

***VBAM Games, Inc.***

***Mercenary Air Squadron: Errata and Clarification***

***Modified: 1/23/2008***

In an effort to support the fan base for Mercenary Air Squadron and all of the associated expansion we at VBAM Games, Inc. periodically releases this guide to answer questions and clean up any errors with the material.

*Questions*

Q) What other materials does VBAM offer for the casual MAS fan?

A) VBAM has released a number of free mission walk throughs and other free material in our e-zine, The Victory Track. You can read more here:

<http://blog.vbamgames.com/>

Q) Lightning Pod/Rafael Lightning III Pod: +1/+2 to all AtG attacks only for Laser Guided Bombs ?

A) Yes, a Laser Guided Bomb System only improves those weapons that track with Laser Guides.

Q) Do I need a Laser Guided Bomb system to use any Laser Guided Bombs?

A) Yes.

Q) 4.4.4.2.2 Fire from Ground Threats - > I think the Cruiser double attacks need clarifying here...

A) It is always good to clarify. In this case the double attacks are shown on the counters. So a cruiser actually gets two SAM attacks and two AAA attacks, twice that of its smaller peers.

Q) 4.4.4.2.2 Fire from Ground Threats - "Any ship that has lost over half its damage points will be unable to return fire". So a 4 damage points ship which has sustained 2 damage is crippled or not?

A) No, it must be over half the damage points of a ship to be crippled. So in this case, 3 damage cripples the ship but 2 does not.

Q) Sophistication 5 encounter table -> JF-Thunder is a better aircraft than YAK-38 Forger but it's lower on the Encounter points table.

A) Yep! This is to add some variety to the higher end table. Most often the YAK-38 is a nice break from difficult engagements on the Soph 5 table. Experienced players are welcome to change the table to suit their own campaigns of course.

Q) Ah, I just remembered a question about the NPO rules: Is it intentional that the NPO drops ALL his countermeasures if the target number is  $\geq 5$  or not?

A) Play it as though the NPO drops the number of countermeasures necessary in order to lower the target number to 1 or 0 (just like the rule for target numbers  $\leq 4$ ) and not all of them.

Q) The manual mentions that ties go to the players. Is this rule meant to give an advantage to the human players or you actually meant "ties go to the attacker (human or NPO)".

A) The human player gets the advantage. In the case of PvP matches, the advantage goes to the player who is taking the action.

Q) Some enemy aircraft loadouts are not full. They have a lot of empty hardpoints...

A) This is by design actually. While some opponents you face are well equipped, others are other MAS's contracted to defend another client. As an experienced MAS manager knows, it is not always possible to deck out the squadron. An experienced game player may change this to suit their theatre of operations.

Q) A-10 has +4 Dive, so by having a {Soft8, Hard6} Extreme cannon rating it has 100% hit probability vs All ground threats (unless the pilot has a negative Cannon rating in which case he can only miss Hard targets because Soft targets have a target number of 8 from cannon + 4 from Dive - 2 assuming pilot is untrained with cannons = 10 or 100% hit). Is this intentional?

A) Yep!

Q) Excellent Combat Helicopter support is cheaper than Combat Helicopter support...

A) Yes indeed. The idea here is once a MAS has the prestige to call in better helicopter support, they can get better support, and for a better price. The Combat Helicopter Support could be from some expensive mercenary, or other third rate party that is overcharging the MAS.

Q) Lightning Pod and Rafael Lightning Pod III have the same cost (5\$).

I don't know if this is intentional though, they have different rarity...

A) Rarity is the issue here. One is much harder to get in reality than the other.

Q) Page 46 Bogey Defaults: "Sidewinders" = AIM-9 Sidewinder ? AIM-9X only for Raptor and >Lightning ?

A) No. We make the assumption that at these higher levels any plane can field these if their organization is prestigious enough.

Q) Damage points from 1 to 8 but according to the rules 4.4.4.2.1 and counter max. Damage points (= "Stars") are only 5 ?

A) It should say 1 to 5 as far as the basic book is concerned. Some of the ships in the expansion have 8 points, such as the aircraft carrier, which did not fit in the basic book.

Q) 3.2.2 "Modifiers to the players roll" are also for the NPO rivals roll ?

A) Right. Which means if you end up flying against a high prestige organization, be it real or one of the 5 NPO MAS organizations we include in the basic book there is a chance the better organization could win the contract.

One variant we explore for the expansion is not allowing NPO's to compete for contracts if there is more than one player MAS in the bidding. This makes it easier for friends to compete over missions without NPO interference.

Q)4.1 "Equipment that is fired, dropped or expended is removed from play." What about miscellaneous equipment like ALE-45/Fuel tanks/leaflet pod/etc. - are they removed from play after use like a fired missile ? what if they are only partially used ?

A) Technically these types of equipment are not "expended". This makes systems like flare dispensers and ALE-45 good buys for the long term use of a MAS. Some miscellaneous buys, like the Hawkeye air support expended after one use.

Q) 4.2 Is it possible to change altitude in a band even if there is no encounter ?

A) Since a plane is spending a turn in the band it can issue an order, which could be climb. So a plane could move to Band 3, order a climb, and change altitude. Likewise a plane could loiter in a band, burn a fuel, issue an order a climb or dive, and change altitude accordingly.

Q) 4.2.2 If a RADAR sweep is successful and reveals an encounter or nothing, must the wing check again normal when it enters the band ?

A) If the sweep is successful, then no since the wing is certain it is empty. It will make further RADAR checks for the next bands as normal though. The only exception is the optional rule 7:13 Hidden RADAR which involves the wing not knowing for certain if the RADAR sweep was accurate.

Q) Is wing movement simultaneous? Can I choose every new turn which wing moves first ?

A) Yes, it is simultaneous. So it can either change bands or loiter at the end of the turn if there are no encounters to keep it in place.

Q) If wing 2 enters a band where wing 1 already is (no encounter), must there be an encounter check ?

A) No, the band is clear.

Q) Is it possible to fly back to a former band (for example to help the following bomber wing) if you expend fuel for every additional band you enter ?

A) That is correct.

Q) If wing 2 enters an existing encounter of wing 1 how exactly is the new initiative order determined?

A) The player simply rolls initiative for the new arrivals of Wing 2 and fits them in the initiative order.

Q) 4.3 "If the group passes all of the mission bands to the target area," group = all wings?

A) Yes, this could be any of the wings. I used group in this case to accommodate the optional rule 7.5 No Wings.

Q) 4.4.2.1 / 4.4.3 Engage:

To fire a long range missile at long distance 1 (not in a dogfight) is only allowed if you are in the "Long area" and not in the "Close area" ? Your target can be in the "Long" or "Close area" ?

A) A missile with range can be fired from anywhere within its range limit. If it has the dogfighting capability, it may be fired at close range, but only if the pilot engages the target in a dogfight. The burden of close range is that a pilot can't just snap of ranged weapons, but must either disengage to Long Range. He or she must attempt to dogfight if they want to fire at Close Range.

Q) If you try to bring the opponent to close range and you fail, is your aircraft placed in the "Long" or the "Close area" ?

A) It is always moved to close range during a failed dogfight engagement attempt.

Q) What if you are the only aircraft in the "Close area" and all other own and enemy aircraft are in the "Long areas" ?

A) This pilot will need to either disengage and get back to long range, or continue the fight by trying to engage the others in a dogfight. Close range combat requires dogfighting.

Q) If you are in the "Close area" can you try to dogfight only other aircrafts in the "Close area" or can you try to bring an aircraft in the "Long area" to the "Close area" ?

A) You could attempt to engage either enemy in this case.

Q) 4.4.2.2 "Climb/Dive: may engage same altitude or higher/lower aircraft"

Example: A F4 is climbing from low to medium. It can now engage an aircraft at medium or high altitude. Is this correct ?

Same example: The F4 can now engage an enemy at long distance at medium or high altitude (not low) or can try to engage at close range (= dogfight) only at medium altitude. Is this correct ?

A) Yes, the plane is climbing, and not geared to take on targets below it until it issues another order, such as Maneuver. Because there are altitude changes involved there are restrictions on dive and climb.

However the second example has one error, the F4 could attempt to engage at range, or a dogfight, any opposition at high or medium altitude.

Q) If an aircraft uses Climb/Evasion/Maneuver/Dive or Afterburner the corresponding modifier from the aircraft panel is used for all purposes until a new action is chosen in the next turn ?

A) Right! This sets the action of the pilot for the next turn, which gives the pilots some important decisions about offensive and defense.

Q) 4.4.4.2.1 What's the damage of light/medium/heavy/extreme cannons against ground targets ?

A) These are always 1. Cannons are essentially "free" to an activated craft. This is nice, but can take time to do the same work that could otherwise be done with heavier ordnance.

Q) 4.4.4.2.3 Ripple attack: Must the number of dropped weapons be declared before the first dice roll ?

A) Yep.

Q) 4.4.5 What's the aircraft damage roll modifier of an extreme cannon ?

A) There is none for aircraft. The argument here is that it is such a rare piece of equipment (the A-10 being built around it) that the hit per burst ratio would be about the same as no modifier at all. The trouble is of course that the A-10 is a terrible dogfighter.

Q) 4.4.6.2 Is the following correct if the "Bug out" - objective is chosen:  
Aircraft in "Long area" >> every action is possible >> not engaged + not fired >> bug out at the end of turn (no dice roll)

A) Correct. The plane has left.

Q) Aircraft in "Close area" >> only afterburner-action is possible >> roll a 7 or higher >> if 7 or higher bug out immediately

A) The use of the word immediately needs some clarification. This means the plane can leave at the end of the turn. This is why the +2 IR penalty exists since the heat from the afterburners makes it easier to track with IR weapons.

Q) 4.4.8 "If the aircraft below zero fuel is forced to loiter , ..." You mean "at" zero fuel ?

A) Essentially yes, once zero fuel is hit the pilots needs to get out and head for the "barn". If he can't at the end of the turn, fuel is reduced, and then the pilot bails.

Q) Page 28 Mission three "We are next"

"We deploy any defenses, and put our planes in the Target area. The Mercantile works it's way to us." How do you play this exactly in game terms ? What defences are deployed ? There are no pre-set Mercantile-fighters, so who works his way to us ?

A) Actually there is a substantial air threat at Sophistication 5, which means the Mercantile is bringing quite a few very nice airplanes with them. For defenses you can buy your own defensive installations on the Miscellaneous Equipment list which are placed on the map. Since the map is reversed it is the player's MAS that is launching from the Target Area to meet the Mercantile.

Q) Page 35 NPO Caveats What about low fuel ? It would be more realistic if there is a rule for the NPO's to withdraw/bug out if their fuel is down to - let's say - 50% or 3 fuel.

A) That is certainly an adjustment that could be made. It was left this way in the original rules to keep the number of things to track down.

## Errata

\*Equipment availability roll table has range 51-80 then jumps to 91-110

A) The second should be 81-110.

\*Weak AAA and Light cannon descriptions are written twice...

A) Yes, this is a typo. Please ignore the extra AAA line.

Please note all corrected plane and counter sheets are included with this file.

Other Minor Corrections (Included in this Pack)

### Aircraft:

A6 Intruder Climb +1 or -1  
+1 Climb

F4 Phantom Maneuver -1 or -2  
-2 Maneuver

HAL Tejas Hardpoints 8 or 10  
8 HP

SU25 Frogfoot Fuel 8 or 12  
12 Fuel (Sheet is correct)

F/A18 Hornet Hardpoints 9 or 10  
10 HP (Sheet is correct)

MIG31 Foxhound ECM 2 or 3  
2 ECM

Tornado Afterburner +3 or +5  
+3

YAK38 Forger Damage Mod -1 or +1  
-1

Eurofighter Fuel 10 or 8  
10

JAS Gripen Afterburner +3 or +4  
+3

AtA Weapons:

Alamo Range 1 or 2 / Air Target 5 or 1 / Radar or Heat  
Range 1, Air Target 5, RADAR

Adder Air Target 4 or 2 / Radar or Heat  
Range 2, Air Target 4, RADAR

Phoenix HP 2 or 1  
1 HP

AtG Weapons:

MK83 1000 Bomb Soft Target 3 or 4 / Hard Target 1 or 2  
Soft Target 3, Hard Target 1

AGM-69 SRAM Hard Target 5 or 4 / High or Low  
H 5, High Only

MK84 2000 Bomb Soft Target 3 or 7 / Hard Target 1 or 3  
Soft Target 7, Hard Target 3

GBU-12 Laser Guided MK82 Hard Target 4 or 6  
Hard Target 4

GBU-16 Laser Guided MK83 or GBU-10 Laser Guided MK84 / Soft Target 8 or  
9 / Hard Target 6 or 5 / 2 Damage or +1 Damage

GBU-16 Laser Guided MK83: Soft Target 8, Hard Target 6

GBU-10 Laser Guided MK84: Soft Target 9, Hard Target 5, +1 Damage

GBU-15 Laser Guided MK84 Variant: Soft Target 8, Hard Target 8, +1 Damage,  
High Altitude Only



Unique Attributes:

Should be “Once Per Campaign” for game balance purposes

Group 1,  
Attribute:  
18

Group 2,  
Attribute:  
14

Group 4,  
Attribute:  
18

Group 5,  
Attribute:  
15