

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.

ACTION STATIONS

CORRECTIONS TO EDITION 4.0

UPDATED 13 JULY 2018

Following the recent publication of the new Edition of Action Stations, it has come to light that a few inconsistencies have got past our final checks. These are mainly in the area of Visibility and Spotting, and we have rewritten that section, which is enclosed with this file.

There are also some Special Effects which players have found cause a bit too much damage and we agree that this is the case. There are therefore some effects which should be deleted.

Some clarifications have been added following suggestions from players, and we have added a new section to reflect the use of WW1 Q ships, derived from the effects in the previous editions of the rules.

2017

By chance we discovered a typo and incorrect reference in the Aircraft Movement section (9.3). The correction has been added to this document. This is marked thus:



2018 – 1

While working on a new edition of Bulldogs Away, which incorporates the movement system from Action Stations, we have updated the rules on Towing. A new set of Towing rules appear in this document. The corrections are marked thus:



2018 – 2

Our attention has been drawn to some further anomalies, which we are pleased to correct with this update.

The first is that we have foolishly failed to incorporate one important fact, which is that burning ships are illuminated, and should also be casting an area of illumination around themselves. This was in the previous edition and it was overlooked when we rewrote the text.

The second is that there are conflicting effects if the steering is damaged after it has already reached the state where a crew test is required. We have reflected a bit more about our initial ruling when we were asked, and we have now come down in favour of the “stacking” – 1 penalty (which is shown in 6.1 under Damage Control), rather than the addition of a fire.

We have also come to the conclusion that the damage control system would be helped with a simplification, so that now when you succeed in repairing Machinery or Steering, all current damage is removed.

There are also a few other text revisions which come from these changes. This series of corrections is marked thus:



We must also apologise that the previous correction sheet of April did not have the new Visibility pages attached. These have been rewritten, to cover the missing bit about burning ships, and the new pages are attached.

4.3 – Manoeuvre

The following text changes are required to cover the effects of excess damage on Steering. The following rule section is replaced as shown below:

Effect of S Damage on manoeuvre

If a ship suffers S damage it must use one worse Turn Template for its class, the progression being from H → M → L.

If a ship is reduced to below L capability, then it must pass a successful Crew Test in order to make a turn. If the damage gets even worse then that Crew Test will be taken with addition modifiers of – 1 for each excess level of damage.

If it fails it must continue straight ahead on its current course for the distance required by the Turn Template. It may make one attempt to turn each time the template distances would permit it, assuming it has enough speed left.

4.8 – Towing

Vessels can attempt to tow other vessels up to 1 class larger than their own. For a ship to tow another vessel they must have successfully passed a tow line. To do this they must be in contact or within 5 cm and both must be stationary (i.e. have no Speed Markers).

This requires the assisting ship to approach the other vessel with 1 speed marker in its Movement Phase, at the end of which this marker is removed, satisfying the requirement to have no speed markers in the Damage Control Phase.

Passing a tow requires a successful Crew Test by the towing vessel carried out in the ship's Damage Control Phase. This is modified by the current Sea State as follows:

Sea State	0 or 1	2	3	4	5 +
Modifier	+ 2	+ 1	+ 0	– 1	– 2

Once a tow has been passed the ships may move off and separate by up to 5 cm between their closest points (which must be between bows and/or sterns).

Towing Speed

The table below shows the proportion of the towing vessel's speed that can be achieved.

Towed Vessel:	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Towing Class 1	½	¼	—
Towing Class 2	¾	½	¼
Towing Class 3	1	¾	½

However, the maximum speed under tow is the lower of...

- EITHER the original Speed Rating of the towed vessel,
- OR the current maximum speed of the towing vessel.

The towing vessel can move either ahead or astern, though ahead would be more sensible as you will get better speed. The appropriate number of Speed Markers are placed by the Towing ship.

Breaking the Tow

Tow lines can be dropped at any time. Each vessel then continues independently. The tow line may also be broken unintentionally.

Tows part automatically if:

- Either vessel is involved in a collision (not a Glancing Blow).
- Either vessel sinks.
- Any vessel moves between the two ships.

Other circumstances:

- Either vessel hit by gunfire
- Sea State is 4 or greater

In such cases roll a d10; on a roll of 10 the tow line parts.

5 – Visibility and Spotting

This section has been rewritten. We have added a clarification about the status of “objects” on the play area. These are either Contact Markers, which have to be revealed by spotting, or models. The change from previous editions is that when a model is on the table it is a potential target if it is in range and visibility of an enemy.

We have deleted a short paragraph (the 4th in the existing section 5.2) regarding submerged submarines, which contradicted text in an earlier paragraph regarding spotting from submerged submarines.

Section 5.4 is renamed Starshells, Flares and Burning Ships.

In this section there is a typo in the Starshell/Flare Deviation table. The last two entries should show ‘+10’ and ‘+20’. In addition the Starshell/Flare Drift Table has been tweaked so that the drift values are greater. We have done this so that the values better match the game time and distance scales.

The new rule is added:

“Burning ships illuminate all within 10cm of the model.”

In section 5.5 there is a missing full stop in the 3rd sentence between “Contact Markers” and “Searchlights”. The new 4th sentence has now been changed to simply say that a ship using a searchlight is illuminated.

In Section 5.6 we have added a remark that ships using searchlights are illuminated.

In Section 5.7 covering Smoke Floats, using such devices at night will cause the ship to be illuminated. This illumination is removed at the end of a turn.

In section 5.9 covering radar, we have rewritten the first paragraph which had some typos and some unhelpful text.

6.2 – Damage Control

Delete the following two bulleted items in the list of items where Repair can be attempted:

- Repair damage to Torpedo Controls (a B hit result)
- Remove Command Disruption (a B hit result)

These are two Special Effects which we removed during development, but failed to spot that they still appeared here.

The following two paragraphs replace the current penultimate paragraph (“Damage Control is ...”):

Damage Control is attempted by declaring which system is being repaired, then taking a Crew Test. If the test is successful (a final score of 6+) then the system is repaired, otherwise it remains damaged or out of action.

In the case of damage to Machinery or Steering, all current damage effects applying to the relevant system are removed with a successful test, though any Hull damage cannot be removed.

7.1 – Arcs of Fire and Lines of Sight

In the first paragraph we have added a new sentence:

‘The target must also be in the current visibility distance, which may well be less than the range of the gun.’

This may seem obvious, but it needs to be mentioned.

Page 16: Shooting Modifiers Table

The text for ‘Shooting through smoke’ should say ‘Shooting through smoke from burning vessels)’.

7.4 – Special Effects

Under “Bridge Hit” add that the ‘First Bridge hit knock out radar’.

Under “Machinery” delete the words ‘, with 1 Hull Box additional damage’ under results 2, 4 and 6.

Under “Steering” delete the words ‘, with 1 Hull Box additional damage’ under result 5, and ‘, with 2 Hull Boxes additional damage’ under result 6.

In addition the result ‘4’ is modified as shown here:

- 4 Manoeuvre rating is reduced. The effect is that the rating is reduced from H → M → L → Crew Test required to turn. If the damage gets even worse then that Crew Test will be taken with addition modifiers of – 1 for each excess level of damage.

8 – Torpedo Attacks

The draught of the various ships in the game is taken into account in their Class. The modifier for Shallow Draught vessels should only be applied in cases where a ship has the special trait “Shallow Draught”. None of the ships in the data tables has this trait at present. One case where it could be applied is “Bournemouth Belle”, a paddle steamer.

In the Torpedo Hit Modifiers Table, change the effect under – 2 to read ‘Shallow Draught (Special)**’

Add the new footnote:

** The normal draught of ships in the game is taken account of though its Class. Shallow Draught targets can be introduced in a scenario specific game at the players’ discretion.

8.5 – Torpedo Damage

In the table under the result ‘1 – 3’ delete the text which says “due to flooding”.

9.3 – Aircraft Movement

The last phrase in the second sentence of paragraph 1 should read:

‘..., so they are moved in a separate Segment (2c) in the Movement Phase.’

10.3 – Armed Merchantmen and Q ships

We have added a new rule to deal with Q Ships and some specific effects of their design.

Optional Rules for Q ships

Players may wish to agree that Q ships (in particular) are shallow draught vessels. The player owning the Q ship may declare it to be shallow draught when it is attacked by torpedoes, after the opponent has rolled his torpedo attack dice. (If he has missed there is no need to give away the secret, but if he just missed by 1 or 2, a hit would become a miss.) If the torpedo is regarded as a miss, do not forget that it will continue on its way, like any other torpedo that misses. If you reveal the true nature of your ship in these circumstances, the ability to surprise enemy vessels is lost (see below).

When a Q ship reveals itself, it gains an immediate bonus to its H value of 100%. When working out when it will sink after it has been wrecked, the original value of H is used.

In the following paragraph “Surprising the enemy” the 3rd sentence should read ‘The target(s) of the Armed Merchant Cruiser’s attack must then pass a Crew Test.’

10.4 – Points Values

Add a new entry after Armed Merchants:

- Q ships add 50% to their final total.
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5 — VISIBILITY AND SPOTTING

5.1 – Visibility

Ships cannot engage their enemy at ranges in excess of the current visibility range, determined at the start of the game, and which may have changed due to the effects of drawn initiative dice.

5.2 – Spotting

Contact Markers and Models

Units are represented on the table in the form of Contact Markers or models. There may be more Contact Markers in play than you have ships. This is explained in the Game Set-Up section. A Contact Marker represents the possibility that there is an enemy vessel at that location. It must be identified by being Spotted. Models on the table represent actual identified ships, which can be attacked if in range etc.

The Spotting Process

Aircraft and ships that were already deployed on table as models at the start of the Spotting Phase may attempt to spot enemy Contact Markers or “Blips”. Submarines at periscope depth may attempt to spot at a reduced chance, but not in a turn in which it has declared an attempt to dive.

Each aircraft or ship may make one spotting attempt per turn during the Spotting Phase. Spotting alternates between the players starting with the winner of initiative.

The target “Blip” must be within the current visibility range of the spotting vessel, and in the spotter’s line of sight. Ranges are measured between the closest Turning mark on the Spotting vessel and the centre of the Contact Marker.

The target of the attempt is declared, and the testing vessel carries out a Crew Test, with the following modifiers:

Situation	Modifier
Class 3 ship or aircraft testing Sea State 0	+ 2
Class 2 ship or aircraft testing Testing vessel or aircraft equipped with radar Testing vessel has Quiet engines Sea State 1 or 2	+ 1
Sea State 4 or 5 Attempting to spot a non-illuminated Contact Marker from within an illuminated area	- 1
Sea State 6 or worse Submarine at periscope depth trying to spot.	- 2

If the score is 6 or better this is successful and the opposing player must remove the “Blip” and either deploy a ship or declare it to have been a piece of driftwood, whale, or similar.

Deploying Spotted ships

When a “Blip” is deployed as a ship, the model is placed on the spot where the Contact Marker was. The owning player determines its heading. A vessel deployed after being spotted must be marked with 1 or 2 Speed Markers, with the exception of German S boats and their Italian copies, which can have up to 3 Speed Markers.

Submarines deployed from a Contact Marker after having been spotted must be deployed on the surface.

Finally, the spotted vessel is marked as surprised..

Surprised vessels

Surprised vessels may not carry out any actions this turn. Surprise markers are removed at the end of the current turn.

5.3 – Voluntary Deployment

A player may choose to deploy a ship from its “Blip” at the start of its activation, before it is moved. When voluntarily deployed, a ship may be moving in any direction. It may only have two Speed Markers. It is allowed to make one attempt while deploying to have a 3rd Speed Marker if it passes a Crew Test, modified by - 1 if the ship is Class 2, and - 2 if Class 3.

Submarines

Submarines being voluntarily deployed may be surfaced or submerged.

5.4 – Starshells, Flares and Burning Ships

Starshells can be fired by any gun of 3" or greater to any point on the table in the gun’s arc of fire and line of sight. Each mount may fire one Starshell per turn in the Shooting Phase when the ship is activated. Starshells illuminate all within 20 cm of the marker.

Flares can be fired by any vessel out to a distance of 15 cm, one per vessel per turn, in the Shooting Phase when the ship is activated. Flares illuminate all within 10 cm of the marker.

Burning Ships illuminate all within 10cm of the model.

Method

The point of aim is specified and the starshell or flare marker is initially placed at that point. A d10 is then rolled and the deviation from the point of aim in terms of undershoot or overshoot is given in the Starshell/Flare Deviation table. Move the marker to this point.

Roll	1	2, 3	4 - 7	8, 9	10
Deviation in cm	- 20	- 10	0	+ 10	+ 20

In the End Phase of each turn, roll 1d10 for each Star Shell or Flare, modified as follows:

- Testing for Flare - 1
- Testing for Star Shell + 1

If the score is 6 or greater, the item remains in play, and drifts downwind by the distances shown on the table below.

Sea State	0 or 1	2	3	4	5 +
Drift (cm)	0	5	10	15	20

5.5 – Searchlights

Most, if not all vessels carried searchlights. In the absence of any definite data, assume that Class 1 vessels have one searchlight, Class 2 have one on each side, Class 3 have two on each side. Searchlights may EITHER be turned on OR off when the ship is activated during the Shooting Phase. They may only be aimed at a model, not a Contact Marker. Searchlights will illuminate a single vessel out to 100 cm, but the using vessel will count as illuminated. The use of searchlights is noted by placing a yellow cone next to the illuminating ship and a yellow circle next to the vessel it is illuminating. Both cone and circle should be identified to keep track exactly which ship is illuminating which target.

Effect of Searchlights on shooting

The target of a searchlight may not shoot at the vessel using the searchlight due to the dazzling effect.

5.6 – Effects of Illumination and Illuminated Areas

Shooting

Any vessel that falls within the area of Illumination, is target of a Searchlight or is itself using a searchlight may be engaged by gunfire at the daytime equivalent of the current night time visibility distance.

Shooting from inside an illuminated area is impaired by the glare of the flare or starshell. This is simulated by applying a – 1 modifier to shooting from inside an illuminated area, unless the target itself is illuminated. No shooting is allowed through the area unless it is at a target which is itself illuminated or is using searchlights.

Spotting

A Contact Marker in an area of illumination from Flares or Star Shells may be subject of a Spotting attempt at the daytime equivalent of the current night time visibility distance.

If the night time visibility is 35 cm, then the object can be engaged at up to 75 cm. (see the table in Game set-up).

Spotting from inside an illuminated area is impaired by the glare of the flare or starshell. This is simulated by applying a – 1 modifier to spotting attempts from inside an illuminated area, unless the target itself is illuminated. Spotting **through** an illuminated area or through a burning vessel is blocked.

5.7 – Smoke Floats

These are used to create smoke screens, and remain in play until dispelled. They are dropped by a boat at any point during its move. One float may be deployed per turn. Place a 10 cm line of cotton wool aligned downwind to represent the float.

In the End Phase of each turn roll a d10 on the Smoke Dissipation table for each 10 cm section of smoke, modified as shown below. On a 6+ it is removed. After this test, add a further 10 cm section of smoke downwind of any lines of smoke still in play.

Sea State	0 or 1	2	3	4	5 +
Modifier	– 2	– 1	+ 0	+ 1	+ 2

Smoke floats created a bright flash when ignited. If used in night actions a boat which drops or ignites a smoke float illuminates itself and is marked as such. This illumination is removed in the End Phase.

Smoke screens created by smoke floats block line of sight. No gunfire is allowed through a smoke screen, nor may torpedoes be fired at a target behind one.

Smoke Screens

Smoke floats could be ignited when carried on a vessel to create a smoke screen. To do this requires a successful Crew Test in the ship's activation during the Shooting Phase. If this is done, the boat places one 10 cm section of smoke downwind of the model per Class of ship, in contact with it. These smoke sections move with the ship and remain aligned downwind and in contact with the vessel.

It tests each turn to see if it dissipates entirely, but does not extend if it remains in place.

5.8 – Smoke from Burning Vessels

Vessels on fire trail 10 cm sections of black smoke deployed in the same manner as smoke from smoke screens. This smoke moves with the ship concerned as it moves.

One section of smoke is applied per fire burning. As fires are put out, smoke is removed from the downwind end of the line in the End Phase. This type of smoke only partially blocks line of sight so a –1 modifier is applied to gunfire if the line of sight passes through it.

5.9 – Radar

Radar is used within the scope of the game to assist in the identification of “Blips”. An object seen on radar does not enable you to identify it sufficiently to allow you to shoot at it, but it does help the crew aim their binoculars in the right direction. Radar technology was in its infancy, especially that equipping small craft. As a result, the effectiveness of radar could be drastically reduced by a combination of poor maintenance and climatic conditions. Radar provides a +1 modifier when used to attempt to spot a “Blip”.

Surface search radar was carried on some aircraft later in the war. and functions in the same way as if spotting from ships.

Radar outfits varied considerably throughout the war. In general terms, as far as arrangements for Coastal Forces craft were concerned, they were confined to the Allies. Nearly all British and US boats had radar of some sort by the end of the war. In the earlier stages it was common for boats with radar to be assigned as group leaders to flotillas, guiding them on to targets. The use of radar on S Boats was almost unheard of since there were no suitable sets produced. Those which were used were 'cast offs' from Luftwaffe night fighters, fitted to S112, S86, S87 and two other boats. S130 and S701 were fitted with experimental sets late in the war. Some MFPs carried radar, acting as pickets for escort groups.