Guide to the use of the module for The Burning Blue

TBB requires quite a few random chit draws. So, the designer created the "cup" map board which has a "deck" named "opaque cup". Right-clicking a stack of chits gives you a "Send to Cup" command that puts the appropriate group of chits in the cup where you can draw from them (the chits are automatically shuffled so regardless of what you may see on the top when you draw a chit, what you get will be random). The weather chits have their own right-click menu when they have been drawn, with commands that can send them directly to the weather areas.

Once complete with that draw you can return the stack to the original chit pile with the "Return to Chits" command.

There are a number of map cutouts intended to facilitate access to parts of the main map that could draw focus from where the action is. In the scenario setups the markers start here. The map cutouts are

- "Channel Patrol" which includes the boxes for Luftwaffe Channel Patrols, RAF flights, RAF Wings, and a Combat Box which you can use to hold the units that are involved in a combat.
- "Game Status" which includes the Game Clock, Air Picture track, Sun Display, Crosswinds, and Victory Points Track (also used for Scramble Limit, HF Radio Range, and RAF Response).
- "Luftwaffe Airfields" which is a private window for the Luftwaffe Player so that the RAF player cannot see which units are moved to the Raid Display.

The units of the RAF player are set up on the British Tote Board which is not private, because the British dispositions cannot influence German Planning.

Air units have a Log Sheet command (CTRL+L) to allow recording information which would otherwise have been shown via disruption chits, or recorded on the paper log sheet. There are commands to indicate and change altitude (CTRL+A, CTRL+Up, CTRL+Down).

Note also the commands to place Order markers (CTRL+SHIFT+O), Tally Ho! (CTRL+SHIFT+T), Patrol (CTRL+SHIFT+P), and Orbit (CTRL+SHIFT+R) markers for the unit in question. When Order markers have been placed in this way it is possible to use the "Find" right-click command (CTRL+SHIFT+F) from either the air unit, or from an Order or Tally Ho! marker, and a line will be drawn between the air unit and its marker (see the illustration).

You can only have a single marker that can be an Order marker, a Tally Ho!, or an Orbit arker. Delete the old one to create a new, or convert it to the new one.

The Notes command (CTRL+N) writes a note that is shown above the unit (could be like "Pancake Filton" instead of a command), and there is a Notes Table command where you can record whatever you want about the unit that doesn't fit within the log or the normal notes.

When giving orders to units, you can use whatever method that suits you best: Notes, or Order markers. My preference is to use order markers to specify where a squadron is going, and Notes to

specify desired altitude or add an orbit order to the destination. The Orbit marker can easily be replaced by a Note.

The Luftwaffe Hostile Raid markers are the only air counters that are normally on the map, and accordingly, they have the same commands, with the addition of a command to change their detected strength (ALT+S).

Of course, you can choose to use the strength, altitude, and disruption markers just like you would in the board game. Also, if you prefer to use the paper maps and logs, that is perfectly fine.

The Luftwaffe player uses the German Raid Display ![plane icon] (ALT+SHIFT+R) to hold the air units, and here the Detection cards for the raids are also placed, just like in the physical game. The German Raid Display can never be seen by the RAF player.

RAF Tote Board

The RAF player uses the British Tote Board ![tote icon] (ALT+SHIFT+T) just like in the physical game. The Tote Board is not hidden for the Luftwaffe player.

One pre-game activity for the RAF player that takes a lot of time, is described in rule *6.6.3 Readiness* where the player sets up the squadrons on the Tote Board according to the scenario instructions. This activity can now be automated by pressing the "Setup Squadrons" button on the Tote

Scenario 3 Bodyline.vsav - RAF Tote Board
Setup Squadrons | Advance **all** air units on the Tote Board
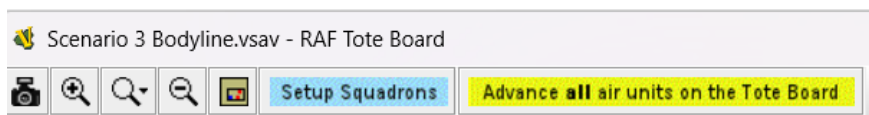
Board. The dice will be rolled, and the squadrons moved to the correct Ready, or Available boxes. This can take a while, but is much faster than doing it manually. The Duxford Wing roll is also made automatically.

A reminder is printed at the end about the various optional setup rules for the scenario. Also note that in scenario 5, the 421 Reconnaissance Flight sets up in the air, and of course you will have to do this manually.

* **Setting up squadrons**
* Rolling for squadron readiness (scenario 3) - **Die roll: 2**
* Rolling for Duxford Wing- **Die roll: 8**
* 257 (Burma) Sqn at Debden is moved to Available
* 601 (County of London) Sqn at Debden is moved to Ready
* 111 Sqn at Debden is moved to Available
  •
  •
  •
* 213 Sqn at Exeter is moved to Ready
* **Remember Special Rules (c) and (d) about forward airfields**
* **Replace 603 Sqn. with 264 (Defiant) [Vc, HF] if the Defiants Defiant optional rule is used**
* **Remove 303 Polish Sqn. from play if the Poles in Training optional rule is used**

In order to speed up play during the Admin Phase, the chore of rolling dice, and moving all the squadrons on the Tote Board towards Ready, this process has been automated through a button called "Advance ALL fighters on the Tote Board" (CTRL+SHIFT+A). When this button is pressed, an attempt will be made to move each fighter closer to its Ready box, rolling a die as needed.

* **Auto Advance of all fighter units**
* Hornchurch airfield is disrupted
* Attempting to move 601 (County of London) Sqn. **Die roll: 1 - Failed** but becomes ready because this is 6th attempt
* 601 (County of London) Sqn at Debden is moved from Available Box B to Ready Box B. **If desired, the unit can be manually moved back to Available.**
* 54 Sqn at Lympne is moved from Rearm Refuel 2 Box to Rearm Refuel 1 Box
* Attempting to move 610 (County of Chester) Sqn. **Die roll: 2 - Failed**
* Attempting to move 501 (County of Gloucester) Sqn. **Die roll: 5 - Failed**

However, according to the rules a player is not forced to progress a fighter on the tote board, and in particular, a player can decide to move the fighters to the Available box instead of the Ready box. If any of this is the case, it is necessary to do the procedure manually, or manually correct any fighters that have been moved further on than desired.

When a fighter has made five attempts to move from the Available box to the Ready box, the automated procedure will make the sixth attempt successful, in accordance with the optional part of rule *18.2.2 Available*.

Rule *18.2.6 Rearming and Refuelling* states that squadrons that are not assigned to the airfield where they are located will have to go though the Rearm/Refuel boxes a second time. For forward airfields, or for flights, the automated procedure doesn't know the correct assigned airfield, and in this case, the fighter will have to be moved manually to the Available, or Ready box.

When an airfield is disrupted, no RAF squadron can change its readiness state [16.4.1]. An airfield disruption marker (Bombing Disruption or Strafe Disruption) placed above the airfield on the Tote Board display, will halt such change of state when using the automated procedure. Alternatively, the disruption marker can also be placed in the airfield hex on the main map.

Note also that when in an airfield hex, a squadron can be sent to the corresponding Landing Box on the Tote Board by the bottom-most right-click command. Likewise, when a squadron is in the Scramble box on the Tote Board, the bottom-most right-click command will send it to the corresponding airfield on the main map.

Luftwaffe Planning

A number of features have been provided to enable the Luftwaffe player to plan his or her raids on-map if desired. For this purpose, there is a special map showing all the Luftwaffe airfields. This is only visible to the Luftwaffe player, and here all the air units are placed according to the scenario. This should make it easier to select units to participate in a raid. For scenario 3 to 5, the Luftwaffe player will have to decide where the "3/2" units will have to be placed.

A unique feature of this Vassal module is that it is possible to plot the raid paths directly on the main map by placing special planning markers (invisible to the RAF player) on the map board. These markers are found in various colours in the Game Counters Window. Each marker has a number of different images called layers that can be cycled through the Increase (CTRL+F11), and Decrease (CTRL+F10) commands on their right-click menu. These are "Arrow", "Form Up", "Waypoint", "Target", "Bomb", "Strafe", "Orbit", "Recovery", and a layer with just a dot, intended to be a neutral holder of the notes (see below).

When moved on map, these planning markers leave a coloured movement trail that can mark the map with a route. Each marker will have its own trail, so you can clone a marker, and split a route, or put the marker somewhere else. You can delete the entire trail of one of these markers by using the Erase Line (CTRL+E) right-click command. All these markers and their trails can be hidden temporarily through the "Show/Hide Planning" button, so that you can look at the map without the clutter of the planning markers, and the "Show Only Planning" button hides all other counters so you can better concentrate on the planning. This last button is slightly dangerous because you might forget that you have pressed it, and wonder why you have no counters on the map!

The planning markers also have Notes (CTRL+N) like air units, which are little labels above the unit. This could be used to mark things that the layers cannot do, or tell which raid they represent, in case the colour is not enough. Furthermore, there are Fixed Notes (ALT+N) printing "Check Fuel", "Split Raids", "Balloon Barrage", "HAA", "LAA", "Form Up", "Recovery", "Orbit", "2nd Target", "Nav Check", "Bomb", or "Strafe". Finally, they have Table Notes (CTRL+SHIFT+N) like air units, that can be filled in with various information at the player's option, like the composition of the raid.

There are also Plan Notes which are little coloured pieces of text that you can place on the map for any purpose you like. They could for instance, be used for marking the game turns along the trails of the planning markers. The Plan Notes are likewise invisible to the RAF player.

Again, players are not forced to use planning markers and Plan Notes. You can use the old-fashioned paper and pen method just as before.

Below is an example of what a German plan could look like. Planning marker have been used with various layers to show Form Up, waypoints etc., and the timing have been shown with Plan Notes. First, the planning marker was dragged along the route from the starting point to the end point, and at the end point it was turned into a Recovery layer. Then more markers of the right type were placed at points where something special was happening. Finally, the Plan Notes were added with the timing. In order to make the text show up at the right place, the note was some times placed in a hex to the left, and the text moved by adding spaces in front, like "   13:25".


Below is how it would look at 12:55 PM to the RAF – and the Luftwaffe when planning is hidden:

Admin Phase

The button "Advance Clock and Remove Temporary Markers" can be used in the Admin Phase to Advance the clock by five minutes (if both clock hands have been set), and by removing Ack-Ack Barrage, Airfield Disruption, Climb, and Dive Bomb markers. Of the two kinds of airfield disruption markers, the Bombing Disruption marker is only removed the game turn after it was played. (This information is part of the counter, so a new Bombing Disruption counter should be picked, rather than cloned from an old one).
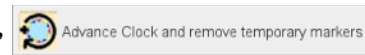
TIPS

1. Right-click on a map spot to centre the view there. You can walk your way around the map by right-clicking your way there.

2. Every piece in the game has its own menu. You get to it by right-clicking on a piece.

3. If you want to issue a right-click command on a bunch of pieces at once, use your mouse cursor to draw a box around a bunch of pieces. Then right-click a piece and do the command. (If not all the pieces share that command, you might not see it though). You turn it off by clicking anywhere on the map.

4. If you want to pick a single piece in a stack, double-click the stack to expand it first.

5. All the air units you need for a scenario are placed on the "Luftwaffe Airfields" map, or the "RAF Tote Board", and most markers are either on the tracks, the Channel Patrol/Boxes map, or created through a right-click menu.. You only need to pick a counter from the counter palette when you need a flight counter, or one of the remaining markers.

6. Use the commands to convert Order, Tally Ho!, and Orbit markers into each other. It is faster than picking a new one, and you only need one of these for an air unit at any one time.

7. When you as Luftwaffe player use dummy Form Up markers, be aware that you cannot yourself see if a Form Up marker is a dummy or not without flipping it (CTRL+F). But then your opponent can also see what it is. For that reason, you should use the invisible right-click command (CTRL+I) on any Form Up marker that you want to check before you reveal it to the RAF player. You can also move it to the German Raid display which the RAF player can never see.

8. If you want to be more players on each side, all you need to do is to have all players for one side use the same password (File – Preferences – Personal).