Newbie's Guide to IL2 Joystick Setups

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Version 1.3 – Last Updated on June 3rd, 2008
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Sample Joystick Setups – When I was brand new to IL2 and Hyperlobby (HL), one of the most confusing things for me was getting my joystick setup correctly. This was especially true, since my joystick came with almost no paper documentation and was not recognized by the in-game Input section of IL2 that allows you to set sensitivity and deadband. I would often find myself being shot down while in online combat using HL because I could not use some function quickly enough. IL2 Sturmovik also has so many different functions and views that if you are new to flight simulators (as I was), you may find it a little overwhelming. I found after searching online that there was very little good information about how to map each function to its best location or switch on the joystick while still remaining ergonomically comfortable or allowing speedy access. I finally ran into a real F-18 Hornet pilot in one of the virtual squadrons who gave me some advice on how to set up things for both more realism and quicker operation.

In IL2 you can assign functions to your joystick buttons or hats by simply launching the IL2 Sturmovik 1946.exe program and then heading into the Controls section. Once in the controls section, simply click to the right of any function you want to assign and a narrow rectangular box will appear. Now, simply press the button on your joystick that you want to use to control that function.

The essential controls that you definitely want on the joystick or HOTAS are: Aileron, Elevator and Rudder, Power (Throttle), Weapon 1 (Fire button), Weapon 2, Elevator and Rudder Trim, the three major views (Normal, Wide, and Gunsight), Flaps Up/Down and Prop Pitch. You can find these controls under the 'Controls' section of the game. I would also suggest External Padlock Enemy Air as a critical function when a particular HL server allows padlocks.

The semi-essential controls that you may want to have mapped to the joystick or HOTAS are: Radiator, Supercharger and Increase/Decrease Mixture. These will become more and more important as your skill level increases and you learn how to work with complex engine management (CEM).

The controls that you definitely want mapped to keys on your keyboard using a combination of two keys or more, so that they are not accidently activated or deactivated while in the heat of combat are: Engine Start/Stop (I use Shift + E keys) and Wing Fold (I use Shift + W keys for this). You may also want to consider mapping a combination of two keys for lowering and raising your Landing Gear, as having your gear accidently come down during combat is obviously not good.

The other non-critical (at least for combat) controls that you must have mapped but could be placed either on your joystick, HOTAS or keyboard (your choice) are: Chocks, Tailhook, Canopy, Airbrake, and Toggle/Select Engines.

What follows are four examples of how to initially setup both a CH Products Fighterstick (or CH HOTAS) and a Saitek X-52 HOTAS Stick/Throttle for maximal ergonomic comfort and operational control (it will also work for the almost identical X-52 Pro HOTAS Stick/Throttle). I am sorry that I cannot show similar diagrams for the HOTAS Cougar from Thrustmaster, but I do not own that equipment so it would be difficult for me to give specific recommendations (but I would be happy to play with, uhh, I mean, officially test a FREE sample ;).

Just remember that joystick/HOTAS setup is highly personal and every individual eventually finds the settings that work best for them. My settings make work great for you or they may fail miserably, so you will have to experiment to find the sweet spot. Hopefully, no matter what type of joystick you are using, the following images will prove helpful:
Using Only CH Products Fighterstick (No Throttle or Pedals):

In this case, with only the joystick, you would then map the Throttle control to the slider (actually it is a hardware trim slider) on the lower left of your Fighterstick and the Rudder control would be mapped to the slider at the rear of the Fighterstick (the slider closest to you as you play). All other functions that I spoke of above not mapped to the Fighterstick would then be setup on the keyboard.
Using CH Products Fighterstick and Pro Throttle (No Pedals):

The sliding motion of the Throttle itself will control Power, and Rudder has now been moved to the mini-joystick on the throttle as the Fighterstick is not a "best" stick.
In this example, since the Fighterstick is not a 'twist' stick like the X-52, the rudder (yaw) control has been assigned to the mini-joystick on the Pro Throttle. And also, as for the first example with only the Fighterstick. Any functions not mapped to the Fighterstick or Pro Throttle (such as Chocks or Canopy) would then be mapped to the keyboard.

**Using a Saitek X-52 HOTAS (Stick and Throttle but no Pedals):**

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With the X-52, rudder (yaw) is controlled by twisting the joystick left or right and rudder should be assigned here unless using separate pedals.
And once again, any functions not mapped to the Saitek X-52 stick or throttle would be mapped to the keyboard (like **Canopy** and **Radiator**).
Using CH Products Full HOTAS (Fighterstick, Pro Throttle and Pro Pedals):

The Fighterstick setup is the same (see Fighterstick and Pro Throttle example above) except for not setting the wheel brakes to the top right side red button on the Fighterstick, but a few functions on the Pro Throttle have changed:

And the Pro Pedals will be set up as follows:

Now you can use the mini-joystick of the Pro Throttle to look around in much the same way as you can do with a Track IR. And again, all other functions like Engine Start/Stop, Canopy, etc., not
mapped to the HOTAS, should be set to keys on the keyboard.

Credits:

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