

# Wing and a Prayer Design Document

## Chapter 1: About the Game



### 1. What is Wing and a Prayer?

#### **A LARP inspired by history, not re-enacting history**

*Wing and a Prayer* is inspired by the events of the Battle of Britain, but we're not aiming to re-enact them. In real history, Stow Maries aerodrome never saw the kinds of activity we're playing. It was not an active RAF station, still less a replacement and temporary home for 11 Group Control at RAF Uxbridge, which was not destroyed in August 1940 as we imagine (although it was attacked and damaged many times). Historically, the WAAF did not usually order the disposition of RAF squadrons; they will in our game. Historically, they were not in direct radio contact with pilots, they will be in our game.

Our event is inspired by the darkest time of Britain's war, but it should feel like stepping into a miniseries of the period, not like being there.

# A LARP about the Women's Auxiliary Air Force

*Wing and a Prayer* is primarily about the experiences of the WAAF. These characters can expect to be in control of the narrative and at the centre of their stories. The role of women in war has historically been minimised, and we want to use those stories as the basis for our event. We've been inspired by the iconic image of women in the control room, but we're going to deviate from history to create the most emotionally impactful experience we can.

While not flying, RAF characters will have the same freedoms to build a personal story with strong emotional moments. Whilst in the air, their stories can end at any time, as briefed by the organisers. We will be working with RAF players to ensure they have good back-up plans in place.



## Influenced by traditions inside and outside of the UK

As is common in UK LARP, there will be a story team behind the scenes adding narrative elements that influence events of the game. In our LARP the WAAF characters will make decisions which will directly impact our fictional war. Most crucially, pilots will live or die as a result of these decisions, as they happen during the event. Unlike in other LARP traditions, these events will not be pre-ordained or pre-planned. It would be a mistake to think of this as “winning” or “losing”. The objective of the event is to experience moments of drama. This is a collaborative effort, both between players and organisers and between players and other players.

As is common elsewhere, however, much of the character generation will be done in the open, before the event. To get the best value out of your time-in, pre-game character background development is important. Most obviously – if your character is in a relationship of some sort at the start of the game, you should know with whom. If your character knows others at the start of the game, you should know how and why. You will flesh out your character from an initial framework, working with other players to add details and relationships. The organisers will facilitate this, providing guidance and channels to build your IC networks.

# Interpersonal interactions vs the wargame

Primarily, this is a game about emotional moments and interpersonal interactions against the background of a desperate struggle. The tensions that arise from a new and unknown kind of war, fought with new and poorly understood weapons, where women are finding new roles.

In order to help generate the uncertainty and immediacy of war, the game is supported by a wargame. Events happening in the skies over Britain will be tracked, and strongly influenced by player action. WAAFs will plot German raids and move RAF fighter squadrons into position to intercept them. Pilots will fly their aircraft to intercept German raids and attempt to prevent them from bombing their targets - but their lives will largely be in the hands of the WAAFs staffing the Operations Room. The WAAFs will track the position of hostile aircraft, decide which raids to intercept and which RAF squadrons to put where to make the intercept. The pilots may think of themselves as knights of the air, but it is largely decisions made in the Operations Room which will determine whether they succeed, or indeed survive. Pilots may be killed as a result. Towns may be bombed; maybe the town you're from.

Don't worry that you won't "get it right"; characters making mistakes is entirely expected and even if your part in the game looks complicated, previous runs have given us confidence that you'll settle into your roles quickly on the day.

## Most of all, however, we're here to make stories

You won't need to know any rules. You simply need to bring your character to life in a key period in the history of our war. *Wing and a Prayer* is not designed to be "fun", although moments of it will be. There'll be light and shade. There'll be times for a cup of tea, times to simply enjoy your interactions with others, and times when the fate of your loved ones lies in your hands.

You don't need to know the real history inside-out. You're co-creating the stories we'll all be telling for years to come. If that sounds exciting, you're in the right place.



# 2. Playing The Game

## Life on Base

When not on duty, the WAAF and RAF personnel share the same base. They eat meals and drink tea in the same mess hall, attend the same station events and have all the complicated relationships that any group of people sharing a living space in a high-pressure situation do.

The new base commander is eager to build a community spirit and has instigated a number of social activities. The first of these is the opening Friday Dance, which will take place in the Mess. This will let you meet everyone's characters, establish your relationships in person, and perhaps enjoy a quiet flirtation.

The Mess is always open, and a good place to gravitate to when you aren't needed elsewhere. You can always find a biscuit and someone to gossip with there, and it's the first place people will come looking for help. It's also where all meals are served, and these will be available in shifts to enable every Watch to eat.

If you want somewhere quieter, the Chapel is also always open and welcomes worshippers of all denominations. Although Stow Maries doesn't yet have its own chaplain, base personnel are able to seek solace and advice from each other in this more secluded space.

More private still is the Pilot's Ready Room, where the RAF hold briefings and prepare for missions. A small room, set back from the road and facing away from the rest of the base, this is the ideal place for a moment of stolen romance.

For the more socially inclined, there will be a cricket match after lunch on Saturday - RAF against WAAF - and a concert in the evening which will require rehearsals throughout the day. There will also be several visitors to the base with varying agendas, who need to be entertained.

The Operations Room itself is the heart of Stow Maries. Located opposite the Mess, this is where you will work when on shift. The three Watches operate in staggered shifts so there will always be an overlap of personnel. There's the opportunity for healthy rivalry between Watches, which should not be indulged whilst on duty but can find expression in various ways outside the Operations Room.

Finally, there's the post to take care of, plenty of paperwork to look at (with or without permission), and a never-ending need for tea.



# Game Mechanics / Calls

This is a very rules-light game; the few calls and mechanics are all logistical, dealing with safety, intensity management and starting/stopping the game.

## TIME IN/OUT

The organisers will use these calls to start and end the game.

## STOP THE GAME

To be used in the event of a serious injury or dangerous situation which requires gameplay to be stopped until it is resolved. If this is called, everyone within earshot should immediately stop play.

## I NEED A CUP OF EXTRA STRONG TEA

To be used if a player finds a situation too intense/overwhelming and needs to step away without breaking the flow of play. Upon use, that player should immediately be excused in character as smoothly as possible so they can leave the scene. The player can either go to any other In Game area, or to the Crew Room if they prefer.

*Variation:* If you want to check on someone else that you think might be overwhelmed, ask them 'Do you need a cup of extra strong tea?' and help them leave the situation if necessary.

## DEAL WITH IT ON MONDAY

To be used when something cannot be accommodated in-game but will happen to the character off-screen later. Can also be used if a player doesn't wish to do something that their character would have to do.

*Example:* A Watch Supervisor orders a Plotter to sharpen all the pencils in the Operations Room. The Plotter responds: "Yes, ma'am. I will deal with that on Monday."

## CREW IN BROWN COATS

From time to time, you will see people in brown warehouse coats wandering around. These are crew members who are currently off-duty and either grabbing some food or just taking a break. In Game, they are personnel who do unimportant and unexciting things on base and, while you can acknowledge they exist, you shouldn't attempt to engage them in roleplay. If you need to send an In-Game message to the organisers, you can ask one of them to deliver it for you. Otherwise, please treat them as set dressing and continue playing around them.



# Game Themes

Our priority for *Wing and a Prayer* is to make an enjoyable and welcoming experience for everyone involved. However, *WaaP* contains some central themes which have the potential to cause upset if not approached carefully. We are also aware that the player base is likely to contain people from different nations, with widely varied experience from varied LARPing cultures, so we felt it important to lay out some ground rules to make our expectations clear.

Any player acting in violation of these rules, or causing distress or discomfort to other players, will be warned once and asked to leave the game if their behaviour continues. In serious cases, especially where the organisers are concerned with the wellbeing of others, players may be removed from the game immediately.

## GREEN THEMES

Central to the game. You are likely to see this within the game, and this is something players are welcome to explore.

While the green themes do encourage some forms of discrimination based on characteristics of **characters** (gender and nationality) - it remains unacceptable to discriminate on characteristics of **players**. If you wish to insult another character, find insults which do not reference characteristics the player did not choose (e.g. race or body shape.)

### 1. Sexism

The stories of women at war are also stories about sexism, and a struggle for equality. While we're allowing our WAAF much more influence on events than they had at the time, there will still be plenty of times when they suffer the injustices of the era. All WAAF characters will be female and RAF characters will be male, but your character's gender presentation does not have to match yours.

### 2. Xenophobia

This is a World War and, as such, there are allies from all over the world coming to England to join the services. This is naturally the source of much interest from many young Brits and, while most are simply curious about their new foreign friends, there are also culture clashes and outright xenophobic responses. Choosing to play someone from another country is fine but be aware you may come up against some negative reactions.

### 3. Violence (talking about it)

It is natural that characters who have seen extreme levels of violence and destruction will want to share this with their friends. There may also be simulated injuries during the game.

## AMBER THEMES

These topics are not excluded from the game but require sensitivity. Before playing on these themes with another player, you must check in with that player and make sure they are happy to.

### 1. Homophobia

We feel that there is potential for some interesting stories to be told about gay relationships during war, and players are welcome to explore these if they wish. Characters with homophobic views are perfectly in keeping with the historical setting, but you must check in with other characters before roleplaying around the subject.

### 2. Ableism

We recognise that, in a war setting, some players may wish to explore themes around both recent injuries and longer-term disabilities. However, we may have players with real-life conditions which require mobility aids, assistive technology etc. who do not wish disability to be a theme of their character's game. Therefore, injured or disabled characters will be introduced at workshops during the game. Any other disabilities should pass without comment.

### 3. *Physical combat*

Violence between characters may be roleplayed as long as everybody involved has consented, both to the idea of fighting and to exactly what sort of contact that will involve. Remember that our players come from a variety of LARP traditions and may be used to assuming very different levels of physicality in combat. Combat should be acted out, with light contact at most. Combat is not to involve weapons of any kind.

### 4. *Physical contact: romantic*

Player consent must be explicitly obtained before initiating any sort of romantic physical contact with another character.

## **RED THEMES**

These themes are not acceptable within our game in any form.

### 1. *Transphobia and Racism*

We do not consider that these are topics we can approach faithfully and sensitively, whilst also making them enjoyable for everyone. Therefore, please do not bring these topics up. Please also remember that players of any gender may be playing as WAAF or RAF personnel. Please assume these characters are female or male respectively.

### 2. *Sexual assault, non-consensual sex, sex with minors*

These have no place in our game. Neither references to these topics, nor trying to play through scenes like rape or threats of sexual violence will be permitted.



A Live Action Roleplaying Game  
produced by Allied Games

Nick Bradbeer, Harry Harrold, Andy Knighton, Liss Macklin,  
Lauren Owen, Thorsten Schillo & Ian Thomas

