AEON ATTACK

Players Manual

Prologue

It is the year 2421.

Despite the constant threat of exploitation of its own planet, global pandemics and wars for resources, humanity has created a confederative system of government that has largely ensured political and economic stability over the past 120 years. The overpopulation of the Earth continues to be critical.

Individual planets in the solar system have now been colonized or are being used for the extraction of raw materials. The settlement of Mars is well advanced; through the development of advanced terraforming technologies, it is already the home planet for over ten generations.
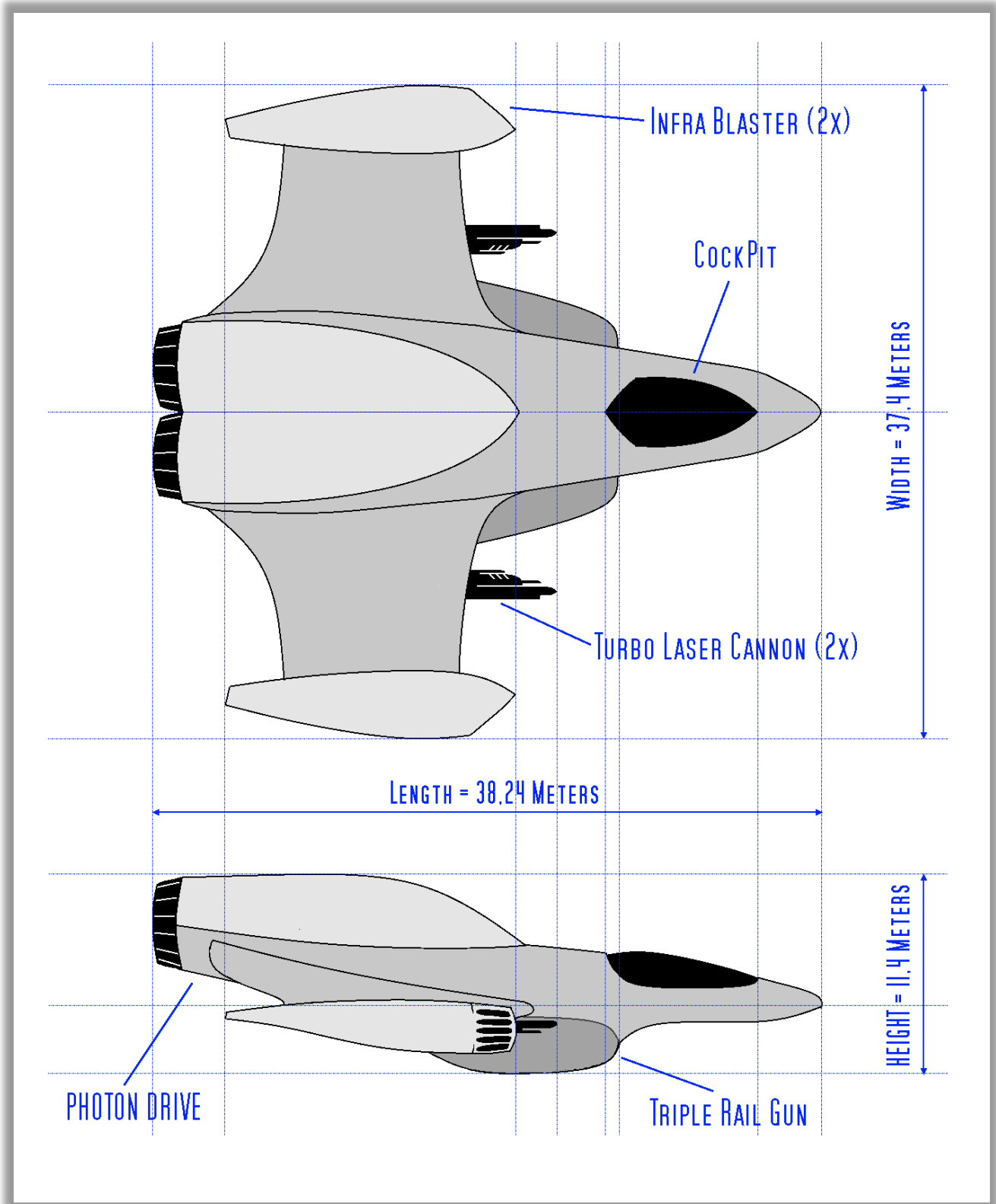
Beyond that, any efforts to reach, let alone colonize, habitable planets outside the known solar system have been unsuccessful. The search for intelligent extraterrestrial life has also been fruitless so far. Very worrying, however, were the discoveries made as early as the 23rd century of several planets in the Vega system that showed traces of highly developed civilizations.

Along with the formation of a confederative world government, Star Fleet Command (S.F.C.) was founded. The primary goals of this global institution are the defense of Earth and the exploration of outer space. S.F.C. has advanced technologies to support its missions.

The best example is the reconnaissance and combat fighter V.I.P.E.R. ("Very Impressive Photon Energized Raider"). Advanced propulsion, sensor and weapon systems and the innovative power system S.P.H.E.R.E. ("Super Photon Hadron Electron Radial Energy") make this prototype a promising element in the S.F.C. fleet.

The first and most experienced pilot for V.I.P.E.R. is – you!

The V.I.P.E.R. ("Very Impressive Photon Energized Raider") Prototype

Infra Blaster (2x)

CockPit

Width = 37.4 Meters

Turbo Laser Cannon (2x)

Length = 38.24 Meters

Height = 11.4 Meters

PHOTON DRIVE

Triple Rail Gun

Game Controls

The player's spaceship (V.I.P.E.R.) can be controlled with the cursor keys of your MSX computer or with a Joystick connected to port 1 or 2.

To fire your current weapon, use the SPACE key or Joystick button 1. Joystick button 2 has no function.

The game contains some cut scenes. You can skip the a single dialogue by pressing SPACE key or Joystick button 1. You can skip the complete cut scene by pressing the UP cursor key or the UP direction of the Joystick.

By pressing the function key F1 you can take a little rest. The PAUSE mode is active now. To return to the game, press F1 again.

Do not collide with enemies, their bullets or certain alien obstacles on the ground. This surely will destroy even the most advanced spacecraft!

There are 3 displays at the bottom of the screen:

Lives – The number of available V.I.P.E.R spacecrafts. At the beginning of the game you have 3 of them.

Score – Each time you shoot an enemy you receive points, depending on the strength of the enemy. If you manage to destroy all enemies of an attack wave, you will receive extra points. You will receive extra lives by collecting score points.

Time – This is the timer for S.P.H.E.R.E. energy. If you collect the S.P.H.E.R.E. and choose a special weapon, the timer starts counting down from 99 to 0. When the time is up, the extra energy of the S.P.H.E.R.E. is depleted. Since there is no more energy left to power the special weapon, V.I.P.E.R. can only use its default weapon, the single railgun shot.

HINT: Try to get additional energy by collecting another S.P.H.E.R.E. as long as the timer does not reach 0. This way you can maintain and even strengthen your special armament!

The S.P.H.E.R.E. ("Super Photon Hadron Electron Radial Energy") System

The S.P.H.E.R.E. is used to provide V.I.P.E.R. with the immense amounts of energy it needs for its auxiliary systems. These pure powerballs of energy can be collected by your spacecraft and directly converted to power up your weapons, shields or engines.

During your mission, the S.F.C. will send you these energy charges at regular intervals. Shooting the S.P.H.E.R.E. changes the type of energy it will provide. Repeatedly collecting the same energy type will increase its effect and duration (the timer is reset to 99).

Please note that the energy distribution system of the V.I.P.E.R. prototype is only able to power one weapon system at a time. However, S.F.C. scientists have made initial progress with parallel powering of the weapons and shield systems.
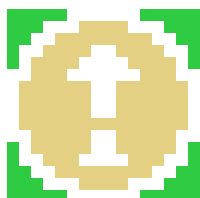
Power wave
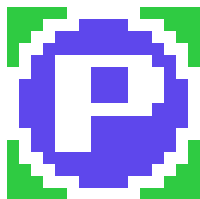
The energy of the S.P.H.E.R.E. is released as a power wave of destruction. It will destroy all enemies in sight.
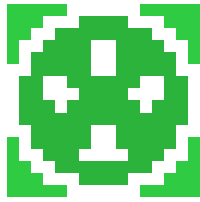
Instant effect.

Photon Drive Boost

The S.P.H.E.R.E. energy is redirected to your ship's photon drive permanently.
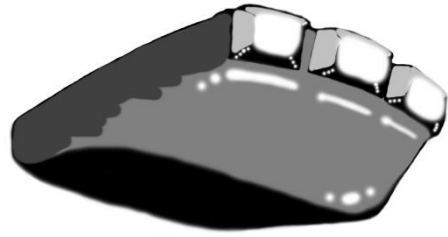
Permanent effect, can be upgraded.

Triple Railgun Shot

The default weapon of the V.I.P.E.R. is extended by two additional bullets in diagonal directions.

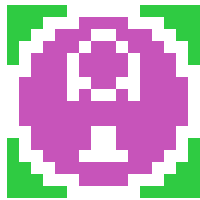Time limited effect, can be upgraded.

Turbo Laser Gun

The V.I.P.E.R. is equipped with 2 of these heavy laser guns that can fire at a massively rapid rate.

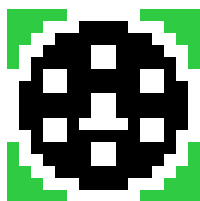Time limited effect, can be upgraded.

Infra Blaster

These infrasound-based weapons are capable of destroying targets by disintegrating the molecular structure. Low cool down rate, but almost no range limitation.
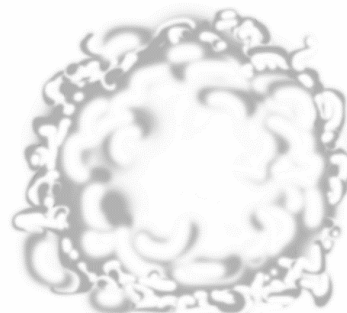
Time limited effect, can be upgraded.

Shield Sphere

The energy of the S.P.H.E.R.E. is transformed into a rotating energy shield. It can protect V.I.P.E.R. from a certain number of collisions with enemies and their bullets.

Effect limited by damage taken.

Technical Requirements

The software is MSX1 compatible, the technical requirements to run the game are:

- CPU: Zilog Z80 running at 3.58 Mhz
- VDP: TMS9918/TMS9928 or compatible video processor
- PSG: AY-3-8910 or compatible sound chip
- RAM: 16 KB (non memory-mapped)
- VRAM: 16 KB

The game comes in ROM format (256 KB MegaROM) and can be played with MSX emulators like WebMSX or OpenMSX.

Technical FAQ

Q: is there anything to consider if I want to play "Alien Attack" with an MSX emulator?

A: When using a MSX emulator you have to be sure that the proper ROM mapper is selected to play Alien Attack. The game needs the ASCII16 mapper.
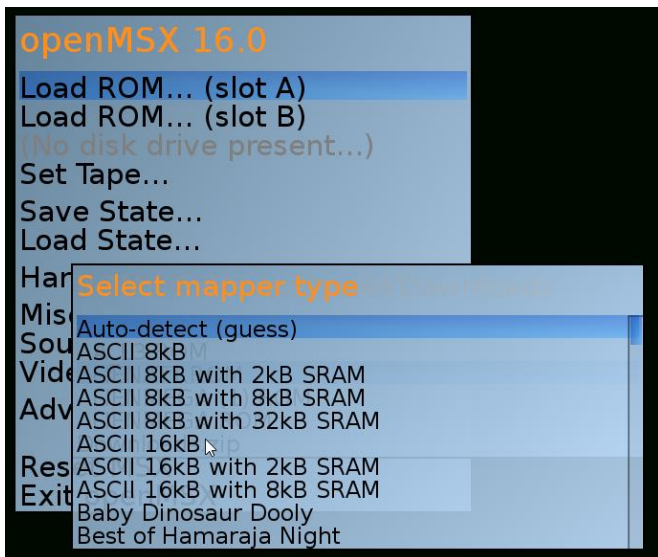
Q: How can I select the ASCII16 mapper in OpenMSX?

A: If you are using the openMSX launcher app "Catapult", you can choose the mapper by clicking button "Cart A" and choose "Select cartridge type". In most cases, the default "AUTO" setting should work. If not, you can choose "Ascii 16kB" from the list of ROM types:
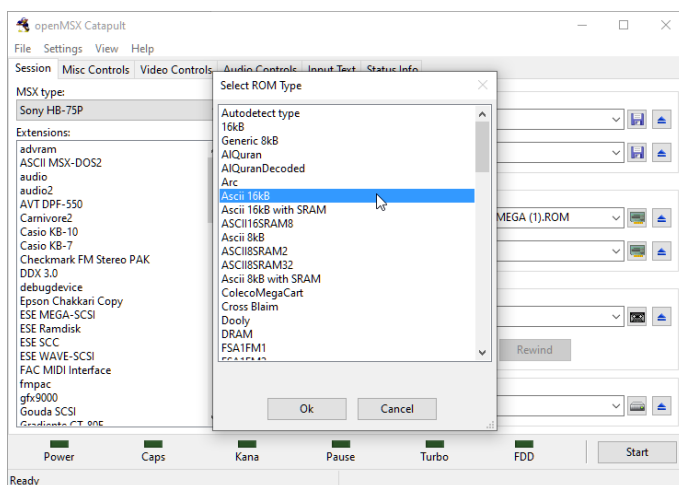
If you are using OpenMSX directly, you can select the mapper by choosing "Load ROM…" from the main menu and choose the ROM file of the game. In our tests the "Auto-detect (guess)" setting worked in most cases as well.

Q: How can I select the ASCII16 mapper in WebMSX?

A: If you are using WebMSX, click on the cartridge 1 icon and choose "Load ROM Image". Then select the proper ROM file for Alien Attack. After that, click on the cartridge 1 icon again and choose "Set ROM format". Now you can Select "ASCII16" as mapper.
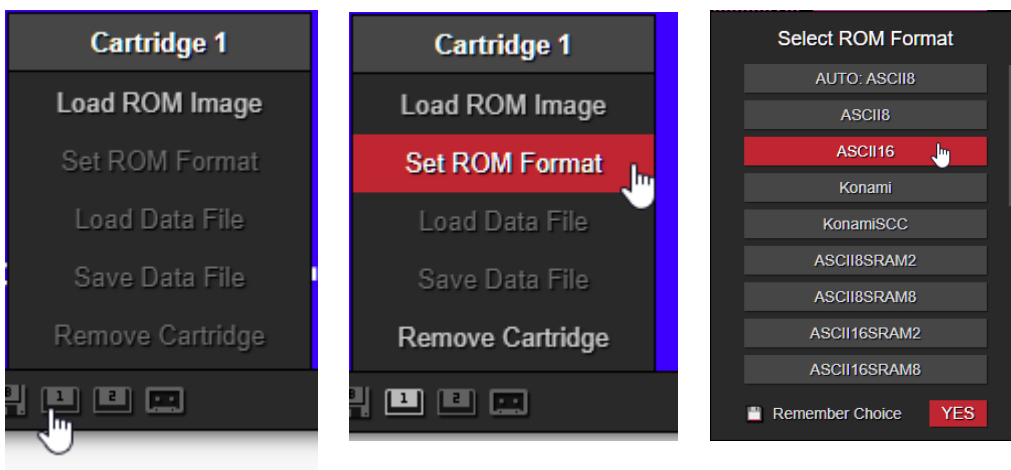
Q: The enemy sprites are flying over the information bar at the bottom of the screen, is this a bug or a feature?

A: We made the intentional decision to leave it that way. Otherwise more sprites would have been needed to mask this area. Therefore we saved up these sprites for more bullets and enemies. 😊

Q: The game is too hard for me! I do not even get to the first boss! WTF?

A: You should ask our children for help. Maybe they know how to cheat.

Q: I want to know how the Vul Kuolun story continues, but unfortunately the game ends after 2 levels. Why?

A: At a certain point during the development of the game we had to make a decision to either create more game content or focus on the completion of game function and features. We decided to make the game "feature complete". The game is fully playable with 2 complete levels and end-boss fights.

It is very likely that there will be an enhanced game version after MSXDev '21 with more levels and story to come.
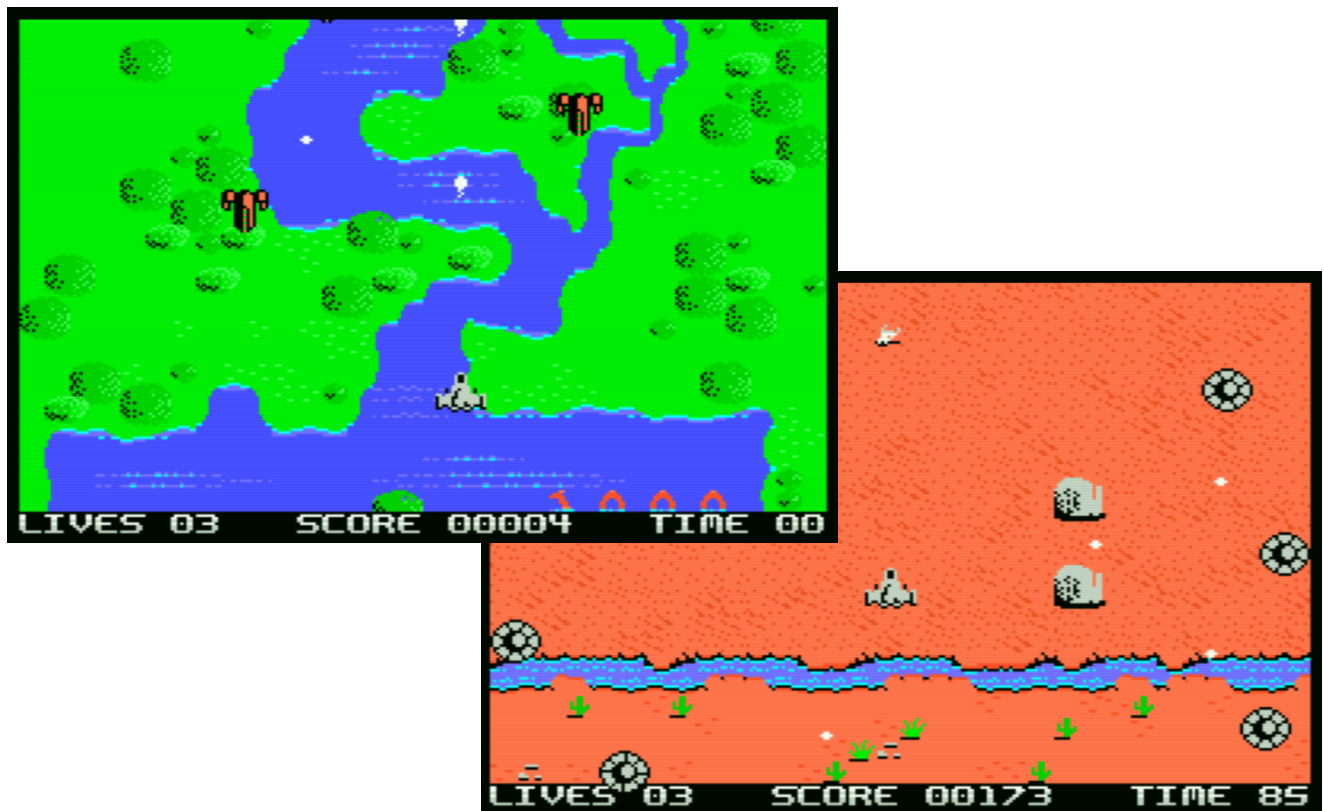
Scenes from Level 1 and Level 2

How everything began...

"Alien Attack" is a game for the MSX home computer platform, which was very popular in the 1980s, especially in Japan, Spain, South America and the Netherlands. Nowadays, there still is a very active community around the globe that shares the passion for the MSX home computer platform.

Marcos Daniel Blanco (a.k.a. cbsfox, Brazil) started to program in Assembly back in 1988 and created lots of disk tools since then, but never did a game for MSX before. In 2019, he began developing Alien Attack. It was supposed to be a kind of "River Raid" clone. Thanks to great help from the MSX community he mastered the first hurdles.


First released version on msx.org in 2020

Marcos published an early version of his game at the beginning of 2020 on the website "MSX Resource Center" (www.msx.org), the central contact point of the community, and asked for help with graphics and sound. Daniel was happy to help him.

Daniel Simon (a.k.a. Def Danny, Germany) got a MSX computer as a Christmas gift back in 1984. Probably since then, his dream (which he probably shared with many pimply computer kids of this generation) had been to develop a "real" computer game by himself. It was to take 36 years until this dream came true. Just rediscovered his love for the old MSX home computers around 2013, he remembered how to use them to create music and drawing graphics like back in the old days.

With combined talent and a lot of fun in doing so, two guys in their best mid-forty years, developing a Shoot'em up on a nearly 40-year old computer system, hoping that other people appreciate this work of 1,5 years.

14. August 2021
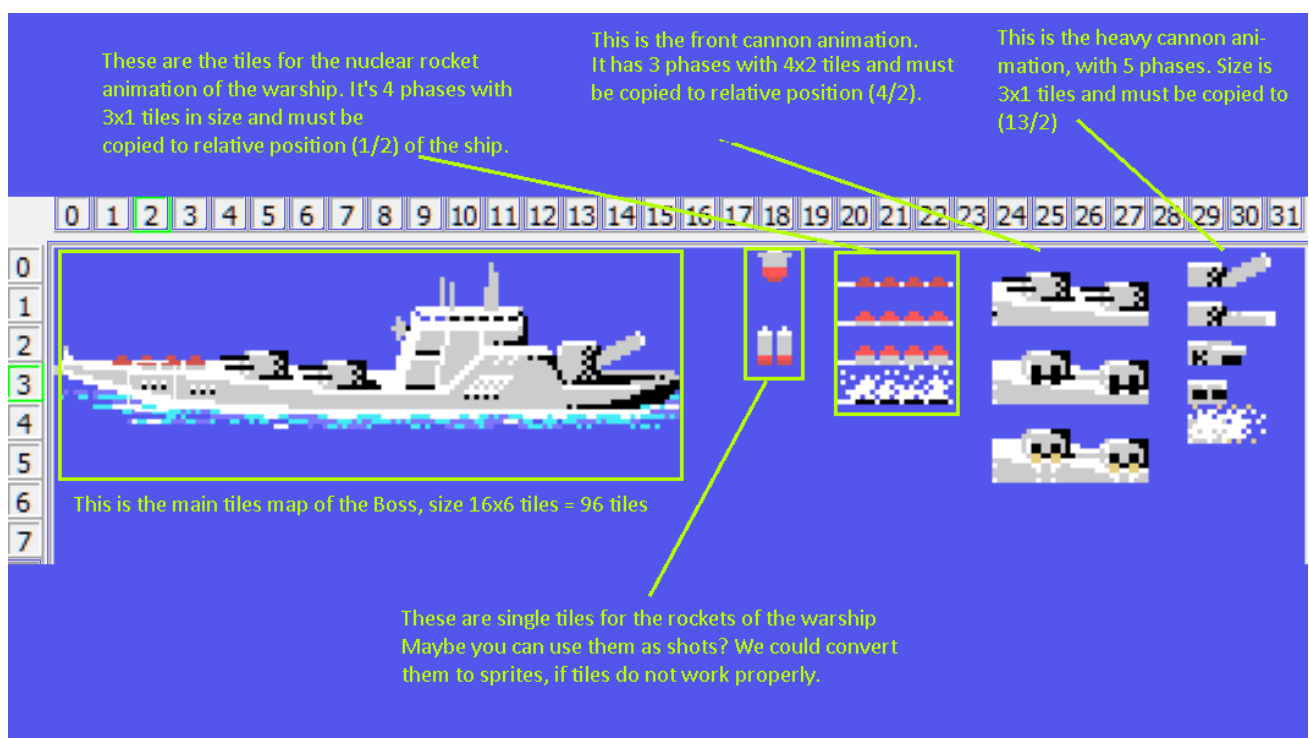
Tileset and animation phases of Level 1 Boss

Game Credits

Original Idea, Visionary, Programming, Game Design	Marcos Daniel Blanco
Graphics, SoundFX, Music, Level Design, Documentation	Daniel Simon
Consulting and Project Support	Pintus Giuseppe Ettore Mario Cavalanti (Clube MSX) Julio Marchi (MSXALL.COM) Hamlet and Ro (MSX.ORG) Arnaud de Klerk
Game Testing	Arnaud de Klerk Enrique Sanchez Dominik Böhler Zoran Majcencic Daniel Afarelli
Original music score by	Def Danny Christian Bruhn Didier Marouani Ron Grainer Paul van der Valk
Creative Critics (our fantastic children)	Luiza Felipe Pauline Lissy