

WW II Aerial Combat Fast and Easy Rules

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Playtest: These rules have been tested numerous times with large groups of players. They work well and produce a fast and fun game.

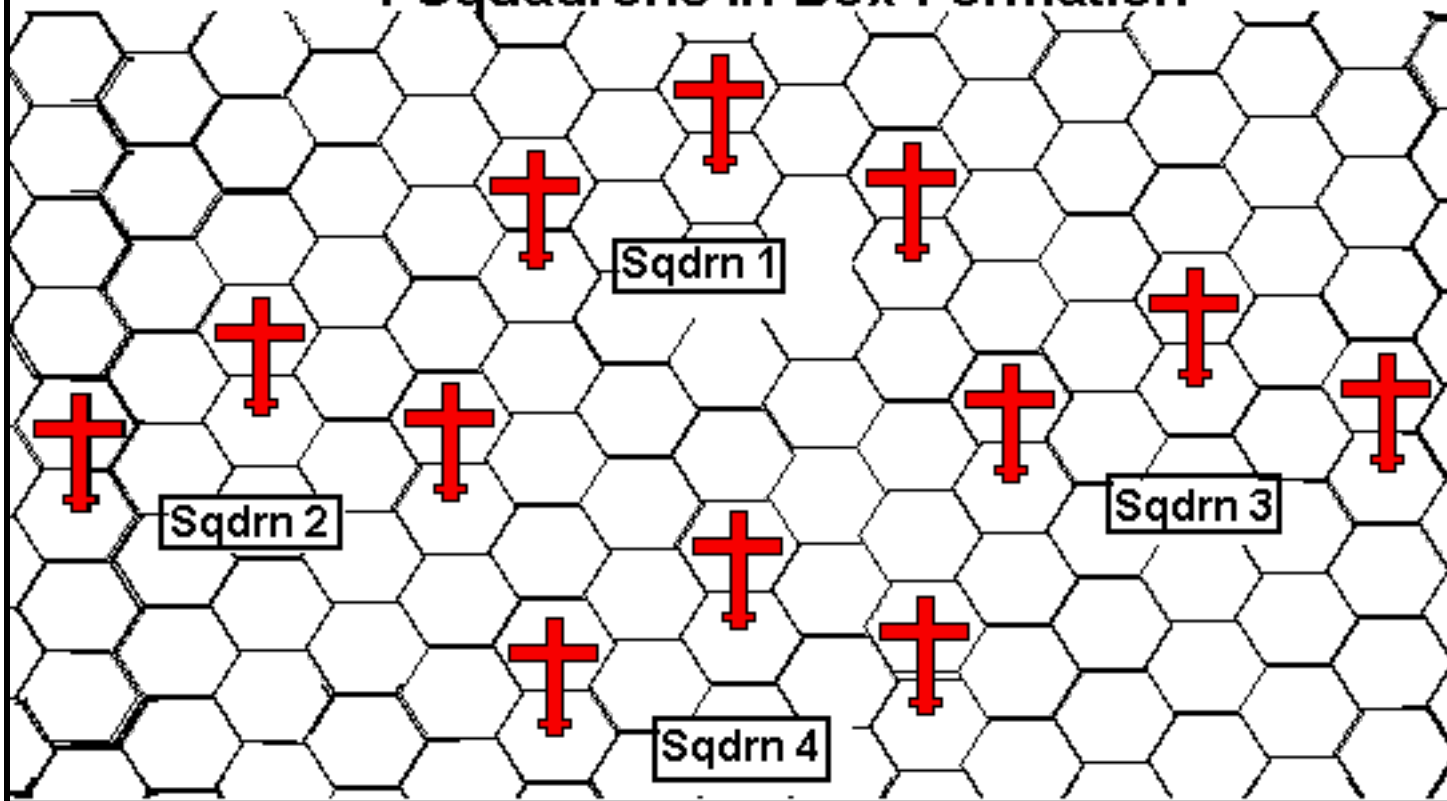
The Models: Plastic model planes are readily available in 1/144 scale. The 1/144 models are cheap, and just the right size. They are also very easy for the students to build. You can find die-cast planes from manufacturers like Sky Wings, In Air, Corgi and Model Power. Look for planes sold in sets at toy stores for the best deals. The scale of the die-cast planes is inconsistent, so be careful when buying them if this is a concern. Here are some simple [paper airplane models](#) you can print and use. Additional free paper airplanes are available from a lot of web sites, just look around. [Paperworlds.com](#) and [FreePaperToys.com](#) is a good place to start a search. You can also purchase origami airplane models for at [Fiddler's Green](#) and [Papertigerarmaments.com](#).

The Board: The battle will be played on a hex mat. A 5' square is about the minimum for dogfights with fighters. A longer board will be needed for bombing runs. If you're doing a bombing run several hexes near the end of the board should be marked as the targets of the bombers. The hexes should be about 4" in size and the pattern can be drawn by tracing a cardboard hexagon. The hex pattern should be aligned so the two sides have a straight path of hexes to each other and any bombing targets.

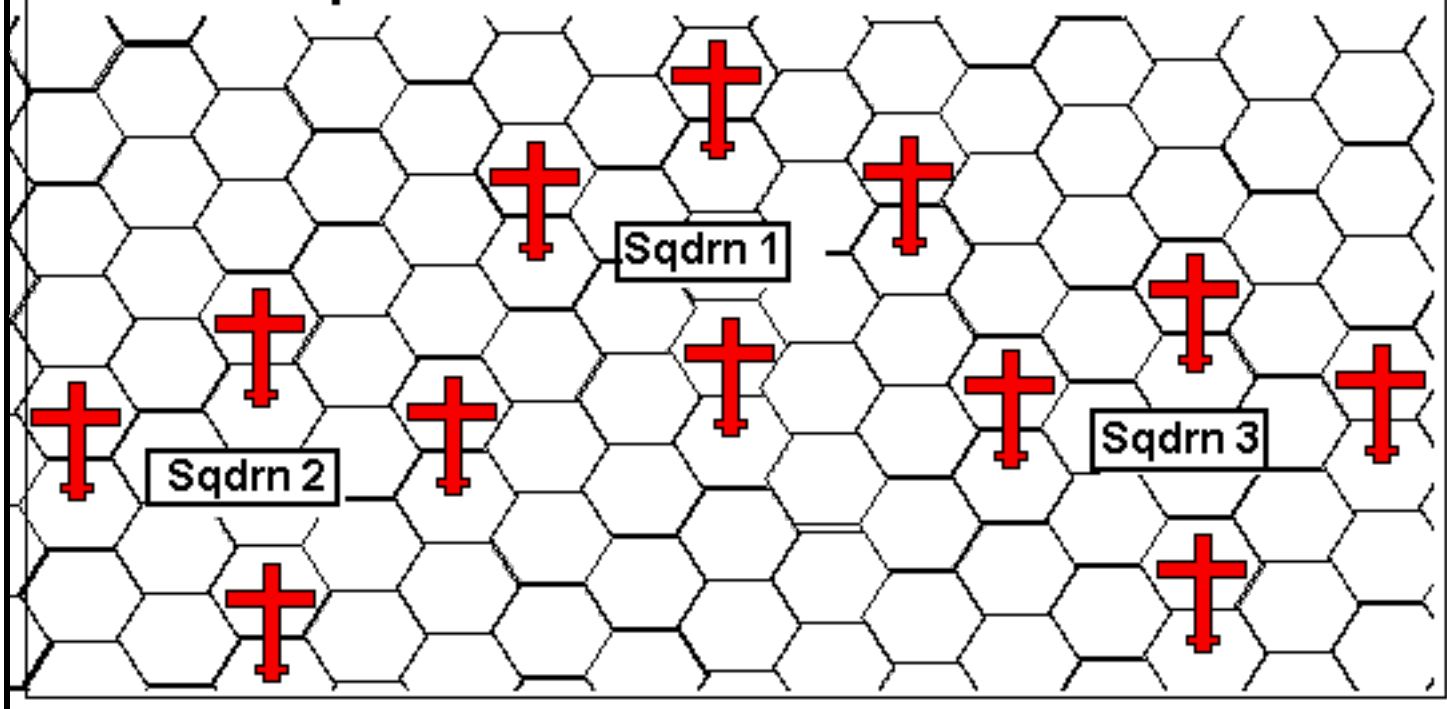
Deployment: Opposing sides should be deployed at least 4 hexes away. If you are doing a bombing run the bombers should start at one end of the table with their targets at the far end. The bombers should be in formation of three or four bombers and should try to stay in formation as they fly to maximize their protection. Note that heavy bombers will occupy two hexes. Fighters should start out grouped into squadrons. Planes should always be placed in hexes so that they face a hex side, not a corner.

Bomber Formations

4 Squadrons in Box Formation



3 Squadrons in Modified Box Formation



Scenarios: It's easy to make up your own scenarios, but here are a few to help you get started

Zekes in the Slot: Japanese Zeroes against American Corsairs or P-38s. There should be about 2 Zeroes for every American plane.

Yamamoto's Defeat: American fighters try to intercept and kill Admiral Yamamoto. 6 P-38s against 2 Betty bombers and 8 Zeroes. The Japanese player must secretly record which bomber is carrying Yamamoto. The Americans must shoot down Yamamoto's plane to win the scenario.

Bombers over Berlin: American or British bombers with escorts must fight through German interceptors to reach their targets. Use a long table with three bombing targets at the far end. Use a force ratio of 1 bomber squadron (4 planes each) and one escorting fighter squadron (6 planes each) for every 4 squadrons (6 planes each) of German interceptors. The Allies must destroy one of the bombing targets to win the scenario.

Deck of Cards: Use a standard deck of playing cards. Take out one card for each fighter plane and bomber squadron and shuffle them together. The planes should be clearly marked so the players will be able to remember which plane moves on which card.

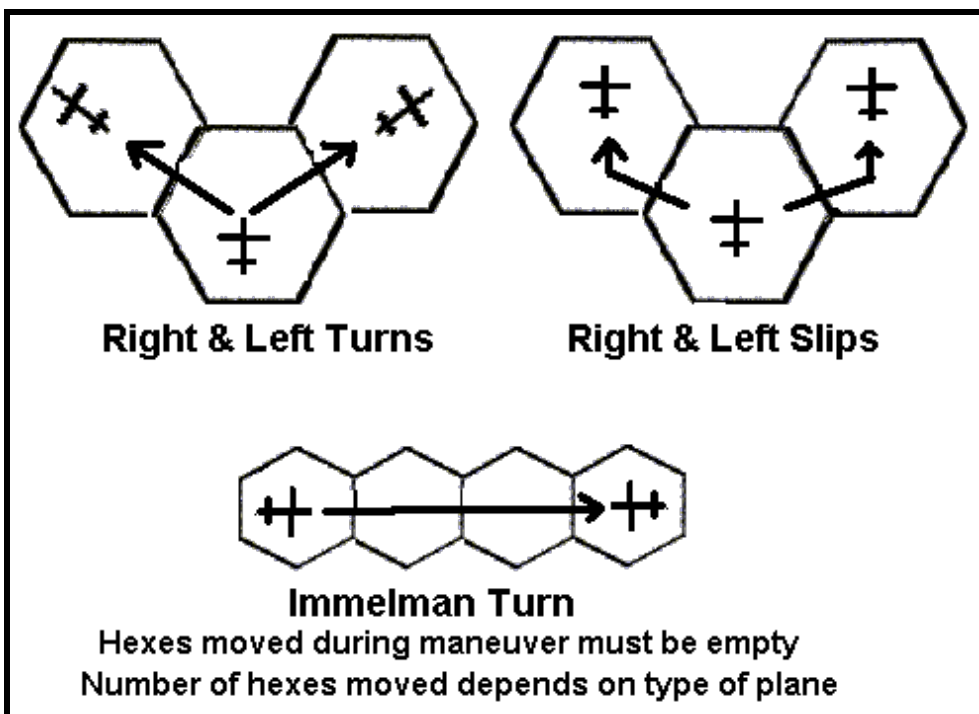
Rules

Sequence of Play:

1. Draw Card
2. Active Planes Move
2. Active Planes Shoot
3. Bombing

Choose Cards: Turn over the top card in the deck. The fighter plane or bomber squadron that is assigned to that card will now move and shoot. Note that all bombers in a squadron move and shoot at the same time. This helps them to stay in formation. After each plane has completed its move and shoot draw the next card. Continue until every plane has had a chance to move then shuffle the deck and repeat the process. Remove the cards of planes that are shot down.

Active Planes Move: Each plane has a Speed rating that indicates the maximum number of hexes the plane can move. Planes must ALWAYS move at least one hex. It costs one hex of movement to move forward or slip to the right or left. When a plane slips it doesn't change facing, it slides over and forward (see diagram). Planes also have a Turn rating which indicates the cost in hexes for a turn. A turn is performed by changing the plane's facing one hexside to the left or right and then moving forward (see diagram). Each plane also has an Immelman rating that indicates the cost in hexes for the plane to execute an Immelman turn (also known as a split S). When performing an Immelman turn the plane moves forward a number of hexes equal to it's Immelman rating then in the last hex it changes facing by 180-degrees. The hexes the plane moves through while performing the Immelman turn can NOT contain any other planes. Each plane can move and maneuver as it wishes as long as the total cost doesn't exceed its speed. Moving planes can fly through hexes that contain other planes but they may not end their move in a hex that contains another plane.



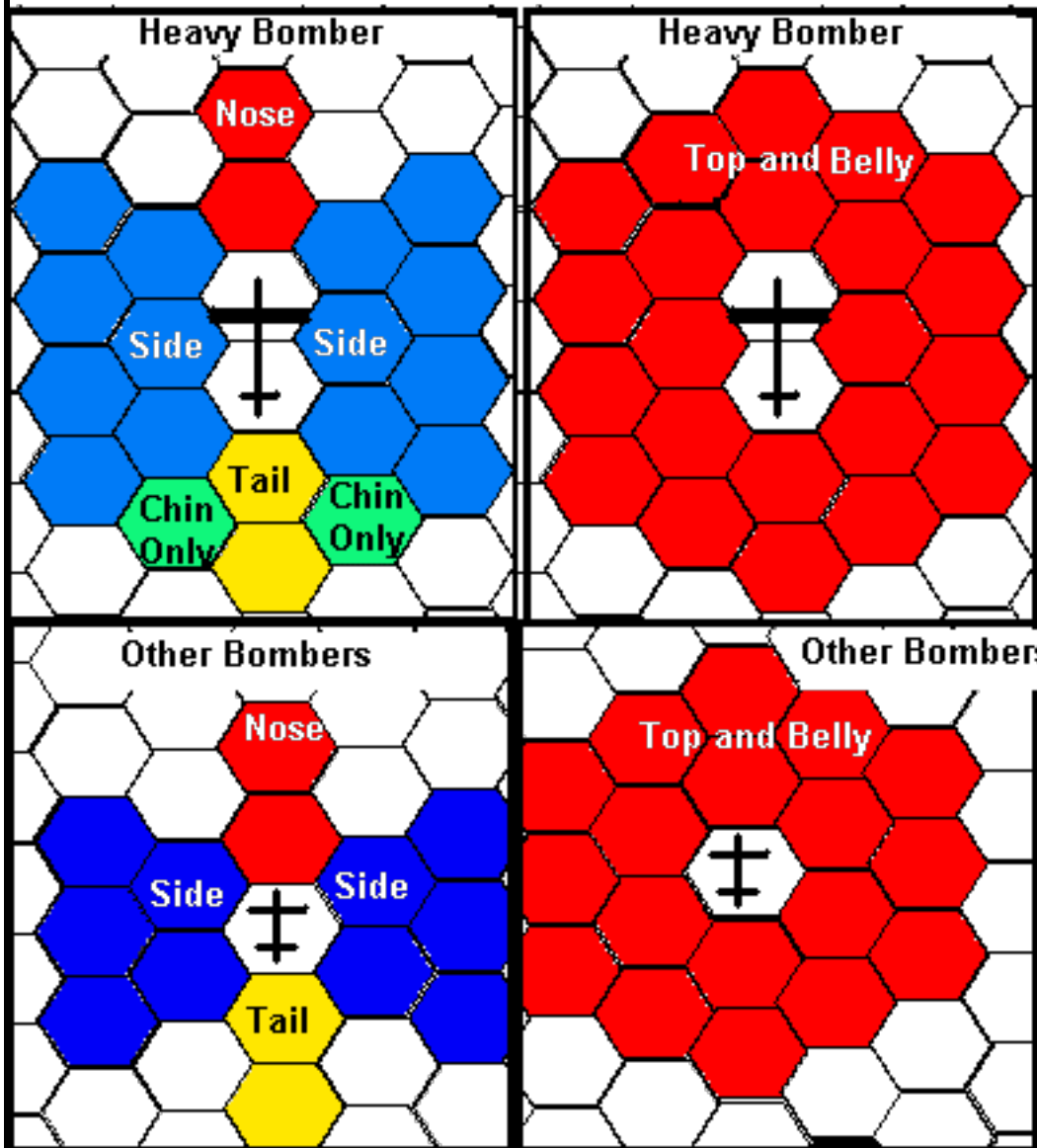
Resolve Shooting: Fighter planes may ONLY fire at enemy planes that are in the line of hexes directly in front of their nose, they may not fire off to the sides or at an angle. Fighters can shoot 4 hexes. Fighter planes with a tail gun can only fire the tail gun at enemy planes in the line of hexes directly behind them and are limited to a range of 2 hexes. Planes block line of sight, so you can't shoot through friendly planes. The Gun rating indicates the number of dice to roll when shooting. The Shooting table shows the die roll needed to score a hit. Hits must be recorded on the target plane. This can be done by putting small markers on the base or wings or you can keep a written record. When the number of hits on a plane equals its Damage rating it is shot down and removed from play. Damage to a plane does not affect the plane's ability to move or shoot (heavy bombers are an exception).

Shooting Table

Range (Hexes)	1	2	3	4	Gun rating is number of dice to roll. Bombers and tail guns shoot only 2 hexes.
Dice Roll to Hit	3 - 6	4 - 6	5 - 6	6	

Bomber Firing Arcs: Bombers have different firing arcs and their guns are limited to a range of 2 hexes. The diagram shows where each bomber turret can fire.

Bomber Firing Arcs



Engine Hits: When a fighter scores a hit on a heavy bomber with a roll of 6 there is a chance that an engine was hit. Roll again for each 6 that was rolled to hit the heavy bomber. If the second roll is a 4 - 6 then an engine was destroyed. Engine hits can be marked by putting cotton on the plane. Each engine hit after the first one reduces the speed of the bomber by 1 hex. If a bomber is reduced to speed 0 then it rolls 1 die each turn and it can move 1 hex on a roll of 4 - 6. If a bomber loses all of its engines it is shot down.

Bombing: If a bomber has moved onto a hex containing a target it gets a chance to destroy the target with bombs. The bomber rolls 1 die. If the roll is equal to the hit numbers in the plane's Bomb rating then the target is destroyed.

Fighter Data Table

Allies	Crew	Guns (Front/Tail)	Speed	Turn	Immelman	Hit Points
P-38 Lightning	1	4	6	4	5	8
P-40 Warhawk	1	3	4	3	4	5
P-47B Thunderbolt	1	4	6	3	4	8
P-51 Mustang	1	3	5	3	2	7
P-61A Black Widow	3	6	5	4	-	10
F4U Corsair	1	3	5	2	3	6
F4F Wildcat	1	3	3	2	3	6
F6F Hellcat	1	3	5	3	4	7
Hurricane IID	1	4	4	3	3	6
Spitfire I - V	1	4	4	2	2	5
Spitfire IX - XIV	1	4	5	2	3	5

Mosquito FB Mk IV	2	6	5	4		
Mig-3	1	3	5	2	3	5
La-5/7	1	3	5	2	3	5
Yak-7/9	1	3	5	2	3	5
Airacobra	1	4	5	3	4	6
Axis						
Me109E	1	3	5	2	2	5
Me 109G	1	4	5	3	3	6
Me 110G	1+1	4/1	4	4	4	8
FW 190A	1	4	5	3	3	7
Me 262	1	5	9	5	6	6
A6M5 Zero Army	1	3	4	2	3	5
A6M5 Zero Navy	1	2	3	1	2	4
Ki-43 Oscar	1	1	4	2	2	5
Ki-45 Nick	1+1	4/1	4	4	4	8

Bomber Data Table

Allies	Crew	Type	Guns (* =chin gun)					Speed	Turn	Hit Points	Bombs
			Nose	Top	Belly	Side	Tail				
B-17G Fortress	10	Heavy	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	22	3-6
B-24J Liberator	8	Heavy	2	2	2	1	2	3	3	18	3-6
B-25D Mitchell	5	Heavy	4	3	-	1	2	3	3	10	4-6
TBF Avenger	3	Light	2	1	-	-	4	3	3	5	3-6
Lancaster	6	Heavy	2	2	-	-	4*	3	3	18	3-6
IL-2	2	Fighter Bomber	4	-	-	-	1	3	3	5	5-6
Tu-2	4	Medium	-	-	2	-	2	4	4	13	4-6
Pe-2	3	Light	1	1	-	-	1	4	4	7	5-6
Axis											
JU-87D	2	Fighter Bomber	2	-	-	-	1	3	4	4	5-6
JU-88G	4	Medium	2	2	-	-	2	3	3	14	4-6
HE-111H	5	Medium	2	2	-	1	2	3	3	12	4-6
B5N Kate	3	Light	-	-	-	-	1	3	3	4	5-6
D4Y Judy	2	Light	-	-	-	-	1	4	4	3	5-6
G4M2 Betty	7	Medium	2	1	-	2	2	3	2	9	4-6

Additional Planes: You can use this conversion table to generate game statistics for other planes. Use common sense and adjust any ratings that seem out of line.

Conversion Table

Guns	1 Machine Gun = 1/2 die 1 Cannon = 1 Die	Speed (MPH)	Speed Points
Hit Points	Fighters: Weight / 100 up to 7000 lbs, Weight / 200 after that	1- 300	Miles Per Hour / 100 (round up)
	Bombers: Weight / 200	301- 450	Add MPH / 50
Turn	2 x Weight in 1000s / Speed (adjust according to speed)	450+	Add MPH / 25

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Resources: Here are some useful resources for WW II aerial combat

- "B-17!" by Mike Crane, [Lone Warrior #138](#) simple rules and paper planes
- [Blue Max WWII](#) rules and web site by Ian Clarence
- [Aces of WW II](#) website
- [American Aces of WW II](#) website, good place to read about aces
- [Aces of the Luftwaffe](#) web site by Petr Kucha, loaded with interesting facts.
- [WW II Ace Stories](#) web site by Dariusz Tyminski. Warning: web page plays a midi song that sometimes jams up my browser
- [Watson's WW II Aircraft Museum](#) website, pictures and data about airplanes. Pictures on this site were used as reference material when drawing my paper models.
- [EVOlution Computer Design](#) web site by Onno van Braam, has blueprints of WW II planes.
- [Don Color Aircraft Camouflages](#) website by Jens Popp, useful for deciding how to paint/color your planes
- "Minimal Aerial Combat" by Pete Jones is a simple set of WW II rules available at the [Free Wargame Rules](#) web page (<http://www.freewargamesrules.co.uk/>)
- [Paperworlds.com](#) has free paper airplanes
- [Papertigerarmaments.com](#) has origami planes
- [FreePaperToys.com](#) is a good place to start a search for free paper WW II aircraft models
- [Fiddler's Green](#) website has origami planes