Info about the "2nd Fleet Upgraded" module for VASSAL

This module is Michel Boucher's 2nd Fleet module with an added set of counters upgraded to 3rd Fleet standards and some other enhancements. The module also contains the expansion from AH's "General" magazine adding French forces, some more UK forces and a handful more of Soviet subs. The counters exist both as original and as upgraded to 3rd Fleet standards. Notice: The French counters have been made with a "Tricolor" pattern instead of the original black letters on dark blue. The main map is the expansion map with the Bay of Biscay Sea Zone.

New Module Functions

- Added "Solitaire" player. Works basically the same as "Moderator", but easier to understand for people unfamiliar with the "Moderator" function.
- Added "Force Pool" for each side.
- Added the extended submarine detection table from an article by Thomas Dworschak in AH's "General" magazine, Vol. 27, #2. Most players probably wish to use the original table, but now at least the option is available.

Counters

All upgraded counters are taken from the 2nd Fleet Cyberboard module by Glenn Rowley. However, I have made alterations to some of them. One example is the "CR" (convoy) units for both sides. They have been equipped with a damaged side like in 5th and 3rd Fleet and also have a "Mask" trait, placing an "unloaded" counter on them. The reason behind this is that a play-test of the "Battle of the Gap" scenario (scenario 8) using the upgraded counters saw a Soviet victory that was like decisive x 2, or something. An important part of that result was that all NATO CRs, save one or two, were sunk. I don't think that can be explained by luck or play alone, so I decided to make the CRs a bit harder to kill. The Soviet firepower is, after all, quite enhanced in the later games in the series with fast and sea-skimming SSMs as well as a general increase in SSM values. The idea is that damaged CRs reaching objective hexes earn half the scenario defined VPs for reaching an objective hex.

You will also notice something new with the Soviet submarine-counters. Most subs have circled damage values. Some have an X in place of the N in the lower right corner. And the Oscars have a black underline of the silhouettes. All this is to allow for the optional rules regarding Soviet subs given by Dworschak in the before mentioned "General" issue.

Of new counters, I can mention "SAM Site Damage" (Dworschak), "Optional Base Damage" (Dworschak) and various concealment counters to suit everyone's taste. I have also added an **"Action Arrow".** The Action Arrow is just that, a counter with an arrow. It can be rotated to point towards any hexside. Use it to point toward the action instead of using time to zoom in and out to be able to read the small hexnumbers. This is one of Ian's great ideas and he has made the counter image.

Moving on to the menus on the new counters, they have many new functions. I'll give a briefing of the menus based on unit class below. Note that these new traits are found only on the upgraded counters.

SURFACE UNITS

Invisible
Makes the unit invisible to the opponent (Facilitating the use of concealment counters until the units are detected per the detection rules)
Flip
Flips the unit to its damaged side
Mark Moved
Tags the unit as moved
Damage
Records step damage as per the "General" article by Dworschak
Logistics
Brings up a property sheet to record the use of fuel and ammo, greatly easing the use of the logistics rules. Just tic off as you go with any agreeable symbol (X or I are good candidates)
Out of Supply
Adds a out of supply marker to the unit. The marker is multi leveled and can be flipped to show out of fuel, out of ammo, out of fuel & ammo and finally a marker for replenishing vessels.
Delete

SUBMARINE UNITS

Invisible
Deep Mode
Adds a small "Deep Sub" icon to the unit.
Flip
Detected
Adds a "Local Detection"-marker to the unit. The marker can be flipped to the "Strategic Detection" side. This function is not added to the surface units as these will mostly operate in Task Groups or Task Forces. So the detection-function has instead been added to the TF/TG counters.
Mark Moved
Damage
Logistics
Out of Supply
Delete

AIR UNITS

Invisible
Flip
Cruise missiles
Added to planes able to launch CMs. Works just like the logistics function on surface and sub units. However, as it records only one type of ammo, I chose to name it "Cruise Missiles" instead of "Logistics".
Mark Moved
High Mission
Adds a "High Mission Profile"-marker
Mission Range
Adds an "Extended Range"-marker that can be flipped to show a "Reduced Range"-marker
AA Refuel
Adds an "AA Refueling"-marker that can be flipped to show an "AA Refueling Done"-marker
Delete

NEW FUNCTION ON CAP-COUNTERS
CAP Fired
Adds a marker showing the CAP has fired once. Flip the CAP Fired marker and it shows CAP Fired 2+ times.

NEW FUNCTIONS ON TF/TG-COUNTERS
Mark Moved
Detected
Adds a detection-marker.

SOME CLOSING COMMENTS
The upgraded counters have been playtested only once, playing scenario 8. And then with the, above mentioned, devastating Soviet victory. We should have done a scenario or two more, but due to us doing the other, new modules, we decided that we'll leave it up to the players themselves to figure out whether the scenarios are balanced or not using the upgraded counters. After all, my intention with the upgrade was only to provide players with the option of using 3rd Fleet-standard playing pieces, not to remake the scenarios.

I also urge people to try playing with some or all of the rules from Thomas Dworschak's articles in "The General" if they have access to that one (I can help you with that). He has quite a few good ideas. My highest recommendations are:

- Concealment Counters & "Dummy Subs". This certainly makes the use of submarines more realistic in my opinion. It kind of brings back the power to the subs.
- Step Damage on surface units. Ships take damage point by point rather than only when the result equals half or full damage value (damage can also be repaired). The reasoning is that several small hits also do damage, though that damage may be repaired to some extent. I feel that this rule is more realistic, but it does make life harder for the US carriers…
- Catastrophic damage on submarines. Submarines run the risk of a breach in the pressure hull when hit hard enough to be damaged. A more likely fate for allied subs than Soviet ones due to the Soviet double hull principle.
- Special Soviet submarine technology. Clusterguard, Titanium hull and large spacing between hulls ("Oscars" only).
- The "one third"-rule regarding damage to submarines (necessitated by the fact that many Soviet subs were unable to damage the US "Seawolf"-class in the later games. A rather unrealistic effect.

CREDITS

Some people deserve extra thanks here because without them this module would not have been made, at least not by me.

Michel Boucher: For creating the 2nd Fleet module and giving useful advice during the module building.

Glenn Rowley: For creating the 5th Fleet Cyberboard gamebox from which I have borrowed the counters as well as the map.

Don Holt: For giving me the initial kick in the butt by showing me the basics of module editing and building in Vassal.

"jofclark": For building the existing 7th Fleet module and thus showing me how to facilitate in-game logistics recording.

Ian Cooper: For being my play test partner, doing the 3rd and 7th Fleet modules and bringing along some great ideas.

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