

# **Battle of the River Plate**

**Introductory Naval Rules**  
*From the Naval Wargames Society*



# Battle of the River Plate

## Introductory Naval Rules

### From the Naval Wargames Society



“Battle of the River Plate” is a fast play introductory set of WW2 naval rules covering the famous battle of the same name, fought in December 1939 off the coast of South America. The set is aimed at the newcomer to the hobby. It is a self contained set in that all you will need to play are a few 6-sided dice (at least three dice of two different colours), a tape measure, pens and pencils. You won’t need models to use the rules as counters showing plan views and profile views of the ships involved are included (although you can of course use models in place of the counters if you wish).

#### Dice

As stated above you’ll need at least three six sided dice of two different colours. For the purposes of explaining the mechanisms of the rules the colours will be described here as “white” and “red”.

#### Order of Play

Each turn is made up of a number of segments, or phases. These are played through in order.

- Initiative Phase
- Movement Phase
  - Player A moves their ships
  - Player B moves their ships
- Gunnery Phase
  - Player A resolves their gunfire
  - Player B resolves their gunfire
- Torpedo Phase
  - Move any torpedo counters on the table
  - Player A launches torpedoes
  - Player B launches torpedoes
- Damage Control
  - Both players roll to see if they can repair any damage

#### Movement Phase

Each ship has a maximum speed listed. This is the maximum distance the ship can move in inches each turn. Unless a ship has been immobilised through damage it must move at least 1”. Ships can also turn up to 45 degrees after completing half their move, and another 45 degrees at the end of movement. For example, a cruiser moves 6”. It can turn 45 degrees after moving 3” and another 45 degrees after moving another 3”. Ships moving 1” can ONLY move at the end of movement.

Ship speeds are calculated by dividing the real ship’s maximum speed by 4. *Ajax*, *Exeter*, *Achilles* and *Cumberland* move up to 8”. *Graf Spee* moves up to 6”.



**Gunnery Phase**

Measure the range between the firing ship and the target. Determine the Gunnery Modifier. Starting from zero, add 1 for each complete group of 3 guns that are firing (example – Exeter is firing six 8” guns, so adds 2 to the die roll; Ajax is firing two 6” guns so adds nothing). Add the die roll modifier in the table below depending on the range.

Gun	Range				
	5”	10”	20”	30”	40”
4”	+3	+1	+0	X	X
5.9”	+3	+2	0	0	X
6”, 8”	+3	+2	+1	0	X
11”	+3	+2	+1	+1	0

If the entry in the table is X the gun is out of range

Roll two white dice and one red. Add the Gunnery Modifier to the total of the white dice, and to the score of the red dice.

If the result of the white dice throw is 12 or more the target has been straddled and has been hit. If the result of the red dice is 8 or more then three hits have been scored. If the result is 6 or 7 then 2 hits have been scored, otherwise 1 hit is scored.

*Example: Exeter is firing all six 8” guns at a range of 13”. The Gunnery Modifier is 2 (6 guns firing) plus 1 (8” guns firing at up to 20”), total 3. The white die throws are 6 and 4, the red die throw is 4. The total of the white die throws is (6+4+3) = 13. This is greater than 12 so the target is straddled. The result of the red die throw is (4+3) = 7. Two hits are scored.*

For each hit scored roll 2d6 and determine the hit location from the table below

Die Roll	Armour	Location
2	N	Hull
3	Y	Hull
4	Y	Forward Turret
5	N	Hull
6	Y	Engines
7	N	Secondary Guns
8	Y	Hull
9	N	Hull
10	Y	Aft Turret
11	N	Hull
12	Y	Special Hit – roll again on table below

Special Hits - Roll another d6

Die Roll	Armour	Effect
1	N	Bridge hit – ship cannot change course or fire for 1 turn
2	N	Bulkhead collapses – take 1d6 hull damage
3	Y	Boilers hit – lose 1d6 speed (must penetrate Engine armour)
4	N	Fire starts – lose 1 hull per turn until extinguished. Roll 5+ on a d6 to put out the fire, rolling at the start of the turn
5	N	Rudder damaged – ship can only make a turn at the end of movement
6	N	Torpedo tubes hit

The effects of normal hits are as follows:

Location	Effect
Hull	Lose 1 hull point (ships have 1 point per 500 tons displacement). If a ship loses all its hull points it sinks. If it loses more than 75" of its hull points it may not fire torpedoes.
Forward or Aft turret	If the turret armour is penetrated the turret is destroyed. If the ship has more than one forward or aft turret (e.g. Ajax and Exeter's forward turrets) choose the turret that is hit at random
Engines	The ship's speed is reduced by 1
Secondary Guns	One secondary gun mount is knocked out

### Armour

If a hit location is shown that has "Y" in the "Armour" column that means that the ship's armour must be penetrated to cause damage. If the armour is penetrated then the results above come into effect. If the armour is not penetrated the effects of the hit are ignored. The table below shows the armour value of each location

Location	Ship			
	Ajax, Achilles	Exeter	Cumberland	Graf Spee
Turrets	4	4	4	6
Hull	4	4	4	5
Engine, Boilers	4	4	4	6

Gun	Range				
	5"	10"	20"	30"	40"
4"	-1	-2	-3	X	X
5.9", 6"	+1	0	-1	-2	X
8"	+1	0	0	-1	-2
11"	+1	+1	+1	0	0

To see whether the ship's armour has been penetrated roll a dice and add the number in the table corresponding to the firing gun and the range. For example, an 8" gun firing at 13" would add 0, whilst an 11" gun at the same range would add 1. If the result equals or exceeds the Armour value of the location that has been hit the armour is penetrated.

*Example: Exeter has scored two hits on Graf Spee with her 8" guns fired from 13". The hits have landed on her Hull (an armoured portion, hit location 8) and her aft turret. The penetration modifier is 0. The firing player needs to roll a 6 to knock out the turret and a 5 or 6 to penetrate the hull.*



## Torpedoes

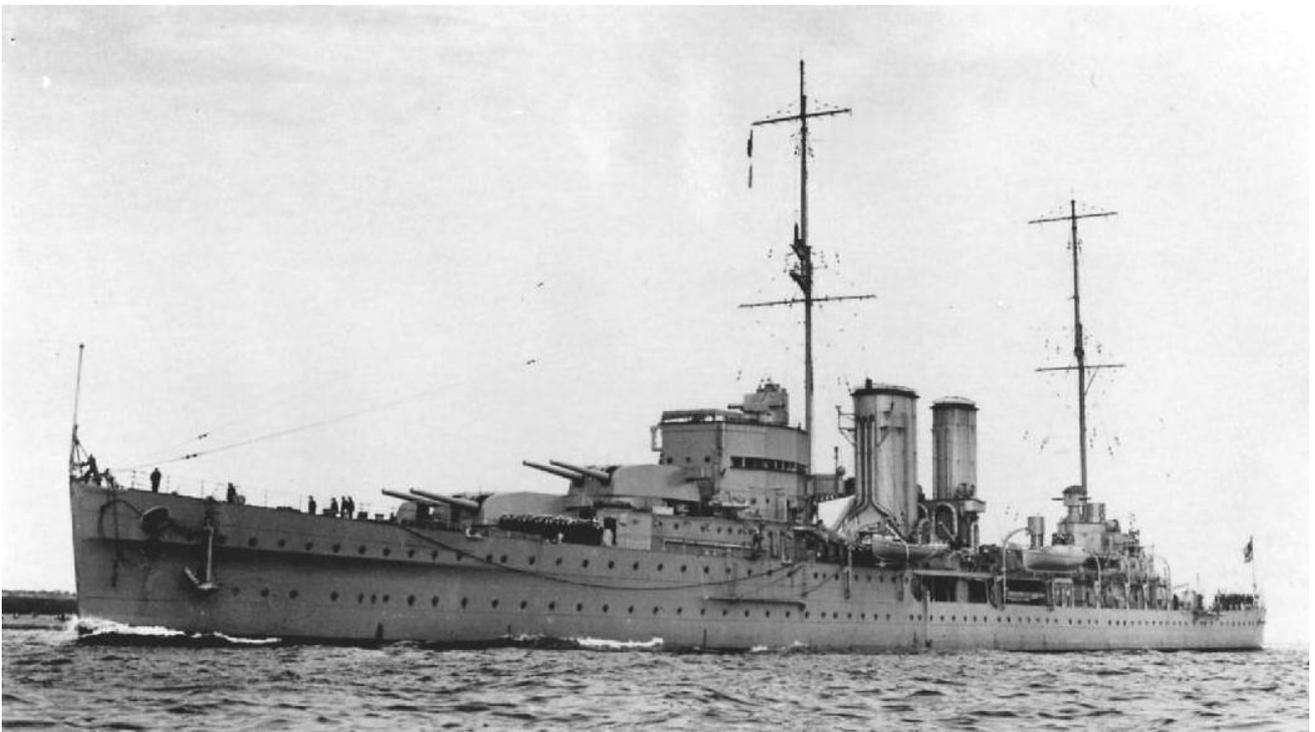
If a ship has torpedoes listed it may launch them at the end of the turn. Place a torpedo counter on the table for each torpedo fired. The direction of the marker shows the direction in which the torpedo is travelling. In the torpedo phase of each following turn move the torpedo marker 10" along its track. If a torpedo marker passes within 2" of a model roll a dice. The torpedo hits on a roll of 4+. If a hit is scored roll a dice. The result is the number of hits scored AND the number of additional hull points lost. Also, a ship hit by a torpedo automatically has their speed reduced by 1 for each hit.

*Example: Ajax is hit by a torpedo. The die roll is 4. She loses 4 hull points. She also takes 4 hits. If any of these are hull hits she will lose more hull points. Her speed is also immediately reduced by 1.*

## Damage Control

The last phase of each turn is the Damage Control Phase. Players may attempt to repair damaged parts of the ship. Roll a dice. On a roll of 6 they may repair one Turret, Secondary Gun Mount or restore 1" of lost movement. Lost hull points cannot be restored. This is also the point in the turn where die rolls are made to put out fires.

At the end of the Damage control Phase the turn is complete.



# Ship Data

## HMS AJAX, HMS ACHILLES

Speed 8"  
 Hull Points 15 OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO

### Armour

- Turrets 4
- Hull 4
- Engines, Boilers 4

### Armament

A Turret 2x 6" guns  
 B Turret 2x 6" guns  
 X Turret 2x 6" guns  
 Y Turret 2x 6" guns

Port Secondary Guns #1 2x 4" guns (AJAX), 1x 4" gun (ACHILLES)  
 Port Secondary Guns #2 2x 4" guns (AJAX), 1x 4" gun (ACHILLES)  
 Stbd Secondary Guns #1 2x 4" guns (AJAX), 1x 4" gun (ACHILLES)  
 Stbd Secondary Guns #2 2x 4" guns (AJAX), 1x 4" gun (ACHILLES)

Port Torpedoes 3 tubes OOO  
 Starboard Torpedoes 3 tubes OOO

## HMS EXETER

Speed 8"  
 Hull Points 17 OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OO

### Armour

- Turrets 4
- Hull 4
- Engines, Boilers 4

### Armament

A Turret 2x 8" guns  
 B Turret 2x 8" guns  
 X Turret 2x 8" guns

Port Secondary Guns #1 2x 4" guns  
 Port Secondary Guns #2 2x 4" guns  
 Stbd Secondary Guns #1 2x 4" guns  
 Stbd Secondary Guns #2 2x 4" guns

Port Torpedoes 3 tubes OOO  
 Starboard Torpedoes 3 tubes OOO

## HMS CUMBERLAND

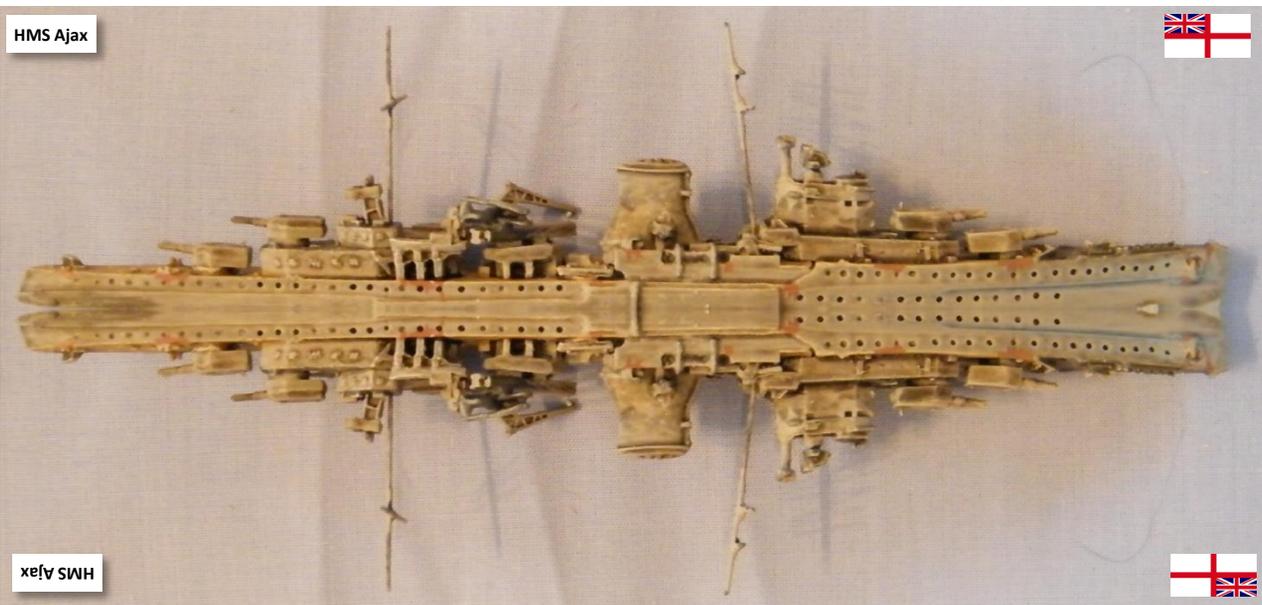
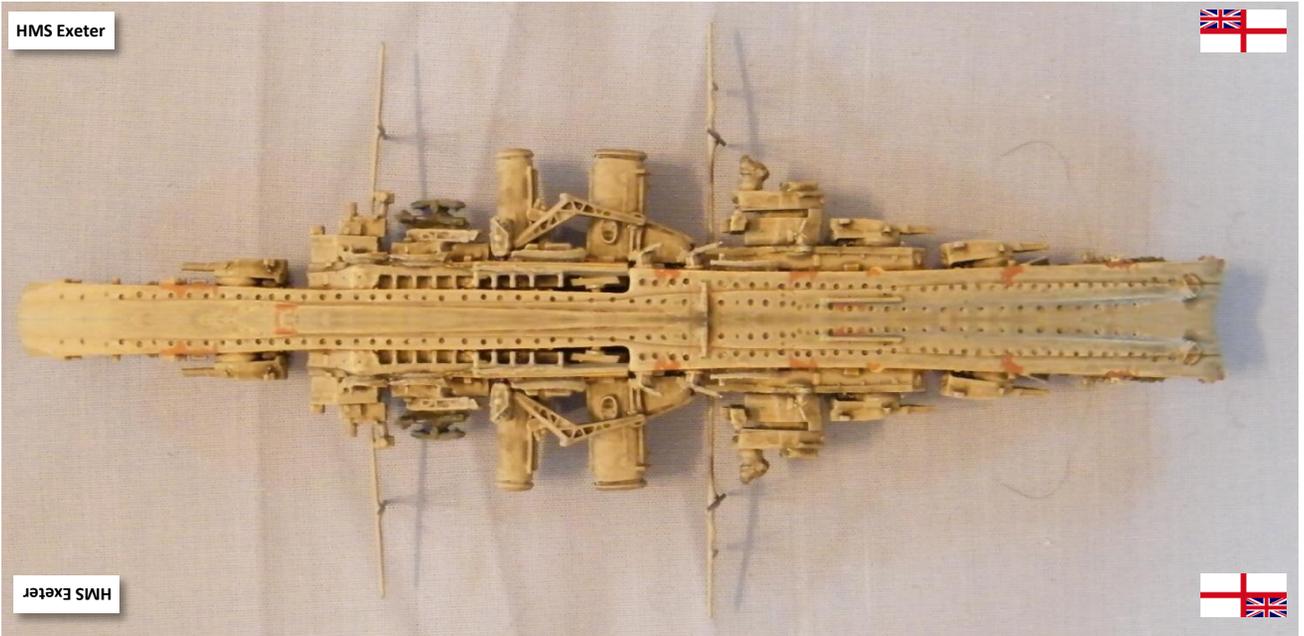
Speed	8"	
Hull Points	20	OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO
<b>Armour</b>		
• Turrets	4	
• Hull	4	
• Engines, Boilers	4	
<b>Armament</b>		
A Turret	2x 8" guns	
B Turret	2x 8" guns	
X Turret	2x 8" guns	
Y Turret	2x 8" guns	
Port Secondary Guns #1	2x 4" guns	
Port Secondary Guns #2	2x 4" guns	
Stbd Secondary Guns #1	2x 4" guns	
Stbd Secondary Guns #2	2x 4" guns	
Port Torpedoes	4 tubes	OOOO
Starboard Torpedoes	4 tubes	OOOO

## GRAF SPEE

Speed	7"	
Hull Points	24	OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOO
<b>Armour</b>		
• Turrets	6	
• Hull	5	
• Engines, Boilers	5	
<b>Armament</b>		
A Turret	3x 11" guns	
Y Turret	3x 11" guns	
Port Secondary Guns #1	1x 5.9" gun	
Port Secondary Guns #2	1x 5.9" gun	
Port Secondary Guns #3	1x 5.9" gun	
Port Secondary Guns #4	1x 5.9" gun	
Stbd Secondary Guns #1	1x 5.9" gun	
Stbd Secondary Guns #2	1x 5.9" gun	
Stbd Secondary Guns #3	1x 5.9" gun	
Stbd Secondary Guns #4	1x 5.9" gun	
Port Torpedoes	4 tubes	OOOO
Starboard Torpedoes	4 tubes	OOOO

# Battle of the River Plate – Ship Counters

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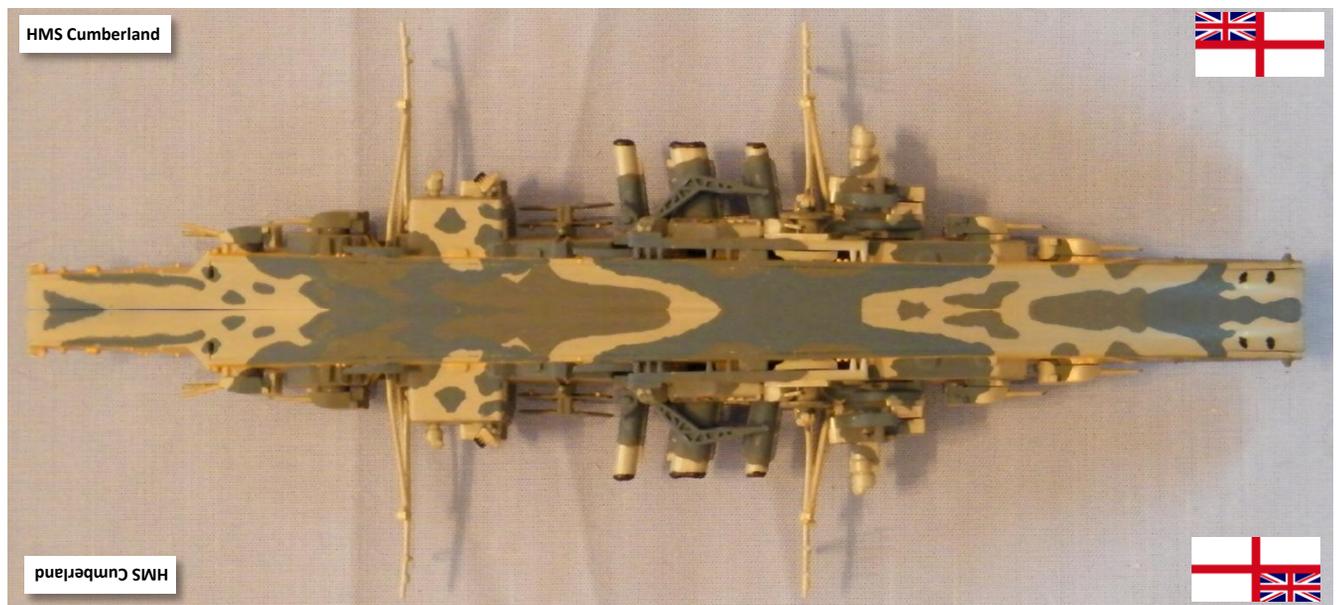
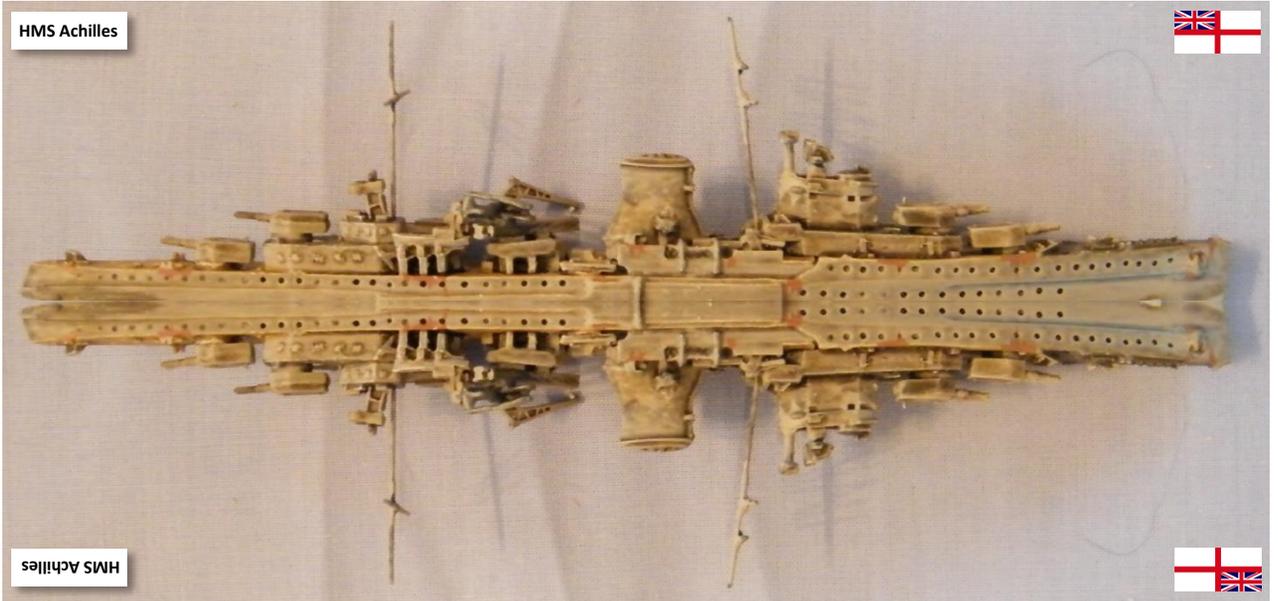


## Sheet 1 – Exeter, Ajax

*Stick to thin card then cut out. Fold profile views in half for a 3D counter, or use plan views for “traditional” counters*

# Battle of the River Plate – Ship Counters

From the Naval Wargames Society

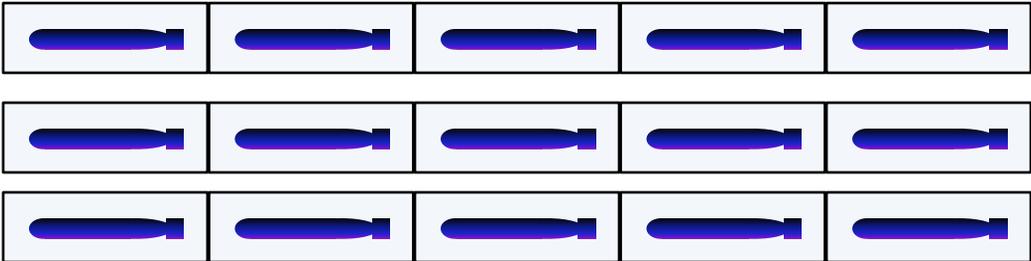
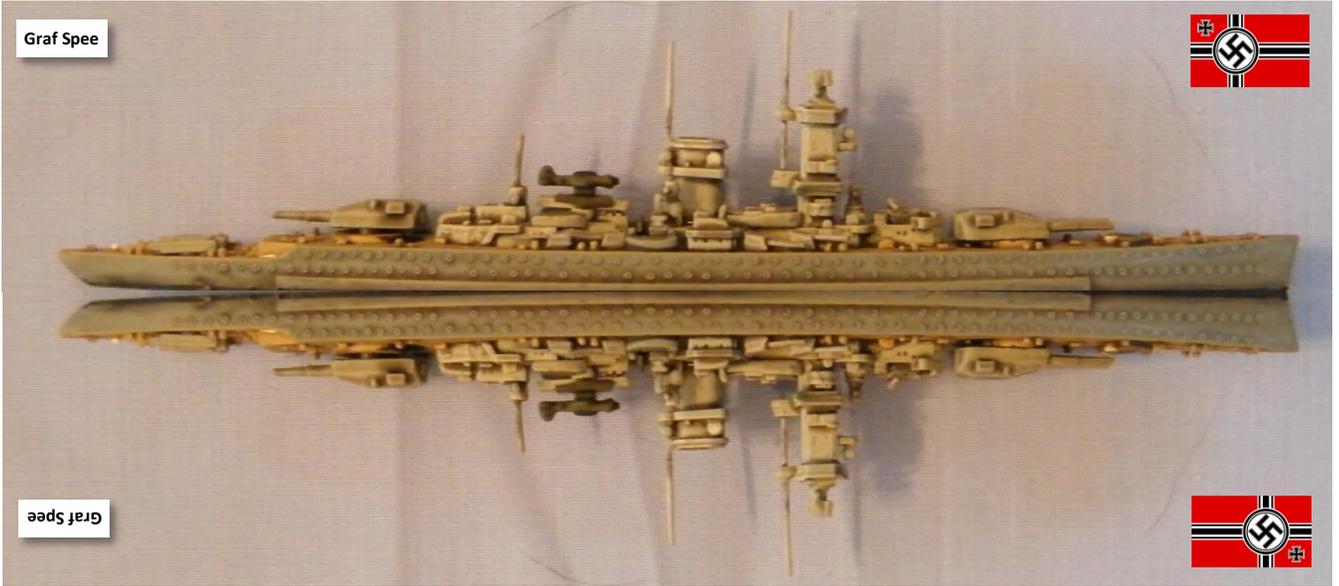


## Sheet 2 – Achilles, Cumberland

*Stick to thin card then cut out. Fold profile views in half for a 3D counter, or use plan views for "traditional" counters*

# Battle of the River Plate – Ship Counters

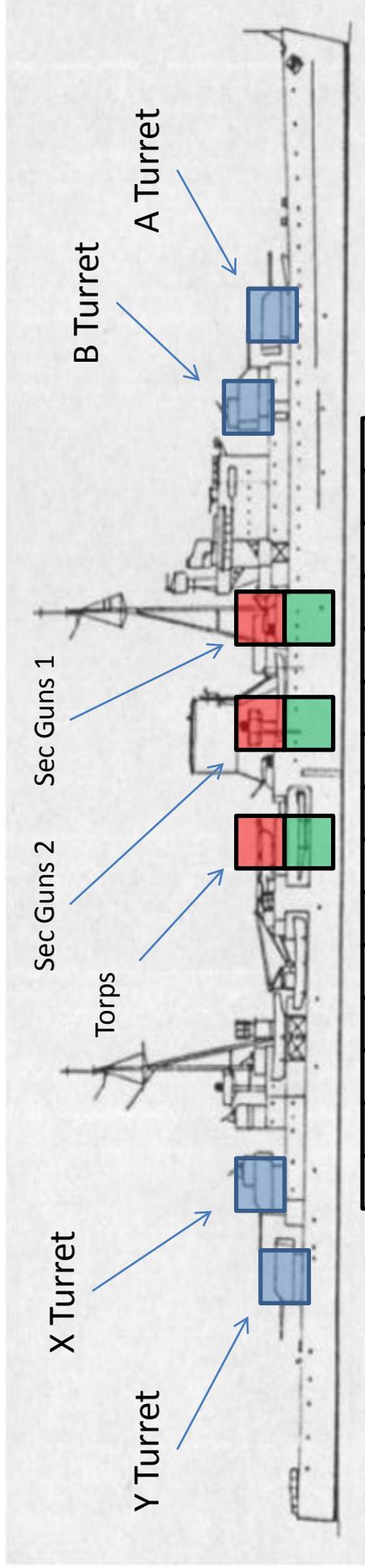
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## Sheet 3 – Graf Spee, game markers

*Stick to thin card then cut out. Fold profile views in half for a 3D counter, or use plan views for “traditional” counters*

# HMS AJAX



Speed

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Bridge

Fire

Rudder

<b>Armour</b>		<b>Armament</b>	
• Turrets	4	A Turret	2x 6" guns
• Hull	4	B Turret	2x 6" guns
• Engines, Boilers	4	X Turret	2x 6" guns
		Y Turret	2x 6" guns
<b>Torpedoes</b>		Port Secondary Guns #1	2x 4" guns
Port Torpedoes	000	Port Secondary Guns #2	2x 4" guns
Starboard Torpedoes	000	Stbd Secondary Guns #1	2x 4" guns
		Stbd Secondary Guns #2	2x 4" guns

# HNZMS ACHILLES



Hull Damage (15)

Speed

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Bridge

Fire

Rudder

## Armour

- Turrets 4
- Hull 4
- Engines, Boilers 4

## Armament

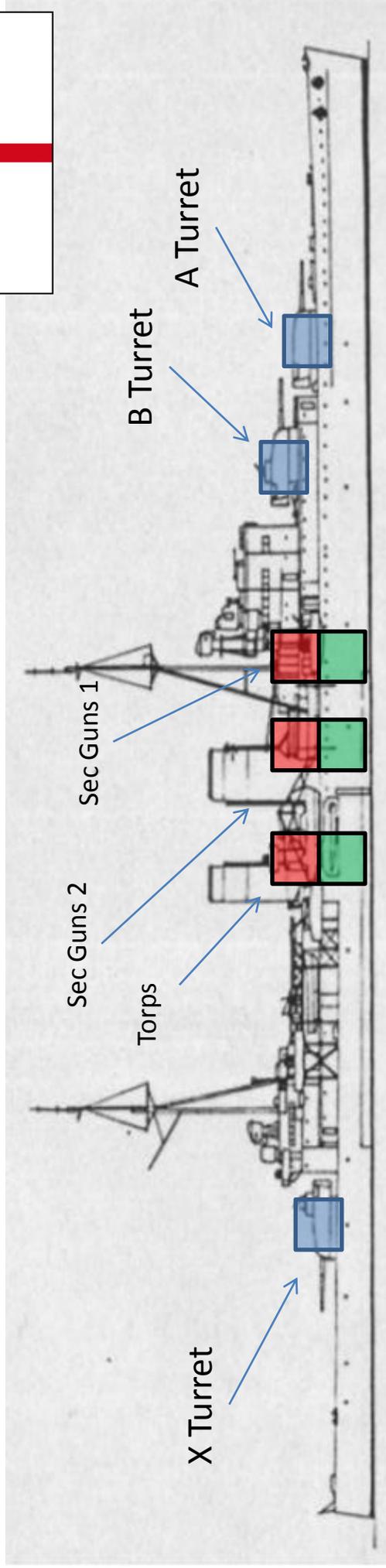
- A Turret 2x 6" guns
- B Turret 2x 6" guns
- X Turret 2x 6" guns
- Y Turret 2x 6" guns

## Torpedoes

- Port Torpedoes 000
- Starboard Torpedoes 000

- Port Secondary Guns #1 1x 4" gun
- Port Secondary Guns #2 1x 4" gun
- Stbd Secondary Guns #1 1x 4" gun
- Stbd Secondary Guns #2 1x 4" gun

# HMS EXETER



Hull Damage (17)



Speed



Bridge



Fire



Rudder



## Armour

- Turrets 4
- Hull 4
- Engines, Boilers 4

## Armament

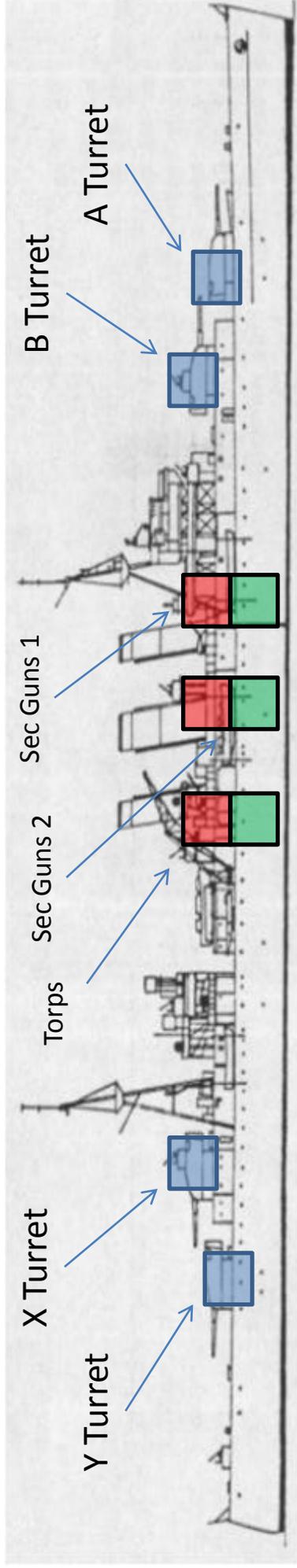
- A Turret 2x 8" guns
- B Turret 2x 8" guns
- X Turret 2x 8" guns

- Port Secondary Guns #1 1x 4" gun
- Port Secondary Guns #2 1x 4" gun
- Stbd Secondary Guns #1 1x 4" gun
- Stbd Secondary Guns #2 1x 4" gun

## Torpedoes

- Port Torpedoes 000
- Starboard Torpedoes 000

# HMS CUMBERLAND



Hull Damage (20)



Speed



Bridge



Fire



Rudder



## Armour

- Turrets 4
- Hull 4
- Engines, Boilers 4

## Armament

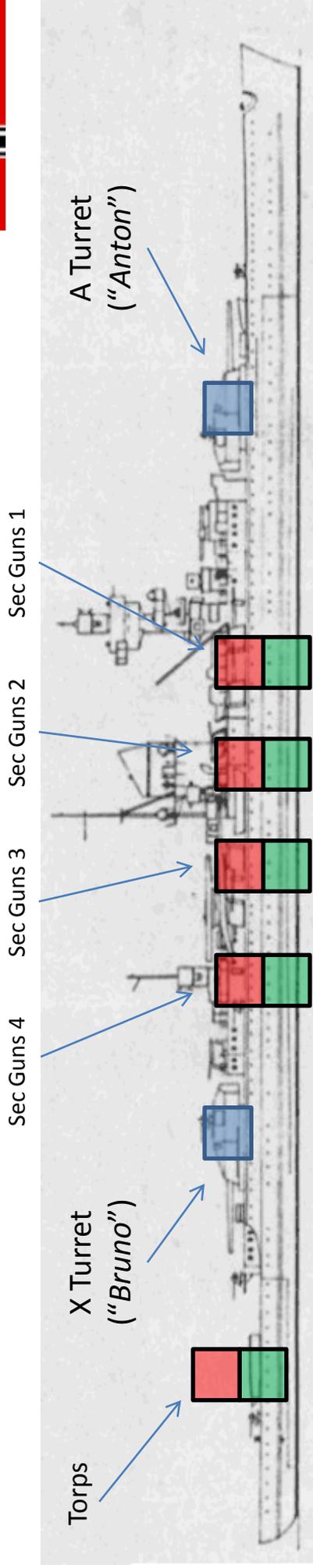
- A Turret 2x 8" guns
- B Turret 2x 8" guns
- X Turret 2x 8" guns
- Y Turret 2x 8" guns

## Torpedoes

- Port Torpedoes OOOO
- Starboard Torpedoes OOOO

- Port Secondary Guns #1 2x 4" guns
- Port Secondary Guns #2 2x 4" guns
- Stbd Secondary Guns #1 2x 4" guns
- Stbd Secondary Guns #2 2x 4" guns

# KM GRAF SPEE



### Armour

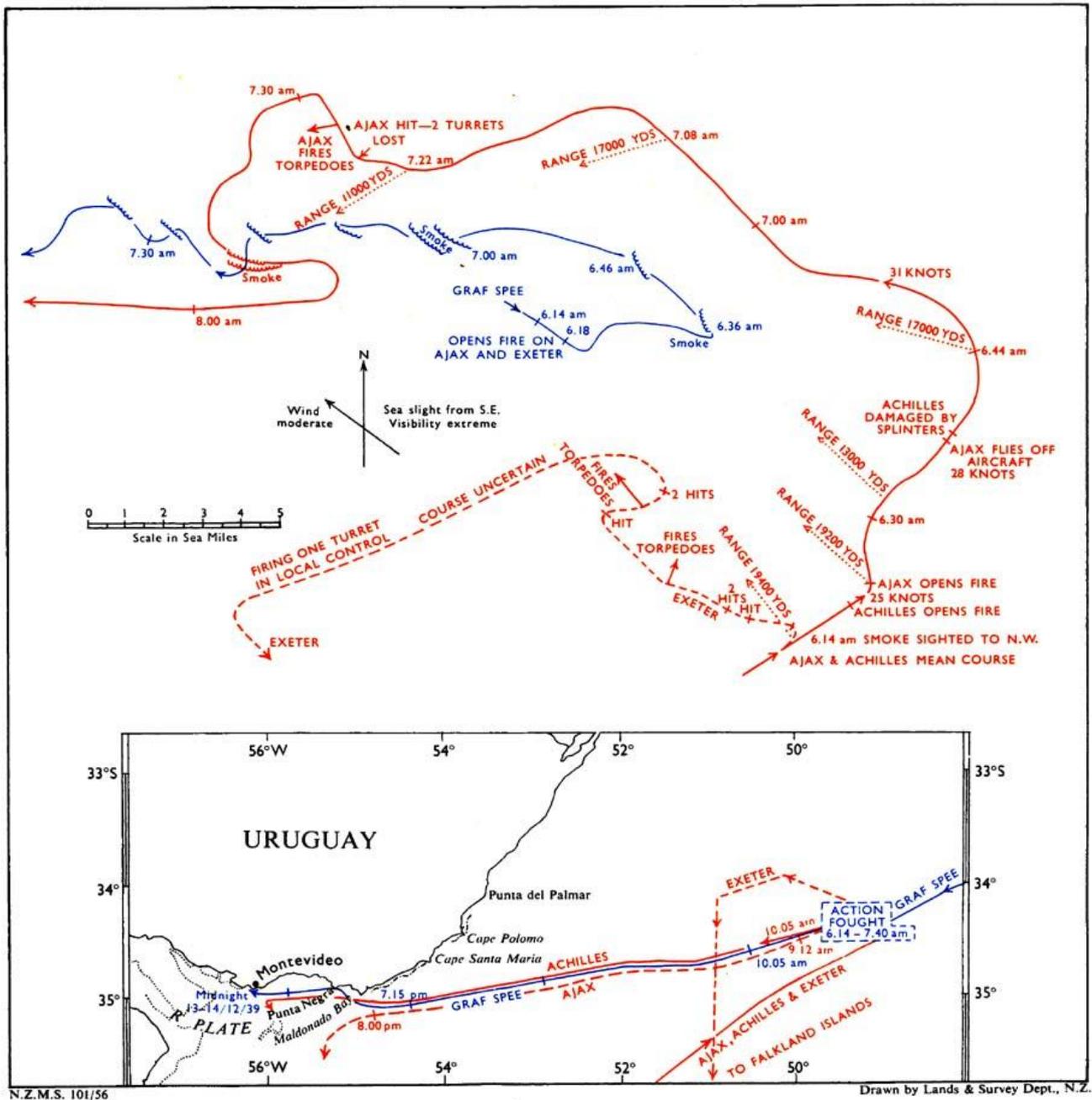
- Turrets 6
- Hull 5
- Engines, Boilers 5

### Armament

- A Turret 3x 11" guns
- X Turret 3x 11" guns
- Port Secondary Gun #1 1x 5.9" gun
- Port Secondary Gun #2 1x 5.9" gun
- Port Secondary Gun #3 1x 5.9" gun
- Port Secondary Gun #4 1x 5.9" gun
- Stbd Secondary Gun #1 1x 5.9" gun
- Stbd Secondary Gun #2 1x 5.9" gun
- Stbd Secondary Gun #3 1x 5.9" gun
- Stbd Secondary Gun #4 1x 5.9" gun

### Torpedoes

- Port Torpedoes OOOO
- Starboard Torpedoes OOOO



BATTLE OF THE RIVER PLATE, 13 DECEMBER 1939

