

HAWX 2

SYSTEM: PS3, 360
PUBLISHER: UBISOFT

ESRB RATING: T
SCORE: 2.0 / 5.0



Soaring through the air at 500 km/h while a pack of Russian insurgents tries their best to send you hurtling towards the ground with their heat seeking missiles sounds like a tense but fun concept. Tom Clancey's HAWX 2 tries to deliver the excitement of aerial combat, but can't really seem to get off the ground.

Taking control of multi-million dollar aircraft on a series of fictional missions, players are given the opportunity to try some of the world's highest caliber death machines. Complete with landing and take-off sequences the experience attempts to be as realistic as possible but pulls back from being a straight-forward simulator. Players aren't required to balance a million different controls while flying but at the same time the game lacks the ease and smoothness of a more arcade-like experience.

Straddling the line between sim and arcade compromises a lot of what would normally make the game soar. Banking and turning feel jerky and overly-precise, lacking the smoothness that would be present in a more casual experience. On the other side of the coin, dodging missiles and gunfire is a breeze requiring only the most basic



loops. The game is frustrating where it shouldn't be and too easy where it needs to be tense.

The game does support a few select flight stick controls for those who really want to get invested in the simulation experience, but for a majority of players they'll be stuck with the disappointing configuration of the base controller. For some reason the acceleration is mapped to the triggers while rudder control is left to the bumpers. This means that players who want to speed

up while finely tuning trajectory must contort their hand in to a hook-like claw to succeed. With no option to re-map the controls the game can get incredibly uncomfortable and all over a feature that seems so simple to include.

Some of the levels, particularly the escort missions, fall apart because of poor AI scripting. It makes sense to rely on the player to complete the mission, but even with a sincere effort the suicidal tendencies of ally ships and fighters make it nearly impossible to win.

The one place where things feel just right is the landing and take-off sections. Simple enough to execute it won't require multiple retries, but at the same time challenging enough to make it a worthwhile experience. However, in a fully-featured campaign this is a sidebar at best and doesn't excuse the mediocre middle section while players are away from the hangar.