

# REFITTING

## A Better LUFTWAFFE

By Michael Anchors

*LUFTWAFFE* is something of a phenomena in the Avalon Hill Game Company line. Introduced in 1971, the game always sold quite well. It ranked eighth on the last "All-time Bestsellers" listing. As the *GENERAL Index and Company History* pointed out, the superb cover art and appealing title are major selling features. Nevertheless, the game ranks 52nd (fourth from the bottom) on the "Wargame RBG". It has been widely cited as unrealistic (Seth Owens, "A Historian's Guide to AH Wargames" in Vol. 19, No. 6) and boring (Kenneth Erbey, "Tactical Level Luftwaffe" in Vol. 18, No. 4). *LUFTWAFFE* is thus widely owned, but seldom played or enjoyed.

That is too bad, because sleeping inside the box with the diving Messerschmidt is a potentially great game! Every component of the game, except the rules, is superb. In this article I have attempted to revise certain rules to create the exciting game the designer and developer were hoping to produce. Assume that all original rules are in effect, except as modified below:

**A.** No more than one German squadron (two aircraft factors) can land or take off from an airbase per turn. One squadron can take off, and another land, each turn at each airbase.

**B.** It takes one full turn to refuel. While the aircraft type if being refueled, its *Aircraft Time* counter is placed face down on the German OB card. Staging alone does not require refueling. It is handled as in the original rules, except that the utility of such is limited by Rule 1 above.

**C.** Aircraft entering a hex to attack enemy aircraft end their movement in that hex. However, aircraft may pass through hexes containing enemy aircraft without attacking.

**D.** Bombers do not remain in their target hex after bombing, but continue movement to the limit of their movement factor.

**E.** German aircraft sharing a city hex with enemy aircraft during the German Movement Phase are attacked by city AA fire.

**F.** Air combat is handled in a completely different manner than previously:

*Step 1:* At the beginning of combat in a hex, the German player openly divides his attacking aircraft into two groups—A and B. The US player then divides his escorting fighters into two groups—C and D. Groups may be redefined for each combat turn.

*Note:* In a purely fighter-fighter combat, only groups A and C would be created.

*Step 2:* Groups A and C conduct combat against each other; losses are extracted simultaneously. The planes in Group C are detached from close escort duty for the remainder of the quarter.

*Note:* If Group C is totally eliminated in this combat, excess casualties are removed from Group D. If no planes were assigned to Group C by the US player, Group A can attack Group D directly. In neither case can Group D fire on Group A.

*Step 3:* Surviving aircraft in Group D can now attack Group B. Group B cannot return fire.

*Step 4:* Surviving aircraft of Group B now attack the bombers. Bomber defensive fire is directed at Group B only.

**G.** Air combat no longer follows the "best against

the best" rule. Players may assign each attacking aircraft type to any of the opponent's aircraft types in the hex/group. If that target type is wiped out, excess losses are taken from other enemy types in the hex with the same or lower "E" rating (owning player's choice). If no such type is available in the hex/group, excess "hits" are ignored. An attacking player with several squadrons of one type may subdivide his squadrons for combat. The opponent's aircraft types may not be subdivided.

*Note:* The US player must name a target aircraft type, not just a target E rating. Consequently, he cannot selectively attack "school" units, if non-school units of the same type are in the hex.

**H.** During the US player turn, US fighters may only attack German fighters in the air that *began* the player turn in a hex with US aircraft.

**I.** American planes may strafe airbases only if the names of the bases and the I.D. of the strafing planes are pre-recorded on the Mission Sheet. Bombers may bomb bases only if the base and I.D. number of the bomber unit are pre-recorded.

**J.** For AA fire and strafe attacks, one die is used to resolve combat. For air-to-air combat, two dice are used. The *lower* of the two dice is modified by the E rating difference and applied to the CRT.

*The following rules apply to the Advanced game only:*

**K. Replacements:** German replacements are amassed at a rate of one factor for every four unbombed aircraft factories. Each quarter in which the US player bombs the last target of one of the types listed below, German replacements for the next quarter (only) are cut in half (rounded down):

- Ball Bearings
- Chemicals
- Steel
- Oil
- Rail Center
- Transportation Center

The US replacement rate is a flat eight aircraft factors per quarter. This can be increased by one factor/quarter for each Shipping (i.e., U-boat) target bombed.

**L.** There are *no* RAF attacks.

**M. Victory Conditions:** Each turn the US player receives one victory point for each target-city bombed in the present and all previous quarters. The US player wins whenever it becomes inevitable that he will accumulate 300 or more points by the end of the April 1945 quarter.

**N.** Players may use the original Advanced Game US and German OBs, recognizing that they represent a hypothetical situation in which the Fuehrer did not delay jet development. If the players desire a more historical game, don't substitute jet units (starting in Jan 1944). However, for play balance, penalize the US player one victory point for each squadron of the 9th and 12th Air Forces he uses each turn. These aircraft are shown in red on the variant US OB card accompanying this article. Destroyed or partially destroyed squadrons from the 9th and 12th Air Forces must be brought up to full strength before they can be returned to those forces; hence, for each turn destroyed or damaged, also deduct one victory point from the American total.

