




The F18 Simulators at Air Combat Zone

 by Zach

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Earlier this week, I had the incredible opportunity to check out the [F18 combat simulators](#) at the [Air Combat Zone](#) in Mississauga compliments of the great people at Samba Days. Oh, you don't know about [Samba Days](#)? Basically the best Christmas (or any gift) you could get someone... they get to pick what experience they get to have ranging from Skydiving, to zip lining, to boating and more. It's pretty awesome.



Anyway, I chose the F18 dogfighting simulation because it's something that definitely interests me. The facility has four simulator cockpits that are all linked together, so I brought my brother, dad and my dad's friend. As you walk in, you're greeted with tons of jet fighter images, video and models. Everything is air combat related and starts to get you in the mood.



Our flight commander, Steve, call sign Hornet, then had us sit down at the basic trainers to learn the buttons on the HOTUS controls on both the throttle and joystick. We learned to control our speed, afterburners, flying basics, radar activation, weapon select, activate the missile guidance and firing. Then after a brief review, and learning some more of the basic controls like understanding the heads up display, flare counter measures, and the sounds in the aircraft (important, because if someone has a missile lock on you, you want to turn and burn while dropping counter measures... otherwise you're about to be blown out of the sky.)

Then we get to the real simulators. You climb into the cockpit, surrounded by switches, and buttons and monitors... all of which WORK. The radar shows active targets on it, the weapons display shows how many AIM9 missiles you have left, how many shots on the Vulcan cannon you have remaining, and the number of counter measures available to you. Another monitor shows the amount of fuel you have, including the flight time remaining and speed you're travelling at. Still another shows the status of your aircraft. And there's still another half dozen displays! Needless to say, it was very cool!

Then your heads-up display, and the giant screen really immerse you in the experience. You really do feel like you're moving, turning, rolling, and chasing. If you're going too fast, and turning, your screen might start blacking out as you're pushing too many Gs. When you fire a missile, you make sure to follow it to ensure it hits your target. The cannons have tracers so you can see where your shots are going. Ahhhh it was SO COOL! While video doesn't accurately convey the experience, I did my best to show some of the experience and the joy of firing a missile and blowing up a bogey.

My brother, dad, dad's friend and I all came out of it totally loving every moment. It was SUCH an incredible experience. We laughed and replayed our favourite kills on the drive home and we're already planning a trip back there because it was so much fun. Long story short... grab some friends or family, and check it out! It's an experience you will absolutely love.

Grab the experience [through Samba Days](#) and learn more about the [Air Combat Zone](#).

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