

BYTES ARCADE

Armored Patrol

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When the assault cruisers first landed on this strange planet, you had no idea you would eventually find yourself commanding the last-surviving T-36 heavy-assault tank company in the entire sector. You have only a few tanks left, and transferring to a surviving tank is your only hope to keep fighting if your current tank is destroyed.

Suddenly, the targeting radar shows an enemy tank to the left, and the robot detector lights up. You fire but miss the tank. Oh no! The energy levels are dropping in your tank! The enemy robot has tapped your energy supply and is draining it. Wait, you have the other tank in your sights. You fire the T-36's high-energy plasma cannon. You got the tank. Now quick, spin and blast the robot before your energy is gone. Got 'em! And so the battle continues; you monitor the targeting radar and fight on against the alien foe.

Armored Patrol is one of the latest releases from Adventure International for the TRS-80, and it is a real winner. The game puts you in the commander's seat of

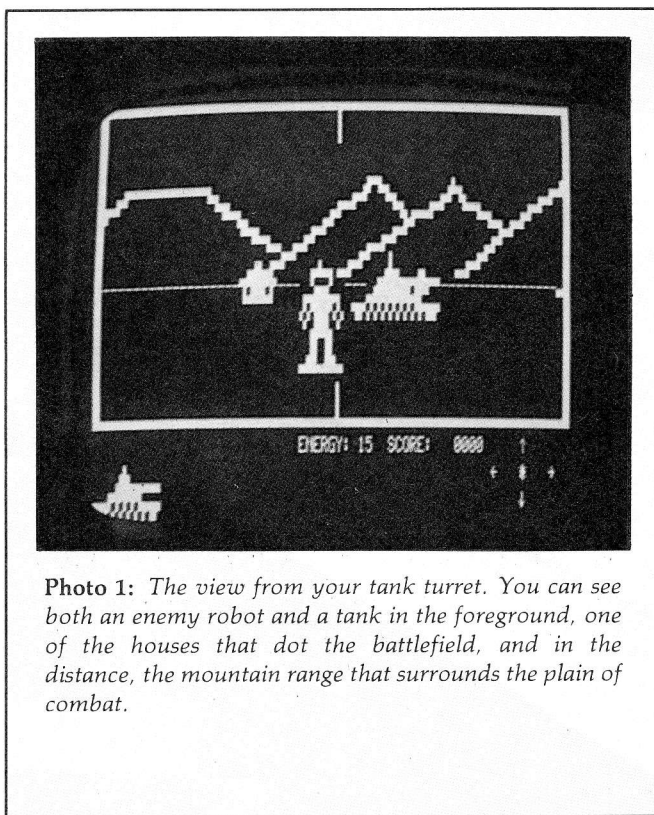


Photo 1: The view from your tank turret. You can see both an enemy robot and a tank in the foreground, one of the houses that dot the battlefield, and in the distance, the mountain range that surrounds the plain of combat.

an armored assault tank fighting an alien enemy on a hostile plain. The object is to destroy enemy tanks and robots with your tank's high-energy plasma cannon before they zap you. The enemy tanks can return fire with a similar plasma weapon. The robots drain your energy supply if they get close to you. You view the enemy and the surrounding planet surface through the T-36's viewport and locate the enemy via a direction finder at the lower-right side of the TRS-80 screen display.

The Game

The really outstanding feature of this game is its three-dimensional graphics (you will notice similarities to the popular arcade game Battle Zone). As you move, the screen image changes perspective relative to your movements. The closer you get to an object, the larger it appears and vice versa. When you spot an enemy tank or robot, it can and does move, and the movement also has perspective. For instance, if a tank moves across your view from left to right, it starts small, gets larger when it's directly in front of

At a Glance

Name

Armored Patrol

Type

Arcade-type game

Manufacturer

Adventure International
POB 3435
Longwood, FL 32750
(305) 862-6917

Price

\$19.95, cassette;
\$24.95, disk

Authors

Wayne Westmoreland and
Terry Gilman

Format

Cassette tape or 5¼-inch
floppy disk

Language

Z80 machine language

Computer Needed

TRS-80 Model I or III with
either 16K bytes (cassette
version) or 32K bytes of
memory and one disk drive
(disk version)

Documentation

Self-documented program

Special features

Multiple-player option;
sound-effects capability (re-
quires an amplifier)

Audience

TRS-80 owners who enjoy
arcade games

you, and then shrinks in size as it pulls away. The buildings also increase and decrease in size as you move in relation to them. It is all quite lifelike.

You control the movement of your tank via the keyboard. The "A" and "Z" keys control your tank's left tread; the ";" and "." keys control the right tread. Using them in combination, you can advance, retreat, and turn (slowly or rapidly) in either direction. The space bar fires your plasma cannon. The plasma "missile" will destroy the enemy if it hits but does not do any damage to the assorted buildings located on the planet's surface.

How to Score

Scoring is straightforward. Enemy tanks are worth 1000 points, and robots are 5000 points. For every 20,000 points you score, you get another T-36 tank as a reserve. If the enemy tanks hit you with their fire or the robots suck all your tank's energy out, you lose that tank. Hiding behind buildings and darting out to fire can be a good tactic. Remember that the robots materialize at random locations and don't appear on your scope, so you

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must watch your energy levels. A significant drop means that a robot is in range. When you blast a robot and it shimmers out of existence, your energy reserves stabilize. The biggest problem is remembering to be aware of the robots as they sneak behind you and drain your tank's energy before you can turn around to blast them. You fight until you have exhausted all your reserve tanks. The game will display the top ten scores and save them to the game disk. After the final tank is destroyed, you begin again with your initial complement of tanks.

Action Graphics

Wayne Westmoreland and Terry Gilman, authors of *Armored Patrol*, did a really super job with the graphics. The action is smooth as you move across the planet's surface. For block-type graphics, the view is quite realistic. You could even imagine you're watching a computer-generated target display.

Other notable features are the use of real time, the tracking of the highest ten scores, and the option of one or two players. In the two-player mode, you alternate at the controls of the tank, and whoever gets the highest score wins.

Even though your score climbs after the first couple rounds, this is not an easy game. You have to keep moving, and if an enemy tank or robots get behind you or you take too long turning to attack, you lose tanks. You have to be a pretty good shot to hit the enemy, especially when you and the enemy are moving toward each other or in opposite directions. Who knows—it may even sharpen your eye if you do any bird watching or picture taking.

Conclusions

- *Armored Patrol* is a fast-paced, arcade-style action game that features three-dimensional graphics. It can be played on a TRS-80 Model I or Model III. The game is available on both tape and disk. Two players can compete during each round of play (players alternate turns).

- Scoring is straightforward. Novices and experienced game players should enjoy this one. The keyboard-controlled movement is simple to master, and the entire screen display is nicely done. Player instructions are actually a module in the game, so you don't have to worry about losing any instruction sheets.

- You won't find yourself getting bored with this game. The block-type TRS-80 graphics are quite adequate to convey the movement of your tank around the battlefield. The action is spirited and can become quite addictive.

- The price is a pleasant change when compared to the cost of many games.

- Overall, *Armored Patrol* is a well designed, nicely executed program, and I think you will enjoy it as much as I did.