

# Damn the Torpedoes!

## Fast play WW2 Naval Rules

### By Kevin White

#### Equipment

I am using my 1.5 inch hex gridded surface for this game.

Counters represent individual ships and submarines on the table. One aircraft counter represents a flight (group) of aircraft. Feel free to substitute ship models and aircraft if you have them.

You will also need a standard pack of playing cards (Jokers removed).

#### Activation

Designate one side red and the other black.

Turn over a playing card.

Move and fire the activated side.

#### Movement: ships and submarines

	Hexes	Turn*
Slow (up to 19 knots)	4	1
Medium (20-29 knots)	5	1
Fast (30+ knots)	6	2

\*The number of hex sides the vessel can turn through in any given move

#### Movement: aircraft

Turn over a separate playing card for each flight

Card	# of hexes moved
2-10	As per the card
Jack	11
Queen	12
King	13
Ace	15

Aircraft can only be in the air for 10 turns before they need to return to base/aircraft carrier to refuel.

They can turn through any number of hex sides in any given move.

#### Armour Class

Up to 4 inches	Any
5 – 8 inches	Diamond Heart Spade
9 – 12 inches	Heart Spade
13+ inches	Spade

I used *Jane's Fighting Ships of World War 2* as my authority. When looking at the armour plating take the thickest armour found on the ship and use that as the default. Wikipedia is becoming more reliable as a reference for those that don't have a copy of *Jane's* handy.

## Combat

### *Detecting submarines*

All submarines start the game on the table undetected (face down). Once a unit is within ten hexes of an undetected submarine they may attempt to detect the submarine. A submarine may not be attacked until it is detected. To detect turn over three playing cards; any pair detects.

### **Firing: guns**

Class	Range	# of cards drawn
BB	15	9
CC	10	6
DD	5	3

Everything fires at effective range.

### *To hit*

Check the armour class of the target. Only cards of this suit are hits. If a target ship's armour class is "Any" all shots will cause damage, so go straight to the damage assessment.

### *Damage*

For each hit turn over another playing card and mark off the appropriate square on the damage chart.

Cards marked Ace-10 affect speed; Jacks, Queens, and Kings affect gunnery.

For each complete column marked off (e.g. all the Jacks) lose a third of the gunnery cards.

For each complete row marked off (e.g. all the Diamonds) lose one hex of speed.

### **Firing: torpedoes**

Range 10 hexes

Turn over a card for each hex between you and the target.

Any red Jack, Queen or King means the torpedo fails to hit.

For each hit turn over five cards and mark off the damage accordingly.

### **Firing: depth charges**

Range 2 hexes

Turn over 5 cards for each depth charge; Clubs are hits.

For each hit turn over five cards and mark off the damage accordingly.

### **Combat: aircraft**

#### *AA Gunnery*

Range 2 hexes

Turn over 5 cards; each Club shoots down a flight.

Each surviving flight turns over 5 cards and check against armour class for hits. For each hit turn over another playing card and mark off the appropriate square on the damage chart.

### *Dogfight*

Range            adjacent hexes

Turn over a card for each flight in contact. Highest score wins (aces are low). Remove the losers from the game.

### **Playtesting**

I have included counters and damage charts for the scenarios that I used for play testing the rules. I have also included a number of blanks for the major navies involved in the Second World War to enable you to construct your own fleets.

### *The Battle of the River Plate*

This was the first major naval battle of the war. The Kriegsmarine were using the Graf Spee, a pocket battleship, as a commerce raider in the South Atlantic, and enjoying considerable success. However the Royal Navy's South American Division was beginning to close in. On December 13<sup>th</sup> 1939 three British Cruisers (two Leander class and one York class) engaged the Graf Spee. The pocket battleship escaped to Montevideo, a neutral port. Captain Langsdorff was told that he must leave the port. He believed, mistakenly, that a far greater Royal Navy presence was waiting for him out at sea. Rather than risk losing that engagement, he took the Graf Spee out to sea and scuttled her.

In the play test the Graf Spee needed to steam the whole length of the table in order to escape into the port of Montevideo. This is a propaganda victory for the Germans. The Royal Navy must sink her to win.

Divide the Royal Navy Cruisers into two divisions. The Leander Class cruisers, Ajax and Achilles, start about half way down one long table edge and HMS Exeter starts opposite them on the other long edge.

I played this half a dozen times and the Graf Spee won twice. Despite her guns having a longer range and being more heavily armoured, the fact that she was outnumbered three to one weighed heavily in favour of the Royal Navy.

### *The Convoy Game*

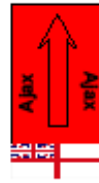
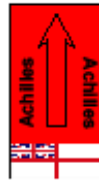
The North Atlantic convoys saw many merchant ships fall prey to marauding U-Boats operating in groups known as Wolf packs. Eventually Great Britain realised that convoys needed to be escorted. In this play test the convoy of merchant ships has to steam the whole length of the table. They are escorted by four Tribal Class Destroyers whose task is to detect and destroy the U-Boats before they cause too much damage.

I played this scenario through several times and used four U-Boats and two blanks for the play test. Put the U-Boat counters and blanks face down on the table and mix them up. Divide the counters into two groups of three counters each. Place them about half way along the long table edge on opposite sides. Until the counters are revealed they ALL count as submarines.

The U-Boats' task is to sink as many merchants as possible without incurring too much damage. Once they have sunk the majority of the merchants they may withdraw from the table if they wish. This will count as a win for the German side. The Royal Navy needs to sink the U-Boats and still have the majority of the merchant ships intact in order to win.

This was a very satisfying game with the destroyers working hard to detect the submarines. Although the U-Boats are fragile, they are hard to detect. This is a difficult scenario for the Royal Navy to win. A future article will deal with an Aircraft Carrier scenario.

SEE COUNTERS BELOW



## Counters and Damage Charts for the Battle of the River Plate

Class CC  
Name Exeter  
Speed Fast  
Armour Any

Clubs	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	J	Q	K
Diamonds	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	J	Q	K
Hearts	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	J	Q	K
Spades	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	J	Q	K

Class CC  
Name Achilles  
Speed Fast  
Armour Any

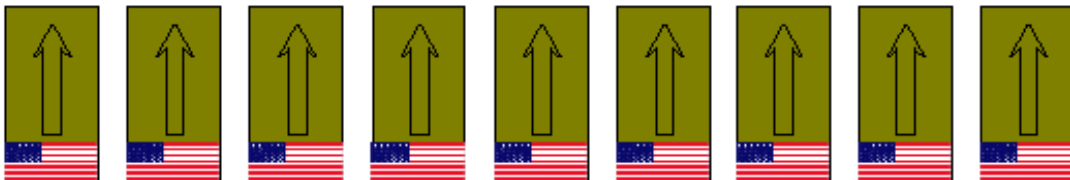
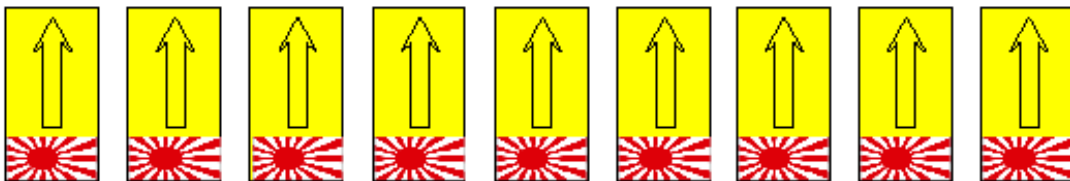
Clubs	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	J	Q	K
Diamonds	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	J	Q	K
Hearts	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	J	Q	K
Spades	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	J	Q	K

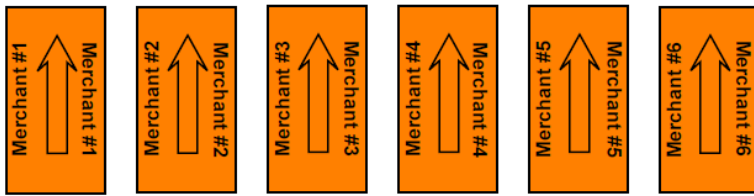
Class CC  
Name Ajax  
Speed Fast  
Armour Any

Clubs	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	J	Q	K
Diamonds	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	J	Q	K
Hearts	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	J	Q	K
Spades	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	J	Q	K

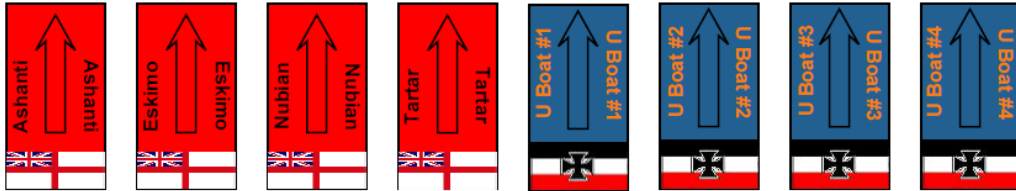
Class Pocket BB  
Name Graf Spee  
Speed Medium  
Armour Diamond Heart Spade

Clubs	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	J	Q	K
Diamonds	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	J	Q	K
Hearts	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	J	Q	K
Spades	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	J	Q	K





## Counters and Damage Charts for the Convoy Game



Class	Merchant #1	Red	o	o	o	o	o	o
Speed	Slow	Black	o	o	o	o	o	o
Armour	Any	Red	o	o	o	o	o	o
		Black	o	o	o	o	o	o

Class	Merchant #4	Red	o	o	o	o	o	o
Speed	Slow	Black	o	o	o	o	o	o
Armour	Any	Red	o	o	o	o	o	o
		Black	o	o	o	o	o	o

Class	Merchant #2	Red	o	o	o	o	o	o
Speed	Slow	Black	o	o	o	o	o	o
Armour	Any	Red	o	o	o	o	o	o
		Black	o	o	o	o	o	o

Class	Merchant #5	Red	o	o	o	o	o	o
Speed	Slow	Black	o	o	o	o	o	o
Armour	Any	Red	o	o	o	o	o	o
		Black	o	o	o	o	o	o

Class	Merchant #3	Red	o	o	o	o	o	o
Speed	Slow	Black	o	o	o	o	o	o
Armour	Any	Red	o	o	o	o	o	o
		Black	o	o	o	o	o	o

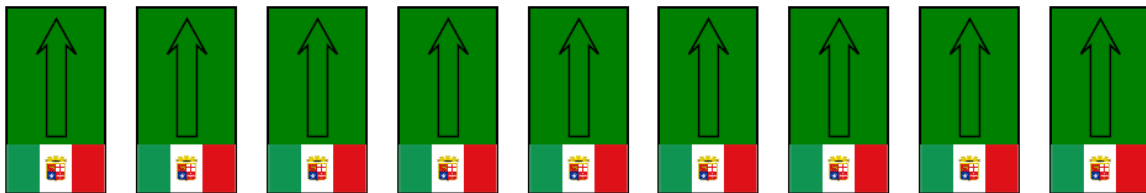
Class	Merchant #6	Red	o	o	o	o	o	o
Speed	Slow	Black	o	o	o	o	o	o
Armour	Any	Red	o	o	o	o	o	o
		Black	o	o	o	o	o	o

Class	Submarine	Red	o	o	o	o	o	o
Name	#1	Black	o	o	o	o	o	o
Speed	Slow	Red	o	o	o	o	o	o
Armour	Any	Black	o	o	o	o	o	o

Class	Submarine	Red	o	o	o	o	o	o
Name	#3	Black	o	o	o	o	o	o
Speed	Slow	Red	o	o	o	o	o	o
Armour	Any	Black	o	o	o	o	o	o

Class	Submarine	Red	o	o	o	o	o	o
Name	#2	Black	o	o	o	o	o	o
Speed	Slow	Red	o	o	o	o	o	o
Armour	Any	Black	o	o	o	o	o	o

Class	Submarine	Red	o	o	o	o	o	o
Name	#4	Black	o	o	o	o	o	o
Speed	Slow	Red	o	o	o	o	o	o
Armour	Any	Black	o	o	o	o	o	o



Class DD  
 Name Ashanti  
 Speed Fast  
 Armour Any

Clubs	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	J	Q	K
Diamonds	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	J	Q	K
Hearts	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	J	Q	K
Spades	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	J	Q	K

Class DD  
 Name Eskimo  
 Speed Fast  
 Armour Any

Clubs	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	J	Q	K
Diamonds	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	J	Q	K
Hearts	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	J	Q	K
Spades	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	J	Q	K

Class DD  
 Name Nubian  
 Speed Fast  
 Armour Any

Clubs	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	J	Q	K
Diamonds	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	J	Q	K
Hearts	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	J	Q	K
Spades	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	J	Q	K

Class DD  
 Name Tartar  
 Speed Fast  
 Armour Any

Clubs	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	J	Q	K
Diamonds	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	J	Q	K
Hearts	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	J	Q	K
Spades	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	J	Q	K

