

# Axis and Allies: **SECRET SUBS**

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## 0.1 Introduction

Axis and Allies: SECRET SUBS aims for a lofty goal: hidden information and true surprise - within a public-knowledge system like A&A - **without** relying on tedious bookkeeping or the honor system. In SECRET SUBS you'll still know *how many* submarines your opponents have... but nailing down their actual location (before it's too late) is a different story. Which of those five sub groups are a threat - and which are merely decoys? There's only one way to find out - get hunting!

In this variant, each power's Submarine units are kept off-board on a **public** Tracker, organized into in numbered Groups. Each of these Groups is represented on the board by a corresponding Sub 'Token' numbered on their **bottom** (secret) faces. These Sub Tokens are placed and moved on the board, and they can represent groups of any size - including **zero**. On the board, Sub Tokens behave and move exactly like normal submarines, and it is only when they engage in **combat** that they are publicly revealed.

## 0.2 Terminology

Before jumping into the more detailed rules, some helpful terms are defined below:

1. **Sub Token** - This is the physical "Secret Sub Token" that sits on the board/Sea Zone. Each represents the Sub Group corresponding to the hidden number on their bottom, which under normal circumstances may only be viewed by that Token's **owner**. Anything can be used as a Sub Token (find the ones I made [here](#)), as long as they're **identical when face-down**.
2. **Sub Group** - this is the group of actual submarines that a Sub Token represents. Groups are organized on a power's Sub Group Tracker (see the last page of these rules for samples), which is **public knowledge**. Each Group is represented on the board by the Token with the same number as that Group. Groups can contain any number of submarines - including **zero**.

## 0.3 Similarities/Differences between Sub Tokens and "Fleet Markers"

Sub Tokens function **similarly** to fleet markers from the original Axis and Allies Pacific (and the 'Marshaling Cards' from Revised). In fact they are identical to Fleet Markers in that:

1. Both Tokens are **numbered** for tracking & accountability
2. The units summarized by both Tokens are **publicly** visible at all times
3. The units summarized by both Tokens are considered **present** in the Token's zone at all times
4. The units summarized by both Tokens **must individually obey all normal rules**

However, Sub Tokens **differ** from Fleet Markers and marshaling cards in two **very important** ways:

1. The **ID number** of each Sub Token is **secret**, whereas Fleet Marker numbers are public
2. Sub Tokens may be **decoys**: the group they represent may have **zero** submarines in it

## 1.0 Purchasing and Placing Secret Submarines

**1.1** Each turn, powers purchase submarines as normal by paying their cost during the 'Purchase Units' phase and setting them aside for deployment in the mobilization zone. During the 'Mobilize New Units' phase these submarines are still built normally - but they are physically placed not into Sea Zones but rather onto the public Group Tracker, where they are organized into groups however their owner wishes. On the game board, these Groups will be represented by corresponding new Sub Tokens - it is these which are physically placed in the Sea Zones wherever that Group can be mobilized.

**1.2** The **maximum** number of new Groups created/new Sub Tokens placed in a given turn is equal to the number of submarines purchased this turn, **plus one**. The new Groups/Tokens may be placed in any eligible Sea Zone, as long as all production capacity limits and rules are observed as normal.

**1.3** You are **not** required to place all of the new Tokens available to you, but you must have at least the number needed to mobilize any new Groups you create. If you do not have enough remaining free Groups on your Tracker or Sub Tokens in your supply, you may add your new subs to a group already present in the mobilization zone(s), or you may **reorganize** (following section 4.0 below) your Groups or remove decoy Sub Tokens from the board to free these Tokens up to be placed anew this turn.

**1.4** Each Sub Token uses as many production **capacity** points as the number of submarines they represent, but **never less than one** - so any decoy Tokens/empty groups you create still use one production capacity point each. If you do not have sufficient production capacity or Tokens to mobilize all of your eligible submarines/Tokens, they are discarded and returned to your supply.

### *A Production Example:*

*John is controlling the United States, and he currently has seven Sub Tokens on the board, representing Sub Groups #1-7 on his group tracker. During this turn's Purchase Units phase he bought three more subs. It is now the Mobilization phase, and so John is eligible to place up to **four** new Sub Tokens (**one** for each purchased sub, **plus one**). However, he only has three Tokens remaining in his supply (Groups #8-10), so he can only create up to three new Groups this turn unless he **reorganizes** his current Groups.*

*John decides to keep his current Groups as they are, and to use just the three remaining Tokens for his new subs. He wants to divide these new subs into two groups - one sub in Group #8 and two subs in Group #9 - while also creating an empty group/decoy Sub Token (#10). To do this, he places one new submarine into the #8 box on his Group Tracker, the other two new subs into box #9, and **nothing** into box #10. Next John places Tokens #8 & 9 into the Pacific, and he places Token #10 - the decoy with zero submarines in its Group - into the Atlantic. John's Mobilization phase is now over, and he can move on to placing the rest of his units or the Collect Income phase.*

*Note that this placement strategy would consume **three** production capacity points from his Pacific Industrial Complex (for the two groups which contain the total of **three** subs he placed there) - but it would also consume **one** capacity point from his Atlantic complex for the decoy Token, which still takes up **one** capacity point.*

## 2.0 Secret Submarine Movement

Movement with Sub Tokens is virtually identical to moving normal submarine units. They have the same movement range and restrictions; they may stack and defend with allied and other friendly units (including yours or an ally's other Sub Tokens), and they may move through groups of enemy ships without a Destroyer following the Game Rules like a normal submarine. Also like submarines they may, if unaccompanied by other surface warships, be ignored during an enemy's movement. Like normal subs their presence alone does not make a Sea Zone "Hostile" for the purposes of determining legal movement or amphibious invasion points of origin - but also like normal subs, they **do** prevent **unescorted** transports from landing troops from their Sea Zone.

## 3.0 Secret Submarine Combat

**3.1** At the start of a combat involving Sub Tokens they should be moved with the rest of the participating units to the battle board, **keeping their Group # hidden. If there is no opposing Destroyer present**, the owners of any Sub Tokens must now choose whether their subs will submerge or fight, with the attacker choosing (and **reorganizing**, if desired) first, followed by the defender.

**3.2** Once submerging vs. fighting Groups have been chosen, any **submerging Groups are not revealed** but are instead immediately placed back on the board face-down in the Sea Zone.

**3.3** Any **Groups/Tokens that are fighting** (i.e. not submerging) are now simultaneously revealed. Flip them over, find their Groups on the owner's Tracker, and place those submarines on the battle board near their respective Tokens. Keep the submarines grouped with their Tokens during combat to remember which subs belong to which Group. Combat then proceeds as normal.

**3.4** Any time during combat that a submarine would **submerge**, they must do so as **part of a Group and be represented by a Token**. You may elect to have some of your subs continue fighting while others submerge, as long as you have at least one Sub Token available to represent the submerging Group (including any that already submerged before the beginning of combat) and at least one more for any subs remaining in the combat. Place any submerging subs back on the Group Tracker, moving a their Sub Token from the Battle Board back to the Sea Zone if necessary.

**3.5** If a Power has only one Sub Token or Group in a given combat/Sea Zone, **that power's submarines must fight or submerge together as one Group**.

**3.6** If a **revealed** Token's Group of submarines is ever **zero/empty** (including any decoys revealed at the start of combat), that Token is immediately **discarded** and returned to that owner's supply.

**3.7** At the end of combat any surviving submarine Groups are returned to the Group tracker (they may be reorganized first) and the Sub Tokens representing them are returned face-down to the Sea Zone.

*A Combat Example:*

John (our hypothetical US player from before) wants to invade Wake Island - currently owned by Japan (which is controlled by Mike) - so during his Combat Move phase he moves a fleet to the surrounding Sea Zone. John's invasion force includes a Battleship and two Cruisers, along with several transports and two Sub Tokens/Groups. Japan also has two Sub Tokens in that Sea Zone, as well as one Cruiser and one Destroyer.

At the start of Combat, John and Mike each move their units to the battle board, keeping their Sub Tokens unrevealed for now. John is the attacker, so he would ordinarily decide to whether to submerge subs first - but **Mike has a Destroyer present**, so both of John's Sub Groups must surface and fight. John will be revealing his Sub Tokens, so he reorganizes them first. One of his two Groups was just a decoy, so **to prevent it from being immediately discarded once it's revealed, he moves a few units from his other Group into the decoy Group**. He leaves both of his Tokens (face down) on the battle board, and it's now up to Mike to decide what to do.

**Since John has no Destroyer present**, Mike can choose to submerge his subs if he wishes. One of Mike's Tokens is also a decoy, and the other has three subs in its Group. **Mike saw John reorganize his subs a moment ago**, so he has a guess about how many he's facing. He tells John that he wishes to Submerge one of his Tokens while fighting with the other. He takes the submerging Token (the decoy Token) and places it back on the board face-down in the Sea Zone. The fighting Token that represents three subs remains on the battle board.

Mike and John have both made their decisions, so it is time to **simultaneously** reveal the Groups that are going to actively fight. John reveals his Sub Tokens: #1 & 2. After his reorganization, both of those Groups now have submarines in them (he would have had to **discard** the decoy Token now, if he had left that Group empty). John takes the submarines off the tracker and places them near the Tokens that represent them on the battle board.

Mike also reveals the Token that has decided to fight, taking the three subs from that Group and places them on the battle board near his remaining Token. The battle can now proceed as normal, beginning with Mike's subs' Surprise Strike phase (since John has no destroyer).

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The combat draws to a close, and Mike now has only one sub remaining and he decides to submerge it during the Surprise Strike phase. He places the submarine back on the Tracker in the appropriate Group, and places that Token back in the Sea Zone next to the decoy Token that submerged at the beginning of combat.

With naval combat over, John can now proceed to the amphibious invasion of Wake Island.

## 4.0 Secret Submarine Reorganization and Anonymization

Sub Groups may be 'reorganized' and 'anonymized' (shuffled) by their owner at any time, provided the following rules are followed:

1. **Reorganization** may occur at any time, but only between Groups of submarines that are **co-located** (together in a single Sea Zone) and **interchangeable**.  
Groups that are to be reorganized together must be truly interchangeable - meaning they must be co-located and have identical movement and retreat restrictions/eligibility. If there are any gameplay-affecting differences between the groups they cannot be reorganized together.
2. **Reorganization** can **never** cause the number of Sub Tokens on the board to **increase**.  
Sub Tokens and Groups may be exchanged, consolidated, or eliminated during reorganization, but new Sub Tokens and Groups **cannot be created** as part of reorganization.
3. **Reorganization** of Groups is **public**, but secret **anonymization** of Sub Tokens is allowed.  
Sub Tokens **that share a Sea Zone** even momentarily during the movement of one of the Groups - may be **anonymized** by their owner at any time - that is, they may be picked up from the Sea Zone, shuffled secretly, then returned to the same Sea Zone.

### *Reorganization Example:*

*John (our US player from earlier) has been building lots of submarines. He currently has eight different Sub Groups (Groups #1-8) on his tracker, and therefore he also has the eight corresponding Sub Tokens (Tokens #1-8) in various Sea Zones representing them. A maximum of 10 Sub Tokens are allowed in this game, meaning that John has only two Sub Tokens left in his supply (Tokens #9 & 10). Of the eight Groups/Tokens John has on the board, only five have actual submarines assigned to them on the Tracker. The other three do not - they're decoys.*

*It is the Mobilization phase again, and John has purchased another three subs this turn. He has another four Tokens/Groups to potentially create (3 purchased subs + 1 extra)... but John only has two Tokens (#9 and 10) left in his supply. He is not required to place all four new tokens, but John likes filling up the oceans with plastic bits, so he looks at his fleet and notices that three of his Tokens/Groups (#1-3) are **sharing the same Sea Zone** after fighting a combat this turn. Japan just learned the composition of these three groups in a recent combat, so John decides to **reorganize** those Groups into one large group to free up their Tokens for new placement this turn. On his Group Tracker, then, John takes the subs out of Groups #2 and 3 and puts them all into the Group 1 box. He **removes** Sub Tokens #2 & 3 from the Sea Zone, leaving Token #1 alone there. John is now free to immediately create **new** Groups with Tokens #2 & 3 as part of his mobilization this turn.*

### *Anonymization Example:*

*John is moving one sub Token/Group **through** a Sea Zone that contains another of his Tokens. Mike's been watJohn decides to take this opportunity to anonymize the two Tokens to confuse their identity. To do this, as the Token moves through the zone with the second Token, John picks both Tokens up off the board, shakes them up in a closed hand, then sets them back down on the board in the Zone. John may then continue moving the Group/Token, with the other players no longer knowing which Token is moving and which is remaining behind in the zone.*

SUBMARINE GROUP TRACKER

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3	GROUP 4	GROUP 5	GROUP 6	GROUP 7	GROUP 8	GROUP 9	GROUP 10

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