Razzle Dazzle did not attempt to hide a ship, since the smoke of a ship’s coal-fired engines made that impossible. Instead, it distorted a ship’s appearance so U-boat commanders would incorrectly predict where to submerge and wait for their prey.

To execute a surprise attack, a U-boat had to dive and remain almost still while a target approached. Being in the right position required good planning and an accurate assessment of the target’s course. Razzle Dazzle interfered with that assessment, leaving the U-boat well out of the target’s path and torpedo range.
In March 1918, the U.S. Navy established a new department, the Camouflage Section — composed of artists and scientists, working in Design and Research Subsections, respectively — to develop and approve anti-submarine camouflage for Navy warships, and direct similar efforts in the merchant marine.

Harold Van Buskirk
Harold Van Buskirk was an architect and member the Submarine Defense Association, a research and development company making camouflage for the merchant marine. After joining the U.S. Naval Reserve, he was appointed to head the new Camouflage Section.

Everett Warner
Everett Warner — artist, art critic, and U.S. Naval Reserve officer — worked with Thomas Edison during World War I, before being appointed to head the Design Subsection, based in Washington, D.C.

Loyd Jones
Loyd Jones, chief physicist for the Eastman Kodak Company, was selected to lead the Research Subsection, based in Rochester, New York. There, Jones invented various methods for testing Razzle Dazzle designs in miniature.