

Level Bombing

by Hammer

Level bombing in Aces High II is not rocket science, but it does require some planning, patience, and an understanding of the systems used in order to be successful. The purpose of this write up is to shed some light on techniques that can make you a successful level bomber. These are certainly not the only or even the best methods to accomplish your level bombing mission, but they do work for me!

Choose Your Target

The first step in planning a bomber mission is to choose your target and which structures you wish to destroy at your target. You will use your situation awareness and your own personal goals to decide where you can successfully bomb and where you can help influence the battle. The most common targets are the airfield your country is trying to capture or the airfield that is attacking your airfield. Other popular targets include vehicle bases and an enemy's HQ. With an effective strat system, factories and cities could also become popular targets.

Once you've decided on your target, you must figure out how much ordnance it is going to take to destroy it. The chart below shows the various structures, what it takes to destroy them, how long they are down, and what effect their destruction has. Note the down times listed are the maximum down times if the base is not re-supplied. Drone supply convoys are constantly running and the enemy can re-supply a field from nearby bases so, with the exception of hangars and CVs, you will rarely see items down as long as indicated in the chart.

Target type	Target	Destroy with	Down time	Effect	Supplier	Can be resupplied
Field	Map room	10 troops	N/A	Captures field	N/A	No
	Guns	1 100 lb	2 hours	Kills field ack	AAA factory	Yes
	Radar	1 250 lb	2 hours	Kills field radar in a 12.5 mile radius	Radar factory	Yes
	Ammo	1 250 lb	2 hours	Reduces bomb/rocket loadout to zero	Ammo factory	Yes
	Fuel	1 250 lb	2 hours	Reduces maximum allowed fuel load	Fuel refinery	Yes
	Barracks	1 250 lb	2 hours	Reduces troop loadout to zero	Training facility	Yes
	Fighter hangar	3 1000 lb	15 mins	Disables fighters at the field	N/A	No
	Bomber hangar	3 1000 lb	15 mins	Disables bombers at the field	N/A	No
	Vehicle hangar	3 1000 lb	15 mins	Disables vehicles at the field	N/A	No
	Shore battery	4 1000 lb	15 mins	Disables shore battery at the field	N/A	No
	Town	1 250 lb	45 mins	Kills town building to	N/A	No

Target type	Target	Destroy with	Down time	Effect	Supplier	Can be resupplied
	building			allow for field capture		
Zone	HQ	37 1000 lb	2 hours	Kills all radar for a country	City building	Yes
	AAA factory	1 250 lb	3 hours	Loads supplies for field guns	City building	Yes
	Radar factory	1 250 lb	3 hours	Loads supplies for field radar	City building	Yes
	Ammo factory	1 250 lb	3 hours	Loads supplies for ammo at fields	City building	Yes
	Fuel refinery	1 250 lb	3 hours	Loads supplies for fuel tanks at fields	City building	Yes
	Training facility	1 250 lb	3 hours	Loads supplies for barracks at fields	City building	Yes
City	City building	1 250 lb	3 hours	Loads supplies for factories and HQ	City building	Yes *
Supply	Train	1 100 lb	N/A	Stops train from resupplying destination	N/A	N/A
	Convoy	½ 100 lb	N/A	Stops convoy from resupplying destination	N/A	N/A
	Barge	½ 100 lb	N/A	Stops barge from resupplying destination	N/A	N/A
Ships	Primary ship	8 1000 lb	5 min	Sinks task group, respawns at port	N/A	No
	Other ships	2 1000 lb	1 hour	Sinks ship	N/A	No
Special Types	Barrier	N/A	N/A	Barrier	N/A	N/A
	Structure	1 250 lb	45 minutes	An object any country can destroy	N/A	No

These values are subject to change

Select Your Bomber and Bomb Load

Choosing which bomber to use for your mission is a matter of personal preference and what you hope to accomplish with your mission. If you want to destroy all of a certain type of target, you need to choose a plane that will allow you to carry enough bombs to do so. The number of bombs you will require to destroy a target will vary widely with experience and I won't try to give any guidelines other than to say practice and determine the minimum number of bombs you need to drop and the maximum number of targets you can destroy. Experiment with different bomb loads and remember that a formation allows you to accomplish missions with different bombs or salvo settings than you could with a single plane. If you are unsure what targets are going to be up at your target, 500 pound bombs are a flexible choice.

Select your bomber and bomb load in the hangar. Below is a quick summary of the level bombers, ordered by bomb load:

Lancaster III - Capable of carrying a whopping 14,000 pounds of bombs, the Lancaster is slow, climbs poorly, and has fairly weak defensive armament. Use for very high altitude bombing or in areas where your fighters own the sky. If you're going up high, plan on a long flight. It takes a Lanc over 35 minutes to reach 25k with 14k bombs and 25% fuel (see chart below).

B-24J - The B-24J and the B-17G share the strongest defensive armament of all the bombers and have similar performance but, with the B-24 carrying 2,000 pounds of bombs more than the B-17 (for a total of 8,000 pounds), the B-24 instantly surpassed the B-17 in popularity when it was introduced with version 2.01. Unlike its use in the real world, the B-24J is more often used in Aces High for low altitude tactical strikes than high altitude bombing.

Ju 88A-4 - It is probably a surprise to most people that the Ju 88 can carry a heavier bomb load than the B-17, but numbers don't lie. Capable of carrying 4 x 500kg bombs externally and another 20 x 50kg bombs internally, the Ju 88 can carry 3000kg (6,600 pounds) of ordnance, including 2 torpedoes. While it is faster than the B-17 below 20k, it has a lower rate of climb and much weaker defensive armament. Still, it has enough bombs to destroy a hangar or two with plenty left over to de-ack a field and then go to work on the fuel and ammo. If only it had a forward firing 20mm instead of the puny 7.7mm!

B-17G - The B-17G, along with the B-24J, has the strongest defensive armament of all the bombers and can carry a respectable 6,000 pounds of bombs. It is also fairly fast (for a bomber), especially up high. Like the other level bombers, you are as likely to see B-17s on the deck as up high.

B-26B - The Marauder is a great bomber for rendering a field useless. Capable of carrying 4000 pounds of bombs, it can carry large bombs to destroy hangars or small bombs to destroy the ack, fuel and ammo. It has fixed, pilot controlled forward firing guns that allow lots of strafing. It is about 50 mph faster than a B-17 down low, making it a good choice for low altitude missions. Its main weakness is the lack of a belly gun, allowing undefended attacks from underneath. Keep it below 2,000 feet and that is not much of a problem (but the swarming enemy are!).

Ar 234B - The only perk bomber currently in the game, the Arado Ar 234B is a jet powered bomber capable of carrying 1500kg (3,300 pounds) of bombs. Faster than most fighters at any altitude, the Arado is not immune to the fighter diving down from higher and for that reason should be flown at least at medium altitude where it will have a chance to dive away from an attacker. To fly at high altitude, you will probably have to sacrifice 1,000kg of bombs in order to take drop tanks needed to give you the range.

TBM-3 - The only carrier based bomber capable of level bombing, the TBM can carry a torpedo or up to 2,000 pounds of bombs. It can also carry 6 wing mounted 5 inch High Velocity Aerial Rockets (HVAR) which gives it enough firepower to take out a hangar. However, since carrier launched fighters such as the F6F and F4U-1D can carry just as much ordnance, the TBM has a hard time making a place for itself in the arena and is usually flown as a novelty or for a torpedo attempt against an opposing fleet.

Boston III - Introduced with Aces High version 1.10, the Boston III is an older cousin of the A-20G Havoc (also introduced in 1.10). The best performing level bomber, it is capable of carrying only 2,000 pounds of bombs and has very weak defensive armament. Because

many fighters can carry more ordnance than the Boston III, this bomber will most likely find its use limited to scenarios.

Ki-67 - Introduced in version 1.09, the Ki-67 "Hiryu" (Flying Dragon) is the first Japanese level bomber in the game. The Ki-67 is a fast bomber with a very good rate of climb but it carries a maximum of only 800kg (1,760 pounds) of bombs and lacks the pilot controlled guns of the B-26. It can carry a torpedo but torpedo runs are fairly rare. For these reasons, I suspect it will have difficulty finding a niche in the main arena. Still, its speed, climb rate, and the 20mm cannon in its dorsal turret make it a good choice for a quick strike bomber while its speed and climbing ability can allow it to survive high altitude missions. This bomber can also be flown in the attack mode.

Formation or Single Sortie?

There is little reason to take only a single bomber instead of a formation unless you plan on making a low level, nap-of-the-earth (NOE) run with lots of hard maneuvering. Even then, if you can get a formation to the target, you have 3 times the destructive power available.

Decide Your Bombing Altitude and Calculate the Time/Distance to Get There

Your next step in planning your bomber mission is to decide what altitude you want to be at over the target. You may also want to reach a certain altitude before entering enemy territory. Deciding these issues will help determine where to start your sortie and help you plan your route. Choosing an altitude to bomb from is a compromise of three issues: how long it will take to get there, the likelihood of being intercepted, and how accurate you are from altitude.

How long it will take you to get to a certain altitude is plane dependent. Below is a chart showing how much time and distance it takes the various bombers to get to altitude with the indicated fuel load and the maximum bomb load using the default auto-speed. These measurements were taken in AH1. The AH2 performance may be slightly different but the measurements are still close enough for planning purposes.

The likelihood of interception decreases with altitude. In the main arena, anything below 10k is low altitude. At these altitudes, the probability of interception by enemy fighters is almost 100% unless your side has total air superiority and the numbers to maintain it. Even then, you will probably need a gunner over the target so you can concentrate on dropping your bombs. If there is an even fight going on over your target, low altitude is probably not a good choice.

From 10k up to about 20k is medium altitude. The risk of interception is still high, but it will more than likely be by one or two planes at a time instead of getting hoarded like you do at low altitude. The down side is it takes longer to get to these altitudes and will possibly be above a wind layer, making your bombsight calibration more difficult. If there is a hard-pressed even fight going on over the enemy base, a medium altitude run has a decent chance of making it. You will probably still need a gunner over the target, though.

High altitude is 20k and up. The higher you are, the less likely you are to be intercepted. On the other hand, it can take some of the bombers a very long time to get to altitude. For example, a B-17G with 6k bombs and 25% fuel takes almost 20 minutes and 2 sectors (50 miles) to climb from sea level to 20k.

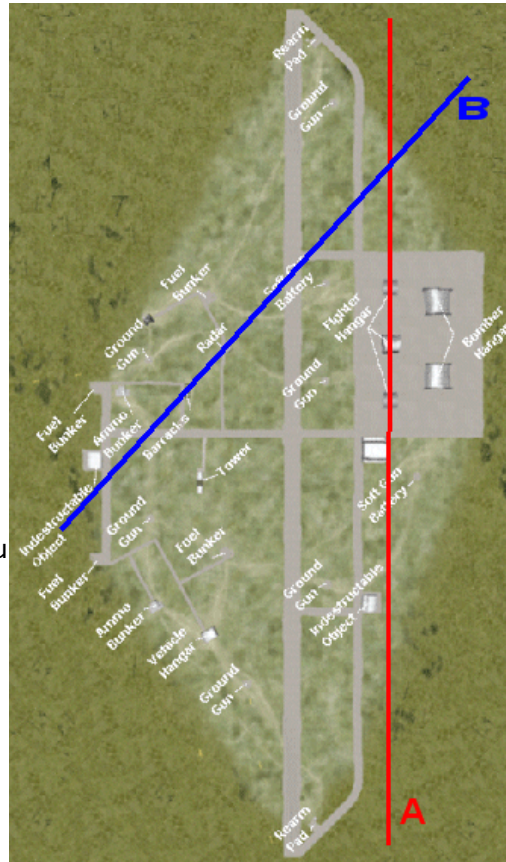
Your accuracy at altitude will be a factor of practice. The more experienced you are, the more accurately you can bomb from higher altitudes.

Choose Your Route

Once you have figured out how much time and distance it will take to climb to your desired altitude, you can decide how far back from the "front" you need to take off in order to achieve your desired altitude. Once you have done this, you have a start and end point for your route and you can figure out what comes in between.

The first thing to consider in choosing your actual route is the direction from which you want to approach the target. You do this based on what you want to hit at the target. Look at the map of a small airfield to the right. If you want to destroy the fighter hangars at this field, the approach indicated by line A is appropriate. With good bombsight calibration and intelligent salvo settings, you can destroy all the hangars in one pass. If, however, you want to destroy the barracks and the radar, the approach indicated by line B would be appropriate.

If you don't drop all your bombs on the first pass, you also need to take your next pass into consideration. Think about which way you should turn to help line up the targets you want to hit on your second pass. Maps of the airfields are available on the clipboard maps.



Now that you have determined where you need to start and how you want to come in over the target for your bomb run, you need to plan your actual route. This is often the most direct route if you are hitting a front line base, but you may want to plan a more circuitous route that avoids the front line battles (which are usually over or between airfields) if you want to hit a target farther back. Plan to avoid enemy radar coverage (right click on your map and select "Radar" to see the radar coverage around fields) if possible. The key is to select a route that allows you to come over the target from the direction you have planned for your bomb run. This could mean planning a route that brings you in from that direction, or simply making the necessary adjustments as you approach the target. You need to ensure you line up on your target early enough to allow speed adjustments and bombsight calibration prior to the drop. You probably won't want to drop at full speed and it takes longer than you might think to stop decelerating and reach a stable speed. Plan on reaching your bombing altitude at least 1/2 sector (preferably more) out from your target so your speed has time to stabilize prior to calibrating your bombsight.

Taking Off

Taking off in a bomber takes a little more consideration than taking off in a fighter. A bomber, especially the heavies like the B-17 and Lancaster, require considerably more runway to takeoff and, once up, their climb rate is very low. Make sure there are no hills at

the end of the runway or you may find yourself back in the tower much sooner than you expected.



If your view down the runway looks like this, you might want to reconsider your takeoff direction!

After starting your engines, apply throttle to start moving down the runway. Just as in a fighter, apply rudder to keep yourself centered on the runway. If you use auto-takeoff, you start on the runway with 2 notches of flaps down. Go ahead and raise those back up. In doing some quick experiments with the B-17, I have found you take off using less runway with flaps up. Once off the ground, level to gain some speed while raising gear. Once you have reached your plane's best climbing speed, apply auto-speed ([ALT][X]) and begin the slow climb to target.

When taking off with formations, it is important to note that your drones will not leave the runway to follow you on a "shortcut" takeoff path. You must takeoff down the runway. Also keep in mind that your drones are trying to form up with you and are susceptible to running into buildings at the airfield or nearby terrain features if you maneuver them into them. Drones will not start to form up on you until you are 200 feet above ground level (AGL). If you have a drone lagging behind, chop throttle and allow it to catch up. If your drones get too far away from your lead plane, they explode.



Take off down the runway if you want your formation to stay intact

Flying Your Formation to the Target

Flying in formation is a bit different from flying a single bomber. You must make your turns gentle enough that your formation can stay with you. Too sharp a turn and they will become separated. Separate too much and your drones will self-destruct.



Turn too tight and you'll lose your formation

In addition to keeping your maneuvers gentle, it is a good idea to throttle back during your turns. This allows the other planes to have the extra power they might need to maintain formation.

As you are flying to your target, it is useful to pay close attention to your text buffer for information about your target. You will often see reports about fighter coverage, what needs to be hit, and who else is heading there with bombs. If you are not seeing this information,

you will want to ask about it so you can plan your approach and bomb run. There is no need to start asking as soon as you clear the runway, but once you are within a sector or so, you need to know. The more details you can get the better, but don't expect everybody to stop what they are doing to answer every question you may have about a target. Take what you can get and plan accordingly. Adjust your approach to allow you to hit as many targets as possible in one pass. Also, be prepared to change targets. A lot can happen in the time it takes to get a bomber to a target!

Approaching the Target

It is important to get lined up with the target and into drop configuration early enough to allow your speed to stabilize for proper bombsight calibration. It can take a surprisingly long time for a plane to reach a stable speed when reducing or increasing throttle. A good technique is to figure out an RPM setting which gives you a constant speed and altitude. This RPM setting will vary at different altitudes and by plane. Practice and experience will help you determine what works best for you. It is even more important to get properly lined up if you are bombing from above the wind layer(s) (if present) because, once your bombsight is calibrated, any change in direction will throw the calibration off in relation to the wind direction. This is discussed in more detail during the bombsight calibration portion of this write-up.

Use the map to get lined up on your general direction of approach at least 12 miles (1/2 sector) from your target. Reduce your throttle to your drop setting for a speed of somewhere between 150 and 185. Try to find a speed that will allow your bomber to maintain altitude and not drift up or down. Open your bomb bay doors so the drag will bring you to your actual drop speed. You will also want to set your salvo and delay based on what structures you plan on hitting at the target.

Your salvo setting determines how many bombs will drop when you press the bomb key. The delay sets how much time elapses between each bomb. These are important settings which allow you to spread your bombs over then entire target, eliminating strats as you go, or concentrate them in one area to demolish a hardened structure. Both salvo and delay are set using dot commands.



Formation Bomb Patterns, 10k, 175 mph IAS

To set your salvo, the command is `.salvo #` where `#` is a number between 1 and the max number of bombs you are carrying.

Delay is set with `.delay #.##` where `#.##` is a time between 0.05 seconds and 1.00 second. The difference between these is shown in the two pictures below.

If the skies are contested, you will probably want to call for a gunner before you begin your final approach. While you can gun for yourself with no problem on the way to your target, you can't effectively calibrate your bombsight, make the bomb run, and gun for yourself while you're doing it. Give a call on your country or squad channel and you'll more than likely find someone willing to gun.

Final Approach

Once you have set your throttle, opened your bomb bay doors, and set your salvo and delay, it is time to get in a position to make your final adjustments. Go to the bombardier's position in your plane by pressing [F6].

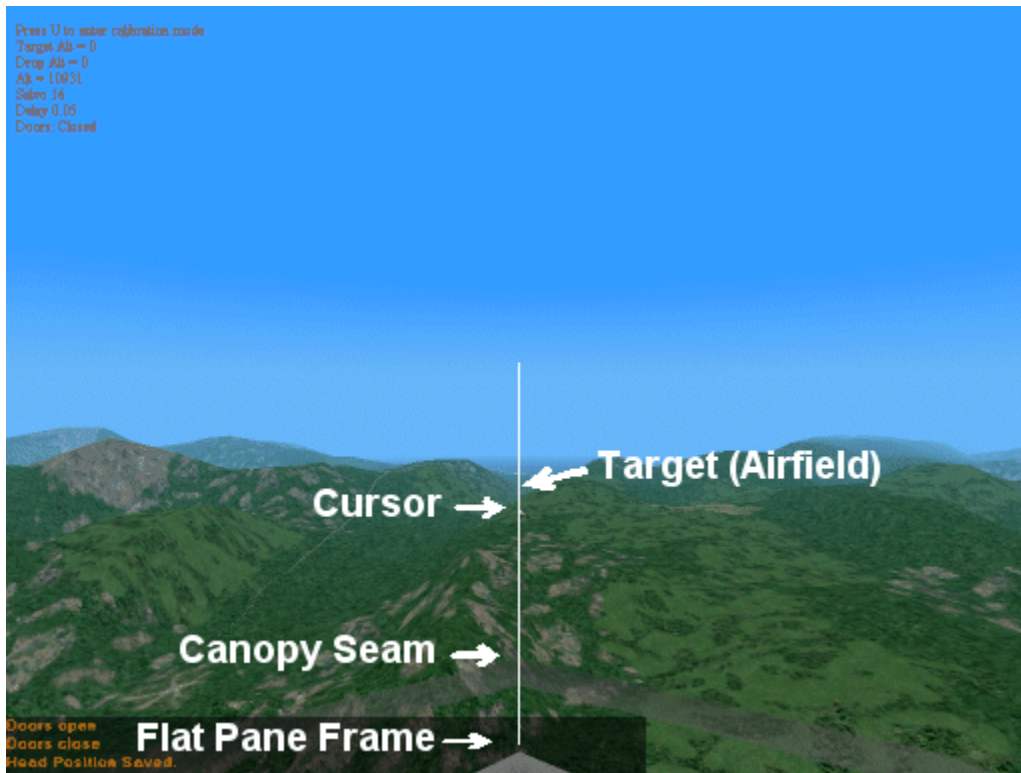
When you enter the bombardier's position, you will be looking through the bombsight. Take your cursor and align it on the vertical crosshair about 1/4 to 1/3 up from the bottom of your screen. You are going to use this to further help you line up on the target. You may need to do a quick calibration to line up your crosshair with your direction of travel.



align your cursor with the vertical crosshair

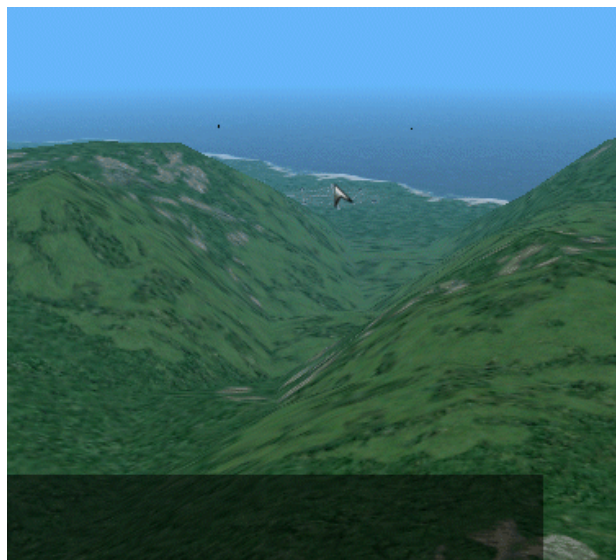
After your cursor is aligned, push the [8] key on your keypad to look up from your bombsight. You now have a reference to "dead center" from your bombardier's view that can be used to further line up on your target once it is in view. Adjust your view through the

nose of the bomber to give as clear a view possible out the nose. If you are in a TBM, you will have to go back to the pilot's position.



view from the bombardier's position in a B-17G - note how the cursor and other available features are used to line up with the target

Depending on your altitude and the terrain around it, you can spot your target from as far as 10 miles away, maybe even further. Once you can see your target, zoom in to see for yourself what structures are standing and make additional adjustments to your approach direction to line up and prepare your bomb run to hit the available targets.



zoom in for a better view and more precise adjustments

While in the bombardier's position, to include while looking through the bombsight, you can steer the plane using your joystick. When you release your joystick, your plane will automatically go back to level flight. You want to make gentle corrections and wait for the plane to stabilize to see the results.

While making your final adjustments, you should also be able to determine if the structures you had planned on bombing are still standing or if you will need to adjust your salvo and delay settings in order to effectively bomb other targets.

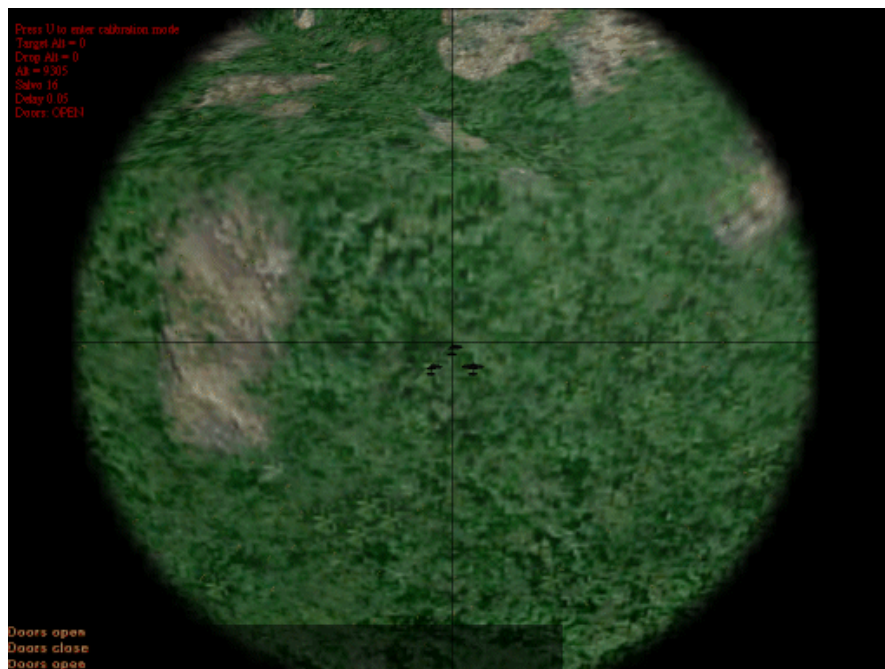
Once you have adjusted your flight path to your satisfaction, it is time to calibrate your bombsight.

Calibrating Your Bombsight

Calibrating the sight is what gives most people trouble. In many flight simulations, your bombsight is a laser pointer and your bombs hit where your sight points. Not so in Aces High. Here you must calibrate your sight and fly at the calibrated speed and altitude in order for your bombs to hit their target.

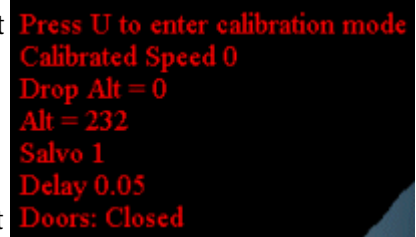
Before you calibrate your bombsight, you must be at a constant speed and altitude. Use auto-level to set your altitude. Pick a speed at which your bomber will fly without losing or gaining altitude and set your throttle to maintain that speed. You can check your speed with the E6B on your clipboard. If your speed is increasing or decreasing, you will not get an accurate calibration!

The steps involved in calibrating your bombsight are not that complicated. When you enter the bombardier position by pressing the [F6] key, you are taken directly to the bombsight view. This will give you a view like the one below.



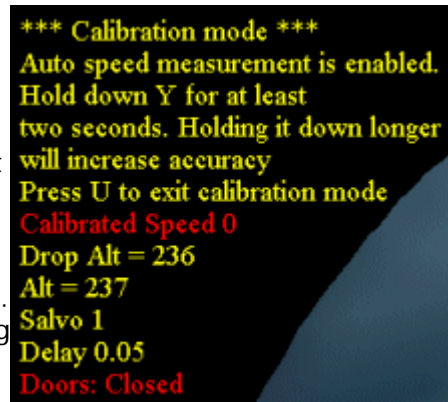
view through bombsight, no zoom

The first thing you should notice is the red text in the upper left corner of your screen. Red text indicates the sight is not calibrated. The first line of this information will tell you to press [U] (or whatever key you may have mapped it to) to enter the calibration mode. (If it says "Press None to enter calibration mode", it means you must map a key to this function.) The bombsight calibration functions are found in the "Flight" keys list of your keyboard mapping. For the rest of this write up, I will use the [U] key as the key which takes you into the calibration mode and the [Y] key as the key which is used to calibrate speed during calibration.



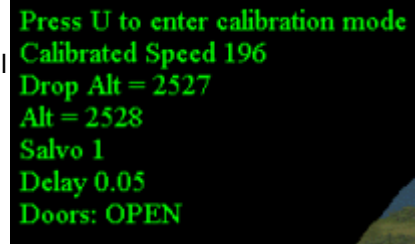
Press U to enter calibration mode
Calibrated Speed 0
Drop Alt = 0
Alt = 232
Salvo 1
Delay 0.05
Doors: Closed

When you press the [U] key to enter the calibration mode, the text in the upper left of your bombsight screen expands and changes color to yellow. Under the heading ***Calibration mode***, the text states "Auto speed measurement is enabled. Hold down Y for at least two seconds. Holding it longer will increase accuracy". That is not the whole story, though!



*** Calibration mode ***
Auto speed measurement is enabled.
Hold down Y for at least two seconds. Holding it down longer will increase accuracy
Press U to exit calibration mode
Calibrated Speed 0
Drop Alt = 236
Alt = 237
Salvo 1
Delay 0.05
Doors: Closed

Once your speed is steady, press the [Y] key and hold it. As the directions say, hold at least 2 seconds but holding longer will increase accuracy. I recommend 10 - 15 seconds at least. The longer you hold it, the better the calibration. Once you have held it for however long you want, release the [Y] key and press [U] to exit the calibration mode. Once you do this, your bombsight text will turn green, indicating you are calibrated.



Press U to enter calibration mode
Calibrated Speed 196
Drop Alt = 2527
Alt = 2528
Salvo 1
Delay 0.05
Doors: OPEN

Once your bombsight is calibrated, continue to watch your E6B to ensure you remain at the calibrated speed as indicated on your bombsight. Also look at the two altitude notations on your bombsight: the "Drop Alt" and "Alt".

"Drop Alt" is the calibrated altitude and "Alt" is your current altitude. These two altitudes should be the same. If they are not, you are either gaining or losing altitude. While one or two feet shouldn't make a difference, they should be the same for your calibration to be 100% accurate.

You may calibrate as often as you like during a bomb run. If you have to maneuver a bit to line up after calibration, it is usually worth the time to recalibrate.

Bomb Run

If your approach to the target was lined up properly, you should be seeing it in your sight soon. You want to acquire your target in the bombsight as soon as possible and, once you acquire it, spend most of your bomb run looking through your sight. Depending on your altitude, the type of target, and the terrain, you can acquire your target from 10 miles or more away. That is almost 1/2 a sector.

If you still need to make adjustments to your line of approach, you can do so but it can affect the accuracy of your calibration. If you have time, you can recalibrate. If not, you

have to decide whether to drop with your current calibration or to go around again and try to make a better approach.

As you get closer to the target, it naturally moves closer to the center of your bombsight. As soon as you have some distance between the top of your bombsight and the target, you will want to zoom in by pressing [Z]. Usually, you are zoomed in too far and will need to zoom out by pressing the [key until you can see your target. Once you have reacquired your target in the zoom mode, continue to zoom in using the] key, keeping your target just at the top of your sight. As you get close to the target, you will have much more detail and you can pick out the actual target you are going to drop on.



view through bombsight, maximum zoom

As you can see in the picture above, I am lined up to drop on two fighter hangars. Since there are not targets in between the hangars, this would be a place to use 2 salvos of only a few bombs. If you're not lined up to drop on more than one target during your first pass, you will want to extend out far enough to line up another pass. Usually, you need to keep going past the target for a minute or two to have enough room to set up your next pass. If you turn around too early, you will find your crosshair past the target. Remember, from 10,000 feet, the landing point of your bombs is well in front of the current position of your plane. If you don't have enough bombs left to destroy a particular type of structure on your second or third pass, adjust your salvo setting and hit a smaller target such as an ack, fuel bunker, or city building.

Gunning

All of the bombers in Aces High are equipped with defensive guns. With the exception of the Ar 234, these guns can be manned by you and 1 gunner. If you man the guns yourself, your bomber will go on auto-level while you are away from the pilot's position. You can, however, turn your bomber using your rudder.

To man the guns, simply press the number on your keyboard (not the keypad) that corresponds to the gun you wish to go to, and you will be taken to that gun unless that position is already occupied by a gunner. In formations, you have the option of manning a gun position on the drone bombers as well as your own. Press [CTRL] 1 for the lead plane, [CTRL] 2 for the plane on the left, and [CTRL] 3 for the plane on the right. You will jump to the same gun position in the designated plane. From there, use your joystick to control the gun. A chart showing which number corresponds to which gun is below.

	Nose	Tail	Dorsal/ Upper	Ball/ Ventral	Left Waist	Right Waist
Ar 234B	-	-	-	-	-	-
B-17G	5	4	3	2	6	7
B-24J	5	4	3	2	6	7
B-26B	4	3	2	-	5	6
Boston III	-	-	2	-	-	-
Ju 88A-4	-	-	2&3	4	-	-
Ki-67	2	6	3	-	4	5
Lancaster	2	4	3	-	-	-
TBM-3	-	-	2	3	-	-

You have 2 options when firing your defensive guns. Firing your primary guns (F or joystick button 1) fires all guns which can hit the target. For example, if you were manning the tail guns of a B-17 and had an enemy approaching from 6 o'clock and slightly high, pressing your primary trigger would cause the not only the tail guns to fire at it, but also the upper turret. This usually brings a lot more firepower to bear on the target. Pressing your secondary trigger (B or joystick button 2) will fire only the guns you are manning. To return to the pilot's seat from one of the gunner positions, press 1.

Gunning for yourself in route to the target is usually no problem but you may want to ask for a gunner as you approach the target. The reason for this is you can't gun and make a bomb run at the same time. If you make the bomb run, you are extremely vulnerable to enemy fighters. If you gun, you're not going to drop any bombs. Many fighter pilots wait for a buff to get near the target, where the pilot is probably in the bombardier's position, before making their attack. Often, a call on the country or squad channel is all it takes to find a gunner.

Like your views from the cockpit, you can adjust the views for each gunner's position and save them the way you want. See Aces High View System for more details.

Returning Home

After successfully dropping your bombs on target, it is time to return home. Generally, you will want to fly to the nearest friendly base that does not have a furball over it. If you are at high altitude, avoid the temptation to drop your altitude until you are sure you are safe from interception. It is better to fly to your base and then spiral down. Sure, it takes more time but the chances of a low fighter killing you on the way home are a lot less if you are way above it!

Bombers are extremely easy to land. They are some of the most stable planes out there and, with their huge wing areas, generally allow for very low speeds (well below 100 mph with flaps) before stalling. The hardest part about landing a bomber is getting slow enough that you can actually set down rather than float right over the field. In general, you will want to put your gear down at 130 or so and start lowering flaps. As your speed decreases, keep lowering flaps and make sure that you continue to descend. Push the nose down a bit if you have to and ride it in to a nice, smooth landing.

The Quicker Ride Home

If you're not interested in the long flight back to base, you might want to consider going down low and using up some machine gun ammo on the base or any enemy fighters that might be flying around. The B-26, with its fixed forward firing machine guns, is especially well suited for strafing airfields. The B-17G and B-24J with their ball turrets are also adept at hitting targets on the ground with machine gun fire. You can do a significant amount of damage to a field in this way, but you will often end your mission by being bounced by a swarm of angry enemy fighters.

Regardless of how your mission ends, if you managed to put your bombs on target, you can consider your mission accomplished!