

# neak Peek: **Chuck Yeager's Air Combat**

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NOTE: Screen shots and information presented in this article are based on a pre-release version of Air Combat and are subject to change before final release. Screen shots have been adapted to a system palette and then dithered, and thus may not represent the precise look of the game. This article is not a review.

Chuck Yeager's Air Combat first showed up on the PC market about two years ago and immediately became one of the more popular flight simulators in that competitive market. Much of its success was due to its simplicity. Unlike complex counterparts such as Falcon 3.0 and F-117A, CYAC was different in that it was primarily a dogfight simulation. The game was designed from ground up to be just that — head to head fun.

So now, two years since its introduction on the PC, a Mac version of Chuck Yeager's Air Combat will soon hit the stores. But unlike many popular PC games that have been ported to the Mac, Air Combat stands out as one of the better conversions we have ever seen. The Mac version of Air Combat features a wealth of new features not included in the PC version, including network play, a better campaign mode, multiple monitor support, and QuickTime capabilities.

**Overview.** Chuck Yeager's Air Combat can be played in three historical periods: World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. Depending on the era, you can choose from among six different airplanes, including the P-51 Mustang, FW-190, F-86 Sabre, MiG-15, F-4 Phantom, and MiG-21.

A pull-down menu allows you to choose what type of game to play. The Create Mission option lets you create your own custom scenario. Here you can design a custom mission by selecting your type of airplane, starting altitude, number and type of enemy aircraft, and enemy skill level. You can also mix and match aircraft from different eras. For example, fly in your F-86 Sabre (Korean era) against the venerable but squirrely MiG-21 (Vietnam era).

If you're not keen on creating custom missions, you can select the Historic Mission option and choose from among the 50 historically accurate missions included. Each of the three eras contains approximately 15 missions each. Historical missions are labeled either easy, normal, or hard. A typical hard mission: First Blood took place on November 15th, 1950, and now your job in re-enacting it is to make the first MiG kill by an F-86 Sabre. Other historical

mission types include dogfights, bomber escorts, ground attacks, rescues, and bomber attacks.

Finally, there's the ever-challenging "Campaign" mode, which signs you up for the long haul. Under a Campaign, you commit yourself to fly a number of selected historical missions in a particular era. Although the missions in Campaign are the same ones you'll find in Historic Mission, the incentive to play Campaign is to play all of its missions so you can get your ticket back stateside.

**Head to Head.** A new feature in the Mac version of Air Combat not found in the PC version is Head to Head. Here you can play against another person over an AppleTalk network or over via modem by using AppleTalk Remote Access (ARA). Once connected on a network, both players select their own airplanes. While selecting these and agreeing on altitude and other factors, players can also chat before going into battle. Once ready, both players hit "Fly" and begin the dogfight. After one player is defeated, both players return to airplane selection menu where they can discuss the previous dogfight and experiment going H2H again and again with different airplanes.

As mentioned, Air Combat can be played using high speed modems over telephone lines. However, both machines must be using AppleTalk Remote Access, a product sold by Apple. ARA allows two remote Macintoshes to behave like they're on an AppleTalk network. Although ARA is notoriously slow, Air Combat will run smoothly on fast Macs with 9600 baud modems or higher. This is achieved by using small packets that update the airplane's position eight times per second. Flight simulator fans who have been wanting to challenge their friends over telephone lines now have the tools to do so through an ARA connection.

**Graphics and Flight Models.** The graphics in Air Combat are richly detailed in high resolution. In addition to the familiar polygonal graphics, the game features realistic bit-mapped explosions and nice-looking round clouds. The game supports monitor sizes of 9", 12", and 13" in 256 colors or black and white. Thanks to some nifty programming, the game will run fairly smooth on an LC II and above. For slower machines, features like graphic detail, horizons, clouds, and explosions can be turned off to achieve higher frame rates. Another nice feature is the ability to turn off the cockpit display, giving you a bigger and better view.

Air Combat also features accurate flight models that feature G-force induced blackouts and realistic stall characteristics. While the airplanes in the World War II era (P-51 and FW-190) and Korean War era (F-86 and MiG-15) can only fire guns, the Vietnam era planes (F-4 and MiG 21) come bristling with infrared-guided and radar-guided missiles. But unlike today's highly accurate missiles, these missiles are harder to lock on and sometimes miss their target. Such realism add to the fun and challenge of the game.

[he Rest of the Best](#). After a mission you can replay your last mission in a VCR-style window. Here you rewind, fast forward, or watch events frame by frame. Another unique feature to the Mac version of Air Combat is the ability to save the replay as a QuickTime movie.

Air Combat also supports multiple monitors. Up to six monitors can be hooked up to the game and each monitor can be set to show a different view. However, you'll need a rather fast Mac to get this feature to work smoothly.

[EA's Back!](#) Chuck Yeager's Air Combat is definitely a good example of how good conversions of popular PC games to the Mac can be done. Instead of writing the game in-house, Electronic Arts went out and contracted Mark Adams, a 26 year old Macintosh programmer, whose desire was to create a great flight simulator for the Mac. Air Combat was programmed by a Macintosh programmer for the Macintosh. The result is a flight simulator that feels decidedly like a Mac game, not a port.

Chuck Yeager's Air Combat is scheduled to be released in September, with a brand new manual and box specifically made for the Macintosh version. Bravo!

By the way, look for more Mac games from Electronic Arts in the near future. Keep tuned to IMG for the latest news on EA's next Mac game.