

BATTLEWAGON



TASK
FORCE
GAMES

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RULES OF PLAY



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(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 — while 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 barbettes, 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

COMMENCE FIRE!

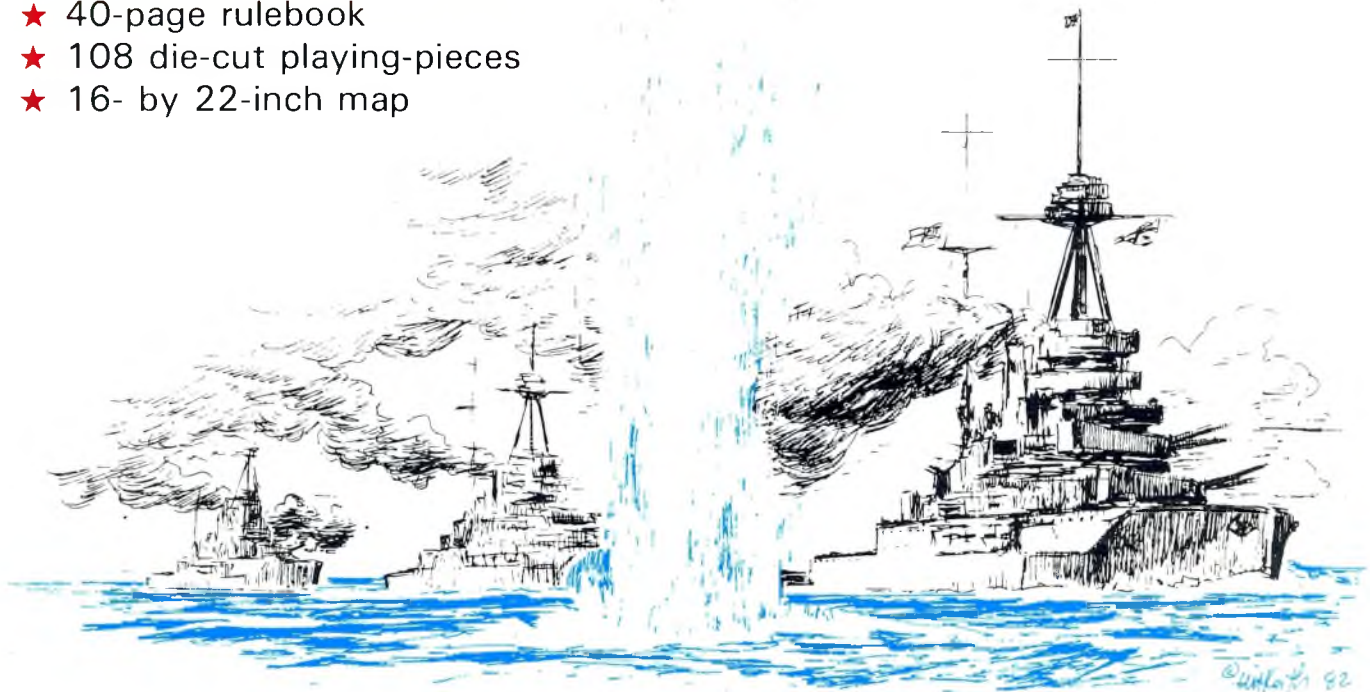
The enemy's battleline is pinpointed by the bright orange blast as his guns return fire. Salvo after salvo is exchanged as your ships battle for victory at sea.

BATTLEWAGON allows players to recreate naval battles in the era of the *Dreadnought*. Scenarios reenacting ten of the most famous engagements during World War I and II are included. With the wealth of information provided on ships and naval combat, players may also recreate almost any naval battle ever fought, or create their own hypothetical engagements.

BATTLEWAGON captures the excitement and suspense of surface naval combat in a fast and playable game. Each ship is represented by a playing-piece on the map as well as by a "Ship System Display" which contains the information needed to move and engage the ship in combat. Each turn of the game is subdivided into impulses to allow for simultaneous movement and firing.

Included in **BATTLEWAGON**:

- ★ 40-page rulebook
- ★ 108 die-cut playing-pieces
- ★ 16- by 22-inch map



Number of Players: Two or More

Age: 12 Years or Older

Playing Time: Variable,
from Two Hours

Complexity: Moderate
(Introductory Scenario Included)

Original **BATTLEWAGON** design:
Stephen G. Wilcox

BATTLEWAGON redevelopment by:
David W. Crump

