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Dynamic Mission Library for DCS

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Dynamic Mission Library
for DCS

PART I: INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

1 How to get started quickly

DML is big. This *document* is frighteningly big. So how can you get the most out of DML in the shortest amount of time? Since DML is built similar to a box of LEGO® bricks, you don't need to know everything there is to know before you can start – it's fine to start knowing just the basics and then learn more as your needs require.

Here's my recommendation

1.1 What you need to know before you start

First, I assume that you know how to create simple missions. You know: place a client plane, add some units, add a trigger zone. You *must* know how to do that. Also, you must either watch the 'adding DML to your mission' video tutorial, or already know how to add a trigger to a mission.

And you must know how to fly at least one plane. All demo missions in DML use the (free) Su-25T that comes with DCS, so maybe get into that cockpit and spend a few minutes with it, and set up the controls.

1.2 What you don't need

Lua is not a requirement. Although DML comes with great support for Lua scripting, all modules are built to work without any Lua requirements. And that includes modifying configuration files. To find out how we pull that off, read on.

1.3 How to get started fast: DEMOS!!!!

We are all looking for different things. DML comes with many modules, of which you only need a few. You can old-school it by reading this entire manual (and you'd get a nod of appreciation for your thoroughness from me).

Or, you can skip ahead to this manual's Tutorials / Demo section, and then check out the corresponding .miz files in the 'tutorials & demo missions' folder. Each demo mission usually centers around a particular module or set of modules. So look for the demo that most closely sounds like it is what you are looking for. Read the docs, and open the .miz in Mission Editor.

Initially, you'll read about some strange things, like these 'attributes' that we add to trigger zones. Just roll with it and see if the demo does what you want. When you want to use it yourself, then revert to the first chapters of this manual that explains the fundamentals of DML (Trigger Zones, Attributes, and Config Zones), and then read the description of those modules that the demo used to achieve the desired ability.

The choice is yours... Jump to Chapter 7 now - or read on.

2 Welcome – What is this?

So, still with me? Welcome again to this document. Thank you for taking the time to RTFM – you are very wise indeed to read this, as much of what's written here should make using DML more enjoyable for you and help shorten the time it takes to use DCS Dynamic Mission Library (DML) in your own missions.

So, what is DML? It's a **mission-building toolbox**. It contains many modules that all can do something for you. It's built similar to a box of LEGO® bricks – you seldom need all, and you can start having fun building stuff knowing just the basics and using just a few.

Here are some examples:

- Do you want to add a moving NDB to a ship? Just add the *NDB* module
- Want to keep kill scores? Add the *PlayerScore* module.
- How about dynamically spawn troops when you need? Look at *Cloners*.
- Your mission needs random civilian traffic? Check out *Civ Air*.

Even better, **DML does not require Lua**, yet it also provides comprehensive support if you do want to use Lua.

At its heart are modules that **attach themselves to Mission Editor's (ME) Trigger Zones** to provide new abilities. Mission designers control abilities in ME by adding 'Attributes' to these Trigger Zones.

Name	Value	
NDB	121.5	
soundFile	distressbeacon.ogg	

For example, when you add above attributes to a trigger zone, the "cfxNDB" module automatically activates for this zone and starts an NDB at the zone's center at 121.5 MHz, playing the "distressbeacon.ogg" sound file on that frequency.

Through this simple mechanism, adding complex new abilities to missions becomes a snap (or, at least, much easier). Since **you control DML from inside ME**, you do not have to mess around with Lua scripts – all DML modules take their run-time data from Trigger Zone attributes. You edit those in ME: Trigger Zones already have attributes, editing them is built into ME. If you have ever created a Trigger Zone, you have already seen ME's zone attributes. You likely ignored them because they have had little practical use. Until now. We'll use zone attributes to put DCS mission creation into super-cruise.

DML can reduce advanced tasks (such as adding CSAR missions) to placing trigger zones and adding attributes.

If that isn't enough, DML modules **can be triggered with ME flags**, while **others can set ME Flags** when they activate. For example, spawn zones can be instructed to watch flag 200, and

Name	Value	
timeDelay	5-7	
in?	200	
out!	201	

spawn every time when that flag changes its value. Other modules can be told to increase a Flag (e.g., 201) every time they activate. This allows you to integrate the modules in your normal ME mission design workflow without having to resorting to outside means.

As a significant expansion to classic mission design, **DML supports named flags**, i.e. flags that have name like 'bunker destroyed' rather than a number (like 1234). Since early 2022, DCS ME also supports named flags, so it has achieved parity with DML in that respect. DML goes a bit further with zone-local flags, Watchflags and multiple simultaneous flag changes, and you are encouraged to explore. DML is 100% compatible with ME flags.

Name	Value
pulse	
flag!	fire
time	1-3

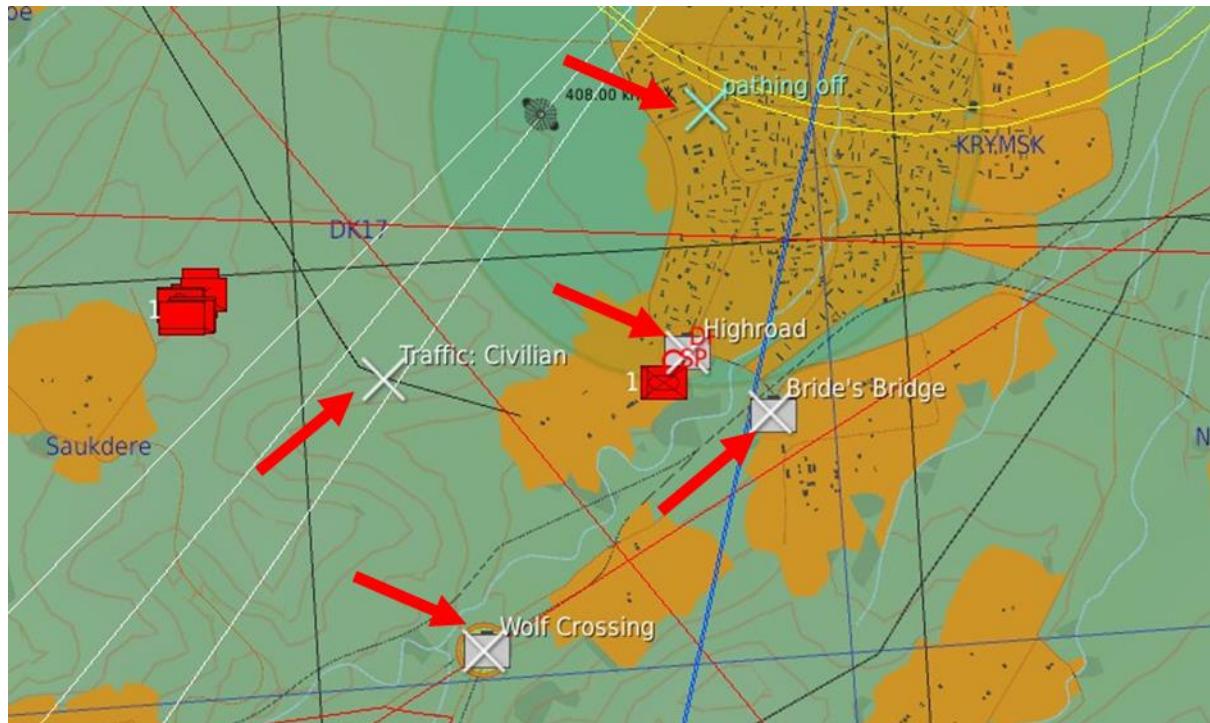
This model of providing data through attributes added to a trigger zone in ME extends to module configuration: if a module requires configuration data, it starts up with default values, and then looks for a – surprise! – Trigger Zone that might contain the attributes that you want to change for this mission. **You can configure your modules from within ME** – you don't have to change a single line of code.



DML has something in store for every mission designer – novices and veterans alike. And for mission designers who have discovered Lua, DML can super-charge their abilities. That being said, **Lua knowledge is not required** to use DML in your missions. At all.

This would be the perfect moment to try the first of the many demos that come with DML – so if you want to know what this is all about, just go here (→ Smoke'em! DML Intro.miz) and find out!

Let us look at a real-life DML-enhanced mission:



Note the five Trigger Zones on the map (follow the unobtrusive red arrows). As mentioned, DML uses ME Trigger Zones and attaches its own modules to them. That way, mission designers can simply place new functionality by adding standard Trigger Zones to the map - without requiring any Lua. You then add a few attributes to the Trigger Zone, and DML's modules home in on them automatically.

Name	Value	
pathing	offroad	

Above screenshot was taken from my "[Integrated Warfare: Pushback](#)", a mission that uses DML to dynamically create ground forces and that require the player's air support to win. On the map, I placed various zones to

- Add conquerable zones ("Wolf Crossing", "Bride's Bridge", "Highroad") – these are zones that, when captured by blue or red, automatically produce ground forces that defend the zone against invaders and seek out and capture other conquerable zones
- Control civilian air traffic ("Traffic: Civilian")
- Control AI's pathing for ground forces ("pathing off")

All zones use simple, ME editable attributes (like "pathing", "offroad") to tell DML what to do. In the end, writing such a mission amounts to just a little more than placing zones and adding attributes. After all, the trick is coming up with a good mission idea – putting it together should be easy. With DML it may have become a bit easier.

Behind the scenes, DML also provides a collection of **Foundation** modules that lack ME integration. Using these modules directly is not intended for beginners and requires a modicum of Lua-knowledge; they provide ready-made, tested, convenient access to many functions that mission designers would traditionally code by themselves (or use ready-made libraries).

So, what's in DML? In a nutshell here's a selection of functions that you can choose to add to your mission at any moment:

- **Drop-in Modules (no Lua knowledge required)** that add complete functionality to a mission – for example
 - CSAR Missions
 - Limited number of pilots (ties in with CSAR Missions)
 - Civilian Air traffic
 - Automatic Recon Mode for aircraft, complete with reporting and custom flags
 - Griefer protection (i.e. protection from asocial people who intentionally abuse your server)
 - Intelligent slot blocking for preventing spawns on enemy airfields
 - Protection from missiles
 - Helicopter Troop Pick-up, Transport and Deployment
 - Score Keeping
- **Zone Enhancements** that interactively **attach new functionality to Zones in ME (no Lua required)**. They provide diverse functionality such as
 - Add interactive player menus
 - Comprehensive Flag manipulation and handling like Flag Randomizers and Flag Pulsers so you can completely randomize troop activation and spawning
 - Counters for events
 - Group Tracking and Unit Detection

- Dynamic Spawning and Cloning
 - Dynamic Object/Cargo Spawning
 - Artillery Target Zones
 - Conquerable Zones and FARPS
 - (moving) NDB
 - Map/Scenery object destruction detector
- **Persistence** – players can **save a mission and then later continue it** (within the confines of DCS's limitations)
- Support for **zone-local flags** so you can stop having to invent new flag names for everything. Keep your flag pool clean when you are using flags to signal within the same zone..
- An **Interactive Debugger** to inspect flag values, report any time they change their value or if their value changes to a specific number – with ME integration that allows you to set up debugging missions before you run them
- **Foundation**, a library of ready-to-use methods (**only for mission designers who use Lua**). They support
 - Advanced Event Handlers for mission and player events
 - Zone management and attaching/reading zones attributes
 - Inventory keeping
 - Managing orders and pathing for troops
- **Multi-player supported out-of-the-box.** All modules work for single- and multiplayer missions, including modules with user interaction via communications.
- **A collection of fully documented Tutorials / Demo Missions** that serve to illustrate how the more salient points of DML can be used to quickly create great mission. They aren't flashy. They hopefully are helpful instead.
- **A hefty Manual** that I can lord over you and yell "RTFM" whenever you have a question. Yup, that's definitely why I wrote it.

Of course, this is just the beginning – DML is far from complete, and there are lots of new avenues to explore. Based on feedback, I expect DML to evolve, and to add new and exciting abilities. Until then, I hope that you enjoy the ride!

Zürich, August 2022

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2.1 About this Document

This document is divided into multiple parts:

- **Part I: Introduction & Overview (you are reading this part right now)**

gives you a bird's eye view of the library: how the various parts fit together, and what they are designed for. Read this first, as having a rough sketch of the map often helps understanding the details. Because – when the part that you are reading refers to something that will come later, knowledge about where that part belongs to makes it much easier to keep calm and carry on reading

- **Part II: Using DML**

This is the heart of DML's documentation, and we cover a lot of ground here:

- We begin with some important DML concepts (e.g., Zone Attributes, ME Integration, ...), and how the modules work together in general. Reading this part is very important, since it helps to understand why modules are built the way they are.

- We then go through every module and take a closer look: what it does, how to use it in your mission, and (for those who are interested) walk through the API (if one exists).

You can skip any module that doesn't interest you; all module descriptions are structured identically; they can be read in any order. Moreover, the Foundation modules are inherently technical, and should only be read by people who absolutely, positively want to get more out of DML by using Lua.

- Note that if a module's section in this part is headed with "Lua Only" (e.g., "dcsCommon (Lua Only)"), you can safely ignore that section until the time that you want to light the Lua 'burner. Understanding such a module is only required for advanced DML uses.

- This part also covers one of DML's most sought-after aspects: the fully integrated interactive mission debugger. Learn how you can wrest information from your mission while it is running, and impose your will on those flags!

- **Part III: Foundation Reference**

This part provides a comprehensive reference to Foundation's Lua API that we left out of Part II.

Neither part is meant to stand on its own; part I is too short to convey much helpful information, while part II and III provide an ocean of detail that you can drown in. So read about what's in store in part I, and then embark to navigate parts II and III. When you get lost in the details, make sure to refer back to part I, get your bearings, and then head out back on track.

And – explore! There are demo missions to investigate and play around with – most are documented in Part IV: Tutorials / Demo. These missions are meant to be taken apart, dissected, and modified. When in doubt, load up ME, and experiment. Many questions are much easier answered by equal amounts of experiments and creativity. Finding out that something happens in a certain way is often as much fun as finding out why.

2.2 Part IV - Demo Missions: Have a look!

DML comes with a comprehensive, sometimes even fun set of demo missions that are designed to illustrate some of its major abilities and provide a reference to how you can use them in your own mission. With very few exceptions, these demos require no Lua knowledge.

Note that the demo missions, from a player's perspective, are tepid at best: there's very little pizzazz in evidence when you play them. As mission designer, however, they may very well knock your socks off – when you realize how little effort it takes you to add these features to your next mission. And be sure to read each demo mission's Discussion section, as you may have missed the best.

Examining the demo missions can help jump-starting your own mission designs with DML – as many demos either focus on a module's features, or how these modules work together. When you are done putting the mission through its paces, read the 'Discussion' part of each demo again to find out about some interesting point you probably have overlooked.

Finally, if you are interested in starting mission scripting with Lua, you will find that there are a couple of Lua-specific Tutorials that could be very interesting, as they illustrate how to structure an effective mission management script in Lua (expanding on →Using DML with Lua (Lua Only)).

2.3 What's up with those “(Lua Only)” remarks?

DML has many uses. It provides strong ME integration, and most modules can be used without ever having to write a single line of code.

That being said, DML can truly supercharge your missions – provided you know how to write Lua code. DML provides strong API for those of you who are bold enough to venture into those regions where “there be dragons”: the Lua Scripting Abyssal. While ME does a terrific job in harnessing many of DCS's mission capabilities, it can but scratch the surface of the real underlying mission engine. Lua scripts can; Lua scripts can go deep. They regularly catch fish no ME-only designed mission could even dream of.

But that ride isn't free: coding is not for everyone; it's a disposition as much as an aptitude. So, if you don't hear the permanent siren song with which words like *invocation*, *class* or *callback* are constantly calling out to coders, do not fret: You aren't thusly afflicted. **Simply know that you can safely skip any chapter that I labelled “(Lua Only)”.**

And to you, the coder I say: “Suit Up!”

2.4 DISCLAIMER

Let's make this short – we are not lawyers. Understand that by doing anything that is described, recommended, suggested, alluded to, inferred, or merely hinted at in this document, you may cause incredible damage, cause war, and maybe even end life as we know it.

By using DML you accept and irrevocably commit to not holding me, Christian Franz, nor anyone I know, did know, or might know accountable for anything that results from using any part of DML and/or associated materials.

You have been duly warned, and you will not try to indemnify anyone but yourself for any damages resulting from anything that involves DML.

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2.6 Acknowledgements

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- cloose for their work on the baseCaptured module (initial idea and code proposal)

3 Introduction

Dynamic Mission Library (DML) is a collection of modules that enhance a mission author's scripting capabilities for Eagle Dynamic's DCS World Mission Editor. It integrates new abilities like unit spawners, artillery, civilian air traffic and CSAR missions into Mission Editor.

DML comprises of:

- **Zone based Enhancements for ME**

Enhancements use Mission Editor's Trigger Zones to attach ("anchor") themselves, and "Attributes" to control how these new features work. In other words, Zones tell DML "where", and their attributes "what": attributes tell "Spawn Zones" what units to spawn and when, they describe to "Map Markers" what to write onto the F10-Map, or control how "Civ Air" lets air traffic flow.

To "anchor" a module to a Trigger Zone, Mission Designers simply add an attribute – DML then automatically attaches the correct module to that zone

Name	Value	Remove
NDB	121.5	
soundFile	distressbeacon.ogg	

(see the documentation to find out what attributes control). In the example to the right, the "NDB"-named attribute tells DML that this zone anchors the *cfxNDB* module. The value "121.5" for NDB tells *cfxNDB* that this beacon should transmit on 121.5 MHZ, while the "soundFile : distressbeacon.ogg" attribute details which sound file is to be played over that frequency. You can find out which attributes are required or optional for which module in the "Using DML" part of this documentation.

Zone Enhancements can "stack", meaning that you can anchor multiple modules to the same zone, e.g. Map Marker, CSARBEST and FARP can all attach to the same zone.

Using Trigger Zones with attributes has numerous enormous advantages:

- No messing around with scripts
- Mission Designers can use ME's visual editing tools to place functionality
- we separate a module's functionality (which is code-based, and should not concern designers) from visual mission building
- we have a graphical representation (the enhanced zones) of where we place the new functionality
- we can use copy/paste to quickly replicate enhanced zones over the map,

which conveniently integrates DML into your normal mission editing workflow

- **Full-Feature Modules**

These are ready-made, drop-in packets that add new features like CSAR (Combat Search And Rescue) missions simply by adding them to a mission.

- **Zone-based configuration and data access**

Modules use Trigger Zones to provide configuration details and mission data to modules. That way you can change or configure a module without having to access or change the underlying code.

- **Functional Libraries (Foundation, Lua-Only)**

These Lua-only modules provide ready-made methods for advanced mission

authors. Unlike other modules they require Lua know-how.

- **Demo Missions**

Often, a picture is worth a thousand words. And a demo mission is worth ten tutorial videos. DML comes with a pack of missions that are curtailed to demonstrate (as opposed to ‘show off’) DML’s capabilities, and how to integrate them from a mission designer’s standpoint. They are short on sugar, and high on nutritional value. And they come with a dedicated part in this documentation, so be sure to walk through each demo with the documentation in hand, or you may miss some of the finer points.

All DML modules are lightweight and have negligible performance impact; the entire library is self-contained. No other libraries (e.g., ‘MIST’ or ‘MOOSE’) are required; there are no known conflicts when you run other libraries side-by-side with DML.

3.1 Functional Overview

To use, DML requires that you are able to perform three basic steps within DCS Mission Editor (ME): create actions, place Trigger Zones, and add “attributes” to Trigger Zones. Beyond that are no requirements; **DML does not require any Lua knowledge** from mission designers.

For a typical mission building session, once you know what kind of mission you want to build, you simply look up the (few) modules that you need to implement the main features (say: a cloner, a menu, a randomizer and CSAR Missions), and start laying down zones.

So let's take a tour through DML, and just briefly stop at the main attractions. Part II will go into detail, for now let's get the Big Picture: how does DML work with ME, and what does it offer a mission designer?

3.1.1 Zone-based Enhancements for ME

These are modules that everyone can use from within ME without writing any code. All that is required is that mission designers place Trigger Zones, and then use ME to add “Attributes” to these zones.

An “Attribute” (also called “Property”) is a Name/Value pair (example: “Pilot/Iceman”) that you add to a Trigger Zone with ME’s Trigger Zone editor (see right)

All Zone-based enhancements use this simple mechanism to pass information and control its abilities.

To add an Attribute, inspect a Trigger Zone in ME. Then click on the “Add” button and edit the “Name” and “Value” fields. To change an attribute’s name or value, click into the fields. If you leave a Value empty, the Attribute itself remains in existence and retains the value <empty>. When encountering an empty attribute, all modules simply use a default value instead – they do the same when an attribute is absent)

To find out which attribute names and values are defined, please see the relevant sections of this documentation.

DML already supports a large and varied host of enhancements that all use Zones and Attributes to control their features. Below, please find a short overview of what DML has on offer:



3.1.1.1 Standard cfxZones attributes

DML uses standard DCS (Mission Editor) zones as “anchor” for its modules. Any zone that is placed with ME is automatically processed by DML and passed to its modules. In addition to

simply mapping out a region on the map, zones managed with DML understand attributes (see above). When present, certain attributes mark a Zone as an anchor for a specific module. For example, any zone that has the ‘smoke’ attribute will automatically anchor ‘cfxSmokeZone’ functionality (see below)

Zones can serve as anchor for multiple modules at once, although this may be limited by DCS itself: if you define a zone to be an anchor for both a smoke zone (see below) and a moving zone, the zone moves as you intent; the smoke stays in place for 5 minutes, and then jumps to wherever that zone has moved in the intervening time; the smoke then again remains in place for another 5 minutes, while the zone itself may move on to another place.

When you use zone-based enhancements, **all zones**, regardless of other modules they may anchor, **support a number of attributes** in DML:

- **linkedUnit**
Makes the zone move with the indicated unit. Works only inside the logical confines of DML, not supported by ME
- **useOffset**
When using “linked Unit” (see above) maintains the spatial offset between the zone and the linked unit
- **owner**
Assigns an owner (red, blue, neutral) to this zone. Only available within DML

3.1.1.2 cfxSmokeZones

Add a **permanent, colored smoke effect** to the center of the zone. It doesn’t stop smoking for the entire mission. You control smoke color with the ‘smoke’ attribute’s value. Compatible with other zone extensions.

3.1.1.3 rndFlags

You new best friend. A simple way (finally!) to **randomly set ME flags**, with tight control over which flags should be set, when, and how. After using these you won’t believe that you ever had to put up with the old way.

3.1.1.4 pulseFlags

A module that **repeatedly sets ME flags** – multiple times, for as many times as you want, at your own pace and time, with (of course) controllable start and stop commands (via flags)

3.1.1.5 delayFlags

Smaller sibling to pulseFlags, this module simply introduces a **delay before it changes a flag**.

3.1.1.6 RaiseFlags

A module to **set flags to a value** at mission start or a (randomizable) time after start.

3.1.1.7 *xFlags*

A module to **combine multiple flags for decision making** ('one of these flags is true?) or to use as a '**gated switch**' (i.e. a switch that itself can be turned off)

3.1.1.8 *Changer*

A module that provides **on-the-fly flag value conversion** and can function as a **gated switch** for all DML modules.

3.1.1.9 *CountDown*

A very flexible **counter module that counts changes on flags**.

3.1.1.10 *cfxObjectDestructDetector*

This little gem's goal is to greatly simplify detection of when a **Map Object is destroyed** – be it a bridge or building. It **tightly ties into ME**'s ability to assign a zone to a building or other object and provides mission designers with simple functionality to directly manipulate flags.

More advanced scripter can take advantage of the callback functionality that is invoked when the marked structure is destroyed.

3.1.1.11 *cfxSpawnZones*

This adds the ability to **spawn troops** in a zone - automatically, and on demand. Spawns can occur once and multiple times. The spawned troops can receive complex orders.

3.1.1.12 *Clone Zones*

Like Spawn Zones this module adds the ability to **dynamically create units**. However, Clone Zones create groups from **templates** that are easy to build in ME. Spawning occurs on demand.

3.1.1.13 *cfxObjectSpawnZones*

Very similar to cfxSpawnZones, this zone **spawns cargo and “static” (scenery) objects** instead of combat units. Since a peculiarity of DCS is that helicopter cargo items are static objects, you can use this enhancement to conveniently spawn cargo for helicopters to sling-load.

Object spawn zones can be linked to ships and therefore be used to spawn static objects there (make sure to useOffset to make objects spawn relative to the ship's center point)

3.1.1.14 *cfxOwnedZones*

This adds the ability of creating **zones** (areas on the Map) **that can be captured**. They currently also offer some specialized spawning abilities, depending on which faction holds the zone. They can also be marked by owner on the F10 in-game map

3.1.1.15 cfxArtilleryZones

This simulates artillery target zones for interaction with FO. Can **simulate artillery bombing**. Later versions may connect to artillery units in range.

3.1.1.16 cfxCargoReceiver

These specialized zones work in conjunction with the cfxCargoManager module. **Delivering** (unhooking) a helicopter's **sling-loaded cargo** in such a zone **sets ME flags** and generates events that other scripts can subscribe to. Cargo Receiver also provides text-based messages for helicopter pilots that approach them with information aimed to **guide them to the drop zone** (once the helicopter is close enough).

3.1.1.17 FARPZones

Adds the ability to **make FARPs conquerable** like Owned Zones, with easy placements of defenses, and ensures that all resources for reload and repair are available at start and after capturing a FARP. Unlike Owned zones, ownership is managed by the FARP that must be inside the FARP Zone. Since Owned Zones and DCS FARP follow the same rules for ownership, there is seldom a conflict; the main difference between an Owned Zone and a FARP Zone is that GroundTroops (the module that manages ordered troops) is unable to resolve a troop pileup in a FARP. If this situation arises, players must eliminate enemy troops themselves.

3.1.1.18 cfxMapMarkers

This small script adds the ability to **place arbitrary map notes** (text) on the F-10 in-game map, visible to either faction, or all factions. The text appears wherever the mission designer places the zone

3.1.1.19 cfxNDB

Adds an NDB to Zones. The NDB **can move with a unit**, enabling mission designers to easily place NDB on ships that move with it. NDBs can be **turned on and off** at will **using ME flags** or API.

3.1.1.20 Messenger

A DML-style version of ME's good old MESSAGE TO XXX and SOUND TO XXX – with flags to trigger and some (advanced) variable reading: **send dynamic text and audio messages** to all, a coalition, a group, or unit.

3.1.1.21 Unit Zone

Trigger Zones done right: set all the attributes right there on the zone and drive flags the way god wanted you to.

3.1.1.22 Group Tracker

Have DML **watch your groups** and set flags when something changes.

3.1.1.23 Wiper

A DML module to **remove objects, units and other stuff** inside the zone.

3.1.1.24 Radio Trigger

Some nice **interface glue to use “Communication”** radio bound flags with DML modules

3.1.1.25 baseCaptured

A module that generates **signals** (so other modules can react) **when a base** (airfield, FARP) **changes hands**

3.1.1.26 Radio Menu

Allows mission designers to easily **create in-game menus** with up to four items per menu.
Includes cool-down handling

3.1.1.27 Delicates

Makes units and objects ‘brittle’ so they **explode when they are hit**

3.1.1.28 Impostors

Gives all AI-controlled **units** in this zone the ability **to turn into static objects and back at will.**

3.1.1.29 Persistence

This module adds the ability to ‘persist’, i.e. write the mission’s current state to file, and then later load that state back into your mission. This module handles loading and saving mission data for all modules: any module that loads after persistence automatically uses persistence when it is appropriate.

3.1.1.30 Unit Persistence

While many DML modules automatically handle persistence automatically for whatever they are handling, there’s a glaring hole: units and static objects that you place with ME. UnitPersistence takes care of that for you.

3.1.1.31 Sequencer

Everything is a sequence: things should happen one after the other. Use a sequencer to take the tedium out of ensuring that yes, indeed, A does happen before B, dammit!

3.1.2 Feature Enhancements

These enhancements add ‘drop-in’ functionality to DCS missions. They, too, can be customized by adding attributes in ME; some interact with, or expand the capabilities of existing Zone Enhancers (CSAR Manager, Helo Troops, Player Score).

3.1.2.1 Player Score / Player Score UI

Provides **simple score-keeping** and **kill-tabulating**, fully MP-capable, based on *player name* (not unit). Supports individual “named” unit score (i.e. a special score of 100 for the unit with name “Theater Commander”) and type scores (e.g. a score of 20 for all units of type “BTR-80”). Has a ready-made, MP-capable UI

3.1.2.2 Recon Mode

A module that allows planes (AI and Player) to **automatically record enemy groups on the F10 map** for all players on the same side to see. Supports priority- and black-listed groups.

3.1.2.3 Civ Air

This module provides **AI-controlled civilian (well, neutral) air traffic** that flies between airfields in the region.

3.1.2.4 Helo Troops

A drop-in feature to enable **player-controlled troop helicopters** (Hind, Hip, Huey) to pick up and deploy infantry. Can interact with spawn zones to request troop production.

3.1.2.5 CSAR Manager

A drop-in feature that **provides CSAR Mission** support: pick up downed pilots and deliver them to safe zones. Functions out of the box; requires the author to add safe zones with ME to designate the place where rescued personnel can be delivered. Additionally, it provides a convenient and easy ME interface to instantly create CSAR missions upon mission start.

3.1.2.6 Artillery UI

Provides an **interface for Artillery Zones**. Allows helicopters to call in smoke to artillery zones, and when close enough and in direct line of sight (LOS) to the zone’s center, order artillery to fire.

3.1.2.7 Limited Airframes

This module provides two significant additions to any mission that it is added to:

- **Limits the number of pilots** (“airframes” since each time you lose an airframe you lose a pilot) per side. So even if a mission allows for a multitude of airframes to choose from, this module limits the number of “lives” a side has until the mission is lost
- To offset the pilots lost, this module **automatically interfaces with the CSAR Manager module** (if present) to generate CSAR missions for ejected player, so

helicopter pilots can attempt to retrieve a downed pilot (at the risk of another pilot).

3.1.2.8 Guardian Angel

A module that **destroys missiles inbound** on certain airframes just before they hit. Not 100% safe, but very close. Will give statistics about missiles dodged. Can be used so simulate ‘jamming’ of missiles, and is mainly intended for missile evasion training purposes.

3.1.2.9 parashoo

A small module that **removes parachutists** once they reach the ground. Its main benefit is that it declutters a player’s F10 map (i.e., it avoids too many parachute icons) in long-running missions.

3.1.2.10 Recon Mode

Allows **reconnaissance flights** (player and AI) with automatic marks on the F10 in-game maps. Supports blacklist (groups that are never found) and priority target lists.

3.1.2.11 ssbClient

A module that allows **slot-blocking** for **aircrafts** on airfields that currently **do not belong** to the aircraft’s **faction**. Requires that the server (only the server) that is hosting the mission has the SSB script running.

3.1.2.12 ssbSingleUse

A module that allows **slot-blocking for aircrafts** that have previously **crashed**. Requires that the server (only the server) that is hosting the mission has the SSB loaded and that SSB’s kickReset option is turned off (set to false)

3.1.2.13 unGrief

Griefer-repellent for servers: makes it undesirable for **players to kill their own side**.

3.1.2.14 Cfxmon (

DML **debugging tool** that allows mission designers to **monitor** every **callback** provided by DML. Callbacks can be selectively disabled.

3.1.3 Foundation Level (Lua Only)

These are modules that provide methods that accomplish common mission tasks: calculating distances, issuing orders, creating “events”. All modules further down in the architecture require at least one (often more) of these modules. **If you do not intend to write your own Lua scripts that tap into DML, you can safely skip this section.**

3.1.3.1 *dcsCommon*

This is DML’s Bedrock. All other modules require this **collection of common methods**. Look at the API description to find out what is provided. Generally: if it’s something basic/common you want to do, there’s a method for it in dcsCommon, especially if you need access to a unit’s basic information like heading, speed, or position in relation to another unit or aerodrome. It provides an improved notification/callback method for you that allows you to filter, pre- and post-process events in a much more friendly way than DCS does.

dcsCommon also provides many of the “primitives” you can use to assemble and spawn groups – however, like with other foundation methods, other modules that are higher up in the architecture usually provide more powerful functionality.

Finally, dcsCommon provides one central pillars for mission designers who create their missions based on **update/event** cycles (with cfxPlayer providing another: player events)

3.1.3.2 *cfxZones*

This is a collection of methods that specialize in **handling DCS Zones** and providing easy **access to properties**. When scripting with DML, script authors should always use cfxZones instead of trying to access DCS’s mission zones directly. This library provides support for reading attributes, handles **moving zones** (called ‘linked zones’ in cfx parlour), and is the main building block for all Zone-based enhancements. Using cfxZones in your own code makes mission scripting with zones a lot easier. cfxZones implicitly adds new attributes (like ‘owner’) to zones so that these attributes are always available to scripts. Mission designers can override these implicit attributes simply by adding it explicitly to a zone.

Mission authors usually only utilize a few of this module’s methods directly, utilizing modules/callbacks provided by modules higher up in the architecture instead.

3.1.3.3 *cfxPlayer*

This library mainly **provides callback functionality for player events**, and manages updating player information transparently. It provides a convenient callback framework so mission scripts can easily keep up to date with all player information. cfxPlayer is most useful when scripts need to implement multi-player functionality or a GUI (e.g. via Communication) that must differentiate between player-controlled Units/Groups. Since most Feature Enhancement modules are multi-player enabled, they require this module even if the mission is intended for single-player use only.

Interacting with this module is mainly via subscribing to player events and then writing code that handles whatever needs to be done when those events happen.

3.1.3.4 cfxCommander

This small library provides functionality to **issue orders to groups** via a group's controller. Emphasis is here on providing simple methods to schedule orders; this is important because ordering units immediately after they have been created can cause issues, and orders are often given in a sequence (stop now, then start moving in 10 seconds). It is a purely convenience library that provides scripting shortcuts.

One more advanced feature that this module brings to the table is for **pathing** in conjunction with pathing attributes and pathing zones on the map which allow the designer to optimize unit pathing (groups can automatically follow roads and drive off-road in certain areas that are designated by zones).

3.1.3.5 cfxGroundTroops

This is the hub module that provides convenient “**Orders**” for DCS groups of ground units. It manages a pool of Troops – DML parlance for a DCS Group with “orders”. Scripts interact with this module mainly by configuring the task loop at the beginning, and later by adding troop tables to, and removing them from the pool it manages.

Troops added to the GroundTroops pools all have orders (see the section on ‘Orders’ later in this document) and they are managed in-game by GroundTroops’ task management loop automatically.

Ground Troops **handles group** tasking via **orders**, **route them**, can autonomously **change a group's orders** if need arises, automatically **lase targets**, and remove troops from the management queue when they get stuck. Groups in GroundTroops management pool that are **destroyed are automatically removed** from the queue, and GroundTroops understands multiple tasking loop methods for enhanced performance: to manage performance, GroundTroops can put new units into order queues and dynamically handles adding them to the task loop. It supports multiple tasking models (all at once, sequential) to fine-tune performance. It can also **resolve ‘pile-ups’** inside owned zones, when multiple enemy groups mutually block each other, and neither can clearly resolve capture.

Many Zone Enhancers automatically submit groups to the GroundTroops module for minimal interaction. Others can remove them from the pools and later return them, and even understand transforming orders.

3.1.3.6 nameStats

This is a module that provide an **easy to use, generalized, name-based information store**. Use it to **track numbers and strings** for any logical (named) instance. Examples are keeping score, or tabulating cargo/weight (for both of which DML modules already exist and that utilize nameStats to work their magic)

3.1.3.7 cargoSuper

This module can **manage inventories and weight** for logical (named) instance. It does not apply the weight to a unit, it simply provides a simple, abstract API to manage cargo items and their weight

3.1.3.8 cfxCargoManager

A module that watches cargo and **creates cargo events** that whenever something noteworthy happen that relate to the **cargo it monitors**. Due to current limitations in DCS, this module synthesizes some of the events from changes in the objects it watches.

3.1.3.9 cfxGroups

A module that reads the mission data at starts and provides a table for all initially defined groups. This module's main use is to **provide information about player mission 'slots'**.

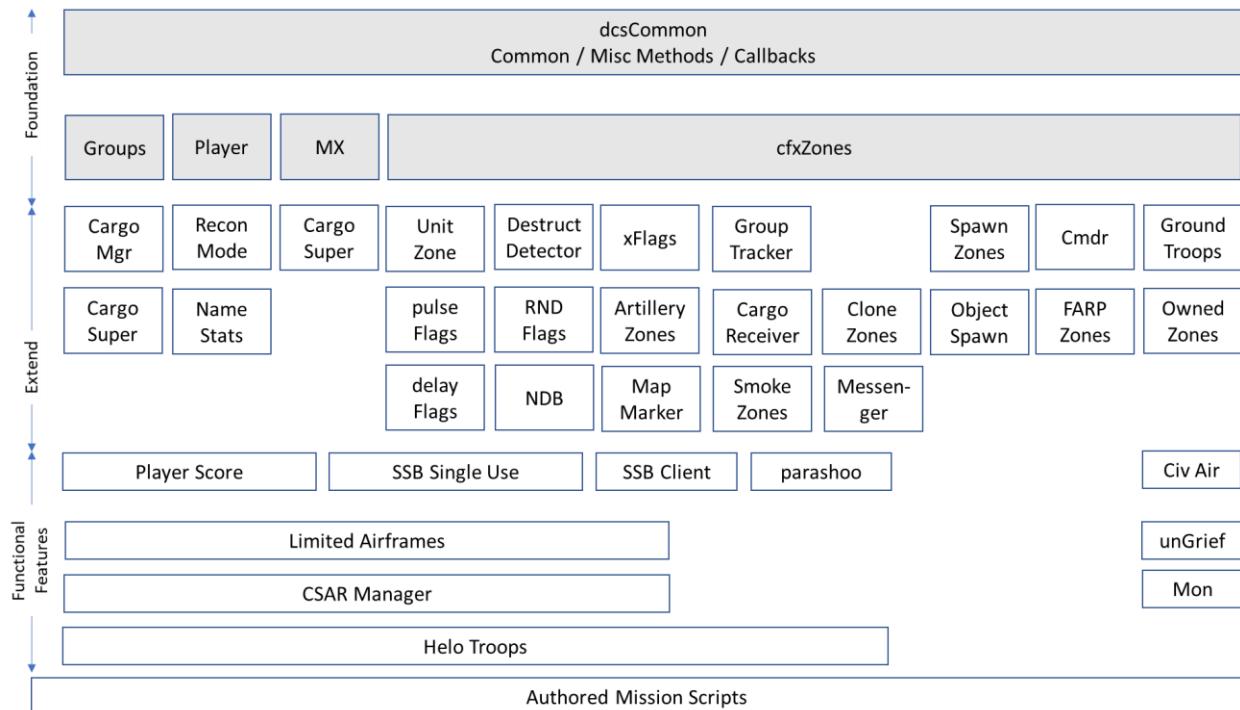
3.1.3.10 cfxMX

A module that reads the mission data at start to provide **information about all groups** that are defined at the time that the mission starts (i.e. created with ME). Cannot provide information about groups that are spawned after the mission starts..

3.2 Architecture (Lua Only)

Conceptually, imagine DML as a modular “upturned layer cake”: It starts with a Foundation layer of modules that provide common or miscellaneous functionality. Part of that layer is a collection of abstract modules (e.g., dcsCommon, cfxZones, cfxPlayer) that provide important services to all other modules and **provide integration with ME**. Together these modules are the ‘**Foundation Layer**’. The functionality in this layer is accessible to mission creators **only by means of Lua scripting**. Therefore, few people will ever use Foundation directly.

Below the foundation are modules that **Extend or Add Functionality**, by **combining their functions with Zones in ME** and provide ME-based means to access them. These modules allow a mission author to utilize new functionality **without writing a single line of code** (most of these modules provide hooks for optional script integration), simply by means of placing zones in ME and adding attributes. They also often serve as convenient building blocks for more advanced modules. Examples are Destruct Detectors, Artillery Zones and Spawn Zones.



Below the Extension layer are functional **Feature Modules** that provide ready-to-use functionality for your missions. They can be customized with Zones and Attributes, and can be interfaced with by scripts. Examples are CSAR Manager, Player Score and SSB Client.

The final (optional) layer are scripts that mission author create who choose to tap into any of the DML’s modules.

cf/x Dynamic Mission Library
for DCS

PART II: USING DML

4 Using DML

DML enhances normal mission design with ‘vanilla’ Mission Editor in that you lay down some trigger zones, and add some attributes. There’s usually very little else involved. So let’s look at DML from a mission builder’s perspective, and how you would typically use DML in your mission building efforts

- *Design the Mission*

Like any other mission, you come up with a mission idea, and decide upon the main features. Unlike with plain ME, with DML you add a step to pick the modules that deliver the functionality / ability (e.g. CSAR, menus, conquerable zones) for import. Since DML is modular, you usually end up using only a handful of modules per mission

- *Import some Modules into your Mission*

You only do this once; it takes roughly half a minute. It doesn’t matter when you do it (and you can always add more modules later). I usually do it directly after choosing a map because I then have access to all the new features.

- *Build the Mission in ME and add DML features where needed*

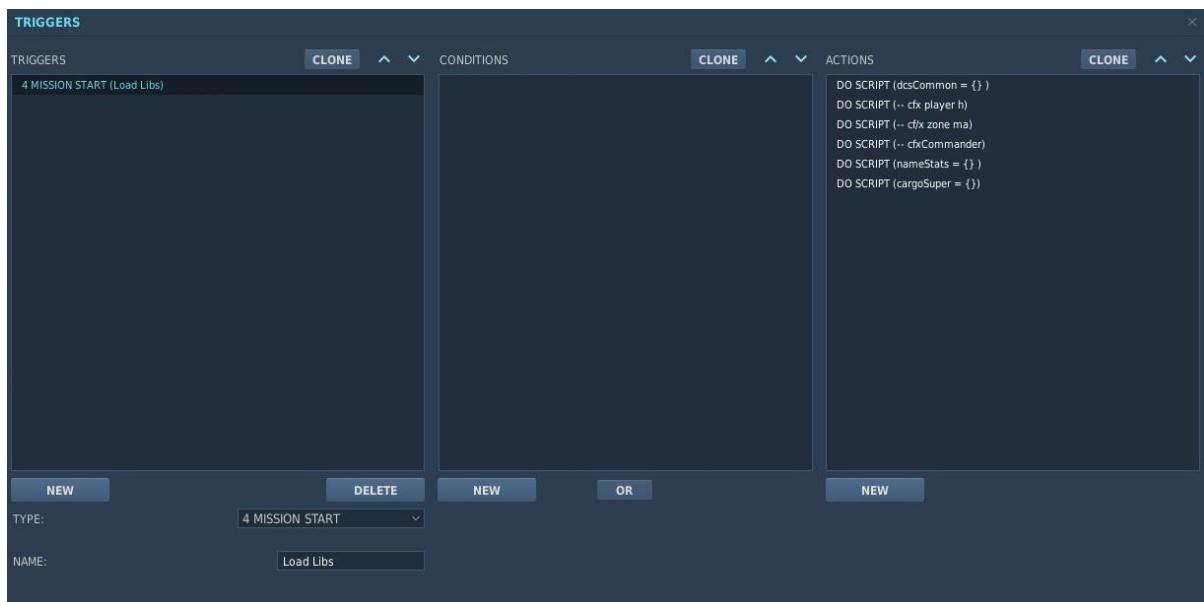
Build your mission as always. To put down some DML functionality, you usually simply add a trigger zone, and add a couple of attributes in ME’s zone editor.

- *Test, rinse, repeat*

Run the mission, and test if the DML modules deliver what you want, perhaps tweak some attributes.

4.1 How to import Modules into a Mission

DML is organized in multiple “modules” which are nothing more than small text files. Each of these text files is named after the module they contain. To bring these modules into your mission, first create a MISSION START trigger. Then add DO SCRIPT actions to that trigger, one for each module that you want to include into the mission.

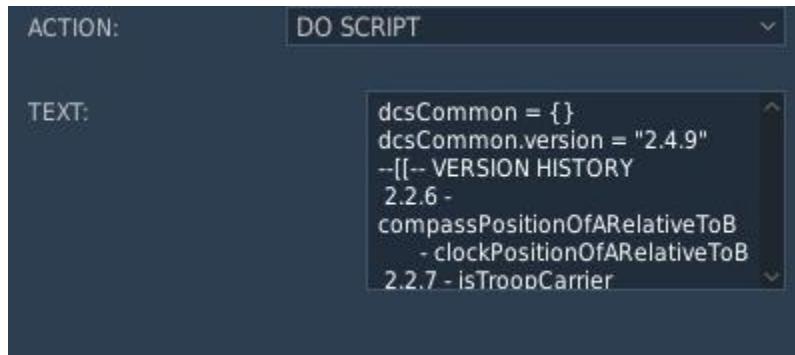


In above example, we have added six modules to the mission: dcsCommon, cfxPlayer, cfxZones, cfxCommander, nameStats and cargoSuper.

Note:

We'll discuss later what these modules actually do, here we look at how to bring them into a mission.

Next, open each module with a text editor (e.g., NotePad), and **copy/paste the entire text** from each module into their own DOSCRIPT text box.



The sequence of the actions determines the order in which the modules are loaded when the mission starts up. That is important to remember when there are dependencies between modules, i.e. when module A needs the functionality of module B, that module B must load before A does.

Most modules check their integrity when they load, and you will see warnings displayed when a module fails to load because it needs functionality to be loaded before it loads itself. This document always lists which module requires what functionality in their 'dependencies' section, so you can quickly look up which modules you need for your mission.

Note:

We use DOSCRIPT actions because of their simplicity. Other mission designers prefer a DOSCRIPTFILE action instead. Either will work, and for simplicity we'll stick with DOSCRIPT for the entirety of this document.

Note II (advanced users)

You may wonder why we don't simply pack all of DML into one big file that simple works for all missions with a unified START Trigger. That will surely work, and if you like that simplification, feel free to do so. The performance penalty is negligible. From an engineering perspective, however, it's highly displeasing to create a drab monolithic slab out of what is architecturally designed to be beautifully modular.

4.2 Important Concepts

Mission scripting can be challenging and extending the capabilities of the Mission Editor (ME) that is packaged with DCS World needs some careful advanced planning in order to make it as simple as possible. To do this, DML uses several easy-to-understand concepts that help to integrate the modules with ME and simplify accomplishing certain mission goals like ordering troops, occupy areas etc.

4.2.1 Zones and Attributes

DML uses a central ME tool for integration:

Trigger Zones. They can be placed anywhere on the map, are easy to modify (move, change, copy and paste), and they support a central feature that we use to pass information from ME to our modules: Attributes.

Attributes are named values (or “name/value pairs” in programmer parlance) that mission designers can add to, modify, and remove from Trigger Zones. An attribute (sometimes also called ‘property’) always has a name, and a value. Use ME to enter any text for both name and value.

Module Anchors

DML looks for attributes with certain names (e.g., “smoke”), and if it finds that attribute, automatically “anchors” the appropriate module to that zone (for example connects the smoke zone module to that zone). Read the “Using” section to find out which module looks for which attribute.

If you add an attribute and leave its value blank, *that* becomes its value (i.e. the attribute exists, it has the value <empty>).

The image on the right shows a Trigger Zone called “Red Two”. In the lower part a red box highlights the attributes that we added to this trigger zone. In general, you can add as many attributes to a zone as you like. **[Lua Only]**: the cfxZones module gives designers easy access to a Zone’s attributes, can easily convert them, and collect all zones that have a certain property]

All modules use Trigger Zones with attributes to anchor modules, and to control a module’s functionality.

Usually, the name you give to a Zone (“Red Two”) itself is irrelevant; DML looks for specifically named attributes to anchor a module. You can therefore use the same zone to anchor multiple modules.

There are cases where a zone’s name is relevant to provide data: to configure a module, DML uses so-called Module Configuration Zones (see below) that can be omitted entirely (if you do not want to curtail the way a module works), and place anywhere on the map.



4.2.2 Flags in DML

Beside Trigger Zones, another central ME tool allows mission designers to shape the flow of control: ‘Flags’. Mission designers use Flags to “persist” (remember) states. Although Flags in ME are somewhat primitive, they can be used to great effect – as many existing missions show.

Many Zone Enhancements in DML can monitor (“watch”) a flag (“Input”) for a value change which can then trigger the module’s action (in DML parlance, we call these “Watchflags”). Others can change a flag’s value (“output”) when they determine that certain conditions are met (for example a group that they watch has died, or a zone is conquered).

You tell a module which flags it should use for input or output via Zone Attributes. For example, the ‘Messenger’ module can be triggered via input to display a message, and another trigger can tell it turn off completely. Since triggering is done by flags, you decide which flags to use to use for these purposes, and then list them as values for Messenger’s ‘messageOut?’ and ‘messageOff?’ attributes. That zone’s messenger then triggers the appropriate action whenever these flags’ values change.

Name	Value	
messenger		
messageOut?	enter outer	
message	Get a little bit closer	
messageOff?	at rwy	

Conversely, many Zone Enhancements can determine that they want to signal something. For example, pulser sends out a repeating signal for other zones to synchronize their actions, or a conquerable zone may want to announce that its ownership has changed; an object destruct detector has detected destruction, or a cargo delivery zone needs to alert the mission that a helicopter has delivered some cargo. Each time, the module can announce this by changing the value of an output flag. Like with the input flags, output flags, you tell the module which flag to change with a Zone Attribute in ME (in above example, the pulser’s output flag is an ME flag named “fire”).

Name	Value	
pulse		
flag!	fire	
time	1-3	

4.2.2.1 DML “Watchflags”

Many modules offer functionality (e.g. spawn a group, start smoke, output a message) that you want to trigger at exact moments in your mission. To signal a module to activate its functionality, mission designers use ME flags. DML allows mission designers great flexibility when it comes to decide how triggers a function. For example, a mission designer can tell a cloner only to spawn new clones when the value of the flag named “killCount” is greater than 5.

Watchflag Attribute (Input)

Whenever you see a DML module that supports an attribute name that ends on a question mark (e.g., “f?”) that means that this module can watch an ME Flag. You supply the flag’s name as value (here “100”, an old-style ME flag name. Newer flags can have names like “EnemySighted”). If the value of that flag changes, the module’s function (e.g., spawning) can trigger, provided all your conditions are met. DML supports a host of conditions that you can apply to flags to trigger selectively (e.g. when the flag’s value equals a certain value), or simply trigger on a change (default behavior).

Name	Value	
f?	100	

Trigger Methods

After you tell a module which flag to watch, to actually make it trigger at least one of two things must happen:

1. The flag's value must change. DML Watchflags only trigger on flag value changes and ignore the flag otherwise
2. (Optional) The new value of the watched flag must match the rule (condition) that you describe in the module's trigger method attribute

Name	Value
messenger	
message	WE HAVE A MATCH: 4
messageOut?	heartbeat
triggerMethod	=4

Why is the second point optional? DML assumes that simply changing the Watchflag's value is enough to trigger the module's function. So, when you give a zone's module a Watchflag and skip telling DML what exactly to look for, it will simply activate whenever that flag's value changes. That simple mechanism will cover most of your mission demands: all enemy tanks are destroyed; this triggers a change in a flag, and that flag is wired into your cloner → a new clone group spawns!

Sometimes, however, you want finer control over when something happens, and this is where the trigger "methods come" in. These are simple, predetermined rules that are applied to the current value of the Watchflag. For example, the rule "=4" means that in order to trigger, the Watchflag must not only change, but after the change, the flag's value must also be equal to the number 4.

DML supports multiple comparisons, and even allows you to compare the Watchflag to other flags that you can name in the trigger method. DML understands the following rules:

- 'change' or '#'
triggers whenever the Watchflag's value changes
- 'off' or '0' or 'no' or 'false'
triggers when the Watchflag's value changes to zero
- 'on' or '1' or 'yes' or 'true'
triggers when the flag's value changes from zero to non-zero
(Warning: DML will not detect a transition between two non-zero numbers e.g., 3→4, it only triggers on a change from ZERO to a non-zero value)
- 'inc' or '+1'
triggers when the Watchflag's current value is greater than the previous value
- 'dec' or '-1'
triggers when the Watchflag's value is less than the Watchflag's previous value
- 'lohi'
triggers when the Watchflag's previous value was zero (0) or less and the new value is greater than zero. Often used with pulses.
- 'hilo'
triggers when the Watchflag's previous value was greater than zero (0) and the new

value is zero or less. Often used to detect a countdown reaching zero.

- '`>(number)`' or '`>(name)`'
triggers when the Watchflag's value changes, and the value is larger than the number given or flag identified by name

Examples:

- `>4` triggers when the Watchflag's value is larger than the number 4
- `>*landings` triggers when the Watchflag's value is larger than the value of local flag 'landings'
- '`= (number)`' or '`= (name)`'
triggers when the Watchflag's value changes, and the value is equal to the number given or flag identified by name

Examples:

- `=4` triggers when the Watchflag's value is equal to the number 4
- `=*landings` triggers when the Watchflag's value is equal to the value of local flag 'landings'
- '`<(number)`' or '`<(name)`'
triggers when the Watchflag's value changes, and the value is less than the number given or flag identified by name

Examples:

- `<4` triggers when the Watchflag's value is less than the number 4
- `<*landings` triggers when the Watchflag's value is less than the value of local flag 'landings'
- '`#(number)`' or '`#(name)`'
triggers when the Watchflag's value changes, and the value is not equal to the number given or flag identified by name

Examples:

- `#4` triggers when the Watchflag's value is not equal to the number 4
- `#*landings` triggers when the Watchflag's value is not equal to the value of local flag 'landings'

Quoting Numbered Flags

Early versions of DCS used only numbers for flag names. For example, "22" was (and still is) a legal flag name. This can create confusion when using Watchflags as it can't tell the difference between a number and a flag whose name happens to be a number.

In order to allow DML to distinguish between a number and **flag whose name happens to be a number**, such a flag's name **must be put into double quotes** "" and "" to be interpreted as a flag number. Hence, if you want to trigger only if the input flag was equal to flag named 22, the condition would be

`="22"`

DML then (and only then) recognizes “22” as meaning the flag named 22 rather than the number 22.

4.2.2.2 Bang! Method (output)

Most modules support a variable, mission designer selectable bang! ‘method’.

DML understands a number of bang! methods that it applies to the flag. Currently, DML understands the following methods, each defined by a keyword:

Name	Value	
RND		
method	flip	
f?	99	
flags!	200-210	
pollSize	1-3	

- ‘on’
Sets the flag’s value to one, no matter what it was before. Same as using the number 1 (one)
- ‘off’
Sets the flag’s value to 0 (zero), no matter what the value was before. Same as using the number 0 (zero)
- ‘inc’
Increases the flag’s value by 1 (one). If, for example, the flag’s value was previously 10, that is increased to 11
- ‘dec’
Decreases the flag’s value by 1 (one). If, for example, the flag’s value was previously 10, this number is decreased to 9.
- ‘flip’
This is one of the most effective methods to trigger on flag change. It flips the flag’s value between 0 (zero) and “not 0”: If the flag’s value was anything except zero, the new value is zero. If the flag’s value was zero, the new value is 1 (one). This way you can flip-flop flags, turning them on and off repeatedly.
- (number)
Sets the flag to the fixed value (number), no parentheses. Example: 33 – sets the flag’s value to (the number) 33
- ‘pulse’ or ‘pulse, <number>’
“pulses” the flag by setting its value to 1 (one) for some time, and then re-setting it to 0 (zero) some time later. If you do not specify any time, the flag is reset after three (3) seconds. You can supply your own pulse time by adding a comma and a number, e.g. “pulse, 4” will keep the pulse up for four (4) seconds before dropping back to zero.



4.2.3 Understanding Flag Use

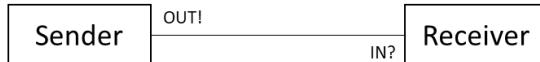
As we have seen above, DML provides two separate ways to communicate with other modules:

- The way it sends signals (the **output method**, usually designated by the exclamation point "!" at the end of the attribute's name). It describes what is sent when the module wants to convey information. This can be 'inc' (the most common, increases the flag's value), or 'On', 'Off', 'flip', a fixed value etc. A module sets an output flag whenever it sees fit, usually as a response to something happening in the mission (a group enters a zone, an object is destroyed etc)
- The way a module looks at their **inputs** (flag attributes with question mark "?" in their name) and tries to decide if it should trigger. Most common is the 'change' method: the module triggers when the flag's current value changes.

Note:

Modules look at their input flags regularly, usually once a second (usually set globally for the module with the `ups` attribute in the config zone). This means that they do not immediately detect a signal/change, *only the next time they look at their input flags*. This means that they can even miss a signal if the input flag changes too quickly.

Let's put this together: say you have two modules: 'Sender' that sends signals on 'out!', and 'Receiver' that looks for a signal on 'in?'. Now, let's look at some combinations to see how output and input methods work together.



OUT Methods

- Inc
- On
- Off
- Value
- ...

IN Methods

- Change
- On
- Off
- Comparison
- ...

- The most common case is *Sender's* output ("DML Method") is set to 'inc' (increment: add the number 1 to the flag's current value) and *receiver's* input ("Watchflag") to 'change'. Any change of the flag's value made by *Sender* then results in *Receiver* to detect the change next time it checks, and then to trigger.
- Now let's change the receiver's Watchflag method to '>4', and assume that at the start of the mission, the underlying flag's value is zero (0). *Sender's* method stays at 'inc' (increment by one). The first four times that *Sender* sends a signal, the flag's value changes from 0 to 1, 2, 3 and then 4. Each time that the flag's value changes, *Receiver* sees the change when it checks, but ignores it. The fifth's time, however, *Sender* has set the flag's value to 5. Upon inspection, *Receiver* detects the change to the flag's value, sees that the new value is ">4" and triggers. Since modules check input flags regularly, it will **not trigger the next time it checks the flag (usually a second later)** because although the flag's value is >4, it did not change from the previous check. **Watchflags require a change** on the watched flag in order to

trigger. When *Sender* again changes the flag's value, this time to 6, *Receiver* again triggers. And will trigger every time **when Receiver sees that the flag's value has changed from the last time it checked.**

- And now let's set *Receiver*'s Watchflag back to "change", while *Sender* is set to 'On'. Now, the first time *Sender* triggers, it sets the flag to On (1). *Receiver* detects the change, sees the new value '1', and triggers. Next time *Sender* is triggered, however, it again sets the flag to On (1). The problem is, though: **it already was set to On (1) before.** *Sender* does not mind; it has done its job. *Receiver* sees that the flag has a value (1 = On), and since there was no change to the previous value (which was also 1), it ignores the current value and continues waiting for a change.

So here's the big take away: **Watchflags are inspected regularly and trigger on change.** If there is no change, the Watchflag does not trigger.

Consider: If multiple modules use 'On' as their output and they all connect to the same flag, only the first flag to set 'On' will subsequently trigger a listening module that is waiting for 'change'. After that, the flag stays on the 'On' value (1). When other modules trigger, they also set that flag to 'On'. To the listening receiver, though, the value of the flag stays the same, and no change is detected; nothing is triggered. This is intentional and immensely helpful to set up common scenarios: Like a 'Burglar Alarm' you are able to trigger a central reaction (Alarm) exactly once from multiple possible triggers: the first triggers a reaction, all others no longer elicit a response even if triggered.

To make this perhaps a bit clearer, and to show just how potentially broad this concept of triggering on flag is: A receiver is connected to the IN? flag. That is to say, it is **NOT** connected to a particular sender module. Receiver doesn't care nor know about senders. All it concerns itself with is the value of the IN? flag, and when it changes. So you can (and often do) have multiple modules connect their OUT! ports to same flag. And you can have (and often do) multiple modules connect their IN? ports to the same flag. All senders and receivers work independently from each other, some can be connected or disconnected at will, and they will work together without ever knowing about each other. Only one thing is certain: if any sending module changes the out! flag, all listening receivers will react, and otherwise ignore the current value.

4.2.4 Multiple Output Flags

DML has the ability to bang! multiple flags at the same time. Unless otherwise specified, all output bang! flags (those that end on an exclamation point "!") support this ability. To bang! multiple flags, they need to be listed as the attribute's value and are separated by a comma; leading/trailing blanks are ignored.

counterOut!	*cVal
tMinus!	*counted
zero!	isZero, startStageTwo

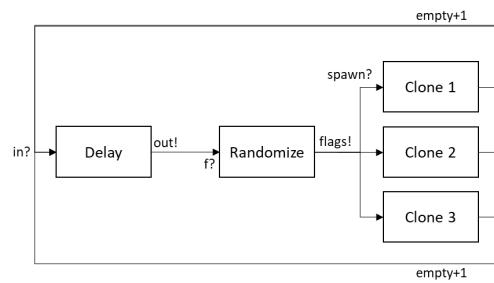
Please note the following:

- All flags are banged with the same method
- All flags are set simultaneously, meaning that there is no guaranteed order in which they are changed.

4.2.5 Using Flags as “signal lines”

In DML, you can greatly simplify your designs if you interpret flags as lines (wire) that transmit signals, reminiscent of old-school digital circuit design. Look at a module like a black box with inputs (attributes with '?') and outputs (attributes with '!'). Use flags as the wires that connect input and output.

You can then easily design your mission functions as small logical circuits that show the flow of control and greatly reduce complexity.



4.2.6 Attribute Synonyms – Why?

Many modules offer multiple different names ('Synonyms') for the same input signal. For example, a clone zone can use the name 'spawn?', 'in?' and 'f?' all to trigger a new spawn cycle. When you set up your spawn zone, you can use one, *and only one* of these per Zone to trigger a cloning cycle.

Cool - but *why*?

The reason for this is to facilitate module stacking. In DML 'module syntax', most modules support the generic 'f?' or 'in?' as input. This makes sense, as it's easy to remember, and often, if you stack modules on the same zone, you want them to trigger at the same time. Use a single 'f?', and all anchored modules that understand 'f?' as input will trigger when that flag changes.

In the example on the right, we have two modules that stack on the zone: a cloner, and a messenger. Both cloner and messenger support 'in?' as input flag (here set to flag 401). When flag 401 changes, both the cloner and the messenger modules activate and do their thing.

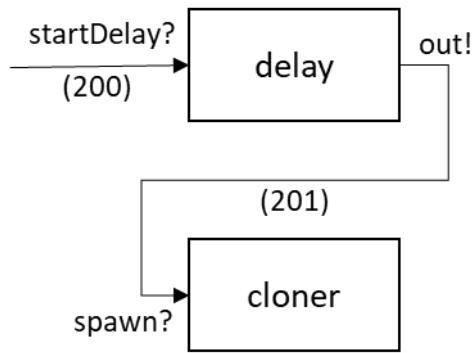
Name	Value	
cloner		
in?	401	
messenger		
message	Convoy sighted at bridge!	

But what if you want to stack two modules that share the same input name, but you *don't* want them to activate at the same time? A common case is if we build a small ‘circuit’ directly on the zone. The example on the right uses a delay module to delay the incoming signal on flag 200 by 2

Name	Value	
cloner		
spawn?	201	
timeDelay	2	
out!	201	
startDelay?	200	

seconds before passing it ‘out!’ on 201. Since 201 is ‘wired’ into the cloner’s ‘spawn?’ input, this causes the cloner to spawn 2 seconds after the timeDelay received a signal.

If we look at delayFlag's and cloner's documentation, we'll find that they both share 'in?' and 'f?' as inputs. So we can't use these synonyms as they would cause both to activate. We have to use an input name that we can tell apart: delayFlag supports the uniquely named 'startDelay?' input synonym (i.e. cloner does *not* recognize this attribute), while the cloner supports 'spawn?' (which delayFlag does not recognize). If we use the two synonyms that are not shared, we can connect the input lines to different signals, and thus are able assemble this little signal delay 'circuit' on the same zone without getting our attributes crossed.



That's why DML supports synonyms.

4.2.7 DML Flags: Named and Local Flags

This is arguably one of DML's most powerful and important features. Put differently, one of ME's less loved aspects was the fact that flags only used numbers as names [NOTE: This has changed with a late version of DCS 2.7 – Now DCS ME also supports named flags]. So it was up to the mission designer to remember that flag "37" is used to signify that the enemy Flanker has been triggered, while "45" might be used to signal that the tanker is on-station.

4.2.7.1 NAMED FLAGS

DML supports named flags. There are some (minor) rules to adhere to (→ Flag Naming Rules), but in DML you can use meaningful flag names! Of course this is backwards-compatible to old-style ME: use a flag name that is entirely a number (e.g. "123"), and this flag is recognized by older versions of DCS ME and can be used with all ME triggers. DML's named flags are fully compatible with the newer, late DCS 2.7+ version named flags.

Name	Value	
pulse		
flag!	fire	
time	1-3	

HISTORICAL NOTE

From 2008 through early 2022, DCS ME supported only flags whose names were positive integer numbers, excluding zero. Since late versions of DCS 2.7, ME is fully compatible with DML-style named flags.

Using flags, you can pass flag signals between DML modules that use good, recognizable names (like 'Tanker On Station') that do not clutter up your ME flag space (which you will probably still use for UI and other mission-related tasks).

Flags are what is used to communicate in ME in general, and between modules DML in particular. Since DML modules make it easy to communicate, flag usage in DML-enhanced mission increases significantly.

4.2.7.2 ZONE-LOCAL FLAGS: *name

There is another feature DML feature that, combined with Zones, exponentially raises flag utility: **local flags**. Any mission designer who has spent just a little time designing DML-enhanced missions has assembled some small ‘Zone Automations: an assembly of DML modules that talk to each other purely inside the zone: often involving a delay flag, raise flag, messenger, count down, pulse flag or randomizer. The problem with these “automatons” is that they still require one or more unique flags to communicate with each other, and that makes them difficult and ungainly to work with, especially when using copy/paste.

Enter zone-local flags: these flags, recognizable by a name that **begins with an asterisk “*”** is zone-local. This means that a different zone that uses exactly the same name will access its own zone-local incarnation, and not cross signal with a same-named flag in another zone. In the example on the right, the raiseFlag module bangs flag “*1”, which the stacked smoke module’s input startSmoke? uses. So, all modules that stack on this zone share the value of *1. To any module attached to a different zone, that flag is not only invisible, that zone may even have its own *1 flag with a different value. This way, this zone can pass values between its modules without cluttering your mission’s flag name space.

Name	Value	
smoke	random	
paused	yes	
startSmoke?	*1	
raiseFlag	*1	
afterTime	1-20	

4.2.7.3 FLAG NAMING RULES

So how can we distinguish between flags, and how do we use them? Generally speaking, ME-compatible flags were numbers only, while DML flags could be named anything (with some restrictions: they should not begin with a digit, and must not contain a comma ‘,’). Since Mid-2022, ME also supports names like DML. A special subclass of DML flags, the zone-local flags all start with an asterisk, and otherwise have the same restrictions as other DML flags.

	ME “Classic”	ME “New”, DML	DML Zone-Local
Format	Positive Number, (new: Alphanumeric)	Alphanumeric, must not contain comma , must not start with asterisk “*”, double quote “” or digit (‘0’…‘9’)	Starts with asterisk “, alphanumeric, must not contain comma ,
Examples	123 99 2898	A12 With blank F***d up Yup “quotes” too	*1 *A12 *fireCloner *ok multi **
Scope / Visibility	Entire DCS	DML modules, Lua Scripts Entire DCS (newer versions)	Only DML modules in same zone
Invisible to		Old DCS versions	Everyone outside Zone

4.2.7.4 DML FLAG RANGES

There is one case in which “classic” ME number-only flags make sense, and I recommend that you make use of it when it suits your needs: for flag ranges, e.g. “10-20”. This only works with numerical global (old-school ME) flag names, and you must be careful not to accidentally mix these with local flags. Used strategically, though, numerical flag ranges can be quite comfortable. Mission designers’ discretion is advised.

4.2.8 DML Flags and access via API / global access to local Flags

So how are DML flags accessible from Lua? This is luckily quite simple, since DCS Lua scripting always supports named flags in addition to numbered. So if you choose a globally named flag (e.g. “Eagle Landed”) that flag is also available from Lua.

“Local” flags (flags starting with an asterisk “*”, e.g. “*boom”) are also accessible from outside if you observe DML’s local name creation rules. When you designate a flag as local in a zone’s attribute starting the flag name with an asterisk “*”, all that DML does is prepend the zone’s name. So, if a zone name “Hog Starting Area” uses a local flag “*hog rolling”, that flag is accessible to Lua (*and from other zones as well!*) by its global name “Hog Starting Area*hog rolling”

4.2.9 Module Configuration Zones

Since Trigger Zones are so convenient, most modules also use them to provide the option to set configuration values, or to pass data for processing. In these cases, the zones also use attributes with values to pass data to a module, while the Trigger Zone’s name itself is used to anchor the zone to the relevant module. Configuration zones are mission global – they control how a module works across the entire map.



In above example, we see three configuration zones: one each for cfxCommander (“CommanderConfig”), limitedAirframes (“limitedAirframesConfig”), and cfxGroundTroops (“groundTroopsConfig”). As mentioned, for configuration zones, their **name** is relevant: **it must match exactly** the name that is specified in the module’s description.

Being able to control configurations with Trigger Zones makes it easy to curtail a module to your mission's requirements; all you need to do is add the relevant attribute to a correctly named zone, and your module is configured.

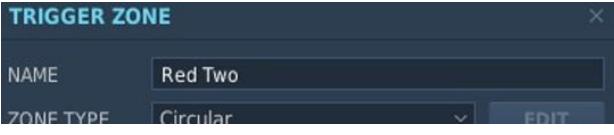
Unlike with most other zones, placement (location) of a configuration zones irrelevant, you can place them anywhere you like. A good place for them is somewhere out of the way where they can't confuse or get in the way (one of the corners of the map, for example). Some people also like to color-code config zones (we use yellow).

4.2.10 Orders

Ordering troops is an ability multiple modules support in DML: modules that can produce (spawn) units, and are able to give, or pass on, orders. Orders are a DML concept that is not accessible from DCS ME, and using orders requires the presence of some DML modules.

Generally, orders are entered as attributes in the Zone enhancement that produces them (e.g. Spawners, Owned Zones), and then are handled while the modules pass group ownership between them. Some Order Attribute requires parameters. When needed, these are supplied as separate attributes. For example, the 'guard' orders require a parameter that tells the module at which range enemy troops are automatically engaged. For this, a separate 'range' attribute is added to the zone.

4.2.10.1 Available Orders

Orders	Description	Parameters
guard	Places the group in guard mode. It will actively look for enemies and, upon detecting them, will move towards and engage the enemies. After destroying all enemy units, the group goes back to guard mode. If given, range defines to what distance (in m) enemy ground units are detected.	range
attackOwnedZone	Automatically seek out the nearest enemy or neutral owned zone, and move to conquer it. If the zone is conquered while this group is still under way, it looks for the next closest owned zone. If there are no more owned zones, orders are switched to 'guard'	
attackZone	<p>Move to attack the zone referenced by name in the 'target' attribute. The name of a Zone is the same as you entered in the "Name" field for the Trigger Zone in ME at the very top.</p>  <p>So, to attack the zone defined above you would first enter "attackZone" as value for the "orders" attribute, and then enter "Red Two" as value for the "target" attribute. If the target zone can't be found, the group's orders are switched to 'guard'</p>	target

Orders	Description	Parameters
lase laze	<p>These units do not engage the enemy, but lase any enemy target that they detect up to a distance of the range parameter. Lase code is 1688 and currently can't be changed. Targets must have LOS, or they won't be lased.</p> <p>Just one of the units lasers, the other units are back-ups if the lasing unit is killed.</p> <p>Units that have lasing orders interact with the jtacGUI script by passing target information and alerting players that lasing information is available.</p> <p>Order attribute can be named 'laze' or 'lase'</p>	range
training train dummy dummies	<p>All units are issued 'ROE HOLD' and will not engage any enemy. Once all units are destroyed, the entire group respawns after cooldown. This is useful for training missions where you want to set up self-replenishing enemy targets that don't fight back, for example for bombing schools.</p> <p>Order attribute can be named 'training' or 'train' DO NOT USE AUTOREMOVE with these orders, or you'll have lots of targets - quickly</p>	

4.2.10.2 "wait-" Prefix for orders

When units spawn, it's not always in the interest of the mission's design that they carry out their orders immediately. This is especially true for units that are intended to lase targets, or move to target zones only after they have been transported to their destination.

To temporarily stay an order, you can prepend the word "wait-" to the orders (do not forget the hyphen). For example, when you want troops to lase targets after they have been transported, their orders for the spawner is "wait-lase", instead of just "lase". Once the troops have been transported, the 'wait-' prefix is removed, and the orders are carried out. As long as the orders carry a 'wait-' prefix, they are interpreted as 'guard' with default range.

4.2.11 Spawn Formations (spawners)

Note:

The following only applies to units being spawned by spawners. If you dynamically spawn units in a mission with CloneZones, those are assembled in the same formation you gave them in ME.

When groups are spawned, they assemble into a formation. You can tell the spawners what formation the group should assume. This is purely for the group's initial arrangement, should the group move, they will break that formation. A formation always assembles around a point and takes a second parameter that defines the area that the formation covers (size). For this the spawner usually takes the Zone's center and radius, but some spawners can work with polar coordinates and/or displacement (r, phi) to define where to assemble and at what size.

Formation	Description
line	A single file of units, left to right. If there is only one unit, the center of the spawn zone is used as position. Use this formation to place a single unit exactly where the spawner is located (most other formations start with the zone's periphery)
line_v	A single column of units
chevron	A chevron with the middle units most forward
scattered, random	Units are spread randomly across the zone
circle, circle_forward	Units are arrayed in a circle, all facing forward (same direction)
circle_in	Units are arrayed in a circle, all facing inwards towards center (like a huddle)
circle_out	Units are arrayed in a circle, all facing outwards (very good for SAM)
grid, square, rect	Units are packed into a grid with optimal (rectangle with smallest surface) fit for the number of units. Note that even if you specify 'square' as formation, it is not guaranteed that the units form a square
cols, 2deep	Units are arrayed in two columns
2wide	Units are arrayed in two lines



Above: 15 BTR-80 spawned in “grid” formation

4.2.12 Spawning: Type String and Type String Arrays

Spawning units requires some deeper DCS knowledge about units that can be difficult to come by; it is currently not covered in DCS’s documentation: Unit Type Designations, that DML and DCS variously refer to as ‘Type’, ‘Type Name’, ‘Type String’ or ‘Type Array’. It is a short text (string) that uniquely identifies to the game engine which 3D model and weapons to use, and it can deviate significantly from how it is named in ME. For example, the internal ‘Type’ of what is called “LUV HMMWV Jeep” in ME is “Hummer”. This means that to find the Type for the unit that you want to spawn, you must find an information source that can provide you with the correct type string. This is a possible source you may find helpful, as I used for all type strings in this document:

<https://github.com/mrSkortch/DCS-miscScripts/tree/master/ObjectDB>

Modules (and methods from the API) that spawn units request such a “Type String”, or “Type String Array” for the purpose of identifying what unit to spawn.

Since that the **correct value for this attribute is usually invisible** for ME users, it must be taken from (third party) documentation. As mentioned above, the “Type String” in DML corresponds to the “type” attribute in the spawn data table, and “typeName” attribute in the game’s object DB.

Since it’s desirable to spawn more than one unit per group, modules support a “Type String Array”. This is simply a string that contains multiple Type Strings (one for each unit), separated by comma “,”.

- For example, to spawn three Infantry Soldiers carrying the M4 and a single LUV HMMWV Jeep, use the Type String Array “Soldier M4, Soldier M4, Soldier M4, Hummer”.

Note that again, the type string value for “Soldier M4” was retrieved via external sources, just like “Hummer” before.

Important Note

You *can* insert **blanks to separate** the individual type strings visually (i.e. after the comma) - but be careful: do not insert blanks into the type string itself.

4.2.13 Ownership / Owned Zones

Owned Zones are DML zones that are in possession of a faction (note that this is a DML feature and not available in ME directly). Modules use this in zones that use ownership to control behaviors:

- Change in ownership can trigger a callback for some owned zones
- Spawners can stop spawning when controlled by the wrong faction
- Troops can automatically be ordered to seek out and attack the nearest owned zone
- FARP Zones automatically handle ownership change and spawn the correct resources

Owned zones are conquered by placing ground units inside the zone. If only one side has ground units inside an owned zone, ownership is transferred to that side, and stays with that side until only ground units from the other faction are inside the zone. Neutral units do not count, and a zone can be captured with a single unit even if there are neutral units inside.

Script Authors be advised that although there are many enhancements available to handle the ownership of a zone, the ‘owner’ attribute itself is provided (but not managed!) by the cfxZones foundation module, so you can access that attribute even if you do not include zone-based enhancements.

[Note: it’s currently planned to separate the cfxOwnedZones into the ownership part, and the producing part that is currently integrated into cfxOwnedZones for a clearer separation of these concepts]

4.3 Using DML with Lua (Lua Only)

PLEASE BE ADVISED

If this is the first time you are reading this document, I strongly recommend that you skip this rather technical section and move directly to →4.4 Using Zone Enhancements to acquaint yourself with Zone Enhancements first and play around a few of the included demos. It will make understanding the “DML Way” much easier.

The Demos, Zone Enhancements, and Feature Enhancements should be your first steps exploring DML. You’ll eventually return here to learn the nitty gritty and how to coax the most out of DML by using your own Lua scripts. For now, just remember that this section exists.

DML uses a design philosophy common to many commercial game engines, and it may be helpful for mission designers to adopt a similar design approach in their own missions, as it dramatically speeds up mission design, modularity, and reduces test requirements.

Modern game engines organize around a couple of main principles:

- *Game States* that describe the main game “situations” (e.g. “assembling”, “ingress”, “attack”, “egress”)
- *Update Loop* that performs Game State-appropriate actions (e.g. generate random encounters during ingress) and may generate state-changing “Events”.
- *Event Handlers* that are invoked at very specific situations, called ‘Events’. Event handlers decide if one Game State should transition to another (all planes have taken off) and change the Game State accordingly.
- *Configuration Data* provided from ME (debugging, difficulty, etc)
- A *Start()* method to get everything in position and kick off updates

4.3.1 Skel: The most basic mission script

The most basic usable mission script implements two of those ideas: an event handler and an update method. Thus a truly bare-bones mission script looks something like this:

```
skel = {}  
function skel:onEvent(event) -- event handler  
end  
  
function skel.update()  
    -- schedule next update invocation  
    timer.scheduleFunction(skel.update, {}, timer.getTime() + 1)  
    -- check states and act accordingly  
end  
  
world.addEventHandler(skel) -- connect event handler  
skel.update() -- start update cycle
```

Above minimal script is a fully functional mission script that can handle events and updates every second. It doesn’t really *do* anything, but above is pretty much what all good mission scripts boil down to. We’ll now build and expand on that concept.

4.3.2 Game States

You can always divide a mission into discrete phases, or “states”. You can usually easily define the conditions when a mission goes from one state to the other. One of the surprising discoveries is that – when done correctly – a mission usually has very few states, and that states follow a strict sequence; also, you will find that it’s quite easy to determine/define what makes a mission to transition from one state to another. Once you have determined the relevant states, it becomes easy to determine what to look for: the things that make a mission change its state.

4.3.3 Update() Loop

This is a “main” loop that is invoked regularly – for example once every second. All it does is read the current *state* of your mission, and branch to the appropriate state handlers. Usually, it does nothing, as few states require constant hands-on management from the mission. The Update Loop thus usually consists of a few simple state checks followed by the occasional branch and invocation.

4.3.4 Event Handler

Events are pre-defined situations that can influence a mission’s state, but not necessarily so (meaning: an event carries the possibility of changing the state, but does not necessarily always do so. For example, a ‘take off’ event by itself does not mean that a mission can progress to ‘ingress’ state, it may require that all planes of a package have taken off). Therefore, in addition to invoking a main update loop, most game engines also provide means for scripts to be told that certain events have occurred, and provide hooks for designers to place callbacks to be invoked in such cases: “event handlers”.

As one of the central means to manage a game’s flow of control, DCS of course provides its own event dispatcher: `world.addEventHandler()`. Script authors can use this to subscribe to world events and thus be ‘in the loop’ if something happens.

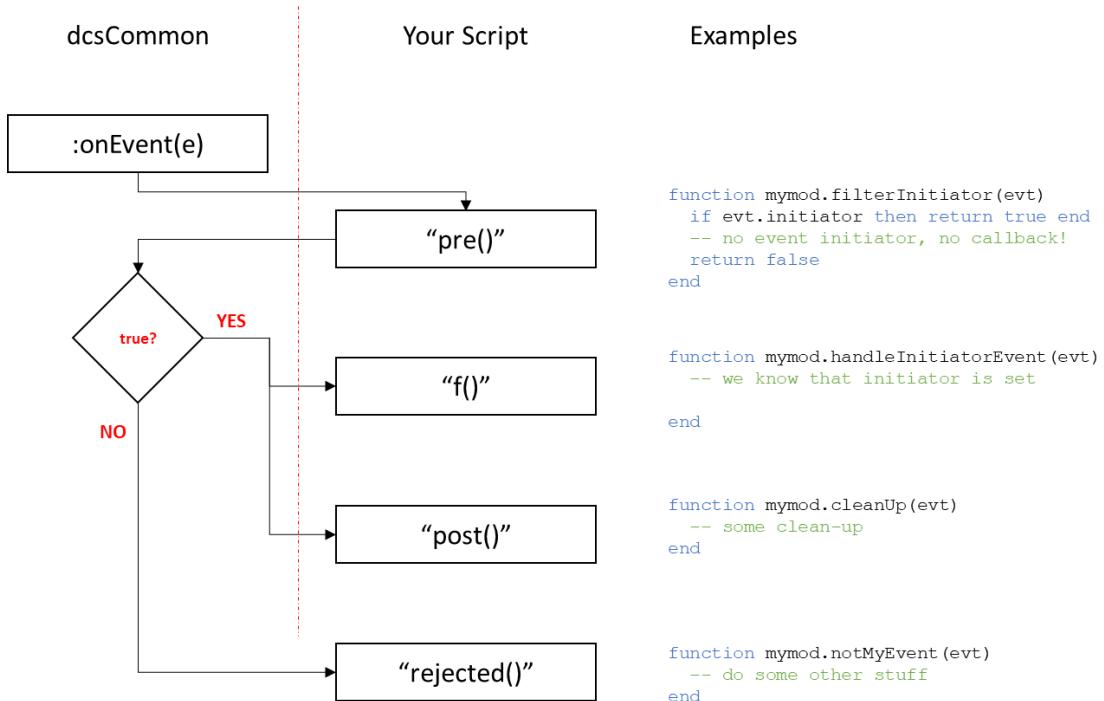
4.3.4.1 *dcsCommon event dispatcher*

The ‘bedrock’ module `dcsCommon` (see later) provides a convenient, modular replacement for the one provided by DCS. Instead of implementing your own `onEvent()` methods on your own tables and calling `world.addEventHandler()`, you can use `dcsCommon`’s more advanced event handler that allows for the following features:

- *Use any method name for event processing*
You can freely name your event responding method, it does not have to be `onEvent`
- *Optional pre-processor method*
You can pass your own pre-processing method to analyze the event data. This pre-processor then decides (by returning true) if the event processor method is invoked.
- *Optional post-processor*
You can pass your own function that is invoked only after event processing method was invoked. Handy for closing transactional brackets, clearing data etc.

- *Optional non-processor (rejected)*

You can pass your own function that is to be invoked when the pre-processor decided that the event processor is not to be invoked.



4.3.5 ME-provided “Configuration Zones”

Some mission- or map-specific data is often the only information that changes between missions (e.g. the names of critical units, airfield names, difficulty settings, etc.). The same is true for important switches like turning on debugging, or disabling some feature. Data-only information should be moved to a GUI-based editor rather than source code. This is because the latter forces developers to change their source code for every map or scenario. Since DML provides easy access to zone properties, and because ME provides a nice, convenient GUI to add, modify and remove properties, we combine these to an ideal solution that we call ‘Configuration Zones’.

DML-internal modules use them heavily, and DML’s API provides mission designers with easy access as well. Here’s how a script reads all attributes (name/value) of a ME-created zone named “myData”:

```
local theZone = cfxZones.getZoneByName ("myData")
local myData = cfxZones.getAllZoneProperties (theZone)
```

myData now contains a table with all name/value attributes that the mission designer added to that zone in ME. You can use this data just as if it was typed into a table somewhere in your code.

WARNING:

After collecting data from a zone into a table, instead of keeping this data in a separate table, you may be tempted to simply copy all attributes as configuration data into the main module. Let's say you wanted to read code module skel's configuration from myData. You may think of doing the following:

```
for attr, val in pairs (myData) do
    skel[attr] = val
end
```

That is a **very bad idea**, as (in a *best-case scenario*) you will inadvertently overwrite parts of your code. **Always individually validate each configuration attribute** in code, provide correct defaults, and **set module-configuration variables explicitly** instead:

```
skel.singleUse = cfxZones.getBoolFromZoneProperty(
    theZone, "singleUse", false)
```

4.3.6 The Start() Method

Everything gets rolling in a start method that

- Checks the integrity of the mission (is everything where it should be?)
- reads configuration data
- sets up the initial game state
- connects all event handlers
- and then gets the update ball rolling

You start a mission by invoking its start() method.

4.3.7 The “Main” Skeleton

Putting above together, we usually get a basic mission code “skeleton” that looks something like this (note that the event handler isn’t yet connected):

```
skel = {}

skel.state = "" -- state of the mission

function skel.handleEvent(event)
    -- handle event
end

function skel.update()
    -- schedule next update invocation
    timer.scheduleFunction(skel.update, {}, timer.getTime() + 1)
    -- check states and act accordingly
    if skel.state == "hi there" then
        -- do something
    end
end

function skel.start()
    -- init variables
    skel.state = "hi there"
    -- read config zone data (not done here)
    -- hook up event handlers (see later)
    -- start update loop
    skel.update()
end

-- start the mission
skel.start()
```

Above script is already a fully functioning mission that has its update() method invoked once per second, and that mission designers can use to monitor a game’s state. The missing pieces are the event handler, and config loader - but hooking that up is similarly trivial.

DML modules provide callbacks for a (rather large) host of different events that you can choose from. Not all event handlers are structured identically, but the central premise is always the same: the event handlers determine if a state change is required, and the update loop handles the current state. If the main loop detects that a change in state is required (possibly by determining that a mission is complete), it usually synthesizes an event, and itself invokes the appropriate event handler.

When you look into the code of the various DML modules, you’ll find that they also implement this design: cfxZones uses it to update moving zones, ReconMode monitors aircrafts that way, etc. Most DML modules provide callbacks that you can tie into your own scripted event handlers to be notified when something interesting happens. As a result, your own mission code quite often resembles above skeleton, with a few additional lines thrown in

to handle a handful of specific events, and to determine when the obligatory ‘Mission Complete’ message is to be displayed.

Note: for a practical, more expanded working example of the skeleton code (dmlMain)

See “Landing Counter.miz” for a working example of a mission with event handlers

4.3.8 Extending DML with Lua (tbc)

4.3.8.1 Structure of a standard DML Module

4.3.8.2 Accessing named zones

4.3.8.3 Collecting Zones with a named attribute

4.3.8.4 Accessing attributes in a zone

4.3.8.5 Supporting persistence

4.4 Using Zone Enhancements

All Zone Enhancements provide key functionality that they attach to a Trigger Zone that mission designers place with ME. In order to find out which zone is intended for them, the modules look for key attributes in zones that tell them to attach their functionality to that zone.

Name	Value	
artilleryTarget	One	
f?	100	
shellNum	17	
strength	700	

For example, the Smoke Zones module looks through all Trigger Zones in a mission for an attribute called ‘smoke’. If it finds such an attribute, it knows that this zone has data that tell it what to do (place smoke at the center of the zone, and use the color that is given as the value for the smoke attribute)

Using this simple mechanism allows DML several important features

- Use ME’s GUI to place a module’s functionality, including copy/paste to rapidly populate a map with zone enhancements
- Integration with ME Flags, as flags can be used to tell modules which flags to watch or modify if something interesting happens
- Use Trigger Zones to pass configuration/setup data – so a module’s code does not have to be modified to curtail it for a mission.
- Stack multiple modules onto the same Trigger Zone – each module homes in on its own keyword; you can therefore use the same Zone for more than one module. If you take advantage of this ability, you must take care that if two modules use the same attribute name, its value is compatible with both modules. A common attribute for many zones is the “verbose” attribute. If a Trigger Zone is shared by multiple modules that all support the “verbose” attribute, it is up to you to ensure that the value you choose is applicable to all.

Using zone enhancement is simple:

- Add the module and all dependent modules to your mission in a MISSION START trigger
- Add a Trigger Zone (or more)
- Add an attribute to that trigger zone, and name it as described in that module’s “ME Attributes” section.
- (Optionally: add a config zone for that module to change a module’s base behavior)

DML currently provides the following Zone Enhancements for your missions:

- **Smoke Zone**
A zone that provides perpetual colored smoke at its center
- **RND Flags**
A method (attached to a zone) to randomly change a set of flags. Highly flexible, and with great options to make mission randomization much easier
- **Pulse Flags**
A method (attached to a zone) to repeatedly change a flag in a settable interval.

- **Delay Flag**
Pulse Flags smaller, more streamlined sibling: when a flag changes, wait for some time, then change another flag.
- **RaiseFlag**
DML's prime flag raising method. Raise any flag, local or global, at mission start or after a randomizable delay.
- **xFlags**
Flag manipulation and combine module, often used to create win conditions or decisions.
- **Changer**
Flag to convert a flag's value and "gated switch"
- **CountDown**
Counter that counts changes on a flag until its own counter reaches zero. Multitude of versatile options allow you to set this up for many different uses.
- **Object Destruct Detector**
Changes a ME-compatible flag when a map object is destroyed
- **Ground Unit Spawner**
Dynamically (in-mission) spawns ground units that can follow DML orders
- **Cloner**
a.k.a. "Spawner 2.0", this zone can dynamically spawn entire groups, using an ME template (including their template's routes) and works for ground, sea and air units. Unlike Ground Unit Spawners, the cloner does not support DML orders, but uses ME waypoints.
- **Object Spawner**
Dynamically spawns objects and cargo
- **Cargo Receiver**
Can receive dynamically spawned cargo and change ME Flags when cargo was successfully received
- **Artillery (Target) Zone**
Rains destruction onto this zone when told to
- **Owned Zone**
A zone that can change ownership (neutral/red/green) and therefore be conquered
- **FARP Zone**
A FARP with an owned zone (see above) attached. Provides services (rearm, refuel, repair) after being conquered to the owning faction

- **Map Marker**
Places text on the F10 in-game map
- **NDB**
Places a non-directional (movable) beacon (NDB) that you can tune your ADF to. If the zone is set to move via a linked unit (e.g. a ship), the NDB's location updates regularly. NDB can be set to any frequency, AM and FM.
- **Messenger**
A module to display text on the screen, with some niceties added.
- **Unit Zone**
This module is the DML-version of ME trigger zones, except much more convenient and with support for named and local flags
- **Group Tracker**
A module to count and track when groups are added to the tracker or are being destroyed.
- **Wiper**
A module to selectively (or wholesale) remove objects from the game.
- **Radio Trigger**
Provides a convenience DML interface for DCS's communication→radio item triggers that lack a simple reset to be triggered multiple times
- **Base Captured**
This module generates signals (changes flags) and provides ownership information for bases (airfields, FARPs, ships)
- **Radio Menu**
Easily create Communication → F10 Other menus (with up to four items per menu) that trigger (DML-style) flags, and supports cooldown
- **Delicates**
Makes units 'brittle' – when they are damaged even in the slightest, they explode.
- **Impostors**
Turns groups of units into static objects to conserve CPU – and back.
- **Persistence**
Main service module to provide mission save/load capabilities to DML modules. Whenever you want to add mission save capability to your mission, you must first add this module
- **unitPersistence**
Plug-and-play support for saving ground units and static objects placed with ME (i.e. that did not spawn dynamically during the mission). Add it, boom! Done.

- **Sequencer**
A module that generates flag events on a sequence of flags.
- **fireFX**
A module similar to “smoke zone” to place a fire/smoke affect that can be turned on and off at will
- **LZ (Landing Zone)**
A module to detect landings and take-off inside of it

We'll describe each module in detail in the following sections.

4.4.1 Core Abilities (supported by all Zone Enhancements)

Since all Zone enhancements use DML's foundation module “cfxZones” to anchor their functionality, all Zone Enhancements also inherit the foundation's core abilities, i.e. they all support the following attributes:

Name	Description
linkedUnit	Moves the zone's center with the unit who's name exactly matches the value of this attribute. That unit must exist at the beginning of the mission, or the zone will not be linked. Note that you can link units and zones after mission start by using the API
useOffset	Must be set to “yes” or “true” to have this effect, ignored otherwise. Only has an effect if the zone is linked. Keeps the offset between the unit and zone constant. Note that the zone's center remains the same in relation to the unit's center. If the unit turns, the offset does not change with the unit's heading.
(turnWithUnit)	(Currently not implemented, for later expansion of useOffset)
owner	The coalition that owns this zone. Used with many other zone enhancements. Some enhancements can even change this value This attribute is added to all zones, even if not present. Default owner is neutral.

Some care must be taken when using inherited abilities, as they not always work as you may expect. The smoke zone, for example, when used with a linkedUnit attribute, results in smoke that jumps to a new location every 5 minutes, and so on.

4.4.2 cfxSmokeZones

DCS provides a ‘smoke’ effect in various colors that unfortunately ends after a certain time. For missions it may be useful to be able to *permanently* mark a location with colored smoke.

cfxSmokeZones does exactly that: any zone that has the relevant attribute has an automatically “refreshing” smoke at the center with the color that is specified as the attribute’s value. This module is primarily intended to be used via ME, but also provides an API

4.4.2.1 Description

The zone receives a “never-ending” smoke effect of the specified color placed at the center. For this, the zones are placed in a list of managed zones that have their smoke effect refreshed regularly.

To add a smoke effect to the center of a trigger zone, simply add the ‘smoke’ attribute, and enter the desired color (random, green, blue, white, orange, or red) as value.

Name	Value	
smoke	green	

You can either add zones using ME (preferred), or using the API. You can only remove smoke zones from the managed list via API. Once you remove a zone, the smoke effect will not be renewed. This means that the effect usually does not disappear immediately, but when the smoke effect times out after the last refresh.

ME INTEGRATION

You can start the mission with the smoke disabled and have the smoke effect start when a flag changes value. To do so, first add an attribute “paused” with value “true” (this will cause the smoke to be delayed). Then add an attribute “f?” with the number of the flag (e.g. 100) that you want smokeZones to watch. When this flag’s value changes, the smoke starts for this zone.

Name	Value	Description
f? startSmoke?	Name	When the Watchflag triggers, the smoke is started.

Supports DML Flags

4.4.2.2 Dependencies

Requires dcsCommon, cfxZones

4.4.2.3 Module Configuration

None.

4.4.2.4 ME Attributes

To add a permanent, colored smoke effect to a zone, add the following attribute in ME

Name	Description
smoke	<p>Adds a permanent smoke affect to the center of the zone. Possible values for the smoke effect are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “green” or “0” • “red” or “1” • “white” or “2” • “orange” or “3” • “blue” or “4” • “random”, “?” or “rnd” (random color from above) <p>MANDATORY</p>
paused	When true, will not start smoke at mission start, but wait for a signal on the f? flag. Defaults to false (smoke starts at mission beginning). Note that if you set paused to true and omit the f? attribute, you can only start this smoke via API
f? startSmoke?	Watchflag. When this flag triggers, smoke starts. Defaults to <none>
altitude	Altitude (in meters) above ground that the smoke should be created. Defaults to 1m
triggerMethod smokeTriggerMethod	Conditions when the DML Watchflag should trigger Defaults to ‘change’

Supports Watchflags

4.4.2.5 API

In addition to ME you can use a simple API to start and stop a zone’s smoke effect. Unlike with ME, you *can* stop the effect with invocation of API methods.

4.4.2.5.1 addSmokeZoneWithColor(aZone, aColor, anAltitude, paused, onFlag)

Adds aZone to the managed smoke zones. A colored smoke effect of aColor (a number 0 ... 4) is placed in the middle. The effect is maintained indefinitely, or until it is removed from the managed smoke pool via `removeSmokeZone()`. If aColor is omitted, the smoke effect’s color is green.

anAltitude is the altitude in meters above ground where the smoke is placed (defaults to 1 meter if omitted), paused will prevent the smoke from starting immediately when true, and onFlag is the number of the ME flag that smokeZones watches for a change to start the smoke.

If invoked for a zone that is already managed, a second smoke of the new color is added, and eventually, after the old color times out, the new color remains.

4.4.2.5.2 removeSmokeZone(aZone)

removes aZone from the list of managed smoke zones. Note that the smoke will not disappear instantaneously. Instead, the smoke effect will time out and disappear after some time.

4.4.2.5.3 startSmoke(aZone)

Starts a paused smoke zone and sets paused to false. If the zone is already playing the smoke effect, another smoke effect is started. aZone can be a string (name of zone) or the cfxZone

4.4.2.6 *Using the module*

Include the cfxSmokeZones source into a DOSCRIPT Action at the start of the mission

Add a zone to the mission, and add the ‘smoke’ attribute to that zone.

4.4.3 rndFlags

4.4.3.1 Description

This module gives you access to what you have been looking for ever since you started writing missions: a simple, flexible and elegant way randomly set flags to make your missions appear more random.

A classic setup is a mission where you have five different groups of enemies, and you want to randomly activate up to any three of them. Doing this with triggers is possible, but nightmarish to maintain and service later.

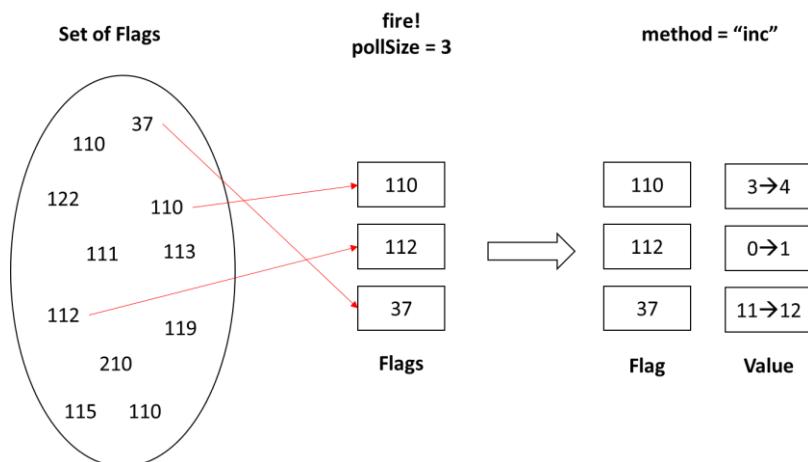
With rndFlags it is just a matter of placing a zone and adding a couple of attributes. rndFlags are exceedingly easy to use, yet incredibly flexible if you need them to be.

Basic Function

rndFlags uses Trigger Zones only to pass data to the randomizer, so you can place the one anywhere on the map.

All rndFlag randomizers function the same way:

- You give it a set of flags (e.g. “100-110, A42”). These are the flags that the randomizer can choose from
- You tell it “fire!”, and the randomizer picks one or more flags from the set and then changes them



Starting from this simple mechanism, rndFlags can also do a lot more if you wish:

- The set of flag the randomizer chooses from is very flexible, and you can add the same flag multiple times
- The randomizer can pick more than one flags at once
- After picking flags, you can remove them from the set so that the next time the set has become smaller. When a randomizer runs out of flags this way, you can tell it to ‘reshuffle’ the deck by putting all flags back
- You have multiple options to tell the randomizer what to do with the flag it chooses
- You can “fire” the randomizer as often as you want

Set of Flags

You start with a set of flags that you pass to the randomizer with the ‘flags!’ attribute. You list the flags to include separated

- by comma (e.g. “3, G, 4, 5,”)
- the order in which flags are listed is not relevant
- you can also include whole ranges by giving the lower and upper bound separated by a hyphen (e.g. “10-20”). This is only applicable for ME-compatible (number-only) flags
- You can mix individual flags and ranges (e.g. “A, 4-8, 9”)
- You can add the same flag multiple times (e.g., “9, 4, SomeFlag, 4”). This will add that flag **multiple times** into the set.
- Ranges can overlap with other ranges and individual flags (e.g., “A19, 4-10, 6-12”)

Why is it possible to be able to have multiple instances same flag in the set? Because that allows you to increase that flag’s likelihood of being chosen over the other flags without adding another layer of calculation to the mix.

Imagine you want flag 5 have a 50% chance to be chosen, and flags 6 and 7 each only a 25% Chance. You achieve that simply by creating a set “5, 5, 6,7” for the randomizer

Poll Size (optional)

Each time the randomizer ‘fires’ (chooses flags from the set), it takes a number of items from the set of flags. By default, the randomizer chooses a single flag. You can easily change this with the optional pollSize attribute. pollSize understands two different formats as value.

- *Single Number* (e.g. 3)
The number you give is the ‘sample size’, the number of items the randomizer chooses from the set of flags. You can set this to any positive number, (if that number exceeds the number of items in the set, the entire set is chosen).
If for example you choose pollSize = 3, each time you fire the randomizer, three flags are chosen from the set.
Note that during the pick process, the randomizer makes sure that it does not pick the same *item* twice (of course that does not prevent the same flag to be drawn twice if you have two items that reference the same flag)
- *Range* (e.g. 2-5)
If you give a range pollSize randomizes the size each time the randomizer fires to a number between (and including) the lower and upper bounds. So, if you set pollSize to “1-3”, each time the randomizer fires, pollSize can be 1, 2 or 3.

Remove and Reshuffle (optional)

By default, each time the randomizer fires, the set of flags to choose from is the same. You can change that by enabling the ‘remove’ option. If set, each time the randomizer fires, the item(s) it chooses from the set are removed. For example, if the start set is “5, 4, 9”, and the randomizer picked the “4” item, the next time the randomizer is fired, it uses a reduced set with the remaining items “5, 9”.

This continues until the randomizer runs out of flags. When the randomizer runs out of flag, it looks if you also set the ‘reshuffle’ option. If reshuffle is set, the randomizer “reshuffles” all flags by returning to the original full set of flags that it started with.

If reshuffle is disabled, it simply does nothing, as all flags are exhausted, and there is nothing to do.

Flag Change Method (optional)

After the randomizer has chosen the flag(s), it changes them according to standard DML Flag methods.

fire! – running a randomizer cycle

There are multiple ways to have a rndFlag randomizer run a cycle:

- `onStart` (optional)

A randomizer that has the `onStart` attribute set to true will run the randomizer 0.25 seconds after the mission starts. The 0.25 second delay is intentional to allow all other modules to initialize and the mission itself to ‘settle’ before DML starts polling and changing flags.

- `f?` or `rndPoll?`

This is a DML watchflag. The randomizer watches this flag for change, and each time the value of this flag changes, the randomizer fires (undergoes a randomizer cycle).

Note that if you choose **neither `onStart` nor `f?`** for a randomizer, it will **automatically enable `onStart`** to ensure that it runs at least once.

Putting it all together

Let’s begin with the most basic, and most-often used randomizer: A randomizer that at mission start chooses one flag out of a set.

Name	Value	
RND	one of 5 at start	
flags!	1-5	

The randomizer on the right creates a set of five flags: “1, 2, 3, 4, 5”.

Since there are no other attributes, the following happens when the mission starts:

- No `pollSize` attribute is present, so `pollSize` is set to 1 (one)
- No “method” attribute is present, so `method` is set to “on”
- Neither “`onStart`” nor “`f?`” attributes are given, which causes `onStart` to be automatically set to true
- Since `onStart` is true, `fire!` is scheduled for 0.25 seconds after mission start
- At 0.25 seconds mission time, the randomizer fires
 - A flag from the set “1, 2, 3, 4, 5” is chosen
 - The chosen flag is set to 1 (`method = “on”`)

So let's get a bit more fancy: we have a mission with 6 groups of enemies. We want that two to four of them activate at mission start. Each group is activated by their own flag, numbered 10 through 15

Name	Value	
RND	2 to 4 of 6 at start	
flags!	10-15	
pollSize	2-4	

We add two additional attributes: pollSize and rndPollSize. Let's see what happens when we run the mission:

- No “method” attribute is present, so method is set to “on”
- Neither “onStart” nor “f?” attributes are given, which causes onStart to be automatically set to true
- Since onStart is true, fire! Is scheduled for 0.25 seconds after mission start
- At 0.25 seconds mission time, the randomizer fires
 - pollSize is set to a random number between 2 and 4, including 2 and 4. Let's assume 2 is chosen
 - Two flags from the set “10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15” are chosen
 - The two chosen flags are set to 1 (method = “on”), which activates the groups that are connected to the two flags

Now let's go wild. We have a number of enemy groups, each activated by their own flag. They are activated by flags in the range from 20-30, and another group at flag 37.

We use flag 100 to activate the randomizer, and each time we run a cycle, we want to activate 2 to 4 of the groups. When the mission starts, the first batch of enemies should activate. Also, when a group has been activated by the randomizer, it should not be activated again in later cycles.

Name	Value	
RND	2 to 4 remove, start & watch	
flags!	20-30, 37	
pollSize	2-4	
remove	yes	
onStart	yes	
f?	100	

So let's dry-run this setup to see what happens when the mission is run:

- No “method” attribute is present, so method is set to “on”
- Since onStart is true, fire! Is scheduled for 0.25 seconds after mission start
- This randomizer watches flag 100 for changes
- At 0.25 seconds mission time, the randomizer fires
 - pollSize is randomized to a value from 2 to 4. Let us assume that “3” is chosen
 - Three flags from the set “20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 37” are chosen. Let us assume they are “26, 21, 29”
 - The three chosen flags are set to 1 (method = “on”), which activates the groups that are connected to these flags
 - The three items “26, 21, 29” are removed from the set for this randomizer
- (some time later) flag 100 changes, causing this randomizer to fire:
 - pollSize is randomized to a value from 2 to 4. Let us assume that “2” is chosen
 - Two flags from the (reduced) set “20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 30, 37” are chosen. Let us assume it's “28, 20”

- The chosen flags “20” and “28” are set to 1 (method = “on”), which activates the groups that are connected to this flag
- The items “20” and “28” are removed from the set for this randomizer
- (this repeats until all items are removed from the set)
- (a little later yet again) flag 100 changes, causing this randomizer to fire
 - The randomizer notices it has no items in its set and simply does nothing.

Further Considerations

rndFlags allows you to quickly add the ability to change several randomly selected flags from a set of flags. On a purely ME level, this requires that you then also add triggers to your mission that watch these flags, and perform an action (like, for example, activate a group) when a flag changes.

Note that many DML modules (those who support query ‘?’ attributes) watch flags by themselves and initiate action without requiring ME triggers. You can quickly write a highly randomized mission by placing a bunch of Spawn Zones and wire their query flags to those that are changed by a randomizer. One of the most powerful mission design concepts is combining a randomizer (rndFlags) with a pulser (pulseFlags) and Clone Zones to quickly create an unpredictable, near-infinite range of mission set-ups.

ME INTEGRATION

This module is all about ME integration. It uses Zones only to be able to feed attributes into the module, and then fires the ME flags as described, so you can place the zones wherever you please. To control a randomizer with a flag, use the f? attribute

Name	Value	Description
f? in? rndPoll?	Name	DML Watchflag to start a new random cycle. Defaults to <none set> You can use any synonym, but only one per Zone.
RND!	List flags	Defines the set of flag names that the randomizer chooses the flags from and then sets them according to the “method” attribute.
done+1 done! rndDone!	Name	The flag name to bang! when the randomizer has run out of flags to change, and reshuffle is false (randomizer did nothing) Is banged! every time that the randomizer runs a cycle on an empty flag set

Supports DML Flags

4.4.3.2 Dependencies

rndFlags requires dcsCommon and cfxZones

4.4.3.3 Module Configuration

To configure rndFlags via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere

- Name it “rndFlagsConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Show debugging information. Default is off

4.4.3.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
RND!	<p>Marks this as a randomizer.</p> <p>Set of flags, as a comma (’,’) separated list of the flag names that can be chosen from. The flag names can appear in any sequence. Supports ranges like “2-7” (ME numbers only). Flag names can be included multiple times, including the same flag name multiple times simply increases the likelihood that this number is chosen.</p> <p>Examples: “2, 4, A, A, F, 6” “A9, 3-18, C33, samAttack, 11-11”</p> <p>MANDATORY</p>
method rndMethod	DML Output flag method. Defaults to “inc”
pollSize	Number of items to choose from the set of flags during a cycle. Can be a range: two numbers separated by a hyphen, e.g. “2-5”. When a range is given, pollSize is randomized each cycle to a number between the lower and upper bounds, inclusive. Defaults to 1.
remove	When set to true, the flags that were chosen during a cycle are removed from the set of flags. Defaults to false.
reshuffle	When set, the original full set of flags is restored when all flags have been removed Defaults to false
f? in? rndPoll?	DML Watchflag to start a random cycle. Defaults to <none set> You can use any synonym, but only one per Zone
triggerMethod rndTriggerMethod	Watchflag condition when to trigger. Defaults to “change”
onStart	If true, a cycle is run for this randomizer 0.25 seconds after the mission starts. Defaults to false
	NOTE: if no f? (nor synonym) is specified, and onStart is false, the randomizer will never activate. You’ll receive a warning.
done+1 done!	The flag number to bang! when the randomizer has run out of flags to change, and reshuffle is false (randomizer did nothing) Is banged! every time that the randomizer runs a cycle on an empty flag set

- Supports DML Flags**
- Supports DML Watchflags**
- Supports zone-local verbosity**

4.4.3.5 Persistence

RNDFlags persist the current flag pool if you have chosen to remove flags each time you run a random cycle. Do if you started with (a, b, c, d) and already ‘spent’ the ‘c’ flag, upon loading the randomizer only has the flags (a, b, d) at its disposal. Reshuffle will reset to full original stock.

4.4.3.6 API

None.

4.4.3.7 Using the module

Include the rndFlags source into a DOSCRIPT Action at the start of the mission

Add a zone to the mission and add the ‘RND’ and “flags” attributes to that zone.

4.4.4 pulseFlags

4.4.4.1 Description

This is the second essential ME flag manipulation module: while rndFlags allows you to randomly select many from many flags and set them, pulseFlags allows you to change the same flag multiple times, over time.

Use pulseFlags to drive repetitive actions and sequences in your missions.

“Pulsing”

In the context of DML, “pulsing a flag” means changing the value of a flag one or more times. The pulseFlag module gives mission designers the ability to create ‘pulsers’ that automatically change a flag in certain ways, one time or many times. The pulser has the ability to randomize the time between pulses.

A pulser always works with a flag that the pulser changes, a method how to change the flag, an interval (time) between changes, and an optional limit on the number of pulses (changes).

Pulse Number and Frequency

A pulser can change the flag indefinitely, or a set number of times (e.g. 12 pulses). If you set no limit to the number of ‘pulses’ (flag changes), it runs indefinitely. If you set a maximum number of pulses, the pulser stops after the last pulse (goes into paused state). You can randomize the number of pulses generated by supplying it with a range (e.g. 3-7), and the pulser will generate a random number of pulses within that range.

Between each ‘pulse’ (flag change), the pulser waits some time. You can either set this interval time to a fixed number or a range of seconds. When you pass a range, the time between pulses is randomized to fall inside that range (e.g. 3-5 can be any number between 3 and 5, inclusive).

Putting it together

As before, let’s start with the bare necessities: create a pulser that indefinitely changes flag 100 once every two seconds.

Name	Value	
pulse	once every 2 seconds	
flag!	100	
time	2	

When run, the pulser on the right:

- Sets method to ‘flip’ (default)
- When the mission starts, flag 100 is ‘flipped’ (anything other than zero to zero, zero to one) [note that to be precise, the initial pulse starts one second after the mission starts]
- The pulser then schedules the next change to flag 100 in 2 seconds. This repeats until the mission ends or the pulser is paused

Let’s make this more random: we want the time between the pulses to vary from 2 to 5 seconds.

Name	Value	
pulse	once every 2-5 seconds	
flag!	100	
time	2-5	

As you can see, specifying a range automatically makes the pulser to pick a random number between 2 and 5 (which includes 2 and 5).

Now, lets create a pulser that changes flag 100 exactly 7 times, with 10 to 30 seconds between each pulse, and then increment flag 110 when it is done

Starting a pulse

When the mission starts, pulseFlags automatically starts all pulsers that do not have their “onStart” attribute set to false. A paused pulser can be started with the activate? flag.

Name	Value	
pulse	once every 2-5 seconds	
flag!	100	
time	10-30	
pulses	7	
done+1	110	

ME Integration

Like rndFlag, pulseFlag provides comprehensive ME integration to drive most of your flag needs.

Name	Value	Description
pulse	Name	This is the flag that gets changed according to method each time a pulse is sent.
pulse!	Name	Increment this flag's value when the number of pulses as defined with the 'pulses' attribute have completed. Note that a pulser without a pulses attribute won't do this.
done!	Name	
pulsesDone!		
activate?	Name	Watchflag that restarts a paused pulser (with the first pulse)
startPulse?		
pause?	Name	Watchflag that when triggered, stops the pulser and puts it into paused state
pausePulse?		

4.4.4.2 Dependencies

plusFlags requires dcsCommon and cfxZones

4.4.4.3 Module Configuration

To configure pulseFlags via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “pulseFlagsConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Show debugging information. Default is off

4.4.4.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
pulse!	Marks this as a pulser. The value describes the flags to change on each pulse. The flags are changed according to the method attribute. Use only one synonym per zone. MANDATORY
method pulseMethod outputMethod	DML flag output method. Use only one synonym per zone. Defaults to "flip"
done! pulsesDone!	This flag's value is changed when the pulser completes a fully run of pulses. Can only happen when the pulses attribute supplies a positive number. Defaults to <none>
activate? startPulse?	Watchflag. When triggered, a paused pulser is reset and then restarted. Use only one synonym per zone. Defaults to <none>
pause? pausePulse?	Watchflag. When triggered, a pulser is paused. Use only one synonym per zone. Defaults to <none>
onStart	When set to false, a pulser starts paused, else active. Defaults to true (pulser starts automatically)
pulses	The number of pulses to complete. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If set to -1, the pulser runs until the mission ends or the pause?-flag changes If set to a number, the pulser will generate that many pulses. If set to a range (e.g. "3-5") the pulser will generate a random number of pulses within that range. Defaults to -1 (endless)
time pulseInterval	Seconds between pulses. You can supply a range (two numbers separated by a hyphen, e.g. "4-19"), the time between pulses is randomized after each pulse to a number in that range. Defaults to 1
zeroPulse	Usually, a pulser starts with an initial pulse ("pulse zero"). This initial pulse can be delayed by <i>time</i> by setting zeroPulse to false. The effect is that the initial pulse happens after the first delay Default is true (initial pulse immediately)

Supports DML Flags

Support Watchflags

Supports zone-local verbosity

4.4.4.5 Persistence

PulseFlag automatically supports persistence. It restores the number of pulses left and re-initializes a running pulse to the number of seconds left.

4.4.4.6 API

None

4.4.4.7 Using the module

Include the pulseFlags source into a DOSCRIPT Action at the start of the mission

Add a zone to the mission and add the ‘pulse’ and “flag!” attributes to that zone.

4.4.5 delayFlags (“Timer”)

4.4.5.1 Description

A streamlined timer: the zone watches for start signal, and a controllable later, it sends a signal. The delay can be randomized, and it can be paused, and reset. It always provides the remaining time (in seconds) on one output

ME INTEGRATION

delayFlag is intended for two main purposes:

- To introduce a controllable / randomizable delay between the input signal and output signal. Example: respond to a request after a few seconds to give more realistic appearance. Stack it on a zone and use zone-local flags for portability and minimal requirements.
- To act a timer that, after it runs down, sets a flag. Use it to set time limits in a mission or control response to user actions (if players do not achieve this within a time frame, do that). For this, use a separate zone, and global flags.

START/RESET, STOP

The input functions like a combined delayed trigger and dead-man switch. Once activated, a timer runs down. When the timer has run down, the output flag is changed. This is the basic delay function.

Simply put “startDelay?” resets and then starts the timer. Note that the timer does not have to run down before it can be restarted. If this happens while the timer is running down, the timer is also re-started. Note that you can use this as a “dead man switch”: as long as when this signal is received before the timer runs down, it restarts and never sends the “delayDone!” output.

If “stopDelay?” triggers, the delay is stopped indefinitely until it is reset and restarted with a signal on “startDelay?”

PAUSE, CONTINUE

In addition to start and stop, you can pause and continue the delay time while it is running with the “pauseDelay?” and “continueDelay?” inputs. Pausing or continuing a timer that is not running has no effect.

REMAINING TIME

At any time, the remaining number of seconds on a timer is available on the “delayLeft” output. If the timer has run down, or hasn’t yet started, that number is -1

RANDOMIZER

You can give a delay range. Each time the start flag is changed, a new delay is picked at random from that range.

4.4.5.2 Dependencies

dcsCommon, cfxZones

4.4.5.3 Module Configuration

To configure delayFlags via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “delayFlagsConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Show debugging information. Default is off

4.4.5.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
timeDelay	Marks this as a delayFlag module. The value of this attribute defines the number of seconds to wait after activation before the output flag is set. Value can be a range in which case delayFlag picks a random number inside the range (including bounds). Defaults to 1 second MANDATORY
out! delayDone!	The flag to bang! after the delay has passed. Use only one synonym per zone
method delayMethod	DML method for output Defaults to “inc”
f? in? startDelay?	Watchflag that starts the delay. Use any synonym, but only one per zone.
triggerMethod delayTriggerMethod	DML Method for Watchflags
stopDelay?	Watchflag that stops a running delay. Has no effect on a stopped delay
pauseDelay?	Watchflag that when triggered pauses the delay to be continued later. Has no effect when triggered when the timer isn't running or is already paused. Defaults to <none>
continueDelay?	Watchflag that when triggered continues a paused delay. Has no effect when triggered when the timer isn't running or not paused. Defaults to <none>
delayLeft	Flag that carries the number of seconds left on the timer (including when delay timer is paused). Carries -1 when timer is not running.

- Supports DML Flags**
- Supports Watchflags**
- Supports zone-local verbosity**

4.4.5.5 Persistence

DelayFlags automatically supports persistence. If a delay flag was running at the point of saving the mission, the time delay is set to the remaining amount of seconds when the mission loads data.

4.4.5.6 API

4.4.5.6.1 `delayFlag.startDelay(theZone)`

Starts the delay on theZone. If the delay is still counting down, it is refreshed.

4.4.5.7 Using the module

Include the delayFlag source into a DOSCRIPT Action at the start of the mission

Add a zone to the mission and add the ‘timeDelay’ and “out!” attributes to that zone.

4.4.6 Raise Flag

4.4.6.1 Description

This is the DML version of ME's ability to set flags. It allows you to set flags directly, without a trip to ME's trigger panel. RaiseFlag has full support for DML flags. In conjunction with local flags (which are supported), raiseFlag becomes a more versatile zone-local replacement for many module's onStart input (which it replaces while we deprecate onStart for most modules)

A raiseFlag module can increment, decrement, flip, or set a flag to a specific value some time after the mission starts. You can randomize the time, and you can prevent it from setting the flag if you stop it before its timer runs down by using the stopFlag? input. The latter allows you to easily design 'race against clock' scenarios.

Use this to set flags in your mission to specific values – either at the start of the mission, or after some (random) time.

4.4.6.2 Dependencies

dcsCommon, cfxZones

4.4.6.3 Module Configuration

To configure raiseFlags via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it "raiseFlagConfig" (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Show debugging information. Default is off

4.4.6.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
raiseFlag raiseFlag!	Marks this as a flag raiser. The value of this attribute is the flag that is to be raised. Use only one synonym per zone MANDATORY
value	Method or value to set the flag to. Supports <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'inc' increments the flag's current value by one• 'dec' decrements the flag's current value by one• 'flip' sets the flag's current value to 0 if it was anything but zero, and to 1 if it was zero.• (number) – set the flag to this number Default is 'inc' – the flag's value will be incremented by one

Name	Description
afterTime	Amount of time (in seconds) after mission start to set the flag. Can be a range. If a range is given, the time is a random number from this range. If this attribute is omitted, the flag is set 0.5 seconds after the mission starts.
stopFlag?	Only useful in conjunction with afterTime. A Watchflag. When triggered and raiseFlag is still waiting for afterTime, raiseFlag is 'disarmed' and raising the flag is cancelled. It will not be raised later. Once stopped, it cannot be re-started.
triggerMethod raiseTriggerMethod	Watchflag condition for stopFlag?

Supports DML Flags

4.4.6.5 API

Tbc

4.4.6.6 Using the module

4.4.7 xFlags (Flag Combining / Testing)

4.4.7.1 Description

More flag testing than you can shake a signal at. Although it's one of the most sophisticated modules in DML's arsenal, it's easy to use and indispensable when you want some decision-making logic or a way to determine that a certain situation has arisen, but don't want to break out Lua.

Consider:

- you have five enemy groups, and when half or more of them are defeated, you want to call in support.
- The allies have captured two of six possible waypoints, but not yet attacked the main base, so you want to trigger a bomb raid
- Red enemy generator has created five waves, blue is still holding their own base, and all red groups are destroyed, so you want to set the win condition

So, essentially, you'll break out xFlags whenever you need some decision testing, to see if enough of a mission's goals are fulfilled to warrant some action.

BASIC SETUP: TESTING AND xSUCCESS!

Essentially, xFlags consists of a set of input flags and the requirement that a number of them must have triggered. **Once that requirement is fulfilled, xFlags triggers the output xSuccess and pauses until reset.**

Let's assume you have three input flags (see below): A, B and C. You require that at least two of them need to trigger. So, after *any combination* of two flags trigger (AB, BA, AC, CA, BC or CB), the output flag is triggered. xFlags gives you fine control over the requirements that must be met, so you can quickly build a zone that decides win conditions, trigger new stages or calls in support.

INPUTS (FLAGS)

xFlags uses a list of input flags ("xFlags?") that is inspected once per cycle (usually once every second) to determine if they fulfill the input's "xFlagMethod" watchflag trigger

Name	Value
xFlags?	oneA, twoA, threeA
require	any
xSuccess!	*hit

condition. In other words, it checks and internally stores which input flags have triggered. The result of each individual check is saved and later checked at xFlag's "require" attribute (see below). The "xFlagMethod" attribute follows standard Watchflag Method conventions for input flags; it applies to all input flags listed in the "xFlags?" attribute, and defaults to 'change', meaning that by default an input's value is compared against the "zero state" (see below) to determine if it triggers.

At mission start (and upon triggering the 'xReset' input) xFlags sample the current state of all input flags and save it as a "zero-state" reference (see below) so they can compare against this to determine if a flag has changed.

REQUIREMENT

The most important part in xFlag's inspection cycle comes after it has established all input flag's trigger state: it then compares how many input flags currently have triggered against the requirement of how many should. If the requirement is fulfilled, the xSuccess output is banged according to "xMethod".

Currently, xFlags understands the following conditions:

- 'or', 'any', or 'some'
triggers if at least one of the input flags has triggered. This is equivalent to the logical 'OR' operation performed over all flags (hence one of its synonyms is 'or'). **This is xFlag's default requirement.**
- 'and' or 'all'
triggers if all the input flags have triggered. This is equivalent to the logical 'AND' operation performed over all input flags (hence the synonym 'and')
- 'more than'
triggers if more input flags have triggers than the number given in the '#hits' attribute
- 'at least'
triggers if #hits or more of the input flags have triggered
- 'exactly'
if triggers if the number of input flags that have triggered is equal to #hits
- 'none'
triggers if none of the input flags have triggered. Requires that you turn off one-shot mode, as the initial setting (all flags set to false) will trigger with 'none', and immediately stop the xFlag
- 'not all' or 'nand'
triggers when not all input flags have triggered. Requires that you turn off one-shot mode, as the initial setting (all flags set to false) will trigger with 'none', and immediately stop the xFlag. This is equivalent to the logical 'NAND' operation performed over all inputs.
- 'most'
triggers when more than half of the input flags have triggered. Will not trigger if exactly have have triggered, so be careful if the number of input flags is even.
- 'half or more'
triggers when half or more of the input flags have triggered. Will also trigger if exactly half of all flags have triggered
- 'never'
used when you are using xFlag's "direct outputs" (xDirect, xCount, xChange) and

Name	Value
xFlags?	oneA, twoA, threeA
require	at least
#hits	1
xSuccess!	*hit

want it to operate during the entire mission. xFlags will never trigger xSuccess, and keep evaluating, setting xDirect, xCount and xChange accordingly

“LATCHED” ZERO STATE AND RESET?

When the mission starts, all xFlag zones “reset”: they save their initial state (i.e. save the state of the input flag at that moment into a ‘zero state’). Each time xFlag re-examines the flags (usually once per minute), it determines each input’s current state against that flag’s zero state to arrive at the trigger status. It continues to do so until the main requirement has been fulfilled, at which point that xFlags zone stops evaluating until it is reset.

When you reset an xFlag (implicitly at mission start, explicitly with the xReset? input), it will save all current input states as the new state zero, and re-start evaluating. An xFlag that is still running (i.e. not all requirements have yet been met) can be reset.

DIRECT OUTPUT: xDIRECT, xCHANGE! and xCOUNT

Many uses of xFlag involve constant evaluation of the input flags without necessarily requiring there to be xSuccess signal. For example, you might want a xFlags to constantly count how many of the input flags are currently set to a value equal to two, perhaps to be used in another module. xFlags provides additional outputs that are constantly (once per cycle) updated with results from the evaluation process that you can use:

- *xChange!*
A DML flag that is banged whenever xFlags detects a change from last to current state (at least one result of the flags is different from the last check)
- *xDirect*
The current raw result of xFlag’s entire evaluation, either 0 (false) or 1 (success). Useful when one-shot is turned off (see below). Note that this is very different from xSuccess, as xSuccess is governed by a DML method, and triggers only on a change.
- *xCount*
Is always set to the number of successful input flag tests. If, for example, three of the input flags test successfully in this cycle, the value of this flag is set to the number 3.

If you are primarily interested in the direct outputs remember to set “require” to “never” to ensure that xFlags will always continue to evaluate the flags (require defaults to “some”, so unless you change that, xFlags ceases to evaluate after the first hit)

ONE-SHOT

Unless you reset an xFlag, it runs only until it triggers, and then pauses. You can change this behavior by setting the oneShot attribute to false. In this case, the xFlag continues to evaluate all inputs every cycle (usually once per second), and trigger the output according to the requirement fulfilment.

SINGLE-INPUT xFLAGS (FLAG CONVERSION)

It will have occurred to you that you can use xFlags in a particularly useful way: to convert a flag's value into a trigger by simply providing a single input flag with the relevant xFlagMethod.

That is indeed possible and works well. You may be better served if you look to the "changer" module which provides a similar service in a neater package.

Since xFlags' functionality can be suspended and enabled by flags, it can function as 'gated switch', a device that only permits signals to pass when it is enabled. Again, the changer module may be a better choice.

SUSPENDING XFLAGS: xON?, xOFF? And xSuspend

Often, it is desirable to suspend an xFlag. Use the xOn? and xOff? inputs (hard-wired to a change method) to enable and suspend an xFlag. Usually, an xFlag starts the mission in enabled state. When you add an xSuspend attribute with the value true, the xFlag starts in suspended state and will only start once it receives a change on the xOn? input.

Note that even while suspended, xFlags do receive and respond to xReset? by loading a non-zero state

LIMITATIONS AND CAVEATS

"Change" and "flip"

The default 'change' watchflag trigger condition watches for a change on a flag, and when the value of that flag changes with regards to the previously read value, it triggers. During an xFlag cycle, that process is slightly different: the current value is compared to the value it had when the xFlag was last reset: the "zero state". This has a number of important implications when xFlag is repeatedly checking all flags during cycles:

- If an input flag is changed multiple times, and the end result is still different from the initial "zero state" value, only one trigger event is registered
- If an input flag changes multiple times, and the newest value happens to be the same as the one stored in the "zero state" (for example when using the 'flip' trigger method), this registers as *not triggered*, irrespective of how many times it changed in the mean time

Using requirement 'most'

Also be careful when using the 'most' requirement – it will only trigger the xFlag's output when more than half of the input flags have triggered. This is important to remember when you have an even low number of flags. For example, if you have 4 (four) input flags, 'most' means that 3 (three) or more flags must have triggered in order to fulfill then requirement.

It takes time...

Remember that xFlags have a cycle time (usually one second). If you build a cascade of xFlags (and you will), remember that it may take some time for a signal to propagate through multiple levels, so make sure that you wait a couple of cycles before you suspect an error in your setup. Use the zone's 'verbose = yes' attribute to see which inputs an xFlag receives when. xFlags understands zone-local verbose attributes.

4.4.7.2 Dependencies

xFlags requires dcsCommon and cfxZones.

4.4.7.3 Module Configuration

To configure xFlags via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “xFlagsConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Show debugging information. Default is off
ups	Number of cycles per second. Default is 1

4.4.7.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
xFlags?	A list (comma-separated) of input flags whose values should be evaluated to form the output signal MANDATORY
require	Condition/Operation that should apply to the input flags to form the output value. Currently supports the following conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘or’, ‘any’, or ‘some’ triggers if at least one of the input flags has triggered • ‘and’ or ‘all’ triggers if all the input flags have triggered • ‘more than’ triggers if more than the value given in ‘#hits’ of input flags have triggered • ‘at least’ triggers if #hits or more of the input flags have triggered • ‘exactly’ if triggers if the number of input flags that have triggered is equal to #hits • ‘none’ triggers if none of the input flags have triggered. Requires that you turn off one-shot mode • ‘not all’ or ‘nand’ triggers when not all input flags have triggered. Requires that you turn off one-shot mode

Name	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‘most’ triggers when more than half of the input flags have triggered. Will not trigger if exactly half have triggered, so be careful if the number of input flags is even. ‘half or more’ triggers when half or more of the input flags have triggered. Will also trigger if exactly half of all flags have triggered ‘never’ used when you are using xFlag’s “direct outputs” (xDirect, xCount, xChange) and want it to operate during the entire mission. xFlags will never trigger xSuccess, and keep evaluating, setting xDirect, xCount and xChange accordingly <p>Defaults to ‘some’</p>
#hits	<p>Value used for only some of the require attribute. Can be a value or flag name (in which case the value will be loaded from that flag). Numbered flags must be enclosed in double quotes, e.g. “22” to access flag 22. Defaults to 1 (one)</p>
xFlagMethod	<p>Condition that must be met for individual input flags. Is identical to trigger method for Watchflags except it is applied to each input flag individually. Defaults to “change”</p>
xSuccess! out!	<p>Flag to bang! when xFlags when the evaluation of input flags succeeds (all conditions are met). Once xSuccess is triggered, and unless oneShot is set to false, this zone’s xFlag pauses until xReset is triggered. Defaults to <none></p>
xChange!	<p>Flag to bang! when xFlags detects a change in the input configuration. Merely detects a change in the input configuration, has no relation with xSuccess!, except that xSuccess will also be accompanied by a bang on xChange! Defaults to <none></p>
xDirect	<p>Each time xFlags evaluates the input flags, it directly sets the xDirect flag to the evaluation result (0 or 1) – this is different from what xSuccess may output, since that flag’s value is dependent on the xMethod attribute.</p> <p>This flags value is set directly, not via DML method.</p> <p>Defaults to <none></p>
xCount	<p>Each time xFlags evaluates the input flags, it directly sets the xDirect flag to the number of hits (positive test results from the individual flags tests). For example, if three tests of the input flags are successful, xFlags sets the value of this output to the number 3</p> <p>This flags value is set directly, not via DML method.</p> <p>Defaults to <none></p>
xReset?	<p>When the value of this input changes, the zone’s xFlag module is reset, and evaluation starts afresh.</p>

Name	Description
	Note: this input always reacts to a change in the flag's value Defaults to <none>
method xMethod	DML method for output flags Defaults to "inc"
oneShot	When the value if this attribute is false, that zone's xFlag module will not stop evaluating after it triggers xSuccess.
xOff?	Flag to turn the xFlag off, suspending it. When turned off, no processing of input flag occurs. The xFlag will still respond to xReset by loading a new zero state. Note: this input always reacts to a change in the flag's value Defaults to <none>
xOn?	Turns a suspended xFlag back on to resume processing. It resumes processing where it left off Note: this input always reacts to a change in the flag's value Defaults to <none>
xSuspended	Sets the initial state of xFlag. Setting it to true suspends the xFlag at mission start Defaults to false

Supports DML Flags

Supports DML Watchflags

Supports zone-local verbose

4.4.7.5 API

(tbc)

4.4.7.6 Using the module

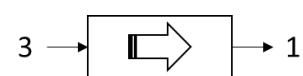
To enable, add the script to the mission as a DOSCRIPT action during Mission Start

To use, simply add the 'xFlags?' and required other attributes to a zone.

4.4.8 Changer

4.4.8.1 Description

Changer is DML's "flag transmogrifier" and "gated switch". Whenever you need a flag's value transformed, or install a switch that controls when a flag's value may pass, you should turn to this changer module first



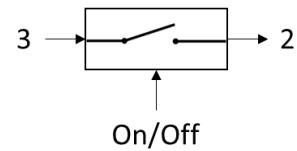
BASIC OPERATION: FLAG VALUE CONVERSION

Changer works by continually taking the input flag's value, changing it in some simple way, and then putting the result to the output flags. The way that the input value is changed to the output is controlled by attributes:

- 'inEval'
When set to true, the input value is interpreted according to the watchflag's triggerChangeMethod. Otherwise, the input flag's value is read directly
- 'changeTo'
Describes the 'operation' that is performed on the input signal to calculate the output. Changer supports the following:
 - 'bool'
Output value is 0 if input is 0, 1 otherwise (conversion to bool)
 - 'not'
Output value is 1 if input is 0, 0 otherwise
 - 'sign'
Output value is -1 if input is <0, 1 otherwise
 - 'abs'
Output value is the absolute of input value (e.g. outputs '3' for '-3' and '3')
 - 'negative'
Output value is input value multiplied by -1, turning the sign.
 - 'direct'
Output value is the same as input value. Used primarily with when changer is functioning as a gated switch
- 'Min'
When present, sets the lower limit of the output value, e.g., if Min is set to 6 and processed (see above) result is 3, the output value is set to 6
- 'Max'
When present, sets the upper limit of the output value, e.g. if Max is 2 and the processed (see above) result is 9, output is set to 2.

BASIC OPERATION: GATED SWITCH

Another central feature is that changer be ‘switched’: when turned on, it takes the input value and (after processing) propagates it to the output. When you turn it off, input and output become separated, and the input values no longer propagate.



Whatever for? Often, you want a flag to trigger a module, but only under certain conditions. Phrased differently, you need something that can conditionally block a flag: We need a way to switch (turn on/off) the transmission of a flag to a module. This is what changer is designed to do. So we propagate the input to output when the switch is ‘on’, and simply leave output as it is when switched off.

Changer sports two, sequential options to separate input and output:

- `changeOn?` and `changeOff?`

These are (triggered) watchflags that are used to individually turn the Changer off (`changeOff?`) into paused mode, and on (`changeOn?`). When starting up, a Changer starts in ‘On’ state, unless you provide a ‘`changePaused`’ = ‘true’ attribute. When turned off (paused), the only way to turn a Changer back on is through a signal on `changeOn?`.

Note that when you pause/turn a changer off, that state overrides any potential signals on the `changeOn/Off?` Input.

- `changeOn/Off?` and `NOT changeOn/Off?`

Atypical for DML, this is a single, value-controlled switch. For “`ChangeOn/Off?`”, if the value of this flag is 0 (zero), the output flag is no longer changed, similar to when it is paused. In all other cases, output is updated from input. Inversely, for “`NOT changeOn/Off?`”, the gate opens when this flag’s value is 0 (zero) and closes for any other value.

Note:

This is overridden when the changer is paused or turned off with `changerOff?` – in that case no signal is propagated to output.

We recommend that you only use one method to control the switch – but it is possible (and required in some complex cases) to use both switch controls together.

DEFAULT OPERATION

Changers often work in both modes simultaneously: an input value is converted to an output value, while at the same time a different flag controls if the converted value flows to the output. Out of the box, a changer is configured as a simple pass-through:

- `InEval: false`, input is read directly
- `changeTo: direct`, input is passed to output unchanged
- no min, no max defined
- `paused: false`, gate is open
- `on/off?` and `NOT on/off?` disconnected

4.4.8.2 Dependencies

Changer requires dcsCommon, cfxZones

4.4.8.3 Module Configuration

To configure changer via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “changerConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Show debugging information. Default is off
ups	Number of cycles per second. Default is 1

4.4.8.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
change?	The input flag whose value is used to create the output signal MANDATORY
out! changeOut!	The output flag.
triggerMethod triggerChangeMethod	Watchflag method that is used to interpret change? when inEval is set to true Defaults to ‘change’
inEval	When set to true, the input flag change? is interpreted as a watchflag under triggerChangeMethod’s rules Defaults to false
changeTo to	Operation to apply to the input flag to create the ouput value. The following operations are defined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘bool’ Output value is 0 if input is 0, 1 otherwise (conversion to bool) • ‘not’ Output value is 1 if input is 0, 0 otherwise • ‘sign’ Output value is -1 if input is <0, 1 otherwise • ‘abs’ Output value is the absolute of input value (e.g. outputs ‘3’ for ‘-3’ and ‘3’) • ‘negative’ Output value is input value multiplied by -1, turning the sign. • ‘direct’ Output value is the same a input value. Used primarily with when changer is functioning as a gated switch Defaults to “direct”

Name	Description
min	When defined, ensures that the output value has this value at minimum
max	When defined, ensures that the output value has this value. If max is less than min, output is always set to max
paused changePaused	When set to true, the changer starts in paused/off mode and the output flag is not changed. The only way to turn a paused changer on when off/paused is via a signal on the changeOn? input Defaults to false.
on? changeOn?	Turns a paused changer on, enabling transmission of the input signal (after processing) to output, opening the ‘gate’. Triggers on “change” Defaults to <none>
off? changeOff?	Turns a changer off, pausing it. Input signals are no longer processed nor propagated to output, closing the ‘gate’. Triggers on “change”. Defaults to <none>
On/Off? changeOn/Off?	Flag that when defined controls transmission of input to output when the changer is running (i.e. not paused). The value of this input controls the gate as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0: gate closed, no transmission • Anything else: gate open. Defaults to <none>
NOT On/Off? NOT changeOn/Off?	Works exactly like On/Off above, except that open/close values are exchanged: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 Gate Open • Anything else: gate closed Defaults to none. Be advised that if you also define On/Off? for the same zone, NOT On/Off will be ignored, and you receive a warning every second.

Supports DML Flags

Supports DML Watchflags

Supports zone-local verbose

4.4.8.5 API

(tbc)

4.4.8.6 Using the module

To enable, add the script to the mission as a DOSCRIPT action during Mission Start

To use, add the ‘change?’ attribute and required other attributes to a zone.

4.4.9 countDown

4.4.9.1 Description

Whenever you need to know when a certain event occurred a certain number of times, you can look to countdown to help you. There are surprisingly many uses for this: delaying actions or responses, filtering every other event, limiting the number of respawns, counting kills towards victory etc. You'll find that in almost every mission you need counters, and that is why ME provides a (limited) support of counting on flags as well.

So – big picture: countDown is an ME flag monitoring and manipulating module that counts for you.

BASIC FUNCTION

countDown is easy to understand: it has an input flag that it watches (the ‘in?’ flag), and you set a limit (e.g. 5). After countDown has seen that number of value changes on the ‘in?’ flag, it changes the value of ‘out!’ flag. A simple count down.

ADDITIONAL FEATURES

While a counter is always helpful in mission design, it's the built-in decision making that makes countDown so helpful. countDown offers additional flag handling outputs that make

- **T-Minus (Output)**
Named after NASA's famous count down procedure, the “tMinus!” output simply changes each time a signal is received on the “in?” flag, but the count is still above zero. Hence, tMinus produces a change every time before zero is reached, but not when zero is reached.
- **Looping (Attribute)**
You can set the count down to automatically restart counting when it has reached zero.
- **belowZero (Output)**
This is the opposite of T-Minus: it fires every time an input is received on ‘in?’, and the counter is below zero, i.e. the count down has received more signals on the ‘in?’ flag than the start value specified, and is now ‘below zero’. This can't happen if the count down is set to loop
- **Value Randomization (Attribute)**
The start value can either be given as a number (e.g. 5) or a range (e.g. 3-7). If loop is set to true, a new randomized start value is calculated on each iteration of the loop.

COMMON COUNTER USES / SET-UPS

Counters are one the most versatile components in process design. Here are some of the most common use cases and their configuration that you can use to solve common mission requirements

- **Classic Count-Down: ONCE AFTER SO MANY TIMES**

In this configuration, you simply set the start value, and zero! changes after the correct number of changes were detected on ‘in?’

Name	Value	
countDown	5	
in?	110	
zero!	200	

- **EVERY NTH TIME – FREQUENCY DIVIDER**

This is a modification of above: the same set-up, except we have enabled ‘loop’. After setting the start value (here 5), we now see a change on zero! every n-th change on in? (here every 5th time)

Name	Value	
countDown	5	
in?	110	
zero!	200	
loop	yes	

This configuration is also called a ‘frequency divider’, as it divides the frequency of the occurrence of in? by n.

- **ONLY UNTIL**

This configuration uses a count down as a “limiter”: it allows a change on ‘in?’ to propagate to the output ‘tMinus!’, but only until the maximum number of changes has been received. After that, it no longer transmits changes in ‘in?’ to the output ‘tMinus!’. So, in this configuration, only a maximum number of changes appear on ‘tMinus!’.

Name	Value	
countDown	5	
in?	110	
tMinus!	200	

Note:

when you set the start value to n, ‘tMinus!’ will propagate only (n-1) signals: on the final signal the value is zero and ‘out!’/‘zero!’ fires instead. If you need exactly n signals from the counter, you need to set ‘out!’ and ‘tMinus!’ to the same flag (or increase the start value by one).

- **EVER AFTER / NOT BEFORE**

This is the opposite of ‘ONLY UNTIL’: every time there is a change after the counter has counted to zero, the signal on ‘in?’ is propagated to ‘belowZero!’. As

Name	Value	
countDown	5	
in?	110	
belowZero!	200	

before, you may or may not want the zero change to count as well, so you may also have to set out! to the same flag as ‘belowZero!’

ME INTEGRATION

countDown provides comprehensive ME flag integration.

Name	Value	Description
in? count?	Flag Name	Watchflag. When triggered, decreases count by one Defaults to <none>
tMinus!	Flag Name	DML Output. Changes when counter decreases and has not yet reached zero Defaults to <none>

Name	Value	Description
zero! out!	Flag Name	DML Output. Changes when counter decreases and reaches exactly zero. Defaults to <none>
belowZero!	Flag Name	DML Flag. Changes every time count is decreased and is below zero. Note that if the 'loop' attribute is set, this can never happen. Defaults to <none>
counterOut!	Flag Name	A flag, when given, is set to the current value of the count. The flag is updated each time that the counter is triggered via count?
disableCounter?	Flag Name	A Watchflag that, when triggered, disables the counter for good.

4.4.9.2 Dependencies

countDown requires dcsCommon and cfxZones

4.4.9.3 Module Configuration

To configure rndFlags via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “countDownConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Show debugging information. Default is off
ups	Number of updates per second

4.4.9.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
countDown	Marks this as a count down. The value of this attribute defines the number times until the count reaches zero This value supports ranges: if you specify a range (e.g., “3-5”) each time the count down is initialized (at start, and when looping), a random number in the range (including upper and lower limit) is chosen. Defaults to 1 (one) MANDATORY
loop	If this attribute is true, a count down restarts after reaching zero. If the count down is given as a range, a new random start value is taken from that range (including upper and lower limit)
method ctdwnMethod	DML Flag method for output flags. Use only one synonym per zone. Defaults to “flip”
count? in?	Watchflag that when triggered constitutes a signal to count down by one. Use only one synonym per zone. Defaults to <none>
triggerMethod	Watchflag method for input flags.

Name	Description
ctdwnTriggerMethod	Defaults to "change"
zero! out!	DML Output flag to bang when countdown reaches zero. Use only one synonym per zone. Defaults to <none>
tMinus!	DML Output flag to bang when count is lowered, and has not yet reached zero. Defaults to <none>
belowZero!	DML Flag. Changes every time count is decreased and is below zero. Note that if the 'loop' attribute is set, this can never happen. Defaults to <none>
counterOut!	A flag, when given, is set to the current value of the count. The flag is updated each time that the counter is triggered via count? Defaults to <none>
disableCounter?	Watchflag that when triggered turns off the count down. Defaults to '<none>'.

4.4.9.5 API (tbc)

4.4.9.5.1 getCountDownZoneByName(aName)

4.4.9.5.2 isTriggered(theZone)

4.4.9.6 Using the module

Include the countDown source into a DOSCRIPT Action at the start of the mission

Add a zone to the mission and add the 'countDown' attribute to that zone. Add other attributes as required

4.4.10 cfxObjectDestructDetector

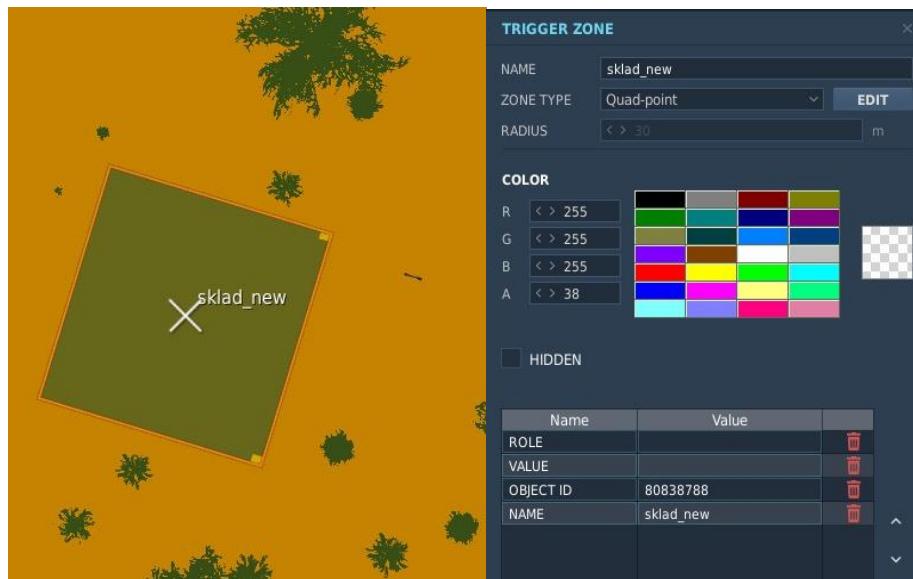
The destruct detector is a module that tightly integrates with ME, and additionally provides a scripting API. Unlike most other zone enhancements, this module provides direct means to manipulate ME-accessible flags.

4.4.10.1 Description

A peculiarity of ME is its ability to create a zone that exactly fits around a map object, and automatically assigns some attributes. In order to create such a zone, simply right-click on a map object, and a small button ‘assign as...’ pops up.



When you click on the button, ME automatically creates a zone that exactly fits the shape of the object, and opens the zone editor, with several attributes added:



By default, ME adds the attributes Role, Value, Object ID and Name, with Object ID and name pre-filled: Object ID identifies the map object and is the ID scripts check to see if the object was destroyed.

When you include cfxObjectDestructDetector into your mission, it automatically seeks out all zones that have an “OBJECT ID” attribute, and starts watching them.

The beauty of destruct zones comes into play with new attributes mission designers can add to such a zone to automatically set, re-set or change flags without adding any code.

ME INTEGRATION

You can add any of the following attributes to an object zone, and when the object referenced by OBJECT ID is destroyed, the module invokes the following:

Name	Value	Description
f! destroyed! objectDestroyed!	name	DML flag to bang! when object is destroyed. Use any synonym but not both in the same zone

NOTE

Since objectDestructDetector homes in on any zone with an OBJECT ID property, it automatically works with all objects that a mission designer marks with an ‘assign as’ zone that automatically attached the OBJECT ID.

Thus, simply adding this module to a mission and then subscribing to the destruct callback (see below) is enough to interface your scripts to be notified of object destruct events for thusly marked objects.

WARNING

The OBJECT ID that ME reveals with ‘assign as’ is taken from an internal DB for that map. In the past, there have been instances where the object ID of *some* map building change between DCS releases. So, when you are using object destruct detectors and they suddenly stop working, check the object ID that the detectors track against a newly created “assign as” zone. If they differ, the map’s internal Object DB has been updated and you must update the detector zone’s object ID.

Callbacks

For easy scripting integration, destruct detector provides events callbacks whenever an object described in OBJECT ID is destroyed. The callback must match the following profile:

```
theCallBack(zone, ObjectID, name)
```

with `zone` being a link to the `cfxZone` (the DML wrapper for the DCS Zone!), `ObjectID` the DCS object ID of the object that was destroyed, and `name` the value of the `name` attribute.

NOTE:

Object Destruct Detector only generates events for object ID's that are defined in ME via the ‘assign as’ function. The module will not detect destruction of objects other than the ones it is told to watch.

4.4.10.2 Dependencies

This module requires `dcsCommon` and `cfxZones` to be loaded

4.4.10.3 Module Configuration

`cfxObjectDestructDetector.verbose` – set to true to see a message each time a watched object is destroyed.

4.4.10.4 ME Attributes

As described in “ME Integration”, destruct detector supports multiple attributes that tell it what to do (besides invoking callbacks) when a watched object is destroyed.:

Name	Description
OBJECT ID	THIS ATTRIBUTE IS FILLED BY ME AND MUST NOT BE CHANGED MANDATORY
NAME	THIS ATTRIBUTE IS FILLED BY ME AND MUST NOT BE CHANGED MANDATORY
method oddMethod	DML Method to bang! on f! when object destroyed Defaults to “inc”
f! destroyed! objectDestroyed!	The flag to bang! when the object is destroyed. Use only one synonym per zone. Defaults to “*none”

4.4.10.5 Persistence

This module supports persistence in that it automatically preserves the status of the scenery object that it watches. If the object is destroyed, upon loading from file the object is removed, and the destroyed! Flag value is set to the same value that it had when the mission data was persisted.

4.4.10.6 API

You can use the API to intercept all destruction events for any object marked with an OBJECT ID in a zone

[*4.4.10.6.1 addCallback\(theCallback\)*](#)

Adds theCallback to destruct detectors list of methods to invoke when a watched object is destroyed.

4.4.10.7 Using the module

Include the cfxObjectDestructDetector source into a DOSCRIPT Action at the start of the mission

4.4.11 cfxSpawnZones

4.4.11.1 Description

cfxSpawnZones is a Zone Extension that allows you to add Group Spawners (i.e. points on the map where new ground units are created in-mission) to your mission. By spawn zone your mission can spawn groups dynamically (i.e., at runtime).

A spawner can spawn once, a set number of times, on demand, or indefinitely. A spawn cycle each time spawns a group composed of the vehicles/infantry that are defined by the ‘types’ attribute. You can find a good reference of the type strings for each individual unit here: <https://github.com/mrSkortch/DCS-miscScripts/tree/master/ObjectDB>

Spawn Cycle

General spawning logic is that, unless paused, a spawner produces a group and places it inside the spawn zone radius according to the ‘formation’ attribute. When the group is removed from the spawner’s control (be it automatically, by being destroyed, being picked up by a transport (including aircraft via cfxHeloTroops), or ordered to move out), the spawner undergoes a ‘cooldown’ cycle (waits for an amount of time) after which it produces the next group. Note that on mission start, an active (un-paused) spawner will spawn immediately.

cfxSpawnZones supports different spawning “behaviors” controlled by attributes, and has built-in capabilities to interact with other modules, e.g. GroundTroops (orders) and HeliTroops (airlift).

Spawning can also be controlled (paused) by the faction status of an associated controlling zone (via the masterOwner attribute: when the owner of that zone is a different faction, spawning is stopped). This is useful to control spawn availability on FARPS and airfields, or producing troops after a zone is conquered. Note that the spawn zone does **not** have to be within their associated masterOwner’s zone radius, it can be on an entirely different place of the map.

ME Integration (forced spawns, activation and pause)

Spawners can be instructed to spawn immediately, at which point they ignore all of the rules programmed into them by attributes, and create a fresh ‘batch’ of troops immediately.

SpawnZones can be told to watch an **ME flag**, and every time that flag changes, the Spawner spawns new units without checking max spawns, updating spawn count, or respecting a cooldown, not even ownership. In order to use an ME flag to trigger a spawn, all you need to do is add an attribute to the spawner:

Name	Value	Description
f? spawn? spawnUnits?	Number	Watches the flag <Number> (as accessed by DCS) for a change. Each time the flag's value changes, a new group is spawned Use only one synonym per zone
activate?	Number	Watches the flag <Number>. Each time the flag's value changes, the spawner's ‘paused’ setting is forced to ‘false’. Used to ‘activate’ a paused spawner
pause?	Number	Watches the flag <Number>. Each time the flag's value changes, the spawner's ‘paused’ setting is forced to ‘true’. Used to ‘pause’ a spawner

This simple mechanism allows mission designers to, for example, spawn troops whenever a player unit enters a zone (for very nasty surprises). Furthermore, spawners support watchflags that allow the mission to pause and un-pause (activate) spawners by changing a

flag. This allows other modules (e.g. rndFlags) to activate paused spawners, or turn them off at will.

Alternatively (Lua only), scripts can use the API's method `spawnWithSpawner()` to directly trigger a spawn, also bypassing all checks.

After a forced spawn, `SpawnZones` resets the cooldown and invokes all subscribed callbacks.

Spawn Locations

Unlike ME, a `SpawnZone` does not care where it spawns the units. This means that you must be careful not to place a spawner on surfaces that are too steep, or cause units to spawn in water (unless that is your objective). This can, however, be used for a nice exploit: you can spawn troops on off-shore platforms if you are careful enough with your positioning and the platform does not move. In some off-shore objects (like oil platforms), the units will fall through (the object has no hit box, as sadly some scenery objects don't have), in others, they stay in position and respond normally to enemy action



Callbacks (Lua Only)

`cfxSpawnZone` supports callbacks that are invoked when a new group is spawned. To register a callback, invoke

```
function cfxSpawnZones.addCallback(theCallback)
```

The callback has the following signature

```
theCB(reason, theGroup, theSpawner)
```

with `reason` being string describing why the callback was invoked, `theGroup` being the newly spawned DCS group, and `theSpawner` the `cfxSpawnZone` table that was used to spawn.

Currently, the following reasons are defined:

- "spawned"
The `SpawnZone` `theSpawner` has just spawned `theGroup`. If the `cfxGroundTroops` module is installed, `theGroup` is passed to `GroundTroops` for management.

You can force a spawn by directly invoking

```
function cfxSpawnZones.spawnWithSpawner(aSpawner)
```

which will override any restrictions, and spawn the specified types immediately

4.4.11.2 Dependencies

Required: dcsCommon, cfxZones, cfxCommander, cfxGroundTroops

Optional: cfxHeloTroops

4.4.11.3 Module Configuration

This module does not need to be configured

4.4.11.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
spawner	Marks this ME Zone as a spawn zone. Value of this attribute is ignored , use it to describe what it spawns to make mission editor easier for you MANDATORY
f? spawn? spawnObjects?	Flag (ME-compatible) to observe. Each time the value of that flag changes, a new spawn is forced, ignoring all other settings like maxSpawn, cooldown, paused, etc. Defaults to no flag to observe Use only one synonym per zone
pause?	Flag to observe. Each time the flag's value changes, the spawner's 'paused' setting is forced to 'true'. Used to 'pause a spawner'
activate?	Flag to observe. Each time the flag's value changes, the spawner's 'paused' setting is forced to 'false'. Used to 'activate' a paused spawner
types	Type string array for the ground units that are spawned. Example "Roland ADS, Roland Radar, Roland ADS" or "Soldier M4" – WARNING: Blanks are part of the type, and blanks before and after the last character are automatically stripped. For a full reference of objects and their types, see here https://github.com/mrSkortch/DCS-miscScripts/tree/master/ObjectDB and use whatever is given as value for the "typeName" attribute, e.g. "Soldier M249" for the "INF Soldier M249.lua"
country	The country (a number) the units that spawn belong to, e.g. "22" for Switzerland (Warning: unlike many other zone extensions, we use a County, not a Coalition here. The coalition is determined by which Faction the country belongs to as is defined when you create the mission, or by using the faction editor. Common Countries are Russia = 0, Ukraine = 1, USA = 2, UN Peace Keepers = 82 You can find a reference of all country codes here: https://wiki.hoggitworld.com/view/DCS_enum_country).
masterOwner	A string that references another ME Zone by name. It must match that Zone's name exactly, and that zone must have an owner (e.g. defined as an cfxOwnedZone or FARPZone). A spawner only spawns automatically when the masterOwner's owning faction is the same as the spawner's country affiliation. On the map, the spawner does not have to be inside the masterOwner's zone, it can be hundreds of miles

Name	Description
	<p>away. You can use this to start spawning reinforcements in a completely unrelated part of the map when units conquer the masterOwner zone.</p> <p>If no masterOwner is specified, the Spawner spawns as directed and disregards any surrounding zones that happen to be owned</p> <p>Optional, defaults to empty</p>
baseName	<p>A name (e.g. "Hill Marines") that is used to create units and groups from during unit spawning. If provided, baseName MUST BE UNIQUE. If you do not assign a base name, a unique one will be generated for you.</p> <p>If two spawners have the same baseName, one of them will not spawn, so if for some reason a spawner does not spawn, make it a habit to check this first.</p>
cooldown	Time interval (in seconds) from when a new group can be produced (removed from the spawner) to the moment it is produced. Defaults to 60
autoRemove	<p>Usually, a spawner retains ownership of a group that is produced, and will re-start the spawning cycle only after it was removed. If you add the autoRemove attribute with a "yes" or "true" value, the Spawner will automatically re-start the spawning cycle (cooldown, produce) as soon as the new group has spawned. You can use this to automatically give orders and have units move out after they have spawned (similar to how OwnedZones spawn attackers). Be advised that you can create a lot of vehicles on your map in a very short time, so be careful when using autoRemove.</p> <p>Defaults to 'false'</p>
heading	The direction the spawned group is oriented to, from the center of the spawn zone. Defaults to 0
formation	Formation of the spawned group. See dcsCommon for supported group formations. Defaults to 'circle_out'.
paused	When paused, a spawner only spawns when other scripts tell it to (e.g. your own scripts, cfxHeloTroops, triggers).
	Defaults to "no"
orders	This is an optional interface to other troop-governing modules, e.g. cfxGroundTroops. Default is "guard", and spawners support in addition to those that cfxGroundTroops support (see → Orders)
range	An attribute used to pass a range value to orders (e.g. JTAC laze range, detection/engage range)
target	An attribute used to pass a target zone when used in conjunction with the 'attackZone' orders
maxSpawns	The maximum number of times that this spawner spawns groups. Set it to a positive number (e.g. 3) to spawn that many times. Set it to a negative number for an unlimited number of spawns (default is -1). Set it to zero (0) and the spawner will never spawn.
requestable	Interfaces with other scripts, if you set this value to true, troops will only spawn on request via <code>cfxSpawnZones.spawnWithSpawner()</code> . See the API section on how to get a list of eligible spawners. Automatically interfaces with HeloTroops and other enhancements
trackWith:	<p>List of groupTracker zones. All spawned groups are added to these groupTrackers.</p> <p>If you have stacked the tracker on the same zone as the spawner, you can use a single asterisk '*' as zone name.</p>

Name	Description
	Supports a comma-separated list of trackers if you simultaneously want to pass the spawned groups to multiple trackers Defaults to <None>

4.4.11.5 Persistence

Spawners fully support persistence. Note that since spawn zones can use DML-native routing via Orders, many persisted groups can resume their orders directly after loading a saved mission (meaning that they are not prone to the ‘Waypoint 1’ issue that cloned groups can have).

As with all other persisted groups, any unit that was destroyed will not be persisted, and any unit that was even barely alive will re-spawn fully repaired, fueled, and complete re-stocked with munitions.

4.4.11.6 API

In addition to ME Integration, SpawnZones support API to cause a SpawnZone to spawn, get SpawnStatus and receive callbacks when a SpawnZone is spawning.

4.4.11.6.1 function cfxSpawnZones.addCallback(theCallback)

Adds theCallback to the list of callbacks to invoke when a spawner spawns. theCallback must match the following signature theCB(reason, theGroup, theSpawner)

4.4.11.6.2 function cfxSpawnZones.spawnWithSpawner(aSpawner)

Causes aSpawner to ignore all restrictions (including cool-down and maxSpawn) and spawn a group as specified in the types attribute with orders. aSpawner can be a string, in which case it must be the name of the zone as defined in ME.

Spawn callback is invoked, cooldown is reset, but the number of spawns is not updated.

4.4.11.6.3 function cfxSpawnZones.getSpawnerForZone(aZone)

Returns the SpawnZone for aZone (a cfxZone), or nil if aZone is not a SpawnZone.

4.4.11.6.4 function cfxSpawnZones.getRequestableSpawnersInRange(aPoint, aRange, aSide)

Given aPoint and aRange, this method returns a table of all SpawnZones that have requestable set true, and that are currently owned by aSide

4.4.11.6.5 function cfxSpawnZones.verifySpawnOwnership(spawner)

Tests if spawner’s ownership agrees with that of the master zone. If no master zone is defined, it returns *true*. This method only returns false if a master zone is defined, **and** that master zone’s ownership disagrees with the coalition defined for spawner.

4.4.11.7 Using the module

Include the cfxSpawnZones source into a DOSCRIPT action at the start of the mission.
Create Spawn Zones by adding a Trigger Zone and adding attributes as described above.

4.4.12 Clone Zones

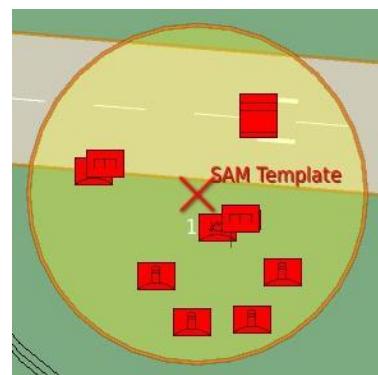
4.4.12.1 Description

Like Spawn Zones, clone zones dynamically spawn units into the game as the mission runs. Unlike Spawn Zones, you don't use a type string to tell clone zones which units to spawn. Instead, they 'clone' (create exact copies) of 'group templates': a group template is simply a group that exists in the mission. Therefore, creating a template simply consists of creating a group in ME, and then placing a clone zone on top of it. A template is created. Later in the mission, Clone Zones can re-create new groups from these templates.

Creating a Template

This step is quite simple. Whenever you have assembled a nice composition of units (they don't necessarily have to belong to the same group) that you want to use as a template, simply place a clone zone over them (over at least one of the group's units).

At mission start, **all groups who have at least one unit inside a clone zone become part of that zone's clone template**; the Clone Zone then creates a 'snapshot' (an exact copy) – including all route information – of all units and stores it in memory as a template. The template *can then be used by other clone zones as well*.



IMPORTANT

All templates are created at mission start. It is irrelevant what happens to those units later. When the clones are created, they are always fresh copies from the template at mission start.

Creating Clones from “Templates”

Clone zones are used to spawn units. When told to spawn, they take a template, and re-create the entire template around the zone's center from the snapshot that was taken at mission start.

What makes clone zones so powerful is that clone zones **can use other clone zones's templates**, and they can even choose randomly between templates. Using cloners and 'foreign templates' can rapidly accelerate

Name	Value	
Cloner	Valley Nasty Surprise	
source	SAM Template	
turn	90	

mission design and radically cut down unit proliferation (you clone templates instead of deploying individual units). A common mission design pattern is to create one complex template (e.g. a SAM site), and use multiple clone zones throughout the map that all reference that same template. Since clone zones spawn when told to, using a Flag Randomizer allows you to quickly create a randomized, unpredictable mission with very little effort and only a few templates

Important Note

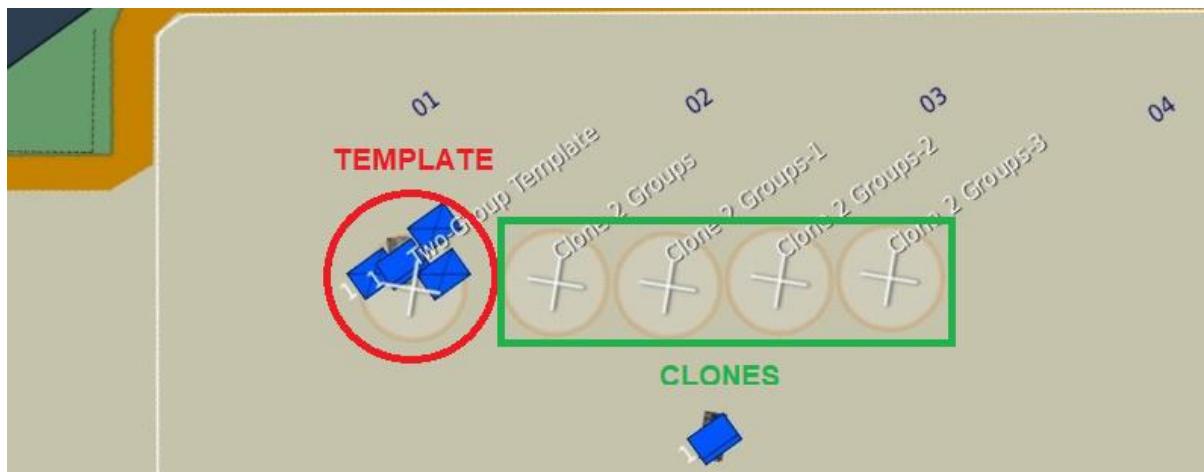
After a clone zone creates a template from the groups inside, all groups are removed from the game as part of the template creation process, and then clones are spawned from the new when the mission starts. You can prevent the template from spawning by adding an ‘onStart = false’ attribute.

Clone Naming

When a cloner spawns a new group, that clone’s name is derived from the original group’s name by taking the original name and adding a unique string. For example, if a group in a template is named “Dock Defenders”, clones are named using “Dock defenders” as base, and have a new unique string appended. The result may be something like “Dock Defenders-912223”. This scheme allows you to easily incorporate cloned groups into unit zones, group trackers and other DML modules that accept “wildcard” names.

A Quick Example

Let’s walk through an example (also part of the ‘Attack of the CloneZ.miz’).



On the map above, there are two blue groups inside the red circle: One consisting of three Infantry, and one group that consists of a single Hummer. Both groups have at least one unit inside the “Two Group Template”

Trigger Zone (marked **TEMPLATE** in the image above), making them part of the template. (Disregard the sole blue unit in front of the green rectangle, that is just eye candy)

Name	Value	
cloner	two groups in template	

“Two Group Template” is set up as a unit template. Hence all groups that have at least one unit inside the zone become part of that template. **To make a clone zone serve as a template, omit the ‘source’ attribute.** That’s all that is required to create a template.

We also note that there is neither a ‘spawn?’ nor ‘onStart’ attribute, meaning that we expect this template not spawn any clones, and therefore be empty when the mission starts.

Usually, we would add an “onStart” = true attribute on the template as well, but here we want to demonstrate that you can define templates without having the template’s units spawn in the mission. This is a convenient way to define complex templates somewhere out of the way without taking up memory and performance.

We now turn our attention to the four identical “Clone 2 Groups” clone zones (marked **CLONES** in the image above).

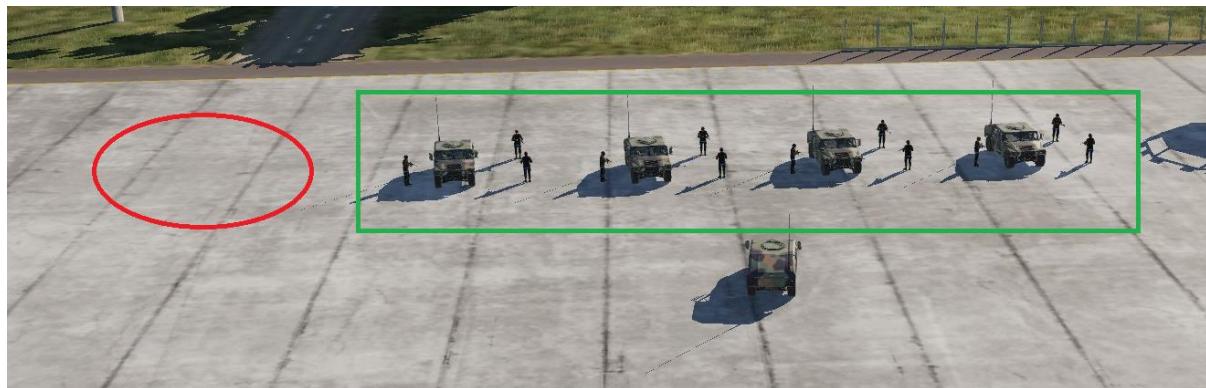
Name	Value
cloner	
source	Two-Group Template
onStart	yes

They all use a “source” attribute, meaning that they use a foreign template, in this case one that is supplied by clone zone “Two-Group Template” – the one we just analyzed. We also note that these zones all have an ‘onStart = true’ attribute, meaning that when the mission starts, these zones all first fetch the template from “Two-Group Template”, and spawn a group that looks exactly like the one we assembled in ME for the template zone.

So, when the mission runs, we should expect:

- No units in the red area
- A total of 4 copies of what is in the red area in ME inside the green area

Let's run the mission:



Nice.

Randomizing a template's layout

Usually, a cloned zone is a perfect clone from the original; all units/objects are assembled in the exact same position relative to each other. You can change that: by using the target cloner's 'randomizeLoc' attribute, you can have cloneZone randomize the position of each unit/object. Upon cloning, each unit/object receives an offset in a random direction, and a random distance, with the distance limited to the target clone zone's radius. If you make the target zone's radius small, displacement is small, if it is large, the individual units can be displaced by large distances. Note that this does not mean that all cloned units will come to reside inside the target zone – the size of the target zone merely defines the maximum displacement.



A second attribute 'rndHeading' allows you to also randomize a unit's heading (by default it will assume the template's heading). Note that rndLoc/randomizeLoc and rndHeading are independent of each other and can be used separately.

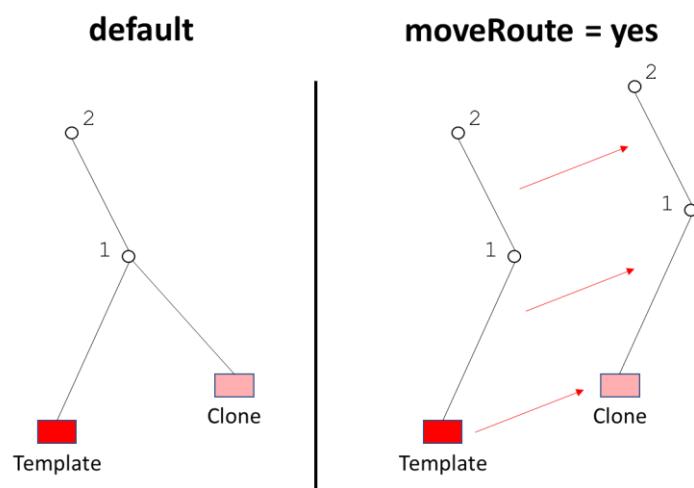
A word of caution

Cloners care little about what they clone and where to – they simply do your bidding. You can tell a cloner to import and spawn any template from anywhere, and you therefore can spawn units in locations where they really should not spawn. While this may seem fun at first, it can get old fast and ruin an otherwise good mission, so use discretion when employing similar tricks like the one below:



Cloning Routes

Since clone zone create exact copies, it happily also copies all route and waypoint information into the template. This can have some unforeseen effects when a different clone zone than the one that created template creates a clone based on that template. When the cloned units are moved to the new clone location, what should happen to the waypoints? Should the also move to the new location? Sometimes, you want multiple clone zone spawn units that all rally to the same point (the first waypoint after the initial point), sometimes you want the route that the units are to follow also move with the unit.



To allow you to do both, Clone Zones treat routes as follows:

- The initial waypoint always coincides with the spawn location of the cloned unit.
- Unless you set the clone zone's moveRoute attribute to true (yes), all waypoints beyond the initial point remain at the original (template's) position. This means that

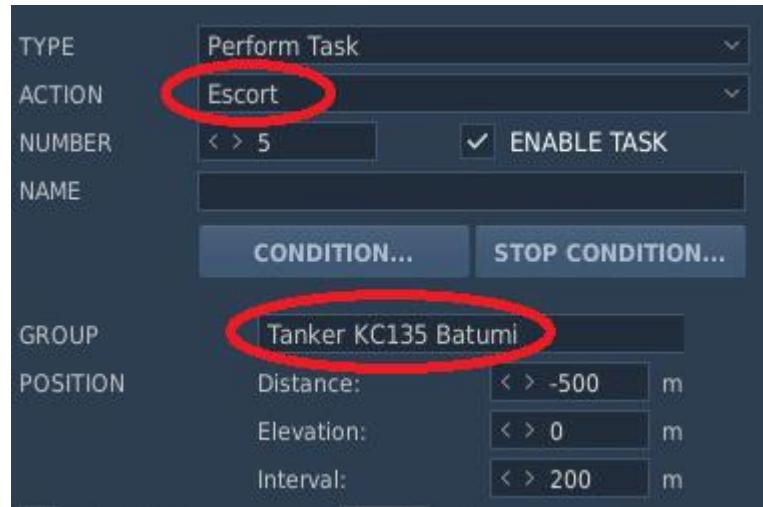
except for the spawn location, all units that spawn from such a cloner's position follow the same route

- If a spawner's moveRoute is set to true, all waypoints for the group receive the same offset as the spawner has from the original template's zone. All units from such a spawner follow a route that has the same shape as the original template's route, but is moved to the spawner's position

Clone References

Some of the waypoint actions can reference other groups or units. For example, you can tell a group to escort or follow another group, or attack a unit. So what happens if you clone a group? There are a couple of possibilities:

- If the group/unit the clone is referring to is not a clone, nothing changes. If you, for example have a rescue helicopter that respawns every hour (to get around a much more complex waypoint and order management conundrum) with orders to follow a carrier, the new clone simply also follows carrier
- If the group/unit the clone refers to is a clone, it gets a bit more involved:
 - If the other unit referred to is part of the same spawn template (since spawners support multiple groups per spawn), DML automatically resolves the reference to that other clone
 - If the other unit referred to is part of a different cloner, the group/unit reference is always resolved to the last (most recent) clone of that unit/group.
- The same rules apply to cloned static objects.



Using other zone's ('foreign') and multiple templates

Arguably one of clone zone's most powerful abilities is that they can use other clone zone's templates with their 'source' attribute. You use this to assemble a group (or more) into one template, and can then deploy clones of that template to many other zones throughout the map. A common use case for this is to create a SAM site template and place multiple clone zones that reference that SAM template. At mission start, you randomly (e.g. using rndFlag) activate only some of them, making the mission unpredictable. This dramatically decreases unit count in ME and the effort to create, and maintain, a mission.

To further enhance randomization, clone zones natively support template randomization. When a clone zone supplies more than one template zones for cloning in their 'source' attribute, each time the zone undergoes a clone cycle, it randomly chooses one of the supplied templates to clone.

Name	Value
Cloner	Lakeside SAM
source	SAM small, SAM big

On the road: onRoad Attribute

You can use the 'onRoad' attribute to force units to spawn on the nearest road to the intended spawn location (this option makes most sense when your

Name	Value
cloner	
onRoad	yes

cloner imports a template from another cloner, but can be used on any cloner). When you choose this option, the cloner will place any new spawn on the road nearest to the intended spawn location (after applying any randomization).

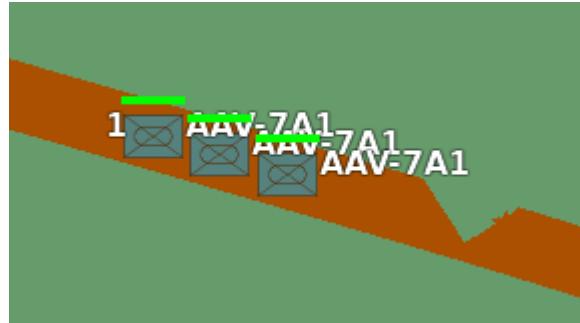
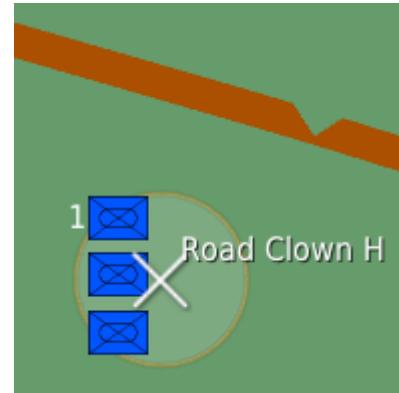
You can use this to great effect in densely populated regions (Cities) and in hilly regions to ensure that the units spawn on accessible surfaces (roads), not inside of buildings or steep inclines

The downside is that the next road may be far away, so make sure that if you activate the onRoad option, a road runs through the clone zone.

The cloner also attempts to keep minimal separation for each vehicle, but since this can't be algorithmically guaranteed to always work, will only try a couple of times before giving up and bunch the units together as it's told by DCS.

So, whenever you are using the onRoad option, keep the following in mind:

- If the nearest road is not inside the zone, the units will still move to the nearest road, and that may be miles away
- If there are multiple roads inside the clone zone, you can use randomization to distribute the units randomly over multiple streets. The onRoad option is applied after randomization, so the nearest point on the road can vary with each invocation.
- The original formation in the template will most likely be severely distorted
- The cloner takes at most 100 attempts to resolve separation between the units. If it can't resolve minimal separation, it gives up and bunches them on the road as close as they happen to be.



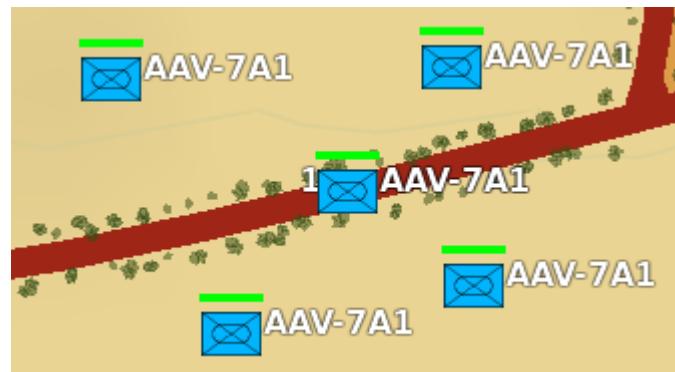
Using onRoad and rndLoc together with a city map allows you to quickly generate highly randomized mission scenarios. If you also supply multiple source templates to the spawner, you can create near endless variation with only a few simple attributes and zones.



wholeGroups: randomizing groups versus units

The attributes rndLoc, onRoad or rndHeading usually affect all units individually. In most cases, this breaks a group's formation (i.e. that careful arrangement that made in ME). If you want to keep that arrangement, you can apply the 'wholeGroups' attribute which will use a group's first unit, apply rndLoc, onRoad and rndHeading (whichever apply), and then arrange the rest of the group around that unit. For the various attributes this means:

- rndLoc: the first unit is placed randomly. This means the entire group is moved to the randomized location, keeping the formation intact
- rndHeading: the entire group, while keeping relative formation, is rotated around unit 1
- onRoad: only unit 1 is guaranteed to be placed in the middle of a road. All other units are arranged around it in the same formation as you set up in ME (see image to the right)



Aircraft, Helicopters, Ships, Static Objects

Note that clone zones are not limited to ground units. They copy all units (except player aircraft) into their template. That way you can easily create templates for aircraft that attack certain targets, and later spawn them multiple times.

Aircraft

When you clone aircraft groups to other locations, remember that their routes are also cloned, and these routes are changed according to the value of *moveRoute*. Some special rules apply to aircraft routes: if the first waypoint references an airdrome (because the

aircraft departs from that airfield: hot/cold start, runway), the closest airdrome to the new position (clone zone's center) is used. The same applies to the route's last waypoint: if the plane is instructed to land at an airdrome, the closest airdrome to the last waypoint is used. The latter is only important when moveRoute is set to true.

Helicopters

Similar restrictions with regards to airdromes apply to helicopters as they do to aircraft. Helicopters that start from the ground may and may not have these restrictions, depending on the helicopter.

Ships

Be careful when cloning ships, as cloners do not check if the position the units are cloned to are eligible for ships. You can clone a ship template and position an oil tanker on a mountain top.

Static Objects

When you include static objects into a template, remember that a spawner's 'empty!' flag is only triggered if all units are destroyed – and this includes any static objects spawned.

Cargo (Static Objects)

When you clone static objects that can be used as cargo (by having the relevant checkbox ticked), any cloned such object is also cargo. If CargoManager is installed, a cloneZone automatically hands off such cargo objects for management.

Coalition of spawned clones

By default, a clone all spawned units belong to the same faction as the units that were used to create the template (this means that in extreme cases, the same template can hold multiple coalitions). You can, however, override by specifying a masterOwner zone. All spawned clones then belong to the coalition that owns masterOwner.

Mission Start

When a mission starts, all clone zones run through the following steps:

- If no 'source' attribute is present, the clone zones looks for all units (air, ground, sea) inside the zone, and copies all groups for which at least one unit is inside the zone into a new template. All groups that are part of the template are removed from the game. If no groups are found, a warning is given that no template was created.
- Only if there is an 'onStart = true' attribute present, a clone cycle is initiated.
- Each time a clone cycle starts,
 - If a 'source' attribute is found, a clone zone with the name as gives as value for source is fetched, and that template is loaded. If more than one source templates are given, one is selected by random.
If that clone zone has no template, a warning is given. Only if no source attribute is given, the clone zone's own template is loaded.

- The template is used to create an exact clone of all groups that are in the template, including all routes. During the cloning process, all unit and group names are made unique based on the original (template's) names.

Since all template's original groups are all destroyed during the template creation process, any units or groups that are part of a template cannot be used in ME's 'UNIT IN ZONE' or 'GROUP IN ZONE' conditions because they no longer exist – they were destroyed during cloning.

ME INTEGRATION

Cloners can spawn on mission start (default), and when a flag changes its value to signal to the cloner that a new clone cycle should be initiated. Also, the cloner can watch the groups that it has cloned, and change a flag when all groups that were cloned in the last clone cycle are destroyed (which you can then use to initiate new clone cycle)

Name	Value	Description
spawn? in? f? clone?	Name	<p>Watches the flag <Name> (as accessed by DCS) for a change. Each time the flag's value changes, a new clone cycle is initiated</p> <p>You can use any of the synonyms for input (f?. in? spawn?, clone?), but only one per zone.</p>
empty!	Name	<p>When all units from the last clone cycle have been destroyed, this flag's value is changed according to method</p> <p>Note that this includes all static objects that are included in the template</p>
deSpawn? deClone? wipe?	Name	<p>Watches the flag <Name> for a change. Each time the flag's value changes, all units (including static objects) that are still alive from the previous spawn are removed from the game.</p>

Note:

if you feed *empty!* directly into *spawn?* (set them both to the same value), you create an endless spawner that re-spawns the entire template after all previously spawned units are destroyed.

RESTRICTIONS

Currently, clone zones do not support units that you linked to ships in ME (e.g., a carrier with aircraft groups on them). This may change in later releases.

INTEGRATION WITH GROUPTRACKERS

CloneZones can automatically add any spawned groups (but not static objects) to a groupTracker. Simply use the "trackWith:" attribute and supply the name of the zone that contains the groupTracker. If the groupTracker is stacked on the same zone as the cloner, you can provide the wildcard "*" as zone name

CALLBACKS (API)

Cloners sport strong support for Lua-scripted callback. Prove a callback that matches the following profile

```
function clonerCallback(theZone, theReason, arguments)
```

and your code will be invoked whenever one of the following happens (as provided by theReason argument)

- “will despawn group”

The cloner is about to despawn a group, usually as a response to a spawn with “preWipe” set to true.

Note:

At the start of a mission, all cloners that also serve as template despawn their originals, and will thus invoke this for each original group. WARNING: Your callback for the initial removal of originals is only invoked if you subscribe to callbacks before you run cloneZones.start().

arguments contains the group that is about to be despawned

- “will despawn static”

The cloner is about to despawn a static object, usually as a response to a spawn with “preWipe” set to true.

Note:

At the start of a mission, all cloners that also serve as template despawn their originals, and will thus invoke this for each original static. WARNING: Your callback for the initial removal of originals is only invoked if you subscribe to callbacks before you run cloneZones.start().

arguments contains the static object that is about to be despawned

- “did spawn group”

Whenever the cloner creates a group, this callback is invoked. Note that cloners can have more than one group per template, so this can be invoked multiple times per spawn cycle.

arguments contains the group that was spawned.

- “did spawn static”

Whenever the cloner creates a static, this callback is invoked. Note that cloners can have more than one static per template, so this can be invoked multiple times per spawn cycle.

arguments contains the static that was spawned.

- “spawned”

Whenever a spawn cycle completes, this is invoked.

arguments.groups contains all spawned groups, arguments.statics contains all spawned statics. This invocation is provided separately to the per-group/static invocations so you can bulk-process the spawned items rather than one by one

- “empty”
All units that were part of the previous spawn have been killed. Invoked at maximum once per spawn cycle. This is not invoked if preWipe is causing the units to be destroyed. `arguments` is empty
- “wiped”
When a spawn cycle undergoes a pre-wipe, this is invoked. `arguments` is empty.

4.4.12.2 Dependencies

Clone Zones requires dcsCommon, cfxMX and cfxZones.

4.4.12.3 Module Configuration

This module does not need to be configured

4.4.12.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
cloner	Marks this ME Zone as a clone zone. Value of this attribute is ignored , use it to describe this cloner's function. MANDATORY
source	The source for the clone template, must be the name of clone zone. When a clone cycle is initiated, the template is fetched from the source zone, and the units are then spawned around If this zone's center. If this attribute is present, this zone is not scanned for units to create a template from. If you supply more than one template zone names , separated by comma (e.g., “SAM 9 small, SAM 9 big”), each time a clone cycle is initiated, the clone zone picks one template by random. Defaults to <not present, zone scanned for units to create a template from>
turn	Degrees in which the clones are turned relative to the template's original position, relative to the zone's center. Defaults to 0 (zero)
moveRoute	If this attribute's value is true, all waypoints are move the same amount as the cloned units upon spawn. Only relevant if the zone is cloning another zone's template. When not present or false, all spawned units use the template's waypoints. Defaults to false
onStart	When set to false (default), the cloner will not spawn during start. Note that if this spawn zone is used to create a template, this results in an empty zone, as all units used for the template are destroyed during template creation. Defaults to false (no spawn on start of mission). To spawn units at mission start, set this attribute to true.
masterOwner	If not present, all cloned units retain the exact ownership of the units that the template was created from.

Name	Description
	If present, all cloned units are owned by the faction (red/blue/grey) that owns masterOwner. Note that using masterOwner, the coalition for the units that this cloner spawns can change during the mission. Defaults to <none, retain template ownership>
spawn? f? in? clone?	Flag to watch for a change. If the value of this flag changes, a new clone cycle is initiated Defaults to <none> This flag has multiple synonyms. Use only one per zone.
triggerMethod cloneTriggerMethod	Watchflag method to tell what to look for in inputs. Defaults to "change"
preWipe	If this attribute is true, any remaining units from the previous cloning cycle are removed from the game when the next clone cycle starts. Use this to 'refresh' groups like SAMs or Tanks that can run out of ammo. Default: false
empty!	The value of this flag is changed according to method when all units from the last spawn have been destroyed, including all static objects.
method cloneMethod	DML Method for output flags Defaults to "inc"
deSpawn? deClone? wipe?	Flag to watch for a change. If the value of this flag changes, the remaining units / static objects from the previous spawn are removed. Note that if you trigger deSpawn?, empty+1 will not trigger subsequently. Defaults to <none>
trackWith:	List of groupTracker zones. All spawned groups are added to these groupTrackers. If you have stacked the tracker on the same zone as the cloner, you can use a single asterisk '*' as zone name. Supports a comma-separated list of trackers if you simultaneously want to pass the cloned groups to multiple trackers, e.g. "GroundTrack, HeloTrack" This is useful if your cloner clones more than one group, and your trackers use filtering.
randomizedLoc rndLoc	Upon cloning, each cloned unit/object is displaced in a random direction by a random distance from 0 to the target zone's radius. Defaults to false
rndHeading	Upon cloning, each cloned unit/object assumes a random heading. Defaults to false
triggerMethod cloneTriggerMethod	Watchflag method for input flags. Defaults to 'change'
onRoad	Set to true to have any cloned unit deploy on the nearest road to the location it would spawn otherwise. This is very likely to change the template's formation, and can be a long way from the clone zone's intended spawn location, so use carefully. May also have other effects, such as bunching up the spawned units in unrealistically close proximity to each other. Defaults to false
wholeGroups	A modifier for the rndHeading, onRoad and rndLoc attributes. When set to true the clones are affected as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rndLoc - randomizes the location of unit 1 of the group, and keeps all other vehicles in formation relative to that group. In

Name	Description
	<p>fact, it only randomizes the group's position, not individual units</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • onRoad - now only the first unit is placed on the center of a road, all other units remain in location • rndHeading - with centerOnly, all units rotate randomly around unit 1's location • <p>Defaults to false (all units individually)</p>

Supports DML flags

Supports Watchflags

Supports zone-local verbosity

4.4.12.5 Persistence

Clones Zones support persistence. They persist all groups and static objects that they have spawned (if they are still alive at the point of persistence), and will re-connect with their spawns to correctly trigger empty! if that flag is connected to outputs.

Note that just like groups that you placed in ME, any group that has a route with more than one waypoint (in addition to the initial waypoint) will (due to the way DCS works) immediately head for the first waypoint. Keep this in mind when adding groups with routes to spawners in missions that you also want to use persistence with.

Persisted Cargo will correctly be managed by cargoManager upon reload.

4.4.12.6 API

4.4.12.6.1 spawnWithCloner(theZone)

Initiates a clone cycle for theZone. theZone must be clone zone.

4.4.12.6.2 getCloneZoneByName(aName)

Returns the clone zone that is named aName. If no such clone zone exists, nil is returned.

4.4.12.6.3 cloneZones.addCallback(theCallback)

Adds theCallback to the list of callbacks that are invoked whenever a cloner event occurs. theCallback should conform to the profile

```
function clonerCallback(theZone, theReason, arguments)
```

with theZone being the zone the cloner is anchored to, theReason a string describing why the callback is invoked, and arguments some additional reason-specific data.

The following reasons are defined (details see above)

- "will despawn group"
- "did spawn group"

- “will despawn static”
- “did spawn static”
- “spawned”
- “empty”
- “wiped”

4.4.12.7 Using the module

Include the cloneZones source into a DOSCRIPT action at the start of the mission. Create Clone Zones by creating a Trigger Zone and adding attributes as described above.

4.4.13 cfxObjectSpawnZone

4.4.13.1 Description

ObjectSpawnZones are similar to cfxSpawnZones in that they are used to dynamically spawn objects into a running DCS mission (i.e., they can create objects that did not exist in ME when the mission started). Like their name indicates, ObjectSpawnZones are used to spawn “inanimate” objects into the game. These usually are cargo objects, but they can be used to spawn other static objects into the game. In DCS terms, ‘static objects’ are inanimate: they do not cause world events (like “dead”), can’t be controlled by AI, and will therefore not move by themselves, nor fight or otherwise react to the presence of enemy units - even if they look exactly like (non-static) units.

Since to DCS they are inanimate, they *can* be linked to other units (ships) and picked up as cargo by helicopters. ObjectSpawnZones has provisions to allow both: they can be linked to ships so that the objects that they spawn can be placed on the deck of ships (and then move with the ship), and the spawned objects can be declared to be cargo objects so helicopters can pick them up.

There are some small differences to Unit/Group SpawnZones, so make sure that you consult and understand the various ME Attributes.

Spawn Cycle

After objects are spawned, the ObjectSpawnZone keeps an eye on the spawned objects. Once all of them have disappeared from the game (by deleting/destroying them), a new spawn cycle begins with a cooldown first, and then spawning all objects as described. Note that picking up cargo objects does not remove them from the game, so the spawner will not re-spawn simply because a cargo object was picked up. CargoReceivers (see below) have the ability to auto-delete cargo on deliver so this can then trigger the spawner’s re-spawn cycle.

When autoRemove is set to true the spawner immediately undergoes a new spawn cycle after spawning.

Pausing the Spawner

Unless paused, spawn cycles happen automatically at start, and when the spawned objects disappear. You can prevent this by setting the paused attribute (prevents spawning at start), or using the pause? input to deactivate the spawner. When paused, you can only start a new spawn cycle by forcing it via API or spawn? input. You can activate a paused spawner by sending a signal on the activate? input.

Making spawns “delicate” or “brittle”

You can assign a Delicate Zone to the spawner. If you do so, the named Delicate Zone is used to assign delicate status to the spawns, making them explode when they receive a tiny amount of damage. See Delicates module for more info.

Spawning “Formation”

Objects in object spawner always spawned objects as follows

- In the zone's center if the count attribute is omitted or set to one (1)
- An evenly spaced circle on the perimeter of the zone if count is set a value greater than one.

ME Integration (forced spawns)

Spawners can be instructed to spawn immediately, at which point they ignore all of the rules programmed into them by other attributes, and spawn objects immediately.

ObjectSpawnZones can be told to watch an **ME flag** for change, and every time that flag changes, the spawner spawns anew without checking max spawns, cooldown. In order to use an ME flag to trigger a spawn, all you need to do is add an attribute to the object spawner:

Name	Value	Description
f?	Number	Watches the flag <Number> (as accessed by DCS) for a change. Each time the flag value changes, a new set of objects is spawned
activate?	Number	Watches the flag <Number>. Each time the flag's value changes, the spawner's 'paused' setting is forced to 'false'. Used to 'activate' a paused spawner
pause?	Number	Watches the flag <Number>. Each time the flag's value changes, the spawner's 'paused' setting is forced to 'true'. Used to 'pause' a spawner

This allows mission designers to spawn objects whenever a player unit enters a zone (e.g. cargo containers for helicopters). Like unit spawners, object spawners support watchflags that allow the mission to pause and un-pause (activate) spawners by changing a flag. This allows other modules (e.g. rndFlags) to activate a paused spawner, and turn it off at will.

Alternatively (Lua only), scripts can use the API's method `spawnWithSpawner()` to directly trigger a spawn, also bypassing all checks.

After a forced spawn, SpawnZones resets the cooldown and invokes all subscribed callbacks. Unlike Troop Spawns, a forced spawn does count against maxSpawns, but a limit overrun is ignored.

Callbacks and scripted spawns (Lua Only)

ObjectSpawnZones support callbacks that are invoked when a new group is spawned. To register a callback, invoke

```
cfxObjectSpawnZones.addCallback(theCallback)
```

The callback has the following signature

```
theCB(reason, theSpawns, theSpawner)
```

with `reason` being string describing why the callback was invoked, `theSpawns` being a table of the newly spawned objects, and `theSpawner` the `ObjectSpawnZone` table that was used to spawn.

Currently, the following reasons are defined:

- “spawned”
ObjectSpawnZone `theSpawner` has just spawned `theSpawns`. If the module `cfxCargoManager` is installed and `isCargo` is set to true, the spawned objects are passed to `CargoManager` for management.

You can force a spawn by directly invoking

```
cfxObjectSpawnZones.spawnWithSpawner(aSpawner)
```

which will ignore any restrictions, and spawn immediately. A forced spawn does not count against the `maxSpawn` limit.

Spawning Cargo

Objects can be spawned as cargo that can be then picked up by other units (e.g. helicopters). If you set the `isCargo` zone attribute to true, the object is spawned as a cargo object in DCS and responds to normal cargo commands. Make sure to also set the `weight` attribute in this case to control the cargo’s weight.

Note that if you have installed the `cfxCargoManager` module in the mission, all **cargo is also automatically registered with the cargo manager** to generate cargo events that your script can subscribe to. In order to not register a spawned cargo object with cargo manager, set the `managed` attribute to false.

Linking spawned Objects to Units (autoLink)

DML supports linked zones: zones that move with objects. Since a common behavior with spawned objects is that an object that is spawned from an Object Zone that is linked to a unit should also move with that unit (e.g. a cargo spawner placed on a ship), `ObjectSpawner`’s default behavior for objects spawned with an `ObjectSpawnZone` that is linked is to also link the spawned objects to the unit that the object is linked to.

In order for moving (linked) object spawners to ‘drop’ their spawned objects to the ground (instead of onto the linked objects), add an `autoLink` attribute and set it to false. If no `autoLink` attribute is present, any object created from an object spawner that is linked to a unit is automatically also linked to that same unit.

4.4.13.2 Dependencies

Required

`ObjectSpawnZones` requires `dcsCommon`, `cfxZones`

Optional:

`cfxCargoManager` (for managing cargo events).

4.4.13.3 Module Configuration

ObjectSpawnZones does not require any configuration

4.4.13.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
objectSpawner	Marks this ME Zone as a spawn zone. Value of this attribute is ignored , use it to describe what it spawns to make mission editor easier for you MANDATORY
f? spawn? spawnObjects?	An ME-compatible flag (e.g. 100) that this object spawner monitors for change. Whenever the value of the monitored flag changes, a new set of objects is spawned immediately, ignoring all maxSpawn and cooldown rules. You can use any synonym, but only one per Zone
pause?	Flag to observe. Each time the flag's value changes, the spawner's 'paused' setting is forced to 'true'. Used to 'pause a spawner'
activate?	Flag to observe. Each time the flag's value changes, the spawner's 'paused' setting is forced to 'false'. Used to 'activate' a paused spawner
types	Type string array for the STATIC OBJECTS that are spawned. Example "White_Tyre, Red_Flag". These objects may look like units (if you use the type string for a ground unit or aircraft), but they are static. WARNING: Blanks are part of the type, and blanks before and after the last character are automatically stripped. All static objects given here are stacked on top of each other, and count as one instance (the example creates a tire with a red flag in the middle) MANDATORY
count	The number of times that the combined object in types is to be repeated. If count equals one (or is omitted), the objects defined in types are assembled in the center of the zone. Otherwise, the objects are distributed over the zone's circumference count times. Defaults to one
country	The country for which the static objects are spawned. Examples: 0 = Russia, 1 = Ukraine, 2 = USA etc. Defaults to 2 (USA)
baseName	Used to create the names that uniquely identify the objects that are spawned to DCS. If provided, MUST BE UNIQUE for each spawner. If you do not provide a baseName, a unique name is generated for you.
cooldown	Number of seconds after the last spawn was removed before new objects are spawned. Default is 60 seconds
autoRemove	Wait for the spawned objects to be removed or destroyed, immediately start cooldown, then re-spawn according to rules. Default is false
autoLink	Only used when the spawner is linked to a unit: should the spawned objects move with the unit that the zone is linked to (usually ships, but can also be other objects). Defaults to true. Set to false if the spawner should 'drop' the objects to the ground.
heading	Orientation of the objects when they are spawned. Default is 0 (North)
weight	Used with cargo objects: the weight of this object in kg. Defaults to zero.
isCargo	Are these objects to be picked up by helicopters? Defaults to false.

Name	Description
managed	Used only if the objects spawned are cargo. If true, cargo objects are automatically registered with cfxCargoManager when they are spawned and cfxCargoManager is loaded). Defaults to true
maxSpawns	Number of times that the spawner spawns the objects. Defaults to 1 (one)
paused	A paused spawner will not spawn automatically (but can be forced to spawn via API or query flag spawnObjects?). Set to true to pause spawning. Defaults to false.
requestable	This spawner should only spawn on request (i.e. via API or from other zones). Forces paused to true. Default value is false
useDelicates	Name of Delicates Zone that is used to assign delicate status when this spawner spawns objects

Supports DML Flags

4.4.13.5 API

In addition to configuring spawn zones with ME, mission designers can use the API for even finer control

4.4.13.5.1 addCallback(theCallback)

Adds theCallback to the list of callbacks that are invoked whenever an object spawn event occurs. theCallback has to match the following profile: theCB (reason, theSpawns, theSpawner)

4.4.13.5.2 getSpawnerForZone(aZone)

Returns the object spawner that is attached to cfxZone aZone. If no object spawner is attached to that zone, nil is returned.

4.4.13.5.3 getSpawnerForZoneNamed(aName)

Returns the object spawner that is attached to the zone with the name aName. If no object spawner is attached to that zone, or if no zone with that name exists, nil is returned.

4.4.13.5.4 getRequestableSpawnersInRange(aPoint, aRange, aSide)

Returns a table of all the object spawners that are inside aRange of aPoint, and that spawns object for aSide.

4.4.13.5.5 spawnWithSpawner(aSpawner)

Forces aSpawner to spawn immediately, ignoring all current restrictions. If a cooldown timer is running, cooldown is reset. This spawn cycle is not counted against maxSpawns.

4.4.13.5.6 despawnRemaining(spawner)

Removes all current objects from the list of spawns tracked by the spawner, leading to a new spawn cycle (cooldown, spawn) when the correct conditions are met.

4.4.13.6 Using the module

Include the cfxSpawnZones source into a DOSCRIPT action at the start of the mission

Remember to also include cfxCargoManager if you want it to automatically managed cargo events

4.4.14 cfxCargoReceiverZone

4.4.14.1 Description

This module solves a limitation of ME: unlike ME, it can generate events and set flags when players unhook cargo in such a zone. CargoReceiverZones provides strong integration for ME (via ME flag manipulation when something was delivered). Additionally, the receiver zones can provide automatic directions for the helicopter pilot during the final delivery phase.

CargoDeliveryZones work closely together with ObjectSpawnZones (who usually spawn the cargo objects) and the cfxCargoManager module that tracks the cargo objects and provides the required cargo events.

ME Flag Manipulation

Similar to the object destruct detector module, cargo receiver zones can manipulate standard ME flags (set, clear, increase and decrease), allowing mission designers not only to trigger on a delivery, but also use a single flag to count deliveries. This is controlled by adding attributes to the zone:

Name	Value	Description
f! cargoReceived!	Number	Sets this flag according to method each time cargo is delivered into the zone

Callbacks (Lua Only)

In addition to attribute-based flag manipulation, the module supports callbacks whenever cargo was delivered into a cargo receiver zone. The callback must match the following profile:

```
function cargoReceivedCB(event, obj, name, zone)
```

with event being a string describing the event, obj being the cargo object itself, name being that object's name (which can persist beyond the existence of the cargo object itself) and zone being the cargo zone as defined in ME

Currently, the following events are defined:

- “deliver”
The cargo object `obj` was delivered into the cargo receiver zone referenced by `zone`

4.4.14.2 Dependencies

CargoDeliveryZones can only track cargo that is registered with cfxCargoManager

It therefore requires that the following modules have loaded:

dcsCommon, cfxZones, cfxPlayer, cfxCargoManager

You usually also want cfxObjectSpawnZones to load because they can create cargo objects for you

4.4.14.3 Module Configuration

(none)

4.4.14.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
cargoReceiver	Marks this zone as a cargo receiver zone. Value is ignored MANDATORY
autoRemove	Delete any object <removeDelay> seconds after it was successfully delivered. This is helpful for most ObjectSpawnZones set-ups to trigger their spawn cycle
silent	Set to true to turn off this zone's directions. Defaults to false (zone will talk to pilots)
method cargoMethod	DML Method Defaults to "flip"
f! cargoReceived!	The flag to bang! when the object is destroyed. Use only one synonym per zone.
removeDelay	The delay (in seconds) after which after a successful delivery an object should be removed. Requires that autoRemove be set to true. Defaults to 1, Minimum is 1

4.4.14.5 API

In addition to configuring cargo receiver zones with ME, mission designers can use the API for even finer control

4.4.14.5.1 addCallback(cb)

Adds the callback cb to this module's list of active callbacks. Must match the following profile:

```
cargoReceivedCB(event, obj, name, zone)
```

4.4.14.6 Using the module

Include the cfxCargoReceiverZone source into a DOSCRIPT action at the start of the mission

Place cargo receiver zone as your mission requires

4.4.15 cfxArtilleryZones

4.4.15.1 Description

artilleryZones (better: artillery *target* zones, as they designate where the artillery shells will land) are a simple extension for mission builders that can be used to simulate artillery bombardment on a point on the map (without having to place artillery units), as well as marking an artillery zone visually (via smoke) and on the F10 map. In conjunction with the artilleryUI module, mission designers can easily implement forward observation (FO) methods for helicopters with support for spot range and LOS.

Artillery zones provide enough firepower (controlled with the shellStrength attribute) to destroy any object, so they are a good (and spectacular) choice to use when you need to destroy map objects (bridges, buildings). This can be further utilized with object destruct detectors that can tell you when a map object was destroyed (and stop bombardment), or trigger further bombardment to make sure an object gets destroyed).

Artillery zones can use standard mission flags to trigger a bombardment, so a mission designer can rig artillery target zone very precisely and then simply change a flag to start bombardment.

Finally, artillery zone has a comprehensive API for those who want to interface to artillery zones via scrip.

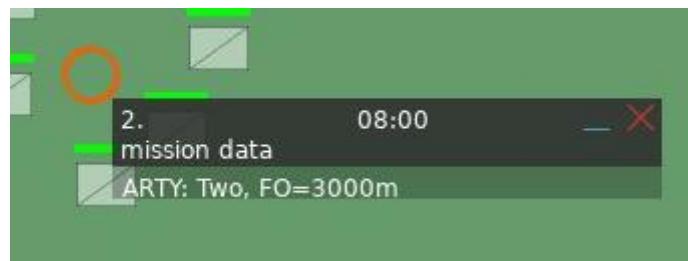
ME Flag Integration

You can trigger firing into the artillery zone with normal ME flags. You tell the artillery zones which flag to watch, and every time that flag changes value, a fire cycle is triggered. Note that flag-triggered firings ignore any cooldown attribute; when the flag changes, the artillery fires.

Name	Value	Description
f? in? artillery?	Number	Watches the flag <Number> (as accessed by DCS) for a change. Each time the flag value changes, a new fire cycle is initiated

Map Integration

Artillery target zones are marked on the F10 map for the coalition that this artillery zone belongs to (an optional attribute, see below). If no coalition is specified for the artillery zone, it won't be visible on red's nor blue's map.



Automatically marking an artillery zone can be suppressed with an attribute (see below)

Callbacks (Lua Only)

artilleryZones support callbacks. Your callbacks must match the following profile:

```
function artyCallback(reason, zone, data)
```

with

- reason describing why the callback is invoked
- zone being the artillery zone that is responsible for the event
- data being a table containing additional information for the event

Artillery zones invoke subscribers callbacks for the following reasons:

- 'fire'
The artillery is firing according to parameters. The data table is empty.
- 'impact'
A (simulated) projectile from a fire event has impacted. The data table holds the additional information: data.point is the impact point of the shell, data.strength is the power of the explosion
Note that for each fire event there can be multiple impact events for the same zone: that zone's shellNum invocations to be precise.

You can subscribe to artilleryZone callbacks by invoking

```
cfxArtilleryZones.addCallback(theCallback)
```

4.4.15.2 Dependencies

cfxArtilleryZones requires dcsCommon and cfxZones

4.4.15.3 Module Configuration

None.

4.4.15.4 ME Attributes

cfxArtilleryZones make heavy use of attributes. Make sure to understand the defaults; usually you'd only need to change some of the attributes

Name	Description
artilleryTarget	Marks this zone as an artillery zone. Value is ignored MANDATORY
coalition	Used with Artillery UI – the coalition that can give a fire command (the explosions are completely coalition agnostic – they kill anyone). When the artillery zone is marked on the map, only this side will see it. Defaults to 0. Supports “red” and “blue” as values
spotRange	Used with Artillery UI – the maximum range at which an FO can give a fire command. Measured from center of zone. Defaults to 3000 meters
shellStrength	Average power of each exploding shell. Defaults to 500. 3000 is enough to level big buildings, so be conservative.
shellNum	Number of shells (salvo) per fire cycle. Defaults to 17 shells per cycle

Name	Description
transitionTime	The time (in seconds) the shells take on average to reach the target zone. Note that not all shells arrive at once, but are usually spread over a couple of seconds. Defaults to 20
addMark	Add the artillery target zone to the F10 map of coalition (see above). Defaults to true .
shellVariance	Difference in shell's explosion power, in percent. Defaults to 0.2 (20%)
f? in? artillery?	DML Watchflag. When triggered, the artillery bombardment starts. Defaults to <none> You can use any synonym, but only one per zone
triggerMethod artyTriggerMethod	Defines the trigger condition for the DML Watchflag. Defaults to "change"
cooldown	Used with Artillery UI: Number of seconds before the next fire cycle can be initiated. Is ignored when initiating fire via ME flags. Defaults to 120 (2 Minutes)
baseAccuracy	The radius (in meters) around the center of the zone in which the projectiles will land. Defaults to the ME zone's radius (meaning all projectiles will land inside the zone if this attribute is missing and fire cycle is invoked via trigger flag)
silent	Used with Artillery UI: if true, suppresses communication responses from artillery

Supports DML Flags

Supports Watchflags

Note that all zones that are created with ME are also automatically added to the pool of managed artillery zones.

4.4.15.5 API

In addition to configuring artillery zones with ME, mission designers can use the API for even finer control

4.4.15.5.1 addCallback(theCallback)

Adds theCallback to the list of callbacks. Your callbacks will be invoked whenever a fire or impact event occurs.

4.4.15.5.2 createArtilleryTarget

```
createArtilleryTarget(name, point, coalition, spotRange, transitionTime, baseAccuracy,  
shellNum, shellStrength, shellVariance, triggerFlag, addMark, cooldown, autoAdd)
```

Creates an artillery zone via API. For the description of the various parameters and their default, please refer to the ME Attributes section, below.

The method returns a cfxArtilleryZone that can be added to cfxArtilleryZone's list of target zones that are managed (for watching trigger flags). If autoAdd is set to true, the newly created artillery zone is automatically submitted.

[4.4.15.5.3 addArtilleryZone\(aZone\)](#)

Adds aZone to the list of managed artillery zones. Note that only zones added to artillery zones' list of managed zones can show up on the map or will be considered when querying artilleryZonesInRange

[4.4.15.5.4 findArtilleryZoneNamed\(aName\)](#)

Returns the artillery zone with name aName, or nil otherwise. aName must be a full match.

[4.4.15.5.5 removeArtilleryZone\(aZone\)](#)

Removes aZone from the list managed artillery zones. The zone will disappear from the map and no longer be considered by artilleryZonesInRange. Remove an artillery zone when you know that all targets inside the zone have been destroyed.

[4.4.15.5.6 artilleryZonesInRangeOfUnit\(theUnit\)](#)

Returns a table of all artillery zones that fulfill the following constraints

- is managed by artillery zones
- belongs to the same coalition as theUnit
- theUnit is at maximum spotRange from the zone's center
- theUnit has LOS to the zone's center point

[4.4.15.5.7 doFireAt\(aZone, maxDistFromCenter\)](#)

Initiates a fire cycle at the artillery zone aZone. maxDistFromCenter specifies the maximum distance the projectiles will land (i.e. the 'accuracy' of the shells). If omitted, the zone's baseAccuracy attribute is used.

doFireAt ignores any cooldowns, and will not reset the cooldown of an artillery zone.

aZone can be a string with the name of the artillery zone. aZone does not have to be actively managed by artillery zones to invoke doFireAt.

4.4.15.6 Using the module

Include the cfxArtilleryZones source into a DOSCRIPT action at the start of the mission

Place artillery zones with ME

4.4.16 cfxOwnedZones

4.4.16.1 Description

Owned Zones is a module that managers 'conquerable' zones that spawn attackers and defenders, and that keeps a record of which coalition owns which zone. Ownership is updated regularly. Owned Zones anchors itself to zones with an 'owner' attribute from ME.

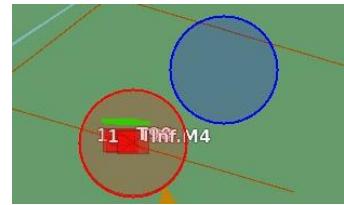
REDFORCE have secured zone Blue Owned One

Note

'owner' is an attribute that *all* DML Zones share: it is assigned implicitly by cfxZones, and set to neutral by default. It is only by **explicitly** setting an 'owner' attribute in ME *and including this module* that a zone becomes an Owned Zone.

Visuals

Owned zones are shown on the F10 Map in-game and are colored by their owning faction: grey for neutral, Red for REDFOR, Blue for BLUEFOR. This can be turned off for each zone by an attribute.



Conquering an Owned Zone

An Owned zone is conquered when there are only ground troops belonging to the opposing (conquering) faction inside the zone left alive. A single ground unit (including infantry) can therefore conquer a zone, as long as there are no units from the opposing faction inside the zone. Capturing a zone is instantaneous. A neutral zone is captured even if there are neutral units remaining in the neutral zone, i.e. neutral units do not have to be destroyed to capture a neutral owned zone.

Zone Protection Attributes

There are several attributes that can protect an owned zone from the enemy. You can use this to prevent certain conditions from arising (such as a critical owned zone is inadvertently taken out by AI instead of players).

- Owned Zones can be set to "unbeatable" so they are never conquered by another faction.
- Owned Zones can be set to "untargetable" so that AI will ignore them when looking for a zone to attack.

Defenders / Attackers Production Logic

Owned zones can spawn troops to defend the zone (defenders), and send out troops to engage other owned zones. What troops they produce are determined with the 'defendersRED/BLUE' and 'attackersRED/BLUE' Type attributes. Neutral zones do not produce attackers nor defenders.

The logic for production is as follows

- When the mission starts up, defenders for the currently owning faction are produced instantly, unless the zone is neutral, in which case no defenders are created.

- When a zone is captured, the zone enters a “defender production” cycle (it waits). If at the end of the wait cycle the zone is still held by the same faction, defenders are spawned as described by the defendersXXX property.
- Once all defenders are spawned, the zone goes into attacker production (wait) cycle.
- When no defenders get destroyed during the produce attacker cycle,
 - If there are no enemy or neutral zones to attack, the zone spawns no units.
 - A new attacker group (consisting of units as described in attackersXXX) is spawned that automatically seeks out other owned zones [requires cfxGroundTroops] that are owned by neutral, or the other faction.
 - A new attacker production wait cycle starts
- When a zone defender is destroyed, the zone enters a ‘shocked’ state in which it does nothing. This shocked counter is renewed every time defenders are destroyed. Once the shock counter finishes, the zone enters a repair cycle
- In repair, all damaged units are replaced by fresh ones one by one, one unit for each cycle. When all defenders are repaired, the zone goes back to producing attackers.

Note that once attackers are produced, the module attempts to hand them off to cfxGroundTroops with orders to “attackOwnedZone”. If cfxGroundTroops is not loaded, this results in an error message.

ME Flag Integration

Owned Zones support ‘bang!’ attributes for red, blue and neutral: you can specify one flag (e.g. 100) for each side (red, blue, neutral) that Owned Zones changes each time an Owned Zone changes hands. The logic is that the flag for the winning side is increased by one, and the one for the side that lost the zone is decreased by one.

Note that these bang! flags are **set in the zone’s configuration zone**, as they apply to all owned zones.

Name	Value	Description
n!	Number	Increase this flag by one if neutral wins an owned zone. Decrease this flag by one if neutral loses an owned zone. Applies to all owned zone, is set in the module’s config zone
r!	Number	Increase this flag by one if red wins an owned zone. Decrease this flag by one if red loses an owned zone. Applies to all owned zone, is set in the module’s config zone
b!	Number	Increase this flag by one if blue wins an owned zone. Decrease this flag by one if blue loses an owned zone. Applies to all owned zone, is set in the module’s config zone

Additionally, Owned Zones supports changing flags on **individual zone** basis.

Name	Value	Description
conq+1		Increase this flag by one each time this zone is conquered. This flag applies to one zone (that one that carries this attribute)
conquered!	DML Flag	Flag to bang! when this zone changes hands Defaults to <none>

Callbacks (Lua)

When a zone changes hands, a capture callback can be invoked. You install such a callback via:

```
function cfxOwnedZones.addCallBack(conqCallback)
```

conqCallback has the signature (zone, newOwner, formerOwner) with zone being the cfxZone, and newOwner and formerOwner the respective coalition ID (0 = neutral, 1 = red, 2 = blue)

4.4.16.2 Dependencies

Required: dcsCommon, cfxZones

Optional: cfxGroundTroops

4.4.16.3 Module Configuration

To configure the Owned Zones module via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “ownedZonesConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Show debugging information. Default is off
announcer	Show a message if an owned zone is captured. Default is true
defendingTime	Time (in seconds) for producing defenders. Defaults to 100
attackingTime	Time (in seconds) for producing attackers. Defaults to 300
shockTime	Time (in seconds) after an attack on defenders before repair commence. Defaults to 200
repairTime	Time (in seconds) for repairs to complete. Defaults to 200
n!	Increase this flag by one if neutral wins an owned zone. Decrease this flag by one if neutral loses an owned zone
r!	Increase this flag by one if red wins an owned zone. Decrease this flag by one if red loses an owned zone
b!	Increase this flag by one if blue wins an owned zone. Decrease this flag by one if blue loses an owned zone

4.4.16.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
owner	Coalition that owns the zone at beginning of Mission. Can be 0, 1, 2 or “red”, “blue”, “neutral”. If nothing or some illegal value give, this defaults to neutral (0) MANDATORY
conq+1	Increase this flag’s value by 1 (one) each time it is conquered.

Name	Description
	Defaults to <none>
conquered!	Flag to bang! when this zone changes hands Defaults to <none>
defendersRED	A string, coma separated, that specifies the types of troops to spawn when the zone is owned by RED. Example: "Soldier M4,Soldier M4" places two Infantry soldiers. Warning: these types need to <i>exactly</i> match DCS's types. Be sure not to accidentally insert blanks. Special types: "none" – no troops Defaults to "none"
defendersBLUE	A string, coma separated, that specifies the types of troops to spawn when the zone is owned by RED. Example: "Soldier M4,Soldier M4" places two Infantry soldiers. Warning: these types need to <i>exactly</i> match DCS's types. Be sure not to accidentally insert blanks. Special types: "none" – no troops Defaults to "none"
attackersRED	A string, coma separated, that specifies the types of troops to spawn when the zone is owned by RED. Example: "Soldier M4,Soldier M4" places two Infantry soldiers. Warning: these types need to <i>exactly</i> match DCS's types. Be sure not to accidentally insert blanks. Special types: "none" – no troops Defaults to "none"
attackersBLUE	A string, coma separated, that specifies the types of troops to spawn when the zone is owned by RED. Example: "Soldier M4,Soldier M4" places two Infantry soldiers. Warning: these types need to <i>exactly</i> match DCS's types. Be sure not to accidentally insert blanks. Special types: "none" – no troops Defaults to "none"
formation	Formation of the defenders group. See dcsCommon for supported group formations. Defaults to 'circle_out'.
attackFormation	Formation of the attackers group. See dcsCommon for supported group formations. Defaults to 'circle_out'.
spawnRadius	Radius of circle that the defenders are placed on. Defaults to slightly less than zone radius, so defenders are always inside the zone they are defending. Defaults to 0.
attackRadius	Radius of circle in which the attackers spawn after they are produced. Defaults to zone radius
attackDelta	Distance from center of zone in which attackers spawn circle is located. Defaults to 10.
attackPhi	Angle (direction) in degrees from zone center where attackers are spawning. Defaults to 0.
paused	Pauses zone. "true" or "yes" means that the zone is paused. A paused zone produces no attackers nor defenders, but will detect capture normally. Capturing a paused zone will currently not unpause the zone. Do that in the capture callback. Defaults to "no"
unbeatable	"true" or "yes" makes it unbeatable. Zone can't be conquered by other side. Defaults to "no"
untargetable	"true" or "yes" makes it untargetable. Zone will not be targeted by troops with 'attackOwnedZones'. Defaults to "no"
hidden	"true" or "yes" hides it. Zone is not shown on F10 Map. Defaults to "no"

4.4.16.5 Persistence

Owned zones keeps track of all units it has produced (attackers and defenders) and will upon load re-create those groups where they were when the mission was saved. **If these groups are controlled by cfxGroundTroops (as per default), they will continue their tasks immediately** (in sharp contrast to units placed with ME who will tend to proceed to their first waypoint). This currently only applies to troops with orders ‘attack zone’, ‘lase’, and ‘attackOwnedZone’.

4.4.16.6 API

In addition to configuring owned zones with ME, mission designers can use the API for even finer control

[4.4.16.6.1 addCallBack\(conqCallback\)](#)

Adds conqCallback to the list of callbacks the Owned Zones invokes when an owned zone changes hands. The callback must conform to the profile

```
function myCallBack(zone, newOwner, formerOwner)
```

[4.4.16.6.2 getOwnerForZone\(aZone\)](#)

Returns the owner for DML zone aZone. Same as aZone.owner.

[4.4.16.6.3 getEnemyZonesFor\(aCoalition\)](#)

Returns a table of all enemy owned zones for aCoalition. Note that this table is complete, it INCLUDES zones that have the untargetable attribute set to true.

[4.4.16.6.4 getNearestOwnedZoneToPoint\(aPoint\)](#)

Returns the closest owned zone (any ownership) and distance to aPoint. It excludes owned zones that have the attribute ‘untargetable’ set to true

[4.4.16.6.5 getNearestOwnedZone\(theZone\)](#)

Returns the closest owned zone (any ownership) and distance to theZone. It excludes owned zones that have the attribute ‘untargetable’ set to true

[4.4.16.6.6 getNearestEnemyOwnedZone\(theZone, targetNeutral\)](#)

Returns the closest enemy owned zone (opposing coalition) and distance to theZone. If targetNeutral is true, neutral zones are included in the list. It excludes owned zones that have the attribute ‘untargetable’ set to true

4.4.16.6.7 getNearestFriendlyZone(theZone, targetNeutral) excludes

Returns the closest friendly (same coalition) owned zone (any ownership) and distance to theZone. If targetNeutral is true, neutral zones are included in the list. It excludes owned zones that have the attribute ‘untargetable’ set to true

4.4.16.7 Using the Module

To enable, add the script to the mission as a DOSCRIPT action during Mission Start

To configure the module, place configuration zone as described above.

Then, place Trigger Zones in ME, and name them. Add the ‘owner’ property and enter “red”, “blue” or “neutral” as initial owners. All other properties are optional.

4.4.17 FARP Zones

4.4.17.1 Description

FARPZones is a Zone Extension that improves in-game FARP capabilities. It automatically creates all “resource” units required to operate a fully functioning FARP (i.e. Power, Communication, Repair and Rearm), and can optionally also place defenders (similar to OwnedZones). The FARP Zone automatically reflects the owning status of the FARP object it is linked to (the FARP object must be inside the zone), and re-generate the resource/service vehicles once captured.

When creating a FARP zone, it is best to place it on, or very close to, the center of the FARP static object itself, so that the Resource Vehicles are easy to place, and you can ensure that the FARP is contained within the Zone.

Warning

You should only place **at most one FARP Zone over a FARP**. Since the FARP Zone associates itself with the nearest FARP, make sure to place the FARP Zone near the FARP in question. If you place two FARP Zones close to the same FARP, there will be no error. When captured, though, the FARP can behave unpredictably, as it is not defined which FARP Zone will receive the notification.

FARPs are marked by a circle in the F10 player map, colored in the color of the owning faction.

Unlike OwnedZones, a FARP Zone currently does *not* re-generate defenders or resource vehicles.

Note:

FARP Zones do not work with Airfields.

r-Phi-What???

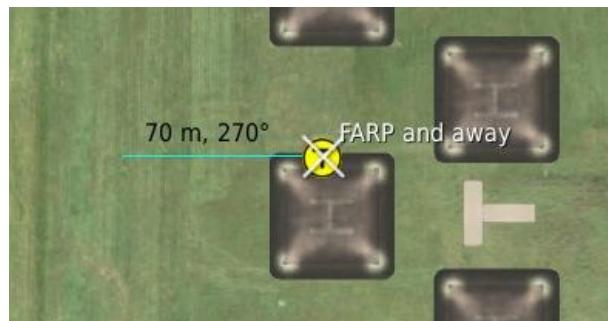
In order to place the resource and defensive units, FARP uses a system called ‘polar notation’. It’s very easy to use in ME, and you’ll soon find out why. Let’s start with placing the resource vehicles:

Name	Value	
FARP	and away	
rPhiHRes	70, 270, 0	

they deploy as a line around the resource point. On the left you can see that we have told this FARP that it should deploy the resource vehicles at “70, 270, 0”. This means the following: the resource vehicles are to deploy around a point that is 70 meters distant from the zone center (that’s “r”), at a bearing of 270 degrees (Phi, from the center), and that the units all deploy with heading (H) zero. Hence rPhiH = “70, 270, 0”

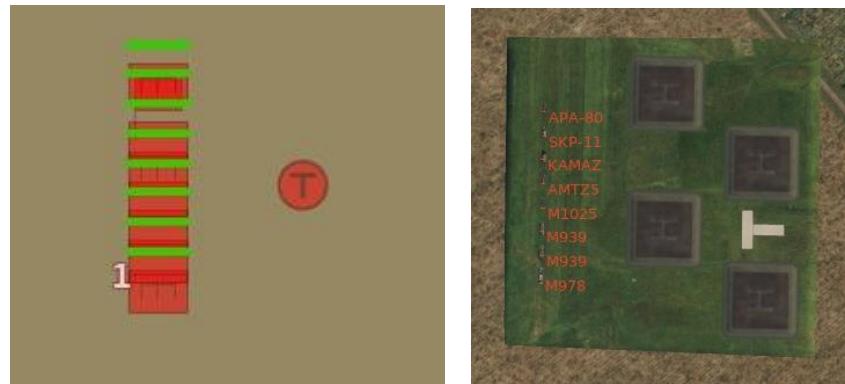
But how on earth did we arrive at these numbers, and why are we using such a strange way to describe a simple offset? Because we can get those numbers directly from ME, inside ME!

Using the ruler tool in ME, we can, when measuring from the zone’s center, directly get both R (70 m) and Phi (270°) for



the location to place the units. Since the line of vehicles should be facing north, that's the final 0 (you can use the ruler a second time to measure the heading the line should have).

The result is this in-game:



We follow the same procedure when placing the defenders that are spawned for the FARP when captured. The defenders always deploy inside a 100 meter radius, and you place the center of that circle with "rPhiHDef". If the FARP is captured, the defending vehicles for the new owning faction uses the same spot. Note that using ME's ruler to measure the spot for the zone you can achieve very precise positioning of defenders, utilizing the surrounding terrain.

F10 Map Display Options

FARP zones are displayed on the F10 map in-game, and are colored by their owning faction (red/blue/grey). You should place the FARP Zone very close to the actual FARP unit to make the circle correctly reflect the FARP's conquer zone, as the circle created on the map is exactly 2000m in radius and then reflects the area that when entered by enemy ground forces, captures the FARP.

Since it's not always desirable for FARPs to be visible, or only visible when owned by a specific side, each FARP has individual attributes that control when a FARP Zone is drawn on the F10 Map. Use "hideRed", "hideBlue", "hideGrey" for that purpose. They all default to 'false', resulting in a FARP being visible by default.



FARP Ownership and Spin-Up

FARP Ownership is governed by DCS, and FARP Zones always reflect that. When a FARP is conquered, FARP Zones detects this and starts the 'spinUp' cycle (a wait cycle). When that cycle is complete without another change in ownership, the FARP becomes operational for the conquering side: the resource and defense vehicles are spawned at the location that is indicated by the rPhiHRes attribute (see above and below)

When the mission starts up, no spin-up is required, all resource vehicles spawn immediately, the FARP can immediately be used for all services.

FARP Services

For many mission designers, providing services at a FAPR (e.g. Repair, Rearm, Refuel) can be an issue. FARPZones always ensure that a FARP has all required service vehicles ready for the FARP to immediately (or after spin-up when captured) provide all services. As mission designer it suffices if you add a Zone and the FARP attribute, and the FARP has all services available. Note, however, that the resource vehicles are not automatically replaced by the FARP, the player must defend them or the services may nor be available any more.

Interaction with other DML modules

FARP Zones interact automatically with most other modules when required. Here are some hints when you plan to use other Zone Enhancements with FARP Zones

- SSB Client – integration is fully automatic. SSB Client recognizes which FARP belongs to what coalition and blocks slots accordingly. No conflict
- SpawnZones – since a FARP can be conquered, you should be careful when using spawn zoned inside a FARP zone. Make the spawner's masterOwner the FARP to prevent the spawner from spawning when the FARP is owned by another faction.

4.4.17.2 Dependencies

Required: dcsCommon, cfxZones

4.4.17.3 Module Configuration

To configure FARPZones via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it "farpZonesConfig" (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Show debugging information. Default is off
spinUpDelay	Number of seconds after a capture that the FARP becomes active (the resource vehicles spawn). Defaults to 30

4.4.17.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
FARP	Indicates that this zone is a FARP zone. Value is ignored. MANDATORY
rPhiHDef	Radius (in m), Phi (degrees) and Heading (degrees) of the center point around which the defenders deploy. Defaults to 0, 0, 0
rPhiHRes	Radius (in m), Phi (degrees) and Heading (degrees) of the center point around which the resource vehicles deploy as a line. Defaults to 0, 0, 0
redDefenders	typeStrings of defender vehicles. Example "ZSU-23-4 Shilka, ZSU-23-4 Shilka". Defaults to "none" Special encoding: "none" – no vehicles
blueDefenders	typeStrings of defender vehicles. Example "Roland ADS, Roland Radar, Roland ADS". Defaults to "none" Special encoding: "none" – no vehicles

Name	Description
formation	Formation of the defenders group. See dcsCommon for supported group formations. Defaults to 'circle_out'.
rFormation	Radius of the circle that the defenders assemble in. Defaults to 100m
hidden	Set to "no" if FARP is visible on the F10 map (and colored according to owner). Defaults to "no"
hideRed hideBlue hideGrey	For any of these three attributes, the FARP is hidden if it belongs to that faction. For example, if hideRed is set to true, the FARP is shown on the map while it belongs to neutral or blue, but disappears when it is owned by red.

4.4.17.5 Persistence

FARP Zones persist the status of defenders and resource vehicles. Due to the way that FARPs interact with ground forces in the game, you may see a 'FARP aligned with data' message shortly after loading a mission, indicating that the FARP now should be available to your side (important when using SSBCClient that prevents spawning from enemy FARP)

4.4.17.6 API

None.

4.4.17.7 Using the module

Add the script to your mission using a DOSCRIPT action while the mission starts.

In ME, place a FARP static object, and then a Zone over it (choose a radius of 2 km to match up with capture radius), and add the FARP attribute to the Zone.

4.4.18 cfxMapMarkers

4.4.18.1 Description

A small ME extension module that allows you to place markers and text comments in ME on the map that players can see during the mission when they switch to F10 Map View (provided they enable markers).

4.4.18.2 Dependencies

Required: dcsCommon, cfxZones

4.4.18.3 Module Configuration

No special configuration required

4.4.18.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
mapMarker	Turns on the map marking feature. Simply must be present. Content of this property is displayed as text on the Map. Example “Destroy all vehicles in this area” MANDATORY
coalition	Side that sees this marker. Can be “red”, “blue”, “neutral”, or “all”. You can also substitute “1” for red, and “2” for blue. Defaults to “all”

4.4.18.5 API

None.

4.4.18.6 Using the module

To enable, add the script to the mission as a DOSCRIPT action during Mission Start

To use, place a Zone in ME, and name it. Then add the ‘mapMarker’ property and add descriptive text into the value field. That text is shown in-game on the F10 Map. All other properties are optional.

4.4.19 cfxNDB

4.4.19.1 Description

This enhancement places an NDB (non-directional beacon) that aircraft can home in on with their ADF. Since cfxNDB is based on cfxZones, these NDB can move by linking them to a unit, making it easy to add 'homing beacons' to units that (in DCS) are difficult to add beacons to: ships. Look at the demo to see how we attached an NDB to a battlecruiser that a Huey can home in on.

NDB are exceedingly easy to set up – all they need is a frequency and a sound file (since DCS currently does not support a set of default sound files, you must supply your own. The 'ADF and NDB fun' mission includes a small (public domain) sound file you can use to simulate an ELT signal.

Name	Value	
NDB	121.5	
soundFile	distressbeacon.ogg	

To use an NDB in their aircraft, players must be familiar with radio navigation.

Moving NDB

If you use the linkedUnit attribute to make the zone follow a unit, an NDB will automatically observe any location change. In the example to the right, we have linked an NDB at 540 kHz to the naval unit named 'Cruiser.'

By default, a unit-linked (moving) NDB updates its location every 10 seconds. That is quite often, as most units do not move very far in that time (for example, the carrier "Theodore Roosevelt", when cruising at 50 km/h moves 140m in that time. That is less than half its length). ADF navigation isn't precise enough to notice small spatial changes unless very close by, so update (or 'refresh') intervals with longer times usually work equally well. Note that in order to reposition an NDB, the audio transmission (as defined by the sound file) is turned off and then re-started at the new location. This is important to remember if your refresh interval is shorter than the duration of the sound clip, as anything past the refresh interval is not played and the sound file begins anew. Location refresh is turned off for unlinked NDB.



Name	Value	
NDB	0.540	
soundFile	distressbeacon.ogg	
linkedUnit	Cruiser	

If required, you can change the update interval of NDBs with an attribute in the config zone

Sound File

The NDB transmits an endlessly repeating sound file over the radio. You must specify the sound file's name in the attribute, and include its file type (e.g. ".ogg"). In order to work you must observe the following:

- The sound file must be included in the mission. The easiest way to do this is by adding a "Sound To All" Action that is timed at some point far in the future (some 99999 seconds after mission starts). This includes the sound file into the correct location in your mission.

- NDB looks for sound files in l10n/DEFAULT/. If you manually place sound files in your mission at other places than ME's default location ("l10n/DEFAULT/"), you must provide the path to that location yourself, relative to l10n/DEFAULT/.

ME Integration

You can turn an NDB on and off at any time in the mission using normal ME flags. You tell the NDB zones which flags to watch, and every time that those flags change values, the NDB is turned on or off accordingly.

Name	Value	Description
on?	Number	Watches the flag <Number> for a change. Each time the flag value changes, the NDB is started (will also cause the transmission sound to rewind). The current paused value is ignored, and then set to false after the NDB has started
off?	Number	Watches the flag <Number> for a change. Each time the flag value changes, the NDB is stopped. paused is set to true for this NDB

4.4.19.2 Dependencies

NDB requires dcsCommon and cfxZones.

It also requires that you include the sound files that you want the NDB to transmit.

4.4.19.3 Module Configuration

To configure the NDB module via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it "ndbConfig" (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Show debugging information. Default is off
ndbRefresh	<p>Time (in seconds) between location updates <i>for moving NDB</i> (i.e. an NDB with a linkedUnit attribute).</p> <p>Note if the refresh interval is shorter than the duration of the sound file that is transmitted, the sound file stops playing at refresh, and then starts at the new location <i>from the beginning</i>. This means no part of the sound file beyond the refresh interval is ever played.</p> <p>NDB that aren't linked to units do not refresh and have no restrictions on the length of their transmission</p>

4.4.19.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
NDB	<p>Creates an NDB at the zone's center. If the zone is linked to a unit, this NDB will automatically update to the unit's location.</p> <p>The value of this attribute is the frequency (in MHz) at which the NDB transmits (e.g. 121.5 for 121.5 MHz, 0.42 for 420 kHz)</p> <p>MANDATORY</p>
fm	If true, the transmission is in FM, else in AM Defaults to false (AM)
ndbSound	<p>Name of the sound file with extension that is to be transmitted. Defaults to '<none>'. Note that the sound file's name must be specified relative to the missions default location for sound files (I10n/DEFAULT/). If you use ME to import the sound files, you do not have to specify the location.</p> <p>Remember to import the sound file into the mission else no sound will play.</p>
watts	Transmission power (in watts) for the NDB. 100 Watts usually has a range of some 150 km. Defaults to 100 Watts
paused	If set to true, on mission start the NDB will not start up. Use the "on?" watch flag attribute or API to turn it on. Defaults to false
on?	Watchflag. Each time the flag triggers, the NDB is started (will also cause the transmission sound to rewind). The current paused value is ignored, and then set to false after the NDB has started. Defaults to no flag to watch
off?	Watchflag. Each time the flag triggers, the NDB is stopped. paused value is set to true after the NDB has stopped. Defaults to no flag to watch
triggerMethod ndbTriggerMethod	Defines the trigger condition for DML Watchflags. Use only one synonym per zone Defaults to "change"

4.4.19.5 API

You can use the API to easily start and stop an NDB from script. Note that you must create the NDB in-mission with ME first,

4.4.19.5.1 `startNDB(theNDB)`

Starts an NDB as defined by theNDB. Any paused attribute is ignored, and paused is then set to false. theNDB can be a string referring to the zone by name, or the NBD zone itself.

4.4.19.5.2 `cfxNDB.stopNDB(theNDB)`

Stops an NDB as defined by theNDB. The paused attribute is set to true. theNDB can be a string referring to the zone by name, or the NBD zone itself.

4.4.19.6 Using the Module

To enable, add the script to the mission as a DOSCRIPT action during Mission Start

To use, simply add the ‘NDB’ and ‘soundFile’ attributes to a zone.

To prevent the NDB to start transmitting when the mission starts, add a ‘paused’ attribute and set it to false. You can then start the NDB using the on? watch flag.

To stop an NDB from transmitting, use the off? Watch flag.

4.4.20 Messenger

4.4.20.1 Description

Originally created for convenience, and now expanded for perfection, the messenger module is a greatly enhanced replacement for ME's MESSAGE TO XXX action. One big convenience is that you can visually package a messenger into a zone with other modules like cloners. That way you can easily identify what message belongs to which action. When stacking with other modules, make sure to use a shared input synonym for both (in the example to the right, messenger and spawner share the 'in?' attribute as input, so the message is displayed at the same moment that the cloner spawns).

Name	Value
cloner	
in?	401
messenger	
message	Convoy sighted at bridge!

Messengers can display a message and/or play an audio file to the entire world, or a coalition when triggered. Since DML triggers fire when a value changes, they are slightly easier to set up by themselves for repeated uses, and dramatically easier to use



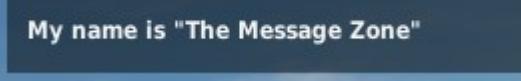
Unlike ME's MESSAGE TO XXX action, a messenger module can be enabled and disabled by flags, making it very easy to create message controlling logic in your mission (for example simulating a unit that stops broadcasting text/audio messages when it is destroyed).

MESSAGE WILDCARDS

The message text supports "wildcards": text that gets replaced at run-time, allowing you display current information that is not available at the time you

Name	Value
messenger	
message	<n>My name is "<z>" <n>

design the mission: Time of day, value of flags, position of a zone (when this zone is linked to a unit). There are also 'convenience' wildcards to output the zone name, current time, and insert line feeds



Convenience Wildcards

These wild cards display constants, information about the messenger zone itself, or the current time.

- <n> creates a line feed
- <z> – this is replaced with the zone's name as given in ME
- <t> – this is replaced with the current mission time in the format given in the zone's "timeFormat" attribute (which defaults to "HH:MM:SS"), e.g. "08:42:11"
- <lat> the latitude of the messenger zone's current position
- <lon> the longitude of the messenger zone's current position
- <ele> the elevation of the messenger zone's current position
- <mgrs> the zone's current position in MGRS coordinates

Dynamic Wildcards:

These wildcards can access other flags, zones or units, and interpret the data they access there in some advanced form

- DEPRECATED
~~<v> — this is replaced with the current value of the flag that is specified in the messageValue? Attribute.~~
- *Flag Values*
To access a flag's current value from within a message, use the <v: flagName> wildcard, with flagName being the name of the flag that you want to access. For example, to access the flag 'killsA', you'd use the wildcard <v: killsA> in your message: "Player A has <v: killsA> kills"
- *Flag as Time Value*
Likewise, you can access flags and have their value interpreted as time (in seconds), and use the zone's timeFormat attribute to convert that into a meaningful value. To access a flag and have the value converted to a time value, use <t: flagName>. Remember to set the zone's timeFormat attribute to the format that you prefer.
- *Accessing Positions: lat, lon, ele, mgrs for zones and units*
You can have messenger access a zone or unit's latitude, longitude, elevation, or mgrs by using the appropriate wildcards with a reference to the zone's or unit's name. If no unit or unit matches the reference, the entire reference is replaced with the (optional) messageError attribute (usually nothing).

Name	Value	
message	Eagle-1 is at <mgrs:Egl-1>	
messenger?	msg	

Eagle-1 is at 37T GG 34043 45959

Note that messenger first looks for zones and only if it did not find a zone matching the name it will look for units. Unit and Zone names must match exactly.

TIME FORMAT

When a message displays a time value (via <t> or <t:name>), that time value is formatted according to the format that you can specify with the "timeFormat" attribute. By default, that format is "<:h>:<:m>:<:s>" which translates into 24-hour, leading-zero Hours:Minute:Second, e.g. "08:15:02". When you pass a flag as time value, that flag's value is always interpreted as seconds and formats the time accordingsy

Messenger understands the following time formats

- <s>
the time value in seconds. E.g., if the time value is 254, <s> is replaced with '254' (no change to the value)

- <m>
the time value in seconds as whole minutes. E.g., if the time value is 254, <m> is replaced with ‘4’, while 3891 returns “64”
- <h>
the time value in seconds as whole hours. E.g., if the time value is 3891, <m> is replaced with ‘1’
- <:s>
the time value converted to a “seconds in a minute” time value (0-60) and formatted with leading zero. E.g., if the time value is 64, <:s> is replaced with ‘04’
- <:m>
the time value (in seconds) converted to “minutes in an hour” time value (0-60) and formatted with leading zero. E.g., if the time value is 64, <:m> is replaced with ‘01’, and 803 returns “13”
- <:h>
the time value (in seconds) converted to a hours and formatted with leading zero. E.g., if the time value is 3764, <:h> is replaced with ‘01’

Accordingly, if you wanted to display a flag named ‘timeLeft’ as a count-down value showing remaining minutes and seconds (i.e. “73:55”), you’d first configure timeFormat attribute in the zone to be “<m>:<:s>” and then use the wildcard <t: timeLeft> in your message

MESSAGE RECEIVERS

You can control who receives the message sent by messenger on four levels:

- If you don’t specify anything, the message is broadcast to everyone
- If you add a ‘coalition’ attribute, the message is only broadcast to players on that side
- If you add a ‘group’ attribute, only units in that group receive the message
- If you add a ‘unit’ attribute, only that unit receives the message

Note that these attributes are all mutually exclusive. You can at most have one of the ‘coalition’, ‘group’ or ‘unit’ attribute per messenger. If you add more than one receiver attribute, the highest level wins: if, for example you supply both ‘coalition’ and ‘unit’,

TURNING A MESSENGER ON AND OFF

Just like a radio or telephone, you can turn a messenger on and off. When ‘off’ it won’t react to signals on messenger?. Use the messageOn? And messageOff? inputs to turn the messenger on and off.

When a messenger starts, it’s on by default, and you can start it up by setting the onStart attribute of a messenger to ‘false’.

4.4.20.2 Dependencies

Messenger requires dcsCommon and cfxZones to run

4.4.20.3 Module Configuration

To configure the messenger module via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “messengerConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Show debugging information. Default is false

4.4.20.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
messenger? messenger	Watchflag. When triggered, the module will display the message and/or play sound. MANDATORY
message	The text of the message to be displayed TEXT WILDCARDS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <n> creates a new line • <z> is replaced with zone's name • <t> is current time in the format as defined with the <code>timeFormat</code> attribute • <lat> the latitude of the zone's current position • <lon> the longitude of the zone's current position • <mgrs> the zone's current position in MGRS coordinates • <v: flag name> is replaced with the value currently held by the flag <i>flag name</i> • <t: flag name> uses the value from flag <i>flag name</i> and interprets it as a time value, formatted according to the <code>timeFormat</code> attribute • <lat: unit/zone name> outputs the latitude of the zone or unit that matches the name <i>unit/zone name</i>, or “messageError” (usually an empty string) if neither can be found • <lon: unit/zone> outputs the longitude of the zone or unit that matches the name <i>unit/zone name</i>, or “messageError” (usually an empty string) if neither can be found • <ele: flagName> outputs the elevation of the zone or unit that matches the name <i>unit/zone name</i>, or “messageError” (usually an empty string) if neither can be found. Elevation is calculated in meters (default) or feet if the “imperial” attribute is true • <latlon: unit/zone> outputs the latitude and longitude of the zone or unit that matches the name <i>unit/zone name</i>, or “messageError” (usually an empty string) if neither can be found • <lle: unit/zone> outputs the longitude, longitude and elevation of the zone or unit that matches the name <i>unit/zone name</i>, or “messageError” (usually an empty string) if neither can be found

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <mgrs.: flagName> outputs the mgrs. coordinates of the zone or unit that matches the name <i>unit/zone name</i>, or “messageError” (usually an empty string) if neither can be found
triggerMethod msgTriggerMethod	Defines the trigger condition for DML Watchflags. Use only one synonym per zone Defaults to “change”
messageValue?	A flag name that is read whenever a message is put out. The value that this flag contains can be accessed with the <v> wildcard in the message attribute Deprecated. Use <v flagName> instead
clearScreen	If true, erase all existing messages. Defaults to false
soundFile	Name of the sound file (including extension like ‘.wav’) that is to be played. Defaults to ‘<none>’. Note that the sound file’s name must be specified relative to the mission’s default location for sound files (I10n/DEFAULT/). If you use ME to import the sound files, you do not have to specify the location. Remember to import the sound file into the mission else no sound will play.
coalition msgCoalition	The coalition that should receive the message/sound. If no coalition is given, text and sound are played to all. Legal values are “red”, “blue”, “neutral”, 0, 1, 2 Default is <none> (play to all).
group msgGroup	The name of the Group that should receive the message/sound. If no Group is given, the message is received by all
unit msgUnit	The name of the Unit that should receive the message/sound. If no Unit is given, the message is received by all
messageOn?	When the value of this flag changes, the messenger is turned on. If it already was on, nothing happens All messengers start in On state and require at least one signal on their messageOff input to disable. Defaults to <none>
messageOff?	When the value of this flag changes, the messenger is turned off. Any further messages are suppressed. If the messenger already was turned off, nothing happens. Defaults to <none>
mute messageMute	If set to true, the messenger starts muted and requires a signal on messageOn? To activate. Defaults to false
duration messageDuration	Time (in seconds) how long a message should stay on-screen Defaults to 30 seconds
timeFormat	Time format for any time values Defaults to “<:h>:<:m>:<:s>” – standard 24 hour time
imperial imperialUnits	When true, elevation is calculated in feet (imperial units) else meters. Defaults to false (meters)
error messageError	The text to substitute for a unit or zone reference if the units or zone cannot be found. Defaults to “” (empty string”

Supports DML Flags
Supports Watchflags
Supports zone-local verbosity

4.4.20.5 API

No API. Use trigger.action.outTextForXXX() and trigger.action.outSoundForXXX() instead

4.4.20.6 Using the module

To enable, add the script to the mission as a DOSCRIPT action during Mission Start

To use, simply add the 'messenger' attribute to a zone.

4.4.21 Unit Zone

4.4.21.1 Description

This is the DML version of trigger zones – editable on the spot, with the ability to trigger DML and ED flags. Since you edit the trigger conditions right there on the map (well, inside the Trigger Zone's editor), it's much easier to directly connect the zone's purpose and function.

Unit Zones support wildcard matching of groups and player units: specify the string that a group's (or player unit's name) name starts with, and all groups that match that description automatically are checked. For example, with "Ta*" you tell a unitZone to check all living groups whose name starts with "Ta" if they are inside the zone. If your mission contains the groups "Tank Busters-1102", "Tassel" or "Tamara's Revenge" they will all be checked.

Name	Value	
unitZone		
lookFor	The*	
matching	player	
enterZone!	*hi There	

This is particularly helpful to integrate zone testing for units that have been spawned with spawners and cloners, as these all use 'base names' when spawning groups – their group names all start with the base string, and you can check against that.

HOW UNIT ZONES WORK

For better integration and high performance, Unit Zones work slightly different from classic ME zones when they detect if a specific group is inside, so it helps to understand their detection logic.

- *Change based*

Unit zones are designed to be used to detect a status change rather than a condition. This means that unitZones change a flag when the status of the entire zone changes. A unitZone has exactly two states:

- **None** of the units to look for is inside the zone ("empty")
- **Any** of the units to look for is inside the zone ("units present")



Let's assume a unit is empty. The first unit of all the units that this unitZone is looking for that enters the zone creates a status change event (and flag change) for changing from "empty" to "units present". When subsequently other interesting units enter the zone while it is still in "units present" state, no state change is triggered, even if the unit that originally triggered the change leaves the zone.

When the last interesting unit leaves the zone (or is killed inside the zone), the zone changes back from "units present" to "empty", and a flag change is initiated.

- *State is Initialized at Mission Start*

UnitZones establish their initial state at the beginning of a mission. This initial state does not create a status change event, even if the initial state is "units present". Care must be taken when dealing with client (player) units: these are not present in the mission when it starts up, so if you design a mission with player units spawning

inside a unitZone, their appearance after mission start can trigger a unit zone.

- *Name-based matching with wildcards*

UnitZones look for groups by name. Since one of DML's most powerful features is cloning, and cloned groups use a naming scheme based on the template's original name, unitZones support 'wildcard' name matching: you can either specify the full name of a group to look for (only a single match possible), or you can provide a base name and add an asterisk "*", telling unitZones that all groups whose name starts with the same string (minus asterisk) are to be regarded. This allows for powerful zone testing, even without using clones.

WARNING

When set to groups, unitZones matches **group names**, not individual unit names.

When set to player (see below), it matches **player unit names**, not group names.

- *Discrete rather than continuous checks*

unitZones tests for units present in a zone at regular time intervals (can be changed with a config zone). By default, this check is performed once per second. This has little consequences for ground units; as zones usually are large enough to make no difference. For fast moving units, however, there is the possibility that they cross the entire zone inside that time limit, so make sure that the zone is large enough. A plane that moves 500 mph crosses 740 feet in one second, so a 1000 feet diameter (500 ft radius) may barely be enough (500 km/h gives 140 m/s, requiring a 100m min radius). Since units rarely cross a zone in an optimal way, you may want to make the zone significantly larger (but you have encountered and resolved that same issue in classic ME before, so I won't re-tread that ground)

Be advised that even though unitZone's unit matching is fast and low-impact, simultaneously adding many unitZones, lots of groups and indiscriminately jacking up testing (e.g. once every 10 ms) can degrade a mission's performance.

- *Red and Blue only*

unitZones only works with red and blue groups and completely ignores neutral groups. If you need neutral groups to trigger an event, you'll have to resort to classic ME

- *Filtering*

Usually, your unitZones are looking for highly specific units, and you know which category and/or coalition they belong to. UnitZones allows you to limit unit matching to categories (e.g. aircraft) and/or coalition. Use this to remove the risk of false positives (we all use copy/paste), and slightly increase performance.

Note that unitZones coalition filtering may work slightly different from what you might expect: unitZone never inspects neutral groups, only red or blue forces. So, when you supply '0' or 'neutral' as filter, this will cause unitZone interprets this as 'both' and inspects red and blue (the same as if the attribute wasn't given at all).

- *Player vs Groups*

Since all missions revolve around players, unitZones provide a special switch to only regard player units. Care must be taken to remember how unitZones match names. In the (default) *group* matching, all units whose group name matches the lookFor

attribute are checked. When set to player, only player units are examined, and the lookFor match is performed for the unit's (rather than group's) name.

OUTPUTS

unitZones supports multiple output flags that it can change when the relevant conditions are met:

- *enterZone!*
when the zone previously was empty, **the first unit** that matches this zone's match criteria that enters this zone triggers a change on this flag
- *exitZone!*
when a zone previously had units present, this flag is changed when a test determines that the zone is empty. This can happen when the last interesting unit has departed or was killed.
- *changeZone!*
Every time a change happens (one of the above), this flag is also changed.

A special, optional output “uzDirect” can carry the current state of the unitZone: 0 = none of the units we are interested in are inside the zone, 1 = at least one of the units is in the zone.

4.4.21.2 Dependencies

unitZone requires dcsCommon and cfxZones to run

4.4.21.3 Module Configuration

To configure the unitZone module via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “unitZoneConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Show debugging information. Default is false
ups	Number of zone checks performed per second. 0.1 means once every 10 seconds, 2 means twice a second. Defaults to 1

4.4.21.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
unitZone	Marks this ME Zone as an anchor for unitZone MANDATORY
lookFor	Name for the group or (player) unit to check zone status. If the last character in the name is an asterisk “*”, exact matches and all group/unit names that start with that string (minus asterisk) are

Name	Description
	<p>accepted, e.g. if you supply "Hel*" all of the following would be accepted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hel • Hello World • Helo Rescue-1 • Hellfire <p>You can use this feature to your advantage in conjunction with cloners or spawners, as these all produce groups with a known base name.</p> <p>If you only supplied "Hel", only (without the asterisk "") only the group whose name exactly matches "Hel" is checked.</p>
matching	<p>What type of units to match. Currently supported are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • group (default): look for group names • player – look only at player units and match their unit's (not group's) name against lookFor <p>Default: group</p>
coalition	<p>The coalition (red/blue) units to check. Accepts 0, 1, 2, red, blue, neutral. Note that 0 (zero) and 'neutral' means 'both' in this case, neutral groups/units are never checked against the zone</p> <p>Defaults to 0 (both)</p>
filterFor	<p>Which unit categories to look for. If no attribute is given, all categories are checked against the zone (when their name pattern matches). When you supply a filterFor attribute, only that category is considered. Currently supported are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 (zero) or "aircraft" or "air" • 1 or "helo" or "heli" or "helicopter" • 2 or "ground" • 3 or "ship" • 4 or "train" <p>Defaults to no filtering</p>
enterZone!	Change this flag when the first unit (player) or part of all groups that match the criteria enters the zone
exitZone!	Change this flag when the last unit (player) of all groups that match the criteria have exited the zone (being destroyed counts as leaving)
changeZone!	Changes this flag whenever enterZone! or exitZone! are triggered
method uzMethod	DML Flag method for output. Use only one synonym per zone
uzOff?	Watchflag. When triggered, this zone will no longer perform checks. When already off, nothing happens
uzOn?	Watchflag. When triggered, this zone will resume checks. When already on, nothing happens
triggerMethod uzTriggerMethod	Method that determines when the watchflags should trigger. Default is "change"
uzDirect	<p>When present, this flag (or flags) is always set to the current state of the unit zone:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 when one or more units in the zone • 0 when none of the indicated units in the zone. <p>Default is <none></p>

Name	Description
uzDirectInv	Like uzDirect, just inverted, provided since unitZones is often used to control many functions, and this saves an inverter (changer) module: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 when one or more units in the zone • 1 when none of the indicated units in the zone. Default is <none>

Supports DML Flags

Supports Watchflags

Supports zone-local verbose

4.4.21.5 API

4.4.21.6 Using the module

To enable, add the script to the mission as a DOSCRIPT action during Mission Start

To use, simply add the ‘unitZone’ and required other attributes to a zone.

4.4.22 Group Tracker

4.4.22.1 Description

GroupTracker is a DML module that allows you to generate DML-style events whenever a group or set of groups is destroyed. If you have some ME experience, look at it as DML's version of the GROUP ALIVE and GROUP DEAD trigger conditions, with a couple of counters thrown in for good measure.

GroupTracker is a quite versatile, has minuscule performance impact, and can make mission design delightful – especially in conjunction with other modules like cloners, xFlag and Messenger.

HOW GROUP TRACKER WORKS

Simply put, a group tracker works like this:

- It's always named after the zone it is attached to
- You hand one or more groups to the tracker. The tracker can filter, and discard those groups that you add if they don't match the categories that you choose.
- GroupTracker regularly (e.g. once per second) checks all groups that it's told to track
- When a group was destroyed since the last time it checked, it can increment the flag "removeGroup!"
- When you add a new group to a tracker, it can increment the flag "addGroup!"
- You can output the current number of groups to the output "numGroups" and the total number of units tracked to the "numUnits" output

And that's it. Group Tracker does not care what kind of groups it tracks: air, sea, ground, nor which coalition they belong to. All it does its count the number of groups, and change flags when it detects something new or destroyed.

SO WHO NEEDS THAT?

Who would need such a basic module? Everyone. Like many simple things you only notice their absence once they are gone. While most of groupTracker's abilities can be achieved with other means, using groupTracker makes it much easier. Implicit in above's description are a couple of important features that you can use for your own mission:

Remember that in DCS, flags not just indicate true/false, but they can carry numerical information (e.g. the number 42). DML modules usually trigger when an input flag changes in value, and you usually set up modules to 'increment' a flag when a change occurs.

Looking at the output flags that a groupTracker module supports, and supposing that no other module is modifying those flags, groupTrackers flags also double as follows:

- addGroup
Triggered with method ‘inc’ whenever a group is added. Therefore contains the total of all groups added to this tracker (this can be much higher than the number of groups currently tracked)

Name	Value
tracker	
removeGroup!	*bdead
messenger	
message	Red Kills: *value
messageOut?	*bdead
messageValue?	*bdead

- removeGroup
Triggered with method ‘inc’ whenever a group is removed (dead). Therefore contains the running total of the number of groups that were tracked by this tracker and have been destroyed up to now

In effect, groupTracker not only allows you to be notified when a group is added to the tracker or a tracked group is destroyed, it also always gives you access to totals, and these are most often used to control scenario/victory condition or mission states. By providing the ability to count from a set, groupTrackers make short work out of otherwise difficult mission propositions, such as

- Provide a kill count
- Provide a ‘units left’ count
- Trigger reinforcements if 3 groups from a set of groups have been destroyed
- Disable spawners/cloners when a maximum number of groups is reached and re-enable them when it falls below a minimum
- Trigger if all tracked groups are destroyed
- Destroy all currently tracked groups

Due to the way it functions and integration with cloners, you can use a groupTracker as an easy add-on for cloners to track groups that were created by multiple spawners of spawn cycled as it’s allGone! output is the cloner’s empty! analogue, and a tracker’s destroy? Input works like a cloner’s despawn? input.

GETTING GROUPS ADDED TO A TRACKER

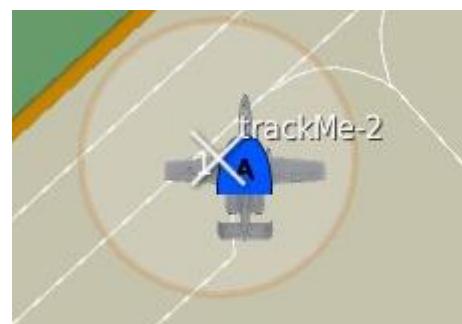
There are a number of ways to add a group to a groupTracker

- Place at least one unit of the group inside a zone with an “addToTracker:” attribute. Such units must exist at start of the mission, and are added to the listed trackers at mission start. The tracker that is referenced (in the example “plane tracker”) must exist, or groupTracker will complain at start-up.

Name	Value
addToTracker:	plane tracker

Note I:

This attribute can be added to any zone, and is only active when groupTracker is loaded. This attribute is only evaluated at mission start, so any group that does not have at least one unit inside this zone at start will not be added to the tracker (e.g. player units do not exist at mission start).



Note II:

Multiple groups inside the same zone are correctly processed

Note III:

addToTracker supports lists of trackers. Their names must be comma-separated (",")
so ensure that your zone names for trackers do not contain a comma.

- Some modules (those that spawn groups like spawners and cloners) support a "trackWith:" attribute. These groups are added dynamically, after they are spawned into the mission, to a tracker.
- Lua scripts can add groups by invoking the API at any time.

SPECIAL USES

Note that a groupTracker can act as a more capable version of a clone zone's empty! flag, and many missions use a zone stack that contains both a cloner and a groupTracker to supplement a spawner's inbuilt empty! ability to only trigger when *all* cloned groups (not merely the last batch) have been destroyed.

Similarly, the destroy? Input can be used to destroy all tracked groups. This mimics a cloner's despawn? input and can be used in conjunction with a spawner to destroy all clones that were spawned over multiple clone cycles.

WILDCARD NAME SUPPORT

Since groupTrackers are often part of a stack and only track groups that are 'produced' by that stack, the "addToTracker:" and "trackWith:" attributes support the asterisk "*" wildcard: when you want to reference the groupTracker attached to the same zone, simply use an asterisk instead of the zone name. This allows for easy copy/paste of stacks.

FILTERING

groupTrackers support filtering when they are handed groups. By default, they accept all groups. Occasionally, you want a tracker to track only a certain category of units (e.g., ground troops), and you can turn this feature on with the tracker's 'groupFilter' attribute.

A common use for this is when a cloner spawns multiple categories, and you want to separate and track them separately.

LIMITATIONS

groupTracker does not track static objects nor map/scenery objects, and such objects can't be added with an "addToTracker:" or "trackWith:" attribute.

ME INTEGRATION

GroupTrackers main purpose is to create flag events (changes), and therefore provides heavy ME / DML flag integration:

Name	Description
addGroup	Whenever a group is added to the tracker, the value of this flag is increased. If not changed by other modules, this flag also doubles as a running total of all groups added to the tracker
removeGroup	Whenever a tracked group is destroyed, the value of this flag is increased. If not changed by other modules, this flag also doubles as a running total of all watched groups that have been destroyed while they were tracked
numGroups	The value of this flag always represents the number of groups currently watched by this tracker. Its value is updated 1/ups times per second.
numUnits	The value of this flag always represents the total number of units currently watched by this tracker. Its value is updated 1/ups times per second.
allGone!	When the number of tracked groups falls to zero, this flag is banged. If it was zero before, no output signal is generated.

4.4.22.2 Dependencies

groupTracker requires dcsCommon and cfxZones

4.4.22.3 Module Configuration

To configure the groupTracker module via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “groupTrackerConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Show debugging information. Default is false
ups	Number of group checks performed per second. 0.1 means once every 10 seconds, 2 means twice a second. Defaults to 1

4.4.22.4 ME Attributes

Attribute to add all groups that are (even partially) covered by this zone to a groupTracker

Name	Description
addToTracker:	List of groupTracker zones. All groups that have at least one unit inside this zone are added to these groupTrackers. This happens only at mission start-up, and therefore only work for non-player-controlled planes (since player-controlled planes do not exist at mission start-up). If your player group contains AI planes, place one of those into the zone, and that group can be added to a tracker. If you have stacked the tracker on the same zone, you can use a single asterisk '*' as zone name.

Name	Description
	<p>Supports a comma-separated list of trackers if you simultaneously want to pass the groups to multiple trackers, e.g. “GroundTrack, HeliTrack”</p> <p>This is useful if the zone contains more than one group, and your trackers use filtering</p> <p>Add all groups that have at least one unit in this zone to the tracker whose zone name is given in the Value field.</p>

Attributes for a groupTracker

Name	Description
tracker	Marks this zone as a groupTracker. It can be referenced by the zone's name passed in the trackWith: and addToTracker: attributes. When referenced locally, a single asterisk “*” can be used as wildcard name for easy copy/paste of the entire stack MANDATORY
addGroup	Whenever a group is added to the tracker, the value of this flag is increased. If not changed by other modules, this flag also doubles as a running total of all groups added to the tracker Defaults to <none>
removeGroup	Whenever a tracked group is destroyed, the value of this flag is increased. If not changed by other modules, this flag also doubles as a running total of all watched groups that have been destroyed while they were tracked Defaults to <none>
numGroups	The value of this flag always represents the number of groups currently watched by this tracker. This value is updated 1/ups times per second. Defaults to <none>
numUnits	The value of this flag always represents the total number of units currently watched by this tracker. This value is updated 1/ups times per second. Defaults to <none>
groupFilter	Which unit categories to track. If no attribute is given, all categories are tracked. When you supply a groupFilter attribute, only that category is accepted when attempting to add to a tracker. Currently supported are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 (zero) or “aircraft” or “air” • 1 or “helo” or “heli” or “helicopter” • 2 or “ground” • 3 or “ship” • 4 or “train” Defaults to no filtering
triggerMethod trackerTriggerMethod	Watchflag method for inputs Defaults to ‘change’
destroy?	Watchflag that when triggered destroys all groups that are currently being watched. If any groups are destroyed, the removeGroup output is increased by the number of groups that were removed. numGroup is set to 0

Name	Description
	Defaults to <none>
method trackerMethod	Method to bang! on output flags Defaults to “inc”
allGone!	Flag to bang! when the number of tracked groups falls to zero. If it was zero before, no output signal is generated.

Supports DML Flags

Supports Watchflags

Supports zone-local verbosity

4.4.22.5 Persistence

Group Tracker supports persistence. Note that due to the way that persistence works, the numGroups and numUnit outputs are set one second after all groupTracker loads (in a process called ‘late bind’) to allow later-loading modules to spawn the units that groupTracker tracks. If you trigger on those outputs, make sure to persist the output flags with persistence’s “saveFlag?”

4.4.22.6 API

Tbc

4.4.22.7 Using the module

To enable, add the script to the mission as a DOSCRIPT action during Mission Start

To use, first create a groupTracker by adding the ‘tracker’ attribute to a zone

Then add groups to trackers, use zones with an addToTracker: attribute, or cloners and spawners with a “trackWith:” attribute.

4.4.23 Wiper (Unit/Object removal)

4.4.23.1 Description

Wiper (with a 'w') is a module that can, upon activation remove specific objects that are inside the zone. DCS differentiates objects by categories, and wiper functions along these same lines. Currently, the following object categories are accessible through ME:

- Unit (1) – controlled units (ground, fixed-wing, rotor-wing, ships, trains), AI and player-controlled.
- Weapon (2) – usually munitions, usually only short life span.
- Static (3) – uncontrolled models that can look exactly like AI-controlled units, plus further objects that can be used to populate a map. DCS may by itself decide to convert an Unit to a Static object, just to cause grief to mission designers, see below.
- Base (4) – Most likely FARPs and landable ships. Unambiguous definition hard to come by
- Scenery (5) – some (but by far not all) of the various objects that populate the map when it comes out of the box. And no. Trees are (sadly) not part of that definition. As aren't other, highly interesting objects that we'll touch upon later.
- Cargo (6) – hopefully the cargo that you are looking for.

There are points in your mission where you want to clear out objects, be it at the start of the mission, or later, for effect reasons. DML provides the wiper module for this purpose

ABILITIES

Wiper can remove all objects of a certain category (see above) that are within the zone. Before removing the objects, it can apply a name filter, so only objects that match the category and name restriction are filtered.

For analysis purposes, you can also set a wiper to report all objects it finds inside its zone, by category when it fires.

SPECIAL USE CASE: Cloners & Spawners

A peculiarity with DCS is that in some cases, with some versions of DCS, the engine removes a (dead or almost-dead) Unit, and replaces it (probably for performance reasons) with a matching Static Object. This can wreak havoc in more ways than one, as it will no longer be removed when you dispose of the group (for DCS internal reasons, too arcane and boring to elaborate here). In situations where your mission heavily relies on spawners and/or cloners this can lead to an over-abundance of burnt-out husk and wrecks, that did not get removed by a pre-wipe sweep from the cloners. This is where you can use wiper in addition to the preWipe attribute. For added safety, key the wiper to the cloner's group base name, and only those statics will be removed that were formerly AI Units spawned by the cloner.

LIMITATIONS

There are many intriguing peculiarities in DCS, and the way it treats the destruction cycle of units is among them. Another one are scenery objects:

- When units fight, some may get destroyed. Depending on how overwhelming their defeat and how strong they are, the transition from living AI unit to dead husk may be different. Infantry getting killed usually transitions from alive to dead by playing a short animation cycle, and then replacing the live Unit with a static object. Wiper can remove these without problems
- Stronger units may start burning, and then, after “cooking off” may explode or simply die, leaving different kinds of debris, flames, and smoke. Neither smoke nor flames can be removed by Wiper. Also, Wiper can only remove some of the debris left behind, while some wreckage may be left behind for the simple reason that it can not be detected. Also, in current DCS versions, the flames and smoke that can erupt from vehicles are not part of the ‘detectable’ world, and therefore not be removed by wiper modules. They will have to run their course until ED gives access to these effect objects in a later release



- There are scenery objects that are also invisible to wiper, meaning that they will not be removed when you put down a zone and attach the wiper module.
 - First to mention are trees: wiper can't see any trees, and therefore is currently unable to clear trees for you. Use the special zone ME ability to do that.
 - Then there are objects that, even though they may get an object ID when you right-click and choose ‘Assign as’ in ME; they do not appear to be visible to wiper (i.e. via world.search()). For example, the lamp post close to parking lot 14 in Senaki Kolkhi. Place a wiper over the lamp, activate the inventory function, and marvel at the empty list – allegedly there is nothing there.
 - As mentioned above, most effects (fire, smoke) and debris will also not be visible to wiper, and hence can't be removed.



WARNING

When removing scenery objects, DCS’s world.search() routine (that DML uses to query the world for objects to remove) can be exceedingly imprecise, and remove objects far outside of the wipe radius:



As you can see in the left image above, a small wipe zone is placed over the black rectangle that represents a building in Senaki Kolkhi (marked discretely by a yellow arrow with red outline). The wipe zone's radius only encompasses the building's center, nothing else.

In-game, however (right image), not only the building, but some surrounding trees, and – more disturbingly – the hangar for lot 14 have also been removed. This is not a DML bug, but a result of how DCS's internal methods work.

As a result, whenever you intend to remove some scenery or when you get unexpected results, run a wiper with the inventory option set to determine

- Which category the object you want to remove belong to, and more importantly,
- if the objects that you want to remove are even visible.
- When they are visible, selectively remove the objects with names (if possible).

ME INTEGRATION

Wiper's main use is to selectively remove objects inside the zone at the start, and other key moments in your game. To trigger object removal, simply use a flag.

Name	Value	Description
wipe?	Name	Watchflag that tells wiper when to trigger a remove cycle.
wipeInventory	yes/no	Tell the wiper to list all objects it found in the zone, by category prior to starting the wipe cycle.

4.4.23.2 Dependencies

Wiper requires dcsCommon and cfxZones to run

4.4.23.3 Module Configuration

To configure wiper via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “wiperConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Show debugging information. Default is false
ups	Number of checks for a wipe trigger per second. Defaults to 1

4.4.23.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
wipe?	Watchflag. Triggers a wipe cycle MANDATORY
triggerMethod triggerWiperMethod	Method that triggers the Watchflag Defaults to ‘change’
category wiperCat	Category of the objects that are affected by the wipe (i.e. if they belong to the category they may be wiped). Possible values are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “unit” or 1 • “weapon” or 2 • “static” or 3 • “base” or 4 • “scenery” or 5 • “cargo” or 6 Defaults to ‘static’
wipeNamed	<i>Optional</i> comma-separated name list that an object’s name must match in order to be wiped. Supports an asterisk (“*”) as wildcard to match anything. For example, “Ba*” would match “Base”, “Ba”, “Babushka”, and “Bathyscape” <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Ba*” – all objects inside the zone whose name starts with “Ba” • “Grou*, Commander Kirk, He*” – all objects whose names start with “Grou” or “He”, and the object whose name exactly matches “Commander Kirk” Defaults to <option off>, no name filtering
wipeInventory	A Boolean that turns on the wiper’s inventory function. Whenever triggered, the zone lists all objects it finds inside the zone, sorted by category. Note that there may be objects inside a zone that wiper cannot find, and that it may return objects that are not really inside the zone. Both are a DCS limitation, not a bug in wiper.

Supports Watchflags

4.4.23.5 API

(tbc)

4.4.23.6 Using the module

To enable, add the script to the mission as a DOSCRIPT action during Mission Start

To use, simply add the ‘wipe?’ attributes to a zone and add other attributes to tell which objects inside the zone should be removed.

Then, to remove objects inside the zone, trigger the Watchflag. Note that you can trigger the wiper multiply times

4.4.24 Radio Trigger

4.4.24.1 Description

This small module provides a convenient, multi-use DCS-DML interface for ME's "Radio Item Add" feature. In ME, radio items can only set a flag to a certain value.

ACTION:	RADIO ITEM ADD
NAME:	Trigger CH1
FLAG:	ch1
VALUE:	< > 1

DML, on the other hand, triggers on changes. So standard ME radio items are inherently single-use (at least from the perspective of DML): once you have chosen a radio item, that flag is set to the new value (by ME), and can't be easily used again until it is re-set.

Name	Value	
radio?	ch1	
rtOut!	*msg	

The DML RadioTrigger module simply converts setting a flag to a pulse that other DML modules can read, and **then resets the radio item flag** so that the next time the item is chosen from the communications menu, it will again trigger a pulse.

4.4.24.2 Dependencies

Radio Trigger requires dcsCommon and cfxZones

4.4.24.3 Module Configuration

To configure wiper via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it "radioTriggerConfig" (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Show debugging information. Default is false
ups	Number of checks for a radio trigger per second. Defaults to 1

4.4.24.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
radio?	Watchflag. Triggers a radio cycle, then resets this flag to its previous value MANDATORY
triggerMethod radioTriggerMethod	Method that triggers the Watchflag Defaults to 'change'
method rtMethod	Method how the output flag should be triggered. Defaults to 'inc'
out! rtOut!	DML Flag to set when the module triggers Defaults to <none>

Supports DML Flags
Supports Watchflags
Supports zone-local verbose

4.4.24.5 API

(tbc later)

4.4.24.6 Using the module

To enable, add the script to the mission as a DOSCRIPT action during Mission Start

To use

- add the 'radio?' attribute to a zone and add other attributes to tell which flag to change how when the radio item is chosen
- In ME, add a radio item, and make it change the same flag as specified in the radio? attribute above.
- Connect any modules that need triggering by radio to the rtOut! attribute

4.4.25 baseCaptured

4.4.25.1 Description

baseCaptured is a module that generates output for DML flags when the nearest base (Airfield, FARP or Ships with airfield facilities) is captured (i.e., changes faction). Note that although possible in theory, currently DML does not support capturing ships. If it does, this function will also work for ships.

NEAREST BASE

When you add the `baseCaptured!` attribute to a zone, it automatically looks for, and then associates that zone with the nearest base (airfield, FARP/Helipad/Ship) it can find. As such, it is best to place that zone as close as possible to its intended site, but DML will not mind if the airfield is hundreds of miles away. It will pick the closest one automatically. If you don't place the zone close the intended base, it is your onus to ensure that there are no closer bases, or the zone will associate with a different base.

Note that you can (and often find it helpful to) create multiple `baseCaptured` zones for the same base (one per faction).

CONTESTED FARP/AIRFIELD

By default, `baseCaptured` also supports the 'contested' state of a FARP or airfield when blue and red vehicles are close by. When a FARP becomes contested, the module sends out a signal on the `contested!` output.

OUTPUT

`baseCaptured` provides very different outputs:

- Creates a DML Flag change when the nearest base is captured. These are the `baseCaptured!`, `contested!`, `redCaptured!` and `blueCaptured!` signals. They provide DML Method-based signals when the base is captured. This is frequently used to trigger actions when a change of hands for this base happens.
- `baseOwner` continually provides a number (0, 1, 2) for the base's currently owning faction (0 = neutral, 1 = red, 2 = blue, 3 = contested). This is frequently used to count the number one side holds and generate actions when that number falls below, or rises above, a threshold.

4.4.25.2 Dependencies

`baseCaptured` requires `dcsCommon` and `cfxZones`

4.4.25.3 Module Configuration

To configure the `baseCaptured` module via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it "baseCapturedConfig" (note: name must match exactly)

- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Show debugging information. Default is false

4.4.25.4 ME Attributes

baseCaptured!	Marks this zone as a baseCaptured zone. It lists the flags that should be banged! when the closest base (FARP, Airfield, Ship with Helipad) to this zone is captured by another faction. MANDATORY
method captureMethod	DML method for output flags Defaults to 'inc'
blueCaptured! blue!	Flags to bang! when blue faction captures the closest base to this zone Defaults to <none>
redCaptured! red!	Flags to bang! when blue faction captures the closest base to this zone Defaults to <none>
contested!	Flags to bang! when closest base becomes contested and belongs to neither blue nor red Requires handleContested be true in configuration (default) Defaults to <none>
baseOwner	Flag that is set by the module to the current faction (0 = neutral, 1 = red, 2 = blue, 3 = contested) that currently holds this base.

Supports DML Flags

Supports zone-local verbosity

4.4.25.5 API

Tbc

4.4.25.6 Using the module

To enable, add the script to the mission as a DOSCRIPT action during Mission Start

To use

- add the 'baseCaptured!' attribute to a zone. This zone is automatically be associated with the nearest base.
- Add other attributes as needed

4.4.26 RadioMenu

4.4.26.1 Description

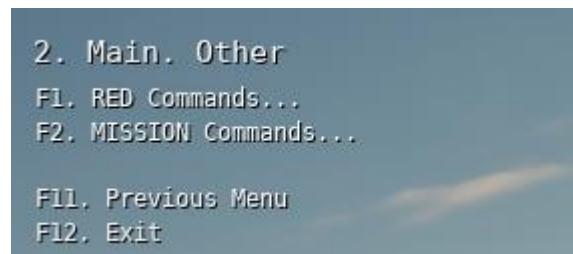
DCS allows you to add menus and sub-menus to the Communication→F10 Other... menu. The RadioMenu module is DML's equivalent, allowing you to easily install menus with up to four commands per menu that all drive (DML-Style) flags.

DML's radio menus are easier to set up than using plain ME, support a broader range of options (like type-specific menus, e.g. all "A-10A" player planes) and support cool-down and multi-use.

MENUS FOR ALL / COALITION / GROUPS / TYPES

For each trigger zone that has a radio menu attribute, DML installs a menu in the Communication→F10 Other... menu. For this menu, you can have up to four separate menu items (also called 'commands'). DML supports type-, group- and coalition-specific menus, so you can restrict the availability of that menu.

The image on the right shows two menus installed by two different trigger zones with a radio menu attribute: the 'RED Commands' menu (which is only visible to the red side), and "MISSION Commands" that is visible to all players. Choosing either menu branches to the menu items available for that menu.



To control who can access a menu, you use the 'coalition', 'groups' and 'types' attributes as follows:

- If you omit all attributes, the menu is available to everyone
- If you add the coalition attribute alone, only that coalition can see the menu, if you choose 'neutral' or 0 as coalition, all sides get access to the menu
- If you add a 'groups' attribute, any information given in the 'coalition' attribute is ignored, and the groups listed get access to the menu
- If you add a types attribute, any player who crews a unit that matches one of the types (e.g. 'A-10A, UH-1H') listed receives access to the menu. You can narrow this by also providing the coalition attribute, so only players who match the coalition and type receive access to the menu.
- If you add both 'groups' and 'types' attributes, 'types' is ignored.

You can use the 'types' attributes to restrict access to a menu to generic and specific types as follows:

- 'helicopter' grants access to this menu to all players controlling helicopters
- 'plane' grants access to this menu to all players in fixed-wing aircraft
- Type names (e.g. "A-10A") restricts the menu to all players who control a plane of exactly that type

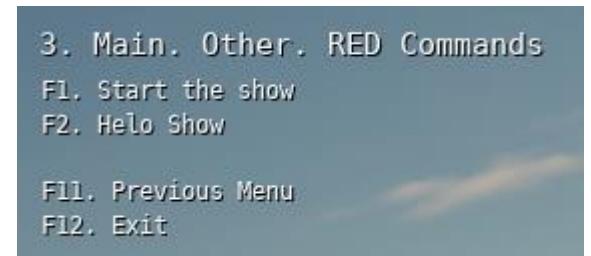
The ‘types’ attribute supports comma-separated lists, so you can add multiple types. For example a ‘types’ attribute with “hel0, A-10A” as value grants access to all helicopters and the A-10A.

MENU ITEMS, COOLDOWN, FLAG

For each menu installed, you can add up to four menu items per menu.

When the player chooses an item, DML bangs the flags that are associated with that item, and initiates a cool-down timer. When the player chooses this menu item again before the cool-down has timed out, no flag is banged, and a message is displayed instead.

In the image to the right, we had previously chosen the “RED Commands” menu and are now presented with two items to choose from: “Start the show”, and “Helo Show”. Choosing either item results in DML banging the flags associated with it and initiating the cool-down.



When an item is on cool-down, choosing it produces a message that optionally can also display the remaining time (in seconds)

COOLDOWN MESSAGE

When a player chooses a menu item while a cooldown is active, no flag is banged, and a message is displayed instead. You can define your own message that is to be displayed, and access/display the current number of seconds until the item becomes available again. Radio Menu provides special wildcard characters that allow you to format and display the remaining time in an easy way.

You can use more than one wildcard. For example, “please wait <:m>:<:s>” will translate into “please wait 02:12” when the cooldown is 132 seconds left. Use the following wildcards (note that they are identical to messenger’s ‘display flag as time wildcards)

- <s>
remaining cooldown in seconds. E.g., if remaining cooldown is 254, <s> is replaced with ‘254’
- <m>
remaining cooldown as whole minutes. E.g., if remaining cooldown is 254, <m> is replaced with ‘4’, while 3891 returns “64”
- <h>
remaining cooldown as whole hours. E.g., if remaining cooldown is 3891, <m> is replaced with ‘1’
- <:s>
remaining cooldown converted to a seconds time value (0-60) and formatted with leading zero. E.g., if remaining cooldown is 64, <s> is replaced with ‘04’
- <:m>
remaining cooldown converted to a minutes time value (0-60) and formatted with

leading zero. E.g., remaining cooldown is 64, <:m> is replaced with '01', and 803 returns "13"

- <:h>
remaining cooldown converted to an hours time value and formatted with leading zero. E.g., if remaining cooldown is 3764, <:h> is replaced with '01'

ADVANTAGES

Using DML Radio Menu in your mission opens up a number of advantages of classic ME trigger-based menus:

- Easy to use, easy to modify
- More than one flag per menu item (default DML feature) can be changed
- Natural DML integration – multiple uses result in multiple flag changes (default DML 'Method' behavior). You can change this to single-use by setting a trigger zone's method accordingly
- Built-in cool-down period, and cool-down messaging (including remaining time)

LIMITATIONS

To make them easy to use, RadioMenu imposes some limitations on their use:

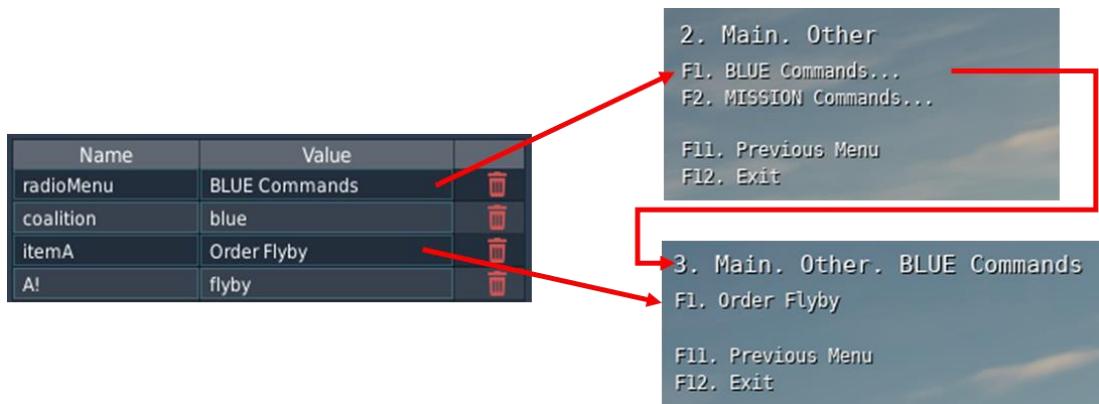
- Items always install inside named menus.
This means that to install a command on the 'Communications→F10 Other' top level, you will need to use another method.
- Limited to four (4) items per menu
- No group-specific menus, only global and coalition-specific

MINIMAL SETUP

To add a Communications→F10 Other menu to your mission requires minimal setup: simply add a trigger zone anywhere on the map (the location is not important), and add the following attributes:

- radioMenu: the value of this attribute appears as a new menu in the F10 Other menu.
- **OPTIONAL:** coalition controls which coalition (red/blue) will have access to this menu. If you omit this attribute, all sides can see it
- itemA (or itemB, or itemC or itemD) the command that appears when the player opens this menu. Currently, up to four items (A-D) can be defined
- A! (or B! or C! or D!) the flags to bang according to the current DML method when the player chooses the corresponding item.

Name	Value	Remove
radioMenu	BLUE Commands	
coalition	blue	
itemA	Order Flyby	
A!	flyby	



4.4.26.2 Dependencies

Radio Menu requires dcsCommon, cfxZones.

If you use the ‘group’ or ‘type’ attributes for menus to make them player-group/type exclusive, RadioMenu also requires cfxMX

4.4.26.3 Module Configuration

To configure the RadioMenu module via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “radioMenuConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Show debugging information. Default is false

4.4.26.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
radioMenu	Name of the menu to install in the Communications→F10 Other menu. MANDATORY
coalition	The coalition that has access to this menu. If omitted or set to ‘neutral’, <i>all</i> coalitions have access. ‘blue’ or ‘red’ restricts access to that coalition. Defaults to <no coalition>
group groups	Restricts this menu only to the groups of that name. Supports comma separated groups names, e.g. “Eagles 5, Uzi One, Aleph” will make this menu available to all members of those groups Overrides any ‘coalition’ and ‘type’ attribute; when you add a ‘group’ attribute, those other attributes are ignored. Defaults to <no group restriction>

Name	Description
	NOTE: requires module cfxMX to load before radioMenus
type types	<p>Restricts access to this menu to player units who control a unit that matches one of the listed types. You can list multiple types, separated by a comma (e.g., "F-15C, A-10A")</p> <p>Supports the class-wildcards 'plane' (all fixed-wing players) and 'hel0' (all rotor-wings controlled by players).</p> <p>When you also supply a 'coalition' attribute, access to this menu is restricted to those players who match both.</p> <p>Defaults to <no type restriction></p>
	NOTE: requires module cfxMX to load before radioMenus
itemA	Name of itemA in this menu. If this attribute is omitted, no menu item appears
itemB	Name of itemB in this menu. If this attribute is omitted, no menu item appears
itemC	Name of itemC in this menu. If this attribute is omitted, no menu item appears
itemD	Name of itemD in this menu. If this attribute is omitted, no menu item appears
A!	DML flag to bang when itemA is chosen. Defaults to <none>
B!	DML flag to bang when itemB is chosen. Defaults to <none>
C!	DML flag to bang when itemC is chosen. Defaults to <none>
D!	DML flag to bang when itemD is chosen. Defaults to <none>
cooldownA	Cooldown (in seconds) after itemA is chosen before it becomes available again. Defaults to 0 (immediately available again)
cooldownB	Cooldown (in seconds) after itemB is chosen before it becomes available again. Defaults to 0 (immediately available again)
cooldownC	Cooldown (in seconds) after itemC is chosen before it becomes available again. Defaults to 0 (immediately available again)
cooldownD	Cooldown (in seconds) after itemD is chosen before it becomes available again. Defaults to 0 (immediately available again)
busyA	Message to display when itemA is chosen while cooldown is still active. Defaults to "Please stand by (<s> seconds)". Supports Time Wildcards <s>, <m>, <h>, <:s>, <:m> and <:h>
busyB	Message to display when itemB is chosen while cooldown is still active. Defaults to "Please stand by (<s> seconds)". Supports Time Wildcards <s>, <m>, <h>, <:s>, <:m> and <:h>
busyC	Message to display when itemC is chosen while cooldown is still active. Defaults to "Please stand by (<s> seconds)". Supports Time Wildcards <s>, <m>, <h>, <:s>, <:m> and <:h>
busyD	Message to display when itemD is chosen while cooldown is still active. Defaults to "Please stand by (<s> seconds)". Supports Time Wildcards <s>, <m>, <h>, <:s>, <:m> and <:h>
method radioMethod	DML method to bang flags. Defaults to 'inc', meaning that each time that a menu item is chosen, the flag's number is increased, generating a signal. To emulate ME's native menu method that sets a flag to a value <v>, use that number <v> as method
radioTriggerMethod	Watchflag method for inputs Defaults to "change"

Name	Description
removeMenu?	Watchflag that triggers removal of entire menu
addMenu?	Watchflag that triggers adding the menu if it wasn't shown or removed previously
menuVisible	When set (as per default) the menu is shown at the start of the mission. When set to false, the mission starts up with the menu hidden and requires a signal on addMenu? to appear Default to true (menu is visible on mission start)

Supports DML Flags

Supports Watchflags

Supports zone-local verbosity

4.4.26.5 API

tbc

4.4.26.6 Using the module

To enable, add the script to the mission as a DOSCRIPT action during Mission Start

To use

- add the ‘radioMenu’ attribute with a value (e.g. “Reinforcements”) to a zone, which creates a new menu in the Communications→F10 Other menu.
- Add other attributes as needed

4.4.27 Delicates

4.4.27.1 Description

There comes a time where you want a unit/object/cargo to explode given the slightest provocation (think “*Le Salaire de la peur*”). This is the module that can do it for you: as soon as any unit designated as ‘delicate’ is damaged, it explodes.



DESIGNATING OBJECTS/UNITS AS DELICATES

To designate units or objects as ‘delicate’, you place them on the map in ME and a trigger zone around them with a ‘delicates’ attribute. All static objects and units inside that zone become ‘delicate’.

Delicate status is determined on unit/object level, not group level, so it is possible to create a group in which only one unit is delicate.

Note that ‘delicate’ status is determined at mission start. So units that enter the ‘delicates’ zone later will not become delicate, and units that initially were inside the zone and later leave it remain delicate.



TRIGGERING A DELICATE OBJECT / SAFETY MARGIN

When a delicate object suffers damage, it explodes. This means that to trigger the explosion, you must first damage the unit/object. Note that this can be more difficult than you think: tanks, for example do not get damaged when they are hit by machine gun fire, so firing at a tank with a machine gun will not trigger a ‘delicate’ tank.

You can set a safety margin to allow a small amount of damage to the object by adding a ‘safetyMargin’ attribute to the zone. The object only explodes if total damage exceeds that safety margin

Once a delicate object explodes, the zone can send out a signal on the delicateHit! output.

EXPLOSION STRENGTH

When a delicate object is triggered, it explodes. The strength of that explosion is determined with the ‘power’ attribute

Name	Value	
delicates		
power	1	

Remember that explosions can damage surrounding objects, so triggering one delicate object can trigger a chain reaction.

BLOWING IT ALL SKY HIGH

You can tell the zone to blow up all their delicates by sending it a signal on the blowAll? input. If you feed the delicateHit! output into this input, you essentially create a ‘one hit kills all’ scenario

LIMITATIONS

Delicate status does not work with cloners or scenery objects.

4.4.27.2 Dependencies

Delicates requires dcsCommon and cfxZones.

4.4.27.3 Module Configuration

To configure the delicates module via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “delicatesConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Show debugging information. Default is false

4.4.27.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
delicates	Marks all static objects and units that are inside this zone when the mission starts up as ‘delicate’. If they get damaged at all, they immediately explode. Note that if these units move later outside this zone, they remain delicates, while units that move inside this zone later do NOT become delicates. Value of this attribute is ignored MANDATORY
power	Strength of the explosion when the delicate object is triggered.

Name	Description
	Defaults to 10
f! out! delicatesHit!	Flag to bang! when one of the units/objects defined by this zone explodes. Defaults to <none>
method delicatesMethod	DML Method for output flags Defaults to 'inc'
remove	When set to true, the delicate object/unit is removed from the game when it explodes. Defaults to true
triggerMethod delicateTriggerMethod	Watchflag method for all inputs
blowAll?	Sending a signal on this input causes all surviving delicates defined by this zone to blow up. When you feed back the delicatesHit! Signal into this input, one hit kills all.
safetyMargin	A number that defines how much damage the object can sustain (relative to its initial life) before it explodes. Expressed as a fraction from 0 (0%) to 1 (100%). For example, 0.1 means that the object can sustain 10% damage before it explodes. Defaults to 0 (any damage makes it blow up)

Supports DML Flags

Supports Watchflags

Supports zone-local verbosity

4.4.27.5 API

Tbc

4.4.27.6 Using the module

To enable, add the script to the mission as a DOSCRIPT action during Mission Start

To use

- add the 'delicates' attribute to a zone
- place objects/cargo/units inside that zone. These will be delicate during the mission
- Add other attributes as needed

4.4.28 Impostors

4.4.28.1 Description

Impostors allow you to replace AI-controlled units with identical-looking static objects on-the-fly, and turn them back into AI-controlled units when you need them. This can save a lot of CPU performance because every AI-controlled unit requires at least a small amount of CPU to control (look around, decide what to do next), while static objects do not.

Use this for late/on-demand hot-starting aircraft and units/groups that are only required to be animated/controlled when players (i.e. people who see them) are close enough: airfield traffic etc that you can safely ‘switch off’ when no one is around, or for late-activating aircraft that should be on their slots when the player is still at the airfield. In short, use Impostors to dial up the eye candy without tanking the mission’s performance

You can also use Impostors to make SAM sites ‘invisible’ to RWR until they are activated – this has the added benefit that they are still visible to high-flying (stand-off weapons range) visual detection etc.

ABILITIES

Impostors are simply the static object (uncontrolled) version of a unit and therefore look exactly the same, and use less CPU (they still use nearly the same amount of GPU to draw, though). DML’s impostor zones

- Work for all groups (aircraft, ships and ground units)
- Preserve orders, path information etc.
- Can optionally (since it’s a common use case) automatically turn AI-controlled units into static objects at mission start
- Allow you to switch between Impostor and AI-controlled units using flags
- Support multiple changes between impostor (static) and AI-controlled units
- Correctly handles destroyed units/objects when transitioning between Impostor/AI-controlled and back.
- Allows hot-start for aircraft when they reanimate (i.e. they start moving a second after changing to AI controlled units)
- Handles multiple groups per zone
- Integration with groupTracker
- Impostors support a zone’s linkedUnit attribute when that zone links its movement to a unit that can become an impostor

HANDLING IMPOSTORS

Setting up groups to give them the ability to turn into static objects is easy: simply place a Trigger Zone with the ‘impostor?’

attribute. All groups that have at least one unit inside that zone become Impostor capable, i.e. can be turned into static objects upon command.

Name	Value	
impostor?	ggolmp	
reanimate?	goGroup	
onStart	yes	

To turn all units of that group (that are still alive) into impostors, simply send a signal on the flag that you passed as value in the ‘impostor?’ attribute, in our example above the (global)

'ggolmp'.flag. The units are now 'frozen': they no longer move, nor respond to enemy activity. Be advised that active enemy units can and will try to damage impostors.

Since it is such a common use case, you can add an 'onStart' attribute that when set to true, automatically turns the groups into impostors at mission start.

Once your mission determines that the impostors should revert to AI-controlled units, simply give a signal on the flag connected to the "reanimate?" input.

When units reanimate, their AI is given the original orders from mission start (a DCS limitation), so it may cause some unexpected behavior with units that have move orders (they start moving towards the first waypoint – not the initial waypoint, the first waypoint)

Also note that Impostor behavior for aircraft can be somewhat unexpected due to the way DCS handles aircraft spawning.

- When airborne aircraft are turned into imposters, they spawn on the ground instead.
- When turning such an impostor back into an AI-controlled unit, they become airborne again
- Aircraft tend to revert to their initial spawn point and then head to their first way point when turned back to their AI-controlled state

Impostor abilities are determined at mission start, and any unit that has been designated as a possible impostor does not have to stay inside the impostor zone to retain their ability to be turned into an impostor nor to be turned back from impostor to AI-controlled unit.

HANDLING UNIT/OBJECT DEATH

Any unit (while AI controlled) or static object (while being an impostor) that is destroyed will not respawn when the group changes between Impostor/AI controlled units. This is important to remember since Impostors (being uncontrolled) do not defend themselves but will be attacked by enemy AI controlled units.

Note that units that are merely damaged will regain full health the next time they change to the other state (Impostor/AI controlled)

HANDLING WIPEOUTS

If all units/impostors that are managed by an impostor zone are destroyed, the impostor zone will take itself offline to conserve even more CPU. Obviously, sending signals to change between Impostor or AI controlled units will have no effect.

When all managed units/impostors are wiped out, the Impostor Zone can send a signal on the 'allDead!' output. This happens only once, the first time the module discovers that all units/impostors are dead during the health check (that happens up to times per second)

"BLINK" – AI PLANE REANIMATION OPTION

The built-in DCS logic for spawning aircraft checks if the slot that the aircraft should spawn on is occupied, and if so, automatically chooses an alternate, free slot that fits the aircraft size. This can

Name	Value	
impostor?	ggolmp	
blink	0.5	
reanimate?	goHawg	

lead to a conflict with an Impostor plane that is to become active (turn into an AI-controlled aircraft): the slot is currently occupied by a static object. This can only happen on Imposter to AI-control transition and is no issue when a unit transitions to a static object.

To resolve this, set a zone-individual short ‘blink’ interval (default is -1: no blinking) that causes the module to first removes the static object, allow for a brief period of emptiness so DCS can register that the slot is free, and then spawn the AI-controlled unit on that slot. Visually, the aircraft briefly ‘blinks’ out of existence only to return quickly. Use a short blink interval (usually 0.1 is enough), so the change is barely noticeable.

A blink interval is not necessary for ground units nor ships.

INTEGRATION WITH GROUPTRACKER

You can have impostor tracked with the groupTracker module. Be advised that each time a tracked group turns into impostors they are removed from the tracker (creating removeGroup events) and when turned back into AI-controlled units that creates addGroup events on that tracker.

INTEGRATION WITH LINKEDUNIT

One of DML’s abilities is that it can link a zone to a unit’s position by the “linkedUnit” attribute. Impostors respect such a link by inheriting the zone when a unit is turned into a static object, and they return link ownership to the AI-controlled unit when turned back.

LIMITATIONS

When you are using impostors in your mission, please hold the following limitations in mind:

- Impostors do not defend themselves but will be attacked by enemy AI. See: shooting ducks in a barrel.
- Obviously, Impostors don’t move
- Any damage short of destruction will not carry over when a group changes from one state to the other. A half-dead infantry unit changes into a fully healed static unit and vice versa.
- While it’s fine to change ships between impostor and AI controlled units, it’s instant death for any unit stationed on that ship. The same is true for any static objects that you place on AI controlled ships and then turn into impostors.
- Player aircraft cannot be turned into impostors.
- Does **not** integrate with cloners nor spawners.

4.4.28.2 Dependencies

Impostors require dcsCommon, cfxMX and cfxZones.

4.4.28.3 Module Configuration

To configure the impostors module via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “impostorsConfig” (note: name must match exactly)

- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Show debugging information. Default is false
ups	Number of health checks performed per second. Defaults to 1

4.4.28.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
impostor?	Marks all groups that have at least one unit inside this zone as potential impostor, giving them the ability to change between static object and AI-controlled unit. The value of this attribute is a Watchflag that triggers transition of all surviving units from AI-controlled to static object. MANDATORY
reanimate?	Watchflag that triggers transition of all surviving static units to AI-controlled units. They immediately restart any waypoint actions or route orders (if given). Ground units will start moving their first (not initial) waypoint.
triggerMethod impostorTriggerMethod	Method that triggers inputs (DML Watchflags) Defaults to “change”
onStart	If the value of this attribute is true, all units are turned into impostors at the start of the mission. Default is false
blink	The value of this attribute specifies the brief interval (in seconds) between removing the impostor and spawning of the AI-controlled units. Only required for AI aircraft. A good value is 0.1 – 0.2; a value of zero or negative value means no blinking. Defaults to -1 (no blink interval)
trackWith:	Name of a zone with a groupTracker attached. All units are added to that tracker when they are AI-controlled and removed when they are turned into impostors. Reanimating them subsequently will again add them to the tracker etc.
allDead!	DML flag to bang! when all groups that are managed by this impostor zone have been destroyed
method impostorMethod	DML method for output Defaults to “inc”

Supports DML Flags

Supports Watchflags

Supports zone-local verbosity

4.4.28.5 API

Tbc

4.4.28.6 Using the module

To enable, add the script to the mission as a DOSCRIPT action during Mission Start

To use

- Place zone over at least one unit of the groups that you want to add the impostor ability and to be managed by this zone.
- add the ‘impostor?’ attribute to the zone
- Add other attributes as needed

4.4.29 persistence

4.4.29.1 Description

This module provides all persistence services for your mission and must be present whenever you want to support saving and loading your mission (in the somewhat limited context of DML). This module gives your mission access to “manual” save in addition to auto-save features, and saves the values of those flags that you specify in trigger zones via saveFlags attribute.

Please also refer to this document’s ‘Persistence’ section for more detailed information about DML’s persistence abilities and how to set up DCS to allow persistence.

4.4.29.2 Dependencies

Persistence requires dcsCommon and cfxZones.

In order to save and load data, DCS must also be configured to read/write data. It gracefully handles situations where the module detects that it can’t read or write data. The mission runs normally, it merely can’t load mission data on start.

4.4.29.3 Module Configuration

You can configure the persistence module using a trigger zone in ME named “persistenceConfig” and add the following attributes

Name	Description
verbose	A value of “true” turns on debugging messages. Default is “false”
versionID	If present, this turns on version matching. When a mission starts up, persistence checks the value provided via the Zone with the one saved. If they do not match, the entire save data is discarded, and the mission starts fresh Defaults to <none>
serverDir	Path from the DCS standard directory (usually “C:\user\name\saved games\DCS.openbeta” or “C:\user\name\saved games\DCS”) to the Missions directory. Use this if you set up your DCS different (usually important for dedicated servers). Defaults to “Missions\”
saveDir	Name for the mission’s data directory. Defaults to “<mission name> (data)”. This directory is created in the serverDir automatically if it does not exist If you set saveDir to “”, the mission saves its data directly into serverDir Defaults to “<mission name> (data)” if a configuration zone is present, none without configuration zone
saveFileName	Name for the file that persistence uses to write mission data. Defaults to “<mission name> Data.txt”
saveInterval	Controls auto-save. Any value larger than zero will turn on auto save. The value you give here is the number of minutes between auto saves. Auto-saves co-operate with manual saves, so you can use both methods in your mission Defaults to -1 (auto-save off)

Name	Description
cleanRestart?	DML Watchflag. A change signal on this input triggers a “fresh start” request: next time the mission starts up, it won’t load mission data. Defaults to <none>
saveMission?	DML Watchflag. A change signal on this input triggers a ‘manual’ (as opposed to automated) save. Defaults to <none>

4.4.29.4 ME Attributes

You can use Trigger Zones with the ‘saveFlags’ attribute to list the flags that persistence should save. Remember that you can add this flag to any trigger zone, especially zones with other modules.

Name	Description
saveFlags	A list of flags that you want to be saved with the mission. Supports local flags (e.g., “*go”) and numbered ranges (e.g. “3-17”). MANDATORY

Since **persistence loads before any other modules**, and you **can add the “saveFlags?” attribute to any Trigger Zone** (with other modules), you can **use this to set up module’s input flags to the correct value** to prevent/cause them to fire as these values are loaded into the default state when that module starts up later.

4.4.29.5 API

See this manual’s ‘Persistence’ section

4.4.29.6 Using the module

See this manual’s ‘Persistence’ section

4.4.30 unitPersistence

4.4.30.1 Description

This module requires the “persistence” module to be added to the mission.

The unitPersistence module transparently saves the positions of all *ME-placed* AI units and static objects that are still alive at the point of save, and restores them when the mission starts. **Persisting dynamically spawned units is handled by the modules that spawn them** (e.g. cloners, spawn zones, owned zones etc.) so please check their description for persistence support.

Due to the way DCS works, there are the following quirks to observe when a mission loads from saved data:

- *All Units*

The AI assumes it spawns a unit at its initial point (IP), and then proceed to waypoint 1 (WP1, if given). Although DML saves the unit’s progress, it can’t query the AI which waypoint it’s currently approaching and curtail the route accordingly. This means that if you have routes assigned to groups, any loaded group will start moving waypoint 1 after loading. If you design a mission with persistence, make sure you take this into account: Make sure that a group has at most one waypoint (in addition to the initial waypoint where it spawns). If you add more waypoints, it helps if all additional waypoints are close together, so that if the units return to WP1

Also remember that when groups load, any surviving unit loads at full health, with a full complement of munitions

- *Aircraft Groups (includes Helicopters)*

If the initial waypoint is on the ground, the loaded aircraft will always start from the ground, no matter how far it had progressed previously. This may change later if a) DCS changes controller logic to allow access to current waypoint info or b) I get my smart route analysis code running that can curtail an AI’s route

- *Player Groups*

Player groups aren’t persisted

- *Ships*

Due to a quirk with carriers, ship groups are currently only persisted in a ‘fully dead’ way: if the entire naval group is destroyed, it won’t re-appear after load. If just one unit of a naval group is barely limping along, the entire group respawns after load, at full health and fully stocked.

Ship group’s positions currently aren’t persisted, they spawn at the ME initial position

- *Static Objects (incl. Cargo)*

No restrictions, and destroyed statics respawn as destroyed with visual representation. Cargos respawn in a loaded mission as cargo at the location that they were moved to at the point of save

4.4.30.2 Dependencies

Requires dcsCommon, cfxZones, persistence and cfxMX.

4.4.30.3 Persistence

This module persist all non-dynamic ground units and static objects.

4.4.30.4 Module Configuration

None.

4.4.30.5 ME Attributes

None.

4.4.30.6 API

None.

4.4.30.7 Using the module

Add unitPersistence to your module. Smile.

4.4.31 Sequencer

4.4.31.1 Description

Many things happen in a strict order, and with variable intervals between them. Since DCS has no specific conductor/director abilities to make sure things happen in the correct sequence, making sure that one thing happens after another can be tedious.

This is where the sequencer module comes in. Its sole purpose is to ensure that a sequence of flag changes, that, for example flag “moveRefueler” is changed before flag “startAirGroup” changes.

Sequencers have many uses in your mission

- Ensure correct staging of your mission (e.g. spawning enemies of the next stage when all enemies in the current stage are destroyed)
- Easily run conversations/narratives where you play sound files and/or messages in a sequence with pauses in-between
- Coordinate ‘cut-scene’ or similar behaviors of vehicles (move refueler away from aircraft, start aircraft, have another crew member arrive, have aircraft take off)
- Schedule interruptible tasks/events (e.g. re-starting mission, inbound enemies) with warnings in intervals they happen
- Easily schedule “time or event”-style stages

Each stage in a sequence has an easily controllable duration, and a sequencer can be paused, resumed and reset at any time

GENERAL BEHAVIOR

You supply a sequencer with a list of flags or ‘stages’, and when you start the sequencer, it will, one after the other send signals to the flags that you have listed, in exactly the order that you have listed them. For example, if you listed flags “A, B, D, Z”, the sequencer will signal these flags in the order A, B, D, Z.

Name	Value	
sequence!	i1, c1, g2, g1, g3, hog, over	
intervals	10, 5, 10-15, 10, 5	

Once it has reached the final flag (stage) in the sequence, it can either restart the entire sequence, or send a signal on the “done!” output and terminate the sequence.

INTERVAL: PROGRESSING THE SEQUENCE

There are multiple ways how the sequencer progresses from one stage to another. In general terms, after the sequencer signals a flag, it waits before it signals the next flag. So how long does it wait, and what does the sequencer wait for?

There are multiple ways to progress the sequence, and they work cooperatively

- A time limit
- A signal on the nextSeq? Input

Whatever comes first (time-out on the timer or signal on nextSeq?) will progress the sequence.

Time-driven progress

You can supply a list of durations with the “intervals” attribute, and the sequencer then uses these to set the time interval until the next sequence stage starts. The sequencer is highly flexible with regards to how it handles the duration between stages:

- A single value (e.g., “20”) results in the duration between all stages being that same duration (20 seconds in this case)

- If you supply a list of values (e.g. “10, 20”), the sequencer uses these one after the other for each sequential stage. When it

Name	Value	
sequence!	i1, c1, g2, g1, g3, hog, over	
intervals	10, 5, 10-15, 10, 5	

reaches the end of the list of durations, it ‘rewinds’ and begins again with the first duration. This means that the number of durations does not have to match the number of flags in your sequence. For example, if your sequence is “A, B, C, D, E, F”, and your durations is “10, 20”, the resulting sequence is:

A (10 sec) B (20 sec) C (10 sec) D (20 sec) E (10 sec) F

- Each duration in the list can be a range (e.g. “10-30”), in which case the sequencer picks a random value in that range (e.g., 23)
- If you do not give any duration, the sequencer uses a 24 hour wait period (meaning that stage progress is made entirely via the nextSeq? input).

Flag-Event driven progress

Any time that a sequencer is waiting for a time-out, a signal on nextSeq? ends that stage and progresses to the next one.

Combined Progress

Many missions use a schema “do this when the player takes off, or after at latest 15 minutes, whatever comes first”. A sequencer supports this out of the box. Feed the flag that signals a player’s departure into the ‘nextSeq’ input, and set the duration to $15 \times 60 = 900$ sec.

SEQUENCER CONTROL

Once a sequencer is started, it runs until it has run through the last stage (unless it is set to loop, in which case it runs through the sequence endlessly. At any time, a sequencer can be paused, which will also pause the timer until it is resumed.

Also at any time, a sequencer can be reset, which causes it to revert its initial setting (ready to run, started if onStart is true, first sequence, first duration)

Starting a Sequence

When a mission loads, the sequencer checks to see if the `onStart` attribute is true (defaults to false), and if not, settles into stopped mode. So to start a sequence, issue a signal on the ‘startSeq?’ input.

Pausing and Continuing

The ‘startSeq?’ and ‘stopSeq?’ inputs start and stop a sequence. If a sequence is running, and there are 10 seconds left on the current stage when you stop the sequence, it’ll resume with 10 seconds left on the time when you issue the ‘startSeq?’ input.

Reset

When you give a sequencer a signal on the `reset?` Input, it reverts to the state that it started up in. This means that if ‘`onStart`’ is false, it needs a signal on ‘`startSeq?`’ to begin.

THE FIRST SEQUENCE: SIGNAL-WAIT VS WAIT-SIGNAL (zeroSequence)

So what constitutes the very first stage? Should the sequencer immediately signal the first flag in the sequence when it starts and then wait, or wait the first duration and then signal? The attribute “`zeroSequence`” controls this. By default, this attribute is true: the sequence starts with a signal and then enters the first wait, it runs as a ‘signal-wait’ sequence.

If you set `zeroSignal` to false, the sequence starts with the first wait duration, and at the end of the first wait issues the signal on the first flag – a wait-signal sequence.

Remember this slight difference when you calculate your durations.

4.4.31.2 Dependencies

Sequencer requires `dcsCommon`, `cfxZones`.

4.4.31.3 Module Configuration

To configure the sequencer module via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “`sequencerConfig`” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
<code>verbose</code>	Show debugging information. Default is false

4.4.31.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
<code>sequence!</code>	A comma-separated list of flags that should be banged! in exactly that order. Example: “ <code>startGround, startSAM, startSirens</code> ” Value of this attribute is ignored

Name	Description
	MANDATORY
interval invervals	A comma-separated list of durations (in seconds) between the flag banging. The number of intervals does not have to match the number of flags given under sequence!, the values simply repeat. A single value means that the same interval is applied between all stages. You can supply value ranges instead of a single value, and the sequencer picks a random value from that range. Example: "10, 12-17, 33" Defaults to 86400 (24 hours)
next?	A signal on this input causes a running sequencer to end the current count-down to the next stage, and immediately start the next stage. Defaults to <none>
onStart	If set to true, the sequencer starts the first sequence 0.25 seconds into the mission (this delay allows all other modules to load and initialize before the first signal is sent from the sequence) Defaults to false (sequencer requires a startSeq? signal).
zeroSequence	Controls if the sequencer operates in "signal-wait" or "wait-signal" mode: if it starts with a signal (zeroSequence is true) or a wait (zeroSequence is false) Defaults to true (start with signal, "signal-wait" mode)
loop	If true, the sequence repeats endlessly or until stopped with 'stopSeq?' or 'reset'. If false, the sequence ends after the last stage, and a signal is sent on done! Defaults to false
done! seqDone!	The signal to send when the sequencer has ended the sequence Defaults to <none>
startSeq?	A signal on this input starts a paused or un-started (when onStart is false) sequencer. If the sequence was paused, the count-down resumes at the moment it was paused. If the sequence is already running it has no effect. Note that a sequence that has ended (run through all stages) cannot be restarted with startSeq? but must be reset first. Defaults to <none>
stopSeq?	A signal on this input pauses a running sequence. The current state of the stage's timer is preserved. If the sequencer is already paused, this has no effect. Defaults to <none>
resetSeq	A signal on this input resets the sequencer to the initial state: paused (if onStart is false), sequence stage one, duration one. A sequence that has ended (run out of stages) can be reset and then started again. Defaults to <none>
method seqMethod	The method to use for all outputs. Defaults to 'inc'
triggerMethod seqTriggerMethod	The trigger method for all inputs. Defaults to "change"

Supports DML Flags

Supports Watchflags

Supports zone-local verbosity

4.4.31.5 Persistence

Sequencers support persistence. When you load a mission, any running sequencer resumes at the stage and remaining time for that stage from the point where they were saved.

4.4.31.6 API

Tbc

4.4.31.7 Using the module

To use sequencers in your mission, add the script to the mission as a DOSCRIPT action during Mission Start

To use

- add the ‘sequence!’ attribute to a zone and add the flags you want to bang! in sequence
- Add other attributes as needed

4.4.32 fireFX

4.4.32.1 Description

This module is similar to ‘smoke zone’, except that it creates a highly visible fire/black smoke visual effect that can be turned off much quicker and that can be controlled in size and visual intensity.

Note that fire/smoke effects are purely visual, they do not damage vehicles or infantry standing inside them, nor aircraft flying through them. They also do not produce any thermals or wind effect.

SIZE MATTERS

DCS provides the same effect in different sizes, and you can set the fire effect’s size with the module’s main ‘smokeFX’ keyword to the following:

- “small” or “S”
- “medium” or “M”
- “large” or “L”
- “huge” or “H” or “XL”

NO SMOKE WITHOUT FIRE?

The effect can be a fire/black smoke combo, or you can have just some black smoke. There is no setting that allows flames without the billowing smoke.

DENSITY

You can control the ‘thickness’ of the smoke, making it appear near-translucent (like with a very hot fire), or near black, like from an oil fire.

FLAME ON!

Most importantly, you can control when fire/smoke should appear and disappear. The two inputs start? and stop? allow you to turn the effect on and off at will (in sharp contrast to the smoke zone effect, that you can only turn on, and then have to wait for some minutes until it fades out).

Also, you can opt to have the fire/smoke effect visible from the mission’s beginning by using the ‘onStart’ attribute.

4.4.32.2 Dependencies

fireFx requires dcsCommon, cfxZones.

4.4.32.3 Module Configuration

To configure the fireFX module via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere

- Name it “fireFXConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Show debugging information. Default is false

4.4.32.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
fireFX	<p>Tells DML that you want a fire/smoke effect at the center of the zone. The value of this field specifies the size of the effect. Currently the following values are recognized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “small” or “S” • “medium” or “M” • “large” or “L” • “Huge” or “H” or “XL” <p>Smoke is always colored black.</p> <p>Note that this effect is visual only. Vehicles or troops inside the fire aren’t damaged by the fire at all.</p> <p>Defaults to “small” (if none of the given values is recognized)</p> <p>MANDATORY</p>
flames	If you supply “false” for this attribute, only smoke (no fire) is displayed. Defaults to true (flames and smoke)
density	“Thickness” or visibility” of the smoke produced by this effect.
start?	DML watchflag (input) for when the effect should start. Defaults to <none>
stop?	DML watchflag (input) for when the effect should stop (Note: unlike the smoke zone module, which can take several minutes for the smoke to stop, this fireFX’s smoke stops within seconds) Defaults to <none>
onStart	If set to true, the mission starts with the effect on Defaults to false (no effect on start)
triggerMethod fxTriggerMethod	DML method for inputs Defaults to change

Note: if onStart is false and no start? Flag is given, that zone will provide a warning at start-up that its effect can’t be started.

Supports Watchflags
Supports zone-local verbosity

4.4.32.5 API

Tbc

4.4.32.6 Using the module

To use fireFX in your mission, add the script to the mission as a DOSCRIPT action during Mission Start

To use

- add the ‘fireFX’ attribute to a zone and add any attributes to control appearance and control

4.4.33 LZ (Landing Zone)

4.4.33.1 Description

For most DCS missions, it makes sense to synchronize actions to the point in time where a key aircraft takes off (to start the mission phase, and perhaps remove AI-intensive ground animations), or lands (to conclude, or kick off the next mission phase).

LZ gives the mission designer the ability to create flag events whenever aircraft (fixed-wing and helicopters) take off or land.

This module can notify you (or other modules) when aircraft land or take off inside its zone. You have flexible control over which aircraft generate a landing or take-off event.

BASIC OPERATION

An LZ has two outputs: ‘landed!’ and ‘departed!’ that create a signal when any aircraft that matches some requirements lands or takes off inside the zone. By default, all aircraft in the game trigger these signals, and using attributes, you can narrow the range down to individual planes.

Note that for most fixed-wings, landing inside a zone usually means landing at, or taking off from an airfield or carrier. LZ aren’t limited to airfields and can be used, for example to detect landings on a dirt strip or make-shift airfield (grass in WW II).

And, of course, Helicopters and other VTOL aircraft can land and take off almost anywhere, where an LZ comes in handy to detect such an event.

WHICH AIRCRAFT ?

Often, you are only interested to be notified when a specific aircraft or group takes off or lands, and LZ gives you attributes with which you can narrow the search by unit name, group name, type, and/or coalition.

- unit/group
 - when given either attribute, you can list the names for units or groups (separated by comma), and if you use an asterisk wildcard '*' as the last letter in a name, all units or groups that match everything before the asterisk will be considered: if you are looking for “He*”, “He”, “Helium”, “Heinkel” and “Hello-1-1” will all match.
- type
 - type allows you to list the plane types (e.g., “A-10A”) that you are interest in, separated by comma.

LZ supports the following special types:

- “ANY” – any plane.
- “HELO” – all helicopters
- “PLANE” – all fixed-wing aircraft

MODIFIERS

In addition to above selection criteria, LZ supports two modifiers to further narrow the search:

- coalition
When given, all units that match the requested type are also checked against their coalition.
- playerOnly
When set to true, all AI units are excluded

Note that it is perfectly legal to specify a LZ that, for example, detects only players from the red side by setting the LZ to “coalition=red” and “playerOnly=yes” without any unit, group, nor type attribute

THE ZONE IS HOT!

You can turn an LZ “on” and “off” via its “pause?” and “continue?” inputs. A paused LZ will no longer detect any landings or take-offs inside until it is told to continue.

4.4.33.2 Dependencies

LZ requires dcsCommon, cfxZones.

4.4.33.3 Module Configuration

To configure the LZ module via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “LZConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Show debugging information. Default is false

4.4.33.4 ME Attributes

Name	Description
LZ	Tells DML that this is an LZ that detects landing and take-off of aircraft inside it. The value of this attribute is ignored MANDATORY
landed!	Flags to bang! when a plane matching the criteria lands inside the zone Defaults to <none>
departed!	Flags to bang! when a plane matching the criteria lands inside the zone Defaults to <none>
coalition	When given, the coalition that aircraft must match. Supported are “red”, 1, “blue”, 2, “neutral” 0 When you specify “neutral” or 0, all coalitions match Defaults to 0 (any coalition)
playerOnly	When set to true, all AI planes are ignored Defaults to false (all players and AI are considered)

Name	Description
unit units	A comma-separated list of all unit names (case insensitive) that should be considered. Supports wildcard “*” for the last character, in which case all groups that match that everything before the asterisk are considered: “Hog-*” will match “HOG-”, “hog-1-1” and “HoG-5-2”, but not “Hogger” When matching units, any ‘coalition’ setting is ignored Defaults to <none>
group groups	A comma-separated list of all group names (case insensitive) that should be considered. Supports wildcard “*” for the last character, in which case all groups that match that everything before the asterisk are considered: “He*” will match “He”, “HELLO” and “heinkel-1-1”, but not “Hans Heinkel” Defaults to <none>
type types	List of types, separated by comma, that a unit must match at least one of (e.g. “A-10A”). Types must match exactly Additionally, the following special types are also supported <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “ALL” or “ANY” – all aircraft match • “HELO” – all helicopters match • “PLANE” – all fixed-wing planes match Defaults to “ALL”
isPaused	When set to true, the LZ is paused at mission start Defaults to false (LZ is active on start)
pause?	DML Watchflag to pause the LZ Defaults to <none>
continue?	DML Watchflag to continue a paused LZ Defaults to <none>
method outputMethod	Method to the outputs Defaults to ‘inc’
triggerMethod lzTriggerMethod	Method that triggers inputs. Defaults to “change”

Supports DML Flags

Supports Watchflags

Supports zone-local verbosity

4.4.33.5 API

Tbc

4.4.33.6 Using the module

To use LZ in your mission, add the script to the mission as a DOSCRIPT action during Mission Start

To use

- add the ‘LZ attribute to a zone and add any attributes to control detection of landings and take-offs

4.5 Using Stand-Alone Features

DML stand-alone features are drop-in modules that out-of-the-box provide specific capabilities without requiring additional set-up (although mission designers can curtail these modules to their requirements with configuration- and data zones).

DML has ready-made modules that implement the following abilities (please note that for some modules documentation is forthcoming)

- **Player Score**
A simple score board based on players (not units) for a more action-oriented approach to missions. Allows mission-specific score tables based both on unit type and unit name.
- **Helo Troops**
Allows players in transport helicopters (Huey, Hip, Hind) to pick up infantry anywhere and deploy them somewhere else. Supports comprehensive in-game UI and closely works together with spawn zones (if present)
- **jtacGrpUI (doc coming)**
Allows players to interact with DML-spawned JTAC troops that have ‘lase’ orders. Players receive vectoring upon request.
- **CSAR Manager**
Allows instant creation of CSAR missions with integrated pick-up of unit by landing close to them or simulated winching. Updates cargo weight.
- **Limited Airframes**
Very unfortunately named module, that facilitates a limited pool of player pilots. If a pilot is killed, ejects or ditches an airframe outside of designated safe zones, that pilot is lost. Integrates with CSAR Manager to automatically generate CSAR missions to recover downed pilots and re-plenish the player pilot pool.
- **Guardian Angel**
A module that prevents missiles from hitting protected air units by destroying them shortly before impact. Supports comprehensive text-based missile warning.
- **Parashoo**
A tiny module that gets rid of those pesky parachute guys that litter the ground after some time
- **Civ Air**
Generates civilian (neutral, transport) air traffic that flies between air fields. Aircraft spawn on the airport at ramp, start up, fly to their destination airport, land, taxi to ramp, and despawn after some time.
- **Artillery UI (doc coming...)**
In-game player UI for DML Artillery (Target) Zones to allow players to activate the fire

command for artillery zones. Supports the artillery zone's spot range and LOS requirements

- **Recon Mode**

An airborne scouting/recon system that marks discovered groups on the map and supports priority- and black lists

- **SSB Client**

An advanced slot blocking system that can block slots for aircraft on airfields/FARPs that do not belong to the same side. Also supports "single-use" of aircraft (blocking a slot after a crash). There is also a stand-alone version of SSB Single-Use available.

- **SSB Single Use (doc coming...)**

A slot blocking mechanism that blocks aircraft after they have crashed.

- **unGrief**

A low-grade griefer-repellant for multi-player game. Allow a number of friendly kills before this module will retaliate after each further kill. Intended for servers who suffer from abuse by immature users.

Can also be used to set and enforce PVE rules with local PVP zones on a server.

- **cfxmon Development Tool (Lua Only)**

A development tool that mission designers using Lua can use to view all events (DCS, DML) as they occur

4.5.1 Player Score

4.5.1.1 Description

Player Score is a module that automatically keeps score and a “kill log” for each player. Mission designers can add a unit score table for unit types (e.g. a BTR-80 kill yields 20 points), named groups (all units in the group named “special forces” yield 25 points) or named individual units (the unit named “SAM Command West” yields 50 points). Mission designers provide a score table by adding a specifically named trigger zone, and then add the type- and name scores as attributes

Scoring is automatic and the score is kept for the player (by name), not the unit(s) they control. So, if a player changes air frames, the kills achieved in the new frame is added to those they made before. Player Score itself keeps score for every kill and announces them to all players as they happen. A separate module “Player Score UI” provides a UI to access totals and kill log.

Announcing Kills

Player Score announces each kill with the score and current total for each side. This feature can be turned off with an attribute in a config zone. AI kills are only announced to the side that has earned a kill. PvP kills are announced on *both* sides.

Killing a named unit (i.e., the unit’s name is listed in the playerScoreTable) is announced as having successfully killed a strategic unit.

After each kill, the total score for the player that earned the kill is announced for their side.

Tabulating Kill Types

Internally, Player Score keeps a record of how many unit types (e.g. BTR-80) a player has killed. This information can be accessed by other modules (e.g., Player Score UI) or other scripts.

Named / Typed Scores

A kill for a unit that is mentioned on the playerScoreTable (either the unit’s name, the group’s name that it belongs to, or its type) yields that score, and negative twice that amount if it was a fratricide. Name score has precedence over group score over Type. For example, if the playerScoreTable has an entry for BTR-80 that yield 35 points, a kill of that unit type scores 35 points. If that unit was named “Field Commander” and the playerScoreTable has an entry of, for example, 100 points for “FieldCommander”, those 100 points are awarded for the kill instead of 35.

If the unit killed isn’t mentioned on the playerScoreTable (neither unit name, group name, nor type), a default score is used.

Default Scores

Default scores (unless changed via a config zone) are as follows:

- Aircraft: 50
- Helicopter: 40
- Ground Unit: 10

- Ship: 80
- Train: 5

(**Note:** static objects and scenery objects do not return a default score. If they are not listed in the score table, killing them does not award points).

Sounds

Mission designers can supply two different sounds to be played: a sound that is played when a normal kill is scored, and a ‘bad’ sound that is played when a fratricide occurs, or a player is killed (played only on the side the killed player belongs to)

The name for the sound files is provided via the config zone.

Support for scripts (Lua only)

Player Score supports a simple interface to fetch a player’s score, and the ability to change a player’s score by an amount. Please see the API section.

4.5.1.2 Dependencies

Player Score requires the modules dcsCommon, cfxZones and ~~cfxPlayer~~.

4.5.1.3 Module Configuration

Player Score uses two different sources of data for configuration: a standard configuration zone for setting up how Player Score behaves, and a score table (data) zone where a mission designer can assign score for unit types (e.g. BTR-80) and individual units (by unit name).

Configuration Zone

To configure Player Score module via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “playerScoreConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	A value of “true” turns on debugging messages. Default is “false”
aircraft	The fallback score to award for killing an aircraft if that unit wasn’t found on the score table (name or type). Defaults to 50
helicopter	The fallback score to award for killing a helicopter if that unit wasn’t found on the score table (name or type). Defaults to 40
ground	The fallback score to award for killing ground unit if that unit wasn’t found on the score table (name or type). Defaults to 10
ship	The fallback score to award for killing a ship if that unit wasn’t found on the score table (name or type). Defaults to 80
train	The fallback score to award for killing a train if that unit wasn’t found on the score table (name or type). Defaults to 5
announcer	If false, no kills are announced. Score is still kept. Defaults to true
scoreSound	Name of the sound file to play when a score is announced

Name	Description
badSound	Name of the sound file to play when killing own troops or being killed in PvP

Score Table

The score table holds entries for two different purposes: Score for types, and score for named units.

Whenever a unit is killed, Player Score first checks if the score table has an entry with the exact name as the unit's name (e.g. "SAM Commander" – the name given by a mission designer to a unit) and uses that score. If no match is found, it looks at the type of the unit that was killed (e.g. BTR-80) and tries to find a matching entry in the score table. If a match is found, that score is used. If no match for name nor type is found, the matching category (aircraft, helicopter, Ground, Ship, Train) from the config (see above) is used as score.

To use a score table in your mission,

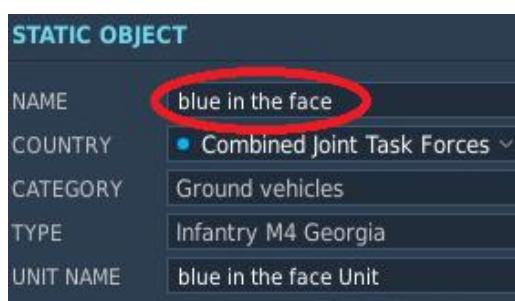
- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it "playerScoreTable" (note: name must match exactly)
- Add names/types and their score to the table:

The score table uses the following format:

Name	Description
<tape or name>	<Score as number>
Type Example: BTR-80	Example: 15
Name Example: Big Kahuna	Example: 130 Note: The name is first checked against a unit's name, and then against the unit's group.

Static Objects:

To have static objects return a score, use the name given at the top of the static's info panel (where usually the group's name is assigned for AI units).



Scenery Objects

To assign score to scenery objects, use the OBJECT ID as name in the score table. The object id is shown when you right-click on a scenery object and then click on the 'assign as...' pop-up menu. Note that the object id can change between

Name	Value
ROLE	
VALUE	
OBJECT ID	262537216
NAME	an-2m
f=1	10

DCS versions (when the map is updated), so use scenery score sparingly (use static objects instead).

4.5.1.4 ME Attributes

None. (not counting configuration / data zones, see above)

4.5.1.5 Persistence

PlayerScore is persisted together with each player's kill list.

4.5.1.6 API

[4.5.1.6.1 updateScoreForPlayer\(playerName, score\)](#)

[4.5.1.6.2 logKillForPlayer\(playerName, theUnit\)](#)

[4.5.1.6.3 scoreTextForPlayerNamed\(playerName\)](#)

4.5.1.7 Using the module

Copy the script into a DOSCRIPT action while the mission starts.

Add a score table or config zone if you want to assign other scores than the default values.

4.5.2 cfxHeloTroops

4.5.2.1 Description

HeloTroops adds the ability to Airlift (transport: load / unload) ground troops into transport helicopters. It installs an “Airlift Troops...” command into a player’s Communication→F10 Other... menu to allow them to load, unload, and set troop transport preferences.

Note that Helo Troops can load any group that complies with Helo Troop’s ‘legalTroops’ unit filter (infantry only by default, can be customized in a config zone). Having these units spawn with DML is not a precondition.

When flying a transport helicopter (as defined in dcsCommon), the script loads and deploys troops when the helicopter is on the ground. When close to a cfxSpawnZone with ‘requestable’ attribute, it can also trigger a spawn. Landing close to any group that entirely consists of transportable troops (as defined in HeloTroops), allows the player to load these troops into the helicopter for transport.

If the helicopter lands and has troops loaded, these troops can be (auto-)deployed. The script supports user-configurable settings to auto-load the closest loadable group when no troops loaded, and auto-deploy any loaded troops when troops are being carried. This enables the player to immediately deploy any loaded troops on touch-down.

Currently, the player preferences default to auto-load = OFF and auto-deploy = ON (can be changed with a config zone).

Helo-Troops built-in UI

Helo Troops provides a UI via Communication→Other...→Airlift Troops menu that allows players to

- Request spawns from spawners in range (will start a spawn cycle on that spawner. Checks for cooldown first)
Note: if there are more than 5 spawners in range, only the first 5 are shown)
- Load troops into the helicopter (Choose by team in range. List is limited to the closest 5 teams)
- Deploy troops loaded in the helicopter
- Change Auto-deploy and Auto-load settings

Interaction with DML Modules

Helo Troops automatically interacts with the following modules if they are present:

- SpawnZones – find and interact with spawner in proximity to the helicopter to their start spawn cycle upon request (player-controlled)
- GroundTroops – manages ‘wait-‘ prefix and removes that prefix when deploying troops that had orders with ‘wait-‘ prefix upon loading
- CSAR Manager – compatible with UI and loading of downed pilots
- Cargo manager (tbc) – weight management

Other

HeloTroops fully supports multi-player; in MP, player groups **must** be single-unit or the scripts will not work correctly.

Currently, the script does not change the helicopter’s cargo weight. This feature is expected to be added soon.

4.5.2.2 Dependencies

Required: dcsCommon, cfxZones, cfxCommander, cfxGroundTroops

Optional: cfxSpawnZones (for requestable troop spawning)

4.5.2.3 ME Attributes

None.

4.5.2.4 Module Configuration (tbc)

To configure the Helo Troops module via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it "heloTroopsConfig" (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
legalTroops	Type Array that identifies the unit types that helicopters can load. This is compared against any unit on the ground to determine if the helicopter can load the group. All units in the group must be on that list, or the entire group cannot be loaded. For example, if a group consists of four infantry soldiers, the group can be loaded. If the group also contains a vehicle (e.g. "Hummer"), that group cannot be loaded. Defaults to "Soldier AK, Infantry AK, Infantry AK ver2, Infantry AK ver3, Infantry AK Ins, Soldier M249, Soldier M4 GRG, Soldier M4, Soldier RPG, Paratrooper AKS-74, Paratrooper RPG-16, Stinger comm dsr, Stinger comm, Soldier stinger, SA-18 Igla-S comm, SA-18 Igla-S manpad, Igla manpad INS, SA-18 Igla comm, SA-18 Igla manpad"
troopWeight	Used to calculate the cargo weight per troop loaded. Currently not used. Defaults to 100 (kg)
autoDrop	Default setting for helicopter when touching down. Players can change this individually. Defaults to true
autoPickup	Default setting for helicopter when touching down. Players can change this individually. Defaults to false
pickupRang	Range in which troops can be picked up, from helicopter. Defaults to 100 meters

4.5.2.5 Persistence

Helo Troops keeps track of the units it deploys (after picking them up), and they will appear correctly after loading a mission, with their orders intact.

4.5.2.6 API

None.

4.5.2.7 Using the module

Add the script to your mission using a DOSCRIPT action while the mission starts. All transport helicopters now can transport infantry.

4.5.3 jtacGrpGUI (tbc)

4.5.3.1 *Description*

4.5.3.2 *Dependencies*

4.5.3.3 *Module Configuration*

4.5.3.4 *ME Attributes*

4.5.3.5 *API*

4.5.3.6 *Using the module*

4.5.4 csarManager

4.5.4.1 Description

csarManager is an extension for DCS Missions that adds CSAR (Combat Search And Rescue) capabilities to missions. CSAR missions can either be added to a mission via CSAR-Zones in ME that are generated at mission start, or via other scripts/modules (e.g. limitedAirframes) that generate CSAR missions at runtime. CSAR missions are only available to troop transport helicopters (i.e. Huey, Hind, Hip – not Shark, Gazelle nor Apache)

When using CSAR Zones, this script creates an entry into the managed missions table, and generates the required troops on the ground. Optionally (depending on the zone Attributes) the unit(s) also broadcast an emergency signal to home in on with ADF. Other scripts can generate a CSAR mission at any time by invoking

```
csarManager.createCSARforUnit(theUnit, pilotName, radius, silent)
```

In order to function properly, each side that has CSAR mission must have at least one CSARBASE defined where a helicopter can drop off rescued personnel. Without a CSARBASE, helicopters can pick up and drop off downed pilots, but the CSAR missions do not register as complete. When landing in a CSARBASE zone, any loaded rescued troops are automatically unloaded, the mission marked as successful, and any registered success callbacks are invoked.

The module supports directing players to their CSAR mission targets and ‘live updates’ during hover. For each active mission, a pilot can query via communications the target’s bearing, range, and ADF frequency.

Picking up evacuees is handled automatically by landing in close proximity, or hovering at 3+ meters (9 feet or more) directly over the target for the required number of seconds, while not exceeding a maximum altitude. Pilots can pick up multiple evacuees before returning them.

The script correctly manages weight for any units picked up/dropped off.

csarManager can handle multiple active CSAR missions, and is fully MP capable. In MP, player groups must be single-unit groups.

CSARBASE works in conjunction with other cfxZone attributes like “FARP”.

ME INTEGRATION

You place CSAR Zones on the map that generate CSAR missions when the main mission itself starts up, or when signaled with a flag. Unless a ‘deferred = true’ attribute is present in a CSAR Zone, it generates a CSAR mission on startup. The CSAR Zone also generates a new CSAR mission every time the value changes on the startCSAR? flag

Name	Value	Description
in? startCSAR?	Name	Watches the flag <Name> for a change. Each time the flag value changes, a new CSAR Mission is created. Defaults to <none>

INTEGRATION WITH LIMITED AIRFRAMES

The limited airframes module integrates with CSAR Manager to automatically generate a

CSAR mission when a player pilot safely ejects from a plane, or ditches it outside a designated airfield/FARP/ship. In order to correctly work together, **CSAR Manager must load before Limited Airframes**.

API Integration

To register a success callback, use

```
function csarManager.installCallback(theCB)
```

with the callback having the following signature:

```
function cb(theCoalition, success, numRescued, notes)
```

with

- `theCoalition` being a number for the coalition the helicopter that completes the mission belongs to
- `success` a bool if the CSAR mission was successful (true) or not
- `numRescued` the number of people rescued
- `notes` a string

Note that a callback is invoked separately for each mission. If a pilot picks up multiple evacuees from different CSAR missions prior to returning, and then lands at a CSARBASE, a success callback is invoked for each mission completed.

4.5.4.2 Dependencies

Required: dcsCommon, cfxZones, cfxPlayer, nameStats, cargoSuper

Optional: limitedAirframes

4.5.4.3 Module Configuration

To configure the csarManager module via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “csarManagerConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Set to true to turn on debugging information. Defaults to false
ups	Updates per second. Defaults to 1
useSmoke	When approaching a mission target, activate smoke or not. Smoke can have significant performance impact when close in a helicopter, so be mindful of this option Defaults to false
smokeColor	Color of the smoke to pop when helicopter is in range and enabled. Understands numbers (0-4) and names (green, blue, etc)
csarRedDelivered!	Flag to change when a red coalition-flown CSAR mission ends successfully
csarBlueDelivered!	Flag to change when a blue coalition-fown CSAR mission ends successfully

csarDelivered!	Flag to change when a CSAR mission ends successfully
rescueRadius	Helicopter must land within this distance (in meters) to the target to pick up. Recommended Value: 70
hoverRadius	When attempting a hover rescue, helicopter must stay within this range (in meters). Recommended value: 30
hoverAlt	When attempting a hover rescue, helicopter must stay below this altitude (in meters). Recommended value: 40
rescueTriggerRange	When approaching a mission target, the mission triggers a message from the evacuees at this range. This is also the range at which smoke is triggered if enabled
beaconSound	Name of sound file (ogg or wav) to play on the ELT frequency. Includes extension. Example: "Radio_beacon_of_distress.ogg"
pilotWeight	Weight for an evacuee in kg. Recommended Value: 100
hoverDuration	Time required to hover above pilot to secure winch and complete rescue
vectoring	If set to false, the mission report will no longer give range and bearing to the downed pilots. Default is true (range and bearing is provided)

4.5.4.4 ME Attributes

csarManager uses two different kinds of zones that you can place in ME to accomplish different things: a CSARBASE marks locations where pilots deliver the people they rescued; CSAR Zones are used to place pre-made CSAR mission on the map that are available at mission start.

4.5.4.4.1 CSARBASE

A CSARBASE is a zone in which a helicopter transporting evacuees can unload the rescued personnel.

Name	Description
CSARBASE	Must be present to identify this zone as CSAR Base where CSAR Missions can end. A helicopter must land inside this zone. Supports linked zones (for example if the BSAR Base is a ship). Each side that has CSAR Missions must have at least one such zone, or CSAR Missions can not be completed. There is no upper limit on the number of CSAR Bases a side can have. The value of this attribute can be used to name the CSAR Base, else the Zone's name is used. MANDATORY
coalition	The side that owns the CSAR Base. If neutral, both sides can use this as a base, else only the faction specified. Defaults to "neutral". Other possible values are "red" and "blue"
name	Optional name for CSARBASE.

4.5.4.4.2 CSAR Zone

A CSAR Zone is a zone that allows you to place CSAR missions on the map. Upon mission start and when signaled via startCSAR? flag, a new active CSAR mission is created.

Name	Description
CSAR	Identifies this as CSAR Zone that is converted into a CSAR mission upon mission start or when the value of the startCSAR? flag changes.

	MANDATORY
coalition	Faction (red/blue) for which this mission is generated
name csarName pilotName victimName	Name of this mission, recommended is to use a personal name, e.g. "Lt. Wesley Crasher"
freq	Frequency for the ELT (radio to home in on) in KHz. Random if not set
timeLimit	(currently not used)
weight	Weight of pilot (tbc)
deferred	If true, CSAR missions are only created when the startCSAR? flag changes. Default is false (a CSAR mission is automatically created when the main mission starts up)
in? startCSAR?	When the value of this flag changes, a new CSAR is created according to this Zone's attributes. Defaults to <none>

Supports DML Flags

4.5.4.5 API

csarManager allows you to generate CSAR missions while the mission is running. Invoke

```
csarManager.createCSARforUnit(theUnit, pilotName, radius, silent)
```

with the following parameters to create a new CSAR Mission

- `theUnit` is DCS unit the unit that ‘creates’ the CSAR mission, i.e. the unit that is crashing and where people are bailing out from. It must exist and have a location, but does not have to be alive. This unit is used to determine the CSAR mission’s location and faction (the CSAR mission is created for the same side that the unit belongs to)
- `pilotName` is a string that is used to create the mission’s name. It helps if it’s a good name, and the word (downed) will be prepended for creating the mission name. If you don’t give a name, ‘Eddie’ (as in ‘Eddie the Eagle’) is used.
- `radius` is the maximum distance from theUnit’s location where the mission is going to be created. This simulates the ‘parachuting to ground’. Use a fixed value, or a combination of altitude and speed to create some realistic randomized location.
- `silent` – a bool you can use to suppress the ‘Mayday’ message that is automatically generated when this message is invoked. Defaults to false

Note that not all invocations of this method result in CSAR missions: if the mission’s location (after randomizing from theUnit’s location) ends up in water, the units are assumed to have drowned. If not silent, a “KIA” message is displayed.

4.5.4.6 Using the module

Add the script to your mission using a DOSCRIPT action while the mission starts.

In ME, place CSARBASES:

- CSARBASESs are zones where a helicopter can deliver rescued units to complete CSAR missions. Without a CSARBASE for their fraction, pilots can’t complete a CSAR mission

- If you place a CSARBASE without a coalition attribute, or set the attribute to neutral, any player can complete a CSAR mission there
- (Optional) Place CSAR zones on the map. These can spawn CSAR missions on start and later using flags
- To create CSAR missions while the mission is running, see the API section or use the startCSAR? flag defined per CSAR Zone

4.5.5 Limited Airframes

4.5.5.1 Description

Limited airframes is a drop-in module that works out-of-the-box to put a limit on the number of player-controlled pilots per side (slightly misleading module name notwithstanding).

When that number drops below zero, that side loses the engagement (limited airframes will not end the mission, merely set a flag accordingly). This feature can be turned on and off in-mission, and each side can have a different maximum.

Limited Aircraft is fully multiplayer capable and comes with a comprehensive in-game menu.



HOW TO LOSE A PILOT

Limited Airframes monitors world events and looks for player events that indicate that a player's plane is lost (hence the module name). When limited airframes determines that the airframe is lost, it lowers the number of player pilots for that side by one.

Limited Airframes deducts a pilot when

- The player is killed via crash or other means
- The player ejects
- The player's aircraft is ditched (player exits the plane outside designated safe zones)
- The player changes aircrafts while not landed (even if inside a pilot safe zone)

Note that other modules (e.g. CSAR Manager) can work with Limited Airframes to automatically generate missions to rescue downed pilots and replenish the number of remaining pilots.

HOW TO *NOT* LOSE A PILOT (SAFE ZONES)

Limited airframes will not deduct a pilot when

- Player changes airframes inside a designated safe zone with the aircraft safely landed.

Safe zones are designated by a trigger zone with the 'pilotsafe' attribute. Safe zones can be safe for any coalition (default), or blue and red separate.

Name	Value	
pilotsafe	blue	

Since DML internally supports zone ownership, a zone that is owned by one side will not be safe for the other side to change airframes in. Pilotsafe zones owned by neutral factions are safe.

HOW TO RE-GAIN A PILOT

Limited airframes provides an API to increase the number of available pilots per side. Other modules use this API (e.g. CSAR Manager). Note that even using the API it is not possible to increase the current number above the imposed maximum.

ME INTEGRATION

Limited Airframes provides support for DML and other flags for the following events:

- Red won (blue ran out of pilots) – DML Flag
- Blue won (red ran out of pilots) – DML Flag
- Number of pilots left blue
- Number of pilots left red

UI

Limited Airframes has built-in UI via the Communication → Other game menu. The UI allows each side to enquire the number of pilots they have left, and turn limited airframe count on/off.

RED has unlimited pilots left,
BLUE has 4 of 4 pilots left

This can be disabled with the config zone's 'userCanToggle' attribute.

Each time a side loses a pilot, a message is displayed with announces the number of pilots remaining for that side.

You have lost a pilot! Remaining: 2

When a side is about to lose because it is running out of pilots, a warning appears for that side to that effect

You have lost almost all of your pilots.

WARNING: Losing any more pilots WILL FAIL THE MISSION

Once a side has lost all pilots and loses the engagement, another message comes up:

All above messages can be accompanied by audio. The file names to play are set with the config zone.

BLUEFORCE has lost all of their pilots.

REDFORCE WINS!

SETTING LIMITS

Use the module's config zone to set up the upper limits for pilots for each side. Supply "-1" as maximum to allow an unlimited supply of pilots for that side.

LIMITATIONS

(Handling in case of multi-seat planes)

4.5.5.2 Dependencies

limitedAirframes requires dcsCommon, cfxPlayer, cfxZones

If you want limited Airframes to automatically interact with the CSAR Manager module, **CSAR Manager must load before Limited Airframes**, or limited Airframes will not connect to CSAR Manager.

4.5.5.3 Module Configuration

Limited Airframes uses a configuration zone for setting main options. To configure this module via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “limitedAirframesConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	A value of “true” turns on debugging messages. Default is “false”
enabled	Controls whether Limited Airframes is active. Defaults to “true”
userCanToggle	Controls whether players can turn Limited Airframes on and off during the mission. Defaults to “true”
maxRed	Maximum (and starting) number of pilots for the red coalition. Set to -1 to make the number unlimited. Defaults to -1 (unlimited)
maxBlue	Maximum (and starting) number of pilots for the red coalition. Set to -1 to make the number unlimited. Defaults to -1 (unlimited)
#red	Flag that continuously is set to the current number of pilots remaining for Red
#blue	Flag that continuously is set to the current number of pilots remaining for blue
redWins!	Flag to bang! when blue has lost all pilots and red wins. Defaults to <none>
redWinsFlag!	Flag to bang! when red has lost all pilots and blue wins. Defaults to <none>
method	DML bang! method. Defaults to ‘inc’
warningSound	Name of sound file to play when limited airframes is displaying a message. Defaults to <none>
winSound	Name of sound file to play for winning side when other side has lost all pilots. Defaults to <none>
loseSound	Name of sound file to play for the side that has lost all pilots and therefore lost the engagement. Defaults to <none>
announcer	When set to false, there are no announcements for change on air frames, Defaults to true (airframe changes are announced)

4.5.5.4 ME Attributes

Limited Airframes uses ME trigger zones to denote areas where player pilots can safely change into other airframes without losing a pilot. These zones can have the following attributes:

Name	Description
pilotsafe	<p>Marks this zone as safe for pilots to change into other airframes when landed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the value to this attribute contains neither the word ‘red’ nor ‘blue’, it is safe for all coalitions • If the value of this attribute contains the word ‘red’ this zone is safe for the red coalition • If the value of this attribute contains the word ‘blue’ this zone is safe for the blue coalition <p>Note that safe state may be contingent on ownership of the zone.</p> <p>MANDATORY</p>

4.5.5.5 Persistence

Limit Airframes persists the number of pilots left for each side

4.5.5.6 API (tbc)

`limitedAirframes.pilotsRescued(theCoalition, ignored1, numRescued, ignored2)`

4.5.5.7 Using the module

Add the script to your mission using a DOSCRIPT action while the mission starts.

In ME, place at least one zone that has a “pilotsafe” attribute when that side has a non-negative (i.e. finite) number of pilots.

4.5.6 Guardian Angel

4.5.6.1 Description

Guardian Angel is a module that watches an aircraft and can protect it from incoming guided missiles. When a missile is fired at a protected unit, guardian angel first warns the unit, and then tracks, and ‘intervenes’ shortly before the missile hits by destroying it. Both warnings and interventions are optional and can be turned off.

Warning: Guardian Angel does *not* protect aircraft against dumb-fire missiles nor guns.

Use this module to selectively make units (nearly) impervious against missiles, to add heart-attack-inducing segments to a mission (when the player does not know a guardian angel is watching them) or to create smart missile defense trainers.

Guardian Angel has the following features (most of which can be controlled with a configuration zone):

- Automatically protects player aircraft (fixed-wing and rotor-wing)
- Warns of missile launch with direction
- Destroys missiles shortly before they hit a protected unit
- Can announce warnings and ‘interventions’ to all or privately to the unit only
- Can protect player and AI planes
- Can add visual effects (small explosions) when a missile is removed (can be dangerous!)
- Can be turned on and off at will with flags
- Also avoids newer re-targeting missiles like S-300
- Supports cloned units

Guardian Angel’s missile protection is quite impressive. Run the demo mission “missile evasion (Guardian Angel)” to see how it can protect you and a fellow protected (AI) plane from multiple SA-6, S-10, and S-11 sites – while the other AI planes all get shot down.

Out of the box, Guardian Angel provides full protection for all player planes against all missiles. Using a config zone, you can selectively turn off some of the above-mentioned features. For example, by turning off interventions, pilots are warned when a missile is launched, but they are no longer saved from the missile: a good and lethal training tool (with only interventions off, pilots are still informed when a missile has missed, lost track or re-acquired. A hit announces itself).

HOW TO TELL GA WHICH AIRCRAFT TO PROTECT

By default (which you can modify with a config zone), Guardian Angel protects the following aircraft

- All player aircraft (all coalitions). This can be changed with the ‘autoAddPlayer’ attribute (see Module Configuration, below)

This means that all player aircraft are protected, while all AI aircraft are unprotected.

In order to **individually** protect aircraft (including AI), or remove protection, place these aircraft in trigger zones with

Name	Value	Remove
guardian	yes	

a ‘guardian’ attribute, and either add true (aircraft is protected) or false (not protected) as value. These ‘guardian’ zones override all config settings, so when you place player aircraft

inside a trigger zone with `<guardian = false>` attribute, that plane will not be protected even if the configuration tell Guardian Angel that all player aircraft should be protected.

Name	Description
<code>guardian</code>	<p>MANDATORY</p> <p>Tells Guardian Angel how to treat aircraft inside the trigger zone:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>true</i> All aircraft inside this zone are protected by Guardian Angel • <i>false</i> All aircraft inside this zone will not receive protection from Guardian Angel. <p>Defaults to ‘true’ (all aircraft inside are protected)</p>

LIMITATIONS

Guardian Angel works by tracking all missiles fired at aircraft, calculating their closing velocity to the targeted aircraft, and deriving a lethal distance. When inside lethal range, the missile is intercepted for protected aircraft. That way, fast closing missiles are intercepted further away than slowly closing ones.

Even though the predictive code is highly successful at intercepting missiles aimed at a protected aircraft, they can still be destroyed through collateral damage caused by an explosion nearby:

- When another plane that happens to be too close to the protected plane is destroyed and the blast kills the protected aircraft
- When a missile that targeted a different plane loses track and explodes in close proximity
- When a missile tracks countermeasures (decoys, flares, chaff) and as a result explodes near the aircraft.

WARNINGS

Next to Guardian Angel’s ability to protect planes from fiery missile death, it provides some comprehensive warnings that a RIO may give you:

Missile, missile, missile, 12 o clock
Missile, missile, missile, 6 o clock
16800000: tracking Froghopper, d = 9497m, Vcc = 157m/s, LR= 28m Missile MISSED!
16800000: tracking Froghopper, d = 9585m, Vcc = -12m/s, LR= 2m Missile RE-ACQUIRED!
16799232: tracking Froghopper, d = 205m, Vcc = -1272m/s, LR= 228m ANGEL INTERVENTION

Possible Warnings

Except for launch, all warnings begin with some ‘gibberish’ and end on the actual Warning. Let’s look at the gibberish first, as you can use it later to gauge your own skills:

16799488: tracking Froghopper, d = 102m, Vcc = -747m/s, LR= 134m

The information displayed is as follows:

<weapon name> tracking <target unit name> <dist> <vcc> <LR>

with

- <weapon name> being whatever name DCS gave that thing. Yes, they are mostly uninspiring names.
- <target unit name> is the name of the unit that the weapon is fired at
- <dist> is the distance from target to the missile when the even occurred
- <vcc> is closing velocity between target unit and missile. A negative value means that the missile is moving closer, a positive that the missile is moving away
- <LR> is the resulting lethal range and calculated by Guardian Angel based on closing velocity.

And now for the Warnings:

- *Missile, missile, missile*
A missile is launched. Always comes with a clock direction
- *Missile Missed*
A missile no longer closes in on the aircraft
- *Missile Re-Acquired*
A missile re-gained track / closes in again
- *Missile Lost Track*
A missile is no longer tracking the aircraft
- *Missile Disappeared*
A missile was destroyed by other means than Guardian Angel
- *Angel Intervention / God Intervention*
A missile was destroyed by Guardian Angel because it would have hit within the next 0.1 seconds.

Turning Guardian Angel On/Off at will during the mission

Guardian Angel permanently watches two flags that you can specify to turn it on and off. When it detects a change on the “activate?” flag, it becomes active, and likewise, a change on the “deactivate?” flag turns it off. When the mission starts up, it goes into the state that you specified in the config zone’s ‘active’ attribute (defaults to true).

WARNING:

WHILE TURNING OFF GUARDIAN ANGEL TAKES EFFECT IMMEDIATELY, TURNING IT ON (PROTECTING PLANES) ONLY AFFECTS MISSILES THAT ARE SUFFICIENTLY DISTANT FROM PROTECTED AIRCRAFT FOR GUARDIAN ANGEL TO INTERCEPT THEM!

Callbacks (Lua Only)

Guardian Angel supports callbacks so scripts can be informed when angels intervene. A callback must match the following profile:

```
function angelCB(reason, targetName, weaponName)
```

When invoked, reason contains the reason for the invocation, targetName and weaponName as strings. Currently, the following reasons are defined:

- “launch”
A missile was launched
- “miss”
A missile has apparently missed the target. Re-acquisition cannot be ruled out (and is likely for more advanced SAM)
- “reacquire”
A missile that looked as if it missed / did no longer track is again tracking
- “trackloss”
A missile has apparently lost track of the target. Re-acquisition cannot be ruled out.
- “disappear”
A missile has disappeared – this is only invoked for missiles that Guardian Angel tracked and did not remove itself. Most likely reason is that the missile was destroyed.
- “intervention”
Guardian Angel has removed a missile that was about to kill a protected unit

Your script can sign up to be invoked with

```
guardianAngel.addCallback(theCallback)
```

4.5.6.2 Dependencies

Guardian Angel requires dcsCommon and cfxZones

4.5.6.3 Module Configuration

Guardian Angel can use a configuration zone for setting up main options. To configure this module via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “guardianAngelConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	A value of “true” turns on debugging messages. Default is “false”

Name	Description
autoAddPlayer	When set to true, player planes are automatically added to Guardian Angel's watchlist. Default is true
launchWarning	If true, Guardian Angel announces a missile launch. Default is true
intervention	If true, Guardian Angel destroys a missile before it destroys a watched aircraft. Default is true
announcer	If set to false, Guardian Angel suppresses all announcements. Defaults to true
private	If set to true, all announcements are only made to the group that a missile was fired at. Defaults to false (everyone can see)
explosion	Guardian Angel can add a mostly harmless explosion when a missile is removed due to an intervention. If this value is smaller than one (e.g. -1) this feature is turned off. If you enter a value > 0 (zero), an explosion with a magnitude of this value is placed in direction of that missile's last location, 500m from the aircraft. A mostly harmless value is 1.0 (one point zero) WARNING I Even though this explosion is usually harmless for the protected plane, it can pose lethal to any other plane (wingmen). WARNING II The explosive effect is only harmless to the protected plane if the explosion value is small (e.g. 1). If you enter sufficiently larger values, the shock wave can destroy even the protected plane. If you set this value to see explosions, make the value 1.0 Defaults to -1 (off)
fxDistance	When using explosions, this is the distance (in meters) away from the aircraft where the (real) explosion is going to take place. Defaults to 500
active	The state that Guardian Angel starts up in. True means that it is active, false that it is turned off. Defaults to 'false'
activate? on?	Watchflag to turn on (activate) guardian angel. Defaults to <none>
deactivate? off?	Watchflag to turn off (deactivate) guardian angel. Defaults to <none>

4.5.6.4 ME Attributes

None.

4.5.6.5 API

Guardian Angel has a simple API for interfacing with ME to add and remove AI planes to the watchlist. It also supports callbacks for Angel Events

[4.5.6.5.1 addUnitToWatch\(aUnit\)](#)

Adds aUnit to the list of units that are to be watched (protected). aUnit can be a string containing the unit's name or a unit. This is primarily useful to add AI units with a ME action

[4.5.6.5.2 removeUnitToWatch\(aUnit\)](#)

Removes aUnit from the list of watched units. If aUnit doesn't exist or isn't watched, this is ignored. aUnit can be a unit or string containing the unit's name

[4.5.6.5.3 addCallback\(theCallback\)](#)

Adds theCallback to the list of methods to invoke when an angel event happens.

4.5.6.6 Using the module

Include the guardianAngel source into a DOSCRIPT Action at the start of the mission

Optionally, add a config zone with ME

4.5.7 Parashoo

When planes in DCS are shot down, their pilots can try to eject. If they eject successfully, they glide to the ground, and an icon with text appears on the F10 map to mark the landing spot.



Unfortunately, there is no way to interact further with these downed pilots, and the icons can start cluttering up the map in long engagements

4.5.7.1 *Description*

parashoo is a simple, lightweight script that removes a parachutist a short while after they land on the ground.

4.5.7.2 *Dependencies*

None. This script is stand-alone and can be added to any mission without requiring any other scripts.

4.5.7.3 *Module Configuration*

`parashoo.killDelay` controls the time delay between the moment that the parachutist touches down, and the unit is removed. Default delay is 3 minutes.

4.5.7.4 *ME Attributes*

None.

4.5.7.5 *API*

None.

4.5.7.6 *Using the module*

Copy the parashoo source into a DOSCRIPT action that runs at the start of the mission

4.5.8 Civ Air

4.5.8.1 Description

Civ Air is a high-performance drop-in module to quickly add civilian (or neutral) AI flights to missions. You control which airfields have civilian traffic, how many planes ferry between the airfields, and which planes to as civilian (note that DCS currently only has few truly civilian planes). If you simply add the module to your mission, and do not change anything, you will have up to ten (10) civilian flights between any two airfields on the map. The map and airfields are detected automatically.



HOW IT WORKS

Civ Air works by generating civilian (neutral, non-aggressive) flights between airfields. Once a flight ends (either by reaching the destination and parking, or crashing), a new flight is generated. This continues until the mission ends.

To generate a flight, Civ Air goes through a number a steps:

- Pick an aircraft type (e.g. Yak-40). It will always be part of a neutral faction.
- Pick a starting airfield
- Pick a destination airfield
- When the mission starts up, half the maximum number of planes start in the air above their departure airport. They all spawn immediately
- All other civilian planes spawn on the tarmac and perform a cold-start. Only one civilian flight spawns per cycle (once every 25 seconds unless changed with a config zone).

AIRCRAFT TYPES

Civ Air by default uses a set of air frames (identified by their type) and randomly picks one to create the flight. You can completely customize which frames are available (and add other – even non-civilian – airframe types) with the config zone. By default, Civ Air picks a type from the following list:

- Yak-40
- C-130

- C-17A
- IL-76MD
- An-30M
- An-26B

When you customize the list, you can increase the likelihood of a plane appearing by adding its type multiple times, increasing its chance of being picked over the others.

DEPARTURE/DESTINATION AIRFIELDS IN CIVAIR

Flights always originate from one airfield and end at another airfield (that is to say, they always remain on the map. CivAir currently does not support off-map departure or destinations; this may be added at a later time). The airfields that civilian flights depart from or fly to are taken from sets of airfields that you control in ME.

You can add airfields to two sets: the ‘inclusion’ and ‘exclusion’ sets. All civilian flights depart from and land at airfields from the ‘inclusion’ set that are not also on the ‘exclusion’ set. You can use this feature by manipulating the exclusion set to temporarily ‘close down’ airfields on the inclusion set, or to quickly remove just a few airfields in ME from the map for civilian traffic.

You add an airfield in ME to the inclusion list by adding the ‘civAir’ attribute to a trigger zone. The nearest operational airfield will then be added to the inclusion list. Note that if you have two trigger zones with the civAir attribute closest to the same airfield, this **airfield will be added twice, making it proportionally more likely to be picked** as departure or destination airfield. The value you supply to the civAir is disregarded – unless it is the word “exclude”. If your civAir attribute’s value is ‘exclude’ the nearest operational airfield is added to the ‘exclusion’ list instead. If an airfield exists on both ‘inclusion’ and ‘exclusion’ lists, the exclusion list takes precedence (no flight to or from that airfield).

DEPARTURE-ONLY/ARRIVAL-ONLY AIRFIELDS

Airfields can be designated as departure-only or arrival-only. To do so, simply use the keyword ‘departure’ (or ‘depart only’) or ‘arrival’ (or ‘arrive only’) as value to the civAir attribute. Airfields with a ‘departure’ value will not be used as landing airfields, while airfields with ‘arrival’ are not used for take-offs (or air-starts at mission begin).

Name	Value	
civAir	depart only	

Note that arrival-only and departure-only airfields are added to the list of generally open airfields before departure or arrival are determined. This means that if you add an airfield once as a generally permitted airfield, and then add the airfield again as ‘arrive only’, this airfield is still available for departure and landing; it’s also more likely to be picked as arrival since its name is entered twice into that set. Use this to control the likelihood of airports being chosen as source or destination for flights.

IMPORTANT

If you add any airfields to the ‘inclusion’ list, it will contain *only those* airfields that you have added with zones. If you add no airfields to the ‘inclusion’ (or depart-only) list, CivAir adds *all of the map’s airfields* to that list. Use the latter to have CivAir use all airfields, and then remove a few with the “civAir/exclude” attribute/value pair.

FLIGHTS

Unless the civilian flight is air-started (which only happens when enabled and only when the mission starts up), all flights start cold at ramp. Once they have started, the aircraft taxi normally, depart the airfield, overfly the destination airfield, and then land there. Once landed, they taxi to their parking lot, and power down. Some time later, they de-spawn, and a new flight is created.

An air-started (can only occur on mission start when enabled, used to populate the air at mission start) aircraft appear over their starting airfield, and immediately start flying towards their destination. If multiple aircraft air-start over the same airfield, they are altitude-separated to avoid a collision.

LIMITATIONS

Currently, civAir has the following limitations:

- Standard Airfields Only
CivAir currently supports only standard airfields on your map. It does not support FARPs or Ships
- Fixed-Wing Only
Currently, CivAir does not support helicopters.

4.5.8.2 Dependencies

CivAir requires dcsCommon and cfxZones

4.5.8.3 Module Configuration

civAir uses a configuration zone for customization. To customize settings,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “civAirConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	A value of “true” turns on debugging messages. Default is “false”
aircraftTypes	A comma-separated list of Types (as defined in https://github.com/mrSkortch/DCS-miscScripts/tree/master/ObjectDB/Aircraft) that define the aircrafts used for civilian flights. These must be fixed wing aircraft (i.e not helicopters). All airframe types are picked from this list, and each entry has the same chance to be picked. This means that if you list the same type twice, you increase the chance of that type to be picked. civAir defaults to the following list: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yak-40, Yak-40, C-130, C-17A, IL-76MD, An-30M, An-26B Note that by default, the Yak-40 is twice as likely to be picked for a flight as an aircraft because its type is listed twice

Name	Description
ups	Number of updates per second that civAir checks on its flights. By default, this is 0.05, or once every 20 seconds.
maxTraffic	Maximum number of civilian flights at the same time. Defaults to 10
maxIdle	Number of seconds of an aircraft idling that can elapse before it is removed. CivAir determines that an aircraft is idling by checking if it is moving. If you set this number too low, a cold-starting aircraft may be removed before it can move. Defaults to 480 (seconds = 8 minutes)
initialAirSpawns	Controls if at mission start half of maxTraffic immediately spawn in mid-air to start a mission with planes in the air.

4.5.8.4 ME Attributes

In ME you can add airfields to the set of included or excluded civAir airfields. To do so, create a trigger zone close to the airfield, and add the following attribute:

Name	Description
civAir	<p>When present, the airfield closest to this trigger zone is added to either the inclusion or exclusion set. Additional keywords are supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘exclude’ If the attribute’s value is ‘exclude’ the closest airfield is added to the exclusion list. In all other cases, it is added to the inclusion list. • ‘departure’ or ‘depart only’ In this case, the airfield is added to the inclusion set only when looking for airfields to depart from • ‘arrival’ or ‘arrive only’ In this case, the airfield is added to the inclusion set only when looking for an airfield to land on. <p>Note that you can add the same airfield multiple times by adding multiple trigger zones with a civAir attribute close to the same airfield. This will proportionally increase the likelihood of the airfield being picked for either destination or departure</p> <p>Note also that only functioning airfields are chosen. FARPS or ships are disregarded.</p> <p>MANDATORY</p>

4.5.8.5 API

(tbc)

4.5.8.6 Using the module

Copy the civAir source into a DOSCRIPT action that runs at the start of the mission. No other change is needed, from that point on 10 civilian flights between two random airfields will constantly populate your map.

You can customize that setup in the above-described way.

4.5.9 Artillery UI

4.5.9.1 Description

Artillery UI is a smart interface for artillery zones that can guide players to artillery zones and gives them the ability to mark and fire artillery zones via the Communication→Other menu.

This UI is usually only intended for helicopters, but the UI can be made accessible to all aircraft (Note: due to proximity that is required for an aircraft to function as FO, using a fixed-wing aircraft as FO makes little sense)

Artillery UI directly interfaces with artillery zones and thus provides a drop-in command interface for players to control artillery zones. Artillery UI provides information and command via the Communication→Other... interface as follows

FO Rules that Artillery UI automatically observes – and how to get around them

Before Artillery UI allows a player to trigger the fire cycle of an artillery zone, the following conditions must be met:

- Player **must be in a helicopter** (unless the `allowPlanes` attribute is set to `true` in Artillery UI's config zone. In that case, every player unit has access to Artillery UI)
- Player must be **inside** an artillery zone's **spotRange** (unless the `allRanging` attribute is set to `true` in Artillery UI's config zone. In that case, all players have unlimited spotRange). Note that spotRange is an attribute of the individual artillery zones and can be edited with ME)
- **Player's** view to the target's center is unobstructed and they have a **LOS** (unless the `allSeeing` attribute is set to `true` in Artillery UI's config zone. In that case, they always have unobstructed view)
- The artillery zone's **cooldown** timer has run out (unless the `allTiming` attribute is set to `true` in Artillery UI's config zone. In that case, the cooldown is reduced to zero). Note that cooldown is an attribute of the individual artillery zones and can be edited with ME)

Target Direction / Guidance

Artillery UI provides a list of all artillery zones currently managed by the artillery zones module. If the group querying target directions is further than a few kilometers (the zone's `spotDistance`, to be precise) away from a zone, the list includes bearing and range to the target.

Bringing down the house - OBSERVING
Soganlug Airfield [266.8km at 88°]

If the unit is close enough to observe the target zone, OBSERVING is reported instead for that target zone. If the unit is in range, but the player has no LOS to the target zone, OBSCURED" is reported.

When a target is reported as OBSERVING

Marking Zones

Artillery UI allows players to request target zones to be marked. Instead of artillery shells, a

single phosphorous round is shot into the target zone, marking the zone visually with colored smoke. Smoke dissipates after 3-5 minutes

Fire Control

When a unit is close enough to observe the target zone, and has a direct line of sight (LOS) to the target zone's center, the unit can order the artillery to fire. Note that is usually is this requirement (close proximity and LOS to the artillery zone's center) that makes it next to impossible for modern fighter aircraft to be effective at FO: their time over target is simply too short.

Reload in Artillery

After firing into an artillery zone, the artillery needs to re-load. This takes time (as configured with the artillery zone's cooldown attribute which defaults to two minutes). Fire commands into the artillery zone before that time are ignored.

4.5.9.2 Dependencies

Artillery UI requires the following modules: dcsCommon, cfxZones, cfxPlayer, cfxArtillerZones

4.5.9.3 Module Configuration

ArtillerUI can use a configuration zone for setting up main options. To configure this module via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it "ArtilleryUIConfig" (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	A value of "true" turns on debugging messages. Default is "false"
allowPlanes	Usually, the Communication menu is only visible in helicopters, as fixed-wing aircraft can't loiter close enough to artillery zones to act as FO. Setting this to true also gives fixed-wing aircraft access to the artillery UI. Defaults to false
smokeColor	This defines the smoke color used to mark artillery zones. Defaults to "red". Legal values are "green", "blue", "orange", "red", "white" and the numbers 0 through 4
allSeeing	Removes the unobstructed view requirement for all players. They now can fire when in range. Default is false
allRanging	Removes the spot range requirement for all players. They now are always in range. Default is false
allTiming	Removes the cooldown restriction for all players. Artillery zones can always start a new fire cycle. Default is false

4.5.9.4 ME Attributes

None.

4.5.9.5 API

None.

4.5.9.6 Using the module

Include the cfxArtilleryUI source into a DOSCRIPT Action at the start of the mission

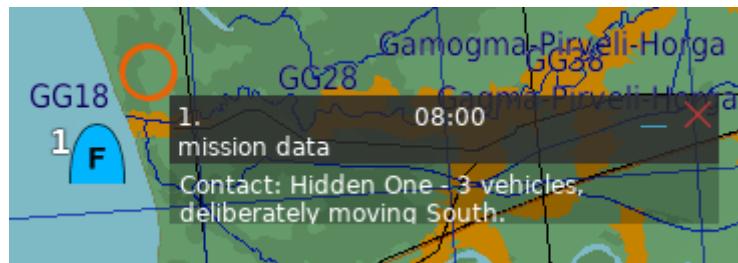
Optionally, add a config zone with ME

4.5.10 Recon Mode

4.5.10.1 Description

Recon Mode allows 'scout' planes (AI and Player) to automatically record enemy ground troops on the F10 map that then become visible to all players on the same side to see. This is similar in principle to DCS's built-in 'fog of war' map feature, but has several important differences:

- recon ability can be assigned to and removed from specific planes
- supports a 'priority list' – groups that are a priority to find for the recon planes
- supports a 'black list' – groups that recon planes never find
- provides special messages when priority units are detected
- supports callbacks so your own scripts can tap into recon results
- supports ME flag integration for when a scout detects units and priority targets
- detection is based on configurable parameters (altitude and visibility)
- report detected units to the scout's coalition
- ability to mark detected units on the F10 map
- can be turned on and off via flags



Reporting In

Whenever a scout detects an enemy unit, this is reported to all players of the scout's side. This feature can be turned off. The report is made in the following format:

- Strength: number of units (infantry / vehicles)
- Action: if they are stationary or in which direction they are moving
- Location: in Lat/Lon (default) or MGRS
- Time: when they were observed

Recon reports new ground contact Hidden One:
3 vehicles, deliberately moving South, Lat 42°17'30.354"N Lon 41°38'46.668"E, at 08:00:13.

Additionally, a group that is marked as priority (see later) can have an individual message that is displayed upon the group's discovery. The message is defined in the priority-designating trigger zone, and supports most of the same formatting as the 'messenger' module

Note that you can selectively suppress scout reports for groups by using the 'silent' attribute for priority groups (see later)

F10 Map Marks

Whenever Recon Mode detects enemy units, it places a mark on the F10 map that all players on the same side can see. The mark optionally contains additional information (how

many units sighted, group name, action). The mark does not update, and therefore represents the initial contact location and strength. The mark is automatically removed after 30 minutes (or when any player clicks on the “X” icon in the mark’s description.). This feature can be turned off with an attribute in the config zone

Note that placing a mark can be suppressed for groups by using a ‘silent’ attribute for priority groups.

Detection Range

Auto Recon can detect units at far greater ranges than they are in DCS (with Fog of War set). Detection range is a function of two user-configurable (via a config zone) attributes: minimum- and maximum range. The unit’s actual detection range is a function of altitude (above ground). When close to the ground, detection range is at minimum, and when at high altitude at maximum.

ME INTEGRATION

Like most other stand-alone modules, ReconMode uses a config zone to curtail its base behavior. Additionally, it can use zones to curtail which aircraft can perform recon, and which ground forces can be detected:

Adding Recon Planes to a mission: “Scout Zones”

Using trigger zones placed over aircraft in the Mission Editor, you can designate planes as scouts (i.e., they actively report any new enemy ground forces that they detect), or ‘no-scouts’, meaning that they lack the ability to perform recon during the mission.

This is important because for ease of use, ReconMode can be set up automatically allow or disallow all aircraft to perform recon, and you would use the scout option to add planes as scouts (when disabling all planes except special scouts), and the no-scout option to remove recon ability from some planes (when the default is to allow scouting for all planes)

To assign scout or no-scout abilities to units, place aircraft (not ground units) inside a trigger zone with the ‘scout’ attribute:

Name	Description
scout	Marks all aircraft (fixed- and rotor-wing) inside the zone. If the attribute’s value is ‘true’, the aircraft have recon ability. If the value is false, they are ‘blind’, i.e. they have no recon abilities. Defaults to ‘true’ MANDATORY
dynamic	Controls if all units that start with the same name are automatically included. This is helpful for clone zones that base all names for clones on the name of the unit in the template. Defaults to false

Further modifiers affecting scout aircraft: AutoRecon

In addition to “Scout Zones”, basic recon behavior of all planes is governed by the module’s config zone (see later). Particularly of interest here is the autoRecon mode, which is enabled by default. In that case, there are a couple of easy modifiers that curtail recon ability

- **redScouts / blueScouts / greyScouts**
Selectively enables/disables autoRecon for that side
- **playerOnlyRecon**
Grants recon abilities only to player (i.e. not AI) aircraft. Note that playerOnlyRecon is applied *after* red/blue/grey modifiers

Modifying Ground Troop Visibility (“Recon Zones”)

Recon mode usually reports all groups of enemy units that it detects. You can modify this behavior by changing how some groups are reported:

- **Priority Groups**
Recon mode supports a list of priority targets. They are detected normally, but their detection is handled differently: the detection event is different, and a different flag in ME is banged. This allows you to designate special groups that can elicit different responses from your mission depending upon which group was discovered.
- **Flag events when groups are spotted**
ReconMode provides multiple ways to alert your mission that groups have been spotted by a recon aircraft:
 - via the global detect! flag that is triggered whenever a group of ground forces is detected that is not a priority (set with the config zone)
 - through the global prio! flag that is triggered whenever a group of ground units is detected that is marked as priority
 - through optional the spotted! flag that can be set individually for each priority target
- **Invisible (blacklisted) Groups**
ReconMode also supports the exact opposite of priority items: blacklisted units. These are units that a recon plane never detects. Use it to hide strategic units from recon's prying eyes to ensure that they must be discovered the old-fashioned way.

Priority Messages

When you designate groups as priority groups, you can optionally trigger a ‘priority message’ that is displayed. This message is individual per trigger zone, and supports the following formatting wildcards:

- <n> creates a new line
- <z> is replaced with zone’s name
- <t> is current time in HH:MM:SS format
- <lat> the latitude of the discovered group’s current position
- <lon> the longitude of the discovered group’s current position
- <ele> the elevation (in feet or meters, as determined by the imperialUnits reconModeConfig attribute)
- <mgrs> the discovered group’s position in MGRS coordinates

Only applicable for priority targets (i.e. recon’s value is something other than “black”), ignored otherwise.

Note that the reported location is that of the first surviving unit found in the group. If your group is spread over a significant area, the returned position may be misleading (but it's still the location of one of the units in that group).

Note also that priority messages (when defined) will be displayed even when a 'silent' attribute is present (see below). That way you can output a message without giving any other indication why or where the message was generated.

(Blacklisted groups do not have that feature since they by definition aren't spotted by recon aircraft)

Staying Silent (no report, no mark)

You can suppress both recon report and map marks for any groups inside a priority zone by adding a <silent : true> attribute to a priority zone (does not work with blacklisted groups, as they never generate a report nor map mark).

Suppressing the report and mark can be desirable if you wish to use recon mode simply to trigger an event in your mission and still want to use normal reporting (i.e. keep the config's 'announcer' attribute set to true).

Support for Cloners

ReconMode has built-in support for cloners: when you designate ground forces as priority targets or blacklist them (making them invisible to scouts), a simple option allows you to treat all dynamically spawned clones of that group the same way.

Adding Ground Units/Groups to Priority- or Black-List

Recon mode supports adding groups to black-or priority lists with trigger zones. Simply add the "recon" attribute with either "black" or "prio" as value, and all groups inside that zone will be added to the relevant priority list.

When you mark a zone as a priority target, you can use additional attributes to customize the message that is sent or flags that are banged

Name	Description
recon	Marks all ground groups inside this zone as recon relevant. If the value is "black" all groups that have at least one inside this zone are added to the blacklist, otherwise they are added to the priority target list Defaults to "prio" MANDATORY
dynamic	Controls if all groups that start with the same name are automatically included. This is helpful for clone zones that base all names for clones on the name of the unit in the template. Defaults to true
prioMessage	A message that is displayed to the coalition that the scout belongs to. Can contain most of the text wildcards that the messenger module provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <n> creates a new line• <z> is replaced with zone's name

Name	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <t> is current time in HH:MM:SS format • <lat> the latitude of the discovered group's current position • <lon> the longitude of the discovered group's current position • <ele> the elevation (in feet or meters, as determined by the imperialUnits attribute in reconModeConfig) • <mgrs> the discovered group's current position in MGRS coordinates <p><i>Only applicable for priority targets</i> (i.e. recon's value is something other than "black"), ignored otherwise Default is <none>, i.e., no message is displayed</p>
spotted!	DML output flags to bang when a group is spotted. Flag is banged <i>in addition to</i> the module's global "prio!" flag. <i>Only applies to prio zones</i> (ignored when blacklist zone) Defaults to <none>
silent	Only applicable to priority groups. When present and set to true, the recon report and map mark are suppressed for any groups defined with this zone. Note that this does NOT apply to any prioMessage you have defined for this zone, as that will still be displayed. Defaults to false

Turning Recon Mode on and off during the mission

Recon Mode can listen to flags for a change to turn its scouting abilities on and off. You define these flags in the config zone.

Performance Considerations

A recon function has to regularly check detection against all existing troops on the ground. This can quickly escalate in terms of performance requirements. Recon Mode uses several methods to intelligently limit its performance drain on the mission:

- Recon planes perform a check every few seconds, not permanently
- Checks are spread over time, not all at once
- Neutral troops are skipped
- Visibility checks perform optimizations (e.g., if one unit of a group is too far away to detect it is assumed that they all are since groups move in proximity to each other)

In short, when under pressure, Recon Mode trades detection accuracy for performance: instead of hitting your CPU up for more power, it relaxes the recon schedule. The result is that a recon plane may be a few seconds late in reporting a new contact.

With those automatic limitation in place, Recon Mode reduces performance impact to negligible levels even if you have thousands of units on the map. You can therefore use recon mode in large-scale multi-player missions without worrying about Recon Mode dragging performance down.

Callbacks (Lua Only)

Recon Mode supports callbacks so scripts can be informed whenever some recon events occur. Your callback must follow the following profile:

```
function demoReconCB(reason, theSide, theScout, theGroup, theName)
```

When invoked, `reason` contains the reason for the invocation, `theScout` is the unit that created the event, `theGroup` is the group that was spotted, and `theName` is the name of that group (in the case of a “dead” event the name of the scout unit that died. Currently, the following reasons are defined:

- “detected”

A new group of ground troops was detected. If a priority group was found, this event is not invoked, but a “priority” event (see below) instead
- “removed”

A mark that was placed on the map was removed. This is only invoked if a mark was placed (i.e. `applyMarks` is set to true)
- “priority”

A group that is listed on the priority list was discovered. Note that for this event no “detected” event is invoked, just the “priority”
- “start”

A scout has started their reconnaissance mission. `theGroup` is nil, and `theName` contains the string “<none>”
- “end”

A scout has ended reconnaissance. `theGroup` is nil, and `theName` contains the string “<none>”.
- “dead”

A scout has died while performing recon. Since the unit no longer exists, the **parameters contain unusual information**: `theSide` is -1, `theGroup` is nil, `theScout` is nil and `theName` contains the name of the scout unit that died.

Your script can sign up to be invoked with

```
cfxReconMode.addCallback(theCB)
```

4.5.10.2 Dependencies

Recon Mode requires `dcsCommon` and `cfxZones`

4.5.10.3 Module Configuration

Recon Mode can use a configuration zone for setting up options. To configure this module via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “`reconModeConfig`” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
<code>verbose</code>	A value of “true” turns on debugging messages. Default is “false”

Name	Description
autoRecon	If true, all planes are automatically treated as actively reconnoitering. NOTE This is on by default. To avoid excessive scouting activity, you should reduce the number of active scout planes with enabling or disabling one of the following attributes: redScouts (off), blueScouts (off), greyScouts (off), playerOnlyRecon (on) Default: true
redScouts	If true, all red planes are included as scouts when autoRRecon is true. Default is false
blueScouts	If true, all blue planes are included as scouts when autoRecon is true. Default is true
greyScouts	If true, all neutral planes are included as scouts when autoRecon is true. Default is false
playerOnlyRecon	If true, only player aircraft are included as scouts when autoRecon is true. AI planes will not be automatically included as scouts. IMPORTANT NOTE: This condition is applied in addition to blueScouts and redScouts. If you disallow red scouts, red players will not automatically be added to the list of scouts. Defaults to false
reportNumbers	If true, the F10 map markings include a unit count of the group at the time the group was discovered. Default is true
applyMarks	If true, discovered groups are marked on the F10 map. Default is true
announcer	If true, discovered groups are announced via text. Default is true
detectionMinRange	The detection range of a recon plane under worst conditions (low-level flying). Default is 3000 (3 km)
detectionMaxRange	The detection range of a recon plane under best conditions (high-altitude). Default is 12000 (12 km)
maxAlt	The altitude at which a plane achieves maxDetectionRange. Default is 9000 (9 km, 27'000 ft)
prio+	A flag in ME that is increased every time that a priority unit is detected
detect+	A flag in ME that is increased every time that a normal (non priority) is detected
prio!	DML flag to bang! when a priority unit is detected Defaults to <none>
detect!	DML flag to bang! when an enemy group is detected. If that same group is on the priority list, prio! is banged instead. Defaults to <none>
method reconMethod	DML method for output flags. Defaults to 'inc'
reconSound	The name of the sound file to play when e recon event occurs. Defaults to <nosound>, which will not play a sound
autoRemove	When a detected group is destroyed, that group's mark is immediately removed from the map if this attribute is set to true Defaults to true
mgrs	Defines if the location of the group that is detected is given in Lat/Lon (default) or MGRS. Set to true to enable MGRS. Default is false (coordinates are displayed in Lat/Lon)

Name	Description
imperial imperialUnits	When set to true, the value given in <ele> (elevation) is in feet, otherwise in meters Defaults to false (ele is returned in meters)
activate? on?	Watchflag to monitor for a change. If a change is detected, Recon Mode goes into active state. Defaults to <none>
deactivate? off?	Watchflag to monitor for a change. If a change is detected, Recon Mode turns off Defaults to <none>
active	Set to false to start Recon Mode in disabled (off) state. Defaults to true (Recon Mode enabled)
reportTime	Number of seconds that a recon message stays on the screen. Defaults to 30.

Supports Watchflags

Supports DML Flags

Supports zone-local verbosity

4.5.10.4 ME Attributes

To designate groups of ground forces as either priority targets (which allows for special flag signals) or invisible to recon aircraft, place them inside a trigger zone and use the following attributes:

Name	Description
recon	Marks all ground groups inside this zone as recon relevant. If the value is “black” all groups that have at least one inside this zone are added to the blacklist, otherwise they are added to the priority target list Defaults to “prio” MANDATORY
dynamic	Controls if all groups that start with the same name are automatically included. This is helpful for clone zones that base all names for clones on the name of the unit in the template. Defaults to true
prioMessage	A message that is displayed to the coalition that the scout belongs to. Can contain most of the text wildcards that the messenger module provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <n> creates a new line • <z> is replaced with zone’s name • <t> is current time in HH:MM:SS format • <lat> the latitude of the zone’s current position • <lon> the longitude of the zone’s current position • <mgrs> the zone’s current position in MGRS coordinates <i>Only applicable for priority targets</i> (i.e. recon’s value is something other than “black”), ignored otherwise Default is <none>, i.e., no message is displayed
spotted!	DML output flags to bang when a group is spotted. Flag is banged <i>in addition</i> to the module’s global “prio!” flag. <i>Only applies to prio zones</i> (ignored when blacklist zone) Defaults to <none>

Name	Description
silent	Only applicable to priority groups. When present and set to true, the recon report and map mark are suppressed for any groups defined with this zone. Note that this does NOT apply to any prioMessage you have defined for this zone, as that will still be displayed. Defaults to false

To assign or remove scouting abilities to aircraft, place them inside a trigger zone with the following attributes:

Name	Description
scout	Marks all aircraft (fixed- and rotor-wing) inside the zone. If the attribute's value is 'true', the aircraft have recon ability. If the value is false, they are 'blind', i.e. they have no recon abilities. Defaults to 'true' MANDATORY
dynamic	Controls if all units that start with the same name are automatically included. This is helpful for clone zones that base all names for clones on the name of the unit in the template. Defaults to false

Note that this includes player planes.

4.5.10.5 API

Recom Mode provides a very simple API so mission designer can add and remove units to black list, prio list, and add and remove units to the list of scout/recon planes. For more advanced users, it also provides hooks for event callbacks

4.5.10.5.1 [addToPrioList\(aGroup\)](#)

Adds aGroup to the list of groups that are priority targets. aGroup can be a string (group name) or the DCS group

4.5.10.5.2 [addToBlackList\(aGroup\)](#)

Adds aGroup to the list of groups that will never be discovered by scouts. aGroup can be a string (group name) or the DCS group

4.5.10.5.3 [addScout\(theUnit\)](#)

Adds theUnit as a scout/recon unit. theUnit can be a string (unit name) or DCS unit

4.5.10.5.4 [addCallback\(theCB\)](#)

Adds theCB to the list of callbacks that are invoked on a recon event. theCB must match the following profile:

```
demoReconCB(reason, theSide, theScout, theGroup, theName)
```

with reason being a string, theScout a Unit, theGroup a group, and theName a string.

4.5.10.6 Using the module

Include the cfxReconMode source into a DOSCRIPT Action at the start of the mission

Optionally, add a config zone with ME

4.5.11 ssbClient

“[SSB](#)” is a freely available, multiplayer-only server module that allows aircraft ‘slot blocking’. SSB must be installed on the hosting server (and only the server). ssbClient is a mission (client-side) plug-in that allows mission designers to intelligently use slot-blocking ability of SSB in their missions. This means that by including ssbClient into your mission you can use slot-blocking functionality in your missions. Note that ssbClient only works in conjunction with SSB, and therefore requires the mission be run in multiplayer mode and an SSB-enabled server.

4.5.11.1 Description

ssbClient provides automatic slot blocking for aircraft that

- have their starting location on an airfield/FARP that is currently occupied by the enemy (optionally neutral as well) – note that this is a dynamic feature, and when the airfield is captured, the aircraft become available (or blocked)
- are on an airfield that is “closed” ssbClient provides an API to open/close airfields
- are associated with an airfield that is occupied by the enemy (aircraft slots can be associated with the provided API)
- (optionally) aircraft that have crashed (a ‘single-use’ feature to prevent crashed aircraft to be re-used). This option provides a “re-use after” feature to allow access to the crashed aircraft slot after some time (to simulate replacement)

Note that a mission that enables the “single use” feature **requires that the host first disables** SSB’s automatic “**kickReset**” option.

Any player group that you wish to be blocked from spawning until the airfield belongs to the correct side must have the group’s first player unit placed on the ground (i.e. “Take off” with one the following: “From Runway”, “From Parking Area”, “From Parking Area Hot”, “From Ground Area”, “From Ground Area Hot”) within 3000m of the airfield’s/FARP’s center. That is all.

There are some additional (Lua-only) advanced options available (see below).

Additional Features (Lua-Only)

The client supports methods to “close” and “open” airfields, and the ability to “bind” (and “unbind”) aircraft to airfields. Using these methods is not required. They can be invoked either through your Lua scripts, or with a DOSCRIPT action in ME

Opening and Closing an Airfield

A closed airfield will not permit any player groups that start from there to be entered (slots are blocked), no matter who the airfield belongs to. This is commonly used to close FARPs that are still hidden, or to close contested airfields

You only need to open an airfield if it was previously closed, meaning that initially, all airfields are open.

Binding/Unbinding a Group to an Airfield

Due to the way that airfields are matched to groups, in rare cases it may become desirable to allow a player group to spawn in an enemy controlled airfield, FARP or even ship (or ground-start close to it). Usually, SSBClient will prevent you from doing so, because it sees the closest airfield as enemy controlled. You can 'unbind' the group from any airfield, making it always available to start, no matter who owns the closest airfield.

Conversely, you can also bind groups to other airfields (i.e. different to those that SSB binds them to during start-up). Note that this does *not* move the aircraft to the newly bound airfield. It merely *binds the availability of that group to the ownership of the newly bound airfield*. Use this for special effects like allowing aircraft to become available on airfield B depending on the ownership of airfield A (by binding the group located at B to airfield A).

Binding In-Air starts

You can use above bind feature to bind in-air starts to airfields (usually, in-air starts are ignored by SSBClient). This requires that you ensure that `keepInAirGroups` is set to true (see module configuration, below).

4.5.11.2 Dependencies

ssbClient requires dcsCommon, cfxGroups and cfxZones

4.5.11.3 Module Configuration

ssbClient supports a convenient configuration zone to set it up for your mission's requirements.

To configure ssbClient via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “cfxSSBClientConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Note that there are no mandatory attributes for ssbClient, so it can work out-of-the-box for most missions (and without requiring a config zone)

Name	Description
verbose	A value of “true” turns on debugging messages. Default is “false”
singleUse	A value of “true” turns on single-use: an airframe is blocked after crashing it. Note that this requires that the server’s SSB setup sets kickReset to false in SSB. Defaults to false
reUseAfter	If singleUse is enabled, this optional attribute controls after how long a delay (in seconds) the slot may be re-used. This can simulate replacements arriving after some time. Setting this value to -1 blocks the slot for the remainder of the mission. Defaults to -1
allowNeutralFields	If set to “true”, aircraft can spawn on neutral airfields (otherwise they are blocked). Defaults to false
maxAirfieldRange	Maximum range to find an airfield/FARP for a ‘from ground’ start. If no airfield is found that slot will be permanently open.

Name	Description
keepInAirGroups	For performance reasons, ssbClient strips all slots for air-starting aircraft from its observation list. In some cases (e.g. when you want to bind the availability of an air-starting aircraft slot to the ownership of an airfield) ssbClient must also manage air-starts. Set this value to true to also retain air-starting slots. Defaults to false
enabledFlagValue	This reflects SSB's flag value of that same name. DO NOT CHANGE THIS UNLESS YOU ARE ABSOLUTERLY SURE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING. Defaults to 0
enabledFlagValue	This reflects SSB's flag value of that same name. DO NOT CHANGE THIS UNLESS YOU ARE ABSOLUTERLY SURE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING. Defaults to enabledFlagValue + 100

4.5.11.4 ME Attributes

None.

4.5.11.5 Persistence

SSBClient correctly persists which slots are blocked, so when you load the mission, they will assume the same status as the point in time when the mission was saved. This includes slots blocked due to loss of aircraft.

4.5.11.6 API

4.5.11.6.1 [closeAirfieldNamed\(name\)](#)

A closed airfield will not permit any player groups that start from there to be entered (slots are blocked), no matter who the airfield belongs to. This is commonly used to close FARPS that are still hidden, or to close contested airfields. Name is the name of the FARP or airfield, and must match exactly

4.5.11.6.2 [openAirFieldNamed\(name\)](#)

You only need to open an airfield if it was previously closed, meaning that initially, all airfields are open. Name is the name of the FARP or airfield and must match exactly

4.5.11.6.3 [unbindGroup\(groupName\)](#)

Due to the way that ssbClient automatically matches FARPs/airfields to groups, it may become desirable to allow a player group to spawn in an enemy controlled airfield, FARP or even ship (or ground-start close to it). Usually, SSBClient prevents you from doing so, because it sees the closest airfield as enemy controlled. You can 'unbind' the group from any airfield, *making it always available to start*, no matter who owns the closest airfield (single-use restrictions may still apply, though).

groupName is the name of the group that is to be unbound

[4.5.11.6.4 bindGroupToAirfield\(groupName, airfieldName\)](#)

You can bind groups to other airfields (i.e. different to those that SSB binds them to during start-up). Note that this does not move the aircraft to the newly bound airfield. It merely binds the availability of that group to the ownership of the newly bound airfield. Use this for special effects like allowing aircraft to become available on airfield B depending on the ownership of airfield A (by binding the group located at B to airfield A).

groupName is the name of the group, airfieldName that of the new airfield to bind slot accessibility to. Both must match exactly.

[4.5.11.6.5 openSlotForCrashedGroupNamed\(gName\)](#)

You can manually ‘force’ re-opening of a group after a crash by invoking this method. gName must match exactly the name of the group. If the group wasn’t blocked, this call is ignored.

4.5.11.7 Using the module

Include the cfxSSBClient source into a DOSCRIPT Action at the start of the mission

To change any configuration settings, add a SSBClientConfig zone with the relevant attributes.

4.5.12 ssbSingleUse (tbc)

4.5.12.1 Description

4.5.12.2 Dependencies

4.5.12.3 Module Configuration

4.5.12.4 ME Attributes

4.5.12.5 API

4.5.12.6 Using the module

Remember to turn off kickReset

4.5.13 unGrief (enforce PVP/PVE mode, no friendly kills)

Griefer

A “griefer” or bad faith player is a player in a multiplayer video game who deliberately irritates and harasses other players within the game (trolling), by using aspects of the game in unintended ways, such as destroying something another player made or built. A griefer derives pleasure primarily, or exclusively, from the act of annoying other users, and as such, is a particular nuisance in online gaming communities.

4.5.13.1 Description

unGrief is a module that aims to discourage friendly kills in multi-player missions, the actions of so-called ‘griefers’, i.e. asocial elements that get a rise out intentionally disrupting the game with friendly fire. When friendly kills are detected, the player responsible for the kill is warned, and if they continue their actions, their plane is destroyed. If they continue to kill their own side, their plane can be immediately destroyed/disabled when they try to occupy a slot during that same mission (everything is forgotten when the mission ends)

unGrief works out-of-the-box.

PLAYER-LEVEL ENFORCEMENT

unGrief records infringing players by keeping their log-in Name (player handle) on a black-list, so it tracks a player even if they switch planes, sides, or log out and then log back on - as long as they do not switch their login name, unGrief recognizes and remembers them. That being said, unGrief does not persist offenders after the mission ends, so when a mission is re-started, earlier misdeeds are forgiven and forgotten.

PvE-RULES (NO PVP ALLOWED)

unGrief allows you to enforce a PvE-only play style. In PvE, all player versus player kills are forbidden and count like killing a friendly. To use unGrief to

Name	Value	
pve	yes	
ignoreAI	yes	

simply disallow player-player killing, use the setup shown on the right.

PvP ZONES IN PvE MISSIONS

For servers, it may make sense to set PvE rules, and still allow PVP in designated areas. unGrief has a very simple way of allowing this: simply add a zone with an ‘pvp’ attribute, and PVP is allowed inside that zone. Note that all other unGrief options are still in effect: blue on blue or red-on-red kills are still not allowed. Multiple PvP zones per map are allowed.

STRICT AND RELAXED PVP RULES

To determine if a PVP kill is legal, the plane’s positions **at the moment of the kill** are relevant. Usually, if a player unit is killed by another player while it resides inside a PvP

zone, the kill is legal even if the killing plane has fired from outside the zone. This is called ‘relaxed’ PvP rules, and it allows players to kill planes inside a PvP zone without entering it themselves.

To prevent ‘safe snipers’ loitering just outside a PvP zone and kill players inside, you can opt to turn on ‘strict’ PvP rules per zone, in which case both planes must be inside the PvP zone at the moment of the kill. If either plane is outside, the kill is illegal.

If, a player unit is shot down outside a PvP zone, it’s always an illegal kill - even if the shooting plane is inside a PvP zone. Therefore, be wary when shooting at players that are running from you towards safety, lest they reach safety and you inadvertently score an illegal kill.

IGNORE AI (NON-PLAYER UNIT) KILLS

unGrief can ignore all Player-AI kills. This is useful when you want to use unGrief to enforce PvE rules, but relax AI (non-player unit) killing.

GRACE KILLS

unGrief grants a number of kills per player before it retaliates for the first time. After that limit of ‘free’ friendly kills is used up, each friendly kill will have the player’s plane destroyed or the player kicked (when using SSB).

RETRIBUTION: BOOM vs SSB

unGrief knows two methods of retribution:

- ‘boom’ – to quote an ancient game: you are set up the bomb. The player’s plane is destroyed with an explosion. This also works in single-player mode (playtesting)
- SSB – the script signals SSB that the player’s plane is to be kicked. This requires that the mission is run as multiplayer, and SSB is installed on the server

A WRATHFUL SCRIPT

unGrief can be set to be wrathful towards repeat offenders: the first time that a player is killed by unGrief for a griefing transgression, they may re-slot and continue. If they should transgress again by killing friendly units, unGrief becomes wrathful against them, and destroy their plane as soon as they re-slot. Every time. Until the mission ends. No exceptions. For though shalt tremble before the mighty unGrief until the day is done and everything complete!

SIDE EFFECTS

Be advised that there are situations and mission set-ups where accidental blue-on-blue or red-on-red kills can happen, especially when using AI crew (Petr, George) or cluster munitions in close vicinity to your own troops. Helicopter pilots also be careful when dropping off or picking up Infantry, for accidentally squishing your own troops can trigger swift retribution from a wrathful unGrief script.

LIMITATIONS

If a transgressing player switches out of the airframe that is used for the kill before the kill registers (a kill can take some time to register when the unit ‘cooks off’), they escape the consequences.

4.5.13.2 Dependencies

unGrief requires dcsCommon and cfxZones.

4.5.13.3 Module Configuration

unGrief uses a configuration zone for setting up all options. To configure this module via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “unGriefConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	A value of “true” turns on debugging messages. Default is “false”
graceKills	Number of own faction (“friendly”) kills that are permissible before unGrief retaliates. Set to 0 to disallow (and immediately punish) any friendly kills. Default is 1
retaliation	How unGrief retaliates towards the player when their graceKills are exceeded. The following options are supported: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ‘boom’ Place a small explosive inside the plane, grin, ignite.• ‘ssb’ Use server-side SSB to kick the player from the plane Default is ‘boom’
wrathful	Sometimes griefers are slow learners. When set to true, unGrief disallows a repeat offender to re-slot after their second transgression. Their plane is destroyed every time they try to slot until the mission ends.
pve pveOnly	When set to true, PVE rules are in force for this mission. Player versus Player kills outside of (optional) PVP zones count like friendly kills. Defaults to FALSE (PVP killing is allowed across the map)
ignoreAI	Ignores friendly kills if the killed unit was AI-controlled (i.e. not a player unit). Useful in conjunction with PVE rules. Defaults to false.
warnings	When set to true, players entering and leaving a PvP zone receive a notification. Only works when PvE is set to true Defaults to true

4.5.13.4 ME Attributes

unGrief uses config zones for all settings. In PVE mode, unGrief can use PVP zones as follows:

Name	Description
pvp	The mere presence of this attribute marks this zone as a PVP combat zone. Killing players of another faction in this zone is legal. Same-faction kills are still illegal and will be punished.
strict	When set to true enforces 'strict' pvp rules, requiring both planes be inside the PvP zone at the time of the kill. When false, only the killed player plane must be inside the PvP zone. Defaults to false

4.5.13.5 API

tbc

4.5.13.6 Using the module

Include the unGrief source into a DOSCRIPT Action at the start of the mission

Optionally, add a config zone to set module-global options.

When using SSB as retaliation for griefing behavior, remember that this only works in MP mode, and requires the SSB script be installed on the server.

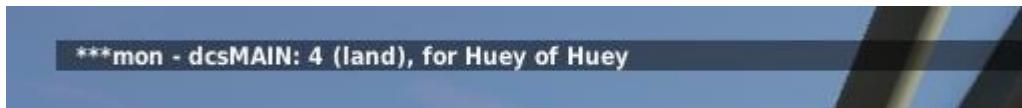
To allow PVP combat on a PvE server, designate PvP zones with trigger zones, and add a pvp attribute to those zones.

4.5.14 cfxMon Development Tool (Lua Only)

4.5.14.1 Description

cfxMon is an event monitor for mission designers who are developing Lua-based scripts and want to visualize/analyze which events and in what order events are generated during a mission. cfxMon has built-in support for most DML modules and automatic installs its own callbacks for the modules it finds on start-up.

Each time an event is generated, it is logged to the screen, and context added when available. For example, if DCS generates the world event 4, this is what cfxMon could put to the screen:



In above example, the event ID is 4, and cfxMon translates that to “land” automatically. It was invoked by unit “Huey” of the group “Huey”.

You can selectively turn logging on and off for any DML module through a config zone.

4.5.14.2 Dependencies

cfxMon requires dcsCommon and cfxZones.

Optional: all other DML modules

4.5.14.3 Module Configuration

cfxMon uses a configuration zone that allows you to enable/disable specific event monitoring. To use a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “monConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone. Adding “no” or “false” turns off that monitoring ability. All values default to true:

Name	Description
dcsCommon	Log all DCS world events
cfxPlayer	Log DML Player events. Only monitors these events if cfxPlayer module is present, disabled otherwise
cfxGroundTroops	Log DML Ground Troops events. Only monitors these events if cfxGroundTroops module is present, disabled otherwise
cfxObjectDestructDetector	Log DML object destruct events. Only monitors these events if cfxObjectDestructDetector module is present, disabled otherwise
cfxSpawnZones	Log DML spawn zone events. Only monitors these events if cfxSpawnZones module is present, disabled otherwise
(others)	(to follow)
delay	Time (in seconds) that a log is displayed on the screen. Defaults to 30. Set it to a shorter time (and use above

Name	Description
	attributes to turn off events) when you are getting flooded with events and the screen can't keep up with showing them.

4.5.14.4 ME Attributes

None.

4.5.14.5 API

None.

4.5.14.6 Using the module

Include the cfxMon source into a DOSCRIPT Action at the start of the mission

To change any configuration settings, add a monConfig zone with the relevant attributes.

4.5.15 Module Name

4.5.15.1 Description

4.5.15.2 Dependencies

4.5.15.3 Module Configuration

4.5.15.4 ME Attributes

4.5.15.5 API

4.5.15.6 Using the module

4.6 Server-based modules

Some modules in DML interface with scripts installed on the server side of DCS, meaning that these modules usually only work when such a mission is run as multi-player. For example, the module “ssbClient” interfaces with a popular server script (Ciribob’s “simple slot block”, “SSB”). If that SSB script is not installed on the hosting server, or the mission is run in single-player mode (i.e. it’s not run un a server), the mission module (ssbClient) will simply have no effect.

This section of the documentation describes the server module: what it does, and how it communicates with a mission

4.6.1 smrGUI

4.6.1.1 *Description*

This tiny server modules allows a mission to re-start the mission simply by setting a flag to the value larger than 0

This is helpful for mission designers who incorporate the mission’s version into the name (e.g. “my cool mission 1.2.7.miz”) because a mission currently cannot easily restart itself. By installing the server module, a mission merely needs to change a flag, and the server module re-starts the mission.

This is also helpful during debugging sessions when you quickly want to re-start the mission without having to go through a mission editor cycle: Simply use the debugger (or some ME-built trigger) to trigger the restart.

4.6.1.2 *Mission Interaction*

smr watches the mission’s flag space and reacts to changes in the following flags:

Flag	Description
simpleMissionRestart	When this flag has a value other than 0, smrGUI restarts the mission.

4.6.1.3 *Using the module*

The module must be installed in */Saved Games/DCS/Scripts/Hooks

4.7 Using Foundation (Lua Only)

4.7.1 dcsCommon (Lua only)

4.7.1.1 Description / Using dcsCommon

dcsCommon is the ‘bedrock’ module. All other modules require its presence. This module provides:

- A replacement for DCS’s world event notifier that is more modular and flexible
- A library of often-used methods to more easily perform common tasks (i.e. a library that any designer would have to write anyway and for which there is little excuse for ED not to have provided)

Including it into a mission does not induce any performance penalties, as its methods are all passive, so it can be added to any mission, including those that utilize other libraries such as MIST or MOOSE.

dcsCommon provides a collection of methods that are described in the API

Event Handling

dcsCommon provides a convenient, more flexible event handler for mission designers. Instead of simply calling your code when something happens, invocation is done in multiple, conditional stages. You can optionally provide a callback for each stage and thus have a more fine-grained control over what happens, and separate out code blocks

When you subscribe to dcsCommon’s event handler, you can pass up to four different callback methods:

```
addEventHandler(f, pre, post, rejected)
```

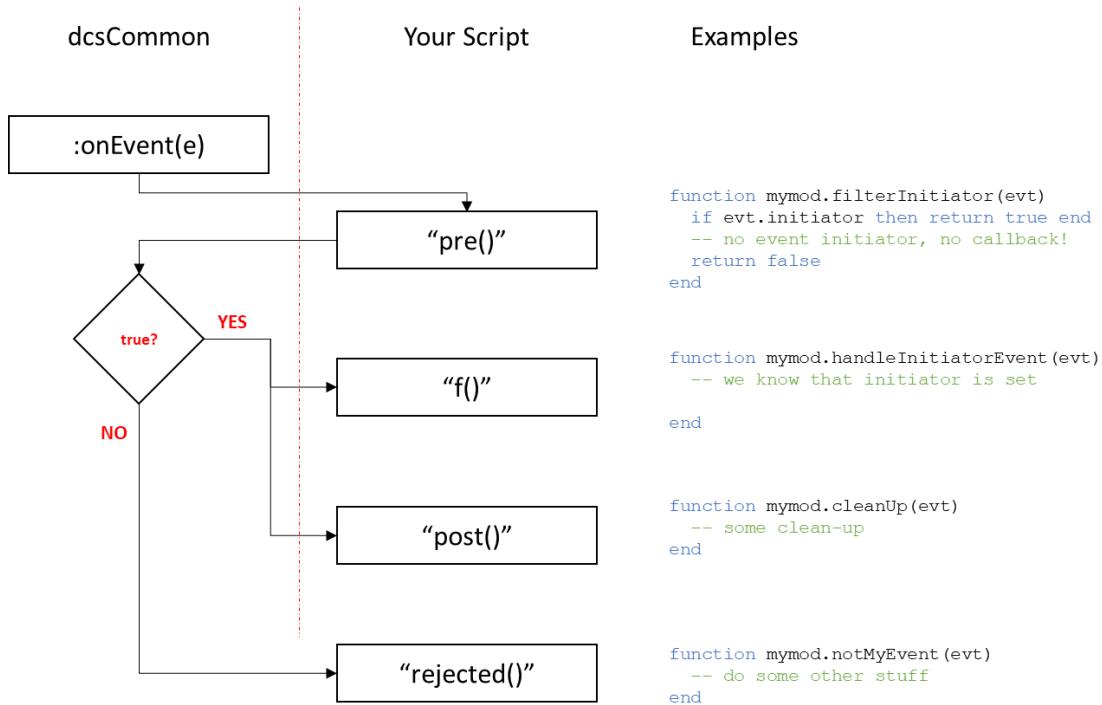
with

- `f` being the actual event handler that is to be invoked when `pre` returns true
- `pre` is the optional pre-processor that determines if `f` should be invoked. Return true to have `f` invoked.
- `post` is the optional post-processor that is only invoked if `f` was invoked
- `rejected` is the optional reject-processor if `pre` returned false

All callbacks have the same prototype

```
function mymodule.someName(event)
```

and `event` containing the event table as passed from DCS.



dcsCommon provides another, streamlined version that allows the author to pre-select the events they want to be invoked for:

```
addEventHandlerForEventTypes(f, evTypes, post, rejected)
```

which essentially replaces pre with an array of numbers (the event IDs) in evTypes that list the IDs that you want f to be invoked for:

As with addEventHandler,

- post is an optional post processor invoked after f
- rejected is an optional method that is invoked when evTypes does not contain the current event ID

String / Table Handling

dcsCommon implements a number of convenient methods to enumerate tables (convert them to arrays), choosing random elements and similar.

Also present are often-used methods for string manipulation, like splitting strings into arrays (for example a string containing a comma separated list of units into an array), trimming strings (removing leading and trailing blanks), testing if a string starts with or ends with a string, and remove that string etc.

Vector math

Don't be afraid of that name – it's merely a collection of methods that makes it easy to deal with locations (points) and directions (both are called vectors in mathematics). These methods allow you to determine locations, move one point gradually towards another etc.

Miscellaneous

The grab bag of function provides convenience access to mission designers that don't fit a particular niche, but are still common fodder: getting the bearing to a point, calculating closing distance, getting the altitude of a unit, measuring the distance between two points etc. All here for convenience.

Group/Unit handling

These are convenience methods to quickly access units in groups, find groups close to points, and get information about individual units like their heading, speed etc.

Spawning Groups

Spawning units in DCS is a process that involves multiple steps:

- create a group data table. This is the container for all units. A group always contains units of the same category: ground, ship, aircraft, helicopters. Air units have to always be the same type (e.g. all have to be A-10A or all have to be UH-1), while ground and water groups can mix types (e.g. Hummer and Leopard II), but all have to be in the same category (ground). Paths / Routes and orders are always given on the group level). All groups must be named, and a group name must be unique across all other groups in the mission.
- Provide the “type string” information that tells the game which object model to use
- create path and order data tables for the group, and add them to the group
- create unit data tables for each unit of a group and add them to the group. Unit-individual properties are location, heading and name. Names must be unique across all units in the mission.
- air units are similar to ground units and may require you to add additional data tables like loadout and callsigns
- once the group’s data table is complete, spawn the group in DCS. It is only at this point where you specify which coalition the units belong to, which is determined by the country code.

dcsCommon provides a number of convenience methods that can streamline this process and even arrange the groups in ‘formations’. To simply spawn a single unit with a type string of “Soldier M4” at a certain location, with a set heading and no orders, you can use the method `createSingleUnitGroup()`. That method will create the group and unit data tables for you. You then invoke `coalition.addGroup()` with that group data to spawn the unit/group on the map:

```
-- create group data
local theGroupData = dcsCommon.createSingleUnitGroup("test123",
"Soldier M4", x, z, 270)
-- spawn in world
local theGroup = coalition.addGroup(1, groundCat, theGroupData )
```

A more advanced sibling `createGroundGroupWithUnits()` can arrange a number of units (passed as an type string array) into a formation:

```
-- create group data from multiple unit type strings
local theGroupData = createGroundGroupWithUnits("abc4", {"Soldier
M4", "Soldier M4", "Soldier M4"}, 20, 3, "circle_out", 0)
-- spawn in world
local theGroup = coalition.addGroup(1, groundCat, theGroupData )
```

Spawning Static Objects, linked objects

Spawning static objects follows similar rules, except that you can omit the group and spawn directly.

dcsCommon supports spawning linked objects, i.e. objects that move with ships. Due to the complexity involved with offsets and rotation, it is strongly recommended to place linked objects in ME using objectSpawnZones instead of directly invoking methods from dcsCommon, as it takes significantly less effort, works, and supports ME's GUI.

Airbase / FARP / Ship handling

dcsCommon provides mission designers with several convenience methods to find and filter airbases based on

- parts of their name (e.g. 'senaki' will return Senaki Kolkhi)
- their type (aerodrome, FARP or ship)
- their coalition
- closest distance to points or units

There are also convenience accessors to get parking slots on airfields. There are also methods to create waypoints involving airfields for aircraft units (take-off, overhead, landing)

4.7.1.2 API

dcsCommon's entire (large) API is described in its own chapter → dcsCommon API

4.7.1.3 Dependencies

None

4.7.1.4 Module Configuration

None

4.7.1.5 ME Attributes

dcsCommon has no ME interface

4.7.2 cfxPlayer (Lua Only)

cfxPlayer is a collection of methods that mainly simplify tasks revolving **around player-controlled units and groups with player-controlled units**.

IMPORTANT

cfxPlayer differentiates between players and the units these players occupy, and they are separate entities with different life cycles. Units/groups can appear multiple times over the course of a mission, while players can only appear, and will stay until the end of the mission. Player „A“ always is player „A“, no matter which side or unit they control.

Similarly, cfxPlayer does not care who controls a player unit: if networked player “netA” first controls unit “myUnit”, then changes to a different unit, and later a networked player “netB” controls “myUnit”, to cfxPlayer they both are “myUnit”, no matter who controls it - even if that unit respawned multiple times.

cfxPlayer is useful for mission designers who create scripts that offer functionality based on individual players (e.g. score keeping, UI). Note also that many of DML’s higher-level modules require cfxPlayer.

4.7.2.1 Description / Using cfxPlayer

Mission designers rarely invoke cfxPlayer methods directly. Instead, their main entry points are

- **Player event callback**

Whenever something happens that changes the context of a player-controlled unit or group from a game’s perspective, cfxPlayer invokes callbacks with a description of the event. Mission designers subscribe to these events by providing a simple callback to

```
cfxPlayer.addMonitor(callback, events)
```

- **Current player info DB**

cfxPlayer maintains an up-to-date DB of all current player-controlled units and groups that contain player-controlled units. Scripts can access this DB for their own requirements

- **Current player group DB**

cfxPlayer maintains an up-to-date dictionary of all current groups that contain player-controlled units

- **Current player DB**

cfxPlayer maintains an up-to-date dictionary of all currently connected players and the names of the unit they occupy (or “<none>” if they multicrew in a slot different from pilot)

- **(occasionally) Convenience accessors to player information**

Occasionally, you may want to access information about a player-controlled unit, like their current airframe, the first player-controlled unit in a group, or the player-

controlled unit's position etc. cfxPlayer provides a number of convenience accessors for this.

cfxPlayer regularly checks the status of all players, player-controlled units, and groups that contain player units, tracks their current status, and invokes callbacks whenever it detects a change.

The Player Unit/Group DBs

cfxPlayer provides globals (and accessor) that contain up-to-the-second current information about all player-controlled units, and groups with player-controlled units in the game. When you access these DBs it is important that you **do not make any changes** to the data, or cfxPlayer may return unpredictable results

The following DBs are available for mission designers:

- `cfxPlayer.playerDB`
somewhat misleadingly named, this contains information of all currently player-controlled **units**
- `cfxPlayerGroups`
this **global** is a DB that tracks all groups that contain at least one player-controlled unit
- `cfxPlayer.netPlayers`
a dictionary with player names as keys, and the unit names of the units they occupy as values. **WARNING:** multi-crew units only show the pilot, so any **crew members** **do not show** up as players! Updated once a second

Each entry to the playerDB is a table with the following attributes:

- `name`
Name of the **player's unit**. THIS IS NOT THE PLAYER'S NAME
- `unit`
the unit that the player controls
- `unitName`
the name of the unit that the player controls. Same as `name`
- `group`
the group that the player's unit belongs to
- `groupName`
the name of the group that the player's unit belongs to
- `coalition`
the coalition that the player's unit is aligned with

Player Event Callbacks

When a script subscribes to cfxPlayer's event notifier, it passes a method that matches the following profile:

```
myPlayerEventCallback(eventType, description, info, data)
```

with

- `eventType` being a string containing the event category, e.g. 'new'.
- `description` being a human-readable string describing the event that can be easily dumped to log or displayed on-screen
- `info` being the relevant record table from the player unit DB
- `data` being a table containing additional information, dependent on the event

There is an important difference between how cfxPlayer *player* events versus *unit/group* events are generated: players can only appear as new once, and won't disappear over the course of the mission. Units and groups can appear and disappear as they are occupied by player. This means, that there is exactly one newPlayer event for each player, and no event for players leaving. Even if a player disconnects from the server, cfxPlayer keeps their record until the end of the mission. Conversely, units and groups can appear and disappear for the same and other players multiple times while the mission is running.

cfxPlayer Status Change Event Types

cfxPlayer invokes any subscribed callbacks with the following event types

- “`new`”
Player's *unit* did not exist in DB before and now has appeared for the first time. Note that player units spawn only when they are inhabited.
Note that cfxPlayer tracks player units, not the player who controls them

`playerInfo` contains a record of the player's unit
`data` is an empty table

- “`side`”
The player's unit has changed sides (e.g. RED to BLUE)

NOTE:

This can't happen, because currently units can't change sides. This event is provided in case this possibility appears in DCS

`playerInfo` contains a record of the player's unit
`data` contains the two attributes `old` and `new` with the old and new coalition values, respectively

- “group”

Player’s unit has changed to a different group. This event has the same caveats as ‘side’, as usually, a unit can’t change groups, and cfxPlayer tracks player units, not the player who controls the unit. Present in case DCS introduces that ability for units

`playerInfo` contains a record of the player’s unit

`data` contains the two attributes `old` and `new` with the old and new coalition values, respectively

- “unit”

unit is inhabited by a different player. This event currently isn’t detected, since cfxPlayer tracks player units, not individual players. It’s present for later extensions.

`playerInfo` contains a record of the player’s unit

`data` contains the two attributes `oldUnitName` and `new` with the old unit’s name (not unit, as it may no longer exist) and new unit, respectively

- “leave”

A formerly player-controlled unit has disappeared from the game

`playerInfo` contains a record of the player’s unit. Note that while the unit itself is not longer valid, the unit’s name is still retained correctly

`data` contains an empty table

- “newGroup”

A new group containing a player-controlled unit has appeared.

`playerInfo` is nil

`data` contains a table with the attributes: `group` (the group that appeared), `name` (the group’s name), `primeUnit` (the first unit in that group that is player-controlled), `primeUnitName` (the name of that unit), and `id` (the group’s ID)

- “removeGroup”

A group that formerly contained player-controlled units either no longer contains any player-controlled crafts any more, or has disappeared entirely

`playerInfo` is nil

`data` contains a table with the attributes: `group` (the group that appeared), `name` (the group’s name), `primeUnit` (the first unit in that group that is player-controlled), `primeUnitName` (the name of that unit), and `id` (the group’s ID)

`data` contains the group that no longer contains player-controlled units. This group may no longer be valid

- “newPlayer”

A new player has appeared. Since player detection is bound to them occupying the pilot slot of any plane, including multicrew, new players are detected only when they enter a pilot slot in a unit. Once detected, a player will remain in the DB until the end of the mission, even if they disconnect

`playerInfo` is nil

`data` contains a table with the attributes: `playerName` (the name of the player that appeared), `newUnitName` (the name of the unit the player is controlling as pilot)

- “**changePlayer**”

A player has changed to a different unit, or left the unit they formerly occupied.

`playerInfo` is nil

`data` contains a table with the attributes: `playerName` (the name of the player that has changed units), `newUnitName` (the name of the unit the player is controlling as pilot, or “<none>” if no unit), `oldUnitName` (the name of the unit the player has left, or “<none>” if they didn’t control a unit before)

Note:

“changePlayer” can be **invoked twice**: once for leaving the old plane (without entering a new one), and once for entering the new plane. In the former case (player left unit), `newUnitName` is ‘<none>’.

From above, the events that currently are relevant for mission designers are

- for units: `new` and `leave`
- for groups: `newGroup` and `removeGroup`
- for players: `newPlayer` and `changePlayer`

Example Sequence Of Events

To better illustrate how cfxPlayer works, let’s look at what may happen in a game, and what events will be invoked coded by color for `group`, `unit` and `player`:

1. Game starts

- No event

2. Player A chooses side RED

- No event

3. Player A occupies “Frogger A” that is part of group “Redfrogs”

- “`new`” event for unit “Frogger A”
- “`newGroup`” event for group “Redfrogs”
- “`newPlayer`” event for “A”

4. Player A changes to unit “Fulcrum B”, part of “Redcalf” group

- “`new`” event for unit “Fulcrum B”
- “`leave`” event for unit “Frogger A”
- “`newGroup`” event for group “Redcalf”
- “`removeGroup`” event for group “Redfrogs”
- “`changePlayer`” event for player A

5. Player A changes to BLUE side while occupying RED unit

- “`leave`” event for unit “Fulcrum A”
- “`removeGroup`” event for group “Redcalf”

6. Player A chooses unit “Hogger” in group “Winged Pigs”

- “`new`” event for unit “Hogger”

- “newGroup” event for group “Winged Pigs”
 - “changePlayer” event for player A
7. Player **crashes** “Hogger”
- “leave” event for “Hogger”
 - “removeGroup” event for “Winged Pigs”
8. Player enters unit “Bug’s Bunny” of group “Hornets”
- “new” event for unit “Bug’s Bunny”
 - “newGroup” event for group “Hornets”
 - “changePlayer” event for player A
9. Player **ejects** from unit “Bug’s Bunny”
- “removeGroup” event for group “Hornets”
10. Now **derelict** plane “Bug’s Bunny” **crashes**
- “leave” event for unit “Bug’s Bunny” (yeah, strange)
11. Player A enters unit “A new Hopper” in group “Hueys”
- “new” event for unit “A new Hopper”
 - “newGroup” event for group “Hueys”
 - “changePlayer” event for player A

4.7.2.2 API

The entire API for cfxPlayer is described in → cfxPlayer API

4.7.2.3 Dependencies

Required Modules

- dcsCommon must be loaded

4.7.2.4 Module Configuration

- cfxPlayer.verbose – when true, events are printed to screen when they happen

4.7.2.5 ME Attributes

cfxPlayer does not use ME Attributes

4.7.2.6 Using the module

Include cfxPlayer source into a DOSCRIPT Action at the start of the mission

4.7.3 cfxZones (Lua Only)

cfxZones is one of the most fundamental modules that DML is built upon, and it provides most of the heavy-lifting for DML's ME integration. This module provides a replacement for DCS's built-in Trigger Zones and allows mission designers to enhance and expand on them (if they use DML's zones instead of those provided by DCS).

IMPORTANT

Although most of the information contained in this section is of technical nature and accessible only via Lua, I recommend that you at least read the part about **Zone Attributes** and **Zone Names**, as they are used extensively from within ME

4.7.3.1 Description

cfxZones both provides the essential infrastructure for managing zones, and provides a wealth of zone-based methods for creating, modifying, testing and managing zones.

At the start of a mission, cfxZones reads all zones that designers previously set up in ME, and provides its own wrapper. Mission designers should always use these zone wrappers instead of using ME's Trigger Zones directly.

Zone Attributes

cfxZones provides **strong support for ME's zone attributes** (sometimes also called 'properties'), that designers can add, modify, and remove from inside ME. Zone attributes are text-based key-value pairs, and cfxZones allows direct access to these properties, as well as capabilities to search and collect zones based on attributes.

Many modules further up in the library utilize these abilities to implement their function simply by looking for the presence of an attribute and then control their functionality by from additional information taken from other attributes.

This simple mechanism allows designers to combine ("stack") functionality of multiple modules into a single ME Zone: the example on the right contains different properties that are used by different modules:

- the "**CSARBASE**" attribute indicates to the *CSARManager* module that the area of this zone is a legal area for helicopters performing a CSAR mission to return rescued personnel to
- the "**FARP**" attribute indicates to *FARPZones* that the zone is a conquerable FARP (with additional properties defining how that FARP defends itself for each side)



- the “**pilotsafe**” attribute signals to the *limitedAirframes* module that air frames that are landed inside this zone can be safely exited (the player can change to a different airframe/slot) without losing a pilot (provided, of course, that the zone is owned by the correct side).

Please read the relevant sections of this documentation to learn more about those modules and which zone properties they use

We recommend you adopt similar schemes for your own extensions, as zone properties are easy to maintain in ME.

Zone Names

Of course, cfxZones also supports access to zones by their name, or part of their name. Again, some modules in the library utilize zone names for deriving functionality. Be advised that using a name to derive functionality is an inferior method compared to properties. When it is used in DML modules, it is usually to identify fixed names, and they are used to store configuration information for the module, rather than mission-relevant information.

NOTE:

Please be advised, that cfxZones treats zone names case **IN**sensitive! If you have two or more zones in your mission that differ in name only by their upper/lower case spelling, you will lose access to all of them except one. Ensure that you give unique names to all your zones in ME.

Standard Zone Attributes

All cfxZones have at least the following properties:

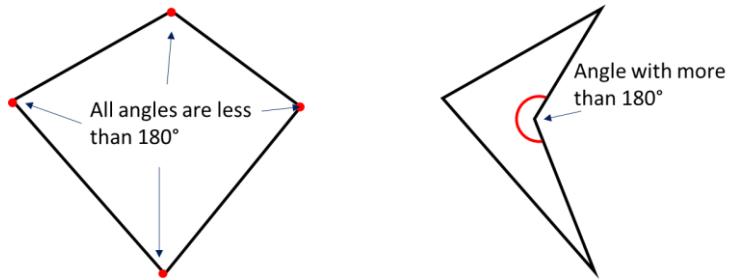
- **point**
A vector (x, 0, z) that represents the zone’s ‘main’ (central) point on the map. Y (height) is always zero.
Never access this property directly! cfxZone’s main accessor for a cfxZones’s point is cfxZones.getPoint() which will return the zone’s current location, updated in case the zone is a moving zone. The point returned is a copy of the zone’s main point, altering it will not change the zone’s position.
- **isPoly**
A Boolean that is false if the zone is set up as a circle in ME, true otherwise.
- **isCircle**
A Boolean that is true if the zone is set up as a circle in ME, false otherwise.
- **radius**
The radius of the zone, as defined in ME. Note that poly zones also have a radius. Strange, but they do.

Circular and Quad Zones: compatibility and restrictions

cfxZone’s point testing methods (e.g. `isPointInsideZone()`) are compatible with ME’s

Quad zones. However, note that currently, quad zone testing may fail for some quad zone shapes. cfxZones uses a fast point inside polygon testing algorithm that assumes convex polygons (which most quad zones are, since a polygon in ME currently is limited to four corners and no crossing lines).

A convex shape is a shape where all angles seen from inside the shape must have an angle of 180 degrees or less:



If your quad zone has a non-convex (concave) shape (as pictured above on the right), some inside testing can fail for that zone.

Moving Zones / Linked Zones

cfxZones supports simple methods to link zones to the movement of units. If you add a `linkedUnit` property to a unit in ME, the value of that property determines (by name) the unit that this zone is linked to. Note that the unit to link to must exist and the name must match exactly, or the zone is immediately unlinked and won't link even if a unit of that name is later created.

There are multiple ways that a zone follows a unit:

- *Centered*
The zone's center is placed on the unit's position (default). This way the zone's center always moves with the unit. Even if you initially create the zone some distance away from the unit to follow, the zone will always be placed directly above the linked unit.
- *Offset*
The zone always keeps the same displacement relative to the unit, as set up in ME during mission creation. If the mission starts with such a moving zone places 300 meters southeast of the linked unit, cfxZones always updates the zone to remain 300 meters southeast of the unit even if the unit moves to a different location.
To make a zone keep its offset relative to the unit it is linked to, use ME to add the property `useOffset` with a value of `yes` or `true` to the zone
Note that the linked unit's orientation does not influence the placement of the zone. If the linked unit turns by some 180 degrees, the zone will still be placed 300 meters southeast of the unit (and not, as some might have expected, 300 meters to the northwest: the unit moves relative to the unit's location, not the unit's heading).

Note also that you can create zones and link them via script using the API. This means that you can use scripts to late-link (i.e. after the mission starts) units and zones that did not exist at the beginning of the mission.

4.7.3.2 Dependencies

cfxZones requires dcsCommon to be loaded

4.7.3.3 Module Configuration

cfxZones does not require to be configured

4.7.3.4 API

Please see the dedicated chapter → cfxZones API for more information

4.7.3.5 ME Attributes

4.7.3.6 Using the module

Include the cfxZones source into a DOSCRIPT Action at the start of the mission

4.7.4 cfxCommander (Lua Only)

cfxCommander is mainly a middleware module that mission designers use to facilitate issuing orders to ground troops. In missions, orders are usually given in a sequence, and one of cfxCommander's main features (besides simplifying order construction) is the ability to schedule issuing orders, so mission designers can give a string of orders: "stop all vehicles now, then attack this enemy in 10 seconds"

Another central ability of cfxCommander revolves around pathing: this module interacts with 'pathing' zones that mission designers can place on the map. These zones give hints to cfxCommander how to utilize roads.

cfxCommander is one of the central modules for cfxGroundTroops

4.7.4.1 *Description*

cfxCommander is mainly used by other modules, and by mission designers that require to issue move orders to ground units via scripts utilizing cfxCommander's API.

Configuration Zone

cfxCommander's main options can be configured using a simple Trigger Zone. See → Module Configuration, below

Pathing via roads

cfxCommander has built-in abilities to create path orders for groups from one point on the map to another, and can use or disregard roads based on the module's configuration, specially placed 'pathing zones' and the API:

- *API*
When requesting a path for a group's move order via API, the mission designer can specify if roads should be followed
- *Pathing Zones*
Mission designers can place Trigger Zones in ME with a 'pathing' attribute that locally overrides any pathing as requested from the API. This allows mission designers to locally turn off road pathing when the area's road network is too complex
- *Configuration*
Mission designers can place a special zone using ME that sets up global pathing (i.e. overrides any pathing zones and API).

Issuing Orders in cfxCommander

Ordering troops in DCS is a somewhat involved process, and cfxCommander can only simplify the process somewhat. DCS itself differentiates between "Tasks", "Commands" and "Options".

cfxCommander somewhat unifies this, offering an API that abstracts this to "orders" that are to be carried out by the group. The underlying code then resolves this to tasks, commands and options – whatever may apply. Additionally, cfxCommander allows you to schedule the execution of your orders. This is particularly important for two reasons:

- Ordering troops to do something immediately after they have been spawned may crash DCS, so you need to schedule your first orders a few seconds in the future
- Orders usually come as a sequence: first do this, then do that. cfxCommander recognizes this requirement and makes it easy to issue a sequence of orders that then are scheduled in the future.

cfxCommander has an API that allows mission designers to build and schedule their own tasks, options, or commands. Using that API withing mission code is discouraged; it's far better to emulate cfxCommander to build read-made 'orders' as a method, and then use that to issue orders. The 'orders' that cfxCommander currently support is limited, but usually sufficient for most missions

- Order a group to move to a location
- Order a group to stop
- Have a group transmit on the radio (once or continuous)
- Have a group stop transmitting

Formations

when moving, ground troops in DCS can assume some pre-determined formations. These are distinct from formations they can be assembled in during spawning (see some modules later). Since cfxCommander places heavy emphasis on correct pathing, and DCS uses a special case of formations to control road pathing, formations are only available with some of the API, and may even be overridden then.

DCS has defined the following formations for ground units

- Off Road
- On Road
- Cone
- Rank
- Diamond
- Vee
- EchelonR
- EchelonL

4.7.4.2 Dependencies

cfxCommander requires dcsCommon and cfxZones

4.7.4.3 Module Configuration

cfxCommander can use a configuration zone for setting up main options. To configure cfxCommander via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it "CommanderConfig" (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	A value of “true” turns on debugging messages. Default is “false”
forceOffRoad	if set to “true”, vehicles path will generally follow roads, but may drive offroad (they follow a list of vertex points generated from the road, but often do not drive in the road itself). Default is “false”
noRoadsAtAll	Completely turns off road following when set to “true”. Ground units path directly to the destination, using as few straight lines as possible. If set to true, this overrides any setting for “forceOffRoad”. Default is “false”

4.7.4.4 API

Low-Level

The low-level API methods are for assembling and setting DCS-Level order fragments, like *Options*, *Tasks* and *Commands*

Options

Options are set as key, value pairs as described in the DCS API

4.7.4.4.1 `scheduleOptionForGroup(group, key, value, delay)`

Sets a group’s key, value pair as described in delay seconds. Default for delay is 0.1 seconds

Commands

Commands in DCS terms are immediate actions like setting frequency or starting/stopping a transmission. From a coding standpoint, commands set a group’s state. Commands can be assembled into a block, and then issued as a whole. The process of issuing commands is as follows:

- create a command data table that holds all commands to issue for a group
- create command(s)
- add command(s) to the command data table
- schedule execution of all commands in the data table

4.7.4.4.2 `createSetFrequencyCommand(freq, modulator)`

returns a command for setting the frequency

4.7.4.4.3 `createTransmissionCommand(filename, oneShot)`

returns a command for sending a sound file (as indicated by filename) via the currently set frequency. If oneShot is true, the mission ends after the sound file has played once in full, otherwise it repeats infinitely (or until the group is deleted or a stop transmission command is issued)

Note:

Omit the path that leads to the mission’s main ("I10n/DEFAULT/") for the filename

[4.7.4.4.4 createStopTransmissionCommand\(\)](#)
returns a command to stop a transmission from this group.

[4.7.4.4.5 createCommandDataTableFor\(group, name\)](#)
returns an empty command data table for group. The table's name is set to name. After adding commands to the table, pass it to the scheduling method for execution.

[4.7.4.4.6 addCommand\(theCD, theCommand\)](#)
adds theCommand to the command data table theCD.

[4.7.4.4.7 scheduleCommands\(data, delay\)](#)
schedules all commands contained in the command data table data to be executed after delay seconds.

[4.7.4.4.8 scheduleSingleCommand\(group, command, delay\)](#)
A one-step shortcut that allows a single command to be scheduled for group after delay seconds without first having to wrap it in a command data table.

Tasks

Tasks in DCS are what groups are doing. Groups usually either move, hold or attack. Since cfxCommander provides strong support for moving troops via "Orders", we only expose the API for task scheduling and creating Attacking and Engaging other groups.

[4.7.4.4.9 scheduleTaskForGroup\(group, task, delay\)](#)
scheduled task to be assigned to group after delay seconds.

[4.7.4.4.10 createAttackGroupCommand\(theGroupToAttack\)](#)
returns a task to attack theGroupToAttack that can be scheduled

[4.7.4.4.11 createEngageGroupCommand\(theGroupToAttack\)](#)
returns a task to engage theGroupToAttack that can be scheduled. Readers discretion is advised to find out the difference between attacking and engaging groups.

High-Level: Orders

Orders are an cfxCommander abstraction layer for easier access. They all "make a group do something". This may result in tasks, options or commands to be issued under the hood, but from the API level, they are all the same, and all can be scheduled.

Important Note:

Modules further up in the hierarchy (e.g. cfxGroundTroops) may also use their own definition of “orders”. They are different and distinct from another and can’t be mixed.

4.7.4.4.12 makeGroupGoThere(group, there, speed, formation, delay)

Causes group to start moving to there at the indicated speed in delay seconds. On their way, they’ll assume formation. Formation must be one from the set defined by DCS (see above), e.g. “Cone”. If you want the group to follow roads, use makeGroupGoTherePreferringRoads() instead as that method provides automatic support for pathing zones and configuration preferences.

4.7.4.4.13 makeGroupGoTherePreferringRoads(group, there, speed, delay)

This is the prime moving order for cfxCommander, and will path group from where they are to there at the indicated speed, starting in delay seconds. Pathing will observe pathing zones and config settings.

4.7.4.4.14 makeGroupHalt(group, delay)

Orders group to stop after delay seconds

4.7.4.4.15 makeGroupTransmit(group, tenKHz, filename, oneShot, delay)

Starts a transmission on the radio at tenKHz * 10000 Hz (e.g. if tenKHz is 123 the frequency is set to 1230000 Hz = 1.23MHz), playing the sound file filename after delay seconds. If oneShot is set to true, the transmission ends after one play-through, otherwise it loops until the group is deleted, or a stop transmission order is issued

4.7.4.4.15.1 makeGroupStopTransmitting(group, delay)

Stops group to transmit on the radio after delay seconds.

4.7.4.5 ME Attributes

As described above, makeGroupGoTherePreferringRoads() observes pathing zones that mission designers can place with ME. Add the following attributes to control a group’s pathing that is calculated with that method. In order to influence a group’s pathing, at least start or end point of the path must be inside a pathing group.

Name	Description
pathing	Marks this ME Zone as a pathing zone. The value of this attribute gives cfxCommander hints on how to create paths that lead into, reside within, or lead out of this zone. Currently, the following hints are supported: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “normal” Create a path as requested• “offroad” Orders to move on roads are ignored, and off-road pathing is

Name	Description
	<p>allowed. Use this in case an area has a complex road system that makes pathing difficult or degrades performance.</p> <p>MANDATORY</p>

4.7.4.6 *Using the module*

Include the cfxCommander source into a DOSCRIPT Action at the start of the mission

To change any configuration settings, add a CommanderConfig zone with the relevant attributes.

4.7.5 nameStats (Lua Only)

Many missions require one way or another to track some important figures: be they score, weight or other meaningful statistics. nameStats is DML's number-tracking foundation. It can only be accessed via API

4.7.5.1 Description

nameStats provides an easy to use, generalized, name-based information store. Mission designers first create a new store for a name (e.g. a player's name - "Vandal"). Once a store has been created for that name, data can be stored and retrieved inside that store by using 'paths' that lead to different information containers for that name. There is no limit to the number of containers that designers can add to a store, provided that all paths are named differently.

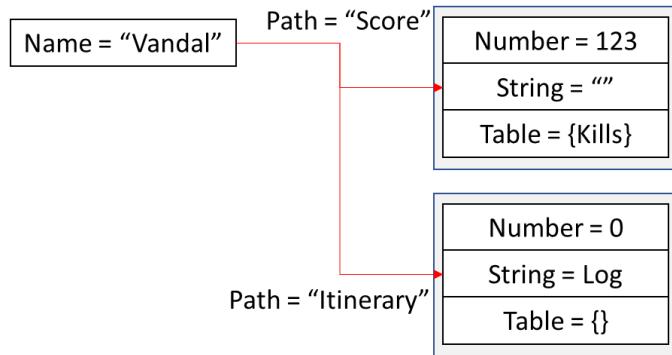
Inside each container, nameStats holds three separately accessible slots: one each for

- a number
- a string
- a table

Therefore, each path leads to a container that holds one instance of a string, a number and a table.

It's up to the designer which of these instances they use; they can use any one, two, or all three of them simultaneously.

The example on the right shows a store for the name "Vandal". This store currently is home to two containers: one that is accessed by the "Score" path, and one for the "Itinerary" path.



The container that is reached via the "Score" path uses both the number and table slots, but does not use the string slot. The number slot contains the current score for Vandal as a number (123), while the table slot contains a link to a table of kills (which is not further detailed in this demo)

The "Itinerary" path for Vandal leads to a container that uses the string slot to store a log of all take-offs and landings, while it currently doesn't use the number and table slots.

Note that above example illustrates how the information inside nameStats is organized. It's up to the designer to define how to use it. nameStats simply provides a simple, easy and unified accessor methods.

How to use nameStats

Since nameStats is designed for easy, safe use with numbers, strings and tables for a very specific set of goals (mission design), its API is minimal, yet highly effective. Whenever you try to access something that does not yet exist, the structures required for access are created, and default values are returned.

This means that mission designers can always simply read or add information to named stores, and do not have to worry about allocating stores or containers.

nameStats centers around named stores because it assumes that mission designers want to store information based on players, and that each store is therefore similarly organized. All information inside a store should therefore be exclusive to that player.

Numbers, Strings and Table Data inside a container

namedStore always provides three slots per container: a string, a number, and a table. For these slots, the API provides optimized accessors to accomplish the most common tasks:

- for numbers to set and change a number
- for strings to add to the current string (i.e. logging is supported out-of-the-box)
- for tables to store and retrieve (i.e. arbitrary user data under the mission designer's control)

So, let us assume that a player in unit thePlane just landed at theAirfield. Let us further assume that we want to log this and the plane type under the "Itinerary" path in the players store. The entire code for this could look like this:

```
local pName = thePlane:getPlayerName()
local pType = thePlane:getTypeName()
local airfield = theAirfield:getName()
local aString = "\nLanded " .. pType .. " at " .. airfield
nameStats.addString(pName, aString, "Itinerary")
```

The addString method first looks if a store for pName exists. If not, a store is created. Then, nameStats looks for a container under path. Again, if none exists, a container is created. Finally, aString is added to the string that is currently in the string slot, creating a log.

Example

So why this peculiar structure? Because a named store with pathed containers allows mission designers to easily implement otherwise complex tasks with ease. Let us imagine that a designer wants to track which player in a MP game kills how many planes of what type.

```
local theType = theKilledUnit:getTypeName() - type is path
nameStats.addValue(thePlayerName, 1, theType) - add one
```

is all that is needed to do to track all kills (for each killed unit nameStats automatically opens a new container) – provided above lines are invoked for each kill.

At any time, we can iterate, and display all kills (per unit type and total) up to now for this player with

```
Local allKills = nameStats.getAllPaths(thePlayerName)
local totalK = 0
for idx, unitType in pairs(allKills) do
```

```

local kills = nameStats.getValue(thePlayerName, unitType)
totalK = totalK + kills
trigger.action.outText(unitType .. ":" .. kills, 30)
end
trigger.action.outText( "Total Kills: " .. totalK, 30)

```

Note:

nameStats contains most of the required logic to build tree-based structures (node-leaf concept using the optional rootNode parameters). Since this isn't required for most missions, nameStats has been optimized for simple look-up-based access. Designers can easily extend nameStats to fully support tree structures.

4.7.5.2 Dependencies

None. This script is stand-alone and can be added to any mission without requiring any other scripts.

4.7.5.3 Module Configuration

None.

4.7.5.4 API

Numbers

4.7.5.4.1 getValue(name, path)

Returns the number that is currently stored at path for store name. If this is a new name/path combination, 0 is returned.

4.7.5.4.2 changeValue(name, delta, path)

Adds delta to the value found at the name/path combination. Use negative numbers to subtract from the current value

4.7.5.4.3 setValue(name, newVal, path)

Sets the number at name/path to newVal.

Strings

4.7.5.4.4 getString(name, path)

Returns the string that is currently stored at path for store name. If this is a new name/path combination, "" (an empty string) is returned.

4.7.5.4.5 addString(name, aString, path)

Adds aString to the string found at the name/path combination.

4.7.5.4.6 setString(name, aString, path)

Sets the contents of the string at name/path to aString

Tables

4.7.5.4.7 setTable(name, path, aTable)

Sets the table at name/path to aTable

4.7.5.4.8 getTable(name, path)

Returns the table at name/path. Default table is {}

General Name Store Management

4.7.5.4.9 getAllNames()

Returns a table of the names for all stores that currently exist in nameStats

4.7.5.4.10 getAllPaths(name)

Returns a table of all paths that are defined for name

4.7.5.4.11 reset(name, path)

Resets the three slots in a container for name/path to 0 (Zero, number slot), "" (empty string for string slot) and {} (empty table, table slot)

4.7.5.5 ME Attributes

nameStats requires no ME integration

4.7.5.6 Using the module

Copy the nameStats source into a DOSCRIPT action that runs at the start of the mission

4.7.6 cargoSuper (Lua Only)

cargoSuper is an API-only layer for managing cargo inventories/manifests. This module is primarily used by other modules to manage a unit's cargo weight and provide inventories for entire warehouses.

4.7.6.1 Description

cargoSuper is a collection of methods that focus on abstracting cargo items and weight for transport and storage purposes in DCS. Central to cargoSuper are abstract “**mass objects**” that represent Things, and “**manifests**” that track these Things.

cargoSuper is primarily a book-keeping module: managing these mass objects is done simply by adding to, and removing them from manifests, and by tabulating them on demand. Manifests in cargoSuper are identified by their name; each manifest must have a unique name.

When a mass object is added to a manifest, it is always added under a ‘category’. Mission designers have free reign in naming these categories, and can elect to not use categories in manifests at all (in which case a default category name is substituted).

In the example to the right, we see two manifests that are maintained by cargoSuper: one each for the name “Red Cross One”, and one for “Steel One”.

In true bookie manner, cargoSuper does not care what these manifest names represent, except that they must be distinct from each other so cargoSuper can tell them apart.

If we look at the manifest for “Red Cross One”, we find that there are two entries for Category: “First Aid”, and “Food”. And in the “First Aid” category, we finally find the entries for the mass objects “Bandages” (50t), “Syringes” (7t) and “Vaccine” (270t).

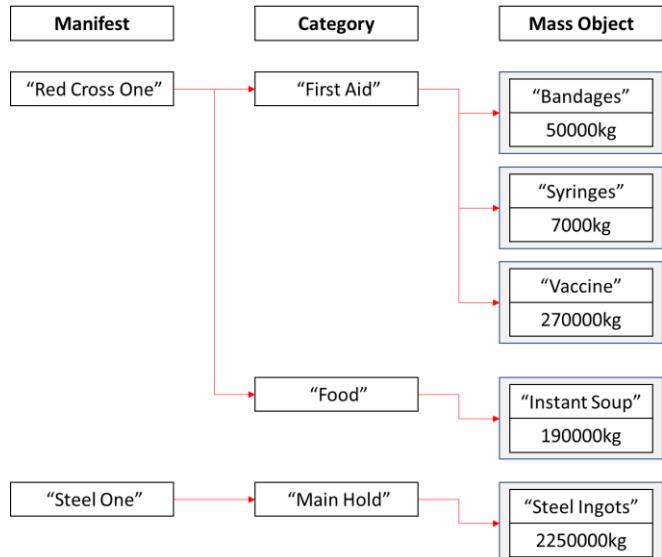
The second category, “Food” contains a single mass object “Instant Soup” with 190t.

The second manifest, the one for “Steel One” contains only one category “Main Hold” that holds a single mass object “Steel Ingots” at 2250t. It is likely that such a configuration of manifests is used to track ship inventories; cargoSuper does not care, tough, and mission designers are free to use the manifest/category/massObject system any way they choose.

It is important though, to remember that cargoSuper provides simple methods to add and remove them, as well as calculate total mass for entire manifests.

IMPORTANT:

cargoSuper does **not** modify a unit’s cargo weight – it merely provides the book-keeping infrastructure so a mission designer can use these values to set a unit’s cargo weight.



Mission scripts must invoke `trigger.action.setUnitInternalCargo()` with the calculated total mass of a manifest on their own (see workflow description below)

cargoSuper workflow

cargoSuper is designed to support mission designers to help administrate cargo management for units and warehouses. cargoSuper manages mass objects (and their weight) by collecting them under manifests.

Basic workflow for using cargoSuper is as follows:

- **Creating mass objects (cargo)**

Before anything can be loaded into units or stored in warehouses, `massObjects` must be created using `createMassObject()`. This simply creates a mass object for inventory keeping; it does not load it into a unit, nor does it enter cargoSuper's manifest book-keeping

Mass objects can be created at any time. Note that although an important use for mass objects is to determine cargo mass, they are also used to simply represent stock. cargoSuper can also be used to provide full-blown inventory management for an entire warehouse, with the ability to determine mass only a nice addition.

Note that much like groups and units, all **mass objects must have a unique name**. If you create a mass object with a name that is already in use, you'll receive a warning message, and you may receive some unpredictable results. cargoSuper's API provides auto-naming features to automatically assign unique names for new mass objects. Since mass objects are often bound to in-mission objects, an easy way to assign a unique name to a mass object is by using the name from the mission object it represents.

- **Adding mass objects to manifests (add cargo to unit X)**

cargoSuper keeps tracks of mass objects and collects them under named "manifests".

Since unit names in DCS must be unique, it is a convenient way to collect all cargo into a manifest under that unit's name. So to add a mass object to unit X's manifest, we first get that unit's name with `X.getName()`, and then invoke `addMassObjectTo()` with the unit's name, a category (e.g. "first aid") and the mass object. This adds the mass object to cargo super's book-keeping into the manifest under unit X's name and the "first aid" category.

So what happens if you tell cargoSuper to add a mass object to a manifest that does not exist? Don't worry: cargoSuper simply opens a new manifest for the name that you supply, and adds the mass object.

- **(Setting a unit's cargo)**

Since cargoSuper is a general purpose-cargo inventory module, it does not set a unit's cargo by itself. It is up to the mission to set the unit's internal cargo mass by first inquiring the total mass of the manifest via `calculateTotalMassFor()`, and then invoking `trigger.action.setUnitInternalCargo()` with the new total mass value

- **Removing mass object from a manifest (remove cargo from unit X)**
You can remove a mass object from a manifest at any time simply by invoking `removeMassObjectFrom()` for a manifest.
- **(Setting the unit's new cargo)**
If you are managing the cargo weight for a unit, after removing the mass object from the manifest, it's time to set the unit's new cargo weight the same as before: calculate total mass via `calculateTotalMassFor()` and then invoke with the new value `trigger.action.setUnitInternalCargo()`.
- **Checking the inventory/manifest**
At any time, you can check what is stored under a named manifest. This is a two-step process: since all mass items are stored in a manifest in categories, you first get all existing categories in a manifest with `getAllCategoriesFor()`, and then iterate all categories to get all mass objects stored in each category with `getManifestForCategory()`. Of course, mission designers can short-circuit this by not using categories and omit the first step.
- **Resetting manifests**
`cargoSuper` provides a simple method to remove all mass objects from a cargo with `removeAllMassForCargo()` and even an entire manifest with `removeAllMassFor()`

Note:

Manifests keep track of mass objects as they are passed to them, and these mass objects are not assumed to be exclusive to a single manifest. This means that if a mission requires mass objects to be only tracked with a single manifest, the mission designer must ensure that a mass object is removed from one manifest when it is added to another,

4.7.6.2 Dependencies

`cargoSuper` requires `dcsCommon` and `nameStats`

4.7.6.3 Module Configuration

None.

4.7.6.4 API

Managing Mass Objects

4.7.6.4.1 `createMassObject(massInKg, massName, referenceObject)`

Returns a new mass object with weighing `massInKg` and named `massName`. If `massName` is nil, `cargoSuper` generates a unique name for the object. `referenceObject` can be anything that is relevant from the mission designer's perspective. It often is a cargo unit created in DCS.

4.7.6.4.2 deleteMassObject(massObject)

INTERNAL USE. This method deletes massObjct from cargoSuper's internal book keeping table, so it will no longer be checked against for name uniqueness. It does NOT remove the mass object from any manifest.

4.7.6.4.3 addMassObjectTo(name, category, theMassObject)

Adds theMassObject under category to a manifest named name. If the manifest does not exist, a new one is created. If category is nil, cargoSuper uses an internal default name.

4.7.6.4.4 removeMassObjectFrom(name, category, theMassObject)

removes theMassObject from category in name. If no such mass object exists in category, the command is ignored. If category is nil, an internal value is used as default.

Managing Manifests

4.7.6.4.5 getAllCategoriesFor(name)

returns a table of all currently defined categories in manifest name. This is commonly used to prepare to iterate through all categories.

4.7.6.4.6 removeAllMassForCategory(name, category)

removes all mass objects from manifest name in category. If category is nil, an internal default is used.

4.7.6.4.7 removeAllMassFor(name)

removes all mass objects from the entire manifest name

4.7.6.4.8 getManifestForCategory(name, category)

returns all mass objects in category from manifest name. If category is nil then an internal default is used instead.

Calculating Mass

4.7.6.4.9 calculateTotalMassForCategory(name, category)

returns (in kg) the sum of weight for all mass objects in category of manifest name. If category is nil, an internal default value is used.

4.7.6.4.10 calculateTotalMassFor(name)

returns (in kg) the sum of all weight for all mass objects in manifest name

4.7.6.5 ME Attributes

None.

4.7.6.6 Using the module

Copy the cargoSuper source into a DOSCRIPT action that runs at the start of the mission

4.7.7 cargoManager (Lua Only)

CargoManager is an API-only layer that generates **cargo events** for other scripts and modules. In a nutshell, your scripts pass it objects (e.g. cargo objects) to watch, and cargoManager invokes callbacks when something interesting happens to the watched object.

4.7.7.1 Description

Essentially, your scripts first subscribe to be notified of cargo events, and then pass objects to watch for typical cargo events. Other modules, like for example cfxObjectSpawnZones can pass cargo automatically to cargo manager on spawning the object.

cargoManager checks each object once per second for changes in status. When an event happens to a watched object, cargoManager then invokes all callbacks with the necessary information

cargoManager is mainly used in scripts to detect when a helicopter picks up or puts down cargo objects, since DCS currently does not support generic events for this.

Cargo Events

“Cargo Events” are synthetic events, that cargoManager derives from monitoring the watched object’s state. If the state changes in certain ways, it generates an event and invokes all registered callbacks with event information:

- *lifted*
When the cargo was previously deemed ‘grounded’, if now moved more than a meter, and is now considered ‘lifted’, i.e. picked up by a unit and being transported.
- *grounded*
cargo hasn’t moved for a while, and is now considered ‘grounded’
- *disappeared*
cargo object has disappeared
- *dead*
cargo object was destroyed
- *new*
a new cargo object was added to the watch pool,
- *remove*
a cargo object was removed from the watch pool. Is invoked directly after a dead or disappeared event

Callback

When your script subscribes to cargo events, it must provide a callback that matches following profile

```
cargoEventCB(event, object, name)
```

with the following parameters

- `event`
a string that contains one of the previously defined cargo events
- `object`
the cargo object in question. Warning: the object may no longer be valid (in the case of a disappeared event)
- `name`
the name of the cargo object. **Note:** if the cargo object itself is no longer valid (e.g. after a disappear event), the name still **is** valid.

4.7.7.2 Dependencies

CargoManager requires dcsCommon and cfxZones

4.7.7.3 Module Configuration

`cfxCargoManager.ups` – updates per second. Set to 1

4.7.7.4 API

4.7.7.4.1 `addCallback(cb)`

Adds the callback cb to list of callbacks to invoke when a cargo event happens.

4.7.7.4.2 `getCargoStatusFor(theCargoObject)`

Returns the current state (a string, e.g. “lifted”) for theCargoObject. If the cargo object does not exist, nil is returned..

4.7.7.4.3 `addCargo(theCargoObject)`

Adds theCargoObject (a DCS object) to the pool of watched objects. You must ensure that this is a proper static object, or the results can be unpredictable.

4.7.7.4.4 `removeCargoByName(cargoName)`

removes a cargo object with the name cargoName from the pool of watched cargo objects.

4.7.7.4.5 `removeCargo(theCargoObject)`

removes theCargoObject (a DCS object) from the pool of watched cargo objects

4.7.7.4.6 `getAllCargo(filterForState)`

Returns a table of all cargo objects currently in the watch pool. If filterForState is given (not nil), the list is filtered for all objects that match the string given in filterForState (e.g. “lifted”)

4.7.7.5 ME Attributes

None.

4.7.7.6 Using the module

Copy the cfxCargoManager source into a DOSCRIPT action that runs at the start of the mission

4.7.8 cfxGroundTroops (Lua Only)

4.7.8.1 Description

Technically, this module sits between Foundation, and Enhancements. It manages groups that have been issued orders. All interaction with cfxGroundTroops is via API; many modules higher up in the hierarchy make heavy use of this module (spawners, owned zones, etc.). For example, cfxSpawnZones create groups, issue them orders, and then pass them off to cfxGroundTroops for management.

Orders

As described under Important Concepts: → Orders, orders are central to DML, and cfxGroundTroops is the module that manages orders for ground troops. Currently, the following orders are recognized (meaning that any module that requests an order attribute will automatically support them).

- **guard**

Orders to guard means that the group is to remain in place, and attack any enemy forces in the vicinity. The range parameter determines the engagement radius

- **attackOwnedZone**

Look for, and then move towards the closest non-owned zone managed by the cfxOwnedZone module. Engage any enemy troops there. Once the zone has been conquered, move to the next. When all zones have been conquered, switch to “guard”.

- **attackZone**

Move toward a named zone. Attack any enemy troops on the way.

- **lase/laze**

Stay in place and laser-designate any enemy troops that come in range and have a direct LOS. The range parameter determines how far the group can “see”. Each group only lasers one target.

- **train/training/dummy/dummies**

Do nothing, do not engage, weapons tight.

Performance considerations

Although lightweight, cfxGroundTroops *can* have significant impact on a mission’s performance – although this is usually caused by the sheer number of troops in-game rather than the processing time required to manage the troop’s orders. If you experience performance issues, you may want to first see how many groups your mission is spawning, and then how cfxGroundTroops is managing them, with particular attention to the update intervals you have configured.

Troop Management Models

GroundTroops supports multiple troop order management models, controlled by the configuration settings:

- *Standard*
In this mode, all groups are inspected every update pass. This burns performance and can result in performance spikes. It can also overload DCS's order AI when it receives too many new orders simultaneously, so use this update model only when you are using few managed groups
- *Queued*
In this mode, every update pass, one exactly one group is processed. Since ground units progress on a sedate pace, it's enough to check and update every unit once every few minutes. This method produces an even load with excellent response to most tactical situations
- *Scheduled*
In this mode, updates per group are scheduled individually per group. This mode distributes workload evenly and is future-proof for when DCS introduces multi-processing for Lua scripts.

Callbacks

cfxGroundTroops supports a callback infrastructure that scripts can subscribe to and be notified of certain events. To have your method invoked, use `addTroopsCallback()` with your callback handler as parameter

The callback method must adhere to the following profile

```
theCallBack(reason, theGroup, theOrders, data)
```

with reason being a string describing why the callback occurred, theGroup being the affected group, theOrders a string containing the groups current orders, and data being reason-specific data, with data.troops always containing a reference to the Troop table for this group

The callbacks can be invoked with the following reasons:

- “arrived”
theGroup has arrived at the destination. Group orders will be switched to “guard” automatically.
- “dead”
The entire group was destroyed. Group is automatically removed from managed pool.
- “neutralized”
An enemy group was successfully destroyed by a group with “guard” orders. The attribute `data.enemy` contains the destroyed group.
- “engaging”
An enemy group is being engaged by a group with “guard” orders. The attribute `data.enemy` contains the group that is being engaged.
- “lase:tracking”
A group with orders to lase has found a target and started tracking an enemy unit. `data.enemy` contains the enemy unit, and `data.tracker` the unit that is doing the tracking.

- “lase:stop”

A group with orders to lase has stopped tracking the target units. Reasons for that can be multiple: the tracked unit has moved out of LOS, is dead, or the tracking unit has died.

Managed Capacity

In addition to the order update loop, GroundTroops allows you to limit the number of groups it actively manages. By setting `cfxGroundTroops.maxManagedTroops` you can turn on managed capacity. When setting this value to any positive number, the pool of managed troops is limited that number. Any new troops that are added to the pool will instead be added to queues (separate for faction to ensure that no faction gains an advantage by flooding the pool). Only when troops are removed from the pool, it is replenished from the queues. Troops that are queued simply aren't order-managed. They will still fight should they encounter enemies and will follow any commands they have been issued prior to being added to the pool.

Place a cap on the pool when you experience crashes while your mission has deployed many groups. From experience, DCS can crash if too many groups are being issued orders in a short time span, which can happen when OwnedZones change hands (many groups receive new routing orders) – especially if you choose to have groups follow roads (which is an option when giving orders)

Troops vs DCS Groups

`cfxGroundTroops` uses the concept of a ‘Troop’ wrapper (see Troop Table, below) that encapsulates a DCS group (i.e. a group as returned from DCS) of ground units that it manages with additional data. In simple terms, Troops are “a DCS group plus Orders”. Please refer to the section on Orders to read up on the details. To have `GroundTroops` manage a group of ground units, they first have to be converted into a “troop” structure by invoking `cfxGroundTroops.createGroundTroops()`. The returned table can then be modified, and finally submitted to the pool of managed troops by invoking `cfxGroundTroops.addGroundTroopsToPool()`. From this point on, `cfxGroundTroops` monitors and manages the group. To remove a group from the pool, you can invoke `cfxGroundTroops.getGroundTroopsForGroup()` to retrieve the troop wrapper, and then invoke `cfxGroundTroops.removeTroopsFromPool()` to have them removed. This will not change the current groups orders nor remove them from the mission – they merely are no longer managed by `cfxGroundTroops`.

The Troop Table

`cfxGroundTroop` wraps a DCS group with a table to contain additional data for order management. Scripts can access this information, but caution is advised when changing data in the troop table: this can have unpredictable results. While most of the fields are internal, the following attributes may be of interest:

- `group`
the DCS group that this troop table wraps.

- **orders**
The orders (a string, e.g. “lase”) for this group. This is cfxGroundTroops main entry point for handling the group during update. Modifying this attribute will take effect in the next update cycle.
- **coalition**
The coalition the group belongs to. Simply a copy from group:getCoalition()
- **name**
The name of group. Cached in case group becomes inaccessible. Persists past group:delete() so you can still access the group’s name
- **range**
value of the range parameter as used by some orders. Changes here take effect in the next update cycle
- **destination**
Only defined for some orders. A cfxZone describing the destination area
- **enemy**
Only defined for some orders. A DCS Group that this group is tasked with engaging.

4.7.8.2 Dependencies

Required: dcsCommon, cfxZones, dcsCommander

Optional: cfxOwnedZones

4.7.8.3 Module Configuration

cfxGroundTroops can use a configuration zone for setting up main options. To configure cfxGroundTroops via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone in ME anywhere
- Name it “groundTroopsConfig” (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
queuedUpdates	set to true to process one group per turn. To work this way, scheduledUpdates (see below) must be false. Default is false
scheduledUpdates	set to false to allow queuing of standard updates. Overrides queuedUpdates is true. Defaults to false
maxManagedTroops	Defines a cap on the number of actively managed groups (<i>not units!</i>). Once the cap is exhausted, new groups are placed into a smart managed queue and fed into the managed pool when slots become available. Queued troops will still engage enemies when sighted, but not move nor

Name	Description
	lase enemies. Set to -1 for an infinite cap. Defaults to 65
monitorNumbers	Set to true do receive debugging info when queuing and dequeuing groups. Defaults to false
standardScheduleInterval	Interval (in seconds) between updating managed queue. Defaults to 30 seconds (twice a minute)
guardUpdateInterval	Interval (in seconds) between updates for groups with “guard” orders. Defaults to 30 seconds.
trackingUpdateInterval	Update interval for groups with “lase” orders that track moving vehicles. Defaults to 0.5 (twice per second)

4.7.8.4 API

4.7.8.4.1 addTroopsCallback (theCallback)

Adds theCallback to the list of callbacks to invoke when cfxGroundTroops detects a troop event. The callback must match the profile

```
theCallBack(reason, theGroup, theOrders, data)
```

with reason being a string that describes the reason for the callback (see above), theGroup being the group that triggered the event, theOrders the group’s current orders, and data the event-specific additional data (if defined).

4.7.8.4.2 createGroundTroops(inGroup, range, orders)

returns the Troop Table for inGroup that can be managed with cfxGroundTroops. The parameter range is order-dependent, and orders is the order string (described in →Orders)

4.7.8.4.3 addGroundTroopsToPool(troops)

Adds the TroopTable troops to cfxGroundTroops’ pool of managed troops.

4.7.8.4.4 removeTroopsFromPool(troops)

Removes the TroopTable troops from cfxGroundTroops’ pool of managed troops. Note that this is done automatically when a managed group is destroyed; you only need to use this if you want to prevent cfxGroundTroops fram managing the group described in troops.

4.7.8.4.5 isDeployedGroundTroop(aGroup)

Returns true if aGroup is managed by cfxGroundTroops (or waiting in a queue to be managed)

4.7.8.4.6 getGroundTroopsForGroup(aGroup)

Returns the Troop Table for aGroup, provided aGroup is being managed by cfxGroundTroops.

4.7.8.5 ME Attributes

No ME interface

4.7.8.6 Using the module

Copy the cfxGroundTroops source into a DOSCRIPT action that runs at the start of the mission

Add a configuration zone with ME to override default configuration.

4.7.9 cfxGroups tbc (Lua Only)

4.7.9.1 Description

This low-level module primarily supplies information about player slots. This information is usually only required for missions that in one way or another need to block slots.

4.7.9.2 Dependencies

4.7.9.3 Module Configuration

4.7.9.4 ME Attributes

4.7.9.5 API

4.7.9.6 Using the module

4.7.10 cfxMX tbc (Lua Only)

4.7.10.1 Description

This low-level module primarily supplies low-level information about groups as defined by the Mission in ME. It is primarily used to clone groups that are present at mission start

4.7.10.2 Dependencies

4.7.10.3 Module Configuration

4.7.10.4 ME Attributes

4.7.10.5 API

4.7.10.6 Using the module

4.8 Persistence

This section deals with an optional DML feature called ‘persistence’. Standard DCS installations require that you actively disable security features to enable persistence. Many players do not feel comfortable with either the process of disabling these features, or the idea of playing with lessened security, or both. Therefore I recommend that you think carefully before you add persistence to your mission. That being said, using persistence you can do incredibly interesting and fun things that are impossible to achieve otherwise.

4.8.1 What is persistence?

Simply put, persistence is the ability to reading and/or writing data to permanent store, so when a mission writes data and then ends, that data can be retrieved later and acted upon: the data persists past the end of the process. In other words, persistence is often used for:

- Saving and later continuing a mission (in DCS to a limited degree)
- Keeping records (scores, kills, departures, landings)
- Sharing data among different applications (or missions).
- Exporting data for other applications

This is an incredibly empowering ability for mission designers, as it theoretically allows a mission creator to write a string of missions that take into account the results or some main feature from the previous mission (say, units that were destroyed in the previous mission remain destroyed in the follow-up mission, making it more difficult or less difficult depending on the player’s past performance), and integrate it, creating the illusion of theater consistency.

So, why is persistency disabled by default and requires a non-trivial effort for the player to enable?

Security. Read on.

4.8.1.1 FOR YOUR OWN PROTECTION: READ THIS CAREFULLY

If a mission script has unfettered access to your storage, it can achieve a lot of great things. On the other hand, at the hands of a malicious mind, **it can also create a lot of damage**. Lua’s – and therefore DCS’s – only model of storage access is “all or nothing” (there are other, more gradual, firewalled approaches that can mitigate the risk of giving access to storage to applications (e.g. Apple’s Application Sandbox for iOS and macOS). Since missions run as part of DCS, this means that you can either give a mission full access to your entire storage, or none at all. So if DCS gave full storage access to all Lua scripts, it would only take a few hours until the first maliciously crafted missions appeared that exploit that feature for nefarious purposes, with vandalism and blackmail being some of the lesser evils.

So, by default, mission scripts can’t just willy-nilly write to your storage, you must explicitly instruct DCS to do so. **This is good, as it protects casual players and mission designers who import a mission from the internet from malicious content.** This works well and makes DCS more secure.

The result, on the other hand, is that mission designers who want to write some data to file will have to actively disable these safety features before their mission scripts can write to their storage. Again, this is a good thing, as it does not involve simply clicking a dialog (something a person may be socially engineered to do), but a more complex process that requires you to open and edit a file in DCS's main installation. If you allow DCS to write to your storage, that does not happen by accident.

More importantly, it also requires that anyone who plays (hosts) a mission that uses persistence must also disable these features (this is only true for single-player missions, and people who self-host multiplayer missions. If you log on to a multiplayer game that uses persistence as a client, your DCS does not have to persistence-enabled, it is handled by the server).

Accordingly, if you author a mission that uses/requires persistence be aware that this can significantly reduce the enthusiasm of potential players. As a rule of thumb and in DCS's current model of nothing/al access, persistency may be a good idea for long multiplayer missions and server missions that share player scores, and should be avoided for single-player missions.

4.8.1.2 De-Sanitizing LFS and IO

There are legitimate, even desirable reasons to allow a mission to be able to write to storage: to save and restore a mission, to manage high scores that persist through mission re-starts, to maintain a log of griefers, etc.

To use the DML's persistence, **you (and anyone who hosts the mission that you are authoring) must** therefore perform the steps below to “de-sanitize” two security features that will remove restrictions place on Lua by DCS:

- Go to your main DCS installation (*not* the saved games folder, we aren't in Kansas any more)
- Open the folder named “Scripts”
- Look for the file “MissionScripting.lua”
- **Back up this file**
- Open the original
- Look for “sanitizeModule('io')”
- Place two dashes in front so it looks like this: “-- sanitizeModule('io')”
- Look for “sanitizeModule('lfs')”
- Place two dashes in front so it looks like this: “-- sanitizeModule('lfs')”
- Save and close the file, restart DCS

For reference, the block of code inside ‘MissionScripting.lua’ should look similar to

```
sanitizeModule('os')
-- sanitizeModule('io')
-- sanitizeModule('lfs')
_G['require'] = nil
_G['loadlib'] = nil
_G['package'] = nil
```

So, what have you done? By placing the two dashes in front of the ‘sanitizeModule()’ commands you have commented them out, they will no longer be executed. The sanitize command disable libraries in DCS’s scripting language “Lua”. The two libraries that are disabled by ‘sanitize’, and that you are now allowing to run are

- **io**
This provides scripts with the ability to create, modify and delete files anywhere on your storage. An attacker might use this to read/modify/overwrite data if they know where to look (always assume they do know this)
- **Ifs**
This provides scripts with the ability to create, modify and delete directories on your storage. An attacker might use this to create hidden, or hide existing folders, or change the structure of your storage.

Should anyone ever tell you to also de-sanitize ‘os’ be very suspicious. *That library allows* your scripts to spawn new processes, a capability that you should not easily give to other people or scripts. That new process may be a virus, or key logger, or some other unsavory digital miscreant that you want to keep away from your computer.

Note:

Be advised that often, after a new DCS version comes out, you may need to repeat the de-sanitizing steps above, as the new version may overwrite MissionScripting.lua, putting the guards back in place.

4.8.1.3 Security Threat Assessment

Be aware that you are opening a window to allow an attacker onto your computer by means of maliciously crafted mission scripts that could exploit de-sanitized Ifs and io, however small that risk may be.

So how big is that risk? Risks are often measured by several categories: Potential Damage of an event, and the Likelihood (probability) of that event happening

So lets start with the bad one: Potential Damage is Catastrophic

If you de-sanitize Ifs and io for DCS, and then run a mission that contains malicious Lua code, the potential result can be catastrophic. An attacker may destroy or modify any file on your storage. That’s exactly why, by default, DCS disables Ifs and io. So, let’s be clear-eyed about that.

Now, for the better news: Likelihood is small

For the attack to succeed several conditions must be met

- You must have Ifs and io de-sanitized
- An interesting mission or mod with malicious code must be developed and posted online, with nobody detecting and warning the attack code
- You must download that mission or mod hosting malicious code and then run it in your unprotected DCS

It’s an unattractive target: Since most DCS installations *have* sanitized Ifs and io by default, the target audience for such an attack is small: although DCS is popular, it is not that popular

(compared to, say “Minecraft”), and some 90% of all DCS installations are fully sanitized: most players do not require (nor ever notice the absence) of Ifs and io. Hence, authoring such an attack vector promises relatively small return on investment, when there are bigger, easier targets (but never assume you are safe!).

4.8.1.4 *Mitigating Measures (if you are uncomfortable with persistence)*

So, to mitigate the risk, you can follow the following best practices, some of which may be overkill (if, for example, you never run missions downloaded from unknown sources):

- Be up to date on malware advisories, focusing on DCS
- Obviously: if your computer/network is a high-value target, you should never de-sanitize Ifs nor io. You should probably also not run games on it that can run DLC or Mods.
- Don’t run missions that you did not create yourself (often impossible)
- Only run third party missions or mods that you download from reputable sources that are peer-reviewed (e.g., ED, GitHub).
- After downloading a mission, sanitize Ifs and io before you run it for the first time, and keep an eye out on the internet for reports of DCS as an attack vector.
- Only de-sanitize Ifs and io when you need to. There are third-party tools available that can automatically manage configuration files like MissionScripting.lua for you
- Re-sanitize when you are done
- When you have a dedicated server, only de-sanitize the server
- (If you are rich) use a dedicated mission development computer that is kept separate from the rest of your network.
- Make sure your kids don’t subvert your efforts by de-sanitizing DCS to play that fabulous mission that they just found on the internet.

Just don’t get paranoid. The threat is real, but it is entirely manageable

4.8.2 Why persistence is currently difficult in DCS

Still with me and interested in persistency? Good. After the scary part above, let’s further curb your enthusiasm and look at what persistency can’t do due to the limits that DCS’s current game engine/scripting environment impose.

To be blunt: DCS is old. It’s based on the venerable ‘LOMAC – Lock On – Modern Air Combat’ originally published in 2003, which then evolved into DCS originally released in DCS in 2008. So by all accounts, we are working with a game engine that contains significant parts that are old enough to drink. At conception, the game’s mission engine wasn’t designed to host a theater that contains hundreds of planes controlled by players in missions that span days of real-time. And accordingly, at the time nobody thought it important that people be able to save mission progress and continue at a later time.

Simply put: DCS wasn’t designed to support persistency. This currently (mid 2022) has a number of consequences: You

- *Can’t save time of day nor date*

Actually, that’s not entirely true. You *can* save time and date – you just can’t set it in a mission when you load that information. This is one of the most significant impediments that can outright kill your mission idea. Imagine that you design a

mission that starts at early morning 05:00 local time, and is intended to last for 16 hours, with the mission timed to take advantage of dusk falling in the last hour of the mission – a definitely epic mission. If you play that mission and save it after 6 hours, and then later restore the mission from saved data, you may restore everything to where it was when you saved the mission – except that the time of day is back to 05:00 and that epic finale will not happen at dusk, but around mid.day.

- *Can't restore weather*

This is currently not much of an issue, since dynamic weather isn't much of a factor in DCS right now. When you load a mission from file, the weather, like time of day reverts to the mission's starting conditions

- *Can't spawn AI units with less than full health, nor with depleted munitions*

AI units currently can only spawn fully healthy, and fully equipped, with no mechanism to deplete them. This means that when you save a mission with units badly hurt and out of ammo, but not dead, then these units return to full health and fully equipped after the mission loads. So beware of formerly depleted SAM sites when you load a mission – it's bound to be resupplied.

- *Can't spawn units halfway down their route*

There currently exist no reliable method to spawn units with their task list restored from where they were when the mission was saved. This means that usually, after a mission restore, the units will attempt to return to their first waypoint, simply remain where they spawned after load, or some other unpredictable behavior (some of DML's modules can handle this gracefully, others not so much).

The save behavior affects AI aircraft that spawn from the ground (take off): On load, they will always spawn on the ground, no matter how far they progressed at save point.

So design your savable missions with an eye on the consequences of adding complex movement paths.

- *Can't restore player's spawn and loadout*

Similarly to AI units, player planes spawn at full health, with original mission payload and fuel, usually at their base. Some modules may support some clever alternatives, but with player planes there is the added difficulty that there is no guarantee that a player that was present when the mission was saved is also present in that same slot when the mission continues, so the simplest way to resolve this is to assume that that plane was lost, and a successor now starts at that slot's original point. From a mission designer's point, regard the mission's restore point simply as a player's log off /log on event.

And yet, even with all those restrictions, persistence still has a lot of interesting benefits, and here's how we can use persistence in DML

4.8.3 Using Persistence in your Mission

To add persistence to your mission, simply add the 'persistence' module to your mission as the first module *after* dcsCommon and cfxZones.

WARNING:

Add persistence immediately after you have added dcsCommon and cfxZones. **Persistence is only available to those modules that load after persistence** itself loads.

As soon as you add the persistence module to your mission, you have added the *ability* to load and save mission data. The persistence module itself can only save a pitiful amount of data by itself: all it knows how to do is

- Save the mission data that is handed to it and when it is told to save (including automatically every n minutes)
- Load a mission upon start if a save file exists
- Skip loading mission data when told to, creating a fresh start
- Check mission save versions and ensure only valid data is loaded
- save the flags that you tell it to

So although persistence itself knows how to save data, it doesn't know what to save. That is provided by other modules. DML modules automatically converse with the persistence module, so you as a mission designer usually do not have to worry about that.

Not all modules support persistence. Some don't require persistence, others have not yet been upgraded to support it. Be sure to check a module's description if it supports persistence

4.8.4 Using persistence with DML modules

At this point (persistence is still being designed), modules either automatically support persistence, or they do not support it at all. If you want persistence, you add the persistence module. The rest happens automatically, controlled via the persistence protocol that the persistence module implements and that other modules adhere to. Note that in some cases you may need to preserve a flag's status 'manually' by adding it via the saveFlag attribute to a trigger zones (see Persistence Module interface). This will cause the flag to be initialized to the saved value before the module starts up, making it the default value and prevent a trigger reaction when another module later changes it during its own load.

When a mission supports persistence, you can choose whether a mission should auto-save (in regular intervals), or only save on demand (via a flag change, of course). If a mission detects that it has saved mission progress, it will automatically start reloading from the saved data. This means that in order to start a mission from scratch, you must either tell persistence to ignore the save data (called a 'fresh start request') or delete the saved mission data from hand.

Persistence provides a mechanism for 'clean restart', and a ME-integrated 'update restart', which allows the mission to automatically restart from scratch if the save data is out of version with the current mission.

4.8.4.1 Restarting from scratch_ 'Fresh Start'

To restart a mission from scratch, you can either delete the mission's save data (not very user friendly for dedicated servers), or issue a signal on 'cleanRestart?' for the persistence module as configured in the persistence modules config zone. Doing so writes a special value to the save data that causes it to ignore any saved data on the next mission start. Usually, you would then follow this up with a mission restart.

4.8.4.2 Restart after Mission Update: *versionID* attribute

In persistence's config Zone (as set up in ME) you can provide a *versionID* attribute that is always saved with the mission data. When during mission start-up persistence detects that the current *versionID* does not match the one saved, it will start the mission from scratch. Use this if you release a new version of your mission that is incompatible with the data that a previous version has written, and thus must start from the beginning.

Note that if you are using *versionID*, persistence will write this data to a save file inside the save directory that you defined in the configuration zone.

4.8.5 Mission Loading: Sequence of Events

If you add persistence to your mission, most of it is automatic. For some modules it may be important to know in which order they are loaded so this is how persistence loads a mission

- 1) Persistence checks if it can access the mission save folder and if so, if there is any data. If either isn't true, persistence stops trying to load data. From this point on, the mission loads as if it was running for the first time: it starts 'fresh'
- 2) After reading the data, persistence checks to see if it finds the 'fresh restart' flag. If so, it stops loading data, and the mission begins fresh
- 3) Next, persistence checks if there is a version ID in either the current version (set via ME) or in the saved data and compares them. If they don't match (including matching an existing versus a non-existing ID), the mission begins fresh
- 4) From here on persistence knows that the data it is reading should be used to initialize all modules and signals (via flags and values) that data is available
- 5) It then proceeds to set all flags that were marked by 'saveFlags?' attributes
- 6) Persistence then relinquishes control to all other modules that load later. This means that no module that loads before "persistence.lua" can have any access to persistence, which is the reason why it should load as early as possible. **Note that the order in which these other modules load their data is indeterminate**, you must not assume or rely on the fact that one module loads data before another. **The only module guaranteed to load data first is persistence itself.**

Any module that is loading later proceeds as follows: first it

- 1) Checks to see if persistence is available. If so, it signs up for persistence save via a callback.
- 2) Then checks to see if persistence has data and requests the date by its module name
- 3) If it receives data, it proceeds to set its modules accordingly

4.8.6 Shared Data between Missions (tbc)

DML offers the ability to share data between missions. This feature is primarily reserved for API use, and some modules use it to share their data with other missions that use the same module. For example, the Player Score module can be used cross-mission if you configure it that way (at this point, however, this feature is not implemented). This allows separate missions to access and update the same score table (e.g. for an eternal high score list).

Note: not yet implemented

4.8.7 ME Integration

When you add persistence to a mission, you don't know if the computer that hosts the mission is de-sanitized (i.e. supports persistence) or not. From the mission's perspective, the computer always looks as if it *is* de-sanitized, the persistence module gracefully handles any exceptions internally. It therefore always looks to all modules as if they can save data successfully, even when they can't.

When it comes to loading data at a mission start, a secure DCS installation simply has no saved data, so the mission always looks to be a fresh start.

4.8.7.1 *versionID*

This attribute (which you can add to persistence config zone, see later) is used to automatically reset (discard) all saved data and start 'fresh' when the version found in the attribute does not match the value found in the save data. You can use this feature to force a fresh start in a new version of your mission to avoid

4.8.7.2 *Saving Flag Values*

Persistence allows you to specify flags whose values should be saved and restored. To do so, simply add the "saveFlags" attribute to a zone. Use this to save flags that you have been using outside of DML.

Name	Description
saveFlags	A list of flag names to persist. Supports ranges for numbered flags. MANDATORY

4.8.7.3 *Reading and Writing Data: the Mission Pool*

Tbc

4.8.7.4 *Mission-individual and shared data pools*

Tbc

4.8.8 Configuration

4.8.8.1 '*Unconfigured*' persistence

Persistence can be configured with a config zone. If you do not provide such a config zone in your mission, persistence will default to a simplified behavior

- It saves all data to the "Missions/" directory, not "<mission name> (data)/"
- No version handling (obviously, as this is set in a config zone)

- Since no cleanRestart? Input is defined, you must either invoke the method via API, or manually delete the data to force a fresh mission start
- saveInterval is set to -1, so persistence will only save data on manual invocation via API (since saveMission? isn't set)

4.8.8.2 Unconfigured Save Location

When you do not add a PersistenceConfig zone to your mission, persistence defaults to saving data in

- “C:\user\name\saved games\DCS.openbeta\Missions\” or
- “C:\user\name\saved games\DCS\Missions\”

The mission is saved as ““<mission name> Data.txt”

4.8.8.3 Persistence config zone

You can configure the persistence module using a trigger zone in ME named “persistenceConfig” and add the following attributes

Name	Description
verbose	A value of “true” turns on debugging messages. Default is “false”
versionID	If present, this turns on version matching. When a mission starts up, persistence checks the value provided via the Zone with the one saved. If they do not match, the entire save data is discarded, and the mission starts fresh Defaults to <none>
serverDir	Path from the DCS standard directory (usually “C:\user\name\saved games\DCS.openbeta” or “C:\user\name\saved games\DCS”) to the missions directory. Use this if you set up your DCS different (usually important for dedicated servers). Defaults to “Missions\”
saveDir	Name for the mission’s data directory. Defaults to “<mission name> (data)”. This directory is created in the serverDir automatically if it does not exist If you set saveDir to “”, the mission saves its data directly into serverDir Defaults to “<mission name> (data)” if a configuration zone is present, none without configuration zone
saveFileName	Name for the file that persistence uses to write mission data. Defaults to “<mission name> Data.txt”
saveInterval	Controls auto-save. Any value larger than zero will turn on auto save. The value you give here is the number of minutes between auto saves. Auto-saves co-operate with manual saves, so you can use both methods in your mission Defaults to -1 (auto-save off)
cleanRestart?	DML Watchflag. A change signal on this input triggers a “fresh start” request: next time the mission starts up, it won’t load mission data. Defaults to <none>
saveMission?	DML Watchflag. A change signal on this input triggers a ‘manual’ save. Defaults to <none>

4.8.9 API

tbc

- 4.8.9.1 *doSaveMission()*
- 4.8.9.2 *noteCleanRestart()*
- 4.8.9.3 *saveText(theString, fileName, append)*
- 4.8.9.4 *registerModule(name, callbacks)*
- 4.8.9.5 *registerFlagsToSave(flagNames, theZone)*
- 4.8.9.6 *getSavedDataForModule(name)*
- 4.8.9.7 *getSharedDataFor(name, item)*
- 4.8.9.8 *putSharedDataFor(data, name, item)*

5 The Debugger

DML comes with a fully-fledged interactive tool to help you track down bugs in your missions. Since flags are the main method that we use to structure and control the flow of a mission - and DML modules primarily use flags to communicate - DML's debugger is heavily focused on providing you with comprehensive, easy-to-use, **interactive** (i.e., while a mission is running) and above all meaningful tools to inspect, track, and analyze flags.

There are two parts to the debugger that closely work together:

- **Interactive** – for when you are **running a mission** and look at flags in real-time
- Mission Editor – where you can **set up ‘observers’** for the debugger to pre-load. That way you enter a mission with a primed debugger, ready to swat anything that even remotely looks like a bug.

By adding the debugger to your mission, you gain the ability to instantly

- Inspect and set any flag at will
- Have flags observed and be alerted when they change
- Be alerted when a flag changes to a particular value
- Take a ‘snapshot’ of flags and later compare them with current values
- Set up ‘observers’ that monitor multiple flags

Additionally, DML provides you with classic DML-style zones to **set up a debugging session in ME**: use it to set up observers that automatically load and configure the debugger when the mission starts. That way you can instantly start debugging your flags - without having to set up observers or add flags to them by hand.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

To use the debugger interactively, you must enable the “F10 Map User Marks” mission option.



Godson's (8 years old) impression of a debugger

5.1 Interactive Use during Missions

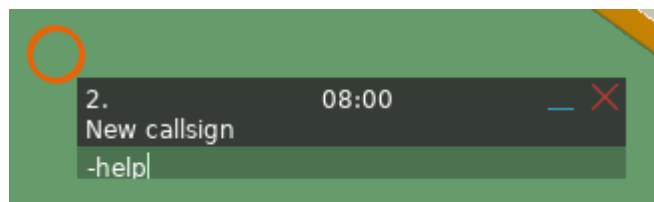
You can issue commands to the debugger through an interactive text entry field (it's normally used for different things, but we re-purpose it in DML)

In a mission that uses the debugger, you go to the Map View (F10), and click on the “Mark Label” button on the tool bar, then click somewhere on the map.



“Mark Label”

A small orange circle appears, with a black title bar and a grey text entry field beneath. To enter a debugger command, click into the text field, and start typing. All debugger command start with a hyphen ('-' a.k.a. minus-sign). In the example on the right, I have entered the ‘-help’ debug command that causes the debugger to give you a list of all interactive commands it knows.



To activate the command, you must click outside the text box.

The debugger instantly responds with a text message:

- an error message when it doesn't fully understand the command. In that case, the Map Mark remains open, and you can correct the command by clicking into it.
- If command is accepted, the Map Mark disappears, and the debugger responds with a text message.

PRO TIP

DCS has a handy ‘MESSAGES HISTORY’ function that you can access by pressing ‘ESC’ during the mission. All messages, including all debugger messages are accessible from here and you can use this read past messages that have already faded from the screen.

5.1.1 Remembering it for you wholesale: -help and -?

Should you ever forget which commands do what, simply entering '-help' or '-?' prompts the debugger to display a short helpful list of all commands and their uses. It's not much but it goes a long way.

```
-show <flagname/observername> -- show current values for flag or observer
-set <flagname> <number> -- set flag to value <number>
-inc <flagname> -- increase flag by 1, changing it
-flip <flagname> -- when flag's value is 0, set it to 1, else to 0

-observe <flagname> [with <observername>] -- observe a flag for change
-o <flagname> [with <observername>] -- observe a flag for change
-forget <flagname> [with <observername>] -- stop observing a flag
-new <observername> [[for] <condition>] -- create observer for flags
-update <observername> [[to] <condition>] -- change observer's condition
-drop <observername> -- remove observer from debugger
-list [<match>] -- list observers [name contains <match>]
-who <flagname> -- all who observe <flagname>
-reset [<observername>] -- reset all or only the named observer

-snap [<observername>] -- create new snapshot of flags
-compare -- compare snapshot flag values with current
-note <your note> -- add <your note> to the text log

-remove <group/unit/object name> -- remove named item from mission

-start -- starts debugger
-stop -- stop debugger

-save [<filename>] -- saves debugger log to storage

-? or -help -- this text
```

We'll go through all the commands below, so there's no need to study above; just nod in appreciation.

5.1.2 Fundamental commands: -show, -set, -flip and -inc

Since they are used to store states and signal changes, flags abound in DCS missions, and even more so in DML-based mission that use flags to communicate between modules. So, it is important to be able to look at flags, and change their value.

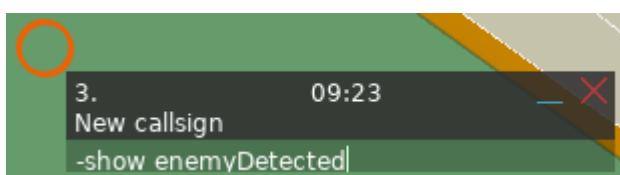
The Debugger has three easily understood commands for that:

- **-show <flagname>**

Accesses the flag <flagname> (e.g., 'enemyDetected') and displays its current value as a text message. Note that all debugger messages are time-stamped so you can (using

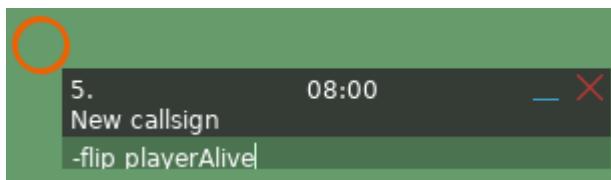
Message History) reconstruct when (in mission time) the flag had that value.:

```
[09:24:57] flag <enemyDetected> : value <0>
```



- **-inc <flagname> and -flip <flagname>**

Most of DML's flags react to a change in a flag's value, meaning that mostly, they aren't looking for a particular value, merely a *change* in value. To conveniently support this, the debugger sports two quality of life features: commands to increment (inc) and 'flip' (when the flag's value is equal to 0, set it to 1, else set it to 0) a flag.

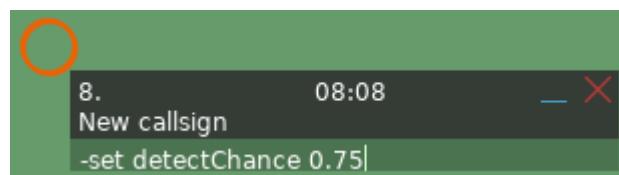


```
*** [08:00:28] debug: flipped flag <playerAlive> from <0> to <1>
```

This is usually sufficient to trigger any input for DML modules that have a Watchflag looking for 'change'.

- **-set <flagname> <value>**

With this you set the flag <flagname> to <value>. Note that values must be numbers. You can enter negative numbers and fractions (e.g., -3.141 is valid)

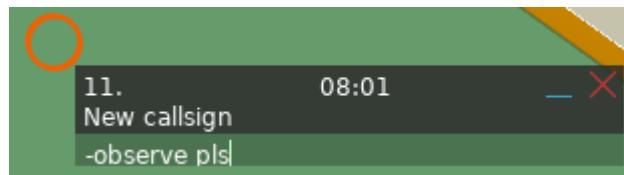


```
*** [08:10:07] debug: set flag <detectChance> to <0.75>
```

5.1.3 Let the Debugger work for you: -observe and -o

On many occasions, it's sufficient to inspect the value of a flag to determine if everything is as you intend them to be. But some issues are more difficult to track down, and instead of constantly checking if a flag has changed its value, it would make more sense to be alerted when a flag that you are interested in changes its value.

And that's what "-observe" (or "-o" for lazy people) does for you: it adds that flag to its internal watchlist. From now on, every time a flag on that watchlist changes, you'll be notified immediately:



Note that there is no limit to the number of flags we can add to the debugger's watchlist, and we'll later look at 'observers' a nice quality of life feature that makes it easy to prepare and manage watchlists both interactively and from inside ME.

```
*** [08:00:21] debugger: now observing <pls> for change with <+DML Debugger+>.
```

For now, we just added 'pls' to the debugger's watchlist, and it patiently examines all flags and waits for them to change. Note that the debugger gives you more information than you probably realized:

- The time when observation started (08:00:21 in mission time)
- Flag name (pls) that it is now observing
- This flag is observed for 'change'
- A mysterious "+DML Debugger+" is watching the flag. We'll get back to this when we talk about observers

So the mission runs, and the flag ‘pls’ suddenly changes. This is what you may see

```
--debug: 08:04:08 -- Flag pls changed from 1 to 0 [+DML Debugger+]
```

The debugger tells you:

- Mission time (08:04:08) when the change was detected. This can be helpful if you later need to establish the order in which the changes happened
- Flag ‘pls’ changed. This is important to know since usually you have the debugger watch multiple flags at the same time
- From 1 – the value that the debugger remembers from the last time it checked
- To 0 – the number it has now
- +DML Debugger+ - the ‘observer’ that noted the change. We’ll come back to that later.

So, whenever you want to see if and when a flag switches values, have the debugger - observe it for you, and you’ll find out as soon as it happens.

5.1.4 Losing interest: -forget

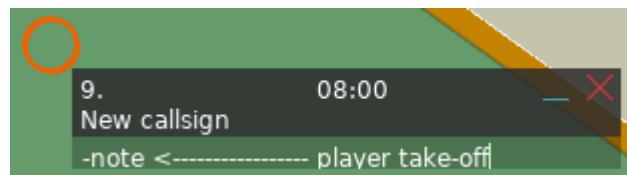
Sometimes, after you have seen your flag of interest change the way you intended, you may no longer need to be notified of its changes, want to focus on other flags, or simply de-clutter the text display on your right side. It’s time to tell the debugger to -forget that flag. When successful, the debugger responds with



```
*** [08:14:48] debugger: no longer observing pls with <+DML Debugger+>.
```

5.1.5 Annotating Message History: -note

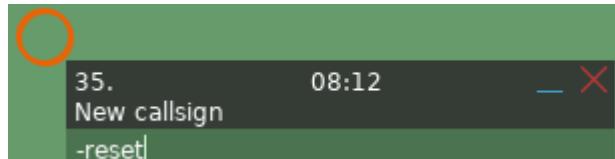
A lot of debugging has to do with looking at the message log (Message History) and finding the relevant entries. Thus, it may be helpful to find points of interest that you marked: a flag value that you found strange, or an event that you want to mark in the log and later find. For this, the debugger has a ‘-note’ command. Anything you type after the command will appear as a text message in the log, making it easy to find later:



```
*** [08:00:24]: <----- player take-off
```

5.1.6 Clearing the Slate: -reset

When you are observing flags, you may occasionally want to bring all flags up to their current state without causing them to trigger a change.



You most commonly do that if you stopped the debugger during a mission, and then want it to continue without creating false positives for the flags it watches (when the debugger is stopped, it no longer tracks flags but continues to listen to interactive commands). To do so, simply use the `-reset` command, and the debugger loads all current values as the start values for any observed flag.

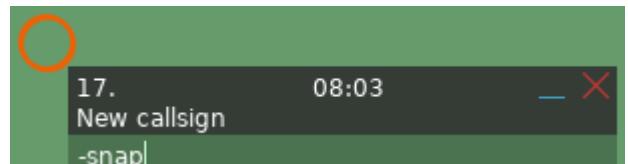
```
*** [08:12:37] debug: reset complete.
```

5.1.7 Getting the BIG picture: `-snap` and `-compare`

Up to now, we have talked about *individual* flags, and how the debugger can help you to track down changes. Often, though, when you design a mission, you have many flags that taken together reflect the state of your mission. Often, mission designers determine that something important should happen, when the state of a mission reaches a certain point, and that point is often expressed with a combination of flags.

For example, you may want to trigger the enemy's retreat if it has lost more than half of its aircraft, their two forward SAM sites are destroyed, and the player still has three aircraft left. All this can (and usually is) expressed via flags. If, during testing you notice that something goes awry, and you are losing track of the complex interdependence of flags, it's time to bring out the big guns: **snapshot!**

A snap shot is nothing more than looking at, and then noting down the values of all the flags that you are observing. This little thing is incredibly useful, because you can then later compare current values against those noted before and see which have changed. Using '`-snap`' you can take snapshot - at any time (as a matter of fact, the debugger automatically takes a snapshot at the very beginning of the mission); just remember that the debugger only keeps the most recent snap shot.

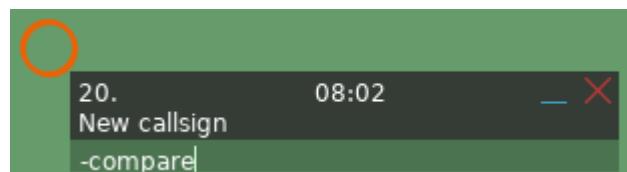


```
*** [08:05:12] debug: new snapshot created, 8 flags.
```

Note that the debugger's response tells you how many flags it is tracking in the snapshot. Make sure that you check this against your expectation, as there are few more frustrating situations when you find out that that one flag you needed to compare wasn't part of the snapshot.

So far, this wasn't impressive. Now comes the cool stuff:

At any time, you can tell the debugger to **'-compare'** the **snapshot to the current situation**. The debugger provides you with a nice table of past (snap) and current (now) values and marks those flags where the value has changed:

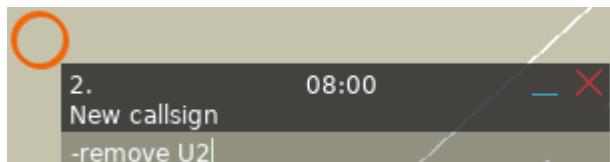


```
*** [08:14:47] debug: comparing snapshot with current flag values
<t2> snap = <0>, now = <0>
<t3> snap = <0>, now = <0>
<pls> snap = <0>, now = <0>
! <t1> snap = <0>, now = <6> !
! <5> snap = <0>, now = <2> !
<4> snap = <0>, now = <0>
<7> snap = <0>, now = <0>
<6> snap = <0>, now = <0>
*** END
```

As you can see, the values for flags “t1” and “5” have changed since the snapshot was taken, and they are marked with an exclamation point (“!”) before and after their data: “t1” was set to 0 in the snapshot and now holds the value of 6, while the (classic, numbered) flag “5” was recorded with a value of 0, and currently is set to 2.

5.1.8 Getting rid of ‘em: -remove

You can use the debugger to remove units, groups or static objects by using the -remove command, and give the groups, unit’s or static object’s name.



Note that the name must be spelled correctly, including upper and lower case.

```
*** remove: removed unit <U2>
```

If the debugger can’t find any Group, Unit or Object that matches the name you gave, it will return an error alerting you to that fact.

5.2 Big Brother: Observers

Most missions can be broken into separate, logical parts, and are designed accordingly. You may, for example, first design Blue's AAA, then ground defenses, then attack groups.

Usually, and especially with DML, they use flags to communicate. The debugger supports this and allows you to group flags with ‘observers’ that even provide integration with Mission Editor to set up a debugging session before the mission runs.

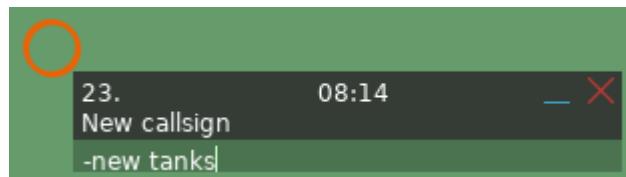
Besides being able to prepare a debug session in ME, observers offer another important ability that makes them tremendously useful in mission debugging: the ability to change what they report. By default, the notify you when a flag’s value changes, just like we’ve seen above.

Observers, however, allow access to the full spectrum of DML’s Watchflag ability, so you can easily tell an observer to only notify you if a flag has changed to a certain value. And **that ability makes using observers a killer feature**, especially in tandem with ME pre-setup: set up an observer that only notifies you if a certain set of flags attains a certain value – the closest you can get to “break points” in DCS without a source-level debugger.

5.2.1 Creating an observer: -new and new for

An “observer” is simply a List for flags that the debugger maintains for you. You can add flags to the list, and a flag can be part of multiple lists. By default, an observer behaves just like you have seen before: report when a flag on the list has changed its value.

You can give observers any name you like, **but to guarantee compatibility with all commands, make sure it does not contain any blanks**. I prefer short and meaningful names, because you will have to re-type the name every time you add a flag to it, and because it’s always displayed with the flag name if the observer notifies you.



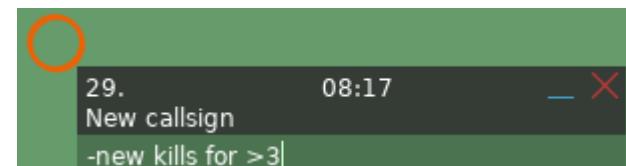
```
*** [08:17:26] debugger: new observer <tanks> for <change>
```

WARNING

Observer names that contain blanks can’t have their condition assigned nor changed.

Note the ‘for <change>’ part in the debugger’s response. This mean that the new observer is set up to trigger (notify you) on “change”. This is the DML “change” Watchflag condition, and it is assigned by default to an observer. Since we did not add a condition when we created the observer with -new, the debugger automatically used “change” for the condition

We can change that: Instead of simply issuing ‘-new <name>’ we can add a DML condition (also called ‘Watchflag Method’) through the optional ‘for <condition>’ to the



observer. All flags that are added to this observer are checked against that condition.

The observer we create with “-new kills for >3” will check all flags that are added to this observer that, when their value changes, their new value is greater than 3, and if so, trigger a notification

```
*** [08:23:14] debugger: new observer <kills> for <>3>
```

NOTE

Remember that flags can be added to multiple observers, so you can **have the debugger check a flag for you against multiple conditions simultaneously**, a great relief when debugging complex missions!

5.2.2 Adding flags to observers: -observe with

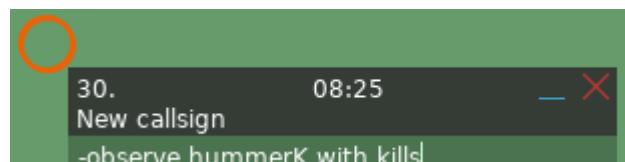
You add flags to an observer with the ‘-observe’ command.

Wait – didn’t we cover ‘observe’ before? Yes – and for a very simple reason: The debugger maintains a default observer, called “+DML Debugger+” that is set up to trigger on change. When you simply -observe a flag without also giving an observer, the debugger simply adds it to its own default observer. We already saw that when we first experimented with observing flags:

```
--debug: 08:04:08 -- Flag pls changed from 1 to 0 [+DML Debugger+]
```

Note the part in the brackets “[+DML Debugger+]” – whenever an observer notifies you of a flag that triggered its condition, the debugger will also tell you which observer spoke up. Here, it was the observer called +DML Debugger+, which is the one that the debugger happens to create when it starts up, and that all flags get assigned to when you don’t give another observer

So how do we add a flag to a specific observer? By adding ‘with’ to the command and add the name of the observer. Let’s add the flag ‘hummerK’ to the recently created observer ‘kills’ that triggers when the value of that flag changes to a value greater than 3.

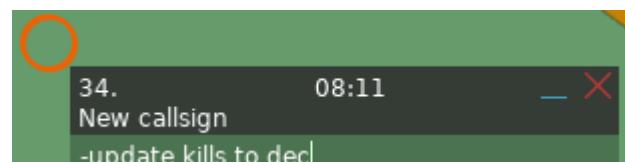


```
*** [08:02:28] debugger: now observing <hummerK> for value >3 with <kills>.
```

5.2.3 Changing an observer’s condition: -update to

Occasionally, you may want to change what an observer is looking for in the flags it is managing.

You can easily do this by using the -update command with the observer’s name and the new DML Watchflag condition (‘Method’). Let’s change the ‘kills’ observer so that it notifies you whenever the last value was larger than the new one – the ‘dec’ condition



```
*** [08:12:33] debugger: updated observer kills to <dec>
```

REMIONDER:

Remember that an observer name that contains blanks cannot have their condition changed. So if you repeatedly get an error whilst trying to change a condition, verify that the observer name is free of blanks.

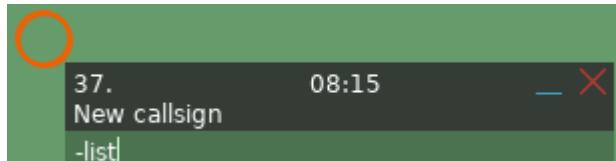
5.2.4 Supported Observer Conditions

Since the debugger is entirely based on DML, it inherits all DML abilities. The observers internally use DML Watchflags to trigger a notification, and hence we can use all “DML Watchflag Methods” in the debugger, just as if we are setting up trigger zones in ME:

- ‘change’ or ‘#’
- ‘off’ or ‘0’ or ‘no’ or ‘false’
- ‘on’ or ‘1’ or ‘yes’ or ‘true’
- ‘inc’
- ‘dec’
- ‘lohi’
- ‘hilo’
- ‘>(number)’ or ‘>(name)’
- ‘=(number)’ or ‘=(name)’
- ‘<(number)’ or ‘<(name)’
- ‘#(number)’ or ‘#(name)’

5.2.5 Show me what you got: -list

When your mission becomes more complex, and especially when you use debugger’s ME integration, where you come into a mission with numerous observers already set up, it’s helpful when you can get an overview of the observers that debugger currently knows, and what they are looking for. A list of all observers and their trigger methods is only a -list command way.



```
*** [08:00:25] listing all observers:  
<Look for pls = 15> for <value =15> (1 flags)  
<Look for t1= 4> for <value =4> (1 flags)  
<rndObserver> for <value change> (5 flags)  
<many flags> for <value change> (8 flags)  
<+DML Debugger+> for <value change> (0 flags)
```

The list above shows a total of 5 active observers, the number of flags they each track, and what they are looking for in the flags they track. For example, the observer called “Look for pls = 15” triggers when a flag it observes changes its value to 15, and it is currently tracking 1 flag.

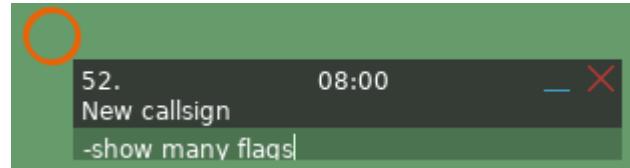
Here we also see our good friend “+DML Debugger+”, the debugger’s own default observer, which currently does not track any flags, and is set up to look for a change in values.

Also note that from the early mission time (25 seconds into the mission) it is obvious that we are looking at pre-set observers created in ME – more on that later.

Finally, note that many observers have a blank in their name yet use complex conditions - another sure indication that they were set up with ME

5.2.6 Show and tell: -show observername

Just like you can tell the debugger to show you the value of a single flag, you can tell it to show you all the flag values that are managed by an observer. Simply use the observer’s name instead of a flag name



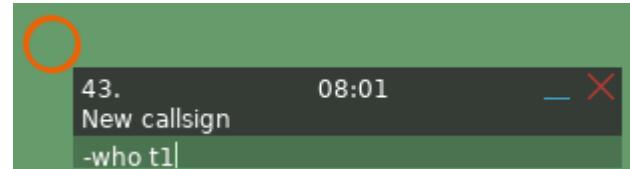
and you’ll get a list of all flags that it is currently watching, along with their current values, and the condition that the observer looks for to alert you to a change:

```
*** [08:01:08] flags observed by <many flags> looking for <value change>
! f:<t1> = <6> [current, state = <0>, HIT!]
f:<t2> = <0> [current, state = <0>]
f:<t3> = <0> [current, state = <0>]
f:<4> = <0> [current, state = <0>]
! f:<5> = <2> [current, state = <0>, HIT!]
f:<6> = <0> [current, state = <0>]
f:<7> = <0> [current, state = <0>]
f:<pls> = <0> [current, state = <0>]
```

Note that the exclamation point in front and the text in square brackets (e.g. [current, state = <0>, HIT!]) are only relevant (and can only occur) when you have disabled the debugger. When current and state values diverge (indicated by the exclamation point and ‘HIT!’ legend), the debugger will produce a notification for that flag when it becomes active. This is so that you can the show command even when the debugger itself is inactive. Use the ‘reset’ command before starting the debugger to avoid unnecessary notifications.

5.2.7 Who’s zoomin’ who: -who

When your mission becomes complex, and you have multiple observers tracking your flags, it may become helfult to find out which observers track a particular flag. This is when you can employ the -who command, which runs through all observers to tell you which observer is checking out that flag, and what it is looking for:

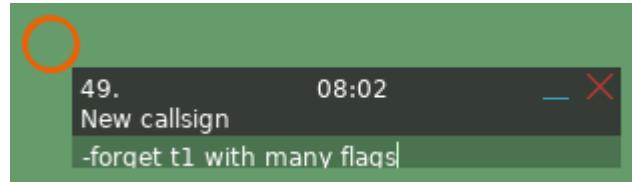


*** [08:00:38] flag <t1> is currently observed by
<Look for t1= 4> looking for <value =4>
<many flags> looking for <value change>

Above response shows that the flag “t1” is observed by two observers: “Look for t1=4” which has the (somewhat predictable) condition “=4”, and the “many flags” observer, which is looking for a change in value.

5.2.8 ... and Forget Me Nots: -forget with

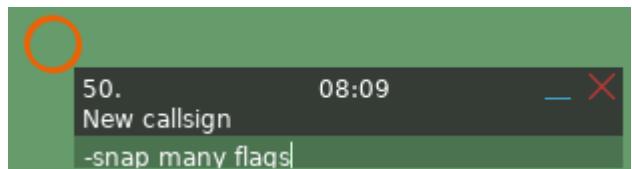
You can selectively ‘forget’ a flag from an observer by adding ‘with’ and the observer’s name to the ‘-forget’ command. This removes the flag from that observer list, and retains it on all other observers that also observe it.



*** [08:01:26] debugger: no longer observing t1 with <many flags>.

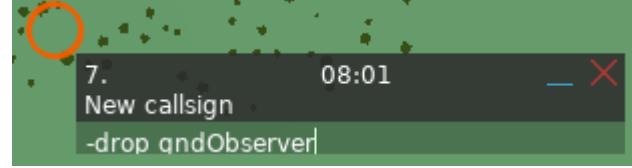
5.2.9 Oh, snap! -snap observername

You can limit a snapshot to only the flags that are on one observer's list. Simply add the observer's name to the `-snap` command, and only the flags observed by that observer are recorded. So when you compare them next time, only that smaller slice of flags are compared to their actual values. When combined with ME-based observer setup, you gain a comfortable, fine-grained and exact analysis tool for your mission.



Observed flag changes troubling you? No

Observed flag changes troubling you? No problem. With -drop you can tell the debugger to instantly forget an observer. The only observer you cannot drop is the instant debugger's own observer, and it will make you that you don't try to drop it.



*** [08:02:25] debugger: dropped observer <gndObserver>

5.2.11 Main switch: -start and -stop

Finally, there are two commands that you can use to turn the debugger on and off at will: -start starts the debugger if it was inactive, and -stop will make it inactive (go on stand-by). When inactive, the debugger itself (the part that tracks flags) is dormant, but the daemon (the part that listens to your commands) is still very much active and responds to all commands. The debuggers observers can still be shown, edited etc.

5.3 Saving the Debugging Log: -save [filename]

The debugger has the ability to write the entire log of the current debugging session to disk so you can then use text tools to analyze the output at a later date, send it to other people (e.g. the mission designer) and compare it to other logs.

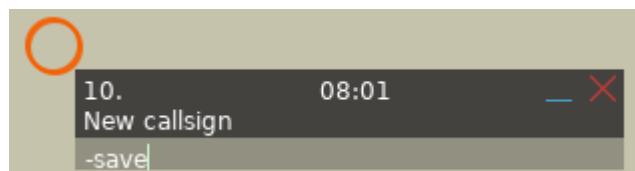
5.3.1 Using -save [filename]

When enabled (see below) you can, at any time, save the log from the current debugging session to your storage as a text file. The contents may look something like this (probably much longer), and reflect all debugging messages:

```
cfx debugger v1.1.0 started.  
interactive debugDemon v1.1.0 started  
    enter -? in a map mark for help  
---debug: 08:00:10 -- Flag t1 changed from 0 to 2 [many flags]  
---debug: 08:00:11 -- Flag 5 changed from 0 to 2 [many flags]  
t1 is now equal to four! [08:00:12]  
---debug: 08:00:12 -- Flag t1 changed from 2 to 4 [many flags]  
---debug: 08:00:15 -- Flag t1 changed from 4 to 6 [many flags]  
*** [08:00:19] debug: inc flag <seq> from <0> to <1>  
---debug: 08:00:19 -- Flag seq changed from 0 to 1 [gndObserver]  
---debug: 08:00:22 -- Flag gnd2 changed from 0 to 1 [gndObserver]  
---debug: 08:00:27 -- Flag gnd1 changed from 0 to 1 [gndObserver]  
---debug: 08:00:32 -- Flag gnd3 changed from 0 to 1 [gndObserver]  
---debug: 08:00:38 -- Flag hog changed from 0 to 1 [gndObserver]
```

Note that the log only contains debug messages, it does not contain the entire message log that is available from the “Messages History” menu.

To save the log, simply issue a “-save” command. If you do not provide a file name with the save command, the file will be saved as “DML Debugger Log.txt” in your current “Missions/” folder (the one DCS uses in saved games).



```
+++debug: log saved to <C:\Users\> Saved Games\DCS\Missions\DML Debugger Log.txt>
```

Note that since the debugger uses DML’s ‘persistence’ module, you can change the save location (important for dedicated servers). Please refer to DML’s ‘persistence’ module documentation for details.

If a previous log of that same name exists at that location, it will be overwritten, replacing the contents with the new log.

You can provide your own file name for the log, e.g. “-save my debug log”, which will save the log to a text file named “my debug log.txt”. Note that if you provide any file extension other than “.txt”, a “.txt” will be added, so you might as well omit it altogether.

5.3.2 How to enable -save

In order to use ‘-save’, you must add the ‘persistence’ module to your mission before the mission loads the debugger, and perform the necessary steps outlined in the ‘persistence’ section to allow a DCS mission to write data to your storage.

5.3.3 Do I have to add persistence?

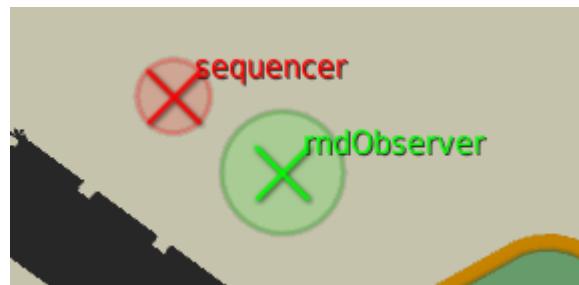
If you do not add ‘persistence’ to your mission, ‘-save’ is disabled and you receive a reminder of that fact every time you try to use ‘-save’. There is no need to add persistence unless you really want to use that feature.

5.4 Integration With Mission Editor (Optional)

Crucially, the debugger provides full integration with ME, so you can set up observers at your leisure in ME, and have them instantly at your fingertips when your mission is mission running.

Without ME integration, you'd spend the first minutes of each bug hunt setting up observers, add flags, and possibly miss crucial flag events that happen at the very beginning of the mission. In ME, on the other hand, you can take all the time in the world to set up observers, edit them to your heart's content, and most importantly, only have to set them up once, for as many mission runs later as you want.

Of course, using this feature is optional and entirely up to you. As soon as you add the debugger to your mission, it's good to go: press 'Fly Mission' and you're off. If you merely intend to hunt down a single, particularly obstinate bug, that may be a viable approach: start debugging right away before you bring in the ME-based debug artillery.



Note that using debugger ME integration is trivial when you already have worked with DML before but may feel awkward otherwise.

5.4.1 Creating Observers in ME

If you have any experience with DML, the next step is not only familiar, it also takes only a few seconds: it uses standard trigger zones and an attribute name that you'll never forget. If you have never worked with DML, these steps may feel strange at first, but they will become natural soon.

To create an observer in ME, simply

- Create a Trigger Zone anywhere on the map. We use the trigger zone's 'attributes' that we can edit directly in ME to pass information to the debugger, so the location of the zone is irrelevant. Place it where it's convenient to access and not in the way of other mission details. Likewise, the zone's size and color aren't relevant, choose any.
- Add a new attribute to the zone by clicking on the Add button in ME's Trigger Zone editor (the one that opens when you create, or click on, a trigger zone)
- Rename this attribute 'debug?' (do not forget the question mark at the end). This marks the zone as an observer, and when the debugger starts up when you run the mission, it reads all the data you put into the 'value' field.
- Then add the flag names that you want that observer to observe as values to the attribute. You can list as many flags as you like, and the individual flags must be

Name	Value

Name	Value	Remove
debug?	seq, gnd1, gnd2, gnd3, goHome	

separated by commas. If you are using classic, numbers-only flag name, you can also add entire ranges (e.g., 10-17) of flags as part of the list. In the example on the left, we have added the flags ‘seq’, ‘gnd1’, ‘gnd2’, ‘gnd3’ and ‘goHog’ as flags to this observer.

The observer inherits the zone’s name as its own name in the debugger, and you’ll immediately see it with -list when you start the mission.

You can also set the observer’s trigger condition with the “debugTriggerMethod” (or one of its synonyms, like “sayWhen”) attribute. It defaults to ‘change’ but any

Name	Value	
debug?	pls	
debugTriggerMethod	=15	

DML Watchflag Method is valid. Please be advised that terms like “DML Watchflags” and “synonym” are DML parlance that will be inaccessible to you until you try your hand at DML. You can use the debugger without knowing that stuff, you merely can’t max out its usefulness like DML warriors can.

WARNING:

Remember that the interactive debugger disallows you to change the condition for an observer with a name that contains blanks. If you intend to be able to change an observer’s trigger condition while the mission is running, do not use blanks in the trigger zone’s name.

5.4.2 Dedicated and Stacked Zones, tracking local flags

While it’s a good idea to create dedicated (stand-alone) ‘debug zones’, i.e., Trigger Zones that only use the “debug?” attributes, you can easily add the “debug?” to other zones and “stack” the debug module onto other DML modules that use the zone.

This may be not as clean as a dedicated debug zone, but it is an easy fix if you want to quickly debug a particular zone’s flag, especially if that zone uses local flags that are difficult to access otherwise.

In the example to the right, we have stacked the ‘debug?’ attribute with a

Name	Value	
radioMenu	Pulser	
itemA	Start Pulser	
A!	*startPulse	
itemB	Stop Pulser	
B!	stopPulse	
debug?	*startPulse	

“radioMenu” module. the debugger now automatically tracks the local “*startPulse” flag with this zone’s observer, and a notification appears whenever the player chooses the “Start Pule” radio item (read the RadioMenu module description to find out how it works).

5.5 Adding Debugger to your mission

The debugger can be added to your mission in two different ways:

- Stand-alone (for non-DML-enhanced Mission)
- As standard module for a DML-enhanced Mission

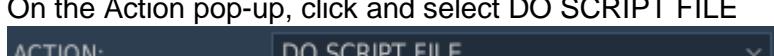
The stand-alone version is provided for those who have never ventured into the fun world of DML enhanced mission scripting, and simply need a debugger NOW!!!!one please. If you are already using DML, please use the DML-version. The stand-alone version may lack features of the DML version and is not maintained as regularly.

5.5.1 Stand-Alone (NO DML in your mission)

I don't need to tell you that you are missing out on a lot of fun, but let's get this thing rolling for you as quickly as possible. To add the debugger (standalone) to your mission

- Open the mission in ME
- Now, add a trigger to your mission:

- Click on the set rules for trigger icon 
- Under the Triggers heading, click on the NEW button
- From the new fields that show up, click on Type: 1 ONCE pop-up menu and change that to 4 MISSION START

- On the far right under the Action Heading, click NEW
- On the Action pop-up, click and select DO SCRIPT FILE

- Click on the OPEN button and select "Mission Debugger.lua"
- Save the mission.

From now on the debugger runs whenever the mission starts. You'll know that the debugger is active when you see the following text appear upon starting the mission:

```
interactive debugDemon v1.0.0 started
enter -? in a map mark for help
```

Note that the stand-alone debugger supports adding observers from ME just like the DML version.

5.5.2 DML-enhanced Missions

If you are already using DML in your mission, adding the debugger is straightforward. Just add theDebugger.lua like you would any other module and make sure that you are also using 'dcsCommon' and 'cfxZones'. It would be strange if your mission didn't already include them, so it will take you roughly 10 seconds to add the debugger. Make sure you are using the newest versions of dcsCommon and cfxZones.

WARNING

NEVER ADD A STAND-ALONE DEBUGGER INTO A DML-ENHANCED MISSION!

The stand-alone version may lag a few versions behind, and usually comes packaged with older versions of dcsCommon and cfxZones that *will* conflict with your DML-modules.

5.6 Bug Hunt - A Live demo

So let's run the debugger through its paces. Fire up DCS ME and load the mission "demo – Bug Hunt".

We use this demo mission to explore many features of the debugger. Some of the examples may be a bit contrived, but they should give you a good indication how you can get the best out of the debugger: both in ME and in your mission. Oh yeah... it's also show-boating some of DML's abilities, but what the heck. I wanted to have some fun, too

This demo documentation takes a slightly different approach from most of DML's demo-docs: we are looking at individual use cases instead of the entire demo.

5.6.1 Please ignore me: Self Test

Run the mission, enter the Frog's cockpit and do nothing. After a few seconds, a few lines of text should appear on the right side, reporting some flag changes. This is a small self-test added to this mission to check the debugger's integrity. This is part of the **mission**, set up using ME triggers; the self test is **not** part of the debugger. If you want to test the debugger in your missions, you'll have to add your own tests. The object of this self test is to verify that the debugger version that is added to this mission is working correctly. After it ran successful you can safely ignore it. I'm merely using it as a quick quality check.

5.6.2 Observing and setting flags to debug your mission

Let's imagine a Herc transport flight 'Elvis' from Batumi to Kobuleti that the player is tasked to protect. We can activate the Herc with a flag, which prompts it to spawn on Batumi runway 31 and takes off. When the transport has left the airport zone, we spawn an aggressor. Should the Herc survive and land at Kobuleti, the mission is won.



To control the mission, we are using the following flags:

- *goElvis*
A flag that activates the Herc on the runway. It'll then take off after a brief interval
- *elvisLeaving*
This flag turns true when the transport ‘Elvis’ leaves the ‘Home Plate’ zone around Batumi (All of group outside). Elvis is airborne at that point and turns towards Kobuleti. When this flag turns true, we want to spawn a red Albatross (the albatross is harmless so we can test the remainder of the logic, it will be switched out later for a more dangerous flight)
- *elvisSafe*
This flag turns true when the transport arrives at Kobuleti. It signals a successful conclusion of this mission. Remaining attackers should turn home, and some congratulatory message should be displayed. We simply trigger a message in the demo
- *goAlba*
A flag that activates the aggressor Albatross. This flag turns true when Elvis has been activated with *goElvis* and *elvisLeaving* is true

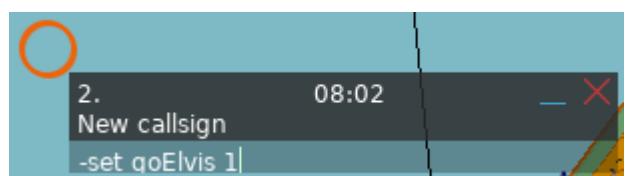
So, let's run the mission. Initially all seems well: We have a cool Radio Menu wired into flag ‘*goElvis*’ (provided by a DML radio menu zone), but we will be using the debugger just because we can.

Start the mission and hop into the Hog or Frog. Look outside. A couple of vehicles around a hog (we'll get to that cool animation later). The runway is clear, the sky is clear. All correct so far

A couple of messages start crawling on the screen, from some pre-set observers that we ignore for the moment (we'll get to those later)

Now let's activate the Herc. We could use the radio menu Other→Elvis→Start Elvis (which would increment *goElvis* from 0 to 1), but we want to use the debugger to brute-force this.

We go to F10, place a mark (put it near Batumi runway 31 so you can see what is happening on the map as well) and enter “-set *goElvis* 1”. Immediately we are rewarded by the Herc appearing on the runway.



So all is good. Except – no. When we step through all aircraft, we notice that the Albatross, too, has spawned. Why?

“-show *goAlba*” reveals that indeed, *goAlba* has been triggered:

```
[08:00:20] flag <goAlba> : value <1>
```

Ok, how did that happen?

Restart the mission. Now, **before we spawn elvis**, we “-observe *goAlba*”

```
*** [08:00:15] debugger: now observing <goAlba> for value change with <+DML Debugger+>.
```

Now start Elvis with “-set *goElvis* 1”

And... As soon as we set goElvis to 1, the debugger reports a change to goAlba: it goes from 0 to 1, triggering the Albatros to spawn.

```
*** [08:00:47] debug: set flag <goElvis> to <1>
--debug: 08:00:48 -- Flag goAlba changed from 0 to 1 [+DML Debugger+]
```

Why????--

goAlbatros is supposed to turn to true only when Elvis exists (goElvis was given, which causes it to spawn), and elvisLeaving is true (which can only turn true when the unit is outside of the home plate zone).

Let's have a look. Restart the mission, and "-observe goAlba" as before. But since we are now suspicious, let's also examine "elvisLeaving" before we spawn Elvis. We expect this value to be zero, since Elvis hasn't left yet.

CONDITIONS
FLAG IS TRUE ("goElvis")
FLAG IS TRUE ("elvisLeaving")

6. 08:00
New callsign
-show elvisLeaving|

```
[08:01:31] flag <elvisLeaving> : value <1>
```

Ouch. It's 1, not 0 as we had expected!

In hindsight that's correct. elvisLeaving is defined as

CONDITIONS
ALL OF GROUP OUT OF ZONE (Elvis, Home Plate)

Since the Elvis group has not yet spawned, it's also entirely outside of the home plate zone, and the flag immediately goes to 1. So here's your exercise: How would you fix that?

5.6.3 Setting flags to skip/advance mission stages

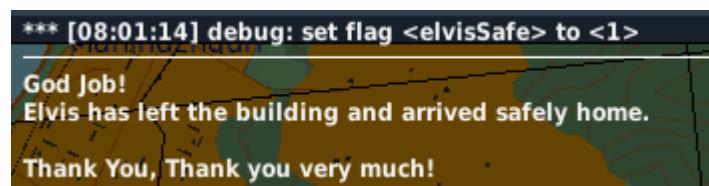
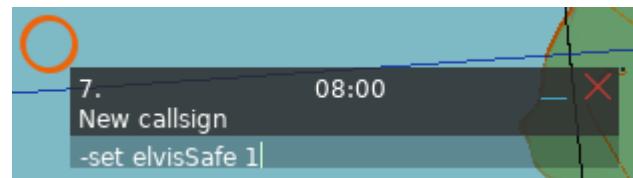
The next use case is so obvious that I only mention it for completeness:

A common mission design pattern is to divide a complex mission into smaller, more manageable 'phases' like start-up, assemble, ingress, attack, egress, and recovery. For the mission to know which phase it is in (i.e., which action it needs to trigger), flags are used. Using a debugger to trigger these phases whenever you want can save you a lot of time, because you no longer must successfully navigate all previous phases. Simply set up the flags to the values you know they need to have, and then trigger that phase [pro tip: also try to intentionally set up flags so they *don't* match the phase's expectation, trigger it and see if it can deal with this gracefully – a technique called negative-testing)]

In our example, the flag goElvis starts the phase where Herc takes off, and when goAlba becomes true, the enemy attack phase is triggered. A final phase is triggered when the Herc arrives at Kobuleti: the mission is successful.

So let's debug this phase without having to wait for the Herc to arrive:

The final phase starts when the Herc arrives at Kobuleti and this causes the elvisSafe flag to turn to 1. Since we have a debugger all we need to do is brute-force the flag. We can do this immediately at mission start – we don't even need to start the Herc for this.



So, the final phase works correctly – except for thy typo in “Good” all is working well.

5.6.4 Using Observers and snapshots to debug your mission

It's usually the small things that make the difference between a good and a great mission. You can have a good mission where the AI takes off and attacks ground forces. And you can sweat the details, and add stuff that doesn't change the mission, but how it's experienced. Here's a small detail that adds flavor to a mission.

We have a Hog sitting on the ground, tasked and ready to go. But now, just to add some flavor, it's also surrounded by some support vehicles. When it's time to go, the vehicles all withdraw, and the plane starts taxiing to the runway.



To add this to your mission, you'd likely set up a group each for the ground vehicles. Each group has a move order, and that order is suspended with a 'Hold' order until a flag is set. When it's time to go, you set the flags that allow the vehicles to move, and when the AI aircraft is no longer blocked, it starts moving. The specifics here aren't important [except that it's trivial with DML, and a headache without], and we see that we have a number of flags that all must change before the plane can move.

In our demo, the three groups Ground-1 through Ground-3 are controlled with flags 'gnd1', 'gnd2' and 'gnd3'. We are also using a flag 'hog' to activate the hog [Note: we are using some *serious* DML magic in this example that reduces this task to little more than child's play. See the notes at the end of this section]. The entire sequence is started when flag 'seq' changes its value to 1.

So, we need to make sure that once flag ‘seq’ changes, flags gnd1, gnd2, gnd3 all fire before flag ‘hog’ fires. To do this, we set up our own observer to look at these flags and report their change. Let’s assume that, somehow, behind the scenes our mission has some logic to delay changing these flags, one after the other, and perhaps even randomize them so the order isn’t always the same (DML does this for us in this mission, but let’s focus on the big picture).

So, let’s create an observer and then start the sequence. Run the mission, and issue the following commands:

- -drop -gndObserver [NOTE: this is necessary because this observer already exists from a ME pre-set; we merely erase and then re-build it manually to hammer home the message just how much simpler ME pre-sets are]
- -new gndObserver [creates a new observer named ‘gndObserver’ that triggers on value change]
- -o seq with gndObserver [adds seq to gndObserver. -o is short for -observe]
- -o gnd1 with gndObserver
- -o gnd2 with gndObserver
- -o gnd3 with gndObserver
- -o hog with gndObserver

We now have an observer that looks at these flags for you. Let’s make sure it’s set up correctly with “-show gndObserver”

```
*** [08:21:06] flags observed by <gndObserver> looking for <value change>
f:<seq> = <0> [current, state = <0>]
f:<gnd1> = <0> [current, state = <0>]
f:<gnd2> = <0> [current, state = <0>]
f:<gnd3> = <0> [current, state = <0>]
f:<hog> = <0> [current, state = <0>]
```

Now, we want to make sure that all these flags fire once we hit ‘seq’, and the easiest way to do that is with a snapshot, so we also take a snapshot of this observer:

“-snap gndObserver”

```
*** [08:21:13] debug: new snapshot created, 5 flags.
```

Five (5) flags are in the snapshot, which tracks with our expectation, so we are good to go.

We now start the sequence, change to F2 outside view, look at the vehicles and hold our breath:

“-set seq 1”

Text messages start appearing, and vehicles start moving away from the hog!

Then the Hog comes to life, and starts moving!

(you may also have noticed something strange: labels suddenly appear when units come to life – this is another DML feature that we ignore. Just marvel at the possibilities you have when you used DML)

```
*** [08:01:23] debug: set flag <seq> to <1>
---debug: 08:01:24 -- Flag seq changed from 0 to 1 [gndObserver]
---debug: 08:01:26 -- Flag gnd2 changed from 0 to 1 [gndObserver]
---debug: 08:01:30 -- Flag gnd1 changed from 0 to 1 [gndObserver]
---debug: 08:01:36 -- Flag gnd3 changed from 0 to 1 [gndObserver]
---debug: 08:01:42 -- Flag hog changed from 0 to 1 [gndObserver]
```

So we see that yes, the sequence appears to be somewhat random (gnd2-gnd1-gnd3), and they all happen before hog, which is good. Since the number of flags is rather small and easy to remember, we also know that all flags have fired that should have fired. But imagine you have a whole big list of flags that all should have changed by now.

That is when we use the snapshot compare command to get a nice overview, with helpful marks on those flags that have changed:

"-compare"

```
*** [08:02:26] debug: comparing snapshot with current flag values
! <gnd3> snap = <0>, now = <1> !
! <gnd2> snap = <0>, now = <1> !
! <hog> snap = <0>, now = <1> !
! <seq> snap = <0>, now = <1> !
! <gnd1> snap = <0>, now = <1> !
*** END
```

And yes, indeed. All flags in the snapshot have an exclamation point, as we expected. So, this startup sequence seems to work, the debugger has confirmed that for us.

5.6.5 Setting up Observers in ME

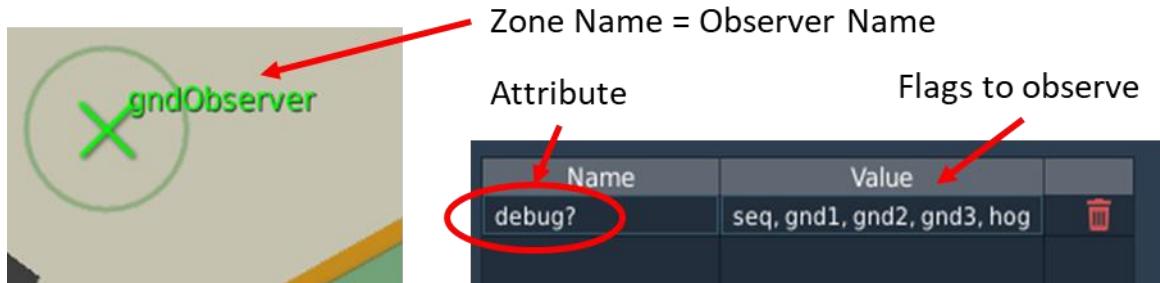
In the previous section, we manually built 'gndObserver', which we then used to track several flags and observed how they changed over time.

While building the observer, you also probably noticed that building even a small observer engendered some tedium, bordering on annoying. Moreover, it's OK to do it once, but having to do this multiple times is a truly dread-inducing proposal. Which you will have to do, because when you restart the mission, all previous settings are gone, making you start all over. Perish that thought. In an unmarked grave.

That's why The Debugger, having full access to DML's zone manipulation capabilities, gives you the option to pre-set observers from within ME. Not only is setting up observes in ME lightning fast, it also persists – you save it with your mission and the observers are ready for you when the mission starts.

All you need to do to build an observer is to create a trigger zone anywhere on the map. In the trigger zone editor, change the name of that trigger zone to something you like – this will be the name of the observer, so be careful not to include blanks in the name if you want to be able to change the trigger condition during the live mission.

Once you have set the name, add a new attribute: set the attribute's name to "debug?". This will tell DML that it should pass the value of this attribute to the debugger. So, accordingly, set the value to a list of the flags that you want to observe: seq, gnd1, gnd2, gnd3, hog



Look at the (green) trigger zone 'gndObserver' in the mission. You see it's exactly set up like I described above: 'debug?' attribute with the flag names listed. If you run the mission now and "-show gndObserver", you'll get the exact same information as the observer we built with so much effort from within the live debugger.

5.6.6 Debugging local flags, flag concurrency

DML supports zone-local flags – flags that are “only visible inside the zone itself”. Of course, these flags aren't really inaccessible outside of the zone, they are merely difficult to access by accident, which is good enough for mission design purpose. As documented, a zone-local flag merely has a unique name composed out of the zone's name, an asterisk, and then the local name. The debugger knows how to handle zone-local variables and can track them.

The easiest way to track a zone-local variable is by adding the 'debug?' attribute to the zone that is home to the local variable. That also conveniently creates an observer for that zone, giving you full access to that flag when the mission starts.

Let's inspect the mission's 'sequencer' zone, the zone that directs the show of vehicles moving away from the Hog.

What we see are a pulser stacked on a flag randomizer. The pulser is started with 'seq' (very little surprise there) which feeds into 'startPulse?'. Once the pulser starts, it sends signals to the local '*go' flag on the pulse! Output.

That local flag feeds into the randomizer's rndPoll? input and triggers a new random cycle.

Note also the 'method' attribute, which is shared between the pulser and randomizer, setting both output methods to 'inc' (a pulser usually would default to 'flip').

Name	Value	
pulse!	*go	✖
pulses	4	✖
time	4-7	✖
startPulse?	seq	✖
RND!	gnd1, gnd2, gnd3	✖
rndPoll?	*go	✖
remove	yes	✖
rndDone!	hog	✖
onStart	no	✖
method	inc	✖

So, let's track the local *go" variable in the debugger. All we need to do is add a "debug?" attribute, with "*go" (with the asterisk) as value. Save the mission and run it. The debugger loads the new observer and immediately activates it.

Name	Value
debug?	*go
pulse!	*go
pulses	4
time	4.7

Let's start the sequence with 'set seq 1' and see what happens

As soon as we 'set seq 1', gndObserver (which is also active since it's preloaded from the mission as well) response with a note that seq has changed.

We also see that flag *go (the local) flag has gone from 0 to 1. The only way to know which zone this flag belongs to is by looking at the end of the line, and we see the observer's name (which matches the zone name) in square brackets: [sequencer]. So, we know that sequencer's local go flag went from 0 to 1

```
*** [08:01:23] debug: set flag <seq> to <1>
---debug: 08:01:23 -- Flag seq changed from 0 to 1 [gndObserver]
---debug: 08:01:25 -- Flag *go changed from 0 to 1 [sequencer]
---debug: 08:01:26 -- Flag gnd3 changed from 0 to 1 [gndObserver]
---debug: 08:01:32 -- Flag gnd2 changed from 0 to 1 [gndObserver]
---debug: 08:01:32 -- Flag *go changed from 1 to 2 [sequencer]
---debug: 08:01:39 -- Flag gnd1 changed from 0 to 1 [gndObserver]
---debug: 08:01:39 -- Flag *go changed from 2 to 3 [sequencer]
---debug: 08:01:43 -- Flag hog changed from 0 to 1 [gndObserver]
---debug: 08:01:43 -- Flag *go changed from 3 to 4 [sequencer]
```

Looking down further we see that signals on *go always coincide with signals on the flags gndX and hog. Which brings us to another important observation:

Since we know that signals flow from the pulser to the randomizer, and the randomizer then sends out signals on the randomized flags, we know that the *go signal always happens before the randomizer's output signal.

The record, however, seems to indicate otherwise. In the amber box on the right, signal "gnd2" is listed before "*go", making it seem as if it happened before

```
---debug: 08:01:25 -- Flag *go changed from 0 to 1 [sequencer]
---debug: 08:01:26 -- Flag gnd3 changed from 0 to 1 [gndObserver]
---debug: 08:01:32 -- Flag gnd2 changed from 0 to 1 [gndObserver]
---debug: 08:01:32 -- Flag *go changed from 1 to 2 [sequencer]
```

*go. It did not – This is merely a result of how the debugger works, and the time “resolution” it has. By default, the debugger samples all flags four times per second, and everything that happens in that same time slice it reports as concurrent – it does not know what came first, and simply reports changes in the order it walks through the flags. Since gndObserver's list of flags is worked down before starting on sequencer's, it reports gnd2's change before it reports *go's.

Therefore, when you try to establish the order in which flags are set, always consider the observer's reporting time (red box). **If two signals have the same time stamp, you can't determine which signal came first** – to the debugger they happened concurrently.

Note also that simply increasing the debuggers ‘time resolution’ (for example by slimming the time slice to 0.1 seconds, there is no guarantee that this can give better results: many DML modules run on the same clock, and therefore there’s a good likelihood that the time interval between the pulser sending its message and the randomizer responding to the signal is less than 0.001 seconds. Keep the debugger’s resolution at 0.25 seconds (or more) to keep a good balance between accuracy and performance.

5.6.7 Now hear this: debugMsg and sayWhen observer attributes

When you set up observers in ME with the debug? attribute, you can change the message that the observer outputs. In addition to all special formatting that the messenger module supports, you can also use the following text wildcards:

- <c> for the flag’s current value (the value it has now)
- <p> for the flag’s previous value (the value it had last time the debugger sampled it)
- <f> for the flag’s name.

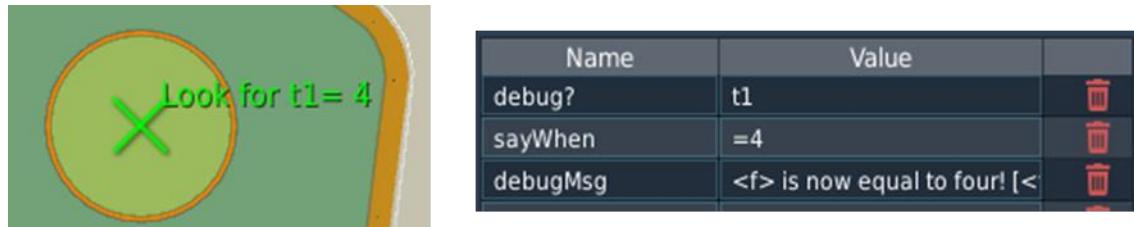
By default, the debugMsg attribute defaults to

```
“---debug: <t> -- Flag <f> changed from <p> to <c> [<z>]”
```

which returns a message similar to

```
---debug: 08:00:12 -- Flag t1 changed from 2 to 4 [many flags]
```

Look at the green “Look for t1=4” trigger zone



It has two additional attributes. debugMsg is set to to a different format than normal:

```
“<f> is now equal to four! [<t>]”
```

That is what triggers the output

```
t1 is now equal to four! [08:00:12]
```

Which sticks out like a sore thumb – intentionally. You can use this feature to make an observer’s notifications pop out from the other notifications so you can quickly home in on them.

Note

that the only way to change an observer’s message is through ME, the debug demon has no such ability.

This zone also changes the observer's trigger condition from the default 'change' Watchflag condition to "=4" by using 'sayWhen'. This observer will therefore only notify you when the flag's value changes, *and* the new value is equal to 4 (see DML Watchflag definitions).

5.6.8 Mission Discussion: What DML does in this demo

While this mission's focus is on The Debugger, it's also a nice showcase for some of the modules that come with DML, and what they can do.

Of particular interest are three modules that we are using for the start-up sequence of the ground vehicles and AI-controlled hog:

Impostors

All the vehicles and the A-10 are turned into impostors (static objects) when the mission begins (onStart is true). This saves some CPU, and allows us to 'pause' the Hog's orders. The impostors are turned into AI-controlled units with their reanimate? Input, which the "gnd1", "gnd2", "gnd3" and "hog" flags are wired into.

Name	Value
impostor?	gimp
reanimate?	gnd1
onStart	yes

The A-10 also has a 'blink' attribute of 0.1 seconds that briefly removes it from the game before replacing the static object with the AI-controlled unit to avoid DCS's internal airfield slot controller assigning the A-10 a different starting position.

Name	Value
impostor?	imp
reanimate?	hog
onStart	yes
blink	0.1

The impostors also will respond on their impostor? Inputs (flags "gimp" and "imp"), so if you were to issue '-set gimp 1' on the debugger after they have moved, you can turn them all back to static objects.

The Vehicle Startup Sequence

To make the mission look more natural, we want the three vehicles leave the Hog before the hog comes to life. To add some panache, we want to randomize the order in which the vehicles start moving, and also somewhat randomize the time between the vehicle's departure.

This is done with two modules: a Pulser that sends out several pulses with variable timing between them, and a Randomizer that randomly picks a flag from a list of flags and then sends a signal on that flag.

We also stack the two modules on the same zone 'sequencer', allowing us to use a local flag "*go" to communicate between Pulser and Randomizer without polluting this missions flag name space.



The Pulser

We want to start three vehicles, and the hog, making it a total of four (4) pulses that we want the pulser to produce for us. This is reflected by the 'pulses' attribute which switches it from the default 'infinite' to 4.

We also want a the time between

Name	Value
pulse!	*go
pulses	4
time	4-7
onStart	no
startPulse?	seq

individual activation to vary between 4 and 7 seconds, and that is what we find as value for the ‘time’ attribute (again replacing the default 1 fixed interval). We also want the pulser to wait until it’s started (onStart is set to false), and we send a signal to start on the startPulse? Input via the now very familiar ‘seq’ flag.

Finally, since we know that the only recipient of the Pulser’s signals is the Randomizer that’s also housed in the same zone, we use a zone-local flag “*go” to send output from the pulse! output.

The Randomizer

We store the flags for all the ground vehicles in the RND! array, allowing the randomizer to pick one each time it receives a signal on the rndPoll?” input, which is wired to the Pulser via local

RND!	gnd1, gnd2, gnd3	
rndPoll?	*go	
remove	yes	
rndDone!	hog	

“*go”. We use the Randomizer’s ability to randomly ‘choose and discard’ flags from its flags (remove = true), so that after sufficient poll requests have been received, it runs dry. We also use its ability to signal that all flags have been ‘used up’ via the ‘rndDone!’ output. When this happens, we know that all vehicles have received their ‘reanimate?’ signal, and we can wire this signal directly into the Hog’s Impostor reanimate? input, ensuring that it’s always the Hog that starts last.

Shared flags and attributes

Since we are stacking modules in a zone, we can take advantage of shared attributes and flags, and we do so here. First, we use the zone-local “*go* flag to pass signals from the Pulser to the Randomizer.

Also, we are using the shared attribute name ‘method’ to set both the Pulser’s

method	inc	
--------	-----	--

and the Randomizer’s output method to “inc”. Although, strictly speaking this isn’t necessary (the default output methods for the Pulser (“flip”) and Randomizer (“inc”) would have worked), we include it in this demo just to show off.

5.6.9 Dependencies

The debugger requires dcsCommon and cfxZones

5.6.10 ME Integration (reference)

The debugger consists of two separate parts: the interface daemon (which looks for, and intercepts user input), and the debugger itself, which is a DML module like any other. As a DML module, it uses trigger zones and attributes, and of course also supports a config zone.

5.6.10.1 Debug Zones (for setting up Observers)

Name	Description
debug?	List the flag names that the debugger is to observe. All flags listed here are accessible from the debugger under the observer with the same name as the trigger zone MANDATORY
triggerMethod debugTriggerMethod inputMethod sayWhen	Trigger condition for the flags (the observer's "condition" that triggers a report for the flag) Defaults to 'change'
method outputMethod debugMethod	DML Method for the debugger's output flags. Rarely used. Defaults to "inc"
notify!	DML flag to bang! when a flag listed in debug? triggers
debugMsg	Message to output when a flag listed in debug? triggers. Supports wildcards, including <f> for the flag name that triggered, and <z> for the zone name. Note that this allows you to provide individual message formatting per observer , a feature that is not available for the interactive debugger. Defaults to "---debug: <t> -- Flag <f> changed from <p> to <c> [<z>]" which results in a message similar to ---debug: 08:00:12 -- Flag t1 changed from 2 to 4 [many flags]

Supports DML Flags

Supports Watchflags

Supports zone-local verbosity

5.6.10.2 Debugger Configuration

To configure the debugger module via a configuration zone,

- Place a Trigger Zone somewhere in ME
- Name it "debuggerConfig" (note: name must match exactly)
- Add any of the following attributes to this zone:

Name	Description
verbose	Show even more debugging information. Default is false
active	If the debugger is active on start-up. Defaults to true (debugger is active at mission start)
on?	DML Watchflag to activate/start the debugger if it's inactive/stopped Defaults to <none>
off?	DML Watchflag to deactivate/stop the debugger if it's active/running Defaults to <none>

reset?	DML Watchflag that when triggered causes the debugger to re-baseline all flag values with current values. Useful when you are about to start the debugger after it was deactivated to avoid false positives. Defaults to <none>
state?	DML Watchflag that when triggered causes the debugger to log all currently observed flags and their values Defaults to <none>
ups	Number of updates per second, the “time resolution” of the debugger. Defaults to 4

Notes:

The interactive part of the debugger (it's daemon) offers superior access to most of the API exposed by the config zone. The ability to control the debugger with flags is provided mostly for Lua-scripts and exceedingly rare cases where a mission event should trigger a debugging feature.

Note also that you should only change the debugger's ups (samples per second) to values larger than 4 when absolutely necessary (hint: it's usually not necessary).

De-activating the debugger does **not** deactivate the debugger daemon.

The debugger daemon has no configurable options.

cf/x Dynamic Mission Library
for DCS

PART III: FOUNDATION API

6 Foundation API

This section contains a detailed, comprehensive reference of those modules that have extensive API:

- dcsCommon – the bedrock foundation. Mission designers use it in all their scripts.
- cfxPlayer – the module that creates player events and maintains a DB of player units and players
- cfxZones – the module for ME integration and intelligent zone management

Note that this Part contains information that is **only necessary for mission designers that want to access DML via Lua**. If you do not intend to write Lua scripts yourself, you can safely skip this section.

6.1 dcsCommon API

This is the API for the foundation's most fundamental module, dcsCommon

Reflects API version 2.6.6

6.1.1 Miscellaneous Methods

Miscellaneous methods that are helpful for odd things like random, headings, conversions etc.

6.1.1.1 *libCheck(testingFor, requiredLibs)*

returns true if all modules listed in requiredLibs are defined

6.1.1.2 *smallRandom(theNum)*

Returns a random number. Useful for random numbers lower than 50 since DCS's random generator is based on Perlin, which returns a sequence of random numbers that are random on average, but close together.

6.1.1.3 *randomBetween(loBound, hiBound)*

Returns a random number between loBound and hiBound. loBound and hiBound must be >= 1. Use it to "pick a number in range"

6.1.1.4 *randomDegrees()*

returns a random number between 0 and 359

6.1.1.5 *randomPercent()*

returns a random number between 0 and 100

6.1.1.6 *randomPointOnPerimeter(sourceRadius, x, z)*

returns a random point (xr, 0, zr) on the circle placed at (x, 0, z) with radius sourceRadius

6.1.1.7 *randomPointInCircle(sourceRadius, innerRadius, x, z)*

returns a random point (xr, 0, zr) inside a circle located at (x, 0, z) with sourceRadius, and that is at least innerRadius distant from center (x, 0, y)

6.1.1.8 *distFlat(p1, p2)*

Returns the 'flat' distance (distance as measured on a map, ignoring any height) between two points p1 and p2. Input points 3D (x, y, z)

6.1.1.9 *dist(point1, point2)*

Returns distance between two 3D points point1 and point2

6.1.1.10 *delta(name1, name2)*

Returns the distance between two objects named name1 and name2

6.1.1.11 *lerp(a, b, x)*

Returns a value between a and b, with x indicating ‘how far from a towards b’ in percent.

Example: lerp(10, 20, 0.5) is the value 50% percent between 10 and 20, returning 15

6.1.1.12 *bearingFromAtoB(A, B)*

Returns the bearing (in rad) A lies in relation to B (looking from B)

6.1.1.13 *bearingInDegreesFromAtoB(A, B)*

Returns the bearing (in degrees) A lies in relation to B (looking from B)

6.1.1.14 *bearing2compass(inrad)*

Given an angle in Rad, returns a compass degree reading between 0 and 360

6.1.1.15 *bearingdegrees2compass(bearing)*

Given a three bearing, returns a ‘NW’ compass reading: 0 = “North”, 260 = “SW” etc.

6.1.1.16 *compassPositionOfARelativeToB(A, B)*

Returns the compass position (“N”, “NW”, etc) A lies in relation to B (looking from B)

6.1.1.17 *clockPositionOfARelativeToB(A, B, headingOfBInDegrees)*

Returns the Clock Position (12, 1, 2, ...) of A in relation to B (looking from B)

6.1.1.18 *getClockDirection(direction)*

Returns o’clock for a direction (direction in degrees)

6.1.1.19 *topClone(orig)*

Returns a shallow clone of table orig

6.1.1.20 *clone(orig)*

Returns a deep clone of table orig

6.1.1.21 *rotatePointAroundOrigin(inX, inY, angle)*

Returns px and py after being rotated angle around origin

6.1.1.22 *bool2Text(theBool)*

Returns “true” or “false”, depending on the value of theBool

6.1.1.23 *bool2YesNo(theBool)*

Returns “yes” or “no” depending on the value of theBools

6.1.1.24 *point2text(p)*

Given point p returns “[x=<x>, y=<y>, z=<z>]” as string

]

6.1.1.25 *string2GroupCat(inString)*

Returns the DCS Group Category for inString, e.g. 2 for “group”. Not case sensitive.

6.1.1.26 *string2ObjectCat(inString)*

Returns the DCS Object Category for inString, e.g. “unit” returns 1. Not case sensitive.

6.1.1.27 *str2num(inVal, default)*

Returns inVal as string, and default if inVal is nil or illegal

6.1.1.28 *dumpVar(key, value, prefix, inrecursion)*

Dumps the entire contents of value to the log. Recursively dumps all table elements, including subtables. To dump the contents of the variable x to the log, invoke

```
dcsCommon.dumpVar("this is x:", x)
```

Inspect the DCS log for results, search for “this is x:” to find the location

6.1.1.29 *dumpVar2Str(key, value, prefix, inrecursion)*

returns a string that contains the entire contents of value as text. Recursively walks through all table elements, including subtables. To get the contents of the variable x into s, invoke

```
local s = dcsCommon.dumpVar2Str("x is:", x)
```

6.1.1.30 *event2text(id)*

Translates the DCS event id into human readable string

6.1.1.31 *smokeColor2Text(smokeColor)*

Translates a DCS smoke color into human readable string (e.g. “RED”)

6.1.1.32 smokeColor2Num(smokeColor)

Translates human-readable smoke color (e.g. "red") into a color that DCS understands

6.1.1.33 markPointWithSmoke(p, smokeColor)

Places a smoke colored smokeColor at the location p. The smoke origin is height-adjusted for the terrain.

6.1.1.34 isTroopCarrier(theUnit)

Returns true if theUnit is a troop carrier as defined in dcsCommon.troopCarriers

6.1.1.35 dcsCommon.isSceneryObject(theUnit)

Returns true if theUnit is a scenery objects instead of a Unit

6.1.2 Table / String Managements

These methods are specialized to assist in manipulating arrays and strings

6.1.2.1 *getSizeOfTable(theTable)*

Returns the size (number of elements) of any table (including, but not limited to, arrays)

6.1.2.2 *dcsCommon.findAndRemoveFromTable(theTable, theElement) (assumes array)*

Looks for, and then removes theElement from the array theTable

6.1.2.3 *pickRandom(theTable) (assumes array)*

Returns a random element from the array theTable

6.1.2.4 *topClone(orig)*

Creates a “top clone” from orig: the first level of the table are all newly created, any objects they reference, however, are copied by reference. Sometimes also called a ‘shallow clone’

6.1.2.5 *clone(orig)*

Recursively creates a clone from orig. All referenced objects are also cloned, creating a true clone.

6.1.2.6 *copyArray(inArray)*

Creates a new array that references all elements of inArray in exactly the same order

6.1.2.7 *enumerateTable(theTable)*

converts the arbitrary array/table theTable to an array, dropping any keys.

6.1.2.8 *combineTables(inOne, inTwo)*

Given two tables, returns an array that contains, in sequence, all elements from inOne and inTwo. If there are duplicate elements, the result will contain duplicates.

6.1.2.9 *arrayContainsString(theArray, theString)*

returns true if the array theArray contains an element that is equal to theString

6.1.2.10 *splitString(inputstr, sep)*

Returns an array that contains all parts of inputstr, split at the separator sep. For example

```
dcsCommon.split("hello my friends", " ")
```

returns {"hello", "my", "friends"}. If no sep is given, blank (" ") is used

6.1.2.11 *trimFront(inputStr)*

Returns inputStr with leading spaces removed

6.1.2.12 *trimBack(inputStr)*

Returns insputStr with trailing blanks removed

6.1.2.13 *trim(inputstr)*

Returns the contents of inputstr with leading and trailing blanks (" ") removed.

6.1.2.14 *trimArray(theArray)*

Returns an array based on theArray, in which all elements have their leading and trailing blanks (" ") removed.

6.1.2.15 *stripLF(theString)*

Removes all CRLF from theString and returns result

6.1.2.16 *removeBlanks(inStr)*

Removes all blanks from inStr and returns result

6.1.2.17 *stringIsPositiveNumber(theString)*

Returns true if theString contains only digits (i.e. only if string is a positive integer)

6.1.2.18 *stringStartsWithDigit(theString)*

Returns true if theString starts with "0".."9"

6.1.2.19 *stringStartsWithLetter(theString)*

Returns true if theString starts with "a".."z" or "A".."Z"

6.1.2.20 *stringStartsWith(theString, thePrefix)*

Returns true if theString starts with thePrefix, false otherwise

6.1.2.21 *removePrefix(theString, thePrefix)*

Returns the contents of theString with thePrefix removed. If theString does not start with thePrefix. theString is returned unchanged.

6.1.2.22 *stringEndsWith(theString, theEnding)*

Returns true if theString ends with theEnding, false otherwise

6.1.2.23 *removeEnding(theString, theEnding)*

Returns the contents of theString with theEnding removed. If theString does not end with theEnding, theString is returned unchanged.

6.1.2.24 *containsString(inString, what, caseSensitive)*

Returns true if the string inString contains the value of what. If caseSensitive is true, the comparison is exact, else the case is ignored.

6.1.2.25 *stringRemainsStartingWith(theString, startingWith)*

Returns the remainder of theString starting with the first occurrence of startingWith. If theString is “Woe to you oh earth and sea”, and startingWith is “earth” then this method returns “earth and sea”

6.1.2.26 *processHMS(msg, delta)*

Given a string msg, and a number of seconds in delta, it converts delta into hours, minutes and seconds, and then proceeds to replace wildcard in the msg input string as follows:

- <s> seconds
- <:s> seconds with leading “0” if < 10
- <m> minutes
- <:m> minutes with leading “0” if < 10
- <h> hours
- <:h> hours with leading “0” if < 10

Hours range from 0 to 23

6.1.2.27 *nowString()*

Returns current mission time as a string, formatted “00:00:00”

6.1.2.28 *latLon2Text(lat, lon)*

Given latitude and longitude returns a string in Degrees, minutes, seconds

6.1.2.29 *numberUUID()*

Returns a unique number for each time it is invoked

6.1.2.30 *uuid(prefix)*

Returns a string that starts with the value of prefix, with a unique number appended each time it is invoked.

6.1.3 Vector Math

These methods implement common vector methods for DCS points (vec3 that are based on “x”, “y”, “z”)

6.1.3.1 *vAdd(a, b)*

Returns the sum of a and b

6.1.3.2 *vSub(a, b)*

Returns a – b

6.1.3.3 *vMultScalar(a, f)*

Returns a multiplied by the scalar f (“vector a times number f”)

6.1.3.4 *vLerp (a, b, t)*

Returns the point x that is t percent between a and b

6.1.3.5 *mag(x, y, z)*

Returns the magnitude of an implicit vector made from (x, y, z)

6.1.3.6 *vMag(a)*

Returns the magnitude of vector/point a

6.1.3.7 *magSquare(x, y, z)*

Returns the squared magnitude of a vector comprising of (x, y, z). magSquare is slightly faster than mag because it does not calculate the square root.

6.1.3.8 *vNorm(a)*

Returns a in normalized form, i.e. the magnitude of vNorm(a) is 1.0 while it still points in the exact same direction as a.

6.1.3.9 *dot (a, b)*

Returns the dot product of the vectors a and b (essentially b projected onto a)

6.1.4 Airfield, Landable Ships and FARP

These methods simplify access to airfields, ships that aircraft can land on, and FARPs

6.1.4.1 *getAirbaseCat(aBase)*

Returns the category of airbase aBase

6.1.4.2 *getFirstFreeParkingSlot(aerodrome, parkingType)*

Returns the first unoccupied parkingslot with correct type of aerodrome. If no parkingType is specified, the first free slot is returned.

6.1.4.3 *getAirbasesInRangeOfPoint(center, range, filterCat, filterCoalition)*

Returns an array of all airbases that are inside a circle with a radius of range around the coordinates center. If filterCat is given, only airbases of that category are returned. If filterCoalition is specified, only airbases that are owned by that coalition are returned.

6.1.4.4 *getAirbasesInRangeOfAirbase(airbase, includeCenter, range, filterCat, filterCoalition)*

Returns an array of all airbases that are inside a circle centered on airbase with radius range. If includeCenter is true, the result includes airbase. If filterCat is given, only airbases of that category are returned. If filterCoalition is specified, only airbases that are owned by that coalition are returned.

6.1.4.5 *getAirbasesInRangeOfAirbaseList(theCenterList, includeList, range, filterCat, filterCoalition)*

Returns an array of all airbases that in rage of all the airbases specified in the table theCenterList. If includeList is true, the result includes the airbases from theCenterList. If filterCat is given, only airbases of that category are returned. If filterCoalition is specified, only airbases that are owned by that coalition are returned.

6.1.4.6 *getAirbasesWhoseNameContains(aName, filterCat, filterCoalition)*

Returns a list of all airbases on the map whose name contains aName. If filterCat is given, only airbases of that category are returned. If filterCoalition is specified, only airbases that are owned by that coalition are returned.

6.1.4.7 *getFirstAirbaseWhoseNameContains(aName, filterCat, filterCoalition)*

Returns the first airbase on the map whose name contains aName. If filterCat is given, only airbases of that category are returned. If filterCoalition is specified, only airbases that are owned by that coalition are returned.

6.1.4.8 *getClosestAirbaseTo(thePoint, filterCat, filterCoalition)*

Retruns the closest airbase to thePoint. If filterCat is given, only an airbase of that category is returned. If filterCoalition is specified, only an airbase that is owned by that coalition is returned.

6.1.5 Group handling

These methods simplify accessing and getting information on groups. Usually, methods require a DCS group as input

6.1.5.1 *livingUnitsInGroup(group)*

Returns an array of all units of group that are alive

6.1.5.2 *getClosestLivingUnitToPoint(group, p)*

Returns the living unit of group that is closest to point p

6.1.5.3 *getClosestLivingGroupToPoint(p, coal, cat)*

Returns the group with lining units that is closest to p and belongs to coalition coal and of category cat. If cat isn't specified, GROUND units are returned.

6.1.5.4 *getLivingGroupsAndDistInRangeToPoint(p, range, coal, cat)*

Returns an array of {"group":group, "dist":dist} elements of all groups that are in range of point p and of category cat and belong to coalition coal. If no cat is specified, GROUND is used.

6.1.5.5 *getGroupLocation(group)*

Returns the location of the first living unit of group. Group can be string or DCS group

6.1.5.6 *getGroupUnit(group)*

Returns the first unit in group that is alive, or nil. Group can be string (name of group) or DCS group.

6.1.5.7 *getFirstLivingUnit(group)*

Alias for getGroupUnit() with a much better name

6.1.5.8 *isGroupAlive(group)*

Returns true if group has at least one living unit. Group can be string or DCS group

6.1.5.9 *getLiveGroupUnits(group)*

Returns an array of all living units of group

6.1.5.10 *getGroupTypeString(group)*

Returns a string with the TypeNames of all living units inside the group. The TypeNames are separated by comma.

6.1.5.11 *getGroupTypes(group)*

Returns an array of the TypeStrings of all living units in group

6.1.5.12 *getGroupAvgSpeed(theGroup)*

Returns the average speed of all living units in theGroup

6.1.5.13 *getGroupMaxSpeed(theGroup)*

Returns the speed of the currently fastest unit in theGroup

6.1.6 Unit Handling

These methods simply accessing a unit's properties

6.1.6.1 *isSceneryObject(theUnit)*

Returns true if theUnit is a scenery object

6.1.6.2 *isTroopCarrier(theUnit)*

Returns true if theUnit can carry infantry (currently a set number of helicopters. APC etc. currently aren't included)

6.1.6.3 *getUnitAlt(theUnit)*

Returns theUnit's y component in meters

6.1.6.4 *getUnitAGL(theUnit)*

Returns a units height above ground in meters

6.1.6.5 *getUnitSpeed(theUnit)*

Returns theUnit's speed (in m/s)

6.1.6.6 *getClosingVelocity(u1, u2)*

Returns the closing velocity (how fast the units approach each other) in m/s. A negative value means that they are separating at that speed.

6.1.6.7 *getUnitHeading(theUnit)*

Returns the heading (in rad) of theUnit

6.1.6.8 getUnitHeadingDegrees(theUnit)

Returns the heading (in degrees) of theUnit

6.1.6.9 unitIsInfantry(theUnit)

Returns true if theUnit is an infantry unit

6.1.7 Spawning Units / Group, Routes, Tasks

These units simplify constructing and manipulating the tables (data blocks) that are used for spawning units/groups in DCS

6.1.7.1 *createEmptyGroundGroupData (name)*

Returns an empty group data block for a group named name, that can be used later (after adding more data) to spawn groups. Defaults to ground troops.

6.1.7.2 *createEmptyAircraftGroupData (name)*

Returns an empty group data block that can be used to create air groups. The group's name is name.

6.1.7.3 *createAircraftRoutePointData(x, z, altitudeInFeet, knots, altType, action)*

Returns a route waypoint that can be used to assemble an air group's path. The waypoint is located at (x, altitudeInFeet,z) and is of type action, with a speed of knots.

6.1.7.4 *addRoutePointDataToRouteData(inRoute, x, z, altitudeInFeet, knots, altType, action)*

Adds a new air waypoint to inRoute at location (x, altitudeInFeet, z) with a speed of knots and action.

6.1.7.5 *addRoutePointDataToGroupData(group, x, z, altitudeInFeet, knots, altType, action)*

Adds a new air waypoint to an air group data block at location (x, altitudeInFeet, z) with a speed of knots and action. (Simplified accessor so you don't have to construct aircraft routes yourself). Will add a route to the data block if none present

6.1.7.6 *addRoutePointForGroupData(theGroup, theRP)*

Adds route point theRP to data block theGroup. (air???)

6.1.7.7 *createEmptyAircraftRouteData()*

Returns an empty data block that is used to assemble aircraft routes

6.1.7.8 *createTakeOffFromParkingRoutePointData(aerodrome)*

Returns a route point for an aircraft to take off from aerodrome

6.1.7.9 *createOverheadAirdromeRoutPintData(aerodrome)*

Returns a route point overhead aerodrome

6.1.7.10 *createLandAtAerodromeRoutePointData(aerodrome)*

Returns a route point to land at aerodrome

6.1.7.11 *createRPFormationData(findex)*

returns a route point that specifies formation findex

6.1.7.12 *addTaskDataToRP(theTask, theGroup, rplIndex)*

Adds theTask to route point rplIndex of theGroup

6.1.7.13 *createPayload(fuel, flare, chaff, gun)*

Returns a payload data block to be used for spawning aircraft

6.1.7.14 *createCallsign(cs)*

Returns a callsign data block to be used for spawning

6.1.7.15 *createGroundUnitData(name, unitType, transportable)*

Returns a ground unit data block for a unit named name and of TypeString unitType. This data block is then added to groups. If transportable is true, the unit can be transported by other units capable of transporting units.

6.1.7.16 *createAircraftUnitData(name, unitType, transportable, altitude, speed, heading)*

Creates a data block for an air unit name of unitType – WTF are the other params? Check code!!! TODO: check this

6.1.7.17 *addUnitToGroupData(theUnit, theGroup, dx, dy, heading)*

Adds theUnit to theGroup at an offset of dy, dy to the group's location, and facing heading.

6.1.7.18 *createSingleUnitGroup(name, theUnitType, x, z, heading)*

Simplified method to create a single-unit group name with a single unit of theUnitType at location x, 0, z) and facing heading. Returns the unit's group

6.1.7.19 *arrangeGroupDataIntoFormation(theNewGroup, radius, minDist, formation, innerRadius)*

Recalculate all unit's relative locations relative to the group's location, using radius, minDist, formation and innerRadius as parameters for formation

TODO: explain formations and params

6.1.7.20 *createGroundGroupWithUnits(name, theUnitTypes, radius, minDist, formation, innerRadius)*

returns a group data block named name from array theUnitTypes using formation and parameters. Group is always ground units.

TODO: explain formation and parameters

6.1.7.21 *createGroupDataFromLiveGroup(name, newName)*

Using all living units from the living (in-game, already spawned) group name, create a data block based on their data, and return that data block:

TODO: revisit code to look at what it really does.

6.1.7.22 *rotateUnitData(theUnit, degrees, cx, cz)*

Rotate unit data block theUnit by degrees around a center points defined by (cx, 0, cz)

6.1.7.23 *rotateGroupData(theGroup, degrees, cx, cz) – data block*

Rotates the group data block theGroup by degrees around a center point defined by (cx, 0, cz).

6.1.7.24 *offsetGroupData(theGroup, dx, dy)*

Offsets all unit's locations in data block theGroup by dx and dy

6.1.7.25 *moveGroupDataTo(theGroup, xAbs, yAbs)*

Update data in theGroup's data block to that the group's location is located at (xAbs, 0, yAbs). This will move all unit data as well

6.1.8 Static Objects

These methods simplify creating static objects and placing them in-game

6.1.8.1 *createStaticObjectData(name, objType, heading, dead, cargo, mass)*

Returns a generic data block to be used for spawning static objects. The properties set are name (must be unique), objType (the TypeString), the heading it is facing, dead (set to true if the destroyed variant of the model is to be used), cargo (set to true if it can be used as cargo) and mass (amount in kg)

6.1.8.2 *createStaticObjectDataAt(loc, name, objType, heading, dead)*

Returns a data block for spawning static objects like above at the location loc, with loc being in the format (x, ignored, z). No options for setting dead, cargo or mass

6.1.8.3 *linkStaticDataToUnit(theStatic, theUnit, dx, dy, heading)*

Link the data block for the static object to be created to theUnit. theUnit must be a ship. The parameters dx and dy describe the initial offset to theUnit's center. You must link a static object before you spawn it.

6.1.8.4 *offsetStaticData(theStatic, dx, dy)*

Offset's the location inside the data block theStatic by the amount of dx and dy

6.1.8.5 *moveStaticDataTo(theStatic, x, y)*

Sets the location information inside the data block theStatic to the position (x, 0, z)

6.1.8.6 *createStaticObjectForCoalitionAtLocation(theCoalition, loc, name, objType, heading, dead)*

Create in-game and return a static object as described by the parameters.

THIS METHOD SPAWNS STATIC OBJECTS

6.1.8.7 *createStaticObjectForCoalitionInRandomRing(theCoalition, objType, x, z, innerRadius, outerRadius, heading, alive)*

TODO: Verify

Spawns (creates in-game) and returns a static object belonging to theCoalition and that is described by the parameters inside a circle around the coordinates (x, 0, z) with the radius outerRadius and at least innerRadius distant to the center.

6.1.9 Coalition

6.1.9.1 *getEnemyCoalitionFor(aCoalition)*

Returns the coalition number (1 or 2) that is the enemy of aCoalition. Input can be 1, 2, "red" or "blue". If aCoalition is neither of those values, nil is returned (this means that neutral has no enemies!)

6.1.9.2 *getACountryForCoalition(aCoalition)*

Returns the first country ID (a number) that is part of aCoalition (as set in the coalition builder in ME)

6.1.9.3 *coalition2county(inCoalition)*

Returns the joint task force 'country' for inCoalition (0, 1, or 2)

6.1.10 Event Handling

6.1.10.1 *addEventHandler(f, pre, post, rejected)*

Adds your event handler f to the list of methods that are to be invoked when an event happens. In addition to the handler f, you can also install three additional methods: *pre* is a method that is invoked with the unprocessed event to pre-process and determine if f should be invoked. If *pre* returns true, f will be invoked, *rejected* otherwise. *post* is a method that is invoked after f was invoked, and can be used to clean up any data prepared in *pre*. *post* is only invoked if f was invoked. If you don't specify any of *pre*, *post* or *rejected*, dcsCommon's internal (default) methods are invoked instead (they usually do nothing – unless you override them for your own purposes – be very careful when doing that, it is not recommended!). addEventHandlers returns the id for the event handler to be used with removeEventHanlder

6.1.10.2 *preCall(e)*

Default pre-processor for events, always returns true.

6.1.10.3 *postCall(e)*

Default post-processor for events, does nothing.

6.1.10.4 *addEventHandlerForEventTypes(f, evTypes, post, rejected)*

Adds your event handler f to the mission. f will be invoked for the events listed in the evTypes array. Post and rejected are methods that are invoked after f (post) or the event was filtered (rejected). Returns the id for the event handler to be used with removeEventHanlder

6.1.10.5 *removeEventHandler(id)*

Removes the event handler

6.2 cfxPlayer API

As a classic ‘Event Generator’, most interaction with cfxPlayer is via the callbacks, with cfxPlayer also providing a number of tables and convenience methods for accessing player units, player groups, or player info.

Missions in DCS mostly disregard players and focus on units and strategic considerations, making missions that focus on a player a rather difficult proposition. cfxPlayer helps in this regard, as it can synthesize player events by monitoring all players and the units they occupy. If your mission focuses on player actions, and your mission design includes players as key concepts, you will probably want to use cfxPlayer in your missions.

6.2.1 Tables

6.2.1.1 *cfxPlayer.playerDB*

This contains a table indexed by unit name that is updated regularly with the units of all player-controlled units and the groups they belong to. Each table entry has the following attributes:

- `name`: Name of the **player’s unit**. THIS IS NOT THE PLAYER’S NAME
- `unit`: the unit that the player controls
- `unitName`: the name of the unit that the player controls. Same as `name`
- `group`: the group that the player’s unit belongs to
- `groupName`: the name of the group that the unit belongs to
- `coalition`: the coalition that this unit is aligned with

6.2.1.2 *cfxPlayerGroups*

A table indexed by group name that contains information about all groups in-game that currently contain at least one player-controlled unit. Each table entry has the following attributes:

- `group`: **theGroup**
- `name`: **the group’s name**
- `primeUnit`: the first living unit that has is player-controlled
- `primeUnitName`: **the name of the primeUnit**
- `id`: **the group ID**

6.2.1.3 *cfxPlayer.netPlayers*

A (key, value) dictionary of (player name, unit name). Note that the unit may no longer exist, and that a player may have left the mission.

6.2.2 Callback Handling

6.2.2.1 *addMonitor(myCallback, eventsFilter)*

This adds the method `myCallback` to cfxPlayer’s list of functions to invoke when it detects a player event. The **optional** table `eventsFilter` contains an array of events that lists the events `myCallback` should be invoked for. This is a subset of all events the cfxPlayer defines.

For example:

```
local eventFilter = {"newGroup", "removeGroup"}  
cfxPlayer.addMonitor(myCallback, eventFilter)
```

The following events are currently defined:

- “new” – new player-controlled unit appeared
- (“side”) – currently never invoked
- (“group”) – currently never invoked
- (“unit”) – currently never invoked
- “leave” – player-controlled unit disappeared
- “newGroup” – new group with player-controlled unit
- “removeGroup” – group lost last player-controlled unit or was removed
- “newPlayer” – a new player (name) has appeared
- “changePlayer” – player has changed to a different unit (includes respawn)
- (“leavePlayer”) – currently never invoked

The callback must match the profile

```
function myCallback (evType, description, info, data)
```

6.2.2.2 *removeMonitor(myCallback)*

Removes the previously installed myCallback from the list of callbacks that are invoked when a player event occurs.

6.3 cfxZones API

Trigger Zones make up the backbone of many DML modules because Zones can be easily placed with ME's graphical interface, and mission designers can easily add and modify properties to zones. Zones are ideal since they

- have a unique name and can be identified individually
- have a location on the map and therefore can pass location information that can be modified inside ME
- occupy a surface and can therefore pass area information that is easily edited in ME
- can be easily identified and modified in ME
- can pass arbitrary string data via ME-editable properties to modules that look for them

Consequently, cfxZones provides strong support for Zone management: the API provides functions for

- **Testing / Management:**

Find zones with names or that contain part of a name, are within other zones, have proximity to locations (points or units) and vice versa (return units in a zone), or have a certain property/attribute.

Other methods facilitate linking a zone's location to a unit, pick a zone by random, or move the zone's location.

Many of these methods allow testing against not just one, but a set of zones. Since cfxZones knows all Trigger Zones defined in ME, it defaults to testing against that set by default, making your zone management code very concise.

- **Property Management**

Properties are the main avenue to extend Trigger Zone functionality, and cfxZones provides comprehensive support to access these properties

- **Miscellaneous**

Since Trigger Zones are so versatile, cfxZones provides a handful of miscellaneous methods to accomplish other tasks, like placing smoke and the incredibly powerful ability of spawning units.

Important Note:

cfxZones copies all zones from DCS on start and creates a wrapper with enhanced data for all other modules. If you change a cfxZone, those changes will not propagate to DCS's game engine. This means that if you use cfxZones to manage your zones (especially should you change a zone's location or size), you must also use the methods provided by cfxZone's for testing to ensure that the results are correct. Furthermore, be advised that currently, cfxZones and DCS moving zones don't mix well, so choose either.

6.3.1 Testing

6.3.1.1 *isZoneInsideZone(innerZone, outerZone)*

Returns true if innerZone's center point is inside outerZone

6.3.1.2 *getZonesContainingPoint(thePoint, testZones)*

Iterates the table testZones and returns all zones from that table that contain thePoint. If testZones is nil, all cfxZones are tested.

6.3.1.3 *getFirstZoneContainingPoint(thePoint, testZones)*

Iterates the table testZones to find a zone that contains thePoint, returning the first zone it finds. If testZone is nil, all cfxZones are tested.

6.3.1.4 *getAllZonesInsideZone(superZone, testZones)*

Given a superZone, returns all zones contained in the table testZones that have their central point inside superZone. If testZones is nil, all cfxZones are tested against superZone. Note that even if superZone is part of testZones, it will not be included in the result.

6.3.1.5 *groupsOfCoalitionPartiallyInZone(coal, theZone, categ)*

Returns a table of all groups that match coalition coal and are of type categ and that have at least one living unit that is placed inside theZone.

6.3.1.6 *isGroupPartiallyInZone(aGroup, aZone)*

Returns true if any living unit of aGroup is inside aZone

6.3.1.7 *isEntireGroupInZone(aGroup, aZone)*

Returns true if all living units of aGroup are inside aZone

6.3.1.8 *pointInZone(thePoint, theZone)*

Returns true if thePoint (x, y, z) resides inside theZone. Note that the y component of thePoint is ignored.

6.3.1.9 *unitInZone(theUnit, theZone)*

Returns if theUnit is inside theZone

6.3.1.10 *unitsInZone(theUnits, theZone)*

Returns a table that contains those units from the input table theUnits that are inside theZone

6.3.1.11 closestUnitToZoneCenter(theUnits, theZone)

Returns the units from the input table theUnits that is closest to the main point (as placed in ME) for theZone.

6.3.2 Management

6.3.2.1 *offsetZone(theZone, dx, dz)*

Moves theZone's main point (as originally defined in ME) by dx and dz units (meters). This change will not propagate to DCS's game engine, so `trigger.misc.getZone()` for the same zone will not reflect the offset.

6.3.2.2 *moveZoneTo(theZone, x, z)*

Moves theZone's main point to the absolute location as defined by x and z. This change will not propagate to DCS's game engine, so `trigger.misc.getZone()` for the same zone will not reflect the move.

6.3.2.3 *centerZoneOnUnit(theZone, theUnit)*

Moves theZone's main point to coincide with the location that theUnit currently occupies. Note that if theUnit moves later on, theZone will **not** move with theUnit; this method does **not** link theZone to theUnit (use `linkUnitToZone()` for that, see below). This change will not propagate to DCS's game engine, so `trigger.misc.getZone()` for the same zone will not reflect this.

6.3.2.4 *zonesStartingWithPrefix(prefix, searchSet)*

Returns a table of all units that start with the string prefix from the table searchSet. If no searchSet is provided, all zones currently known to cfxZones are searched.

6.3.2.5 *zonesStartingWith(prefixes, searchSet)*

Returns a table of all units passed in searchSet that start with any of the prefixes passed in the prefixes table. If no searchSet is given, all zones currently known are searched. If prefixes is a string, this is the same as `zonesStartingWithName()`.

6.3.2.6 *getZoneByName(aName, searchSet)*

Return the zone from searchSet whose name (uppercase) exactly matches aName. If no searchSet is provided, add zones known to cfxZones are searched. If no zone is found, result is nil

6.3.2.7 *getZonesContainingString(aString, searchSet)*

Returns a table of all zones from searchSet whose name contains aString. If no searchSet is given, all zones currently known to cfxZones are searched. If no zones are found, result is an empty table.

6.3.2.8 getZonesInRange(point, range, theZones)

Returns a table that contains all zones from theZones whose main point lies at maximum range meters away from point. If no theZones is specified, all zones known to cfxZones are searched.

6.3.2.9 getClosestZone(point, theZones)

Returns the zone from theZones whose main point is closest to point. If no theZones are given, all zones known to cfxZones are searched.

6.3.2.10 pickRandomZoneFrom(zones)

Returns a random zone from the table zones. If no zones given, all zones from cfxZones are used.

6.3.2.11 linkUnitToZone(theUnit, theZone, dx, dy)

Links theZone to theUnit. From now on, theZone's center will be placed to coincide with theUnit, offset by dx and dy (with dy being the Z offset). If dx and dy are omitted, the zone is always centered on theUnit. If theUnit is destroyed, theZone will remain at theUnit's final location (plus/minus offset).

Notes:

- The unit you link the zone to must exist, or the result is undefined.
- Zone position changes from linked units do not propagate to DCS's game engine, so trigger.misc.getZone() for the same zone will not reflect the link.

6.3.2.12 createSimpleZone(name, location, theRadius, addToManaged)

Most zones managed by cfxZones are derived from the mission as designed with ME. That does not, however, mean that mission designers can't create cfxZones while the mission is in progress - it might even be required.

This method returns a new circular cfxZone with name as its name, located at location (only x and z are used, y is ignored) with the circle having a radius of theRadius (in meters). If addToManaged is true, the new zone is added to cfxZones set of managed and monitored zones: it will be updated when linked to units, and considered for all zone testing when the full cfxZones set is used (e.g. by passing nil as a test set).

Note that any zone created with this method can't be accessed via trigger.misc.getZone(), even if addToManaged is true; DCS game engine doesn't know about it.

6.3.3 Properties

6.3.3.1 *getPoint(aZone)*

This is the **main accessor method to get aZone's location**. It returns a new point table (x, 0, z) that

- reflects the accurate location of the zone (in cfxZone context, including linked zones, and zones that have been moved by offsetZone, moveZone or centerZone)
- you can modify the contents of the returned point without worrying that the changes flow back to the zone.

6.3.3.2 *getZonesWithAttributeNamed(attributeName, testZones)*

Returns a table of all zones from testZones that have an attribute named attributeName. If no testZones are provided, all zones known to cfxZones are tested.

6.3.3.3 *zonesWithProperty(propertyName, searchSet)*

Alias for `getZonesWithAttributeNamed()` (see above)

6.3.3.4 *getAllZoneProperties(theZone, caseInsensitive)*

Returns a table of all properties, indexed by property name, that were previously assigned to inZone with ME in DCS. If caseInsensitive is true, all property names are converted to uppercase (and might overwrite those properties that – foolishly – are only distinguished by upper/lowercase spelling).

6.3.3.5 *getZoneProperty(cZone, theKey)*

Returns the value of the property named theKey from cZone. If the property does not exist for cZone, nil is returned.

6.3.3.6 *getStringFromZoneProperty(theZone, theProperty, default)*

returns the string value from the property named theProperty from theZone. If default is not defined, default will use “”. If the property does not exist for theZone, default is returned.

6.3.3.7 *getMinMaxFromZoneProperty(theZone, theProperty)*

Attempts to return an array of two numbers from the property named theProperty of theZone. It assumes that the value of theProperty fulfills the following

- the value string begins with the first number (no leading characters or whitespace)
- the two numbers are separated by a blank, e.g. “12 34” returns [12, 34]
- the numbers can be fractions (e.g. “1.234 5”)
- there are at least two numbers separated by blank
- negative numbers are allowed
- digits, signs, fraction points only (no coma separators)
- if more than two numbers are supplied (e.g. “1 2 3”, only the first two are returned
- the retuned table is an array of the format {first, second}

6.3.3.8 *hasProperty(theZone, theProperty)*

Returns true if theZone has a property named theProperty. Note that this method returns true as long as the property is defined for the Zone in MW, even if the value is empty.

6.3.3.9 *getBoolFromZoneProperty(theZone, theProperty, defaultVal)*

Returns the value of the property named theProperty of theZone, interpreted as a Boolean. If the property is not defined, or can't be interpreted as a Boolean, defaultVal is returned. If defaultVal is not defined, false is used.

Note that the following values can be interpreted as Boolean

- “yes”, “true”, “1” are all interpreted as true
- “no”, “false”, “0” (Digit Zero) are all interpreted as false

Values are case insensitive, so “yes”, “Yes” and “YES” will all be interpreted as true.

6.3.3.10 *getCoalitionFromZoneProperty(theZone, theProperty, default)*

Interprets the value of theProperty in theZone as a coalition value and returns the appropriate ID (0 for neutral, 1 for red, 2 for blue). If the value can't be interpreted or the property doesn't exist, default is returned. If default isn't defined, 0 (neutral) is returned.

- 0, “neutral” and “all” return as 0 (zero)
- 1. “red” returns 1 (one)
- 2, “blue” returns 2 (two)

The value is case insensitive. “Blue”, “blue” and “BLUE” are all interpreted as 2 (blue)

6.3.3.11 *getNumberFromZoneProperty(theZone, theProperty, default)*

Interprets the value of theProperty in theZone as a number. If the value can't be interpreted or the property doesn't exist, default is returned. If default isn't defined, 0 is returned.

Numbers can be negative (leading with a minus sign “-”) and fractions (e.g. “3.1415”)

6.3.3.12 *getVectorFromZoneProperty(theZone, theProperty, minDims, defaultVal)*

Interprets the value of theProperty in theZone as a number vector (array) with at least minDims entries as follows

- the vector elements are separated by coma “,” e.g. “3.12, 4.5, 6” returns {3.12, 4.5, 6}
- each vector element is separately interpret as a number
- if an element can't be interpret as a number, defaultVal is substituted for that element
- if no defaultVal is supplied, 0 is substituted instead
- The returned array has at least minDims elements
- If theProperty contains less than minDims number of entries (separated by space), defaultVal is entered into the return array until minDims elements are reached
- If theProperty contains more than minDims elements, all entries are returned.

6.3.3.13 getPositiveRangeFromZoneProperty(theZone, theProperty, default)

Interprets the value of the property “theProperty” as a hyphenated range of positive numbers (e.g. “12-34”). Returns two values: lower bounds and upperbounds.(12, 34). If the numbers in the range are given in the wrong order (higher value, lower value) the returned values are sorted correctly (lower, higher)

If only one number is given (e.g. “23”), it returns that number for lower and upper bounds.

6.3.3.14 getSmokeColorStringFromZoneProperty(theZone, theProperty, default)

Interprets the value of theProperty in theZone as a smoke color, returning the color as a lower-case only string, e.g. “red”

- When the color is given as a number 0..4 that is returned as the correct color string (e.g. “1” returns “red”)
- The color in the value can be any mix of upper or lower case and will return a lowercase only color, e.g. “oRanGE” will return “orange”
- The returned value is a string, lower case only
- The value of default is not validated nor verified

6.3.4 Spawning

6.3.4.1 *createGroundUnitsInZoneForCoalition (theCoalition, groupName, theZone, theUnits, formation, heading)*

THIS METHOD SPAWNS UNITS

Returns a new group of ground units that has been spawned into the world for theCoalition. The group is named theName (if a group of the same name existed previously, that group is immediately deleted). The group's center is located at the center of theZone. The group consists of all the units as defined by theUnits (a type string array, coma separated, see → Spawning: Type String and Type String Arrays). The units are arranged as defined by formation, and the entire formation is turned towards heading.

Notes:

- Since only coalition (not country) is specified, the units always belong to the synthetic Combined Joint Task Force of that side
- If no groupName is specified, a name is created from “G_” plus the zone’s name.
- This method only spawns ground units

6.3.5 Miscellaneous

6.3.5.1 *markZoneWithSmoke(theZone, dx, dz, smokeColor)*

Places a smoke at the position of theZone’s center, offset by dx and dz. Smoke’s color is defined by smokeColor (a number). Note that in DCS, a smoke mark will disappear after some duration (currently 5 minutes). If you need a zone/point that is permanently marked by smoke (an auto-refresh smoke, so to speak), use the provided smokeZone module.

6.3.5.2 *markZoneWithSmokePolar(theZone, radius, degrees, smokeColor)*

Places a smoke at the position of theZone’s center, offset by radius and degrees. Smoke’s color is defined by smokeColor (a number) Note that in DCS, a smoke mark will disappear after some duration (currently 5 minutes). If you need a zone/point that is permanently marked by smoke (an auto-refresh smoke, so to speak), use the provided smokeZone module.

cf/x Dynamic Mission Library
for DCS

PART IV: DML TUTORIAL / DEMO MISSIONS

7 Tutorial / Demo missions

7.1 Overview

DML comes with a host of demo missions crafted to demonstrate and/or highlight certain capabilities. While most of them are somewhat contrived, they are easy to understand, and most of them – unless marked ([Lua](#)) – do not require any Lua know-how at all.

We recommend you read below “menu” of demos first, and then pick those that interest you most.

- **Smok’em – DML intro**
A very small, unassuming mission that contrasts DML’s way of doing things against ME’s old-school approach by creating smoke all over Senaki-Kolkhi
- **Object Destruct Detection**
Shows how DML can **detect** when a **scenery (map) object is destroyed** and automatically **set a flag** that ME triggers can read. No Lua required at all.
- **ADF and NDB fun (NDB)**
Place an NDB on the ground, or **have it follow a unit** (e.g. a ship) with only a few clicks.
- **Artillery Zone (ME Trigger only)**
Shows how easy it is to set up artillery **bombardment simply by placing a zone**. Then shows how that bombardment can be triggered by ME flags. No Lua required at all.
- **ME-Triggered Spawns (Spawner)**
Shows how **ME triggers** can be used to **cause a Spawner to spawn**
- **Spawn Zones (ideal for building training missions and lasing)**
This is the **archetypal air-to-ground training mission**: Targets **re-spawn indefinitely**, and do not fire back. There is also a group of JTACs that **lase targets** for the pilot. No Lua required at all
- **Random Glory / Random Death (RND Flag)**
Demonstrates the use of rndFlags modules to **randomize control flow** in your mission. While Random Glory also somewhat shows off DML- DML integration, Random Death shows the **classic ‘Randomized Enemies’** setup, enormously simplified with a rndFlags module.
- **Pulsing Fun (Pulser)**
Shows how to use a pulse module to **drive / stagger actions (via flag changes)**. Like Random Glory, it also shows off DML-DML integration.
- **Attack of the CloneZ (Clone Zone)**
A mission that shows but a few of **the many great ways to use clone zones**: to save time, to randomize, to provide endless clone spawners etc. Also demonstrates

some of the many uses of delayFlags

- **Flag Fun Zone-Local Flags**

A mission that show how you can use **zone-local flags** to build simple zones with modules that exchange information internally, and **then use copy/paste** to quickly deploy lots of self-contained copies

- **Once, twice, three times a maybe (Count Down)**

A mission that uses a **counter** to control how many times a cloner spawns, and then starts some smoke when the counter has counted down and the cloner no longer spawns

- **Bottled Messages (Messenger)**

Introducing: **messenger** and **delayTimer**. And **compound module zones**. This mission also shows how to initiate DML-actions with ME triggers

- **Follow Me! (Unit Zones, and Messenger)**

Shows how to use DML's version of the good old GROUP IN ZONE ME flag – except that DML may be way cooler. You decide.

- **Clone Relations (Advanced Clone Topics)**

Shows how a cloner works with templates that include escort targets and other template-external targets and how it automatically resolves this.

- **Moving Spawners (Spawn Zones and Linked Units)**

A mission that demonstrates both object- and unit-spawners with a cool twist: the **spawners move**, and the units and objects drop from vehicles and form a trail behind the vehicles that drop them. No Lua required at all.

- **Helo Trooper**

This mission demonstrates how the Helo Troops allows you to **load any infantry into a nearby player helicopter** and how to **use spawners with the 'requestable'** attribute so infantry can be 'requested' – a feature important if you are using FARPs that can be captured by the enemy (see separate demo). No Lua required

- **Helo Cargo (requires a helicopter Module) – Cargo Receiver**

A mission that demonstrates how object spawners and **cargo receivers** work together to **quickly create a helicopter cargo mission** with dynamic spawns. No Lua required at all

- **Artillery Zone & Artillery UI**

Shows how, by just adding a single module a **player** can **trigger artillery bombardment**, **get directions** to artillery target zones, and **mark these zones** with smoke – all from the communication menu. No Lua required

- **Missile Evasion (Guardian Angel)**

Demonstrates Guardian Angel's abilities to **remove missiles just before they hit**. No Lua required.

- **Recon Mode**
Demonstrates the abilities of the Recon Mode drop-in module, and how targets can be added to priority- or blacklist. Shows how **recon flights (AI and player-controlled)** can have significantly better spotting abilities than DCS. No Lua required
- **Owned Zones ME Integration (Owned Zones)**
Flag bangers ahoi! This little mission demonstrates how to set up a mission with **owned zones that start a whole war** once the first zone is conquered. Shows how Owned Zones change ME Flags. No flying required.
- **FARP and away**
A very simple demo that shows how a **FARP zone is used** to set up some defenders, and how it react to capture. Again, a show only, no flying required.
- **Keeping the score (Player Score)**
Shows how to easily add **score keeping** and units with individual score to your mission. Also demonstrates the Player Score UI module. No Lua required at all.
- **The Zonal Countdown (Count Down, Messenger)**
Countdown, Messenger and **continuous updates**. With a bang at the end. Also shows **multiple flag triggering**
- **(Full Mission) Frog Men Training**
This mission **brings together several modules and ME Flags** for a real-world weapons training mission. ME Flags are used to enable modules, and DML is used for missile protection, re-spawning, repair/restock, and messaging.
- **CSAR of Georgia (CSAR Manager)**
Demonstrates **how to set up and use the CSAR Manager** package in your missions.
- **Track This! (GroupTracker)**
The basics of the **groupTracker** module and how its various **output flags** can be used in your mission to greatly simplify otherwise complex tasks.
- **Watchflags Demo**
A mission that demonstrates the various **capabilities all input flags possess** and how to activate them.
- **Viper with a double you (Wiper)**
Removing objects – the good, the bad, and the ugly.
- **Radio Go-Go**
Using the Radio Item → DML module flag glue to trigger a module multiple times with the same Radio Item
- **xFlags – Field Day**
Shows how to use the xFlags module to perform complex decisions based on multiple flags

- **Virgin (Civ) Air / Air Caucasus**
Show-cases the CivAir civilian air module, and how it can be used to quickly populate your map with non-threatening aircraft that you must tell apart from the bogeys.
- **Count Bases Blue**
How to use the baseCaptured module, and then use to perform decisions based on the number of bases captured
- **Pilots At Their Limits**
Put's the limitedAircrafts dynamic pilot limit through its paces. Lose too many pilots and your side loses the engagement
- **Gate And Switch**
Introduces the Swiss-Army-Knife of modules: Changer. Shown are both modes: value conversion, and gated switch to prevent flag signals from flowing.
- **Good Grief (unGrief)**
A showcase for the (mild) griefer-repellent. Sanction friendly kills when they happen more than once. Usually employed for MP PvE servers
- **The Danger Zone (PvP)**
Using the unGrief module to only allow PVP in specially designated zones.
- **Reinforcements A La Carte**
How to use the radioMenu module to order reinforcements, or even a mission restart.
- **Delicate Subjects**
“Delicates” are units that explode if you so much as look threateningly at them. See here how to use them
- **Forever-looping Spawns**
How to solve a common issue for (server-based) missions that have long (multi-day) uptime and need to remain fresh (i.e., groups get constantly refreshed)
- **Impossible Impostors**
Impostors. The coolest module in the set. By far.
- **(Lua) DML Mission Template:**
The Lua Code Skeleton – **how to structure mission code** in DCS in general and how to use DML for even better results. Looks at creating your own **Config Zones** in ME and then using them in your code. **Requires Lua skills**
- **(Lua) Landing Counter**
A tiny, fully multi-player compatible mission that simply counts all the landings a player (not their unit – all players can change slots at any time) does. Demonstrates **how to filter world events**. **Requires Lua skills**
- **(Lua) Event Monitor**
A **test bed for events** – to be used by Lua beginners, and everyone who has a need

to analyze the sequence of events in a mission. Does not require Lua per se, but you require Lua to make any sense of it.

7.2 Smoke'em! DML Intro.miz

7.2.1 Demonstration Goals

This is the ideal 'Start your DML' journey, as the little 'Smoke Zone' shows us nicely how to use DML, and what's so nice about using it.



Running the demo itself isn't impressive at all. Playing with it in ME, on the other hand, is. It shows how much simpler and better even a mundane task like placing colored smoke in DML can be.

7.2.2 What To Explore

7.2.2.1 In Mission

Run the mission and enter the Frogfoot. Then go to F2 outside view and place the camera behind the plane. On the left, there is a single red smoke. On the right, along the runway are multiple columns of differently-colored smoke. OK, so what?

Accelerate time and wait until the 5 minute mark. Aha! Not quite unexpectedly, the smoke on the left has died –this is smoke that we created the conventional way: with a zone and SMOKE MARKER action.

ACTIONS
SMOKE MARKER (ME Smoke, 1, RED)

The smoke on the right, however, keeps happily on smoking. Oooh, rah, score one for DML! Yes, not that impressive, but let's move on to ME

7.2.2.2 ME

First, The Bad

Ok, so let's acknowledge the ugly stuff first. Because it's DML, we need to load the DML modules, there's no way around that. And for that we need to have a MISSION START trigger with DCS's most intimidating action of them all: the DO SCRIPT Action [cue scary music]!

ACTIONS
DO SCRIPT (dcsCommon = {})
DO SCRIPT (.. cfx zone ma)
DO SCRIPT (cfxSmokeZone =)

There's no way around that wart. Luckily, it's always the same: copy/paste the entire module; usually, they are the same modules. Since DML is modular, you can often get away with only copying a few. This is DML's biggest usability issue – some people are afraid of

this first step, and it will keep them from using DML. But we are past that, intrepid mission builder, so on we go!

Now let's try the following:

Put a red smoke marker the conventional way on the parking slots 64 – 67 (four new markers). To do this, we

- first copy/paste zone “ME Smoke” four times, and drag them to their new positions.
- Write down the four new names
- Create **four new Actions** in ME, all for the same ONCE trigger that we are using to start the one that was already there; with one of the new trigger zone names each
- And all five now die after 5 minutes

Next, try the same with DML:

- Copy/paste the zone “Smoke em!” four times, and drag them to their new positions.

With DML there are no new actions to edit, no zone names to remember - and the smoke keeps coming after five minutes.

7.2.3 Discussion

There's no denying it: Loading DML modules into the START MISSION trigger is ugly, frightens novices, has a decidedly ‘black magic’-ish touch, and there is no easy way around it. Since it's something that you only do once per mission and then can forget about, it gets easier each time. This currently is DML's weak spot.

After that, though – using Trigger Zones and have modules attaching their magic automatically to the Trigger Zones makes editing a complex mission so much easier. You see their function on the map, and click there directly to edit.

Still not convinced? Try this:

The conventionally – created smoke on slot 65 that you created above: change that smoke's color to white, and then the one to the right of that to blue. It's not an overly complex change, but you still need to remember zone names, open the trigger editor, got to the trigger, find the correct action, and then change the color in the pop-up.

With DML, simply click on the zone (visually identifying it **on the map**, no look-up-by-name from a list of very similar names!), and change the “smoke” attribute from “red” to “white, and to “blue” on the one to the right. How is that for quality of life?

Name	Value	
smoke	white	

Aren't you glad you went through all that DML loading trouble?

Indeed, it's still just smoke. *unending* smoke, but still – just smoke. Try the other demos to see just how little effort it requires to add great new features to your missions. And more importantly: how easy it is to move them around and control them – right there on the map, from within ME.

Oh, and no Lua at all – let's disregard the START trigger, ok?

7.3 Object Destruct Detection (ME Integration).miz

7.3.1 Demonstration Goals

This mission demonstrates how you can integrate a DML module (the friendly object destruct detector) into your own missions, how you can trigger an action when a map object is destroyed – without any Lua code. We'll set ME's Flag 10 when our scenery object is destroyed.

7.3.2 What To Explore

7.3.2.1 In Mission

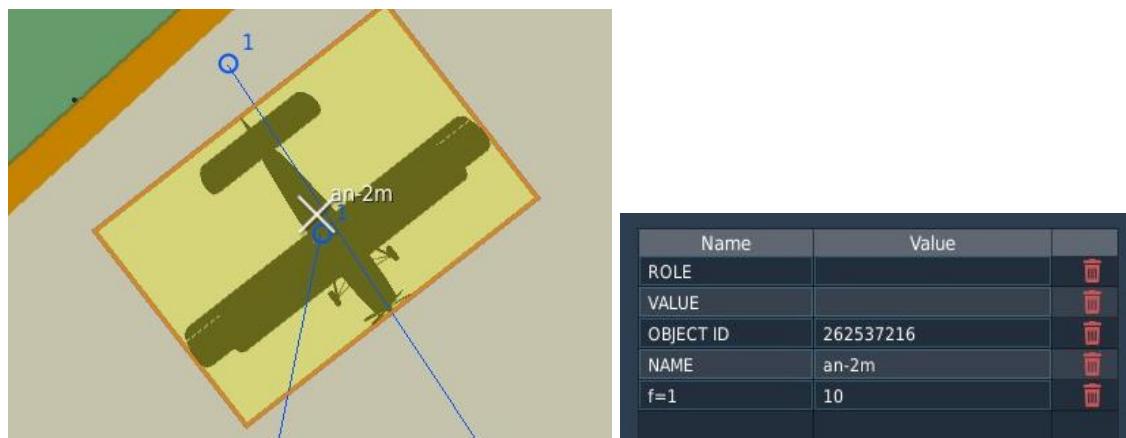
Start the mission either as Su-27T (free with DCS) or UH-1 (not free). Then destroy the An-2M (the double-decker that is part of the scenery at Senaki-Kolkhi):



As soon as it is destroyed, you will see a message appear to that effect. Note that DML doesn't care how you destroy the Antonov. Try being creative 😊.

7.3.2.2 ME

Notice the quad-based zone around the An-2. This was created with ME's “assign as” function. Click on it to reveal the zone's attributes



Notice the “f=1”/“10” attribute. That is the only addition we made to the zone. It sets flag 10 to 1 (true) when the Antonov object is destroyed (→ ME Attributes).

Now look at the ONCE trigger that runs when flag 10 becomes true. That's how easily you can integrate DML modules that can set triggers into your missions.

Note:

This demo's documentation uses the old, deprecated 'f=1' attribute. The (updated) demo itself uses the newer *f!* (bang!) attribute with method = "flip".

7.3.3 Discussion

This mission does not require any Lua. It uses the ObjectDestructDetector module to make testing if a map/scenery object was destroyed a snap.

Simply add a single attribute to the 'Assign as...' zone that ME created, and you are good to go. You can then use standard ME trigger conditions to test for flag change and initiate any action you like.



Note:

This mission may suddenly stop working correctly after an update to DCS. Sometimes, the world object DB gets updated, and object ID can get changed around. It happens rarely, and if that happens, simply right-click on the Antonov and verify that the ID's still match. If they don't update the destruct detector to new ID

7.4 ADF and NDB Fun.miz

7.4.1 Demonstration Goals

Shows how NDB zones can be used to place beacons all over the map. We show in this mission

- How to set up NDB for KHz and MHz ranges
- How to place moving NDB
- An ELT locator set up as NDB

Note:

To see in-game how these zone enhancements work, you need

- An **aircraft with ADF** functionality built in (e.g., Huey, F/A-18, F-5E). The SU-25T has no ADF capability, and hence can't be used. The mission has a Huey and Hornet included.
- You need to **know how to use ADF and operate the radios**. It's outside the scope of this document to teach you how. Simply accept the premise that it works if you currently lack the modules or radio navigation know-how



7.4.2 What To Explore

7.4.2.1 In Mission

Enter the Huey or Hornet there are three NDB in the KHz range. Use your ADF to locate them:

- 1100 KHz (fixed, at end of runway)
- 540 KHz (moving, on the battle cruiser off the coast to the west)
- 420 KHz (moving with the Hummer along the far runway side)

There are also two NDB in the MHz range

- 121.5 MHz (fixed, emergency frequency), in the Batumi Harbor
- 125 MHz (fixed, at the beginning of runway 24)

If you have access to an ADF that operates in the KHz range (Huey), tune to 420 KHz, and observe how the needle slowly ‘walks’ from SE to W, following the Hummer. Now tune into 125 MHz and see ADF point to the beginning of runway 24.

Now, make sure that you hear the warbling “distress beacon” audio (which we incorrectly use for all NDB - you wouldn’t use that sound for “normal” NDB) of either NDB 420 KHz or 125 MHz.

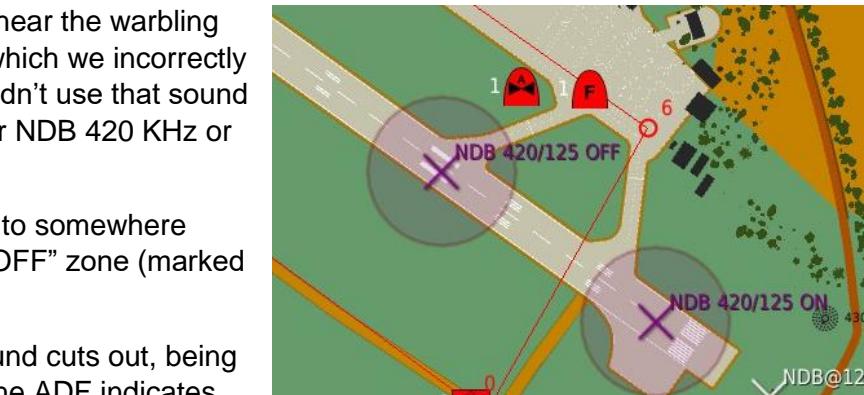
Carefully taxi your aircraft to somewhere inside the “NDB 420/125 OFF” zone (marked in purple on the right).

Notice how the warble sound cuts out, being replaced with static, and the ADF indicates that it has no source.

Now taxi to a spot inside the “NDB 420/125 ON” zone at the start of runway 24. Note how the NDB comes online again, the audio starts screaming, and the ADF indicator points to the selected NDB.

Now take off, and try to locate the cruiser, using her 540 KHz beacon to home in.

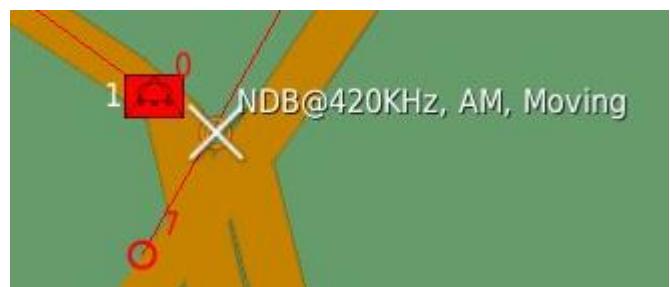
Now switch to the Hornet and locate the ADF at the start of the runway. Then take off, and home in on the 121.5 ELT signal.



7.4.2.2 ME

Note how placing NDB is quite simple. To have an NDB follow a unit, simply put its name in the linkedUnit attribute.

Note that linkedUnit is not an attribute from the cfxNDB module, but it is inherited from cfxZones. Remember that you do not have to place a zone that follows a unit exactly, it will center itself on mission start. Here, we’ve placed it merely close to the unit it follows to make it visually easy to work on both without obstructing each other.



Note that although an NDB's frequency is defined in MHz, creating an NDB in the KHz range is easy: divide the KHz by 1000 and enter that number.

Name	Value	
NDB	0.420	
soundFile	distressbeacon.ogg	
linkedUnit	Mover One	

Example: to create an NDB at 420 KHZ, put $420/1000 = 0.420$ into the NDB attribute.

Using ME Flags to switch NDB on and off

See how we use ME flags 100 and 110 to turn on multiple NDB at once by using the "on?" and "off?" attributes in NDB 420 KHz (the one following the Hummer) and NDB 125 MHz (the one in front of runway 24). Note that multiple NDB can share the same trigger flag.

on?	100
off?	110

7.4.3 Discussion

Again, no Lua at all.

The ability to place NDB on ships and moving vehicles makes it possible to easily create some nice dynamic 'locate the hidden transmitter' missions.

Being able to start and stop NDBs with triggers also allows some sneaky mission surprises, for example simulating ELT failure in the last moment when you are just about to discover the unit that you are looking for.

CONDITIONS	CLONE	ACTIONS
PART OF COALITION IN ZONE (RED, NDB 420/125 OFF, ALL)		FLAG INCREASE (110, 1)

7.5 Artillery Zones Triggered.miz

7.5.1 Demonstration Goals

This mission demonstrates the use of artillery (target) zones, purely controlled via ME flags. In this mission there are artillery target zones, and multiple groups of very unlucky ground vehicles that wander into those zones.



Also, this mission shows how you can alternatively rig an ‘Other...’ radio item to fire into an artillery zone.

Further demonstration goals are to provide some good examples for attributes, and how you can quickly set up artillery attacks simply by placing zones.

7.5.2 What To Explore

7.5.2.1 In Mission

Start the mission, enter your trusty 25T and observe the two ‘Poor Sods’ groups of ground vehicles as they wander into the “Arty Target” zone. Use outside view and F7 ground vehicle view. Cover your ears. Each time when the first vehicle enters the zone, a fire command is given to the artillery target zone (you’ll see a message to that effect show up in the upper right corner). The zone then simulates a 20 second projectile transition time, after which 17 shells hit the ground in the zone.

Note that the artillery zone can be triggered multiple times

Now turn your gaze towards that group to your left. Go to communications, and choose “Other→Artillery Fire on Unlucky”

Notice that almost instantaneously, shells explode around those vehicles.

Switch to F10 map view, and note the circle mark where you just had death rain on the Unlucky. Click it to disclose the target information.

Notice how you can’t trigger this explosion again via radio

7.5.2.2 ME

Look at the trigger Zone “Arty Target”. This is the target zone that is triggered multiple times. First, look at the attributes:

Note how we use very few actual attributes, and simply accept the factory defaults. Note the “f?” attribute that tells artillery zones to monitor flag 100 for change. Note that we override only shell count (17) and strength (700), so when the artillery zone is triggered, we expect a roughly 20 second transition time (default) for the first shells to arrive. There will be 17 shells with a power of 700 plus/minus 20% (default deviation). Note that this artillery zone does not require a collation (it defaults to neutral), and thus is not visible on our F10 chart, but will still happily respond to our commands (and destroy any troops within)

Name	Value	
artilleryTarget	One	
f?	100	
shellNum	17	
strength	700	

CONDITIONS	CLONE	ACTIONS
PART OF GROUP IN ZONE (Poor Sods, Arty Target)		FLAG INCREASE (100, 1)

So how is the artillery fire triggered? When flag 100 changes. In order to have it fire multiple times, we have rigged two triggers in ME that instead of setting flag 100 to true, **increase** the flag’s value. This change is what triggers the multiple fire cycle in the artillery zone, once each per trigger.

Now let’s look at the “Comms Arty Zone”. This one has some more attributes than Arty Target, so lets look at the differences:

This zone is triggered by flag 110 (“f?=100”), transition time is 0.1 seconds (near instantaneous) and coalition is “blue”. Also, we are to expect 22 shells with a strength of around 300 each.

Name	Value	
artilleryTarget	Two	
f?	110	
shellNum	22	
strength	300	
coalition	blue	
transitionTime	0.1	

Why the ‘coalition=blue’ attribute? Recall that the F10 in-game map showed this target zone as a marker. The coalition=blue attribute allows this marker to show up on blue maps.

Recall that the shells arrived almost instantaneously. This is controlled by the transitionTime=0.1 attribute. Note that there is still some lag, and not all shells arrive at the same time. This is intentional, since not all artillery guns fire simultaneously.

So how did we wire up the artillery to fire when we command it on the radio? First, note that this zone is watching flag 110 for a change. Now look at the trigger we created

TRIGGERS	CLONE	CONDITIONS	CLONE	ACTIONS
1 ONCE (Install Comms Trigger F110, NO EVENT)		TIME MORE (1)		RADIO ITEM ADD (Artillery Fire at Unlucky, 110, 1)

This installs a radio item “Artillery Fire at Unlucky” and when chosen, will set flag 110 to 1. This will trigger the artillery cycle the first time. If you later choose this radio item again, nothing happens because the flag value is already 1, and the artillery zone watches for a *change*.

7.5.3 Discussion

This mission requires no Lua at all.

Easy to trigger / use copy/paste

Artillery zones allow you wire up destruction all over the map in just a few seconds. The trigger watch system for artillery zones is easy to understand and works well with all standard triggers in ME, giving all mission designers easy options to command artillery fire with a radio call. Unlike many other features, it's also easy to wire artillery zones up to fire multiple times simply by changing a flag value. Also remember that multiple artillery zones can watch the same flag, making it possible to rig some spectacular firework with the same trigger simply by using copy/paste. It's also good to recall that artillery zones work over water as well as on land, and this can be used to great effect.

Versatility through Attributes

The way that artillery zones use attributes also makes it very easy to set up very varied explosions, and time them very precisely, simply by tweaking a few entries in ME. This makes calling in 'arty strikes' to completely destroy structures on the map a snap (remember that you can use object destruct detectors to ensure that this has really happened), and creating dramatic scripted intros (like having your airfield shelled while you take off and miraculously not damage your aircraft) easy and fun to set up. If you look at the side-by-side screenshots at the beginning of this section, you'll notice that the craters in the in-game footage matches up nicely with the artillery zone. Just remember that when you need that kind of precision, you'd need to test and probably use low-power explosions, because if you are only a few feet away from the artillery zone, just like in real life, the blast wave can kill you.

Further thoughts

Be advised that artillery zones function very well by themselves, and have additional built-in functionality when used with further add-ons like artillery UI (which is used to simulate FO with helicopters). We'll revisit that function soon.

And of course, as an extension to standard cfxZones, artillery zones can be linked to units – just factor in the transition time when you use such a set-up (the impact point is set at fire time, and not where the unit will be after the transition timer runs down). Used with ships and short transition time this is sure to create a great spectacle!

What to try

- Use an artillery zone to destroy a map object, and an object destruct detector to detect the destruction. If you can't get it to work, compare your solution with how the Artillery UI does it.
- Set up an artillery zone that follows a ship (via linked unit) and watch the great effects that you can have with that.

7.6 ME Triggered Spawns.miz

7.6.1 Demonstration Goals

This mission demonstrates how to spawn troops and objects using ME triggers. This is very useful to spawn surprises on unsuspecting pilots, or spawn cargo for transport craft.

7.6.2 What To Explore

7.6.2.1 In Mission

Enter the cockpit of your trusty Su-25T. Your objective is to “steal” the plane. You won’t get far, though, because the moment you leave the hangar, units spawn all around you, and the taxiway to your left is suddenly blocked by three objects

7.6.2.2 ME

If you have looked at the other spawn demos, there are few surprises here. The only change is the “f?” attribute for both troop and object spawners. All spawn zones (troop and object) watch the 100 ME flag for change and spawn when that flag changes value.

Name	Value
objectSpawner	road block
types	tetrapod_cargo
paused	yes
f?	100

The 100 flag is set when the Frogfoot leaves its own “Stay inside me” zone.



As soon as the flag is changed, the spawn zones (keyed to the 100 flag by the “f?=100” attribute respond by each running through one spawn cycle.



Note that we used minimal spawners and no base name, so we could easily use copy/past for all spawners. Note in-game that the objects and units have ugly names as a result.

7.6.3 Discussion

This mission requires no Lua at all.

There are a couple of points to observe:

- The spawners use very few attributes and thus use default values.
- Look at the names assigned to the spawned units.
Because the spawn zones have no '**baseName**' attribute (which is used to generate spawned unit names), all spawned objects have auto-generated names. They are ungainly and non-descriptive (e.g., "SpwnDflt-1-12"). If you turn on full labels in your mission, you may want to think about providing a more elegant base to name troops off by providing your own "baseName" attribute. Just remember that each **baseName** attribute must be unique per Spawner.
- All zones watch flag 100. Not a surprise, but just in case you wondered: yes, multiple zones can trigger on the same flag



7.7 Spawn Zones (training and lasing).miz

7.7.1 Demonstration Goals

This fully MP capable mission demonstrates spawn zones with different orders and respawning behaviors. It also demonstrates how to place troops that automatically lase enemy vehicles, and communication with JTACs. The spawn zones in this mission are

- *Vehicle spawn zones (targets)*
These vehicles spawn as red. Since they have “training” orders, they won’t shoot back. Once they are all destroyed, the spawner re-spawns the entire group.
The groups use different spawn formations
- *Infantry JTAC spawn (lasing)*
An infantry group that has orders to “lase” enemy units. They lase the first living enemy unit they find that is visible (LOS) and in range.
- *Spawn anywhere demonstrator*
An infantry group spawned on a gas platform offshore, where you can’t place them with ME



7.7.2 What To Explore

7.7.2.1 In Mission

This is the **quintessential ground attack training mission**: unlimited weapons, unlimited targets, lasing support, no return fire – **put together in under 3 minutes!** You can add your own aircraft and they are automatically supported.

Pick an airframe (the Su-27T is free with DCS, so it is always available). Note the message from the JTAC that inform you that they have started lasing. If you fly an LGB or APKWS equipped plane, the laser code 1688.

Go to *Communications* → *Other* → *JTAC Lasing Report* to receive routing information for all currently lased targets (since we only have one JTAC group there is only one entry in the list)

Destroy the red vehicles (you have unlimited ammo). After you destroy a group of ground vehicles, they will re-spawn (after a delay of 60 seconds). Respawns are unlimited

Now destroy the JTAC group. They won’t respawn.

Finally, use F7 to cycle though all the troops until you see the group of infantry spawned on top of a gas platform.

7.7.2.2 ME

There are three zones placed with ME:

- Two Spawners for BTR and Spawn Leos (defined in the types attribute). These spawn the ground troops. Since their orders are “training”, they won’t return fire. They are set to unlimited respawn (no maxSpawn attribute) after 60 seconds of cooldown. Their formations are slightly different (2 columns and rectangular)
- One spawner for JTAC (four infantry with lase orders).They have a maxSpawns of 1, meaning that they won’t respawn

Name	Value	
spawner	training Leo	
types	Leopard-2	
typeMult	9	
country	0	
baseName	Leos	
orders	training	
cooldown	60	
formation	rect	
heading	270	

Other points of interest:

- The start trigger that loads all modules also includes the jtacGrpUI module (a drop-in enhancement) so players can communicate with their JTAC
- This mission is fully multiplayer capable
- There is **no dedicated mission code**, this mission purely relies on ME Zone Enhancements and drop-in modules
- We include **no configuration zones** for any module as we like their default settings well enough

Finally, move up to the North, somewhat northwest of Sochi-Adler. See how that spawner (“Gas Platform Spawn”) is positioned on a map object. Now try to drop an Infantry group with ME there.

When you examine this spawner’s Attributes, notice how rudimentary the information is. Most spawners require only very few attributes, as they make (mostly) sane assumptions about what a mission designer would want.

7.7.3 Discussion

There is no dedicated mission script – this is a mission constructed entirely in ME, in very short time: import modules, place three zones, done - all modules that are include are stand-alone or work entirely with ME Attributes. In other words: this mission requires no Lua. At all.

The spawn zones for the ground vehicles provide unlimited waves of harmless targets (their orders are “training”, meaning they will not shoot back). The two spawn zones use two different spawn formation to illustrate that capability.

Since ME does not validate if a Trigger Zone is placed over land or sea, we can use this to place units in locations that are disallowed in ME. The Unis Spawner “Gas Platform Spawn” exploits this to place units on a gas platform, off the coast of Sochi-Adler. Note that this doesn’t always work (some map objects lack the required hit boxes and the troops fall

though), but this opens some interesting venues for new ideas to place troops, and even allows for some initial “liberate the pirated platform/ship” scenarios.

The JTAC spawn once and will not respawn (their maxSpawn attribute has a value of 1) and automatically lase the first enemy unit that gets in range (set to 3000 meters) and within direct LOS. Whenever they lase status changes (starting to lase, lose sight, target killed), they’ll report to their side. Note that currently JTACs always use 1688 as designation code.

Also included in the mission is the functional drop-in “jtacGrpUI” that allows all players to communicate with their JTAC to receive vectoring. A separate demo mission illustrates that in more detail.

7.8 Random Glory / Random Death (rndFlag)

7.8.1 Demonstration Goals

The module to kill for. Yes, *finally* a way to simply and efficiently randomize missions. In more ways than you can shake a bag of dice at.



Although not technically a Zone Enhancement (it pretty much ignores everything that makes a trigger zone a, well, trigger zone - we simply use a Zone so we can pass data to the module with ME) we know that it will soon become one of your most-often used module.

In “Random Glory” we use the rndFlags in a benign manner: to randomly select and activate a bunch of smoke and object spawners.

In your real missions, however, your objectives are going to be more sinister: you’d be choosing and activating groups of enemies, all armed to the teeth and intent on killing the hapless players. Hence “Random Death” – a mission that randomly chooses a couple of deadly enemies from a bunch of possible opponents that will hunt you down. See if you can complete your mission (destroy the tanks marked as primary) and live to tell. Then try to do it again.

7.8.2 What To Explore

7.8.2.1 In Mission

Random Glory

This is a kind of interactive show. Start the mission, enter the Frogfoot, and relax. Look outside and notice that nothing is happening. Placed on the map in front of you are a number of smoke zones, and a number of (static) object spawners. None of them is active yet.

Go to communications→other.. and notice that there are two strange menu items “Change RND Watchflag to 1” and “Change RND Watchflag to 10”. Choose one of them and wait for a second or so. Depending on, well, some random numbers, some smoke will start, and some F-117 may appear in front of you.

Now choose the other menu item. More planes and colorful smoke. Continue to alternate between the two menus and more smoke and planes appear until finally, a C-17 (big, big) cargo plane appears to the left.

That's all, show is over.



(if you continue changing the watchflag, you can marvel at the magnificent C-17 stacking. It's a result of how I wired the 'done+1' output that fires the object spawner. Sosumi).

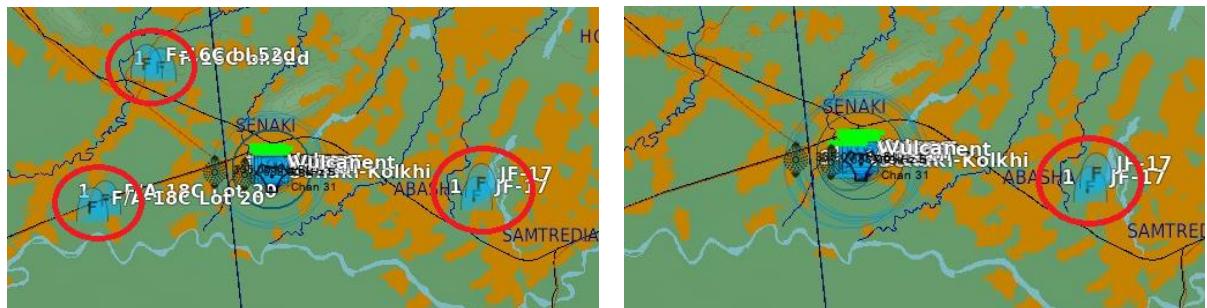
Random Death

Start the mission in your Frogfoot. Look at the map. Your targets are the vehicles close to the tent on Senaki-Kolkhi's tarmac (marked with a red circle). Destroy them and you win.

A few seconds after the mission starts, you see a message "Here we go!", along with some strange chatter running along the right side of the screen. Look at the map again and note that new blue (enemy) units have appeared. Note what has appeared, and try to complete the mission if you are so inclined.



Re-start the mission. After you get the "Here we go!" message, look at the map again



You'll notice that a different number of enemies, and quite probably also different enemies have appeared. Re-start once more. Again, there'll be a different mix of enemy units.

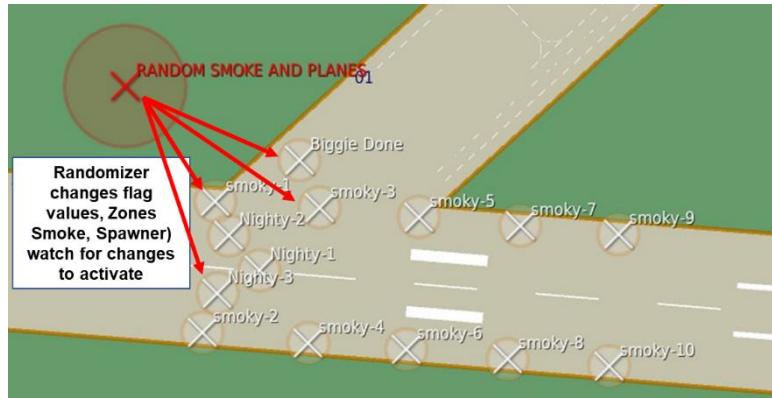
7.8.2.2 ME

Random Glory

In ME we see a couple of interesting things. For experienced mission designers the most peculiar aspect is that there is only a single trigger, the one that loads DML and sets up the menus. **Everything else doesn't need ME trigger actions!**

So how does it work? DML modules have strong ME integration, which means that they can either watch flags for changes to trigger their action, or can set flags as their action. Which means that if we connect these two directly with the flag in the middle, we can completely cut ME's Triggers out of the middle: the random generator creates flag changes, and the smoke and spawn zones watch for changes

In this mission we first set up a bunch of smoke and spawn zones, and key them to different flags to activate. For example, Smoke Zone 'smoky-1' is keyed to activate when flag 1 changes, while 'smoky-2' activates when flag 2 changes etc. In total we have ten some zones, each waiting for their own flag to change: flags 1 through 10.



We then added some object spawners, that also wait for a flag's change to spawn. These spawners look at flags 30 through 32 for a change.

To prevent all zones from doing anything before their watched flags change, they are all set to 'paused'.

Finally, we added a randomizer that each time it's watch flag ($f?=100$) changes

- picks one to three flags (pollSize 1-3)
- out of the set of 13 flags (1-10, 30-32)
- and sets them to 1 (method on, set by default)
- afterwards, the flags that were drawn, are discarded (remove = yes)
- When all flags have been drawn from the set, and a cycle is requested on an empty set, the randomizer increases the value of flag 110 by one (done? 110)

Name	Value	
RND	random gen	✖
flags!	1 - 10, 30-32	✖
pollSize	1-3	✖
remove	yes	✖
f?	100	✖
done+1	110	✖

When you inspect the start trigger that loads DML, there are also two actions that connect the menu items "Change RND Watchflag" and that change flag 100 to 1 and 10, respectively. This setup is required because the randomizer looks for a change in a flag, and menu items (unlike DML) can't simply increase a flag, they can only set a flag to a fixed value.

So if we want to trigger the randomizer multiple times, we have to set flag 100 to different values: 1 and 10. Each time you set it to a different value, the randomizer fires, and some more smoke or airplanes appear... Until the last flag is removed from the set of flags. If the randomizer is cycled once again, it changed the done? flag (110) instead. That one is 'connected' to the spawner for the C-17. So that plane appears when all flags have been exhausted. And keeps appearing, stacking them on top of each other, when you keep changing the randomizer's watchflag.



Random Death

In contrast to ‘Random Glory’, this mission probably looks much more like you would have expected, and it works exactly how you imagined it: we set up a bunch of triggers in ME, each one to enable a group of enemies. We take these triggers and feed them as a set of trigger into our randomizer.

At some point in the mission (when the Frogfoot leaves the start circle, which triggers ‘Start Lottery’) that randomizer picks a couple of them by random, and sets their flags to true – causing the units to become active and begin their hunt for you.

The randomizer’s setup itself also bears no surprises: It uses the set of flags as source set (100-108, a total of 8 items). It’s paused at mission begin (no `atStart` attribute given), and waits for flag 99 to change for a cycle. We only plan one cycle, and this is simply wired up with a ‘ONCE’ ME trigger (Start Lottery) that fires when the Frogfoot leaves the starting circle, setting flag 99 to 1.

TRIGGERS
4 MISSION START (Load DML / Hello!)
1 ONCE (Win Condition, NO EVENT)
1 ONCE (Activate (100), NO EVENT)
1 ONCE (Activate (101), NO EVENT)
1 ONCE (Activate (102), NO EVENT)
1 ONCE (Activate (103), NO EVENT)
1 ONCE (Activate (104), NO EVENT)
1 ONCE (Activate (105), NO EVENT)
1 ONCE (Activate (106), NO EVENT)
1 ONCE (Activate (107), NO EVENT)
1 ONCE (Start Lottery, NO EVENT)

Name	Value	
RND	select enemies	
flags!	100-107	
pollSize	3-5	
f?	99	

When that happens, the randomizer initiates a cycle (`f?=99`): it rolls the dice on the number of flags to change (pollSize 3-5), and then randomly picks that many flags from the pool (100-107, 8 total) to change.

Since method is implicitly set to ‘on’ (chosen by default), those flags are all set to 1, which fires their triggers in ME, enabling their groups. And presto! you have a bunch of deadly enemies heading your way.

7.8.3 Discussion

Again, none of these missions require any Lua.

‘Random Glory’ demonstrated how DML modules use flags to communicate with each other without needing any ME mediation. They exchange signals with each other and you, the mission designer, don’t have to set up any additional trigger actions.

That being said, the randomizers can randomize a mission much easier, even using a classic (non-DML) approach with triggers and actions that are then driven by randomizers.

So, just **how effective is a randomizer** to make our mission more unpredictable? Well, let’s run the numbers to find out. We have 8 different groups (objects), and we can draw 3, 4 or 5 samples from the 8 groups. Elementary statistic

gives us the number of different combinations for each draw size at 56 combinations for 5, 70 combinations when we draw 4, and again 56 different combinations when we draw 3 out of 8 items. That makes for a grand total of **182 different combinations** (don’t believe me?)

Here’s how we calculated that number. $C(n, r) = \frac{n!}{r!(n-r)!}$ with $n = 8$ and $r = 3, 4$, and 5)

Name	Value	
RND	select enemies	
flags!	100-107	
pollSize	3-5	
f?	99	

7.9 Pulsing Fun.miz (pulseFlags)

7.9.1 Demonstration Goals

Show how a pulse module ("Pulser") is used to repeatedly initiate flag-driven actions. This is useful for all kind of controls in your mission: staging of waves, initiating actions after a certain delay, synchronizing and/or randomizing event etc. In Pulsing Fun we use it for a simple, literally earth-shaking purpose. to simulate an artillery barrage.

7.9.2 What To Explore

7.9.2.1 In Mission

Enter the Frogfoot. Be sure not to move it an inch, or you'll die. Open a beverage, and enjoy the show. Change to F2 outside view for an even more impressive display of destructive fun.

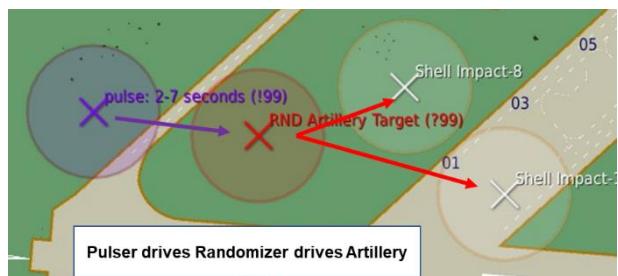


7.9.2.2 ME

This mission (similar to "Random Glory") demonstrates the stark difference between DML and classic ME mission crafting: MW works with Triggers, Conditions and Actions. DML replaces the Conditions with modules, and allows you to directly wire modules together with flags, which they use as triggers. ME's method is much broader in scope. DML is much easier to use.

In this demo, the pulser regularly kicks the Randomizer into action via flag 99. The time between the kicks is randomized between 1-3 seconds, and repeats forever.

Each time the randomizer receives a kick, it picks 1 to 3 flags from its pool of flags 200-210, and flips those flags it has picked



The artillery zones all listen to their flags (200-210), and whenever its value changes, simulate a shell landing in their zone. This cascades nicely, completely unpredictable, into a great show. And no ME Triggers were hurt in this demo!

7.9.3 Discussion

Again, no Lua. Furthermore, we don't even use triggers (except for loading DML).

The various modules use flags to signal to each other, completely eschewing traditional ME Trigger/Action combos.

Name	Value	Remove
pulse		trash
flag!	99	trash
time	1-3	trash

Since DML triggers are looking for a value change in the flag that they are watching to trigger, and we expect to trigger the artillery zones multiple times, we use the 'flip' method. This method alternates the flag's value between 0 and 1, neatly generating a signal that the modules can see.

We can do this because we know that the randomizer only drives other DML modules, and the flip method is therefore the most elegant, guaranteed

Name	Value	Remove
RND		trash
method	flip	trash
f?	99	trash
flags!	200-210	trash
pollSize	1-3	trash

to never create an under/over flow situation while still registering a change. Ok, it would probably have worked just as well with increment, but it feels let neat. It won't work with either 'on' or 'off' because these methods set a fixed value, and on all subsequent triggers, the value does not change on the flag, keeping the artillery zone quiet.

Although this demo is a bit contrived (yet impressive!), it serves nicely how you can use a pulser to stagger starting stages randomly. Use this and similar cascades to create much more varied missions, with less risk of repetitive play-through.

7.10 Attack of the CloneZ.miz (Clone Zones and Delay)

7.10.1 Demonstration Goals

This mission demonstrates how you can use clones to randomize missions, and quickly (with very little effort) deploy units from spawners – again randomized.



This mission focusses on several aspects:

- How to create templates that other zones can use
- How cloners can use multiple ‘sources’ to randomize what they spawn
- How clone spawning can be randomized with rndFlag randomizers
- How cloners can be used to provide “endless” spawns
- How to use a delayFlag to pause respawns for a while
- How cloners can be used to cascade attackers until they overwhelm the defenders

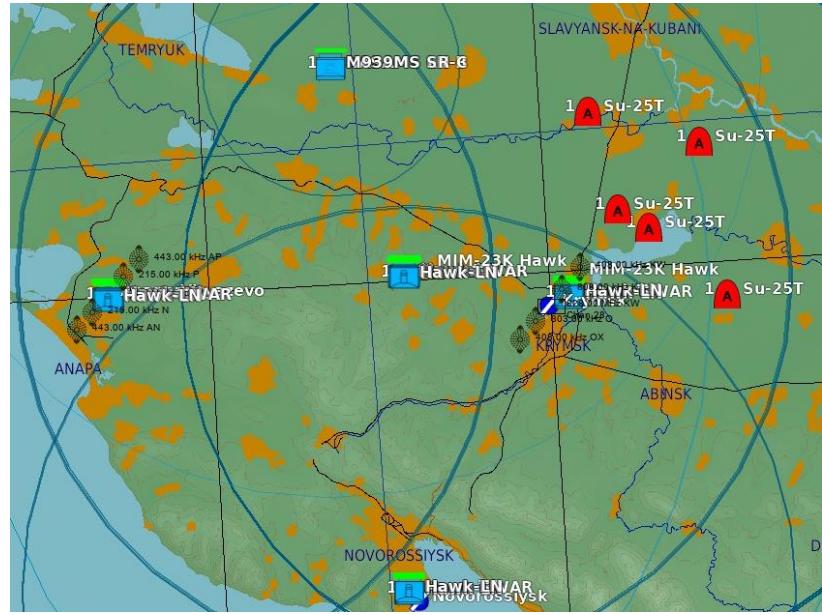
7.10.2 What To Explore

7.10.2.1 In Mission

This is another mission where you mostly observe, and we’ll then run through the same in ME to see how we did it. So, start the mission, choose either side, and hop into your Su-25T. Don’t touch the controls and go straight into F10 Map view. Zoom out and pan the map far up northwest, until you can see Anapa, Novorossiysk, Krymsk and the single red aircraft approaching Krymsk at the same time. Pause the game.

Let’s take a good look around. Take note of the SAM locations north-west of the Krymsk – Novorossiysk line. Inspect them and note their size and composition. Now end the mission, and choose ‘Fly Again’ and repeat the procedure. Notice that not only have the number and locations of SAM sites changed, so has their composition. Try this some more times. You’ll find that there are four locations in total, and that each location can either be populated with a SAM or not. Furthermore, a SAM’s composition can vary between three types: a small HAWK battery, a large HAWK battery and a NASAM battery.

Now return your attention to the lone Su-25T that is approaching Krymsk. Un-pause the game (if you followed my instructions), and watch it valiantly attack Krymsk's runway. It won't succeed, the SAM battery will see to that. Note that once the Su-25T is shot down, three more Su-25T, all identical to the first appear: one where the first originated, one to the northwest, one to the southwest. They all approach Krymsk, trying to bomb the runway. They all will initially fail. Note, however, that as soon as the first Su-25T of the second batch is shot down, three more appear. This continues until the SAM battery is out of missiles, and no more Su-25T are shot down. This can briefly lead to situations, where five or more SU-25T are attacking Krymsk.



Now restart the mission, and pan the map to Gelendzhik and zoom in. The harbor area is protected by 8 T-90. Some 5 seconds after the mission starts, you'll see a group of three Hummers spawn to the east, approaching the Harbor. They'll never make it. A few seconds after they are destroyed, a new blue group of three Hummers spawns – maybe from the same location, maybe from one of the other two possible locations.



Simply observe as group after blue group spawns from one of three locations. If your sense of timing is acute, you will also notice that the interval between one blue group being destroyed, and a re-spawn appearing varies by a few seconds.

Finally, pan down to beautiful Batumi and look at Batumi airfield's tarmac. Note the many blue units on the tarmac. Enter the blue Su-25T (if you aren't already in it), go to F2 outside view, and inspect them. Eagle-eyed observer that you are, you will surely have noticed that there is something repetitive about them - they seem to be four identical sets of troops.



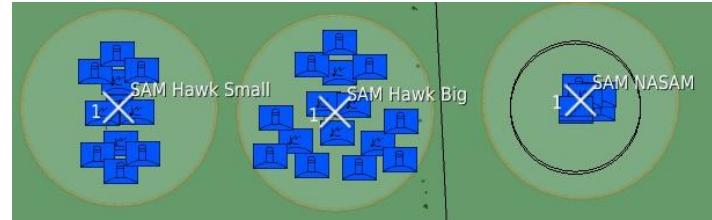
Nothing left to see, let's fire up ME and have a look at what's working behind the scenes.

7.10.2.2 ME

RANDOM SAMS

Let's begin with the part that wasn't visible in the mission. Far up in the North, there are three groups of blue SAM sites.

These are the SAM sites that you met in the mission: a small HAWK, a large HAWK, and a NASAM. Each of these SAM sites is inside their own Trigger Zone. If you inspect the trigger zones, you'll find that they are all alike: they only have a single attribute "cloner", and nothing else.



If you consult the documentation for Clone Zones you'll find that such a clone zone does the following: it creates a cloning template, and then, at mission start, removes all units. Since there are no instructions to spawn any clones (no 'onStart' or 'spawn?' attributes), these clone zones will never spawn any clones during a mission. If you were to run the mission and pan up to the North, you'll find nothing, the SAMs aren't there.

Name	Value	
cloner	big sam hawk	

We simply use a convenient, yet far-away location on the map to create our templates that we then use all over the map. Using out-of-way locations like this is convenient if you later want change their composition without the risk to accidentally change other units.

Now scroll south and to the east where you *did* see the SAM sites during the mission. In ME; there's nothing there except a few empty Trigger Zones with names like "Krasnyy SAM" and similar. So, let's inspect their attributes. These

Name	Value	
cloner		
source	SAM NASAM, SAM Hawk Sma	
spawn?	11	

Trigger Zones are also clone zones. Unlike the first three, these *do* have a "source" attribute, meaning that they import a 'foreign' template. Strangely enough, the 'source' attribute doesn't list just one Trigger Zone as template, but three. This is a native randomizing feature of Clone Zones: when you provide more than one template, each time the zone is told to spawn clones, it randomly chooses one of the named template zones. That explains why all SAMs could have one of three different compositions each play-through.

But how did we get a different number of SAM sites to spawn each play-through? The answer lies in the clone zones' *spawn?* flag, and the fabulous randomizer "CHOOSE RANDOM SAMS" zone east of Anapa. If you look at the randomizer's attributes you'll see

Name	Value	
RND	pick blue sam SITES	
pollSize	2-4	
flags!	10-13	
onStart	yes	

that it randomizes once, at mission start (*onStart* = yes). So, when the mission starts up, the randomizer first chooses a *pollSize* (two to four) meaning that it will populate two to four of the existing SAM clone zones. Each SAM clone zone has their own *spawn?* flag to watch (from 10 to 13), and when that flag gets changed by the randomizer, that clone zone pulls a

random template (from the three it can choose from), and clones it. So each mission you have two to four SAM sites, each populated with one of three possible SAM templates. That's more than 30 ways your blue SAMs are set up using only one randomizer and three templates.

WAVES OF CLONED ATTACK PLANES

Take a look at the Su-25T NE of Krymsk that is set up to perform a Runway Attack. In addition to its initial location, its route has two waypoints: one for line-up and one to position it overhead Krymsk. Superimposed over the attack plane we find another "Red Clone One" Trigger Zone that functions as a clone zone.

Since this clone zone has no `source` attribute, any units inside function as template, so the SU-25T with orders to bomb Krymsk's runway will be cloned.

This cloner has an `onStart = yes` attribute, meaning that when the mission starts, the **template is created, and immediately afterwards, a clone is spawned** into the mission. This is markedly different from the SAM templates that we looked at before – this time the contents of a clone zone are immediately available in the game.

Name	Value	
cloner		✖
empty+1	100	✖
spawn?	100	✖
onStart	yes	✖

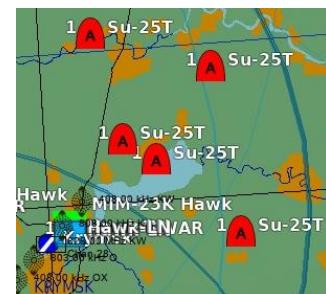
We also see with `spawn?` that every time flag 100 changes, this cloner will undergo a new spawn cycle. We also see that, strangely, `empty+1` is also queued to flag 100, meaning that every time the last spawned clone is destroyed, flag 100 changes. This creates a feedback loop: when the last unit of the last cloned batch dies, a new spawn cycle is initiated. This will continue until the cloned group is no longer completely destroyed.

And now for the cool wrinkle: "Red Clone Two" and "Red Clone Three". These are cloners that look very similar to "Red Clone One" – with two exceptions:

Name	Value	
cloner		✖
source	Red Clone One	✖
empty+1	100	✖
spawn?	100	✖

- They use Red Clone One as template, meaning that they spawn exact copies of whatever the template for Red Zone One is
- They do not have an `onStart = yes` attribute, meaning that when the mission starts, they don't spawn.

And there is something important that the cloners have in common, which we use for a surprise effect: they also `spawn?` and `empty+1` on flag 100, creating a triple feedback loop. This means that **whenever one of the clone groups is destroyed, all three re-spawn**. Be careful when using feedback loops, as they can create a big number of units in a very short time (even exponential growth). See this mission's Discussion section on how we limit spawning in this mission to ensure that this does not happen.



Taken together, this explains the initial mission behavior: A lone SU-25T that is followed by wave after wave of three SU-25T that originate from three different locations all at once, with a growing number of planes attacking Krymsk

DELAYED ENDLESS RANDOM RESPawns

Now let's look at Gelendzhik. Here we observed that the Hummers spawn in three different locations a short while after the previous spawn was destroyed. The set-up is similar to the three planes that we looked at before:

Name	Value	
cloner	blue poor basterds	
spawn?	210	
empty+1	200	

One group that defines the template, and two more groups that reference the “blue meanie” template with their *source* attribute. Unlike before, the “blue meanie” template does not spawn on start, and waits for a signal on flag *spawn? = 210* to spawn. We also notice that if the last unit of the cloned group is destroyed, flag 200 is changed via *empty+1*.

When we examine the other cloners, they look very similar, and just like the planes above, they have both important similarities and changes:

They have in common:

- Neither has *onStart*, so they all wait for a signal on their *spawn?* input

Name	Value	
cloner	blue poor basterds	
source	blue meanies	
empty+1	200	
spawn?	211	

They are different

- All *spawn?* values are different, meaning that they all require different flags to change to spawn
- Unlike “blue meanie” that spawns its own template, these spawners use a foreign template (blue meanies’, to be exact)

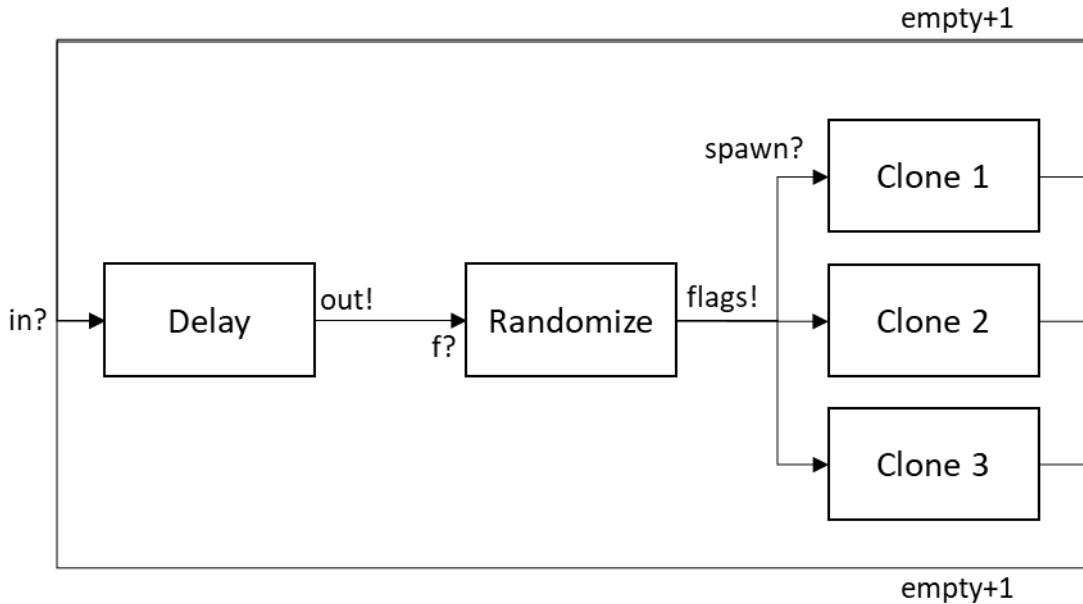
This setup is reminiscent of how we set up the randomized SAMs, and indeed we use a randomizer to pick which group to spawn. But if we fed *empty+1* directly into the randomizer, the new group would spawn immediately after

Name	Value	
timeDelay	5-7	
in?	200	
out!	201	

group would spawn immediately after the last was destroyed. That’s where the *delayFlag* zone comes in. It watches the input flag *in?*, which is set to 200 – the flag that all blue meanie clones set when they are destroyed. So, when a group is destroyed, that flag changes, which initiates *delayFlag*’s timer. When that timer runs down (here a random delay of 5 to 7 seconds) it bangs *out! = 201*, which feeds into the randomizer’s *f? = 201* input trigger.

The randomizer, set to a fixed *pollSize* of 1 (implicitly, as no attribute means that a default of 1 is chosen automatically) selects one of the three output *flags!* (which in turn each connects to one of the three blue meanie clone zones), completing the circle – a new group is spawned.

Name	Value	
RND	New blue after kill	
flags!	210-212	
f?	201	
method	inc	



This loop randomly spawns a new clone group, after a delay, when the previously cloned group was destroyed.

And a final note: the delayFlag zone also has an *onStart = yes* attribute. This starts the entire cycle when the mission starts.

MULTI-GROUP TEMPLATES

Finally, we turn our attention to Batumi. After we have discussed everything above, there's only one small thing left to explore: Multi-group templates – or rather: the fact that a template does not care if you give it one or many groups into the template. It simply copies, thank you sir!

If you inspect the “Two Group Template”, you’ll notice that it’s a standard clone template setup: simply copy, then serve as template (no spawn by itself). If you look closer at what it clones, you’ll find that there are actually *two* groups inside the clone zone: one consisting of infantry, and one consisting of a Hummer. While – obviously – such a setup can be streamlined in ME into a single ground forces group, such a setup can serve multiple purposes:



- This way, separate groups can have different routes even though they are spawned at the same time. Since routes are on a group level, you must use multiple groups if you want to assign different routes to parts of the spawn
- If you are using Heli Troops, it may be advantageous to split infantry and vehicles, because Heli Troops refuses to pick up groups that include vehicles

- More importantly, though, cloners aren't just restricted to ground forces. This way you can create a clone template that includes **a mix of ground forces, aircraft, helicopters and/or ships**.

Looking even closer, you'll notice that there's also a static object inside the clone zone. Static objects also become part of the template and will be cloned just like units. Be advised that in order to pass an empty+1 check, all static objects must also be destroyed if they are included in a template.

7.10.3 Discussion

Lua? What Lua?

“EXPONENTIAL GROWTH”? NOPE!

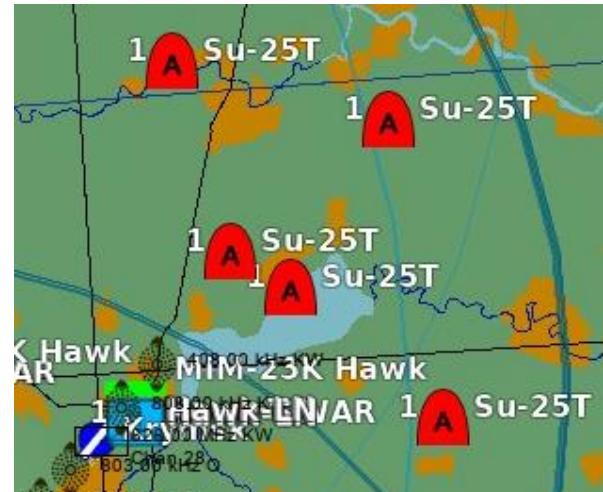
Above, I ominously wrote “Be careful when using feedback loops, as they can create a big number of units in a very short time (even exponential growth)”. While this is true with spawners, and you can easily create situations where the number of units cloned doubles every second (giving you less than 16 seconds to respond before DCS throws in the towel), there is a throttling factor built into this scenario.

The setup is that when a cloned group is destroyed, it creates a signal on the *empty?* Flag that we directly feed into the *spawn?* flag of all three cloners. So, one kill leads to three new planes, and *theoretically*, this should spiral out of control quickly. Evidently, it does not. You'd be hard pressed to see more than five Su-25T at the same time. The question is: why?

The explanation is hidden inside the description of the *empty+1* attribute:

empty+1	Number	When all units from the last clone cycle have been destroyed, this flag's value is increased by 1
---------	--------	--

So, it's not that just any cloned group triggers the production of new clones – it must be the last one that the cloner spawned. When a new batch of clones spawns, the cloner forgets about whatever it cloned previously, and only watches the new clones. In our mission, when the first of the three groups is destroyed, all cloners spawn new clones, remember the new and forget about the remaining two groups of ‘older’ clones that are still alive. If those are subsequently destroyed, no additional clones are produced because their cloners have forgotten about them.



HOW DO THE Su25T FIND THEIR TARGETS?

How is it that the cloned Su-25T that start at different locations all fly to the rallying point and correctly attack the runway instead of missing it by miles?

The answer to this one lies in the fact that when a group is cloned, so is its route. When a clone zone use a foreign template through the `source` attribute, the cloned unit's initial point (the position that it spawns on) may be miles away from that of the original's. Since route points are given in absolute locations, this can lead to unintended consequences, and cloners support the `moveRoute = true` attribute to move each route point by the same offset as the unit's initial point. In our case, however, we want all planes to rally at the first waypoint after their initial point, which is accomplished simply by omitting the `moveRoute` attribute. This way, wherever the cloners are positioned, the cloned aircraft starts inside the clone zone, and then head for the first waypoint which remains the same map location for all cloned planes.

REGULARLY RE-STOCKING SAMS

There is a purple Trigger Zone 're-stock SAM site' south of the Krymsk SAM cloner. It is currently deactivated (`onStart=no`). If you change the '`onStart`' attribute to '`true`', it starts running, emitting a pulse every 5 minutes on flag 50. Flag 50 is the input for Krymsk SAM, causing it to re-spawn. Since it's `preWipe` attribute is also set, every 5 minutes, the entire SAM site is first deleted, and then replaced with a fresh copy.

While this re-stocking works and is a good way for your missions to provide endless stocks of ammunition for your troops, be mindful of a side-effect here: when we cause the SAM site to respawn, it takes a new random template, so every five minutes, the SAM site not only gets refreshed, it also may get replaced by a completely different configuration. This works as designed, so if you use re-spawn to re-stock a cloner, make sure that you do not also add template randomization to the mix.



7.11 Flag Fun – LOCAL FLAGS (& raiseFlags)

7.11.1 Demonstration Goals

Oh no, more colorful smoke! Well, sit down, and hold on to your shorts, sonny. This one will knock your socks off!

That's because effect that we use for demonstration is rather lame. The underlying technology, however, will make you grin in anticipation of how *you* will use it in your missions.

DML has a number of outstanding features, paramount among them its ability to use named flags (which is great), and local named flags (which is simply god-like). In DCS, flags are similar to radio channels: they uniquely identify a channel that anyone can tune to. Channels are identified by numbers only, and that is that. DML adds two additional features: channels identified by alphanumeric designations, and ‘room only’ channels – channels that only those people can receive who are in the same room: zone-local flags. Only modules that are attached to the same zone can transmit on these flags. Even better, other zones can use the same local flag name without getting any crosstalk from other zones.

7.11.2 What To Explore

7.11.2.1 In Mission

Run the mission. Enter ‘Groundhog’ at Senaki-Kolkhi. Stifle a yawn. Yeah, colorful smoke starts erupting around the Frogfoot. There’s a message after some time. If you run the mission a couple of time, you’ll see that the smoke start sequence is different each time, and that the colors for each smoke is also randomized. Nice, but this has been done before.

Now jump into the “Frog From Above” Frogfoot, and kill the units on the derelict airstrip next to the red smoke markers. Note that the northern unit (a BTR-80) keeps respawning after each kill (it takes a few seconds to respawn, but respawn it will), while the southern unit (a Leo) does not respawn. Again – nice, but we have done this before.

Fire up ME and load the mission. Secure jaw.

7.11.2.2 ME

At first glimpse, there is little surprise: we see a ton of green zones called ‘smoker-xx’ that we guess contain smoke zones. Off to the side is a zone called ‘Fire ME flag’. Let’s look at that first:

raiseFlag does exactly what it says on the tin: set a flag (in this case Flag 10) five seconds after the mission starts.

Looking at the mission triggers, we see that there is a ONCE trigger “DML

Name	Value	
raiseFlag	10	
afterTime	5	

called!” that simply puts out a message “DML called and wants its flag back!”. The object of this demo is entirely underwhelming yes, you can use raiseFlag to set a ME flag.

Now open one of the green zones, let's examine it and see if we can deduce what it is doing. Click into the "smoker-1" zone and inspect the attributes:

- Right off the bat, we see that this is a compound zone: it's home to a smoke zone ('smoke' attribute) and raiseFlag module ('raiseFlag')
- The smoke is dormant on start because the paused attribute is present and set to true (yes)
- The smoke zone will trigger when the startSmoke? flag is changed. This flag is set to '*smoke ON' which looks a bit strange (actually, it looks extremely strange to people just coming from ME, as ME only supports numbers as flags. DML supports named flags, so 'smoke ON' is a perfectly legal flag name) but so far, so good.
- The raiseFlag module is set to bang! on flag '*smoke ON' (same strange flag designation), so we know it will eventually start the smoke – simply because the smoke module is wired to the same flag.
- raiseFlag is set to fire 1 to 20 seconds after starting the mission

Name	Value	
smoke	random	
paused	yes	
startSmoke?	*smoke ON	
raiseFlag	*smoke ON	
afterTime	1-20	

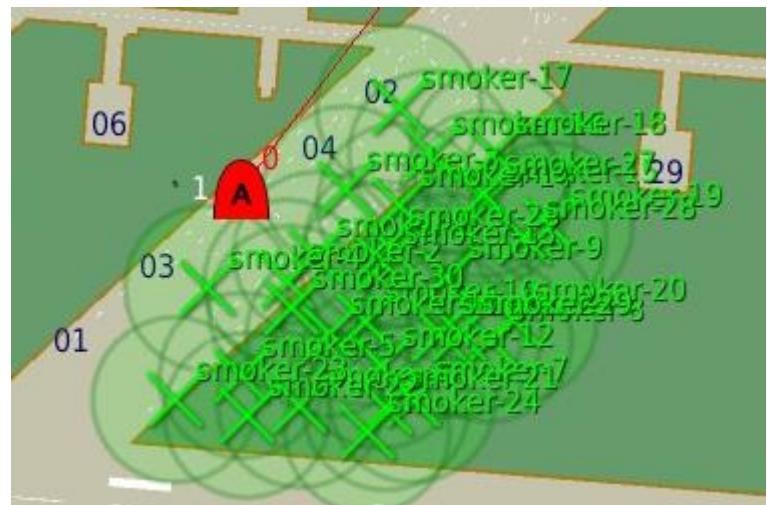
So what we can deduce from this zone is that it will start a randomly colored smoke some 1-20 seconds after the mission starts.

And now for the kicker:

Inspect the other green "smoker" zones. Strangely, they are all alike – the only thing that is different for each zone is its name. In fact, it looks as the name was assigned by ME during lazy copy/paste. And that's exactly what happened. How can that be? Why doesn't the first raiseFlag module that bangs on "*smoke ON" start all smoke zones?

Because these flags are all local flags, as indicated by the

leading asterisk "*" in their name. Such a flag can only be seen by other modules inside the same zone, and they can't be seen by same-named flags in other zones. So, although the flag has the exact same name in all zones, **"*smoke ON" is a different flag inside each zone**. It can't be seen outside the zone, it does not pollute your mission flag space, and the zone it belongs to *can* be pasted willy nilly all over the map without breaking your mission!



Now recall the respawning BTR-80? Let's check out the spawner to see if we understand how that one works.

We see the raiseFlag! Module that, without any other attributes bangs on (local) *respawn – which goes into the cloner's clone? input, causing a clone cycle.

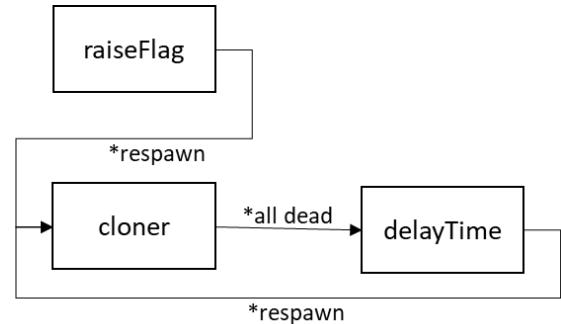
Once all clones are destroyed, this generates an output via empty! on (local) "*allDead", which is wired directly into the delay flag's startDelay? Input.

After a delay of (randomized) 2 to 4 seconds, delayDone! Bangs on *respawn, which causes a new clone cycle.

So, we have a basic endlessly respawning, randomized cooldown, clone zone. It uses all local flags. So how difficult is it to adapt this cloner so we can have the Leo at the other end of the runway to also respawn endlessly? Which attributes do we need to adapt?

Let's find out. Copy the zone (ctrl-c) and paste it over the Leo on the other end of the runway.

Name	Value	
raiseFlag!	*respawn	trash
cloner		trash
clone?	*respawn	trash
empty!	*all dead	trash
timeDelay	2-4	trash
startDelay?	*all dead	trash
delayDone!	*respawn	trash



You are done. Since we are using only local flags, no attributes have to be adapted, the entire 'clone automaton' works autonomously, and **can be copy/pasted anywhere with no change!**

7.11.3 Discussion

Another mission without any Lua in sight!

The cloners use raiseFlag instead of onStart for multiple reasons

- We are about to deprecate onStart for most modules
- Using raiseFlag makes this spawner more flexible and useful: instead of spawning at mission start, using raiseFlag allows us to introduce an arbitrary start delay for this cloner.

And now for some exercises:

- imagine that you want to make all spawn stop any further spawning when flag 900 is changed. How could you go about that? Hint: the easiest way does not involve the clone.
- Have a message appear per cloner before it respawns, but *not* the very first spawn. Hint: make some 2-4 seconds before the respawn.

7.12 Once, twice, three times a maybe.miz (Event Count Down)

7.12.1 Demonstration Goals: The unending Spawner

This mission demonstrates how we can employ a counter to limit a cloner's spawning to a set number. We do this the following way: we use a flag change to initiate a spawn. Once the determined number of spawns is reached, we no longer want the cloner to spawn.



The set up is easy: we use a cloner that is set up to spawn units at mission start, and then every time all spawned units are destroyed. We can do this with a simple feedback loop on the cloner from `empty!` to `spawn?`. This, by itself, creates an unending spawner as we have seen in *Attack of the CloneZ*.

We now want to limit this in such a way that after the third spawn (including the initial start spawn), the cloner no longer spawns. As additional bonus, we want several smoke zones smoke start their smoke effect to signal that this has happened.

In a normal mission you would use similar configurations to allow something to happen for a number of times before another, different action is initiated.

7.12.2 What To Explore

7.12.2.1 In Mission

Jump into your trusty Su-25T. If you don't know how to use it to destroy ground units, invest the half hour in training, then come back 😊!

Now, in front of you is the target range, and an armed Hummer has just spawned. Switch to A/G, TV and Laser, and use your *Vikhr* missiles to destroy the Hummer. As soon as the Hummer is destroyed, a new one spawns. Circle around and destroy that one as well. Again, a new Hummer spawns. Once you destroy that one, red smoke columns start rising on both sides of the runway, and no more Hummers spawn.

7.12.2.2 ME

There are few surprises here: we have a cloner that spawns the Hummer, and it is set up to spawn *onStart*, and every time there is a change on *spawn?*, which is set to watch flag 100. Every time all units of the last spawn are destroyed, the module bangs flag 100 (*empty+1*) – not 100 as we initially

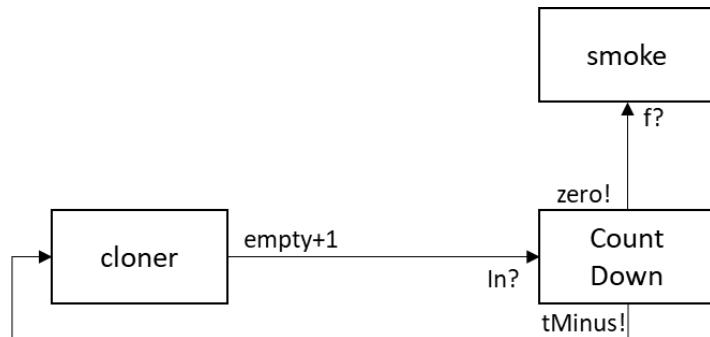
Name	Value
cloner	
onStart	yes
spawn?	100
empty+1	110
preWipe	yes

stated as we need a way to interrupt the feedback. If we banged flag 100 with *empty+1*, each kill of the Hummer will spawn a new Hummer, with no way to interrupt it.

So, to interrupt the feedback loop at the appropriate time, we feed it into a count down module's input to count the *empty+1* events, and use the count down's *tMinus!* output which propagates any input unless the

Name	Value
countDown	3
count?	110
tMinus!	100
zero!	200

counter has reached zero or less. This completes the circuit from the cloner's output *empty+1* to the cloner's input *spawn?* flag. All that remains now is to set up the count down start value itself, which we set to 3 (note that, according to the documentation, a start of 3 will result in 2 changes on the *tMinus!* flag, which is exactly what we want).



Understanding this becomes surprisingly simple if you take a design approach: draw this out on paper, using boxes for spawner, and lines for flags that connect to the in/output attributes. The end result looks similar to a digital circuit, and that is pretty much what we are designing here.

The last bit that completes the picture is quite easy: we connect the smoke zone's *f?* input to the counter's *zero!* output, which causes it to start smoking when the counter's count reaches zero (after three kills).

7.12.3 Discussion

That was easy. And no Lua.

Now, for a small challenge: why don't you build in some cool eye candy: change the set up so that after the Hummer is destroyed, the next Hummer spawns after a 5-10 second pause.

Hint: all you need is a delayFlag.

And now, try to make add some randomization: make the Hummer stop respawn after 3 to 5 re-spawns.

Hint: You don't need anything else, it's all there already 😊

7.13 Bottled Messages.miz (Messenger, timeDelay)

7.13.1 Demonstration Goals

This one is short and sweet, and demonstrates a couple of important “DML glue” concepts: how ME and modules stick together:

- Using Radio Flags to initiate DML actions
- Using multiple modules that “stack” on the same zone
- Using a timeDelay to sequence DML events

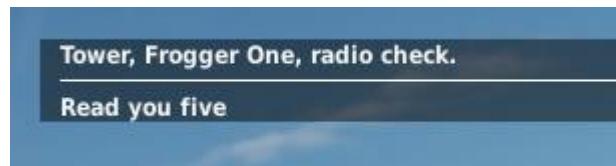
7.13.2 What To Explore

7.13.2.1 In Mission

Enter your Frogfoot, and go to Communications→Other and choose “Immediate Radio Check”. This user interaction via Radio menu starts a (very short) sequence of actions from DML: it causes a messenger on the “100 Radio Check” zone to output a message, and play a sound file.

Now choose Communication→Other, and select “Radio Check, delayed response”. Another, slightly longer sequence of DML actions runs:

- A message “Tower, Frogger One, radio check” appears
- After a short while, “Read you five” appears on screen, and a sound file plays.



That's all, folks!

7.13.2.2 ME

In order to create user events, we use ME’s “Radio Item Add” actions that create a new entry in the Communications→Other tree.

ACTIONS	CLONE	^	v
RADIO ITEM ADD (Immediate Radio Check, 100, 1)			
RADIO ITEM ADD (Radio Check, delayed response, 110, 1)			

These radio items, when chosen, cause a flag (here 100 and 110) to be set to a specific value (note that ME can't increase flags with radio items, just set them to a specific value, so any subsequent choice of the same radio item will not register as a flag change).

DML modules detect this change to initiate their actions.

In a simple (the first) case, it simply activates a messenger (`f? 100`) which causes it to output a *message* ‘five by five’ and plays the audio *soundFile* `fife.ogg` (note that this sound file is added to the mission by a separate trigger to ensure it is included into the .miz archive).

Name	Value	Remove
messenger		
f?	100	
message	Read you five	
soundFile	fife.ogg	

A more interesting cascade is started when we choose the “Radio Check, delayed response” option: We first see a message “Tower, Frogger One, radio check.” displayed on our screen (mimicking us requesting a radio check from the tower), followed by a brief (variable) pause, and then the written and aural response “read you five”). The most interesting bit here is the delay. This allows us to insert a pause between DML actions that seems more life like (in this case). In general, though it’s often desirable to allow a brief time interval between actions, and `timeDelay` is the perfect tool to do this for you.

This is achieved by multiple chained DML modules: The initial 110 flag change from the radio item activates a combined `timeDelay/messenger` zone: it activates `f? 110` which is common to both messenger and time delay. The message is displayed (messenger) and a delay is started (`timeDelay 1-2` seconds, randomized). When the time delay is complete, `timeDelay` bangs `out! 115`, which is (not coincidentally at all) the input flag for the second messenger.

The second messenger, attached to zone “115 response read you five” offers little surprise and is configured nearly identically to the original one-step action. Once the message and audio are played, this cascade ends.



Name	Value
messenger	
message	Tower, Frogger One, radio ct
f?	110
timeDelay	1-2
out!	115

Name	Value
messenger	
message	Read you five
f?	115
soundFile	fife.ogg

7.13.3 Discussion

COMPOUND MODULE USE

Using compound modules can be both a blessing and a curse. Most commonly the following modules are used together with others:

- `delayTimer` (to chain DML actions)
- `messenger` (to annotate actions)

so it's fitting that we use these two together to demonstrate the concept. When you use modules together, there are several points that you need to keep in the back of your head to avoid unintended consequences:

SHARED ATTRIBUTES

When two modules per their “ME Attributes” description have one or more attributes with the same name (e.g. `in?` for messenger in Clone Zone) you must ensure that this is in line with your intended use. Usually, they are for trigger handling (inputs always end on a question mark, and outputs should always end on `+1` or an exclamation point). Some modules may share a name, or use similarly named attributes that can lead to confusion.

Also, mind that it's usually not a problem if two or more modules share the same input attribute (e.g. `in?`), it *can* be problematic if two or more modules share the same output attribute, and fire at the same time. In that case, the way that modules change the output flag can come into conflict.

TIMING, INPUTS AND OUTPUTS

Remember that even though modules may “share” the same input and output attributes, internally they may be treated quite differently. All modules run on their own ‘clock’ (meaning they use different times when they look at the input flag or bang an output flag), and it’s virtually guaranteed that these clocks are *not* synchronized. Therefore, you never know which module reads a flag first, nor how much time passes before other modules check that flag. Don’t ever rely on an order in which modules react, and always ensure that there are no dependencies on the order in which they do.

RICH MAN’S DEBUG TOOL

When using Lua, `trigger.action.outText()` is pretty much functions as DCS’s poor man’s debug tool. DML’s messenger module is the rich man’s equivalent. Attach it to a zone that you want to monitor, queue it to the same trigger, and have it report whenever the module that you are interested in activates. When done, simply remove the messenger attribute.

7.14 Follow Me! (unit zones & messenger)

7.14.1 Demonstration Goals

This mission demonstrates how unitZones can be used to detect units / players and how that information can drive messengers to provide feedback to create mock ground controller or formation flying trainer.



7.14.2 What To Explore

7.14.2.1 In Mission

Hop into the Frogfoot on the ground. Once inside, increase throttle to start rolling, and close the distance to the Hummer in front of you. It starts rolling, and depending on how close you are will encourage you to get closer, or remain at that distance.

Once you reach the runway threshold, you are told that you should contact tower for clearance, and the hummer veers off to the right, while you should stop. You no longer receive messages that you should get closer to the Hummer.

Now restart the mission and jump into the airborne Frogfoot. In front of you is another Frogfoot 'Maximo Lider'. Find out how good your flying skills are, and fly in close formation (less than 30m apart). When you get inside 60 and 30 meter distance, you'll get messages, and when you then widen the gap, you'll again get messages when you grow more than 30 or 60 meters apart.

7.14.2.2 ME

Let's begin with the ground-bound Frogfoot. We have a zone "Detect Player One" that ostensibly exists to detect the presence of a player plane (and serve as a set-up for a cheap pun later). When we inspect the zone itself we find that it is a compound zone, consisting of a unitZone and a messenger module.

The unitZone looks for player-controlled planes (*matching* is set to *player*) whose name begins with "The"(lookfor = "The*" – note the asterisk at the end to denote wildcard). Note that both client (player) planes match that description, for simple expediency (so I could re-use the zone via copy / paste).

The zone is also set up to bang! the local flag 'hi there' when the player unit is found to enter the zone. When all player planes that match the description leave this zone, the module is also to bang! on (ME compatible, global) flag 100.

Stacked on the zone is also a messenger flag that activates when local flag 'hi there' changes, and that displays the greeting message that you saw when you entered the cockpit on the ground.

So what is that ME flag 100 for? Well, that is an old-school shout-out to ME that allows the Hummer to proceed with its path to waypoint one (it was held at the initial waypoint by a waypoint action. Accordingly, we expect the Hummer to start rolling when we move out of the "Detect Player One" zone.

So how did the Hummer keep telling you that you should come and that you are close enough? This is accomplished by the two essentially identical, concentric unitZones "inner" and "outer" that move centered on the Hummer (linkedUnit = FollowMe) and that stack a unitZone to generate flag change events whenever the player moves inside or outside of the zone. Each entry and exit of the zone generate their own global DML events, a total of four (4) different events.

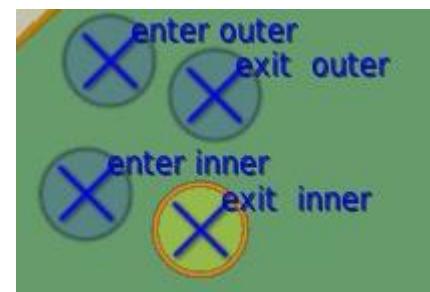
And that solves the secret: there are four separate ME Trigger Zones that each carry a messenger. Each messenger is tied to their own trigger event, and thus create the four different messages that you encounter:

- "Get a little bit closer" when you enter the outer zone
- "That's close enough!" when you enter the inner zone



Name	Value
unitZone	
lookFor	The*
matching	player
enterZone!	*hi There
exitZone!	100
messenger	
messageOut?	*hi There
message	Frog One, approach and foll

Name	Value
linkedUnit	FollowMe
unitZone	
lookFor	The*
matching	player
enterZone!	enter outer
exitZone!	exit outer



- “You could get a bit closer” when you exit the inner again and
- “Frog One, keep up!” when you leave the outer zone.

There is one last messenger feature that we use to “mute” all messages when the Hummer reaches the runway. At the runways hold short position we find a quad trigger zone “Ready Player One” that also contains a unitZone module. This unitZone looks for the Hummer’s Group (lookFor = Follo*, and no ‘matching’, which defaults to Groups). As soon as the first (and only) unit of that group enters the zone, it bangs! on the (global DML) flag “at rwy”.

The four messengers that we looked at before all have this flag wired to their “messageOff?” input. Once a signal is received on that input, a messenger goes silent, so all four messengers immediately stop sending out messages when you enter/leave the zones around the Hummer – to the player it looks as if control was handed over to Tower.



Name	Value
messenger	
messageOut?	enter outer
message	Get a little bit closer
messageOff?	at rwy

Now look at the set up for the airborne version, and you’ll see that it’s an almost identical setup. This is only provided to show a couple of things:

- unitZones update quickly enough to also allow inflight following (they use just-in-time updates, so they only update once a second, every time they are required to check so have negligible performance cost)
- You can use simple combinations like this to create complex flight following/flight training missions where players must stay close to a unit and receive warnings when they are getting too far away
- Just how cool are messengers that you can tell to shut up?

7.14.3 Discussion

Yeah, no Lua.

Detect Player One

This demo uses a pretty underhanded trick to detect when the player enters the ground-based Frogfoot that only works under certain conditions:

- unitZones are initialized at start-up and save if initially, the units they look for are inside or outside the zone so they can respond correctly when later on the units enter or leave the zone. When *at start-up* it is determined that a looked-for unit is inside the unitZone, no signal is generated, but the state is saved.
- So how is it possible that our ‘Detect Player One’ unit detects the player when we enter the mission at the beginning? This is due to two factors:
 - unitZone must load at startup (as done in the ONSTART trigger)

- A peculiarity of missions is that when the mission starts up, player units are not yet inside the world – players look at the slot choice panel.
- When the players choose their planes, unitZone has initialized, and saved the fact that no player plane is inside “Detect Player One”. So when it suddenly detects a spawned player unit inside, the zone creates a zoneEntered! flag change.

Detect Player Two

Why is this zone so big?

Because the player plane that spawns is fast, and it may exit the zone during the interval that unitZones samples all zones (by default once per second). In ME, we set The Flying Frog up to start at 500 km/h, which translates to some 140 m/s. We therefore add some margin for safety, and make the zone's radius 200m (400m across), so even two-seconds between samples will allow the zone to detect the player plane when it spawns.

NAME	Detect Player Two
ZONE TYPE	Circular
RADIUS	< > 200 m

Now, there is an easy fix that would allow you to use a small zone instead, irrespective of the player unit's speed. Can you find it?

Spoiler: yes, it involves a linkedUnit attribute.

Detect the other player?

Both Detect Player zones use a lookFor = “The*” wildcard that fits both player planes: “The Frog” and “The Flying Frog”. So what do you predict would happen if you fly “The Flying Frog” through “Detect Player One” – and why?

Hint: revert back to the previous topic “Detect Player Two”.

Quads, too!

That zone on the ground, at the hold short position. The one that detects when the Hummer is inside and tells the pilot to contact tower? Yeah, that's a quad zone. Glad you noticed. All zone based modules support quad zones – as long as you remember to keep the angles below 180 degrees (which usually is the case with most quad zones).

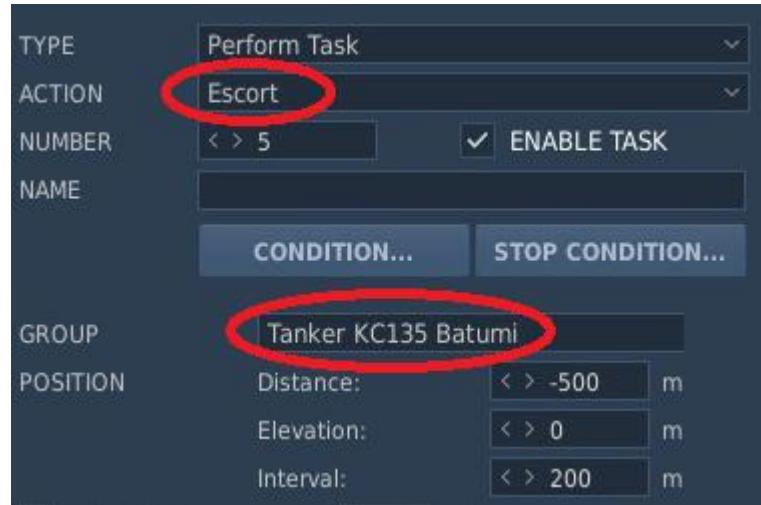
7.15 Clone Relations (Advanced Topic)

7.15.1 Demonstration Goals

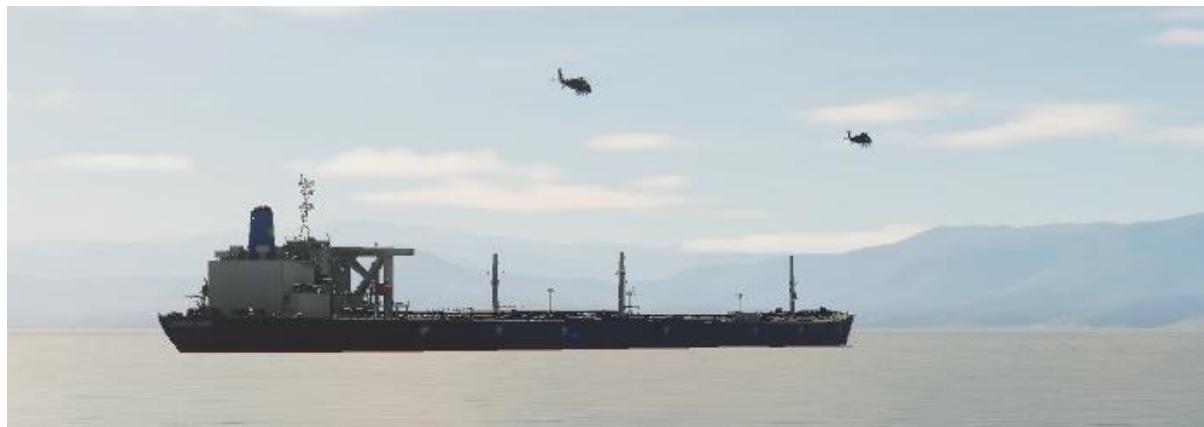
This demo explores the question: what happens to units/groups that are cloned and that have other units/groups in their waypoints?

In other words, what happens when either (or all) of them are clones? What happens when

- A unit with such a reference is cloned (i.e. the escorting unit is cloned, the unit to escort isn't)
- A unit with such a reference is cloned and the targeted group is also a cloned



A common example is a rescue helicopter that is placed off the side of a carrier and simply shadows the movement of the carrier through a 'follow group' task. After a while, the rescue chopper runs out of gas and has to land. This is fine for most scenarios, but some servers run 24/7, and here the mission designer runs into an issue: the helicopter disappears after a few hours, requiring some advanced mission design Lua-fu to have it re-appear on station. With a cloner this can be easily remedied, if the rescue helicopters spawn regularly (say every 2 hours), and the clone can correctly resolve its reference to the unit/group it should follow.



Even more direct are battle groups that engage each other and that should perpetually respawn after being destroyed to simulate an ongoing battle. Here the enemy groups have each other as attack targets. The cloner must ensure that when new clones spawn they attack the correct group, as the one their task refers to was destroyed hours ago, and the group they should attack are clones.

7.15.2 What To Explore

7.15.2.1 In Mission

This mission is a collection of micro-case-studies, and we want to explore them one at a time. Start the mission, then

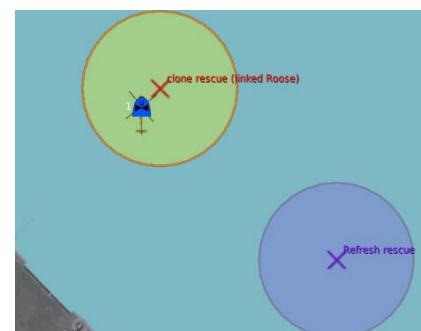
1. Hit F9 to cycle through the ships until you are viewing the Roosevelt. Notice the rescue helicopter off it's starboard side. Observe it closely. Every 10 seconds it seems to jump slightly, and then resume it's location.
2. Also note the Hornets that take off the Roosevelt every 90 seconds.
3. Now, cycle with F9 until you are looking at the Seawise Giant. Note the *two* helicopters following it. If it's still early in the mission, you'll notice the lagging helicopter closing the gap to the leading, and then keeping it's distance after a short while.
4. Now cycle to the Stennis. Observe the Hornet taking off (you may need to restart the mission), and the deck equipment.
5. Using F2, cycle to the KC135 tanker, and note its escort of three vipers.
6. F2-cycle to the lone chopper flying over water to apparently nowhere
7. More F2: cycle to the Frogfoot, and watch it attack a static target at Batumi (if it survives the encounter with the eagle)
8. Use F7 to cycle to one of the two battling tanks. Notice how they perpetually respawn and attack each other.

7.15.2.2 ME

So let's go through the things we observed in-mission and note what is remarkable about it, why, and how we did it with DML

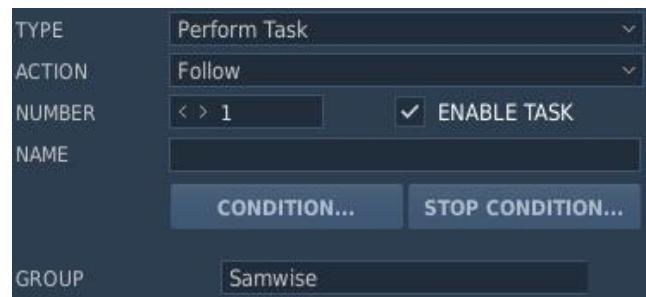
1. This ("Clone Rescue") is an endlessly respawning rescue helicopter that always appears in the same spot relative to the carrier and then assumes follow position. This is a possible solution for 24/7 servers who want permanent rescue helicopters on-station with a minimum of fuss. It's realized with a zone that has as linkedUnit the Roosevelt (so it moves with the ship) and keeps its relative position to the Roosevelt through the useOffset Attribute. This linked zone also contains the cloner that clones the UH-60. Since preWipe is true, the last spawned instance of the helicopter is despawned before the new one is cloned. The UH 60 has orders to follow the Roosevelt, and when cloned, these follow orders are cloned as well.
Finally, there is pulser in the Zone (Refresh Rescue) that bangs the cloner's input every 10 seconds to initiate a new clone cycle.
2. The Hornet is regularly spawned by the "Bug Cloner" clone zone. Note that since the Hornet is set to "Takeoff from Runway" in its initial waypoint, we do not have to set the cloner to follow the Roosevelt via 'linkedUnit' (although it would not hurt to do so). Upon spawn, the waypoint reference

Name	Value
linkedUnit	Roosevelt
useOffset	yes
cloner	
preWipe	yes
spawn?	100



is resolved to the current position of the Roosevelt, and hence the Hormet clone spawns correctly, and can take off. The spawner's preWipe attribute is given to not overwhelm the mission (else a hornet is cloned every 90 seconds, dragging down DCS's performance). Spawning is controlled with the pulser in "Fresh Bugs"

3. There is an important difference between the Seawise and Roosevelt that becomes apparent when you look at them in ME: in-mission, the Seawise is a clone, while the Roosevelt is the original unit that was assigned in ME. This demonstrates two important concepts that DML solves under the hood. Both UH-60 that are following the Seawise have "Follow" instructions (as a Tolkien fan, the Seawise will also be called "Samwise", I can't help it. Ah, "fellowship" – huh. Puns "R" us.). When the mission starts up, first the "fellowship of clones" group is cloned. During the cloning process, the cloner recognizes that the unit that the helicopter is to follow is also part of the cloning template, and automatically resolves the following orders to follow the cloned seawise.
- A little bit later the "clone following clone" zone is triggered. That group has orders to follow the "Samwise" that was placed in ME, but that unit no longer exists (it was removed during start-up). The cloner then looks through its records and sees that it did clone that unit, and automatically assigned the last clone from the original as target of the follow task. So it is possible (and common) to clone units that interact with other units that are themselves clones. The rule to remember here is that unless the reference is to a unit within the same clone template, a reference to a cloned unit is always a reference to the last cloned instance. Keep this in mind when designing your mission, and it will usually work out well.
4. The (non-SC) Stennis works similar to the Roosevelt. This sample shows that Aircraft can clone onto starting positions without issues. Additionally, we are cloning static objects here onto the Stennis' deck, simply to show that it's possible. This is only important if you want to clone cargo, as you would usually simply use standard (un-cloned) static objects to place on a carrier's deck. There's very little to see here except proof that a cloner can correctly handle static objects linked to moving ships.



- This example simply shows how clones (the falcons) can escort a normal unit, it's the purely aerial equivalent of the helicopter following the Roosevelt; it's also proof that cloners support the 'Escort' task in addition to 'Follow'.

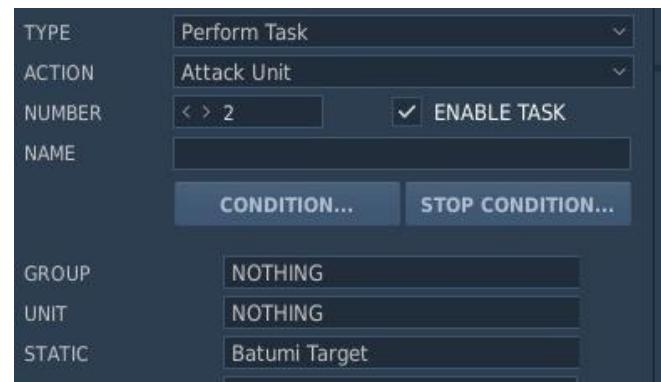
- This little example demonstrates that you can use foreign templates in a cloner and the cloned unit will still faithfully execute their orders.

Although it doesn't look like it, the UH-60 is following the Roosevelt. It merely has to cross the 46 km distance first.



- This is more interesting, and here we see the application of the 'last clone is it' rule. The Frogfoot has orders to attack the static object 'Batumi Target'.

This static, however, is part of a clone template that is cloned four times before the Frogfoot spawns. Consequently, when the Frogfoot is cloned, clone zone updates the Task to attack the static clone that was cloned last (it's undetermined which of the five cloners will be the last one since they all fire during the same cycle. If you need to tightly control which clone to attack, you will have to sequence the cloning process with timers like delayFlag)



- And finally, the tale of the endlessly battling tanks. Both groups have each other as targets defined, both are endless respawners (meaning their spawn is short-circuited with their empty+1 signal). The interesting question here is: how will this resolve, as theoretically, one will not have a correct target at their initial spawn. While this is correct (whoever spawns first will not have a correct attack target as the other unit doesn't exist), this quickly is resolved by the fact that neither tank survives for long, and all subsequent spawns always resolve correctly to their last-cloned enemy.

Now, before you get too excited – even though dynamically updated clone tasks is an impressive feat coding-wise, it doesn't do much in this example, as the tanks would battle each other even without having the task to attack each other.



7.15.3 Discussion

Compound Zone Modules / Synonym use

There is an interesting Zone setup that involves the Seawise Giant cloning example. Inspect the Zone “Clone Following Clone”.

What we have here is a cloner that is cloning after a delay, and the delay is built into the zone. The signal enters on flag 200 (which is used to clone the Samwise and the first UH-60), and goes into the delayFlag module before it exits the delayFlag on 201 and enters the cloner.

Name	Value	
cloner		
spawn?	201	
timeDelay	2	
out!	201	
startDelay?	200	

This is required to prevent the two clone Zones “Fellowship of clones” and “Clone Following Clone” to spawn uncontrollably at the same time, the delayFlag module enforces a separation of the cloning process by time (here 2 seconds).

Both modules (delayFlag and cloner) share the same zone - we could have used two separate zones, one each for the cloner and one for the delayFlag module. However, to do so we must be careful to separate the inputs so they would not get crossed. timeDelay has three synonyms for their input flags: in?, f?, and startDelay? – while a cloner responds to in?, f?, spawn? and clone?. In order not net cross out input lines, in? and f? are out, while we are free to use the other synonyms to keep the lines separate. In our example we chose ‘spawn?’ for the cloner, and startDelay for delayFlag.

No carrier clones

Currently, you can't mix cloned carriers with cloned flights from that carrier. For reasons unexplained, it simply doesn't work. Place a cloner over the Stennis, and have it spawn onStart. Try as you might, you will not be able to get the hornet spawn from the cloned Stennis. A bit annoying, but since carriers aren't supposed to die, much less respawn in a mission, this is an annoyance more than anything else.

Perhaps this issue can be resolved in the future.

7.16 Moving Spawners I & II (SpawnZone and linkedUnit, GroupTracker)

7.16.1 Demonstration Goals

This mission demonstrates how you can link spawn zones (both unit and object spawners) to other units and have the location of the spawn move. Mission designers use this to simulate both units ‘dropping cargo’ or deploying troops along a route



The “II” version of this mission also shows how you hand off spawned troops to group trackers

7.16.2 What To Explore

7.16.2.1 In Mission

Simply sit in the cockpit and observe the two trucks on either side of the runway. The left truck drops objects (a tire with a red flag in the center) and the right truck drops infantry (a soldier). The drops occur every ten seconds (cooldown) for a total of ten times each (maxSpawns)

Not that the units/objects aren’t spawned in the center of the moving trucks, but to the side, and slightly behind.

Also note that in version II of this mission, we use a group tracker to track the number of troops (but not static objects) that are spawned and display a message containing the current count.

7.16.2.2 ME

There are two spawn zones: one used as a unit spawner and one as object spawner. Inspect the zones in ME, and take note of the following:

Unit Spawner

- **autoRemove** is set to true to immediately restart cooldown timer and respawn
- **linkedUnit** is Truck One, and **useOffset** is set to true so the ‘drop point’ for the unit always stays in the same relative position to the truck’s center.

- **formation** is set to **Line** so the single unit is always placed at the exact location of the spawn zone (a positioning feature that only the “Line” formation provides → Spawn Formations)
- **maxSpawns** is set to 10 (ten), so spawning stops after the tenth spawn

Object Spawner

- **linkedUnit** is the second truck (“Dropper Two”), and **useOffset** is turned on. Since this is an object spawner, we don’t want the spawned objects to move with the linked truck, and therefore there is also an **autoLink = false** attribute
- **types** are two objects (Flag and Tire), and they are always created together **count** times per spawn (one) for **maxSpawns** iterations. Since count is one, the combined static object is created in the center of the spawn zone, not arrayed around the zone’s perimeter
- **autoRemove** is set to true to immediately start the cooldown and respawn cycle

7.16.3 Discussion

Again, this mission requires no dedicated mission script, everything works out-of-the-box – this mission requires no Lua. Even though it looks as if the truck “drop” objects and personnel, in reality this is done with spawn zones that simply use their zone’s linkedUnit attribute to follow a unit around.

Since object spawners are mostly linked to moving units to spawn cargo or landing markings on ships, the objects usually spawn linked to the same unit as the spawn zone itself. We need turn that off to have the spawned objects be ‘dropped’ to the ground. Although technically, DCS supports linking objects to other moving objects than ships, the results range from ‘interesting’ to ‘unpredictable’, so it is not recommended. Still, the code will not automatically unlink objects when their link type isn’t a ship for future compatibility.

Version II of this demo uses an identical setup, and additionally passes all groups (in our case single-unit infantry groups)

useOffset	yes	
trackwith:	Track Troops	

to a group tracker when they are spawned. Group Trackers can generate flag events when something happens to groups. To pass a group after spawning to a tracker, use the “trackWith:” attribute in the spawner.

When a new group is passed to the group tracker, it updates the number of groups currently tracked on the (local) “tracking” flag, which triggers a messenger module that is stacked on the same zone. The messenger then uses that same (local) “tracking” flag as number input to generate the “Now tracking XX groups” message that is displayed each time that the “tracking” flag changes.

Name	Value	
tracker		
numGroups	*tracking	
messenger?	*tracking	
message	Now tracking <v> groups	
messageValue?	*tracking	

7.17 Helo Trooper.miz

7.17.1 Demonstration Goals

You need a troop transport helicopter for this mission: UH-1, HIND or Hip.



This mission demonstrates how players can use a troop transport helicopter to pick up infantry groups and deploy them (automatically and manually), and how to interface with spawners that use the 'requestable' attribute to selectively spawn groups.

7.17.2 What To Explore

7.17.2.1 In Mission

Start the mission in the SU-25T. Note that there is no Other... menu available. Look around. You see that there are several groups of units already deployed on the ground, to the left (north-east):

- Pick Me Up
- Pick Me Up Too
- Illegal Team

Now start in one of the transport helicopters (for this demonstration, we'll take the Huey).

Choose Communication and observe that there is an 'Airborne Troops...' menu. **THIS IS NOT THE MENU YOU ARE LOOKING FOR!** Helo Troops provides its own menu in the "Other..." communication tree.

Choose communication→Other→Airlift Troops. This is the menu that connects to Helo Troops.

Note that the menu leads with Helo Troop's settings: Auto-Drop (currently ON) and Auto-Pick-Up (currently off). Select these to toggle their settings

Now for the more interesting stuff

Requesting A Spawn

You have the option to request spawning a group Legal Team Six. If you choose this option, the spawner connected to this menu item (automatically made by Heli Troops) causes that spawner to spawn a group and then undergo cool-down. Once the group is spawned, you can pick it up like any other group. Try again to spawn the group. If you are quick enough, you'll only get a message that the spawner is cooling down (well, you get a more appropriate message, but the cooldown is triggering this message).

Using spawners with requestable spawns versus immediate spawns is useful when you want a spawner to hold back spawning until the helicopter is very close, or the spawner sits in territory that can potentially be conquered (and spawned troops will immediately start fighting)



Loading Troops

Since Auto-Pick-Up is turned off, the helicopter didn't load the closest team, and you can choose which team to load. You have two options (three if you requested a spawn): Pick Me up, Pick Me Up Too (and Legal Team Six). Note that you do not have the option to load 'Illegal Team': they consist of infantry and an 'illegal' unit, the Hummer. Note also that the Team Missileer Pickup is also not available although it fully consists of 'legal' troops: it's too far away.

Choose one of the legal teams and load them up. They'll disappear from the game. Try to load another team. That's impossible, instead you have the option to disembark (deploy) the currently loaded team.

Deploying Troops (auto-deploy)

Now make sure that you have selected 'Auto Drop ON'. Take off, fly to the runway's center line close to the Su-25T, and land the helicopter on the runway. Your group of infantry disembarks immediately, deploying into a defensive circle around the helicopter.

Auto-Pickup

Now make sure that auto-pickup is turned on. If you do this while still on the ground, note that the troops surrounding your helicopter are not immediately loaded – auto-load only

happens the moment that your helicopter lands so you can safely change options while on the ground.

Take off empty, and touch down close to the Missileer group. That group is immediately loaded.

Manual Drop-Off

Now ensure that you have set Auto-Drop to OFF. With the missileer loaded into your helicopter, fly back to the runway where you unloaded the first group. Touch down and note that your infantry stays on board. Now choose Deploy Team to have your team of missileers disembark.

Weight Considerations

Currently, Heli Troops does not factor in the weight of troops it's loading into the helicopter. This is to be implemented later.

7.17.2.2 ME

Note that this mission shows a couple of important features:

- A spawner's requestable attribute controls if the troops can be requested via a helicopter's menu. Note that simply making a spawner requestable does not ensure that the spawned troops can be picked up. That check is made separately, the troops merely spawn (which can be used for different purposes altogether: a spawn can be triggered if your helicopter is close enough, and this alone can be a mission goal)
- You now can pick up any friendly group that consists entirely of infantry, provided you land close enough. These units can be placed with ME or spawned from DML spawners
- Heli Troops offers per-helicopter options to auto-load and auto-unload units.
- Heli Troops determines which groups it can load. The group with the Hummer (illegal unit for helo transport) does not appear as an option
- Heli Troops only offers to load troops that are in range
- Heli-Troops automatically interacts with spawners that are in range and offer spawn on request
- Heli-Troops automatically observes a spawner's cool-down rules after requesting troops.

Name	Value
spawner	legal spawner, all types are
types	Soldier M4, Soldier M4, Soldi
country	0
baseName	Legal Team Six
requestable	yes

7.17.3 Discussion

No Lua is required at all.

Helo Troops helps to integrate helicopters better into a mission – you no longer have to bother with embark/disembark waypoints: you now can pick up and deploy troops wherever you fee is right.

There is more, though, so try this:

- Load up a group of infantry, and drop it close to the refueler (ground unit) at the end of the runway. The group immediately engages it until it is destroyed.
- Pick up a group of infantry, and fly due west (bearing 260). At the coast, there are a gas platform and a large tanker. Land on them. Yes, your troops can deploy on those objects! And yes, you can pick them up from them!



7.18 Heli Cargo.miz – cargo spawn & receive

7.18.1 Demonstration Goals

This mission shows how object spawners **spawn cargo**, and how cargo **receivers** then **guide the helicopter** pilot towards the receiving zone. This mission is fully multi-player capable.

The mission dynamically spawns the cargo objects, and the receiver zone uses ME flag 10 to count the number of objects delivered. We use standard ME triggers to output a message on the first, second and third delivery. The delivery zone is marked with dynamically spawned tires arranged in a circle to mark the delivery area.

Oh, and for visual candy we also threw in a smoke zone that permanently marks the delivery zone with green smoke.

7.18.2 What To Explore

7.18.2.1 In Mission

Fly any of the provided helicopters. Use the standard communication menu to pick up cargo. Once hooked, slowly fly the cargo towards the receiver zone that is marked with tires and green smoke. Note that during approach text messages guide you towards the zone. Unhook the cargo inside to deliver. A message will appear. Fly back to the pick-up area and notice that the cargo has re-spawned (triggered by delivering it, at which point it was deleted). Pick up another cargo and deliver, then again. Note that each time you deliver, a different message appears

7.18.2.2 ME

Cargo is not placed in ME as objects, but we use object spawners set up to dynamically spawn cargo. These spawners can indefinitely supply new cargo objects. The problem with these cargo units: ME currently does not have the ability to set flags if you delivered dynamically spawned cargo, it can only work with cargo objects that exist at the start of the mission. Not so DML: we have cargo receivers that can work with any cargo.

We are **not using** any of the ME-supplied cargo triggers (CARGO UNHOOKED IN ZONE – which are woefully inadequate here because they require that the cargo is defined when the mission starts). Instead, the cargo delivery zone uses an “**f+1**” attribute on flag **10**, which increases the flag’s value each time that you successfully deliver cargo. **The messages are triggered by using standard ME flags**

Name	Value
cargoReceiver	can receive cargos
autoRemove	yes
f+1	10



Note that we use a separate object spawn zone to create the ring of tires that marks the receiver zone. We could have “stacked” the zones by using only one zone and move all attributes into one zone, but for clarity (and a possible attribute conflict) we use separate zones to separate cargo receiver and object spawner.

Also note the permanent smoke that is positioned slightly off the cargo zone. It only adds some visual pizzazz, and nicely shows how to add an ‘eternal’ smoke marker.

7.18.3 Discussion

This mission requires no Lua at all.

Cargo delivery Zones allow you to work with dynamically spawned cargo – something that ME currently unfortunately doesn’t allow at all. So whenever you are designing a mission where cargo can appear as a result of mission events, cargo receivers allow you to automate hauling that cargo to the destination.

Note also that cargo delivery zones ‘talk to pilots’ to guide their cargo, a great help for the final meters during delivery. This ability is built into cargo delivery zones, the messages only appear to the helicopter group hauling the cargo, and the directions only commence on the last few meters.

How Cargo Spawner, Cargo Manager and Cargo Receiver interact

Here is how Object Spawn Zones, Cargo Manager and Cargo Receiver Zones work together:

- At start, the Cargo Receiver Zone requests that it is updated on all cargo events by registering a callback to Cargo Manager
- The object spawn zone spawns a cargo object and places it at its center. This spawn is counted against the zone’s maximum number of spawns
- The Object Spawn Zone checks maxSpawns, and sees that it can re-spawn because maxSpawns are unlimited (-1)
- Since autoRemove is false (by default), the spawner watches the object and waits for the cargo to disappear before the next spawn cycle is started
- Since the managed attribute is true (by default) and the CargoManager module is loaded in this mission, the Object Spawner passes the new cargo object to Cargo Manager
- The cargo is now available in-game like normal cargo placed in ME
- A helicopter hooks, and then lifts the cargo. Note that this does *not* make the cargo disappear from the spawner’s perspective. No new spawn cycle is initiated.
- Cargo Manager notices that the cargo was lifted. It notes this cargo’s status as ‘lifted’ and invokes all subscribers with the ‘lifted’ event
- Cargo Receiver’s callback is invoked with ‘lifted’. Since the Receiver looks only for ‘grounded’-events, it ignores this event.
- Once every second, Cargo Receiver Zone enquires from Cargo Manager all cargos that are currently in the air (lifted). For each one, it checks if the cargo’s current position is close enough to a receiver zone for directions. If so, it checks the ‘silent’ attribute for that zone, and if not set, it outputs directions for the helicopter that is closest to the cargo (this is usually the one hauling the cargo, but in rare cases the wrong helicopter can receive the directions. Can’t be helped)
- When the helicopter puts down the cargo, cargo manager notices and invokes all subscribers with a ‘grounded’ event
- The Cargo Receiver’s callback is invoked with ‘grounded’ event. It checks the location of the grounded cargo against all receiver zones. If that location is inside a receiver zone,
 - it invokes its own callbacks with the event ‘deliver’

- processes the flag information attributes. In our example, it increases the value of Flag 10.
 - Since autoRemove is true, the cargo object is deleted. This will cause the spawner to initiate the next spawn cycle (see below)
- The Spawn Zone detects that its watched cargo has disappeared from the game, and starts the next spawn cycle by cooling down for 60 seconds (default) and then spawning a new cargo object

7.19 Artillery with UI.miz

7.19.1 Demonstration Goals

ArtilleryUI is a drop-in module to control/trigger firing a firing cycle into a cfxArtilleryZone for a unit working as an Artillery Forward Observer (FO). This mission demonstrates multiple points:

- How easy it is to integrate a feature enhancement (Artillery UI)
- How Artillery UI works in missions
- How artillery zones can be used to destroy map objects
- How to use a config zone to change some behavior (e.g. smoke color)
- Use an object destruct detector to trigger an ME action when the artillery destroys a map object
- (This mission also shows how we can remove an artillery zone after the work is done using a single Lua command. Ignore this bit until you feel comfortable looking at Lua code)

Normally, Artillery UI only works with helicopters – this restriction can be lifted with an attribute in a config zone (naturally). This allows us to use the free SU-25T module as FO. Since an FO must remain in close proximity to their target zone, we use a trick and enabling active pause so the Frogfoot can function as magical helicopter.

With the Su25T fixed in place, we then demonstrate the various options that ArtilleryUI offers. There are two artillery target zones on the map: one immediately to the left of the plane, and one more than 200km to the east, in Tbilisi.

7.19.2 What To Explore

7.19.2.1 In Mission

Start the mission and do not touch the Frogfoot's controls until the active pause kicks in. then look to the left. There is a factory complex that is one of our target zones.



Our goal is to have artillery destroy this complex. Since we are in active pause, we can take all the time in the world to experiment with ArtilleryUI.

Choose Communication→Other→Forward Observer

This is the Artillery UI interface. You have three options:

- List Artillery Targets
- Artillery Fire Control
- Mark Artillery Target

Listing Targets

When you choose List Artillery Targets, artillery UI lists all currently artillery zones that cfxArtilleryZones is managing. When you are close enough to observe, your status is either listed as "OBSERVING" or "OBSCURED"

If you aren't close enough to observe, the target zone is listed with range and bearing

Bringing down the house - OBSERVING
Soganlug Airfield [266.8km at 88°]

In this mission we have two target zones. We are observing one ("Bringing down the house"), and the other ("Soganlug Airfield") is 267km at bearing 88°

Marking Targets

It's not always (well, really never) easy to immediately spot your objective, especially if the target zone is swamped with enemies that have weapons and shoot at you – which they will. Therefore, when you are close enough (within 30km of the target zone), you can request to mark the target zone with smoke. So this now. Notice how even though there are two artillery zones on the map, you are only close enough to one, and therefore you only have one choice. Select <Bringing down the house>

Artillery shoots a single smoke round into the artillery zone, and a few seconds later, orange smoke will erupt from somewhere close to the building



Note that you do not need to be close enough to observe to have the target marked.

Fire! Command

When you are close enough and OBSERVING (meaning that in addition to be close enough, you also have clear LOS to the target zone's center) you can instruct artillery to fire. Doing so triggers the artillery zones fire cycle and then initiates a cooldown phase (artillery is reloading)

Similar to the Mark Zone command, the fire command only lists artillery zones that are available to receive a fire command, i.e. those that your unit is observing. Since your Frogfoot is hovering close enough with clear LOS to <Bringing down the house>, order the artillery to fire, and enjoy the show. Notice how the factory is levelled and you receive a message about the success.



Now try to issue another fire command. You'll notice that you get a 'No unobscured target areas' message. That is because the objective was destroyed, and the target zone was removed. The other target zone, Soganlug, is too far away for us, so we are done here.

7.19.2.2 ME

There are two artillery zones on the map: one close by to our Su-25T, and one far away in Tbilisi. Inspect the attributes in the artillery target zone, and note

- **coalition** is set to blue. This is important so artillery UI shows this target zone to blue side
- **transitionTime** is set to 5 seconds. This is just to make us wait less time. Note that transition time affects both the smoke petard and artillery shells

There are a couple more items that are noteworthy:

- There is a **ArtilleryUIConfig** zone. This configures ArtilleryUI so that aircraft can also use the UI, and sets the smoke color to orange (it's red by default)
- There is a strange second ME Trigger Zone inside the artillery zone: "**ceh_ang_b**". Inspect it and you will find that this is a Trigger Zone created in ME with "Assign as", and is used as an **Object Destruction Detector**!
- The Object Destruct Detector increases flag 100 (Attribute **f+1=100**) when the building is destroyed.
- So what does flag 100 control?



Inspecting the trigger in ME reveals that it does a couple of things: it outputs the "Good Shells" message. This is how your mission can use object destruct detectors to control other aspects of your mission and trigger actions

- (**Lua Only**) There is another action triggered with flag 100: a DOSCRIPT action. You should ignore it for now, but what it does is remove the artillery zone from cfxArtilleryZones list of managed zones so it disappears from artillery UI. This is merely eye candy, and when you feel ready to jump into the Lua abyss, you'll find that this wasn't actually that difficult to find out (simply look up cfxArtilleryZones API and find out what `removeArtilleryZone(zoneName)` does

7.19.3 Discussion

This mission requires (almost) no Lua at all.

As you can see, merely adding the Artillery UI to the mission gives you access to an entire UI for helicopters to mark artillery zones and FO visibility logic.

We used a config zone to change the way ArtilleryUI normally works in two ways:

- The UI is also available to fixed-wing aircraft (instead of helicopter only)
- Smoke color to mark the target zone is set to orange instead of default (red)

We used an Object Destruct Detector to find out when the factory is destroyed and used that to trigger an action (a message to everyone)

This mission also uses a tiny bit of black Lua magic to remove the target zone from the pool of managed target zones after the objective was achieved (we detected that the map object – the factory). It does not affect how the mission works, just adds some polish.

What to try

Use ME to change the configuration zone and add attributes for allSeeing, allRanging and allTiming and then see how this affects your ability to trigger the Soganlug artillery zone. Use F7 to observe the bombardment (there is a vehicle “Kenny” there).

7.20 Missile Evasion (Guardian Angel).miz

7.20.1 Demonstration Goals

This demonstrates the drop-in module “Guardian Angel”, a module that protects all player aircraft from missile attack. In this demo, we turned on the showy (and potentially harmful) ‘explosion’ effect that “detonates” missiles instead of removing them.

It also shows how AI planes can be added to Guardian Angel’s watchlist (Lua only)

7.20.2 What To Explore

7.20.2.1 *In Mission*

Fly the Frogfoot along the route and keep around 2000m altitude. Notice the frightening Hydras of missile contrails building as missile after missile is launched from multiple SA-6, S-10 and S-11 sites.



Do not try to evade. Note that after a short while, all planes except yours and a Jeff are dead. Note the warnings and other messages on the right side of the screen. Note that even if you don’t try to evade or expend any counter measures, you still live through the flight.

Also note that missiles that are removed by interventions explode at a safe distance

7.20.2.2 *ME*

Note the configuration zone. If you inspect it, you will see that we enabled explosions for effects, and set the value to 1.0. Note that this can potentially harm other aircraft.

Inspect the triggers and note the ONCE (Protect Jeff One) trigger. This is a bit of Lua code. It shows how, when you know the name of an AI Unit, you can also add it to the list of protected planes.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

As of version 3.x (and later), GuardianAngel supports designating protection status of aircraft using zones and attributes. See “Guardian Angel Reloaded”, which explores the new features.

7.20.3 Discussion

This mission requires no Lua at all.

Guardian Angel does its job really well, allowing missiles to come close, but not too close to protected planes. You can use this for many purposes: missile evasion school (where every time Guardian Angel intervenes, you would have lost), for adding harmless but blood pressure rising drama to a mission sequence (where a player plane receives protection to ensure nothing happens), or to kick up your missile training difficulty by disabling some Guardian Angel capabilities (for example disable interventions but keep missile warnings in place).

We have turned on the explosions effect in the configuration zone. Turn it off, and explore some other values.

What to try

- Turn off explosions
- Turn on ‘private’ – this reduces message clutter
- Turn off intervention and see how long you can survive. Mind the Missile missile! warning.

7.21 Guardian Angel Reloaded (Guardian Angel 3.x) tbc

7.21.1 Demonstration Goals

This mission builds on the previous ‘Missile Evasion’ mission, and adds details of the new features introduced with Guardian Angel 3.0 and later.



Guardian Angel adds the following capabilities:

- Dynamically turn Guardian Angel on and off during the mission
- Adding Aircraft to an ‘unprotected’ list using trigger zones
- Adding Aircraft to a ‘protected’ list using trigger zones

7.21.2 What To Explore

7.21.2.1 In Mission

Start the Mission in “GUARDED PLAYER” Frogfoot and as soon as you enter the cockpit, change to F10 Map view and zoom out. You’ll see a Falcon “Soon b ded” heading out to the east that, after a few seconds, is joined by another Falcon “Protected Falcon” heading the same way. Cycle through the F2 views until you are following “Soon b ded”. It won’t take long, and the first Falcon dies, so switch to “Protected Falcon” and follow that aircraft. This one should survive the barrage of three (!) S-300 SAM sites attacking it simultaneously (the S-300 is a SAM site that can re-target missiles in the air and beat the crap out of Guardian Angel 2.x). There is some residual risk that the protected falcon is killed by a missile that goes for a decoy that happens to be too close to it, but it usually survives.

Now, choose Communication→F10 Other→Guardian Angel→DISABLE Guardian Angel. It won't take long, and the Falcon is dead. Yes, S-300 are that lethal.

Turn Guardian angel back on using Communications→F10 Other→Guardian Angel and take off in your Frogfoot (you did choose the “GUARDED” slot, didn’t you? Time to find out. Fly due east, at 2500m (some 7500 ft) and you’ll see myriads of missiles being intercepted by GA.

Now, using Communications, turn GA off. You’ll don’t have the ghost of a chance.

Turn GA on again and depart Senaki-Kolkhi in the “UNPROTECTED PLAYER” Frogfoot. You’ll find that even with GA turned on, you won’t get far. This aircraft, even though it’s a player aircraft and GA is on, is unprotected, and the S-300 are far too deadly.

7.21.2.2 ME

In addition to being able to handle missiles that dynamically re-target (which the previous version of GA did not detect to the rude surprise of many players) version 3.0 mainly adds the following abilities

Turning Guardian Angel On and OFF

You now can use the config zone to tell GA which flags to watch for a change to enable and disable GA. When disabled, GA will still track all missiles in the air

Name	Value	Remove
on?	enableGA	
off?	disableGA	

(with negligible performance cost), but refrain from using that information to protect aircraft. When you switch GA back on, it resumes protecting aircraft, but be aware that it can be too late for some protected aircraft, as inbound missiles may already be in lethal range.

You use the two inputs on? and off? in the config zone to connect the Watchflags. In the demo we simply connect them to the radioMenu module that provides two items A and B.

Selectively Protecting and Exposing aircraft

You can selectively add and remove protection from aircraft by placing them in a trigger zone with the ‘guardian’

Name	Value	Remove
guardian	yes	

attribute. If the value of that attribute is false, the planes inside that zone will receive no protection whatsoever. If the value is true (or empty), all planes inside will always receive protection. Of course, aircrafts are only protected as long as GA is active (on).

Note that protection status is determined when the aircraft appears in the game. Moving through a ‘guardian’ zone does not affect an aircraft’s status.

7.21.3 Discussion

So let’s have some fun. Turning GA on and off does not necessarily have to be something you leave to the user. In many cases you may want a short time in your missions where you need to insure that players are safe (in an intermission etc), and for that interval you’d turn on GA. So, devise a way to turn on GA after 3 minutes, and turn it off after 5.

7.22 Recon Mode.miz

7.22.1 Demonstration Goals

This mission shows the basic functionality of how recon planes can be used, how to add priority targets, and how to add black-listed (invisible to recon) targets.

NOTE:

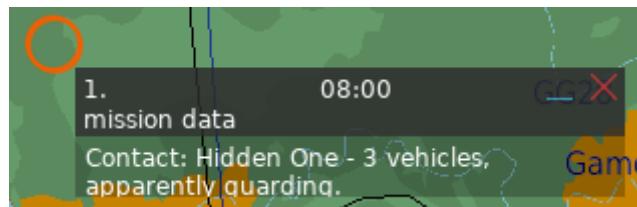
This mission merely demonstrates the bare necessities to get ReconMode up and run; it was originally written for ReconMode 1.x – the 2.x (or later) version included with DML adds some QoL features for adding and removing planes and ground forces to priority and other lists. The follow-up demo “Recon Mode – reloaded” explores these additions while building on the things learned here.

7.22.2 What To Explore

7.22.2.1 In Mission

Start the mission in the Su-25T on the ground. Switch to F10 Map view and simply wait while observing the Tomcat on its way in-land and (a little while later) the Albatross after it took off.

Note the circles appearing on the Map. Click one of them



Note that for most of the discovered ground units there are no DCS-provided markers on the map.

Also note the text messages that appear on the right side of your screen. They appear whenever a group of ground forces is detected the first time, and they conform to the following format:

<who> reports new ground contact <group name>:
<composition>, <doing what>, <location>, at <time>:

**Recon reports new ground contact Hidden Two:
3 vehicles, apparently guarding, Lat 42°18'02.413"N Lon 41°42'47.383"E, at 08:00:37**

<composition> currently describes how many vehicles, and how many infantry.

NOTE:

The report format has changed from 1.x of Recon Mode. This documentation reflects the new (superior) report format. You are welcome 😊

After a minute or so, a “GOTCHA” message appears. This is a **ME-triggered** message that is displayed after Recon Mode found a group that is on a priority list of targets

Be mindful of the fact that you never see a message that refers to the group of ground forces that is named “never find me”. This is important because this is a group that does exist, is squarely in the path of the recon plane, and was black-listed; it should not be discovered.

Now re-start the mission, and take off, cruelly ignoring the albatross. Fly into the general region where the Albatross discovered the ground units. Note that your plane also automatically reports any units it sees.

7.22.2.2 ME

There are a couple of interesting points here:

- Note the red ground units as they are on the map. Notice that there are two groups of special interest to us: "Me B priority!" and "never find me". There is nothing special about their set-up (these are standard ME-placed units) except we need to remember their group name
- There is a config zone on the map that sets up two flags that Recon Mode modifies when a recon plane discovers ground forces ("detect!"): 100 (for normal discoveries) and 110 (for priority target discovery, "prio!")
- Inspect the "Prio Detected" ME trigger. This fires when Flag 110 is greater than 0. This is how you can detect in your mission when a scout detects a priority target
- Inspect the "Six detections" ME trigger. This fires when Flag 100 is greater than 5, meaning that Recon Mode has at that point discovered six ground groups (not counting any priority group).
- **(Lua Only)** Note the "Demo: add priority/ignore groups" ME trigger. This demonstrates how you can add the name of a group to the priority- and blacklist (we noted down the names above). Unfortunately, doing this requires that you understand how to write a single Lua command, so return to this when you need this feature and are ready to face this task.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

The newer (2.x) version of Recon Mode supports adding groups to Prio- and Blacklist with zones. Inspect the next tutorial "Recon Mode – reloaded" to see how you can easily add priority groups and scout aircraft to Recon Mode

- Note the lone red Albatross inbound to Gudauta. It is only included to demonstrate (when you turn on verbose in the config zone) that red planes are not added to the scout list because redScouts is turned off

7.22.3 Discussion

This mission requires (almost) no Lua at all.

We can add full recon flight abilities to a mission simply by adding this module.



Note how **discovered groups are marked** on the F10 map but the **red units do not show up** as symbols. This means that DCS's For of War mechanics still hide the units, making the

recon flight a very useful addition for missions that center around looking for specific enemy troops.

What to try

- Experiment with the `announcer` and `applyMarks` attributes in the config zone to see how you can change Recon Modes messaging behavior
- add `detectionMinRange` and `detectionMaxRange` attributes to the config zone, and experiment with them. You can, for example, make your planes hyper observant by setting both values to 100000 and then watch in awe as the Tomcat and friends detect all enemy ground units within some 20 seconds.
- Create a mission with lots of ground units and many planes, and allow all planes to auto-recon. Notice that there may be a few seconds between detection of ground units now as Recon Mode minimizes performance impact (which now is next to negligible)

Restrictions

When incrementing ME flags, Recon Mode currently lumps detection events for red and blue together. This will be extended with new attributes in a later version. If you need more information about what side found a group, you need to use callbacks.

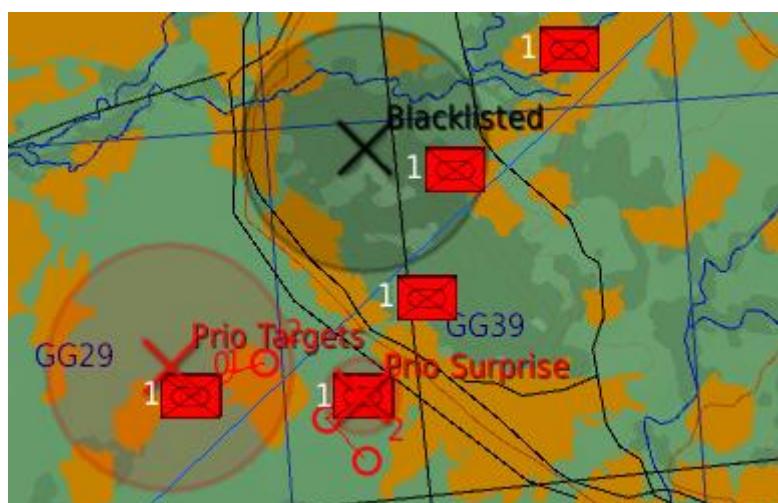
7.23 Recon Mode – reloaded (Recon Mode 2.x)

7.23.1 Demonstration Goals

This mission builds on the previous mission “Recon Mode” and focuses on the new features that came with 2.x of Recon mode:

- Selective inclusion / exclusion of aircraft with trigger zones
- Trigger-Zone based Priority- and Blacklisting
- Trigger-Zone based flags when groups are discovered (only priority targets)
- Better Reports
- UseRecon Mode’s detections to trigger game events
- Custom priority messages per priority zone
- Support for cloned groups
- Ability to individually suppress reports and map marks so detection events can be triggered without generating a report
- Turn Recon Mode on and off via flags

All 2.x features are in addition to 1.x and the module is backwards-compatible to 1.x



7.23.2 What To Explore

7.23.2.1 In Mission

Enter your Frogfoot ‘Gnd Player’, sitting on the ground at Senaki-Kolkhi, and switch to the F10 map view. Zoom out until you can see the Tomcat coming in towards the coast from the west.

As in the previous version, Recon sends reports whenever an aircraft detects ground units. The 2.x format contains more and better information, though: Let’s break it down:



Each report is now formatted as follows:

- *Who*: scout aircraft that is reporting
- *Strength*: number and type of units (infantry / vehicles)
- *Action*: if they are stationary or in which direction they are moving
- *Location*: in Lat/Lon (default) or MGRS
- *Time*: when they were observed

A heartbeat later, and as in the demo before, a ‘Gotcha! priority group detected’ message comes up.

A few seconds later, another – new - priority message appears:



Simply take note of the message contents.

While the F-14 progresses further inland, turn your attention eastwards, where an F-16 has departed from Kutaisi, due East. It will overfly a group of red ground units. Note that there is *no report*. The F-16 *does not call in*.

Turn back to the tomcat (and probably Albatross which also will have taken flight by now), and after a short while you’ll again see the message that 6 contacts have been spotted.

Now, change slots, and jump into the ‘Blind Frog’ at Kutaisi. Take off, and also overfly the enemy group to the East. Note that again, even though you are a player plane, no report is made.

Finally, change slots again into the “Air Trap” Frogfoot. A few seconds after you enter the cockpit, it detects some ground forces. Almost immediately you’ll get a warning message ‘Oh snap, it’s a trap!’: four new – previously unseen – groups have sprung into life, and they are all targeting you. You can try, but you are hopelessly outmatched and will most likely be shot down within seconds.



Now restart the mission. As soon as the Tomcat reports the first contact, switch to Communication→F10 Other→Recon Mode and choose “Turn Recon Mode OFF”. Now wait for a minute or two. You will not be surprised to see that no further groups are detected. Switch Recon mode back on again, and see that reports are starting to flow again.

3. Main. Other. Recon Mode
F1. ENABLE Recon Mode
F2. Turn Recon Mode OFF

7.23.2.2 ME

So let’s go through the new additions to Recon Mode and what new tools you now have at your disposal:

Trigger Zones for Priority and Black List

You now can use trigger zones to designate any group of ground forces that has at least one unit inside a zone

Name	Value	Remove
recon		

with ‘recon’ attribute to be either a priority target, or blacklisted. As long as the value of the recon attribute does not start with ‘black’, the groups found inside are deemed to be priority targets. To blacklist them (recon will never discover them), simply enter the word ‘black’ as

value. Once units move outside of these trigger zones, they remain priority targets or blacklisted.

Support for cloned groups

It's often desirable to have units spawn with cloners, and then be either blacklisted or assigned priority status. Recon Mode's recon zone supports this. Simply add the dynamic attribute, and all cloned groups that are based on the same naming scheme are automatically added to the corresponding list.

The demo mission demonstrates this by stacking a cloner on top of the 'recon' zone, thus ensuring that the group that is detected is actually a clone, not the original group (the onStart attribute ensures that a clone is created at mission start)

Name	Value	
recon		
dynamic	yes	
cloner		
onStart	yes	

Priority Message

A new feature of Recon Mode is that you can add priority messages and flags to groups that are designated as priority targets with a trigger zone. Even if these groups move out of their designating zones, each group triggers an optional priority message and sets a priority flag when it is spotted.

Name	Value	
recon		
dynamic	yes	
prioMessage	Primary contact discovered!	
spotted!	spottedMe	

The priority message supports a formatting very similar to the messenger module, with the exception that the location reported is that of one of the units of the group, not the center of the zone:

- <n> creates a new line
- <z> is replaced with zone's name
- <t> is current time in HH:MM:SS format
- <lat> the latitude of the discovered group's current position
- <lon> the longitude of the discovered group's current position
- <mgrs> the discovered group's position in MGRS coordinates

Important Note:

A priority message, when defined, will display even if the zone's silent flag is set to true. This is so you can override placing the map marker and scout report for these groups, and still be able to output a custom prioMessage.

Priority Flags

Just like a priority message, the defining priority zone can trigger flags each time one of the groups is spotted. As the “Oh snap, it’s a trap” example shows, this can be used in sneaky ways to initiate action (by using triggers) when specially designated units are discovered.

Name	Value	
recon		
spotted!	springTrap	

Priority flags are set even if the zone’s ‘silent’ attribute is set.

Staying Silent

You can suppress both recon report and map marks for any groups inside a priority zone by adding a <silent : true> attribute to a priority zone (does not work with blacklisted groups, as they never generate a report nor map mark).

Name	Value	
recon		
silent	yes	

Suppressing the report and mark can be desirable if you wish to use recon mode simply to trigger an event in your mission and still want to use normal reporting (i.e. keep the config’s ‘announcer’ attribute set to true).

Note:

Even when silent is set for a zone, output flags are set normally (when defined) and prioMessages are displayed (when defined) when a group is detected

Turning Recon Mode On and Off via Flags

The config zone allows you to specify two flags which Recon Mode monitors to turn on or off at will. We are using a RadioMenu module to provide the flag signals conveniently by menu choice,

Name	Value	
radioMenu	Recon Mode	
itemA	ENABLE Recon Mode	
A!	turnOn	
itemB	Turn Recon Mode OFF	
B!	turnOff	

and set up the config zone to trigger on the DML Watchflags “turnOn” and “turnOff”.

Adding / removing aircraft from the scout roster

Recon Mode can now use Trigger zones to add and remove aircraft from the roster of active scouts. This always works on top of the settings chosen in the config zone. In the demo mission, Recon Mode is set up to assign the following aircraft as scouts:

- autoRecon (true): all aircraft automatically are added to the recon roster when then enter the game
- redScouts (false, via default): no automatic red scouts
- blueScouts (**true**, via default): all blue aircraft are automatically scouts
- greyScouts (false, via default): no automatic grey scouts

Name	Value	
autoRecon	yes	
detect!	detected	
prio!	prioTarget	
announcer	yes	
applyMarks	yes	
mrgs	no	

So, when the mission starts up, with above settings, all blue aircraft are added to the recon roster when they appear.

So now we want to selectively remove two aircraft from active scout duty: the AI Falcon and the 'Blind Frog', both located at Kutaisi.

We simply placed a Trigger Zone ('I AM BLIND!) with the 'scout' attribute over these aircraft, and set the value to false.

Name	Value	
scout	no	

When these planes enter the game, Recon mode ignores them. Even if you enter the Blind Frog's cockpit multiple times later in the game, it will never be granted scouting abilities. That is why neither the F-16 (also in the 'blind' trigger zone) nor the Blind Frog ever report the enemy ground forces east of Kutaisi.

Also note that there is a trigger zone named 'Player Eyes' at Senaki Kolkhi, encompassing the two blue player aircraft and that explicitly enables the two player aircraft there as scout. With the current config settings, that is redundant, as blue aircraft are always added as scouts. However, should you later change the config to exclude blue aircraft from the scout roster, those two will still remain scouts.

7.23.3 Discussion

So here are some fun things for you to try with this mission. Let's see how you do the following:

- Change the reports to give location info in MGRS
- Change the "Primary contact discovered..." message to include Lat and Lon in addition to Time
- Turn on the silent flag for the "Prio Targets" zone and try to predict what will happen. Did you expect to still receive the 'Gotcha' message? Why did it still appear?
- Change the mission so the Recon Mode switches Off when the "Oh snap, it's a trap" message is received.
- Remove all player planes from the scout roster

7.24 Owned Zones ME Integration.miz

7.24.1 Demonstration Goals

This mission shows how Owned Zones work in general and how they can be used to set ME Flags. It also offers a nice test bed to illustrate how the various cooldowns work and can influence the game.

7.24.2 What To Explore

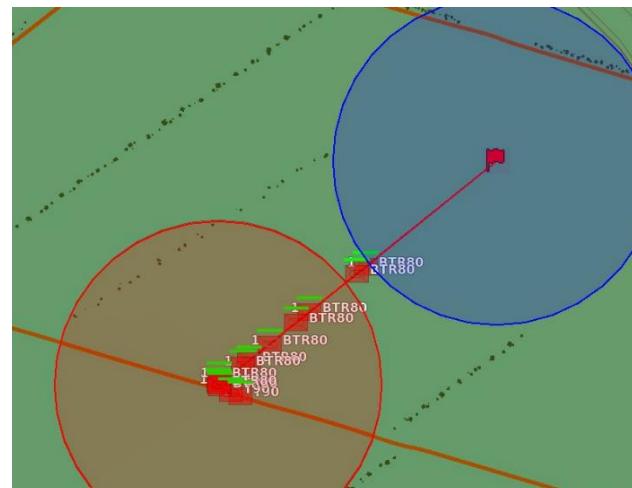
7.24.2.1 In Mission

Start the mission, enter your Frogfoot, and switch to the F10 in-game map. To the south of the airfield are two blue circles. These are two zones owned by blue coalition. The southern of these has an Infantry unit that defends the zone, the northern blue zone is undefended.

A group of two red T-90 are approaching southern blue. After a (very) short battle, red wins. Upon entry of southern blue, that zone turns red, and we receive two messages: “REDFORCE have secured zone Blue Owned One” and “We won a zone”

After a short while, a red infantry appears in the newly captured red zone, and a few seconds later BTR-80s start to appear in regular intervals that move towards northern blue.

Eventually, the first BTR-80 arrive inside northern blue, and that zone is captured. From that moment on, the zone that red captured first stops producing new BTR-80



7.24.2.2 ME

Note that there are no blue units on the map placed with ME. All blue troops are spawned dynamically from OwnedZone. The blue Infantry unit M4 is the blue defender that we specified in the owned zones defenderBLUE attribute: “Soldier M4”. Defenders are spawned at mission start.

Name	Value
owner	blue
defendersBLUE	Soldier M4
spawnRadius	5
attackersRED	BTR-80, BTR-80
defendersRED	Soldier M4
attackRadius	10

After capture by red we produce the same unit, this time as defendersRED. Note that owned zones can spawn usually ‘blue’ units as red. Later, the BTR-80s are the units that we defined under attackersRED. Note that there are no attackersBLUE defined: this zone does not produce attacking units.

Note the two triggers “ONCE Got One Red” and “ONCE Got 2 Reds”). They both trigger on Flag 10, one when Flag 10 has a value of 1, the other when the value of Flag 10 is 2. If you

```
1 ONCE (Got One Red, NO EVENT)  
1 ONCE (Got 2 Reds, NO EVENT)
```

inspect the ownedZonesConfig, you will find that we are banging Flag 10 for red: `f!=10`. Each time red captures a zone, this flag's value increases. Each time red loses a zone, this flag's value decreases. We trigger our message "We won a zone" on flag 10.

Owned Zones generates the "REDFORCE have secured zone Blue Owned One" message which we can turn off with the 'announcer' attribute in the config zone.

7.24.3 Discussion

Again, this mission required no Lua at all and integrates with normal ME flags.

Here are some other points worth mentioning and exploring

- Zones can be owned and undefended: northern blue starts as a blue zone, yet it is entirely undefended. When undefended, Owned Zones remain the possession of a coalition until the opposing coalition places at least one ground unit inside the zone.
- When a zone is conquered, a small bug in DCS may prevent it to correctly change color. Zooming in or out of the F10 map resolves that
- Like all dynamic spawners, Owned Zones can spawn lots of units in a very short time. Be careful with the `attackingTime` attribute (config zone), as that controls an Owned Zone's spawn interval. We set it to a very short interval (15 seconds between spawns) for this demo. In a real mission, spawning units every 15 seconds will create a vast number of units that quickly overwhelm the computer.
- Banging flags is a powerful feature to take advantage of: it's easy to define a win condition that merely triggers on total owned zones captured – if a side loses a zone, that flag's value decreases automatically, if they capture one, it goes up
- Be mindful of some of ME's restrictions when setting up triggers that use banged flags. Remember that ME can't compare flags to negative values (DML knows no such restrictions)
- Add a "Leopard-2" as `attackersBLUE` attribute to **northern** "Blue Owned Two". Try to predict what will happen, then run the mission. Surprised? A remarkably interesting dynamic is that Blue Owned Two reacts only *after* Blue Owned One is captured.

7.25 FARP and away.miz (tbc)

7.25.1 Demonstration Goals

7.25.2 What To Explore

7.25.2.1 *In Mission*

7.25.2.2 *ME*

7.25.3 Discussion

7.26 Keeping Score.miz (PlayerScore)

7.26.1 Demonstration Goals

This mission shows the Player Score and Player Score UI modules in action. It also demurely demonstrates a permanent smoke zone, just because we can. This mission provides unlimited ammo and targets, so you can go nuts. Targets won't shoot back.

7.26.2 What To Explore

7.26.2.1 In Mission

Start the mission and use the (free) Su-25T or one of the A-10 (A or C) to lay waste to the poor targets on the ground. If you fly the C-Hog, there's also target lasing available with a code of 1688.

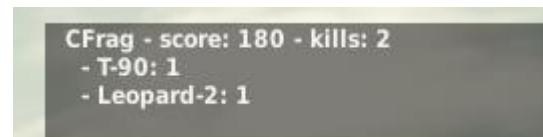
When you kill a ground unit on the main runway, note how your score increases each time the unit is killed (if the unit is still "cooking off", the score is awarded only after the unit explodes). Hitting a BTR-80 yields 10 points, while a Leo nets 30.

Close to the main tarmac, marked by red smoke, are three T-90 tanks. Kill them all, and watch the score. After killing one of them you get a message that you killed a strategic target ("Big Kahuna") and receive a significantly higher score (150). Note that scores are totaled as well.



After successfully killing some vehicles (at least one BTR-80 or Leopard, and one T-90), choose Communication→Other... →Score/Kills. This is the Player Score UI module that allows a player access to more detailed personal score information. You are presented with your personal kill log:

- Total score and number of kills
- List of all types killed and their number
- Note that named kills also appear as a separate type



7.26.2.2 ME

Note that there are two zones on the map that feed data to Player Score. One is the 'normal' configuration zone ("playerScoreConfig"). The other

Name	Value	Remove
Blg Kahuna	150	
Leopard-2	30	

("playerScoreTable") is much more interesting. It holds the score table for this mission. As you can see, the Unit Named "Big Kahuna" yields a score of 150 points. This is a "named unit score", as only units that match that name receive this score, and since unit names must be unique in DCS, there can only ever be one unit that is awarded that score.

Also, all units of type “Leopard-2” receive 30 points. This is a “unit type score”, because “Leopard-2” is a known type string for units of that Type. All units that match that type yield a score of 30.

Since the BTR-80 and T-90 are listed nowhere on the Player Score Table, they award only 10 points each since that is the default score for ground vehicles.

7.26.3 Discussion

This mission requires no Lua at all.

Things to explore

- Change aircraft after killing some units. See that your previous score is brought over
- Play in Multi-Player. See that the score is attributed individually.
- Note the permanent smoke (red) zone that we added to better find the priority (Big Kahuna) target.
- Change the default score for ground vehicles to 25 in the player Score Config zone, and try again.

7.27 The Zonal Countdown (Local/Global Flag Demo)

7.27.1 Demonstration Goals

This mission demonstrates how you can use a messenger module as a real-time counter, using message wildcards, and how to use a count-down module for the surprising task of implementing a real-time count-down. It also serves as another nice demonstration of DML flags in action, as this module stack is activated by a global ME flag, and then runs on internal flags until it triggers the explosion which is done in ME



We got an extra prop from the set of “Speed” for this demo!

7.27.2 What To Explore

7.27.2.1 In Mission

Jump into your trusty Frogfoot. Follow the instructions: trigger the countdown with Communications→Other→Bye Bye Bus.

A countdown appears on-screen. Note the following:

This is a text from Zone Countdown. Countdown: 1

The text claims to be a message from zone “Countdown”. And it shows a continually changing number that rapidly approaches zero.

Unsurprisingly, when the number reaches 0, the bus goes bye, bye in a rather spectacular way.



7.27.2.2 ME

To start the count-down, we see a standard ME trigger set up on mission start with a radio item which sets flag 100 when selected.

This gets the ball rolling, and is a standard UI pattern for player-induced actions.

On the map itself we see a couple of units, and two trigger zones. The units are no surprise. The “Countdown” zone is the ‘automaton’ zone, a little stack of modules that work together to perform the countdown, provide timing, and provide the real-time messaging. The “Zero-Message” zone is only present to provide additional visual candy (it provides the final ‘Bye, bye Bus!’ message to remove the count-down message).

ACTION:	RADIO ITEM ADD
NAME:	Bye Bye Bus
FLAG:	< > 100
VALUE:	< > 1



The “real” work happens in the “Countdown” zone, and we’ll take it apart one by one:

We begin the stack with a **pulser**. This is merely a ‘clock’ that provides a regular signal on the local flag `*thePulse`. At the start of the mission, the pulser is stopped (`pulseStopped = yes`), and once the (global) flag 100 changes, the pulser will start sending out a signal on `*thePulse` once every second (`time = 1`)

<code>pulse!</code>	<code>*thePulse</code>
<code>time</code>	1
<code>pulseStopped</code>	yes
<code>startPulse?</code>	100

Once the pulse starts beating, it feeds into a **count down** module. This module starts counting at 11 (‘this one goes to eleven!’), and every time a signal is received on local `*pulse`, it counts down on. The current value of the counter is passed out on local `*cVal` for anyone who is interested (the messenger is). Also, every time the value changes, `tMinus!` bangs out on local `*counted` (which is, strictly speaking, not necessary and done here for clarity; `*cVal` could also have served the same purpose to drive messenger’s `messageOut`). When the count down reaches 0, it bangs on the global (and ME-compatible since it is a number) flag 110, and global named flag “boom”.

<code>countDown</code>	11
<code>count?</code>	<code>*thePulse</code>
<code>counterOut!</code>	<code>*cVal</code>
<code>tMinus!</code>	<code>*counted</code>
<code>zero!</code>	110, boom

The **messenger** module is triggered every time a signal arrives (the flag’s value changes) on (local) `*counted`. Then it assembles the message to put on the screen from message “*This is a text from Zone <z>. Countdown: <v: *cVal>*” and resolves any wildcards it finds. The two wildcards `<z>` and `<v: *cVal>` are replaced with the zone’s name (“Countdown”) and value of the (local) flag `*cVal` (which is the counter from the count-down above).

<code>messenger?</code>	<code>*counted</code>	
<code>message</code>	<i>This is a text from Zone <z>. Countdown: <v: *cVal></i>	
<code>clearScreen</code>	yes	

Before it's put on the screen, the screen is cleared, removing all previously displayed messages, and moving the output line to the top.

TRIGGER ZONE	
NAME	Countdown

This is a text from Zone Countdown. Countdown: 1

This is what makes the countdown seem to be updated; in reality, it's merely overwritten.

When the count down reaches zero, it bangs on (global and ME-compatible number) flag 110. This is detected by the Mission Trigger "ONCE, Boom", which simply explodes the Bus when the flag 110 changes to a non-zero value

TRIGGERS	CLONE	CONDITIONS	CLONE	ACTIONS
4 MISSION START (Load DML)		FLAG IS TRUE (110)		
1 ONCE (BOOM (110), NO EVENT)				EXPLODE UNIT (Bye Bye Bus, 100)

At the same time as ME is busy blowing up the bus, the messenger in the "Zero Message" zone gets active: triggered by the same signal on (ME compatible global number) flag 110, it clears the screen (erasing the last count down message), and writes "Bye, Bye, Bus!" to the screen. This is a purely cosmetic addition and not necessarily required. It's also a bit wasteful, as we need another zone (two messenger modules don't stack on the same zone). There's even a third zone ("Second Zero") which we'll look at in the Discussion section. But someone told me that it usually pays to be thorough and dot your Tees and cross your eyes 😊.

Name	Value
messenger	
message	Bye, Bye, Bus!
messageOut?	110
clearScreen	yes

7.27.3 Discussion

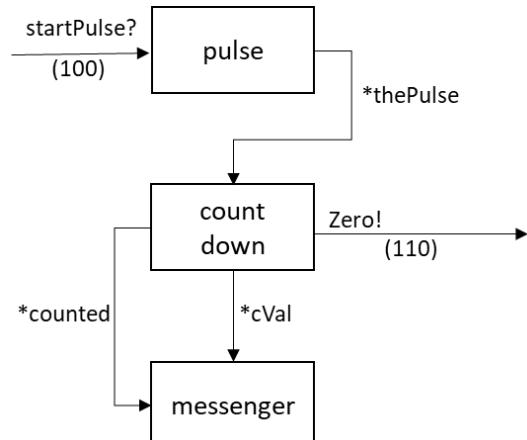
Another mission, another no-show for Lua.

DESIGN DETAILS

Just a minor observation: since the messenger reacts to changes on the messageOut? Input, we could have fed *cVal instead of *counted into messageOut? And received the same results, saving one local flag.

But since DML flags add very little cost, and make things much clearer, we used a separate flag to tell messenger that a new message should be displayed.

Again, I strongly recommend that you design your zones with block diagrams (as shown oh so beautifully on the right) either while or before you create the mission, as it makes it much easier to spot potential issues, and makes choosing local flag names easier. It also helps to identify global flags early in the process.



THE RACE: SECOND ZERO

Also of interest is the second flag that is set when the counter counts down to zero: It sets two global flags: 110 (number-name) and “boom”.

Both of these flags trigger a messenger, each one in a different zone (110 in “Zero Message”), and “boom” (in zone “Second Zero”). When you use multiple outputs like we do here, you must be observant of a peculiar effect that can arise in programming: a race condition. This is when two or more processes are running concurrently, and the order in which they complete is important.

When the counter’s zero! output fires, both flags 110 and “boom” are simultaneously banged. There is no way to determine which one will be picked first, so you don’t know which one will write to the screen first. If you added the *clearScreen* attribute to one of the two messengers, in roughly half the cases they’d be processed after the other messenger, and that messenger’s message would be erased. So none of them must have a *clearScreen*, to ensure that this never happens; the order in which you define the Zones or list the flags in counter’s “zero!” output has no impact on which of the two will be processed first. Keep this in mind when you design missions: when you rely on the assumption that one thing happens after the other, you may have to ensure that they do. A delay flag is one method of ensuring a sequence. xFlags is another.

CHALLENGE:

Try to build something into “Zero Message” and “Second Zero” that ensures Second Zero is always processed after Zero Message” and that allows you to add the *clearScreen* attribute to Zero Message.

7.28 Frog Men Training.miz

7.28.1 Demonstration Goals

This is a fully developed mission to facilitate Su-25T weapons training. It demonstrates the use of multiple modules that work in conjunction with (very few) traditional ME triggers to achieve various purposes:

- Unit/Group activation/spawning when certain groups spawn
- Endlessly replenishing enemies
- Protection from Missiles
- 'Restocking' SAMs after some time
- 'Repairing' suppressed SAM sites
- Messaging when certain spawners activate
- Using compound/stacked module activation on zones



7.28.2 What To Explore

7.28.2.1 In Mission

There are multiple Su-25T configurations to choose from:

- SEAD
- CCIP/CCRP bombardment
- Laser Guided Missiles
- TV Guided Missiles
- Gun Pods
- Air to Air

There is a big main target range on the old airfield SW of Kobuleti where most of your target practice occurs. The targets are set to automatically respawn once a group is fully destroyed.

You can change air frames at any time. When choosing some air frames, observe the following

- When choosing Air to Air (*Air Frog One*), a group of A-10 and a group of Ka-50 spawn as targets in front of you
 - When choosing Gun Pods (*Convoy Gone*), a convoy spawns in front of you close to the orange smoke
 - When choosing *SAM Hunter*, a couple SAM sites spawn and come on-line a few seconds later. Since you are protected by Guardian Angel, the SAM sites should not be able to kill you. When you completely kill a SAM site, it respawns after the last unit is destroyed. You have some 30 seconds before they start re-acquiring you. Also observe that after some time (without attacking their radars), the SAMs stop firing at you as they have run out of missiles. After a while, though, they will start again – they have been replenished.
- Finally, observe that if you have suppressed a SAM site by destroying their radar, some time later they come back on-line and attack you

Above groups will not spawn unless you enter the appropriate airframe. Once they have spawned, however, they will remain in-game (remember this when you spawn the SAMs) even if you change to a different configuration

Destroy entire groups on the ground to see that they automatically re-spawn. The same is true for SAM sites, Helicopters, and Aircraft.



7.28.2.2 ME

This mission assembles lessons from previous demos and add some more advanced topics. It is a fully functioning mission that's also available for download.

COMPOUND ZONES

In this mission, we stack multiple modules onto the same zone. This serves to make access easier, as well as grouping logically connected functions into the same visual representation. Look for the zone called “Hog cloner”, far up in the north, North of Maykop-Khanskaya.

Inspecting the attributes, we see that there are two module keywords: *cloner*, indicating that *cloneZones* attaches to this zone, and *messenger*, meaning that also that the messenger module anchors to it. If you look at both zones’ descriptions, you will find that they

Name	Value	
cloner		
in?	200	
empty+1	200	
messenger		
message	Hogs gone wild	

share one attribute: *in?* (200) – the attribute that controls which flag to watch for a change to occur. Since both modules share the same attribute, they will also trigger with the same flag

change (technically, it's a bit more involved, but that's what it boils down to). So, every time flag 200 changes its value, *both* cloner and messenger activate. Note that it is not determined which activates first, there is no inherent order in which modules are triggered.

The upshot is that every time the cloner spawns a new set of clones, the messenger also plays a message.

ENDLESS SPAWNS

This is achieved by creating a feedback loop from *empty+1* into the *in?/spawn?* input of the cloner. Whenever the last unit of the previous clone is destroyed, *empty+1* fires, which feeds into *in?/spawn* creating a new clone cycle.

Note that the SAM cloners do *not* use a feedback loop. Read below why that is not required.

RESUPPLYING/REPAIRING SAMS

In order to re-supply and repair the SAMs, we use a simple idea: simply remove (*preWipe yes*) the existing group, and then immediately replace it with a fresh copy of the (fully stocked and fully repaired) template. We do this regularly, say every 5 minutes (300 seconds). For this we can use a pulser set to change a flag (say 101) that causes a spawn at the spawner every 300 seconds. This also neatly solves our endless respawn requirement. If by some miracle you are fast enough to completely wipe a SAM site within the five minutes after it spawns, it will still respawn after 5 minutes and we do not need a feedback loop from *empty+1* → *spawn?* for the SAM spawners.

Name	Value
pulse	(re-)start sams
paused	yes
activate?	100
time	300
flag!	101

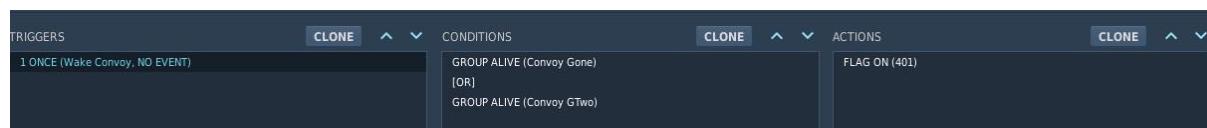
Configured this way, this pulser, when running, causes flag 101 to change every 300 seconds. Since 101 is connected to the *spawn?* input of the SAM cloners, they regularly cause a re-spawn of all SAM units every 5 minutes ($5 * 60 = 300$ seconds). Since the SAM spawners are set to *preWipe yes*, any remaining units from the previous spawn are removed from the game when a new spawn cycle is started, resulting in fresh, fully equipped and repaired units every 5 minutes.

Name	Value
cloner	
spawn?	101
preWipe	yes

For now, simply note the presence of the *paused yes* and *activate? 100* attributes for the pulser. We'll come back to those in the section "ON DEMAND SPAWNING"

ON-DEMAND SPAWNING (CLASSIC ME→DML)

This is for the SAMs, Hogs/Sharks and Convoy. The cloners are first activated by standard ME triggers:



As soon as one of the two aircraft are in the game, the relevant flag(s) are set, and the cloner(s) sense that they should spawn. After that, they re-spawn as described under ENDLESS SPAWNS. Above works well with the convoy, and the Air-to-Air groups

Now, with the SAMs, we hit a snag: the SAMs are using a pulser to refresh them regularly, and we don't want the refresh to start unless the SAMs are present (otherwise they would appear after the first refresh cycle after 5 minutes).

One possible (there are many others) solution is to pause the pulser (*paused* yes). This prevents the pulser from starting any pulses. When the SAM Hunters appear, ME sets flag 100 to one, which is detected by the pulser's *activate? 100* input. This activates the pulser, which causes it to immediately send its initial pulse. That initial pulse causes the SAMs to spawn.



And that is how we put it into this mission: when the SAM Hunters appear, flag 100 is changed, which activates the pulser's initial pulse. The pulser is connected to the SAM's *spawn?* input, causing it to spawn immediately, and from then on, every 5 minutes when the pulser sends out another pulse.

MISSILE PROTECTION

This is quite easy: we add guardian angel to the mission, and then add a config zone that

Name	Value	
verbose	no	
announcer	false	

- Turns off verbose
- Turns off announcer

and leaves all other defaults. Turning off the announcer simply leaves the main guardian angel functionality (remove missiles when they come too close) but removes the breathless commentary.

7.28.3 Discussion

A fully-fledged mission with no Lua.

To make this mission more interesting, change Guardian Angel's configuration to not destroy the missiles, and disable respawning for the SAMs.

7.29 CSAR of Georgia.miz

7.29.1 Demonstration Goals

This mission demonstrates how to use CSAR Manager to easily create and trigger CSAR missions.

Note: due to the nature of CSAR Missions, you must use a Troop-Transport capable helicopter (Huey, Hip, or Hind), as the UI will not respond otherwise.



CSAR Missions can automatically provide pilots with directions to their mission targets, and allows to winch-rescue evacuees that have been grounded on difficult terrain, as well as smoke-mark the LZ. Downed pilots are equipped with an ELT that a player's helicopter can home in on. Note that picking up downed pilots increases your helicopters total weight, so be careful when planning multi-pick-up CSAR missions at high altitude.

7.29.2 What To Explore

7.29.2.1 In Mission

Start the mission in the SU-25T (i.e. *not* a helicopter). Go to communication→Other.. and note that there is only one item available – the one to trigger a new CSAR mission. Even if you trigger this mission, it's not available to you in a fixed-wing plane.

Now change role to one of the helicopters (we'll choose the Huey here, but the others will react the same)

Go to communication→Other... and note that there is a new item CSAR Missions... available. Choose it. This is the CSAR Manager's UI and offers the following options:

- *List active CSAR*
This shows a list of all currently available (waiting for pick-up) CSAR missions, along with their ELT's frequency. If vectoring is enabled (by default), this also shows range and bearing to each of the evacuees.
- *Status of rescued crew aboard*
Shows the medical status of each evacuee that you have picked up. This is meant for

later extension when time-critical missions are supported.

- *Unload one evacuee*

CSAR Manager automatically loads evacuees when you land close to them. This can overload your helicopter (for example if you are performing a rescue operation in a mountainous region), so you can unload already picked up evacuees one by one and rescue them later.

Choose “List active CSAR”, and you will receive the news that one pilot is requesting extraction: a Lt. Wesley

Crasher. They are some 1.9 miles away at bearing 222, and their ELT can be located

at a certain frequency (here 280 KHz). This frequency can change, as this particular CSAR is set up with randomized frequency. If you are so inclined, set your ADF to this frequency, and listen to the ELT’s shriek. Now check the map and since all units are visible, you’ll also see the downed pilot to the south.



When you get close enough, you’ll receive a new message.

Hoo! One, (downed) Lt. Wesley Crash-1. We can hear you, check your 12 o'clock - popping smoke.

It gives you the ‘clock position’ of the LZ, and if enabled, the LZ is marked with colored smoke to help you visually identify the target.

When you get closer still, CSAR manager’s ‘CSAR Chief talk-down’ kicks in that constantly updates your location relative to the evacuee.

Closing on (downed) Lt. Wesley Crash-1, 147.6ft on your 12 o'clock o'clock

If you touch down close enough, the evacuee is automatically loaded into the helicopter. If you hover over the evacuee at the correct height and distance, your crew attempts a winch rescue, and a count-down is initiated. When the count-down reaches zero, the evacuee is safely hooked and automatically winched aboard.

Steady... 84.9ft to your 12 o'clock o'clock, winching... (20)

Now return to the airport, and land close to the two fire engines where you originally departed. As soon as you touch down, the CSAR mission concludes successfully. Congratulations!

But... as soon as you touch down with your first evacuee, you receive a new distress call. Before we go off saving this pilot, go to Communication→Other→Start CSAR Mission (which triggers Flag 100). Notice the message that appears. Request an update on all current CSAR missions and note that there are now two CSAR missions available (instead of one). Switch to map view, and you’ll see their locations. You can now rescue these pilots as well. Note that each time that you rescue a pilot, a new CSAR mission is created some 2 nm to the southeast of Senaki-Kolkhi.

If you have the modules installed (and are able to pilot them), switch to other helicopters and see that CSAR manager works with them as well.

7.29.2.2 ME

The first thing to notice is that all CSAR GUI is self-contained in the module, so there is no set-up for the mission designer other than importing the module.

For CSAR Manager to work, it requires two important items: the Base (or bases, as CSAR Manager happily accepts multiple bases) where you return downed pilots / evacuees to, and the evacuees themselves.

Turn your attention to Senaki-Kolkhi. And note the light blue quad-based trigger zone “CSAR safe”. It only has a single attribute: CSARSAFE, which marks the entire contents of that trigger zone as an area that, if you touch down with your helicopter inside it, and have evacuees loaded, their CSAR missions complete successfully. Whenever you include the CSAR Manager in a mission, remember to place at least one CSARSAFE zone, or the module will complain bitterly at mission start. We chose a quad-based trigger zone only to show that this function also works with quad zones.



Now let's look at the CSAR Missions (downed pilots). These missions can be created in various ways:

- With a CSAR zone. When you use the basic CSAR Zone, it creates a CSAR mission for the appropriate side (or neutral if none given, neutrals can be rescued by any faction) at the center of the zone when the mission starts up. The very first CSAR mission where you picked up Wesley Crasher is such a mission.

Name	Value	
CSAR		
pilotName	Lt. Wesley Crasher	
coalition	blue	

- With a deferred CSAR Zone. These are like the CSAR zone above with an additional important distinction: they do not create their CSAR Mission when the main mission begins, but wait for the flag startCSAR (or one of its synonyms) to change, and then create a CSAR Mission. Since they are controlled by flags, it's possible to create multiple CSAR missions, as the endlessly repeating CSAR mission featuring Lt. Linebreaker and his clones show. If you use such a configuration, you would usually stack some other modules on top of the CSAR for additional functionality. In our example we stack a messenger onto the CSAR, and connect both their input flags to their common synonym “in?”

Name	Value	
CSAR		
pilotName	Lt. Linebreaker	
coalition	blue	
deferred	yes	
in?	csarDone	
messenger		
message	Mayday, mayday, mayday! F	

- A CSAR can also be initiated from Lua code (not demonstrated here)
- A CSAR can be initiated from other DML modules, for example “Limited Airframes” where player ejections can result in new CSAR Missions (when they eject safely and touch down on land). This is also not demonstrated here

Some important functionality of CSAR Manager is accessible via its configuration zone, and that is what we used to implement the ‘never-ending CSAR’ mission:

CSAR Manager supports a number of convenient flag banging abilities when a player returns a pilot to a CSARBASE:

one for red (“csarRedDelivered!”), one for blue (“csarBlueDelivered!”), and one for any successful CSAR (“csarDelivered!”). We use the latter, and wire it into Accident Site-3’s “in?” flag. So every time a player safely delivers a pilot to base, a new CSAR mission is created at Accident Site 3.

Name	Value	
verbose	no	
csarDelivered!	csarDone	
useSmoke	true	
smokeColor	orange	
beaconSound	distressbeacon.ogg	
vectoring	yes	

7.29.3 Discussion

Again - No Lua!

Since this module’s config zone offers so many cool features, let’s experiment a little:

- Try a CSAR mission with no vectoring. Turn it off, and then see if you can still locate the crash victim
- To make it even harder, turn off smoke
- Change the beacon sound to something you like better

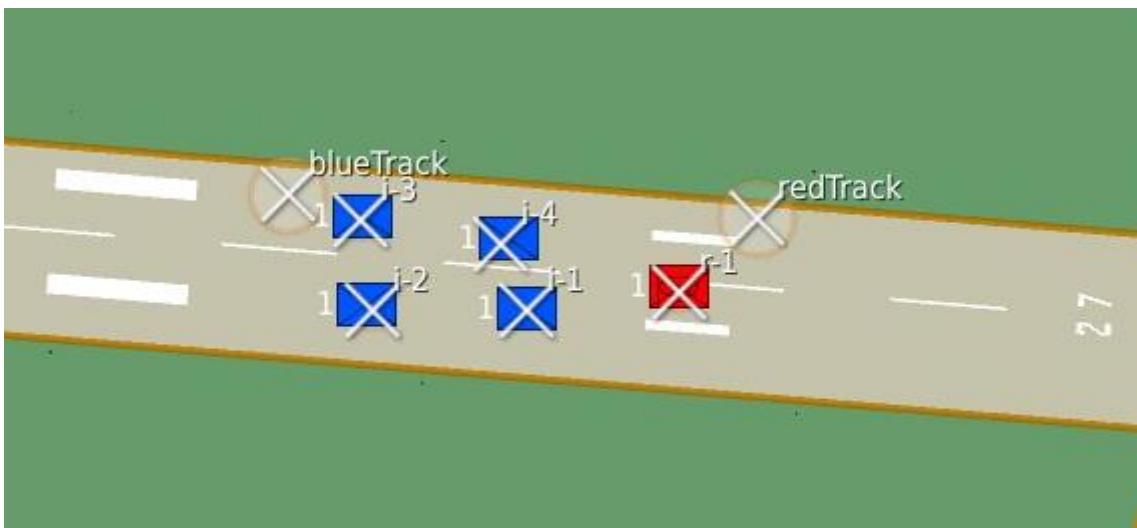
And now for a real challenge: Have your mission create new random CSAR that whenever you successfully bring back one pilot. To make this more manageable, let’s add the following conditions

- The “random” CSAR missions aren’t random by themselves. They are merely pre-placed CSAR missions, and you randomly pick one from all the available ones
- Add a delay of 10 seconds between successful delivery of an evacuee and when a new CSAR mission is generated
- When a new CSAR mission is generated, have it display a message.

7.30 Track This! (Group Tracker)

7.30.1 Demonstration Goals

This rather abstract mission shows how you can use groupTrackers as counters that drive cloners and messengers.



groupTrackers utilize the duality of DCS flags – their somewhat schizophrenic ability to be used as true/false/change indicator to start something, and the ability to hold a positive number as value that can transport additional meaning.

Accordingly, groupTracker's output flags can convey multiple meanings simultaneously, and we'll use both of them. This mission has very little artistic or gaming value, but it serves nicely to illustrate how incredibly useful groupTrackers are.

7.30.2 What To Explore

7.30.2.1 In Mission

Start the mission, and enter the Frogfoot. Press F7 to watch the red Hummer repeatedly murder the four re-spawning infantry, who continually respawn, and eventually kill the Hummer, only to have the cycle repeat.

Somewhat more intriguing are the scrolling text messages on the side that accompany the grisly spectacle: a kill count that is updated each time one side makes a kill.

There's very little else to see here, so exit the Frogfoot and head over to ME. On the way over, it may help if you tried to imagine how you would implement this using traditional ME, or even with DML but without groupZones. It's possible, but ain't pretty.

Red Kills: 6
Red Kills: 7
Red Kills: 8
Blue kills: 1

7.30.2.2 ME

The initial set-up holds few surprises: the infantry and Hummer are all built using basically the same stack of modules on the zone:

If we overlook the trackWith: attribute, all we have here is a self-refilling cloner:

- onStart = yes means that we start the mission with a cloned template
- preWipe is set, so prior to a spawn, all remaining units are wiped. This is usually just a cosmetic option and works with some, but not all units
- when the last unit of the last batch is killed, empty! fires on (local) *dead, which is wired into the stacked delayFlag module's startDelay?. It's set to 10 seconds delay (timeDelay = 10), and after the time runs down, the delay bangs! on local *rez, which is wired into the cloner's clone? input, starting the cycle anew.

Name	Value
cloner	
trackWith:	blueTrack
onStart	yes
preWipe	yes
empty!	*dead
clone?	*rez
timeDelay	10
startDelay?	*dead
delayDone!	*rez

So far, that self-repeating cloner is easily understood. The only odd attribute is "trackWith:", which lists the name of another ME Trigger Zone, "blueTrack". So what is "trackWith:"? This is a bit of DML magic, that allows cloneZone to directly talk to groupTracker, and pass the newly spawned groups to that group tracker, allowing it to do what you can't outside of Lua: add groups to a groupTracker while the mission is running (i.e. not at the start of the mission). As DML's main dynamic spawners, cloneZone and spawnZone have their own, privileged onramp to groupTracker, and it's called "trackWith:".

So let's look at what blueTrack is doing:

It receives groups of blue infantry whenever they are spawned by a cloner. These groups simply pop into the tracker's watch set and from then on are tracked. Since we have no addGroup! output connected, adding groups results in no action from this tracker.

Name	Value
tracker	
removeGroup!	*bdead
messenger?	*bdead
message	Red Kills: <v:*bdead>

Eventually, a blue group is killed (since the infantry groups are all single-unit groups, this is rather fast). The tracker notices this and does the following:

- It updates the new group count. Since no numGroups! output is connected, this results in no further action
- It increases the removeGroup! output (it does this once for each dead group it finds in this pass, usually, that's only one. But if two or more groups die in-between track checks, the correct number of increases is done on the removeGroup! flag). This output is wired to the (local) *bdead flag.

So groupTracker does very little – at first. It's the way we interpret the information that makes all the difference

Look at the messenger that is stacked on the same zone. It's messenger? is triggered by the local *bdead flag, which we know increases each time a blue infantry dies. So, the death of an infantry triggers the out message

Messenger goes ahead and assembles the message "Red Kills: 7" 
<v:*bdead>". When it encounters the "<v:*bdead>" wildcard, Messenger then looks at the value of local *bdead flag. Messenger now loads the current value of that flag, and exchanges that value for the wildcard. If that value is now 7 (meaning that this flag got increased 7 times, or 7 blue infantry groups have died in total), the newly assembled (and displayed) text reads "Red Kills: 7"

So, in retrospect, this demonstrates how we can use a single groupTracker outputs in two very different ways on the same zone.

7.30.3 Discussion

And now for some real challenges:

- using the knowledge above, build a group of three cloners that each spawn new single-infantry groups until seven infantry have been killed. At that point, all spawners stop spawning.
- Now do this *without* xFlags

7.31 Watchflags Demo

7.31.1 Demonstration Goals

In DML, Watchflags are a central ability, and they can simplify many mission designs by providing on-the-spot condition checking. In other words, Watchflags may well be the secret, unsung heroes of your next mission design.



This mission is designed to merely demonstrate the basic principles behind Watchflags and why they can be so useful.

TRIGGERING A MODULE'S FUNCTION

Many modules can be activated from the 'outside' via an input flag (in the example on the right called 'heartbeat'). This is a flag that the module watches, and – by default – when the **flag's value**

changes (e.g., from 2 to 19), the module

interprets this value change as a signal to activate. The new value is stored, and when the flag's value changes again (say from 19 to 5), that again is interpreted as an activation signal.

Name	Value	
messenger		
message	WE HAVE A MATCH: 4	
messageOut?	heartbeat	

This simple mechanism is exceedingly helpful, and enough to satisfy the vast majority of a mission's demands: there mere presence of a plane in a certain zone, for example, may sufficiently fulfill all criteria to advance to the next stage.

Now, in many missions there are situations, that are similar, but require just a bit more sophistication. For example, you may not want to trigger a module when a group was destroyed (which is easily done with a simple trigger cued to the kill event), but when a total of three groups are destroyed. Sure, you can easily build a small automaton (using a count down module) to solve that particular requirement. After designing a number of missions you'll realize that some patterns emerge: often, being able to narrow down a trigger's change event can simplify mission design.

Now let's look at the fact that we only use a small portion of the information that a flag can carry: Flags carry numbers as information. Right now, by simply detecting a change in the number the flag carries, we use a qualitative aspect to trigger a module. What if we were able to also use some of the quantitative aspects? For example, can we build an input that triggers on the change of flag's number, *but only if that number is now greater than 3?*

And that is what Watchflags are all about: the option to add a small quantitative rule that we apply to a flag in addition to detecting the change. By default, all Watchflags are told to merely detect a change. With a 'triggerMethod' attribute (or its module-specific synonym) we can add one of number of pre-defined additional checks.

In this mission we explore the ability of a Watchflag to detect the following conditions

- change (this is the default behavior of all flags, and the same as if no additional condition was given)
- Increment
- '<(number)': smaller than a number
- '='(number)': equal to a number
- '>(number)': greater to a number
- '='(flag)': equal to another named flag
- '='("flag")': equal to a flag that happens to have a number as name

Remember that there are more conditions that Watchflags can detect, this demo merely scratches the surface.

7.31.2 What To Explore

7.31.2.1 In Mission

Start the mission, enter your trusty Frogfoot. Observe the message that is displayed and follow the instructions (Communication→Other→Start Heart).

A message “pulse started” appears, and every five seconds from now on, new lines of text appear with various content. Just note that they appear, and let this run until you’ve seen the following message:



matches FlagEleven!!!

That is the last message we are looking for, and after you have confirmed that the message appears, you can close the mission.

7.31.2.2 ME

This demo explores some of the more common (but not all) rules by using a simple mechanism: a pulser provides an ever-changing, flag value that changes every 5 seconds by incrementing the flag’s value by one: “heartbeat”. All the messenger zones use the pulser’s “heartbeat” flag as input, and process it differently.

However, before we go into details, we need to look at a couple of important settings that are set up during mission start in ME

- First, of course is the radio item ‘Start Heart’ that, when selected, sets ME flag “gogogo” to 1.
- Then the ME flag “flagEleven” is set to the value 11. This is done via a FLAG INCREASE action simply because, unlike DML, there is no ‘Flag Set’ action in ME. This only works because we know that at mission start, this flag’s value is 0 (zero) and no other action is setting it
- Using the same action, we set the ME flag “3” (that is a flag whose name is “3”) to the value of 8

ACTIONS	CLONE
RADIO ITEM ADD (Start Heart, "gogogo", 1)	
FLAG INCREASE ("flagEleven", 11)	
FLAG INCREASE ("3", 8)	
MESSAGE TO ALL (Flag "flagEleve, 30, true, 0)	

So, when the mission begins, we have also set up two ME flags: ‘flagEleven’ (which is set to the value 11) and (classic ME) flag “3” (which is set to the value 8)

Now let's look at the pulser "heartbeat". This offers few surprises:

- It bangs! on the flag 'heartbeat'
- Since pulseStopped is set to yes, the mission starts with this pulser stopped
- It starts pulsing when the flag 'gogogo' changes its value
- There are 5 seconds between pulses
- Since no number of pulses are specified, it will pulse until the mission ends
- When pulsing, the output flag ('heartbeat') is always increased by one (pulseMethod = inc)

Name	Value	
pulse!	heartbeat	
startPulse?	gogogo	
time	5	
pulseMethod	inc	
pulseStopped	yes	
messenger		
message	Pulse Started	
messageOut?	gogogo	

There's also a messenger stacked onto the same zone, which is also wired into 'gogogo' (with messageOut?); the flag that used to start the pulser. This is purely cosmetic, as it merely gives you feedback that you have started the pulse.

Now let's look at the remaining messengers that all use differently configured messengers:

Zone "Change"

The 'Change' zone represents the default behaviour (no triggerMethod attribute is given, which defaults to 'change').

As a result, every time that the pulser changes its output (the flag 'heartbeat'), this messenger triggers, and writes a new line 'Change detected' to the screen.

Name	Value	
messenger		
message	Change detected	
messageOut?	heartbeat	



Zone "Inc"

This is the first zone with an expanded trigger condition. In addition to having the flag changed, the new value of the watchflag must also be larger than the value that it previously observed (triggerMethod = inc). So in order to trigger, 'heartbeat' must not only change, it must have a higher value than last time messenger checked.

Name	Value	
messenger		
message	Inc -- Count = *value	
messageValue?	heartbeat	
messageOut?	heartbeat	
triggerMethod	inc	

We are also feeding the "heartbeat" flag into messageValue, so its value can be inserted into the message that we put to the screen. Since the pulser is set to always increase the value of "heartbeat", we are sure that this message appears whenever a pulse is sent, and we now know that we always have the current value on-screen

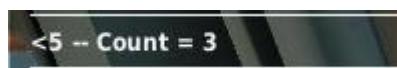


Zone “Smaller 5”

Here we trigger only as long as the value of heartbeat is less than the number 5 (triggerMethod = <5). Our expectation is therefore that we receive four messages, and when heartbeat has a value of 5 or higher, this module no longer generates output to the screen.

Name	Value	
messenger		
message	<5 -- Count = *value	
messageValue?	heartbeat	
messageOut?	heartbeat	
triggerMethod	<5	

When you check the game’s output more than 20 seconds after you start the heart, you’ll notice that the line “<5 – Count = ...” no longer appears.



Zone “Exactly 4”

This one appears exactly once during the lifetime of our mission: when the value of “heartbeat” is the number 4 (triggerMethod is “=4”)

Name	Value	
messenger		
message	WE HAVE A MATCH: 4	
messageOut?	heartbeat	
triggerMethod	=4	

Zone “Six or larger”

This one may only surprise you initially, due to the way that the zone is named is setting up your expectations. Our goal is to trigger the module when the number of flag ‘heartbeat’ reaches six, and every time from then on (when it is larger than six).

Name	Value	
messenger		
message	6 or larger	
messageOut?	heartbeat	
triggerMethod	>5	

However, triggerMethod is set up to “>5”, and – probably because our brains are wired that way – it may take us a few moments to realize that “>5” and “>=6” are logically equivalent (at least when dealing with integers as we are here). DML only supports = (equal), < (less than) and > (greater than), so we’ll have to use >5 as its logical equivalent to “six or more”.

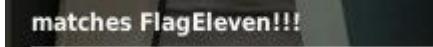


Zone “flagEleven”

And now we are getting into the deep end of the pool. DML’s Watchflags can not only compare a flag to some fixed number, it can also compare the value of the Watchflag to any other flag. All you need to do is supply the flag’s name instead of a number. This allows you to perform complex decisions right on your zone. Of course, local flags are supported.

Name	Value	
messenger		
message	matches FlagEleven!!!	
messageOut?	heartbeat	
triggerMethod	=flagEleven	

Also, remember that Watchflags not only support equality comparison for other flags, but also “<” and “>”.

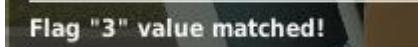
 matches FlagEleven!!!

Zone “QUOTED number-named flag ‘3’ that is 8”

A historical oddity of DCS is that prior to late March 2022, flag names in ME were limited to numbers. That made mission development quite challenging and unforgiving. As a result, there are many existing missions that use flags with numbers as names, and bad habits die hard, so it’s to be expected that there are missions that (still) use flags with names that happen to be numbers.

Name	Value	
messenger		
message	Flag "3" value matched!	
messageOut?	heartbeat	
triggerMethod	="3"	

Which means that DML should support those backwards-oriented souls. But how can DML tell a number from a flag that uses as number as name? In this case, you must surround the name (which is a number) by double quotes. If a Watchflag sees a number in quotes, it will use the number as name for a flag instead of a number value.

 Flag "3" value matched!

7.31.3 Discussion

Again, no Lua.

Try and experiment with the various conditions, then build a zone that announces only the third kill of an entire group.

And now try this without Watchflags. ☺

7.32 Viper with a double youu (Wiper)

7.32.1 Demonstration Goals

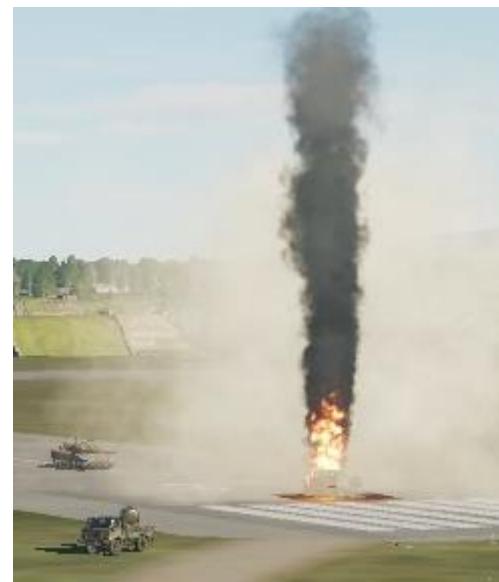
Wiper is a module that removes a variety of objects from the game. This demo runs through its most important uses, and shows some of its limitations.

7.32.2 What To Explore

7.32.2.1 In Mission

Enter the Frogfoot, press F2, pan and turn the camera until you have a good view of the “Fuchs” ground vehicle. Choose Communication→Other→Start Infantry Respawn Demo. Observe the gruesome spectacle of the Infantry spawning, being killed, and disappearing just before re-spawning. Notice that after each kill, the entire body is removed.

Now press F7 until have a clear view of the Leopard 2 tank. Now choose Communication→Other→Start Tank Respawn Demo. Observe similar carnage, but this time, after each kill, debris, fire and smoke remain.



Re-start the mission and return to your Frogfoot. Press F7 until you have a clear view of the infantry standing next to a large lamp post.

Now choose Communication→Other→Wipe Lamp.

Observe how the lamp does **not** disappear, but the big, curved hangar dome does disappear! Soldier and (static) airfield machinery remain, though. Also note the block of text that has appeared, listing some names next to ‘Cat = 1’ through ‘Cat = 6’. Take note of these names, as we will return to them in ME later



Cat = 1:Lonely 1
Cat = 2:
Cat = 3:Static AS32-31A-1-1
Cat = 4:
Cat = 5:749176120
Cat = 6:

Restart the mission, and again enter your Frogfoot's cockpit.

Hit F7 until you are viewing the Infantry named Solitary" who stands in front of a boring, nondescript building.

Now choose Communication→Other→Wipe Infrastructure. Note how the building, the trees next to it, and the bunker to lot 14 vanish, but the soldier remains.



Finally, choose F7 until you are viewing the single soldier "Nobody", standing next to a tree. Choose Communication→Other→Wipe Tree, and wait a few seconds.

Yup, the tree doesn't budge.

So, let's jump into ME to see what we are looking at

7.32.2.2 ME

This mission is more about the limitations of wiper than its abilities. Wiper is universally and easily understood: you want an object gone, you call the wiper.

Unfortunately, as we'll see, DCS throws a few spanners into the works, so it's important to know about the limitations, and how we can ensure to not waste valuable time when something happens differently from how we expected it.

THE HAPPY CASE

Luckily, wiper works flawlessly when dealing with units and static objects (i.e. all objects that mission designers place by themselves). Removing these works without fail. Use wiper whenever you want to remove objects that you no longer need, or to enable obstructions that you placed yourself in ME. For example, you can use wipers to gradually over time clear containers from a yard until there is enough space for a helicopter to land, etc.

For fine control, use a wiper's wipeNamed attribute to selectively remove objects from a larger group of possible wipe targets.

WIPPING REMAINS / WRECKS

As we have seen in the Infantry Respawn demo, wiping can also work clearing the remains from dead units, so they work well with cloned infantry. But unfortunately, DCS can and will deposit objects like wrecks, smoke and flame that currently can't be wiped because they aren't accessible to DML or other script-based tools – as demonstrated by the Tank respawn demo

Name	Value	Remove
cloner		✖
clone?	infclone	✖
empty!	infclone	✖
preWipe	yes	✖
wipe?	infclone	✖
wipeNamed	Grou*	✖

WIPING SCENERY

It gets ugly when you try to wipe scenery. Wiper allows you to try, and will happily remove all scenery objects it finds, but DCS is not giving in willingly.

- Trees usually can't be wiped. Some trees, on the other hand, are parts of nearby scenery objects and hence can be wiped, but not individually without the other scenery object they come packaged with.
- As the "Wipe Lamp" and "Wipe Infrastructure" examples show, some clearly visible scenery objects simply can't be wiped.
- You cannot (at least as of this writing) easily deduce which scenery items can be wiped.
- Worse, wiping scenery objects in a zone may have knock-on effects and wipe other scenery that are outside the zone, so always verify which scenery objects are inside a zone with the Inventory attribute during debugging, and then restrict the wipe by supplying a "wipeNamed" attribute and list the objects that you do want removed.

```
Cat = 1:Solitary  
Cat = 2:  
Cat = 3:  
Cat = 4:  
Cat = 5:137661232 262537217  
Cat = 6:
```

7.32.3 Discussion

Wiper has another ability that comes in handy when dealing with scenery or heavily populated areas.

Wiper can filter the objects that should be removed by name with wildcard. This works well as long as the names are sufficiently dissimilar. It is, for example, easy to remove all objects that belong to a group since they are (when done correctly) all have similar names in-group, and can be differentiated from other groups by their name.



When dealing with scenery, however, many objects have very similar names, as they often are 9-digit object ID that all differ only by one or two digits when close together



In Senaki-Kolkhi, for example there many bunkers close together. Imagine you want to remove only the four upper 'leaves'. When you place a wiper zone, no matter how small, it is near impossible to find a location that correctly removes the four bunkers, but leaves the

other surrounding bunkers intact. The reason is that, as mentioned, DCS's world.search() method is imprecise returning too many objects.

To resolve this, use the following approach. First, during testing, run the wiper with the inventory option to see which objects are returned.

```
Cat = 1:Bored  
Cat = 2:  
Cat = 3:  
Cat = 4:  
Cat = 5:749176118 749176117 749176116 749176115 749176114 749176112 749176109  
Cat = 6:
```

Then, use ME's "Assign as..." to identify which objects are the ones that you are interested in, and then list them in the wiper's *wipeNamed* attribute – remember that this attribute supports lists.

The demo mission has a final communication command: Wipe Hangar Top. This removes the four hangar tops simply by listing all objects names that should be removed in the *wipeNamed* attribute.

Name	Value	
wipe?	wipeHangartops	
wipeCat	5	
wipeInventory	yes	
wipeNamed	749176114, 749176115, 749176116, 749176117	
verbose	yes	

7.33 Radio Go Go (Radio Trigger)

7.33.1 Demonstration Goals

The radio trigger module provides some comfort ‘glue’ for mission designers who use DML and wish to integrate ME-style RADIO ITEM ADD-based flags. The standard issue here is that ME only supports setting a flag to a single value, and DML usually triggers on a flag change.

ACTION:	RADIO ITEM ADD
NAME:	Trigger CH1
FLAG:	ch1
VALUE:	< > 1

This means that subsequent selections of the radio menu simply set the same flag to the same value, not triggering any flag.

To remedy this, the Radio Trigger module provides a way that notices a flag change in the input, generates a signal on the out! flag, and then resets the input flag so that when the player chooses it again, a new signal is generated.

7.33.2 What To Explore

7.33.2.1 In Mission

Enter the Su-25T and enjoy a tranquil look at Batumi’s main airport facilities.

Then choose Communication→Other→Trigger CH1.

Notice that a message appears after a short while.

Choose Communication→Other→Trigger CH1 again.

We have go number 1!
We have go number 2!
We have go number 3!

Notice that again a message appears, slightly modified (it counts the number of times it has been invoked)

You can repeat this as many times as you like, each time a message appears with an increased count.

7.33.2.2 ME

There is very little surprise here: the module watches flag “ch1” for a change, and as soon as it is triggered, bangs on the zone-local “msg” flag that starts the messenger before re-setting ch1.

Since messenger is configured to trigger on change, it would not trigger a second or third message when the item is selected from the radio menu: ch1 is already set to 1.

Name	Value	
radio?	ch1	
rtOut!	*msg	
messenger?	*msg	
message	We have go number <v>!	
messageValue?	*msg	

That’s where the radio trigger comes in. As soon as it triggers, it resets the input that triggered it so another activation of the flag via the radio menu is possible.

In our example, we trigger the messenger with radioTrigger's output, which is set to increment (default method out). The message itself also displays the value of the message out flag so that we can easily count how many times the radio item was activated.

7.33.3 Discussion

So you are looking at the radioTrigger module and think – hey, I have an idea: an automatically resetting flag; that's *exactly* what I can use for my next project! I create a flag, feed it into a radioTrigger, and it resets itself automatically, no need for a separate output flag, I merely read the input flag, and it resets itself, right?

The idea is good, but unfortunately it doesn't work. At all. Let's try it. Simply copy and paste the "Radio Check" trigger zone. Now you have two modules that both are looking at ch1, and both should then output a message when the menu item is selected.

Run the mission, and choose the radio item.

Only one message.

Why? Because as soon as one of the two radioTriggers detects the change, it triggers its output, and then immediately resets the input flag. When the other radioTrigger module looks at the input flag, it's looking at the reset flag value, and therefore cannot detect a difference, and does not trigger.

But it gets worse: there is no way to tell beforehand which of the two radioTriggers gets to look at the flag first, and you have therefore just set up a race condition between the two modules.

Now, the same would happen if you used radioTrigger to simply reset the flag and connected another module to the flag to trigger: you'd never know if radioTrigger got to the flag first and re-set it before the other module could trigger. It may also cause the module trigger twice if radioTrigger read it after the first module, and then reset the trigger.

So whenever you are using radioTrigger, make sure it is the only module reading that particular flag; if you need more than one signals generated from that, simply use multiple outputs.

7.34 xFlags – Field Day (Decisions, Flag Testing)

7.34.1 Demonstration Goals

xFlags is an incredibly versatile module that you can use to create complex trigger rules with a snap. This demo shows the different xFlag “requirements” and how they can be used to detect certain common situations. In the demo three Tigrs perform a ‘race’ and we use xFlags to detect various conditions, such as ‘more than one across the finish line’ etc.



7.34.2 What To Explore

7.34.2.1 In Mission

Start the mission and enter your trusty Frogfoot’s cockpit. Once seated, press F7 a couple of times until you are viewing the infantry soldier and his yellow-jacketed buddy. They and the windsock on the other side are the finish line.

Look to the left and notice the three Tigrs. This race isn’t going to be close, it’s a complete set-up. The question is not who will win, but how we detect various situations that can arise in a game with a simple xFlag zone.

Go to Communications→Other...→Start Vehicles

The Race... begins. The Tigrs start rumbling towards the finish line, and as they cross it, messages appear. Take note of what they say, and once all race cars have stopped their engines, you can exit the mission

7.34.2.2 ME

Each of the red trigger zones represents a classic game decision / flag testing situation that xFlags resolve. Each of these zones has a messenger attached that is triggered by that zone’s xFlag.

The setup is simple: there are three target zones (Arrival 1-3) set up behind the ‘finish line’ that each trigger their own (global) flag when a vehicle enters it (using unitZone): oneA, twoA, threeA. When a vehicle enters a zone and triggers the flag, a message is also put to the screen.

Vehicle Three arrived



The red xFlags zones each take these flags as input, and using different requirements, will trigger at different times. Let’s go through these one by one and see how they work

One Of Us

This xFlag should fire when the first of the “race cars” (“us”) has entered its target zone. Unlike in this demo mission, we don’t really know which of the three will win, so this decision mimics the requirement that from a set of flags, at least one (any) is sufficient to trigger the output flag. Note that the flag will also trigger if more than one input flags were true, but since an xFlags stops checking after it has fired, this situation does not arise.

Name	Value	
xFlags?	oneA, twoA, threeA	
require	any	
xSuccess!	*hit	

All Of Us

This xFlags fires when all three input flags have triggered. It will patiently wait while one vehicle after the other trundles over the finish line and trigger their flags. Only after the third has arrived do we see this xFlag trigger

Name	Value	
xFlags?	oneA, twoA, threeA	
require	all	
xSuccess!	*hit	

Exactly Two Of Us

This xFlag will only fire if two (no more no less) of the input flags have triggered. It would not fire if, for example, all three were triggered. This

Name	Value	
xFlags?	oneA, twoA, threeA	
require	exactly	
#hits	2	
xSuccess!	*hit	

is in contrast to ‘One of us’ that merely requires a minimum, while exactly requires an exact match.

You control which number to match with the #hits attribute (remember that #hits can also be another flag – simply pass that flag’s name. Don’t forget the double quotes if it is a numbered flag)

More Than One Of Us

Triggers xFlag when at least two (or more) flags have triggered upon inspection.

Note that again, #hits carries the information how many flags should be triggered at minimum.

Name	Value	
xFlags?	oneA, twoA, threeA	
require	more than	
#hits	1	
xSuccess!	*hit	

At Least One Of Us

This requires that at least one flag has triggered. It is different to One Of Us in that #hits controls the minimum, and is therefore a more specific version of ‘some’.

Name	Value	
xFlags?	oneA, twoA, threeA	
require	at least	
#hits	1	
xSuccess!	*hit	

Most Of Us

When you need more than half of the flags to have triggered. Note that if exactly half have fired (e.g. 2 from 4), this will not trigger the xFlag.

Name	Value	
xFlags?	oneA, twoA, threeA	
require	most	
#hits	1	
xSuccess!	*hit	

Half Or More Of Us

The pendant to Most Of Us if you also want to trigger the xFlag when exactly half or more of all the flags have triggered.

Name	Value	
xFlags?	oneA, twoA, threeA	
require	half or more	
#hits	1	
xSuccess!	*hit	

7.34.3 Discussion

Resetting One Of Us (Advanced Topic)

There is another zone that demonstrates how an xFlag with reset works. Here we short-circuit the xSuccess! Flag into xReset?, which will reset the entire xFlag and load the current flag state of all input flags as new zero state.

During the race, this causes the xFlag to trigger each time a car passes the finish line (or rather, enters its unitZone, which then triggers its arrival flag).

You may wonder why this doesn't immediately re-trigger, since we know that the first car has arrived.

The answer is that the triggered flag now has been integrated into the xFlag's zero state, and since the watchflags trigger on change, that formerly triggering value now has become the baseline and will no longer trigger that flag.

Why will it no longer detect the fact that the first is triggered?

Name	Value	
xFlags?	oneA, twoA, threeA	
require	any	
xReset?	*hit	
xSuccess!	*hit	

Vehicle Three arrived
xFlag: ANY hit
xFlag: RESETTING ANY hit
xFlag: At Least one hit
Vehicle One arrived
xFlag: Exactly two hits
xFlag: half or more hit
xFlag: RESETTING ANY hit
xFlag: Most hit
xFlag: More Than one Hits
Vehicle Two arrived
xFlag: RESETTING ANY hit
xFlag: ALL hit

Zone-Local Verbosity

DML uses the 'verbose' attribute in the module's config zones to switch on a debug mode for that module. They become 'verbose' outputting a lot of information on the screen to help you debug your mission.

Some modules also support zone-local verbosity, meaning that only the modules in that zone (and only those who support zone-local verbosity) turn on their debug mode. xFlags supports local-zone verbosity.

Add a 'verbose = yes' attribute to one of the xFlag zones to test this ability. Be careful to remove these verbose flags afterwards because they can litter your mission with messages, and that usually happens at the worst time imaginable.

The DML Quick Reference tells you which modules currently support zone-local verbosity.

verbose	yes	
---------	-----	--

7.35 Virgin (Civ) Air / Air Caucasus II / One-Way Air (CivAir)

7.35.1 Demonstration Goals

CivAir is a high-performance drop-in module to generate civilian air traffic. It functions out of the box, and can be easily customized. It's mostly used to make a mission seem more lively, but can spice up a mission by providing aircraft that must not be shot down.



7.35.2 What To Explore

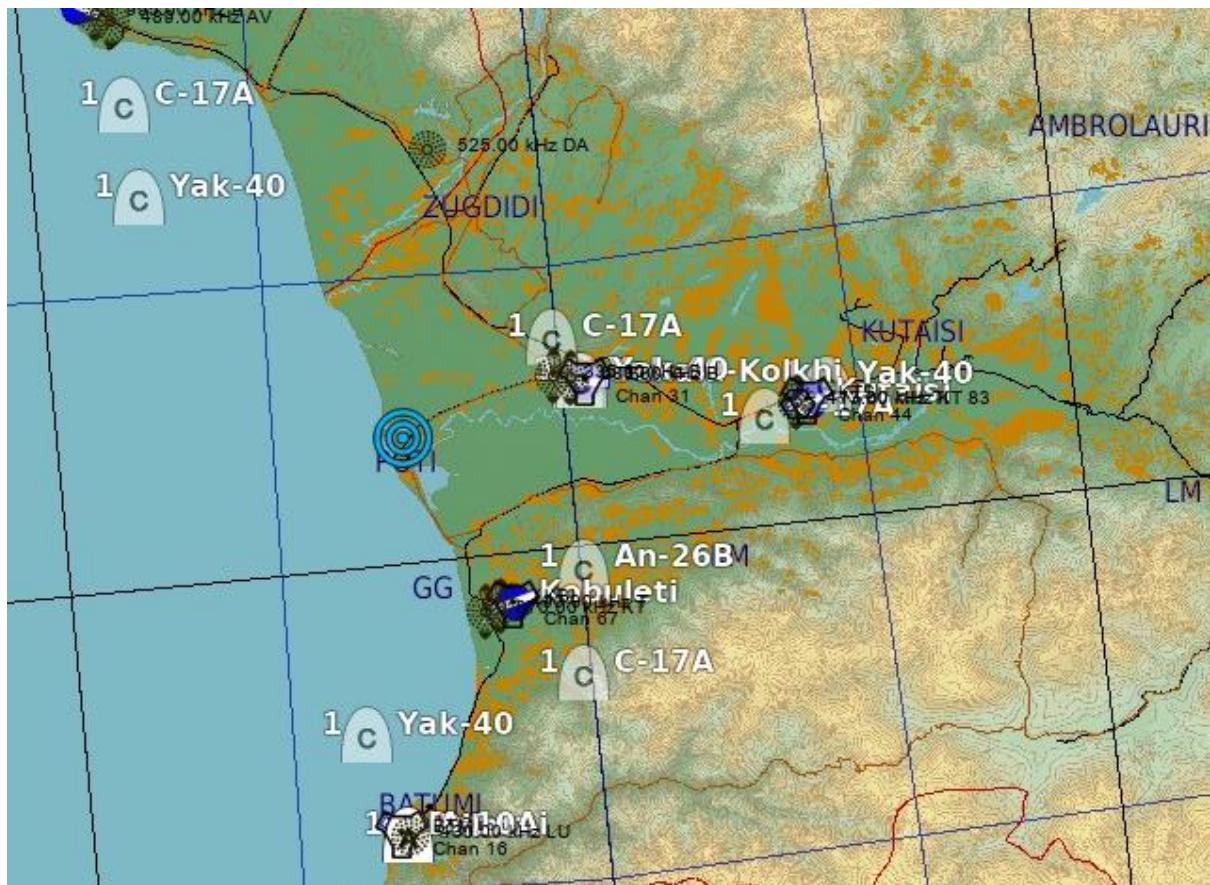
There are two missions here to explore: Virgin (Civ) Air, and Air Caucasus II. We'll discuss both.

7.35.2.1 In Mission

Virgin (Civ) Air is a blank mission with a single player Frogfoot to enter (cold), and CivAir as it functions out of the box. Enter the mission, and press F2 multiple times to step through the airborne flights. After a while stepping through the planes, you'll notice additional civilian flights that sit on the tarmac.

Accelerate time and watch the aircraft take off, fly, and land. Switch to F10 map, and zoom out. The white icons all depict a civilian flight under civAir's control. Note that the flights are fully randomized, and fly all over the Caucasus map. Note also the diversity of airframes.

Now switch to Air Caucasus II, and do essentially the same. Note that now the ten planes all bunch together: they only originate from, or fly to one of the following airfields: Batumi, Kobuleti, Kutaisi, Senaki-Kolkhi and Sukhumi-Babushara. They never fly to any other destination or depart from another airfield.



Also note that there are fewer aircraft types compared to Virgin (Civ) Air: there are only the (very common) Yak-40, Hercules and Antonov An-26 (just ignore the C-17As in the image above, that screenshot was taken from an earlier version of the demo where the Globemaster was in the mix)

7.35.2.2 ME

Virgin (Civ) Air shows how an unmodified drop-in of Civ Air looks in a mission. It's completely hassle-free, truly random, and a nice addition to any mission that has cycles to waste for some atmospheric sugar (CivAir itself uses negligible processing power, the AI planes only very little).

Air Caucasus II demonstrates how to customize civAir in only a few minutes with the following additions to your map:

We add a trigger zone close to the airports of Batumi, Kobuleti, Kutaisi, Senaki-Kolkhi and Sukhumi-Babushara and add just a single attribute: civAir. When civAir starts up, it detects these zones, and builds a new list of airfields that are allowed for civAir from all zones with that attribute. In the Virgin (Civ) Air demo, no such zone was present, and Civ Air then proceeded to assemble all airfields it finds on the map into the list of allowed airfields.



Note that the civAir attribute has no value and is still correctly recognized. As long as the value for this attribute isn't the word 'exclude', civAir uses the closest airfield to that zone as a departure or destination point for a civAir flight.

Name	Value	
civAir		

Air Caucasus II uses a config zone to change the air frames that are used. When you look at the planes that are flying in that mission, you'll notice that the Yak-40 small business jet is much more prevalent than the other types. This is because in the aircraftTypes attribute, that type is listed thrice, meaning that it is three times more likely that this type is chosen than the other types that are present (C-130 "Hercules", An-26B).

Name	Value	
maxTraffic	1.0	
aircraftTypes	Yak-40, Yak-40, Yak-40, C-130, An-26B	

7.35.3 Discussion

As you can see, civAir works well straight out of the box, and can easily be customized to use only a few airfields and airframes simply by adding some zones and attributes

7.35.3.1 The popular Yak-40

As mentioned above, the Yak-40 is listed three times in the aircraftTypes attribute, making it three times as likely for it to appear than any other plane. Let's find out how that looks. Remove two of the three Yak-40 entries, then run the mission again. Paging through the various planes, you should see that now the distribution is even between the three airframe types. Now also add a C-17A into the mix and see what happens.



7.35.3.2 Making Batumi more popular

So let's make Batumi more popular with the jets. Click on the Trigger Zone "Civ Air Hub-1" next to Batumi Airfield, copy, and paste right next to the first one. Now there are two Trigger Zones with a civAir attribute close to Batumi, making it appear twice in the inclusion list. Run the mission. Note that now flights are more likely to start or end in Batumi, but still there will be no flights from and to Batumi – civAir is smart enough to detect and prevent this.

Traffic Centers
Senaki-Kolkhi
Batum
Batum
Kutaisi
Kobuleti
Sukhumi-Babushara

Note that the list of traffic centers is displayed when you set verbose to true in civAirConfig.

7.35.3.3 Increasing Traffic

Now let's try and stress your CPU and DCS ground control. Set the maxTraffic attribute in civAirConfig to 100. Start the mission. Immediately, it starts up with 50 planes in the air, racing to one of the different airfields.

Now, once every 20 seconds (assuming you left ups at 0.05), a new aircraft is added, so it will take almost 17 minutes for the remaining 50 planes to spawn on their various airfields and start their warm-up cycle.

Handling that many planes can become an issue with DCS, as it doesn't handle many planes in congregating on the same airfield well. You may observe strange mutually preventing loops of aircraft in the pattern, or mutually blocking planes on the ground – DCS may even spawn multiple planes over each other, causing some short-lived mayhem until they are all de-spawned (this is a DCS bug – a future version of civAir might contain code to work around this). But the main take-away is that civAir can, and DCS may some day be able to, handle a large number of civilian aircraft without problems, and no discernible performance hit.

7.35.3.4 One-way Air

Another demo (One-Way Air) demonstrates CivAir's ability to 'direct' the flow of aircraft for airfields. Using the values 'departure' or 'arrival' for the CivAir attribute makes that airfield only eligible for take-offs ('departure') or landings ('arrival')

Name	Value	
civAir	depart only	

Note that this is compatible with CivAir's concept of multiple zones for the same airfield. Adding either value (arrival/departure) to additional zones for an airfield makes it more likely for a take-off or landing to happen there.

Name	Value	
civAir	arrival only	

7.36 Count Bases Blue (baseCaptured, xFlags)

7.36.1 Demonstration Goals

This mission demonstrates how we can use the various baseCaptured outputs to trigger other modules:

- The change-of-hands DML flag to trigger a message and
- ownership flag to count (using xFlag's 'lesser' count function) the number of bases in blue's possession.



7.36.2 What To Explore

7.36.2.1 In Mission

Enter the mission, and watch how the various Leo tanks approach their target FARPS. After a while, three blue FARPs (from a total of four) are being captured.

Each time a FARP is captured, a message appears with a new total of FARPs that blue still holds.

A Base Was Captured.
Blue now owns 2 bases

7.36.2.2 ME

Let's begin with the baseCapture zones. They are all set up similarly. When their associated (nearest) base is captured by another faction, they all bang! on the

Name	Value	
baseCaptured!	captcha	
baseOwner	bo1	

(global) flag captcha. Also, individually, each zone transmits the current owner on the (also global) flag boX, with X being different for each base (so I can easily tell them apart: bo1, bo2, bo3, and bo4).

Now, these boX flags are all collected by an xFlags module, configured to function as a counter:

- Input flags are bo1, bo2, bo3, bo4, the ownership flags from the four FARPs. Since they are output from a baseCapture module we know they can only hold three possible values: 0 (neutral), 1 (red), 2 (blue)
- Require is set to ‘never’, meaning that the xFlags module will continuously run, and never stop, no matter what configuration bo1-bo4 have. This is important since ‘require’ defaults to “some”, so if we did not change it to ‘never’, xFlags would stop after the first base is owned by blue.
- xFlagMethod is set to “=2”, meaning that xFlags looks for input flags whose value is equal to the number two.
- xCount is an output that is set to the number of ‘hits’ on the input flags, i.e. the number of input flags that meet the requirement “=2”. In other words, xCount counts the number of input flags that are equal to the number two – which happens to be the number of bases that are owned by blue. That value is output on the (global) flag named ‘blues’.

Name	Value	
xFlags?	bo1, bo2, bo3, bo4	
require	never	
xCount	blues	
xFlagMethod	=2	

And finally, the messaging stack: Two modules that run in sequence: the initial signal ‘captcha’ (which is the signal that a base was captured, as put out by any of the four bases) comes into a delayFlag’s startDelay? input and triggers a delay of one second, only to be put out on the (local) “*go” flag.

Name	Value	
timeDelay	1	
startDelay?	captcha	
delayDone!	*go	
messenger?	*go	
message	A Base Was Capured. <n>Bl	
messageValue?	blues	

The (local) “*go” flag triggers the messenger module which gathers the current value of the ‘blues’ flag (which is the current number of bases owned by blue, as put out by the xFlags’ xCount output) and inserts it into the message instead of the <v> wildcard.

**A Base Was Capured.
Blue now owns 2 bases**

7.36.3 Discussion

This deceptively simple mission uses a number of tricks to accomplish what it does. Let’s walk through them one by one.

Counting blue bases

We use xFlags’ ability to count (and publish via the xCount output) the number of input flags that meet the requirement ‘=2’, i.e. the number of input flags that equal the number two. Since the input flags are the raw ‘owner’ output from baseCaptured, a flag that is qual to two means that it comes from a base that is owned by blue.

‘Never’ ever ever

So why did we set ‘require’ to ‘never’? Remember that xFlags pauses once the requirement is met, and defaults to ‘some’. In default configuration, the first time that a base is owned by blue – which is the condition the mission begins at. Since always want xFlags to supply us with the number of bases owned by blue, we tell it to never stop – hence the requirement.

Counting blue – revisited: Base ownership versus base loss.

So why are we using an xFlags module to count the number of bases owned by blue in such a roundabout way? Couldn't we just use a capture event as indicator that blue lost a base, set 'dec' as method for baseCaptured! DML method, and start with 4 as value for 'blues'?

Yes, but that only works when we make a big assumption: that blue can never re-gain any of its bases. Because if it did, 'blues' would no longer correctly reflect the number of bases blue holds. If red and blue ownership traded the same base a few times, *the value of 'blues' could easily reach zero with blue still holding on to three bases.*

So if you, for example, made it a win condition that red should capture more than 3 blue bases, simply counting capture events is not sufficient if blue can re-capture bases.

Waiting... for what exactly?

In our exploration we have glossed over this bit: the messenger module is triggered after a time delay of one second – i.e. the message is displayed one second after a baseCaptured module's message is received. But why?

The answer shines a light on a slightly ugly facet of DML's inner workings: all modules run on their own timer, and there is no way to tell when which

Name	Value	
timeDelay	1	
startDelay?	captcha	

module checks their input. In other words, there is no way of telling the order in which they process the flags. And this can be a problem because for the messenger module, this can introduce a race condition: it could, conceivably process a baseCaptured signal before xFlags does (there's a roughly 50/50 chance of this happening). In this case, however, the messenger module prints the message to the screen before xFlags has had an opportunity to update the 'blues' flag, which carries the number of bases owned by blue. The result is that the messenger displays an incorrect base count for blue.

The time delay of one second changes this, as it forces a time delay that guarantees that xFlags has completed its own processing. But why 1 second? Because that is the value that most modules have their ups (updates per second) set to by default. If you ever run into a possible race condition, you can often resolve this with a time delay for the signal for the module that should run last, and the delay should be at least as long as the ups for all modules that contribute (sometimes, when there are multiple cascades of modules involved, you may have to add multiples of that to account for all cascades).

Challenges:

Can you change the mission in a way that:

1. outputs a message 'Red Won' when red owns three bases?
2. without using the value of the captcha flag?

7.37 Pilots at their Limits (Limited Airframes)

7.37.1 Demonstration Goals

This mission demonstrates how Limited Airframes works when players switch or crash planes. We'll walk through the following scenarios:

- Changing airframes in a safe zone
- Changing airframes on the ground outside a safe zone (ditching on the ground)
- Crashing the plane
- Ejecting from a plane
- Ditching an airframe in mid-air



7.37.2 What To Explore

7.37.2.1 In Mission

At the start of the mission, enter Frogger One SAFE, sitting cold on the ground in Senaki-Kolkhi, a pilot-safe zone. Now, change into Frogger Two SAFE's slot. Note that since you are leaving a plane in a pilot safe zone, you can change airframes without an issue.

Now change into the slot UNSAFE Frogger, which is sitting in an unprotected area. Note that again, you can change *into* that plane without an issue because the plane you are leaving is sitting safe on the ground, in a pilot-safe area.

Now change back into Frogger One SAFE.

Pilot New callsign DITCHED unit UNSAFE Frogger -- PILOT LOSS (MIA)

Since you are changing into a different air frame outside of a pilot-safe zone, you'll lose one pilot (if CSAR Manager was active, it would have generated a CSAR mission for where that plane was standing).

Now change into "U B Dead", an SU-25T flying above mountains with an

Pilot <New callsign> is confirmed KIA while controlling U B Dead

You have lost a pilot! Remaining: 3

empty fuel tank. Crash the plane into the ground. Limited Airframes announces your death and deducts another pilot from your pool.

Re-enter U B Dead. Try to cheat death by ejecting. Again, one pilot will be deducted. If you had CSAR Manager installed, it would have generated a CSAR Mission for the pilot.

So let's try and be creative.

Re-enter U B Dead, and

quickly switch to another plane, for example Frogger Safe One, before it flies into the ground. Nice try, but Limited Airframes still deducts a pilot, and if CSAR Manager was installed, another CSAR Mission would be created.

Enter one of the SAFE Froggers, and eject. Note that even though they are in a safe zone, your side loses a pilot. Again, if CSAR Manager was installed, a CSAR mission would be started.

Go on, and waste more air frames. Once you reach your last pilot, you get a warning

You have lost almost all of your pilots.

WARNING: Losing any more pilots WILL FAIL THE MISSION

Once you lose that, it's curtains for the mission when you re-seat (in multiplayer, you can opt not to re-seat, and have another player try and rescue one or more pilots – when CSAR Manager is active – or simply wait for the mission to conclude).

BLUEFORCE has lost all of their pilots.

REDFORCE WINS!

7.37.2.2 ME

In ME there are only a couple of interesting things to observe:

- Senaki-Kolkhi has a Quad Trigger Zone “Senaki Blue Safe” with the *pilotsafe* attribute, and ‘blue’ as its value. This means that *only blue planes* are safe to switch here because it only mentions blue (if none were mentioned, all planes would be safe here)

Name	Value	
pilotsafe	blue	



- This mission also shows how to set up Limited Airframes asymmetrically for red and blue with a configuration zone. Note how there are different values for maxBlue and maxRed, giving blue an advantage of two more pilots. You can use this to balance a game where one side has better (more capable) aircraft than the other.

Name	Value	
maxBlue	4	
maxRed	2	

7.37.3 Discussion

CHALLENGE

So let's see what happens if you take one of the **RED UNSAFE** Froggers, fly it to Senaki-Kolkhi, and park it inside the pilot-safe zone, then switch planes. What did you expect would happen?



7.38 Gate and Switch (Changer – Pulse & Gated Switch)

7.38.1 Demonstration Goals

A common design pattern in missions is where you need to trigger one course of action one condition is true, and other if it isn't.

Gate and Switch demonstrates a simple way how to do this with the Changer module, and with the DML 'pulse' method.



In this mission we want to be able to command spawning F117s that take off and fly away – but only when our plane is in a certain zone. When we are outside the zone, commands to spawn planes will only result in a message.

7.38.2 What To Explore

7.38.2.1 In Mission

Enter the Frogger and look outside. In front of you there is a big circle marked out with tires and flags. Before we move the aircraft, go to Communication → Other → Spawn And Depart.

A message comes up to tell you to move your plane into the circle. Try this a few more times. The result is always the same.

Please move your plane into the circle

Ok, let's comply. Move the Su-25T into the circle marked out by tires and flags, come to a complete stop, and try the communications menu again. This time, an F-117 spawns on the runway, and after a brief time, it takes off, heading for another airfield. Wait until it has taken off and try the command again. A new F-117 spawns and takes off.

Taxi your aircraft outside of the circle. If you have given multiple spawn commands inside the circle, wait until all scheduled spawns have completed and no more planes spawn.

Then try the command again. You should again see the message requesting you to move into the circle.

7.38.2.2 ME

Now let's see how this is done in ME. There are multiple challenges:

- Create a way to connect two different actions to a repeatable communications menu item
- Have only one of those actions activate depending on a game condition (here: player's plane inside a zone / outside of that zone)
- Ensure that the radio commands do not 'bleed' across actions when the condition changes

The first one is simple to implement, since we have a module especially built for this: Radio Trigger. Note, however the peculiar method we chose: 'pulse'. This method sets the output flag rtOut!

Name	Value
radio?	gogogo
rtOut!	radioGo
method	pulse

to 1 for 3 seconds, and then sets it back to zero. We'll discuss later why. Let's just remember that an output set up this way should connect to an input configured for 'lohi' activation.

The rtOut! signal feeds via the radioGo flag into two zones "Respond to radio Outside" and "Respond to radio Inside" that are configured almost identically:

- A changer module reads the radioGo signal and passes it unchanged to local *rG flag.
- The local *rG flag activates the messenger flag to output a message.

Name	Value
change?	radioGo
changeOut!	*rG
On/Off?	outZone
messenger?	*rG
message	Please move your plane into
msgTriggerMethod	lohi

We have modified this basic functionality in multiple important ways:

SWITCH

Changer uses the On/Off? Input to control its gate. This means that whenever the value on the flag that connects to On/Off? is zero, the gate is closed, and no signal propagates from radioGo to local *rG. When, on the other hand, the value on outZone is anything other than zero, the gate is open, and signals can flow through the changer to the messenger. Using a changer as a "gated switch" (to block or allow information to flow) is an important and common design pattern that you can use in your missions to great advantage.

If you inspect the second zone that is configured almost identically, you'll find that their only difference is that their gate is controlled by different flags: outZone and inZone. This means that these two modules can be active at different times (see later)

Name	Value
change?	radioGo
changeOut!	*rG, goClone
On/Off?	inZone
messenger?	*rG
message	Roger, Spawning on Runway
msgTriggerMethod	lohi

Note also that this zones gate switch

(changeout!) provides signals on two different flags: local *rG and global goClone. We'll use that signal later.

PULSE AND LOHI

When the information can flow through the gate above, it arrives at the messenger. Remember that the signal originates from the radio trigger that converts giving a radio command into a pulse, making the flag's value mostly 0 (zero), and after an activation 1 for a few seconds. The 'lohi' method to trigger is very useful as it only triggers on a flag change that goes up, but never when the flag resets back to 0. Additionally, it only activates specifically when the flag value rises from 0 – so 'bounces' (erroneous additional increases on the flag, i.e. multiple simultaneous activations) are filtered out.

HOW TO NOT CROSS-BLEED INFORMATION

But why go to all this trouble with 'pulse' and 'lohi'? The answer to this lies in the fact that multiple modules are listening to the radio trigger. Let's try and walk through a normal setup where the radio trigger is set up to simply increment the output flag 'radioGo'. The gate for zone "Outside" is open, the gate for "Inside" is closed.

Now the player chooses the radio item, and radioGo is incremented from 0 to 1. Since "Outside" gate is open, the signal propagates to the messenger and the message "Please move..." is displayed. Since "Inside" gate is closed, the radioGo signal does not propagate, and that messenger remains silent. The player repeats this a couple of time. Each time, the Outside messenger fires, the Inside messenger stays silent, and at the end, the value of radioGo has increased (through four 'inc' method invocations= to 4).

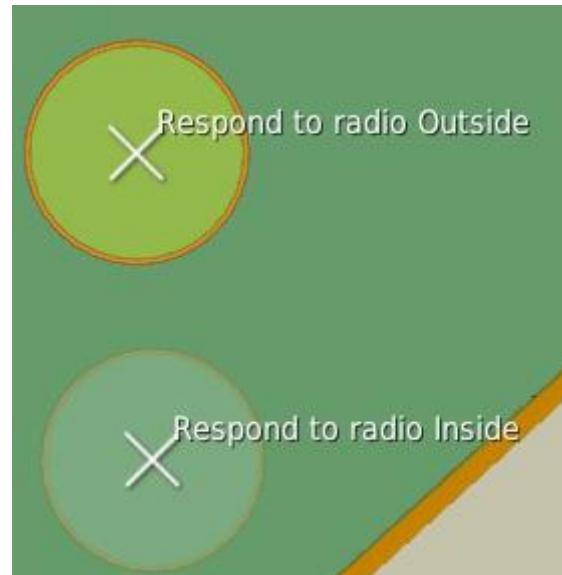
Now the player moves into the circle. Among other things, this activates Inside's gate. Now radioGo's value (which is 4) flows through the changer to messenger. Messenger compares this value with the last (zero, it has never received a signal before), and immediately (and erroneously) triggers. This is information crossbleed – part of the information of previous activations have made it through the gate. This we want to avoid.

The solution is to use a flag that only carries information transiently – for a brief time – and then returns into its default inactive state (zero). That's what the pulse method does: it briefly (for a few seconds) goes to 1, and then returns to zero. **Therefore, 'pulse'/'lohi' is the ideal method combination for gated flags.**

That is why the radio trigger issues pulses, and the messengers are cued for 'lohi' signal transition: shortly after the signal is received, it falls back to zero, the information cannot easily cross-bleed to other modules.

Note:

I intentionally wrote 'easily' above – an edge case remains: we can imagine a situation where the player enters the circle and enables Inner's gate in the brief period where the radioGo flag is still 1. This can happen, but very unlikely. You can try to guard against this



using delayFlag modules, but usually guarding against these cases is not worth the effort unless the result is game-breaking.

DIFFERENT ACTIVATIONS

So how do we achieve that the “Inside” and “Outside” gates open and close at the right time? We use the unitZone’s uzDirect and uzDirectInv outputs that carry the exact signals that we are looking for: inZone is 1 if, and only if, the player is inside the zone, and 0

Name	Value	Remove
unitZone		✖
lookFor	Frog*	✖
matching	player	✖
uzDirect	inZone	✖
uzDirectInv	outZone	✖

otherwise. We use this to control ‘Inside’ gate. uzDirectInv is 1 if, and only if, the player’s plane is outside the zone, and 0 otherwise. We use this to control the gate for Outside. Since they switch values at exactly the same time, there is no danger of overlap where both gates are enabled or both gates are disabled.

THE CLONER: SIMPLE SWITCHED GATE

The Inside switch (changer) has two outputs, of which the global goClone flag is used to trigger the cloner. That module’s setup matches the exact use pattern for gated modules: a gated “pulse” input signal

Name	Value	Remove
cloner		✖
clone?	goClone	✖
cloneTriggerMethod	lohi	✖

7.38.3 Discussion

CHALLENGE

What would be the result if we removed the clone zone’s “cloneTriggerMethod” attribute? Why does this happen?

CHALLENGE

We could have used RadioTrigger’s radio? inputflag “gogogo” as input for the changers and lived without rtOut! and the pulseMethod as long as radio? is connected. Can you find out why this is true?

CHALLENGE

Above, I wrote that an output set to ‘pulse’ method should preferable connect to an input configured for ‘lohi’. Technically, ‘inc’ will also work with an output configured for ‘pulse’. Can you find out why, and under which conditions this is true?

CHALLENGE

It’s happy coincidence (and if you believe that...) that unitZone happens to have both uzDirect and uzDirectInv available. But what if you used a module that only holds one output

and you needed both the normal and inverse signal? How would you build two stacks that should flip like our example above without overlap? Hint: you need multiple instances of a module that you are already using, but in a different configuration.

7.39 Good Grief (unGrief)

7.39.1 Demonstration Goals

The internet is full of great people. Unfortunately, the internet is also chock full of asocial elements that love to spoil other people's fun – griefers. If you host missions on your server and see these trolls showing up, one possible recourse is DML's unGrief that may act as a low-impact, "low-grade griefer" deterrent (determined griefers will keep showing up and must be banned by IP).

This demo shows how unGrief reacts to a player who is engaging in the griefing activity of intentionally killing their own side.



7.39.2 What To Explore

7.39.2.1 In Mission

In this mission there are various blue frames and a red airframe. Start by boarding a blue airframe and kill a blue ground unit. If you own the UH-1 module, this can be easily accomplished by using the gunner positions, else use the Frogger, or (if you own FC3) the Hog.

When you kill the first blue unit, a warning appears. This is regarded as an accident, and your initial kill is forgiven, but you are on notice:

New callsign has killed one of their own. YOU ARE ON NOTICE!

Kill a red unit. No warnings appear. This is a legal enemy kill.

Now kill another blue unit. This time, unGrief assumes that you are acting in bad faith, punishes you, and gives you a final chance:

New callsign is killing their own. 2 kills recorded so far. We disapprove

Have a nice day, New callsign

Your aircraft blows up and/or crashes.

Pick a new blue plane.

Kill another blue unit. No assumptions of accident. Your plane explodes.

But there's more: Your third friendly kill closes the deal for unGrief: you are a griefer. Since it's set to 'wrathful', it will not forgive you. From now on, you are dead, and unGrief will make sure you stay dead. You have overstayed your welcome:

Player <New callsign> is not welcome here. Shoo! Shoo!

Whenever you try to slot, it adds 100t to your plane's internal cargo, and ignites 1kg of explosives inside your plane. **Even if you try to change sides.** Try to enter the red Frogger to experience this. If you want to be able to fly this mission again, it must be restarted first.

7.39.2.2 ME

All of unGrief's features are controlled from within a single config zone.



Usually, all you need to do is add unGrief (and its dependencies) to your mission, and you are all set. With a config zone you can set details like grace kills and enable your wrath.

Name	Value	
verbose	no	
graceKills	1	
wrathful	yes	

7.39.3 Discussion

unGrief is near hassle-free and easy to set up, yet there are still some things to try out:

Zero graceKills

What will happen when you set graceKills to zero? Pretty much what you expect. From experience, setting graceKills is only a good choice for 'strict' servers. If your server gravitates to more relaxed, casual play-styles, you may want to allow at least one strike before retaliating.

The Grapes of Wrath

This demo has unGrief's "wrathful" enabled, in effect removing a repeat offender from this mission until it is restarted. Disabling is easy: simply set it to false, or remove the attribute entirely from the config zone. Be mindful using wrathful, as it may make a mission unplayable with casual players.

The Fluster Cluck

unGrief responds to 'killed' events. When a unit is killed, it inspects who is responsible for the kill, and when they are on the same side, investigates. This means that a cluster bomb dropped too close to your own units – especially infantry – can immediately send you over the grace and wrath limits, so be careful when unGrief is watching you!

Also, some crew AI (e.g. George and Petr) do not differentiate between friend or foe when offering up targets, so be very sure whom you engage, lest unGrief retaliates.

PVE rules (no player-player killing)

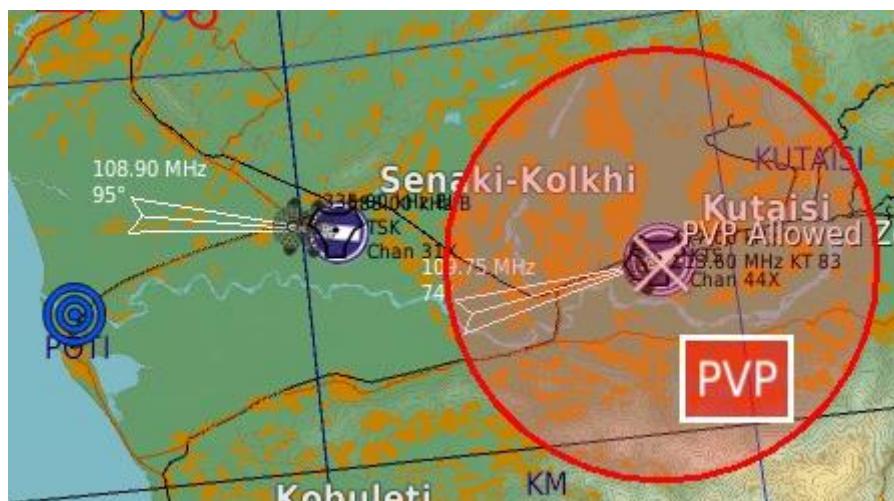
A common griefer tactic is player-killing. To combat that, you may simply want to set your server up to disallow player-player kill, but allow everything else. To do so, simply set the pve attribute to true, and add the ignoreAI attribute with a value of true.

Name	Value	
pve	yes	
ignoreAI	yes	

7.40 The Danger Zone (MP – PvP Zones in PvE)

7.40.1 Demonstration Goals

The unGrief module allows dedicated PvP zones in a PvE environment. This demo shows how easy it is to add PvP zones to a multi-player mission that is set up as PvE.



7.40.2 What To Explore

Note: This is a multiplayer mission, it's quite pointless to fly it solo as you can't kill anyone.

7.40.2.1 In Mission

One player should enter the red, the other the blue. Enter the blue PVE Frogfoot. Both continue straight on. Blue should shoot down the red Frogfoot. Blue receives a warning that the next instance of PvP kill will have consequences.

Now both players should change into the respective PvP planes. These planes are both inside the PvP zone, where PvP killing is allowed. As soon as you enter the cockpit, you are warned that you are inside a PvP area:

WARNING: you are entering a PvP zone!

Blue should now again kill the red PvP plane. This kill has no consequences. After that, leave the PvP area. Once you cross the threshold to PvE country, you'll get a message

NOTE: you are leaving a PvP area!

7.40.2.2 ME

First, we'll inspect unGrief's config zone. It uses the standard set-up for a PvE mission:

Name	Value	
pve	yes	
ignoreAI	yes	

- 'pve' = true makes all player-player kills illegal
- 'ignoreAI' = true allows players to kill AI units of their own side without consequences, just like any 'normal' mission without unGrief

- Since no ‘warnings’ attribute is present, warnings default to ‘true’, giving all players notice when they cross from PvE to PvP and vice versa.

If you look at the map, there’s a big zone that uses map objects to highlight it red and label it as ‘PvP’ so everyone can clearly see where the ‘PvP’ arena is located. These markings are created using standard map objects.

More importantly, though, there’s also a trigger zone with a lone ‘pvp’ attribute.

Name	Value	
pvp	allowed here	

The mere presence of this attribute

turns the zone into a PvP arena. The value ‘allowed here’ is ignored and can be anything. I chose that value to make it slightly clearer what this attribute is about

Since there is no ‘strict’ = true attribute present, for this zone, relaxed PvP rules are in effect: for a legal PvP kill only the player that is shot down must be inside the zone.

7.40.3 Discussion

Multiple PvP arenas

unGrief supports multiple PvP zones per map, and they can have different rules per zone. Be sure not to overlap PvP zones when they adhere to different rules, as in such cases, the particular rules chosen to judge a kill can be unpredictable. Try to add another PvP zone to the map

Not necessarily circular

PvP Zones don’t have to be circular; you can use Quad-based zones as well. This is especially useful if you want a PvP zone follow some terrain feature (e.g. coast)

Strict PVP Rules: an individual choice

Individual PvP zones can follow different rules with regards to kill strictness. This is set in the ‘strict’ attribute given per PvP zone. When the strict attribute is not given, or set to false, a PvP zone conforms to relaxed rules (only the killed plane must be inside the PvP zone at the point of kill).

7.41 Reinforcements a la Carte (Radio Menu, Cloner, Dynamic Reinforcements, Mission Restart)

7.41.1 Demonstration Goals

This mission primarily explores how to use radio menus to accomplish various goals:

- Calling in reinforcements / spawning on command
- Coalition-specific menus
- Group-Specific Menus
- Global (all coalition) menus
- Restarting the mission via menu
- Cooldown messages for



7.41.2 What To Explore

7.41.2.1 In Mission

Start the mission, choose the RED side, and enter RED Frog's cockpit. Take a look around at the beautiful rising sun, then choose Communication. Use 'Parent Menu' until you are in the 'Main' menu that offers 'F10 Other'. Choose it.

You are presented with two menu options: "RED Commands" and "MISSION Commands". Both are menus that are installed by DML based on Radio Menu zones. Note: the order in which those two commands appear may change (Mission commands comes before Red commands; this is how DCS menus work. The important thing is that the menus are present)

2. Main. Other

F1. RED Commands...
F2. MISSION Commands...

F11. Previous Menu
F12. Exit

3. Main. Other. RED Commands

F1. Start the show
F2. Helo Show

F11. Previous Menu
F12. Exit

Choose “RED Commands...”, A new menu appears. Choose ‘Start the show’, and marvel at the group of Su-27 that spawn in, and then perform a flyby.

Call up the same menu and spawn another flight, and then another. Each time that you choose the “Start the show” item, a new flight is created.

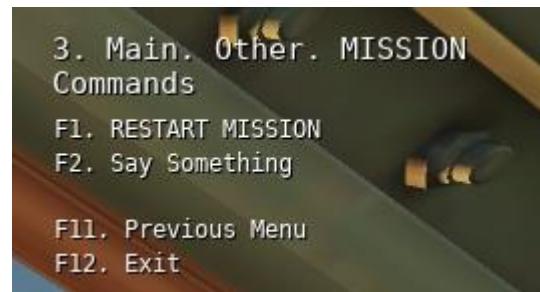
Now choose ‘Helo Show’, and look to the left. A Mil-8 Hip spawns and takes off close to you. As fast as you can, choose ‘Helo Show’ again. If you are quick enough, instead of another Hip, a message like the one to the right appears. This menu item is on cooldown and can only be used again after the cooldown times out. The remaining time is displayed with the message.

Readyng Helo 02:35 (155 seconds) left

Now enter the ‘MISSION Commands...’ menu and inspect the commands this menu allows.

Choose ‘Say Something’, and note that a message “I say SOMETHING” is output to the screen

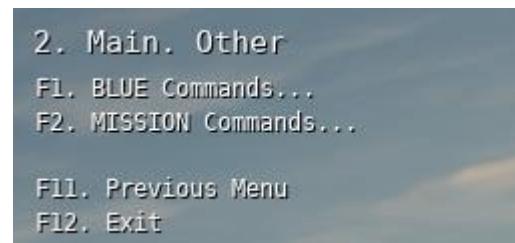
Then, choose “RESTART MISSION” and note that this (unsurprisingly) causes a re-load and restart of the mission.



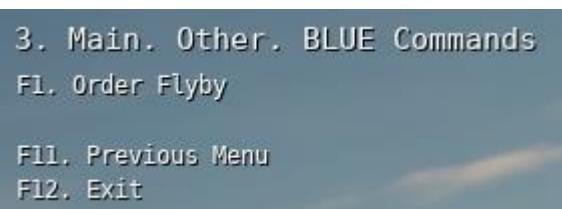
Now choose BLUE side and enter BLUE Frog’s cockpit. Again, navigate to the top menu, and choose “F10 Other”.

Note that the menus displayed this time are different: Now there’s a “BLUE Commands” menu where there previously was a “RED Commands” menu, while the MISSION Commands appears to be the same as what was offered to red.

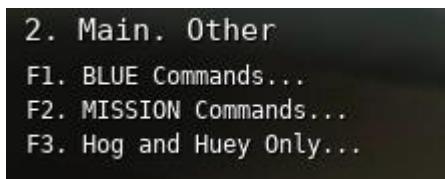
Choose the BLUE Commands menu and inspect the ensuing options. Instead of red’s multiple commands, you are now only given a single command, “Order Flyby”. Choose it, and marvel at the four Tomcats performing a low flyby. As before, you can “order” multiple flights of Tomcats, one each time that you choose ‘Order Flyby’ from the menu.



Change slots to the blue “Double Augh” group (when you run this on a server, you will need the password “1234” to select the slot) and enter the cockpit. Now navigate to the “Other..” menu and observe that there now is an additional meu available: “O Sole Mio”. Choose it to receive a secret message.



Now enter the ‘Hogger’ (note: requires the A-10A module) or “Huey Blue” (note: requires UH-1H module) and call up the “Other...” menu. You’ll see a new menu item “Hog and Huey only”, while the Huey also shows an additional “Heli Only” menu.



Switch slots again to the Ka-50 “Karmov Blue” (Note: requires Ka-50 module). Taking a jaunt to the Other... menu reveals that here, in addition to “Blue Commands” and “Mission

Command" we have a "Heli Only..." menu, but no access to the "Hog and Huey Only" menu that we saw in the Huey before..

Finally, purely for entertainment, after quickly ordering a couple of flights of blue Tomcats, change both slot and side to red, then enter the Red Frogfoot, then order some flights of red Su-27. Now lean back and enjoy some aerial ballet as the groups engage each other.

7.41.2.2 ME

This mission uses three zones for creating the various menus that you saw as player: one each for red and blue, and a common menu that is displayed to both.

The Red and Blue menus each have a 'coalition' attribute that controls their availability to players of each side, while the "All" menu omits a coalition attribute, and hence is available to all.



Similar to Mission Editor, DML's radio menus do little more than setting flags, with a few important differences:

- In ME you directly add a menu *item* to the F10 Other menu, not a menu with its own sub-items.
- In ME, you set flags to a specific value, which usually means that you can only use this radio menu item once, and then need to reset it before you can use it in a meaningful way again (perhaps by using a DML Radio Trigger module).

ACTION:	RADIO ITEM ADD
NAME:	ME Menu Item
FLAG:	1
VALUE:	< > 1

DML's radio menus work slightly different:

They install their own menu entry in the F10-Other menu, which then can contain up to four separate items (with the attributes itemA, itemB, itemC, itemD).

Name	Value
radioMenu	BLUE Commands
coalition	blue
itemA	Order Flyby
A!	flyby

2. Main. Other

F1. BLUE Commands...
F2. MISSION Commands...

F11. Previous Menu
F12. Exit

3. Main. Other. BLUE Commands

F1. Order Flyby

F11. Previous Menu
F12. Exit

Additionally, when a player chooses one of the items, they use DML's flag methods to change the indicated flag(s), meaning that they can do more than simply set a flag to a specific value, and in DML terms can be readily used to issue multiple commands. Since it's so easy to re-issue the same command again with DML Radio Menus, it comes pre-installed with a cooldown option which we are going to explore soon.

7.41.3 Discussion

After gaining access to flags that we can control with menu items, the rest becomes. Simple:

SPAWNING ON-DEMAND

Actually, spawning (reinforcements) on-demand becomes trivial when combining a cloner with a radio menu: simply wire the menu items flag (e.g., A! for itemA) into the cloner's clone? input, and you are done. This is done for the Tomcats, Hip, and Flanker cloners.

Name	Value	
cloner		
clone?	flyby	

COOLDOWN WITH COOL REMAINING TIME

Since Radio Menus makes menu items so convenient and quick to use repeatedly, they will often require a method to ensure that they are not used too quickly in succession. RadioMenu provides built-in cool-downs for each item. Even more conveniently, when on cooldown, such a menu item provides configurable feedback that the item is currently under cooldown.

In this demo, the Red Side's 'Helo Show' menu item uses a 164 seconds cooldown before it can be used again.

itemB	Helo Show	
B!	crimson dynamo	
cooldownB	164	
busyB	Readyng Helo <:m>:<:s> (

If a player on the same side tries to re-issue that command before the cooldown times out, the 'busy' message is displayed.

Now, that 'busy' message has a very interesting built-in property: it can access and display the currently remaining cooldown time much like a messenger can interpret the value of a flag as a time value. Using wildcards such as <:s> and others, we can format the busy message to display the cooldown in a friendly, human-readable form.

Readyng Helo 02:35 (155 seconds) left

In the demo, the full busy string reads:

Readyng Helo <:m>:<:s> (<s> seconds) left

The various <x> wildcards are replaced by their corresponding values.

RESTARTING A MISSION

Again, since we can selectively set a flag with radio menus, it is very easy to restart a mission by wiring it into a ME trigger that has a LOAD MISSION action that points to itself, which will prompt a re-load and re-launch, even on most multiplayer servers.



Note that normally you want to guard against accidentally choosing this item, so put it in its own menu with only a single 'restart' item. That way, people who accidentally went into this menu can back out without aborting the current mission

Note also that restarting a mission is a dangerous, potentially grievous item to offer to random people on a public server, so be careful, and perhaps restrict access to menus (see below) to a few select players.

GROUP-ONLY MENUS – SECRETS “R” US

The group “Double Augh” has their own menu that is only visible to members of that group. For obvious reasons, you can only specify groups that contain player aircraft.

Name	Value	
radioMenu	O Sole Mio	
group	Double Augh	
itemA	For your Eyes Only	
A!	Secret	

While this ability has many applications in normal missions, you can also use it to “protect” sensitive commands like restarting a server or saving a mission on multiplayer servers.

How so? DCS provides password-protect player slots (note: works only in multi-player). If you want to protect menus from being accessible only to some people, use that password feature to protect a slot, and assign the sensitive menus only to members of that group.



Be advised that this is merely a superficial deterrent for casual would-be griefers. The security provided by this mechanism will not deter a determined attacker.

TYPE-ONLY MENUS

Similar to missions that are only available to specific groups, you can make menus available to specific unit types, e.g. “UH-1H” or “A-10A”. Here we see two types listed: A-10A and UH-1H. We also see that coalition is set to blue, so all Hueys and A-10A Hogs (but not A-10C nor A-10C II) in the blue coalition will have access to this menu. That is why you saw this menu in the Huey and Hog, but not the Frogfoot on the blue side.

Name	Value	
radioMenu	Hog and Huey Only	
types	A-10A, UH-1H	
coalition	blue	
itemA	Hog and huey, sitting in a tree	
A!	huig	

When you jump into the RED Hog (A-10A), you see that there is no “Hog and Huey Only” menu – because although the Type matches (A-10A), the coalition for this unit does not.

Also, we have a menu that is available in all helicopters (you can jump into the Karmov RED and verify that you also have access to this menu).

This is done with a “Helos” wildcard types attribute that automatically includes all helicopter types. Since there is no ‘coalition’ attribute for this menu, it is available to all sides (which is why the blue Huey, blue Karmov and red Karmov have access to this menu).

Name	Value	
radioMenu	Heli Only	
types	Helos	
itemA	Helicoper menu is here	
A!	helos	

7.42 Delicate Subjects ('brittle' exploding units) tbc

7.42.1 Demonstration Goals

From time to time, you may want to use objects or units that simulate dangerous cargo, or must be protected at all cost. Delicates is a way to do just that – a unit or object designated as ‘delicate’ explodes after receiving even the slightest amount of damage. Placing multiple delicate objects / units close together can result in a chain reaction, so be mindful when placing them.



Note that due to its convenient side-mounted guns that work on the ground, this mission requires access to the UH-1 Huey module.

7.42.2 What To Explore

7.42.2.1 In Mission

Enter the Huey, and switch to the *right* gunner’s seat. Aim at the white civilian car, and quickly squeeze the trigger to shoot as few bullets as possible so that you merely graze the car.

If you do it right, the car will explode, slightly injuring the infantry next to it, causing a secondary explosion (that infantry is also ‘delicate’)

The infantry on the far left should not be affected.

Switch to the *left* gunner’s seat and take control of the minigun. Take aim at the various objects, and note that all of them, with one notable exception, blow up as soon as you hit them with minigun fire.

The APC, on the other hand, remains impervious to all minigun fire, and even the explosions caused by the Hummer and other objects. Even though the APC is designated a ‘delicate’, it can’t be made to explode by hitting it with a minigun: the minigun does not penetrate its armor.

7.42.2.2 ME

There is very little surprise here. The most important take-away are

- as demonstrated by the two infantry, ‘delicate’ status can be assigned to individual units. Even though the group “Blown Away” consists of two infantry units, only the one inside the ‘delicate inf’ zone is ‘delicate’ and explodes when only slightly injured. The second unit which is outside the ‘delictae inf’ zone does not.
- You can assign delicate status to units, static objects and static objects that are cargo, but not scenery objects. Be advised that static objects may possess some unexpected properties, such as being impervious to small-arms fire.



Name	Value	
delicates		
power	1	

7.42.3 Discussion

Be careful when placing multiple delicate objects in close proximity, as they can easily cause a chain reaction.

Challenge:

Arrange objects in such a fashion that they create a chain reaction that lasts for at least 5 seconds.

7.43 Forever-looping Spawns (Server-friendly endless respawns)

7.43.1 Demonstration Goals

One of the many challenges for multiplayer-servers is providing a mission that can run 24/7 without the ‘background’ units running out of things to do. All units in a mission eventually run out of things to do: no more enemies to engage, no more routes to follow.



So how can you run a 24/7 server that is always fresh with units? One common practice is restarting your mission every few hours (this also keeps the impact of memory leaks at bay). But even with restarts every few hours, there often comes a point after a couple of hours where your main points of interest become points of boredom, nothing happens there anymore.

In this demo we explore a few simple design patterns that allow ‘always-fresh’ content.

7.43.2 What To Explore

7.43.2.1 In Mission

Enter the blue Frogfoot’s cockpit, and change to F10 Map view.

In front of you, an AH-1 is taking flight. A few seconds later, it disappears, only to re-appear on the ground, and take off again. This repeats over and over.

On your left, there is a lone redforce infantry. Should it be killed, it respawns immediately, as often as it is killed.

Then there are two ATGM Strykers. Observe as they trundle along their routes. One is driving down Senaki-Kolkhi’s 09 runway, the other one is cruising up Senaki’s tarmac in a NE heading.

Increase time scale to accelerate the action. After a while, the Stryker cruising up the tarmac suddenly disappears, and is replaced by a new Stryker driving back the opposite way. Once it reaches the end of the tarmac, closing the loop.

Once the Stryker driving down Kolkhi’s 09 reaches the end of the runway, it disappears and a new one appears at the beginning of the runway, starting anew.

7.43.2.2 ME

So, let's look at the most useful 'endless' design patterns:

RESPAWN ON DEATH

This is perhaps the simplest of all, and can be accomplished easily with nothing more than a single cloner, as shown with the perpetually resurrected infantry:

Name	Value	
cloner		
clone?	*dead	
empty!	*dead	
onStart	yes	

- Set onStart to true to have the group spawn when the mission begins
- When the group is destroyed, the cloner sends a local signal on empty!
- This is fed back into the clone? input, creating a feedback loop.

A big advantage of this design is that since all flags are local (start with an asterisk '*'), we can rapidly copy/paste this zone onto as many groups as we like.

TIMED REGULAR RESPAWNS

Another method to keep a mission fresh is to respawn the group regularly after a timer runs down. In DML this can be easily accomplished by stacking a pulser onto a cloner.

Name	Value	
cloner		
clone?	*restartHeli	
empty!	*restartHeli	
preWipe	yes	
pulse!	*restartHeli	
time	10-20	

- The pulser provides a signal every n seconds (here randomized between 10 and 20 seconds; in a real mission this would usually be a much higher value, say every hour = 3600 seconds)
- The signal (pulse!) is fed into the cloner's input to trigger the spawn. Since the pulser by default sends an initial pulse, the cloner does not require an onStart = true to clone the group at mission start.
- Every time the pulse's timer runs down, the previous clone is de-spawned and a new one is spawned.
- Note that if the group is destroyed, a new spawn is also immediately created (empty! also bangs the local restartHeli flag. Omit the empty! bang to have the group appear regularly, but keep it destroyed for a time (until the pulse timer runs out)

RESPAWN ON REACHING GOAL

A very good, albeit slightly more involved method to keep a mission in motion involves two trigger zones: a spawn point, and an end point. The idea is that when the spawned group reaches the end point, it de-spawns, and re-spawns at the starting point. Like the previous cases, we accomplish spawning with a cloner.

We detect that the group has reached the end point with a unit zone that creates the respawn signal for the cloner. There are a couple of noteworthy items here:

Name	Value	
cloner		✖
clone?	restartLoop	✖
empty!	restartLoop	✖
preWipe	yes	✖
onStart	yes	✖

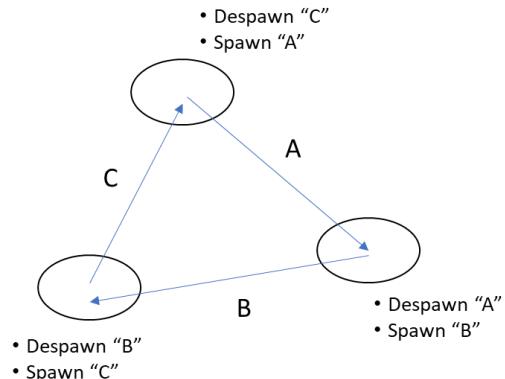
Name	Value	
unitZone		✖
lookFor	Loop*	✖
enterZone!	restartLoop	✖

- unitZone uses a wildcard “Loop*” for its lookFor attribute because a cloner generates groups with unique names based on the original (template) group’s name, and we want to detect all groups that are created by the cloner.
- This time we can’t use a local flag, because we need to communicate signals between trigger zones (the end point). This makes this kind of endless respawn less simple to copy and maintain.

CASCADED LOOP

A variant of the “Respawn On Reaching Goal” method is a cascade of spawns that ultimately form a loop:

- When a group reaches their end point, instead of re-spawning at the start (like in the example before), it despawns and a new group starts at that point
- The new group goes along its route until it reaches its own endpoint where it despawns and a new group is created in its place.
- This continues until finally, the last end point is reached which triggers spawning of the first group, closing the loop.
- Like the previous pattern, this one is not as easy to copy/paste because it requires zones that communicate with each other, and cannot solely rely on local flag.



Although cascaded loops require more effort to set up and are notoriously difficult to debug, they have some big advantages:

- You can break that part of the mission into smaller, more manageable tasks
- It’s more flexible: you can have destroyed groups revert back to the last point they reached or any other point in the cascade

- Gaming-wise, a cascaded loop is much more interesting: it mimics a group that heals/repairs and reloads over time: every time a group reaches the end of its particular leg, it is repaired, restocked and reinforced.

7.43.3 Discussion

Of course, you should experiment with above patterns, and fit them to your requirements. A couple of ideas that you should try to implement right now:

- *Combined Respawn Patterns*
We already do that in the demo: when the group in the timed respawn is destroyed, it generates an immediate respawn. Similarly, the other patterns respawn on destructions to ensure that there are always living groups in the mission (the goal is to keep a mission entertaining 24/7 – on a server)
- *Delayed respawn*
Currently, all spawners re-spawn immediately. A better version is stacking a delay flag module with the cloner, and run the respawn signal through a delay. Use local flags for the delay to increase portability
- *Message on respawn*
Even better, also stack a messenger on the cloner to alert players that a group is about to respawn (and/or that a group was destroyed)
- *Count kills and trigger events*
Since each respawn signal has to be changed in a flag (in DML at least), you can count the respawns, and do lots of interesting things with it (for example additionally spawning a boss group every Nth time)
- *Block respawns with a gated switch*
Use gated switches to break a loop and prevent respawns for some time. Make sure to also have a global timer running in that case so that even after a loop was broken, eventually it is restarted.
- *Menu driven (re-) spawns*
Of course, you can always offer spawners that are triggered by radioMenu modules. We've dedicated a whole demo ("Reinforcements à la carte") for that, so this is just a reminder to allow people in your mission that option.

7.44 Impossible Impostors – Using Impostors

7.44.1 Demonstration Goals

This mission shows how to use impostors, and highlights their various options and when to use them. Impostors are incredibly useful, simple to use, and allow you a number of sneaky tricks in your missions.



So why are impostors so useful? A couple of reasons

- In impostor form, they use less CPU because no AI controls them
- You can ‘freeze’ groups until they are needed
- You can switch back and forth between impostor and AI controlled (with some restrictions), making them ‘animated on-demand’

So strap in, there’s a lot to explore in this mission.

7.44.2 What To Explore

7.44.2.1 In Mission

Jump into the Frog One Su-25T, hit F2 and take a look around. Take note of the following:

- The silver A-10 in front of you
- The green A-10 in front of you
- The AH-1 Cobra on your left
- The two mixed groups of vehicles and infantry slightly to the right of your aircraft
- The group of three Infantry on your four o’clock position

Now press F2 (aircraft view). Notice that currently, yours is the only AI-controlled aircraft in the arena: the F2 view does not jump to other aircraft. The two Hogs in front of you are static objects.

Now press F7 (Ground Unit View). You'll be able to switch between two ground units: A red one that is busy attacking a blue unit that does not fight back (or is already dead), and a blue unit that stands close to its twin. Note that you can only switch the view between these two ground units – all other ground units are static objects. Switch to the red Infantry. Note that

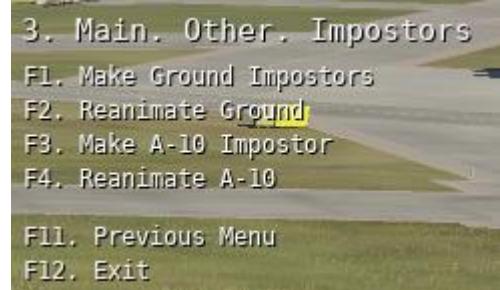
- It attacks, and kills the blue infantry static object
- A message appears:
+++ipst: Zone <Impostor Blue> - all impostors destroyed. Removing.
- This proves that Ai attacks static objects
- Static objects can be easily killed and don't shoot back

Press F2 again to return to the outside view of your Frogfoot.

Now choose Communication→ Other→ Impostors→ Reanimate Ground.

Look around. Note that

- A lot of labels have appeared on a multitude of ground vehicles and infantry. Press F7 to step through them. You now have many units to step through
- The units look exactly like the static objects that occupied their positions just a few moments before.
- Note that some units have winter, while others have desert, and most use default liveries. Yes, Impostors has full livery support.
- Your RWR tone activates because the patriot site behind you has come on-line
- There was no 'blinking' visual artifact (you'll see the difference when we reanimate the Hogs).
- The two groups in front and to the right of your aircraft start moving, marshalling on their way to their first waypoint
- A message from a tracker module has appeared:
+++gTrk: adding group <Three Amigos> to tracker The Tracker
- When some of the units in front of you have moved a couple of yards, choose Communication→ Other→ Impostors→ Make Ground Impostors. Note that all units suddenly freeze in place, and the RWR tone stops. All units have turned into Impostors (static objects) again. Choose Communication→ Other→ Impostors→ Reanimate Ground to again turn them into AI-controlled units and continue on their way.



Wait until the two groups of infantry have cleared the immediate area in front of you (might take a minute). Look at the two static A.10 in front of you: the silver and green one. Now choose Communication→ Other→ Impostors→ Reanimate A-10. Note that

- The silver Hog seemingly vanishes
- The green hog "blinks" (briefly vanishes and reappears) and starts to move a few seconds later (when no vehicles obstruct the path)

- The Cobra helicopter blinks, then takes off and starts flying to the east
- Use F7 to step through all controlled planes. Rediscover the silver A10 in flight above the airfield. It's alive and well, in the air.

Step until you again see the green A-10, and wait until it has taxied a few seconds and turned some 180° to head for the runway. Choose Communication→ Other→ Impostors→ Make A-10 Impostor

Note that

- the A-10 on the ground stops in its tracks and has turned into a static object.
- The Cobra helicopter also drops to the ground and rests there completely undamaged
- The A-10 that was airborne now sits somewhere on the ground to the northwest (where it was flying just before), completely unharmed

Now choose Communication→ Other→ Impostors→ Reanimate A-10 and note that

- The airborne A-10 is back in the air and is heading for waypoint 1
- The Cobra takes off where it dropped and flies towards waypoint 1
- the ground A-10 teleports back to the slot in front of the Frogfoot. Why? Because DCS is mysterious.

For the remainder of this demo you need access to a UH-1 module. This is merely because it has very convenient side-mounted miniguns that we can use to manually kill some units/objects. Replace the Huey with your favorite method to selectively destroy units.

Restart the mission, enter the Huey, and switch to the left side gunner (press '3'). Use the minigun to destroy one of the three static infantry. Now choose Communication→ Other→ Impostors→ Reanimate Ground. Note that the group now only consists of the two surviving soldiers. Destroy one of the two remaining soldiers, and then choose Communication→ Other→ Impostors→ Make Ground Impostors. This only turns the lone surviving soldier into a static object

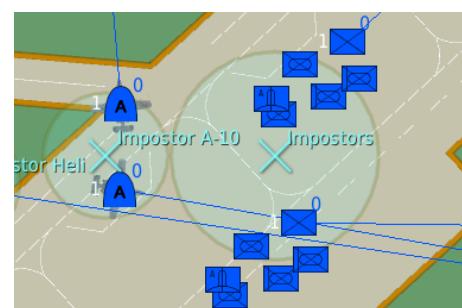
7.44.2.2 ME

So let's look at the various use cases one by one.

MULTIPLE GROUPS PER ZONE

Just like many other modules, any group that has at least one unit inside the Impostor Zone will gain the impostor ability. In the example to the right, each zone manages two groups, even though not all units reside inside the zone.

Remember that Impostors always works on entire groups, never individual units.



THE BASIC IMPOSTOR

The simplest fully controlled Impostor (and that is used extensively in the mission) is one with watchflags for switching between the two states, and optionally the onStart attribute. You'll find

Name	Value	
impostor?	ggoImp	
reanimate?	goGroup	
onStart	yes	

yourself using onStart for many groups that simply await activation when something relevant happens as decided by your mission.

IMPOSTOR FOR AIRCRAFT ON THE GROUND

Since AI aircraft on the ground spawn with some DCS-imposed, mandatory sanity checks, they always spawn on un-occupied slots. This means that there must be a short interval between removing the static object that occupies the slot (and conveniently prevents other aircraft from spawning there).

Name	Value	
impostor?	hgolmp	
reanimate?	goHawg	
onStart	yes	
blink	0.1	

Blink values from 0.1 to 0.2 are usually sufficient.

USING IMPOSTORS WITH A GROUP TRACKER

Impostor zones have built-in support for DML group trackers. Integration works by invoking addGroup() at the tracker when the Impostors are turned into AI-controlled units and removeGroup() when they are turned into impostors.

You can see this in action when the mission starts, as the tracker is using zone-local verbosity. When the mission starts up, it shows the warning that

+++gTrk: Note - group <Three Amigos> wasn't tracked by <The Tracker>

This warning comes up because the Impostor Zone turns the tracked group “Three Amigos” into impostors (due to the onStart flag), notices that they are tracked by a tracker, and accordingly tells the tracker to remove this group. Since it wasn’t yet registered with the tracker, and verbosity is active for that zone, it shows the warning.

To use a group tracker, simply list its zone name in the “trackWith:” attribute

Name	Value	
impostor?	ggolmp	
reanimate?	goGroup	
trackWith:	The Tracker	

LINKING ZONES TO UNITS WITH IMPOSTERS

DML supports linking a zone’s position to a unit with the “linkedUnit” attribute. Impostors respect this link and preserve it when a unit is turned into an Impostor, and return it to the unit when it is turned back into an AI-controlled unit.

Name	Value	
linkedUnit	Amigo One	
verbose	yes	

If you add the ‘verbose’ flag to the zone that is linked to an impostor, you will get a message each time a zone is linked to, and unlinked from an impostor like the following:

+++ipst: imp-linked zone <Linked to amigo one> to imp <Three Amigos-8200105>

7.44.3 Discussion

Here are some more subtle points that you may find interesting

- The two A-10 and a number of the vehicles use different liveries that carry over to their impostor version
- When units are turned back to their AI-controlled version, they usually start heading towards their first (not initial) waypoint from wherever they left off – unless they are aircraft that start from slots and use a different placement logic.
- You can use hot start for aircraft to ‘scramble’ jets seconds after reanimating them
- If you intend to repeatedly stop ground units by turning them into impostors and later continue on their way, make sure that they only have two waypoints: the initial point where they spawn, and waypoint one

Challenges:

Here are some fun things to try with impostors:

- Make the A-10s (and helicopter) activate when the red infantry kills the blue impostor
- Add an impostor SAM that reanimates when the airborne (silver) A-10 gets close
- Make all ground units become impostors when your Frogfoot is more than 2 miles away from Senaki-Kolkhi
- Make a group of vehicles turn into impostors when they arrive at their destination.
- Do the same with a group of aircraft
- Create an escort mission where whenever the player is too far away from the vehicle they escort, the vehicles stop (turn into impostors), and continue when they are close enough. Hint: use a zone that is linked to an impostor.

7.45 Being Persistent (load and save a mission)

7.45.1 Demonstration Goals

This mission demonstrates basic mission persistence: loading and saving ME-placed ground units and static objects, as well as saving and loading flags (or rather, their values)

This mission also demonstrates “manual” saving and how to force a ‘fresh start’

In order to be able to run this mission, your DCS installation must have performed the required steps to un-sanitize “io” and “lfs”. Please refer to the “Persistence” section on how to do that.

NOTE:

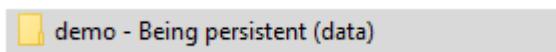
This mission will create a folder called “demo – Being persistent (demo)” in your Missions directory, and save all mission data into that folder

7.45.2 What To Explore

7.45.2.1 Before Starting the mission

Open your missions folder in Explorer and keep it open. When the mission begins, you will see a folder “demo – Being persistent (demo)” appear when the mission starts up for the first time and has read/write access. If you already have such a folder in your Missions directory, please delete it.

Start the mission and keep an eye on the Missions folder. You should see a new folder appear:



Open the folder, it should be empty.

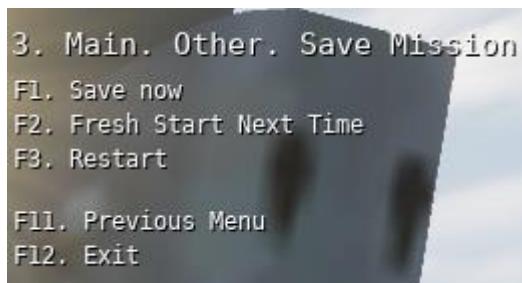
Now switch to DCS, in-mission

7.45.2.2 In Mission

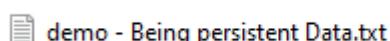
Choose the Frogfoot, and enter the cockpit.

Observe the various units moving about. Wait a few seconds until at least some of the infantry or vehicle has passed your plane (so you can tell for sure that when you load the mission again, the units are restored to other positions than their start position).

Choose Communications→Other→Save Mission→Save Now



A new file appears inside the newly created folder:



Note: you can open this file with any text editor. If you change data inside (it's JSON format), be sure that you know what you are doing.

Choose Communications→Other→Save Mission→Restart

A second or so later, the mission will restart. Choose the Frogfoot again, and once you are inside the cockpit, look outside. The mission should have loaded, and the infantry that last time started to the right of you should now start at the point they were when you made your save.



For the next test, change into the UH-1, and switch to the right-side gunner (4). There are four infantry standing next to your helicopter. Destroy the closest one, and then one of the three remaining. The other two will start running for cover. Save the mission and restart.

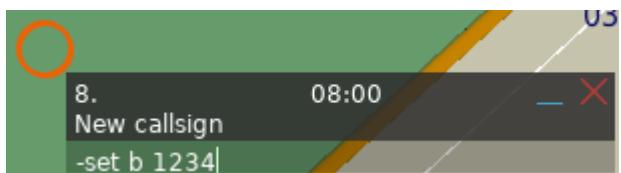
Jump back into the Huey and take the right-side's gunner position. Note that the two dead units are now removed, and the remaining two are no longer running for cover, but are standing at the location they were at when you saved the mission. You may have to inspect the F10 map if they got too far.

Now switch to the left side gunner (3). Take the minigun and destroy the Hummer and oil tanks (they are static objects). Save the mission, restart, and return to the left side gunner.



Note that now, the hummer shows up as destroyed, but the oil tanks, although they were clearly dead, look unblemished. This is a peculiarity in DCS: some static objects look OK even though they spawn as dead (oil tanks), while others correctly spawn dead.

Now change to F10 map view, and use the debugger's interface to change flag b to 1234 (place a map mark, and enter “-set b 1234”, then click outside the mark's text field).



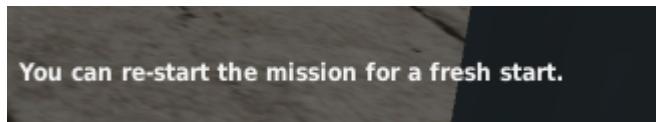
The debugger responds with

```
*** [08:02:08] debug: set flag <b> to <1234>
```

Save and then restart the mission. Use the debugger to recall the value of flag b (with ‘-show b’)

```
[08:02:24] flag <b> : value <1234>
```

And finally, choose Communications→Other→Save Mission→Fresh Start Next Time. You'll see the following message:



Re-start the mission. This time, it starts fresh, with all units and static objects restored to original starting positions and alive.

7.45.2.3 ME

There's very little to see here, most of the ability is provided by the persistence and unitPersistence modules transparently.

The most interesting part here is persistence's config zone. We see that persistence should save the mission (saveMission?) whenever a change is detected on the 'save' flag and restart fresh next (cleanRestart?) time it observes a change on the 'clean' flag. Obviously, these are fed directly from the RadioMenu zone.

Also note the 'saveFlags' line that we stacked into this zone that marks the flags 'a', 'b' and 'c' as flags whose values it should save and load with the mission.

Name	Value	
saveMission?	save	
cleanRestart?	clean	
saveFlags	a, b, c	

Name	Value	
radioMenu	Save Mission	
itemA	Save now	
A!	save	
itemB	Fresh Start Next Time	
B!	clean	

7.45.3 Discussion

Remaining Fresh

Once you tell a mission to take a fresh start, it will do so. You may have noticed that there still is a mission data file. Don't worry, that data remains ignored every restart until you overwrite that old file with a new save. This is because missions cannot remove files from a directory unless they also have 'os' un-sanitized, something you should not do, nor request from those who run your missions.

Deleting the data file or mission data directory

You are free to delete the data file out of the data directory or data directory altogether any time you are not flying the mission. This will also cause a fresh start next time you run the mission. The 'cleanRestart?' flag is for convenience especially for dedicated server owners, who may not be able to easily access their server's missions directory.

Restricting access to saveMenu? and cleanRestart?

When you add a radio menu to give access to commands like save and clean, every player can access them. Are there ways to give access to these commands only to select people?

Yes – there are multiple ways to do so:

- Via one-sided menus. This only works if players can fly only planes from one side. You can then set up a password-protected aircraft on the other side, and set a RadioMenu with access to “saveMission?” and “cleanRestart?” that is restricted only to that side
- Or you can leave the debugger in the game (it consumes next to no resources), and use it to “-set” the flags that trigger “saveMission?” or “cleanRestart?” directly. Only those people who know which flags to set can then trigger a save or clean.

7.46 Sequencing Fun (Sequencers)

7.46.1 Demonstration Goals

Everything is a sequence. Sometimes, though, we must exert some control that what happens in our mission happens in the correct sequence. The sequencer module helps you keep the order of events in order, and this demo shows just a glimpse of what a sequencer can do for you.

Note:

To better appreciate how this demo accomplishes its feats, it helps if you are also familiar with the 'Impostor' module



7.46.2 What To Explore

7.46.2.1 In Mission

Enter the mission in the Frogfoot, and simply wait. You'll see three warning messages appear one after the other:

Server Restart in 5 Minutes

Server Restart in 1 Minutes

Server restarting now

Don't worry, there will be no restart- This is merely a demo of how you can sequence a number of messages, with an arbitrary time interval, and at the end trigger some action.

Now go to Communications, and choose Other→Start the Show. You have three options:

F1. Go! for the Show!

F2. Stop the Show

F3. Hurry Up!

Let's briefly discuss what these menu items do:

- “Go! for the show” starts and un-pauses the sequencer
- “Stop the Show” pauses the sequencer
- “Hurry Up!” advances the sequencer

Now start the show. One after the other, the following happens:

- The infantry soldier starts walking
- The AH-1 Cobra wakes up and takes off immediately
- The refueller pulls away from the Hog
- The Hummer pulls away from the Hog
- The Firetruck pulls away from the Hog
- The Hog wakes up and starts taxiing
- A message displays that concludes the ‘show’

That's all, folks! Thank you, thank you very much.

While all this happens you can use ‘Stop the Show’ to prevent the next stage from happening, and then use ‘Start the Show’ to continue.

While the show is running (but not when it is paused), you can force the next stage to happen immediately by using “Hurry Up”

7.46.2.2 ME

So let's start with the messages that simulate a server's shutdown warnings: In a real mission, your setup is likely slightly different: you'd space the stages by more time than we do here, and the final message would obviously also restart the server (which we are not doing here)

The sequence of flags that should be sent a signal are t5, t1, and r (as defined by the ‘sequence!’ attribute), with a wait period of 10 seconds before t5, 10 seconds before t1, and 10 seconds before the final flag signal (intervals).

Name	Value	Remove
sequence!	t5, t1, r	
intervals	10, 10, 10	
zeroSequence	no	
onStart	yes	

Since we want the sequence to operate in a Wait-Signal fashion (first wait, then send the signal), the ‘zeroSequence’ attribute is false, which causes the sequencer to wait before it signals the first flag t5, and we start the sequencer when the mission starts up (onStart is true)

The flags t5, t1 and r are all connected to the inputs of their respective messenger modules, that are all set up similarly: they wait for a change on their input messenger? and, once received, proceed to output their message.

Name	Value	Remove
messenger?	t5	
message	Server Restart in 5 Minutes	

Above outlines the basic flow for sequencers: a central sequencer connects to various modules via flags, and the ‘sequence!’ attribute determines the order in which flags are

signaled. The ‘intervals’ values determine how long the sequencer should wait between sending signals.

Name	Value
sequence!	t5, t1, r
intervals	10, 10 10
zeroSequence	no
onStart	yes

Name	Value
messenger?	t5
message	Server Restart in 5 Minutes

Name	Value
messenger?	t1
message	Server Restart in 1 Minutes

Name	Value
messenger?	r
message	server restarting now

That schema should cover more than half of your sequencing needs: simulated dialogues, staged sequences for better immersion, regular events, or fixed-timed events in your mission are all covered.

But a sequencer can do far more:

- It can randomize the interval in a tightly controlled fashion
- It can immediately end the current waiting period and proceed to the next stage through an input signal, which is very helpful for building a common mission pattern: “A happens when the player does this OR the time runs out, whichever comes first”

The staged sequence of various vehicles pulling away from the hog demonstrates both:

Here, the sequencer is set up like before, and it simply uses a few more inputs to better control the sequencer:

- startSeq? looks for a signal on the flag “goShow” to start or unpause (continue) the sequencer
- stopSeq? looks for a signal on the flag “stopShow” to pause the sequencer if it’s running
- next? looks for a signal on flag “hurry” to skip the wait and immediately go to the next stage in the sequencer

Name	Value
sequence!	i1, c1, g2, g1, g3, hog, over
intervals	10, 5, 10-15, 10, 5
startSeq?	goShow
stopSeq?	stopShow
next?	hurry

There are two interesting points here:

- “intervals” third interval reads “10-15”. This is a range, and when the sequencer encounters it, picks a random value in this range. That way you can introduce an element of random into the timing of the stages, without upsetting the order.
- A signal on “next?” causes the sequencer to advance to the next stage, overriding the timer. This means that there are always two things that can cause a sequencer to advance to the next stage: a signal, and a time-out, and it always uses whatever comes first

7.46.3 Discussion

Pausing a Sequence does not pause the game

Keep in mind that a sequencer merely orders the sequence in which it sends signals on flags. This means that if you pause a sequencer, that will not pause the actions it may have already triggered. When you pause the Show after the infantry soldier has started moving, that soldier itself does not start moving.

About that default 24 hour interval

You may have stumbled on a peculiar default for the ‘interval’ attribute: it defaults to 86’400 seconds, which is 24 hours. Why is that?

Before I answer let’s briefly come back to the way how sequencers work: it advances to the next stage whenever the interval timer runs out, or a signal is received on the next? input, whichever comes first.

Now imagine you want a sequence that is entirely triggered by signals on next? – how would you do that? Simple, you may think, simply omit the ‘interval’ attribute. That would be correct, but since a sequencer always looks for an interval time, it uses a default. If we use a 1 second default, the sequencer runs through all stages in that many seconds. The solution is to default the interval to an arbitrarily large amount, and 24 hours is a nice compromise, as that is also the average amount of time most server run missions before they re-start them for better performance. If you need longer intervals, you must set the interval attribute accordingly.

7.47 Departures and Landings.miz (LZ)



7.47.1 Demonstration Goals

LZ is quite flexible when it comes to choosing which aircraft landing in or departing from the zone it is attached to, and with LZ it is very easy to trigger other modules or scripts when this happens. This demo shows how to create flag events when

- any aircraft takes off
- a player aircraft takes off or lands
- a unit with a specific name lands
- a group with a specific name lands
- an aircraft of a specific type lands

inside a zone, and we'll also demonstrate how this can be easily achieved with moving platforms like ships.

7.47.2 What To Explore

Note I:

There are some aspects of the mission that you can try interactively yourself, but this requires that you have access to a helicopter mod, and know how to fly it well enough to

land on small platforms. It's not required though, because AI will eventually do all that for you as well

Note II:

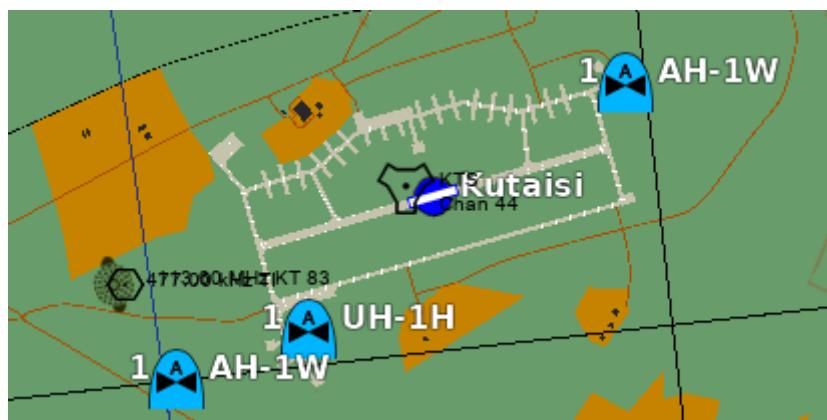
You may find it helpful to use some time compression (CTRL-Y) if you are easily bored.

7.47.2.1 In Mission

Start the mission, and enter the “Frogger” Frogfoot. Press F2 twice to watch an A-10 starting its run down Kolkhi’s 09 and eventually taking off. A short while after becoming airborne, a message appears:

Aircraft departed from Kolkhi!

Switch to F10 Map view and pan over to the east until you are looking at Kutaisi. Note the three helicopters



Two of them will soon land, while the one in the upper right corner is gearing up for departure (a cold start, takes a couple of minutes). Each time a helicopter lands, you'll see one or more messages appear:

Helo Arrived Kutaisi South

Helo Arrived Kutaisi North

Huey Arrived Kutaisi North

Then you'll see an A-10 arrive at Kutaisi, followed by

Aircraft arrival Kutaisi Runway

And the AH-1W departing from Kutaisi north-East:

A helicopter named "Co*" departed Kutaisi N Bays

If you don't have a Hip or Huey module, or don't want to fly a gas platform approach:

Press F2 until you can observe the Mi-8 “Hip” getting ready to depart the Tarawa.

Aircraft took off from Tarawa

Watch it fly across to the gas platform and land on it

Aircraft landed on Gas Platform

If you have a Huey or Hip module

you can fly the Hip from the Tarawa to the gas platform and back - and trigger the messages yourself. You can do the same with the Huey, and additionally, you can take off from and land on the small platform in the grass in Senaki-Kolkhi

7.47.2.2 ME

From a mission design perspective, this one is a cakewalk: the LZ generate one or two flag events that are wired into messengers. The only interesting thing here are the different set-ups for the LZ, and how they filter for aircraft that trigger.

The basic setup of an LZ that detects every landing and take-off inside its zone is depicted on the right: the events are triggered for any aircraft that lands or starts in the zone. There is no filtering for types, units, groups, players nor coalition, so any plane taking off or landing in this zone will create flag events.

Name	Value	
LZ		
landed!	IK	
departed!	dK	

If you want to filter out a class of aircraft (e.g. only want to detect landings or take-offs from Helicopters), you can use the types attribute with the special 'Helo' type. This will ignore all fixed-wing landings.

Name	Value	
LZ		
landed!	IKuHeloS	
types	helo	

Likewise, you may be interested only in landings or take-offs from players. This is controlled by the 'playerOnly' attribute. When set, all AI landings and take-offs are ignored.. In the example to the right, all take-offs and landings from any player-controlled aircraft (any coalition, any type, helicopter and fixed-wing) creates an output

Name	Value	
LZ		
landed!	IKP	
departed!	dKP	
playeronly	yes	

Instead of types, we can also filter for group names or unit names. When you filter for group or unit names, you can list multiple names, and the names can end in a wildcard '*' meaning that only the part before the '*' must match exactly. The example on the right will create a landing or take-off event for any unit that has a name that starts with "Co". Remember that name matching for groups and units is case **insensitive**.

Name	Value	
LZ		
departed!	dKuHelo	
units	Co*	

And here we have an LZ that only reacts to landings by one side: 'coalition' is set to blue, so this LZ ignores all landings by red aircraft.

If you set coalition to 0 or 'neutral', the LZ will react to *all* landings, neutral, red and blue.

Name	Value	
LZ		
landed!	IKuRW	
coalition	blue	

And finally, an LZ that is attached to a unit – here the Tarawa. This allows you to detect take-offs and landings that happens on moving units like ships and carriers, but may also be used with convoys, trains or other creative ideas.

Name	Value	
linkedUnit	Tarawa	
LZ		
departed!	dTa	
landed!	lTa	

7.47.3 Discussion

If you look at moving the trigger zone for the LZ over Tarawa, you'll notice that it is disproportionately large. This is for a reason and important because there is a risk that it might not detect all landings or take-offs:

For performance, all modules in DML, like most DCS processes, update on a schedule, usually once per second. This means that a moving zone is also updated once per second. If the Tarawa moves during this time and the LZ is too small, there is a chance that the part of the deck that an aircraft that touches down or takes off from is outside the LZ – and the take-off or landing will not register (correctly, as they happen outside the zone)



So if you attach an LZ to a moving unit, allow for some 'drift', controlled by the maximum speed of the unit.

7.48 DML Mission Template.miz – (Lua Only)

7.48.1 Demonstration Goals

This mission demonstrates the following:

- Adding DML modules to a mission during Start
- Invoking DML foundation from script
- Minimal DML-based designer-authored mission script “dmlMain” that
 - Validates DML libraries
 - Reads a config zone with attributes
 - Subscribes to all DCS world events and writes them to screen as they happen
 - Subscribes to all DML player events and writes them to screen as they happen

7.48.2 What to explore

7.48.2.1 In-Mission

Start the mission as single or multi-player. You can choose one of multiple Su-25T planes. Before you choose a plane, however, not the lines of text on the right side. These tell you that some DML modules have loaded.

More importantly, though, they also show what values the dmlMain mission script read from the configuration zone that was placed with ME.

Choose a slot, and start the mission

As soon as you enter the cockpit, new lines of text appear on the right side. These chronicle world and player events as they happen.

Keep an eye on the right side and now change plane slots, eject, crash the plane, and watch other planes start-up etc. As time progresses, more events are chronicled.

While unimpressive at first, simply remember that these events are what we will use to control our missions – in a much more fine-grained way than the out-of-the-box trigger conditions provided by ME can.

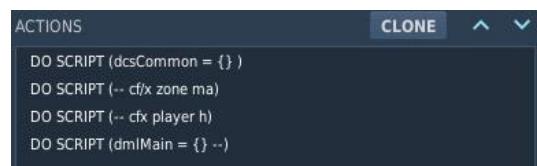
7.48.2.2 ME

Inspect the following:

- Triggers Panel

Inspect the MISSION START trigger. It contains a number of actions: they all are DOSCRIPT actions.

- All except the last load DML modules: dcsCommon, cfxZones, cfxPlayer
- The last DOSCRIPT defines the dmlMail source (dissected in Discussion, below) which is the actual mission-designer authored script that uses DML



methods to perform various tasks. dmlMain runs in the background and checks the world once a second, while it is directly invoked whenever a world event or player event happens.

Copy the entire contents of the DOSCRIPT action into a text editor so we can discuss it later on

- Inspect the **yellow trigger Zone named “dmlMainConfig”** placed on the map near Senaki-Kolkhi. Notice the tribute list (Name/Value).
There are two name/value pairs defined:
 - “test one” has “any value” as value
 - “another test” has “42” as value
- Run the mission again. When the mission starts and shows the available slots, note again the text on the right. Now notice that they show the same text for name/value. This demonstrates the dmlMain can easily read attributes placed in a zone.
- In ME, change the values, names, and perhaps remove and add attributes, then run the mission again. See how the changes you apply to the attributes in dmlMainConfig are reflected when the mission runs.
- Note that you can add your own aircraft and they are all automatically supported

Name	Value	Remove
test one	any value	
another test	42	

7.48.3 Discussion

dmlMain follows DML’s main mission script design philosophy. It provides a very flexible and extensible bed for complex missions or designs that can’t be easily accomplished with ME.

IMPORTANT

Remember that even though mission scripting in Lua is by orders of magnitudes more powerful than what can be achieved with classic trigger scripting, don’t overlook the fact that one does not preclude the other. ME does provide a lot, and many missions can profit from a hybrid approach: design the easy/ornamental stuff in ME with triggers, and just do the complex stuff with mission scripts. Look how DML encapsulates functions into modules, and then uses ME Zones as interface. Whenever possible, you should emulate this concept.

That being said, let’s dig into the DML-based main mission. As stated before, with just a few lines of code, it provides almost everything you need to write exceedingly complex mission, and easily perform tricks that you can’t do in ME alone.

The basis of this mission script templates are

- A config zone to provide easily modifiable (In ME) mission settings

- An update loop that is invoked once per second
- Event Handlers for world- and player events. These get invoked every time something potentially interesting happens, and let dmlMain sleep otherwise.
- A start method that gets everything rolling

In other words: this dmlMain fully implements what we discussed in → Using DML.

So, let's look more closely. If you haven't done already, copy the DOSCRIPT text into a text editor, and unship your looking glass – we are going in!

7.48.3.1 Reading Configuration Data

Since a basic script like this does not need complex configuration data, we simply, just for fun, place a zone in ME (called "dmlMainConfig") and add a couple of attributes. Our readConfiguration() method simply uses cfxZones to retrieve the zone with getZoneByName(), and retrieve all properties from that zone as a table with getAllZoneProperties(). After that we simply write all name/types to outText()

```
function dmlMain.readConfiguration()
    local theZone = cfxZones.getZoneByName("dmlMainConfig")
    if not theZone then return end
    dmlMain.config = cfxZones.getAllZoneProperties(theZone)
    -- demo: dump all name/value pairs returned
    trigger.action.outText("DML config read:", 30)
    for name, value in pairs(dmlMain.config) do
        trigger.action.outText(name .. ":" .. value, 30)
    end
    trigger.action.outText("---- (end of list)", 30)
end
```

7.48.3.2 Main Update Loop

This simple mission script does not watch game states, and can happily live without an update loop. Accordingly nothing is being done inside the loop. Should you place a trigger.action.outText() method inside update(), you'll see a new text line every second – because that is when update is invoked.

```
function dmlMain.update()
    -- schedule myself in 1/ups seconds
    timer.scheduleFunction(dmlMain.update, {}, timer.getTime() +
1/dmlMain.ups)
    -- perform any regular checks here in your main loop
end
```

The main trick here is that update() simply schedules itself again in one second, and thus continues on indefinitely.

Yes, some things really are as simple as that.

7.48.3.3 World Event Handler

We only provide two callbacks here: the pre-processor wPreProc() (which does nothing except returning true to all events are passed to the main event processor), and the main

event processor `worldEventHandler()` which merely uses `dcsCommon` to translate the event ID to some human-readable format, and then submits it to `outText()`

```
function dmlMain.wPreProc(event)
    return true -- true means invoke worldEventHanlder()
    -- filter here and return false if the event is to be ignored
end

function dmlMain.worldEventHandler(event)
    -- now analyse table <event> and do stuff
    trigger.action.outText("DCS World Event " .. event.id .. " (" ..
.. dcsCommon.event2text(event.id) .. ") received", 30)
end
```

Mission code usually uses these event handlers to determine if the game needs to change state. Since our mission doesn't use states, we simply demonstrate how they are invoked and provide some in-mission feedback when they are.

7.48.3.4 Start()

Quite unsurprisingly, `start()` merely connects the dots, and starts `update()`.

```
function dmlMain.start()
    -- ensure that all modules have loaded
    if not dcsCommon.libCheck("DML Main",
        dmlMain.requiredLibs) then
        return false
    end

    -- read any configuration values
    dmlMain.readConfiguration()

    -- subscribe to world events
    dcsCommon.addHandler(dmlMain.worldEventHandler,
        dmlMain.wPreProc) -- no post nor rejected

    -- subscribe to player events
    cfxPlayer.addMonitor(dmlMain.playerEventHandler)

    -- start the event loop. it will sustain itself
    dmlMain.update()

        -- say hi!
    trigger.action.outText("DML Main mission running!", 30)
    return true
end
```

No surprises there: integrity check(`libCheck()`), config data loaded (`readConfiguration()`), world event subscribed to (`addEventHandler()`), player events subscribed to(`addMonitor()`), and `update()` started.

7.48.3.5 Player Event Handler

Again not really required for this particular mission, we merely demonstrate how it is used and when by writing out some text. When you run the mission you see when and with which events it is invoked. Tip: fly a helicopter (Ka-50), eject, and see the sequence of event unfold: player events and worlds events.

```
function dmlMain.playerEventHandler (evType, description, info,  
data)  
    trigger.action.outText("DML Player Event " .. evType .. "  
received", 30)  
end
```

7.49 Landing Counter.miz – (Lua Only)

7.49.1 Demonstration Goals

Shows how intercept specific world events and count all landings a player makes, independent of which plane they fly. Report, but don't count AI landings.

7.49.2 What To Explore

7.49.2.1 In Mission

Fly the mission, and put down a couple of landings. Change the airframe after a landing, or take off, and land again. Run the same mission in Multi-Player and have other people land. See how only player landings are counted in total (not by airframe/slot they occupy), and that AI landings (that happen at certain times) are reported, but not counted.

7.49.2.2 ME

Copy the source for `ldgCtr` into a text editor for discussion later. Note that there is no configuration zone anywhere in the mission.

Note that you can add your own aircraft and they are all automatically supported

7.49.3 Discussion

7.49.3.1 Summary

Basis for this mission is that we process all world landing events, and discard all others. If a landing event occurs, we report that fact, and then see if that unit is piloted by a player. If so, we increase the number of landings for that player.

7.49.3.2 Interesting Details

A couple of interesting things:

- Although there is no “`ldgCtrConfig`” zone placed with ME, we are still looking for it. This is just to demonstrate that we can safely future-proof the mission by including the code without penalty
- We don't need `update()`. Like above, we still include it
- We do not need player events. We still include the code for possible later expansion
- We have a table `ldgCtr.landings` that will contain a number for each player to count the landings
- We use `wPreProc` to filter out all events that are not landing (4)
- In the `worldEventHandler`, we know that `wPrePro` makes sure that we are only invoked for landing events, and directly process the event table
- How do we know that the plane is piloted by a player? When `getPlayerName()` returns anything but nil.
- We index the landing count by the player name and so can tabulate all landings by player, irrespective of the unit they are flying
- This code works with any number of players automatically, no special provisions to support multi-player required.
- You can add your own aircraft and they are all automatically supported

7.49.3.3 Relevant Code

So, lets look at the code, which you can extract by copy/pasting everything from the DOSCRIPT action for ldgCtr

```
function ldgCtr.wPreProc(event)
    return event.id == 4 -- look only for 'landing event'
end

function ldgCtr.worldEventHandler(event)
    -- wPreProc filters all events EXCEPT landing
    local theUnit = event.initiator
    local uName = theUnit:getName()
    local playerName = theUnit:getPlayerName()
    trigger.action.outText(uName .. " has landed.", 30)
    if playerName then
        -- if a player landed, count their landing
        local numLandings = ldgCtr.landings[playerName]
        if not numLandings then numLandings = 0 end
        numLandings = numLandings + 1
        ldgCtr.landings[playerName] = numLandings
        trigger.action.outText("Player " .. playerName .. " completed ".. numLandings .." landings.", 30)
    end
end
```

7.49.3.4 Further Notes

Also, the `start()` function contains these interesting lines:

```
-- init variables & state
ldgCtr.landings = {}
```

Above simply initializes the landings counter to zero for all players (actually, it removes all numbers from the table), and makes sure that the table exists in the mission space so we do not crash when we try to access it from `worldeventHandler`.

Note

It's best practice to define and initialize module variables such as this at the very beginning, not just in `start()`. Re-initializing variables in `start()` is also good practice as it also future-proofs your mission code.

7.50 Event Monitor.miz (tbc)

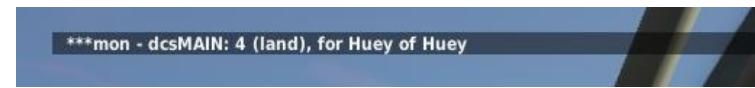
7.50.1 Demonstration Goals

Event monitor is a development tool mainly for mission designers who are learning Lua and advanced mission designers who need to investigate events as they happen during a mission. Event Monitor uses cfxMon to log all events as they happen to the screen.

7.50.2 What To Explore

7.50.2.1 In Mission

Start the mission and, jump into your favorite plane and cause the events that you are looking for.



7.50.2.2 ME

Note that Event Monitor is a bare bones tool template. Use it to create your own specific event tester. Out of the box, this mission only monitors the basic DCS events, and only comes with the Foundation Modules dcsCommon and cfxZones. Should you want to test your own scenarios or events, make sure to include the relevant modules (even your own).

7.50.3 Discussion

This mission's config zone sets the 'delay' for events to 5 seconds (default is 30). If you are new to DCS events, be sure to do the following, and note the event that creates:

- Enter a plane
- Start up a plane
- Extend and retract flaps and manipulate some other cockpit instruments (note: no event!)
- Take off in a plane
- Land a plane
- Change a plane
- Eject from plane. Let the ejected pilot reach the ground. Wait for the plane crash event.
- Crash into ground
- Fire missiles
- Fire cannons
- Drop Bombs
- Kill a target on the ground in Kutaisi
- Land a plane outside of an airport
- Take off and land a helicopter
- Crash a helicopter

7.51 Mission.miz

7.51.1 Demonstration Goals

7.51.2 What To Explore

7.51.2.1 In Mission

7.51.2.2 ME

7.51.3 Discussion

8 Mission Design FAQ

Got a question? Check here first!

8.1 General

8.1.1 Loading Modules

- *How do I load modules?*

There's a video available, and it's also explained in this manual.

- *Do I have to load DML at mission start?*

No, but it is the best point in time to do so. Some modules assume that they load at mission start, and the information they gather from the original mission may not match the current situation if you do not.

- *Is the order in which modules load relevant?*

Yes, in that you need to load 'dependent' modules before you load that module. For example, you must load dcsCommon and cfxZones before you load Messenger. You must load the 'persistence' module before any other module that you want to be able to persist data.

8.1.2 Module Misbehaving?

- *My module only reacts the first time or not at all...?*

Triggers react on change of the flag's value. Make sure that you are *triggering* with a DML flag method like 'inc' (one that will change the flag's value each time) if you want the module react every time. Specifically, be aware that the 'flip' method works well to guarantee a change only if one module changes that flag – if two or more can change the flag, if they fire at the same time, two flips in a row will reset the flag to its original value.

On the other hand, your Watchflag condition may be set incorrectly, so also ensure that it set to 'change'

8.2 Module Specific

8.2.1 CloneZone

- *The group that the cloner should spawn doesn't spawn,*
even though I bang on the correct flag. When set to verbose it even claims to have spawned the groups, but nothing appears on the map.
Check that you did not check the 'Late Activation' flag in the group, as this too is copied to the clone, and the clone then forever waits to be activated.

8.2.2 Messenger

- *Message does not appear although it triggers correctly*

Check the coalition attribute. It defaults to 0 (all), but if you are stacking a messenger with other modules on the zone (e.g. unitZone), ensure that any coalition attribute present uses a synonym that does not conflict with messenger.

8.2.3 Object Destruct Detector

- *Module used to work, but suddenly has stopped working in my mission*

From release to release, DCS might change the objectID of some buildings/objects on the map. Verify that the objectID matches the one you are looking for

8.2.4 SSBClient

- *I have added and configured SSBClient, but it does not block any slots*

SSBClient only works when the mission runs in multiplayer. Start it as a self-hosted Multiplayer game

- *Hey, I did the above, still nothing!*

SSBClient also needs SSB installed in your Server Hooks folder.