BISMARCK
SOLITAIRE
DELUXE EDITION

INTRODUCTION

In May of 1941 the war had just begun. The Germans had the biggest ship that had the biggest guns ...

Lyrics from the Johnny Horton song "Sink the Bismarck"

Great song, for a good movie, on a ship that was one of the most famous from World War II.

The significance of the German battleship Bismarck was its impact to British naval operations in the Atlantic. Convoys were needed to keep Britain in the war. They provided a continuous supply of food and arms. Anything that disrupted this supply was a grave threat to the British.

During the hunt, the British battleship HMS Hood was sunk in its duel with the Bismarck. The Royal Navy detached almost every capital ship from their on-going missions in the Atlantic to find the Bismarck and revenge the Hood. The Prinz Eugen slipped away but the Bismarck was ultimately cornered to face a massive combination of enemy battleships, heavy cruisers, and aircraft from carriers. Now you are in command of the mighty Bismarck and the decisions are yours...

GAME SUMMARY

Bismarck Solitaire places you in command of German naval forces against an opposing British autonomous player side, referred to as the BOT side. The object of the game for the German player is to earn the victory points of the mission goal AND bring the Bismarck home safely before the game ends on turn 20.

You are the German commander of the Bismarck, Prinz Eugen and a supporting U-boat as they sortie into the Atlantic with the British BOT Royal Navy after you. Then there are 3 game sets (Easy, Difficult, and Hard). There are 18 different missions of increasing difficulty. Each mission has it's own objectives to beat the British and win the game. There are also medals to earn in each mission when certain objectives are achieved.

Bismarck Solitaire can also be played cooperative. One player takes the Bismarck and the other takes the Prinz Eugen and U-boat.

GAME UNITS AND MARKERS

The game includes 3 unique German Ship pieces, many yellow cubes to track ship and game status; plus colored dice. Ship pieces are placed on the board with their name facing up.

SEARCH BOARD AND EVENT CHARTS

A classic search game board is used to track your ship movements and locations. On the search game board are a turn track, sequence of play and ship battle tactics chart.


Search Board

Events are on each mission chart. Select which mission you want to play for a game and use the event charts for that mission. Once selected it is placed beside the search game board or use the easel to stand the mission up facing you. Event charts for a mission are brought into play each game turn by a die roll that determines which event chart to use. The ship status board lists ship firepower (dice rolled in ship combat), ship speed (how many movement squares it can move in a turn) extra fuel for German ships, and ship strength is tracked on the hit track that reduce ship strength when hit.
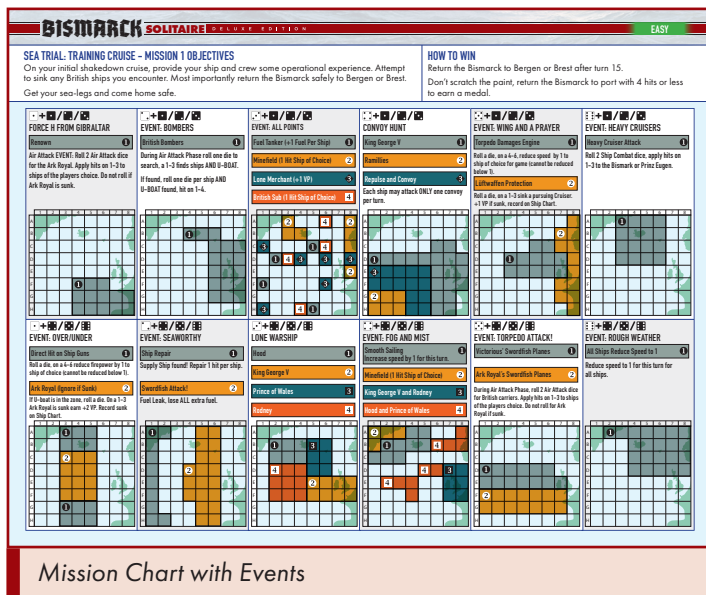
Mission Chart with Events

The search board is divided into a grid search pattern. Each grid has a cross referencing letter on the left and right sides and the numbers on the top and bottom. Grids are used to locate your ships and opposing forces. Within each grid are four ship movement squares which are only used for moving your ships. Zones are a group of grids used by event charts to identify where opposing ships are in relation to where your ships are located for a turn. Zones are defined by color codes and numbers on event charts and change from event to event.

For example, reference point at Brest, France is in the G7 grid and within the G7 are four movement squares to move into, defined by the white lines. Around G7 are a group of grids that are defined by zone colors.
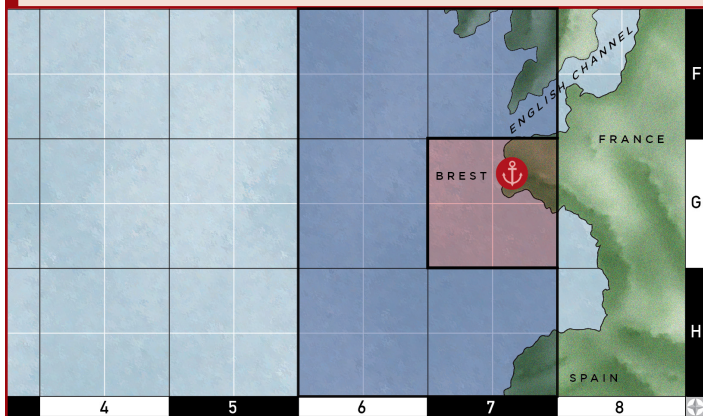
SHIP STATUS BOARD

Use the ship status board to mark damage (hits) to its strength, available extra fuel, and any speed reductions during the game. Use the yellow cubes to record the change in status.

VPs are earned when British ships are sunk. VP values on the Prinz Eugen and U-Boat are negative values and are deducted from the VP total for the game if they are sunk. If the Bismarck is sunk you lose the game automatically. The Extra VP Track is used to record VP earned through event charts.
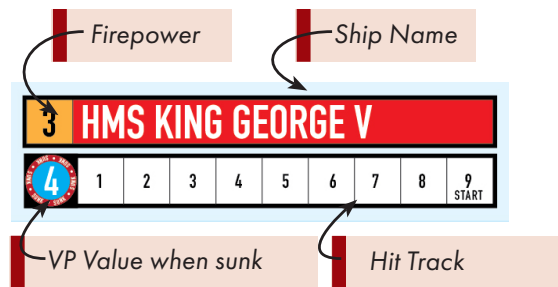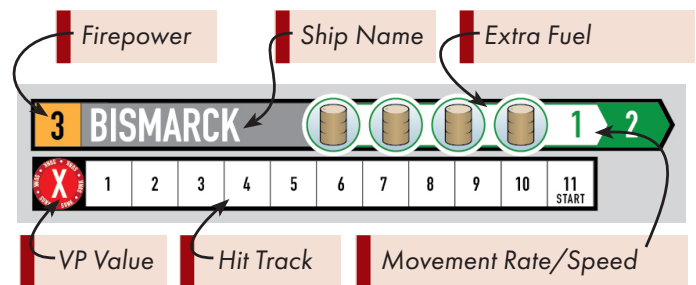
The spaces on the Ship Status Board for Cruiser Sunk, Ark Royal Sunk, Extra VP, Repairs, and Convoys (not shown) are used to track events that may happen during game play. Use yellow cubes to mark when these events occur.

GAME SET UP

1. Choose the mission you want to play.

2. Pick the appropriate game board and ship status board for the mission selected.

3. For the ships in play, place yellow cubes on the start box for each ship hit track.

4. For the German ships place a yellow cube on each fuel barrel. For the Bismarck and Prinz Eugen place a yellow cube on its maximum speed.

5. Place a yellow cube on turn 1 of the turn track.

6. The remaining yellow cubes are set aside. They will be used during the game to record other status items such as convoys sunk, extra VPs, etc.

7. Select the location on the game board for the Bismarck, Prinz Eugen and the U-boat. The Bismarck and Prinz Eugen both start in any movement square you choose in row A between columns 5-8. They may be placed separate or together. The U-boat is placed in any movement square of columns 1-4. These are the only ships that are moved and tracked on the search board.

The British are the BOT they do not set up any ships. Instead the British ship's solitary actions are determined by the event charts for the mission selected. The events bring their ships into play each turn and do not need to be tracked on the search board.

TURN SEQUENCE OF PLAY

1. Roll two dice to determine the event in play for the turn and carry out the event instructions.

2. Resolve any Air Attacks (if present), in event chart grid zones containing your ships.

3. Resolve U-Boat Attacks (if present), in event chart grid zones containing your U-boat and opposing ships.

4. Resolve Ship Combat in event chart grid zones containing your ships and opposing ships.

5. Move your ships applying any event effects on movement.

6. Mark the end of the turn and repeat the turn sequence.

The events have a dice selection pattern tied to a white and black die. Each turn roll a white and black die to determine the event for the turn.

In the example below, if the white die is a 3 and the black die is a 4, 5 or 6 then Lone Warship would be the event used for the turn.

Once the event for the turn is determined, implement the event instructions. Note, event instructions can override game rules.

The event chart for the turn shows a search board of color coded and numbered zones (a group of grids) of where British ships are located and/or zones with information that may affect your ships. If your ships are in any of these zones, then your ships are impacted. If it is information, then follow it and apply it to your ships in that zone. If the zone has British ships or aircraft, then you have found the enemy and they have found you too. You must have ship combat with the identified ships and/or be subject to air attacks.

For example, The Bismarck and the Prinz Eugen are both in a zone with the Home Fleet, but not the U-Boat. Only the Bismarck will engage in ship combat with all the ships in the Home Fleet in this example, because the German ships have separated. If the Prinz Eugen had been in the same grid with the Bismarck (even if in different movement spaces of the grid), both could fire on the ships of the Home Fleet.

The U-boat is treated differently than ships because it has the ability to submerge. Events that refer to effects on ships apply only to the Bismarck and Prinz Eugen. Any events that apply to the U-boat will state such.

RESOLVING BRITISH AIR ATTACKS

Air Attacks represent the efforts of British aircraft carriers against the Bismarck. Air attacks are one per turn.

Air attack die rolls hit on 1–3. If multiple ships are in the grid, hits are applied to ships by player choice.

RESOLVING U-BOAT ATTACKS

The German U-boat represents a group of U-boats that supported the Bismarck. They are not affected by air attacks or ship combat. British ships cannot attack U-boats. When the player finds his U-boat in a zone that includes British ships he has a choice, escape or attack. The German U-boat automatically escapes British ships located in the same zone. If the U-boat player decides to attack, he targets one ship or convoy. When attacking, the U-boat rolls one die and on a result of 1-3 it hits the target, on a 4-6 result the U-boat is hit. After applying the die result the U-boat attack for the turn is over.

RESOLVING SHIP COMBAT

For a detailed example of Ship Combat, see page 6.

Ship combat occurs when your ships are in a grid that is included in the zone (group of grids) that have British ships in them for the turn based on the event chart for the turn.

Ships must stay for the first round of ship combat. They may attempt to escape ship combat each succeeding ship combat round.

Each firing ship must use all its firepower (dice rolled) against one target ship.

The German player fires first in ship combat, British second. His ships may target any British ship or ships. In ship combat, if a British ship is sunk before firing, it does not fire in the round.

For example, when the Bismarck and Prinz Eugen are together, they could target and fire at the same ship. However, if firing at two different ships the Bismarck could fire at one and the Prinz Eugen would fire at the other ship.

When the British ships fire in ship combat, the strongest British firepower ship targets and fires at the Bismarck. Then the next strongest British firepower ship targets and fires at Prinz Eugen. Any other remaining British ships (if any) all target and fire at the Bismarck. German U-boats are ignored. British ships cannot fire at U-Boats.

During a round of ship combat each ship fires by rolling dice equal to their firepower number. For example, the Bismarck rolls 3 dice when firing, the Prinz Eugen 2 dice. Ships score a hit on opposing ships for each 1-3 result on each die rolled to fire.

When a target ship (warship or convoy) is hit in ship combat, use a yellow cube to reduce the ship strength on the hit status track for each hit. When the ship strength is reduced below 1 the ship is sunk and is no longer in the game. Record the VP earned. When the sunk ship shows up on Event Charts later it is ignored. Excess hits on a sunk ship in combat are ignored.

There are five available Convoys in each game. When a Convoy is sunk, place a yellow cube a box in the Convoy row. Each sunk Convoy is worth 1 VP.

GERMAN "ESCAPE OR REMAIN" DECISION:

Anytime British ships are encountered you must engage them for one round of combat (exception U-boat). You have a choice; stay for another round with your ships or attempt to escape combat for the remainder of the turn. If you choose to escape with your ships in

different locations, each ship does an escape die roll. If they are in the same location, both ships will escape or stay based on a single die roll.

On a roll of 1-2 the Bismarck and Prinz Eugen can escape and avoid battle. A roll of 3-4 they escape, but take 1 hit on each ship. A roll of 5-6 they do not escape, receive 1 hit on one ship and remain in ship battle for the next round. These options are also noted on the side of the search board under the Ship Tactics. **The U-Boat always escapes ship combat.**

BRITISH "ESCAPE OR REMAIN" DECISION:

All British ships stay if the ships group (all British ships) total current strength (not firepower) exceeds the German ship group total current strength. Otherwise all British ships try to escape after the first round. On a 1-3 die roll they all escape, even convoys. On a roll of 4-6 they all must stay for another round of ship combat if the German player stayed or failed an escape attempt.

Important: When a zone shows a British ship or ships and you have split the Bismarck and Prinz Eugen into different grids but they are in the same zone as the British ships, the British ships fight only one ship and that is the Bismarck. The Prinz Eugen is ignored.

SHIP COMBAT TACTICS:

At your discretion, you have alternate tactics you can employ. The Bismarck and Prinz Eugen can each attempt to close, stay the course, or attempt to increase the range. At the start of any round of battle, you may choose a ship tactic to attempt for each ship. The options are found on the search board. Choose a tactic and roll one die before the round of battle and follow the charts listed on the page. Ship Combat Tactic choices can change from round to round. U-Boats do not use Ship Combat Tactics.

▬ MOVEMENT ▬

The ships that are moved on the game board are the Bismarck, Prinz Eugen and U-boat. British BOT ships DO NOT move on the board; they arrive or are found in grids and zones by turn event charts.

Events can affect movement.

Each turn your ships and U-boat can move up to their move limit. The speed for Prinz Eugen is 3, Bismarck 2, and U-Boat 1. They move once each turn. Movement is from movement square to adjacent movement square in a grid.

Diagonal movement is not allowed. You do not have to move in a turn if you want to stay in a location. You cannot move through land squares that block water squares from being adjacent (land has no grid lines).

EXTRA SHIP MOVEMENT FOR GERMAN SHIPS

The German ships and U-boat also start the game with extra fuel.

Each extra fuel barrel on a ship allows one extra movement square move beyond a ship move limit per barrel expended (remove the cube on the barrel). Only one barrel may be used in a turn per ship and U-boat.

For example, on turn 4 the Bismark and Prinz Eugen move 2 movement spaces together. On turn 5, the Bismarck and Prinz Eugen move in separate directions at their normal speed, the Bismarck moves 2 spaces and the Prinz Eugen moves 3. On turn 6, only the Bismarck burns 1 extra fuel to move 3 movement spaces and the Prinz Eugen moves 3 also at it's normal rate.
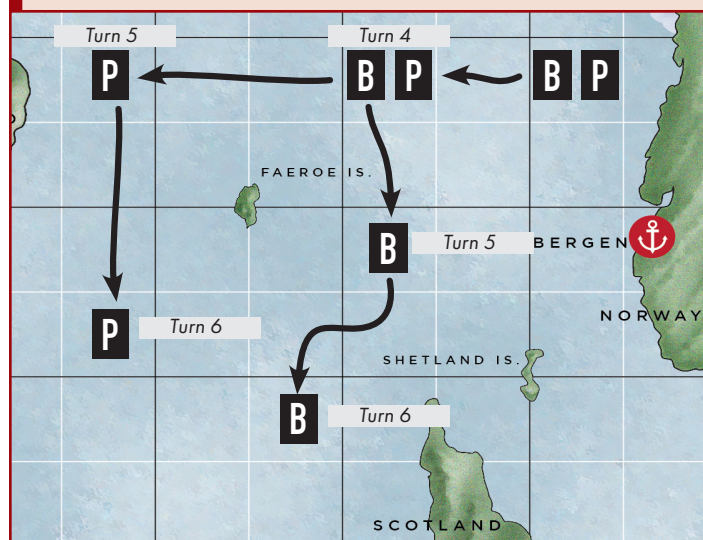
▬ HOW TO WIN ▬

You win as the German player if you earn the victory points and objectives for the mission AND bring the Bismarck to a friendly port any time after the turn described in the objectives. Otherwise, you lose and the British win.

The British automatically win anytime, and at the instant, the Bismarck is sunk or at the end of turn 20 without the Bismarck in a home port.

HOW TO WIN MEDALS

Each mission, list a condition for you to earn a mission specific medal. If the condition is achieved during the mission (for example, sink a warship) then record the earned medal in the battle archive by circling it. Medals can only be earned if you both win the game AND complete the conditions for the medal. No medals are awarded posthumously. All ships sunk in a game count towards both the mission goal and any conditions for earning medals.

▬ DESIGNER NOTES AND STRATEGY ▬

The design of the Bookgame Bismarck Solitaire came about as we looked for one of our board game designs that could be delivered quickly in a book format during backlogs of worldwide shipping and supply chains caused by a pandemic. Our board game Bismarck Solitaire fit well. So we converted the board game into a bookgame.

The bookgame was the right call for the right time. It turned out to be a hit and has been enjoyed by many gamers.

Now we are excited about doing Bismarck Solitaire as the board game as it was originally designed.

It has layered missions for the player that become more difficult as they made progression through their missions. You make the decisions on the best way to pursue your mission. Where to move your ships, choices on keeping them together or apart, when to head for home, even ship battle tactics of close, keep distance or escape all rest in your hands. You will encounter the full force of the Royal Navy (ships, planes, mines) and the variances of being at sea (rough weather, fog, luck).

Players should plan their missions. The best way is to study the event chart maps to help you decide where and where not to be. This can change from turn to turn.

One of the key design elements is that every event chart has an equal chance of showing up each turn. There is no card counting or limit to how many times an event can arrive. For that matter there is no guarantee that any event will ever arrive. Keep this in mind as you plan your mission.

Each turn move your ships into grid areas where you hope to find target ships (convoys, single ships, etc.) or avoid strong formations (aircraft, battle groups of ships, etc.).

Make use of the event charts to help your strategy. For example, if you want to hunt convoys look at the British event charts to see where the convoy lanes are and place your ships there. If you damage a ship like the Hood and it gets away, use a strategy to hunt it down by looking at the event charts to find zones where the Hood sails and then move your ships into those zones.

The same goes for when you are damaged and are trying to avoid capital ships. Look for zones that they do not sail and move your ship towards those zones.

Conditions change during your mission and you need to adjust your response to those changing conditions.

GAME HISTORY

The mission for the Bismarck and Prinz Eugen was to break into the Atlantic and attack Allied shipping. To make sure that Bismarck was sunk, the Royal Navy would ruthlessly strip other areas of action. The British would ultimately deploy 6 battleships, 3 battlecruisers, 2 aircraft carriers, 16 cruisers, 33 destroyers and 8 submarines, along with patrol aircraft. It would become the largest naval force assigned to a single operation up to that point in the war.

On the evening of 23 May, Suffolk sighted Bismarck and Prinz Eugen in the Denmark Strait, close to the Greenland coast. Suffolk immediately sought cover in a fog bank and The Admiralty was alerted. Norfolk and Suffolk, outgunned, shadowed the German ships using radar. After the German ships were sighted, British naval groups were redirected to intercept.

Hood and Prince of Wales made contact with the German force on the morning of 24 May. Both British ships initially mistook Prinz Eugen that was now in the lead for Bismarck and opened fire on her. Both German ships were firing at Hood.

The Hood's magazines exploded on a direct hit by a 15 inch shell from Bismarck. The massive explosion broke the great battlecruiser's back, and she sank within minutes taking all but three of her 1,417-man crew. Prince of Wales continued the action, but suffered multiple hits and then retreated under cover of a smokescreen. Bismarck had been hit two times by Prince of Wales' 14-inch guns, rupturing some fuel tanks, causing her to leak oil. Norfolk and Suffolk and the damaged Prince of Wales continued to shadow the Germans, reporting their position to draw British forces to the scene. The Germans decided that the undamaged Prinz Eugen would detach to continue raiding.

At 10 pm, Victorious was 120 miles away and launched an air attack on the Bismarck with Swordfish planes. They made a single torpedo hit causing minor damage.

On 25 May, the British lost contact with Bismarck. Bismarck had managed to evade the pursuing British ships and had enough speed to outrun the Home Fleet and reach the safety of France. However, Force H with the carrier Ark Royal and the battlecruiser Renown were approaching to intercept from the south.

Bismarck was spotted by British planes on 26 May. The Ark Royal launched an airstrike, but her aircrew mistook a British cruiser for the German battleship and attacked her. Their torpedoes with magnetic detonators failed to work properly and the cruiser emerged unscathed.

Ark Royal now launched a second strike consisting of 15 Swordfish. These were carrying torpedoes equipped reliable contact detonators. The attack resulted in two hits on the Bismarck, one of which inflicted critical damage on her steering. A jammed rudder meant she was now unmaneuverable.

The battleships Rodney and King George V waited for daylight on 27 May before attacking. They opened fire, quickly hitting Bismarck. Her gunners achieved near misses on Rodney, but the British ships had silenced most of the German guns within half an hour. Despite close-range shelling Bismarck did not sink. Scuttling charges were soon set off by German sailors, and at 10:40 am, Bismarck capsized and sank.

After separating from Bismarck, Prinz Eugen made her way to Brest safely, arriving on 1 June 1941.

IMPORTANT RULES AND CONCEPTS

Movement Squares: Four spaces within a Grid a ship and U-boat can move.

Grid: Locations on the board for ships and movement.

Zones: A group of grids designated by an event chart, that may have multiple different zones, designated by color.

- Each grid has a grid identifier (A1, A2, B1, B2, etc.) that is fixed and does not change on an event chart. They generally have 4 movement squares though some can have less near land masses.

- Zones for an event chart are defined by color and have a varying number of grids that make up the zone for that event chart. Zones, and grids included within zones, can change from event chart to event chart.

- Bismarck and Prinz Eugen are defined as together if they are in the same grid, even if in different movement spaces within the grid. They are **both** affected by events and opposing ships when in the same grid together.

- When not in the same grid together, but in the **same zone**, both ships are affected by events. If opposing ships are in the zone, only the Bismarck is affected and must have ship combat with the opposing ships. The Prinz Eugen avoids the ship combat.

- When Bismarck and Prinz Eugen are in grids in **different zones**, each ship is affected by the events and opposing ships in their zone.

- The U-boat is not affected by events unless specifically stated. They are not affected by opposing ships unless they decide to do a U-boat attack.
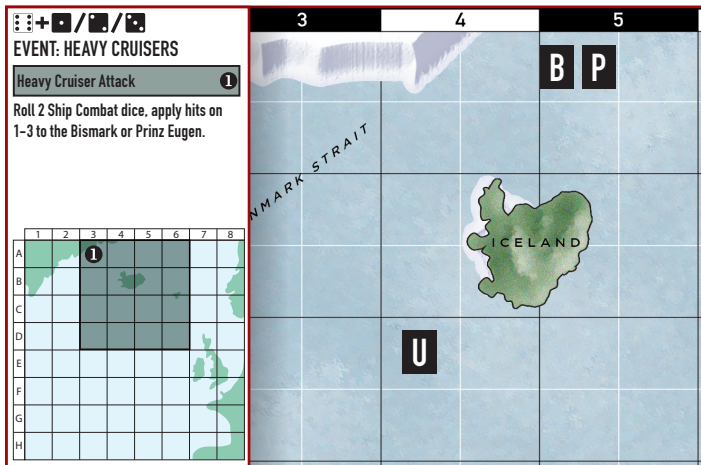
BATTLE RECORDS

For each mission write down your total VPs and whether the Bismarck has sunk. Compare your VPs to the required VPs for the mission and note if you earned the medal.

TURN 1
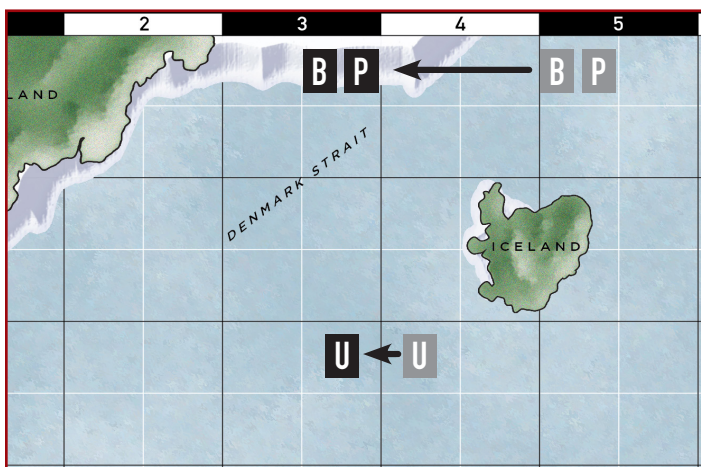
Bismarck and Prinz Eugen start in grid A5 and U-boat in grid C4. The event dice rolled show white 6 and black 3, Heavy Cruisers.

EVENT: HEAVY CRUISERS

Heavy Cruiser Attack ❶

Roll 2 Ship Combat dice, apply hits on 1-3 to the Bismarck or Prinz Eugen.

The grids your ships and U-boat are in are the same zone as the Heavy Cruiser Attack. The U-boat is not affected by it, but the Bismarck and Prinz Eugen are affected. The roll of the 2 dice for the Heavy Cruiser Attack show a 2 and 5. The 2 is a hit and the decision is to mark it on the Prinz Eugen.
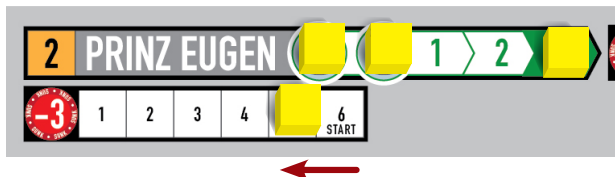
The event is over. There are no air or U-boat attacks nor ship combat. Bismarck and Prinz Eugen move together 3 movement spaces to grid A3, with the Bismarck marking off 1 fuel barrel for the extra movement space it moved. The U-boat moves to 1 space into grid C3. The turn is over.

TURN 2

The event dice rolled show white 3 and black 1, All Points.

EVENT: ALL POINTS

Fuel Tanker (+1 Fuel Per Ship)	❶
Minefield (1 Hit Ship of Choice)	❷
Lone Merchant (+1 VP)	❸
British Sub (1 Hit Ship of Choice)	❹
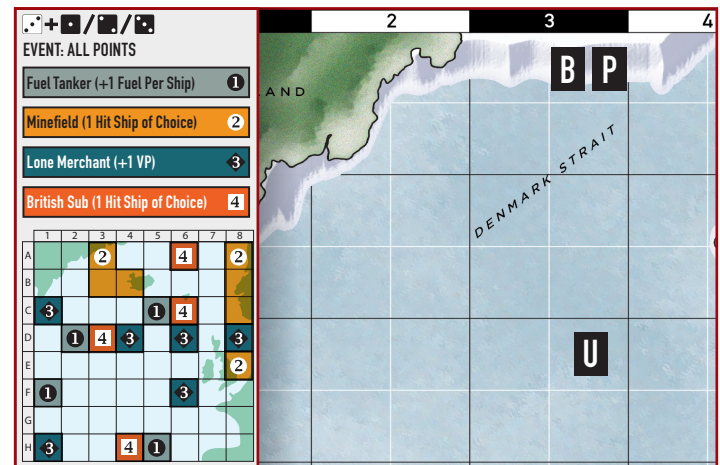
The U-boat is not affected. The Bismarck and Prinz Eugen are affected by a Minefield in their grid and must apply 1 hit to a ship of choice. The Bismarck marks the hit.
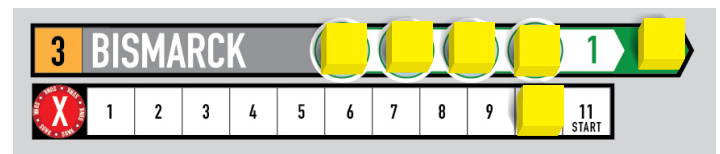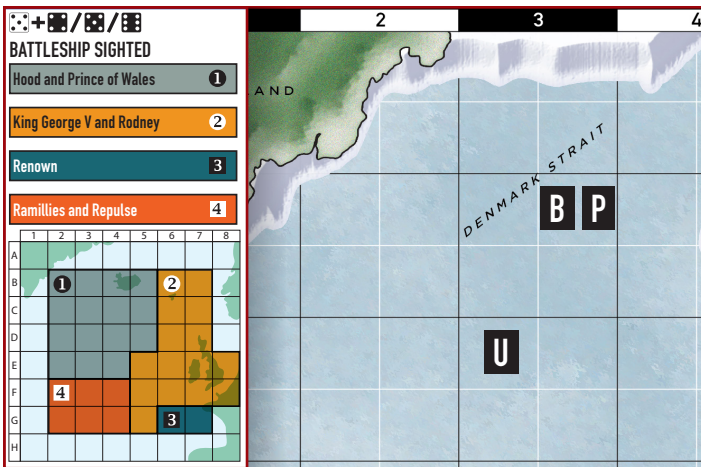

There are no air or U-boat attacks nor ship combat. The Bismarck and Prinz Eugen move together 2 movement spaces to grid B3. The U-boat moves 1 movement space and remains in grid C3. The turn is over.

TURN 3
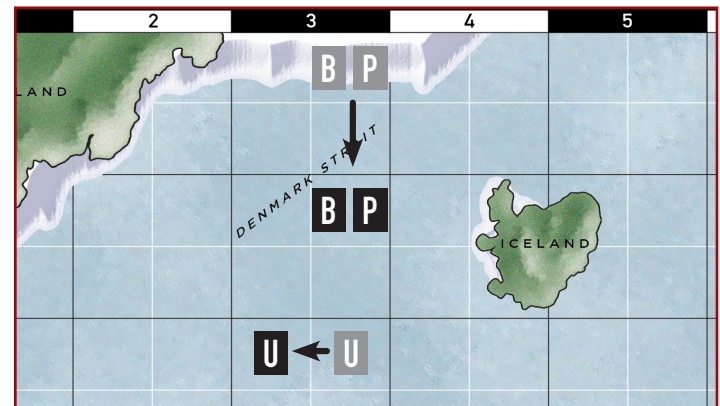
The event dice rolled show white 5 and black 6, Battleship Sighted.

BATTLESHIP SIGHTED

| Hood and Prince of Wales | ❶ |
King George V and Rodney	❷
Renown	❸
Ramillies and Repulse	❹

The U-boat and both German ships are affected as the grids they are in are the same zone as the Hood and Prince of Wales. The U-boat has a choice of attacking or not. It chooses to attack and targets the Hood by rolling 1 die. The result is a 4 which is a hit on the U-boat which is marked. The U-boat attack is over.
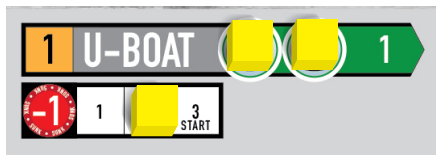

There is no air attack. Now ship combat must be resolved between the German ships and the British ships Hood and Prince of Wales. The Germans fire first and both ships target the Hood. The Bismarck rolls 3 dice for its firepower and rolls a 1, 3, and 5 which causes 2 hits to the Hood. The Prinz Eugen rolls 2 dice for its firepower and rolls a 2 and 6 which causes 1 hit to the Hood. The Hood marks 3 hits.


Now the British return fire. The Hood targets the Bismarck and rolls 3 dice scoring 1 hit which is marked on the Bismarck.
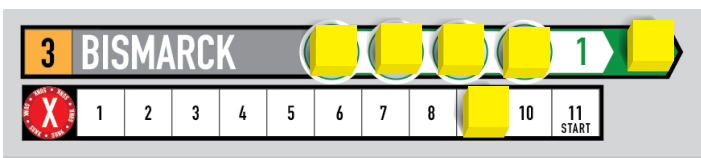
The Prince of Wales targets the Prinz Eugen. It rolls 2 dice and scores no hits. This ends the first round of ship combat. The British ships total strength is less than the German ships so they try to escape another round of combat. They roll 1 die resulting in a 5, and must stay for another round. Bismarck targets the Hood and Prinz Eugen targets the Prince of Wales. Bismarck decides to close on the Hood and rolls a die for the tactic, rolling a 1 which allows it one extra firepower die. It rolls 4 firepower die and scores 3 hits on the Hood which sinks it.
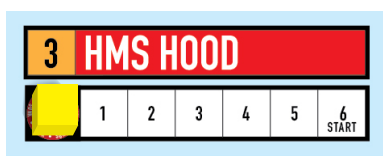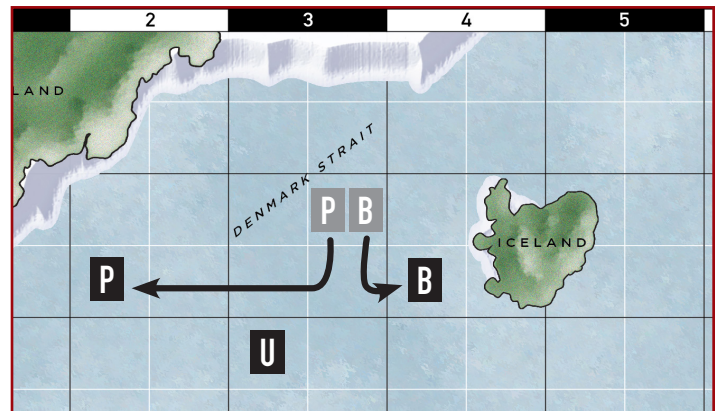

There are 3 VP are earned for sinking the Hood. The Hood cannot return fire this round nor for the rest of game on any event it shows up. Prinz Eugen fires at the Prince of Wales and rolls 2 dice but misses. The Prince of Wales fires at the Bismarck by rolling 2 dice and scores 1 hit. Bismarck marks the hit.
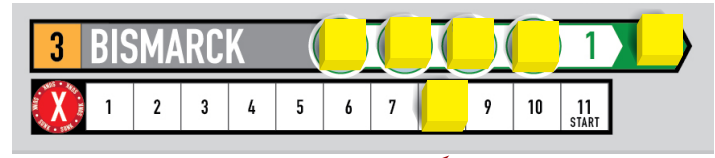
This ends the second round of ship combat. The British ship rolls to escape another round of combat and rolls a 2 which allows it to escape. The ship battle is over.

The German ship movement now occurs. The Bismarck and Prinz Eugen decide to separate. The Bismarck moves 2 movement spaces to grid B4. The Prinz Eugen moves 3 movement spaces to grid B2. The U-boat does not move and remains in place in grid C3. Turn 3 is over.

If game players want to plot or track their movements of the Bismarck, Prinz Eugen, and U-Boat they may photocopy the game Search Board above and mark their movements on the copy.

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