

BATTLEWAGON



TASK
FORCE
GAMES

2011

BATTLEWAGON



RULES OF PLAY



BATTLEWAGON RULES OF PLAY

(A) INTRODUCTION

(A1) HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In October of 1906, the first of a new type of battleship, *HMS Dreadnought*, entered service with the Royal Navy. "Dreadnought" was a fitting term for this new type of ship which rendered all existing battleships obsolete.

Prior to the *Dreadnought*, the typical battleship displaced approximately 15,000 tons and was capable of a maximum speed of 18 to 19 knots. There were normally four 12-inch guns on these ships in two centerline turrets, one each fore and aft of the superstructure. In the superstructure itself, carried in turrets or casemats, would be a secondary battery of four to ten guns of 6- to 9-inch caliber. Some battleships had a tertiary battery of 4- to 6-inch guns, and all had an "anti-torpedo" battery of 3-inch guns to drive off torpedo boats and destroyers.

The philosophy behind the varied armament of these battleships was that the larger, long-range guns would be needed at the beginning of a battle; but as range decreased, the greater number and faster firing of the secondary guns would more than make up for what these guns lacked in power. However, events in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904 and '05 cast doubts on this reasoning, and the argument for ships with "all big guns" gained adherents.

The *Dreadnought* was the ultimate expression of the "all big gun" theory. She mounted ten 12-inch guns in five turrets (three on the centerline and two more outboard of the superstructure). This provided her a broadside of eight guns — twice the number of a pre-dreadnought battleship — which her maximum speed of 21 knots enabled her to choose the range at which she would fight.

Before the *Dreadnought* era, fleet reconnaissance had been taken care of by light cruisers — relatively unprotected ships with approximately a 4000-ton displacement, 4- to 6-inch guns and a top speed of 28 knots. To support these reconnaissance units, navies built "armored cruisers" with an approximate displacement of 10,000 tons and a maximum speed of 22 knots. These armored cruisers were essentially miniature battleships equipped with less armor and smaller guns. However, since the new dreadnoughts were as fast as the old armored cruisers, a new heavy reconnaissance vessel was needed.

Great Britain's solution to this problem was to build three ships which were bigger and faster than the original *Dreadnought*, but which were equipped with 6-inch belt armor rather than the 11-inch armor of the *Dreadnought*. Britain called these new ships "battlecruisers." The German solution was the *Blucher*, a newly-constructed version of the basic German dreadnought design. This new version mounted 8.2-inch guns, was capable of light cruiser speeds and had armored cruiser protection.

British battlecruisers had always been lightly armored when compared with British battleships; but it was in the design of the *Courageous* and its sister ships that this characteristic was carried to its extreme. These ships all displaced 18,600 tons and mounted four 15-inch guns, but carried only three inches of armor. The Germans, on the other hand, built battleships which gave up little firepower for speed and maintained far better protection than their likely opponents, the British.

Battlecruisers, as a class, became obsolete with the end of the Great War. None were built after World War I, and those which survived were either refitted with more armor or converted to carriers. Even the World War II *Scharnhorst* class was

actually made up of small battleships rather than battlecruisers.

It was the United States which led the development of battleships from the beginning. The *U.S.S. Michigan* was vastly superior to the *Dreadnought* in many ways. For instance, the *Michigan* had all her guns on the centerline, solving the problem of protecting superimposed barbets, and was also far better protected than her British rival.

The *Michigan* had already been conceived and her construction had begun when Admiral Sir John Fisher, First Sea Lord of the British Admiralty, won his battle to turn the *Dreadnought* loose on the world. Only the remarkable speed of the *Dreadnought's* construction allowed her to be the first ship with "all big guns." Yet despite this distinction, the *Dreadnought's* internal watertight-compartment arrangement and armor were no better than most pre-dreadnought battleships. The British Naval propaganda machine has done well these past seventy-five years to establish the *Dreadnought*, rather than the *Michigan*, as the first "modern" battleship.

Had Fisher had his way with the *Dreadnought*, she would have mounted no secondary guns at all; but Fisher was forced to allow the *Dreadnought* an anti-torpedo battery of some two dozen 12-pounders, which were bolted down wherever space could be found (including turret roofs). It should be noted that every subsequent British dreadnought had a secondary battery of at least 4-inch guns. By 1912, the secondary battery was made up of 6-inch guns behind armor. The rest of the world had generally included 5- or 6-inch guns from the outset. Thus, in effect, the *Dreadnought* as an "all-big-gun" ship only eliminated the medium guns from the battery.

In the final analysis, it was the American *Iowa* class battleship which set the highest standard for excellence. The "all or nothing" armor protection system used in this class was subsequently adopted world-wide.

The angular dreadnoughts of World War I were obsolete by the end of the war. The few not scrapped or scuttled were largely rebuilt to provide more protection and efficiency, and then reigned over the seas until rearmament in the 1930s saw a new generation of clean, sleek and even deadlier steel monsters take to the oceans. Though eclipsed by aircraft carriers during World War II, dreadnoughts retained their ability to absorb massive damage. Even now, the U.S. Navy has reactivated some of the "mothballed" *Iowa* class battleships, while the Soviets are building nuclear-powered surface combatants larger than any of the first-generation dreadnoughts. The romance of the "battlewagon" lives on.

(A2) HOW TO GET STARTED

Make several photocopies of the three Ship System Display pages (permission is granted to copy these pages). Place the mapsheet on a flat playing surface and the playing-pieces and the dice in a convenient spot near the map. A pencil or other writing instrument is necessary for each player, and blank paper will also prove useful.

NEW GAMERS:

If a player is unfamiliar with this type of game, he should read the following rule sections and cases (ignoring all optional rules): **A** = all; **B** = all; **C** = all; **D** = 1 through 8, 10 and 12 only; **E** = 1 through 3 only; **F** = 1, 2.1, 4 and 5 only; **G** = 1 through 4, 5.32 and 6 only; **H** = none; **I** = 1 through 4 only; **J** = all; **K** = none; **L** = none; **M** = 1 only. The player should then read *River Platte*, scenario (M3.1).

After reading the scenario, the Ship System Displays (or SSDs) should be filled out. Two copies of the cruiser/merchant ship SSD page are necessary for this. Find the data on the German *Graf Spee* in rule section (L5) and the data on the British

ships in section (L3). First, enter the data on the SSD for the *Graf Spee* by referring to section (I2.1), which has an example of a completed SSD for this ship. If necessary, read again all of rule section (I2), which explains how SSDs are filled out. Either of the two prepared SSDs for cruiser designs will fit any of the four ships in the *River Platte* scenario with only minor alterations. One should next study the Player's Information section so that he can quickly find any tables which are called for during play.

The player is now ready to recreate the battle of the River Platte. This scenario (M3.1) lists the setup location along with the beginning speed and heading for each ship. The scenario also gives the conditions under which the battle was fought, and tells how to determine when the scenario should end and which player has won. The turn marker should be placed on the top left-hand edge of the map, in hex number 0101. This turn marker will be used to keep track of the number of turns which has elapsed.

EXPERIENCED GAMERS:

Experienced gamers should read the entire rulebook, ignoring optional rules, and then pick a scenario of particular interest. Optional rules may be added to the game by the mutual consent of the players. Doing so will add more detail to the game, but will make play of the game more complex.

This rulebook contains the information necessary to recreate almost any naval surface action which took place between 1914 and 1945. Players may research a battle and then use the information to set up their own scenarios. It is also possible to set up scenarios based on hypothetical battles.

Follow the setup instructions included with whichever scenario is being played. Be sure to note observation conditions, sea state and any special rules. Record all pertinent information on the Ship System Displays (SSDs) for the ships involved in the scenario. Place the turn marker on the top left-hand edge of the map in hex number 0101. This turn marker will be used to keep track of the number of turns which has elapsed.

(A3) HOW TO READ THE RULES

Each rule is indexed by a letter followed by a one- or two-digit number. This number may be followed by a decimal-point and up to two additional digits.

The letter used in this system designates the section to which the rule belongs. The one- or two-digit number designates the case within the rule section. Numbers to the right of a decimal-point designate the sub-cases within a case.

A Rule Summary [section (P)] is provided to aid players in locating specific rule sections or cases. The rules are also internally cross-referenced, using the index system described above, to aid players in locating important concepts referred to in other rules.

(A4) GAME COMPONENTS

A complete game-set of *BATTLEWAGON* contains the following:

- One rulebook
- One sheet of 108 playing-pieces
- One game mapsheet

Not included in the game but required for play are a writing instrument for each player, photocopies of the Ship System Displays (SSDs) and two six-sided dice. Blank paper is also necessary in some instances.

(B) THE GAME SYSTEM

(B1) OVERVIEW OF THE GAME

BATTLEWAGON is a tactical game of combat at sea. It is basically a two-player game, but may have more players if each of them commands only a part of the forces of one side.

Each turn of the game is divided into six "impulses" [see (C2)]. During each impulse, ships may move a number of spaces which varies with their speed, and then fire their weapons.

Each gun or other weapon has factors which are used to represent what the weapon is capable of. Combat Results Tables (or CRTs) are used to correlate these weapon-factors with a die-roll and probable outcomes to determine what effect, if any, the weapon has on a targeted ship. Damage is allocated by additional die-rolls. Any system which is determined to be destroyed is then marked off the SSD of the targeted ship.

(B2) THE GAME SCALE

Each hex on the *BATTLEWAGON* map represents 2,000 yards from hexside to opposite hexside. Each turn represents 10 minutes of actual time (each impulse represents 100 seconds). Ship playing-pieces, with the exception of merchant ships, represent one ship each. Merchant ship playing-pieces represent groups of ships which vary in number, depending on the scenario which is being played.

(B3) SHIP SYSTEM DISPLAYS (SSDs)

The SSDs consist of diagrams representing a ship's weapons and other major systems, as well as listings of factors and other data which pertain to each ship. Prior to play, the SSD should be filled out using the information found in the *Ship Data Table*, section (L).

(B4) THE MAP

The game mapsheet may be used to represent any area of ocean in which a battle is fought. A grid of numbered hexagons (hexes) has been superimposed on the mapsheet as a means of regulating the movement and positioning of ships and other playing-pieces. The numbers printed in the hexes on the mapsheet are used to specify where certain types of units are to be placed at the beginning of a scenario.

Players will notice that the mapsheet is divided into four equal sections, each of which is identified by the letter "A," "B," "C" or "D." These identifying letters and the lines dividing the mapsheet into sections are used only in conjunction with an optional rule [see (D12)]. They are completely ignored in the basic scenarios.

The mapsheet also has a set of six letters arranged in a circle in its upper right-hand corner, and a set of six numbers arranged in a circle in its lower left-hand corner. The letters will be used in the scenarios to show the initial heading (direction of movement) for the ships. The numbers are not used, and should be ignored.

(B5) THE PLAYING-PIECES

BATTLEWAGON includes one sheet of 108 playing-pieces which are used to represent ships, smoke, star shells and deck fires. There are also several game markers included on the sheet.

Each ship playing-piece contains a two-letter code to indicate the ship type, as well as an identifying number for the ship.