AIRCRAFT OF OPERATION COBRA

By Chas Smith

1. THUNDERBOLTS

1.1 P-47 Thunderbolts: The Thunderbolt was originally developed as a long-range fighter to protect bombers but was transitioned into a primary ground attack aircraft in 1944. The aircraft design made it a natural fighter-bomber and it excelled in air interdiction and close air support roles. A series of improvements were made to the aircraft in 1944 including the development of various rockets and corresponding mounting systems. The models included represent these new systems and their various ordnance loads, as well as other similar American fighter-bombers that used rockets in the same time period.[1]
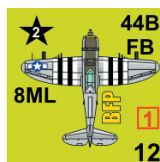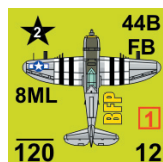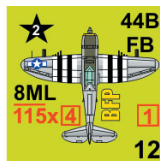
1.11 THE MODELS

U.S. 44A FB [2]
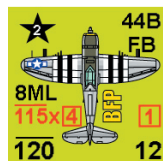Available: ≥ June 44
MG: 12
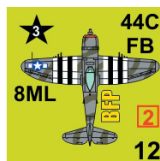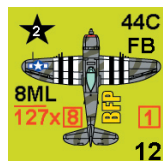ROF: 1
Bombs: 100
Rockets: 115mm (4)
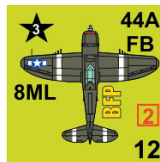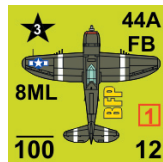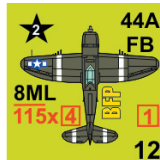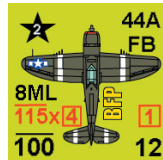
U.S. 44B FB
Available: ≥ July 44
MG: 12
ROF: 1
Bombs: 120
Rockets: 115mm (4)
Special Rocket Notes:
-May only conduct
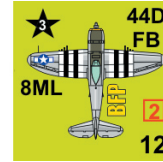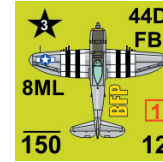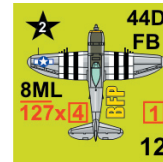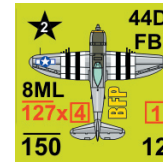 Area Attacks
-May not jettison rockets

U.S. 44C FB
Available: ≥ July 44
MG: 12
ROF: 1
Bombs: NA
Rockets: 127mm (8)

U.S. 44D FB
Available: ≥ July 44
MG: 12
ROF: 1
Bombs: 150
Rockets: 127mm (4)

1.2 ATTACKS: Thunderbolt aircraft armed with rockets have the following options in a single fire phase:

1) MGs and/or bombs normally
2) Rockets only

The procedures for conducting a Sighting TC and resolving Light AA attacks remain unchanged per Chapter E. After a successful Sighting TC, but before any attack, the owning player must declare if the attack is to be made with MG/bombs or rockets. Conduct per Chapter E if a MG/bomb attack is declared.

1.3 ROCKETS: This armament is listed in red below the Morale on the aircraft counters. If a rocket attack is declared, it is the only weapon that can be used by the aircraft in that fire phase. Rockets are either 115mm or 127mm. The **R**ocket **A**ttack **N**umber (RAN) is listed inside a box to the right of the rocket diameter. The RAN is the number of TH attempts that aircraft can make during the fire phase. The RAN is halved if the ATT (**C3.33**) is used (EX: a 44C FB can make either 8 ITT/VTT or 4 ATT attacks). Rockets, like bombs, may be used only once. After conducting a rocket attack, flip or replace the FB counter with a FB of the same type without rockets. A FB loaded with rockets engaged in Aerial Combat (**E7.22**) suffers the same penalty as an aircraft carrying bombs (**E7.221**). The DRMs for Rockets and bombs are cumulative in Dogfights. Rockets may be jettisoned like bombs (and at the same time as any bombs) per **E7.225**. The 44B FB is the exception to this rule section. It may *not* jettison rockets, *must* use the ATT and thus a point attack when using rockets, and incurs an additional +1 TH DRM].[3]

1.31 INFANTRY/VEHICLE TARGET TYPE (ITT/VTT):
ITT/ VTT may only be used during a strafing run. Any combination of TH attempts per hex(es) can be used up to the full RAN. After a rocket attack is declared, all hex(es) and the unit(s) being attacked must be announced prior to resolving the first attack. Each attack is conducted regardless of the outcome of the prior attack. Any To Hit Original 12 DR, using any target type (including area), results in a malfunction of the rocket system. All remaining rockets are considered jettisoned; flip the aircraft counter to the appropriate side (the aircraft continues to move along its

attack route and is subject to light AA fire normally although it does not conduct any additional attacks in this fire phase).

1.32 AREA TARGET TYPE (ATT): ATT may be used only during a point attack. When using the ATT the RAN is reduced to half of its original number. Of the remaining RAN, half of the attacks are made from four hexes, and half from three hexes. Each attack is conducted regardless of the outcome of the prior attack. Each attack is conducted as Area Fire (**C1.55**).

1.33 ROCKET TH DRM: The **E7.421** provisions for a Direct Hit or Near Miss do not apply to rockets. All hits while using the ITT/VTT are Direct Hits, and all hits with ATT use the IFT at half firepower. All aerial TH DRM apply normally, with the following additions:

DRM	Target Type
-1	Area (ATT)
+2	Infantry (ITT)
+3	Vehicle (VTT)

1.34 ROCKET TK DRM: The **C7.22** Aerial Advantage vs. AFV applies; the **C7.21** AFV Rear Target Facing does not apply.

1.341 ROCKET EFFECTS: Attacks against infantry use the applicable IFT column (100mm or 120mm and halved if using ATT). If the VTT was used, AFVs are attacked on the applicable **C7.34** HE/Flame TK Table (100+ and 120+ columns). If the ATT was used, AFVs are attacked per **C1.55**.

Thunderbolt - Example of Play 1:
44B FB conducting a Point Attack
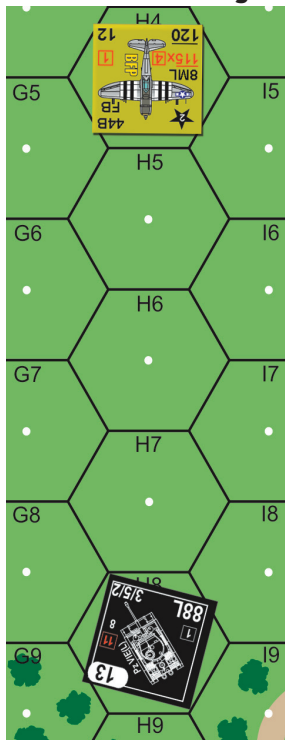
A 44B FB in H4 attacks a Tiger I in H8. The 44B FB conducts and passes a Sighting Task Check from H4. It is subject to, but receives no Light AA fire. The player must decide if the attack is going to use rockets or MGs/bombs. A rocket attack is declared. The 44B FB may only conduct ATT attacks when using rockets, making this a point attack. The RAN is four that is halved to two for an Area attack. The first attack is fired from H4 and the second from H5. Each TH attempt requires an Original DR ≤ 8 to achieve a hit. Base 7; DRMs: -1 Rocket ATT, -1 Target Size, +1 44B FB TH DRM = 8. Any hits attack the Tiger I on the IFT because it was an Area attack. It is resolved on the 8 FP column with a net 0 DRM: -1 DRM for aerial advantage and +1 DRM for all AF ≥ 6.

Thunderbolt - Example of Play 2:
44C FB conducting a Strafing Run
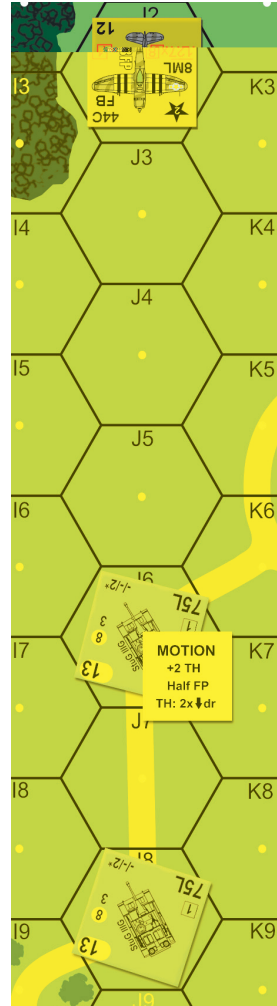
The StuGs in J6 (Motion) and J8 are attacked by a 44C FB from J2. The 44C FB conducts and passes a Sighting Task Check from J2. It is subject to, but receives no Light AA fire. The controlling player declares the use of rockets and the VTT, thus the fighter bomber must make a strafing run. The player wants to attack both StuGs. All rocket attacks must be pre-declared. Any combination can be used on any of the hexes; the player chooses to attack each StuG four times. Four TH attempts are made at the StuG in J6 from J2. Each rocket is fired at a 4 hex range (7-12 aerial range), and a Final DR ≤ 3 is necessary for a hit. Base 9; -3 VTT, -1 Target Size, -2 Motion = 3. A Final DR ≤ 11 is required for an effect. Base TK 12, -2 Aerial AF, +1 aerial = 11. When the FB reaches J4 it attacks the StuG in J8 with the same TH/TK DRMs as the StuG in J6 except that it is not moving, and thus would be hit on a Final DR ≤ 5.

NOTE: on both of the above examples, any TH DR of 12 immediately ends the rocket attack and eliminates any remaining rockets that have not been fired yet.

AIRCRAFT NOTES:
(1) THE MODELS: The models may also represent other similar fighter bombers equipped with rockets. The dates for implementation and the allowable ordnance mixes vary from source to source. The four included models generically represent the various ordnance loads.

(2) 44A FB: While rocket pods were still in development and testing, older aircraft versions were fitted with rails to mount the 115mm rockets. This model was first used in June 1944.

(3) ROCKETS: The 44B FB had rocket pods mounted underneath the wings. These could not be jettisoned, and even if the rockets had been fired it hindered the maneuverability of the aircraft and was a recognized disadvantage in a dogfight. These rockets were relatively inaccurate. This is represented by restricting it to use of the Area Target Type as well as a +1 TH DRM.