ALIENMSX

.unofficial

32KB ROM Cartridge (specific ROM file for PAL and NTSC systems)

MINIMUM REQUIREMENT: MSX 1 Computer, 16KB RAM

Finally, after almost 4 years of development with several intermediate betas, AlienMSX is ready!

The game development took much longer than I initially thought/imagined, due to a series of factors:

- Despite my technical background as a developer, it had been over 25 years since I had written a single line of code;

- I started coding the game in C (thanks to Danilo for the workshop initiative and the MS Visual Studio template development). During this period, I ended up rewriting a large part of the initial code for optimized Z80 Assembly due to ROM size (a personal goal is for the game to fit in 32KB, like the stunning games from the 80s) and performance (many simultaneous animations on the screen and some incorporated visual effects). This considerably increased development and testing time.

- There was never a clear specification of what the game would be like when complete. New ideas were appearing and being incorporated into the code, which often meant rewriting/restructuring much of the code that had already been written and tested.

- I managed to dedicate to the game only a fraction of the little free time I had left - sometimes that meant a few hours a month.

Well, this is the result - I hope you enjoy it with a few hours of fun.
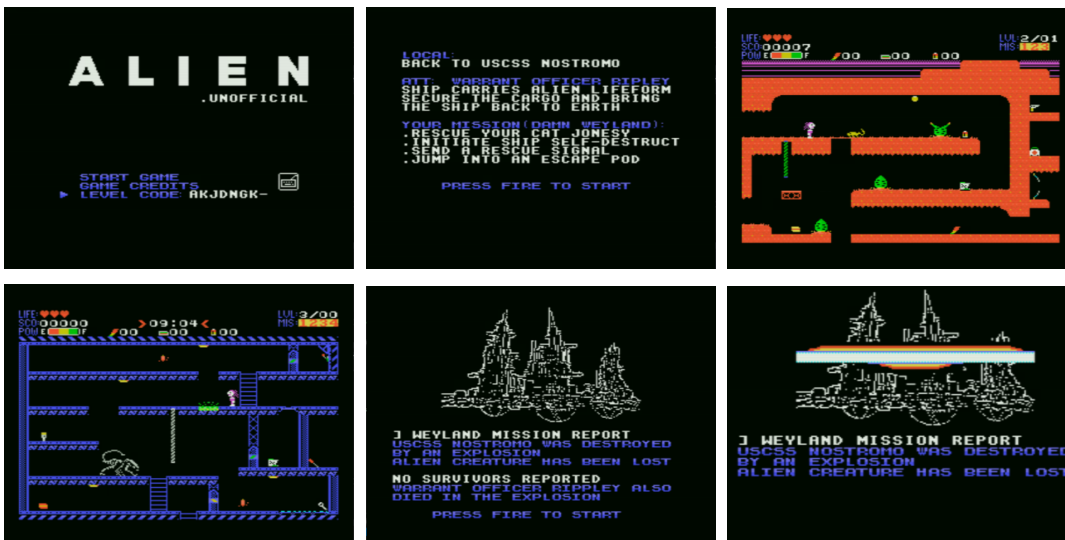
This game has entered the MSXdev24 competition (https://www.msxdev.org/category/msxdev24/).

AlienMSX is freeware.

A L I E N
Alien movie copyrighted by 20th Century Studios

GAME STORY

The year is 2122. The **USCSS Nostromo** spacecraft is a space tug that was 39 light-years away returning to Earth when it receives an unknown transmission from a nearby moon called Acheron (LV-426).

The ship's computer **MU/TH/UR 6000** familiarly known as **Mother** then follows the secret orders of the **Weyland-Yutani Corporation**, which prioritizes obtaining Aliens and any other alien life form found on expeditions, treating all employees as disposable resources.

In the first phase of this adventure, you will be the synthetic employee and science officer Ash, who was awakened by the computer and tasked with waking up the rest of the crew, decoding the message and going to the planet to respond to this supposed SOS from an unknown alien civilization.

In the second phase, you will be warrant officer Ellen Ripley, responsible for descending with part of the crew to the planet to look for the origin of the call. After you find a destroyed alien ship with its crew dead but containing several strange creatures (known as *facehuggers*) and dangerous alien eggs, you must rescue the crew and return safely to the Nostromo.

In the third and final phase, still as Ellen Ripley, you decide (against **Weyland Corp** instructions) to avoid the extremely dangerous Alien (Xenomorph XX121) that was brought aboard from Acheron being taken to Earth, even if it means blowing up the Nostromo. For that you have to escape both the Alien and the *facehuggers* spread throughout the ship.

"In space no one can hear you scream"

GAME PLAY – INTRO SCREEN:

Press "SPACE" key to play via keyboard or the "FIRE" button to play via joystick.

Select the "START GAME" option to start the game, "GAME CREDITS" to see the credits, or "LEVEL CODE" to enter a previously received 8-character level code (you will receive a new code each time you complete a level).
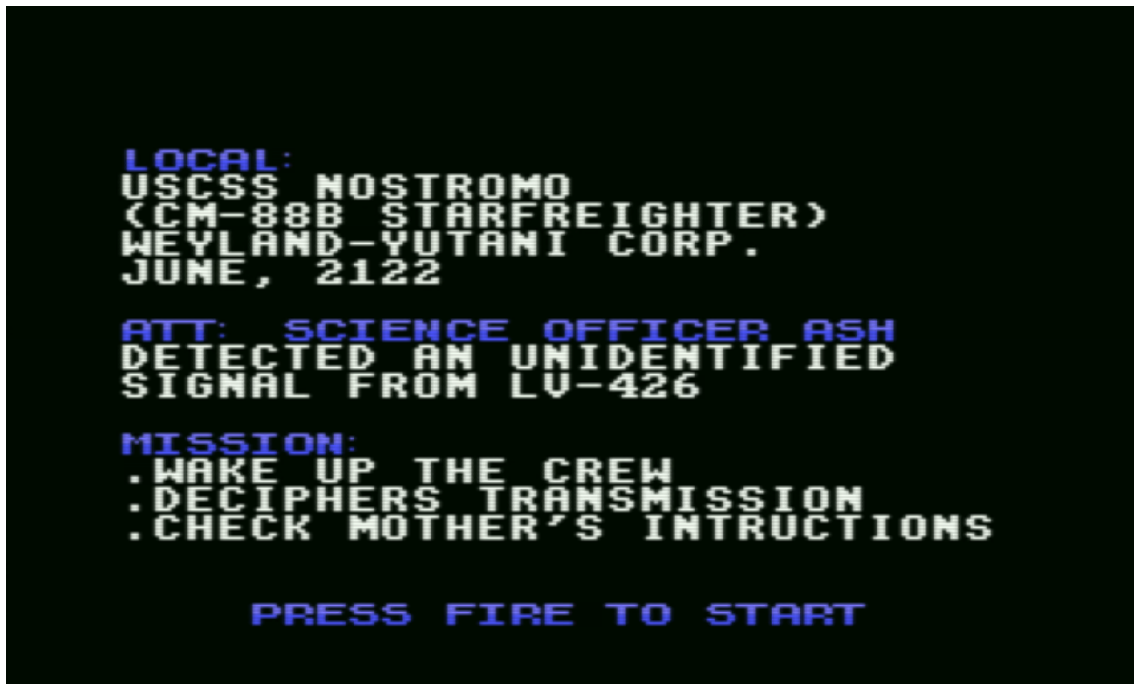

Tip: You can press "ESC" key to skip the "ALIEN" text animation.

GAME PLAY – SCREEN INFORMATION FOR EACH PHASE:

In each phase you have some missions that need to be completed. Upon completing all the missions, you will move on to the next phase.

On this screen you will understand what the missions are for this phase.

Phase 1 information

Press "SPACE" KEY or "FIRE" button to start the game.

GAME PLAY – CONTROLS AND ASSISTANCE KEYS:

Use the arrow keys on the keyboard or the joystick to move the player.

There are several dangerous elements in the environment. Avoid touching or passing through them or you will be injured and have your energy reduced.

To open a vertical gate, simply pull over and try to move towards the gate. This will open if you have the appropriate card or key.

For a ground gate, press the DOWN key while standing on top of the gate. This will open if you have a suitable tool.

You can go up and down the ladders and ropes, just press the UP or DOWN directional button while standing in front of you. While you're on the ladder or rope, you won't be able to jump or use the weapon.

If you have a weapon and ammunition, the "SPACE" key or the "FIRE" button will shoot in the same direction you are moving. You can shoot too if you are jumping.

Be careful when shooting at an electrical breaker. If hit by a shot, the circuit breaker will be damaged and all lighting on the ship will be turned off. To fix it, you must touch the circuit breaker with the proper tool – this will restore the lighting.

If you are attacked by a *facehugger* and it clings to your face, you will not be able to fire your weapon. In this case, if you have a knife, the "SPACE" key or the "FIRE" button will allow you to use the knife to cut the parasite's tail and free yourself. This knife will be damaged, and you will need to look for another one if you need to defend yourself again.

There are several control panels scattered around the ship. Each panel has a specific function, such as opening electronically locked doors or completing one of the level's missions. To activate the panel, you need to touch it with the appropriate access key.

Tip 1: You can press "ESC" key at any time to respawn your player in a safe place on this screen. You will usually need this if you are trapped in a compartment without a card or key required to allow you to exit. But be careful, because with this your current life will be lost. Press "Y" to confirm or "N" to cancel.

Tip 2: press "P" key to pause the game. Press "P" again to return.

INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR GAME PLAY:
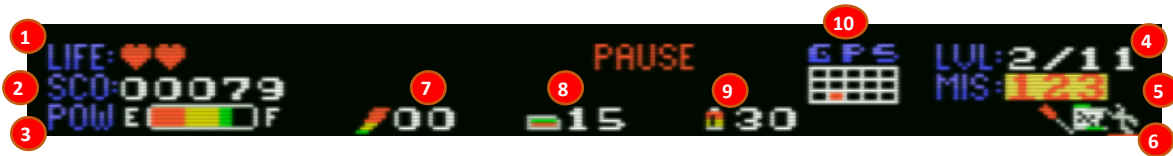
1 Remaining LIVES.

2 Your SCORE.

3 ENERGY (HP). Each time you are injured, some of your energy is reduced. When your energy is completely depleted, you lose a life.

4 PHASE/SCREEN: Each phase has 15 different screens to go through.

5 MISSIONS. Each phase has different missions to complete. While the mission is incomplete it is shown in red color. Once complete, it changes to green color.

6 OBJECTS. All objects collected by you in this phase.

7 ENERGY SHIELD. The shield automatically activates as soon as you get an energy cell and will discharge until the energy runs out. When you're shielded, dangerous elements like lightning bolts, acid, boiling oil, and laser beams can't harm you. But be careful - if you get squashed or hit by a closing gate or moving platform, you'll be seriously hurt even if you have your shield up.

8 WEAPON and AMMUNITION. Displays whether you have a weapon and the remaining amount of laser shots you have available. Always look for more ammo to keep yourself stocked and safe.

9 FLASHLIGHT and BATTERY. If you accidentally turn off a light breaker, it will make it much more difficult to navigate safely in the dark of space. Look for a flashlight and extra batteries to help you in this case. Activate the flashlight by pressing the "F" key. But be careful because the energy is reduced until the flashlight goes out. Press the "F" KEY again to turn off the flashlight and save energy.

10 SHIP MAP. Find a LOCATOR object to access the ship's map and get around more easily.

OBJECTS:

There are several objects that are scattered around the environment and can be collected. The objects will be extremely useful for you to move around and protect yourself during your journey. Each object has a specific use. Some objects stay with you indefinitely during the phase, others have a certain durability and will need to be replaced.

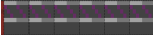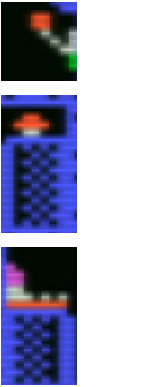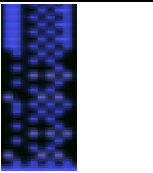|	
	RED CARD: You will need this card to open the gates of that same color. The red card lasts the longest and can be used an average of 8 times before it gets damaged.
	GREEN CARD: You will need this card to open the gates of that same color. The green card has an average duration and can be used an average of 5 times until it is damaged. Use carefully and avoid getting stuck in a room.
	YELLOW CARD: You will need this card to open the gates of that same color. The yellow card is short-lived and can be used an average of 3 times before it is damaged. Use carefully and avoid getting stuck in a room.
	KEY: Control panels can only be operated with the appropriate security key. The panels serve to open doors and complete missions.
	SCREWDRIVER: This tool can be used to fix an electrical breaker that you have accidentally tripped by a gunshot. When used, the screwdriver will need to stay on the breaker to keep it on, so you'll have to find another one if you need it again.
	PLIERS: Floor gates do not need cards to open. Some can be opened easily; others are stuck and will need the help of a tool like pliers to be unlocked.
	KNIFE: Always try to kill a *facehugger* from a distance using shots from your weapon. However, if you're attacked by a *facehugger*, you'll need a knife to cut it off your face. Because of the acid they release when injured, the knife you used will be rendered useless, so always look for others to keep yourself protected.
	FIRST AID KIT: During your journey there will be various dangers that can hurt you. Get the first aid kit to apply bandages and recover some lost energy.
	WEAPON: You will see that having a weapon will be very useful to protect yourself and open paths. But be careful because you have a limited number of shots. You cannot use the weapon if you are falling, climbing or descending a ladder or rope, or while you have a *facehugger* attached to your face.

	AMMO: The extra ammunition is for you to reload your weapon. You need to have both a gun and enough ammo to fire.
	FLASHLIGHT: If you have turned off the power breaker that turns on the lights, press the "F" key to turn on the flashlight and light up the scenery next to you. Once triggered, the flashlight's remaining power begins to reduce. Press "F" again to disable the flashlight. When you run out of power, you're back in the dark and need to find an extra battery.
	BATTERY: Batteries provide power to your flashlight. Search for new batteries to keep your energy stock always high. You need to have both a flashlight and enough battery power to turn on the flashlight lighting.
	LOCATOR: with the locator you will have access to the ship's map, and you will be able to see its current position.
	ENERGY SHIELD: The shield will protect you from dangerous elements like lightning, acid, boiling oil, laser beam, and from *facehuggers*. Once obtained, the shield activates automatically, and the remaining energy is consumed.

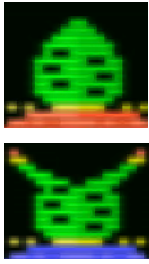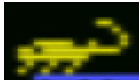|	
	Executive director Kane and the cat Jonesy (they are not exactly objects) but they need to be rescued as part of the missions to be completed in levels 2 and 3.

ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS:

	ELECTRICAL RAY: There are several panels and conduits with exposed wires in the walls of the craft. Avoid touching or passing through this electrical charge as it will cause serious injury.
	ACID: Toxic and acidic substances can be found on the floor of the ship. Avoid touching or passing through these substances or you will be seriously injured.
	BOILING OIL: At various points in the ship, the hydraulic system is out of order and there is a leak of boiling hydraulic fluid. Avoid touching or passing through this liquid as it will cause serious injury.
	STEAM: At various points in the ship, the heating system is out of order and high-pressure steam is leaking. Avoid touching or passing through the steam as it will cause serious injury.
	LASER: The laser barrier is part of the ship's security system. There are several active barriers, to prevent unauthorized crew members from accessing some restricted points of the ship. Avoid touching or going through the barrier as it will cause you serious injuries.
	SPRAYS: There are several sharp debris and metal splinters scattered across the floor of the ship. If you fall into them or pass them, you will be seriously injured.
	LADDERS AND ROPES: You can climb up or down between platforms in a room via ladders and ropes. Be aware that while you're going up or down, you won't be able to jump, shoot or use your knife.
	GATES: Gates can be horizontal or vertical. Vertical gates need an access card of the corresponding color (green, red or yellow). Horizontal gates may be rusty and will need a tool to help open them. Some gates will automatically close after a while, others will stay open indefinitely. Be careful not to be crushed by a closing gate, as this will cause you a very serious injury.
	LOCKED DOORS: These doors have an electronic lock and can only be opened by the corresponding control panel. Once opened, the door will stay open indefinitely.
	PORTAL: Portals allow you to be instantly transported between different locations on the ship. Just touch the portal to be transported. They come from alien technology collected by Weyland-Yutani in previous expeditions.

	TREADMILL: Conveyor belts are normally used to transport loads. If you're on a treadmill, you'll need to jump to get around.
	FORCE FIELD: these platforms activate and deactivate automatically at a given time. Once activated, you can walk on it safely. But be careful not to cross the area of a force field just as it activates, as in this case you will be injured.
	MOVING PLATFORM: Several moving platforms will be found on the ship. Some serve as an elevator; others will take you across the horizon from one point of the room to the other. They are very practical but be very careful not to be crushed vertically by a moving platform, nor to be hit horizontally by one of them. This will cause you a very serious injury, sometimes even fatal.
	CIRCUIT BREAKERS and CONTROL PANELS: You will find several circuit breakers and control panels. They control the ship's lighting, lock doors, and activate the systems responsible for the phase's missions. To trigger a circuit breaker, you'll need to fire your weapon at it. If it's an electrical circuit breaker and the ship's lighting is compromised, you can fix it with a suitable tool. To activate the panels, just touch one of them with a security key.
	WALLS: As you'd expect, most walls on a spaceship are solid and very strong. But over time some walls become more fragile and can be destroyed with a few accurate shots. The problem is that you can't tell which walls are solid or fragile unless you do a test. It may take several shots to the right wall for it to start showing signs of damage.

ENEMIES:

Depending on the phase you are in, you will encounter different enemies. In some cases you can kill or injure them using your weapon or with the energy shield activated. Running away is always a good option, as you will be seriously injured if they touch or grab you.

	EGGS: eggs are initially created inside an **ALIEN** queen. When it is fully developed, it leaves the queen's abdomen and can remain inert for years waiting for some other life form to approach. When something gets close enough, the egg opens and its internal parasite is released, attacking the victim. **The eggs can be destroyed with multiple shots from your laser gun. Once destroyed, its remains become very dangerous due to the accumulation of acidic blood released. Avoid passing through these remains to avoid injury.**
	FACEHUGGERS: hibernating inside the eggs is a parasite. When a viable host is placed near an egg, it opens and the *facehugger* launches itself at the victim, wrapping its long "tail" around its victim's neck. **To protect itself and avoid any external interference, the *facehugger's* blood is a concentrated acid solution. Once attached to the victim's face, it will be necessary to cut its tail with a knife to free itself, but the acidic blood will cause serious injuries.** **The energy shield can also protect you from a *facehugger*, even if it is already attached to your face.** **The safest way to kill a *facehugger* is to shoot it with your laser gun from a distance.**
	ALIENS: as soon as the parasite infects its host, an embryo is implanted in its body and begins to develop. When ready, the little Alien (Xenomorph XX121) begins its life by emerging from its host's chest. **Once an adult, the Alien - with its characteristic elongated skull - develops a very resistant black exoskeleton and becomes an aggressive and violent creature.** **Killing an adult Alien is extremely difficult. Avoid confrontation at all costs, because even if you hit him several times with your laser gun, you will only be able to wound him. Heavy military weaponry is needed to kill him, but the USCSS Nostromo does not have such kind of weapons.** **Do not get too close - contact with an adult Alien will be fatal.**

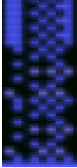|	Probably the best way to kill the Alien will be through creative ideas, such as ejecting it through an emergency airlock or even destroying the entire ship with it inside…

Final tip: Have fun!

SPECIAL CREDITS TO:
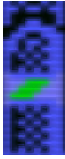
ubox MSX Lib by Juan J. Martínez (https://gitlab.com/reidrac/ubox-msx-lib)

MSX Templates for VisualStudio by Danilo Angelo (https://github.com/DamnedAngel/MSX-Templates-for-VisualStudio)

Music portions extracted from:

- "Nightshift" by Mr.Lou

- "Run the Gaunlet" - Anonymous

- "Moonlight Sonata" by Beethoven

QUICK GUIDE: (because no one reads the entire manual anyway)

Gates can only be opened by cards of the same color

Cards have different durability. Be aware if a card disappears after using it to open a gate

Some gates need one to open it

Security doors are opened by the respective circuit breaker or control

panel

Some circuit breakers control the ship's lighting. You will only know which ones by testing.

If you damage a circuit breaker with a shot from your weapon, you will need one to

fix it. You lose it after using

Control panels require one to be activated

Some walls can be destroyed by shots from your weapon. But you need to find out which...

If you are in the dark and need to turn on your flashlight , press the 'F' key. You

need to have a flashlight and a battery charge. Remember to turn off the flashlight when it is no longer needed, also using the 'F' key.

Eggs can be destroyed with a few shots from your laser gun

Facehuggers can be killed from a distance with shots from your laser gun. If it gets stuck to your face, you'll need a knife to kill him. In that case you also lose that knife

You can only fire shots if you have a gun and ammunition

There's no point trying to kill him the Alien with your laser gun. Better to run away and destroy the entire ship with him inside

The rest is fairly straightforward… Collect as many objects as you can and avoid touching anything that could hurt you