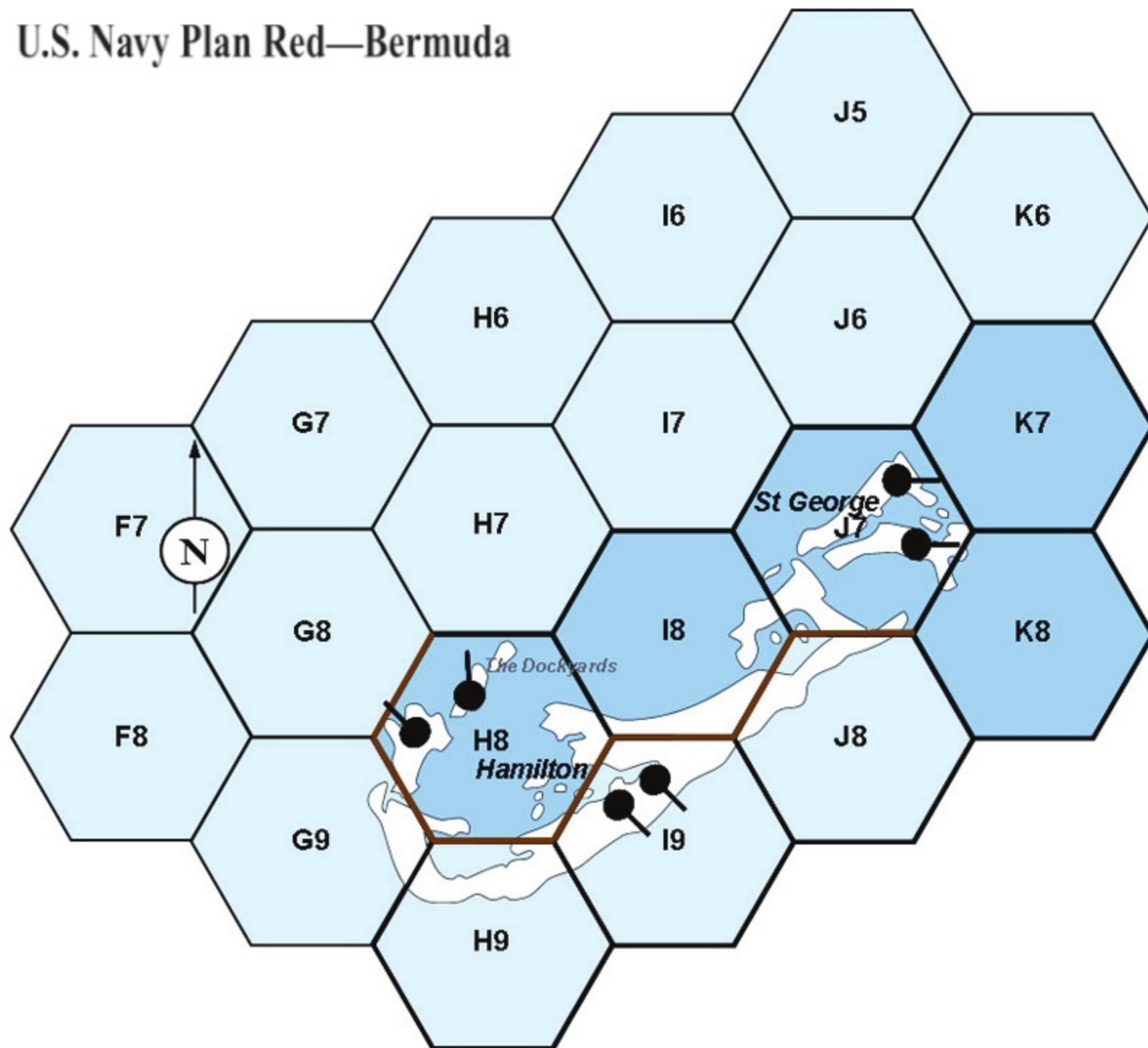


U.S. Navy Plan Red—Bermuda



Fortress Bermuda
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In Great War at Sea: U.S. Navy Plan Red, Bermuda is the target of an American invasion in Scenario 4, "Rocky Outpost". Bermuda is certainly rocky, and it can be considered an outpost, of sorts. But from the 1860s to the time of the Great War, Bermuda was also known as the "Gibraltar of the West." In large part this was due to the fact that Bermuda was one of the most heavily fortified islands in the British Empire, or indeed of any power, relative to its geographic size.

Over the course of its history, Bermuda has been the site of more than 100 forts or fortifications. Most of these fortifications were in the form of fixed sea-facing batteries, which protected the very restricted channels into Bermuda's two main harbors. Interestingly, these batteries were erected to protect Bermuda from American invasion, which was deemed a real possibility during the post-Civil War era to 1898, and not formally discounted until 1937.

Bermuda's forts were modernized and up-gunned from 1865-1898, when 12 forts sported some 87 guns: 47 x 64-pdr, 10 x 9-inch, 23 x 10-inch, 5 x 11-inch and 2 x 12.5-inch guns (all rifled muzzle-loaders). With the perfection of breech-loading guns at the turn of the century, and the simultaneous reduction in tensions between the U.S. and Great Britain, the number of forts and batteries decreased from 1898 through 1910. By this time, there were just six active forts with only 22 guns: 2 x 12-pdr quick-firing, 6 x 4.7-inch quick-firing, 10 x 6-inch and 4 x 9.2-inch. As the focus of British attention fell more and more on Germany, the strategic significance of Bermuda dropped precipitously, such that by 1913 only eight guns of three forts remained to defend the island.

Bermuda in 1940.

The last period of fortification on Bermuda came during the Second World War. Ironically, the Americans undertook this effort, installing something like 12 fixed guns in six batteries across the island (by this time, the British only had one battery of 6-inch guns left, and during the war installed only two more guns). From 1939 to 1944, the emplacements supported 4 x 6-inch (GB), 4 x 155mm, 4 x 6-inch (US), and 2 x 8-inch (ex-railway guns). Added to the defenses were four 105mm (non-fixed) howitzers and numerous light anti-aircraft guns to protect the seaplane base and naval air stations built by the U.S. after 1940. The 105mm guns were intended to provide artillery support to ground troops in the event of an invasion, since all other batteries were in seaward-facing emplacements.

The real strength of the Bermuda batteries was not in their ability to engage enemy warships at long range (some of these guns had the ability to fire at up to 27,000 yards), but to guard the only two passages through the extremely treacherous reefs surrounding the island and into the main harbors (the unnavigable reefs extend from 1 to 2 nautical miles on the south and eastern sides of the island to over 10 nautical miles on the north and western sides). The long (4 nautical miles into Hamilton's port, or 17 nautical miles into St. George's harbor, site of the Royal Navy dockyards), restricted channels meant that enemy vessels would have to engage in a substantial pre-invasion bombardment (and hopefully knock out all defending batteries) or attempt to run past the guns at something close to point-blank range.

Neither scenario posed an easy proposition to a potential invader. Indeed, once ashore, an enemy then faced the prospect of fighting against an opponent on very good defensive terrain, with many small caves and rocky outcrops, not to mention the dozens of tiny islets scattered throughout the island's harbors. While not impregnable by any means, any attack on the island would require significant naval and ground assets to be successful.

American gun crews occupy Bermuda, 1940.

In U.S. Navy Plan Red, Bermuda is not explicitly depicted with any significant defenses; only a preparatory bombardment is needed to silence the coastal batteries. In part this is due to the historical fact that by 1921 Bermuda's defenses had been denuded to only two 6-inch guns. However, what would have happened if Britain had attempted to reinforce the island and add additional guns to its defenses, approaching something close to the status around 1910?

Since the British had long expected a U.S. invasion of the island, permanent emplacements existed across the island in over a dozen masonry forts and protected positions. This would have allowed a relatively quick process of adding guns. Assuming at a minimum that such reinforcement would resemble the WWII armament, 16 guns would represent a respectable defense.

As a variant, any invasion of Bermuda must occur on the tactical map. Use the tactical map overlay for the island. Bermuda has three coastal forts, one with two secondary and one tertiary (H8), one with one secondary and one tertiary (I9), and a third with one primary, three secondary and two tertiary (J7). All are protected by heavy armor, and gain a fire +1 modifier in addition to all other modifiers.

Movement on the tactical map overlay of the island is highly restricted: All ships attempting to move in coastal hexes outside the marked navigation channels (K7, K8, J7, I8, H8) will be grounded on a die roll of 2 through 6. American ships ground on a die roll of 5 or 6 in the marked navigation channels. No more than two ships (four if DD or smaller) may move through the marked channels per impulse without penalty; for each additional two (or four if DD or smaller), add +1 to the grounding die roll. Ships may move up to speed 1+ in the marked navigation channels without penalty. For each additional speed increment above 1+ (2, 2+, 3, etc.), add +1 to the grounding die roll.

Minefields may be placed in any hex of the tactical map, up to a maximum of one per hex.

The port of St. George (J7) may only hold three capital ships or six non-capital ships. The Port of Hamilton and The Dockyards (H8) may hold up to six capital ships and 12 non-capital ships. Transports count as capital ships for purposes of this rule. Only two transports may unload in each of these hexes at a time. Transports may not unload in any hex except these two ports (J7, H8).