



AIR COMBAT COMMAND

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A-10C THUNDERBOLT II

Current as of December 11, 2018



MISSION

The A-10C Thunderbolt II is the first Air Force aircraft specially designed for close air support of ground forces. They are simple, effective and survivable twin-engine jet aircraft that can be used against all ground targets, including tanks and other armored vehicles.

FEATURES

The A-10C offers excellent maneuverability at low air speeds and altitude, while maintaining a highly accurate weapons-delivery platform. They can loiter near battle areas for extended periods of time, are capable of austere landings, and operate under 1,000-foot ceilings (303.3 meters) with 1.5-mile (2.4 kilometers) visibility. Their wide combat radius and short takeoff and landing capability permit operations in and out of locations near front lines.

Thunderbolt IIs have Night Vision Imaging Systems (NVIS), goggle compatible single-seat cockpits forward of their wings, Helmet Mounted Cueing Systems, and a large bubble canopy, which provides pilots all-around vision. Using night vision goggles, A-10C pilots can conduct their missions during darkness. The pilots are protected by titanium armor that also protects parts of the flight-control system. The redundant primary structural sections allow the aircraft to enjoy better survivability during close air support than did previous aircraft.

The aircraft can survive direct hits from armor-piercing and high explosive projectiles up to 23mm. Their self-sealing fuel cells are protected by internal and external foam. Manual systems back up their redundant hydraulic flight-control systems. This permits pilots to fly and land when hydraulic power is lost.

The Thunderbolt II can be serviced and operated from bases with limited facilities near battle areas. Many of the aircraft's parts are interchangeable left and right, including the engines, main landing gear and vertical stabilizers.

Avionics equipment includes communications, inertial navigation and Global Positioning Systems, fire control and weapons delivery systems, target penetration aids and night vision goggles. Their weapons delivery systems include heads-up displays that indicate airspeed, altitude, dive angle, navigation information and weapons aiming references; and a low altitude safety and targeting enhancement system (LASTE) which provides constantly computing impact point freefall ordnance delivery. The aircraft also have armament control panels, and infrared and electronic countermeasures to handle surface-to-air-missile threats.

The Thunderbolt II's 30mm GAU-8/A Gatling gun can fire 3,900 rounds a minute and can defeat an array of ground targets to include tanks. Some of their other equipment includes an electronic countermeasures, target penetration aids, self-protection systems, and an array of air-to-surface weapons (including laser and GPS guided munitions, AGM-65 Maverick and AIM-9 Sidewinder missiles).

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