

ALIEN METAMORPHOSIS

Variant Rules for *ALIENS*

By Stuart K. Tucker

Those of you who loved this game or can't find it (it is out of print) may want to check out the new version of *STARSHIP TROOPERS*—different bugs and weaponry, but similar exciting action. "Sir, is this going to be a standup fight or another bug hunt?"

With the release of another movie sequel, why not break out your old copy of Leading Edge's *ALIENS* for another heart-pounding escape? My friends and I did, but we weren't satisfied that the original game portrayed the movie well enough and came up with some minor modifications. Have you ever seen Vasquez survive after popping off a few grenades in Ops? Now you can. Are you tired of those light-weight pistols failing to serve a good purpose? Now you can hope to stick one up the mouth of a nearby alien. Don't you feel that carrying an incapacitated Marine should harm your aim a bit? After over 30 viewings of the movie, the discrepancies trouble the purist.

As fine as the game *ALIENS* portrays the movie, the connoisseur will appreciate these changes.

Hasty Shots. At the moment an alien enters a Marine's space, the Marine may squeeze off a point-blank hasty shot. Aim is affected by the weight of the weapon.

1. Pistols use the Aim 2 line, Range 1 column.
2. Pulse rifles and Shotguns use the Aim 1 line, Range 2 column.
3. Flame units use the Aim 1 line, Range 3 column.
4. Machine guns use the Aim 1 line, Range 5 column.

The usual acid spray takes effect in the space of the alien's attack.

Carrying Marines. A Marine carrying an incapacitated Marine must add three to firing die rolls (except for Hasty Shots—the advantage of the second pair of eyes over the shoulder helps in that case).

Grenade Effects. Before checking the normal Effect chart, see if the alien or Marine is hit. The alien in the target spot is automatically hit. Aliens one or two spaces away from the target spot must roll on the unwounded Burke card Aim 1 line to see if they are hit (and killed). Marines one to eight spaces away from the target spot must roll on the unwounded Burke card Aim 2 line to see if they are hit. If a Marine is hit, use the effects shown in the Grenade Table Effect (Marine) column. *Example:* Vasquez fires a grenade at range 3. It kills the targeted alien, but kills adjacent aliens on a 2 or less, and wills aliens two spaces away from the target on a 0. Vasquez must roll a 5 or higher to avoid being incapacitated.

Weapon Handling. Unload actions must be consecutive. Reload actions must be consecutive. In between unloading and reloading, other actions may be taken. It costs no actions to drop a weapon. It takes two actions to acquire the weapon from an incapacitated Marine in the same space.

	Action cost:	
	Unload	Reload
Pistol	1	2
Pulse Rifle	2	2

Movement Sequence. We have always used a predetermined Marine movement order to reduce coordination in the heat of battle. An alternative is a randomized sequence. At the start of each Marine turn, all Marines in combat resolve their melee attacks. Then, take the cards of non-incapacitated Marines and those not in combat or grabbed. Taking care to keep the wounded sides correctly up, shuffle these cards and move each Marine one at a time as revealed from the top of the deck. After all have moved, any grabbed Marine that has been freed may then move.

Reactor Room. Randomly place the Marines by rolling dice as if placing aliens, but add five to all rolls of 0-4 to keep the Marines distant from the exit. Then, give the Marines a free move parallel or away from the exit at the start of the game.

Ripley, What Are You Doing? In the reactor room scenario, on the turn in which the Marines take their second casualty, Ripley begins to move the APC to rescue them. Count 12 turns down the turn track to mark the arrival time. The APC bursts through the exit (use the Ripley card to mark it) three spaces deep into the room (killing anything in its path). Marines now exit the scenario by moving onto the card representing the APC. Aliens get one move to jump onto the APC before it departs. The first attacks Ripley through the windshield (Ripley adds two to melee value). If Ripley is grabbed, the APC doesn't depart. It takes two actions for another Marine to become the driver. Marines get Range 1 shots at any aliens on the APC card with them. Any alien not killed or stunned may attack any Marine on the APC.

Operations Room. In the operations room, aliens get three move actions, not four. Ripley may not move until she has shot three times with the pulse rifle. Then, Newt and Ripley may enter the passageway to the door.

Air Ducts. The explosive effects of a grenade double in range due to the nature of the passageways. Thereafter, the target location of the grenade blast costs three move actions to enter.



...The biggest news of the year has to be the astounding announcement that Wizards of the Coast has been granted a patent on aspects of the "trading card game method of play" by the US Patent Office (US Letters Patent 5,662,332). Soon, they'll be tapping the shoulders of the "me-too" companies for royalties—especially the ones which can't afford patent lawyers...Despite rumors of its demise, Spearhead games expects to continue production, but it has slowed production in the absence of dedicated management. If the company is sold, pre-publication orders for *THUNDER OF HONOR* will be honored...Columbia Games is now supplying the public and retailers directly, which apparently has earned the displeasure of Chessex (a major game distributor)...Task Force games is apparently in negotiations with Amarrillo Design Bureau over the fate of the *Captain's Logs* series (idle for the last two years)... Decision Games plans to release in February 1998 a non-collectible card game on the Battle of the Bulge, called *NUTS*...Parker Brothers' *LION-HEART* (with big plastic toys and all) was shipped in November... Avalanche Press expects to put out *AIRLINES* in early 1998. Their volume two for *THE GREAT WAR AT SEA* will cover the North and Baltic Seas and should be available in March 1998...Rio Grande's *MEDICI* is expected in late March and *EL GRANDE* in June...Clash of Arms expects to release *WAR WITHOUT MERCY* in January. Their *La Bataille* series will next feature a new edition of *MOSCOW*, and *ORTHEZ*. They expect to release in 1998 a *Battles of the American Revolution* game on Brandywine/Germantown as well. *OPERATION SHARK* shipped in November...GMT's *JUGURTHA* and *PHALANX* (*Great Battles* modules) went to the printer in December. Designer Richard Berg is working on a campaign system covering the ancient world (presumably with an interface to GMT's *Great Battles of History* series). GMT is also planning *VICTORY*, a Napoleonic version of *GLORY*. . . Fat Messiah has put out a solitaire game, *LAST FRONTIER: THE VENUSIAN INCIDENT*, in which the player boards a crippled lab ship hurtling toward orbital re-entry, using his squad to rescue the crew from an alien horror. They also released a game called *SHAPESHIFTERS*, for 2-4 players, in which players take on different forms to crush their opponents...Ral Partha has released a fast-playing fantasy miniatures game, *BATTLESTORM*. . .

...**In computer strategy gaming news**...New World's *UPRISING* has been released...Blizzard was expected to release *STARCRAFT* by the end of 1997...In the fall, Interactive Magic released *SEVEN KINGDOMS*, a real-time game in which a player takes an emerging historical civilization from a modest village to conquest of the world. They are busily working on *GREAT BATTLES OF HANNIBAL*, for release this winter...In March 1998, Interplay plans to release Flatline Studio's *ALIEN INTELLIGENCE*, a real-time strategy game with simultaneous land and space combat... Impressions (division of Sierra On-line) released *CIVIL WAR GENERAL II* in October...SSI plans to release *SOLDIER'S WAR* in 1998, a turn-

