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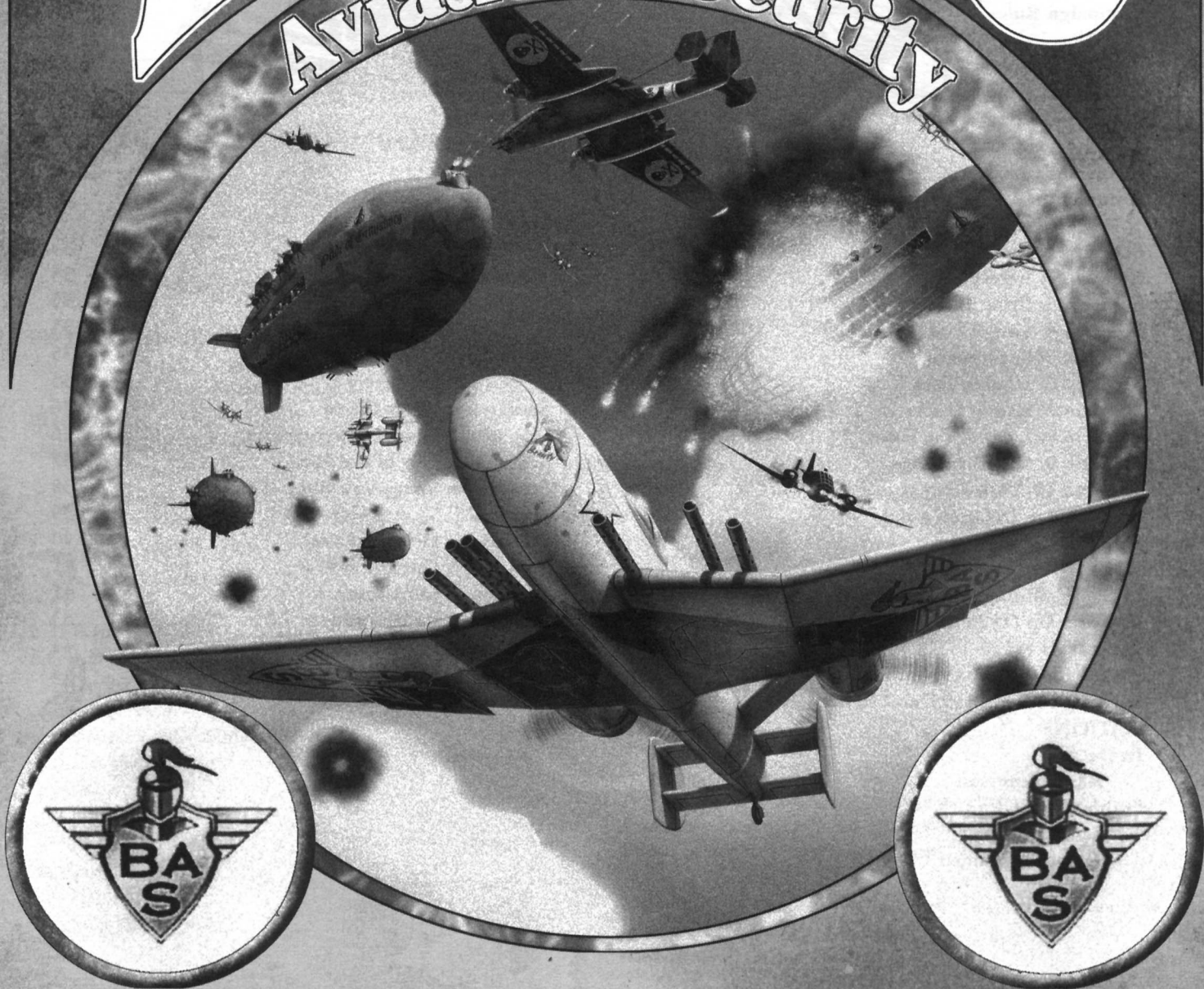


FASA
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A CRIMSON SKIES CAMPAIGN

Blake

Aviation Security

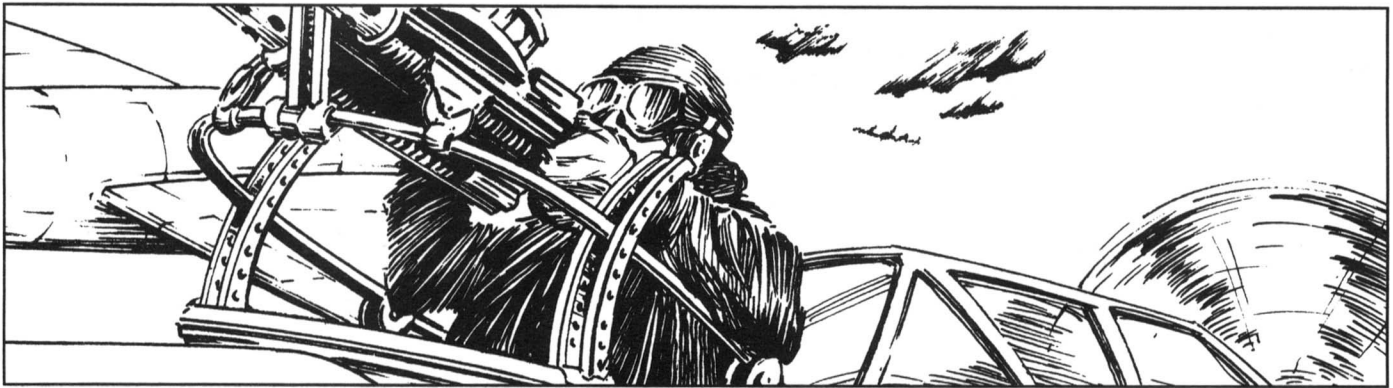


We Protect YOUR Skies!

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BLAKE AVIATION SECURITY



THE ONE TO COUNT ON

Bandits—seven o'clock high. About half a mile out. The alarm came over the radio, startling me out of my sightseeing. I tore my attention away from the dark green splendor of the Allegheny Mountains and twisted my head in a vain attempt to see the incoming planes over my left shoulder. Blinking in the face of the near-blinding afternoon sunlight, I marveled at the fact that our wing leader had managed to spot them in the first place. But I guess that's why these Blake Aviation pilots get paid the big bucks.

The radio was crackling with almost constant activity now as the pilots kept each other updated. I kept quiet, just listening and waiting for my cue.

"How many?"

"Four—maybe five."

"I make out two Devastators."

"Confirmed. Plus a pair of Furys and a Warhawk."

"Think they're hostile?"

"What do you think, rookie? They're diving in out of the sun!"

The authoritative voice of Captain Danny Fisher halted any further discussion. "Cut the chatter. Stay on course. Prepare to break formation and engage on my signal. Rose, stick tight with Mercury. We'll keep the bandits off your tail."

I was Mercury. Unlike the highly trained fighter pilots on my wing, I was just a courier, hired to deliver the innocuous-looking envelope tucked safely into my flight jacket. What was inside? They hadn't told me, and I knew better than to ask. My employers, a banking firm based in Columbia, had said that the delivery to their Cleveland office would be a milk run. Nobody was supposed to know about the transfer. As the silhouettes of the five fighters began to take shape in the distance, I scowled and thought that "nobody" sure had some nice planes.

"Here they come," Fisher said calmly. "Steady ... steady ... now!" On his signal, the squadron split off into two pairs—Fisher and his wingman, Rose, banking right, and the other two planes banking left. I dragged my stick right, pulling in close behind Rose's Valiant. The bandit planes had apparently been lulled into think-

ing that they had surprised us. They were slow to react as the Blake Aviation aircraft pulled up suddenly and unleashed a hail of gunfire in their faces.

My eyes flicked to the left as the brilliant fireball of an exploding Fury caught my attention. Tiny fragments of wreckage floated down to Earth; there was no way the pilot could have escaped in time. Ahead of me, black smoke poured from the engine casing of the lone Warhawk. The pilot pitched his nose downward and fled from the battle, no doubt hoping to stay in one piece long enough to land. I watched it go for a moment, suddenly recognizing the blood-red lightning bolt insignia on its fuselage, identifying our enemy as the Red Storm Gang. They were a notorious local pirate band, responsible for countless raids and hijackings.

Two of the pirates were down, but that merely evened the odds. And now the Blake squadron had lost the element of surprise. This was when the real aerial dancing began. I wasn't able to contribute much to the dogfight; my number one priority was to stay on Rose's wing and not get my tail shot off. Fisher and his wingmen made that easy. Only once did one of the pirates get a bead on me, and Fisher quickly put a stop to that. He took advantage of the enemy flyer's focus on me to slip in behind him, unleashing the full fury of his Peacemaker's quad cannons. The Devastator banked left sharply, then nosed down into a spin, trailing flames and smoke all the way to the ground.

By that time, only two pirate craft remained. They apparently didn't like the way the odds looked now—five (if you counted me) against two. The Fury and Devastator turned tail and ran, diving to gain speed as they headed for the hills.

"Should we pursue, Cap?" one of the Blake pilots asked hopefully.

"Not today, boys," Fisher replied reluctantly. "We're not on a hunting mission; our job is to take Mercury safely to his destination." The pilots were well disciplined; they didn't argue or complain. But they still cheered enthusiastically when the Captain added, the grin on his face practically audible in his voice, "But maybe we'll catch some bandits on the way home."

When we arrived at the airfield outside Cleveland, I said goodbye to Captain Fisher and his squadron and delivered the envelope that had caused such a fuss. I watched the four planes take off again with a twinge of regret, their golden winged-shield-and-visor insignias reflecting the last rays of the twilight. My experience with them had left me fascinated with these "knights of the sky." I would not rest until I knew more.



BLAKE AVIATION SECURITY



KNIGHTS OF THE SKY

Piloting is a skill. Flying is an art. That's what makes up the pages of *Air Action Weekly*, and that's why you, the reader, keep coming back, issue after issue. It's these stories that make the publication strong. That's also why I enjoy writing for the magazine, if only as a part-time correspondent. And while my own performance in the air may not reflect great amounts of artistry, I know it when I see it.

The courier run described previously was part of my everyday life as a pilot. While I keep my eyes open for good ideas for articles, I hadn't gone looking for anything on this particular job. As I had said, it was supposed to be a milk run. Simple. Lucky for me, it didn't turn out that way. Instead, I got a first-hand opportunity to see the pilots of the BAS in action. I immediately knew that this was a story that had to be told. When I got back from Cleveland, I pitched the idea of a full-length feature on BAS to the *Air Action Weekly* editors. Who were these knights of the sky? How did they get to be the top security firm in North America? And what of their founder, the star of radio, print, and film, Paladin Blake?

The editors went for the idea, and after some quick negotiations, so did Paladin Blake himself. A few weeks later, I was packed and on my way to the Empire State, the first stop on my trip to observe BAS operations across the continent. It only took a few days before I realized my 'feature' would have enough detail to deserve a special issue all its own. I spent the next six months in the Empire State, Hollywood, and Dixie, flying and talking with, in this correspondent's humble opinion, some of the best pilots in all of North America.

This is not to say that the BAS pilots are all aces. Their methods are unorthodox at best, and many of them have rightly earned the "maverick" classification. However, in the BAS what might be liabilities elsewhere have been turned into strengths, making for some of the strongest teamwork I've had the pleasure to witness.

Postscript: This issue is dedicated to the memory of Captain William "Sailor" Carver. He was a crack flier in the Dixie BAS, and I count myself lucky to have served with him. He will be missed.

When I returned, I sat down with the editorial staff of *Air Action Weekly* to discuss the prospect of a special issue. I knew the experiences I'd had were worthy of greater coverage. Happily, the editors agreed with me after reading over my source material, and so this special issue of *Air Action Weekly* came to be.

In this issue are two sections detailing the missions I saw. The first, *Imperial Guard*, covers the time I spent in the Empire State with the BAS Imperial Guard squadron. This coincided with the Empire Transit scandal, so I was personally on hand for those exciting events. I'm proud to be able to offer you a behind-the-scenes exclusive on what really happened.

The second section, *Down and Dirty in Dixie*, describes my time with the Dixie squadron of the BAS. These daring flyers really tested my skills in trying to keep up with them. Dixie is home to no small number of pirate groups, and the number of sorties and dogfights I saw and took part in leaves me breathless just remembering it. My favorite experience was fighting my way on-board the pirate ship *Lone Wolf*, though it's not something I'd be willing to try again.

Between the two is a study of Blake Aviation Security, including its operations. The article covers the company from the top down, moving from the men and women who made Blake Aviation Security what it is, to the main regional offices throughout the continent. It begins with a discussion of the history of the company as well as its founder, the enigmatic Paladin Blake, in a personal interview with the man himself.

Blake Aviation Security was extremely helpful in the writing of the issue, and gave me anything I needed. However, this article is still far from being in-depth. The six months of research was mostly spent with the two squadrons mentioned above. As a result, I believe I have barely scratched the surface of the company as a whole and Paladin Blake in particular.

The times I shared with the men and women of Blake Aviation Security are times I'll always remember fondly. It was a privilege to share their lives and the dangers they face, if only briefly. They truly are "the one to count on."

Thomas Keaton

Air Action Weekly Correspondent



IMPERIAL GAMBIT

Imperial Gambit is a historical campaign based on a conflict between Blake Aviation Security (BAS) and the Flying Cobras pirate group in 1936. The campaign stems from an underhanded plan put in motion by Empire Transit, an airship service based out of Empire State, to covertly fund the Cobras in an attempt to disrupt the operations of their main competitor, Imperial Air. Since Imperial Air was the biggest client of BAS at the time, the security pilots quickly went toe to toe with the pirate group.

The scenarios outlined below portray historical events, but players may deviate from them in the course of play.

CAMPAIGN RULES

The following rules are intended for use with both the *Imperial Gambit* and *Down and Dirty in Dixie* (see p. 35) campaigns, but players may find them useful in other campaigns involving Blake Aviation Security.

PILOTS

Blake Aviation pilots must all pass an intense air-to-air combat training course when they are first hired, giving them an edge over many of the pirate groups they encounter in the skies. When creating a Blake Aviation pilot, use 480 points for lead flyers and 380 for wingmen. However, as hired security specialists, BAS pilots must also live up to high standards of service and courage, else they risk their jobs and reputation. BAS pilots suffer double the standard penalty for retreating or performing a non-combat bailout; they lose 40 experience points rather than 20.

REPUTATION

Blake Aviation's primary motto is "The One To Count On," and their words are backed by years of solid performance. If their clients lose faith in their ability to protect valuable cargo and passengers, BAS will be out of business.

To reflect this, the Blake squadron receives Reputation Points based on its performance throughout the campaign, according to the Reputation Point Table. Certain missions will have special rules regarding the awarding of Reputation Points, and Reputation Points will be a factor in the overall outcome of the campaign. Note that the squadron's Reputation may become negative if the pilots fare badly.

REPUTATION POINT TABLE

Event	Reputation Points
Win Mission	+1
Cargo or Passengers Protected	+1
Lose Mission	-1
Cargo or Passengers Lost	-2
Mission ends in a draw	+0

CASH FLOW TABLE

BAS Cash Per Mission = \$2,000 + (1D10 x 1,000) + (current Reputation Point score x 1,000) - (2,000 if cargo or passengers lost in the previous mission)

BOTTOM LINE

As a private corporation, the financial bottom line is extremely important to Blake Aviation's continued success. In addition to the usual costs of repair and re-armament following a battle, BAS must pay out insurance money for any cargo lost under its protection. The company also has an excellent life insurance plan for the families of pilots who are killed or disabled in the line of duty. These operating costs can add up, and there's only a finite amount of money in the corporate coffers. Sometimes, something has to give.

After each mission, the Blake squadron receives a certain amount of cash. This money may be spent on repairs, replacements or customizations; or it may be saved for a rainy day. The volatile nature of BAS' corporate economics means that this income is not fixed. It is determined by the formula shown in the Cash Flow Table. If the formula ever results in a negative cash flow, treat it as an income of \$0. Aircraft costs (including repairs and tinkering) are discussed starting on p. 52 of *Behind the Crimson Veil*. Note that replacement aircraft must be purchased but replacement pilots come free (they are assigned by the corporation).





PLANES AND PILOTS

The rosters for the BAS Empire State Squadron (known as the Imperial Guard) and the Flying Cobras are given below. Should any of the pilots be killed during the course of the campaign, they may be replaced with flyers created using the standard 450 points (for lead pilots) or 350 points (for wingmen) as explained on p.19 of *The Rules of Air Combat*.

IMPERIAL GUARD—BAS EMPIRE STATE SQUADRON

Flight One

Lead 1: Jamie "Mac" McDonough	
Firebrand	3-6-4-6-6-3
Wing 1: Jennifer "Raven" Caston	
Peacemaker	3-5-5-3-4-3
Lead 2: Michael "Beast" Walsh	
Avenger	3-6-3-4-6-3
Wing 2: Clauss "Adler" Wasserman	
Avenger	4-3-5-3-5-3
Lead 3: Joel "Sabre" Bertman	
Bloodhawk	4-3-3-7-3-5
Wing 3: Scott "Highlander" MacCarthy	
Brigand	5-3-5-4-2-4

Flight Two

Lead 1: Myriah "Lark" Martel	
Warhawk	4-5-5-4-5-3
Wing 1: Nia "Storm" Asher	
Kestrel	3-4-6-3-3-4
Lead 2: Seth "Ares" Harrington	
Bloodhawk	6-4-4-2-4-5

Wing 2: Ben "Sierra" Elliott	
Devastator	5-4-3-5-4-2
Lead 3: Kelly "Fox" Fox	
Vampire	3-4-5-5-4-5
Wing 3: Jeff "Sparks" Houston	
Raven	5-5-4-3-3-3

FLYING COBRAS

Flight One

Lead 1: Harry "Rex" Black	
Valiant	4-5-5-4-5-5
Wing 1: David "Shark" Hodge	
Bloodhawk	3-3-3-4-3-6
Lead 2: Billy "Joker" King	
Vampire	3-6-3-3-3-6
Wing 2: Alan "Persian" Cox	
Peacemaker	4-2-2-5-3-5
Lead 3: Anthony "Royale" Donnel	
Fury	4-3-3-5-3-4
Wing 3: Renthait "Renny" Flynn	
Fury	2-3-6-5-6-4

Flight Two

Lead 1: Giovanni "Doc" Navarro	
Raven	4-4-6-3-5-3
Wing 1: Tricia "Ronin" Stevenson	
Warhawk	4-3-5-3-4-4
Lead 2: Russel "Titan" Sawyer	
Intrepid	6-4-4-3-4-3
Wing 2: Erika "Robin" Lew	
Brigand	3-4-4-3-3-5



RUNNING THE CAMPAIGN

The scenarios are presented in historical order, with each mission representing an actual encounter between the Imperial Guard and the Flying Cobras. The players may choose to play the missions out of order, but the following considerations should be kept in mind. *Scenario 6: Double Take* must be played immediately after *Scenario 5: Suckerpunch*, and *Scenario 12: Last Stand* must be played last. The other missions may be played in any order.

CAMPAIGN VICTORY

When all the scenarios have been played, the overall victory is determined by the Imperial Guard's final Reputation Point score, as detailed on the Final Victory Table.



IN THE EMPIRE

Trent Field had originally been built as a US Air Corps pilot training facility after the Great War. Located just outside New York City, it had top-notch facilities—a paved runway, spacious hangars, and a posh admin building for the base officers. During the breakup of the United States, the Empire State took over the base and converted it into a commercial airfield. The admin building had become a terminal, equipped with all the modern conveniences. Landing at Trent became a popular way to avoid the headaches of flying into the city.

A small drab building, not unlike the other storage and maintenance structures scattered across the airfield, is nestled in one of Trent's corners. The office's only distinguishing characteristic is the sign over the door, the winged-shield and knight's visor logo of Blake Aviation Security. Not exactly the grandeur I expected from the home of Blake's premiere squadron, the Imperial Guard.

On my first visit to the BAS Empire State office, I never even made it past the front door. Three men—pilots, judging from their fur-lined leather jackets and high boots—were leaving the building as I approached. They were chatting amiably, but the one in the middle, a short fellow with curly blonde hair and piercing green eyes, paused as he noticed me. He stepped over with a broad grin.

"Keaton, right?" he asked, extending his hand. Startled that he knew my name, I just nodded wordlessly as we shook hands. "They told us you were coming," he explained. A pure-blooded Brooklyn accent clipped his words off short. "I'm Captain McDonough. Call me Mac. These guys are Walsh and Wasserman."

The other two pilots nodded politely, though it was clear they weren't thrilled by my presence. I could understand their reluctance. I was an outsider among their close-knit group. Still, their commander didn't seem the least bit put off. "We were just heading up—escort run to Buffalo. Your plane refueled?" Without

FINAL VICTORY TABLE

Less than -5: Overwhelming Defeat

BAS has suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of the Flying Cobras. The members of the Imperial Guard are transferred to garrison duty in Alaska and replaced by more competent flyers. Paladin Blake is forced to make extreme concessions in the Imperial Air contract to avoid losing his most valued customer. Blake Aviation's business suffers greatly in the face of the bad press that results.

0 to -5: Average Defeat

The Flying Cobras soundly defeat Blake Aviation, costing them thousands of dollars in lost revenue. Imperial Air loses some business to Empire Transit. Though it maintains its contract with BAS, it begins pursuing other security options. The Imperial Guard suffers considerable embarrassment and must work hard to redeem itself in Paladin Blake's eyes.

1 to 5: Average Victory

The Imperial Guard makes a decent show for itself, claiming victory over the pirates. Imperial Air remains a Blake client. Still, it's not what one would expect from one of Blake Aviation's top squadrons. Paladin Blake is disappointed in the Imperial Guard squadron's performance.

6 to 10: Complete Victory

The pirates may have gotten in a few licks, but there's no doubt that the Imperial Guard emerged victorious. The Imperial Guard pilots each receive a bonus of 30 Experience Points for a job well done.

More than 10: Decisive Victory

Blake Aviation thoroughly trounces the Flying Cobras, reinforcing the confidence that they are the ones to count on. The members of the Imperial Guard squadron each receive personal commendations from Paladin Blake himself, and a bonus of 60 Experience Points for their outstanding performance.

waiting for a reply, Mac headed for the nearest hangar. I followed, quickly discovering that I had to lengthen my steps to keep pace with the fast-walking flyer.

"Yeah, it should be," I told McDonough, silently hoping that the ground crews had been their usual efficient selves.

Mac grinned again. "Good. Then let's head out. No point wasting time." Less than half an hour later, I was in the air, flying my first mission with the Imperial Guard. Just outside the city limits, we rendezvoused with the *Northumberland*, the airship we were escorting. It was a beautiful zep, one of the newer models, and the Imperial Air logo blazed proudly from both sides of the gas bag.

Over the radio, Mac explained (presumably for my benefit, though I already knew much of what he was saying), "Imperial Air is Blake's biggest customer. We handle escorts for their flights up and down the coast: Dixie, Columbia, Appalachia, the Atlantic Coalition, and, of course, the Empire State. Our squadron is dedicated full time to protecting IA."

We flew north initially, as the zeppelin made a few stops, then prepared to head west. In Albany, we met up with the Imperial Guard's second flight, which was returning from another escort mission. Weary after too many hours in the cockpit, I chose to accompany them back to Trent Field. I would later regret that decision. Just a few hours after I left them, McDonaugh's flight ran into trouble over the Catskills Mountains. They tangled with a flight of pirates who managed to cripple the *Northumberland* before the Blake pilots drove them off. My first opportunity for action with the Imperial Guard, and I had missed it!

Little did I know that I would soon have all the action I could handle. The attack on the *Northumberland* was just the beginning. The next few months would see one of the most challenging campaigns the Imperial Guard had ever experienced—one that would have a profound effect on the future of Blake Aviation Security.



SCENARIO 1: BUSINESS AS USUAL

One of Imperial Air's most popular routes is the passenger service between New York City and Philadelphia. Every day, zeppelins make their way across the former state of New York to the Falls Region, with Blake Aviation Security escorts in tow. The Flying Cobras chose this route for its first strike, knowing that an assault on the heart of Imperial Air's business would have a tremendous psychological impact. The pirates made the *Northumberland*, an unremarkable passenger zeppelin, their first target. As it was not carrying any valuable cargo or passengers of note, the zeppelin was only lightly defended by two wings.

The Cobras struck while the *Northumberland* was over the Catskills Mountains, northwest of New York City. Though they put up a valiant defense, the Blake pilots were surprised and outmatched. The Cobras crippled the engines on the *Northumberland* and then disappeared as swiftly as they had appeared. Publicly, BAS claimed this encounter as a victory since the bandits had not made off with any hostages or loot, and no one was seriously injured aboard the zeppelin. In

reality, the Cobras had achieved exactly what they wanted to, and it was only the beginning.

GAME SET UP

Lay out a Zeppelin map. The Cobra Flight Two sets up first along the north map edge. Once the Cobra planes have been placed, the Blake player may set up anywhere within three hexes of the *Northumberland*, using any four planes from Flight One.

The *Northumberland* is a standard commercial zeppelin. Each engine nacelle's turret holds a single .50-caliber machine-gun, and there is also a flak cannon on the nose and stern of the airship.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Cobras' objective is to bring down the *Northumberland*, crippling its engine nacelles without actually destroying it. They are not after loot or prisoners, merely the disruption of Imperial Air's transit service. Blake Aviation must protect the zeppelin.

The mission ends when all of the Cobra planes have been shot down or have retreated off the northern map edge. The Guards have no home map edge.

WINNING THE MISSION

The side that earns the most victory points wins the mission:

BAS Points

For each enemy plane brought down	25
If the <i>Northumberland</i> is destroyed	-50

Cobras Points

For each enemy plane brought down	10
For each engine nacelle destroyed	10
If the <i>Northumberland</i> is destroyed	-50

The Imperial Guards lose Reputation Points for lost cargo if the *Northumberland* goes up in flames, but not if it is merely crippled (all engines destroyed).

SCENARIO 2: ENTRAPMENT

Following the initial attack on the *Northumberland*, the Cobras made a number of other hit-and-run raids on Imperial Air's shipping and passenger lines. They met with limited success as BAS and Imperial Air tightened security on all flights—even "low-risk" targets like the *Northumberland*. Still, the defenders were spread thin and the crafty pirates repeatedly struck many of the lightly defended airships. The constant attacks began to wear on both the Blake escorts and Imperial Air's customers.



Finally, BAS tacticians decided to set a trap for the bandits. On a regularly scheduled cargo flight, they sent a decoy zeppelin disguised to look like an unarmed commercial zeppelin. In reality, the *Andromeda* was empty of cargo and packed with extra weaponry and guards. To make it an even more tempting target, Blake ensured that there would only be a handful of defenders traveling with the zeppelin.

Unfortunately, the Cobras were not to be had so easily. Sensing a trap, they did not engage the *Andromeda* and went for the Blake escorts directly instead. The defenders tried their best to lure the bandits into range of the *Andromeda's* withering gunfire, but the Cobras steered clear of the decoy gunship. After harassing the Blake pilots in a brief dogfight, the Cobras retreated.

GAME SET UP

Lay out the Rural map and a Zeppelin map, aligned so that the east edge of the Rural map meets the west edge of the Zeppelin map. The Imperial Guard's Flight One sets up first, and may begin anywhere on the Zeppelin map. Cobra Flight One must set up within five hexes of the Rural map's west edge.

The *Andromeda* is a heavily armed commercial zeppelin. Each engine nacelle turret is armed with two .50-caliber machine guns and there are two turrets (one .50-caliber machine gun and one flak cannon) on both the front and back of the airship.

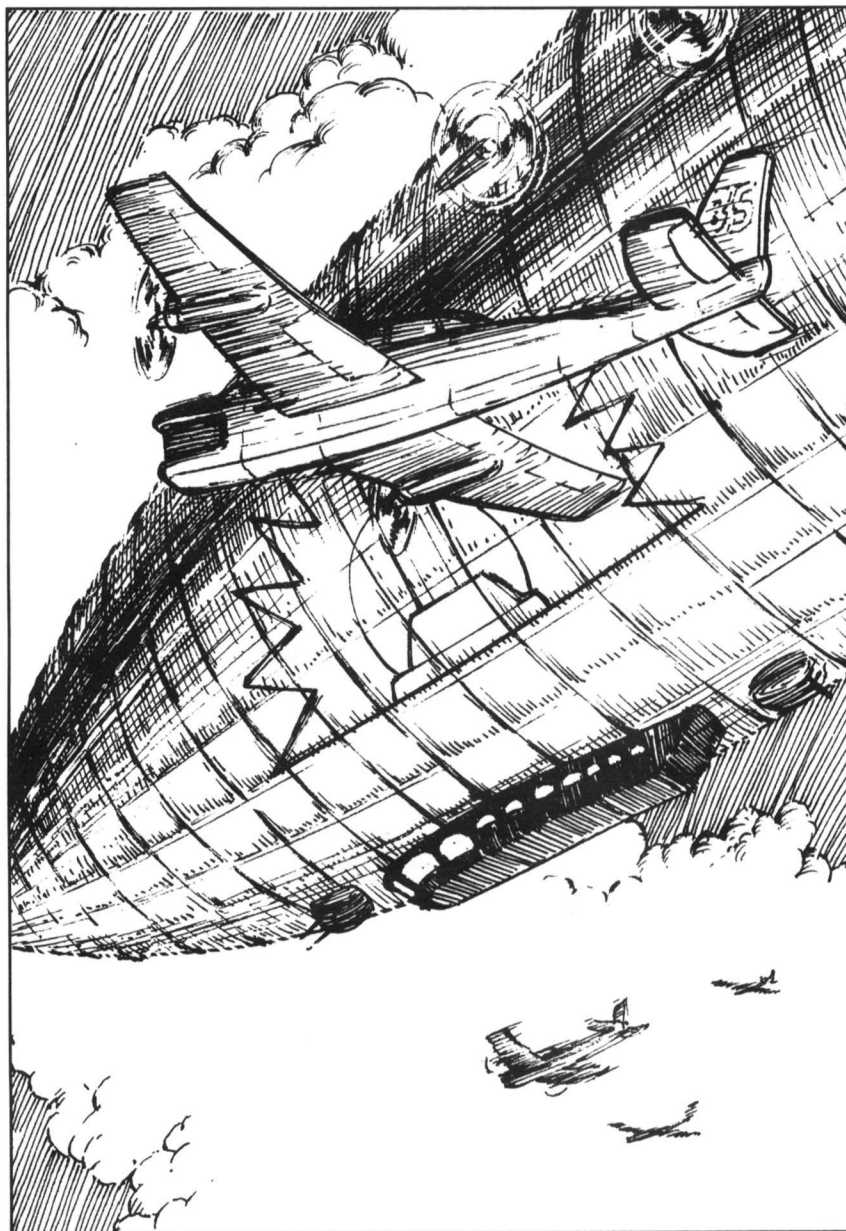
RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Because the Cobras suspect a trap, they will be reluctant to get close the *Andromeda*, preferring instead to try and lure the Blake defenders onto the Rural map. Their objective is to harass the enemy and then live to fight another day. They will not fight to the death, and will try to flee rather than bail out.

The mission ends when all the planes on one side have been destroyed or have fled. Cobra planes must flee off the west edge of the Rural map. Blake planes may flee from any map edge.

WINNING THE MISSION

Both sides are simply trying to shoot down as many of the opposition's planes as possible. The side with the most victory points wins the mission.



BAS Points

For each enemy plane shot down	25
If the <i>Andromeda</i> is destroyed	-25

Cobras Points

For each enemy plane shot down	25
If the <i>Andromeda</i> is destroyed	50

For the purposes of Reputation Points, there are no cargo or passengers to lose in this mission, even if the *Andromeda* is destroyed.



SCENARIO 3: BRING IT HOME

Blake's investigation division, through diligent efforts, tracked down a cargo zeppelin captured by the Cobras in a raid the day before. Instead of just taking the cargo and running, the Cobras had hid the zeppelin in a canyon in Hell's Heights and were trying to repair it. The Imperial Guard squadron was dispatched to drive off the pirates and retrieve the cargo.

GAME SET UP

Lay out the Canyon map. No Zeppelin map is necessary, since the captured cargo airship is grounded, nearly crippled, and does not have any impact on the mission.

Cobra Flight One sets up in any of the canyon or railroad hexes midway between the north and south edges of the map. Imperial Guard Flight One starts along the southeast edge of the map.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The BAS pilots must drive off or destroy the pirates to reclaim the damaged airship and its cargo. The Cobras will fight viciously to defend their captured prize, but may retreat off the western map edge if things get too hairy for them. The mission ends when there are only planes from one side left on the map.

The Cobras' home edge is the west map edge; the Guard's home is the east map edge.

WINNING THE MISSION

The side with planes left on the map at the end of the mission wins.

If the Blake player wins, the squadron receives a bonus of +2 Reputation Points for retrieving the cargo. If he loses, there is no additional penalty for losing the cargo, since it was already lost. Instead, he just receives the normal -1 penalty for losing the mission.

SCENARIO 4: LONG HUNT

While on a routine patrol, the Imperial Guard received word of another hit-and-run raid on a passenger line. The flight's course put them in a perfect position to intercept the fleeing bandits. The Blake pilots climbed to a higher altitude and attacked with the sun at their backs, taking the Cobras by surprise. Their initial diving attack brought one of the pirate craft down in flames, and the others scattered and tried to make a run for it. In the running dogfight that ensued, another Cobra was shot down before the remaining planes managed to outdistance their pursuers.

GAME SET UP

Set up the Rural and Canyon maps so that they line up from north to south (northernmost edge is the top of the Rural map, southernmost edge is the bottom of the Canyon map). The chase begins in the north, with the Imperial Guard setting up along the northernmost map edge and the Cobras setting up no more than five hexes from that same edge. All planes must begin facing south.

PLANES AND PILOTS

Imperial Guard Mixed Flight

Lead 1: Joel "Sabre" Bertman	
Bloodhawk	4-3-3-7-3-5
Wing 1: Scott "Highlander" MacCarthy	
Brigand	5-3-5-4-2-4
Lead 2: Seth "Ares" Harrington	
Bloodhawk	6-4-4-2-4-5
Wing 2: Ben "Sierra" Elliott	
Devastator	5-4-3-5-4-2

Flying Cobras Mixed Flight

Lead 1: Harry "Rex" Black	
Valiant	4-5-5-4-5-5
Wing 1: David "Shark" Hodge	
Bloodhawk	3-3-3-4-3-6
Lead 2: Anthony "Royale" Donnel	
Fury	4-3-3-5-3-4
Wing 2: Renthait "Renny" Flynn	
Fury	2-3-6-5-6-4

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Cobras' objective is simply to get away. They are weary from their previous raid, and running too low on fuel and ammunition to engage in a prolonged battle. To "escape" safely, a Cobra plane must exit off the southern map edge *and* be more than 15 hexes from all Blake planes. If there is a Blake plane 15 hexes away or less when a pirate reaches the southern edge, lay out another map to the south (the Cobra player may choose which map, but Zeppelin maps count as "open sky" for this mission) and continue the chase.

The pursuit may go for up to six map-lengths in this manner (the original Rural and Canyon maps, plus four additional ones laid out to continue the chase). On the sixth map, the Cobras must turn and fight. They can't risk leading BAS back to their home base.

The mission ends when all of the Cobra planes have left the map, either by escaping or being shot down. Imperial Guard planes may flee from the battle by flying off the east, west or north map edges.



WINNING THE MISSION

At the end of the mission, the side with the most victory points wins.

BAS Points

For each Cobra plane destroyed	25
For each Blake plane destroyed	-25
For each Blake plane that flees	0

Cobra Points

For each Cobra plane that "escapes"	25
-------------------------------------	----

SCENARIO 5: SUCKERPUNCH

To keep the Imperial Guard constantly off-balance, the Cobras varied their tactics greatly from raid to raid. In one unusual episode, they stashed a bomb inside an Imperial Air cargo plane. One of three aircraft carrying machine parts from Pittsburgh to Harrisburg, the plane was crippled by the explosion and forced to make an emergency landing near Huntingdon. Most of the Blake planes continued escorting the remaining cargo planes on to their destination while one wing remained behind to protect the downed aircraft until help arrived.

The Cobras, meanwhile, had been combing the area in search of the exact spot where the cargo plane went down. When one of their wings found it, they engaged the Blake escorts. The Cobra pilots fled when they spotted Blake reinforcements on the horizon.

GAME SET UP

Lay out the River map. The Cobra player sets up first, placing his planes anywhere along the north map edge. Then, place a marker on the map to represent the location of the crippled cargo plane. The BAS planes may set up anywhere within 5 hexes of this marker.

PLANES AND PILOTS

Imperial Guard

Lead 1: Kelly "Fox" Fox	
Vampire	3-4-5-5-4-5
Wing 1: Jeff "Sparks" Houston	
Raven	5-5-4-3-3-3

Flying Cobras Scout Patrol

Lead 1: Billy "Joker" King	
Vampire	3-6-3-3-3-6
Wing 1: Alan "Persian" Cox	
Peacemaker	4-2-2-5-3-5

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Both sides are trying to secure the cargo plane until their reinforcements can arrive. At the end of the fourth turn (and every subsequent turn), there is a chance that help will arrive for one or both sides. If there are still opposing planes on the map, each player may roll a die. If he rolls equal to or higher than the number listed in the Reinforcements Table, he receives reinforcements at the start of the next turn. There is only one batch of reinforcements for each side. It is possible for both sides to receive help in the same turn.

The Blake reinforcements are the remaining planes of Flight Two, and enter on the east map edge. The Cobra reinforcements are the rest of Flight One, and enter on the north edge.

Planes from both sides may flee from any map edge. The mission ends when all planes from one side have been destroyed or have fled.

WINNING THE MISSION

Whichever side still has planes on the map at the end of the mission wins.

REINFORCEMENTS TABLE

End of Turn	Die Roll Required
4	10
5	8
6	6
7	4
8	2
9	Reinforcements arrive automatically

SCENARIO 6: DOUBLE TAKE

After ensuring that ground crews recovered the downed cargo (from *Suckerpunch*), the Imperial Guards continued their escort of the remaining two cargo planes. Midway to Harrisburg, "Ares" Harrington spotted bandits approaching. Unlike the Cobras (who usually flew unmarked planes), these aircraft proudly displayed the emblem of the Allegheny Archers—a local pirate group. The Archers had seen the battle-damaged Blake escorts and figured them for easy pickings. In the ensuing dogfight, the Imperial Guard pilots proved them wrong. All of the pirate aircraft were brought down in flames.

GAME SET UP

Lay out an Open Sky map. The Blake defenders and the two cargo planes set up first, no more than four hexes from the center of the map in any direction. The Archers may set up along the west map edge.



All of the BAS planes start the mission with the damage and ammunition (i.e., spent rockets) they had at the end of the previous mission.

PLANES AND PILOTS

The Imperial Guard uses Flight Two, but any planes that were shot down in the previous mission are not available for this one. The Guard player may choose whether or not to use planes that fled from the previous battle. The Guards are also accompanied by two cargo planes (use the cargo plane statistics given on p. 68, *Behind the Crimson Veil*). A pilot rated 3-3-3-3 flies each cargo plane.

Allegheny Archers

Lead 1: Tony "Buccaneer" Barnes	
Bloodhawk	3-5-7-3-4-3
Wing 1: Carlos "Ace" Rodriguez	
Brigand	5-4-3-4-3-3
Lead 2: Marcia "Otter" Entring	
Valiant	3-5-3-3-6-5

Wing 2: Henry "Mace" Ryan	
Valiant	3-5-3-4-4-4
Lead 3: Sean "Contact" Malluci	
Devastator	4-4-4-4-4-5
Wing 3: Jordan "Hawk" Collins	
Fury	4-3-5-2-5-3

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Archers' mission is to get rid of the BAS defenders. If they do, they can then force the cargo planes to land and steal their contents. The Imperial Guard must protect the cargo planes against the pirates.

Planes from either side may flee off any map edge, except for the cargo planes. Those may not leave the map. The mission ends when all the fighters (not including the two cargo planes) from one side have left the map.

WINNING THE MISSION

The side with planes remaining at the end of the mission wins. If either of the cargo planes is shot down, both sides lose.



COBRA STRIKE

It had been nearly two months since the raid on the Northumberland. The increased security on Imperial Air's flights had taken its toll on the BAS pilots, who were flying almost non-stop missions. I could count on one hand the times I had seen more than half the squadron together at one time. This afternoon was no exception—Guard Flight One was gathered in the ready room at Falls Airport, a small field outside Buffalo, but the other flights were out on escort missions.

The ready room bustled with activity as the pilots heatedly discussed their adversaries' tactics. "It just doesn't make sense!" "Highlander" MacCarthy snapped, his ruddy features twisted with frustration. "Why attack an empty cargo zep?"

"Maybe they didn't know it was empty," offered Jen Caston, Mac's wingman. Unlike most of the other pilots' call signs, Jen's nickname, "Raven," only stuck when she was in the air. "Maybe they're just poorly-informed pirates?"

A few of the BAS crew chuckled half-heartedly at this, but everyone knew that it just didn't add up. Yesterday's attack on an empty, unescorted cargo airship had just been the latest in a series of mind-bogglingly bizarre raids. Sometimes the pirates looted; sometimes they destroyed. Sometimes they fought, even against superior odds. Sometimes they ran even when they outgunned their opponents. Highlander was right—it didn't make sense from a traditional tactical point of view.

A tremendous boom outside, powerful enough to rattle the windows of the building, brought the discussion to a screeching halt. "What the ..." Mac McDonough's shocked tone spoke for us all as he dashed to the door, pulling it open to get a better look outside. Others gathered around the window, but I followed Mac out, looking around for signs of what had happened. Billowing black smoke was visible over the top of the building nearest us. An accident in one of the hangars? A plane crash? My mind raced with the possibilities, but I was way off the mark. As Mac and I watched from the doorway, a Warhawk flew in low and fast over the airfield. I saw something drop from the underside of the plane, and then the ground shook with another explosion.

"They're bombing the airstrip!" Even the usually unflappable Captain McDonough was taken aback, but he quickly regained his focus. "Get to your planes! I want everyone in the air five minutes ago!" Without waiting for responses, Mac took off at a dead run across the runway toward the BAS hangar. I followed close on his heels, pausing momentarily to eye the wreckage of the bombed supply shed when it finally came into view.

Dashing across the open pavement, I felt like a sitting duck. A Raven—now there's a plane you don't see every day over upstate New York—lumbered overhead, lined up with the runway. My first (panicked) thought was that it was going to go for us, but I soon saw its real target—a shiny new Avenger taxiing down the

runway a few dozen yards away. The Raven's cannons and machine guns opened up with a roar that was nearly deafening, and the heavy slugs shattered the Avenger's airframe. A small fire began burning on the right wing, but the plane didn't instantly burst into flames. The pilot made no attempt to get out, but I had no way of knowing if he was dead, wounded, or just trapped. Two of the ground crew were already running to aid the flyer.

The assault on the airfield continued as we got into our planes and took off. Mac, Raven and I managed to get off the ground without incident, but Highlander's Brigand was strafed to pieces on the runway (he suffered only minor injuries) and Adler's Avenger suffered heavy damage when a bomb landed on the runway in front of him and he careened into the crater. By the time the rest of us were in the air, the pirates were already retreating. The fight was over, but the stinging insult of the raid would not soon be forgotten by the Imperial Guard.



SCENARIO 7: SITTING DUCKS

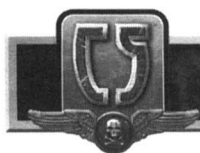
The Cobras' most daring raid was a turning point in the conflict between the Imperial Guard and the pirates. In a busy airfield outside of Buffalo, ground crews worked diligently to get the *Spirit of Erie* airship ready for its next flight to New York. It would be carrying more than two hundred passengers, including several prominent businessmen. In the midst of the preparations, less than an hour before passengers would begin boarding the zeppelin, the Cobras snuck in low over Lake Ontario and attacked. One wing strafed the runway as Blake escorts began to take off, while the other planes proceeded to bomb the *Spirit of Erie* while it was still on the ground.

When the dust settled, the Cobras' hit-and-run had damaged the *Spirit of Erie* beyond repair and done significant damage to six BAS aircraft. No passengers were hurt, but the resulting loss of faith in the safety of Imperial Air's transit lines caused far more damage than the bombs themselves. For Blake Aviation, this assault was the final insult. Paladin Blake vowed to pull out all the stops and put an end to this pirate menace once and for all.

GAME SET UP

Lay out a Zeppelin map and the Seaport map. The Zeppelin map represents the airfield. Place the two maps side by side so the "land" edge of the Seaport map touches the west edge of the Zeppelin map.

The *Spirit of Erie* is grounded and, therefore, not able to fire its guns or participate in the battle. It is merely there as a



target. However, the Blake player may set up 5 flak cannons anywhere on the map. Treat these flak cannons as zeppelin-mounted flak cannons (see p. 47, *The Rules of Air Combat*), except that they have a 360-degree alley firing arc.

Two of the Imperial Guard planes from Flight One may start the mission already in the air; the rest of the flight starts the mission on the ground and must take off to join the fray. All BAS planes start on the Zeppelin map no more than three hexes from where it meets the Seaport map. The rules for taking off from the ground appear on p. 42, *Wings Over Manhattan*. Any "sky" hex on the Zeppelin map may be treated as a runway for takeoff purposes.

The planes from Cobra Flight Two set up along the edge of the Zeppelin map farthest from the seaport.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Cobras must strike quickly, hitting the zeppelin and then escaping before the Buffalo air militias can arrive to turn the tide against them. The militia squadron will arrive at the beginning of Turn 10, so the Cobras must get all their planes off the eastern map edge before then, doing as much damage as possible to the *Spirit of Erie* and its BAS defenders.

The mission ends when all Cobra planes have left the map, or at the end of Turn 9, whichever comes first. Any Cobra plane remaining on the map at the end of Turn 9 is considered destroyed for victory point purposes (the incoming Buffalo militia will show no mercy).

WINNING THE MISSION

The side with the most victory points at the end of the mission wins.

BAS Points

For each Cobra plane destroyed	25
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Cobra Points

For each Blake plane destroyed in the air	10
For each Blake plane destroyed on the ground	20
For each zeppelin hex hit by at least 100 lbs of bombs	20

SCENARIO 8: LUCK OF THE DRAW

In the wake of the raid on Buffalo, three additional Blake squadrons were assigned to the Empire State region. Captain McDonaugh requested that the Imperial Guards be relieved from escort duty for a time so that their squadron could go on the offensive, and his request was granted. For the next two weeks, the Guards patrolled the sky but found no sign of the pirates. Then, suddenly, their luck changed. The flight was coming in to land and refuel at an airfield outside of Reading, PA when they spotted two Cobra aircraft refueling near the

runway. The Cobras hurriedly took off to engage the descending Blake aircraft. With both sides running dangerously low on fuel and unable to flee from the battle, the dogfight took on new urgency. After a brisk engagement, one of the pirate craft was knocked out of the sky and the second waggled his wings in the traditional sign of surrender. The Blake pilots escorted him in for a landing and took him prisoner.

GAME SET UP

Lay out the Rural map. The Blake planes set up anywhere within three hexes of the east map edge. The Cobras set up within three hexes of the west edge.

PLANES AND PILOTS

Imperial Guard

Lead 1: Seth "Ares" Harrington	
Bloodhawk	6-4-4-2-4-5
Wing 1: Ben "Sierra" Elliott	
Devastator	5-4-3-5-4-2

Flying Cobras

Lead 1: Russel "Titan" Sawyer	
Intrepid	6-4-4-3-4-3
Wing 1: Erika "Robin" Lew	
Brigand	3-4-4-3-3-5

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Neither side has the fuel necessary for an extended dogfight. At the beginning of the mission, the players should roll one die for each plane. Add the plane's Range statistic, divided by 10, to this die roll. The result is the number of turns worth of fuel that plane has on board. For example, the Blake player rolls a 4 for "Ares" Harrington's Bloodhawk. The Bloodhawk has a Range of 400 miles, so the net result is 8 turns ($400 \div 10 = 4$, $4 + \text{die roll of } 4 = 8$). At the end of Turn 8, Harrington's plane will be out of fuel.

A plane running low on fuel may choose to land during the Movement Phase of any turn. Use the rules for landing on p. 30, *The Rules of Air Combat*. A plane may land in any road hex without penalty (even if the hex has other buildings or trees in it), but suffers the +2 penalty for "not on surfaced road or runway" if landing on any other hex.

If a plane runs out of fuel entirely, the pilot has no choice but to land the plane in the next Movement Phase. The engine cuts out, and the pilot must glide the plane in for a landing in the hex immediately in front of him. Apply the normal landing modifiers for the condition of the plane and the hex the pilot is landing in, and add an additional +2 modifier for being out of fuel.



No plane may flee by flying off the edge of the map. However, planes that have landed are considered “surrendered” and may not take off again during this mission. The mission ends when all the planes from one side have been shot down or have surrendered.

WINNING THE MISSION

The side with planes still flying at the end of the mission wins. Surviving Blake pilots receive a special 30 Experience Point bonus for capturing a prisoner if a Cobra pilot surrenders.

SCENARIO 9: GUARDIAN ANGELS

BAS investigators spent some time questioning the captured Cobra pilot, “Titan” Sawyer. Faced with a harsh jail sentence or worse, Sawyer reluctantly gave up the location of one of the Cobras’ mountain bases on the outskirts of the Allegheny Mountains. Acting upon the information, Blake Aviation quickly organized an assault against the pirate camp and destroyed it.

GAME SET UP

Lay out the Canyon map. The cluster of buildings near the southeast corner of the map represents the Cobra base. Cobra Flight One may set up anywhere within three hexes of the base. Imperial Guard Flight Two sets up along the north map edge and should be equipped with bombs and rockets.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Imperial Guard’s objective is to destroy the pirate base and as many enemy planes as possible. The Cobras’ objective is to stop them. The mission ends when all the planes from one side have been shot down or have fled from any map edge.

WINNING THE MISSION

Each side receives victory points for achieving their objective. The side with the most points at the end of the mission wins.

BAS Points

For each enemy plane shot down or forced to flee	25
For each base hex hit with at least 100 lbs of bombs	25

Cobra Points

For each enemy plane shot down or forced to flee	25
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SCENARIO 10: TURNABOUT IS FAIR PLAY

Examining the mounting piles of evidence, Blake investigators became convinced that the Cobras were being tipped off

by someone inside Imperial Air or Blake Aviation. The BAS investigators worked diligently to discover the identity of the inside man, and managed to narrow down the list to just over a dozen men who had access to Imperial Air’s shipping manifests and schedules. To ferret out the rat, the agents arranged for the suspects to receive false copies of the week’s manifests. Each man’s copy made a different target appear irresistible—a valuable cargo with a small escort. By seeing which of the “dummy” targets the pirates went for, the agents confirmed the identity of their inside man. When the Cobras fell for the bait, they found a deadly ambush waiting for them.

GAME SET UP

Set up a Zeppelin map and an Open Sky map alongside each other. The Cobra player sets up first, placing the planes from Flight One along the side of the Open Sky map farthest from the zeppelin. The Blake player initially sets up two planes from Flight One anywhere on the Zeppelin map. The other planes from Flight One are on board the zeppelin and must take off. Historically, the Blake flyers waited until the Cobras were near the zeppelin before they sprang their trap.

Two planes can take off each turn during the Movement Phase. They begin movement underneath the zeppelin from gas cells 2 and 4. Use the *Takeoff* rules given on p. 42 of *Wings Over Manhattan*.

The zeppelin is the *Wild River*, a disguised military airship. Half its gun turrets are equipped with twin .50-caliber machine guns; the others are flak cannons.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Cobras came into the fight intending to disable the *Wild River* and capture its cargo. Once the trap is sprung, their mission changes from an easy raid to a fight for their lives. Cobra planes may flee from the edge of the map they started from. Blake planes may flee from any map edge. The mission ends when there are no opposing planes left on the map.

WINNING THE MISSION

Both sides earn victory points for inflicting damage upon their opponent. The side with the most victory points at the end of the mission wins.

BAS Points

For each enemy plane shot down or forced to flee	25
--	----

Cobra Points

For each enemy plane shot down or forced to flee	25
For each airship gun turret destroyed	10



SNAKE IN THE GRASS

"Good of you to come, Mr. Forbes. Please, have a seat." The words were polite enough, but Robert Claypool's tone as he gestured toward an empty chair did not invite argument. I was already seated at the long, square conference table, along with Claypool and two agents from Blake Aviation's investigations division, John Carter and Michael Owens.

"Sure, Mr. Claypool. May I ask what this is all about?" Zeke Forbes asked as he slid into one of the plush chairs. His expression was a mixture of curiosity and puzzlement. No doubt he was wondering what the manager of Blake Aviation's Empire State offices would want with a lowly accounting supervisor.

Claypool looked grave. "Some disturbing news has come to my attention, Mr. Forbes. I'm sure you're aware of the recent string of attacks on Imperial Air shipping lanes." Claypool opened a folder, removed a piece of paper and slid it across the table to Forbes. "Agents Carter and Owens have been doing a bit of digging into these matters. I'm sure you recognize that document. It's the shipping schedule for this week. Pay particular attention to item five on the list, a lightly defended shipment of valuable machine parts that was attacked outside of Albany. We have reason to believe that someone in this organization tipped off the pirates."

That got Forbes' attention. He frowned, studying the paper carefully. After a moment he said, in a suitably indignant tone, "I find that difficult to believe, Mr. Claypool. Not in Blake Aviation Security. But even if it were true, there must have been more than a dozen people with access to this list." I folded my hands carefully on the table, watching the exchange intently. Claypool didn't have enough evidence to prove in a court of law that Forbes was the pirates' inside man. If he had found the evidence, Forbes would be in a Manhattan Police Department squad car, not here in a posh boardroom. The trick was to bluff him into condemning himself.

"Fourteen, actually," Claypool confirmed sagely. "Only they didn't all receive the same list. Each person received a different copy, indicating a different irresistible target. A wedge of cheese, if you will, to lure out our rat." The manager's tone turned harsher as he continued, "Your copy's bait was shipment number five. Of course, I've already told you which shipment was attacked." After a dramatic pause, Claypool nodded to one of the agents. "Mr. Owens, place Mr. Forbes here under arrest."

Owens rose from his chair and took a step toward Forbes. Then he froze, as the scrawny accountant suddenly produced a revolver from an inside pocket. "Stay back," Forbes warned angrily, as he stood and backed toward the door. Owens kept his hands out to the sides in a placating gesture. I tensed in my chair, but I was across the table from Forbes, unable to reach him to interfere. There was nothing I could do. Beside me, Carter clenched the edge of the table in helpless frustration.

Forbes kept the gun trained on us until he reached the door. In the split second when he glanced down to find the doorknob, Owens sprang into action. He drew his own revolver, bringing it to bear on Forbes, but he wasn't fast enough. Forbes' eyes widened as he realized his mistake, and he pulled the trigger. The crack of a gunshot and the shattering of glass echoed through the boardroom as the bullet tore through Owens' shoulder and smashed the window behind him. Owens cried out and collapsed. As Carter and I both leaped up to take advantage of Forbes' distraction, the accountant surprised us all by taking a few running steps and launching himself through the broken window.

Breaking through my shock, I ran to the window and looked down to the grassy lawn one floor below. Forbes was running around the side of the building with his gun still gripped in one hand, and I suddenly realized his destination. "He's heading for the hangar. You'd better warn Mac and the other pilots," I told Claypool. Silently, I hoped that the Imperial Guard would be alerted in time to stop the escaping rat.



SCENARIO 11: TO CATCH A RAT

With the identity of the inside man confirmed, BAS investigators prepared to confront him and bring him to justice. Their plans went awry when the man, Ezekiel Forbes, wounded one of the security team and fled to the nearby Imperial Air airfield. He stole one of the Imperial Guard's fighters and escaped. The rest of the Imperial Guard hurriedly took off in pursuit.

After a lengthy pursuit, the Blake pilots caught sight of more planes on the horizon ahead of them. Forbes had radioed his pirate allies, and they had come to rescue him. In the skirmish that ensued, Forbes' plane was damaged badly and crash-landed; the other pirates were eventually driven off. Blake ground agents arrived at the crash site to find Forbes badly injured. Though they took him to the nearest hospital, he later died of his injuries.

GAME SET UP

Lay out the River map and an Open Sky map so their short edges line up (the southern edge of the sky map meets the northern edge of the river map). The Blake planes set up first on the southernmost map edge. Forbes' plane begins no more than four hexes from a Blake aircraft. The other Cobra planes set up last, along the edge where the two maps meet.

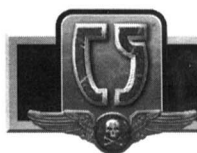
PLANES AND PILOTS

Before the mission begins, the Cobra player must decide which one of the Imperial Guard planes Ezekiel Forbes stole.



Forbes may steal any of the planes from the Guard's Flight One. Historically it was "Adler" Wasserman's *Avenger*. Forbes is a mediocre pilot, with a rating of 3-3-3-3-3. The rest of the Cobra planes are from Cobra Flight One.

The Imperial Guard uses Flight One, minus the stolen plane. At the Blake player's discretion, the pilot whose plane was stolen may borrow a plane from Flight Two and fly in the mission.



RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Blake pilots want to bring Forbes back alive, and would rather not destroy the stolen plane if they can help it. They'd prefer to force him to land, but if that's not possible they will reluctantly bring him down in flames. Forbes, meanwhile, just wants to escape with his life. His goal is to exit the map from the northernmost map edge, but he would rather surrender than die. If Forbes surrenders, he will attempt to land during the next movement phase.

Cobra planes may flee from the northernmost map edge. Blake planes may flee from the southernmost map edge. The mission ends when there are no opposing planes on the map.

WINNING THE MISSION

The Imperial Guard wins if Forbes is shot down or surrenders. They receive a special +30 Experience Point bonus if Forbes surrenders with his stolen plane intact, and there are still Blake planes on the map at the end of the mission. The Cobras win if Forbes escapes.

SCENARIO 12: LAST STAND

After weeks of painstaking investigation, Blake Aviation finally pinpointed the location of the Cobras' zeppelin. Hidden in the depths of the Allegheny Mountains, the airship *King Cobra* served as the pirate's main base. The Imperial Guard launched a full-fledged assault at night, taking the pirates almost completely by surprise. Following a fierce battle, the Blake pilots brought the *King Cobra* down in flames and ended the Flying Cobras' threat to Imperial Air operations.

GAME SET UP

Lay out three maps—River, Canyon and Zeppelin—beside each other from left to right. Imperial Guard Flight Two sets up anywhere on the River map. Cobra Flight Two sets up anywhere on the Zeppelin map.

The *King Cobra* is a standard commercial zeppelin. Each of its engine nacelle turrets contains a single .50-caliber machine gun.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The BAS pilots are trying to destroy the *King Cobra* by targeting its helium cells. Any Cobra planes they bring down in the process are an added benefit. The Cobras have to defend their home base.

Planes from either side may flee from any map edge.

WINNING THE MISSION

The Imperial Guard wins if they destroy the *King Cobra*. Otherwise, the Cobras win. The Blake squadron receives a special +5 Reputation Point bonus if they win this mission.



IMPERIAL FAREWELL

I sat in the main lounge area of the BAS office at Trent Field, my feet propped up on the edge of the coffee table as I read the morning's New York Times. The headline emblazoned in bold letters across the top of the page made me smile: "Blake's Boys Expose Transit Plot." In the two weeks since the final confrontation with the pirate airship, the BAS investigators had been hard at work piecing together exactly what had been going on.

As the news article explained, the agents managed to dig up some records indicating substantial payoffs to the pirate band from Imperial Air's main rival, Empire Transit. Apparently, Empire was hoping to lure away some of IA's customers by making it seem that the transportation giant was incapable of protecting its passengers. It would have succeeded, too, if not for the brave efforts of Blake's flyers—who, incidentally, were less than impressed by the Times's coverage of their exploits.

"Can you believe it? The Bombers get the front page for a smuggling bust, and we get shuffled to page three. Look at that—going on and on about IA and Empire Transit. There's barely a paragraph about us!" Ares Harrington was perched on the couch next to me, reading over my shoulder. He leaned back with a sigh, still muttering under his breath.

From his seat at the small dining table, Mac McDonough looked up from his oatmeal and grinned at Ares. "Good press is good press—even on page three. Be grateful they mentioned us at all." Then he glanced at me. "So, Keaton, I hear you're leaving us."

I carefully folded the paper, intending to keep it as a memento of my exploits with the Imperial Guard. "Yes, unfortunately, I leave this afternoon. Heading to Dixie, and then on to some other BAS offices."

Mac nodded. "Well, it was good flying with you. Good luck down South. You're going to need it." He grinned again, carrying his breakfast dishes over to the sink and leaving me to ponder his obscure warning. I couldn't imagine what could possibly compare to the adventures I'd had with the Imperial Guard. Little did I know what awaited me in Dixie.



HISTORY

Meeting Paladin Blake in the air is like trying to strip the wind off the hurricane—or so Bette Davis claimed in her role as the Black Widow, in one of the more crowd-pleasing scenes of this year's smash Hollywood feature "The Privateer." Meeting Paladin Blake in person, on the other hand, is like walking into the eye of the hurricane. His Hollywood-based corporate headquarters are as much a center of regulated chaos as the newsroom at any big-city daily paper, and Blake is at the center of it all. At any given minute, Blake Aviation's ground division is coordinating dozens of operations across the continent, with half a hundred more in the planning or research stages. And Blake seems to have his hands in all of them.

Blake is not a particularly tall man, nor a particularly loud one, but he still manages to be imposing. Conversations seem to drop ten decibels in his presence. Judging from their reactions, his employees clearly hold him in awe—even those employees that see him every day. At the age of fifty-five, he has the aura of a wise, thoughtful grandfather. At least, he does when he's dealing with a crisis. Alone in his office, talking to a reporter, he's suddenly all business.

I spoke to him recently to pin down some of the missing details for *Air Action Weekly's* history of the famous-yet-mysterious founder of Blake Aviation Security, and I was astonished at how quickly he changes personas. The Paladin Blake radio serials depict him as a driven but sometimes hapless hero, the recent Errol Flynn movie made him seem like an omnipotent but arrogant peacock of a man, and BAS' own publicity portrays him as a grim, stalwart warrior of the skies. The "real" Paladin Blake seems to be none of these, but he wears as many faces in private as his writers create for him in public.

During the three hours I spent in Paladin Blake's office, no fewer than fourteen people poked their heads through his open office door to ask his advice or give him a update on some abstruse event going on somewhere in the country. Some of these interruptions were brief bulletins—"The Guard touched down fine with the *Destiny's Light* in convoy, boss, not a scratch on her" met with a nod and a smile—while others were in-depth consultations about strategies, reactions, and lines of inquiry. In each case, however, Blake seemed to already know the particulars of the case in question, and he was always ready to lend an ear or a word of advice.

In theory, BAS is run by a cadre of near-autonomous bureau chiefs who report back to the Hollywood office. In practice, Blake seems to serve as a personal mentor and advisor to his operatives at all levels of his organization. His dedication

and level of involvement are hardly typical behavior for the wealthy head of a multinational corporation. But as BAS' press flacks love to point out, Paladin Blake is not just any businessman, and Blake Aviation is not a typical company.

BAS' pilots and investigators are renowned as some of the best in the business. Employment under The Paladin, as his subordinates often call him, requires lofty standards of morality as well as rock-solid skills. Blake makes it clear to his new recruits that the corporation's solid reputation depends on their behavior, and while he can tolerate failure, he doesn't tolerate moral or legal compromise. As a result, BAS is as famous for its codes of conduct as for its reliability and discretion. Where did this virtuous mandate come from? Only Paladin Blake really knows for sure.

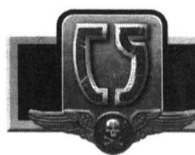
IN THE BEGINNING (1882-1920)

Blake is not evasive or coy about his distant past. He simply refuses to discuss it. "Go see 'The Privateer,' if you want simple answers," he told me early in our interview. "They made up some suitably dramatic rubbish that would answer your questions about where BAS came from. Real life isn't nearly that straightforward."

Apparently not. Where "The Privateer" has a teenaged Blake learning to fly in his father's crop-duster, and later vowing revenge against pirates everywhere while pulling his lifeless fiancée from a burning barn after a moonshiners' raid, the available records indicate that he didn't even grow up anywhere near a farm.

Paladin Blake was born on August 1, 1882, the second son of Charles and Margaret Blake of Clayton, Missouri. Clayton was at the time a bustling suburban community of about 9,600, part of the greater St. Louis metropolitan area and the county seat of St. Louis County. Clayton was ravaged during the ISA border disputes of the early 1930s, and its civilian population scattered in the wake of the looting and rioting that followed, so it remains difficult to track down records or acquaintances of the Blakes from that time period. Paladin Blake's own silence doesn't help.

Student files from Yale, where Blake earned his undergraduate degree, indicate his date and place of birth and show that he was a bright and willing student throughout his childhood and his high school career. He graduated second in a class of 60 from Clayton County Central High. His father's occupation is listed as "traveling salesman." Charles Blake was an independent pilot who sold and delivered machine parts and



small engine components, and it is highly probable he taught both his boys how to fly a light plane.

Paladin Blake attended Yale from 1912 to 1916, graduating cum laude with a degree in economics. His high grades as an undergraduate speak well of his understanding of financial theory, and he clearly had a hand in creating the diverse portfolio that would later see him through the Great Depression. He began attending law school at Yale in 1916, but dropped out in the middle of his second semester to become a full-time financial planner and business manager, apparently working directly for his father. The Blake fortune seems to have its roots in this period, as Blake invested his family's money in worldwide resources ranging from South American rubber plantations to a British motorcycle manufacturer. Matthew Blake went on to enlist in the Great War; Paladin enlisted a year later, after his brother's return.

GROWING UP (1920-1930)

After returning from the war following the signing of the Armistice, there are few records to document his activities until early 1920, when he joined the Pinkerton Detective Agency. Again, Paladin Blake himself refuses to discuss this time period, though he has a great deal to say about Pinkerton itself.

Blake's stint with the Pinkertons lasted only a few years but apparently influenced him greatly. Official Blake Aviation Security press releases mark this as the period when Blake first considered founding his own version of Pinkerton—but with a bold new focus. In BAS' words, "It was clear to Mr. Blake that the country's future lay not on the ground, but in the air. The increasing profitability and utility of aviation-based commerce was destined to revolutionize the security industry, and Paladin Blake was determined to be a pioneer in the field."

Blake himself is more succinct. "Pinkerton was guarding the wrong mousehole," he says. "They should have looked up once in a while. The industry changed, and they didn't change with it."

Blake started preparing for that change early on. He moved around a great deal after leaving Pinkerton in 1923. Over the following years, his path is difficult to trace as he traveled across North America. In 1925, he joined a small mercenary outfit called the Bay Bobcats, serving as just another name on the roster. Many of his fellow pilots viewed him as a diletante—a rich businessman playing at being a hero. Blake quickly proved them wrong.

On Blake's first mission, the Bobcats were hired to fly against the Diamondback Gang to end a protection racket that the local authorities had chosen to ignore. In that first outing, Blake brought down two pirate craft in his customized Curtiss P-1 *Hawk*. The Bobcats were suitably impressed.

"He was a pretty flashy flyer," recalls ex-Bobcat Myriah "Lark" Martel, now a flight leader in BAS' Imperial Guard. "He

said he didn't have a lot of combat experience, but the pirates couldn't touch him in the air. Duke [Ronald "Duke" Gerrold, the Bobcats' flight leader] asked him what a hotshot flyboy like him was doing slumming with a merc outfit. He shrugged and said 'Research,' and that's about all we could ever get out of him. He had a lot of questions for us, though—where we'd learned to fly, how we felt about pirates and about being mercenaries, whether we'd ever wanted to go straight and make something out of ourselves. I always figured he was a reporter. He only stayed with the 'Cats a few months, and then he was gone."

Other flyers tell similar stories about Blake's exploits over the next few years. He sampled a variety of mercenary groups across the country, traveling across the continent. He signed on with many different groups, but always with teams who flew aerial security missions and skirmished with pirate aircraft. Sometimes he would disappear for weeks at a time with little or no warning; often his stints with a given flight team would last no more than a month or two. According to the radio dramas, he may have actually traveled internationally during this time as well.

In no time, Blake earned a reputation as an eccentric wanderer who happened to be a highly skilled pilot and a deadly shot. Asked about his flying skills, he remains modest: "I had good teachers," he says. "Albert Tennyson was one of them. There were others over the years. You can give them the credit if you like."

The next time he surfaces concretely is 1927, when tragedy struck.

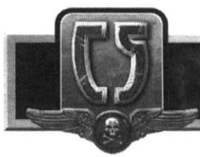
According to Republic of Texas records, Charles Blake was found shot to death in 1927 next to his badly damaged plane in a field just west of Beaumont. His manifests showed that he had been carrying a cargo of common manufacturing-grade piston rods; a pirate band may have mistaken him for a private courier and forced him out of the sky, then murdered him out of malice when his cargo turned out to be useless to them. Still, the cargo was missing, and the killers left no trace of their identities. Paladin Blake hired a series of private investigators to look into the matter, but the case remains unsolved.

Reports of him after his father's death report a change in both his demeanor and flying style. He became something of a maverick, especially after a series of incidents where he refused to break off pursuit of pirate aircraft despite orders from the leader of whatever outfit he was with at the time. Most of his peers attributed his fervor to his deeply ingrained sense of law and order. Still, rumors persisted that he was pursuing some sort of personal vendetta. Blake never confirmed or denied these reports, leaving his true motives a mystery. Whatever the reason, taking down pirates was more than a job for Paladin Blake; it was an obsession.

When the United States splintered in 1930, the war in the skies escalated. Though local militias were formed to combat the growing wave of aerial piracy, it soon became clear that



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these groups alone were not up to the task. Bandits preyed upon shipping lanes across the continent, and many companies, already weakened by the recent stock market crash, simply could not stand the additional losses. As a mercenary, Blake was on the front lines of the battle; he saw first-hand how the situation was disintegrating. As a businessman, he well knew the economic impact the pirates were causing. Clearly the time was ripe for a new player to enter the field and combat the growing menace.

EARLY YEARS (1930-1931)

The founding of Blake Aviation Security is the earliest part of his past that Paladin Blake is willing to talk about at any length, but once he gets started, he doesn't want to stop. "I'd been preparing for it for years," he says, "and I couldn't wait any longer. Good people were getting hurt and good companies were going belly-up over it. Someone had to make a stand. People have acted like it was a marketing decision on my part, but there was more to it than that. I wanted to found BAS to prove there was still decency and integrity in the world. It was always meant to give people something to look up to—literally."

Paladin's diversified business assets had allowed him to escape the Great Depression relatively intact. In June of 1930, he invested a majority of his remaining assets in the startup of Blake Aviation Security. He bought two dozen high-quality aircraft, and hired top-notch mechanics to keep them in good repair. Then he began recruiting. His travels had put him in contact with scores of pilots from across the continent, and he already had a mental list of which ones met his high standards. "I wanted the best, and by that time I knew who they were," he says. "In every outfit, there's usually a standout—someone who's in it out of frustration at the way the world's going. Someone who wants justice, not just adventure or cash. 'Lark' Martel was one of them. So was Billy Carver. You look at BAS' squad leaders today, you'll find a whole crop of angry do-gooders that I harvested myself."

Most of the pilots he tapped were mavericks like him, but Blake also brought aboard a number of raw recruits whose enthusiasm outweighed their skills. The flyers and ground crews were joined by a dozen private investigators and bodyguards who would handle BAS' ground operations. These initial BAS employees all had one thing in common with their founder—a burning desire to make the skies safe from pirates. They had their work cut out for them.

Though the company was originally based in Hollywood, BAS' motto, "Have Planes, Will Travel," espoused their willingness to take jobs anywhere in North America. Their first contract came from a Hollywood trading company, Findley Shipping, which had suffered recent losses at the hands of coastal pirates and hired BAS to protect its cargo. Blake

Aviation performed well on its first time out: the squadron, led by Blake himself, took down five Monterey Sharks pirates while suffering no losses of their own.

It was at this time that Blake first attracted the attention of *Air Action Weekly*. Blake's crippling of the Sharks earned him a short feature story, pseudonymously written by a stringer named Dashiell Hammett. While "Dash," as he was generally known, had achieved moderate popular success as a novelist, his flamboyant lifestyle left him perpetually struggling for money. His stint as a correspondent for *AAW* was one of a number of minor jobs that kept food on the table and fuel in his private plane. He and Blake had met briefly when they both worked for Pinkerton, and Blake remembered "Dash" as a talented investigator. He took Hammett onto the payroll as a BAS security consultant, and enlisted his help in establishing BAS' ground-based detective teams. Hammett's experiences went directly into his writing. "The Red Curse," a serial novel in which a thinly-veiled Paladin Blake uncovers a team of bootleggers working in the lower echelons of the Empire State government, was Hammett's first big critical success. The book launched the career that took Hammett away from BAS and remade him as a screenwriter and professional novelist.

Hammett's initial success didn't quite rub off on Blake Aviation. Blake's pilots continued to rack up an impressive number of kills against Hollywood pirate gangs, and the company was able to open several branch offices of their ground operations across Hollywood. The smaller West Coast shipping agencies provided a steady stream of contracts, but Blake's operating costs were cripplingly high. Blake prided himself on paying top dollar to attract the best in the business, and on keeping his equipment in top-flight shape. He recruited Great War ace Albert Tennyson to establish a flying school for BAS operatives to ensure that their skills stayed fresh and their combat abilities were up to par. No one would argue that he didn't get what he paid for, but for every mission that turned a profit, there were two that cost BAS money due to hospital bills, repairs, replacement planes, and insurance policies. Blake was trying to run a major-league business on a minor-league business' profits. Not even exceptional flying skills could save him and his flyers from the dreaded bottom line.

Things looked grim for the fledgling firm until early 1931, when a man named Peter Justin approached Blake with a proposition. Justin, the head of Lockheed Corporation's security division, offered Blake an impressive fee to secretly transfer a prototype plane from one Lockheed facility to another. The run seemed simple enough, and Blake readily agreed, seeing the job as an easy way to put his company in the black. He couldn't have been more wrong. His quick "milk run" across the San Bernardino Mountains ended shortly after takeoff when he was shot out of the sky and left for dead. His trek back to civilization led him to a secret base where a duplicate of the prototype



was being stored. Baffled, he began to investigate, and in the process he became entangled in a deadly web of espionage, betrayal and harrowing dogfights. But Blake was more than equal to the task, and he emerged from the affair a national hero. Hammett, who was fast becoming a household name, turned the case into his first Paladin Blake serial: "Paladin Blake and the Case of the Phantom Prototype." At the same time, the mission earned Blake Aviation a lucrative long-term contract from Lockheed—a contract that saved BAS from certain bankruptcy. It was a vital turning point for the company.

BLAKE'S RISE (1932-1936)

The "Phantom Prototype" serial was an instant success, and the public demanded more. Hammett and Blake were happy to oblige. The written chronicles of Paladin Blake's

adventures propelled both the man and the company into the limelight, and a popular radio drama series soon followed. King Features paid Hammett to write a newspaper comic strip called "Paladin's Knights," and several of the Blake serials were optioned for film adaptations.

Blake became a media sensation, and BAS' business began to boom. Companies across the country leapt at the chance to be represented by a media darling who also had a proven track record as a dedicated and successful anti-pirate crusader. Blake spoke out loudly in the national press against piracy and the national governments that had failed to put a stop to it. The subject rarely fails to anger him. As he puts it, "These are the ones who're sleeping in their beds when my people are out there laying their lives on the line. Where's the righteous anger? Where's the dedication? Why aren't more of them up there fighting alongside us?"

While his stridency earned him some enemies, particularly among local law enforcement agencies who felt slighted by his accusations, his bold stance caused some nations to gravitate to BAS simply to visibly prove their dedication to justice. Blake began to sign contracts directly with the national governments, putting his squads on retainer as pirate-hunters and border patrollers.

The influx of cash allowed Blake to expand operations. The air fleet grew from one squadron to eight within a year. Three squadrons were stationed in Hollywood, three in Empire State, and two in the Republic of Texas. This geographic positioning allowed BAS to cover missions all across the former United States, but it also meant that Blake was forced to take on more of the administrative tasks, leaving him little time to go out on missions. Most of the company's operational control was handed over to regional offices and individual squadron leaders.

Blake Aviation's growth allowed it to take on bigger missions and bigger clients. On the East Coast, Imperial Air hired BAS on a long-term retainer after a flight of Blake's best were able to turn the tables on a pirate band who had been persistently harassing Imperial's transport zeps. The prestigious contract was a real feather in Blake's cap. Two of BAS' Empire State squadrons were devoted full-time to Imperial Air, earning them the nickname "the Imperial Guard." Out west, Blake's pilots earned accolades from private and government sources alike for their success tangling with pirate bands such as the Diamondback Gang and the Black Tornadoes. One of Blake's Hollywood squadrons even flew as stunt pilots in the film "Aces High," which Dashiell Hammett scripted.

BAS' performance on the ground rivaled its success in the air. In Columbia, BAS investigators went undercover for three months to unearth a Unionist cabal. In the Empire State, they tracked down the center of a major moonshine operation, paving the way for the air fleet to bomb the bootleggers' stills into oblivion. However, the investigators' most prominent case came in Hollywood, when BAS bodyguard Gregory Hart single-handedly foiled an assassination attempt against Hollywood President David Dunbar. Hart vaulted onto the podium and pushed Dunbar aside just before the assassin fired. The President escaped without a scratch, but Hart was not so lucky. The bullet meant for Dunbar struck Hart in the back, paralyzing him from the waist down. This incident was touted as proof of the dedication and courage of BAS' employees. Blake speaks emotionally about Hart: "A true national hero. The best of the best. We're honored that he's chosen to stay on as an instructor at BAS' training grounds."

Over the next few years, Blake Aviation continued to grow. Soon the company had offices in nearly every North American nation. The Native American nations, proud of their isolation, refused to allow Blake to set up shop within the borders of the Lakota Territories or the Navajo Nation. Operations in those areas had to be coordinated from neighboring nations. The only other region lacking a BAS office was Free Colorado. Despite many invitations, Paladin Blake has refused to open an office "so long as it remains on such friendly terms with the den of miscreants, thieves, and murderers running things out of Boulder."

By the end of 1936, BAS was without question the premiere aviation security firm in North America. Across the continent, planes bearing the shield-and-helmet logo of Blake Aviation helped to keep the skies safe from raiders. In keeping with their new image, BAS adopted a new motto: "The One To Count On."

LOOKING FORWARD (1937 AND BEYOND)

In recent years, more and more private security companies have sprung up, attempting to cut into Blake's business. So far, these attempts have been mostly unsuccessful, with a few notable exceptions. In the ISA, the homegrown appeal of Masterson Protection Agency has bitten a large chunk out of BAS' air contracts. Down south, the recent scandal involving corruption in Blake's Dixie office has significantly weakened BAS' position in the area. Paladin Blake maintained his uncompromising integrity by owning up to the incident rather than sweeping it under the carpet, and he dealt harshly with the small group of conspirators who had been allowing safe passage to smugglers in exchange for bribes. (Hammett used the affair as the basis for his serial "Paladin Blake and the Dixie Double-cross.") Despite these attempts at damage control, local rival Guardian Angel Services was quick to capitalize on the bad press and steal business away from BAS.

The only candidate likely to become a true rival of BAS in the future is Mecca Security. This small firm recently gained notoriety when it received a lucrative contract from the Curtiss-Wright Corporation—a contract which BAS initially turned down due to differences of opinion between Paladin and the head of the corporation's security services. The Mecca Security pilots have performed admirably in their defense of Curtiss-Wright's shipping lanes, earning other contracts up and down the East Coast. Though Mecca is still much smaller than BAS, the backing of a large aircraft corporation may give it enough clout to become a threat to Blake's business in the future. Until then, Blake Aviation remains the one—the only one—to count on.

OPERATIONS

Blake Aviation is divided into two operational groups: the air fleet, which includes the mechanics and other support crews necessary to keep the planes in the air, and the ground division, Blake's cadre of investigators and bodyguards. Each group has its own unique properties, but they are both known to take excellent care of their employees. The pay scale is designed to attract the best in the business, and special incentives are given to pilots who can provide their own planes when they join the company. BAS covers all operational expenses, including hospital bills, repairs and ammunition for the pilots and travel expenses for the investigators. There is also a generous insurance program to guarantee that an employee's family will be well taken care of should the unthinkable happen.

IN THE AIR

Everyone knows the reputation of Blake Aviation's air fleet. "Your best line of defense" is their motto, and few would dispute their right to say it. Companies all across North America depend on BAS every day to protect their cargo and passengers from pirates and terrorists. Many regard Blake aviators as the best in the business.

To be considered for a job at BAS, a pilot must be licensed in at least one North American nation and pass an extensive background check. Any hint of impropriety will seriously affect a candidate's chances for employment, and a criminal background will usually disqualify him entirely. There are exceptions, of course. Paladin Blake's personal experience with flyers on the fringes of society has convinced him that even the most infamous of mavericks may be acting out of a sense of justice. "Give them a way in out of the cold, and half the time they'll take it," he told me. "If they were just in it for the money, they'd be pirates. Mercs aren't all bad people, they're just pointed down the wrong path. Given the opportunity, they'll come down on the side of order more often than you'd think." Blake has been known to consider former smugglers and mercenaries for positions—if they can convince him (and his detectives) that they've truly changed their ways.

Once the prospective pilot passes the initial interview process, he (or she—roughly one third of BAS' flyers are women) must prove his or her skills in the air, competing against existing BAS flyers in races, aerial obstacle courses and mock dogfights. Squadron leaders and senior pilots rate the recruit's performance; only the best of the bunch become Blake Aviation pilots.

No matter their experience level, all BAS flyers are required to attend Blake's rigorous aerial combat training course, run by Great War ace Albert Tennyson. At Tennyson's flight school, they hone their flying skills and learn some of the finer points of Zeppelin escort and dogfighting. Tennyson is a great proponent of the foundations of aerial tactics laid out by German ace Oswald Boelcke, who scored 40 victories during the Great War. The "Dicta Boelcke" includes such sage advice as "place the sun between yourself and the enemy" and "foolish acts of bravery only bring death."

Blake's air fleet follows a straightforward paramilitary organization. Discipline is not very strict—Blake likes his pilots to think of each other as family and was never very good at following orders himself. Flyers are organized into squadrons of 24 planes—4 "flights" of 6 planes. Squadrons are commanded by a captain; flights are under a lieutenant. Other wing leaders are sergeants, and their wingmen have the basic rank of pilot. The squadron leaders answer to their bureau chiefs, who report to Tennyson, who in turn reports to Blake himself.

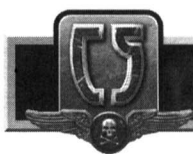
One can't speak of the air fleet without also mentioning its backbone: the ground crews of mechanics and armorers who work diligently to keep the planes in working order, even when it seems like a miracle that the craft made it back to the airfield at all. The crews are highly regarded by the pilots (woe to the new recruit who treats his mechanic as "just a grease-monkey" and needs to be put into his place) and receive the same level of training and benefits as the flyers.

The exact missions flown by Blake's pilots vary widely, but many can be categorized as "escort duty," "border patrol," or "pirate hunting." Of the three, escort duty is the most common, and is the service Blake Aviation is best known for. Every day, Blake pilots see zeppelins and cargo planes, carrying anything from Hawaiian tourists to gold bouillon, safely to their destinations.

ALBERT TENNYSON

Born in England some fifty-odd years ago, Albert Tennyson served with the Royal Flying Corps during the Great War, where he earned the coveted title of ace. After the war, Tennyson came to America, chasing dreams of a film career. Those dreams never came to pass, though he did serve as a flight consultant on several Hollywood films and took a brief turn at barnstorming.

Neither Paladin Blake nor Tennyson will discuss when and how they first met. All that's known for sure is that they flew



together during Blake's mercenary days, when the elder Englishman taught Blake, as Tennyson puts it, to "fight and fly and kill and be a gentleman all at the same time." When Blake founded BAS, Tennyson became his business partner as well as his mentor and good friend.

Tennyson and Blake worked closely together to set up a training program where BAS recruits would learn aerial combat based on Tennyson's decade of flying experience, particularly his experiences during the war. The result was a top-notch flight school that has been training Blake's best for more than five years. In addition to running the school, Tennyson is also Blake Aviation's Chief of Air Operations, and regional managers across the country answer directly to him. Still, Tennyson can be found at the airfield, up to his elbows in grease, more often than in the office.

ON THE GROUND

It is a common saying among Blake's ground division that "the ground pounders do the work while the flyboys get all the glory." Though it's usually said in jest, it's hard to deny that BAS' reputation is primarily based on its performance in the air, not on the ground, despite the contributions of BAS' ground agents. The members of the ground division are a unique mix—part detective, part bounty hunter and part bodyguard. Their job involves long hours, grueling stakeouts, dangerous undercover work, endless research, deadly gunfights and a lot of travel—and from what I've seen, they love every minute of it.

Like their aerial counterparts, prospective ground agents from across the country are sent through a thorough Hollywood-based training program run by Chief of Ground Operations Samantha "Sunny" Day. At the end of their training, they become licensed private investigators in Hollywood. Most go on to obtain licenses in other nations, which helps to keep them out of trouble with local law enforcement when they're on the job. New recruits are paired with veteran agents to learn what can't be taught in a classroom. The ground division's organization is much more loosely defined than the air fleet's. There is no formal rank structure, since most agents (once they pass their initial "on the job training" phase) work alone. Agents answer directly to the bureau chief of their regional office; the chiefs coordinate cases, assign duties, and report to national managers, who in turn report to Day.

The agents handle a wide variety of jobs, anything from the mundane (typical private-eye work uncovering local bootlegging operations or petty fraud) to the extraordinary (international intrigue or corporate blackmail). They are commonly hired to retrieve lost or stolen goods, such as confidential documents stolen by a rival corporation or valuable objects taken by pirates. In one particularly unusual case, Blake agents had to track down and return a Florida millionaire's missing boa con-



strictor. On occasion, BAS agents are sent after people rather than objects—whether it's a fugitive who needs to be brought to justice or a kidnapped heiress who needs rescuing. Agents are also hired as confidential couriers or bodyguards. It's not uncommon to see a Blake agent traveling on an airship, a briefcase handcuffed to his wrist and his pistol within easy reach. Documents or diamonds, it doesn't matter—Blake Aviation guarantees that the items will reach their destination safely.



Unlike many other private detective and security agencies, BAS has for the most part refused to take on less savory but profitable jobs for big business interests, such as strikebreaking and red-hunting. Blake has made it clear that he wants to focus on criminals rather than political agitators. In the few cases where the two have overlapped, BAS' exceptional public relations work has maintained its sterling image.

SAMANTHA DAY

The Hollywood society pages have repeatedly tried to uncover a romantic link between Blake and his Chief of Ground Operations. Ask either of them about it and they'll just laugh. Day, a former Pinkerton employee who Paladin Blake encountered during his brief stint at the detective agency, says she's too busy for romance. "He already swept me off my feet once when he hired me away from Pinkerton," she jokes. "That was enough for one lifetime."

Day was an ambitious licensed private investigator in her 20s when she and Blake first met. Raised in a sheltered New Haven, Connecticut community and educated at the private Wesleyan University, she had grown up with a strong sense of her own privilege and potential. She was determined to become Connecticut's first female police officer, and she began applying to the State Police Academy while still in college. Turned down without comment for four years running, she took her case to the media, and was met with public derision and contemptuous editorials. In frustration, she applied for a private investigator's license under the name "Sonny" Day, and managed to sign on as a trainee at Pinkerton. The nickname stuck with her after a supervisor sarcastically praised her "sunny disposition" during a dispute.

Once she entered the workforce, however, she found her dreams of being a private detective were based more on pulp fiction than reality. "I wanted to right wrongs, fight for law and order, defend the weak, that sort of thing," she complains. "Instead I was snooping on cheating husbands and digging up dirt on union organizers to leak to the press. It wasn't exactly the stuff heroism is made of."

Blake stayed with the Pinkertons for less than a year, but Day apparently made a strong impression on him. When he founded Blake Aviation a few years later, she was one of the first employees he recruited. "She was a crack investigator who wanted to make the world a better place, and she was wasted at Pinkerton," Blake says. "I needed someone I could trust to make sure we hired the right sort of people and kept them pointed in the right direction. 'Sunny' hasn't let me down yet."

Day worked closely with Dashiell Hammett in the early days of BAS to recruit, train and organize a stable of skilled investigators, many of whom later became heads of their own bureaus across the country. Together, the two created an educational program for new investigators, with "Dash" teaching

research and the finer points of footwork, and "Sunny" teaching a range of subjects from forensics to ethics. All new BAS ground agents still pass through an educational course designed by Samantha Day, who occasionally still teaches classes but spends most of her time coordinating cross-country investigations.

Day's strong sense of idealism and her uncompromising moral code were part of the reason Blake recruited her, and her ethical standards are in part what shaped BAS' code of conduct. As part of their initial training, agents are schooled in local law, and they are required to abide by the legal standards of whatever nation they are operating in. Agents have been fired in the past for paying too little attention to local standards of behavior, and Blake and Day have both made it clear that they don't intend to compromise on the issue.

DASHIELL HAMMETT

A writer by trade and a snoop by nature, Hammett started his career as an author early in life, but found that dime novels didn't quite pay the rent. Like Blake and Day, he worked for Pinkerton briefly, parlaying his natural nosiness into a short career as a private investigator. The same talents drew him into journalism, and he enjoyed some success as a freelance correspondent for *Air Action Weekly*. Working under a pseudonym to keep some distance between his detective fiction and his first-hand reports on aviation, Hammett traveled around the country, digging up real-life dramas and transforming them into reports for *AAW* and pulp stories for detective magazines.

When he was assigned to cover the exploits of an ambitious Hollywood startup company, Dashiell—"Dash" to his friends—ran across his old acquaintance Paladin Blake again and offered to become Blake's business partner. Blake put him to work training new investigators and doing background checks on recruits and clients alike.

Hammett's firsthand knowledge of Blake Aviation and his friendship with Paladin Blake put him in a perfect position to chronicle Blake's accomplishments. Hammett's early fictionalized accounts of their adventures attracted critical praise and attention from the major film studios. Dash became a hot commodity in Hollywood circles while Blake was still a small-time pirate hunter. Dash formally left BAS, but remained close to Blake himself, and occasionally did research for the company or for Blake directly. He also continued writing about Blake's adventures, and his *AAW* serial "Paladin Blake and the Case of the Phantom Prototype" eventually propelled BAS into the same heights of fame Hammett was already enjoying.

Hammett continues to work for BAS on a freelance basis, usually as a personal favor to Blake. His insights into BAS continue to provide grist for Hammett's popular ongoing radio drama series "Paladin Blake and His Privateers."

ACROSS THE CONTINENT

Blake Aviation keeps regional offices in every nation of North America, except Free Colorado and the two Native American nations. Though all offices are part of the BAS family, operations vary across the continent.

HOLLYWOOD

Hollywood is usually regarded as the “home” of Blake Aviation Security. Paladin Blake began his piloting career here, and the original BAS offices were housed in Santa Monica. Aside from its sentimental value, Hollywood is still the hub of BAS operations. All recruits—ground crew and air crew alike—come through the training program at the corporate headquarters in Pasadena, and all three of the company’s chief officers—Paladin Blake, Samantha Day and Albert Tennyson—are based in the area.

Four BAS squadrons are stationed in Hollywood, along with the requisite support crews. Between coastal pirates, such as the Red Dragons and the Monterey Sharks, and the Yosemite Brotherhood bandits of the Sierra Nevada mountains, the pilots have their hands full. There is a particular ongoing rivalry between the BAS Hollywood flyers and the Monterey Sharks, a troublesome band of coastal raiders. Though the Blake pilots have inflicted heavy losses upon the Sharks, attempts to eradicate them completely have been unsuccessful. The Sharks are firm believers in the “don’t keep all your eggs in one basket” principle, and keep their loot and supplies split among numerous coves and small islands along the Hollywood coast. For every hideout BAS destroys, there are four more they have yet to find. Despite the constant setbacks, it doesn’t take long for the Sharks to regroup and begin preying on the shipping lanes again.

Thanks to Hollywood’s turbulent city life, there’s no shortage of work for the ground division either. Bodyguards are in constant demand, as Hollywood stars and starlets attempt to avoid overzealous fans and reporters alike. Even Hollywood president David Dunbar employs BAS security forces in his entourage, ever since Blake investigator Gregory Hart thwarted an assassination attempt against him. The Hollywood BAS agents always seem to have a case list a mile long. Sordid affairs, backstabbing corporate intrigue and blackmail seem more common in everyday Hollywood life than on the silver screen.

SCENARIO: COSTAL RETREAT

Blake Aviation has been hired to escort a plane full of tourists from Los Angeles to Hawaii. Unknown to BAS, one of

the passengers, a wealthy film producer, is the target of a brazen kidnap scheme. The pirates hope to eliminate the BAS guards and force the plane to land on a secluded island off the coast of Hollywood. There, the producer and the other tourists will be held for ransom.

Game Set Up

Lay out an Open Sky map. The passenger plane (an unarmed cargo plane) and the BAS escorts may set up along the north map edge. The Monterey Sharks pirates set up second, along the west map edge.

A pilot rated 3-3-3-3-3 flies the cargo plane.

Planes and Pilots

Rising Stars (BAS Hollywood)

Lead 1: Kurt “Excalibur” Denning
Bloodhawk 4-4-5-4-6-3

Wing 1: Daniel “Professor” Reeves
Bloodhawk 4-4-5-3-4-3

Monterey Sharks (Pirates)

Lead 1: Anne “Shark” Jones
Avenger 3-7-3-3-4-4

Wing 2: Josh “Sandman” Hamilton
Brigand 3-4-4-3-5-3

Rules of Engagement

The objective of both sides is to shoot down the enemy planes without damaging the passenger aircraft.

Winning the Mission

Whichever side has the last plane flying wins. If the passenger plane is destroyed, both sides lose.

EMPIRE STATE

When Blake Aviation expanded its operation out of Hollywood, it chose the Empire State as its first stop. The Blake offices are located, naturally, in Manhattan. From here, regional manager Robert Claypool oversees operations all along the East Coast. Educated at Harvard in business, Claypool recognized the warning signs of 1929 and sold off most of his stock assets prior to the devastating crash on Black Tuesday. In more recent years, Claypool’s business savvy has secured numerous contracts for BAS and kept the eastern offices operating in the black.





BAS' largest client, by far, is Imperial Air. With their massive fleet of zeppelins, Imperial Air dominates the entire eastern seaboard—and wherever they go, BAS goes with them. BAS has four squadrons assigned to the Empire State corridor, two of which are devoted exclusively to Imperial Air. Each Imperial Air zeppelin is protected by no less than one flight of BAS planes and a squad of bodyguards onboard the airship in case of a boarding action. Imperial Air advertisements proudly boast of their Blake escorts, and travelers from Maine to Florida sleep soundly onboard their zeppelins, knowing that they are in good hands.

IMPERIAL GUARD

The Imperial Guard can trace their history back to the early days of Blake Aviation, as the Empire State squadron was the second BAS group formed in North America. The two squadrons that were dedicated to Imperial Air when they signed on as a BAS client quickly earned the nickname “the Imperial Guard.”

Today, the Guard has the unenviable task of providing escort through the most perilous stretches of Appalachia and the ISA. Despite these dangers, the crack pilots perform their duties admirably. They have the best record for protecting cargo of any BAS squadron and have frequently earned the praises of Paladin Blake himself. Even the most seasoned pirates think twice about taking on Imperial Air zeppelins.

The Guard is led by Captain Jamie “Mac” McDonough, a former Empire State militia officer with more than thirty pirate victories to his credit. Though he fights with startling ferocity in the air, back at the aerodrome McDonough is a quiet, unassuming gentleman, held in high regard by the men and women under his command.

INDUSTRIAL STATES OF AMERICA

The animosity between ISA and the Empire State has never been very good for BAS' business. Early on, Paladin Blake was forced to limit aerial operations with the ISA's borders or risk alienating his biggest customers in the Empire State. He had no such compunctions when it came to ground operations, but there his company suffered from its own reputation. BAS was always better known for its aerial prowess, so the lack of a presence in the skies over the ISA was a real detriment. Despite this handicap, the investigations division still manages to drum up enough business to warrant keeping a regional office in Chicago.

The Chicago office may be in trouble, however, thanks to some stiff competition from a Detroit security firm, Masterson Protection Agency. Masterson's main advertising strategy has included the adoption of a nationalistic slant. Their ads are fond of slamming Blake Aviation for its ties with Empire State

and touting the “local boy makes good” angle of Masterson's founder, Edward “Ned” Masterson. Masterson himself rose from an impoverished background and served in the Great War as an aviator. After the war, he joined the Defenders of the Heartland, an ISA militia group, before striking out on his own with the foundation of Masterson Protection Agency. Slowly but surely, Masterson has been eating away at Blake Aviation's ISA business.

CHICAGO

With Chicago's gang wars, bootleggers and dirty politics, it often seems that the center of power in the ISA is also its center of trouble. BAS Chicago agents are frequently forced into tough situations, caught between rival groups or drawn into shady political dealings. To combat the potential temptations inherent to that environment, Paladin Blake recruited former U.S. Federal agent Eliot Ness and placed him in charge of the Chicago bureau as soon as it opened. Paladin Blake has made it clear that his people are expected to rival the integrity of Ness himself, and for the most part his agents do their best not to disappoint him. In one case, BAS agents Michael O'Connell and Cary Gibson were found murdered after they had worked to expose an extortion racket in the Windy City. Undaunted by the danger to themselves, Gibson and O'Connell's fellow investigators continued to pursue the matter, and were eventually able to shut down the racket and bring the murderers to justice.

APPALACHIA

The Appalachian Mountains are home to dozens—perhaps even hundreds—of pirate havens and smuggler dens. It is no wonder, then, that this area is a particular hub of Blake Aviation activity. Two parts border patrol, one part bloodhound, the pilots and investigators of Blake's Appalachian outfit are dedicated to two rather lofty goals: stemming the flow of liquor across the borders into Dixie, ISA and Empire State, and eradicating the pirates who prey upon shipping lanes in those areas. Despite the enormity of their task, the BAS agents and flyers are relatively optimistic. “Every day we do a little damage—it all adds up,” claims Captain Jake Tierney, the commander of BAS operations in Appalachia.

WHITE KNIGHTS

It seems ironic that the pride of Blake Aviation's anti-bootleg outfit shares its name with Paladin Blake's personal blend of whiskey, “White Knight Liquor,” but the pilots regard it as a sort of inside joke. They all have the highest regard for their founder, and Blake himself often speaks highly of the Knights. The flyers have tangled with such deadly pirate gangs as Hell's Henchmen and the Roughnecks and still managed to keep a



higher kill-to-losses ratio than any other BAS squadron. Frequent forays into the pirate havens around “Hell’s Heights” keep the pilots on their toes.

The Knights have a good relationship with the local militias, who must constantly battle to keep the brigands of the Appalachian Mountains from preying upon the citizens of Appalachia. Blake’s pilots frequently participate in joint missions with the militia, targeting pirate bases or protecting especially valuable cargos.

ALASKA

Blake Aviation’s first involvement with Alaska came in 1933, when Paladin Blake was called upon to aid a Russian

noble family in rescuing their kidnapped daughter. Soon after that incident, Blake set up an official BAS office in the Klondike. Though small at first, the outfit grew quickly as it became clear that there was a good deal of money to be made in Alaska, protecting shipping lanes into Canada and Pacifica. Though the pilots do their best to stay out of the conflict between the Red and White Russians, it is often difficult to avoid involvement entirely. Sometimes the Russian conflict engulfs civilian targets, and Blake Aviation is forced to step in and protect its clients’ assets.

There are currently two BAS squadrons based in Anchorage, along with a small group of investigators. One of the investigators, Frank “Grizzly” Cooper, has worked hard to establish a good relationship with the native Alaskan tribes. His



ACROSS THE CONTINENT

experience living among the Inuit for a time has taught him valuable winter survival skills, which he is quick to pass along to other BAS pilots should they ever be shot down in the Alaskan wilds.

SCENARIO: BLACK GOLD

Gabriel Industries, a prominent oil company, has contracted Blake Aviation to safeguard its interests in Alaska. When Red Russians stage a raid against one of Gabriel's refineries, BAS must drive off the bandits and protect the oil.

Game Set Up

Lay out the Seaport map. The Russians set up in the southwest corner of the map, no more than 3 hexes from the south edge or the west edge. The Blake planes may set up along the east map edge.

Planes and Pilots

Aurora Squadron (BAS Alaska)

Lead 1: Matthew "Finch" Murray

Tempest 4-2-4-4-5-5

Wing 1: Abigail "Abby" Beach

Devastator 4-3-3-5-5-3

Lead 2: Cate "Dixie" Conrad

Bloodhawk 3-3-6-3-5-3

Wing 2: Marco "Speed" Tuturro

Warhawk 6-3-3-5-3-3

Bolshevik Squadron (Red Russians)

Lead 1: Nicholas "Nikki" Rochenko

Vampire 5-4-3-3-5-5

Wing 1: Sasha "Dove" Dashkova

Bandit 3-5-3-3-3-5

Wing 2: Gregori "Molotov" Alekseev

Kestrel 4-3-3-4-5-3

Rules of Engagement

Prior to the start of the mission, the Blake player must designate any two adjacent building hexes as the Gabriel refinery. The Russian's goal is to destroy the refinery by dropping a bomb on either of the two refinery hexes. BAS pilots must prevent them by destroying or driving off all of the attackers.

When one of the refinery hexes is hit with a bomb, the oil will go up in a massive fireball. Planes in either refinery hex immediately take two flak rocket hits (p. 42, *The Rules of Air Combat*) using the Nose Hit location table on the record sheet. Planes in adjacent hexes take one flak rocket hit; use the Hit Location Table appropriate to the plane's facing, as if a flak

rocket had exploded in that hex. The plane that dropped the bomb takes damage just like any other nearby aircraft; so it is advisable to aim the bomb at the refinery from an adjacent hex, rather than the refinery hex itself.

Winning the Mission

The Russians win if they destroy the refinery. Otherwise, BAS wins.

FREE COLORADO

Paladin Blake staunchly refuses to have any official dealings with the pirate-friendly nation of Colorado, and so there is no Blake Aviation regional office to be found there. Even so, the Colorado area probably sees more BAS activity than any other place in North America—usually from the other side of the border. An assignment to the Colorado theatre is regarded as a feather in a BAS pilot's cap. Only the best Blake flyers are sent into this lion's den of pirate activity.

Free Colorado's favorite pastime is running liquor across the borders into the surrounding dry nations of Arixo, Utah, the Peoples' Collective, and Texas. Blake Aviation has standing contracts with the governments of those regions, and works hard to shut down the bootleggers. In addition to the smugglers, Colorado is home to scores of bandits who launch raids on the shipping lanes in neighboring nations, then return to safety in Boulder, Denver or Sky Haven. Blake Aviation pilots will give chase across the border when they can, but none of them are foolish enough to pursue targets all the way back to one of those pirate havens.

BEHIND THE LINES

Despite Paladin's official stance, there are undoubtedly BAS operatives working unofficially within the borders of Free Colorado. Several times, pirate leaders thought to be safe in Boulder have turned up mysteriously in the hands of authorities in Utah and the People's Collective. One particularly nefarious bootlegger, "Red" Calvert, was handed over (by parties unknown) to the Navajo Nation in return for the \$2,000 bounty on his head. There have also been a number of raids on Colorado pirate bases by unmarked aircraft.

Free Colorado is understandably angered by kidnapping and raiding in its own backyard, so it is no surprise that no one has claimed responsibility for these actions. However, rumors persist that Blake Aviation may be behind these activities. Given Paladin Blake's stance against pirates and smugglers, it is safe to assume that he gives his tacit consent to such operations, even if he does not openly support them.

DOWN AND DIRTY IN DIXIE

Down and Dirty in Dixie is a historical campaign based on actual missions flown by BAS' Dixie squadron against various pirate groups in 1936. *Air Action Weekly* reporter Thomas Keaton was on assignment with the Dixie squadron during this time and documented their exploits.

The scenarios outlined below portray historical events, but players may deviate from them in the course of play.

Campaign Rules: The special rules from *Imperial Gambit* (p. 6) apply to *Down and Dirty in Dixie* as well.

PLANES AND PILOTS

Unlike the Imperial Guard squadron, Blake's Angels are not tied to any one client. They go where they're needed, performing a variety of different missions.

BLAKE'S ANGELS - BAS DIXIE SQUADRON

Flight 1

Lead 1: Billy "Sailor" Carver

Valiant 3-5-6-5-3-6

Wing 1: Eduardo "Dragon" Doumani

Fury 5-4-7-4-4-3

Flight 2

Lead 2: Adam "Dancer" Blain

Peacemaker 3-5-7-3-4-3

Wing 2: Greg "Clay" Clayborn

Brigand 6-4-3-3-4-3

Flight 3

Lead 3: Carol "Queenie" Keifer

Raven 4-3-6-4-4-2

Wing 3: Tao "Sheik" Aridi

Bloodhawk 4-3-3-3-6-4

RUNNING THE CAMPAIGN

Though the campaign scenarios are presented in historical order, they can easily be played in any order. The only restriction is that Scenario 9 should take place immediately following a scenario in which at least one BAS aircraft was shot down.

CAMPAIGN VICTORY

Unlike *Imperial Gambit*, this campaign does not follow an overall storyline. For the most part, victory is counted on a mission-by-mission basis. However, Reputation Points can still be used to track the squadron's overall performance using the descriptive guides "Overwhelming Defeat," "Average Victory" and so on given in *Imperial Gambit*.



SPECIAL DELIVERY

"Dragon to Angel Flight. We have a bit of a problem here." My ears perked up as the message came in. We were circling an empty field a good distance from an airfield in northern Georgia, waiting for "Dragon" Doumani to rendezvous with us.

"We copy, Dragon," came the calm reply of the Angels' captain, Billy "Sailor" Carver. "What's your situation?"

The radio crackled with ominous static for a long moment, then clicked on again to broadcast Doumani's response. "Our friends have returned from their hunting expedition a little early. I've got what we came for, but they're moving to intercept. I could use a hand out here. I'm just clearing the eastern runway now."

"We're on our way, Dragon." Carver didn't have to give any further instructions to his pilots; they immediately fell into formation as he banked away from the clearing and kicked his throttle up to full power. I pulled up on Carver's wing, keeping pace with his Valiant as we headed toward the airfield.

I had been flying with the Blake's Angels squadron for nearly a month now, tagging along on missions across the South. It was quite a change from escorting Imperial Air zeppelins. Sure, the Angels get their share of babysitting missions, but unlike the Imperial Guard, that isn't their primary purpose. The Angels are troubleshooters, going where the action is and taking on any and all kinds of missions.

Our objective was the retrieval of certain documents stolen from Bell Aviation by a local band of pirates. Doumani, Carver's wingman, had taken an autogyro in on his own to pick up a BAS agent who had retrieved the missing files. Carver didn't want to arouse the pirates' suspicion by sending in the whole squadron; he wanted to give their agent the best chance of making it out. Unfortunately, the pirate aircraft had returned unexpectedly and now threatened to capture both Doumani and the agent.

The Blake squadron raced toward the airfield, which was now visible over the tree line. I scanned the skies, searching for Doumani's autogyro. Finally, I spotted the small craft. Carver's



DOWN AND DIRTY IN DIXIE

voice came over the radio, “Keaton, you stick with Dragon. Make sure our precious cargo gets delivered safely. Dancer and Clay, let’s go give those bandits something to keep them busy.”

We all acknowledged our orders, and I watched the three fighters pull off to go meet the incoming pirate aircraft. I quickly lost sight of the dogfight as I flew in a wide arc and came up in line with Doumani’s autogyro. “Looks like we’re going to miss the fun, Dragon,” I commented wryly.

“Yeah, but there’s always a next time,” came Doumani’s jovial response.



SCENARIO 1: PAPER CHASE

One of Blake Aviation’s main operations (aside from aerial escort) is the retrieval of lost or stolen property. The *Down and Dirty in Dixie* campaign leads off with one such mission.

The story began when a pirate band broke into the main Bell Aviation manufacturing plant in Marietta, Georgia, and made off with confidential design plans for one of Bell’s new aircraft. Bell suspected that the pirates were hired by their main competitor, Curtiss-Wright Aviation, which had a plant of their own not far from the Marietta facility. In a daring undercover operation, one of Blake’s agents managed to infiltrate the pirates and locate the missing documents. He then waited for a time when the pirate aircraft were out hunting and grabbed the plans.

In a pre-arranged pick-up, “Dragon” Doumani from the Blake’s Angels squadron flew an autogyro to retrieve the agent and the documents. Unfortunately, the pirates returned to their home airfield sooner than expected and Doumani found himself in a tight spot. He radioed for backup and the rest of the flight, which had been waiting nearby, swooped in to rescue him.

GAME SET UP

Lay out the River map. Doumani’s autogyro (with the Blake agent and documents already onboard) starts the mission in one of the green field hexes near the southeast corner of the map. The rest of the Blake squadron may set up anywhere along the north map edge. The Georgia Drones pirate squadron sets up along the west map edge.

PLANES AND PILOTS

Use Flights 1 and 2 from Blake’s Angels, but “Dragon” Doumani will be flying a Bird Dog Autogyro for this mission only. See p. 54, *Wings Over Manhattan*, for rules regarding autogyros.

Georgia Drones (Pirate Squadron)

Lead 1: Corey “Mask” Wood	
Brigand	3-4-4-6-5-4
Wing 1: Lisa “Hammer” Morgan	
King Cobra	3-5-3-3-4-4
Lead 2: Michael “Tinker” McDade	
Bandit	3-4-4-3-3-7
Wing 2: Antonio “Snake” Lopez	
Bandit	4-5-5-2-3-3

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The pirates don’t want to lose the Bell plans, so they will go to great lengths not to damage the autogyro. However, if they can defeat the Blake escorts, they can force down the autogyro without destroying it.

The Blake player’s goal is to get the autogyro and its cargo to safety. The autogyro must fly off the north map edge. Five turns after it leaves the map, the mission ends. If the autogyro is accidentally destroyed, the mission ends immediately.

Planes may flee off their starting (home) map edge.

WINNING THE MISSION

The Blake squadron wins by holding off the pirates long enough for the autogyro to get away with enough of a head start that the Drones will not be able to track it down and recapture it. If there are still Blake planes in the air (and on the map) five turns after the autogyro leaves the map, the Angels win. If the pirates defeat the Blake planes without destroying the autogyro, they win. If the autogyro is destroyed, both sides lose and the Angels suffer the Reputation Point penalty for lost cargo.

SCENARIO 2: GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

In a time where national currencies fluctuate in value depending on where you go and how the country’s economics are doing, there is no denying the lure of cold, hard, heavy gold. So when a shipment of Spanish gold was being transferred from Miami to Jacksonville, it was a very tempting target indeed. The Dixie government tried to keep the shipment as secretive as possible, but word leaked out to a local pirate band despite their efforts.

GAME SET UP

Lay out a Zeppelin map. The Angels may set up in any hex adjacent to the zeppelin. The Dark Clouds pirate squadron starts along the northern map edge. Prior to the start of the mission, the pirate player must decide how his boarders will travel to the target. Historically, the Clouds put their entire boarding party on one cargo plane and used the second one as a decoy.



PLANES AND PILOTS

Use Flights 1 and 3 from Blake's Angels.

Dark Clouds (Pirate Squadron)

Lead 1: Sam Kennedy	
Warhawk	6-3-4-3-5-4
Wing 1: Kathleen Marshall	
Devastator	3-3-5-4-3-4
Lead 2: Avy Shepherd	
Cargo Plane	4-3-6-5-4-3
Wing 2: Patrick Rusk	
Cargo Plane	5-4-3-3-3-5

The pirates also have 10 boarders available for the mission.

The airship *Conquistador* is a standard commercial zeppelin. Its turrets are armed with single .50-caliber machine guns. There are 15 guards onboard to defend the airship, plus the turret gunners.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Rules for boarding party actions are described in *Behind the Crimson Veil*. The pirates' objective is to get their boarding party onto the zeppelin and take control of it. If the boarding party fails, their backup plan is to disable the zeppelin's engines and drive off the Blake defenders. The Angels must protect the gold shipment.

Planes may flee from any map edge. The mission ends when all the planes from one side or the other have been destroyed or have fled, or when all the BAS guards on the *Conquistador* have been eliminated.

WINNING THE MISSION

The player in control of the zeppelin when the mission is over wins.

SCENARIO 3: OUT OF THE SUN

Though not as dangerous as the infamous Hells Heights, the hills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in northern Georgia are still a hot spot for pirate activity. Blake Aviation frequently sent patrols into this area to look for signs of pirate bases. On one such patrol, the Blake Angels ran into trouble when they found what they were looking for. The bandit squadron outnumbered them two-to-one, but the Angels put forth a remarkable effort. Using the peaks and valleys of the mountains to their advantage, the Angels managed to bring down two of the enemy aircraft before retreating.

GAME SET UP

Lay out the Canyon map. The Angels set up in the middle of the map, no more than two hexes from the east-to-west center line. The pirates start along the southern map edge.



PLANES AND PILOTS

Use Flight 2 from Blake's Angels.

The Whistlers (Pirate Squadron)

Lead 1: Jonas "Spear" Monachi	
Valiant	5-3-6-2-4-4
Wing 1: Joe "Sensei" Yamaji	
Bloodhawk	2-5-4-2-4-5
Lead 2: Lindsay "Belle" Taylor	
Valiant	3-3-3-4-5-6
Wing 2: Sam "Outback" Greene	
Fury	4-5-4-4-3-3

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The objective for both sides is to bring down as many enemy planes as possible. Aircraft may only flee from the south map edge. The mission ends when all the planes from one side have been destroyed or have fled.

WINNING THE MISSION

The side with planes still on the map at the end of the mission wins.

SCENARIO 4: SMUGGLER'S BLUES

Dixie as a whole has few national laws, leaving most of the legislation up to the individual member states. In particular, it has no national law on prohibition. Some of the Confederation's states are wet, some dry, and some in-between (with laws regulating the sale of some forms of alcohol but not others). For Blake Aviation, this results in some interesting border wars against bootleggers, with Dixie squadrons guarding state borders instead of national ones.

One such area is the border between the Confederate states of Arkansas (a dry state) and Mississippi (a wet state). The junction between the Mississippi and Arkansas Rivers is a popular crossing point for moonshine smugglers. In the winter of 1936, the Blake's Angels squadron spent a few weeks patrolling the border there. One encounter with a smuggling band led to a memorable dogfight over the freezing Mississippi. Though several pirates bailed out into the water, they still froze to death before they were rescued.

GAME SET UP

Lay out the River map. The Angels set up anywhere on the south side of the river. The pirates set up anywhere on the north side of the river.

PLANES AND PILOTS

Use Flights 1 and 2 from Blake's Angels.

Order's Nemesis (Pirate Squadron)

Lead 1: Ellis "Rocket" Madsen	
Avenger	4-2-6-3-6-4
Wing 1: Adrian "Bulldog" Lynch	
Peacemaker	3-4-3-4-3-5
Lead 2: Christian "Wraith" Wagner	
Devastator	4-3-6-3-5-4
Wing 2: Cynthia "Willow" Hamil	
Bloodhawk	3-5-5-3-3-3

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Angels' objective is to prevent the smugglers from exiting off the southern map edge. The pirates' planes are all laden with barrels of whiskey and suffer a -1 penalty to their top speed. At the end of any turn, a pirate may choose to jettison his cargo. In the following turn, the plane's speed will be back to normal.

Since it's the middle of winter, the waters of the Mississippi are bitterly cold. If a pilot bails out over a water hex (including hexes that are partially water and partially something else, like a bridge or boat), he must make a Constitution roll with a target number of 10 minus the character's current Constitution. Add + 2 to the target number if the character is

in shock. If the pilot fails the roll, he dies of hypothermia in the freezing waters.

The mission ends when all the pirate aircraft have either been shot down or have exited from the southern map edge.

WINNING THE MISSION

Each side earns victory points for achieving their goals. The side with the most victory points at the end of the mission wins.

Blake Points

For each enemy plane shot down	25
For each enemy plane forced to jettison its cargo	20

Pirate Points

For each pirate plane that leaves the map with its cargo	25
For each pirate plane that leaves the map without cargo	10
For each enemy plane shot down	15



KING'S RANSOM

It took a special kind of insanity to be a boarding party member. I was very much surprised, therefore, to find myself accompanying a BAS team on a boarding mission. However, the Blake agent commanding the team was quick to reassure me that this was no ordinary boarding action. It was a unique opportunity to witness firsthand the skill and daring (and, I thought to myself, the lunacy) of a boarding party without actually having to jump onto a moving Zeppelin thousands of feet above the ground.

The opportunity arose when wealthy shipping tycoon Arthur King was kidnapped in the dead of night from his Orlando mansion. The Angels squadron was brought in to rescue King, who was being held on a steam ship anchored off the coast of Florida. Five specially trained BAS agents had been assigned to board the ship. So there I was, strapping on the unlikely combination of a life jacket and a parachute as I prepared to accompany the agents on their unusual maritime operation.

Once we were airborne, I found that standing on the wing of an airplane traveling over a hundred miles an hour was as frightening as it was exhilarating. I was grateful for the security of both my parachute and the safety line that kept me securely fastened to the support strut of the Skewer's starboard wing. As a novice, I was given the center spot on the wing, so I was securely squished between two burly agents. As we got closer to our target, our pilot, "Dancer" Blain, dropped to a lower alti-



tude to avoid being spotted. The water below was dizzyingly close, and the spring wind sprayed ocean surf in our faces, soaking us to the bone.

After nearly fifteen minutes in flight, the steam ship became visible, bobbing silently in the water a good distance ahead of us. Unfortunately, the crew of the ship soon spotted our planes. They must have radioed for assistance, because as we neared the vessel I spotted four dots on the horizon—incoming aircraft. I didn't relish the thought of riding fully exposed into the middle of a dogfight, so I mentally willed Dancer to hurry it along before those planes got into range. We soon learned that we had more to worry about than the enemy planes. A puff of smoke from the bow of the steam ship heralded the dangerously close explosion of a flak shell. On our right, Clay's Brigand was bounced around a little by the shock-wave, but it didn't seem to take significant damage.

Dancer took evasive action as we braved the flak cannon's wrath and buzzed over the vessel's smokestack. Once on the other side, Dancer slowed and brought the seaplane in for a landing. He slid up close to the side of the vessel as the boarding team—me included—unbuckled our parachutes and safety lines. The agents on the left wing, closer to the ship, exchanged gunfire with a pair of pirates on the steamship's deck. Meanwhile, the rest of us readied the grappling hooks we would use to hoist ourselves onto the ship.

Once onboard, the six of us moved quickly toward the ladder leading below decks. One agent kept watch over the ladder while the rest of us descended into the bowels of the ship. We met little resistance in the passageways—the two pirates we encountered did not last long against the five of us. One by one, the boarders kicked open doors and checked each of the rooms. Finally, we made it to the central cabin, where we found Arthur King bound and gagged on the floor of the stateroom.

When it was all over, I was sure of one thing—I was not getting back on that plane. An ocean cruise on a steam ship sounded like just the ticket.



SCENARIO 5: WATERY GRAVE

In early spring of 1937, the Angels had a rather unusual assignment. Arthur King, a prominent Orlando businessman, had been kidnapped and was being held for ransom. King's family, unwilling to pay the money for fear of encouraging future acts of terrorism against themselves or their company, hired Blake Aviation to rescue Arthur. BAS' top investigators were assigned to the case, and quickly pinpointed King's current location—a steam ship anchored off the coast of Florida.

GAME SET UP

Lay out an Open Sky map. The sky hexes represent the ocean. Before the mission begins, the pirate player needs to mark three adjacent hexes as the location of the steam ship, the *Lone Wolf*. He must also indicate which hex contains Arthur King, and how many guards are in each boat hex.

PLANES AND PILOTS

Use Flights 2 and 3 from Blake's Angels, but "Dancer" Blain flies a Skewer for this mission only. The Angels have 6 boarders who will fly into the fray on the wings of the Skewer. Because of its wing pylons, the Skewer is capable of holding three boarders on each wing instead of the usual two.

Wolf Pack (Pirate Squadron)

Lead 1: Xavier "Fenris" Sanchez	
Aguila	4-4-6-4-3-4
Wing 1: Horace "Squinty" McClintock	
Skewer	3-4-4-4-5-3
Lead 2: Keiko "Lobo" Tanaka	
Brigand	3-3-4-3-4-7
Wing 2: Dan "Star" Sparling	
Firebrand	4-3-5-5-4-4

The Wolf Pack also has 6 guards on the *Lone Wolf*, one of whom is a gunner for the ship's front-mounted flak cannon. Treat the flak cannon as a zeppelin-mounted flak cannon (see p. 47, *The Rules of Air Combat*), but with a 360-degree choice of firing alleys.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

This mission is a rather unorthodox boarding action because it is taking place on a sea ship instead of an airship. To get onto the vessel, the Skewer must land in the water near the ship (the plane does not have to land adjacent to the *Lone Wolf*, but the closer the better). During the movement phase in which he lands, the pilot must make a normal landing roll (p. 31, *The Rules of Air Combat*). The boarders may simply walk off into the water—no roll is necessary.

When in the water, boarders may move one hex per turn, swimming toward the *Lone Wolf*. They may not be targeted while swimming. Once they reach a boat hex, use the standard boarding rules for Movement and Combat from *Behind the Crimson Veil*. If they find King and eliminate all the defenders in that hex, the boarders may move off the boat (still going one hex per turn) and swim back out to the Skewer. The Skewer may take off in the next turn, and attempt to ferry King to safety by exiting from any map edge.

The mission can end in one of three ways:

- King is escorted safely off the map in the Skewer.
- The Blake squadron defeats all enemy planes.
- The pirates defeat all Blake planes.



DOWN AND DIRTY IN DIXIE



WINNING THE MISSION

The Blake player wins by defeating all the pirates, or escorting King to safety. If King is killed, or the Angels are defeated, the pirates win and the Angels suffer the -2 Reputation Point penalty as if a passenger had been lost.

SCENARIO 6: HELPING HAND

The Angels were out on patrol near the Appalachia border when they heard a distress call over their radio. A Dixie Air Militia squadron had gotten in over its head when tangling with some rough Appalachian pirates. The BAS pilots immediately went to the aid of the Lucky Spades militia, and rescued the two remaining planes from that squadron.

GAME SET UP

Lay out the Rural map. The Dixie planes set up first, anywhere in the northern half of the map. The Bluegrass planes set up second, also anywhere in the northern half of the map. Finally, the Blake planes set up along the south map edge.

PLANES AND PILOTS

Use Flights 2 and 3 from Blake's Angels.

Lucky Spades (Dixie Air Militia)

Lead 1: Alex "Slugger" Miller
Valiant 3-5-5-3-5-4
Wing 1: Kelly "Jade" Abrahams
Valiant 4-4-4-3-6-3

Bluegrass Bandits (Pirate Squadron)

Lead 1: George "Pa" Carlisle
Devastator 3-5-3-3-6-4
Wing 1: Russel "Rusty" Beck
Bloodhawk 3-5-4-4-4-3
Lead 2: Wendy "Dove" Morton
Defender 3-6-6-3-3-3
Wing 2a: Sean "Apollo" Walton
Valiant 3-3-6-3-3-4
Wing 2b: John "Flamestrike" Taubert
Warhawk 3-5-3-4-4-3



RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Blake squadron's objective is to rescue the remnants of the Lucky Spades. Though they were trying to flee when BAS showed up, the Spades will turn and fight now that they have reinforcements. Planes from either side may flee from any map edge. The mission ends when all the planes from one side have been shot down or have fled.

WINNING THE MISSION

Whichever side still has planes left on the map at the end of the mission wins. The Angel pilots who participated receive a special +20 Experience Point bonus for each Spade plane that is still on the map when the mission ends. In addition, the Angels receive a special +2 Reputation Point bonus if they win this mission.

SCENARIO 7: OUT FOR JUSTICE

Though it is normally the job of the investigations division, occasionally Blake's air fleet is called in to handle a fugitive retrieval mission. In one such case, the pilots of Blake's Angels were assigned to bring in notorious pirate leader "Griffon" Bartlett. The Alabama state government wanted Bartlett dead or alive, though alive would be better (so they could put him on trial and make an example of him). The Angels pursued Bartlett to his base in northern Alabama, and brought him down before he was able to cross the border into Appalachia.

GAME SET UP

Lay out the Seaport map (the water represents Wheeler Lake). The pirates set up along the east map edge. The Angels set up along the west edge.

PLANES AND PILOTS

Use Flights 1 and 3 from Blake's Angels.

Griffon's Raiders (Pirate Squadron)

Lead 1: Garrett "Griffon" Bartlett	
Bloodhawk	6-4-4-6-3-3
Wing 1: David "Ranger" Brown	
Avenger	3-5-4-4-3-5
Lead 2: Kim "Bravo" Lawson	
Avenger	5-3-3-5-3-6
Wing 2: John "Racer" Curtis	
Fury	3-3-5-3-3-5

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Angels' objective is the capture of "Griffon" Bartlett. If this proves impossible, though, they can settle for bringing him down in flames.

Planes can flee off the map edge they started from, but if Bartlett flees he is considered to have surrendered for victory purposes. The mission ends when there are no opposing planes left on the map.

WINNING THE MISSION

The Angels win if Bartlett surrenders or is shot down. The Blake pilots receive a special +20 Experience Point bonus if Bartlett is brought in alive.

SCENARIO 8: JOINT VENTURE

Given Blake Aviation's staunch anti-pirate sentiments, it is only natural that they go out of their way to engage bandits wherever they can find them. Because of this, it is not uncommon for BAS to assist local militias in raids against pirate strongholds.

One of those raids took place a few weeks after the Angels had assisted Lieutenant Miller and the Lucky Spades (see *Scenario 6: Helping Hand*, p. 40). The Spades were planning an assault on the Blue Devils, a pirate band operating out of the Blue Grass Mountains region, and figured they could use all the help they could get.

The Spades and Angels launched a joint assault against the Devils' home zeppelin, the *Cumberland*. They met more resistance than expected, as the Devils had recruited a few more flyers since the Dixie pilots last encountered them. A bitter dogfight raged between the squadrons, but in the end the *Cumberland* went down in flames and the remaining pirates fled into the hills. The victory was not without great cost to the Angels, however—their leader, Captain Billy Carver, was shot down and killed.

GAME SET UP

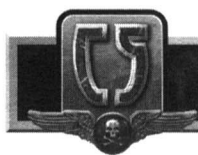
Lay out a Zeppelin map and an Open Sky map next to each other such that their long edges meet. The Spades and Angels set up first, along the edge of the sky map furthest from the zeppelin. The Devils can then set up their planes anywhere on the Zeppelin map.

PLANES AND PILOTS

Use Flights 1 and 2 from Blake's Angels.

Lucky Spades (Dixie Air Militia)

Lead 1: Tom "Tommy Boy" Gardner	
Firebrand	3-4-5-5-5-5
Wing 1: Alex "Slugger" Miller	
Valiant	3-5-5-3-5-4
Lead 2: Kelly "Jade" Abrahams	
Valiant	4-4-4-3-6-3
Wing 2: Marcus "Surgeon" Straite	
Bloodhawk	4-3-4-4-4-4



DOWN AND DIRTY IN DIXIE

Blue Devils (Pirate Squadron)

Lead 1: Todd "Jackal" Berg	
Peacemaker	3-4-5-3-5-4
Wing 1: Amy "Bullseye" Chapman	
Devastator	3-4-2-5-3-3
Lead 2: Robert "Claymore" MacInnes	
Avenger	3-4-6-4-2-3
Wing 2: Sam "Elk" Red Elk	
Coyote	4-4-4-4-3-4
Lead 3: Charlie "Hatchetman" Forrester	
Bloodhawk	3-6-4-3-4-5
Wing 3: Vic "Vic" Norman	
Bloodhawk	3-3-3-4-4-5
Lead 4: Paul "Bonsai" Okaira	
Brigand	4-4-5-3-4-4
Wing 4: Fiona "Watts" Sherman	
Brigand	3-3-6-3-3-4

The *Cumberland* is a standard commercial zeppelin, but its gas cells are filled with hydrogen rather than helium. Its engine nacelle turrets are equipped with single .50-caliber machine guns.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The combined forces of the Dixie militia and Blake squadrons must try to bring down the *Cumberland* and as many pirates as possible. The pirate planes may flee from the Zeppelin map edge furthest from the Open Sky map. The Blake and Dixie planes may flee from their starting map edge. The mission ends when the joint forces' planes have all been destroyed, or have brought down the zeppelin and the pirate aircraft.

WINNING THE MISSION

Each side scores victory points based on the damage they inflict upon the enemy. The side with the most victory points at the end of the mission wins.

Angel/Spade Points

For each enemy plane shot down	
or forced to flee	25
If the <i>Cumberland</i> is destroyed	50

Devils Points

For each enemy plane shot down or	
forced to flee	25
If the <i>Cumberland</i> is still in the air	
at the end of the mission	50



DRAGON'S REVENGE

The silence in the room was deafening. Though I had only been with the squadron for a few months, and even then only as an outsider, I felt the loss of Captain Carver keenly. I could only imagine what the other pilots must be feeling, having lost their leader and friend. Such a senseless waste of a good man—gunned down from behind while making a run on a Zeppelin engine nacelle. He hadn't even seen it coming.

After the mission, we all ended up in the barracks at the Angels' home airfield. No one wanted to talk. Only "Dragon" Doumani had spoken at all, ordering the ground crews to refuel and rearm the planes immediately. Now we all sat listlessly staring at the walls, avoiding any conversation about what had happened. Doumani finally broke the silence. "I'm going back out as soon as my plane's ready," he said grimly. His dull monotone was a true departure from his usual jovial attitude.

"You're going back?" asked "Clay" Clayborn in his thick Georgian accent.

Doumani nodded. "I'm going to find him. The one who shot down the Captain. And when I do, I'm going to send him down in flames. Are you with me?"

"Of course we are," Clay said immediately. The other pilots nodded their agreement.

I cleared my throat and piped up from the corner, "Count me in, too. I didn't know Captain Carver as well as you all, but he was a good man."

"A good man," Dragon echoed in solemn agreement.

Little more than an hour later, we were back in the air, but we had no luck tracking down the pirates we had tangled with earlier. Exhausted, low on fuel, Doumani reluctantly agreed to return to base as the sun began to go down. Convinced that it would take more than blind luck to stumble across the bandits, Doumani contacted a friend in Blake's investigations division. A pair of agents were assigned to the case, and a few days later they had tracked down the Blue Devils' new hideout, a small airfield east of Knoxville.

That afternoon, Doumani led Dancer, Clay and myself to Knoxville. It didn't take us long to spot the Blue Devils' planes. "Hold up here—I'm going to get their attention," Doumani said. His Fury made a wide circle, then dove sharply. The Fury's machine guns churned up the gravel in front of the Devils' planes, but didn't actually hit any of the aircraft. Doumani climbed and came around for another pass, once again strafing the ground.

This tactic seemed to work. We saw three pilots rush out of the hangar and leap into their planes. As the Devils began to taxi toward the runway, Doumani hailed them on the radio. "Blue Devils aircraft, this is Blake Aviation Angel Flight. You have two choices. One, the fellow in the Peacemaker can face me, one on one, and the rest of you can go no matter what the outcome is. Two,



you can all keep taxiing and take your chances that we won't strafe you to pieces before you can even get airborne. What'll it be?"

The pirates didn't answer at first, but Doumani made his point crystal clear by making another pass at the grounded planes, this time drawing a line of bullets between two of them. After this display, the pirate leader made radio contact, the reluctance in his voice almost tangible. "All right, y'all have a deal." A deal with the devil, I thought, knowing that there was no way the pilot who killed Captain Carver would escape from the rage of "Dragon" Doumani.



SCENARIO 9: RETRIBUTION

The Angels were deeply affected by the loss of their captain. He was well liked by all of them, and they took his death very hard. "Dragon" Doumani, now acting captain, gathered the squadron and vowed to avenge his death by hunting down the leader of the gang and bringing him to justice. The other Blake pilots swiftly agreed. A few days after the incident, BAS investigators managed to track down the Devils' new hideout.

Doumani led the Angels to the small airfield and issued a challenge to the leader of the Devils, "Jackal" Berg. Doumani offered to let the other Devils go if Berg would face him in a one-on-one dogfight. Berg agreed at first, but when the duel began to go sour, the other two Devils broke the agreement and attacked. After a brief battle, the three Devil planes were no more than smoking heaps of wreckage on the ground.

GAME SET UP

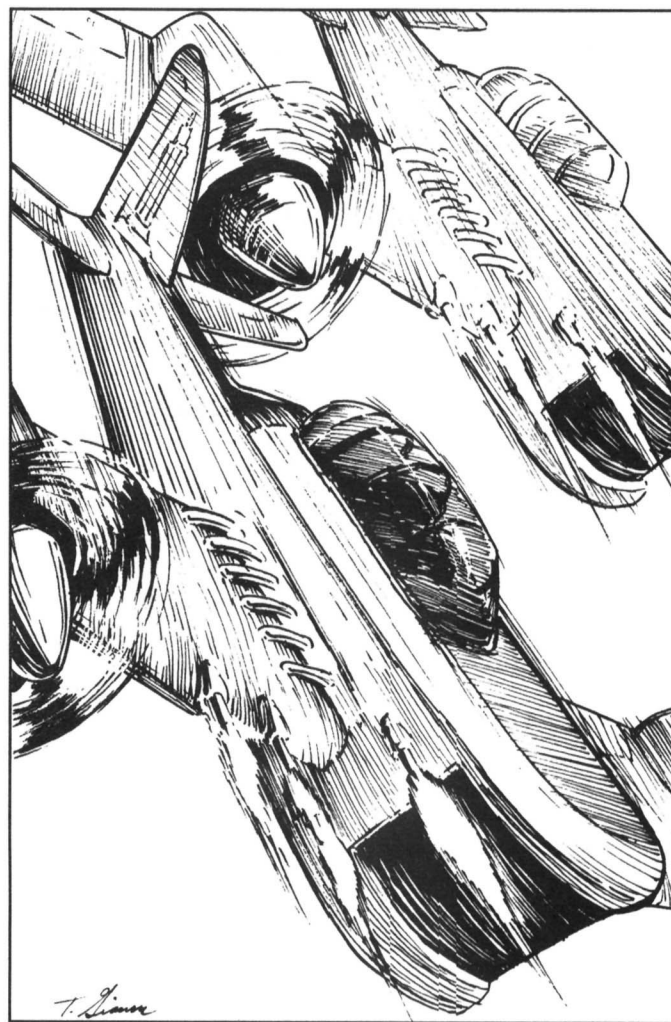
Lay out the Rural map. The Angels set up along the north map edge, and the Devils set up along the south edge.

PLANES AND PILOTS

This mission is best played after a mission in which the Blake player suffered a defeat, and at least one pilot was killed or injured. Historically, the following pilots participated in the engagement.

Blake's Angels (Mixed Flight)

Lead 1: Eduardo "Dragon" Doumani
 Fury 5-4-7-4-4-3
 Wing 1a: Adam "Dancer" Blain
 Peacemaker 3-5-7-3-4-3
 Wing 1b: Greg "Clay" Clayborn
 Brigand 6-4-3-3-4-3



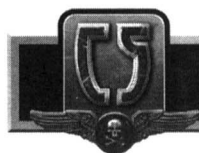
Blue Devils (Pirate Squadron)

Lead 1: Todd "Jackal" Berg
 Peacemaker 3-4-5-3-5-4
 Wing 1a: Amy "Bullseye" Chapman
 Devastator 3-4-2-5-3-3
 Wing 1b: Sam "Elk" Red Elk
 Coyote 4-4-4-4-3-4

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The mission begins with the duel between Doumani and Berg. While the duel is in progress, none of the other Blake pilots will fire upon the pirates. They will simply fly in circles around the map, watching the dogfight. The Devil pilots are another story. At any time during the duel, Berg can call for assistance. His wingmen will immediately jump into the fray, at which point the Blake pilots can join in too.

Pilots may flee from their starting map edge. The mission ends when there are no opposing planes on the map.



DOWN AND DIRTY IN DIXIE

WINNING THE MISSION

The side with planes still on the map at the end of the mission wins. Doumani receives a bonus of 50 Experience Points if he brings down Berg's plane despite the interference of the other Devils.

SCENARIO 10: DAMSEL IN DISTRESS

In a daring raid on a private passenger zeppelin, a band of Missouri pirates snatched the daughter of state governor Owen Starling. The pirates fled from the zeppelin by stealing a plane from the airship's hangar. Though Blake Aviation was not escorting the zeppelin, the Angels happened to be in the vicinity when they heard the report of the kidnapping in progress.

The Blake planes raced to the scene and pursued the fleeing racing plane for miles. They didn't dare shoot at it for fear of harming Starling's daughter; their only choice was to follow it until it landed, at which point BAS investigators could take over. This plan hit a snag when the rest of the pirate squadron showed up intent on preventing the Angels from pursuing their prey.

GAME SET UP

Lay out two Open Sky maps so that their short edges meet (if you only have one, use any other map and ignore any features). The Angels' planes start at the southernmost edge of the map. Ashe's plane begins in front of them, no more than five hexes from the edge, facing north. The rest of the Black Knights set up along the edge where the two maps meet.

PLANES AND PILOTS

Use Flights 1 and 3 from Blake's Angels.

Black Knights (Pirate Squadron)

Lead 1: Ashley "Ashe" Harris	
Racing Plane	3-5-6-4-4-5
Wing 1: Max "Cannon" Daniels	
Avenger	3-3-4-6-3-3
Lead 2: Vince "Rabbi" Trejo	
Defender	3-6-3-3-5-5
Wing 2: Phil "Baron" Graves	
Kestrel	3-3-3-3-5-5

Ashe's plane is a private racing plane stolen from the zeppelin's hangar. To model this aircraft, use a Valiant's statistics, but ignore the Valiant's weapons—the racing plane is unarmed. Helen Starling is onboard this plane, Ashe's prisoner.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Ashe's plane flees to the north, attempting to pass her fellow pirates and escape from the Blake pilots. The rest of the Black Knights will be bent on shooting down the Blake aircraft to prevent them from catching Ashe.

The Angels must keep the racing plane in sight, and avoid damaging it at all costs. They have to chase the plane for twelve turns. If at any time during those turns the racing plane is more than 20 hexes from a Blake aircraft, it escapes and the mission ends. Otherwise, the mission is over at the end of turn 12. If the racing plane exits the north map edge and is still not more than 20 hexes from a Blake aircraft, lay out another map and continue the chase.

WINNING THE MISSION

The Angels lose the mission if they let the racing plane escape, or if they are all destroyed. If they successfully pursue the plane until the end of turn 12, they win and receive the +2 Reputation Point bonus for protecting passengers (Helen Starling).

If by some accident the racing plane is destroyed, both sides lose and the Angels suffer a -2 Reputation Point penalty for their bumbling interference, in addition to the normal -3 for losing a mission and losing passengers.

SCENARIO 11: THREE-CARD MONTY

When Blake's Angels were assigned to escort a Bell Aviation courier from the corporate headquarters in Marietta to a branch office in Augusta, it appeared to be a milk run. No one was supposed to know about the transfer of the top-secret schematics, and the escort wing was kept small to avoid drawing undue attention. Despite these precautions, a group of pirates somehow found out about the delivery and attacked the group just outside of Atlanta. Confusion worked to the Angels' advantage, however. The pirates had learned that Bell's courier would be flying a Valiant. What they didn't know was that the Blake escorts were, too.

GAME SET UP

Lay out the Rural map. The Blake planes and the courier's Valiant set up anywhere in the north half of the map. The pirates set up along the south map edge.

PLANES AND PILOTS

Use Flight 1 from Blake's Angels, but both pilots are flying Valiants for this mission.



Bell Aviation Courier

Bobby "Dante" Williams
Valiant 3-3-3-5-3

Atlanta Ghosts (Pirate Squadron)

Lead 1: Bill "Pusher" Reynolds
Brigand 3-3-3-7-5-3
Wing 1a: Maren "Athena" Hardy
Brigand 3-4-4-5-4-2
Wing 1b: Nick "Hunter" Caine
Brigand 4-4-5-4-3-3

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Ghosts' objective is to bring down the courier plane. However, they don't know exactly which one it is at first. Each turn, the pirate player may pick one of his pilots, and choose a Valiant to examine. The pirate pilot makes a Sixth Sense roll with a target number of 8. If the pilot succeeds, he correctly analyzes the skill of the Valiant's pilot. The Blake player must tell the pirate player whether or not the chosen Valiant is the courier plane. If the pilot fails, he has no idea which plane is the courier. If he rolls a 1 on the Sixth Sense check, he believes that the chosen Valiant is the courier (whether or not it actually is), and must not attack it until a second Sixth Sense check (in a subsequent turn) convinces him otherwise.

At any time during the mission, the Blake pilots may radio the pirates and tell them which plane is the courier. Usually this will only be done if the pirates are on the verge of destroying the courier plane by mistake. After all, it's in BAS' best interests to make sure that the courier is not shot down. However, the pirate player must be aware that these radio transmissions may just be a ruse to protect an injured Blake aircraft.

Planes may flee from any map edge, but if the courier plane flees it counts as a "surrender" to the pirates. This mission ends in one of four ways:

- All pirate planes are shot down or flee from the map.
- The two Blake escorts are shot down or flee from the map.
- The courier plane is shot down.
- The courier plane surrenders.

WINNING THE MISSION

The Ghosts win the mission if the courier plane surrenders, or if the escorts are both destroyed or forced to flee. If all the pirates are destroyed, the Blake squadron wins. If the courier is shot down, both sides lose and the Angels suffer the Reputation Point penalty for lost cargo.

SCENARIO 12: COUNTERHEIST

No one would have suspected "Shae" O'Bannon, scourge of the Appalachian skies, of being an art connoisseur. Yet in the

summer of 1936, she led a handful of pilots and ground crew across the border to hijack a zeppelin transporting some rare paintings to the Birmingham Art Museum. Shae's bandits made short work of the local security force guarding the paintings and made off with the loot. Seeing that their confidence in Redstone Security had been misplaced, the museum quickly turned to BAS for help in retrieving the paintings. Unwilling to risk damaging the cargo with a direct assault on the airship, Blake's Angels engaged the pirate's aircraft while a boarding party assaulted the zeppelin.

GAME SET UP

Lay out a Zeppelin map. The Emeralds set up first, anywhere within two hexes of the airship. Blake's Angels set up along the west map edge.

PLANES AND PILOTS

Use Flights 1 and 3 from Blake's Angels. The Angels also have a cargo plane available to carry the boarding party, which consists of 10 BAS agents. Historically, the boarders rode into action on the cargo plane, but the Blake player may choose a different approach.

The cargo plane pilot is rated 3-3-3-3-3-3.

Southern Emeralds

Lead 1: Katie "Shae" O'Bannon
Peacemaker 3-5-6-3-4-4
Wing 1: Tim "Lightning" Rourke
Aguila 3-3-3-6-4-3

The *Alabama Pride* is a standard commercial zeppelin. Its engine nacelle turrets each have a single .50-caliber machine gun, and there are two additional flak cannon turrets—one at the front and back of the airship. It is guarded by 10 Emerald pirates.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Rules for boarding party actions are described in *Behind the Crimson Veil*. The Blake pilots will avoid doing any serious damage to the *Alabama Pride*, but may need to take out a few engine turrets to protect the incoming boarders. Once the boarding party is safely on the airship, the pilots will turn their attention to shooting down the remaining Emerald aircraft.

The mission ends when the Blake boarders have taken control of the airship's bridge, or have all been wiped out.

WINNING THE MISSION

If the BAS boarding party takes control of the zeppelin, the Blake player wins. He will receive a bonus of +2 Reputation Points for retrieving the paintings successfully. If the pirates win, or if the zeppelin is destroyed, there is a -5 Reputation Point penalty for losing the priceless works of art.

Give 'em Hell Boys!



◆ Fin ◆

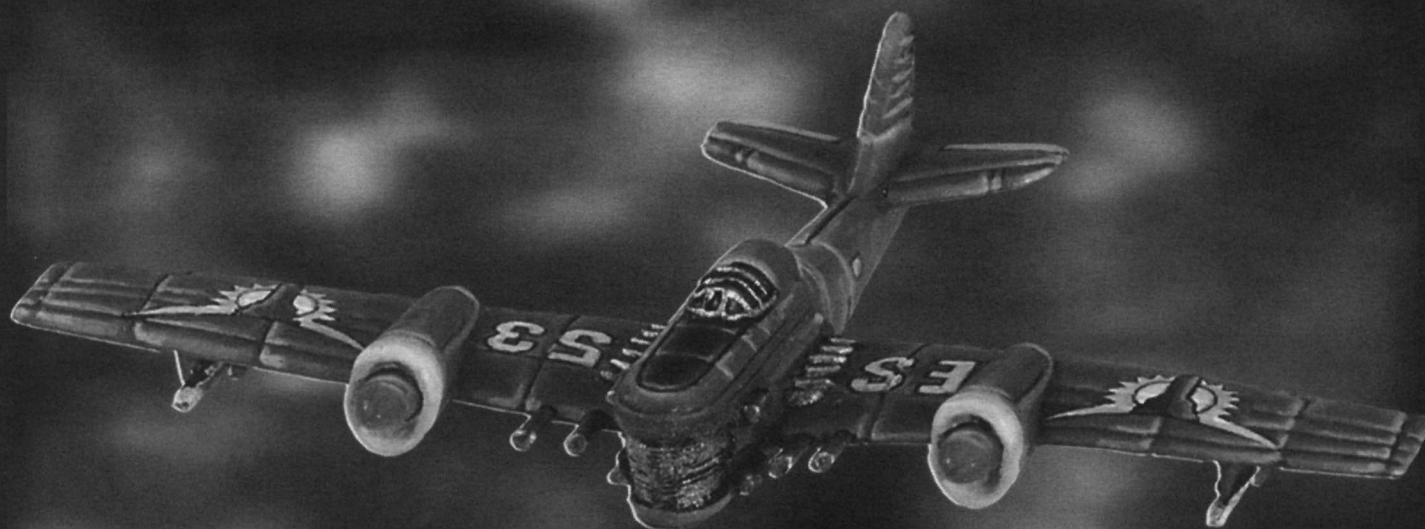


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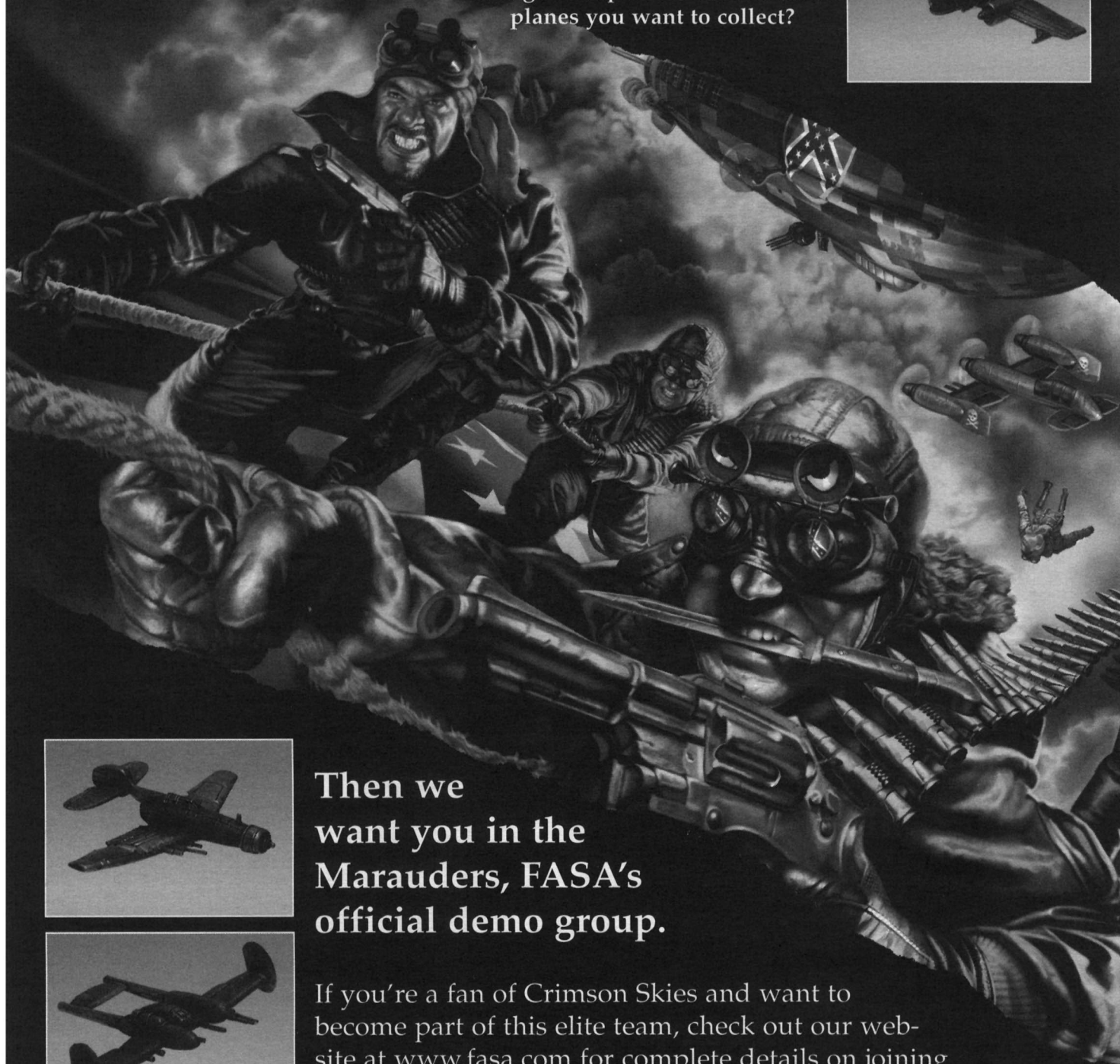
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