

WINNING THE VICTORIA CROSS (Bishop's solo airfield raid)

A solo-play scenario for testing / trying out

Dogfight! or *Dogfite!*

Rules for WW1 aerial combat with miniatures

Around dawn of 2 June, 1917, Billy Bishop attacked the aircraft of Jasta 5 on their field at Estourmel as they were preparing for a morning sortie, and shot down three in the ensuing fight as they scrambled to get into the air. For this action Bishop was awarded the Victoria Cross. The validity of the action (or of this telling) is beside the point: and that is that it makes for a good solo-play game!

The details/numbers below are not carved in stone (or most likely even close to good representations of history): if changing something makes the game suit individual taste better, than change away!

PILOTS: Bishop (Experience +1, Flying - MT / **bet** level, Shooting +1)

Bishop's numbers are up for grabs. He was, supposedly, not a great flyer at this time: thus the penalty for higher-level MTs / **bets**. The firing bonus is to reflect the notion that he was reputed to bore right in on his target with little concern for his own safety --it's also good for game-balance: giving him a +2 firing skill (and the associated increase in critical hits) may be found necessary, depending on how challenging a game is desired.

6 Germans* --random skills rolled at the time an aircraft is selected to attempt starting.

1d6: 1= **-1**; 2, 3, 4 = **0**; 5,6 = **+1** (roll again: **+2** if 5,6 rolled a second time)

NOTE: Roll Experience first and add/subtract resulting Experience from Flying and Shooting die rolls.

*more (or less) than this number can be used --six has yielded fairly challenging (yet not impossible) games. The quality of the German pilots can also be altered to vary the difficulty of the scenario.

TIP: Use a single sheet of paper to record / track the Germans' stats and damage (rather than six individual logs) to keep the clutter on the table to a minimum and make access to the data easier.

AIRCRAFT:

	MT / bet	aero- batics	power	drag	climb	spin	firing*	min speed	max speed	max dive	strength
Nieuport 17	0	+1	0	-1	+1	0	0	2	7	8	5**
Albatros D2	+1	+1	0	+1	0	0	0	2	7	12	5**
Albatros D3	0	0	0	+1	+1	0	+1	2	7	8	5**

* Nieuport has one gun, Albatros have two.

** If playing *Dogfite!*, reduce strengths to 4 (since only size-2 bursts are allowed)

SETUP: The airfield should be a 3-by or 4-by-4 hex space in the middle of the table. The parked German aircraft should all be in the middle of one hex in a corner of the field --if fitting the models is difficult, counters or some other type of marker can be used to represent them until they start / move. Bishop begins the game three hexes from the German aircraft at any altitude.

STARTING GERMAN AIRCRAFT: During the targeting step on turn 2 (and on each even-numbered turn after), randomly pick one aircraft to roll to start engine (6 on d6, +1 to roll for each following turn). If aircraft starts, roll for power gain during movement (+1 to roll if speed = 0), and move / taxi aircraft on following turns using the same Movement-Point rules as with flying aircraft (EXCEPTION: Any turns on the ground must be done in the middle of a hex).

To take off, an aircraft must begin the turn at minimum speed --takeoff may be delayed until speed is one greater than minimum speed, but no later. Aircraft will climb at the shallowest angle (one-point speed loss) unless its speed reaches two greater than minimum.

PLAYING THE GERMANS: It's up to the individual player, but handling the Germans as no more than dumb targets doesn't make for a challenging game. To inject them with a bit of unpredictability, rate the "smartness" (ie: good tactical value) of each possible action (1-6) and roll a die to see if the pilot does it (modify roll with Experience). Thus something that is obviously a good move (something even a rookie could figure out) would be rated low (say 2 or 3?) while something that is perhaps a bit more sophisticated and/or dependent on guessing what Bishop will do would be rated high (5 or 6?).

Another tool for increasing the variability of the German's performance / actions is to assign each pilot upon their creation a "keen" factor (as with other ratings: -1 to +2 ?) that reflects how much they want to be a hero. Possible actions could then be given a risk rating (as with the "smart" rating above) that a pilot would roll against to see if he's brave (or stupid...) enough to take the chance. (This would be for things like taking higher MTs / [bets](#).)

SPECIAL RULES FOR ATTACKING AIRCRAFT ON THE GROUND: When strafing parked or taxiing aircraft, Bishop receives the CV / [edge](#) position bonus even if the target is in the middle of the hex, and gains the following CV / [edge](#) bonus based on the speed of the target on the ground:

Target speed = bonus: 0 = +5, 1 = +3, 2 or 3 = +1

Remember that aircraft on the ground are at altitude level 0: attacks from level 1 (in the same hex) suffer the -5 penalty for being at half-hex range unless Bishop is leaving level 1 (in which case no additional range penalty is assessed).

GROUND FIRE: On each turn that Bishop ends over an airfield hex, roll during combat for AA fire. CV / [edge](#) based on Bishop's altitude: altitude 0 or 2 = CV / [edge](#) of 1, altitude 1 = CV / [edge](#) of 2. Modifiers: speed = -1 if >6, +1 if < 4; MT-level = -1 if level 2, -2 if level 3.

OPTION: Limited Ammunition = Bishop has 9 bursts of fire ([5 shots](#)) before reloading is required. Reloading succeeds on a d6 roll of 5 or better (+1 modifier per consecutive turn) and no targeting, aerobatics, or MTs / [bets](#) of level 2 or 3 may be done while reloading.

VICTORY CONDITION: Bishop must escape edge of table with lead of at least 2 hexes over nearest airborne German aircraft. Escape may only be attempted after rolling less than the number of aircraft destroyed on 1d6. (NOTE: Aircraft on ground that receive 20+ / [16+](#) hits are considered destroyed.)