

OPERATION VARSITY



Overview

Operation Varsity is a single player/cooperative mission for DCS that takes strong thematic inspiration from Mission 5 of Ace Combat Zero, “Flicker of Hope”. Players must escort three flights of C-130 transport aircraft to a drop zone for their paratroopers, clearing out air defense sites in their path and enemy fighters patrolling the region.

The mission was designed with heavy randomisation in mind for replayability, a relatively short duration (approximately 1.5 hours), and being able to be flown alone or with friends, in a variety of skill levels and airframes.



Goals

The primary goal is to have as many of the C-130 transports reach the drop point for their paratroopers as possible.

The mission will be considered complete once all three of the C-130 flights have either:

- Completed their drop and left the area of operations,
- Been shot down, or
- Aborted their drop and returned to base.

Since the mission is so heavily randomized, it falls to the players to investigate the target area and decide the best way to approach it. An AA gun site that is miles from the flight path of the C-130 will not matter, but a SAM site in the same spot may change the situation entirely.

Letting all three flights of C-130s die will not “fail” the mission per se, but your results will be scored poorly in comparison.



Allied Support

You're not alone in the fight! AI-controlled allied aircraft can be called in to help you. Use the F10 Other → Allied Support option in your radio menus to request support from a flight. However, they only have one use, so think carefully about whether the time is right to use them!

Allied flights consist of:

- BOLT: A pair of F-15Cs armed for air-to-air duties.
- KNIGHT: A pair of MiG-29Gs armed for air-to-air duties.
- VENOM: A pair of F-16Cs armed for DEAD duties.
- STORK: A pair of Tornado GR4s armed for DEAD duties.
- WHALE: A pair of Su-34s armed for a mix of DEAD and general attack duties.
- TUSK: A pair of A-10Cs armed for general attack duties.
- BONE: A single B-1B armed for general attack duties.

Kills made by allied flights will not contribute to your overall score, so you may want to be sparing with them if you want a better result.



Enemy Aces

You're not the only apex predator on the field. If enabled, an enemy ace will occasionally join the fight. They fly a wider variety of aircraft types, are more skilled, and much more dangerously armed than the usual patrols. However, they are worth substantially more points than regular kills.

Please note the enemy Ace system is still being fleshed out at this stage and will see improvements and additions - expect them to be a lot more vocal about showing up and ruining your party soon!



Scoring and Ranking

Much like its inspiration, Operation Varsity scores the players' kills and overall performance, and provides a Rank at the end of the mission along with the total score to let you know how you did. You are graded from E up to A, followed by S rank for the truly exceptional performers. You can check your current score and rank by selecting the "Check Mission Status" option in the F10 Other radio menu.

The thresholds for rank are automatically calculated by the mission based on the settings for enemy quantities (see the Customizing the Mission section for more information). Bear in mind that the Allied Support AI flights' kills will not count towards your score, so heavy reliance on them may hurt your ranking! In addition, flying solo may net you a lower rank than you might expect, simply because of the amount of enemies to kill and not having the time to get them all as a one man army.

The rank and score you reach is purely a bragging rights reward.

Customizing the Mission

Operation Varsity allows you to customize the mission difficulty to your tastes, player numbers, and airframe choice.

Player Slots

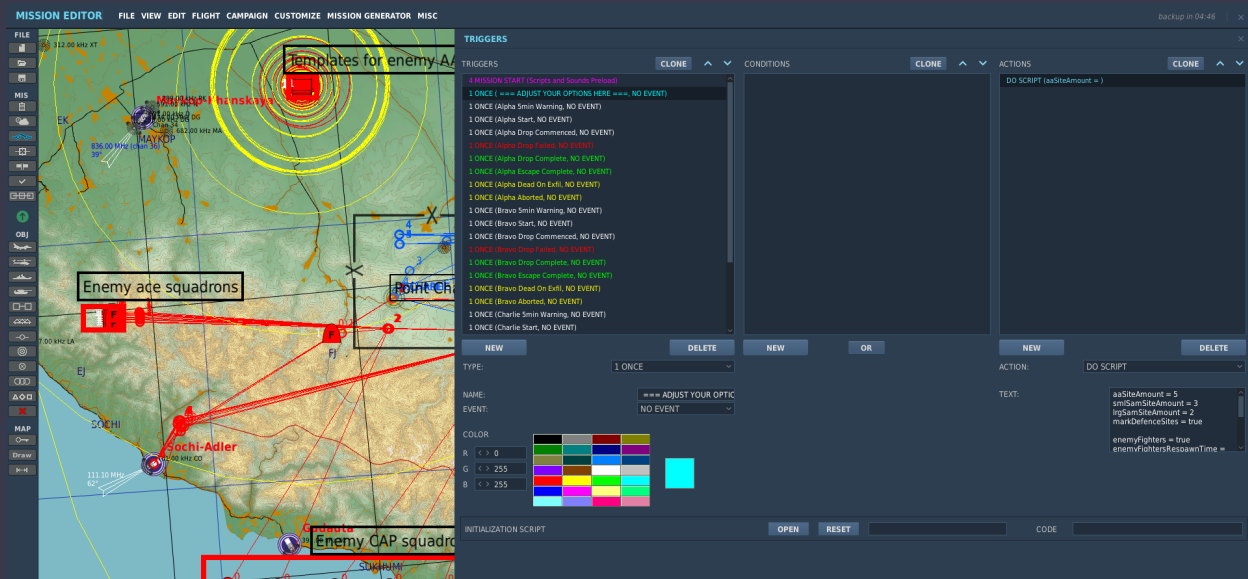
Every player aircraft slot on the Blue side can be changed, deleted, renamed, or moved without consequence. Adding in new slots will also function as normal.

Difficulty and Other Options

In the Mission Editor, under the “Set rules for trigger” option on the left sidebar, you will see a bright blue line named “=== ADJUST YOUR OPTIONS HERE ===”. These are the options given to you to change how intense the battle will be, by adjusting the amount and rate of enemy spawns and the likelihood of enemy ace encounters.

It’s a good idea to copy and paste the info from the text box under “DO SCRIPT” into Notepad or Wordpad so you can more easily read it.

The options, their effects, and what you can do with them are listed below.



aaSiteAmount sets the amount of anti-aircraft gun sites that will spawn. This can be a number ranging from 0 to 15, with the default setting being 5.

smISamSiteAmount sets the amount of short-ranged SAM sites (e.g IR SAMs, the SA-8, Roland, and so forth) that will spawn. This can be a number ranging from 0 to 10, with the default setting being 3.

lrgSamSiteAmount sets the amount of long-ranged SAM sites (e.g. SA-3) that will spawn. This can be a number ranging from 0 to 10, with the default setting being 2.

markDefenceSites determines whether or not the rough location of the anti aircraft sites will be marked on the F10 map. If set to true, the sites will be approximately marked; if set to false, there will be no map markers and players will need to find the sites with no extra help. This setting will default to true in case it is set improperly.

enemyFighters determines whether or not enemy fighter patrols will periodically spawn in and patrol the combat area. If set to true, enemy fighters will spawn; if set to false, there will be no enemy fighter patrols. This setting will default to true in case it is set improperly.

enemyFightersRespawnTime is the amount of time in seconds between enemy fighter patrols spawning. For example, the default value of 900 seconds equals 15 minutes. This can be any number greater than 0, but setting it to anything more than 4800 (80 minutes) is irrelevant as this is longer than the mission length. In addition, setting it to any value lower than 300 (5 minutes) will instead cap it at 300, as a safeguard to avoid accidentally setting a number too low and spamming the mission with an excessive number of aircraft. This number will not be adhered to precisely by the enemy spawns but is randomized with a slight variance ($\pm 10\%$) in practice.

enemyAces determines whether or not the enemy ace pilots will join the fight. If set to true, enemy aces will spawn; if set to false, there will be no ace encounters. This setting is independent of the usual fighter patrols, so you can have no patrols and only ace encounters if you like! This setting will default to true in case it is set improperly.

enemyAceProbability is the percentage chance that an ace will be spawned with each “check”. The checks occur at periods of time based on the enemyFightersRespawnTime variable above but with a greater random variance ($\pm 30\%$). Each time the check occurs, this is the percent chance that it will successfully spawn an ace encounter. This setting can be any value from 0 to 100; setting it to 0 effectively turns off ace encounters, while setting it to 100 will guarantee an ace spawns at each check. This setting will default to 33% in case it is set improperly.

earlyWarningType is the type of AWACS or GCI support that will provide direction on the radio for air engagements. The valid options are “AWACS”, “GCI”, or “none” (ensure that they have quote marks around them). “AWACS” will enable an E-3 Sentry aircraft over home base; “GCI” will instead utilize a ground based early warning radar at the field; “none” will disable these options entirely. Note that the E-3 AWACS will provide datalink info to aircraft like the F-16 and F/A-18, whereas the early warning radar GCI will not. Fighter-to-fighter datalink will still function regardless of which GCI is enabled.

Credits

Eagle Dynamics (naturally) and all the 3rd party developers who have breathed that extra bit of life into the sim.

Grimes, Speed, and anyone and everyone who has worked on MIST and given people all the extra tools to make things like this.

The denizens of Funky Squadron and VA-149 Velites for all the testing, suggestions and participation in the creation.

Project Aces for the distinctive mission update and completion audio samples, and the thematic inspiration for this mission.