

## THE GREAT ESCAPE

Ocean, £8.95 cass, joystick or keys

**T**here have been many books and films telling of the successes and failures of escape attempts from German high security POW camps throughout World War II. Ocean have now released a computer program which allows a player to step into the army boots of a prisoner of war imprisoned in Ger-



What an incredible piece of programming! A complete POW camp has been crammed into the Commodore, right down to the very last detail. The prison and surroundings have been extremely well planned, and the research which must have gone into the production of the program is admirable. It's a shame this depth of design isn't incorporated into more programs. What makes The Great Escape so special is the phenomenal amount of freedom the player is given within the game environment. That, coupled with the many different escape possibilities gives the player scope for months of varied and interesting play. Unquestionably the best arcade adventure so far this year - don't miss it.

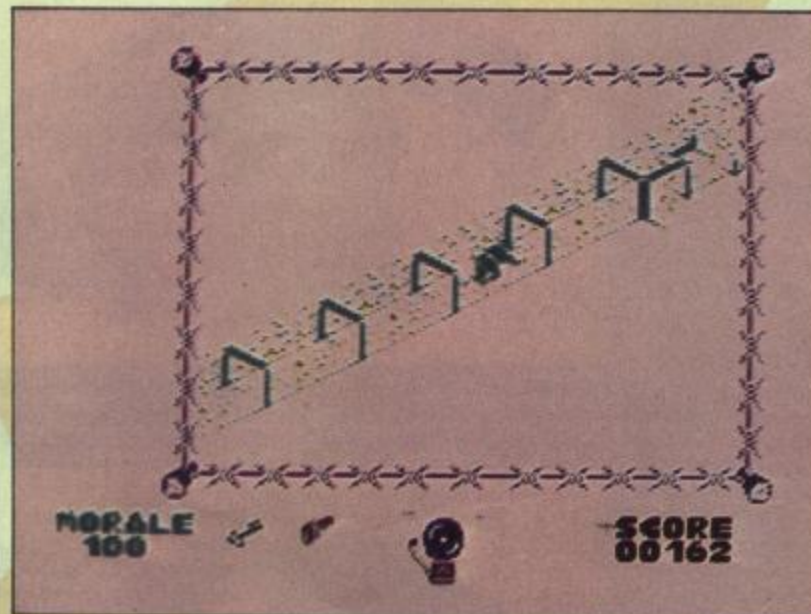
many's most secure camp.

The date is 1942, and the recently arrived hero is appalled to find that all the prisoners have fallen into a state of complete apathy. Their morale has been crushed by several failed escape attempts, and all they do now is follow a strict routine of sleeping, eating and attending role calls, waiting for the end of the war. Our hero is still full of enthusiasm though, and has decided to make a break for freedom - with or without the help of

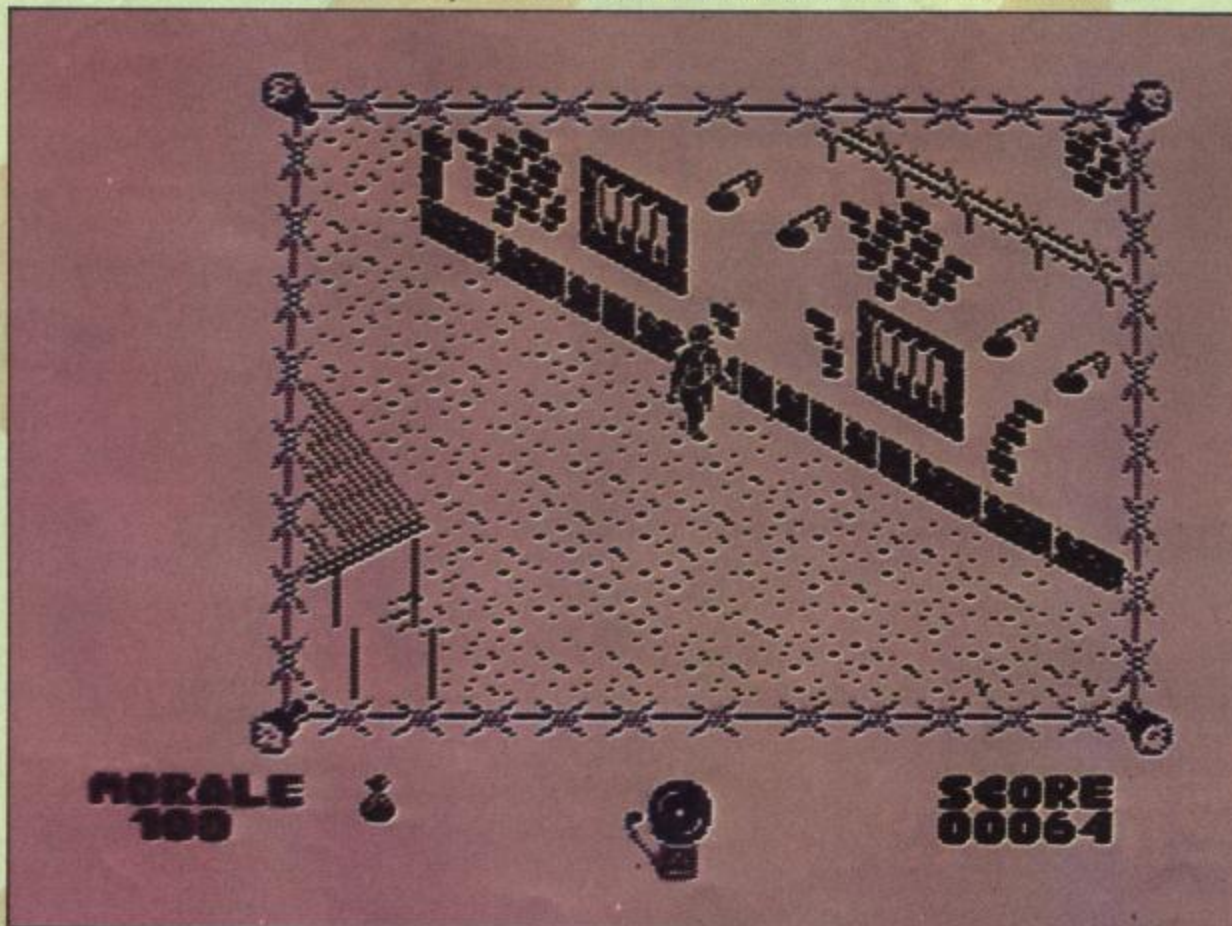
the other inmates.

The camp is situated in a converted castle, positioned on a cold North Sea peninsula. The only access is through the main gate, and official papers are required to authorise safe passage. All activity is monitored by guards in the watchtowers, and powerful searchlights sweep back and forth throughout the night. Prisoners are housed in the centre of the complex, only leaving their cells to exercise in an area adjacent to the

Going underground... in a bid for freedom, the prisoner gets lost in the maze of tunnels below the camp



Under cover of a building, the prisoner crosses the compound



In the stores, in the stores... the prisoner collects his red cross parcel

main gate.

Against these odds, escape seems a daunting prospect - but there is a positive side. The guards follow a rigid timetable, and their movements can be monitored and predicted. A maze of drains and tunnels used during previous escape attempts criss-crosses beneath the castle, and a range of useful objects can be picked up from around the castle - keys,

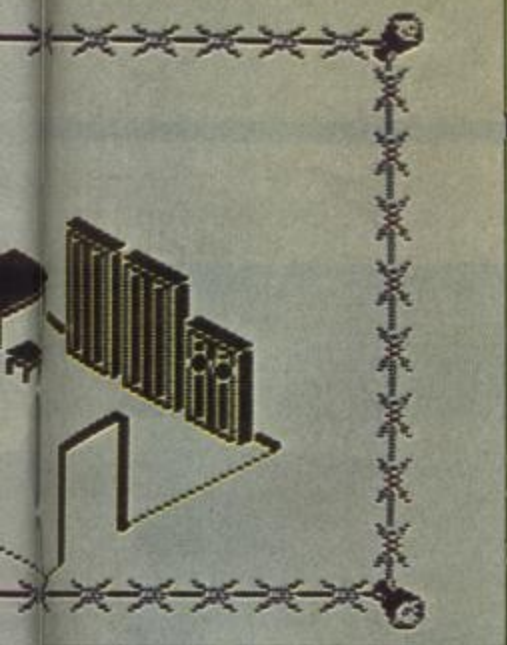


The programmers have made a brave attempt at a large scrolling play area - sadly the scrolling doesn't meet the same high standard as the gameplay. The Great Escape contains some of the most detailed and attractive graphics I've seen on the Commodore, it just seems a pity that the screen play area is so small. The sound effects do their job admirably, but the game lacks a decent melody to add to the very weak atmosphere. The presentation could have been made stronger, as there's absolutely no front end. Still, all the problems are very logical, fairly simple to solve... and great fun.



Ocean have achieved a very competent conversion from the original Spectrum program, considering that the 64 doesn't really like 3D perspective games. The camp is highly detailed and there are loads of guards and POW's wandering around to add to the atmosphere. A really nice touch is the ability to enter tunnels and scramble around under the ground. My only niggle is the slow speed of action, but this is still faster than most games of this type. If you fancy a bit of WW II action from the other side of the fence, then look no further than The Great Escape.





torches, wire-cutters, shovels and dynamite to name but five.

Abandoning control of the prisoner allows him to follow the strict German routine – useful to bide time while an escape plan is formulated, or to monitor the behaviour of the guards.

The action is displayed through a remote forced 3D perspective, with flick-screen indoor locations and multi-directional scrolling castle grounds. Information displayed at the bottom of the screen comprises a numerical representation of the hero's morale, an alarm bell and a text readout area, which displays German orders. Failing to comply with these orders (roll call, meal times and so on) results in the hero being chased by guards, and a spell in solitary confinement if he's captured. Capture also causes the loss of any collected equipment along with a loss of morale. Should morale sink to zero, the potential escapee becomes an insipid model prisoner like the rest of the inmates – but that's not going to happen, is it?

#### **PRESENTATION 90%**

Good instructions, and many highly effective touches throughout, such as being able to let the prisoner do his own thing.

#### **GRAPHICS 81%**

The detailed 3D graphics generate a suitable atmosphere, marginally tainted by the juddery scrolling and absence of colour.

#### **SOUND 22%**

A few bells and whistles add some atmosphere to an otherwise silent game.

#### **HOOKABILITY 88%**

Instantly absorbing and interactive action as soon as the prisoner leaves his bed.

#### **LASTABILITY 88%**

A complete POW environment to be monitored, many objects to find and locations to explore – just to find *one* escape route!

#### **VALUE 87%**

Weeks of play on offer for nine quid.

#### **OVERALL 89%**

One of the best arcade adventures available – an essential purchase for fans of the genre.