

arBirds away! - [Lawrence Nyveen](#)

There have been a lot of flight Sims. There continues to be a lot of flight Sims. And new flight Sims will always keep popping up.

WarBirds is one of those flight Sims. Once upon a time, a bunch of Air Warrior players took to heart the adage that if you want something done right, you have to do it yourself. So they did.

WarBirds covers WWII, from the Spitfire Mk I, Bf 109E, and Stuka of the Battle of Britain to the B-17G, Spitfire Mk XIV, and F4U-4 to the jet-powered Me 262. It doesn't have all the planes that fought in the war, but it does offer more than 50.

There are two kinds of combat flight Sims - multi player and not. Boxed games that let you fly within the confines of a CD-ROM against artificial opponents soon lose their magic and take up more of your shelf space than your time. When you fly in a multi player combat, you fly against unpredictable, dangerous human beings. You'll always find someone who wants to separate you from your shoes - the challenge never goes away.

To my mind, WarBirds stands head and wings above any comers for the title of best multi player combat flight sim. Heck, I'd even rank it ahead of any boxed game, too. The designers spend countless hours refining and tuning the flight models until - well, there is no until. It's an ongoing process. Computer flying isn't real flying. There are no G-forces and it's easier to attack aggressively with a computer than it is to put your real life on the line. Still, among the guys who prefer as realistic a ride as possible - no matter the computer platform - WarBirds is it.

o top it all off, the software is free. You can download the software at no cost and fly around shooting drones to your heart's - and wallet's - content. You can even play head-to-head with one other pilot over the Net for [free](#).

WarBirds shines, however, when you set up an account, which costs about \$10 a month. The fee entitles you to unlimited time in a free instant action arena that uses a simpler flight model and five hours in the pay-to-play "real" arenas. Any time beyond five hours spent in the pay-to-play arenas will cost you \$2 per hour. Should you find yourself regularly spending 20 hours or more a month, you can take advantage of payment plans that charge \$1.50 an hour for a block of time.

Along with an account comes exposure to the WarBirds community. You'll find fellow pilots to be supportive and helpful - we all like fresh meat, you know. Seriously, you'll find many resources, official and unofficial, to help ease your entry into the WarBirds world. Visit the official Mac help pages at <http://www3.imagiconline.com/machelp/>

There's a raft of unofficial online Mac resources too; you can find the best culled at my Web site at

<http://101.warbirds.org/wblinks.html>

I can't sum up the game in any way other than admitting that since I started flying WarBirds, I have barely touched another game of any kind. It's that immersive.

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