

# The Wargame - How to Do Your Duty

## The RAF At Our Stow Maries

There are six RAF fighter squadrons assigned to C and D sectors. Four are day fighter squadrons, operating Hurricanes or Spitfires. (While there are small differences between these two aircraft, they are both fast and agile single-seat, single-engine fighters armed with eight machine guns in the wings.)

The other two squadrons are equipped with specialised night fighters; Defiants and Blenheims. While these types look very different from each other, they have some similarities. They are heavier, slower and less agile than day fighters, and they have multiple crew per plane. Most importantly though, they are equipped with Air Interception Radar, making them much more effective at locating enemy bombers in the dark.

In game, a few overflow planes from these squadrons are based at Stow Maries. Others are based elsewhere and crewed by NPCs. RAF players may choose which of their characters they're playing at any given time. Night fighter characters will probably have a greater level of operational responsibility at night, while during the day the single-seat fighters will spend more of their time in the air.

Each squadron is divided into two flights, A and B, each of six aircraft. Each flight is divided into two sections, each of three aircraft: Red and Yellow section form A Flight, while B Flight is made up of Green section and Blue section.

Each squadron is led by a Squadron Leader, who probably also leads A flight as Red 1, with a Flight Lieutenant leading B flight as Green 1 and ready to take over should anything happen to their commander. Other pilots are ranked as either Flying Officer, Pilot Officer or Flight Sergeant. In multi-crewed aircraft, they are supported by navigators and/or gunners who are variously Flight Sergeants, Corporals or Aircraftsmen.

### **46 Squadron - Hurricanes**

46 Squadron started the war in shipping protection before taking its Hurricanes to Norway on the aircraft carrier HMS Glorious. The squadron had a highly successful tour of duty there until Glorious was sunk while bringing them home in June 1940. There were only a handful of survivors, and the reconstituted squadron is largely untested since moving to a nominal base of RAF North Weald last month. It is currently based out of RAF Stapleford Tawney.

### **303 "Kościuszko" Squadron - Hurricanes**

303 Squadron became operational only last month as part of an agreement between the Polish Government in Exile and the United Kingdom. Its pilots are mostly long-serving Polish veterans, benefiting from years of extensive and rigorous pre-war training and eager to take revenge on the Nazis for the fall of their homeland. The squadron has just been moved from RAF Northolt to RAF Manston.

### **222 Squadron - Spitfires**

222 Squadron was deployed in a shipping protection role flying Blenheims, until March 1940 when they were refitted with Spitfires before fighting over France to cover the Dunkirk evacuation. Having fought through the Battle of Britain, most of their pilots are now experienced veterans, although there are always a few new arrivals replacing combat

losses. Nominally based at Hornchurch, the bombing of that airfield has seen them temporarily deployed to RAF Martlesham Heath.

### **603 (City of Edinburgh) Squadron - Spitfires**

603 Squadron is newly arrived in the south east, having been assigned to defensive duties in Scotland until last month - primarily protecting the fleet anchorage at Scapa Flow. They've been in Spitfires since before the war broke out, so they're comfortable and experienced in the aircraft. 603 has the distinction of the first RAF victory of the war, having downed a Ju-88 bomber that was attempting to mine the Firth of Forth on 16th October '39. With the destruction of RAF Hornchurch, they are currently sharing RAF Rochford with 600 Squadron's Blenheims.

### **264 (Night Fighter) Squadron - Defiants**

264 Squadron's Defiants started the war in a convoy protection role, scoring some impressive initial successes with their turreted guns until the Luftwaffe realised their vulnerability to frontal attacks. Heavy losses followed, and in May 1940 the squadron was withdrawn from day fighting operations to train in the night fighter role. With their training largely complete, the squadron is on active duty once more. Their Defiants have been fitted with experimental Airborne Intercept Radar sets to improve their night performance. The squadron has been moved between bases a lot and is currently based at RAF Hawkinge.

### **600 (City of London) (Night Fighter) Squadron - Blenheims**

600 Squadron is a long-standing Volunteer Reserve squadron, whose pilots are expected to have paid for their own training. Initially conceived as a heavy day fighter squadron, the Blenheim's poor performance against modern enemy fighters saw it relegated to the night fighter role, but the squadron is to be refitted with new Bristol Beaufighter heavy fighters next month. 600 Sqn provided the initial testbed aircraft for the development of Airborne Intercept Radar; its aircrew are experienced with electronic systems and the squadron has a close relationship with the Telecommunications Research Establishment (TRE). The squadron is currently based out of RAF Rochford, alongside 603 (Edinburgh) Squadron's Spitfires.

## **Overview**

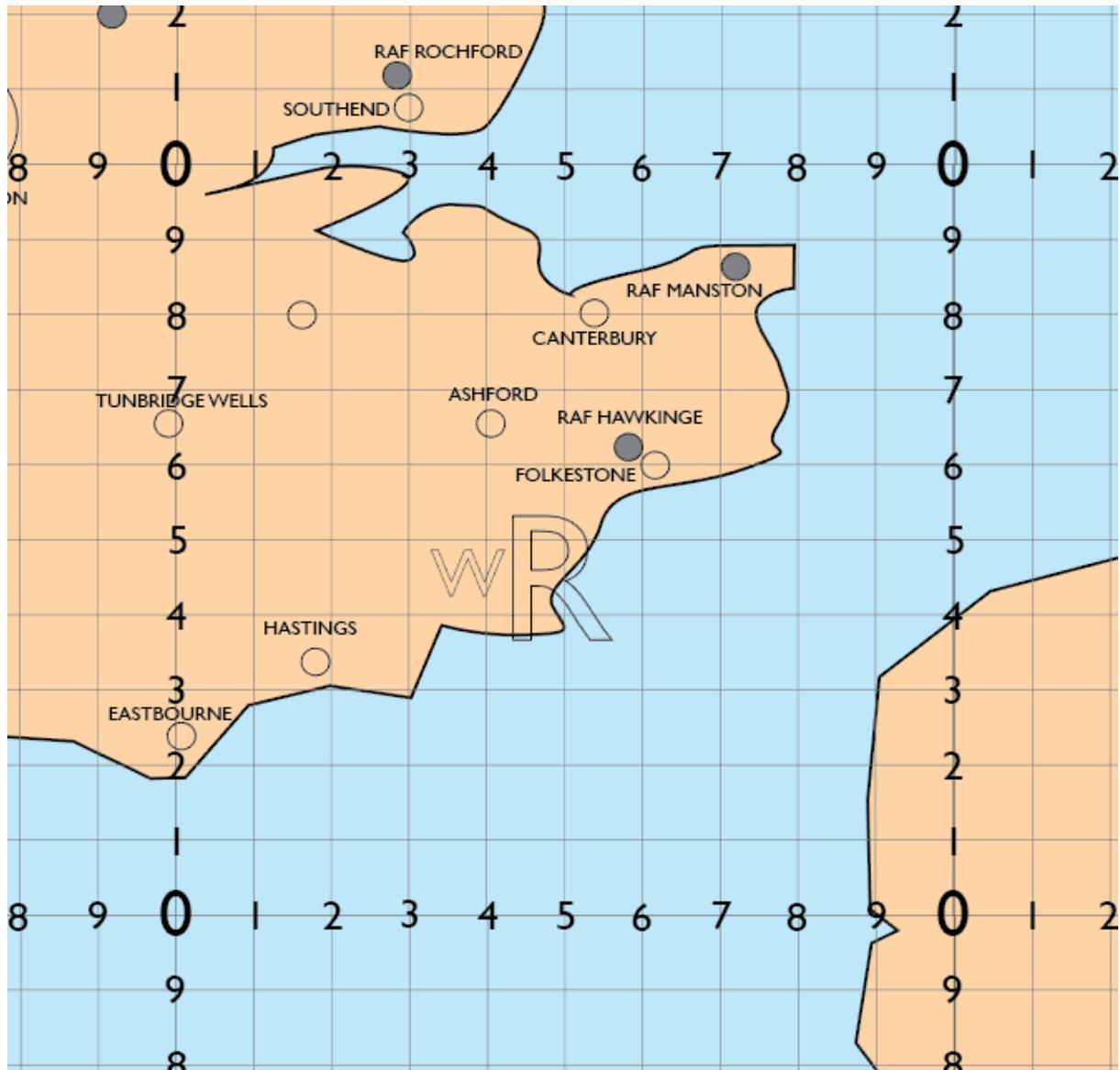
When on duty, the WAAF characters will operate a radar station and an operations room. They will control the RAF players in action, who voice-act flying their fighters from the off-game room we're calling The Sky.

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.



## 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.



## 8.ii The RAF In Game - Flying in Combat

**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.

### 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 via the gap between two hangers. This serves to give that moment of dramatic response to the order without requiring entrance to the actual hangers full of precious WW1 planes, and also serves to camouflage much of the players' run to The Sky. It covers the fact we've not actually got Blenheims, Defiants, Hurricanes and Spitfires on site.

### 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. This roleplay is aided by decks of cards. There's a deck of cards for every outward journey, then two decks for an actual combat interception if one should happen, then a deck for the return to Stow Maries. 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.

### JOURNEY OUT

First up, each squadron will be handed a Journey Deck. This contains prompts for the kind of roleplay you may wish to engage in as you fly out - maybe there's cloud cover, or minor mechanical issues on a plane. Mostly, however, the cards are blank and this time is your character's own for giving orders, for banter, or for silence as your character prepares for combat.

Players will distribute the cards between them, face down. Cards do not have to be

distributed equally, nor do they have to be dealt out, simply distributed. You'll then look at your hand of cards, consider how to play them, and then play them in any order you see fit. To play a card, you simply say what the pilot would say in response to the prompt. You're roleplaying your pilot's experience to those on the comms. channel; you have your voice to represent that experience.

As well as prompts, there'll be actual suggestions of things you might say. These are entirely optional and simply there to give you \*something\* to say if you can't think of anything else. We found during testing that this was very handy.

## **INTERCEPTION**

Many sorties will end in combat. This involves playing cards from two decks. The Blue deck contains neutral and good cards, the Red deck contains neutral and bad cards.

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.

Just as for the Journey Deck, 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.

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.

The numbers of cards in each deck at this point is given by the system. The RAF Squadron Leaders can, however, choose to "press the attack" and double each deck. This will mean more positive consequences, and more negative consequences, of the sortie.

## **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.

Whichever is the case, you'll be handed another Journey Deck for the return journey. You'll roleplay through that deck the same as the journey out until the Sky Room crew turn the comms off, and you return to the field of play by the same route you left.

## **Combat and Consequences**

Blue and red cards played in combat can lead to damage to aircraft, as as injuries or death to pilots.

Positive consequences include damage or disruption to enemy aircraft.

- Damage forces a plane down, no matter if it is a fighter or bomber.
- Disruption causes a plane to break formation; fighters will quickly rejoin the fight, but lone bombers will usually turn for home since pressing on alone is extremely dangerous. If a formation of bombers is reduced to 50% strength then it will usually turn back.

Negative consequences include aircraft being hit. If an aircraft is hit, then either the pilot will be injured, or the aircraft will not make it back to base.

- If the aircraft is shot down, the pilot may parachute to earth, hopefully landing safely on land. Landing in the sea is more dangerous, but with luck (and WAAF assistance!) a fast rescue launch will find you. If you land safely, you may return to duty after a short delay (with injuries if you choose.)
- If the pilot is hit then the aircraft may land safely back at base but the pilot should report in to the off-game room to have injury makeup applied before re-joining the game. You can decide the severity of your injury with the makeup crew.

Some cards indicate that the player of the card has been hit, while others indicate that a friendly aircraft has been hit. These may be taken by the player, or assigned to a friendly NPC aircraft in the same fight.

There are a small number of cards that indicate a character has been killed (possibly via a mortal wound which will kill them after landing.) While it is entirely up to you how you report this, it's the end of that character's journey. This is a great opportunity for a dramatic death scene - pilot deaths resulted in some of the most emotionally powerful scenes in Run 1.

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

