

# Wings of War



*Wings of War* FAQ v1.0

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Here are some of the most common questions about the game, its components, rules, and the historical background of the airplanes depicted.

## GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q) Is **Watch Your Back!** an expansion set for **Famous Aces**?

A) No, at the moment there are no "expansions" for *Wings of War*. There are just two independent sets, **Famous Aces** and **Watch Your Back!** Either one of them can be played with 2-4 players. **Watch Your Back!** isn't an expansion since it can be played on its own without owning **Famous Aces**.

Q) Isn't "2-4 players" misleading? All the scenarios

have two evenly-matched sides, so it should probably say "2 or 4" players."

A) The design team often played with three players: one player flying two planes, the other two in a team with one plane each. We never tried three on three: each player flying one plane each. As a non-historical scenario that's possible, but inventing it is left to the imagination of the players.

Q) Which is the minimum age to play *Wings of War*?

A) The box indicates ages 10+, but 8-year-old kids can play successfully with the basic rules. Six-year-old kids can play with some help in handling the maneuvers available each turn. On some online forum we read about even younger players. The age listed on the box refers to the age of someone that could read the rules by themselves and play the game on their own.

## GAME COMPONENTS

Q) How much is the game language-dependent?

A) All the components are language independent, except for the rulebook. You can find an Italian edition by Nexus Editrice, an English edition by Fantasy Flight Games, a German edition by Mad Man's Magic and a Greek edition by Fantasy Shop, and they all share the same components except for the language of the rule booklet. You'll find the French

translation of the rules online soon.

Q) Are there common components between **Famous Aces** and **Watch Your Back!**?

A) The rulebook, counters and rulers are the same. The cards are different, representing the different planes in each of the two sets. The control boards of **Watch Your Back!** are generic, not dedicated to specific plane models.

Q) Why do I have five control boards and only four maneuver decks in my box?

A) Because you have a control board for every model of airplane in **Famous Aces**: the Dr.I, Albatross, SPAD XIII, Sopwith Camel and Sopwith Triplane. In *WoW* some models use the same maneuver deck, as in this case of the Dr.I's and Sopwith Triplanes - both use the "D" deck, so 4 decks for 5 plane models are enough.

Q) Why are there several planes with the same maneuver letter if there is only one type of each maneuver deck included with the game?

A) We wanted to add alternative color schemes that were historically accurate and fun to play. We also wanted to be able to play with several friends and two copies of the game.

If players want to fly more than one plane with the same maneuver letter (For example: 2 SPAD XIII in the same patrol, a German Camel against an Allied one, a Dr.I against a Sopwith Triplane), you can do one of the following:

1. Buy, borrow, or convince a friend to buy/borrow a second copy of the game. This is the better but more expensive way to play.
2. Plan your move by writing down the three different card numbers matching the maneuver cards you want to use. For example, an Albatros that wants to go straight, execute an Immelman and then go straight again can write 2, 12, 1 for that turn and then use card

n. 1 in the first step, n. 12 in the second, n. 1 in the third. Then everybody can use the same maneuver deck. You can even photocopy each maneuver deck and give it to players for quick reference (by doing this you won't need to spread out the decks on the table). After a while you'll learn the card numbers and you won't need to check as much. Be careful when you change airplanes, as some of the maneuver decks are different and your moves may not be what you had in mind. Check the card IDs for similar cards. This system takes more time, but is far cheaper.

Q) Why are there some cards that I cannot use immediately?

A) We had a production limit to keep the price reasonable and give you the best value. We included four maneuver decks, and then as many plane cards as we could (Allied Camels, an allied plane captured and used by the Germans, Dr.I's and Sopwith Triplanes) so you could have more freedom in designing scenarios.

Planes with a different damage letter, like the three B-firing Sopwith Triplanes in **Famous Aces** can be used with **Watch Your Back!**, or used as planes with alternative color schemes by pretending they fire at A.

The only really "useless" cards are the promo ones: the UFAG in **Famous Aces**, the SPAD in **Watch Your Back!**. They're there to remind people that other versions of the game exist and to allow further color schemes.

Q) Is it normal to find four blank cards in the game?

A) Yes. Due to the card layout required for printing, there are additional cards besides the 132 cards announced on the back of the box, and you can use them as replacement cards or for your personal game variants. The very first print run also contains four more promo cards than usual (3 copies of the Ufag instead of one, and 2 copies of the "Lightning Bolt" SPAD XIII): those are additional cards in addition to the 132 cards in each set.

Q) There is one counter that puzzles me since no rule appear to apply to it. It's the one that looks like either a pair of binoculars or two chimneys. What does it do?

A) Sorry! They were overlooked on the page that explains the meaning of each counter. A few of them are for successful missions. A generic one is provided (with the drawing of a target), and some specific ones are for the rescue of a spy/pilot, for bombing, for strafing, for photo missions... Binoculars are for a successful mission directing artillery fire. They are described in the notes on how to invent new scenarios.

Q) There are counters to indicate the nationalities of your shot down planes. These counters show specific roundels for British, French, Belgian, Italian, American and Russian planes, while we only get a generic Maltese cross for the "Central Empires." Is the difference between Italians and Belgians more important than the differences between Germans, Austrians, Turks, and Bulgarians?

A) The counters with cockades are in the exact amount that are needed for the game, either with **Famous Aces** or with **Watch Your Back!** The crosses are the same for Austrian and Germans because actually their planes had the same insignia; we checked with our historians to see if it was possible to use different crosses for the two different nationalities, but they said that this would be totally meaningless from a historical point of view. Turkish and Bulgarian counters are not there because there are no planes of that nationality. When we do planes for those nations, we will include counters for them.

Q) "Memo" counters to remember which maneuver was performed last are on the back of the "nationality shot down" markers, meaning they are asked to do double-duty that may coincide. Isn't that poor planning?

A) Not really. Since we provided three "memo" counters for each of the four planes you can fly in each set, and since you use the "shot down" markers

when an airplane is shot down, at the moment you need a shot down marker you also need three fewer "memo" counters.

Q) Why are cards smaller than the standard Poker/CCG size?

A) Our first prototype was made on Carta Mundi blank cards, regular *Magic*-size, and it took quite a large table to play a duel. Wisely, Nexus Editrice decided to use smaller cards (about 65 x 45 cm) because a duel with the first prototype utilized most of a dining room table and a bombing mission had to be played on quite a large section of floor. With the smaller cards, you can have large dogfights and bombing/recon mission on reasonable surfaces.

Q) I just purchased the game and noticed that both the C and the D deck have sharp (approx. 90 degree) turns to the right, but not a corresponding move to the left. Is this on purpose? If yes, then why?

A) In **Famous Aces**, each plane has a specific maneuver deck that reflects the speed and the specific characteristics of the plane.

The C deck is the one for the Sopwith Camel that was produced with several models of engine but mainly with the rotary Clerget of 130hp. It was a tricky airplane, but it allowed experienced pilots to use the torque effect of the engine for very tight right-hand turns. Some of them even reported that it was easier to turn 270° right than 90° left. It is not quite so in our game, so that's why the C deck has 3 tight turns to the right.

The Sopwith Triplane and Fokker Dr.I have a similar effect due to their rotary engines, and that's why their D maneuver deck have two right turn cards and no left.

Q) Wouldn't it help if the maneuver decks had different backs? It took me a while to figure out a system where I wasn't always applying the wrong deck to one of my planes, or putting a card back on the wrong pile.

A) The uniform backs allow for the creation of single maneuver cards for aces, or for plane variants, that could be mixed into many decks, and would also allow inventive players to make new maneuver decks for planes that we did not put in the game, by putting together maneuvers from several different decks. This makes the blank maneuver cards you get in the boxes even more useful, both for optional rules and to be used as replacement for lost cards.

Q) Is it possible to buy extra sets of maneuver or damage cards?

A) No. Currently you can only buy complete boxed sets.

Q) A quick look suggests that a 4-player game may run out of damage cards before players run out of damage ability. Wouldn't it be wiser to give us more damage cards?

A) During test play we never experienced this happening. Let's take **Famous Aces** as an example:

The A damage deck contains 56 damage points. Playing with four planes, in the worst situation you can have a Spad at 15, a Camel at 14, an Albatros at 14 and a Triplane at 12 damage. There would still be 1 point and 1 explosion left in the deck, so at least 1 airplane will be eliminated and its cards will be re-used again before needing to write down damages, even if you use the optional rule that suggests to discarding the explosion for a less luck-based game. The rule of writing down and re-using cards is mentioned in the booklet mainly so you can use multiple planes of the same model (by writing down your moves).

In the regular 4 player game with one box should be mathematically impossible to run out of damage cards.

Q) Isn't the front cone of fire of the airplanes too wide for machine guns that were fixed on the fuselage and could shoot only straight ahead?

A) The cone of fire is quite generous because the maneuver turns allowed are of 60° or 90° - there is no way to turn less than that. Think of the pilot kicking the rudder over or pushing the stick to angle the plane to make that shot.

## BASIC RULES

Q) I assume that "prepare the damage deck" means to shuffle it up, correct?

A) Yes. It means to shuffle it and, depending on the size of your gaming group, cut it. Then you place the deck at an easily reachable part of the table. If you play with several planes, you should get a damage deck for every four aircraft, and mix together the ones with the same letters. For example, if you play with six A planes and four B planes, you shuffle two A decks together and shuffle and use one B deck.

Q) If I put two damage decks together for 6 players, will I have to separate the cards again if we play a game with 2 players?

A) No. It is better to have more decks together, so if a particular card is played the players can't be sure it will not appear again soon. A deck for 4 planes is the suggested minimum for one damage deck. If you have more, the better the game is.

Q) What should I do if I use a maneuver card that forces my airplane card out of the gaming field (but the airplane card is inside both before and after the maneuver)?

A) Use it normally; if you play on a table, hold it with your finger until the airplane has moved. If the plane manages to stay inside the table after moving, it won't be eliminated from the game.

Q) In general, is the left/right direction of a maneuver card (relevant for rudder special damages) indicated by the big blue arrow drawn over the landscape or by the little one in the left lower corner?

A) By the little one in the left lower corner: it is

actually the only reason we put it on the card.

Q) Is a "stall maneuver" considered a steep maneuver?

A) Yes. The steep maneuvers are the ones with the diamond. In **Famous Aces** the stalls (two in each maneuver deck) and the short sideslip of the D deck (the one for Dr.I and Sopwith Triplane) are steep maneuvers.

Q) Can you play a stall (that goes straight ahead) just before or after an Immelmann Turn?

A) No. The rules say: "You have to play a straight move (one with the *little arrow pointing up* symbol) just before the Immelmann Turn and one just after." If you look carefully, you notice that the stall has only a little diamond, not a little arrow pointing up.

Q) Can the straight maneuver after an Immelmann Turn can be used as the start of a new Immelmann Turn, or does each Immelmann Turn have to have its own starting and finishing straight maneuver? In other words, is this sequence correct?:

Turn #1

- 1) Straight
- 2) Immelmann Turn
- 3) Straight

Turn #2

- 1) Immelmann Turn
- 2) Straight
- 3) ...

Or should turn #2 be as follows?:

- 1) Straight
- 2) Immelmann Turn
- 3) Straight

A) Yes, the straight can be used for both Immelmann Turns. The first sequence is correct: the rule that every Immelmann Turn must have a straight before and a straight after is correct.

Q) In the optional rules, an illegal move brings about the elimination of the plane. But what about the basic rules?

A) Our advanced rules are more realistic, and also a good punishment for anybody trying to cheat. But for beginners, it seemed too cruel a rule. We left it to be handled by the players - as in most games there are just "habits," not rules, about how to deal with mistakes (or maybe people trying to be too smart).

We like the suggestion by Peter Donnelly: "Substitute a straight for any illegal card (including an illegal Immelmann)." This will probably result in the plane overshooting the target or leaving the immediate area of battle, and possibly will be followed by senseless maneuvers that might even send the plane off the table, but that simulates the confusion of a novice pilot.

Q) In the drawing on page 3, the firing SPAD is pointing the ruler toward the red dot at the center of the Fokker. Do I have to reach that spot of the target to be able to fire, or can I reach any part of the card or any part of the airplane drawing?

A) You can just reach "any point of an enemy plane card," as stated in the rule in the "Firing" paragraph just above. Touching the border of the card is fine. Having to reach the airplane drawing is an unofficial optional rule for better realism that makes firing more challenging.

Q) In which order do the airplanes fire?

A) In any order, but the rules say that the phase is ended when "all the airplanes that can fire have fired." The planes that are eliminated in that gaming phase can fire as well. So if a plane that is fired at and reaches its maximum damage, or explodes, can still fire anyway. This makes the firing order irrelevant.

Q) If you are in range, do you have to fire your guns?

A) No. The airplane can fire if it has a target in range,

but it is not forced to do so. Firing is not automatic. You also have to choose your target if there are more than one available.

Q) Is there any difference between green and red jamming symbols on damage cards?

A) In the basic game no, both jam with the same effect. The difference of color is used in the optional rules. Read "On the way to become an ace" scenario in the rule booklet, or the optional rules you can find on several Web sites.

Q) When drawing damage cards and someone pulls two cards showing "jammed" indicators, does the shooter take six jammed guns tokens? Does the target even get the effects of the second card?

A) Since the two cards are pulled at the same time, all their damage effects are taken by the target. The rule says that "The airplane that fired at him has jammed his guns and cannot fire until after the next three maneuvers." This means the next three maneuvers for both the jammings... So three counters are enough, even if you take two cards (i.e. it is the same situation as if you draw just one).

Q) In four-player games (two teams), are the team players allowed to discuss their moves?

A) The rules don't give any limitation, but we usually don't discuss maneuvers between players. Anyway, since communication between pilots was an inefficient exchange of hand signals and so on that could be seen also by the enemy, we'd dare to say that a limited open discussion could be allowed. No secrets!

If you are playing in threes, with one player having two planes and the other two players on a team with one plane each, you can allow total and even secret communication between the team of two players, if they want, to balance the coordination between the two planes moved by the same player. But it is probably more fun to find other ways to balance the scenario without allowing it.

## OPTIONAL RULES

Q) To see if tailing is possible, should the ruler touch the red dot on the tailed plane?

A) Yes: the rule is different from the one about firing. You must reach that dot; if the ruler doesn't reach, then tailing is impossible.

Q) The tailing player is allowed to rearrange the maneuver cards he has already placed down. Does he replace current cards with new maneuver cards, or can the tailing player just change the order of the maneuvers he has put down?

A) The tailing player may only rearrange the order of the maneuvers he chose; he cannot exchange them with unused maneuvers. This explains why you can go on with tailing before revealing the second maneuver, but not before the third: you have only one card left to show, and you can not rearrange the order of a single card!

Q) Is it legal for an airplane to tail two other planes at the same time? It won't happen very often, but the situation could arise. I don't see anything in the rules that would prohibit it, but it seems wrong somehow.

A) Good point! You only tail one aircraft at a time. Choose which one.

Q) If a fire damage card is drawn and another fire card comes up, does the player take another three fire tokens? How about smoke tokens?

A) That's in the rulebook: "If a plane takes more than one special damage of the same kind, from that moment ignore the older one and count the most recent one (if they are taken at the same time, count just one of them)." So if you are on fire and you take more fire damage, just take all the counters you need to restore the total to three. And the same for the smoke.

Actually, you can also see that this rule perfectly matches the "two jammings at the same time" rule in

the section above.

Q) Can fire cause a player's guns to jam?

A) No, when you take fire damage cards "only damage points and explosions are taken into account."

Q) Is it correct, at the start of the turn, to discard the last Flame counter and then check immediately if the plane can tail an enemy?

A) Yes. Since the rules say that the plane catching fire "cannot perform tailing (see below) for the rest of the turn and for the next two turns," and the last counter is discarded at the start of the third turn, you can do that.

## HISTORICAL QUESTIONS

Q) Francesco Baracca's card says he's in the Italian Air Force, which on the back of the card has roundels colored (from outside to inside) green, white, red. The counter art shows a red outer circle and the green "dot" in the center is so small so that the casual viewer will think this is a French plane. Is this a mistake?

A) This is quite a funny thing. The Italian High Command made a regulation about the colors to be put on the cockades, but it forgot to say which one was the correct order. So there were units putting the green inside and the red outside, while others did it the opposite way around. On the back, we chose to have only one insignia for each nationality, and for Italy we put the most distinctive "green outside" design that you'll find on some **Watch Your Back!** planes. But 91a Squadriglia, to which Baracca's and Ruffo's SPAD XIII belonged, had the red outside, and the proportions that you see on Baracca's card.

Italy was not the only one to have variations in national insignias. German/Austrian planes changed their cross's shape several times during the war. In **Watch Your Back!** you'll find a DH4 with American roundels that has a white section quite larger than the one on the SPADs of **Watch Your Back.**

Q) Von Richtofen's Triplane (famous for Brown's report of shooting it down) had "small black crosses" and was one of the early adopters of the "straight" cross instead of the Maltese cross. Is your card wrong?

A) The crosses Brown speaks about are the later versions of the crosses. The shape of the crosses changed several times along the war. We depicted an earlier version than the one that was shot down.

On the subject of color schemes: Not only could the same plane change schemes with time, but a pilot could also fly several planes with similar but different schemes. Richtofen flew in several different Fokker Dr.Is during his career.

Q) So there are no mistakes in the color schemes of your cards?

A) There could be. We have done a lot of research and annoyed a few professional aviation historians, by pillaging their bookshelves and asking questions.

WWI airplane color schemes are a controversial subject. A lot of documentation is based on diaries written perhaps dozens of years after the fact, black and white photos, forged relics and so on. The debate is endless. Planes in museums cannot always be trusted either. Many have been repainted, have had the "canvas" changed, or are replicas. So if you find Rahn's Dr.I with a slightly different scheme in an American museum, the people who made the replica had a slightly different opinion on his scheme than we did.

The only mistake that we've spotted up to now is that a machine gun is missing on Olieslager's Camel. If you want to correct the mistake, please add it with a black felt pen of the kind used to write on CDs. The illustrator depicted a Camel that's preserved in a museum in Antwerp and that shows an MG only on the nose. Later on, we discovered it was a replica, inaccurate at the light of original WWI photos. He corrected the drawing, but the wrong one was printed.

Q) Why did you include unique airplanes, such as the Sopwith Triplane, Hanriot HD.1, Ufag C.I and a German captured Sopwith Camel, instead of more common planes such as the SE5a or the Nieuport 17?

A) The choice of planes might seem odd, but we wanted to put in a few more unusual planes. The Hanriot, for example, is a very fine airplane that fought on both the Northern and the Italian fronts, and even in the Balkans. It is less known than it deserves, but it is also featured in several other simulation games.

It was easy to put four unique planes in each box, and with some effort and research we could add a fifth one. So in respect to card sheet layout standards and at no additional costs, we added some planes that we thought were interesting.

That's why there is a Sopwith Triplane in the first box. It uses the same maneuver deck as the Dr.I. It is true that the Sopwith Triplane usually had a single machine gun (and for this reason its natural destination should have been in a box containing a B Damage deck), but we managed to put in an A-firing weapon variant, Collishaw's plane. Not an obscure machine, but one of a quite famous ace.

A SE5A or a Nieuport instead of the Triplane would need other 16-20 maneuver cards, besides the airplane cards. That would have put us over the standards and increase the number of cards by 50%, adding to the price of the game. The Sopwith Triplane is there at the cost of four cards. The cardboard allowed for 5 consoles, the rulers and counters. The Triplane console didn't raise production costs.

The Austrian Ufag is in **Watch Your Back!** for the same reason: it could match the DH4's maneuvers using the same H deck, allowing for five planes instead of four. Besides, it was a very fine airplane. About the German Camel, or the captured Nieuport 11 in **Watch Your Back!** - why not? It cost one card out of 132 and it allows for more scenario options. Another English Camel instead of the German one

would have been far less useful. Of course, a German Camel instead of a SE5A would be silly if there was not a price increase, but again the German Camel costs one card and the SE5A would have cost 22-25 of them.

Q) Purists will note that WWI planes actually flew "differently" based on whether they had one or two guns, since the extra weight actually mattered at that level of technology. You use A-firing variants (twin MGs) of the Sopwith Triplane and of the Hanriot HD.1 with the same maneuver cards as the B-firing ones (single MG). Don't you think this is inaccurate?

A) We made the same choice as that of several other WWI air simulations: with some acceptable approximation, we decided that it is acceptable to use the same maneuver deck.

Besides, the fear of maneuverability loss was often overestimated. The two-MG Hanriots are from famous Italian aces: one belonged to Silvio Scaroni, the second Italian ace after Francesco Baracca. The Belgians thought that the weight of the added MG on the Hanriot would decrease maneuverability too much, so they gave up the idea, but Scaroni demonstrated that the decrease was not so terrible, since after adding a second MG he got 9 victories in three weeks.