

WW2 1941 ABC

Introduction

This is an unauthorized fan variant of *Axis & Allies 1941* solely intended for those who find that the game played Rules As Written is too long or too complex for players at their table. If you're happy with the current rules, or have house rules that increase complexity, this is not for you.

- **Hypothesis: The complexity of Axis & Allies comes not from unit counts but from having to forecast your own turn.** You begin your turn by purchasing units that won't be placed until the end of your turn, forcing you to think through combat moves and anticipate how they will go and guess what you will need as a result.
- **Hypothesis: Fleets are fun.** All those ship units are fun, but they are too expensive to buy, and poor Russia has the only two industrial complexes on the map that can't place ships.
- **Hypothesis: Unit abilities are convoluted.** Ships can't move through sea zones with hostile surface ships, except for submarines, except when destroyers are present. An infantry can move 1, unless it moves onto a transport, in which case it can move a second time. A sub in battle can do a surprise strike as well as avoid air hits, unless an enemy destroyer is present, unless that enemy destroyer is from a different nation, unless defending. A transport is never part of battles but gets destroyed immediately, etc.

In *WW2 1941 ABC*, turn order has been simplified to ABC: Advance your units (whether into combat or not), Battle, then Create and place new units. Since new players, even old hands, of *Axis & Allies* often try to do non-combat moves at the same time as combat moves, this is the default.

Since the limit on the number of units that can be produced in a region already discourages infantry stacking, prices are discounted (roughly divided by 3): infantry cost 1, tanks and submarines cost 2, destroyers and transports cost 3, fighters and bombers cost 4, carriers cost 5, and battleships cost 6. To further discourage infantry stacking, income not spent is lost. As a result, Germany's income of 12 and ability to produce 4 units means it would never produce 4 infantry (wasting 8 income): it might want to produce a battleship, fighter, and 2 infantry or instead a bomber, a fighter, and 2 tanks. (Bonus: you're less likely to need those cardboard chits to represent stacked units.)

Special abilities of units have been streamlined and systematized, and in the process amped up. All abilities are now given a name, shown on a summary table, and called out and documented in the rules.

- Transports now attack and defend at 1. Think of them as escorted convoys. No more special rules about what type of ship they are and how to remove them as casualties.
- Both transports and carriers can take up to two units: any mix of tanks and infantry for transports, and any mix of fighters and bombers for carriers!
- Subs should be fun, and destroyers shouldn't take that all away! Submarine and anti-submarine rules have been streamlined (see *Battle* for details).
- No more need to track the movement allowance of individual planes and recall where they were several phases ago: they have a range (shortened by 1) then optional final movement after a battle.

I hope you enjoy playing *WW2 1941 ABC* as much as we enjoyed making it.

- J. Alan and Connor X. Henning

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How to Win

To win you either need to capture one of your opponent's victory cities or as the Axis you need to control regions that produce a combined income of 32 at the end of the US turn. To win by conquest alone: the Axis need to capture London or Washington, D.C., while the Allies need to capture Berlin or Tokyo. The game ends as soon as that happens. (Note that Moscow is not a victory city.)

Set up initial forces for each nation using the table on the last page. Two to five can play, dividing the nations as agreed, but the game works best with two players.

Order of Play

Each round of play goes through the nations in the following order: Russia (Allies), Germany (Axis), Britain (Allies), Japan (Axis), United States (Allies). Each nation's turn consists of these three phases, in order:

1. Advance
2. Battle
3. Create New Units

Phase 1: Advance

During this phase you will move all of your units that you wish to, whether or not they are going into combat. Each unit has a range that indicates the number of areas (land regions or sea zones) that it can be moved. For instance, a fighter can move up to 3 areas away.

No unit can exceed its movement range for this phase. In addition, land units and surface ships must stop when certain other conditions apply:

- Land units must stop upon entering any hostile land region (an area with enemy units or an enemy control marker).
- Surface ships must stop upon entering a hostile sea zone that contains surface ships (in other words, they do not need to stop if the sea zone contains only hostile submarines).
- Transports may not move again after units disembark.

Note that units can always move out of starting areas that hold hostile units. One other restriction, for air units on carriers: they must take off from the carrier before it moves, otherwise they can't leave the carrier this turn.

Travel through hostile areas - Submarines and air units don't have any special conditions that require them to stop at areas with enemy units.

Loading and unloading - Transports and carriers can each take up to 2 land or air units respectively. They may not carry units from other nations. A land unit moving onto a transport must still have at least 1 move left in its movement range to be able to move onto the transport. In contrast, an air unit does not need to spend 1 move to land onto a carrier, as it is already in the same area. As a final movement (distinct from its range), a land unit may disembark. For instance, in one turn an infantry can move onto a transport, the

transport can move (or not), then the infantry can exit the transport, even though otherwise infantry only have a range of 1.

Blitz - A tank does not need to stop in the first region it moves into, if that region is enemy controlled with no units in it. Moving through such a region switches control (follow step 9 of Combat, below).

Neutral territories - Neutral lands are not unoccupied. If a nation enters or flies over a neutral territory, the nearest defender should place three infantry units and a control marker there, representing the neutral region joining their alliance. Note that whoever controls Turkey can enter and exit the Black Sea.

Phase 2: Battle

During this phase, you will resolve all the battles. As the attacker, go through each hostile area containing your nation's units, in whatever order you wish, and resolve each battle, if possible. Note that attackers cannot initiate combat on sub-only fleets (they're considered submerged and hidden).

For some battles, you will want to use the battle board, which provides a summary of attack and defense values and special abilities; when using the battle board, each player places their units in the corresponding boxes. Attackers do not place units in the area that belong to friendly nations; those can never participate in joint attacks. However, defenders do place units belonging to their allied nations.

1. **Attacking Units Fire** - Roll for submarines first, then roll for each assault box, from the highest (☒) to lowest (☐) in order, skipping any boxes without corresponding units and stopping once all defenders are casualties. In general, with each hit, the defender must choose a casualty and move it behind the casualty line on the battle board; they can't choose a casualty that the attacker couldn't hit. Note the following special abilities and restrictions:
 - a. **Submarines can only hit sea units** - When a sub hits, the opponent cannot take an air unit as a casualty. Once no hostile sea units are left, don't roll for your subs.
 - b. **Sneak attack** - Casualties of attacking submarines, with the exceptions of destroyers, are immediately moved off the battle board and to the bank of unused pieces and therefore don't get to return fire. **Anti-submarine** - If a defending destroyer is hit by an attacking submarine, move it behind the casualty line.
 - c. **Air coordination** - Air units need destroyer support against subs: air units cannot hit submarines unless at least one of their nation's destroyers are also in the battle; if not, and only hostile submarines are left, don't roll for the air units.
 - d. **Anti-aircraft fire** - On the first round of combat only, any air units that roll a 6 (☒) may be subject to anti-aircraft fire. Take each air unit that rolled a 6 (☒) and that can be matched to a different defending land unit, battleship, or destroyer and return it to the bank.
 - e. **Battleships can take two hits** - When a battleship is hit for the first time, move it to the damaged box. If a battleship is hit again, move it behind the casualty line.
 - f. **Multinational defense** - When the units being attacked belong to multiple players, the defenders must decide between themselves which units to remove as casualties or, if they can't agree, the attacker will decide.

2. **Defending Units Fire or Prepare to Withdraw** - Each defending nation may declare the intent to withdraw. If not, each nation now rolls for each of their defending units, including those behind their casualty line, from highest (☐) to lowest (☐) in order, following the same procedure as above, but skipping *Sneak attack* and *Anti-aircraft fire*, which are only applicable to attackers. Otherwise they follow the Withdraw instructions when they get to step 4.
3. **Remove Casualties** - Each player moves all casualties to their bank of unused pieces. Transports are removed along with any land units they were carrying. Air units are not removed with carriers but are treated independently.
4. **Withdraw** - The attacker may decide to end the battle, in which case they must move all units of the same type (land, air, or sea) to a single one of the areas moved from. If the attacker doesn't end the battle, they may instead choose to withdraw any or all submarines. If the attacker is not ending the battle, the defender may withdraw any or all submarines to any sea zone without hostile units (if no such zone exists, they can't withdraw) or, if the defender announced their intent to withdraw instead of returning fire, they may withdraw all units to a single adjacent area without hostile forces.
5. **Repeat** - Go back to step 1 and repeat, unless one side has only air units and the other only submarines, in which case go to step 6.
6. **Check for Victory** - If the attacker captured a victory city (Berlin, London, Tokyo, Washington DC), the game is over, and the attacker's side won!
7. **Land Air Units** - After an attacker wins a battle, they have a choice as to where to land any attacking air units. Air units can land in the current sea zone (if it contains one of their carriers with capacity), in a friendly land region in range that wasn't hostile at the beginning of their turn, or on a carrier with capacity in a sea zone in range. The final movement is 2 for a fighter and 3 for a bomber. In case a defending carrier is lost but the air units survive, if a unit can't find a place to land, these air units become casualties and are placed in the bank.
8. **Return Surviving Units** - Put all surviving units back into the contested area on the board. Reset surviving battleships so they are upright again.
9. **Update Income Tracker** - If the attacker won a land battle, and the region has an income value printed on it, reduce the owner's budget by that amount on the national income bar at the top of the board, and increase the budget of the attacker or of the original nation, if on the same side as the attacker (e.g., if the US defeats a Japanese force occupying Borneo, the UK's income goes up).
10. **Amphibious Assault** - When a battle has concluded in a sea zone adjacent to a land region and the attacker's fleet contains at least one loaded transport, the attacker may trigger an *amphibious assault* at their discretion. They can disembark any or all land units, then conduct combat in that area as normal (go to step 1), possibly joining any other units moved there in Phase 1–Advance. Any land units retreating from an amphibious assault can be loaded back onto transports that have room.

Phase 3: Create New Units

During this phase, you place new units in regions at your nation's factories to prepare for the future. But first, on the US turn, verify that the Axis haven't won an economic victory by controlling regions worth 32 credits.

You have two limits to how much you can mobilize each turn: your overall budget and the number of units each eligible factory can produce.

Your overall budget is the sum of credits across all the regions you control. Track your total on the national income bar; you can double-check your level by summing the value of each land region you control.

An *eligible factory* is a factory that you controlled at the start of your turn. You can't produce anything at factories that you captured just this turn. If you controlled no factories at the start of your turn, you have no eligible factories and cannot create new units: skip this phase.

Factory capacity is the same as the number of IPCs for its region: so the factories in Germany and Japan, for instance, can each produce up to 4 units, while the factories in India and Australia, for instance, can each produce just 1 unit. *Exception:* Each continental U.S. factory has an overall capacity of 3.

Your income is the most you can buy this turn. Decide what you wish to purchase. Besides only being able to buy what you can afford, you can only purchase as many units as you have capacity to place. Any unused budget can't be saved for your next turn.

Placing New Units

1. **Land and Air Units** - Place any newly purchased land and air units in land regions with eligible factories with sufficient capacity.
2. **Sea Zones** - Place any newly purchased sea units in sea zones adjacent to eligible factories with remaining capacity, regardless of whether or not enemy units are there. For each transport or carrier placed, you can load 1 or 2 corresponding units from the adjacent land region. *Note:* The Soviet Union can place sea units into Sea Zone 4 from Russia, provided it also controls Archangel, and can load them in this phase with new units from Moscow. *Note:* Germany can place sea units into Sea Zone 16, provided it also controls Southern Europe, and can load them in this phase with new units from Germany.

Unit Summary

Unit	Cost	Range	Other Movement	Attack	Defense	Special Ability
Infantry	1	1	1 (to disembark)	1	2	None
Tank	2	2	1 (to disembark)	3	3	Blitz
Fighter	4	3	2 (to land)	3	4	Travel through hostile areas
Bomber	4	4	3 (to land)	4	1	Travel through hostile areas
Submarine	2	2	1 (to withdraw)	2	2 ^a	Travel through hostile areas; sneak attack; can withdraw
Destroyer	3	3	0	2	3	Anti-submarine; air coordination
Transport	3	2	0	1 ^b	1 ^b	Transport 2 land units
Carrier	5	2	0	1	2	Carry 2 air units
Battleship	6	2	0	4	4	Can take 2 hits

^aIncreased because no longer has *sneak attack* on defense. ^bSimplifies combat; think of it as a convoy.

Setup

The setup has been updated for game balance (edits noted below) and to adjust for the fact that nations later in the turn order start with less income than in the standard game.

Russia 6 infantry, 1 tank, 1 fighter

Archangel 3 infantry

Karelia 3 infantry

Caucasus 3 infantry, 1 tank

Urals 1 infantry

Siberia 2 infantry

Sea Zone 4 1 submarine

Germany 3 infantry, 1 fighter, 1 bomber

Western Europe 2 infantry, 1 tank, 1 fighter

Southern Europe 2 infantry, 1 fighter

Eastern Europe 4 infantry, 2 tanks

Norway/Finland 2 infantry

Ukraine 3 infantry, 2 tanks

West Russia 3 infantry

North Africa 1 tank

Sea Zone 5 1 battleship, 1 submarine

Sea Zone 9 2 submarines

Sea Zone 16 1 destroyer, 1 submarine, 1 transport

United Kingdom 1 infantry, 1 bomber, 1 fighter

Anglo-Egypt Sudan 2 infantry, 1 tank

India 2 infantry, 1 fighter

Australia 1 infantry

Eastern Canada 1 tank

Union of South Africa 1 infantry

Sea Zone 8 1 battleship, 1 submarine

Sea Zone 10 1 destroyer, 1 transport

Sea Zone 14 2 fighters, 1 aircraft carrier

Sea Zone 29 1 destroyer, 1 transport

Sea Zone 33 1 submarine, 1 transport

Japan 4 infantry, 1 tank, 1 fighter, 1 bomber

Manchuria 2 infantry

Coastal China 2 infantry

Southeast Asia 2 infantry

Sea Zone 31 1 submarine, 1 destroyer

Sea Zone 45 2 fighters, 1 battleship, 1 aircraft carrier, 1 transport

Sea Zone 46 1 fighter, 1 aircraft carrier, 1 destroyer, 1 transport

United States

Eastern U.S. 2 infantry, 1 tank, 1 fighter, 1 bomber

Western U.S. 2 infantry, 1 tank

Hawaiian Islands 1 infantry

Philippine Islands 1 infantry

Northwestern China 1 infantry

Szechwan 2 infantry

Sea Zone 11 1 destroyer, 1 transport

Sea Zone 42 1 battleship, 1 aircraft carrier (carrying 2 fighters), 1 submarine, 1 transport

