



DZO MODERN:



THRILLING TALES



ADVANCED CLASS:

AIR ACE

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The engine screamed as “Barnstormer” Burton pushed the plane into a power dive. At these speeds, the wings of a lesser aircraft would have been torn off, sending the pilot to his doom, but Burton was confident that his custom work on the Silver Swan would hold up--at least long enough to ditch the two Air Pirates who were currently roaring after him, weapons blazing.

At the last possible second, Burton pulled back hard on the control stick, and the Silver Swan leapt skyward again, at a nearly impossible angle. As he spiralled the plane into a tight barrel roll, Burton heard the explosions as the vile Air Pirates tried and failed to match the maneuver.

The Air Ace is an archetype of the pulp genre. Examples include G-8 and his Battle Aces, Dusty Ayres, Bill Barnes, and the hero of the recent film *Sky Captain & The World of Tomorrow*.

The 1930s, the heyday of the pulp magazines, was a time of extreme enthusiasm about aviation--travelling by air had not yet become commonplace, and was seen during the Depression as a romantic escape from earthbound problems. The pilot was seen as a dashing heroic figure, and the pulps provided many such heroes to thrill readers.

Many of the air heroes of the pulps were World War I flying aces, fighting against the Germans in what at the time was known as “the Great War.” The stories weren’t limited to simple adventure tales of the air war, however--the most popular of the air hero pulps, G-8, featured flying armies of zombies,



giant bats, supervillains and more.

The contemporary air heroes flew aircraft at the cutting edge of aviation (and beyond)--in tales that were the period

equivalent of near-future Science Fiction.

Air Aces are the daredevil defenders of the skies, and their adventures should focus on aviation-based threats and far-flung travel--everything from dogfights with air pirates to infiltrating the flying fortress of a world-conquering madman

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become an Air Ace, a character must fulfill the following criteria:

Base Attack Bonus: +2

Skills: Craft (mechanical) 6 ranks, Pilot 6 ranks

Feats: Aircraft Operation

CLASS INFORMATION

Hit Die: The Air Ace gains 1d10 hit points per level. The character’s Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points: The Air Ace gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The Air Ace’s class skills are as follows: Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft(mechanical)(Int), Drive (Dex), Knowledge (Physical Sciences, Tactics,

Technology (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Navigate (Int), Pilot (Dex), Read/Write Language (none), Repair (Int), Research (Int), Search (Int), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5
+ Int Modifier

Bonus Feat: At 1st, 4th, 7th and 9th level, the Air Ace gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Air Ace must meet all the prerequisites of the feat .



Builder, Cautious, Dead Aim, Far Shot, Focused, Gearhead, Heroic Surge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Strafe, Vehicle Dodge, Vehicle Expert

CLASS FEATURES

The following features pertain to the Air Ace advanced class.

Favored Aircraft: At 1st, 3rd, 5th and 8th level, the Air Ace can designate a particular model of aircraft as a favored aircraft, gaining a +2 bonus to Craft (Mechanical), Knowledge, Pilot and Repair checks involving that model. At the players discretion, with the GM's approval, additional Favored Aircraft slots can be spent on an existing model, increasing the bonus by a further +2 per slot.

Elbow Grease: Starting at 2nd level, the Air Ace gains a +2 competence bonus to Craft (Mechanical) and Repair checks. This bonus increases to +4 at 4th level, and +6 at 7th level. This bonus is in addition to any bonuses due to Favored Aircraft status.

Soup Her Up: Starting at 5th level, any individual aircraft that the Air Ace has designated as a Favored Aircraft, and that he works on or flies at least once per week, increases all of its traits by 25% (For example, a plane with a top speed of 200 mph would now have a top speed of 250mph). At 9th

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+1	+0	+2	+0	Favored Aircraft, Bonus Feat	+1	+1
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+1	Elbow Grease +2,	+1	+1
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+2	2nd Favored Aircraft	+2	+1
4th	+3	+1	+4	+2	Elbow Grease +4, Bonus Feat	+2	+2
5th	+3	+2	+4	+3	Soup Her Up (25%) 3rd Favored Aircraft	+3	+2
6th	+4	+2	+5	+3	Signature Aircraft	+3	+2
7th	+4	+3	+5	+4	Bonus Feat, Elbow Grease +6	+4	+3
8th	+5	+3	+6	+4	4th Favored Aircraft	+4	+3
9th	+6	+4	+6	+5	Bonus Feat, Soup Her Up (50%)	+5	+3
10th	+7	+4	+7	+5	"That's Impossible!"	+5	+4

level, this bonus rises to a 50% increase to all of the aircraft's traits.

This bonus applies to all traits, regardless of what particular d20 vehicle rules system you're using.

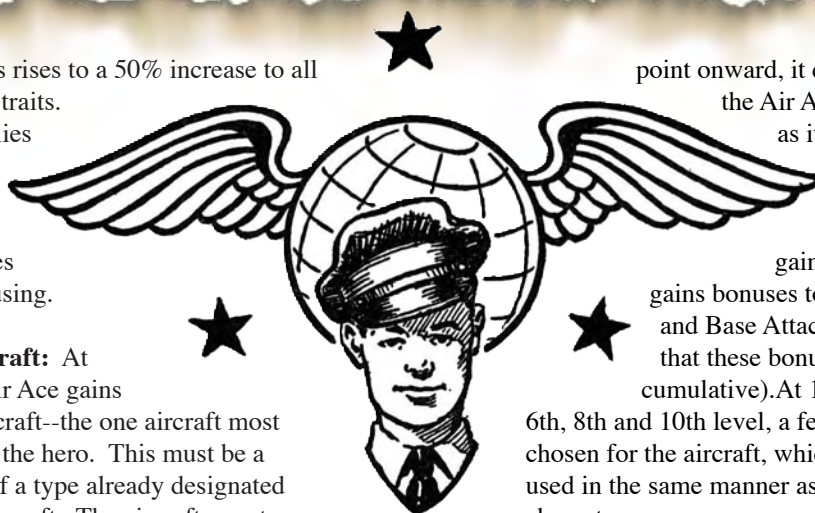
Signature Aircraft: At 6th level, the Air Ace gains a Signature Aircraft--the one aircraft most associated with the hero. This must be a single aircraft of a type already designated as a Favored Aircraft. The aircraft counts as a Mastercraft item, offering a +3 bonus to use. (In addition to the bonuses due to Favored status).

In addition, the aircraft itself becomes an NPC, with the "Signature Aircraft" NPC class (**Sig**), and is capable of gaining feats (see below)--from that

point onward, it draws 10% of the Air Ace's experience as its own.

As the aircraft gains levels, it gains bonuses to Defense and Base Attack Bonus (note that these bonuses are not cumulative). At 1st, 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th and 10th level, a feat may be chosen for the aircraft, which can be used in the same manner as if it were a character.

A Signature Aircraft that comes under the control of someone other than the Air Ace will retain the benefits of the NPC class, as long as the new owners maintain the tithe of 10% of their experience awards.



SIGNATURE AIRCRAFT

Level	Defense Bonus	Base Attack Bonus	Special
1	+1	-	Bonus Feat
2	+1	+1	Bonus Feat
3	+2	+2	
4	+2	+3	Bonus Feat
5	+3	+4	
6	+3	+5	Bonus Feat
7	+4	+6	
8	+4	+7	Bonus Feat
9	+5	+8	
10	+5	+9	Bonus Feat

The Bonus feats for a Signature Aircraft must be taken from the following list, and are able to be used by the aircraft in the manner described:

Alertness: Gives the bonus to PCs using the aircraft's radar, etc.

Burst Fire: The aircraft's weapons are capable of Burst Fire.

Dead Aim: The aircraft's targeting system give a bonus while aiming.

Dodge: The aircraft is capable of dodging, even if the pilot does not possess the Vehicle Dodge feat.

Elusive Target: In a fight with multiple opponents, the aircraft is hard to hit due to its maneuverability.

Far Shot: The aircraft's weapons have greater range.

Frightful Presence: The aircraft is infamous, striking fear into the hearts of enemies.

Improved Initiative: The aircraft's speed and maneuverability bestow a bonus to the pilot's initiative roll.

Lightning Reflexes: The aircraft offers a +2 bonus on Reflex saves

Strafe: The aircraft's weapons are capable of strafing fire.

Toughness: The aircraft gains a +3 bonus to hit points (or the equivalent, depending on the d20 vehicle rules used). This can be taken multiple times.

Additionally, future ***THRILLING TALES*** products will contain new vehicle-specific feats, and of course, Gamemasters are free to invent their own.

“That’s Impossible!”: At 10th level, the Air Ace gains the final class ability--once per game session while piloting an aircraft, the Air Ace can force it to utterly defy physics for one maneuver. A helicopter can be made to vertically loop, a airplane can come to a complete stop or suddenly fly backwards, etc. The effect of this action upon movement, combat, or chases are determined by the Gamemaster, in accordance with the particular d20 vehicle rules being used.

