



# GAME OVER, MAN! GAME OVER!

## ALIENS

■ FORMAT: VARIOUS ■ YEAR: 1986

When it isn't scaring moviegoers, the *Alien* franchise is often employed as a way to scare the pants off of gamers. *Alien Vs Predator*, *Alien Trilogy* and *Alien: Resurrection* all came up when scary moments were being discussed, and Darran's reaction to *Alien: Isolation* had to be seen to be believed. All that having been said, it's *Aliens* on the 8-bit micros that first got players to the fragile emotional state best euphemised as 'brown alert'.

Right from the start, the atmosphere is tense and oppressive, with six crew members controlled from a first-person perspective and cut off from one another, accompanied only by the eerie sounds of the space station and their guns. Venturing deeper into the base is the only way to make progress, but that brings out the threat of the Xenomorphs. You can see where they've been, as they spread biomechanical growth through the space station, infesting it with eggs and face huggers. If it spreads too far, the lights will go out – and then you're in really big trouble.

But it's actually encountering one of the aliens that results in the most terror. You'll know when

you've found one, as your proximity meter begins to emit an unsettling wailing sound. From there, it's a matter of time – if the lights are on, you can see it walking around and line up your shot. If they're not, you're going to have to rely on firing blind just to illuminate the room, hoping you'll catch it before it catches you. Either way, the last thing you want to do is miss your shots. Missing a close one will see the alien attack with speed and ferocity – you have half a moment to react, and if you don't, your crew member is a goner.

The last thing you see when your crew member is about to die is that alien rushing towards you, followed by the abrupt cut to static that signifies death. It's a moment that is scary without being explicit – leaving the crew member's ultimate fate to the player's imagination is all the more terrifying. The worst thing of all though, is that every time it happens – every time one of those screens turns to static and contact is lost – you're just one step closer to being alone with the aliens. Thanks to the designers' masterful work in building an atmosphere, that is a truly horrifying prospect.



## FEAR FACTOR 10

### GREENBERET79

"Panic, then the Alien moving along, then more panic, then the Alien moving towards you, then more panic. Then death"