

# BLOOD RED APRIL

The logo features a central circular emblem with the letters 'BRs' inside, flanked by stylized wings and a laurel wreath.

Over on the *Blood Red Skies* Ready Room Facebook group they've been holding an informal competition to write themed historical scenarios based on those in *Blood Red Skies* and *Air Strike!* with a theme of the month of April.

Here are some of the entries.

Thanks to Gunter Wolf, Steve Ellis, Sean Griffiths and Ken Natt.





## An Easy Mistake to Make

**April 1945.** As the war in Europe draws to an inevitable close the Luftwaffe fights on, outnumbered and caught between the Soviet hammer and the Western anvil. The skies over Germany become crowded with Allied aircraft, with flak a greater threat than enemy fighters. A flight of USAAF P51s on escort duty spot some 'FW190s' heading for a formation of B17s. The 'Little Friends' move in for a 'Bounce'.

### ELEMENTS

Each player deploys the number of elements detailed below.

### DEPLOYMENT SEQUENCE

The US Player has the initiative and will bounce his opponent. The bounced player deploys one element at the centre of the table. Any other elements are placed in High Cover by the opposing player. The US player then deploys his elements on table at least 18" from any enemy planes.




### STARTING ADVANTAGE LEVEL

Bounced planes start the scenario Neutral, bouncing planes Advantaged.

### SPECIAL RULES

#### La-7

Use La-5 models with the following stats for the La-7s:

 2  2  8 (411mph)

**Traits:** Rapid Roll, Great Climb, Poor Quality

### LEAVING THE BATTLE AREA

Planes that exit the table leave the scenario altogether. No Boom chits are inflicted for planes lost in this way.

### GAME LENGTH

The scenario continues until one side is shot down or are driven off by accumulated Boom Chits.

### Historical Notes

In an interview later in his life, Kozhedub recounted how he claimed two USAAF P51s in "self defence" after he attempted to protect some B17s from attacking Fw190s and was in turn attacked by the escort. The encounter between Kozhedub and the P51s is still debated.

### VICTORY

The player making the bounce scores a victory if they shoot down more enemy planes than planes of their own are shot down. The player being bounced scores a victory by avoiding this outcome.



### List of Forces

#### Soviets

One squadron of two elements comprising:

- 1x La-7 Pilot Skill 5 (Ivan Kozhedub), 1x La-7 Pilot Skill 4
- 2x La-7 Pilot Skill 3 (starts in High Cover)

Theatre cards: Heavy Flak Presence

Doctrine card: Low Altitude Performance

Ace Skills: Cool Under Fire, Snap Shot

#### USAAF

One squadron of two elements comprising:

- 2x P51D Pilot Skill 4
- 1x P51D Pilot Skill 4, 1x P51D Pilot Skill 3

Theatre cards: Heavy Flak Presence

Doctrine card: Seasoned Pilots



# Palm Sunday Massacre

**Strait of Sicily. 18th April 1943.** During the last phases of the Tunisian campaign, Axis forces were relying their logistical effort on air transport. Operation Flax, starting on 5th April 1943, was designed to cut Axis air supply lines between Italy and Tunis. April 18th, USAAF fighter sweeps were unable to intercept any enemy formations, but in the evening the situation change unexpectedly.

USAAF P-40s, flying at 4000ft, and 12 RAF 92nd squadron Spitfires, flying in high cover at 15000ft, made contact with an enemy large formation, 65 Ju 52s escorted by Macchi C.202s, Bf 109s and Bf 110s, flying northeast on a return flight evacuating troops from Africa. More than an score of transports and 10 fighters were shot down. This battle has been known since then as the Palm Sunday Massacre.

## ELEMENTS

Each player deploys the number of elements detailed below.

## DEPLOYMENT SEQUENCE

- The *escorting player* deploys one element **anywhere** on the tabletop.
- The *intercepting player* deploys one element at least 18" from the escorting element.
- The *escorting player* deploys one element in **High Cover** along any table edge.
- The *intercepting player* deploys one element in **High Cover** along any table edge.
- The transports once detected are deployed 12" away of the searching pilot and more than 9" from any table edge.

## STARTING ADVANTAGE LEVEL

Roll a D6 for each plane on the tabletop. On a 1-2 it starts Disadvantaged, a 3-4 Neutral, and on a 5-6 it starts Advantaged.

## SPECIAL RULES

Use the following special rules from The Transport Hunt scenario on pages 56-57 of *Airstrike: The Hunt, The Transports, Search Area*.

## LEAVING THE BATTLE AREA

Transports that exit the table leave the scenario altogether. No Boom Chits are inflicted for planes lost in this way.

If an escort or interceptor leaves the table it may re-enter the following turn if passes a Maneuvre Test. It starts Advantaged. If the plane fails returns to base. One Boom Chit inflicted on a squadron for each plane returning to base.

## GAME LENGTH

The scenario continues until the intercepting squadron(s) or the escorting squadron(s) are driven off by accumulated Boom Chits.

## VICTORY

Each aircraft shot down is worth the following number of victory points.

- Escort = 1 Victory Point
- Interceptor = 2 Victory Points
- Transport = 3 Victory Points

The player with the greatest total number of Victory Points at the end of the game is the winner.



## List of Forces

### German

One squadron of two elements comprising:

- 1x Bf 110c Pilot Skill 4, 1x Bf 110c Pilot Skill 3
- 1x Bf 109G Pilot Skill 5, 3x Bf 109G Pilot Skill 3

One transport squadron comprising:

- 4x Ju52 Pilot Skill 3

Theatre cards: Restricted Airfields, Tropical Conditions

Doctrine card: Outnumbered

Ace Skills: Slippery

### Allies

USAAF 57th Fighter Group

One squadron of one element comprising:

- 2x P40 Pilot Skill 4, 4x P40 Pilot Skill 3

RAF 92nd Squadron\*

One squadron of one element comprising:

- 1x Spitfire MkVb/c Pilot Skill 5, 1x Spitfire MkVb/c Pilot Skill 4,
- 4x Spitfire MkVb/c Pilot Skill 3

Theatre cards: Battle Fatigue, Radar Support

Doctrine card: Intruders, Seasoned Pilots

Ace Skills: Accurate

\* 92nd Squadron was using, at the time of the battle, both types of Spitfire (Mk Vb and Mk Vc). Allied player can choose to use any one of them or both.



# Operation Vengeance

Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, the mastermind of the Pearl Harbor attack and most renowned admiral of the Imperial Japanese Navy, hated by the Americans and seen by them as a warmonger. Following the losses at Guadalcanal and facing criticism from home, he has embarked on a morale-boosting tour of his soldiers and airmen. Hailed as a hero by his countrymen, seeing him on the front lines would surely bolster morale for operation I-Go.

On the 18th of April 1943 Admiral Yamamoto boarded his Betty transport aircraft watching his escort circle overhead he saluted his brave soldiers and disappeared into his aircraft not knowing what events were in motion. A second Betty carrying Chief of Staff Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki followed him into the sky

Unknown to the Japanese high command the Americans had intercepted the coded messages detailing the Admirals itinerary four days earlier and viewed his demise as a priority. The only fighters with the range to carry out such an attack from the nearest American base were the P-38Gs based in Guadalcanal, even then to avoid detection they would have to avoid passing near to any Japanese occupied islands and fly at a low level for most of the way. Maintaining radio silence and instructed to remain below 50ft until the interception, this was an unprecedented mission and would become the longest-range fighter intercept of World War II.

It was planned to intercept Yamamoto on the leg between Rabaul and Balalae, planners estimated that an interception could be made at 0935, and miraculously the P38s of the 339th squadron arrived one minute early, catching the bombers as they began their approach to land.

## ELEMENTS

Each player deploys the number of elements detailed below.

## DEPLOYMENT SEQUENCE

Using a 4'x4' area, clouds are placed as usual 2 per player, the Japanese player must deploy the first cloud. Due to the Americans springing the trap the American player may choose to remove or redeploy one cloud marker of their choice.

The IJN forces deploy first up to 18 inches from their table edge, the transports should be deployed within 10" of each other and start advantaged, the escorts must be deployed within 4" of the bombers and also within the 18" deployment zone and start advantaged. The transports

do not count as laden. One transport must carry the Admiral in secret the Japanese play must designate one transport to carry the admiral. Doctrine cards (zero's only): Aggressive tactics.

The Americans may deploy where they wish and in minimal elements, if they choose, but have to start at least 18" from any Japanese aircraft, they begin the game advantaged

Doctrine cards: Slashing attack.

The following theatre cards are in play on the table: Storm Clouds, Low-level Haze.

## LEAVING THE BATTLE AREA

The Japanese aircraft have to leave the area and keep the Admiral safe. They can move off the opposite board edge to their deployment.

## GAME LENGTH

The scenario continues until one side is shot down or are driven off by accumulated Boom Chits.

## VICTORY

If at any point both transports are destroyed the game ends with a victory for the Americans.

If at any point both transports escape the game ends with a victory for the Japanese.

If one transport is destroyed the game continues until either the Americans are driven off or the remaining transport is destroyed or escapes.

If only one transport is destroyed when the game ends the Japanese player reveals if the Admiral is alive or dead, if he is alive then the Japanese win, if not then it is a draw, as the Americans will have to return to base not knowing for sure the outcome of the mission.



## List of Forces

### IJN

One squadron of two elements comprising:

2x G4M 'Betty' Pilot Skill 3

4x A6M5 'Zero' Pilot Skill 4, 2x A6M5 'Zero' Pilot Skill 3

### USAAF

One squadron of one element comprising:

1x P-38J 'Lightning' Pilot Skill 5, 3x P-38J 'Lightning' Pilot Skill 4, 2x P-38J 'Lightning' Pilot Skill 3

Ace Skills: Killer Instincts

*Note: Historically neither versions of these fighters were yet in service, but are used here for convenience.*