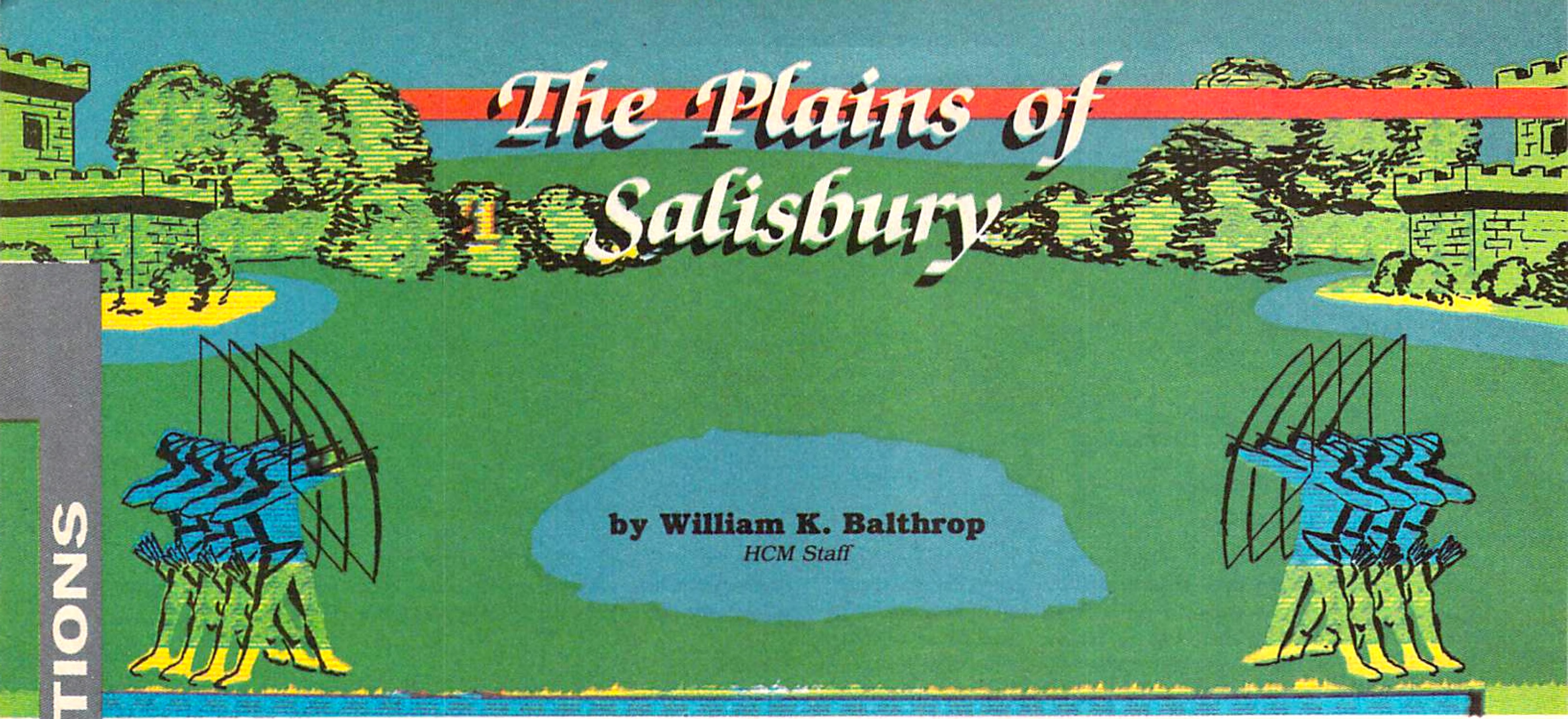
The Plains of Salisbury



by William K. Balthrop
HCM Staff

All is not well in Camelot. The kingdom is in chaos as King Arthur prepares his gallant knights for his final battle with his arch-enemy (and son) Mordred.

Arthur sits alone at his dimly lit table, a large map spread before him. As he struggles to concentrate on tomorrow's coming battle at Salisbury, time weighs heavily on his mind. So many years have passed since he first drew the sword from the stone. At dawn, he will make a last valiant stand against his evil son. With Merlin gone, who will come to Arthur's aid? Will it be someone from the distant future? Could it be you?

This program is an exciting simulation of King Arthur's last battle on *The Plains of Salisbury*. The game requires two players, each controlling an army of gallant knights. Players move the knights and engage in combat until one player defeats all of the opposing player's troops.

The Playing Screens

Three maps of terrain comprise the battleground for this mini-war. Each map lies adjacent to the others. (Moving off the right edge of the first map brings you to the left edge of the middle map, and so on.) You may not move off the left edge of the first map or the right edge of the last map—or off the top or bottom of any map.

The program will ask you to designate a map layout. You can enter any ordered combination of the three maps to indicate the layout sequence: e.g., 123, 321, 213, 232, etc.

Each map contains 6 types of terrain that affect movement and troop defense. You may move your knights into all terrains except water. Each type of terrain has a different movement/defense factor—the higher the number, the more strength it takes for your knight to travel. The 6 terrain types are:

TERRAIN	MOVEMENT/DEFENSE UNITS
Roads	1
Open grasslands	2
Forest	3
Buildings	4
Forts	5
Water	No movement allowed.

Obviously, roads offer the least resistance to movement and the least protection from attack. On the other hand, a fort is the most difficult to move through, but it offers the highest level of protection. Forts also possess an endless supply of arrows. Each knight, however, is capable of carrying no more than 4 arrows at a time. When these are used up, the knight must return to a fort to get more before he can participate in the combat phase. A knight who remains in a fort will always have a supply of 4 arrows.

Movement Phase

Two phases make up each player's turn: movement and combat. During the movement phase, a player is given an opportunity to move his or her knights, starting with knight number 1 and continuing through knight number 6.

Every knight can travel up to 9 movement units each turn. You may move your knights either left, right, up, or down by using the 4 keys indicated in your machine's Control Capsule. If you don't wish to move, or if you wish to stop moving a knight before all of his movement units are gone, then press [ENTER] or [RETURN]. This will start the next knight's turn; or, if he's the last knight, this will start the combat phase.

The number of movement units expended when entering a terrain type can be seen in Chart 1. If you stick to the roads, you could move your knight up to 9 squares at a time (a square is one character on the screen). Traveling through open grasslands, knights can move only 4 squares in one turn. Moving in the open grasslands requires 2 movement units for each of the 4 squares; so if your knight has only 1 movement unit left, he cannot continue. At this point, press [ENTER] or [RETURN] to begin the next knight's turn. When a knight's movement factor is exhausted, you will be prompted to move the next knight.

Every time a knight moves, he expends strength (.1 strength units per movement unit). Each knight starts the game with 9.9 units of strength, shown simply as a 9 on the screen (a strength of .9 will show up as 0). If a knight's strength level drops below zero for any reason, the knight cannot do battle. Each knight will automatically receive .5 units of strength every turn. If a knight stays away from battle, and only moves 5 movement units per turn, then his strength level will stay even. Not moving will increase his strength by .5 every turn. Marching at full speed (using all 9 movement units) will drain .4 strength units per turn.

Hand-to-Hand

A knight entering a square occupied by an enemy knight will automatically initiate hand-to-hand combat. This is a fight to the death, eliminating the losing knight from play.

Once hand-to-hand combat begins, your knight's strength level determines how much strength you can drain from the enemy; thus, the stronger your knight, the better his odds are of winning. If the strength for both knights drops below 0 at the same time, both knights will be eliminated.

If a knight has engaged in hand-to-hand combat and wins, he may not move until his next turn. The losing knight, obviously, may never move again.

After a knight has moved into a new square, the program updates and displays the number of movement units remaining and the knight's strength level. If a knight runs out of strength while moving, he is out of the game. The vanquished knight, however, will remain on the map until the map has been updated.

Combat Phase

After completing the movement phase, the combat phase starts. If any of your knights are adjacent to an enemy knight (horizontally or vertically, *not diagonally*), you can now attack that knight with bow and arrow. The enemy will not be able to fire back at you until your turn is over, so you have nothing to lose except one arrow. Every knight may fire one arrow per turn in the combat phase.

Select the knight that is to fire an arrow by pressing the number corresponding to that knight. Then indicate the direction of fire by pressing the key indicated in the Control Capsule for your machine. After a knight fires an arrow, that knight may not attack again until your next turn. Hitting an enemy lowers strength by a factor based on a random number and the attacking knight's strength level.

Every knight begins with only 4 arrows. If a knight uses all 4 arrows without replenishing them, that knight will not be allowed to initiate combat. A knight can replenish his supply of arrows at one of the forts.

You can terminate a knight's combat phase at any time by pressing [ENTER] or [RETURN].

Save Exit Return

Pressing the appropriate Exit/Save option key (designated in your system's Control Capsule) calls up a short submenu. When you reach this menu, you can either save your game to disk (or cassette on the TI-99/4A, Commodore, and Atari machines), or exit without saving. After saving, you can also quit the game or return to where you left off.

When you exit the game you are informed of the winner at that time. If you've saved a game where each player has at least one knight left, the game can be continued later—but, as you exit, the computer tells you the winner *as if the game were over*. The winner is determined by the following scoring rules: 50 points for each enemy knight defeated, and 10 points for each arrow that hits an enemy.

Load a Game

After the title screen, the program will ask whether you want to load an old game. If you reply with a Y for Yes, then it will ask for the file name. The old game will load and commence where it left off at the time it was saved.

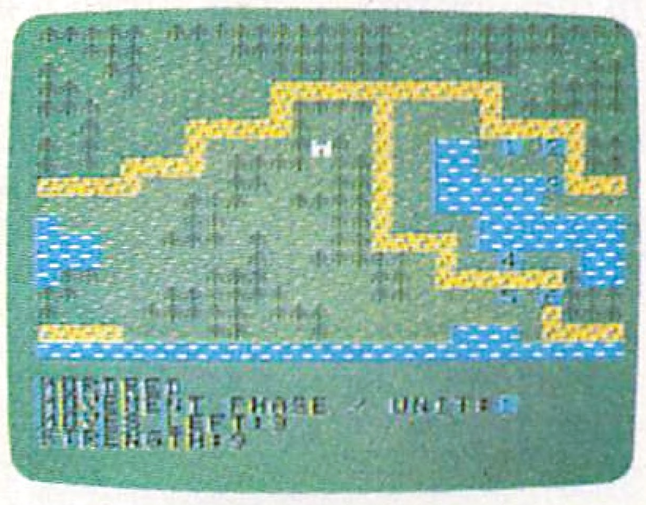
HCM

For your key-in listings, see HCM PROGRAM LISTINGS Contents.

CONTROL CAPSULE

The Plains of Salisbury

KEY	FUNCTION
Movement Phase	
I,J,K,M	Move up, left, right, down.
SPACEBAR	Enable screen scroll.
1	Screen 1.
2	Screen 2.
3	Screen 3.
RETURN	Terminate movement.
ESC	Exit/Save option.
Combat Phase	
1-6	Select unit to fire.
I,J,K,M	Fire up, left, right, down.
RETURN	Terminate combat.



This screen, from the TI-99/4A version shows a typical arrangement of knights moving across the landscape

CONTROL CAPSULE

The Plains of Salisbury

KEY	FUNCTION
Movement Phase	
Arrow keys	Move up, left, right, down.
A	Screen 1.
B	Screen 2.
C	Screen 3.
RETURN	Terminate movement.
ESC	Exit/Save option.
Combat Phase	
1-6	Select unit to fire.
Arrow keys	Fire up, left, right, down.
RETURN	Terminate combat.

CONTROL CAPSULE

The Plains of Salisbury

KEY	FUNCTION
Movement Phase	
Cursor keys	Move up, left, right, down.
F1	Screen 1.
F3	Screen 2.
F5	Screen 3.
RETURN	Terminate movement.
F7	Exit/Save option.
Combat Phase	
1-6	Select unit to fire.
Cursor keys	Fire up, left, right, down.
RETURN	Terminate combat.

CONTROL CAPSULE

The Plains of Salisbury

KEY	FUNCTION
Movement Phase	
Cursor keys	Move up, left, right, down.
Fn 1	Screen 1.
Fn 2	Screen 2.
Fn 3	Screen 3.
ENTER	Terminate movement.
ESC	Exit/Save option.
Combat Phase	
1-6	Select unit to fire.
Cursor keys	Fire up, left, right, down.
ENTER	Terminate combat.

CONTROL CAPSULE

The Plains of Salisbury

KEY	FUNCTION
Movement Phase	
E,S,D,X	Cursor up, left, right, down.
CTRL 1	Screen 1.
CTRL 2	Screen 2.
CTRL 3	Screen 3.
ENTER	Terminate movement.
F9	Exit/Save option.
Combat Phase	
1-6	Select unit to fire.
E,S,D,X	Fire up, left, right, down.
ENTER	Terminate combat.