Bombs Away!
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This is a paper and pencil game which attempts to simulate UK Bomber Command’s night bombing campaign over Germany during World War 2. To play the game you will need the aforementioned paper and pencil, and you will also need a normal pack of playing cards (take the Jokers out). A tour of duty consists of 30 missions (turns). Each mission has 3 phases:

Phase 1 Mission preparation
Phase 2 Over the target
Phase 3 Coming home

Phase 1 Mission Preparation

Crew Ratings
Each Lancaster Bomber has seven crew members, a pilot, bomb aimer/front gunner, a flight engineer, a mid upper gunner, a navigator, a wireless operator and a rear gunner. Draw a playing card for each of them and rate them accordingly.

2-4 Poor
5-Jack Competent
Queen-Ace Good

Weather
Draw six cards
J Q K of Spades headwinds
Ace of Spades other bad weather

Fuel
Your Lancaster starts the mission with 24 fuel points
Bad weather lose 3 fuel points
Headwinds lose 3 fuel points
Poor navigator lose 6 fuel points
Fuel tank hit lose 3 fuel points
Engine hit lose 3 fuel points

Phase 2 Over the Target

Flak
Deal out twelve cards. Any Clubs count as hits. For each hit deal one card and check for damage.

Clubs J Q K A Undercarriage
Diamonds J Q K A Fuel tank
Hearts J Q K A Engine
Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts 10 Bomb doors jam closed
Spades Ace Pilot wounded
King Bomb aimer/front gunner wounded
Queen Flight engineer wounded
Jack Mid upper gunner wounded
9 Navigator wounded
8 Wireless operator wounded
Air crew can receive up to two wounds, any more and they will die.


**Enemy Fighters**

Draw a card for the direction from which enemy fighters are approaching. Jacks count as eleven and Queens as 12 (discard Kings and draw again). Consider a clock face with your aircraft’s nose pointing at 12, your tail at six and your wings pointing to 9 and 3 respectively.

The front gunner will deal with any fighters approaching from 11, 12 or 1 o’clock. The rear gunner will deal with anything approaching from 5, 6 or 7 o’clock. The mid upper gunner will deal with everything else.

A club indicates one attacking fighter, a diamond two, a heart three and a spade four. So, if you draw the Jack of diamonds there are two fighters approaching from your 11 o’clock position. They will be dealt with by the front gunner.

Good gunner draws 5 cards
Competent gunner draws 4 cards
Poor gunner draws 3 cards

Lay out the correct number of cards face up for the approaching fighters (in this case two) and the relevant number of cards for your gunner face down. Let’s assume we have a competent gunner so he has four attempts to defeat the incoming fighters. The **highest** card wins. The two fighters draw an Ace and a Jack.
Aces are high for this phase and cannot be beaten so at least one fighter will get a shot at you. Turn over your cards one at a time and seek to beat the enemy fighters – a three (no good), a 2 (no good), a six (no good) and a King (one fighter shot down). The surviving enemy fighter pulls a card and checks to see what damage it has inflicted upon the bomber (use the Flak damage table).

Cloud cover
Once the flak and fighters are out of the way check for cloud cover over the target. Draw three cards
- All red, all clear
- 1 black and 2 red, 1/3 target covered, lose 1/3 of your cards
- 2 black and 1 red, 2/3 target covered, lose 2/3 of your cards
- 3 black means the target is completely covered and no bombing is possible

Good bomb aimer gets 15 cards
Competent bomb aimer gets 12 cards
Poor bomb aimer gets 6 cards

Turn up your cards and count the damage points to the target.
- Ace 5 points
- JQK 3 points
- Other 1 point

Phase 3 Coming Home

Good pilot 3 cards
Competent pilot 4 cards
Poor pilot 5 cards

Final approach: check for crosswinds. Deal out six cards.
- JOKA Spades indicates a crosswind + 1 card
- Check your aircraft status and add accordingly
  - 1 engine lost + 1 card
  - 2 engines lost + 2 cards
  - Undercarriage damaged + 4 cards
  - Still carrying bomb load + 2 cards
  - Less than half fuel + 1 card
  - Less than quarter fuel + 2 cards

Any JQK means the aircraft crashes on landing. If that happens turn over a card for each crew member. On JQK Hearts the crew member dies.

Victory Conditions

If you finish the tour with the same crew you have won a resounding victory. Bomber Command paid a huge toll in terms of lost aircrew which is reflected in the game. It is very unlikely that you will come through unscathed.

Having said that we should have some measure of how we have done. If you scored
- over 400 points good tour
- 200 - 400 points OK tour
- less than 200 points poor tour

Happy landings!