

= Alien Soldier =

Alien Soldier is a 1995 side @-@ scrolling run and gun video game developed by Treasure for the Mega Drive . Retail copies were released in Japan and PAL territories while in North America it was only available exclusively via the Sega Channel cable service . The story follows a powerful being named Epsilon @-@ Eagle , who after being nearly killed becomes determined to avenge his near death and save his planet . The character has a variety of weapons and moves that the player must master to complete the game . Many gameplay ideas are borrowed from Treasure 's earlier Mega Drive release , Gunstar Heroes . However , Alien Soldier puts an emphasis on challenging boss fights with short and easy levels serving as downtime in @-@ between .

Development lasted two years and was led by Hideyuki Suganami , who originally wanted to make the entire game himself but ultimately received support . He had ambitious plans for Alien Soldier but in order to meet his deadline , the game was released at roughly half @-@ completion . Alien Soldier was released towards the end of the Mega Drive 's lifecycle and was explicitly targeted for " hardcore " Mega Drive gamers . Critics have praised the game for its graphics , soundtrack , and overall intensity , recommending it for fans of Gunstar Heroes and the run and gun genre . Some negative critique was directed towards the hard difficulty , steep learning curve , and unorthodox gameplay . It was ported to the PlayStation 2 in Japan , and also re @-@ released worldwide on the Wii Virtual Console and Steam .

= = Gameplay = =

Alien Soldier is a side @-@ scrolling run and gun video game in which the player controls the main character , Epsilon @-@ Eagle , through 25 stages and 31 bosses . The gameplay has been compared heavily to Gunstar Heroes ; however , putting a much larger emphasis on boss fights , and lacking any 2 @-@ player option . The stages are notably short , populated with weak enemies to serve as downtime between the more difficult boss battles . There are two difficulties in the game , " supereasy " and " superhard " . Enemies on the hard setting are only slightly more difficult ; however , there are no passwords or unlimited continues as in the easy mode .

Epsilon @-@ Eagle can run , double jump , hover in the air , and use six different types of weapons . Only four can be equipped at any given time , but the player may choose which weapons they would like to equip before the game starts . Each gun has its own ammunition bar which can be replenished ; if it 's depleted the player will be left with a little firepower . The player can also perform a dash across the screen , which when at full health , will become a deadly move called " Phoenix Force " that will damage any enemies in its path . There is also a counter move , that if timed properly , will change enemy bullets into health . Epsilon @-@ Eagle can attack in either fixed @-@ fire or free @-@ moving styles . The first makes him immovable while firing a weapon , instead allowing for quick aiming , while the second allows walking and shooting simultaneously with the sacrifice of directional accuracy .

= = Synopsis = =

The premise of Alien Soldier is provided with a long text scroll at the start of the game . After the game has begun , it is not referred to again . In the year 2015 , the " A @-@ Humans " of " A @-@ Earth " have created genetically engineered A @-@ Humans capable of super intelligence and strength , as well as parasitic co @-@ existence with machinery and animals , particularly humans . A terrorist organization known as " Scarlet " rose up within this race and sought to dominate the rest of the A @-@ Humans and A @-@ Earth by locking the planet down and keeping anyone else out . During the height of Scarlet 's power , an assassination attempt on the group 's leader , Epsilon @-@ Eagle , was carried out by a special forces group . Scarlet fought back with their powers , and the battle somehow breached the space @-@ time continuum . Epsilon was gravely injured and cast somewhere into the continuum .

Seemingly gone forever , another Scarlet member known as Xi @-@ Tiger took control of the

organization . Under his rule , Scarlet became too brutal even for themselves , and they called for Epsilon to reclaim his position . More or less isolated from the rest of the group , Xi sought to find and assassinate Epsilon himself . He planned an attack on an A @-@ Human research laboratory , where children with special abilities had been kidnapped and experimented on . Upon arriving , Xi @-@ Tiger sensed the presence of Epsilon in one of the boys . However , he was unsure because he couldn 't pinpoint the evil from Epsilon , who had entered the boy 's body and was now living as a parasite . Xi @-@ Tiger took a young girl hostage and threatened to kill her unless Epsilon revealed himself . The boy flew into a rage and morphed his body into Epsilon himself . Xi seemed to sense this strange power , and in fear , killed the girl and fled . Epsilon had completely split his dual personality apart ; with both " good " and " evil " Epsilons now chasing after Xi @-@ Tiger .

= = Development and release = =

Development of Alien Soldier lasted two years and was led by Hideyuki Suganami , who from the start wanted to make the entire game himself . Despite 32 @-@ bit fifth generation hardware already on the market , he chose to program the game for the 16 @-@ bit Mega Drive , claiming that he may have been too captivated by the idea of making an " action shooting " game . Treasure explicitly targeted the game for " hardcore " Mega Drive players and designed its difficulty and end @-@ game scoring methods with this in mind .

Suganami was deeply invested in Alien Soldier and devoted a lot of personal time to developing it . He originally had ambitious plans for a large backstory , but in order to make their deadline of January 3 , 1995 , the majority of it was cut from the game . As the deadline approached , he came to realize he would not be able to complete Alien Soldier himself , and so additional staff were added to provide him support . He worked overtime during the New Years holidays in order to complete the game . The market for the Mega Drive was quickly shrinking , and the game had to be released in a half @-@ finished state . After its release , Suganami wished he continued working on it , believing he could have improved on the story and graphics .

Alien Soldier was released in 1995 on a physical cartridge format in Australia , Europe and Japan . In North America , the game was delivered exclusively through the Sega Channel cable service . The game 's first re @-@ release was in Japan on the PlayStation 2 as part of the Sega Ages 2500 : Gunstar Heroes Treasure Box compilation . Alien Soldier was released again worldwide in fall 2007 on the Wii via the Virtual Console download service , and again for Microsoft Windows on Steam on January 6 , 2011 .

= = Reception = =

For its original Mega Drive release , Famitsu provided Alien Soldier with a score of 24 out of 40 . Frank Provo of GameSpot reviewed the Wii Virtual Console release in 2007 , citing the excellent graphics , sound , and general intensity of the game . He noted initial difficulty adjusting to the controls and game design . However , once accustomed , he said , " you start totally feeling what it must be like to be an army of one trading firepower with some of the universe 's largest , most elaborate creatures . That 's a great feeling . " Lucas M. Thomas of IGN noted the game 's many similarities to Gunstar Heroes and recommended Alien Soldier to those who enjoyed it . " Alien Soldier is a long @-@ lost piece of Treasure 's action gaming legacy , " said Thomas . " It 's got the fast @-@ firing , high @-@ energy , overly @-@ explosive intensity that fans of the company have come to expect . " Darren Calvert of Nintendo Life described the graphics and animation as some of the best on the Mega Drive . He found the game difficult , but still enjoyable for fans of the run and gun genre . Dan Whitehead of Eurogamer described the game as " manically @-@ paced " and " bizarrely creative " while also providing a disclaimer that it 's " really hectic and difficult if you 're not into this sort of thing . "

= = External Links = =

Official website (Japanese)
Alien Soldier at MobyGames