

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is an AAR (After Action Report) written by Tom Holliday of a SEEKRIEG 5 game he hosted at Spring Maneuvers on 18 February 2005 at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas. Other than formatting and correction of a few typographical errors, the text is unedited from the original.

While the descriptions appear to be quite vivid for a wargame, the author maintains that "I must admit that I got long-winded, but ...I really didn't "make" anything up, just connected the dots that Seekrieg provided me, with a couple of connection phrases."

The action was played using the standard CHART H1 for hit determination. This chart allows for a much more exciting and fast-paced game by permitting a greater number of hits to occur than would be expected historically, especially at long ranges. An alternative version, CHART H2, is available for gamers desiring a long range gunnery model more representative of historical outcomes.

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## **Battle of Denmark Straits**

As fought at Spring Maneuvers, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, on 18 February 2005

Kriegsmarine: ADM G. Lutjens (Paul)  
*KM Bismarck* – CAPT E. Lindemann (Paul)  
*KM Prinz Eugen* – CAPT H. Brinkmann (Lee)

Royal Navy: VADM L. Holland (Patrick)  
*HMS Prince of Wales* – CAPT J. Leach (Patrick)  
*HMS Hood* – CAPT R. Kerr (Alan)

**Current conditions:** Beaufort Number – 4-5; Sea State – 5-7'; Wind – 12-18 kts from the N-NE; Visibility Code – 8 very clear; both fleets traveling at 28 kts.

**Crew ratings:** All were set to 0 (game director's choice)

**Ammo for the primary batteries:** game director's choice based on chart A13  
*KM Bismarck* – 40rpg AP (33%), 40rpg SAP (33%), 40rpg HE (33%)  
*KM Prinz Eugen* – 40rpg AP (33%), 40rpg SAP (33%), 40rpg HE (33%)  
*HMS Prince of Wales* – 90rpg AP (90%), 10rpg HE (10%)  
*HMS Hood* – 78rpg AP (65%), 36rpg SAP (30%), 6rpg HE (5%)

**Command Ratings:** determined by players roles  
*KM Bismarck* – Bridge Command: 7, Flag Command: 10  
*KM Prinz Eugen* – Bridge Command: 6, Flag Command: 7  
*HMS Prince of Wales* – Bridge Command: 7, Flag Command: 9  
*HMS Hood* – Bridge Command: 9, Flag Command: 9

**Restrictions imposed on the Kriegsmarine commanders for historical purposes:** (this information was not known by the Royal Navy)

1. The Kriegsmarine was not able to positively identify the *HMS Hood* and *Prince of Wales* until they opened fire. Originally, they were thought to be 2 heavy cruisers, in other words, good target practice. Based on this, the Germans are not allowed to turn away from the British, until they fire.
2. The Kriegsmarine can not use evasive action. This is due to the 2 British cruisers that are shadowing the *Bismarck* from the North, hoping to lead the rest of the Royal Navy to her.

**Restrictions imposed on the Royal Navy commanders for historical purposes:** (this information was not known by the Kriegsmarine)

1. The Admiralty will overlook the loss of a ship if the *Bismarck* goes down. The Royal Navy can replace a battleship, hard as that may be, while the Kriegsmarine can not.
2. You can open fire on the Germans before getting positive identification; but, it is considered blind fire and you must allocate at least one ships fire to the *Prinz Eugen*. This is because the British historically opened fire on the *Prinz Eugen*, thinking that the battleship would be following the cruiser, not leading her.

**Restriction imposed on both sides for convention purposes:**

1. Battle Stations can be issued on the first turn, but firing can not be initiated until the second turn after that. This is part of the rules, but I use it in convention games to give novice players 2 turns to learn the maneuver rules, before moving to the firing rules. Less to learn all at once.

0536, 24 May 1941

**British Battle Plan:** VADM Holland decided that he needed to close the distance with the *Bismarck* in order to keep her from escaping. However, he needed to balance that with the potential damage her guns could bring to bear. To that end, he decided to charge in with the *Hood*, using her greater speed, to gain and maintain contact with the enemy. Evasive action was authorized once she was engaged. The *Prince of Wales* would use her more powerful, longer range guns to engage the *Bismarck* from a safer distance, which would also allow her to turn broadside and bring all 10 guns to bear, and use plunging fire against *Bismarck*'s deck plates.

**German Battle Plan:** ADM Lutjens wanted to sink the closest British ship as quickly as possible, and then decide to either break contact with a tactical victory, or close in for the kill of the other British ship.

0538, 24 May 1941 (Turn 1)

**British Orders:** *Hood:* Increase speed to 29 kts and turn toward the German ships. By presenting a narrower target and moving faster, CAPT Kerr hoped to survive long enough for the *Prince of Wales* to cripple the *Bismarck*. *Prince of Wales:* Come hard left to parallel the German fleet, thus bringing the entire primary battery to bear.

**German Orders:** Increase speed to 30 kts, as speed is security. Maintain course and let the British make the first move.

0540, 24 May 1941 (Turn 2)

**British Orders:** *Hood:* Continue to increase speed to 30 kts, and turn into the Germans. *Prince of Wales:* Conduct the "Top Gun" maneuver, by steering just aft of the *Hood*.

**German Orders:** Continue as before. We have now identified the "closest" ship which will receive all our initial attention. (\*\*Game Note: In hindsight, the game director failed to enforce the Optional Formation Speed rule # 11.1.7, which would have forced the Germans to roll 01-25 in order to maintain formation at the *Bismarck*'s top speed. This is unfortunate, as the game director did tell the British about this rule prior to the game, and this may have aided in their decision to split their ships and fight under independent actions\*\*).

0542, 24 May 1941 (Turn 3)

**British Orders:** *Hood:* Continue to increase speed to 31 kts, and make minor corrections to maintain a narrow aspect in reference to the German guns. Primary turrets A and B open fire on the *Prinz Eugen*. *Prince of Wales:* Finish the unorthodox maneuver just in time to unmask the guns and open fire on the *Bismarck*.

**German Orders:** Continue as before. If the British are kind enough to deliver themselves into our arms, who are we to question it. ADM Lutjens orders both ships to open fire on the *Hood*.

**British Gunnery:** At a range of 26,750 yds, the *Hood* is not able to see or hit *Prinz Eugen* with her acquiring rounds. The same holds true for *Prince of Wales* opening volley at 34,500 yds on the *Bismarck*.

**German Gunnery:** Luck is with the Germans. *Hood* just sailed into sight as the *Bismarck*'s fire control parties finalized their fire control solution. Therefore, she did not suffer from the Blind Fire penalty when firing 26,500 yds at *Hood*. Unfortunately, the 8 acquiring rounds still missed. The *Prinz Eugen* also fired at *Hood* from 26,750 yds, thus confusing the spotters due to over-concentration. She also missed.

0544, 24 May 1941 (Turn 4)

**British Orders:** *Hood*: Take evasive action and continue to fire at the *Prinz Eugen*. CAPT Kerr does not want to incur any over-concentration penalty by firing at the *Bismarck*. *Prince of Wales*: Settle into a course paralleling the Germans. VADM Holland likes the way his plan is turning out, if only the *Hood* can evade damage long enough.

**German Orders:** Continue as before. We can see them, they can't see us yet, and the ship closest to us is not even firing at the *Bismarck*, what's not to like about this situation.

**British Gunnery:** The *Hood's* evasive action succeeds in throwing her own gunners off their mark, and she misses *Prinz Eugen* at 25,400 yds. While still well outside of visual range at 32,250 yds, the *Prince of Wales* finds the range to *Bismarck* with 2 rounds. First blood is drawn in impressive fashion. *Prince of Wales* penetrates the armor of C-Turret, causing enough crew casualties to knock her out of action for a few minutes and the loss of a port 2cm Flak mount (DE 115). *Bismarck* also loses 1 primary battery fire control system. She is now down to only one system. The other shell fails to penetrate *Bismarck's* thick hide.

**German Gunnery:** The Germans respond with 2 rounds of their own from the *Bismarck* at 25,100 yds, which impact the *Hood*. CAPT Lindemann even laughs at the British attempt at evasive maneuvers, as he watches his gunners superbly place the first round into *Hood's* bridge (DE143). This round also destroys one of the *Hood's* three secondary battery's fire control systems (DE161). The second round amazingly bounces off, causing only negligible damage.

**German Damage:** Unknown to the British, the *Bismarck* suffered a collapse of a watertight bulkhead which flooded some non-critical spaces below deck (DE610). This reduced her top speed to 28 kts and forced her to allocate one damage control party to preventing the flooding from spreading (effectively reducing her DCR by 1).

0546, 24 May 1941 (Turn 5)

**British Orders:** It has now become personal for CAPT Kerr, who cheated death when the *Bismarck's* 15" shell sailed through his bridge. Despite unnerving the Captain, *Hood* suffered very little meaningful damage. CAPT Kerr continues his drive toward the Germans, while trying to present a most elusive target (presenting a narrow aspect and using evasive maneuvers). *Prince of Wales*: pleased with the results of her gunnery, the CAPT only adjusts course slightly to the left.

**German Orders:** Due to the flooding on *Bismarck*, ADM Lutjens orders the fleet to slow to 28 kts, but continues to pour on the fire against the *Hood*.

**British Gunnery:** The *Hood's* gunners, slightly shaken up by the damage to their ship, squander the advantage they gain from finally watching the *Prinz Eugen* come into full view at 24,250 yds. The *Prince of Wales* though, has found the range on *Bismarck* at 32,100 yds and adds another penetrating hit to her belt. This round is potentially devastating (DE172), as the *Bismarck's* main feedwater pump is hit, and on the verge of seizing. If this happens, the *Bismarck* will lose all propulsion and be dead in the water, at the mercy of the Royal Navy.

**German Gunnery:** Like the *Hood*, *Prinz Eugen* is having difficulty finding her mark. The *Bismarck's* gunners, however, continue their success from 24,000 yds with a penetrating hit on the *Hood's* port secondary turret, rendering it useless (DE110). This also starts a serious fire in the turret's magazine. Five 40mm 2-pdr guns are also destroyed on the port side due to this explosion (DE132). The *Bismarck* also opens up with her secondary guns, but to no avail.

0548, 24 May 1941 (Turn 6)

**British Orders:** CAPT Kerr now has a nagging feeling of de'je'vu, which he can't shake. He is also starting to question the validity of VADM Holland's plan. Yet, as a professional British sailor, he orders the *Hood* to continue the charge, without raising his concerns to the admiral. *Prince of Wales:* Alter course slightly left to maintain the distance between herself and the *Bismarck*.

**German Orders:** CAPT E. Lindemann and ADM Lutjens both breath a sigh of relief when the *Bismarck's* damage control officer reports that the main feedwater pump is continuing to function, and shouldn't fail unless she takes more damage. ADM Lutjens orders the fleet to start coming left to ensure that the full broadside capability of his ships is maintained for as long as possible.

**British Gunnery:** At 23,000 yds, the *Hood* finally gains the range on *Prinz Eugen* and lands one 15" shell which penetrates the port secondary battery (DE106), causing problems in the ammo hoists to the #4 and #6 turrets, reducing their rate of fire. The *Prince of Wales's* excellent gunnery continues as she hits the *Bismarck* again from 31,250 yds, but this time fails to penetrate, doing only superficial damage.

**German Gunnery:** As the *Hood's* crew begins to celebrate their improving gunnery, they are literally bludgeoned by the Germans. The *Prinz Eugen's* gunners take advantage of *Hood* closing to within visual range, and hit with two 8" shells. Amazingly, one of these shells penetrates the superstructure putting the starboard TT mount out of action temporarily, but the damage looks severe (DE131). This also ignites a second fire and traps half the damage control parties in a crew space. Splinters from this round pierce the funnel causing smoke to partially obscure the aft primary fire control stations (DE 148), reducing the *Hood's* maximum speed by 1 kt to 30 kts, and destroying two 40mm 2-pdr guns on the starboard side. Just when things are looking bad, they get worse. The *Bismarck* strikes with almost inhuman accuracy at 23,250 yds, landing four 15" shells and one 6" shell in the *Hood*. The first round destroys the #3 secondary turret, and an additional six 40mm 2-pdr guns (DE132). The second round fails to penetrate the top of X-Turret, but does cause a malfunction in the #7 secondary turret's ammo hoists, reducing the rate of fire for this battery (DE106). The third round penetrates the belt armor and moderately damages the main feedwater pump (DE121). The final round is yet another sniper shot destroying what is remaining of the bridge (DE143). The 6" shell just bounces off *Hood's* armor.

**British Damage:** The initial fire in the secondary magazine of *Hood* is growing, and causes the crew of the #1 secondary turret to abandon their posts as the turret is engulfed in flames (DE517). Other systems are starting to fail on *Hood*, due to the pounding she is receiving. The firing circuits of the forward primary battery are damaged and begin to affect her forward guns rate of fire (DE615). When these circuits failed, they also short-circuited the control mechanisms for three 40mm 2-pdr guns on the port side. She also begins minor flooding which slows the *Hood* to a maximum speed of 29 kts and will require the attention of one damage control party for the duration of the engagement (DE612).

0550, 24 May 1941 (Turn 7)

**British Orders:** Even VADM Holland is beginning to question his judgment as he picks himself up off the deck of the *Hood*. CAPT Kerr is also beginning to believe that he will use up all his luck during this battle, since the *Bismarck* has taken 2 direct shots at him now. *Hood:* due to damage to the bridge is temporarily unable to issue orders, but her speed slows to 29 kts. *Prince of Wales:* turn toward the *Bismarck* slightly in order to decrease the range between them. CAPT Leach is not confident that the *Hood* will last much longer and he must bring more firepower to bear.

**German Orders:** Despite the damage on *Bismarck*, ADM Lutjens is very pleased with the way this engagement is shaping up. The fleet will continue to turn toward the British ships.

**British Gunnery:** The *Hood's* forward ammo hoists are slow to work, and she is only capable of firing one volley at 22,100 yds, which misses the *Prinz Eugen*. The *Prince of Wales's* gunnery is continuing to

deteriorate as the new crew starts to suffer fatigue and they lose the range to *Bismarck*, which increases to 31,600 yds.

**German Gunnery:** The gunnery crews of the *Prinz Eugen* and the *Bismarck* are ecstatic and begin to celebrate. Nothing could survive the onslaught they just witnessed as the *Hood* erupts in flames. They begin to traverse their turrets toward the *Prince of Wales*, only to realize that the *Hood* is continuing to advance toward them. They hastily try to readjust their guns and relay on the *Hood*. All to no avail as their rounds splash harmlessly around her.

#### 0552, 24 May 1941 (Turn 8)

**British Orders:** *Hood*: start coming around to the left to maintain orientation on the Germans. However, the *Hood* begins to slow quickly, as CAPT Kerr is informed that the main feedwater pump just quit. The *Hood* can now only coast toward her adversaries. The only good news is that the smaller fire has been put out. *Prince of Wales*: Continue the slow turn toward the Germans.

**German Orders:** ADM Lutjens is now wondering just how strong the *Hood* is. She took everything the Germans had and still keeps coming. Already moving due south, he decides that that will be close enough to the British, and orders midships steady.

**British Gunnery:** Although the *Hood* was able to push enough ammo through her primary hoists to achieve a full rate of fire, she still is not able to hit the *Prinz Eugen*. The *Prince of Wales* does slightly better and lands one round through the *Bismarck's* deck at 31,900 yds. This round is able to knock the *Bismarck's* main power plant out of action. Effectively though, the *Bismarck* only temporarily loses the use of both her search and fire-control radars.

**German Gunnery:** German gunnery is starting to annoy their captains. After such an amazing set of volleys, they now continue to hit nothing but ocean, even as the range closes to less than 23,000 yds.

**British Damage:** Since the damage control parties are starting to get stretched thin working on the magazine fire and the main feedwater pump, they do not realize there was a small leak in the #1 Boiler Room. That leak just got worse and flooded the entire space (DE612), ensuring that the *Hood* will only be able to attain a maximum speed of 28 kts.

#### 0554, 24 May 1941 (Turn 9)

**British Orders:** Just as VADM Holland is debating whether or not to transfer the flag to *Prince of Wales*, the damage control reports start to improve on *Hood*. Due to an excellent damage control party, the main feedwater pump is working again. Now, if they could just extinguish the magazine fire. CAPT Kerr orders all ahead full, increasing her speed to 25 kts, and brings her around 45° to the right, allowing all primary guns to bear on *Prinz Eugen*. *Prince of Wales*: Continue the turn toward the Germans. The ranges will finally begin to decrease.

**German Orders:** CAPT Lindemann is not pleased when he orders two damage control parties to work one on the main power plant (a party he knows will not be available for anything else) and the other to repair his radars. However, things could be much worse. He needs to get his gunners back into this fight. Since the *Hood* has been able to close the range, the Germans begin a slow turn away to starboard.

**British Gunnery:** Even though the damage control parties on *Hood* are working at top efficiency, the gunnery department is still badly shaken and it shows in their inability to fire more than one volley from the forward guns, which lands short of the 22,500 yds. The aft turrets fair no better. *Prince of Wales* also has no luck with her single volley against the *Bismarck*.

**German Gunnery:** Finally recovering from their premature celebration, both ships are able to hit the *Hood* with one round each. Unfortunately, despite penetrating *Hood's* armor with a 15" shell from 22,750 yds, there is no appreciable damage done. The *Prinz Eugen's* shell harmlessly bounces off from 22,500 yds.

0600, 24 May 1941 (Turn 10)

**British Orders:** Following their success in the machinery spaces, the damage control parties are finally able to extinguish the magazine fire. Things are starting to look up on the *Hood*. *Hood:* Increase speed to 26 kts, but slow the turn as her course is almost paralleling the Germans. *Prince of Wales:* turns slow and steady.

**German Orders:** The damage control parties report that the radars are back in operation, but the question at hand is how much more damage can the *Hood* take? Continue the turn away from the *Hood*.

**British Gunnery:** Having adjusted for the German's turn away from them, both British ships find their mark. The *Hood* hits *Prinz Eugen* with 2 shells at 22,800 yds, only one of which penetrates, as the other sails through her hull. The round that does the most damage severs the bridges communications with the engine room, making it harder for the *Prinz Eugen* to change speed (DE124). The *Prince of Wales* is more successful with her single round which penetrates *Bismarck's* deck from 30,200 yds, damaging the power distribution system (DE153). This knocks the port secondary batteries out of action temporarily, and destroys two 3.7cm guns on the starboard side along with one of their fire control systems for this rapid fire battery.

**German Gunnery:** *Prinz Eugen* has found her target and continues to hit with another 8" shell on the *Hood*, but is unable to penetrate her hide. *Bismarck* continues her cold gunnery streak, missing the *Hood* at 22,900 yds.

**German Damage:** The last round from *Prince of Wales* seems to have damaged the firing circuits of the rear primary battery affecting *Bismarck's* rear guns rate of fire (DE615). When these circuits fail, they also short-circuit the control mechanisms for two 3.7cm Flak guns. Just as the crew finished repairs on the radars, they are knocked out of action, but this time the damage looks permanent. The rounds from the *Hood* also resulted in compartment flooding on the port side of the *Prinz Eugen*, causing her to list to port far enough to render her secondary batteries on that side unable to fire (DE604). Along with the guns, one of her four secondary fire control systems is damaged. The *Prinz Eugen* must assign a damage control party to permanently prevent the spread of flooding. She loses 2 kts of speed down to a maximum of 30 kts and loses the use of one 3.7cm Flak gun and its associated fire control system.

0602, 24 May 1941 (Turn 11)

**British Orders:** *Hood:* Continue to increase speed, attaining 27 kts, but steady course bringing all primary guns to bear. *Prince of Wales:* Slowly continue to decrease the distance to *Bismarck*.

**German Orders:** "We must find a way to hit **and** damage, these British ships. Steady your course, maybe a completely steady platform will increase our skills." ADM Lutjens announced.

**British Gunnery:** *Prince of Wales* seizes on the opportunity presented by *Bismarck*, a steady target and lands 2 rounds at a range of 28,200 yds, however, neither shell penetrates. The *Hood's* crew is still more concerned with their ability to stay afloat, than with inflicting damage, and she misses the *Prinz Eugen*.

**German Gunnery:** *Bismarck* experiences a reduction in her rear turret fire rate due to the damage to her ammo hoists, and is only capable of sending one and a half volleys downrange at 22,500 yds. Neither finds their mark. *Prinz Eugen* continues her successful gunnery with two rounds impacting the *Hood* at 22,400 yds. Although neither round penetrates, they cause enough damage when combined with all the other hits to start showing stress fractures all over the *Hood*. The structural damage to the aft portion of the ship finally places the rear primary turrets X and Y and the #7 secondary turrets out of action (DE617). She also loses 2 more kts of speed, limiting her to a maximum of 26 kts. Two more 40mm 2 pdr guns on the starboard side are rendered out of action, and the fire control systems for all anti-aircraft batteries short-circuit.

0604, 24 May 1941 (Turn 12)

**British Orders:** With her rear primary turrets out of action, there is no reason to present a broadside target and maintain her distance. CAPT Kerr orders the *Hood* to turn 45° to starboard and close with the Germans at maximum speed, 26 kts. *Prince of Wales:* Continue the same 10° turn toward the Germans, also closing the distance.

**German Orders:** German damage control continues to impress their captains as *Bismarck* reports that her secondary batteries are operational again. However, CAPT Lindemann chooses not to use them, due to the additional over concentration penalties his gunners were suffering. To this end, he also orders a change in targets to the *Prince of Wales*. She has been allowed to harass the *Bismarck* for too long unhindered. Maintain course and speed to ensure a stable platform to fire from.

**British Gunnery:** Despite getting the ammo hoists to work again and firing 2 volleys from her forward guns; the *Hood* is not able to hit *Prinz Eugen* at 21,750 yds. *Prince of Wales* suffers the same gunnery results and misses the *Bismarck* from 26,550 yds. However, she has now masked her rear battery, and is only firing the forward 6 guns.

**German Gunnery:** *Prinz Eugen* records the only hit, which fails to penetrate the *Hood's* armor. *Bismarck's* acquiring rounds fall harmlessly into the ocean.

0606, 24 May 1941 (Turn 13)

**British Orders:** *Hood:* Come back to port slightly to an optimum firing angle on the *Prinz Eugen*. *Prince of Wales:* Continue the methodical turn to close with the *Bismarck*.

**German Orders:** Remain at midships steady. "We will either begin to hit these British devils, or sink in the effort," remarks ADM Lutjens.

**British Gunnery:** *Hood* continues to have difficulty hitting *Prinz Eugen*, even though her ammo handling problem seems to be resolved and she has closed the range between them to 21,500 yds. *Prince of Wales* takes advantage of finally seeing the *Bismarck* and being able to spot her rounds as she lands two shells at 24,500 yds. Unfortunately, neither shell penetrates the *Bismarck's* armor. However, one shell landing just aft of the #5 secondary turret does damage to that turret's ammo hoists causing a reduction in its rate of fire (DE106).

**German Gunnery:** *Bismarck* also takes advantage of being able to fire a full broadside at a visible *Prince of Wales*, landing one round on the A-Turret. Unfortunately, *Bismarck* realizes that she is still too far away to penetrate the *Prince of Wales* armor. The *Prinz Eugen's* gunnery crew is ecstatic as they watch four rounds explode down the length of the *Hood*, but none penetrate and seemingly do no damage. However, the continued beating that the *Hood* is taking is having an effect, as the *Hood* loses its primary fire control radar due to power distribution damage, and sees a reduction in her fire fighting capacity (DE605).

**German Damage:** Despite not penetrating the *Bismarck's* armor, the rounds from the *Prince of Wales* start to buckle the *Bismarck's* sleek lines. Structural damage causes the loss of the port secondary battery and the reduction of 2 kts of speed (DE617). The loss of two port side 3.7cm Flak guns is secondary to the loss of all fire control systems to her 3.7cm Flak batteries.

0608, 24 May 1941 (Turn 14)

**British Orders:** "Sir, the *Bismarck* has trained her guns on the *Prince of Wales*." "Finally," CAPT Kerr exclaims, "Cease evasive maneuvers, and close with the Germans at all possible speed." *Hood's* orders are now set. She wants to finish off the *Prinz Eugen* quickly, so both British ships can get to the business of sinking the *Bismarck*. *Prince of Wales:* Continue to turn and close.

**German Orders:** Due to the damage to *Bismarck*, ADM Lutjens orders independent action for the German ships, and sends a message to the *Prinz Eugen* to begin screening the *Bismarck*, with smoke if possible. *Bismarck's* damage reduces her speed to 26 kts, but she does not turn away from her attackers. She is still very much in this fight. *Prinz Eugen:* maintain 28 kts, but turn 10° to port in order to position herself in front of the *Bismarck*.

**British Gunnery:** *Hood's* ammo hoists suddenly freeze, preventing any ammo from arriving at the guns for several minutes, just as she closes to less than 20,000 yds. *Prince of Wales* unleashes two volleys at 22,000 yds achieving one hit, which fails to penetrate.

**German Gunnery:** The German gunners need to stop celebrating. The *Prinz Eugen* follows a great round of volleys with an absolutely useless round, missing with all shells. The *Bismarck*, suffering from a damaged ammo hoist, fires only a single volley with her rear battery. But the forward battery is capable of a full rate of fire, which hits the *Prince of Wales* with one round, only to bounce off again.

0610, 24 May 1941 (Turn 15)

**British Orders:** CAPT Kerr has now made his bed; it is time to lie in it. *Hood:* Continue all ahead midships steady. *Prince of Wales:* Anticipating that the *Bismarck* is about to break contact, CAPT Leach decides to get as many guns back into the fight as possible, while still closing the distance to *Bismarck*. He orders an emergency turn to starboard.

**German Orders:** *Bismarck:* Knowing that she is hurt and the *Prince of Wales* is relatively undamaged, prudence dictates that she break contact to fight another day. CAPT Lindemann orders a 30° turn away from the British ships, placing the *Prinz Eugen* between herself and the *Hood*. *Prinz Eugen:* Having cleared the *Bismarck's* stern and not wanting to close with the British ships any more than is necessary; CAPT Brinkmann orders a midships steady course.

**British Gunnery:** Temporarily repairing the ammo hoists, the *Hood* is able to fire 2 full volleys from her forward turrets. Of eight rounds traveling 18,250 yds, two hit the *Prinz Eugen*. Despite firing Semi-armor piercing rounds, one of them passes through the *Prinz Eugen* inflicting minimal damage, but the other penetrates the deck near the #1 Torpedo Tube mount damaging its control mechanism (DE127). This round also damaged the *Prinz Eugen's* smoke generating capability. However, the two things that concern CAPT Brinkmann the most are the moderate fire that started on the starboard side of his ship and the collapse of a watertight bulkhead, which caused enough flooding to affect his ships speed (DE610). The *Prinz Eugen* is reduced to a maximum speed of 28 kts. Although closing the distance quickly to 21,100 yds and firing 3 volleys, the *Prince of Wales* is unable to achieve an effective fire solution and misses the *Bismarck*.

**German Gunnery:** *Prinz Eugen* returns the *Hood's* fire with one round out of sixteen, which bounces off the *Hood's* armor, causing only superficial damage. *Bismarck* is only able to fire her front guns due to ammo problems with the rear turrets, and therefore misses the *Prince of Wales*.

0612, 24 May 1941 (Turn 16)

**British Orders:** Both the *Hood* and *Prince of Wales* make minor steering corrections in order to achieve a more favorable firing solution.

**German Orders:** *Bismarck* will only get one last chance to seriously damage the *Prince of Wales* and this is it. CAPT Lindemann orders a midships steady course in the attempt to fire her last full broadside. CAPT Brinkmann now clear to turn away from the British and still be in a position to protect the *Bismarck* orders the *Prinz Eugen* to begin a turn to starboard and lay smoke and prepare to launch torpedoes. ADM Lutjens realizes that he is in a fight to save the *Bismarck*.

**British Gunnery:** Despite closing the range to only 16,700 yds and firing 3 volleys from her forward guns, the *Hood* is unable to hit the *Prinz Eugen*. The *Prince of Wales* is not so unfortunate. Finally, unmasking her rear turret, she fires three volleys of 10 rounds 20,900 yds, hitting the *Bismarck* 3 times. *Prince of Wales* is finding the *Bismarck*'s armor thicker than she expected as only one round penetrates the belt mid armor, moderately damaging one engine room (DE117). Splintering from the other two rounds causes some flooding and structural damage to an already wounded ship (DE606). This damage limits her turning ability to 22.5° and reduces her speed by another 2 kts, and puts the C-Turret permanently out of action. This could be the turning point, as *Bismarck* loses the use of 25% of its big guns and is slowed to a maximum speed of 20 kts.

**German Gunnery:** Don't count the Germans out just yet. They may be wounded, but like any wounded animal they lash out ferociously. The German gunners are finally able to put everything together and achieve 4 hits on the *Hood* from the *Prinz Eugen* and 3 hits on the *Prince of Wales* from the *Bismarck*. The *Prinz Eugen* has now moved in close enough to penetrate some of the *Hood*'s armor, and she does with two of her four shells that hit the *Hood*. The first hits the port torpedo tube, knocking it out of action (DE130). She also loses her smoke generators, but this is trivial. The second round seriously damages the *Hood*'s rudder (DE134). This damage makes the *Hood* sluggish to commands to change direction and could ultimately take her out of the fight, especially if the Germans are attempting to disengage. *Bismarck* makes good on her parting volley. All three rounds penetrate with the first being her signature sniper shot, destroying the bridge of the *Prince of Wales* (DE140). CAPT Leach survives the explosion that also destroys one of his two primary fire control systems (DE160). The second round explodes deep within the engine spaces, destroying one engine room and one boiler room (DE117) and causing enough casualties to further reduce the *Prince of Wales*' maximum speed another 2 kts (DE116) to a total of 23 kts. The final round further reduces her command and control ability by destroying the signal bridge (DE140). This round also knocks out the primary fire control radar. The combination of all this damage causes a massive shipboard fire near one of her primary magazines. The Germans have now evened the odds.

0614, 24 May 1941 (Turn 17)

**British Orders:** VADM Holland is now committed to sinking the *Bismarck* before she gets away, but the fire on *Prince of Wales* is very worrisome. *Hood*: Despite a sluggish wheel, she is capable of steering a reasonably straight course. *Prince of Wales*: Make a minor steering correction, and seek revenge.

**German Orders:** Maybe there is still hope of destroying these British after all. *Bismarck*: Straighten out the course for another shot at the *Prince of Wales*. *Prinz Eugen*: Having just begun a smoke screen which will provide the *Bismarck* more protection in a few minutes; and launch 6 torpedoes toward the British to keep them at bay. Three fish are fired in a standard pattern with a speed of 30 kts and a range of 15,300 yds at 90°, and three are fired in a standard pattern with a speed of 30 kts and a range of 15,300 yds at 80°. The good news is despite being damaged, the smoke generators are working. The bad news for CAPT Brinkmann is that the fire onboard his ship is getting worse and spreading toward the bow.

**British Gunnery:** The British gunners are thoroughly shaken from the beatings they just received, and are unable to achieve any hits.

**German Gunnery:** As seems to be the case with the German gunners, they celebrate their victories prematurely. The *Bismarck's* crew completely misses the large flaming target of the *Prince of Wales* at 21,250 yds. The *Prinz Eugen* is the only ship capable of attaining a single hit at 15,600 yds. Amazingly it penetrates, destroying one of the *Hood's* two primary fire control systems.

**British Damage:** Despite responding quickly to the *Prince of Wales's* shipboard fire, the damage control parties are having a hard time controlling the blaze.

**German Damage:** The fire aboard *Prinz Eugen* causes structural damage in the forward primary turrets rendering them out of action (DE607).

0616, 24 May 1941 (Turn 18)

**British Orders:** To avoid the inbound torpedoes, *Hood* and *Prince of Wales* turn toward the Germans in an attempt to parallel the incoming threat. Besides, this should help close the range to the slowing *Bismarck*.

**German Orders:** ADM Lutjens decides that it is time to put at much distance and smoke between the *Bismarck* and the British ships. *Bismarck:* Conduct an emergency turn to starboard and maintain the maximum speed of 24 kts. This speed was made possible by the extraordinary work of the damage control parties in repairing the damage to the engine room. *Prinz Eugen:* Having accomplished the mission of screening the *Bismarck*, CAPT Brinkmann wishes to put some distance and smoke between him and the British ships. Hard turn to starboard. Thankfully, the smoke generators continue to function.

**British Gunnery:** The turn executed by the *Hood* must have thrown her gunners off. For the sixth straight volley, she is unable to hit the *Prinz Eugen*, which is still not protected by the smokescreen at 15,100 yds. The *Prince of Wales*, knowing that within a few minutes, the *Bismarck* will be hidden by smoke, realizes that this is possibly her last chance for revenge. Her crew rises to the occasion and lands 4 rounds at a range of 22,000 yds. Unfortunately, only one of the rounds penetrates (by the slimmest margin, 13.5" of penetration and 13.4" of armor on the barbette). This round only damages some crew spaces, but does destroy two 2cm Flak guns on the port side.

**German Gunnery:** German gunnery had again gone cold. The Kriegsmarine was definitely going to have to rethink its gunnery training. No hits were achieved.

**British Damage:** Now the fire aboard *Prince of Wales* was not only worrisome, but down right frightening. The best efforts of the damage control parties were not even able to contain it and it expanded to other portions of the ship.

**German Damage:** The cumulating damage on *Bismarck* was finally taking its toll, as steam leaks were beginning to appear in the engine spaces (DE611), causing an additional loss of power and 2 more kts of maximum speed, bringing her back to 22 kts.

0618, 24 May 1941 (Turn 19)

**British Orders:** VADM Holland is very concerned about the *Prince of Wales's* fire. From his vantage point aboard the *Hood*, the entire upper deck of the *Prince of Wales* is engulfed in flames. However, in order to protect his ships, he continues the turn toward the point at which the *Prinz Eugen* launched her torpedoes.

**German Orders:** *Bismarck* is now headed away from the British ships and will be covered by the *Prinz Eugen's* smoke in just a few seconds. CAPT Lindemann orders the *Bismarck* to steady her course in order to put as much distance between her and the British ships. *Prinz Eugen:* continue to come about in order to parallel the *Bismarck's* course, and lay as much covering smoke as possible.

**British Damage:** The fire aboard *Prince of Wales* is now raging out of control. Just as CAPT Leach is contemplating issuing an order to abandon ship, he is consumed in a great explosion, which raises his ship out of the water, breaking her back. In only a matter of seconds, the *Prince of Wales* disappears below the waves.

**British Gunnery:** The explosion aboard *Prince of Wales* distracts the gunners on the *Hood*, and they miss the *Prinz Eugen*.

**German Gunnery:** The same is true for the German gunners, who also miss their targets.

0620, 24 May 1941 (Turn 20)

**British Orders:** VADM Holland now decides to break contact with the *Hood*, which has been severely damaged. His plan of using the *Hood* as the sacrificial lamb almost worked, and would have worked if it hadn't been for an unlucky magazine fire aboard the *Prince of Wales*.

**German Orders:** The Germans are also happy to break contact at this point. ADM Lutjens will celebrate the sinking of the *Prince of Wales* once his ships are safe. That will not be for a long time, since both are moderately damaged. There is still quite some distance to the French coast; and, the entire Royal Navy will now be out for revenge.

#### **Final Results:**

**Minor German Tactical Victory:** The engagement was a draw leaning toward the British until the *Prince of Wales's* magazine exploded

**Minor British Strategic Victory:** *Bismarck* and *Prinz Eugen* were so damaged that the Royal Navy would be sure to track them down, but at the cost of at least one battleship, *Prince of Wales*.