

Comprehensive Axis Commerce Raiding Example: Hunt for Graf Spee



It is the Nov-Dec 1939 Seasonal Turn and European Limited War is in effect. Hoping to slow the arrival of Allied reinforcements, the Axis faction decides the time is right for commerce raiding. Because the war has just started, there is no Raid marker in the Strategic Warfare Box to remove at the start of the Axis Logistics/Partisan Segment.

The Axis faction begins the Commerce Raiding Procedure:

Step 1: The Axis faction must select one or two German ships to form a Raid Task Force. It selects the CAs Gr Spee and Lutzow in Kiel (w4023), which borders the North Sea Naval Zone by way of the Kiel Canal. Both ships must pass a Speed Check. Gr Spee rolls a 2 and passes, but Lutzow rolls a 6. That fails, so Lutzow is placed in the Naval Warfare Delay Box. Gr Spee is placed in the On Station Box of the North Atlantic Naval Zone.

Step 2: The Western faction has several ships based in Scapa Flow (w4817), Gibraltar (w2208), and the Eastern US/Canada Box, all adjacent to the North Atlantic Naval Zone.

Looking closer at the Commerce Raiding Table, the Western faction decides it will not try to intercept Gr Spee with any ship having a Speed Factor of 3 or less. (This is to minimize the chance of ships being sent to the Delay Box.) That leaves the following ships available for the search:

- In Scapa Flow: 2 BB (Hood, Repulse), 2 CA (Berwick, Norfolk), 1 CV (Furious)
- In Gibraltar: 1 BB (Renown), 1 CA (Suffolk), 1 CV (Ark Royal)
- In the Eastern US/Canada Box: 3 CAs (Cumberland, Exeter, York).

For its Interception attempts, the Western faction decides to pair each of its CVs with a BB to protect the carrier in any potential Night Action. Otherwise, each surface ship will attempt to intercept on its own. The three CAs in the Eastern/US Canada Box will get a -1 DRM for being in an Off-Map Box. The Western faction begins rolling:

- The roll for the combined group of BB Hood and CV Furious is a 3 – a *Speed?* result. Because the roll of 3 is less than both ships' Speed Factors, the result is treated as *Off Station* and the ships remain in Scapa Flow available for use.
- BB Repulse rolls a 2, *Off Station*, and stays in Scapa Flow.
- CA Berwick rolls a 3, *Speed?*, which again is treated as *Off Station*.
- CA Norfolk rolls a 4, *Speed?*, which converts to *Off Station*.
- The combined group of BB Renown and CV Ark Royal roll a 5, a *Speed?* result. Here the roll is greater than Renown's Speed Factor

of 4, so the result is treated as *Failure* and both ships are placed in the Delay Box.

- CA Suffolk rolls a 3, *Speed?*, which converts to *Off Station*. Suffolk remains in Gibraltar.
- CA Cumberland rolls a modified 1 (with a -1 DRM) – the result is *Interception!*
- CA Exeter also rolls a modified 1 (again, -1 DRM) and will join the battle.
- CA York rolls a modified 2 (-1 DRM), *Off Station*, and remains in the Eastern US/Canada Box.

Step 3: With only two CAs to fight Gr Spee, the odds are not great for the Western faction ... but it chooses to initiate the Air & Naval Combat Sequence anyway. Since neither side has any carriers in the battle, both sides must choose a Night Action, and battle is joined.

The Axis faction resolves its attack:

- Gr Spee attacks Exeter with 2 dice, rolling a 2 and a 6. A hit! The subsequent damage roll of 1 damages Exeter, which is moved to the Damaged/Reduced Box.

The Western faction resolves its attacks:

- Cumberland attacks Gr Spee with 1 die, rolls a 1, misses.
- Exeter attacks Gr Spee with 1 die, rolls a 6, and hits. The subsequent damage roll of 3 is enough to sink Gr Spee!

Step 4: Because there are no undamaged German ships remaining in the Line of Battle Box, the raid fails. But let's suppose for a moment that Exeter had missed Gr Spee with its shot. In that case (assuming neither side wished to retire), a second Combat Round would have been fought. If Gr Spee was still undamaged after the second Combat Round, the commerce raid would have been declared a success and the Axis faction would choose one of the three options listed under Successful Commerce Raids (§5.1.2):

- It could force the Western faction to place a friendly Convoy marker in the Naval Warfare Delay Box, or
- It could force the Western faction to place a British support unit in the Delay Box, or
- Place the Raid marker in the Strategic Warfare Box and cause the Western faction to suffer a +1 DRM to its Delay rolls for the rest of the season.

Step 5: After the raid, all ships would be placed as follows:

- Damaged ships (such as Exeter) would be placed in the Naval Warfare Delay Box, damaged side face up.
- Undamaged interceptors (such as Cumberland) would be placed in the Used Box of the North Atlantic Naval Zone.
- Undamaged raiders (such as Gr Spee in our hypothetical case) would be placed in the Naval Warfare Delay Box.

Comprehensive Base Attack Example: Raid on Taranto

It is the Nov/Dec 1940 turn and the Axis faction has several Italian ships based in Taranto (w2427). The Western faction targets that hex for a Base Attack Raid. It can do this because it has a British CV Fleet unit in its Force Pool.

The Western faction makes an Intelligence Roll with a +1 DRM. With a roll of 3, the British Task Force can be four ships. The Western faction selects the British CV *Illustrious*, CVL *Eagle* and CAs *Berwick* and *York*, all based in Gibraltar (w2208).

As Taranto is in the Central Mediterranean Naval Zone, the Western faction will have to make Speed Rolls for its ships. The CVL *Eagle* fails and is placed in the Naval Warfare Delay Box. The other ships press on with the raid.

The Western faction rolls on the Base Attack Table and gets a 1 – an *Air Raid* result with two Combat Rounds!

Illustrious only has 2 Airstrike Factors. In the first Combat Round, the Western faction assigns 1 factor to BB *Ct Cavour* and 1 factor to BB *Caio Duilio*. A lucky roll of “boxcars” means both ships are hit! The subsequent damage rolls of 4 is enough to sink *Ct Cavour*, but a 3 only damages *Caio Duilio*.

In the second round, *Illustrious* assigns 1 factor to BB *Littorio* and 1 to CA *Trento*. The Western luck continues: a roll of 6 (with a subsequent damage roll of 5) damages *Littorio*. Meanwhile, a roll of 5 is enough to disable *Trento*. After this military triumph, the British ships are placed in the Used Box of the Central Mediterranean Naval Zone.