

Second Commission

A turn-based naval command · version 1.0.0 · Tronsoft Games

You were put ashore without a ship. An old friend at the Admiralty has found you a squadron and one season in which to use it. What you do with the season is the game.

The one idea

Harbours pay, sinkings do not. Every harbour you hold pays its value into your score at the end of every turn. A harbour taken on turn four pays seven times what the same harbour pays when taken on turn twenty-five. Sinking a ship pays you only what she cost to build, once. An admiral who spends the season hunting the enemy fleet and takes the coast late will lose to one who took the coast early and never fought at all.

The second idea is that **gunnery is printed, not rolled**. There is no die anywhere in this game's combat. The ready-reckoner sits beside the chart at all times: read the class firing down the side and the class being fired on across the top, and the number where they cross is the damage she deals. Every action you open is a decision you have already made, and the only thing hidden from you is where the enemy is.

The ready-reckoner

	BB	CA	DD	CO	SS	CV	TR	FL
BB	5	6	6	6	2	6	7	5
CA	3	4	5	5	2	5	6	3
DD	2	3	4	4	5	5	5	2
CO	1	2	3	3	4	3	4	1
SS	7	5	3	3	2	6	6	6
CV	1	1	1	1	0	1	2	1
TR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FL	5	5	6	6	2	6	7	5

The flagship adds one to the damage of any friendly hull firing from a hex beside her, and a carrier does the same with her air group. A transport has no guns at all: she is the only way into a harbour with a garrison in it.

The ships

Code	Class	Cost	Hull	Steam	Sight	What she is for
BB	Battleship	26	12	3	2	The heaviest broadside afloat and the slowest hull. A submarine will open her like a tin.
CA	Cruiser	17	9	4	3	The working ship of the line. Nothing beats her outright and nothing ignores her.

Code	Class	Cost	Hull	Steam	Sight	What she is for
DD	Destroyer	10	6	6	3	Depth charges and the legs to bring them. The only hull a submarine fears.
CO	Corvette	6	4	5	2	Cheap escort. Sweeps shoal water and screens the line for a sixth of a battleship.
SS	Submarine	14	6	4	2	Unseen except by escorts alongside. Torpedoes gut a capital ship; guns barely scratch her.
CV	Carrier	20	7	4	5	Sees five hexes and lends a point to every friendly gun in a battle within two. Cannot fight for herself.
TR	Transport	8	5	4	2	Carries the landing party. The only way into a fortified harbour that will not surrender.
FL	Flagship	0	14	4	3	Free and mandatory. Adds a point to every friendly gun in a battle it can see. Sinking her costs thirty points.

A turn

Orders. Click one of your hulls. Green water is ground she can make this turn; a red counter is an enemy she can fire on. She steams up to her rating in hexes and stops the moment an enemy comes alongside, so a screen laid across a channel is a real obstacle. Land blocks; shoals do not.

Battle. Every declared action is fought out, up to three rounds. Both sides fire from the hulls they had when the round opened, so a ship that goes down this round still gets her shot away. A hull shot below a third hauls off if she has water to haul off into.

Harbours. Every harbour pays its holder. A third of that income goes to the yard instead of the score, and the yard lays down new hulls in your own harbour basins. This is why holding coast compounds: it buys ships as well as points.

The yard

A harbour you hold with an empty basin can lay down a hull. The cost is the class cost, paid out of the yard's own purse, and she commissions in the basin at full strength. Losing the harbour loses the berth. Late in a season the yard is often worth more than the gun line, because a corvette laid down on turn eighteen still holds a harbour on turn twenty-four.

Fog, boats and screens

You see what your hulls can see, and you remember what they saw. A contact you no longer have eyes on is drawn as a ghost with the class you last believed it to be. A submarine is not drawn at all unless a destroyer or corvette is alongside her.

A boat opening an action against an unescorted ship fires before the reply. Put a destroyer or corvette next to a heavy and that free shot is denied. This is what a screen is for and it is the reason the flagship should never steam alone.

Difficulty, and what it honestly does

There are eleven difficulties, named as wardroom ranks. What changes across them, measured rather than asserted:

Setting	Measured effect
The enemy purse	The largest single effect by a wide margin. At the top of the ladder the enemy buys about seventy per cent more ship than you do.
Fleet planning	From the fourth rank up the enemy assigns objectives across the whole fleet at once instead of letting each hull choose greedily. Measured at about twenty-three points of win rate.
The blunder band	A poorer staff accepts a visibly worse berth. Could not be shown to change the outcome in four separate measurements and is not claimed as skill.
Escort discipline	From the sixth rank up the enemy screens her heavies. The rule is real but the situation arises about four times in ten seasons, which is too rare to move a result.

Setting	Measured effect
Aggression	Deliberately NOT a setting. It was measured twice and was a handicap both times: where damage is printed rather than rolled, pressing home is a worse reading of the same table rather than courage. It is held at one value for every commander.

One thing you should know about the sides

At an equal purse the side that moves first wins about fifty-five seasons in a hundred, with an average margin of about twenty-three points. That was measured over three hundred paired seasons. You always take the first side, and the difficulty purse is what pays for the difference. It is written here rather than left for you to find.

Saving, and the file:// problem

The game writes itself into your browser at the end of every turn and offers to resume. Your career ledger is separate and survives a new season. If you open the package directly from disk the browser gives the page an opaque origin and refuses local storage altogether; the game will play but nothing will be kept. Serve it over HTTP.

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