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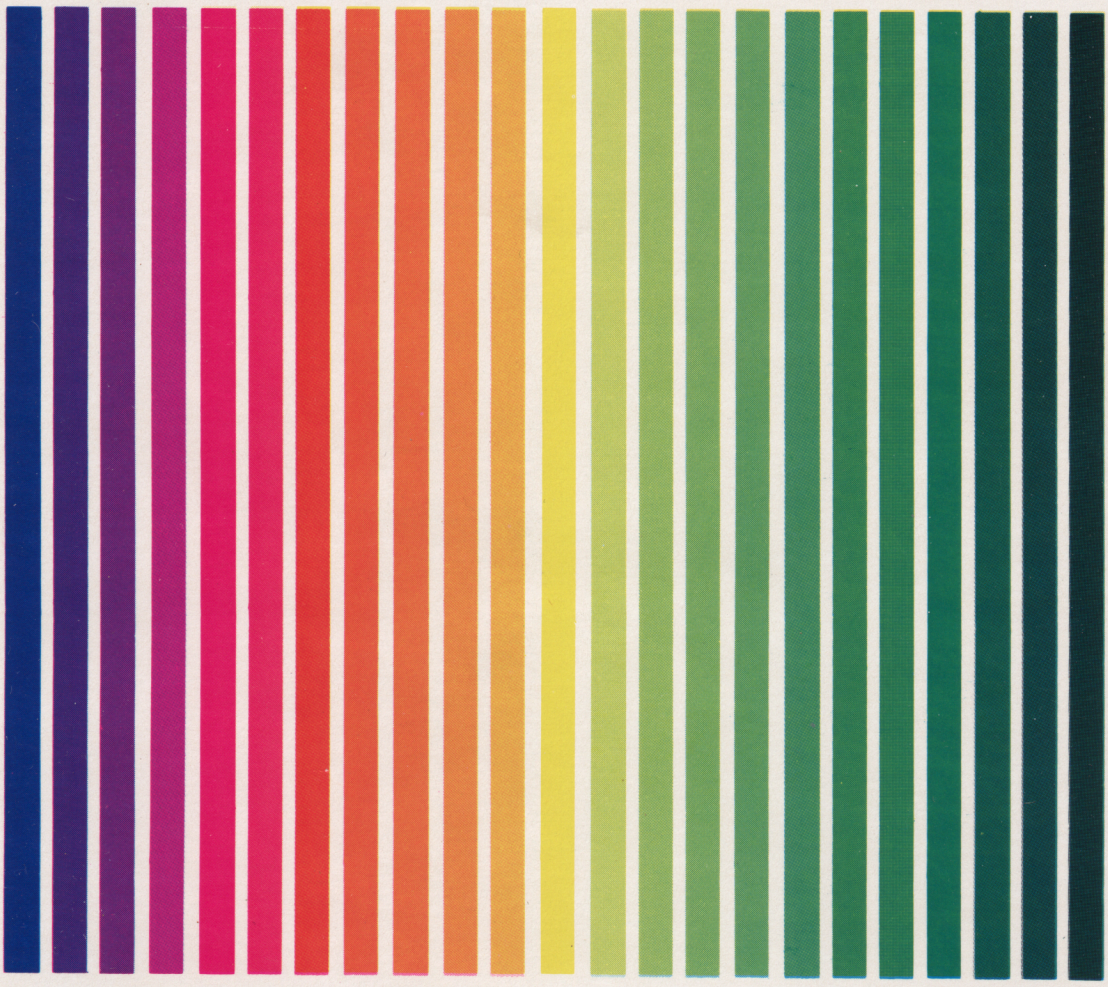

Robert Zdybel

CENTURION

Destroy the barbarians in this real-time war game
1 player (teens and up)

Cassette: 16K (APX-10016) Diskette: 24K (APX-20016)

Edition B

User-Written Software for ATARI Home Computers

Robert Zdybel

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GAME OVERVIEW

CENTURION is a real-time war game in which you are a Roman centurion warrior assigned to destroy ten hordes of barbarians before they destroy your ten legions. Your legions occupy positions in an 11-by-18 grid of hexagons. But you don't know the locations of the enemy units until one of your legions nears an enemy unit; then that unit displays in its hexagon. You move your legions by issuing a series of directional commands. After entering your commands for a unit, you go on to move other units while the program carries out your commands. It also controls the enemy's moves. The barbarians are intent on wiping out your units! Thus, you constantly need to scan the grid for enemy movement and then recall your units to revise your strategy.

CENTURION has ten levels of difficulty. The high levels allow barbarians greater strength and allow you less time to plan your moves.

REQUIRED ACCESSORIES

ATARI BASIC Language Cartridge

Cassette version
- 16K RAM
- ATARI 410 Program Recorder

Diskette version
- 24K RAM
- ATARI 810 Disk Drive

GETTING STARTED

LOADING CENTURION INTO COMPUTER MEMORY

1. Insert the ATARI BASIC Language Cartridge in the slot of your computer.

2. If you have the diskette version of the CENTURION:

   a. Turn on your disk drive.

   b. When the BUSY light goes out, open the disk drive door and insert the CENTURION diskette with the label in the lower right-hand corner nearest to you. Close the door.

   c. Turn on your computer and TV set.

   d. When the READY prompt displays on your TV screen, type RUN "D:CENTURION.APX" and press RETURN. The program will load into computer memory and start.

If you have the cassette version of the CENTURION:

   a. Connect your program recorder to the computer and to a wall outlet.

   b. Turn on your computer and your TV set.

   c. Slide the CENTURION cassette into the program recorder's cassette holder, and then press REWIND on the recorder until the tape rewinds completely. Then press PLAY.

   d. Type CLOAD on your computer and then press the RETURN key two times. Thetape will load into computer memory.

   e. After the tape finishes loading, the word READY will display on your TV screen. Type RUN and press the RETURN key. The program's first display screen will appear on your TV screen.

The first display screen

You'll see the hexagonal grid being built, with solid hexagons representing impassable terrain. Next, the numbers of your ten legions will position themselves on the grid. At the bottom of the screen you'll first see the text "COPYRIGHT 1981 ATARI". After several seconds, you'll see the prompt "DIFFICULTY LEVEL? (0-9)". Select the level you want, zero being the easiest and nine being the most challenging. The lower levels give you more time to think between moves and give the enemy units less strength than do the higher levels. You're now ready to do battle. Good luck!

PLAYING THE GAME

The playing field

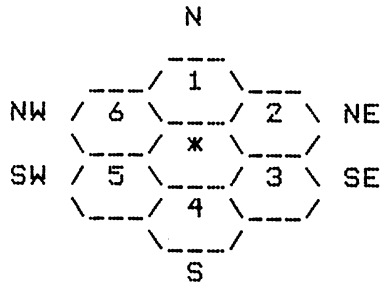
Your goal is first to locate an enemy unit and then to engage it in combat by moving your unit(s) into the hexagon it occupies. Each of your units displays as a number (0-9) in a hexagon. Enemy units visible to you display as numbers (also 0-9) in inverse video. Enemy units will suddenly appear whenever one of your units moves within three hexagons of them. You can move your units into any outlined hexagon. However, you can't pass through solid hexagons from any direction.

Moving your legions

You'll see the prompt "INPUT COHORT #" below the grid. Enter one of two kinds of numbers: a number for one of your units or a number for an enemy unit. Entering a number for one of your units (e.g., 6) results in a display like the following:

COHORT	EFF.ST	DIS.ST	MOVES
6	100	0	0 0 0 0

"COHORT" refers to your unit's number. "EFF.ST" (effective strength) and "DIS.ST" (disrupted strength) are explained below. Under "MOVES", replace as many of the zeros as you like with one-digit directional commands, which the program executes in real time. Your choices are ("*" represents the hexagon containing your called-up unit):



For example, if you key "1 6", your called-up unit first moves north one hexagon and then moves northwest one hexagon. Keying 7, 8, or 9 erases your last command for the called-up legion. Keying 0 erases all your commands for the called-up legion. You can change your orders whenever you like and you can add more orders as previous ones execute by calling up the unit again.

Effective and disrupted strength

Each unit--legion and barbarian--has an effective strength representing the number of men ready and willing to fight. Each unit also has a disrupted strength representing the number of men too scared or exhausted to fight. All units start at 100% effective strength, but their strength can diminish in combat, either permanently (i.e., casualties) or temporarily (disrupted). Disrupted strength slowly reverts to effective strength over time. Your units' effective and disrupted strength levels appear under the headings "EFF.ST" and "DIS.ST", shown in the display above.

Your special units

Fortunately for you, you have five special units not available to the barbarians. They are:

UNIT 0--ARCHER adds its effective strength to the effective strength of any of your units on the attack, if ARCHER is adjacent both to your unit(s) and to the enemy unit under attack. ARCHER suffers no strength loss in such an attack.

UNITS 1,2--CAVALRY units move twice as fast as ordinary units, but they defend at half the normal strength.

UNITS 8,9--PIKERS defend at twice the normal strength.

Enemy movement

Enemy units move themselves. You'll want to keep track of their moves to revise your own troop movements. To see an enemy unit's effective and disrupted strength to help you decide whether to attack, enter the unit's number in response to the "INPUT COHORT #" prompt while pressing SHIFT. You'll see the same display described earlier, but without the MOVES information. (You can't spy on the enemy!)

SCORING

The program keeps track of your progress. If you manage to rout the barbarians, the Roman Senate awards you silver pieces, the amount depending on how long it took you to banish them. If you lose to the barbarians, you'll be suitably notified!

PROGRAM OPERATION LIMITATIONS AND WARNINGS

Be sure to wait for the "beep" sound indicating the computer has read your command before you press another key. Otherwise, the program might lose some of your commands.

If you try to enter a move for a unit that already displays four moves (i.e., no zeros), the program will bump you back to the "INPUT COHORT #" prompt. You must either wait for the program to execute at least one move for that unit before entering another move for the unit, or erase one or more moves for the unit and then enter your new moves.

The program ignores any command you enter that would move your unit into rough terrain, off the grid, or onto another of your units.

RESTARTING AND REPLAYING THE GAME

You can interrupt the game at any time and start over by first pressing BREAK, then SHIFT CLEAR, and typing RUN.

When you finish a game, responding Y to the prompt "LIKE TO PLAY AGAIN (Y OR N)?" will set you up to battle the barbarians yet another time!

SUMMARY OF COMMANDS

(A vertical bar (|) separating items indicates you may choose one item from the list.)

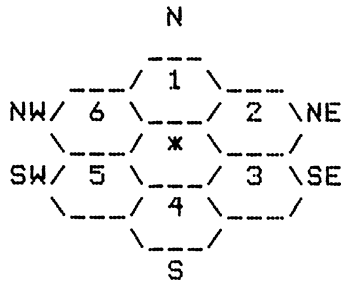
IN RESPONSE TO "INPUT COHORT #" PROMPT:

0|1|...|9	To call up one of your legions
0|1|...|9 + SHIFT	To call up a display for one of the enemy units

IN RESPONSE TO INFORMATIONAL DISPLAY:

1|2|...|6	Move in direction indicated in figure below
7|8|9	Erase last move for called-up unit
0	Erase all moves displayed for called-up unit

DIRECTIONAL ROSE



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1. Name and APX number of program.

2. If you have problems using the program, please describe them here.

3. What do you especially like about this program?

4. What do you think the program's weaknesses are?

5. How can the catalog description be more accurate or comprehensive?

6. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being "poor" and 10 being "excellent", please rate the following aspects of this program:

_____ Easy to use
_____ User-oriented (e.g., menus, prompts, clear language)
_____ Enjoyable
_____ Self-instructive
_____ Useful (non-game programs)
_____ Imaginative graphics and sound

7. Describe any technical errors you found in the user instructions (please give page numbers).

8. What did you especially like about the user instructions?

9. What revisions or additions would improve these instructions?

10. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 representing "poor" and 10 representing "excellent", how would you rate the user instructions and why?

11. Other comments about the program or user instructions:

From

STAMP

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[seal here]