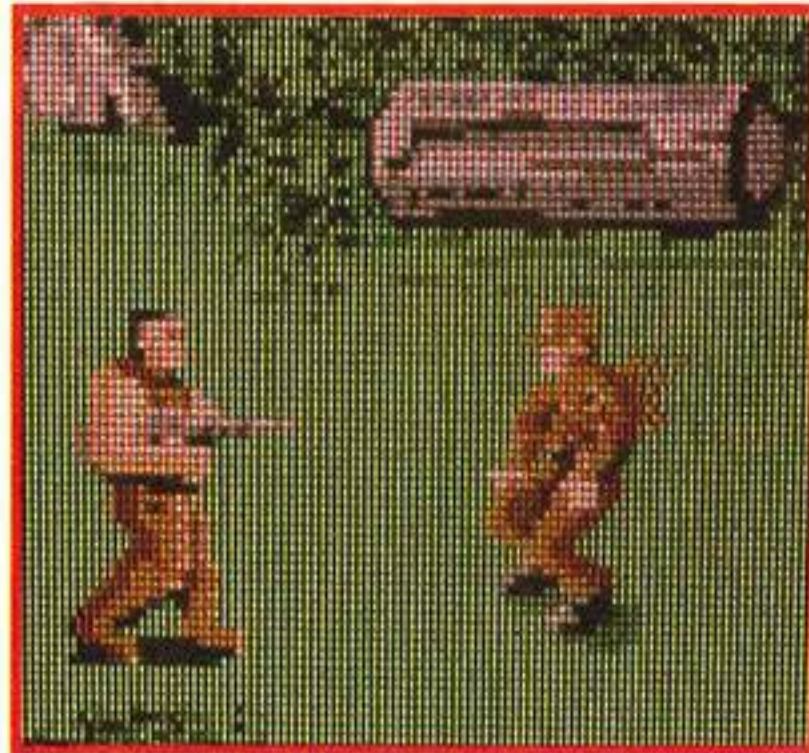


# PREDATOR

ACTIVISION

*With a physique like an armoured personnel carrier and a name that sounds like a cavalry charge, the mighty Arnold Schwarzenegger has achieved even greater fame and success as a screen commando, than he did in his unprecedented body-building career.*

His latest film is called Predator, which received favourable reviews even from the so-called serious press. The Sunday Times: 'The combat scenes are even better than in Platoon!' The theme of military combat is already well subscribed to in the software market and so every new addition to the list must have something original to offer. There are three formats which have been adopted in combat games: the 'Commando' style, which comprises a soldier running across a vertically-scrolling terrain; the side-view with horizontal scrolling, which is used in Player's recent release called Joe Blade; and the overhead view, which is exclusive to Interceptor's brilliant Eagle's Nest. Recently, the onus has been on software companies to make their military combat games less violent. This request was heeded in Player's Joe Blade, which placed emphasis on searching for objects and rescuing kidnapped politicians,

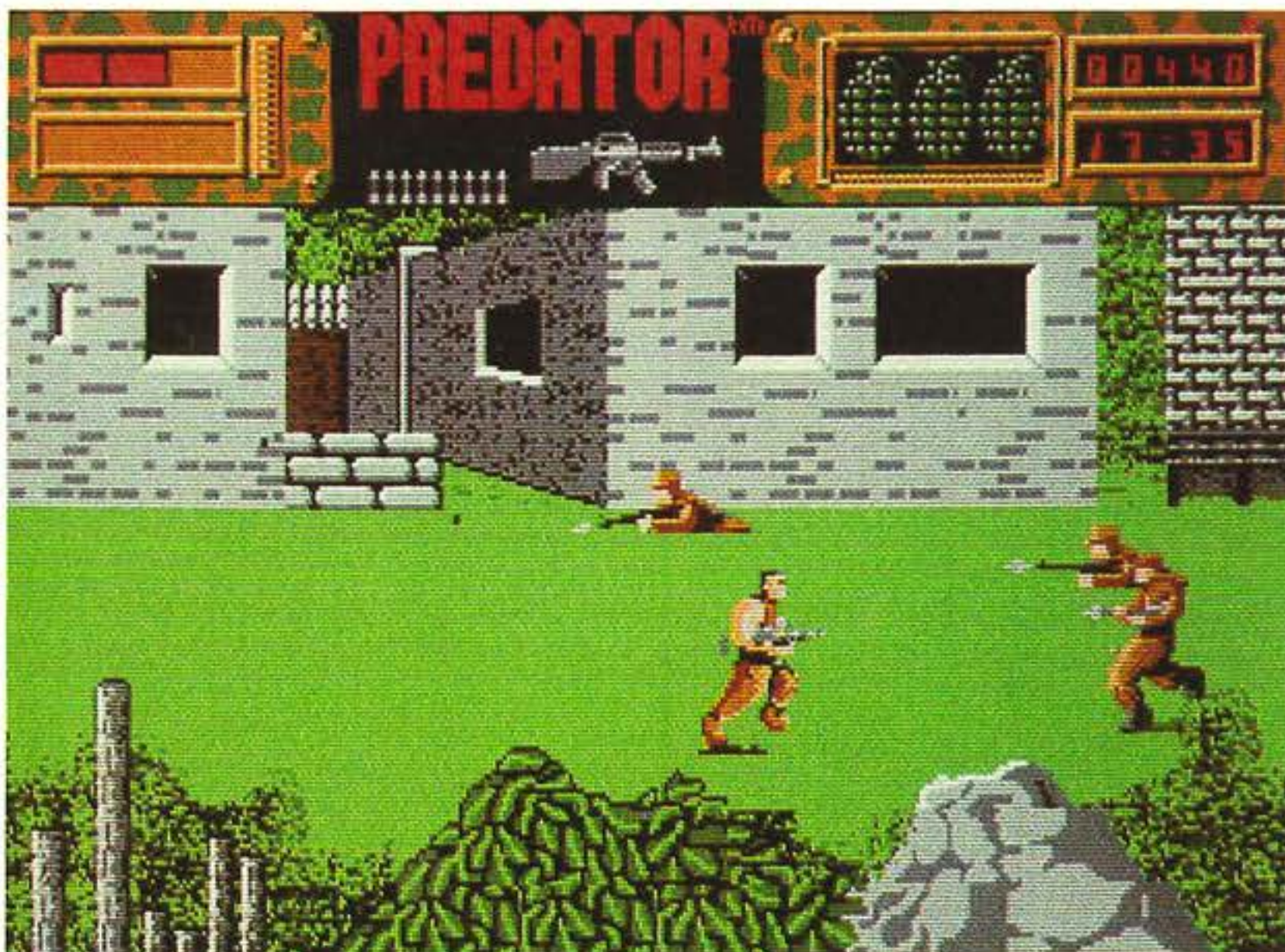


rather than gaining bonus-points with a high body-count. In contrast, Activision appear to have totally disregarded this move to pacifism and, as a result, Predator is bloody and violent.

The loading screen displays a slick animation sequence of the alien Predator's space craft orbiting the earth, which is followed by a digitized picture of Arny baring his mighty chest. After a double-disk-loading ceremony, the game screen materializes to reveal a clearing in the jungle, accompanied by the distinctive sound of an approaching helicopter. Sure enough, a helicopter hovers into view, a rope drops from the hatch and five identical commandos abseil to the ground. The final commando is Major Alan Schaefer who was portrayed by Schwarzenegger in the film and who you must direct in the game. He is slightly different to the other commandos, with a bulkier body and bare arms - presumably, they couldn't find an army shirt to fit Arny's 24-inch biceps. The other commandos run off screen, and pushing the joystick to the right sends Schaefer running after them. The screen begins to

scroll as the character reaches the centre, although he can run faster than the scrolling speed. Although the game scrolls horizontally, there is some depth to the screen and redirecting the pressure on the joystick to diagonal positions, moves him to the back and front of the screen. The status display at the top of the screen consists of a digital timer and points gauge, with life and energy sources indicated by red bars. Initially, Schaefer is armed with an M16 Armalite which he nestles under one massive arm, plus three hand grenades, which must only be used as a last resort. Unlike the film in which Arny appears to have an unlimited supply of bullets, your ammunition is quickly exhaustible. Therefore, a weaponry gauge on the status display indicates the ammunition levels and the number of grenades you have at your disposal. A sniper in a tree makes his presence known at the back of the screen. Pressing the firebutton activates the weaponry and, while the firebutton is pressed, the joystick governs the aiming of the gun. In order to retaliate, you must move within range of the sniper's rifle and each time Schaefer is hit the energy gauge depletes by one bar.

Schaefer quickly catches up with the first of his comrades, who is lying dead in a pool of blood and, suddenly, the screen turns blue, the monitor emits a ghostly sound and a triangular gunsight chases him across the screen. The sights are easily avoidable and if you keep within reachable distance of the dead comrade and wait for the screen to return to normal, you can



Schaefer walks straight into an ambush amongst some derelict buildings

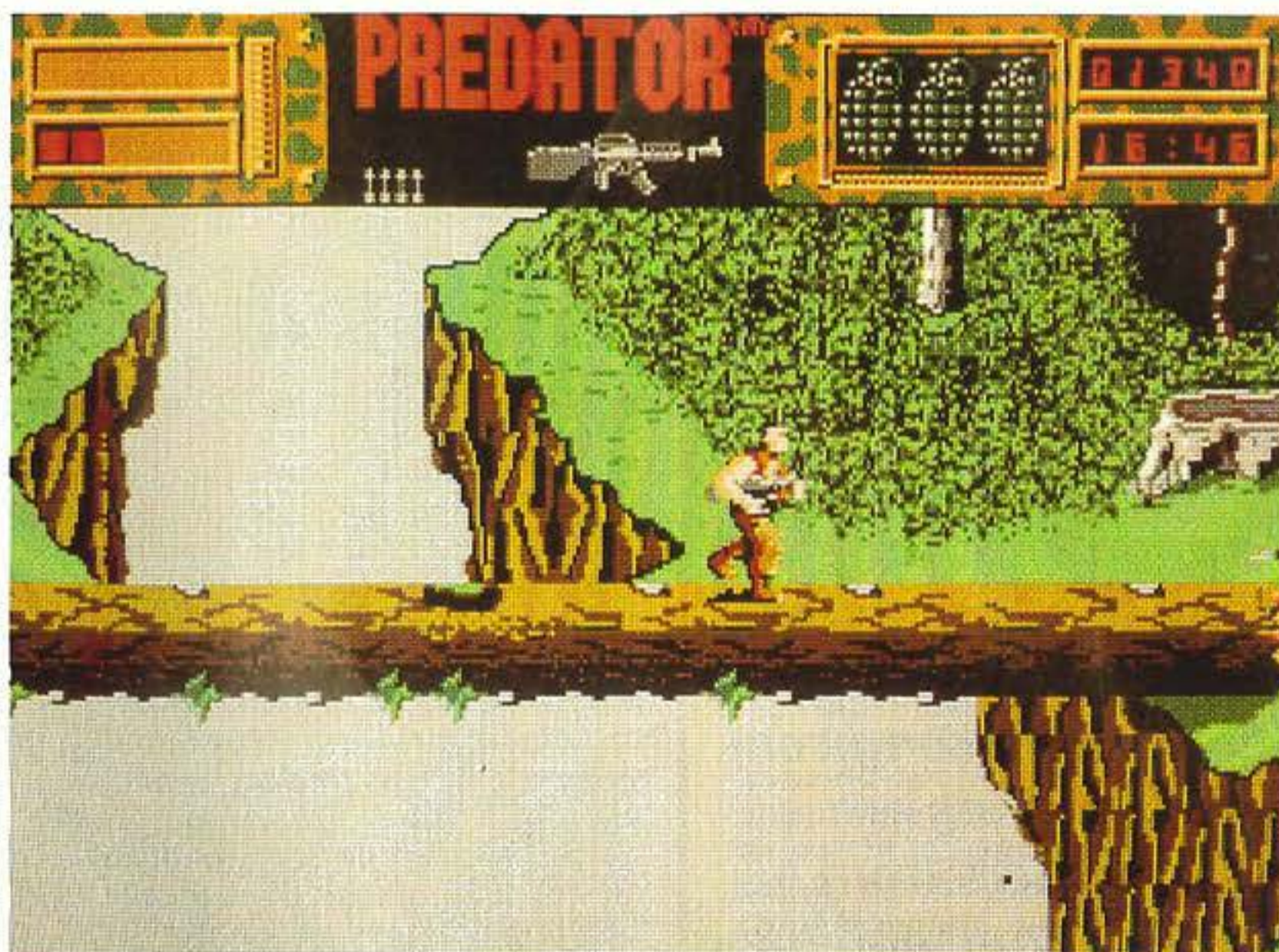
**GAME: PREDATOR**  
**HOUSE: ACTIVISION**  
**PHONE: 01-431 1101**  
**PRICE: £19.99**  
**RELEASE: NOW**

**GRAPHICS** : 65 %  
**SOUND** : 53 %  
**ADDICTIVENESS** : 53 %  
**ORIGINALITY** : 62 %  
**OVERALL** : 62 %  
**1ST DAY SCORE** : 3350

KEYBOARD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
JOYSTICK	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MOUSE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
COLOUR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MONO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
520ST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1040ST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Predator reminds me of the Rambo, Commando-type games, only this time the action takes place over a horizontally-scrolling background. I was impressed with the sound created by the helicopter rotor blades - could it perhaps have been sampled from the real thing? Running through the jungle is a pretty experience - the backdrops are well drawn and quite convincing. The action, for the first two levels, sees old Schwarzenegger running the gauntlet through enemy territory. The best tactic seems to be to stop only to pick up fresh weapons - otherwise keep moving! Predator is a difficult game but one in which your performance should improve with every sitting. Many people will dislike it but it does represent a challenge. And, unlike in the films, Arnie actually does die occasionally!*

**NC**



Entering level 2 over a log bridge

exchange the M16 Armalite for a more effective and devastating heavy-gauge shotgun. This exchange is achieved by moving near to the weapon, pressing 'Return' once to drop the existing gun, and again to pick up the replacement. Pushing the joystick to the right sets Schaefer running, and before long he is confronted by a flock of birds which in normal circumstances would not be a threat to the mighty Schwarzenegger. However, in this case, every bird that hits him depletes his energy. Obviously, the birds are introduced to waste ammunition, but surely Activision could have thought of something more menacing.

With the ammunition spent on warding off the killer birds, Schaefer may as well get rid of the useless weapon and rely on unarmed combat for his protection. Without a weapon, pressing the firebutton activates the unarmed combat mode. Then pushing the joystick forwards activates a punch; pulling backwards blocks; and redirecting the joystick diagonally sends out a powerful kick. However, not even Schwarzenegger could swat high-velocity bullets and, as he runs into the first ambush, his only defence is to resort to the hand-grenades. Pressing the spacebar throws the grenade a short distance, while the left-hand 'Shift' key sends it further. Another dead comrade offers the opportunity to re-arm Schaefer and, again, the screen turns blue and the triangular sight

chases him across the screen. Again, the sight is easily avoidable and you can return to the body and pick up the new weapon. As you progress through the game, the ambushes occur more regularly and intensely, with the enemy hiding in foxholes and machine gun posts. Eventually, the jungle ends and Schaefer runs into an urban situation, where the enemy take position inside the buildings - time is running out!

**STA**

*I'm still fairly undecided about this one. It is true that the game has a fair amount of action and the animation of the characters is quite good. However, the pace of the game is so slow that, on getting killed for the umpteenth time, I actually timed the opening helicopter sequence - 42 seconds! What a waste of time having to go through that rigmarole every time a new game is started. Overall, not something to shout too loudly about although, knowing my luck, everyone will think it a hit and I'll be left with egg on my face. It could be good if everything was speeded up by a factor of two and the unnecessary bits cut out - enough said. Not my cup of tea.*

**MM**

*He's big, he's butch and he's bulky - even in pixels! I always treat games which have been based on films with some scepticism, but I was pleasantly surprised by Predator. The animation is quite effective, particularly the helicopter sequence, and the character's running motion is unmistakably Schwarzenegger. Undoubtedly, Predator is gung-ho, violent and bloody, but there is an underlying aspect of strategy which, when correctly employed, increases your success in the game. The weaponry exchange is an interesting feature and the easily exhaustible ammunition forces you to use the weapons wisely. There are a number of failings in Predator, such as the helicopter scene at the beginning of the game, which is a novelty at first, but after the third or fourth time, becomes time-wasting and tedious. Additionally, the seemingly menacing alien's weaponry is easily avoidable, while a pathetic flock of birds prove to be the greatest hazard in the entire game.*

**JS**



Watch the bushes for the hidden enemy



Schaefer finds more bullets to dodge