

## **7.6 (OPTIONAL RULE) CONFIRMATION OF GERMAN FIGHTERS CLAIMED SHOTDOWN BY YOUR GUNNERS.**

For the player who wants a more detailed experience for his crewmembers, this rule allows the player to determine what aerial victories claimed by his bomber's gunners are approved for official credit by the Aerial Victory Credit board.

### **7.6.1 HOW WAS CREDIT FOR AERIAL VICTORIES DETERMINED DURING WORLD WAR II.**

During World War II the criteria that the USAAF used for awarding aerial victory credits varied by theater and commands. The action had to occur between December 7, 1941 and September 2, 1945. Only fighter pilots or members of night fighter crews were eligible. The enemy aircraft had to be airborne, heavier than air, manned, and armed.

Destruction involved shooting an enemy aircraft down, causing the pilot to bail out, intentionally ramming the airplane to make it crash, or maneuvering it into the ground or water. If the enemy airplane landed, despite its degree of damage, it was not counted as destroyed.

An eyewitness in another aircraft or gun camera film confirmed aerial victory credit claims. USAAF officials then awarded credit, usually through the issuance of numbered air force general orders. An aerial victory credit board, of which there were several during the war, also documented credits.

Prior to World War II the Air Service awarded one whole victory credit to each aviator who contributed to an aerial victory. A single victory could—and often did—result in three or four victory credits. In World War II the criteria were changed. The service divided one credit among all aviators who contributed to destruction of an

enemy airplane. With the awarding of fractional credits, a single victory could result in no more than one full credit.

Gunners on bombers such as B-17 Flying Fortresses and B-24 Liberators destroyed enormous numbers of enemy aircraft, but the Army Air Forces quickly abandoned the attempt to systematically award aerial victory credits to them. The average bomber had ten machine guns and six gunnery positions, and the average bomber formation contained many aircraft. If a formation shot down an enemy airplane, witnesses could not determine exactly which bomber, much less which gunner, destroyed the airplane.

*Army Air Forces Statistical Digest, World War II* has these numbers for aerial victories in the ETO during World War II: 6,098 by heavy bombers, 7,422 by fighters, and 103 by medium bombers.

How many of those were actually losses remain a matter of conjecture. Post-war studies suggest that fighter pilots over-claimed by about a 2:1 margin. The degree to which bomber gunners over-claimed varies greatly depending on who you ask, and no solid evidence could be found to support any particular ratio of over-claiming. Bomber over-claiming has been estimated between 2:1 and 10:1.

One of the reasons for 10:1 not being too far off is if a fighter was shot down attacking a bomber box just about every gunner who fired on him would likely claim a kill. Thus you could get several claims from a single B-24 or B-17. Now combine that with there being very little way to confirm kills. (e.g. the fighter started smoking, did it crash or recover? Many gunners would assume it crashed and make a claim. If it flew through another formation in that shape you have even more claims.)

The moral factor was one reason to award kill credits to bomber gunner. Many ace pilots and gunners went on Bond Drives to raise money for the war effort after returning from their 25 missions. Recognition for the gunner and the kills they claimed was a good thing, so even though the USAAF did not officially credit bomber gunners some numbered Air Forces including the 8th and 15th Air Forces did award credits using their own criteria.

To simulate the Aerial Victory Board's of the 8th and the 15th Air Forces award of Credit for a claimed aerial victory by one of your gunners, use the optional rules below.

**7.6.2 RECEIVING CREDIT FOR AERIAL VICTORIES CLAIMED BY YOUR BOMBER'S GUNNERS.**

Treat each enemy fighter shot down by a gunner on your bomber as a "Claim". Keep track of the claimed victories by each gunner during each mission. At the end of the mission during the Post Mission Debriefing roll on Table 7-6 below to determine if your numbered Air Force Victory Awards Board approved your credit.

It is now possible to receive partial credit if the board determined other gunners also made a claim on the fighter you claimed as shot down.

Roll 2D6 on Table 7.6 for each Enemy Aircraft claimed by your gunners.

**TABLE 7-6 AWARDING AERIAL VICTORIES**

Die Roll	Aerial Victory Award Board's Action
2	Denied - No Credit Awarded
3	Shared - 1/3 Victory Credit Awarded
4	Approved = Full Credit Awarded
5	Denied - No Credit Awarded
6	Shared - 1/2 Victory Credit Awarded
7	Approved = Full Credit Awarded
8	Denied - No Credit Awarded
9	Shared - 1/2 Victory Credit Awarded
10	Approved - Full Credit Awarded
11	Shared - 1/3 Victory Credit Awarded
12	Denied - No Credit Awarded

**Table Notes:**

- a) Denied Claim results in no victory credit being awarded. Do not count it toward Ace Status.
- b) Partial claims are added to the gunner's victory totals. Example;  $1/2 + 1/2 = 1$  full Victory Credit.  $1/3 + 1/3 + 1/3 = 1$  Full Victory Credit.