# trategy & Tactics: A-10 Attack!

by Ron Hunt

If you're like me, when you first start a game out of the box, you set the manual aside and start clicking buttons, looking through menus and generally just poking around seeing what you can find. The one great thing that the Macintosh has given us from the start is the fact that most programs operate the same and few, if any, hidden features are found outside the menus. A-10 Attack can certainly be approached in this fashion but I believe to get the most out of the simulation, you must have a good understanding of how to approach the missions and use your assets to their best advantage.

First start with your controls. The call for realism in flight simulations has been heard and A-10 Attack offers a more realistic user interface than any flight simulation to date! The down side of this is that as these games become more realistic in their operation, the user must spend more time training himself with the use of the controls and operation of the simulation. In the real world the pilot of an A-10 will spend many hours in training, learning his craft like the back of his hand. Time spent training, however, will always payoff when the going gets tough!

To get the most realistic interface with A-10 Attack, a full Thrustmaster setup is recommended. The available buttons, stick, throttle and rudder pedals give the true feeling of being in the cockpit and little need for the keyboard. If you're a real pilot, the only thing missing is the feeling of motion; everything else is there. Other Macintosh joysticks and gamepads are also useful and well suited to A-10 Attack. The key is setting up the controls in a logical manner, making it easy to do important tasks in quick fashion.

The most important tasks in A-10 Attack are those used in combat. The Weapons Station Arming Panel is very realistic but difficult to use quickly. Start with the weapons load you plan to carry. None of the missions in A-10 Attack require you to carry a weapon on every station. The fatter and heavier the Hog, the slower it responds to get you out of trouble. Choose a job for each Hog and load it accordingly.

Plan weapon loads that use like stations. As an example, Stations 1 and 11 are great for carrying AIMs or HARMs. Stations 3 and 9 are primarily for Mavericks and Stations 4 through 8 are the main bomb carrying points. Use your control stick buttons, game pad buttons or a program like Quickkeys to arm pairs of stations with a single keystroke. A typical QuickKeys Special sequence to arm Stations 1 and 11 would be (F12 F1 F11). By placing F12 first, all stations would be cleared, then Stations 1 and 11 armed. Assign one keystroke to do the job

and now those weapons are quickly accessed. Likewise to use the mavericks loaded on Stations 3 and 9, use this sequence: F12 F3 F9 [+]. F12 clears all stations. F3 and F9 arms Stations 3 and 9 and [+] turns on the MFD TV camera for maverick designation. Many stations can be controlled this way and the HUD will display what weapon is available as long as like weapons are loaded on the station pairs. Loading Station 1 with AIMs and Station 11 with a HARM doubles your workload!

Checklists are synonymous with aviation and now would be a great time to get a standard checklist set for starting each mission. An example of a checklist I use before each mission is as follows:

Pause
Brief
Assign pilots to aircraft you wish to fly
Determine jobs for each aircraft
Assign weapon loadouts appropriate for the job
Plan waypoints for each aircraft and assign targets
Turn TACANs "On" (when appropriate)

Pause: When starting a mission, click the pause button after the mission map opens. Many of the missions are time critical. Give yourself time to move the map around and decide the best way to go about the job at hand.

Brief: Look over the mission objectives and the assets available to you. Devise a plan for getting the job done and everyone home safely!

Assign Pilots: If you wish to "Take Command" of more than one aircraft during the mission a pilot must be assigned to each. Otherwise you will only be able to visit that aircraft. Also move the chits around so you can easily keep track of who is where.

Determine jobs for each aircraft available: This is important. If more than one aircraft is available, not all aircraft should be loaded for the same job. For example, you can assign one aircraft for Radar and SAM suppression while other aircraft can be loaded for specific targets.

Assign weapon loadouts appropriate for the job: Keep the Hogs efficient. Load them for their assigned targets with weapons adequate for the targets and area. Don't overload them and bog them down. You can always return to base for another weapons load.

Plan waypoints for each aircraft and assign targets: One Hog usually has waypoints available for the mission. Modify or use these waypoints for other aircraft (if available). When planning waypoints enlarge the map. The waypoints must be set in a logical fashion keeping in mind that you can't plan an action the aircraft is not capable of. For instance, the aircraft can't be at 5,000 ft and make a 90 degree turn 1 mile from the end of the runway after takeoff. The "IN" (initial) waypoint will start at the end of the nearest runway. Make sure that all aircraft are taking off the same direction or you'll have some interesting Air Traffic Control problems. Select "Takeoff" for the IN waypoint then put the number 1 waypoint a couple of miles off of the departure end of the runway. Select an altitude and airspeed that the aircraft is capable of at that point in the flight. Note: "TFR" next to the altitude box in the Waypoint window stands for Terrain Following Radar. The A-10 does not actually have this capability but when checked, the aircraft will remain at the altitude set over whatever terrain it encounters. Set the other waypoints and assign altitude and airspeed for each. This is also the time to assign targets. Choose the target choice early; for instance, if the main target is at waypoint 6,

assign the target at waypoint 5. The computer pilot will start looking for it after waypoint 5 and be ready when it gets to waypoint 6. Also keep in mind that if you take command of an aircraft and leave again before it gets to its target, you may interrupt the target information. Open the waypoint box and determine that everything is still set as you wanted. Actually unless you plan on hitting the target yourself in each aircraft, it's best to use the "Visiting" option to see the progress of other aircraft.

Turn TACANs "On" (when appropriate)  Not everything can move on the airport at once. Traffic jams will occur and your big offensive plan will be in a traffic jam on the tarmac! If you're in a mission with several different aircraft, turn the "Pause" button off and let aircraft that have weapons and waypoints planned be on their way. You can finish loading other aircraft during this time or visit other locations. Use the "Leader" strip for aircraft while in the mission map mode. This will let you keep track of their speed, altitude and heading. Also, be sure to check the "Radar" range of aircraft and SAM sites in the map mode. It will display a range circle around the chit and could be helpful in your planning.

Sometimes aircraft won't move when you want them to. Recycle the TACAN "ON" button in the Waypoint window. This generally gets them going. If that doesn't work, visit the aircraft to see if there could be another problem.

Send aircraft at the appropriate times. You don't want the SAM suppression to arrive at the target area after you or the F-15 cap sitting on the ground when the Migs come visiting! After the TACAN is turned on in the waypoint window and the plane is airborn, "ETAs" (Estimated Times of Arrival) will appear for each waypoint. Use these times to keep track of your battle plan. Although the planes are in the air the waypoints can be moved and the airspeeds and altitudes changed to better meet a target schedule.

If you follow a basic checklist your planning will remain organized and become quick and efficient, a formula that can lead to success.

Weapons are certainly important for success in any mission, but the right weapon for the job can be essential. Read the Operating Manual, Training Manual and practice using the various weapons so that you can become familiar with their performance and know what to expect. This is also helpful if you find yourself in a position with what might appear to be the wrong weapon load. Laser guided bombs can be dropped with the CCIP and laser guided missiles can be launched as unguided missiles with devastating effects. HARMs are more effective when launched from altitude rather than a low level run. They were designed as  stand-off weapons so use them as such. Rockeyes drop and spin open to spread their bomblets prior to impact. They work best when dropped from about 1000ft. If dropped too high, the bomblet, spread is too great and looses effect. Drop them too low and the canister wont have time to open! Bombing with the CCIP is tricky and takes practice as well.  First of all unless your dropping retarded munitions your first thought should be "Will I be clear of the blast."  I've found the best way to drop bombs from 2000ft is to make a good run. Be sure the Baro button is armed, get lined up from a distance and designate the target in the HUD. Keep a shallow dive going so you can continue to see the target designation diamond and keep the drop line on it. At 1000 or 1500ft pull slowly up to level flight and wait for the bomb to drop. Although you won't see the CCIP reticle, this method seems to be very accurate. Pulling too hard will throw the bomb past the target, and going too low will put you into the blast effect. If you're dropping 2000 pounders be sure to pull up hard away from the blast after the bomb is away!

Quick tips. Use the keyboard to access tools quickly. Double clicking on an aircraft chit with the arrow tool opens the Weapons Loadout . Double click on an aircraft chit with the waypoint tool and the Waypoint window opens.

Eggs and interesting places to visit:

Click on the “Hog Heaven” title in the high score window.

From the “Takeoff” training mission fly these headings and distances to visit these interesting places:

Mining Pit - head 335 for 32 miles
Tunnel under river - head 025 for 38 miles
Capitol Building - head 272 for 72 miles
Yacht club - head 215 for 40 miles
Underground Cavern with waterfall - head 245 for 82 miles

In the Germany theater and the “Antinov Armada” mission, fly heading 015 for 75 miles to find an airport with its runway cut into the ground and an underground hanger as long as the airfield.

A-10 Attack is truly a unique flight simulation. There are volumes of questions, answers, hints and tactics available on the information highway. Soon I’m sure you’ll find additional missions and software updates as well. I hope the few notes I’ve managed to compile here can help everyone enjoy the simulation to it’s fullest!