

AN INTRODUCTION TO SEEKRIEG 5™

"No admiral ought to be at sea after [age] 55 and I ought to be put on half-pay at once!...The increasing age of our Admirals is appalling!...Let us have favouritism back again, and Nelsons at 40 winning the battle of the Nile instead of Sir Methuselah Buggins and the other old fossils coming along!"

Admiral 'Jacky' Fisher as cited in Marder, Fear God Vol II.

SEEKRIEG 5 is probably best described as the natural evolution of the fourth edition published in 1981. Many of the features that made the earlier edition such a success have been revised and enhanced so that anyone familiar with the earlier editions of SEEKRIEG will still feel right at home. But that's where the similarity ends.

We quite literally threw out the book when we set about designing SEEKRIEG 5. Math has been kept to a minimum as many of the calculations required in previous editions have been incorporated in lookup tables or pre-calculated on the new ship logs. Even veteran players will be amazed at the new level of detail in the ship data and the fact that none of the extra detail gets in the way of playability.

But if checking off 'damage boxes' and gradual, pre-determined loss of fighting capability based on points is your idea of an exciting simulation of naval combat, you will have to look elsewhere. Quite frankly, the damage system in SEEKRIEG 5 is the closest thing to being aboard ship and unlike anything you will find in any set of rules covering the 1880-1945 era of naval warfare.

However, SEEKRIEG 5 is certainly a detail-oriented miniatures wargame, intended to simulate naval combat using a per-hit damage system wherein the damage caused by each hit is specifically identified. The particular capabilities of a warship are reflected in actual units and damage is described in terms of its actual effect on specific shipboard operations. As you might expect, a system with this much detail is not intended for re-fighting large naval battles in a short period of time. The greater the number of ships and players, the longer the time required in order to play to a decision, but it is recommended that no individual player command more than two or three large warships at a time. Playing time will also vary according to the experience of the players and the conditions of the scenario. Still, it is worth noting that many veteran SEEKRIEG players have reported SEEKRIEG 5 plays much faster than its predecessors.¹



Ship movement is essentially unchanged from previous editions but movement and gunnery now use the same scale of 1:18000 (2"=1,000 yards). Of course, other movement scales can still be used depending on the size of your available playing area. Turn length still represents two minutes and a number of optional rules have been introduced to cover certain aspects particular to a specific time period or situation. In keeping with our commitment to use real data in the game, all values are still expressed in actual units wherever possible. For example, gun ranges are actual ranges in yards and penetration and armor thickness is always given in inches.

A playable command system for both admirals and captains has also been added to SEEKRIEG 5 in order to reflect the command and control problems inherent in combat situations. Command ratings are used for each and the ratings can either be assigned based on historical situations or determined at random. Crew ratings have also been added.

Plenty of additional information has been included in this edition. In addition to charts and tables with more detailed information on torpedoes, radar and aircraft, more comprehensive rules and data for weather and environmental conditions have been provided to assist with scenario creation. Rules, ship logs and damage effects for merchant vessels are also included.

In short, SEEKRIEG 5 will provide as much real data as possible presented in a format that makes it possible to use the information in a playable miniatures simulation of naval warfare.



THE COMMAND SYSTEM

The command system is comprised of Flag, Bridge and Crew ratings, each reflecting the capabilities of the ship, it's crew, captain and when a flagship, the admiral. These values can either be assigned or randomly rolled. The values can be reduced by damage, which then results in a simulation of loss of command and control capability within the system.

Those folks who *really* want to play the part of an admiral can actually do so without even having to skipper a ship (provided enough players are available to command the individual ships, that is -- after all, someone has to do the driving!). Blank, printable flag command forms are provided for all countries and eras to assist the admiral in formulating his battle orders and issuing signals during a game turn.

THE SHIP LOG SHEETS

Of course, by far the greatest change is the new Ship Logs. The ship log now serves a dual purpose; in addition to showing the ship's game specs and recording damage, it now provides key information used throughout the turn sequences. Information such as penetration, rate of fire by range, armor adjustments, acceleration, torpedo settings and fire control which used to be located on separate game charts is now right at your fingertips on the ship log. The log also provides a means to easily record bridge commands (commands issued prior to movement). Layouts of the primary, secondary, tertiary and torpedo batteries are shown and much of the other information is specific to the individual ship, including penetration, fire control, acceleration, propulsion units (boiler rooms, engine rooms and shafts), turning ability, radar, aircraft and torpedo specs. Space for determining ammunition loadouts is also provided.

The new Ship Log replaces the old Ship Data volumes and does away with players having to fill out new log sheets every time they play. Each log sheet has been created for a specific ship, includes multiple versions for each ship reflecting capabilities after major refits and can be printed right from the CD-ROM. Very little effort is required to prepare a log sheet for the game. Ammunition loadouts, admiral, captain and crew ratings are about all that is required.

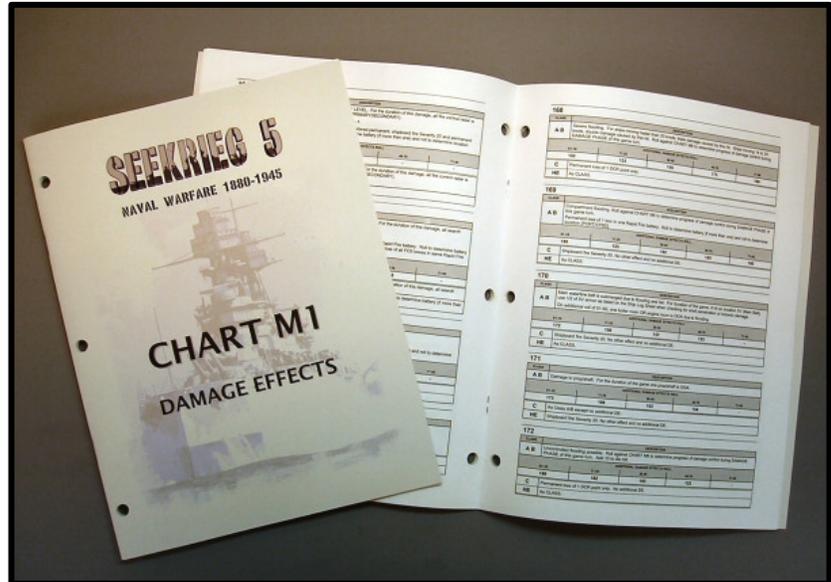
THE DAMAGE SYSTEM

SEEKRIEG 5 still uses a per-hit system that checks for penetration against armor on individual hits and calculates damage accordingly. One of the major accomplishments is a complete rework of the armor penetration information. Penetration data is provided for the individual gun model and the range classifications (short, medium, long and extreme) are also specific to the gun and based on the actual angle of fall for the

projectile at the given range and not a pre-determined percentage of the maximum range of the gun. This, in turn, matches the appropriate hit location table for the particular range classification. Rates of fire for guns using corrected fire are also calculated specific to the gun model and range, and all the information is right there on the ship log. Batteries of rapid-fire guns for use as anti-torpedo boat and AA weapons are also handled more efficiently in the new edition.

CHART H (hit determination) has been revised to include additional factors important to the fire control solution and more accurately reflect those factors relative to one another for all eras. In addition, fire control systems are better defined and are now part of the ship log. The result is that it actually takes less time to calculate hit probability since both the player and the Game Director contribute to the process. Hit probability is also much easier to determine since the numbers are smaller and fewer as a result of many of the factors having been combined and moved to the ship logs.

The general hit locations have been expanded to nine and specifically identified as either vertical or horizontal armor. The gun penetration tables on the ship log provided specific values for penetration of both horizontal and vertical armor by the shell in 2,000 or 3,000 yard range increments. AP, SAP and COM shells are accounted for, but HE is now handled in a completely different manner, more accurately reflecting its performance against armor.



The damage point (DP) calculation, while still reflecting the relative internal volume of a ship, has been reworked to more accurately reflect the survivability of smaller ships. This allows the use of smaller ships such as MTBs and light coastal craft to be included in the general game. But even though DP is still tracked and still caused by hits, it is variable according to shell type and severity of the hit. Loss of capabilities is no longer accomplished using the old loss factor (and the associated calculations that had to be made at the end of each game turn) but through a combination of specific and general damage effects somewhat similar to the old critical damage. The specific effects result from individual shell hits and the general effects result from accumulating DP. They are quite similar in that both describe the damage in physical and game terms whenever possible and are variable in terms of both the chance to get it and the damage caused.

Specific effects also take into account the type of hit (penetrating, non-penetrating, pass-through, dud) and many have a chance of leading to additional damage effects (simulating damage from shell penetration and shock effects). In all, there are about 160 different damage effects described for all types of vessels and these effects cover specific hits, general damage and damage resulting from serious shipboard fires that continue to burn across game turns. But even all these basic effects allow for so much variation in severity, duration, type of hit and additional damage that the possible outcomes number well into the thousands.

While minor loss of speed can occur as the result of flooding or structural damage, only severe flooding, damage to boiler rooms, engine rooms or shafts will cause significant loss of speed. Again, losses of this nature are specific to the ship, shown on the ship log and based on the division of compartments for boilers, engines and the number of shafts. The net effect of all of this is that it is now possible for a ship to have received a substantial amount of damage without an automatic and equivalent corresponding loss in all systems.

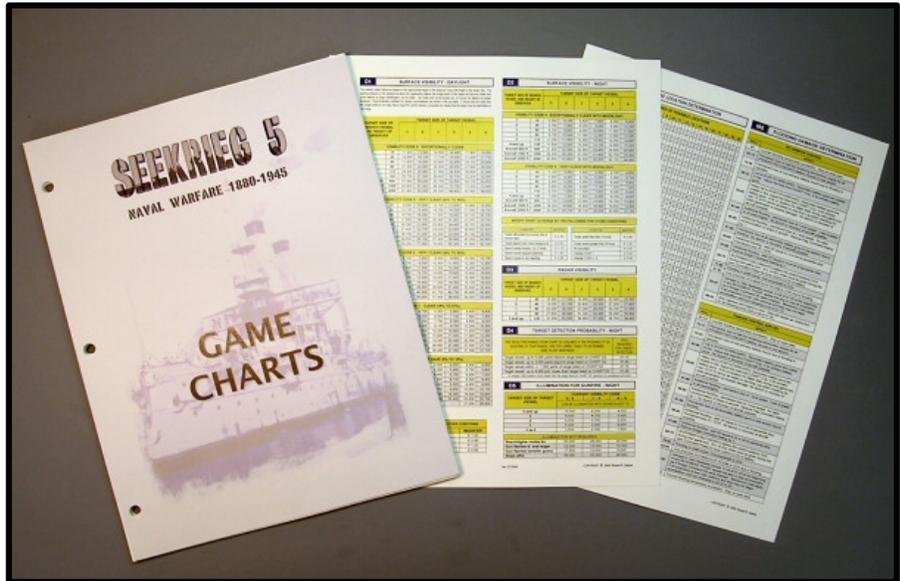
Damage control is now accomplished through an assigned damage control rating. The rating permits a captain to perform effective damage control against an equal number of damage situations (such as fighting fires or checking to see if the results of specific damage effects have been "repaired"). The duration of many damage

effects is now random and based on a severity level so you really never know just how long B-turret will be out of action or if they've managed to control the flooding in an engine room. Rules for long-term damage repair have also been included.

TORPEDOES

Much of the math has been removed from the game, including the torpedo hit probability calculation which has been re-worked into two game CHARTS. Although you can still use the old torpedo calculation, two look-ups and a single multiplication are all that's needed in the new system. A detailed explanation of the new torpedo system is not possible here, not because it's difficult but because firing markers and spread templates are involved and any explanation would be lost without having those in front of you.

Torpedo movement is not formally tracked (i.e. no plotting movement of the torpedoes on the game table each turn) and relies heavily on the judgment of the firing ship's captain both in terms of launching at the correct bearing angle (and spread size) and deciding just when the spread template should be placed on the table. All in all, the new torpedo rules certainly capture both the concept and the flavor of torpedo fire from surface warships.



ETCETERA

Many other aspects of naval warfare are now covered in greater detail including smoke, environmental conditions, use of shipboard aircraft, night actions, random damage effects, blind fire, rapid-fire guns and barrage fire. However, even though SEEKRIEG 5 does focus primarily on combat between surface warships, there is still excellent coverage of air operations and a unique method of handling submarines and ASW.

One final note to everyone, but especially to those of you who are new to SEEKRIEG: While our aim in the development of SEEKRIEG has always been more toward simulation and realism, we really do strive to keep the game as playable as possible. Like all game designers, we try to strike what we believe to be an appropriate balance. And like all rules, the result is not always to everyone's taste or their individual concept of a game or even their concept of naval warfare.

There is certainly a much greater level of detail in this edition but we believe we have managed to keep that detail from turning into complexity through constant play-testing, re-evaluation and, admittedly, sometimes just sheer dumb luck!