

A Few Tips for New Players

Originally posted at "SimHQ" and here reprinted
with some additional feedback from members of the Red Baron community.

"...best thread here to date, IMHO !! Keep it going!...", LW STURM
"...we older ones can learn some tricks here too!", LW STURM
"Hehehe... what can I say?", Spandau
"I just love your posts...even read them to my wife! ", LE_Heureux
"Honey, get a life.", Mrs. Heureux
"...excellent threads. They are a fun read as well as informative...", LE_Heureux
"...consistently helpful to many...", LE_Heureux
"...they ring true as well as being articulate and entertaining...", LE_Heureux
"...your preeminence as a Red Baron ace", LE_Heureux
"Hex is clearly delusional. Probably flies without oxygen.", American Journal of Psychiatry
"...really tickled me.", LE_Heureux
"Hey! Tickling Hex is OUR job!", Madame Ovary's Home for Wayward Girls

I have now learned a few useful tidbits (mostly the hard way) after some time in the game. In particular there were some revelations that I wish I knew about earlier (lol RTFM Pepe!):

1) TRANSPARENT COCKPIT:

If you have Voodoo you can hit Alt T for a 3DFX see-through cockpit that allows you to better see what you are doing. There are also some transparent cockpit paints available that leave your instruments visible but hide your wings and the rest of the cockpit, giving you a better field of vision.

2) ENEMY VIEW

Lock an enemy with the E key then press F8 to see their plane. Great for knowing who you are up against and what they are flying. Now press F5 to see them in relation to you -- great for dogfighting SA. Before I learned this I always wondered how people would say "Prepare to die, skunk!" when I was still a mile away. How did they know it was me? Turns out it wasn't my deodorant...

3) TARGET LOCK (MMP)

Press SHIFT D to lock on to a particular aircraft and press D any time after to locate it fast. Much faster than cycling through all the E contacts in range just to find your target. The first time I got into a furball with a dozen planes I was so busy cycling through the E contacts I got my tail waxed.

4) FUSELAGE IS A DAMAGE DUMP.

Rather than aiming at the fuselage of an opponent, aim for wings, tail, engine or pilot. That N11 pop gun will take a long time to kill an Alby bomber otherwise. Try shooting the tail off a Gotha and see what happens. "Aim for something" is often how the better pilots summarize this.

5) VOODOO GLIDE

RB is an old game and ONLY supports Glide for 3D effects. Red Baron has awesome graphics if you use a Voodoo video card. I got a cheap PCI card and I love it. Makes the game 10x better. Ground textures are great. Aircraft are modeled in great detail. You are missing much of the enjoyment of the game if you don't spend a few bucks on an old Voodoo card and slave it to your existing graphics card. Unfortunately most newer video cards do not have Glide support. If you have a late model high end video card and a high performance PC then you can download Glidos -- a software based Glide "wrapper" that works with RB.

6) TWIST JOYSTICK

Essential for lining up guns using the rudder. You won't survive MMP servers without it. Also important for Immelman turns, stall turns, rudder turns and other fancy manouvers with exotic names that I should really know about but mostly just make up as I go along. Rudder pedals are another option however I find the twisty stick gives me faster response.

7) ASK FOR HELP WHILE FLYING

Many squad members will teach you a few tricks or let you practice dogfighting with them. I would like to thank the GTs for helping me with my dogfighting and the RAF for showing me how to bomb.

8) WINGS OF VALOR

<http://wings-of-valor.net/> has downloads and tips that will make you a better player. Tutorials, patches, paints, bug fixes, add-ons -- everything is at WoV. It also has a great forum where you can ask questions and get feedback from experienced players.

9) GAUGES

Airspeed and altitude are life. Pay attention to keeping your airspeed up and watch the AoA (angle of attack or climb rate) to learn what is your most efficient climb speed. Also fuel gauge and oil gauge are important if you want to survive SP for any length of time. There are some gauges patches that will convert all your aircraft to either metric or Imperial units if you want. I found this helped me learn the relative speeds of aircraft better. Sometimes the steepest angle of attack is NOT the fastest way to get altitude. A shallower climb at a faster speed may get you higher, faster.

10) AUTOCLIMB

Sorry but it does not exist. All those guys above you just have more patience than you and climbed to altitude before they flew into harm's way. Use SHIFT A for level flight, ALT A to circle in MMP. Some pilots cut lengths of popsicle sticks to put under their joystick to climb automatically in straight flight while they grab a frosty beverage. Tough to do with a twisty stick but works if you have rudder pedals.

Well dude, I got another one: When you want to climb fast and move fast, keep your angle of attack low. You climb not because your angle of attack is high, but because your speed creates more lift in the wings. I can climb 1000 feet per minute with a Snipe with a 5-10 degree angle of attack, going at 90MPH. How about that stinky? -- RAF_Slicer

11) RB3D COMPATIBILITY WITH WIFE/GIRLFRIEND

Please note that unlike men, women plan ahead and often know their schedule DAYS IN ADVANCE (Gasp!) I found that if I post my RB flight schedule listing war nights and training nights on the fridge door (ahh! The fridge -- wish my cockpit had one! -- but I digress...) I find that if I post my schedule on the fridge door, Mrs LePeu (she loves being called that) knows it IN ADVANCE and plans her schedule so it does not conflict with my flying (Is that a great wife or what?) This results in less involuntary celibacy,

fewer bonks on the head with large mallets and reduced instances of seeing a halo of little stars and birdies. In short: if you know when you are flying then tell the Mrs in advance, otherwise there will be a conflict:

HER PLAN (formulated two weeks ago and anticipated ever since): the two of you will have a candlelit dinner and then spend the night snuggling on the couch watching "Sin and Sensibility" together.

YOUR PLAN (formulated in the car on the way home from work): you will grab a bag of cheesies and a slice of salami for dinner and retreat to the office with a few well chilled wobbly pops to yell expletives at the computer screen while you blast opponents with your machine guns until 3:00 am.

You see where this is headed, right?

12) DEATH BY TYPING

Hentzau says this quite eloquently so I will simply quote him:

Ok heres one for the new guys. You will suffer far fewer typing deaths if you place some of the common things that you say in the [Quickchat] section of the mplayer.ini file. Such as: Insert=Salute bloody hun! Delete=My apologies for that collision! Home=No vulching on this server please. End=No smoking on this server please. PageUp=etc, etc, etc PageDown=etc, etc, etc. Whatever you want to say

Then save as mplayer.ini Now when you want to salute just hit "backspace" "insert" "enter" and you just typed "Salute bloody hun!" in the chat window. Its quick and can give your pilot character without wasting alot of time typing. I use that collision one alot. LOL

13) LEARN THE SPAD XIII

New pilots hate this crate because it can't turn for beans. I had bad turn habits when I started RB -- every fight turned into a series of level turn circles in my Nieuport or Sopwith. When I got to MMP I was massacred by pilots who had learned to use the vertical. By flying Spad you are forced into the vertical and learn to use it well. You don't have to fly Spad forever but having a good run at it will sure help you in every other crate you fly. It is a pure Energy fighter and the opposite of the DR1 which is a pure turn fighter. Every other plane is somewhere in between IMHO.

14) USEFUL THINGS TO PRACTICE

- Dive on a machinegun nest and shoot at it. Then zoom back up vertically and try to require it and shoot it again. Teaches marksmanship, vertical moves and target acquisition.
- Get over your runway and start doing loops. Make sure you finish each loop exactly in line with the axis of the runway. You should be able to do this forever in a plane like an N24 or D3. For variety try exiting the loop at right angles to where you started, and try rolling out of the loop at the top and hold the altitude you gained in the climb. Use a light touch on the controls and one control input at a time to keep your energy up. Teaches energy conservation, stall avoidance, orientation.
- Get right down to ground level and switch to F5 view. Start a big flat turn with the wingtips as close to the ground as you can get them. Now start tightening the circle until it is as tight as you can go. See if you can get a buddy to practice with using identical planes but without firing. Most pilots will crash if they try to follow you. Teaches ground awareness, lead turns, lag turns.
- Get a Spad or SE5A and get to 3000 feet or 1000M exactly. Dive on a ground target and fire then pull up and soar straight back up. See how close you can get to your original starting altitude and see if you can level out without stalling.

15) MY PLANE IS BETTER THAN YOUR PLANE

Every plane has its strengths and weaknesses. I won't catalog them all here but I will tell you some things to watch for:

- Turn radius (important for circle fights)
- Rate of climb (important for being able to attack from above or climbing out of a fight)
- Level speed (great for overtaking low enemies or running away from higher ones)
- Dive speed (useful for catching a faster plane below you)
- Zoom climb efficiency (better zoom allows you to gain more altitude in a quick climb)
- Guns (rate of fire, ammo load, bullet spread and reload times are all factors)

Many players pick the DR1 because it has good climb and is the best turner in the game. Unfortunately it is also one of the slowest. So are you going to try to turn fight a DR1? Or will you use your faster plane to run away, get altitude and come back later to attack from above? Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of each plane allows you to plan in advance how to fight it. I also recommend you fly every plane you can on both sides of the game so you know the capabilities of each.

16) NFM vs AFM: THE MYSTERIOUS UBER

FM stands for "Flight Model." The original RB2 flight model is now called "NFM" or Normal Flight Model. When RB3D was released it had an improved flight model called Advanced Flight Model or AFM. While AFM added gun jams, negative gee engine stalls, wing pops and other effects it also had a serious bug in that damaged airplanes would fly BETTER instead of worse. This was most pronounced in the Fokker D7 where a few shots into the upper wings would make it suddenly capable of incredible sustained rates of climb at extreme angles of attack. This tendency to improve with damage is referred to as "Ubering". Many pilots like NFM because it does not have this bug, while some pilots prefer AFM despite the Uber (some say because of it!) Online servers may be either NFM or AFM. If your airplane seems to be handling strangely, check the server settings in the "Gold Room" or lobby of the game. Pick the model you like best and stick with it. Be aware that those of you with RB3D who fly Single Player are flying AFM and no amount of changing preferences will make it behave like true NFM.

To further complicate things there are some servers running modified FMs. These are usually designed to fix or improve on the buggy AFM model. Be aware that to fly on these servers you must download and install a customized flight model patch. This patch must be uninstalled before flying on AFM or NFM servers or you will get booted for having an altered flight model loaded. Be aware that most modified FMs have their good and bad points and not all are made by impartial designers.

17) GHOST IN THE MACHINE

Sometimes you will get ejected from a server due to lag, nets or other connection problems. When you go back to the server you may see your pilot listed twice in the lobby or "Gold Room". This duplicate listing is a "ghost" and will prevent you from flying. If you try to enter the game you may find yourself looking at an external view of your crate on the runway and unable to take off. If this happens, exit the game, change the name of your pilot (even by one character) and re-enter the game.

18) WINDOWS XP

RB3D is compatible with XP however you may encounter missing sounds or joystick problems. You need to write protect your RBPREFS.DAT file to prevent XP from overwriting it after each game. See the WoV help document containing XP workarounds for help on this.