

THEY COME UNSEEN (Osprey Games)

A compilation by the designer of FAQs concerning the rules.

This file is a compilation by the designer of questions from the BoardGameGeek forum concerning the rules for They Come Unseen and his answers in each case. The Q&A have been collated for the relevant sections of the rule book and then listed in order as they appear in the rule book and with page number references. *(Some original Q & A have been edited in the interests of clarity. Some Q & A appear more than once if they relate to more than one section of the rule book).*

(Version 1; subsequent versions will be compiled and posted as necessary).

SETUP

(Rules page 4)

Control panel starting levels

Q It never says what the starting fuel level of the Soviet Destroyers is.

A At game start all units are fully fuelled and fully armed:

Destroyers with 100% fuel & 3 salvoes of mortar bombs each

Submarines with 20 units of battery [=100%] and one load of mines each.

Weather setup

(Rules pages 4 & 14)

Q Why are there two ways shown to setup the weather?

Rules page 4 - Setup: 8. "Randomly draw an Ice-Station Card. Its number dictates the weather level in the **Western** Sea".

Rules page 14 - Weather: "At the start of the game the Storm Level in the **Eastern** Sea is set at random by drawing a Station Card".

A The two setup options offered for the weather are slightly different in their effect. If the card draw is used to set 'West' (p.4) it will give a succession of single storms that build from the west and sweep progressively through the three sea areas. Setting 'East' (p.14) gives a succession of individual storms in each sea area. Try both for a bit of variety but either way the key to success is to keep a very close eye on the weather and make your plans for the forecast conditions as many turns ahead as you can!

THE BOARD

(Rules page 6)

Placement of Playing Pieces (Rules pages 3, 4 & 6)

Q Placing the sub tokens on the main board is only mentioned in the Objectives and Setup sections. The Objectives section is the only place that actually says that when you are at periscope depth/surface/0 ft you put the sub token on the main board. I missed this in my initial read through, and then was confused because the rest of the rules didn't mention ever placing the subs on the main board.

A The Main board is the surface of the Barents Sea and therefore a submarine on the surface and a submarine at periscope depth will both appear on the board from time to time. So, in the respect that the Main board is used for both conditions, 'surface' and 'periscope depth' are interchangeable but the conditions are of course different as you have identified.

When I play I place the submarine pieces on the Main board when on the surface in an ice-station (and in the two grey game start squares of course). When a boat is at periscope depth I use a Datum token to indicate the periscope and snort masts protruding above the surface and leave the submarine piece on the Deep board to be moved to 'catch up' with the Datum piece movement when the submarine returns to the depths. Some players like to play a hybrid during a snort with the datum token resting on top of the submarine piece just to clarify what's happening (i.e. not just randomly moving the datum!) which is of course absolutely fine.

Q Can ship tokens overlap, where the front of one token overlaps the front/middle/back of another token?

A Yes they can overlap in this way because the central part of a token marks the square that a vessel is occupying and the rest is decorative; the central parts are coloured and very distinct compared to the decorative sections so it is clear which square a piece is actually occupying. Another vessel can pass through or land on a square that the decorative section of another piece is covering.

Q Can a submarine approach, say, Ice-Station Alfa, diagonally, from the South West, skirting the two land squares to the North West?

A It's difficult answering your question because the move as you describe it is itself open to interpretation without seeing exactly what you mean and so perhaps discussing the land/sea interfaces on the board in general will help.

I will start by stating that the final square moved into ALFA, BRAVO, CHARLIE and ECHO must be orthogonal and not diagonal (for DELTA and FOXTROT a diagonal move is the only logical one anyway); when you look at the board the reason for this advice should be clear and that sort of sets the scene and if you apply this line of thinking to other squares close to land you shouldn't go far wrong.

Players can't "cut the corner" with their vessels unless there is "clear water" and they should look at the board and ask themselves "does the intended move look right for a ship or submarine moving close to land in the square(s) in question; is there a sufficient area of 'sea' drawn on a square to make its use by a vessel sensible or for a diagonal movement at the intersection of the squares to be realistic?"

While the board has been drawn to make such movement limitations as obvious as possible some players may want to agree 'house' rules.

Q The rules say that when snorting the subs are visible on the main board. Necessary for gameplay. Additionally, when attacking an Ice Station the subs surface in the harbour. Do the actual sub counters get placed on the main board, or just the datum marker? I would say that in a harbour, the actual sub counter should be used. However, a snorting move out at sea should maybe use the datum for all that move. If the actual sub counters are used, is it then the responsibility of the Soviet player to place the datum marker on the last (surfaced/snorting) square of the sub before it dives? This might lead to a situation of the Soviet player forgetting to place the datum marker and then resorting to even more guess work.

A This really is a matter of personal choice. I play as you suggest with a submarine piece appearing in an ice-station and I use the datum token during a snort - some like to play a hybrid with the datum token resting on top of the submarine piece during a snort just to clarify what's happening (i.e. not randomly moving the datum!), which is of course absolutely fine. The game plays best if the NATO player snorting places the datum piece at

the end of the charging phase. The Soviet players are always at liberty to move the datum pieces if they have an idea about a submarine's position, most usually after a successful search or on receiving 'Sonar watch' declarations by NATO.

NATO ACTIONS

Movement

(Rules page 8)

Periscope Depth & Surfaced

Q Periscope depth and 'surface' seem to be used interchangeably. I was confused as it wasn't clear that periscope depth was the same as sitting on the surface where everyone can see you. (I'm thinking back to the Hunt for Red October movie where they're below the surface but send up the periscope to scout around). It sounds like the depth of the water of 0 feet on the dial is both surface depth and periscope depth?

A Yes, for simplicity when at periscope depth or on the surface players should move the gauge to zero to record this movement away from the other points on the depth gauge: 200/400/600 feet. (*Submarine depth gauges display "keel depth" because the depth sensor is in the keel. In real life therefore periscope depth for a diesel submarine would be around 50-60 feet, depending on the class, and on the surface a depth reading of about 20 feet would be shown*). I thought that including this level of detail would be unnecessarily complicated for the game and would lead to confusion about how many squares should be moved when moving back to 200 feet from the surface or from periscope depth; in both cases it is a move of one square.

The Main board is the surface of the Barents Sea and therefore a submarine on the surface and a submarine at periscope depth will both appear on the board from time to time. So, in the respect that the Main board is used for both conditions, 'surface' and 'periscope depth' are interchangeable but the conditions are of course different as you have identified.

When I play I place the submarine pieces on the Main board when on the surface in an ice-station (and in the two grey game start squares of course). When a boat is at periscope depth I use a Datum token to indicate the periscope and snort masts protruding above the surface and leave the submarine piece on the Deep board to be moved to 'catch up' with the Datum piece movement when the submarine returns to the depths. Some players like to play a hybrid during a snort with the datum token resting on top of the submarine piece just to clarify what's happening (i.e. not just randomly moving the datum!) which is of course absolutely fine.

Changing Depth

Q It says that the subs can only change depth up/down 200ft per square, does that mean if a sub is at 600 ft on the edge between deep and shallow water, it can't move one space directly into shallow water since that would require a change of 400 ft.? If so, then to make that move the sub would have to move 1 space along the border of the shallow/deep water, staying deep but moving up to 400 ft, and then move diagonally to where they originally wanted to go and changing depth to 200ft.

A You are correct.

Q Depth Movement up or down only occurs while moving forward or backwards. What does forwards or backwards mean? Since the sub can move in any direction, wouldn't every direction be considered forward/backward? The front/back of the token are said to be

purely decorative so it wasn't clear if I am supposed to take into account the orientation of the token when determining if I am moving forward/backward. If I have to take the orientation of my sub into account, does it cost any movement point to change the orientation of the last space I enter? Meaning if I come in east/west can I orient it north/south for free. Is diagonally considered forward/backward?

- A The use of 'forwards and backwards' here is just to reinforce the fact that a submarine has to move one square, which can be in any direction, to change depth i.e. the submarines don't move vertically (the only exception being if a submarine runs out of battery power completely when it rises vertically to the surface - you don't want to be doing this!). There is no cost to changing the orientation of the piece but during gameplay I doubt you will be concerned about its orientation because the decoration on the pieces is such that it doesn't matter.

Snorting (battery charging)

(Rules page 8)

- Q Am I only allowed to do one Snort per turn/per sub? The movement rules say I can move and then have the option of ONE action (snorting/laying mines/attack station), but thought I would clarify the following scenario isn't allowed: I'm in deep water and move to periscope depth, then move 2 squares, it says I MAY move up to 3 additional squares, but I don't, and so then decide to do a second snort of moving 2 spaces in one direction to fully charge my batteries.

- A A submarine may only conduct one snort per turn. The snort will always end a move and as such it can be part of longer move if deep water is involved throughout and as long as the total move doesn't exceed 14 squares. Note the Snorting rules which say: "The snort movement counts towards the submarine's maximum move distance. As such, it takes up a submarine's entire movement allowance in shallow water". The scenario you suggest isn't allowed.

- Q After moving the 2 spaces in a straight line, must the optional movement of up to 3 spaces be in only one direction? Could I move 2 spaces in one direction and then the 3rd in a different direction?

- A Absolutely, doubling back can be a good tactic. You might also decide that you won't use the full 3 spaces - being one square out in the Soviet's calculations can save the day. Note the Snorting rules which say: "They may then move a maximum of three squares in any direction, changing depth as allowed by their location".

- Q Does the 2 movement in one direction cost me 2 units of battery, or any units of battery? Does the optional 3 spaces of movement after the snort cost me any battery? Or do I simply have to have at least 1 unit of battery when I'm at periscope depth, then I move my two spaces, increase my available battery by 10, and then optionally move up to 3 spaces, keeping my battery the same.

- A To snort:
- you must move to periscope depth and have at least 1 unit of battery power left when you appear on the Main board (*to run auxiliary machinery and so on*) - this part of the move costs units of battery power.
 - move 2 spaces in a straight line, including diagonally (this does not cost units of battery power because the battery is being charged) and then increase the battery meter by 10 units (but never to exceed the maximum gauge level of 20 units)
 - move up to 3 spaces in any direction changing depth as desired - this part of the move costs units of battery power.

So a snorting move uses and provides battery units giving a net gain in battery power overall.

Q I'm only paying for movement with battery for squares I move as part of my movement but not for squares I move as part of a snort? If I have to pay for the snort then I would get battery and then have to immediately reduce my battery by 2?

A Snort: During a snort move battery units are expended in two sections of the move: getting to periscope depth to start the snort and when moving away at the end (up to 3 squares). The third (middle) element of the move "continuing at periscope depth for two more squares in a straight line" is when the battery is being charged and battery units are gained after which "This increases their available battery by 10 units".

Running Out Of Battery (Rules page 8)

Q Running out of battery means that my current turn is over and my next turn I can't do anything, correct?

A If you have been submerged so long that your battery capacity gets to zero you must rise vertically to the surface (Main board) and sit there ... and expect the worst! The submarine remains on the surface until its next turn in order to gain 5 units of battery power. If you manage to survive without being rammed you get to dive at the next turn. I can't stress enough how much this situation should be avoided!

Laying Mines (Rules page 9)

Q Is the entire minefield required to be in shallow water, or can any part of it be in deep water? If so, then I can only lay mines if I start in shallow water.

A Note in the 'Laying Mines' rule that it says: "Minefields may be only laid in water which is 250 feet deep, and may not be placed diagonally". To function the minefields need to be laid in areas with a water depth of 250 feet. If you decide to lay the minefield in a way that some of the squares covered by the minefield piece are in deep water, a vessel passing over the squares in deep water will not activate that particular part of the minefield so that section of the minefield would be wasted.

SOVIET ACTIONS

Movement (Rules page 10)

Q Since an action splits your movement, and you pay for each part independently (which may result in using more fuel than if you just move the whole distance at once), a move, Sonar Search, move, Ram, and then move again would be 3 different parts of movement that would have to be paid for with fuel. I'm thinking Yes based upon your earlier comments.

A Yes.

Sonar search (Rules page 10)

Q It says that each Destroyer may move, do a search (and possibly attack), and then may move again, before finally finishing their turn in one of three ways, but it doesn't say what those three ways actually are. Is it: do nothing, sonar watch, RAS?

- A Having moved, conducted a search (and perhaps an attack) a destroyer can move again within the limits of the maximum allowed turn of 18 squares (but this maximum can be reduced by weather effects): ramming a foolhardy submariner wallowing on the surface with an empty battery perhaps; refuelling/rearming at sea by RAS with the Supply ship or by entering an ice-station; or moving and doing nothing further but a destroyer will always want to set 'sonar watch' at the end of its movement (unless alongside in an ice-station or damaged following ramming).
- Q Is a destroyer turn limited to performing one action in between 2 sequences of movement? So Move, and then ram/search and attack/resupply/RAS, and then move again if you still have movement points? Could I perform a search, move 1 space, do another search, then move 1 space, do another search, etc.? I'm thinking no, but it was a little unclear.
- A OK there's a lot in this question and you need to view the rules that concern different activities to see what combinations are allowed. The overriding restrictions in a turn are the maximum number of squares that can be moved (note weather effects), the available fuel onboard, the limit of one sonar search per turn and which actions end a turn (RAS/mine activation) or further restrict operations (Ramming).
- a. Only one sonar search is permitted per turn by each destroyer; note in the 'Sonar Search' rule it says: "Once per turn per Destroyer, the Soviets may declare a search, placing the plastic sonar pieces to the left and right of the Destroyer to form a 7x7 square sonar search area around the ship". This search is in addition to the 'sonar watch' that can be set right at the end of the ship's chosen movement (but not after ramming [damaged sonar] or if alongside at an ice-station).
- b. Note in the RAS rule it says: "After conducting a RAS move the ships involved cannot do anything else this turn, but the Destroyer may set up a sonar watch as normal".
- c. Note in the Ramming rule it says: "The ship sustains the same damage it would if it hit a mine." Then note in the Ship Damage section it says: "A damaged Destroyer immediately reduces its fuel by 20 units, may not use sonar or weapons, and may only move a maximum of six squares per turn".

Attack**(Rules page 11)**

- Q When specifying a depth, must I select 200/400/600, or could I say 250? I don't know why I would as it negates the possibility of direct hit.
- A You've answered your own question really. The detonation depths that can be selected for each of the two sets of three mortar bombs in a salvo are shown on the destroyer control panels in a triangular section under the salvo gauge; they are: 200ft, 400ft and 600ft.
- Q Page 6 of the rules: "A note on the playing pieces: the central square of the ship and submarine pieces represent the square the unit is on. All parts of the token which extend outside this square are purely decorative, and do not affect gameplay". As a submarine is in only in one square, only one mortar can hit at most?
- A Absolutely right. There is, however a scenario in which a submarine can be hit twice during the same Soviet turn and that scenario is when the two destroyers mount a coordinated attack and bomb the same square but separately:

The first destroyer searches, gains contact, attacks and achieves a hit. If the second destroyer is close enough to the action to be able to lay a sonar search template over the same piece of water in which the submarine has already been hit, a second hit can be achieved by the second destroyer's salvo. It's worth just pointing out that the submarine

players do not indicate which bomb was successful in a salvo (i.e they don't identify the square) but simply declare that the salvo has achieved a hit; the Soviets therefore need to be accurate in their mortar bomb placement during a coordinated attack ... but it can be a deadly tactic.

Ramming

(Rules page 11)

Q Can I move after I do a Ram action?

A Yes a destroyer can move after ramming but note the restriction in the Ship Damage rule which says: "A damaged Destroyer immediately reduces its fuel by 20 units, may not use sonar or weapons, and may only move a maximum of six squares per turn. It may still ram a submarine, and RAS, but its total fuel may not exceed 80 units". So along with the other movement restrictions, a move post ramming is limited to six spaces, which can be further reduced by bad weather, and the total move allowance for a turn cannot be exceeded.

Q In the damage section on page 13 it indicates ships can be damaged by ramming. But it never talks about submarines ramming ships in the rules. The ramming part is only in the Soviets section. How does a submarine ram a ship?

A Submarines do not ram ships. The only ramming that takes place in the game is when a ship (a destroyer or logistic ship) rams a submarine and sinks it (Ramming page 11) which is why Ramming, as a section header, only appears in the Soviet section. The 2nd bullet point on page 13 under Damage says "Ships can be damaged by minefields, ramming or being in a station when it is attacked", and in the case of 'ramming' it is referring to the damage that the ship suffers as a direct result of striking the submarine as it rams it (damage to bow and so on) hence the part of the Ramming paragraph on page 11 that says: "The ship sustains the same damage it would if it hit a mine".

Sonar Watch

(Rules page 11)

Q Does this last for one turn of NATO? i.e once the submarines have moved & the NATO turn is over, the sonar watch is reset until the Soviet player sets it up again? Or does the watch stay in place until the Soviet player wishes to set up another watch area?

A The 'sonar watch' areas last for the duration of NATO's next turn; when the Soviet turn comes they are free to do whatever they like (within the limits of the rules of course!).

'Sonar watch' provides some searching continuity for the Soviets to bridge the gap between turns as the NATO players move; real life isn't a board game and TCU isn't a simulation and this rule is there to try to bridge that gap too. As soon as the NATO players complete their turn for which the Soviets had set 'sonar watch' it is the Soviet's next turn. If NATO declared contact in a 'sonar watch' area this will help the Soviets to plan their turn but if the Soviets were careless when orientating their 'sonar watch' areas they may have offered NATO a clear undetected path through a blind arc and not had contact, or perhaps a layer has formed as a storm rolls through concealing a submarine's movements. If 'sonar watch' contact was made, however, what could it mean; has NATO moved outside the 'sonar watch' area where contact was declared and on out into open water ... or has the submarine slid quietly into a blind arc?

Q When there are two ships with sonar watch when a submarine goes through it, they say contact colour (red) for example. It doesn't say in the rules that you specify which ships sonar you triggered but shouldn't they?

A Yes you're right. NATO players' declarations of contact by sonar watch areas should identify the destroyer, or destroyers, in contact (*in reality the individual ships would know*

if they had contact without it being pointed out to them - but it needs to be pointed out in the game).

Logistics (Rules page 12)**RAS (Replenishment At Sea) (Rules page 12)**

- Q There seem to be 2 ways to do a RAS action, correct? A destroyer and supply ship are in ADJACENT spaces, and then move 4 spaces together in the same direction (including diagonally?). Since those 4 spaces count for movement for all ships involved I'll have to remember how many spaces each one has already moved.
- A I'll take this question in two parts. For a RAS the ships are orientated 'side by side' with the central parts of the pieces resting flush against each other as shown in the diagram. They move 4 squares in a straight line (i.e. not diagonally - this side by side placement cannot be achieved diagonally). Yes you will have to remember how many spaces have already been moved by all ships but this applies throughout the game.
- Q A destroyer has no fuel so the supply ship moves ON TOP OF the destroyer and they move together 4 spaces. Does this destroyer that didn't have any fuel have to pay for the 4 movement out of the fuel they just took on board?
- A The Supply Ship moves to an ADJACENT square (rather than 'same square' as written - a description carried over in error from the original game in which the 3D pieces could occupy the same square). As for any RAS the move of 4 squares does not use fuel - note the RAS rule that says: "The four squares moved while conducting a RAS count towards the total movement the ships are allowed in a turn, but no fuel is spent". So the fuel taken onboard in this case, with the destroyer starting with empty tanks, will be the fuel remaining at the end of the move.
- Q Do you adjust your fuel dial down for the 4 squares moved as part of a RAS?
- A 'No'. No fuel is spent during the 4 square move. Note in the RAS rules where it says: "The four squares moved while conducting a RAS count towards the total movement the ships are allowed in a turn but no fuel is spent."
- Q If performing a RAS with both Destroyers and splitting the token values, must an entire token go to one ship, or can I split the token between the 2? Meaning each Destroyer could take 1 salvo of weapons, or 30 units of fuel for one ship and 20 for the other?
- A Yes, the token values can be split as you suggest. Note the RAS rules where it says: "... and those values are added to the Destroyer's supply or split between both Destroyers".
- Q The middle picture on page 13 say that the RAS is illegal, but is it only illegal as it relates to both destroyers? Could I still do the RAS, but just with the supply ship and the Yellow destroyer, leaving the Red destroyer where it is?
- A Yes.
- Q Rules say to move a destroyer or supply ship alongside each other, but must their tokens be oriented in the same direction as the 1st picture on page 13 shows? Could I move the destroyer alongside the supply ship so that the 2 middle pieces of the tokens are touching, but the front of the destroyer is on top of the middle of the supply ship? I'm thinking no, but again, only the middle portion of the ship tokens is considered the ship.

- A By thinking 'no' you are thinking correctly! Although the parts of a token that extend outside a square are 'purely decorative' they still show the orientation of a vessel and for a RAS the ships need to be moving side by side in the same direction as shown on page 13.
- Q I'm only paying for movement with fuel for squares I move as part of my movement, but not for squares I move as part of a RAS? If I have to pay for the RAS, then I would get fuel and then have to immediately reduce my fuel by 10.
- A RAS: the 4 squares count towards the total move for a destroyer and the Supply ship but destroyers only use fuel getting to the start point of the RAS i.e. arriving in an adjacent square to the Supply ship. See RAS rules: "The four squares moved while conducting a RAS count towards the total movement the ships are allowed in a turn, but no fuel is spent".
- Q With regards to RAS, since the ships have to be adjacent and not overlapping, does the 4 spaces of straight-line/non-diagonal movement have to be in the direction that they are oriented? So if they are West/East you would have to move those directions, or could you move them North/South? I'm thinking No, they have to move in the direction they are oriented.
- A They have to be moved the way they are orientated - ships don't move sideways!

DAMAGE**(Rules page 13)****Ship Damage****(Rules page 13)**

- Q In the damage section on page 13 it says that ships can be damaged by the submarines but never does it discuss how that happens and what happens. It talks about submarines being rammed but not ships. Please advise.
- A Ships are damaged when moving over a minefield depending on the total number of squares moved when they do - see page 9 'Laying Mines' (2nd, 3rd & 4th paragraphs) with a side-note linking to the 'Damage' section of the rule book.

Repairs**(Rules page 13)**

- Q On page 13 there is the paragraph: "A tactical repair restores sonar and weapons capabilities; an engineering repair restores maximum fuel capacity, salvo capacity and move distance." I don't get that right, maybe I'm missing an important part which can be found in the rulebook already (but unfortunately not by me): An engineering repair restores the salvo capacity. I'm okay with that. However: Am I not able to fire those salvos as long as I did not restore the weapons capability too? In other words: If I want to use the mortar bombs again I have to fix both the tactical and the engineering repairs first?
- A Although all other abilities need only either the tactical or the engineering repair to function again the "weapons systems" requires both repairs? The two types of repair restore the features as listed and yes the weapon capability is affected by both repairs as follows:

After a 'Tactical' repair the weapon system is available and can be used to fire as many salvos as were onboard the destroyer at the time that the damage was incurred. So, if at the time the damage occurred the destroyer had 2 salvos onboard, the destroyer could return to sea after a 'Tactical' repair and fire those 2 salvos but would not be able to rearm until the 'Engineering' repair has been carried out.

The 'Engineering' repair restores the maximum number of salvos that can be carried to 3 and allows rearming to take place if there are sufficient weapon tokens available at the ice-station where the repair is being carried out or subsequently from the Supply ship.

WEATHER

(Rules page 14)

- Q I just took a look at the weather rules. I saw the callout that mentioned that when moving between weather zones, the lowest possible movement applies, meaning the highest movement penalty is the one to use. What happens to a submarine that is moving in shallow water?
- A The weather restrictions concerning reduced maximum moves **only apply to "ships"**; submarines are not ships and are blissfully unaffected by rough seas when moving. Check the "Storm level" table on page 14 and note that it describes restrictions that affect "ships" and those that affect "submarines". The only weather restrictions for submarines are at Storm level 6 when they can't snort or enter ice-stations; submarines benefit from the ability to hide below a layer in Storm levels 5 & 6.
- Q Why are there two ways shown to setup the weather?
Rules page 4 - Setup: 8. "Randomly draw an Ice-Station Card. Its number dictates the weather level in the **Western** Sea".
Rules page 14 - Weather: "At the start of the game the Storm Level in the **Eastern** Sea is set at random by drawing a Station Card".
- A The two setup options offered for the weather are slightly different in their effect. If the card draw is used to set 'West' (p.4) it will give a succession of single storms that build from the west and sweep progressively through the three sea areas. Setting 'East' (p.14) gives a succession of individual storms in each sea area. Try both for a bit of variety but either way the key to success is to keep a very close eye on the weather and make your plans for the forecast conditions as many turns ahead as you can!