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## Board Game – Be an Airman

This board game is meant to represent the experience of aircrew during the Second World War. Players began the game as trainees, took part in overseas operations, and returned home to Canada at the end of the game.

Reproduction



Board Game – Be an Airman © Canadian War Museum

### About the Game

This board game was created in 1941 by Owen Cathcart-Jones, an experienced pilot who served for a short time in the Royal Canadian Air Force. The game was published in Canada by the Copp Clark Company Limited. The game was produced in English only, although the instructions were provided in both English and French. The game included in the Discovery Box is a copy of the original English on one side, with a version translated into French on the other.

The playing surface is made of cardboard, and the original game came with a die, and metal playing pieces shaped like aircraft. Sales helped the Royal Canadian Air Force Benevolent Fund, which provided financial assistance to members of the air force and their families.

The game was played by groups of 2 to 6 players and reflected the experience of Canadian aircrew during the war. Players joined the **British Commonwealth Air Training Plan**, becoming **pilots**, **air gunners**, or **observers**, and taking part in overseas operations. The game ended with their return home as heroes.

The game was one of many ways in which the war affected children's lives. It encouraged them to think of themselves as participants in the war, while also hiding wartime realities.

Although the game simulated the air force experience, it downplayed the risks of injury and death that actual aircrew faced.

## Did You Know?

Billy Bishop's picture and endorsement appear on the cover of the game's box. He was Canada's best-known fighter ace during the First World War. He helped recruit for the Royal Canadian Air Force during the Second World War.

## Vocabulary

### **British Commonwealth Air Training Plan:**

This trained aircrew from the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and other Allied countries. Over 131,000 personnel trained in Canada.

### **Pilot:**

The member of the crew who was trained to fly the aircraft. Some aircraft only carried the pilot, and no other crew.

### **Air Gunner:**

A member of the crew trained to use machine guns. Air gunners defended against attacks by enemy aircraft.

### **Observer:**

When this game was created in 1941, observers trained to take aerial photographs, navigate, and aim bombs. These duties were later divided between navigators and bomb aimers.