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COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

The #1 Computer Game Magazine

September 1993
Number 110

Strategy Game Section

150 Wargames Surveyed

Summer CES Part Deux

SYNDICATE Strikes

Prince of Persia 2: Cruel and Unmerciful

Sneak Preview: Warlords II

Microsoft Flight Simulator 5.0 Reaches New Heights

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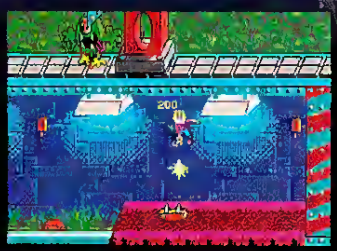
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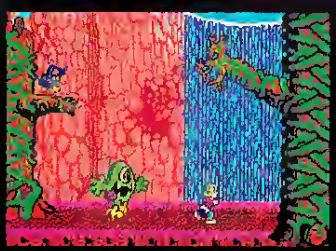
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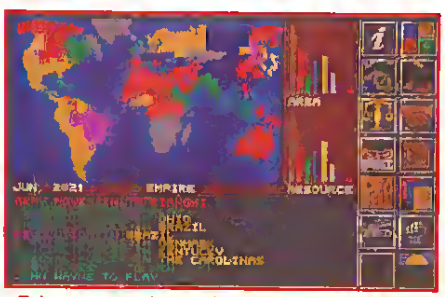

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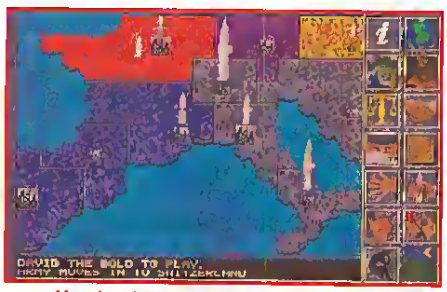

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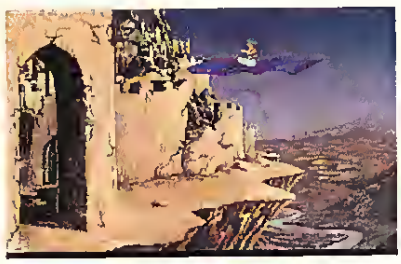

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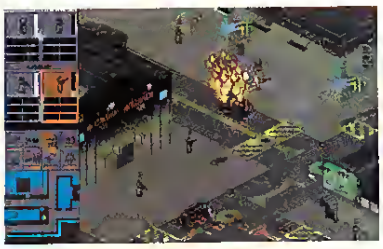

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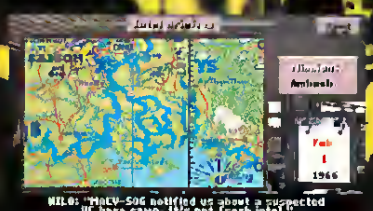

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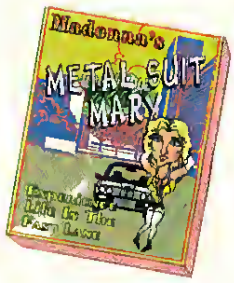

Celebrity Design

Have We Been Misled?

by Johnny L. Wilson

In the July issue of *Computer Gaming World*, our staff report on the Computer Game Developers Conference teed off on one of my favorite speculative fiction authors, Harlan Ellison. Harlan gave the keynote address at the conference and, true to the tradition of the previous two years, managed to tattle quite a few cages (not the least of these, this editor's). We stand by our critique, but our boyhood heto and member of that elite literati informs us that we (and lots of other banquet attendees) misunderstood his statement regarding his contribution to Cyberdreams' *I Have No Mouth And I Must Scream.*

What we understood Harlan to say was that he spent two concenttated weeks on the project. What actually ttanspired, according to both Ellison and the publisher of his upcoming computer game, was that Harlan Ellison collaborated with designet David Sears for months prior to the concentrated two weeks and expects to be involved for months *after* said period. Aside from this (after all, we had othet axes to grind with Mr. Ellison's address), this situation offers an appropriate venue for reflecting on the celebrity design phenomenon.

As the entertainment software industry convetges with show business, it will become mote commonl for companies to recruit celebrity designers. This is not a new phenomenon. Electronic Arts has recruited celebrities from Dr. Timothy Leary to Dr. J. and Larry Bird, to its latest celebrity signings with Shaquil O'Neal. One of Accolade's biggest product lines uses the expertise of golfer Jack Nicklaus, while others invoke football coach Mike Ditka, hockey star Brett Hull, retired soccet luminary Pelé and basketball star Charles Barkley. Bethesda tapped Wayne Gretzky's name fot their hockey game, but got the bulk of their expert advice from other hockey players. Mediagenic's old Gamestar label once sullied Pete Rose's name (before the "Gamblin' Rose" managed to do so himself) with a design to which Pete himself admitted he had offered little. Tom Clancy's contribution to the *Red Storm Rising* computer game was certainly minimal, compared to Larry Bond's contribution to *Harpoon.* Some designs, then, have been very much a team effort between the celebtities and the programming team, but some have been little more than celebrity licenses.

Does a sports celebrity performing for a videotape or scratching out a few player ratings equal celebrity game design? Does a story synopsis ot backstory constitute a computer game design? Does the licensing of one's characters or fictional wotld indicate that one has designed a game? Would a film director like Francis Fotd Coppola ot James Cameron (who both use lavish amounts of film) become a game designet by offering a computet game company the use of film footage from off the cutting room floor? What if a film producer offered a sctipt to a game publisher? Does that make the producer a celebrity designer?

How will consumers know if a celebrity actually contributed to a game's design? Does it really make any difference?

The question is, "How will the consumer know whether his/her beloved hero/heroine actually conttibuted to the design of a computet game?" Futthet, "Does it make any difference?" Right now, it is impossible for consumers to tell how much involvement a celebrity actually had with a game, but we think it *does* make a difference. Slapping a celebrity name on a product does not make that product any better. Building the model underneath a program from special insight given by that celebrity *does* provide extra value.

It is a three-fold tesponsibility to assist the gamer/prospective purchaset in knowing how real the celebrity involvement with a game is. First, the consumer needs to learn to ask. Ask the retailer (who ptobably has no way of knowing, but is sure to try to find out once gamers opt to ask questions first and maybe purchase the game later). Write the publisher (once they know consumers really care, they'll do more to publicize any *actual* involvement).

Second, the publishet needs to get the word out. Electronic Arts did a wonderful job of communicating Garry Kaspatrov's involvement with *Kasparrov's Gambit* by having Kaspartov himself tell the press and assembled V.I.P.s what they were trying to accomplish in the design. Publishers need to make a special effort to communicate the contributions of the celebrities involved with the design. If the publishers collaborating with the celebrities go the extra mile to communicate what positive involvement can be, it may point out the failings of other publishers who are simply and, perhaps disingenuously, using a name.

Finally, it is the responsibility of the ptess to ask the tough questions. We need to specifically ask what the involvement with the game has been (and will be) and we need to publish the results. To be honest, there are times when we are actually discouraged about the minimal involvement which celebtities have had with a game which bears their name on the box. There have been times that we didn't fully communicate that disappointment. Perhaps, we even need to give a few annual "Name Dropper" awards to the worst offenders. Whatever the case, we pledge to focus beyond the starlight to determine what contribution they really made to the gaming experience. CGW

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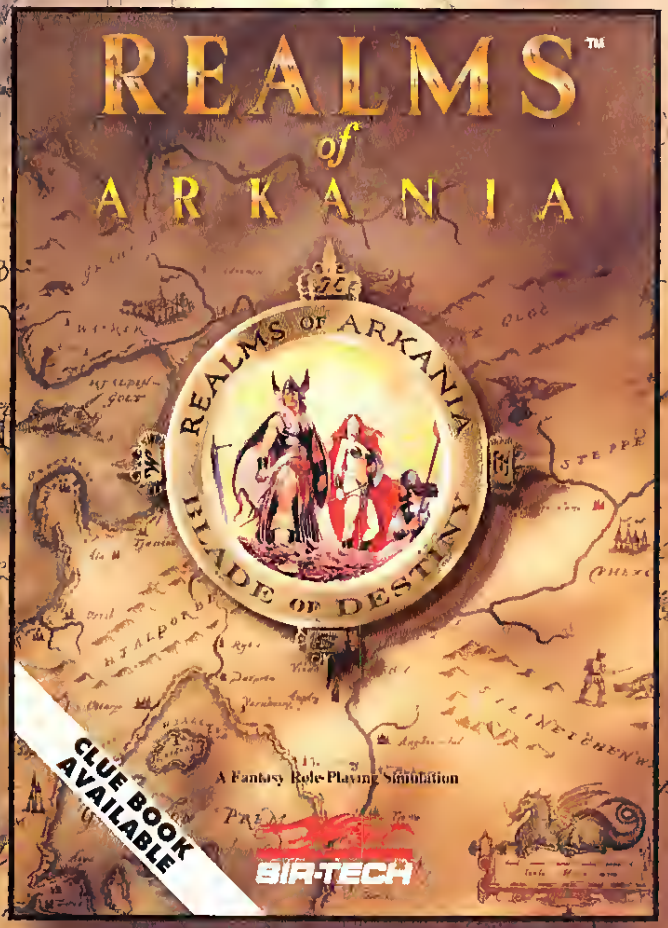

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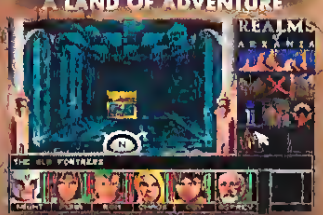
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If You Build It They Will Fly It

Photo of Citation jet courtesy of Cessna Aircraft Company

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.

A Preview of Microsoft's *Flight Simulator 5*

by Tim "The Timinator" Trimble

Imagine...You load up *Flight Simulator 5* on your PC and find your plane where it always was in *Flight Simulator 4*, on the end of the runway at Meigs Field, Chicago. Only this time it's a partially cloudy day, with wispy white puffs drifting across a soft blue sky. The horizon fades into the haze of the distant clouds. The Chicago skyline is populated with detailed buildings, their shadows stretching across the ground. Pixelated facsimiles of instruments no longer fill your panel; instead, a textured instrument panel bears digitized images of authentic instruments.

A Learjet taxis into view, flashing its beautifully tendered paint scheme and gradient shading. It depatts quickly as you admire the sleek details of the craft. Looking to the right you see the angled instrument panel, a portion of the right seat, door, window and its view. Even at this angle the instruments are still being updated as the engine instruments indicate that the engine is warmed up and teady to go.

Aftet double checking the mixture and constant speed propeller settings, you apply full throttle. The digitized sounds of the engine increase in pitch as the nose of the plane starts to bounce. The plane wants to leave, but you forgot to telease the parking brake. After correcting the oversight, the plane accelerates down the strip, runway numbers 36 rolling by. Switching to external view you ogle the sleek lines and shading of the Cessna R182. As the geat goes up to the tune of the motors, you notice the wheels slowly fold back into the belly of the aircraft. Swinging your external view forwatd of the aircraft and the spinning propeller, you bid adieu to the airport and climb out over Lake Michigan.

No Longer On The Vaportrail

By the time you read this article, this scenario will be a reality. Over 12,000 hours of

development have gone into the creation of *Flight Simulator 5*, which demonsttates the amounr of work that Microsoft and BAO (The Bruce Artwick Organization, developers of the product) have committed to this product. This commitment to leading edge techniques and features can be easily seen in the product itself.

The same four aircraft ate available: the Cessna Skylane RG R182, the Learjet 35A, the Schweizer 2-32 Sailplane, and rhe Sopwith Camel. This, however, is where the similatities end. Each of the aircraft are externally rendered in smooth gradient shades and sleek shapes, wirhout any indication of quirky polygons.

Each craft has its own digitized instrument panel, charactetistic of its design. I can't wait to sit a real pilot behind the instrument panel of the Learjet to see whar the facial expressions will be! The Learjet panel simulates the high-

Photo Courtesy of Cessna Aircraft Co

tech digiral equipmenr of its real life counrerpart. Dual throttles with thrust reversers are a good indication that this simulator is built fot some serious flying fun. I can finally fly in to Meigs field like a carriet jock and kick in rhe rhrust reversers, imagining rhe grimaces on the faces of the tower conrrollers. The forward view is of the left side of the cockpit only, wirh rhe center windscreen support brace on the tight side of the screen and a magnetic compass halfway up the post. A ptess of the Tab key will toggle in the engine insttument gauges over the top of the radio stack. And as in the real Learjet, the view out the ftont windscteen is a lor smaller than the

Cessna due to the height of the insttumenr panel.

The flight characteristics of the aircraft have been grearly improved and have become more realistic, although I still seem to have a problem with recreating a power-on stall into a spin.

Making a Scene

The scenery of *Flight Simulator 5* is also very impressive. Buildings with unique srructutes and windows, along with shadow effects, have been added to the cityscapes. The mettopolitan areas truly look expansive with rhe complexity of streets and buildings. The view of a city skyline ftom 10 miles and 15,000 feet is something that has to be seen to be appreciated. Also, these objects don't jusr pop up on the horizon; they can actually be seen from an extended distance and grow as you approach. Just as in teality, however, the fatther away you are ftom something, the more it blends in with irs surroundings. This is most evident when trying to find a small airport on the outskirts of a metropolitan area. (Can you say "Are we lost yet?") Fot those long cross-country flights across areas that were once void of any scenery, there are now "scenery seeds." These seeds will "bloom" into random scenery objects ro always provide somerhing to look at during rhe flight. It could be a small town, farm or forest. But the best part of the scenic enhancements is the photo-realisric stuff. Meigs field in Chicago is actually a digitized photo of the airport. This is the only digitized scenery currently in the package, but Microsoft has plans to release highly detailed scenery of New York and Paris with lots of photo-tealistic scenery to look at.

And speaking of Paris, both Paris and Munich have been added to the defaulr scenery available in the package. The scenery of Paris is beautiful and offets the obligatory buzzing of the Eiffel Tower. Chicago, New Yotk, San Francisco, Seattle and Los Angeles are also included with the enhancements.

In addition, the transition between day and night is nothing shott of inctedible! When flying in the evening, night will gradually creep up as rhe sky slowly gtows darker, the clouds become pink and then gray, and rhe stars slowly come out. Ir even seems rhat BAO has figured out how to have multiple shades of black for giving a very accurate depiction of night flight. The red glow on the instru-

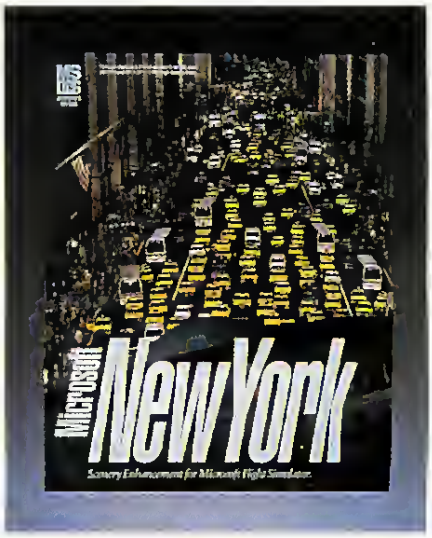
ment panel against the night sky of stars and city lights below is a sight worth seeing.

Where there used to be some difficulties flying from Chicago to New York in *Flight Simulation 4*, this is now no longer the case. Instead of the old custom coordinate system, *Flight Simulator 5* now supports a true Longitude and Latitude coordinate system with a precision of 170 thousands of an inch. (The old system is still supported for those that want to use it.) This also means that the entire world is now supported for *Flight Simulator 5*. In fact, when in map view, it is possible to zoom out so far that you can see the entire globe of the earth.

How's The Weather?

The weather system in *Flight Simulator 5* is a major enhancement to the product. Not only do the clouds look realistic, but they also act like real clouds. When you fly through them, the screen will go from partial obscurity, to full obscurity, back to partial obscurity, and then you're on top. The view above the clouds is truly represented. Now you can have wispy clouds floating under you, blocking yout view of the ground down below.

The weather system will also allow the creation of multiple weather areas. Each area can have its own cloud, wind, temperature and barometric pressure settings. It is now possible to depart in beautiful clear weather and end up in a raging thunderstorm while trying to reach yout destination. Within each weather area, multiple wind and temperature layers



can be created to help simulate the effects of temperature changes and winds aloft. One weather area can also be copied into another weather area and then slightly modified for simulating gradual weather changes. If you want a nice thrill, just turn on the thunderstorms. The sight of the black swirling clouds will make any pilot's hands sweat.

Feature Presentations

Flight Simulator 5 now has replaced the demo recorder with a more functional video

IF YOUR IDEA OF A GOOD TIME

IS SITTING ALONE IN THE DARK,

FIGHTING OFF EVIL FORCES

'TIL THE SUN COMES UP...

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recorder for taping and replaying flights. And for those moments when you forgot to turn on the camera, but would love to review the last minute of the flight (before that incredible three bounce landing), an instant replay feature is available. It even allows a "slow replay." For those really special Kodak Moments, a flight photograph can be taken of the entire screen or of the view screen, and then saved as a standard PCX graphic file.

Many graphic modes are supported, including VGA and SVGA, along with support for multiple brands of sound cards. It seems *Flight Simulator 5* has learned a lot from the Macintosh version of *Flight Simulator* since the use of the mouse is supported for the menus and for changing settings of the instruments on the panel. One can also control flight with the mouse by toggling the right button between control mode and standard mouse pointer mode. The support for "modes" has been changed to "situations" which allows for greater descriptive detail about the situation that is being created or loaded.

The installation procedure has been automated (aside from putting in the diskettes), and with this release requires three 3.5 inch diskettes. It is recommended that the computer be a 386sx or better. The memory requirements will actually be less than with *Flight Simulator 4*, and Microsoft says that *FS 5* will run fine as a DOS session under Windows.

BAO is also currently working on a new version of *Aircraft and Scenery Designer* for use with *FS 5*, and a new *Air Traffic Control* simulator, which is rumored to support *FS 5*, has been demonstrated at a few of the recent trade shows.

Overall, this release of *Flight Simulator 5* marks another major advancement in flight simulation technology for microcomputers. It is quite evident that Microsoft and BAO have been paying attention to the marketplace and have taken their time to produce a leading edge product. With this release, I expect that even the aviation industry will begin to take notice. CGW

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Broderbund's *Prince of Persia 2*

by Charles Ardai

In the middle of the 18th Century, there was a vogue in England for what were then called "Oriental Tales"--exotic, magical, adventure-filled yarns about princes and sorcerers, flying carpets and cursed amulets, genies (then called "geniuses"), eunuchs, harems and minarets. The rage died down when the American and French Revolutions took people's minds off such fanciful pastimes, but it lasted long enough to leave behind a body of literature that has never lost its appeal or its influence.

It is these Tales, as much as the original *1001 Arabian Nights*, that give us the vocabulary used in stories tanging from the silent screen version of *The Thief of Bagdad* to last year's *Aladdin*. Few people temember particular Tales, but everyone knows the characters and plot devices. As evidence, consider *Prince of Persia 2*.

The original *Prince of Persia* had a story, but it was all bones, no flesh. An unnamed peasant visiting Persia falls in love with the daughtet of the Sultan, who is being coutted in the Sultan's absence by his treacherous Gtand Vizier, Jaffar. When Jaffar learns of our hero's interest, he hurls the young man into the land's deepest dungeon, from which it is then the player's job to escape, or die trying.

That's certainly a good enough narrative to support a climbing-jumping game, especially when the game is as good as that one was. Yet, as storytelling goes, it's a little thin. When confronted with the challenge of writing *Prince of Persia 2*, designer Jotdan Mechner decided to craft something meatier. So, he teached back into our cultural memory and (probably without realizing it) dug up a plot that derives diiectly from such Tales as Hawkesworth's "Almoran and Hamet" and Johnson's "Rasselas."

As the game opens, the princess and her suitor have been wed, leaving Jaffar to plot revenge. One day, the prince comes to the palace only to be chased out and forced to flee for his life. Why? Because through the use of dark magic, Jaffar has taken on the prince's fotm and given the prince the appearance of a mad beggar.

Run out of Petsia only a few steps ahead of the guards' flashing scimitars, the prince is reduced to a lower state than he had possessed even at the start of the first game. Stripped of everything—power, physical appearance, his very identiry—the prince has to go on a voyage of discovery straight out of Joseph Campbell.

Unlike the first game, whose story consisted of a set-up at the start and a denouement at the end, the story here develops from scene to scene. Aftet a few levels, we discover that it is not a random walk that the prince is on. Rather, it is a teturn to his birthplace, where he will uncover secrets about who he is and gain the abilities he needs to best Jaffar.

This more sophisticated storytelling doesn't turn *Prince of Persia 2* into something it's not, a subtle and mature exploration of psychological themes. It is still a climbing-jumping game in the Nintendo mold, with vicious puzzles to solve and endless hordes of foes to slay. However, the game does take on a depth and a resonance that its predecessor did not possess.

Since I called the first game "the *Star Wars* of its field" (and have lived to tegret it, aftet seeing that giddy phrase plasteted all over Broderbund's ads and packaging), what does that make *Prince of Persia 2*? At the risk of getting blurbed again, I would say that *Prince of Persia 2* not only is in every dimension better than *Prince of Persia*, but that it is the cruelest, most infuriating, least merciful—in short, the best—game of its type I have ever played.

This Time It's Persian-al

The game is divided into thtee major chunks, each of which is futthet divided into roughly five levels. Each level consists of a multi-screen environment with an entrance and an exit. The player's goal in each case is to get the prince past all the obstacles that lie between the two.

Obstacles range from the obvious (chasms to be leapt, sword-wielding warriors to be fought) to the tticky (blades that slash out of recesses in the wall, spikes that skewer the player a la *Raiders of the Lost Ark*) and the unspeakable (decapitated heads that fly around and bite the prince to death, animated skeletons that cannot be killed). What makes the game so difficult is that these obstacles do not crop up one at a time, but all at once and in the worst possible combinations.

For instance, at one point the prince finds himself on a ledge with a skeleton waiting below. If the prince climbs down, the skeleton will attack. This, by itself, is manageable: Skeletons can usually be disposed of temporarily by striking them often enough that they fall to pieces. However, in this case, the player has a problem: Taking one step back from where he climbs down will cause the prince to step on a tile that will shoot a poisoned datt at him, while two steps back will get him impaled on a set of spikes. Just to make matters worse, the ledge is unstable and apt to collapse on the prince's head.

The best solution to this puzzle is to avoid it. There is another way around which, though not easy to survive, at least has the advantage of being *possible* to survive. Yet the game contains many puzzles such as the one

TITLE:	Prince of Persia 2
PRICE:	$69.95
SYSTEM	IBM
REQUIREMENTS	286-10MHz, 2MB RAM for sound effects, VGA graphics, 7MB hard drive space
PROTECTION	Symbol look up in manual
DESIGNER	Jordan Mechner
PUBLISHER	Broderbund Novatu, CA (415) 382-4400

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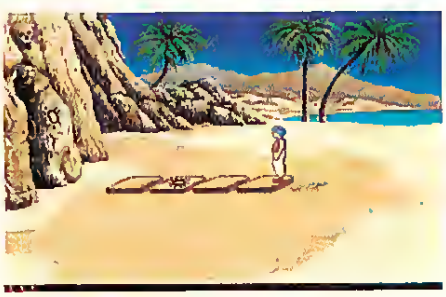
described above, only a few of which really are impossible and only a few of which can be avoided. The solutions sometimes demand the timing of a master juggler and the hand-eye coordination of a diamond cutter, but solutions do exist and, like it or not, the player has to find them or admit defeat.

The wonder of it all is that one keeps at it, dying and dying and dying again, until finding the way past each impasse; but the fact is that one does. At least a dozen times while playing the game I threw up my hands and said "To hell with it!" But always, a few minutes later, I had rebooted and was at it again. *Prince of Persia 2* has an appeal that is absolutely irresistable. Lots of games have puzzles, but few have puzzles that have been calculated so carefully to give one the maximum amount of trouble, puzzles that are so ingenious, or puzzles the cracking of which gives one such satisfaction. Anyone with an



ounce of game-player in his or her soul will not be able to sleep if it means stranding the prince on an unfinished level. So, one's eyelids get heavier and one's reflexes more sluggish, but one plows ahead anyway. It's a matter of pride.

As Good as It Lucas

Looking at *Prince of Persia 2* with a critical eye, it strikes me that my *Star Wars* comment was more apt than I realized. At the time, I only meant that, like *Star Wars*, *Prince of Persia* was mindless entertainment, but mindless entertainment of a very high order. In fact, the two have more in common than that. Whether it is because Mechner and George Lucas were inspired by the same sources or because Mechner was inspired by Lucas, playing *Prince of Persia 2* feels a lot like playing a George Lucas movie.

There are many obvious parallels: the prince, a Luke Skywalker type if there ever was one, receives pleading distress messages from his imprisoned princess. The prince drops into a chamber whose walls close in and crush him. The prince gets his father's sword and uses it to battle the forces of evil. In the game's final moments, the prince has to trust in the magic force he has learned rather than in his conventional weapons.

The debt to Lucas can be seen in the game's graphics as well. Visually, the game could be an Indiana Jones movie: one races across rooftops in a Middle East city, through booby-trapped caverns, and around a flamered Temple of Doom. One travels by boat, by flying carpet, and on horseback. The prince, though young and turban clad, has something of a Harrison Ford quality to him as he skids to a stop at the very edge of a precipice, catches the edge of a pit just barely too wide to leap across, hangs by his fingertips over pits of lava, and runs, arms flailing, with an army of skeletons at his heels. (Players of the first game will remember its incredibly detailed, realistic animation. Though less startling the second time around, it is no less impressive.)

The game's combat sequences are as exciting as anything Lucas ever cooked up, not only because of the variety of enemies, each with its own strategies and weaknesses, but also because of the resounding clangs of clashing steel, the grunts of wounded combattants, the invigorating soundtrack in the background, and the ingenious tactics that are available to the player. Yes, the player can thrust and slash and parry his way to success, but he can also use the game's deadly devices and traps to his advantage.

For instance, toward the end of the game the prince comes face-to-face with a nasry-looking high priest standing just inches away from one of those telltale slashes in the wall that mean a blade is contained within. I immediately thought of the Nazi mechanic julienned in the plane propeller in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Sure enough, two thrusts was all it took to back the goon into the blade. Rest in pieces.

Good and Evil

It is worth pointing out, in the interest of giving fair warning to players before they pick up a game this addictive, that the same things that make *Prince of Persia 2* so good also sometimes make it hard to take. *Prince of Persia 2* is a very difficult game—which is fine—but there is merciless and there is *merciless*. It's one thing to have to replay a scene 30 or 40 times until one gets it right. It's another thing to have to replay scenes 30 or 40 times even after one has solved them, simply because of a dubious feature of the save-game function.

There are 10 slots on the save-game menu and the game allows one to save at any time, even in mid-battle. This seems very generous until one discovers to one's horror that when a saved game is restored, it doesn't drop one in mid-battle (or wherever) but at the start of the level on which the save command was executed. Some of the larger levels have mid-level "save points" so that one does not have to play the entire way through again and again, but one still has to re-do huge, difficult chunks of the game long after one is sick of them.

Other bits of business also make playing the game unreasonably difficult. For instance, drawing one's sword makes the prince take a step forward, even if he is standing on a narrow pillar and the step forward will send him plummeting to his death. It wouldn't have hurt the game at all, and would have led to less tooth-gnashing, if this were not the case.

Similarly, players learn the hard way to ignore the instruction manual's reassuring advice about running jumps: "Don't be afraid of pressing [the '8' key] too early; the Prince will wait until the last possible moment to jump." I cannot count the number of times I died as a result of pressing the "8" key too early and the Prince's not waiting nearly long enough to jump.

The time limit that kicks into effect a fifth of the way through the game ("Waste no more time! I am dying!") is probably also an unnecessary annoyance. The prince can die and be resuscitated an unlimited number of times, but when the timer runs out, the game is over. As a result, the player is encouraged to get through each level as quickly as possible, often bypassing those sections that don't lead directly to the goal but which contain difficult-to-get, life-enhancing potions. Unfortunately, if one bypasses all those potions, one reaches the endgame with plenty of time to spare but too few hitpoints to battle Jaffar. So, it's back to the beginning.

Other than that complaint, however, *Prince of Persia 2* merits nothing but salaam after salaam. Players looking for a visceral, action-oriented, Indiana Jones-rype experience will find it in *Prince of Persia 2*. It is a virtuoso performance by Mechner, one of the field's most devious puzzle constructors, and it should provide the field's best gamers a chance for some virtuoso performances of their own. CGW

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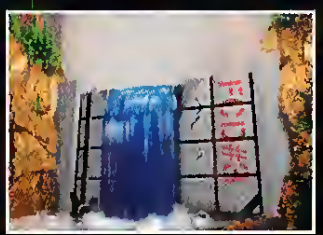

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CES Report Part II

CGW Quests For The Best At The Summer Consumer Electronics Show

Last month's CES Report on the latest trends in game design offered a rundown of CRPGs and wargames to be released in upcoming months. This month's report focuses on a genre-by-genre rundown for action, adventure, simulation, sports and strategy.

Gateway To Adventure

Sierra has always been a leader in the adventure game category and they are introducing a Fall lineup that seems sure to build on that image. In addition to *Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Father*, the psycho-horror suspense adventure described in the last report, the company will offer a *King's Quest VI-CD*, *Goblins 3* and some new twists on old success with *Police Quest IV* and *Leisure Suit Larry 6*.

Goblins 3 allows gamers to develop one's character and undergo a transformation. Plus, for those true addicts, it has a clock feature to indicate how long the gamer has actually played the game. Expect some bragging on the networks about how fast the experts solved the puzzles.

Police Quest IV was written by controversial ex-Los Angeles Police Chief Daryl Gates and developed by television producer Tammy Dargan. Tammy comes from a solid film commercial background and has produced segments for the tabloid television series, *America's Most Wanted*. So, in addition to the gritty, realistic storyline, the graphics team was able to use a Kodak *DCS 200ci Digital Camera* to shoot most of the background scenes. With locations selected by Gates and camera angles selected by Dargan, the photo-realistic look is most distinctive.

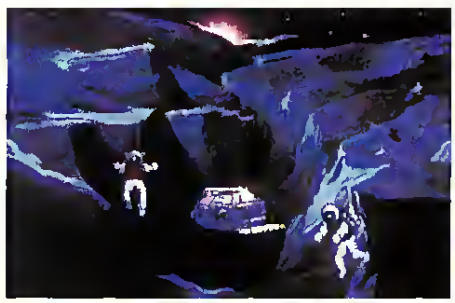
Leisure Suit Larry 6

Leisure Suit Larry 6, which will probably be shipped as a CD-only product, builds upon its predecessors with a new artistic touch. Not only does it use a "talker technology" from Bright Star (Sierra's wholly-owned subsidiary) that goes a long way toward synchronizing digitized speech and animation, but it also incorporates some not-so subtle visual puns to go with the expected verbal ones.

LucasArts also continues to be prolific in the publication of graphic adventure games. In addition to *Sam & Max Hit The Road*, the zany adventure discussed in last issue's sneak preview, the publisher plans to market *The Dig* and *Day of the Tentacle*. *The Dig* is a collaboration between adventure game design veteran Brian Moriarty (*Trinity*, *Loom*) and filmmaker extraordinaire Steven Spielberg. Originally based on a script from *Amazing Stories* (the television series) that was never actually produced, the game features a team of space explorers who are stranded on a hostile planet and must excavate the ruins of a lost civilization for the key that allows them to return home.

Day of the Tentacle is, as noted in previous *CGW* articles, essentially *Maniac Mansion II*. The big difference is that this time-travel comedy adventure was conceived as a cartoon-like adventure and "directed" in the style of the classic Warner Bros. animation director Chuck Jones. The fast-moving animation cuts are delightful, and cartoon fans everywhere should recognize the style.

Legend is another house that adventure built. In addition to *Companions of Xanth*, the Piers Anthony license sneak previewed in the July issue, and *Gateway II: Homeworld*, the sequel to their original game based on Frederick Pohl's Heechee saga, they have started work on Steve Meretzky's latest project. Rather than doing another *Spellcasting* immediately, Steve will be creating a game about a league of superheroes in New Jersey.



The Dig

Citizens of the Garden State will want to barten down the barches for a plethora of toxic waste jokes and get ready for some of the weirdest heroes yet. *The League of Superheroes of Hoboken* is expected for early 1994, and even the design document is hilarious reading.

Interplay continues to search for the final frontier with its *Star Trek* adventure series. This year will see the introduction of *Star Trek: Judgment Rites*, an adventure that is almost twice as big as the anniversary game,

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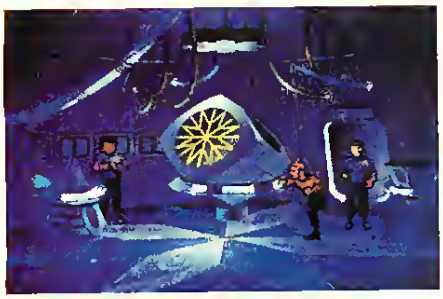


Star Trek: Judgment Rites

has an overall story (as well as individual episodes), and features several familiar characters from the television series. Further, gamers can now assign Scotty, Uhura, Chekhov and Sulu to the landing party. Finally, gamers can choose between three levels of difficulty in the adventure.

MicroProse is putting the finishing touches on two graphic adventures which build on the *Rex Nebular* engine. Both games feature a scoring system, but the player must ask for the score since the design teams feel that "scoring" tends to hinder suspension of disbelief.

One game which uses the engine is *Dragonsphere*, a fantasy adventure where the gamer must progress through several different communities (shapeshifters, nomads, faeries, etc.), all graphically distinct, in order to solve the major quest. The base story is that an evil sorcerer has been entrapped in a sphere that is now cracking. Naturally, the player wants to ensure that the Ultimate Bad Guy stays trapped. The good news is that the story is not as obvious as it sounds and that even the game utilities have been worked into the story as logical adjuncts to the game world.

The *Return of the Phantom* is the other game which uses the *Rex Nebular* engine. Using the mythos behind the original novel, the gamer has to solve a mystery which occurs *after* the events in the novel. *Return* is one of several adventures for 1993 which will use a time-travel theme.

For example, Electronic Arts' next foray into the graphic adventure genre will be *The Labyrinth*. Not only does the adventure involve time-travel, but it appears to be just convoluted enough that gamers will be thankful for the comprehensive auto-mapping utility.

Another time-travel adventure set for Fall release is *Kronolog: The Nazi Paradox* from Merit Software. As described in the Winter CES Report, *Kronolog* involves reversing history in order to undo an alternate future where the Nazis won World War II. The adventure features a point and click interface and digitized character dialogue.

Pop Rocket's Mac CD-ROM game, *Total Distortion*, is an adventure game based on traveling through various dimensions and recording one's experiences as music videos. Naturally, the higher the ratings, the higher one scores. Not only are the encounters in this game truly bent, but the special effects are bizarre.

Broderbund is also venturing into the adventure gaming marketplace. *Myst* is a CD-ROM adventure from Rand and Robin Miller (of *Manhole* fame). The adventure has even more exploratory qualities than the average game, but there are interesting puzzles and an actual story to tie them together. The graphics, which use full ray-tracing in all locations, are extremely impressive. Further, the different musical themes are incredibly effective in setting the atmosphere for various scenes, as well as helping gamers determine where each area fits in the plot line. Two brothers try to influence the gamer into doing their bidding and thus hangs the balance.

The house that licenses built, Capstone, has a few more adventure game licenses up its sleeves. *Wayne's World* uses a point and click interface to allow the gamer to rescue the lovely Cassandra from the hands of DRAG (Decency Referendum Against Grossness) and earn the $50,000 necessary to save their TV show. Speaking of TV, the publisher also has a *Beverly Hillbillies* graphic adventure on tap, as well as a *Homey the Clown* action/adventure.

As for European products, Psygnosis is developing a graphic adventure that is *not* an action/adventure in their typical style. Instead, *Innocent Until Caught* is heavy on character interaction and puzzle-solving. It also features the kind of humor that is sure to be appreciated by anyone who has ever dealt with the IRS. Fortunately, this game is fiction and the story involves the *Interstellar* Revenue Service.

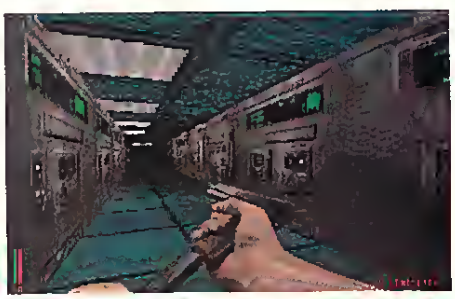
As previewed in the February issue of *CGW*, Activision's *Return to Zork* uses real actors/actresses to try to bring back the magic of Infocom's Great Underground Empire. Activision is also serving up a European import called *Simon the Sorcerer* that has something of the look and humor of a *Monkey Island* game.

Finally, a nod to the youngsters is due. Humongous Entertainment splashed onto the scene with a big hit in *Putt-Putt Joins the Parade*. Now, Ron Gilbert and Shelley Day are releasing a new junior adventure. *Fatty Bear's Birthday Surprise* allows the gamer to help an animated teddy bear cater a surprise birthday party for his cute little owner, Kayla. Humongous also plans a Fall sequel where *Putt-Putt Goes to the Moon* after a freak fireworks accident.

Dragonsphere

Clearing For Action

Naturally, the success of last year's *Wolfenstein 3-D* has spawned its imitators in the action category. Beyond Id Software's own successor to the action game crown, *Doom*, two other games caught our attention as possible competitors. Bethesda Softworks' *Terminator: Rampage* looks a lot like *Doom* in terms of the 3-D play environment, but it builds on the Terminator universe. *Isle of the Dead* from Merit Software isn't as impressive graphically, but it makes up for the lack with enthusiasm, gore and the spicy addition of a little gratuitous T&A. We see it as "Total Recall meets The Zombies" with an art style that looks like *MAD* magazine artist Don Martin meets the EC Horror Comics that preceded *MAD*.



Terminator: Rampage

Another 3-D action game is LucasArts' *Rebel Assault* on IBM CD-ROM, Sega-CD and CD-I. All of the environments through which the players navigate their vessels are rendered in 3-D perspective. The asteroids are particularly impressive.

Cyberdreams showed some of its 3-D action game, *CyberRace*. *CyberRace* is Syd Mead's futuristic game of hovercraft racing and it looks like *Comanche Overkill* with different vehicles. Meanwhile, Bethesda Softworks unveiled *Delta-V*, a cyber race game where players fly their vessels through tunnels and vortices.

Another action game trend is the redesign of classic arcade games to run under *Microsoft Windows*. Naturally, one such product is going to be published by Microsoft itself (allegedly to prove to developers that it can be done). The *Microsoft Arcade Pak for Windows* will feature five classic Atari coin-op games, including: *Asteroids*, *BattleZone*, *Centipede*, *Missile Command* and *Tempest*. Several of the games are adjustable for speed and difficulty, using familiar *Windows* sliders. Further, the team was so determined to have the games look and sound like the coin-op versions that they video-taped the coin-op machines and bit-mapped the graphics frame-by-frame in order to get identical graphics. Then, they

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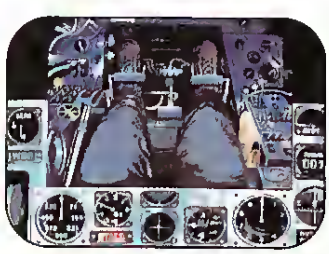

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digitized the sound effects directly from the coin-op machines.

Another product which proves that *Windows* is a conducive environment for arcade action is from a new Davidson affiliate, *3DI*. Their new product, *Earth Invasion*, is an arcade package of new games reminiscent of *Defender*, *Star Raiders* and *Space Invaders*. All of the games feature 256-colors, midi-sound and *3-D Studio*-style rendering of space ships, where appropriate. The games are further enhanced with lots of peripheral animation.

Another sign that action classics are making a definite comeback, albeit in rejuvenated and enhanced form, is the fact that Jon Freeman and Anne Westfall are revamping their original EA hit *Archon* as SSI's new *Archon Ultra*. The game still begins on a strategic board where gamers try to capture all the enemy pieces (Chess without the Checkmate) or occupy all five "power points." Then, as action occurs, players engage in a fast-paced arcade sequence. The game allows one or two players and features 3-D monsters (pieces) in 256-color VGA.

Gamers who remember *Gauntlet* will probably enjoy QQP's *Red Crystal*, an action/adventure for one or two players in cooperative or competitive mode. Players view the action in side-by-side windows, and the on-screen characters have attributes that range from 1-6 points. The company assures us that the game will feature modem play.

Another classic style of action game that is making a comeback is the pinball game. Amtex, makers of *Tristan*, has signed a distribution agreement with Broderbund Software and plans to release two new pinball titles in their line. One title is a licensed version of Bally's *Eight Ball Deluxe* and the other is a licensed version of Williams' *Funhouse*. Meanwhile, Dynamix has taken a different approach by putting eight different pinball games in the same product, each built around the theme from a Sierra or Dynamix game. *Take A Break! Pinball* is the name of their *Windows*-based pinball package.

Isle of Dead

Accolade has licensed one of the most well-known Japanimation characters in the U.S., Speed Racer, for their new action game—*Speed Racer in The Challenge of Racer X*. The game is basically a racing game with gadgets. As Speed Racer or Racer X, the gamer tries to foil the cast of villainous slime (Captain Terror, Snake Oiler and the Gang of Assassins) and win the race as Trixie, Spridle, Pops and Racer X cheer or offer warnings in animated sequences using digitized voice.

Take a Break! Pinball

Psygnosis is revamping their Amiga game, *Walker* (in which the gamer operates a fighting machine that looks vaguely like an Imperial Walker and shoots little humanoids) and is calling it *ABS: Advanced Battle Systems*. The game is being developed by the same people who gave us *Lemmings*, but you wouldn't recognize this one as being "cute." Psygnosis is also planning to release action games based on *Last Action Hero* and *Cliffhanger*.

Command Adventures Starship is Merit Software's entry into the *3-D Studio*-style ship-to-ship combat genre that also features some nice landscapes reminiscent of *Vistapro*. It is a multiplayer game (on the same computer or network) that looks like *Star Control II* when one is in space and *Dune II* when one is battling on land.

In a similar vein, Gametek's *Ashes of Empire* combines strategic elements in post-communist Europe/Asia to set up some aerial combat missions. The designers claim that there are over 6,000 individual characters, 9,000 locations and 2.8 million square miles in the game's universe. The game features action, strategy and exploratory elements.

Sequels on the action front include: *Inca 2*, an import for Sierra that builds on their previous action/adventure where Erich von Daniken's *Chariots of the Gods* is more truth than fiction. Sierra also plans to publish a CD version of the original *Inca*. Origin's *Wing Commander Academy* is a mission builder with new ships. In addition to the new vehicles, it allows players to save up to eight missions for future play. Finally, Psygnosis plans to release another *Lemmings Holiday Version* disk to make us all go crazy at Christmas time.

Sports Smart

Three new hockey games are expected to debut between now and next year's Summer Consumer Electronics Show. One product is not yet announced and was not shown at the show. The other two were from Accolade and EA, respectively. Accolade was showing the Sega Genesis and SNES versions of *Brett Hull Hockey*. Although the IBM version won't ship until 1994, the video game versions featured the dulcet digitized tones of sports commentator Al Michaels and digitized images of Brett Hull. Like other competitors, it will feature names, likenesses and statistics of actual major league players.

Electronic Arts will counter with an IBM version of *NHLPA Hockey*. This excellent Sega Genesis product is an action gamer's dream. If current plans do not change, the IBM version should feature the capacity to print statistics and create leagues.

Football will also be a very competitive genre in the upcoming six-to-twelve months. Accolade will release an upgraded version of *Mike Ditka Ultimate Football II*. In addition to 256-color SVGA graphics and digitized commentary from Al Michaels, the new version will allow gamers to edit team logos, playbooks and uniforms. The new game will also allow league play.

Not to be outdone, Dynamix unveiled *Front Page Sports: Football Pro*. Not only does this game feature new animation, but it includes real NFL players and stats, user-created coaching profiles and customized team colors. Now, substitutions are handled easier and game plans can include 140 plays per game.

Merit Software is also upping the ante on their football game. The *Deluxe Edition Tom Landry Strategy Football* features an enhanced league editor (allowing gamers to select college, as well as NFL, rules and change team uniforms, player's names, etc.). It also adds more input from Landry himself, new formations and a season play option. An upgrade will be available to current Landry owners at $19.95 and the new game will sell for $49.95.

Finally, MicroProse will enter the stadium with *NFL Coach's Challenge Football*. With the default playbook based on an actual NFL coach's plays and a powerful editor for creating one's own plays, this action/strategy game is loaded with features. We like the capacity for customizing coaches by using eight different characteristics and the AI's ability to adjust to the human coach's tendencies.

Other sports games announced or shown in very early form include: Accolade's *Pelé Soccer*, Bethesda's *NCAA Road to the Final Four II*, and Dynamix's *Front Page Sports: Baseball*.

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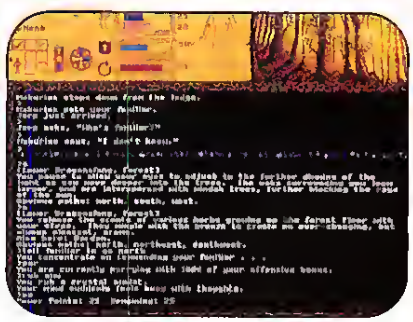

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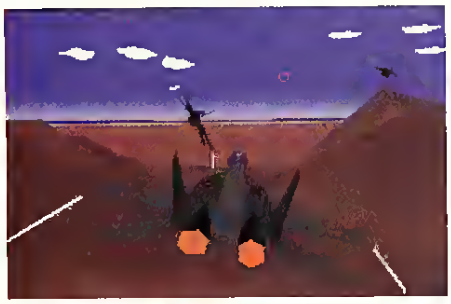
Circle Reader Service #62

The Sim-Fast "Fly It" Plan

Though MicroProse may get stiff competition for their *World Circuit* racing game when Papyrus' *Indy Car Racing* hits the shelves, the company expects to do well in the field it has traditionally led with its new *F-14 Defender* simulation. This flight sim will feature carrier-based missions with an emphasis on air tactics with visual ID. Since F-14s do not rely on fly-by-wire technology, there will be more of a feeling of actually flying within the game. Plus, they plan to make things a little rougher with realistic aspects like mid-air refueling and a cockpit which, like the airplane's cockpit itself, is not exactly user friendly. Graphically, the night view with the backlit display is impressive, and gamers who like realism will be delighted with the full carrier model (where lots of computer-controlled planes are keeping realistic schedules, complete with tankers, CAP, and other sorties).



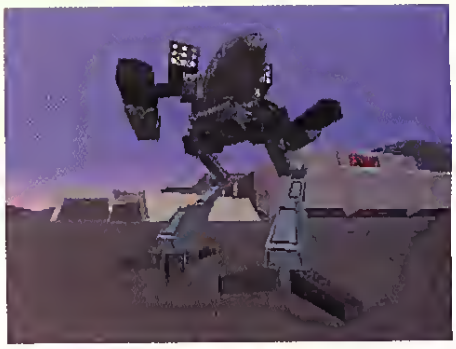
MiG-29 Fulcrum

Origin is also working the carrier mode with its upcoming *Pacific Strike*. Essentially *Strike Commander* in the Pacific, the game will feature 20 different aircraft and six carrier-based missions. Non-humanitarians can even strafe the life boats as they leave sinking ships.

Spectrum HoloByte plans to enlarge the scope of their flagship flight simulator with a *MiG-29 Fulcrum* add-on disk to *Falcon 3.0* and a European import (from Digital Illusions, developers of *F-16 Combat Pilot* for EA) called *Tornado*. Not only does the latter product feature an incredibly large and detailed map, but it features some incredible mission-planning features, scenarios and, possibilities for head-to-head play.

Obviously, another fertile area for simulations is the arena of far-future warfare. LucasArts plans to expand their *Star Wars* universe of titles with an *X-Wing Tour of Duty* expansion disk and a product where one can fly *against* the Rebel Alliance, *TIE Fighter*.

Meanwhile, Activision is proving that the company is back with, literally, a vengeance. Their *Mechwarrior II* comes complete with head-to-head capability and uses ThrustMaster peripherals so well that it is possible for a gamer with enough joysticks and a footpedal unit to get the *BattleTech Center* feeling when playing by modem. The graphics feature texture-mapped overlays and the designers are thinking of unique ways for gamers to be able to customize their own 'mechs, as per the pen and paper game rules and the paint schemes of the *BattleTech* universe. Since Dynamix plans to unveil a gigantic robot game in the first quarter of '94 and they did the 3-D engine for the original *Mechwarrior*, it will be interesting to see how gamers react to both products. Right now, both look very different.



Mechwarrior II

As noted last issue, submarine simulations will play an important role in the simulation line-up for Fall. In addition to *Grave Wolfe* from Dynamix (with its unbelievable wave modeling and the opportunity to command a realistic German U-boat) and EA's *Seawolf*

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MBT: CENTRAL GERMANY, Modern Tactical Armoured Combat.
ROMMEL AT EL ALAMEIN, Battles For Egypt, 1 July to 6 November, 1942.
MOSCOW CAMPAIGN, Typhoon & White Storm, Aug 1941 to Feb 1942.
TO THE RHINE, The Allied Advance In The West, 29 Aug to 11 Dec, 1944.
ROMMEL AT GAZALA, Battles For Tobruk, 26 May to 27 June 1942.
STALINGRAD CAMPAIGN, The Turning Point In Russia, Jun 1942 - Feb 1943.
KURSK CAMPAIGN, Operation Zitadelle, Summer 1943.
OPERATION OVERLORD, The Invasion Of Europe, 6 June - 28 August, 1942.
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(*688 Attack Sub* with incredible sound, much improved interface and more realism), NovaLogic will unveil a CD-ROM version of their graphically impressive *Wolf Pack* game (originally published by Broderbund).

Winning Strategy

The most obvious trend in the world of strategy games is that of gambling games. It seems like everyone has one. QQP plans to unveil *Lucky's Casino*, New World will feature *More Vegas Games*, and Villa Crespo will do *Windows* with new versions of *Sanford Wong Video Poker for Windows* and *Dr. Thorpe's Blackjack for Windows.*

Lucky's Casino will feature: five variations of poker, red dog, pai gow poker, three types of video poker, bingo and horse racing (among others). Not only do the individual games look nice, but in the QQP tradition, there is a campaign game where gamers have "three game weeks" to rack up the most possible money. The New World package will expand on their successful *Windows* version of *Vegas Games* by featuring multi-player (at the same machine) versions of poker, blackjack, craps, mechanical horse racing and baccarat.

Maxis will continue their *Sim*-line of strategy games with a repackaged version of the original *SimCity*, *SimCity Classic*, and an advanced version of the planning simulation called *SimCity 2000.* The latter not only allows for non-rectangular zoning, but considers different types of roads, elevation and power, as well. It also requires transit stations and budgetaty trade-offs. We like the fact that one can select which industty each city will specialize in by making cettain budgetaty and zoning decisions. Maxis is also nearing completion on *SimFarm*, which was discussed in previous CES reports.

TIE Fighter

Strategic Simulations, Inc. has added a new twist to the Sim-style sttategy game. Under their Advanced Dungeons and Dragons license, the company has developed *Stronghold*, sort of a fantasy *SimCity* with combat and magic. One must select the right races to build cities, exploit natural resources, hold objectives and build economies/populations. We especially liked the way that the architecture in each town was distinctive to the dominant race or major occupation to be found within the town.

Space seems to be another frontier in the strategy genre. In addition to Interplay's recent *Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space*, Sierra is developing a strategy game called *Building Mankind's Future in Space*, and Mallard has re-released a more polished and sophisticated version of Wesson's *Moonbase* as *Lunar Command.* The former uses *3-D Studio* vehicles to drive its classy look, and the latter offers improved play value over its predecessor.

Gametek is releasing two products that may bring some fascinating abstract strategy games to new markets. *Tesserae for Windows* takes the well-received Macintosh game (*Tetris* in an altered consciousness, one might say) from Inline Design and puts it in an accessible format for IBM users. *King's Table* is the Scandinavian classic, *Ragnarok*, with *BattleChess*-style graphics, but different gameplay.

Speaking of chess games, Capstone just brought their *BattleChess*-style program to market, entitled *Terminator 2 Judgment Day Chess Wars.* Meanwhile, Electronic Arts announced that *Kasparov's Gambit* will now use the highly sophisticated *Socrates* chess engine.

In addition to bringing abstract strategy to the computer, the strategy genre has reached the point where personnel management is an important part of the strategy mix. Sir-Tech

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Circle Reader Service #71

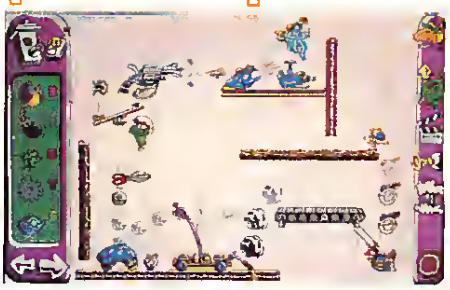
Software's *Jagged Alliance* features an improbable plot for the overall campaign, but features real-time action and requires a delicate mix of artificial personality management in order to succeed. In many ways, it offers some of the same challenges as Electronic Arts' *Syndicate*, but the personalities of the agents are more developed, and the graphic texture of the world is much "lighter" than the dark cyberpunk strategy game from England.

Kasparov's Gambit

Arborea from Psygnosis, offers a similar challenge. Though it is billed as a fantasy adventure, the emphasis of the game is on the characters having relationships with each other. Thus, new assignments and opportunities have to be "voted" upon, and different team members have different effects upon the outcome. Hence, the personnel management aspect is as important as in *Jagged Alliance* or Mindcraft's sequel to *Mercenaries, Strike Squad.* Mindcraft has introduced a split-screen cooperative mode with smaller squads in the latest *Mercenaries* product so that gamers get more of a sense of commanding "people."

The ever original Jeff Tunnel of Dynamix is hard at work on two follow up titles to *The Incredible Machine. The Even More Incredible Machine* will offer 73 new puzzles, several new items (crocodile, boiling kettle, pinball bumpers), and the ability to design one's own puzzles to share with friends. Following this will come a loony variation on the *TIM* theme, *Incredible Toons.* The idea remains the same, but now the items in the puzzles will be animated in a wacky cartoon style. With the haitball-hacking Al Cat and his pal Sid Mouse as their guide, and armed with a wild collection of objects, players will be able to contrive contraptions to rival the best of Wile E. Coyote.

Finally, one of the most interesting technological variants on a classic strategy that we saw at CES was *Video Cube* from ARIS. ARIS isn't really a game publisher; their strength has always been in video and multimedia. Nevertheless, their *Video Cube*, something like a *Rubik's Cube* using video clips, looks



Incredible Toons

intriguing. One tries to match up a side of these distinctive video clips and, if successful, gets the reward of a mini-movie using those clips.

The Forecast

Business-wise, we don't know what this Fall and Christmas season will bring for the entertainment software industry. We are watching the encroachment of traditional Hollywood studios upon the New Hollywood with great interest. We are curious about the eventual shape of the data highway and its potential impact on game machines like 3DO and Atari's Jaguar. We wonder if CD-ROM will ever reach its full potential. Yet, we know that there seem to be more games coming along that *we* want to play and that has always been a positive sign, even in unsettling times. **CGW**

Scorpion's View

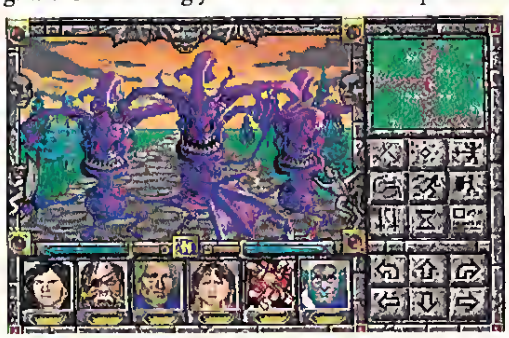
CGW's Role-Playing Expert Has *Xeen* It All

TITLE:	Might & Magic: Darkside of Xeen
PRICE	$69.95
SYSTEM:	IBM
REQUIREMENTS	2MB RAM, VGA graphics, 15MB hard drive space
PROTECTION:	Documentation lookup
DESIGNER	Jon Van Caneghem
PUBLISHER.	New World Computing Hollywood, CA (800) 325-8898

As most role-players know, *Darkside of Xeen (Darkside)* is the add-in/complement to New World's *Clouds of Xeen (Clouds)*. Since it was designed to be played with *Clouds* as the second half of the story, the mechanics of *Darkside* are identical to those in *Clouds*. Character creation, spells, combat, etc., are all the same as in the previous game, and nothing new has been added.

Of course, taking place in a different part of the world, *Darkside* does have a whole set of new locations, quests, dungeons, monsters and so forth, and these are on a somewhat tougher scale than *Clouds*. My impression was that *Darkside* was designed more with an eye towards being played as part of the full world rather than by itself. However, as *Darkside* can be played as a stand-alone game, we will first listen to its side of the story.

The goal of *Darkside* is to stop the evil Alamar from doing nasty things to the world. Exactly what those things are is something you learn as you progress through the game; it's enough to know at the start that Alamar has to be stopped.



The player's party of adventurers begins in the town of Castleview and should not be in a hurry to leave. Unlike *Clouds*, entry into any of the five *Darkside* towns requires a pass. The one for Castleview can be purchased just outside the town, but the other passes are more difficult to come by, and even the one for Castleview costs more than the parry's initial purse. So, it is best to stay inside for awhile and build up some cash.

Note, by the way, that you can't get around the passes with the Town Portal spell. In *Darkside*, Town Portal will deposit the team just outside the town gates, rather than inside. So whatever you try, you will still need those passes to get into the various towns. Speaking of portals, the transport mirrors in the towers do not work, at least not until a certain quest is completed. Then, once Castle Kalindra has been fully restored, the only ways to get around are hoofing it or using your own spells.

The real drive in this game is for money. Where *Clouds* handed out experience in the thousands, *Darkside* grants you experience in the hundreds of thousands. This sounds fine, until you consider the costs of training the party. Once the characters start reaching the upper levels, training suddenly becomes a very expensive proposition. When it requires 200,000+ gold to get the entire party up one level, even a million in gold suddenly looks like a pittance.

My own team finished at 108th level, and could have gone higher if the money had been available. Scraping up the necessary cash, particularly in the latter stages, was not easy. My recommendation is to stash as much as possible in the bank and let the money build up interest, right from the very beginning. Think of it as saving up for your party's higher education.

Beyond that, *Darkside* is typical of the *Might & Magic* series. Each town has its "monster problem" that needs to be cleared up. Quests of all kinds can be found by wandering in the outdoors. Stat-boosting magic fountains, shrines and wells sit waiting for the party to find them. All of this is pretty straightforward and will be familiar to anyone who has played *M&M III* or *Clouds*.

A number of puzzles also need to be solved. These, I regret to say, are almost trivially easy. In fact, the solutions are so simple, you might have trouble with some of them by overlooking the obvious. Even if you do overlook something, the answers are usually nearby.

For example, in the Northern Tower of the Vowelless Knights, there are several "lessons" to complete. Each completed lesson provides hundreds of thousands of experience points. The answers to all these lessons can be found on the top floor of the Tower. This was one of the disappointing aspects of *Darkside*: puzzles that could almost be considered "self-solving," and hardly worth the designer's effort to include them.

The end game is, for the most part, surprisingly calm. Before heading out to Castle Alamar, I naturally beefed up the team (especially with a visit to the fountain that granted temporary mega-hit-points) and had all the possible protective spells active. I was expecting a rugged time of it and wanted to be prepared for anything.

As it turned out, the only fighting necessary was down in the dungeon. The first floor had some nasties that were easily avoided, the next two floors were puzzles of a sort, and the fourth floor was the confrontation with Alamar.

However, your team doesn't get to do the fighting. No, this is The Big One, the Last Fight between Corak and Alamar (whose real name

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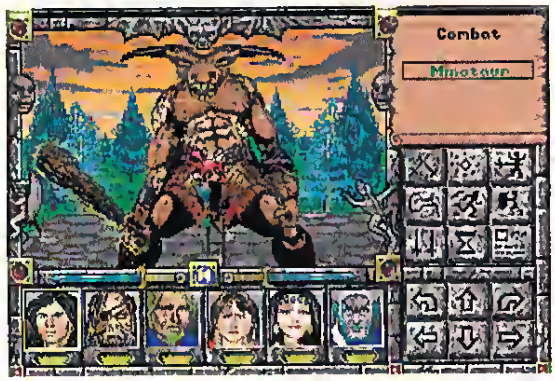
will be known to anyone who has played any of the previous *Might & Magic* games), and your party is the audience.

You may feel disappointed by that, but this end sequence is well-done and worth getting to. The animations and digitized voices are very good, and there is certainly a sense of drama in this face-off of two implacable foes. It is better by far than the bland *Clouds* ending of "The Parade of Monsters Dying."

A Whole New World

At this point, *Darkside*, as such, is over. When the fireworks have finished, a screen appears with your final score. If you are playing the game as a stand-alone, that's pretty much it. If you've got the full world installed, a second screen will appear with a message from the Dragon Pharaoh to see him as soon as possible. This begins the third, special quest: unifying the Cloudside and the Darkside into a single world.



Here is where you finally get to enter Dragon Tower, Darkstone Tower, and the Southern Sphinx (bring your widget!!), as well as learn the purpose of those mysterious machines sitting in the four corners of Cloudside. Since by this time your party is likely to be quite powerful, there is little in this section that will give you any trouble. The golems in Darkstone can be annoying, though, since they are able to drain spell points, and the dragons in the clouds over Dragon Tower are somewhat nastier than those who live in the Tower itself. Otherwise, setting up the reunification should prove to be fairly easy.

The one sore point in this portion of the game is the walk to the shrine. As the final step (no pun intended!), the party walks along the cloudpaths from above Darkstone to the shrine of the Ancients. There is nothing to see, nothing to fight, and nothing to do but walk along the paths, which takes several minutes real-time. Teleport doesn't work, and the paths are too far apart for the Jump spell. It is extremely boring, and ought to have been much shorter. Either that, or something should have been added to make the journey more interesting.

Fortunately, this trudging brings you to the second endgame, which is also well worth seeing. It begins with the marriage of the Darkside Queen and the Cloudside Prince, who then activate together the machinery that unifies the two halves of Xeen into a complete world with a very nice series of special effects—a satisfying ending for the game.

Tales from the Darkside of Xeen

"World of Xeen" was not without its problems, however. After reinstalling *Clouds*, bringing the save games back from floppy, and then installing *Darkside*, everything seemed to be fine. I found my advanced party in Vertigo, where I had last saved them, with all their equipment, levels, gold, and so forth.

Naturally, they went right over to Castleview via the pyramid outside town. That worked well, too. Then, they started picking up quests, and I noticed early on, luckily, that the Auto-Quest Notes were not working. It never recorded a single quest—not one.

Now, I haven't heard from anyone else who had this experience, but I did, so I'm reporting it. I didn't have any trouble with the Items List that kept track of special items (town passes and so on) or the Auto Notes that recorded locations of fountains and clues, but the Quest recorder just didn't do anything. I had to keep manual notes of all the quests myself.

However, this may very well be related to starting the game in mid-stream, so to speak. After completing *Darkside* through the unification ending, I went back and started over with a brand-new team. They began in Vertigo, of course, as level one characters. After talking to the Mayor there, I took them over to Castleview and spoke to a couple of people in that town.

Now the Quest recorder was working. It faithfully noted all quests from both sides of the world, just the way it was supposed to do. So, if you are playing the complete game with a party brought over from *Clouds*, be sure to check the Auto-Quest Notes and see if it's recording the quests or not.

The other physical problem was a tendency of the game to hang from time to time. This didn't happen very often and seemed related in some way to the sound, as the freeze never occurred when the sound was off. When it did happen, rebooting the system and rerunning the game was necessary. Outside of that, the unified "World of Xeen" ran cleanly, which is saying a lot these days, especially considering that one game is being installed into another.

A word or several does need to be said about the Dungeon of Death northeast of Nightshadow (Cloudside), which is of concern only for those playing the complete world. While you get the key for this from a lich on the Darkside rather early on, Dungeon of Death has nothing to do with the plot of *Clouds*, *Darkside*, or the full world.

Level one is a giant crossword puzzle of some 70 or so words. The answers to all the definitions are obtained from a statue a few steps from the entry. You just write them all down, then walk around the level putting them in. Nor since the snares of *Bard's Tale II* has there been anything so pointless and boring.

It's the fourth level that's the worst. You see Lord Xeen...and Lord Xeen...and Lord Xeen...and Lord Xeen...a small army of them, and all vulnerable only to the Xeen Slayer Sword. They are created by Lord Xeen machines in the four corners of the level. Each machine destroyed nets the party five million experience points (this is where my team outstripped the cash and never caught up).

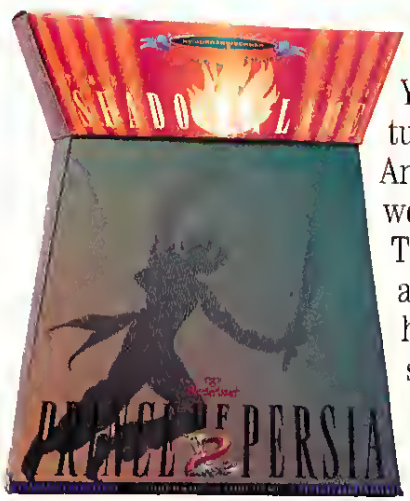
In the center is a control room filled with more Xeens. When you finally get rid of them all and type in the password (obtained in Darkstone), a message comes up saying, "you are a SUPER goober." After thinking it over, I agreed; I had to have been nuts to go through this dungeon. Unfortunately, there was no way of knowing in advance that this level, this entire dungeon, had no purpose other than as an experience generator. *You*, on the other hand, have been warned.

Graphically, *Darkside* was a little better than *Clouds*. Musically, the compositions for *Darkside* were much better; I generally had the music on while Darkside and off when the party was Cloudside. Sound effects were pretty much the same on either side of the world.

If you have the room (figure 40MBs with save games), you'll get the most enjoyment from playing the complete world. If you have to make a choice between *Clouds* or *Darkside*, pick *Darkside*, since you can't use an experienced *Clouds* team if you're playing *Darkside* as a stand-alone.

Overall, *Darkside* is a satisfactory conclusion to the current *Might & Magic* saga. A new *Might & Magic* is promised (by the statues in Darkstone) in 1994. It will be interesting to see what direction the series takes, and what improvements will be made, now that the story, begun so long ago with *Might & Magic I*, has finally come to an end. I'm looking forward to seeing it. CGW

Bad Day in Bagdad!



You've been cast out of the palace as a beggar. The princess has turned against you. The palace guards want your head on a skewer. And you haven't even had breakfast yet. This is not good. It gets worse. One minute you're fleeing for your very life across roof tops. The next, you find yourself washed up on a desert island...or amidst ancient ruins, face to face with a disembodied head (and boy is it hungry!). This is *really* not good. You stumble upon quicksand, serpents, spikes, magic spells, a skeleton with a sick sense of humor, and then...well...things get just a mite tricky. Introducing *Prince of Persia 2®: The Shadow & the Flame™*. Some call it a dozen Arabian Nights movies rolled into one. Actually, it's your worst Arabian nightmare. So get some sleep. Once this swashbuckler begins, you may never sleep again.

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Nothing Can Come Between Me And My Genes

Electronic Arts' *Space Hulk*

by Jeff James

One of the most popular themes in science fiction is the "bug-eyed monsters invade Earth" scenario. From H.G. Wells to Heinlein, this xenophobic concept has had a profound impact on science fiction att and literature. The best contemporary example of this is undoubtedly the *Alien* films, based upon the nightmarish creations of artist H.R. Giger. Over the course of the *Alien* film trilogy, audiences thrilled to the life and death struggle between Lt. Ripley (along with her throw-away supporting cast) and a race of ptedatory xenoforms. In addition to film, other media—namely comic books, novels, board games and computer games—have hopped on the "man-eating aliens" bandwagon. In one of the best attempts yet at bringing computer gamers the best in xenophobic science fiction, Electronic Arts and Games Workshop have teamed up to bring the latter's popular *Space Hulk* board game to the computer screen.

In the board game, one player conttols a squad of valiant space marines while the other directs the actions of the aliens, called "Genestealers." A nasry lot, Genestealers are a breed of creatures resembling a nightmatish cross between a Gigeresque horror and a Lovecraftian abomination—all teeth, claws and burning malevolence. Unable to reproduce by conventional means, Genestealers must infect a host creature with their own genetic marerial to propagate the species. Able to survive in the cold vacuum of outer space, Genestealers ate made of sturdy stuff, with hard, armor-like exoskeletons. They're also gifted with great speed and strength, making them extremely hard to kill. Attempting to stop these creatures from spreading across the universe are the space marines of the Imperium, collectively known as the Legion Astartes. Since the Genestealers are no ordinary foe, the best soldiers of the legion are used to fight them—the Terminators. The best of the best, these elite soldiers wear powered combat suits, akin to the battle-suited grunts described in Heinlein's classic novel *Starship Trooper*. Since the Genestealets are unable to travel between the stars on their own, they hitch rides on huge, derelict space craft known as Space Hulks. These craft drift through space, carrying the Genestealers throughout the galaxy. To stop them, squads of Terminators are injected into these vessels and charged with seeking out and destroying as many Genestealers as possible.

After installation, the fight to save the galaxy from the Genestealers begins with a particularly gruesome introductory animation. After the animation, the playet arrives at the main menu screen of *Space Hulk*. From here, the player can choose from a series of tutorials, select missions based on *Space Hulk* originals, or enter the Death Wing campaign option. The tutotials are the best place to start; two sets of tutorials are available to give aspiring space marines the chance to master game controls before being thtown to the Genestealers. The first set of tutorials statts the player off with scenarios that can properly be termed "baby's first combat missions." The first of the basic tutorials is a no-brainer; the player has to simply move one armored grunt from one end of the maze to the other, without having to worry about such bothersome dilemmas as getting eaten by Genestealets or incinerated by friendly fire. Over the course of the next four missions, the player will learn how to fire weapons, locate and carry objects, control multiple soldiers, and, eventually, how to go about roasting a few aliens.

After the five basic tutorials are completed, an animated awards ceremony graduates the player to the advanced tutorials. Whereas the basic tutorials help the gamet discern which end of a storm bolter is which, the advanced tutorials impart a more important lesson. In a nutshell, the advanced tutorials will teach the player a valuable lesson: Genestealers love to kill space marines, and they are exttemely proficient at doing so. In addition, the player will eventually learn how to control up to two squads of Terminators (fot a total of ten troopers) in a variety of mission settings. All this training prepares the player for rhe more difficult scenarios found in the *Space Hulk* original missions (16 scenarios in all) and the Death Wing campaign, which offers up to 21 sequential missions. The *Space Hulk* original missions are based on missions used in the actual *Space Hulk* boardgame, while the Death Wing campaign is based upon the boardgame's optional Death Wing supplement. Regardless of missions selected, players would be well advised to perform the tutorials first to master the mechanics of gameplay.

Die, Slimeball! (Gameplay)

Game play is straightforward, thanks to *Space Hulk*'s innovative playing interface. Once a mission has begun, the playet is presented with a control screen consisting of five viewscteens, corresponding with the helmet cameras on each of the Terminators. The view in each window is akin to the viewpoint offered in such dungeon crawls as *Eye of the Beholder* and *Dungeon Master*. A large central viewscreen allows the player to directly control one Terminator, while the remaining four smaller displays reveal what each of the other fout Terminators see. An overhead map

TITLE	Space Hulk
PRICE	$59.95
SYSTEM*	IBM
REQUIREMENTS	386 or better, 260K FMS for sound support (2MB RAM recommended), VGA graphics, 8.5MB hard drive space, 3.5" 1.44MB HD floppy drive, mouse
PROTECTION	None
DESIGNERS	Nick Wilson, Kevin Shrapnell and Andy Jones
PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts San Mateo, CA (415) 571-7171

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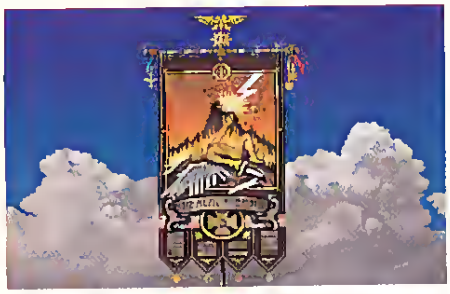


is available on the left of the screen (where the planning screen can be accessed by right-clicking), while a set of directional arrows (a la *Eye of the Beholder*) are on the right. Directional arrows on the keyboard are also supported, although joysticks are not.

Terminators are controlled one at a time; idle ones will remain in "overwatch" mode, firing automatically upon any enemies that come within range. To switch between Terminators, pressing the appropriate function key (F1 through F10) makes the selected terminator the active one, under direct player control. Using the planning screen, players can direct marines to move, open doors, fire weapons and perform other actions. In missions where the player must control more than one Terminator, the planning screen is invaluable. One unique feature of the game is the "Freeze" feature. Similar to a pause function, activating this option will halt gameplay. Unlike a true pause, the freeze option only works for a limited amount of time. If freeze time runs out, the player is dumped unceremoniously back into the game to deal with the Genestealers in real time. A true pause option is available, although the player cannot see the map or create any orders using the planning screen when paused. Freeze time creates a sense of urgency to the player's actions, making the game that much more exciting.

Ambush! (Terminator Troubles)

As fearsome as the Legion Astartes are reported to be, players will find that most troopers—especially when in overwatch mode—behave more like a pack of frightened school girls than a team of the galaxy's best soldiers. Having a Terminator engage in hand-to-hand combat without special equipment (see below) means almost certain death, while weapon jams ensure that even a well-armed and positioned marine will have a brutally short lifespan. Moving around their battle brothers is too difficult for some marines. Even after laying out intricate tactical plans for troopers at the planning screen, one may find Terminators blundering into one another, clogging up passageways and blocking avenues of fire. In my experience, some missions were doomed to failure when one Terminator blocked the path of another, engaging in a ludicrous shoving match until both were sliced into lunch meat by a marauding Genestealer. Given the limitations of the space marines themselves, aspiring commanders will quickly realize that victory depends almost entirely on the rigorous application of sound strategy and tactics.

As tough as the Genestealers are, the Terminators aren't totally helpless. A wide array of weapons are available for use, ranging from the standard issue storm bolter (essentially a high-tech machine gun with unlimited ammo) to the alien-shredding auto-cannon. The flamer can be used to lay down a blanket of flame, although it only has a measly six shots of ammunition. For hand to hand combat, the player can equip his warriors with power gloves, power swords, hammers, and a wicked device called a chain sword, which is essentially an over-sized chainsaw bolted to a trooper's fist. Most fearsome of all is the lightning claws weapon, which equips a Terminator with electrified gauntlets bristling with sharp razors.

Fight With Honor! (Sound And Graphics)

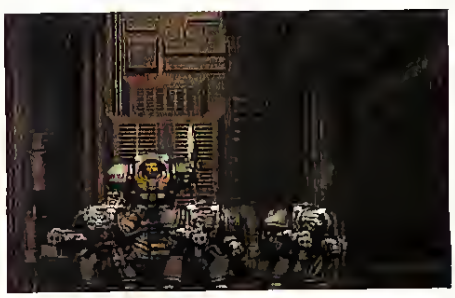
The most striking aspect of *Space Hulk* is the excellent use of digitized sound. Mission briefings are accompanied by excellent digitized speech, with a gruff commander barking orders to the player in heavily accented English. Once the game begins, Terminators will shout out "Let's go!", "We bring death!", "Beware!", and other appropriate battle cries. Of particular tactical significance is the propensity for Terminators to announce when they are being attacked. For example, the third Terminator in the player's squad will cry out "Incoming on three!" when he is under attack by Genestealers.

Graphics are also well done, with the Genestealers rendered in a sickening purple hue. Although most of the action takes place in the rusting corridors of drifting space hulks, several of the missions take place in underground labyrinths and large buildings. In each location, a great deal of ephemeral animation is used. Moving a Terminator down a deserted corridor, the player will see and hear a loose wire writhing and sparking on the floor, while the distant screams of approaching Genestealers can be heard. All of this sound and animation is used very convincingly, adding a thrilling sense of danger to the game. More than once, I nearly jumped out of my command chair when a Genestealer leapt suddenly onto the screen. Gamers who enjoyed the nail-biting anxiety exhibited in the *Alien* films will undoubtedly appreciate the *Space Hulk* atmosphere.

Beware! (Glitches And Grumbles)

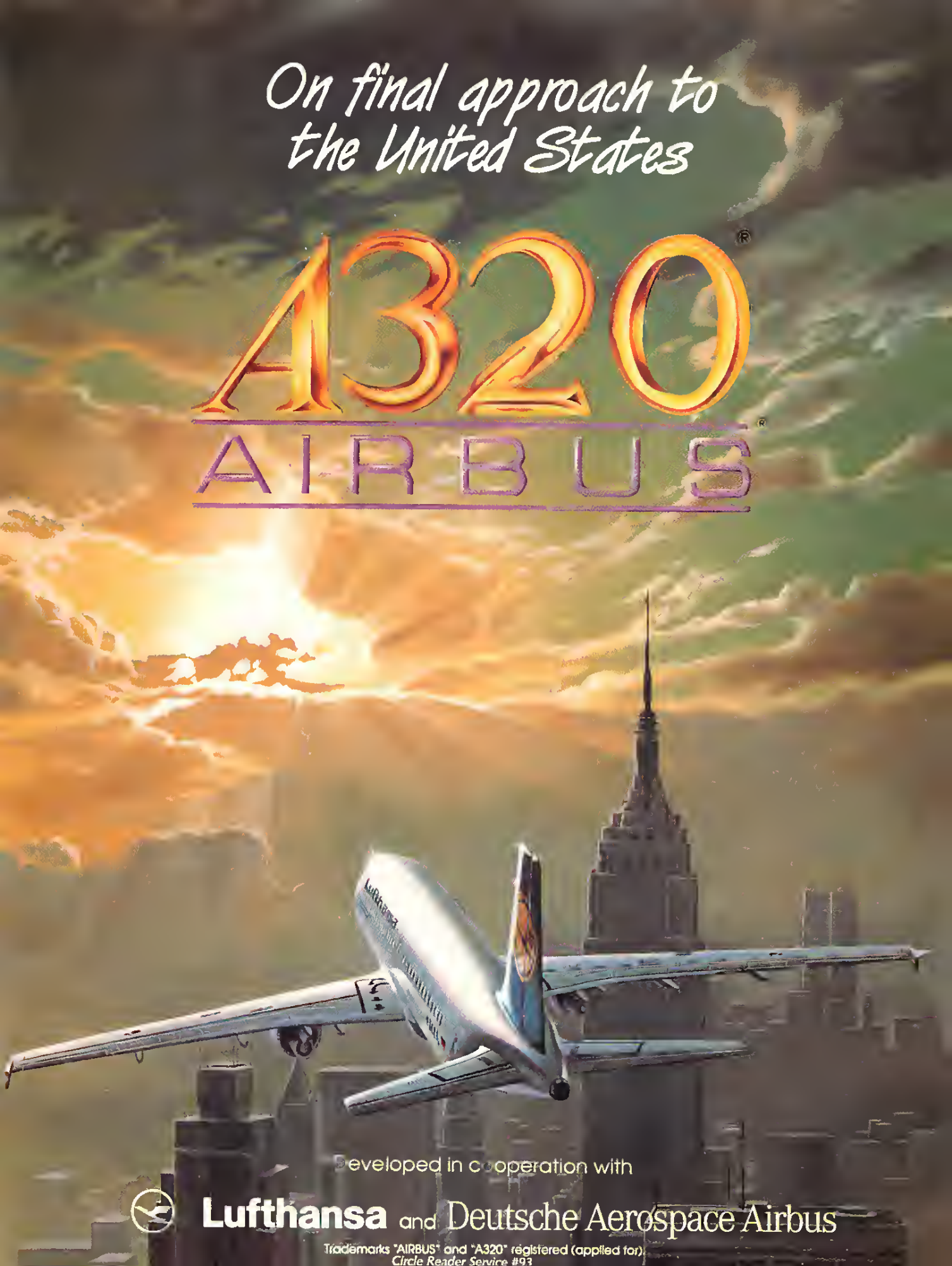
As polished as *Space Hulk* is, a few glitches and program foibles need to be mentioned. Giving Terminators their marching orders via the planning screen is an invaluable program feature. Unfortunately, the dull-witted Terminators will often blunder into simple obstacles, unable to go around them or choose another course of action. Improved AI in this area (such as allowing troopers to walk around obstacles and turn to face approaching enemies) would go a long way to making the space marines a much more effective fighting force.

Strangely, there is no post-installation setup utility which would allow players to toggle sound and music. If the game was installed with PC sound and the player later adds a Sound Blaster, the entire game must be re-installed. This user-hostility extends into parts of the playing interface as well. Selecting to restart a campaign brings up a new screen with the enigmatic query "Are you sure?", making it all too easy to erase a hard-fought campaign when the player thinks he is simply dropping to DOS. A more descriptive display informing the player what exactly is being done would be welcome. Admittedly minor issues, these interface foibles nevertheless place an extra burden upon the gamer.



To The Emperor! (Verdict)

Gory, exciting and filled with lots of exploding ordnance, *Space Hulk* is a first-rate game of tactical "infantry versus xeno" combat. Nick Wilson and his programming team should be congratulated on one of the best boardgame to computer game conversions yet. The game simply cries out for a sequel equipped with multi-player support, improved trooper AI and more mission options. Scenario disks and a mission builder would also be a nice touch. Wish lists and glitches aside, I found *Space Hulk* to be an immensely enjoyable journey into the depths of pixelated xenophobia. Gamers looking for an excuse to don a space suit and eradicate a simulated race of hostile aliens should find that *Space Hulk* suits them well. CGW



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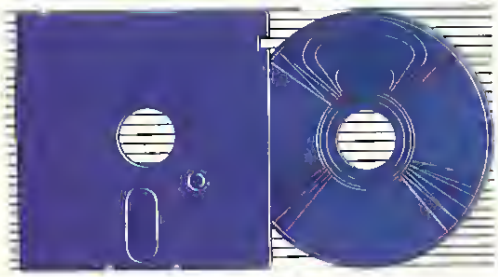


COMPANY REPORT

Broadening The Spectrum

Spectrum HoloByte Looks To The Future

Once upon a time, Spectrum HoloByte was part of Sphere, Inc. Sphere, in turn, was controlled by a company within the Maxwell media empire of tabloid publisher Robert Maxwell. After Maxwell's death, Spectrum HoloByte founder Gilman Louie managed to get enough venture capital together to buy back the company from the Maxwell interests. As part of that funding, the investors placed their own management team inside Spectrum HoloByte.

Another Opening, Another CEO

CGW wanted to know what changes that management team would make and how that would affect future product. We were concerned about personnel changes and wondered what the agenda of Spectrum's new investors would be. So, we interviewed new Spectrum-HoloByte CEO Patrick Feely. Feely immediately expressed his charter in terms of broadening the company's product line. He stated that he considered the company's strong product lines to be *Tetris, Falcon, Star Trek: The Next Generation* and a "player to be named later." His goal is to build a brand-based identity for the successful lines and add to those lines through acquisition and development.

Next, he established that the company's immediate priorities were to: 1) develop the company's strong suits (flight simulators, puzzle gaming); 2) take advantage of the cartridge business (the area where Spectrum expects the greatest sales growth, particularly with their *Star Trek: The Next Generation* program and with flight programs when SNES and Sega get beefed up); 3) gearing up for Interactive TV projects for both flight sims and *Star Trek: TNG* products; and, of course, broadening the company's product line through acquisition.

Science-Fiction author Stephen Goldin assures CGW that his scenarios are true to the StarTrek universe.

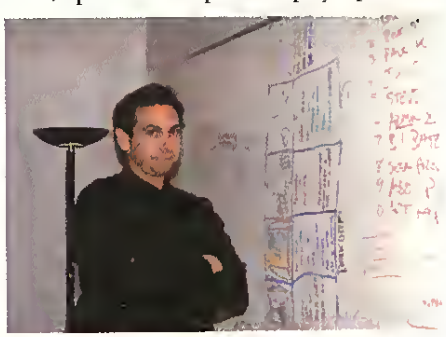
Patrick Feely, Spectrum HoloByte CEO, looks over his plans for expansion.

We pointed out that many of the items on the agenda required large expenditures and significant ramp-up time to implement, but Feely insisted that 80-85% of Spectrum's fiscal/personnel resources were being invested in markets that can get immediate returns and only ca. 15-20% in new technology. Assuming Feely's percentages are correct, Spectrum will be expanding at a significant rate over the next few years because the "new technology" portion of the company's current development is already substantial (with Virtual Reality, storefront attractions, Interactive TV and 3DO products already under development). Spectrum is using some of the most exciting technology around. Unfortunately, we can't write about it, *yet.*

Feely projected a doubling of staff over the next few years and predicted that the focus of the company will shift from "design house" to full-scale publisher. In addition to in-house staff, Spectrum is publishing around five outside projects in the current fiscal year.

Within two weeks of our interview with Feely, the first of the acquisitions occurred. To exploit the cartridge market, Spectrum purchased **Bullet-Proof Software USA**, run by Henk Rogers (long-time friend and colleague of Spectrum HoloByte chairman and founder, Gilman Louie). Bullet-Proof is not only the developer of *Tetris* for most console platforms, but the developer of *FaceBall 2000* and a Mario Bros. title called *Yoshi's Cookie.*

Within four weeks of the interview, CGW began to hear rumors that the company was showing interest in financially-strapped **MicroProse** (NASDAQ: MPRS). The word was that MPRS was finishing its fiscal year with less than a quarter million in cash and announcing a loss of over $4 million. By press time, Spectrum HoloByte had offered to provide $10 million of much-needed capital into MicroProse by purchasing subordinated debentures (an interest-bearing bond arrangement). In this case, the $10 million from Spectrum allows MicroProse to get below its $3 million debt ceiling to other lenders and gives MicroProse some breathing room. In turn, Spectrum gets interest on the bonds, equal number of directors to those presently serving on the MicroProse board and an opportunity to convert the bonds into more than 1.6 million shares of MPRS stock. In short, Spectrum has put into play a potential



Director of New Technologies Ron Martinez stands beside the diagram depicting his grand design for Spectrum's future.

Harvey Lee, Customer Support Manager, spoofs the gamer's vision of what happens during a customer support call.

merger by srock swap where each share of Spectrum may be exchanged for .6 shares of MPRS. This means that Spectrum has virrually "gone public" without having to undergo the rigors or vagaries of an IPO (Initial Public Offering). Now, Spectrum has the potential of holding up to 60% of MPRS stock and has, essentially, become the second-largest disk-based entertainment software publisher.

What this deal does not make clear is the status of rumors concerning a Spectrum HoloByte purchase of Strategic Simulations, Inc. Due diligence was allegedly being performed for a purchase of SSI when the potential MicroProse merger was announced. As of press rime, however, the status of this possible acquisition was in doubt. Nonetheless, Spectrum's recent moves undetscore the truth in Feely's parting statement to us, "We wanr ro increase the base of creativity in our organization."

That's Show Business

Where will Specrrum find this increasing base of creativity? One answer was to bring in Ron Martinez as Director of New Technologies. Ron is best known for his work with Jim Gasparini on Simon & Schuster's early *Star Trek* text adventures and a paradigm-breaking political strategy game called *Hidden Agenda* (Springboard Software). For a time, he was working on a project called *Mammal Club* (a bizarre cross between H.G. Well's *Island of Dr. Moreau* and a dark cyberpunk-style furure) that was originally inrended to be *both* a film and a computer game. As usually happens with non-studio film funding, the producrion was "put into turnaround" (i.e. ran out of funds and backers).

So, Marrinez migrated inro the world of interactive movie-making for CD-I. Unfortunately, a global base of less than 100,000 machines does not make for a viable enterrainmenr marker, so he opted to move ro Spectrum. His vision of products for Specrrum HoloByte includes some very advanced face technology to be used in 3DO producrs and some nifty hardware implementations for their amusemenr park-based virtual reality products. Martinez not only brings his experience in computer game and interactive movie design ro the party, but has a keen sense of the value of story and character, as well. "Stories," Martinez once commented at a Computer Game Developers Conference, "is when things happen to people we care about."

Spectrum is ideally prepated to venture into the world of story games. Not only does Martinez know the value of story, bur the company tapped novelist Stephen Goldin (author of ca. 30 science fiction novels) to script their *Star Trek: The Next Generation* CRPG. Goldin wrote *A Trek to Madworld* based on the otiginal Star Trek series, as well as several of the best books in the *Laser Books* series of people-oriented science fiction novels. His best-known works, ourside of *Madworld,* are *The Eternity Brigade* and *A World Called Solitude.*

ST: TNG Product Manager Mat Genser has a little fun at Spock's expense.

To enhance the background of the *Star Trek: TNG* story, the company has hired Andrew Probert. Not only was Andrew one of the designers of the Enterprise (NCC-1701D), but he designed many of the interior sets for the television series. Now, he's working with Spectrum on making the 3D backgrounds and ships for the computet game, 3DO game, and location-based products. This is the kind of detail that *Star Trek: TNG* fans should appreciate in an interactive version of one of their favorite series.

The Show Must Go On

Of course, Specrrum must build on more than *Star Trek: TNG* in order to build the company to the satisfaction of its new managemenr team. The merger with MicroProse seems certain to broaden gamer satisfaction through the inregration of the flight simulator lines (so F-16s and F-15s can fly together againsr MiGs?), and the "srory-otiented" folks at Spectrum are sure ro enjoy the power of the graphic adventure engine which MicroProse has built. One thing is for sure, Spectrum HoloByte isn'r standing still. They're...well...virtually flying. What else would we expect? CGW

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Over There

Game News From That Yonder Shore

by Robin Matthews

This month's contributor to the blood rush of hortor games from Microprose UK is *Legacy*, a superiot graphic adventure with sttong role-playing features. The player's single character explores a huge, scary house with links to other dimensions and other worlds. It is combat intensive and features auto-mapping and a reasonable magic system. The graphics are strong, and although the rooms ate too "regular" and lacking in atmosphere, it is certainly an interesting release that many will enjoy. In some ways, the horror aspect of *Legacy* overlaps with Virgin's *7th Guest*, though the free flowing nature of that CD-ROM product and its undoubted "presence" cause an unfavorable comparison to be made with the Microprose release.

Cambtidge-based Millennium Interactive has not figured in this column fot a while, so we are pleased to report on two forthcoming releases. *Morph* is a scrolling puzzle game that will appeat on both Amiga and PC formats in the eatly summer. The "plot" involves an eccentric professor and his nephew. The nutty prof has built a teleport machine which is struck hy lightning while using it on the young lad (strange, eh?). The net effect is that the machine is in bits scattered around a large gaming world. Your mission is to collect the parts and te-assemble the machine. Divided into five different sections with lots of puzzles, the graphics look ptomising and good sound support is also claimed.

The other Millennium product poised in the starting blocks is a game with a working title of *Beastball*. To be released on PC and Amiga 1200, it is described as the first in a series of futuristic sport sims. It will be a one- or two-player fantasy sports game "with elements of *Grid Iron*, *Tom and Jerry* and *The Terminator*."

The players, genetically engineered with different skills and attributes, are immune to pain and tegenerate after each match.

Morph

Matches are either in a League or Cup competition with ptomotion and gtand finals. Possessing strong graphics, it is designed to appeal to sports games players and, rather distutbingly, to violence lovers. That aspect might rightly cause a stir and is unlikely to gain much futther coverage for that teason alone. Both formats are due in Novembet 1993.

Empire made quite an impact with *Team Yankee* and its sequel *Pacific Islands*, and now a third tank sim is to be released. *War in The Gulf* is set in 1995 when Iraq has once again entered Northern Kuwait. Still convinced of the justice of their territorial claims, the Iraqis have mounted a limited strike using battalions of the Republican Guard. They quickly seize control of the Sabriya and Ar Rawdatayn oilfields, and also invade the two most important off-shore possessions of Kuwait, the islands of Failaka and Bubiyan.

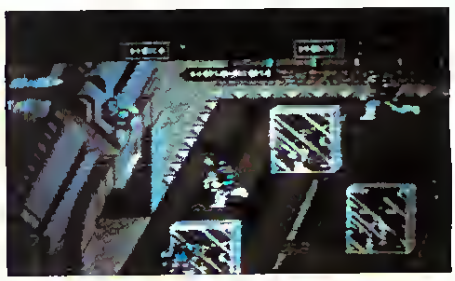
Team Kuwait is a ctack unit of mercenaries, all US veterans from Operation Desert Storm, who have been hired as patt of Kuwait's local defense forces. Intetnational assistance will take time to have an effect, so Team Kuwait is in the front-line of the offensive to repel the Iraqi invaders.

War in the Gulf uses a similar system to the previous titles with the player simultaneously conttolling fout groups of four AFVs, including the M1 Abrams Main Battle Tank. The simulation has economic considetations and involves resource management. Gameplay is divided into a series of separate missions, varying fiom re-claiming the islands to full scale battles in the crucial oil fields. *War in the Gulf* features over 15 separate tank battles set among actual topographical maps of the atea. The geographic region represented is teported to be in excess of 400 squate miles. One hopes that this will not be ptophetic, but *War in the Gulf* is currently out on the PC, with both Amiga and ST versions planned.

The final product this month is *Shadoworlds*, Teque's follow-up to the interesting *Shadowlands*. The original product was distributed by Domark, but this latest telease is now published by UK software house, Krisalis. *Shadoworlds* uses a further development of the *Shadowlands* isometric view system and also utilizes the unique "photoscaping" technique which lights up areas as you explote (and conversely darkens them as you leave).

The plot moves the *Shadowlands* interface away from medieval magic and mystery to deep space. The player heads a team of four hand-picked space marines whose job is to explore a massive space station housing a Weapons Research Facility. This space station orbits a planet on the outet limits of the galaxy. As the story goes, decades eatlier a virulent form of plant life had been ejected ftom the Earth. This didn't please the plant a bit, but it was content to keep its fly-trap shut. That is, until weapons testing really got its leaves ruffled.

Gallant space heroes must explore the Space Station and the nearby planets to try and unravel a fairly sophisticated storyline. One's parry can be made up of any of 18 characters, including a mutant dog, security androids, and numerous psychopathic astro-mercenaries.



Beastball

After this, the rest is similar to *Shadowlands*. The movement and object manipulation is done by selecting the head or limbs of a tailor's dummy, where the right leg moves the parry as a team and the left leg moves the

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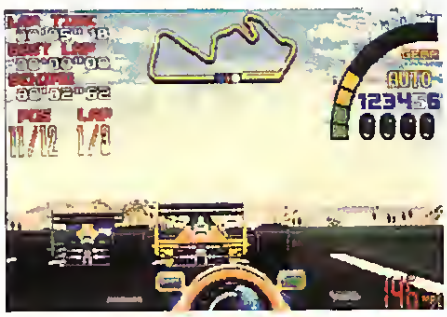
selected character only. This works well enough, but the party members' apparent lack of common sense in movement can be frustrating. Though the player may want to go through a door, this does not seem to be communicated effectively to one's characters, who often bang into walls for the thrill of it. This quirkiness could ruin the game for some, but if one copes with it, *Shadoworlds* is a cracking exploration, puzzle and combat extravaganza. And it's big. I am quite amazed that it fits onto two 720K disks, but this is no lunar week wonder. The graphics are average, the sound is OK, but above all, it's a bit different. *Shadowlands* is available on both PC and Amiga formats now.

He may be missed in the Formula One Grand Prix Championship, but Britain's Nigel Mansell certainly seems to be making an impact (literally, as far as some ovals are concerned!) in Indy car racing. Sheffield-based **Gremlin Graphics** have released *Nigel Mansell's World Championship* on other formats, but it is ironic that as he has left for pastures new, the PC version makes a belated appearance. This is no Geoff Crammond sim, but rather a polished arcade game.

The graphics are little more than hi-res EGA, and there is not much subtlety to the controls and steering. The software does allow a driver to practice and receive advice from the old moaner, culminating in either individual races or the reenactment of an entire Grand Prix season. There are far more sophisticated driving games around, but at the right price, and accepting its limitations, this is a pleasant enough diversion.

Before I say *au revoir* this month, there's just time to mention a new adventure from **Coktel Vision**. *Lost in Time* is already available in a French version and should be converted and released as this column is put to



Nigel Mansell's World Championship

paper. Starring the attractive Doralice who has previously appeared in Coktel's racy adventure, *Fascination*, *Lost in Time* is yet another product claiming to be the first interactive movie/game. With full motion video, 3-D free motion, and digitized 256-color graphics, the software looks terrific and might just deliver the dream.

Plotwise our heroine wakes up feeling a trifle fuzzy headed. She finds herself on a strange boat, wondering what has happened to her, where she is, and why the wall poster is dated 1840. These questions must be answered, but to do this Doralice must confront an arch criminal coming at her from different periods in time.

With auto-mapping, auto-notetaking, an all point-and-click mouse-based interface, a special CD-ROM version with digitized sound, full soundtrack, and all manner of clever time parallaxes, *Lost in Time* could be a biggie and may build on Coktel's rapidly increasing standing.

That's all this time. Next month we'll take a close look at **Loriciels'** *D-Day*, among others.

The above games and any of the other games mentioned in past columns can be obtained from:

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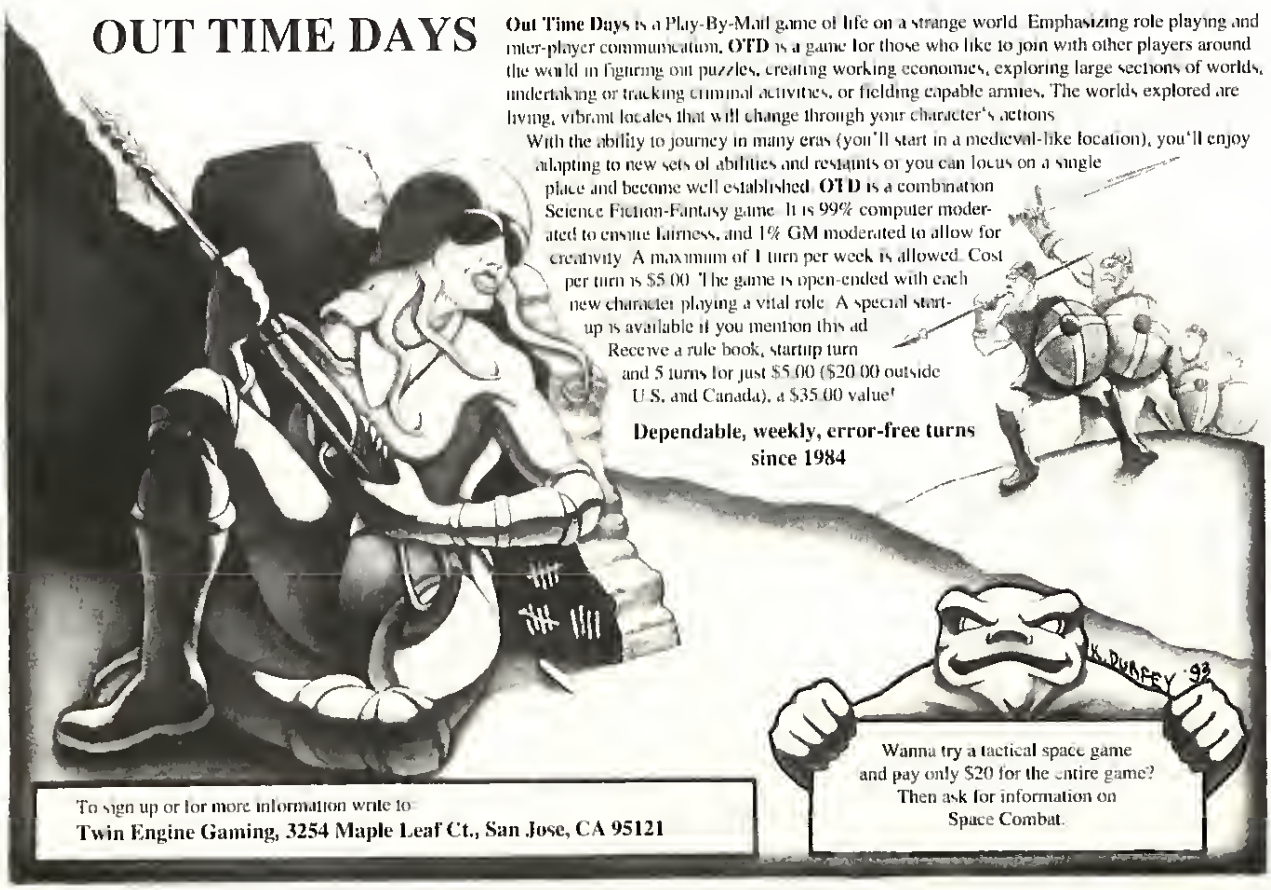
Robin Matthews can also be contacted on Compuserve at 76004,3456. CGW



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You Can't Go Holmes Again

ICOM's *Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective, Vol. III*

by Charles Ardai

When Thomas Edison's first movie, *The Great Train Robbery*, appeared in theaters, people went to see it in droves despite its grainy, jerky images, crude performances, and minimal storyline. When a scrawny desperado faced the cameta at the end of the movie and fired his pistol out at the audience, people screamed.

When the first commercial video game, *Pong*, appeared in barrooms across the country, so many people played it that they overfilled the coin collection boxes and broke the machines. This was the case despite the game's severely limited action, graphies, and sound, and its lack of a storyline altogether.

Both cases show that the fitst examples of a new type of entertainment need not be especially good in order to be popular. A first try might turn out a classic, as in the case of the first novels *(Don Quixote, Pamela)*, but this is not necessary in order for the work to be a success; and history tells us that a first try is that much less likely to be good when the artist creating it has to grapple with a new technology as well as a new art form.

These days we are frequently told that the multimedia era of computer entertainment is dawning. On the horizon are mountains of product in development, and if enough people buy the hardware necessary to use it, we may actually see all this product someday. In the meantime, multimedia gamers have to content themselves with what's out there.

What's out there is very limited. Aside from a handful of upgrades to games originally designed for floppies and some quickie clip jobs masquerading as games, hungry gamers basically have a choice between Virgin's *The 7th Guest* and ICOM's *Sherlock Holmes, CD* games. Is it any wonder, then, that ICOM has circulated almost a quartet of a million copies of these games? (It doesn't hurt that *Holmes Vol. 1* comes packed in one of the leading multimedia kits as a "freebie.")

One might as well say it straight: these games don't have to be very good to sell like hotcakes. ICOM's *Holmes, CD* games are the only games on the market to offer abundant full-motion video and spoken-word audio. Each volume contains more than an hour of video. The video is of real, live actors, speaking in reasonable faesimiles of British accents. It's like having PBS right there on your PC! Asking for quality, too, seems downright impertinent.

Am I saying that the *Holmes, CD* games are bad? No. In fact, ICOM's may well be the best Holmes games on the market. What I am saying is that they are a first try; and that, while they do convey an undeniable thrill, this is mainly the thrill of seeing a new technology used, not of seeing a new technology used well. It is fine to praise these games for what they are, but one must also criticize them for what they are not. I fear that amidst all the hype, players are not being as demanding as they ought to be about what companies feed them in the name of multimedia entertainment.

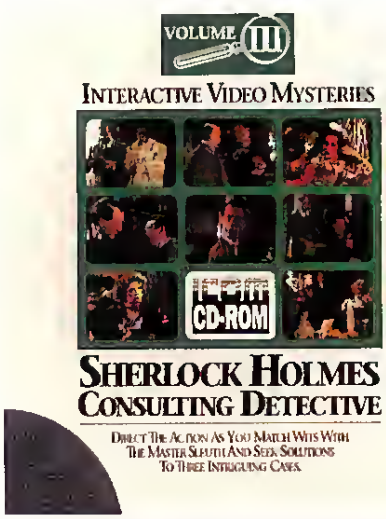
Holmes Game Advantage

One of the nice points about ICOM's *Holmes, CD* games is that they are, in fact, games. The game elements that link all the video clips together may be simple, but at least the result is readily identifiable as entertainment. Peeling away the storyline, what the player actually does is access entries from an index, just as he might when using a multimedia encyclopedia. In this case, the index goes by the name of "Holmes' directory," an alphabetical listing of some of London's more interesting inhabitants and institutions. The player can rifle through the directory at will, pull names from it, copy them into "Holmes' notebook", and then, by clicking on the "horse and carriage" icon, see what the computer has filed away under a given name (i.e., "visit the location").

Names that are germane to the current case will usually produce a short (20-120 second) video clip of eithet Holmes or Watson quizzing that character about the crime under investigation. Names that are not will usually produce a line drawing of a house with its door closed and a comment on the soundtrack along the lines of "I don't know why you dragged me out here, Watson."

The bulk of the game, therefore, is a matter of sniffing out germane names. One gets one's first leads during the lengthy clip that introduces each case; in the course of following up on these, additional names come up along with facts and clues. When one has followed up on all the leads and drawn conclusions ftom all the clues, clicking on the "gavel" icon presents the solution to a judge. If any important clues are missing, the player is sent back to the main screen to find them.

At first glance, there appear to be other elements to the game, but these are peripheral at best. Copies of the *London Times* that are allegedly packed with clues are available both on-screen and in identical hard copy, but I found both versions useless. The Baker Street Irregulars, Holmes' band of nosy street urchins, can be called in to give their opinion on a character, but more often than not they haven't got one. When they do have an opinion, it rarely produces information that one hasn't already gotten from the video clips.



TITLE	Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective, Volume III
PRICE	$69.95
SYSTEM	IBM, Macintosh
REQUIREMETS	286-12MHz or better. VGA graphics, CD-ROM drive with 150K transfer rate, mouse
PROTECTION	None
PUBLISHER	ICOM Simulations, Inc Wheeling, IL (708) 520-4440

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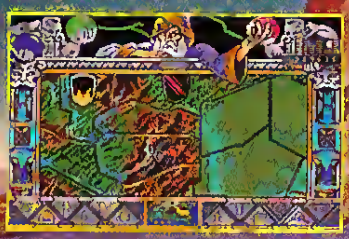

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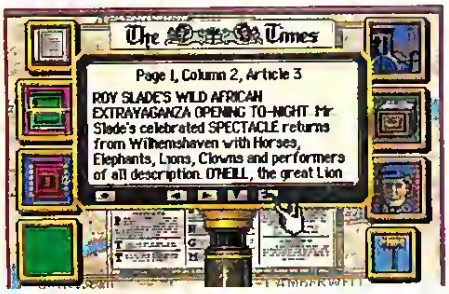
SSI

Finally, there are "Holmes' files," which contain sketchy background information on some of the game's characters, but what they offer, too, is mostly redundant or superfluous.

There is no time limit in the game, nor is there any danger. One cannot do anything "wrong," other than fail to solve the case. One is permitted to save the game, but this is only for the sake of picking it up again at a later date, not for testing alternative plot pathways.

The word "interactive" is prominently displayed on the game's package, but the game is only interactive in the sense that the player determines, to some degree, the order in which the video clips are presented. Which clips one selects has no impact on the content of the clips one sees subsequently, and one sees the same clip no matter how often a given character is visited.



Even more distressing, it is possible to view the clips out of order, and one occasionally does so by accident. For instance, in one of *Volume III*'s three cases ("The Solicitous Solicitor"), poorly planned ordering of the entries in Holmes' notebook makes it likely that the player will read the London Library entry on "chinaberry"—including Watson's comment that "H.R. sure knows his poisons!"—before visiting H.R. Murray's laboratory and being told to check out the entry on chinaberry in the library.

The most damning evidence against the game's purported interactivity is that it is possible to go through the game by brute force, simply clicking on each entry in Holmes' directory in sequence, starting with Abraham Able and ending with Graham Zweiback. Doing so would be equivalent to viewing the clips in a random order, but it would have no detrimental consequence on one's progress through the game, other than lengthening the playing time and increasing the number of dead ends one visits.

There is nothing inherently bad about this design, and given the strengths and weaknesses of the CD-ROM as a medium one can understand why ICOM made the choices it did. However, gamers accustomed to the legitimate interactivity of a mystery game like Sierra's *Laura Bow* adventures should be prepared for the tradeoff here between getting to see live actors perform and getting to participate in a story in a significant way. Users of ICOM's *Sherlock Holmes* are viewers more than they are players. Their involvement in

each story is essentially limited to deducing the solution to the crime—and if this is interactive then so is reading a Sherlock Holmes novel, because one can do the same thing there.

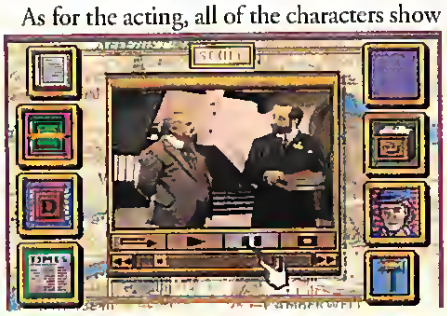
The Case of the Ersatz Doyle

The three stories one gets in *Holmes, CD Volume III* are, on the whole, no better and no worse than their counterparts in the first two volumes. As such stories go, they are fairly good, neither as good as the stories Conan Doyle wrote nor the contents of a typical issue of *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*, but better than one might expect.

"The Thames Murders," with its five floating corpses and complicated chain of motives, is the best, and the best suited to the game's structure. It even includes a cameo role for Colonel Moran and a final twist which, though easy to guess, is satisfying. "The Solicitous Solicitor," with its legal lothario and bevy of languid ladies, provides a certain voyeuristic interest, though its subplot about property deeds is too dull for words and its twists are telegtaphed. "The Banker's Final Debt," with its smashed statues and missing jewels, reminds one of Doyle's "Six Napoleons," but does not stand up to the comparison especially well.

In all three cases, the plot development and the planting of clues seems mechanical and crude, more on the order of an episode of "Murder, She Wrote" than the original Holmes stories. Certainly, there is none of Doyle's spark of genius or cleverness. One begins pondering cases that are roughly as interesting as the banal real-world crimes found in the newspaper. If there were a fourth case on this CD and it were "The Carnal Car Mechanic," about Amy Fisher and Joey Buttafuoco, it would not stand out from the other three.

As for the acting, all of the characters show

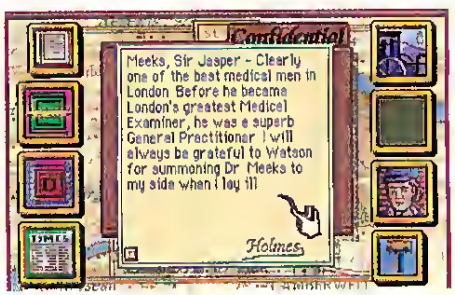


signs at various points of indulging in the sort of hyper-theatrical gestures and intonations that Jon Lovitz used to parody in his "Master Thespian" bit on *Saturday Night Live*. Though dramatizations of Sherlock Holmes have always tended toward campiness, hamminess and other forms of overacting (see, for instance, Jeremy Brett in PBS' recent series), rarely has it been taken to such extremes. ICOM will do much better next time if it hires professionals, not just for the acting chores, but for writing and directing as well. There is only so long that the gaming audience will put up with paying good money (and not a little of it) to see the work of amateurs.

Holmes Alone

Readers might be curious as to why, in light of the drubbing I've given *Holmes, CD III* above, I said at the start that ICOM's may be the best Sherlock Holmes games on the market. The answer is twofold.

First, no one has done any better. ICOM's games are visually impressive (though one wishes the clips would contain fewer talking heads and more action) and technologically exciting in a way that Electronic Arts' *The Lost Files of Sherlock Holmes*, for example, is not. It is a thrill to see little actors talking to each other in a window on one's computer screen.



ICOM's *Holmes, CD* is a first try and enormous leaps do remain to be made, but it is unlike anything else out there and that, at least, makes it worth playing. I suspect, and hope, that it will not be state-of-the-art for long, but for now it is; and for what it is, it's not half bad.

This leads to the second reason, which is that even though the stories the game tells are not masterpieces, they are solid, fairly constructed mysteries that have actual solutions to be deduced. The game may not be as interactive as one might like, but it is an improvement over the *Clue* VCR game of several years back or the Dennis Wheatly "interactive mystery books" of yesteryear. Mystery games are rare enough that a gamer who wants to find a new one can't afford to pass one up if it is at least decent.

Sherlock Holmes, Volume III is, at least, decent. It is probably not worth buying all three volumes, but curious gamers should at least take a look at one of them. **CGW**

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THERE'S A SUCKER BORN EVERY MINUTE

In LucasArts' *Day of the Tentacle*

by Charles Ardai

Calling *Day of the Tentacle* a sequel to *Maniac Mansion*, the pioneering 1987 adventure game that introduced both LucasArts' "S.C.U.M.M" game system and many of *Tentacle*'s main characters, is a little like calling the space shuttle a sequel to the slingshot. It is true that both serve the function of hurling objects great distances—space shuttles and slingshots, that is—but they have so little else in common and are separated by such an enormous gulf of technical sophistication that mentioning them in the same breath is almost absurd.

So it is with *Day of the Tentacle* and *Maniac Mansion*. For comparison's sake, note that one room of *Day of the Tentacle* contains the entire original game, as a gag. That's right: in one of *Tentacle*'s rooms, players will come across a computer that is running *Maniac Mansion*. If they so choose, they can put *Tentacle* on hold while they play through *Maniac Mansion* from start to finish.

Anyone who chooses to play the original will be stunned by how far the field of interactive fiction has come in the past six years. The original is there in all its retro glory: chunky, flat graphics; boxy Commodore 64 font; stiff animation; sound effects that are limited to thunks, beeps, and static; and an early point-and-click interface that lacks all the shortcuts and conveniences that make current games so much more comfortable to play. The story and puzzles are strong, but their presentation is downright primitive. Only nostalgia or curiosity will permit today's gamers to suffer through what was once state-of-the-art but is by today's standards crude.

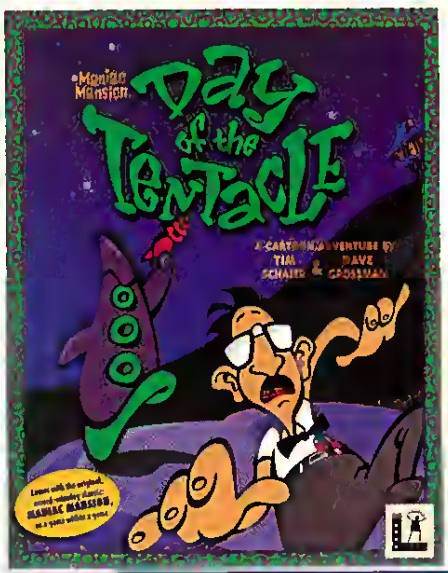
Compare this with *Day of the Tentacle*. Its graphics are lush and colorful, with skewed perspectives and grotesque characters that could have been lifted from vintage Warner Brothers cartoons. Every scene is animated, with characters performing lots of weird, once-in-the-game actions rather than just cycling through a stock series of poses. In the CD-ROM edition, every single line of dialogue in the game is spoken out loud—and not only spoken, but spoken in voices that would have done the late Mel Blanc proud. Gameplay is smooth and intuitive, the interface having been designed to give players a minimum of frustration. Even the font in which the game's text appears is custom-designed, angular, wacky, and just right for the game's cartoony atmosphere.

So Long, Sucker!

Day of the Tentacle begins when a stream of inappropriately disposed toxic waste kills a cute little birdie and causes a self-willed purple tentacle, surly and ill-mannered to begin with, to mutate into a super genius with thoughts of world domination. His good-guy companion, Green Tentacle, warns him not to drink the polluted water, but he does it anyway. Then he grows stubby little arms, develops a baritone voice, thunders out an ominous warning to one and all, rises up on his glutinous sucker and hops offscreen to hatch his evil plots. There's nothing for Green Tentacle to do but call for help.

A better connected tentacle might have sent his plea to one of computer gaming's more reliable heroes: Indiana Jones, for instance, or King Graham. Maybe even the Avatar. Those guys are hard to reach, though, so Green Tentacle sends his note by carrier hamster to the one adventure game hero he knows: Bernard Bernoulli, the geeky, gawky, stoop-shouldered protagonist of *Maniac Mansion*.

Bernard promptly enlists the help of two new characters: Hoagie, an appealingly moronic slob with all the brains (and the shape) of a bowling ball, and Laverne, a wild-eyed space cadet whose voice suggests that she has been heavily, but insufficiently, sedated with valium. Together, these three musketeers



TITLE	Day of the Tentacle
PRICE	IBM: $59.95, CD-ROM: $69.95
SYSTEM	IBM, IBM CD-ROM
REQUIREMENTS	386 and higher recommended, expanded memory recommended, VGA graphics, 14MB hard drive space (floppy only)
PROTECTION	Manual Look up (floppy version only)
DESIGNERS	Dave Grossman, Tim Schafer
PUBLISHER	LucasArts San Rafael, CA (415) 721-3300

ttaipse over to the motel of Dr. Fred Edison, the inept mad scientist who genetically engineered the tentacles in the fitst place, and whose Sludge-O-Matic is industriously dumping toxic waste into a stteam under a spreading kumquat tree. So it begins...and before it ends, our heroes will have to travel farther afield than the kumquat tree. Much fatther.

In order to undo the mischief he has wrought, Dr. Fred cooks up a plan to send Hoagie, Laverne and Bernard back one day in time to shut off the Sludge-O-Matic before Putple Tentacle can drink the mutagenic water. However, due to a catastrophic miscalculation, Dr. Fred's time machines go kablooie, stranding Hoagie in Colonial New England, Laverne in a dystopic future in which humans ate the pets of their tentacle mastets, and Bernard right back where he started, in the present.

Before they can get on with the plan to stop Purple Tentacle, they all have to get Back To The Present. This presents some difficulty, in light of the fact that Hoagie has no way to plug in his time machine in the 18th Century and that Laverne is a captive, first in the branches of that darned kumquat tree and then, in the tentacles' electrified kennel.

What is to be done? Well, an ancestor of Dr. Fred's can make Hoagie a battery, and Ben Franklin can charge it with electticity, if

Hoagie does evetything just right. Doing evetything "just tight" involves pulling three ctuel practical jokes on George Washington and one on Betsy Ross, as well as amending the Constitution. Yet that's all a piece of cake compared to what Laverne has to do, which includes disguising herself as a tentacle, sucking a hamster out of a mousehole, winning a "best human pet" contest using a corpse as het enttant, and taking a punch to the kisset ftom a spring-loaded boxing glove.

Meanwhile, Bernard has to contend with a depressed novelty inventor, a laid-back car thief, a home-shopping channel on TV, a semi-lobotomized Weird Ed (another character from the original game in a hilations cameo appearance), and the IRS, whose agents seize Dr. Fred and tie him up with red tape while they give him an audit. Bernard's task is just as difficult as Hoagie's or Laverne's: he has to fix the main time machine, at an expected cost of two million dollars.

Once all three characters complete their

quests, they are finally able to go back in time one day to shut off the Sludge-O-Matic. First, however, they have to face an atmy of Purple Tentacles in a showdown that can only he characterized as epic. (That's not true, actually. It can also be charactetized as ridiculous.)

Thtoughout all the above linacy, the game's various threats ate made less-than-threatening by the fact that one cannot die. One cannot even hack one's characters into a dead end, not even accidentally. This means that one is free to try absolutely anything in any situation, without fear of the consequences.

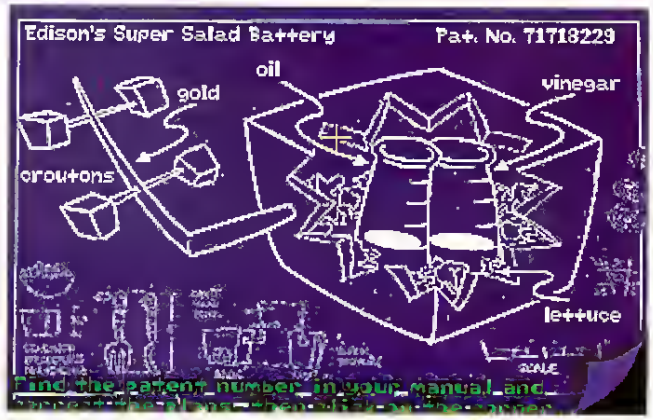
The impact of this design choice is greatest in dialogue sequences, when the player is interacting with John Hancock, ot Thomas Jefferson, ot Harold, the primping human pet in a tutu, or whomever. In most games, the dialogue would take the following form: the interlocutor would ask the playet a question ("What do you think of my hair?"), and the player's options would consist of the right answer ("It is very nice") followed by three or four funny answets, selecting any of which would get the player executed on the spot. I have never understood this. If the point of playing a game is to have fun, why do games punish players for choosing fun answers over sensible, horing ones?

The designers of *Day of the Tentacle* seem to have had this question in mind when they wrote their game, since not only are there no sensible, boring dialogue choices, but the player is never, ever punished for doing something funny. Doing funny things is the whole point of *Day of the Tentacle*, and the game

encourages the players to get into the spirit in evety possible way, starting with the strange-looking game box (the CD version is triangular rather than square) and ending with two great punch lines that bting the game to a rousing finale. All that's missing is Porky Pig saying "Th-th-th-that's all folks!"

Purple Reign

In order to prevent Purple Tentacle from taking over the world and populating it with its spawn, Bernatd, Hoagie, and Laverne have to interact with each other a good deal, this despite being separated from one another both physically and by several hundred yeats. They pull off this difficult feat in a number of ways, mainly by sending objects to each other by flushing them through time. (Did I neglect to mention that Dr. Fted's time machines are huilt inside Pott-O-San-style toilets?) Much of the game's complexity, then, stems ftom the fact that one never knows,

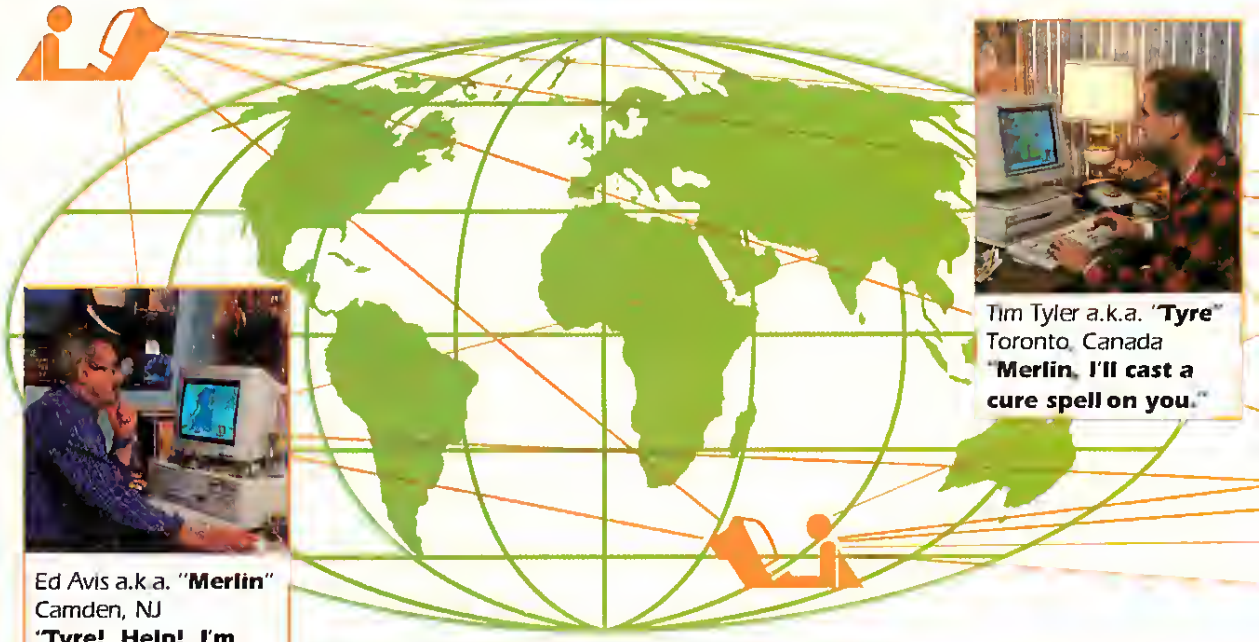


when one finds an object, in which era it will turn out to be useful. So, a bucket of paint that Hoagie finds just might be the tool Bernard needs to ttounce the IRS; Laverne's scalpel (she's a medical student) is ineffective against the tentacles but might be handy for Bernard; and thtee false sets of teeth make their way back and forth through time, suggesting the tather unpalatable conclusion that dentures are the one truly universal commodity in human history.

As in the original game, the need to search through what is essentially the same mansion over and over adds to the robustness of the simulation: by the time the game ends, the player feels he really *knows* that house. To spice things up, the Edison mansion changes ever so slightly ovet the centuries, forcing the player to do a lot of exploration through rooms and corridors that are simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar. The use of three different eras, each with its own visual characteristics, style of comedy, and set of puzzles, protects *Day of the Tentacle* against the charge of being too claustrophobic. Some players criticized *Maniac Mansion* because they didn't like being stuck in the same house for

(Continued on page 80)

A New Dimension



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Camden, NJ
"**Tyre! Help! I'm wounded.**"

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Waco, Tx
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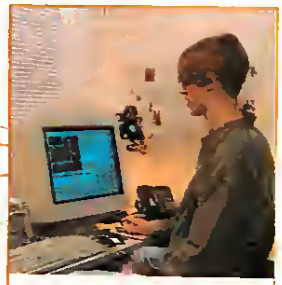

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The Many Saves Of Don Jonz

Capstone's *Eternam*

by Allen L. Greenberg

While computer game designers labor to perfect the art of interactive entertainment, they may be unawate that the makers of non-interactive entertainment have spent decades undermining their efforts. For years, movies have depicted the innocuous computer as an evil ptesence, ready to subjugate the population it was designed to serve and entertain. Fortunately, probably due to their growing dependency on computer-generated special effects, filmmakers now seem content to move on to other villains.

Filmmakers have not, however, expressed any such forgiveness towards other forms of interactive entertainment such as the fantasy theme park. With this summer's release of *Jurassic Park*, dinosaur recreation centers throughout the world will douhtlessly suffer a decline in business. Other classic films and television shows such as *Westworld*, *Futureworld*, *Fantasy Island*, in addition to all of those malfunctions on the holodeck of the new starship Enterprise, have all preached the dangers connected with entering an artificially generated fantasy environment. While we might expect computer game designers to come to the defense of the fantasy parks, such is not the case. *Eternam*, an adventure game from the always unusual Infogrames, instead presents a frightening picture of a recreation world whose patrons risk leading exciting, yet dramatically shortened lives.

The Story So Far

Eternam is a first-rate adventute about a planet-sized amusement park of the same name. The hero is a fututistic vacationer named Don Jonz, whom one might suspect is able to trace his lineage back to "Indiana." Equipped only for a fantasy week away from work, Don quickly discovers that Eternam is up to its equator in trouble. At one time, the planet belonged to a race of lizard-like creatures called Dragoons. Scalped out of the rights to this paradise world, they huddle together on one small continent where they have managed to silently take control of the planet's massive computer system, under the direction of their leader, the vile Mikhal Nuke. Don must now navigate this fantasy-turned-nightmare world in order to reach the Dragoons, bring Nuke to his knees, and settle the dispute. Helping the hero is Tracy, a drop-dead gorgeous secretary who happens to be putting in overtime from inside the computet's terminals.

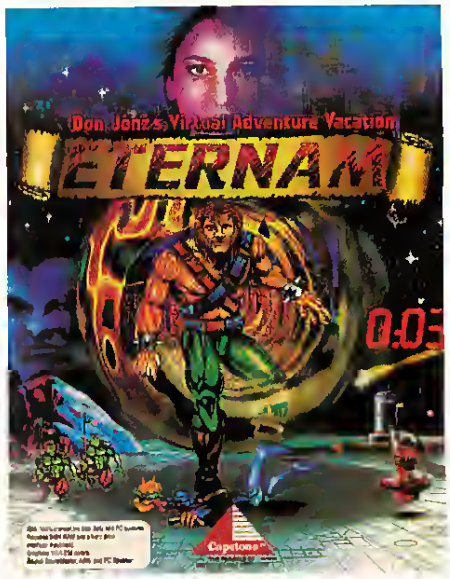
Eternam features several continents, each of which is as unique as it is threatening. A medieval land is guarded by a duke whose servants' passions range from sweet-meats to stone statues. Another land mass is occupied by French revolutionaries who are split into a confusing variety of factions and loyalties. A bizarre collection of mismatched machinery dominates a high-tech civilization, while a deadly pyramid overshadows an ancient Egyptian landscape. While initially appearing to be a series of continent-sized, self-contained mini-adventures, *Eternam* will eventually tequire Don Jonz to do some fast-paced continent-hopping in order to achieve his ultimate goal. Mapping these places is not absolutely necessary, but it is a simple exercise which will prove valuable as the adventure progresses.

The adventures of Don Jonz turn out to be quite an interesting yarn, and are mercilessly laced with hefty doses of humor. Cameo appearances by anachronistic personalities abound, including not-quite-the-crew of the original starship Enterprise. Never letting the player forget that this is indeed a fantasy theme park, technicians occasionally wander through the picture, and a passing tourist may supply help at an otherwise hopeless moment. In rhe tradition of several other popular adventures, two of the programmers have also been given pivotal roles in the adventure.

If The View Fits

Experienced adventure gamers may find themselves reaching for the mouse to control *Eternam*, although any such effort will prove wasted. Nearly the entire game may be controlled from the keyboard using the four directional cursor keys. Six icons line the bottom of the screen representing the commands "take," "use," "speak," "look," "inventory" and "disk access." The icons may be activated hy pressing a letter key from the keyboard which causes a shockingly realistic human finger to appear on screen and select the appropriate icon. Alternatively, this "digitized digit" may first be summoned with the tab key and then moved to the desired icon with a direction key.

Inside buildings, Don Jonz is seen in a standard two or three dimensional view, around which he may be guided by the four direction keys. Each time Don passes something of interest, a "line of sight" appears on screen along with text identifying the item.



TITLE:	Eternam
PRICE:	$59.95
SYSTEM:	IBM
REQUIREMENTS:	386-16MHz, VGA graphics, 6MB hard drive space
PROTECTION:	None
DEVELOPER:	Intogrames
PUBLISHER:	Capstone Miami, FL (800) 468-7226

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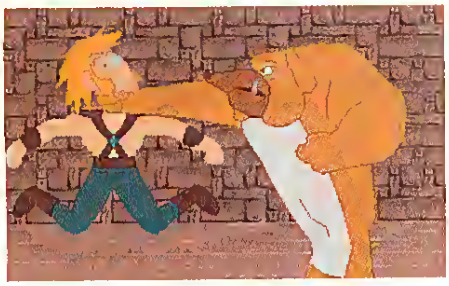

Don would be wise to pick up any item which he is permitted to take. Most items have a use elsewhere in the game, and there is no limit to the number of items he is permitted to include in his inventory.

Conversation with other on-screen characters may be initiated by Don or with another character. This conversation is of the multiple-response format, in which the program offers the player two or more choices of dialogue. Unfortunately, the player often has only one chance to select the proper statement. The wrong choice may cost the player some important information or, worse, fail to set certain critical events in motion. Frequently saving the game to disk is about the only answer to this problem. Other vital pieces of information are well-hidden throughout the game. At more than one point, Don will be forced to take a trivia quiz which seems something like a copy-protection test. However, the answers will be found elsewhere in the program and not in its documentation. Any piece of information which Don comes across should be written down for later reference.

Outside buildings, the player views the action as seen through Don's eyes. Exceptionally smooth-flowing three-dimensional scenery ("virtual reality" for those who still insist on abusing that term) creates the impression that Don is riding a bicycle or a well-trained futuristic horse. Certain inhospitable reptiles, possibly related to the Dragoons, also travel Eternam's roads in an attempt to mortally end Don's visit. For this, he is equipped with some type of self-aiming weapon, or spell, which is more than adequate for self defense. Don begins his adventure with 100 hit points which may be reduced by encounters with these creatures, or by some of his more dangerous adventures indoors. The points regenerate on their own as long as the player prevents them from reaching zero.

Eternam is presented in an entertaining variety of graphic styles. Painted graphics dominate the program, but these are frequently combined with some hilarious cartoon-like sequences. There are also some digitized photographic images to represent Tracy and Mikhal Nuke as they communicate with Don from within Eternam's computer. Nearly

every scene includes some eye-pleasing action or animation. Ad Lib compatible music and Sound Blaster sound effects are available, but the player who so chooses may simply listen to the flatulent noises of the PC's internal speaker.

Hope Springs Eternam

Eternam is a relatively difficult exercise to complete and will provide the player with more than a few tense and confusing moments. Its greatest achievement is clearly its remarkable and compelling story which will keep players exploring until they reach the game's satisfying conclusion. *Eternam* is clearly a double-edged blade—frightening players away from one type of interactive entertainment while offering them the best of another. CGW

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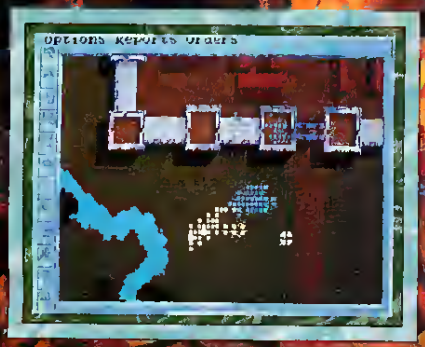

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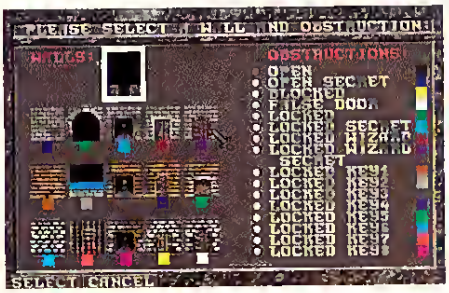
Neverending Stories

Create Your Own Fictions with SSI's *Unlimited Adventures*

by Rudy Craft

If this review had been written a month ago, it would have blasted Strategic Simulations' *Unlimited Adventures* for its grossly inadequate documentation. It would have pointed out the total uselessness of an adventure building product that included programming bugs that render it all but impossible to design a fully playable adventure. It would have whined at length about the inadequacies of SSI's Gold Box engine and how far removed it was from the cutting edge of computer gaming technology. Fortunately, the month has passed, and with it, all but the last criticism.

Unlimited Adventures is SSI's adventure construction kit using the familiar Gold Box *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* engine in its latest and up-to-date form. Yet, even the latest version of the Gold Box engine is sorely lacking by comparison with other more recent games. Its graphics, for example, do not compare with those in *Darkside of Xeen*, *Ultima Underworld II* and *Crusaders of the Dark Savant*. Obviously, SSI recognizes this problem, as they are putting the system out to pasture with the release of this construction kit and are developing a new *AD&D* game engine, beginning with the long overdue *Dark Sun*.

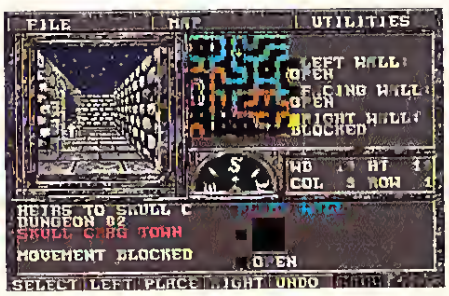


To be fair to SSI, *Unlimited Adventures* should not be compared to state of the art role-playing games, but to other adventure construction kits. After all, Origin has not yet released an *Ultima Underworld* adventure construction kit, nor are they likely to. Placed in its proper weight-class, then, *Unlimited Adventures* is easily the best adventure construction kit available.

Unlimited Adventures allows the player to design and/or plan an essentially unlimited number of adventures. Adventures can be transferred between owners of the construction kit simply by transferring all the files in the adventure subdirectory. (A couple of tips: make sure the subdirectoty has ".dsn" for its suffix, i.e., "Raven.dsn." Also, make sure the subdirectory contains its own "save" subdirectory.)

Design School

The process of designing an adventure is not quick or easy. It is simple enough to construct a single dungeon with monsters and treasure, but construction of a full-fledged adventure with an actual plot is



complicated and time consuming. Anyone considering buying *Unlimited Adventures* to construct adventures should be sure they have the time and devotion required. On the other hand, it requires no special devotion to use it to play adventures created by other amateur designers.

Each adventure can include up to four wilderness modules and up to 36 dungeon modules. However, depending upon how one links the dungeons together, two or more dungeon modules can be combined to form a single larger dungeon, or one dungeon module can be used for two or more smaller dungeons. Moreover, the term "dungeon" is too restrictive. In *Unlimited Adventures*, "dungeons" can be cities, caves, towns, towers, castles, woods, deserts or swamps, depending on the artwork and events selected.

Creating a wilderness module is fairly simple. Each designer can use one of the five default maps included or he can create his own map. From the point of view of the computer, however, the appearance of the map is irrelevant. It may look like a castle on the map, but unless the designer has placed the appropriate events on the map, no castle exists. In fact, the game will play just as well with a blank map, with a picture of a bird, or with any other artwork that fits on the screen. Each wilderness map square is designated as passable or impassable. The designer can place up to 100 events on the passable squares, including, of necessity, transfer events allowing the characters to enter the various dungeon modules.

Dungeon modules are significantly more complicated and more interesting to design. *Unlimited Adventures* provides a very handy dungeon module editor which allows the designer to select the dungeon's backdrop (essentially, the floor and ceiling types) and to place individual walls, doors, openings, locked doors and secret doors. A limited variety of wall types are available, including stone, brick and coral, as well as some outdoor types such as trees and bushes. Unlike much of the other artwork, the walls and back drops cannot be replaced with the designer's own art work. Only the

TITLE	Unlimited Adventures
PRICE	$59.95
SYSTEM	IBM, Macintosh (Reviewed on IBM)
REQUIREMENTS	IBM — VGA graphics, 6MB hard drive space Mac — B&W, 1MB RAM, Color, 2MB RAM
PROTECTION	Word look up in manual
DESIGNERS	Jason Linhart & MicroMagic, Inc.
PUBLISHER	SSI Alameda, CA (408) 737-6800

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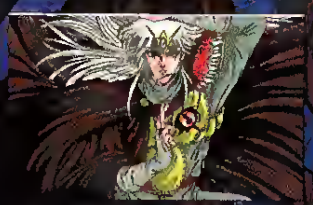

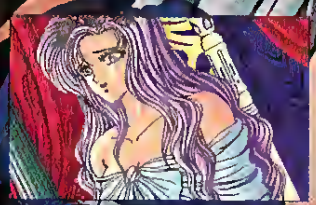

System requirements: 286-20 or faster machine (386 recommended) with 640K RAM, hard disk, mouse recommended. Operating Sys.: MS DOS 3.3 or above, Windows 3.1. Graphics compatible with VGA. Sound support: Sound Blaster, Sound Blaster Pro, Thunder Board, Pro Audio Spectrum, Adlib Gold and Speed Master.

R This game is not for the faint-hearted. Contains violence and some material inappropriate for minors under 18

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att work provided with *Unlimited Adventures* can be used. As a result, the dungeons tend to look similar. (If you've seen five dungeons, you've seen them all.) Whatever individual flavor a dungeon might have must arise out of the events placed in that dungeon, not its appearance.

Each module, wilderness or dungeon, can include up to 100 events. "Event" is a term in *Unlimited Adventures* which refets to all of the possible ways the game can interact with the characters. There are a total of 35 different event types including the basic Combat, Give Treasure, or Text Statement and more complicated events, such as the confusing but critical Quest Stage. Even the simplest events, like the text statement event, allow the designer to specify the conditions under which the event will occur. Thus, for example, there can be a text event that will occur only if there is a thief in the party. Events can also be linked together to form complicated branching sequences. For example, a group of ogres could ask the party (via the Question - Yes/No event) if they want to undertake a dangerous mission. If the patty answers "No," the ogres could attack (via the Combat event). If they say "Yes," a text event could describe the mission. Each of these events can be linked to additional events so long as the 100-events-per-module limit is not exceeded.

Unlimited Adventures comes with a library of 127 default monsters and non-player characters (NPCs). All of these beings can be edited. Changes can be minor (such as increasing an otc's hit points by one) or major (renaming the monster and changing each and every characteristic, power and ability—in effect, creating a new monster). The default monsters can be restored with one click of the mouse.

Included is an extensive att gallery containing five wilderness maps, eight big pictures (covering the upper half of the screen), 127 combat icons, and 38 sprites (pictures used to show monsters approaching the party.) *Unlimited Adventures* allows the designer to replace any of these graphics with his own art work. However, this art must be created according to certain exacting specifications in either the .PCX or .LBM format. Essentially, if you are not a

capable artist with a compatible art program, don't even bother to try. (*Unlimited Adventures* specifically supports Electronic Arts' *Deluxe Paint II* and ZSoft's *PC Paintbrush*). Unfortunately, to protect TSR's copyright, *Unlimited Adventures* does not allow the designer to edit or change the artwotk included in the product.

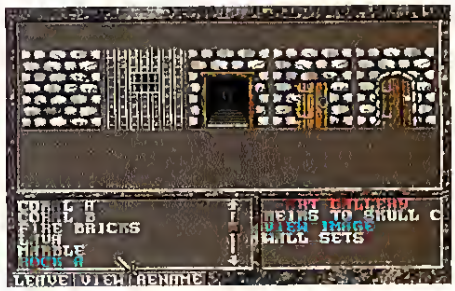
A Game's Got to Know Its Limitations

Unlimited Adventures also does not allow the designer to create or edit magic items ot magic spells. This limitation arises in patt out of TSR's desire to protect the "integrity" of its game, but it also arises out of the way the program works. Each monster, magic item and spell is assigned a specific slot in the game. Changing a monstet is no big deal because that change will affect only the current adventure. On the other hand, because characters can be transferred between adventutes, a modified spell or magic item could be quite confusing, if not program crashing.

The most glaring problem with *Unlimited Adventures* is its 128-page manual (or "Designer's Journal"). This would appear to provide adequate room to fully explain all of *Unlimited Adventures*' features, but appeatances can be deceiving. Fifty-six of its pages are devoted to game tules ptimarily directed toward a player of the *Heirs to Skull Crag* adventure included in the product. *Skull Crag* is nothing special as an adventute, except insofar as it serves as a sample of how to construct one. Admittedly, nearly all of these tules are helpful, if not necessary, to the designer of an adventure, but the significant information could and should have been presented in a more condensed form. For example, the Journal devotes 15 pages to descriptions of monsters and non-player characters. These descriptions are so limited and vague as to be totally useless to an adventure designer. Besides, the monster editor allows all of this information to be changed. These 15 pages could have been used to explain some of the more complicated adventute construction features. In particular, the tutorial should have been expanded to include an explanation of the confusing Quest Stage event. When properly used, this event allows the designer to create a sequence of evenrs that rhe character must encounter in the proper order. Each adventure can include up to 44 different quests, each with up to 100 steps. However, the use of the Quest Stage event is faitly complicated and confusing, and the manual is of no help in explaining the process. The omission of any explanation ftom the otherwise excellent tutorial is unforgivable.

To some extent, the problems with the manual have been cured by the inclusion of a massive text file with version 1.1. This document explains each and every option for nearly every major game feature. The document also acknowledges and explains the bugs found in version 1.0.

With the inclusion of the expanded documentation and the bug fixes in version 1.1, *Unlimited Adventures* has atoned for many of its sins and emerges as one of the best game creation tools available. However, again, players should know that they are buying a product that will require a



huge investment of theit energy. Constructing a good, interesting adventure with *Unlimited Adventures* will take many, many hours of work, much of it spent at a desk with pencil and paper planning event sequences and drawing maps. Most roleplayers will probably want to leave the lahor to the professionals and immerse themselves in pre-created worlds. Still, for the tare breed who likes play that more resembles work, *Unlimited Adventures* provides unlimited job opportunities. **CGW**

Update Information

As of June 11, the most recent version of *Unlimited Adventures* for the IBM is Version 1.1. This version includes the text file containing the "Designer's Guide Supplement - A Technical Manual for Adventure Design." SSI will exchange version 1.1 disks for version 1.0 disks. Version 1.1 and the text file ate also available on **America On-Line**, **CompuServe**, and GEnie, as well as other majot netwotks. Also available are numetous adventutes designed by other users, as well as original art work created for use with the product.

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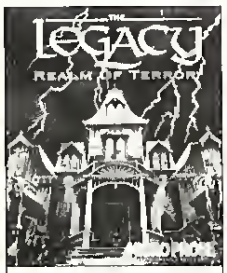

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Scenery Design	28	-
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Jump Jet	34	-
Jump Jet "Ace Pack"	38	-
KGB	22	-
M1 Tank Platoon	29	-
MacArthur's War	32	-
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Patriot	43	-

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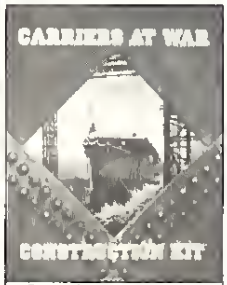

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El-Fish	37	-
Empire Deluxe	37	-
Eric The Unready	37	-
Facetris III	17	17
Flight Sim 4.0	40	39
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Global Conquest	39	-
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Hong Kong Mahjong Pro	31	-
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Monopoly	28	-
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Perfect General	38	-
WWII Scenario Disk	22	-
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Perfect General Enhanced	8/93	-
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Populous	16	-
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Powermonger	31	-
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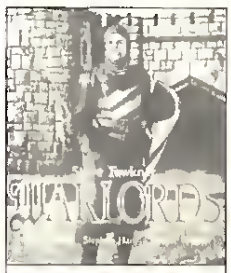
Bill Elliot - Nascar	32	32
Car and Driver	37	-



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Earl Weaver Baseball II	16	-
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Front Pg. Sports: Baseball	3/93	-
Front Pg. Sports: Bsktball	'93	-
Games: Summer Challenge	35	-
Games: Winter Challenge	35	-
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Indy 500	16	-
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Mauna Kea Crse. Disk	19	-
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NCAA College Football '92	37	-
NFL Challenge	56	-
NFL Video Pro Football	47	-
PGA Tour Golf	19	37
PGA Tourn. Crse. Disk	15	15
PGA Tour Golf (Windows)	37	-
PGA Tourn. Crse. Disk	15	-
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Pro League Baseball	37	-
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Wilson Pro Golf	27	-
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A-10 Tank Killer	10
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Aces of the Pacific	10
B-17 Flying Fortress	10
C. Yeager Air Combat	10
F-15 Strike Eagle II	10
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Falcon 3.0/3.0.1	10
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Secret Weapons Luftwaffe	10

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Willy Beamish	42	-
Wing Commander + Secret Missions 1 & 2	47	-
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Wolfpack	3/93	-

Scorpia Lurks In The *Shadow of the Comet*

Ah, we've almost teached the end of summet. As usual, Fted is off this month to the Dark Room of Colossal Cave fot the annual grues convention. He always looks forward to this little vacation. Speaking of vacations, I've heard of a nice, picturesque village in New England where you can spend a quiet few days. Quiet by my standards, that is.

Shadow of the Comet is a neat little adventure in the Lovecraft tradition. This is, so to speak, the "real stuff," since the game box displays the imprint of Chaosium, the folks who publish the *Call of Cthulhu* role-playing game. Not that *Comet* is a CRPG; it's strictly a traditional adventure, however, the settings and situations will be familiar to any Lovecraft fan.

So, here you are, Dr. John T. Parker, British astronomer, visiting the New England fishing village of Illsmouth in 1910. Halley's Comet is making its Earth fly-by in three days, but that's not the only reason you're in town. During the comet's last pass in 1834, Lord Boleskine, another Brit, went insane while making a few celestial observations from the vicinity of Illsmouth. He left behind some cryptic notes (don't they always?), and you're in town to find out just what happened.

Illsmouth is a small place, which is just as well since the automap doesn't work quite the way the manual says. Only those buildings already shaded in can be moved to automatically; no matter how many times you go to the others, they won't be named on the map, and you can't go to them directly. After taking a look around yout temporary lodgings and reading everything you can, a stroll through town is in order. The town hall is a good place to pick up some info, especially if you can get on Juggs' good side. Come back here later for a better chance to snoop atound.

Some places (mostly people's homes) you'll never be able to get into, but it's wise to know just where everything is anyway. And it's such a nice day, how about a walk in the woods? The automap doesn't work hete (it's just for the town), but while a little confusing, you can't really get lost. Remember to pick up everything you can during your constitutional.

Back in Illsmouth, be sure to catch the Gypsies' act before Baggs (the local police) runs them out of town. Nice guy, Baggs. Well, so much for that. With all the information you've picked up by now, it's time to get some stuff out of the steamer trunk and go to work on it. The important thing is to mark the right spot on the (other) map you have, because that's where Boleskine went last time. It isn't hard, especially if you *search* carefully.

You've had a busy day; how about relaxing in the local tavern with a cold one? Ya might even meet some of the locals there, but I'd be careful about whose invitation I accepted. Crash! The window breaks. Sounds like a fight outside. Let's go see what's up. Hmmm, two-to-one odds, and the kid is taking a pounding. Definitely not sporting. Of course you're going to help him (preferably with a sturdy weapon in hand!). How else are you gonna find someone to guide you through the forest?

After you pick up yout camera it will be night (time of day changes by action rather than actual passage of time, which is handy). Too bad Webster chickens out and leaves you in the woods. No matter, you can get to the spot yourself and take the pictutes.

Follow the kitry and you'll find another spot not quite so congenial. Do we hear the words "Cthulhu" and "R'lyeh" among others? UH-OH. You're in trouble now, Dr. Parket. RUUUUNNNNN!!!

Whew! That was close. A rather debilitating experience though, as the doctor tells you when you wake in the motning. Go directly to the pharmacy. Anywhere else and you'll drop dead in your tracks (not the best ending for the game). Besides, you want to develop those plates, right?

This can be tricky, but it's really simple. You only need the fitst two from the shelf and the fitst two from the table (they operate in pairs as developer and fixative). Ah, they came out nicely. First one's good. Second one's good. Third one…oops! Thump!

Pity the plate broke when you fainted. Then again, maybe it's better that way. Now that you've recoveted, perhaps you should have a talk with Juggs about all this. Hmmm. He's not at work. Is he home? Why is that robed figure leaving the house, and why is the door locked? Better keep an eye on this one.

How convenient of him to leave the key. Inside, be sure to find all three statues. When you get to the living room, keep in mind that some things can be replaced with others, while some things need to be put back where they came from.

Voila! A secret door opens, and in the next room is Juggs. No, he isn't dead, yet. He has some final instructions for you before he passes on, poor fellow. Yes, you do have to tead the (shudder) Necronomicon, but put it right back when you're done!

Getting out of here safely is the next prioriry. Be *very* careful how you walk through town and do *not* use your automap. In some directions, you'll run into Baggs, and that will be the end of it for you (and maybe the world).

Once you've made it safely to your rooms, you don't have to wotry about Baggs for a while. Read the message, then pay a visit to Underhouse, who has even mote things to tell you (few of them cheery).

So let's think about getting into the Mayor's safe. First, you'll need

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a bible (because the number you're thinking of is *not* the right one; some things would be just a trifle too obvious, eh?). Know anyone in town who might have this book? With a little *quid pro quo*, you could get your hands on it. Then, you have to deal with the city clerk.

Manipulating the conversation correctly will get you upstairs (such a nice view up there). The safe is pretty obvious, and you don't have that many numbers to try, but fool around too much and you'll be caught.

Wow, there sure is a lot of nastiness under the surface of this small town. And guess who's been elected to clean it up? Heh! So you better get a move on—to the lighthouse, perhaps? Of course, the guards aren't going to let you through and will kill you if you persist. But they aren't very bright, and you might be able to fool them (you *did* look over everything you got from the safe, right?). However, they won't stay fooled forever. Once you get to the top, look around carefully and act quickly; you don't have much time. There are a couple of things to pick up here, and then you'd better take off.

When you get back from the forest, it will be night time, the perfect time to visit the cemetery. Someone around town has the key. Brrr. Sure is a spooky place, and it won't get better. Stroll around and see what you can find. Then, it's down into the crypts.

You may want to map as you go along for future reference. In some of the rooms are bats, rats or spiders. These must be avoided, as there is no way to kill them. In other rooms grates block your passage. Getting them open is part of the fun. (Hint: keep an eye on the floors in those critter rooms.)

Two grates open only when a series of floor plates have been lit up. Each set of plates has its own pattern, and a little careful experimenting is all you need here. And be careful; some rooms have pits in the center.

So, you've reached old Jonas at last. Don't just stand there listening to him blather! Time is short, so grab what you can and get moving. This is where the map you made is helpful. When you have Dagon on your tail, you don't want to be running into any dead (very dead) ends.

That was a little too close for comfort! It's been a busy night, and will get busier. The time has come to wipe out the evil cultists once and for all. Since tactical nukes aren't available, you'll have to depend on what you already have and the info you've picked up on how to use it. (Re-read your journal if your memory needs refreshing.)

The first three are not too hard, but the fourth will take some doing, as you have to get into the ruined house. This requires a distraction (here, kitty) and some tricky maneuvering (and running!).

Once you're inside the old place, be careful. Death traps are everywhere. Just keep in mind that whatever you need is always somewhere close by (and save often, just in case!). In particular, there is a book to read, and you may want to make your own notes as, for some reason, the info is not recorded in the journal.

At the top, things look pretty grim for our hero, but don't despair. Remember, second time does it. Then get out of there as fast as you can, because the place is on fire. Yes indeed, it has been a busy night (and Illsmouth is rapidly becoming depopulated, heh).

Next morning, Baggs has a few questions for you about last night's events. Guess someone noticed all the goings-on. Underhouse can help if you say the right thing. Once Baggs is gone, you'll learn about some interesting items in Curtis' shed.

Odd how the place is locked up, but with the right items you can break in. Poor Curtis. There's no time to mourn him, however. Search for the items you came for, then head to the forest. Finding the right spot to use the feather can be a drag, but keep at it and it will work somewhere.

After the Q&A session with the Indian (note: Underhouse is incorrect; the Howler is not Nyarlathotep), it's time to take out the cult leader. This isn't too difficult. Just don't pick up any nitro (boom!). And that puddle in the dark room is there for a purpose.

This day passed fast, and it's night again. Now comes the strangest part of the game: convincing Bishop to lend you his boat. The conversation path to this is not very logical, so after the first couple of exchanges (start with "looking for you"), don't go for the obvious.

When you arrive at the island, look around first, then check out the sliding block puzzle. It's not as bad as it looks; only four moves are needed to solve it and open up the cave. (Hint: start with column 3.) Inside, you only have to use two gems. Be careful where you stand and what you use (this is what save games are for!).

Now, it's time for the final trip to the second cave. The lamp will stay on the second time you use it (odd, but that's how it is). This cave is full of nasty critters that shamble back and forth. You just have to move carefully and avoid getting too close to any of them. It may take some doing, but it can be done.

In the third room are some old friends in dire straits. Helping them is pretty easy (how much unused stuff is left in your inventory?). Interestingly, this somehow gets rid of all the critters, too, so you can walk safely through the caves to the second exit that brings you right up to the perfect spot for those pics of the comet (remember the comet?).

Keep that book from the old house in mind, though. You *must* know which four stones are the proper ones, so do the light act before you take pictures of the comet. And right after the comet zips by...yes friends, here he is, Mr. Y. Sothoth in person!

There is no time to waste here; the ritual has to be completed quickly. Four items should be used on the stones. Properly done, the incantation follows automatically; improperly done...well, let's not think about that.

Okay! Yog Sothoth has been dispelled! The world has been saved (for now). Dr. Parker can go home and astound scientists everywhere! (In his place, though, I think I'd keep quiet about all this. Who's really gonna believe it?)

Whew! That was a nerve-wracking one. While you rest up from your exertions, remember if you need help with an adventure game you can reach me in the following ways:

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

On GEnie: Visit the Games RoundTable (rype: Scorpia to reach the Games RT).

By US Mail (enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you live in the United States): Scorpia, PO Box 338, Gracie Station, New York, NY 10028.

Until next time, happy adventuring! CGW

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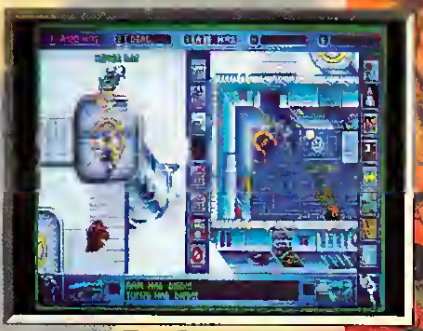

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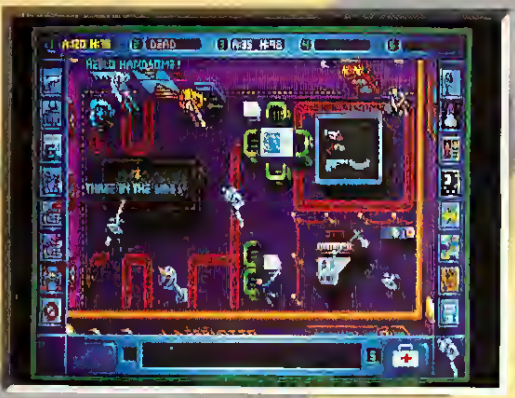

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Conquistadors In Space

Sierra Weighs Anchor With Coktel Vision's *Inca*

by Chuck Miller

In 1532, the ill equipped army of Francisco Pizarro undertook the conquest of Peru. With only 170-200 conquistadors, he successfully defeated tens of thousands of Incan warriors under the leadership of Atahualpa, emperor of the Tawantinsuyu empire, a kingdom that extended from Chile to the equator. How this feeble Spanish force was able to accomplish such a monumental, though ruthless task forms the basis of the story behind *Inca*, Sierra's latest import from their "French connection," Coktel Vision.

So, Where's Your Cadillac, El Dorado?

Inca transports the player back in time to the year 1525. Here one finds Huayna Capac, Atahualpa's father, the one Inca aware of the impending arrival of the conquistadors. Assured that the powers of the Incas will never fall into the hands of these "bearded savages," he has hidden these powers away in a safe place to await the coming of the prophesied golden one, El Dorado, destined to appear 500 years hence. The goal of El Dorado, and the player, is to discover these powers and bring about the rebirth of the Inca empire. Of course, the player must face a powerful opponent in the process of fulfilling this prophecy—Aguirre, symbolizing the Spanish conquistadors, and constantly in search of wealth and material power.

Lost Wealth Of The Incas

Inca is a game tich in background, steeped in mystique, and yet, unfortunately, unable to fully deliver the goods. While I found the concept interesting and the story promising, the game failed to achieve its full potential. It repeatedly drew me into the story, mostly through the puzzle segments and dramatic scenes, and then dropped me abruptly, usually upon reaching the action portions of the game.

The problem, though difficult to define, is definitely not with *Inca*'s presentation, as it is a visual and audible treat. Where *Inca* failed to fulfill my expectations was in the general flow of the story. When it should have smoothly moved from one segment to the next, I found instead what I considered abrupt distractions. Many arcade portions of the game seemed "inserted" rather than blended into the storyline. As such, they detracted from play rather than adding to it. The "save codes" (discussed later) that appeared after critical points in the game also disrupted the suspension of disbelief.

As a result, *Inca* comes across as a loosely strung together series of action sequences, mazes and puzzles, resulting in the appearance of a collection of games rather than a single title. Yes, the story does emerge, but mostly *between* segments of play.

Pen And *Inca*

As indicated, *Inca*'s presentation is solid. Its graphics are of obvious quality, as witnessed by the fact that it was awarded Best Graphics at the Supetgames Show Paris, 1992. Images, rendered in 256-color VGA, are tich and mood enhancing. Video captured actors are fluid and lifelike in their movements on screen, demonstrating some of the best video rotoscoping I have seen to date. Yet, as good as the graphics are, and with as much space consumed on one's hard drive as *Inca* requites (a full 17 MB), there seemed to be a notable lack of variety in imagery. Many of the same animations and scenes are used repeatedly during the course of the game, especially in the space combat segments. It would seem that the great majority of the system real estate tequited is for *Inca*'s soundtracks and digitized audio effects.

Inca Dinka Do

Music and sound effects in *Inca* ate sterling, easily making them the most outstanding part of the game. If one area towers above the others in this title, it is that of audio accompaniment.

INCA

TITLE	Inca
PRICE	$59.95
SYSTEM	IBM
REQUIREMENTS	386-20MHz or better, VGA graphics, 17MB hard drive space, mouse
PROTECTION	None
DEVELOPER	Coktel Vision
PUBLISHER	Sierra On-Line Coarsegold, CA (800) SIERRA-5

Just listening to the game during the first few minutes of play will justify the volume of space it requires on one's system.

Actually, I am probably biased as I have been a fan of new-age music for some time now. Thus, *Inca*'s exceptional new-age, jazz-style soundtrack, created using authentic Inca instruments (pan pipes and drums), provided me with some real listening pleasure. In fact, the music is so popular overseas that many radio stations in Europe are playing selections from *Inca* as part of their regular playlist.

The only negative factor I detected with the game's audio was that it was not always in sync with the graphics, especially when characters were talking. The audio track often ended before the accompanying text finished being displayed.

Familiar Faces

Inca's interface is well-designed, even if inadequately explained in the documentation, and employs full mouse control with no typing required. If preferred, a joystick may also be used. However, I found control with the mouse more accurate.

One's inventory is manipulated in a fashion similar to that of Sierra's in-house products, accessed by moving the pointer to the top of the screen. This, however, is the only interface similarity. Setting game options is by hotkey, except when one returns to the main control room between "quests." Here one can begin the next quest, receive instruction from Huayna Capac, check out the "Encyclopedia Incanica" (an on-line reference work explaining the Inca terminology employed), play with the pan pipes (sort of an Incan xylophone), and access the game's soundtracks by means of cueing up an on-screen "tape player."

The save game provision in *Inca* is, in my estimation, very poor. One can only "save" their progress at certain points. This is accomplished by means of a "save code" comprised of eight random numbers provided by the game. As such, each installation of *Inca* will result in a different set of codes. So, if one starts playing *Inca* on one computer, and then installs it on another, the previous codes will be invalid.

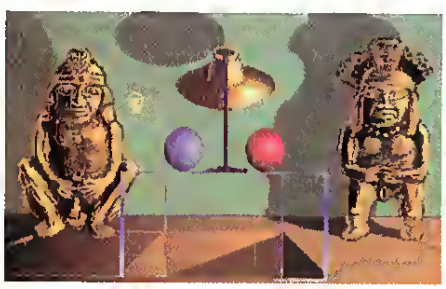
Gallons Of Galleons

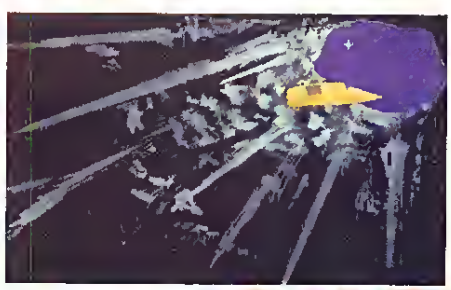
Game play is comprised of puzzles, mazes and action sequences. Puzzles are primarily of the logic and object manipulation variety. For example, using one object on another (such as a key on a locked cabinet) will achieve the desired results.

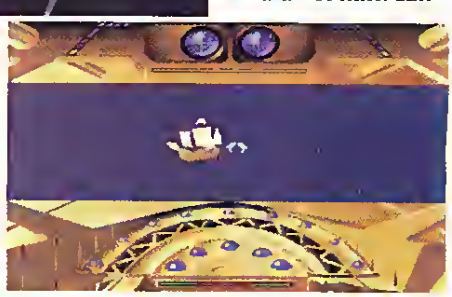
Fortunately, the mazes employed in *Inca* are made bearable through a built-in automapping feature. Just hit the right mouse button and a map will appear, indicating all the locations already visited and each doorway encountered.

Action sequences also play an important role in *Inca*, comprised of two varieties: space combat and ground combat. The space combat sequences place the player in a Tumi Fighter with several weapons at his or her disposal. In ground combat, the player has only a single energy weapon, with all action occurring in the game's mazes.

With a few exceptions, I found *Inca* of average difficulty. Only two puzzles and one arcade sequence were cause for any head stratching.







Does *Inca* Stinka?

Not necessarily, depending on one's gaming experience and preferences. While *Inca* is an interesting title, there is not enough substance to satisfy the seasoned gamer (who can expect to derive about eight to twelve hours of play—not much considering its retail price). The story line is weakly implemented, and there is insufficient reward for successfully completing the game (more a sense of relief mingled with some disappointment). *Inca* is not a dismally boring game by any means, yet it is not all that exciting either.

I do admire the respect and appreciation paid to the ancient Incas in this title. It was handled well, increasing the player's awareness of this people's unique heritage and, as mentioned several times before, the soundtrack is superb (I went around for most of the day humming its enchanting music). Still, these factors do not outweigh the inherent weaknesses. In spite of its excellent presentation and strong concept, I really did not find myself challenged by *Inca*, or sufficiently caught up in its story.

To whom then will *Inca* appeal? Action aficionados will most likely be disappointed with the low level of skill required in the game. On the other hand, the puzzles are also only of modest difficulty. What this amounts to is a game that will not strongly appeal to either action gamers or adventurers. Its main audience will most likely be gaming neophytes: those who are new to computer games or are only casual players.

So, while there are those who have really enjoyed *Inca* (it does offer a modest degree of gaming pleasure), for most I would recommend investing one's dollars elsewhere, possibly in one of Sierra's other, more satisfying adventures. And, while at it, make sure to get a copy of the *Inca* soundtrack on music CD (available from Sierra for just $12.99, plus tax, shipping and handling). It offers a listening experience one should not miss. **CGW**

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MISSION CONTROL

Circle Reader Service #76

HOT LAPS AT A COOL SCHOOL

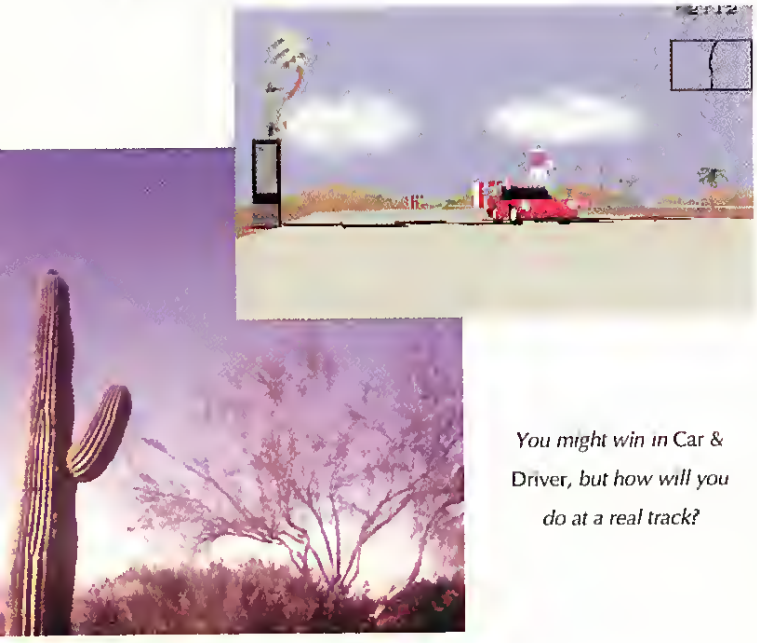
by Ken Brown

Bob Bondurant's 1.6 mile track can be combined with the Firebird International Raceway (at right) to form a 2.6 mile course.

It's not everyday that computer game magazine editors get to drive hot laps at high-performance dtiving schools. You may recall in our April issue that Electronic Arts sponsored a contest to promote its *Car & Driver* simulation, with the winner flying all-expenses-paid to the Bob Bondurant School of High Performance Dtiving in Phoenix. Waltet Nikolic from Atlanta, Ga., was chosen at tandom ftom over 225 entries. So he locked The Club on his Mouse Wheel and flew to Pheonix for a drivet's ed course in hyperspeed.

Our Man On Two Wheels Visits The Bondurant School of High Performance Driving

The game's producer, Paul Gtace, thought about a *Car & Driver* player unleashed at a petformance driving school in a 5.0 liter Mustang, and decided he'd better go just in case. EA's Fiona Murphy, emphasizing the impottance of accident avoidance in public relations, sought to improve her skills as well.



You might win in Car & Driver, but how will you do at a real track?

Meanwhile *CGW* publisher Russell Sipe agreed to take the trip, and made the easy mistake of choosing me for the story since I have automotive magazine expetience and gtew up next to the Quaket State. But, alas, after working for such magazines as *Popular Hot Rodding* and *Off-Road*, I still relegate common maintenance items, like testing the engine's PH balance and setting the radio presets, to the service ptos at Stop-N-Go.

I soon learned that the people at Bondurant know their cars—as well they should, after being in the business for 25 years. The school began in Orange County, Calif., moved nearby to Ontatio Motor Speedway, then settled for a long period at Sears Point International Raceway near San Francisco. As the school grew, Bondurant needed more track time than Sears Point allowed. So he "packed up all his cars, and he moved to AZ." Arizona, that is. Swimmin' pools. Rodeo stars. Cacti.

To stock the new facility, Ford *gave* Bondurant all the vehicles he'd need. The tunning total is now around 130, including 65 5.0 litet Mustangs, an assortment of Taurus SHOs, SHO-powered Sables, Ptobe Turbo GTs, T-bitds, and Crown Victotia police cars (for law enfotcement ttaining). Ford provides the vehicles in exchange for Bondurant's product testing and endorsement. Other sponsors include Goodyear Tires, Simpson Safety Equipment, Koni shocks, Ronal wheels, Recaro seats and Texaco fuel.

The Car & Driver contest, co-sponsored by EA and CGW, brought one lucky reader to Bondurant's school.

Finally, Bondurant has 30 100-hp rear-engined Formula Fotds to teach all you Nigel Mansell wannabes how to carve a track. The open-wheeled racets have just 1600cc engines, but a much better power-to-weight ratio than street-legal cars. A three-day course including track time in these hornets goes for $1895, less during the summet "off season" when the oven is on in Arizona.

Alas, the one-day high-performance driving course doesn't allow ttack time. Still, we did take some hot laps with Instructor Chad Biggerstaff in a full-size Ford van. "It's important to drive through

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the corners in the straightest possible line," he announced, approaching a left sweeper from the outside of the track. "Brake into the cornet to load the front end, then accelerate from the apex to achieve max exit speed." We were suddenly mashed into the right side of the van as Biggerstaff rocketed out of the corner. He proceeded to give us an IMSA-style demo with running commentary, few of us actually comprehending as he careened around the track.

Before we could climb into our own machines, we had to spend a little time in "ground school." These sessions covet the basics of proper driver posture, understeer, overtsteer, braking and acceleration, etc. All of the theoty and techniques mentioned in the classroom would soon be put to use on the course.

Our first exercise was in a 225-hp SHO-powered Mercury Sable. The Throttle Steer Exercise was simple: crank the wheel to make a tight circle, then acceletate. As the car's speed increased, the radius grew; decelerating, it quickly returned to the original tight circle, demonstrating that turning radius can be conttolled by varying speed.

Exercise two was on the slalom course. Eight cones are set up at 40 feet intervals to teach handling techniques. Biggerstaff demonstrated the ease of inducing catsickness by weaving through the cones at 35 mph. The point of the slalom was to teach proper "balancing" techniques of a moving automobile. If the car is never allowed to "settle" on all four tires, the resulting imbalance becomes uncontrollable by the end of the slalom. Drivers can steer through cones faster and with greater control by allowing the car to "settle" for a brief moment before steering into the next turn.

After leatning the technique, it was no problem running the course in my Probe GT at 35 mph. It was more difficult at 40, but I still managed not to nail any cones.

For our next course we traded in out cars for a Tempo "Skid Car" equipped with outrigget wheels. The hydtaulically-actuated training wheels enable the car's front or rear end to be raised, inducing understeer or oversteet when cornering. We drove in ovals, each student having the opportuniry to recover from a setious rear-wheel skid. By steering in the direction that the car is skidding, and looking where you want to go, the vehicle can be recovered and driven out of the spin. The technique is easy to mastet, but will cost you some tread if you don't have a skid car or a snow-covered parking lot.

Front-end tecovery is a little less enjoyable, because steeting conttol is lost and the car always seems destined for a row of barriers. To recover, simply brake to load the ftont end which regains steering control. Nobody punched any of the plastic barriers on the skid pad, but we did have fun doing doughnuts and 360s for a while.

After lunch, we teturned to ground school to discuss cornering, then headed out to our next course. The staff had set up cones with two straightaways, an increasing radius cornet and a normal half-circle cornet. As the instructors dtove the course, they demonstrated where to accelerate, begin braking, increase braking, turn in, trail off steering and accelerate out of the corners.

We hopped in our own machines and descended on the track. We were soon accelerating to high speeds on the straightaways, then braking before enteting the corner, maintaining a line through the apex, and accelerating out to the outside of the ttack. Faster drivers began catching other cars in the sttaights, necessitating a brief "pit stop" to let them play through before rejoining the race. The sound of Indy cars started roaring in my head.

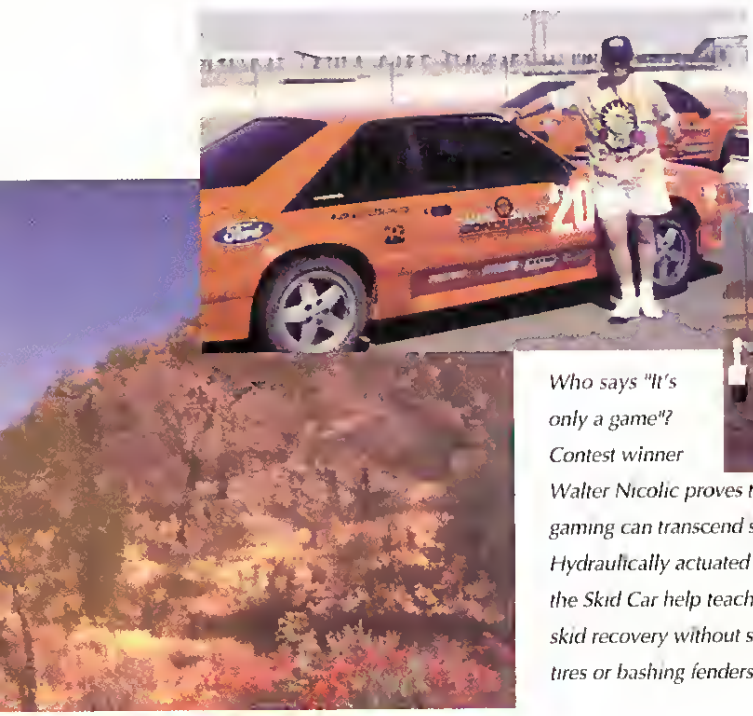
Meanwhile, the instructors waved dtivers into the pits to join them fot petsonal instruction. Rather than congratulating me for my superb racing instincts and signing me up for a Can-Am team, my instructor advised me to delay turning into the tight apex corner for a few seconds so I could accelerate thtough a shallower arc on exit. It worked beautifully. It's a trick I continue to use through my housing complex to shave precious seconds off my commute.

We then headed over to the accident avoidance course (no, not a figure 8). One lane branches into thtee with a traffic signal overhead. As your car approaches within 80 feet of the signals, two of them change from green to red. You must avoid the red lanes where an accident just occurred or a lady with a strollet just stepped into the road. The exercise is an excellent test of response times, but more importantly, shows that avoiding an accident is easier than braking for it. At 35-40mph, we couldn't stop before the "accident." But, if sharp, we could steer around it in time.

Finally, we got a chance to do some teal performance driving on the autocross course. This is about a quatter mile course designed to challenge a driver's cornering, braking and acceleration skills. There are a number of curved segments, corners and a slalom to wend through, before driving the course again and stopping at a designated point. We were timed by the instructors to compete fot fastest speed. I hiked up my Nomex underwear, set my jaw and revved up to the starting grid, visions of victory-circle girls and tose wreaths dancing in my head.

I thought my first time was the new world's record, but, incredibly, my time improved with each pass. I was able to beat all the drivers except one by a wide margin of several hundredths of a second. One driver, though, consistently turned in the best track times. And that man is Paul Grace, wicked nemesis of aspiring racers and suspected demonic collaborator. My only explanation was that if this man could produce a game as excellent as *Car & Driver*, as well as *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat*, *Seal Team* and the upcoming *Seawolf*, he could hack my car to slow it down. One day he'll eat my dust, but as Khan said, "revenge is a dish best served cold."

Aside ftom being a sore loser, I came away from the course having learned some important lessons. You can *avoid* an accident faster than stopping for it. You can control a car in a skid. You can corner through a yellow light at 30 mph. And, despite 100-degree weather, Bob Bondurant runs a very cool school. CGW



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SEE CGW 1

Circle Reader Service #42

Letters from Paradise

Now, It's In Your Lap

I just received my July issue, and wanted to express my continued appteciation for your efforts to put out a better and better product. I am faitly new to the "Gaming" world of the 1990's, but sute think it's improved since my last "go-round" back in the early 80's.

I have a few questions and comments which I would appreciate you responding to:

1) I made the sad mistake of putting about $3400 into a great Texas Instruments notebook (486 DX/25 MHz with 4 MEG RAM) and a MAG 15 monitor. I thought at the time that I would be able to get a joystick and external sound card, and all would be well. I thought I could use the notebook for both entertainment and business. It hasn't worked out that way. I then ordered an expansion station from Axonix, and attempted to configute a Creative Labs multimedia bundle with the hatdware. Thete were of course complications (let's just say it didn't work too well, plus the longest cable Axonix recommends using with theit expansion station to the notebook is about 12 inches—not very comfortable). Forget about getting Creative Labs tech support to help. I waited about a week befote I spoke to anyone, and then when they called they told me I had five minutes to work it out. I am now in the process of trying to sell my notebook. Know anybody that would be intetested? Know any way to sell it other than the newspaper?

Question #1: Any other ideas to salvage my notebook so I can play flight sim games, etc. with full sound and CD-ROM capability?

Question #2: Could you please tell me, in your opinion, what would be the current "486" desktop dteam machine for playing computer games—(not a manufacturer, although I'll take that information—I mean the specifications - i.e., motherboard, VESA?, ISA?, EISA?, Cache, RAM, VESA Local Bus?, Hard Drive, CD-ROM & Sound Card, Graphics Card, Monitor, Keyboard, Joystick, etc.). Also, what about a memory manager? (Another mind-blowing hassle.)

Unfortunately, my experience has been using about 75% of my time dealing with hatdware and software problems, and 25% of my time actually playing games. I'm at the point where I really want to just play the games or give up the hobby before I get more aggravated then what it's worth... I'm not looking for any more hardware problems.

Question #3: Is "3DO" the answer to my quest for pure entertainment? I have stooped as low, in my desperation, as buying a Super Nintendo and MicroProse's *Super Strike Eagle*. While it's better than nothing, it's a poor substitution for the real thing. Will "3DO" be just a hyped up *Super Nintendo*, or will it allow me to play the games the way they were meant to be played in their original IBM versions? *Falcon 3.0, Strike Eagle*, etc.?

Question #4: What in your opinion, would you say is the most enjoyable flight simulation game (combat) that you have played?

Question #5: Would using "OS/2" as the operating system make it any easier to play games without the memory management hassles or would there be other problems to contend with?

Please help.

Daniel Barr
Palm Beach Gardens, FL

Well, we're not sure we have all the answers for you, but we'll sure give it a try. In answer to Question #1, we might suggest the following. Genovation offers a joystick adapter for laptops (Genovation, Inc. 17741 Mitchell, North, Irvine, CA 92714) and Mediavision offers a sound device that plugs into one of the ports in the notebook (Mediavision 3185 Laurelview Court, Fremont, CA 94538).

As for Question #2, here are our suggestions:
486 66MHz DX/2 motherboard (VESA Local Bus) EISA
256K Cache RAM on motherboard
AMI BIOS (upgradable with disk)
8-16 Megabytes of 70ns or faster RAM
VESA compatible Local bus Video card with S3 (or other co-processor).
250 megabyte and up, SCSI 2 Hard Drive.
SCSI 2 host adapter with cache memory.
MPC Level 2 CD-ROM.
SoundBlaster 16 ASP w/ Roland Sound Canvas SC-7 module.
Full Thrustmaster Mark II WCS/FCS and Rudder pedals.
20" and up CAD monitor

Use of a local movie theater with THX or digital sound to jack into and play games in (well, you said "dream machine" didn't you?).

Actually, the above may change when Pentium rigs and Power PCs are more widespread. As for memory managers, we just tested 386MAX version 7.0 and got 628K of free lower memory. We were initially quite impressed, but need to test it with more games.

Question #3 asked about 3DO. It is really too early to answer your question. There are lots of developers lined up behind 3DO and it has a lot of potential. It still isn't clear how games will be saved on the machine or how many expansion peripherals will be manufactured to support the base machine. We're still watching with great interest.

If you want to talk flight simulators (Question #4), most of us still opt for Red Baron. *Not only is the Dynamix game still a satisfying gaming experience, but it even works on the 386 Notebook our editors take on business trips!)*

With regard to Question #5, we don't really know about OS/2. We have not had an opportunity to test it with games. We suspect that memory intense games like Strike Commander *would have complications under OS/2, but we are not sure. Maybe some of our other readers can enlighten us.*

Time(liness) Sometimes Pays

If only computer games were as promptly produced and as bug ftee as *CGW*! You must get paid a fortune!

T. Madden
St. Louis, MO

We have forwarded your letter to our publisher and picked up brochures on Pentium-based computers and vacation homes in Jamaica, pending his response to your suggestion.

The Sci-Fi Panel

I'd like to see an issue dedicated to sci-fi games: what's presently out there, what's worthwhile and what's to come.

Damien Kupper
Anaheim, CA

CGW #100 *had an annotated list of the science fiction strategy games that were available at that time. Back issues, including #100, are*

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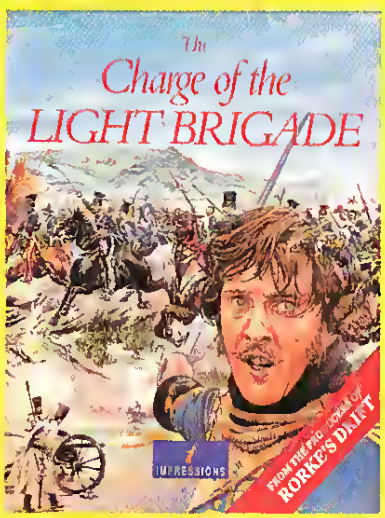

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SEE CGW 2

available for $4.60 each (including shipping and handling). We do hope to take another look at far future games in the near future, but have not currently scheduled the section.

Lowest Common Denominator

Regarding the editorial in issue 108, I feel that computet games have already teached the lowest common denominator. Why computer games aren't like TV, however, is because the LCD computer gamet has more intelligence and education than the LCD TV audience. As "intetactive" media and cheaper, easier-to-use computers become more prevalent, these LCD numbers may very well converge.

Glen Cox
Fott Collins, CO

The curious question about this convergence is whether the 500 channels which are regularly predicted by media pundits will offer more variety (because the delivery system of entertainment on demand will allow the information/entertainment providers to monitor the success of individual games/programs more precisely) or less variety. Will the diffusing of interests between 500 channels allow for narrowcasting where special interests are better served or will information providers simply seek out big numbers as in the broadcast model. We hope that the new media will follow the narrowcast model and allow for a wider variety of interactive programming.

If the new world of interactive media follows the broadcast model, we are liable to end up with arcade-style "shooters" (running, jumping, die-a-lot games) that are not suited to the response times of interactive television, interactive movies (that are very likely to be bad movies with artificial choices) or hack 'n slash CRPGs that may use special effects gore to offset their lack of interesting story. With the narrowcast approach, there might be a chance to see truly interesting stories with characters played by real people interwoven into the interactive experience. There might be opportunities for fantasy sports leagues where franchise owners get video replays of what "their" players did the night before. There could be electronic villages (cyburbs) where people interact in video in much the same way computer users with modems can interact in on-line games on today's networks. Right now, it just isn't clear.

The Pornbroker

The article on page 99 of the June 1993 issue, entitled "Memory Management and System Configutation for MS-DOS Games," is accompanied by a still scene from a pornographic film. Besides the fact that I find this personally offensive, it is totally unnecessary to the message of the text, juvenile and extremely sexist. It is obvious that some of your writers and editorial staff do not think that women may be readers (and purchasers) of this magazine.

If your publication intends to continue this practice, I would very much like to know, so that I may stop buying them and start a boycott. I am very much a believer in freedom of speech and freedom of the press. However, I am not a believer in the suppression and exploitation of any group of people, and *women* are people. If I wanted to view pornogtaphy, I would have bought a pornographic magazine.

Tina Schumann
Seattle, WA

First, let us be very clear that the screen was from a computer game and not from a pornographic movie. Second, the scene was supposed to be ironic in that the women involved were supposed to look like they were interested in sexual frolic but were really after Les' knowledge of extended and expanded memory. So, in actuality, the scene was spoofing a sexist position as opposed to exploiting it. Third, the CGW *editors and writers do* think *women are people. We have several female writers to this magazine and our art director is a woman. We aren't exactly a bastion of sexism at* CGW*, but if we ever decide to change the format and start distributing exclusively to small stores with lots of video booths, we'll let you know.*

Who's The Boss?

In the reviews of games, there should be some kind of grade ot point scale established. This way, I would be able to tell if the reviewer would really tecommend the game. Sometimes, it is hatd to tead what their overall opinion of the game is.

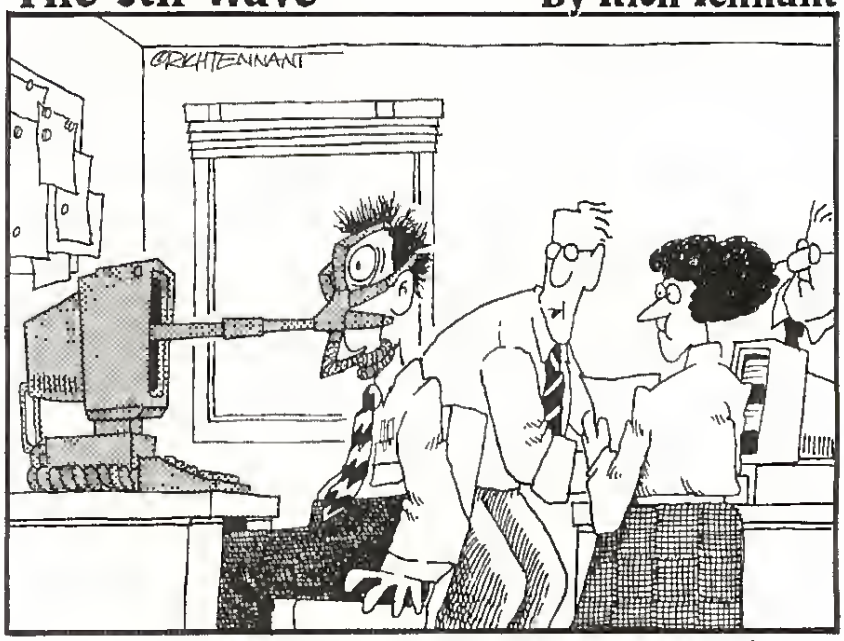
Bryan Wiley
Wichita, KS

The magazine is great, but I wish you could give some kind of score or grade at the end of the reviews for each game you review. It is sometimes hard to read through your writer's babble.

Brandon Valeriano
La Mitada

Maybe you need a babble fish? Actually, that's Babel fish (named after the infamous tower in Genesis). Anyway, there are several good reasons why we choose not to let our reviewers use point systems. First and foremost, we respect our readers too much to do so. The job of a reviewer is to critically appraise a game with enough detail and color to allow the reader to decide if that game is for him/her. The reviewer should not be a gaming demigod who decides whether the reader should buy that game or not. Reviewing is enlightening opinion and numerical evaluations tend to cast that opinion into stone. Second, we value the ratings given by our readers. Hence, the treatment of the Top 100. We would not want to be in a position of putting our reviewers' opinions over the wider sampling of opinion. Third, the use of numerical evaluations tends to discourage reading the reviews themselves. Since we try to take great care in writing these reviews, we certainly don't want to undercut ourselves by providing an incentive for readers to skip the prose. In short, we don't think our readers really need to be told what to think. We just try to provide plenty of substance for them to cogitate upon. That, it seems, is the task of good writing. CGW

The 5th Wave **By Rich Tennant**



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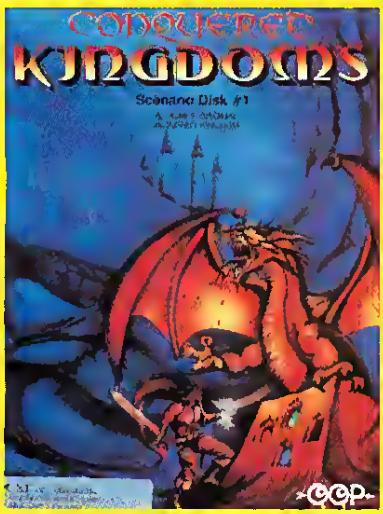

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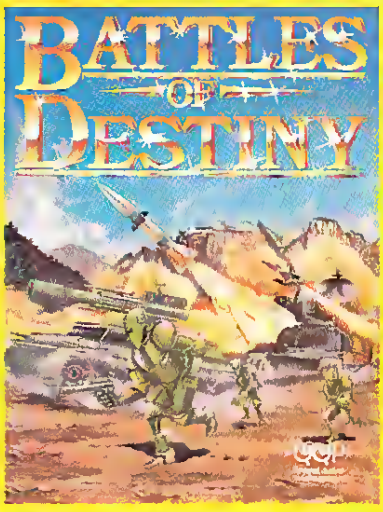

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Best Of The Rest

Applying A Little Strategy

by Chuck Miller

Games of strategy take numerous forms, from full-blown wargames to simple coffeetable games. One thing they all have in common is that they put one's mind to the test, forcing the player's gears of logic into motion. Since strategy is the focus of this issue, our efforts in this column will be devoted to examining three strategic shatewate offerings: *STELCON 2469*, *Search & Destroy 2.4* and *Scorched Earth 1.2*. Each game has a military theme, though the implementation is significantly varied. So, with gears churning...

A Game Of Stellar Proportions

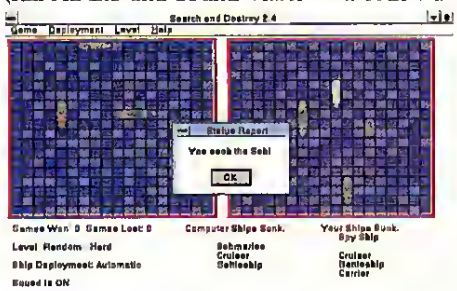
Those who enjoy diversions focusing on stellar exploration and conquest will find *STELCON 2469*, a space sttategy/wargame from Siliconis, much to their liking. In *STELCON*, one assumes the role of the omnipotent emperor of a small but loyal planetary sociery seeking to extend the reach of his authotity across the far teaches of the galaxy (similar to the commercial titles *Star Command* and *Stellar Crusade*). As such, the player's mission is to expand the reaches of his or her power through the development of new technology and the conquest of neighboring star systems. Propetly managed, one's forces will gain the victot's lautel by the complete eradication of all opposing forces in the galaxy.

Currently at version 1.7.1, *STELCON* offets the watgamer a gaggle of featutes. Graphics are provided in 256-color VGA and, while not *quite* state-of-the-art, provide an attractive playing environment. The intetface—employing a combination of mouse, menu and keyboard interaction—is intuitive and relatively user friendly.

The greatest development effotts have been invested, approptiately, in the mechanics of the system. Though easy to learn, *STELCON* itself is very complex, with support ptovided for five players, either computet or human, and with a selection of three levels of computer difficulty. In addition, six classes of ships are available to would-be galactic emperors, offering design improvement with the escalation of technology. Documentation, while cleatly presented, is quite extensive and bears careful reading prior to play.

While the game does have some weaknesses, the greatest single drawback in the current version of *STELCON* is its complete lack of audio suppott. Though space is a telatively "quiet" place, this does not ttanslate well into exciting play (full Ad Lib and Sound Blaster suppott is ptomised for future versions).

Requirements for *STELCON* are modest. An MS-DOS compatible machine is necessary, 286 or better, with 640K RAM, VGA/MCGA graphics, 128K XMS RAM, and a mouse. Shateware registration is $20.00 (US funds), required after 20 days of use. With registration, the player will receive the latest version of *STELCON* and notification of future releases. All correspondence should be directed to: Siliconis, c/o Vu Truong, PO Box 146, Canoga Patk, CA 91305.



Search & Destroy

Those desiring extended hours of space wargaming will not be disappointed with *STELCON*. It offers this in a sufficient dose. However, if one prefers more brief mental challenges, the following titles offer a much more appropriate fare.

Hey! You Sunk My...

If one's military gaming is limited to activities more akin to floating ships in the bathtub, *Search & Destroy Version 2.1* will be more to one's liking. Primarily a *Battleship* clone, *Search & Destroy* offers the familiar "gtids" where the player and his computet opponent place their fleet of five vessels, then attempt to locate and destroy each othet's ships without radar. Like the boardgame equivalent, *Search & Destroy* tequires little time to master. Finding and destroying the enemy before being destroyed oneself, however, is a different and more difficult matter.

STELCON

Search & Destroy offers the playet a fair amount of configurabiliry. Since its otiginal release, multiple levels of computer firing logic have been added, as has automatic and repeat ship deployment. Several levels of play are provided, including those that take into account the size of the remaining ships on the board. Sound support is user configurable, offering ttaditional sounds for explosions and the like, plus digitized "win" and "lose" sound files, along with the option of employing one's own digitized effects. Level of play and sound options are stoted each session, negating the need to reset them each time play is resumed.

In all, *Search & Destroy* is a competent digital version of the classic *Battleship* boardgame. For a minimal $10.00 registration fee, it is a teal bargain no self-respecting "bathtub admiral" should ignore. To registet *Search & Destroy*, send a check or money order in US funds to: Randy Baron, 200 East 89th Street Apt. 25-A, New York, NY 10128. Upon receipt of the registration fee, the player will be mailed a code number (that disables the shareware reminder) and will be entitled to receive the next version of the game by mail. Please include the version numbet (listed in the "About Box") when registering.

Tanks For The Memories

Anothet "less demanding" strategic title, and my favorite of this ttio, is *Scorched Earth*. A modern version of one of the oldest computet games around, *Scorched Earth* is a simple, yet addictive title. The goal is a very basic one: destroy the enemy tank(s) before being destroyed. There is no hassle of ttoop and vehicle deployment, just the simplicity of aiming and firing.

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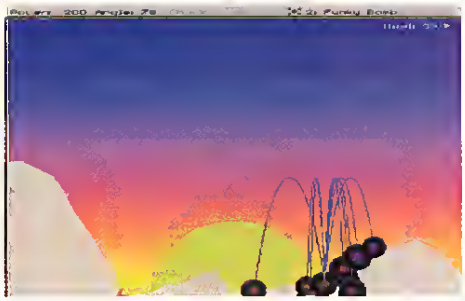
One can jump right into *Scorched Earth* without taking time to read the rather extensive documentation (some 63 pages worth!). It is a simple game to get the hang of playing. However, to gain the fullest amount of enjoyment, one should at least skim the provided material, as there are manifold features hidden within *Scorched Earth* that make the game easier and more fun to play.



Scorched Earth

To dive right into *Scorched Earth*, one simply needs to run it. (If SVGA graphics are available on one's system, by all means select that mode—these higher resolution graphics are quite good.) Play begins with the random generation of the current level, creating the terrain and determining the location of the player's tank and that of the enemy (up to 10 players are supported). Number of opponents, the skill level of each computer player, type of terrain, sound effects, graphic resolution, and a myriad of other options can be selected by the player, with the ability to save one's settings for future sessions. This is definitely the most configurable version of this game I have come across and, I would add, the most playable and addictive.

Each game is comprised of ten rounds against one's opponent(s). A winning round provides the victor with a victory purse which may be immediately invested in improved weapons, or accumulated for more substantial purchases later. During play, one's main concern is destroying the enemy as quickly as possible, knocking out his tank before the player's tank can be targeted and destroyed. Success demands accurate adjustment of angle and power of fire, and compensation for wind velocity and intervening objects. A correct determination greets the player with the colorful, fractal-graphic destruction of an opponent's vehicle.

Overall, *Scorched Earth*, is a bargain for its modest $10.00 registration fee, providing the player with his or her password (deluxe registration is available only in the US at $20.00, offering the player the most recent version of the game and a complete loose-leaf copy of the manual. Please specify disk size). A Spanish version is also available for the same price.

So, if you want a chance to scorch the enemy in an enjoyable game, register *Scorched Earth* with Wendell Hicken, 59 Esperanza Apt. M, Sierra Madre, CA 91024. Please send payment in US funds only.

That's it for this installment. Games reviewed in this column are available through numerous distributors of shareware and public domain software, as well as on many national and private on-line services. If you do not have access to these services, you can usually write or call the game developer for an evaluation copy. And remember, if you find a shareware program enjoyable, please register it with the author. Until the next time, great gaming!

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If you have authored a shareware or public domain game for MS-DOS compatible, Macintosh or Amiga computers and would like to have it considered for review in this column, please send two complete copies (preferably on 3.5" disks) with documentation and a cover letter to:

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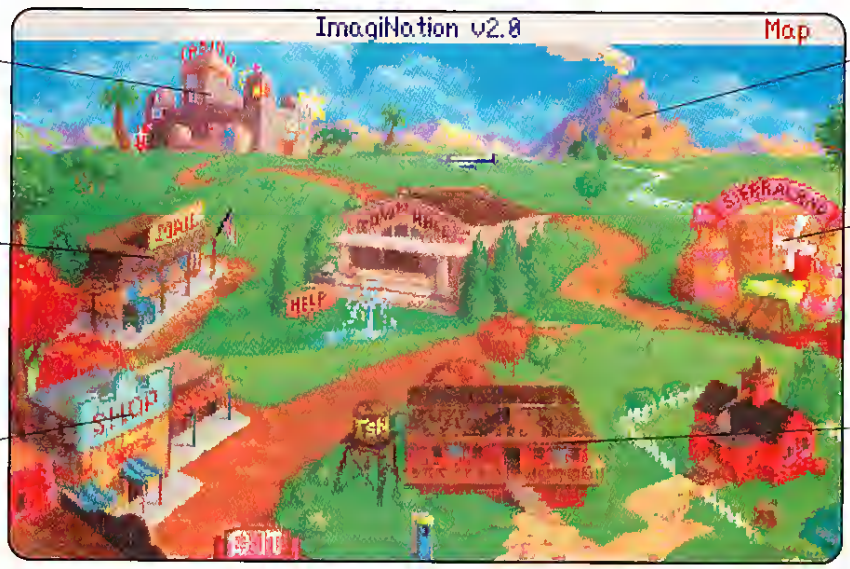

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(Continued from page 47)

the entire game. These players should have no problem with *Tentacle.*

The handful of other complaints that were leveled against *Maniac Mansion*, whether by players or critics, are clearly inapplicable to *Tentacle.* Every scene in *Tentacle* has a score and almost every action is accompanied by some sort of sound effect. The animation is smooth and plentiful, and though the characters' outlines are still slightly jagged, they are as minimally jagged as current VGA technology permits. The command interface has

been refined down to the now-standard nine verbs (Give, Talk To, Push, Open, etc.) and hot-spots in the graphic window highlight suitable verbs for ease of selection. None of the objects with which one interacts are so small that it is hard to see them, and the game's demand for precise cursor placement is extremely lenient.

The professional voice actors chosen for the various characters are all up to the challenge and, without exception, add to the game. The celebrity of the bunch is Richard Sandets (Les Nesman of "WKRP in Cincinnati") who teads Bernard's lines in the nebbish ttemolo for which he is known. Jane Jacobs plays Laverne with suitable pathos, and Denny Delk's Hoagie sounds like a distillation of every brain-dead metalhead we've ever seen in movies and sitcoms. Unfortunately, I cannot say who provided the test of the fine voices, because the only credit LucasArts gives is Richard Sanders as Bernard. (I had to hunt thtough a promotional newsletter that came with the game to get even the other two names.) LucasArts did the same thing in the CD-ROM edition of *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis*: they ctedited Doug Lee as Indy and left everyone else anonymous. This practice shortchanges both the actors and the audience, and should be ended.

Day-O!

In the past, when I have said that a game resembles a cartoon, I have meant it in a pejorative sense. I have teserved this comment fot games that resemble the sorts of cartoons no one ever watches, no one loves, and no one will remember a genetation down the road. So, when I wrote that a given game resembled a cartoon, I meant more that it resembled "Thundatt the Barbarian" and "Blackstar" rather than the classic animation of old.

Day of the Tentacle is like a cartoon in the positive sense, howevet.The cartoons it resembles ate the immottals: the Looney Tunes gems ftom the 40's and 50's. It isn't quite as anarchically zany, and the chatacters don't sacrifice everything fot a laugh, but if it were (and if they did) it would not be as good a game.

LucasArts plays the ttadeoffs well. *Day of the Tentacle* is extremely funny without being unplayable, logical without sacrificing the

marvelous illogic of cartoondom, and challenging without losing its sense of whimsy. It may not hold up for 50 years, like the cartoons that inspired it, but I expect that this game will keep entettaining people for quite some time to come. CGW

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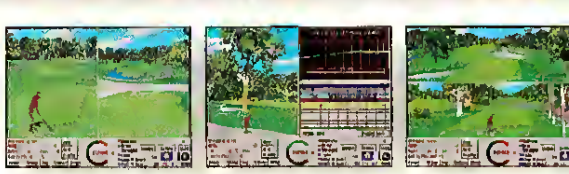

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Gaming On The ROM

In reviewing Trilobyte's *The 7th Guest*, we observed three new development concerns faced by CD-ROM publishers: "pressed" media, increased system demands, and added hardware compatibility requirements. While it is not our intention to downplay a developer's responsibility to thoroughly test their products, we believe the reader should at least be aware of the increased difficulties encountered with developing for this medium.

"Pressing," mastering a program on disc, is similar to that of mastering audio CDs. While a traditional disk-based game can be copied onto a limited number of floppy disks quite readily for beta-test distribution, transferring a large CD-ROM title to disc is more complicated and costly. CD-based games are developed on systems employing massive hard drives—gigabytes in size—in order to deal with the required volume of data. Thus, until committed to disc, a CD title can only receive limited testing (on systems possessing massive storage). When a product is ready to be pressed for testing on its intended media, a limited run of CDs is produced. At this stage, the game is tested on multiple systems for initial bug stomping. The process is repeated until, ideally, a finished bug-free product is ready for final mastering. Thus, the beta process is more difficult, lengthy and costly to implement successfully.

Increased system demands refers to the ever increasing need for more processing power and RAM as a result of the increased amount of graphic and audio data that must be "moved" from disk to screen. This matter poses a serious question to developers—that of the *minimum* requirements for a title. Set the minimum too low, and the product suffers; too high, and the number of gamers able to play it is severely limited.

Added hardware compatibility requirements must also be considered. Some CD-ROM drives require proprietary controller cards, while others are more generic in their needs. Many sound cards now employ integrated CD-ROM interfaces. Furthermore, new "standards" are constantly being established. Thus, testing a product under every conceivable hardware configuration is a daunting, often impossible task.

Clearly, we have only scratched the surface of what CD-ROM development entails in added concerns. Yet, just possessing a basic understanding of what's involved in producing a CD title can go far in aiding one's understanding of the delays and problems associated with developing for this media.

This article was originally scheduled to run with the review of *The 7th Guest* in Issue 109. In the meantime, however, we have been able (with the help of MediaVision and Trilobyte) to resolve the DMA conflicts experienced with certain Pro AudioSpectrum 16 (PAS16) sound cards. For most PAS16 owners, the solution may be as simple as changing the DMA channel employed. The PAS16 defaults to DMA #5 on installation. In order to work properly with *Guest*, the installation software for the PAS16 should be run again, selecting DMA #3 instead. If this does not correct the problem, contact MediaVision technical support to determine if you have a properly functioning card. There have been problems with some PAS16s prior to the current revision #04 boards.

Following this "sound" advice should enable those with PAS16 cards to fully enjoy Trilobyte's hauntingly entertaining puzzler. *Guest* provides a must see (and hear) experience for the CD-ROM gamer. It is definitely worth the effort to make one's visit to Stauf's Mansion as pleasant a one as possible. CGW

by the game itself.

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As It Was Foretold...

Coktel Vision's *The Prophecy*

by Allen L. Greenberg

Phil is setting out on a quest—so is Al. On Phil's quest rests the heart, blood and destiny of all humanity—Al's quest too. Along Phil's quest lie the foulest and most unspeakable horrors waiting to corrupt his soul and consign it to the most loathsome of fates in the deepest pits of hell—Al's quest likewise. Should Phil succeed in his quest, he will be proclaimed the mightiest of heroes. All of humanity, together with celestial chotuses of heaven, will sing his praise, just like Al.

Yet, Phil's quest is better! Why? Because, Phil acts in fulfillment of a *prophecy*, while Al merely acts. Thou, noble adventurer, may also fulfill a prophecy. Don't be like Al! Prophecies are available from thy local holy petson, magician or sctibe. Prophecies—don't begin thy quest without one....

Prophecies are, of course, a common plot device found in fantasy entertainment of all ages. This seems odd; a hero's actions should appear no more courageous simply because someone once predicted them. Indeed, those actions, once predicted, may even seem mechanical rather than heroic. Unfortunately, such is the case with Sierra/Coktel Vision's *The Prophecy*, an adventure game in which the hero must mechanically solve a series of elaborate puzzles in order to reach the conclusion.

The hero of this particular quest is Ween. His mystical grandfather, Ohkram, has charged him with the defense of the Kingdom of the Blue Rocks against the evil sorcerer Kraal. Hidden deep within various levels of a sacred temple are three special grains of sand. By slowly gaining entrance to each level and facing various dangers within, Ween must recover the grains of sand and deposit them in a special hourglass, referred to as the Revuss. Why should the temple, the sand, or the hourglass so affect Kraal or the Blue Rock Kingdom? Someone put it in a prophecy, so it must be true.

The Prophecy has the feel of a giant lock. Piece by piece, the player manipulates small sections of the lock until a door finally swings open like an old puzzle box. Endless jewelry, keys, statuettes and other key objects wait behind concealed panels, themselves only accessible after the right objects have been properly manipulated, or ancient buttons have been properly pressed. For those who enjoy abstract puzzles given physical form, *The Prophecy* will prove a real joy. Increasing this sense of adventuring within a box, at only one point during the adventure does Ween venture outside, after which he promptly finds himself back inside to face another series of cryptic devices which form the game's finale.

While the various devices are clearly *The Prophecy*'s main attraction, Ween does enjoy the company of several other characters. Two prune-faced, dance-happy twins volunteer to carry Ween's luggage, which they handle somewhat less than dependably. A wise friend named Petroy is an expert in obscure languages. Perhaps the most charismatic character in the game is Urm, a domesticated vampire bat whose appetite for fruit long ago replaced his lust for blood. There is also a temple guardian suffering from a magically induced case of senility, as well as the mysterious Opale who appears to Ween in occasional visions. A copper ball becomes Ween's mute companion, which is capable of transforming into several useful objects provided the hero is able to locate the items necessary for it to do so. Players will spend quite a bit of time transforming this ball from one implement to another as they solve each puzzle.

The Prophecy also features some eye-popping visuals, along with nice sound effects and an interesting musical score. Indeed, several of the animations feature characters who are strikingly life-like yet almost too bizarre to be human. While the same animated sequences are repeated a little too often throughout the story, there is no denying the technical wizardry with which they were constructed. Most of the program contains still paintings which are rich in both color and detail. Unfortunately, function is often sacrificed to form, as these graphics must be searched pixel-by-pixel in order to find objects which are vital to the hero's success.

The game uses a mouse-driven interface identical to the one in Coktel Visions' *Goblins* series. It is not uncommon, however, for an object to be so well-hidden that it may only be found by a careful, systematic seatch. The system handles object manipulation well until it becomes necessary to use one object in conjunction with anothet, in which case it becomes somewhat awkward. In many cases, a command involving two objects may not be accepted at all if the objects are not named in the proper order.

As was foretold many paragraphs ago, *The Prophecy* has no shortage of mind-taxing puzzles for those who enjoy such exercises. Others, who have come to enjoy adventure games for their stories, humor and dialogue, along with a dash of tole-playing, will probably find little of interest here. Of course, one can always wait until the game is complete to decide. Hindsight has always been the most accurate prophetic tool of all.

CGW

THE PROPHECY

TITLE:	The Prophecy
PRICE:	$59.95
SYSTEM:	IBM
REQUIREMENTS:	286-10MHz, VGA graphics
PROTECTION:	None
DEVELOPER:	Coktel Vision
PUBLISHER:	Sierra On-line Coarsegold, CA (800)SIERRA-5

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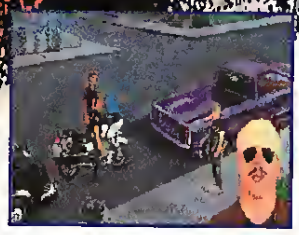

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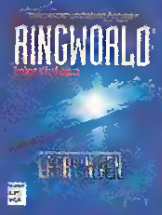

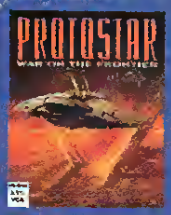

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20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE CD

Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis

by Charles Ardai

Harrison Ford's voice is not an easy one to imitate. It is one of LucasArts' many accomplishments in the CD-ROM edition of *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis* that Doug Lee, who reads Indy's lines, is a true Harrison Ford sound-alike. Throughout the game, Indy sounds the way Indy ought to sound, as do Marcus Brody ("Good Lord, Indy! He's some sort of agent from the Third Reich!") and all the other characters. LucasArts obviously put a lot of care into casting its voice actors, and it shows. Unlike many recent CD-ROM upgrades, which have been embarrassing and amateurish, *Atlantis* has the stamp of quality all over it.

To be fair, *Atlantis* was a first-rate game even before this new edition (B.C.D., as it were). The addition of more than 8,000 lines of spoken dialogue, plus plenty of digitized sound effects, only makes it more so. However, the upgrade is much more than just an incremental improvement. It adds a whole new dimension to the game—like taking a silent film and turning it into a talkie.

Just how significant an improvement this is can be seen especially clearly in scenes that contain extended exposition or dialogue. There is a big difference between reading five or six screens full of text at Sophia Hapgood's slide presentation on Atlantis and hearing Sophia make her speech out loud. There is a huge difference between reading Indy and Sophia's banter as it pops on and off the screen and hearing them sling the same insults back and forth at the top of their simulated lungs.

Another advanrage of spoken text: characters who seemed flat in the original game really come to life when animated aurally, as well as visually. The man in the red fez at the market in Algers, who only evoked chuckles when mute, now gets real laughs. Sternhart, the unctuous archaeologist in Tikal, is more menacing now that one can hear his loaded intonations. Even the game's various Nazis, who sound like extras from vintage war movies, are more substantial now that they are able to bark out a comment or two before Indy flattens them.

Playing *Atlantis* on CD spoils a player, not just for playing the non-CD version, but for any "silent" game. It's hard to go back to reading text off a monitor after experiencing a game like this.

More than five years ago, I asked Douglas (*Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*) Adams where he thought the next major advance in computer game technology would take place, and while everyone else was talking abour virtual reality and artificial intelligence he chose sound, saying that improved sound would be relatively easy to achieve and would improve game quality immeasurably. As it turns out, he was absolutely right.

Sound is not the only dimension in which the CD-ROM edition introduces improvements. It also takes steps to eliminate some of the more annoying features of the original game, such as the tiresome copy protection scheme (unnecessary here, obviously). A few sentences of dialogue have been added to the by-now-infamous "How many fingers am I holding up behind my back?" puzzle to help players realize that there is no solution for them to find. Even the game box has been reduced in size, for which LucasArts gets my thanks. (I am tired of seeing companies use boxes the size of two hardcover books to hold only a CD and a few sheets of paper.)

In all other regards, both good and bad, the game is the same as it ever was. Indy's mission is still to locate the Lost City of Atlantis before the Nazis get there and harness the energy of the Atlantean mineral, orichalcum. He has to get there by way of Monte Carlo, Crete, and Iceland; by camel, hot air balloon, and submarine; and on the way he has to tangle with centuries-old deathtraps, find a copy of *The Lost Dialogue of Plato*, and steal a few kisses from his traveling companion, Sophia.

There are still three separate plot paths which diverge about a third of the way through the game, offering the player a choice among puzzles that emphasize teamwork, independent resourcefulness and action. Alas, the three paths still overlap with each other sufficiently that one does get tired of replaying the same scenes again and again, even with the slight variations between paths. There are also more mazes in the game than there ought to be, as well as too many "hunt the pixel" puzzles in which the player has to find and click on objects that are roughly a single pixel in size.

However, changing these elements would have required radical revisions in the game. Short of making such revisions, LucasArts has done an impeccable job. Except for its unfortunate tendency to stutter and spit when the CD-ROM drive has to search for data in mid-sentence, the new soundtrack functions without a hitch, and the other pieces of the game (graphics, puzzles, dialogue) are all quite strong.

It is worth noting that the CD the game comes on contains demos of two games that look even better, in terms of graphics, sound, and so forth: *Day of the Tentacle* and *Sam and Max Hit the Road*. *Atlantis* also ends with the promise of another Indy game coming soon. So, the next Indiana Jones game will probably put this one to shame.

No matter. *Atlantis CD* is still a game to ooh and aah over—and for CD-owning Indy fans who are suffering the DTs due to ABC's cancellation of *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*, it is a must-see. **CGW**

TITLE	Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis
PRICE	$69.95
SYSTEM	IBM
REQUIREMENTS	386SX, CD-ROM, 50K per saved game, SoundBlaster or compatible for voice
PROTECTION	None
DESIGNER	Hal Barwood
PUBLISHER	LucasArts Games, San Rafael, CA

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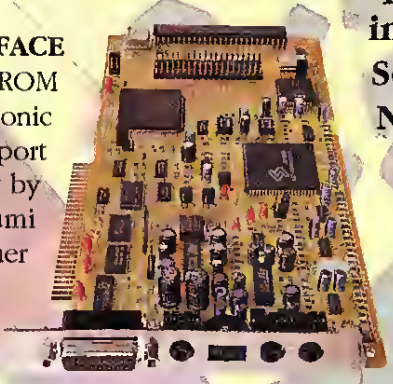

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Take The Princeling Challenge

MicroProse Presents *Challenge of the Five Realms*

by Gordon Goble

In my book, three criteria must be met for a given pursuit to be considered truly *challenging*. Obviously, there must be an intrinsic and formidable level of difficulty present at all times. Secondly, it must burst forth with intrigue, as this builds a respect for the qualities of the quest in question. Finally, in a computer game, one would hope that the undertaking would be enjoyable.

Challenge of the Five Realms - Spellbound in the World of Nhagardia by MicroPlay/MicroProse succeeds in the former; that is, there are plenty of demanding quests and featsome foes to best. And though, at times, *Challenge* rates highly on the esteemed fun-o-meter, there are still sevetal elements of game design where *Challenge* is lacking, and this bodes ill for the entire quest. Speaking of the quest...

The King is dead. Long live the Lizard King. No, not the venerable, yet expired, Doors vocalist, but a profoundly more evil entity, that of Lord Grimnoth. This dude is one mean scaleface, and it is the player's mission to save the world from Grimnoth's serpentine hand of doom.

The *world* in question does not mean Earth, and the drama of *Challenge* unfolds on quite a different celestial body. Multi-dimensional Nhagardia is a place of myths and legends, of magic and monsters. Knights abound and damsels are distressed. Gnomes, elves, mermen and mermaids (make that merpeople), and winged folk are also rumored to exist, but in realms other than that of the centtal, human domain of Alonia.

Holding Alonia together during this petiod of time (roughly equivalent to Earth's Middle Ages) is King Clesedor. He is hailed by some and reviled by others, but he does his royal best. The game player is his son, the prince and heir to the thtone.

It is in *Challenge*'s opening animated inttoduction that good ol' "dad" is brutally evapotated by the slimy Grimnoth, opening a door to the adventutes that follow. Grimnoth wants the crown, and, with a vocal timbre not unlike that of Darth Vadar, gives the ptince 100 days to turn it over. If the young ptince does not comply, Grimnoth will envelop the land in a "plague of darkness."

A plague of darkness in Alonia is just about the worst thing that could happen. A land without nights, Alonia has bred residents who are literally scared to death of the dark. So, it's a matter of turn over the crown to the evil one; don't hand over the goods and witness the end of civilization; or find out what this guy's problem is, maybe waste him, and save everybody. Naturally, our gutsy prince opts for the latter.

Much of what the ptince can or cannot do throughout his mission will be decided in advance of gameplay via a character generation process. A "quick generation" will spawn one of several default princes, while a "manual generation" will permit the player to answer a number of moral and ethical questions so that the program can apply values and skills accordingly. Inevitably, the prince's disposition will lean in one of four directions, that of a magician, watrior, diplomat ot thief (and sometimes a little of each). This process is of utmost importance to the coming developments, as a magically wimpy prince won't be able to *spell* his name.

Generating a character is actually one of the more entertaining aspects of *Challenge*, in that the well-written questions are both insightful and pretty darn funny. This reviewer was once informed that my royal alter-ego's most redeeming qualities were drooling, belching and farting. Such accurate assessments were indeed a surprise — alas, it knew me too well.

Once the lad has been created and named to the gamer's liking (let's keep this part *clean*, people!), his visual likeness can be created. Several pte-designed potttaits are available, or one can be custom-composed with the aid of the *Challenge* Face Paint Ptogram (a miniature bitmapped drawing package included with the game).

As *Challenge* begins, the prince wanders cluelessly around his castle and awaits instruction. The gamer's view of the action is provided in an overhead blimp-style, and certainly doesn't offer anything new. The interface consists of a number of icons situated to the right of the main screen, with player photos appearing on the bottom.

As the prince begins his journey, he will obtain the obligatory various weaponry, components for sorcety, food, and the like. He will also meet up with many traveling companions, some of questionable merit. Thete is a limit of ten NPCs in the party at any one time, although a group of characters may take the part of just one NPC, giving the gamer a total party greatet than ten.

Of course, not everyone will: 1) offer a positive contribution, or 2) want to join the metry band of men (and women). Bad guys are plentiful and, though some may want to toast the prince thtough wizardry, others will choose more accepted fotms of battle. Once one enters the demesne of the "Combat Screen," the gamer is presented with a slow, arduous presentation of phased combat, illustrated by not only cumbersome but disjointed gtaphics where the odd arm may flail blindly into space, but no significant contact occurs. For most gamers, the alternative "Quick Combat" option may be the mode of choice, even though the computet will make some odd field-of-battle decisions. At least, the whole process isn't quite so drawn out in this mode (although "quick" it is not).

Worse yet, imagine the following scenario. The prince has discovered an impoverished, diseased and blind wisp of a woman with no magical ability whatsoever holed up in a dilapidated shack on the edge of town. Casting all moralities aside, he decides to kill her. As the combat screen is enteted, the following information flashes on the screen: "You are facing

TITLE	Challenge of the Five Realms
PRICE	$69.95
sYSTEM	IBM
REQUIREMENTS	386-12MHz, VGA graphics, 21 MB hard drive space
PROTECTION	Documentation look up
DESIGNERS	F.I. Lennon, Rick Hall, Marc Miller
PUBLISHER	MicroProse Software, Inc Hunt Valley, MD (800) 879 PLAY

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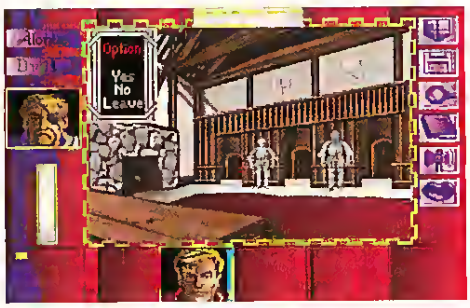
1 opponents, but their leader is more skilled at warfare than the ptince." To make matters wotse, the ensuing battle rages on for minutes before the prince squeaks out a marginal victory.

Complaint #1: Poorly worded generic messages such as this are unacceptable in 20MB worth of game. Complaint #2: There is simply no way that this physical wreck of a woman is "more skilled at warfare than the prince", and capable of putting up such a fight. That this scenario could happen at all made this reviewer think twice about *Challenge*'s quality control.



And it's a darn good thing our hero did win this battle, as a princely demise will often result in the gamer being boinked right out of the program and left staring at a black DOS screen. As *Challenge* comes equipped with copy protection, this prospect becomes even less appealing.

Triumphant he was, and as the prince continues along his way, it becomes obvious that one thing *Challenge* has going for it is a solid sense of humor. While quizzing a local drunk on his supposed knowledge of the other four realms of Nhagardia, our boy is told that, "There's a realm of squirrels, and a realm of naughty prostitutes," followed by the slurred threat, "Why if you weren't forty years younger than me, stronger than me, and certainly better with a weapon than me, I'd kick your royal arse from one end of Alonia to the other."

As in most CRPGs, travel from town to town is conducted through a "World Map," a sort of satellite view of the land, and a beautiful one at that. When in a town, a "zoom out" option is accessible, and although this eliminates the need for hand-sketching the city streets, the "zoom out" view is patently ugly and reminiscent of circa 1980 Colecovision.

Speaking of gamet assistance, *Challenge* offers a dated note-taking tool that will inevitably be ignored in favor of a pen and paper. The fact that the *Challenge* notebook is one of precious few elements in which the keyboard is employed at all is unfortunate as mouse mechanics leave something to be desired, and often the cursor is a tad out of sync. Keyboard shortcuts, too, would be a bit more expeditious during tedious segments.

Who to maim and kill, who to befriend...as we all know, decisions of this magnitude ate never easy in the real world, and aren't in *Challenge* either. New found acquaintances may well have complex personalities and can't be immediately labeled as "good" or "bad." This is a nice touch not present in all CRPGs, and character interactions must be invoked with caution ("truth" spells don't always solve the problem).

Once the prince has the tools, learns a few spells, and assembles a strong supporting cast, he will (hopefully) find that the rumors are true and begin exploring the existence of the other four realms. He will soon find that Alonia is not the only troubled region in Nhagardia, and that the resolution of conflict is a key to the solution of the puzzle. The fact that he has to do it all in 100 days will spell problems for some, but then that's the nature of the world-saving business, isn't it?

Challenge is not a simple affair, and the inherent good humor and complexity of characters do, fortunately, add to the interest. Sadly, though, one is left with a general impression that an adequate beta testing program was not conducted—there are simply too many oversights combined with a certain awkwardness to gameplay that shouldn't exist in a finalized version. **CGW**

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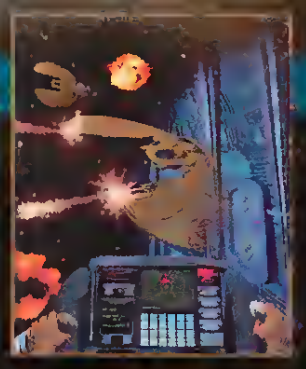

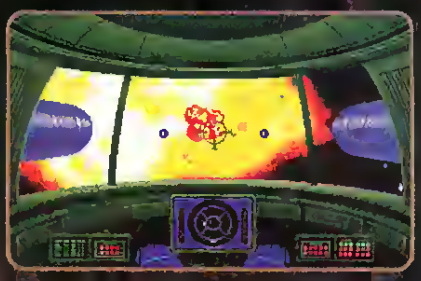

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MicroProse' Strategic Space Opera Is Rated XXXX!

A Revealing Sneak Preview

by Alan Emrich

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.

While standing at the greeting card rack at the local Hallmark store, we've probably all been suckered into opening a card that had the word "SEX!" on the cover, only to find the text on the inside reading, "Now that I have your attention..." Well, if you were attracted to this article by its title, you've fallen for it again. But now that I have your attention, let me tell you about a strategic space game under development that really delivers the best that galactic conquest has to offer.

MicroProse's forthcoming *Masters of Orion* (lovingly known by the development team as "*MOO*") is designed by newcomers Steve & Maria Barcia, and Ken Burd of Simtex Software. Although it is their first design effort, *MOO* has that crucial something that makes for a wonderfully addictive game, a quality which I call "gaming gravity." This means that, no matter how busy one is with other matters, it pulls a gamer's body into orbit around it and creates black holes where weekends used to be.

Quadruple-X?

I give *MOO* a XXXX rating because it features the essential four X's of any good strategic conquest game: EXplore, EXpand, EXploit and EXterminate. In other words, players must rise from humble beginnings, finding their way around the map while building up the largest, most efficient empire possible. Naturally, the other players will be trying to do the same, therefore their extermination becomes a paramount concern. A classic situation, indeed, and when the various parts are properly designed, other X's seem to follow. Words like EXcite, EXperiment and EXcuses (to one's significant others) must be added to a gamer's X-Rating list.

A Recipe For Cooking In Space

Masters of Orion combines many of the best elements of strategic space game classics like SSG's *Reach for the Stars* and Interstel's *Armada 2525*. Although the lead designer, Steve Barcia, stated he had never played these computer titles, his grafting of what are essentially the best elements of each of these strategic space games' designs is uncanny. Clearly, Barcia has put his finger squarely on the pulse of what makes for a great game of galactic conquest.

A player begins a game by defining the number of opponents (from 1-5 computer opponents *only*—there are no multi-human player provisions of any kind), the difficulty level (i.e., how many explorers and colony ships that one starts with, a la *Spaceward, Ho!*) and a star map size (ranging from small to humongous). Following that, one chooses from among the several different alien races in the game, each with their own unique ability (*see sidebar*).

After choosing a flag color, one can type in his or her leader's name and the name of the home world. It is also possible to further personalize the game by naming worlds colonized and ships designed throughout the game. Suddenly, one is managing their home world into prosperity, complete with on-line descriptions of every window and button (when playing at lower difficulty levels). The on-line tutorial even includes advisory text that appears at certain important game thresholds. The average gamer should have no problem picking up the basics, even without picking up the game manual.

Management Behind Bars

Planetary management is handled through the allotment of resources via slider bars (again, a la *Spaceward Ho!*) into the five different areas of interest: ship construction, planetary defense, industrial expansion, environmental development and technological research. A planet spends 100% of its available resources every turn after the proper deductions are automatically removed, just like a paycheck, for ship maintenance, spy networks, counter-espionage and trade. The funds are allocated by sliding a bar up or down on one line, while the player can see the dynamic increases or decreases on another. So, instead of players getting their hands dirty with a lot of numbers, they are working with friendly "spending ratios" via the slider bars.

The math in the game is mercifully simple and very logical. Reading in the manual how the exact numbers work (with the exception of trade, which is more opaque) adds crystal clarity to one's on-map experiences with *MOO*. Like *Civilization*, the game evolves quickly from fun to fascination as one learns more about how the formula behind it make it tick.

A Good World Is Hard To Find

As one explores the map, each star usually has a single useful planet located there. Each planet is rated for its maximum population size (I've seen them range from 10 to 125 million) and features one of many possible atmospheres. Half of these (irradiated, tundra, inferno, etc.) cannot be colonized without first discovering the proper technology necessary to terraform the planet and settle there.

Each population point represents one million beings. When a colony ship lands on a new planet and plants the flag, only two

The alien races available in MOO

Alien Race*	Description
Alkaris	An avian race of superior pilots
Bulrathis	A large, bear-like race of superior ground fighters
Fellpurrs	A catlike race with deadly gunners
Humans	Outstanding diplomats and traders
Klackons	Highly productive insect workers
Meklars	Cybernetic masters of automated production
Psilons	Brilliant researchers
Sakkra	Prolifically reproducing lizards
Shadowmorphs	Shape-shifting spies supreme
Silicoids	Crystalline beings immune to hostile environments

* = Race names are subject to change as the game is developed.

points settle there to establish the "seed" colony. At that point, one can either wait for them to grow or, better yet, peel off people from other worlds and dump them on the new one so that they'll develop faster. With the proper investments in environmental technology, one can discover terraforming, pollution reduction, and other techniques that can make even the most dreadful planets useful. However, nothing is cheap in *MOO;* economic development is the cornerstone of success in this game, as in every, "4-X" classic.

Tick, Tock, Tech, Talk

After quickly adapting to the easy, mouse-driven interface and learning the rudiments of the game, what's an aspiring galactic overlord to do? Peaceful players will want to develop new technologies and good relations with their neighbors. In *Masters of Orion*, there are six different technological areas (computers, planetology, weapons, etc.), each of which can be pushed up 99 levels.

Throughout the first 50 levels of each tech area, the potential for new discovery abounds. Every aspect of the game is touched upon by technology and every progression is a logical step from the one preceding it. Whether it's a new weapon, defense, special ability, industrial optimization, increase in ship speed, expansion of scanning distances, or improvement in computer capabilities (the vital factor in the success or failure of one's spy and counter-spy networks), technology can give players an edge every bit as vital as those granted by their special racial characteristics.

"Excuse Me, But Drop Dead"

Contact with neighboring races soon occurs and diplomatic relations begin almost instantly. Through a simple, yet highly diverse set of menu bars, a player can establish non-aggression pacts, alliances, various levels of trade, or can threaten, backstab and otherwise deal with diplomatic matters. Alien emperors will occasionally send their ambassadors around (or, if snubbed, will recall them!), thus initiating their own parleys for peace, war against "common enemies," swapping technologies or other such matters.

One particularly intriguing aspect of *MOO* is that players can establish spy networks and set up defenses against enemy spies. Spies always report on the latest alien technological discoveries and can either be activated to steal technology or destroy factories and planetary defenses. For those players not inclined to sabotage or steal from a particular neighbor (perhaps hoping to curry favor with them), one's spies can always go underground and await further instructions.

Shoot First, Interrogate Later

War happens. To prepare, one must design and build ships which take advantage of the latest technological discoveries. However, as no player may operate with more than six different ship designs on the board at once, care must be taken that a balanced, high-tech fleet is maintained.

The potential number of combinations of weapons, special abilities, engines and defenses on the four different available hull sizes is staggering. One might have Level III battle computers, Level IV ECM, Level I shields, crummy duralloy armor (although it can be "doubled hulled" for those wanting to sacrifice the ship's interior space for added damage points), all before ever deciding on the weapons and special items to put on board a ship. Fortunately, as one's technology advances, more space becomes available on the hulls, and older technology gets smaller and cheaper to reflect miniaturization. However, the latest goodies will usually fill precious hull space very quickly, as players will discover when using the ship design screen.

Fire The Gatling Phasers!

The tactical space combat system is similar to that of *Armada 2525* (and *King's Bounty*, for all you fantasy world conquerors out there). When ships engage in combat, they line up on opposite sides of the screen and maneuver on an 8x10 square tactical combat map (complete with the planet being fought over and occasional asteroid squares). The ships then proceed to maneuver while firing beam and missile weapons at each other. Of course, special devices such as automated repair systems, repulsor beams, stasis cubes, cloaking devices, and more come into play on the tactical battle board and can make for some hairy space battles.

Planets, too, can be bombed or, much to the consternation of every other civilized alien race, attacked by biological weapons. To conquer a world, it is generally advisable to clear the space above it and bomb any defenses on it before attempting to land colonists there. When the ground troops start to tango, it can be a bloody and costly affair if one does not have a sufficient technological edge in ground battles (body armor and ion rifles, for example).

The real beauty of *MOO* is that all of the weapons and technology work together through such a clean set of simple and logical dictates that it is easy to understand the nuances of combat. One does not need to have the computer command one's ships in battle (which it will do, if desired) but, instead, can command each ship type group with a reasonable confidence that the right targets and weapons are being selected each combat round.

Although this preview is only a cursory look at *Masters of Orion*, I can say this: I've played every strategic space game that I could find in my 20 years as a wargamer, both board and computer games. Although I haven't heard the final sound effects, nor seen the latest of the evolving graphics, I can say that the various parts of this game are designed and executed better than most I've seen. The gameplay elements are expertly melded, and I can see the whole exceeding the sum of its parts when *MOO* is finally released.

Civilization In Space? C'mon...!

MicroProse Producer Jeff Johannigman initially described *MOO* to me as "*Civilization* in space." Well, Jeff, it's not. However, if that's what it takes to get people to take a look at *MOO* so that it doesn't get lost in the shuffle of strategic space games, I can forgive the marketing hype. (After all, I tried to lure readers in with an XXXX rating in this article's title).

Masters of Orion is a fine game in its own right and, while comparisons can be made to classic games of strategic conquest, none are required. Anyone who tries *Masters of Orion* will see that it has the right stuff. When the jury comes back on this game, I suspect it will find a place near the top of its genre as players discover that rare fifth X in its design—EXquisite. CGW

Blade Scummer

Electronic Arts' *Syndicate*

by Wyatt Lee

The metal of the elevated walkways was losing its battle with the acid rain. Rust flaked from the skeletal framework of the scaffolding as the steps of invading agents crunched along like boots stomping the desiccated remains of a long-dead corpse. Defenders armed with Uzis moved to intercept them, but their efforts were doomed to be as ineffective against the invaders' mini guns and lasers as the earlier efforts of governments to legislate against the megalomaniac onslaught of the megacorporations. The force of the mini gun's heavier caliber slugs threw the defenders back against each other in obscene waves of death, and soon the crimson of their blood added a richer tint to the rust-red palette of the scaffolding.

Syndicate is a game of dark future conflict that might well be described as Ridley Scott (director of *Blade Runner*) does *PowerMonger*. It is *not* a game for the squeamish. As in the fictional introduction, it seldom offers a mission where one is not forced to leave a trail of blood-spewing corpses across the screen, most of whom die dramatic on-screen deaths. It is a world of cyborgs and megacorporations where crime syndicates compete for global domination, a world where assassination is as much "strictly business" as the hits in *The Godfather*. The player becomes a sort of far-future "Godfather" in this typical Bullfrog strategy game, but commands from the safety of a mother ship hovering over the conflict rather than from a compound on Long Island or near Lake Tahoe.

The Family Is What's Important

As in other Bullfrog products, the objective of the game is to take over the world by maneuvering tiny, animated humans across maps of varying terrain types. In *Populous*, gamers used divine force (in the form of plagues, natural disasters and world shaping) to convert the various worlds to their favor. In *PowerMonger*, gamers directed populations from a god-like perspective, but added various technologies to improve the survivability/military capability of the gamer's chosen people. In *Syndicate*, one still views the action from above, but it is necessary to manage finances, establish research budgets and manage a team of cybotg agents in order to succeed.

Also like *PowerMonger*, the *Syndicate* player attempts to stain an entire world with the custom color that symbolizes the player's forces. The world map is a dark future version of our world and there are 50 geographical areas, each with its own mission. These missions can be: assassination attempts; covert operations designed to "persuade" a civilian to join one's cause; evacuation of individuals from a rival syndicate's control; or a surgical sweep where one weeds out or recruits rival agents from a city, block by block. As in the other games, computer-controlled forces (in this case, rival syndicates) compete simultaneously with the human player.

Also like its predecessors, *Syndicate* offets a distinct terrain and an ominous soundtrack. Slow building chords play underneath each mission and add to the foreboding atmosphere. I even liked the sound effects when one changes from menu to menu, reminiscent of doors whooshing open in the old *Man from U.N.C.L.E.* television series. Some of my friends got annoyed with it and toggled off the sound immediately. Graphically, *Syndicate* offers much more distinctive terrain than its predecessors. The buildings are incredibly detailed and have an interesting modern (steel, brick and glass) character to them and the animated billboards are reminiscent of the huge televisions above Tokyo's Shibuya Station. The limited downside to the detailed graphics is that they tend to be almost too pretty for the gray future that the game posits, and the 3-D graphics often obscure the characters as they traverse the map. Don't get me wrong, the artists do wonders with a dark palette, but fail to present the general entropy inherent within a world of criminal anomie (i.e. no one cares enough to keep up the infrastructure).

A disappointing difference between *Syndicate* and its progenitors is that the production version of the game does not allow for head-to-head competition (as in *Populous* and *PowerMonger*) between human-controlled syndicates or its natural extension, network competition. It seems

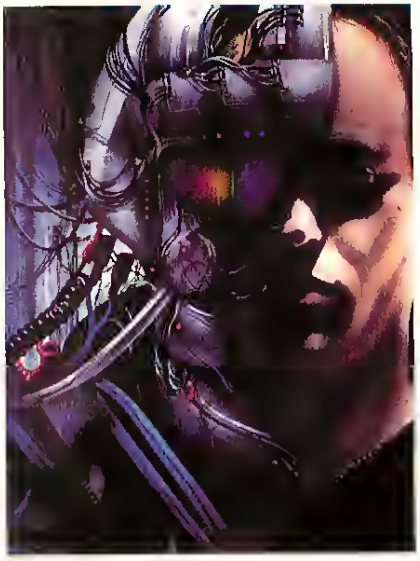
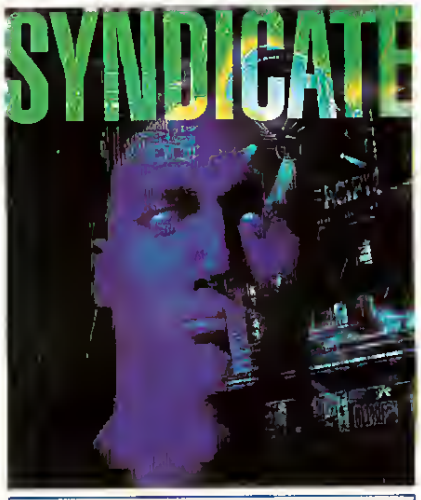


Illustration by Eric Gooch

to me that the game would have a more exhilarating pace and more satisfying play value if one could challenge the syndicates of one's friends and co-workers.

A Coffer You Can't Refuse

When playing the game, the player as syndicate boss controls the game through menus and icon-based point and click options. The former sets up the missions and the latter commands the agents during the missions. The first important menu is actually a world map, a venue menu. The player decides upon his/her initial placement and discovers the mission options available. The player must work through five initial missions as a type of forced tutorial. After that, the possibilities open up according to territories controlled. The syndicate boss pushes



TITLE:	Syndicate
SYSTEM:	Amiga and IBM with 4 MB RAM, VGA SoundBlaster support only
PRICE:	$59.95
PROTECTION:	None
DEVELOPER:	Bullfrog Productions
PUBLISHER:	Electronic Arts San Mateo, CA

the "Briefing" button and gets a brief text description of the mission objective. Then, accepts or rejects the mission. If desired, it is possible to purchase extra intelligence and get more information priot to selecting said mission.

I call the next menu the Q Section menu (temember James Bond?). In addition to a silhouette of the agent being equipped or modified, the Q Section menu featutes on-screen buttons fot: 1) assigning research priorities and funding; 2) selecting new or replacement agents from the cryogenic chamber; 3) modifying existing agents with cyborg enhancements; and 4) equipping active agents with ammunition, weapons and tools. The delimiting factor, of course, is the amount of funds in the budget. This increases with conquest and taxation, but diminishes when one loses territories (i.e. one's tax base). On occasion, one must wait until a simulated day passes before being able to continue funding research or equipping a squad for a given mission.

The Reseatch button brings up a new scteen with a dynamic graph. The player selects the rype of weapon to be researched (automatic, heavy, assault or miscellaneous) and the amount of funding. The graph changes to reflect the speed with which each advance can be putchased and, when one returns to the screen, highlights the amount of the research which has already been completed. Unfortunately, one has to guess which weapon will become available in a given category at a given time. I have had flame thtowers appear as both assault and automatic weaponry. I have had mini guns appear in the same two categories. This takes away from the ptoduct's polish and sophistication.

The Team button allows players to replace their fallen agents with new "blood" from the cryogenic chamber. A roster appears and the substitution process is telatively intuitive. The Mods button allows a syndicate boss to artificially enhance his/het agents with cyborg consttucts (brain, eyes, heart, chest, arms and legs). I found the chest to be a nice first investment, serving almost as a bullet-proof vest. Then, I followed with arms and legs so that my agents could catry two mini guns rathet than one. The Equip button allows one to purchase new weapons ot equipment and to reload the agents' existing arsenals.

Once the visit to the Q Section menu is complete, the gamer is ready to take the cyborg spies into the mission proper. The action takes place on a map where tiny figures, along with miniature vehicles and buildings are viewed from an oblique overhead perspective. One monitors the action through two constantly changing "windows." One window features the realistic (oblique) petspective of the action just desctibed and the other is a direct overhead view where one can readily spot approaching dangers (red dots for enemy agents and blue dots for those inttusive policepersons). Both are dynamic and I found both useful (the latter is exptessly vital when one's agents are hidden by obsttuctions or inside buildings on the action window).

The gamer can separate the fout agents in the squad and operate each individually or can give them orders as a group. To order the agents to move, one merely clicks on the desired terminus point on the action window and they will use their AI to get there. To draw a weapon or get an object out of inventory, the player left-clicks on the object in the on-screen inventory for that agent. To drop a weapon or object, one right-clicks on the object in the inventory. When enemy agents and police arrive on the scene, one merely places the cutsot over them and the cursor is transformed into a target: white if the target is out of range and ted if it is a viable target. To fire a teady weapon, the ted taiget cursot is positioned ovet the target and the player right-clicks. The result provides satisfactory sound effects and animation. When an active object (weapon, medikit, persuadertron, etc.) can be picked up, the cursor transforms itself into a metallic claw to allow the gamer to know that the object may be picked up and added to the agent's inventory. It's extremely easy.

If the gamer does *not* want to operate all of the agents individually, the agents have (accotding to the game's fiction) CHIP technology implanted in their bodies so that their Intelligence, Perception and Adrenaline levels can be pumped up artificially. So, players can click on sliding scales and enhance those qualities *before* leaving their agents to act according to the AI algorithms. Indeed, it is a good idea to "pump up those flabby agents" before leaving them to the program's own devices and meandeting off to play hero with others of one's agent corps.

Nothing Personal, Strictly Business

Indeed, everything about *Syndicate* is professional and business-like. I particularly liked the way each new ciry or complex had its own logic. Having to use mass transit to get from one side of the ciry to the other or needing to navigate tunnels and skywalks added a different dimension. As play progresses, gamers systematically move from mission-to-mission, conquering the world, and the missions get systematically tougher.

Unfortunately, the strategy element involved in the Research section is limited by the randomness discussed earlier. Further, the AI of the enemy agents leaves much to be desited. In many scenatios, one can simply find a protected area with a reduced entryway and allow the enemy to come in waves. When one can do so, the bodies simply pile up in as gruesome a spectacle as could possibly he expected this side of Nazi atrocities.

I also wish that there was an automatic centering option on the action window. Admittedly, the scanning window with the direct overhead perspective *does* automatically center on the spy squad, but it would be nice (at least when one is traveling in group mode) to have the action window do the same. I found scrolling around to find the group to be a distraction from time to time, but othets may not find it so.

Finally, I wish that the missions did not seem so repetitive. The missions essentially boil down to three rypes: assassination, extraction and slaughter. There are occasional new wrinkles, but the standard scenarios provide the btead and buttet for the entire game. The option of playing against human-controlled syndicates would enhance the shelf life and play value of the game, but even that might not get around the design's repetitive nature.

Showing Some Respect

In spite of the negatives, *Syndicate* is a polished and significant effort. It seems sure to satisfy the teal-time strategy gamers who enjoyed *Populous* and *PowerMonger*, but will not satisfy those that are looking for a *Neuromancer*-style cyberpunk game nor those who are looking to test their reflexes against the computer. It is impressive as far as it goes and not to be missed by aficionados of the gente Bullfrog built. Unfortunately, it doesn't quite offer the staying power of its predecessors.

CGW

BATTING CLEAN-UP

Strat-O-Matic Computer Baseball Version 4.0

by Wallace Poulter

A number of years ago I was invited to join an established baseball league. Rather than playing with cleats and bats, howevet, this league was played with catds and dice. The game was *Strat-O-Matic*, a statistic-intensive re-creation of Ametica's Favotite Pastime. Aftet a few insttuctional games, I agreed and parlayed the #1 draft pick, as an expansion franchise, into Tony Gwynn and Bill Doran. Round 7 came around and I took a rookie slugger who no one else thought would make it: Jose Canseco. I was hooked and spent the next couple of years playing in several leagues.

I was fottunate in that the gentleman who ian the league had every *Strat-O-Matic* card ever made and ran a league of "All Time Greats." Here I first learned about Jimmie Foxx, Mickey Cochrane, Al Simmons and other true legends of the game. *Strat-O-Matic* wasn't perfect (Ted Williams didn't make my statting outfield, based on the numbets), but the sense of control and managerial choices kept my interest. As with most of us who started with board games, time (the lack thereof) and family eventually intervened and I stopped playing.

Then Strat-O-Matic's telease of a comput-etized version of the game caught my attention. Here was an opportunity to return to *Strat-O-Matic* without the hassles of the board game. Unfortunately, my enthusiasm was checked. First impressions ate ttuly dreadful and revolve almost exclusively atound the worst copy ptotection I have ever seen in this industry. This ptotection scheme, which I have dubbed Lame-O-Matic (™, ridicule pending), allows one instal-lation ftom the Master disk. You must un-install back to the Mastet disk if you wish to remove the game fiom yout hatd dtive. What a joke! Strat-O-Matic has the nerve to call this "state of the art." In the real wotld, most of us delete and install programs all the time based on our current needs. I must have placed *Jack Nicklaus* golf on my machine at least a half dozen times, deleting it when I needed mote space for a project. Yet, even if one grants the logic involved in cteating this protection, consider the other problems.

If one's hard disk fails (as mine did the day after I put the game on it) you can get a replacement disk by sending $10, the original disk, and a receipt for the work done on the hard drive!!! I suggest Sttat-O-Matic look up the wotds "cus-tomet" and "ctiminal" in the dictionary. They might find that the words are not synonyms.

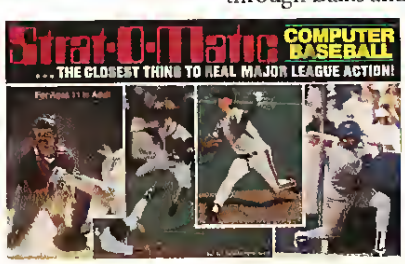
Nor do fitst impressions improve once one gets into the product. The menu options are full of jargon and abbreviations that do not help a first time user. Therefore we tefet to the manual. The 60-page manual has two illustrations, while the rest is a never-ending stream of poorly organized text. Being the adventurous type, I wanted to jump in immediately and start my own league, rename the teams, and move players around. Again the menus were not helpful. I had to wade through the manual trying not to miss anything. Once the league was set up, I wished to play San Francisco's games manually and all the othets automatically. I finally figured out that one does this by hitting the "Out of Town Scoreboatd" option and picking the appropriate game to play manually. Makes sense to me: Out of Town Scoreboard and playing a game manually are an obvious synergy!? This information is tucked away on page 26 of the manual.

So, it's a lousy game too, right? Wrong. Once you get past the copy protection and manual (and how many customers has Strat-O-Matic lost by then?), you get to a wonderful product which accurately and enjoyably recreates all the fun I had when I first played *Strat-O-Matic* with the cards.

In many ways *Strat-O-Matic* is two products in one. The first is a straight computet game, while the second works in conjunction with the board game and playing cards, and acts as the bookkeeper, handling all charts, rules and dice. The player catds, and the system they use, are at the heart of the product regardless of how you play the game. The Advance side of each batter and pitcher card is split into two. These tepresent performance versus a right handed or left handed opponent. A gtid, 6 columns x 12 rows, is formed by taking the I-3 column headings from the apptopriate side of the position player's card and the 4-6 column headings from the appropriate side of the pitcher's catd. In the boatd product, three dice are thtown with a colored die tepresenting the column to use and two white dice representing the row number to be used. While playing with the catds the computer now "throws" the dice.

This system is easy to use but, as noted eatlier, can sometimes create abnormal situations where decisions ate made purely on numbers versus left/right pitching rather than on overall qualiry. What is interesting is that usually ball clubs play hitters in the same spot in the line up (Mattingly always hitting third for Yankees, etc.) while the *Strat-O-Matic* numbets imply that a playet's place in the batting ordet should change greatly based on the pitcher's thtowing hand.

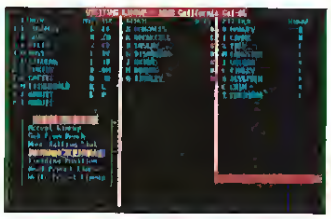
Just about every stat and game situation you can think of is covered in *Strat-O-Matic*, from the standard Hit & Run, through Balks and Wild Pitches. Errots, as in real baseball, play an impottant part of a team's success. For all of Bonds' offensive stats (and Williams et al), the Giants' recent success can be more accurately attributed to the best defense in the National League with Clayton and Thompson (vastly undetrated) on the double play, Williams (a former college SS) at 3B, Manwating's gun behind the plate, and Lewis' errorless stteak in Center. Defense, especially up the middle, can save a couple of runs per game. *Strat-O-Matic* accurately shows this.



TITLE:	Strat-O-Matic Computer Baseball Version 4.0
PRICE	With Strat-O Matic cards $70.25, w/o cards $60
SYSTEM	IBM
REQUIREMENTS	VGA graphics, 2MB hard drive space
PROTECTION:	See review
PUBLISHER	Strat-O-Matic Co., Inc 46 Railroad Plaza Glen Head, N.Y. 11545 (800) 645-3455

In fact, *Strat-O-Matic*'s stat accuracy is its biggest strength. While occasional weirdness (Will Clark stealing 21 bases in a 1992 teplay) is part and patcel of all baseball simulations, the

numbers generated in over 100 stat categories "feel" right. Kruk leading the league in hitting, with Bonds, Van Slyke and Sheffield close behind, for example. Schilling leading the league in wins, while it did not happen in 1992, was definitely within the realm of possibility. *Strat-O-Matic* doesn't just re-create the stats, it uses them in a realistic manner so a player may well perform better (or worse) than reality, but always within a reasonable range. A good example of this would be my replay using the Giants of 1992. I thought Roger Craig gave up on Darren Lewis too early in 92 and I used him exclusively as a lead off hitter. Lewis had 65 steals (one behind the leader Brett Butler) and consistently performed well. Ironically, a lot of Dusty Baker's moves this year fit the way I thought the Giants should play. The only stat I wonder about is the Save. While not knowing the rules inside out (anyone who actually understands the infield fly rule should get out more often), my understanding was that a save was awarded if the man on deck was the tying run. In a couple of instances pitchers who entered different games with 9-0 and 10-2 leads respectively, were awarded saves even though their clubs increased the size of victory (11-3 and 14-2). I think this is wrong, but I'm not certain.



The computer game is split into two further parts. The game playing portion and the stat package. In the latter, a General Manager function, a Statistical function, and an Accessory function are of primary interest. The General Manager option includes the Computer Manager function and the respective League, Team, Player and Ballpark maintenance programs. The Computer Manager allows the setting of a starting rotation (and spot starters), lineups versus left- or right-handed pitchers, and a number of substitutions.

League play is, in my opinion, the heart of the product. Here one can wheel and deal and build the contender that one wishes. League set-up can take a while, and I found the best method was to import teams from other leagues first. Players may be cut or traded throughout the running of a league. A nice feature of *Strat-O-Matic* is the ability to pick (as in draft) one's own stadium. A team with singles hitters might pick Busch Stadium, for example. Weather is also a factor within the game and can affect the outcome of game situations. Remember that when the wind is blowing out at Wrigley.

Game set-up is accomplished through a number of menu choices and toggles. Everything from weather and ballpark effects through the DH can be toggled on or off. The game has both text and VGA screens. The biggest difference between the two (other than the pleasant graphics) is that the menu of choices is displayed on the text screen, while one must hit the "M" key to activate it during VGA play. Once into actual game play there are small black and white pitcher and batter animations superimposed on a colorful representation of each park. It works quite nicely, too. Numerous offensive and defensive choices are available, including the standard Steal, Hit & Run, Sac Bunt, Squeeze, plus all the defensive alignments one would expect. An optional Quickplay feature allows very speedy generation of game results. This can be toggled off at any time after the 5th inning—a nice touch.

Strat-O-Matic is a faithful recreation of the board game, with a good use of the computer to speed up game play. The copy protection is an abomination, and the manual isn't much better, yet for all this, the game is excellent and provides many hours of fun. Fortunately, that is the criteria upon which I ultimately judge a product. **CGW**

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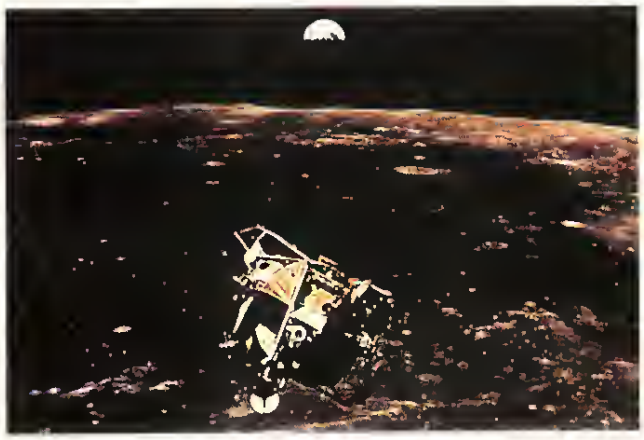


Moon Landings Made Easy

Tips For Interplay's *Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space*

by Erik Anderson, With Fritz Bronner, Designer of Race into Space

Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space is a challenging game that places the player in the position of the leader and administrator of a space program. This was a job big enough to cause the resignation of two American administrators, and the death (by heart attack) of a Soviet Chief Designer. While *Buzz* is a somewhat simplified and abbreviated version of the real thing, it is still somewhat daunting. The following is a guide to negotiating the worst of the hazards.

There are three levels of difficulty in the game: hard, difficult and bloody nightmare! Some might ponder whether the game is more difficult than history. In recreating history, nearly everyone has 20/20 hindsight. If approached with the attitude that "it was easy since we did it before," the space program would have met with disaster. That is why the design of the game takes an early view of space exploration. From the late 1950's all the way up to just before the Moon landing, there were literally thousands of dangerous unknowns. Whether man could survive in a weightless environment was one of many questions space experts considered.

Rigid safeguards, proper planning, and backup contingencies must be made in order to overcome the harsh environment of space. In *Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space*, one is given the opportunity to handle this stressful job and deal with some big-time crises management. A player must face the same difficult unknowns that his or her historical counterparts had to deal with. Hopefully, through these suggestions we may keep you from getting fired, or from suffering cardiac arrest.

"It's One Small Step..."

The strategy for the game can be broken down into three sections: the opening, the midgame and the endgame. It is important to set goals in each area in order to plan properly.

Opening (1957-1961): Buy an Orbital Satellite and an Atlas or A-series. R&D them immediately and declare (in Future Missions) an Orbital Satellite launch attempt. It will take place at the end of the next turn, allowing another set of R&D attempts before it happens. The plan is to launch on November 1957, just like history, but with a little luck some real advances can be made.

Keep R&D'ing and launching satellites until successful. Buy a Mercury/Vostok program in the Spring of 1958 and R&D it continuously. Buy Astronauts/Cosmonauts and put four or five of them in the Mercury (or Vostok) program. If all goes well, you can declare a Manned Suborbital for Spring of 1960. Follow that as soon as possible with the Manned Orbital and an EVA (buy and R&D it, of course!) as soon as it is practical. By the end of 1961, it should be time to buy the Titan and Ranger (or Soviet equivalent, which I will cease to list) and/or the Gemini.

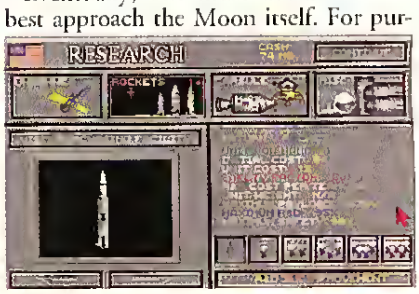
Midgame (1962-1966): R&D the Titan, Ranger and Gemini. Get the second group of astronauts and assign them to the Gemini project. Launch a Lunar Flyby as soon as the Titan and Ranger are up to speed, but not before doing a Manned Orbital. The Manned Orbital is a crucial mission step, and launching a Flyby first means a -3 modifier throughout the mission!

When the Gemini is ready, buy a Docking Module for it. This should be done after accomplishing the Orbital, so declare all Gemini missions as Duration, Docking and EVA missions. Since you've got the Titan working, Strap-Ons are recommended, as is launching the whole thing in one mission. That would be Mission #33, Manned Orbital Docking EVA Duration. Note that you can't count on docking with a Docking Module already in orbit, so avoid that. Also, avoid missions with joint launches if you can help it; they're not as reliable

Fly the Gemini on Mission #33 repeatedly, gradually increasing Duration levels (B, C and then D). If the dockings fail, don't increase the duration (that will make planning them too difficult). Eventually, you should raise your Docking to around 70% and Duration to at least Level C.

At some point, think about following up the Lunar Flyby with a Lunar Probe. However, since it's generally OK to skip this step, go ahead unless there is a lot of money available or the manned program is suffering setbacks and needs to do something in the meantime.

Eventually, one must decide how to best approach the Moon itself. For pur-



poses of this discussion, let's assume the historical approach, which is a fairly good and reasonably safe plan. To take the historical road, you must buy the Apollo capsule in 1964 or 1965 and begin R&D'ing it right away.

Endgame (1967-): Buy a Lunar Module! The Eagle is much more affordable than the Cricket; not because of initial cost, but because of its R&D costs as well.

Fly the Apollo, as the budget bonus for the fitst three-person capsule is nice. Once Duration C has been accomplished, the Lunar Flyby is done, and the Lunar Probe (if any) has landed, go ahead and fly a Manned Lunar Pass!

Save the Manned Lunar Orbital until you can combine it with a LEM test. The prestige bonus is good, but it's a long way to the Moon. Therefore, don't unnecessarily expose your Apollo program to that many steps, any of which could fail.

Buy a Saturn at some point. Note that since the Titan, Atlas and Strap-Ons are all over 75%, just *buying* the Saturn V nets a safety factor of 60%! That's a year's worth of R&D, so make the Saturn V a final major purchase.

The last three missions should be a Manned Earth Orbital LM Test, a Manned Lunar Orbital LM Test, and then (ta da!) a historical Manned Lunar Landing. Once your simulated Armstrong puts moonboot to moondust, you've won!

Okay, it's *never* that easy. Setbacks always occur. If the Gemini fails, for example, one must speed up the Apollo program and have it take over early. If the Manned Lunar Pass fails to make orbit, downgtade the Manned Lunar Orbital into a Pass, and reschedule everything else. When problems arise, part of the game (and life in general) is dealing with them.

Feel free to improvise solutions in *Buzz*, too. The historical approach is a good one, but if the budget is uncommonly low or high, or if other circumstances dictate (like the Apollo keeps blowing up), it can be the worst approach to choose.

Hardware Options: Going with a Gemini instead of an Apollo is cheaper, but riskier. The player must decide which to use early on in order to have a Kicker-B and Cricket LEM on time. Later, if the budget improves, get an Apollo program as a backup, in case the Gemini fries.

Foregoing the Saturn V and launching all LEM missions as joint missions is an inexpensive option. However, I don't like joint missions with unmanned portions; they seem to fail with alarming regularity. It's tempting to skip LEM tests by taking this option, but it has its risks....

The minishuttle is great. It's expensive to start, though it is cheaper in the endgame than an Apollo, thanks to its reusability feature. It's also extremely reliable, which is nice.

The Soyuz Kicker-C option is worth a look, too, especially for the Soviet player who's falling behind.

The four-man programs change the whole midgame and endgame strategies, so make the decision to go with a minishuttle during the opening. It's not a great way, but there's no docking or LEM tests to worry about.

"Fire In The Spacecraft!"

Astronautics is a dangerous business. Even on the simplest missions, fatal disasters will occasionally occur. Don't despair; repair the damage or switch to your alternate program and continue the race. Your opponent is subject to the same failures, and fail he will.

Don't be discouraged if an opponent gets all the "firsts" in terms of discoveries. While their progress is not good for your budget, it's important to remember that the game is a moon race. It is akin to a marathon and it *does* have a finish line. If an opponent gets all the firsts, following suit within a turn or two will keep things approximately even. While a bit demoralizing to trail others, it's just fine as strategy. A mishap by your opponent or a last-minute burst of speed on your part will be enough to steal the lead at a critical moment.

Buzz is a deceptively simple game. There are plenty of decisions, and their ramifications have many levels which are difficult to foresee. As with all things, practice makes that easier. Take heart—

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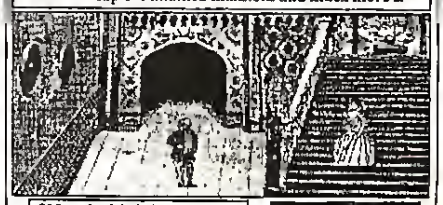

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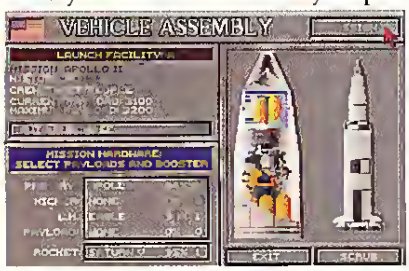
the computer can be beat if you think ahead, stay smart, fight dirty and remain oprimistic. No one was more surprised rhan the asrronauts when we made it all the way ro the moon without any in-space



fatalities. (Well, there was the one on rhe ground.) Having no casualties in space was really a stroke of luck; a statistical fluke, and *Buzz* reflects that. Odds are, a player *will* kill people in space. Just try to keep the carnage to a minimum and hope your opponent does worse.

"You Are Go For At Least Seven Orbits..."

The following is a list of what one's program needs to have accomplished before trying to put people on the Moon.

- A Docking Skill of at least 80%. Keep trying dockings until obtaining this level. Launching a manned lunar landing and then failing to dock is very frustrating.
- An Endurance through Level D. Do not skip any endurance levels when going to the moon. For each endurance level skipped, it's a -5 throughout rhe mission! Lunar orbiral and lunar landing missions have far too many sreps to rake such a risk. Historically, the U.S. launched Geminis on ever-increasing durarions until passing the two week mark (level D). NASA also practiced dockings on the same missions, which was convenient. Try it.
- Prior mission milestones: It's dangerous to launch an orbital mission until after completing a suborbital. However, it's much mote dangerous to do a Lunar Landing wirhout having done a Lunar Orbital first. Why? Because, in the case of the landing itself, that -3 for a skipped step has a lot more mission sreps in which to cause you grief! Never skip the Manned Lunar Orbital! When trying for the Manned Lunar Pass, you may be able to skip the Lunar Probe (sometimes), but you should always have at least one successful Lunar Flyby. The Pass is a shorter mission, but even so, rhat -3 the whole way around makes ir quite a white-knuckler.
- LM tests: At least make a Manned Lunar Orbital and take an LM along for a test. This satisfies two out of three LM points; the remaining one is just a -3 when using the LM. Get the remaining LM test, if possible. Trying to land without *any* LM tests is pretty dangetous.
- Maximized R&D capsule safety facror. Always do this, especially in the case of the Gemini program. Never launch a manned mission unless the capsule is up to the max level to which it can be developed at that time. You should maximize the R&D for capsules, not just out of normal safety concern, but also because the +1 to the safety factor after a successful mission is vital for going *above* the max R&D level (as opposed to bringing things up to a level that would otherwise have to be attained by spending a couple Mega-Bucks). You can sometimes break this rule when racing for the first Sub-Orbital, but at no other time!
- A pilot wirh Capsule Skill of 4. Never consider anything less than 4. Okay, maybe a 3, but not less than thar!
- No rushing: A -3 is too painful, especially when multiplied out by some 20-odd sreps. Rushing is for sarellites and Sub-Orbirals, nor for Moon walks. Buying a second launch pad allows for the earlier scheduling of missions—without rhe rushing penalties! Second and third launch pads are costly, so consider carefully when to buy them.

Technology Bonus

The following information is not listed in the original game documents. Want a leg up on the competirion? Read on....

Any program developed to 75% or greater will give a reliability bonus to other similar programs. For example, the Mercury is researched and developed to 75%. If the Gemini program was purchased, it would start at 40%. This reflects what was learned from the Mercury program and helps in the design and development of the Gemini program.

What follows is a list of Technology Transfers. On the left is the currenr program safery and what Tech bonus is received when starting similar programs. (The Soviet program bonus works the same way as these American examples.)

We hope rhis additional inrelligence will aide you in your race against the "Evil Empire" of your choice. CGW

Manned Programs

Program(s)	Safety Factor	Bonus for other programs
Mercury	75%	Gemini-20%, Apollo-20%, Jupiter-10%
Gemini	75%	Mercury-40%, Apollo-30%, Jupiter-15%
Apollo	75%	Mercury-40%, Gemini-40%, Jupiter-25%
Jupiter	75%	Mercury-40%, Gemini-40%, Apollo-40%
Mercury, Gemini	75%	Apollo-40%
Mercury, Eagle	75%	Jupiter-35%
Mercury, Cricket	75%	Jupiter-35%
Gemini, Eagle	75%	Jupiter-35%
Gemini, Cricket	75%	Jupiter-35%
Apollo, Eagle	75%	Jupiter-35%
Apollo, Cricket	75%	Jupiter-35%

* The minishuttle gets no bonuses from the capsule programs. It was based on the dyna-soar lifting body, a revolutionary concept at the time.

Rockets

Program(s)	Safety Factor	Bonus for other programs
Atlas	75%	Titan-25%, Saturn-15%, Nova-10%, Booster-30%
Titan	75%	Atlas-35%, Saturn-35%, Nova-25%, Booster-30%
Saturn	75%	Atlas-35%, Titan-40%, Nova-25%, Booster-30%
Nova	75%	Atlas-35%, Titan-40%, Saturn-35%, Booster-30%
Booster	75%	Atlas-35%, Titan-25%, Saturn-15%, Nova-10%
Atlas, Saturn	75%	Titan-65%, Nova-35%
Atlas, Titan	75%	Saturn-60%, Nova-35%
Atlas, Nova	75%	Titan-65%, Saturn-60%
Booster, Saturn	75%	Titan-65%, Nova-35%
Booster, Nova	75%	Titan-65%, Saturn-60%

Satellites

Program	Safety	Bonus
Explorer	75%	Ranger-45%, Surveyor-45%
Ranger	75%	Explorer-50%, Surveyor-50%
Surveyor	75%	Explorer-50%, Ranger-50%

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COMPUTER WARGAMING WORLD

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The Empire Deluxe Tournament Continues!

by Alan Emrich

Round three of the New World Computing/*Computer Gaming World* official *Empire Deluxe* tournament is under way at this time. Here's the lineup:

Name	Network	City, State
R. Rutdlege	Prodigy	Seattle, WA
M. Conder	GEnie	Littleton, CO
M. Kohn	CompuServe	Walnut Creek, CA
T. Webb	Prodigy	Reno, NV
D. Aldrich	GEnie	Minneapolis, MN
R. Andrews	TSN	Waterville, OH
E. Best	GEnie	Carrollton, TX
M. Ellis	Prodigy	Tupelo, MS
B. Marchesani	Prodigy	Lyndhurst, NJ
D. Crandell	CompuServe	Englewood, NJ
B. Brennan	CompuServe	College Point, NY
H. Gale	GEnie	Westwood, MA
M. Gravel	CompuServe	Cranston, RI
R. Matthews	GEnie	Assonet, MA
W. Haberer	GEnie	Tucson, AZ
R. Moser	Prodigy	(Unavailable), FL

Highlights from round two show that Blue is still the most winning position to play. The average game length was only 67 turns, while only one match went into triple digit length at 130 turns. The quickest match during round two was a stunning 15 turns!

As an interesting aside, one tournament player, Darell Phillips (Prodigy: WJXS08A) found his first round opponent was an old friend whom he hadn't seen in over three years. Best of all, he didn't know that friend, Mike Isom, was even a computer gamer! Now, of course, their friendship is closer thanks to playing in the *Empire Deluxe* tournament. And on that note, I'll close this column by playing the theme to "It's A Small World..." CGW

You've Got To Be Keating Me!

A Sneak Preview Of *Warlords II*

by Alan Emrich

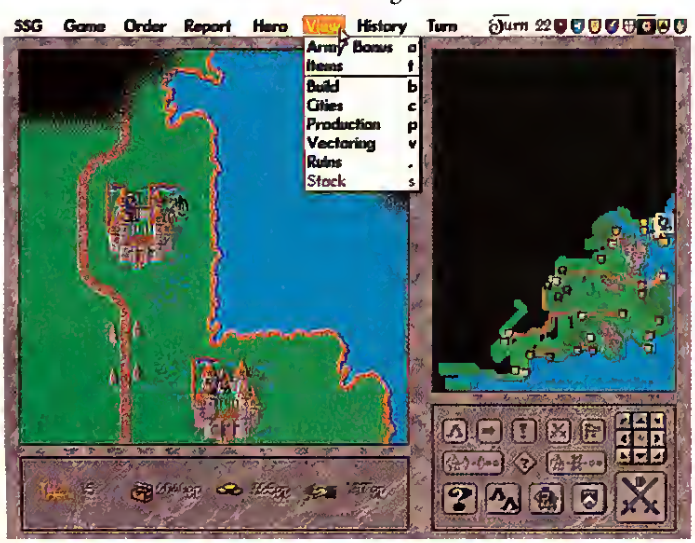
Sneak Previews are not designed to be reviews. They are feature articles based on "works in progress" that CGW's editors have deemed worthy of early coverage. These articles are not intended to provide the final word on a product, since we expect to publish appropriate review coverage when the game is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

When Australia-based Strategic Studies Group (SSG) released *Warlords* back in 1991, I doubt that they could have anticipated its tremendous success, not its popularity as a "hatd core" fantasy wargame. Certainly, the expetience from SSG's previous fotay into fantasy computer games (their ill-fated *Fire King*—a sort of *Gauntlet* role-playing game run amuck) might have kept wargamers *par excellence* Ian Ttout and Roger Keating a safe distance from the fantasy gente. However, when Steve Fawkner submitted a game design to them for a "real" fantasy wargame, SSG published *Warlords* with their usual low-key fanfare. The test is history (well, fantasy actually—if you take my meaning).

Before one could say "I am destined to conquer Illuria," the techno-tinkers at SSG were busy working on an "enhanced" vetsion of *Warlords*. Released soon afterward, it incorporated some of the many new features that the Macintosh conversion of the game was developing. In fact, the Macintosh version of the game, when released in 1991, was such a vast improvement over the IBM version in the eyes of SSG, that a full tilt sequel *(Warlords II)* was planned upon the Mac conversion's release. After a long hiatus to launch their *Carriers at War* game series, those Aussies were at it again. With a long list of things they and outspoken players wanted to see in a sequel product, *Warlords II* went slowly from the drawing board to the motherboard.

Greetings, Warlord!

Veteran *Warlord* players will enjoy the new polished look to the game. A new background with the appearance of marble has been added, the army units and heroes are much ctispet, and improved terrain adds considerably to the game's monitot-bound look. The ambiance of *Warlords II* is further enhanced by the graphic depicting each individual player/warlord. While the eight players still possess the same familiar colors, each now has a distinctive shield emblem and an attractive castle design on the map. Neuttal castles retain their traditional walls-&-turrets look, while the Storm Giants' castles, for example, appear as a mountain with clouds and lightning bolts atop it. Conquest by the Lotd Bane warlord converts a castle into a large, blackened skull with torches dimly lighting the threatening maw of an entryway. Other players (the elves, dwarfs, etc.) each have their own distinctive castle architecture.



In addition to improved graphics, playets with a sound catd ate in for another treat. The computer opponents speak and each snippet of speech is presented with a large portrait of "the Warlord" himself, who will greet players, bid them adieu, and comment on their ptogress from time-to-time duting play. I don't know whose voice is that of the Warlotd, but it was mercifully unaccented. Somehow, a Paul Hogan sound-alike just wouldn't have the same impact when making a stern commentary mid-game.

Music and sound cues have been added, too. The music, in patticulat, works well with its mostly low, background intensity. It is subtle enough that I found myself leaving it on while playing (which is unusual for me). The sound effects, while sparse, punctuate important points in the game, in particular sounding a gong to signal the commencement of a human player's turn. As will be noted later, this feature can be quite important.

New Worlds To Conquer

After getting past the early sizzle, the fitst bite of steak comes in the fotm of new maps. The half dozen fixed maps, by themselves, add so much mote variety than the single, fixed, visible map in the otiginal *Warlords*. Add to this a random map genetatot (whete players can define the percentages of woods, water, hills and cities they desire) and the ability to save these maps should any particularly interesting ones get rolled up, and replayability skyrockets. Granted, the map maket is a processot intensive feature (meaning that it will take a 286-12MHz computer around five minutes to generate a new world that a 486-50MHz cranks out in about 30

seconds), but the end results, I've found, are always well worth the wait.

Best of all, the maps can now, optionally, be played in "discovery" mode. This means that they are blackened at the start (a la *Empire Deluxe* or *Civilization*) and become revealed as one's units maneuver around. Every map is the same, fixed size (large, as in the original *Warlords*), so it may take several turns of careful exploration to get a feel for the location of other players and continental coastlines, but it does add considerably to the game.

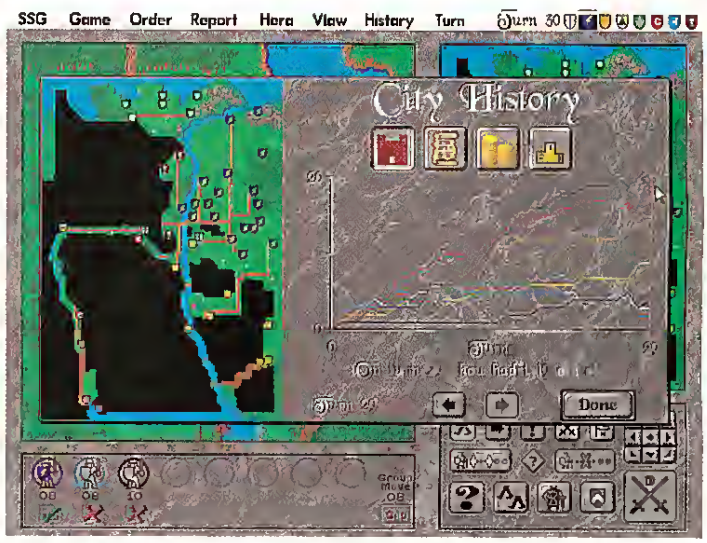
To facilitate exploration, two cheap new unit types have been added. These are Scouts, with a special ability that helps a stack of units move through hills and woods quickly, and Bats, which can fly over mountains and water, and can carry heroes on their backs. Both of these unit types have only one combat strength point and a high movement allowance—making them perfect for exploration duties.

Close-In Counters

Although one can now opt to play with a "quick start" feature that divides up all of the cities evenly between players before turn one begins, I expect players will generally want to expand out from their first city and conquer their way into everlasting glory. In either case, units will be mixing it up in battles from the start, and one soon discovers that combat has become a much more interesting event. Though it still looks and works similarly to *Warlords*, *Warlords II* has created such an increased diversity in the unit types that a whole new challenge awaits players of the original game. Consider a sampling of these new factors.

Many battles will still revolve around cities. In city battles, Minotaurs and Spider units both receive strength bonuses. If the attacker has a Catapult, the defender receives no strength bonus for the city walls. In clear terrain, Light and Heavy Cavalry units receive a one and two point strength bonus, respectively. Having a demon army negates all non-hero, non-city wall bonuses the enemy stack might be enjoying, while fighting with an Archon (atch angel) unit on your side will negate the opponent's hero bonuses. One final bit of spice is the effect of elephant units, which will reduce evety enemy unit attacked by one strength point each.

Units can now have modified strengths upwards of 14 points each, and clicking on the "Show Stack" menu line reveals each unit's basic and then modified strengths. Of course, blessings at temples are still important, and the "intense combat" option still exists. Now, however, the basic combat die roll is made against a D-16 (16-sided die), while intense combat uses a D-20. Finally, one can now change the order in which their units step fotward to engage in battle.



The practical upshot of these changes is that it is now more of a challenge to put together those "special forces" stacks of units that were right for all occasions in the original *Warlords* game. Now, one must optimize different stacks for different purposes. Players will do well to have some cavalry corps to run down enemy scouts probing the neighborhood, a flying wing for crossing mountains or water in force, a siege stack for assaulting heavily defended cities, an anti-hero strike force, and so on.

It should also be noted that naval units have been completely eliminated. Units now stop when they move through an embarkation point (coastal castle, port or bridge) and, on the next turn, they take on the guise of a ship at sea (or, conversely, convert back to a land unit). While I haven't quite figured out the nuances of ship-to-ship combat yet, it looks as if sea movement is another good way to go exploring, and strong attacks from the sea can be conducted against coastal cities with thunderclap surprise.

Diplomacy

Yet another new element in *Warlords II* is the addition of formal diplomacy. Although there can only be three declared diplomatic states between any two players, these suffice. While at peace, the forces of two warlords can cooperate (although they still move separately). Normal hostility allows one's forces to combat each other, but no assaults on enemy cities are allowed. Fot that, the third level of diplomacy, "total war," is the option of choice.

Typical for a Roger Keating design, the computer players have long memories and short tempers, so one can easily find themselves surrounded by hostile neighbors. Each kingdom also has a diplomatic rating ranging from "Supreme Diplomat" to "Running Dog" (they are also rated for aggressiveness and economic efficiency). In all dealings, one's reputation precedes a player and is factored into all diplomacy.

Charting The Monarchy

As one becomes more involved in a game of *Warlords II*, the additional charts and graphs that can be called up from the various menus prove their worth. It is certainly nice to see, both as a graph and in raw numbers, where one stands vis-a-vis a city or army count with their neighbors. Graphs also provide comparative information on wealth and victory points, so checking these from time-to-time is a must. There is even a "history" graph which recalls heroic deeds done and the conquest of cities on a turn-by-turn basis.

Increasing The Value Of Gold

Money has become much more important in *Warlords II*, although players can certainly win without being great money managers. In addition to limiting one's potential army size and attracting mercenary heroes (as before), money can now be spent to increase the productive capabilities of a city. Although the exotic units (dragons, wizards, elementals, etc.) can only be built at cities as a pre-game option, there are still plenty of other unit types to choose from for those wanting to play in the "more realistic" mode. The cheapest units to add to a city's potential are the aforementioned Scouts and Bats (at 10 and 30 gold, respectively, to add to that city's "allowable builds"). At the high end of the scale are Pegasi, Griffins and Elephants (each costing well over 1,000 gold).

Note that these prices just allow a city to build those unit types. They must still be built, over time, in the same old way. However, city defenses improve when a city can produce more unit types, so buying a variety not only gives a player production options, but also improves a city's chances of withstanding a siege. Additionally, the new production vectoring system (where a unit produced in one city appears two turns later in another) is much easier to use.

The Quest For Heroes

Heroes take on increased dimensions in *Warlords II* as well. Now, they are gender specific and, with each city or enemy army conquered, they earn experience points. When a plateau is reached, that hero rises in rank and has their personal combat strength and movement allowance increased. This crude role-playing element, however, does not detract from the largely war/strategy game aspects of *Warlords II*, but another new element does add a twist....

Heroes who visit temples can now be sent on quests. It might be to raze a city, recover an item, or smite another hero. Whatever the quest is, it will pay off handsomely in both wealth/magic items and experience points for the hero that completes it. What these quests tend to do, however, is to send away both a hero and his/her accompanying armies on some "damn fool crusade" while important battles urgently need to be fought. Just how much a player wants to let such hero-led forces be distracted becomes a new strategic consideration. However, cranking up heroes to demigod-like stature can create a force that no enemy will be able to withstand.

Missing Links

Sadly, in the beta versions I've previewed, the AI was still very much "under development." I could not test much of it out, and therefore, cannot really report on it. One glaring nuisance that I must report, however, is the game's speed. Although there is a toggle for choosing a random turn order, one often has to wait quite a while for the computer players to finish their turns. This can be particularly annoying when playing with the "observe enemy armies" option off, such that there is nothing to watch while waiting for another turn.

The reason for this delay is that the computer is moving each army or stack individually and fighting the battles out in the same way as the human players do. There seem to be no "quick combat" routines built into the AI at this point, and each player turn was taking about 30 seconds on my 386-33. That means I spent an average of three minutes between my turns while waiting for the computer players to finish theirs. I must thank SSG for including the loud (almost annoying) gong sound to notify a human player that it is his or her turn. This allows one to leave the room for a couple of minutes and be notified when it's time to come back to play another turn.

Perhaps the most requested feature for *Warlords* (plus *Civilization* and several other strategy games, for that matter), modem play, is not to be found in *Warlords II*. Modem gamers will still prefer *Conquered Kingdoms* when looking for telegaming fantasy conquests. However, *Warlords II* does work fine with multiple human players on the same machine, and I've had some three and four-player weekend games lately that have been very exciting.

In the best traditions of SSG, *Warlords II* is a game where the better strategist will win. The product is crammed with game play, and the replay value has been advanced by bounds. For fans of games like *Empire Deluxe* or *Conquered Kingdoms*, it is simply impossible to go wrong with the likes of *Warlords II*. Personally, I can't wait to see what further refinements await as the finishing touches are added to this game. CGW

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Think Like A General, Win Like An Admiral

Words of Wisdom For Gaming Warriors

by Tim Carter

Let's face it, no one really wants to lose a game. Yet, thete are too many gamers who never bother to prepare to win. Hacks like myself wtite articles that give game-specific tips to help players along, but there are certain general gaming principles that can be learned and applied to every game. With an understanding of these genetal aspects, one can develop their own grand sttategic plans, tathet than relying primarily on the game-bound tips uncovered by those of us who spend far too much time with their games.

Success in any strategy game requires that the player have a solid grasp of (surprise!) strategy. The question of just what *is* strategy has kept a legion of military historians and political scientists busy for decades. Fortunately, the boundaries of strategy for most computer games are considerably more limited than in teal life.

A good place to start when considering strategy games is one of the oldest of them all—chess. Thete are essentially five elements necessary to understanding and winning at chess. These are: the board, the pieces, tactics, strategy, and openings. In thinking about strategy for other games, it is useful to think in terms of these five building blocks of strategic thinking.

While the board in chess is simple, properly using it is a key to chess strategy. In games where the boatd is more complicated, usually reflecting a natural tertain of some kind, understanding the board is often crucial. Terrain modifiers, be they in terms of movement, combat ot production, are usually of vital importance to winning the game. Fortunately, these modifiers are also usually well documented.

On a more subtle level, maps will sometimes channel movement in a particular direction. This can be very important for long range planning. The key here is to understand how the map will affect tactics, strategy and opening moves. In what ways will it make the opposition predictable, theteby making planning more simple?

> "So it is said that if you know others and know yourself, you will not be imperiled in a hundred battles." Sun Tzu

Understanding the forces at your disposal goes beyond a simple petusal of their description in the game documentation. It is necessary to understand how units interact with one another and with the enemy. For instance, in Three-Sixty's *V for Victory* series, armored units contribute *both* their attack strength and an armor modifier when the odds of any attack are totaled. This means that armor is best used in conjunction with a large number of other units which can benefit from the modifier. In many cases a massed armor attack is actually a waste of resources. Furthermore, armored units with a strength of zero can still contribute greatly to the success of an attack by modifying the odds ratio through the use of their armor modifier.

It is also important to understand the forces of the opposition. Most integrated military forces are more than the sum of their parts. The same is true of most gaming armies. Removing a single element from an enemy arsenal may make its overall effort dramatically weaker. When facing an army it is sometimes useful to consider how to disrupt its cohesion rather than attempting an all out battle of annihilation. In SSG's *Warlords*, "leader hunting" is an extremely effective tactic, while in the classic *Empire*, a petsistent campaign against the enemy ttansport fleet will almost always guarantee victory.

> "The art of war in the narrower sense must now in its turn be broken down into tactics and strategy. The first is concerned with the form of the individual engagement, the second with its use." Carl Von Clausewitz

Tactics, the maneuvering and operation of fotces on the field of battle, cannot be overlooked if one wishes to have consistent success. Here one's knowledge of the opposing armies and the terrain must be combined to create a position of advantage. Tactics involve winning the battles between individual units, whatever their size.

In the classic board games, tactics involved achieving the mythic 3 to 1 odds for attacks, and avoiding these odds on defense. While computer games (and boatd games) have moved away from this simplistic system, the basic principle behind this approach still applies. The 3 to 1 tatio was preferred because it minimized risks to the attacking force while increasing the chances of victory.

Where possible, such as in QQP's *Conquered Kingdoms* and *The Lost Admiral*, it is obviously a good idea to match forces with enemy units which cannot fight back (i.e. lancers vs. cavalry, submarines vs. battleships, etc.). However, given the diversity of units involved and the nature of most battles, this is not always possible. A wise tactician therefore must leatn how to gain an advantage when the match-ups ate not cleat ot obvious.

For instance, in *Conquered Kingdoms* a combined arms aptoach is often highly effective. Since missile units confronted by an enemy in their square cannot fire for that turn, it is often useful to move a weak and expendable unit into the same square with a high value enemy piece, such as a dtagon. Then, you can move up your own missile forces, confident that the enemy will not be able to return fire.

> "In ancient times skillful warriors first made themselves invincible, and then watched for vulnerability in their opponents." Sun Tzu

Strategy is the art of planning a series of tactical engagements that result in a winning position. The key to a successful strategic plan is the exploitation of enemy weaknesses. The corollary to this, of course, is creating a vulnerable position in the enemy line through the ptopet combination of strategy and tactics. Strategy thus must be systematic. Create and follow a general plan. Establish what is necessary to win and then pursue these goals single-mindedly.

Strategy also often involves cteating the fotces to be used. Games like *Civilization* and *Empire* allow playets a much greater degtee of strategic freedom because they can conttol not only how they will use theit forces but also what those forces will be.

If this is the case, creating and exploiting an advantage must be the focal point of force creation. For instance, in *Warlords* an

effective strategy can involve the creation of a fast striking force to raid enemy cities behind the front lines. Such a force can be comprised of either flying units, cavalry or slower units transported by boat.

"A mistake in the original concentration of the army can hardly be rectified during the entire course of the campaign." Helmut Von Moltke (the elder)

Openings are an essential element of chess; they are important to strategy for most other games also. A successful opening provides the player with the initiative and with an advantageous position, often by putting the enemy into a vulnerable situation. For instance, in SSI's *Second Front* a useful opening is to move all of the German armored corps into Army Groups North and Center. This will usually put Moscow and Leningrad in peril a month or more sooner than a balanced attack in the north and south. The additional four weeks of good weather can knock the Russians out before the snows fall.

Openings can be of two essential types: first, a basically tactical opening which seeks to make a quick kill early. In *Conquered Kingdoms* setting up a Wizard (with fireball) next to a densely packed enemy build zone can lead to an early advantage. The wizard dies, but so does half the enemy army! Second, an opening can be positional. A positional opening does not necessarily depend on the balance of forces, but rather seeks to gain a geographic advantage, such as clearing your home continent in *Civilization*. Your economy may be weak, but with no enemies within striking range for a thousand years the foundation of a world empire is well set.

"The art of war is simple, everything is a matter of execution." Napoleon Bonaparte

Good strategy involves flexibility. The definition of a good strategy game is one in which it is not possible to create a plan at the beginning of the game and then follow it through without modification to the end. While games like this might be gratifying on some base level, they are also usually boring. As long as the goals of one's strategy remain fixed, planning should alter with the situation on the ground. (Or on the sea, in the air or wherever.)

Often, particularly against a computer opponent, opportunities will appear in the most bizarre locations. Many players fall victim to what I call the "history trap." In other words, because they are playing a historical situation, they tend to create plans within artificial (for the game) boundaries determined by their understanding of history.

Don't be afraid to sink the entire Soviet Red Banner Fleet with ASW aircraft *(Harpoon)* or use battleships as aircraft decoys to protect your carriers *(Carriers at War)*. True grognards may gasp in dismay, but few historical battles were ever very evenly balanced, so most games are either taking liberties with history already, in which case why not carry it one step further, or are so unbalanced that desperate action is required.

In conclusion, thinking strategically involves seeing not just the parts, but the whole picture. It requires a mind open to innovation yet focused on goals at hand. Most of all it requires planning and analysis. Think through the logical (and in the case of computer AI, the not so logical) consequences of a course of action. Then plan how to link a sequence of these actions together to get to an objective. Finally, be prepared for it all to go wrong from the start. As Lord Kitchener said, "We must fight war as we must, not as we should like." CGW

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Publisher: Media Vision **$165**

Blue Force

Created by best-selling computer game designer Jim Walls. You are Jake Ryan, rookie motorcycle cop. Ten years have passed since the unsolved murder of your parents, but threads of evidence still exist. Teamed with your father's partner, you begin to weave the all but forgotten strands together. Will the truth force you over the line? Features digitized sound effects and smooth animation through the use of fully digitized actors. 256-color VGA.

Publisher: Tsunami **$42**

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Publisher: TUNE1000 **$32**

Ashes of Empire

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Publisher: Gametek **$36**

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Publisher: Maxis **$24**

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Publisher: Spirit of Discovery **$30**

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Publisher: Access Software **$42**

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Publisher: New World Computing **$42**

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Publisher: Electronic Arts **$36**

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Publisher: Virgin Games **$36**

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Distributor: Hi Tech Expression **$36**

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Publisher: Sierra **$42**

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Humbled, But Not Hobbled

Three-Sixty's *Harpoon Designers' Series II* Surprises Even Veteran Players

by Ed Dille

Mr. Dille was commissioned at the U.S. Naval Academy in 1982. Subsequently, he served aboard the USS Knox (FF-1052), out of Yokosuka, Japan, and was part of the commissioning crew of the USS Mobile Bay (CG-53), the second Aegis VLS Cruiser. He is a fleet qualified Tactical Action Officer.

Historians can testify that isolationist movements usually follow major conflicts, and the closing of the cold war is, judging from the current political climate, no exception to this rule. Fortunately, or unfortunately depending on one's point of view, the designers of *Harpoon Designer Series II* have adopted a similarly bleak view of upcoming events. While not claiming to be prophets, none of the 48 new scenarios escape the realm of possibility.

HDSII is similar to *HDSI*, in that the user obtains 12 new scenarios for each *Harpoon Battleset* owned, but it also contains a comprehensive on-line data annex of all the platforms used in all releases to date, a superb printed tactical manual in the documentation, and Version 1.32 of the game system. This latest update, which will be the last before the arrival of *Harpoon II*, is yet another radical revision of the original code. As with previous updates, the new model is fully backward compatible. This means that all scenarios written or user-generated before *HDSII* arrived will operate in accordance with the new model. How much of a difference will users notice in scenarios they know very well? Quite a lot, actually.

The Enemy Below

The greatest differences between 1.32 and earlier versions of *Harpoon* concern anti-submarine warfare (ASW). The original *Harpoon* used a very simplified system of sonar modeling. Basically, for each type of sonar suite, the active and passive detection ability was rated as a percentage within the maximum detection range. Any contact which came within either the passive or active envelopes was checked for detection every 30 seconds of game time. As such, even a diesel boat at full stop (so quiet that it should not be detected passively at all by most platforms) would eventually be detected passively. Though the model was acceptable for active sonar ops, it wasn't even close for passive ASW.

Passive sonar detection is the reality of the day, with active ops dictated only in special circumstances, some of which will be discussed later. The rationale behind this reality is simple. Counter-detection ranges may be ten times as much as that in which an active return on a subsurface contact might register on the gear. Sonar suites put so much power through the transducer that they literally boil the water surrounding the dome. As such, a battle group conducting active ASW is sending a locator beacon for their position to any submarine that is listening within a hundred miles or more, depending on ambient conditions.

The new sonar model, billed as a slightly scaled down version of the one which will appear in *Harpoon II*, uses an approach which more closely approximates reality than its predecessor. All passive detection calculations are made based upon the same equation utilized in the fleet, Figure of Merit. Without getting into the mechanics of the calculation too deeply, it is based upon source level, self noise and ambient noise. Source level is the decibel rating of the noise generated by the potential contact. It may be modified by other factors related to target maneuvers. Speed increases, for example, cause extra machinery to start. The noise they make on start up radiates at discrete frequencies known as transients. Other factors which can increase source level is the rate of speed. A submarine traveling above cavitation speed (which varies by class) will have air bubbles forming and collapsing in the prop wash. This is detected by sonar operators as a sizzling sound. Self noise is one's own ship noise related to all of the same factors. To relate these terms, if one's self noise is high, due to excessive speed, for example, it is impossible to detect submarines passively unless their source level is even higher (unlikely unless one is right on top of them). Ambient noise is the source level of the ocean itself, and is affected by sea state, biological activity, local shipping, and ice pack or shoal activity where appropriate. High ambient noise lowers the detection ability of both players.

Passive tracking and classification is a complicated and time consuming process, even for professionals. Since it would be unreasonable to expect the average player to learn the nuances of Target Motion Analysis, the design team artificially induced a delay in calculations to replicate the time lag one would expect between detection and localization of subsurface contacts. Instead of allowing a passive detection attempt every 30 seconds, the program now looks only once every five minutes of game time. This not only allows for proper integration time as the CIC team tries to refine their target solution, it also provides submarine skippers a realistic chance to degrade that solution through maneuvering. Unfortunately, *HDSII* does not allow the em-

TITLE	Harpoon Designer's Series II Post Graduate Naval Operations and Tactics
PRICE	$39.95
SYSTEM	IBM
REQUIREMENTS	386SX with 4MB RAM strongly recommended
PROTECTION	None
DESIGNERS	Mike Steele, Darrel Dearing, Jesse Spears
PUBLISHER	Three Sixty Campbell, CA (408) 879-9144

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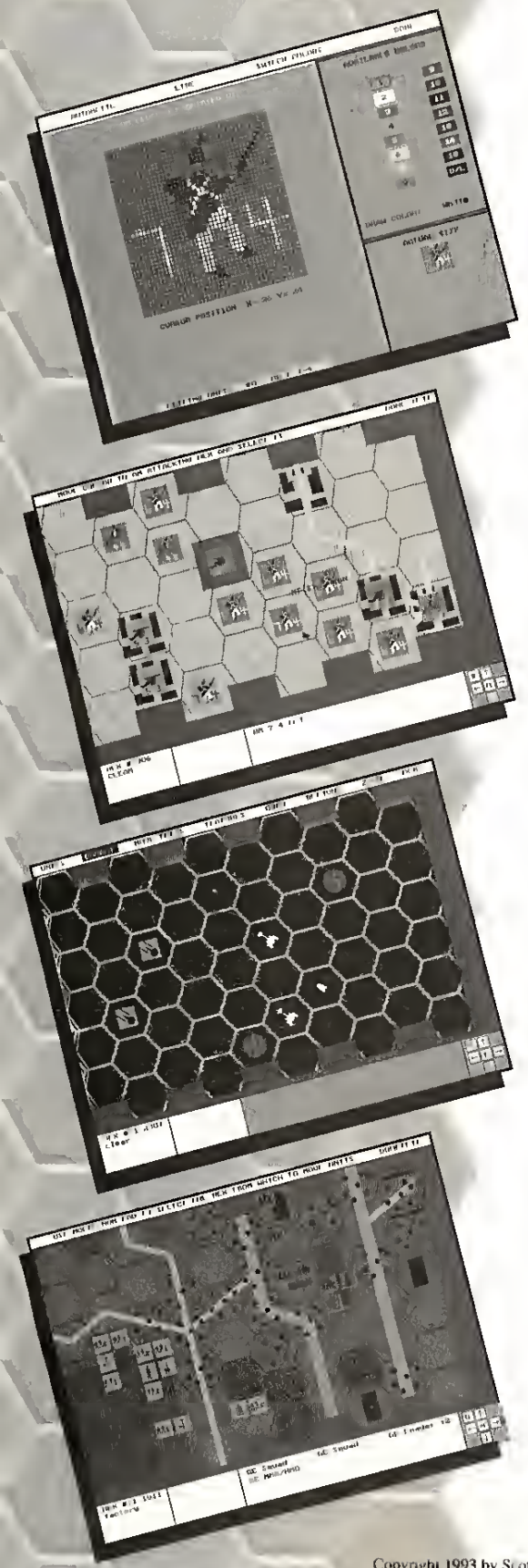

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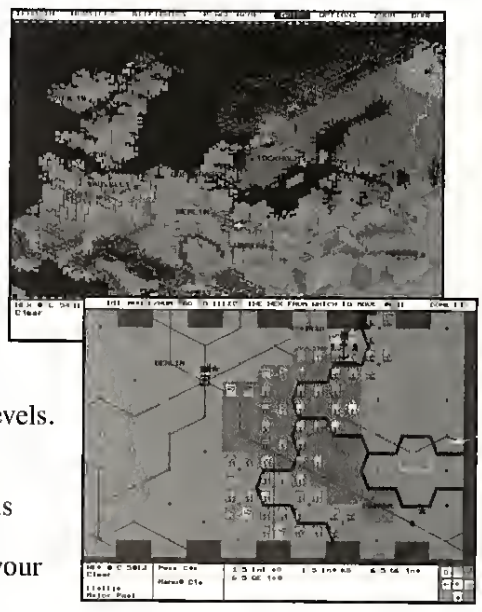

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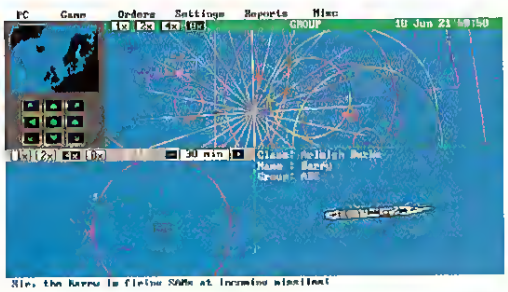
ployment of false target cans (independent sonar sources which are fired from torpedo tubes and maneuver to simulate a submarine), which confuse the problem even further. On the other side of the coin, submariners no longer have the luxury of "instant" speed and depth changes. Subs will maneuver to change their depth gradually, remaining as quiet as possible in the process.

The Active Sonar model now incorporates similar algorithms, with the following modifications. Transmission loss of the sound signal is doubled and target gain is considered. Target gain is how much of the transmitted sound wave is actually reflected back off the target. It is affected by the aspect of the target and the size. Once reflected, the sound waves are still subject to signal loss through reflection and refraction before they return to the transmitting platform in the form of an echo.

Another aspect of ASW that has been totally revised is torpedo modeling. Previously, torpedoes were treated exactly like missiles, which was wholly inaccurate. Now, each torpedo type will behave according to it's preset characteristics. Air launched torpedoes will hit the water and begin an expanding spiral search pattern until the target is acquired or the torp runs out of fuel. Similarly, submarine and ship-launched torpedoes will follow an intercept course to the target, receiving continuous course adjustments (if wire-guided) as long as the firing platform does not maneuver and break the wire. If the wire is broken, or the torpedo reaches the calculated intercept point without acquiring the target, it will begin a snake search pattern. Wake homers will follow their firing course until the wake of a ship is encountered, at which point they will turn and follow that wake (even if it isn't the best choice, torps are dumb animals, remember). In all of these cases, the torpedo must eventually acquire the target with it's seeker head in order to make an attack run. Other minor modifications include manually deployable aircraft sonobuoys and more appropriate speed selection for dual speed torpedoes by the AI opponent.



Vampire! Vampire! Bearing 180 Degrees

Anti-Air and Anti-Surface Warfare (AAW and ASUW respectively) routines have also received a tune up. One of the most significant changes involves heavily laden attack aircraft jettisoning ordnance when engaged by Interceptors or SAMs. This allows them to be more maneuverable and survivable as they try to make it back to home plate to rearm for a follow up strike. The prior version allowed air strikes to continue inbound kamikaze style, such that one could amass large groups of "expendable" pilots and virtually be assured of obtaining hits on any formation, however formidable. Version 1.32 pilots, like their real world counterparts, jealously protect their own hides. As such, players should now prepare their strikes in waves, as opposed to large mixed groups.

Other changes to aircraft modeling include loiter commands to interceptors who cannot engage their original targets, as opposed to returning them to base, and realistic altitude change delays, just as in submatine depth modeling. Computer controlled aircraft will also fly in the altitude band best suited for their mission type, and it is now impossible to engage other aircraft with guns unless one is in the same altitude band.

Missiles and munitions routines have now been modified so that they may only be expended on appropriate target types, plus their salvo size is limited by actual launcher rate of fire constraints. Also, all types of inertially guided weapons may now use bearing-only attacks, so players do not have to wait on a refined targeting solution, if desired. In conjunction with this change, however, all missiles must actually acquire their targets in the terminal homing phase. If not, the missile will begin a search pattern and attack any target that is subsequently detected, even if it was not the target of interest.

AAW missiles also adhere to real world guidance constraints under the new system. Semi-active homers require the firing platform ro actively illuminate the target throughout the intercept. If the guiding radar shuts down for any reason, such as through sucking up a HARM (homing anti-radiation missile), all defensive missiles in flight self destruct. The exception to this rule is the Aegis suites on either Arliegh Burke or Ticonderoga class ships, where the missiles have an inertial mode which will keep them on their last course update until their fuel is expended.

HARMs also behave correctly in 1.32, requiring an active radiation source to complete their attack runs, unless it is a model with onboard memory, that can fly to the location where the emitter was active at the time of its launch, even if the emitter is subsequently shut down. Because HARMs fly at upwards of Mach 4, they still have a relatively decent chance of hitting the platform, though their warheads are small, being designed exclusively to destroy the sensitive components of a radar array. Other minor changes that impact the AAW and ASUW mission areas include more aggressive use of surface gunnery, when appropriate, and the ability of properly equipped helicopters to use blip enhance (a missile counter-targeting feature that allows them to appear as big as a CV). Missiles which engage such deceptive measures always miss the airframe employing them.

When all of these changes are evaluated in the aggregate, astute players will note that the entire system plays differently. In essence, the AI plays a much smarter game and the player is forced to deal with more real world constraints than ever before. There are still some anomalies which plague the computer opponent. Air Strikes, for example, always proceed on a straight intercept from the launching base, allowing knowledgeable players to stack their AAW assets along the threat axis instead of having to worry about 360 degree coverage, as in the real world. These minor glitches, however, do not detract from the authenticity of the simulation in any significant fashion. *HDSII* is one big step closer to becoming the definitive simulation of modern naval warfate. If all of this can be accomplished as revisions to a now antiquated model, one's imagination boggles at the thought of what the *Harpoon* design team has in store for players with a completely new engine in *Harpoon II.*

So You Want To Be A Designer?

The Three-Sixty design team employed a lot of the following guidelines in preparing their contributions to *HDSII.* Budding designers would do well to follow their lead when creating new user scenarios. The elements of good design in this system are diverse, and every single one of them need not be employed each time the player sits down with an idea. What is important, however, is that designers keep all of the key factors in mind and employ them where appropriate.

Two considerations must remain uppermost in the designer's mind throughout the process. First, the scenario should illustrate one or more tactical/strategic principles. Second, it should be accurate with regard to order of battle. The first four scenarios of the GIUK subset of *HDSII* are a perfect example of the first

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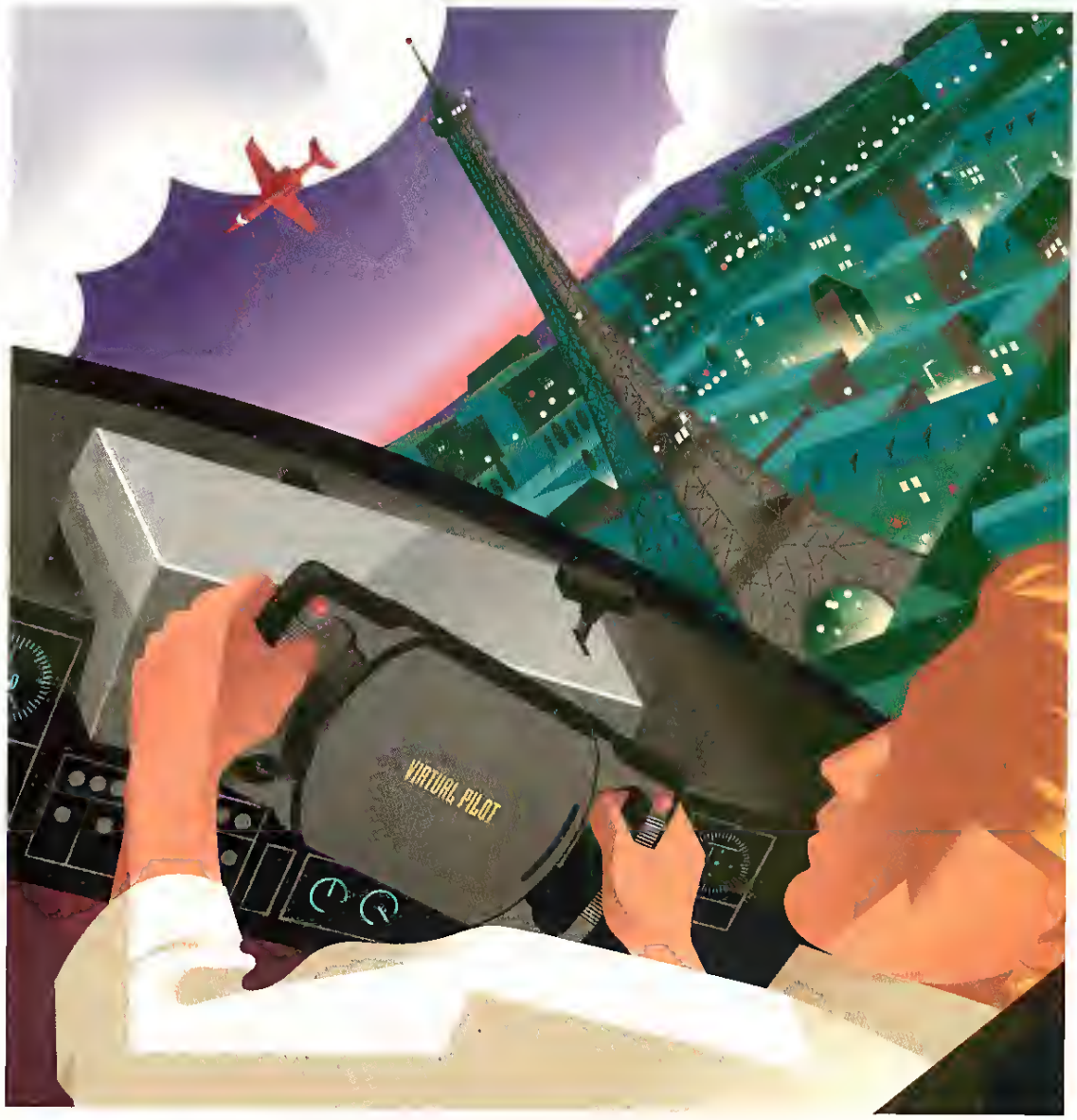

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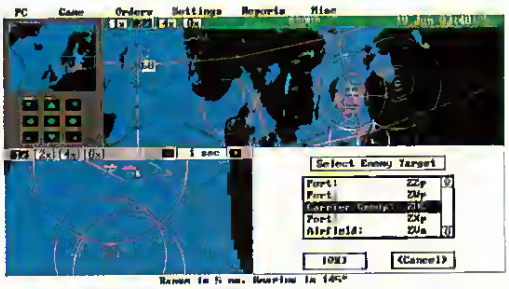
of these points. B.I. Hutchinson has depicted a major U.S. assault on the Kola Peninsula in exactly the four phases one would expect in the real world: Reconnaissance, Ingress, Strike Ops and Egress. The second consideration, that of accuracy, is best accomplished by going to the source. By that, I mean purchasing one of the comprehensive reference books on the subject. The two best are *Jane's Fighting Ships of the World* and *The Naval Institute Guide to Combat Fleets of the World.*



Keeping the aforementioned principles in mind, the next issue for consideration is balance. This is a topic which generates a great deal of debate among designers. Some believe that every scenario must allow either side an equal opportunity at winning. Others, such as Jim Dunnigan (*The Complete Wargames Handbook*/Quill Press), observe that many players prefer to take the inferior side so losing is excusable and any victory obtained is that much sweeter. My philosophy embodies a portion of each approach, mainly because the design system allows a lot of latitude in the specification of victory conditions.

Equality of forces is not necessary as long as the weaker player has challenging but obtainable victory conditions. Allowing the inferior player a "stopper" is often better than actually striving for true balance between opposing forces. Examples of other types of "stoppers" might be a couple of rouge submarines for an inferior side against a vastly superior surface/air combined threat with minimal ASW capability. The combinations are as endless as the designer's imagination.

Other design considerations include geography, starting positions and the presence of neutrals on the battlefield. Whetever geographical choke points exist, straights or narrows, they are prime points for submatine positioning, particularly for diesel boats. Compel players who must transit these areas to sanitize them first, and punish those who don't with a couple of well placed torpedoes. Secondly, don't always start groups in their optimum configuration for the known threat axis. Knowledgeable players will check their formations and alter them accordingly. Finally, always throw one or more neutrals on the battlefield to punish players who shoot first and ask questions later. This reinforces restraint, proper target classification and refining the solution for impatient "trigger happy" captains.

If It Flies, It Dies!

Although, life is hell in a multi-threat environment, the air war is usually winnable (at least for the Blue player). The ptime directive is to shoot the archer, not the arrow. In other words, engage airborne missile launch platforms before they reach their release points if at all possible. For CVBG's, this is best accomplished through Combat Air Patrol (CAP) assets. Position two units of CAP on either side of the expected threat axis at about 200 nautical miles (NM) from the main body. From this vantage point, they will usually be in position to engage incoming groups with AA missiles, in turn causing strike elements to jettison the ordnance which actually threatens the surface assets within the group. This equates to a "mission kill" even if one does not actually eliminate all of the inbound aircraft. Players must watch these engagements closely and dispatch relief CAP to the units on station as soon as they occur, such that follow up waves of attack aircraft are not left unmolested. Non CV groups can be protected with CAP from either nearby CV's or air bases. If the fighters have sufficient range, simply have them loiter at 200 NM along the threat axis from the gtoup to be protected.

Once inbound aircraft have penetrated the outer defenses, the player may have a second opportunity to engage them with CAP in ready 5 status (in the case of short shooters, like maverick equipped aircraft), but the bulk of them will become the tesponsibility of formation AAW assets. In this area, the playet has a little latitude tactically. Within the main body, shooters should be positioned such that they can provide a layered defense and overlapping coverage to protect the high value unit (HVU), which is usually the CV, LPH, LCC, Support ship or merchant group.

Each class of AAW ship usually has several methods of defeating inbound aircraft or missiles, including either long or medium range missile systems, point defense systems like Phalanx (which are only effective against missiles targeted at one's own ship, due to doppler restrictions) and electronic countermeasures, such as range gate pull off. The latter is a method of modifying missile seeker head radar returns to convince it that the target is actually in a position other than reality. To protect the HVU, however, one's optimal position is between it and the inbound missile group, since crossing shots are the most difficult intercepts to complete. Hence, main body positioning of AAW assets is critical. A good rule of thumb is to place Aegis equipped ships in close proximiry to the HVU, while placing lesser shooters (DDG's and FFG's) in sectors 8,000 to 16,000 yards from the main body on either side of the threat axis.

More sophisticated tactics involve the use of AAW picket ships in either a missile trap or silent SAM configuration. When the tactical situation dictates that main body assets must adopt an active emission posture (i.e., their detection and localization is assured to enemy forces), positioning one or two cruisers 100-150 NM from the main body on the threat axis in total emission silence is ideal. In this configuration, the cruiser(s) can act as a missile trap, going active with their air search radars only when the incoming raid has been detected by other means and is within their engagement envelope. Silent SAM is similat in terms of stationing distance, but it is a tactic that never requires the shooter to illuminate the target. SM1 ER equipped cruisers can receive targeting data from cruisers in the main body and shoot inbound aircraft silently, without putting themselves at risk.

The final consideration for proper AAW management is airborne early warning. The premier platform for this mission is the E-3 AWACs, but it is constrained by being only a land based asset. If they are available, use these airframes to the maximum extent possible. If not, E-2 Hawkeyes are the weapon of choice to keep savvy CVBG Commanders appraised of the air threat. A well positioned E-2 eliminates the need for the CVBG to use active emissions altogethet, thereby confounding the enemy's targeting efforts. He will know you are in the area, because E-2s don't materialize out of thin air, but he won't be able to localize you well enough to attack without resorting to methods other than ESM.

Control Of The Seas

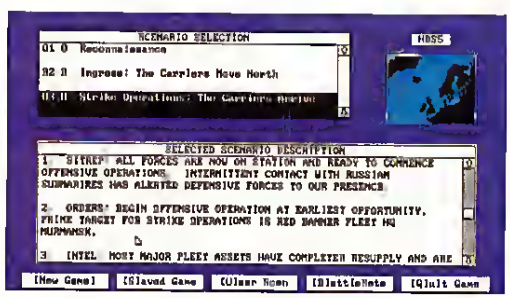
ASUW is slightly more difficult than AAW, because one must invest more time establishing hostile intent and refining the over-the-horizon targeting solution. Several factors must be considered when one is contemplating an ASUW strike, including target composition, optimal delivery platforms, supporting arms and timing. For this discussion, ASUW strikes will include attacks against bases.

Surface assets begin with a very limited number of ASUW

weapons. So, utilizing air gtoups to prosecute the attack is more desirable. Not any air gtoup constitutes an appropriate strike, however. Proper strike planning requires the player to consider the enemy's defenses and the amount of ordnance that must be deliveted to achieve the objective of the strike. Weapon types must be matched to target types but, more importantly, the strike aircraft must be given a reasonable chance of reaching their launch points. The best method of achieving this objective, under the current *Harpoon* model, is a stream attack. In lieu of launching a massive mixed group of aircraft to execute the attack, the player should launch sevetal groups in the order they will engage enemy defenses.

Consider a strike against an enemy CVBG, for example. First, the player should launch 4-8 fightets in two groups on pattol missions in the area one would expect to encounter enemy CAP. You cannot launch them on strike missions because their otdnance does not match the target type. Immediately following this, the playet should launch all ARM or HARM capable aircraft to engage any air search radars that go active in the target gtoup. Assuming success in blinding the enemy, the test of the groups will have a milk run. Follow with the main body of the strike force, using guided munitions if possible and iton bombs as a last resott. This group should be mixed with ECM aircfaft, such as the EA-6B, increasing their survivability. If several types of strike aircfaft will be used, each should be launched as a separate group to maximize the chances of the strike achieving its objective.

When ait assets are unavailable to prosecute the target, surface forces must considet other factots to maximize their attacks. First, one must be assured of a refined, complete targeting solution prior to committing the limited assets in the magazine. Second, one must ascertain the composition of the target group. Are they, in fact, hostile? Will the weapons to be employed ensure saturation, based on available intelligence? If the answer to either question is "No," then hold off on the attack. If one is certain that conditions ate right to proceed, then the next step is to te-evaluate salvo size based upon what you know about the enemy's anti-ship missile defenses (ASMD) and the PK (Probability of Kill) of the weapon you are employing.



Assume a missile PK of 80% and a tatget vessel capable of firing thtee AAW missiles (with theit PK at 60%) in the time that your missiles are in the envelope. With a single target vessel, a salvo of four missiles is likely to have two survive and entet the terminal phase of guidance. Within that phase, either point defense systems ot the ECM suite is capable of killing both, but it is likely that at least one will survive with an 80% base chance of hitting the tatget.

Of course, the problem is grossly more complicated when one is tatgeting a formation of ships. There, the overlapping air defenses compliment one another, and one must commit a lot of scarce ASUW missiles to ensute a modicum of success. In such a case, it is best to try to coordinate two ot more ASUW attacks from different bearings with a simultaneous time on top of target. While not easy to accomplish, players who do so ate rewarded with appropriate results.

Where enemy forces have equivalent launch ranges for ASUW weapons, prudent players will dispatch a Surface Action Group (SAG) instead of endangering their HVU. SAGs are good for taking the battle to the enemy. They can transit faster than the battlegroup and prosecute the attack quicker. One must ensure, however, that SAG composition is both adequate to accomplish the mission and to defend itself against potential threats. From the Blue perspective, a good SAG should include at least four medium tange ASUW shooters, one long range AAW shooter, one medium range AAW shooter and, if an ASW threat is present, a couple of towed array/helo equipped platforms to counter the subs. This means four ships of proper capability, not eight total, because each ship class is multi-mission capable. Finally, if one wants to appreciate the need for follow-up damage assessment, the animations option should be disabled, increasing uncertainty for enemy ships which are damaged, but not desttoyed by the player's attack.

Run Silent, Run Deep

As one may have discerned by the discussion up to this point, ASW is the most difficult of all the mission areas. Enemy submarines, if ptoperly employed, are the most deadly threat to be faced. To minimize this threat, playets must employ a concept of layered defense similar to that used in AAW planning. The ideal method of engagement is to prosecute enemy submarines with ait assets (invulnerable to counterattack at the time of this writing) well in advance of the arrival of friendly surface groups. This is known as area ASW and is best conducted by long range assets which can remain on station for an adequate petiod of time with large sonobuoy loads, such as the P-3 Orion. In the Notth Atlantic Convoy's Scenarios, for example, these units may be employed to create 30 mile wide sanitized corridors for the strategic btidge concept of convoy resupply to the European theater.

For submarines that escape this outer defensive tactic, ptudent battle group commanders will have stationed ASW picket ships 16,000-20,000 yatds in advance of the battle group's PIM, to escape the ambient noise of the main body and provide early warning of the leakers through passive sonar contact. Subs that are detected in this manner are best prosecuted using indigenous helicopter assets (two dippers and an SH-2 is best for the Blue player). In this manner, the firing platforms are not subject to counter attack.

Failing this, submatines which are detected in a convergence zone (CZ) can be prosecuted by dispatching a Surface Action Unit (SAU). SAU composition should be at least two ASW capable surface ships that can use Sprint and Drift tactics to close with the datum while the main body turns away. Again, if helo prosecution is available, it should be utilized to avoid endangering the host platforms. If not, close with the contact until an over the side shot is obtainable. Despite one's best ptotection, however, an occasional submarine will not appear until one of the main body units sucks up a torpedo. In this instance, the only recourse is to maneuver immediately, go active on all sonars, launch all teady ASW aircraft and take every action to minimize damage until the unwelcome intruder can be eliminated.

Back At Home Port

If one is fortunate enough to tip a glass of champagne at the end of an arduous campaign, it is an accomplishment worth toasting. The fruits of victory are often bittersweet, as one may leave behind many comrades in the process, but survival and mission accomplishment remain the prime directives. Hopefully, this article has allowed a greater harvest of these fruits, and encouraged a broader appreciation of their cost. Until we meet, either as allies or enemies, hete's wishing fair winds and following seas to all! **CGW**

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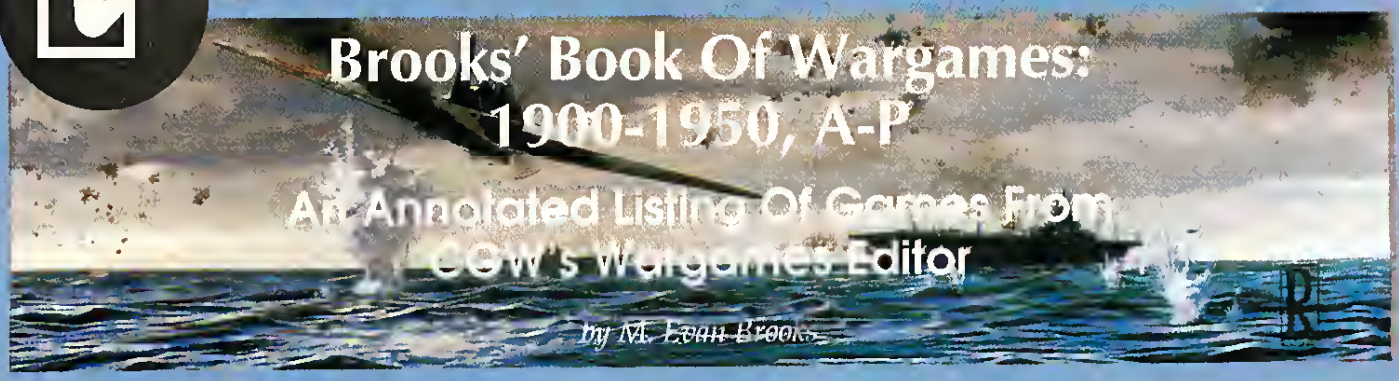
An Annotated Listing Of Games From CGW's Wargames Editor

by M. Evan Brooks



Aces of the Pacific art Courtesy of Dynamix

When it comes to wargames, World War II continues to produce more titles than any other single period of history. Although this period was previously covered in *CGW* #37 and *CGW* #88-89, the rapid pace of releases tends to mandate occasional updates.

The computer market is no longer shifting as rapidly among different computer types as it once was. During the 8-bit era, games had to be produced for different machine types, each of which was completely incompatible with its competitors. Today, the MS-DOS machine has gained a virtual domination of the market, but incompatibilities within the MS-DOS market itself are becoming more varied than the 8-bit market ever was. DOS 5.0 and expanded memory are virtually required; CGA graphics are extinct, and newer games require SVGA graphics cards; clock speeds below 33 MHz are becoming unsupported, and it is likely that the machine of the near-future may be the 486-66. The games themselves are growing ever larger, and it is not unusual to have a game with 10 high-density disks. Sound support also causes a disconnect between machine use, and there is no fix likely to appear.

Please note platform availability; a five-star game on an Atari 800 that is several years old is not of the same sophistication as a new product designed for a SVGA 486-66 PC. However, it has been given its rating for what it did, to a lesser extent what it still does, and perhaps for the place it holds in this reviewer's heart and memory. Of course, the designers look askance at these ratings, and often deluge the magazine with voluminous complaints. Again, though, these are intrinsically subjective, and a discriminating reader should be able to temper the ratings with this writer's normal reviews in order to ascertain the inherent biases. In all candor, I have intentionally taken steps to reduce the ratings of older games; the computer market's "flavor of the week" simply cannot sustain an older platform vehicle and product.

Prices are difficult to determine for older games, since they are so heavily discounted, assuming they can be found at all. Thus, be aware that the prices are only a tough guideline. Also, since this guide is for reference, one should be aware that prices shift downwards rapidly.

We are not omniscient; there are many holes in the data contained. Rather than delete those titles for which we have little information, they have been included for completeness. And now the CHALLENGE: a one-year subscription will be given to the reader filling in the most omissions/corrections. Please send your submissions to me in care of this magazine or via modem (on GEnie, address: M.E. Brooks; on Prodigy, HFTN43A). I will do the judging, and all decisions are final. The deadline for submissions will be three months after this article is published.

LEGEND: xxx = Data not available

LINE 1: Title/Rating

Ratings:

0	= Good use as a magnet holder
★	= Avoid
★★	= Marginal
★★★	= Average to Good
★★★★	= Very Good
★★★★★	= Highly Recommended
N-R	= Not Rated

LINE 2: Machine Format [(A)tari/(C)ommodore/(Ap)ple II/(T)RS-80/II(GS)/(Am)iga/(ST)/(M)acintosh/(I)BM];
Issue of CGW in which that game was mentioned; bold print refers to major article
(Company/Designer/Date of Publication/Price)
(O/P: Out of Print)

LINE 3: Difficulty (Beg)inner/(Int)ermediate/(Adv)anced
Environment
(Land)/(Nav)al/(Air)/(Dip)lomatic/(Econ)omic
Level (Tac)tical/(Op)erational/(Str)ategic
# of Players (M: modem option)

Level Definitions

Tactical: man-to-man up to company level
(turns represent seconds to hours)
Operational: battalion-level to division-level
(turns represent hours to weeks)
Strategic : corps-level to theater army or higher
(turns represent weeks to years)

Military Organization:

Fire Team	2-3
Squad	9-12
Platoon	40-50
Company	120-150
Battalion	500-1,000
Brigade	3,000-5,000
Division	10,000-15,000
Corps	20,000-80,000
Army	100,000-up

ACE OF ACES (★+)

(A/C/I; #32,38) Accolade; Michael Bates and Rich Banks; 1986; $29.95
Beg/Air/Tac/1
A simplistic flight simulator offering a somewhat ahistorical rendition of fighter combat during World War II.

ACES OF THE PACIFIC (★★★★)

(I; #92,98,99,101) Dynamix; Damon Slye; 1992; $69.95;
Int/Air/Tac-Op/1
A World War II flight simulator, reminiscent of *Battlehawks*, but in Dynamix's own style. Until Electronic Arts' *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat*, LucasFilm had claimed World War II aerial operations as its private domain. The situation has obviously changed. Although *Aces*' initial release was plagued with a slow frame rate and other "undocumented features," later fixes have converted it into *the* flight simulator of World War II.

ACES OVER EUROPE (N-R)

(I) Dynamix; Damon Slye; 1993; xxx; N-R
Int/Air/Tac-Op/1
Dynamix takes its system into the Western Front. Sadly, while *Aces of the Pacific* covered the entire war, *Aces Over Europe* covets only the latter half of June 1944. See *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* for similar coverage.

ACTION IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC (N-R)

(Ap/I; #70,74) General Quarters; Owen P. Hall, Jr.; 1989; $35.00
Beg/Nav/Tac-Op/0-2; M
World War II and the Murmansk run, with an emphasis on strategy rather than the minimalist graphics. Sink the Scharnhorst!

ACTION OFF THE RIVER PLATTE (N-R)

(Ap/I) General Quarters; Owen P. Hall, Jr.; xxx; $35.00
Beg/Nav/Tac-Op/0-2; M
Pursuit and destruction of the German "pocket battleship" Graf Spee.

ACTION STATIONS (★★★+)

(Am/I; #68) RAW; CDR Alan Zimm; 1989; $49.95
Adv/Nav/Tac-Op/1-2
A very comprehensive simulation of surface warfare during World War II (actually 1922-45). Excellent research and complexities are marred by poor graphics and an awkward user interface. Still, it is the most detailed simulation covering this period. Presumably Three-Sixty's *Victory at Sea* will offer this product competition.

ACTION STATIONS SCENARIO DISK (★★★+)

(Am/I) RAW; CDR Alan Zimm; 1992; $21.95
Adv/Nav/Tac-Op/1-2
More ships and options for *Action Stations*.

AFTER PEARL (★★★)

(A; #4.6,37) SuperWare; George Schwenk; 1984; O/P
Beg/Nav/Op-Str/1-2
A strategic simulation of the War in the Pacific

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(1941-1945), this game beats little resemblance to history. Reminiscent of Avalon Hill's boardgame *Victory in the Pacific*, it is quick and fun to play. A "cotton candy" game, it may well rot your mind, but this reviewer still likes it.

AFRIKA CORPS (N-R)
(Am/ST; #87) Impressions; Ken Wright; 1991
Int/Land/Op/1
A British release, this simulation of the North African Campaign was never released in the United States.

AIDE DE CAMP (★★★★)
(I) HPS; Scott Hamilton; 1993; $79.95
Int/Land-Nav-Air/Tac-Op-Str/I
Not a game as much as a gamer's aid. This utility program will assist one to convert any board wargame to computer output, albeit without the AI. Once files are created, games can be played by e-mail. A library of conversions by dedicated users is already under way.

AIRDUEL (N-R)
(I; #107) MicroProse; xxx; 1993; $59.95
Int/Air/Tac/1
Covering air warfare from 1915-1990, this is more of a game than a simulation. Somewhat reminiscent of *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat*, it is the only product that allows a match up of Fokker and Phantom—presumably a one-sided duel. Initially scheduled to be released as *Dogfight*.

AIR RAID PEARL HARBOR (N-R)
(Ap/I) General Quarters; Owen P. Hall, Jr.; xxx; $35.00
Beg/Nav/Tac-Op/0-2; M
Variations on an unplayable theme? Based upon the title and description, this simulation of the Japanese assault on Pearl Harbor in 1941 must be for either sadists or masochists (depending on which side is played).

AIR WARRIOR (★★★+)
(#63; 67) GEnie; Kesmai; 1988; $6.00/hour
Int/Air/Tac/1-multi; M
An on-line simulation of tactical air combat from World War I onwards. Continually being revised and updated, it is interesting although it can become an expensive way of life. The learning curve is lengthy, but veteran pilots are often available on-line who are willing to give assistance and tutorials.

AIR WARRIOR, SVGA (★★★+)
(I; #101, 106) Konami; Kesmai; 1993; $59.95;
Int/Air/Tac/1-multi; M
The commercial stand-alone of *Air Warrior*, it allows one to practice off-line or simply enjoy a solitaire mission. With front-end graphics and a smooth interface to GEnie, it serves as a conduit to the multi-player version. However, flight mechanics are so realistic that often it becomes "not just an adventure, but a job."

ANCIENT ART OF WAR IN THE SKIES (★★+)
(I; #101,103,104) MicroProse; Dave and Barry Murry; 1992; $59.95
Int/Air/Tac-Op/1
Aerial operations of World War I done in a "cutesy" fashion, it is a "beer and pretzels" game. Graphics and gameplay are satisfactory, albeit not exemplary.

ARNHEM: THE MARKET-GARDEN OPERATION (N-R)
(Am/I; #86) CSS; R. T. Smith; 1991; xxx
Int/Land/Op/1-3
"Monty's Folly" in hexadecimal.

AT THE GATES OF MOSCOW (N-R)
(A/C/Ap; #25) SGP; David Heath; 1985; O/P
Int/Land/Op/0-multi
A computer game released simultaneously with the board game version, it covers the 1941 Axis drive on Moscow. Neither product has withstood the test of time.

B-17 FLYING FORTRESS (★★★)
(Am/I; #101,102) MicroProse; Mike Brunton; 1992; $69.95
Int-Adv/Tac-Op/1
A detailed flight simulation of the B-17, its graphics are both excellent (internal views) and sub-marginal (external views). Bomber operations are inherently dull (somewhat akin to driving an unwieldy bus on a fixed route), and this simulation more than covers the topic.

B-24 COMBAT SIMULATOR (★★)
(C/Ap/I/; #39) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; John Gray; 1987; O/P
Int/Air/Tac/1
A simulation of the World War II Ploesti oil raids, the player must join his B-24 to the formation, fly to the target, and inflict maximum damage. While accurate, the game suffers somewhat from a repetitious nature and the fact that a single bomber in a raid offers little room for initiative. Superseded by *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe*.

BANZAI (N-R)
(Ap/I; #85) General Quarters; Owen P. Hall, Jr.; 1991; $35.00
Beg/Nav/Tac/0-2; M
The last voyage of the Japanese super-battleship Yamato in a tactical battle simulation of World War II Pacific action.

BATTLE COMMAND (N-R)
(C; #40;74) Applied Computer Consultants; Bob Sinclair; 1986; O/P
Int/Land/Tac/2; M

BATTLE CRUISER (★★)
(A/C/Ap; #37,38) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Gary Grigsby; 1987; O/P
Adv/Nav/Tac/1-2
The sequel to *Warship*, this simulation covers World War II in the Atlantic and World War I. Similar to its predecessor, it suffers the same strengths and weaknesses.

BATTLE FOR MIDWAY (N-R)
(C) Firebird; xxx; 1986; O/P
Int/Nav-Air/Tac-Op/1
Players command the US Pacific Fleet six months after Pearl.

BATTLEFRONT (★★★)
(C/Ap; #32,37) Strategic Studies Group; Roger Keating and Ian Trout; 1987; $39.95
Int/Land/Op/0-2
A very flexible game covering corps-level combat and proper use of the chain of command during World War II. Design-your-own scenarios open the bulk of the 20th century to gaming; however, the artificial intelligence of subordinate commanders is notoriously weak. The game system will either attract or repel the player—there is no middle ground.

BATTLEGROUND (N-R)
(I; #40) MVP Software; xxx; 1987; O/P
Int/Land/Tac/2
Tactical squad-level operations on the Western Front during WWII.

BATTLE GROUP (★★)
(C/Ap/I; #27,29) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Gary Grigsby; 1986; O/P; ★★
Adv/Land/Tac/1-2
SSI's World War II Western Front sequel to *Kampfgruppe*, this simulation offers tactical scenarios and the ability to design-your-own. Not as successful as its antecedent, it suffers from the same problems.

BATTLE HAWKS 1942 (★★★)
(I; #53,63,64) LucasArts; Noah Falstein and Lawrence Holland; 1988; $29.95
Int/Air/Tac/1
A combat simulator of the major carrier battles of World War II from the cockpit perspective. The graphics, excellent when released, pale in comparison to newer releases; however, excellent documentation and quick play keep this product a real player. There are rumors that LucasArts is considering a newer version, which would bring it up to the state-of-the-art for the faster machines currently available.

BATTLE OF BRITAIN (★★★)
(M; #99) Deadly Games, Rene Vidmer; 1992; $54.95; N-R
Int/Air/Op/1
Strategic level air warfare. Players command beleaguered RAF against intelligent German raids.

BATTLE OF BRITAIN (N-R)
(C) Firebird; xxx; 1986; O/P; N-R
Int/Air/Op/1

BATTLES OF THE ATLANTIC (N-R)
(Ap/ST/I; #5.2,29) Simulations Canada; L. Howie; 1986; $60.00
Adv/Nav/Op/1-2
A World War II simulation. An amalgamation of a board and computer game, it uses map, counters and computer.

BATTLE OF THE BULGE (N-R)
(I) Ark Royal; Carl Carpenter; 1988; O/P
Int/Land/Op/1-2

BATTLESHIP BISMARCK (N-R)
(Ap/I; #74) General Quarters; Owen P. Hall, Jr.; 1991; $35.00
Beg/Nav/Tac-Op/0-2; M
World War II pursuit of the German battleship by British Naval Forces.

BATTLESHIP (N-R)
(C/ST/A/I; #55) Epyx; xxx; 1988; O/P
Beg/Nav/Tac/1-2
The old Milton Bradley *Battleship* game with a couple of new ideas and twists.

BATTLE STATIONS (N-R)
(M) TimeLine, Ltd.; M. L. Samford and W. P. Worzel; 1986; O/P
Beg/Nav/Tac/1-2
Again, the old Milton Bradley *Battleship* game with other new ideas and twists not found in either the computer or boardgame versions.

BATTLE STATIONS (N-R)
(Ap/I) General Quarters; Owen [illegible], Jr.; xxx; $35.00

Beg/Nav/Tac-Op/0-2; M
A simulation of the WWII USS Houston, historically a lopsided contest with a few American and Allied forces attempting to stem the Imperial Japanese fleet at its zenith.

BATTLE TANK: BARBAROSSA TO STALINGRAD (N-R)
(Am/ST/I; #72) Simulations Canada; Stephen Newburg and Stephen St. John; 1990; $60.00
Adv/Land/Op-Tac/1-2
Tactical armored combat in the East, June 1941-May 1943.

BATTLE TANK: KURSK TO BERLIN (N-R)
(Am/ST/I) Simulations Canada; Stephen Newburg and Stephen St. John; 1991; $60.00
Adv/Land/Op-Tac/1-2
Tactical armored combat in the East, June 1943-May 1945.

BIG THREE (N-R)
(I; #96) SDJ; Steven D. Jones; 1991; $29.95
Int/Land/Str/2-3
A shareware-style version of World War II in Europe, lacking any AI.

BISMARCK: THE NORTH SEA CHASE (★+)
(C/Ap; #42) DataSoft; Anthony Sroddart; 1987; O/P
Beg/Nav/Tac-Op/1
An arcade-type simulation of the chase for the Bismarck, this product offers little innovation, insight or play value.

BLITZKRIEG: BATTLE AT THE ARDENNES (★)
(Am/I;#67) RAW; Al and Joseph Benincasa; 1989; $49.95
Adv/Land/Op/1-2
The Battle of the Bulge during World War II.

BLUE MAX (★)
(I; #76,77,78,83) Three Sixty; Rick Banks and Paul Butler; 1990; $49.95
Int/Air/Tac/1-2
First out of the blocks in the 1990-91 World War I air simulator competition, and it shows. More a game than a representation of reality, it does not really succeed on either level.

BLOOD AND IRON: BATTLES OF THE BIG RED ONE (N-R)
(I) Twin Dolphins; Paul Meyer; 1993(?); xxx
Int/Land/Tac/1-2
A forthcoming release which simulates small unit tactics during World War II. It looks interesting, and should merit a closer examination upon release.

BOMB ALLEY (★+)
(Ap; #3.4) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Gary Grigsby; 1982; O/P
Adv/Air-Nav/Op-Str/1-2
Gary Grigsby's sequel to *Guadalcanal Campaign*, this treatment of the World War II Meditetranean Campaign was not a success in its initial release. Time has not revised this judgment.

BREAKTHROUGH IN THE ARDENNES (★+)
(A/C/Ap/I; #5.1,33,37) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; David Landrey and Chuck Kroegel; 1983; O/P
Adv/Land/Op/1-2
A follow-on to *Operation Market-Garden*, this game suffers the same strengths and weaknesses. Better than *Tigers in the Snow*, it is more complex and obsolescent.

BULGE—THE BATTLE FOR ANTWERP (★)
(C) Green Valley Publishing; xxx; 1985; O/P
Beg/Land/Op/1-2
Real-time Battle of the Bulge game which boasts "no manual required." Player intelligence also appears to be optional.

CAMPAIGN (★★+)
(Am/ST/I; #102,104) Empire; Jonathan Griffiths; 1992; $59.95
Int/Land/Op-Tac/1
Billed as a strategic/tactical simulation of the World War II Western Front, it is adequate on the former level and almost an arcade rendition of the latter. Some interface inadequacies contribute to the "vanillaness" of this product.

CARRIER FORCE (★★)
(A/C/Ap; #4.2,4.6,27,29,37) Strategic Simulations Inc.; Gary Grigsby; 1983; O/P
Adv/Nav-Air/Op/1-2
A tactical/operational simulation of the major Pacific carrier battles of World War II, it is marred by extremely slow execution and historical inaccuracy in some areas. Obviously dated, it has been superseded by designer Gary Grigsby's newer treatment of the same subject, *Carrier Strike*.

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CARRIERS AT WAR (★★★)
(C/Ap/I; #5,15,22,37) Strategic Studies Group; Roger Keating and Ian Trout; 1984; $50.00
Int/Nav-Air/Op/1-2
Similar in coverage to *Carrier Force*, it excels in its flexibility, options and limited intelligence. It is broader in scope than *Carrier Force*. Highly recommended for the 8-bit market.

CARRIERS AT WAR, 2ND EDITION (★★★+)
(I; #90,100,102) Strategic Studies Group Roger Keating and Ian Trout; 1992; $69.99
Int/Nav-Air/Op/1-2
Upgraded into the cutrent computer technologies, *Carriers at War* is graphically attractive and offers excellent gameplay. Its major flaw is the lack of a campaign, and each scenario is a stand-alone operation, allowing the player to "go-for-broke" and not worry about conserving assets for future operations.

CARRIERS AT WAR CONSTRUCTION KIT (N-R)
(I) Strategic Studies Group; Roger Keating and Ian Trout; 1993; xxx
Int/Nav-Air/Op/1-2
The other half of *Carriers at War*, the documentation is voluminous and offers a fascinating look into carrier opetations during World Wat II.

CARRIER STRIKE (★★★★)
(I; #97,98,99) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Gary Grigsby; 1992; $59.95/$29.95
Int/Nav-Air/Op/0-2
Gary Grigsby's updated version of *Carrier Force*, it does not have the graphic capabilities of *Carriers at War*, but it does have a campaign option. While I consider this to be a worthwhile option, I do have to admit that my 15-year old son would not even bother booting this up, although he was fascinated with *Carriers at War*. In summary, I would recommend this to the grognard, while *Carriers at War* has more appeal to the MTV generation.

CARRIER STRIKE Expansion Disk (★★)
(I; #104) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Gary Grigsby; 1992; $29.95
Adv/Nav/Op/1-2
More scenarios and a 1946 campaign offer new play value, albeit the retail cost is somewhat high.

CHUCK YEAGER'S AIR COMBAT (★★★+)
(I; #85,86) Electronic Arts; Brent Iverson; 1991; $59.95
Adv/Air/Tac/1
A flight simulator offering the ability to fly scenarios in World War II, Korea or Vietnam, or mix-and-match them. Good game play and an excellent post-mission analysis yield a recommendation.

CLASH OF STEEL (★★★★+)
(I; #109) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Martin Scholz; 1993; $69.95
Int/Land-Nav/Str/0-3
A strategic and eminently playable simulation of World War II in the entire European Theater (including both Eastern and Western Theaters). Reminiscent of Avalon Hill's *Hitler's War*, it is everything that *Storm Across Europe* should have been and wasn't.

CLASH OF WILLS (★)
(A/C; #5,4,29,37) DKG; Marc Summerlott; 1985; O/P
Int/Land/Str/1-3
A strategic simulation of the war in Europe (1939-1945), covering both Eastern and Western Fronts. Primitive graphics and poor user interface coupled with extremely poor documentation will deter most players. Yet, its sheer scope does offer some playability and enjoyment. But for a more current treatment see *Clash of Steel*.

CLOSE ASSAULT (★)
(A/Ap; #3.3) Avalon Hill; Gary Bedrosian; 1983; $35.00
Beg/Land/Tac/1-2
A World War II tactical infantry simulation, with the computer utilized as a board-game assistant. Using a hex-grid map and counters, it has touches of the boardgames *Squad Leader* and *Panzerblitz*. However, it is awkward, clumsy and obsolete.

COMBAT LEADER (★★)
(A/C; #37) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; David Hille; 1984; O/P
Beg/Land/Tac/1
A tactical simulation of armored warfare (squad/platoon) with built-in as well as design-your-own scenarios, the game offers a myriad of options. Quick playing, but with primitive graphics (destroyed armored vehicles resemble nothing so much as cockroaches).

COMMAND HQ (★★★+)
(I/M; #74,76,77,79,80) MicroProse; Dan Bunten; 1990; $59.95
Int/Land-Nav-Air/Str/1-2; M
A product capahle of recreating World Wars I-IV(?), this is a modified "beer and pretzels" game. Highly recommended for entertainment, although not as a historical learning experience.

COMPUTER AIR COMBAT (N-R)
(Ap) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Charles Merrow and Jack Avery; 1980; O/P
Adv/Air/Tac/1
A computet-clone of Yaquinto's boardgames *Air Force* and *Dauntless*, this covers tactical air combat during World Wat II. One of the first air combat simulations, this sparked the birth of *Computer Gaming World* as a forum fot setious reviews.

COMPUTER AMBUSH (★★+)
(A/C/Ap/M/ST/I; #3.3,37) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Ed Williger and Larry Strawser; 1980; O/P
Adv/Land/Tac/1-2
A tactical man-to-man simulation of patrolling in World War II. The graphics are extremely primitive, but the details make up for this deficiency to a large extent. Users still plaintively ask for an updated version of this simulation.

COMPUTER BISMARCK (N-R)
(A) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Joel Billings; 1980; O/P
Int/Nav/Tac/1
The game that started SSI, its age and functional obsolescence make this product useful only to the collector. More of a computer assist to a hoardgame than a true computer game.

COMPUTER THIRD REICH (N-R)
(Am/ST; #62;86,97) Avalon Hill; Thalcan Software; 1992; $39.95
Adv/Land-Nav-Air/Op-Str/0-3
The computer translation of the classic board wargame. Wargamers were expectant, but having been burned by the Avalon Hill software division before, the mediocre AI of this product was not a real surprise.

COMPUTER THIRD REICH
(I) Avalon Hill; Thalean Softwate; 1993(?); xxx; N-R
Adv/Land-Nav-Air/Op-Str/0-3
The MS-DOS version has been promised with totally new graphics and a challenging AI. The betting line on this one is not high.

CONQUER FOR WINDOWS (N-R)
(I) Elpin; Harold Habeck; 1993; $69.95; N-R
Int/Land-Nav-Air/Str-Op/1-2; M, Network
An *Empire*-clone for Windows offering modem and network play. It has fewer unit types than the usual *Empire* "me too" and a bit more emphasis on economics.

CRUSADE IN EUROPE (★★★★)
(C/Ap/I; #5,3,5,5,26,37) MictoProse; Sid Meier and Ed Bever; 1985; O/P
Int/Land/Op-Str/1-2
An operational/strategic simulation of the Western Front during World War II, the scenarios offer real value. The campaign suffers ftom an incompetent computer opponent, but this product has aged well. Now if they would only offer the hard drive installable version.

DAS BOOT (★★)
(Am/I; #74,76,82) Three Sixty; Paul Butler and Rick Banks; 1991; $49.95
Int/Nav/Tac/1
A World War II submarine simulation, it is not as sophisticated as *Silent Service II* and contains some mindless arcade segments, but it does allow one to play the German side.

DAWN PATROL (N-R)
(C) Mark of the Falcon; Scott C. Baggs; 1985; O/P
Int/Nav/Tac/1
A real-time World War II submarine simulation.

DECISION IN THE DESERT (★★★★)
(C/Ap/I; #5.5,37) MicroProse; Sid Meier and Ed Bever; 1985; O/P
Int/Land/Op/1-2
An operational study of the Desert Campaign in World War II, it offers a fascinating study, which will teach appropriate lessons in armored desert warfare. More accurate than *Crusade in Europe*, but narrower in scope. Even with age, this game is still enjoyable.

DESERT FOX (★)
(C; #36) Accolade; Sydney Development Corp.; 1985; $19.95
Beg/Land/Op/1
An operational simulation of the African Campaign, it attempted to mix both arcade play and simulation, and ultimately failed on both levels.

DESERT RATS (★★)
(I; #54,58) CCS; R.T. Smith; 1989, $39.95
Int/Land/Op/1-2
Similar in coverage to *Decision in the Desert*, it offers a scenario of the entire campaign (in 672 turns!!). Awkward user mechanics and primitive graphics mar this product; age has turned it to vinegar, and it's not even that old.

DESERT WAR (N-R)
(M; #60) SJP; xxx; 1989; xxx
xxx/Land/Tac-Op/1-2

DESTROYER (★★)
(C/Ap/I/GS; #33) Epyx; xxx; 1986; O/P
Int/Nav/Tac/1
Graphic-emphasis yields an interesting portrayal of World War II destroyer operations. However, the documentation and scenarios are underdeveloped. Again, age has rendered it obsolescent

DESTROYER ESCORT (★★+)
(C; #62) Medalist; Robert Prescott; 1989; O/P
Beg/Nav/Tac/1
Very similar to *Destroyer*, but a newer version.

DIPLOMACY, COMPUTER (★★★)
(Am/I/ST; #37,41,75) Avalon Hill, Ron Surherland; 1984/1992; $50.00
Int/Dip/Str/1-6
A faithful rendition of the classic boardgame, its graphics and computer intelligence are not state-of-the-art. The Amiga and Arari ST versions have recently been revamped, though the IBM version remains untouched and out-dated (though it is being sold in a new box).

DIVE BOMBER (★+)
(Ap/C/ST/Am/I; #55) Epyx/US Gold; Acme Animation/Gremlin Graphics; 1989; $39.95
Beg/Air/Tac/1
A "Sink the Bismarck" simulation marred by mediocre graphics, documentation and an overall lack of panache. Similar to *Bismarck: The North Sea Chase*.

DNIEPER RIVER LINE (N-R)
(A/Ap) Avalon Hill; Bruce Ketchledge; 1983; O/P
Int/Air/Op/1
An Eastern Front battle during World War II, this is not so much a computer game as it is computer assistance to a boardgame (it comes with map and counters). It ultimately didn't succeed on either level.

DREADNOUGHTS (★+)
(C/Ap/I; #4.5,4.6,26) Avalon Hill; Thomas Dowell; 1984; $30.00
Int/Nav/Tac/1-2
World War II naval action covering the pursuit of the German battleship Bismarck in 1941. Operational and tactical levels, with the latter allowing one to modify and create his own scenarios. However, poor graphics and game play do little to enhance the game.

DREADNOUGHTS (★★+)
(I) Turcan Research Systems Ltd.; Peter Turcan; 1992; xxx
Int/Nav/Tac-Op/0-2
A "view-from-the-turret", this World War I naval simulation offers an interesting, albeit very slow portrayal of tactics during the few World War I encounters.

EAGLES (★★)
(A/C/Ap) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Robert Raymond; 1983; O/P;
Beg/Air/Tac/1

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World War I aerial operations, more akin to chess than a flight simulator. However, it can be an enjoyable, albeit unrealistic experience.

EASTFRONT (N-R)
(I; #101,106) Columbia Games; Craig Besinque; 1992; $39.95
Int/Land/Stt-Op/2
A simulation of World War II's Eastern Ftonr, this is a conversion from the designer's boardgame. As such, it is a straight port, and lacks any AI.

EASTERN FRONT (★★★★)
(A; #37) APX; Chris Crawford; 1982; O/P
Int/Land/Op-Stt/1
An operational-sttategic simulation of the German invasion of Russia during World War II, this game was the fitst to show what the computer could do in wargaming. Obsolete by contemporary ptogramming standards, it temains fun to play. The catttidge version offers both beginnet and advanced scenarios.

EMPIRE (★★★)
(Am/I/ST; #40,41,43,54,60,63,75) Interstel; Walter Bright and Mark Baldwin; 1987; O/P
Int/Land-Sea-Air/Op/1-3
A very enhanced version of the public domain product, this offers an intriguing simulation of global-type warfare. Emphasizing aspects of land, sea and ait, the simulation is very interesting, alrhough it does take a long time to win. Design-your-own options and easy user interface make this a player. Based upon the combat units, this appears to be a Wotld War I general's concept of how the next war would be fought (battleships remain king!).

EMPIRE DELUXE (★★★★)
(I; #101,107) New World; Matk Baldwin and Bob Rakowsky; 1993; $59.95
Int/Land-Sea-Air/Op/1-6
The enchanced version of *Empire*, it has the "bells-and-wbistles" that all gamets wanted. A scenario disk is being designed with inputs ftom the "Who's Who" of computet gaming design. Yet, as I continue to play, I am frusttated by the ptemise (after all, one has fightet aircraft and still begins with no knowledge of his geographic environment) and the combat (which often tends to World War I atritional assaults). Yet, I keep on playing....

EUROPE ABLAZE (★★+)
(C/Ap; #27,37) Strategic Studies Group; Roger Keating, Eric Baket and Ian Trout; 1985; $49.95
Int/Air/Op/1
A simulation te-creating the Battle of Btitain and the Bomber Offensive Ovet Germany during World War II. Design-your-own scenarios and much detail, but *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* has superseded rhis game to a latge degree, although that product is more tactically-oriented.

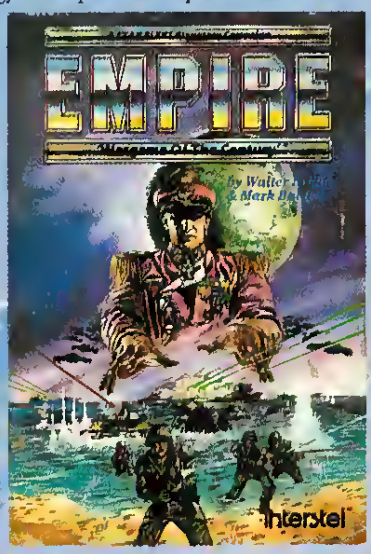
FALL GELB (N-R)
(C/I/Ap/ST) Simulations Canada; Les Howie; 1988; $60.00
Int/Land/Op/1-2
The fall of France, Spring 1940.

FIELD OF FIRE (★★)
(C/A/Ap/ST/I; #37) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Roger Damon; 1984; O/P
Inr/Land/Tac/1
A tacrical situation of squad-level operations on the Western Front during World War II. History and "lessons learned" rake a back seat to playability, but it is an interesting introduction to computer wargaming.

FIFTY MISSION CRUSH (★+)
(C/I/A/Ap; #4.4,35,37) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; John Gray; 1984; O/P
Beg/Air/Op-Stt/1
A tactical recreation of the bomber offensive against Germany during World War II. Realistic but dull; superseded by *B-17* and *Secret Weapons of the Lufiwaffe* in terms of graphics, game play and historical detail.

FIGHTER COMMAND (N-R)
(Ap; #3.4,4.4,5.1,5.2,26) Srtategic Simulations, Inc.; Charlie Merrow and Jack Avery; 1983; O/P
Adv/Air/Op-Srt/1-2
An early operational simularion of the Battle of Britain.

FIGHTER DUEL: CORSAIR VERSUS ZERO (N-R)
(Am; #94,97) Jaeger Software; Bill Manders; 1991; $49.95
Adv/Air/Tac/1-2; M
One of the few detailed flight simulations designed specifically for the Amiga, it has many devored fans. While *CGW*'s review was less than laudatory, its aficionados were quick to burn the editors in effigy. Pethaps it's an acquired taste?



FIGHTER DUEL PRO (N-R)
(Am; #105) Jaeger Software; Bill Manders & Matt Shaw; 1993; $59.95
Adv/Air/Tac/1-2; M
The sequel—new and improved! Considered by some to be the best fligbt sim (particularly head-to-head) on the Amiga.

FIRE BRIGADE (★★+)
(I/M; #49,63,64,66) Panther; Dave O'Connor, Tony Olivet and Ben Freasier; 1989; $39.95
Adv/Land/Op/1
A simulation of the 1943 battles around Kiev on the Eastetn Ftont. Good documentation and excellent packaging have yielded a game that has withsrood the test of time, although the learning curve is somewhat long.

FIRST OVER GERMANY (★★)
(C/I; #58,59) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; John Gtay; 1989; O/P
Int/Air/Tac/1
A tactical simulation of the bomber offensive against Germany during World War II, it is relatively detailed. However, game play becomes somewhat tedious.

FLEET MED (N-R)
(Am/ST/I) Simulations Canada; J. Baker; 1991; $60.00
Air/Nav/Tac/1-2
A tactical simulation of naval conflict in the Mediterranean (1939-1943), it includes nine scenarios and a "design-your-nwn" feature.

FLYING TIGERS (0)
(A/Ap; #37) Discovery; David Weseley; 1982; O/P
Beg/Air/Tac/1
A tacrical air-to-air simulation of World War II in the Pacific. Graphics, realism and play value are sufficient to deter anyone ftom furrhet play.

FOKKER TRIPLANE SIMULATOR (N-R)
(M; #66) Bullseye; Donald A. Hill, Jr.; 1986/1989; $69.95
Int/Air/Tac/1
An early World War I flight simulator, it shows its age.

GATO (★+)
(C/Ap/Am/I; #5.2) Spectrum HoloByte; Ed Dawson and Paul Arlton; 1983; O/P
Int/Nav/Tac/1
One of the first World War II submarine simulations, it was adequate in its time, but not exemplary in any regatd. Time has not been generous to this product.

GERMAN RAIDER ATLANTIS (0+)
(Ap/I) General Quartets; Owen P. Hall, Jt.; xxx; $35.00
Beg/Nav/Tac/0-2; M
Poor graphics, poor documentation and poor gameplay characterize this game of surface naval combat in Wotld War II.

GRAND FLEET (★★+)
(ST/I; #63) Simulations Canada; J. Baker; 1988; $60.00
Int/Nav/Tac-Op/1
A simulation of fleet tactical operations in World War I (actually covering 1906-1920), totally without graphics. However, it remains one of the few products covering this period. Ir includes seven scenatios and a "design-your-own option."

GREAT NAVAL BATTLES: NORTH ATLANTIC, 1939-1943 (★★★+)
(Am/I; #102) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Roy Gibson & Ed Bever; 1992; $69.95
Adv/Nav/Op-Tac/1-2
A detailed simulation of World War naval operations, ir is historically detailed and recommended to the aficionado of the petiod. While its AI ofren suffers in the campaign game, it is still the standard-bearer of the genre. While I can recognize its strengths, I must also note that often the game can become somewhat tedious, with vast naval engagements and numerous hits doing little real damage.

GREAT NAVAL BATTLES: SUPER SHIPS OF THE ATLANTIC (★★★+)
(Am/I; #110) Strategic Simularions, Inc.; Roy Gibson & Ed Bever; 1993; $29.95
Adv/Nav/Op-Tac/1-2
The first expansion disk, allowing for ships that never left the drawing boards, but which could have made a major impact on the war.

GREAT NAVAL BATTLES: AMERICA IN THE ATLANTIC (★★★+)
(Am/I; #107, 110) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Roy Gibson & Ed Bever; 1992; $29.95
Adv/Nav/Op-Tac/1-2
The United States enters the War in the Atlantic.

GREAT NAVAL BATTLES: SCENARIO BUILDER (★★★+)
(Am/I; #110) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Roy Gibson & Ed Bever; 1992; $39.95
Adv/Nav/Op-Tac/1-2
An expansion disk allowing for uset input and "design-your-own" scenarios.

GREAT WAR 1914 (★★+)
(C/A) DKG; Marc Summerlott; 1986; O/P
Int/Land/Op-Str/1-2
Primitive graphics and poor user interface mar this examination of the beginning of World War I. On the othet hand, there ate relatively few simulations covering this period.

GUADALCANAL CAMPAIGN (N-R)
(Ap; #2.5,5.4) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Gary Grigsby; 1982; O/P
Adv/Nav-Land/Op/1-2
Perhaps the first "monster" computer wargame, this coveted the entire Guadalcanal Campaign, but in a tedious fashion. The subject has been covered in more recent simulations (see Gary Grigsby's own *War in the Pacific*).

GUDERIAN (★+)
(A/C/Ap; #38,40) Avalon Hill; Software Associates; 1987; $30
Int/Land/Op/1-2
A faithful adaptation of Jim Dunnigan's famous board game, it suffers from being an almost too literal translation. Slow-moving, the design had potential, but the programming did not achieve its objective.

HALLS OF MONTEZUMA (★★★)
(C/Ap/Am/I; #42,45) Strategic Studies Group, Roger Keating and Ian Trout; 1988; $39.95
Adv/Land/Op/0-2
The *Battlefront* system writ once again, this covers the U.S. Marine Corps from the Mexican War through Vietnam, with emphasis on World War II. Battles include Belleau Wood (World War I), Okinawa and Iwo Jima (World War II) on brigade/divisional level operations. Editor Johnny Wilson loved the *Halls*; this reviewer is not as easily entertained.

HELLCAT ACE (★)
(A/C) MicroProse; Sid Meier; 1983; O/P
Beg/Air/Tac/1
One of the first flight "simulations" from MicroProse, it was entertaining when released. Now it has interest only to the collector.

HELLCATS OVER THE PACIFIC (N-R)
(M) Graphic Simulations; Eric Parker; 1991; xxx
xxx/Air/Tac/xxx
A World War II flight simulator for the Mac.

HEROES OF THE 357TH (★★)
(Am/I) Electronic Arts; Brian Hilchie, Dan Hoecke; 1992; $49.95
Int/Ait/Tac/1
A relatively new release which was obsolescent befote it was released. Mediocre graphics and mediocre gameplay combine to produce a whole less than the sum of its parts.

HIDE AND SINK (N-R)
(Ap) Mirror Images Software; Philip Koopman; 1983; O/P
Beg/Nav/Tac/1
Another *Battleship* variation.

HIGH COMMAND (N-R)
(I) Three-Sixty; Gregg Cartet and Joey Nonnast; 1993; $49.95
Adv/Land-Nav-Air/Op-Str/1-3
Third Reich the way it should have been done. While the AI has come in for much criticism, the game itself is easy to learn and play. Originally released by Colorado Computer Creations, Three-Sixty has given it SVGA gtaphics and interface tweaks for a new release.

HISTORY LINE: 1914-1918 (N-R)
(I; #109) Ubi Soft; Blue Byte; 1993; $59.95
Int/Land/Op/1
A game covering various battles of World War I in a semi-amorphous method; history takes a back seat to playability. Cutrently available in Britain, it should soon make it to the U.S. market.

HURRICANE (N-R)
(xxx) Simulations Canada; xxx; xxx; xxx; N-R
xxx/xxx

IN HARM'S WAY (★★+)
(C/Ap/Am/ST/I; #52,57) Simulations Canada; Bill Nichols; 1988; $60.00
Adv/Nav/Tac/1-2
Tactical naval combat in the Pacific from 1943-1944; nine scenarios and a "build-your-own" option. A sequel to Long Lance and probably one of the most absorbing games in SimCan's fleet of text-only wargames.

IWO JIMA 1945/FALKLANDS 1982 (★)
(C; #34,37) Firebird; John Bethell; 1985; O/P
Beg/Land-Nav/Op/1
Simulation of the amphibious operation in World War II, it made up in price value what it lacked in historical accuracy. Howevet, it has aged poorly and offers little for the contemporary wargamer in either history or play value.

JAGDSTAFFEL (0)
(A/Ap; #37) Discovety; David Weseley; 1985; O/P
Beg/Air/Tac/1
A tactical game similar to *Flying Tigers*, only occurring in the European Theater. Just as bad as *Flying Tigers*.

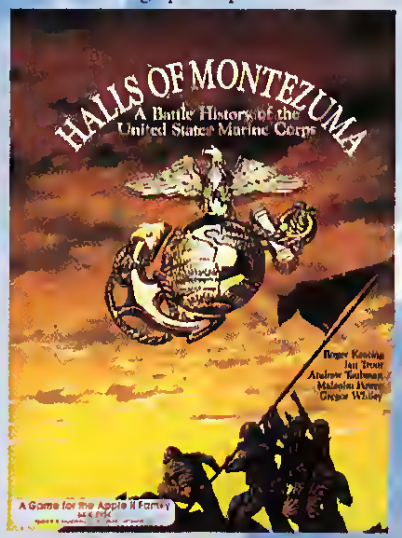
JUTLAND (N-R)
(I/CD; #104) Sorcery Software; xxx; 1993
Int/Nav/Op-Str/1
A detailed simulation of World War I naval operations, it has not yet been released, although it has received full "reviews" from the industry. It looks interesting, but wait for it to "unvaporize."

KAMPFGRUPPE (★★★)
(C/I/A/Ap/Am; #5.2,5.4,5.5,25,37,CGF Winter) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Gary Grigsby; 1985; $59.95
Adv/Land/Tac/1-2
A tactical simulation of warfare on the Eastern Front, this game was *CGW*'s Game of the Year in 1985. Multiple options, but marred by lack of joystick input and a stacking anomaly (virtually an entire army can be crammed into a small geographic location). A classic that should be reworked in order to bring it up to contemporary standards.

KAMPFGRUPPE SCENARIO DISK #1 (★★)
(A/C) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Gary Grigsby; 1986; O/P
Adv/Land/Tac/1-2
Five additional scenarios for *Kampfgruppe*. Historical accuracy is subject to question in some of the scenarios, and the basic game was capable of designing a player's own scenarios.

KNIGHTS OF THE DESERT (★+)
(A/C/Ap/I; #3.4,37) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Tactical Design Group; 1983; O/P
Int/Land/Op/1-2
An operational simulation of Rommel's Desert Campaigns in North Africa during World War II, it was one of the first games to offer multiple stacking in the same hex. Slow and ponderous, its re-creation of the African Campaign does not deliver its potential.

KNIGHTS OF THE SKY (★★★+)
(I; #74,76,79,83) MicroProse; Jeffrey Briggs; 1991; $59.95
Int/Air/Tac/1-2; M
The modem play option is the greatest strength of this World War I flight simulator. While *CGW*'s review gave it the highest of recommendations, this reviewer found the inability to fly on the German side, the graphic representation of "cloud



cover," and flight models/damage to be less than optimal. Still a fine game, which suffers only by comparison (and badly) to *Red Baron*.

KRIEGSMARINE (N-R)
(Am/ST/I; #66,67) Simulations Canada; Steve Newberg and James Baker; 1989; $60.00
Adv/Nav/Tac/1-2
Tactical naval combat in the Atlantic between 1939 and 1944, with nine scenarios and a "build-your-own" option.

KURSK CAMPAIGN (N-R)
(Ap/ST/I; #37) Simulations Canada; Stephen St. John; 1986; $60.00
Adv/Land/Op/1-2
A simulation of the largest tank battle of World War II (Operation Zitadelle, Summer 1943).

LAFAYETTE ESCADRILLE (N-R)
(T; #3.5) Discovery; David Weseley; 1983; O/P
Beg/Air/Tac/1
World Wat I air combat.

LONG LANCE (★★+)
(C/Ap/Am/ST/I; #43,48) Simulations Canada; Bill Nichols; 1988; $60.00
Adv/Nav/Tac/1-2
Tactical naval combat in the Pacific in 1942.

LOST ADMIRAL, THE (★★★★)
(I; #86,88,90,99) QQP; Bruce W. Zaccagnino and Thurston Seatfoss; $59.95; 1991
Int/Nav/Tac-Op/1
Empire goes to sea; quicker than others of this genre, it offers a plethora of scenarios and randomization factors. Easy to play and difficult to master, it has the potential for long-term playability, and a newer version is planned.

M4 TANK SIMULATOR (N-R)
(M; #105) Deadly Games; Rene Vidmer; 1993; $54.95
Int/Land/Tac/1
A World War II tank simulation, with nice sound, passable graphics and good gameplay.

MALTA STORM (N-R)
(Am/ST/I; #65,72,74) Simulations Canada; Robert Crandall; 1990; $60.00
Adv/Nav/Op-Str/1-2
A simulation of the battle for the Mediterranean between December 1941 and August 1942 utilizing three week turns.

MALTA STRIKE (N-R)
(Ap/T) Discovery; Dave Arneson; 1980; O/P
Beg/Air/Tac/1
Tactical combat in the World War II Mediterranean theater.

MARE NOSTRUM (N-R)
(Ap/I) General Quarters; Owen P. Hall, Jr.; xxx; $35.00
Beg/Nav/Tac-Op/0-2; M
World War II action between the Royal Navy and the Italian Fleet.

MARIANAS TURKEY SHOOT (N-R)
(AP/I) General Quarters; Owen P. Hall, Jr.; xxx; $35.00
Bat/Nav/Tac-Op/0-2; M
The latgest air carrier battle in history, as well as the most one-sided. WWII action with the last gasp of the Japanese.

METZ-COBRA (N-R)
(C/A) DKG; xxx; xxx; O/P
Int/Land/Op/1-2
Bteak-out from the Normandy Beachhead, 1944.

MIDWAY: THE BATTLE THAT DOOMED JAPAN (N-R)
(I) General Quarters; Owen P. Hall, Jr.; 1987; $35.00
Int/Nav/Op-Str/1-2

MIDWAY CAMPAIGN (★)
(Ap/A) Avalon Hill; National Mictocomputer Associates; 1980; O/P
Beg/Nav-Air/Op/1
An operational/strategic simulation of the Midway Campaign, this game has been superseded by improvements in computer design. Ptimitive graphics and gameplay do little to enhance its dutability.

MIGS AND MESSERSCHMITTS (N-R)
(Ap/T) Discovery; Dave Wesley and Ross Maker; 1980; O/P
Beg/Air/Tac/1
Tactical World Wat II in the East. To be generous, it may he desctibed as "obsolete."

MIRACLE AT MIDWAY (N-R)
(Ap/I; #65,66) General Quartets; Owen P. Hall, Jr.; 1989; $35.00
Beg/Nav/Tac-Op/0-2; M
The WWII decisive battle in the Pacific.

MOSCOW CAMPAIGN (N-R)
(I/Ap/ST) Simulations Canada; Stephen St. John; 1987; $60.00
Adv/Land/Op/1-2
A simulation of Operation Typhoon and White Storm (30 August 1941 - 13 February 1942).

NORMANDY, BATTLES IN (★★)
(C/Ap; #40,42,54) Strategic Studies Group; Roget Keating and Ian Trout; 1987; $39.95
Adv/Land/Op/1-2
The Normandy Invasion and Bteak-Out, this simulation is marred by the utilization of the *Battlefront* system in a situation where it is inapplicable. The historical use of fire and maneuver tends to bog down in a war of attrition; corps maneuvetability becomes mired in a motass of engagements which yield ahistorical results.

NORMANDY, BATTLE FOR (★★★)
(A/Ap/C/I; #3.4,37) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; David Landrey; 1984; O/P
Int/Land/Op/1-2
An operational simulation of the Invasion of Normandy, this game is easy to learn, although the documentation covering the actual landings leaves much to be desired. A solid intermediate level game in 1984, it is dated and suffers from a lack of joystick input, yet this reviewer still enjoys it.

NORTH ATLANTIC CONVOY RAIDER (N-R)
(xxx) Avalon Hill; xxx; xxx; O/P
xxx/xxx

OBJECTIVE: KURSK (N-R)
(A/C, #5.2) DKG; Matk Sommerlott; 1984; O/P
Int/Land/Str/1-2

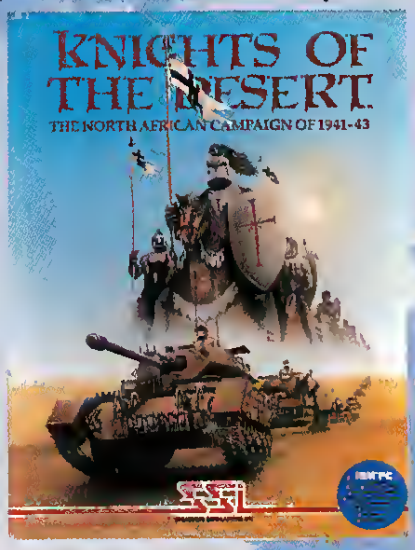
OBJECTIVE: KURSK (★★)
(A/C; #4.4,37) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Gary Grigsby; 1984; O/P
Adv/Land/Tac-Op/1-2
A tactical/operational simulation of the largest tank battle in World War II, it is very detailed. However, user input is tedious via keyboard, and the game system overall is somewhat bland.

OPERATION COM★BAT (★★)
(Am; #75) Merit; Scott Lamb; 1990; $49.95
Beg/Land/Tac/1-2; M
An abstract watgame with early modem play, it offets little for the contemporary user.

OPERATION KEYSTONE (★)
(I; #28,31) Ovett Sttategic Simulations; T.J. Peto, Jr.; 1986; O/P
Int/Nav/Tac/1
Wotld War II submarine operations in the Pacific. Similat to both *Silent Service* and *GATO*, but pethaps less intetesting than either.

OPERATION MARKET-GARDEN (★+)
(A/C/Ap/I; #5.3,5.4,37) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; 1986; Chuck Kroegel and David Landtey; O/P
Air/Land/Op/1-2
A ractical/operational simulation of the largest aitborne operation of Wotld War II, this game suffers from graphic sensory deprivation (detetmining the road network is a lesson in frustration). Also, input may not be readjusted in mid-play, and overall, the user interface is both clumsy and unforgiving.

OPERATION MARKET-GARDEN (N-R)
(I) MPG Net; xxx; 1993; $2.00-4.00 pet ht.



An on-line version of "A Bridge Too Far," based on the original SSI design.

OPERATION OVERLORD (N-R)
(Ap/ST; #32) Simulations Canada; Stephen St. John; 1986; $60.00
Adv/Land/Op/1-2
A simulation of the first 11 weeks following D-Day (6 June - 28 August 1942).

OPERATION WHIRLWIND (★★+)
(A/C;#3.5,37) Broderbund; Roget Damon; 1984; O/P
Beg/Land/Tac/1
Ancestor of *Field of Fire*, *Panzer Grenadier*, and *Wargame Construction Set*, this tactical simulation of an urban assault during World War II remains fun to play, despite its age. Howevet, overall, it has not aged all that gracefully.

OVERLORD (N-R)
(ST) CCS; Ken Wright; 1988; O/P
Int/Land/Op/1
A divisional-level simulation of the Invasion of Normandy.

P-51 MUSTANG FLIGHT SIMULATOR (N-R)
(M; #60) Bullseye; Donald A. Hill, Jr.; 1989; $59.95
Adv/Air/Tac/1-2; M
Cut from the same cloth as the *Fokker Triplane Simulator* but slightly mote detailed.

PACIFIC STORM: THE MIDWAY CAMPAIGN (N-R)
(Am/ST/I; #94) Simulations Canada; R.C. Crandall; 1991; $60.00
Int/Nav/Tac-Op/1-2

PACIFIC STORM: THE SOLOMONS CAMPAIGN (N-R)
(Am/ST/I; #94) Simulations Canada; R.C. Crandall; 1991; $60.00
Int/Nav/Tac-Op/1-2
An operational simulation of the South Pacific (1942-1943) in two week turns.

PACIFIC WAR, GARY GRIGSBY'S (★★★★)
(I; #103,105) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Gary Grigsby; 1992; $79.95
Adv/Land-Sea-Air/0-2
The simulation of the Pacific. Graphically acceptable, its strength lies in the sheer data and scope of the campaign. In all truth, I find it overwhelming, but I can recognize quality when I see it. Highly recommended for retitees, or fot those for whom the expression "Get a life!" means something.

PANZER BATTLES (★★★)
(C/Ap/M/I; #68,69) Strategic Studies Group; Roger Keating and Ian Trout, 1989; $39.95
Adv/Land/Tac/0-2
The *Battlefront* system on the East Front with six scenarios (Minsk, Moscow, Kharkov, Prokhotovka, Kanev and Kotsun). Interestingly enough, Moscow, Kharkov, Kanev and Korsun have all been the subjects of paper wargames, and the computer offers a different perspective.

PANZER GRENADIER (★★)
(A/C/Ap; #5.5,37) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Roger Damon; 1985; O/P
Beg/Land/Tac/1
A tactical simulation of armored warfare on the Eastern Front during World War II, it is marred by historical inaccuracy. Reconnaissance by fire is overemphasized, and opportunity fire is hit-and-miss. It lacks the panache and elan to yield an enduring game experience.

PANZERJAGD (★)
(A/C, #4.6,37) Avalon Hill; Richard W. Scorupski; 1984; $30.00
Beg/Land/Tac/1
A tactical simulation of armored warfare during World Wat II, it is obviously dated by newer efforts and has little to recommend it today.

PANZER STRIKE (★★)
(C/Ap/ST/I; #45,47) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Gary Grigsby; 1988; $44.00/$49.95
Adv/Land/Tac/0-2
A tactical simulation of World War II small unit actions in the West and East Fronts. Very detailed, but the lack of a battlefield panotamic view often allows one to lose track of objectives, and it may take hours to complete a "thirty minute" assault.

PANZER WAR (N-R)
(A; #4.6) Windctest Softwate; George Schwenk; 1983; O/P
Beg/Land/Tac/1-2

PATTON STRIKES BACK (★★+)
(M/I; #90) Broderbund; Chris Crawford; 1991; $59.95
Int/Air/Tac-Op/1-2
Chris Crawford's entry covering the Battle of the Bulge. Designed as a bridge to non- or neophyte wargamets, it failed to succeed with either that crowd or the wargamer market. Some interesting concepts and detailed historical analysis failed to remove the "taint" (i.e., it ain't a game and it ain't a simulation).

PATTON VS. ROMMEL (★★)
(C/M/I; #35) Mindscape; Chris Crawford; 1987; $14.95
Int/Land/Op/1-2
An operational campaign in France, 1944, this simulation was characterized by innovative play systems matred by difficult trafficability and passage of lines.

PERFECT GENERAL, THE (★★★+)
(I; #84,91,94,95) QQP; Mark Baldwin; $59.95; 1991
Int/Land/Tac/1-2; M
By the designer of *Empire*, this simulation sacrifices realism for playability. Still, the playability level is sufficiently high that one can forgive the weakness in realism.

PERFECT GENERAL WORLD WAR II SCENARIO DISK (N-R)
(I; #94,95) QQP; Mark Baldwin; xxx; 1992
Int/Land/Tac/1-2; M
An expansion disk covering many World War II battles.

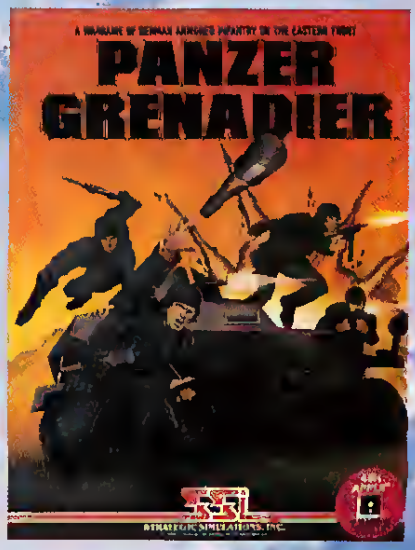
PERFECT GENERAL GREATEST BATTLES OF THE 20th CENTURY (N-R)
(I; #108) QQP; Mark Baldwin; $29.95; 1993
Int/Land/Tac/1-2; M
A second expansion disk—more ranging in chronological periods, but many of the scenarios are within the period covered herein.

POWER AT SEA (N-R)
(C;#46) Accolade; xxx; 1987; O/P
Beg/Nav/Tac-Op/1
The WWII battle of Leyte Gulf. In the vein of Epyx's *Destroyer*, but lacking even that game's sense of realism.

PRELUDE TO JUTLAND (★★)
(Ap/I; #65) General Quarters; Owen P. Hall, Jr.; 1986; $35.00
Beg/Nav/Tac-Op/0-2; M
The preliminary battles 1915 and rhe Grand Battle itself. Minimalist conception of graphics and user clumsy.

PT-109 (★★+)
(M/I; #48,51) Spectrum HoloByte; Gordon Walton; 1988; O/P
Adv/Nav/Tac/1
PT boat tactics in the South Pacific; relatively good graphics and game play on a subjecr rately covered.

PURSUIT OF THE GRAF SPEE (N-R)
(xxx) Strategic Simulations, Inc.; Joel Billings; 1982; O/P
Int/Nav/Tac/1-2
Simulation of the early World Wat II battle off Montevideo Harbor. Very dated.



Next month: The thrilling conclusion, "R-Z."
CGW

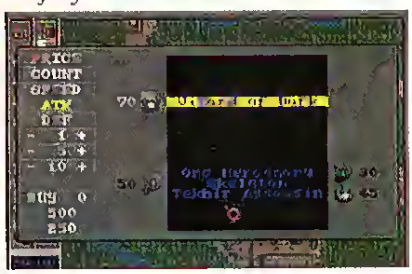
A Mercenary's Work Is Never Done

Mindcraft Lures Players Into An *Ambush At Sorinor*

by H. E. Dille

Vale turned his face to the twilight breeze, scenting for the goblins he could feel on the back of his neck. His nose and eyes were his best allies, as he certainly couldn't hear anything over the din created by the merchant convoy.

"Lazy fat bastards will get us all killed with their tinkling purses," he thought resentfully.



It was a mistake to have let the Sernevan con him into this mission, even if they do pay well. It's tough to spend the gold in Valhalla. At that instant, out of the corner of his eye, Vale saw the lead wagon lift into the air and explode in a maelstrom of magical fire, incinerating the escorts closest to it. The trap was sprung and the hideous Goblin war cry rang out from every bush. The time for thinking was over.

Vale leapt at the nearest ambusher with a smile on his face, and the Goblin's reverie was interrupted as the broadsword split him from eyeballs to appetite. A second, with his head turned to face other opponents, had his skull cleanly cracked open with the hilt of Grysenwormer as Vale extracted his weapon, which had jammed in the pelvic bone of the first assailant. The two bodies fell together in a bloody embrace as Vale turned and ran at the flank of a group of unsuspecting archers. They were intent on reloading, as volley after volley of their deadly barbs found their marks in the corpulent flesh of the hapless merchants. As he ran, Grysenwormer spun in a vicious arc above his head, flinging droplets of blood from its tip to mark the passage. Three bounding strides from the group, Grysenwormer was spinning fast enough for the metal to resonate in the night air. It was Vale's own battle song, and he laughed as the Goblin formation turned to envelop him.

Expanding on the *Siege* engine, Mindcraft's latest installment in the system, *Ambush at Sorinor*, chronicles the struggles of six rival clans for control of the realm. Players assume the persona of a mercenaty leader who organizes warriors for missions in support of each clan. All of the clans seek to avoid open warfare, adopting instead a system of "diplomatic" offenses against their opponents. These usually take the form of raids against outposts, border skirmishes, economic warfare (i.e., looting caravans) and assassination attempts. The latter can involve dignitaries, diplomats, noblemen and other personnel important to a clan for specific reasons. One mission, for example, involves protecting a group of sacrificial virgins bound for the Zorlim Mages. These Acolytes claim that virgins are in short supply and they need them desperately for their black rights.

Sorinor allows several play options. One may select ro pursue a campaign, in which the objective is to accumulate as much money as possible by switching benefactors often and maintaining rhe balance of power. Also, any mission which appears in the campaign game may be played as a single mission. This allows players who are having difficulty with a given objective to practice off-line, as it were. This really isn't necessary, however, as the results of each campaign battle are not saved unless the player elects to do so. As such, the game does nor require incessant disk swapping to rerain saved games. Finally, players have the oprion of using a scenario editor to create their own missions.

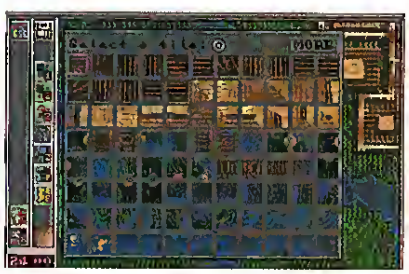
Planning a Mission

Understanding rhe scenario editor, which is very easy to master, yields a lot of insight into the play model itself. Players musr first select the Map file they will use as the background for the engagement. Next, they derermine the posirions of the entry and exit zones, blue and green respectively, that dictate the geographical objectives of the design. The Ward forces

TITLE:	Ambush at Sorinor
SYSTEM:	IBM
REQUIREMENTS:	386SX-16MHz with 2MB RAM
PRICE:	$59.95
PROTECTION:	None
DESIGNER:	Larry Froistad
PUBLISHER:	Mindcraft Software Torrance, CA (310) 320-5215

must enter via the blue zone(s) and exit via the green zone(s) to accomplish their objective. Next, the player must specify the number and composition of Ward forces for the scenario, as well as the kill percentages that the Ambush forces must achieve to win the scenario. The only Ward units that count toward that percentage are the VIP units, be they merchants, diplomats, virgins or whatever. Killing Ward escort troops is often necessary to meet that goal, but their death does nothing toward fulfillment of one's contract.

The player does not specify the starting composition of the Ambusher forces, only the amount of coins they will receive if successful and how much of that is provided up front as a down payment. Combining the down payment with available bank funds enables players to buy their forces. In self-generated scenarios, the computer will always be the Ward player, and the Human will act as Ambusher. This means that most people will be unlikely to play their own designs, because they will always know the starting composition of their opponent. Finally, the player must specify which clan the mission is being performed for, who it is against, and the relative values their loyalties will change based on the outcome. For example, if the player is acting on behalf of the Rokans against the Twillin, successful completion of the mission



might raise the former's impression of the player by three points, while lowering the same for the Twillin by two. The higher one's estimation of player capabilities, the more they are willing to pay. For unsuccessful missions, the player rating should be lowered by a greater amount than he stood to gain, and it should be applied to both of the involved clans. Even the victims of the intended ambush may employ the player later and would be unhappy with his demonstrated ineptitude.

Setting Up the Ambush

With the pre-generated missions, the player can end up as either Ward or Ambusher. Since one should already have a feel for the former, let us now examine how the player approaches the role of the latter. After the introduction screen, in which one is given a text explanation of the mission's objectives, it is important for the player to study the layout of the map and check the stats of whatever opponents one has been told will be involved (this is definitely not always comprehensive intelligence). As Ambusher, one of the chief considerations in purchasing units is speed. It is easy to be out of position when the Ward units

appear, particularly on maps with multiple entry and exit zones. When this happens, one has to be able to move swiftly to intercept the high value groups before they can exit. A secondary consideration is attack and defense values. Some units have really high attack ratings but defend poorly, others are more balanced. The strategy one intends to pursue directly affects what the eventual unit mix should be, and failure to appreciate this concept concedes defeat in almost every instance.

Players should strive to use no more than the down payment to complete the mission or they will never make any money. This is not always possible, as some missions are designed specifically to make the player dip into their coffers, but these are the exception rather than the rule. Players may also purchase and place traps on the map in addition to their mercenary forces. The types of traps vary from simple pitfalls that destroy only the unit that trips them to the magical blast described in the fictional introduction. The more expensive traps are good in that they kill several of the enemy at once, but they suffer the same limitation as the cheap traps—the enemy has to be a cooperative victim. Some maps have natural choke points, which virtually ensure that the enemy will pass that way. When this is the case, one can use traps profusely. Otherwise, one's money is usually better spent on troops which can take the battle to the enemy.

And Then Things Got Bloody

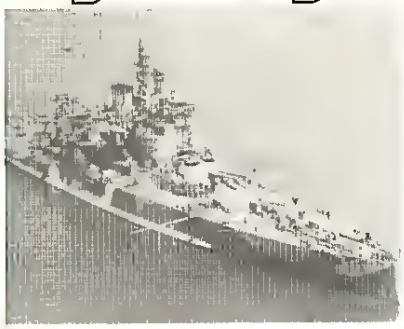
Since the heart of the game is tactical combat, one could rightfully expect its interface to be the best aspect of the model. Unfortunately, nothing could be farther from the truth. When the player positions units on the map, they begin in either a line abreast (for units of five or less) or a phalanx formation. Each of these formations has actual tactical strengths and weaknesses. Whenever the groups are given movement orders, however, they tend to shift into a column formation, which is the weakest combat formation of them all (ask any Napoleonic wargamer). Further, with the exception of ranged combat, which is difficult to execute, actual engagements occur only when two opposing units slam up against one another. This also means that the warriors in the back of the column do not move forward to envelop their opponents as one would hope. Rather, they remain placidly in the rear until all of their comrades on the front line are slaughtered, then take one step forward to a similar fate.

Executing actual flanking maneuvers and maintaining some degree of formation integrity is possible, but is obnoxiously difficult. First, one must keep each unit size as small as possible (no band of 50 marauding barbarians, thank you) and position them perpendicular to likely enemy avenues of approach. When the enemy units appear, one must coordinate the assault by stopping the real time simulation at least once every five seconds and fine-tuning the movement orders of every unit on the board. If this is your idea of fun, then have at it! The alternate method

of control is to use the "converge" command to basically say "Ok, now everybody run here...that's good, now run over there." Unfortunately, this is also neither inspiring, tactically correct, nor fun.

Sorting Through the Ashes

The folks at Mindcraft are a decent lot, who genuinely try to provide gamers with what they want. Given that, one can only hope that they go back to the drawing board with this engine before releasing another title of similar ilk. In addition to the tactical model, they must also invest a lot of time in refining the AI that controls the computer opponent. It was not uncommon for VIP groups to continue blindly into my Ambushers rather than trying to go around or even fleeing until escort help could arrive. With that kind of AI, one wonders who is getting ambushed in *Ambush at Sorinor*, the computer troops or the purchaser of the game? Unfortunately, there are too many occasions when it feels like the latter. CGW



ATLANTIC BREAKOUT

SSI Expands Operations For Great Naval Battles Series

by H.E. Dille

The sky was an empty gun metal grey, cloudless but without color. Raymond Spruance hunkered deeper in his chair against the biting wind which cut across the bridge wing, wishing he had gotten the assignment in Pearl. Instead, the orders had read, "Take immediate command of Cruiser Division Four...rendezvous with DesRon Seven and Convoy HX-122 for Murmansk transit..." He wanted to believe that this assignment was politically motivated. After all, most officers would have jumped at the chance to be on Admiral King's staff, but he knew Washington would have been the death of him. The other side of his brain told his ego to shut up, the real reason he was here was because the Canadians had botched it. ON-115 had been ravaged by U-boats for five days under their stewardship. Scattered and disorganized, the remainder of the original 41 ships were easy prey for Scharnhorst and Tirpitz, who killed at leisure until their magazines were empty, then vectored new U-boats to the survivors. It was a disaster for the Allies...one they didn't want to see repeated. The latest intelligence reports indicated a strong belief that the German raiders had met with a mother ship to refuel and rearm. Worse, they had not been located for the last ten days. His thoughts were interrupted when the bridge door clanged shut behind him.

"Commodore, excuse me but I thought you would want to see this right away."

"What is it?", Spruance asked as he studied the strained look on the young Lieutenant's face.

"Aerial reconnaissance reports on Kiel, Sir...RAF reports no sightings"

"What's the significance of that, Lieutenant, bad weather for the Nazis?" Spruance was losing his patience.

"No Sir...begging the Commodore's pardon, Sir, you're missing the point," the Lieutenant said wincing at being the bearer of bad tidings.

"Well, what is the point, Son?"

"The target area was not obscured, in fact there was perfect visibility. It's just that the port was empty...no ships, Sir."

"When was the last flight before this?"

"Five days ago, Sir."

"Thank you Lieutenant, that will be all," Spruance dismissed him, turning his chair around to face the sea once again. The entire Kriegsmarine at sea for as many as five days and we don't know where they are. "God help us," he muttered, his words swept away in the freshening North wind.

Raymond Spruance in the Atlantic, instead of husbanding the island-hopping campaign in the Pacific? In reality, this historic possibility is not as far fetched as it might sound. The mauling of convoy ON-115 alluded to in the introduction actually occurred, except that it was conducted exclusively by U-boats.

After Pearl Harbor, Hitler ordered the Atlantic raiders stationed at Brest back to German waters, where they never again became a major factor in the Atlantic campaign. Had Hitler understood how thin U.S. naval forces were spread, and opted to coordinate surface and subsurface attacks against convoy shipping, the entire complexion of the war could have changed. SSI's *Great Naval Battles North Atlantic* series, as expanded by the three add on disks discussed herein, allows players the option of exploring an endless number of "what if" combinations in their quest for alternative history.

Expanding Engagement

Before addressing the unique contents of the expansion disks exclusive of one another, it is important to note that each also contains the upgraded version 1.2 of the original game. The README file included with the update documents six full pages of bug fixes from the original release. Further, the correction of these bugs is more than cosmetic. Version 1.2 offers more accurate modeling of gunnery and significant enhancements to campaign play. Without expanding on each of these in detail, the following section will highlight those of immediate interest to current owners of the original game.

TITLES:	America in the Atlantic, Super Ships of the Atlantic, Scenario Builder
PRICE:	$39.95 Scenario Builder, $29.95 others
SYSTEM:	IBM
REQUIREMENTS:	286-16MHz with 2MB RAM, 724K EMS, 11MB hard drive space for basic game and all expansion disks
PROTECTION:	Document look up
DESIGNER:	Roy Gibson
PUBLISHER:	Strategic Simulations, Inc Sunnyvale, California (408) 737-6800

The tactical AI has been rewritten such that the computer fights a better battle. Rather than breaking off into a wild melee at the beginning of each engagement, ships will now try to remain in formation and maneuver cohesively unless hindered by damage. Further, the target selection routines have been modified to take advantage of proper squadron tactics. No longer will 15" shells be squandered targeting destroyers, unless destroyer types are the only units sighted. Further, ships in formation will attempt to spread their fire among appropriate target types in an opposing formation. Under the old system, many ships would often be targeting one enemy, which not only wasted a lot of firepower, it also reduced each firing ships gunnery accuracy because spotters could not distinguish their own shells, and it left other ships unmolested until the original target sank beneath the waves.

Other improvements include the addition of accurate minimum arming distances for all torpedo variants, and secondary guns now reflect damage consistent with their calibre. The ballistic calculations made by the program still reflect inaccurate hit per-

centages at extremely long and extremely close ranges, but the mid-range band seems fairly accurate. Players seeking to improve their gunnery accuracy must consider the elements that comprise it and refine their tactics accordingly. The inputs to the quality of a targeting solution are: course/speed changes (for either platform), buoyancy profile (is the firing ship heeling in a turn, bouncing in heavy weather or listing from damage), number of spotting or actual salvos fired, number of shells in a salvo, visibility for spotters, and whether or not other ships are firing at the same target, which degrades the ability of all the spotters to distinguish the fall of shot. Some of these factors may be easily manipulated, such as maintaining course/speed while refining a targeting solution. Others, like weather conditions, are beyond player control. The secret of good gunnery is to consider all of the factors and take whatever action is necessary to maximize one's accuracy percentage.

Damage resolution and damage control routines are also more realistic. Rudder and propeller hits from shellfire are now very rare. Ships may regain speed after damage has been repaired. Fires are now more difficult to localize and control, counterflooding occurs properly, and the order in which flooded compartments are picked by the AI to be pumped is now more logical.

Another area of restructuring is the Campaign Game. A major improvement is that, if the Allied player does not have enough escort ships assigned to convoy duty, which keeps them from being used offensively, ships will automatically be lost to U-boats.

Additionally, convoy composition has been altered to reflect the combined German surface/subsurface threat, allowing players to assign 1CV, 1BB, 1CA and 2DD's to any particular convoy, if desired. The AI player now repairs damaged ships on escort duty, rather than sending them back to sea. Destroyers lose 40% more efficiency than Battleships over an equivalent time, Cruise 10% more, and bad weather conditions now increase efficiency loss rates for all units. Finally, new construction ships start the campaign at 75% efficiency vice 100% to reflect a green crew and lack of actual experience.

Finally, most of the blatant bugs that plagued the original have been corrected. Keyboard lock ups may still occur, but they are much more rare than before, and most may be cleared up by hitting the Escape key. Because the lock ups do exist, no matter how infrequent, players are advised to save games often.

SSI has a good history of responding to consumer feedback and upgrading accordingly. As such, players are advised to do their part and contact SSI directly whenever one of the few remaining glitches appears; it will help their tech support staff localize and correct the problem for all users. Having said that, it must be noted that the 1.2 version alone is worth the asking price of any of the expansion disks. The rest of what each has to offer, which will now be addressed, could be considered icing on the cake.

America in the Atlantic

America in the Atlantic is built on the premise explored at the beginning of this article, that expanded operations by the Kriegsmarine would have forced the diversion of U.S. assets from the Pacific to the Atlantic theater of operations.

Players may now opt to command any or all the following American ship types:

Hull type	Class(es)
CV	Wasp
BB	Texas/Nevada/Pennsylvania/New Mexico/California
	Maryland/North Carolina/South Dakota and Iowa
CA/CL/CLAA	Northampton/New Orleans/Brooklyn/Wichita/Atlanta
DD	Bagley/Fletcher

The expansion set comes with ten scenarios built around hypothetical engagements with these units, as well as three options for campaign play. The scenarios range in complexity from single ship encounters, such as the Hipper vs. the Philadelphia (CA vs. CA), to an all out classic line of battle confrontation between all of the capital ships ever afloat in the Kriegsmarine and an American Task Force consisting of 4 BBs, 2 CAs and 3 DDs. All of the scenarios are designed to allow manipulation by the tactically oriented "what if" gamers, but an even greater satisfaction comes from exploration of strategic possibilities with the new campaign games.

The first campaign runs from February 8th, 1942 to April 7th, 1942, and explores what might have happened had Hitler not ordered the Prinz Eugen, Scharnhorst and Gneisenau to make the infamous Channel Dash, after which they were crippled for the remainder of the war by RAF bombing. Campaign Two presupposes that Hitler never shifted his capital ships to the "Zone of Destiny" in Northern Norway and forces the Allied player to deal with the triple threat posed by the bases of Brest, Tromso and Kiel. Historical purists may question the absence of Hull and Wilhelmshaven on the base list, but SSI compensated for their absence by beefing up the other bases correspondingly. The final campaign, by far the most interesting of them all, is based on the premise that Germany invaded Britain in early 1941, losing much of its navy, but transforming England from an implacable enemy into a reluctant, weakened ally. Subsequently, Germany invades Iceland, which had been occupied by U.S. Marines. The Marines are forced to withdraw and the campaign focuses on American efforts to affect that withdrawal in the face of a resurgent Anglo-German fleet.

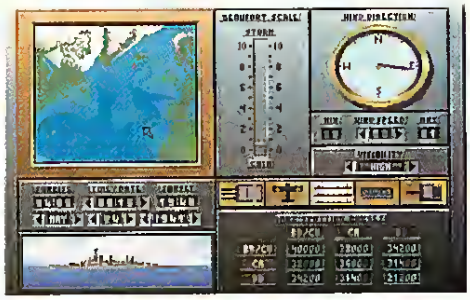
Super Ships in the Atlantic

The *Super Ships in the Atlantic* expansion disk allows players to sample operations with German and British ships which were either under construction or on the drawing board when the war ended. The three campaigns contained on this disk are set in 1942, '44 and '46 respectively. The first two presuppose expanded construction programs and early developments during the pre-war period that come into play during the historical time frame. The third campaign operates on the premise that Hitler, after being blocked from further expansion in the Czech crisis of 1938, opted to modernize all of his forces and actually execute the master plan in 1946. As in the other expansion disk, the third campaign opens the most fascinating possibilities for player experimentation. The new ship types are summarized in the following table:

Class/Type	Side	Main	Secondary	Tons
"H" Class BB	G	8-16in/47	12-5 9in/55	55,453
"P" Class Pocket BB	G	6-15in/47	8-5 9in/55	30,500
Vanguard Class BB	B	8-15in/42	16-5.25in/50	44,500
Lion Class BB	B	9-16in/45	16-5 25in/50	40,550
"M" Class CL	G	8-5.9in/55	none	7,800
Bellona Class CL	B	8-5 25in/50	none	5,950
Swiftsure Class CL	B	9-6in/50	none	8,800
"Z" 1940 DD	G	6-5 9in/55	none	6,300
Battle Class DD	B	4-4.5in/45	none	2,325

Although none of these ships would be a match for the Yamato, improvements in radar and gunnery make the

heavyweights superior to any other ships of equivalent size, while the new destroyers are swifter and more maneuverable that their predecessors. For those who can't afford the time it takes to play out the campaign options, the disk also has ten pre-generated scenarios, ranging from simple to complex, as before.



The Scenario Builder

As if all this wasn't enough to keep armchair Admirals busy for months to come, SSI also offers a *Scenario Builder* expansion set. As the title states, the program offers players a palette and construction set from which they can edit existing scenarios from the original or either expansion set already discussed, plus manually create new scenarios, either for themselves or to swap with others. The latter option will surely generate new user groups on many of the national BBSs. But wait, that's not all...as they are fond of saying on the infomercial circuit. The expansion set also introduces an entirely new element to the system, role-playing! Opting for a career in the military isn't just for silicon pilots anymore.

The scenario player portion of the program operates like the normal *GNBNA* interface for all single scenarios, whatever their origin, but it does not allow standard campaign play. Instead, there is an option called Captain's Campaign. Here, the player elects to sign up in either the Royal Navy or the Kriegsmarine for the duration of hostilities. One begins as a lowly Sub-Lieutenant or Leutnant zur See, and strives to become Admiral of the Fleet. Promotions and medals are far from automatic; the player must earn them through prowess in battle. Further, the system incorporates a modifier that makes long term survival difficult if the flagship goes down. For example, at the starting rank, there is a 100% chance that the player character will be rescued if his ship is sunk (as often happened to Destroyers in those days). With each increase in rank, the percentage for rescue is lowered by 10%. Hence, as one becomes fairly senior, it is a good idea to stay afloat.

Finally, every engagement generated by the Captain's Campaign is completely random. This not only serves the purpose of keeping replay value at an infinite level, it also contributes to the fog of war the player experiences as each engagement begins. At times, one will blunder into some wonderful mismatches. At others, one will be the focus of attention in the mismatch. In the second case, there is still honor in cutting and running when the situation warrants it. Either way, the uncertainty generated by the system will only enhance the experience of set piece players and appease those who abhor complete intelligence in a wargame.

SSI's efforts in refining and expanding this series are to be commended. This praise is offered with the full knowledge that it will not cause the programmers to rest on their laurels. The *Great Naval Battles* series is not at its zenith, but with continued user feedback and support, on-line and otherwise, it has the potential of becoming the recognized placebo for practitioners of historical naval combat in this theater. **CGW**

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TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY CHESS WARS: Animated chess programs are trendy right now. The latest company to make its move, Capstone has acquired another title to add to their long list of "box office" licenses. This time, it is Skynet (the computer) against the Resistance (the player) featuring the characters from the film *Terminator 2*. Similar in many regards to the recent Spectrum HoloByte release, *Chess Maniac 5 Billion and 1*, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day Chess Wars* offers the player an animated approach to this time honored classic, with a graphic depiction of each chess piece's demise upon being, in this case, terminated. Featuring an AI that learns as it plays, this title allows the user to experience chess in an apocalyptic milieu. While many features are available, including SVGA graphics and major sound board support, overall quality is not up to that exhibited in Interplay's excellent *Battle Chess* titles. IBM ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #1.

WAYNE'S WORLD: Whoa! Wayne & Garth need your help, dudes! Total drag, their show's getting pulled if they don't raise some serious cashola in three days. Ex-squeeze me? No more babes? Bogus! Time for a Pizza-Thon. Cruise the town in the Mirthmobile and check out all the hot spots in Aurora. Use the way cool graphic interface to point and click your way to fame and mondo dinero. Colorful VGA graphics and digitized voices from the movie help set the mood. There's also a "No hurl guarantee" on the game, because the anorexic manual will leave you hungry. Is it worthy? If this game were a babe, you'd take her home. But after a week, you'd be out cruising again. IBM ($44.95). Circle Reader Service #2.

Elpin
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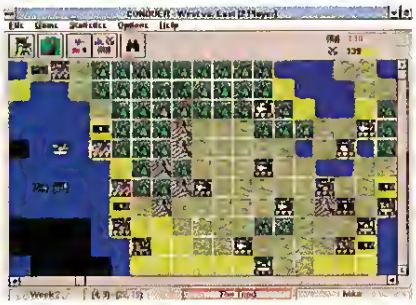
CONQUER FOR WINDOWS: This colorful conquer-the-world clone will find a place beside *Empire Deluxe*, *Battles of Destiny* and *Strategic Conquest*. Designed expressly for *Windows*, this 2 - 4 sided contest can be played by network (with a full complement of four players) or modem (for two players only, with up to two computer players joining in if desired). Although the game de-emphasizes having a variety of units types (there are only four: infantry, armor, planes and ships), it does underscore economics and long tange planning. The board must be conquered square-by-square, with each square contributing either food or gold to one's war effort. Cities are constructed with funds from the gold and they, in turn, can produce more units. Players will have to adopt some new tactics to win at *Conquer for Windows*. However, one might do well to take a look at it. IBM with *Windows* ($69.95). Circle Reader Service #3.

Terminator 2: Judgment Day

Wayne's World



Conquer For Windows

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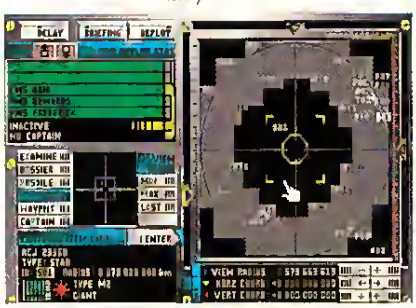

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Impressions Software, Inc.
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RULES OF ENGAGEMENT 2: For those who prefer their required doses of starship combat more in the style of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, waged on computer touch panels, rather than from the traditional cockpit of a space fighter as in *Wing Commander*, Impressions may have just the prescription for your strategic malnutrition. *Rules of Engagement 2* follows in the footsteps (or is that gravity boots) of its predecessor with noticeable graphic improvements. The newest module of the Interlocking Game System (IGS), *Rules of Engagement 2* allows the player to seamlessly link games with *Breach 2* and *Breach 3* for incorporating land-based battles with the space combat missions. In addition, this title features its own Construction Kit, enabling the player to fully customize virtually every component of the game: create one's own missions; construct fleets, fabricate captains, fashion solar systems and alien races; even design animations using *PC Animate Plus* (program not included)

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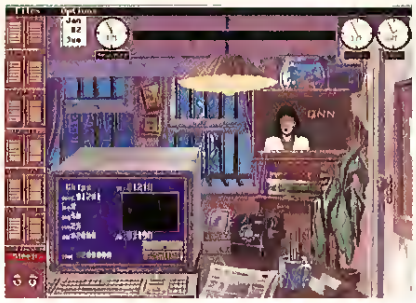
ro link with campaigns. Players new to this series, however, can anticipate a stiff learning curve. IBM ($69.95). Circle Reader Service #5.

Intetplay Ptoductions, Inc.
17922 Fitch Ave.
Irvine, CA 92714
(714) 553-6655

RAGS TO RICHES: If one believes that "greed is good," and delving into finances is more fun than dealing with fantasy, then the player of this new title from Interplay may be well on his or her way from *Rags to Riches.* Based on today's news and trading relationships, *Rags to Riches* allows the player to dabble in the exciting world of stocks, commodities and securities. One can play in the present, beginning his ot her fiscal year on Januaty 1, 1993, or commence theit wheeling and dealing in the era of the 1929 Stock Market Crash. Beginner, intermediate and advanced levels of play are provided in this financial simulation sporting high quality SVGA images. Have the secretary screen incoming calls, send the pit runner on his way, hire an assistant, and don't forget to call Mom every day. She has a great deal of market savvy, not to mention money to loan. IBM ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #6.

Mallard Software, Inc.
3207 Justin Rd.
Flower Mound, TX 75028
(214) 539-2575

LUNAR COMMAND: Beginning life as *Moonbase* from Wesson International, this lunat colony simulator has just been re-released by Mallard Software undet the appellation *Lunar Command.* While some additions have been made in this upgraded title—including sound, VGA graphics and some scoring enhancements—this simulation is basically the same as that of its earlier incarnation. Allowing one to design, plan, build, lead, motivate and control a lunar colony, *Lunar Command* challenges the player to maintain a proper balance between financial prosperity and self-sufficiency. Establishing shelters and life-support facilities, excavating minetals and dealing with catastrophes all play a vital role in the lunar equation. Fail in any regard and the results could be fatal. (Running out of oxygen, for instance, does little to endear the lunar commandet to those under his authority.) Strong leadership and planning abilities are the keys to success when one is over a quarter of a million miles away from home. IBM ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #7.



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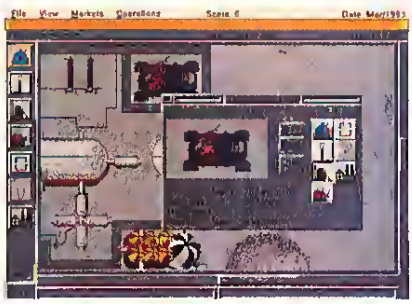

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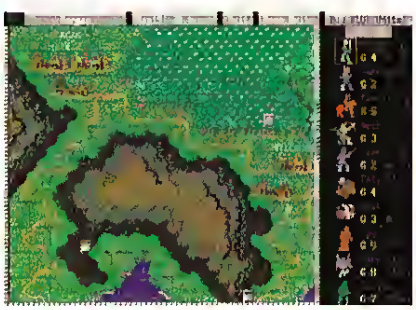

Conquered Kingdoms
Scenario Disk #1

War In The Gulf

MicroProse
180 Lakefront Dr.
Hunt Valley, MD 21030-2245
(800) 879-PLAY

RETURN OF THE PHANTOM: Gamers with a flair for the dramatic need not mask theit enthusiasm fot MicroProse's newest animated adventure release, *Return of the Phantom.* Based upon the same game engine employed in *Rex Nebular, Phantom* takes a more sinister, melodramatic approach to adventure gaming. As French detective Raoul Montand, the playet must investigate a series of unexplained events, all pointing to the return of the famed Phantom of the Paris Opera House, thought to have died around the turn of the century. Has the Phantom of the Opeta returned, in ghostly form, to exact his tevenge? Has he somehow managed to traverse time itself? Or, is someone else responsible for the strange occurrences plaguing this famous structure. This is the mystery the player must solve as he ot she investigates the Opera House and the labyrinth of catacombs hidden below. IBM ($69.95). Circle Reader Service #8.

Quantum Quality Productions, Inc.
1046 River Ave.
Flemington, NJ 08822
(908) 788-2799

CONQUERED KINGDOMS SCENARIO DISK #1: If, like Alexandet the Great, you've tun out of kingdoms to conquer, don't sit down and weep. Pick up QQP's *Conquered Kingdoms Scenario Disk #1* instead. This handy little addition to the original *Conquered Kingdoms* (game required) offers the player an additional 14 new scenatios, including novice and expert maps, and new terrain types (a booklet of attractive four-color maps is enclosed). Two-player modem support is available, as is traditional competition against computerized opponents. Twenty-one difficulty levels are provided for increasing one's combat pleasure. If warfare in a fantasy setting fulfills one's longings fot excitement, *Conquered Kingdoms* will supply amply. Though not state-of-the-art in presentation, this game of geographical conquest makes up for any visual and audible lack in its playability. IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #9.

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one a glimpse of mechanized warfare during Operation Desert Storm. The player controls four tank units with a total of 16 vehicles, attempting to turn Iraqi turrets into Tiparillos. Bit-mapped VGA graphics are not state-of-the-art, but the sense of urgency, confusion and disorientation translates well throughout the game. Players can equip their M-1 Abrams, M-113 APC, M-2 Bradley or M-901 TOW launcher with four kinds of ammo in preparation for 25 different missions—all more challenging than the actual conflict. A good interface helps make the game enjoyable and interesting, but not quite a direct hit. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #10.

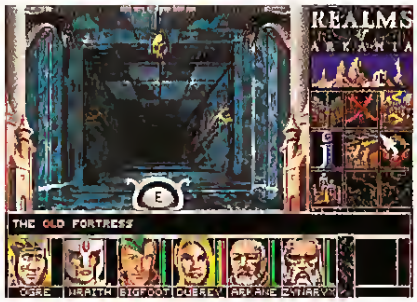
Sierra On-Line, Inc.
PO Box 485
Coarsegold, CA 93614
(209) 683-4468

LAURA BOW IN THE DAGGER OF AMON RA: The latest of Sierra's conversions to CD-ROM has made its appearance, allowing Ms. Bow to "speak her piece" (in southern belle fashion), along with the rest of the roaring 20's cast. As with previous Sierra CD conversions, digitized speech has replaced the on-screen text for each character and for the narrator (puzzles remain unchanged). Ideally, adding voices should increase the difficulty of play (as clues are no longer as obvious without the text displayed on screen) and add emotion to game play that cannot be conveyed in written text alone. The emotive factor, though, is only effective when the vocal acting is sufficiently realistic and believable. This is where Sierra has been weak thus far. Overall, the quality of the vocals in *The Dagger of Amon Ra* are adequate. However, it does suffer from vocal talent which is inferior to the CD version of *Space Quest IV*, Sierra's previous CD-ROM release. IBM ($69.95). Circle Reader Service #11.

Sir-Tech Software
PO Box 245
Ogdensburg, NY 13669
(315) 393-6633

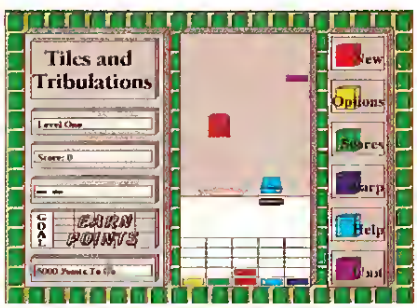
REALMS OF ARKANIA: Meat and potatoes role-players might get their fill from this hearty CRPG based upon a best-selling German "people and paper" system. The character attribute system is rich and original, offering 12 character "archetypes," over 50 skills with actual uses in the adventure and, interestingly, negative attributes, like superstition, greed and phobias. Playing *Realms of Arkania* in either a Novice or an Experienced mode, players will see the realm from several different perspectives: an overhead map for long-distance travel; a first person view in dungeons and towns; and a third person, 3-D isometric view in combat mode (a la *Darklands*). Detailed and occasionally fresh,

Laura Bow In The Dagger Of Amon RA



Realms Of Arkania

A Collection Of Classic Games



Tiles And Tribulations

High Command

its only fault might be an awkward interface and mediocre graphics. IBM ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #12.

Star Graphics Corp.
1800 SW 1st Ave., Suite 545
Portland, OR 97201-9942
(800) 831-7611

A COLLECTION OF CLASSIC GAMES: *Windows* gamers can now lay their hands on another entertainment pack, this one from Star Graphics, which includes three *Windows* games, two screen savers and a collection of *Windows* wallpaper. Of course, the games are the main feature of this collection. *Beleaguered Castle* is a version of *Solitaire* in which the player builds castles comprised of a pile of cards topped by a king. While the cards are face up for play, moving all cards of a like suit onto the corresponding center piles, in order from ace to king, is not as easy as it appears. *Morris*, based on an ancient English board game, challenges the player to strategically place tokens on a board in "mills" of three pieces in a row. Completing a mill allows the player to remove an opponent's piece from the board. When a player is down to two pieces or is blocked from further moves, the game is over. The last game in this set is based on geometric shapes. *Patterns*, comprised of the two puzzles *Tangrams* and *Plates of Wisdom*, requires players to move puzzle pieces into special geometric patterns. Overall, play in these games from Star Graphics is entertaining, even though the graphics are just average. Those wanting some simple *Windows* diversions to delve into between times of productivity may find *Classic Games* a logical choice. IBM with *Windows* ($34.99). Circle Reader Service #13.

Technological Computer Innovations
255 North Cherrywood Dr.
Lafayette, CO 80026-2726
(303) 673-9046

TILES AND TRIBULATIONS: A combination of action and strategy, TCI's *Tiles and Tribulations* gives the *Windows* gamer the chance to stack colored tiles to his or her heart's content, at least until sufficient errors make further progress impossible. The goal of this simple, yet tricky, game is to catch falling tiles with a keyboard-controlled paddle, and then drop them into the tile bin at the bottom of the screen. This bin, a 5x5 matrix that holds 25 tiles at a time, is where the player must stack the falling tiles in vertical, horizontal and diagonal patterns of same-colored tiles. When a pattern is completed, tiles in the pattern disappear, freeing up room for additional patterns. Tiles dropped into the bin in a random fashion will fill up the bin

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Circle Reader Service #52

and end the game. Each level, of the 50 provided, in this fun little title has a unique goal that must be solved before the player can advance to higher levels. IBM with *Windows* ($21.95). Circle Reader Service #14.

Three-Sixty Pacific
2105 South Bascom Ave., Suite 165
Campbell, CA 95008
(800) 653-1360

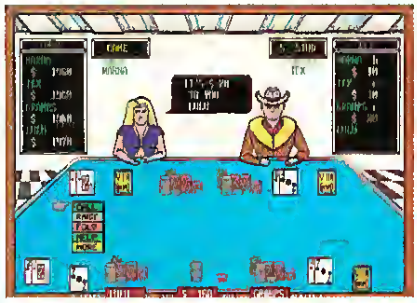
HIGH COMMAND: Like Three-Sixty's *V For Victory* series, this game feels very much like a classic boardgame on a computer, and has been compared with such all-time boardgame favorites as Avalon Hill's *Third Reich*. As the head of either the Axis or the Allies, players will be commanding combat forces, managing production plus research and development, doling out foreign aid, and allocating resources. Detailed and moderately complex, *High Command* may be less a game than a way of life. Fortunately, the game offers five tutorials of graduated complexity to get new players up to speed and on the road to victory. Originally released by Colorado Computer Creations, the game has been given an SVGA face-lift and a minor tune up by Three-Sixty. IBM ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #15.

Villa Crespo Software
1725 McGovern Sr.
Highland Park, IL 60035
(708) 433-0500

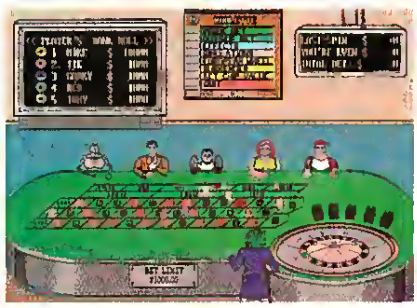
HEARTS: *Volume Twenty One* in the Coffee Break Series, *Hearts*, is another one of Villa Crespo Software's fine, affordable programs. Offering major sound card support and graphics from CGA through SVGA, *Hearts* deals out some traditional family fun in a competent, though simple package. Six opponents of varying skill and strategy levels provide the player with ample challenge. The easy to use interface supports both mouse and keyboard. Rounding out this offering is an on-line help feature and complete statistical records. IBM ($12.95). Circle Reader Service #16.

RUCKUS POKER: While not quite delivering the promised "toughest poker players you've ever met," this Coffee Break Series poker game is no slouch when it comes to knowing when to hold 'em and... well, everyone knows the rest. Five-handed games are filled with players from among the eight different artificial opponents (each with their own style of chat balloon dialogue) and the four games that can be dealt include 5 and 7 Card Stud, Hold 'em and Chicago. Typical of Villa Crespo, there are quality statistical analysis functions and an on-line tutor for

Hearts



Ruckus Poker



Ruckus Roulette

Thinkcross

Spiritual Warfare

betting advice. IBM ($12.95). Circle Reader Service #17.

RUCKUS ROULETTE: This little roulette simulation from Villa Crespo Software offers the player the opportunity to "place their bets" in a financially non-threatening atmosphere, one without risk to their bank accounts (save the cost of the game). Though it does not live up to the traditional marketing hype emblazoned on the outside of the box ("*Ruckus Roulette* recreates all the excitement of this popular casino game"), it nonetheless does offer the player an opportunity to learn and/or play roulette without losing face, money or a spouse. *Ruckus Roulette* allows the "gambler" to test out different betting strategies and ply his hand against up to four computer controlled players. Of course, long-term statistics are just a help key away. Supported hardware includes EGA/VGA graphic cards and Sound Blaster compatible sound boards. IBM ($12.95). Circle Reader Service #18.

THINKCROSS: A puzzle game from a classic mold, *ThinkCross* has players trying to eliminate various shapes from the screen by crashing like shapes into each other. Naturally, gravity is a core element, but there are plenty of obstacles including bridges, elevators and crumbling floors to keep it from being easy. Of course, every level is progressively harder, but passwords will take players back to the last uncompleted level. IBM ($12.95). Circle Reader Service #19.

Wisdom Tree
2700 E. Imperial Hwy., Bldg. A
Brea, CA 92621
(800) 772-4253

SPIRITUAL WARFARE: Those who would rather convert their enemies than kill them may wish to join the army of the Lord in a game of *Spiritual Warfare*, pitting the believer against the forces of evil in a modern day setting. Newly released from Wisdom Tree, this title offers the gamer a chance to test both their faith and joystick prowess in a Nintendo-esque world. Designed for players ages 8 and up, *Spiritual Warfare* combines action gaming (from a top-down perspective) and Bible quizzing in a single package. Familiar gospel music plays in the background as the player traverses twelve distinct territories and answers 250 Bible questions. Converting enemies to the faith and correctly answering Bible trivia questions serve to restore the player's waning health. In addition, unlike many action games, progress can be saved at any time. IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #20. CGW

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.

The Bard's Tale (Electronic Arts, 1985)
Many Formats
Chessmaster (Software Toolworks, 1986)
Many Formats
Civilization (MicroProse, 1991)
Amiga, IBM, Macintosh
Dungeon Master (FTL Software, 1987)
Amiga, Atari ST, IBM
Earl Weaver Baseball (Electronic Arts, 1986)
Amiga, IBM, Macintosh
Empire (Interstel, 1978)
Amiga, Atari ST, C-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 On-Line, 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, Macintosh
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, 1986)
Apple, C-64, IBM
Wing Commander (Origin, 1991)
IBM, Sega
Wizardry (Sir-Tech Software, 1981)
Many Formats
Zork (Infocom, 1981)
Many Formats

Mech Brigade

Strategic Simulations, Inc., 1985

Many Formats

Mech Brigade built on the lessons learned in publishing the World War II tactical armored combat game, *Kampfgruppe*, and even corrected the most oft-cited problem in its predecessor, the stacking problem. *Mech Brigade* featured modern armored warfare, but never quite gained the popularity of its predecessor. Since *CGW*'s readers consistently rated *Mech Brigade* highly (though not as highly as *Kampfgruppe*) and it had improved the system beyond *Kampfgruppe*'s original level, *CGW* made it one of the original inductees into the Hall of Fame.

Might & Magic

New World Computing, 1986

Apple, C-64, IBM, Macintosh

Might & Magic caught the fancy of role-players everywhere because it offered a new look (i.e. the walls in various mazes had a distinctive three-dimensional look as one explored the dungeons), a prolific amount of combat encounters, and one of the largest maps to that point in a CRPG. Designed by a gamer, Jon Van Caneghem, for gamers, the emphasis of the series has always been on tactical success to reach a strategic goal.

Top Adventure Games

	GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	Monkey Island 2: Le Chuck's	LucasArts	9.94
2	Indiana Jones: Fate of Atlantis	LucasArts	9.84
3	The Secret of Monkey Island	LucasArts	9.72
4	Star Control II	Accolade	9.71
5	Quest for Glory III	Sierra	9.56
6	Sherlock Holmes CD	ICOM	9.55
7	Alone in the Dark	I-Motion	9.54
8	Les Manly in: Lost in L.A.	Accolade	9.28
9	King's Quest VI: Heir Today...	Sierra	9.26
10	Lost Files of Sherlock Holmes	Electonic Arts	9.20

Top Role Playing Games

	GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	Ultima Underworld	Origin	10.45
2	Ultima Underworld II	Origin	9.59
3	Eye of the Beholder II	SSI	9.51
4	Might & Magic III	New World Computing	9.41
5	Ultima VII: Part Two Serpent Isle	Origin	9.41
6	Ultima VII	Origin	9.34
7	Might & Magic: Clouds of Xeen	New World	9.34
8	Wizardry VII: Crusaders of Savant	Sir-Tech	9.25
9	Eye of the Beholder	SSI	9.10
10	Bane of the Cosmic Forge	Sir-Tech	9.05

Top Simulation Games

	GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	World Circuit	MicroProse	10.27
2	X-Wing	LucasArts	10.15
3	Falcon 3.0	Spectrum HoloByte	9.58
4	Aces of the Pacific	Dynamix	9.48
5	Comanche: Maximum Overkill	NovaLogic	9.39
6	Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe	LucasArts	9.19
7	Stunt Island	Disney	9.10
8	Chuck Yeager's Air Combat	Electronic Arts	9.06
9	Red Storm Rising	MicroProse	9.0
10	F-15 Strike Eagle III	MicroProse	9.03

Top Strategy Games

	GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	Solitaire's Journey	OOP	10.18
2	Dune II	Virgin	9.74
3	Chessmaster 3000	Software Toolworks	9.32
4	Hong Kong Mahjong Pro	Electonic Arts	9.13
5	The Lost Admiral	OOP	9.05
6	The Incredible Machine	Dynamix	9.05
7	Mech Warrior	Activision	8.94
8	The Island of Dr. Brain	Sierra	8.91
9	Hoyle Book of Games, Vol. 3	Sierra	8.78
10	Populous II	Electronic Arts	8.78

Reader Poll #108

Top 100 Games

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD
The Premier Computer Game Magazine

	Game	Company	Type	Score
1	Links 386 Pro	Access	SP	10.51
2	Ultima Underworld	Origin	RP	10.45
3	World Circuit	MicroProse	SI	10.27
4	Wing Commander II	Origin	AC	10.17
5	X-Wing	LucasArts	SI	10.15
6	Solitaire's Journey	QQP	ST	10.12
7	Front Page Sports Football	Dynamix	SP	10.11
8	Conquered Kingdoms	QQP	WG,ST	9.97
9	Monkey Island 2: Le Chuck's Revenge	LucasArts	AD	9.94
10	V for Victory: Velikiye Luki	Three-Sixty Pacific	WG	9.93
11	Indiana Jones: Fate of Atlantis	LucasArts	AD	9.84
12	The Perfect General	QQP	WG	9.75
13	The Secret of Monkey Island	LucasArts	AD	9.72
14	Star Control II	Accolade	AD,AC	9.71
15	Dune II	Virgin	ST	9.68
16	V for Victory: Utah Beach	Three-Sixty Pacific	WG	9.63
17	Wolfenstein 3-D	Id Software	AC	9.61
18	Ultima Underworld II	Origin	RP	9.59
19	Falcon 3.0	Spectrum HoloByte	SI	9.58
20	Quest for Glory III	Sierra	AD,RP	9.56
21	Sherlock Holmes CD	ICQM	AD	9.55
22	Alone in the Dark	I-Motion	AD	9.54
23	Empire Deluxe	New World	WG	9.52
24	Eye of the Beholder II	SSI	RP	9.51
25	Aces of the Pacific	Dynamix	SI	9.48
26	Links	Access	SP	9.47
27	Warlords	SSG	WG,ST	9.44
28	Ultima VII: Part Two Serpent Isle	Origin	RP	9.41
	Might & Magic III	New World Computing	RP	9.41
30	Pacific War	SSI	WG	9.40
31	Comanche: Maximum Overkill	NovaLogic	SI	9.39
32	Hardball III	Accolade	SP	9.37
33	V For Victory: Market Garden	Three-Sixty Pacific	WG	9.34
	Might & Magic: Clouds of Xeen	New World	RP	9.34
	Ultima VII	Origin	RP	9.34
36	Chessmaster 3000	Software Toolworks	ST	9.32
37	High Command	Three-Sixty Pacific	WG	9.29
38	Les Manly in: Lost in L.A.	Accolade	AD	9.28
39	Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf	Accolade	SP	9.27
40	King's Quest VI: Heir Today ..	Sierra	AD	9.26
41	Wizardry VII: Crusaders of Savant	Sir-Tech	RP	9.25
42	Lemmings	Psygnosis	AC,ST	9.21
43	Lost Files of Sherlock Holmes	Electonic Arts	AD	9.20
44	Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe	LucasArts	SI	9.19
45	Second Front	SSI	WG	9.17
46	Tetris Classic	Spectrum HoloByte	AC	9.14
47	Hong Kong Mahjong Pro	Electonic Arts	ST	9.13
48	The Castle of Dr. Brain	Sierra	AD	9.11
49	Eye of the Beholder	SSI	RP	9.10
	Stunt Island	Disney	SI	9.10

The Computer Gaming World Poll

A monthly survey of the readers of Computer Gaming World Magazine.

Top Wargames

	GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	Conquered Kingdoms	QQP	9.97
2	V for Victory: Velikiye Luki	Three-Sixty	9.93
3	The Perfect General	QQP	9.75
4	V for Victory: Utah Beach	Three-Sixty Pacific	9.63
5	Empire Deluxe	New World	9.52
6	Warlords	SSG	9.44
7	Pacific War	SSI	9.40
8	V For Victory: Market Garden	Three-Sixty Pacific	9.34
9	High Command	Three-Sixty Pacific	9.29
10	Second Front	SSI	9.17

Top Action Games

	GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	Wing Commander II	Origin	10.17
2	Wolfenstein 3-D	Id Software	9.81
3	Lemmings	Psygnosis	9.21
4	Tetris Classic	Spectrum Holo8yte	9.14
5	Oh, No! More Lemmings	Psygnosis	8.92
6	Lemmings 2: The Tribes	Psygnosis	8.85
7	Out of this World	Interplay	8.57
8	Terminator 2029	8ethesda	8.13
9	Spectre	Velocity	8.02
10	Speedball 2	Konami	7.92

Top Sports Games

	GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	Links 386 Pro	Access	10.51
2	Front Page Sports Football	Dynamix	10.11
3	Links	Access	9.47
4	Hardball III	Accolade	9.37
5	Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf	Accolade	9.27
6	Tony LaRussa 8aseball II	SSI	8.86
7	NFL Pro League Football	Micro Sports	8.54
8	The Games: Winter Challenge	Accolade	8.50
9	PGA Tour Golf	Electronic Arts	8.49
10	Tony LaRussa's Ultimate 8aseball	SSI	8.49

Poll is based on reader survey cards in each issue of *CGW* and published two issues subsequent. Data on more than 100 games is archived and top ten lists may contain games which scored below the Top 100 cutoff

51	The Dagger of Amon Ra	Sierra	AD	9.09
	Conflict: Korea	SSI	WG	9.09
53	Chuck Yeager's Air Combat	Electronic Arts	SI	9.06
54	Bane of the Cosmic Forge	Sir-Tech	RP	9.05
	Quest for Glory I (VGA)	Sierra	AD,RP	9.05
	The Lost Admiral	QQP	ST	9.05
57	Red Storm Rising	MicroProse	SI	9.04
	Eric the Unready	Legend	AD	9.04
	Conquests of the Longbow	Sierra	AD	9.04
60	Silent Service II	MicroProse	SI	9.03
	F-15 Strike Eagle III	MicroProse	SI	9.03
62	Quest for Glory II	Sierra	AD,RP	9.02
	Gunship 2000	Microprose	SI	9.02
64	The Incredible Machine	Dynamix	ST	9.01
	Police Quest 3	Sierra	AD	9.01
66	Ultima V	Origin	RP	9.00
	Battles of Destiny	QQP	WG,ST	9.00
68	Space Quest IV	Sierra	AD	8.98
	Western Front	SSI	WG	8.98
70	Carriers At War	SSG	WG	8.97
71	The Adventures of Willy Beamish	Dynamix	AD	8.96
72	Mech Warrior	Activision	ST,SI	8.94
73	Veil of Darkness	SSI	RP	8.92
	F-117A	MicroProse	SI	8.92
	Oh, No! More Lemmings	Psygnosis	AC,ST	8.92
76	The Island of Dr. Brain	Sierra	ST	8.91
77	Rise of the Dragon	Dynamix	AD	8.89
	Martian Memorandum	Access	AD	8.89
79	Tony LaRussa Baseball II	SSI	SP	8.86
80	Lemmings 2: The Tribes	Psygnosis	AC,ST	8.85
81	Indianapolis 500	Electronic Arts	SI	8.83
82	Elvira	Accolade	RP	8.82
83	Command HQ	MicroPlay	WG,ST	8.81
	Spellcasting 301: Spring Break	Legend	AD	8.81
85	Rex Nebular	MicroProse	AD	8.80
86	Gateway to the Savage Frontier	SSI	RP	8.79
	Great Naval Battles	SSI	WG,ST	8.79
88	Populous II	Electronic Arts	ST	8.78
	Hoyle Book of Games, Vol. 3	Sierra	ST	8.78
90	Heart of China	Dynamix	AD	8.75
91	Battlechess	Interplay	ST	8.72
	Gateway	Legend	AD	8.72
93	Starflight II	Electronic Arts	RP	8.71
94	Battles of Napoleon	SSI	WG	8.70
95	Pools of Darkness	SSI	RP	8.68
96	Typhoon of Steel	SSI	WG	8.67
97	Armada 2525	Interstel	ST	8.63
98	Amazon	Access	AD	8.62
99	Space Quest V: Mutation	Sierra	AD	8.60
	Strike Commander	Origin	SI	8.60

Games on unnumbered lines have scores equal to the line above. = Top game of type

AD=Adventure, RP=Role Playing, SI=Simulation, ST=Strategy, WG=Wargame, AC=Action, SP=Sports

PC Research Hits List of Top-Selling Software

May, 1993

PC Games (MS-DOS)

Rank	Title and Source
1.	X-Wing (LucasArts)
2.	Seventh Guest (Virgin)
3.	Strike Commander (Origin)
4.	Wolfenstein 3-D/Spear of Destiny (Formgen)
5.	AD&D Eye of the Beholder (Strategic Simulations)
6.	Ultrabots (Electronic Arts)
7.	Commanche: Maximum Overkill (NovaLogic)
8.	Links - Banff Springs (Access)
9.	Links - 386 Pro (Access)
10.	Hardball III (Accolade)
11.	Tony Larussa Baseball II (Strategic Simulations)
12.	Alone in the Dark (Interplay)
13.	Freddy Pharkas, Frontier Pharmacist (Sierra On-Line)
14.	Wing Commander (Origin)
15.	Empire Deluxe (New World Computing)
16.	El Fish (Maxis)
17.	Star Trek 25th Anniversary (Interplay)
18.	F-19 Stealth Fighter (MicroProse)
19.	Sim City (Maxis)
20.	AD&D Unlimited Adventures (Strategic Simulations)

Amiga Games

Rank	Title and Source
1.	688 Attack Sub (Electronic Arts)
2.	Shadow of the Beast (Psygnosis)
3	Legend of Kyrandia (Virgin)
4.	Overlord (Virgin)
5.	AD&D Gateway to Savage Frontier (Strategic Simulations)

Macintosh Games

Rank	Title and Source
1.	Prince of Persia (Broderbund)
2.	King's Quest VI (Sierra On-Line)
3.	King's Quest V/Red Baron Bundle (Sierra On-Line)
4	Microsoft Flight Simulator (Microsoft)
5.	Lemmings (Psygnosis)

CD-ROM Products

Rank	Title and Source
1	7th Guest (Virgin Games)
2.	MPC Wizard (Aris Entertainment)
3.	Compton's Encyclopedia Upgrade (Compton's New Media)
4.	Key Clipmaster Pro (SoftKey)
5	Street Atlas U.S.A. (Delorme)
6.	Cinemania (Microsoft)
7	Lightning (Lucid)
8	Corel Art Show (Corel)
9.	Key Fonts Pro (Softkey)
10.	CD Speedway (Bloc)

This list is based on units sold by Software Etc., Babbages, Waldensoftware and Electronics Boutique. For more information, please contact PC Research at (703) 435-1025

What You've Been Playing Lately

Every month our mailbox bulges with hundreds of Reader Input Cards from our most loyal and outspoken readers. Over the years we've found these cards to be an invaluable source of feedback. Within 10 days of releasing our latest issue we can expect to see cards pouring in with suggestions, encouragements, tirades and many good laughs, in addition to the data for our Top 100 poll. Through your efforts, we know *exactly* where we stand with our readers (you don't mince words!), and we are treated to well-articulated opinions on anything and everything related to gaming. This column is a forum for these responses and for the results of our "Playing Lately?" query on the Reader Input Card. Thanks for taking the time to fill them out ... keep 'em coming!

Playing Lately? Results For CGW #108, July 1993

1. X-wing (LucasArts)
2. Civilization (MicroProse)
3. Sttike Commandet (Origin)
4. Ultima 7.5: Serpent's Isle (Origin)
5. Empire Deluxe (New World)
6. World Circuit (MicroProse)
7. Might & Magic: Darkside of Xeen (New World)
8. The 7th Guest (Virgin)
9. V For Victory: Market Garden (Three-Sixty)
10. Wolfenstein 3-D/Spear of Destiny (id Software)

Reader Recommendations

"For all its simplicity, Spaceward Ho! is great. It doesn't bog down with large empires, and we love the multi-player capability. Gangs of fun!
X-wing suffers from too much puzzle-solving and requires inhuman reflexes to proceed. It's beautiful, but frustrating. Nor fun."

- D. Zimmerman, Herndon, VA

"Outstanding! Star Control II is the best balanced and all-around fun game I've played in years. Even the final credits are entertaining (a la Monty Python and the Holy Grail)."

- J. Shaffer, Silver Spring, MD

"I recently had the chance to play Protostar from Tsunami. It has the poorest play quality for any game I've played in months. The graphics were good but the content was thin and poorly organized, and the documentation was the worst I've seen."

- M. Smith, Verona, MS

"Super job on Pacific War! Mr. Grigsby has outdone himself this time. By harnessing the capabilities of the computer he has taken a monster the likes of SPI's War in the Pacific and turned it into a playable dream. Although the computer opponent does strange things - like raiding Raboul in '42 with only 2 CVs! A few things are missing which do distort things - for instance refit/shipyard work, size of port limiting the number of ships, and the ability for heavily damaged ships to limp a long way home. Overall, job well done!

- E. Booth, Harker Heights, TX

"Publishers who continually raise the ante on hardware with every release are really after the high-end, well-heeled user. So I suggest marketing these games with gold fringe on the hoxes, velvet disk sleeves, Biscotti Regina enclosed for munching during installation, and framable certificates of ownership."

- C. Dodge, Corona del Mar, CA

"QQP has mastered the art of crearing addictive computer strategy games with unlimited re-playability. Too bad the sound suppott sucks rocks."

- B. Rosado, Crestwood, N.Y.

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 agteed 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 most major networks (e.g., Compuserve or GEnie), but can also be obtained from individual software publisher's own BBSs or direct from the publisher with proof of purchase. We continue to urge publishets to keep us updated on the latest versions/patches to their games.

('**' indicates new files)

Aces of the Pacific 1946 Add-On Disk Update: Single Missions will now be saved correctly, and several fixes have been made to Cateer Pilors, including the eliminarion of known Shell Sysrem Errors. 3/10/93.

Air Bucks Version 1.2: A major overhaul of the original airline strategy game. 4/17/93

** Ambush At Sorinor Version 1.02: Adds a speed control option for fast machines, replaces several bad mission descriptions, and fixes the AI for VIPs and escorts. 6/17/93

Ancient Art of War in the Skies Update: Version 02 of the game. 3/01/93

Battles of Destiny V1.1 Patch: Enhancements and bug fixes include: Patrol Mode, Map Editor, and two playet modem enhancements. 5/06/93

Buzz Aldrin Race Into Space Update: Fixes the "screen blackout" bug and adds an Undo button to the Purchase screen. 5/04/93

** Caesar Patch: Allows players to use Impressions' game with disk compression utilities, and corrects the "culture" problem. 5/19/93

Darklands Version 07 Update: Latest version of MicroProse's RPG. 3/05/93

Dune II Patch File: Fixes ptoblems with the delivery of items from CHOAM. 4/18/93

Empire Deluxe Version 3.1: This new version makes a myriad of feature changes and bug fixes to Version 3.0. 4/30/93

F15 Strike Eagle III Vetsion 3 Update: Corrects minor ettors in earlier versions. 4/25/93

Harpoon Version 1.32A Upgrade: Makes changes to the Harpoon game system. 5/18/93

Indiana Jones/Atlantis Mac Patch: Corrects the "desert balloon" crash bug in the Mac version. 4/15/93

Indiana Jones/Atlantis 486 Patch: Allows one to play the game on a 486 withour color ptoblems ot errors. 5/26/93

Jordan in Flight SVGA Patch: Allows owners of Diamond Stealth, Diamond Stealth 24 and Orchid Fahrenheit 1280 Plus video cards to run the game in SVGA. 5/21/93

** Jump Jet Update: Corrects the joystick problems some players are reporting and some other compatibility problems. 5/18/93

Links 386 Pro Update Version 1.09: Includes new drivets for specific video cards, a new Sound Blaster Pro 16 drivet, and fixes the Harbour Town Hole 14 lockup. 3/3/93

Magic Candle III Version 1.16: Fixes problems with Sound Blaster support, mirrot of honesty/candlewick problems, difficulties with tranferted chatacrers from MC2, and other minor glitches. 2/17/93

Mantis Update (IBM): Adds new features and improves gameplay. For disk-based vetsion only. 3/01/93

Pacific War V1.1 Upgrade: The "official" SSI upgrade to Gaty Grigsby's Pacific War. 4/18/93

** Realms of Arkania Disk 3 Fix: The first print run of this game was missing some data from disk 3. You only need this file if your BLADE directory has 48 files and 3,030,380 bytes in it. 6/23/93

Space Quest 5 Patch: Corrects the following: (1) Inability to Restore or Quit after running out of time on WD-40's ship. (2) Inability to skip polishing the Star Con crest in EGA mode. (3) Loss of cursor when Roger steps off the log which spans the river on Kiz Urazgubi. 2/26/93

Sumpter to Appomattox Update: Fixes the "Build" routine and eliminates the memoty error thar some gamers were having. 3/13/93

The Seventh Guest Fix: Cotrects incompatibility problems with some video cards, motherboards, and sound cards. 5/06/93

Tom Landry Football V. 1.03 Update (IBM & Mac): Cortects problems with high-speed modem play. 3/06/93

Tony LaRussa II Patch: Fixes bugs in SSI's baseball simulation. 5/21/93

Ultima VII Version 3.4: Lord British fixes some minor leaks in the roof of Castle Britannia. Updates from Version 3.0 to 3.4. 2/17/93

Ultima Underworld II Patch: Fixes the "strike" problem, local bus difficulties, and a few othets. 2/24/93

Unlimited Adventures Version 1.1 Patch: In addition to new files for the software, this file conrains a supplement to the game's manual. 5/21/93

Unlimited Adventures Design Guide Supplement: A Technical Manual for Adventure Design by Scott Gries and MicroMagic, Inc. The official manual supplement. 5/20/93

Wilson Pro Staff Golf Update: Corrects mouse driver problems and errors where incotrect driving clubs were selected for certain ranges. 4/21/93

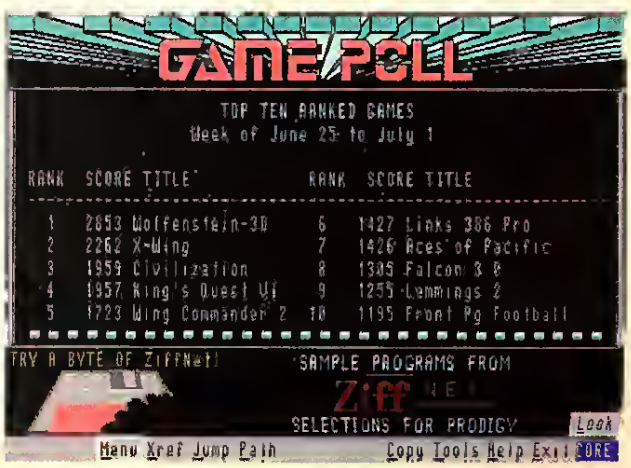
World Circuit Modem Update V1.05: Corrects problems with 2400 baud modems. 4/08/93

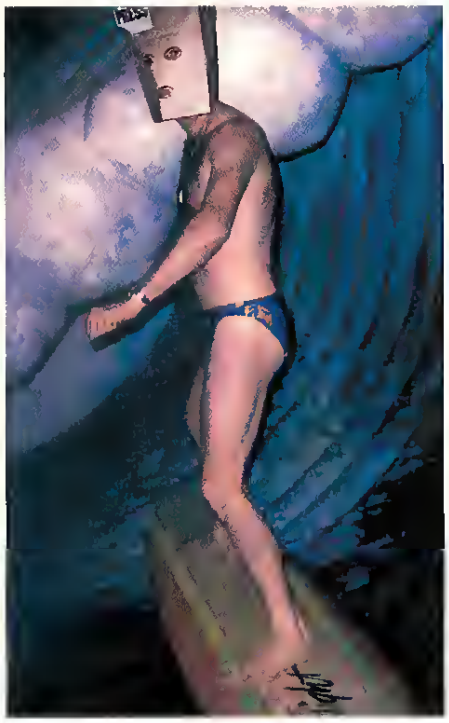
X-wing I/O Soundcard Patch: Allows I/O port settings of 210-260. 4/15/93

X-wing Roland Sound Patch: Fixes crash bugs associated with the Roland soundcard on 486 machines. 4/15/93

The PRODIGY Weekly Top Ten

Computer Gaming World is Prodigy's on-line games expert. Look for us in rheir Game Center, a forum where users read articles posted online by *CGW* and exchange messages on the bullerin boards (we can be reached there ar EXPT 40B). The Prodigy Game Poll is run by Prodigy based on a list of games provided by *CGW* and is updared weekly. Nore that it is not a cumulative rating over time (like the *CGW* Top 100 Poll). Instead, the Prodigy Game Poll is a weekly "Snapshot" of game popularity with gamers rating their favorites on a 1 - 10 scale. The highest total poinr earners make rheii Top 10. We provide this data to our readers as another barometer of "what's hot" in computer gaming.





THE RUMOR BAG

by Duke "Baggy"

Sometimes, things can be going too perfectly. I was out neat Black's Beach so I could catch a left-breaking wave, goofy foot and all. I did a rock dance at low-tide in ordet to paddle out, and I found myself sitting out at the lineup with neatly every other surfet in Southern California on such a beautiful day. We kept waiting for a killer wave, just like my readers who keep waiting for Hero Software's *Champions* to ship. Fortunately, I had some tentatively good news for them. I had just that day booted *HeroMaker*, the direct sale version of their *Champions* charactet generator. People and paper role-players can use their computers to create and print out theit characters without having to leaf through and double cheek all of those rules in the hardbound book. It's a good sign. *Now*, maybe they'll get the adventure/story into the computer game and we'll see that long-awaited jewel. At least us frustrated supethero types now have something to do with our computers.

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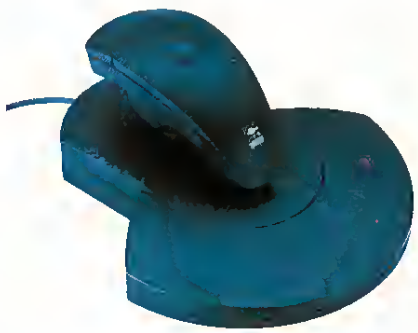
Speaking of hero makets, the killet wave I was about to catch was enough to clean up everybody else, but I managed to get really barrelled and eatch enough gteen room time to get a few hoots from the lineup. That is, of course, before I stalled out just enough for the wave to crash over the top of me and hammer me like a Charles Barkley dunk. Man, did I get drilled! I dare you to try to think about rumors, even Accolade signing a licensing agreement with a guy like Sir Charles, when you're getting 300 pounds per square inch of watet up yout nose.

When my head surfaced, I had so much salt and sand in my eyes that the whole beach looked like a planetscape from another world. The whole scene reminded me that Mallard Software, the folks that cteate those cool scenery disks for Mierosoft's *Flight Simulator 5*, is working on anothet product. This one is called *Space Clipper* and it's based on the Delta Clippet being developed by McDonnell Douglas (the next generation space shuttle). Not only has Mallard developed *Space Clipper* to be a simulation, but they ate adding adventure game elements, as well.

As I paddled back out to the lineup, I overheard a couple of guys atguing about *Wolfenstein 3D*. One guy said it was proof of the computer's superiotity over the *Super Nintendo* system. He insisted that they couldn't possibly put their 3-D engine on a SNES without that FX chip and, even then, it would be doubtful. I chuckled. Even Nintendo had thought Id Software would need the FX chip to get their game going on the SNES, but Id didn't need it. It runs as pretty as you please without it. Of course, they had to get rid of the Nazi logos, SS men and attack dogs (which are now giant rats), but the gamers are still fighting a master society and trying to break free.

Then, a streak of bad luck hit. Even though I'd managed to catch the gnatliest wave of the day (for all too short a time), I found myself paddling from peak to peak at just the wrong time. I'd leave one spot and a great wave would crash through. I'd go back and end up waiting endlessly. It was sott of like waiting for the wave of monster robot games to hit. Aetivision is supposed to release follow-up products to *MechWarrior II* in the first quarter of '94 and then unleash *MechWarrior III* near the second half of the year. Meanwhile, Dynamix will bring their *MetalTech* game to the party in the fitst quarter of '94, as well.

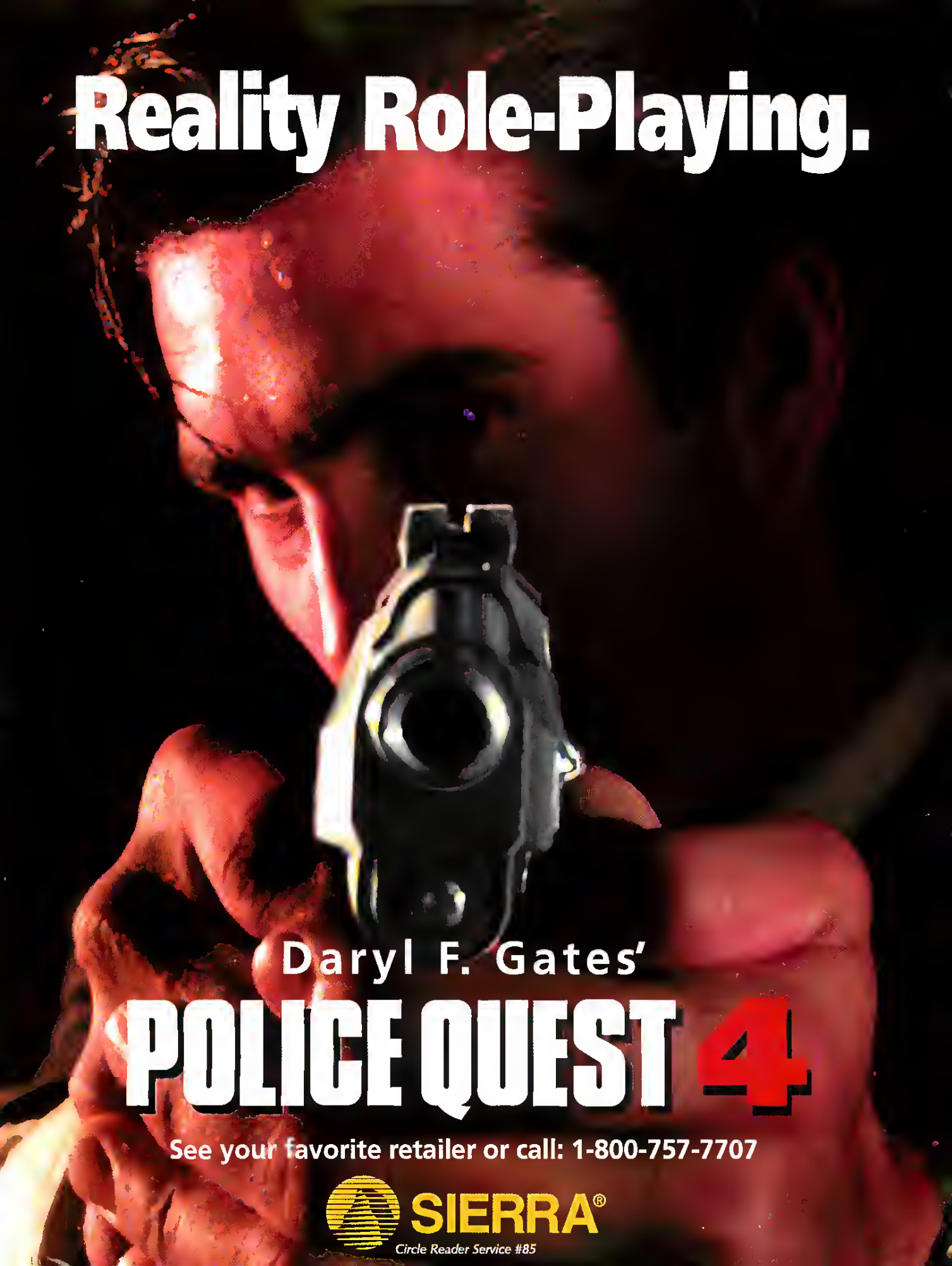
As I waited, the swells provided a gentle undulation that nearly rocked me to sleep. Before it could, though, the vibration reminded me that I had fotgotten to write anything about Logiteeh's soon-to-be-released *Cyberman* petipheral. The input device is *almost* an affordable flying mouse in that it will allow the gamer to control pitch and yaw in a third dimension, as well as standard directional movement. CRPGers should like it because it gives vibrational feedback whenever one's on-screen character gets hir by a weapon or jostles against a physical batrier.



Logitech's CyberMan Input Device

So, I resolved to catch the next big wave, whethet it was the one I really wanted or not. Unfortunately, I missed it worse than MicroProse is going to miss their original release date for *Sid Meier's Civil War* (he's concentrating on *CPU Bach* for the 3DO system and the civil war game won't ship until 1994). Then, on my next try, I misjudged my takeoff and went over the falls. I did about six feet of free-fall and got sucked back up into the rinse cycle. Talk about getting hammered (and I don't mean from booze), I was exhausted when I dragged myself to the shore.

So exhausted, in fact, that I failed to see or feel the cuddly beach bunny tuck a note into the sleeve of my wet suit. The note said that Avalon Hill might be working with an experienced computer wargame design team to program their *Computer Advanced Squad Leader*. It also said to meet her at the usual place. I guess I wasn't *that* exhausted. CGW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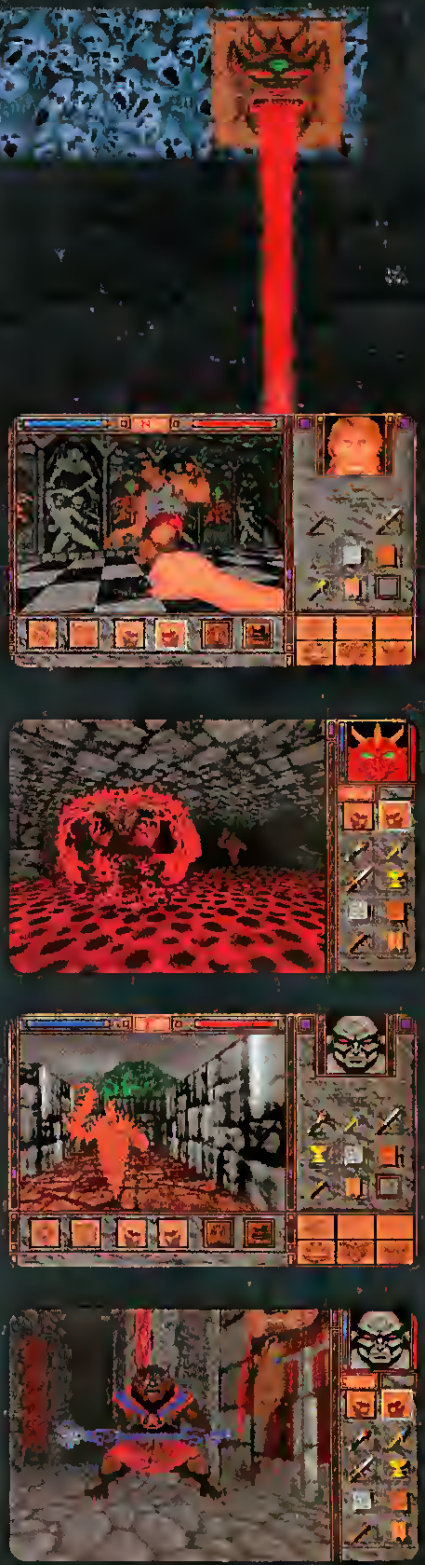

Actual screens may vary.

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