

GRAND ADMIRAL



TM

SYSTEM RULEBOOK



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3	Scenarios	13
<i>Game Components</i>	3	<i>Breakout.....</i>	14
Playing the Game	7	<i>Fleet Action</i>	14
<i>Sequence of Play</i>	7	<i>Hit & Run</i>	15
<i>Victory!.....</i>	7	<i>The Patrol.....</i>	15
Movement	8	<i>To the Rescue.....</i>	16
Combat	9	<i>The Trap</i>	17
<i>The Attack Roll</i>	9	A Simple Campaign System	18
<i>The Damage Roll</i>	10	Using Miniatures.....	19
<i>Torpedoes</i>	11	<i>Ship Models.....</i>	19
Additional Rules	11	<i>Large-Sized Hex Boards</i>	19
<i>Same-Hex Targets</i>	11	<i>Open Tabletop</i>	20
<i>Fleet Morale</i>	11	Designer's Notes	22
<i>Single-Roll Combat Resolution</i>	12		

GRAND ADMIRAL

Written by Daniel Kast

MJG-0720

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INTRODUCTION

Individual size is needed, for specific reasons; numbers also are necessary. Between the two opposing demands there is doubtless a mean of individual size which will ensure the maximum offensive power of the fleet; for that, and not the maximum power of the single ship, is the true object of battleship construction. Battleships in all ages are meant to act together, in fleets; not singly, as mere cruisers.

– Alfred Thayer Mahan

If we had less statesmanship we could get along with fewer battleships.

– Mark Twain

Grand Admiral™ is the collective name for Majestic Twelve Games' series of large-scale board games simulating naval combat during the age of the battleship.

Emphasizing simple game mechanics and fast gameplay without sacrificing historical accuracy, each entry in the **Grand Admiral** line stands alone. However, the core game mechanics remain constant, allowing players to combine ships from different products to create new scenarios and explore any number of “what-if” situations.

Although designed as a hex-n-counter board game, **Grand Admiral** can be easily adapted to tabletop play using any scale of naval miniatures. So, raise the battle ensign, sound general quarters, and damn the torpedoes—your destiny awaits!

GAME COMPONENTS

Everything needed for play is provided, except for some dice, playing cards, and an opponent to play against.

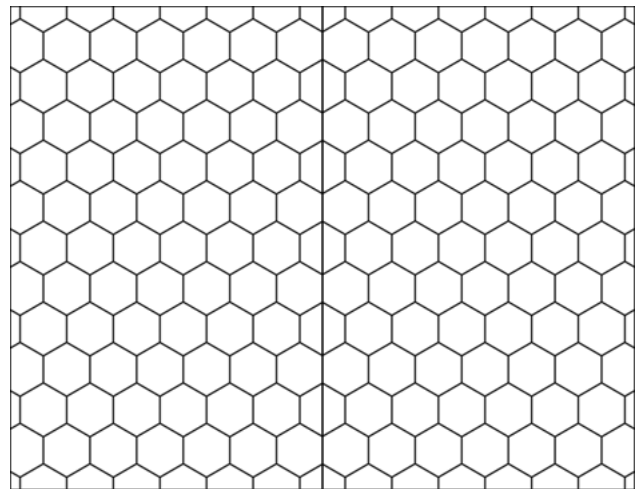
If you purchased the electronic version of this product, you will have received a single ZIP file that contains several portable document format (PDF) files. You are granted permission to make as many hard copies of each file as needed for personal use. However, the electronic files may not be redistributed without permission.

Game Board

The game board is made up of two sections, featuring a hexagonal grid pattern used to regulate movement and weapons fire.

If you purchased the electronic version of this product, open the GAMEBOARD.PDF file, which contains a game board section in both black and white and full color. Print two (2) copies of the version you prefer onto 11" by 17" paper and carefully trim the white borders using a hobby knife or pair of scissors. Note there is a 1/8" bleed around the edges of the graphic.

The game board is formed by aligning the two sections lengthwise, as shown below:



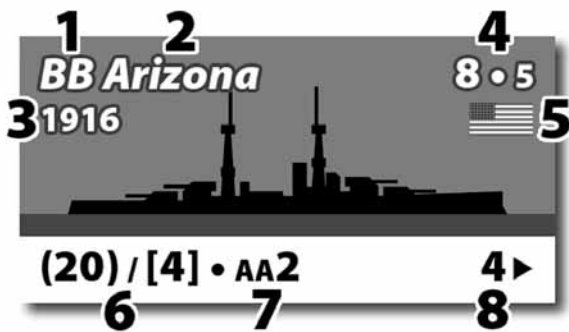
You may wish to glue the game board onto cardboard or foamcore to prevent it from shifting during play.

Each hex represents a span of open water 4000 yards across (approximately two nautical miles). The completed game board is 13 hexes long by 11 hexes wide, representing a total area of more than 500 square nautical miles.



Counters

Each ship in the game is represented by a separate playing piece, called a “counter”. Counters are double-sided: the front side (black text) represents the ship in its normal, undamaged state, while the back side (red text) reflects the loss in performance when the ship has been crippled.



In addition to an identifying silhouette, the following information is printed on each counter:

- 1) **Type:** The ship’s type. Some common types are BB (battleship), BC (battlecruiser), CA (heavy cruiser), CL (light cruiser), and DD (destroyer).

Note that some consolidation has occurred; for example, German *Große Torpedoboote* are considered destroyers. Also, the classification used is that assigned by the owning navy—thus, *Gneisenau* (1938) is a battleship (*Schlachtschiff*) and not a battlecruiser.

- 2) **Name:** The name of the ship.
- 3) **Year in Service:** The year in which the ship was commissioned. This can be used to differentiate between counters representing ships with the same name, or between counters representing different configurations of the same ship.

It can also be used to restrict the ships available to one side or the other—*e.g.* in a scenario set during 1916, no ships with a year in service of 1917 or later may participate.

- 4) **Armor:** Two armor ratings are given. The first is the ship’s Belt rating, protecting against attacks from either side of the ship. The second (in smaller print) is the ship’s End rating, protecting against attacks from the front or rear of the ship.
- 5) **Ensign.** The flag flown by the navy to which the ship belongs.

- 6) **Gun Dice:** These values indicate the number of attack dice rolled when firing each of the ship's gun batteries. They are listed according to caliber; *i.e.* the leftmost value always represents the largest guns on the ship, while the rightmost value always represents the smallest.

A number in parentheses indicates that the battery is mounted in turrets; a number in brackets denotes guns housed in casemates. See page 9 for details.

Note that the ship's gun dice are reduced when it becomes crippled.

- 7) **Anti-Aircraft Rating:** [This value is not used in the current version of the rules.]
- 8) **Speed:** An indication of how quickly the ship can move across the game board. Next to the speed is an arrow, pointing towards the front of the ship and indicating the direction of travel (its "heading").

Note that the ship's speed is reduced when it becomes crippled.

The counters require some assembly:

- 1) Fold each sheet along the indicated line (lightly scoring the sheet with a hobby knife will make this much easier).
- 2) Glue the two halves together. For added durability, you may wish to glue a piece of cardboard or chipboard between the two halves of each sheet.
- 3) Carefully separate each counter using a hobby knife, pair of scissors, or paper trimmer.

If you purchased the electronic version of this product, print the COUNTERS.PDF file onto 8.5" x 11" cardstock.

Data Sheets

In addition to the playing piece that represents it on the game board, each individual ship is listed on one of the included data sheets, which provides additional information and is used for record-keeping.

Each data sheet contains information on a particular nationality and ship type (*e.g.* "American Battleships") and includes the following information:

- **Ship Name.**
 - **Year in Service.**
 - **Victory Points:** The number of victory points (VPs) awarded to the opposing player when the ship is sunk.
 - **Hull Points:** The number of points of damage the ship can sustain before sinking. One box is checked off each time the ship suffers one point of damage.
- There are two rows of boxes: when all of the boxes in the first row have been checked off, the ship has been crippled; flip its counter over to its crippled side (red text). When all of the boxes on the second row have been checked off, the ship has been sunk; remove its counter from the game board.
- **Armor.**
 - **Speed:** Two speeds are listed, separated by a slash. The first value is used when the ship is undamaged, while the second is used when the ship is crippled.
 - **Anti-Aircraft Rating.**
 - **Torpedoes:** The number of boxes indicates the number of torpedoes carried.
 - **Guns:** The size of guns in each of the ship's batteries. They are listed in order, according to caliber; *i.e.* the largest guns are at the top, while the smallest are at the bottom.

- **Gun Dice:** Two numbers are given, separated by a slash. The first is the number of attack dice rolled when the ship is undamaged, while the second is the number of dice rolled when the ship is crippled.
- **Range & Penetration:** Each gun battery has a sequence of numbers that define both the distance at which the guns can engage the enemy and how quickly their penetration value decreases as the range to the target increases.

For game use, you may either make copies of the appropriate data sheets, or else write the necessary information onto copies of the blank data sheet.

You will also need a pencil to mark damage and record the launch of torpedoes.

Playing Cards

Grand Admiral uses playing cards to regulate the order of movement and combat.

Remove the following cards from a standard deck: two each of A, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 (one red and one black) and four face cards (two red and two black). These 16 cards make up the “action deck”.

Prior to the game, one player is designated as “Red” while the other is “Black”. Note that the card suits do not matter, only the colors.

Dice

All dice used in this game are six-sided, like those found in most family board games. While the game can be played with less, having at least a dozen dice will make things much easier.

PLAYING THE GAME

The first step in playing the game is to choose a scenario (see page 13). You and your opponent must then determine who will play which side. This can be done by mutual consent, or one player can have the option of choosing a scenario, with the other given the choice of which side to play.

Next, set the game board on a flat surface, such as a table or the floor. If not already specified by the scenario, choose the ships and/or aircraft that will make up your fleet. Place the appropriate counters on the board as directed by the scenario, with the ships' undamaged sides (black text) facing up.

Finally, each player gathers the data sheets for the ships on his/her side. Make sure you also have the action cards and dice on hand.

SEQUENCE OF PLAY

Shuffle the action deck and deal three cards to each player. You and your opponent then each roll a die: the player with the higher roll will be the first to play one card from his/her hand.

When a card is played, the appropriate action is taken as described below. Note that your hand will contain cards belonging both to you and to your opponent: much of the strategy is in deciding when to play your own card and when to play your opponent's.

- **Number Card:** The indicated player moves any or all of his/her ships with a speed equal to or greater than the value of the card (an Ace counts as 1), as described in the section on **Movement**. For example, playing a red "4" indicates that the Red player may move ships with a speed of 4, 5, or 6.
- **Face Card:** The indicated player attacks with any or all of his/her ships, as described in the section on **Combat**.



Once the action described by the card has been resolved, it is discarded. If you played the card, draw another from the deck. Your opponent then plays a card from his/her hand.

When it is your turn, you must play a card: you may not pass to your opponent, nor may you discard a card without playing it.

You and your opponent continue to alternate playing cards and drawing new ones until the action deck is exhausted. After this, play continues as before, although no new cards are drawn. Once both players' hands are empty, reshuffle the cards and repeat this process until the game ends.

VICTORY!

The game ends as soon as one player achieves the required number of victory points (VPs) as specified by the chosen scenario. Most often, VPs are earned by sinking your opponent's ships, although some scenarios may provide other means by which they may be earned.

MOVEMENT

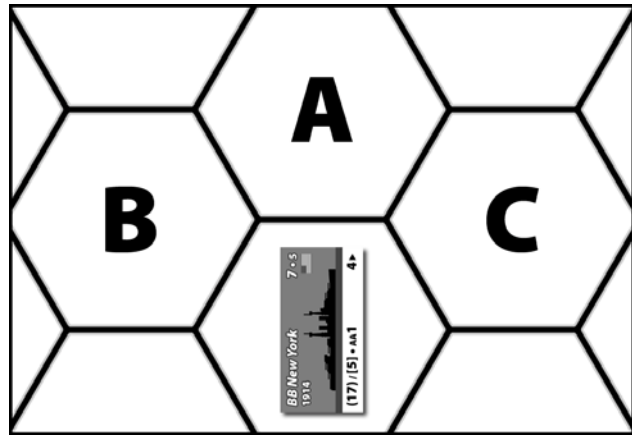
When one of your color number cards is played, you may move any or all of your ships with a speed equal to or greater than the card's value. For example, a "3" card allows you to move any or all of your ships with a speed of 3 or more. (Aces count as 1.)

You may move the eligible ships in any order you choose. When moving a ship, you may do one of two things:

- 1) You may move the ship one hex in the direction of its current heading (as indicated by the arrow on its counter).
- 2) You may change the ship's heading by one hexside to either the left or the right.

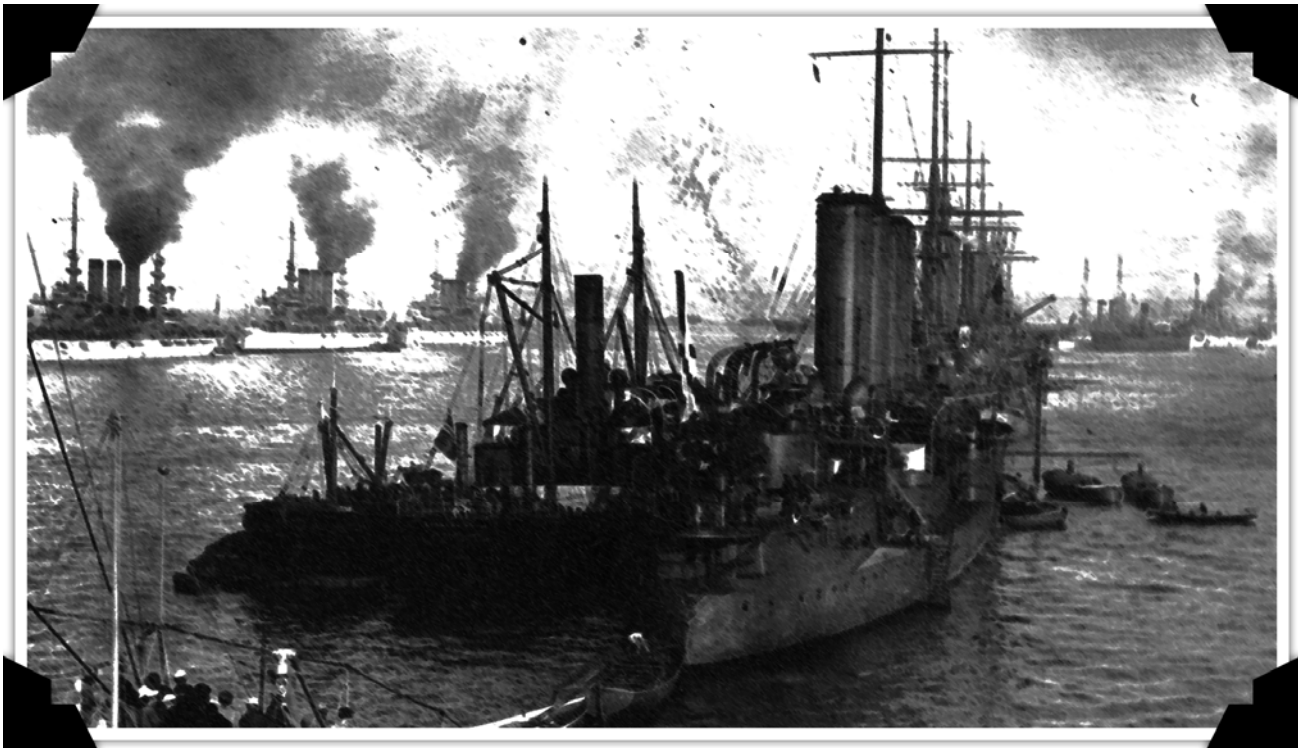
No ship is ever required to move. You may not move a ship off of the game board, unless the scenario being played specifically allows this.

Ships may not move into the half-hexes along the edges of the game board; these are considered to be out of play.



Example: BB New York is currently facing hex (A). When she has the opportunity to move, New York can either move into hex (A), turn to face hex (B), or turn to face hex (C).

A maximum of five friendly ships may co-exist in the same hex; *i.e.* you may not move a ship into a hex that already contains five of your own ships. Note that this restriction applies to each side separately—thus, your ship can move into a hex that already contains five ships, provided some of those ships belong to your opponent.



COMBAT

When one of your color face cards is played, you may fire the weapons of any or all of your ships. You may do this in whatever order you choose; however, all of one ship's attacks must be resolved before moving on to the next.

A gun battery may only attack one target at a time; however, each battery on a ship may attack a different target. The targets for all of a ship's batteries must be announced to your opponent before you start rolling any dice.

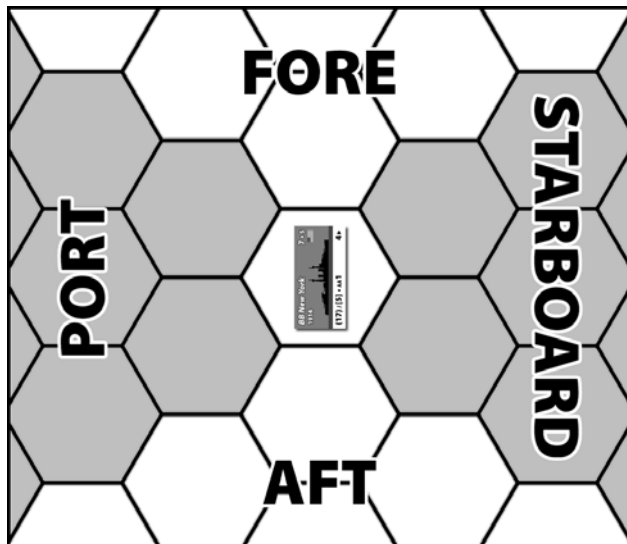
THE ATTACK ROLL

The first step in making an attack is to roll a number of attack dice. The results of these dice will determine the number of hits (if any) scored on the target.

To determine the number of attack dice, consult the "DICE" column of the firing ship's data sheet. The first value is used if the firing ship is undamaged, while the second applies if the firing ship is crippled.

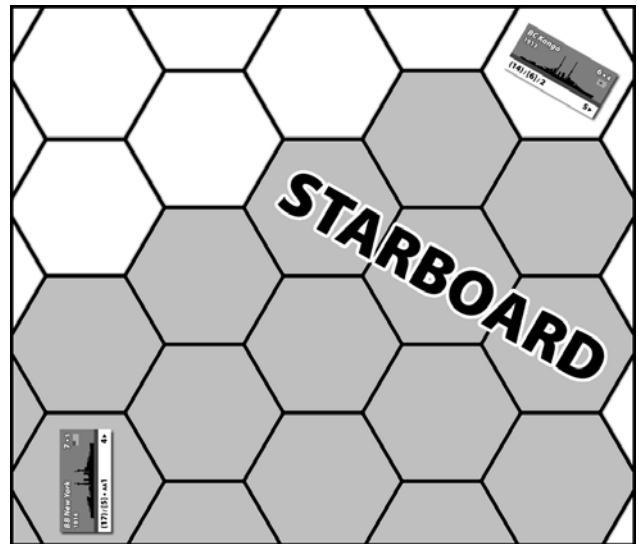
Firing Arcs

All ships have four firing arcs, as shown below:



By default, guns may fire in any direction, without modification. There are two exceptions, however:

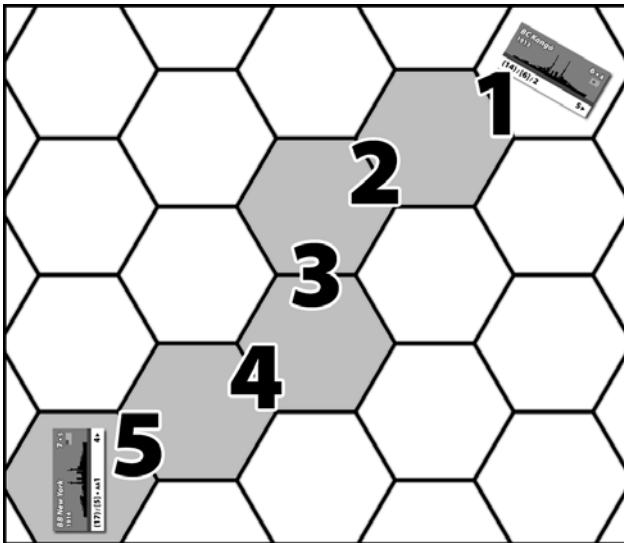
- 1) When turrets (indicated by parentheses around the gun dice) fire into the fore or aft arc, the number of attack dice is cut in half, rounded up.
- 2) Casemated guns (denoted by brackets around the gun dice) may only fire at a target in either the port or starboard arc.



Example: BC Kongō is firing her turreted 14"/45 guns at BB New York. Kongō is undamaged, so the first number of gun dice applies. New York is in Kongō's starboard firing arc, therefore the number of dice is not reduced. As a result, Kongō will roll 14 attack dice. Had New York been in Kongō's fore or aft arc, the number of dice would have been reduced to 7.

Range

The distance from the firing ship to the target is determined by counting the number of hexes along the shortest path between the two. Include the target's hex, but do not count the hex occupied by the firing ship.



Example (cont'd): Counting the number of hexes along the shortest path between BC Kongō and BB New York, we see that the distance between the ships is five hexes.

Cross-reference the distance to the target with the firing guns' range and penetration sequence. If the number listed is white on a dark background, the target is at short range; if the number is black on a white background, the target is at long range. If no number is given, the target is out of range and may not be attacked. (Note that there is a difference between zero (0) and "no number".)

If the target is at short range, each attack die that comes up 5 or 6 scores one hit. If the target is at long range, a hit is scored on each result of 6.

Example (cont'd): Consulting BC Kongō's data sheet, we see that the fifth number in the 14"/45 guns' range and penetration sequence (3) is black on a white background, indicating that BB New York is at long range.

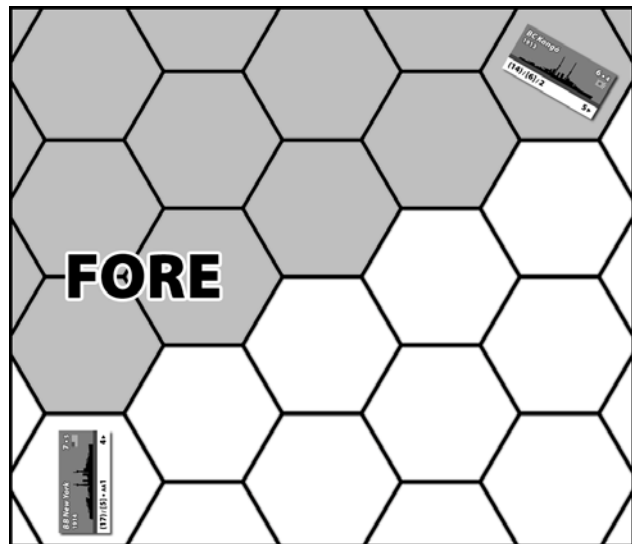
The attack dice are rolled, coming up 4, 4, 3, 6, 3, 1, 1, 2, 1, 3, 6, 5, 2, and 6. As a result, three hits are scored on New York.

THE DAMAGE ROLL

If the attack scores any hits, the next step is to determine whether any damage is inflicted on the target. Roll one die for each hit scored; each die that equals or exceeds the target number scores one point of damage.

To determine the target number, cross-reference the distance to the target with the firing guns' range and penetration sequence. The number listed is the guns' penetration value. Subtract this from the target's armor rating; the result is the target number.

If the firing ship is in the target's port or starboard firing arc, the target's belt armor rating is used for this calculation; otherwise, use the target's end armor rating.



Example (cont'd): BC Kongō's 14"/45 guns have a penetration value of 3 at a distance of five hexes. Kongō is in BB New York's fore firing arc, so the target's end armor rating is consulted, which is 5. Subtracting 3 from 5 yields a target number of 2.

Three hits were scored, so three damage dice are rolled, coming up 1, 2, and 5. As a result, two points of damage are scored on New York.

Regardless of the target number, any damage die that comes up 6 automatically scores one point of damage. Conversely, any die that comes up 1 fails to score damage.

TORPEDOES

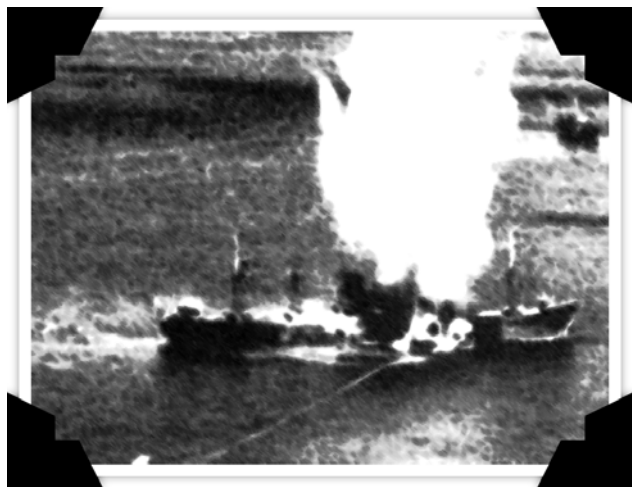
Torpedo attacks are announced at the same time targets are declared for a ship's guns. You must declare the target of the attack and the number of torpedoes to be launched.

Torpedoes may attack a target in any of the four firing arcs, and have a maximum range of one hex.

Roll one attack die per torpedo launched: each result of 6 scores one hit on the target. A torpedo hit automatically causes one point of damage; no damage roll is required.

The number of torpedoes carried by a ship is indicated by the number of boxes on its data sheet. Check off one box for each torpedo launched: when all of the boxes have been checked, the ship is out of torpedoes.

When a ship becomes crippled, immediately check off one-half of its remaining torpedo boxes, rounded up; e.g. if a ship with three torpedoes remaining becomes crippled, two of its torpedo boxes should be checked off.



ADDITIONAL RULES

SAME-HEX TARGETS

Occasionally, you may find yourself making an attack against a target located in the same hex as the firing ship. In this case, the following rules apply:

- 1) The target is considered to be in the firing ship's port or starboard firing arc.
- 2) The target is considered to be at a range of one hex.
- 3) The target's belt armor rating is used.

FLEET MORALE

This rule is optional, and accounts for the effects of morale on the performance of a fleet. A fleet with good officers and training will fight on longer than one with poor leadership or little fighting spirit.

If using this rule, each fleet will have one of five morale levels. Unless specified by a particular scenario, these levels may be chosen freely by each player.

<u>Morale Level</u>	<u>Modifiers</u>
Poor	+10% / -20%
Fair.....	+5% / -10%
Average.....	None
Good.....	-5% / +10%
Exceptional.....	-10% / +20%

The first modifier is applied to your point limit for the scenario, while the second is applied to your opponent's victory target.

Example: You are the defender in a "Hit & Run" scenario (p.15). Normally, your point limit would be 500, while your opponent would need to score 200 VPs in order to claim victory. If your fleet is given a "Fair" morale level, your point limit would increase to 525 (500 + 5%) while your opponent's victory target would reduce to 180 (200 - 10%).

DESIGNER'S NOTES

These last pages contain various tidbits and bits in an effort to explain a few of the “whys”, “wherefores” and “what-were-you-thinkings” involved in the development of this game. If you have other questions, don't hesitate to ask; click on over to the Majestic Twelve Games discussion forum and fire away!

Perhaps the biggest question in some people's minds will be “What about **Grand Fleets**?” The short answer is: I'm not sure. Certainly, there is a significant overlap between the two games—but just as certainly, there are a number of differences; not least of which is the intended scale of each.

Whereas **Grand Fleets** is well-suited to small- to medium-sized engagements, few will have the inclination to use that game for anything larger than the Battle of Dogger Bank. Meanwhile, **Grand Admiral** will allow players to refight Tsushima or even Jutland with relative ease.

On the other hand, with so much competing for gamers' attention these days, the appeal of “pick up and play” games has never been greater. Most of us will never get over our love for well-painted hunks of lead and voluminous rulebooks—but relatively attractive, ready-to-use counters and a game board small enough to lay down pretty much anywhere mean that **Grand Admiral** is likely to get more playing time than its older brother.

Initially, my plan was to design **Grand Admiral** so that everything needed to play the game was printed on each ship counter. However, this would have meant consolidating guns into very broad categories; for example, Light, Medium, Heavy, and Super-Heavy. While this was a valid option, I decided against it for a couple of reasons:

- First, I was unable to come up with reasonable groupings that didn't “wash out” differences between individual guns to an unacceptable degree. Not only is the difference between a 12” gun and a 13.5” gun worth retaining, but it can't even be said that all 12” guns are created equal.
- Second, as it became apparent that record-keeping was going to be needed anyway (in order to track damage), there was no reason not to list specific range and penetration information on the data sheets.
- Finally, this decision had the happy consequence of allowing players to dispense with the counters and use miniatures instead, since all of the information on a ship's counter is duplicated on its data sheet entry.

Specific and credible information regarding the spacing of ships in a line of battle is difficult to obtain. Those historical records I have been able to track down indicate that somewhere between two and four cables was the norm, with measurements taken from bridge to bridge (10 cables = 1 nautical mile).

For example, Admiral Makaroff's Battle Instructions of March 17, 1904, state that by spacing themselves at two cables, the Russians hoped to bring three ships to bear against two of the enemy's. This implies the Japanese battleships were expected to be three cables apart. Meanwhile, firsthand accounts of the Battle of Jutland in 1916 state the British battlecruisers were spaced at 500 yards (2½ cables). Finally, during their engagement with *Bismarck* in 1941, the distance between HMS *Hood* and HMS *Prince of Wales* was about four cables.

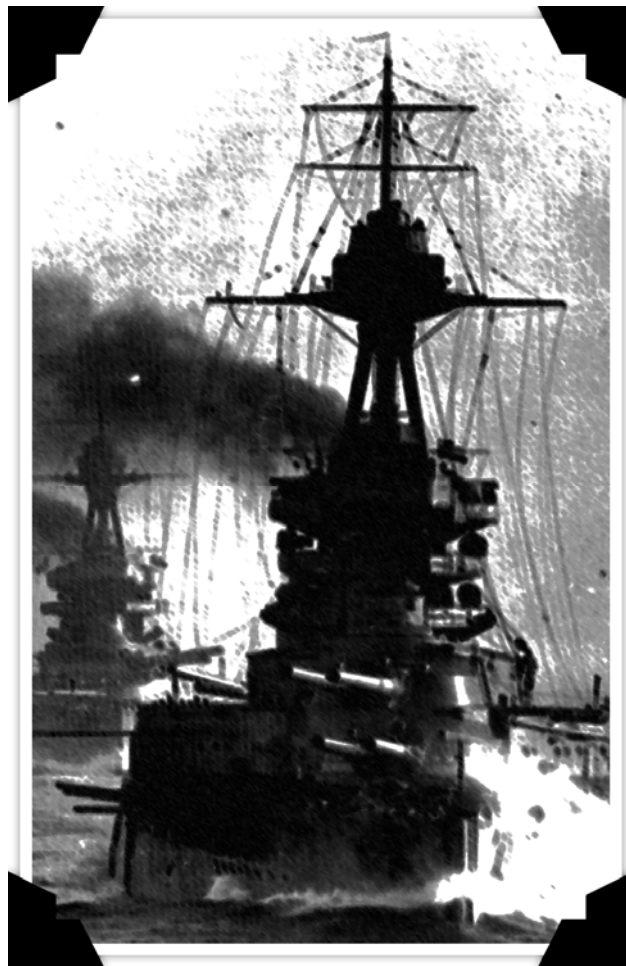
I have opted for using the largest value (four cables) when determining the “stacking limit”, mainly to prevent ships from bunching together too much. However, the game won’t suffer unduly if this limit is increased (thus implicitly reducing the space between ships).

Most guns are allowed to fire into any arc. In the case of non-turreted guns, this is not meant to indicate that all of the mounts have 360° fields of fire—instead, the assumption is that roughly half the guns may be brought to bear against any given target. Thus, while non-turreted guns would appear to have broader firing arcs than those in turrets (which are reduced by 50% when firing fore or aft), the overall number of gun dice has been reduced to reflect this assumption.

Casemated guns are restricted to attacking targets in either the port or starboard firing arc. This does not represent one set of weapons that can fire in either direction, but rather two sets of weapons, one on each side of the ship.

There is no reason you couldn’t allow such weapons to fire twice per face card: once at a target in the port firing arc, and once at a target in the starboard arc. Historically, I have no idea whether this occurred, or if the gunnery officers were only able to focus on a single target at a time.

Penetration values are roughly two-thirds of what they “should” be historically—*i.e.* each increase in armor rating represents the equivalent of an additional 2” of improved Krupp steel, while each increase in penetration value represents the ability to pierce an additional 3” of armor. This was done because I think it allows for a better game, balancing the extremes somewhat.



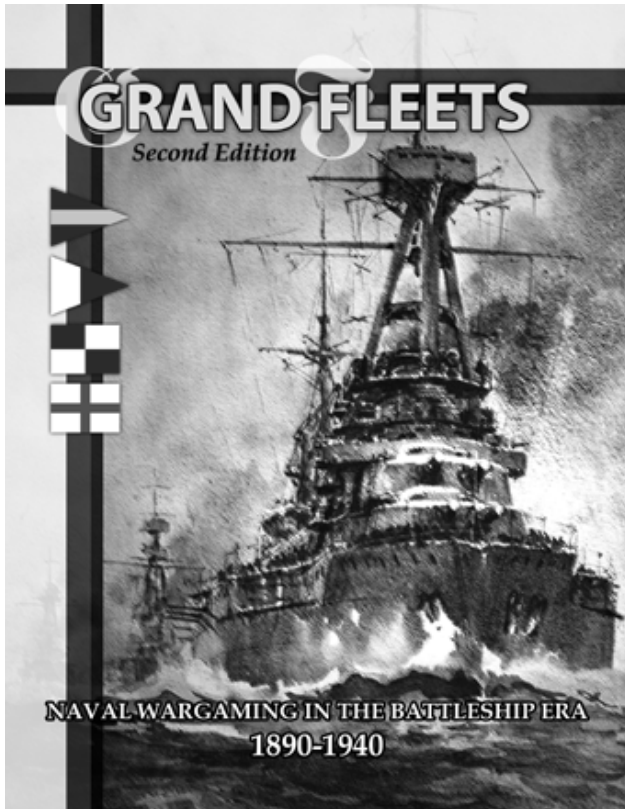
Torpedoes have been abstracted rather severely; they all have identical characteristics, regardless of size or type. This may be modified to reflect exceptional circumstances (such as the Japanese Type 93 “Long Lance” torpedoes of World War II) but the emphasis of surface combat during this period was on the big gun—at least, until the airplane took control—and I felt it important to retain that focus in the game.

Players who want some variety may elect to alter the range of torpedoes based on time period. For example, scenarios set during the Russo-Japanese War could restrict torpedoes to same-hex attacks only, while World War II battles may allow attacks out to two hexes (or even further).

Happy gaming!

—Daniel Kast
July 2010

ALSO AVAILABLE FROM MAJESTIC TWELVE GAMES



MJG-0710

\$14.95

Grand Fleets[™] is a miniatures game of naval warfare during the age of the battleship. From the ironclads of the late 1800s to the super-dreadnoughts of World War II, players can take command of the ships that altered the course of history.

Great pains have been taken to accommodate a wide range of preferences: hexes or no hexes; any miniatures scale; simultaneous or sequential play — the choices are up to you!

In addition to the basic rules for surface actions between 1890 and 1940, *Grand Fleets* includes advanced rules for things like time of day, smokescreens, crew quality, and destroyer flotillas. Best of all, you'll never have to wait for "official" publication of your favorite ships: comprehensive, step-by-step guidelines are provided to generate data sheets for any vessel that put to sea during the battleship era.



MJG-0711

\$14.95

King & Kaiser[™] is the first scenario book for the second edition of *Grand Fleets*. Within these pages, you will find everything you need to fight out the near-run thing that was the Great War at sea.

While great armies slogged through the Flanders mud and clashed over a sun-dried patch of Anatolian rock, the course of human affairs was directed by the men and machines that steamed the oceans of the world. Across the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, and the North Sea, two powerful navies battled for supremacy, a life-and-death struggle that resonated throughout the twentieth century.

In addition to more than fifty data cards detailing ships of the *Kaiserliche Marine* and the Royal Navy, *King & Kaiser* includes half a dozen scenarios from the early years of World War I.