

F/A-18C Hornet – COMMs and Preset Button Usage

In the F/A-18C Hornet, communication is managed through two ARC-210 radios: **COMM 1** and **COMM 2**, each with 20 programmable preset channels, known as “buttons.” These presets are configured prior to a mission and allow the pilot to quickly access the correct frequency for ATC, AWACS, tanker, strike coordination, and flight communications without manually tuning frequencies in-flight.

Example COMMs Preset Layout

Below is an example preset configuration for a carrier-based mission in the Syria theater, used by a multi-element Hornet squadron:

COMM 1 - ARC-210 (ATC, AWACS, Tankers)

Button	Purpose	Freq.	Additional Info
1	Departure	127.5AM	
2	CSG (STRIKE)	320.0AM	
3	Recovery (Marshal)	127.5AM	55X, 5 ICLS
4	AWACS (MAGIC)	251.0AM	
5	AWACS (IMAGE)	256.0AM	
6	Tanker (Arco 1-1)	254.0AM	11Y
7	Damascus Tower	253.25AM	
8	Ramat David Tower	251.3AM	
11	Tanker (Texaco 1-1)	268.0AM	Recv. 1Y



- **Buttons 1 & 3** are both ATC-related; Button 3 adds ICLS and TACAN info for carrier recovery.
- **Buttons 4-5** cover AWACS callsigns for picture and broadcast.
- **Buttons 6 & 11** are tankers, with TACAN channels for AAR navigation.
- **Buttons 7-8** provide regional tower freqs for Damascus and Ramat David in case of divert or transit ops.

COMM 2 - ARC-210 (Flight COMMs)

Button	Purpose	Freq.
1	Flight (Phobetor 1)	301.0AM
2	Element (Phobetor 1)	301.5AM
3	Flight (Phobetor 2)	302.0AM
4	Element (Phobetor 2)	302.5AM



- COMM 2 is reserved for **intra-flight communication**.
- **Flight** refers to all 4 jets in the element; **Element** refers to each 2-ship pair.
- This division helps keep comms concise during tactical execution.

How to Switch Preset Channels

To switch between presets in the F/A-18C:

- 1. Use the UFC (Up Front Controller):**
 - Press the **COM 1** or **COM 2** button on the UFC.
 - Rotate the **channel select knob** just below the UFC screen to cycle through presets (1-20).
 - The currently selected button will appear in the top left of the UFC window.
- 2. Monitor and Talk:**
 - Ensure the desired radio (COMM 1 or COMM 2) is selected for transmission by checking the transmit selector knob on the **Audio Control Panel**.
 - A small dot will appear next to the active radio on the HUD or DDI when transmitting.
- 3. Manual Override (if needed):**
 - You can manually input a frequency via the UFC if a preset is unavailable, but preset switching is faster and less workload-intensive.

Tactical Tips

- Use **COMM 1** for ATC, AWACS, tankers, and base frequencies.
 - Use **COMM 2** for **tactical intra-flight communication**.
 - Maintain discipline: only speak when necessary and always identify yourself (e.g., “Phobator 1-2, tally two bandits, 240, 15 miles”).
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Revision #1

Created 11 July 2025 19:25:00 by Tilder

Updated 11 July 2025 19:28:11 by Tilder