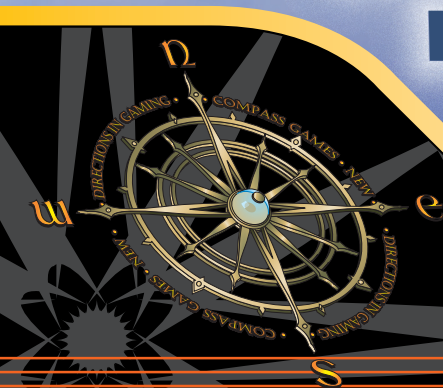# RULES OF PLAY

Gregory Smith's

INTERCEPTOR ACE

Daylight Air Defense Over Germany, 1943·44

Compass Games
New Directions in Gaming

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[1.0] INTRODUCTION

The strategic bombing of Germany by the United Kingdom and the United States gave rise to a new chapter in total war. At night, the British brought the foreshadowing of the end of the Third Reich with the "1,000 plane raid." A strategy of "round the clock" bombing was conceived, where night operations by the British would be followed up by day operations by the Americans. During 1943, the American bomber force built up gradually, with no fighter escort to begin with, and eventually turned into 1,000 plane raids of their own, with massive fighter escort. The air battle over Germany now raged for the very life of the regime itself.

Interceptor Ace is a solitaire, tactical level game placing you in command of a German interceptor aircraft during the second half of the Second World War. Your daytime mission is to destroy as many enemy bombers and fighter aircraft as possible, while advancing your crew quality and increasing your personal rank and awards—all while remembering you have to make it home amidst diminishing odds of survival as the war progresses. As time passes and players rack up kills, they may use the experience gained to improve their odds of success by purchasing skills. As their prestige increases, they may request transfer to other bases in an attempt to get "closer to the action" and/or request a newer type of interceptor. Awards and ace status help to narrate the player's eventual storied career—to survive the war and become one of the top bomber-killer aces of the war.

Players will find it extremely challenging to survive an entire tour from March 1943 to February 1944, at which time the game ends. You will start with one of the aircraft available to the Luftwaffe at the start of the game, but as your fame and prestige rise, more advanced interceptors will be available to choose from.

The rules are numbered and presented in sets of major sections, each section divided into numerous major and secondary cases. The rules cross-reference other rules using (parentheses), so for example you will see, "you normally cannot avoid combat with the escorts (exception: 7.1.10)" meaning case 7.1.10 is related to this rule. The rules of this game have been arranged both for ease of comprehension on first reading and for ease of reference later.

IF YOU ARE NEW TO OR UNFAMILIAR WITH HISTORICAL GAMES, DON'T PANIC! First look at any of the Aircraft Display Mats, the Target Charts, and the playing pieces, then give the rules a quick read through. Please don't try to memorize them. Follow the setup instructions for play and then read Section 2.0 that describes the general course of play. Section 4.0 provides the framework to help you get started. As questions arise simply refer back to the rules. After a few minutes of play, you will find yourself becoming familiar with the game mechanics.

Online game support is available. Choose from these options:

Visit us on the Web:
https://compassgames.com *(Compass Games home page)*

Contact us by email:
sales@compassgames.com

We also recommend you visit the official game discussion topic on ConsimWorld for game support, to read after action reports, and to share your play experience with others. You will find *Interceptor Ace* game topic by visiting talk.consimworld.com and navigating to the Western Front individual game discussion area.

General customer service and game parts support are provided by Compass Games (see 3.8).

Throughout the rules you will see numerous indented sections such as this one. These sections are filled with examples, clarifications, play hints, design notes and other assorted wisdom in order to help ease you along.

Interceptor Ace

[2.0] HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

[2.1] OBJECT OF THE GAME

The object of the game is to conduct repeated sorties (a.k.a. flights or missions) as the pilot of an interceptor aircraft and to shoot down as many enemy bombers as possible. The success of each sortie is reflected by the total number of aircraft downed or any special mission completed, which can result in promotion and advancement—culminating in receiving the highly coveted Knight's Cross. You will face relentless risks as each sortie becomes more hazardous due to the passage of time and the new, more advanced enemy aircraft you will be engaging. The ultimate success you achieve rests on the decisions you make while conducting sorties during the course of your career.

Overall victory level is determined at the end of the game based on total victories achieved against bombers (which can also be determined posthumously if you are killed in action).

The key game components used to facilitate play are the various Aircraft Display Mats to track the status of your aircraft with tracks for your sorties based on where you are stationed, the Bomber Target Chart, the Fighter Target Chart to resolve fighter or escort encounters, and the Sortie Log Sheet to track the activity and success of each. The various Player Aid Cards are used to resolve game functions.

[2.2] GENERAL OVERVIEW

In general, play revolves around conducting numerous sortie assignments and resolving any encounters until safely returned to base. Upon completion of each sortie, you assess the success achieved by consulting your Sortie Log Sheet, which may result in a promotion/award for yourself. Between sorties you may check to see if you have become eligible to fly a more advanced type of aircraft. You may also need time to recuperate from any personal injury before being able to conduct your next sortie, or may have to sit out a sortie while your aircraft is repaired.

[2.3] CONDUCTING SORTIES

Your Aircraft Display Mat shows the overall status of your aircraft as you fly sorties. When conducting sorties, your aircraft progresses through Endurance boxes on the mission track, checking for possible encounters each time, including the possibility of a random event.

Typically, encounters involve intercepting an enemy raid composed of bombers, or fighter encounters. For each encounter you decide to engage in combat or attempt to avoid it. You will also record all aircraft you engage during combat on the Sortie Log Sheet, noting whether you damaged or destroyed them.

As you conduct combat, you will inflict and receive damage. At the end of a combat, you must decide whether to continue on your sortie or head back to base.

Damage of any kind is serious when you consider the fragile nature of your aircraft, and should influence your decision on when it is time to abort your sortie.

[2.4] RETURN TO BASE

Once your aircraft completes its sortie by returning to base, you will possibly receive awards or decorations, and check to see if a more advanced type of aircraft is available. Convalescence due to wounds received may delay your next flight. Time needed to repair your aircraft may delay your next mission; if enough damage was done, or it may even be scrapped and you will receive a new aircraft.

[2.5] END GAME

Once all sortie assignments have been carried out through February 1944, the game ends. Also, should you be killed in action, the game immediately ends. Whether you survive until your final sortie or not (at the end of February 1944), tally the total number of aerial victories against bombers to determine your level of victory achieved. Typically, to record an entire career, you will want to note all aircraft shot down, your final rank, and any awards achieved. Of course, if you have been killed, any accolades and results are recognized posthumously.

[3.0] GAME EQUIPMENT

[3.1] AIRCRAFT DISPLAY MATS

The 15 double-sided Aircraft Display Mats (30 different aircraft) provided correspond to each aircraft type available to the player. This mat helps track the status of your aircraft and systems, including available weapons and ammunition at your disposal. Select the appropriate Aircraft Display Mat corresponding to the aircraft type you have selected for play. This mat is the centerpiece when conducting game play and carrying out sorties. The use of this mat is explained in the appropriate rules section.

[3.2] BOMBER AND FIGHTER TARGET CHARTS

The Bomber Target Chart [B10] and Fighter Target Chart [B11] are used to resolve combat against enemy aircraft and are typically set beside your Aircraft Display Mat during play. The use of these mats is explained in the appropriate rules section.
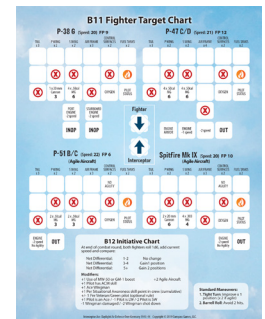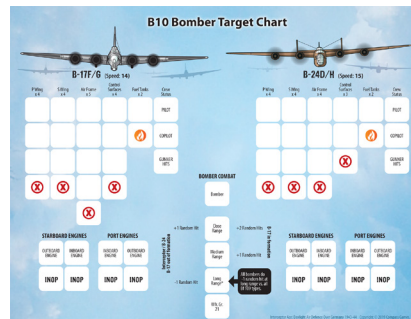
[3.3] PILOT AND CREW STATUS CHART

The Pilot and Crew Status Chart [A2] is used to track skills, awards, and your pilot's current Prestige Level, which determines eligibility for aircraft upgrades (9.0).

[3.4] THE PLAYING PIECES

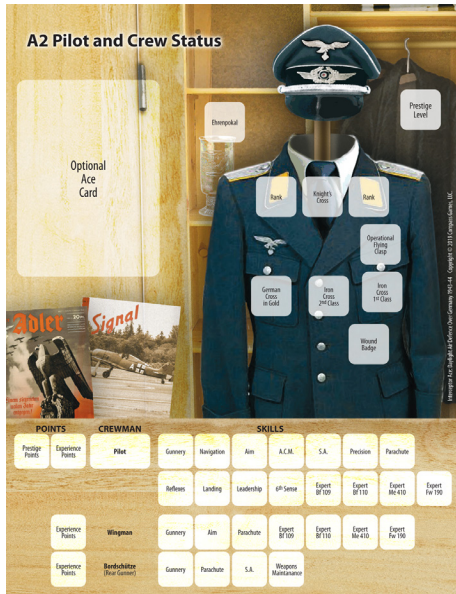There are 223 playing pieces on a die-cut sheet included with *Interceptor Ace*. These playing pieces are referred to as markers (or counters) and are placed on either the Aircraft Display Mat to track status of your plane and crew or on one of the Target Charts. Markers are provided for individual aircraft, crew members, ammo rounds, random events, and the status of crew and systems.

Note: some extra markers (damage markers, for example) have been printed as spare parts should any become missing or damaged. The game also includes six markers for use with a previous game, "Nightfighter Ace." These may be discarded if you do not own that game.

[3.4.1] HOW TO READ THE MARKERS

Interceptor Ace counter mix provides markers to track the status of your aircraft and for resolving engagements. These markers may include information, such as die-roll modifiers, to facilitate play. An explanation of each marker type is explained below.

[3.4.2] GAME MARKERS

Aircraft:
The various aircraft markers correspond to the type you have selected and is placed on the Aircraft Display Mat to track progress of your assigned sortie. Each of the 30 aircraft markers lists its corresponding type and start date.

Yellow band indicates aircraft available at the start of the game ▶

Friendly   **Enemy**

Officer Rank:
Eight Officer Rank markers (four pairs, left and right) are provided to track your promotion level as a pilot if you have chosen to be an officer.

Non-commissioned Officer Rank:
Eight NCO Rank markers (four pairs, left and right) are provided to track your promotion level as a pilot if you have chosen to be an NCO.

Medals & Awards:
Various awards may be bestowed on you based on your career success. Although mainly for historical interest, the major game impact is that most of them raise your Prestige Level, an important game mechanic that allows you to fly more advanced aircraft as they become available. Some provide minor game advantages as well.

Crew and Wingman Skills:
As you gain experience, another key game mechanic is the improvement of your pilot, wingman, and crew (if you have one of the aircraft equipped with a rear gunner) by the purchase of skills. These skills have a direct impact on your combat capabilities and survival. Your pilot begins the game with one Experience Point, granted for having graduated from Flight School. Different skills have different costs to purchase.
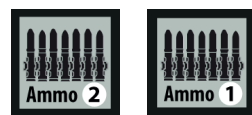

Random Events:
While most Random Events are resolved immediately, some can be used later during play and these markers should be placed on the Aircraft Display Mat until used.


Armaments:
Ammo markers represent typically cannon ammunition carried in your weapons, and are two-sided showing either "1" or "2" ammo points.

Interceptor Ace

Damage:

Damage markers are provided to track damage to wings, the tail, the airframe and any possible damage to engines and other systems. These markers are only placed on your Aircraft Display Mat or Target Charts when damage occurs. They have an "INOP" side for systems that are knocked out (specifically, engines and weapons).
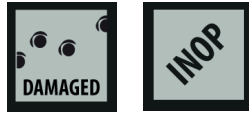
Crew Status:

Crew status markers are provided to track severity of injury or KIA results.

Map Markers:

Markers are provided for the Operations Map (if used) to represent your currently assigned base zone, your specific airfield, and your assigned unit.
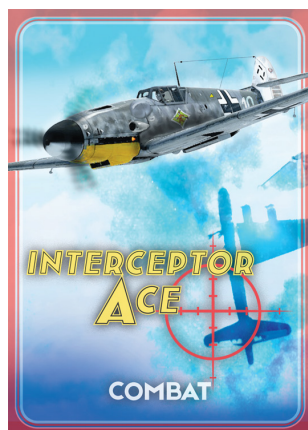
[3.5] GAME CARDS

3.5.1 The Combat Card Deck

There are 60 combat cards in the game. The deck is used for offensive fire, defensive fire, wingman support, combat maneuvering, etc. This deck should be shuffled at the start of every month, or as needed.

Damage by firepower

Defensive action or wingman action

Bomber/rear gunner defensive fire

3.5.2 Historical Aces

There are eight Historical Ace cards, used for players who wish to recreate the career of a historical pilot during the time frame of the game.
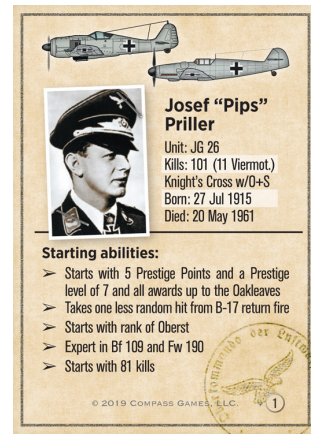
◄ *Name*

◄ *Historical information*

◄ *Game abilities*
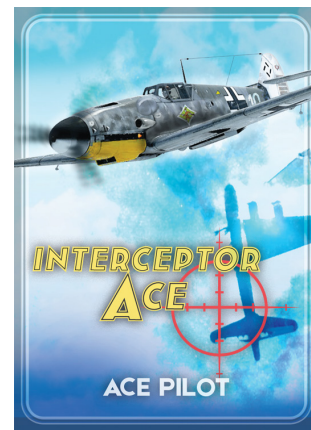
[3.6] CHARTS AND TABLES

Numerous one and two-sided Player Aid Cards are provided to facilitate game play and resolve game functions. The use of these charts and displays are explained in the appropriate rules section. Specific charts and tables are referenced by their ID in [square brackets].

When a die roll is called for, each table specifies the die roll combination necessary, which in some cases may include each die representing a different place value. In such instances, use a colored die to distinguish place values. For example, on the Fighter Damage Chart [B6] for a roll of "1d6+1d6," the first d6 represents the tens' place value and the second d6 the ones' place value. This means the result of a roll of 3+4 is a "34" and not a "7."

[3.7] THE SORTIE LOG SHEET

The two-sided Sortie Log Sheet is used to record information for each game session and damaged or downed aircraft. Feel free to photocopy these sheets as needed.

[3.8] GAME SCALE

Each sortie is conducted in a day, with (typically) eight sorties flown per month, corresponding to the number of major raids undertaken on average by the Americans for that month. Select markers represent individual aircraft, specific crew members, and ammunition.

[3.9] PARTS INVENTORY

A complete game of *Interceptor Ace* includes the following components:

One full-color counter sheet (223 x 9/16-inch counters)

One Rules Booklet with Designer's Notes

Four Player Aid Cards, 2-sided

Two Player Aid Cards, 1-sided

One deck of 60 Combat Cards

One Sortie Log Sheet pad, 2-sided

Fifteen Aircraft Display Mats, 2-sided

One Operations Map

One Position Chart

Eight Ace Pilot cards

Two 6-sided, one 20-sided, and one 10-sided die

One Game box

If any of these parts are missing or damaged, please contact the publisher:

Compass Games LLC, PO Box 271, Cromwell, CT 06416 USA

Phone: (860) 301-0477

E-Mail: *sales@compassgames.com*

> *Note on game terminology: There are three types of aircraft commonly referred to as "fighters" in the game. However, in the game, slightly different terms are used to specify the side, and role, these fighters play. A German fighter is called an "Interceptor." An Allied fighter defending bombers is an "Escort" while fighters on sweeps are simply "Fighters." Finally, the term "Fighter Combat" refers to Interceptors having combat with either Fighters or Escorts.*

[4.0] GAME SETUP

GENERAL RULE

Game setup consists of rolling randomly for a starting base and aircraft type, or by selecting your aircraft type, preparing your Sortie Log Sheet, and placing the corresponding Aircraft Display Mat in front of you for initial marker placement prior to conducting your first sortie. You should also have the Bomber Target Chart [B10] set nearby, as it will be referenced when resolving engagements against enemy bombers. Nearby should also be the Fighter Target Chart [B11] as enemy fighters or escorts may also be engaged. Shuffle the Combat Card Deck and place it face-down on the Operations Map, in the Combat Cards space, next to the Discard Pile.
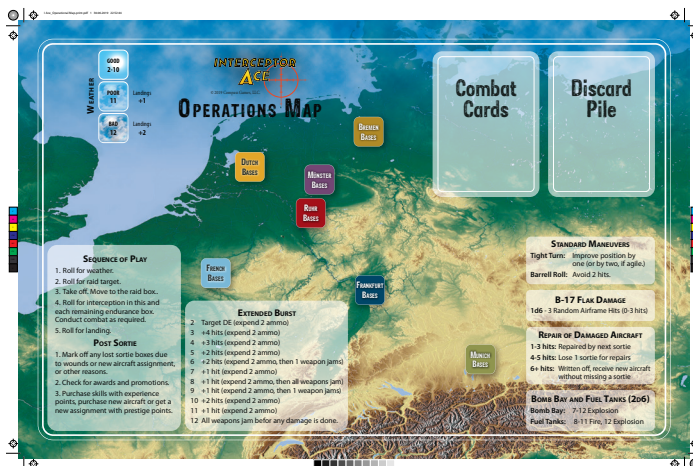
[4.1] BASE ASSIGNMENT

Play begins by rolling 1d20 on the list below to receive your starting base and unit, then select selecting one of the aircraft types currently available for them. Alternately, you may choose the location and starting date if you desire. Game play consists of being the pilot of a single aircraft (and controlling a wingman later in the game) rather than simulating control of larger formations.

Roll	Unit	Aircraft Available
1	I/JG 1	Bf109G-1, Bf109G-1/R2, Bf109G-1/R6
2	II/JG 1	Fw190A-4
3	III/JG 1	Fw190A-4
4	IV/JG 1	Fw190A-4
5	I/JG 2	Fw190A-4
6	II/JG 2	Fw190A-4
7	III/JG 2	Fw190A-4
8	I/JG 3	Bf109G-4
9	II/JG 3	Bf109G-5
10	III/JG 3	Bf109G-4, Bf109G-6
11	II/ZG 26	Me410A
12	I/JG 11	Fw190A-4
13	II/JG 11	Bf109G-6
14	III/JG 11	Bf109G-6
15	I/JG 26	Fw190A-4, Fw190A-5
16	II/JG 26	Fw190A-4, Bf109G-4
17	III/JG 26	Fw190A-4, Bf109G-1/R2, Bf109G-4
18	I/JG 27	Bf109G-4
19	III/JG 54	Fw190A-4, Bf109G-4
20	I/ZG 26	Bf110G-2
Optional start:		
21	IV/JG 3	Bf109G-6
22	I/ZG 76	Bf110G-2
23	II/ZG 76	Bf110G-2

> *Note: careers starting in Bremen, while historical, have low chances of interception at the start of the game. First time players may wish to avoid starting there.*

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Base	Starting Zone	Date
Jever	Bremen Bases	Start
Woensdrecht	Dutch Bases	Start
Deelen	Dutch Bases	4/43
Mönchengladbach	Ruhr Bases	Start
St. Brieuc	French Bases	Start
Poix	French Bases	Start
Vannes-Meucon	French Bases	Start
Mönchengladbach	Ruhr Bases	4/43
Schiphol	Dutch Bases	9/43
Münster-Handorf	Münster Bases	8/43
Hildesheim	Bremen Bases	10/43
Husum	Bremen Bases	4/43
Jever	Bremen Bases	4/43
Oldenburg	Bremen Bases	6/43
Rheine	Münster Bases	6/43
Vitry-en-Artois	French Bases	Start
Wevelgem	Dutch Bases	Start
Bernay	French Bases	Start
Oldenburg	Bremen Bases	Start
Bad Lippspringe	Münster Bases	10/43
Neubiberg	Munich Bases	6/43
Ansbach	Frankfurt Bases	8/43
Wertheim	Frankfurt Bases	8/43

[4.2] START DATE

[4.2.1] Your first sortie will be in March 1943 unless you choose to start later.

[4.2.2] You may choose a newer type of aircraft to fly when it becomes available, but only if you have a sufficient Prestige Level that will allow you to fly it. A player's Prestige Level increases with awards and promotions. Some starting rolls will require you to waive this requirement for your first aircraft, for example, if you start with the Me410.

[4.3] PREPARE SORTIE LOG SHEET

[4.3.1] Prepare a narrative of your flying career by recording the following information in the header of the Sortie Log Sheet:

Aircraft: this is the aircraft you have chosen to fly.

Name: this is name you choose for your pilot, or an actual pilot's name if using an optional Historical Ace card.

> *Note: the pilot's name has no impact on game play other than building a narrative around your career to enhance your game session or after-action reports. Optional: see 10.2, Historical Ace Cards.*

[4.3.2] The Sortie Log Sheet is used to capture information about each sortie, including which aircraft you have encountered and/or downed, any wounds received, and experience gained.

[4.3.3] Each month on the Sortie Log Sheet consists of eight sorties – this is the average number of main force raids flown by the US 8th Air Force during the time period covered by the game, and therefore the number of times you will intercept. The exception is April 1943, when only four missions were flown.

[4.4] AIRCRAFT DISPLAY MAT SETUP

[4.4.1] Place in front of you the Aircraft Display Mat that corresponds to the type of aircraft you have selected (see example on facing page). You will be referencing this display continuously while conducting sorties to record the status of your plane.

[4.4.2] Place the following markers on your Aircraft Display Mat:

1. Place the Aircraft marker for your type of aircraft in the Hangar box This marker is moved along the Endurance track to show your current location.

2. Place the Wingman marker in the Present box.

3. Place the appropriate base zone, base marker, and unit markers on your Aircraft Display Mat.

4. Place the appropriate Ammunition markers in the armaments section of your Display Mat [4.5]. If your aircraft, for example, has 6 ammo listed, that would be three markers on the "2" side, not six markers.

5. Before the first sortie, you may spend your Experience Point (your pilots starts the game with 1). Place the purchased skill on either the Aircraft Display Mat or on the Pilot and Crew Status Chart [A2] as appropriate.

Example of a Fw190 A-4 Aircraft Display Mat with markers placed for the start of the game. In this example, the player had rolled a "5" to start the game. This placed him in St. Brieuc, in the French Base Zone, in the unit I./JG 2. He has placed his ammunition and wingman counters on the mat, and his aircraft in the hangar box. He is now ready to start his first interception. His missions will use the "French Bases" track, and ignore the other six tracks unless he rebases to one of those other zones.

[4.5] AMMUNITION

Commentary: World War 2 aircraft normally had a fairly limited ammunition load for cannons (weapons larger than roughly 14mm) but typically carried a very large load for machine guns (sometimes as much as 1,000 rounds). Accordingly, the game does not track machine gun ammo, just cannon ammo. This is why some weapons have the "infinity" symbol: during the course of a single sortie, that ammo would probably never be completely fired, making it unlimited in game terms.

Procedure:

1. Consult the initial Ammunition Load information next to each weapon on your aircraft.

2. Select a total number of ammunition markers that adds up to the ammunition points carried. For example, if this number is "4" then it means two markers will be placed on the "2" ammo side. Place these markers next to the appropriate weapon(s).

[4.6] BASING

Players will be based at one of 21 bases throughout the game.

Historical Note: There were many more airfields used than are listed, and some Gruppen had their staffeln distributed to other fields than the listed one. The fields listed also represent these other, unlisted fields in the area. The main thing that matters (for fuel consumption) is what zone you are flying from.

[4.6.1] CHANGING BASES

You may change the unit you are assigned at by spending 2 Prestige Points and losing one sortie in time. (Place an "R" for "reassignment" instead of a target city on the Sortie Log Sheet.) If you spend the 2 Prestige Points to change units, a "free" aircraft upgrade is included if you have to change

to a different major subtype (9.1). The upgrade aircraft must be available at the time of the change. This would cost an additional two lost sorties as you familiarize yourself with the new aircraft.

[4.6.2] BASE ZONES

In order to streamline play, all bases are clustered into geographical groups (Zones). They are included by name for historical purposes, however, for game purposes, any base in the same group is considered identical. These Base groups allow for the proper amount of endurance to be burned off when intercepting incoming raids, as shown on the Aircraft Display Mats. The unit assignments are also included for historical purposes, but have no impact on game play.

Base Zones:

DUTCH BASES – Woensdrecht, Schiphol, Deelen, Wevelgem

BREMEN BASES – Husum, Jever, Oldenburg, Hildesheim

FRENCH BASES – St. Brieuc, Poix, Vannes-Meucon, Vitry-en-Artois, Bernay

RUHR BASES – Jever, Mönchengladbach

MUNICH BASES – Neubiberg

MÜNSTER BASES – Münster-Handorf, Bad Lippspringe, Rheine

FRANKFURT BASES – Ansbach, Wertheim

[4.6.3] TARGET ZONES

Just as the interceptor bases are clustered geographically to streamline play, so are the bombing targets. The Raid Chart [A1] lists the actual target name, followed by the geographical target zone to which it belongs in parentheses. What matters for game purposes is knowing what target zone that the target is part of. That will determine how much endurance your interceptor has when it attempts to intercept the raid, or if it can even intercept the raid at all.

Historical Note: some targets are not very close geographically in real life to their target zone; but for game purposes they are "close enough" to get the proper fuel consumption. One example is Leipzig, which is considered part of the Berlin target zone. It's not all that close to Berlin in real life, but for game purposes, it gives the correct fuel result.

Example: A player rolls for an incoming raid in March 1943. He rolls a "9" which indicates the target city is Vegesack. On his Aircraft Endurance track, after takeoff, he would move his plane ahead to the "Bremen" Endurance box, where ever that might be, depending on what base he takes off from since Vegesack is part of the Bremen target zone.

It is possible, when flying a Bf109 or Fw190, that the target zone is "grayed out." This means it is beyond your fuel consumption range and that raid cannot be intercepted. If that happens, simply move ahead in the game to the next sortie. It does not count toward your sortie total, as you would not even take off.

Note: Fuel tracking is "painless" insomuch that it occurs as a function of where you start versus where the raid is headed, as shown on the Aircraft Display Mats.

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[4.6.4] CHANGING AIRCRAFT

You may change your aircraft at the end of each sortie to a newer type, if one is available and you have sufficient Prestige Level and Prestige Points. Consult the Available Aircraft Replacement Chart [R1] at the end of each turn. You are not required to upgrade aircraft. However, if you do, it costs you 1 Prestige Point to upgrade to a different aircraft in the same general series (Fw190, Bf109, Me410, Bf110) and 2 Prestige Points to upgrade to an aircraft in a different general series.

Example: You are flying the Fw190 A-4. At the end of a sortie, you check Chart [R1] on the Fw190 column and see the Fw190 A-5 is available. It would cost 1 Prestige Point to upgrade to that aircraft. Just to check, you also roll on the Bf109 column and notice the Bf109G-6 (30mm version) is available. You could upgrade to that aircraft, but because it is in a different series, it would cost 2 Prestige Points.

[5.0] HOW TO WIN THE GAME

GENERAL RULE

A full game consists of completing numerous sorties up to and through February 1944. The game may end early if you are killed in action. While the results of each sortie may result in promotion and awards, overall victory level is determined at the end of play based on the number of aerial victories against bombers.

[5.1] ENDING THE GAME

[5.1.1] The game ends upon completion of your final sortie in February 1944—no sorties are conducted after February 1944.

[5.1.2] If it is determined after calculating missed sorties due to injuries that your next sortie would commence after February 1944, the game ends.

[5.1.3] The game immediately ends, regardless of date, should you be killed in action.

[5.1.4] Once the game has ended, you can determine victory.

[5.2] DETERMINING VICTORY

[5.2.1] I would assume most players will merely enjoy topping their previous performances when playing the game. However, for those who wish a general historical "yardstick" for their efforts, I offer these victory conditions (although downing enemy fighters give certain game benefits and count as "kills," you will notice they are not part of the victory conditions):

DEFEAT: 0-4 bombers shot down

You are a disgrace to the Luftwaffe, your family, and yourself. After the war you return to the bombed-out city that was once your home, and wish you'd done better.

DRAW: 5-10 bombers shot down

You have fulfilled your obligations to the nation and you are an ace. Book and movie offers after the war are probably not in the cards, however.

MARGINAL VICTORY: 11-20 bombers shot down

You have enjoyed success as a fighter pilot. You are one of the aces currently assigned to the Luftwaffe. Your unit respects your abilities, and Headquarters puts you in training in late 1944.

SUBSTANTIAL VICTORY: 21-30 bombers shot down

You are one of the Luftwaffe's top aces, and have gained the respect of your peers, your unit, and commanders. You are often mentioned in the nation's papers and are offered command of an Air Division in late 1944.

DECISIVE VICTORY: 31+ bombers shot down

You are the scourge of the skies and the pride of the entire Luftwaffe. Your legendary exploits place you at the top of the Luftwaffe elite and are mentioned prominently in propaganda efforts as the "Viermot Killer." Your peers are amazed at your steel nerves and flying skill. You retire peacefully after the war.

[5.2.2] **Pilot Death**. Should you be killed in action you still (posthumously) determine your victory level.

[6.0] SEQUENCE OF PLAY

GENERAL RULE

Interceptor Ace adheres to a discrete sequence of play for conducting numerous sorties. At its most abstract level, the sequence revolves around conducting sorties and returning to base. While there are no discretely numbered "game turns" as with other turn-based systems, game play is broken down into monthly increments of time, as reflected by the Sortie Log Sheet. Each month has a number of raids which occur and can be intercepted. Normally this is eight; however, in April 1943 only four occur.

The following game play outline begins once an aircraft has been selected and the corresponding Aircraft Display Mat has all markers placed (4.0, Game Setup).

[6.1] GAME PLAY OUTLINE

Game play is conducted per the below sequence and is repeated until the game ends (5.1, Ending the Game), at which time victory can be determined (5.2, Determining Victory). The precise activities performed as outlined below are covered in the appropriate rules sections.

1. Obtain incoming raid information by checking on the Raid Chart [A1] – the month/year versus 2d6 roll. (April 43 is the exception: roll 1d6 for raids in that month.) Write this on the Sortie Log Sheet. Roll for weather (Chart [B9]).

2. Move from the Takeoff Endurance box to the Raid Location Endurance box. (For example, from the Takeoff box, move directly ahead to the France box, if the raid is headed to one of the targets in France.) Notice there are several targets listed for each Target Zone. For example, the France Target Zone includes Brest, Lorient, Amiens Rail, Le Mans, etc. These are included for historical interest, but in game terms, what matters is the target is a particular zone, which dictates fuel expenditure.

3. In the Raid Location Endurance box and each remaining Endurance box (except for the "grayed-out" Endurance boxes, if any) roll to intercept on the Interception Chart [B1]. Conduct combat if interception occurs. Repeat until the aircraft has gone through all Endurance boxes or has finally intercepted the raid, or wishes to return to base. Since it is day, you will probably (but not necessarily) intercept a raid right away. It is possible you will encounter an Allied fighter sweep, or might roll a random event and not make contact immediately. You may abort at any time due to aircraft damage, wounds, or for any other reason. You are NOT required to travel through each Endurance box until landing. Additionally, "grayed-out" Endurance boxes (for the Fw190 and

Bf109 aircraft types) are beyond your limits of fuel endurance and are not entered or used, other than to inform you if a raid target is beyond your range and cannot be intercepted.

4. In the Landing box, roll to land the aircraft, applying any applicable DRMs (die roll modifiers).

5. Obtain awards, Prestige Points, and Experience Points. Check the Available Aircraft Replacement Chart [R1] for available aircraft upgrades. Spend Prestige and Experience Points if desired.

6. Repeat process on the next sortie line on the Sortie Log Sheet, until shot down and killed, or until the last sortie of February 1944.

[7.0] COMBAT

[7.1] GENERAL PROCEDURE

[7.1.1] Combat is resolved for each Endurance box in which an interception occurs, either against the raid itself, or possibly a fighter sweep, and the player decides not to avoid combat. Each combat may be composed of several "Passes" and each Pass of several rounds. A pilot does not have to chase a damaged bomber, for example.

[7.1.2] **INTERCEPTION** After moving to the Raid Location Endurance box on the Endurance track, roll for interception. If there is no interception rolled for a particular Endurance box on the Interception Chart [B1], then nothing occurs. A result of "Fighter Encounter" may also occur, which means you engage a group of Spitfires or P-47s. If that occurs, conduct combat against them, and if still flying afterwards, move your interceptor one Endurance box ahead on the track and roll again on [B1]. If an interception occurs, roll on Aircraft Target Chart [A3] to determine the type of bomber. Write the type of target on the next open space on the Sortie Log Sheet (B-17, B24). There may be also a roll for type of escorts, if more than one is possible. There are five different orientations between the interceptor, bomber, and escorts.

Enemy Aircraft

Head On · Advantaged · Disadvantaged · Tailing · Tailed

Player Aircraft

ORIENTATIONS FOR COMBAT:

HEAD ON No special effects against bombers. Escorts will start with that orientation if the interceptor begins with fighter combat instead of going after the bombers first, and enemy fighters on a fighter encounter will usually start with this orientation.

ADVANTAGED If Advantaged against a bomber, the player shoots first on the Long range round of the pass, then the bomber returns fire. If Advantaged against the escort, that will be the orientation the interceptor begins with against the escort if the player begins with fighter combat.

DISADVANTAGED If Disadvantaged, that is the orientation the player will be in relation to the escorts once fighter combat begins. Disadvantaged has no effect in relation to bomber combat – it only matters if escorts are present. If there are escorts and the player rolls "Disadvantaged" on the interception chart, he may NOT attack the bombers. He must go directly to fighter combat and start Disadvantaged. If there are no escorts,

"Disadvantaged" has no real meaning. The player simply attacks the bombers if he chooses as if he had rolled "Head on."

Disadvantaged is also the orientation the interceptor starts at when fighting escorts if the player chooses to attack the bombers first. This is very important: if there are escorts, and the player goes after bombers first, he will start Disadvantaged against escorts when fighter combat begins, even if the interception roll initially was "Head on" or "Advantaged."

TAILING This is not a starting orientation; however, it occurs during fighter combat. You are facing the enemy aircraft's tail. The key advantage to Tailing is that your aircraft automatically inflicts one bonus "Tail" hit if any hits are scored at all.

TAILED This is not a starting orientation; however, it occurs during fighter combat. The enemy is facing your tail. The key disadvantage to being tailed is that the firing aircraft automatically inflicts one bonus "Tail" hit if any hits are scored at all.

OUT OF THE SUN When this occurs, you may start at Medium range against a bomber and they do not return fire the first round. If you choose to engage escorts first (if present) you will start Advantaged, fire, and they do not get to flip a defensive card the first round. Essentially this is a "free shot" with no opportunity for reaction prior to the initiative phase (7.2.2.7).

[7.1.3] **START COMBAT** To begin combat, the player must first decide if he is attacking the bombers or any escorts (if present). If starting Disadvantaged and there are escorts present, he may not choose to intercept the bombers – he must conduct fighter combat. A player must fire all unjammed forward weapons together if he uses them; he cannot use just some of his forward guns or cannons. The player must also choose a point of aim if engaging a bomber: Port Wing, Starboard Wing, or Airframe. This is done even if the player does not have the Aim skill – it is used to determine damage if a "GP" (Group Damage) result occurs on the combat card. Fighters, escorts and interceptors are considered to always use the Airframe as the point of aim during fighter combat. A player may change his aim point in between rounds of a pass; for example, he can start with the port wing at Long range, but decide to switch to the airframe at Medium range, etc.

[7.1.4] **BOMBS** If a bomber is attacked in the 1st or 2nd Endurance box, not counting the Takeoff box, it is considered to still be loaded with bombs as noted by the small bomb symbol on the Endurance tracks of the Aircraft Display Mats. These may detonate with a bomb bay hit; check the Aircraft Damage Listings Chart [B4]. If they detonate when the interceptor is at close range, he may take damage. Roll 2d6; on a 2 or 12, the interceptor takes 1d6 random airframe damage hits in that case.

[7.1.5] **FLAK** If a bomber is attacked in the 3rd (or later) Endurance box, not counting the Takeoff box, it is considered to have already dropped its bombs. Although you now cannot destroy the bomber by detonating its bombs, it will possibly have taken flak damage from the target area. Roll 1d6 for each bomber you attack in the 3rd or later Endurance box and subtract 3. This will be the number of random hits the bomber will have taken from flak (from zero to 3, maximum). Roll these hits as random airframe hits on the Bomber and Group Damage Chart [B3] and apply them before beginning your attack. Notice the Aircraft Display Mats only show the flak "icon" in the 3rd Endurance box, but the possible flak damage is rolled then or in any later box if you intercept a bomber in a later box. Only bombers take flak damage – it does not affect fighters, escorts, or interceptors.

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Interceptor Ace

[7.1.6] COMBAT PASSES Each sequence of bomber combat is called a "Pass." Each Pass is made up of up to 3 rounds. (Possibly 4 if an interceptor is equipped with Wfr.Gr.21 rockets.)

Flip a card from the deck. This is your interceptor's attack card for the first round. Follow the instructions on the card as far as damage inflicted. Use the column that corresponds to your current firepower (FP on the cards). Firepower (FP) is determined by adding all firing weapons' BOLD numbers together. Excess firepower does not count – so an aircraft that has 9 FP total would use the "8" column. The left most column, "6-" means "6 or less." Aircraft with 1 to 6 FP would use that column.

The Attack Deck Results Chart [B2] explains the results derived from your FP on the combat card. These range from a number of random hits, a "Group Damage" result, and possible outright aircraft destruction with a "DE" result. The appropriate amount of random hits are then rolled on Chart [B3] against bombers and on Chart [B6] against interceptors, fighters, and escorts.

Weapons may jam as part of firing – the card text will indicate if this has happened. If it does, you should determine which weapon has jammed (if firing more than one, this is determined randomly) and subtract that weapon's FP (firepower) number from your total firepower. The adjusted firepower number will then be used to determine the number of hits you inflict. If your aircraft has an "MG FF" weapon system and it has been selected to jam, treat the jam as "no effect."

Flip a second card – this is the defensive fire card from the bomber. The only information that matters on the bomber's card is the "DEFENSIVE FIRE: X" (where X is an integer of random hits to the interceptor). As the interceptor is faster than the bomber, the range decreases by one each round of combat (Long range becomes Medium range, Medium becomes Close). The player may choose to break off and end the pass at any time, but after firing once at close range, the interceptor must break off after firing and is automatically engaged by the escort (if present. Exception, see rule 7.1.10.). If there are no escorts, he may wheel around and try to make a second pass against the same or a different bomber, or may end the combat. All combat is simultaneous, unless the player was Advantaged against the bomber or attacked "Out of the Sun." In those cases, he will fire first during the first round of the first pass. (Exception: a player with the Reflexes skill may use that skill once per sortie to fire first in a round. It can be any round, not just the first round.)

[7.1.7] RANGE EFFECTS ON BOMBER COMBAT At Long range, both the interceptor and the bomber (or fighter/escort) generate one less random hit (-1 hit). At Medium range, there are no changes. At close range, both aircraft produce one extra random hit. B-17 bombers, if in formation, always generate an extra hit in addition to this, which combines with range effects as shown:

As shown on the Bomber Target Chart [B10]:

Interceptor/Escort/Fighter

Range	B-24/B-17 out of formation	B-17 Bomber in formation
Close	+1 hit	+2 hits
Medium	(no change)	+1 hit
Long	-1 hit	(no change)

B-17 bombers are always considered to be in formation (the "combat box" of the B-17, which provided mutual defensive fire, was considered especially deadly) unless they have been attacked by Wfr.Gr.21 rockets, which would break up the formations and allowed for easier attacks by the interceptors.

[7.1.8] GUNNER DAMAGE EFFECTS ON BOMBER COMBAT Unlike the rear gunner of some of the interceptors (Bf110, Me410) where severity of the wound is rolled, random hits on bomber gunners create an abstracted result. Each gunner hit on a bomber is tracked with a numerical marker (1,2,3, etc.) which is placed on the Bomber Target Chart. For each gunner hit, defensive fire is reduced by one random hit. (It is possible, although uncommon, that so many gunners will have been wounded that the defensive fire will be reduced to zero hits.) A crew injury result on a bomber may result in a wound to a pilot, copilot, or a gunner. In that case, severity of the wound would be rolled, except for the gunner. A gunner crew injury merely increases the gunner hit marker by "1."

[7.1.9] BREAKING OFF After each pass of combat, the player must decide whether to attack again or whether to break off. For all rounds of combat in a pass firing is simultaneous. (Exception: the interceptor fires first at Long range if Advantage against the bomber, if he uses his Reflexes skill, or if attacking "Out of the Sun.")

[7.1.10] COMBAT AGAINST ESCORTS If your interceptor chooses to break off the attack, the bomber gets away with whatever damage it has (and may yet crash en route home). The bomber combat is ended, and now fighter combat begins with the escort (if any are present). Note your interceptor may only attempt a second pass on a damaged bomber if there is no escort. If an escort is present, combat begins with it at the end of the first pass against the bomber. An interceptor that does not wish to engage the escort may attempt to end combat for this Endurance box by rolling 1d6. 1-2 succeeds, and combat has ended. 3-6 results in combat with the escorts occurring normally. (Success represents escaping further action for whatever reason…be it ducking into some clouds, or just diving away from the escorts before they could react, or just slipping away due to inattention or getting lost to the vision of the escorts.) If he ends combat in this manner, he can not reengage the bombers in this Endurance box. He will advance his aircraft marker one Endurance box and then decide to attempt interception again or land.

[7.1.11] SECOND PASSES If there are no escorts and your interceptor decides to make another pass against a damaged bomber (or a new one, if the first one was destroyed) he is assumed to wheel around to get into a firing position again, and starts the procedure again from Long range. Subsequent combats against bombers are always conducted in a Head on status (meaning, he no longer has Advantaged status if he had it the first pass). He may only do this if there are no escorts. Again, if the bombers

are escorted, he must begin fighter combat after his first pass at a bomber unless he attempts to end combat on a 1d6 with success on a 1-2.

[7.1.12] ROUNDS OF COMBAT IN A PASS After the first round of firing in a pass, all subsequent attack rounds again require the flipping of two new cards, one for your attack, and one for the bomber's defensive fire. All combat in subsequent rounds of a pass IS simultaneous, regardless if the interceptor started Advantaged or not.

Example: Your interceptor attacks. You were Advantaged against the bomber, so you attack first. The attack causes a hit to the bomber's gunners. Because this happened first, the bomber's return fire is reduced by 1 random hit. The second round occurs at Medium, and although you started Advantaged, firing is now simultaneous.

Example: Your interceptor attacks Head on against a bomber. You hit a gunner at Long range. However, the bomber's defensive fire is not reduced by this until the next round, because combat is simultaneous at Long range in this case.

[7.1.13] EXTENDED BURST A pilot may risk firing an extended burst from his forward weapons (only) in order to achieve more hits using the Extended Burst Chart [C3]. Although this (usually) results in more damage to the bomber, it may also result in a jammed weapon or weapons. If a pilot wishes to attempt this, he must have 2 Ammo Points remaining in at least one of his forward weapons, and must be at Medium or Long range. Notice that if his only firing weapons (due to jamming or ammo depletion) are ones that have an infinite ammo supply he may not employ extended burst. Prepare for combat normally by choosing an aim point, then roll 2d6 before pulling a combat card:

Roll	Result
2	Target DE (expend 2 ammo)
3	+4 hits (expend 2 ammo)
4	+3 hits expend 2 ammo)
5	+2 hits (expend 2 ammo)
6	+2 hits (expend 2 ammo, then 1 weapon jams)
7	+1 hit (expend 2 ammo)
8	+1 hit (expend 2 ammo, then all fwd weapons jam)
9	+1 hit (expend 2 ammo, then 1 weapon jams)
10	+1 hit (expend 2 ammo)
11	+1 hit (expend 2 ammo)
12	All weapons jam before any damage is done

Note that EACH firing weapon expends two points of ammo, if possible. Any extra hits received are random hits to the aimed area. The extra hits from an extended burst only occur if at least one hit is achieved normally from the firing card. Weapon jams from extended burst, unlike from card play, occur after firing, unless a "12" is rolled and no firing occurs.

The downside to firing an extended burst, besides possible gun jams, is the bomber's return fire is increased by 1 random hit temporarily that round, as the interceptor is flying straight while extending his firing.

[7.1.14] WERFERGRANATE 21 ROCKETS (Wfr.Gr.21) These rockets were mounted under several versions of German interceptors as a method to "break up" the tight combat boxes of the B-17s, which reduced their massed defensive firepower. They could be fired outside the B-17s' defensive fire range, and although they weren't terribly accurate, they didn't have to be, with a 30 meter burst radius.

In the game, they are fired first, **BEFORE** the Long range round of the pass, and the bombers cannot return fire. Roll 2d6 and consult the Aircraft Display Mat; if they hit, they inflict 1-2 random hits on a bomber; furthermore, all B-17s in this Endurance box are "out of formation" for the rest of the combat. They may also be used against B-24 bombers, but have no effect other than the 1-2 random hits (as their combat boxes were not quite as lethal as the B-17 boxes anyway). They are useless against fighters or escorts. If they get a "Miss" result the B-17 bombers are NOT out of formation.

The Wfr.Gr.21 rockets and tubes added a lot of drag. Aircraft equipped with them have less speed than comparable aircraft without them. An aircraft's speed increases by "1" after they have been fired (the launching tubes could be jettisoned, restoring the aircraft to a "clean" state). However, if damaged before they can be fired, they cannot be used or jettisoned. If encountering enemy fighters or escorts and still undamaged, they may be jettisoned at the start of combat without penalty for the speed increase.

[7.1.15] AMMUNITION USE Each weapon expends 1 point of ammo each time it fires (exception: extended burst). Some weapons (typically, the machine guns) have the "infinity" (∞) symbol for ammunition, to denote their ammo is not tracked. This is because those weapons have more ammunition than would normally be fired in the course of a sortie.

[7.2] COMBAT WITH ESCORTS OR FIGHTERS (FIGHTER COMBAT)

[7.2.1] COMBAT PROCEDURE AGAINST ESCORTS OR FIGHTERS

It is possible to encounter a fighter sweep – this can be either British or American. American fighter sweeps are always considered to be P-47s. British fighter sweeps are always considered to be Spitfire IX's. This simplifies matters for combat, as no bombers are involved.

The game begins with unescorted bombers. However, as time passes, escorts begin showing up with more regularity. A player's interceptor may attack bombers first, or the escort first, if present. If fighting escorts first, the escort will begin fighter combat with your interceptor with the orientation listed in the interception roll. This will be either Advantaged, Disadvantaged, Head on, or Out of the Sun.

However, if the interception roll was Disadvantaged, you may not attack the bombers first – you must engage the escort. It is your choice, however, to engage the bombers first, if the starting orientation from the Interception roll was Advantaged or Head on. Notice you normally cannot avoid combat with the escorts (exception: 7.1.10) – you'll either fight them first, or after attacking the bombers.

[7.2.2] STARTING ORIENTATION Place your aircraft and the appropriate enemy fighter/escort on the Fighter Target Chart [B11]. There are 5 orientations possible:

1. **Head-on** (aircraft facing each other)

2. **Advantaged** (the enemy aircraft is turned 90 degrees to the side)

3. **Disadvantaged** (your aircraft is turned 90 degrees to the side)

4. **Tailing** (one aircraft is completely turned backwards in relation to the other aircraft)

5. **Out of the Sun** (your aircraft starts Advantaged, gets to shoot, and the enemy aircraft does not get to flip a defensive card)

Remember that fighter combat begins with the player at "Disadvantaged" if he chose to attack bombers first, regardless of the initial orientation that was rolled.

[7.2.2.1] **COMBAT NOW BEGINS** If facing the enemy aircraft (either you are Head on, or Advantaged) you may shoot your forward weapons by using the appropriate firepower column at the top of the combat card you flip. The enemy aircraft will fire back if facing you, if not, he will use the defensive section of the card he flips. Fighter combat is considered to be at Medium range, insofar as there are no range effects on combat between interceptors and fighters/escorts.

[7.2.2.2] If you are Head-on, you may also choose to not fire and go defensive immediately, by either using the defensive section of your combat card, or by calling on your wingman for assistance and using that text. As another option, you may choose a standard maneuver in lieu of a card draw. These are:

- **Tight Turn.** Improve position (7.2.2.7) by one (or by two, if agile).

- **Barrel Roll.** Avoid two hits.

[7.2.2.3] If you are Disadvantaged (i.e., the enemy fighter/escort is Advantaged against you) or if you are being tailed, you have three options: 1. You may choose to go defensive by using the defense option of the next card you flip. 2. You may call to your wingman to assist you and use that text from the flipped card. You cannot do both, and you must choose one before flipping the card. Your wingman cannot assist you if he is not present, damaged, or your radio has been knocked out, and if that is the case, you can only use the defense option of the combat card while Disadvantaged or Tailed. 3. The third option is to use one of the two "standard maneuvers" in lieu of a card draw.

[7.2.2.4] If you are Disadvantaged or being tailed and have a rear gunner, you may also flip a second card to shoot at the same time you flip a first card for your defense. Rear gunners use the "defensive fire" section of the flipped card to shoot at the fighter/escort that is tailing you (just like when bombers shoot defensive fire).

[7.2.2.5] An aircraft that is being tailed will suffer a bonus "Tail" hit if any hits are scored at all. This would be prevented by a defensive card that prevents all damage, or a combination of skills and/or a defensive card that reduces the amount of incoming hits to zero.

[7.2.2.6] After shooting or making your defensive choice and flipping both cards, you apply the results simultaneously. It is possible the enemy fighter/escort may do massive damage that gets completely negated by your defensive card, or vice versa. More typically, hit damage is reduced, and sometimes your orientation improves by one or two positions. It is possible a defensive move will end the encounter.

[7.2.2.7] After both cards have been flipped and results applied, the two aircraft roll for initiative on the Initiative Chart [B12] as the final action of the combat round. This roll will adjust the orientation of the planes to each other. Each orientation improvement is a 90 degree "shift" in relation to the other plane. For example, if you are being tailed, and your initiative roll says to "gain 2 positions" you would now be head to head with the enemy fighter/escort. If you are Disadvantaged and you gain 2 positions, you would now be Advantaged against the enemy fighter/escort (you move to Head on, and his plane moves sideways). You cannot improve to better than tailing the enemy. The enemy cannot improve to better than tailing you.

[7.2.2.8] "Agile" aircraft (the Bf109 and Spitfire) add "2" to their end of turn initiative roll, as long as they have not suffered engine or controls

damage. They also gain improvement by two positions, not one, when conducting a tight turn (either by card draw, or if selected as a standard maneuver) as long as they have not suffered engine or controls damage.

[7.2.2.9] You now conduct the next round of combat with this new orientation, and continue until one aircraft is shot down, or successfully ends the combat by getting away. After shooting down (or driving off) an escort or fighter, you may choose to engage another one, starting at a Head on orientation, or you may end the encounter altogether. Interceptors may not engage bombers in the Endurance box after they have conducted fighter combat. If still desiring to engage bombers after fighter combat, they must advance one Endurance box and roll again for interception on the Interception Chart [B1]. If this places them in the Landing box, they are low on fuel and must land instead.

FIGHTER COMBAT EXAMPLE:

A Fw190A-4 is engaged by a P-47, starting at "Head on." On the B11 chart, both aircraft are placed facing each other. The player doesn't want to take a "12" attack without doing something, so he starts by going defensive. He flips card #19 for the P-47's attack and notes he will be taking 3 random hits. He then flips his defensive card which is #23. The defensive text states he has performed a Chandelle maneuver, avoiding all damage, and has improved his position by one. This means the P-47 is turned sideways, as the player is now Advantaged against him. To end the first round, the player rolls for initiative. The P-47 has a speed of 21, and the Fw190A-4 has a speed of 19. To this the player adds 1 for his M-W boost, since it is not inoperative (yet) giving the P-47 a one point advantage in initiative before the dice are rolled. He then rolls two dice, one for his plane, one for the P-47. His rolls were "2" (his) and "4" (the P-47). The P-47's net initiative is +3 (4+1 versus 2) which is a 3 point difference, gaining the P-47 an improvement in position. Therefore, ending the first round, the planes are back to Head on status. The second round of combat begins and the process is repeated.

[7.2.3] **WINGMAN ABILITIES AND USE** Your wingman's job is to protect you during combat. However, at times he will be busy trying to stay alive himself, as the numerical odds were generally against the Germans at this stage of the war. The wingman in the game is somewhat abstracted – he flies a notional aircraft whose damage you don't specifically track. He can, however, earn skills and become an ace. It is important to realize that by using your wingman, you are not getting to use the defensive text on a card – you either use defensive text, or you call on your wingman to assist you. You do not get to do both in the same combat round. The following rules govern his abilities and use.

[7.2.3.1] **WINGMAN ATTACKS ON BOMBERS** You may order your wingman to attack a bomber at the same time you begin your attack by using the Wingman Attack on Bomber Chart [W1]. Resolve this after your attack. Normally, this would be done on sorties where there are no escorts to worry about, as loss/damage to your wingman will have negative consequences in combat versus escorts. This attack is completely voluntary – you are not required to build up your wingman's kills. Your wingman cannot attack if he is damaged. Wingman attacks against bombers are modified by range – if a wingman were to do 4 random hits, he does 5 at close range and 3 at Long range. You are not required to have him attack at Long range – you can wait to have him attack when closer, if desired, without penalty or return fire (as the bomber or box is presumed to be focused on you). The wingman is always considered to be at the same range that you are from the bomber.

[7.2.3.2] **WINGMAN ATTACKS ON FIGHTERS/ESCORTS** You may order your wingman to assist you (assuming your radio is functional and his plane is not damaged or missing). On some cards, the wingman will do nothing (he is considered busy with his own problems). On some cards, it states the wingman will attack with a certain firepower

listed. For this attack, the wingman flips another combat card, and may use his skills to modify the result (aim, expert, etc.). Most importantly, the enemy fighter/escort does not draw a defensive card, as he is busy with your main aircraft. It is possible for your wingman to shoot down an enemy fighter/escort this way, in which case, you automatically are considered disengaged. A damaged wingman cannot attack or assist you, which implies you may not wish him to risk damage by attacking bombers earlier in the engagement.

[7.2.3.3] **WINGMAN EXPERIENCE** Your wingman starts with one Experience Point, and gains experience at the same rate you do. He may buy most skills (see Skill Listing, 7.7). He may also earn awards, but does not track Prestige, as he is always assumed to be flying the same aircraft you are, or a very similar model.

Note: using your wingman can be a "crap shoot" before he gains any skills, as there are a lot of cards that result in no help to you. However, once he becomes an expert (and can draw a second card in combat if you don't like the first one) using him instead of defensive text becomes a much better option.

[7.3] DISENGAGING

There may be times (if all forward weapons are knocked out, for example) when you will want to disengage. You may only choose to do this as your action instead of firing (you must be Tailing or Advantaged against the enemy fighter/escort). If you are Tailing the enemy aircraft, it is automatic, and the encounter ends. If you are Advantaged, it succeeds on a 1d6 1-4, and fails on a 5-6. If it fails, the enemy aircraft gains one position, then that round of combat ends and you roll for initiative normally and continue combat.

[7.3.1] **ENEMY DISENGAGEMENT** An enemy fighter/escort will attempt to disengage if the pilot is wounded, has all forward weapons knocked out, has leaking fuel tanks, or oxygen knocked out. This action occurs instead of firing. If Tailing you, it succeeds, and the combat is ended. If Advantaged against you, it succeeds on a 1d6 1-4, and fails on a 5-6. If it fails, you gain one position, and combat continues. If he is Disadvantaged or Tailed, he will continue to pull defensive cards until in a position to try to disengage.

[7.3.2] **FRIENDLY DISENGAGEMENT** If you are attacking a bomber you can disengage at any time before firing would occur (Long, Medium or Close range). Remember that you may then have to face escorts (if present) unless you try to escape their attention. (see 7.1.10).

[7.4] AIRCRAFT DAMAGE AND REPAIR

If an aircraft meets its damage threshold for the airframe, either wing, control surfaces, or has all engines knocked out, it is considered shot down. A fire in the fuel tanks also results in a lost aircraft, as all crew bail out. An explosion in the fuel tanks is catastrophic and also results in the loss of the aircraft and all crew are KIA. An explosion in the bomb bay also destroys a bomber.

Interceptors can take damage from bombers that explode from a bomb bay hit (if the bombs are still on board and an "7" or higher is rolled for explosion) IF the interceptor is at close range when this occurs. On a 2d6 "2" or "12" the interceptor takes 1d6 random damage in that case.

A second damage result against a system already knocked out is "no effect" instead. You can only kill the pilot once, for example. However, most systems (Engines, Wing, Airframe, Controls, etc.) require multiple damage results to destroy.

A "DE" result on the card means the aircraft is immediately destroyed. Such a result encompasses such things as engine failure, the entire tail section being shot off, or a wing being sawn off. When a target is destroyed, circle it on the Sortie Log sheet. A "DE" result is not negated by a defensive move or card that reduces random hits – only by cards that say "avoid all damage."

[7.4.1] **DAMAGE TO FIGHTER AIRCRAFT** German interceptors can receive damage from the card deck (from bomber defensive fire) or from a fighter or escort. Grouped damage (a "GP" result), if it occurs, comes from the Bomber and Group Damage Chart [B3]. All grouped damage to fighter aircraft uses the "Airframe" column, and the gunner result is ignored (even if the aircraft is an Me410 or Bf110). All other damage is rolled randomly on the Fighter Damage Chart [B6]. If a player receives a fuel tank hit, and rolls an explosion, the game ends (no parachuting attempt allowed in that case).

Due to the large, heavy radial engines in the P-47 and Fw190 series, those aircraft ignore the first engine hit they take. Place a damaged marker on the "Engine Armor" status box to indicate it has "absorbed" that first engine damage. Subsequent engine hits actually damage the engine. Additionally, they only suffer "1" speed loss from the first hit of engine damage. At the second hit, they get -2 speed.

Disregard the words "Port" and "Starboard" on the Fighter Damage Chart [B6] in regard to engine hits when taking damage to a single-engine aircraft. They are all simply engine hits in that case.

The various effects of damage are listed on the Aircraft Damage Listings Chart [B4] and should be applied immediately to aircraft.

Engine damage does not preclude an aircraft from finishing a combat – it only hampers or precludes further interceptions within that sortie. A damaged engine reduces speed by "2" (exception: first damage to a radial engine). If one engine of a twin-engined aircraft is knocked out, speed is reduced by "4." This has serious implications for the initiative roll at the end of each combat round. Of course, if the engine (or both engines for a twin-engined aircraft) are knocked out, the interceptor must immediately glide to an emergency landing. Alternately, the crew can bail out by rolling on the Parachute Chart [B8].

If a player's plane is destroyed, roll to bail out. (Exception: you cannot parachute from a plane destroyed by an exploding fuel tank. You are KIA in that case and the game ends.)

A pilot (and gunner, if present) may attempt to parachute if a plane is shot down. Even if not shot down, the German pilot may decide to bail out of his aircraft at the end of any round of combat. Normally, this would be if you are severely wounded and the plane is shot up enough you are doubtful you would survive the next round of combat. This choice ends combat. Roll for each crew to parachute on chart [B8].

Note on damage: The FuG25a IFF was an electronic "Identification Friend or Foe" system to assist ground Flak crews in identifying friendly aircraft. Its effect is not modeled in the game, as there is no friendly Flak fire to contend with. This system is included mainly as another system to get damaged which, thankfully, doesn't impact on survival. If damaged, treat as "no effect" as it is not present on the Aircraft Display Mats.

[7.4.2] **POST COMBAT REPAIR** A player may abort his sortie after combat if he desires, due to damage. Simply move your aircraft marker directly to the Landing box, and roll for landing. Leaking fuel tanks and oxygen system damage force an aircraft to abort at the end of a pass against a bomber. In fighter combat, they must attempt to disengage until successful or shot down. Damage cannot be repaired while airborne. After landing, repairs on the German interceptor are made by the following:

1-3 hits: Repaired by next sortie. 4-5 hits: Lose one sortie for repairs. 6+ hits: Aircraft is written off, receive new aircraft without missing a sortie. Jammed weapons and crew injuries do not count as "hits" for the purposes of repair. (Exception, see NCO scrounging ability [7.9.2]).

[7.4.3] **AIRCRAFT LOSS DUE TO BATTLE DAMAGE** It is possible that an enemy aircraft will not make it back to England, even if you did not inflict enough damage to shoot it down before you had to break off combat for whatever reason. Use the following formula:

On a 1d10 roll of "1" a damaged aircraft will crash before reaching home. Add 1 chance to this possibility for each of the following: Each engine OUT (not damaged), or any system that is 1 point short of aircraft destruction.

Example: A B-17 bomber has one engine damaged, two knocked out, and three hits on the port wing. Since the port wing can only take four hits, that would add one, and the knocked-out engines add one each. The damaged engine does not have an effect. Therefore, this bomber crashes enroute home on a roll of "1-4" on a 1d10.

You receive credit for such a kill (bomber or fighter/escort crashing enroute home) ONLY if this was spotted by someone – on a 1d6 roll of "1-2" you receive credit for this kill. (Exception: there is a Random Event which gives you credit without a die roll.)

[7.4.4] **LANDING PROCEDURE** Landing can be a hazardous procedure if the plane is damaged or the pilot is wounded. Total up all modifiers and roll on the Landing Chart [B7] then apply the results, if any.

[7.4.5] **FORCED LANDING** It may be that an interceptor is forced down after a combat (for example, if one or sometimes both engines are hit and knocked out) or has suffered leaking fuel tanks. In such a case the aircraft would not make it back to base. The player has two options at this point:

1. Bailing out. Roll for each crew on the Parachute Chart [B8].

2. Making a forced deadstick landing in an emergency field or road somewhere at +1 DRM. If the player chooses to do this (perhaps to try and save an injured crewman's life) he must total up his landing modifiers and roll on the Landing Chart [B7]. Even if he lands successfully, he will miss the next sortie as he travels back to his normal base.

[7.4.6] **ROUGH AND CRASH LANDINGS** A poor enough roll on the Landing Chart may result in a rough landing (each crew member receives a light wound, and aircraft is lost for 1 sortie for repairs) or in a crash landing (each crew member receives a wound – roll for severity, and aircraft is written off as destroyed). At the far extreme of the landing chart (a roll 16+) the aircraft is destroyed while landing and all the crew are killed.

[7.4.7] **CREW INJURY** The interceptor normally has just a pilot, but some models in the game have a rear gunner. Each crewman's injuries may result in lost time or replacement.

A roll that calls for an injury to the Bordschütze (rear gunner) when one is not present is treated as "no effect."

Three results may happen from crew injury: Light Wound (LW), Serious Wound (SW), and Killed in Action (KIA).

[7.4.8] **INJURY DURATION AND EFFECTS**

LW: Miss 1 sortie. If this is any other crewman than the pilot, use a temporary crewman as a replacement. He is considered to not have any skills.

SW: If this occurs to the pilot, you must immediately attempt to break off

combat at the conclusion of the current firing pass against a bomber, or fighter combat. The landing roll receives a +1 DRM. After landing, roll 2d6 on the Serious Wound Resolution Chart [C2] to determine the number of sorties missed by that crewman. If this is any other crewman than the pilot, use a temporary crewman as a replacement. He is considered to not have any skills. It is possible that the replacement crewman may advance in skills enough that you would not want your old crewman back, once he is released from the hospital. You are not required to get the old crewman back, but you may if you want to. It is your choice.

KIA: If this is the rear gunner, simply replace with a brand new crewman for the next mission. The replacement has no skills or points. If the pilot is KIA, the game ends at that point.

[7.5] WEATHER EFFECTS

The weather for each sortie is rolled on the Weather Chart [B9]. The weather was obviously good enough for the Americans to mount a raid, but the large distances involved means the weather at your landing field may be worse, or has changed for the worse, and may be different at combat altitudes as well. The weather affects the landing roll negatively with any other result than "Good" weather. Apply the appropriate modifier (-1 or -2) if the landing weather is anything other than "Good."

Note: The presence or absence of clouds, which could have other effects on combat, are mainly abstracted via the differing results of the combat cards. Some players may feel this simplifies weather effects quite a bit – they are correct. With only eight or less main force raids a month, we are assuming that on the day chosen for the raid, the overall weather is at least good enough to mount the raid, and therefore good enough to intercept (as happened historically). The landing modifiers take into account localized storms over your landing field that may have sprung up.

[7.6] PARACHUTING TO SAFETY

At times you will be shot down by a bomber or an allied fighter. In such cases, the crew is allowed to attempt to parachute to safety. Roll for each crew member on the Parachute Chart [B8]. At this point, assuming you survive the parachute roll, you will lose the next turn (sortie) while you receive a new aircraft and get back to base. The only thing that would preclude a parachute attempt is a fuel tank explosion (a player may still parachute from a "DE" result from a card).

[7.7] CREW SKILLS

The various crew members may increase in skill during the course of the year. For every four sorties flown (regardless of kills) each crewman gains an Experience Point, which he may spend to "buy" skills. Sorties that are skipped due to injury, plane repair, or other reasons, do not count toward gaining Experience Points. The skills cost different amounts of Experience Points to purchase. The Skill Effects Listing Chart [B5] gives a summary of all the skills and costs, with the full explanation here below in the rules.

The pilot starts the game with one Experience Point (if an Officer) or two Experience Points (if an NCO). This is granted for graduating from flight school, and for the NCO, for general experience from (typically) longer service prior to flight school.

The skills confer various benefits during game play, as listed below. The cost to buy each skill is listed after the skill name in parentheses.

SKILLS:

LANDING (1) [Pilot only] This skill allows a "-1" modifier to the Landing Chart [B7].

NAVIGATION (1) [Pilot only] This skill negates the "Raid not Located" result in the Interception Chart [B1], and converts that result into "Advantaged."

PARACHUTE (1) [All crew] This skill allows a "-1" modifier to the Parachute Chart [B8].

REFLEXES (1) [Pilot only] This skill allows a pilot to either gain one position after the initiative roll of a round of combat, or to fire first in a round. It may be used once per sortie. Firing first against a fighter/escort means that any hit avoidance does NOT occur if the other aircraft flips a defensive card. Any orientation improvement (from a tight turn, for example) still occurs.

S.A. (2) [Pilot/Gunner] Situational Awareness skill gives a "+1" to the Initiative Roll.

WEAPONS MAINTENANCE (2) [Gunner only] This skill allows the player to ignore the first (only) "Jammed Weapon" result from either extended burst or a combat card once per sortie.

EXPERT (3) [Pilot/Wingman only] A pilot may become an "expert" in his current series of aircraft: Bf110, Fw190, Bf109, or Me410. This skill allows the player to redraw one combat card per sortie, if he desires to do so. He must use the results and/or events of the new card, even if it does less damage. This skill applies to all aircraft in the series for which is was purchased.

LEADERSHIP (3) [Pilot only] The pilot's other crewmen and wingman gain experience at the rate of 1 per 3 missions, instead of 1 per 4.

PRECISION (3) [Pilot only] The pilot is sparing and accurate with his bursts, so much so, that when he fires and flips an odd-numbered card, he does not expend an ammo counter. This skill is not active when a player uses extended burst.

A.C.M. (4) [Pilot only] Air Combat Maneuvering allows a player to receive one less random hit when receiving defensive fire from bombers or when attacked by a fighter or escort.

SIXTH SENSE (4) [Pilot only] The pilot has developed an uncanny sense of impending danger. Once per sortie, any "DE" result on a combat card against him is instead converted to 2 random hits.

GUNNERY (5) [All crew] This skill gives the player an extra random hit when firing, IF any hits were scored normally when firing forward guns (for a rear gunner, when firing rear guns). This applies to both bomber and escort/fighter combat.

For the wingman, this gives him -1 to the dice roll in wingman combat versus bombers.

AIM (6) [Pilot/Wingman only] This skill gives a player the ability to apply one "bonus" hit of the picked type which was aimed at. Players may aim at a Wing (Port or Starboard) or Airframe. This skill only applies to forward attacks against bombers. The Aim skill should not be confused with the procedure by which a player "aims" at a particular area of the target bomber. That procedure always happens.

For the wingman, this gives him -1 to the dice roll in wingman combat versus bombers (cumulative with Gunnery – with both skills he would receive -2).

[7.8] AWARDS

The various awards in the game are representative of the major awards given to fighter pilots. Each award confers one Prestige Point to a player (and also raises his prestige level by one), which he may spend at his convenience to upgrade aircraft or obtain a transfer to a new unit. There are also events which confer Prestige Points to players, listed below the awards.

[7.8.1] THE WOUND BADGE This award was given in three classes, Black, Silver, and Gold. To receive the Wound Badge in Black, the player's pilot must have been injured during combat (or in parachuting from a stricken aircraft, or during a landing). Keep track of a second wound by flipping the Wound Badge in Black to the "2" side. Upon receiving a third wound, the player is awarded the Wound Badge in Silver, placed on the "3" side. Track a 4th wound by flipping the Wound Badge in Silver counter to the "4" side. Finally, upon receiving a 5th wound, the player receives the Wound Badge in Gold. No further tracking is required at that point. Note that the Wound Badge only gives a player a single Prestige Point, NOT for each class of badge or each wound.

[7.8.2] THE IRON CROSS 2ND CLASS The Eisernes Kreuz 2 (or EK2) was awarded upon downing the first enemy aircraft (fighter or bomber). It confers one Prestige Point.

[7.8.3] THE IRON CROSS 1ST CLASS The Eisernes Kreuz 1 (or EK1) was awarded upon downing a third enemy fighter aircraft, or a second kill if it is a bomber. It confers one Prestige Point.

> *Historical Note: The EK2 and EK1 were awarded on a points system, 1 point required for the EK2, 3 points for the EK1, but one had to have the EK2 before receiving the EK1. As a single engine fighter was worth 1 point, and a 4-engined bomber was worth 3 points, players will receive them after the first and second kills they achieve, if both were bombers or the first was a fighter, or possibly after the 3rd kill, if all 3 kills were fighters.*

[7.8.4] THE HONOR GOBLET *(Ehrenpokal)* This was not a uniform award; rather a silver cup given to pilots who had proven themselves with an aerial victory. However, by 1943 this had changed to pilots who had the Iron Cross First Class, but not enough victories to have earned the German Cross in Gold or Knight's Cross. In the game it is awarded after the 10th kill. It confers one Prestige Point.

[7.8.5] THE OPERATIONAL FLIGHT CLASP *(Frontflugspange).* This clasp was given in 3 classes: Bronze (after 20 flights); Silver (after 60 flights) and Gold (after 100 flights). Only the first clasp confers one Prestige Point to the player.

> *Game Note: The Operational Flight Clasp in Gold is not obtainable within the 12 months of the game, as there are only theoretically 92 flights, but is included for historical interest and/ or player variants.*

[7.8.6] THE GERMAN CROSS IN GOLD This award was sometimes derogatorily referred to as "Hitler's Fried Egg" due to its size and gaudy design. It is awarded automatically after 20 kills and confers one Prestige Point.

[7.8.7] THE KNIGHT'S CROSS This highly coveted award was given to successful fighter pilots. Although in reality the award came at many different kill totals, for this period of the war the following formula will be used: At 30 kills, the player rolls to receive the Knight's Cross, with success on a 1d6 roll of "1." Each succeeding kill gives a "-1" modifier and the player rolls again each time at the end of a mission in which a new kill (or kills) were achieved. Note this means the Knight's Cross is automatically awarded at 35 kills if all previous die rolls were failures.

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[7.8.7.1] To receive the Oakleaves to the Knight's Cross, the player again begins to check at 40 kills, with success on a 1d6 roll of "1." Each succeeding kill gives a "-1" modifier and the player rolls again each time at the end of a mission in which a new kill (or kills) were achieved. Note this means the Oakleaves to the Knight's Cross are automatically awarded at 45 kills if all previous die rolls were failures.

[7.8.7.2] To receive the Oakleaves and Swords to the Knight's Cross, players repeat the same procedure at 60 kills.

[7.8.7.3] To receive the Oakleaves, Swords, and Diamonds to the Knight's Cross, players are automatically awarded it upon reaching 100 kills.

[7.8.7.4] Each level of the Knight's Cross confers one Prestige Point to the player.

[7.8.7.5] Each subsequent award of the Knight's Cross (Oakleaves, Swords, and Diamonds) involves a loss of a sortie as you travel to Berlin to receive it from Hitler himself. (See optional rule 10.7 if you wish to attempt to assassinate Hitler during this trip.)

> *Historical Note: There were many awards of the Knight's Cross, and also the Oakleaves, but very few Swords and Diamonds. It will be extremely difficult to achieve in the one-year time frame of the game, unless starting with an historical ace card.*

[7.8.8] **"ACE" STATUS** Upon reaching "Ace" status (5 kills) a player receives a Prestige Point. Wingmen and pilots receive a +1 on the Initiative Chart [B12] if they are an "Ace." There is no special benefit to a rear gunner making ace, in the rare event this might occur.

[7.9] PROMOTIONS

Players may choose to advance up one of two promotion tracks: as either an Officer or as a Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO).

Officer Pilots start as Oberleutnants with 1 Experience Point. Unlike some branches where higher-ranking officers found themselves removed from the fighting, in the Luftwaffe a pilot was still a pilot, although they might end up commanding units at various levels. Each promotion confers a Prestige Point to a player.

NCO Pilots start as Unteroffiziers. NCO promotions, unlike officer promotions, do NOT confer a Prestige Point to a player. (However, NCO Pilots do start with 2 Experience Points instead, and have abilities that come with rank that officers do not get.) This does make it a little more difficult for the NCO Pilots to unlock the highest value aircraft for use, although this is somewhat offset by the extra starting Experience Point and abilities.

[7.9.1] **OFFICER RANKS**. The officer ranks are:

OBERLEUTNANT is the player's normal and lowest possible officer starting rank. No special abilities.

HAUPTMANN allows the player a one-time reassignment to a new unit for "free" – no Prestige Point cost. Notice this is voluntary; the player is not required to pick a new assignment. In either case, you are given command of a Staffel (as a Staffelkapitän) in your unit (roughly 12 aircraft). This command is only relevant for roleplaying purposes.

MAJOR allows the player another one-time reassignment to a new unit or base for "free." Notice this is voluntary; the player is not required to pick a new assignment. In either case, you are given command of a Gruppe (as a Kommandeur) in your unit (roughly 36-48 aircraft). This command is only relevant for roleplaying purposes.

OBERSTLEUTNANT no game impact as it occurs at the end of the game; however, it is included as another metric by which players may judge their performance.

[7.9.2] **NCO RANKS**. The NCO ranks are:

UNTEROFFIZIER is the lowest starting NCO rank. Allows the "scrounging" ability. If the aircraft had 4-5 hits from a mission, the damage is repaired in time for the next sortie on a 1d6 roll of "4-6." (This modifies the normal repair rules.)

UNTERFELDWEBEL allows the "scrounging" ability, except the effect is automatic.

FELDWEBEL allows the "working the system" ability. If a Feldwebel loses a wingman or crewman, he "works the system" to get a new wingman/crewman who comes with four Experience Points.

OBERFELDWEBEL has no game impact as it occurs at the end of the game; however, it is included as another metric by which players may judge their performance.

[7.9.3] **PROMOTION MECHANICS** The first promotion attempt is made after the 4th month of service per the log sheet reminder (after the last sortie of June 1943) and the second attempt after the 8th month of service (after the last sortie of October 1943). The final promotion attempt is made at the end of the game (after the last sortie of February 1944).

Promotion to the next higher rank occurs on a successful 1d6 roll of "1-4," with the following modifiers:

-2 For possessing the Knight's Cross (on each promotion attempt)

-1 per 10 kills during the previous four-month period

-1 per award of the Iron Cross 1st Class, Ehrenpokal or the German Cross in Gold during the period

A player may have multiple modifiers depending on how the period went.

[7.10] RANDOM EVENTS

The first time a "12" is rolled, per sortie, on the Interception Chart [B1], a Random Event occurs. This replaces the Fighter encounter that is listed there (should you roll a second "12" later in the sortie, the Fighter encounter would happen at that point). You then roll on the Random Events Chart [C1]. The results of the 2d6 roll on chart [C1] range from very good to very bad. Some will give a player a marker that may be used at a future point in the game (eyewitness corroboration, etc.). Place this marker on the Aircraft Mat. Other random events will need to be processed per the text of the event (you may be attacked, etc.). After processing the random event, move forward one box and continue your sortie.

[7.11] EXTENDED EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Extended Example of play using the basic rules of combat:

It is July 1943: Oberleutnant August Mann – whom at this point is a Double Ace with 10 Kills (8 B17's, 1 Spitfire and 1 P-47C) and has been awarded Iron Cross First and Second Class (first and second kills), the Wound Badge (1) and the Ehrenpokal. He has flown 16 missions earning him five Experience Points (one Experience Point per every four missions plus the one he starts with as an officer).

He has used his accumulated Experience Points to purchase Air Combat Maneuvering (ACM) for four Points and Reflexes for one Point, leaving him with zero Experience Points at the moment.

His current Prestige Level is five, and he is flying a Messerschmitt 109G-6/R4 (which requires a Prestige Level of 3). His Prestige has come from the following: EK 1 and 2, Wound Badge, he is an Ace, and has earned the Ehrenpokal award.

Oblt. Mann is based at Bernay, France with 1/JG27 – Bernay is in the French Sector of the Operations Map. His starting base die roll was *18* on 1d20.

There is a raid coming in on Kassel (a dice roll of *6* on the 2d6 July 43 Raid Chart [A1]), the weather is good (dice roll of *4* on the 2d6 Weather Chart [B9]). A check of the Aircraft Target Chart [A3] reveals that the raid is composed of B-17's with P-47 Escort. (In July 43, the bombers are automatically B-17s and raids to Kassel are escorted.)

The marker on the Aircraft Display Mat is moved from the Hanger to Take-Off and then to the Ruhr Endurance box. As this box has the bomb symbol on the Messerschmitt 109 chart, the B-17's have not dropped their bombs yet and are on the way to the target. This means that there is a possibility that any bomber hit in the bomb bay will cause a detonation.

Interception Roll – Look at the Interception Chart [B1] and roll 2d6. A dice roll of *11*. We are up sun and will attack the formation Out of the Sun. This gives us a distinct advantage. We have to make a critical decision. As the bombers are escorted by P-47's do we dive through the P-47's and go straight for the bombers, or do we go after the escorts first? A very difficult choice to make, but duty calls. We will attack the bombers first then risk the escorts after we get a pass at the bombers. A check will be made to see if we run into a YB-40 because it is July 43 – see the Notes section on the Aircraft Target Chart [A3] – A 2d6 roll of "12" would result in a YB-40; fortunately, we roll a *10*, so it is a 'normal' B-17F.

Out of the sun die result roll gives us the opportunity to attack a B-17 starting at Medium Range and fire first. I will not instruct my wingman to attack the bomber – he can watch my back.

Given there are still bombs on board the B-17's we will aim at the Airframe (you have to designate which part of the B-17 you will attack (Port Wing, Starboard Wing or Airframe). Time to draw a card so we place our aircraft at Medium Range on the Bomber Target Chart and draw card #29; cross reference our 16 Firepower (you cannot be selective in which guns fire, it must be all of them). and the result is a DE – we have shot the bomber down with a lethal burst. The bomber does not fire back, since in this rare case, we shot first. Normally combat is simultaneous. We also note ammo expenditure.

Now we are required to engage the escorts, but first we will instigate the "bug out" rule and try to get away as per 7.1.10. We roll 1d6 and get a *6* which means we have to engage the P-47's.

We place our aircraft counter sideways on the Fighter Target Chart [B11] to denote the we are Disadvantaged, with the P-47 counter facing us, because we attacked the bombers first. We are now faced with three choices.

1. We can perform a standard maneuver, either a tight turn, which gives us 2 position changes (since the Bf109 is an agile aircraft) or a Barrel Roll which reduces our hits by two. The disadvantage of this is the 12 FP P-47 will get to hit us before our turn takes effect or if we barrel roll, we will have two less hits, but will still be Disadvantaged.

2. We can draw a Combat Card, declaring use of the defensive text, and hope it's a good one.

3. We can draw a Combat Card and call our wingman to help us get out of the fix we find ourselves in. (This option becomes better once the wingman is experienced enough to have bought some skills.)

We opt to pull the tight turn and use our ACM skill to reduce the hits by one and hope the P-47 gets poor dice throws.

ROUND 1 OF COMBAT VS. ESCORTS

P-47 Draws Card #4 = 5 Hits – not good. -1 for ACM so a net of 4 hits.

The hits are determined on the Fighter Damage Chart [B6]. Hit #1 1d6 +1d6 = DR *12* Port Wing, Hit #2 DR *33* Airframe, Hit #3 DR *55* Airframe Hit #4 DR *25* Port Engine (defaults to an Engine hit, as we are single-engined). This hit reduces speed by two. Our tight turn takes effect after we have been pounded by the P-47, and improve position by two and have reversed the situation and now are Advantaged. It is now the initiative phase, so our advantage may be short lived. But at the moment, we are facing the P-47 counter, and it is turned sideways.

It is now the end of the combat round, and the last thing that happens before the next round is checking Initiative. The Initiative Chart [B12] is checked and 1d6 is rolled for each aircraft. Speed and other modifiers are added or subtracted to give a final result. So, Player – DR *4* + 18 (speed -2 due to damaged engine) +2 Agile Aircraft, +1 ACM +1 MW50 total of 26. Enemy P-47 – DR *5* +21 = 26 We are equal and checking on the chart there is no change in position; we get to attack.

ROUND 2 OF COMBAT VS. ESCORTS

We are Advantaged and attack with 16 FP; the P-47 will go defensive.

We draw card #38 with 16 FP results in five Hits. The P-47 draws card #28 – A Cuban 8 and avoids one hit and improves his position by two. Four Hits on the P-47 are resolved as follows: Hit #1 DR *25* Engine hit (armour absorbs the hit), Hit #2 DR *34* Tail hit, Hit #3 DR *43* Rear Guns (not present so treated as no damage), Hit #4 DR *45* Starboard Wing. We have been unable to inflict critical damage and the P-47 has been able to turn the tables.

Initiative at the end of round: We roll a *1* on a 1d6 so 1+18 Speed + 2 Agile +1 ACM +1 MW50 = 22 P-47 Rolls a *5* on 1d6 so it's 5+21=26 This is a differential of four. This improves his position by one, so he is now Tailing us. Time to use the Reflexes skill, which can be used once per sortie. This will change our position back to Disadvantaged. This is better than taking a free tail hit when the P-47 shoots again (when Tailing and you shoot, you get an "bonus" additional tail hit on top of any other hits).

ROUND 3 OF COMBAT VS. ESCORTS

I decide to use the Wingman option. I will use the wingman text of the card I draw. P-47 draws card # 49, 5 Hits (12 FP) -1 hit for my ACM skill = 4 hits. We draw card #39 and check the wingman section – he attacks the P-47 with 24 FP! The results of the P-47 hits are: Hit #1 DR *12* Port Wing, Hit #2 DR *13* Starboard Wing, Hit #3 DR *66* Fuel Tank hit; roll 2d6 = *6* (only a leak), Hit #4 43 Rear Guns (no effect as the system is not present). We have now taken quite a bit of damage.

The wingman attacks with his 24 FP (from the card text) and draws Card #59 – a DE result, the P-47 disintegrates under the full force of the attack. Time to go home.

As noted previously the weather is good and we roll 2d6 for our landing roll and get a *9* modified by +1 for the damaged engine and so the final result is a *10* – we land safely.

POST MISSION

We chalk up a bomber kill, the wingman chalks up an escort kill, and we lose a sortie to repair the Bf109 that has five systems damaged. One is added to the number of sorties completed.

[8.0] PRESTIGE LEVEL & PRESTIGE

New pilots did not receive, as a general rule, the latest and most advanced aircraft to fly, not to mention the "one of a kind" experimental configurations. These were generally distributed first to the "Ace" pilots who had proven themselves. To represent this, *Interceptor Ace* uses the concept of "Prestige Points" and an overall "Prestige Level." As a player's Prestige Level increases, newer and more advanced types of aircraft will be available for use. Prestige Points can be used to upgrade to newer aircraft, to get reassigned to a new unit/base, or to request a skilled replacement crewman if needed.

[8.1] PRESTIGE POINTS

Every time a player receives an award of any type (or a follow-on award, such as the Oakleaves to the Knight's Cross, etc.) he receives a Prestige Point. Keep track of your current total of points on Chart [A2]. You also receive a Prestige Point for achieving your 5th kill (you have become an "Ace" at that time) and for each promotion. Prestige Points may be spent on the following items:

> **A: 1 Point:** Upgrade to a newer aircraft in the same series (Bf109, Fw190, Bf110, Me410)
>
> **B: 2 Points:** Upgrade to a newer aircraft in a different series
>
> **C: 2 Points:** Reassignment to a new unit (lose 1 sortie while transferring)
>
> **D: 1 Point:** When receiving a replacement crewman, he arrives with two Experience Points (unspent)
>
> **E. 1 Point:** Receive a new aircraft in the same series so as to not lose a sortie due to repairs

You can only upgrade to an aircraft if your current Prestige Level is high enough to allow you to fly it. (See 8.2 below.)

[8.2] PRESTIGE LEVEL

A player's Prestige Level starts at zero. Every time a player receives a Prestige Point, his Prestige Level increases by one. It never decreases. Unlike Prestige Points, which can be saved and spent as desired, the Prestige Level is your overall Prestige within the Luftwaffe and is used to "unlock" more advanced aircraft, which can then be purchased with Prestige Points. Your Prestige Level can only increase as the game progresses – it never decreases even if you spend all your Prestige Points. Once your Prestige Level reaches "7" it no longer needs to be tracked... that is the highest level needed to fly any aircraft. Prestige Points, however, can still be earned (and spent) even if you are currently at level 7 Prestige.

Pilots who have a Prestige Level of "7" are no longer required to roll on the Available Replacement Aircraft Chart [R1] for available replacement aircraft. He is allowed to choose any that are currently listed as available.

Example: A player has shot down two bombers in his Fw190A-4. This means his Prestige Level is currently "2" (one because he received the Iron Cross Second Class, and then one more for receiving the Iron Cross First Class). He wants to upgrade to the Fw190A-4/R6. Despite the fact he can afford to upgrade by spending a Prestige Point, he cannot, as it requires a Prestige Level of "3" to be able to upgrade to it. He COULD, however, spend a Prestige Point to upgrade to the Fw190A-5 if he rolled it as available on the Available Replacement Aircraft Chart [R1].

[9.0] REASSIGNMENT TO A NEWER AIRCRAFT

A player may be reassigned to a newer model aircraft under certain circumstances.

[9.1] AIRCRAFT SERIES

There are four "series," or general subtypes of aircraft, in the game. These groups of aircraft are all made by the same manufacturer. It is easier to upgrade to an aircraft in the same general subtype as your current aircraft, than it is to upgrade to a completely different aircraft, as you are already generally experienced with cockpit layout, etc.

The four subtypes are:

Bf109 (11 aircraft)

Fw190 (13 aircraft)

Bf110 (4 aircraft)

Me410 (2 aircraft)

[9.2] UPGRADING

If he desires a newer model of aircraft, he should roll on the Available Replacement Aircraft Chart [R1] and see which ones are available to his unit. He may then spend one Prestige Point and receive it (and must have the Prestige level required to fly that model). It must be of the same general subtype as his previous aircraft. (For example, one Prestige Point will allow a Bf109G-1 pilot to upgrade to any other Bf109 subtype that is currently available.)

[9.3] SWITCHING BETWEEN SUBTYPES

Players may switch between the major subtypes of aircraft, (e.g. moving from ME109G-2 to a Fw190 A-4) but this costs two Prestige Points. When switching to a new major subtype of aircraft, he loses two sorties while familiarizing himself with the new major subtype, and may fly again on the third sortie after transfer. He retains his normal crew (and may possibly lose a crewman). If you change to a two-seater aircraft and now require a gunner, the gunner starts the game with no Experience Points. If you have the NCO Feldwebel rank you can 'acquire' a gunner with four Experience Points (7.9.2).

[9.4] SWITCHING DUE TO INJURY

If seriously wounded, the player is automatically given a new plane for "free" (and possibly a new crewman who starts with no special abilities; however, see 7.9.2) of the same major subtype which he started on. He may choose any type of aircraft that is currently available at that time in the same general series he was previously flying, and goes back on flight duty the next turn after release from the hospital. If he has Prestige Points to spend, he may expend one per crewman to get them reassigned back to his plane upon his release. Otherwise, they are assumed to continue flying with a different pilot which happened during the hospital stay, and he gets a new crew. He must choose an aircraft he is capable of flying, from the standpoint of Prestige Level.

[9.5] SWITCHING DUE TO AIRCRAFT LOSS

A player who crash lands his plane or is shot down (and presumably survives) receives a new plane of his old major subtype without having to spend any Prestige Points. For example, a player in a Bf109-G2 is shot down in September of 1943. He could receive a Bf109G-6/R6 if desired (assuming his Prestige Level is "3" or higher).

[9.6] NEW CREW MEMBERS

It may be possible that an aircraft upgrade will "add" a new crew member – there are normally one but sometimes two crew on the interceptors in the game. New crew members arrive with no special abilities (exception: see 7.9.2). The same applies to replacement crew for casualties. It is also possible a new plane will have one less crewman – in that case, the old crewman is lost to the pilot.

[9.7] PRESTIGE POINT WAIVER

If the player starts the game past March 1943, he may find himself in a unit flying an aircraft that has a Prestige requirement higher than zero. The requirement would be waived in that case for that particular model of aircraft and any same-model replacements if he loses it.

[9.8] LIMITED AVAILABILITY AIRCRAFT

Some aircraft cannot be replaced…they were literally "one of a kind" test versions. If you upgrade to one of these special aircraft and subsequently lose it via a crash or having it shot down, you will not get another one during the same game.

These aircraft are:

Fw190 A-5/U9

Fw190 A-5/U11

Fw190 A-5/U12

Fw190 A-6/R2

[10.0] OPTIONAL RULES

[10.1] MULTIPLAYER

Despite the fact *Interceptor Ace* is designed as a solitaire game, it can be played cooperatively or competitively by two or more players.

[10.1.1] COOPERATIVE PLAY

Two players can fly in the same unit, and assist each other in interceptions. To simulate this cooperation in bomber combat, assign one of the two interceptors as the leader. His interception rolls apply to both players each Endurance box. If the leader rolls a fighter sweep, both players have a fighter sweep (with the same orientation). If the leader rolls a bomber interception, both players have a bomber interception (with the same orientation). If the leader has Wfr.Gr.21 rockets, his attack will break up the bomber formation for himself and the other player if successful. Other than that, they will attack bombers separately.

Fighter combat is a little trickier, insomuch as each player will be fighting against their own escort or fighter target. However, if one player has shot down his opponent, he may assist his teammate by maneuvering against his teammate's opponent. Each round this happens, it will improve his teammate's position by 1, occurring during the initiative roll. However, at the end of each round this happens, the assisting player must roll a die: on a 1 or a 2, he will find himself starting a new combat in a Disadvantaged status against a fresh Allied fighter or escort.

[10.1.2] COMPETITIVE PLAY

Two players can fly in the same or different units, and compete for the best score. When it comes time for return fire from the bombers, the opposing player can flip the card. If an escort or fighter encounter occurs, the opposing player decides to use a defensive or wingman assist section of cards when playing defensively and also rolls for initiative.

[10.2] HISTORICAL ACE CARDS

In order to add what amounts to Historical Scenarios in the game, eight cards have been included, each representing one of the top "bomber killers" in the Luftwaffe. Each card includes special instructions for its use, and a "snapshot" of the pilot's status at the start of the game (March 1943). For example, many start with kills, Experience Points, awards, etc. Simply adjust the Pilot and Crew Status sheet to reflect the situation, and place the Ace card on the upper left side in the box provided to allow you to refer to it as needed. You are now ready to start flying as that Ace starting in March 1943.

[10.2.1] **Starting Unit**. The Ace cards lists the unit that the pilot had served in at the start of 1943. Alternately, with less historical accuracy, you may choose a unit at random. Start with any aircraft available at that unit, however, priority should be to an aircraft the pilot is an "expert" with.

[10.2.2] **Ace Abilities**. Each card lists the special abilities of that particular Ace. If Experience Points are listed, you may spend them (or save them) as desired. Every Ace starts with the Expert skill in at least one series of aircraft, such as Bf109, Fw190, etc.

[10.2.3] **Historical Ace Victory**. Some of the Aces listed on the cards were already near their kill totals by March 1943; some had not even started yet. Regardless of starting kills, you should consider your career a defeat if you do not MATCH or EXCEED the pilot's historical total.

[10.3] PILOT FATIGUE

Obviously, running nonstop operations will eventually take a toll on a pilot's judgment, flying capabilities, and attention. Pilot fatigue includes the stress of continuous combat in addition to the physical fatigue. The following optional rules simulate this effect on the pilots.

FATIGUE LEVEL

Pilot fatigue level starts at zero. Each sortie flown causes the pilot to gain one fatigue point. Each sortie NOT flown (for any reason – the raid is out of your fuel range, you are switching aircraft, or you just don't fly) removes two fatigue points. Record your fatigue on the Sortie Log Sheet.

FATIGUE EFFECTS

The following effects occur at different fatigue levels:

1-5	Fatigue	No effect.
6-11	Fatigue	Add +1 to parachute die rolls
12-17	Fatigue	Add +1 to landing and +1 to parachute rolls
18-23	Fatigue	Add +2 to landing, +1 to parachute rolls, and you have -1 for initiative rolls
24+	Fatigue	Add +2 to landing, +2 to parachute rolls, and you have -1 for initiative rolls

ANNUAL LEAVE

A pilot may take leave (the military term for vacation time) for a week (two sorties). He may do this once during the game. When he returns, his fatigue level is set at zero.

[10.4] VARIABLE ENEMY FIGHTER PILOT QUALITY

For those who want to encounter variably skilled enemy fighter/escort pilots, use the following. Roll 1d6 when encountering fighter sweeps or escorts:

Time:	1d6 for Quality:			
Mar 43 – Jun 43	1 = Green	2-4 = Trained	5 = Veteran	6 = Ace
July 43 - Feb 44	1-3 = Trained		4-5 = Veteran	6 = Ace

Green pilots do one less random hit. Trained pilots are the default. Veteran pilots do one extra random hit. Ace pilots do one extra random hit and also receive +1 on the initiative roll.

[10.5] ADVANCED COMBAT AGAINST BOMBERS

Players may wish to use the advanced combat system. It is reasonably similar, except it uses the Position Chart [P1] for bomber combat. Additionally, having a B-17G target is different than a B-17F and should be noted by players. B-17G bombers do an extra hit against interceptors at ALL ranges when attacked from orientations 1, 2 or 3 (the front). The starting orientation against the bombers is in one of 26 locations. This is rolled randomly with a 1d10 for location. If a 1 through 8 is rolled, it is combined with a 1d6 for Low (1-2) Level (3-4) or High (5-6). (Locations are numbered 1 through 8, with the possibility of being Low, Level, or High, plus 9 being a Vertical Climb attack, and 10 being a Vertical Dive attack.) The player must make a decision at this point:

1. If unsatisfied with his location number, he may adjust it by one location to either direction before engaging the bomber (but not to 9 or 10 – Vertical Dive and Vertical Climb) For example, if he attacking from location 5, he may move to location 3 or 7. In doing so he takes one random hit in damage. This is assumed to come from Long range fire from somewhere in the combat box, or even a different nearby box.

If unsatisfied with a Vertical Climb, he may move to any starting location from 1-8 and conduct an attack from "Low." He also receives one random hit for the move, and the bomber also fires first at Long range.

If unsatisfied with a Vertical Dive, he may move to any starting location from 1-8 and conduct an attack from "high." There is no penalty.

2. For locations 1-8, if unhappy with his starting altitude, he may adjust it by one level (Low can go to Level, High can go to Level, and Level can go either way). If this involves climbing, the bomber will shoot first at Long range, whether or not the initial interception gave the interceptor an Advantaged start. There is no penalty for diving to a lower starting position.

3. He may do both adjustments (location and altitude) if desired, or just one, but must apply all penalties that apply.

4. The player may also choose to accept the situation as is, and begin his pass.

Players should note that the "B" and "F" notations in the Damage Modifiers by Approach section of Position Chart [P1] refer to "Bombers" and "Fighters" (interceptors) respectively.

After making a pass, if the player is able to re-engage (due to a lack of escorts) he would begin the process again, but the player begins opposite his entrance location and may adjust from there. For example, if the player attacked from location 3, his second pass starts at location 6. He could then adjust to location 4 or 8 and change his altitude up or down from his last altitude, suffering the appropriate penalties for adjustments.

Vertical Climb and Vertical Dive attacks are resolved differently than normal attacks. Each consists of just one round of firing, and are considered to occur from Medium range for the purposes of range effects. An aim point is still declared, but if a "GP" result is obtained, the player applies the special package listed on Position Chart [P1].

The location for a second pass after a Vertical Climb or Dive is rolled randomly.

[10.6] OPTIONAL ADVANCED MANEUVERS

The standard maneuvers (barrel roll, tight turn) are all available to starting players and have unlimited usage during a sortie. Players may wish to try "Advanced Maneuvers" which are a set of additional skills not included in the basic game. These skills are bought just like any other and allow the player to "learn" advanced maneuvers which can be used once per sortie. These are:

Advanced Maneuver 1: Cuban Eight (Avoid 1 hit, improve by x 1)

Advanced Maneuver 2: Chandelle (Avoid all damage, improve x 1)

Advanced Maneuver 3: Immelmann (Avoid all damage, improve x 2)

Advanced Maneuver 4: Split-S (Avoid 1 hit and encounter ends)

Each advanced maneuver may be used once per sortie, assuming the player has bought the skill. They all have an Experience Point cost of "1" and must be learned in order: Maneuver 1 must be learned first before the player can learn Maneuver 2, etc.

Extremely Optional Rule: For those with a taste for the truly strange, I came across a unique situation while researching Nightfighter Ace. Since it still would have been possible for a day fighter pilot to have done this also, I couldn't resist adding it again:

[10.7] THE ASSASSINATION OF ADOLF HITLER

In the book "Laurels for Prinz Wittgenstein" the author recounts how the Prinz was surprised that his pistol was not removed prior to his meeting with Hitler and how it would have been possible to "bump him off" right then and there. As a member of the aristocracy, Wittgenstein obviously loved Germany, but was not too fond of Hitler. Procedures changed drastically for meeting with Hitler after the July 20th 1944 assassination attempt. However, since the game occurs before then, and if a player wishes to assassinate Hitler, use the following rules:

A. The attempt happens when meeting with Hitler to receive either the Oak Leaves, Swords, or Diamonds to the Knight's Cross.

B. Roll 1d6 for the number of pistol shots you get off. Each shot creates a wound on Hitler. Roll 1d6 per the normal wound procedure (1-3 = LW, 4-5 SW, 6 = KIA). The wounds add up....2 LWs = SW, and 2 SWs = KIA. Obviously if you roll a "KIA" he is killed.

C. If this does not kill Hitler, his bodyguards kill you immediately, and the game ends.

D. If this does kill Hitler, you are considered by many to be a true hero of Germany. However, his bodyguards still kill you immediately, and the game ends.

DESIGNER'S NOTES

After having completed *Nightfighter Ace* I was pressed by John Kranz to think about doing a sequel. Making a direct end war sequel wasn't appealing to me…too many Mosquito nightfighters, too much jamming, too much everything. I realize I said that once about "Hunters" and still made "The Hunted" but the situation is so much worse in the air.

However, adapting the system for day use seemed extremely promising, and I started to research by analyzing B-17 operations (I looked at every single major operation for 1943 and 1944) and I quickly came to the conclusion I wanted to do the game focused on 1943. Mid to late 1944 was just too one-sided – thousand bomber raids combined with over a thousand escorts. The year 1942 didn't have much action on the bomber front on a large scale. I looked more closely at 1943 and early 1944.

Probably the hardest part of the design was the fighter vs. fighter combat. The routines for shooting down the bombers were mainly imported from *Nightfighter Ace*, but I didn't have a logical system for the fighters. Originally I just had the planes blaze away, but it was too simplistic, and didn't have the feel of what I'd imagine a dogfight would be. Then I had an "aha" moment – apply some of the concepts from *Down in Flames (*one of my favorite aircraft games). Now, the dogfights can last many rounds, with reversals of fortune and position – they feel like dogfights. I felt like I finally had a fun system by applying those concepts to this game.

Probably the "heart" of the game is the decisions players must make regarding the expenditure of their precious Experience Points to improve their pilots. Some are offensively oriented, some are survival oriented. Some are a bit subtle in their effects, and some will probably be more useful in one series of aircraft versus another. I encourage players to try different combinations to see if they can obtain better scores.

Timing is everything, they say, and I'm sure some people will think that this game is poorly timed based on Jeremy White's superb game *Skies Above the Reich.* However, the designs are independently conceived, and fortunately it's a very "apples and oranges" situation, as his game is more about squadrons while mine is focused on a single aircraft. If anything, the two games complement each other, rather than compete.

This game will hopefully point out that fighter combat was an extremely dangerous line of work. Players will be hard-pressed to survive the entire year. One thing that should be foremost in a player's mind is he is not flying a U-boat. Aircraft are fragile machines, at best. A level of risk that would be acceptable in *The Hunters* for example, will probably get you killed in *Interceptor Ace* (or at the least, shot down). Players will notice quickly that the Bf109s, prior to receiving underwing cannon, are definitely the "challenge mode" aircraft of this game. They will have a really hard time downing bombers before getting weapons upgrades. Players will also notice that Fw190s received their nickname of "Butcher Bird" for a reason.

There will no doubt be many questions as to why I chose the time frame that I did. The American bombing campaign started in 1943, so that seemed one good reason. As stated above, late 1944 was just too brutal, and the odds so overwhelming that it didn't seem like a fun game was there. (I would have to have rules to represent your staffel of 12 aircraft facing 200 escorts, for example.) But really, I just liked the overall feel of keeping to 1943 – the American capability builds as the year progresses until things get pretty hairy by the end of the game. The German advantage early in the year degrades over time, and so the game starts somewhat easy and gets harder. That seemed to work very well in *The Hunters* and I hope it will here also.

I would hate to see a game I designed just sit on a shelf somewhere, collecting dust. I'd much prefer to have the counters get worn down and the charts sporting coffee stains :) So playability was a very important design objective for me. As I've said before, there's a fine line to walk here between historical accuracy, playability, and complexity. I hope that once again I've hit this goal. Good luck, and Happy Hunting!

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Interceptor Ace

HISTORICAL BACKDROP

In 1943, the Americans felt they had built up enough of a bomber fleet to begin assisting Britain in the round-the-clock strategic bombardment of Germany. The heart of the American bombing effort was the B-17 bomber. The British had long come to the conclusion that "precision bombing" was not achievable with their bomber force and had switched to mass night bombardment of German cities. The objective was to "reduce the German citizen's will to fight" and "displacing workers" by destroying their homes. There have been countless arguments over the morality of such a plan – but many British viewed it as a greater moral sin to allow the Third Reich to triumph in the war. Regardless, the British campaign was obtaining results…but mainly through flattening as much acreage as possible and killing civilians. It was truly total war, and truly horrific.

The Americans, therefore, were to bomb Germany during the day, in order to keep up constant pressure on the German defences via "round the clock bombing." They felt they did have the capability to achieve precision bombing, due mainly to their faith in the Norden bombsight, although this faith was perhaps a bit overoptimistic. Still, they did, in fact, achieve better results than the British had with a similar number of bombers. Much of the damage done only knocked out production of facilities for a few days or less, but it was having a disruptive effect and made the Germans disperse key facilities among other countermeasures.

At first, the Americans sent in their bombers unescorted, due to a lack of range and somewhat due to a lack of escorts. They believed that with 12 x .50 cal machine guns per bomber, flying in a "combat box" formation for mutually supporting defensive fire, they would be able to drive off enemy fighters.

This also proved a bit overoptimistic, as the Germans soon learned they needed to break up the combat boxes to reduce the defensive fire. They also learned that the B-17F models were most vulnerable to a Head on attack, with only a single .50 caliber machine gun in the nose. Losses were high enough that the Americans stayed with striking at targets in France, the Ruhr, and the coastal cities for some time. The Head-on tactics of the Germans did bring about the hurried development of the B-17G model which was basically the same as the F except for a new twin gun turret in the nose. These did not arrive in numbers until late 1943, however.

Another tactic tried by the Americans was the "YB-40" version of the B-17. Basically, it was a B-17 gunship – it carried 16+ .50 caliber machine guns (it had a second top turret) and over 10,000 rounds of ammunition. It was not really successful for a variety of reasons, and very few actually flew on missions, but it was a stopgap until fighter escorts with increased range could be employed.

The Germans were not idle in their tactical innovations. One interesting development was the "Werfergranate 21" rocket, fired from mounts under the wings of fighters from outside the bomber's defensive fire range (up to a kilometer away). This served to do some damage but mainly worked to break up the bomber formations.

Another innovation was the development of underwing gondolas containing 20mm cannon (sometimes two per gondola) to increase firepower. It was recognized that the Bf109s, while excellent dogfighters, lacked the firepower to consistently bring down the tough B-17s. The gondolas, while increasing firepower, also increased drag, making those fighters less effective against escorts. Eventually the Germans gave the mission of downing bombers to the Fw190 units and had the Bf109 units engage the escorts.

Perhaps the strangest weapon mounted by the Germans was the "Bord Kanone 5" – a 50mm cannon (basically, an adapted antitank weapon) which was placed in the front of the Me410. It had a devastating effect on B-17s – one hit was usually sufficient to down a bomber. The loss of performance, however, was enough to make the Me410s easy prey for the American escorts.

At the start of the campaign in early 1943, the average bomber raid had 100 bombers and no escorts. By 1944, the Americans were sending over a thousand bombers with over a thousand escorts on missions. The Luftwaffe simply could not cope with the tidal wave of the Combined Bomber Offensive, which foreshadowed the end of the Third Reich.

This game is dedicated the 2nd Lt. Samuel Whitehead, my uncle, who flew 32 missions over Germany in 1944 as the pilot of a B-17. He is in the center of the photo, pictured here with his crew.

Whitehead Crew: (left to right): Robert E. Teien-B, Leonard M. Hanson-ENG, Lester M. Fine-CP, Carl S. Lambert-RO, Samuel H. Whitehead-P, John J. Lukasik-WG, Paul N. Pearlin-TG, Albert A. Saleeby-N. Not pictured: Edward Y. Odian-BTG, Nick Miller-WG.

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Honorable Mention
Designer wishes to thank Ian Cowley for the extended example of play, and a big thank you as always to Christine and Heather at Staples for making my prototypes so nice.

RULES INDEX

> **Note:** *one counter was changed on the countersheet due to an error. This is the skill marker for Reflexes. The second ACM counter should have been labeled "Reflexes" and not ACM. Players may use any of the blanks, the second copy of ACM, or copy and glue the image below to make a substitute:*

(Front)   **(Back)**