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There has to be a number of difficulties to adapting a board game where players randomly select points on a grid to hit or miss an opponent’s secretly-placed nautical force, and “Battleship” certainly pays homage to the game, but achieves little else in terms of enjoyment.

“Battleship” is based on the classic Hasbro game that actually dates back to World War I, when it was played with pencil and paper.

The film depicts wayward hero Alex Hopper (**Taylor Kitsch**), his brother and U.S. Navy Commander, Stone Hopper (**Alexander Skarsgard**) who must repel an alien invasion during international Pacific war games off Hawaii.

The film starts by laying out the reason why the faceless and nameless antagonists come to earth. NASA sends a signal into space to a planet similar to earth, in hopes of contacting life. They succeed and bad things happen.

Nothing really happens for the first half-hour except attempts to show that Alex is a guy without much direction, while Stone is the polar opposite and gets his brother to join the Navy to give Alex some structure. Even though the opening is trying very hard to establish the characters, they’re still pretty one-dimensional.

Once the Naval war games start, where many nations are participating, alien spaceships land in the ocean and create an impenetrable dome, trapping the Hopper brothers and another small ship inside.

From here, the action takes precedent, which is actually not as interesting as you might hope.

Of course, there’s plenty of complicated and technical CGI work, but the alien antagonists are not developed at all.

Nods to the board game include the aliens using explosive ammunition that looks exactly like the plastic pegs you place on “hit” ships in the game. They also hit a ship, dig into them a little bit and then explode.

Also, while the highly advanced Naval ships’ equipment is knocked out, the heroes have to rely on ocean buoys to detect where the enemies are on a grid. Of course this turns into the sailors choosing random points, then declaring, “hit” or “miss” accordingly.

I actually found those two instances some of the most creative aspects of the movie that had pretty much nothing else to go on, other than the name “Battleship.” However the movie continued with explosions, ships sinking and general lackluster performances by the crew.

Kitsch could be any other hotshot action character who must learn how to lead others or figure out that you can’t be a rolling stone forever. Stone Hopper is interesting enough inasmuch as Skarsgard plays the accomplished Naval officer convincingly.

Supporting cast members including **Rihanna** as Petty Officer Cora Raikes and **Brooklyn Decker** as Alex’s love interest, Samantha Shane, are forgetful and **Liam Neeson**, playing Admiral Shane is there just to deliver formal speeches.

I will give the film credit for using many real U.S. Navy personnel in the filming, albeit in background roles where they blend in with actors when they only speak the military lingo that is their true vocabulary while at their posts.

U.S. Army veteran and double-amputee **Col. Gregory D. Gadson** plays the film’s most interesting character, Lt. Col. Mick Canales. He is a recovering double amputee in Hawaii who

seems pretty jaded, or down on his condition.

His physical therapist Samantha convinces him to go hiking where they eventually encounter alien ground forces attempting to “phone home” as one of the other throw-away characters so eloquently states.

Mick leads the fight to disable the communications and in a way, overcomes his disability to maintain his leadership, honor and desire to protect one’s country.

“Battleship” suffers from serving up an enemy that neither the audience, nor the characters on screen know anything about. Alien invasion is nothing knew, so in order for the audience to be concerned at all with your version, something has to stand out. Unfortunately, nothing does with “Battleship.”

A faceless, endless hoard of enemies is convincing when it is ruled or led by sinister, interesting villains. Think back to Star Wars’ Stormtroopers that are as generic as they come, but Darth Vader is one of the great villains of our time.

Unfortunately, “Battleship” offered no polarizing or menacing villain and as a result, its action was more or less boring. Tension was probably highest during the previously mentioned scene where characters “play” the board game in real life.

Director **Peter Berg** certainly didn’t have much to work with from writers **Erich** and **Jon Hoebe r** , but everyone involved knew what they were getting into when signing up for a film based on a board game.

I heard there was an after-credits teaser scene, but wasn’t willing to stick around for more.

“Battleship” is rated PG-13 and is currently playing in local theaters with a runtime of 131

minutes.

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Also, check back here this weekend for a review of "Men in Black 3" which opens Friday, May 25.