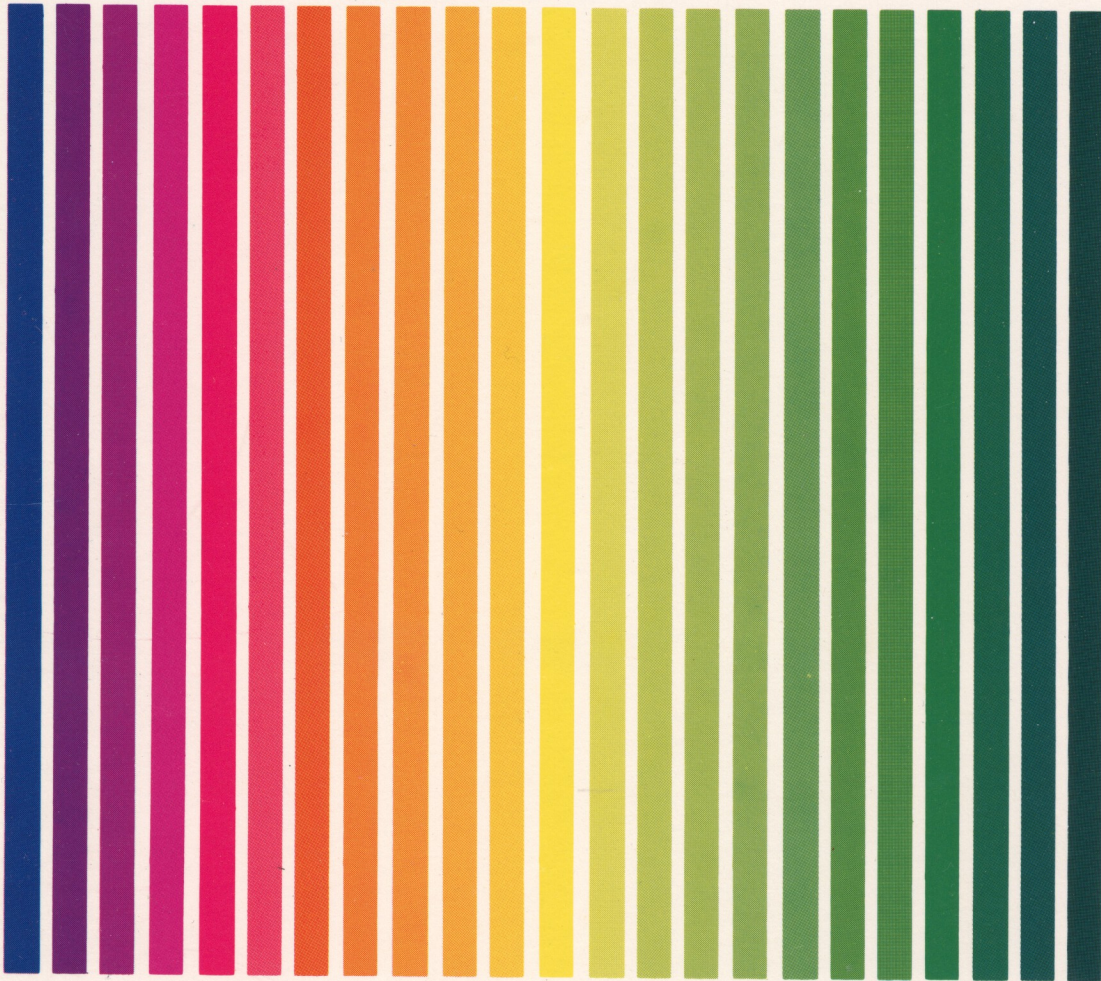# APX

ATARI® PROGRAM EXCHANGE

Joel Gluck

ATTANK!

Destroy your opponent's tanks on the battlefield
2 players (ages 10 and up)

Cassette: 24K (APX-10072)   Diskette: 32K (APX-20072)

User-Written Software for ATARI Home Computers
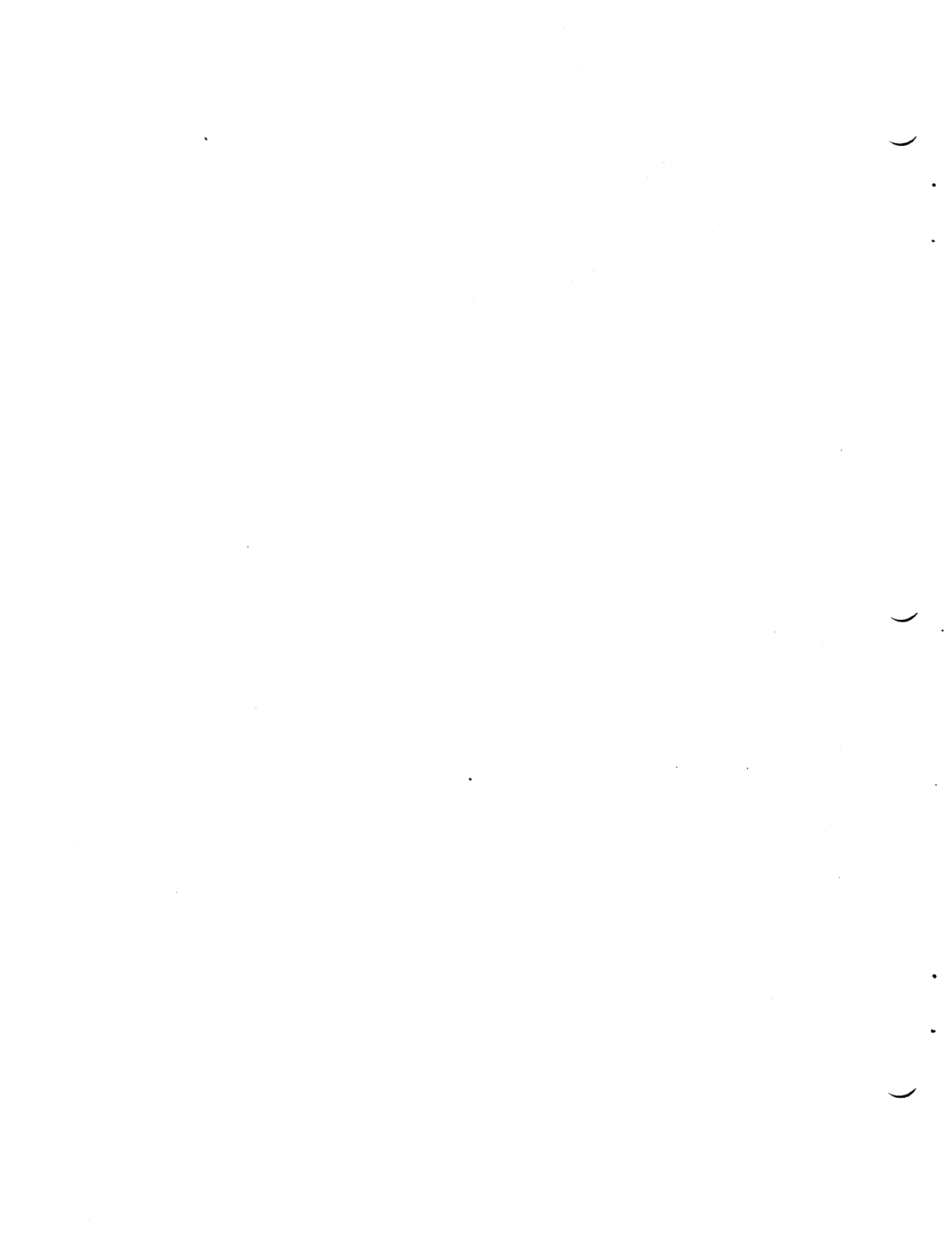
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ATTANK !

by

Joel Gluck

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INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

In this two-player action game played with joysticks, your mission is to destroy both your opponent's tanks before he or she destroys yours. You maneuver your forces through a realistically responsive environment of trees, rocks, walls, land mines, tunnels, and rubble, and you then position and fire your guns when your opponent's tank is within firing range. You can choose day or night battle conditions, or a mixture of the two. If you opt for nighttime, only the tanks and shells are visible on the battlefield, except for brief glimpses during explosions.

Packed with colorful graphics and sound effects, ATTANK! is loaded with playing options, such as the number of hits a tank can sustain before being destroyed, shell range, tunnel pattern, and day and/or night battle conditions. You can choose whether to introduce an element of chance into the game by using the random air raid bomb option. ATTANK! also includes two handicap options so that novices can give pro tank players a real workout. All these options, along with a new battlefield layout every game, create almost unlimited game variations and let you customize the game's battle conditions according to each player's skill.

REQUIRED ACCESSORIES

Cassette version

24K RAM
ATARI 410 Program Recorder

Diskette version

32K RAM
ATARI 810 Disk Drive

ATARI BASIC Language Cartridge

A pair of ATARI Joystick Controllers

CONTACTING THE AUTHOR

Users wishing to contact the author about ATTANK! may write to him at:

1906 George Court
Merrick, NY 11566

GETTING STARTED

LOADING ATTANK! INTO COMPUTER MEMORY

1. Plug your two joystick controllers into the first and second (the two leftmost) controller jacks at the front of your computer console.

2. Insert the ATARI BASIC Language Cartridge in the (Left Cartridge) slot of your computer.

3. If you have the cassette version of ATTANK!:

    a. Turn on your TV set.

    b. Turn on your computer and connect your program recorder to the computer and to a wall outlet.

    c. Slide the ATTANK! cassette into the program recorder's cassette holder and 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. The tape 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 first display screen will appear on your TV screen.

If you have the diskette version of ATTANK!:

    a. Turn on your disk drive.

    b. When the BUSY light goes out, open the disk drive door and insert the ATTANK! 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:ATTANK" and press the RETURN key. If you're using more than one disk drive, remember to follow the device initial (D) with the number of the drive containing the ATTANK! diskette (e.g., RUN "D2:ATTANK" for disk drive two). The program will load into computer memory and start.

THE FIRST DISPLAY SCREEN

The screen darkens. A crisp communique teletypes onto the screen, followed by a dramatic display of the program title.

SELECTING YOUR OPTIONS/INSTANT PLAY

After the program copyright notice, the following message displays:

        Welcome to ATTANK!

        Please choose the following
        options by typing numerical keys
        only. To 'bounce back' to a prior
        option, press the space bar. More
        details may be found in the docu-
        mentation.

        INSTANT PLAY (1) OR SELECT OPTIONS(2)

        Figure 1   Option Selection/Instant Play

You have two choices. You may select all your options before starting to play, or you can
accept the preset options and begin playing immediately. As the screen message points
out, all your responses are single-digit numbers (except for the INITIAL HITS option),
and pressing the RETURN key isn't necessary. You can change your mind about any option
prior to beginning the game by pressing the SPACE BAR until you return to the option you
want to change.

The preset options for INSTANT PLAY are as follows:

        1. Each tank can sustain 10 hits before destruction.

        2. Each tank has a shell range of 5.

        3. Battle occurs during daytime only.

        4. Tunnels are configured in pairs.

        5. No bombings occur.

        6. The Great Equalizer, which makes the game more
            difficult for the person ahead, is turned off.

To start playing immediately with these options, type a 1 and, if you like, skip over the
remainder of this section. Then come back after you've played for awhile and want to vary
the game conditions.

To set your own options, type a 2. The options and their range of settings are as
follows. Note that the screen display for all options contains the phrase "NORM="; NORM
refers to the preset value for the option.

GREAT EQUALIZER (1=YES 2=NO) NORM=2

If you play ATTANK! using the Great Equalizer, the game becomes more difficult for the

person who's ahead because his tanks have a shorter shell range. The shell range of each player's tank always equals the number of hits <u>remaining</u> for his opponent's corresponding tank before being destroyed. For example, if you specify that the tanks can sustain 9 hits and your opponent's first tank has sustained 4, then the shell range of your first tank is 5.

INITIAL G. E. HITS (1-9) NORM=8 (suggested)

This option displays only if you answer YES (1) to the GREAT EQUALIZER option. Now you select the number of hits each tank can sustain <u>and</u> each tank's initial shell range. Of course, both values change as the game progresses, according to the Great Equalizer rule (see GREAT EQUALIZER above).

INITIAL HITS (00 or 01-99) NORM=10

This option displays only if you answer NO (2) to the GREAT EQUALIZER option. Here you specify the number of hits each tank can sustain before being destroyed. Enter a number between 01 and 99 to specify the same number of hits for all four tanks. (Enter any number between 1 and 9 as a two-digit number, i.e., in the form 01, 02, ..., 09.) Enter a "00" to specify a different number for each tank. The program then prompts you for the number of hits for each tank for each player.

RANGE (1-9) NORM=5

This option displays only if you answer NO to the GREAT EQUALIZER option. Enter a number between 1 and 9 to specify the distance a shell travels when fired from a tank (assuming nothing blocks its path).

NIGHT (1=NO 2=RANDOM 3=YES) NORM=1

This option determines whether battles occur only during daylight or during both daylight and nighttime. Only tanks, bullets, and explosions are visible at night. Enter a 1 to play a daylight only game. Enter a 2 to cause the daytime and nighttime conditions to occur randomly. Enter a 3 to play a nighttime only game.

TUNNELS (1=PAIRS 2=QUAD 3=RANDOM) NORM=1

The battlefield always has four tunnels randomly positioned on the screen. Tanks can move through and fire into these tunnels. With this option you decide how to connect the tunnels to each other. Your choices are connected pairs, connected quads, and random connections. Your tunnel pattern remains constant throughout a game. To show the patterns, we'll assign a letter to each tunnel and let an arrow signify "leads to" in the following chart:

CHOICE	TUNNELS
1 Pairs	A<-->B, C<-->D
2 Quad	A-->B, B-->C, C-->D, D-->A
3 Random	A-->B, B-->D, C-->B, D-->B
	(random example can vary)

BOMBINGS (1=YES 2=NO) NORM=2

Choosing bombings introduces a large element of chance into game play: at random times random bombings occur, causing mass destruction. Any tanks hit are destroyed. Bombings can greatly influence the outcome of a game. If you prefer a game based largely on skill, answer NO (2) to this option.

STARTING GAME PLAY

After selecting and checking all your options, type a 1. The screen will clear and the program then draws the battlefield.

PLAYING ATTANK!

THE BATTLEFIELD

The battlefield contains a wall border, scattered rocks, forests, walls, land mines, tunnels, and your tanks. A display at the top of the TV screen shows the number of hits each tank can sustain.

GAME RULES

Moving your tank

Each player controls two tanks. Joystick 1 controls the red solid and dotted tanks, and joystick 2 controls the blue ones. You control your solid tank in the same way you do your dotted tank, except you <u>always</u> hold the red trigger button down on your joystick to move the dotted tank. (You do so even if your solid tank is destroyed, leaving you only the dotted tank.)

Hold your joystick controller so that the red trigger button is at your upper left, toward the TV screen. Move your joystick forward (toward the TV screen) to move a tank forward in the direction in which it is pointing. Move your joystick rightward to turn a tank clockwise; move it leftward to turn a tank counterclockwise. You can't move a tank in reverse.

Firing a shell

Pull your joystick backwards (toward yourself) to fire a shell. The main purpose of firing shells is to damage (and eventually destroy) enemy tanks. (Guard against one of your tank's firing a shell that will hit your other tank or that will even hit itself--see Tunnels.) However, shells are also useful for clearing paths of rocks, trees, and mines. Unless something is immediately in front of the tank you're controlling, a shell appears in front of your tank and moves forward until it strikes something or reaches the limit of the shell range. If it hits something, an action occurs. The Bump into/Fire at Table in the summary section shows the reaction of various items hit. Note that if you fire at something directly in front of and adjacent to your tank, the shell won't appear but the item will react as though hit.

Bumping into or firing at objects

Bumping into or firing at different battlefield elements causes different reactions. The table in the Summary section describes these reactions.

Damage and destruction of tanks

A tank sustains damage in two ways: by being hit by a shell and by bumping into a land mine. A damaged tank spins around and makes appropriate noise, and the tank's number of

hits remaining decreases by one in the display at the top of the screen. After spinning, the tank usually moves one space in the direction it's facing, an automatic safety feature designed to remove the tank from the line of fire. However, this feature can't move a tank through walls, rocks, tunnels, mines, or other tanks. Therefore, being out in the open is advantageous is you're being fired upon. (See the section on strategy for more pointers.)

If a tank is hit by a bomb (see the section on bombings) or if the tank has one hit left and is then damaged, it's destroyed. The resulting graphics and sound effects will leave no doubt as to what happened!

Tunnels

Using the tunnels shrewdly is an important aspect of your overall strategy, and it's a good tactic for getting out of a tough spot. The battlefield holds four tunnels, each leading, invisibly, to another tunnel. Depending on your chosen tunnel option, they are connected in pairs, in a series, or randomly.

To fire through a tunnel, point your tank at the tunnel and fire. Unless the exit is blocked, the shell will travel through that tunnel and continue at the opposite end of the exit tunnel. If the exit is blocked, even by a rock or a tree, you can't fire through and destroy the rock or the tree. A tank immediately next to a tunnel also blocks the tunnel and thus can't be hit by a shell fired into the entrance to the tunnel.

Moving a tank through a tunnel follows the same guidelines. For example, let's say tunnel A leads to tunnel B. We move one of our tanks to the left side of A, face it towards A, and try to move forward. Nothing happens! Sitting on the right side of tunnel B, where our tank would ordinarily exit, is a rock. Thus, that entrance to the tunnel is blocked by a barrier at the end of the connected tunnel. So, we turn our tank, move it above tunnel A, turn it towards tunnel A again, and try to move forward. This time the tank disappears and soon our tank appears immediately below tunnel B.

A tank can fire and hit itself—doing damage. This situation occurs if the tank positions itself between two connected and properly situated tunnels and fires into the entrance tunnel with sufficient shell range.

Bombings

If you opted for bombings, brace yourself. In fact, the more you move around, the more bombs you'll have to face because bomber radar can detect tank movement. Prepare for one whenever you hear screaming jets and see the battlefield flash. The outcome of many games using the bombing option is decided by the fate of where the bombs fall.

A bomb explosion devastates an area capable of holding nine tanks. During a bombing, all tanks become immobile; no one is safe! A tank hit by a bomb is instantly destroyed—the tank's hit display becomes zero and a gravestone marks its demise.

Night   ·

If you've become a real pro at daylight battles or if you prefer the realism of continuous battles, consider the night option. (Or, for a less drastic game, try the random night option.) Once the battlefield is drawn, it's lights out! From then on, you see only the tanks, shells, and explosions, plus outlines of objects during explosions and bombings. It pays to remember what you see during these events. At all other times, you have to play by feel and by sound. Good players can hear the difference between bumping into a wall, a tree, or a blocked tunnel.

ENDING THE GAME

ATTANK! ends when one player's two tanks are destroyed. The winner and winning score, which is the combined remaining hits of his tanks, display with appropriate flourish, along with a prompt for playing again:

        If you would like to play again, type 1. If not, type 2.

If you type 1, the program asks if you'd like to play with the same options. Type 1 in response to this second prompt to begin immdiately with the same ones; type 2 to go through the options before playing another round.

If you type 2 in response to the first prompt but change your mind, type RUN and press the RETURN key. Then press the SPACE BAR immediately, to bypass the opening messages.

SUGGESTED STRATEGY AND HELPFUL HINTS

1. Staying in the open during close combat improves your chances of being moved automatically out of the line of fire if you're damaged.

2. When you're being spun from being hit by a shell, your best move is to fire.

3. To do anything—move, fire, etc.—hold your joystick in the desired direction until the action occurs. Pushing the joystick once does nothing.

4. Tanks are immobilized during nightfall or daybreak in a random night game, during a bombing, or during a large forest fire.

5. Use the tunnels effectively. Many a game has been won by a player's surprising the enemy with shells that appear to come out of nowhere. Tunnels are also great for a fast retreat or for a lightning offensive.

6. Move more; fire less.

7. Short-range games can be more fun.

8. Never give up. One tank can definitely hold the upper hand over two. Then again, a player using strategy and having two tanks can usually get his opponent into some pretty tight spots.

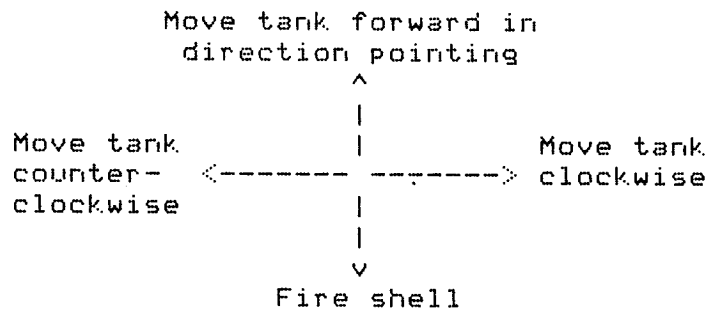9. Destroying a landmine directly before attacking can confuse the enemy.

PROGRAM WARNINGS

1. If the screen sets up in such a way as to prohibit normal play (for example, in the rare instance when one tank is completely surrounded by walls), press the SYSTEM RESET key. Then type RUN, press the RETURN key, and press the SPACE BAR to bypass the opening messages.

2. A tie game can occur during a game with the bombing option in the rare instance that all remaining tanks are destroyed. The computer will say that red or blue wins with a final score of zero hits remaining. Count this game as a tie.

3. Be nice to your joystick. If it doesn't respond as you anticipate, check that

   a. You're holding it in the correct position and you're not pushing it diagonally.

   b. You're holding down the red trigger button or not doing so, depending on the tank you're trying to move (hold down the button for the dotted tank).

   c. You're moving the joystick in the desired direction <u>long enough</u> to see the resulting action.

INFORMATION SUMMARY

PRESET OPTIONS FOR INSTANT PLAY

1. Each tank can sustain 10 hits before destruction.

2. Each tank has a shell range of 5.

3. Battle occurs during daytime only.

4. Tunnels are configured in pairs.

5. No bombings occur.

6. The Great Equalizer, which makes the game more difficult for the person ahead, is turned off.

JOYSTICK CONTROLS

```
             Move tank forward in
              direction pointing
                     ^
                     |
Move tank            |              Move tank
counter-    <------- ------->  clockwise
clockwise            |
                     |
                     v
               Fire shell
```

(Press red trigger button to control
 dotted tank.)

BUMP INTO/FIRE AT TABLE

1. Trees
   BUMP: The tank either moves through the tree,
         destroying it, or stays put (fruit trees
         are easier to move through than evergreens).

   FIRE: The tree is destroyed or ignited. This
         fire may spread to other trees.

2. Walls and Gravestones
   BUMP: Tanks cannot move through walls or gravestones.

   FIRE: Walls and gravestones cannot be destroyed
         by tanks.

3. Rocks
   BUMP: Tanks cannot move through rocks.
   FIRE: The rock is destroyed.

4. Mines
   BUMP: The tank is damaged (or destroyed if it had
         one hit left).

   FIRE: The mine is destroyed.

5. Tunnels
   BUMP: The tank pops out of the exit tunnel or
         stays put (if the tunnel is blocked--see
         Tunnels, page 8).

   FIRE: The shell pops out of the exit tunnel or
         disappears (if the tunnel is blocked).

6. Rubble
   BUMP: The tank moves through the rubble, which
         is cleared away.

   FIRE: The shell continues through the rubble,
         which is cleared away.

7. Other tanks
   BUMP: Tanks cannot move through other tanks.

   FIRE: The other tank is damaged (or destroyed if
         it had one hit left).

NOTE: Bombings can permanently destroy anything except
      tunnels and gravestones.

ADVANCED TECHNICAL INFORMATION

ATTANK! uses user-defined characters created with the help of NEWFABET, a utility program written by the author and implemented using INSTEDIT, a character-set editor written by Sheldon Leemon. INSTEDIT's subroutine begins at line 30000.

The routine controlling the blinking cursor used in all user input in ATTANK! resides between ines 2900 and 3000.
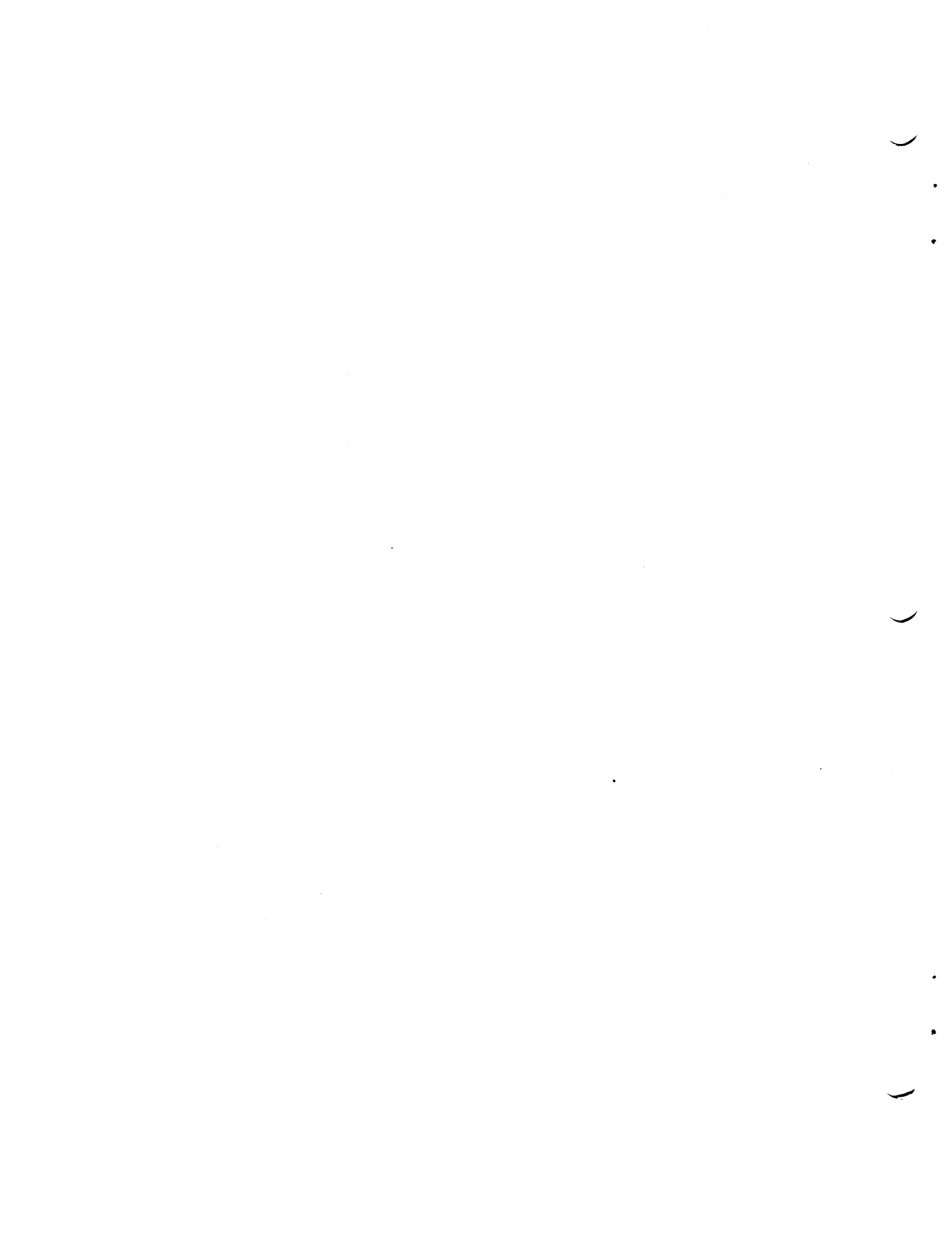
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You void this warranty if the APX product: (1) has been misused or shows signs of excessive wear; (2) has been damaged by use with non-ATARI products; or (3) has been serviced or modified by anyone other than an Authorized ATARI Service Center. Incidental and consequential damages are not covered by this warranty or by any implied warranty. Some states don't allow exclusion of incidental or consequential damages, so this exclusion might not apply to you.

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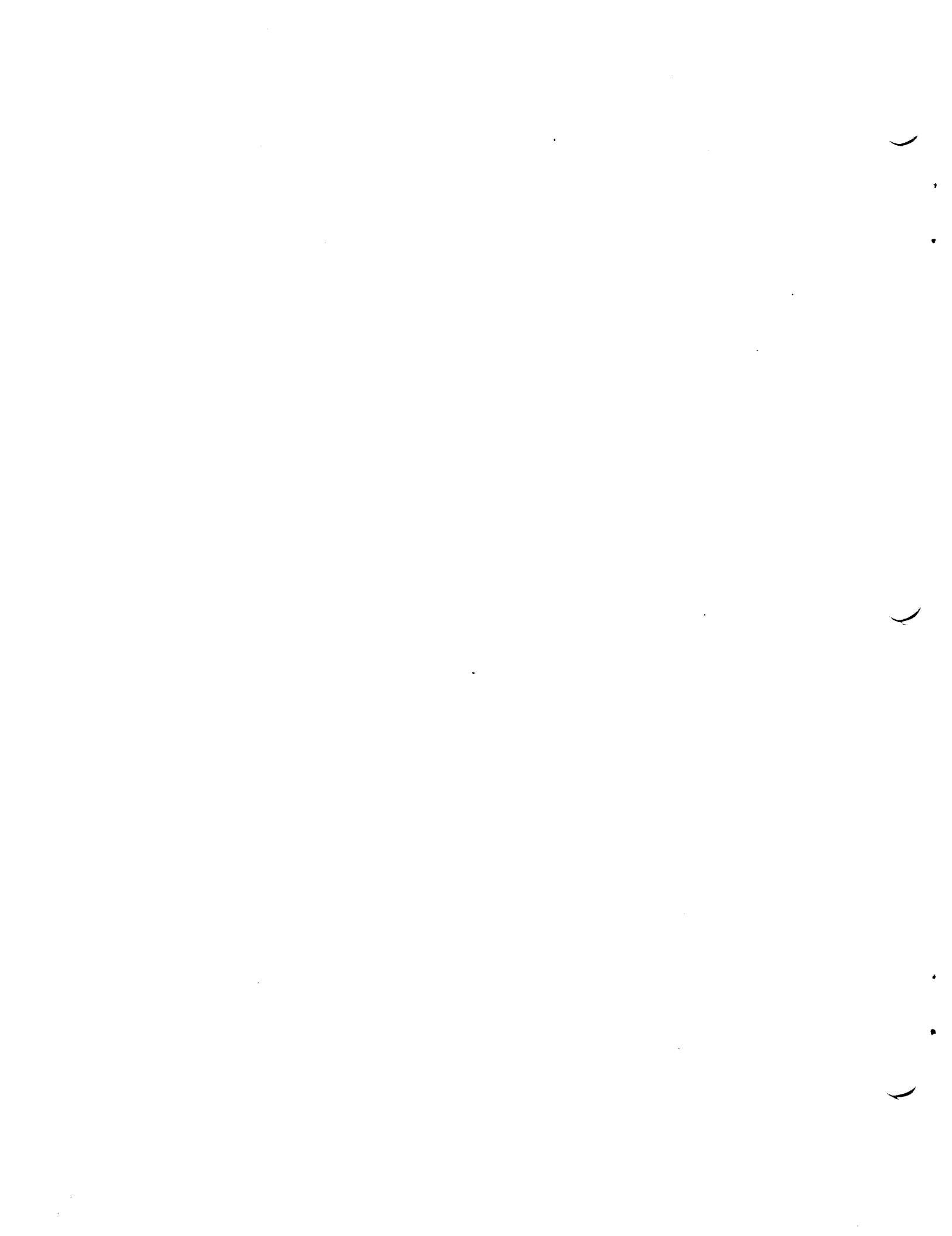
We're interested in your experiences with APX programs and documentation, both favorable and unfavorable. Many software authors are willing and eager to improve their programs if they know what users want. And, of course, we want to know about any bugs that slipped by us, so that the software author can fix them. We also want to know whether our documentation is meeting your needs. You are our best source for suggesting improvements! Please help us by taking a moment to fill in this review sheet. Fold the sheet in thirds and seal it so that the address on the bottom of the back becomes the envelope front. Thank you for helping us!

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 and/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 software)
_____ 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 software or user instructions:

_____

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