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Subject: Mini-review: Riesenflugzeugabteilungen

Reisen. must be the longest one word title in gaming history. It is the expansion set for the Luftschiff zeppelin game that adds the big bombers and 7 scenarios. Luft. is necessary to play. What do you get for your \$...well, both so much and not much, depending on how you look at it. A one page, 2 sided rules of play covering combat, flight and SOP, short historical overview, and the scenarios, and another one page, 2 sided Reisen sheet for tracking the activities of four of the giant a/c. Y'know, this set has whetted my appetite to do some research to add the Handley Page and Gotha bombers...

How does it play? It's a blast: much "simpler" than flying a zep with a shorted learning curve. It reminds me of B-17 Queen of the Skies without all the wristage (as R. Berg might say). The single most significant difference is the situation cards that don't affect the a/c: rain, snow, hail, asphyxiation, solar heating or St. Elmo's Fire. Only petrol burn, frostbite and Lost! as well as the combat cards affect the bombers. Well, I flew a Sikorskii II'ya Mourometz G.3 to bomb Libau in 1916. Fought off a blizzard of Albatrosses (shot down 2) and successfully bombed the target though I ran out of fuel on the way back but successfully landed the plane near the base card. This bird is tough: 7 Mgs, 4 engines, relatively high speed. Almost forgot: other a/c are Caproni Ca 4, Zeppelin Staaken R.5 (claimed as the largest a/c Germany flew in any war -- hmmm, wingspan of 40 m and more -- have to look up that giant Me transport) and Junkers R..

Sequence of play: 1) new situation card may appear; 2) speed fade back; 3) power acceleration; 4) deceleration; 5) climb / dive decision; 6) climb / dive speed adjusted; 7) movement executed for the bomber; 8) combat; interceptors move and more a/c and AA combat; 9) drop bombs, move crew and roll for repairs. I was unsure about movement sequence: choosing to move first the Reisen, then all counters except the Reisen, then interceptors according to Part G of the Luft rules. I hope I was right but it played OK. (some of these rules are written in such a way to be a bit open to interpretation IMHO). The game played v. fast, as I choose to continually introduce the 10 sit. cards for each sequence per the Luft. rule note, instead of rolling for them (which makes it almost a real-time game ;)). A great addition to a great game. Going to try the Russian civil war scenario next...

Doug Murphy