

FAST CARRIERS

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In the Fast Carriers World War II Scenarios, it is impossible for dive or level bombers to attack BB's or BC's unless the vessels are already at D-2 status (from torpedo planes or surface combat). This forces the Player, as strike commander, to ignore undamaged capital ships unless he has several torpedo planes per target available. This is certainly unrealistic, as dive bombers did attack undamaged BB's during attacks on carrier forces (Kirishima at Midway, South Dakota at Santa Cruz, etc.). In game terms, it is impossible for 18 dive bombers to attack a BB. In real life, damage to these units was, at best, minor (South Dakota took a bomb right on Number 2 turret, which many of the turret crew were unaware of). But bombers had the potential to wreck steering positions, destroy AA guns and crews, and so forth.

To allow this, reduce the Defense Strength of BB's and BC's to allow the bombers a chance to inflict damage. I suggest an anti-bomber DS of "6" for the Japanese BC's, and DS's of 7 or 8 for U.S. battleships and the Japanese ships Mutsu, Nagato and Yamato. These Strengths allow attacks and damage appropriately because of the more accurate nature of dive bombing attacks (as opposed to torpedo attacks) plus the nature of the armament carried by dive bombers in 1942-43: 1000 (U.S.) and 550 (Japanese) lb. bombs fused for use against carrier decks. These bombs would hardly penetrate the heavy deck armor of capital ships, but could do damage akin to a D-1 result. These Strengths could also apply against the less- accurate level bombing attacks, as accuracy has already been built into the air unit's Anti-Surface Combat Strengths.

The ship's printed DS would simply apply against surface or torpedo attack and any modifications would be calculated from this (i.e., the Nagato at D-2 would still defend against bombers at an adjusted Defense Strength of 5, not 3).

Since a ship at D-3 status is dead in the water and must be towed, it is illogical for the rules to permit a carrier at D-3 to change facing. This change deprives a defender of an easy way to defeat a torpedo attack by presenting the ship's stern to the attacker. This places a dead-in-the-water ship where it should be at the attacker's mercy save for any CAP or Flak.

Speaking of towing, CA units should be allowed to tow CV's. There is precedent:

Northampton towed Hornet at Santa Cruz until subsequent attacks forced her to part the line. The ships maintained a speed of 3-4 knots until that time.

To give B-17's more punch when attacking airfields, triple their Attack Strength to 6, instead of doubling it to 4. This enables a stack of three units to make attacks of +12 and +6. This dabbling is not unreasonable, since the game allows torpedo planes like the TBF or Kate to attack at +3, and the B-17 was specifically designed as a high-level bomber, unlike torpedo planes.

Delete Case 11.2 and allow a defender to set up his CAP in any way he wants—he may place all his units with torpedo planes coming in, or low with bombers attacking. Let him help sink himself. If a Player has only four CAP units, why should he be forced to deploy two at low altitude—even if it is not a bad idea and is really in his best interest?

Allow ships to transfer between two TF's in the same hex at any time, as long as no dummies are thus created (save this until Night as per the rules). At Santa Cruz, CLAA Juneau accidentally left crippled Hornet to join the Enterprise over the horizon-before the attack, which caused Hornet's eventual abandonment. This change also allows the Player another chance to out-smart himself, one of the intriguing aspects of the game.

Players can agree to reasonable transfer limits or none at all, since the strategic hex is ninety miles wide, and TF's may not be all that near to each other, even if they are in the same hex.

U.S. carriers should be allowed to try to remove the first D-1 result, if that is the full extent of damage following the last Tactical Stage before a new Strategic Turn. Yorktown at Midway, Enterprise at Eastern Solomons and Santa Cruz, and Hornet were able to repair much of the damage done to them by the Japanese attacks. This is accounted by the superior U.S. damage control (reflected in the DS's of the ships), plus the nature of Japanese hits—bombs were fused to penetrate deep before exploding. A die roll of "1-3" could be allowed to remove a D-1 at the start of a new Strategic Turn. Or, the D-1 result, would remain (for accumulation purposes), but normal air operations could be allowed to resume after an interceding Strat-Turn. Japanese ships should not be given this advantage, because most U.S. bombs would detonate just under the flight deck, blasting huge holes and starting fires which the crews were hard-pressed to control, much less repair. The Players can try variations of this.

A quick note on the Midway Scenario: Add one (TBF) to Midway at the start of the game. This is a detached portion of the Hornet's famous Torpedo 8, and, historically it attacked Nagumo along with the Army B-26's early on 4 June. And, speaking of B-26's, in this Scenario they should be torpedo planes, not high-level bombers. Make-shift attachments for two torpedoes were rigged on them (much to the surprise of their crews), as they were on some PBV's (which attacked Kondo's transports and actually hit a tanker). Two B-26's and an Avenger returned.

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