



The Airborne Forward Air Controller - FAC (A)

FAC Introduction

The Airborne Forward Air Controller - FAC (A), has a pivotal role in helping direct aircraft towards ground targets. They were used extensively in Vietnam and more recently in the Gulf War conflicts. The FAC (A) is typically a single aircraft which flies ahead of a Close Air Support flight. It picks out ground targets for the CAS aircraft providing bearing and range. In addition, the FAC can launch "Willie Pete" White Phosphorous rockets which mark the target for visual identification.

FAC in Falcon 4.0: Allied Force

Falcon 4.0: Allied Force features an implementation of the Forward Air Controller role. In real life, the FAC is more familiarly flown by the A-10 aircraft, but as an extremely versatile aircraft, the F-16 is also capable of functioning as an FAC. This product allows you to fly the F-16 on FAC missions and also allows you to fly air-to-ground combat missions under the coordination of AI FAC aircraft.

During the course of the dynamic campaign, CAS missions will be tasked by HQ, and an FAC flight is generated for each. As is normal for Falcon, as in real life, the CAS and FAC flights may be flown by pilots from different squadrons. The combination of flights forms what is known as a "package".

There are two types of CAS flight represented in Falcon. The standard CAS mission and the On-Call CAS mission. The standard CAS missions provide close air support in a target area with typically a pre-known target. The On-Call CAS missions are not aware of the primary target until determined and described by the FAC. It is important to understand that the On-Call CAS missions must check in with the FAC, whereas the standard CAS missions may not. Standard CAS missions will attack targets independently of the FAC, and will only "check in" with the FAC if they are unable to locate their enemy. The On-Call CAS flights will check in with the FAC if one has been assigned, and will always attack the target described by the FAC.

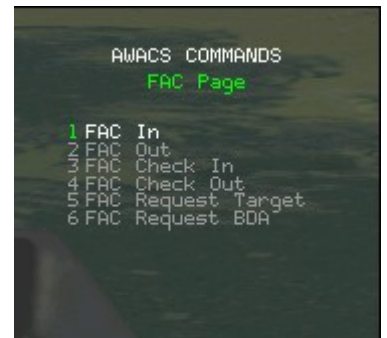
Flying the FAC

We will first discuss how to fly a successful FAC mission.

Upon selecting an FAC mission inside a TE or the campaign, you will notice that the FAC waypoints have a station time. By default this will be in the region of 15 minutes. The FAC must stay on station for the duration of the station time to successfully complete the mission, and should service any fighters that check in accordingly.

Once in the flight, you should follow the steerpoints accurately as normal, in respect to the locations and arrival times. When you have an FAC steerpoint selected, you can inform AWACS that you are flying the function of FAC and to forward any communications to you. You do this by cycling to the FAC menu page which is located at the 3rd page of the AWACS menu (press Q 3 times), and then select the "FAC In" option.

As mentioned above, the FAC is usually one component of a package, over the course of your station time, other flights may check in with your FAC. Because Falcon 4.0: Allied Force represents an active combat environment, it can never be guaranteed that the flights tasked to check in with you will reach the target zone - if the flights are intercepted by the enemy, they may not make contact with you. You must still complete the station time to be successful at your assigned task.



Checking flights in

When a flight wants to check in with you, you will hear the lead pilot call across the radio, "Checking In". At this point you must acknowledge them with a radio communication. By cycling to the FAC menu page (3rd page of the AWACS menu), you will see their flight listed in the options. If the flight that is checking in with you has a callsign of "Fury1", you will see "C Fury1" listed in the menu. The letter "C" lets you know that this flight has requested to check in. If Fury1 does not hear from you within a short while, the request will be repeated. You can answer the request by pressing the number key associated to their entry index in the menu, eg. 1. Continue to listen out for additional flights who may check in during your station time.

Assigning targets

The next responsibility of the FAC is to assign a target to the flight. You can do this by designating a target on the radar or by using the padlock view to pick out a visible ground vehicle. Padlocking ground threats should be performed in A-G targetting mode, so that enemy ground vehicles are prioritised above aircraft, runways and buildings by the padlock view. Once your target has been chosen, cycle to the FAC menu page and press the number key for the flight to which you wish to assign your target. For example, if item 1 in the menu shows "A Fury1", assign your current target to Fury1 by pressing 1.



The fighters under your direction will then proceed to attack the vehicles you designate. They will make multiple passes, reattacking the same target group until otherwise directed or out of ordnance. Once they have expended their air-to-ground munitions, they will call "Checking Out" and automatically head home.

Launching rockets

When equipped with LAU68/131-WP munitions, the F-16 is also able to launch "willie pete" smoke rockets at your targets. This helps fighters under your direction locate their targets both day and night. More information can be found about launching rockets in the training sections of this manual, however it is worth knowing that the WP marker rockets are fired individually rather than as multiples. The LAU68/131-WP is described in the Tactical Reference within Falcon 4.0: Allied Force. You can find this in the pull-down menu after clicking on "Munitions" and then "Stores".



Checking flights out

Once your station time is complete, or should you need to depart earlier than planned, select the "FAC Out" option from the FAC menu. This tells any fighters under your control that they are operating on their own from this point forward in their mission.

This completes the guide for flying the FAC, and its role in the dynamic campaign. We will now take a look at this from the perspective of flying a Close Air Support mission under the coordination of the FAC.

Flying under the direction of the FAC

In this product, you are also able to fly as one of the fighters performing Close Air Support (CAS), meaning you need to know how to check in with the FAC and request information from it. You should be flying a CAS or On-Call CAS mission. As described above, the On-Call CAS mission should always get its targets from the FAC, whereas the standard CAS mission can attack targets of its own choosing, only really checking in with the FAC if it is unable to locate worthy targets by itself. During the dynamic campaign, you will be given chance to fly both of these mission types.

Checking In

As you fly towards your target waypoints, the FAC will be arriving and if part of your package, you will hear the FAC call "In" across the radio. You are now able to "check in" with the FAC, so ensure you have a target steerpoint selected, cycle to the FAC menu and select the "FAC Check In" option.

Requesting targets

Once the FAC acknowledges your checking in, it will describe the target range and bearing to you. You can request this information by selecting "FAC Request Target" from the FAC menu. The AI FAC will also start launching the "willie pete" marker rockets into the target area, and the smoke plumes will be visible to you as you approach the area.

Battle Damage Assessment

After performing an attack run, you can ask the FAC for Battle Damage Assessment by choosing "FAC Request BDA". The FAC will inform you of the number of individual targets destroyed since your last BDA update.

Checking out

Once your patrol time is over or you run out of ammo, you request the FAC to check you out by selecting the entry "FAC Check Out" from the same FAC menu page. This informs the FAC that your station time is over and that you are now leaving the area. After being checked out by the FAC, you can proceed back to your homebase. Another successful mission!

