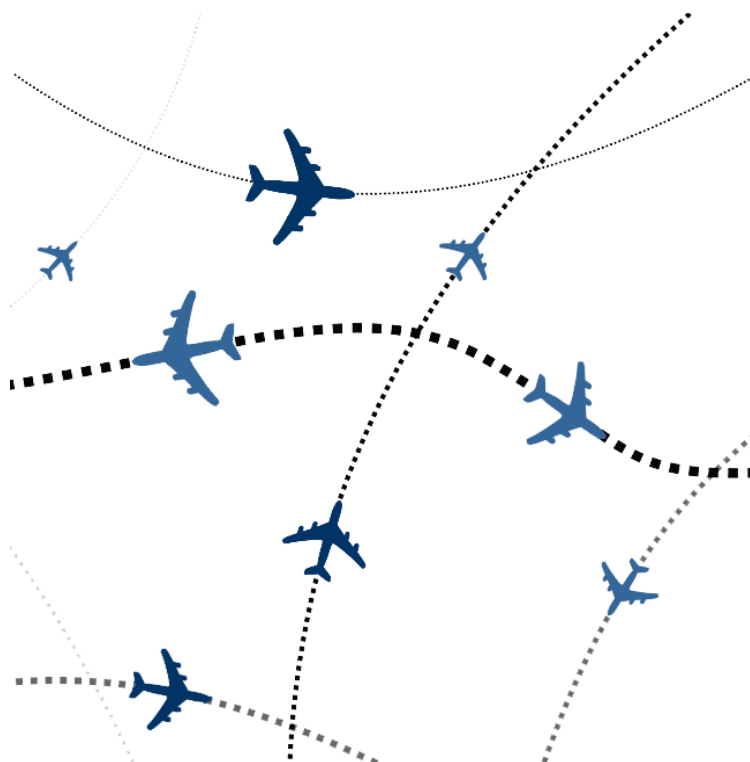




## ***MAIW Flightplans Package***

**Changes to MAIW traffic files**



## **Introduction**

There are some changes to the original MAIW traffic files in this package. The reasoning behind this and our methodology are explained in this document by MAIW staff member Steve “Firebird” Holland who did the conversions.

## **Why?**

In essence to a certain extent we are victims of our own longevity. We have been going for well over a decade now and tackled so many subjects that many of original installations are not as accurate as they once were.

Some we have updated, some need updating and some are going to need updating shortly or in the near future.

## **Why now?**

The impetus for this was also something that we are doing for P3D users. We are starting to see some very clever people converting original FS9 models to FSX standard so that they can be used in the current standard of Flight Sim software – Lockheed Martin’s P3D.

A very helpful idea was formulated to help users onto this product. Simply put when a model was successfully converted MAIW would help P3D users, and also newer FSX users out by building a megapack. This megapack would contain all of the schemes and traffic files originally released in various FS9 packages but converted to FSX standard so that they could be used successfully in FSX/P3D.

## **Yes, so?**

Well after the initial releases we came up against the fact that now every time somebody wanted to release a pack that necessitated a change to the original megapack traffic file that it was a bit daunting to package producers. The best example of this was F-16 units being replaced by F-35s. You would now get problems with the megapack traffic file.

## **What problems?**

Every time somebody changed an F-16 unit they would need to alter and recompile a massive traffic file, in its self not an easy task.

Then you start to get into problems with continuity of that file. Some people like to keep retro traffic as an option for their systems. What about people cutting over to P3D later? What about when somebody accidentally overwrites an already modified traffic file? The risks would get greater with every modification that affects the mega traffic file.

## **So what did you decide to do?**

After a discussion we realised that we had no option but to amend the system we employed to minimise future problems. The only thing that made sense was to split up the megapack traffic file. However, that wouldn't help completely as some of the traffic files held many different types across many bases, for example an ANG pack.

The best solution seemed to be to go further than to return to the collection of original traffic files from the original releases.

## **Further?**

Yes. It was decided that to provide the optimal solution for users and developers was to split up the original traffic files into individual units. Some developers had already done this in there packages but we would do this for all.

## **What benefits does this approach bring?**

Well firstly it means that developers producing a new pack don't have to work so hard to disentangle a unit from a large traffic file and produce an amendment to the original one in addition to their new one. So this will make producing traffic files quicker and easier for them. Secondly, it will encourage users to update existing traffic with more up to date packages.

## **What do you mean by that?**

Well if you take a look at the Great Lakes ANG packs you will see that the topic was so large that even though it was split into two parts the second part still contained 17 units. Most new developers are going to be put off by tackling any unit there by the sheer size and complexity of replacing the whole package.

However, if we split it up into 17 individual units more budding developers are going to think that they can replace that unit there or add the new unit set up there. So everybody benefits.

## **OK, I think I get it but isn't that a massive amount of work?**

Yes it is but it is the only real solution.

## **OK, so who is going to do this work?**

Unfortunately for me I seemed to have broken the cardinal rule in the military – never volunteer for anything – so it seems like I will be.

## **OK, how long is this going to take?**

I can't really say for sure but less than most people will think. As an example I have already broken down the F-16 megapack into the individual units from the 32 packs and that is a sizeable chunk of work already completed.

## **OK, so you are replacing one traffic file with smaller ones. How are you naming them?**

A good question and what that needed thought.

We needed some system in place whereby traffic from different packs could co-exist happily so that users could see them at a glance when they searched on their system.

## **So what is this system?**

The naming template that we developed is:

**<Type><Nation><Air Arm><Base><ICAO><Unit>[Year]**

The breakdown is as follows:

### *Type*

Traffic type. Normally MIL but can also be RETRO, GOV (Government) or CORP (Corporate). Of course if you use the same system yourself you could also see CIV (civilian) or COM (Commercial Airline).

### *Nation*

Governing nation. Fairly obvious here, examples being USA, UK, Japan etc

### *Air Arm*

Again fairly obvious, examples being 'USAF', 'RAF', 'Force Aérienne Belge'. It also allows some further breakdown such as ANG can have the state as well so 'ANG MI'.

### *Base*

Examples are 'Monte Real', 'RAF Coningsby' and 'JRB Fort Worth'.

### *ICAO*

The standard four character ICAO identifier for the base as used in FS9. Some changed in FSX and some don't exist at all so I get it simple.

### *Unit*

Examples are 'SkU15', '2 Sqn' and 'AATC'.

### *Year*

This is an optional parm and I only use when associated with RETRO traffic. The year that I chose to use is the year of package release. It seemed the most logical. If I have done my job

correctly then all RETRO traffic will have a year suffix. It also means that you can keep multiple retro files for the same unit.

## **Can you give us an example?**

Sure. An example unit from the Seaboard ANG v2 pack.

`'Traffic_RETRO_USA_ANG DC_Andrews AFB_KADW_201st AS_2012'`

## **Does that unit still exist? Why is it marked as retro?**

It's a fair question.

As I was going through the packs I decided to mark units as RETRO if they met one of four conditions.

- The unit was updated in a later MAIW pack.
- The unit was no longer active.
- The unit was no longer at that base.
- The unit now flew another type.

So it could be an still active unit but either in a later. It could be the original traffic is untouched in the later package but to be safe I marked it is RETRO.

## **OK so what do we do with the RETRO traffic?**

That is up to you the traffic was originally supplied and we still make it available. You can have it active in your system, you can store it somewhere safe or you can delete it. It is up to the individual.

## **Why don't you include the aircraft type in the naming standard?**

Good question. I decided against it for two reasons.

Firstly, if a unit operates more than one type do you add them all or just the main type? If you don't add them all then it means that a search for, example, 'C-130' will not find all the units that operate a C-130.

Secondly, If you do add them all then we possibly run into the risk of the path and filename limits of the operating system being breached. So I decided to leave out the type.

## **Why didn't you prefix them all with 'MAIW'?**

Firstly, if you had separate units from the same base some from 'MAIW' and some from 'JYAI' then they would not be sequential in your traffic folder which negates one of the benefits of the naming standard.

Secondly, again adding another level could fall foul of the path and filename limit of the OS. Once again we hope and encourage developers to follow this standard for the benefit of all.

**I noticed that <insert name here> traffic has converted type, are you going to update it?**

No. As org we don't do that anymore but as it is one unit maybe somebody will be encouraged to replace it, as mentioned earlier.

**I noticed that that <insert name here> unit has moved base, are you going to update the plans?**

I refer the honourable gentleman to the answer I gave some moments ago.

**OK, so you are doing this how are you going to distribute this stuff?**

Still through the Download Hangar but there will be a change to the megapacks. The complete schemes will be in one download and the complete split traffic files will be in another download.

**What about packs that are not official MAIW ones?**

Well we have no control over these but we hope that the developers see that the strategy makes sense and that the naming standard makes sense and that these developers follow it as well. We positively encourage it.

The outcome if everybody does is that in your traffic folder the individual units will fall into their real world dispersal that are easily found rather than some random system that we had in the past.

**Does this mean that we will only get the traffic splits in megapacks?**

No. We are doing all the packages and so all will become available. It just makes sense to do the megapacks first as they were the catalyst for this whole exercise.

**I am still using FS9 so what about me?**

The splits are being done for both FS9 and FSX/P3D formats so we will make them available to FS9 users as well.

**What if I have any questions?**

I am sure there will be some. As usual we will respond to any reason questions on our forums at <https://militaryaiworks.com>. This especially goes to developers looking to utilise the new system.