Abandon2ed Times

abandoned but not forgotten

Fallout VS Fallout 3

2D OR NOT 2D?

MECHWARRIOR

ROBOT STOMPING ACTION FOR ALL!

106 106

DreamWeb

DREAM THE NIGHTMARE
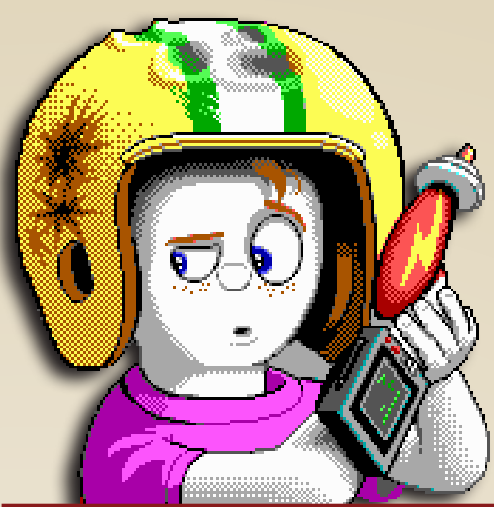
EDITORIAL

Welcome to the very first issue of **Abandonia Times**! Dedicated to all the great classics (and forgotten gems as well), we hope to provide a few pages of reading pleasure for all you Abandonware lovers out there.

Some of you may wonder why we went for a magazine when we already had the popular and ever-growing site **Abandonia** as our 'playground'. The truth is that a magazine offers so much more freedom. This way, we can talk about more than just abandonware - we can also focus on protected classics, modern indie games, freeware and console classics to offer you the full retro experience.

This first issue may not be that big (we're testing the waters here) but it will give you all an idea of what is to come in the issues to follow. Expect interviews, more reviews, more articles, comics, etc. in the next issues so be sure not to miss it!

In any case, I hope you'll enjoy reading our first issue. It was fun creating it and I hope it will be fun for you to read as well!

editor,
Red Avatar

CONTENT

Welcome to our first issue! Below you'll find all the content it has to offer. There's a lot more lined up for next issue, however, so while there may not be too much here at this moment, future issues will be packed with goodies for you to read including comics, interviews, cheats, hints & tips and much much more! So enjoy this issue and get a taste of what is to come ...

GAMING SINS

Welcome to our very first Gaming Sins. In each issue, we'll handle a different sin games or gamers can commit and the Sin of this issue is:

CONSOLITIS

Consolitis is a very dangerous disease of the "selloutitis" family of viruses. It can cripple and even outright kill a PC game in its tracks and has been spreading more and more over the last 5 years where it mostly affects successful games. Some of the symptoms of the disease are as follows:

- poor controls
- simplistic user interface
- shallow gameplay
- tired clichés and a lack of originality
- check points

One of the biggest cases of consolitis was, in fact, the sequel to Deus Ex. Despite the assurance of its developers that the game would withstand consolitis, Deus Ex Invisible War never stood a chance.

After contracting the disease, it suddenly craved stuffy cramped spaces Instead of beautiful open worlds, its interface became such a mess to use and its story fell flat on its face. Attempts by the community to relieve the game of some of its symptoms didn't succeed so it suffered one of the gravest fates a game can have: being condemned to used as example of how *not* to make a game.

A sad case that showcases the dangers of consolitis. No game is safe for the terrors that will haunt every PC gamer's nightmares. So let's have a minute of silence for the many victims.
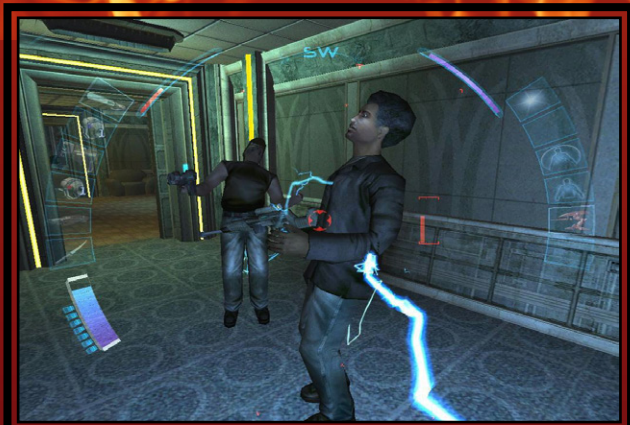
DREAMWEB

Back in the age of the Amiga (late 80's, early 90's), top-down games were very popular thanks to classics such as Chaos Engine and Alien Breed. Slowly, the style started to go out of fashion however, and when Dreamweb made the move to PC in 1994 (two years after the Amiga release) top-down games were already considered a tad "passé". But here we are, 14 years later, and I must say Dreamweb feels refreshing despite its age.

Dreamweb was quite unique in more than one way: it was one of only a few top-down adventure games and was branded an "adult" game to boot! Besides the ma-

ture language and setting, there's one scene containing full on sex and, gasp! Pixel genitals! It may seem like no big deal now, but back then it was unheard off!

Before you start with the game itself, I strongly recommend you read the storybook that comes with the game (and which can be downloaded from the website). It has vital information which you'll need in the game but it also tells you what's been happening beforehand.

The game places you in a Blade Runner-esque world where you play Ryan, a bartender whose nights are being plagued by odd dreams. Through your dreams, you discover that your aim is to kill 7 men, 7 "evils", so you have to track them down and kill them. It doesn't sound like an adventure game, does it? Still, it's nice to have an adventure game where you can play an assassin for once.

When you start the game, you wake up next to your girlfriend in her apartment. It's easy to get overwhelmed from the start: the whole room is littered with objects! While most adventure games let you only pick up vital items (with a red herring thrown in left or right) Dreamweb lets you pick up anything that isn't nailed, glued or tied down. Most of it is completely useless, however, so it can get tricky knowing what you should keep and what you can leave behind. This is the biggest flaw in the game yet, oddly enough, it's also one

"Dreamweb lets you pick up anything that isn't nailed, glued or tied down."

of its strengths. This system means you really need to consider what might come in handy in a MacGyver kind of way which I guess is cool. Personally, I'd keep a walkthrough at hand just in case, if you want to avoid frustration.

The top-down view really suits the game although items aren't always that obvious to recognise. Most are only a few pixels big and I think that Creative Reality (the developers) should have increased the size of all items

REVIEW

and rooms. Most of the screen space is wasted (as you can see in the screenshots) by a huge bar at the top and a huge representation of yourself on the left. They could have easily made everything twice as detailed but I believe this was done due to the Amiga's limitations. Luckily, the game tells you what you're looking at.

The interface is kept very simple which is great: games released back then had the tendency to have a ton of actions to chose from (use, push, pull, open, close, etc.) but Dreamweb took the smart move of combining those all in a single "use" function. This makes solving puzzles a lot less frustrating! Not that those are too hard as it is: it's really more the case of "do I have the right item in my pockets". The solutions are always very prac-

"I'd keep a walkthrough at hand just in case, if you want to avoid frustration."

tical: use a screwdriver to open a panel, use an axe to wedge open a door, etc. Still, Creative Reality do sin in a few areas: they added several Dragon's Lair style "puzzles" where you need to do specific actions in time or get killed. A bit cheap if you ask me.

And now we've come to the biggest problem: the game is much too short. It can be completed in a few hours time which is a shame considering the story had so much potential - I was really surprised to see how quickly the ending had come. It could easily have been twice as long if they had made it harder to track down your targets. This also meant that the story never was given the time to really deliver. A wasted chance really.

In the end, it's still a fun - if rather short - game with an

interesting story. If you have a few hours to spare, why not give it a go? There aren't any other games quite like it and for Blade Runner fans, it may hit the right spot.

COUNTERPOINT - by TheChosen

A challenging adventure game that has only one weakness: It's too short.

Dreamweb is one of a rare breed of highly atmospheric cyberpunk games with an unique feeling of its own. The story is cool (like Red said, make sure to read that diary before you play this one!), the music is awesome, the world is dark 'n dangerous and it always rains.

The game might be too hard for some due to the amount of objects that can be picked up (both useful and useless). The solutions to the puzzles are quite logical though (I personally managed to make it to the beach without using any walktrough), unlike the "Glue cat into wall to lure the giant in" kind of puzzles in certain Sierra games.

Other than being a bit short, I never really liked the voice acting which came with the DOS CD version. Most of the guys (with some exceptions including the main character) didn't sound like they really fit in a futuristic American city. They sounded more like British to me.

Overall, its short n' sweet and a nice brainteaser for adventure game veterans. I agree with Red's 3.5 score, but it doesn't mean that you shouldn't try it.

Name:	**DreamWeb**
Publisher:	**Empire Interactive**
Developer:	**Creative Reality**
Year:	**1994**
On Abandonia:	**Yes**

VERDICT:

review: Red Avatar

listen Up!

2D or not 2D?

Over the past 25 years, graphics have made huge leaps and bounds in almost every area. Starting out with humble text adventures, we moved on to gorgeous 2D games and are now experiencing games so detailed, screenshots look almost like real-life photographs. And yet, I can't help but wonder if, perhaps, 2D has been shoved aside a little too quickly ...

I recently started replaying Leisure Suit Larry 2 and what amazed me, was how well-made the backdrops were, despite the limited amount of colours and pixels available at the time. Your mind automatically fills in the details, making the world come alive. Every pixel turns into a shape - a screen of a mere 320 by 200 pixels becomes a world of its own for you to enjoy. Just a handful of pixels can become anything your mind can imagine!

It makes me realise what we're missing in modern 3D games. Everything is in plain sight for you to look closely at so where is the mystery? Textures have become so detailed you can see the finest detail but is this really better than good old 2D? I don't believe it is.

Rarely 3D can match my imagination - it may be crisp and sharp, but it's also cold and hard and the 3D worlds are nowhere near as luscious and detailed as the 2D ones made over 10 years ago in games such as Baldur's Gate 2 and Broken Sword. In fact, Broken Sword 3 (Sleeping Dragon) didn't have half the charm as its two prequels. After all, 2D backdrops were often made by talented artists that spent weeks and months tweaking and painting to get locations to feel just right.

You won't see scenes this detailed in 3D games any time soon if ever ...

So, why, when 2D has these advantages, do they stick with 3D? The sad truth is that most 2D is just not fashionable anymore. Young gamers prefer flashy 3D and we all know the result of this. Heck, even 2D adventures these days use pre-rendered 3D locations instead of the artistic masterpieces from artists such as Steve Purcell and Dave Gibbons. It's such a shame. Well, while we immerse ourselves in these highly realistic but imagination-starved worlds, maybe, now and then, we can think back on our old 2D games. I know I will.

Red Avatar

BETASUPPE

Betasuppe is a hilarious freeware platform-slash-text adventure game made by Mjau Panda for the TIG-Source's 2007 B-Games Competition.

The seaside

It is Camille, our sun! She is bright and happy usually and also shines and stuff. She also hurts my eyes when I look at her directly apparently. She is very nice apart from that though.

The aim of the game is to help Colin, a happy blue bundle of joy (and, incidentally, also the main character), get to the sea. You play the game as the disembodied voice in his head ontrolling his actions by feeding him commands for him to execute (that is if he understands what you're trying to make him do, of course).

Watch out, though: like in many platform games, it's possible to die. In fact, there's quite some odd ways to kick the bucket in Betasuppe. For example, letting him walk too close to the sun (named Camille for some reason) will make its brightness kill him by toasting his eyes. Let that be a warning to all you kids out there! There are a few commands that make the game a little easier, however: you have a save, load and undo command at your disposal to correct any screw-ups.

Sadly enough, it's too short and a little too hard at first which may be off-putting for some, but after a while, you start getting the hang of the commands and then the game becomes easier. Another downside is that Colin moves far too slowly which becomes quite annoying after a while, especially when you're stuck and you have to move around a lot.

Also annoying is that, at times, it feels like you're playing the game through a mirror because the left and right commands are executed from Colin's point of view instead of your own so they're reversed because Colin faces you. This can be a confusing at first not to mention annoying since it can mean the difference between life and death but luckily, after a while, you get used to it ("*or you can use 'east' and 'west' instead of 'left' and 'right' to avoid such issues*" - ed).

The graphics are nicely retro although there's a distinct lack of detail in the background and the animations are a little primitive but considering this is a one-man job, we can't be too critical. The music does its part as well, although it does get repetitive after a while.

In the end, I quite enjoyed this game because of its quirky commands and comments despite it being too short and its other shortcomings. Well worth a try!

A12Alex

The cliff

-walk west

Okay!

There is a cliff here, and an elevator too.

>look at elevator

A little like ... Dizzy
Dizzy may not be controlled by text commands but the style of the game is certainly familiar and just like Colin, Dizzy also has a big grin on his face no matter the circumstances!

In the year of 1997, the world was blessed. No, not in some metaphoric, holy, or political aspect, but in a feel-good-Christmas-dinner kind of way. That's right., this was the year *Fallout* was released. So began a CRPG series that survived the ages. But let me introduce the newest addition to the series from Bethesda Softworks: Fallout 3! Now let's pit the two in a fight, a fight to determine which is better.

First of all, the immediate difference you notice is the graphics. In 1997, graphics were limited to either crappy 3D or quality 2D graphics which *Fallout* went for. FO1's primitive isometric angle fits right into the strange art style, easy interface and overall atmosphere. Now we look at FO3: gorgeous! The graphics are very nice although some textures are a little blurry and frame drops can occur but that's the price we pay for trying to move way from game-

FALLOUT VS FALLOUT 3

play towards shiny graphics. Lets face it, though: graphics don't make a game, regardless of how nice they are.

In both FO1 and FO3, character creation is simple: you assign different points to stats such as strength, endurance, luck, and charisma. You also have skills, such as small guns, lock picking and science. Now, in *Fallout* the allocation of these happens right off the bat, but in FO3, you assign them in-game over the course of an hour or so (similar to Oblivion). No big deal.

In FO1, you're presented with a simple, easy-to-use world map where your move back and foward between different locations. There aren't that many of them, but

they all offer something different and while there's only a few towns, they still give you the things you need. In FO3, however, you move through a real world and can spot locations from miles away. On top of this, you can also use the world map to instantly travel to the location of choice.

Fighting is turn-based in FO1, with each attack using a certain amount of Action Points (AP). At the expense of more, you can also use the advanced targeting system to target specific body parts. FO3's combat is a combo of real-time and start-stop action. You can still use a targeting sys-

"graphics don't make a game, regardless of how nice they are."

tem (called V.A.T.S) which freezes combat and let's you make targeted shots at the expense of AP, but you can also play it like a traditional FPS. V.A.T.S. makes combat easy, though. I found that, as long as you got close to your opponent, you could easily perform a head shot - cheap, but thrilling.

In FO1, one often has random encounters while travelling the wasteland on the world map - monsters, mutants, merchants, etc. . In FO3, you encounter enemies everywhere while exploring : bands of raiders, Enclave troops and Brother Hood of Steel outcasts to name just a few! Its inevitable, specially in Washinton DC, where you

can't move 5 feet without getting blown up or shot at. Of course, this also makes you feel like you're in a warzone.

Of course, the best things about the Fallout series, is the ability to play any way you want. That's true, to a certain point: while you can pretty much kill everyone and anything you want (in fact, you can run out of people to kill if you're really evil), this will give your karma a severe hit in return. Yikes, consequences!

In both games, you can also be a "good guy" and kill every raider you come across or you could be like Uncle Fubbles: "Favor who you favor" meaning kill those you hate and help those who help you in return. And why not? Mankind's down the hole, so why be a selfless guy? I mean, no one *else* is doing it, so why should you? Go

"Why be a selfless guy? I mean, no one else is doing it, so why should you?"

with the flow! Just don't play the games the 'wrong' way: ruin the experience by simply killing everything, looting them and moving on because you'll miss out on a lot this way.

Both games use companions to tag along with you. In FO1 the most I ever had at the same time, was one, but in FO3 you can have more than three. Of course, you can do it all by yourself because in both games, companions almost make it too easy and steal away experience points (*Companions are especially useful to carry your stuff - ed.*).

Both games have good stories, though personally I find that FO1's story is way better than that of FO3 because, while FO1 had a typical epic "save the Princess, save the world" sort of story, FO3 sent you on a "find your father" quest by making you run all over the place. With all the things you had to do, you'd think it'd take a while to complete but it doesn't. FO3 is fairly short if you stick to the main quest. In fact, the first time I beat the game, it only took 24 hours of game time. Both games have more then one ending, however, and lots of side quests - which I avoided most of the time - meaning there's plenty of replay value in both.

The last thing to discuss is the unique art & cult fiction in both games. In the Fallout universe, history branched off in a different direction after World War II: America, while making great technological advances, got stuck in the culture of the 1950's. This offers a unique setting to the post-apocalyptic futuristic USA. Both games did a good job capturing this 1950's - FO3 even has a radio station that plays nothing but music of that time period.

In conclusion, while both games have hits and misses, FO1 was the first in the series and remains the original and the best. FO3 received a ton of both criticism and praise but in my opinion it's great (although there's room for improvements).

- Fubb

SCORE BOARD

FALLOUT 1	FALLOUT 3
5/5	3/5

MECHWARRIOR

I t is the thirty-first century, and mankind is once again at war. Battlefields of the future are dominated by huge robotic war machines known as Battlemechs. Piloting these awesome weapons of war are men and women, the elite of the elite, who know that each battle could be their last. They are... Mechwarriors.

The Battletech universe has been the subject of numerous computer games over the years - some officially licensed and some fan-made. Of the official ones, Mechwarrior was one of the first - and one of the earliest mech combat games as well. I won't

go into excruciating detail regarding the game's universe, since Battletech fans already know what it's all about (likely better than I do), and for all the others, it has been explained in detail in the game manual (which, by the way, provides a glossary of important terms so that you don't have to ask "what the hell is a 'PPC', exactly?").

In the game, you take the role of one Gideon B. Vanderburg, the only survivor of the ruling family of Ander's Moon. A group of raiders known only as the "Dark Wing" has attacked the planet, wiped out the Vanderburgs (making the soon-to-be fatal mistake of overlooking you) and stolen an artifact known as the Chalice of Herne. The thing about the Chalice is... no, not its immense financial value (even though it's probably worth a lot); the Chalice is the symbol of rulership over Ander's Moon and a key element of the ceremony during which a new
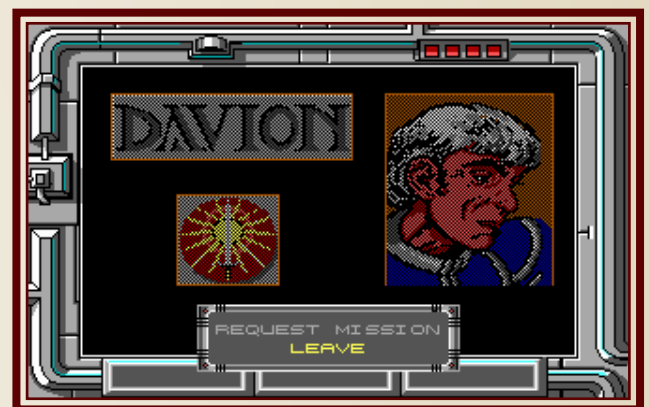

Duke of Ander's Moon is anointed.

As the only survivor, you are the obvious suspect; if you return to Ander's Moon without proving your innocence, you risk imprisonment or death. The only way to clear your name is finding the Dark Wing, retrieving the Chalice and providing evidence pointing to the real villain. You have five years to complete that mission.

The actual game is divided in two parts: the so-called "RPG" adventure, and your mercenary ca-

"The game is divided in two parts: the so-called "RPG" adventure, and your mercenary career."

reer. There is no clear distinction between each - you can take up following the trail of Dark Wing at any moment, just like at any point you can give yourself a breather and grab a couple of contracts to rake in some green.

Of the two, the adventure is noticeably weaker – it seems to have been stuck on almost as an after-

thought and is painfully linear – if at any point you make a wrong choice (the game offers you different courses of action to choose from at several times), you either die or are stuck with no chance to complete the game apart from reloading an earlier save.

Fortunately, the adventure part is not too extensive, and the mercenary one is far better. As a merc, you start out with a single mech - that being a smashed-up Jenner. Naturally, the first thing to do is to get it repaired – and you might find yourself in for a nasty surprise: Mech repair complexes on less important planets sometimes don't have enough spare parts for some of the repairs. Hardly debilitating, but it can leave you handicapped during your next mission. When you've got your Jenner operational, it's time to grab your first contract.

Completing missions for a Successor House increases your reputation and improves their attitude towards you, thus allowing you to get bigger contracts and negotiate better terms of payment. On the flip side, a house whose interests you've harmed severely enough in the past may refuse to hire you altogether! There are normally several missions available at a time - their number is always chosen according to the importance of the particular planet you're on. Once you've picked one from the randomly generated list, you can start negotiating the payment, your cut of the salvage and how much front money you'll receive (it's actually simpler than it sounds).

However, the contractor doesn't have to accept your terms – they can present a counter-offer, higher than their initial bid but lower than your demand. You can keep haggling, but if you are too

greedy, the agent may refuse to negotiate with you and to offer you any new missions for some time.

When the negotiations are completed and you find yourself holding a signed contract, it's time for the mission - which typically boils down either to destroying all enemies (optionally preventing them from destroying a structure at the same time) or destroying a structure the enemy mechs are protecting.

"Completing missions for a Successor House increases your reputation."

The combat is made more complex because the various weapons differ in range, power and heat production - that last is very important since if a mech overheats it will shut down and be defenceless until the system reboots, so watch your heat gauge!

As an added touch of realism, damage to specific parts of mechs affects their battlefield performance – for example, a damaged leg will cause the enemy to limp and move much more slowly, while
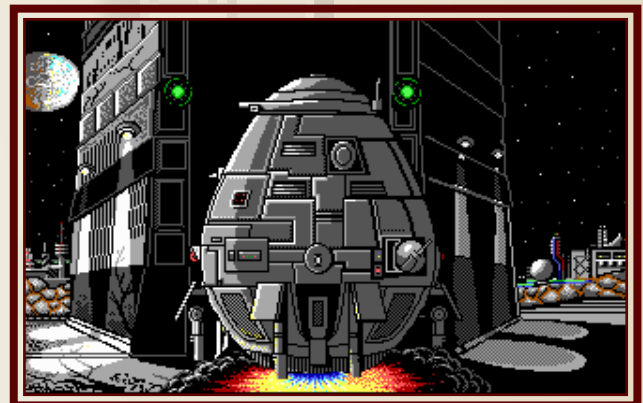
destruction of the head (where the cockpit is located) will "kill" it outright without extensive damage.

After a few missions, you'll want to expand your mercenary lance (for the unenlightened: a lance is a squad of mechs) to include more mechs and mechwarriors. The 'Mechs are purchased in the same place wherein you normally repair them; the more powerful ones being not only more expensive but also harder to find, while unemployed mechwarriors can be found in bars - at first only rookies will be willing to offer you their services, but once your fame grows you'll find more experienced warriors willing to join you as well.

> ## "Once your fame grows you'll find more experienced warriors willing to join you."

Mechwarrior offers eight different Mech types – two each of Light and Medium classes and four Heavy ones (no Assault ones, so forget about rampaging around in an Atlas). Considering the wide number of mech types in the Battletech universe it's hardly impressive, but just enough to provide variety and some different tactical options.

Unfortunately, the AI controlling your sidekicks in combat is far from stellar – their targeting abilities don't go much beyond firing in the general direction of the enemy mech, and their sense of tactics is limited to rushing forward head-on, even if heavily outgunned; one consolation is that the

opponents do exactly the same thing. The tactical command screen leaves a few things to be desired, lacking some simple commands that would greatly improve the player's control over the team. "Hold position", "follow leader" or "move to position" are hardly complicated or unusual, are they?

In terms of graphics the 16-color EGA graphics are pretty simplistic, but acceptable. During the combat we are treated to a 2D cockpit and a 3D display of the combat area. Unfortunately, said 3D may have been good in 1991, but it's simply primitive by standards from as far back as 1997. The music is pretty scarce and limited to several short melodies in specific points (well, OK, it's fairly nice when you get to listen to it), and the sound FX are merely a few different beeps disgorged by your PC Speaker.

As the de facto grandfather of all mech simulations, it's a must-play for every mecha fan. Despite its age, the actual gameplay is very enjoyable - if you ever liked a mech simulation before, this one will get you hooked in no time flat! (like it did a certain Fifth Horseman, but that's another story...).
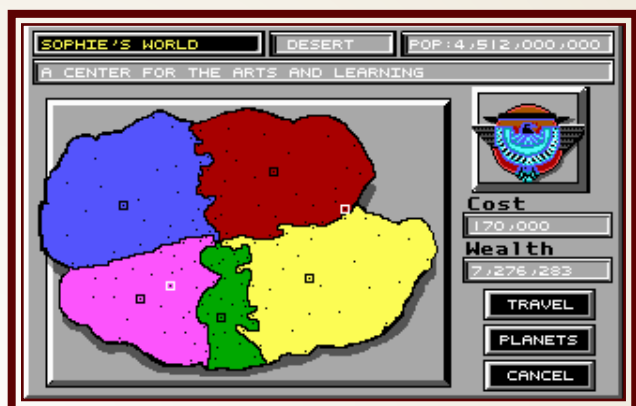
Name:	**MechWarrior**
Publisher:	**Activision**
Developer:	**Dynamix**
Year:	**1989**
On Abandonia:	**Yes**

VERDICT:

review: The Fifth Horseman

REVIEW

✝ In Loving Memory ✝

Please let us take a moment to remember ... COMMANDER KEEN.

Commander Keen had a long life with no less than 7 games under his belt (8 if you include the Gameboy game which Keen swears happened during one of his cocaine black outs) but alas, he is no longer of this gaming world.

Despite a small cameo in Doom II: Hell On earth, he just didn't cut it after his series got canned. It's ru-

moured that, after the trauma of having seen his baby sitter being eaten by aliens, Keen was never quite the same again. Success went to his head and he even tried auditioning for other popular games including Duke Nukem but the image of a muscular hero hanging out with an 8 year old was feared to spark certain ... unwanted gossip, so the deal fell through.

And then last week, the inevitable moment arrived: years of careless drinking finally took its toll. Neighbours last spotted him stumbling into his space ship, a bottle of Vortigonian vodka firmly clutched in one fist, his trusty pogo stick in the other. After several failed attempts, his space ship finally shot upwards, into the night sky, only to explode in a huge ball of light mere moments later. Who thought mixing 200 proof vodka with an open engine flame could be so dangerous?

May he rest in peace.