.



Doctor, Heal Thyself

What else is wrong with the game? One could go on and on.

The cursor calibration is much too sensitive, leading to at least one situation in which the player can try to do the right thing (specifically, put a bushel of corn on a scale) and be told that he is trying to do the wrong thing.

A sizable chunk of the game is given over to word puzzles which are nearly all-text lessons in synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms—hence my SAT remark, above — or else which are centered around strangely chosen quotations. In

place of *Castle*'s inspiring comment on using one's mind to unlock all doors, *Island* offers JFK's "Forgive your enemies but never forget their names" and James Michener's "In six pages I can't even say 'hello.'" Needless to say, these are contextual *non sequiturs*, in addition to which I wonder how many young players will even know who Michener is.



Then, too, the game contains moments of pure carelessness of the sort that are unforgivable in any professional software but particularly so in an educational game. For example, when one finds the second-to-last word in the word search the computer says, "You have found 9. There are 1 left to go."

Add to all of this the fact that Sierra has chosen to market the game not in *Castle*'s zany purple package full of stars, springs, and lightning bolts but in annoying yuppie pinstripes with a headline that says "Sierra Discovery Series" and a pompous proclamation that reads, in part, "We guarantee this game will entertain your child while he or she learns...if your child does not have fun...we guarantee a full refund of your purchase price..." *Island* takes itself much too seriously to have fun.

Though it has its moments of brilliance, it is more a gussed up set of tutorials than what *Castle* set out to be, a "roller-coaster ride for your mind." Chalk it up to a different design team (Corey Cole is nowhere in sight), chalk it up to sequelitis, chalk it up to bad judgment and tight production schedules — chalk it up to whatever explanation makes sense, but do chalk it up and then write *The Island of Dr. Brain* off. *Castle of Dr. Brain* is a much better game. Buy that one instead. **eww**



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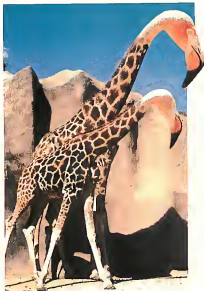
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What's it all about, Algae?



Last one in the gene pool is a...

by Maxwell Eden

Once the province of science fiction and, more recently, well-equipped biotechnology firms, genetic engineering is now available — at least on electronic varieties of life forms — to anyone with a personal computer.

In the real world (as opposed to life inside computers), bioengineers can identify specific genes responsible for particular characteristics and then, transfer those genes and their inherent traits into the same species, or an entirely different species. The possibilities are unlimited, the responsibility awesome.

Players intrigued with biotechnology, problem-solving on a planetary scale, plus interrelated topics such as the environment, evolution, behavior, food chains and ecosystems will be enthralled with *SimLife* by Maxis, the Artificial Life (A-life) simulation maven well-known for *SimCity*, *SimEarth*, and *SimAnt*.

"Make It So!"

—Captain "Gene" Luc Picard

SimLife (SL) simulates ecosystems complete with plants and

animals that can be altered on the genetic level. By interacting with each other and their environment, the A-life forms within the simulation approximate, on a much simplified level, real world behavior, from birth to R.I.P. By pressing one of SL's "Make It So" buttons, players can randomly populate a world with all manner of flora and fauna and get an immediate high rating. However, a prematurely good report card in the Evaluation Window (which also provides a pictorial view of which ecological niches are currently filled) could be a fool's paradise. Many plants and animals could quickly find themselves becoming extinct for a whole host of reasons, mainly because a resilient and diverse food web didn't develop over time.

So, there's much more to SL than fabricating bizarre creatures and throwing them into a custom environment just to see what happens. Should some aspects of such a free-for-all scenario prove successful, it would be impossible to figure out why. The exciting and most rewarding aspect of the simulation is experimenting with it in a scientific manner (fun is okay, too); setting and knowing all the controls and variables within the ecosystem provides a thoughtful approach and, consequently, an edge for isolating what went wrong, or right.

SL encourages players to record the outcome of their efforts. A Data Log File compiles statistics that can be used for constructing a genealogy and later, a family tree of animals in an experiment. The data can also be exported to a spreadsheet program like *Microsoft Excel* for charting, graphing, and analysis — ideal for classroom projects, high school to college. The entertaining, thorough and well-written 200+ page SL manual contains a section for carrying out a simple, controlled, step-by-step experiment that focuses on evolution through natural selection; a handy separate lab book for filling in the results is included.

Life's brief span forbids us to enter on far-reaching hopes.

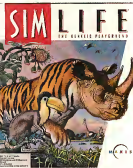
—Horace, Odes

The opening screen offers players the option of selecting from six complete preset ecosystem scenarios, an experimental mode for building custom worlds and setting up new scenarios, or a tour of SL's features via an on-screen tutorial. As a game, SL challenges players to solve the problems presented in the preset scenarios that

include intricate ecosystem patterns: food chains, predator and prey, population control, and soil erosion, to name a few.

As an experimental tool, SL lets players create and modify worlds, plants and animals; design environments and ecosystems; and control evolution. SL puts two powerful tools in the hands of the player: "genetic engineering," which directly influences how life looks, acts, and evolves, for better or worse; and "time," which can be drastically sped up. Experiments that might take hundreds of years in real time can be performed quickly, and thus players can see

TITLE	SimLife: The Genetic Playground
SYSTEMS	IBM Macintosh
PROFECTION	None
PRICE	\$49.95
DESIGNER	Ken Karabinidis
PUBLISHER	Maxis Quincy, CA 1510 254-9700



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the results of their biological tinkering within days, hours, or even minutes.

Any scenario, preset or custom, can be tackled in a range of five levels of increasing difficulty. The complexity can get pretty tough and humbling, even for hot shot bioengineers. Because goals in *SL* are open-ended and subjective, there's no conventional sense of winning. The best one can hope for is to strike an ongoing balance between life and death. Survival is the only name of the game.

... all life is an experiment.

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

Having total responsibility over genetics, food chains, mutation rates, climate, terrain, the laws of physics, and time itself, comes at a price. The number of *SL*'s features, options, and variable settings add up to an impressive and complex network of connected functions that can appear overwhelming.

Grasping the basic concept behind the simulation makes learning how it all works fall easily into place. *SL* has two primary components: one involves the modification or creation of worlds and life forms; the other focuses on providing extensive, continuously updated graphs and reports that track everything taking place in the present ecosystem.

Fortunately, *SL* is driven by sets of pull-down menus, pop-up menus, submenus, buttons, and more than twenty different windows. Given the need to access all this information, the screen is remarkably uncluttered, plus there's always on-line help available to navigate through the maze of options.



There are two main screens: the Map Window displays the entire world at a glance, and the Edit Window, a close up view of a selected part of the world, that shows details on the surface such as plants sprouting and animals scurrying about the terrain, perhaps hunting, eating, or mating (ooh, la, la).

Two narrow menu panels filled with icon tiles, buttons, and tools — all activated by mouse point and click, with some keyboard commands — provide access to most of the features in the simulation: from modifying or creating life forms and building new worlds, to obtaining tracking information about life in the current scenario. An ever-present cosmic clock shows the passing of seasons, days and years.

Life treads on life, and heart on heart; ...

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning,
A Vision of Poets

Opting to run a preset scenario automatically loads a world and its life forms into action. Players may alter the design of a preset world as life forms can be modified or changed. How about pigs that fly?

Suppose the preset scenario titled "Feast & Famine" is chosen. Watch as the world is created from the top down: mountain peaks to valleys, moisture and temperature zones, rivers and lakes, oceans, and filter food. The predator in this scenario is the peccary and the prey is maize, bamboo, and sagebrush. If the peccary multiplies so quickly that it kills all the plants by eating them, everyone loses.

How to STOP playing The



To bring the scenario into balance, possible actions could be:

- Do nothing and see what happens, which is always a good starting point. Avoid interfering in the simulation too soon. Let it run. Things may look bad, but they may work themselves out without "divine intervention."
- Do some serious genetic engineering by calling up the Biology Lab Window. A display appears featuring a three-part flash card image of the selected animal or plant; younger players (teachers and parents, too) will particularly enjoy flipping through the flash cards to produce odd-looking creature combinations with new behaviors.

Clicking another button reveals the Genome Window. This area displays the master switches, the entire genetic code for any species or individual organism, and allows players to change, modify, manipulate or redesign the organism at the genetic level; variables include many precise and subtle changes that affect such characteristics as: gender, movement, behavior, food sources, life expectancy, health, likes and dislikes, and survival attributes. Naturally, a plant Genome Window has a different set of gene settings geared toward plant survival.

Players can alter either the peccary's genes, or the plant's, or both in an attempt to find a solution that will save the simple ecosystem from going down the tube. Of course, another approach could be to introduce a meat-eating predator that fancies peccaries. Then, what would keep the new carnivore species from overpopulating? Another predator that preys on the piggy-eater? Hmmmm.

The Biology Lab also contains a small icon drawing program

where players can edit the on-screen image of existing life forms, draw original icons for new creatures, or choose from a submenu of 32 predrawn animals or plants.

Life is the game that must be played;...

—Edwin Arlington Robinson,
Ballade by the Fire

Deciding to create a new world with life from scratch requires several steps. Giving some preparation and purpose to an original scenario enhances the experiment and escalates the learning value of the simulation. The World Design Window allows players to custom-make worlds that are hospitable, hostile, or somewhere in-between by choosing settings for climate, rivers and mountains, and the size of the world. Of course, larger worlds require more machine memory and lengthier load times. Other considerations include whether to add Toxins (deadly poisons), Mutagens (material that increases the odds of mutation), and Ultra-Food (unlimited amounts of food to whatever animal comes near it) — an especially useful tool for getting fledgling ecosystems off the ground.

SL does not overlook the ability to regulate and increase the odds for Mutation, which is nature's way of trying something new to see if it works. A peccary, for example, may mutate to fly or turn into a carnivore. Initially, such a bizarre mutation applies only to a single individual, not the entire species. If eating meat or flying, which demands more energy of the animal, cannot bring in more food (energy), then the mutation becomes a handicap, and probably won't be passed on to a succeeding generation.

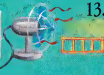


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12. Balloon turns on motor switch.



13. Motor starts fan, pushing tennis ball off ledge.



14. Tennis ball trips see-saw, sending bowling ball crashing onto *your* computer.



11. Scissors cut balloon string.



10. Jack-in-the-box pops up, hitting scissors.



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After the world takes shape, it's time to breath life into it. Players can begin stocking the land and sea with selections of life forms from zoos and botanical groups provided by *SL*. Once the animals and plants are in the scenario, they can be modified or used as templates to create entirely new species.

When designing an organism, the umbrella rule is that everything comes at a price. Creating a super animal, for example, that excels in everything sounds like a great idea. Unfortunately, the poor beast would require so much energy that it couldn't possibly eat fast enough to remain alive. Nature doesn't take credit cards.

A thriving ecosystem will have animals and plants occupying diverse niches; that is, a broad food web where the disappearance of a single species might upset the balance for a time, but would not destroy the ecosystem. Build an ecosystem gradually, get stability, then try adding new life forms to shake up the natives.

Once a scenario is running, keeping tabs on how life is progressing is critical to the success of the experiment. Using the pop-up

Census Window menu provides extensive data on life within the scenario: diversity of life, food web, gene pool, graphs, history, mortality and population. Checking the Mortality Window, for instance, reports on why animals and plants are dying, giving insight on how imbalances might be corrected.



Another way to enjoy and learn what's going on is to highlight a specific creature, select the Variables Window, and follow it as it lives out its life. *SL* tracks the animal or plant while showing how it behaves and why.

If toggled on, one naturally occurring disaster or another will test the resilience and stability of the ecosystem, including such catastrophes as droughts, fires, floods, comets, and a deadly sexually transmitted disease.

I am so absorbed in the wonder of earth and the life upon it that I cannot think of heaven and the angels.

—Pearl S. Buck, *I Believe*

Life? Don't talk to me about life!

—Marvin the Paranoid Android
Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

Before splicing one more gene, here's some background from Maxis on what makes *SimLife* tick — the computer science called Artificial Life. Artificial life has the same goal in mind as Artificial Intelligence (AI). Whereas AI attempts to create a full-blown, complete thinking machine, A-life uses a bottom-up approach; start with single cells that evolve into more intelligent organisms. This is how nature works; the proof being that life strives to evolve into increasingly more complex forms, not the other way around.

A-life is a way of simulating life by giving a computer simple rules and seeing what happens (emergent behaviors.) These behaviors can often be astonishingly lifelike, as players of *SimCity* will attest to. Another compelling aspect of A-life is evolution. Like their real world counterparts, artificial life-forms inside the computer can react to their environment, grow, reproduce, and evolve into more complex forms — all based solely upon what variables the player has set into motion.

Emergent behavior is the part of the simulation that goes beyond the rules originally programmed into the software. For example, rules governing reproduction and mutation were written into *SimLife*'s code; evolution (the adaptation of a species to its environment through mutation) was not — yet creatures in *SL* evolve. Because evolution in *SL* emerges not from rules but from the interaction of hundreds of elements, emergent behavior is less predictable, giving *SL* an organic and lifelike feel.

A-life itself is created by using genetic algorithms (an algorithm is a set of rules for solving a problem) — strings of computer data (much like DNA) that describe the appearance and behavior of an artificial life form. Such strings can be divided into two sections and combined with a segment of another divided string, to create a third data string. This new string will look and act like the offspring of the first two strings, a genetically unique artificial life form. So, for example, when players crossbreed plants and animals in *SimLife*, they're employing algorithms — rules never sounded so sexy.

Tip: *SL* has many inside keyboard activated "cheat" commands used to improve or modify the simulation. Players game for redefining the program's genetic algorithm to mix genes in a more lifelike manner during play should try "<SHIFT EGAD>," an advanced feature not found in the documentation.

If complete control over worlds and life are still not enough, one of *SL*'s advanced functions gives players power to alter the Laws of Physics that affect time and energy of a given scenario, which can be used in various ways. For example, making it less costly in energy to fly than to walk could simulate conditions of a low-gravity planet, perhaps like the one featured in Larry Niven's novel, *The Integral Trees*. Shortening the length of days and years speeds up tracking the genetic drift and mutations over many generations. Adjusting other variables such as food value, movement and metabolism costs makes survival easier for some life forms and harder for others.

It's as large as life and twice as natural.

—Lewis Carroll,
Through The Looking Glass

Biotechnology ranks as one of the most promising scientific developments of the 20th century that is no less controversial, for its positive and negative potential, than the splitting of the atom. The very thought of genetic engineering still harbors fears that such work could lead to a racist 21st-century world of Nazi-type eugenics where people would be branded inferior and weeded out based solely on their genes. On balance, there is the tantalizing promise that biotechnology could eliminate genetically transmitted deformities and diseases.

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If *SL* has one shortcoming, it's that the simulator doesn't include the top of the food chain, *Homo Sapiens*, as a possible A-life form. More importantly, *SL* is Maxis' most ambitious simulation to date; it not only makes learning the difference between "Evergreen" and "Deciduous" fun, but reinforces the reality that diversity makes life strong, and that life cannot be taken for granted. Maybe *SimLife* will inspire a new generation of ecologists and bioengineers who'll pioneer the transformation of planet earth into an (dare I say it?) eden. **CSW**

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Success Formula I

MicroProse's World Circuit - The Grand Prix Race Simulation

by Gordon Goble

World Circuit poses extreme danger. The converted will find their health deteriorate rapidly as lack of sleep, improper diet, and generally sloppy grooming habits join force to wreak havoc on the body and soul. Eyes reddened from the late-night glow of the monitor, *World Circuiters* will emerge from their place of race track glory (or shame), only to be awash in the chastising glare of their significant other.

They will utter something like, "Go ahead to bed, Martha (or Mark?). I'm gonna have just one more race." But it won't be just one more race. It will be two, then three and more, until the eerie hues of early morning sunlight creep through their windowpane, but the only time that will matter will be that of their latest lap.

A dangerous scenario indeed.

In *World Circuit* (*The Grand Prix Race Simulation*), Microprose has attempted to create the ultimate real-time, real-feel computerized road racing experience. They have succeeded. This latest venture into auto racing sims is not without minor blemishes, but for the most part, *World Circuit* has done what countless other predecessors could not do — provide realism, excitement, and challenge in one neat package.

Hard-core computer drivers will tell anyone who listens that it was not until the appearance of Electronic Arts' *Indy*

TITLE	World Circuit The Grand Prix Race Simulation
SYSTEM	Amiga, IBM 286 or better with one MB RAM
PLAYERS	1 - 26 (Head-to-Head)
PRICE	\$29.95
PROTECTIONS	Documentation Lock-Up
DESIGNERS	Grant Coombes, Steve Perry
PUBLISHER	Microprose Hart Valley, MD



500 The Simulation that the world of armchair racing really began to take shape. At no time prior to *Indy's* release had there been a racing sim that provided a true cockpit feel, and in the years since, there have been a number of pretenders to the *Indy* throne. Many were more

complex, and most provided more bells and whistles, but nothing has clicked — until now.

Likeertz, *World Circuit* most definitely puts the gamer in the driver's seat, at no less than sixteen of the world's most infamous proving grounds — the Formula One Circuit. From Australia's Adelaide to Eastern Europe's Hungaroring, each track is an accurate representation of its real-life self, right down to the precise placement of trackside curbing. Further, the fact that that curbing acts like curbing really does — righting direction in a perfectly carved corner, or scrubbing off speed when one wheel is placed upon it — speaks volumes on the precision of this program.

In The Pits (Pre-Race Preparation)

MicroProse recommends a 286 or better machine with at least 1MB RAM for *World Circuit*. Having tested the game on both this minimally equipped machine and a 486/33 Mhz 4 MB unit, both are quite adequate (with the exception of some detail loss on the former).

Initial decision-making involves tailoring *World Circuit* to one's graphical preference. Of the many options available, "adjustable frame rates" is both interesting and innovative, permitting from eight to twenty-five frames/second to scroll across the screen. As with most

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leading edge computer games, *World Circuit* will automatically adapt to each machine, but if the marginally jittery default eight frames/sec. on a 286 becomes an annoyance to some, they can simply choose to bump it up to, say, ten.

Though this procedure will slow the game a tad, the compensation of better graphics may be worth it; it's purely a personal preference. (By the way, depressing the "O" key during play will display "processor occupancy," where the closer to 100% this figure is, the closer to real time the simulation becomes. I found that running a slower machine at as much as 150% presents an almost indiscernible time lag and a smoother graphic scroll.)

Once everything is running smoothly, it's time to select a driver, delete his default name, and insert one's own. If there is to be more than one human participant, two cars will be selected at this stage, and multiplayer mode is initiated. (Multiplayer mode lets two human drivers take turns behind the wheel of their respective autos throughout practice, qualifying, and racing. Player One drives a stint in his own car, then hands over the reins to his opponent. During the actual race, the computer will take over one player's car while the second tries to make up lost ground or scoot further ahead. This is but one of many *World Circuit* firsts — an excellent idea at that — and is soon to be followed by true modern head-to-head play.)



Continuing with pre-race preparations, customization of the racing environment follows, including race length, skill level of the computerized competition, method of control (joystick, keyboard, mouse or mousewheel), automatic or manual transmission, etc. I find the ideal setup involves selecting the joystick to control everything. Pressing forward will allow for gradual acceleration, and backward, graduated braking. More advanced drivers will want (and in the upper levels, must) shift gears manually, and choosing fire button #1 for upshifting and #2 for downshifting makes tremendous ergonomic sense.

All settings can be saved or used on a

one-off basis at the armchair Ayrton's or Nigel's discretion. And speaking of Senna, Mansel, et al, none of these regular Formula One names are found in the program. Microprose does, however, include a list of actual names and teams in the *World Circuit* technical manual. Whether to replace the default names with these guys is up to the individual.

This may be the time to consider the advantages of running just a single event or contesting an entire 16-race Grand Prix season. Selection of the latter is a massive undertaking indeed, and, unless the player has no other life whatsoever, may span several weeks.

Making Tracks (The Racetracks)

Sixteen of the hottest race tracks in the world now beckon, and each is very different in its structure and driving formula. From the straight-away velocity of Germany's Hockenheim to the tight and claustrophobic Monaco, each course demands precision, concentration, quick reflexes, and patience, although the specific application of these qualities varies sharply from track to track, as in real life.

Furthermore, judging by the analysis of a racing colleague of mine who has had personal experience at Montreal's "Circuit Gilles Villeneuve," accuracy in track design has been a prime motivator for game designers. He has but one word for the sensation of returning to Montreal (albeit this time on his computer), and that word is "eerie."

Certainly some tracks offer a more enjoyable drive than others. Standout spots on standout tracks include Estoril's rocketing downhill Turns One and Two (yes, Virginia, there are elevation changes). If this is what a Formula One car feels like at 190 mph, steering cranked hard to the right, blindly probing its adhesion limits, no wonder these guys get paid the big bucks. Another immediate sweat inducer is Silverstone's sixth gear uphill "Bridge" sweeper, where the only thing between an on-line vehicle and the great beyond is a tactically placed slab of curbing. Brazil, on the other hand, rewards a patient drive, gears whirring up and down as fast as George Bush's popularity.

Yet, there's nothing quite like the sensation of overtaking a competitor at a corner such as San Marino's 185 mph Tamburello left-hander. As one's car moves smoothly into sixth gear, it is drawn closer and closer to the car directly ahead. He is now breaking the air turbulence for both cars and the player "slipstreams" behind him. *World Circuit* is the first simulation to offer this real-

life racing technique, and the following car will travel up to ten mph faster "in tow" than it would alone. The closer one gets, the faster one goes, and the move is made just inches off his bumper, swinging outside at the crest of the corner. For a moment, there seems to be no track and just when the car seems destined to fly off track, pavement suddenly re-appears and the player cruises on, safely ahead. Pause the game immediately by hitting the space bar, then depress "R" for a twenty second replay and review that startling maneuver over and over again from several strategic camera positions — inside the cockpit, chase view front, or chase view rear. Unfortunately, there are no fast forward, rewind, or frame-by-frame options yet available.



Practice opens on pit lane, where a quick pull on the joystick brings up the car set-up menu. Here the complex procedure of altering the race car's characteristics takes place. All six gears can be made "taller" or "shorter," front and rear wings increased or decreased, brake bias adjusted, and tire compounds chosen. Generally, the tighter the course, the shorter the gears, and greater the amount of wing. No formal instructions are given here, and it is up to each player to adjust according to track layout and conditions. (Wet tracks and inclement weather are entirely possible for any given race.)

Initial track forays should be conducted under default settings, with adjustments made from there. A default set-up will permit good lap times and race victories at every track in all but the top level of competition. From this point forward, the rookie driver is in control of his own destiny. There are no lessons, but help is available in other forms.

On or off the track, cockpit views of any other driver can be accessed at any time by using the keyboard's cursor keys. Depress the up key and move ahead to the car in front, the down key, one behind. Watch what they do, and when they do it. Additionally, extra features for the newcomer include no less than six different driving aids, each geared to assist through the learning

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curve. As experience and a certain amount of skill is obtained, each can be turned off (and will become inaccessible in the pro ranks).

Automatic brakes will be the first to go; races cannot be won with computer assisted braking. As time goes on, and higher levels are chosen, automatic gears will be a thing of the past, as will be self-correcting spins and indestructibility. Finally, in "Ace" competition, suggested gears for upcoming corners will no longer appear on the instrument panel, and the "ideal race line," a dotted white guide painted on the track surface itself, will disappear. By the time that level is attained, however, these aids probably won't be required.

On The Course (Game Play)

Almost everything happens just the way it would if one were really out there duking it out nose-to-tail with Alain and the boys. Racers always want to finesse the perfect corner, but brake just a touch too late, and quickly feel the wrath of the slippery curbing or the helplessness of a pirouetting Honda in tractionless grass. Brake too early, and exit speed won't be worth a bent nickel. Furthermore, every time that turn is traversed, it will provide identical results, providing the driver is consistent enough.

Tap a car with a little too much force and the car will likely have a damaged front wing, affecting both speed and cornering ability. Do the same damage in the rear and one's car handles like it's on ice. These are strong (and realistic) traits, as are the reactions of the on-track competition.

Another plus is the distinct lack of recurring patterns during repeated *World Circuit* sessions. For instance, the 26 car grid rarely starts the same way twice, and race developments are impossible to forecast. Computer gamers are all too aware of the multitude of programs whose patterns become just too obvious in time, and once committed to memory, render the whole exercise useless. That won't happen here.

Graphically, *World Circuit* is certainly a pretty sight. Four levels of detail (and a "track texture" option, making the pavement look like pavement and not a sheet of black metal) are provided and these can be adjusted while on track. There are plentiful off-course objects to use as references for speed and braking, while the trees of Monza, the harbor of Monaco, and the hazy spray created in a wet race are particularly appealing. More importantly, *other vehicle* perspective of this quality has not been attained since EA's *Judy*.



Rare has been the racing sim that has gone beyond a uni-dimensional image of fellow on-track steeds. Although endeavors at static, perspective correct cars have been made, the final product has been debatable at best, with jumpy, off-kilter polygons being the most common outcome. *World Circuit* offers crystal clarity from all angles, a much needed alternative.

Caution Flag (Criticism)

Unfortunately every rose has its thorn, and on track, *World Circuit* has a couple of teeny tiny prickles, that, ironically, end up assisting the human driver. This reviewer, for example, is quite aggressive on the track and often likes to start a race without qualifying (translating to a last place grid position), just for the thrill of the pass. Generally, transcending a half-pack by Corner One has not been out of the question. Actually, in the lower and slower levels, an entire pack pass and first place by the initial corner

has been known to happen, without the need for a lot of wild maneuvering, just a smooth, fast line up the side of the track. This is simply not possible, or at least not at all common, in real racing.

Nor is *World Circuit's* "bumper car" corners. Simply, it's just too easy to push another car out of the way (and hopefully off the track) in any given corner. Obviously, rushing in and making contact at 50 mph is going to damage equipment, but a gentle fifteen mph nudge will go a long way in ridding one of one's nemesis without scarring oneself. This dirty little technique takes a while to master, but since black flags aren't yet part of *World Circuit*, it is quite effective.

Checkered Flag (Conclusion)

Finally, *World Circuit* is appealing to the ears, as well as the hands and eyes. The high pitched buzzsaw of an over-revved first gear is as accurate and mesmerizing as the drone of sixth. However, it would be a treat to be able to hear the singing engine notes of on-track peers as they are passed (or are passing!), and a graduated, more pronounced tire squeal under hard braking would be a positive addition. The release of *World Circuit* has been anticipated by digital racing fanatics for some time, and the wait has been unconditionally worthwhile. It is *Indy 500 The Simulation* bettered, then multiplied by sixteen. It is the current crowning jewel in computerized simulations. **CGW**

World Circuit Tips

- 1 Do not ignore the "ideal line" painted on the race track. At first, it may seem quicker to take a different route, but until proficiency is attained, it's there for a reason.
- 2 Keep steering aids (such as traction control) on. It does not make one *manomacho* to take them off and the drive feels more real with them on.
- 3 Punting (the act of purposely pushing someone else off track, with the desired result being a gain in position) is O.K. Punt gently, and in corners, as most cars make excellent brakes.
- 4 Sometimes, sometimes, cutting across grass will get a car through a sharp bend faster. A good example of this is the first chicane at the Hungaroring where, if no additional acceleration or brakes are applied while off-track, positions can be gained.
- 5 Don't put absolute trust in the suggested gear signal. It is most often unmistakable, but when fourth gear is signaled in a third gear bend, and the accelerator is hard to the floor (or computer table, at least), it's black flag junction.

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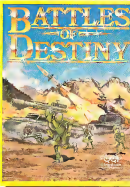
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Discovering the Missing Link



After spending some time with Gametek's prehistoric puzzler, I am not sure I will ever feel comfortable again using the phrase "I'm only human." As one soon discovers in this game of logic skill and physical dexterity, humans are "small squidgy pink creatures" who are often confused by the volume of information that they receive. Moreover, they have a lovable habit of repeating the same mistakes, over and over again, to their own destruction. The parallel to real life is all too painfully clear.

Human Nature

The Humans is a delightful new release from Gametek that follows closely in the footsteps of Psychonosis' extremely popular puzzler, *Lemmings*. In this game of logic and coordination, however, the humorous and pitiful little creatures in need of the player's assistance are not a bunch of cute little floppy-haired rodents, but a tribe of amusing cave dwellers of a decidedly primate persuasion.

The goal in *The Humans* is quite simple—to guide one's tribe through the process of "evolution," enabling them to make the leaps necessary (and literal) to rise above the carnivorous animals around them and survive in a hostile world. Failure results in the loss of fellow tribesmen and ultimate extinction. Of course, these primates will need all the assistance that is "humanly" possible.

On the Level

As with *Lemmings*, *The Humans* is comprised of multiple levels of logic- and coordination-based puzzles which must be mastered in the long trek up the evolutionary ladder. Three skill settings and 80 levels of play are provided, each with a level code supplied upon successful completion. Thus, in essence, 240 levels of play are available as one's skill increases.

TITLE	The Humans
SYSTEM	Amiga, IBM
	(Sega Genesis and SNES soon)
PRICE	\$39.95
GRAPHICS	VGA
SOUND	Ad Lib, Roland and Sound Blaster
PROTECTION	Spyral Archiving
DESIGNER	Imagix Design, Inc.
PUBLISHER	Gametek, Inc.



The first discovery necessary for human survival is the spear. Once acquired, it can be used as a defensive weapon (brandishing), offensive weapon (throwing) or as a pole to vault across pits and other obstacles, even onto the backs of flying reptiles. Next in the line of discovery is the torch. It too serves as a defensive weapon (brandishing), besides being used to ignite vegetation blocking one's path. The three final discoveries necessary to ultimate survival include the rope (to raise or lower humans from cliffs), wheel (for jumping great distances from ramps) and the witch doctor (to summon objects from the spirit world).

How About a Lift?

Essential to solving the puzzles on each level is teamwork among the members of the player's tribe. These humans must first learn how to stack, standing on each other's shoulders, in order to reach cliffs and platforms above ground level. After succeeding in this rudimentary skill, they need to develop the ability to pole vault across chasms and "pass" the spear without turning each other into human pin cushions. Here is where great care must be taken as one can accidentally skewer a companion or toss the spear where no one else can reach it. In such a case, the only alternative is to restart the level from



scratch as there is no ability to save one's progress during play. "Losing" too many humans will also necessitate restarting, as a certain number are required to solve each puzzle. In addition, a time limit is imposed for the completion of each level. Progress continues as long as time is available and a sufficient number of humans remain.

Primal Beauty

The Humans is a VGA-only product for the IBM, lacking support for other graphic formats (Tandy VGA is supported). This is not a problem, only a caution, as VGA/MCGA has become the new minimum graphics standard. While this is an attractive game with fluid animation, graphics could stand some improvement. *The Humans* definitely has more the look

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of a console title rather than that of a computer product (indeed, GameTek unveiled the Sega Genesis and SNES versions of *The Humans* during the Winter Consumer Electronics Show in January). The color palette is a bit limited and the characters, especially in transition animations between levels, are somewhat crude in appearance and not nearly as comical as those that appear on the cover of the box or in the manual. However, the presentation is acceptable to good overall, and the player quickly becomes involved enough in the action to not be too critical of visual shortcomings.



Background music, on the other hand, is perfectly suited to the game. It is so effectively written and performed that it does not draw attention to itself. Rather, one soon finds himself or herself playing in rhythm to the music instead of trying

desperately to toggle it off as is so often the case in this genre of product.

Ugh, Ugh!

Qualms with *The Humans* are few in number. Though music, as mentioned above, is above average for this type of game, the lack of sound effects are noticeable by their absence. No "Ugh!" accompanies being smitten by a spear, nor is there a single "Thud!" when some hapless human plummet to his death. Dinosaurs die without so much as a whimper. At the least, simple sound effects should have been provided.

The only other "missing ingredient" that really comes to mind by its absence is a quick reference card. While not needed in the long run, it would be handy to have available during the initial stages of play, especially since both keyboard and joystick controls are employed (though a joystick is not required).

Leopard Skins and Arrow Heads

The game manual is an excellent example of providing the player with necessary information in a humorous and entertaining fashion. It is attractively illustrated and is enjoyable to read (this is one manu-

al the player will want to read through). Copy protection takes the form of symbols and numbers on a non-reproductive card stock; which is not as bad as some forms of copy protection, but less desirable than others.



The Pictographs are on the Wall

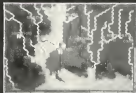
Though not quite the calibre of *Levnings*, *The Humans* is still a capable entry into the genre of puzzle-oriented games. The level of difficulty does build a little too quickly for my tastes, but it is not overly frustrating. In all, much pleasure is to be had directing the antics of this comical clan of cave dwellers. There are certainly enough challenges to keep one's tribe evolving for quite some time. **caw**

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from the cockpit

KIT PLANES-R-US

Aircraft and Adventure Factory

Timothy L. Tremble



Believe it or not, this type of multimedia functionality is actually now available for *Flight Simulator* with the new release of *Aircraft and Adventure Factory (AAF)* from **Mallard Software, Inc.** AAF is described as multimedia creation software for *Microsoft Flight Simulator*. It is basically two products in one package; an aircraft design and assembly program, and an adventure creator with a special programming language designed for interfacing with *Flight Simulator*.

The Aircraft Factory

The Aircraft Factory portion of the product is a *Microsoft Windows* program that simulates the process of designing and building an aircraft. The Aircraft Factory is presented graphically (in *MS Windows*) as various bangers and buildings next to a runway. Each building has a button showing the function that can be performed within: Parts, Structures, Components, and the Assembly Line.

The design process begins with the drawing of "parts" in the Parts Shop. Each part can be an externally visible component of the aircraft, such as a rudder, spinner, wheel, etc. The Parts Shop also includes the ability to build structure template parts for use in building the structure of the aircraft. Each part can be created and edited by tracing or drawing the part on the screen, or by the entering of the part's coordinates.

Once the parts have been created, the next step of aircraft construction is the building of Structures. One can create complex 3-D objects such as fuselages, engines, and fuel tanks by using previously built part templates and pre-defined bulkhead shapes. The assembly process of the structures is presented in a 3-D CAD/CAM display.

The next step is the Components Shop

which allows the builder to take a group of parts and combine them into a single component, thereby making the assembly of an aircraft easier. This leads to the last step of the process and that is the Assembly Line. The components, parts, and structures can all be assembled, painted, and have special effects/conditions assigned. The special effects/conditions allows various parts or components of the aircraft to change their appearance under various conditions, such as making the landing gear visible "only when gear down."



With your copy of *Microsoft Flight Simulator*, imagine sitting on the runway at Migs Field at Chicago in your Beechcraft B100 Kingair awaiting instructions from the tower. The spot view window shows the Kingair, with its custom colors and tail number, sitting on the "numbers" at the end of the runway.

"Beech 87 Tango, you are cleared for takeoff," the tower calls in a digitized voice through your sound card. Going to full throttle, you hear the twin turbo-prop engines torque up to their high pitch whine. After lifting off the runway, you press a key on the keyboard and display the digitized sectional chart for the Chicago area on the screen. Flipping back to the cockpit you hear the tower again, "Beech 87 Tango, contact departure control at 119.9 and have a good day." Pressing another key on the keyboard reveals the digitized approach chart for Chicago O'Hare airport. After checking the approach frequency you flip back to the cockpit again.

Once all of the components and parts are assembled into a complete aircraft, the necessary parameters for making the aircraft flyable can be added: weight, thrust, center of rotation, wing span, etc. Then it is time to play test pilot.

Assembly Line allows you to load *Flight Simulator* and test out the aircraft that was just designed. If something needs to be changed, control is given back to Assembly Line after exiting *Flight Simulator*.

The Adventure Factory

The Adventure Factory allows the creation of custom adventures or situations for *Flight Simulator*. Unlike the point, click, and draw of Aircraft Factory, the Adventure Factory requires some knowledge of programming. The language used is not

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complex and is very similar to the BASIC programming language. Using this language, the adventure itself is defined as a customized set of conditions and consequences. As an example, a digitized voice from the control tower can be programmed to speak to the pilot when the aircraft has met the condition of reaching an altitude of 1000 feet.

Any text type editor can be used for entering the adventure program. Once the program has been written then it is compiled with the *AAF* Compiler which converts the text of the program into something that *Flight Simulator* can understand. Here is a simple example (from the manual) of what an adventure program can look like:

```
(Comments in italic)
;if pilot stalls, do stall
onstall stall
;if pilot crashes, do ouch
oncrash ouch
;quit if pilot presses "d"
if key("d")
    goto done
endif
stall:
    print "nose down!"
    wait(5)
    return2
```

```
ouch:
    print "uh-oh...is your aircraft insurance
    paid up?"
    wait (10);wait 10 seconds
    reset ;start over
done:
    EOF ;End Of File marker
```

With other commands such as *SPLAY* and *VIEW*, digitized sounds (.VOC files) and graphics (.PCX files) can be added to the adventure, allowing the type of situation demonstrated at the beginning of this article. For those that are familiar with programming this is actually quite easy, but it could take a little getting used to for anyone that is not comfortable with writing a program.

AAF is a great product that brings a lot of new technology to a product that was designed before multimedia was the buzzword that it is today. Primarily designed for those that are *Flight Simulator* die-hards, the rest of the armchair pilots can still benefit from the great aircraft and adventures that are showing up as a result of this product. Already, on *Compuserve* in the *FSForum* (*Flight Simulation Forum*) there is a section devoted to *AAF*, and the associated library contains a tremendous amount of adventures and aircraft. *Mallard* has also released some prepuk-

aged, professionally designed adventures and has plans for a lot more to come.

The *AAF* manual does a fairly good job of covering the Aircraft Factory and even contains a small tutorial on the steps for building an aircraft. However, the section covering the Adventure Factory is very weak and makes the assumption that the reader is already very adept at programming and the use of commands with parameters.

Overall, I am quite pleased with this product and would recommend it to anyone that is interested in customizing *Flight Simulator* and creating some great "white knuckle" adventures.

Once again, this is Timothy "The Timinator" Trimble from the cockpit, saying so long for now, and remember—the wheels go on the bottom.

Aircraft and Adventure Factory requires *Microsoft Flight Simulator* and the *Microsoft Aircraft & Scenery Designer*.

Mallard, Inc. can be contacted at:

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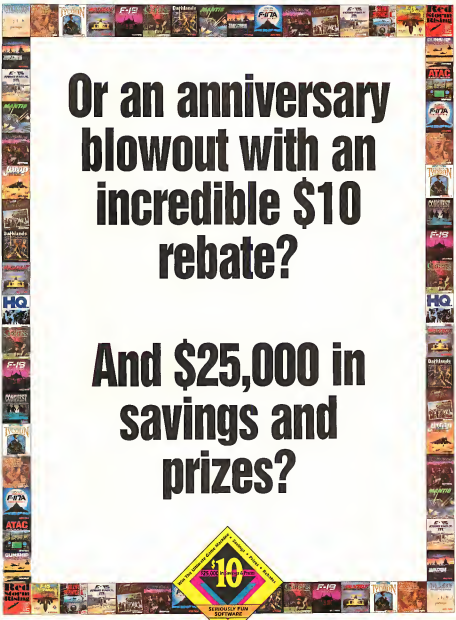
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"Oh, When the Krells Come Marching in.."

A Review of Mindcraft's *Star Legions*

by Martin E. Cirulis

With the scream of torpedoes and the whine of phasers, the Krellans return to wreak blazing revenge against the annoying United Galactic Alliance. So begins the long awaited third installment of the *Star Fleet* series began many years ago by **Interstel Corporation** and now continued by **Mindcraft**. *Star Legions* is, in reality, *Star Fleet III*, but if one doesn't recall its predecessors, one needn't worry, this game stands completely on its own. Any series continuity is completely in the chrome of the game. Of course for those of us with fond memories of the first two games, there is enough familiarity, especially in the layout of the manual, to trigger a pleasant sense of déjà vu.

As one might guess from the title, *Star Legions* (SL) deals with the ground war aspect of the *Star Fleet* universe from the Krellan point of view. For newcomers, Krellans make Klingons seem like diplomats and, from the various visuals one gets of commanders and underlings, they look like green rejects from the evil Federation episode of *Star Trek*. The Krellan military may be effective, but they certainly have no dress code.

The player's job, as a newly commissioned officer of the Planetary Assault branch, is to reduce and capture a never ending string of UGA worlds that are ripe for the plucking. The game is completely restricted to planetary assault, the defending fleet is already driven off or destroyed by the time the player arrives on the scene, and the only threat to his or her troop and bombardment ships is the Planetary Defense Phasers (PDPs) based on the higher tech UGA worlds. This threat can be dealt with by capturing the cities with the PDPs first, or, as a last resort, blasting the entire offending city into rubble with the command ship. Other than these limited ship activities, the game involves using troops to subdue enough cities to force a planetary government to see the philosophical advantages of tyranny.

Horde for the Holidays

The game mechanics are relatively user-friendly and, after running through the

TITLE	Star Legions
SYSTEM	IBM
PRICE	\$39.95
PROTECTION	None
DESIGNER	Tony Sanchez
PUBLISHER	Mindcraft Sausalito, CA 608 545-0933



somewhat dry tutorial (so dry, in fact, that the manual is very correct in warning not to judge the rest of the game poorly because of it), I had a firm grip of the completely mouse-driven interface and was free to refine my world bludgeoning tactics. There are only six control screens to get the hang of, and most of them have redundant controls allowing one to manage different aspects of an invasion without flipping too many screens — a very helpful idea in a "no turns" wargame where every second of real-time equals one minute.

The two weapons capable of capturing a city are Shock Troops and Warriors. Each Star Legion is composed of six cohorts of Warriors and four cohorts of Shock Troops. A cohort consists of a thousand men and it is the only moveable surface unit used in the game. UGA cohorts are shown in red, the valiant Krellans in white. Each time a cohort goes into battle, (by attacking an adjacent enemy cohort)

losses are taken in the number of men the cohort contains. When the total is reduced to zero, the cohort is destroyed. Cohorts also have an efficiency rating which affects their combat totals. This efficiency rating is reduced for every battle that the cohort engages in and is only recovered by spending time not attacking or being attacked.

Shock Troops are the primary assault troops because, initially, they are the only units capable of reaching the target cities through the use of a teleporter. It is their job to hold off the defenders long enough to build a landing pad for the dropships that will bring down the tougher Warrior Cohorts from the orbiting troopships. It is explained that current teleporter technology is only capable of sending down a man and his basic equipment while heavy armor and artillery has to be flown down the hard way. This creates a situation analogous to using paratroopers to secure an airfield so that transports can land in order to disembark the heavy units capable of winning the battle.

Now the rub is that the player has only a limited number of Star Legions allocated to him at the beginning of each new planetary invasion. Each troopship holds only four Legions and their corresponding dropships, and the player is rarely allocated more than a half-dozen troopships by the stingy Krellan Fleet HQ. In the initial briefing one is given an estimate of the number of defending troops, and the troop-ship allotment is based on this number. Players should get used to calling for reinforcements, because it seems the Krellans are employing the descendants of Iraqi Military Intelligence. Defender troop totals are usually off by a factor of eight to ten!

A city is captured when all of the defenders are dead or each city square has been run over. An entire planet surrenders when its morale is reduced to the breaking point. A planet loses morale through the loss or destruction of cities, or, in theory, the bombardment of the planet by the orbiting warships. One's percentage rating for the invasion is based on cities captured versus



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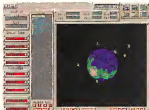


Walden Software



losses, cities destroyed, and whether or not one had to call for help.

The player must maintain a minimum average of 72% for at least five missions in order to be promoted to the next rank. One starts as a Commander and works his way up through Prefect, General, Field Marshal and finally Imperial Tribune. Each ranking earned corresponds with increasingly difficult invasions, from subduing the natives in fine Mussolini style at the Commander level, to actual, almost fair fights at the Field Marshal and Tribune levels. As you can see from the rank and unit designations, these alien Krellans are huge I, *Clematius* fans.



Actually, it is easy being Green...

While this game does become increasingly challenging as one goes up in rank and finds him- (or her-) self facing an increasing number of defensive batteries and UGA Cohorts backing up the lame planetary militias, the same tactics perfected against the low-tech slobs will serve the player well if he/she becomes increasingly more careful in the micro-management of each city battle. *SL* allows the player to issue individual orders to each cohort in addition to general orders to the whole battlefield. This option is extremely useful when one needs to "volunteer" a suicidal shock Cohort to enter a city and destroy an anti-dropship laser before there is a flash of light, a boom, and a downpour of bit's o' scorched warrior Cohort.

A strategy composed of using initial shock trooper raids to pull defenders away from an area where one wants to build a landing pad, sending down overwhelming numbers of warrior cohorts in dropships, and pulling out the shocktroops as soon as their mission is complete, should allow one to conquer most worlds well within the proscribed time limit. Krellan HQ is stingy on troops, generous on time. In real terms this means that a planetary invasion will take up anywhere from 45 minutes to two hours.

The More Things Change...

As a Science Fiction writer and something of a military historian, I find it a little

distressing that the ultimate refinement of future military tactics will be the shield wall. Basically, the combat system of *SL* and the very limited types of units involved, (only four moving ones composed of abstracted troop/armor units that behave exactly like large infantry units) creates a situation where one is left with only two strategies on the ground; when defending, form an infantry square, and when attacking, envelope the enemy in a solid line of attackers allowing for maximum attacks from adjacent squares.

Once the Warrior Cohorts arrive, this situation almost always devolves into a WWI battle of attrition until one side is exhausted and destroyed. *And* since one can usually bring down more troops from the skies, (at least for the first ten or so city battles) the Krellans are almost always victorious. Occasionally, if the player's attention is elsewhere, a defending unit will blast through one's line and take out an unlucky dropship, but this only makes the eventual victory more expensive. In three dozen invasions, I never felt as if I was in serious trouble.

The lack of any kind of air units or the ability of the defender to shift units to a beleaguered city will probably make this game a disappointment for any wargamer looking for a tactical brew-up. Many years ago there was a GDW wargame called *Invasion: Earth!* which dealt with this very same concept along similar lines (but with the inclusion of hidden aerospace units). It seems that the *SL* team could have added something similar to threaten the orbiting fleet and add another high-priority target for a harried commander to deal with.

Even the addition of one or two secondary ground units with alternate attack forms, like a few square range artillery pieces of some kind, would have been enough to give this program a greater wargame feel to it. As it is, not only are the Krellans striking back, they also can't lose.

How the Krell am I going to explain this to HQ?

Making the job of our stunningly over-dressed Krellans even easier is the fact that many of the bad things that can happen, as stated by the manual, seem to be ignored in my version of the software. Since the major campaign aspect of *SL* is the process of building up the combat experience (and thus their combat effectiveness) of one's legions, I started playing this game being very conservative with my warrior cohorts, trying to make sure that a legion wasn't destroyed to the last man and thus totally losing a hard-won record for that unit. One is also told that even massive losses will still be bad for a unit as the fresh

recruits will dilute the effectiveness of the legion for the next invasion.

I need not have worried, no matter what one does, all legions are back at full health with no reduction of effectiveness in time for the next planet to be pummeled. Legions crased down to the last Warrior and Shock Troop spring back to full strength and retain all their experience perks. This loss of a pretty realistic option makes the game much simpler and thus, not as interesting.

Legions are not the only ones feeling much better at the end of an invasion. Any ship that was destroyed by planetary defensive fire is forgotten about in the final evaluation, as well as any damage one may have done to the planet through continued planetary bombardment. All is forgotten and forgiven. In fact, the planetary bombardment counter during the mission will actually wrap around from 99 to 0% and keep on trucking and not affect planetary moral in the slightest.

The only detriments the game remem-



bers after a mission are the number of destroyed dropships and cities. Calls for additional help are also remembered but don't seem to count against the player very much. Also, though the box boasts combat on a myriad of world types, (frozen, desert, wet, etc.) and they do provide some lovely background for the communication screens, they have absolutely no effect on combat whatsoever except sometimes when there is so much water it's hard to find a place to land. One can only hope these omissions will be fixed by the next shipping of this game to create a greater challenge.

I've got those Version 1.0 Blues...

As one might expect from a race of mean green mothers from outer space, the Krells have somewhat neglected some of the smaller technical aspects of their operations. Some of these bugs are merely annoying, some are fatal, and I suggest that any Krellian wishing a spotless battle record save his game at least once, because when the game crashes, *SL* remembers that the player was on a mission but when



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it fails to find a save game it assumes he fled. This results in the loss of the player's hard won record for the current promotion track, forcing him to invade at least five more planets before getting an improved rank.

Save often because the game certainly crashes often, probably on the average of once every two hours of game play. The major bug seems to be in the communications interface screen. When the image of a subordinate or planetary leader appears and talks to you often the system will lock up. Most of the time only for a moment or two, sometimes for good. Also, one must be careful where you click and point on the screen, there seems to be a few non-button areas that will cause a lock up when activated. For example, *never* click on the headings for the Legion Status screen before a mission — unless the sounds of a re-boot are pleasant to one's ears.

Set Phasers on "Upgrade"!

In the most general terms, *Star Legions* has some positive points; it is consistent with previous *Star Fleet* games in that the play is fast, easy to learn and the opponent grows in strength enough to test one's endurance at every level. However, as a "science-fiction wargame," I'm afraid *Star Legions* does injustice to both qualifiers. The backstory and chrome of this game is, at best, tongue-in-cheek. If we are going to represent an army that speaks with English and Texan accents, borrows heavily from the Romans in both military terms and tactics, and uses ship names such as "Rhino" or "Lynx," we might as well have been the morally palatable UGW humans.



The wargaming aspect of this game fires even worse, unfortunately. Even with the aspects that seemed to have been "forgotten" from this initial shipping, the battle mechanics are just too simple to inspire any deep interest in the tactical aspects of this game. *Mindcraft* has created a very solid platform for this kind of potentially fascinating scenario, but more work and surprises have to be worked in before most wargamers will be drawn into long term play. **LOW**

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Sound support: Sound Blaster Pro, AdLib Gold



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A Review of Virgin/Westwood's *Dune II*

by CGW's Mentat, Allen L. Greenberg

TITLE	Dune II: The Building of A Dynasty
SYSTEM	IBM
GRAPHICS	VGA/MCGA
PROFECTION	Documentation Look up
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	Westwood Studios
PUBLISHER	Virgin Software Irvine, CA 0714 833-1999



One might conceivably argue that the leviathan sandworms which populate the planet Arrakis in Frank Herbert's classic *Dune* are actually more moral, and likable, than many of the book's leading characters. *Virgin Games'* first *Dune* game used imagery from the controversial David Lynch film to tell the story of its leading character, Paul Atreides — an exceptionally moral character. *Dune II* is a very different kind of game, totally lacking in morals. It draws on the book's political wars, rather than its individual struggles, for its story.

In this sequel, which easily outshines its predecessor in terms of game play, three very desperate families vie for possession of the planet Arrakis, oftimes known as Dune. In the background looms the des-

potic emperor of the known universe — an additional source of conflict. *Dune II* is a moderately difficult strategy/wargame, brought to life with what are arguably the most outstanding sounds and graphics ever to appear in a strategy game of its kind.

In the game's fictional set-up, the emperor has announced that control of the planet Arrakis will be given to the family which is able to produce the greatest quantity of the spice, Melange, from its deserts. The player must choose to control one of three families to compete with and do battle against the other two, both of which are controlled by the computer. The Harkonnen family is described as savage and cruel while the Ordos (who are *not* an actual Herbert creation) are characterized as emotionless, though no less cunning. Finally, the Atreides battle to disprove the adage that nice guys finish last. The actions and strategies used by the three families actually differ very little, although the Atreides are distinguished by some token feelings of guilt once the carnage is over. The Atreides are generally the easiest family with which to win, followed by the Harkonnen. The player who champions the Ordos family is presented with the greatest challenge.

Dune II unfolds in a series of nine increasingly difficult scenarios which differ only slightly according to which family has been chosen. It is necessary to tackle these in order, and the increase in complexity from one scenario to the next is usually quite dramatic. Each new scenario brings with it not only a more capable enemy, but also new equipment and facilities which are placed at the player's disposal. In addition, a new variety of hazards and surprises are found buried in the desert.

As each scenario opens, the player is given a single, unprotected construction yard which has been placed on a desert

rock formation. With a limited amount of cash "credits," the player must begin to construct energy facilities, a radar station, machinery for the processing and storage of spice, infantry barracks, weapon producing factories and other vital facilities. The player must quickly earn additional credits through spice production in order for the family to survive and succeed. One of the rival families will have already established their own base and will waste little time in mounting an attack against the newcomer.



By the eighth and ninth missions, players will find themselves faced with intimidatingly huge pre-built enemy fortresses. They will also find themselves fighting multiple armies, including a climactic attack by the emperor's Sardaukar troops, while they continue to mine for spice. For these final scenarios, the player will also have access to special weapons provided by research facilities, the nature of which will depend on the family involved. Palaces are also given to accomplished leaders. These provide their families with secret units of Fremmen, Saboteurs or Death Hand Missiles, again, depending on the family in question.

Despite its abundance of sand, the planet contains a variety of other features. Rock outcroppings are the only terrain on which bases may be built, and these first require concrete foundations. Spice fields are

scattered throughout the area, although mining equipment may need special transport to reach them. Sand dunes and mountains are also present and these complicate travel. Certain dunes may also hide additional spice or abandoned credits and weaponry. Of course, the greatest pain in the Arrak-ass are the planet's legendary sandworms. Limitless is their appetite, and no participant in the battle is immune to sudden ingestion by them.



In addition to its concise instruction manual, the program contains an extensive amount of on-line help. By calling on the family psychic advisor, or "mentat," the player may review the scenario's goals and receive advice on how best to achieve them. A description of each available facility, weapon and unit are also available.

Players with one of the appropriate sound boards, (*Sound Blaster* or *Adlib Gold*) plus 2 MBs of available memory, will also hear the mentat's running narration of action on the battlefield.

Dune II's control interface deserves strong praise for its highly intuitive design. Clicking on a structure gives the player access to a damage report, as well as commands regarding its repair and upgrade. Buildings which are capable of production each feature a screen containing an illustrated menu of available products, including the cost and building requirements for each. During combat, clicking on a unit also produces a damage report as well as access to movement and attack commands. By using the family radar system, movement commands may be given across the entire playing area as easily as those involving only short distances.

Dune II is a real-time exercise in every sense of the word. The buildings which occupy its overhead point of view show continuous motion and activity. Combat vehicles and flyers constantly cross the terrain while spice-harvesters busily plow the desert. Even more dramatic are the game's digitized sound effects. The noise of exploding tanks, the shrieks of dying infantry and the thunder of collapsing buildings are rendered to perfection. The sound of tearing flesh and crushed bone as

a giant tank rolls over an infantry unit is particularly effective. Finally, surrounding these amazing sounds is one of the most original and enjoyable music scores ever composed for a computer game.



By stripping Arrakis not only of its spice, but also of its lead characters, along with its morality and mysticism, **Westwood Studios** and **Virgin** have produced a real gem. Surprisingly, the game is still highly evocative of Frank Herbert's original novel. Wargamers with some experience will probably feel more at home in its environment than will beginners, although the latter group may still find it a difficult exercise to resist. Be it to test one's strategic abilities, or the need to feel in control of the known universe, *Dune II* will prove a gratifying experience. **CDW**

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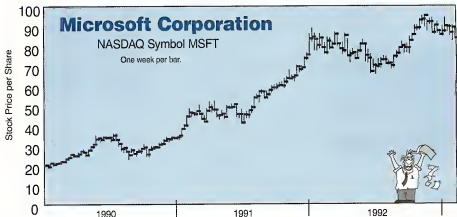
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Is Microsoft Too Big?

When Bill Gates wrote the first BASIC for Altair computers back in 1975, he couldn't possibly have realized he was destined to become the richest man in America. That 4K program proved to be the cornerstone for what Gates would eventually achieve, the creation of a software publisher that would outperform IBM itself.

At *Computer Gaming World*, we are not only dependent upon MS-DOS and *Microsoft Windows*, but we perform all our editing in *Word for Windows* and use *Excel for Windows* for everything from scheduling and tracking expenses to planning our page layouts. Further, almost 90% of our readers are dependent upon **Microsoft** for some part of their systems software.

Some critics believe that **Microsoft's** licensing practices are unfair. Just before press time, the FTC decided to delay its ruling on **Microsoft's** marketing practices. The concern was generated from the fact that **Microsoft** uses what is essentially a two-tiered licensing structure. Computer manufacturers can use their less-expensive tier if they pay the

fee on every machine they manufacture, whether or not they include MS-DOS as the operating system. For a significantly higher licensing fee, they would only pay an MS-DOS fee for machines that use it.

So, with the lower-priced tier, a clone manufacturer would have to pay both **Microsoft** and its competitor in order to place a different operating system on a given model. Hence, **Microsoft's** competitors in the systems software arena feel that the marketing practice is unfair.

On the applications side, **Microsoft's** competitors in spreadsheets and word processors (notably **Borland** and **Lotus**) feel that **Microsoft** has such an incredible revenue stream from their systems software programs that they have an unfair advantage with regard to applications. For example, *Microsoft Multiplan* was not a big hit, but it served as the "farm system" in which *Microsoft Excel* was perfected. **Microsoft** didn't really have to worry about "getting it right the first time" because the systems side provided sufficient revenue to fund all of the development experiments they needed to make along the way.

Competitors in the field of applications would like to see **Microsoft** broken into

two corporations. They believe that if the systems revenue was separate from the applications revenue, they would be able to compete on a level playing field.

In spite of the controversy over licensing practices, **Microsoft** is an extremely well-run company. With many companies, there is a built-in entropy as the company grows. **Microsoft** has avoided this process by making the managers of individual divisions as responsible for the profit/loss and planning as they would be if those divisions were companies themselves. This means that there is a pride of ownership and accomplishment (as well as intra-company competition) that keeps the divisions healthy and growing with a positive synergy.

The good news for gamers is that the company's entertainment division is becoming more aggressive. In addition to their venerable *Microsoft Flight Simulator*, they have added a version of *Links (Microsoft Golf)* and a half-dozen entertainment packages for *Windows*. Further, the company now has key personnel that understand games in top positions. This could lead to systems decisions that will keep developers from having to fight the system. **cgw**



Is it my fault if those pansies at the Pentagon got a little offended at my sense of humor? The bureaucratic brigadiers seem to think my caustic comment concerning former L.A. Police Chief Darryl Gates' and Sierra's agreement to work together on *Police Quest 4* (I merely suggested that they could call it *King's Arrest VII*) was in bad taste and warranted TAD (Temporary Additional Duty) for sensitivity training. After all, they pointed out that the deal was already engendering significant extra publicity and that Gates has considerable expertise in police procedures. I knew that. I just have a cruel sense of humor.

I mean, I'm as sensitive as the next guy. I figure I'm sort of a SNAG in military terms (Sensitive New Age Guy to civilians), so I appealed to my CO on the basis that I had simply gone for a cheap laugh and hadn't meant any harm. Unfortunately, I made the mistake of suggesting that the officer who had assigned me the TAD should go easy on the coffee, maybe he could play *Coffee Break Caruso* instead. *CBC* is the updated version of *Coffee Break Software's* classic program and is not part of *Villa Crespo Software's Coffee Break Series*. The new version will be upgraded to reflect changes in graphics and sound since the game's original release as a CGA product.

I was as dead as *Mean Time*, the on-again, off-again *Interplay* product that was supposed to follow-up on *Wasteland* and has now been officially and irrevocably cancelled, just like my leave. I won't even be able to use those hockey tickets I'd purchased from a scalper (well, the barber over at the PX, actually). I was gonna' take my CO to the game and tell him about *Strategic Simulations'* just under development hockey game. I wouldn't be able to tell him much about it, since I'd seen it on an FYO

The Rumor Bag

by Audie Rambo

"WHO SAYS I AIN'T SENSITIVE?"

basis. I could have told him that it was the game that Canadian-based *Strategy First Software* had been working on and which was first described in "The Rumor Bag" over two years ago. It will feature extremely smooth animation and a wide variety of built-in statistical and league administration tools.

We gathered together in a quonset hut on Perris Island for our forty into compassion-building and tolerance training. As DIs dispensed their profane ridicule to their respective recruits, we played a game to help us understand the non-verbal communication of those who are different from us. The red group was trying to get the green group to give us candy corn to offer the orange group. It was like a group of mimes trying to play that old *Parker Brothers* game, *Pit*. There might be a lot going on, but it wouldn't be quite the same.

I mean, if these sensitivity trainers wanted to play games, I could show them some *Clash of Steel* around the start of the Origins game convention. It's an impulse-based strategic wargame based on WWII's European Theater of Operations. The system is most similar to the boardgame *World in Flames* in that it has an emphasis on production and politics which is not always factored into "pure" wargames. *Clash of Steel* features five scenarios and a campaign game.

If they didn't like wargames (then why are they in the military?), they might like *Fantasy Empire*. SSI's latest strategy-action game from *Silicon Knights (Cyber Empires)*. Not only does the game feature the same type of economic strategy as the science fiction game, but the design team is working on some interesting twists in artificial personality. The game is set in a *Dungeons & Dragons* (as opposed to AD&D) world, and the player directs the action through a computer-controlled agent.

I started to nod off when the instructor started droning on and on with a list of politically correct euphemisms. I started to suggest that an MS-DOS owner who has less than 4 MB of RAM might be considered "recreationally challenged," but I was afraid I'd have to stay for individual counseling after class. Name changes must be the order of the day, since *Wesson International's Moonbase* (sort of a lunar *SimCity* with a more solid capitalistic model) is now going

to be distributed by *Mallard Software* as *Lunar Command*.

I dreamed that I was in this big quonset hut and the ghost of a cross-dresser was haunting me. I awoke with a start. The only ghost I wanted to see were those in *Virgin's The 7th Guest*. The first game isn't even out yet and *Trilobyte*, the designers and developer of the game, is working on Part II. Their working title for the sequel is *The 11th Hour* and they expect to have it on the market by October.

"You're blocking!" said my sensitivity instructor as he hovered over me. "Free up your mind from those stereotypical images. Let your creative juices flow. Let the spirit of brotherhood compel you toward understanding." The most creative thing I had seen in recent days had been the god game that SSI was working on with *StormFront* (formerly *Beyond Software*). Entitled *Stroug-hold*, this real-time strategy/management game is something like an advanced version of *Bullfrog's Powermonger* crossed with *Sid Meier's Civilization*, but set in the AD&D universe. It features random maps and random problems as the player strives to reach high political rank in a given civilization by building up cities, towns and economies. One can choose from 50-60 different types of buildings in order to create different levels of economic and political development.

I didn't think my instructor would like the game much, though, since "racial" characteristics would have a lot of bearing on the game. Elves don't like to remove trees in order to build up farming, and dwarves thrive in the mountains where they can mine. Gamers get to prioritize the type of building, fortifying, working and learning to be accomplished at each given location. The type of civilization to be built depends on maximizing these inherent tendencies.

I finally managed to struggle through my last sensitivity training session, vowing that I wouldn't make any more cracks about celebrity designers no matter who a software publisher decided to sign. Unless, of course, they decide to publish *Bill Clinton and Sam Nunn Go One-on-One*, *Rush Limbaugh's Battle Gaze: Capitol Hill*, *Richard Simmons' Marine Workout* or *Michael Jackson's "Make Your Own Portrait" Utility*. Then, of course, we might have to see *The Rumor Guy's Word Imperfect*. Come to think of it, you see the letter every month. Until then, *Semper Fit* **cow**

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Over There

The Goblin's European Vacation

by Robin Matthews

One of the most unusual graphic adventures to be released in the last year was **Coktel Vision's** *Goblins*. This humorous tale involving mischievous *Goblins* has recently been distributed in the US by **Sierra**. Coktel has now released *Goblins 2* on the IBM platform. Apparently, while fooling around in the original game, someone got their "I" poked out, as it is now *Goblins* featuring two (instead of 3 in the original) of the cheery, grimacing, chuckling little so and so's.

In the game's fiction, King Angoulafré's son has been kidnapped by a huge winged creature and taken to the demon Amoniak. Fifty years earlier, Amoniak was heavily embarrassed by the King, and has now taken his revenge by making the Prince his Court Jester. The King makes an urgent call for adventurers to find and rescue his son. Obviously, the discovery and rescue of said prince becomes the object of the game.

Enter two talented goblins, the serious diplomat *Firgus* and the oddball *Winkle*. These two super goofs take up the challenge and are teleported into the local village. This small hamlet would keep a psychiatrist busy for a year, since the locals are full of hang ups, neuroses, phobias, etc. The hamlet is only part of the gaming environment, however, since the game world is divided into small environments, each made of four or five locations and each having a self-contained problem which can be solved by clues within said locations.

As in the original product, the Goblins are both on screen at the same time and can be manipulated simultaneously. Co-operation is still the name of the game, because many of the problems can only be solved by the two goblins working as a team. The gaming

world itself is far larger than the original *Goblins*, but the graphics, controls and, particularly, the wicked sense of humor are very similar. Be warned, *Goblins 2* is unusual, but those who want a change from severe harsh dungeons or who enjoyed the first release, will definitely enjoy this. *Goblins 2* is good fun and is currently available in Europe now on MS-DOS.



Goblins 2

Trivial Pursuit made a huge impact in the 1980s, and has probably at some time been played by everyone between certain ages. It received an earlier conversion to the MS-DOS world by **Domark**, but this was back in the days when 512 K was king and CGA was good enough [Ed: **Parker Brothers** tried a venture into software a couple of years ago. They published an EGA version of *Trivial Pursuit*, but it didn't have much to offer.]. That software has looked very dated for some time, but almost as the sales of the board variety start to decline, Domark has brought out a new version. *Deluxe Trivial Pursuit* boasts full 256 color VGA graphics, support for the major sound cards, and mouse/joystick control.

The gaming system works on the same basis as the original, in that a question is

asked and requires the player to use the honor system in giving the answer (i.e. there is no system of check). If one is playing against computer opponents, this means it is possible to cheat enough to finish the game on the first roll!

If one is playing with other human players or is truthful, this is without doubt the best computerized trivia game to date. Over 3,000 questions are included, but repeats did start to turn up (in fairness, same as in the real thing).

The graphics are streets ahead of the original, and the general sound effects, like the clunk of the dice, are very good. The questions are set by Russell, a cartoon-like duck, whose comments can become tiresome. Musical posers are also included, indicated by a visit to the Music Room, and reproduction is OK, if a little low in volume (no good in the crowded room situation with several people "discussing" whether the right answer had been given or not).

Deluxe Trivial Pursuit is an accomplished update although perhaps a year or two late. It will provide good solid family entertainment, but is probably at its best for two or three players.

Thalion is a German software house that has been around for some time. They recently released a CRPG on the IBM. *Ambrosia* starts as a single character rule playing game with an overhead view. The character is created using a simple system (male or female, please note) and then, steps into a vast playing area. The main screen is similar to that in *SSI's Prophecy of the Shadow*, albeit not in the same high quality graphics. Movement is via the mouse or cursor keys and, upon entering a town, the view changes



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Deluxe Trivial Pursuit

to a first person perspective that is something of a cross between *The Bard's Tale* and *Dungeon Master*. Upon encountering a door, a window type graphic appears together with the various options. The whole gaming system has a feel of quality about it (or was it nostalgia?) and the mixed views work seamlessly.

The graphics are generally useful, if unremarkable, and the interface is workable, but *Amberstar* really scores with a good old fashioned plot and some tough puzzles. A full party of characters seems likely and the sub-quests are nicely varied. The game is still in the early days of production and subject to some rough edges, but looks like it will be an interesting addition to the adventure/CRPG collection.

As mentioned in the last Over There col-

umn, all roads at the moment lead to 486s and to Rome. After *Caesar* from *Impressions*, *Rome AD92* has now been released from the UK development team at *Millennium*. This is an adventure/conquest/exploration game set in Ancient Rome where gamers assume the role of one Hector, a lowly slave to his master Habens Corpus (a lawyer). *Rome AD92* is played over six huge levels, which are best described as a cross between *Populous* and *Millennium's* previous offering of *Robin Hood*.



Amberstar

The locations are carefully drawn and are full of authentic looking Roman buildings, trees, roads and a buzzing populous. The six levels get progressively more difficult, but the main object is to improve your combat skills and at the same time "solve" each level.



Rome AD92

The interface is simple to use, albeit a bit limited. The combat techniques become more important, but *Millennium* stresses that *Rome AD92* is not designed to be taken too seriously. The commands allow you to control military units singly or collectively, and the Eagle Standard plays an important tactical role, as well as affecting morale.

Rome AD92 is not easy to categorize; in some ways it is an adventure, in others, a wargame, in yet others, a god game. Whatever it is, *Rome AD92* looks pretty and plays well. The levels are huge, and it should provide good entertainment for those who don't mind having their games a touch on the light and frothy side. *Rome AD92* is available now on MS-DOS platforms and will also appear on the Amiga format. [Ed: *Maxis* will be bringing the game to the US shortly.] **CDW**

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OUT TIME DAYS is a highly interactive role-playing Play-By-Mail game with turns processed weekly. It has received excellent reviews, notably from *Flagship* and *Paper Mayhem*. Turn cost is \$5.00. The game is open ended and 99% computer moderated. The notebook may be obtained for \$5.00 (refundable with startup). A special startup is available that gives you the notebook, the startup turn, and five turns for only \$15.00.

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Space Combat was designed to be easy to learn, but difficult to master. Every game starts with ten players, and as each is eliminated, the chances of the game ending will increase. Turnabouts are custom made on a laser printer to aid you in filling out your next turn. The games run about 12-16 turns. Cost is \$3.50 per turn. A notebook (required before you can join) is \$1.00 (free if you mention this ad).

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The world of shareware

Every now and again an excellent game comes along that, while simple in concept, offers an exceptional playing experience. This holds especially true with games that challenge the mind, focusing on mental skill rather than physical dexterity. In this installment of *Best of the Rest*, I would like to bring two such products to the attention of our loyal readers: *Oxyd* and *Capture the Flag*. Both offerings require a sharp mind and reward it with an enjoyable gaming experience.

Help, My Computer Can't Breathe!

My favorite new shareware title is *Oxyd* from **Dongleware Publishing, Inc.** Available in an unusually large number of formats, *Oxyd* can be played on MS-DOS compatible, NeXT, Amiga, Atari ST/STE/TT/Falcon or Apple Macintosh computers. To my knowledge, no other shareware product, nor commercial product for that matter, is available on so many different platforms.

Well, the story goes like this. Something terrible has occurred inside your computer. The life-supporting Oxyds have closed up. Now, without the vital oxygen they emit, this unique world of bits and bytes is endangered. As such, the player must commence upon a risky mission inside the computer to re-open the Oxyds and prevent the destruction of the digital landscapes within. All in all, the story line is an intriguing one, executed with great aplomb.



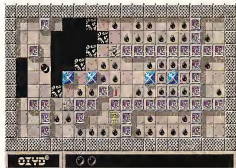
While *Oxyd* may initially resemble the classic memory game, it goes far beyond it in creativity and challenge. Using a mouse, the player manipulates a black marble through each level of maze, touching each Oxyd to reveal its hidden color or pattern. Opening two matching colors or patterns sequentially causes them to remain open. When all Oxyds on a level are opened, the player advances to the next level and a new landscape. In all, 100

Mental Gymnastics

by Chuck Miller

single-player landscapes have been provided, as well as an equal number of dual-player landscapes.

While the mechanics in *Oxyd* are simple, the puzzles are quite intricate. As one progresses through the landscapes, the puzzles become more complex. Objects need to be moved, lasers must be reflected off mirrors and prisms, bombs must be placed and ignited, and the force of gravity must be opposed. Death-heads, flying rotors and chasms all serve to destroy one's marble on contact. Varying landscape materials also affect play. Swamps, ice, plus raised and sunken pathways all affect the marble as it is guided across the landscape. In addition, every tenth level provides a Meditation landscape where the player must place steel balls in special pits, all the time combating friction, acceleration and magnetic fields. The challenge presented is both daunting and additive.



I had the opportunity to play both the Amiga and MS-DOS versions of *Oxyd* and they compare very well. Graphics are especially good, with the Amiga version appearing more colorful and the higher resolution MS-DOS version more defined. Sound effects are very good and are comparable on both systems (though the PC version seems to require a great deal of EMS memory in order to load all sounds).

A key feature of *Oxyd* is the ability to employ a dual-player mode via linked computers. Support is provided for linking through MIDI, modem, null modem and Appletalk. In this mode, an additional 100 landscapes are available through which two players, one controlling the black marble and another a white one, cooperatively work to solve each level.

Oxyd is distributed as shareware and contains all 100 levels (plus the 100 dual-player levels). The first 10 may be played free of charge. From that point on, however, the player will need the

176-page game manual, *The Oxyd Book* (General Edition), which contains useful information and hints for playing the game, plus the secret formulas necessary to remove the Magic Tokens which block the player's progress.

As you may have surmised, I am truly impressed by *Oxyd*. It is an exceptional offering, guaranteed to provide numerous hours of enjoyment (including many sleepless nights). In fact, the quality surpasses that of a great many commercial offerings. Get a copy!

Oxyd can be ordered from **Dongeware** for \$4.00 (please specify the version needed when ordering—IBM-PC, NeXT, Macintosh, Amiga, Atari ST Monochrome, Atari ST Color, or Atari TT/Falcon). *The Oxyd Book* is \$39.00, plus \$3.00 shipping and handling. All orders should be directed to:

Dongeware Publishing, Inc.
P.O. Box 391829
Cambridge, MA 02139-0018
Phone & Fax (617) 497-1130
Orders only (800) 228-OXYD

With Flags Unfurled

Another very popular shareware game is **Carr Software's** *Capture the Flag*. Based on the traditional outdoor diversion by the same name, this game pits the player against an opponent (human or computer) in an effort to capture the other's flag. The goal is simple enough—capture the enemy's flag before one's own flag is taken.

Unlike most wargames, *Capture the Flag* is primarily a non-violent offering with a brief learning curve. There is no death or destruction; no one is ever killed. Like its namesake, enemy players are captured (in a cute animated, cartoon-style scuffle) and sent to "prison," a waiting zone, where they remain for the duration of the game (or a set number of turns). By nature of its design, this is an excellent game for children or adults who normally bypass computer wargames due to their predominantly complex and violent nature.



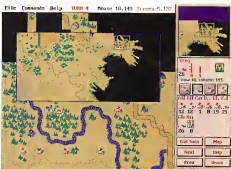
Capture the Flag is very easy to play. Two small teams are deployed over an extensive battleground. Play is turn-based, each player moving his or her characters and assigning them individual commands until available movement points have been expended. The player's turn is then ended and the opponent's begins. Play continues in this fashion until one team captures the opponent's flag.

The playing field itself is comprised of several well designed and varied terrain types, ranging from flat grasslands to forests, and even rocky badlands. In addition, a terrain editor is provided for

constructing one's own battlegrounds. Graphics are of very good quality and provide an enjoyable gaming environment (the appearance is similar to that of a Windows-based product). Character animation during movement is smooth. Sound effects enhance the playing experience. The icon-driven interface is simple and very intuitive, so much so that what little instruction is needed for play is available through a built-in help feature. Overall, it is evident that care was taken in the development of this product, its presentation being of commercial quality.

As it stands, *Capture the Flag* is an enjoyable diversion worthy of consideration, especially for budding computer strategists. It requires a 286 or better PC compatible system, VGA graphics (640 x 480 in 16 colors) and 530K RAM. Ad Lib and Sound Blaster are supported, and a mouse is recommended. Shareware and registered versions are available directly from **Carr Software** at \$5.00 and \$29.00 respectively. Direct your orders to:

Carr Software
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Merced, CA 95344-1919
(800) 487-9231



Until the Morrow

It is time once again to power down the systems for the day. Before I sign off, though, let me remind one and all that shareware authors need our support. Some excellent games are being released through shareware channels. However, these programmers need our help to continue their efforts. Please remember to support them by registering the software you use. We will all benefit.

Games reviewed in this column are available through numerous distributors of shareware and public domain software, as well as on many national and private telecommunication services (GEnie RoundTable locations and file numbers appear in brackets when available). If you do not have access to these services, you can, in most cases, write or call the game developer for an evaluation copy.

Send Us Your Best

If you have authored a shareware or public domain game and would like to have it considered for review in this column, please send two complete copies (preferably on 3.5" disks) to:

Best of the Best
Computer Gaming World
130 Chaparral Court, Suite 260
Anaheim Hills, CA 92808. **cmw**

"I Came, I Played, I Conquered"

The First CGW Multi-Network Modem Gaming Tournament!



Art by Raiger MacGowan, Copyright 1993 IBM Graphics



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Announcing a tournament for every modern gamer who has ever thought: "Wouldn't it be great to get the *Command HQ* players on CompuServe to play the ones on Prodigy?" Now, under the joint auspices of **New World Computing** and **Computer Gaming World**, modem gamers can not only try their hands against the best, but they can win valuable prizes as well.

Game and Scenario

The game to be played during this tournament will be *Empire Deluxe*. CGW's editorial staff selected this game for several reasons. First, we have noticed that gamers tend to spend more of their time playing their newest games, so we hoped that our selection of a new game would encourage more gamers to participate in the tournament. Second, though *Empire Deluxe* is a new game with new features, it has enough of the familiar mechanics of the classic *Empire* that we felt a majority of gamers would be comfortable with the game. Finally, our on-line editor was getting enough experience with early versions of the game (due to his work on a companion book for *Empire Deluxe*) that he could design a special tournament scenario to be included with the production version of the game.

Participants will need to own a copy of the game in order to play, but there is no entry fee. The scenario which will be used has been included in the released version of the game. The file name is CGWTOURN.SCN. The special rules for playing this scenario are as follows:

1. Before beginning the game, the two human players competing should decide by advanced agreement which player number (i.e., color) each will be with the remaining (third) position being computer controlled at the Expert skill level.
2. The scenario *must* be played using the Advanced Game rules.
3. The person who must pay for the modem game call will be designated each month. It will randomly be either the players with the higher or lower alphabetized last name (Abrams being low and Zwick being high, for example). That seems a fair way to try to split up the phone charges which the players must bear.
4. When you reach the Player Setup screen, give the computer (Expert) player Moderate handicaps for both combat and pro-



duction. Each human player must then be assigned three levels of handicaps. These can either be taken as one level of handicap (Slight) in one category and two levels (Moderate) in the other or as no handicap in one category and three levels (Average) in the other — it is up to each player individually. Again, this should be agreed beforehand and discussed prior to commencing the actual game.

5. The scenario ends immediately when one of the two human players controls all three "capitals" (player starting cities), with the controlling player immediately declared the winner.

Alternately, if one human player remains after the other has resigned or been eliminated, the sole remaining human player wins.

If neither of these victory criteria have been met by the end of turn 200, end the game at that point and determine who had the higher "score." Each human player scores 1 point per point of production efficiency for every city he or she controls (i.e., a city with a production efficiency of 72% is worth 72 points). No points are scored for units on the map at the end of the game. The highest score determines the winner.

Ties are awarded to the player with the lowest player number (i.e., red is player 1 and would win in a tie score situation).

6. After a winner is determined, both players should e-mail us and let us know:

- who won

- how the game was decided (capital conquest, resignation or points) and on what turn
- what color the winner played
- what color the loser played
- their respective chosen handicaps
- any dramatic stories or interludes that might be interesting to share with our readers
- (Optional) send a copy of the save game file (there might be a good screen shot there for the magazine).

For example, an end-game e-mail might read: "Karl 'Killer' Kane led the red forces to victory over the blue devils of Nancy 'The Ninja' Neuschum by capturing all the capitals on turn 144. Karl had only a slight combat handicap to Nancy's moderate one and, despite being initially outnumbered, conquered enough islands to gain for his complete conquest of the mainland.

Tournament Organization

The tournament will be a 64-player, single elimination event. Each game must be completed within, roughly, two weeks from the time the issue announcing the matches hits the stands (the exact completion date will be posted on each month's schedule).

What that means is that when, say, the April issue comes out in mid-March (they always roll out two weeks before the cover date), players will have until the end of March to get us results so that we will have time to

prepare them for the May issue. Thus, players will have to hustle their scheduled games. We'll try to notify players by e-mail as early as possible as to who their next matches will be against and include their opponent's phone numbers.

If you cannot contact your opponent to arrange a time to play, notify us. We'll adjudicate any irregularities and our decisions resolving disputes must, of necessity, be final.

Prizes

All prizes (except for CGW subscriptions) have been donated by New World Computing.

- All entrants will receive an *Empire De-Luxe* souvenir of some sort (a hat, T-shirt or something else to be announced).
- The two 3rd Place finishers will receive a year's subscription/extension to *Computer Gaming World* magazine and a New World Computing game of their choice.
- The 2nd Place finisher will receive a compilation of New World Computing games.
- The 1st Place finisher will win the Grand Prize: a trip for two to Southern California (by air within the continental United States) with hotel accommodations and attraction admissions provided. You'll have to rent your own transportation around town, but it will be worth it for this itinerary:

You'll arrive on a Wednesday and settle in. On Thursday morning you'll receive a tour of **New World Computing**, followed by a trip to **Universal Studios** that afternoon. Friday morning will see you making the commute out for a tour of **Golden Empire Publications** (publishers of *Computer Gaming World*), followed by an afternoon and evening of frolic at Disneyland. Make your own plans for Saturday and then home again on Sunday.

Signing Up

There are no entry fees, but all players must sign up by sending an e-mail on one of five possible networks. Your e-mail must include your name, address and phone numbers for both work and home (plus any modem and/or fax numbers). Our on-line addresses are:

Prodigy:	EXPT40B
CompuServe:	76703,622
GEnie:	CGW
America OnLine:	CGW
The Sierra Network:	Box 1048

With only 64 slots to fill, we expect it to go fast. We will accept a few entries after #64 as alternates who might enter the tournament by replacing players who cannot complete either the first or second rounds.

All of the usual disclaimers apply: Employees of New World Computing, White Wolf and Golden Empire Publications are prohibited from playing, void where prohibited by law, etc. EWG

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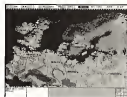
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Rushdie to Judgment

A Review of Three-Sixty's *Patriot*

by M. Evan Brooks

TITLE:	<i>Patriot</i>
SYSTEM:	MSX
GRAPHICS:	SVGA
# PLAYERS:	1
PRICE:	\$69.95
PROTECTOR:	None
DEVELOPER:	ARTECH Digital Entertainment
PUBLISHER:	Three-Sixty Pacific Campbell, CA 408/776-2187

QUESTION: What do *Patriot* and *The Satanic Verses* have in common?

ANSWER: In both cases, the end-users want to kill the author.

Patriot is the most detailed Gulf War simulation yet brought to the computer market. Initial consumer response has been unanimous — and bad. Criticism has ranged from mild impecunious to a sense of personal betrayal. As a participant in the Gulf War, I was interested in the subject matter. However, the treatment herein may best be described as “O-Cubed” (obscure, opaque and obfuscatory).

The “game” is an operational simulation of various *Desert Storm* scenarios, both real and hypothetical, including the *Battle of 73 Easting*, the *Breach of the Saddam Line*, the *Battle of Khafji*, and others. Each scenario is preceded by an *opord* (“operations order”) in the Army standard five-paragraph format. For anyone with experience in the Army or in Joint Operations, the *opords* will be very familiar; for those unfamiliar with such formats, it provides a window into military planning.

Documentation

The documentation is professionally printed. That sums up its advantage; of course, the major question is why did so many trees have to be sacrificed for so little information? There are actually three manuals: (1) The “Field Operations Manual” is particularly useless, having a “brief” history of warfare, the principles of war and a glossary. Too cursory, too general, too bad. (2) The “Training Manual” is the main documentation. It tells how to access each command, but it fails to tell one how to move units in an easy way, how to commit to combat, how to judge success (or failure), or how to combine the different options into an experience both historical and enjoyable. (3) The “QuickStart” should be a tutorial — well, it is in a way. An eight page “QuickStart” sheds a dim light on what is supposed to happen. Again, too cursory, too general, too bad. There is no historical framework in the printed documentation. Nowhere are the scenarios, neither historical nor hypothetical, discussed. Further, there are no designer notes on how to best employ one’s units, assuming that one can learn how to access them.



Graphics and Sound

The graphics are SVGA only. The maps (with a choice of single, split screen or overview) are well done. However, implementation of units is confusing. Literally overlaying one another, it is often difficult to determine who is where. Actual unit depictions may be vehicle silhouette or standard NATO display. Movement orders may be implemented by objective arrows, waypoints or unit boundaries. However, unlike *Harpoon*, one’s preference selections are not saved in the included scenarios. Each and every time one reboots, he must again determine the preferences (a user-created scenario will allow one to retain preferences). Sound, on the other hand, is limited to opening music and sparse battle sounds in the program itself.

Game Mechanics

The game mechanics are where *Patriot* both waxes and wanes. One can access units by a “Current Unit” window or by map or organizational tree function. The “Org” button is pure militaryese; one can see the unit “trace” (superior and subordinate units) and move up or down the command authority. Formations may be combat-tailored to one’s specifications, e.g. in the *Battle of 73 Easting* scenario, one may choose to abolish the artillery parent unit and assign each artillery battalion directly to the Second Armored Cavalry Regiment. A few mouse strokes and it is done.

This, coupled with the boundary lines, makes this product the first civilian wargame ever published which could be used immediately in the military for a CPX (Command Post Exercise). And this is part of the problem. Contrary to advertising lore, the line that “it’s not just a job, it’s an *adventure*” is simply not true. The majority of military life is repetitious, dull and boring. CPXs are like this, only more so. One plans out the corps and divisional boundaries, the brigade responsibilities, etc. In short, it quickly becomes pure work. *Patriot* accurately recreates this work, but the terror of Scud attacks and the thrill of rolling into a newly liberated city cannot begin to be simulated (no *joie de trier* here).

While units can be moved by objective arrows, waypoints or boundary lines, actual implementation of orders is exceedingly

difficult. After playing *Patriot*, one will appreciate why General George Patton's turning a multi-divisional force 90 degrees in forty-eight hours to relieve American forces during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II was such a feat of arms. Simply speaking, radical course changes cannot be done. Yet, the reason for this is invisible to the user, who will simply blame it on the interface. The interface is awkward, but the documentation should have explained the problems and the realities.

One problem that is more difficult to overcome is overrunning enemy units. The overrunning unit simply continues on its axis of advance; no follow-on units are left to fix and destroy the enemy forces, and attempting to turn around is futile. The best response seems to be to adopt a defensive posture once contact is achieved. Is this realistic? No, but it allows the battle to be fought to a conclusion.

There is no ground scale present anywhere. While I could determine the general scale based on unit frontages and actual terrain, most users would not be able to do so. A bar scale in the map window would assist the user immensely. Also, this would allow the user to determine how far a unit could be expected to penetrate in a certain time frame. Right now, the game is like lining the horses up in the stall, yelling "GO!" and waiting at the other end to see who arrives first.

Perhaps, the most important user function is the "Pause" key. Be willing to use it often. Turns are 15 minutes, and a lot can happen. Be prepared to pause the game and examine what the current situation is. Anticipate what will be needed over the next few hours. Remember, generals plan the battle, colonels direct the battle, and captains and majors execute/fight the battle. In *Patriot* the player is the general/colonel and once the forces have been placed "on-line," most of his job is over. This may account for some of *Patriot's* inscrutability — the user's job is almost over when, in most other wargames, it would only be just beginning.

In the history of wargaming, certain games produced interesting concepts which should have been reused, but were not seen anew. Jim Dunnigan's boardgame *Fulda Gap* allowed the use of DLIC (detachments left in contact), so that retreating units left a small covering force.

Norm Koger's computer game *Red Lightning* used sub-forces (allowing brigade subunits to be deployed forward or back). In all these cases, there were ideas that had not been seen in wargaming before, and yet which enhanced the "state of the art." *Patriot* has many such concepts — the use of formation tailoring, the accessibility of units from different modes (map, org, current unit), there is much here for thought. But the basic problem comes down that while there is much that is impressive, the lack of a meaningful game dooms the remainder to oblivion.

Game Play

I have 23 years of military experience, 20 years of board wargaming experience, 10 years of computer wargaming experience and was present for both *Desert Shield* and *Desert Storm* in the Kuwait Theater of Operations. Based on the program as released, I could not begin to figure out what to do or how to do it. Clearly, something is wrong with this picture.



When a reviewer is thus confused, action should be taken. A three hour telephone conversation with *Three-Sixty* ran me through some basics. However, does the average user have access to so much personal help? Even after this, I must confess that I am still confused about much of the program's mechanics. And there are the missing options: Intelligence? No matter. Logistics? Forget about it. CAS (Close Air Support)? Helicopters only.

Desert Storm was a war of logistics; just ask LTG Gus Pagonis. The data base is limited to the ground. However, the historical experience was not so clear. I can remember working in 18th Airborne Corps EOC (Emergency Operations Center) at Fort Bragg, NC from August through November 1990. The TPFDL (pronounced "Tipfiddle", i.e. Time-Phased Force Deployment Listing) was a source of

endless argument — who ships over when? Actually, CENTCOM (Central Command) made it clear — send over "shooters" (combat elements). Support elements would have to wait until sufficient forces were on hand to deter any Iraqi aggression. But even this was not clear-cut. Which "shooters"? The National Guard ("Round Out Brigades") were not ready, therefore, USAEUR (U.S. Army Europe) forces were called. But this logistical Gordian knot is never touched in *Patriot*.

Further, the logistical build-up was the most rapid in military history. Military airlift and sealfit were shown to be deficient in quantity. These types of problems are not covered by the simulation; it is more operational in nature.

Certain errors are basic — the Battle of Khafji is incorrectly occurring in February (it actually began on 29 January). Similarly, time zones throughout the operations order are noted as "Sierra" (actually, it was "Charlie" time; "Zulu" Time is Greenwich Mean, and "Sierra" is more akin to the Hawaiian time zone). Still, these are minor points and do not impact on gameplay.

However, what *does* impact on gameplay is unit strength. The American player will discover that the Iraqis are not a "push-over." Losses can be quite heavy — on both sides. *Three-Sixty* told me that this is because accurate historical deployments were used, but only "open source" data was used for weapons systems. Thus, although we all "know" that the M1 Abrams tank is better armored than public sources admit, and we all "know" that the T-72 Soviet tank will not be an equal adversary, the "open sources" use a worst-case scenario. Thus, one cannot recreate anything near the success of *Desert Storm* unless he edits the scenario and increases the armor durability of the American armor. However, does the average user know what the capabilities of the M1 tank are? Should he? Or is it instead the responsibility of the designer to produce a simulation and game which portray his best "guesstimate" of what actually is, and not what is only open source?

Conclusions

Patriot has some innovative concepts. However, "You are the Beta Tester." Frankly, the data base is well done, but *Patriot's* game and entertainment value seem to have been omitted. This, coupled with the bugs and crashes that plague the program, declare *Patriot* to be more of a *Benedict Arnold* **cow**

Not Just Another Brick in the Wall

Interplay's Castles II

by Ken Hill

TITLE Castles II: Siege & Conquest
SYSTEM IBM
GRAPHICS EGA/VGA
PRICE \$39.95
PROTECTION Documentation lock-up on installation
DESIGNERS Vance DeBenedis, Wilbur Fisher, Ryan Carabont
PUBLISHER Interplay Productions
 Irvine, CA
 (714) 553-6670



Castles II, the latest medieval offering from Interplay, owes much to its older cousin, the original *Castles*. However, *Castles II* offers more to the strategy gamer than just castle design and defense. *Castles II* is a first-rate strategy game that provides a challenge for anyone who has every dreamed of being King.

Castles II is set in the mythical land of Bretagne (loosely based on 14th century France). The reigning King Charles has died without an heir and a power struggle for control of the throne is inevitable. The player assumes the role of one of five potential rulers of Bretagne. Starting from a small base, the player must expand the territory under his control and become

powerful enough to win the support of the resident Pope-in-exile, Innocent Benedict.

The player must complete this imposing job by managing three types of resources: Administrative, Military and Political. The player controls "tasks" in each of these areas to perform the day-to-day operation of his realm. Each kingdom starts out with a small number of resource points in each area, and the amount assigned to a given task affects how long the task takes to complete. As tasks are successfully resolved, the number of points available in each area increases to reflect the skill and experience of the player and his subordinates.

The Administrative tasks include the gathering and production of the goods necessary to maintain the local economy: food, timber, iron and gold. Food is required to feed one's army and people, timber and iron are required to outfit army units and for castle construction, and gold is required for most every action in the game from paying spies to building one's "dream castle." Planning and building castles are also an administrative function.

How well the player manages the game's economy is a crucial element of success. Each of the 35 territories in Bretagne has an assigned commodity which can be gathered or produced from that area. One of the nice features of the game allows the player to choose how they want the commodities to be distributed. A "balanced" distribution will spread them out evenly across the map, while a "geographical" distribution will assign them to area according to the terrain (gold and iron in the mountain, timber in forests, and food in the plains.) A completed castle of sufficient size in a territory doubles the amount of production in that territory.

Players quickly learn that they must have all commodities available to them. A wide variety of tasks must be performed on a continuous basis and each of these re-

quires a certain amount of goods to be gathered successfully. Gold is especially valuable but one can't ignore the other commodities either. In dire circumstances, the player can resort to buying goods on the "Black Market." This source is unreliable and extremely expensive. Hence, it should be used only when desperate measures are required.

Military tasks include: attacking, recruiting army units (infantry, archers and knights), building machines of war (catapults, siege towers and ballista) and sabotaging enemy territories. Some tasks (like building siege towers) cost a considerable number of military points and are not available until the later stages of the game. Since armies must be fed and paid once a year, players have to take care to build enough of a standing army to provide both a capable attacking force and a deterrent to enemy attacks without ruining the rest of the economy. Balancing the use of scarce resources is one of the cornerstones of the game system.

Political tasks include a wide variety of activities: scouting, trading for commodities, sending diplomats, spying and meeting with one's advisors. While it is hard to point at any one area of the game as the most important, players must pay particular attention to the political tasks. This game mirrors history in that the political skill of the player is more important than



military prowess. Players who ignore the political tasks in order to concentrate on military victories will find their road to the throne very bumpy indeed!

Diplomacy is especially important. There is a relationship rating for each of the other players in the game including the Pope. Rated on a scale from 1-9, a rating of 3 or lower reflects poor relations. An attack from this player is a very good possibility. A rating of 2 or lower with the Pope results in excommunication from the Church. Excommunicated players are unable to trade with other players and are prime targets for attacks.



A rating of 7 or better denotes friendship, good will and the possibility of alliance. Chances of successful trading or other interaction with these players is much better. A rating of 8 or higher with the Pope will result in a blessing from His Holiness, and anyone daring to attack a blessed player will incur his wrath. The Pope is also the only one who can confirm the player's ascent to the throne, so particular care must be given to diplomatic relations with him.

These ratings are constantly adjusted throughout the game. Diplomats will arrive from other players demanding payments of gold or other favors to keep them happy. Some bartering is allowed but a refusal to pay could harm relations with that player. Of course, the player may also send diplomats to the computer players demanding payments.

Another important factor is the happiness rating of one's people. This rating affects many parts of the game including the morale of the army and the ability to stave off revolts. There is a political task to increase the people's happiness, but it is an expensive and time-consuming process. Military victory can increase happiness while defeat can lower it.

Game play is real time but the speed of play is controlled by the player. Each task has a status window on the screen complete with a bar showing its relative level of completion. Without interference from the player, time passes slowly. Pressing and holding the right mouse button will

cause time to pass more quickly. Usually, the player can set up a series of tasks and let time fly until the first task has been completed.

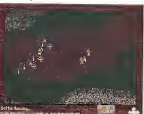
The interface is wonderfully intuitive. Most players won't have to spend much time learning how to work with the game. The entire game can be played effectively using the mouse.

Several bits of "chrome" add the overall flavor of the game. First of all, there are animated film clips available for several key parts of the game. They require VGA and a considerable amount of disk space. While they add something to the overall feel of the game, they can be turned off. Installation of the film clip files is optional.

Other interesting features of the game include the "plots" held over from the original *Castles*. These add spice to the game by weaving action that takes place inside or outside of the realm of Bretagne. For example, an envoy from a far-off empire may ask for the player's help in building a navy to defeat the Saracen hordes by providing a large amount of timber. If one can successfully provide this timber, the price received will be well above market value. The plots can help or hinder the player's goal of gaining control of the realm. Plots can be toggled on or off at any time during the game.

Players also have the option of playing out battles with a tactical simulation. Units can be selected and positioned with the mouse. These tactical battle sequences can be quite entertaining, and a skilled player can give his or her claim to the throne a considerable boost by mastering this section of the game. These battles are optional and the player will be at a *slight* disadvantage if he or she chooses to have the computer resolve all the battles.

Finally, castle design and construction is alive and well. Players build castles for three reasons: to improve defense for that territory, to prevent revolt in surrounding territories, and to increase production. Castle design is easy and favorite designs can be saved to disk for later reuse. Castles are expensive and slow to build but are absolutely crucial for success. A few well-



placed castles in one's territories will quickly pay for themselves.

The game is designed for a single human player only. However, the computer opponents are highly skilled and very challenging. *Quicksilver/Interplay* spent several months tuning the artificial intelligence routines for this game, and it shows. Even on the easiest level, the computer opponents are difficult to master. At the higher levels they become even tougher. If one is tired of silicon-brained wimps as opponents, *Castles II* will provide a refreshing change of pace.

There are some minor problems with *Castles II*. The design of a castle has little effect on its ability as a defensive structure (despite claims in the manual to the contrary). Since one defends with only half of the available forces when on the defense, one can find himself outmanned and, without enough bodies to man the walls, a castle is little or no help when defending against an enemy attack. It's an odd role for the "star of the show," but I don't think that it detracts from the game.

Another problem is that the AI of the computer opponents might be just a little too good. The computer players are so good that some novice (and even some experienced) strategy gamers will become frustrated. The tutorial and strategy tips in the manual are inadequate and don't explain how to succeed in the game. *Interplay* is discussing the possibility of expanding the strategy section of the manual and/or making the easiest level of difficulty slightly easier to counteract this problem.

Castles II is a game that will appeal to many strategy gamers who like an interesting and challenging game. It's a joy to play and, despite its somewhat sedate nature, can become quite exciting during the course of the game. More than once during a crucial point in the game, I felt my pulse racing as I quickly set up the attacks and diplomatic missions necessary to stop my hated opponent from successfully claiming the throne. It offers a variety of game play that will keep it on my computer for some time to come. **CMS**

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(Compter Game Review, Oct. 1992)

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(Compter Gaming World, Aug. 1992)

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Bali Hai Will Call You

(or War in the South Pacific Grows Up)

by Bob Proctor

Here it is, the game Grigsby fans have been waiting eight years for! The whole of World War II in the Pacific, from Seattle to Calcutta! Awesome! Just how big is it? Owners get over 320 ground units, every combat vessel and just about every combat aircraft. But wait! They also get 242 leaders, 200 bases, cargo vessels, and factories. Grigsby's rognaards can suffer through Arctic weather, read Japanese naval codes, and wage strategic warfare with submarines or long-range bombers. *Pacific War* is a prime example of how a computer can make a playable game out of a simulation of staggering complexity.

I'm Gonna Wash That Game Right Outta My Hair

"Playable", however, does not necessarily mean "easy". *Pacific War (PW)* is strictly a game for those addicted to wargames. Beginners and dilettantes should stay away — they will likely feel that the game is unplayable. Even among the die-hards there are some complainers; those who expected to jump right in and begin trying their favorite strategy. No sir! Expect to spend ten to twenty hours just learning to play. Access to an on-

Title:	Gary Grigsby's Pacific War
System:	IBM
Players:	Disc cannot look up
# Players:	1 or 2
Price:	\$79.95
Design:	Gary Grigsby
Publisher:	Strategic Simulations, Inc., Sunnyvale, CA 94086



line service (or a friend who is jacked in) for clarifications and explanations will help a lot, too. Gary Grigsby himself is on **GEnie** and his remarks have been repeated on **CompuServe** and other private bulletin boards. If all this seems reasonable, players who have enough free time to spend 30 to 200 hours per game may like *Pacific War*.

Anyone still reading is probably wondering, "Gee, that long to learn; is the manual that bad?" Well, no, it's packed full of information and is actually pretty good (SSI representatives on **CompuServe** said that they spent more time and care on this manual than for any previous game). Granted, but in my opinion it is still very incomplete. The manual weighs in at 160 pages. This seems big at first but consider the breakdown: 54 pages of rules; a 5 page tutorial; 5 pages of Designer's Notes (which includes some tips); a 28 page history of WWII in the Pacific, written by Albert Nofi, which originally appeared in *Strategy & Tactics* #29; and 55 pages of data tables listing all unit, base and leader data.

For any normal game this would be plenty, but *PW* is not a normal game. A game as complex as *PW* really needs two manuals, one to teach the game and one to provide a quick

reference to specific rules. The need for a tutorial is greater when the game system is unlike any game that came before (as is the case with *PW*). More player aids would help, too, especially a checklist of all the functions or activities that a player should do each turn (See the *player aids* in this issue — Ed). It is real easy to forget something crucial (like assigning a leader) without a checklist, so why not help the novice out? *PW* also lacks a printed map. Players not up on their Pacific geography will have to learn it by scrolling around on-screen. There are 200 places of interest on the map: cities, islands, airfields, villages. All are referred to as “bases” and can be used by either side. Engineers can be used to expand port and airfield capacities where needed.

There Is Nothing Like A Game

PW is organized, as was the military on both sides, into a hierarchy of headquarters. Every base is attached to exactly one HQ. The number varies as commands are overrun or new ones are created. The player has no control over this process other than to protect his existing HQs.

The hierarchy reflects differences between the opponents. In Japan, the schism between Army and Navy went right to the top, so the two major HQs are the Imperial GHQ and the Combined Fleet. All army HQs report, directly or indirectly, to the former and all fleet HQs to the latter. The Allies favor combined-arms HQs which have both army and navy HQs as subordinates. The major Allied HQs are Central Pacific (based in Hawaii at the start), Southwest Pacific (in Australia), and the British Southeast Asia Command (in India). The Allies also have three HQs that control land units only and are not of much concern to the player. These three — Nationalist China, ANZAC (Australia and New Zealand), and the West Coast of the US — representing “home guard” units that are present for defense.

Each HQ is assigned an “objective,” which is always a base. If the objective is controlled by the enemy, the HQ will try to capture it. If it is controlled by the good guys (it will often be the base where the HQ is located), then the HQ will defend it. Each HQ can be under full computer control, operational computer control, or full human control.

You've Got To Be Taught

The simplest ones are to assign objectives and leaders to HQs. Then, if desired, one can just sit back and see how they do. This is what operational computer control is for, the player does the key tasks and lets the computer handle the rest. But Bull Halsey himself can do little without ships, planes, and supplies, so the other major responsibility is to see that adequate resources are available. This is a little more challenging (forgive my gross understatement).

Basic supplies are pretty easy; they are automatically distributed by a “Routine Convoy System” to every base that hasn’t been cut off by enemy air zones. This distribution is influenced by the leaders currently in command, the more aggressive leaders get a larger share of supplies. It is essential,



therefore, to put the most aggressive commanders in charge of the most important operations. If a base does become isolated, a player must decide if it is worth the risk to form a task force to transport supplies there. One must also make sure there are enough ships allocated to the Routine Convoy System to carry what is available. This can be a real problem for the Japanese late in the war.

Beyond routine supply,

the player must also make sure that there are combat forces available. Here, players are strictly on their own. Ships are highly mobile and, thus, easy to transfer — so are the long-ranged aircraft like PB4Ys and B-17s. Moving land units and fighters around, however, usually means organizing a task force (TF). The whole process requires foresight and planning and there never seems to be enough ships!

With a HQ set to full human control, a player becomes responsible for creating all task forces and assigning targets for all air groups. On defense, this will often mean setting a reaction range so that the ships or planes will attack any enemy detected within that radius. On offense, one can have a lot of fun raiding enemy bases, but to make progress they must master the art of the amphibious assault. A major assault may require six task forces: a transport TF to carry the troops, an air combat TF to screen them from enemy air, a surface combat TF, a replenish TF to keep the carriers on station, a bombardment TF to soften up the defenders before the attack, and a cargo TF (or two) to supply them “over the beach” while waiting for the port to surrender.

It takes time and experience to get good at this invasion drill, even after becoming familiar with it. The computer makes an interesting and capable opponent. It chooses from several master strategic plans so there is a lot of variety (at least in the early stages of the war; I’ve not spent nearly as much time playing in ’44 and ’45). If the computer opponent has a failing, it is that it doesn’t react strongly enough to very ahistorical attacks such as an invasion of Japan in early 1942. While it’s pointless to argue about “realism” in this situation, it would be better for the game if such reckless adventuring were punished severely.

Some Enchanted Evening



PW uses weekly turns to portray the entire war from December 7, 1941 until the end, which may come earlier or later than August 15, 1945. Both sides get an Orders Phase and then orders are carried out simultaneously during the Execution Phase. In all games, the computer can play either side, both or neither. There are a variety of entry points which allow you to jump into the conflict at different points in History. These are:

12-7-41: the beginning of the

war, attack on Pearl Harbor optional

5-2-42: just prior to the campaigns for Port Moresby and Midway

8-7-42: the invasion of Guadalcanal

6-12-44: the invasion of the Marianas

10-13-44: the invasion of the Philippines (Leyte)

Those wanting to play a shorter game and still have the computer declare a winner, there are two scenarios available. "Rising Sun" begins with the 12-7-41 turn and runs for four months, the period of initial Japanese expansion. "Coral Sea/Midway" begins with the 5-2-42 turn and runs through the end of June, a mere two months.

The length of each turn (and thus the game) is highly variable, depending on several factors. The first is how much responsibility the player cares to assume (one can direct just one HQ, take full control of every HQ, or choose some combination in between). A second factor is how much information the player wants to see on the screen during the Execution Phase. The fastest option is to select "none" and then use the Utility menu to review the results of the previous turn during your Orders Phase.

The mention of menus brings us to the subject of the user interface. The good news is that owners of previous Grigsby titles will feel right at home with *PW*. The bad news is that the interface leaves a lot to be desired, especially for mouse users. I would fault four major areas:

1) More information about bases should be displayed on the map. By default, they show only a flag of control with no indication of strength or even if the base is occupied. There is an "Alt Symbol" command on the Utility menu that shows more but given 16 colors and map symbols that are 12 pixels square, the need for multiple display modes could be eliminated.

2) There are just too many modes. Four are display modes — Task Forces, Airfields, Ports, and Armies — and you have to change modes to see all of the forces at a base. Add the dozens of functional modes for finding targets, transfers, sub control and so on and it could wear down the weary.

3) Most commands for HQs and units are not available using the mouse from status displays. Once you've called up the status of a task force, for example, there is a button to change leaders but not the target or reaction range.

4) The functions assigned to the mouse buttons are poorly chosen. Some displays open with the left button, some with the right. Sometimes the right button acts as the Esc key, sometimes it doesn't. You can get used to it eventually but it adds to the initial confusion.

Happy Talk

Pacific War is a unique game, providing insights into the Pacific campaign that are not obtainable in any other way. If you are fascinated by the war in the Pacific and you have the time and patience required, this game will give you hundreds of hours of



SCREENSHOT: 41100
 100 Overall Score
 100 Overall Score
 100 Overall Score
 100 Overall Score

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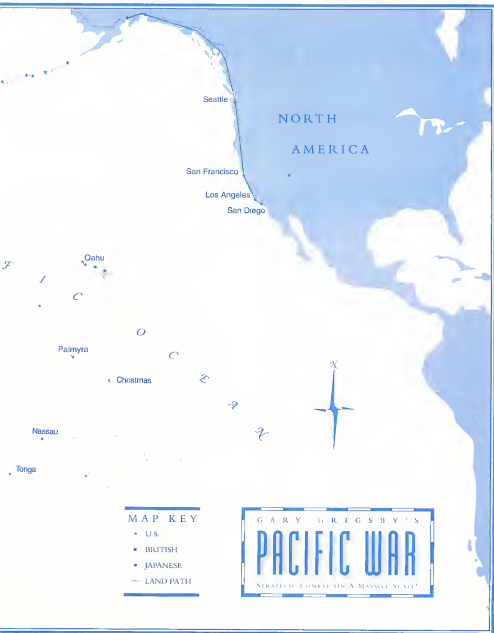
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GARY GRIGSBY'S
PACIFIC WAR
STRATEGIC COMBAT ON A MASSIVE SCALE!



Recipes for Pacific War Task Forces

A Reference for Using the Expanded Ship Class Tables

by Daniel H. Scheltema



Expanded Allied Ship Class Table

Ship Class	Type	Spd	Durab	Arm	Cap	BB	Srf Toep	SDur	ADur	A-A
Essex	CV	33	108	30	91	288	36	0	168	43 348
Illustrious	CV	30	92	42	33	256	29	0	199	50 352
Impalpabile	CV	31	92	38	60	256	29	0	180	46 332
Indomitable	CV	30	92	38	45	256	29	0	180	46 332
Lexington	CV	33	126	35	90	1120	84	0	238	58 80
Wasp	CV	29	56	10	76	192	21	0	32	9 120
Yorktown	CV	33	78	25	91	192	21	0	102	26 120
Colossus	CVL	25	52	1	37	0	3	0	6	2 120
Herran	CVL	25	36	1	12	340	23	0	5	2 18
Independence	CVL	32	44	30	33	0	6	0	69	18 164
Attacker	CVE	18	20	1	20	32	7	0	3	2 80
Bogue	CVE	18	19	1	28	48	6	0	3	1 40
Campano	CVE	16	25	1	18	32	8	0	4	2 122
Casablanca	CVE	19	18	1	27	24	5	0	3	1 72
Commerce Bay	CVE	19	37	1	33	48	7	0	5	2 80
Ruler	CVE	18	23	1	24	48	10	0	3	2 156
Songamoon	CVE	18	21	1	31	48	7	0	3	2 64
Alabama	BB	28	116	123	0	9120	577	0	720	181 220
Colorado	BB	21	108	120	0	8160	511	0	654	164 48
Iowa	BB	33	150	140	0	9120	680	0	1059	265 560
King George V	BB	29	116	113	0	6412	319	0	662	166 272
Nelson	BB	23	113	116	0	9216	575	0	662	166 24
Nezaru	BB	20	96	130	0	6080	309	0	534	134 48
N. Carolina	BB	28	116	123	0	9120	577	0	720	181 280
Pennsylvania	BB	21	110	120	0	7300	364	0	647	167 48
Ramirez	BB	22	97	93	0	6668	340	0	457	115 40
Richlieu	BB	30	116	130	0	6632	358	0	764	191 84
Rider	BB	28	116	136	0	9024	548	0	796	200 188
S. Dakota	BB	21	108	120	0	7200	430	0	654	164 48
Tennessee	BB	21	108	120	0	7200	430	0	654	164 48
Waspate	BB	25	102	93	0	6528	352	0	480	121 160
Alaska	BC	33	91	86	0	3456	246	0	397	100 376
Renown	BC	28	107	70	0	4890	269	0	381	96 60
Bolton	CA	33	44	53	0	1224	102	0	120	31 536
Exeter	CA	32	27	20	0	752	58	25	29	8 120
Indianapolis	CA	32	32	23	0	1128	85	0	39	11 56
Kerr	CA	31	35	23	0	960	70	0	43	12 80
London	CA	31	32	23	0	960	71	88	39	11 120
New Orleans	CA	32	33	46	0	1128	85	0	79	20 56
Norfolk	CA	32	33	23	0	960	71	88	41	11 120
Northampton	CA	32	30	23	0	1128	85	0	37	10 56
Pennacola	CA	32	30	23	0	1232	93	0	37	10 56

The assembling of task forces is a major play element in Gary Grigsby's *Pacific War*. However, players are left on their own to decide the proper mix of ships. The information one needs exists in the ship class and weapons tables, but this has proven tricky to use. Thus, I assembled my own for players to use. While players still won't always have the right ship in the right place when they need it, these tables should at least indicate what the right ship is!

Explaining the Expanded Ship Class Table Columns

The first five columns in these tables are reprinted from the manual and presented here for the sake of completeness. The new columns have abbreviated titles as follows:

- **BB:** The number of bombardment points a ship of this class will contribute to a surface combat or bombardment task force that performs a bombardment mission (calculated as per the manual).
- **Srf:** An extrapolated surface combat index value.
- **Toep:** An extrapolated torpedo index value.
- **SDur:** An extrapolated durability index for surface combat.
- **ADur:** An extrapolated durability index in air-to-surface combat.
- **A-A:** The number of flak points this ship will contribute to the task force's anti-air barrage.

What The New Categories Mean

The **bombardment** numbers are very self-explanatory and it's easy to see from the tables why one battleship can get favorable results on entrenched troops that a whole flotilla of destroyers won't even scratch.

The **flak** numbers are similarly easy to understand. Remember, however, that destroyers are handled in multi-ship squadrons, so their contributions must be multiplied by the total number of destroyers present in the squadron to get the numbers to jibe right.

(Both of the above ratings are modified by ship damage, treating the damage points as direct percentage reductions.)

The other indices are meant to offer a relative strength comparison in their respective categories and are a bit more

Ship Class	Type	Spd	Durab	Arm	Cap	BB	Srl	Toep	SDur	ADur	A-A
Alanta	CLAA	33	20	23	0	384	38	54	25	7	264
Capetown	CLAA	29	14	16	0	128	17	0	13	4	92
Delo	CLAA	32	18	20	0	320	28	75	20	6	118
Gokland	CLAA	33	20	21	0	288	30	54	25	7	272
Ashford	CL	24	17	16	0	368	28	0	15	5	27
Belfast	CL	32	33	16	0	572	56	75	29	8	140
Bosfordyn	CL	33	33	43	0	792	55	0	74	19	56
Calcutta	CL	29	13	16	0	248	23	100	12	4	81
Cleveland	CL	33	33	43	0	768	63	0	74	19	236
Danac	CL	27	16	16	0	288	23	151	15	4	27
De Ruyter	CL	32	21	43	0	280	22	0	16	5	66
Enterprise	CL	33	25	46	0	360	29	203	22	6	34
Fiji	CL	32	27	26	0	608	48	75	37	10	80
Jawa	CL	31	22	16	0	400	29	0	30	6	50
Leander	CL	33	24	20	0	384	30	88	26	7	60
Mimitaur	CL	31	29	26	0	520	44	75	40	11	300
Omaha	CL	33	23	33	0	464	36	40	40	13	68
Perth	CL	32	23	20	0	384	30	88	25	7	28
Southampton	CL	32	30	26	0	608	48	75	42	13	80
Tromp	CL	32	12	13	0	240	18	66	9	3	64
Upatisa	CL	33	29	26	0	608	48	75	40	13	80
Tanger	CS	17	40	0	12	56	8	0	3	2	68
Batle	DD	35	8	3	0	80	10	100	3	1	133
Berkham	DD	35	5	4	0	96	9	108	3	1	36
Brook	DD	35	5	6	0	120	11	67	3	1	46
Cavalier	DD	36	6	3	0	64	7	100	2	1	56
Clemson	DD	35	4	6	0	104	9	40	2	1	7
Comet	DD	35	5	3	0	64	7	50	2	1	56
Electa	DD	36	5	3	0	80	8	100	2	1	28
Evansen	DD	36	4	3	0	112	11	66	2	1	38
Farnborough	DD	41	9	6	0	128	12	99	4	2	58
Ferrago	DD	36	5	6	0	120	11	54	3	1	44
Fletcher	DD	38	7	6	0	120	11	67	3	2	64
Greyhound	DD	36	4	3	0	64	7	100	2	1	24
Grady	DD	40	5	6	0	96	9	108	3	1	36
Intrepid	DD	36	5	3	0	64	7	125	2	1	24
Lawrence	DD	35	5	6	0	120	11	67	3	1	46
Mohau	DD	36	5	6	0	120	11	81	3	1	44
Napier	DD	36	6	3	0	96	10	125	2	1	48
Platin	DD	36	5	3	0	64	8	100	2	1	52
Praetor	DD	37	6	6	0	192	18	54	3	2	106
Quailmanch	DD	36	6	3	0	64	8	100	2	1	52
Sampson	DD	36	7	6	0	192	18	11	3	2	106
Scorpion	DD	36	6	3	0	64	7	100	2	1	44
Sims	DD	37	5	6	0	120	11	54	3	1	44
Stronghold	DD	36	3	0	0	48	6	50	1	1	33
Stuart	DD	36	5	3	0	80	9	0	2	1	56
Summer	DD	34	8	6	0	144	16	67	4	2	130
Swears	DD	37	4	3	0	120	12	88	2	1	54
Talbot	DD	36	6	3	0	120	13	50	2	1	60
Ubase	DD	36	6	3	0	64	7	100	2	1	42
Vampire	DD	32	4	0	0	64	9	75	1	1	36
Wizard	DD	36	6	3	0	64	7	100	2	1	42
Zephyr	DD	36	6	3	0	64	7	100	2	1	56
Buckley	DE	23	5	0	0	24	4	13	1	1	35
Baker	DE	21	4	0	0	24	4	20	1	1	25
Cannon	DE	21	4	0	0	24	4	20	1	1	25
Lawson	DE	20	4	0	0	24	4	0	1	1	25
Hart II	DE	25	3	0	0	64	8	0	1	1	50
Hart III	DE	25	3	0	0	64	8	25	1	1	40
Hart IV	DE	25	4	0	0	96	12	38	1	1	60
Rudskow	DE	23	5	0	0	48	4	20	1	1	26
MTD	PC	35	1	0	0	0	0	25	1	1	2
PT	PC	40	1	0	0	0	0	27	1	1	12
Masley	APD	24	4	0	15	24	4	0	1	1	25
Rudskow	APD	22	4	1	20	48	5	0	1	1	16

convoluted. The Yamoto, with its 1716 surface combat durability, is not necessarily that many times harder to sink than a sub chaser with its 1, due to the nature of surface combat. Any hit will produce one damage point and the surface durability rating has no effect on that. What it does signify is the chance that more than the one point will be shrugged off. It is very hard to get penetration on the Yamoto class battleships, and even if that's achieved, it's hard to get significant damage beyond the first point due to their high surface durability.

The same applies to the air combat durability, which is lower than for all ships due to the larger warheads on air delivered ordnance than on a typical ship fired salvo.

Torpedoes are handled separately since they are ranged differently than ship guns and deal with armor differently. This index only shows relative total "throw weight" in torpedoes, taking into account range, warheads and accuracy. Notice that Allied torpedoes don't compare well to the Japanese (for many historically valid reasons).

The surface combat index takes into account relative accuracy, range and warheads. Any ship can deal out a single point of damage with any hit in combat. It takes 99 hits, however, to sink a ship. A battleship that tosses big shells can kill ships with a few salvos (especially against armorless targets) since most of their hits will penetrate and those that do will still do a lot of damage (even if they aren't "critical hits"). An MTB unit with only flak will be required to score 99 hits to kill most ships, assuming it can survive that long and get that close in. Note that although the Lady Lex and Kaga compare favorably with heavy cruisers, they are not recommended for that role.

Brewing Recipes for the Air Combat Task Force

When constructing task forces, especially invasion fleets where one expects to see some serious action, it pays to play close attention to which classes of ship go into which type of task force.

Air combat task forces should incorporate as much flak strength as possible, as they pave the way for all the others. Adding battleships can slow an air combat task force down unless they are chosen carefully. Furthermore, adding battleships can also cut into the total flak barrage strength since most battleships aren't very good anti-air platforms. Con-

Expanded Japanese Ship Class Table

Ship Class	Type	Spd	Durab	Arm	Cap	BB	Srf	Torp	SDur	ADur	A-A
Akagi	CV	31	108	40	72	816	62	0	222	96	70
Hiryu	CV	34	48	22	64	288	31	0	79	21	122
Isoyuzo	CV	25	48	2	53	288	30	0	8	3	108
Kaga	CV	28	108	45	84	1424	107	0	249	63	124
Shinano	CV	27	240	60	47	480	56	0	733	104	454
Shokaku	CV	34	100	30	84	384	41	0	156	40	164
Soryu	CV	34	64	15	63	288	40	0	52	14	116
Taisho	CV	33	116	35	64	192	32	0	210	53	226
Uryu	CV	32	70	16	64	288	19	0	61	16	238
Horho	CVL	25	25	1	18	128	13	0	4	2	28
Ryuhoh	CVL	26	54	4	31	192	23	0	15	4	116
Ryuzo	CVL	29	32	2	37	192	21	0	6	2	72
Zuiho	CVL	28	45	1	30	192	19	0	6	2	56
Karyu	CVE	24	30	1	24	192	21	0	4	2	86
Shinyu	CVE	22	39	1	33	192	22	0	5	2	100
Taiyu	CVE	21	36	1	27	192	19	0	5	2	56
Fuso	BB	25	120	93	0	7472	105	0	965	142	80
Kongu	BB	30	105	70	0	5252	276	0	374	94	80
Nagato	BB	25	180	103	0	8448	543	0	677	170	88
Yamato	BB	27	213	160	0	12768	695	0	1716	430	120
Aoba	CA	33	31	26	0	608	48	238	43	11	32
Mogami	CA	34	41	26	0	1232	87	357	56	15	36
Myoko	CA	33	44	43	0	1232	87	476	98	25	56
Tokao	CA	34	43	43	0	1232	87	476	96	25	56
Tone	CA	35	37	26	0	1024	74	357	51	13	64
Agano	CL	35	22	6	9	272	28	238	9	3	84
Kanran	CL	18	19	10	9	176	16	25	11	4	20
Kikikami	CL	33	19	10	0	144	14	190	11	4	16
Kuro	CL	33	19	10	9	240	21	238	11	4	10
Nagatsuki	CL	36	17	10	9	240	21	238	10	3	12
Oyodo	CL	36	27	10	9	368	35	0	16	5	80
Uygho	CL	35	18	10	9	240	21	238	11	3	12
Torino	CL	33	10	10	9	36	12	35	7	2	7
Yubari	CL	35	9	10	9	200	17	119	6	2	7
Kamikawa	CS	18	20	0	12	80	7	0	2	1	2
Nishin	CS	28	36	0	20	64	7	0	3	1	24
Akizuki	DD	38	7	0	9	144	13	260	1	1	36
Abukuh	DD	33	9	0	9	120	17	119	1	1	86
Asashiro	DD	35	6	0	9	144	14	238	1	1	44
Fubuki	DD	34	7	0	9	144	13	260	1	1	46
Horooharu	DD	33	6	0	9	120	11	179	1	1	12
Kagero	DD	35	7	0	9	144	14	238	1	1	46
Kamikaze	DD	36	4	0	9	64	7	24	1	1	36
Shimakaze	DD	39	8	0	9	144	14	446	1	1	44
Shirohoro	DD	34	5	0	9	120	12	238	1	1	40
Togatsuki	DD	35	7	0	9	144	14	238	1	1	44
Matsu	DE	27	4	0	0	72	10	119	1	1	66
Sub Chaser	PC	21	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	12
Torpedo Boat	PC	30	2	0	0	32	3	18	1	3	9
Mitsukami	APD	24	4	0	25	16	2	0	1	1	7
Matsuki	APD	33	4	0	9	64	8	179	1	1	40
Wakatake	APD	35	3	0	9	48	6	0	1	1	27

versely, a single Iowa class can put up more flak than a couple of average five-destroyer units.

The difference in destroyer classes can also be extreme. A single Battle or Sumner (both late war classes) puts up more ack-ack lead than a Capetown class CLAA. When assembled carefully, 1942 US air combat task forces can put up 2000 flak points easily and, by the end of that year, the Allies should be able to build at least one with a 4000 flak point rating. A player can afford to take a few risks with that much flak covering them! The Japanese don't have this advantage and must rely on CAP, making their incursions into heavy land based air zones even riskier.



And Don't Forget the Carriers!

The big question in the construction of air combat task forces, of course, is how many carriers they should incorporate. The ermta comment referring to p37 of the manual gives an equation for CAP deployment when attacked of: "If 6 plus a random number from 0-8 is less than the CV points, then CAP is halved." What this means is that 3 Allied carriers (with their 9 CV points) will fall this test 25% of the time resulting in 1.5 carrier's worth of CAP overhead. Now, compare this to the "sure thing" of having two carriers per task force always being able to keep the full two carrier's worth of CAP overhead. Hmmmm....

This formula is applied after others that also affect CAP, such as surprise, PPs, and leadership. Though probabilities say a player would be better off, on average, with three carriers contributing their full rating to CAP 75% of the time, I recommend running three task forces of two carriers each, to two task forces of three each. This allows a player to project air-power in more places at once, or at more times at once. By following this tactic of smaller carrier groupings with the Japanese, I can do better than the historical turn's Pearl Harbor raids 90+% of the time. Think about that.

Surface Combat Task Forces

In surface combat, it pays to have your opponent outnumbered. Be sure to flesh out surface combat task forces with destroyer squadrons that can unleash their deadly torpedos. Torpedos are their best chance to seriously hurt the big ships. The Japanese have their Long Lance torpedos which are brought into play early and enjoy a very long range.

Combat resolution works by the computer forming lines with the heavies in the lead. Since they tend to bang at each other, the side with the numbers advantage will usually get

free shots at the tail-end crowd. Don't expect to get more than two rounds of surface combat to during a gunnery duel. It happens, but rarely. This means many Allied destroyers, especially American ones, won't get many opportunities to get in close enough to use their torpedos. Still, each hit from a 5" gun on a battleship does 1/99th what it will take to sink something.

Light cruisers can also play an effective role in a surface combat task force, particularly in the case of some Allied light cruisers as



their guns are decent in their own right. Look at the Clevelands: flak like a CLAA, main batteries better than Exeters or Aobas, and good armor to boot. The first Cleveland class arrives in November of 1942. On the Japanese side, the Kitikamis look good. They sacrificed main turrets for torpedo launchers. Facing one of these inside torpedo range could be real interesting.

Bombardment Task Forces

When putting together a bombardment task force, *do not* include destroyers (unless you are concerned about submarines or you have nothing else handy). You should have a feel for where the sub activity is by recent attacks and can decide based upon that whether to save them for the surface combat forces or, in the case of the Japanese, maybe for transport task forces.

It is assumed that the air combat forces will deal with any air attacks and, thus, clear a path to the target. If not, at least with all big ships the chances of a seriously damaging hit is lowered. Light cruisers are usually better put in the surface combat groups than bombardment, too, as their guns usually contribute little on this mission.

Anti-Submarine Warfare Duty

Always choose the most "useless" destroyers and smaller ships for ASW duties. Dispatch them to the routine convoy ports (Nagoya, Los Angeles and Calcutta) where the computer automatically assigns them to ASW duty. Alternatively, use these ships to form up "hunter-killer" groups and have them patrol back and forth across areas of heavy sub activity. They also can be used as tail-end Charlies in surface combat fleets, but only if nothing better is handy. Since they burn fuel and don't contribute much firepower, lame destroyers are best deployed on ASW patrol, especially an otherwise weak one. Examples of "lame" destroyers include the Kamikazes, sub chasers, torpedo boats, Clemsons and British MTBs.

Command

Last, but far from least, *never* forget to include a task force leader with any task forces expected to (or fear will) see combat. A weak leader is rarely worse than no leader in naval combat and a great leader will make a tremendous difference. **cwv**

TWO YEARS AGO... THE FWS UNION DEPARTS FOR TAU CETI III VIA THE HYPERSPACE BOOSTER

Following years of instability and chaos - with the Federated Worlds (FW) and the United Democratic Planets (UDP) vying for superiority in the Local Group - in 2374 CE the hyperspace booster at Cetus Amicus was certified operational. The FW, eager to reestablish contact with the mysteriously silent Home Cluster, dispatched the FWS Union, under the command of Alex Seward, to use the booster to travel to Tau Ceti III - the location of the Home Cluster's booster. Captain Seward completed his mission, overcoming saboteurs and xenophobic locals, and uncovered the truth about the discontinuance of Development Assistance to the Local Group. Seward's findings led to an investigation by the Federated Worlds Special Forces' Intelligence Division (FSWF-ID). It was discovered that a conspiracy had been going on during those fifty two years of non-contact, involving high-level officials in not only the Home Cluster, but also in the Local Group. With members of both the FW and UDP governments implicated, both sides grew mistrustful and hostile. Following several military incidents, the UDP declared war on the Federated Worlds.

To Be Continued...

The War escalates this Spring

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Things Your Manual Never Told You

A Guide to CGW's Supplements for Gary Grigsby's Pacific War

by John E. Johnston III



Pacific War is, unquestionably, Gary Grigsby's finest work to date. What sets *Pacific War* apart from other current wargames is the level of detail it possesses. Land units are historically correct and vary in size from battalions to armies. Troop formations can also be divided into smaller units as needed. Air units include a staggering array of airplane types, organized into the historical plane squadrons that fought WWII in the Pacific. The heart of any Pacific wargame, however, has to be the ships involved. Here, *Pacific War* simply shines. Every ship above the destroyer level is included as an individual unit, and ships of destroyer level and below are included in multi-ship units and ship pools.

Pacific War puts the player in the role of theater HQ commanders. Air, land, and

sea forces are moved, transferred, created, assigned missions, given leaders, and sent on their missions with instructions. Just as in real life, though, those orders may well be ignored, misinterpreted, or even overtaken by events. As the theater HQ commander, the player has no tactical control over these results. While I plan to address the mechanics of *Pacific War* in a future article, it is sufficient to state here that *Pacific War* gives the player a very real feel for World War II high command in the Pacific theater, with its warts and all.

About the Expanded Table of Contents (See p. 126)

The table of contents in the *Pacific War* manual is best described as "minimalist." While elegant, it simply does not provide the level of detail required to allow the

player to locate needed material easily. The Expanded Table of Contents that accompanies this article was compiled specifically to remedy this omission of detail.

About the New Index (See pp. 122-123)

Many purchasers of *Pacific War* who were very disappointed by the brevity of the table of contents tried instead to locate items in the manual by using the index, only to find that feature had been left out entirely. The lack of an index for a game of this scope and complexity and in a manual of this size (156 pages) is puzzling. If ever a game manual needed an index, this one does. In order to rectify this error, the *Pacific War* index that accompanies this article was compiled with the help of SSI. This index should make it

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easier for users to locate specific items and references within the manual. When combined with the Expanded Table of Contents, it should make the vast amounts of information in the manual far more accessible to *Pacific War* players.

About the New Map (See pp. 106-107)

All computer wargames with onscreen maps that exceed one screen in size need to include a hard copy of the map for planning and analysis purposes. The need for a map in a monster game, particularly in a monster game which covers over seventy-eight million squares miles of territory (and the onscreen map of which must be shown one partial screen at a time), is self-evident. As a result, while SSI certainly may (and has been) criticized for the minimal table of contents and for not including an index in the manual, SSI's failure to include a hard copy map is without doubt the single greatest omission in *Pacific War*.

The detailed geography of the Pacific may be well known to some, but it is certainly barely known to others, and trying to locate unknown bases with exotic names by trial and error has been the source of a great deal of frustration for more than a few players. The lack of a map also inhibits some players from developing long-term strategic plans and forces them to "wing" their strategies while onscreen. SSI has stated that it did not include a map in the manual due to both the size of the play area involved and for cost-related reasons. With some encouragement from the staff of this magazine, they have been persuaded to include a map for inclusion with this article.

About the New Base Location Table (See p. 125)

To assist those players with a less-than-perfect mastery of the geography of the Pacific, a Base Location Table also accompanies this article. It was designed to allow the player to locate exotic-sounding and probably unfamiliar bases like Sarmi, Nüeni, and Telokbetong by a method other than the map-scrolling version of trial and error. To find a base using the table, look up the name of the base that you wish to find on the map. Next to its name are X and Y coordinates, as displayed on the map screen. The X (first) coordinate increases towards the right of the map; the Y (second) coordinate increases towards the bottom of the map. When the X and Y coordinates are known, the map display information will allow the player to find the base reasonably directly and easily on the game map.

About the New Player Turn Checklist (See pp. 119-120)

There are a considerable number of different types of reports, options, and orders that are available to the player during each open-ended Orders Phase in *Pacific War*. There are so many, in fact, that new players may find themselves unsure of just what things that they should do and in just what order that they should do them. To assist the new player, the *Pacific War* manual does feature an abbreviated "Orders Phase-Player Checklist" on pages 14 and 15, but this checklist leaves out many important functions. A player who follows it turn-by-turn will soon discover that not enough things have been done and that far too many things have been left undone.

The expanded Orders Phase Checklist that accompanies this article (which was jointly compiled by Gary Grigsby, William Highfield, and myself) is designed to remedy this situation. It lists almost all of the options available to the player and organizes them into logical subphases within the Order Phase. It also lists the relevant keystrokes for each option.

The checklist was designed to be used by having a player place its two sheets back-to-back in a clear plastic page protector, which can then be marked on with a water-based marker or grease pencil. As each option is exercised, simply fill in or check the matching box on the checklist.

Not only does this allow a player to tell when every relevant option has been exercised for each subphase or for the entire Order Phase, but the checklist can also prove invaluable if the game has to be saved in the middle of an Orders Phase for mundane matters like meals, sleep, or work, then restored later. ("Let's see, now where was I? Ah, yes, the checklist tells me that it's time to march my LCU's overland.") Important matters that need to be dealt with later in the Orders Phase can also be noted on the checklist near the appropriate item, and clearing the previous Order Phase's marks off of the plastic protector can give the player something to do besides biting his nails during the often-all-too-aptly-named Execution Phase.

The checklist is designed purely as a learning tool, not as any kind of a strait-jacket: all of the subphases are purely artificial, the sequence listed on the checklist can be varied or abandoned at will, and the entire checklist itself can be readily abandoned as soon as the player is comfortable with all of the nuances of the *Pacific War* Order Phase. Playtesters, however, have unanimously reported that use of the checklist makes *Pacific War* significantly easier to learn, play, and understand.

The ANZAC Unit Release Table

The following ANZAC units are scheduled to be released to Southwest Pacific HQ as listed:

Unit	Month
1 AUS Engr	Apr 42
7th AUS Infantry Div	May 42
6th AUS Infantry Div	Sep 42
9th AUS Infantry Div	Nov 42
3rd NZ Infantry Bde	Jul 43
8th NZ Infantry Bde	Aug 43

Unfortunately, this information was not included in the manual. If version 1.0 of *Pacific War* is being used (see below), the Southwest Pacific HQ must be put under computer total or operational control for one turn in order for each transfer to be implemented.

Bugs, Support and Fixes

There are a number of known bugs in *Pacific War* 1.0. They include but are not limited to the Missing Raider Battalion Bug, the Bermuda Triangle Bug (don't try to load planes onto already-loaded ships!), the 65,534-Gun Bug, the ANZAC Transfer Bug (see above), and the most serious of all, the West Coast Defense Bug. The latter is fairly serious in that there is a problem with the AI routines in *Pacific War* 1.0 such that the Allies do not protect the West Coast of the United States well at all.

All is well, though; these bugs have been addressed by Gary Grigsby in interim releases of *Pacific War*. Grigsby, incidentally, has been actively supporting *Pacific War* on the Gamers RoundTable on GENIE, where he has been answering questions, resolving problems, ending confusion, and posting interim bug fix versions for *Pacific War* (one cannot praise Grigsby too highly for doing this; his dedication to supporting *Pacific War* is amazing and all done "on his own time").

As of this article's deadline, the current interim version of *Pacific War* available on Genie is 1.06, which addresses all known *Pacific War* bugs and which includes some new features developed since 1.0, such as a command which cycles the player through all Task Forces in their home ports and which asks if these Task Forces should be removed or not. (Version 1.06 of *Pacific War* has also been uploaded to the SSI software library in the GAMAPUB Forum on CompuServe.) The accompanying sidebar, "*Pacific War* Support via GENIE" discusses how to sign up for GENIE and where to find the *Pacific War* discussion, interim releases, and related files.

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In Conclusion

Pacific War is a milestone in computer wargaming — it's the first true computer "monstergame." Despite a number of forecasts that such a game would have only a limited appeal, *Pacific War* has proved that there truly is a market for large, detailed, strategic wargames by exceeding all projected sales figures by a considerable margin and thereby giving SSI a very pleasant surprise. *Pacific War* has also convinced a number of board wargamers that it is finally time to migrate from the board world to the computer world. *Pacific War* is a game that succeeds well on a great many levels. If you enjoy large, detailed, complex strategy games, then this game is one that you don't want to miss.

As for SSI, one hopes that *Pacific War* has taught them a few lessons, to wit: (1) there is indeed a strong market for well-done strategic wargames, so more need to be developed and released; (2) a detailed table of contents and an index are essential components of any computer wargame manual; and, (3) a computer wargame should *always* include a hard copy of the game map.csw

Pacific War Support on GENie

Gary Grigsby is, as of press time, providing support for *Pacific War* on the GENie network. This support includes answering questions, resolving problems, ending confusion, and making interim bug fix versions of the main *Pacific War*.EXE file available for downloading.

The *Pacific War* discussion can be found on GENie in the *Pacific War* topic (Category 25, Topic 49) of the Games (Scorpio) RoundTable (805;1). *Pacific War*-related files, including the latest interim version of *Pacific War*, can be found in the Gamers RoundTable library (805;3).

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Pacific War Orders Phase Checklist

Week of: _____

REPORTS SUBPHASE

- Review last turn's battle reports (alt/B).
- Use SIGINT to review enemy Task Forces, bases, and land combat units (LCUs) that have been spotted (F5).
- Check losses/score (F9).
- Check sunken ships (F8).
- Check ship pools (F4).

REINFORCEMENT SUBPHASE

- Check for reinforcements (in Sydney, Calcutta, Colombo, Kweiyang, Kunming, Socrabaja, Auckland, Manila, and San Francisco if Allied; in Tokyo, Shanghai, and Port Arthur if Japanese).
- Check replacement pools (F7).
- Cycle through factory cities to see which planes are being produced and upgrade to newer models when applicable (F6).

HQ SUBPHASE

- Examine HQs(alt/F).
- List HQ units (alt/D).
- Relocate HQs (alt/E).
- Move HQs to TF in the same square (alt/S).
- Assign new leader to HQs (alt/L).
- Set HQ control (alt/K).
- Change base HQ (alt/C).
- Set HQ target (alt/G).
- List HQ aircraft (alt/X).
- Assign HQ air leader (alt/P).
- Reinforce bases (alt/R).

Pacific War Orders Phase Checklist (Continued)

LAND SUBPHASE

- Examine land units in sequence (S/W).
- Divide units as needed (D on Unit Data Display).
- Activate all LCUs that will be loaded, moved, or that will attack (A on Unit Data Display).
- Assign leaders to land units (F1 on Unit Data Display).
- March LCUs over land (alt/W).
- Call for immediate sealift forces (alt/T).

AIR SUBPHASE

- Check which enemy bases are exerting AZOCs (alt/Z).
- Check which friendly bases are exerting AZOCs (shlt/Z).
- Examine airfields in sequence (Z/A).
- Set priority target base (B).
- Set missions (D, N, NI, SA, OA, AB, T, D on Air Unit Display).
- Transfer air units (alt/A).
- Upgrade older plane types (C on air unit display).

TASK FORCE SUBPHASE

- Examine ports in sequence (O/P).
- Examine existing TFs for damage, fuel, and threat levels (N/G).
- Unload TFs at destination bases (U).
- Disband TFs at destination ports (R).
- Replenish TFs if possible (Y).
- Transfer damaged (or undamaged) ships to new TFs (T).
- Scuttle badly disabled ships.
- Check for isolated bases that may require special convoys in order to receive adequate supplies (alt/O).
- Create Transport TFs (and/or Tokyo Expresses, if Japanese) to resupply bases in range of enemy air or sea zones of control (C).
- Create Cargo TFs to resupply bases in rear areas (C).
- Create Replenishment TFs (C).
- Create combat TFs at friendly ports (C).
- Assign leaders to TFs (F1 on TF display).
- Load TFs with troops, supplies, or fuel (L).
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Gary Grigsby's Pacific War Base Location Table

Base Name	Coordinates		Base Name	Coordinates		Base Name	Coordinates	
	X	Y		X	Y		X	Y
Adak I.	62	11	Harbin	40	5	Palawan	26	22
Adelaide	22	62	Hawall	72	31	Palembang	15	22
Admiralty I.	38	38	Hengyang	30	10	Palmyra	67	40
Atopae	35	68	Hobart	25	71	Panay	28	22
Amami I.	37	16	Hollandia	34	37	Paramushiro	52	9
Amchitka	60	11	Hong Kong	29	14	Parapare	22	29
Amoy	31	14	Hughes	17	54	Peking	36	5
Anchorage	71	5	Imphal	23	4	Perth	4	53
Andaman I.	17	8	Iwo Jima	41	21	Phnom Penh	22	14
Anjyang	29	8	Jalut I.	52	38	Ponape	46	36
Anikang	31	6	Jitra	17	15	Port Arthur	38	8
Aomori	45	12	Johnston I.	64	33	Port Moresby	34	44
Aituu I.	58	9	Juneau	77	6	Pusan	39	12
Auckland	49	73	Kaifeng	34	6	Rabaul	40	41
Ball	17	30	Kauiwi	69	29	Rangoon	21	8
Baifapapan	22	27	Kawing	40	39	Rennell I.	44	48
Bangka I.	16	22	Khatao Iharu	19	16	Rockhampton	33	56
Bangkok	20	12	Kiifuwa I.	38	44	Rosel I.	36	47
Bataon	29	20	Kiska	60	10	Saigon	22	16
Botan I.	31	17	Kikokiyushu	39	13	Saipan	41	28
Batavia	14	25	Kuala Lumpur	16	17	Sakhalin I.	48	8
Bick	33	35	Kuantan	18	17	Sakshima I.	35	16
Bikini I.	50	34	Kunming	26	7	Samar	31	22
Bonin I.	42	20	Kwajalein I.	51	36	San Francisco	84	20
Bougainville	41	43	Kweilin	29	10	Sapporo	45	11
Brisbane	33	60	Kwelyang	29	7	Sarawak	20	22
Broome	17	40	Lae	36	42	Sarmi	34	36
Buka I.	42	42	Lagasaki	32	20	Sasebo	38	13
Buna	35	43	Lanchow	32	4	Seattle	62	12
Bugayan	29	24	Lashio	24	6	Seoul	38	10
Calcutta	20	2	Leyte	30	23	Shanghai	35	11
Caritan	37	41	Lingayen	29	19	Shimushu I.	51	10
Carlon I.	62	47	Los Angeles	87	24	Shortland	42	44
Cape	37	41	Macassar	21	31	Singapore	17	19
Gloucester	37	41	Madang	36	40	Singora	18	15
Cebu	29	23	Makin I.	53	41	Soembawa I.	19	32
Ceram	27	33	Mandalay	23	6	Soerabaja	16	28
Changsha	30	9	Manila	29	21	Sorong	29	33
Charter Towers	31	52	Manokwari	31	33	Suva	54	57
Chengtu	30	5	Marcus I.	47	24	Sydney	30	64
Chilung	33	15	Mauli	71	30	Takamatsu	40	14
Christmas I.	71	42	Medan	15	15	Takao	31	15
Chungking	30	6	Melbourne	25	65	Tarakan	24	24
Clark Field	30	20	Menando	26	29	Tarawa	53	42
Cloncurry	28	48	Midway	60	25	Tawi Tawi	25	23
Columbo	11	3	Mine Bay	36	45	Teleokbetoeing	15	24
Cooktown	31	49	Mindoro	28	21	Tenimbar I.	26	37
Dacca	21	3	Mit	23	22	Tientsin	37	16
Darwin	25	40	Morotai	29	29	Timor	22	36
Davao	29	26	Mukden	39	7	Tinian	40	28
Dimapur	23	2	Nagoya	42	14	Tilatjap	14	27
Dutch Harbor	66	10	Nanchang	32	10	Tokyo	43	15
Eastern U.S.	93	20	Nanking	33	9	Tonga	59	57
Elate	48	55	Nanning	27	11	Townsville	32	52
Emirau I.	40	37	Nassau	68	53	Trincamalee	12	4
Eniwetok I.	48	33	Nauru I.	49	42	Truk	42	34
Espirito Santo	47	53	Nderi	47	49	Tsingtao	35	9
Eloroto I.	49	11	Negras	28	23	Ulithi	36	29
Flores	20	34	New Georgia	43	45	Waigen I.	30	32
Gasmata	39	42	Noemfoor	33	34	Wake I.	51	29
Green I.	42	41	Nourmea	45	56	Wenchow	32	13
Guadalcanal	45	46	Oahu	70	30	Wewak	36	39
Guam	39	29	Okinawa	36	16	Wialeai I.	38	32
Hainan	26	13	Osaka	41	14	Waije I.	53	36
Holpohong	25	11	Owens, Stanley M.	34	43	Yap	35	29
Halmahera	29	30	Palau	33	24	Zhanjiang	27	12
Honkoku	32	8						

Experience in Pacific War Counts

by Donald H. Scheiterna

One of the important factors in resolution of combat with air groups or land combat units ("LCUs") in *Gary Grigsby's Pacific War* is the experience of the units involved. At the start of the war ('41 campaign) the Allies have both few and (largely) inexperienced units. As a result, they tend to be steamrollered by the Japanese units that have earned their experience from years of combat in China prior to Pearl Harbor.

As the war progresses, the equation gradually changes as attrition slowly wears down those tough Japanese units and the Allied units are strengthened through their survival of their "trial by combat" ordeal. These notes address things more from the Allied perspective as the Allies have the early problem, but the same techniques apply equally, in most cases, to the later war Japanese formations, assuming they can spare the time to implement them (which they could not historically).

The Key to Gaining Experience

A player can improve unit experience by judicious application of training, in the case of air groups, and with careful "blooding" of LCUs. Finally, keeping a careful eye on the replacement rules is also important in both cases of planes and troops.

First, let's look at some basic rules for judging experience. LCUs often arrive at about 50 experience (except for a few of the better trained units, such as raiders, paratroops, Marines and some Aussies returning from the desert war). Land based air groups arrive at about 60. Carrier air groups are usually received at around the 70 experience level.

Experience	LCU Rating	Air Rating
0-30	Poor	Hopeless
31-50	Inexperienced	Poor
51-60	Average	Inexperienced
61-70	Fair	Average
71-80	Good	Fair
81-90	Excellent	Good
91-99	Elite	Excellent

The above constitutes my own subjective ratings, but they're based on the program's numbers and the combat equations. An LCU at 30 experience will fail part one of its experience checks 50% of the time (pg. 35 of manual) and the leader's land combat rating test will fail seven times in eight, for about a 42% net chance of ending up fighting the combat with an effective readiness of one. If it does slip past that set of checks, there's roughly a 45% chance it will fail the next set, resulting in it functioning at 25% its current readiness (or 25% net readiness at best). Combined, this means the LCU has roughly a 30% chance at defending as the weak unit it is, and about 70% chance that it will defend about the same as an unoccupied base (2 squads). Never count on a unit with 30 or less experience to withstand any attack by itself. Putting a base leader in charge of units of this class, without a better unit, is a good way of eliminating leaders. Let the HQ leader who is elsewhere handle these sorts of lost causes.

At 51 experience, the LCU cannot fail either of the two sets of

negative experience checks, so it's now a "normal" unit for combat purposes, though it may still be a hit of a pushover if met by a real force.

The LCUs of less than 50 experience do gain one experience per week unless they are Indian, Dutch or Philippino. Engineer units only gain one experience point per week if they are at less than 25. This is the slow way to improve unit experience, and only good unit units hit their "experience by training" ceiling.

Combat is the Best Teacher

The way to best increase the experience of an LCU is to get it some combat experience. If it's one of the above mentioned hopeless units, it may be more trouble than it's worth, but those with experience in the 50s are worth blooding and evolving into useful troops. It's important to remember that replacements lower the experience of a unit, so committing a unit to engagements that result in heavy losses will be counterproductive.

The US and Aussies have Guadalcanal or the other jungle islands in the Solomons and New Guinea as training grounds for troops. The Brits have Burma. For the Japanese, all of the above are also useful, along with the Bataan peninsula. These areas are good because of the heavy jungle terrain cover that results in lowered casualties and stiffened enemy resistance. Atolls, conversely, are the worst place to train troops by combat.

The idea is to cut off and isolate a group of enemy troops, then put one good unit as an "example" troop to the green ones, and stack some green units in the base to get experience hunting down those enemies in the jungle. Bring the good unit to help dodge disastrous results on the experience checks mentioned above (and, thus, avoid having the whole force surrender when everyone forgets to bring their ammo). Pack a decent leader, too, as the troops will fight better, take fewer losses and, as a result, gain experience faster. Keep them well supplied, protect them from air attacks and naval bombardments, and activate them every week. Try to arrange things so a rear echelon HQ manages the base and doesn't drain off preparations points (PPs) from precious spearhead HQs. A couple months of this sort of action can turn those average units into excellent ones, ready to hit the beaches on their own.

Breaking Up Is Easy To Do (But...)

Be aware that, as of my last test, dividing units off from their parent, getting them experience and then rejoining them with their parent unit does *not* result in an increase in the parent's experience. I was hoping I could use sub-units in battles, thus not risking the parent's whole, and make use of the experience gained in the whole when they recombined. No luck.

One can, however, create overstrength formations in this fashion and get experience even faster since overstrength formations receive no replacements until they fall below TOE strength levels. Thus, experience gains from combat are not diluted with overstrength units as their losses are not made up for by green replace-

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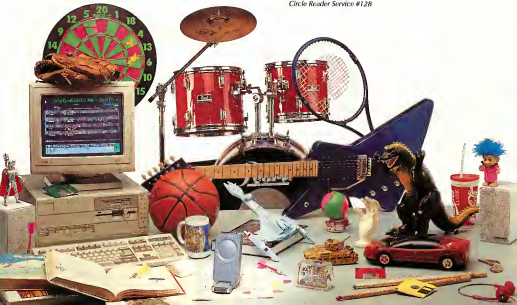
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ments. Instead, the survivors improve and tough it out until unit strength (in squads, artillery and APCs) gradually falls back to its standard TOE maximum.

Overstrength units are especially nice for beachheads, though a bit more cumbersome to put ashore. That is because they don't soak up over-the-beach supply for replacements (1 supply per squad, etc.), but use it all to bring their readiness up to the 49% maximum for that situation. Be careful when creating overstrength units. Do not lower their total experience in the process, or if that happens, blood the unit again before using it. I don't actively use this as a tactic, as it's hard to manage, but I do on occasion benefit from it in the course of play when previously deployed subunits meet up with their parent again.

Pushing Fledgling Air Groups Out of the Nest... *Gently*

With land air groups the situation is similar, but air groups have better training programs. They are also far more prone to take heavy losses if committed when inexperienced. Additionally, they tend to be much easier to get to the "front" by island hopping. Thus, they often experience heavy losses and accomplish very little in the process.

Especially early in the war, Allied air groups are severely out-matched in the state they arrive. Check San Francisco for air reinforcements each week even if the West Coast is under computer control. (The West Coast tends to forget to forward air units to the front often — so it is best to manage that personally by forming up convoys, boarding the air groups, and setting the convoy destination.) Immediately set any newly arrived air groups to "training" missions. The PPs required come from the West Coast HQ, so they don't affect any front line HQs.

If one opts to island-hop new air groups to the front, do so before

they take on replacements. Repeatedly island-hopping these units results in attrition that costs the group both experience and planes. The planes do go back into the pool, so are not actually lost, but the player must expend supplies when they are replaced. It's better to let them get up to full strength, then board them on merchant vessels (MCSs) and ship them to a base within one flight of their deployment base.

Controlling Air Group Losses

Personally, I don't use any air group in actual combat until they are at least average experience (60) except in emergencies (and I accept the fact they're going to get creamed in that case). Setting them directly to training when they are received usually means that, even after being brought up to strength, they are close to or above this 60 point level.

Have some idea of what sort of opposition new air groups will face from the activities of the enemy air in the area. Lop-sided losses indicate a severe numerical imbalance, severe experience imbalance, or equipment quality imbalances (or a combination of these). The combat reports generally show which. This assumes the wise use of air commanders. (Use the best air commander, assuming he's better rated in air than your HQ commander, as the HQ-commander's "air attaché.") Equipment of inferior quality in the hands of excellent pilots will devastate superior equipment in the hands of average pilots.

Don't feed average or lower rated air groups into bases where they face top-notch enemy groups. They'll lose more than they'll gain. Place them against groups estimated to be of a lower skill, smaller numbers, and inferior equipment. Let the fledglings get some confidence shooting down wimps before sending them after the bruisers.

The best way to accomplish this is to find a nice quiet backwater



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with a lightly held, small, enemy base. Get the air groups within "normal" range operating from a level 4 or 5 air base and have them bomb the enemy LCUs by choosing those as the base's air target. A few weeks or months of crunching coral works wonders for their willingness to tackle the tough guys, and greatly improves their skill. Keep them well supplied, make sure they have a good aggressive commander, and watch them fly two to four missions each week (or more if they can take pot-shots at enemy transport convoys). Just avoid taking losses. Bombing missions increase skill the fastest with the least losses if heavy enemy fighter coverage and heavy flak are avoided.

Get these new units to at least a fair, or a good experience level, then commit them *carefully*. As long as they're shooting down as many as they lose, they should hold their own or improve. If they get battered by numbers or better enemy groups, pull them out for a break crushing coral again.

This technique is especially important when converting groups to newer and better equipment. The conversion loses the unit some of their edge as they need to adapt to the new planes. Pull them out of the front base before converting them, preferably to a base that meets the above "coral crunching" criteria. Do the conversion and immediately assign them to training missions until they have all their planes readied following the switch-over. Then, put them to work crushing coral a bit to get their edge back. It's important with new planes because the replacement pool is initially shallow, and it is unwieldy to have to convert the unit back and forth from old to new to old due to heavy combat losses. With the new and (hopefully) improved aircraft, and good experience, they should be able to more than hold their own. I generally convert my best air units to new planes first for exactly this reason. (It seemed to work that way in the real war, too.)

Landing the Heavy Bombers

Heavy bombers tend to be a special case for several reasons. The planes are much slower in arriving as less are produced per turn. They have a useful range for night missions which, at least early on, only have flak to deal with. However, before throwing heavy bomber groups directly into the fray flying night missions, consider: (1) night missions aren't nearly as effective as day missions; (2) only one night mission is flown per turn, versus two day missions; and (3) night missions are flown at normal range, not the extended (1.5 times) range at which many day missions may be flown.

These points argue for putting the heavies through the same training regime as the other types. If they're high experience, they can still fly those night missions but they will now be more effective at night, too. If they do fly in daylight, they will be far more survivable. A suppressed air base, due to accurate bombing from a couple of groups of heavies, will be spending a lot of time and supplies repairing planes damaged on the ground and less time putting up CAP, and even the CAP they do put up is apt to be less experienced that it was before the bombing losses. Both of these factors will tend to result in the heavy bomber groups gaining more experience, rather than suffering the heavy attrition they would if merely average in experience, and result in more planes active at a time.

Another technique that carries over from the LBU notes is that of oversized units. Air units have maximum TOE sizes which cannot be exceeded. For most Army units, that number is 50. For most Marine and Navy units, it's 30. Tac-bombers and heavy bombers top out at 40 per group. The way to achieve the same effect (i.e., the "over-sized" unit) is to put a 50 plane fighter or fighter-bomber unit operating from a front-line, size 2 airfield. It



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is possible to fly a maximum number of planes from a group equal to the airfield size times ten. Thus one can fly only 20, leaving 30 ready replacements grounded. When losses are taken, they aren't replaced, diluting the experience rating. Instead, the ready planes are flown in their place. The unit will pay a price later when it moves to a larger airfield and is replaced up to full size, but this is one way to bootstrap lower experience units to great quality fairly fast. Call this the "cream skimming" method of training.

To best achieve this effect, the full-strength unit should be within one air transfer range of the deployment base. No sense shedding too many planes to attrition before they even get to their new base. Once they are blooded and at the point of absorbing replacements, rotate them to a slightly larger — size 3 base, then a 4. A nice side effect of this technique is the lowered supply cost of operating the unit in a possibly isolated base. Since it's actually above full operational size, until it drops to maximum airfield capacity size, it will use no supply points in absorbing replacements. This can be very handy in invasions where a player wants some beachhead CAP but doesn't want air groups soaking up supplies the troops protecting them need even more. Of course, first the base must be captured (grin).

Carrier Groups: Making the Best Better

Carrier air groups are generally in better shape when newly received. However, they are also much more vulnerable to complete destruction through the loss of their floating bases if they don't quite manage the job. I prefer to commit my carrier air groups only when they are one level better than my land based groups are upon commitment, usually an absolute minimum of "fair" and preferred "good," if I can't manage "excellent."

Carrier air can't be "over-sized" but are subject to the same effect

of apparent increase in skill due to the "cream skimming" technique. The problem is that their total number also dwindles until the carrier makes port or meets a replenishment fleet, and then the replacements result in an experience drop, often a significantly large one.

The cure is the "backwater coral-crushing cocktail." I choose a small atoll base, on the edge of the enemy's territory and outside the range of other LBA assets, if possible, and have my carrier stand-off the maximum range that allows the planes to still hit the LCUs or base. The base should have no more than a level 1 airfield so that fighter opposition is not present and, preferably, only a small port so that flak is light. Pick a home base within out-and-back range of the carriers, make it their home "training" port, have them sail out, hit the target base for two turns, then return to port for supplies and PPs. Repeat until the air-groups are about to go on strike for some "real" action, then send the carrier back into harm's way. It's actually easier to get carrier groups up to spec than LBA (Land Based Aircraft) as one can put the base where desired, rather than trying to shoehorn a training airfield into a hot zone.

The Final Experience

Using these training techniques, a player's divisions and air groups should become much more effective in combat and much less apt to fold-up under the pressure of intense activity. After one too many sudden surrenders by invasion forces, and watching one more green air group eliminated as an effective force as virtually every plane was damaged or destroyed every week, I began paying more attention to this aspect as a part of the total logistics of the theater. I expect other players of *Pacific War* will see the same difference in unit performance. **cmw**

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ATAC



Can Argonaut make up the lost ground?

by Robin Matthews

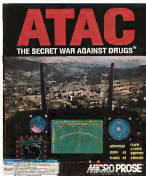
Argonaut had a pretty glittering career up to its release of the multi-airplane simulator, *Birds of Prey* (published in the U.S. by Electronic Arts). *BOP* was a great concept, with its multitude of missions and the chance to fly more than 40 of the world's greatest aircraft. Ultimately, the game had poor graphics, awful controls and was just 'old hat'. There was a rumor circulating at the time of its release that *Argonaut* was aware of its shortcomings and, as a result, certain features were kept back for another product.

Whether that was true or not, *Argonaut* has released its latest flight simulator via **MicroProse**. *ATAC*, sub-titled "The Secret War against Drugs (Note: a new flight sim without an "F" anywhere in its title)", is a multi-plane simulator and, bearing in mind the disappointments of *BOP*, was approached with a large degree of caution by this reviewer.

Set in the near future, *ATAC* is a combined simulation/strategy game that places the gamer in control of a special task force created to fight the war against drugs. The game's fiction asserts that it is 2003. In that imagined future, the drug problem has become so far out of control and the Colombian drug barons have become so powerful that they are out of the reach of normal law enforcement. Hence, the United Nations, with the backing of the world's major nations (and a certain amount of forethought with which we have not seen demonstrated in the international body) has set up an elite force to bring down the drug barons and their cartel: The Advanced Tactical Air Command.

ATAC is neither short of materials nor manpower. The player's persona is pro-

TITLE:	ATAC: The Secret War Against Drugs
SYSTEM:	IBM
GRAPHICS:	EGA/VGA/MCGA
PRICE:	\$59.95
PROTECTION:	Documentation Lookup
DEVELOPERS:	Argonaut
PUBLISHERS:	MicroProse Hunt Valley, MD



vided with: 250 special agents to provide intelligence, eight of the world's best pilots and a secret airbase within the borders of Colombia which has been upgraded and converted for use by eight F-22 Advanced Tactical Fighters and eight AH-64A Apache Helicopter Gunships.

ATAC can be played at one of three levels: Air Strike, Limited Campaign and Full Campaign, each giving a greater challenge. Level One, Air Strike, is designed

to be either an introduction to those unfamiliar with flight sims or merely to provide a souped-up shoot-em-up. Gamers figuratively jump into the nearest F-22 or Apache, take off and buzz around Colombia looking for action. There is no campaign on this level, but *Air Strike* allows one to get used to the aircraft controls and "feel" of the two platforms.

In Level Two, the Limited Campaign, the gamer participates in a crusade against one of the four drug barons. This level provides a gentle learning curve for those who wish to progress from the simple *Air Strikes* up to the full blown Campaign. Against one drug baron the results of one's efforts are more clearly seen and there is a lesser chance of the big drug consignments getting through.

Level Three is the biggie, a full blown campaign against all four powerful drug barons. Senores Orviedo, Cesar, Sanchez and Velez are powerful and dangerous, and this Level will stretch your strategy and resources to the limits. It is unlikely that you will succeed at this level until the limited campaigns are truly mastered.

Arrear of Flying

As far as the flight models are concerned, the two aircraft are very, very different. Neither aircraft flies as realistically as those simulated in *Falcon 3.0* or *Gunship 2000*, but the controls are sensitive and flying has just the right degree of challenge. The AH-64A Apache takes some real flying, especially when things heat-up. The F-22, a combined Lockheed/Boeing Stealth development of the F-15, is a thoroughbred fighter interceptor and is very responsive. It has horizontal and almost vertical tail surfaces, thrust

vectoring systems and the ability to fly at 148km/h technically stalled, pointing upwards at 60 degrees but still under full control. Maximum speed is 921 mph at sea level, Mach 1.7 at 30,000 feet. Armed with a 20mm cannon, internal Sidewinders or AAM's it also features "new design" weapon racks for extra ordnance.

The Apache has been around since 1986 and is accepted as the world's supreme helicopter gunship. The Apache is a standard model in all modern helicopter simulators, since it features advanced communication systems, navigational flight aids, Target Acquisition/Designation sight (TAD) and helmet mounted sighting system. With a maximum speed of 162 knots and 3.5 tons of armaments, including its tank busting 30mm Chain gun, it's a real mean machine.



The flight controls take some mastery, but are not as complicated as those found in modern "deep" flight sims. Most controls are accessed by single key commands, and they are fairly standard, "w" and "s" for throttle, numeric pad for movement etc. Mouse and joystick are also supported with the former being best for menu selections and the latter for flight control.

ATAC also contains some sophisticated features with sensitivity toggles, advanced time at x2, x4, x8 and x16, and lots of various external views, including a floating camera perspective. In fact, at any one time it is possible to put four to eight friendly aircraft in the air and jump in and out of the cockpits of all.

Bearing in mind the other aspects of *ATAC*, the level of difficulty/realism/playability is about right, but the scenery detail does leave a little to be desired. Perhaps, it's a question of being spoiled by the likes of *Comanche: Maximum Overkill* and *Harrier*, but it is difficult to suspend one's disbelief when the countryside is bereft of trees, lacks contours and I suspect that my F-22 actually ploughed straight through a mountain at one stage — not a bad evasive maneuver, eh?

Ad Hoc Missions

In *ATAC* there are no pre-set missions,

it's up to the player to gather intelligence, make deductions and create his own missions. Intelligence Reports are gathered by various agencies, civilians, special agents and electronic surveillance. These reports are the key to the Campaign games, without them the drug barons will import/export uninterrupted and will take over the world. The reports will cross refer to the detailed maps and allow you to prioritize targets.

Here the strategy element comes into its own. The manual contains a series of articles about drug manufacture, illustrating these with small novellas about the people involved all the way along the drug chain. This includes details of the socio-economic history of regions such as Colombia, indicating why the drug industry is so entrenched. The four drug barons do *not* have complete control of the country, but do occupy a sizeable part. They are dependent on the indigenous population to work the plantations, factories and production sites and the whole situation is politically volatile.

If the player's missions disrupt the flow of cash this may force the workers to leave the barons. If on the other hand, one's pilots blow up several carriages of civilians when they blow up the drug train, this is likely to drive the populous back into the protection of the barons. Each target has an element of strategic risk, and this must be weighed up before launching strikes.

The country is littered with buildings, farms and factories linked with drug production, and also with homes, schools and hospitals. Intelligence is fairly reliable, as long as agents are kept supplied, but civilian casualties must be avoided at all costs. The drug barons ignore the player's character as long as they are left alone, but to "win," one must destroy key installations, disrupt drug shipments, interrupt his cash flow and force his work force to desert him.



The barons, not being short of a dollar or two, have their own defensive and offensive equipment, varying from DC 10 transports, Cessna light planes, Hughes

helicopters and even the latest Mig's (including the Mig 29 Fulcrum). Successful intelligence is the only way to defeat these dealers in death, and the gathering of facts



and speculation is critical.

Since one must keep the agents supplied (otherwise the quality of intelligence information will deteriorate), supply missions are necessary. These can be flown either automatically or manually. General recon missions also improve intelligence reports. It is here that the multi-plane feature comes into its own, and it is possible to switch from plane to plane, and from chopper to chopper in one double key stroke. In this way one can always seek out the more interesting bits of the action, and leave the computer to carry out the more mundane tasks.

In the campaign modules, the countryside is a target-rich environment, varying from buildings, trains, trucks, planes etc., containing anything from supplies, cash, the raw coca leaf harvest and also, the finished refined product.

The free form of *ATAC* is superb, reminiscent of some of the best parts of *Jetfighter II*, and allows the player to form his/her own strategy. The Level Three campaign game is a real challenge, but the design of the game is such that it can be replayed over and over again, as the locations and events are randomized.

If the individual components of *ATAC* are taken in isolation, there are better serious flight sims, there are more frantic shoot-em-ups, and there are deeper and more satisfying strategy games. The normal problem with "combined" products is that no matter how good the separate elements are, the whole is always less than the sum. In *ATAC*, this is not the case, the modules all meld together well and produce a total game that is far more than its components. *ATAC* is by no means a perfect product, but it will appeal to a wide audience who are looking for something a bit different, a successful mix of flight simulator, strategy and good 'ole carnage.

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Only The Cool Parts Of The Civil War

Sid Meier Shares Some Thoughts About His Next Project

by Alan Emrich

The five days I spend in Las Vegas at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show are always a mixed bag of good times and exhausting work. One of the experiences that fell under the "good times" heading this year was an opportunity to spend some time hanging out with MicroProse's Ultimate Game Wizard, Sid Meier. While watching him noodle around with their *World Circuit* game during a lull in the show was entertaining (we nearly busted a gut when he drove over the man with the checkered flag at 200mph), his "next project" stories were better!

While I was interviewing him for details about what goes on behind the closed doors of his MPS office (relax, it's game development), their Grand Vizier of Public Relations, the gracious and talented Kathy Gilmore, checked in occasionally to make sure that not too many beans were being spilled. Fortunately, she was kept busy enough with software buyers that I was able to get some privy info.

One important preface is that this game project, which will be a game on the American Civil War (1861-1865), is *not* locked into a schedule. If the game does not develop smoothly, the project may be scrapped entirely. However, it is pretty far along and appears very likely to be published.



Sid Meier in the throes of an "inspirational flash." Note calloused game designer feet in the background.

Sid Meier: A Personality Profile

Before getting into the details of the game, I must give readers an idea of what it is like to talk to Sid Meier (I'm told that I do a pretty respectable impression of the famous game designer).

Sid Meier is very laid back. Closing on 40, the two most used adjectives in his gaming vocabulary are "cool" and "fun." With thoughtful pauses and inflections in his low key manner of speech, it's clear that there is a playful

pixie working the controls in his programmer brain. If one could but reverse-engineer Sid Meier's personal definitions of "cool" and "fun," his design secrets would be exposed.



Sid's hits and misses.

Why The Civil War?

When he was a boy, Sid Meier used to flip through pictorial history books. One in particular stands out in his memory, *The American Heritage History of the Civil War*. In his Civil War game design, Mr. Meier is attempting to capture the essence of that book and its presentation of the complexities of the Civil War in a manner which is visually (as well as viscerally) entertaining. Mr. Meier wants to recreate the toy soldiers (which grown-ups now call "mini-zans") feel of playing in the sandbox so that players will have fun like they were kids again.

Sid Meier's Civil War game (that's NOT the official title, by the way) has the player assuming the role of no individual person. Because the game telescopes during play between strategic, operational and tactical levels, the player will have to fill many roles. One moment, he might be an American President and the next, a general in the field. Sid Meier opted for this variance in command perspective because "no one person did all the really cool and fun stuff." Mr. Meier went on to describe the player's role as sort of the Pug Henry (from *War and Remembrance*) of the Civil War — i.e., at every major event when it occurs.

Time Is Still Everything

The game is currently set to play in real-time, as opposed to being turn based (as in *Civilization*). When asked if a real-time turn structure would finally begot modern or multiple human options in a Sid Meier game, the reply was "W-o-o-h... We'll see." Mr. Meier then went on to underscore his deeply held belief that strong AI was critical to a game's success and enjoy-

ability. The computer opponent cannot be perceived as artificially cheating or a weak player. As with *Civilization*, no special effort is likely to be made to be the game in for classroom use.

Larger, mundane matters of the Civil War, such as logistics, are likely to be minimized (if they are presented at all). These are simply not "fun."

However, smaller tactical battlefield operations, will be included. Mr. Meier envisions a complete system for fighting out battles tactically (presumably at the brigade/regiment level which, technically, is more grand tactical than tactical). When asked about a miniatures tie-in for lead pushers (i.e., the ability to print out orders of battles to be fought out on a table top and then input the results), Mr. Meier responded favorably.

Tactical battles will be optional. In an effort to keep the war moving, they can be skipped and left to the computer to resolve in seconds. In order to keep things manageable, the Civil War game envisioned by Sid Meier will only be playable in the Eastern Theater (From North Carolina to Pennsylvania). The Mississippi campaigns and the war at sea will both be handled abstractly by a player-defined priority system. "If it's fun, it works," says Mr. Meier, who added that having two campaigns (east and west) raging at the same time would detract from the player's total enjoyment.

What About Play Balance?

When asked how such a one-sided affair as the American Civil War could ever be play balanced, Mr. Meier indicated that he had given that a lot of thought. Apparently, the focal point of the game will be the Union election of 1864. If Lincoln loses, so does the Union, as the South will get a negotiated peace.

Foreign intervention is also possible. "I thought it might be cool to have Napoleon III at Gettysburg," intimated Mr. Meier. Other events such as the draft riots and copperheads will have their effects on the game as well.

Remember Civilization?

Finally, I asked if Sid Meier would ever go back and do a bit more for his wildly successful *Civilization* game. "There's too much demand for *Civilization* stuff to ignore it," he said. Among the many ideas he's kicking around for that game are a "what happens next" on earth kit and a "Civ in Space" expansion module.

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The Eagle Has Landed... Slowly



MicroProse's F-15 Strike Eagle III

by Doug Fick

Doug Fick is an F-16 Instructor Pilot and Flight Examiner with the Vermont Air National Guard. He has logged over 1500 hours of flight time in both F-16As and F-16Cs.

As the name suggests, *F-15 Strike Eagle III (SE3)* is MicroProse's third installment of their *F-15 Strike Eagle* series. In an attempt to keep up with the competition, MicroProse pushes computer capabilities to the limit with advanced graphics and realism.

From the moment the box is opened, it's easy to tell *SE3* is a simulation of a modern fighter. Just one glance at the list of commands reveals the more than 80 keyboard combinations needed to run this high-tech bird. This can be either very intimidating or enticing, depending on the player's personality. I'll have to admit, I was a little of both when I saw this. Obviously, *SE3* is not a program that can be jumped into without at least some familiarity with the manual.

Mission Briefing

The manual is written in four sections, with aircraft controls covered first. This is the "nuts and bolts" section that discusses all of the cockpit and radar displays, along with basic explanations of all 80+ control keys. The following section deals with the standard mode (i.e. less realistic mode) of operation. Air-to-air and air-to-ground employment and landing are all discussed. The next section covers the authentic mode of operation and is nearly a repeat of

TITLE:	F-15 Strike Eagle III
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	\$79.95
PROFESSION:	None
DESIGNERS:	Andy Hicks, Jim Day, George Wargo, Chris Clark
PUBLISHER:	MicroProse North Valley, MD



the standard mode discussion but points out the differences between the two. Lastly, air combat, scenarios and weapons are explained.

The air-to-air section is a mediocre treatise on air combat, while the scenario discussion does a credible job of setting the stage for the one historical (Iraq) and two hypothetical (Korea and Central America) theaters of operation. The weapons section consists of short descriptions on the mod-

ern combat aircraft and associated ordnance and threat systems that are presented in the simulation.

After reading the manual, I still had a lot of unanswered questions about some of the more complex bombing modes and felt the air-to-air section could have been more detailed. The *Strike Eagle* is the most sophisticated strike bomber in existence, using some of the most advanced and complex avionics systems to achieve remarkable accuracy. Overall, the manual covers most of the material needed but, unlike the aircraft, misses the mark. The manual definitely doesn't do the gamer or the program justice. Ah well, there's only one solution for the die hard sim-fanatic — jump in and take a spin.

Preflight

The *Strike Eagle* (alias "Mudhen") was designed primarily as a single ship, night interdiction aircraft. In keeping with this mind set, MicroProse designed the program around single aircraft operations. Thus, *SE3* is a "me against the world" game — once across the front line, the player is all alone and everything out there is hostile.

All game options are selected from an open hangar. From here, a quick start single mission can be selected as well as one of three theaters of operation. Jumping into quick start puts the player right into the cockpit with a standard load of Mk-82 freefall bombs. Careers can be either single mission or campaign. Once one of the three scenarios are selected, the next step



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is to receive a mission briefing. This includes target, weather and munitions data. The munitions data is a recommended load and can be changed as desired.

For the most part, all the menu screens are intuitive and well laid out. After just a few minutes in the program, I had a good feel for where everything was and how it worked. The weapons screen does take some getting used to. Instead of listing the weapons by name, ordnance is displayed graphically in front of the Strike Eagle. It takes a while to learn to recognize each munition.

Takeoff

My first impression was "Wow, this is one really good looking program," quickly followed by "Wow, this is one really slow program!"

Graphically, the game is a delight. I spent the first ten minutes just looking at the Eagle from the external views. Gear, speed brake and ordnance load are all faithfully reproduced. When a missile or bomb is released the graphics change to reflect accordingly. The sky deserves a mention. It's the best I've seen in any program to date. I still haven't decided if I like the way that ground detail is displayed. At first it annoyed me. It seemed to flicker by looking more like a brown or green ocean with the sun rippling off it, but after playing the program for awhile this sensation went away.

Targets are well detailed and consist of an immense array varying from Scud launchers to bridges to anything else that can be imagined. If a target is in the middle of a city, sure enough, there will be a city faithfully reproduced right down to the minarets. The anti-aircraft fire from within the city looked like it came from a CNN highlight film of Baghdad with tracers arcing everywhere. Normally, on the first pass over the target all the gunners are asleep, but try to come in a second time and Mr. GsH-23 just might have a 23 millimeter surprise waiting.

The detailed graphics come at a very heavy cost. I've seen the program run on everything from a 386/33Mhz system to a 486/50Mhz system. On a 386/33 with the

graphics all turned down to the minimum level, it's barely fast enough to be usable. Turning the graphics up on this system leaves the program so choppy that I wouldn't want to play it. On a 486/50 and the highest level of detail the program shows some choppiness but normally can sustain at least six frames per second and usually runs over ten per second. I find anything less than five or so to be unusable but not everyone feels the same way I do.



In The Cockpits

SE3 provides seven different multipurpose displays to keep track of aircraft systems, targeting and weapons status. There are three in the front cockpit and four in the back. Each display is user programmable as to what is shown. The options are



radar (both air-to-air and air-to-ground), tactical situation display (TSD; a moving map showing the Strike Eagle in the center), horizontal situation indicator (HSI; a navigational instrument also used for the ILS landing system), attitude director indicator (ADI; an artificial horizon used for flying in instrument conditions), armament page (showing either air-to-air or air-to-ground ordnance selection), heads-up display repeater (nearly identical to the ADI), a master caution page showing which systems are inoperative due to combat damage and lastly, the tactical electronic warfare system (TEWS; showing threats either by icon in the standard mode or numeric system in the authentic mode).

With so much flexibility can come con-

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CONQUERED KINGDOMS: • Instead of always taking 60% of the counties in Cascadia, switch to taking thrones as your objective. Having to take all the thrones in a given Cascadia campaign makes for a whole new style of strategy. • Something very few people know is that you can double teleport in the same turn with two wizards. If both wizards start with 7 mana or better, one can teleport, bring other units plus the second wizard with him. Even though that second wizard has turned gray it can also teleport and bring all the original units with him. Try it, it's fun. • An obvious strategy is to take as many castles as possible quickly. But, many a game has been lost when a player puts most of his efforts into taking castles and almost forgetting the large point towns. • Remember, if you decide on a large force of dragon strategy, you should intermingle them with gargoyles or your opponents archers could devastate you. • A super and fun challenge: Play any scenario against the computer (advanced mode) and only use human characters. You'll be surprised at the difference in play style.

SOLITAIRE'S JOURNEY - Go to the back of the manual and try all the strategy type games. They will challenge your mind.

BATTLES OF DESTINY - Play a game with no air transports.

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fusion. The player new to the game might very well get frustrated at first trying to sort out all this information. Cockpit management should be the first priority on any mission. One needs to decide what is necessary to employ ordnance and survive, then set up each cockpit accordingly. The possible set-ups are endless and experimentation is highly encouraged.

Jumping between the front and back seats is accomplished via a single key-stroke, so access to all seven displays is quick and easy during the mission. One recommendation: turn the autopilot on prior to getting into the pit since it's hard to fly from the back seat, even with the HUD repeater called up.



If the task load gets too great, just call up a friend and run the mission over the modem with one player in front and another running systems from the pit. Other modem options are cooperative wingmen with two Strike Eagles sent on an interdiction sortie acting as a team and lastly, head to head competition. Since the program speed is dependent upon the slowest of the two computers, modem play requires a pair of fairly quick machines to run at an acceptable frame rate.

Aircraft Performance Model

The performance model in the standard mode is grossly overpowered. Much like *Falcon 3.0*, it seems that someone grafted an extra Pratt and Whitney engine to the airframe. However, once authentic mode is called up and a few stores are loaded, players get a good feel for how fast energy bleeds off when pulling G's. Even the



effects of thin air at altitude is shown. When first coming off a tanker and carrying a full load of high explosives, it's nearly impossible to stay above 25,000 feet without tapping the afterburner. Conversely, drop the ordnance, burn down some fuel, and the plane reacts far differently. MicroProse deserves a solid A for accurate aircraft performance. Spectrum HaloByte and the *Falcon 3.0* team could learn something about realistic flight characteristics from this program.

Weapons Employment (Air To Air)

Winning in the air-to-air arena usually boils down to one phrase "he shoots first wins." With the huge APG-70 radar throwing out enough energy to light up a small city, that normally means the Eagle. Additionally, a sharp lookout at the TEWS will show any interceptor trying to flank radar coverage. Lastly, the external tactical view is used to visually pick up threats that are using ground controlled radar (GCI) to intercept the Mudhen. Since aircraft using GCI often have their own radar in standby, they won't trigger the TEWS, and if they approach from the side or rear and not picked up visually, the first indication of their presence may very well be expanding rods of metal traveling at mach five ripping through the Eagle.

Missile combat is very well done. The radar display is integrated with the use of the mouse to designate targets and provides the most accurate portrayal of modern fighter radar operation yet seen. The HUD symbology is right on and missile ranges and launch parameters are very good. SE3 is the first simulation since *Flight of the Intruder*, to portray the AIM-7 Sparrow missile. For the first time, players can't merely "fire and forget." The AIM-7 requires the aircraft's radar to illuminate the target until impact, forcing new tactics to be practiced. What if my Eagle and that Fulcrum on the nose launch at the same time? Should I hang around and hope my missile hits first, thus destroying his radar and the guidance to his AA-10 Alamo, or should I drag, dumping my missile guidance but also putting the Fulcrum's missile into an out of range tail chase? It's a shame the manual didn't go into greater depth on how and why these systems operate the way they do. Players would be fascinated and, much more importantly, would more easily understand what needs to be accomplished and why, in order to employ missiles. The program gets a solid "A" in my gradebook for missile combat, but the manual pulls down only a "C."

The Strike Eagle is not, and was not intended to be, a dogfighter. Air-to-air gun combat is and should be a last resort. Typi-



cally, by the time two aircraft are within gun range, one of the planes is exiting the merge in a fireball after having been popped with a missile. Gun combat does occasionally occur and the program doesn't do too bad in this environment. Graphically, other aircraft are fairly detailed and displayed larger than scale to give aspect and closure cues to the player. Hitting with the gun is very easy, far easier than in an actual dogfight. Not only is the enemy aircraft displayed larger than life, but the area to hit is also larger. It's like fighting a maneuverable 747 — once it's out front it becomes rich acreage in which to plant bullets. A "C+" sounds about right for the grade in gun fighting.



Weapons Employment (Air-to-Ground)

The meat of the Strike Eagles mission is delivering air to ground ordnance with devastating accuracy. The aircraft uses multiple systems to put weapons on target. The inertial navigation system (INS) ties into the global positioning system (GPS) to provide navigation accuracy in the tens of feet. The synthetic aperture APG-70 radar utilizes Doppler beam sharpening to "paint" a near picture-like image from ground returns, and the forward looking infrared (FLIR) pod allows the pilot and weapons system operator to both see and target in the dark. Finally, the laser designator is used to guide laser bombs with pinpoint accuracy.

Each one of these systems is simulated in the game, and learning which to use and when to use it can be a challenge. It takes

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time to understand and employ the various modes of weapons employment.

There are three types of ordnance the F-15 utilizes. The first and easiest to understand is freefall gravity munitions such as Mk-82s, Mk-84s and cluster bombs like Rockeye, CBU-87s and CBU-89s. These come off the aircraft with no subsequent guidance and let Sir Isaac Newton's laws of gravity do the work. There are two



methods to find the proper moment of release. First is the continuously displayed impact line (death dot). Merely fly the pipper over the target and hit the pickle button. The second way is to let the aircraft decide when to release the weapons by using the auto mode. After designating the target by use of the radar or having it pre-planned in the INS, just fly over the target with the pickle button down and the plane will calculate the release point. This is a great mode for dropping bombs with minimal risk to the Strike Eagle. It lets the jet stay right on the deck since the target doesn't have to be acquired visually. Of course, if I really dropped a non-retarded bomb from 300 feet it probably wouldn't arm and if it did, would blow me out of the sky. The program doesn't seem to take into account the fragmentation envelope from one's own weapons, which can often extend out to 3000 feet.

The second set of munitions are laser guided bombs. Most of the highlight film from Desert Storm showed this type of bomb hitting with devastating accuracy. In Desert Storm, the typical delivery was from high altitude. The target is located by using the radar and INS, and then the laser designator is slaved to it. The laser is turned on and reflected energy bouncing from the target is picked up by a receiver in the nose of the glide bomb unit (GBU). Once in range, the bomb is released and falls ballistically toward the target. The laser receiver steers the bomb to zero in on the reflected energy from the target. If everything works right, the bomb will strike the target within tens of inches from the exact spot where the laser is pointed. Every once in a while the receiver loses the reflected energy and the bomb goes ballistic, usually resulting in either a very long

or very short impact. A good example of this is the film of the miss from the mid January strike on the SAM sites south of Iraq's 32nd parallel.

The way that the system is simulated in SE3 is very true to life, but I found employing GBU's in the program difficult. Since there are no support aircraft to help suppress enemy surface-to-air systems, flying at high altitude in the authentic mode is perilous at best. While it's possible to fly low and loft the GBU's at the target, it's not easy to do.

The last category of munitions are powered systems like the Harpoon, Maverick, HARM and SLAM missiles. Lock the weapon onto the target and "guided" will appear in the HUD when in range. All these systems are fire and forget, so once launched, other tasks can be performed.

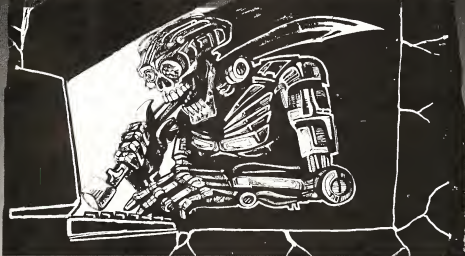
SE3 does a very good job handling a multitude of delivery systems in a realistic fashion. As with the air-to-air radar, air-to-ground targeting is handled with the mouse (or keyboard) and provides a highly accurate simulation. The hardest part of getting into and enjoying the program is learning how to implement the many systems and devise tactics to take advantage of each type's strengths. In this area, SE3 gets an outstanding "A+." The only question is, do most game buyers have the patience and perseverance to learn how to use them. I know several people who gave up on the program early and quit playing it altogether. It's a shame because SE3 provides a lot of insight into, and is an accurate portrayal of, strike fighter operations.



Post Mission Analysis

When I first started playing SE3, I really didn't like the program. I definitely wasn't awed by the manual and had to force myself to put time into the game. A funny thing happened along the way. The more I played and learned about it, the more impressed I became. The systems and aircraft are very faithfully reproduced and provide an excellent feel for what it's like to run a modern, complex strike aircraft. It is definitely a worthy simulation. **CSW**

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Review

Strikingly Handsome

SSI's Carrier Strike Expansion Disk

by M. Evan Brooks

TITLE	Carrier Strike Expansion Disk
SYSTEM	IBM
GRAPHICS	VGA
# PLAYERS	0-2
PRICE	\$29.95
PROTECTION	Documentation Look-Up
DESIGNER	Gary Grigsby
PUBLISHER	Strategic Simulations, Inc. San Jose, CA 1002 737-6800

Carrier Strike has previously received extensive coverage, with both review (CGW #97) and replay formats (CGW #98, 99). In this expansion disk, designer Gary Grigsby has added four scenarios and a new campaign. Most of the game mechanics haven't changed (see below for exceptions) and the graphics treatment is the same. The sound support has been extended somewhat, but the major benefit for those who purchase this expansion module is to get the new scenarios.

README (Documentation)

The documentation may generously be described as sparse; realistically it may be described as virtually non-existent on paper. A data card (5.5" square) tells how to install the program. That's it! Luckily, there is a text file of three pages, which should be printed out. It explains the changes in Version 1.1 and gives a short paragraph about the new scenarios. Overall, the documentation is chintzily sufficient.

Keep 'Em Flying? (Game Mechanics)

Certain game mechanics have been modified. The longer an aircraft is operational, the higher the attrition rate. Thus, the "three strikes per day" rate may still be maintained, but non-combat losses will render such tactics self-defeating. Additionally, aircraft may be repaired at night (roughly six planes per carrier per night), the computer uses more discretion in sailing "in harm's way," and finally, one may divert aircraft to another carrier due to flight deck damage.

While these changes are incremental, the operational attrition radically changes the complexion of the game. Historically more accurate, it presents an obstacle to

the player which can only be overcome by proper tactics and even better luck.

Fresh Waters (New Scenarios)

There are five new scenarios, and each may be used as a new starting point for a Pacific Campaign:

(1) **WAKE ISLAND** (Dec., '41): Two American carriers attempt to support Wake Island following the "Debut at Pearl." While the number of carriers per side is generally even, one of the American carriers is using Brewster Buffaloes as its primary fighter. An exercise in futility, the historic scenario begins with the American carriers placed too far eastward to be of any help; the typical scenario will generally see the Japanese sink the carriers with little risk. This scenario is best used as a start for a long campaign — and the American may well consider declining battle.

(2) **PLAN ORANGE** (Jan., '42): Assume the Japanese did not attack Pearl Harbor. This scenario envisions the battle-wagons rushing to engage as each side uses around three carriers to scout ahead of the "Main Battle Fleets."

(3) **ROSSEL ISLAND** (March, '42): The worst case scenario, assuming that the Pearl Harbor Raid also hit the carriers. Luckily, the British lend a hand, and a huge battle develops off Port Moresby (five Allied vs. six Japanese carriers).

(4) **GUADALCANAL** (August, '42): Midway never occurred, and now the crux of the Pacific War will be fought off Guadalcanal — eight Japanese carriers against five American. Losses will be high in this one!

(5) **OPERATION KE** (February, '43): The Japanese try to retake Henderson Field — four Japanese vs. two American carriers. Ironbottom Sound fills with more than destroyers and cruisers...

Finally, and most importantly, the 1947 Campaign. Postulating a world in which war was delayed for five years, this campaign allows for a year of battles with new ships, planes and weapons systems. Generally, I find the Fascist Hypotheticals somewhat "bombastic." However, the 1947 Campaign simply allows for a different look at carrier employment.

With night fighters and bombers capable of penetrating the "Shield of Darkness"

(akin to the "Cone of Silence?"), the player will have to husband his night fighters carefully. Night CAP can drastically reduce incoming threats. Massed strikes cannot be accomplished at night (technology was not sufficiently advanced), but even a minor bomb hit (and with bombers now carrying up to 2-ton bombs, a minor hit may not be so "minor") can render a flight deck inoperable. Also, night searches find the enemy, minor damage may render him *hors de combat*, and the breaking of a new dawn may well see a massed strike bringing it all home.

Even more interesting, the first-generation of "stand-off" weapons is available. While the bombers will have to break through enemy CAP, they will not have to endure flak. While it is difficult to tell how statistically accurate the new weapons are, it appears that their use engenders some major damage to enemy carriers.

Overall, the 1947 Campaign is an interesting facet of carrier warfare. However, do not be lulled into a false sense of security. An easy first victory by the Americans may be followed by a major Japanese effort (and success). As noted in earlier replay articles, "you've got to know when to hold them, and when to fold 'em!"

Sunset (Conclusions)

What can be said of the Expansion Disk? It is interesting and makes *Carrier Strike* even more challenging to play. However, there is a major caution with the expansion disk — marketing and pricing. Normally, I never address pricing in product lines. Discounting is so prevalent and heavy that retail prices are a ceiling which is rarely touched. However, the Expansion Disk is only sold by mail from SSI. Its price of \$29.95 when compared with the full program's retail cost of \$59.95 may only be described as excessive.

Although an interested user may well derive full value from the Expansion Disk in terms of cost per hour of use, it should also be noted that the full program can be purchased at discount for about \$37. Similar expansion disks have heretofore sold for \$19.95; at such a price, I would feel no hesitation in recommending this product (especially when one could again purchase it at discount for \$15), but at full list price, I would defer a purchase of this sort.

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Spoils of War

RAW Entertainment's Game of Conquest and Exploitation

by Jeff James



TITLE	Spoils of War
SYSTEMS	Amiga, IBM
RELEASED ON	Amiga
PLAYERS	2-4
PRICE	\$49.95
PROTECTION	Documentation look-up
DESIGNER	German Design Group
PUBLISHER	RAW Entertainment League City, TX

Back when 8-bit machines such as the Commodore 64 and the Apple II reigned supreme in the world of computer gaming, a small software company released a program which cast the player as an ocean-going explorer searching for the New World. With a well-crafted interface and an engaging storyline, this game of European Colonialism emerged as one of the most memorable games of the 8-bit era.

The game (as many of CGW's veteran readers may have already surmised) was Dan Bunten's *Seven Cities of Gold*, and the company was the brand new Electronic Arts. However, good game ideas never really die; they simply bide their time until a suitable sales gimmick

simultaneously, increase the power and influence of their own empires. An additional play option introduces the element of the "Cayas", a tribe of neutral Indian natives — strongly patterned after the ancient Aztecs — that may interfere with human and computer players alike. After names have been chosen for all participants and the "look up the word" copy protection has been successfully dealt with, the game begins. First on the list of things to accomplish is the hiring of explorers, non-player characters who act as "middle-management." These four types of explorers — admirals, generals, commanders and governors — each have a particular area of expertise. Admirals command fleets, transfer supplies, gold, soldiers and other explorers across the oceans; generals command land-based armies; while commanders and governors primarily deal with management of cities and harbors. The manual states that up to 600 explorers can be present in the game, divided between all four players. Skilled use of each of these explorer types is essential to doing well in the game.

The bulk of the game's play takes place on two map levels: strategic and tactical. The strategic level allows nearly all of the non-military decisions to be made and provides the view to direct forces on the world map. This map is a surprisingly limited one, with each of the up to four players beginning the game crowded together on a tiny island in the center of the game map. The map is only 64 X 64 squares in dimension at the strategic level, although greater detail can and does exist at the tactical level.

About half of this map consists of ocean, while the edges of the map along all compass directions consist of unexplored land mass. While this geographical layout serves well for the abstract gaming style that *Spoils* uses, gamers looking for a fairly accurate recreation of the historical European expansion to the New World will be disappointed to use this system, abstract in both the political and geographical sense.

The tactical level is where combat takes place, with two dis-



comes along to warrant their re-birth. Such is the case with RAW Entertainment's *Spoils of War* (*Spoils*), released to roughly coincide with the 500th anniversary of Columbus' journey to America. *Impression's Discovery: In the Steps of Columbus* and Koei's *Uncharted Waters* also were released in 1992, attempting to capitalize on the hype, history and hoopla of the famous explorer's exploits. Ironically, EA's update of *Seven Cities of Gold* was originally supposed to appear in this time frame, but was delayed. With *Spoils*, RAW Entertainment and the German Design Group have attempted to craft an engaging tale of colonialism and conquest, giving gamers a chance to sail the bounded main in search of fame, fortune and unclaimed real estate.

Prelude To A Big Land Grab

Spoils allows from two to four players (human or computer-controlled) to compete in a quest to colonize distant lands and,

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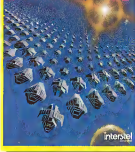
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tinctly different screen types: naval combat and land combat. Naval combat involves maneuvering ships into and out of attack positions by way of an overhead map. Commands exist for firing cannon, changing course, boarding enemy ships and other tactical options. If the player can make it through hostile seas, a land battle may be in the player's future upon landfall. During land combat, *Spools* offers a close-up view of the battlefield and any engaged units.

In addition to being able to move a wide variety of explorers around the game map to do the players' bidding, *Spools* offers a wealth of secondary and tertiary play options. Gold can be spent on research and development (in the hope of increasing the effectiveness of ships and weapons) or can be allocated for building settlements, harbors and mines. A variety of military units are available for use in battle, including artillery, cavalry, marines, engineers and lowly foot soldiers. More soldiers can be recruited, and options are available for training existing soldiers to a more advanced state of combat capability. Finally, players can view the *Spools* gameworld by way of a quartet of map functions, ranging from political and economic views to detailed geographical maps.

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Hard-Drive Heroics

Amiga owners tired of shuffling floppy disks will be pleased to hear that the Amiga version of *Spools* fully supports hard-drive installation, thanks to an AmigaDOS 2.0-style hard drive installation routine. Although the graphics used in *Spools* are rather plain, the sounds are well-done. When at sea, players will hear the splashing of waves, the creaking of wood and the calls of sea birds. Although the sound is generally of high quality, a good deal of the effects which are used may quickly begin to grate on a gamers' nerves (especially the exultant cry soldiers give after each victory in land combat).

Rough Seas Ahead

As annoying as a few of the sounds used in *Spools* might become, the biggest obstacle facing gamers will be dealing with the *Spools* interface. Although the game does support a mouse, looking at the structure of most of the game screens indicates that very little thought was put into making mouse and game mesh well together. Mouse "hot spots" are often hard to discern from the rest of the screen, making the use of a keyboard a more attractive play option. When the player finally learns how to best instruct the program what to do, playing the game itself is made more difficult by a large number of screens which look remarkably alike. Controlling dozens of explorers — by different occupations — by way of similarly colored and structured screens can be a tedious endeavour. *Spools* has a great deal of detail buried under this recalcitrant control system. It is unfortunate that it requires so much effort to effectively appreciate that detail.



Another niggling quirk concerns the time period used for the game: gameplay begins in AD 1800, a time period in which a good deal of the historical "New World" had already been explored. The game graphics and the illustrations used on the manual/box-cover strongly resemble images commonly associated with the early to mid-16th Century, with plate-clad conquistadors brandishing muskets and other weaponry common to that period. While RAW Entertainment might not have specifically intended *Spools* to be an accurate representation of history, this reviewer would have liked a little more history and a bit less abstraction.

Spools is an unarguably ambitious attempt at giving gamers a glimpse into the military, political and logistical problems that explorers faced when they sought out the New World. Unfortunately, it drowns itself with this very same detail, forcing players to wallow through poorly designed menus and play options. With improved graphics, a less cumbersome interface and a greater dose of historical accuracy,

Spools of War could emerge as an excellent choice for wargamers looking for a break from more conventional gaming tableaus. Without those improvements, *Spools of War* is an ocean-going adventure which only the most tenacious of gamers will enjoy.

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The Magic of a 1590 hp Merlin

A Review of Jaeger Software's *Fighter Duel Pro*

by Jim "Hawkeye" Rathgeber

TITLE: *Fighter Duel Pro*
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PRICE: \$99.95
PROTECTION: Documentation Lock-Up
DESIGNER: Bill Morlock, Matt Stone
PUBLISHER: Jaeger Software
Rockville, MD
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FIGHTER DUEL Corsair vs. Zero

PRO



"There are only two kinds of aircraft, fighters and targets."

— Major Doyle "Wahoo" Nicolson USMC, *Fighter Pilot*

Both visually and viscerally, Nicolson's statement is the motto for *Fighter Duel Pro (FDPro)*, the vastly improved successor to Jaeger Software's original *Fighter Duel*. Visually, the graphics are spartan with a philosophy of keeping the peripheral vision from cluttering up the action; and viscerally, the

basic thrust of the program is to get gamers into head-to-head, realistic dogfights.

For anyone who enjoys WWII vintage fighter planes and loves speculating upon their strengths and weaknesses or determining which was the fastest, the deadliest, the best in a one-on-one dogfight, etc., *FDPro* is a would-be pilot's dream. It allows armchair pilots the chance to fly any of 16 different fighter aircraft against either multiple computer bogeys or against a modern opponent.

Learning to Fly

FDPro is different from most flight simulations in that one cannot immediately pick up the joystick and soar into the sky. The realistic flight model in *FDPro* forces one to, amazingly enough, learn how to fly before learning how to fight. This involves understanding the basics of flight and getting used to the mouse/joystick interface. It took hours of practice before I could maneuver my plane reasonably well. I found flying with the mouse a bit awkward at first, but with practice I discovered that I could set the flaps, pan the view in any direction, and control the throttle, all without taking my eyes off the screen — a must in a dogfight. Once in the air I began to understand the fighter pilot aphorism, "Speed is life." The faster I flew, the easier it was to control the plane. Loops and rolls are simple when traveling over 300mph. (Tip: Try not to dive straight down for too long as the controls may lock up and make for, let's just say, a very quick landing!) I was also impressed with the ultra smooth frame rate (24+ per second) which gave me the feeling of floating on air. Although there are only eight gauges, they all function smoothly and are worth keeping an eye on.

Jaeger has added sensitivity levels for the joystick which range from low (impossible to stall) to high (expert). I recommend beginners to start at the low setting and gradually move up. The rudder can now be controlled either with the mouse or with rudder pedals and will slowly roll the aircraft to either side. Another nice feature, if one happens to have a spare computer and a parallel port connector (which Jaeger sells), is a rear view that allows a pilot to see where he or she has been, imitating the rearview mirrors fighter pilots used during WWII.



The Fighters

My first impression when I climbed into the P-51 cockpit was, quite frankly, disappointment. There is no canopy, fuselage, tail or wings. The only items visible were a row of gauges across the bottom of the screen and a set of crosshairs in the middle. However, once I increased the throttle, heard the roar of the 1590 hp Merlin engine, and began rolling down the runway, I forgot about the lack of wings and started concentrating on staying on the blacktop. As I lifted off, it seemed as if I were encased in a glass bubble that flew and

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sounded like a plane. The old adage, "If it walks like a duck and talks like a duck" came to mind. In talking to one of the designers, Matt Shaw, I was told that they could have added wings without any problem, but it was their experience that the less there is to clutter the view in a dogfight the better.



Even though each aircraft basically looks the same from the cockpit, I found every plane to have a feel all its own. The German fighters are fast and deadly, the British and Japanese craft are light and maneuverable, while the American planes (with the exception of the P-38 and the P-51D) tend to fly rather like a bundle of bricks with a feather attached. An added feature, depending on the plane, is the ability to fire cannons, machine guns or

both if using an analog joystick (highly recommended).

Each plane has its good and bad points. The Spitfire IX, while the all around best dogfighter, has a nasty habit of spinning unexpectedly. The German planes (BF109-E&G plus the FW190-A8) while being among the fastest aircraft in a dive simply cannot stay with the more maneuverable Spitfires, Mustangs and Zeros. The futuristic looking Japanese J7W Shinden, which flew in the last days of WW1I, is the fastest fighter in the game, but it can't climb or spin with the Spitfire IX.

Some good match-ups are the P-47 against the FW-190, the P-51 versus the P-38, the Zero opposite the Spitfire I, or the venerable Corsair against the heavy firepower of the British Tempest. There can also be historical duels such as the BF109-E1 taking on the Spitfire I and the sturdy Hurricane in a reenactment of the Battle of Britain — right down to the carburetors that tend to cut out on the spit and the Hurricane as they nose into a dive!

The Duel

FDPro was built first and foremost for modern play. When hooked up head-to-head, both planes start out at 6000ft (tournament mode) making a head-on pass after which anything goes. Seeing the enemy in hi-res, interlaced, bit-mapped detail at 28

frames per second doing barrel rolls without a hint of jerkiness is a pure joy to behold! Hearing the opponents guns get louder as he gets closer, seeing the screen shudder as one's plane takes hits, hearing the engine cough as it loses oil, seeing the fuel gauge drop to zero (self-sealing fuel tanks tend to leak when hit by cannon) or getting dizzy when the controls seize up and the screen goes into a "death spin" are all great effects put in by Jaeger.

Tournaments

There is a national *FDPro* league that has been active ever since the first months of *Fighter Duel*. Tournaments are coordinated by the tourney chairman, Drew "Ghost Rider" Dorman. The tournaments are ran under a league format wherein the best flyers can be found in Division I while beginners start out in Division V. Anyone who wants to participate can give Drew a call for more information. He can be reached at 5566 Pershing, Apt. #505, St. Louis, MO, 63112 (314-367-3916) or by e-mail at A.Dorman2 on the GEnie network.

I've had many a heart pumping, finger twitching, sweat inducing duel flying this fantastic sim! *Fighter Duel Pro* has taken modern gaming to new heights and in my flight log gets both flaps up!!! **LOW**

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Harpoon product development and much more. HUG also operates the *Harpoon Scenario Warehouse* where members have access to hundreds of user-created *Harpoon* scenarios. Our BBS can be reached at (718) 746-7466. Information on joining HUG is available on the BBS or by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to our new address at: HUG, PO Box 5138, Bayside, NY 11065-5138.

The Delphi Oracle is an all-gaming BBS. Play RPGs (AD&D, GURPS), play-by-email games (Diplomacy, ASL), *Empires at War* (a Napoleonic on-line game) and other games on-line. Find modem game players, Gamemasters and players. Simi Valley, California (805) 582-3054 [2400 8-N-1] Free access.

The trapezium BBS is looking for modem gamers like you! Tournaments are run for *Knights of the Sky*, *CosmoQuest HQ*, *The Perfect General* and *Global Conquest* (just to name a few!). We have online games, message bas and 3 gigs of files, too. Call one of our three nodes in Middletown, NJ at either: 1208-921 (908) 706-8342, 9600 x 32 (908) 706-0065; 1ST DIAL Standard 38 x 4 (908) 706-0321.

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Madquack Software, Inc., publisher of the *Magic Circle* series, *Rates of Engagement*, *Siege* and *Battle 2* is proud to announce that it now has a BBS running 24-hours a day. The BBS offers on-line help, upgrades, demos, scenarios, technical support and more. Set your modem to 2400, N-8-1 and call (319) 320-5196.

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Conventions

Adventure GameFest '93 will be held May 21-23 in the Portland, Oregon area. Board, computer and miniature gaming of all genres, both tournament and open gaming, will be featured. There will be door and event prizes, a games station and a miniature painting contest. Pre-registration is \$15 for 3 days, \$12 for 2 days or \$7 for 1 day. To be held at the Oregon Convention Center, 777 MLK Jr. Blvd. (Un-

ion Avenue), Portland, OR. Contact: Adventure Games Northwest, Inc., 6517 NE Alberta, Portland OR 97218, 503-282-6856 or 206-574-GAME.

The Computer Game Developers Conference is where the insiders meet to discuss the technical aspects of creating computer games. The 1993 Conference will be held Saturday, April 17th through Tuesday, April 20th at the Westing Hotel in Santa Clara, California. For more information, call or write: Dev Con, 5339 Prospect Road, Suite #289, San Jose, CA 95129; (408) 374-4340.

The Gen Con Game Fair will be held August 19-22, 1993 at the MECCA Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Meet some of your favorite artists from *Computer Gaming World* magazine, live and in person at their exhibitor booth! For more information, write to Gen Con Game Fair, PO Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147 or call (414) 248-3625.

Origins '93 will be held July 1-4, 1993 at the Tarrant County Convention Center in Fort Worth, Texas. For more information, write or call: Gencon, PO Box 609, Randallstown, MD 21133, (410) 298-3135.

By Area Code

New York City gamer seeks opponents for *The Perfect General*. Please call Sean at H4(212) 661-2330.

Join the no-cost *Arx* & *Alphas* boardgame tournament playing nationwide via the Prology network. All games require 2nd edition rules and are organized by a "game manager." Contact Rick Jamison in Weirton, WV at 11-(304) 797-1750 or send Prology email to CBXHT77A.

Seeking local opponents in the Pittsburgh area to play *The Perfect General*, *CosmoQuest HQ* or *Conquered Kingdoms*. Please call Jim K. at H4(412) 884-7197.

Tucson gamer seeks opponents for any Armaia games, especially wargames. Will play by modem, email or face-to-face. Call Bob in Tucson, AZ at H4(602) 883-4825.

Seeking opponents (preferably local) for *F-15 Strike Eagle III*, *Falcon 3.0* and *The Perfect General*. I'm also interested in upcoming Strategy / Flight Sim games that support modem play. Contact Robb Harris of Oxford, WI at H4(608) 586-5039 or W-(608) 586-5096 or Fax/Modem (608) 586-4593.

I'm experiencing "no joy" in the "clean, clear and sober" skies of Columbus, OH. Local area for *F-15 III* and *Falcon 3.0* pilots can contact Sid "Shake-Spears" Murrer for co-op or duel flights at 11-(614) 294-1861.

New York City modem opponents wanted for *CosmoQuest HQ*, *Global Conquest*, *The Perfect General* or *Conquered Kingdoms*. Call Bob at 11-(718) 539-2002 after 7:30pm EST.

Wanted: opponents (especially local ones) for *CosmoQuest HQ*, *The Perfect General* and *BattleTech*. Am I the only person in my area who plays these games anymore? Surely not! My limited phone budget will allow me to only call local opponents, but I'm always up to a challenge (particularly for *CHQ*) if you're willing to call. Contact Charles Mosler at P.O. Box 181, Greer, SC or by telephone at H-(803) 895-1058. Leave a message if I'm not home.

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Three-Sixty's *V For Victory: Velikiye Luki*

by John Vanore

Just about a year ago (as I write this), the Three-Sixty/Atomic Software team burst onto the computer wargaming scene with *V for Victory Battleset I: Utah Beach*. Initially only available for the Macintosh family, an IBM/DOS version was released late in 1992.

Also released late in 1992 was *V for Victory: Velikiye Luki*. *Velikiye Luki*, the site of a fearsome siege in 1942-43, has been referred to as the Stalingrad of the North, with the Red Army struggling to keep a large German force encircled within the city and its environs until it collapsed. This is only the second computer game released on the subject. The first, *White Death* by RAW Entertainment, was a direct digital translation of a Game Designers Workshop boardgame of the same name. Whatever its merits as a game/simulation, the computerized *White Death* suffered considerably due to its agonizingly unfriendly interface.

The Features

As one might expect, *Velikiye Luki* represents an evolutionary enhancement over *Utah Beach*, rather than a revolutionary leap. There is a great deal of similarity between the two, and the differences are largely a function of subtle improvements to the system. Like its predecessor, *Velikiye Luki* (hereafter *VL*) features a battalion-level simulation overlaid on a spectacular graphic presentation. The crisp, vivid graphics (on both a color Mac and SVGA for the IBM and clones) are not only superb, but so well done that the gamer has all but the actual tactile sense of pushing counters across a card-stock map.

At a scale of one square kilometer per hex and four hours per

TITLE:	<i>V for Victory: Velikiye Luki</i>
SYSTEM:	IBM, Mac
PRICE:	\$69.95
PRODUCTION:	None
DESIGNERS:	Ed Barr, Keith Johnson, Larry Merf
PUBLISHER:	Three-Sixty Pacific Carpenter, CA 1825 776-2187



turn, the system works extremely well at simulating the smaller engagements, although it does push the envelope of manageability on larger scenarios featuring hundreds of units. *VL* is played in a number of sequential, quasi-simultaneous-move turns, with the computer capable of playing either the Soviet or German side.

For the human player turn, there are three distinct phases: Planning, Execution, and After Action. During Planning, obviously enough, all units to be moved and all attacks (which, for other than artillery, take place between adjacent forces) are designated. Planning also encompasses calls for artillery and air strikes.

After Planning comes Execution. Simply put, all the plans made during the previous phase are now simultaneously implemented, for both the human and computer players. In the After Action Phase, one can use the mouse to click through all the highlighted hexes and get a brief or detailed report of whatever combat transpired there.

The System

So much for the sequence of play. The simple, three-step process provides a very smooth interface into a sophisticated simulation program. The player can choose from a variety of offensive and defensive options for all his forces. Attacks can be either All-Out Assaults, Assaults (the basic default), Assaults with No Advance or Probes. Each type of offensive action has its own list of inherent potential risks and gains. Conversely, defenders can assume the Retreat If Attacked, Defend If Attacked or Defend At All Costs postures. All are fairly self-explanatory and all have logical times and places of logical application.

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In addition to all the basics of wargaming presented in *Utah Beach*, *VL* presents much of the chrome to which wargaming grognards have become accustomed. For instance, artillery can now execute a "shoot and scoot" maneuver, allowing the unit to reposition immediately after firing to negate enemy counter-battery fire. A nice touch. Also, infantry units are now capable of riding on tanks, a great way of getting around the perennial shortage of dedicated transportation assets on the Eastern Front. (One small gripe here, I would have preferred that *Three-Sixty* have annotated the changes from *Utah Beach* for the benefit of those who've played that game. It would have been much easier than poring through all the documentation again.)

On top of all that, *VL* features a number of optional functions and historical variants to be used in adjusting play balance and difficulty levels. Whereas most other computer wargames merely fudge combat ratios or otherwise let the computer "cheat," *VL* lets you toggle on and off such elements as Fog of War and Limited Intelligence. You can also vary the weather conditions, modify the degree of air superiority, or take advantage of additional forces which were historically available but did not actually become involved in the fighting. Winning too handily as the Soviet? Give the Germans the elite 1st Fallschirmjäger Division and see what happens.

To manipulate this wealth of data, the *VL* screen contains several windows and sidebars. In fact, the *VL* map only occupies about 70-80% of the screen. A Unit Window, situated at the bottom of the screen, presents as much or as little information as you want on friendly, enemy, or all units. If the Fog of War or Limited Intelligence options are toggled off, you can view a full data set for any unit you click on, including combat strengths, fatigue level, etc. This is particularly useful in checking out artillery units, to see which ones are in supply and haven't moved recently, and are thus ready for fire missions.

If one desires to fight the whole war oneself and not hand off logistical functions to the (computerized) staff, the HQ Sidebar, running down the right side of the screen, is invaluable. From this position, the player can, at the beginning of each game day, allocate supplies among all major headquarters elements. By choosing among None, Minimal, Defensive, General, and Attack, you will basically set the tempo for the remainder of that day's operations, as a corps which has only received Minimal Supply will not be able to carry out sustained assaults. Choose wisely! The consensus among *VL* players is that supply management is critical to winning any scenario. As either the German or Soviet player, you will face supply constraints and

thus will not be able to conduct attacks across a broad front. The Schwerpunkt principle is most important here. Choose your battles carefully, then mass all your strength in those sectors.

Scroll through the sidebars, and you'll find one for Operations. Click on the Aircraft Button and ready air assets will be made available for dedication to ground strike missions. (Air Superiority is abstracted out of game play and is, in fact, another component which can be modified at start-up to adjust play balance.) Allocating ground attack missions is as easy as designating artillery fire missions: select the attacking unit, then (while depressing another key for artillery), click on the target hex, and it's done!

The Scenarios

VL comes with eight scenarios, including the mandatory and ubiquitous all-inclusive Campaign Scenario. To ease the learning curve, the scenarios come in graduated levels of difficulty from Beginner to Expert. "Into the City," for example, is a cluttered but relatively uncomplicated situation. The Soviets have invested the city of *Veikhiye Luki* and seek to clear it of German forces. The German player, in contrast, tries to keep his forces from being annihilated in the encirclement. "Eight More Kilometers," on the other hand, features the German relief effort attempting to break the siege of *Veikhiye Luki*. The Soviet must contain German forces in the city while beating back the relief column. Then there's the Campaign Game. Estimated to take 90 hours of play time, it pulls everything else together in one mammoth slug-fest. For the expert only, this one requires much attention to detail and ample help from the computerized staff.

The Issues

There are a few ongoing concerns over *VL* which, despite my enthusiasm for the game, I would be remiss in not raising here.

Modem play: This issue has been raised repeatedly in the 360 Topic on GENie, and is one of the few shortcomings of the *V for Victory* series. Currently, there is no provision for modem play between two humans, although the *V for Victory* main menu hints at its future incorporation into the series. Just when this will happen is as yet undetermined.

Artificial Intelligence: The computer opponent's AI has also come under some fire. The Soviet computer opponent has been



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RULES OF ENGAGEMENT 2

The War escalates this Spring

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harshly criticized (again, on GENie) for a distinct lack of aggressiveness. The comments generally cover inadequate use of artillery barrages, a hesitancy to attack, and uncoordinated, piecemeal attacks when they do occur. My playing has been predominantly as the Soviets, attacking a very stubborn German computer foe, and have noticed very little of this non-aggressive behavior from my digital adversary. (This, by the way, was also the case in my experiences with *Utah Beach*.) As the Soviet, however, I often find my attacks, particularly artillery barrages, hamstrung by a lack of supply. Lining up all the Soviet artillery hubcap-to-hubcap does not a whit of good if the quartermaster corps can't deliver adequate numbers of shells, and I suspect this general crisis of supply may be driving the supposed AI problems encountered by some others.

Battleset Concept: The initial production version of *VL* contained a basic application that was not compatible with the scenarios from *Utah Beach*. That is, *Utah Beach* scenarios would not run under the enhanced *V for Victory* engine released with *VL*. In a November 1992 posting on GENie, Carl Norman of Three-Sixty bluntly stated they had made a mistake in thinking they could apply a *Harpoon*-like Battleset structure to *V for Victory*, referring to the two systems as "apples and oranges." More recently, however, Three-Sixty has been testing a common software engine that will be compatible with the two existing games plus the upcoming *Market Garden*. Where this will lead when games four and beyond in the *V for Victory* series are released, I don't know.

The Conclusion

For my money, and despite the few dissatisfied voices, *V for Victory* remains the best computer wargame available, and *Velikiye Luki* is an excellent extension of the series. The AI may not be flawless and some folks (a very small percentage, by my count) may have no trouble whatsoever in trashing the computer opponent. However, the vast majority of computer wargamers will find *Velikiye Luki* a thought-provoking, challenging simulation of combat on the Eastern Front, one with a superior combination of wargaming "steak" and graphic sizzle. I wholeheartedly recommend it to any Mac or DOS computer gamer. www

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BRIDGE MASTER: The scope of *Bridge Master* is larger than any other bridge game on the market. It allows gamers to edit the computer players (for gender, bidding aggressiveness and playing aggressiveness), play on-line, create custom pictures for the backs of card decks, select background music, play modem-to-modem or compete over a Novell network. Eight different bidding conventions can be selected, but the computer opponents do not always pick up on them (particularly at lower difficulty levels). In general, the computer opponents play a very weak game, but the beauty of this program is its capacity for connectivity. IBM (\$49.95). Circle Reader Service #1.

LA LAW: Here's a chance to shine in the law offices of McKenzie Brackman as one of the bright lights of the suit set. Players choose one of three junior lawyers from the TV show, then taken a case and begin racking up those billable hours. The only hitch is that the player is racing against time; the trial begins in only nine hours, and there isn't much time for conspiratorial lunches. There's the case file to read, private eyes to call, witnesses to interview, groveling for advice from the show's partners, plea bargaining to do with the opposing counsel, legal research to avoid, etc. When one's case is ready, or even if it's not, it's time to fool the losers, or, persuade the fine jurists that one's hily-white client never inhaled or called Michael Milken back. The mouse-driven game disabuses users of the theory that being a successful lawyer requires no more than a modicum's brain. IBM (\$44.95). Circle Reader Service #2.

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Deadly Games

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M4 TANK SIMULATOR: From the designer of *Bomber*, Rene Vidmer, comes the WWII version of *Mr. Toad's Wild Ride*. Reminiscent of the *Avalon Hill* boardgame *Patton's Best*, one commands the crew of an M4 Sherman tank as the members of a tank battalion campaign their way across France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany in 1944 and 1945. The gritty "You Are There" perspective is played out as much more of a strategy game and less of a simulation, with a feel for capturing the era and topic that may well be unsurpassed. *M4 Tank Simulator* has all of the best elements of a tactical military campaign game with the looks and sounds to sell it. Color Macintosh (\$44.95). Circle Reader Service #4.

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INTERACTIVE COMPUTER CROSSWORDS: Here's a good game for conundrum aficionados with a robust lexicon. While the name *Crossword* is probably a misnomer, both of the major game variations appear on a crossword/Scrabble-like game board. However, players are not limited by the words they use, or even where they are placed on the board. The trick is to add a word to the board that forms other, incidental words by placing letters adjacent to previously played words. Unfortunately, those who are strictly word game tycoos will be fighting an uphill battle. Only people like William F. Buckley, Jr. have a vocabulary larger than the computer's, and it uses every one of them to beat its human competition. IBM (\$34.95). Circle Reader Service #5.

Humongous Entertainment

13110 NE 177th Place #180
Woodinville, WA 98072
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PUTT PUTT JOINS THE PARADE: Except perhaps for *Broderbund's Grandma & Me*, this has to be the best piece of software for youngsters that we've seen. Filled with delightful ani-

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mation and digitized speech, it has been lovingly designed by a team including Ron Gilbert (formerly of LucasArts and their SCUMM adventures). This pre-adventure will have the kids glued to the chair and clicking with glee. Young gamers will guide young PuttPutt the Car as he runs errands in preparation for the big town parade. He'll have to earn money by delivering groceries so that he can get a car wash, buy a balloon and find a puppy. Be warned, though; once Junior is into this one there'll be little time for the grown-up's games. IBM DOS (\$49.95) IBM CD-ROM (\$59.95). Circle Reader Service #6.

Inline Design
308 Main Street,
Lakeville, CT 06039
(203) 435-4995

THE TINIES: The Tinies of the title of this game aren't as cute as their names and their furry bodies might suggest. These little fur-balls have attitudes, and they flaunt them with impunity, making faces at the player and rudely gesturing as the player tries to put them down for a nap. The object of this simple game is to put each colored Tiny in their respective "sleeper pods." This involves maneuvering the Tinies around their simple, object-cluttered environment, which of course isn't as simple as inserting tab 'A' into slot 'B.' While the Tinies' antics are cute, the nature of the puzzles and the level of interest inspired is no real "biggie." Macintosh (\$59.95). Circle Reader Service #7.

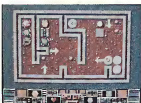
SWAMP GAS VISITS EUROPE: This educational game takes Swamp Gas, a lovable, antennae ET, on a holiday across the European continent. One to four young gamers will be assigned a series of missions which involve piloting Mr. Gas to different European locales. Depending on the difficulty level, they will be asked to identify either a country, capital, major city or historic landmark. If players complete the mission within the allotted time, they are treated to the Alien Arcade where they can choose to play one of three simple action games. In this way, the education is alternated with entertainment to provide incentive, though the extraterrestrially cute digitized voice of Swamp Gas might be incentive enough. Macintosh (\$59.95). Circle Reader Service #8.

Interplay
17922 Fitch Avenue, CA 92714
(714) 553-6678

SOLITAIRE FOR WINDOWS: Stop me if you've heard this one before.



Putt Putt Joins the Parade



The Tinies



Swamp Gas Visits Europe



Solitaire for Windows



The Lost Tribe

There are plenty of Solitaire games with glitzy graphics which are linked together by a "campaign game" element. This time, Interplay is throwing their hat in the parlor-games-done-on-Windows ring with a rather classy bunch of Solitaire games. Presented with spiffy graphics and sound, this package only offers a dozen games, but the other features and options raise this package above some of the other "Instant Windows" game products that have come out of late. Hooks have been left for possible expansions including more game varieties. IBM with Windows (\$49.95). Circle Reader Service #9.

Lawrence Productions
1800 S. 35th Street
Galesburg, MI 49053-9687
(616) 665-7075

THE LOST TRIBE: The Computer Age returns to the Stone Age in this wonderful educational game of tribal leadership. Chased from their homeland by an angry earth god (a volcanic eruption), the tribe has to find its way back to the mythic homeland, and the player is elected the leader. Anyone who thinks that running today's businesses might be difficult ought to try their hand at managing a group of hungry, whimsical, superstitious, and none-too-forgiving Neolithic hunter-gatherers. Players must decide when and what to hunt, when to practice hunting, when to move on, when to carve hunting pictographs or Venus figurines, and how to handle the dozens of random events that crop up in life B.C. This is quality software, with digitized photos of humans acting out the scenarios, animated wall paintings that illustrate the tribe's activities, a well designed interface, an on-line prehistoric database, and a challenging game. The box recommends the game for ages 8 and up, though the lower limit seems a bit optimistic. IBM (\$39.95), Macintosh (\$49.95). Circle Reader Service #10.

Legend Entertainment
14200 Park Meadow Drive
Chantilly, VA 22021
(800) 658-8891

ERIC THE UNREADY: As previewed in the last issue of CGW (#105), this adventure game is a lampton that leaves few icons of pop culture unscathed. TV, film, science fiction, and other computer games all suffer abuse at the hand of Bob Buies (*TimeQuest*) and his pen-turmed-shillelagh. Legend's interface hybrid, which combines the textual interaction of an earlier adventure system with beautiful graphics and graphic puzzle asides, only seems to get better. It seems to have found a balance between the depth of textual interaction and the sizzle of beautiful graphics and graphic interaction. In

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Eric, players take the persona of the title character as he tries to prove himself worthy of a seat at the Rhomboid Table. Lovers of good camp and good puzzles should find this product worth a few sleepless nights. IBM (\$59.95). Circle Reader Service #11.

Mindcraft

2291 205th Street, Suite 201
Torrance, CA 90501
(310) 320-5215

THE MAGIC CANDLE III: An evil blight has swept across the lands within the Solian Sea and, once again, fantasy role-players are faced with the task of expiating the threat to Good. The world of the Magic Candle has changed a bit in this third incarnation, with improved VGA graphics, better mouse support, improved note keeping, and new spells, but fans of the series can still expect the very detailed role-playing found in its predecessors. Players will still have the ability to divide their party and give each character an occupation, one will still have to tend to their characters' fatigue and hunger needs, and the character system still includes a nice variety of useful skills. *Magic Candle III* will certainly not surprise anyone, but fans of the system may think that this is just as well. IBM (\$59.95). Circle Reader Service #12.

TEGEL'S MERCENARIES: Those who enjoyed the hard-edged, cyber-marine feel of the victims in the film *Aliens* ("Vasquez, anybody ever mistake you for a man?" "No. You?") might find a world tuned to their tastes in this real-time, squad-level wargame with a role-playing edge. Players will lead a rough band of mercenaries through a series of scenarios, all generally involving the violent deaths of members of the K'istik race. After hand-picking a squad of mercs from a portfolio file of 20, players will direct the actions of the mercs from a top-down view. Mercenaries is much like *Omnitrend's Breach*, but with a personality. The world in which the mercs' activities take place is graphically rich and alive with non-player characters that wander about and comment on the fire-fights that erupt around them. Yet, though it outpaces *Breach* in character, it doesn't have anything near the interface elegance that the comparable program had. IBM (\$59.95). Circle Reader Service #13.

Mindscape

60 Leveroni Court
Novato, CA 94949
(415) 883-3000

CONTRAPTION ZACK: Most computer users should be able to relate to



Eric the Unready



The Magic Candle III



Tegel's Mercenaries



Contraption Zack



Epic

Zack. He has to work with a sophisticated and temperamental machine, the manual to which is techno gobblede-gook. What's more, he has got co-workers that are working against him by hiding his tools and a boss who screams first and thinks later (if at all). Zack's task is to work his way through six levels of spatio-logic puzzles which are all set in a world seen from the 3-D "isometric" viewpoint. Trial and error experimentation, forethought, and a dose of spatial logic skills will help the puzzle-solving gamer in completing this well-wrought brain-drainer. Amiga, IBM (\$39.95). Circle Reader Service #14.

Ocean of America

1855 O'Toole Avenue, Suite D-102
San Jose, CA 95131
(408) 954-0201

EPIC: This game so desperately wants to be *Wing Commander*. It has a grand and complex space theme that, stripped of its complexity, reduces to a *Battlestar Galactica*-esque space ark storyline. It has some lovely 3-D animated cut screens for the in-depth briefing and launch sequences. It has a branching storyline that reflects the success or failure of the player's missions. Unfortunately, the flight model is a bit silly. The player's space fighter orients itself along a plane, behaving somewhat like it were in atmosphere, the fighter responds much too readily and rapidly to feel realistic, and the player can repeatedly ram into the surface of a planet at high speeds several times before this Hercules ship is destroyed (meanwhile the enemy is generally destroyed with a single shot). While it is evident that much love went into the production of the graphic splash and animated sizzle, it is also evident that the fundamental mechanics are a bit under-cooked. Amiga, IBM (\$49.95). Circle Reader Service #15.

Origin Systems

PO Box 161750
Austin, TX 78716
(512) 328-0282

ORIGIN FX - SCREEN SAVER: Is there a trend here? First *Dynamix* with *Johnny Castaway* and now *Origin* with *Origin FX*? Maybe...but there's little doubt that many *Windows*-using gamers will have their computer's idle time occupied with an assortment of goofy animated effects (oops, FX). Among the more interesting of the 24 screen salvation options are: Claw and Scratch, where analogs of Tom and Jerry chase each other about the screen using traditional cat and mouse cartoon tactics; Silhouette, where creatures from *Ultima*

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VII suddenly materialize in your application, taking a part of your desk top with them as they run across the screen; Window Washer, where Vinnie the work-a-day schlub will use his squeegee to good effect — washing your nasty word processing application off the screen. There are less interesting one's as well, like the Guardian which merely runs the intro Origin logo animation from *Ultima VII* over and over. Another nice feature is the ability to use custom BMP images to create a personalized slide-show. Computer screens will never again rest in peace. IBM with Windows (\$39.95). Circle Reader Service #16.

Point Of View Computing, Inc.
5050 Edison Avenue, Suite 221
Colorado Springs, CO 80915
(800) 397-7055

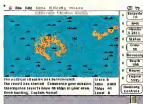
SUBVERSION 1.0: Part Battleship, part Cat & Mouse, this game pits the player in a super-sub against an armada of hostiles. Confined to a boxing-ring sized map, the action is fairly terse for the player as he/she decides what single action to take each turn in order to combat the enemy above. Reaching the supply ships on the board before they are sunk by the enemy is another important goal, as is knowing how to deal with the hazards of the deep. Sadly, the copy protection is *extremely* intrusive on game play, occasionally dropping depth charges on any rising enthusiasm for the game. Amiga, Macintosh (\$59.95). Circle Reader Service #17.

Pre-Engineering Software
1266 Kimbro Drive
Baton Rouge, LA 70808
(504) 769-3728

BRIDGE BUILDER: Software is still available for the Apple II — and if you believe that one then I've got a bridge I want to sell ya. Actually, this piece of educational software is available for both the Apple and the IBM, and gives one the ability to create as many bridges as one's imagination can compose. Players build their bridges by selecting among bridge "members" of differing strengths. When the bridge is completed, an 80,000 lb. truck is run across the structure to test its viability. More often than not, the truck and its unfortunate test driver plunge into the icy waters below in a mass of tumbling girders. An analysis function will then allow the user to pin-point the weaknesses in the design. Though crude in terms of graphics and interface, this seems an excellent intuition-building tool and pre-engi-



Origin FX - Screen Saver



Subversion



Bridge Builder



Bill's Tomato Game



Operation U.S. Presidents

neering introduction into the world of trusses, beams and stringers, tension, compression and load. Apple II (\$59.95), IBM (\$99.95). Circle Reader Service #18.

Pygnosis
29 St. Mary's Court
Brookline, MA 02146
(617) 731-3553

BILL'S TOMATO GAME: Not since *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes* have so many red, ripe fruits been victimized for our entertainment. In this puzzle game from the publishers of *Lemmings*, comes a tragic tale of two young tomatoes who decide to escape their fate as stewed specimens, leap from the Produce Truck of Doom, and lend the life of renegades. Alas, just as their home garden is in sight, an evil squirrel snatches away Tracy, the female half of this pair. Terry's (and the player's) quest is, then, to rescue Tracy by progressing through many fiendishly devised tests of problem-solving and timing. By correctly positioning fans, trampolines, jack-in-the-boxes, and blocking boxes, and by timing the sequence so that Terry avoids moving obstacles, Terry can progress through the screens and on to a juicy reunion with his ripe little lover. The game is as conceptually cute as *Lemmings*, but contains more frustration per bushel, as most of the puzzles are more timing, than strategy-oriented. Amiga (\$49.99). Circle Reader Service #19.

Tanager Software Productions
1933 Davis Street, Suite 208
San Leandro, CA 94577
(510) 430-0900

OPERATION U.S. PRESIDENTS: Presidential trivia may not matter to most of us, but it matters to school teachers and it matters to the secret agents of C.Y.P.H.E.R. The player's role as secret agent is to crack a code which can only be done by learning about the Presidents. The agent is not alone, however. There is a vast network of C.Y.P.H.E.R. agents ready to provide clues and a powerful Microscan Watch which remembers the clues and has an encyclopedic function. After meeting fellow C.Y.P.H.E.R. agents and gathering clues, the player then visits the Gallery of Presidents to make a selection. The graphically simple, 256 color program offers four levels of difficulty and over 1,000 clues about the Presidents. It is ideal "for ages 8 - 108," according to the box, but seems mostly suited for children under 16. IBM (\$49.95) Circle Reader Service #20. **cww**



COMPUTER GAMING WORLD HALL OF FAME

The games in *Computer Gaming World's Hall of Fame* have been highly rated by our readers over time. They have been rated for their impact on the computer gaming hobby during their peak period of influence and acceptance by our readership. Note that the dates listed for each game are the copyright dates and may precede the actual release dates. Specific formats listed are those which CGW has in its possession. Each month, we will highlight at least two of these games as part of this listing.

- Dungeon Master (FTL Software, 1987)*
Amiga, Atari ST, IBM
- Earl Weaver Baseball (Electronic Arts, 1986)*
Amiga, IBM, Macintosh
- The Bard's Tale (Electronic Arts, 1985)*
Many formats
- Chessmaster (Software Toolworks, 1986)*
Many formats
- Dungeon Master (FTL Software, 1987)*
Amiga, Atari ST, IBM
- Earl Weaver Baseball (Electronic Arts, 1986)*
Amiga, IBM, Macintosh
- Empire (Interstel, 1978)*
Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64, IBM
- F-19 Stealth Fighter (MicroProse, 1988)*
IBM
- Gettysburg: The Turning Point (Strategic Simulations, Inc., 1986)*
Amiga, Apple, C-64, IBM
- Gunship (MicroProse, 1989)*
Amiga, C-64, IBM
- Harpoon (Three-Sixty Pacific, 1989)*
Amiga, IBM, Macintosh
- Kampfgruppe (Strategic Simulations, Inc., 1985)*
Many formats
- King's Quest V (Sierra, 1990)*
Amiga, IBM
- M-1 Tank Platoon (MicroProse, 1989)*
Amiga, IBM
- Mech Brigade (Strategic Simulations, Inc., 1985)*
Many formats
- Might & Magic (New World Computing, 1986)*
Apple, C-64, IBM, Mac
- M.U.L.E. (Electronic Arts, 1983)*
Atari 8-bit, C-64
- Pirates (MicroProse, 1987)*
Many formats
- Railroad Tycoon (MicroProse, 1990)*
Amiga, IBM, Macintosh
- SimCity (Maxis, 1987)*
Many formats
- Starflight (Electronic Arts, 1986)*
Amiga, C-64, IBM, Sega
- Their Finest Hour (LucasArts, 1989)*
Amiga, Atari ST, IBM
- Ultima III (Origin, 1983)*
Apple, Atari ST, C-64, IBM
- Ultima IV (Origin, 1985)*
Amiga, Apple, Atari ST, IBM
- Ultima VI (Origin, 1990)*
Amiga, IBM
- War in Russia (Strategic Simulations, Inc., 1984)*
Apple
- Wasteland (Interplay, 1988)*
Many formats
- Wing Commander (Origin, 1991)*
IBM, Sega
- Wizardry (Sir-Tech Software, 1981)*
Many formats
- Zork (Infocom, 1981)*
Many formats

Gettysburg: The Turning Point
(Strategic Simulations, Inc., 1986)

Amiga, Apple, C-64, IBM



The tactical combat system used in *Gettysburg: The Turning Point* spawned its own series of American Civil War games. Many players felt that it was the first "realistic" wargame in terms of the way it handled "What if?" orders of battle with computer-moderated random set-up. The artificial opponent was reasonably competent for most gamers, and the randomness added to the game's challenge and replayability.

Gunship
(MicroProse, 1989)
Amiga, C-64, IBM



From its inception, *Gunship* offered a playable helicopter simulation combined with action-oriented realism. Though its debut was on the 8-bit Commodore 64, its polygon-filled graphics were fast enough and the controls (handled easily with the keyboard overlay) were realistic enough to satisfy almost every military simulation buff. *Gunship* was not the first helicopter simulation, but it was the first mission-oriented combat helicopter simulation and the first to allow characters to have continuity from mission to mission. It was successful enough to spawn an entire generation of imitators.

Top Adventure Games

GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1 King's Quest VI: Heir Today	Sierra	10.40
2 Indiana Jones: Fate of Atlantis	LucasArts	10.08
3 Quest for Glory III	Sierra	10.02
4 Monkey Island 2: LeChuck Rides Again	LucasArts	9.89
5 The Secret of Monkey Island	LucasArts	9.75
6 The Secret of Monkey Island: Lure of the Love Hat	LucasArts	9.72
7 Lost Fein of Sherlock Holmes	Electronic Arts	9.71
8 Sherlock Holmes CD	ICOM	9.55
9 Amazon	Access25	9.50
10 Spellcasting 301: Spring Break	Legend	9.18

Top Role Playing Games

GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1 Ultima Underworld	Oxygen	10.45
2 Eye of the Beholder II	SSI	9.64
3 Might & Magic: Heroes of Xen	New World	9.57
4 Might & Magic: Masters of Magic	New World	9.56
5 Might & Magic: Guardians of Steam	New World Computing	9.45
6 Ultima VI	Oxygen	9.39
7 Eye of the Beholder	SSI	9.10
8 Base of the Colossal Forge	Si-Tech	9.05
9 Ultima V	Oxygen	9.00
10 Etrian	Accolade	8.85

Top Simulation Games

GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1 Red Baron	Dynarex	9.85
2 Command: Maximum Overkill	NewLogic	9.84
3 Falcon 3.0	Spectrum HoloByte	9.52
4 Stunt Island	Duquay	9.31
5 Aces of the Pacific	Dynarex	9.31
6 Great War: Aces of the Luftwaffe	MicroProse	9.30
7 World War 2000	MicroProse	9.10
8 Great Strategy II	MicroProse	9.05
9 Chuck Yeager's Air Combat	Electronic Arts	9.04
10 Red Storm Rising	MicroProse	9.04

Top Strategy Games

GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1 Civilization	MicroProse	10.32
2 The Settlers	Sierra	10.22
3 Hong Kong Mahjong Pro	Electronic Arts	9.85
4 Chessmaster 3000	Software Toolworks	9.82
5 The Last Admiral	OQF	9.05
6 Arch Wagoner	Adrian	8.95
7 Populous II	Electronic Arts	8.92
8 Crusader: Siege and Conquest	Interplay	8.82
9 Hoyle-Book of Games, Vol. 3	Sierra	8.77
10 Serp	Madnet	8.77



Top 100 Games

	Game	Company	Type	Score
1	Links 986 Pro	Access	SP	10.73
2	Compendium Kingdoms	OQF	WG,ST	10.72
3	Civilization	OQF	ST	10.72
4	Front Page Sports Football	Dynarex	SP	10.68
5	Ultima Underworld	Oxygen	RP	10.45
6	King's Quest VI: Heir Today...	Sierra	AD	10.40
7	Wing Commander II	Oxygen	AC	10.34
8	Software's Journey	OQF	ST	10.26
9	Indiana Jones: Fate of Atlantis	LucasArts	AD	10.08
10	Quest for Glory III: LeChuck's Revenge	Sierra	AD,RP	10.02
11	Monkey Island 2	LucasArts	AD	9.95
12	Star Control II	Accolade	AD,ST	9.95
13	V for Victory: Vellinge Luki	Three-Sixty	WG	9.88
14	Hong Kong Mahjong Pro	Electronic Arts	ST	9.85
15	Command: Maximum Overkill	NewLogic	SI	9.84
16	Wolfenstein 3-D	id Software	AC	9.82
17	The Perfect General	OQF	WG	9.74
18	The Secret of Monkey Island	LucasArts	AD	9.72
19	Lost Files of Sherlock Holmes	Electronic Arts	AD	9.71
20	Eye of the Beholder II	SSI	RP	9.64
21	V for Victory: Utah Bleach	SSI	WG	9.63
22	Falcon 3.0	Spectrum HoloByte	SI	9.62
23	Stunt Island	Duquay	SI	9.61
24	Might & Magic: Clouds of Xen	New World	RP	9.57
25	Sherlock Holmes CD	ICOM	AD	9.50
26	Hardball III	Accolade	SP	9.55
27	Great Naval Battles	Dynarex	WG,ST	9.54
28	Aces of the Pacific	OQF	SP	9.51
29	Battles of Destiny	OQF	WG,ST	9.50
30	Amazon	Access88	AD	9.50
31	Wizardry VII: Crusades of Savant	Si-Tech	RP	9.48
32	Links	Access	SP	9.47
33	Warlords	SSI	WG,ST	9.47
34	Might & Magic III	New World Computing	RP	9.45
35	Ultima VII	Oxygen	RP	9.39
36	Chessmaster 3000	Software Toolworks	ST	9.38
37	Sacred Weapons of the Luftwaffe	LucasArts	SI	9.33
38	High Command	ColecoSoft Comp.	WG	9.29
39	Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf	Accolade	SP	9.27
40	Lemmings	Bethesda	AC	9.25
41	Conflict, Korea	Pygmas	AC	9.25
42	Carmes At War	SSI	WG	9.21
43	Second Front	SSG	WG	9.19
44	Spellcasting 301: Spring Break	SSI	WG	9.18
45	Tetris Classic	Legend	AD	9.18
46	The Castle of Dr. Brain	Sierra	ST	9.14
47	Eye of the Beholder	SSI	AD	9.11
48	Gurathap 2000	SSI	RP	9.10
49	The Dagger of Amun Ra	Microprose	SI	9.10
50	The Dagger of Amun Ra	Sierra	AD	9.09

Top Wargames

GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	Command Kingships	10.72
2	V for Victory: Volkye's Lute	9.68
3	The Perfect General	9.74
4	V for Victory: Utah Beach	9.63
5	Great Naval Battles	9.54
6	Battles of Dupleix	9.50
7	Warfare	9.49
8	Warfare	9.46
9	Conflict: Korea	9.21
10	Caesar At War	9.18

Top Action Games

GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	Wild Commander II	9.81
2	Wild Commander 3-D	9.80
3	Leatherstocking	9.25
4	Terminator 2020	9.25
5	Terms Classic	9.14
6	Oh, No! More Lemmings	8.92
7	Super Tails	8.77
8	Out of This World	8.51
9	Conan the Barbarian	8.31

Top Sports Games

GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	Lines 986 Pro	10.73
2	Front Page Sports Football	10.50
3	Football III	10.25
4	Lines 986	9.47
5	Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf	9.27
6	Indiana Jones 500	8.83
7	Tony La Russa's Ultimate Baseball	8.60
8	4-D Boxing	8.56
9	NFL Pro League Football	8.54
10	PGA Tour Golf	8.54

PG is based on reader survey cards in each issue of CGW and published two issues subsequent. Data on more than 100 games is analyzed and top ten lists may contain games which scored below the Top 100 cutoff.



51	Silent Service II	SI	9.00
52	Shuck Y'leuger's Air Combat	RP	9.00
53	The Last of the Atomic Forge	ST	9.00
54	Quest for Glory II	SI	9.04
55	Red Storm Rising	AD	9.04
56	Conquests of the Longbow	AD	9.02
57	Quest for Glory II	AD	9.01
58	Police Quest 3	RP	9.00
59	Ultima V	AD	8.98
60	Strata Quest IV	WG	8.98
61	Western Front	SSS	8.98
62	The Adventures of Willy Steamish	Dynamik	8.98
63	Mech Warrior	AD	8.95
64	F-117A	MicroProse	8.92
65	Populous II	SI	8.92
66	Oh, No! More Lemmings	AC	8.92
67	Rise of the Dragon	Dynamik	8.89
68	Maritan Memorandum	AD	8.89
69	Pacific War	SSS	8.88
70	Indiana Jones 500	SP	8.83
71	Castles 2: Siege and Conquest	ST	8.82
72	Accolade	RP	8.82
73	Command HQ	WG,ST	8.81
74	Rex Nebular	AD	8.79
75	Gateway to the Savage Frontier	RP	8.79
76	Hoyle Book of Games, Vol. 3	SI	8.78
77	Siege	ST	8.77
78	Super Tails	SSS	8.77
79	The Summoning	AC,ST	8.77
80	Heart of China	RP	8.76
81	Battles of Napoleon	AD	8.75
82	BattleChess	WG	8.72
83	Interplay	ST	8.72
84	Legend	RP	8.72
85	Sterling II	AD	8.71
86	F-15 Strike Eagle II	RP	8.69
87	Action Stations	SI	8.68
88	Pools of Darkness	WG	8.68
89	Typhoon of Steel	SSS	8.68
90	Armada 2025	WG	8.67
91	Tony LaRussa's Ultimate Baseball	ST	8.63
92	Black Rogers	SP	8.60
93	Cannon Strike	RP	8.57
94	Legend of Kyandia	WG	8.57
95	4-D Boxing	AD	8.56
96	Megaliths	SP	8.56
97	PGA Tour Golf	SI,ST	8.55
98	NFL Pro League Football	SP	8.54
99	Out of This World	AC	8.51
100	The Games: Winter Challenge	WG	8.50
	Maritan Dreams	RP	8.50
	Origin	RP	8.50

Games on unnumbered lines have scores equal to the line above.

AD=Adventure, RP=Role Playing, SI=Simulation, ST=Strategy, WG=Wargame, AC>Action, SP=Sports

The Computer Gaming World Poll

A monthly survey of the readers of Computer Gaming World Magazine.

PC Research Hits List of Top-Selling Software

December, 1992

PC Games (MS-DOS)

Rank	Title and Source
1.	Kings Quest VI (Sierra On-Line)
2.	Front Page Sports: Football (Sierra On-Line)
3.	Comanche: Maximum Overkill (Nova Logic)
4.	Wing Commander (Origin)
5.	Sim City (Maxis)
6.	F-15 Strike Eagle III (MicroProse)
7.	Monopoly (Virgin Games)
8.	Microsoft Flight Simulator (Microsoft)
9.	Aces of the Pacific (Sierra On-Line)
10.	Lanks 386 Pro (Access)
11.	Civilization (MicroProse)
12.	The Humans (Gameltek)
13.	WWII 1946: Aces Mission Disk (Sierra On-Line)
14.	Risk (Virgin Games)
15.	Star Trek 25th Anniversary (Interplay)
16.	Police Quest (Sierra On-Line)
17.	Falcon 3.0 (Spectrum HoloByte)
18.	SimLife (Maxis)
19.	Hardball III (Accolade)
20.	Quest for Glory III (Sierra On-Line)

Amiga Games

Rank	Title and Source
1.	688 Attack Sub (Electronic Arts)
2.	Civilization (MicroProse)
3.	AD&D Eye of the Beholder (Strategic Simulations)
4.	Operation Combat (Merit)
5.	AD&D Gateway to Savage Frontier (Strategic Simulations)

Macintosh Games

Rank	Title and Source
1.	Prince of Persia (Broderbund)
2.	Lemmings (Psygnosis)
3.	Sim City Supreme (Maxis)
4.	Microsoft Flight Simulator (Microsoft)
5.	Award Winners: KQ V & Red Baron (Sierra On-Line)

CD-ROM Products

Rank	Title and Source
1.	Battle Chews (Interplay)
2.	Wing Commander/Secret Missions I & II (Origin)
3.	Cinemania (Microsoft)
4.	CD Game Pack (Software Toolworks)
5.	Sherlock Holmes Detective (Icom)
6.	Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego (Broderbund)
7.	Sherlock Holmes II (Icom)
8.	Kings Quest V (Sierra On-Line)
9.	World View (Aris Entertainment)
10.	Wing Commander & Ultima VI (Origin)

This list is based on units sold by Software Etc., Babbage's, Wadsworth Software and Electronic Boutique. For more information, please contact PC Research at (703) 435-1025.

What You've Been Playing Lately

The Feedback Forum of Reader Response

Every month our mailbox fills to capacity with hundreds of Reader Input Cards from our many loyal and outspoken readers. Over the years we've found these cards to be an invaluable source of feedback. Within 10 days of the release of our latest issue we can expect to see dozens of cards begin pouring in with comments, suggestions, encouragements, trades and many good laughs, in addition to the data for our Top 100 game poll. Through your efforts, we know which articles were hits, which flopped, how many typos or grammatical errors we've let slip through—in addition to the many well-articulated opinions on anything and everything related to gaming.

This column is set aside to give our readers a voice, and to display the results of our "Playing Lately?" field on the Reader Input Card. Thanks for taking the time to fill them out—and keep 'em coming!

Playing Lately? Results For CGW #103, February 1993:

1.	Conquered Kingdoms (QQP)
2.	Civilization (MicroProse)
3.	Front Page Sports Football (Dynamix)
4.	Wizardry VII: Crusaders of the Dark Savant (Sir-Tech)
5.	Ultima Underworld II (Origin)
6.	Wolfenstein 3-D (id Software)
7.	F-15 Strike Eagle III (MicroProse)
8.	V For Victory: Velikiye Luki (Three-Sixty)
9.	Dune II (Virgin)
10.	Comanche Maximum Overkill (NovaLogic)

Who are you?

Just who are you people? And what do you do with your time? Each month we ask all sorts of prying questions in search of the answers. After immediately turning all data over to the CIA, we then tabulate it for our own amusement. Here are some of our more recent findings.

What is your sex?	What is your favorite gaming genre?
Female: 7%	Wargames: 20%
Male: 93%	Flight Sims: 13%
"You mean during the day or the night?": 4%	Adventure games: 6%

Which is your primary gaming computer?	Role-playing games: 19%
IBM & Compatibles: 91%	Strategy games: 16%
Macintosh Family: 3%	Action games: 5%
Amiga Family: 6%	Don't label me!: 20%
Atari ST: 1%	

Which network do you primarily patronize?	CompuServe: 8%
	Genie: 6%
	Prodigy: 8%
	Sierra Network: 6%
	America On-line: 6%
	Internet/Usenet: 5%
	Unconnected: 61%
How old are you in earth years?	
Under 14: 2%	
14-17: 8%	
18-23: 18%	
24-29: 19%	
30-35: 21%	
36-40: 15%	
41-50: 15%	
51 and over: 2%	



The Patch File

Computer game programs have grown so massive and the number of possible configurations has become so huge that incompatibilities and glitches seem to be breeding at an exponential rate. Consumers and publishers are both frustrated at the need for adding patches into "buggy" programs, but they seem to be an interim solution that is going to be with the hobby for a while (presumably, until a standard platform configuration is agreed upon). So, until the golden age of standardized platforms and bug-free programs, *Computer Gaming World* will publish a regular list of the latest updates of which we are aware.

These patches can usually be downloaded from either CompuServe or GEnie, but can also be obtained from individual software publisher's own BBSs and direct from the publisher (with proof of purchase). We continue to urge publishers to keep us updated on the latest versions/patches to their games.

(* indicates new files.)

Air Force Commander Slowdown Patch: Makes the game playable on high-powered machines. 11/24/92

Amazon Raft Bug Fix: Fixes the problem getting the raft out of the box in the airplane. 12/12/92

B-17 Flying Fortress Version 2 Update: Adds many new features and tweaks some of the existing ones. 11/17/92

***Batman Returns Update:** Latest version of Konami's *Batventure*. 1/24/93

Civilization Update (Amiga): Latest version for the Amiga. 09/12/92

Crisis in the Kremlin Version 1.01: Fixes problems reported by users since its original release. 09/26/92

Crusaders of the Dark Savant Patch #2: Fixes the "Don Barlone" bug. 11/16/92

***Darkseed Version 1.5 Update:** Latest version of *CyberDreams'* adventure. 1/20/93

F-15 Strike Eagle III Install Update: For those having trouble with the install program. 12/23/92

***F-15 Strike Eagle Help Info Text:** Text file containing known problems and suggestions for those having problems with the sim. 1/08/93

Falcon: Operation Fighting Tiger V3.01.1 Update: Contains new installer, a fix for blank screen lockup, escort mission failures, Reg Flag buildings, PC Speaker sounds, ROE conflicts, B-52 crashes, ships in allied comm mode in Kurile Theatre, and others. 10/13/92

Full Count Baseball V5.1 Upgrade: Expands play-by-play and offers a new screen layout. For owners of V5.0 only. 12/06/92

Greens Version 02 Update: Addresses the problems reported with scoring, Sound Blasters, etc. 11/22/92

Gunship 2000 Islands and Ice Version .08: Latest version of the 1&1 scenario disk. 10/10/92

***Great Naval Battles Update:** Latest version of SSI's BB simulator. 1/08/93

Harpoon Version 1.32 Upgrade: Latest IBM version of the game. 11/14/92

Island of Dr. Brain Update: Fixes "Ooops 10" error, music room puzzle, and several other problems. 12/23/92

Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition Rev 1.5: Fixes the Mini-Moss effect caused by several objects being placed after a hill crest. 12/16/92

Lightspeed Version 02 Update: Fixes the trade problem that some players have experienced. 11/17/92

Links 386 Pro Update Version 1.08: Allows game to run under

OS/2 and other DPMI operating systems and software. 11/14/92

***NFL Pro League Football '92 V1.1:** Contains many upgrades, fixes, and additional schedules. 1/26/93

***Pacific War V1.06:** Fixes the bombardment bug, the West Coast defense bug, the missing unit bug, etc. An "unofficial" upgrade from Gary Grigsby — not supported by SSI. 1/24/93

Power Politics Update: Fixes all known bugs. 12/1/92

Quest For Glory III "B" Patch: Corrects all known game play errors. 12/03/92

Railroad Tycoon Version 1.01 Update (Mac): The latest version for the Mac. 09/25/92

ReX Nebular Update 8.49 (IBM/VGA): Corrects the chicken-bomb and poly-cement problems. 11/13/92

SimLife Upgrade V1.02: Fixes minor problems. 12/16/92

Spelljammer Update V1.1: Latest version of the game. 11/21/92

Star Control 2 V1.1: Fixes several small problems. 12/11/92

***Star Legions Update:** Fixes some machine-specific lock-ups, problems with phasers firing out of the FOV, changes to mission ratings, fixes to award sequence. 1/15/93

Stunt Island Update: Fixes a minor bug in the Install program that was causing some system lockups after the hardware autodetect sequence. 11/27/92

Tom Landry Football V. 1.02 Update: Corrects problems with modern play, excessive penalties, Sound Blaster problems, and improved animation choreography. 12/03/92

Wayne Gretzky Hockey 3 Version 1.10: Fixes many bugs, including the Canadian VOC file, the computer scoring problem, CH FlightStick problem, penalties, referees, coach's clipboard and others. 11/24/92

The PRODIGY Weekly Top Ten

The Game Center section of the PRODIGY network offers its users the chance to rate their favorite games on a weekly basis. CGW provides this data as yet another indicator of what's hot in gaming as determined by the player's votes. Please note that a PRODIGY rating is not a cumulative rating, as in the CGW Top 100 Poll, and is based upon a straight 1-10 scale.

THE TEN RANKED GAMES					
Week of Jan 22 - Jan 26					
RANK	SCORE	TITLE	RANK	SCORE	TITLE
1	2922	Wolfenstein 3D	6	1782	Star Trek: 2510
2	2854	Civilization	7	1683	Illions I
3	2108	Wing Commander 2	8	1625	Area of Pacific
4	1810	Links	9	1572	Falcon 3.0
5	1718	Illions Underworld	10	1466	Monkey Island 2

13 free games and more!

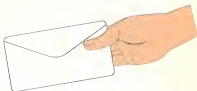
GAME CENTER Look

2094 Score: 2094 Edit 1466 Score: 1466



The Envelope Please

by Johnny L. Wilson



State of the Industry: A film can get extra marketing spin from the Academy Awards. Studio chiefs and directors of non-commercial films can sometimes be vindicated by a well-timed award. Science fiction authors can get build their reputations (and find grounds for negotiating a new contract on their subsequent books) just from having one of their books nominated for a Hugo or Nebula award. Nobel prize winners attain extra funds to continue their research. Product awards in nearly every category have the potential to influence our purchasing decisions.

Yet, almost every award format gives way to controversy. Hollywood insiders complain that the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences is too politicized. Members of the Science Fiction Writers Association complain that too many amateurs have infiltrated their august membership. It seems that, no matter what group gives the awards, there are always critics who complain that a given winner was awarded their prize due to (Select one): a) a previous body of work; b) sentimentality; c) incompetent voters; d) a lobbying effort or e) all of the above.

The Software Publishers Association presents the Excellence in Software awards at their Spring Symposium each year. Indeed, they will have been presented by the time most of you read this editorial. Every year, we hear talk of how "political" the awards are and new initiatives to reform them. For example, we (along with others) criticized the selection of a data disk as the sports game of the year during last year's awards. Others complain of a backlash against some of the member companies in the SPA.

Does this mean that the SPA awards are bad? Of course, not. At worst, it probably signifies that they are like industry-presented awards in any given field and subject to the same pressures. At best, they have value for promotion, occasionally offer extra spin (and shelf life) to a product and, best of all, provide some attention to computer software in general (and, hopefully, entertainment software in specific) that may deserve a second look.

What they do not usually accomplish is the task of bringing unknown or lesser-

known products to the attention of the public. At their best, an award should call one's attention to a demonstration of expertise, a display of innovation or a dash of risk that turns into something elegant in aesthetic or utility. Further, awards carry more weight when those who know something of the difficulty in accomplishing a task can acknowledge an exceptional job. Since the SPA tends to be oriented toward the administrative and marketing aspects of software publishing, the awards seem to favor those products which are better marketed as opposed to better designed.

Naturally, the Computer Game Developers Conference would be an ideal venue for awards which reflect design over marketing. Yet, the CGDC has abdicated their potential for adjudicating product awards because of a philosophical devaluation of awards in general (largely for reasons mentioned earlier). The members recognize the failings of awards without realizing their positive potential for enlightening gamers on those products which designers feel are most noteworthy. Frankly, we wish they would change their minds.

State of the Magazine: Magazines which cover a given field usually offer awards as part of their critical task. The awards allow readers to gain a sense of perspective with regard to games which have remained significant and stood above the rest after a passage of time. In CGW, for example, we have two sets of awards for two operative periods of time: the Game of the Year awards and the Hall of Fame games. The former awards represent the "selling season" from one Summer Consumer Electronics Show to another and the latter awards signify games that have shown themselves to be exceptional over the long haul. The former awards are genre specific, with the exception of the overall Game of the Year award and the Special Awards for Artistic Achievement. The latter awards are all-inclusive.

The awards provide a ready-reference for the readers regarding which titles are deemed most worthy of their attention by the editorial staff of the magazine. At CGW, the process begins with the editors listing the games which they consider to be the best in each genre. This list is cross-

referenced with the readers' ratings in the Top 100. The editors express their opinions concerning the artistic merit of each game and why they believe a given game is better than another. These arguments are weighed carefully against the readers' ratings and a decision is made. Hence, the winners are not always the top-rated games in their genre (since the artistic and design merits might outweigh a popular, but conventional game), but they are usually well-rated.

The overall Game of the Year must offer something very special. It will usually feature some new technology or cross-over into some new boundary of game design. It will often appeal to more than one type of gamer. Some years, it is tougher than others to make this selection, but it is never done hastily. A great deal of thought is placed into every selection and a considerable amount more goes into this one.

The biggest drawback to CGW's two sets of awards is the fact that we conservatively wait until a game has developed a "history" before we acknowledge it. Some readers have complained that this offers no assistance in terms of purchasing outstanding games at an early juncture. So, this month, we unveil a third set of awards. The CGW Editors' Choice designation will accompany feature coverage in the magazine. These awards are designed to give timely recognition to those products which, from our critical vantage point, seem to go beyond the rest of their genre. Since they will, of necessity, be early choices, this will necessitate our staff going out on the occasional limb. Yet, we think that readers who know our approach and tastes will benefit from this additional recognition. Watch for the unveiling of our new awards logo in future issues.

We recognize, however, that every reader is not going to agree with all our selections, whether based on early experience or a well-known track record. Yet, we still think it is worthwhile to make a stab at honoring those games which we deem critical successes. To paraphrase a cliché, "If there were no awards, _____ (Select one: critics, marketers, egoists, reporters, gamers or competitors) would find it necessary to invent them. **now**"

"Catch a dragon? No sweat!"



Here's what the experts are saying about *Eric the Unready*.

"A comedy adventure full of whimsy and wonder"

—Computer Gaming World

"Eric is flat-out funny. There's comedy for everyone and a good quest to boot."

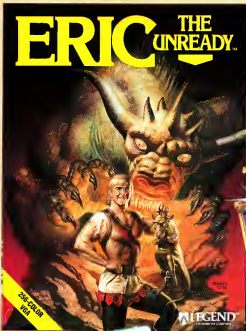
—Computer Game Review

"A wonderfully hilarious adventure"

—Game Bytes Magazine

Eric the Unready established his reputation by impaling his instructor during jousting class. Then, when Princess Lorealle the Worthy is kidnapped, Eric begins a madcap quest through this hilarious fantasy world packed with dragons and dwarves, wizards, unicorns, and the most fearsome beasts of all, the dreaded Attack Turtles.

Every player will find at least one favorite movie, TV show or adventure game that has been struck by Bob Bates' pen! From the award-winning author of *TIMEQUEST*.



"I laughed till my pants fell down!"
Larry Laffner

"More fun than a barrel of monkeys!"
Guywood Threepbrush

- Breathtaking fantasy art!
- 256-color VGA
- Awesome sound track
- New menu-driven system for conversing with characters
- Intriguing mix of interfaces creates a constantly changing graphical scene



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ERIC THE UNREADY is a trademark of Legend Entertainment Company.
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. Actual VGA graphics shown.

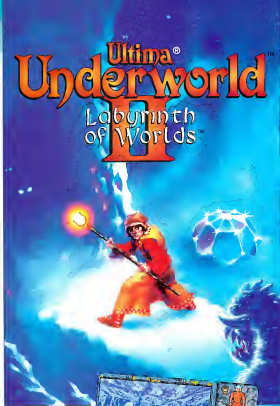
↑ The Thrilling Sequel to
Computer Gaming World's
Role-Playing Game of
the Year! It's not just a
dungeon game anymore!



UNDERWORLD™ The Stygian Abyss™ was hailed as the first in a new generation of fantasy adventures. **UNDERWORLD II Labyrinth of Worlds** delivers a new, sharply realistic look. With smoother animation, more detailed creatures and a spacious view window, it's the most realistic gaming environment on a PC.

The world of *Underworld II* is more varied and engaging than ever before. We've added new terrain features (like shifting floors, water currents and thin ice), new spells (like *Shockwave* and *Paralyz*), new and nastier traps and puzzles, and new creatures (we'll let you discover these for yourself...)

Underworld II takes you beyond the traditional dungeon environment. Deep in the earth, the Guardian's magic has cracked the walls of reality, opening the way to eight new worlds beyond Britannia: a city buried in ice, a floating castle, an ancient tomb and more... From the halls of Lord British's castle, it's time to carry the battle forward and into the **LABYRINTH OF WORLDS...**



Actual screens may vary.

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