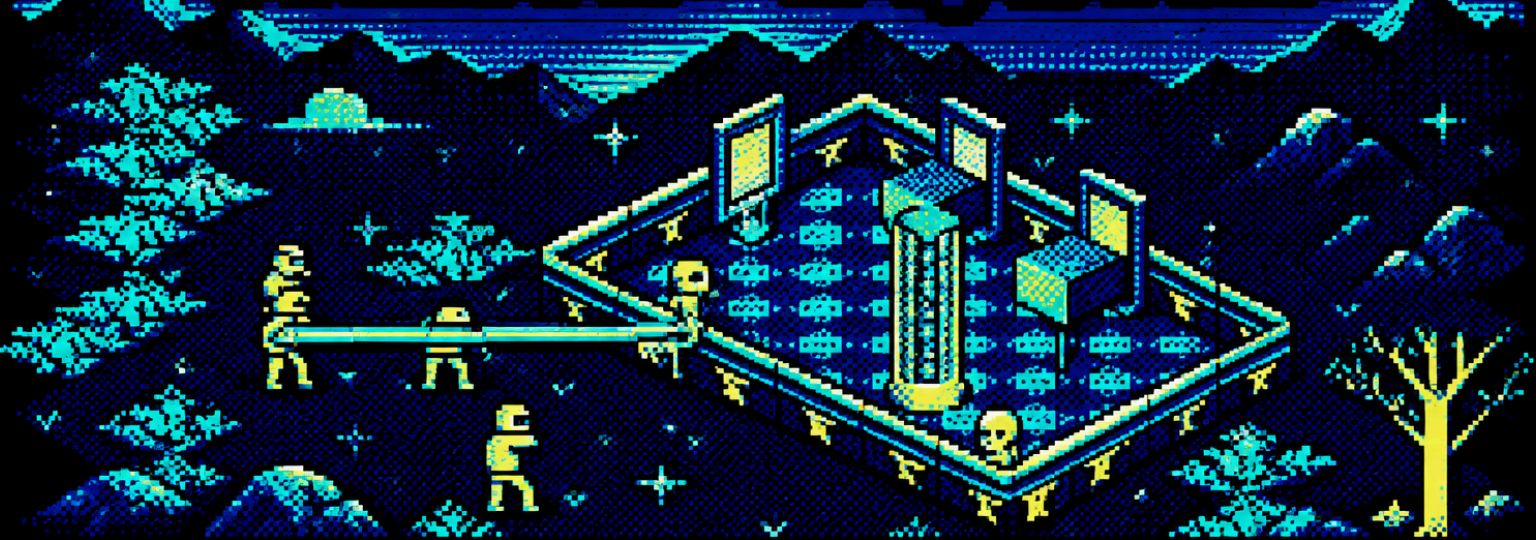


XENO SQUAD



RETROART 2026

by tollis

XENO SQUAD 128

Player manual

A tactical alien-combat game for the Amstrad CPC 6128

Version 1.5 · TOLLIS 2026

The story



October 1999. A fireball streaks across the sky over Thessaly and falls near Larissa.



AEGIS, a secret European strike force, is sent to investigate. What they find will change the world. You are its commander.



Larissa. The small craft came down in the fields and its crew, the Greys, survived. From their weapons our scientists build the first lasers. A second craft in Mantua is signalling into space, and the town of Eichstätt must be held for one night until the civilians are out.



Almería. Dr. Elena Mavros decodes the alien signal and becomes a target. In an armoured suit she crosses the desert while the Hounds hunt her.



Inverness. At dawn the aliens strike a Scottish town. Spitters lob acid over the walls and four civilians are trapped.



Hardanger. In the snowy forests of Norway the aliens raise a beacon to guide their fleet. Stalkers guard it, visible only up close.



Vatnajökull. Their command ship lands on the ice. The Overlord controls the invasion with its mind. When it dies, we learn it was only a viceroy.



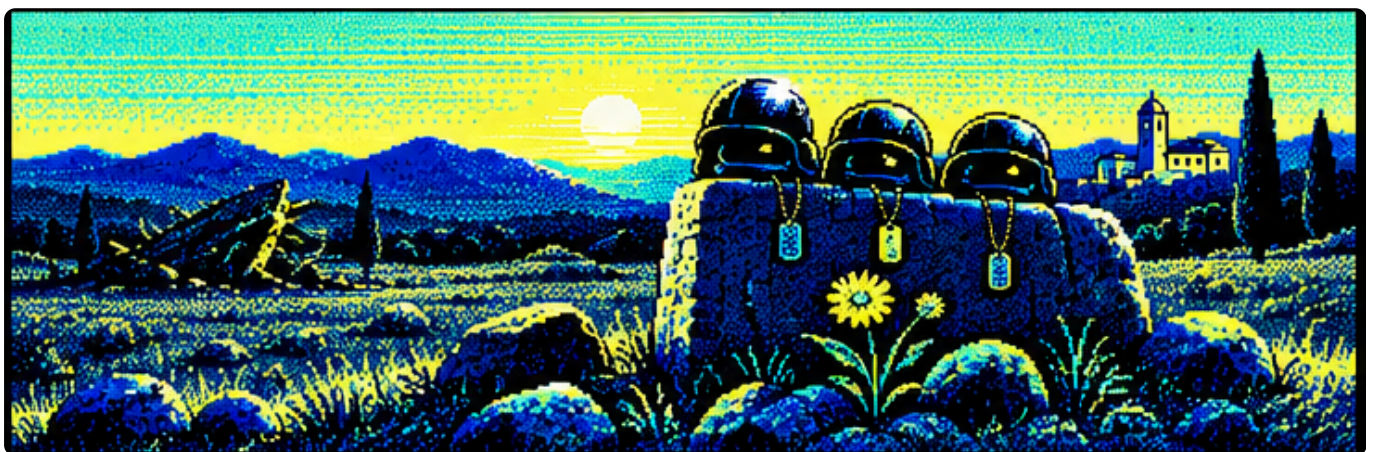
The Carpathians. The Overlord's last signal leads to a relay in the mist. Its navigation module shows where the mothership is going: Athens.



Athens. The mothership descends beneath the Acropolis. The true master of the invasion, the **Archon**, walks the dark streets, and its ships keep landing troops until it dies.



The end? If the Archon falls, the mothership will tear itself apart over the Acropolis. The story will end in Greece, where it began.

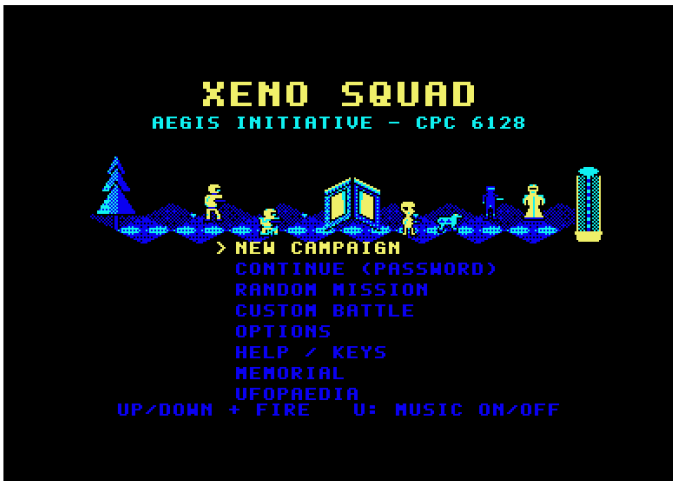


AEGIS will never be named in public. Its soldiers will wear no medals. But the world will still be ours, because of them.

Loading and main menu

The game needs an Amstrad CPC 6128 and loads from disc. It also runs in emulators such as Retro Virtual Machine.

1. Insert the disc `xeno128_v1.5.dsk` in drive A.
2. Type `RUN"XENO` and press RETURN.
3. After the title picture press FIRE (SPACE) for the menu.

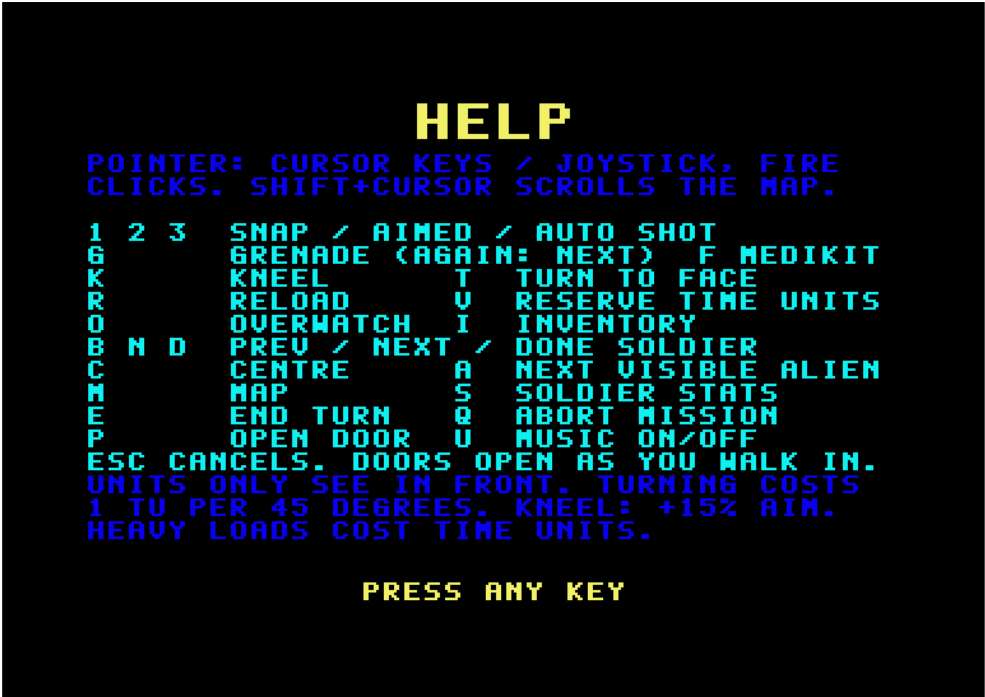


Option	What it does
NEW CAMPAIGN	A new 9-mission campaign with a story. First you choose the difficulty.
CONTINUE (PASSWORD)	Continue from a mission with the password the game gave you.
RANDOM MISSION	A single battle on a random map, with a random objective and enemies.
CUSTOM BATTLE	A battle your way: soldiers, aliens, terrain, weapons, weather.
OPTIONS	Screen colours (3 zones) and music.
HELP / KEYS	The list of keys.
MEMORIAL	The soldiers who fell in the campaign.
UFOPAEDIA	Cards for the aliens you have met.

Choose with up/down and FIRE. **U** turns the music on and off anywhere.

Controls

Everything works with one pointer, as in HeroQuest: move it with the cursor keys or the joystick and press FIRE. Every panel button also has a shortcut key. SHIFT with the cursor keys scrolls the map.



Key	Action
Cursor keys / joystick	Move the pointer
SPACE / RETURN / COPY / FIRE	Click: move, select, target
SHIFT + cursor keys	Scroll the map
1 / 2 / 3	SNAP / AIMED / AUTO shot
G	Throw (G again: next grenade, smoke, flare, mine)
F	Medikit
K	Kneel (+15% aim)
T	Turn to face a direction
R	Reload from the belt
V	Reserve TU for a reaction shot
O	Overwatch: fire at whoever moves
P	Open the closed doors around the soldier (4 TU)
I	Soldier's inventory
B / N / D	Previous / next / done soldier
C	Centre on the soldier

Key	Action
A	Next visible alien
M	Battle map
S	Soldier stats
H	Help
E	End turn
Q	Abort mission (asks Y/N)
U	Music on/off
ESC	Cancel aiming or leave a screen

The **panel** at the bottom shows the turn, the objective and how many aliens you see (SEEN) on the left. In the middle are the action buttons with their letters, and on the right the soldier's name, TU and health with the weapon. Numbered boxes appear at the screen edge, one for each visible alien: click one and the camera jumps to that enemy.

The battle

The battle is played in turns. First you move all your soldiers, press **E**, and then the aliens move.



Time Units (TU)

Each soldier has a set number of TU every turn. Every action spends them:

- **Step:** 4 TU, 6 diagonally, +8 when kneeling. A heavy load costs extra.
- **Turning:** 1 TU per 45 degrees. Units only see in front of them.
- **Kneeling:** 4 TU, standing up costs 8.
- **Shot:** a share of the TU that depends on the weapon and the mode.
- **Swapping an item:** 4 TU.

Shooting

Press 1, 2 or 3 and click the target. The panel shows the chance to hit in %.



Mode	Key	Character
SNAP	1	Quick, cheap in TU, fair accuracy
AIMED	2	Accurate, expensive in TU
AUTO	3	3-shot burst, low accuracy (not on every weapon)

- Kneeling gives +15% aim. A soldier below half health aims worse.
- Damage is 0 to 200% of the weapon's power, minus the armour on the side that was hit. The back is always the weakest side.
- A missed shot goes wide and may hit something else on its path, even one of your own soldiers.

Reactions and overwatch

- **Reaction fire:** when a unit moves in front of an enemy, the enemy fires if its reactions (scaled by the TU it has left) are better. Keep TU and your soldiers will fire during the aliens' turn.
- **V (reserve):** keeps enough TU for one shot so that moving cannot spend them.
- **O (overwatch):** the soldier waits and fires at the first alien that moves in front of it.

Sight, cover and buildings

- What you have not seen stays dark (fog of war). Walls, doors and trees block sight.
- Rocks, crates, trees and walls stop shots and can be destroyed. Shrubs give no protection.
- **Buildings:** send the soldier to a square inside, even one you cannot see. It finds the way to the door on its own, the door opens, and it stops if it spots an alien.
- **P:** opens the closed doors next to the soldier for 4 TU, so you can look inside without entering.
- Doors close again every turn, unless someone stands in the doorway.
- Grenades and plasma knock down walls, trees and cover: make your own entrance.
- You hear the footsteps of aliens you cannot see.



Wounds, morale, panic

- Fatal wounds bleed every turn. The MEDIKIT (F) closes them and restores 10 health (3 uses per battle).
- Morale drops with losses and wounds. With low morale a soldier may panic (losing the turn) or go BERSERK and fire at whatever it sees.
- The Overlord and the Archon make psionic attacks and can take control of a soldier for one turn. Brave soldiers resist more often.
- Weapons of the fallen stay next to the body; walk over them to pick them up.



Weapons, armour and equipment

Each soldier holds one weapon, has 4 belt slots and one suit of armour. Change equipment in the INVENTORY (I); in battle every swap costs 4 TU. Weight above the soldier's STRENGTH costs TU.



Weapons

The SNAP / AIMED / AUTO figures are the cost in % of TU and the weapon's accuracy in %. Lasers never need reloading.

Weapon	Power	SNAP	AIMED	AUTO	Ammunition
RIFLE	30	25% TU · 60%	80% TU · 110%	35% TU · 35%	RIFLE CLIP (20)
PISTOL	26	18% · 60%	30% · 78%	-	PISTOL CLIP (12)
LASER RIFLE	60	25% · 65%	50% · 100%	34% · 46%	no reloading
LASER PISTOL	46	20% · 40%	55% · 68%	28% · 28%	no reloading
PLASMA RIFLE	80	30% · 86%	60% · 100%	36% · 55%	PLASMA CELL (20)
PLASMA PISTOL	52	30% · 65%	60% · 85%	30% · 50%	PLASMA CELL (26)
STUN ROD	30	25% · 85%	-	-	melee

The **STUN ROD** stuns an adjacent alien (key 1) and captures it alive. That earns points and, in the campaign, brings the next technology sooner.

Throwing (G)

G selects the first throwable item on the belt, G again the next one. Then click the square. The range depends on the soldier's strength.

Item	What it does
GRENADE	Blast of power 50, radius 2
ALIEN GRENADE	Blast of power 90, radius 3
ELERIUM CHARGE	Blast of power 120, radius 3, brings down walls
SMOKE GRENADE	5×5 cloud for 3 turns: blocks sight, not shots
ELECTRO-FLARE	Lights 7×7 squares for the whole battle (useful at night)
PROXIMITY MINE	Arms where it lands and explodes when an alien steps on it

Explosions set shrubs, wood and grass alight. Fire spreads for 2-3 turns and burns anyone standing in it.

Armour

Armour takes damage off every hit, depending on the side. Each suit looks different on the soldier.



Armour	Front / side / rear	Look
COMBAT VEST (light)	12 / 8 / 5	The plain yellow soldier
PLATED ARMOUR (medium)	30 / 24 / 18	Cyan shoulder pads, chest plate, knee pads
POWER SUIT (heavy)	50 / 40 / 32	Bulky, closed helmet with a cyan visor

Other equipment

- **MEDIKIT** (F): closes wounds and restores 10 health, 3 times per battle.
- **NIGHT GOGGLES**: on the belt. At night the soldier sees 9 squares instead of 6. No help in fog.
- **Ammunition**: RIFLE CLIP, PISTOL CLIP, PLASMA CELL. R reloads from the belt.

Aliens

There are 10 kinds of alien. The UFOPAEDIA in the main menu shows a card for every kind you have already met.



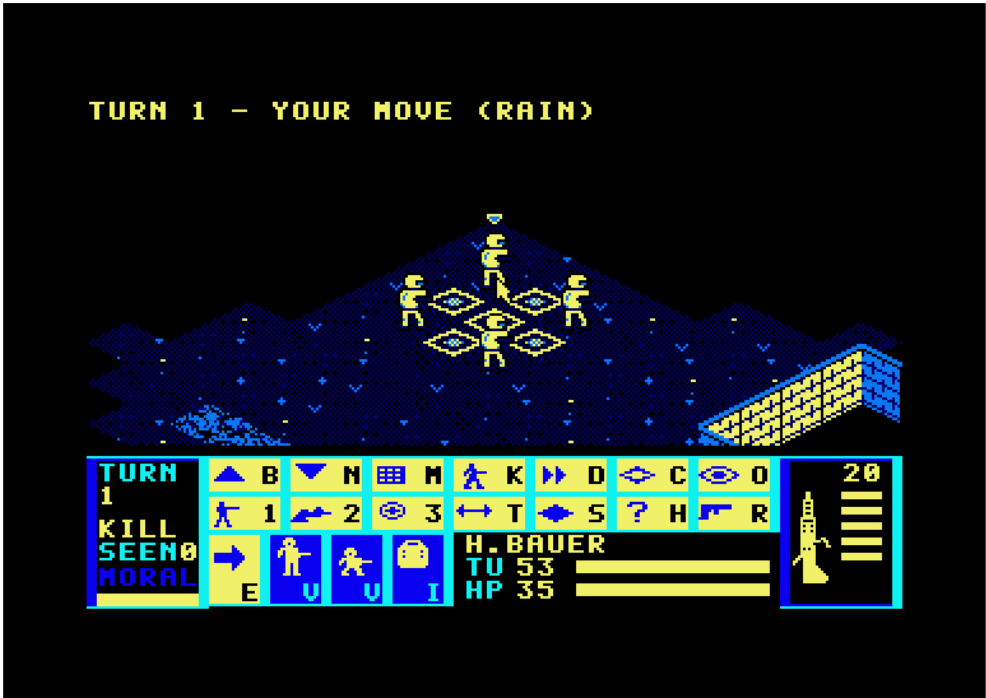
Kind	Health	Armour (front)	Weapon	What it does
GREY	30	4	Plasma pistol	The common invader. Frail, but hunts in groups.
DRIFTER	40	8	Plasma pistol	Hovers and moves fast over any terrain.
HOUND	70	10	Claws	Melee hunter. Its bite turns a civilian into a zombie.
BRUTE	90	14	Heavy plasma	Heavy frontal armour. Hit it from the side.
STALKER	80	18	Plasma rifle	Camouflaged: visible only within four squares.
SPITTER	45	6	Acid	Lobs acid in an arc over cover (3×3). Slow and soft.
MEDIC	32	5	Plasma pistol	Stays behind and heals the wounded. Kill it first.
ZOMBIE	55	2	Claws	A former civilian. Slow and tough.
OVERLORD	120	24	Plasma rifle	A leader. Psionic attacks on morale or control of a soldier for one turn.
ARCHON	150	28	Heavy plasma	The true master. Psionic attacks, keeps calling reinforcements while alive.

Aliens use overwatch, hunt whatever they see and guard their craft. From turn 3 they leave the buildings on patrol more and more often and search for your squad. On the harder levels they aim better and react faster.

Weather

Weather changes how far each side can see. Rain is available in CUSTOM BATTLE only.

Weather	Soldiers see	Aliens see	Other
DAY	11 squares	11	-
NIGHT	6 (9 with NIGHT GOGGLES)	9	Dark palette. An ELECTRO-FLARE lights the area around it.
FOG	5	5	Pale, hazy palette.
RAIN	9	7	Soldiers -10% aim and reactions. Aliens -25% aim and -30% reactions. Fire does not spread. You hear the rain.



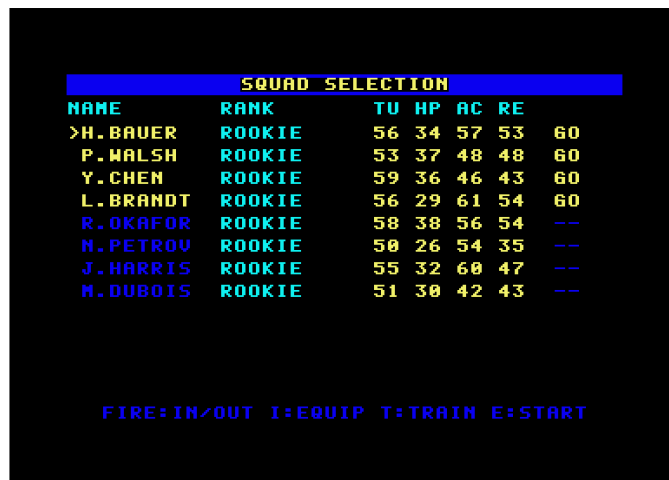
Campaign

The campaign has 9 missions across Europe. Every victory unlocks new equipment and gives you a password to continue later.



#	Mission	Place	Terrain · weather	Objective	After victory
1	CRASH SITE	Larissa, Greece	Farmland · day	Eliminate all aliens	Laser pistols, alien grenades, stun rod, mines
2	SIGNAL	Mantua, Italy	Farmland · fog	Carry the NAV MODULE to EVAC	Laser rifles, night goggles
3	NIGHT WATCH	Eichstätt, Germany	Town · night	Hold out for 8 turns	Plated armour
4	THE SCIENTIST	Almería, Spain	Desert · day	Escort Dr. Mavros to the exit	Plasma pistols
5	TERROR	Inverness, Scotland	Town · day	Rescue 4 civilians	Plasma rifles, power suits, Elerium charges
6	BEACON	Hardanger, Norway	Arctic · night	Destroy the beacon	All equipment
7	THE OVERLORD	Vatnajökull, Iceland	Alien base	Kill the Overlord	-
8	THE RELAY	Carpathians, Romania	Forest · fog	Carry the NAV MODULE to EVAC	-
9	ACROPOLIS	Athens, Greece	Town · night	Kill the Archon	The end of the war

Every mission starts with a briefing and squad selection.



Difficulty

Difficulty	What changes
ROOKIE	A quarter fewer aliens, poor aim, less armour. For learning the game.
VETERAN	The invasion as designed: a hard but fair fight.
SUPERHUMAN	Two more aliens, sharp aim, +25% score. A lost mission sets you back one.

Your soldiers

- You have 8 soldiers and take up to 4 on each mission. On the SQUAD SELECTION screen FIRE adds or removes a soldier, I opens the equipment, T the training and E starts the battle.
- Ranks:** ROOKIE, SQUADDIE, SERGEANT, CAPTAIN, COLONEL, COMMANDER. You rise with kills and missions.
- Training:** after each mission you spend experience points on TU, health, accuracy, reactions, strength, throwing and bravery. A promotion gives extra points.
- Nicknames:** a soldier with 2 kills in one mission or 4 in total earns a nickname (HAWK, GHOST, VIPER...).
- Hospital:** a soldier who comes back below a third of health misses the next mission.
- Permanent death:** the fallen do not come back. New recruits fill the empty places and the soldier's name goes on the MEMORIAL (or M on the map).

After the battle



The debriefing shows the score, the rating, the story text, the new equipment and the **password**. Write it down: CONTINUE (PASSWORD) resumes from there, at the same difficulty. A captured alien brings the next technology sooner.

In the last mission, when the Archon falls, the mothership breaks up in front of you. Then come the epilogue, the honour roll and the memorial.



Random and custom battles

Besides the campaign you can play single battles. Every battle has a new random map with houses, rooms, doors, trees, rocks and UFOs in three sizes.

- **RANDOM MISSION:** you choose only the difficulty. The game picks the terrain, objective, enemies and weapons.
- **CUSTOM BATTLE:** you choose everything, with up/down and left/right.



Option	Values
SOLDIERS	1 to 4
ALIENS	1 to 10
ALIEN TYPE	GREY, DRIFTER, HOUND, BRUTE, STALKER, OVERLORD, SPITTER, MEDIC, MIXED
MISSION	Any objective: eliminate, NAV MODULE, hold out, escort, beacon, leader, rescue
TERRAIN	FARMLAND, FOREST, TOWN, DESERT, ARCTIC, ALIEN BASE
WEAPONS	BALLISTIC, LASER, PLASMA (with the matching armour)
ALIEN SKILL	LOW, NORMAL, HIGH
CONDITIONS	DAY, NIGHT, FOG, RAIN

Colours (OPTIONS)

The screen is split into 3 zones, each with its own palette: top bar, battlefield and panel. In OPTIONS you pick a ready-made scheme or your own colours for each zone, with a live preview of the battlefield (also at night, in fog or in rain).



Tactical tips

1. **Keep TU.** A soldier with TU left at the end of the turn fires during the aliens' turn. Use V or O.
2. **Move in pairs.** One advances, the other covers while kneeling.
3. **Hit from the side or the back.** Armour is always weaker there, especially on BRUTES.
4. **Look before you enter.** Open the door with P, or throw an ELECTRO-FLARE at night.
5. **Smoke saves lives.** A SMOKE GRENADE covers a move across open ground.
6. **The MEDIC first.** Otherwise the wounded aliens keep coming back.
7. **Keep away from HOUNDS.** Let them reach a civilian and you will have a zombie.
8. **Bravery against the Overlord and the Archon.** Brave soldiers resist mind control. Spend spare points on BRAVERY.
9. **Capture when you can.** A live alien taken with the STUN ROD brings the next technology sooner.
10. **In Athens, be quick.** Reinforcements arrive every two turns while the Archon lives. Get into the mothership and hit it with Elerium.