
A & A GAME ENGINEERING PRODUCT SUPPORT

Product Support sheets come in the following types:

- Clarifications – these are more general clarifications about game play in response to questions from players.
- Corrections and Amendments – these include corrections to errors in game data, typing errors, and mistakes in game play that have come to light. These may come in two alternatives:
 - applicable to the most recent edition.
 - applicable to previous editions. These items will all have been incorporated into the latest edition on sale.
- New Rules – These rules will have been developed in response to requests from players. They may also have been developed from House Rules (see below).
- House Rules and player suggestions. House rules that are tested and work well may be incorporated into the basic rules if the author(s) approve.

The content of the sheets follows the same order as the rules in the book and the first sheet shows a summary of these sections and indicates those that are affected by the current sheet.

SEA WARS FLEET ACTIONS

BRIEFING DOCUMENT

DATE: 9 JULY 2007

TEXT REVIEWED 10 APRIL 2014

This document is the result of an email exchange at the start of 2007, which concerned two items.

Firstly, there was a question regarding the effects of long range critical hits, and whether you could ever get such a hit. It also raises the question of plunging fire at extreme ranges.

Secondly, there is a question of the interaction between ships and aircraft. Both of these questions are dealt with on the following pages.

It must be borne in mind, however, that Sea Wars is intended as an operational level game.

1. LONG RANGE CRITICAL HITS
2. AIR ATTACKS

We would like to stress that this document is intended to offer options which fit into the game framework, without changing the underlying rules. Feel free to try them out, but beware that they may change parts of the game significantly.

1) LONG RANGE CRITICAL HITS

The issue is whether you can get long range critical hits when like is fighting like.

Firstly, you need to consider the ranges at which the action is being fought. Let us take Bismarck, Hood, Prince of Wales main armaments:

- Bismarck has 15" with Penetration B- and SV 17, range 38900 yards, DV B+
- Hood has 15" with Penetration B, SV 15, range 33600 yards, DV C+
- POW has 14" with Penetration C+, SV 15, range 38500 yards, DV B+

The Hood was sunk at something around 22000 yards, which is in the long range band of the Bismarck.

The penetrations and ranges of these guns are at short (1 level of AV better) / medium / long (2 levels of AV worse)

- Bismarck: A- 10000y / B- 19500y / D- 38900y
- Hood: A 8500y / B 17000y / D 33600y
- POW: B+ 9500y / C+ 19000y / E+ 38500y

If you cross the T these are 2 levels of AV better (max A+):

- Bismarck: A+ / A+ / B-
- Hood: A+ / A+ / B
- POW: A+ / A+ / C+

This allows Bismarck to penetrate Hood when crossing the T. This is what was happening in the battle as the courses were converging, doubtless to allow the Hood's shells to penetrate Bismarck's belt.

Plunging Fire

As is rightly stated, there is no provision for plunging fire, which would occur with large calibre guns at their maximum ranges. Having looked at other works, a rule of thumb would be to say that plunging fire is appropriate for guns of 11" calibre and greater at ranges over 30000y. This means that most hits should be against the much thinner deck on the target.

Possible Solutions

There are two options. One would be to improve the effective penetration value in the plunging fire zone. The other would be to reduce the target's DV in this zone, which is actually subtly different. There are very few ships with armoured decks in excess of 8" which is around DV E+. Hits are of course also contacting other (possibly more heavily) armoured parts of the ship, so you are not just hitting the deck.

Proposal 1:

Increase the long range penetration by 2 levels, so it becomes (broadside / crossing T):

- Bismarck: B- / A+
- Hood: B / A+
- POW: C+ / A+

Proposal 2:

Reduce the target DV by 2 levels in the plunging fire zone:

- Bismarck: D+ (Hood still cannot penetrate unless T crossed)
- Hood: E+ (Bismarck can penetrate)
- POW: D+ (Cannot be penetrated unless Bismarck crosses T)

For info Yamato DV is A- so any of the above ships would have trouble getting her, unless T crossed at medium range or in the plunging fire zone with T crossed.

I think on reflection that reducing the DV in the plunging fire zone feels better, and in any case you should not be getting too many critical hits at long range.

Please remember that the rules are written on the operational rather than tactical level, so there are some effects which may not feel right overall.

So, having explored the above, there are now more opportunities for the armour to be penetrated, and the -4 modifier for an AP attack not penetrating the armour will not happen quite as often.

"Reality Check"

One of the problems with naval rules, which we have perpetuated here, is that authors take the published ranges of a given gun, and assume that it will be used in action at such a range.

A typical example is the 11" guns used on the German Battle Cruisers of the Scharnhorst class. These have a range quoted of just under 45000 yards. The maximum range at which you can actually reasonably see target on the open sea and judge fall of shot is around 25000 yards. It must be considered virtually impossible to hit a target at ranges in excess of this. Gunnery radar and spotter planes do not necessarily help.

In real life, the farthest shell hit recorded in ship vs. ship combat is about 24000 yards in 1940, with the above mentioned Scharnhorst and Gneisenau involved in the sinking of the carrier Glorious off Norway.

2) AIR ATTACKS

There are two views here, which depend on what how game is interpreted. SW is intended for an operational style, rather than tactical.

If it is treated as an operational game, initiative is important because the winner gets to choose which of his squadrons shoots first, sometimes choosing the one which he perceives is at the greater risk, or which has the best attack, at that moment. Then the opponent does something, then he does something else etc. This means that if you have a vital asset under air attack, you need to fire the best AA you can to defend against that attack. This might not be the best asset you have on the table, but it is the luck of the draw.

If you look at the game on a more tactical level, you could separate out ships from aircraft, do all the ship actions alternately, then do all the air actions alternately. Here there could be a rather unfair situation in that all the aircraft suffer AA fire before they can act, so this may not be really suitable if only one side has ships.

On the whole I think that it is better to force the player to make the decision which action to take first.

Andrew Finch

9 July 2007