

KB Quick – Quick and Easy Kneeboards – Create/Edit/Organise/Publish

KB Quick is an all-in-one app to quickly and easily create and edit kneeboards, organise them, associate them with aircraft, quickly select and publish them for specific training/mission requirements, and easily re-edit and re-publish them with a few clicks.

I realise there are other excellent kneeboard utilities, I developed this one for my own training needs and have decided to share it here in the spirit of these forums.

The screenshot shows the KB Quick application window. The title bar reads "KB Quick - Kneeboard Folder is: C:\Users\shaun\Saved Games\DCS\Kneeboard". The interface is divided into three main sections:

- Left Pane (Kneeboard Editor):** Contains two columns of text. The left column is titled "VIACOM Commands" and includes sections for ATC (Traffic), Ground Crew, Radio, AWACS, Tanker, Supercarrier, and Kneeboard. The right column is titled "Flight (One, Lead, two..)" and includes sections for Radio Check, GO Line, Abreast/Trail/Port/S' Board/Wedge, ENGAGE, and Miscellaneous.
- Right Pane (Kneeboard List):** A table listing saved kneeboards with columns for "Kneeboard Name", "Target Folder", and "KB".

Kneeboard Name	Target Folder	KB
Airfields - Caucasus		<input type="checkbox"/>
Airfields - Nevada		<input type="checkbox"/>
Airfields - Persian Gulf		<input type="checkbox"/>
Airfields - Syria 1		<input type="checkbox"/>
Airfields - Syria 2		<input type="checkbox"/>
Western RWR		<input type="checkbox"/>
Viacom Commands		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Warthog Maverick Employment	A-10C_2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Warthog Quick Start	A-10C_2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Warthog HOTAS Chart	A-10C_2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Viper Air to Ground Weapons	F-16C_50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Viper Quick Start	F-16C_50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Viper DMS-TMS	F-16C_50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hornet A-G Ordinance	FA-18C_hornet	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hornet Quick Start	FA-18C_hornet	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hornet RWR Threats	FA-18C_hornet	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hornet Tactical Setup	FA-18C_hornet	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hornet Carrier Ops	FA-18C_hornet	<input type="checkbox"/>

Kneeboard Pane (Left side of window)

This represents exactly what a kneeboard .png image will look like once you choose to generate it.

It is a rich text editor, into which you can type directly and apply formatting using a right-click menu. You can also paste text or rich text into it and edit it there, and also paste and resize images. Essentially most things you can do in a Word document. The pane can be a single editor or split into 2 columns (as shown above, where each column is its own rich text editor).

Kneeboard panes are saved as rich text documents in a dedicated folder.

Table Pane (Right side)



A sortable, 3 column table listing the kneeboard panes you have created.

KB Quick - Kneeboard Folder is: C:\Users\shaun\Saved Games\DCS\Kneeboard

Snip! Import

F-18C ORDNANCE SYMBOLOGY (STORES PAGE)

1-Weights according in-game "ground crew" window (Jan. 2021).
2-([X]) means symbology duplicated for different weapons.
3-"1x" may include rack weight. "2x" includes rack weight. For the rest, no weight applied yet to pylons, launchers, chaffs and flares.

CODE (STORES PAGE)	ORDNANCE LOAD	WEIGHT (LB.)	STATIONS	STORE DRAG INDEX
BOMBS				
76	BDU-33 (Free Fall Training) 6x: BRU-41A (IMER)	429 (6+Rack)	2,3,7,8	Fwd: 1.1 Aft: 0.6
82B	Mk. 82 (Free Fall Low Drag) 1x: pylon; 2x: BRU-33 (VER)	(1x) 531 (2x) 1,236	2,3,5,7,8 2,3,5,7,8	Pylon: 3.0 VER: 4.0
82LG	GBU-12 (Laser) 1x: pylon; 2x: BRU-33 (VER)	(1x) 606 (2x) 1,386	2,3,7,8 2,3,7,8	Pylon: 5.5 VER: 7.0
82XT	Mk. 82 Snake Eye (Free Fall Hi Drag) 1x: pylon; 2x: BRU-33 (VER)	(1x) 511 (2x) 1,197	2,3,5,7,8 2,3,5,7,8	Pylon: 5.0 VER: 6.0
82YT	Mk. 82Y (Free Fall Hi drag) 1x: pylon; 2x: BRU-33 (VER)	(1x) 511 (2x) 1,197	2,3,5,7,8 2,3,5,7,8	Pylon: 5.0 VER: 6.0
83B	Mk. 83 (Free Fall Low Drag) 1x: pylon; 2x: BRU-33 (VER)	(1x) 985 (2x) 2,145	2,3,5,7,8 2,3,7,8	Pylon: 5.0 VER: 6.0
83LG	GBU-16 (Laser)	1,243	2,3,7,8	Pylon: 9.5
84	Mk. 84 (Free Fall Low Drag)	1,970	2,3,5,7,8	Pylon: 7.0
84LG	GBU-10 (Laser)	2,561	2,3,7,8	Pylon: 15.0
GB24	Low Level Laser	2,059	2,3,7,8	Pylon: 16.0
RE	Mk. 20 Rockeye (Free Fall Cluster) 1x: pylon; 2x: BRU-33 (VER)	(1x) 489 (2x) 1,153	2,3,5,7,8 2,3,5,7,8	Pylon: 7.5 VER: 9.0

New Save Delete Options

Kneeboard Name	Target Folder	KB
Airfields - Caucasus		<input type="checkbox"/>
Airfields - Nevada		<input type="checkbox"/>
Airfields - Persian Gulf		<input type="checkbox"/>
Airfields - Syria 1		<input type="checkbox"/>
Airfields - Syria 2		<input type="checkbox"/>
Western RWR		<input type="checkbox"/>
Viacom Commands		<input type="checkbox"/>
Warthog Maverick Employment	A-10C_2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Warthog Quick Start	A-10C_2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Warthog HOTAS Chart	A-10C_2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Viper Air to Ground Weapons	F-16C_50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Viper Quick Start	F-16C_50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Viper DMS-TMS	F-16C_50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hornet A-10C_2	FA-18C_hornet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hornet A-10C_2		<input type="checkbox"/>
Hornet A-10C_2		<input type="checkbox"/>
Hornat Tactical Setup		<input type="checkbox"/>
Hornet Carrier Ops		<input type="checkbox"/>

Target Folder

Copy Kneeboard

Rename

All Aircraft (Default)
A-10A
A-10C_2
A-4E-C
AV8BNA
F-15C
F-16C_50
FA-18C_hornet
J-11A
MiG-29A
MiG-29G
MiG-29S
Su-25
Su-25T
Su-27
Su-33
TF-51D
UH-1H

A right-click dropdown menu allows you to select a target kneeboard sub-folder (aircraft specific folder) to associate the kneeboard with (see above). If no aircraft specific folder is selected (,or "All Aircraft" is selected), the kneeboard will be a generic one, visible from all aircraft. The aircraft list in the dropdown reflects the sub folders in your kneeboard folder.

The target folder selected for each kneeboard is shown in the second column.

The right-most column contains a checkbox for each kneeboard. Checking that box immediately generates a bitmap image file (<kneeboard Name>.png) captured from the kneeboard pane and writes it to the target kneeboard folder (where DCS expects it). Unchecking that box immediately removes the kneeboard image. This allows you to quickly select/deselect specific kneeboards for a particular scenario.

While a kneeboard remains checked, whenever "Save" is clicked, its .png image is rewritten.

If the target folder of a checked kneeboard is changed, the kneeboard .png image is moved to the new folder.

Clicking a table column header sorts the list, ascending or descending, by that column.

Application Menus: (right to left)

Options

2 Columns:

This toggles a split of the current kneeboard pane into 2 columns (actually 2 rich text editors). Useful if you have a long list of instructions or 2 categories of notes.

Night Version (B/W Text Only):

This toggles the current kneeboard pane between black text on white, and white text on black for night operations. Note that this only works well with black & white text. Any colour formatting will be lost (though can always be re-added). A good way to use this is to take a copy (see below) of a kneeboard and create a version for night use with a click.

Always on Top:

Configures the window as "Topmost" so it won't disappear behind other open windows. Useful if you're taking notes from a pdf manual.

Set Default Font:

Choose a font and font size that will be the default for new kneeboards. This setting is persistent. You might want to set this after installation if the default is too large or small.

Reset Kneeboard Folder:

Change the kneeboard root folder the application will use. Note: If you change this, all created kneeboard .png images will be removed from the old folders and all target folder associations will be removed in the table. You can then reselect target folders based on the new kneeboard folder structure. The program will be terminated for this setting to take effect.

Default Height and Save Height:

I have tried to set the aspect ratio of the kneeboard pane correctly to match the in-game ratio (approx 2:3). However, if you are not happy with that ratio you can click the top or bottom edge of the window and drag it (vertically only) to resize it. When you're happy with the new ratio, click "Save Height" and it will be persisted. Click "Default Height" to return to the predefined 2:3 kneeboard ratio (and "Save Height" to persist that).

Delete: Deletes the currently selected kneeboard (and its .png image if present).

Save: Saves the currently selected kneeboard. If the kneeboard is checked, the kneeboard .png image is rewritten.

New: Creates a new kneeboard entry. You will be asked to enter a name. The name MUST comply with windows filename prefix standards as it will also be used as the filename prefix when a kneeboard image .png file is written.

Import: Import an existing kneeboard image file. Any .png image file can be imported but it will be resized to fit the kneeboard pane, so this is really aimed at image files already dimensioned as kneeboards.

Kneeboard Pane Context (right-click) Menu

I have implemented a basic set of editing functions in a right click menu.

Bold/Normal, Colour, highlight colour, Indent/Outdent, Bullet list, Alignment, Increase/Decrease/Change Font, Background Colour, Cut/Copy/Paste. Also unlimited levels of undo/redo.

If text is firstly selected, the function will be applied to it, otherwise it will become active from the current insertion point as appropriate.

Basic Table Insertion: creates 2,3,4 or 5 column, single row table, initially sized to pane width. Tab past the last row cell to add a row. Rows and columns can be resized by clicking and dragging their edges
To delete a row, double click, just to the outside of row's left or right-most cell to select the row, then cut.

Kneeboard Table Context (right-click) Menu

Target Folder:

Clicking this item displays a dropdown list of all sub- (aircraft) folders in you Kneeboard root folder. Click one to associate the kneeboard with that aircraft.

Click "All Aircraft (Default)" to return the kneeboard association to generic

Copy: Creates a new kneeboard from a copy of the current kneeboard pane

Rename: Allows renaming of the selected kneeboard (.png image file will also be renamed if present)

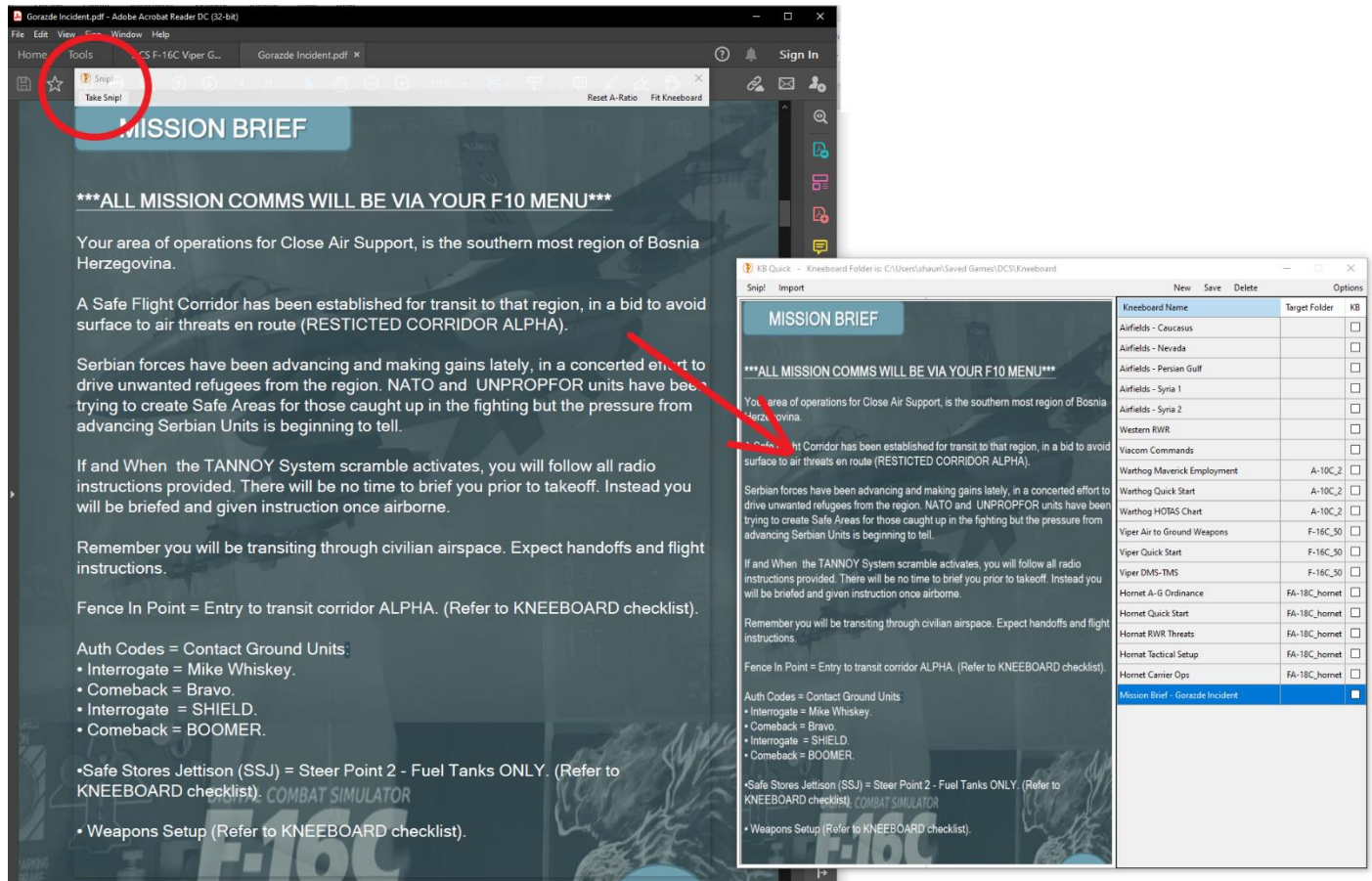
Snip! function (Top Left of menu bar)

This is my version of the Windows Snipping Tool, for capturing and pasting an image of screen/document content directly into a kneeboard.

It opens a topmost window with a transparent client area.

The window is resizable (though only using top left, top right, and bottom left corners. I can't make the bottom right corner clickable, seems to be a .Net restriction – any experts ?)

Note: that unless it is set as “Always on top”, the main application window will be minimised when Snip! is activated. This is done to allow the Snip! window access to the entire screen.



Snip! Menus

Take Snip!: Generates a bitmap of whatever is within the transparent client window and pastes it into the current kneeboard pane (see above).

Undo: This appears only after a Take Snip! and will remove the last pasted snip from the kneeboard pane

Reset A-Ratio: This resets the client area to match the aspect ratio of the kneeboard pane by adjusting its current width.

Normal/ Fit Kneeboard/ Fit Horizontal: (top right)

When clicked this toggles between 3 settings which govern how a snip will be pasted.

Normal: Snip is sized exactly as it appears.

Fit Kneeboard: Snip is resized to exactly fill the kneeboard pane

Fit Horizontal : Snip is resized to fit the width of the kneeboard pane. Its height is unchanged.

Any image pasted into a kneeboard pane can be manually resized later using the small (tiny!) squares at the centre of each image edge (not a great implementation but a .net control limitation which I can't improve upon).

Note that the Snip! window **MUST** be closed to return control to the main window.

Implementation and Configuration

Unzip and place the KBQuick folder where you want to run it from.
Use the KBQuick.exe file to run the program. No installation is required.

If upgrading, no need to update previous version, simply run the program from the downloaded KBQuick 1.x folder.
When you're happy with it you should get rid of the old KBQuick folder if you have one. Your settings and saved kneeboards will still be in your KBQuickFiles folder and will be used by the new version.

KB Quick is a Microsoft .Net application and requires the .Net 5.0 runtime. You may be prompted to download this if you don't already have it. It should only take a minute.

KB Quick will initially create a new folder in your Documents folder called "KBQuickFiles". This is where all kneeboard rich text files and KB Quick configuration files will be saved.

On first execution you will be asked to specify your kneeboard folder. This should obviously be your saved games\DCS(.Openbeta)\kneeboard folder for live use. However, if you want to test it out first select a different folder – but it MUST be called "kneeboard" (Better still take a copy of your DCS kneeboard folder and use that).
NOTE: That nothing is ever written to your kneeboard folders until you click on the created kneeboard checkboxes.

KBQuickFiles folder

This folder contains ALL of KB Quick's data and configuration files
Manually Changing/Deleting files in the KBQuickFiles folder may result in loss of data integrity and cause program crashes. However, if you do run into problems, the structure of the KBQuickFiles folder is quite simple and should be easy to correct manually if necessary.

Settings.kbs: (KB Quick Config file : 5 records)

Kneeboard folder path

Default Font name

Default Font Size

Ratio of Default Main Window Height / Width (default is approx 0.9595)

Ratio of Current Main Window Height / Width

Panelindex.kbx: (Kneeboard index file)

1 Record per kneeboard with the following, comma separated fields

Kneeboard Name: Windows filename prefix

Target Folder: (empty if target is the root kneeboard folder – i.e. for all aircraft)

KB Flag: 1=Kneeboard image is in target folder, else 0

Colls: 1 or 2 (columns)

Night/day: n or d

panelindexold.kbx: (Backup of Panelindex.kbx, taken before each change. Not used within program)

Each Kneeboard has 2 .rtf files, <kneeboard Name>_1.rtf and _2.rtf for left (main) and right columns.

If you want to start afresh, simply delete or rename the KBQuickFiles folder.

You can also backup your entire KB Quick system by taking a copy of the KBQuickFiles folder. To restore, simply replace the KBQuickFiles folder with your backed up version.

It is quite safe to manually delete kneeboard images from DCS kneeboard folders. The folders are scanned at application start up for each kneeboard entry in panelindex.kbx, and their KB Flag fields updated as required.

Some Usage Tips

Editing Kneeboard panes in Microsoft Word

Your created kneeboards are all saved in the KBQuickfiles folder as rich text files, named <kneeboard name>_1.rtf and <kneeboard name>_2.rtf for the left and right panes (Only the _1.rtf file will contain data for single pane kneeboards)

As these are .rtf files, they can be opened and edited in Microsoft Word. This gives you the option of manually opening them in word and using Word's extended features to enhance them. If you do this just be careful to limit the width of whatever you do. I find the easiest way to do this is to set the Word page "size" in the "Layout" tab as "Executive". This seems to limit table widths etc to fit in the kneeboard pane, but YMMV.

Getting Microsoft Excel Cells/tables into KB Quick

KB Quick is not a spreadsheet so won't handle cells pasted in from Excel. However, if you paste the cells into a word document, you can then paste them from word into KB Quick.

Alternatively, just open a kneeboard .rtf file in Word, as above, and paste the Excel cells there and then save the file.

This works because Word converts the Excel object to Rich Text format.

Once the cells are in the KB Quick kneeboard they should be editable and resizable from within KB Quick.

When pasting from word, ensure that "paragraph spacing" (in the Word "Design" tab) is set to "no paragraph space". Otherwise you may get double paragraph spacing which you won't be able to remove from within the KB Quick editor.