

WARBIRDS

by Tom Harvey

Components

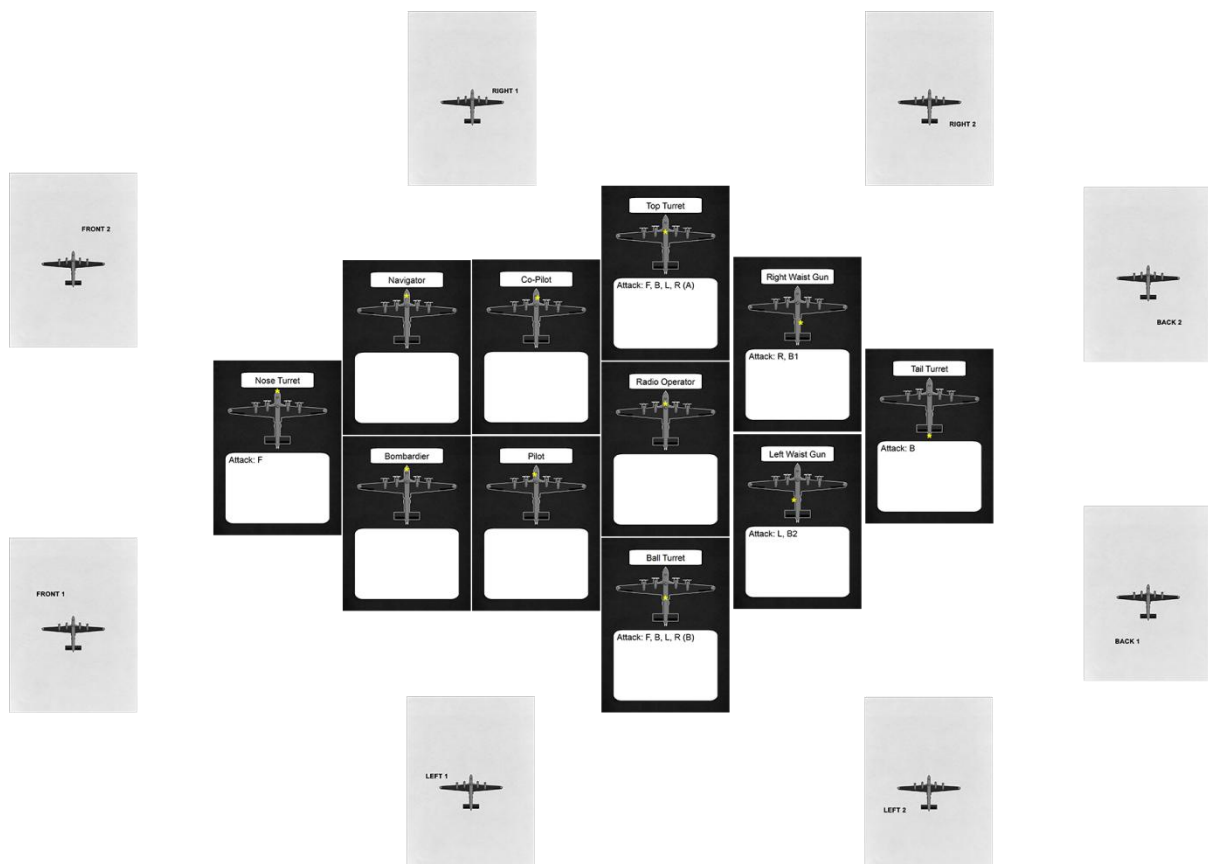
234 cards divided into 15 decks as follows: 13 casualty, 30 crew, 18 bombardier, 15 transit, 35 enemy territory, 40 damage, 10 mission, 11 fuel, 7 skill, 6 victory, 11 station, 8 battlefield, 15 aircraft, 12 progress, 3 pilot.

Objective

Warbirds is a cooperative game about operating a B24 bomber during World War 2. You are working together to score 25 points and successfully complete your tour of duty.

Setup

Separate all of the cards into decks according to their back. Remove the medal cards from the casualty deck and set them aside. Layout the battlefield cards face up in the middle of the playing area. These cards represent the airspace around the bomber. Conceptually the arrangement is as follows:



Lay out the Fuselage, Left Wing, Right Wing and Tail cards from the aircraft deck.

Play

Play is divided into missions.

Mission Preparation

Spread out the crew deck face up. A crew of 8-10 men may be selected for each mission. At least 1 airman with the pilot skill must be present on a mission. If no such men remain, the game is lost. Any crew members who have earned medals but are not selected for a mission (or are in the infirmary) should keep their medal cards with them as a reminder.

Divide the crew members between the players.

Each crew member must be assigned to a station on the aircraft. They must have the skill listed in order to man that station. Decide to which station each crew member will be assigned and give them the relevant card from the station deck. Alternatively, it may be beneficial to layout the station cards as shown above. Only 1 crew member can be assigned to each station. Not all stations need to be manned. The Pilot is also the captain of the aircraft.

Note: Crew members with the pilot skill can also man the co-pilot station.

Give the Bombardier the bombardier deck. Give the transit and enemy territory decks to the pilot. Give the fuel deck to the engineer, or co-pilot if no engineer is present.

Shuffle the transit, enemy territory and damage decks. Shuffle the mission deck and draw the top card.

Note: You may wish to do missions in a particular order for thematic or difficulty reasons. New players would be advised to attempt a shorter mission to start with.

Mission Execution

The mission begins with the aircraft in the transit approach phase, on the way to the bombing target. It then transitions to the enemy territory phase, where the bomber enters combat and attempts to deliver its payload. The final phase is the transit return phase, where the aircraft will (hopefully) return to base.

The mission card just drawn shows how many turns each phase of the mission lasts, along with the bombing target.

For example, a mission with distance 2 and engagement length 3 lasts for 2 turns in the travel approach phase, followed by 3 turns in the enemy territory phase, then 2 turns in the transit return phase for a total of $2 + 3 + 2 = 7$ turns.

The mission takes place in a series of turns, made up of phases taken in the following order:

Pilot Actions

- If both pilot positions are unoccupied, immediately move at least one crew member with the pilot skill to the pilot or co-pilot station. If none are available, you must bail out (see below).
- Discard 1 fuel card. If fuel has run out, you must break formation (see below).
- If you have broken formation, perform the actions described in that section.

One or both pilots may perform 1 of the following actions:

- Fuel Save: Only during enemy territory phase. Perform a skill test using the pilot skill value (see below). If successful, gain 1 fuel card. The pilots note this success by taking a fuel save card from the pilot deck.
- Evasive Manoeuvre: Only during enemy territory phase. Using the pilot skill, perform a skill test. If successful, the pilots may decide to perform the test again. For each successful test, 1 less event card is drawn this turn. If a test ever fails, the evasive manoeuvre has failed and the full amount of event cards is drawn regardless of how many tests succeeded prior to the failure.

The pilot action counts as their action for the turn. Any pilot not performing a pilot action may still perform a crew action below.

Event

Draw from an event deck depending on the current mission phase:

- Transit phases (approach/return): The pilot draws the top card of the transit deck and resolves it.
- Enemy Territory phase: Draw a number of cards from the enemy territory deck equal to the mission intensity shown on the mission card and resolve them. Draw only 1 card if you have broken formation.

Once a card has been resolved, keep it face up to track progress through the mission. When the number of turns indicated on the mission card have been completed, move to the next phase of the mission. If the return phase is completed, proceed to debriefing.

Note: If the bombs have not been released by the end of the enemy territory phase, the Pilot may make the decision to continue the phase as long as desired, drawing the same number of cards as usual. Otherwise, the bombs are released anyway and counted as misses.

Crew Actions

Each crew member may take 1 action. The actions they may take are determined by their current station. All actions take place simultaneously, so for example crew may swap stations using the *change* action. The available actions are:

- Attack an enemy on the battlefield. The station may attack any battlefield position indicated on the station card. Perform a skill test. If the attack is successful, give that card to the crew member as a confirmed kill for tallying at the end of the mission.
- Change station. Remember that a crew member can only occupy a station if they have the relevant skill.
- Bombardier Actions: See the section below.

Resolving Combat

Any enemy aircraft that are still in the battlefield when this phase begins now attack. Draw the number of cards indicated on the engagement card from the damage deck and resolve them.

Unless otherwise stated on the card, damage cards are returned to the deck at the end of this phase. Shuffle the damage deck.

Add a progress card next to the mission card to track how many turns have been completed.

Repeat these phases until the aircraft either lands or is destroyed.

Mission Debriefing

Medals

Medals are awarded for the following (and can be awarded posthumously):

- 3 or more bombs are hits. Recipient: Bombardier
- Perform 3 fuel saves. Recipients: Pilot & Co-Pilot
- Individually destroy 3 enemy aircraft. Recipient: Crew member who does this

Assessment

Calculate the mission score as follows:

- Score 2 points if you reached the enemy territory phase
- Score 2 points per bomb that hit the target
- Score 2 points per medal earned this mission

- Score 2 points per medal in possession of a living crew member that has returned to base, where the medal was won in a previous missions
- Lose 1 point if the aircraft did not land at home base
- The minimum score is 1

The score is the number of victory points earned from the mission. Add these to your current victory points total and update your score progress with cards from the victory deck. Each point represents 1 completed mission of your tour.

If your score has now reached or exceeded 25, then the crew has completed their tour and will be returning home. Congratulations, you have won the game.

Otherwise, proceed to the repairs section.

Repairs

Discard the mission card. If there are no mission cards remaining, the war is over and the crew will be returning home. Congratulations, you have won the game.

Otherwise, discard any dead crew cards and their medals. Remove damage from the aircraft cards. Return pilot, damage, transit and enemy territory cards to their decks.

Any crew members in the infirmary can be added back into the crew deck. Any incapacitated crew from the current mission must now be set aside in the infirmary.

Proceed to the mission preparation phase when you are ready to embark on the next mission.

Pilot Skill

The pilot skill is the maximum skill of both pilots, minus 1 if only 1 pilot is present, minus 1 for each failed/destroyed engine. Pilot skill cannot go below 0.

Skill Tests

Take 1 success and 3 fail cards from the skill deck. Add a number of success cards equal to the crew member's skill in that position (minimum 0). Shuffle the deck and draw one card to determine the success or failure of the test. If you are ever directed to perform a skill test for an unmanned station, the test automatically fails.

Battlefield Positions

Various cards indicate battlefield positions using the first letter of the position as an abbreviation (AAF stands for Anti-Aircraft Fire). Where the position number is omitted, this indicates that both positions are included. For example, F means both F1 and F2. Where (A) or (B) is included, that means only attacks from above or below respectively. If omitted,

then both are included. For example L, R, B (B), AAF includes attacks from L1 below, L2 below, R1 below, R2 below, Back 1 below, Back 2 below and anti-aircraft fire.

Bombardier Actions

The Prepare Bombsight action must be taken before any other bombardier action can be taken, and may be taken only once.

Prepare Bombsight: Only during enemy territory phase. Shuffle the bombardier deck. Draw 10 cards from the deck, discarding "no drift" cards and any "drift left"/"drift right" pairs to yield a starting hand of drift cards. For example if the following cards are drawn: left, right, right, left, no drift, left, no drift, left, right, left, left, the resulting hand is 3 drift left cards. Shuffle the discards back into the deck.

Course Change: Only during enemy territory phase. Draw the top card from the bombardier deck and add it to your hand. If it forms a left/right pair, discard the cards. Make a skill test. If successful you may discard another card from your hand.

Release Payload:

- The aircraft is carrying 5 bombs. For the first bomb, if there are no cards in your hand, a bomb hits the target. Otherwise it misses.
- For the next 4 bombs, draw a card from the bombardier deck. If it is a no drift card, discard it. Otherwise add it to your hand. Discard any left/right pairs from your hand. If there are no cards in your hand, the bomb hits the target, otherwise it misses.
- Repeat the above until a total of 5 bombs have been dropped.
- If there are no cards left in the deck, the remaining bombs miss.

At the end of the turn, the bombardier should keep a number of cards equal to the number of bomb hits.

Resolving Cards

Add card to battlefield

Add this card to the battlefield position indicated in the title of the card. If there are already 2 cards in that position, discard the card instead. Along with position, engagement cards will also indicate whether the attack is from above (A) or below (B).

Damage

The damage cards indicates the *station* that has been hit. If there is no crew at that station the card counts as a miss. If there is a crew member at that station and the attack came from the one of the battlefield positions listed on the card, then it is a hit. Otherwise it is a miss.

Hits

The crew member hit takes the casualty deck. If they have any medals, they add these to the deck. Shuffle the casualty deck and draw a card. This is the damage taken by the crew member.

A crew member that has received 1 damage turns their card sideways. They lose 1 from all of their skills for the remainder of the mission.

A crew member that has received 2 damage is incapacitated and turns their card face down. They may not perform any actions for the remainder of the mission.

A crew member that has received 3 damage or has drawn a card saying "death" is dead. The crew card and any medals they possess are set aside until the end of the mission, when they will be discarded.

Misses

If the attack misses a crew member it hits the aircraft. *Note: Misses from medal cards do not hit the aircraft.* The damage card indicates the amount of damage done to the various parts of the plane. The state of the aircraft should be tracked using the aircraft deck. If the damage on a part of the plane reaches the amount indicated on the aircraft card, then the aircraft is no longer operable. See the bailing out section below.

Out of Fuel

The plane cannot fly without fuel. See the breaking formation section below.

Engine Failure

If 2 engine fails and the complete bomb payload has not been released, you must break formation. If the bombs have been dropped, then 3 engine failures requires you to break formation.

If more than this number of engines fails, the plane is inoperable. See the bailing out section below.

Breaking Formation

Note: Breaking Formation interrupts the turn. The crew may not take any more actions this turn, and any attacking aircraft on the battlefield are discarded.

In order to break formation you must have both the Radio Operator and Navigator stations manned. Immediately move crew members to these stations. If this is not possible, then you must bail out instead (see below).

After the fuel phase of each turn:

If the aircraft has fuel remaining:

- the radio operator and the navigator each make a skill test. If both fail, discard 1 fuel card. If both succeed, gain 1 fuel card.

If the aircraft has no fuel:

- the pilots attempt to glide the aircraft. Make a skill test using the pilot skill value. If the test succeeds, the aircraft continues flying, otherwise you must bail out (see below).

If you are in enemy territory you must land at an alternate friendly base at a distance 3 from your current location. You are still in enemy territory, but during the event phase of the turn draw only 1 event card.

If you are in a transit phase you may continue on to base as normal.

Play proceeds until the aircraft either lands safely or is destroyed.

Bailing Out

Note: Bailing Out interrupts the turn. The mission ends as soon as this action is complete.

If the aircraft is over enemy territory, the crew will either perish attempting to parachute to safety, or will be captured as a prisoner of war. Either way, all crew cards are discarded. Proceed to mission debriefing.

If the aircraft is in transit, the crew may attempt to survive.

Any incapacitated crew members cannot escape and they die. All remaining crew members will attempt to parachute from the plane and land safely.

Note: The ball turret station is too small for the crew member to wear a parachute.

Bail out skill is calculated as follows:

- Base skill of 2.
- -1 for any crew member manning the ball turret station
- -1 if Injured

Each crew member makes a skill test using this value. Failure means death.

Surviving crew members are retrieved by friendly forces and returned to base. They should be treated as incapacitated.

Proceed to mission debriefing.