16 card Carrier Strike

A simple game of carrier action in World War II

World War 2 aircraft carrier battles were immensely complicated affairs, with many types of aircraft, weapons, different types of carrier and multitudinous other ships. Or were they? *16 card Carrier Strike* portrays the essence of carrier battles in a simple format requiring cards, dice, markers and a playing area to represent the ocean. Cries of *Tora!, Tora!, Tora!* are completely optional.

List of components

16 cards:

Blue combat card
Blue CV card
Blue dummy CV1 / CV real
Blue dummy CV2 / no CV – blank
4x Blue squadron cards
Red combat card
Red CV card
Red dummy CV1 / CV real
Red dummy CV2 / no CV - blank
4x Red squadron cards

Also required:

4x unique sets of 3 blue dice (d6):
    1x range / location (RL) dice, 2x strength dice
4x unique sets of 3 red dice (d6):
    1x range / location dice (RL), 2x strength dice
2 recce squadrons dice (blue d8)
2 recce squadrons dice (red d8)
1 combat dice (d6, not blue or red)

Also useful:

10x markers (blue player action completed)
10x markers (red player action completed)
12x detection markers
1x start player marker
2x player screens

Players will also need an 'area of operations', a table or other space to represent the ocean. It's best, but not essential, if this area is blue.

Description of components

Combat cards

Each player has a combat card with on one side the combat table and on the other a 'stance' indicator, gung ho, instinctive, and patient. The numbers on the card are used to work out whether enemies have been spotted, and as an aggression rating for combat.

CV card

This ship card represents an aircraft carrier (CV) group of two carriers and supporting vessels. The position of the ships is the marked point at the centre of the CV card.

A full strength CV card has 8 steps of hits – each side of the card shows one of these steps. A CV card is oriented so that its current strength faces to the north side of the playing area. A CV card with four hits is deemed 'crippled', equivalent to losing one carrier, and is flipped face down. A CV card with eight hits is destroyed, representing the loss of two carriers.

A CV card moves one card length per action or one card width if crippled.

A CV card can hold up to 4 combat squadrons (up to 48 aircraft) and 2 recce squadrons. It has an anti-aircraft rating of 8, reducing as it takes damage (indicated on the card). If crippled, the CV card can only accommodate 24 combat aircraft and 1 recce squadron.

Dummy CV cards

Used to represent where the aircraft carrier group actually is and where it might be. Its real position is revealed by detection actions.

Squadrons and groups

A squadron is a number of aircraft that take actions as a unit. It can be a recce squadron represented by a single d8 RL dice, or a combat squadron represented by a d6 RL dice, two d6 strength dice and a squadron card. A combat squadron can be deployed as fighters or strike aircraft and can be re-armed to switch roles.

A 'group' is any collection of one or more deployed squadrons of any type of aircraft with their RL dice touching.

Squadron card

A squadron card is combined with its RL and strength dice to display the status and role of the squadron. The squadron cards are kept away from the area of operations, so that the other player cannot see them.

Squadron status

Keep the strength dice on the squadron card unless deploying as a dummy squadron. The RL dice shows the location of the squadron on the area of operations; if not deployed put the RL dice next to its squadron card.

- » **Deployed** – Squadron card face up (roles visible) with selected role facing north. RL dice on the area of operations.
- » **Landed** – Squadron card face down.
- » **Refuelling** – Squadron card face up with Refuelling facing north.
- » **Re-arming** – Squadron card face up, chosen role facing north. RL dice next to its squadron card.
- » **Dummy deployed** – As for deployed, but strength dice are not on the squadron card.

Roles

A re-arming or deployed squadron card is placed face up, and its side facing north denotes its overall role (fighter or strike).

There are specific fighter roles dependent on where the fighters are positioned:

- » **Combat Air Patrol (CAP)** - Place the RL dice on the CV card.
- » **Escort** - Place the RL dice so that it is touching the RL dice of a strike or recce squadron that it is escorting.
- » **Hunter** - any fighter squadron that is not CAP or escort.

A fighter squadron's role is determined by its position, so its specific fighter role can change when it moves.

Squadron dice: range and location (RL) dice

These blue or red dice are used to represent both the operating range (fuel capacity) and location of the squadron. Location is indicated by the position of the dice in the area of operations. Range is indicated by the face up number on the dice. A fighter or strike squadron has a range of 6, a recce squadron 8,

and the number on the dice is reduced each turn as the squadron takes actions. If the RL number reaches 1, and the squadron does not land soon, it will lose aircraft that have to ditch in the sea (see *'Running out of fuel'*).

Squadron dice: strength dice

Each combat squadron has 2 dice the same colour as its RL dice. These dice show its strength, are kept on the squadron card and reduced whenever losses are taken. Losses are never recovered unless indicated by the scenario.

Recce squadron dice

Reconnaissance aircraft are represented by a single d8 RL dice. A recce squadron's numerical strength is only one, so any loss suffered will destroy it.

Markers

A number of markers are used to indicate that a friendly force has taken an action during the turn or that an enemy force has been detected.

Set up

See '*Scenarios*' for set up and victory conditions.

Each player selects a different end of the area of operations as indicated by the scenario. One side of the area of operations should be designated as north, so that cards can be oriented in that direction to indicate strength for CV cards and role for re-arming or deployed squadrons.

Each player secretly determines the starting role of all its squadrons, placing the squadron cards face up away from the playing area (behind a screen if used), and oriented so that the role is pointed towards north. Squadrons can start on the refuel role, if desired, in which case they can spend an action to re-arm later.

Turn Sequence

A turn consists of the following sequence, carried out in this order:

1.   Action phases: Beginning with the start player each side takes one action or passes, alternating until both players have passed. If you pass, you

cannot take a further action this turn. The phasing player is the one who is carrying out the current action.

2. Reduce the RL dice of all deployed squadrons by one, except for those that launched this turn.

3. Remove all 'action completed' markers.

4. In rare cases if using a small table, adjust positions of all cards and markers to give everyone more sea room and air space.

5. Start a new turn, switching the start player.

Measuring

The location of ships is denoted by the target in the centre of the CV card, and of aircraft by the centre of an RL dice. For ease of play and to represent the vagaries of currents and winds, measuring in Carrier Strike uses card lengths or card widths of the CV or dummy CV card not otherwise in play.

To determine the range to a target or how far to move a card or RL dice, measure out the distance with the measuring card. For targeting, the measuring card must contact any part of the target card or dice to be in range. Players are not permitted to measure ranges in advance. For actions requiring a target, the player should point to the selected target then carry out the action; once a target has been selected at the start of an action, the action must be followed as far as is possible in relation to that target.

Actions

Each CV card and squadron can take one action per turn. After the action has been taken, place an 'action completed' marker by the RL dice or on the CV card. The action phases are finished, when both players have used all their CV cards and squadrons or passed.

An action is one of:

1. Dogfight.
2. Land.
3. Launch.
4. Move a CV card.
5. Move a Squadron.
6. Re-arm.

7. Refuel.
8. Strike.

There are also two special actions for aircraft, which do not count against the normal one action per turn limit:

9. Detect, optionally preceded or followed by Move, or followed by Dogfight.
10. Intercept, optionally followed by Dogfight.

A CV card may also Disengage as a special action.

Dogfight

The Dogfight action can be taken by any fighter squadron or group of fighter squadrons with RL dice at 2 or more and within 3 card lengths of a detected enemy aircraft group, or can happen to any aircraft group as a result of an Intercept action. The phasing player's fighter group is the attacker if taking the Dogfight action. The non-phasing player is the attacker if taking the Intercept action. Attackers in a Dogfight are always made up of only fighter squadrons. Defenders can be any aircraft.

Fighters with RL dice of 1 cannot choose the Dogfight action or Intercept action, and if attacked, fight at a significant disadvantage (see *Air Combat Procedure*).

Aircraft that are not in the attacking group or the defending group are not affected by the Dogfight.

Carry out the following steps, skipping any where the type of force is missing, and use the Air Combat Procedure for each attack:

1. Attacker's fighters attack defender's fighters. Attacker is first player; defender is second player.
2. Defender's fighters attack attacker's fighters. Defender is first player; attacker is second player.
3. If step 2 involved escorts, then the defending player may move each of his or her squadrons in the defending group up to 3 card lengths in any direction. Squadrons forced to break off during the combat cannot carry out this movement. If no recce and / or strike squadrons from the defending group are within 2 card lengths of the attackers after this step, then the Dogfight ends.

4. Attacker's fighters automatically destroy defender's recce from the defending group within 2 card lengths.

5. Attacker's fighters attack defender's strike aircraft from the defending group within 2 card lengths. Attacker is first player; defender is second player.

At the end of the Dogfight, reduce the RL dice of all the squadrons involved on both sides by one. This reduction is in addition to the normal reduction at the end of the turn. For dogfighting squadrons starting on 1 RL, see *Running Out of Fuel*.

A Dogfight action does not count as an action for any non-phasing squadrons.

Land

A squadron within 3 card lengths of a friendly CV card can take this action to land. Put the squadron card face down behind the player's screen with the RL dice on the centre of the card, and its strength dice on the card towards one edge. If it's a dummy CV card, then it must be the dummy that represents the real aircraft carrier group!

Launch

Any refuelled or re-armed squadron may launch.

Take the RL dice for the squadron and place it within three card lengths of its CV card with the maximum number face up (this will be a 6 or an 8). The squadron must be launched at its current strength and may not be split. If re-armed, the squadron's role is that which was selected in the previous Re-arm action or at the start of the game.

Squadrons can be 'launched' as dummies from real or dummy CV cards. Show a dummy squadron by putting its strength dice off the squadron card. Launching squadrons can be placed within three card lengths of two dummy CV cards, so that detecting them does not also reveal the carrier group's location.

Newly launched squadrons do not reduce their RL dice.

Move a CV card

Move one friendly CV card or both its associated dummy cards.

Movement rates:

- » Undetected CV card: 1 card length
- » Detected CV face up: 1 card length
- » CV face down (crippled), detected or not: 1 card width

Undeployed squadrons or squadrons deployed on the CV card stay with it for no actions or movement costs.

Move a squadron

Move the RL dice of any group up to 6 card lengths in any direction. Touching RL dice can be moved as one action for the group, as long as they remain together for the whole move.

RL dice of squadrons on Combat Air Patrol are kept on the CV card. RL dice of escorts must be in a group of touching RL dice containing at least one recce or strike squadron.

Dummy squadrons can move as if they are real squadrons until detected, at which point they are removed.

Re-arm

Any refuelled combat squadron on its CV card may take the Re-arm action. Place the squadron card face up with the chosen role pointing north. Re-armed squadrons are held on standby until they launch. A re-armed squadron can change roles by taking the Re-arm action again.

A recce squadron cannot re-arm, as it has no weapons.

Refuel

Any landed squadron may take the Refuel action. For a combat squadron turn its card face up and orient it so that the Refuelling side faces north. Recce squadrons automatically refuel in one turn; turn the dice so the 8 is uppermost.

Strike

Groups containing at least one squadron with the strike role and 2 or more on its RL dice can take this action. The target must be a detected CV card within 3 card lengths of the striking group. The phasing player moves the strike group so

that any of the group's RL dice touches the edge of the target CV card. Enemy fighter squadrons may intercept during this movement (see *Intercept*).

After any interception dogfights have been resolved, any remaining strike squadrons (even if on 1 RL) may attack the CV card using the Strike Procedure. Each squadron with a strike role carries out one strike, and then must return to a friendly CV card to re-arm.

Strike Procedure:

In an air strike, anti-aircraft guns first defend against the strike aircraft, then surviving strike aircraft can attack the CV card. Each strike squadron carries out its own separate attack, using the following steps.

1.   Each side in the combat reveals its strength; the attacking side's strength is the number of strike aircraft in the squadron, and the defending side's strength is the current points of AA guns remaining on the target CV card.

2.   Each player selects a stance secretly from their combat card. Place the card with the selected side facing north and the card covered by a hand or screen, so that the other player cannot see the selection.

3.   Reveal the cards and look up the Hit Modifier on the combat table on the combat cards.

4.   Roll combat dice and refer to the Hits Inflicted Table, as described in steps 7 and 8 of the Air Combat Procedure.

5.   Before calculating hits on the CV card, resolve hits on the strike aircraft and the possibility of strike aircraft breaking off, using the Air Combat Procedure; AA guns receive an additional aggression bonus equal to the number of hits they inflict on the strike aircraft.

    a. Allocate hits by reducing the strength dice of the strike squadron.

    b. If breaking off would be required, then do not move the squadron, but instead halve its attack strength rounding up (for example 11 becomes 6) and use this value to calculate hits on the target.

6.   Calculate the number of hits on the CV card, using the attack strength modified by step 5. Note: Aircraft carriers do not break off!

7.   Surviving strike aircraft and any other squadrons with them in the striking group that have not broken off earlier may then move 3 card lengths in any direction.

Place a marker on each strike aircraft squadron to indicate that its action for the turn has been completed.

Detect

Any non-dummy squadron or CV card within 3 card lengths of an undetected enemy group, may attempt to detect it before or after a Move action or prior to a Dogfight action. If target squadrons are in a group, then success detects all its squadrons.

A squadron within 1 card length of any target automatically detects it.

Detection procedure: Each player uses the combat card to select a detection number (from 1 to 4) secretly; place the card with the selected side facing north and the card covered by a hand or screen, so that the other player cannot see the selection. Reveal the two cards and add together the detection numbers, consulting the table below for the result.

Detection Table

Total of detection numbers	Combat squadron or CV card	Recce squadron
2	Detected	Detected
3	Undetected	Undetected
4	Undetected	Detected
5	Detected	Detected
6	Undetected	Detected
7	Undetected	Undetected
8	Detected	Detected

Place detection markers on any detected target, removing any dummy targets or dummy CV cards and placing the real CV card if revealed. Once players are familiar with the game, detection markers are not needed for forces at close quarters. The player owning any detected squadrons must inform the other player whether they are only strike aircraft or only fighters or a mixture (precise numbers need not be revealed).

Any detected target remains detected until no enemy squadrons are within 6 card lengths and no enemy CV cards are within 3 card lengths. In this case, remove the detection marker. If the target is a CV card, it may take a Move action at its maximum speed as its next action to place 2 dummy cards to represent the real position and a fake position, removing the real card.

Disengage

If a player has placed dummy CV cards as described under Detection, the CV card may disengage as its next action if no enemy squadrons are within 6 card lengths and no enemy CV cards are within 3 card lengths.

Intercept

If the phasing player's group moves closer to an enemy group and to within 1 card length through any type of action except Dogfight, both sides detect each other automatically, and the phasing player must pause the move. The non-phasing player must now choose whether or not to intercept the phasing group with any or all of the non-phasing group's fighter squadrons that have 2 or more on their RL dice. Squadrons with 1 on their RL dice cannot intercept.

If the non-phasing player chooses to intercept, move any intercepting fighter squadrons into contact with the phasing player's aircraft and initiate an immediate Dogfight. In this case, the intercepting fighter squadrons are the attackers, and they count as a separate group from any other non-phasing aircraft, even if they were originally escorts. All squadrons in the intercepted phasing player's group are the defenders.

If the non-phasing player chooses not to, or cannot, intercept, then all the non-phasing squadrons must move 3 lengths away from the phasing group. This move must not reduce the distance between the two groups, but does not have to be directly away. The phasing group can now continue its movement, but cannot move to within 1 length of the non-phasing group.

Air Combat Procedure

Carry out the following sequence of steps:

1.   Match up each attacking squadron to one enemy squadron (attacking side's choice); these two squadrons form one 'combat'.

2.   Starting with all the attacker's unmatched squadrons, add in any unmatched squadrons (owner's choice) to any existing combat.

3.   Each combat is resolved separately, and the attacking player chooses which combat to do next after each one is resolved.

4.   Each side in the combat reveals its strength in this combat, showing the strength dice of the squadrons involved.

5.   Each player uses their combat card to select a stance secretly from Gung Ho, Instinctive and Patient. Place it with the selected side facing north and the card covered by a hand or screen, so that the other player cannot see the selection.

6.   Reveal the cards and look up the Hit Modifiers on the table on the combat cards. These modifiers shift the hit ratio on the Hits Inflicted Table.

7.   Each player now rolls the combat dice (1d6) to further adjust the Hit Modifiers: 1, 2 = -1; 3, 4 = 0; 5, 6 = +1. This result modifies the player's result from step 6.

8.   Refer to the Hits Inflicted Table, which shows the hit ratio, the number of hits inflicted depending on the strength of the opposing force. Using the results from steps 6 and 7, and starting at the 1 per 6 column on the table, move right (+) or left (-) to determine the hits inflicted on each side's forces. Ignore any fractions. For example: First Player has 11 aircraft, chooses Instinctive and rolls 2; Second Player has 7 aircraft, chooses Gung ho and rolls 6; 'Instinctive v Gung ho' gives a result of +1 for both sides; final modifiers are 0 for the First Player (1 per 6) and +2 for the Second Player (shift two to the right, 1 per 3).

9.   Allocate hits by reducing the strength dice of squadrons in the combat. Hits are allocated simultaneously. If more than one squadron was involved on a side, the owner of the squadrons receiving the hits chooses how to allocate them. In the above example, First Player inflicts 1 hit (1 per 6 with 11 aircraft), Second Player inflicts 2 hits (1 per 3 with 7 aircraft).

10.   Breaking off: Each stance in the combat has an aggression rating from 1 to 3 given on the combat card. For each player take the combat

dice that was rolled by that player, add in that player's aggression rating and subtract the opposing player's rating. If the result is 4 or more the opposing player must break off. Ignore breaking off if there are no enemy aircraft remaining in the combat. In the above example, the First Player has a combat roll of 2, plus aggression 2 (Instinctive) minus opponent's aggression 3 (Gung ho) = 1. So the Second Player's squadron doesn't break off. The Second Player has a combat roll of 6, plus aggression 3 minus opponent's aggression 2 = 7, which is greater than 4, so the First Player's squadron must break off.

11.   When working out breaking off versus anti-aircraft guns, the guns receive an additional aggression modifier equal to the number of hits they inflicted.

12.   Starting with the defender, each side that breaks off must move 3 card lengths in a straight line in any direction.

Fighters attacking strike aircraft and aircraft with RL at '1'

As for normal air combat, but

» Strike aircraft suffer an automatic right shift against them when attacked by fighters.

» Aircraft with RL at '1' suffer an additional automatic right shift against them when attacked by fighters.

» Strike aircraft and any aircraft with RL at '1' take 2 shifts left when inflicting hits.

» Fighters do not break off when attacking strike aircraft.

Hits Inflicted Table

Adjust columns right (+) or left (-) from the 1 per 6 column. Shifts beyond 12 are 12, and beyond 1 are 1.

1 hit per...	12	10	9	8	*6*	4	3	2	1

Fighters v Strike: +1

Fighters v RL 1: +1

Strike v Fighters: -2

Breaking off: Combat roll + own aggression (+2 if AA guns) - opponent's aggression => 4

Running out of fuel

If a squadron's RL dice has to be reduced to 1 or less for any reason, set it to '1'. On its next action, the squadron must take a Land action or move directly towards the nearest friendly CV card and land as soon as possible.

A squadron with an RL dice on '1' that starts its action further than 3 card lengths away from a friendly CV card cannot land. It immediately loses 1 aircraft per extra card length or part card length distance between it and the CV card. A squadron that loses aircraft like this must end its action on the CV card or at the start of its action on the following turn it will lose 1 aircraft per card length distance from the CV card and must land this turn or all remaining aircraft in the squadron are lost. For example, a squadron with 1 fuel left is 4.5 card lengths away from its CV card; it loses 2 aircraft immediately, takes a Move action and ends up on the CV card; it can land its remaining aircraft next turn. If it had been 7.5 card lengths away, it would have lost 5 aircraft immediately, moving to 1.5 card lengths from the CV card, then on the next turn it would have to take a Land action, lose another 2 aircraft and land any remaining aircraft.

Dummy squadrons

Any undetected carrier group can launch dummy squadrons (see Launch action). Dummy squadrons act just like normal squadrons, but cannot attack, detect or otherwise interact with real squadrons or ships. When detected, dummy squadron RL dice are removed back to the player's playing area.

Anti-aircraft fire

In addition to anti-aircraft fire during a Strike action, a CV card also uses its anti-aircraft guns against each and every enemy aircraft squadron that crosses or ends its move on an enemy CV card during any action other than Strike. In this event, pause the aircraft movement and carry out the steps of the Strike Procedure for each target squadron, but ignoring any hits on the CV card. Surviving aircraft may continue with their action. If a CV card moves to a position below an enemy squadron, the owner of the squadron may move it the minimum distance, so that it is not directly above the card.

Surface to surface action

In the unlikely event that a CV card detects another CV card, at the end of the turn each CV card will inflict damage on the other equal to its remaining hits. The owner of any carrier group that loses a carrier (CV card crippled or destroyed) in this way is deemed to have lost the scenario; it is therefore possible for both sides to lose in this fashion.

Pilot skill

A scenario may specify that some pilots are experienced or elite, for which they will receive bonuses for either strike or fighter role.

When selecting a combat stance, the player also secretly plays one marker for experienced or two markers for elite pilots. A red marker indicates increasing the damage inflicted by one column; a blue marker indicates decreasing the damage received by one column.

Scenarios

First strike!

Initial area of operations: 16 card lengths

Red forces: All, full strength

Blue forces: All, full strength

Pilot skill bonuses: none

Game length: 12 turns or game ends when either side has achieved a victory condition and its CV card has disengaged.

Set up

Each player puts their two dummy CV cards face down anywhere on the home edge of the area of operations. The card with the ships on the concealed face up side is the real location of the ships.

The Blue player is the start player for the first turn and takes the start player marker.

Victory

Decisive: Enemy CV card destroyed and own CV card 3 or fewer hits (not crippled).

Major: Enemy CV card crippled (4 or more hits) and own CV card 3 or fewer hits (not crippled).

Minor: Enemy CV card has taken 1 or more hits and own CV card has taken fewer hits and is not crippled.

Pull back the horns!

Initial area of operations: 16 card lengths

Red forces: All, full strength

Blue forces: CV card on 4 hits (crippled); 2x full strength combat squadrons, 1x recce

Pilot skill bonuses: none

Game length: 12 turns or when either Blue CV card sunk, or Blue CV card has disengaged.

Set up

Blue CV card is detected; as it is crippled it moves at one card width per turn. All Blue squadrons are re-armed (Blue choice of roles). Place a Red recce squadron (undetected) on 5 RL at 4 card lengths from the Blue CV card.

The Red player puts the two Red dummy CV cards face down anywhere on the home edge of the area of operations. All Red squadrons are re-armed (Red choice of roles).

The Blue player is start player for the first turn and takes the start player marker.

Victory

Red Decisive: Blue CV card destroyed and Red CV card undamaged

Red Major: Blue CV card destroyed and Red CV card 2 or fewer hits

Blue Decisive: Blue CV card disengaged and Red CV card has taken any damage

Blue Major: Blue CV card 2 or more hits remaining (disengaged or not) and Blue has 12 or more combat aircraft

All other results are a draw.

Kamikaze!

Initial area of operations: 12 card lengths

Red forces: All, full strength; 2 combat squadrons can only be used in strike role and are manned by kamikaze pilots.

Blue forces: All, full strength.

Game length: 12 turns or when all Red kamikaze strike aircraft have been destroyed.

Set up

Each player puts their two dummy CV cards face down anywhere on the home edge of the area of operations. The card with the ships on the concealed face up side is the real location of the ships.

The Red player is the start player for the first turn and takes the start player marker. Each kamikaze strike aircraft may carry out only one strike and is then considered lost.

Kamikaze pilots

Kamikaze pilots gain 1 shift right when carrying out a strike. Anti-aircraft attacks on kamikaze pilots also gain 1 shift right.

Victory

Red Decisive: Blue CV card destroyed

Red Major: Blue CV card crippled

Blue Decisive: Blue CV card undamaged

Blue Major: Blue CV card 3 or fewer hits

Credits

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Play testing: Graham Bevan, Rob Cooper, Lawrence Davies, Peter Knowlden, Phil McDonald, Gordon Malcolm, Alan Millicheap, Steve Price, John Salt, Mike Shepherd, Rodger Williams, Mike Young

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Contact: For any questions, clarifications or more scenarios, see the Carrier Strike page on the Surprised Stare Games website at:

http://www.surprisedstaregames.co.uk/CarrierStrike

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Quick Reference

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