

# NEW VARIANTS, UNITS & RULES

## Operation Shoestring: Variant Naval Rules

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*These rules present a simple variant for the naval game portion of GMT's Operation Shoestring game. This rule variant spreads out the naval game so that the naval game turns happen in the same time frame as the land game turns. It also adds several optional rules that represent the unique situations that occurred during the Guadalcanal campaign. It does not substantially change any of the rules already in the game.*

When the group that I game with played Shoestring for the first time, we enjoyed the game but wanted a little more from the naval rules. We played the campaign game several times and typically split up each side into naval/ air and ground commands. In the original rules the naval commanders were only involved in half the game turns, even though their actions could decide the game. I decided to come up with some rules that would get the naval guys involved in every game turn. The result was this set of rules. The changes are designed to give players more and different opportunities to plan and execute naval operations. Players will still have to do their best to out guess their opponent, but now there will be more chances to engage in naval action without always having to drag along those pesky transports!

### Sequence of Play Changes

This section covers changes to the standard sequence of play. If the Phase/Step is the same as the standard sequence of play, the Phase/Step title will be noted as (SAME).

#### I. Strategic Interphase

*(Odd-number Game Turns Only)*

##### A. Naval Assignment Phase

1. Reinforcements Arrival (SAME)
2. Naval Repair (SAME)
3. Transport Allocation (SAME)
4. Naval Unit Assignment. Each side secretly assigns the naval units and transports to an upcoming game turn (Odd or Even). This is the turn that the naval units and transports will be available for use.

*Example: For Game Turns 1 & 2 the Japanese have 3 CA, 1 CL, 1 DD and 7 TRAN points. During this step the Japanese player assigns 3 CA and 1 CL to Game Turn 1 and the 1 DD and 7 TRAN Point to Game Turn 2.*

5. Submarine Attacks Resolved (SAME)

##### B. Supply Determination

1. Determine the Supply State. Players use the supply points transported in the Previous 2 Game Turns to determine the supply state for each side. On the first 2 Game Turns both side are considered to be

in Full Supply.

2. Place Supply State chits (SAME)

##### C. Attrition Disease (SAME)

##### D. Fatigue Recovery (SAME)

##### E. Captured Hidden Unit Return (SAME)

### II. Naval Segment (All Game Turns)

#### A. Sea Zone Assignment

1. Both players secretly place naval units and transports assigned to naval operations for this Game Turn in sea zones.
2. Both players secretly assign CV BMB or LB BMB units to sea zones for additional search capability. For each full strength unit assigned to a zone, there is a -1 die roll modifier for the Air Search in that zone. *NOTE: Air units assigned to searches are not available for combat.*

#### B. Air Search/Combat Phase

1. Both players roll air search die rolls in each sea zone and modifies as necessary. If the modified die roll < the numbers on the player's sea zone chart, the opposing player's units are found. The opposing player must then report "I have \_\_\_\_\_ ship counters, including \_\_\_\_\_ carriers, in this sea zone." Determined Advantaged player in each sea zone.
2. Air missions are assigned and planes are flown to the appropriate sea zone.
3. Air-to-Air Combat is resolved.
4. Anti-aircraft fire is resolved.
5. Air-to-Surface strikes are resolved.
6. Guadalcanal anti-aircraft fire (one die on the 1-8 column of the *Anti-Aircraft Combat Table*) is resolved against surviving air units with a "Bombard Guadalcanal" mission.

#### C. Surface Search/Combat Phase

1. Both sides perform surface searches in any sea zones in which they have remaining surface units. Determine Advantaged player in sea zone.
2. In zones where both sides are found, surface combat is resolved. If only one side is found, the successful player determines if there will be surface combat in that zone.
3. Units which survive combat in the N. Guadalcanal Zone may go to the sea portion of the game map for subsequent bombardment / support combat.
4. Transport Attacks are resolved.

### III. U.S. Player Turn (SAME)

### IV. Japanese Player Turn (SAME)

#### V. Naval and Air Return/ Extension Segment

##### A. Extend Patrol Phase (Odd Game Turns only)

1. Both players divide their remaining naval forces into groups to check to see if

the group can extend its patrol into the next Game Turn. Players roll once for each group on the *Extend Naval Patrol Table* and modify the result. If the group can extend its patrol, place the naval units with the units that were assigned to the even Game Turn (in Step I.A. 4). Naval units that use patrol extension will be unavailable for naval operations during the following week.

##### B. Naval and Air Return Phase

*(All Game Turns)*

1. Return all air units to their base.
2. Return all Transports to base.
3. Return all naval units that did not check for patrol extension or failed the patrol extension die roll to base.
4. Naval units that used patrol extension are placed in the 1 wk box on the Naval Repair Track. This means that they will be unavailable for operations during the next week. If a unit that used patrol extension is damaged, it is placed on the Naval Repair Track as normal.

### VI. Game Record Interphase (SAME)

#### New Rules

The new rules are explained below. They are separated from normal, revised and optional rules by the letter N in front of the rule number.

**N19.3 Additional Air Search Capability** Both players may use land and carrier based bombers to add to their air search capability. During the Sea Zone Assignment Phase (Step II.A.2) players may place LB BMB or CV BMB units in sea zones within their range to help search for naval units in those zones. For each full strength unit placed in a sea zone, the player may subtract one from the air search die roll. Air units assigned to air search may not participate in combat and are returned to base during the Naval and Air Return Phase (Step V.B).

**N18.7 Naval Unit Patrol Extension** Normally naval units are returned to base at the end of a Game Turn. However, at the end of odd numbered Game Turns players may attempt to extend the patrol of naval units so that the units will be available for the even numbered Game Turn. Transports may never extend their patrol. Players make the extension attempt during the Extend Patrol Phase (Step V.A.1). the attempt is made as follows:

1. Both players divide their naval units into groups of ships. A group may have any number and type of ships in it, but the

- ships must all be from the same sea zone.
- Each player rolls one die for each group, modifies the results and compares the modified value to the *Extend Naval Patrol table*.
  - If the group gets an EXTEND result it is placed with the naval units that were assigned to the even Game Turn during the Naval Unit Assignment (Step I.A.4) and may be used during the next game turn. If the group gets a RETURN result, it is returned to base.

4. All die roll modifiers are cumulative. The die roll is modified as follows:

- U.S. Group: DR -1
- Group has a damaged ship: DR +1
- U.S. Group in The Slot and Northwest Coral Sea: DR +2
- Japanese Group in the Eastern Solomons and Northeast Coral Sea: DR +2
- Japanese Grp. with a Battleship: DR +1

Player should make a note of which naval units successfully extended their patrol. During the Naval and Air Return Phase of the even Game Turn naval units that used patrol extension are placed in the 1 wk box on the Naval Repair Track. This means that they will be unavailable for operations during the next week. If a unit that used patrol extension was damaged, it is placed on the Naval Repair Track as normal. *NOTE: This represents the extra wear and tear on the ships and crews that stay in the a combat zone for an extended period of time.*

### Revised and Optional Rules

The revised and optional rules are explained below. They are separated from normal and new rules by the letter R (for Revised) or O (for Optional) in front of the rule number.

#### R18.3 Transports

Transports are assigned as noted in the normal rules. However, players should keep track of which transports are used in odd and even Game Turns. A transport may only be used on either the odd or even Game Turn and may never use the Naval Unit Patrol Extension rule. Transport attacks are resolved as noted in the normal rules, but the *Transport Attack Table* has been revised.

#### O1.0 Japanese Battleship Commitment

Historically all of the Japanese battleships in the game were available for deployment to the Guadalcanal area. However, the battleships were held out of action to be ready to participate in a decisive fleet battle, where the main battlelines of each side would fight it out and decide the naval war. The Japanese chose to hold most of these ships (especially the super-battleship *Yamato*) out of the what they considered to be a secondary fight in the battle for Guadalcanal.

To represent the mentality of the IJN High Command, use the following rules:

- During the Naval Unit Assignment (Step I.A.4) the Japanese player rolls one die and consults the Japanese Battleship Commitment Table. The result on the table is the number of Battleships that may be used during the next two Game Turns.

- If the Japanese player commits the *Yamato* during Naval Unit Assignment, the U.S. player receives 2 Victory Points at the end of the game turn.

#### O2.0 Japanese Battleship Victory Points

The super-battleship *Yamato* was in a different class than the other Japanese battleships (and even the U.S. battleships) committed to the action around Guadalcanal. To represent this use the following Victory Points for the Japanese Battleships:

5 Victory Points per Japanese BB STEP Eliminated (except *Yamato*)

7 Victory Points per *Yamato* BB STEP Eliminated

#### O3.0 Air Unit Repair/Replacement

Here are some options that can be used to help keep planes in the sky for both sides.

Option 1: Combining Air Units — Damaged air units of the same type may be combined to make one full strength air unit. Done during Naval Repair (Step I.A.2). Option 2: Air Unit Replacement — For every two full strength eliminated air units, a player may bring one air unit back during the next Reinforcement Arrival. The air units must be of the same type to use this option. This is done during Naval Repair (Step I.A.2).

Option 3: Air Unit Repair — During Naval Repair (Step I.A.2) eliminated air units are placed on the Naval Repair Track in the 4 wks box. The air units are treated as naval units and moved along the Repair Track.

#### O4.0 Japanese DD Supply Transport

The Japanese player may choose to use destroyers (DDs) to transport supplies to Guadalcanal. The Japanese Player receives 10 Victory Points at the end of the game if this option is selected. If this option is selected the following rules apply.

- Each DD can carry 1 supply point from Rabaul, but cannot carry troops.
- If DDs carrying supplies are caught in surface combat, the Japanese player does not receive the Japanese Tactical Advantage die roll modifier.
- Number of TRANS points received as reinforcements on Turn 9 is reduced to 10.

#### O5.0 U.S. PT boats

The U.S. player may choose to build the PT boat base in the Guadalcanal area. The Japanese player gets 6 Victory Points at the end of the game if this option is selected. If this option is selected the following apply:

- On Turn 21 add a U.S. PT Unit to the naval reinforcements.
- The PT Unit is transported to the Guadalcanal area like a company of troops.
- Once in the area, the PT boat unit may be

deployed in the N. Guadalcanal sea zone on each game turn (unless the unit is Neutralized, see below). The PT boat unit never returns to Noumea unless the U.S. Player does not control at least one coastal hex on the game map.

- During the Surface search/Combat Phase (Phase II.C) the PT boat unit makes a separate roll to search for any Japanese ships in the zone. If the PT boat finds Japanese surface units, the U.S. player immediately rolls on the 2-3 column of the Surface to Surface Combat Table. No die roll modifiers are applied to this roll. Damage is applied to the Japanese ships.

- If the Japanese player was attacked in the above step, the Japanese player totals the combat value of all Japanese DD and CL units and rolls on the Surface to Surface Combat Table. No die roll modifiers are applied to this roll. If there is a result other than no effect (–) the PT boat unit is Neutralized and placed in the 1 wk box on the Naval Repair Track. During the turn in which the PT boat unit becomes available, it may be transported to the Guadalcanal area.

### New and Revised Tables

The tables for the new, revised and optional rules are shown below.



TRANSPORT ATTACK TABLE		
Die Roll	With Escort	No Escort
0	1/2 AB	1/2 AB
1	AB	AB
2	AB*	AB*
3	*	AB*
4	*	AB*
5	–	*
6	–	*
≥ 7	–	–

#### Modifiers:

Attacking Player Controls operational Henderson Field: DR -1

Transporting Player controls operational Henderson Field: DR +1

Transporting Player has more ships in N. Guadalcanal Sea Zone: DR +1

EXTEND NAVAL PATROL TABLE		
Die Roll	Result	
≤ 5	Extend	
≥ 6	Return	

#### Modifiers:

U.S. Group: DR -1

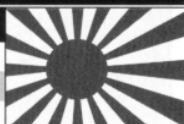
Group has a damaged ship: DR +1

U.S. Group in The Slot and Northwest Coral Sea: DR +2

Japanese Group in the Eastern Solomons and

Northeast Coral Sea: DR +2

Japanese Group with a Battleship: DR +1

JAPANESE BB COMMITMENT TABLE		
Die Roll	Result	
≤ 3	1 BB	
4-8	2 BB's	
≥ 9	3 BB's	