

# 25 and Out — Memphis Belle Style

By Mike Crane

The primary inspiration for this game is the government movie about the Memphis Belle. The idea is to conduct 25 bombing missions over Europe and survive. However, the odds are very much against your survival. If you do, the game may take a while for you to finish, so be prepared to lay it aside and work on it whenever you have the time—or whenever you feel lucky. If you do not receive a fighter attack, a mission will take only a minute or two to play. A fighter attack may take 15 to 30 minutes.

You will be the pilot of a B-17 stationed in England in the early part of the ETO bombing war. You will hold the rank of first lieutenant in the Army Air Force when you begin, but you will be promoted to captain after completing your twelfth mission. You will advance to the rank of major when you complete the twenty-fifth mission. Will you be one of the fortunate few to make it all the way? Choose a name for your bomber and begin your tour of duty.

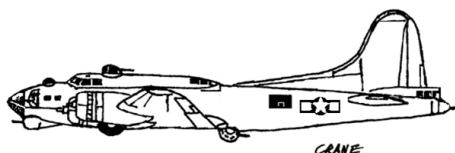
You will need to keep a record of your missions. Make a copy of the 25 and Out Mission Record Sheet. The Mission Record Sheet is divided into 25 missions with three columns for each mission: Position; Fighter Attack; and Flak Barrage.

The first column records the position your plane will occupy in a three-plane element during that mission. Roll three differently colored six-sided dice. The black die represents the left position, the white represents the center, and the red represents the right position. Write down the numbers thrown in the following order—black, white, and red. The color of the die that is highest represents your position in the element for this mission—right (R), center (C), or left (L). If you have a tie for highest number, roll again.

The second column records whether your element is attacked by fighters during the mission. There is a 17% chance of being bounced by bogies. Rolling a 6 on a six-sided die means your element will be attacked by fighters. Record the die throw and use the rules below to resolve the attack. Record the effects of the attack on the Fighter Attack Record Sheet. If all goes well, you will probably need 6 or 7 photocopies of this sheet before the game is over. If things don't go well, well...you won't need so many.

Whether there is a fighter attack or not, you will always encounter a flak barrage over the target area. Each bomber has a 17% chance of being hit. To find the results of the flak barrage, roll the 3 colored dice. (Remove the colored die representing the position of any plane that was shot down during the fighter attack). The color of a die rolling a 6 indicates which plane has been hit. After a hit roll 1d6 to determine the amount flak damage to the plane: 1-4 = 1 engine; 5 = 2 engines; 6 = the plane is destroyed. The flak damage is added to any damage incurred during the Fighter Attack, so a bomber with only 2 engines could be destroyed by a flak burst that took out only 1 engine. More than one plane can be hit by the flak barrage.

Can you go all the way? The Memphis Belle did. If you survive 25 missions, you will win the game, be promoted to the rank of major, and return to the USA as a hero to sell war bonds. And remember, your sweet heart is waiting.

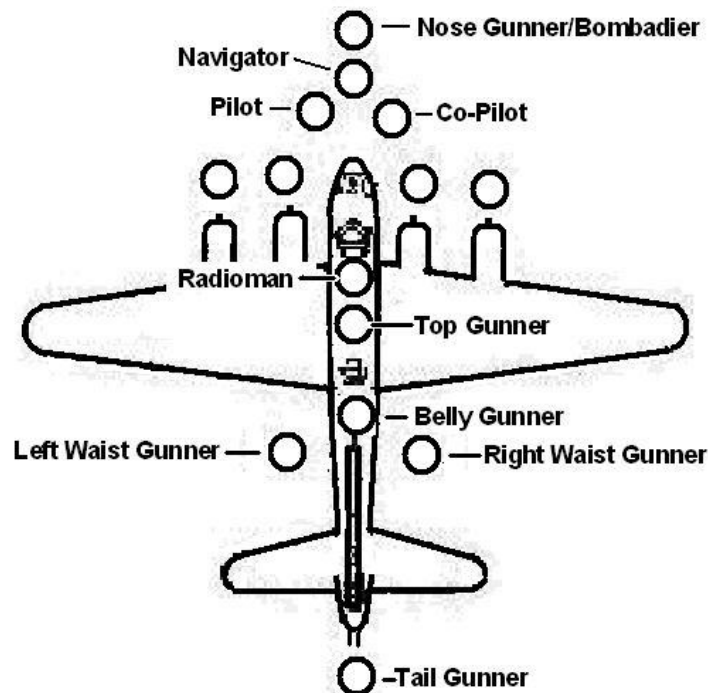


## INTRODUCTION TO THE FIGHTER ATTACK RULES

The leader of a schwarm of four Me 109 fighters chooses to attack your three-bomber element in a B-17 bomber group over Europe. Unless shot-up or shot down, each fighter will make three passes against the bombers.

Three colored, six-sided die will be rolled by each fighter as it prepares to begin each pass. The black die (T) will determine which bomber will be selected as the *target*; the white die (D) will determine the *direction* of the fighter attack—from the front or the rear; and the red die (A) will determine the *area* of the bomber that is to be attacked—left wing, fuselage, or right wing. Be sure to write the result of the throws beneath the fighter on the record sheet so you will not forget. These TDA numbers will be translated to the fighter's pass column as L (left), C (center), R (right) / ↓ (front), ↑ (rear) / LW (left wing), F (fuselage), RW (right wing).

If a fighter attacks the fuselage of the bomber from the front (↓) or the back (↑), the crewmen and their positions are exposed to the enemy's gunfire. The top turret gunner and radioman are exposed to an attack from either direction. The following diagram identifies the positions of the crew.



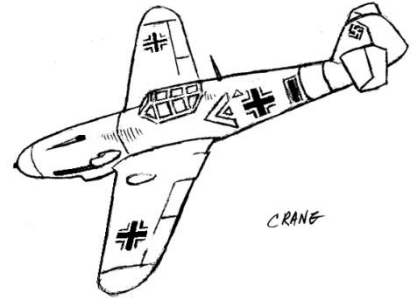
When an engine or a crew position on a bomber has been hit it is destroyed. Place a mark in the circle on the record sheet to indicate the hit. If a fighter rolls for an attack on a wing area that has already been destroyed, the fighter will be exposed to machinegun fire from the bomber but will not be able to do any further damage to the destroyed engines. A position cannot be destroyed twice and any roll result would be discounted.

## THE FIGHTER ATTACK AND FLAK BARRAGE RULES

This requires a pencil, three six-sided dice (black, white, red), and a Fighter Attack Record Sheet. Photocopy the record sheet several times or use a soft-lead pencil that can be erased in order to play more games.

### Fighter approach

Begin with the fighter on the left. Roll 3d6 to determine the fighter's pass approach.



**Target a bomber (Black die):** 1, 2 = Left; 3, 4 = Middle; 5, 6 = Right \*

**Direction of attack (White die):** 1-3 = Rear; 4-6 = Front

**Area of attack (Red die):** 1, 2 = Left Wing; 3, 4 = Fuselage; 5, 6 = Right Wing

When the pass is complete, go to the next fighter. Each surviving fighter will make three passes indicated on the record sheet by the letter A, B, and C.

\*After a bomber has been shot down, the target is chosen by 1-3 = Left; 4-6 = Right. A single bomber will automatically be the target.

### B-17's shoot first

Roll 1d6 for each machine gun position able to fire. A 6 scores a hit. These can shoot:

*Front and Front Wing* = nose gun, top turret gun

*Rear* = tail gun, belly ball turret gun

*Rear Wings* = tail gun, belly ball turret gun, waist gun.

Roll 1d6 for each hit to determine its effect on the German fighter:

1-4 = fuselage damaged, the pilot fires and leaves for home; (mark bottom circle).

5 = engine destroyed, the pilot parachutes without firing; (mark top circle).

6+ = the pilot killed before firing; the plane explodes; (mark center circle).

If a plane is hit by two dice, combine the numbers and use the total for results.

When a fighter has been destroyed, you can draw a line through its remaining passes on the Record Sheet to avoid future confusion.

### German Fighters

The position of the fighter may be drawn on the Record Sheet with the Fighter ID number and letter of the pass (A, B, or C) behind an arrow indicating the direction of the attack; e.g., 1A ↑ ↓ 3B

Roll 3d6 for each attacking fighter. A 5 or 6 scores a hit.

*If a wing is hit*, roll 1d6: 1-4 destroys one engine, 5-6 destroys both engines.

*If the fuselage is hit*, roll 1d6 for the position of the hit. Mark off the circle.

*Front:* 1= bombardier/nose gunner; 2 = navigator; 3 = pilot; 4 = copilot; 5 = radioman;

6 = top gunner

*Rear:* 1= tail gunner; 2 = left gunner; 3 = right gunner; 4 = belly gunner; 5 = radioman;

6 = top gunner

A bomber is destroyed whenever the pilot and co-pilot are both killed, or when three engines are hit and disabled. The game is over if the pilot's position in your plane is hit.

## **The Flak Barrage**

After rolling for and resolving any fighter attack, you will fly into the area of the target. You will always encounter a flak barrage over the target. Roll the three colored dice representing the bombers. (You may remove or ignore the die representing any bomber that was shot down in the fighter attack.) A roll of 6 indicates flak hit that plane. Roll 1d6 to determine the amount of destruction caused by the flak hit: 1, 2 = 1 engine; 3, 4 = 2 engines; 5, 6 = the entire plane. This damage will be added to any damage incurred during the fighter attack. If a bomber had already lost one engine, additional flak damage of 2 engines would down the plane.

## **Victory**

If your plane is shot down or your pilot position is destroyed by a fighter pass, you lose. If you survive the fighter attack, you will roll for the flak barrage over the target. If you survive the flak, you will drop your bombs and will have survived one more mission. Victory comes when you have completed all 25 missions!

## **AN EXAMPLE OF A FIGHTER ATTACK AND FLAK BARRAGE**

### **The Position of Your Plane**

The name of your plane is "*Really Ready*." Three colored die were rolled to determine the position of your plane during this mission. In black, white, and red order, the numbers were 3, 2, 6. The high number indicates your position in the formation, so *Really Ready* is flying on the right side of the bomber element. Suddenly, the intercom crackles, "Bogies at six o'clock!"

### **The First Pass (A)**

After a T/D/A roll of 2/3/3 the German leader turned the yellow snout of his Me 109 toward the rear fuselage of the *Lucky Lady*—the B-17 on the left side of the formation. The tail gunner and belly gunner opened up (2, 6) and one struck the fighter. A roll of [4] indicated that the fighter suffered damage to its fuselage. Feeling his plane shudder under the impact of the 50 caliber bullets, the German pilot fired a hasty burst (2, 2, 4), flipped his plane over into a dive, and headed for home.

The second fighter rolled 6/2/2 and attacked *Really Ready*, the bomber on the right, from the rear targeting the left wing. The bomber fired from three machine gun positions, but none of them hit (1, 4, 4). The German pilot aimed carefully at the big radial engines and pushed the firing button (5, 6, 6). Bull's eye! Every gun tore into the target. Rolls of [3, 5, 6] sent fragments flying and stopped the propellers on the two left-wing engines. It was a bad start for *Really Ready* already. "Stop those engine fires and feather those props, Lieutenant!"

The third fighter rolled 1/6/4 and circled around to make a frontal attack on the fuselage of *Lucky Lady*. The nose gunner and top gunner sent a stream of tracers in the direction of the bogey (4, 5) without effect. The German pilot continued his assault without damaging the bomber (3, 4, 4). The fourth fighter pilot rolled behind the left wing of the wounded *Really Ready* 6/2/2. Unfortunately for him, he could do no more damage to these dead engines, but he did become a target for three of your gunners. The German fighter received one hit (2, 3, 6), which sent it home trailing debris [4].

## **The Second Pass (B)**

The leader of the schwarm and the fourth pilot had been forced to return to base due to fuselage damage. The second pass would be composed of the two remaining fighters. Would they be able to down your bomber and win the game?

The second fighter attacked the left wing of the center bomber, *Careful Cathy*, from the front 3/6/2. The nose gunner and top gunner fired at the fighter without result (1, 4), but the fighter's burst was more successful (1, 2, 6). A roll of [5] signaled the destruction of the two left-wing engines.

The third fighter attacked the rear fuselage of *Really Ready* on the right side of the formation 5/2/3. In spite of your shouts of encouragement over the intercom, *Really Ready's* tail gunner and belly gunner were unable to stop the assault (2, 4). The Me 109 had better luck and savaged your bomber (2, 4, 6) disabling the ball turret gun in the belly [4].

## **The Third Pass (C)**

The second fighter struck the left wing of the (un) *Lucky Lady* from the front 1/5/1. The nose gunner and top turret gunner fired without hitting their target (1, 3). The German pilot fired back hitting the bomber (2, 3, 5) and smashing one engine [3].

The final pass of the last Me 109 came in front of the right wing of the struggling *Really Ready*. Just 1 hit would guarantee the destruction of at least 1 engine and destroy your bomber, your crew, and you—thus winning the entire game for the Germans. The crewmen of the *Really Ready* stood to their guns and scored 1 hit (4, 6). The effect of that hit sent tracers crashing through the fighter's cockpit [6] and caused the pilot to roll his flaming plane over in a death spiral. The fighter attack was over and you survived!

## **The Flak Barrage**

Next, the B-17's began their bomb run. The German flak began to blossom around the formation as they neared the target. Since each plane in the element had survived the fighter attack, three colored (black, white, and red), six-sided dice were thrown to see if the flak claimed any victims [3/5/2]. All of the planes in your element made it through the carpet of flak to drop their bombs on the target.

Congratulations! You beat the odds and completed the mission. Go for debriefing, get a hot meal, and hit the sack. You will be awakened for the briefing of another mission at 4 o'clock in the morning.

## **References:**

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Jackson, Robert. *The B-17 Flying Fortress*. Osceola, WI: Motor Books International, 2001

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[There are several DVD versions of the *Memphis Belle* including a movie and the original government documentary available on amazon.com, Half.com, abebooks, Barnes and Nobles, etc. Just type in "Memphis Belle" to get a complete listing.]

## 25 and Out Mission Record Sheet

The name of your B-17 \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**POSITION-3d6 (L, C, R)      FIGHTER ATTACK-1d6 [5, 6]      FLAK BARRAGE-3d6 [6];  
1d6**

1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____	_____
11.	_____	_____	_____
12.	_____	_____	_____

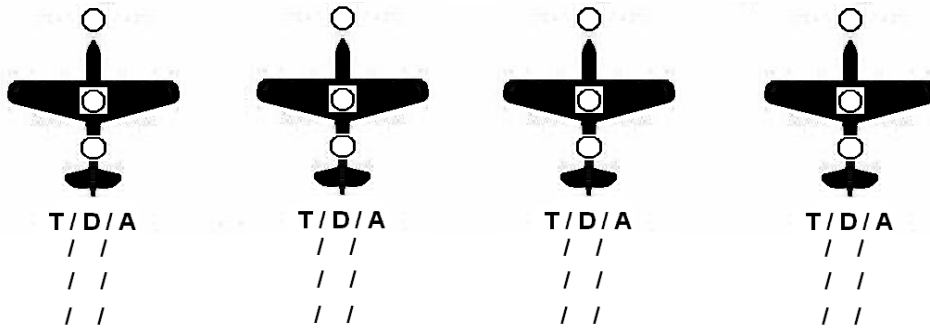
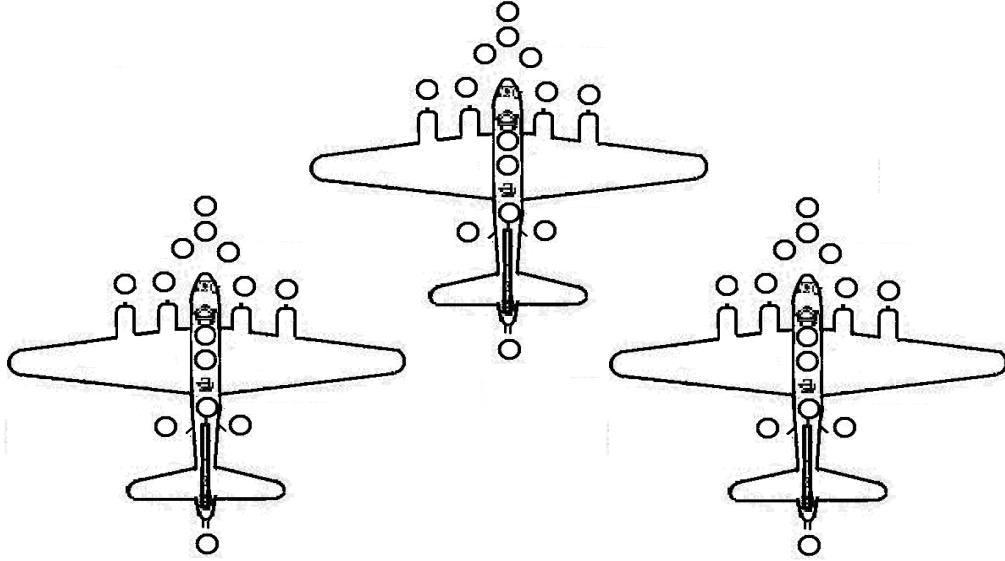
**Congratulations! You have been promoted to the rank of Captain.**

13.	_____	_____	_____
14.	_____	_____	_____
15.	_____	_____	_____
16.	_____	_____	_____
17.	_____	_____	_____
18.	_____	_____	_____
19.	_____	_____	_____
20.	_____	_____	_____
21.	_____	_____	_____
22.	_____	_____	_____
23.	_____	_____	_____
24.	_____	_____	_____
25.	_____	_____	_____

**Congratulations, Major! You have completed your combat tour and won the game!**

## 25 and Out Fighter Attack Record Sheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Mission # \_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_



**BOMBER**

**PASS**

**FIGHTER**

ID (TDA)	FIRE [6]	EFFECT
/ /	( )	( )
/ /	( )	( )
/ /	( )	( )
/ /	( )	( )

(A)

ID	FIRE [5, 6]	EFFECT
1A	( )	( )
2A	( )	( )
3A	( )	( )
4A	( )	( )

(B)

ID (TDA)	FIRE [6]	EFFECT
/ /	( )	( )
/ /	( )	( )
/ /	( )	( )
/ /	( )	( )

ID	FIRE [5, 6]	EFFECT
1B	( )	( )
2B	( )	( )
3B	( )	( )
4B	( )	( )

(C)

ID (TDA)	FIRE [6]	EFFECT
/ /	( )	( )
/ /	( )	( )
/ /	( )	( )
/ /	( )	( )

ID	FIRE [5, 6]	EFFECT
1C	( )	( )
2C	( )	( )
3C	( )	( )
4C	( )	( )

**FLAK BARRAGE** 3d6 [6] \_\_\_\_\_; **FLAK HIT** 1d6 \_\_\_\_\_