THE BATTLE OF BERLIN

A Variant for B-17, Queen of the Skies

By Larry Cirelli

INTRODUCTION:

In November of 1943, the RAF embarked on a campaign which was expected to finally bring the Third Reich to its knees. The target was Berlin and the British authorities were confident that its success would not only shorten the war, but also would prove once and for all to their American "cousins" the folly of daylight bombing. The introduction of the "Oboe" and "H2S" radar systems, and the formation of the Pathfinder Force had aided Bomber Command in making great strides in the area of night bombing since those early days in 1940. In that year, a report from the War Cabinet Secretariat stated that not only did bomber crews rarely find their targets, but they even less frequently hit them.

By 1943, Bomber Command's tactics were aimed at Germany's heavy industry centers. The strategy was not only to destroy the factories, but also the homes, morale and lives of the civilian population. Successes in the first campaigns against the Ruhr Valley and Hamburg had given the British good reason for their high expectations against the German capital; but the Luftwaffe's night fighter force (NACHTJAGD) had also made great strides since 1940.

Gone were the days when German pilots complained that trying to intercept a bomber at night was like "trying to catch a fly in a darkened room". Advances in airborne radar played a major role in the improvement of the NACHT-JAGD's performance. New radar equipment was developed which could not be jammed by "window" techniques and which could home-in on the navigational and tail-warning radars used in British bombers. New tactics were also implemented in 1943 which divided the NACHT-JAGD into "Tame Boar" and "Wild Boar" units. "Tame Boar" units employed radar-equipped

twin-engine fighters which stalked British bombers alone, relying on ground radar and their own airborne sets to locate targets. "Wild Boar" tactics, on the other hand, called for single-engine fighters without radar to operate over the target itself. "Wild Boar" fighters would attack British bombers which were illuminated by searchlights or the raiders' own marker flares. Both the improved radar and the new tactics helped make the NACHTJAGD "uncomfortably efficient" by the Fall of 1943. From a force of 35 in 1940, the NACHTJAGD reached a peak strength of almost 600 "Tame Boar" and "Wild Boar" fighters by March, 1944.

By its conclusion, the Battle of Berlin was the greatest assault ever to be launched against a European city. Between November, 1943 and March, 1944, Bomber Command flew over 20,000 sorties in 35 major operations against Berlin and 12 other German cities. Over half of the sorties were against the German capital. In the end, the British had to make the painful admission that they had failed to pound Hitler's capital or his nation into submission. The cost was 1,047 bombers lost and 1,682 damaged. On the German side, the NACHTJAGD reached the highwater mark of its existence on the last night of the campaign—March 30/31, 1944. On that night, of the 781 bombers sent to Nuremburg, "Tame Boar" fighters were credited with destroying 80 of the 108 British aircraft lost. As for the British, the one bright spot was the emergence of the Lancaster as the mainstay of Bomber Command —the British "Queen of the Skies".

VARIANT RULES

Except for the rule changes listed below, all other rules from *B-17, QUEEN OF THE SKIES* remain in effect.

THE COMBATANTS:

You are now the commander of a British Lancaster heavy bomber. The Lancaster was a four engine bomber, but had some marked differences from the B-17. The Lancaster only had a crew of 7: Pilot, Bomb Aimer, Navigator, Flight Engineer, Radio Operator, Mid-upper Turret Gunner and Tail Gunner. For defensive fire, the Lancaster carried eight machine guns: Two in each of the nose and mid-upper turrets and four in the tail turret. Unfortunately, the Lancaster was armed with the less powerful .303 Browning machine gun. The tail guns were supplied with 10,000 rounds of ammo which was located in the forward part of the waist compartment, and carried by tracks back to the tail guns. The bomb bay was underneath the aircraft, being situated beneath the pilot and waist compartments. Although Lancasters were being supplied with radar sets by 1943, for simplicity this aspect has not been included.

Your adversaries will be the Me-110 "Tame Boar" fighter and the Me-109 "Wild Boar" fighter. The Me-110 was the backbone of the NACHTJAGD in the early years, but by 1943 was being supplanted in that role by newer types. "Wild Boar" tactics were implemented after the successful British raid on Hamburg in July, 1943.

1. PRE-MISSION STEPS

A. Because of the "bomber stream" tactics employed by Bomber Command, it is not necessary to roll for your bomber's position in the squadron or formation. Your bomber is never considered to be "out of formation", but it may drop to 10,000 feet due to battle damage.

B. Roll for the target city on the Mission Targets table (G-3 [L]) on the following page:

G-3 [L] MISSION TARGETS
Roll 2D.

ROLL	TARGET	TYPE	ROLL	TARGET	TYPE
2	Ludwigshaven	Industry	8	Berlin	Industry
3	Leipzig	Aircraft	9	Stuttgart	Industry
4	North Germany (Roll 1D):		10	South Germany (Roll 1D):	
	1, 2 = Brunswick	Industry		1-3 = Augsburg	Aircraft
	3, 4 = Magdeburg	Industry		4-6 = Schweinfurt	Ball Bearings
	5, 6 = Stettin	Industry	11	Ruhr Valley (Roll ID):	
5	Frankfurt	Industry		1-3 = Essen	Industry
6	Berlin	Industry		4-6 = Leverkusen	Industry
7	Berlin	Industry	12	Nuremberg	Industry

C. Examination of the Flight Log Gazetteer (Table G-11 [L]) is necessary only when your bomber is shot down and you need to know if you are over land or water.

EDITOR'S NOTE: All Table references follow the style of the original *B-17* rules. All Tables unique to this article are labelled as per their counterparts in *B-17*, with the addition of a bracketed "L" [L] for "Lancaster" (i.e., G-3 [L]).

G-11 [L] FLIGHT LOG GAZETEER*

TARGET CITY	ZONE 4	ZONE 5	ZONE 6	ZONE 7	ZONE 8	ZONE 9	ZONE 10	ZONE 11
Augsburg	W/N	N	N/G	G	G	G	G	G
Berlin	W	W	W	W/G	G	G	G	
Brunswick	W	W	W	W/G	G			
Essen	W/N	N	G					
Frankfurt	W/N	N	N/G	G	G			
Leipzig	W	W	W	W/G	G	G	G	
Leverkusen	W/N	N	G					
Magdeburg	W	W	W	W/G	G	G		
Ludwigshaven	W/N	N	N/G	G	G			
Nuremburg	W/N	N	N/G	G	G	G	G	
Schweinfurt	W/N	N	N/G	G	G	G		
Stuttgart	W/N	N	N/G	G	G	G		
Stettin	W	W	W	W/G	G	G	G	G

* W = Water, N = Netherlands, G = Germany. Player has a choice of where to come down if a zone has two letters.

D. Place bomber marker on Bomber Command Base on Lancaster Strategic Movement Board.

2. MISSION STEPS

A. Do not roll for fighter cover. There is no fighter coverage available at any time during these missions.

B. As your bomber enters a zone, determine if it will be attacked by a "Tame Boar" fighter by rolling lD on the "Tame Boar" table (B-2 [L]):

B-2 [L] "TAME BOAR" TABLE
Roll 1D.

ZONE	TO TARGET	FROM TARGET
1-3	No Attacks	No Attacks
4	6	6
5	5, 6	6
6-11	4-6	6
Target	3-6	5, 6

C. When your bomber enters the target zone, the following sequence of play occurs:

1. Weather Phase
2. "Tame Boar" Phase (treat as TO TARGET on Table B-2 [L])
3. Searchlight Phase
4. Flak Phase
5. "Wild Boar" Phase
6. Bomb Run
7. "Tame Boar" Phase (treat as FROM TARGET on Table B-2 [L])

3. COMBAT PROCEDURES FOR "TAME BOAR" FIGHTERS

A. An attacking German "Tame Boar" fighter will always be a single Me-110 attacking from the 6 O'clock Low position.

B. The Me-110 will always make three attacks (Initial and both Successive attacks) unless destroyed or having received a FBOA damage result from Table M-2.

C. Spotting Phase
1. Roll ID:
   1, 2 = Me-110 spotted by Tail Gunner;
   3-6 = Me-110 approaches unseen.

2. If the Me-110 is spotted, then:
   a. Follow normal rules for combat.
   b. Bomber may take evasive action during Initial attack after defensive fire, but before offensive fire. This means that the Me-110 will be affected by the evasive action modifier, but the Tail Gunner will not (at least for the Initial attack).
   c. Once the bomber takes evasive action, it must do so throughout all of the present turn's attacks. (See Section 15, page 8 for Evasive Action Rules.)
   d. Mid-upper Turret may only fire at the Me-110 if the bomber is taking evasive action. Mid-upper Turret can *not* fire in the Initial attack, only in the Successive attacks. The Mid-upper turret's field of fire is the same as that of the B-17 Top turret.

3. If Me-110 is not spotted, then:
   a. Me-110 fires first in Surprise Offensive Fire Phase. Me-110 fires only once during this phase, and no defensive fire is allowed.
   b. After Surprise Phase, resolve combat as per above in section 3.C.2 of these rules.

D. Offensive/Defensive Fire

1. The Tail Guns need a die roll of 5 or 6 to hit the attacking Me-110.
2. The Tail Guns will receive the +l modifier when rolling on Table M-2 *only* if all four tail guns are operational.
3. If bomber is taking evasive action, all defensive fire from the bomber needs a die roll of "6" to hit attacking German fighters.
4. Me-110 needs a die roll of 4-6 to hit the bomber.
5. During the surprise offensive fire phase, an Me-110 can roll a 3-6 to hit the bomber.
6. If an Me-110 hits the bomber, roll 2D on Table B-4 to determine number of hits.
   a. Use 6 O'clock position during surprise offensive fire phase only.
   b. Use Vertical Climb position for all other attacks.
   c. Do not add "1" to the number of shell hits achieved by an Me-110 "Tame Boar".
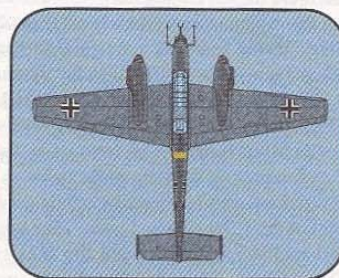
7. For each shell hit, roll 2D on the Area Damage Table (B-5 [L]) to determine the area of the bomber which is affected:

B-5 [L] AREA DAMAGE TABLE
Roll 2D.

ROLL	AREA HIT
2	Nose
3	Bomb Bay
4	Superficial Damage
5	Port Wing
6	Tail
7	Wings — Roll ID: 1-3 = Port Wing; 4-6 = Starboard Wing
8	Waist
9	Starboard Wing
10	Superficial Damage
11	Pilot Compartment
12	Bomb Bay

4. COMBAT PROCEDURES FOR "WILD BOAR" FIGHTER

A. "Wild Boar" attacks take place only over the target zone, and the "Wild Boar" fighter is always an Me-109.

B. The "Wild Boar" fighter attacks on a die roll of "6", or automatically if your bomber is spotted by a searchlight.

C. Attack Phase

1. Roll 2D on TABLE B-6 SUCCESSIVE ATTACKS to determine attack position.

2. Only one "Wild Boar" fighter will attack at a time.

3. If a "Wild Boar" fighter was generated by the bomber's being spotted by a searchlight, conduct normal combat procedures (initial and any successive attacks).

4. If a "Wild Boar" fighter was generated by die roll, only one (initial) attack occurs.

5. All Offensive and Defensive fire is modified by –1. A "6" is always a hit, regardless of modifiers.

D. "Wild Boar" attacks take place after Flak attacks, but before the bomb run.

E. Your bomber may take evasive action during the "Wild Boar" phase, but the bomb run is then modified by –1.

5. TARGET ZONE PHASE

A. Roll for weather on the "Weather Over Target table (O-1 [L]).

O-1 [L] WEATHER OVER TARGET
Roll 2D.

ROLL	WEATHER
2	Bad
3, 4	Poor
5 - 9	Good
10, 11	Poor
12	Bad

1. Also use Table O-1 [L] for weather over base when returning from a mission.

2. Use modifiers on Table O-1 to determine effect weather has on mission (if any).

B. Roll for "Tame Boar" Fighter

1. Use same rules as mentioned in section II, B and section III of these rules.

2. Bad or poor weather will modify the possibility of attack by "Tame Boar" fighters and spotting phase die rolls by –1.

C. Roll for Searchlight Phase

1. Roll lD: 1–4 = No Effect; 5–6 = Searchlight has spotted and is fixed on your bomber.
   a. Die roll on Table 0-2 is modified by +1.
   b. Bomber is automatically attacked by a "Wild Boar" fighter.

2. Bad or poor weather will modify the searchlight die roll by –1.

D. Resolve "Flak Over Target" as per the basic game rules.

E. Roll for "Wild Boar" Fighter.

1. Refer to Section 4 of these rules.

2. There is no die roll for a "Wild Boar" if one has already been generated in the Searchlight Phase. Your bomber will be attacked by only one "Wild Boar" fighter while over the target zone.

F. Conduct your Bomb Run as per the basic game rules.

1. Cities in the Ruhr Valley were in range of the "Oboe" apparatus, which proved to be a much better navigational system than the H2S radar. Therefore, if your mission is to Essen or Leverkusen, modify the "Bomb Run" die roll on Table O-6 by +l.

G. Roll for "Tame Boar" Fighter.

6. CAMPAIGN GAME

A. You're in the RAF now! Tour of duty is 30 missions.

B. To add a touch more realism, increase the tour of duty to 60 missions. RAF personnel were expected to "volunteer" for a second tour of 30 missions.

7. MISCELLANEOUS

A. Nose and Mid-upper Turrets do not receive the +l modifier for twin guns on Table M-2.

B. The Tail gunner may not fire at German fighters attacking from the front as they pass the rear of the bomber (9.2).

C. Since your bomber is never considered to be out of formation, you may never abort a mission for this reason.

D. On the Mission Chart, use the Nose and Top Turret ammo boxes for the Nose and Mid-upper Turrets, respectively. For the Tail Guns, use the ammo boxes for the Port Waist, Starboard Waist and Tail Guns combined.

E. The Random Events Table is never used. If you get a die roll referring you to this table, roll again until you receive another result.

F. If the Tail Guns run out of ammunition, they may not transfer ammo from the other guns, nor may they lend their ammo to the other guns.

G. If your bomber is forced to 10,000 feet by battle damage, roll for searchlights in the searchlight phase. If a searchlight finds your bomber, roll 2D three times instead of twice on the Light Flak column of Table O-3.

H. If your bomber loses one engine and you drop bombs to avoid spending two turns in each zone, your mission is automatically aborted, but still counts toward your tour-of-duty requirements.

I. Ignore any die roll result for the Radio Room; if such a result is obtained, roll again until you receive another result.

7. DAMAGE TABLE CHANGES (BLUE AND PINK CARDS)

BI-1 [L] WINGS
Roll 2D per shell hit.

ROLL	AREA HIT	EFFECT
2 - 5	Same as B-17	See B-17 Table BI-1.
6	Rubber Raft	Applies to a Starboard Wing Hit ONLY! If Lancaster forced to ditch in water, roll on Table G-10 is –2. If hit was on Port Wing, treat as Superficial Damage (No effect).
7 - 12	Same as B-17	See B-17 Table BI-1.

(Changes to Pink Cards begin on next page)

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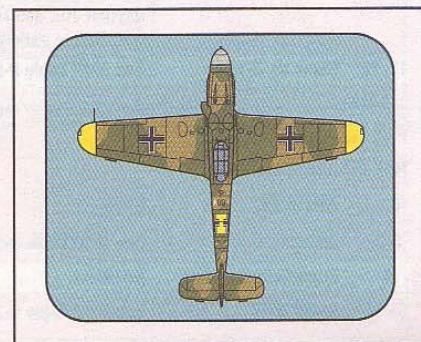Bill Gunsion: *The Encyclopedia of the World's Combat Aircraft*

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P-1 [L] NOSE

Roll 2D per shell hit.

ROLL	AREA HIT	EFFECT
2	Mark XIV Bomb Sight	Bomb run automatically off target.
3	Superficial Damage	No effect.
4	Nose Turret	Roll 1D: 1-3 = guns inoperable; 4, 5 = Bomb Aimer rolls for wound on Table BI-4; 6 = guns inoperable and Bomb Aimer rolls for wound.
5	Bomb Aimer	Roll for wound on Table BI-4.
6 - 8	Superficial Damage	No effect.
9	Bomb Aimer	Roll for wound on Table BI-4.
10	Bomb Controls Out	Bombs must be dropped manually. Bomb run on Table O-6 is –3.
11, 12	Same as B-17	See B-17 Table P-1.

P-2 [L] PILOT COMPARTMENT

Roll 2D per shell hit.

ROLL	AREA HIT	EFFECT
2	Bomb Bay	Roll 2D on B-17 Table P-3.
3	Compartment Heat	Compartment Heat out.
4	Navigator	Roll 1D: 1, 2 = Navigator's equipment inoperable. Bomber must spend 2 turns in each future odd-numbered zone entered; 3-5 = Navigator must roll for wound on Table BI-4; 6 = Navigator's equipment inoperable and Navigator must roll for wound.
5	Pilot	Roll for wound on Table BI-4. If Pilot is KIA or Seriously Wounded, then Flight Engineer must be first crewman to take over, if able to do so.
6	Flight Engineer	Roll for wound on Table BI-4.
7	Superficial Damage	No effect.
8	Radio Operator	Roll 1D: 1 = Intercom system out. May abort mission. If German fighter is spotted, bomber may not take evasive action until after German first firing; 2, 3 = Radio out. If forced to land in water, roll on Table G-10 is –6; 4-6 = Radio Operator must roll for wound on Table BI-4.
9	Instruments	Roll for damage on Table BI-2.
10	Oxygen Supply Hit	Roll 1D: 1 = Pilot; 2 = Flight Engineer; 3 = Navigator; 4 = Radio Operator; 5 = all hit; 6 = Fire and compartment oxygen out. See B-17 rules section Oxygen Out. Roll to extinguish fire on Table BI-3.
11, 12	Same as B-17	See B-17 Table P-2.

P-3 [L] BOMB BAY

Roll 2D per shell hit.

ROLL	AREA HIT	EFFECT
2, 3	Same as B-17	See B-17 Table P-3.
4	Superficial Damage	No effect.
5 - 12	Same B-17	See B-17 Table P-3.

P-5 [L] WAIST

Roll 2D per shell hit.

ROLL	AREA HIT	EFFECT
2	Bomb Bay	Roll 2D on Table P-3.
3	Oxygen Supply Hit	Roll1D. 1-5 = 1 oxygen supply hit; 6 = Fire and waist oxygen out. See B-17 rules section Oxygen Out. Roll to extinguish fire on Table BI-3.
4	Tail Gun's Ammo Boxes	Roll 1D: 1-3 = Port Ammo Box hit; 4-6 = Starboard Ammo Box hit. If Ammo Box takes 2 hits it is damaged and can no longer supply ammo to the Tail Guns. If only one Ammo Box is damaged, the Tail Guns will lose their +1 modifier on Table M-2 after four more firings. If both Ammo Boxes are damaged, Tail Guns run out of ammo after four more firings, and may not be used thereafter. SEE NOTE.
5 - 7	Superficial Damage	No effect.
8	Mid-upper Turret	Roll 1D: 1, 2 = Guns inoperable; 3-5 = Gunner rolls for wound on Table BI-4; 6 = Guns inoperable and Gunner rolls for wound.
9	Superficial Damage	No effect.
10	Tail Gun's Ammo Tracks	Roll 1D: 1-4 = No effect; 5 = Port Ammo Track damaged; 6 = Starboard Ammo Track damaged. If one Track is damaged, Tail Guns will lose their +1 modifier on Table M-2 after two more firings. If both Ammo Tracks are damaged, Tail Guns run out of ammo after two more firings, and may not be used thereafter. SEE NOTE.
11, 12	Same as B-17	See B-17 Table P-5.

NOTE: The die roll results of 4 and 10 can cause a variety of results which may see your Tail Guns lose their +1 modifier one turn and lose all ammo the next. You should keep careful records and use some common sense so that there is no confusion as to the Tail Guns' status. Naturally, the more serious result will always take precedence. Damaged Ammo Boxes and Ammo Tracks may not be repaired during the mission.

P-6 [L] TAIL SECTION

Roll 2D per shell hit.

ROLL	AREA HIT	EFFECT
2	Same as B-17	See B-17 Table P-6.
3	Tail wheel or Auto-Pilot Mechanism	Roll 1D: 1-3 = Tailwheel damaged, landing roll on Table G-9 -1; 4-6 = Autopilot mechanism inoperable; no effect on Bomb Run, but landing rolls on Tables G-9 or G-10 are –1 due to Pilot fatigue.
4 - 6	Same as B-17	See B-17 Table P-6.
7	Rudder	Roll 1d: 1-3 = Port rudder hit; 4-6 = Starboard rudder hit. With 2 hits, a rudder is inoperable. If both rudders inoperable, landing roll on Tables G-9 or G-10 is –1.
8	Superficial Damage	No effect.
9, 10	Tailplane	Roll 1D: 1 = Port rudder controls; 2 = Starboard rudder controls; 3-6 = same effect as for these die rolls in B-17.
11, 12	Same as B-17	See B-17 Table P-6.

NOSE

PILOT COMPARTMENT & BOMB BAY

WINGS

WAIST

TAIL

BOMB AIMER

FRONT TURRET GUNNER

PILOT

NAVIGATOR

W.T. OPERATOR

MID-UPPER TURRET GUNNER

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

REAR TURRET GUNNER

AVRO Lancaster
CREW PLACEMENT BOARD