

Mediterranean Meltdown

July-August '41

Scenes from the forthcoming game *NWS: Supremacy at Sea WW2* ©

The following pages show scenes from a Britain vs. Italy Mediterranean scenario, in the new NWS computer game *Supremacy at Sea WW2* ("SAS").

The scenario is for demonstration, and the operations are *based on* history. For example, knowledgeable readers may see a passing resemblance between the Operation *Pedestrian* in this scenario and any of the real Gibraltar to Malta convoys of 1941, such as *Pedestal* or *Substance*; or between Operation *Excelsior* and the actual Operation *Excess*, in which a Gibraltar to Malta and an Alexandria to Malta convoy sailed together in a combined operation. But a complete correspondence with history has not been sought – for two reasons. First and foremost, since *SAS* is dynamic, with the situation changing every hour, departures from history are inevitable. Once you take the reins in *SAS*, history is yours for the making!

The second reason is that the operations shown here have been selected for their demonstration value, so that readers will see a good range of the types of decisions, events and actions that are possible in *SAS*. This includes some strategic decisions, operational plans and tactical responses. In *SAS*, you get to play at all of these levels!

The released game will have even more features than can be shown here, including the ability to create campaigns over the entire war period, with any of the six major naval powers of WW2 (the US, UK, Japan, Germany, Italy or France), in a variety of theatres. You can also design and fight with your own ships, including giant battleships dwarfing even the famed *Yamato* class.

For further details of the game, including expected release date, refer to the main web page for the game at <http://forums.navalwarfare.org/showthread.php?s=c0eaaac25546db9323d66e3396dfb8fc&t=1467>

We hope you enjoy this promotional tour.

The NWS Team
September 2007.

Disclaimer: Actual screenshots are from a beta version of *SAS* run on a Toshiba Satellite Pro laptop with a 19 inch screen, at a resolution of 1280 * 800 pixels, in true colour mode, with a NVIDIA GeForce Go 7600 video card. The illustrations have used cropped and sometimes resized portions of these screenshots. The released version may have slightly different screens and will have different scenarios, although a Mediterranean campaign will be included. The appearance of the game on your computer may vary depending on the configuration and capabilities of your computer.

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The Scenario

Here in the Mediterranean, as on other fronts, it is a **dark** time for the allies.

Axis forces have captured Greece and Crete. Rommel's Afrika Korps has recently chased the British Western Desert Force all the way back to the Egyptian border. Only the small town of Tobruk holds out, garrisoned by tough Australian troops. All of Egypt - including the major port of Alexandria and access to the Suez and the Levant - now is like a ripe plum to be picked in the next axis offensive. Malta lies battered under tons of axis bombs, heavier than the tonnage dropped on London! And while British naval and air forces have suffered in the unsuccessful defence of Greece and Crete, the Italian Regia Marina remains a powerful foe. Their new battleship *Vittorio Veneto* has been damaged at Cape Matapan, but not seriously, whilst her sister the *Littorio* as well as the older *Caio Duilio* have both been repaired since the British torpedoed them in a daring and successful attack on Taranto harbour last November.

And yet for the allies, there is hope. On the seas, the Italian navy still promises more than it delivers. The major fleet actions off Calabria and Cape Spartivento last July and November and Cape Matapan in March show the Italians to be cautious, unwilling to engage. Their numerically superior air force still fails to deliver knock-out blows. The Germans are progressively withdrawing their hugely powerful and successful Fliegerkorps X from Sicily - where it has relentlessly attacked Malta and Malta-bound convoys since January. And in Admiral Cunningham, the British have a leader with the resolve and courage to take up the fight. His ships are precious, but less so than the reputation of his navy. "It takes three years to build a ship; it takes three centuries to build a tradition" he has declared pugnaciously. He is determined to use the navy not only as a sword but also as a shield for the vital supply convoys to Malta, Alexandria and Tobruk.

And the axis, too, has huge supply problems. The Afrika Korps is almost totally reliant on convoys from Italy to bring the men and material needed to win the North African Campaign.

And so the scene is set for classic actions: the allies striving to maintain their east-west supply routes; the axis their north-south convoys. Here we find the largest fleet actions of WW2 outside the Pacific theatre, and a fascinating aerial struggle between the land-based airpower of the axis and the smaller yet more mobile allied Fleet Air Arm.

During July, you will see transport and supply missions, land-based and carrier-based air attacks, mine-laying, and submarine attacks.

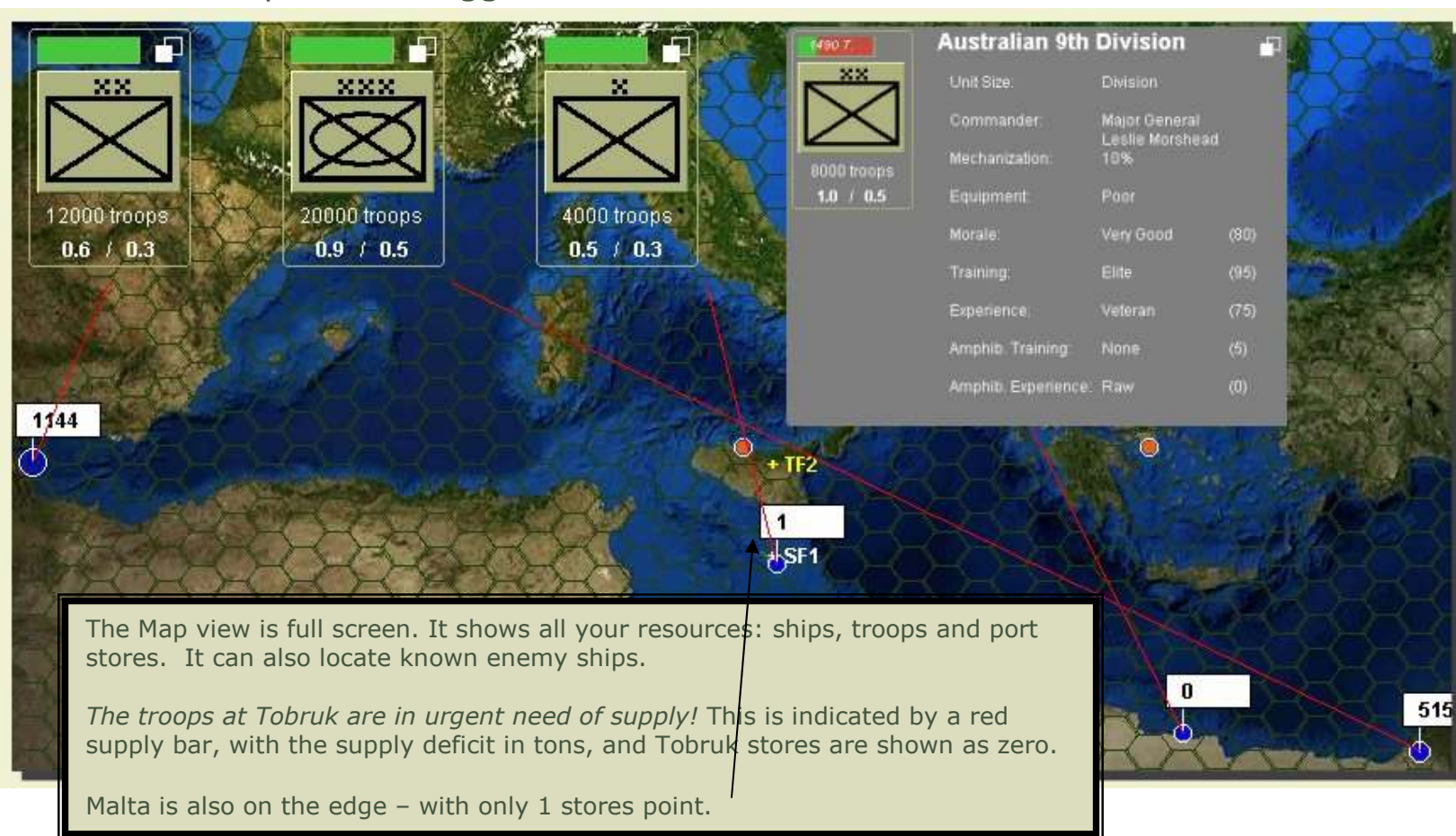
During August, the tension builds to a climax, with a bombardment, a pitched, large scale surface fleet action, and calamity for a British convoy as it stumbles into the minefield laid by the Italians in July.

July – Allied Plans

Allied forces need to recover from the unsuccessful battles to defend Greece and Crete; yet stabilizing the situation on land in Egypt and Tobruk and maintaining the besieged force in Malta is of utmost priority. Allied plans are to:

1. Convoy supplies to Tobruk from Alexandria largely using the *Inshore Squadron* of mostly RAN destroyers.
2. Convoy brigade strength troops and supplies to Malta, from Gibraltar, with a battleship escort and distant carrier cover from Gibraltar's *Force H*. (The troops are then to be taken on to Alexandria next month).
3. Conduct a limited offensive with submarines from Malta to disrupt enemy attempts to re-supply the Afrika Korps through the port at Tripoli. Reconnaissance is to be assisted by aircraft from the *Force H* carrier.

Illustration of Operation 'Digger' – The Relief of Tobruk



These are the basic steps to ordering a supply mission. They can be repeated for a fleet, so it can do multiple supply legs or combine supply with other duties. You can also vary fleet speeds and time in hexes, and set rules of engagement on meeting enemy. Steps 1 and 2 are the same for all new fleet missions, of whatever type.

1. Create the fleet

Enter Fleet Name

Inshore Sqd

OK

2. Add the ships

4. Transfer

3. Select ship(s) to transfer

	Fuel/Rge	Damage
BB Barham	68	0%
BB Renown	68	0%
BB Warspite	68	0%
CL Dido	64	0%
CL Gloucester	70	0%

3. Select ship(s) to transfer

	Fuel/Rge	Damage
DD Stuart	39	0%
DE Hesperus	38	0%
DE Vendetta	36	0%
DE Waterhen	36	0%
MS1		0%

3. Set the amount to be loaded

Tons of supplies to load:

3400

4. Set the path to the destination (Alexandria to Tobruk)



5. And the amount to be unloaded

No. of troops to unload:

0

Tons of supplies to unload:

3400

Tons of raw materials to unload:

0

OK

Cancel

The above steps were repeated resulting in the order to the *Inshore Squadron*, comprising the old Royal Australian Navy destroyers *Stuart*, *Waterhen* and *Vendetta* plus a British destroyer *Hesperus* and two small merchant ships, to make two trips to Tobruk from Alexandria, ferrying a total of 6,800 tons of supplies. This is enough to keep the besieged and reduced Australian 9th Division supplied for several more months.

Not illustrated here but part of this scenario nonetheless, orders have also been given to fulfill the second and third objectives:

Operation 'Pedestrian' – The Re-supply of Malta

A largish convoy of ten merchant ships, including a converted 15000 ton liner for troop transport, plus an escort of the old battleship *Repulse*, newly arrived at Gibraltar, the two light cruisers *Phoebe* and *Sydney*, and twelve destroyers (*Jackal*, *Kashmir*, *Kelly*, *Kelvin*, *Kipling*, *Legion*, *Maori*, *Sikh*, *Faulkner*, *Fearless*, *Flamingo* and *Foresight*) has been ordered to make the slow eight knot journey east from Gibraltar to Malta. This convoy has a secondary purpose: the transfer of ships from Gibraltar to new stations in Malta (the *Jackal* and the *K* class destroyers) and (the following month) Alexandria (the *Repulse*, *Legion*, *Maori* and *Sikh*). All up, the convoy is carrying 4000 troops and 11000 tons of supplies.

A task force from *Force H* with the newly-arrived battleship *Nelson*, the carrier *Ark Royal* – back from her famed chase of the *Bismarck* in the Atlantic - and six destroyers (*Jersey*, *Diamond*, *Fawcner*, *Fortune*, *Fury* and *Hyperion*) is to provide distant cover.

Operation 'Skewer' – Offensive Submarine Patrol

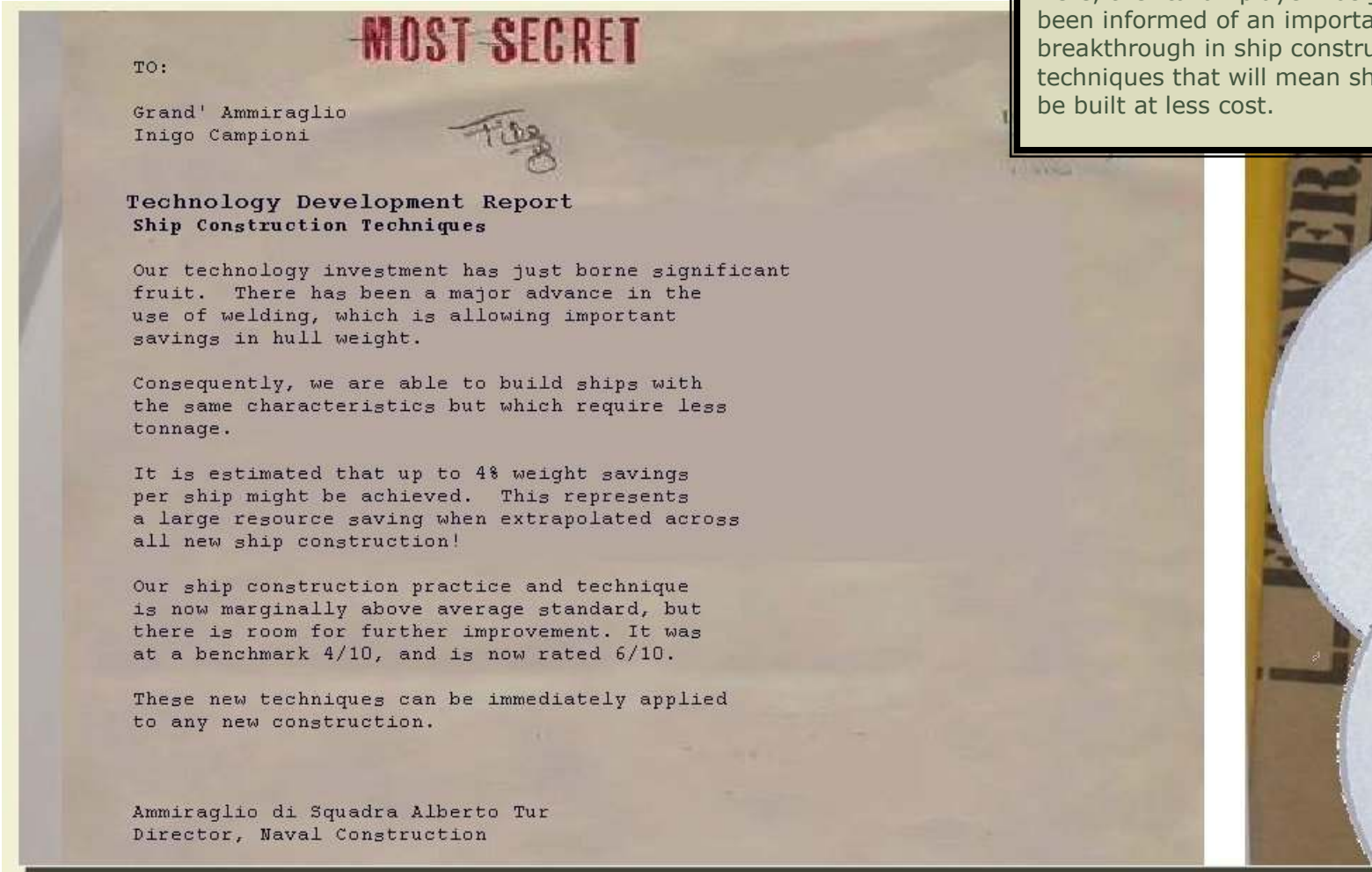
All available submarines from Malta - the eight small but effective 'U' class boats including the famous *Upholder* that recently sank the Italian liner/troop ship *Conte Rosso* - will patrol the southern Ionian Sea and Gulf of Sidra astride the main north-south enemy convoy route between the Italy and the port of Tripoli. They will be organized into two flotillas (*Undaunted*, *Unbeaten*, *Union* and *Upholder* in one, *Upright*, *Ursula*, *Usk* and *Utmost* in the other). Enemy efforts to re-supply the Afrika Korps must be contained while our own forces are rebuilding.

July – Italian Plans

Before commencing planning, a player can review the previous turn and will also be informed of any important scientific developments. (One of your tasks is to allocate budget and set priorities for research and development, in ten key areas such as radar, ASW technologies, fire control and more).

Technology Breakthrough

Here, the Italian player has just been informed of an important breakthrough in ship construction techniques that will mean ships can be built at less cost.

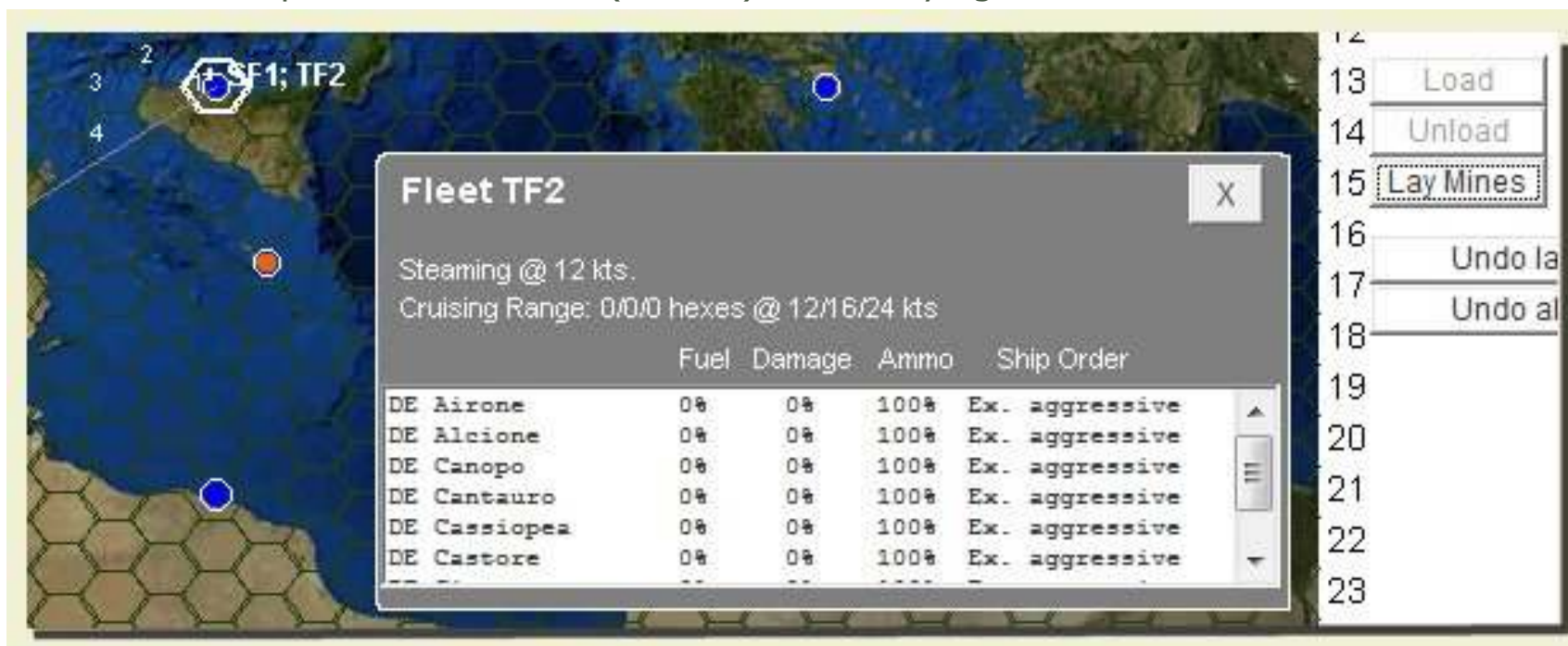


Italian Objectives

The Italians, too, are licking wounds after the battles for Greece and Crete and the major action off Cape Matapan in March. Their limited, low risk objectives this month are to use submarines, mines and land-based aircraft to protect the north-south corridor between Tripoli and the Italian mainland, through which supply convoys to Tripoli can be run – for the benefit of the Afrika Korps and also the port itself as a minor naval base. The orders are to:

1. Cover the western approaches – through the Sicilian Narrows – with mine-laying and submarine patrols by the small fleet of ships and the significant air forces at Palermo that include remnants of the German Fliegerkorps X, a specially trained and equipped anti-shipping aerial strike force.
2. Cover the eastern approaches with a patrol of the Libyan Sea, between Crete and the North African coast, with three submarine flotillas from Taranto, supplemented by reliance on the land-based air squadrons at Tripoli.
3. Through the corridor created, convoy supplies from Italy to Tripoli. Direct convoy escort protection is to be limited to escort destroyers and light cruisers.

Illustration of Operation 'Barriera' (Barrier) - Mine laying in the Sicilian Narrows.



The orders extend to covering three mine-laying sorties, to lay as many mines as possible in a short time in the narrow waters of the Strait of Sicily. All eight *Spica* class torpedo boats from Palermo are involved: the *Airone*, *Alcione*, *Canopo*, *Centauro*, *Cassoipea*, *Castore*, *Cigno* and *Climene*. The numbers in the picture show the consecutive hex path for the fleet. In this "Mediterranean Meltdown" scenario, each hex is 48 nautical miles across. In other scenarios – such as Pacific scenarios – the hex sizes can be much bigger.

Illustration of Operation 'Barriera' – Offensive Submarine Patrol

As part of this operation, two four-boat submarine flotillas from Palermo will patrol the seas between the just-laid mine field and the entrance to Malta itself, in the hope of picking off any convoys that make it through.



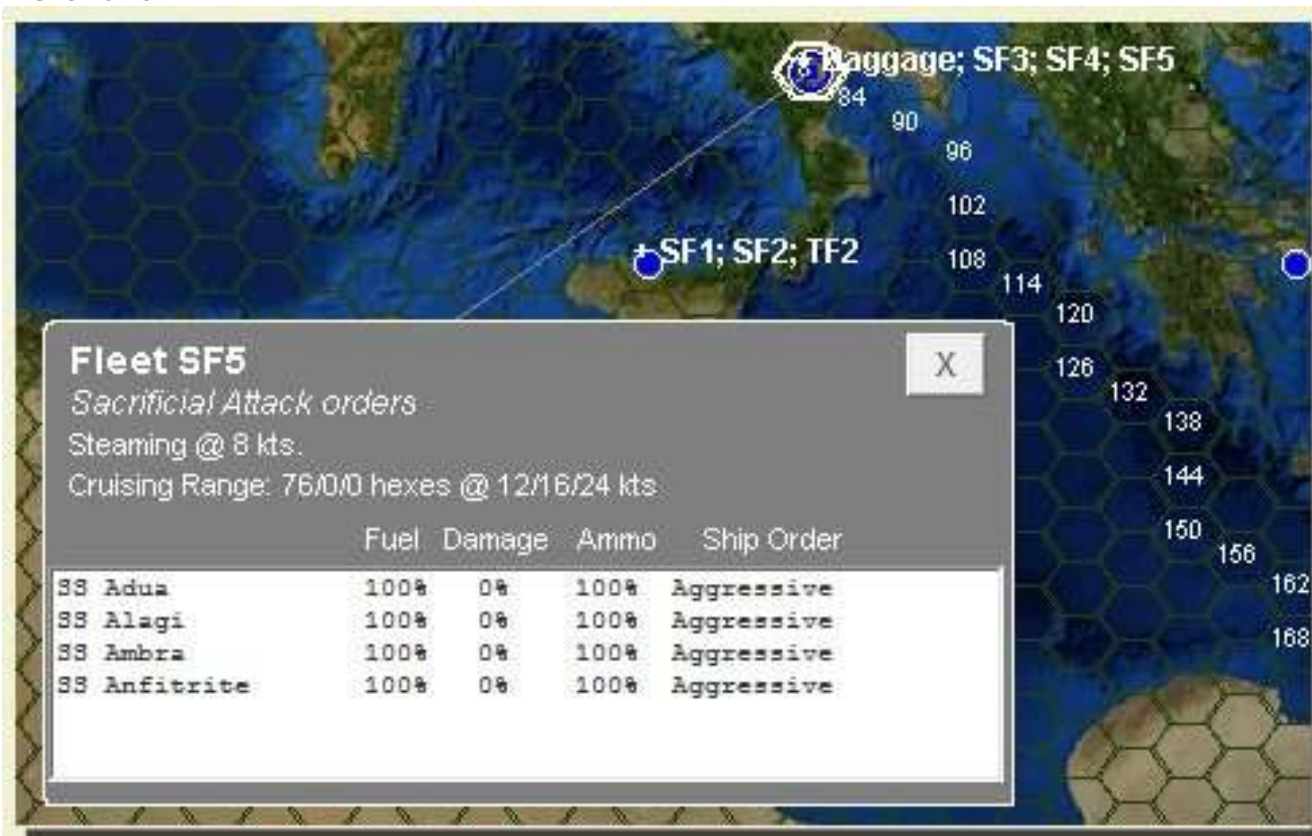
Shown here is one of the flotillas being ordered into position. The numbers are now hours, not a sequence of hex numbers – you can filter the view by hours to see exactly when fleets will be in their allotted positions.

The flotilla has been given "Sacrificial Attack" orders, which means essentially to attack irrespective of odds. The Italian High Command is more daring with its expendable units than it is with its precious battleships!

The other four-boat flotilla – the *Gondar*, *Neghelli*, *Scire* and *Tembieri*, have been given a similar order and will take up station even closer to Malta.

Illustration of Operation 'Barriera' – Control of the Libyan Sea

Also as part of operation *Barriera*, three four-boat submarine flotillas from Taranto will offensively patrol the Libyan sea, between Crete and the African coast, attempting to stop any incursions from the British Mediterranean fleet at Alexandria.



Shown here is one of the flotillas being ordered into position. It has been given "Sacrificial Attack" orders also.

The other two four-boat flotillas from Taranto have similar orders to take up station north and south of this one, so that they cover the 120nm gap between Crete and the African coast.

Like those shown earlier, the boats are all from the successful *600 Series* of Italian submarines, well suited to Mediterranean operations. One of them in this flotilla – the *Ambra* – sank the British cruiser *HMS Bonaventure* in March!

Operation 'Bagaglio' (Baggage) – Supply run to Tripoli.

Not illustrated here but also part of this scenario are orders to fulfill the remaining Italian objective of convoying supplies to Tripoli. A smallish convoy of six small merchant ships, escorted by the two light cruisers *Alberto di Guissano* and *Duca d' Aosta* and four *Maestrale* class destroyers (*Grecale*, *Libeccio*, *Maestrale* and *Scirocco*) will sail

from Taranto and unload 10,000 tons of supplies in Tripoli before making the return journey. The orders are for this convoy to make the trip twice. If successful, Tripoli will gain 20,000 tons of supplies to help the Afrika Korps replenish after their recent headlong drive to the Egyptian border.

July – the Action Begins!

Well, the plans have been made, now let the action begin. We shall see how successful each side has been in the execution of their orders.

SAS computes the action *hour-by-hour!* Fleet movement, fuel usage and fleet sightings – whether visually from ships, ship and carrier aircraft, land-based aircraft, submarines and coast-watchers or from radar (when it is available) or signal intelligence - are all plotted by the hour. Moreover the effect of enemy intelligence and any surface, submarine or aerial battles that occur are accounted for hour-by-hour. All this intelligence is fed into your central intelligence and operations unit ("CIOU"). Fleets will automatically be given emergency orders to avoid, intercept or shadow known enemy, based on their own orders and current battle condition and what is known of the enemy strength, bearing and speed. Ships will also be given orders to split off and head for the nearest port when dangerously low on fuel, or too damaged to continue.

Through all of this, you are not just an armchair Admiral either. You can see these events, and you can also respond to them *if you want to*. SAS allows you to play at different levels of involvement according to your knowledge and preferences. You make the high level budget decisions, ship construction plans and operational plans, thinking ahead weeks, even months. And you can do this all yourself OR let your very competent 2-I-C assist with any of it. Then, when it is time to calculate the action, you can sit back and just watch, or you can roll your sleeves up and get involved in the hour-by-hour tactical response orders! **And the action is fully re-playable hour-by-hour and even – in the case of surface battles – minute-by-minute and shell-by-shell!** So you can relive your glorious (or not so glorious) moments!

The Appendix shows how the turn calculation screen works.

The following turn was calculated with the British as the controlling player, and the Italians restricted to computer-generated emergency moves. Nevertheless, as we shall see, they had the better of it! The commentary is from the British player's perspective.

The action starts on Tuesday, 1st July 1941 at 1 minute past midnight...

Wednesday 2nd July, 9PM – Cargo unloading and Refueling at Tobruk



So far, so good. The *Inshore Squadron* has arrived in Tobruk unmolested, and unloading of its precious cargo has commenced.

The ships in the fleet have started to refuel. Fuel usage and refueling are calculated automatically, hour by hour.

The availability, rate of usage and design capacity of fuel in ships are all important factors to account for in an authentic W2 naval simulation like SAS.

Thursday 3rd July, Midday – Enemy Signal Intercept



The first of many reports of enemy fleets, from a variety of sources, has come in. Nothing to worry about as it is too far from any of your own fleets. Your CIOU has filed the message for reference but has otherwise marked it NFA.

Friday 4th July, 5AM – Reloading and Refueling at Alexandria



Saturday, 5th July

9AM – Enemy Fleet Aerial Sighting



Another enemy sighting. (Not all will be shown here, just some). This time, it is a visual sighting by aircraft from the carrier *Ark Royal* in task force *H.1*. The task force is just out of this picture, to the west, but its aircraft are reconnoitering ahead, and its reports are relayed to your CIOU for possible action by any affected fleet.

Note that enemy fleets are shown in red when first sighted, then orange and finally yellow as the date of last sighting gets older. The enemy fleets *SF2*, *SF3*, *SF5* and *TF2* are all in yellow, whereas *SF1* just spotted now is in red.

You can see the *Inshore Squadron* is back near Tobruk, ready to unload again on entering port.

Meanwhile, the storm over Greece has drifted west to now be over Malta.

1PM – More Cargo Unloading and Refueling at Tobruk



Sunday, 6th July, 9AM – The First Hint of Action

On this day, we have the first real sniff of action.

9AM – Tactical Response for your Malta Submarines - Intercept the Italian Convoy!



The CIOU has determined that enemy convoy *Baggage* is in a good position for interception by your two submarine flotillas *SF1* and *SF2* still at Malta. (Their planned orders had them leaving base for an offensive patrol a few days later). The white line points to your currently selected fleet, the red line to the enemy's.

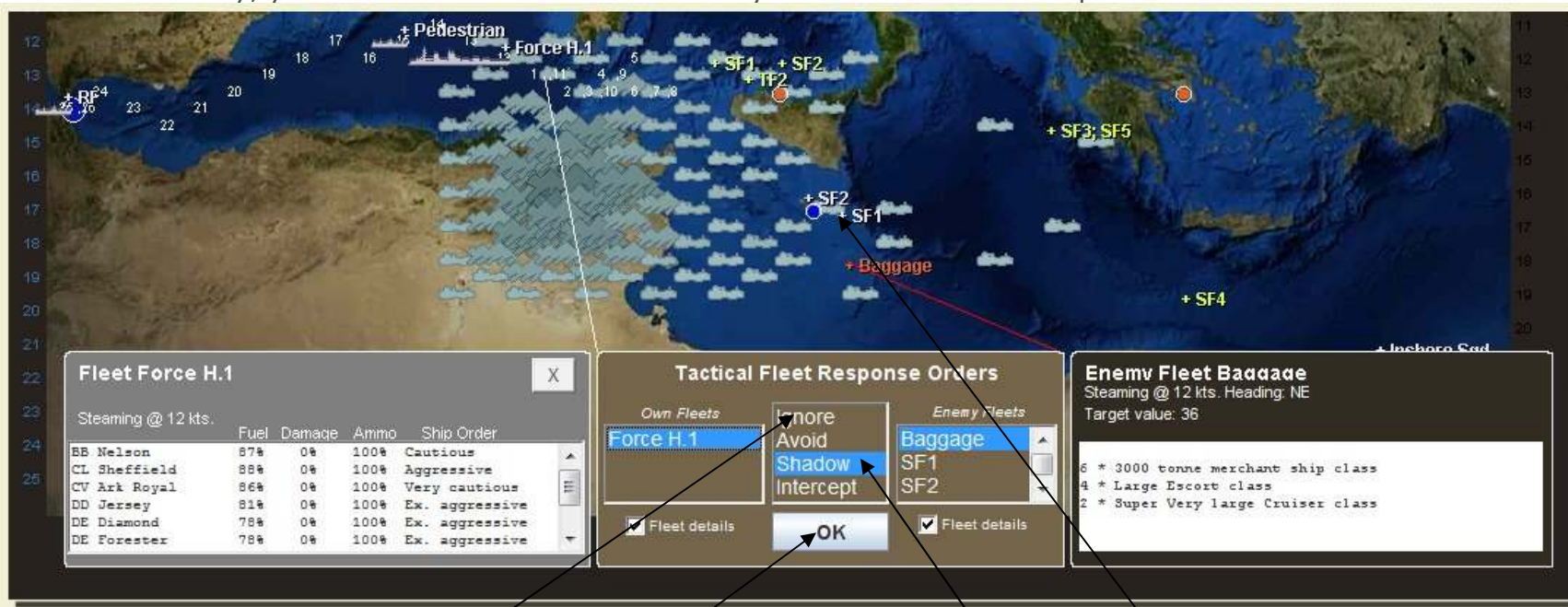
The CIOU asks for confirmation or otherwise. You can Ignore, Shadow, Avoid or Intercept an enemy fleet.

In this example, the British player chooses **"Intercept"** for both fleets *SF1* and *SF2* and then clicks **"OK"** to continue the action. With luck, some serious damage will soon be done to the enemy convoy!

In the above screenshot you can also see details of the currently selected fleet (*SF1*) as well as the selected enemy fleet that you are to intercept (*Baggage*). These info panels can be hidden if you want a less cluttered screen. You can also see where the currently selected fleet (*SF1*) had been ordered to sail before receiving these tactical response intercept orders. (The fleet was to have sailed NE to patrol the southern part of the Gulf of Taranto. Now it will urgently sail SE to intercept the enemy).

4PM – Tactical Response for Fleet H.1 – Ignore the Italian Convoy

A bit later this day, your task force H.1 with the Ark Royal also faces a similar question.



More Tactical Responses! Your CIOU has determined that your fleet H.1, with the carrier Ark Royal, is now close enough to the last reported location of enemy fleet *Baggade* to "shadow" it (Fleets with carriers generally avoid direct interception, preferring to shadow at a distance that still allows their aircraft to attack).

In this example, the British player does not do this because it is more in the spirit of the original orders for force H.1 to avoid drifting too far east. (Its main role is to protect the convoy *Pedestrian*). So the British player clicks on **"Ignore"** and then **"OK"**, to continue the action.

Note that this screen shot is similar to the earlier one but by now, 7 hours later, your fleet *SF1* has moved out from Malta heading SE towards the last reported location of enemy fleet *Baggade*.

Tuesday, 8th July, 11 AM – First Enemy Submarine Attack on Fleet *H.1*!



And now, the first real action!

Force *H.1* has reported being under enemy submarine attack, off the western tip of Sicily.

Details of the Attack

Clicking on the line in the "Submarine Contact" panel opens up a summary of the battle:

Own ships:								Enemy ships:		
	non struc. damage (* 10%)	struc. damage (* 10%)	flooding (* 10%)	speed lost (* 3 kts)	Turret hits	Ammo lost (* 10%)	repair cost (* 10%)		flooding (* 33%)	speed lost (* 6 kts)
Ark Royal	Undamaged							Ascianghi	Moderate damage	
Diamond	Undamaged							Beilul	Light damage	
Forester	Undamaged							Berillo	Undamaged	
Fortune	Undamaged							Durbo	Undamaged	
Fury	Undamaged							Two torpedo hits. Submarine Beilul hit by depth charges. Submarine Ascianghi hit by depth charges.		
Hyperion	Undamaged									
Jersey	Undamaged									
Nelson	Undamaged									
Sheffield	Undamaged									

Force *H.1* is undamaged and its defensive screen has done its work – two Italian submarines – the Ascianghi and Beilul have been depth charged.

This is the first of a running series of no less than four separate encounters between Force *H.1* and the Italian submarines sent originally to attack British convoys. Their sacrificial attack orders have gone to their heads!

Wednesday, 9th July – Three more Enemy Submarine Attacks on Fleet *H.1*

Though not illustrated here, on this next day, both Italian submarine flotillas from Palermo make between them three separate attacks on Force H.1., at 1PM, 4PM and finally at 9PM.

Luckily, the trained crews on the British escorts are able progressively to depth charge and sink four of the Italian submarines – the *Beilul*, then the *Durbo* and *Berillo* and finally the *Tembieri*.

Part of the reason for the British success is due to the relative levels of experience in submarine warfare. The British have reasonably strong ASW weapons and doctrine; the Italians do not have strong training or doctrine in making effective combined submarine attacks. They would have had more success if their two flotillas had attacked in a combined fashion, in the way that German U Boat packs have become adept.

Black Saturday, 12th July!

5AM – Tactical Response for Fleet H.1 - Strike at Dawn!

The day dawns, literally, with a real opportunity. Your CIOU has calculated that Force *H.1*, with the *Ark Royal*, is in a good position to launch an air strike on the recently located enemy convoy *Baggage*.



The British player is notified of a strike in preparation, with 9 Fulmar fighter bombers and 36 Swordfish torpedo bombers – almost the full complement of the *Ark Royal*.

The tactical response options are to:

1. Change the number and/or type of aircraft in the strike
2. Abort the strike entirely.

The British player here opts to go with the recommended strike, and simply clicks "OK".

6AM to 10AM – Disappointment!

But luck is not with the British on this day.

The strike is launched at 6AM

but can not locate the enemy fleet

and is forced to return by 10AM on running low on fuel



4 PM – Convoy *Pedestrian* under Enemy Air Attack!

Yet, while the British strike has had no luck, axis aircraft from Palermo find convoy *Pedestrian*, and attack without mercy.



Details of the Attack

Clicking on the line in the "Enemy Air Strike" panel opens up a battle summary:

44 aircraft attack - a mix of German and Italian fighters, fighter bombers and medium bombers (BF 109Es, BF110C-4/Bs, HE 111H-6s, C.200CB (Saetta)s and SM.81 (Pipistrello)s.

Own ships:	non struc. damage (* 10%)	struc. damage (* 10%)	flooding (* 10%)	speed lost (* 3 kts)	Turret hits	Ammo lost (* 10%)	repair cost (* 10%)
Faulkner							
Fearless							
Flamingo							
Foresight							
Jackal							
Kashmir							
Kelly							
Kevin							
Kipling							
Legion							
MS17							
MS18							
MS19							
MS2							
	SUNK						
MS24							
	SUNK						
MS25							
	SUNK						
MS26							
	SUNK						
MS3							
MS4							
MS50							
	SUNK						
Click Down for More...							

The scrollable battle summary screen tells a sorry tale – on the left is the damage to your fleet, on the right, details of the attacking aircraft.

For a loss of ten aircraft to Ack Ack: 5 * BF 109E's and 5 * HE 111s, the Italo-German strike force from Sicily has sunk 5 merchant ships, including the large 15000 ton ship, and damaged the Repulse.

Land-based air strike involving 11 * BF 109E-4/4B (Emil), 11 * BF 110C-4/B, 5 * HE 111H-6, 12 * C.200CB (Saetta), and 6 * SM.81 (Pipistrello).

Low level bomber attack by 5 a/c vs the Repulse scores 1 hit and 1 near miss.
 Low level bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the Phoebe; none survive AA
 Low level bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the MS17 scores 0 hits and 1 near miss.
 Low level bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the MS18 scores 0 hits and 0 near misses.
 Low level bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the MS19 scores 0 hits and 0 near misses.
 Low level bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the MS2 scores 1 hit and 0 near misses.
 Low level bomber attack by 2 a/c vs the MS24 scores 1 hit and 0 near misses.
 Low level bomber attack by 2 a/c vs the MS25 scores 2 hits and 0 near misses.
 Low level bomber attack by 2 a/c vs the MS26 scores 1 hit and 1 near miss.
 Low level bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the MS3 scores 0 hits and 0 near misses.
 Low level bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the MS4 scores 0 hits and 0 near misses.
 Low level bomber attack by 6 a/c vs the MS50 scores 4 hits and 2 near misses.
 Low level bomber attack by 10 a/c vs the Sydney scores 0 hits and 0 near misses.

Medium bomber attack by 3 a/c vs the Repulse; none survive AA
 Medium bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the Phoebe; none survive AA
 Medium bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the MS18; none survive AA
 Medium bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the MS19; none survive AA
 Medium bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the MS3; none survive AA
 Medium bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the MS4; none survive AA
 Medium bomber attack by 3 a/c vs the Sydney; none survive AA

Aircraft Lost:

Own:

None

Enemy:

5 * BF 109E-4/4B (Emil)

10PM – Submarine Attack on Italian Convoy Called Off



Then, to cap off the bad news, late in the evening, word arrives that one of your four-boat submarine flotillas from Malta that has been trying to locate enemy convoy *Baggage* since last Sunday – almost a week ago – has had to return to Malta for lack of fuel.

Sunday, 13th July

7AM – Convoy *Pedestrian* suffers another Air Attack



And with first light on the new day,
enemy aircraft from Palermo strike yet
again.

The attack is slightly smaller (35 aircraft) but still damaging. Two more merchant ships with their precious cargoes are sunk, the *Repulse* takes a severe battering with four direct hits, and the light cruiser *Sydney* is also hit. The only good news is that your Ack Ack has taken a heavy toll – 20 more aircraft are shot down, some before they could unload their weaponry.

Own ships:	non struc. damage (* 10%)	struc. damage (* 10%)	flooding (* 10%)	speed lost (* 3 kts)	Turret hits	Ammo lost (* 10%)	repair cost (* 10%)
Flamingo					1		
Foresight					1		
Jackal					1		
Kashmir					1		
Kelly					1		
Kelvin					1		
Kipling					1		
Legion					1		
MS17			1	1			1
MS18							
MS19	5	4	5	2			5
MS3	SUNK	5	5	2			5
MS4							
Maori					1		
Mohawk					1		
Phoebe					1		
Repulse	4		1	1	4	1	2
Sikh					1		
Sydney	4		1	2	1	1	1

Land-based air strike involving 6 * BF 109E-4/4B (Emil), 11 * BF 110C-4/B, 12 * C.200CB (Saetta), and 6 * SM.81 (Pipistrello).

Low level bomber attack by 8 a/c vs the *Repulse* scores 4 hits and 1 near miss.
 Low level bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the *Phoebe*; none survive AA
 Low level bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the *Jackal*; none survive AA
 Low level bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the *Kashmir*; none survive AA
 Low level bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the *Kelly*; none survive AA
 Low level bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the *Kelvin*; none survive AA
 Low level bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the *Kipling*; none survive AA
 Low level bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the *Legion*; none survive AA
 Low level bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the *Maori*; none survive AA
 Low level bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the *Mohawk*; none survive AA
 Low level bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the *Sikh*; none survive AA
 Low level bomber attack by 2 a/c vs the *MS18* scores 0 hits and 0 near misses.
 Low level bomber attack by 2 a/c vs the *MS19* scores 1 hit and 1 near miss.
 Low level bomber attack by 2 a/c vs the *MS3* scores 2 hits and 0 near misses.
 Low level bomber attack by 2 a/c vs the *MS4* scores 0 hits and 0 near misses.
 Low level bomber attack by 3 a/c vs the *Sydney* scores 1 hit and 0 near misses.

Medium bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the *Repulse*; none survive AA
 Medium bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the *MS18*; none survive AA
 Medium bomber attack by 1 a/c vs the *MS4*; none survive AA
 Medium bomber attack by 3 a/c vs the *Sydney*; none survive AA

Aircraft Lost:
 Own:
 None
 Enemy:
 6 * BF 109E-4/4B (Emil)

9AM – Submarines finally attack the Italian Convoy

**At last, some moderately good news.**

The remaining submarine flotilla from Malta that is still at sea has finally located and attacked enemy convoy *Baggage*.

You can see that your other submarine flotilla, which was fleet *SF1*, is now returning to Malta to refuel. Fleets forced to return for refueling or damage are put into emergency fleets by your CIOU. The emergency fleet names always start with "EF".

Slight ripples, light air (1-3 knots), dry, occasional high level cloud. Very good visibility

Opening range: 14135 m.

Own ships:

	non struc. damage (* 10%)	struc. damage (* 10%)	flooding (* 10%)	speed lost (* 3 kts)	Turret hits	Ammo lost (* 10%)	repair cost (* 10%)
Unbeaten	Undamaged				I		
Undaunted	Undamaged				I		
Union	Undamaged				I		
Upholder	Undamaged				I		

Duca d' Aosta hit by 1 torpedo from submarine Undaunted
No damage to submarines.

Enemy ships:

	flooding (* 33%)	speed lost (* 6 kts)	Turret hits
Alberto Di Giussano	Undamaged		
Duca d' Aosta	Significant damage		
Grecale	Undamaged		
Libeccio	Undamaged		
MS1	Undamaged		
MS10	Undamaged		
MS11	Undamaged		
MS12	Undamaged		
MS13	Undamaged		
MS14	Undamaged		
Maestrale	Undamaged		
Scirocco	Undamaged		

Clicking on the line in the "Submarine Contact" panel shows summary details of the damage on both sides. Your submarines are undamaged. The *Undaunted* has put a torpedo into the light cruiser *Duca d' Aosta*. The cruiser appears to have slowed by around 6 knots, and taken on a significant amount of water.

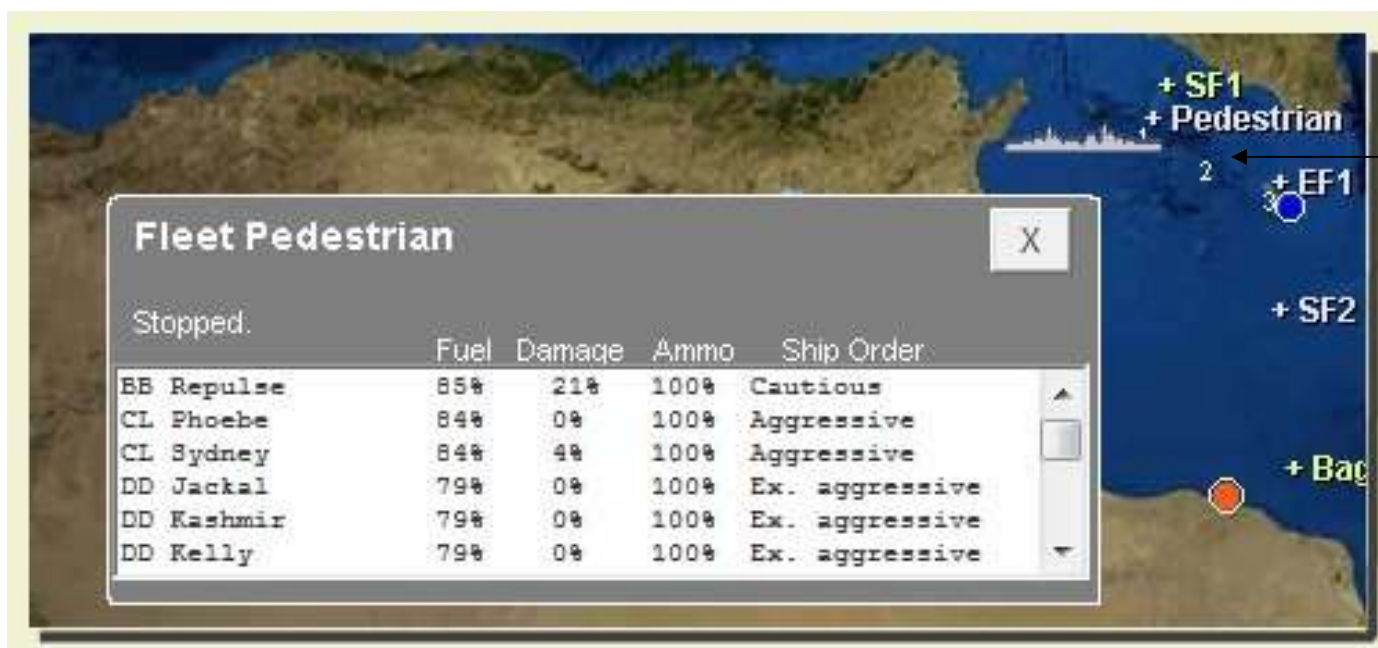
Unfortunately, none of the Italian merchant ships have been hit.

Wednesday, 17th July – Bringing Home the Bacon

Today, Wednesday the 17th, the battered convoy *Pedestrian* finally limps into Malta and unloads what is left of its cargo.

7AM – Status Report on Convoy *Pedestrian*

Here, we see the convoy about ninety nautical miles to the north west of Malta having passed most of the way through the Strait of Sicily. This shot was taken by pausing the calculation and clicking on the fleet. You can do this at any time. You will see details of the status of the selected fleet *as at that hour* – its location and remaining route path, and the status of fuel, damage and ammunition of all ships in the fleet. (Ammunition means main calibre ammunition, not AA. The damage figure is the percentage of the full build cost that would be needed for repairs. The Repulse has a damage figure of 21%, meaning that repairs to it will cost about a fifth of what it cost to build – roughly the same as the cost to build a 7000 ton cruiser from scratch! The actual damage is recorded in much more detail. A separate ship details screen allows you to see the exact damage received to any of your ships).



Fleet Pedestrian

Stopped.

	Fuel	Damage	Ammo	Ship Order
BB Repulse	85%	21%	100%	Cautious
CL Phoebe	84%	0%	100%	Aggressive
CL Sydney	84%	4%	100%	Aggressive
DD Jackal	79%	0%	100%	Ex. aggressive
DD Kashmir	79%	0%	100%	Ex. aggressive
DD Kelly	79%	0%	100%	Ex. aggressive

You can see that the remaining path (numbered 1, 2, 3) for fleet *Pedestrian* takes it into Malta. Malta is where the white-rimmed blue circle is.

9PM – Unloading Commences



The panel indicates that 3,970 tons of supplies have been unloaded. This is only a fraction of the 11,000 tons that the convoy started with.

The Italo-German air strikes have been very successful in keeping Malta on a knife edge. Just how critical the situation is we shall soon see.

10 PM – Ship Refueling



The ship refueling is automatic.

Though good for the ships involved, the refueling is itself a drain on the scant resources at Malta, as we shall see.

Meanwhile, a report (not illustrated here) confirms that Fleet *H.1* has safely returned to Gibraltar at 11AM this morning, and is now refueled.

Sunday, 20th July, 10PM – Submarines Return to Malta



The British submarine flotilla that includes the *Undaunted* - that torpedoed the *Duca d' Aosta* almost exactly a week ago - has been unable to re-locate the convoy. Now, low on fuel, it must return to Malta.

The submarines are now all in emergency fleet *EF2*.

Monday, 21st July, 8PM – Submarines Refueled at Malta



The *Upholder*, *Undaunted*, *Union* and *Unbeaten* have now refueled.

Summary of other events from the Italian side

The action views have all been from the British side so far, but they encompass the significant events involving Italian forces also. The Italian player, using the replay function, can see the whole turn from his own perspective. This includes events unknown to the British, such as:

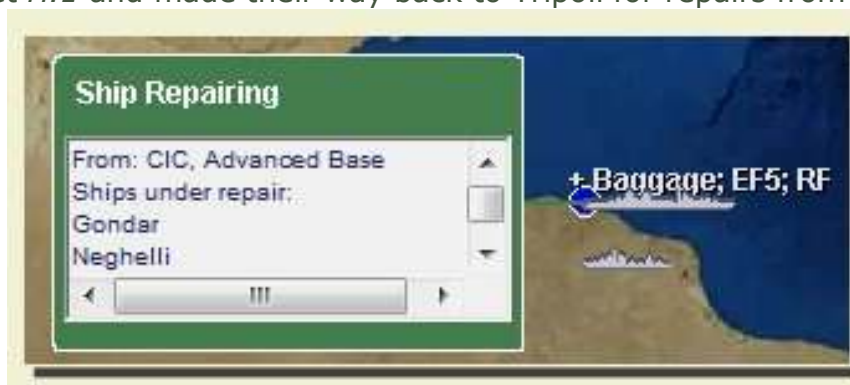
The successful mine-laying in the Strait of Sicily, Thursday, 3rd July, from 10AM



The successful unloading of cargo in Tripoli twice, as convoy *Baggage* twice successfully makes the round trip from Italy to Tripoli:



Some ship repairing events: e.g. of the submarines *Neghelli* and *Gondar*, that were damaged in the unsuccessful attacks on British fleet *H.1* and made their way back to Tripoli for repairs from Thursday the 17th July.



July – The Balance Sheet

With all significant actions now completed for July, it is time to assess how each side has fared. Each player gets a detailed briefing after each turn to help assess their situation. The report includes a "Gains and Losses" accounting that reduces to a common resource point (RP) tally all gains – from production and trade, and all losses – from operational costs, new ship construction, repairs, damage to ports from bombardments, transfers of supplies, supply usage by troops and so on. One RP is equivalent to 1000 tons of supply or 100 tons of new naval construction.

British Gains and Losses

It is already evident that the British plans have taken a battering. Just how critical things are is revealed below in this extract from the "Gains and Losses" section of the turn report:

This column shows the RP (Resource Point) value at these ports at the end of the turn

			/Rearming:		
Malta	Supplies in:	3.97	Supplies out:	0.0	1
Stores (RP's)	Trade:	0.0	Troop supply:	1.4	
	Production:	0	Repairs:	0.0	
			Bombardment:	0.0	
			Refuelling	2.7	
			/Rearming:		
Tobruk	Supplies in:	6.8	Supplies out:	0.0	5
Stores (RP's)	Trade:	0.0	Troop supply:	2.1	
	Production:	0	Repairs:	0.0	
			Bombardment:	0.0	
			Refuelling	0.1	
			/Rearming:		

The Positives – Tobruk is relieved

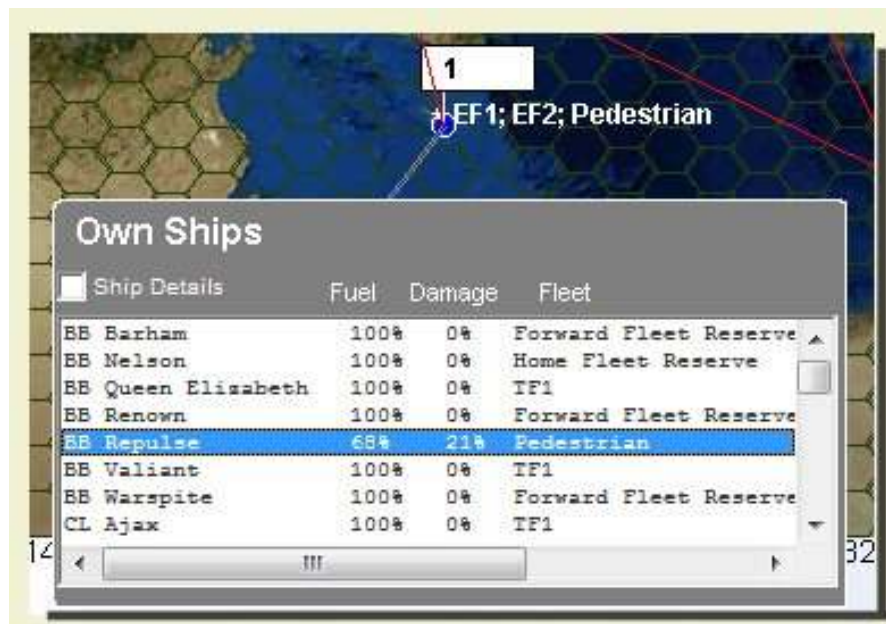
It can be seen that Tobruk's supply situation has been relieved. It now has 5 RPs – 4 more than it started with last month. 6.8 RPs (6,800 tons of supply) were brought in and 2.1 (2100 tons) were consumed by the troops at Tobruk. A small amount (0.1 RPs or 100 tons of supply) were consumed in the refueling of the ships passing through Tobruk. It can be seen that Tobruk can fully supply the Australian 9th Division for at least two more months. The immediate pressure is now off in regard to Tobruk. Operation "Digger" has been a success.

In addition, as has been seen, British submarine *Upholder* has torpedoed the Italian light cruiser *Duca d' Aosta* which will keep it out of action for a while and cost the Italians resources in repair. Moreover, a total of 32 Italian and German aircraft were destroyed by the Ack Ack defences of convoy *Pedestrian*.

The Negatives – Malta is Precarious; *Repulse* is out of Action; 42000 tons of Merchant shipping is Lost.

Unfortunately, Operation *Pedestrian*, the relief of Malta, has been a failure. As the action reports have shown, enemy air strikes reduced the total supply brought in to Malta from the 11,000 tons loaded at Gibraltar to less than 4,000 tons. But worse is the fact that, as the extract shows, by the time the Malta garrison has been supplied and the ships of convoy *Pedestrian* plus the eight submarines operating out of Malta refueled, Malta is right back to where it was – with only 1 RP in stores.

Operation *Pedestrian* has not only failed to relieve Malta, it has cost the British seven lost merchant ships – totaling 42000 tons G.R.T, plus significant damage to the battleship *Repulse*, which now is effectively marooned at Malta, unable to fight again until it can be repaired, and unable to be repaired until Malta has more supplies. The main map view also shows the situation regarding the *Repulse*:



The map view shows Malta still with only 1 RP, and the *Repulse*, with significant damage, effectively marooned there because it cannot be repaired until Malta receives more supply.

Italian Gains and Losses

The Positives – Strategic Successes

The honours for the month of July clearly go to the Italians. Their strategy has been successful.

Operation *Barriera* has prevented the unimpeded supply of Malta. Although 32 aircraft were lost to enemy Ack Ack, the air strikes on convoy *Pedestrian* had a crippling effect. Seven merchant ships were sunk. In addition, the battleship *Repulse* sustained several direct hits. The Italians cannot know just how critical is the supply situation in Malta, nor how this impedes the repair of the *Repulse*; but they will know that the ship should be out of action for at least a turn or two. Damage to the *Sydney* has also been reported.

Operation *Baggaglio* has also proceeded to plan, with two successful supply trips to Tripoli. However, the net value of the convoys has been rather less than expected - the Gains and Losses report shows that the supplies brought in just slightly exceed the cost of repairs and refueling sustained at Tripoli during the period.

Tripoli	Supplies in:	20.0	Supplies out:	0.0	259
Stores (RP's)	Trade:	0.0	Troop supply:	0.0	
	Production:	80	Repairs:	1.2	
			Bombardment:	0.0	
			Refuelling	19.3	
			/Rearming:		

The Negatives – Aircraft and Submarine Losses

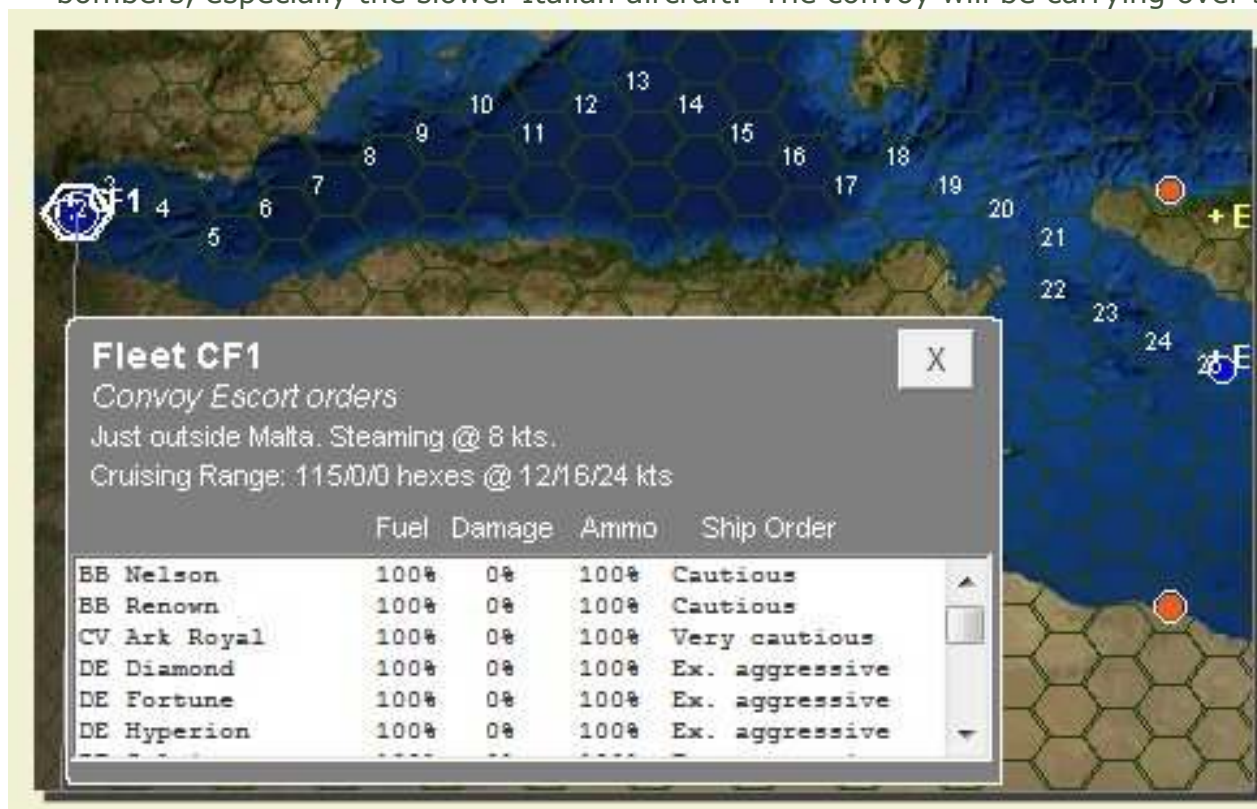
There has been a heavy loss of aircraft based at Palermo, which will need to be replaced. And the loss of five submarines puts a noticeable dent in the Italian submarine fleet. Nonetheless, the loss must be considered minor given the strategic successes; and no major fleet units have been damaged, only the small light cruiser *Duca d' Aosta*, which has already returned to battle-worthiness after quick repairs at Tripoli.

August – Allied Plans

The failure of Operation *Pedestrian* means the relief of Malta is now more urgent than ever. Another convoy *must* be attempted. But the vulnerability of *Pedestrian* to air attack prompts the British to plan an all-out effort, in a combined operation, with *Force H* from Gibraltar and the *Mediterranean Fleet* at Alexandria. The plan has a secondary purpose – to entice the Italian fleet into a major action where the hoped-for superiority of British training and leadership will destroy the Regia Marina as an offensive force. The plans are for a major and a minor operation:

Major Operation *Excelsior* - the Re-supply of Malta

1. Sail another heavily escorted convoy, fleet *CF1*, from Gibraltar to Malta, this time committing the carrier *Ark Royal*, in a direct convoy escort role, where its complement of Fulmar fighters can help to ward off enemy bombers, especially the slower Italian aircraft. The convoy will be carrying over 34,000 tons of supplies.



The convoy includes the slow battleship *Nelson*, the carrier *Ark Royal*, and the escorts *Diamond*, *Fortune*, *Hyperion* and *Salvia*. This is the entire remaining complement of available naval ships at Gibraltar.

In the convoy are 5 small, 3 medium and 2 large merchant ships, totaling 63,000 G.R.T.

They have a total load capacity of 34,800 tons and will be fully loaded for the trip to Malta.

- At the same time, send a convoy from Alexandria to Malta, (fleet CF2) again with as heavy an escort as can be mustered. In this way, the British plan to overwhelm the Italian forces, which will be split between attacking the two convoys, each of which is as heavily defended as possible. The fleet includes two light cruisers, the *Naiad* and *Perth* and six escorts (*Griffin*, *Hasty*, *Hereward*, *Ilex*, *Isis* and *Vendetta*). There are 3 small and 2 large merchant ships in the convoy, and they will be fully loaded with 11,800 tons of supplies.



Secondary Objective – Engage the Italian Battle Fleet

- To prevent an attack from the still powerful Italian surface fleet at Taranto, all remaining naval forces from the Mediterranean fleet at Alexandria will sortie, in two squadrons. A battleship and cruiser force, *TF 1*, will sail ahead and to the north of the Alexandria to Malta convoy and take up an offensive patrol in the southern region of the Gulf of Taranto, north east of Malta. Meanwhile, a carrier force, *TF3*, with the *Formidable*, the sole fleet carrier now available for offensive operations, will sail a little behind, providing a strike and reconnaissance force.

Fleet *TF1*, with the two battleships (*Barham* and *Warspite*), the light cruiser *Gloucester* and four destroyers (*Jaguar*, *Jervis*, *Kandahar* and *Kingston*). The fleet has "Bold Attack" orders, meaning it will attack an enemy not more than twice as big (by naval tonnage).

Fleet *TF3*, with the carrier *Formidable*, the light cruiser *Dido* and two destroyers (*Formidable* and *Stuart*).



4. All serviceable submarines (the eight *U* class subs), and all destroyers at Malta not involved in operation *Fusilade* will be put on alert to intercept any attempt by the Italian surface fleet to sortie south from their base at Taranto toward the convoys.

Minor Operation *Fusilade* - Bombard the Port of Tripoli!

5. Finally, in an audacious move typical of Admiral Cunningham, a small cruiser and destroyer force from Malta will attempt a night bombardment of the port of Tripoli, to reduce the supplies available to the Afrika Korps.



The forces now at Malta that were part of Operation *Pedestrian*, with the exception of the *Repulse*, are battle-worthy and ready for action. It is a short hop to Tripoli...

In the picture here, the number "49" in the hex next to Tripoli means that the fleet has timed its approach to arrive at hour 49, which is 1AM on the third day of the turn. The fleet will be safe from air attack and hopefully will make its approach, and departure, before the enemy can react!

And so, the scene is set for some pitched battle action!

If there is a defect in the plan it is that the British are splitting their strength a little too much in creating so many fleets. In fact, as we shall see, the Italians will be able to exploit this to a degree.

August – Italian Plans

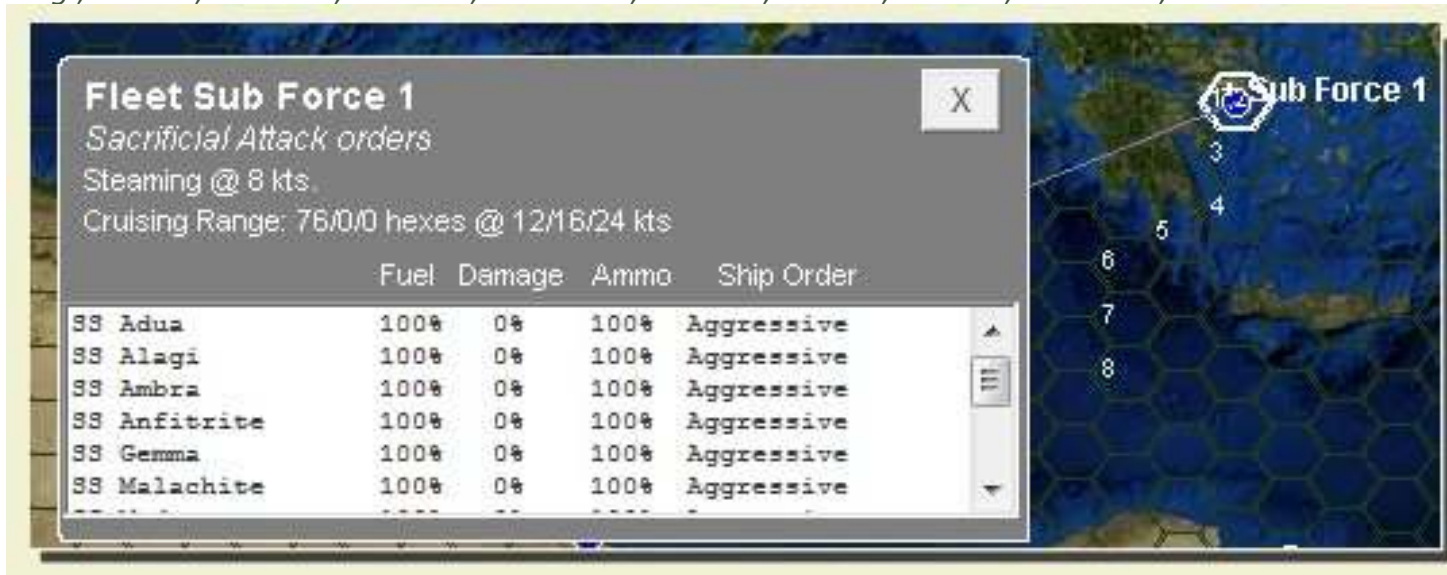
The Italians assume that the British will attempt another convoy to Malta. With their submarines and air forces at Palermo depleted, they decide on a strategy of limited aggression. The modern battleship *Vittorio Veneto* is not yet repaired from the damage received at Cape Matapan; and there is continuing reluctance anyway to commit their newer battleships. In addition, the Regia Marina is facing something of a shortage in oil fuel. The Italian plans are to:

1. Create a moderately strong *Main Fleet* of the three older battleships (*Andrea Doria*, *Guilio Cesare* and *Caio Duilio*), together with the remaining available heavy cruisers (*Bolzano* and *Trieste*), and four light cruisers (*Alberto Di Guissano*, *Duca d' Abruzzi*, *Giuseppe Garibaldi* and *Muzio Attendolo*), plus nine destroyers (mostly of the large *Soldati* class) – *Alpino*, *Artigliere*, *Ascari*, *Aviere*, *Bersagliere*, *Camicio Nera*, *Carabiniere*, *Alvise Cadamosto* and *Antonio Pigafetta*.. The fleet will be put on readiness to sail from Taranto to attack any enemy shipping sighted in the Gulf of Taranto or Ionian Sea. The orders are "Cautious Attack", meaning it will engage with an enemy fleet that is not more than 25% superior (in terms of naval tonnage).



2. Send the twelve submarines that last month patrolled the Libyan Sea out again on essentially the same duty, this time from Piraeus where they sailed to at the end of last month to refuel. But this time all twelve

submarines will be combined in a single flotilla. The Italians have decided to commit their submarines in larger numbers in an effort to be more effective against the British escorts. The submarines are the *Adua*, *Alagi*, *Ambra*, *Anfitrite*, *Gemma*, *Malachite*, *Medusa*, *Ordina*, *Rubino*, *Turchese*, *Uarsceick* and *Uebi Scebeli*.



August – the Action Begins!

The overview provided for July has been quite detailed, to give you a feel for SAS.

For this month of August, because there is a LOT of action, and to avoid this overview becoming too lengthy or repetitious, only the really significant and different events will be detailed and illustrated. The many minor events such as refueling will not be illustrated.

The significant events that do feature include: a daring bombardment of Tripoli by British light forces; a major surface fleet action; the *Renown* and several ships running into the Italian minefield laid in July, and some successful Italian submarine attacks.

The turn calculation was performed with the British again as the controlling player. As the player with the more complex set of operational orders, this allows some interesting tactical responses to be shown.

Sunday, 3rd August, 1AM – Tripoli is Bombarded!

The screenshot shows a map of the Mediterranean Sea with a fleet icon labeled 'TF2' near Tripoli. Two panels are overlaid on the map:

Bombarding Enemy Port!

Fleet TF2 has shelled storages and docks.
 Damage to Port: extremely heavy
 Damage to Fleet: 33 points to repair

Fleet TF2
 Bold Attack orders
 Steaming @ 12 kts.

	Fuel	Damage	Ammo	Ship Order
CL Phoebe	93%	11%	60%	Aggressive
CL Sydney	46%	30%	60%	Aggressive
DD Jackal	79%	0%	60%	Ex. aggressive
DD Kashmir	79%	0%	60%	Ex. aggressive
DD Kelly	79%	0%	60%	Ex. aggressive
DD Kelvin	79%	0%	60%	Ex. aggressive

According to plan, fleet *TF2* from Malta arrives outside Tripoli at 1AM and begins the bombardment. Damage to the port is estimated as "extremely heavy". (Only the Italians will know the exact damage). Shore batteries have fired back and inflicted some damage to the fleet – that will cost 33 RPs to repair. Damage to individual ships is summarized in the fleet details panel that shows when you click on the fleet.

Sunday, 3rd August, 9AM – Tactical Response for Various British Fleets

The screenshot displays a tactical interface for a World War II naval simulation. The main map shows the Mediterranean Sea with various British and Italian fleets. British fleets include RF, CF1, Reserve Fleet at 22/13, Reserve Fleet at 23/17, SF1, TF4, TF2, TF3, SubForce 1, TF1, and CF2. The Italian Main Fleet is also visible. The interface includes three panels: Fleet TF1, Tactical Fleet Response Orders, and Enemy Fleet Main Fleet.

Fleet TF1
 Bold Attack orders
 Steaming @ 12 kts.

	Fuel	Damage	Ammo	Ship Order
BB Barham	96%	0%	100%	Cautious
BB Warspite	96%	0%	100%	Cautious
CL Gloucester	96%	0%	100%	Aggressive
DD Jaguar	94%	0%	100%	Ex. aggressive
DD Jervis	94%	0%	100%	Ex. aggressive
DD Kandahar	94%	0%	100%	Ex. aggressive

Tactical Fleet Response Orders

Own Fleets: SF1, TF1, TF2
 Enemy Fleets: Main Fleet, Reserve Fleet

Options: Ignore, Avoid, Shadow, Intercept
☒ Fleet details

Enemy Fleet Main Fleet
 Steaming @ 24 kts. Heading: SE
 Target value: 66

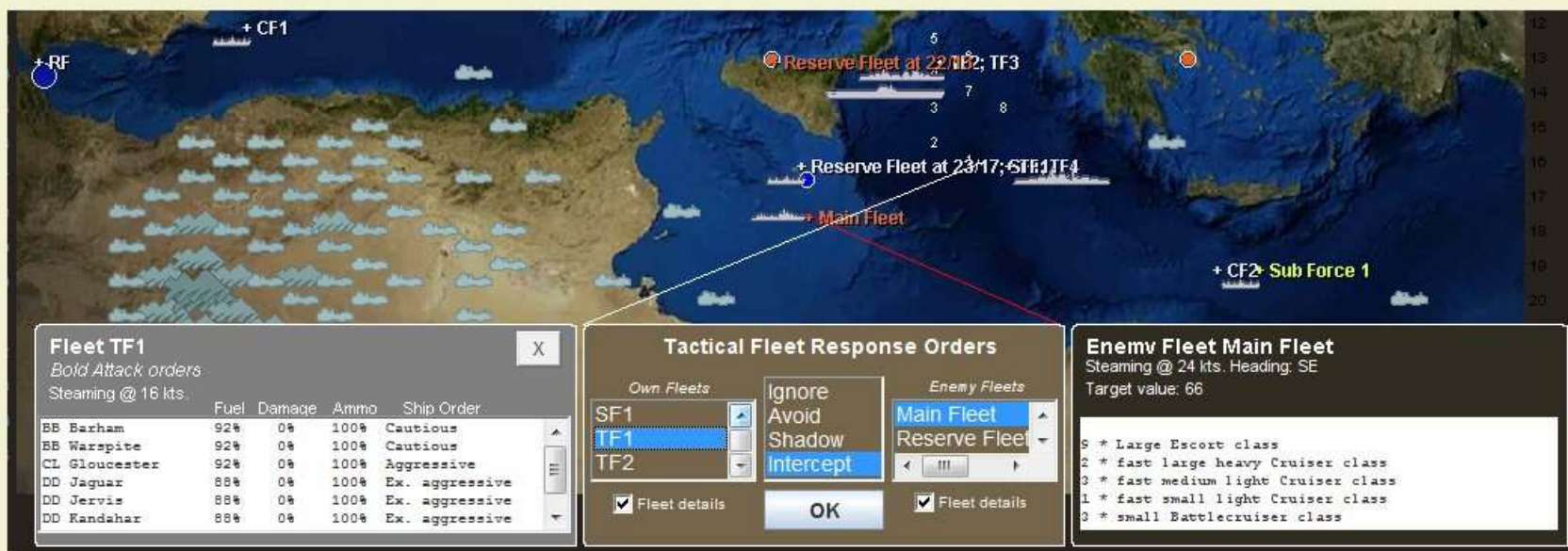
Composition:
 5 * Large Escort class
 2 * fast large heavy Cruiser class
 3 * fast medium light Cruiser class
 1 * fast small light Cruiser class
 2 * small Battlecruiser class

Aerial reconnaissance (from the *Formidable*) has reported the Italian *Main Fleet* at sea (with three small battleships), just out of Taranto and heading SE at 24 knots. It can be seen at the top of the picture.

The CIOU prompts for the correct tactical response for the British fleets. In this example, the British player selects "Ignore" for all of them in relation to the *Main Fleet*. Although the enemy fleet is sailing fast, it is as yet too distant to make a change of orders worthwhile. Admiral Cunningham preserves his precious fuel, and his tactical plans, until the situation is clearer.

But it looks as though the Italian battle fleet *is* coming out of its lair, and the hoped-for engagement of the battles fleets *will* happen..

Monday, 4th August, 7AM – *Intercept the Italian Main Fleet!*



Now, 22 hours later, another report is received of the Italian *Main Fleet*, and it is suddenly dangerously close to the British small cruiser force *TF2* returning to Malta from the bombardment. But it is also right in the pocket of where Admiral Cunningham hoped it would be – too far from Taranto to escape an engagement with the British battle force. It is time to intercept.

The CIOU prompts for the correct fleet tactical responses. The British player now orders the main battle force (*TF1*), now some 150 nautical miles north east, and the submarines at Malta (*SF1*), to intercept at best possible speed. The fleet with the *Formidable* is to shadow. So also are fleets *TF2* and *TF4* – a small flotilla of destroyers remaining at Malta – ordered to shadow. Admiral Cunningham does not want them committed until the main battle fleet arrives.

It is fortunate for the British that their convoys – *CF1* and *CF2* are well out of the danger area – as can be seen in the picture above. *CF1* from Gibraltar to the west, and *CF2* from Alexandria to the east are less than half way toward Malta.

Monday, 4th August, 10AM – Submarine Attack



The eight British submarines from Malta are first to intercept.

Unfortunately, as the battle summary shows (not illustrated here) the combination of relative fleet paths, speeds and good visibility hamper an attack.

The submarines are unable to launch an effective attack. No blood is drawn on either side.

Wednesday, 6th August, 2PM – Surface Battle Commences!



At last, the Italian battle fleet has been brought to action.

Unfortunately for the British, as the action replays show (and which are featured soon), first contact is made not with the British battle fleet, but with the small cruiser force *TF2* that bombarded Tripoli and was ordered to shadow, not intercept.

Things do not always go to plan!

The battle will ultimately involve the British battle fleet and run for over 24 hours. But in the first few hours before the *Warspite* and *Barham* arrive, the small British forces are overwhelmed.

The battle rages for over 24 hours, as first the British cruiser force *TF2* and then remaining British forces in the area are drawn in. Drastic reports (not shown here) of ships being sunk arrive hourly at the CIOU and it is not until 7PM on the next day that a reliable report of the outcome is available. Meanwhile, there is other news - good and bad.

Thursday, 7th August - the Good, the Bad and the Ugly.

1PM - The Good News: Unloading at Malta - *at Last!*



Finally! Some supplies reach Malta.

Convoy *CF2* from Alexandria is the first to arrive, and unloading commences. This will take several hours. 6,400 tons is unloaded in this first hour.

In total, 11,800 tons will be unloaded.

The convoy has made it through unscathed.

Although the British naval forces are taking punishment, they have cleared the way for the vital convoys.

2PM to 6PM - The Bad News - *Renown* and Two large Merchant Ships Sunk by Mines



First, the *Renown*, then several hours later two large merchant ships run smack into the minefield laid recently by the Italians in the Strait of Sicily.

All three ships sink!

7PM – The Ugly News – Heavy Losses in the *Battle of the Strait of Messina*



Your CIOU finally is able to get a clear picture of the long battle just south east of Sicily.

Clicking on the line in the "Surface Ship Battle Report" brings up a summary of the battle results for the *Battle of the Strait of Messina*, as it has now come to be known.

Summary of the Battle

The following picture is of the scrollable battle summary display, similar to ones you have seen for aerial and submarine battle summaries.

On the left are reports of damage to your own ships, including loss of flotation, speed, turrets, ammunition and so on.

On the right is abbreviated (and less accurate) information about enemy ships.

It can be seen that the British have lost three cruisers – the *Dido*, *Phoebe* and the RAN's *Sydney*, and six destroyers – *Faulkner*, *Flamingo*, *Jaguar*, *Kandahar*, *Kingston* and *Nizam*.

The Italians have lost two heavy cruisers – *Bolzano* and *Trieste* and the light cruiser *Alberto di Guissano*.

Varying degrees of damage have been sustained to almost all other ships on both sides.

Started 2 PM in Hex 25/16 Lasted 29 hours, 1 minute

Slight ripples, light air (1-3 knots), dry, occasional high level cloud. Perfect visibility

Opening range: 30162 m.

Own ships:

	non struc. damage (* 10%)	struc. damage (* 10%)	flooding (* 10%)	speed lost (* 3 kts)	Turret hits	Ammo lost (* 10%)	repair cost (* 10%)
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Enemy ships:

	flooding (* 33%)	speed lost (* 6 kts)	Turret hits
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Barham							
Dido	SUNK						
Faulkner	SUNK						
Fearless							
Flamingo	SUNK						
Foresight							
Formidable							
Gloucester							
Jackal							
Jaguar	SUNK						
Jervis							
Kandahar							
Kashmir							
Kelly							
Kelvin							
Kingston							
Kipling							
Legion							
Maori							

Click Down for More...

Alberto Di Giussano			
Andrea Doria			
Bolzano			
Caio Duilio			
Duca d' Abruzzi			
Giulio Cesare			
Giuseppe Garibaldi			
Muzio Attendolo			
Trieste			

Losses are heavy on both sides.

The British have not gained the hoped-for clear cut victory.

They have paid a price for the piecemeal commitment of their forces, allowing the Italians to score against the British light forces in the crucial few hours before the *Warspite* and *Barham* arrived.

Unknown to the British but clear from the replay of the Italian side, the Italian escorting destroyers were forced to depart a little earlier due to fuel shortage. The situation could have been even worse for the British!

Tactical Replay!

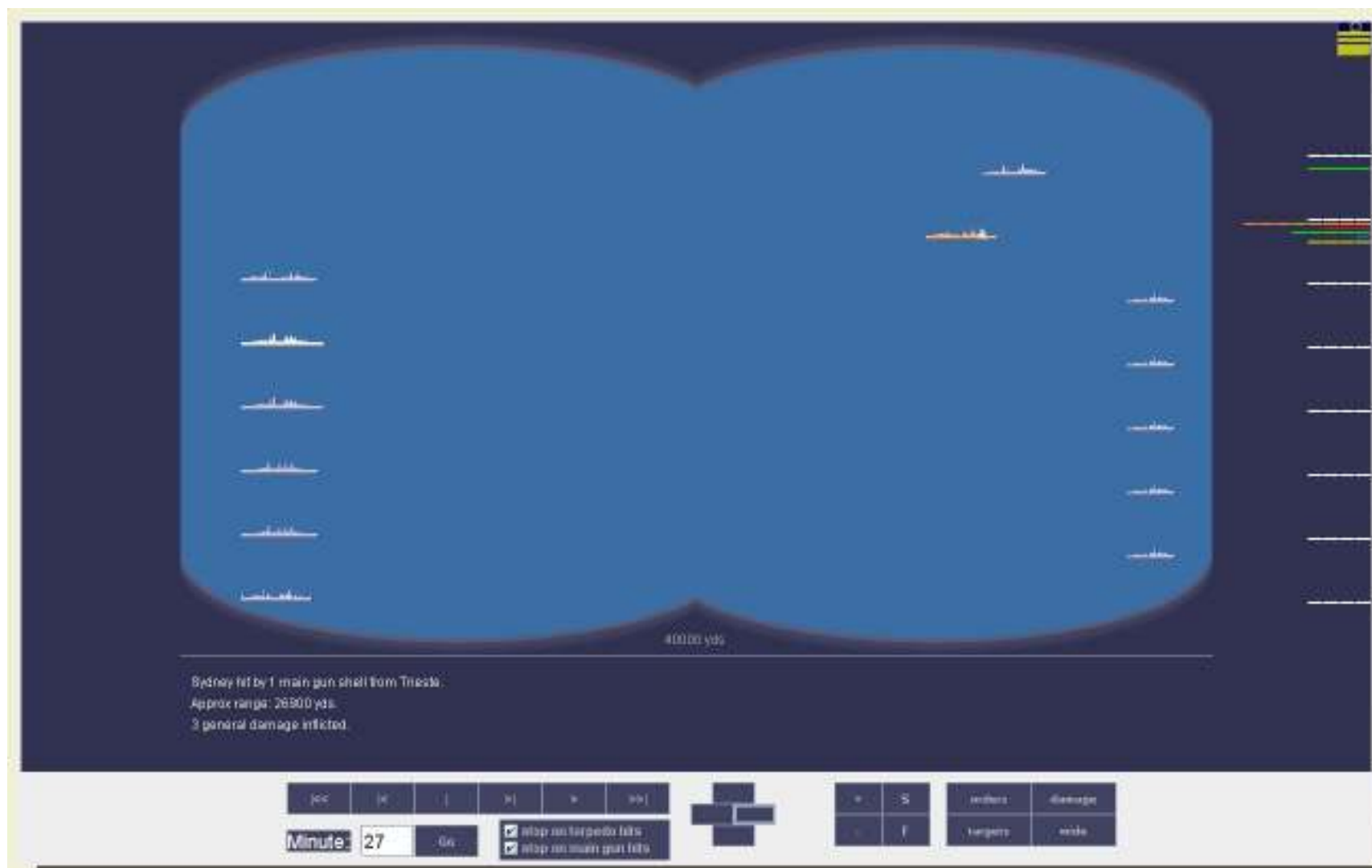
These results have been computed not by some arbitrary formula, as in most strategy games, comparing total attack and defence values. In *SAS*, surface battles are fought out shell-by-shell and torpedo-by-torpedo! And best of all, you can replay all of the action – in this case for the entire 29 hours of running battle!

The calculations are sophisticated and take account of visibility, ship speeds, tactical fleet and ship orders, number and caliber of main guns, remaining ammunition and torpedoes, quantity of secondary/tertiary guns, thickness (and quality) of armour, ship structural strength, reserve buoyancy and quality of damage control, and technology factors affecting gun-laying (the quality of radar if available, optical fire control) and gun ballistics. Progressive flooding, loss of turrets, machinery hits, conning tower hits etc are all accounted for.

The replay is a screen with VCR-style controls. You can run forward or back, at varying speed, pause and even jump to any minute within the battle. You can also force the running to stop on main gun hits and/or on torpedo hits, or even move forward, hit by hit.

The screen shows you the distance between all ships in a simplified 2D representation and a summary of the tactical and targeting orders and damage for all ships, for *every minute of battle*. The view is scrollable and zoom-able. The replay also shows when new ships arrive to join the battle. From the replay it can be seen that the *Warspite* and *Barham* take four critical hours to arrive.

To get to the replay screen, just click on the “Replay” button on the battle summary screen. Here is an example from the battle, showing the *Sydney*, already damaged from the Tripoli bombardment, taking the first hit in the battle on the 27th minute, from the cruiser *Trieste*, after the small British force has been attempting to escape. She has been slowed by previous damage and now lags behind, making her the obvious target for the Italians.



Friday, 8th August – More Unloading at Malta

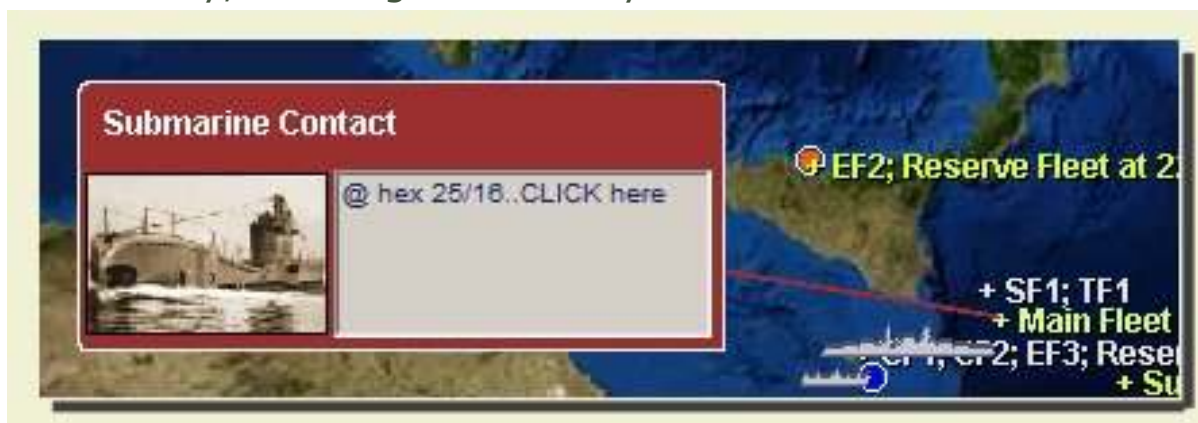
At last, the convoy from Gibraltar arrives and starts to unload.



The full supply load from the convoy – all that was loaded at Gibraltar less the tonnage carried on the two large merchant ships sunk by mines - is unloaded on the docks of Malta. This will take several hours to complete.

Though it has come at a heavy cost, Operation *Excelsior* has successfully relieved the supply crisis for Malta – at least in the short term.

Wednesday, 13th August – Enemy Submarines attack the *Barham*



But still the toll mounts for the British.

The battle summary (not shown here) records that the Italian submarine *Adua* has put a torpedo into the battleship *Barham*.

The damage is not fatal, and *Barham* will live to fight another day, but it compounds the sense of loss the British are feeling.

August – The Balance Sheet

It has been a month of appalling losses for the Royal Navy, including the loss of the *Renown* to mines and three cruisers and six destroyers in battle action.

And yet, both operations were a strategic success. The daring bombardment of Tripoli has paid off handsomely, and Operation *Excelsior* has brought vitally needed supplies to Malta with relatively little loss – thirteen of fifteen merchant ships in the two convoys arriving unscathed.

Whether due to losses last month or the more visible presence of British carriers, the Italo-German aerial threat has been held at bay.

The Italians have won a tactical – but not resounding – victory in the Battle of the Strait of Messina. But with many of its remaining ships now damaged, the inherent caution in the Italian naval command looks set to continue. It may be a while before their surface fleet challenges the British again.

The British battle fleet is now reduced to a shell – with the *Renown* sunk, and all other battleships except the Nelson damaged and in need of repair. At least their carriers remain intact.

In summary, August has been the narrowest of victories for the British.

Conclusion

NWS trusts that you have enjoyed this promotional overview of SAS. For further details of the game, including expected release date, refer to the main web page for the game at

<http://forums.navalwarfare.org/showthread.php?s=c0eaaac25546db9323d66e3396dfb8fc&t=1467>

Credits

SAS concept, design, programming, graphics, manual, this .pdf – Tony Glazebrook.

SAS extended game concepts and NWS Director of Projects – Christopher Dean.

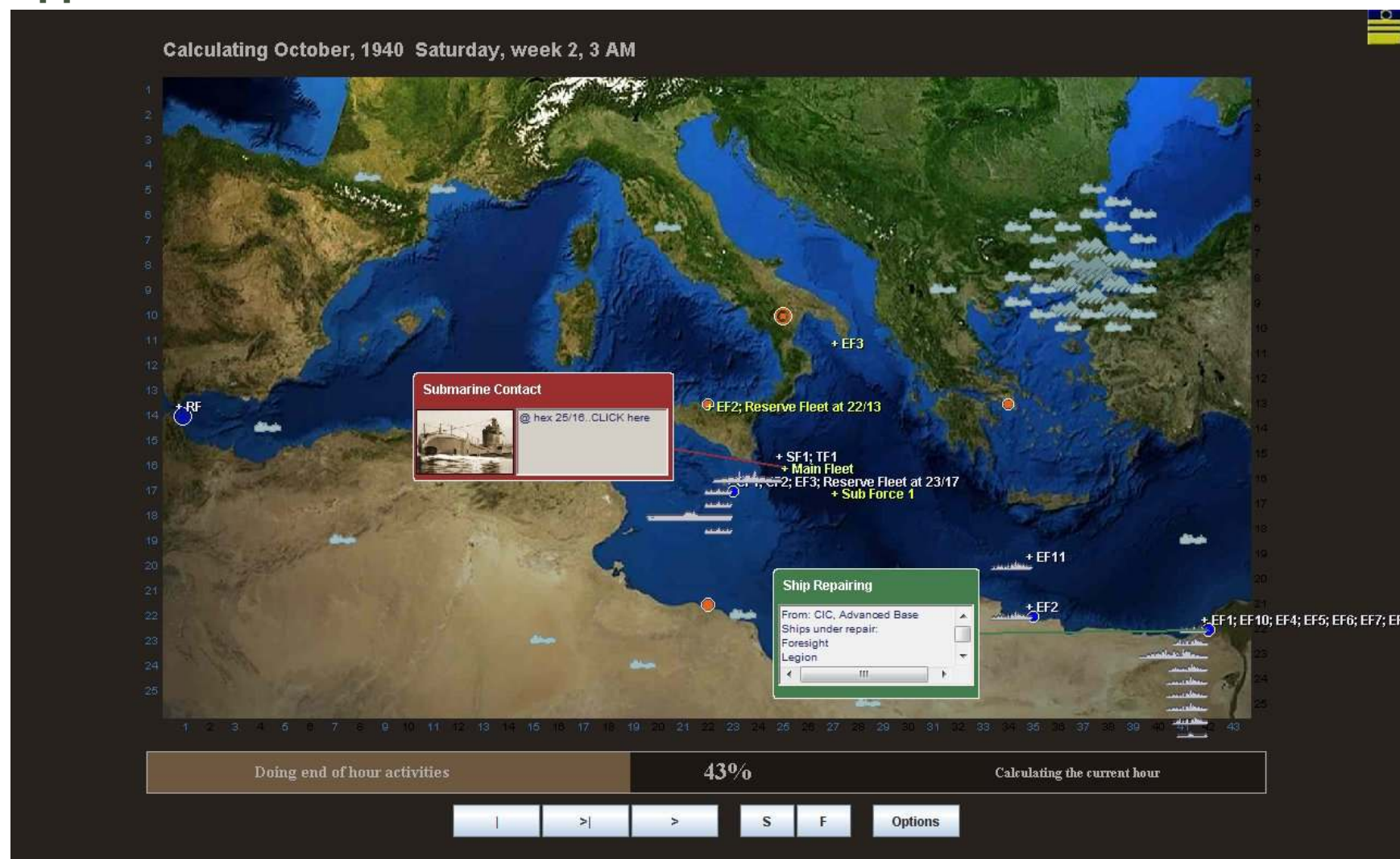
SAS game production – Christopher Dean, William Miller.

SAS beta testing – the NWS team, especially Kurt Schofield, Robert Schoneman.

SAS research assistance – Edwin Rotondaro.

SAS manual proofing – Scott Chisholm

Appendix – The Turn Calculation Screen



This screen drives the calculation of each turn. Almost all of the screen shots in this overview were taken from this screen. A player starts by pressing the ">" button, which will run the calculation, stopping only when tactical responses are required. Or he can press the ">|" button, which will calculate the current hour only. The progress bar indicates how much of the turn has been calculated. Note that you cannot go back, only forward. The "Options" button controls the kind of messages you want to see. The "S" and "F" buttons slow down or speed up the calculation. After the calculation, a player can review - *but not alter* - the turn in the Replay screen, which except for having a few more controls including a reverse button, looks the same.