

Hampton at the Cross-Roads Overview

Setup

Each player will be assigned **one of six roles** for the duration of the game with instructions on that character's interactions with others, their objectives, and their private resources. The game will take place over the course of **four scenes**. In each scene, story and context will be offered by the game leader, two random events will be played and the effects calculated, and then a period of about 15 minutes will allow for discussion around a set of public decisions that certain players will have to make. At the end of each scene, all players will *privately* fill out their decision sheets and hand them into the game leader. **All decisions both public and private are made simultaneously.**

All characters have special "**resources**" to spend to influence the game's outcomes, which can include money (Mayor, Representative, GBI CEO and Union President), free newsletter issues (Substacker) and assignments to public affairs officers (Admiral). These resources can help or hurt any player (including the player spending them) or help drive attention to the shipyard. New resources are offered each scene (except for the GBI CEO, who is offered a fix amount for the whole game). For characters spending money, leftover resources will be carried over to the next scene. GBI's overall resources are public to all players, and how the Substacker writes their newsletter issues is also public.

Throughout the game, a running total of **key metrics** will be offered to all players. Three metrics — the passage of the carrier contract in Congress as well as the Mayor and Representative's election results — are probabilities, and the final result will be randomly determined based on that probability.

At the end of the game, each player will be scored out of 10 points based on their success in reaching their character's own objectives. The player with the most points wins, and in the event of a tie, the victory is shared.

Metrics

Overall Metrics

- **Number of Contracts:** Starts at 0. Determined by the Admiral at various points of the game. Determines the current "deal" in Congress for the number of contracts to be offered to the shipyard in Hampton Roads.
- **Shipyard Repairs:** Starts at \$0. The total number of dollars devoted from local sources to fix the shipyard, the costs of which are estimated at \$100 million. More repairs will increase the Probability of Passage.

- **Shipyards Employees:** Starts at 10,000. Determined by GBI CEO every scene. This is the designated target for hires at GBI, based on potential carrier contracts. Probability of Passage increases as more employees are hired.

Individual Key Metrics

- **Probability of Reelection (Mayor):** Starts at 20%. Determined by the Mayor's likability as well as the scale of the carrier contracts being offered.
- **Probability of Reelection (Representative):** Starts at 20%. Determined by the Representative's likability as well as the scale of the carrier contracts being offered.
- **Stock Price (CEO):** Starts at \$10. Derived from the expected value of future profits from carrier contracts and controlling extraneous expenses.
- **Substack Subscribers (Substacker):** Starts at 1,000. Heavily influenced by the Substacker's judgment on the future stock movements of GBI as well as marketing from all characters.
- **Union Membership Rate (Union Pres):** Starts at 20% (or 2,000 workers). Influenced by grassroots support as well as the employment situation of GBI. The number of members equals the revenue available per scene. The union will receive union dues of \$200 per union worker per scene as a resource.
- **Probability of Passage (Admiral):** Starts at 100%. This is determined by the number of carrier contracts, the likability of the Admiral and the scale of repairs to the shipyard.

The Economics of GBI's Stock Price

$$\begin{aligned} & \$5 \times \$1\text{B of Future Expected Profits} + \\ & \$10 \times \% \text{ Corporate Resources Unspent} \end{aligned}$$

One critical aspect of this scenario is the economic health of Griffith Barrett Industries (GBI), the shipbuilder of the nation's carrier fleet and the owner of the shipyard in Hampton Roads. GBI's stock price fluctuates widely given its anticipated revenues from defense contracts and its efficiency in building ships.

GBI's stock is generally priced at \$5 for every billion dollars of future profits from defense contracts, adjusted for their probability of passage. For instance, if a contract has a future profit of \$1 billion and the probability of passage is 50%, then the company's stock would be valued at \$2.50 (\$500 million future expected profit).

In addition to the expected value of future profits, another \$10 of GBI's stock price is determined by its spending of corporate resources, which start at \$100 million. So in our example above, assuming the company hadn't spent any corporate resources, then GBI's final stock price would be \$12.50.

Carrier Profits

	10,000 Non-Union Workers	10,000 Union Workers	20,000 Non-Union Workers	20,000 Union Workers
1 Carrier	\$4B	\$2B	\$3B	-\$1B
2 Carriers	\$9B	\$7B	\$8B	\$4B
3 Carriers	\$14B	\$12B	\$13B	\$9B

The margin on a single carrier contract is \$5 billion minus the cost of labor. Pentagon planners generally expect about 10,000 workers per carrier, although less workers or more workers can be used by GBI to increase profits or to show its commitment to the project. A non-union laborer costs \$100,000 and a union laborer costs \$300,000 given salary increases, health benefits, vacation days requiring worker substitutes, and more. Therefore, a standard carrier with 10,000 non-unionized workers makes a profit of \$4 billion, and the same carrier with 10,000 unionized workers makes a profit of \$2 billion. See the table above.

Character Descriptions

Newport News Mayor Sam Wallace or Susan Wallace

Mayor Sam or Susan Wallace was elected in 2020 as mayor of Newport News, a major city in the Hampton Roads region. A native of the city, Wallace graduated from the University of Virginia with a major in Systems Engineering. Their undergraduate thesis explored the challenges of constructing clean water systems in the developing world. Intending to join the Army Corps of Engineers, Wallace joined Virginia's Army ROTC program but ultimately received a medical discharge for depression, in part triggered by the relentless news of climate calamities emanating from the Global South.

Changing trajectories, Wallace joined the Peace Corps following graduation, working in Dhaka, Bangladesh on its urban sewage systems. They returned to the United States to work for the Natural Resources Defense Council and then began a political career, first as a union organizer at the shipyard with Local 9999, then as a city council representative, and now most recently as mayor.

Wallace is keenly aware of the long-term risks of climate change to the Navy's installations, but also deeply concerned that the Navy might shortchange Newport News on critical shipbuilding contracts, a move that would devastate the local economy and prove disastrous for the nearly two million residents in the metropolitan region. Running on a campaign slogan of "Building for the Future," Wallace focused their campaign on urban resilience and advocacy for long-term strategic adaptation to climate change while uncovering high-paying, green-collar jobs, beating a long-time incumbent in an upset victory.

Representative Daryl Chase or Denise Chase

After a multi-decade career in the House of Representatives, Daryl or Denise Chase finally arrived at that apex seat in Washington for a littoral district: chair of the Seapower and Projection Forces subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee. With every spending bill originating in the House, Chase has extensive influence on defense spending, particularly with regards to the Navy. They have built an almost unassailable base in the Hampton Roads congressional district by supporting further development and sustainment of military installations throughout the region.

Chase is also affiliated with the American Defense Project's Super PAC, and while not legally directing its funding, does indirectly drive much of its electoral strategy.

Chase has been a staunch opponent of policies related to climate change, both disagreeing with the science and also concerned that considerations of climate change might lead to the movement of naval facilities out of Hampton Roads. They have also opposed unionization at the region's shipyards, worried that higher costs could turn Hampton Roads into the "Detroit of the Ocean." Witnessing the final vote on the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) recommendations in the House, Chase saw firsthand how strategic considerations could rapidly shut down long-running military installations — and has vowed to not let history be repeated.

Griffith Barrett Industries CEO Alexander Brewer or Alexandra Brewer

Alexander or Alexandra Brewer grew up in Biloxi, Mississippi, the descendants of sharecroppers and whose father was a banker in the growing economy of this state perched on the Gulf of Mexico. Life was pleasant if not rich, and Brewer ended up studying accounting at the Patterson School of Accountancy at the University of Mississippi in Oxford. Brewer interned at a shipyard in Gulfport, and after graduation, joined Griffith Barrett Industries (GBI) in a rotational management program.

From those early starts, Brewer ascended to the top spot of the massive defense contractor following a 25-year management career at GBI. A shrewd political operator in the cutthroat defense contracting industry, Brewer oversees a sprawling range of activities, but most

importantly, the company's shipyard in Hampton Roads, which is its largest revenue and profit center.

Now, with Hurricane Helen endangering the future of the Gerald R. Ford aircraft carrier program, it's all hands on deck at GBI to secure as many carrier contracts as possible and guarantee the company's revenues for a decade or more. But it's the home front that is most challenging. Brewer insisted that GBI's laborers return to work during the early waves of the Covid-19 pandemic, stoking tension over workplace health and safety rules. Brewer has actively worked to thwart unionization of the company's shipyard facilities, attuned to the need to maintain the highest profit margins allowable under Pentagon rules to satisfy the demands of Wall Street. But a pro-labor president is throwing off Brewer's equilibrium, and the future of GBI lies in the balance.

Virginia Stripes Substacker Ryan Carmichael or Rhonda Carmichael

Ryan or Rhonda Carmichael began their career at the Daily Press — the daily newspaper of the city of Newport News within Hampton Roads — nearly ten years ago after graduating from the College of William & Mary with a major in Government. Over their college summers, Carmichael interned for The Washington Post on the metro desk, The Virginia-Pilot in Virginia Beach, and the Army Times (based in Springfield, VA), which ultimately led to a cub reporter role at the Daily Press after graduation. For the first five years, Carmichael reported on local issues, and they covered the last cycle of mayoral and congressional races in deeper detail.

Ambitious, Carmichael departed the Daily Press to begin the Virginia Stripes newsletter on Substack, wanting to build a local watering hole for the extensive military community in the Hampton Roads region. They have been trying to make the publication (and themselves) financially sustainable, but have struggled to find subscribers amidst tightening wallets.

While deeply traumatizing for the community, the arrival of Hurricane Helen and the legacy of its destructive wake has been the story of a lifetime. With newly-gained influence, can Carmichael transform a fleeting disaster story into a Substack career at the center of the national conversation?

Local 9999 Union President Tobin McKinley

The McKinley star shined bright when Tobin's great-grandfather first arrived as a young boy at Ellis Island in 1898 during the presidency of (the presumably unrelated) William McKinley. That fortuitous destiny was shattered in September 1901 with the assassination of the U.S. president by Leon Czolgosz, which coincided with a series of setbacks to the newly-arrived McKinley family, including a death from tuberculosis and one during the Spanish Flu in 1919.

McKinley's grandfather eventually migrated down to Hampton Roads during World War II, joining the corporate ancestor of Griffith Barrett Industries (GBI) as a welder in the Allied fight against the Axis powers. McKinley's father also joined the shipyard as a welder, and McKinley

knew from an early age that their stars would be aligned with the fate of that massive gantry on the coast. They've now worked at GBI for more than two decades.

While always a member of the shipbuilding union Local 9999, Tobin never paid much attention to the union representing GBI's workers until Covid-19 struck in 2020, where they watched as several colleagues succumbed to the mysterious airborne disease even as work continued on the Navy's ships. Shocked at the lack of any resistance to return-to-work orders, McKinley was a surprise candidate in the union leadership elections — and equally surprisingly — won the presidency of the local with a campaign to radically strengthen the union's membership and prospects. Now, as Hurricane Helen forces Hampton Roads to rebuild, McKinley wants to rebuild the union as a strong and durable force for all workers at GBI — and perhaps even beyond.

Admiral Martin "Marty" Reid or Martha Reid

Admiral Marty or Martha Reid is a second-generation Navy veteran who deeply believes that a strong Navy will be central to America's power projection in the 21st century. Reid was confirmed as the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) in 2020, and is currently serving out the final year of a 4-year term, which statutorily cannot be renewed. A member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Reid is considered a likely candidate to become Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, which would cap a lifetime of military service.

Admiral Reid has sounded the alarm on the Navy's vulnerabilities to climate change for many years, given the extensive coastal infrastructure the service uses. Reid commissioned the Navy's first comprehensive report on the subject, a report that was widely read but barely acted upon by Congress. The current situation in Hampton Roads was foreseeable, inevitable, and ultimately infuriating.

The Secretary of the Navy has charged Admiral Reid with developing the Navy's recovery strategy post-Hurricane Helen, and the admiral's legitimacy — and promotion to chairman — is on the line depending on how the future of the flagship Gerald R. Ford aircraft carrier program is handled. A signed deal and the strong backing of the incumbent pro-labor president will all but ensure that this decorated sailor reaches the pinnacle of the armed forces.