Wing and a Prayer Design Document
Chapter 7: The RAF in Game

Note to WAAF Players: Do consider not reading this section. It covers the off-game mechanics the RAF players will employ when flying. You don't need to know anything in this section, and you may well find the game more enjoyable and immersive if you resist the temptation to read it until afterwards.

Overview

When on duty, the WAAF characters will operate a radar station and an operations room. They will control the RAF players in action, who voice-act flying their fighters from the off-game room we're calling The Sky.

Underpinning the wargame is a computer system called BLITZ. This constantly tracks the position of all aircraft, and feeds information into the radar terminals, and to various NPCs playing off-site radar operators, Royal Observer Corps volunteers, etc. As players you won't interact with BLITZ directly - you will work with in-game interfaces like a radar terminal or a voice on a telephone line.

Introduction

Much of the drama of *Wing And A Prayer* is driven by events in the air. These events are shaped by the actions of the WAAF at the plotting table. Our software knows the Luftwaffe's plans, the orders the WAAF have given RAF formations in response, and the speed, heading and location of all of those squadrons. A crew room we're calling "The Sky" is where the RAF go to roleplay what happens while they are airborne. That roleplay is prompted by cards drawn from three decks, and their experiences are transmitted to other players from there using our comms gear. RAF players' first encounter with The Sky will be an OOC run-through on the Friday afternoon, then an IC training sortie on the Friday evening, then a number of sorties on the Saturday. On Sunday, WAAF players will get a turn at the experience.

SCRAMBLE!

"Scramble" is the RAF term for getting airborne. When an order comes in to scramble, pilots in the named squadrons will make their way to The Sky as quickly as possible.

THE SKY

Once they reach The Sky, the RAF players should expect to find tables and comms gear laid out for each of their squadrons. They'll have a few minutes to get comfortable for each sortie. This loosely represents the time they'd take to take off, gain altitude and listen out for their orders from the WAAFs on the ground.

The Sortie

Every time the RAF are ordered up, they roleplay what happens to them, and their roleplay is communicated to IC areas through headset comms. Communications will be live for the majority of the sortie, and it will be clear when they are not. Please bear this in mind: what you say is what the WAAFs hear.

Each squadron (or night fighter crew) will crowd around one computer screen - this will have a map which shows you your position, and allows the squadron leader to input direction and altitude orders. The map also includes symbols to represent towns, airfields or other aircraft that you can see:

🏠	**Civilian town or ground location**
⊙ ⊙ ⊙	**RAF flight visual contact** within engagement altitude more than 5000ft below more than 5000ft above
✈ ✈ ✈	**Unidentified flight visual contact** within engagement altitude more than 5000ft below more than 5000ft above
〰 〰 〰	**Radar contact without IFF** within engagement altitude more than 5000ft below more than 5000ft above
〰 〰 〰	**Radar contact with IFF** within engagement altitude more than 5000ft below more than 5000ft above
🚢	**Ships dragging barrage balloons**
⚔	**Ongoing engagement**

JOURNEY OUT
During the journey out, the WAAFs in the Operations Room will be able to talk to you by radio. They will usually instruct you to fly to a particular position and altitude, and expect hostiles from a particular direction.

At night you won't be able to see where you are on the map so you'll be more reliant on the Ops Room - they can tell you where you are (because the Pipsqueek system is reporting your position to the Ops Room automatically every minute or so) and they can give you a direction to steer rather than a map grid.

In the event that an enemy squadron appears within your range of view (about 10km in daytime, less at night) and within 5000 feet of your altitude then you can begin combat! The Squadron Leader calls "TALLY HO" and clicks the "Intercept" button on the the computer.

INTERCEPTION
If an interception does occur, you will draw cards from two decks, Blue and Red. The Blue deck contains neutral and good cards, the Red deck contains neutral and bad cards. The computer will tell you how many cards of each colour to draw - this will be a function of the numbers and types of aircraft, relative altitudes and a number of other factors mostly under the control of the WAAFs.

The Squadron Leader does have the option to **"Press the Attack"** and attack more aggressively. This will double the number of cards drawn from each deck, increasing both the positive and negative consequences of the sortie.

Each card will have a suggestion of something you might say on it. These quotes are simply for inspiration and for if you get stuck. This is a roleplay, not a script.

The RAF players distribute the cards between themselves face down as they see fit, and then look at the cards they've picked up. When ready, the squadron roleplays through the combat together, playing cards one after another and voice-acting around the events therein.

As you roleplay through the cards, you should discard them to a central pile. We found during testing that it was useful to make your intent to play a card to this central pile very clear, and to play quite slowly. It should be dramatic. We intend to aid this with sound effects, and to make your experience in combat as immersive as possible.

Positive (Blue Card) effects include:

- X enemy Destroyed: this destroys a number of enemy fighters or bombers.
- X enemy Disrupted: this damages a number of enemy bombers or knocks them out of formation. They may or may not be destroyed, but they will jettison their bombs and turn back. It has no lasting effect on enemy fighters.

If an enemy squadron of bombers is reduced to 50% strength then it will usually break up and turn back.

Negative (Red Card) effects include:

- A friendly is hit - an aircraft (NPC, or PC if one volunteers) in the squadron is downed; the pilot may or may not be able to bail out.
- A friendly is killed - an aircraft (NPC, or PC if one volunteers) in the squadron is destroyed and the pilot is killed.
- Player is hit - the PC who played this card is hit; either their aircraft is shot down (and they may be able to bail out and be recovered) or the pilot is hit (injured or killed.) If they choose to be injured they may be able to land safely, be made up with injury makeup and receive medical attention.
- Player is killed. The PC who played this card is killed, and people will feel emotions as a result.

Consequences

You may always escalate, taking injuries if you feel you want to, or having your character die if you think it dramatically appropriate.

If pilots are shot down over land, there is an excellent chance they'll be able to return to action after getting back to base (probably via some hitchhiking shenanigans which will make for a good story in the mess.) If shot down over water then the RAF will scramble a fast rescue launch and the Ops Room will try to guide it to pick you up and hope they reach you before the German fast patrol boats do.

Pilot Death

Red cards can lead to pilot death, either because you drew a Player Killed card directly, or you chose to take one of the other cards rather than pust it out to an NPC. It is entirely up you how you play this - dying instantly, taking wounds which you succumb to in the air, or managing to return to base mortally wounded, to die on a stretcher amidst your comrades and the base medics. Whichever way you choose, it's the end of that character's journey. This is a great opportunity for a dramatic death scene - pilot deaths led to some of the most emotionally powerful scenes in previous runs.

The player then swaps to playing a different pilot; either their alternate character or we'll create one on the fly.

SPECIAL MOVES: SQUADRON TACTICS AND HEROIC MOMENTS
Every pilot player has a Special Move card. For Squadron Leaders, this is a Squadron Tactic; for all other aircrew this is a Heroic Moment.

Squadron Tactics reflect the differences between how different squadrons train and fight. 222 Squadron are known for their evasive manoeuvring. 303 are known for their aggressive point blank charges. Whenever making an interception, the Squadron Leader may choose to use their Special Tactic, or not. (It may require certain conditions to be met, as explained on the card.) They retain the card, and may use it on later combats as well.

Heroic Moments represent those cinematic moments where the camera lingers on an individual pilot as they achieve something characterful. Each Heroic Moment will be unique, tailored to the individual pilot character. Most will have conditions that must be met before they can be played, and will outline what the result of the Heroic Moment are. Each pilot only gets one Heroic Moment - once the card is played it is gone.

JOURNEY BACK
You'll need to return from a sortie. This might be the time for your characters to re-tell your glorious actions, or to reflect on those who won't be coming back.

Some sorties will not end in combat. It's entirely likely that a squadron will fail to intercept an enemy formation sometimes.

The Map and Grid References

One thing which nearly all players will need to understand is the grid used to communicate locations on a map. All the maps in *Wing and a Prayer* use the same grid system, as shown in the figure below.

The map is divided into large squares, each 100km on a side and assigned a pair of letters. The large square shown above is WR, or WILLIAM ROBERT in the phonetic alphabet. (All the squares on our maps start with WILLIAM.)

The large square is divided into a hundred smaller squares, each 10km on a side, and identified by a number for its bottom left corner. You can identify a 10km square by giving the letters for the large square it is in, and then the coordinates of its bottom left corner, reading along the horizontal axis before going up the vertical. For example, the town of Hastings is in square WR 1 3, or WILLIAM ROBERT, ONE, THREE.
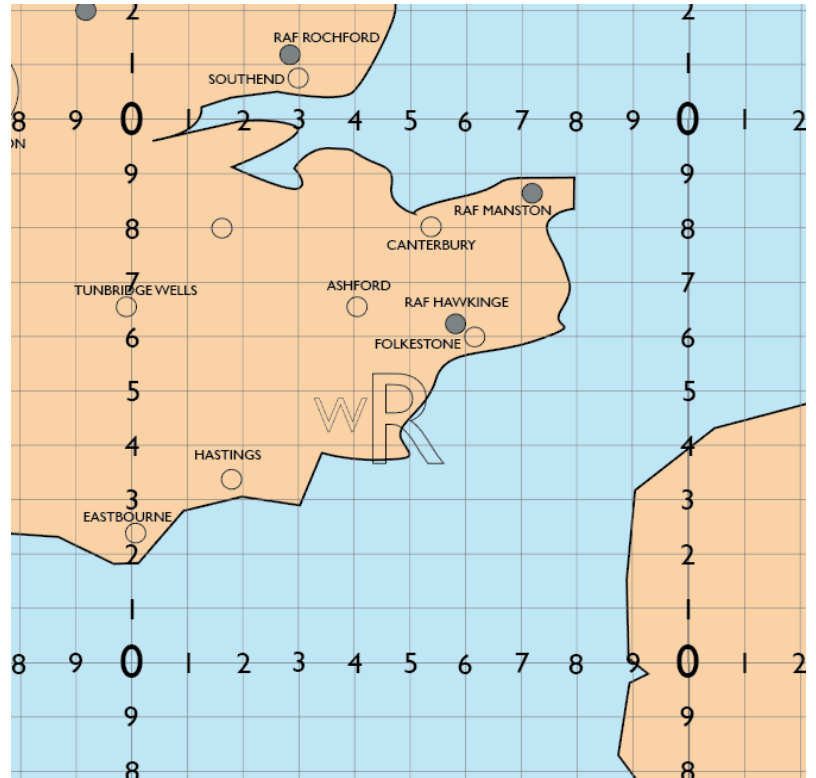
For nearly all purposes it is important to be more accurate than that, so we add a second digit. Hastings is on the right-hand side of the square, about 80% of the way across it, and just under halfway up it, perhaps 40% of the way up. So we could say Hastings' location as WR 18 34, or WILLIAM ROBERT, ONE EIGHT, THREE FOUR.

It can help to put a small pause between groups of letters or numbers. Remember that you can take it slowly and ask for confirmation - and more importantly, the system is robust so making a mistake is unlikely to be a disaster!

Some example locations:
- Folkestone - WR 62 60
- RAF Manston - WR 72 87
- Canterbury - WR 54 80
- Ashford - WR 41 66
- RAF Hawkinge - WR 58 62

To put the distances here in context, a fighter flies at about 600 km/hour and WR is 100km across, so it would take a fighter about ten minutes to cross the entire WR square, crossing a small square every minute. Bombers fly rather more slowly at 300km/h, so take about twenty minutes to cross the WR square, crossing a small square every two minutes. In daylight aircraft can see each other at about 10km, so getting fighters within a small square of a bomber raid is good enough to intercept them.