

Strike Tutorial #6

OK folks – things are going to start getting a little more difficult. You may lose an aircraft or two on this one and it may take some time to master it. Fine - you are facing an SA-10 Bn, not an easy thing to do.

You should probably run this scenario at least three times:

Run #1: Cruise missiles alone – just drive a point home that these are not a silver bullet (well they should be golden considering their cost). Don't worry it will be quick.

Run #2: A coordinated attack with lots of resources. This is the real tutorial.

Run #3: Leave the bombers at home and challenge yourself. More of a true scenario than a tutorial.

Your forces are quite powerful and modern with a mix of weapons types and support aircraft. The trick will be to use them all at the right time and place.

Enjoy.

Note: This tutorial should take about 1 hour to complete

Created by Gunner98 aka Bart Gauvin

Briefing:

Your enemy is based at 'Red Base', and your mission is to close the base. You know he has the following available:

- Bn of SA-10b – S-300PM. This is not the deadliest SAM system you will encounter in COMANA – but its close! If it sees you – things will get ugly fast.
- 2x 'Topsy 75' 3D Long Range air search radars. Quite good and hard to hide from.
- A Sqn of 12 Eurofighter Tyoons! It's laundry day at Red Base – so it will take them an hour to get ready. You will want to have the base closed by then or your day will go from bad to worse!
- You also know that you don't know everything about the enemy.

The terrain is fairly interesting, you're in southern Algeria in the area of the Tassili N'Ajjer National Park and these are the Hoggar Mountains. It looks like a spectacular place to visit, but in the interest of game play I've plotted a couple Geo Markers with some easy to reference names.

- **Big Ridge:** Runs east to west, about 45nm long, about 25-35nm south of the base at an Alt of 3-4000ft, or 15-2500ft above the objective.
- **Small Ridge:** Runs parallel to Big Ridge, about the same dimensions and forms a neat little valley between them.
- **Highway:** A nice and quite obvious low level approach, if I was an air-defender (*Just to clarify – I'm not. I'm a Mud Gunner and work for a living, not like those floppy Bird Gunners who hang around waiting for the bad guys all day ☺*), that valley lights up like the Las Vegas Strip with a big Neon sign – **Airplanes this Way** – with arrows.
- **Side road:** Another nice low level approach, less obvious so possibly not as well defended – or maybe it is...

- **Big Flat Flank:** As the name says. You could use some standoff weapons from below the ridge to the south but range is getting to be an issue.
- **Sandy Flank:** The ridge offers some nice cover but is good 50nm from the target – so this is nice but will take a bit of coordination because once you cross the ridge he sees you.
- **The Back Door:** Billiard Table anyone? Flat is not good if you're trying to hide from an SA-10.

Your Forces are modern Chinese aircraft and weapons. There is a good mix of capabilities but as any, they have limitations:

- **A-50 Mainring:** Based on the Soviet/Russian Mainstay. This is the Russian/Chinese version of the American A-3 AWACS, and quite comparable. In all situations put him on a 'Support' Mission in a safe area. In this case you should turn the radars **ON**, as it is quite a permissive area – for now. He will let you know when that SA-10 is getting angry.
- **CSA-003 Diamond Twin Star:** This is a small commercial aircraft which has been turned into an electronic sponge. Put it on a support mission – leave the radars **OFF**, its strength is the 500nm ESM range. With an asset like this, try and put it in an area opposite your AWACS so that your suspected target, the AWACS and the ESM aircraft form a triangle. This is called 'Triangulation' and hopefully the sensors on the two aircraft will pinpoint the enemy emitter quicker this way.
- **Y-9G Cub:** This is a powerful Electronic Warfare aircraft based on the Russian An-12 Cub. For those of you familiar with the venerable C-130 Hercules, the An-12 is slightly larger and more robust – picture that stuffed with electronics and antennae! This aircraft should be able to jam most radars – but as discussed in the last tutorial, nothing is a sure thing. Because the Y-9G is not agile, it needs to be kept safe, it is an Area jammer. Keep it high and as close to the battle as possible with OECM **ON**. Once you pinpoint the SA-10 you should get a good idea of the range of its missiles, try to keep this guy just outside of that. Another point is that his ELINT suite is 20 years newer than the Twin Star, so you can use that to your advantage in triangulating as well.
- **JZ-8F Finback:** You have two of these older reconnaissance aircraft which have the advantage of being able to fly quite high – not high enough to escape the SA-10 however, so save these until after that is disabled.
- **H-K6K Badger [God of War]:** Well these are heavy units that you would not normally see on a mission like this, but it's a tutorial so we should introduce heavy bombers. The YJ-63 Cruise missiles it carries are reasonably capable, slow like most cruise missiles (520knts) it is terrain following which is good and has a decent warhead and a good PK (probably Hit). Use them properly however or they will be wasted. These bombers are the variables in the three scenario runs we'll discuss later.
- **J-11BS Flanker:** These twin seat Flanker copies are ideal for the complicated task of SEAD (Suppression of Enemy Air Defence). For this role they are equipped with the AS-17 Krypton, not as accurate as the American AGM-88 HARM but it has a heavier warhead.
- **J-16 Flying Shark:** Another spin-off of the Su-27 Flanker, this one has some rather interesting standoff weapons such as the LS-6 GPS guided glide bomb.
- **Q-5D Fantan:** Very loosely based on the MiG-19, the 'D' variant is a much more modern aircraft than that heritage would suggest. Their job today is to close the runways with the Durandal copies, the Type 200-4 bombs. There are some laser guided bombs as well but I wouldn't use them until that SA-10 is dealt with.

Scenario Run-through #1

This won't take long. Simply launch your 4 Badgers, fling your cruise missiles at the base and see what happens. You could try plotting courses for your missiles to see if that helps.

You will probably note that of the 16 missiles, one or two will hit the base. You will probably also note that many of the SA-10 missiles go 'Blind' and lose track. This is because the YJ-63 has the ability to terrain follow – an excellent advantage which many older cruise missiles don't have.

So all in all the attack was a failure. Cruise missiles on their own will have a very difficult time inflicting significant damage on a target, unless you have enough to saturate all defences and hit hard. In this case you would need at least 4 times as many missiles as you have.

Now reload the game and let's do this properly!

Scenario Run-through #2

In this run we will use all the aircraft, and just for sport, we won't use missions for the attack. Feel free to set up missions for your AWACS, ESM and EW aircraft, then launch the rest in groups. You've got plenty of fuel so no harm in having aircraft loiter a bit. I won't talk you through every move, there are just too many options – but will suggest the following:

- Timing is critical, your aircraft need to be in the air and close so that you can quickly follow one strike after another to take maximum advantage of defence neutralization and close the air base quickly.
- Lead with your J-16s in two groups, accompanied by the J-11s, also in two groups. Stay low.
- Put your Badgers off to one or both flanks – consider them your snipers.
- Have your Recon AC handy and your Q-5's safe.
- Lob a couple glide bombs over the ridge – you'll have to climb to do this so be ready to evade.
- When the SA-10 lights up its radar to engage the glide bombs – launch the Kryptons – and I mean about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of your AS-17s from at least two directions. Make sure the Cub is jamming and close.
- Once the Kryptons are about $\frac{1}{2}$ way to the target, throw in a couple Cruise missiles for good measure.
- If you have a chance shut down the Topsy-75's with your remaining Kryptons but keep at least two just in case the SA-10 fires up again.
- Once the SA-10 has been hit there is a good chance the radar is down – test with another glide bomb. Keep hitting the SA-10, if it is not disabled you will take too many casualties on the attack and your mission will fail.
- Now it is time for Recon – remember what I said about Air Defences – layers. Just because the SA-10 is down doesn't make the base defenceless. When you find things plink them with glide bombs or even cruise missiles.

Important Safety Tip

Your JZ-8F comes with four types of sensors: Radar Warning – but chances are anything left at this point is not emitting; Radar – but if something is trying to hide, you probably won't pick it up; Visual – they have camouflage nets; and Infrared (IR) – but your range is only 5 nautical miles.

When you factor altitude into the range ([Slant Range](#)) 5nm is roughly equivalent to 30,000 ft, if your flying at that altitude you will be looking at a very thin line of ground. You need to get low enough to actually see something, but not so low as to get killed. Experiment, but use multiple passes at gradually lower altitude will give you better results. You can find Slant Range calculators on line but basically to see something 2nm off your direct line of flight you need to be around 10,000 ft AGL.

- Once you're confident that the defences are suppressed, go in with the Q-5s and close the runways. Laser guided bombs will be good to kill aircraft on the ground: 500lb bomb for a \$150-million-dollar aircraft is good trade-off.
- Job done!

Now reload the game and let's do this with a bit of a challenge!

Scenario Run-through #3

Now it is very unlikely that you will have strategic bombers along for a tactical strike like this, so do the same again but leave the bombers parked.

Messages:

Discovery of GBAD (Ground Based Air Defence)

You've discovered an unidentified target on the ground. Remember what I said about layers of air defence. So:

- a)** Did you find this with your reconnaissance aircraft? If yes, that is perfect, now kill the target before it can do any damage.
- b)** Did you find it with the sensors on a cruise missile? If this is the case you may need to act quickly, the missile cannot continue to track the target and you don't want to spend the time and effort finding it again.
- c)** Did you find this target with one of your strike aircraft? Oh-oh – you may be in trouble – get out of there fast and let a standoff weapon destroy it – you can come back for another run.

Well done – both runways are closed. Runways cannot be destroyed but to quote Sunburn from the Forum:

Runways (and other air facilities) have what is called an "effective runway/AC size", which takes into consideration both the runway's nominal aircraft size capacity and its current integrity status, to determine the true AC size class that it can handle.

Taking the pair of runways at Souda Bay as example (3500m):

- ***At between 75% and 100% integrity level (ie. 0-25% damage), the runway can handle very large aircraft.***
- ***Between 50% and 75% integrity it can handle up to large aircraft.***
- ***Between 25% and 50% integrity it can handle up to medium aircraft.***
- ***Between 10% and 25% integrity it can handle up to small aircraft.***

**** Between 1% and 10% integrity only STOVL aircraft or helicopters can operate. (<--- At this point you're literally looking at craters and broken chunks of concrete everywhere. Perhaps even the STOVL ability is optimistic, given that in such a condition the engine-FOD would be quite likely...)***

So the base is closed, the air defences are down and a follow up strike will likely turn the place into a smoking ruin.

Bravo! You now have the skills to tackle some pretty tricky targets. An SA-10 is not easy to defeat and could spell the end of a game for an inexperienced player. Now you know how to beat it, all you need is some decent terrain, some standoff weapons, some anti-radiation missiles – and a bit of luck. *Simple!*

You are ready to move on to the 'Basic Training Air Operations' scenario or one of 'Uncle Marks' Tutorials.

Thanks for playing through these scenarios and hope that you eventually play some of my other scenarios in the Community Packs – Primarily the Northern Fury, Mediterranean Fury, Caribbean Fury or Indian Fury series which depicts one storyline of World War Three starting in 1994. They are not easy however so you may want to get a few scenarios under your belt first - Just look for Gunner98 as the author