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THE SPACE GAMER

THE MAGAZINE OF ADVENTURE GAMING

GRAV ARMOR +3
1982 GAME SURVEY
MURPHY'S RULES RETURNS

FEATURED REVIEWS:
THE TRAVELLER BOOK
SSI'S RAPIDFIRE LINE

COMPLETE GAME IN THIS ISSUE:

STEVE JACKSON'S BATTLESUIT



MAN-TO-MAN COMBAT

FROM THE WORLD OF "OGRE"

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THE SPACE GAMER

NUMBER 59 — JANUARY, 1983

Normally, I use this space to talk about all the new stuff in each issue. Readers thereupon go through the table of contents to find out about all the new stuff in each issue. Seems a little counterproductive. I'll do it next month, too, but here I wanted to talk about this issue's centerpiece.

Actually, the *real* centerpiece this time is our 1982 Game Survey, but that's temporary, since we expect each and every one of you to fill it out and mail it in. This leaves *Battlesuit*, *nee Iron Men*.

The name change was prompted by the name's similarity to another power-armor figure which one can find for 60¢ at your local comic-book exchange. (Actually, it's a lot closer to the Howard Pyle novel *Iron Men*, but Howard Pyle just isn't licensed as heavily as most comic book heroes.) So we changed the name. Three days before deadline. (Sigh. All those posters.)

—Aaron Allston

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Cheer the champs and boo the bowsers center insert

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MAN-TO-MAN COMBAT FROM THE WORLD OF "OGRE" BATTLESUIT

Game design by Steve Jackson

Map and counter art by Denis Loubet

Playtesters: Chris Smith, Pat Mueller, John Rankin,
Gary Berg, David Ladyman, Jim Gould, Kelly Grimes

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1.00 INTRODUCTION

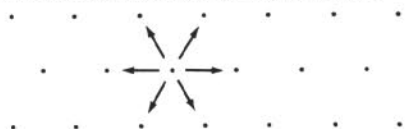
BATTLESUIT is a two-player game of combat between men in "powered armor" which greatly enhances their speed and combat ability. The infantry of 2085 use nuclear projectiles and electronic warfare devices . . . but they are still the units that take and hold ground when nothing else can.

Scale is 37.5 meters between adjacent points and 2 meters (vertically) between contour lines. Each turn takes 10 seconds.

Game components include one 11" x 17" map, 221 two-sided counters, and these rules. You will also need two 6-sided dice and a ruler or straightedge.

2.00 MAPSHEET

The map represents an area some 1.2 kilometers long by .8 km wide. It is divided by many "points," arranged in a hexagonal array, which govern movement and combat. Each point is uniquely identified by a letter and number according to the key at the top and side of the map. Each point is considered "adjacent" to the six points around it, as below:



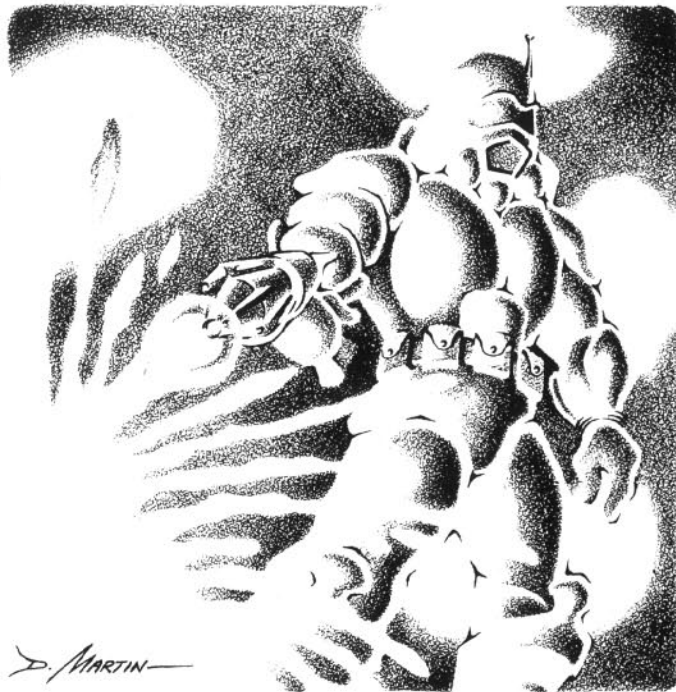
2.01 Contour lines. These lines on the map show relative height. The lowest area on the map is "level 1"; the highest is "level 6." Contour lines are two meters apart vertically; therefore, all level 6 areas are 10 meters above all level 1 areas. Contour lines are used to determine whether an attacker has a clear line of sight (LOS) to his target in cases where terrain or cover may intervene.

Contour lines do not run through the map points, but between them. A point between two different contour lines is at the level of the lower line; if the lines are at the same height (i.e., the large central map area) a point between them is at the level below that of the lines. When a line forms a closed loop with no other line inside it, or when a line and the edge of the map form such a loop, all points within that loop are at the level of that line.

2.02 Cover. There are three types of cover; they interfere with ground movement but offer protection from enemy fire. "Soft cover" (trees or bushes) is shown by a gray tree-pattern overlay. "Hard cover" (buildings or vehicles) is shown by a line drawing of the object offering cover. "Bunkers" are not drawn on the map, but are represented by counters.

Units move only on the map points; therefore, a unit is in cover if and only if it is on the ground (see Section 4.05) and on a point within a cover area as described above. No point is ever partly within cover; it is all or nothing.

All hard cover is assumed to stand two levels (4 meters) above the underlying terrain. Thus, when flying or tracing LOS over hard cover, treat it as two levels higher than the ground on which it is located. All soft cover stands 3 levels (6 meters) above the ground. Bunkers are flush with ground level.



If a hard-cover or bunker counter is placed in a soft-cover area, units on that point get the benefit of the cover counter but no extra benefit for the surrounding soft cover.

A man can stand on top of hard cover, gaining two levels of elevation but losing its protection. A man is always assumed to be inside cover unless the player states that he is on top of it. A man cannot stand on top of soft cover.

3.00 COUNTERS

Each counter represents a single man (with his powered suit, if any), building, wrecked vehicle, or item of equipment. "Chits" to show unit status are also supplied.



Unit type

Attack strength | ECM | movement

3.01 Infantry. Ten different kinds of infantry units are supplied. Four represent different models of armor, four represent armor that has suffered various degrees of damage, and two represent infantrymen without powered armor.

The front of each armored infantry counter shows that man in "normal" status; the back of the counter shows the same man in a state of shock (see Section 6.042).

3.011 Standard suit. This is the basic type of powered armor. It has an attack value of 8, an ECM (electronic countermeasure) value of 2, and a move of 5.

3.012 Assault suit. This is an improved model suit, more effective but more costly. It has an attack value of 10, an ECM value of 3, and a move of 6.

3.013 Command suit. This type is identical to the assault suit except in its increased communications ability (not directly shown in the game) and better ECM value. It has a combat value of 10, an ECM value of 4, and a move of 6. Infantry officers at and above platoon level use these suits.

3.014 Ranger suit. Another costly improvement on the standard suit, the ranger has improved myoelectric "muscles" and better jets, as well as extra "stealth" electronics; it is designed for raiding and reconnaissance. It has a combat value of 8, an ECM value of 5, and a move of 7.

3.015 Damaged suits. Four levels of suit damage are represented by counters ranging from "d1" (the least damaged) through "d4" (almost totally unserviceable). When a suit is damaged, it is replaced by a damaged-suit counter. No distinction is made between (for instance) a suit which was assault-

WHERE WE'RE GOING

It's Origins ballot time again. If you're a TSG subscriber, you can fill out the ballot on the inside back mailer cover and send it in. If you're not a subscriber, you will have to photocopy the ballot on page 18. (You could tear it out, of course, but if I ever find out you've been tearing up your copy of TSG, I'll be terribly hurt. So will you, when our Complaints Department catches you . . . you *do* remember about the Complaints Department, don't you?)

I'm not going to sit here and tell you to vote for everything we published. We're good — but not *that* good. But I do have a few suggestions:

(1) TSG for Best Professional Role-Playing Magazine. Always the bridesmaid and never the bride — that's been TSG. We always get nominated, but never get the brass ring. This could be our year, though. I admit I'm biased, but we've gotten even better over the past few months. Time to give our friends at the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* a run for their money!

(2) *Fire & Movement* for Best Professional Boardgaming Magazine. That doesn't concern a lot of you. If you never read F&M, don't vote for it. It gets enough legitimate votes from the people who *do* read it — it's won for four years in a row . . . the only really serious competition was *Strategy & Tactics*, which has only had one issue in the last year.

(3) Best Role-Playing Adventure: *Sunday Drivers*. It's a good thing this category isn't divided into fantasy and science fiction, though, because I'd have no idea which one to put it in. Whatever it is, I think we did a good job on it.

(4) Best Science Fiction Boardgame: *Ogre*. No, I'm not kidding. Under the nomination rules, an older game can be eligible if it is reissued in a significantly different form. *Ogre* was out of print for a long time, and then came out in a very different form — one that reached a lot more people than the first edition did. It's up to the awards committee whether it can be eligible, but I think it is.

I'd put in a plug for *Illuminati*, but I have no idea what category it fits in, and I'm not quite egotistical enough to demand that the Origins people invent a

new one for it. "Best Totally Peculiar Game"? No way. Life is hard.

There are a number of good releases competing for 1982 honors; as long as I'm throwing plugs around, I might as well mention some of my favorites from other publishers. For openers, GDW's *Striker* has got to be the clear winner for Best Miniatures Rules, at least as far as our side of the hobby is concerned. It's probably got a serious chance at Best All-Time SF Miniatures Rules, too! And the Martian Metals *Traveller* miniatures ought to be a shoo-in for Best Vehicular Miniatures Series.

On the fantasy side, the *Fineous Phigures* are my favorite. There have been several good SF figure releases; I don't have a specific pick.

RPGs there have been this year, and in plenty . . . but nothing really exciting. Of the wholly new efforts, one of the better ones is TSR's *Gangbusters*, even though the theme has limited appeal. Overall, I'd give the nod to the revised and reissued *Champions*. It's different enough to deserve consideration again in 1982, and it's a heckuva good game. There have been enough good supplements that I have to name two that will give *Sunday Drivers* serious competition in that category: FBI's *CityBook I* and Chaosium's *Trollpack*.

The best fantasy boardgame for 1982 was probably Eon's *Borderlands*. That's a game that I predict will get more attention as time goes on. As for "Best Adventure for Home Computer" — tastes differ widely, but I'd put my money on one of SSI's new *Rapidfire* games. They're impressive.

Anyway — send in your ballot. This is a *nominations* ballot. If you want to vote on the final ballot, read the fine print in the first paragraph on the ballot instructions; you probably qualify.

Missing Persons

Occasionally we manage to lose track of somebody interesting. Experience proves that a good way to find these people again is to ask our readers' help. So: If you know anything about these folk, can you let us know?

Missing Person One: K. Allen Bjorke. A few years ago, he was living in Minneapolis, I have no idea where he might be now. He designed a game called *Salyut and Enterprise* and submitted it to Metagaming. It was rejected. For myself, though, I kind of liked it . . . If you're still out there someplace, Kevin, get in touch. I'd like to talk about that game.

Missing Person Two: Milo B. Shiff. Earlier in 1982 he was promoting a new game magazine to be called *Recreation*. He had what sounded like pretty good plans: he even went so far as to place some ads for subscriptions. He also invited me to do a column on *Ogre* and *G.E.V.* But he's not answering letters any more. Has anybody seen Milo? Tell him if he doesn't want that first column I wrote, I'd like it back — and if *Recreation* is still going to come out, to send us a press release for Scanner.

Missing Person Three: Not really a person except in the legal sense . . . "Sten Productions" of La Jolla, CA. They produced a game a few years back, called *Battle Sphere*. Very nice components, simple combat system; it got a couple of good reviews and then dropped from sight. So did Sten Productions; letters to them come back marked "not deliverable, unable to forward." Which is a pity, because somebody ought to put that game back in print.

Getting the Lead Out

As of mid-November, SJ Games is getting out of the lead miniature business. Oh, it made money, all right — in fact, we couldn't keep up with the demand. That's the whole problem in a nutshell. In order to do justice to the *Ogre* and *Autoduel* lines, we'd have to invest in more machinery, hire more people . . . in short, become a full-scale miniatures company. I'd hoped to do miniatures as a sideline, but it doesn't work that way. You've got to make a real commitment. Since we can't do miniatures properly without becoming a miniatures company, we won't do them at all.

That doesn't mean that our miniatures will become unavailable. Right now, we're negotiating with a couple of the largest and most respected companies — people who will do justice to the lines, keep up with demand, and deal fairly with both dealers and buyers. That will let us concentrate on games and magazines — which is what we *are* equipped to do.

I'm not sorry we got into miniatures; it was a lot of fun, and we all learned a great deal. Personally, I enjoy playing with miniatures (and my collection is a lot bigger now than it was before I had