

and allow the player to experience the *Battletech* (licensed from **FASA**) universe via a first person, out of the cockpit perspective. It is the only BattleMech simulation and by means of outstanding graphics, as well as sound support for both the *AdLib* and *Roland MT-32* sound boards, it presents a unique opportunity for blending action and role playing. He believes that the eight different "mechs" to command, combined with multiple missions and objectives, give the game sufficient gameplay to make it an excellent holiday gift. IBM (\$49.95).

**M-1 Tank Platoon** (Microprose): Microprose developed *M-1 Tank Platoon* because they had been receiving customer requests for a realistic tank simulation for several years. The use of 3-D terrain with hills, buildings, trees, roads, and streams, as well as the capacity for rain, snow, and night actions and the ability to command a full platoon of four tanks, along with supporting vehicles, infantry, artillery and aircraft, marks *M-1 Tank Platoon* as a simulation which respects its subject, rather than being a simple action game. Holidays are an ideal time for play and the Microprose design team believes that "After you've jumped into real tank combat with *M-1 Tank Platoon*, anything else will seem like child's play." IBM (\$69.95).

**Tank** (Spectrum Holobyte): When Spectrum Holobyte set out to create multiple military simulations which could be networked together, the development team decided that *Tank* would be the logical first release in the series (which will be entitled the *Electronic Battlefield Series™*), since modern battle tanks are the cornerstone of today's military strategy. The game's features include: head-to-head competition against another computer; topographic 3-D terrain with real slopes, mountains, and valleys; actions which include up to 32 different vehicles, as well as active air support and recon units; and provision for thermal and night modes. It should be a welcome holiday surprise for any gamer because it allows play on multiple levels. It offers everything from easy arcade-type action to complex strategy. IBM (\$59.95).

**Wolf Pack** (Broderbund): John Garoia of **NovaLogic**, developers of *Wolfpack*, approached Broderbund with the idea for *Wolfpack*. His enthusiasm for the project, combined with the beautiful graphics already designed and the potential for a

realistic, but fun, World War II naval combat simulation sold Broderbund on the idea. The uniqueness of the product stems from the player's ability to assume either side of the conflict, as either a German submarine commander or an Allied destroyer/convoy commander. In addition, the built-in scenario builder makes *Wolfpack* even a better value. Particularly with more and more gamers wanting simulations which take advantage of their VGA-capable machines, *Wolfpack* should be a colorful addition to anyone's holiday bounty. IBM (\$49.95).

## Role Playing

**Hero's Quest** (Sierra): In writing a game with the express purpose of introducing role-playing to adventure gamers and adventure gaming to role-players, Lori Cole may have created a whole new genre of games, Role-Playing/Adventure. *Hero's Quest* adds the plot and story of a graphic adventure game to the character creation and character building of a role-playing game. Unique to most games in the adventure genre, it also allows multiple solutions to most of the puzzles in order to allow for replay value. *Hero's Quest* would be an appropriate holiday surprise for lovers of either genre. IBM (\$59.95).

**Knights of Legend** (Origin): Todd Mitchell Porter designed *Knights of Legend* to bring forth a true fantasy role-playing game with all the features he felt had been missing in CRPGs to date. *Knights of Legend* has taken more than eight years in development and offers a significant depth, particularly in the area of character development. It offers the most comprehensive combat system in the genre, but mixed with its menu and icon interface, it is destined to offer the fun of discovery such as role-playing gamers have never experienced it. The game will round out any fantasy gamer's holiday season because of the compelling drama of its story and its vivid universe full of colorful non-player characters. Apple, C-64, (\$49.95).

**Starflight II** (Electronic Arts): In reality, this part of the story was planned when the original *Starflight* was designed. Since Greg Johnson and the rest of the crew at Binary Systems received encouragement to continue the saga in



A-10 Tank Killer



Blue Angels



M-1 Tank Platoon



MechWarrior



Tank



Wolf Pack





Hero's Quest



Knights of Legend



Starflight II



Swords of Twilight



The Third Courier



Windwalker

hundreds of fan letters and the design team believed that both the story and system could sustain a sequel (or more), they developed *Starflight II*. Though there are plenty of space games and plenty of "large" games on the market, Johnson insists that the *Starflight* series is distinctive for the freedom it allows the players. Since players can express themselves through the role-playing experience, he suggests, it is a satisfying one for them. In addition, the unique personalities of the alien races combined with the custom histories make the game have its own special flavor. Johnson says that mail from *Starflight* players indicates that people really enjoy playing the game together. Since togetherness is part of what makes the holidays special, *Starflight II* is an excellent addition to the packages under the tree. IBM (\$49.95).

**Swords of Twilight (EA):** Jon Freeman and Ann Westphal were concerned because the standard approach to computer FRPs (fantasy role playing games) seemed rather clunky. With Amiga graphics and 68000 power, they believed that they could create a role-playing experience more immediate and life-like than anything simulated by rolling dice—or pretending to. *Swords of Twilight*, according to the designers, is distinctive because: No other game combines the action, excitement, and simple mechanics of *Archon* with a real plot, characterization, eloquent prose, sophisticated AI, and complex interaction. In fact, no other game mixes the variety, color, and scope of epic fantasy with real-world logic, ethics, and consequences. They believe *Swords of Twilight* is a great gift because, as a multi-player game, it also provides a great excuse to spend time with the person you give it to. Amiga (\$49.95).

**The Third Courier (Accolade):** Take the role-playing genre and move it into the modern world with realistic situations, authentic locations, and logical constraints. That is what Ivan and Carol Manley have attempted to accomplish in this espionage/detective adventure from Accolade. Because of the emphasis on reality, the designers feel "No other product that we are aware of competes directly with *The Third Courier*." The husband/wife team feels that they have created a different game, a family present, that all family members can play and enjoy. Apple IIGS and IBM (\$49.95).

**Windwalker (Origin):** From a personal interest in both the martial arts and oriental philosophy, Greg Malone created *Windwalker*, the sequel to *Moebius*. *Windwalker* offers animated action sequences crafted after observing real human beings compete and detailed graphics based on careful research of antique materials. Those who want to give a present which offers a chance for the gamer to grow in personal discipline and understanding will want to consider *Windwalker*. Amiga, Apple II, C-64 and IBM (\$39.95).

## Strategy

**Combots (Avalon Hill):** About two and one-half years ago, John Huff envisioned a game that was more open-ended than other computer games he had seen. Basically, he wanted to create a game where computer gamers could "play" with their machines. Like *Omega* (reviewed on page 52 of this issue), the game allows players to design their own combat robots (i.e. Combots). In *Combots*, however, players not only design routines for the basic machines, but they design routines for the special add-on devices, as well. *Combots* offers a flexible computer opponent where players can optimize the AI for particular scenarios and would be a delightful addition to a strategy gamer's holiday "haul". C-64 (\$24.95).

**Gold of the Americas (Strategic Studies Group):** In *Gold of the Americas*, SSG unveils an entirely different approach. In this game, players will need to explore, colonize, invest wisely, use diplomacy, and engage in both land and sea combat. Imagine a *Reach for the Stars* style game of conquest set in a historical era of conquest and colonization. Then, imagine colorful EGA graphics to further enhance the game experience. That's the colorful package available when gamers open *Gold of the Americas* on Christmas morning. Amiga and IBM (\$39.95).

**Ishido (Epyx):** Brad Fraeger (Shanghai), Michael Feinberg and Brodie Lockard developed *Ishido* as a "stone" game of abstract strategy due to their interest

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