

After Action Report, Canvas Eagles

Monthly Game, April 20th, 2016

The following is an after action report from the Skies over France (played at TBS Comics in Fort Walton Beach, FL using the rules *Canvas Eagles* available on-line at <http://www.maxeagles.com/>, with several local rule additions.

Scenario Background

We engage in World War I aerial combat each month on the 3rd Wednesday. The scenario is randomly determined and players are assigned to each side based upon their past success in the campaign. Players are assigned to each side in order of success, and players are each awarded a number of “Pilot Cards” based upon the amount of success since the last time they were killed in combat. Each pilot card lists a skill or liability, and players may discard any cards they wish as long as they start with at least one card. Basically, if you were killed in the previous battle you get only one card and generally have to live with it. If you are an Ace (i.e. have scored 5 kills since the last time you were killed) you get 5 cards. Additional cards are awarded for players who have their own model aircraft, and players can also draw additional cards if they bribe the game master with either food or drink (Butterfinger, Heath, diet coke, or diet Mt. Dew are popular).

This month’s scenario involved German Pfalz D.IIIa aircraft meeting French SPAD XIIIs over the trenches. There were 4 hexes of clouds, and several “non-player” aircraft in the area: 2 Caproni Ca.33 bombers on their way to a target (bombs loaded), 1 Salmson S.2 performing reconnaissance, and 2 Hanover CL.IIIIs flying low level to attack Trenches (these non-player aircraft maneuver rolling 2D6 according to some pre-programmed tables depending on their proximity to “threats.”

Objectives

(The main objective of all our games, everyone should have fun!) Each player is rewarded for each kill they score and partial credit is given for each “Victory” (awarded for causing an enemy to spin below their level or for setting them on fire).

Persona Vitae

Germans

Hauptman Gustav Griswald (Ken Keller)

OberLeutnant Adolf Kriegmann (Gavin Tovrea)

Leutnant Jagermeister Winfred von Schussen (also, Gavin Tovrea)

French

Lieutenant Antoine Bohl (Carl Archer)

Sous-Lieutenant Orville Vaillancour (Tim Homer)

Deployment

The Caproni bombers set up at the north end of the battlefield (flying south between the trenches), the Salmson set-up on the south end. The Hannovers started at level 1 headed across the German trenches to attack the French trenches.

The flights of fighters (player controlled aircraft) set-up approaching the trench lines, the Germans at altitude level 7, the French at altitude 8.

The Battle

The battle commenced un-eventfully, each side making predictable initial maneuvers. However, at the end of the first turn Gavin played a pilot card “Out of the Sun” which reads:

Attack from Out of the Sun!

After the first turn the player MAY **discard** this card to pick-up his aircraft and place it at any desired altitude, any facing, at any speed, in any hex on the board.

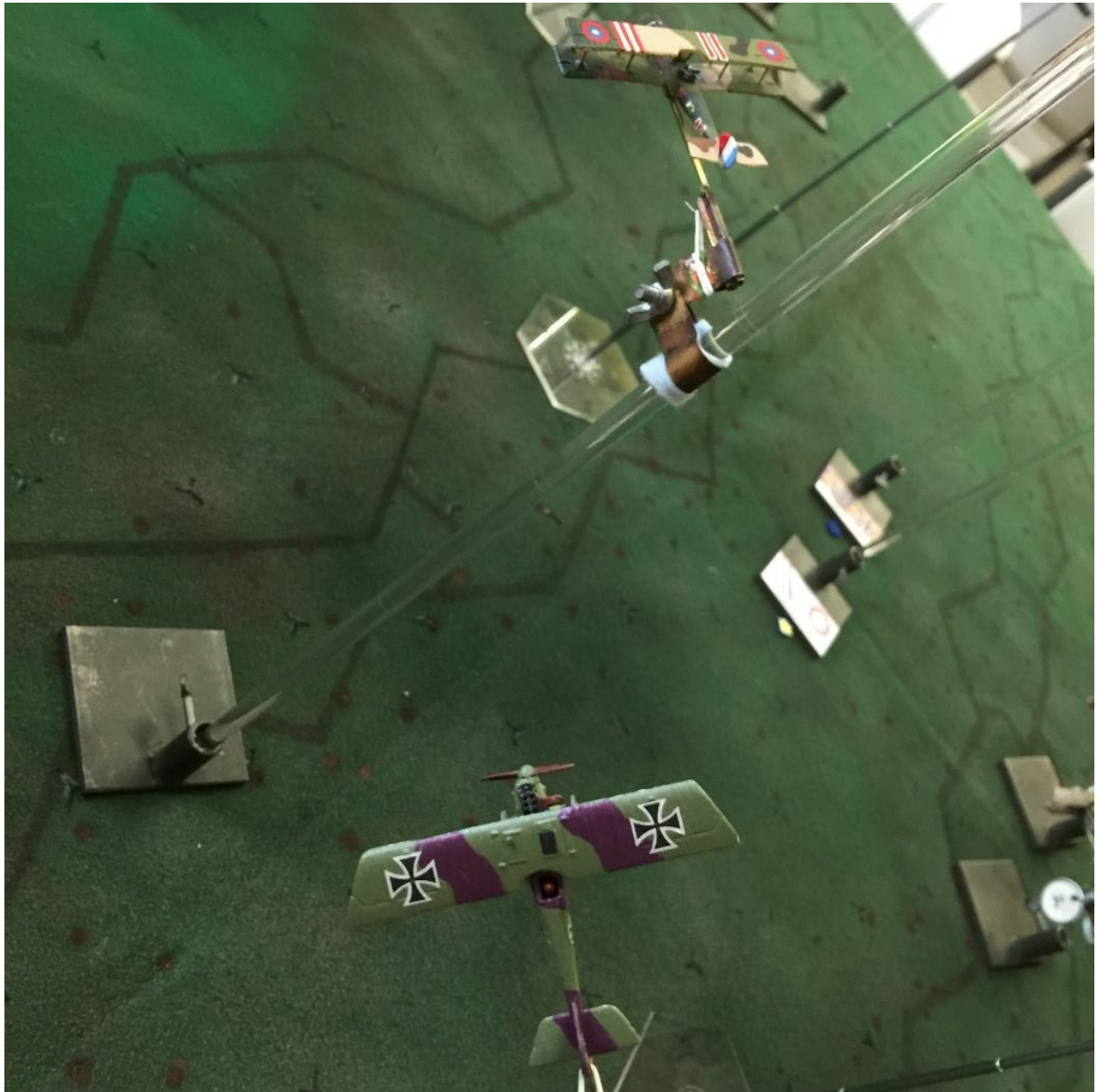
If the aircraft is in tailing position, he may tail ANY NUMBER of enemy aircraft for turn 2.

Therefore OberLeutnant Kriegmann set-up his aircraft directly behind and below the Salmson recon aircraft, simulating the undetected approach on the two-seater, whose crew was too busy making notes of enemy trench positions. Kriegmann felt confident in his attack on the two-seater knowing that Hauptmann Griswald was covering him from above.



ObLt Kriegmann's Pfalz D.IIIa stalking Salmson S.2

Tailing the Salmson on turn 2, ObLt Kriegmann misjudged the maneuver of the Salmson turning inside the target's left turn exposing himself to effective fire from the now alerted tail gunner, which tore into the wings of the German plane. (Tail gunner's shot had a Combat Value of 2 at range 2.)

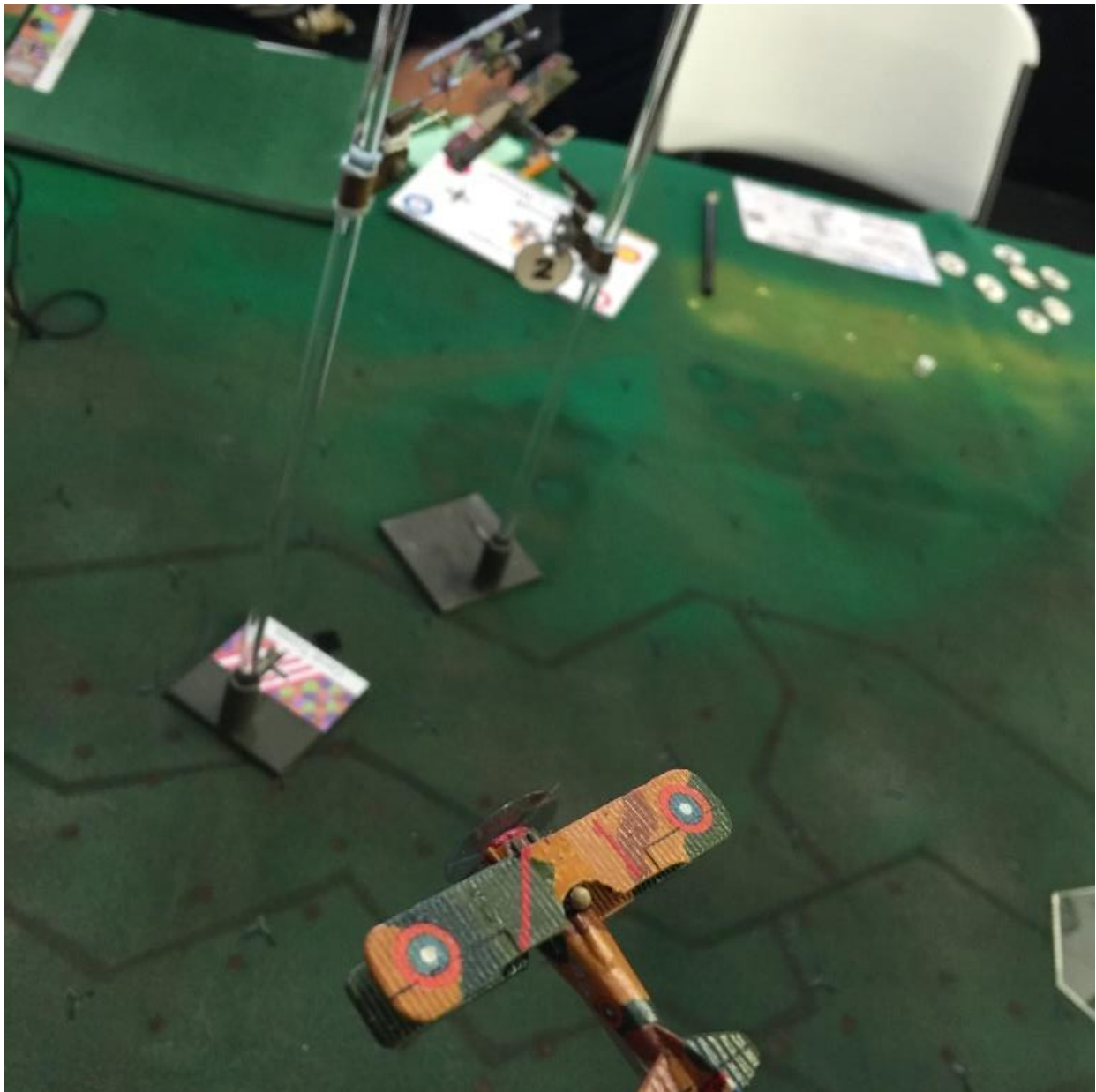


ObLt Kriegmann taking effective fire from the French recon aircraft after turning to tight and misjudging his target's turn.

Kriegmann quickly recovered and on turn 3 managed to line up an attack on the target, as Lieutenant Antoine Bohl set-up to come to the rescue of the desperate recon aircraft, while keeping an eye on the remaining Pfalz fighter (Griswald) who was trying to effectively occupy both of the French SPADs.

As Kriegmann triggered his twin Spandau machine-guns he was satisfied to see bullets striking all around the Salmson while its tail gunner desperately tried to defend himself. (Gavin's attack was Combat Value 12 at range 1, while the tail gunner managed a Combat Value 9 shot). Although the Salmson's fire again shredded the wings of Kriegmann's Pfalz, the

German got the better of the exchange as the Salmson's fuel tank exploded, taking the machine and both of its crewmen down into no-man's-land below (a kill for Kriegmann).



Bohl's SPAD ready to pounce (foreground) while Kriegmann attacks the Salmson in the distance. Photo taken moments before the Salmson's fatal fuel explosion.

Turn 4 saw Kriegmann turn hard into Bohl's attack, trying to spoil his chance for an effective shot. However, Bohl was all over the Pfalz in spite of the fact that Hauptmann Griswald was coming to the aid of his comrade. Bohl managed an effective shot on Kriegmann (Combat Value 12) while Griswald managed a longer range shot (Combat Value 8).

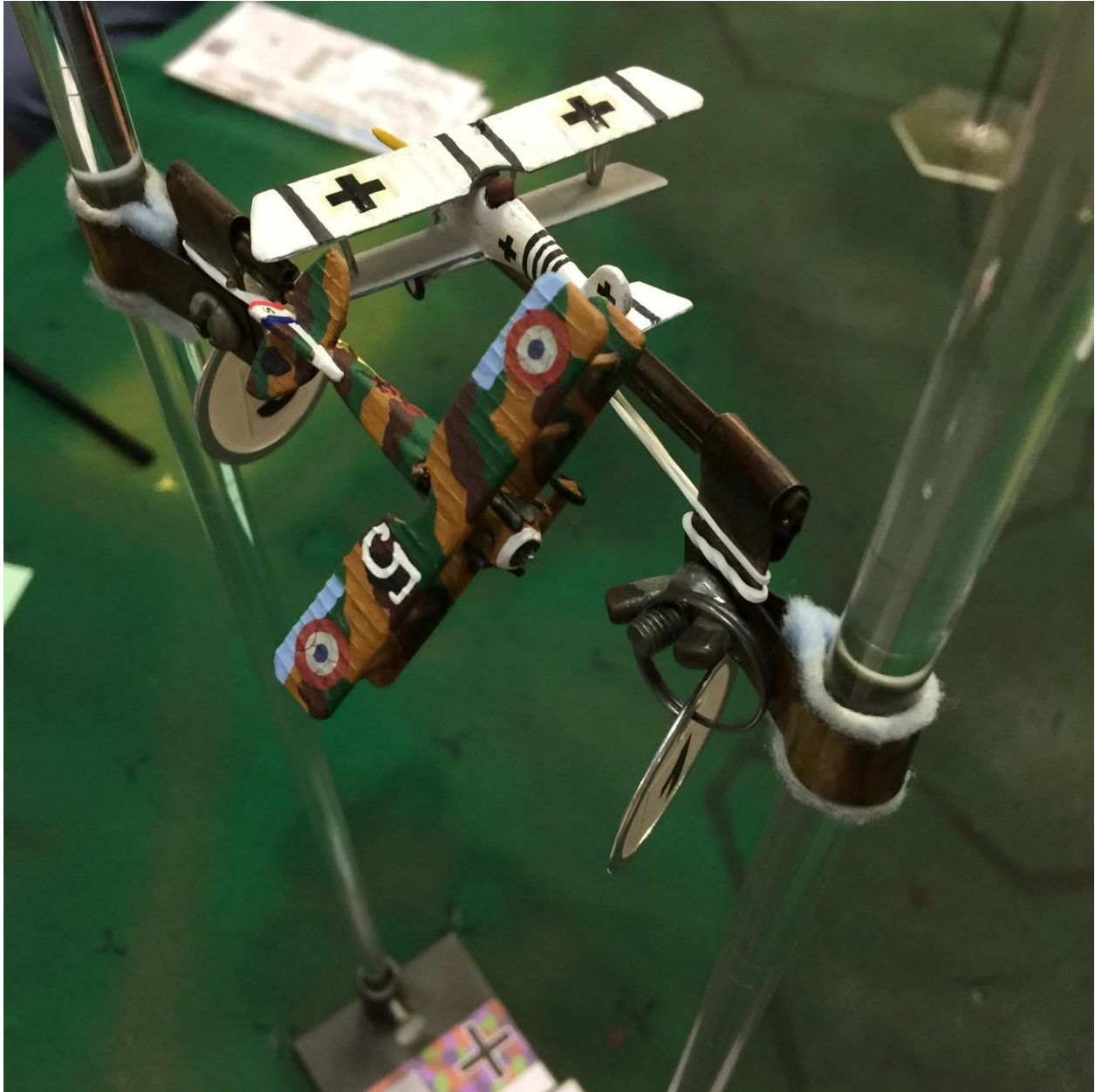
Bohl's attack again tore into the wings of Kriegmann's otherwise undamaged aircraft, causing it to spin (a victory for Bohl).



Kriegmann's Pfalz spins toward the trenches as Bohl's SPAD swoops overhead.

Taking stock of his aircraft after recovering from the spin, Kriegmann realized his wings were critically damaged (which is a condition which allows him to withdraw from the battle without suffering penalties for being a coward), and he quickly made for the edge of the game map.

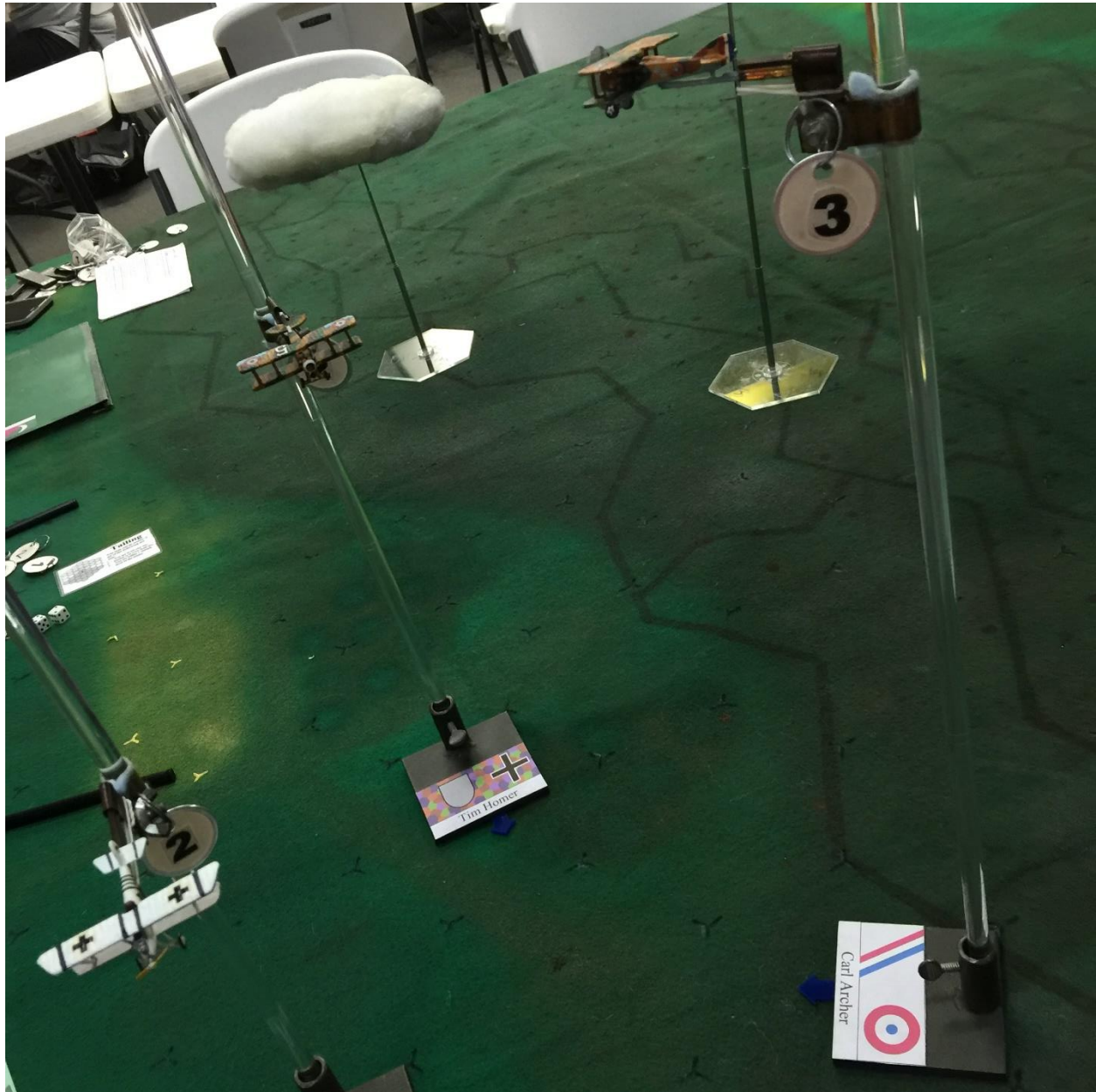
As Griswald concentrated on Lt Bohl's SPAD trying to cover the retreat of Kriegmann he temporarily lost contact with S-Lt Vaillancour's SPAD who was attacking. Vaillancour misjudge the speed of his sleek aircraft and nearly collided with Griswald on turn 6.



Vaillancour's SPAD (#5) nearly collides with Griswald's white Pfalz.

On turn 9, Kriegmann manages to leave the battle area. At this point (pretty much completely apart from the air-to-air battle above) the two Hannover aircraft managed to attack the French trenches. Effective ground fire wounded the pilot of the second Hannover while his back-seater was killed. The attack was effective, but not without cost. (Since no one decided to go attack these non-player aircraft the events were completely irrelevant to the battle we were fighting, but I should have taken a picture since it was surprising that the non-player maneuver tables basically drove these two aircraft to perform the mission that was their historic role. Also of note, the Caproni bombers turned and headed back to their base early in the battle.)

Meanwhile, Hauptmann Griswald feeling very lonely is stalked by Bohl and Vaillancour.

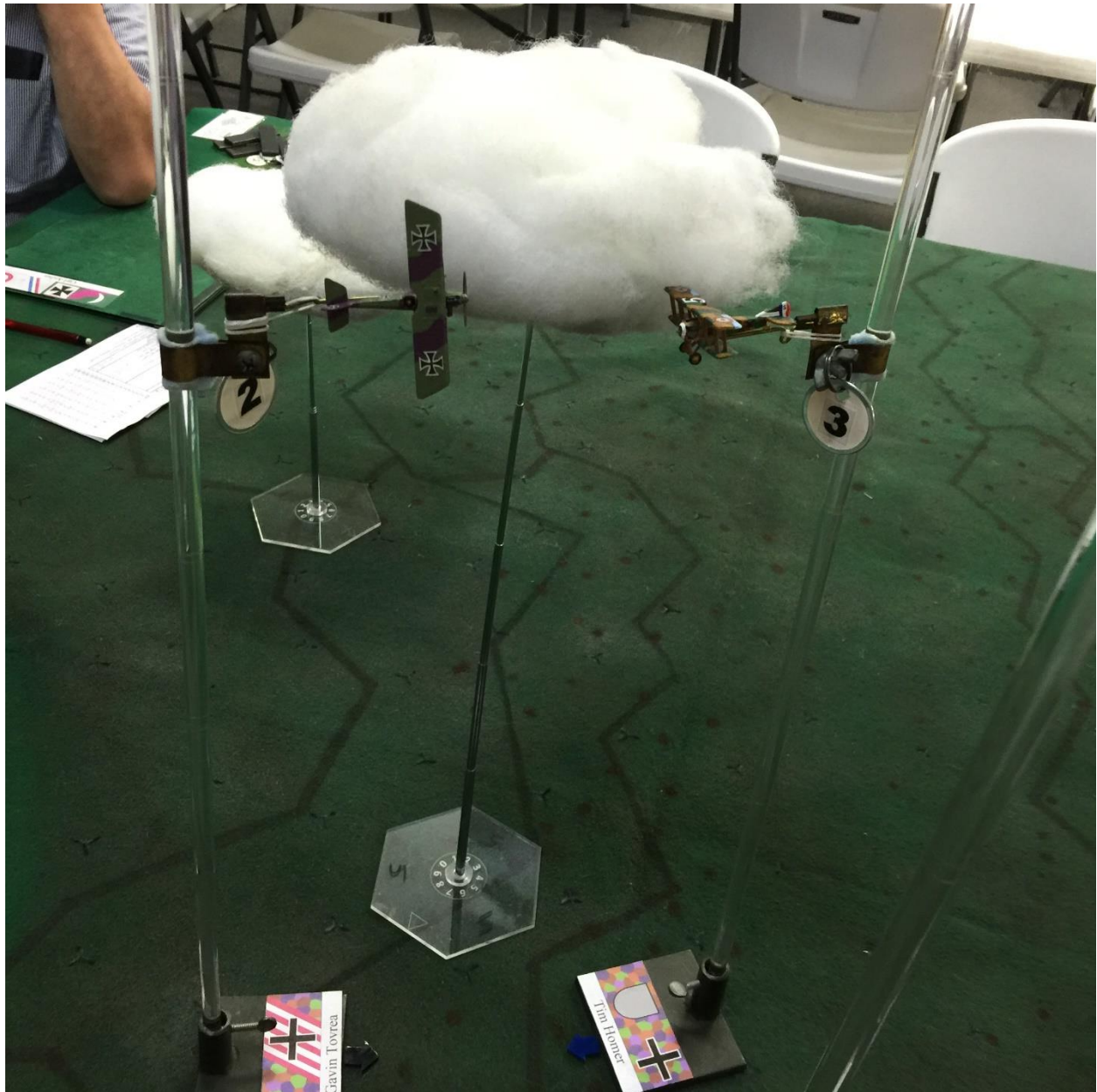


Turns 7-10, Vaillancour and Bohl stalk Griswald's all white Pfalz.

Turn 10 saw the somewhat inexperienced Vaillancour fly into the sights of the wily and suddenly turning Griswald. Vaillancour managed to avoid damage, but was now wary of further attacks.

Turn 10 also saw the arrival of Lt von Schussen's Pfalz D.IIIa (the campaign rules allow a player who is killed or able to withdraw from the battle before turn 10 to "respawn" as another character, so Gavin returned to the fight as Lt von Schussen). Lt von Schussen was a Jagermeister (hunt master) before the war, which will serve him well later in the battle.

As Lt Schussen entered the fight and evened the odds both sides began to carefully maneuver trying to gain an advantage. Von Schussen noted the position and speed of Vaillancour's SPAD on turn 13, and he intuitively predicted the attack of the SPAD. Turning sharply he managed to set-up a head-to-head pass. Both pilots held down their triggers and braced for the hail of lead.



Vaillancour and von Schussen pass head-on in a hail of lead.

Both suffered, but Vaillancour's suffering was soon ended. Schussen took a serious wound in his right shoulder (one crew wound check, roll "6") while Vaillancour was shot once through the head and once through the heart (two crew wound checks, both rolled "6"), he was

dead well before his aircraft was another smoking hole in the French trench lines (a kill for von Schussen).

Results

Ken was awarded 2 Ace points for his “Hang Over” pilot card, and will gain +1 pilot card for next month’s battle for his “Vendetta” card (his nemesis was Carl to whom he had caused 1 Red damaged chit).

Hang Over!

Your pilot spent too much time partying last night.

- -1 to your CV when firing
- -1 to spin and spin recovery checks
- Secretly make a spin check after performing any restricted maneuver (at the end of the maneuver phase)

If you survive you earn 2 Ace points.

Vendetta!

Secretly pick and record one enemy fighter pilot (i.e. non-mission aircraft) as your Nemesis and record this on your mission log. For each Red damage chit you inflict on that aircraft to you get +1 Pilot Card next game.

If you kill your Nemesis (not just shoot him down) you also earn Kills and Ace Points equal to his PV.

Carl was awarded a “Victory” for causing ObLt Kriegmann to spin to a level below his aircraft

Gavin was awarded two kills (one for Kriegmann’s kill of the Salmson and one for von Schussen’s kill of S-Lt Vaillancour). Gavin will also start his next battle with a minor wound since he suffered a major wound in this battle.

Credits

Thank you to TBS Comics (Fort Walton Beach, FL) for the game space and to my players; Carl, Ken and Tim.