

A TRAVEL GUIDE TO ST. NAZAIRE

Your Very First Raid

By Bob Proctor

One of the things I dislike most is to find out that I've been playing a game incorrectly. Do you know the feeling? It happened to me most recently playing *RAID ON ST. NAZAIRE*; I read the rules carefully (I thought) and then went through them again as I played my first game. Things went fine, but as the game progressed and I dove back into the rulebook to clear up certain questions, I began to discover that I hadn't been counting movement costs correctly, that I had allowed guns to fire that weren't supposed to, that German units that should have appeared automatically hadn't, and a few other things. It's my own fault. It's a solitaire game; who else can I blame? I should have read the rules more carefully. Maybe the old attic is getting too full and every time I push something in the front, something else falls out the back? I can't believe it's all due to senility, however. Surely there must be a way to help us learn, and use, the correct rules on the first playing of a game?

In the case of *RSN* the rulebook is pretty complete, but does not present rules in quite the right order to "play as you read". A full-blown tutorial would help, but it would be at least as long as the rulebook and there is not enough space for such in *The GENERAL*. Instead, I offer here a detailed "Turn Sequence" for *RAID ON ST. NAZAIRE* which should make it possible for the reader to start playing as soon as he gets the game home from the store. It is intended to be complete enough, and general enough, that those of you who do not have the game should even be able to follow the Series Replay in this issue. I have not tried to replace the rulebook and I refer to the appropriate sections to avoid repeating minor details.

Counters and Map

Before we get into the actual Turn Sequence we must review those aspects of the game that will be unfamiliar to those who have not yet played this excellent solitaire game.

Look at the counter sheet first. About two-thirds of the counters we combat "units". Some units represent infantry

and these we called "commandos" if they're British and "Stosstruppen" if they're German. Other units represent a major weapon - a vessel, a gun, a searchlight, or armored car - and the crew which operate it. The destroyer *Campbeltown* has two counters, one for each half of the ship. (I left them joined together to make a distinctive counter one inch long for this most important "boat") Note that all British vessels are called "boats" regardless of size and German vessels are called "ships". Boats have counters; ships are printed on the mapboard. Searchlights are a bit unusual in that they have one counter for the light itself, and one for the beam. The beam counter is used to indicate where the light is currently shining.

The map is gorgeous, isn't it? It uses "areas" and "zones" instead of the familiar hexagons and there are two different systems of movement -one for water and one for land. Boats move in the seven water zones. The harbor is divided into five zones labeled "A", "B", "C", "D" and "Z"; the smaller two zones on the left- "Approach" and "Open Sea" play minor roles. On land, the areas are much smaller and are identified by three-digit numbers. The numbers are set inside a symbol that indicates whether this area is open ground (circle), a building (square), a ship (triangle) or part of the U-boat pens complex (hexagon). The areas are connected by solid lines to show where movement is allowed and by dashed lines to show where movement is not possible but combat is (across water, for instance). Areas are grouped together into four zones: areas 111 to 166 are Zone "1", 201-266 are Zone "2", 301-366 are Zone "3" and 401-494 are Zone "4". Gray boxes on the mapboard are Zones "5" and "6" which represent offboard German assembly areas.

There are some dice-rolling terms which are used in the rulebook (and in this issue of *The GENERAL*) for brevity. Some will be familiar: some are unique to *RSN*. For the uninitiated, a "dr" is the roll of one die which gives a result of from "1" to "6"; a "DR" is the roll of two dice where they are added together for a result from "2" to "12". A "drm" is a modifier for a dr or DR a

value added or subtracted to the number actually thrown.

In *ST NAZAIRE*, a "Selection DR" is the roll of two dice as well, but it is read as a two-digit number in the range "11" to "66". The convention is to throw a white and a colored die and to read the colored die first. In the game, such rolls are primarily used to select one of the British boats as a target. A "Triad" is a roll of three dice. Read the red die as a dr, and the yellow plus the white as a DR. One will tell the player whether a hit has been made, and the other what the damage is to be. All are thrown together to save time. A "Selection Triad" is read as a three-digit number (red, yellow, white) in the range "111" to "666" and is usually used to select a land area on the map.

Setting Up the Game

Set-Up is very quick and simple. Place the German guns and searchlights on the board in their assigned positions (shown on each counter). None of the Stosstruppen start on the map, but they get sorted into six groups prior to play. They have a number from "1" to "5" in the upper right corner of each counter which indicates the alarm level at which they may be activated; sort them into piles according to their alarm level. Those with no alarm level are "replacement" counters for use when a unit loses strength or combines, and they make a sixth, pile. The pile with alarm level "1" will be the first to react: put them into a container (hereafter known as the "cup") from which they can be drawn at random. The defense is ready.

Place all the British boats in the Approach Zone. The commandos start the game as passengers on the boats, so they are not on the map until they land. The "Game Log" shows which commando is on which boat and what their assigned targets and landing areas are to be; it is also used to record losses and victory points. (Players can change the printed information regarding boats and passengers and their targets within certain limits -5.- but for the first game

it's easiest to use the historical assignments.) You're ready to go!

1.0 Gun/Searchlight Phase

1.1 Restoration: The very first thing you must do each turn is roll for any German gun or searchlight that may have "Disruption" or "Out of Action" on them. Of course, there won't be any the very first turn of the game. When you do need to do this, roll two dice (a DR) for each gun or light. There are no drms and a roll of "2-7" causes something to happen. If the unit was disrupted, then a roll restores the unit to action immediately.

If the unit was "Out of Action", then the marker is either removed ("2" or "3") or flipped to the "Disrupted" side of the counter ("4-7"). Don't worry about remembering this because it's printed on the counter for you.

1.2 Illumination: On the first turn of the game, the searchlight activity, is preprogrammed. The light at 412 illuminates the Approach Zone; place its beam counter there with the yellow (-1 To Hit drm) side up. The light at 342 also illuminates the Approaches, but its beam counter is not placed there until the Covering Fire Phase.

Starting on Turn 2, you must make a dr for each functioning searchlight to determine which zone it will illuminate. There are no drms. Each light has three possible "zones of effect" and these are shown on the right-hand side of the counter (the rules call this the "Illumination Code"). A dr of "1-3" means the light will hit its primary zone, which is the top of the three. A roll of "4" or "5" illuminates the secondary zone and a roll of "6" illuminates the tertiary (bottom listed) zone.

If there are less than six boats or commando counters in a zone, there is a chance that a light may be ineffective. If the beam counter ends up in such a zone, a dr is made and if the number on the die is *greater* than the number of British units, then flip the counter to its gray (0 To Hit drm) side. It will have no effect for this turn, but the light is still functioning and can be shot at by the British.

2.0 Naval Attack Phase

2.1 Predesignated Harbor Defense Fire: First the defense gets one automatic hit on any target that is too big or too

bright to miss. There is no To Hit dr since no misses are possible. Just roll two dice for the effect and refer to the Harbor Defense Table. There are no drms for this. Roll first for the *Campbeltown* (until it is abandoned by its crew or sunk), then once for each boat that is "On Fire" (including the destroyer if she's ablaze). Boats that are in Zone Z or the Open Sea are immune to both predesignated and normal Harbor Defensive Fire.

Mark the results with appropriate "Evade", "On Fire", "Turn Away", "Dead in Water" or "Sunk" counters and record gun, crew and co commando losses on the Game Log (as explained in Rule 7.1). Note that when a commando loses one or more boxes, you must also check for ammo losses (according to Rule 11.8).

2.2 Harbor Defensive Fire: Now the normal defensive fire is resolved and it becomes possible for the Germans to miss. The player makes rolls until a miss occurs or until 12 hits are made (not counting any hits from predesignated fire). Use the "Shots Taken" marker on the turn record track to count the hits.

For each shot, throw all three dice. The red die determines if a hit has occurred and the other two dice determine which boat is being shot at. A "6" on the red die is a miss (after Turn 3, a "5" or a "6" is a miss), but there may be modifiers that change a miss into a hit! There is a -1 drm if the boat is on fire or dead in the water. Searchlight illumination can also be a -1 drm, if there is a beam counter with its yellow side up in the same zone as the target boat, and if its drm makes the difference between a miss and a hit, then place that beam counter directly on top of the target boat counter and apply the drm. This boat is considered "caught in the beam" for the remainder of this turn, the light's -1 drm, is applied to any subsequent shots against this boat but cannot be applied for combat against any other British unit. If there are two or more beams in the same zone they cannot be used against the same target, but otherwise all drms are cumulative.

The yellow and white dice of the triad are a selection DR to determine which boat is hit. As there are 36 possible numbers and 18 British boats, each boat has a pair of numbers assigned (shown on the counter and the Game Log). For example, if the yellow die is a "4" and the white a "1", then the selection is "41". Boyd's boat is "41-42" and so would be hit. If the boat which is indicated has been sunk or is not in the Approaches, Zones A, B, C or D

(the zones where Harbor Defensive Fire is allowed), then find instead the boat with the nearest selection number that is available. Once you have figured out which boat is the target and that there is a hit, another DR gives the effect on that boat.

2.3 Covering Fire: Now the British boats get to shoot back at searchlight or gun positions. They also shoot until a miss occurs, and there is an effective limit of six shots. Each shot is a triad where the yellow and white dice total is the To Hit DR and the red die gives the effect. The To Hit total must be "7" or less to get a hit and a +1 drm is added for every hit scored this turn. This has the effect of making "2-7" a hit on the first shot, "2-6" a hit on the second, "2-5" on the third, and so on. If you manage to score six hits, the +6 drm makes any further hits impossible. There are also To Hit drms based on the "Flotilla Gun Display" on the Game Log. This shows the total number of guns in the flotilla at the moment; losses among your boats are reflected by marking off the appropriate hits on your guns (if a boat sinks, then all its guns are crossed off). For example, after eight boxes have been crossed off, a +1 drm is added to all British Covering Fire To Hit rolls.

You must choose the intended target for each shot before the dice are rolled, and the following rules govern your choice of targets:

1. Targets cannot be "Disrupted" or "Out of Action" (if they aren't active, they would be invisible in the dark).
2. You must have a boat with a functioning gun in one of the three zones the target could affect.

2.4 Dockside Defensive Fire: Harbor Defensive Fire represents the general effect of offboard German guns, now the guns onboard get their turn. This is resolved one sea zone at a time, in any order. It is applied to the Approach zone on the first turn only. Each gun may fire at only one zone and must fire at the highest zone of effect in which there are target boats. Flip each gun unit as it is allocated to show that it has been used for Dockside Defensive Fire. Note that a gun may not engage in such fire if there is a commando unit ashore in the same area or an adjacent area (Rule 11.4).

This fire is resolved by a triad in the same manner as Harbor Defensive Fire

with the To Hit number equal to the number of German guns firing at the zone. So, if the guns at 300A, 300B and 312 fire into Zone A, a roll of "1-3" on the red die would be a hit (with no drm). If a hit is scored, the yellow and white dice are used to select the target boat as with Harbor Defensive Fire. If the boat with the selection number is not present in that zone, select the boat that is present with the nearest number - a hit is a hit in this game. Resolve damage in the same manner as before. Once a miss occurs, there is no more fire in this zone for this turn. When the Dockside Defensive Fire is completed, flip all the gun counters back to their normal side.

2.5 Open Sea Encounters: There won't be any of these on the first turn. Later, boats have to pass through the Open Sea to return to England and as they do, they run the risk of being intercepted by alerted German forces. Make a DR for each boat in this area on the Open Sea Encounter Table as described in section 7.4.

3.0 Naval Move Phase

3.1 Movement: Is your morale about to break under the withering fire from shore? Finally a chance to get moving! Each boat's maximum speed is shown in the lower right corner of its counter. Most have a maximum of "2" movement factors (read 2MF), but a few can go as fast as 4MF. However, since the British were approaching at reduced speed to avoid alerting the defenders, no boat may move more than two on the first two turns.

Let's consider Turn 1. It takes 1MF to move into an adjacent sea zone, so boats with only 1MF (due to damage or evasive maneuvers) can only move to Zone A from the Approaches this turn. Those with 2MF could move through A to Zone B or Zone Z. One thing you might want to attempt is sinking the *Sperrbrecher*. This ship is anchored out in the harbor so that its two guns could be used for defense; sinking it early will prevent those two guns aboard from doing more damage on Turn 2. The player can attack it with any torpedo boat except MTB 74 (Wynn)-which has delayed action torpedoes. Choose one that has 2MF left after Naval Combat and move it into Zone A (1MF), now use the second MF to make a torpedo attack (Rule 8.4) on the flak ship. The attack is not resolved until after all naval

movement is completed, and only a dr of "1" or "2" sinks it, so you could improve your chances by making another attack with another torpedo boat.

Landings should commence on Turn 2. A boat expends 1MF to enter or leave a Landing Area. Area 336 is the easiest to reach; it is adjacent to Zone B so that boats that start there with at least 1MF can make a landing. Boats in Zone A with 2MF can also reach it. Even though the boat is placed directly on Area 336 (or close alongside if things get crowded, there is no limit to stacking), it is still considered to be in Zone B for German naval fire.

Another event that should happen on Turn 2 is the *Campbeltown* ramming the Southern Caisson of the Normandie dry-dock. Only the destroyer may do this and it costs 1MF. Thus, if *Campbeltown* can maintain a speed of 2MF, she can move into Zones A and B on the first turn and on Turn 2 can move into C and ram the caisson. Read Rule 8.2 for details of how its guns may fire after ramming and how the crew can scuttle the destroyer to improve the odds of getting the 12 Victory Points (VP) for destroying the caisson.

There are two other movement rules which you can look up only when needed. It takes 1MF (per boat) to pick up/transfer passengers from another boat in the same zone (Rule 8.3). As survivors are worth VP if you can get them to England, this is a decision to be made. And, starting on Turn 5, a boat may attempt a Forced Landing in an area not designated for landing (Rule 8.5). This takes all of a boat's MF for that turn and succeeds only on a dr of "1" or "2" (no drm are applied).

3.2 Torpedo Attacks: Resolve all torpedo attacks in any order you wish with a dr on the Torpedo Attack Table (-1 drm if the target is already "Damaged"). Mark off the torpedo box for that boat on the Game Log. Note that Wynn has delayed action torpedoes (see 8.42) which are not resolved until the end of the game. Mark off Wynn's torpedo when he attacks, however.

3.3 Clear Markers: Remove all "Evade", "Turn Away", and "Sunk" markers from all British boats. Remove any boats that were sunk and delete them from the Game Log.

3.4 German Ship Withdrawal: This is a rule you won't use until Turn 10. Beginning then, the German ships moored around the basin move to the U-boat pens

for protection. Read Rule 13.2 the time comes.

4.0 Loading/Unloading Phase

4.1 Load/Unload Commandos: All boats in a Landing area may unload or load passengers. To unload, simply place the commando counter on the area; there are no stacking limits to worry about. To load, remove any commando counters that are in the area and mark off a number of passenger boxes on the boat to match the current strength of the unit(s) being loaded. Note that all boats have a limit of 12 passenger boxes.

5.0 German Activation Phase

5.1 Activation Number: It's time to see how the Germans react. There is a drm for each turn printed on the Turn Record Chart on the mapboard. This starts out at -3 but gradually becomes positive; thus, more and more Germans enter the fray as the game progresses. Roll a DR to see how many German units will be activated this game turn.

5.2 Select Units: Draw that number of units randomly from the cup holding the available forces. If the Activation Number is "12" or more, then the first unit is automatically an armored car (Rule 9.5). If all of the units in the cup are taken, add the next group of counters you sorted before play began. In other words, if you took the last unit labeled Alarm 1, then put all the Alarm 2 counters into the cup and keep drawing. When the fifth group has been used, add all the German casualties from groups 3-5 to the cup. You should always have German counters available to place.

5.3 Place Units: Roll a triad for each unit activated and place the unit in the area indicated. If the area contains a gun or searchlight that is "Disrupted" or "Out of Action", the light/gun is restored and the activated German unit is reduced in strength (Rule 9.4). If the area determined is untenable, then return the counter to the cup. Untenable areas are those where one or more of the following conditions apply: it is occupied by British commandos; it is a German ship that has withdrawn; it is an overwater area (bridge, ship or lock gate) that has been destroyed; it is an area from which it is not possible (due to demolitions) to ever reach a commando.

6.0 Land Movement Phase

6.1 Commandos Move: Commandos move from area to area along the solid lines, paying movement costs as they go (Rule 10.1). If two areas are connected by a single solid line then the cost is 1 MF; two lines cost 2MF; three lines, 3MF. Commandos have 3MF at full strength and 2MF at reduced strength, but they have 1MF less on the turn that they land (Rule 10.3). Remember that it costs 1MF to enter or leave an area containing any enemy unit (including guns and lights) and German units are activated automatically when a commando unit moves onto a ship (Rule 13.21) or adjacent to the Uboat pens (Rule 14.2).

6.2 Set German Movement Number: The Stosstruppen's mobility varies randomly from turn to turn. Roll a die (no drm) for the Move Number for this turn and mark it on the track provided on the mapboard. The MF of each German unit will be in the range of 0MF to 3MF, depending on their current strength (10.2). Larger units will be more mobile than smaller ones.

6.3 German Units Move: Stosstruppen take the shortest route towards the nearest commando as detailed in Rule 10.4. They follow the same rules as commandos, except that they cannot leave an area containing a commando unit and German units on ships and in the sub pens are restricted (Rules 13.1 and 14.2). Armored Cars can move 4MF no matter what the movement dr

7.0 Land Combat Phase

7.1 Resolve Commando Attacks: Commandos can engage in Fire Attacks against a specific enemy unit in their own or in any connecting area. All combat "in the same area" must be resolved before any fire between areas is resolved. Resolve combat by making a DR where the colored die is a To Hit dr and the white die is the number of enemy strength points lost. Several To Hit drms may apply depending on defensive terrain and whether the commando is a demolition unit (those with the orange stripe on the counter) or an assault unit (Rule 11.3). German losses are taken immediately by replacing the target counter with an appropriate one of lower value. Assault commandos may instead make a "grenade attack". Grenade attacks can

only be made against units in the same area. Such attacks use one ammo box on the Game Log and are the only way to destroy armored cars (Rule 11.3). They can, if successful, eliminate all German Stosstruppen units in an area except in the U-boat pens (Rule 14.2). Grenade attacks can be made against guns and lights, but affect only the target (11.4 and 11.6).

7.2 Resolve Stosstruppen Attacks: Surviving German units fire back following the priorities laid out in Rule 11.31 for targets of their fire. This fire is conducted and resolved the same as British fire attacks, except that British losses are recorded on the Game Log. When a commando loses one or more strength points, you must also check for ammo losses (Rule 11.8). If a commando unit's strength is reduced to three or less, its counter is flipped over to the 2MF side.

7.3 German Long Range Fire: Any guns in Flak Towers which have not yet participated in a Fire Attack this turn may shoot at commandos in any area which is color-coded to match the gun's area (Rule 11.51). A dr of "1" or "2" is a hit (-1 drm if the target is illuminated) and a hit removes one strength point on the top commando unit in the target area. Check ammo loss for each hit.

7.4 British Mortar Attacks: Assault units (only) may return the long-range fire with mortars (11.52). They must be in an area subject to German long range fire and the target is always the gun which can shoot into that area. A dr of "1" is a hit; resolve hits with a dr on the Covering Fire Table.

8.0 Demolition Phase

8.1 Preparation: British demolition units (with ammo) that are in an area with a VP objective, a gun or a searchlight may try to blow it up. If the target is a VP objective, a preparation dr must be made first. Roll a die (drm for attacks made, movement, and presence of enemy units); if the result is less than or equal to the current strength of the commando unit, place a "Prepared Charges" counter in the area. If successful, mark off an ammo box for that demolition unit on the Game Log.

8.2 German Removal: Any Stosstruppen unit that is in an area with a "Prepared Charges" marker and no commando units may attempt to remove the charges. Roll a DR and if the result is less than or equal to the unit's current strength, the charges are removed (and the counter).

8.3 Demolition Resolution: For every "Prepared Charges" counter in an area with a commando unit, roll a die on the Demolition Attack Table (drms per Rule 12.3). Note that an assault unit can detonate the charges, but with a +1 drm. A result of "1-3" destroys the target; a "4" damages it. Mark the target area with the appropriate counter. A result of "5-6" means no effect. In all cases, remove the "Prepared Charges".

9.0 Consolidation Phase

9.1 Combine German Stosstruppen: For each area in which there are two or more Stosstruppen counters and no commandos, replace two German units with a replacement counter equivalent to their combined strength (Rule 10.6).

9.2 Move Turn Marker

10.0 End of Game

10.1 Resolve Detonation of Campbelltown: After all commandos have been eliminated or evacuated, the explosives in the *Campbelltown* detonate. Make a dr on the Demolition Attack Table to see if the South Caisson is destroyed. There are a number of special drms for this attack. First, the normal -1 for the South Caisson does not apply. There is a -1 drm if the *Campbelltown* rammed at Speed 2MF, and another -1 drm if she has been scuttled (not sunk). If the maximum -2 drm applies, only a roll of "6" will fail to destroy the caisson.

10.2 Resolve Detonation of Delayed Action Torpedoes: If MTB 74 made a torpedo attack during the game, resolve this now with a dr on the Torpedo Attack table.

10.3 Count Victory Points: Add up all the VP for targets destroyed, half value for targets damaged, and any additional points for survivors that reach England (Rule 15.2). How'd YOU do? So far my best has been 86.8 points and my worst has been 16.2! (This last disaster occurred when six boats, including the *Campbelltown* were sunk by Turn 2 and the rest Pulled out.) But, the amazing thing about *RAID ON ST. NAZAIRE* is that we, unlike the British who rode into history on the small boats, can try again. Good luck.