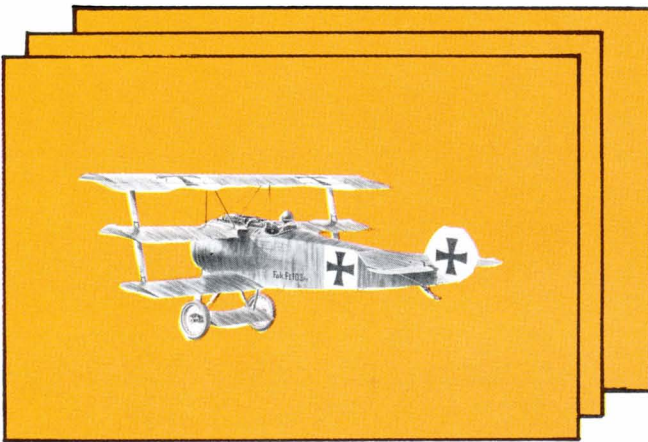# UNEXPECTED MANEUVERS

PILOT'S SUPPLEMENT TO RICHTHOFEN'S WAR

by Michael Turner

"As long as I live I shall never forget my admiration of that German pilot, who, single handed, fought seven of us for ten minutes, and put bullets through each of our machines."
McCudden writing of that fatal encounter with Voss.

RICHTHOFEN'S WAR has always lacked something in the eyes of your editor. Even when involved with the initial playtest and design I found little to like about the game aside from the Campaign Game which I helped develop. The game has always lacked the "guesswork" which made other games exciting. Instead, play boiled down to hex counting and geometric puzzles as players plotted how best to get into position for a 1 hex shot with their maneuver schedule when it was their turn. Excitement was non-existent except for the surprises afforded by the two dice CRT and its built-in critical hits, or the rigors of the 10 second reaction rule.

Michael Turner's variant for the game remedies these faults to a large degree and restores an element of suspense and maneuver to a game which has deteriorated into a hex counting contest and trading of close shot dicerolls. We are so impressed with his variant that we have printed up the necessary cards for mail order sale as an optional extra. They are professionally printed with a beautiful cover illustration by historic aircraft artist Joe De Marco on the reverse and pertinent diagrams and rules on the front. The deck of 27 cards is available from Avalon Hill for $2.00 plus the usual postage charges.

You are flying your Sopwith Pup at 3000 meters above enemy territory, watching the blue skies for any movement. Your senses are somewhat lulled into a false sense of security by the steady dull hum of the 100 horsepower Gnome Mono engine. The fact is forgotten that any moment now your frail craft could be riddled by blazing twin Spandaus. You sit straight, your head twisting and turning constantly.

Two hundred meters above: an Albatross DII fighter from Jasta 2 has picked up your scent. The pilot begins the hunt; watching, trailing, staying above/behind the bouncing Pup. The time and setting is not quite right.

The Sopwith Pup climbs fifty meters and you somehow sense that something is wrong.

The Albatross fighter closes the throttle somewhat, quivers, and swoops down onto the Sopwith.

The situation occurs often in *RICHTHOFEN'S WAR,* a game that realistically recreates the air activity that took place in the skies of France. The game offers constant hours of playing and harrowing escapes. It can bring a player instant glory in the way of acehood, or it could give that same player a vicarious slow spinning death from 4000 meters. In *RICHTHOFEN'S* one activity feels the exhilaration of a "kill" and the remorse of seeing a comrade's plummet to the earth.

Yet, although *RICHTHOFEN'S WAR* is one of the best games out on WWI aerial warfare, it still lacks a number of things that would drastically alter the playing of the game as well as the realism. In this article, I hope to give the *RICHTHOFEN'S WAR* devotee some added optional rules that would greatly increase the playability and in turn enhance the entertainment derived from the game itself.

The main problem with the game is play balance. Play balance is a major constituent to any war game and more so to a game like *RICHTHOFEN'S WAR.* Here the Germans have free rule over the skies. It is only with a bag of tricks and a lot of luck that the Allied player manages to win an evenly matched encounter. It is not until late in the war that the Allied player manages to gain the advantage in flying equipment. What expediency the Allied player has at any time is entirely that of maneuverability of his aircraft. The Allied player can take some solace in that his aircraft is likely to be better equipped than the German aircraft in maneuver schedules, climb and dive rates, and maximums of altitude. But, this is only a small advantage.

Now, back to the Pup and Albatross DII: if we play out the encounter using the standard rules, the outcome would probably be in favor of the Albatross. The fact is, the Albatross fires first. This isn't the worst of it. The Albatross fires on the A table of the TDT. This would almost totally disable the Pup (giving the German player an average roll of the dice), enabling the German player to finish the Pup off before the Albatross could take sufficient damage. The outcome seems cut and dry. Yet, if the roles were reversed, the situation would most probably be the same. The fact is, the Pup hasn't the firepower of the most powerful Albatross. This is not a fault of the game; it is the fault of history.

Suppose, though, that the pilot of the Sopwith had sensed that something was wrong; he feels the bullets cutting through his machine and he instinctively hits the right rudder and peels off. The Albatross zooms by and the Sopwith Pup has the option of following the Albatross (?!) or getting the heck out of there. The important thing is: the pilot of the Pup has the ability to increase his chances for surviving the dogfights he will encounter.

The maneuvers used during WWI were being performed before actual war took place in the air. They were stunts and used at air shows and daredevil matches. They were dangerous to accomplish and took men's lives. Yet, they were an intricate part of WWI air history and should be employed during the hectic dogfights that take place in the game.

Beating a competent German player is never easy to accomplish. The A class weapons of the German becomes dangerously murderous. But,

with maneuvers, the better turning schedules of the Allied player can more than save his skin. It can set up reverse situations and a German Ace may find a spunky Allied plane on his tail!

Maneuvers are done with a series of maneuver cards, three of each maneuver, twenty-seven cards in all. The nine maneuvers represent a cross section of the countless aerobatics pilots performed. How many cards each player receives depends on a number of factors which will be explained later. The twenty-seven cards(3 of each 9 maneuvers) represent the chances that each pilot has in being capable of eluding or trailing the enemy. The cards work as follows:

During *combat* only, the defender (plane under attack) has the option of performing a maneuver or trying to escape by diving or climbing. Maneuvering might be a wise choice if either the plane is falling apart or the aircraft's guns are jammed or if the enemy aircraft is being flown by an ace. It might not be a good decision to perform a maneuver if the defender's aircraft is quite capable of defeating the attacker. Once the choice has been made, each player picks his allotted number of maneuver cards. The defender sorts through his cards and picks *one* which he wishes to perform. The attacker then lays *all* his cards down on the table. If any one of his cards matches the defender's cards then the attacker has successfully followed and both go through the maneuver. If the cards do not match, then the defender performs his maneuver and the attacker must fly a penalty move of six MPs straight and then may move as he wishes (provided he still has any MPs left). He may not dive or climb during this turn phase. All cards are returned to the deck and shuffled after each attack.

THE MANEUVERS:

Diagram #
1) Barrel Roll
2) Falling Leaf
3) Flat Spin
4) Immelmann
5) Loop
6) Nose Dive
7) Side-Slip
8) Tight Circle
9) Vertical Spin

The diagrams of each maneuver show the relationship of the aircraft on the hex board. The aircraft illustrated is the initial position. The numbered hex is where the aircraft will finish as well as the number of MPs expended. All aircraft face the same direction as the initial position except for the Immelmann where the facing is reversed 180 degrees.

The *Barrel Roll* is accomplished by placing the aircraft marker as shown in the diagram. This maneuver takes five movement points with no loss or gain in altitude. The *Falling Leaf* is accomplished by placing the aircraft marker as shown in the diagram. This maneuver takes two movement points and is a 100 meter drop in altitude. The *Flat Spin* is accomplished by placing the counter one hex forward and counting this as three movement points. The remaining movement points multiplied by 50 meters is the altitude loss. The Immelmann is accomplished by placing the aircraft marker directly behind the initial position but facing the opposite direction and adding 50 meters to the height indicator. The *Loop* is accomplished by placing the aircraft counter behind the initial position and counting this as four movement points, six for two hexes behind initial position and eight for three hexes behind initial position. There is no loss or gain in altitude. The *Nose Dive* is accomplished by placing the aircraft counter one hex forward and counting it as two movement points. The remaining turn speed is multiplied by 100 meters and added to the normal dive maximum for that particular aircraft. This is the loss in altitude due to the maneuver. The *Side-Slip* is performed by placing the aircraft marker directly to the side of the initial position as shown in the diagram. This counts as five movement points and a loss of 50 meters. The *Tight Circle* is accomplished by leaving the counter where it is with no loss or gain in altitude and expending *all* movement points. The *Vertical Spin* is accomplished by placing the aircraft marker directly in front of the initial position and counting this as two movement points. The remaining turn speed is multiplied by 50 meters and then added to the normal dive maximum for the aircraft. This is meters loss in altitude due to the maneuver.
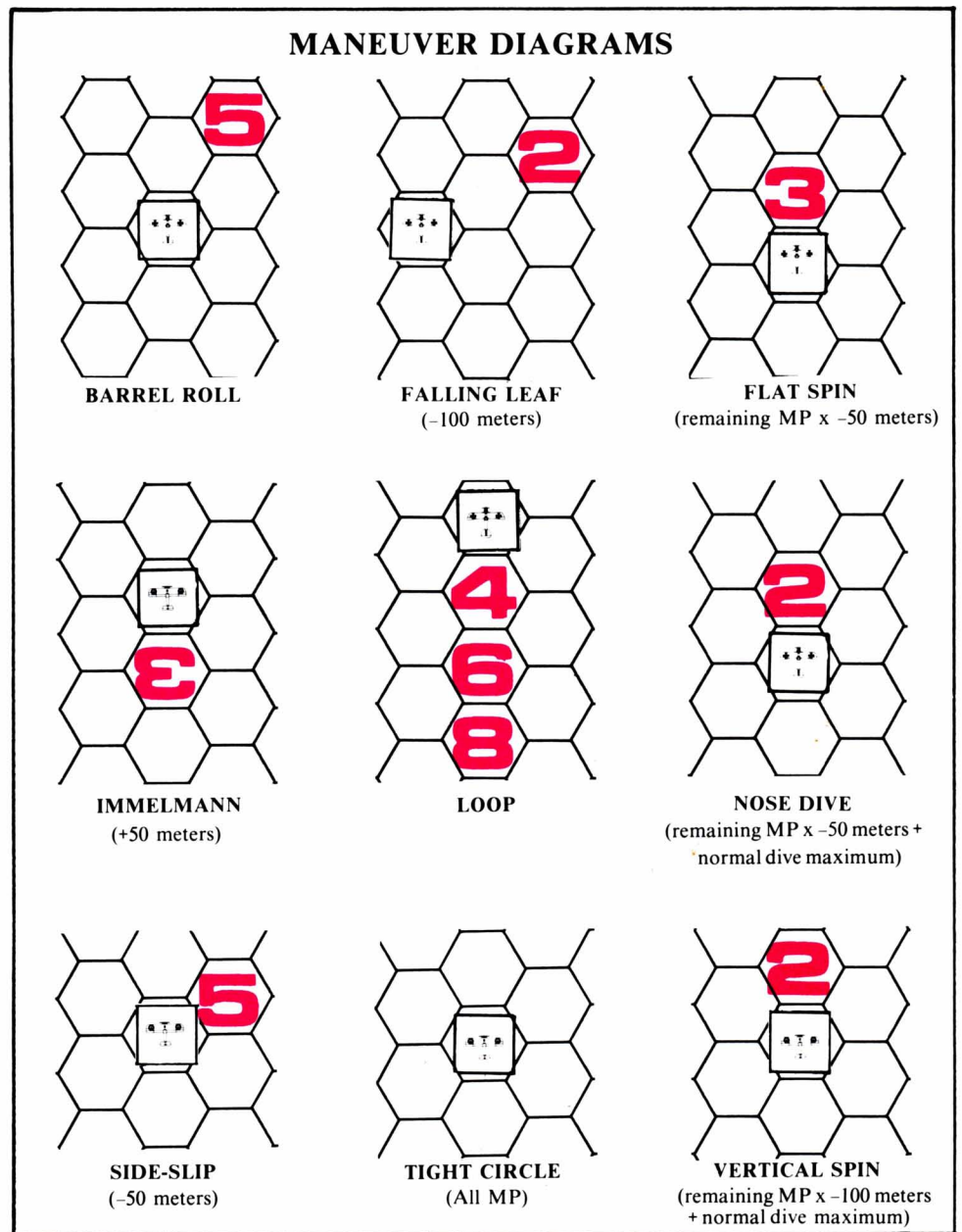
All these maneuvers take place during dogfights only. After a maneuver is performed the player may notice that he has several movement points left; except in the case of the Tight Circle which uses up all the aircraft's movement points. He may use these to either catch up with an enemy aircraft or to put distance between them. If head on attacks occur, there are no maneuvers performed. The aircraft performing Barrel Roll, Side-Slip and Falling Leaf can move their counters either to the left or right of the initial position. If to the left, it is a mirror image of the diagrams.

Whenever one aircraft is set upon by more than one enemy aircraft, each enemy player goes through the maneuver (provided the defender has elected to use the maneuver option). The defender receives his cards and each attacker receives his cards. Play progresses and follow standard maneuver rules. The attacking plane that has first shot gets to trail first followed by the second enemy aircraft, etc.

The number of maneuver cards each player receives depends on his aircraft's performance as well as his own status, combat position (i.e. defender or attacker) and range.

The defender receives four cards and the attacker gets two cards. *This is the base number.* In addition each pilot receives one bonus card per every five kills to his credit. The attacker receives one additional card for every two hexes he is away from the defender at the moment of attack. Fractions are not considered. The aircraft's turning schedule also increases/decreases the base number:

Turning Ability	Cards
A	–2
B	–1
C	0
D	+1
E	+2

MANEUVER DIAGRAMS

BARREL ROLL

FALLING LEAF
(–100 meters)

FLAT SPIN
(remaining MP x –50 meters)

IMMELMANN
(+50 meters)

LOOP

NOSE DIVE
(remaining MP x –50 meters +
normal dive maximum)

SIDE-SLIP
(–50 meters)

TIGHT CIRCLE
(All MP)

VERTICAL SPIN
(remaining MP x –100 meters
+ normal dive maximum)

MOVEMENT CHART:

	Defender	Attacker
Step one:	No movement	Attacks defender and rolls on TDT. All aircraft of attacker's nationality move.
Step two:	Moves or chooses to and performs maneuvers. All aircraft of defender's nationality move.	No movement
Step three:	No movement	Either performs a maneuver *or* flys six allotted MPs straight ahead. All aircraft of attacker's nationality move.
Step four:	Moves normally. May choose maneuver if involved in defensive combat. All aircraft of defender's nationality move.	No movement
Step five:	No movement	Moves normally. May choose maneuver if involved in defensive combat. All aircraft of attacker's nationality move.

If the aircraft has an A turning schedule then two cards are taken away. If the aircraft has an E turning schedule then two cards are added. If C then no change.

After all players involved in maneuvers have their allotted cards, the maneuvers are matched and results are followed.

The movement chart explains which aircraft move during which phase of the maneuvers. It is very important that this chart be understood and followed. Basically, if the defender gets away (successfully eluded his attacker) then the next move he receives will be combat free, unless the player decides to engage in aerial melee again or becomes involved in combat with another enemy aircraft. Even though maneuvers are bonus movements they in no way upset the player turn phase of the game.

It would seem that the succees of the maneuver would depend on the type of aircraft involved as well as the status of the pilot. This very much matches the situation that pilots faced when ordered to go aloft in cloth and wood boxes pulled or pushed through the air by sputtering oil-soaked engines.

Returning to the example of the Sopwith Pup and Albatross DII, the Albatross attacks the Sopwith Pup and rolls for damage on the TDT. After this, the Sopwith Pup has the option of performing a maneuver which he elects to take. The Pup takes four cards with no bonus/penalties as the Pup is a C turning schedule and the pilot is not an ace. The Albatross receives two cards but must give up one because of the minus one for B turning schedule. Let us say that the Albatross is one hex away and thus receives no bonus for range (must be at least two away). He is not an ace and receives no bonus. Thus, the Pup has four cards to the Albatross' one. The Pup player chooses a Loop and the Albatross does not have this card. The Pup performs the Loop and moves the remaining movement points due him. If the Pup is lined up so he may fire at the Albatross then the Pup may now fire. *This is not defensive fire.* It is an added bonus for the defender. The Albatross now moves six of his allotted MP straight. He may not perform a maneuver during this turn even if he is being attacked by the Pup. Now, it is the Pup's turn again and he has the option of attacking the Albatross or turning tail. He elects to dive away from the Albatross and turn back home. Note: if the Pup had attacked the Albatross, the German player would now have the option of performing a maneuver after combat results have been determined. If the Albatross had matched the defender's card, then the Pup would have performed the maneuver and would *not be allowed to fire on the Albatross* if the situation warranted it. The Albatross would then perform a Loop and, after the allotted number of MPs have been expended for that particular maneuver, may fire on the Pup. The next move would be the Pup's and he may now perform another maneuver if he feels relatively lucky that day.

After using the maneuvers a few times, it will be obvious that the aircraft's turning schedule, movement points, dive rate and to some extent accumulated damage all come together and perform more vividly. The aircraft specifications become even more important in the overall picture of *RICHTHOFEN'S WAR* and with maneuvers this is magnified a great deal. The key to this rule is that the use of maneuvers is optional. One need not perform the maneuvers if one believes the situation is not serious enough to warrant it. The maneuvers are not so much an advantage to any pilot as they are a tool for survival.

MULTI-PLAYER GAMES:

In the case of more than one combat situation taking place on the board at the same time, determine results for each individual combat *separately*. That is, after maneuver cards are used for the first group, return all cards to the pack before going to the next group.

Additional points to remember:
* maneuvering aircraft move first. After all results are determined, then other aircraft may move.
* aircraft cannot go off the board edge while performing maneuver results. If an aircraft is forced off the board (usually this occurs during the penalty move inflicted on the attacker) stop one hex short of the board edge. This ends the players turn regardless of number of MPs left.
* the Loop is the best maneuver to perform if the defender wishes to get on the opponent's tail. It will enable the defender to inflict the most punishment on his aggressive opponent but does not enable the defender to escape from his opponent if sufficient damage is not inflicted.
* if the defender eludes his opponent, he may fire at the enemy aircraft if the line of sight is in accordance with the sighting rule. If the defender does not elude his opponent, he may not fire at the enemy aircraft following the completion of the maneuver.
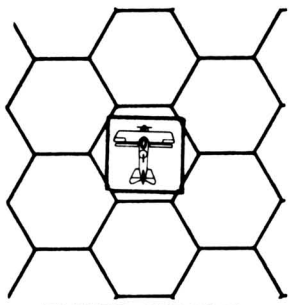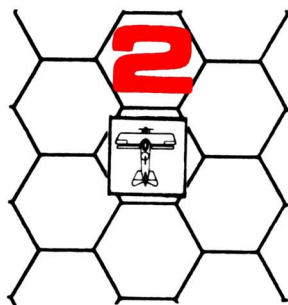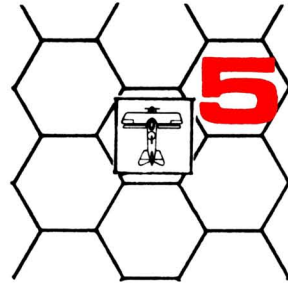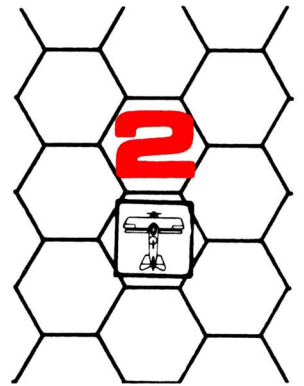
★★★★★

TIGHT CIRCLE
(All MP)

C

VERTICAL SPIN
(remaining MP x –100 meters
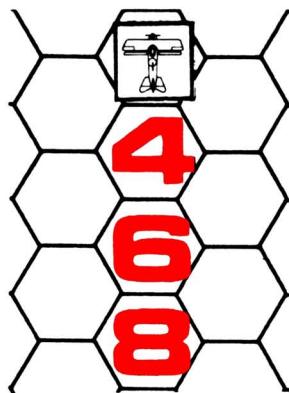+ normal dive maximum)

V

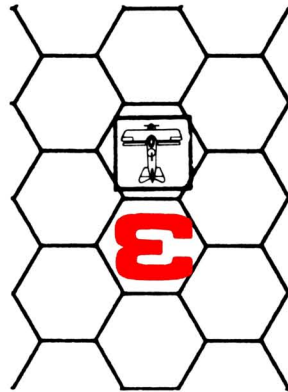**SIDE-SLIP**
(–50 meters)

S-right   T-left

NOSE DIVE
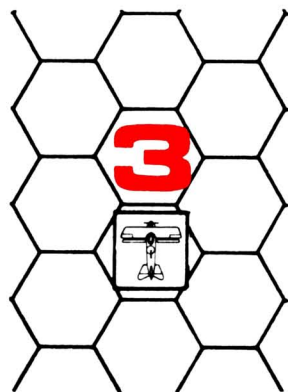(remaining MP x –50 meters +
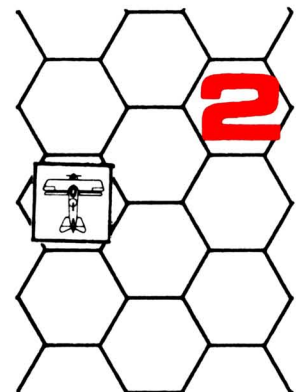normal dive maximum)

N

LOOP
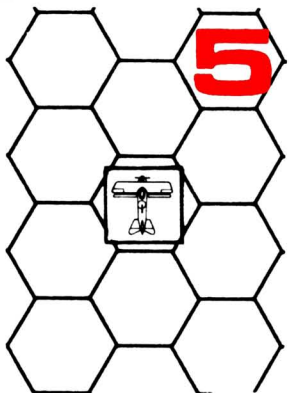ⓝ

IMMELMANN
(+50 meters)
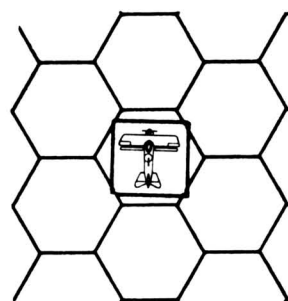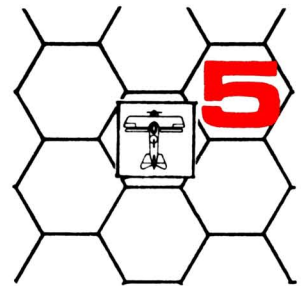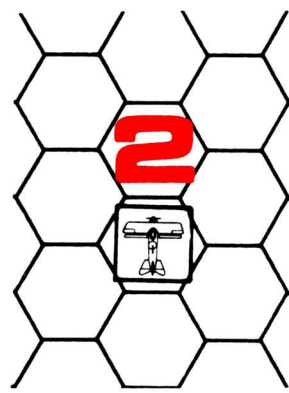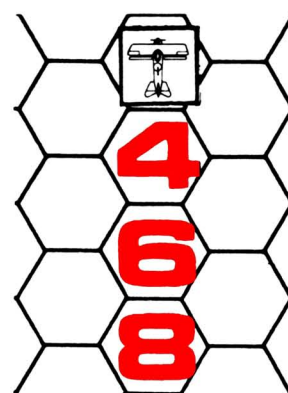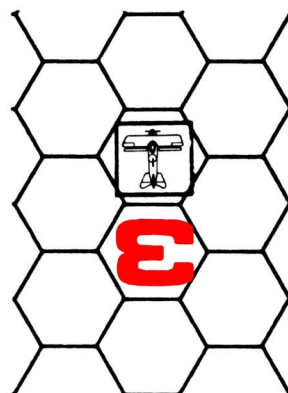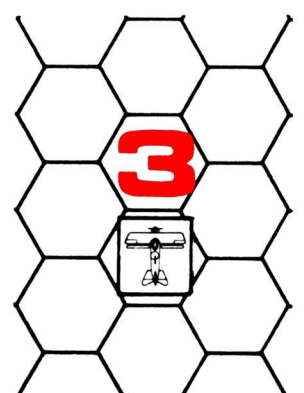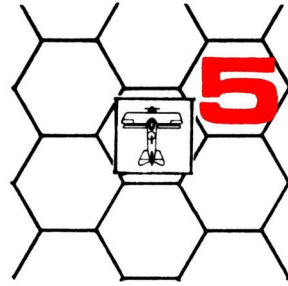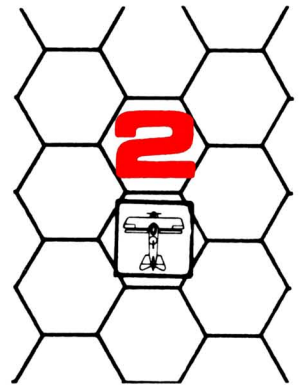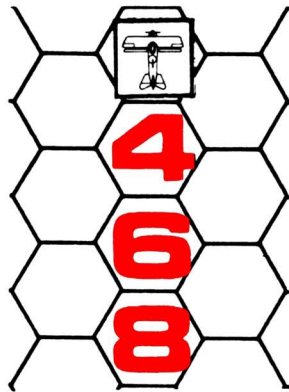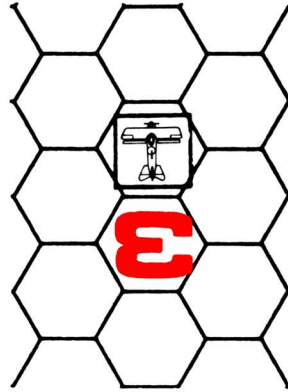
M

FLAT SPIN
(remaining MP x –50 meters)

F

FALLING LEAF
(–100 meters)

G-right   H left

BARREL ROLL

A-right   B-left

TIGHT CIRCLE
(All MP)
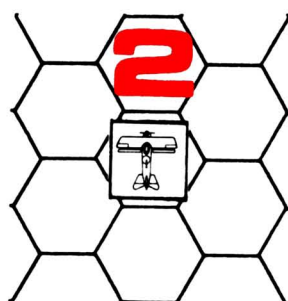
C

VERTICAL SPIN
(remaining MP x –100 meters
+ normal dive maximum)

V

SIDE-SLIP
(–50 meters)

S-right   T-left

NOSE DIVE
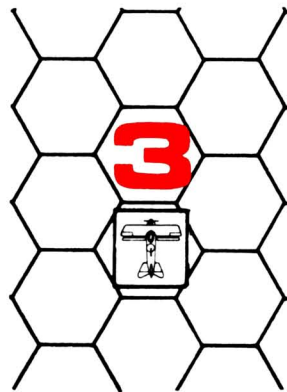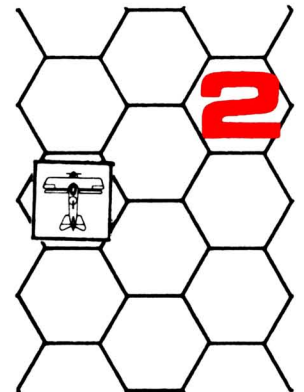(remaining MP x –50 meters +
normal dive maximum)

N

LOOP
ⓝ

IMMELMANN
(+50 meters)

M

FLAT SPIN
(remaining MP x –50 meters)

F

TIGHT CIRCLE
(All MP)
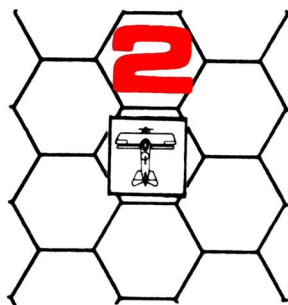
C

VERTICAL SPIN
(remaining MP x –100 meters
+ normal dive maximum)

V

SIDE-SLIP
(–50 meters)

S-right   T-left

NOSE DIVE
(remaining MP x –50 meters +
normal dive maximum)
N

LOOP
Ⓝ

IMMELMANN
(+50 meters)
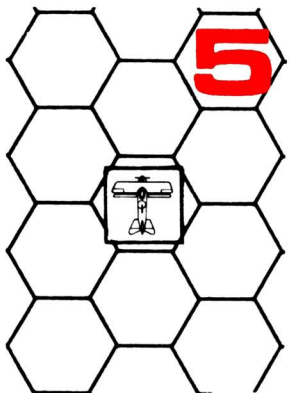M

FLAT SPIN
(remaining MP x –50 meters)
F

FALLING LEAF
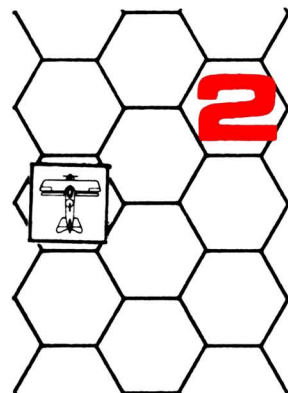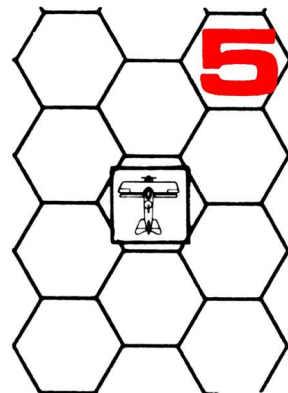(–100 meters)
G-right   H left

BARREL ROLL

A-right   B-left

FALLING LEAF
(–100 meters)
G-right   H left

BARREL ROLL

A-right   B-left