

Red Baron 3D

Multi-Player Tutorial

by
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. GETTING STARTED.....	1
2.1 UPGRADING FROM RED BARON II TO RED BARON 3D	1
2.2 UPGRADING TO THE LATEST VERSION OF RED BARON 3D.....	1
2.3 SINGLE PLAYER VS. MULTI-PLAYER.....	2
3. GETTING ON-LINE	2
3.1 THE PILOT ROSTER.....	2
3.2 CONNECTING	3
3.3 THE LOBBY.....	5
4. FLYING ON-LINE	6
4.1 ETIQUETTE.....	6
4.1.1 <i>Saluting</i>	6
4.1.2 <i>Vulching</i>	7
4.1.3 <i>Rockets and Bombs</i>	7
4.1.4 <i>Collisions</i>	7
4.1.5 <i>The Flamer Bug</i>	8
4.1.6 <i>Chat Decorum</i>	8
4.2 ESSENTIAL KEYBOARD FUNCTIONS	8
4.3 DOG-FIGHTING!.....	10
4.4 THE DREADED “NET”	11
4.5 THE MAP GRID.....	12
5. ODDS & ENDS	13
5.1 IMPROVING FPS (FRAMES PER SECOND)	13
5.2 CHATTING	13
5.3 MACROS	14
5.4 SQUADRONS.....	14
5.5 SQUAD ID.....	15
5.6 GUN SIGHTS.....	15
5.7 UNOFFICIAL PATCHES (UOPS).....	15
5.8 CAMPAIGN MANAGER.....	16
5.9 JOYSTICKS	16
6. RESOURCES.....	16
7. CLOSING COMMENTS	17

1. INTRODUCTION

The intent of this tutorial is to serve as a comprehensive step-by-step guide to what you'll need to know for on-line play. If you're new to the game, this tutorial will definitely prove beneficial. If you're more experienced—well, you might even learn something new, too.

Make sure that you check the “Resources” section at the end of this tutorial for several web sites that will make your on-line experience more enjoyable.

This document is dedicated to my CO, LW_Jupes, who helped me with the original draft back in May 2000 and who has contributed so much to the *Red Baron 3D* community over the years. Salute and Godspeed!

Special thanks also to my esteemed colleagues in The Alliance—the combined forces of the Lone Wulffe and Wing Walkers Squadrons—for imparting most of this game knowledge to me and for putting up with all of my never-ending questions. I'm proud to call them my friends.

Finally, I want to thank BA°Chevelle of **Wings of Valor** for his input and assistance with this revision, and for giving my tutorial a new home.

2. GETTING STARTED

The instructions for MMP (i.e., “Massive Multi-Player”) in the original manual that came with the boxed copy of *Red Baron 3D* (hereafter referred to as RB3D) are limited at best. After reading this document, you'll see what I mean!

2.1 Upgrading from Red Baron II to Red Baron 3D

Before you can fly on-line, you first have to make sure you have RB3D. If you're still flying *Red Baron II*, you need to upgrade to RB3D. The **rb3d_spr.exe** file is called the “Super Patch.” It is available from several web sites but one central location for all things Red Baron is **Wings of Valor** (<http://wingsofvalor.xnbc.org>). You can access this file in the “Files” section of **Wings of Valor**.

Download and install this file. You now have RB3D but you still need to upgrade to the latest version. To do this, follow the instructions in the next section.

NOTE: If you purchased a discounted “Value Line” version of *Red Baron II*, it is not upgradeable using the “Super Patch.”

2.2 Upgrading to the Latest Version of Red Baron 3D

If you have a clean installation of RB3D from an original disk, or if you have updated from *Red Baron II*, you need to update your program to the latest version.

The upgrade is the **rb3d1078.exe** file and it, too, is available in the “Files” section on the **Wings of Valor** web site. You'll need this patch in order to see all of the MMP servers.

NOTE: Some players might tell you that the 1.0.7.8. patch is the source for something called the infamous “flamer bug,” but this isn't true. More on the “flamer bug” later.

2.3 Single Player vs. Multi-Player

It is important to understand that there are actually *two* RB3D programs! The MMP version is a completely separate program from the Single Player (SP) program. Using Windows Explorer, you will find the SP program (**baron.exe**) and the MMP program (**baronmmp.exe**) in your **Sierra/RedBaron3D** directory.

You should create two separate “shortcuts” on your desktop for these two programs.

3. GETTING ON-LINE

You’re now ready to dogfight on-line, quickly and easily. First, get on-line through your ISP (Internet Service Provider). If you’re using software provided by your ISP or other service (such as AOL), once connected, minimize your ISP to the desktop’s “taskbar” by hitting the little “minus” button in the upper right-hand corner of your screen.

Your first option is to put your RB3D disk into your computer. If your computer is set to “Autoplay,” RB3D will automatically start. The first screen you’ll see is the game’s Start-Up menu, where one of your options is to *Dogfight On WON.net*. Instead of going through WON.net, however, select *Quit* on your Start-Up menu. This, of course, will take you back to your desktop.

Now, left-click on the RB3D shortcut you just made specifically for MMP on your desktop. MMP will fire up immediately and take you to your *Pilot Roster*.

A second option enables you to run the game without the CD. If you attempt to start the game by clicking on your MMP shortcut without the CD, you will get a screen telling you that the CD is missing. Simply left-click on the upper-right Iron Cross several times and the program will start.



The No CD Option

NOTE: If you use this “No-CD” option when playing the SP version, you will not have access to all of the video files (e.g., the moving planes on some of the menu screens, the little movie reel clips that you can watch in the *Intelligence* room during a *Campaign*, the historical film clips that pop up every now and then as a *Campaign* progresses, etc.). The lack of these little video enhancements does not impede game play in any way. If losing these videos bugs you (like it did me), you can simply copy all of the video files off of the CD and “paste” them onto your hard drive under the **C:\Sierra\RedBaron3D\Data\Video** folder.

3.1 The Pilot Roster

This is where you can create a new pilot to fly on-line, use an existing pilot, or delete a pilot that you don’t want to use anymore. This screen is also where you set your on-line flying *Preferences*

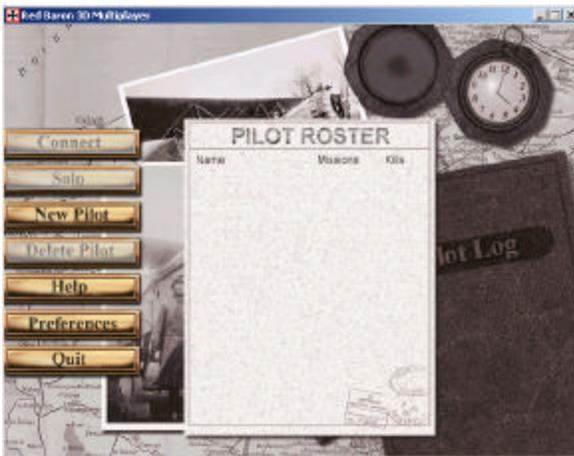
similar to what you're already used to in SP. You have to start with at least one pilot; just click on the *New Pilot* button and give yourself an on-line name.

3.2 Connecting

Before you can get on-line, be sure that you have selected one of the pilots listed in the *Pilot Roster*.

You get on-line by clicking on the *Connect* button. You will then be shown a screen that lists all of the available RB3D servers that are currently on-line. So many to choose from!

Some of the servers will have a small "padlock" icon next to them. This means that the server is restricted to pilots that have been issued a password to enter the server.



The Pilot Roster



Connecting to Online Servers

Each line of server information will consist of the following:

Server Name

Each server has been given its own name, at the sole discretion of the server operator.

Ping Rate

This is the number that tells you how good of a connection you can expect from that particular server with your computer and depends on your ISP, the type of connection you have (cable vs. dial-up), your modem speed, etc. It is an indication of the response time between your computer and the server. The lower the ping rate the better. High ping rates can result in noticeable "lag" in your on-line play.

Ping rates of under 200 are considered excellent.

Ping rates of 200-300 are OK but not great.

Ping rates over 300 can result in "iffy" performance

Type Of Game

There are four different types of on-line games that you can play:

Melee

Melee is pretty much a free-for-all. Everyone flies as individuals and it's every pilot for himself. Each player is awarded a "kill" for every plane that he shoots down. There are no "sides" to Melee and there are no points for destroying things on the ground.

Team Melee

Team Melee is a team game without ground targets for bombing. You choose sides (Allied or German) and then take to the skies over the front in search of each other.

Team Target

In Team Target, the server computer selects ground targets at timed intervals on either side of the front for bombing purposes. Points are awarded to each side for every enemy plane that is shot down and for every enemy target that is destroyed. The targets selected for bombing are identified by squares around these landmarks on the kneeboard map.

Different servers have different rules. Some servers operate as “open” servers where any plane is permitted to bomb ground targets. Others restrict bombing to certain aircraft—typically the older, slower aircraft. If you are unsure of the rules, the polite thing to do is to ask on chat ahead of time if bombing is allowed for any plane. You should also ask if there is a rules web site for the target server. Many servers have rules pages established for fair play and fun.

Get the Baron

“Get the Baron” seems to be the least popular of the server types these days. It’s kind of like “Melee” meets “King of the Hill.” In this scenario, there are one or more “Barons” (each a different color) and everyone is out to get him or them. Only Barons are awarded points for each plane shot down, and you become a Baron by shooting down any plane.

Game Difficulty

From easiest to most difficult, the game difficulty ranges are Novice, Veteran and Ace. These server settings affect the amount and accuracy of machine gun and anti-aircraft fire, the amount of ammunition and bombs that are available, and the amount of damage that a target must incur before it is destroyed. Few actually pay attention to this anymore—people usually just jump onto any open server that looks like it has a lot of action.

Flight Mode (FM)

Some server descriptions might include “NFM” or “AFM”. These indicate either Normal or Advanced Flight Mode. What’s the difference?

The short explanation is that the Flight Mode refers to how the planes fly, sustain damage, and other attributes. In AFM, the planes seem more difficult to fly because engine torque is more pronounced. This setting also determines the affects of sun glare and gun jamming.

The longer explanation is more complex and the subject of debate within the RB3D community. In NFM, many of the planes might actually seem easier to fly. However, when you take damage, your aircraft’s flight characteristics will definitely deteriorate! In addition, as you turn (especially near ground level) your plane will slow down and might even stall, so you need to be much more aware of your craft’s “energy status.” In AFM, many planes (all planes, according to some) will “über” with damage—meaning their flight characteristics will actually improve, particularly when climbing and/or turning.

Number Of Players

This will appear as two numbers separated by a slash (/). The first number represents the number of players currently in the game, while the second number represents the total number of players that the game can accommodate.

Once you've found a server that's running a game you'd like to join, highlight it with your cursor and double-click on it. You'll soon find yourself inside "the lobby" for that particular game.



The "Lobby" or "Gold Room"

3.3 The Lobby

The game's lobby (also called the "gold room" by many pilots) is slightly different, depending on the type of game that is being played.

For a *Get The Baron* or *Melee* server, you'll see one big box on the left-hand side listing the names of all the game participants. On a *Team Melee* or *Team Target* server, you will see the two team boxes, one for Allied and one for German. If you move your mouse cursor over the names of each participant and leave it there for a few seconds, a little picture will pop up indicating the type of plane that player is flying. This is useful if you want to try to match your aircraft selection with others already in the game. In a Team game, you can switch back and forth between the teams by a simple click of the *Change Teams* button at the bottom of the screen.

The *Status* box at the top of the screen in the center gives you a basic rundown of the server's settings—i.e., the type of game being played, the level of difficulty, the map being used, the FM being used (Advanced or Normal), whether or not ammunition is unlimited, whether or not the use of rockets has been enabled, etc.

The last box on the screen towards the bottom is the lobby's *Chat Display* where you'll see the ongoing chat dialogue between players currently in the game. There are four types of chat but only "All" chat is visible while in the lobby. You will not be able to see "Team," "Visual Team," or "Squad" chat from the lobby. More on this later.

At the bottom of the screen are five buttons: *Change Teams*, *Change Aircraft*, *Change Airfield*, *Show Scores*, and *Fly Now*. *Change Teams* has already been discussed. By clicking on *Change Aircraft*, you can select the type of plane you want to fly. In Team games, your choice will be restricted to the side for which you've chosen to fly. However, you might find that some servers have restricted

your choice of planes even further. For example, you might pull up the list of German planes and only find the DRI, the Albatross DIII, and the Pfalz III from which to choose. This additional limitation is done at the server operator's sole discretion.

At the bottom of the pop-up screen where you select your aircraft, you'll also notice a space where you can type in a "Squad I.D." number. More on this later.

Change Airfields allows you to move your base of operations closer to where the action is. If you've selected a *Get The Baron* or *Melee* game, it's appropriate to ask the current game participants via the "chat bar" in the lobby at what aerodrome they're flying; the lobby's "chat bar" is the little bar at the bottom of the *Chat Display*. Left-click on it with your mouse and your cursor will begin to flash there; you can now type and send a short message to the game participants—e.g., "Which aerodrome?" Watch the "chat scroll" in the *Chat Display* box for your answer, which will be in the form of a map grid coordinate—e.g., "B2." Then, when you open up the game's map via the *Change Airfields* button, you simply move your cursor to the aerodrome in the designated grid and left-click on it. That aerodrome should now be outlined by a red square. Click on the *Done* button.

At this point, you're ready to finally get into the game! Do so by clicking on the *Fly Now* button.

NOTE: If you've selected one of the Team games, you really shouldn't ask "which aerodrome?" from the lobby. The appropriate procedure to follow is to first pick the side for which you wish to fly, and then hit the *Fly Now* button to enter the game. Once you're in the game at whatever aerodrome you happened to choose, activate the "chat bar" by pressing the backspace key and select "Team" chat. Now you can ask, "Where's the Hun (or Allied) aerodrome?" and your teammates will gladly respond. You'll find that 99.99% of the time the correct aerodrome is going to be the one closest to "the mud" (i.e., the trench line, or "No Man's Land" as it was called in WWI).

Since Team chat is unavailable in the lobby, sometimes the game participants are reluctant to divulge the location(s) of their aerodrome(s) since if the enemy takes it out via a bombing run, that aerodrome is no longer available for repair, refueling, or rearmament. By using Team chat, the enemy pilots will not be able to see your question, so therefore you won't be giving your team's position away.

4. FLYING ON-LINE

4.1 Etiquette

Before you forge off into the blue to do battle, a little time should be spent on some rules of the skies. This will avoid some unintentional mistakes that are easy to make as a newcomer to the game.

4.1.1 Saluting

"Saluting" is a multi-purpose gesture used for everything from a salutation to saying hello or goodbye. A salute can be as obvious as a "Salute!" to much more elaborate and creative forms. There is also a shorthand version "<S!>."

A salute is usually given to the entire group when you first enter the server. To do this, press the BACKSPACE key on your keyboard to activate the chat bar. Make sure that you are in

“All” chat by using the right and left arrows so that everyone can see your message. Type “Salute!” and then press the enter key. (See *Chatting* under **Odds & Ends**.)

You will most likely get one or more return salutes. Don't be disappointed if you don't get one from everyone. Remember, some might be engaged in a battle for their lives at the time you enter the server!

It is customary to salute your opponent after shooting them down or after having been shot down yourself. As a beginner, you will most likely have more opportunity for the latter than the former!

4.1.2 *Vulching*

Vulching is a term that you will most likely be exposed to on your very first visit to on-line play. What exactly constitutes vulching has long been open to some animated discussions on the various RB3D forums, and a lot depends on the individual server operator's “house rules.”

Vulching comes in several different forms. One is the shooting of planes while they are on the ground or while taking off. It is considered bad form to lurk above an airfield and pick off a plane as it is trying to take to the air. It is customary to let planes gain some altitude before engaging them in battle, or to at least let them make a first turn after becoming airborne.

An important exception to this take-off rule is during organized events or “wars.” These events attempt to simulate battle conditions and attacking your enemy while still on the ground is something that might very well be appropriate unless it is prohibited by the event's rules.

The worst form of vulching, however, is intentionally stealing someone else's kill. If another pilot has been engaged in a fiercely fought battle and has managed to damage his opponent to the brink of destruction, he will be understandably upset if you come in and, with one or two bullets, knock the crippled plane down. Remember, in MMP the last person to put a bullet in the plane is the one who receives credit for the kill. If you do this by accident (and we all have!), the polite thing to do is apologize to the other pilot on open chat and acknowledge that it was actually him (and not you) that brought the plane down.

4.1.3 *Rockets and Bombs*

The use of rockets and bombs in air-to-air combat is also considered bad form; however, there are some servers out there that do allow this. Unfortunately, RB3D does not have the capability to limit rockets and bombs to certain planes. Either they all have them or they all don't. Rockets and bombs are generally considered to be air-to-ground weapons and used by bombers only.

4.1.4 *Collisions*

If you collide with somebody while flying, never assume the worst and accuse the other fellow of intentionally “ramming” you. There's only one thing you can know for sure—IT TAKES TWO to cause a collision! The proper thing to do, therefore, is simply apologize to the other pilot for the collision and move on with your game (whether this means trying to nurse your crippled ship back home, or starting a new life because the collision caused you to crash).

4.1.5 The Flamer Bug

At some point during your on-line experience, you're going to get shot up to the point where your plane catches fire. The fire display is very graphically intensive and is not handled well by the server software. "Riding out a flamer" usually results in everyone being booted off the server! You cannot extinguish an engine fire in MMP the way you can in SP by shutting off your engine and diving.

If your plane catches fire IMMEDIATELY hit the ESC button followed by the ENTER button. Don't even take the time to read the screen options. These two quick key strokes will take you back to your aerodrome with a new life and give credit to your opponent for shooting you down. Don't forget to salute!

4.1.6 Chat Decorum

Finally, as with any competitive game, emotions can run pretty high at times when flying on-line. It's easy to get angry. However, it's best to keep things in perspective and not get dragged into any "flame wars" on the "chat scroll." Keep your cool. Salute your opponent, start over, and fight again—and always remember that this is ONLY A GAME! Fly with honor in memory of the young men who flew these crates in real life over eighty years ago without the benefit of a *Start New Life* button.

4.2 Essential Keyboard Functions

Even if you consider yourself an "Ace" in SP, there are a few things you should know that will improve your chances of survival (and victory) on-line. For starters, some of the keyboard controls for identifying and tracking your "targets" are a little different in MMP. Here are the ones considered to be most important:

N = Padlock mode. This key acts like a "long-range radar". Pressing "N" will slew your view to other planes within range. They may be friendly or enemy planes. You won't be able to identify the contact as friendly or hostile until it gets closer, but you'll at least be able to position yourself more favorably in the meantime (e.g., climb for more altitude, if necessary)

E = Enemy Padlock mode. The "E" key has a shorter range than the "N" key but only locks onto enemy planes when they are in range. Each time you press "E", you will cycle through all the enemy planes within range.

F = Friendly Padlock mode. The "F" key has a shorter range than the "N" key but only locks onto friendly planes when they are in range. Each time you press "F", you will cycle through all the friendly planes within range.

T = Padlock mode. Hitting the "T" key locks you onto the last enemy that put a bullet in your plane, NOT necessarily the closest threat like in SP.

O = Padlock mode. Hitting the "O" key locks you onto whatever aircraft or object (e.g., a balloon—rarely seen in MMP) that happens to be in your gunsight "crosshairs" at the time. However, this function does not work unless you have created an artificial gunsight that appears on your screen (see *Gunsights* under **ODDS & ENDS**).

Shift + D = When you have identified something that you want to keep track of on a regular basis, press the "Shift" key, followed by the "D" key. This will lock your target—which might be an

enemy or your wingman—for subsequent tracking by use of the “D” key. (NOTE: the “Shift+D” function will not work unless you hit the “F8” button first.)

D = Padlock mode. Locks onto your target. However, this only works after you’ve selected your target via the “Shift + D” key.

/ = Glance forward. While in any of the aforementioned padlock modes from inside the cockpit, you can press and hold down the “/” key in order to glance forward for firing. When you release it, the padlock mode that you were in resumes.

F8 = This key gives you a view of whomever you’ve targeted via your “E”, “F”, “T”, “O”, or “D” keys.

F3 = This is the “external padlock” view. It locks your target in the center of the screen with your aircraft pursuing in the foreground. I actually flew on-line for well over a year before discovering this little gem. If you haven’t learned how to use it yet, you should. More on this button later.

F5 = This is the “chase plane” external view. You’ll be looking at your aircraft directly from behind. Some pilots prefer this view for bombing.

Shift + N = By holding down the “Shift” key, followed by the “N” key, you cause everybody’s names to appear above the planes that they’re flying once they are in visual range. This way you know who it is that you’re killing (or who’s killing you!) Pressing Shift+N again turns this feature off.

ALT + T = By holding down the “Alt” button, followed by the “T” button, you activate the transparent cockpit. The transparent cockpit is only available if you have a Glide-compatible 3D accelerator video card installed on your computer. “Glide” is only available on the Voodoo line of 3D accelerator cards by 3Dfx. Unfortunately, 3Dfx is no longer in business and their products are no longer available in stores. However, you might be able to find a Voodoo card for sale on Ebay. After installing your Voodoo card, remember to go into your game’s graphics *Preferences* and check off the little box marked “Glide” as opposed to “Direct Draw.”

NOTE: Do not be misled by the “Open GL” that’s currently available on many 3D accelerator cards. Open GL and Glide are not the same thing.

ALT + I = By holding down the “Alt” button, followed by the “I” button, you activate two little “instruments” in the upper right-hand corner of your computer screen that tell you what your horizontal and vertical positioning is relative to the horizon. The instrument on the left is a straight line that pivots up or down on its left end; this indicates your degree of climb. The instrument on your right is a triangle that pivots left or right around its center; this indicates your degree of bank as well as your vertical positioning (the triangle flips upside down during a loop). This is a great little item for watching your altitude during a turn, or for maintaining your bearings during those swirling “furballs!”

Shift + A = Activates the autopilot for flying straight and level. Great for breaks while cruising at altitude on a Team server, or for typing lengthy “chat” dialogue. Full autopilot (Ctrl + A) is unavailable in MMP.

ALT + A = Activates the autopilot for flying around in a circle at any given waypoint (often referred to as “auto-circle” by many).

ALT + F = By holding down the “Alt” button, followed by the “F” button, you activate the Frames Per Second (FPS) counter in the upper left-hand corner of your screen. Faster processors, increased RAM, and the available RAM on your Voodoo accelerator card will generate faster FPS.

Shift + F = Shoots up a flare, just like real pilots did at times in WWI to alert their buddies of enemy activity. Since this can chew up frame rates, I’ve always been taught to use it only in emergency situations.

Shift + M = Repeatedly hitting “Shift+M” cycles through all of your different ammo types—from regular to incendiary to tracer. Good to know if you’re flying a bomber in an organized war situation and need to conserve your bombs and rockets, since some targets can be taken out using incendiary ammo only.

ALT + TAB = Minimizes the game to the taskbar on your desktop. Works just like the little “minus” button in the upper right-hand corner of most software programs. This function is probably utilized most by the “Operations Officers” in organized wars. Their job is to alternate between the game and an on-line multiple chat service (e.g., ICQ) where other pilots from the team might be waiting for their turn to enter the game. Organized wars usually have a strict limit on the number of participants per side.

4.3 Dogfighting!

You’ll have to play around a bit with all of the essential keyboard functions in order to determine which ones you prefer. Every pilot uses a different mix. However, here are the ones that I utilize the most when dogfighting in team play...

First rule of team play—fly with a wingman! Second rule of team play—never leave your wingman! There’s safety in numbers. Select a wingman by scrolling through friendly contacts with the “F” button. Once you have found the person you want to fly with, lock onto him by hitting the “F8” button followed by the “Shift+D” button. Remember, the “Shift+D” function will not work unless you hit the “F8” button first. Now that you are locked onto a wingman, you can always find him by hitting the “D” button if you get into trouble during combat. You can return to the forward cockpit view by pressing “F1”.

While on patrol, constantly tap the “N” key, searching the sky for contacts. As soon as you get a “hit” on the “N” key, go to Team chat and announce “con” (which means “unknown contact”). If your wingman sees the same contact with his “N” key, he’ll respond with either “cc” (“copy”) or “rgr” (“roger”). Other important shorthand to know: “rtb” (“returning to base”), “omw” (“on my way”), and “wtg!” (“way to go!”).

Switch to “F3” key and tap the “N” key in order to determine your altitude relative to the contact, and adjust accordingly. Remember, the advantage of the “N” key is that it allows you more time to get into a favorable position for combat. If your first sighting is via the “E” key, you’re too late.

After getting yourself into position, tap the “E” and “F” keys in order to determine if the contact is “friend or foe.” If it turns out to be a friendly, you can breathe a sigh of relief and loosen the death grip that you have on the joystick! If the contact turns out to be hostile, engage only if you and your wingman have the advantage. Otherwise, keep flying until you have gained an advantage or

until the bogie attacks, forcing you into action. (Good wingman tactics could fill up a totally separate tutorial!)

If there are multiple bogies (gulp!), hit the “F3” button and then use the “E” button to scroll through the enemy contacts to see where they are and to see which one affords you and your wingman the best tactical advantage.

If, while chasing your target, you hear bullets “popping” your plane, that of course means that you are under attack by somebody else and had better break off your chase or you’ll soon be dead. On-line flying is the sure-fire cure for “target fixation!” Hit the “T” button to see who it is that’s on your tail. If you think you can “turn the tables” on this new threat, hit the “F3” button and go after him instead.

The “F3” key acts like a “toggle” switch between the external padlock view and the forward over-the-wing cockpit view (not padlocked) for firing. It also remembers the last target you hit on in any of the padlock modes (“E,” “F,” “T,” “O,” “D” and “N”). This can be extremely useful during “furballs” because it allows you to keep track of the bogie you are chasing without having to lock onto him via the “Shift+D” button. It also makes it very easy to switch targets in case somebody jumps you while you’re targeting somebody else—or after you’ve finished somebody off and want to locate the next closest threat. Just hit your “F3” button and cycle through the remaining bogies with your “E” button.

Finally, I consider the transparent cockpit mode available in Glide to be absolutely indispensable for effective on-line combat. While there are some pilots out there who scoff at the use of the transparent cockpit as being a “cheat,” the vast majority of pilots do utilize it during combat. The logic behind it not being a “cheat” is that it compensates for the artificial limitations imposed on us by our computer screens.

4.4 The Dreaded “NET”

It will happen. You are on a long-range bombing mission. You have spent the last twenty minutes flying undetected deep into enemy territory. You are lined up on your final approach. You cycle through your ammo to be sure that incendiaries are loaded. You check the map one last time to be sure that you have the right target. You nose her over and pick up speed. Your target is a sitting duck... and then it strikes!

Everything seems to freeze up on you. Your plane seems suspended in mid-air. The whole world has come to a screeching halt. The word “NET” appears in the upper left corner of your screen.

You have been hit with the dreaded “NET” (also referred to as a “mech” for “mechanical problems”). This happens when the “lag” between you and the server becomes significant. Not all “NETs” are fatal, however. It just might be a temporary slow-down in communication, possibly caused by a “flamer” elsewhere in the server. Your frame rate will get very low and might eventually be restored—but until then, flying might be difficult or even impossible.

One tip that might help you survive a temporary slow-down is to immediately press “Shift+A” or “Alt+A” when the problem first appears. This will put you into autopilot and possibly keep you alive long enough to survive a temporary “NET.”

Whether to use “Shift+A” or “Alt+A” depends on your situation. If you are over enemy targets, going into auto-circle with “Alt+A” might not be such a good idea. You are still accessible to

ground fire! If your local terrain is hilly and you are low when the “NET” starts, going into straight and level flying with “Shift+A” might not be the way to go. You might survive the “NET” or you might slam into a hill instead!

If the “NET” message stays on for too long, you will lose your connection entirely. You will then get a little pop-up message telling you that your connection has “timed out” or that you are “out of synch” with the other players. If this happens, click the “OK” button and you will be taken all the way back to your *Pilot Roster* screen. You will have to re-connect with the server all over again. This can be frustrating, which is why it’s so important to check ping rates before logging onto any server.

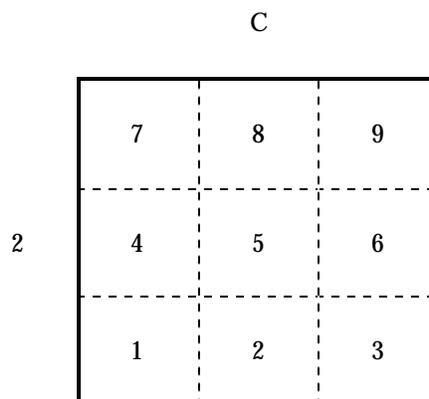
If the word “NET” appears in the upper left-hand corner of your screen for an unusually long period of time (e.g., over 30 seconds), chances are your computer has frozen up on you—leaving you wondering what to do. Your first inclination might be to re-boot by pressing the CTRL+ALT+DEL keys, but this is unnecessary. The best thing to do in this situation is to hit ALT+F4. This will kick you out of RB3D and send you back to your desktop to start all over again. Be patient, however—you might have to hit ALT+F4 a couple of times.

4.5 The Map Grid

It is important to learn how to read your kneeboard maps and relay your position to your teammates. Be careful not to do this on open chat! You access your kneeboard map by hitting “0” on your numeric keypad when it’s turned ON, or “5” on your numeric keypad when it’s turned OFF.

The kneeboard maps are already divided into vertical and horizontal sections that are cross-referenced by letters and numbers. The MMP community has adopted an additional grid description to communicate position even more accurately. Each map grid is further divided into nine sections that are numbered 1 through 9, left to right, bottom to top. This numbering sequence is identical to the way your numeric keypad is laid out on your keyboard.

You communicate your location to your teammates by first indicating the grid that you are in followed by the particular section of that grid. For example, “C2-5” means that you’re flying in grid C2 near the center of the grid. “C2-9” means that you’re flying in grid C2 near the upper right-hand corner of the grid. “C2-2” means that you’re flying in grid C2 near the bottom center portion of the grid. You get the idea.



5. ODDS & ENDS

5.1 Improving FPS (Frames Per Second)

If you have a relatively slow computer with minimal graphics power, you might find that your Frames Per Second (FPS) are low and that your screen movements are “jerky.” One way to improve the situation is to go into your *Preferences* from the *Pilot Roster* and reduce some or all of your graphics detail. This will put less of a demand on your system.

Another tip is to reduce the number of applications that you have running in the background. You wouldn't believe all of the junk your computer has running in the background while you're trying to fly; this can only deteriorate your FPS. A highly recommend nifty little piece of “freeware” is called **End It All 2** that enables you to shut down all of that unnecessary background junk while keeping the necessary stuff in play. It's very easy to download and use. You can find the link to **End It All 2** in the “Resources” section of this tutorial.

Reducing the number of chat lines that appear in the upper left-hand corner of your screen while flying—and how long the chat stays on your screen—can also improve your connection and reduce “NETs.” To adjust the “chat buffer,” right-click anywhere on your on-line screen. It's best to do this while on the ground at your aerodrome. This will bring up a pop-up menu by which you can make several different *Preferences* adjustments without having to go back to your *Pilot Roster* screen. Among the different buttons you can choose from on this pop-up menu is one labeled *Chat*. By left-clicking on this button, you'll be able to adjust the “chat buffer” to your liking. You'll need to play with the settings a bit to find what works best for you.

If you have the “chat buffer” set fast (e.g., only one line of chat appears on the screen at a time), and you think you missed something important, simply hit CTRL+PGUP to view earlier chat lines. Make sure the numeric keypad on your keyboard is turned OFF in order to do this (that's the little green NUM light that is usually found in the upper right-hand corner of your keyboard).

5.2 Chatting

Good communication is a very important part of MMP. Not every chat message, however, is meant for all the players in the server. You certainly don't want to give your location away to the enemy or you might soon find yourself surrounded by bad guys!

You open up the chat bar by pressing the BACKSPACE key. There are four chat levels. The current chat level is indicated by the checked box at the bottom of the chat bar.

ALL – Also referred to as “open” chat. Any message sent when in this mode is shown to everyone in the server, including those still in the lobby. Make sure that anything said here is for general consumption. This is where you would offer your salutes.

TEAM – Messages broadcast in Team chat are only seen by players on your side. For example, if you are flying Allied, then only the Allied pilots will see your message.

VISUAL – Only pilots that are on your side and that are in visible range can see messages sent in this mode. “Visual range” is defined as being able to see the pilot's name above his aircraft.

SQUAD – Only pilots flying with your same squadron number can see messages sent in this chat mode. (See *Squad I.D.* under **Odds & Ends**.)

5.3 Macros

When you fly on-line for the first time, you'll probably wonder how everyone can type their chat messages as quickly as they do and still fly. Besides switching to autopilot, the trick to this is the use of a little "macro" program that's already built into your RB3D program. "Macros" are six short messages that can be saved and displayed in a chat message with a minimum number of keystrokes. To display one of these pre-loaded "macros," open the chat bar by hitting the BACKSPACE key and press one of the following keys on your numeric keypad: INS, DEL, END, PGDN, HOME, or PGUP. Make sure your numeric keypad is turned OFF in order for this to work. Hit ENTER and your "macro" will be displayed on the screen.

If you want to change the pre-loaded "macros" to something a little more personalized, you can do this by editing the game's **mplayer.ini** file. Using Microsoft Explorer or any editor such as Notepad, look for the "Sierra" folder on your hard drive. Inside of that folder should be your "Red Baron 3D" folder. Inside the "Red Baron 3D" folder you should see a file labeled **mplayer**. Simply double-click on this file to open it up.

Once you have the **mplayer.ini** file open, towards the bottom of the screen you'll see **[Quick Chat]** followed by the pre-programmed "macros" and their corresponding numeric keypad assignments. Simply move your cursor to the "macro" you wish to change by left-clicking on the start of the line you're going to change and type away. Then, when you're done, left-click on "File" in the upper left-hand corner of your screen, hit "Save" followed by "Exit." You're done!

Here is the "pre-loaded" macro list that comes installed with RB3D:

```
[QuickChat]
Insert=This is an example of my first chat macro
Delete=Follow me boys!
Home=Let's go bomb something!
End=Nice shooting!
PageUp=<S!>
PageDown=Hey! Watch the hair, pal!
```

If you have a joystick with programmable buttons, an even better option is to simply write your own "Salute!" command and assign it to one of the buttons. Most (if not all) of the programmable sticks out there will let you do this. It is a lot easier to fire off your "Salute!" with the touch of a single button during the heat of battle as opposed to having to divert attention to the keyboard.

5.4 Squadrons

When flying on-line, you will notice that some pilots have letter/number abbreviations before their names. Some might even have military rankings following their names. These are squad designations. A lot of pilots end up joining one of the many RB3D squadrons that are out there; there are literally dozens. However, there are as many pilots that choose to remain independent. You don't need to be in a squad to fly on-line and to have fun. However, anyone who's in a squad will tell you that it's a great place to learn strategy and tactics and also to get help if you ever have any computer problems or questions.

The RB3D squadrons are as different as their names and national affiliations might suggest. Some were formed to emulate actual squadrons and they strive for realism and historical accuracy

wherever possible. Some are organized with a rank structure with promotions, medals and the other accoutrements while others have a more democratic process or even total anarchy. (Don't let the idea of a rank-based squadron scare you off. All of the squadrons are in it for the fun and welcome newcomers.)

There are squadrons affiliated with Great Britain, France, Germany and just about every other country that participated in WWI but they rarely represent the nationality of the members. Most have members representing all age groups but there are some that are comprised of just teens or older members. You will also find squadrons in many different countries. You will find this a very international community.

Choosing a squad is no different from choosing your friends. As such, there are only three rules to follow: find one that your comfortable with, one that fits your personality and flying style, and one that satisfies what you're trying to get out of your on-line flying experience.

A great source for squadron information can be found at the **Wings of Valor** web site listed in the "Resource" section at the end of this tutorial. Almost all squadrons have their own web sites. Take some time to visit and learn more about them. If you like what you see, you can inquire about joining up.

5.5 Squad I.D.

Most (if not all) of the RB3D squadrons have designed their own custom paint schemes. Each of these paint schemes is assigned a number and is a part of a web-based file system managed by WWFlybert.

If and when you join a squad, you'll be told which number(s) to use to when flying on-line. When you select your aircraft in the server's lobby, the pop-up screen contains a small box at the bottom marked "Squad I.D." Enter your squadron's paint scheme number here.

This "Squad I.D." also applies to the on-line "chat" while flying. If you're flying on-line with one or more of your squad mates and you're both sporting the same colors (meaning you've both chosen the same "Squad I.D." number), by selecting "Squad" in the "chat bar" you're able to communicate only with your squad mates and nobody else. This comes in handy when you find yourself on an open server (as opposed to a squad-organized war) with some of your squad mates and want to discuss something in private.

5.6 Gun Sights

A lot of pilots use artificial gun sights that can be easily created and added to your game. There's an **RB2sight** "ReadMe" file located in your Red Baron folder (where you found the **mplayer.ini** file) that contains complete instructions on how to do this. Gun sights can be a real boost to your gunnery skills, particularly while flying in transparent cockpit mode.

5.7 Unofficial Patches (UOPs)

As mentioned earlier, some real computer gurus who also happen to be RB3D aficionados have created some wonderful patches that greatly enhance the "stock" game. You name it, and they've created a patch to improve it—e.g., graphics, sounds, aircraft, even flight/damage models that provide the added benefit of making the AI pilots in SP smarter, more aggressive, and tougher to shoot down. You can even change the game's menu music. They're called "unofficial" patches because they've been created by individual gamers and not by Sierra/Dynamix. As such, Sierra/Dynamix will not accept any responsibility for damage that you might do to your game as a

result of downloading one or more of these unofficial add-ons. Still, a lot of pilots are using them without any serious problems whatsoever and absolutely love them. I'm one of them!

5.8 Campaign Manager

If you get serious about patches and add-ons, you should know that some won't work unless you have a Voodoo card (mostly the graphics patches). Some only work in SP and not in MMP, and some of the patches aren't compatible with other patches—it can get complicated. For this reason, if you choose to start playing with patches, I highly recommend that you first download the Campaign Manager program written by von Tom. Campaign Manager makes adding and removing patches a snap.

You can find von Tom's Campaign Manager at **Wings of Valor** in the "Files" section. As a side note, Campaign Manager also comes with a built-in "crosshairs" check box in its *Preferences* section that will activate a little built-in gun sight so you don't have to mess around building your own **rb2sight.inf** file.

5.9 Joysticks

Although there are pilots out there flying quite well with low-end joysticks—and even some with nothing more than the keyboard—do yourself a favor and invest in a joystick with programmable buttons and a "twisty" handle for rudder control. You'll be glad you did. You'll find many different models to choose from at a price guaranteed to fit almost any budget.

6. RESOURCES

Sierra/Dynamix discontinued RB3D a couple of years ago. The good news is that there is a huge amount of material that has been created to add to your enjoyment and more is being created every day. However, all of this is of little value unless you know where to find it.

There are several web sites that can either provide you with this material or point you to the place to get it. Some of these sites have forums where you can participate in on-line discussions. These are great sources for the answers to any of your questions.

Wings of Valor

(<http://wingsofvalor.xnbc.org>)

This web site has become a central focal point for the Red Baron community and a great place to start when looking for information. There is a forum, a listing of squadrons, an ever-growing files section, and links to other RB3D-related web sites.

Flybert's Chateau

(www.flybert.net)

As mentioned, virtually all of the dedicated on-line pilots out there are flying with customized paint schemes for their aircraft. Some of these paint schemes were created by either the pilots themselves or by the on-line squadrons. In order to see all of the pretty colors, however, everyone must have the same paint schemes loaded onto their computers. WWFlybert, a long-time member of the RB3D community, has dedicated his web site to collecting most if not all of the custom paint schemes that are out there and putting them together in one convenient place for downloading. There is a lot to download but trust me when I say that it is well worth the time and effort.

NOTE: Once you've downloaded the paint scheme files, go to *Preferences* on your *Pilot Roster* screen. There is a box for paint schemes. You need to change it from "Default" to "Custom."

Delphi – Flight Simulator Forum

(<http://www.delphiforums.com/>)

Delphi hosts several forums that might be interest. The largest is the Flight Simulator Forum. Others include the *Society of World War I Simulation Artisans* (SWWISA) and the *Red Baron Arena*. They can all be found at Delphi. You must register to read and post in the forums, but it is free.

SimHQ

(www.simhq.com)

This is a web site dedicated to flight simulators of all kinds. There is also a useful forum with a section for RB3D.

KALI

(<http://www.kali.net/js/welcome.html>)

A lot of pilots use **KALI** as their platform-of-choice for launching RB3D on-line. When you access **KALI**, go to their "Downloads" section to download the necessary software. **KALI** charges a one-time fee of \$20 to utilize their services. However, you are able to use their software free-of-charge in "demo" mode. The "demo" mode automatically shuts down after fifteen minutes, which is more than enough time to access a server and get going. You are not booted off the server when the **KALI** "demo" shuts down. The only problem that has been reported is that programmed joystick buttons might return to their factory default mode when the "demo" times out.

End It All 2

(<http://www.pcmag.com/article/0,2997,s%253D1478%2526a%253D13909,00.asp>)

This is a utility that will remove all of the extraneous routines that are running in the background of your computer that can adversely impact FPS.

7. CLOSING COMMENTS

Well, there you have it—over two years of learning experience crammed into one tutorial. I wish I'd had this document available when I flew on-line for the first time; it would have accelerated the learning curve and greatly enhanced my enjoyment of MMP.

Good luck, and good hunting!

LW_Herr Mac

Member of the Lone Wulffe Squadron

“Ärgere den Wulffe, fürchte das Rudel!”