

Skies Above the Reich

Breaking the Combat Box



Advanced Rule Book



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Advanced & Two Player Games

You are welcome to play by the Advanced Game rules, they are explained in this first section. You are also welcome to play with another player (explained in Section Two), using either the Basic or Advanced Game rules.

SECTION ONE



Advanced Game Rules

The Advanced Game uses all of the Basic Game rules, plus those included in this section.

Pages 2 and 3 of this booklet provide an overview of the pursuit maps, central to the Advanced Game. Set-Up for these maps is explained on page 6 of this booklet.

Game Flow

In the Advanced Game, you play normally until the Mission ends, using all the same rules for the Basic Game. However, there are two new features: first, you can give yourself more TP during a mission turn by performing the regroup action (this is done during the Recovery Phase, and is explained on p. 8 of this booklet); and second, you can pursue fallen bombers.

Pursuit Summary: Instead of putting Damage markers back in the cup when a Fallen marker is placed on the formation map, you place those markers in a stack on the Turn Track (place them in the current turn's space of that track). Then, during the Move Phase of the following or subsequent turn, one or more fighters may "pursue," which means you remove them from the formation map and place them on the current turn's space of the Turn Track. When the Flight Limit has been reached, or the Mission ends earlier, pursuing fighters may attempt to intercept bombers on the Turn Track. Success shifts the game to the appropriate pursuit map, with the Damage markers being placed there (see p. 6 for pursuit map set-up). Use the map corresponding to the Season: for example, if playing the 1942 season, use the map titled "Pursuit Map 1942." If 1944 and you are playing on Map 3, use the 1944 "green Pursuit Map 1944," but if playing on Map 4, use the "silver Pursuit Map 1944."

In general, you will find that it is possible to garner more EP in the Advanced Game, because your fighters can achieve a Fallen result on the formation map and then a Destroyed result on the pursuit map. VP is harder to come by, however, since in the Advanced Game you only earn VP for destroying bombers, not for making them fall out of formation.

Playing the Advanced Game takes a little longer, because it adds a Pursuit sequence of play that follows the Mission, which must be played out on the pursuit map. Luftwaffe pilots found it much easier to down the heavily armed and armored B-17 when it was isolated than when protected by its formation. The aim of attacking a formation became that of weakening its cohesion and thereby dislodging individual B-17s so they could be destroyed with less risk to German pilots and machines. The Advanced Game is harder than the Basic Game because you no longer earn VP for knocking bombers out of formation. You must actually pursue and destroy them.

Old timers may recognize the pursuit maps. They were inspired by the Avalon Hill game B-17: Queen of the Skies. They use a similar graphic format, providing a plan view of the bomber. Similarity ends there, because gameplay doesn't require a book of tables and charts, which means the bomber's fate is resolved much faster than in that old classic. And the point of view is turned around.

Pursuit Player Aid

The reverse side of the Sequence of Play Card sets out the phases and steps of the Pursuit Sequence of Play.

Pursuit Maps

Individual Bomber

The four 8.5"x11" pursuit maps each depict a single B-17 flying alone.

Attack Spaces

Surrounding the bomber are diamond shaped spaces for placing fighters. The spaces are grouped into four clusters, each corresponding to an attack position (Nose, Tail, and two Oblique; both Obliques use the Oblique Attack card deck). They are the equivalent of spaces on the formation map, except altitude blocks are not needed.

Use this map during the 1942 Season



No Sun marker if you roll 1-5 at set-up (see p.6)

Evasive Return Box

Damage Box: Wing



Three Rudder damage points to destroy the bomber

Lethal Level (Oblique is zero)

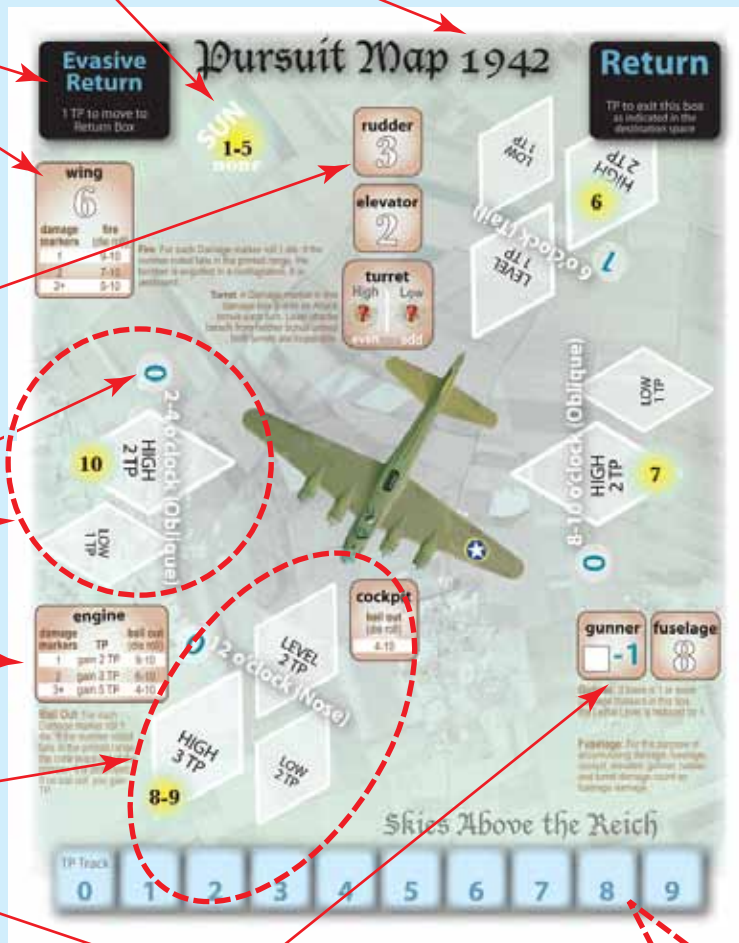
Attack Position: Oblique (High & Low)

Damage Box: Engine

Attack Position: Nose (High, Level, Low)

One Gunner Damage marker to lower the Lethal Level

Use this marker to track TP (8 TP in this example)



Damage Boxes

Damage markers are placed in the Damage Boxes, each corresponding to its Damage type. On the pursuit map, ignore the Catastrophe Number on the Damage marker, and use the table printed in the Damage Box:

Letter indicates Damage type (example: Engine)



Bail Out: Each time you place a Damage marker in the Cockpit or Engine Damage Box, roll a die. If the number rolled falls in the range printed in the box, the bomber's crew bail out. The bomber is destroyed and you earn VP. *Note: For Engine damage, to determine the row to use, count the Damage markers, not points of damage.*

Engine: Each Damage marker placed in this box awards you Tactical Points, as noted in the box. TP earned this way may only be used against this bomber. *Note: To determine the row to use, count the Damage markers, not points of damage.*

Fire: Each time you place a Damage marker in the Wing Damage Box, roll a die. If the number rolled falls in the range printed in the box, flames engulf the bomber. It is destroyed and you earn VP. *Note: Count the Damage markers, not points of damage.*

Gunner: When there are enough Damage markers in this box, attacks against this bomber are less dangerous to your fighters, because the Lethal Level on this map is reduced by 1. *Note: Count the Damage markers, not points of damage.*

Turret: Each time a Damage marker is placed in this box, roll a die. If the number rolled is EVEN, the bomber's top turret is no longer in operation. If ODD, the bottom turret is inoperable. When a turret is inoperable, it grants the player an Attack advantage: If the fighter is Evasive the advantage cancels a Hit, if Determined a Hit is cancelled if you roll an EVEN number on a single roll of the die. Each advantage may be used once per turn. A fighter in a High space may use the advantage if the top turret is inoperable, and a fighter in a Low space may use it if the bottom turret is inoperable. If both turrets are inoperable, a fighter in a Level space may use it. Only one advantage may be earned per turret.



engine		
damage markers	TP	bail out (die roll)
1	gain 2 TP	10
2	gain 3 TP	7-10
3+	gain 5 TP	4-10

wing	
damage markers	fire (die roll)
1	9-10
2	7-10
3+	5-10



turret	
High	Low
even	odd

Accumulated Damage

The Basic Game rule that says accumulated damage of 10 or more destroys a bomber is still in effect (p. 44), **but only on the formation map**. It is not in effect on the pursuit map. Instead, if the Damage numbers of all Damage markers in a box add to or exceed the Damage number printed in that box, the bomber is destroyed. This applies to WING, RUDDER, ELEVATOR, and FUSELAGE damage boxes, but **not** to the other boxes.

Fuselage: Damage markers in the **Gunner, Cockpit, Elevator, Rudder, and Turret** boxes count as Fuselage damage for the purpose of accumulated damage. That is, if the Damage markers in all five boxes add to the number printed in the Fuselage box, the bomber is destroyed.



Advanced Game EP & VP

Experience Points (EP)

In addition to EP awards in the Basic Game, all of which apply to the Advanced Game, a pilot may destroy a bomber on the Pursuit map, earning 2 EP (and 2 staffel EP). If a pilot destroys a bomber and also suffers a Hit, forcing the fighter into the Fate Box, the pilot and the staffel still earn the EP.

Victory Points (VP)

In the Advanced Game, you do not earn VP for knocking a bomber out of formation (Fallen). You only earn VP for destroying bombers (on either the formation map or the pursuit map). You earn 2 VP if an Inbound Mission, and 1 VP if a Near Target or Outbound Mission.

Pursuit

play Pursuit after the Mission ends
but before determining Fate and tallying EP and VP

Fallen

bomber
Fallen
-1

In the Advanced Game, when a bomber is knocked out of the formation (Fallen), instead of tossing its Damage markers back in the cup, put them in a stack on the Turn Track, **in the space of the current Mission Turn**. Place a Bomber marker on the stack. If the bomber has no Damage markers, just place a Bomber marker there.



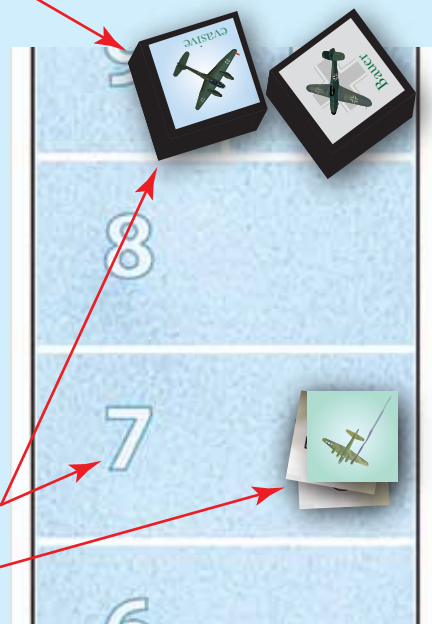
Move Phase

During the Move Phase (Mission Sequence of Play), a fighter may move off the formation map to pursue a fallen bomber. It may do this only if a bomber has already fallen out of formation and its Damage markers are on the Turn Track (or a Bomber marker is on the Turn Track in lieu of Damage markers). Place the fighter on the Turn Track, in the space of the current Mission Turn. If more than one fighter pursues in the same turn, place them together as a group on the Turn Track.

Must Be Able To Move: It costs nothing to move a fighter to the Turn Track (zero TP), but the fighter must be able to move. It can't be in a Return or Evasive Return Box, and it can't have a Hit marker attached.

one turn between Fallen and Pursuit, so the Interception Number is 1

bomber fell out of formation on Turn 7



Pursuit Sequence of Play

The reverse side of the Sequence of Play Card lists the sequence of Pursuit phases, accompanied by an abbreviated explanation of each. There are six phases to be performed in order. Once you finish the sixth phase (Next Pass), repeat phases 4 (Engage), 5 (Burst), and 6 (Next Pass), until Pursuit ends.

Pursuit Ends?

Fighters move in and out of the Return and Evasive Return boxes, paying TP costs for being placed in attack positions, until the bomber is destroyed or you no longer have fighters on the pursuit map. At any time after the first pass, Pursuit also ends if you have zero TP on the Pursuit Map. If the bomber is destroyed, you earn EP and VP (p. 3 of this booklet and the back of the Situation Manual).

Outline of the Pursuit Sequence of Play M

Intercept Fighters attempt to intercept the bomber (but see the escort optional rule, p. 9 of this booklet)

Set Up Shift fighter(s) and Damage markers to the appropriate pursuit map

First Pass Place fighters on attack positions (no TP cost for this initial pass)

Engage Select each fighter's mode (do not use Maneuver chits on the pursuit map); check for advantage

Burst Fighters attack and break away (Continuing Fire cards are not used)

Next Pass Pay TP to move fighters (costs printed on map); repeat the Engage and Burst Phases

Intercept

during the Intercept Phase (Turn Track on the Off Map Panel)

Select a Bomber

Select a bomber on the Turn Track (that is, select the Damage markers representing it, or the Bomber marker). One or more bombers may be intercepted, as long as you have fighters on the Turn Track to intercept with. If you wish to intercept more than one bomber, select them one at a time and resolve interception and pursuit completely before attempting interception and pursuit for another bomber.

Select a Fighter Group

After selecting a fallen bomber, select one fighter group on the Turn Track. A group is one or more fighters in the same space of the Turn Track. Groups may intercept different bombers, or two or more groups may attempt to intercept the same bomber. A group may split into two or more groups to pursue different bombers. A single fighter may be a group of one.

Interception Check

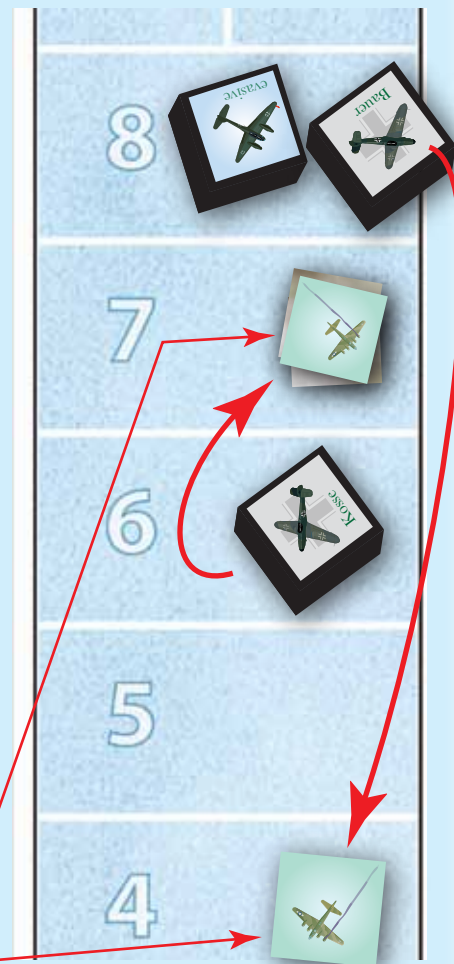
Roll a die for each fighter group attempting interception of the selected bomber. If the number rolled is equal to or higher than the **Interception Number**, the attempt succeeds and the fighter group intercepts the bomber.

Interception Number: Determine the "Interception Number" by measuring the distance in turns between the bomber and the pursuit fighters. Count the number of spaces on the Turn Track **between** bomber and fighters.

Tactical Points: Before rolling the die, you may spend TP to grant yourself a modifier. Add 1 to the die roll for each TP spent. You must spend TP separately for each interception attempt.

fighter attempts to intercept this bomber (Interception Number = 0)
success is automatic, no die roll necessary (unless using Interference, p.9)

fighters attempt to intercept this bomber (Interception Number = 3)



Interception Succeeds

If the attempt succeeds, set up the pursuit map (p. 6 this booklet). Before setting up, however, another fighter group may also attempt to intercept the same bomber (resolve all interception attempts before setting up).

Interception Fails

If the fighter group fails to intercept the bomber, the fighters in the group exit and are done for this mission. They may not attempt to intercept another bomber. Another fighter group may attempt to intercept the bomber, but if none succeed, the bomber escapes.

Pursuit Set Up

during the Set-Up Phase (Pursuit Map)

Sun?

Roll a die to determine the position of the Sun marker. Note the result on the pursuit map: each High space has the Sun icon and a number. If the number rolled matches that number, place the Sun marker in that space. If "none," there is no Sun marker (*the bomber is below the clouds or is flying erratically*).

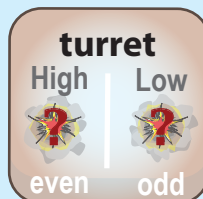


Effect: A fighter in the Sun marker's space enjoys the Out of Sun advantage (p. 45 Rule Book).

Damage Markers

Transfer Damage markers from the Turn Track to the pursuit map. Place each marker in its corresponding Damage Box, according to the type of damage.

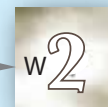
Turret: There are two sections in the Turret Damage Box, one representing the top turret and the other the "ball" turret on the underside of the bomber. Roll a die to determine which section the Damage marker should go in: **Even** high, **Odd** low. Roll separately for each marker. For their effects see p. 3 of this booklet.



Damage Types

C	Cockpit	G	Gunner
E	Engine	R	Rudder
EL	Elevator	T	Turret
F	Fuselage	W	Wing

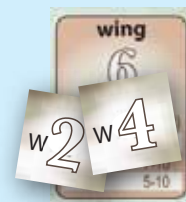
Wing damage →



Destroyed Already?

Make Fire and Bail Out Checks if Damage markers are in Cockpit, Engine, and/or Wing Damage Boxes (see p. 3 in this booklet - if fire or bail out happens, the bomber is destroyed). Even if the bomber does not suffer fire or bail out, after placing Damage markers in the appropriate Damage Boxes, you may find that the bomber is already destroyed due to accumulated damage. That is, if the Damage numbers of a box's Damage markers equal or exceed the Damage number printed in the box, the bomber is destroyed.

If set-up reveals that the bomber is already destroyed **before** the First Pass, it means the aircraft met its demise just as pursuing fighters catch up to it. Those fighters may not intercept another bomber, but the staffel earns EP and VP for the destroyed bomber. Individual fighters do **not** earn EP. To earn Staffel EP and VP for a bomber on the Turn Track, you **MUST** successfully intercept (p.5 this booklet).

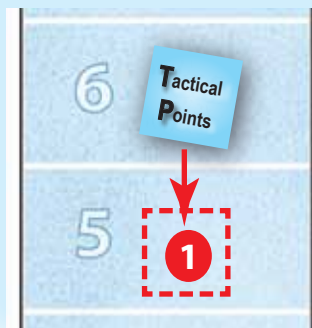


bomber destroyed

Transfer Fighters

Remove intercepting fighters from the Turn Track and keep them close at hand (you will place them in attack spaces). If there is a second fighter group intercepting this bomber (or a third or fourth), place their fighters in the pursuit map's Return Box.

Transfer Tactical Points (TP)

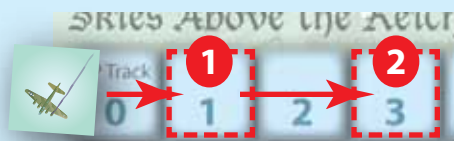


You may transfer TP from the Turn Track to the pursuit map. Deduct them from the Turn Track and add an equal number to the TP Track on the pursuit map. Also, if the bomber has one or more Damage markers in the engine Damage Box, add TP as noted in the box. Set-Up is the only opportunity you have to transfer TP from the Turn Track, but future engine Damage markers will award you TP.

Example:

1 Transfer 1 TP.

2 2 TP for Engine damage



First Pass/Engage/Burst

during the First Pass Phase (Pursuit Map)

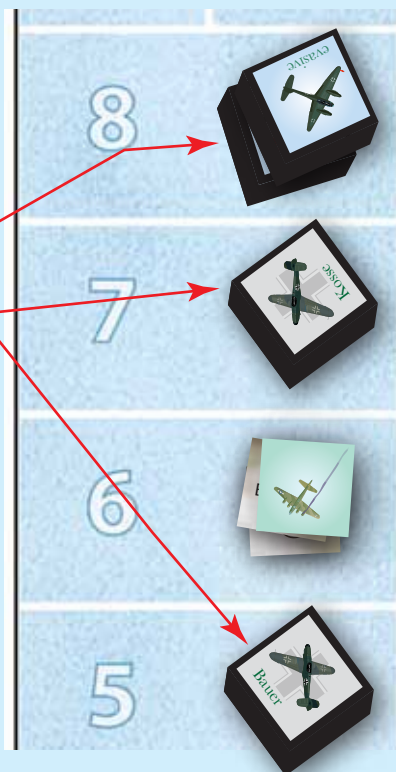
First Group Only

Only the first fighter group is permitted to attack this phase. The fighter group nearest the bomber on the Turn Track is the first group. If two groups are an equal number of spaces away from the bomber on the Turn Track, choose one to be first.

Example: Three fighter groups Intercept the same bomber:

These two Ju88s are two turns away, and so are not the "first group" (they may not attack during the First Pass)

These two Bf109s are an equal "distance" away, so either may be selected as the first group (the other will not be able to attack during the First Pass)



First Group Engages

Place the fighters of the first fighter group in any space or spaces of any attack position on the pursuit map. Ignore notes in the spaces regarding TP costs (you pay zero TP on the first pass). If two fighters are placed in the same space, do not check for collision (collision is ignored on the pursuit map). Select the mode of each fighter. If you choose not to place a fighter in a space to attack in this phase, place it in the Return Box or it may exit now (remove it from play).

Attack Advantage: All the same advantages that apply in the Basic Game apply here, except that to earn the Rotte advantage, two fighters must be in the same space (that means position and altitude have to be the same). Also, fighters earning the Schwarm advantage may be at different altitudes but must be in the same position (e.g., all four can be in the Nose Position, one High, two Level, and one Low).

Lethal Level: Use the Lethal Level indicated on the pursuit map, printed next to the position title. The Lethal Level may be modified by Gunner and/or Turret Damage (see p. 3 of this booklet) or by the number shown on some auxiliary fighters (see "Machines" on p.41 of the Rule Book).

Burst & Break Away

Resolve each fighter's attack one at a time. For each, draw an Attack card corresponding to its position (Nose, Tail, Oblique). Ignore Pass Through and Collision results, but other results are applied according to the Basic Game rules. After applying results, if any, the fighter breaks away to the Return Box or the Evasive Return Box, depending on its mode. **If the fighter has a Hit marker, perform Recovery immediately.**

Bomber Damage 44

If the bomber is damaged by the attack, draw a Damage marker for each Damage result, but ignore the marker's Catastrophe Number. Place Damage markers in their respective Damage boxes and check for Fire and Bail Out as noted in the box.

Fighter Hits 45

For each Hit result, draw a Hit marker and attach to the fighter. Check for Recovery immediately (Recovery is explained on p. 24 of the Rule Book).

No Continuing Fire

Skip Continuing Fire, and do not draw a Continuing Fire card (which means there is no Event Text to apply).



Fighter attacks from the Tail position (Level):

Lethal Level 2

Next Pass

during the Next Pass Phase (Pursuit Map)

Attack Again

After resolving the attacks of the first fighter group, all fighters in Return and Evasive Return boxes may move. Moving is optional. A fighter may move from the Return Box to any attack space on the map, or from the Evasive Return Box to the Return Box. For those fighters moving to attack spaces, perform the Engage and Burst Phases (p. 7 of this booklet).

Tactical Point Cost

Unlike the first pass, placing a fighter in a space is allowed only by paying a TP cost for **each** fighter (although that cost may be zero). The cost is noted in the space or box, and it must be paid from the TP Track on the pursuit map.

Exiting

Instead of attacking, a fighter may exit. Exiting costs zero TP. Exiting fighters are removed from play and may not intercept another bomber during this Mission. If the bomber is destroyed, all fighters on the pursuit map must exit.

Bomber Escapes/Pursuit Ends

When there are no fighters on the pursuit map, or you have zero TP, the bomber escapes. Perform interception for another bomber, if you have more fighters on the Turn Track in pursuit. When you no longer have fighters on the Turn Track, or there are no bombers on the Turn Track, the pursuit portion of the Mission ends. Resolve Fate (p. 55 of the Rule Book) and Tally VP, EP, and OP deductions (p. 56 of the Rule Book).

Regroup

during the Recovery Phase (formation map only)

What Regroups?

One or more fighters may “regroup” in order to increase your Tactical Points (TP) total.

Regroup Where?

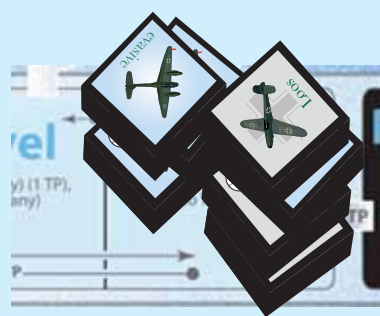
The regrouping fighters must be in the same box on the formation map. You may select only one box each Mission Turn for regroup. You may **not** regroup on the pursuit map.

Regroup When?

Regroup may only happen during the Recovery Phase of the Mission Turn, and **ONLY** if a bomber is not already on the Turn Track (that is, if a fallen bomber's Damage markers or Bomber marker is not yet on the Turn Track). Regroup is prohibited if the Mission Turn marker has already reached the Flight Limit turn.

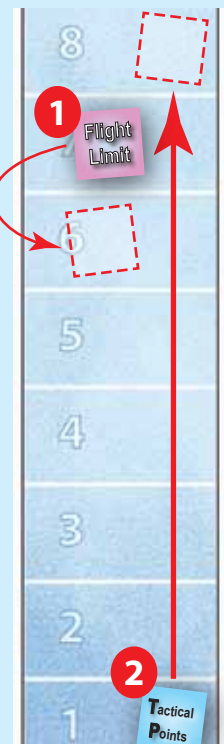
Procedure

First, decrease the Flight Limit by one Mission Turn (shift the Flight Limit marker to an earlier space on the Turn Track). Then, count the number of fighters in the selected box and increase your TP by that number.



Example: Regroup

- 1** Shift Flight Limit marker from Mission Turn 7 to 6.
- 2** There are 7 fighters in the selected box (Oblique Low), so add 7 TP to your total.



Formation Turn

on formation and pursuit maps

Sun Shifts Position?

During play on the formation map and the pursuit map, there is a chance that the formation of bombers will turn, changing their direction. The effect is that the Sun marker will move.

Sun Shift Trigger

This shift can be triggered whenever you are required to draw a Damage marker (because a fighter damaged a bomber, for example). If the Damage marker you draw has the Sun icon printed on it, the Sun marker must shift position. This shift happens at the end of the current phase. It happens even if you put the Damage marker back in the cup (because you attacked with cannon and kept the other Damage marker).

icon trigger



Shift Where?

When triggered, roll a die. If the number rolled is EVEN, shift the Sun marker one position clockwise. For example, if the Sun marker is in the High Nose box, it shifts to the High Flank 2 to 4 o'clock position box. If the number is ODD, it shifts counterclockwise.

Pursuit Map: Optional Rule

A lone bomber is more likely to turn than a bulky formation. On the pursuit map, you may also check for the Sun marker's shift after every turn (that is, after all fighters have attacked). Roll a die: if you roll an EVEN number, there is no shift. If ODD, a shift is triggered (roll a die for direction).

Ju88/Me410 Cannon

on the pursuit map



A Ju88 or Me410 with a Cannon attachment may attack from the Return Box during the Burst step. To resolve the attack, use the same procedure described on p. 25 of the Rule Book. It costs zero TP to do this.

Interference (Optional Rule)

on the Off-Map Panel during interception, 1944 & 1945 seasons only

Enemy escorts may interfere with your fighters' ability to intercept.

Preparation: Place Escort markers in a cup (use the same type assigned to this Mission; if none were assigned, use P-47s).

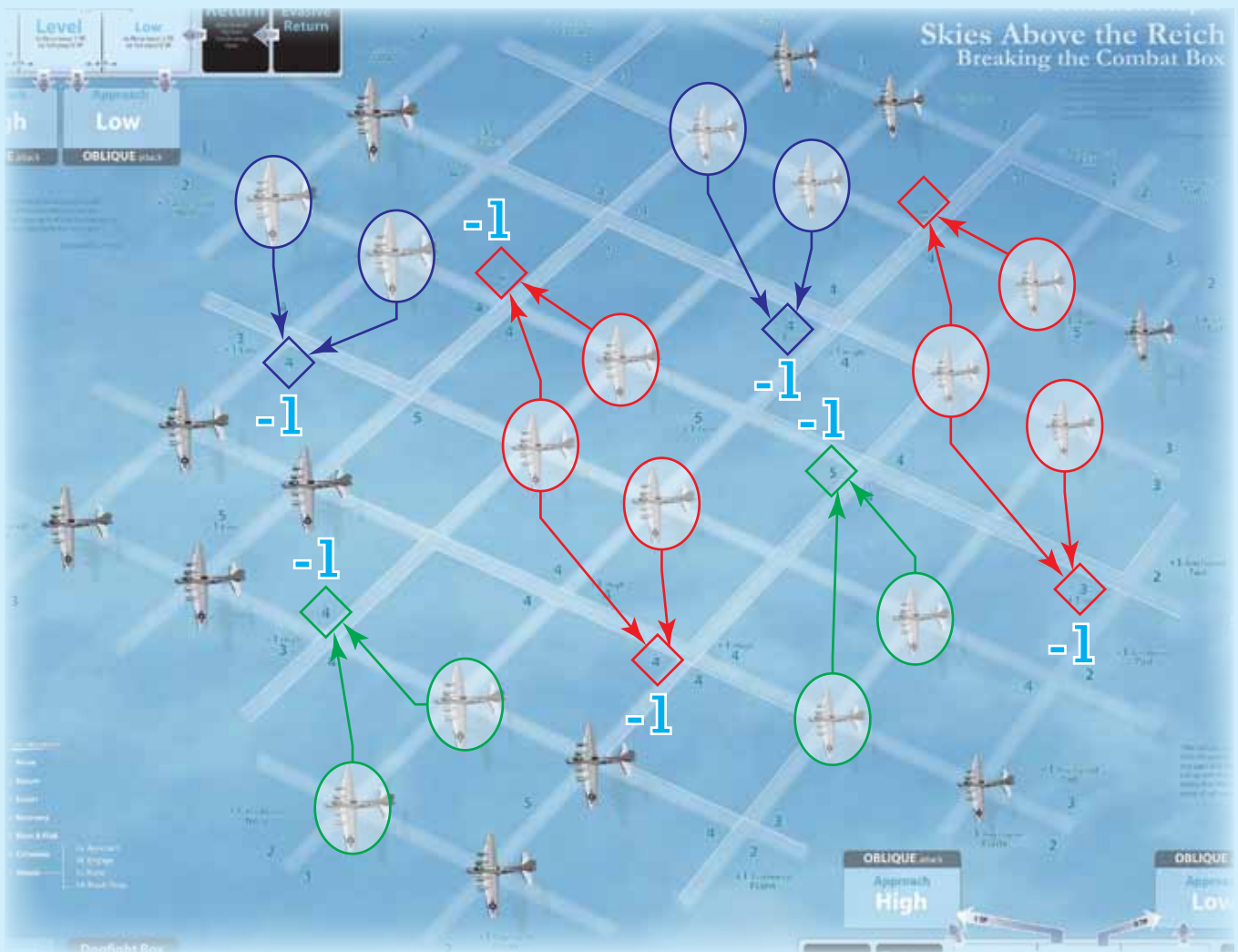
Escort Interference Check: During interception, roll two dice instead of one. Use the **black** die to determine if interception is successful (following the procedure described in this booklet on p. 5). The **red** die checks for interference by escorts. You may spend TP to modify either die, but not both. *Note: unlike modifying the black die, to modify the red die, each TP spent subtracts one from the number rolled.*

Result: If the number rolled on the **red** die is **equal to or higher** than the total number of fighters and bombers currently on the Turn Track, the escort interferes, in which case, draw one Escort marker from the cup – it initiates aerial combat (the fighter is not higher). Afterwards, put the Escort marker back in the cup. If the result of the aerial combat is **B** or **R**, fighters may enter the pursuit map (but only if interception was successful, as determined by the black die). If the result is **S** (scattered) or **D** (dogfight), the fighters may not intercept. If the number rolled on the **red** die is **lower**, there is no interference.

Shrinking Box (Optional Rule)

on the Formation Map

If a Mission goes well, many bombers will fall out of formation or be destroyed. Although Fallen, Destroyed, Loose, and Kaputt markers reduce the Lethal Levels as this happens, there are situations where a significant section of the combat box is wiped out and yet some Lethal Levels do not adjust properly. For added realism, the diagram on this page indicates when and where additional -1 modifiers to the Lethal Level should be applied. The diagram depicts Map 4, but you are welcome to apply it to Maps 2 and 3 by applying the same principle.



If both B-17s indicated by the two ovals  are Fallen/Destroyed, -1 Lethal Level in the space indicated by the diamond 

SECTION TWO



Rules for Two Players

In the two-player version of this game, players work together to win the Campaign. They play each Mission together, cooperatively. They perform Mission Set-Up together, splitting OP and selecting their own fighters, auxiliaries, and attachments (the stickers are color-coded to make this easy). They each keep track of their own pilots on their own Pilot Roster, but each player gets only 9 Bf109 pilots. One player takes the pilots of the top half of the roster while the other takes the lower half (and its corresponding Bf109s). Together, the players either win or lose...and yet, if they win, only one of them gets promoted (**that player** is the true victor). If they lose, only one player will get court-martialled. This makes the two-player version of *Skies Above the Reich* an (un)cooperative game.

The two-player version may be played using only the Basic Game rules, or, if players prefer, they may opt to use the rules for the Advanced Game.

one player gets these pilots

one player gets these pilots

Pilot			EP	Notes
Ademeit				
Bauer				
Clade				
Dahl				
Frieling				
Grimm				
Heller				
Johann				
Kremler				
Loos				
Maack				
Neumann				
Obleser				
Puttfargen				
Richter				
Schmidt				
Thimmig				
Zweigart				

Experience:
L = Lands (1 EP)
BO or W = Bail Out or Wounded (1 EP)
E = Escort killed (1 EP)
EP For Bomber:
F = Fallen (1 EP)
K = Destroyed (2 EP)

Experte Bonus
Pilot must spend 5 EP to gain an Experte Bonus (he may have more than one bonus). Once earned, a Bonus is permanent but may only be used once per mission.

TIMING: add Damage to attack result

A AIM: if Damage result, draw and apply 2 Damage markers

L LUCK: ignore 1 Hit

BA BREAK ANYWHERE: Break Away to any Return Box (no Continuing Fire card)

Green Penalty
Replacement Pilot automatically has one Green Penalty. These are permanent until removed. Pilot must spend 3 EP to remove his penalty.

E ERRATIC: 1 TP to Break Away (or else Fighter exits)

P PANIC: exits when Hit; perform Recovery immediately

Z ZEAL: must be in Determined mode

Two-Player Points

Campaign and EP

Players play the same Campaign, playing each Mission together. Each earns and spends Experience Points (EP) independently (although they may share the cost of a Staffel bonus).

Mission Set-Up

Follow the "Instructions" in the usual way, cooperating to set up the Mission using the Mission Set-Up Table and the Situation Manual. When a die must be rolled (for example, to determine the map), it does not matter which player actually rolls the die.

Staffel Commands

Either player may use a Staffel Command, or players may agree to share the cost of a command. *For example, to select the map, one may spend 4 EP and the other 3EP, splitting the cost.* If disagreement arises, players are free to spend EP as they like. Thus, a player may use a Staffel Command even if the other player does not wish them to do so. *For example, one may spend 7 EP to select an Inbound Mission, heedless of their partner's protest.* Once a command has been paid for and the selection made, the other player may immediately spend an equivalent EP to make another selection, overriding the previous selection. *Thus, after watching their opponent select an Inbound Mission, the other player may immediately spend 7 EP to select an Outbound Mission.* There is no limit to the number of Staffel Commands that may be paid for in a single step of Mission Set-Up. The last selection paid for is binding on both players.

Operation Points (OP)

Players must evenly split the OP, and spend them independently. Each player is allowed **two Bf109s for free**, however, in addition to their OP. OP may not be given to another player or traded.

Example: It is the 1942 Season and the Mission Type is Inbound. When determining the number of OP, a 7 was rolled, garnering a total of 4 OP. Thus, in addition to the two Bf109s each player gets for free, each spends 2 OP. In the 1942 Season the only item on the Operations Menu is Bf109s, so each player plays the Mission with four fighters, all of them Bf109s (for a total of eight fighters between them).

Tactical Points (TP)

Each player starts with the TP indicated by the Situation Manual. Thus, if the mission is to start with only 1 TP, each player starts with 1 TP. There are two TP markers provided in the game, one for each player.

Spending TP: Each player spends their own TP. Tactical Points may not be given or traded to the other player.

Regroup (Advanced Game): Two Flight Limit markers are provided in the game, one for each player. Each player may regroup during the Recovery Phase, and TP earned belong only to the regrouping player. Only count the player's own fighters when adding TP. Both players may regroup in the same turn. Their regrouping fighters may share the same box with the fighters of the other player, but this is not a requirement. If they share the same box, and both players regroup, they do so independently, earning TP only for their own fighters.



Taking Turns

When following the Mission Sequence of Play, players should perform tasks simultaneously. This may not always be practical during some phases (especially the Attack Phase), or if a disagreement arises. Either player, at any time, has the option to impose a turn order, as follows:

Turn Order: When called for by either player, actions must be conducted in turn order. The player with the most TP at that moment goes first, taking the first action. If players have the same amount of TP, the player who has more fighters in play on the map goes first. If still a tie, the player with fewer Green pilots on his roster is the first player (and if *still* a tie, roll a die to determine who goes first). A player may pass his turn. Once Turn Order has been invoked, establish the first player at the start of each phase. Regardless of what transpires during the phase, the first player remains the first player for the duration of the phase.

- **Approach Step (Attack Phase):** When taking turns during the Approach step, each player moves one fighter from an Approach Box to a space in the formation, followed by the other player. Play goes back and forth in this manner until a wave of six fighters is complete. (Note: a wave is 6 fighters, **not** 6 fighters per player.) If a player passes, he may not move another fighter that phase.
- **Engage Step (Attack Phase):** Perform this step simultaneously. When assessing advantage (for Position, etc.), consider both players' fighters. *For example, Player A placed a fighter in an element from the Nose Approach Box, and Player B placed her fighter in the same element but from the Oblique Approach Box, and they are at different altitudes. This earns the Position advantage. One Advantage marker is placed in the element, and either player may use it when it is their turn.*
- **Burst Step (Attack Phase):** When resolving an attack, only one advantage may be used by a player taking their turn (Exception: an Out of the Sun advantage may be used by the fighter it is attached to, in addition to another advantage). *For example, a player may choose to use a Position advantage during her fighter's attack. She may not also use the Rotte advantage during resolution of the same attack. After using the Position advantage, she removes the marker, which means her opponent lost his chance to use it.*

Collision Checks

When a Collision Check is triggered during the Engage step of the Attack Phase and both players have fighters in the space, use Turn Order to determine which player performs the check, and thus, gets to select the fighter to receive the Proximity marker.

Escort Phase

When an Escort marker moves, and a decision must be made as to its destination, use Turn Order to determine which player makes the decision.

Pursuit (Advanced Game)

INTERCEPTION: During interception, players must keep their groups separate, and must take turns during the Intercept Phase of the Pursuit Sequence of Play. The player with more TP goes first (use the most fighters on the Turn Track to break ties). When it is a player's turn, that player selects a fallen bomber and one of their own groups. Both players may attempt to intercept the same bomber.

PURSUIT MAP: If both players intercept successfully, each player keeps track of their own TP on the pursuit map (each player earns TP for Engine damage; do not split the TP). After the first pass (played by only one player), play each phase together, taking turns moving one fighter at a time.

Victory Points (VP)

Players keep a tally of the VP they earn. At the end of a Season, add the VP of both players to determine if the players win, lose, or may continue the Campaign. If players win the Campaign, compare each player's VP. Refer to the Situation Manual, p. 25, for Winning and Losing.

SECTION THREE

Design Notes

Skies Above the Reich had its moment of origination back in 2010. I had just received an issue of *Against the Odds* magazine, and with it came a free postcard game. That proved an unexpected disappointment. I already had precisely the same postcard. This had happened before, and I decided it would be interesting and maybe even useful to design a postcard game where duplicates would not be redundant.

Together with Mark Aasted, I came up with a reverse version of the classic game, *B-17: Queen of the Skies*. We put a B-17 in the middle of the postcard and gave the player a handful of Luftwaffe fighters in the form of counters. We called it *Schwarm* and proposed it to the folks at ATO. In our minds this was not just an individual postcard, it was a tile in a mosaic of postcards. If a customer already had *Schwarm*, and they received another, they could place one next to the other, and thus, the target would be two B-17s flying as a pair. With a third duplicate they could make a vee. Combine them with others, the player could gradually piece together an entire combat box of B-17s. When a bomber was knocked out of formation, the player would shift one of the postcards off to the side, isolating it from the mosaic. We felt that depicting the combat box formation was something yet tackled in the wargame genre, and I was pretty excited about this proposal.

I am happy to say that ATO liked it too, and to our delight, they thought it was a good enough idea to expand. Flattery perhaps got the better of us, because in hindsight, enlarging that little postcard game into an 8.5x14 format with one inch counters took away the one feature we thought was really snazzy. By enlarging it into a stand-alone game, it was no longer viable to put more than one game map together to make a formation. Yes, it could be done, but those postcards were easy to accumulate, unlike ATO's mini-games. Players were unlikely to get duplicates of those, and so, the functionality of collecting copies of *Schwarm* to make a formation was not realized. To accommodate the larger format, we did our best to elaborate the rules, and to this day we remain thankful to ATO for giving us the opportunity to do so. However, the game that was published was not really the game we wanted, and as designers, we realized that was our fault. We immediately set about doing *Schwarm* on a full size wargame map depicting 20 or so bombers. For the first couple of years, Mark and I tailored our prototype to ATO's specifications and material limitations. Because this was going to be a magazine game, we could include one game map, one sheet of counters, and rules integrated into the magazine. We gradually realized that this game would be more interesting if we included more than one formation map, in order to show the development of the formation over the course of the war. Although it is easy to geek out on machinery, the B-17 and the fighters wielded by the mighty Luftwaffe, what we thought was really interesting here was the "terrain" created by organizing bombers in a formation.

It was in 2013 or maybe 2014 that Mark and I decided to allow the design to be what it really wanted to be. That meant doing this on more than a single map and one countersheet. It meant finding another publisher. To their credit, the folks at ATO were gracious, telling us that ATO was supposed to serve as an incubator for more ambitious game designs.

By this time I was in the process of publishing a game called *Enemy Coast Ahead* with GMT, so Mark and I began to think of this design as a potential GMT title too. The game expanded. Its component list grew to monstrous proportions, soon including a hefty deck of cards, multiple boards, many sheets of counters, a ream of player aids. Blocks with stickers soon replaced fighter counters, and the card deck begot a brood of decks (seven at the zenith of our madness). We came to our senses, eventually. But design is like that; addition followed by purging. Repeat, and repeat again. Before long we had tossed out the system used in *Schwarm* for a completely different scheme, and before we were done we had tossed out that scheme too. By the time we approached GMT, the component list was still large, but it was a very skinny version of what this design once was.

Skies Above the Reich is predicated on the idea that the bombers were organized in a configuration, a formation, that established a deadly terrain. We chose not to add much detail in terms of the individual machines, which we know will disappoint many Grogards who want to see a differentiation between a Bf109F and Bf109G. We take technological developments into consideration, for both the fighters and the bombers, but we deliberately set out to design a system that did not bog down in those kind of details.

The lethal terrain and the fighter pilot's challenge of negotiating that terrain is what this game is about. That, and the long durée of the airwar, which proved a catastrophe for the Luftwaffe and for the people under that crumbling ceiling. We ask players to think about how to approach the prickly beast of the bomber formation. How do you attack it? Angle of approach is a vital consideration, as is altitude. Will teamwork help or is it best to send a lone fighter at the beast, followed by another? Ultimately, we hope the player will come to see this terrain as inherently fragile. The game should allow you to watch as the formation loosens up and parts of it break. But if you play a Full Campaign, you should also come to appreciate the dilemma and agony of holding together an effective *staffel*. It too is fragile.

The game uses "seasons" to trace the development of machine technology and tactics, but only as a thick brushstroke. By mid-1943 the player has plenty of options. Bombs, rockets, cannon, and a variety of aircraft to throw at the beast. By late-1943, the player should have his way, if he learns how to use those "attachments" and can read the terrain. Later, the player can count on the threat of constant escort. By 1944, the P-51 Mustang will most likely inspire the player to alter tactics. He may still load some fighters with rockets, but he will not have the luxury of time and will be in a hurry to deliver those goods and then bug out. Other considerations will also weigh on the player's mind. Once you know how to work the tools provided by the Operations Menu, you can knock out bombers with some degree of surety, especially if you are willing to risk your own pilots. That's the problem, and opting for armor may prove necessary, but the need to knock out bombers should tempt the player to risk pilots. The Pilot Roster and the campaign scheme means getting to know those pilots, or feeling like you do, especially as they gain experience. We hope this aspect of the game, the human dimension, is something delivered in the box. It was another motive for shifting focus away from the minutia of machine detail, and, if we flatter ourselves, we hope situates *Skies Above the Reich* in the same genre of gaming as *The Hunters*, or that grand old classic, *B-17: Queen of the Skies*.

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