



# ACES Aircombat Ground Support Manual

## Introduction

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## About the ACES Ground Support manuals

The ACES Ground Support Manual series of documents is written to make it easier for model-aviators to start with Aircombat, as a part of the contact-network ACES.

The Ground Support Manual series consist of three manuals:

- Introduction
- Basic
- Advanced

The Introduction manual (this one) is supposed to introduce you into the world of Aircombat and ACES, and the general ideas behind it all.

The Basic manual is supposed to learn you how to arrange a smaller contest, for the first time.

The Advanced manual is supposed to learn you how to arrange a somewhat bigger contest, and how to put the contests into a cup, and some other a little bit more "advanced" doings.

*"I can't remember the time when airplanes were not part of my life and can't remember ever wanting anything so much as to fly one. Once I had started I had to keep flying."*

*Major Don S. Gentile*

## **Introduction**

Aircombat is one of the newest contest-disciplines within model-aviation. The idea is to re-create the airwars of World War II in model, in a safe way, interesting to both the contestants and the audience. The rules are such that models of 1/12 scale WWII fighters meet each other in fights, during contest. (Please see the rules for more info on how the contests are run).

ACES (AirCombat Elementary Support) was formed by the competing pilots, to form a world-wide contact-network for the pilots. ACES is the organisation that organises the competing pilots, both nationally and internationally. ACES is a democratic organisation, run by officers elected by the competing pilots once every year.

*"Every Dogfight is a duel, and deadly."*

*Feldwebel Oscar Boelsch*

## **Aircombat**

This whole thing is about Aircombat - so let us try to explain the general ideas behind it all.

### ***The genereal idea***

Model-aviation pilots started with Aircombat because they thought it was *fun*! This is still the general idea behind it all - we all do this because we think it is great fun!

Participating in Aircombat should be great fun, to all. Audience, competing pilots, ACES officers, *everyone* should have a great time out on the field!

Some might say we are playing war, but this is not how we see things. We see Aircombat as a game, and as a game only. Aircombat is a game where we in a historical perspective teach new generations what actually happened in the dark years of WWII.

### ***General on rules***

Aircombat is a game. To have a game, there must be rules. Aircombat is in fact the rules, that are changed by the pilots, according to the majority of the pilots will, according to the annual ACES vote.

Rules are to be obeyed. It is up to every participating pilot and member of ACES to see to this.

At the same time rules should not be applied in absurdum. This means that when a problem arises with the rules or the game, *common sense* must be used by both the arranging group and the competing pilots!

## **Safety**

Aircombat is a game involving models of high velocity. There is a risk for personal injuries involved in aircombat, as in all model-aviation (and as in all sports).

Because of this, *safety always has the highest priority*!

Safety should be considered both at contests and at training, test-flights, actually whenever an aircombat-model is airborne.

Safety has such importance that any action taken by a competing pilot deemed to be too hazardous may cause this pilot to be disqualified from the event, or even from ACES.

## ***History***

Aircombat - as model-aviation - has a long history. The first type of controlled model-airplanes were the control-line model-planes. It didn't take long until pilots built scale-models of fighters, and started fighting each other using this kind of model. Eventually, they abandoned the scale-outline, and instead ended up in what today is called F2D Combat - that is, combat with control-line flying wings.

In the 1970-80's, radio-controlled model-planes became cheaper and more available to the public. It didn't take long until some pilots started fighting each other, flying .25-powered "Fun-fighters", and the sort.

During the late 1980's, a format where 1/12 scale fighters from the period of WWII were used in a game accepted by pilots all over the world. Two or more pilots flew against each other, having a streamer attached to the rear of the model. The idea was to cut the opponent streamers, and to keep the own streamer at full length. Since then the concept of 1/12 scale R/C combat has grown worldwide.

During 1995 the game Aircombat was formed, using experience from previous games. Also the organisation ACES was formed at that time, to support the game and its pilots. Aircombat and ACES has since continuously kept growing, worldwide.

*"The successful fighter pilot had to be at the right place at the right time."*

*Colonel John W. Cunnick*

## ACES

The bylaws of ACES are written in the ACES Regulations. The Regulations are the ones who describe how ACES is supposed to be run. The Regulations are voted upon every year, by all ACES members.

The idea behind ACES (AirCombat Elementary Support) are explained in further detail below.

### **General on ACES**

ACES was formed to support the model-aviation pilots interested in the game Aircombat. ACES is a democratic network of competing pilots, worldwide.

- ACES arranges contests for the competing pilots.
  - ACES arranges cups of contests, within different regions (regional, national and international cups).
  - ACES arranges an annual vote to decide in Aircombat and ACES matters.
  - ACES promotes Aircombat, and tries to spread the game worldwide.
- ...Plus lots more!

The idea behind ACES is to be a network of model-aviation pilots, who work for a common cause - to enjoy the game Aircombat, and to have fun!

### **The general goals**

The three general goals of ACES are (in priority-order):

1. Safety
2. Fun
3. Contest

As explained in the Safety -section above, the most prioritised goal of ACES is to make sure the game Aircombat is run as safe as possible, worldwide. Safety has always highest priority!

The main reason why all pilots enjoy the game Aircombat is that they have fun! This is one of the main goals of ACES, to let everyone have fun. To have fun, the game should never grow too serious, instead it should be kept at such level that all pilots can enjoy the game. Also, to have fun, all arguments should be decided the best possible way. Most often the best possible way is to decide by vote, so that the majority decides. At the same time, all new pilots should feel welcome to ACES and Aircombat - this is a game and an organisation for all interested model-aviators!

The whole thing is built around Aircombat - the game and the contest! This is why the contests and all the activities and stuff involved are one of the main goals of ACES. Contests should be arranged. Contests should be fair. To arrange contests there must be rules. Most often, to arrange contests there also must be an organisation behind it, co-ordinating the contests.

The three above main goals of ACES form the heart of ACES - what always should be in mind of any competing pilot within ACES.

## Organisation

As already mentioned above, ACES is formed as a contact-network of Aircombat-pilots across the world. It is however impossible to just have an un-organised bunch of pilots, in a big network. For this reason, ACES has an organisational chart, just like most other organisations.

Basically, ACES is a network of national ACES-sections. The national ACES-sections are (almost) totally independant of the other ACES-sections, including the ACES international co-ordination section.

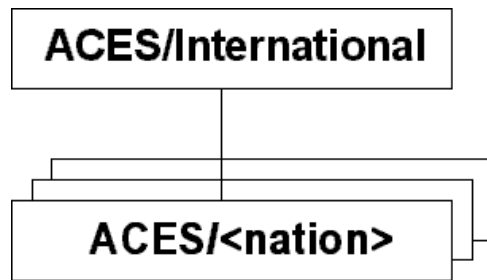


Fig. 1: The ACES organisational chart, overview.

The different sections within ACES are run by ACES administrators (admins), or ACES officers as it also might be called. The most important ACES admins are elected, by the concerned members. This is explained in more detail further below.

The organisational structure of ACES is described in the ACES Regulations. However, as every national section of ACES is independant of the others, and of ACES/International, every national section may decide to change the organisational structure to fit its own needs. A national section may thus choose to add or skip any admin posts as it see fit.

The different sections, and their ACES admins, are explained below.

## ACES/International

The top-level within the ACES organisational hierarchy is ACES/International. The general work for ACES/International is to co-ordinate the work of the different national ACES/Sections.

The International section consist of two ACES admins: The International Co-ordinator (IC) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Co-ordinator. Other international admins may be added as well, depending on the needs of ACES/International.

Example of work done by ACES/International are:

- Co-ordinate the annual vote, at an international level.
- Co-ordinate international contests and cups.
- Rewrite and distribute the international rules, once a year.
- Publish an international newsletter.
- Maintain an international internet-site.
- Possibly arrange larger international contests.

Plus lots more!



## ACES/<nation>

The core of ACES consist of the national sections. The national sections are responsible for Aircombat and ACES within its own country.

The mandatory admins within a national ACES-section are: National Contact (NC), and the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Contact.

The National Contact is elected by the national members, annually. The National Contact then appoints the rest of the national staff (except GC's, see below).

The National Contacts should act as contacts in-between the national members, and the other sections within ACES, including ACES/International. The National Contact is responsible for Aircombat within "his/her" country. The NC should try to arrange as many contests as possible, either himself or (if any) through the GC's. The NC is also responsible of a National Championship (if any).

There might also be the following admins within a national ACES section: Group-contact (GC), Treasurer, Supply-shop officer, newsletter editor, webmaster and PR-officer. (Of course there might be other admins within a national ACES-section, depending on the various needs). They all report directly to the NC's.

A Group-Contact handles contests within a limited area (region) of a country. He might have a 2<sup>nd</sup> Group Contact to help him. A country should consider to divide its organisation into several Fighter-groups when the amount of competing pilots grows too big, or if the country in itself is too big to be covered by the NC alone.

The treasurer is responsible of the money of the national ACES-section.

The Supply-shop officer should keep a supply of ACES-stuff to the national ACES members. This can be ACES-badges, ACES fighter-wings, ACES-caps, ACES T-shirts, etc.

The Newsletter editor is responsible of the national newsletter.

The webmaster is responsible of the national internet-site, and related internet-matters.

The PR-officer is responsible of media-contacts, for instance of sending pressreleases of coming contests to media, and sending results from flown contests to media.

## ACES/<group>

As mentioned above, if a country within ACES is considered to be too big for the NC's to cover, or if the amount of pilots is growing too big for the NC's to cope with alone, then the country should be divided into two or more Fighter-groups.

A Fighter-group is responsible of arranging contests within its regional area of the country.

A fighter-group consist of the following admins: Group Contact (GC), and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Group Contact.

The Group contact is elected at the annual vote, by the concerned member pilots. The elected Group Contact then chooses his 2<sup>nd</sup> GC.

The most common thing is that the GC's go around to different local clubs, and (help them) arrange Aircombat contests. In this way Aircombat is spread to clubs who normally would not try to arrange an Aircombat contest.

## Squadrons

Squadrons have no real organisational role within ACES, but is a fun thing for the members. Squadrons are a way for more experienced pilots to share their knowledge with younger pilots within the same squadron.

According to ACES regulations it takes four members of ACES to form a Squadron. Each Squadron should have a Squadron leader, and a 2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron leader.

Most Squadrons make up their own squadron-logotypes, and sometimes make badges and stickers of them.

## ***Chain-of-command***

There is a chain-of-command within ACES. Generally speaking, democracy should rule. In-between democratic vote, decisions should be taken by the elected admins, except for really big decisions that might call for an in-between vote.

The chain-of-command is as follows:

The highest deciding authority within ACES is the annual international ACES vote.

In-between the annual international ACES vote, the two IC's may decide in international matters. For bigger international matters, the IC's should call for the advice of the NC's before making a decision. If really important matters must be decided, a vote among the NC's must take place. The vote is then decided by majority, where one vote per member country counts.

In national matters, the annual ACES national vote is the highest deciding authority.

In-between the annual national ACES vote, the NC's may decide in national matters. For bigger national matters, the NC's should call for the advice of the other national admins before making a decision. If really important matters must be decided, an in-between national ACES vote may be called upon.

At Group-level, the GC's decide in all matters, in co-operation with the NC's. For bigger decisions, the GC's should call for the advice of some of the Group's pilots before making a decision.

At a contest, the arranging party (NC, GC or other) decide in normal matters. If any really important matters are raised (such as a protest from a competing pilot) a vote among the competing pilots should be made, to decide in the matter.

***The annual vote***

Once every year, a vote is made among the ACES members, at all levels. Three general topics are voted upon:

The Aircombat rules.

The ACES regulations, and other matters concerning ACES.

Personal elections.

The vote is differentiated into three levels:

International.

National.

Group (regional).

Any member of ACES can propose a change of rules/regulations. Any member can also run for any electable admin-post within ACES (within geographical limitations of course).

Proposals intended for the international vote should have at least 3 supporters (including the member who made the proposal), to be considered in the international vote.

Proposals should be sent to the NC. The NC then redistributes the proposals to the IC, who assembles the international vote and sends it to the NC's. The NC's then run the national vote, and send the results to the IC. The IC then assembles the results, and distributes it to the NC's. The IC then writes a new set of international Aircombat rules and ACES regulations, following the result from the international vote.

Note here that a national ACES-section may vote for things that are not put up to the international vote.

Also note that a national ACES-section may choose to follow the national result of the vote, instead of the international one.

The personal elections work in three levels, according to the above. All members of ACES can vote for the IC. All members of a country can vote for the NC. All members of a group may vote for the GC. The candidate with the majority is the elected admin. The (possibly new) admin starts his post the first of January the following year.

The vote is normally held during autumn, to decide on the rules, regulations and admins to be used the next year.

## **Contests and cups**

ACES should arrange contests. This is one of the basic ideas behind the organisation.

How to arrange Aircombat-contests is covered in the "Ground Support - Basic" manual.

But who is supposed to arrange the contests?

This question has different answers depending on which country (or part of a country) we look at.

Generally speaking, the following scheme has worked very well in countries who have started flying Aircombat:

For a start, the NC/2<sup>nd</sup> NC arrange contests at different clubs/airfields where they know there is at least one pilot who has built and flown an Aircombat model, and who is interested in competing in Aircombat. In this way more pilots start to compete in Aircombat.

After a while, interest will (most likely) be bigger, and different clubs with interested Aircombat-pilots, will arrange contests. The NC's can then continue arranging contests at "new" clubs (that is, clubs new to Aircombat).

If interest in the country grows big enough, two or more Fighter-groups may be formed, and the job of arranging contests can be transferred to the GC's of the different groups.

The approach of having ACES admins arranging the different Aircombat-contests - instead of the local clubs - have many advantages:

- The spread of Aircombat gets faster, as NC's/GC's can choose which areas to put contests in.
- The arranging work becomes easier/better, as the same persons do it all the time, instead of letting every club repeat the same mistakes.
- It is easy to "cover" even a single new Aircombat-pilot at a club, and so all new pilots can be attracted to Aircombat.
- It is easy to set up a national cup.

Traditionally, national and international cup's have been flown with great success over the years. Why is this so?

Well, it seems pilots like the idea of not only going to a single contest, but instead participating in a greater context - a cup! It also seems to get the pilots to go to more contests, as they want to make up for a few bad rounds flown at a contest previously in the cup, just to get a better standing in the cup.

How to arrange a cup is covered in the "Ground Support - Advanced" manual.

## **Public Relations**

One of ACES' big goals is to spread the game Aircombat nationally and internationally. One of the best ways to achieve this is to be very active when it comes to Public Relations. How to do this is described below.

## **Media**

The success so far for Aircombat involves an extensive work in actually bombarding hobby-media (read hobby-magazines) with articles, free plans, and contest-calendars. The truth is - it works!

It is the ambition of ACES to keep the media-pressure up, as long and as intense as possible.

To attract new model-aviators to start flying Aircombat, we should concentrate on the hobby-magazines. There are several ways to get published in this kind of magazine:

- Use the free-plans and articles available via ACES.
- Write your own (short) article on why you started with Aircombat.
- Publish small notes on coming Aircombat-events.
- Send info to all hobby-event-calendars of upcoming Aircombat-events.
- Write contest-reports.
- Write your own (longer) articles with Aircombat-experience, and possible your own designs.

Nationally, the media-efforts should be co-ordinated through the NC. It is not wise to have many different writers writing at the same time, to the same hobby-magazine, if they do not co-ordinate their work. *Co-ordination* is the key!

Internationally, The IC co-ordinates the media-efforts, sending out international press-releases to the NC's to redistribute, etc.

## **Internet**

A new media which is highly efficient, is the Internet. To (almost) no cost, we can publish as much info as we want, for (almost) everyone to take part of!

In ACES, the internet-efforts follow the ACES organisation. The ACES internet network is built up by the ACES/International website as the "hub" in the net, from which all national ACES websites should be reachable.

At a national level, the NC is responsible for the national Internet-site (if any). The NC may choose to assign a national webmaster to do this work.

On the internet the following information should be found:

- Names of the appropriate contacts.
  - The Aircombat rules, in appropriate language.
  - General info on ACES.
  - Contest dates.
  - Contest results.
  - Contest reports.
- + other related info, like tips & tricks, etc.

***The ACES Optional regulations***

A part of the ACES regulations is optional. This means that this part is actually a part of the ACES regulations, but they are optional for any member to use at his/her own will.

Included in the Optional regulations are ranks, order ribbons, and other decorations. These are thought of as a fun part of the game, relating to the historical view of the game. They are also thought to be something that gets pilots to compete more, to achieve a higher rank, or a special order ribbon, etc.

Please note, that the decorations of the Optional regulations are in no means thought to make ACES a militaristic organisation! Also note, that *no* member of ACES has the right to command another member of ACES, just because the first member has a higher rank than the other!

The Optional regulations are also optional in the sense, that a national ACES section may (for any reason) decide not to use this part of the regulations.

As a member pilot, you should also be very careful to consider that the customs are different, in different countries. This especially applies if going abroad to a contest. *Always* check how the situation concerning the optional regulations/decorations are in the country you are planning to compete in! If this is a concern, avoid wearing decorations that may upset any audience or competing pilots from the hosting country!

## Version

0.1	1999-10-02	Martin Elmberg	Initial version
0.2	2000-01-20	Martin Elmberg	Minor updates
1.0	2000-05-02	Martin Elmberg	First release version