

Philip Sabin's Rules Amendments for THE BLITZ

These simple tweaks aim to make Joe Carter's game on *The Blitz* into a less dramatic but more realistic simulation of the actual campaign, in which attrition rates were low and bad weather, accidents and mechanical failures were as much of a threat as the British defences (especially their embryonic night fighters). The amendments are based on version 2.5 of the game, and may need adaptation if Joe applies further changes to the latest version on Wargame Vault. The tweaked game starts not on Oct. 1, 1940 but on Nov. 14, 1940, when the Luftwaffe's focus shifted from London to other cities and when RAF night fighters at last began to make an effective (albeit initially marginal) contribution.

- The game automatically begins with the famous historical raid on Coventry, with 30 points of Fuel. From Nov. 15, 1940, roll normally on Table A-1, but treat rolls of 29-62 as No mission this night unless the bomber's last mission targeted a city other than London and occurred 1 night ago on rolls of 39-56 or 1 to 5 nights ago on rolls of 57-62, in which case a follow-up mission is flown against the same Target City. Due to bad winter weather, no missions occur from Jan. 20, 1941 to Feb. 15, 1941 inclusive. This gives a much better reflection of the frequency and targeting of missions in the later months of the Blitz.

- All dates within 3 days of those listed in Tables A-2 and A-3 have New Moon or Full Moon conditions respectively. On all Tables, the modifier for 'Full Moon and Good weather' is reduced to 1 in the stated direction (on top of the modifier for Good weather alone). This creates a smoother model of Moon phases and stops the cumulative nature of modifiers having a disproportionate impact.

- To make take-off glitches less perilous, landing attempts mandated by Table B-2 are assumed to result not from an engine failing completely but from spotting an incipient problem with one of the bomber's systems early in the flight, so they do not incur the -4 penalty on Table G-1 for one engine being out. Bombs may not be jettisoned before the landing. On Table B-3, roll twice and use the lower roll, to reduce the chance of catastrophe during take-off itself.

- On Tables B-1 and C-1, apply a -1 modifier from Mar. 16, 1941, due to the improving spring weather. This makes you less vulnerable to storms, but more vulnerable to the British defences. If you abort a mission to avoid bad weather, use the previous weather for the re-entered Zone but proceed otherwise as if entering the Zone afresh, rolling on Table C-4 if the bad weather roll was a double. Avoiding bad weather in the Target City Zone stops your mission counting as successful. If you encounter bad weather while homebound, you may opt to leave the stream and descend below 3,000 metres if not there already. Bombers below 3,000 metres get a -1 modifier on Tables C-2 and C-3 (so have less chance of disastrous icing or lightning strikes), but must remain below 3,000 metres for the rest of the mission.

- To reduce die-rolling and limit the cumulative risk of disaster on the game's often long missions, ignore Table C-4 unless you rolled a double on Table C-1, in which case rolls of 97-100 on Table C-4 mean that you must check for Mechanical Failure on Table K. For simplicity, there are now no Random Events.

- You must abort an outbound mission if you jettison your bombs or drop below 3,000 metres or if your Bomb Bay doors or Radio Beam Navigation Equipment fail or your Bombardier becomes SW or KIA or moves to another position (which also stops him spotting night fighters below). You leave the stream if you abort an outbound mission or drop below 3,000 metres or if your Radio Beam Equipment fails.

- To preclude unduly roundabout routes, your bomber may fly only W, NW or N when outbound, and only E, SE or S when homebound. This still allows you to use orthogonal instead of diagonal moves if desired in order to reach safer routes or await more favourable weather, at the cost of higher Fuel expenditure and more rolls for enemy action or mechanical failure.

- Counting from the top left using lettered rows and numbered columns, the Land Zones are A1-A5, B2-B6, C2-C6, D1, D4-D7, E5-E7, F5-F8, G3-G8, H3-H9, I2-I9, J2-J8, K3-K9, L2-L6, M2, N6 and N9. The Target City Zone modifier on Tables C-8 and C-9 applies also in all en-route Zones containing cities, and the Water Zone modifier on Table C-9 does not apply in city Zones, to encourage you to avoid overflying them if you can. The Green Zone is M4-M9 and N1-N9, and for simplicity, you need never roll on Tables C-8 or C-9 in this Zone, while crewmen who survive ditching or bailing out outside this Zone are automatically captured with no need to roll on Table E-4 (making Evasion skills redundant). In Zone N9, you need at least 1 remaining Fuel Box to roll on Table G-1 to land rather than on Table E-1 to bail out.

- Deduct 5 from all rolls on Table C-9 due to the smaller relative number of night fighter sorties and the primitive state of British interception radar. Omit any second Beaufighter on Table C-10. Due to British pilots' avoidance of friendly ground fire, do not roll again on this Table after bombing unless the result on Table D-3 was No FLAK. Night fighters make at most one follow-up attack before breaking away.

- Change Tables C-13 and C-17 for a simpler system in which your bomber must roll 2D10 if it opts to take Evasive Action (whether in the stream or not). On an unmodified 20, it collides with the attacking fighter, downing both aircraft and forcing your crew to bail out on Table E-2. Fighters never roll for collisions themselves. This cuts the risk of mid-air collisions to a far less inflated level, especially given the wide spacing between bombers.

- If the Radio Beam signal is jammed on Table D-1, you may not roll again to re-acquire it. This reflects British scientific efforts in the 'Battle of the Beams', and offsets the limited effectiveness of Britain's active night defences. For simplicity, you automatically jettison your bombs if the signal is jammed or if you abort the mission with functional Bomb Bay doors.

- To take account of the larger area which the many searchlights and cannon in London had to defend, reduce the London modifiers to +1 on Table D-2 and +2 on Table D-3. This means that Searchlights will always be blocked by cloud in Poor or Bad weather. FLAK effectiveness outside London remains unchanged, since it outperformed night fighters for most of the campaign. You may choose or be forced to abort your mission instead of using Tables D-2 or D-5, in which case you go straight to Table C-1 for homebound flight and avoid further FLAK or night fighter engagement in the Target Zone. This lets you prioritise your own safety at the expense of forfeiting an accurate bomb drop with its associated VPs.