

Introduction to *Battle of Britain*—*Simple Hex Rules* By Mike Crane

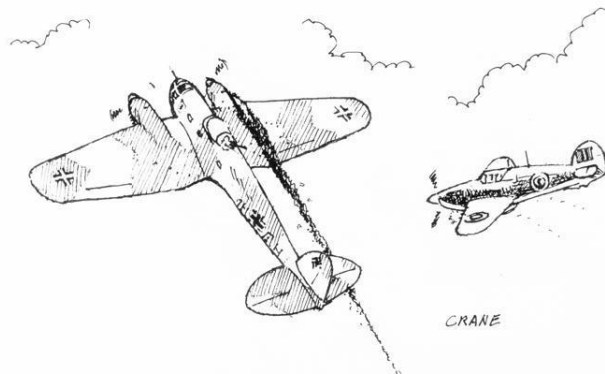
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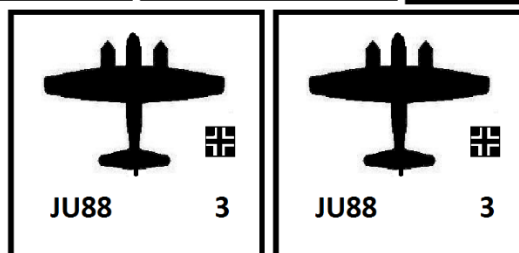
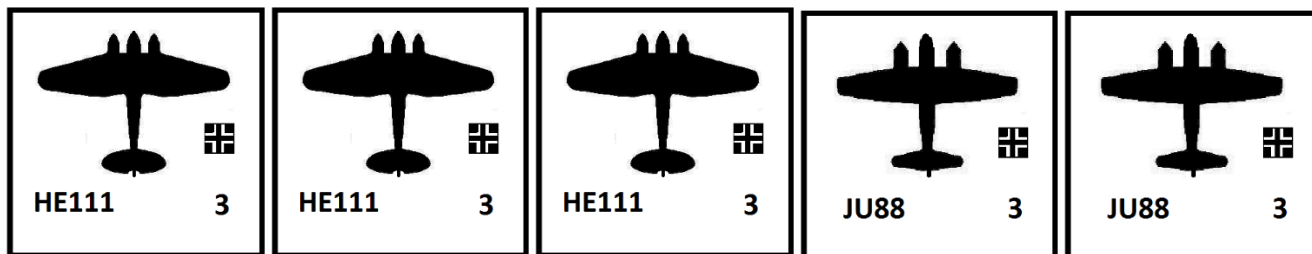
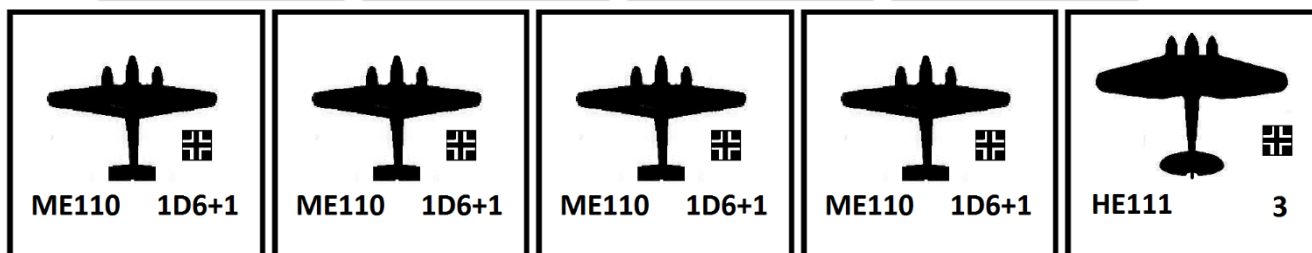
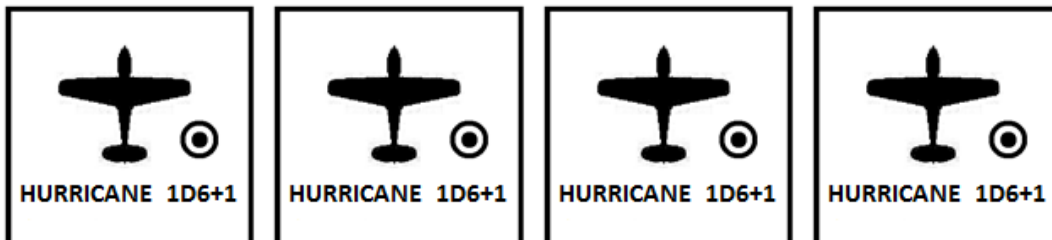
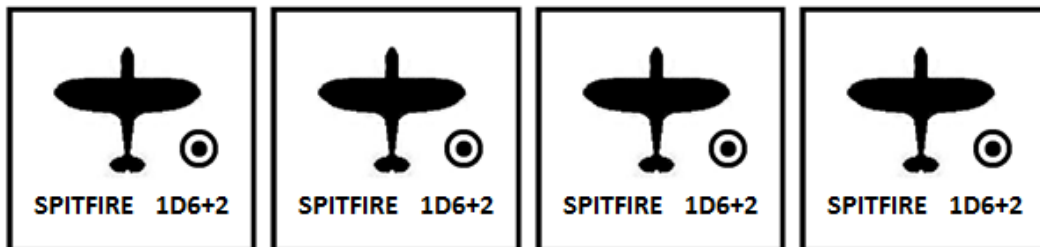
Okay. I admit it. I am a Battle of Britain junkie. This seems to be my favorite period. Last summer I decided to downsize most of my wargaming efforts so the battles could be fought on a small 2" hex mat or board that could be placed on the kitchen table. This would allow faster games with fewer figures, models, and terrain to lay out and pick up. The results have been interesting and fun. Since the Battle of Britain was a primary interest, it seemed like a good place to start. My air games are usually played on poster boards gridded with squares, but converting from squares to hexes was not difficult. (In the future this process will probably be reversed and these rules will be used with squares and the old paper models.)

Since a 2' x 3' field green felt Hotz mat with 2" hexes was at hand, I decided to use it as the playing board. Unfortunately, my paper plane models from past games did not fit well on the 2" hexes. Consequently, counters had to be designed and made to fit.

I changed computers last year and I have always used the drawing program that comes free with the machine. (Okay, so I'm cheap.) After designing the counters, I discovered that this drawing program does not reverse colors. Therefore, the player will need to use two pieces of differently colored paper (colored cardstock paper can be found in the scrapbooking section of Hobby Lobby or Michael's for about 50 cents a sheet). Since both sets of counters are on one page, you will need to run both colored sheets through the printer. (You will end up with an additional set of air forces in opposite colors.) For this game tan counters were used for the Brits and light grey counters for the Germans. Use acrylics to paint red, white, blue and yellow ID dots at the bottom of the counters before you cut them out. If you choose to mount the counters (it really isn't necessary), cut picture-frame mat board in squares the size of the counters and tape the counter to the mat board by wrapping cellophane tape or clear strapping tape over the face of the counter and sticking it to the back. This will protect the counter from smudging and make it easier to pick it up and move it around on the mat.

You are now ready to play. Tally ho!





BATTLE OF BRITAIN—SIMPLE HEX RULES

PURPOSE

- To provide a simulation of a small bit of the Battle of Britain.
- To provide rules that are fast, fun, and easy

OBJECTIVE

- Four German units will conduct two separate attacks on a British target defended by two fighter units.
- The Germans must accumulate 24 total bombing points to win the game. The British must prevent it to win.

EQUIPMENT

- Counters: 8 German bombers (4 He111's, 4 Ju88's); 8 German fighters (4 Me109's, 4 Me110's); 8 British fighters (4 Spitfires, 4 Hurricanes)
- Dice
Activation/movement dice: 4d6—Red, White, Blue, Yellow (R,W,B,Y)
Remaining movement marker die: 1d8
Combat dice: 2d6—Each a different color to represent both sides
- Playing mat: 2' x 3' with 2" hexes
- Damage markers: small washers painted red
- A copy of the rules

SET-UP

- Place the hex mat on a table with a box or box lid representing the repair shop at each end.
- Place the German planes off one narrow end of the mat and the British squadrons off the opposite end. These are the edges of entry for the two sides.
- Each counter in a 4-plane unit should be identified with a R,W,B,or Y mark placed on the base.

ORDER OF EVENTS EACH TURN

- [Skip this procedure on the first turn.] Roll 1d6 for each aircraft in the repair shop boxes. An aircraft will return to its squadron on a roll of 3,4,5 or 6.
- On the first turn—and after repaired planes are placed in the flight line on the second turn—roll the R,W,B,Y dice for each unit to determine which planes will be activated for this mission. Dice results of 3,4,5 or 6 activate the planes with the corresponding colors.
- Move the activated planes to their edge of entry on the hex mat. Planes may enter anywhere on the edge but should enter the board as squadrons in adjoining hexes.
- Half hexes on the mat count as a full hex upon entry and exit.
- German bombers move first each turn.
- German fighters move after the bombers and resolve their attacking combats.*/**
- British fighters move last and resolve their attacking combats.*/**

** It is only necessary to roll the colored dice that correspond to the colors of the planes activated on the board.*

***Use R,W,B,Y order when moving and resolving combats to avoid forgetting to use a plane.*

MOVEMENT

- Each plane must move all of the hexes available to it each turn.
- Bombers move 3 hexes per turn unless damaged.
- Fighters move according to their speed: Fast = $1d6+2$ (Spitfire, Me109); Medium = $1d6+1$ (Hurricane, Me110)
- All planes reduce movement by 1 hex when damaged.
- A plane may move straight ahead or into either of the adjoining diagonal hexes. (See Fig. 1)

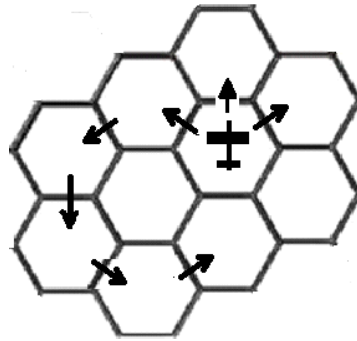


Figure 1. An example of some ways a plane may move.

- A plane must change its facing when it moves diagonally.
- Planes may not move off the sides of the mat.
- Planes will always face a flat edge of the hex, never a point.
- Planes may move through occupied spaces but may not stop on an occupied hex. If a plane cannot move it is destroyed.
- A fighter may split its move by stopping to attack an opposing plane, in which case $1d8$ is placed beside the fighter's hex with the number of moves remaining turned up on the die.
- Undamaged, single-engine fighters may execute an Immelman loop at a cost of 4 movement points: the plane moves straight 2 hexes and turns 180° onto the unoccupied second hex.

COMBAT

- A plane may fire once offensively per turn.
- An attacking plane must move 1 hex before firing.
- Combat takes place from an adjacent hex and will involve offensive fire from an attacking plane and, if guns can be brought to bear, defensive fire from the target.
- The attacking plane may fire at the front, flank, or rear of the target plane. (See Fig. 2)

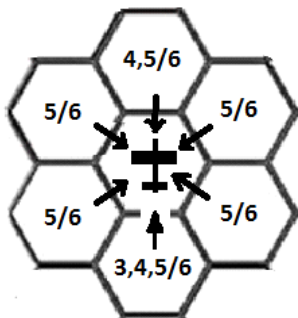


Figure 2. Angles of a fighter attack.

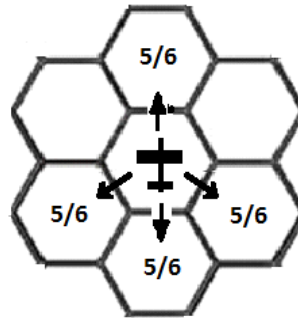


Figure 3. Angles of a bomber's defensive fire.

Figure 2. This shows the directions from which an attacking plane may fire with the 1D6 rolls needed to damage/kill from that position. A 6 always kills and the other numbers represent a hit with damage to the target.

Figure 3. This shows the directions from which a defending plane with a forward gun(s) and rear gunner(s) may fire and the numbers needed to be rolled on 1D6 to hit/kill from that position.

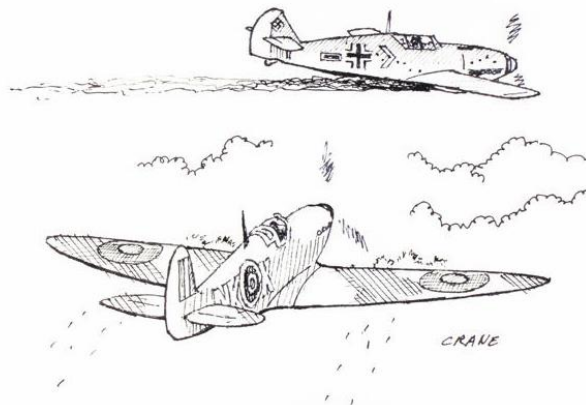
- When it is possible for the target to return defensive fire, both planes will roll their combat dice at the same time to determine the results simultaneously. Both planes may be destroyed.
- When a plane is hit, it receives a damage marker and on the following turn slows its movement by 1 hex. It will turn and head for its own edge of entry in an attempt to escape without being shot down. Damaged bombers will not bomb the target but will be able to defend themselves against attacking planes while escaping.
- There will be no replacements for planes lost in the first attack; however, damaged planes which successfully exit the board will be placed in the repair box and a roll of 3,4,5 or 6 on 1d6 at the beginning of the following sortie will return them to their original squadrons where they will be eligible for activation.

BOMBING

- The target requires 24 total bomb points to be destroyed.
- Roll 2D6 for each German bomber that exits the mat on the British side and tally the numbers on the dice.

VICTORY

- Add the bomb scores from both attacks.
- If the total bomb score equals or exceeds 24 points, the target is destroyed and the Germans win. If the score does not equal or exceed 24 points, the British win.



Battle Report and After Thoughts of a Game

Using *Battle of Britain—Simple Hex Rules*

By Mike Crane

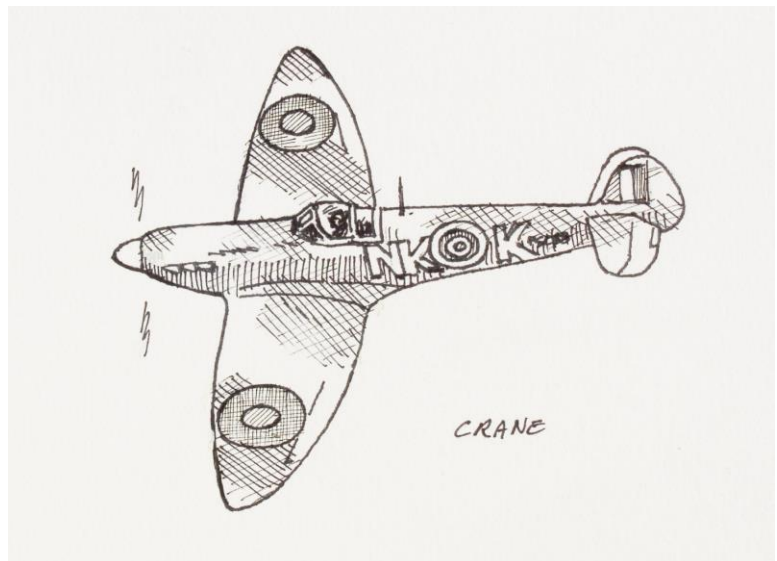
This is an account of a solo wargame using the *Battle of Britain—Simple Hex Rules*. It involves a German bombing mission over England in two separate attacks. Here's how it happened.

For the first attack, red, white, blue, and yellow (RWBY) dice were thrown four separate times to activate fighters and bombers within the four German units. Being extraordinarily lucky with the dice rolls, all of the German planes were activated with one exception—He111 (B). On the other hand, only half of the British fighter planes were activated—one Spitfire (Y) and three Hurricanes (R,W,Y).

In spite of the tremendous odds against them, the brave Britons battled tenaciously against the Hun horde. The Germans lost Me109 (Y) and Ju88 (W). Ju88 (R) was damaged and turned back without bombing the target. The British paid a high price, however—all of their fighters were shot out of the sky. Each of the five German bombers crossing the British edge of entry rolled 2d6. The results were added together and the bombing score for the first day was a hefty 19 points. The British target had taken a tremendous pounding. A German victory was likely even if only a single bomber could get through on the next attack.

The second attack occurred the following day. A roll of 2 on 1d6 was insufficient to bring the damaged Ju88 (R) out of the repair box and onto the flight line. Successive rolls of the RWBY dice activated the following German planes: Me109 (R,W,B); He111 (R,W); Ju88 (B,Y); and Me110 (R). Two He111's (B,Y) were left in the hanger and the remaining Ju88 (R) was in the repair shop. Two Me110s (W,Y) also remained in France. Five fighters and four bombers were a formidable force and would be perfectly capable of achieving the six bombing points needed to win. On the other side, the Brits were more fortunate this time and the RWBY dice activated all four of the remaining fighters: three Spitfires (R,W,B) and one Hurricane (B).

In bold, slashing attacks, the British fighters shot down four German attackers: Me109 (R), He111 (R), Ju88 (Y), and Me110 (R), and turned back He111 (W) with damage. Again, the British lost all of their fighters to accurate German guns, and one of the German bombers, Ju88 (B), broke through the British defense to bomb the target. Two dice were rolled and the numbers tallied and added to the previous score. The dice came up a 2 and a 1. The total bombing score for both attacks was 22 points. Despite the odds, the Brits won!



Looking back, this was a good game and met the goals stated in the purpose—it was fast, fun, and easy. The smaller playing area shortened the game time. I considered using a *Memoir '44* hex board (9 squares x 13 squares) vs. the Hotz mat (14 squares x 18 squares) and opted for the latter because it was wider and longer. However, placing two M'44 boards together would have worked as well (18 squares x 13 squares). The counters fit well on the 2" hexes, although I really prefer the look and feel of models. Also, the use of red, white, blue, and yellow dice sped up the game and reduced confusion.

The random factors of the game were determined by six-sided dice. I am an Anglophile at heart and consequently biased, but most of the action—selecting the aircraft to be activated, determining the speed of the fighters, and resolving combat—was determined by the roll of the dice. After the disastrous beginning, I was actually surprised when the British won this game. The roll of the dice ultimately decided that too. Since the outcome of the dice toss is always changing, the game can be played repeatedly with different results. I definitely plan to play this game again.

The only thing that I might consider changing about the rules would be that damaged bombers would not be allowed to defend themselves after turning back to their edge of entry. It would be reasonable to assume that the gunners were wounded when the plane was damaged. It would also give the British a better chance to knock down more bombers without being shot down themselves. This might produce a more balanced game.