

AT-FLIR

All about the AN/ASQ-228 ATFLIR.

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AN/ASQ-228 ATFLIR – Targeting Pod Basics

The **AN/ASQ-228 ATFLIR** is the Hornet’s primary targeting pod in DCS World. It provides infrared and electro-optical imaging, laser designation, laser spot tracking, and precision coordinate generation. Mounted on the **left cheek station**, the pod is essential for precision-strike missions and is especially useful in night ops, low visibility, and beyond visual range (BVR) targeting.

☐☐ What the ATFLIR Can Do

Capability	Description
FLIR + TV Imaging	IR (thermal) and EO (TV) modes
Zoom	2 zoom levels + 3 fields of view (WIDE, MEDIUM, NARROW)
Laser Designation	LTD/R for guiding laser-guided munitions
Laser Spot Tracking (LST)	Track another unit’s laser spot for buddy lasing
Coordinate Generation	For JDAMs and JSOWs
Tracking Modes	Area track, point/auto track, INR (Inertial Hold)

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☐☐ Zoom Levels and Field of View

ATFLIR has **two zoom levels** and **three fields of view** (FOV), but zoom behavior depends on the FOV setting:

FOV	Description	Zoom Level Support
WIDE	Broad view, large area scanning	Only Zoom Level 1
MEDIUM	Moderate zoom for ID and tracking	Zoom Levels 1 and 2
NARROW	High magnification, precise tracking	Zoom Levels 1 and 2

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- You switch FOV using the RAID/FLIR button.
- Zoom level is toggled using **radar elevation** while the FLIR page is SOI.

☐☐ Sensor Imaging Modes

Mode	Use Case
IR (FLIR)	Best for night ops or thermal contrast
TV (EO)	Best in daylight or clear weather
BH/WH	Toggle black-hot/white-hot in IR mode for contrast preference

■ Use the **IR/TV** OSB to switch modes. IR is the default when the pod powers on.

☐☐ Compatible Ordnance

ATFLIR is required or strongly recommended for these weapons:

Weapon	Type	Notes
GBU-12/16/10	Laser-guided bombs	Requires laser designation (LTD/R)
AGM-65E	Laser Maverick	Requires buddy or self-lasing
AGM-65F	IR Maverick	Use FLIR to identify and lock before handoff
AGM-154A/B/C (JSOW)	GPS glide bomb	Use pod to generate precision coordinates
JDAM (GBU-38/32/31)	GPS bomb	Same as above — designate or manually enter coordinates

“ While JDAMs/JSOWs do **not require** the pod to guide during flight, the pod is essential for finding, designating, and accurately feeding targets to these weapons.

☐☐ Pod Controls Summary

Function	How to Use
TDC Slew	Move the pod crosshairs
TDC Press	Designate, change zoom level
SCS Toward FLIR DDI	Give pod TDC priority
LTD/R Boxed	Arms the laser designator
TRIG Boxed	Enables manual lasing (requires trigger press)
LST	Enables search for buddy laser
UFC → LSTC / LTD/R Code	Set or change laser codes

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⚠ Limitations and Tips

- Laser has effective range of ~**8-10 nm** but accuracy drops beyond 6 nm.
- Clouds, dust, smoke, and terrain can block the laser or FLIR image.
- Maintain good aircraft trim when slewing the pod — sudden rolls or Gs can break lock.
- Use **Area Track** for static targets and **Auto Track** for movers or exact aimpoints.

☐☐ Final Notes

The ATFLIR is a vital part of the Hornet’s CAS and strike toolbox. It’s not just for lasing — it’s your **long-range eyes**, your **night vision**, and your **precision coordinator** for standoff weapons like JSOWs and JDAMs. Mastering pod control will drastically improve your lethality and flexibility in multi-role operations.

Buddy Lasing using the AN/ASQ-228 ATFLIR

In coordinated strike missions, *buddy lasing* allows one aircraft to guide a laser-guided bomb (LGB) onto a target for another. Using the **AN/ASQ-228 ATFLIR** targeting pod, the F/A-18C can either **manually lase** a target or **track another aircraft’s laser** via **Laser Spot Tracker (LST)** mode.

Whether you’re supporting a wingman, working with a JTAC, or performing multi-axis attacks, buddy lasing adds tactical flexibility to your mission planning.

☐☐ Laser System Overview

Feature	Description
Laser Type	Coded infrared (invisible to human eye)
Designation Laser	LTD/R (Laser Target Designator/Rangefinder)
Tracking Mode	LST (Laser Spot Tracker)
Effective Range	~8-10 nautical miles (best under 6 nm)
Beam Width	~0.25° (~450 ft at 10 nm)
Laser Codes	4-digit NATO-standard codes (e.g., 1688)
Lasing Modes	Manual (TRIG boxed) or Automatic (TRIG unboxed)

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☐☐ How to Manually Lase for a Buddy

If you're the one providing the laser designation, follow these steps:

1. Setup the ATFLIR Pod

- Power on the pod and switch to A/G (air-to-ground) master mode.
- Set TDC priority to the FLIR display to control the pod.
- Slew the pod onto the target area and designate the target using TDC depress.
- Use Auto Track or Area Track to maintain lock.

2. Enable Manual Lasing

- Press the **TRIG** option on the FLIR page so it is boxed (this enables manual trigger lasing).
- Ensure the display shows **L ARM** indicating the laser is armed.
- Press and hold the **gun trigger (second detent)** to fire the laser. You'll be manually designating as long as the trigger is held.

3. End Lasing

- Release the trigger to stop firing.
 - Optionally, use the **Undesignate (NWS)** button to clear the target designation.
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☐☐ How to Track Someone Else's Laser (LST Mode)

If you're dropping the bomb and someone else is lasing, use **LST mode** to acquire their laser spot.

1. Enter LST Code

- On the FLIR page, press the **UFC** option to bring up the laser code interface.
- Select the LSTC (Laser Spot Track Code) option.
- Enter the desired 4-digit code (e.g., 1688) using the keypad and press ENTER.

“ Make sure the bomb's laser code (set in mission editor or rearming menu) matches this.

2. Enable LST Mode

- On the FLIR page, select **LST** to begin spot search mode.
- Slew the pod over the expected target area.

- Press and hold TDC depress to begin the laser search.
- Once the pod detects the correct coded laser, it will snap to the spot and begin tracking.

Common Laser Codes & Usage

Code	Use Case
1688	Default JTAC and multiplayer buddy lasing code
1687	Often used by Hornet buddy-lasing pairs
1511-1788	NATO/US standard codes (safe for most LGBs)

Only one aircraft or JTAC should lase on a given code at a time to avoid “code fratricide” (two lasers on the same code causing confusion).

Tactical Tips

If You’re the Laser Provider:

- Lase from **<8 nm** for reliable guidance.
- Keep the target centered in the pod — do not let it drift or break lock.
- Start lasing **~8-10 seconds before impact** unless using AUTO mode.
- Communicate clearly: e.g., “Laser on now,” or “Lasing in 5 seconds.”

If You’re the Bomb Dropper:

- Ensure laser code matches between GBU and LST settings.
- Wait for LST to lock before release if possible.
- Use AUTO or CCIP release modes depending on target type and angle.

Troubleshooting Guide

Problem	Fix
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Bombs miss target	Check for correct code match and lasing timing
LST not acquiring spot	Fly closer, ensure proper pod slewing, verify laser is active
Laser won't fire	Make sure TRIG is boxed, laser is armed, and second detent used
Laser blocked	Clouds, smoke, or terrain may interrupt — adjust position or altitude

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☐☐ Quick Buddy Lasing Checklist

Step	Laser Provider	Bomb Dropper
1.	Power ATFLIR & switch to A/G	Same
2.	Designate target with TDC	Slew to target area
3.	Box TRIG	Set correct LST code
4.	Press and hold trigger to fire laser	Engage LST and press TDC depress
5.	Maintain track on target	Release GBU when tracking is solid
6.	Stop lasing after impact	Confirm hit and break off

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