CROSSHAIRS

A game of WW1 aerial combat by **Stephen Tavener**

INTRODUCTION (by Stephen Tavener)

Crosshairs straddles the line between abstract strategy game and wargame.

I have attempted to capture the essence of a WW1 aerial dogfight in a game with no random elements or hidden elements; so hang up your assumptions at the door, and go along for the ride. Combat is simple – if a plane is within line of sight of two enemy planes, it is shot down. You lose if you are reduced to one plane, and can therefore no longer shoot the enemy.

The multiplayer rules are described in a separate rulebook that is included with the expansion.

MATERIAL

Included with the basic set (2 players):

- A hexagonal game board, 6 hexes per side (2 pads)
- 5 red biplanes
- 5 green biplanes
- 16 white foam clouds
- 40 altitude rings
- 2 small plastic boxes for the biplanes
- Carrying case

Included with each expansion (for each additional player):

- 5 biplanes of the same colour
- A small plastic box for the biplanes
- 20 altitude rings

TWO-PLAYER SETUP

Players choose opposite sides of the board; these are their starting hexes (see *The First Few Turns*).

Take the 5 biplanes of your colour. Divide the altitude rings evenly between each player (you can use additional rings from the expansion). All planes start off the board.

Take 8 clouds each. Starting with the Green player, take turns to place the clouds on the board. Do not make clouds bigger than two hexes.

Hint: for your first games, try to block all the rows and columns on the board. Long, clear lines of sight can be deadly to the unwary.

See the example on the right for a possible cloud pattern.

The Green player starts the game.
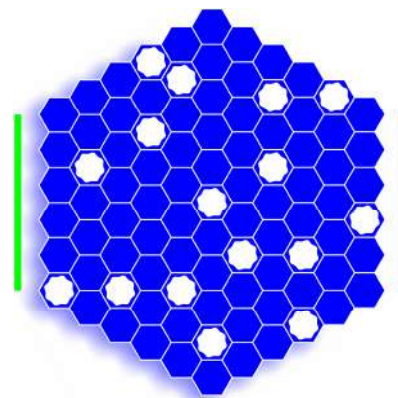
Example of game setup

GAME PLAY

BASIC CONCEPTS OF MOVEMENT

The Planes

Planes have two basic attributes:

- Height, which can range from 0 to 6 (this is represented by a stack of altitude rings under the piece). When a plane moves, all the stack is moved with it
- Direction: planes must always face one side of their current hex. This is the direction they will move next step.

Legal moves

- Planes may not occupy the same space or move through each other, regardless of height.
- Clouds do not hinder movement, but do prevent combat.
- Once on the board, planes may not leave the playing area.
- Planes have a maximum altitude and **may not climb** if they are at height **6**.
- If you run out of altitude counters you cannot increase the height of your planes.

Movement Order

Once all planes have entered the board, a player *must* move all of their planes each turn. There are no restrictions on the order in which the planes move; however, *one plane must finish movement before another can start*.

MOVEMENT

Each turn, a plane **must** perform exactly **one** of the following actions. Parts of an action must be performed in the order stated:

(a) Climb

- (required) Increase the height of the plane by one. Do so by adding an altitude ring underneath the plane.
- (required) Move **one** space forwards.
- (optional) rotate 60°

(b) Level Flight

- (required) Move **one or two** spaces forwards.
- (optional) rotate 60°.

(c) Dive

A diving plane may make a series of *manoeuvres*, losing height with each one. Each *manoeuvre* consists of one of the following:

- Power dive (turn without moving).
    - o (required) Decrease the height of the plane by 2 (removing 2 altitude rings).
    - o (optional) rotate 60°.

- Swoop.
    - o (required) Decrease the height of the plane by one (removing 1 altitude ring).
    - o (required) Move one space forwards.
    - o (optional) rotate 60°.

Note: a plane may make any number of swoops and power dives in any order, so long as it loses height with every step.

(d) Crash

If a plane can neither move nor dive, it crashes into the ground and is removed from the game. Whenever a plane crashes, its owner takes the altitude rings beneath the crashed plane, if any.

*Note: this will only occur if the plane cannot move forwards **and** is at height 0 or 1, so that it cannot power dive. Reminder: planes cannot leave the playing area, and cannot move into a space occupied by another plane.*

COMBAT

Line of Fire

- Planes can shoot directly forwards only.
- They are not limited by range.
- They may not shoot through other planes.
- They may not shoot into, through, or out of, clouds.

Caught in the Crosshairs

A plane may be shot down if it is in the line of fire of two or more enemy planes. Whenever a plane is shot down, it is removed from the game (not used any more) and its owner takes back the altitude rings beneath the removed plane.

Players may shoot:

- at the start of their turn
- after each move; this includes individual manoeuvres within a dive sequence

Players may **not** shoot:

- during their opponent's turn
- between the move and rotation parts of a manoeuvre
- friendly planes

Notes:

- height is not a factor when shooting
- shooting is optional (but recommended, except in very rare circumstances)
- if you shoot down a plane, check again immediately to see if any more planes can now be shot.
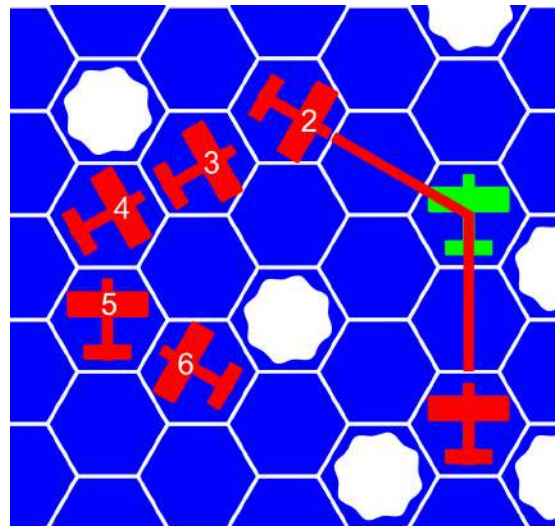
Example of movement and combat:
The plane at height 6 (left) makes a dive to height 2 moving 4 spaces and aiming the green plane. Now the green plane is in the line of fire of two red planes and the Red player shoots it down.

GAME END

When a player is reduced to one plane, they are eliminated from the game. When there is only one player (or team) remaining, that player (team) wins.

THE FIRST FEW TURNS (TWO-PLAYER)

All planes start off the board.

When you move a plane onto the board, place it in any of your starting hexes with a height of 0, facing in any direction. It cannot move again this turn.

- Turn 1: Green moves 1 plane.
- Turn 2: Red moves 2 planes.
- Turn 3: Green moves 3 planes.
- Turn 4: Red moves 4 planes.
- Turn 5 and onwards: move all planes each turn.

Note that in the first few turns, it is not necessary to bring on all of your planes before you can move a plane again.