XP8

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The Story

In the cold darkness, the alien probe drifts into the outer reaches of the star system, drawn by the star's gravity. For days it continues unnoticed, its power systems long ago burnt out. Finally, it crosses the outer system sentry ring, and triggers a series of automatic warnings.

On the homeworld, a computer console hums into life, beginning a chain of events that eventually lead to interstellar war.

Planetary defenses launch fighter craft to intercept the unidentified object, and find it to be a probe of unknown origin, apparently adrift and powerless. It is brought back to a high security military base for examination.

After many days, military scientists reach the conclusion that the probe represents no immediate threat. It appears to have been launched by an alien civilisation, in the hope that it may be found by intelligent life and lead to contact between the two species. It has been successful.

The information within the probe has revealed what we believe to be the location of the aliens own star system. The probe itself suggests their technology is inferior to ours, although it must be remembered that along time has passed since it was cast into the vastness of space: we do not know how long it has taken to reach us, and must expect the aliens to have advanced technologically in the intervening years.

Twenty years later....

All attempts to contact the aliens with interstellar communications have failed. We do not know if the signals have failed to reach them, or have simply been ignored. Military command has therefore decided to send a starship to the alien star system with the intention of establishing contact with

them. This is a peaceful mission, and as such the starship is lightly armed, and carries many respected scientists. We eagerly await the moment when contact will finally be made....

Our starship reported entering the alien star system, and detection of approaching alien craft. That was the last we were to hear from it. Fearing the worst, we launched several military cruisers towards the alien star system to investigate. Shortly afterwards we learned from long range scanners that our starship had been destroyed. As the cruisers approached alien space, they themselves came under unprovoked attack, and responded with deadly force. We destroyed many of the aliens attack craft before we withdrew from enemy space.

Since then, we have been at war with the aliens.

Several years later....

We are losing the war. The enemy are simply too numerous, and have inflicted severe losses on our forces in recent encounters. We fear that in another year, they may have completely defeated us. However, we believe they have a fundamental weakness. Their military infrastructure appears to be heavily centred upon their homeworld. We believe that a successful assault upon their homeworld would leave their military in disarray, and lead to our ultimate victory.

We have therefore thrown everything into a strike force which is even now entering alien space and heading straight for their homeworld. The next few days will determine the outcome of the war.

Loading instructions

Disc 1 is self-booting - simply turn on your machine and put the disc in. You will see some title screens, then the main XP8 menu screen (hold down fire to speed through the different screens). Disc 4 contains a hard disc installer.

The Main menu screen

From the main menu screen you have the choice to start the level indicated, (see playing the game) or to enter the option screens. Use your particular control method to highlight the various options, pressing fire to select.

The Main option screen

From here you can change various aspects of the game. Most are self-explanatory. It is from this screen that you choose one or two players, by turning the selector on or off. Make sure you have your preferred control method selected for each player.

Customise options

You can also enter a 'customise option' screen, from here you can cheat as much as you like. It is possible to make the game extremely easy with all the options turned on. So, if you would like to see all of the game, who are we to stop you.

Password

If you have completed a mission already and don't wish to repeat the experience you can enter the password given at the end of the mission.

Control methods for Player 1 and 2

Joystick   **Joystick positions** for movement.
                 Fire button fires.
                 Left Alt to toggle weapons
                 (**Right Alt** for player 2).

Joypad   **Directional controller** for movement
                 Red or **green** button for fire.
                 Blue or **yellow** button toggle weapons.
                 Side buttons scroll up and down
                 through weapons
                 Pause / play for pause / resume.
                 While paused press **yellow** and **green**
                 together to quit level.

Keyboard   Player 2 only
                 Cursor keys for movement.
                 Right shift for fire / or turn off auto-fire.
                 Right Amiga for auto-fire.
                 Right Alt to toggle weapons.

Additional Controls All methods

                 <Space> Morph ships
                 < P > Pause game

While paused;

                 < Q > Quits mission
                 < R > Resume mission
                 < F10 > Jump to Workbench

Playing the Game

After the mission objective has been described to you, the game will begin. You should first become aware of your ship's status panel, at the top of the screen for player one, and at the bottom for player two:

Mission objects left	Weapon power bar	Weapon type indicator	Your score	Number shield left	Shield strength bar	% Level complete

Basically, your overall objective is to reach the end of the level without losing all your shields. Along the way you will meet various types of ships: some are useful power-up ships, the others will try to destroy you.

If you fail to achieve the mission objective you will have to try again.

You will also come across boss ships, you can't miss them, they're bigger than the rest and they don't leave you alone until one of you is gone. To help you judge their shield strength the '% level complete' indicator will change red, when this % reaches zero it's destroyed.

Power-ups

You will notice green disc shape objects spinning around, these are power-ups for your ship. There are eight standard weapons available, plus special all powerful weapons which will temporarily disable all standard ones. As well as these weapons there are:

Bomb	B
Extra shields	S
Shield restore	+
Immune	I

You can power up each of your weapons by collecting more of the same. You can see the particular weapons power bar go up each time this occurs, but there is a maximum after which any more collected will result in an overload explosion which acts like a bomb.

You will never lose your weapons unless you you lose a shield, in which case your present firing weapon's power will drop. You can disable this in the customised options if you wish.

Two-player Mode

If things get a little tough by yourself you can call on a friend to play as your wing man. In two player mode you fight side by side, any power-ups revealed can be collected by either player. You can however, combine your ships to become one. This is activated by pressing the space bar when in close proximity to one another. Player one will steer and fire forward guns, player two acts as rear turret gunner. Space bar will release your two ships. The gun turret will gain power the longer it is left unfired.

Finally: Good Luck !

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