

# CAPTAINS & CANNONS

A GUIDE TO SHIP COMBAT IN DUNGEONS & DRAGONS 5TH EDITION

BY DRIFTERS GAME WORKSHOP



# CAPTAINS & CANNONS

## A GUIDE TO SHIP COMBAT IN DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS 5TH EDITION

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, Wizards of the Coast, Forgotten Realms, Ravenloft, Eberron, the dragon ampersand, and all other Wizards of the Coast product names, and their respective logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast in the USA and other countries.

This work contains material that is copyright Wizards of the Coast and/or other authors. Such material is used with permission under the Community Content Agreement for Dungeon Masters Guild.

All other original material in this work is copyright [2018] by Drifters Game Workshop and published under the Community Content Agreement for Dungeon Masters Guild.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
Ship Statistics.....	3
Properties.....	4
<b>CHAPTER 2: SHIP COMBAT.....</b>	<b>5</b>
The Order of Combat.....	6
Character Phase .....	6
Crew Actions.....	6
Variant Rule: Crew Bonuses.....	7
Ship Phase.....	8
Movement.....	8
Attacking.....	9
Reactions.....	9
Damage and Repair.....	9
Hull Points.....	9
Sinking.....	10
Repairing Damage.....	10
Long Term Repairs.....	10
Crew Members.....	10
<b>CHAPTER 3: DUNGEON MASTER</b>	
<b>ADVICE.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Treating a Ship as a Single Unit.....	11
Designing the Scale of the Encounter.....	11
Creating a Crew.....	12
Fights Between Large Crews.....	12
<b>CHAPTER 4:</b>	
<b>ENVIRONMENT.....</b>	<b>13</b>
Weather and Terrain.....	14
Environmental Challenges.....	15
The Tempest.....	16
Howling Blizzard.....	16
Volcano of Kau'matu'i.....	17
Brinebeard's Fortress.....	18
<b>CHAPTER 5:</b>	
<b>ENCOUNTERS.....</b>	<b>20</b>
Lizards of the Coast .....	20
Gunboat Diplomacy.....	21
For Whom the Ship's Bell Tolls .....	22
Back Galley Brawl.....	24
Smoke on the Water.....	25
The Magical Seas.....	27
<b>CHAPTER 6:</b>	
<b>EQUIPMENT.....</b>	<b>29</b>
Weapons.....	29
Ranged Weapons.....	30
Melee Weapons.....	32
Hull Upgrades.....	33
Miscellaneous.....	33
<b>APPENDIX A: SHIP</b>	
<b>LIST.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>APPENDIX B:</b>	
<b>PRICES.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>APPENDIX C: SAMPLE</b>	
<b>STATBLOCKS.....</b>	<b>4</b>

# CREDITS

## CREATED BY DRIFTERS GAME WORSHOP

Built for Dungeons & Dragons 5th Edition.

### DESIGN

Jeffrey Yang

### LAYOUT

Jeffrey Yang

### PROOFING

Sharon Wong, Elli Ma

A special thanks to our playtesters: Flambeared, Rickard, Bebop, Jim-Jam, Hannibal, Bob, BD, Corrin, Xanaris, Nekane, and Veejay.

Thank you to Homebrewery for their invaluable creation tool

### ART ATTRIBUTION LICENSED ARTWORK

Artwork has been licensed with express written consent of their owners.

"Battle Ship" -QuentinVCastel:

<https://www.deviantart.com/quentinvcastel>

"Melvin the Hobgoblin Pirate" - Made by RobertLeaskArt, licensed with permission by Porter K. Ludwig.

"Pim" -LinRomanov: <http://mindlesslyred.tumblr.com/>

### PUBLIC DOMAIN ARTWORK

"Shipwreck off Nantucket" - William Bradford

### DM'S GUILD COMMUNITY CONTENT ARTWORK

The following art pieces are owned by Wizards of the Coast and published in accordance with their Community Content Agreement.

"harbor"

"pirate"

"Wotc-4e\_seabattle"

"riverheroes"

"MonsManV\_sadhuman"

"typhoon"

"nightship"

"MonsterManual2\_shark!"

"WotC-FR\_SerpantKingdoms\_lizardman"

"zombie"

"MonsterManual2\_pirate"

"inthesky"

"WotC-FR\_Waterdeep\_tentacle"

### VERSION 1.0

Published on DM's Guild on: 24/10/2018

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest things about 5th edition Dungeons and Dragons, is its speed and accessibility. Rules are simplified, combat is sped up, and minutiae is abstracted in order to create a fast, flexible and easy-to-play game.

This module attempts to simulate ship combat as close as possible, while still maintaining the same speed and accessibility that made 5e such a success. The following rules are intended to be as easy to learn as possible and are easily graspable by any player that can understand basic combat.

Note that these rules are not intended to replace the traditional flow of combat that players would be accustomed to in order to focus their attention on two ships doing battle. Instead, these rules are intended to be layered on top of traditional combat to allow players on the micro scale to affect outcomes on the macro scale. As such, when reading this module, DMs are encouraged to imagine ways that the somewhat basic and straightforward combat between two ships can result in difficulties and challenges on the ships themselves that the players need to address. A fire breaking out on deck, men being tossed overboard or a band of Sahuagin climbing the sides of the ship; all of these are potential ways to turn the players from ordinary crewmen, into heroes of the seas.

## SHIP STATISTICS

From the humble rowboat, to the mighty frigate, all types of ships are capable of being emulated using the rules outlined in this module. However, not all ships are created equal, and thus, the following statistics are used to differentiate ships from one another and determine their strengths and weaknesses.

### ARMOUR CLASS (AC)

Functioning exactly the same as regular **Armour Class**, this determines the threshold that needs to be beaten when attempting an attack roll against the ship.

### HULL POINTS (HP)

Determines how much damage a ship can take before it is incapacitated and starts to sink. Related to the ship's **Hull Points** are its **Hull Dice**. These function similarly to a creature's Hit Dice. A ship's maximum Hull Points is determined by the maximum value of its Hull Dice multiplied by its pool of Hull Dice.

### DAMAGE THRESHOLD

Most ships have damage thresholds that state how much damage the ship must take in a single instance before the damage is considered to have an effect. Any instance of damage below this number (after modifiers) is considered superficial and is not detracted from the ship's current Hull Points.

### CREW MEMBERS

Expressed as two numbers (XX/YY). The first number represents the minimum number of able-bodied crew members that must be on board for the ship to have the barest function. The second number determines the maximum number of crew members that are able to contribute to the operation of a ship.

A ship that has less than the minimum number of crew members on board cannot benefit from the Sail Crew Action. Any crew members above the maximum number of crew members cannot perform any Crew Actions.

### PASSENGERS

How many creatures are capable of lodging on a ship comfortably and safely. This number includes crew members.

### SIZE

Ships are differentiated by their size. A ship's size generally determines its Hull Dice, the number of crew members able to operate it, as well as any upgrades or Weapon Slots that can be attached to it.

Size is given in two ways: the actual dimensions of the ship (bow to stern and maximum width) as well as which size category it belongs to. Sizes in ascending order are: small (less than or equal to 30 feet in length), medium (30 to 80 feet in length), large (80 to 150 feet in length), huge (over 150 feet in length).

### INITIATIVE

Unlike creatures, ships do not roll for initiative, or have initiative bonuses. Instead they have static initiative scores that determine the order they move during the Ship Phase. However, crew members can raise a ship's initiative through the Command Crew Action, allowing that ship to act earlier than comparable ships (see Chapter 2).

In general, smaller ships have higher initiative scores, reflecting their smaller crew sizes and ease of movement.

### TONNAGE

How much weight a ship can carry in its hold safely. If a ship attempts to carry more weight than this, it enters "Sinking" status (see page 10). This weight does not include the weight used by the ship's weapons.

### WEAPON SLOTS

This determines the maximum number of ship weapons on board. Ships are not allowed to install a weapon if that weapon's Weapon Slots would send its total Weapon Slots over its maximum (for more information on Ship Equipment, see Chapter 6)

### SPEED UNIT

How much movement speed the ship gains per successful Sail Crew Action.

## SAIL STATIONS

How many Sail Crew Actions can be undertaken simultaneously on board the ship. These Sail Stations may represent rigging areas, sail controls, rowing banks, coal engines, magical orbs of energy or more depending on the vessel. There is however no mechanical difference between any of the different types of Sail Station unless otherwise stated.

## MAXIMUM SPEED

The maximum amount of speed that a ship can naturally generate without external bonuses. It is calculated by the ship's Speed Unit multiplied by its number of Sail Stations. The number listed in parentheses denotes how fast that ship would go, assuming that all of its Sail Stations were occupied by an average Sailor creature (as listed in Appendix C) and is intended for the DM to use when NPCing a ship.

## PROPERTIES

Most ships have special properties that set them apart from similarly sized ships. These usually cause them to be operated differently or open up a different tactic or condition on the ship. Some of the more common ones are listed below:

**Helmsman Required:** A ship with the "Helmsman Required" property usually have some sort of rudder or steering system on board that works independently of the ship's main locomotion method. These ships can only move in a straight line, unless a crew member takes the Helm Crew Action that round (for more information, see Chapter 2).

**Sail Powered:** A ship with the "Sail Powered" property uses the power of the wind to blow through their sails in order to move. Ships with this property have a speed unit of 0 in a Dead Wind. They also may suffer additional penalties and/or bonuses in other wind conditions (see Chapter 4).

On its turn, a Sail Powered Ship that has had at least half of its Sail Stations successfully used that round may furl its sails instead of using its movement speed. A ship that has furled its sails is not considered Sail Powered and has a speed unit of 0 until the sails are unfurled again. In order to unfurl its sails, half of the ships Sail Stations must have been successfully used that round.

**Mixed Propulsion:** A Mixed Propulsion ship is one that can use sails during windy conditions but has an alternate propulsion method (listed in brackets next to the property) in calmer weather. Mixed Propulsion ships act like Sail Powered ships when their sails are unfurled. However, even when their sails are furled or they are in a Dead Wind, they still retain their normal speed unit.

**Agile:** Agile ships are particularly manoeuvrable and easy to pilot. They are able to turn on the spot, instead of needing to move while turning as most other ships do. Turning does not take up any extra movement speed.

**Cumbersome:** Ships with the Cumbersome trait are particularly difficult to sail. The base DC threshold to perform a successful Sail Crew Action is raised by 5, and attempting to turn requires the ship move forward two Speed Units worth of distance instead of one.

**Independent Propulsion (XX):** A ship with Independent Propulsion has a propulsion method that requires nothing but someone at the helm to activate the controls. When on a ship with this property, a character taking the Helm Crew Action automatically grants the ship a base movement speed shown in the parenthesis. Any "Sail" actions taken are added to this base movement speed.

### TABLE OF SHIPS

Ship	AC	HP (Hull Points)	Dmg Threshold	Crew Members	Pass.	Size	Initiative	Tonnage	Weapon Slots	Speed Unit (ft.)	Sail Station
Rowboat	15	24 (3d8)	5	1/2	2	Small	+10	1/4	0	10	2
Lifeboat	15	32 (4d8)	0	2/4	12	Small	+6	1	0	10	4
Catamaran	15	48 (6d8)	5	1/5	6	Small	+10	1/2	0	15	4
Longship	15	150 (15d10)	10	5/15	15	Medium	+6	6	1	10	10
Sloop	15	200 (20d10)	15	5/16	20	Medium	+7	50	5	20	10
Fluyt	14	150 (15d10)	10	3/15	20	Medium	+7	100	0	20	10
Mana Clipper	15	200 (20d10)	15	1/10	20	Medium	+8	50	6	0	0
Gunboat	15	150 (15d10)	10	2/10	15	Medium	+8	30	3	20	6
Carrack	16	396 (33d12)	15	8/30	50	Large	+6	100	10	10	15
Galley	15	360 (30d12)	15	10/30	50	Large	+5	80	8	5	15
Warship	18	500 (25d20)	20	10/40	60	Huge	+3	500	15	10	20
Steam Ship	20	600 (30d20)	20	15/30	80	Huge	+3	1,500	20	20	20
Battleship	21	800 (40d20)	25	20/60	150	Huge	+4	5,000	30	5	25

## CHAPTER 2: SHIP COMBAT

**A**s the seagulls above squawk for food, a cry and a ringing of the bell clamours from the crows nest; “Ship on the horizon sailing an interception course! She flies the black flag!” The warning is sudden, but not unexpected. The waters of the Jessamine Passage are notorious for pirate attacks, but the crew of the *SS Resolven* are experienced sailors, and they will not be brought low by common pirates.

From the main deck, Captain McCallister barks orders, dispatched throughout the ship by his trusted officers. At his command, sailors spring for the ropes and ready the sails, while gunnery crews wheel out and load the cannons. The ship lookout shouts speeds and distances to the helmsman, who spins the wheel with a laugh and a shout. With toil and teamwork, dozens of sailors work together as one and steer their mighty ship toward the enemy. They live as one, work as one, and they will fight as one.

This chapter provides the rules needed to run a combat encounter between two or more ships in a game of *Dungeons and Dragons* 5th Edition. In a clash between two vessels, the individual sailor rarely matters. Instead, it is how those individuals work together as a crew and the strategy they take that determines victory. These rules are intended to simulate the grandeur and drama of a naval encounter, while still allowing individual players a chance to shine and contribute in their own ways.

In the following text, combat as outlined in Chapter 9 of the *Player’s Handbook* is referred to as “**Regular Combat**” while the combat as outlined in this module is referred to as “**Ship Combat**.”



# THE ORDER OF COMBAT

Ship Combat is broken into two phases: **The Character Phase** and the **Ship Phase**. During the Character Phase, combat plays out similarly to regular combat as described in the Player's Handbook. Players are free to take actions, bonus actions, cast spells, move around, and generally perform any action that they normally have access to (some actions do have slight modifications as will be listed below). However, due to the nature of naval warfare, enemy combatants will most likely be out of range for the majority of a character's abilities.

Instead, characters are encouraged to divert their attention to performing "**Crew Actions.**" Crew Actions are a new set of defined actions that characters can perform that contribute to the running of a ship. These include but are not limited to: working the sails, preparing the cannons, and leading the crew. When performed successfully, these actions contribute to the potential actions that the crew's ship can undertake during the Ship Phase. Once all characters have declared their actions and made their appropriate rolls, the Ship Phase begins.

The Ship Phase plays out similarly to the Character Phase, except only ships are able to take actions and/or move during this phase (characters may still use their reactions for readied actions however). During the Ship Phase, ships move and take actions according to the initiative order. Which actions they are allowed to do and how much movement they are allowed to use are determined by which Crew Actions were performed during the Character Phase. In this way, the individual actions of the sailors come together to control the ship.

## SHIP COMBAT STEP BY STEP

1. **Roll Initiative.** All characters roll initiative in the same way they would in regular combat.
2. **Declare any environmental challenges.** If the battlefield has an environmental challenge in play, the DM declares what will happen over the round, and at which initiative counts. Environmental Challenges are described in more detail in a later chapter.
3. **The Character Phase begins.** Each participant in the battle takes their turn, with the DM controlling NPCs as normal (the DM does not have to declare which Crew Actions that characters on enemy ships are taking if they are out of range of the player's vision)
4. **The Ship Phase begins.** Ships move in order of their initiative score plus any bonuses, with the highest going first. Ships then take their suite of actions as determined by which Crew Actions were undertaken during the Character Phase.
5. **Begin the next round.** When all ships have finished their turns, the round ends. A new round begins from step 2. This process repeats until combat is over.

# CHARACTER PHASE

The Character Phase functions very similarly to a regular round of combat. In fact, all characters are free to do anything during this phase that they would normally be able to do in regular combat. They may attack, move, cast spells, etc., as normal, as well as perform Crew Actions. The Character Phase ends once all characters have had their turn, at which point play transitions to the Ship Phase.

## MAPPING OUT THE SHIP

When reading some of the Crew Actions, it is a natural to assume that characters need to be standing in certain places on the ship in order to undertake them (e.g. "Sail" requiring that a character be seated at the oars, or the "Operate" action requiring that a character be standing by the cannons.) As such, DMs may be tempted to believe that a map of the ship is required in order to use these rules effectively. While a map can certainly be useful, and even add a layer of strategy to these rules, a map is not strictly necessary. So long as the DM or the players are capable of keeping track of things, such as, how many of the ship's weapons are in use, how many sailors are already working the sails, or the rough positions of the characters on the ship, using these rules with a Theatre of the Mind method works very well and can make play much easier.

## CREW ACTIONS

Crew Actions are a special type of action that characters can perform while they are on board a ship that contribute to the functioning of their ship. Many Crew Actions have no immediate effect, but rather, they contribute to the pool of resources that a ship can use during the Ship Phase.

Most Crew Actions are simple ability checks, with a success contributing to the ship's options during the Ship Phase. The DC's stated below assume smooth sailing conditions. DM's are encouraged to increase the DC of sailing actions depending on circumstances. There is no punishment for failing a Crew Action other than a waste of a turn.

Note: The DM is free to choose whether they or the players roll for any NPC crew members on board. However, should the number of NPC crew members on board become large enough that rolling for all of them would be impractical, DMs are encouraged to employ the "Crew Bonus" variant rules below.

### SAIL

Working the bait and tackle, shovelling coal into the engines, or just pulling the giant oars of a galley. No matter what method of locomotion your ship utilises, your ship isn't going anywhere without the strength of your crew's backs.

To take the "Sail," Crew Action, a character must succeed on a **DC 10 Strength (Water Vehicles)** check. Doing so will provide a ship with movement equal to its Speed Unit stat, that it may use during the Ship Phase that round. A failure results in movement equal to half of its Speed Unit stat being granted instead.

## HELM

While for some rudimentary ships (like rowboats), the very act of sailing doubles as both locomotion and steering, for larger ships, a helmsman of some sort is usually required to prevent the ship from listing aimlessly.

Ships that have the “Helmsman Required” property may only move straight ahead if no one on board that ship has taken the “Helm” Crew Action that turn. The Helm action usually does not require an ability check; however, there are certain situations in which the DM may call for one, such as moving through difficult waters, or when requiring very precise manoeuvring. In these cases, the check required is a **Strength (Water Vehicles)** check or a **Dexterity (Water Vehicles)** check, with the type and DC varying depending on situation.

A character on board a ship that does not have the “Helmsman Required” feature can still perform the Helm Crew Action if they so wish, but it is not required to make turns. It would become important however if the ship is subjected to an effect that requires its helmsman to roll a Water Vehicles check.

## OPERATE

When attempting to use any object that contributes to the functioning of the ship that isn't related to sailing or helming, a character must use the “Operate” Crew Action.

The most common application of this Crew Action is when attempting to use a ship weapon. Whether it is a ballista, a cannon, a catapult, or 40 mm artillery batteries, all of a ship's defence systems require someone to manually load, aim and then fire them.

A creature attempting to operate a weapon must specify which weapon they are operating when they take the action (but they do not have to specify their target). For a Crew member to take this Crew Action with a weapon, that weapon must be ready and available to be used (e.g., ranged weapons must be loaded with ammunition first). Attacks can vary widely depending on what kind of weapon is used. Consult the individual ship equipment section for more information.

For every crew member operating a weapon, the ship receives an Attack action with that weapon to its pool of available actions during the Ship Phase. Rolls for attack and damage are resolved when the attack actually takes place during the Ship Phase (See “Attack” on page 9 for more details).

Other equipment on board a ship may also require the Operate Crew Action. The description of these items will detail how they are to be interacted with and their effect.

## COMMAND

While each sailor contributes in their own way to the efficiency of the ship, it is ultimately useless without people to co-ordinate it and ensure the ship doesn't end up sailing in circles. Despite the fact the action is called “Command”, anyone is capable of taking the action, whether it's a galley master beating a double time beat on the drums, a navy officer waving flag signals, or just someone passing on instructions to the sailors below deck.

Taking the “Command” Crew Action takes a successful **DC 10 Charisma** check. Success adds +2 to the ship's initiative during the Ship Phase. This bonus only lasts for one round and a ship's initiative score is reset to its normal value at the end of each round. There is no limit to how many characters may take the Command Crew Action in one round. Multiple successful Command Crew Actions stack.

## READYING AN ACTION

With the addition of the Ship Phase into the initiative order, characters wishing to ready an action have slightly more options. A character that is readying an action may choose to use their readied action during the Ship Phase instead of the Character Phase. All the usual rules regarding readied actions still apply.

## INDEPENDENT DECISION MAKING

Because these rules dictate the simulation of ships, it may be tempting to believe some form of captain is needed to dictate the actions of the ship and sailors, including the players. However, nothing in these rules explicitly requires any single character (either NPC or PC) to take leadership over the entire ship, and much of the ruleset was written with the assumption that players mostly have the independence to decide their own actions. Parties are encouraged to find the level of autonomy that works best for their games.

## VARIANT RULE: CREW BONUSES

Even if you have the fastest and mightiest ship ever built, it would be useless without enough capable crew members to sail it. Unfortunately, many of the larger ships require large crews to sail them; much larger than an average D&D party would be able to fulfil, which means NPC crew members are needed fill out the ranks. In order to avoid forcing the Dungeon Master to make dozens or even hundreds of rolls to see what each NPC crew member does during a battle, the DM may choose to employ this variant rule to mitigate record keeping and speed up gameplay. **In general, the DM would be advised to use this rule if NPC crew members outnumber the players 2:1.**

With this rule, instead of keeping track of each crew member and rolling for their Crew Actions, crew members are amalgamated into a singular score referred to as the “**Crew Bonus.**” With a Crew Bonus active, most Crew Actions that the players roll for gain modifiers that increase both their likelihood of success, as well as their impact.

In order to calculate the Crew Bonus, simply tally up the number of available crew members to be amalgamated, and then divide that number by the number of player characters in your party. For example, if you have 12 crew members you wish to amalgamate, and 4 players in your party, your Crew Bonus is  $12 \div 4 = 3$ . Any remaining crew members are not turned into a Crew Bonus, and instead may take their own actions as independent characters.

Crew Actions undertaken while a Crew Bonus is in effect receive a +1 modifier to their ability check roll per point of Crew Bonus. In addition, the result of a successful Crew Action is amplified while under the effects of a Crew Bonus. The exact bonus differs depending on the Crew Action and is outlined below:

**Sail:** The movement speed granted from a successful Sail Crew Action is increased by one Speed Unit per point of Crew Bonus. Similarly, the movement speed granted from an unsuccessful Sail Crew Action is increased by ½ a Speed Unit per point of Crew Bonus. Regardless of how high the Crew Bonus is however, the ship is still not allowed to exceed its maximum movement speed.

**Operate:** If used on a ship weapon, you may choose another ship weapon on board identical to your own (including ammunition) for every point of Crew Bonus you have. When you roll for damage on your attack with your weapon, you may roll half of your chosen weapon's damage dice (rounding up) to your own upon a successful hit. In order to choose that ship weapon, the weapon must be available and ready to be used and also be capable of targeting the same target you are. The ship weapon you chose is then considered to also have been used, and any extra effects of firing that weapon (including ammunition used) are resolved.

**Command:** The initiative bonus gained from a successful Command Crew Action increases by 1 per point of Crew Bonus.

Keep in mind that for a crew member to be amalgamated, they must be capable of performing and succeeding at a Crew Action. This means that crew members above the ship's maximum crew members number are not amalgamated, and neither are crew members who have been incapacitated and left unable to perform Crew Actions.

Players are also free to request that specific crew members not be amalgamated into the Crew Bonus and are instead allowed to function as regular characters. In these cases, the DM rolls for that NPC's Crew Actions as normal, and that NPC does not contribute to the calculation of the Crew Bonus. This may be decided on a round to round basis (allowing players to have NPCs cover ship duties that they may not have the resources to cover on their own). These NPC crew members however do NOT benefit from the Crew Bonus. Only players may benefit from the Crew Bonus.

Other actions not outlined in this module may also benefit from Crew Bonuses. In these cases, the benefit granted is up to the discretion of the DM.

## SHIP PHASE

Once the Character Phase has ended, the Ship Phase begins, with the ship with the highest initiative going first, similar to the Character Phase.

Unlike characters, ships do not roll initiative. Instead they have a designated initiative score listed in their statblock. This initiative score represents how easy a ship is to manoeuvre, and thus how easy it is for the ship's crew to respond to danger. This initiative however can be raised by characters performing the "Command" Crew Action.

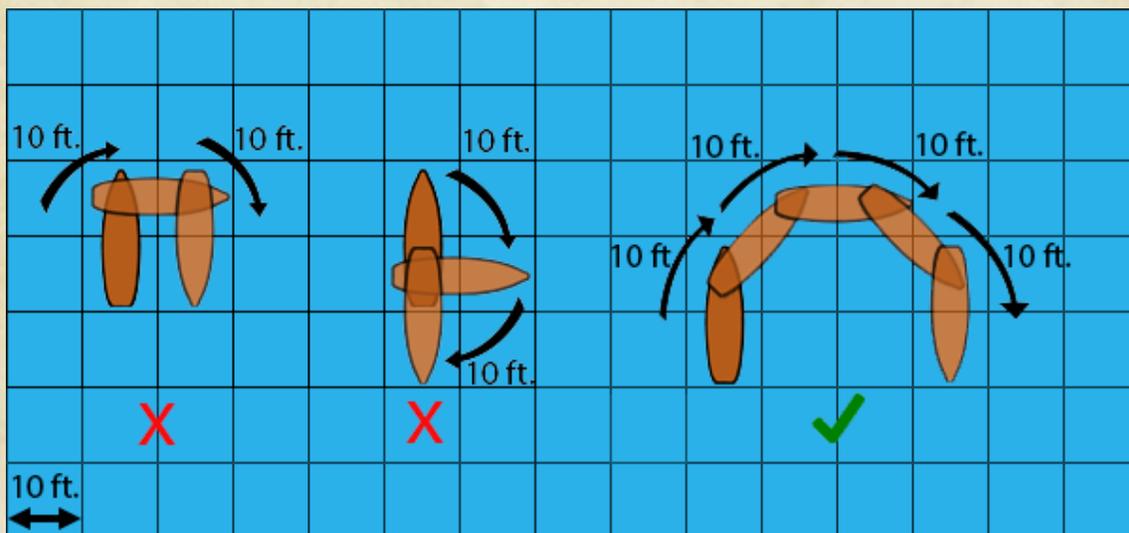
On their turn, ships may use as many of the actions and movement speed made available to them by their crew in the Character Phase.

## MOVEMENT

Unlike creatures, (most) ships do not have a base movement speed. Instead, they gain movement speed through the Sail Crew Action performed by their crew members. Each successful Sail Crew Action grants a ship a certain amount of movement speed that it can use in that round. Like creatures, ships may break up their movement as much as they like and perform actions in between. Ships do not have to use all of the movement speed they have gained; however, any unused movement speed is lost at the end of the round. A ship's movement is always done from the bow of the ship and all movement is counted by how far the bow has moved.

Ship movement also has a few more restrictions than creature movement:

- Ships do not have the option to take the Dash action.
- The directional facing of a ship matters during its movement, as a ship cannot travel backwards (they must make a full 180 degree turn in order to reverse direction), and most weapons require directional facing in order to target properly.
- Ships cannot turn on the spot the way creatures can, unless it has the Agile property. In order to turn, a ship must simultaneously spend movement speed and move in the direction it is attempting to turn. A ship may turn 45 degrees per Speed Unit they expend while moving. For example, a ship with a Speed Unit of 10 feet would need to expend at least 40 feet of movement in order to make a 180 degree turn, as illustrated below.



## ATTACKING

---

The most basic action that a ship can undertake is the Attack action. A ship gains one attack per Operate Crew Action performed on the ship's weapons during the Character Phase. When a ship makes an attack with a ship weapon, the creature that performed the Operate Crew Action with that weapon rolls for the attack, using their ability modifiers and proficiencies. If that creature did not specify a target when they took the Operate Crew Action on the Ship Weapon, they may do so at this point.

Ships may choose to use their Attack actions at any point during their turn, including between movements. Ships do not have to use all of the Attack actions made available to them during the Character Phase, however any unused Attack actions are lost at the end of the round. **Also note that if a Crew Member that operated a ship's weapon is incapacitated before that weapon is used, their contributed Attack action is lost.**

Ships are not limited in targeting other ships with their attacks. Attacks may still target the sailors and creatures on board a ship, so long as they are still valid targets in terms of visibility and range. Note however that all medium and larger-sized ships tend to have rails and walls on their top decks, granting all creatures on board at least half-cover.

## GRAPPLING

Ships are capable of grappling each other using certain ship weapons (see individual ship weapon descriptions for the actual grapple method). A ship that is grappled by a ship of a larger size class than its own gains no movement speed from the Sail Crew Action and it cannot benefit from any bonus to its speed.

**Escaping a grapple:** A grapple ends when the origin of the grapple effect is destroyed (for example, by cutting the grappling hook of the enemy ship) or if an effect removes the grappled ship from the reach of the weapon grappling it and vice versa.

**Moving a grappled ship:** When a ship moves, it may bring with it a ship that it has grappled. Grappled ships must remain the same distance from the point of origin of the grapple at all times during this movement. While doing this, each foot of movement costs an additional foot of speed, unless the grappled ship is two sizes smaller than the grappler.

## RAMMING

For when you're out of ammunition, want to get up close, or just as a desperate last resort, ramming your ship into the enemy can be an extremely effective tactic.

In order to make a ram attack, your ship must be adjacent to the target you intend to ram and have enough movement speed to enter your target's space. At this point, the ship makes a +5 attack roll against the enemy ship. If a character has taken the Helm Crew Action that turn, they may add their proficiency in Water Vehicles to this roll.

Upon a successful attack, the rammed ship suffers damage equal to the maximum Hull Points of the ramming ship, while the ramming ship suffers damage equal to half of the maximum hull point of the rammed ship. On an unsuccessful attack, the opposite occurs: the rammed ship suffers damage equal to half of the maximum hull points of the ramming ship, while the ramming ship suffers damage equal to the maximum hull points of the rammed ship.

If a ship sustains more than half of its own maximum hull points in damage as a result of the ramming attack (either as the attacker or defender), all creatures on board that ship must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity Saving throw or be knocked prone.

Such a crude attack does not come without complications however. Following a ram attack, both ships are stuck together in a mess of debris and are considered to be grappling each other. This grapple ends if one of the two ships are destroyed.

A ship may only perform one ram attack per turn.

## REACTIONS

---

A ship can ready actions just like a normal creature and uses the same rules as specified in the Player's Handbook. As usual, a ship on its turn must declare which action it is holding and the trigger for it. This is particularly useful to wait for enemy ships to come into range before firing a volley at them. As always, an unused readied action is lost at the end of the round.

A key difference between a ship and a creature however, is that a ship may ready as many actions as they have available in their ship action economy. When a ship takes the Ready action and declares the trigger, they must also declare which order they will take their actions in.

Ships may not use opportunity attacks.

## DAMAGE AND REPAIR

Ship combat is brutal, deadly, and dangerous. As such, being able to fix damage can be just as important as dealing it. After all, what's the point of sinking your foe to the bottom of the ocean if you end up joining them soon after?

## HULL POINTS

---

The Hull Points of a ship represents the ability of a ship to sustain damage during a fight and still function. Hull Points function similarly to a creature's Hit Points, with two major differences: Whereas a creature does not record any damage taken while it is at 0 Hit Points, a ship does. Instead of 0, a ship's minimum Hull Points is equal to negative half of its maximum Hull Points. For example, a ship with a maximum of 100 Hull Points can be dropped to a minimum score of -50 Hull Points.

The other difference is that whereas creatures see no difference in their abilities so long as they remain above 0 Hit Points, a ship does suffer penalties as its Hull Points drop. A ship that has less than half of its maximum Hull Points also sees its maximum speed reduced to half. Any movement speed gained from Sail Crew Actions beyond half the ship's normal maximum speed is effectively wasted. This penalty is removed when the ship is restored to above half of its maximum Hull Points again.

## SINKING

When a ship drops to 0 Hull Points, instead of going unconscious like a creature, a ship is immobilised and is considered **sinking**.

When sinking, a ship's Speed Unit is reduced to 0, all Crew Actions are rolled at disadvantage, and all attacks made against it are rolled at advantage. In addition, at the start of each of its turns, the Ship takes "Sinking Damage," equal to 1/10 of its maximum Hull Points (rounded down) as it takes on water and structural damage compounds on itself.

Once a ship reaches negative half of its maximum Hull Points it is considered damaged beyond repair and sinks below the waves. The ship cannot take any actions and cannot be repaired by anything short of powerful magic or divine intervention. For all intents and purposes, the ship is removed from play.

## REPAIRING DAMAGE

Due to being an object, a ship cannot benefit from the effects of healing magic and spells. Instead, restoring Hull Points to a damaged ship must be done through the manual labour of the sailors on board, using spare parts and materials to keep the ship functioning. During the Character Phase, a creature may attempt to perform a **Repair** action to patch up holes, repair damage, and bilge water from the ship. This is not a Crew Action, and thus the effect is immediate.

The Repair action can take many forms depending on the ship and nature of the damage. Characters could be patching up holes, tying ropes together, fixing sprung valves, or just bilging water from a flooded hold. In any scenario, the character must make a DC 10 Strength or Intelligence check (players choice).

Note: As a DM, you may decide if proficiency with certain tools (eg Carpenter's tools or Tinker's tools) are applicable to the skill check.

Success on the check allows that character to spend and roll one of the ship's Hull Dice to add to the ship's current Hull Points. Alternatively, if a ship part has its own individual Hit Point total (such as many of the ranged weapons), the character may spend and roll the Hull Dice to instead add to the Hit Point total of that ship part.

## LONG TERM REPAIRS

A ship cannot survive indefinitely from field repairs and emergency patchwork. Eventually a damaged ship must dock in order to undergo more long term and thorough repairs.

In order to undergo **long term repairs**, a ship must be docked in an area on land with both the space to safely house the vessel, and the facilities capable of administering repairs. For a small rowboat, this may just be a repair shed a few feet up from the beach, while for larger ships it may be a city's dry dock. Whether a location is suitable for repair work is left to the DM's discretion.

Repairing a docked ship takes both time and money. While safely docked, a skilled labourer can work for 8 hours per day at a cost of 13 gold. If done by free labour (such as by a crew member that is already on your regular payroll), the cost is 10 gold per day for just the materials.

For every day a skilled labourer spends repairing the ship, the ship regains Hull Points equivalent to the maximum value of **one of its Hull Dice** or **regains one spent Hull Dice**.

## CREW MEMBERS

In naval combat, the ship itself is not the only casualty during the rage of battle. As cannons fly, crew members are also injured and become unable to perform their duties, severely impacting the performance of the ship.

The **crew member** number is reduced whenever a crew member has become unable to perform regular ship duties and Crew Actions (note that this does not necessarily mean the crew member has died, they may simply be unconscious and/or incapacitated. DM discretion may be required when deciding this differentiation).

Other effects may also incapacitate crew members. Strong winds knocking them prone, hypnotic magical effects rendering them charmed, or a fear effect rooting them in place may also prevent crew members from performing Crew Actions, even if temporarily. For some effects (like those listed as examples in this module), crew members are affected as specified. For others, DM discretion may be required.

Obviously, performing the Repair action does nothing when attempting to restore crew members. Instead, regular creature healing methods are required such as through the application of healing magic, items and abilities. For example, a Paladin may use their Lay on Hands ability to restore one crew member to sailing ability, or a casting of Mass Healing Word could restore up to six.

If you manage to make it back to a port, you may also simply hire crew members to your ship to replace incapacitated ones.



# CHAPTER 3: DUNGEON MASTER ADVICE

**A**s in regular combat, it is the Dungeon Master's responsibility to control the actions of any NPC during Ship Combat. Admittedly, this can be a particularly daunting task. After all, controlling NPC's in regular combat can be strenuous enough, but Ship Combat in particular can call upon dozens of individual NPC's (both hostile and friendly), each with their own stats, conditions, and abilities to consider on top of the additional layer of rules from this module. This section explains several tips and tricks to streamline the experience and help make running a Ship Combat encounter as simple as running any other.

## TREATING A SHIP AS A SINGLE UNIT

This is the simplest method when NPCing enemy ships in combat. Using this method, the DM ignores the agency of individual crew members on board a ship, and instead treats the ship as a single independent entity.

The statblocks for the ships support this method, with the Maximum Speed stat being listed with a parentheses next to it. **This speed is the average speed that ship would go, assuming that all of its sail stations were being occupied by an average sailor** (as given by the Sailor statblock at the end of this book). Using this speed significantly reduces the amount of rolls necessary when controlling a ship, and lets it act much like a creature would. With this in mind, the DM can assign any leftover crew members to the gun stations, helm, repair, etc. If the DM wishes to use less crew members and/or speed, they can merely divide the average speed by the number of Sail Stations on board to find how much speed the average Sail Station provides, and then go from there.

## DESIGNING THE SCALE OF THE ENCOUNTER

The larger sizes and increased movement of ships tend to mean that battles take place over much larger areas than most DM's are accustomed to. This can especially be hard when it comes to translating the encounter to a battle map when the DM is used to each grid square representing 5 feet.

The stats of the ships however are designed to be as easy as possible for DM's to place them onto grids. In general, a ship's length is cleanly divisible by its width. Furthermore, most ship's Speed Units are the same as the ship's width, or at the very least, easily divisible into their lengths and widths. With this in mind, making one square represent a distance equal to the ship's width or their Speed Unit tends to be the simplest way to scale the map. This of course is not the only method, but it does work in most scenarios.

Furthermore, DM's are advised to begin their encounters with each ship capable of interacting with each other within 1 round. For example, if a ship's maximum ranged weapon is a cannon with a range of up to 2,400 ft, the DM should only roll for initiative once the ships are at least within 2,400 ft of each other (if not closer).



## CREATING A CREW

It can be tempting to make a crew that is filled with unique and colourful NPC's, each with their unique classes and statblocks. In practice however, this can be incredibly difficult to keep track of and become impractical. Instead, it is best to restrict crew design to one special unit to act as a captain, and then to fill the rest of the crew up with low CR creatures. If the ship has a relatively large crew, you may then decide to add in a few lieutenants or special units and assign them to using any special equipment on board the ship or fulfilling a specific role.

## FIGHTS BETWEEN LARGE CREWS

Many naval fights may also end in a boarding phase, in which the crews of the two ships engage in personal combat to wipe each other out. However, you may notice that some ships can have fairly large numbers of crew members. When combined with your own potential crews, this can cause fights to be on a scale that is impractical for most DM's to run.

In order to not be bogged down by dozens of extra rolls and distract from your players, it is advised you use the rules for **"Handling Mobs,"** as described on page 250 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. This can severely reduce the number of rolls needed and greatly speed up gameplay.

Another more abstract, but even faster method is the **"Crew Fight"** method. This is best used when both crews have large numbers of homogenous, low CR crew members. In this method, decide which type of crew members you wish to amalgamate. After that, add up all of their Challenge Ratings into a single number; this number will be your **"Crew Strength."** Do the same for the other crew, and then compare Crew Strengths to see which is higher. Subtract the lower number from the higher. Finally, take the remainder and divide it by the Challenge Rating of that crew's crew members that you amalgamated (rounding up). The resulting number is how many of that creature type you represent in the battle your players participate in. All of the crew members from either side that are ignored are assumed to be fighting each other and cancelling each other out.

### CREW FIGHT EXAMPLE

- Ship A has a crew consisting of the 4 player characters, and 10 sailors (CR ½).
- Ship B has a crew consisting of 1 Hobgoblin Captain, and 24 Goblins (CR ¼).
- In order to avoid simulating a fight between potentially 30 creatures, the DM decides to just assume that the Sailors and Goblins fight each other, while the PC's challenge the Hobgoblin Captain.
- In order to determine exactly how many Sailors and/or Goblins they can ignore, the DM first adds up all of the Sailors' Challenge Ratings ( $10 \times \frac{1}{2} = 5$ ) and then adds up all of the Goblins' Challenge Ratings ( $24 \times \frac{1}{4} = 6$ ) to find their Crew Strength.
- The Goblins have a higher Crew Strength and are left with 1 remainder ( $6 - 5 = 1$ )
- Therefore, in the combat the DM actually runs, the PC's fight both the Hobgoblin Captain, as well as 4 extra Goblins ( $1 \div \frac{1}{4}$ ). The rest are assumed to be engaged in fights with the Sailors from the PC's crew. If instead the PC's Crew Strength had been higher, they would have had extra Sailors on their side to assist them in fighting the Hobgoblin Captain.

After the fight (assuming the players are victorious), roll a d20 for each amalgamated member of the PCs crew. On a 9 or lower, it is assumed that crew member died during the battle and the crew number is adjusted accordingly. This method is best used for creatures that don't have many special abilities. Ultimately, the DM is responsible for adjudicating any special results that may occur as a result of the two abstracted forces fighting. This method obviously requires some suspension of disbelief from both the DM and the players, however the alternative requires an extremely tedious and difficult level of tracking.



## CHAPTER 4: ENVIRONMENT

**T**he rain pattered against the windows of the inn, as two young naval officers shared a bottle of wine, swapping stories by the fire.

*“The Escallion Armada.” Said the first young officer. “That’s the scariest thing I’ve ever seen out on the waters. You haven’t known terror until you’ve heard the sound of one thousand cannons sound off in unison.”*

*“Well I served on the Arun during the hunt for the Darkwave pirates.” Said the second young officer. “That’s the scariest thing I’ve seen. Even Captain Hollis looked rattled when he saw their black ship appear on the horizon.”*

*“Bah!” Spat the old man sitting at the bar, slamming his mug and splashing grog over the counter. “Armadas. Pirates. Ye are still but green lads if that be the scariest thing ye’ve seen on the waters.”*

*The young officers looked at each other and smirked. “Alright old timer,” said the first, “What’s the scariest thing you’ve seen out on the sea?”*

*The old man paused and turned to face the boys. His face was weathered by the wind and cured by salt. He gazed at the*

*young officers with an eye that had seen too much, and through yellow stained teeth and cracked lips, he barked, “I’ve seen the sea!”*

*The two young officers barely managed to suppress a giggle before the old man wheeled on them. “Oh, not the tame sea ye wet babes have seen, I speak of the wild sea! This is not the sea of your shipping routes and coastal waters, with their trade winds and predictable waves. This is the sea of sail-tearing squalls! Of waves that swallow ships whole, and icebergs larger than battleships! This is the sea cursed by gods and magic. The sea that hides secrets that man was never meant to know. The real sea.”*

*The smirk on the boys’ faces faded. The man finished his drink. “No boys. No man can match the savagery of the sea. Ye fear death by cannon and cutlass, but it will be the sea that claims ye in the end, like it does for every sailor. Ye turn yer back on it for a moment and it’ll claim ye for her own.” The man slumped like a deflated sail. After a moment, he slid from his stool and staggered for the door. Outside suddenly there was the sound of thunder and wind, the storm had picked up without them even realising. The door shut behind the old man. The young officers looked at each other.*

*They finished their drinks.*



## WEATHER AND TERRAIN

Ships are as much a tool for harnessing the power of the weather and environment as anything else. As such, captains and crews that understand the natural world, and how to use it to their advantage, can often turn an unfavourable encounter into a decisive victory.

The following weather and terrain are the most common occurrences that a crew is likely to meet. These can easily be interlaid over normal combat in order to provide an extra challenge or strategic consideration.

### WIND

The wind is perhaps the most important weather factor when sailing. When a ship with the property “Sail-Powered” is facing in the same direction that the wind is blowing, it gains a bonus to its movement speed equal to the **Wind Speed**. Conversely, it gains a penalty to its movement speed equal to the wind speed while it is facing against the wind.

A ship is considered facing the same direction as the wind if its bow is pointing in the same compass point direction as the wind, and/or the compass points adjacent to that. E.g. A North wind affects ships facing North, North-East, and North-West.

There are four types of **wind conditions**: Dead Wind, Light Wind, Medium Wind, and Strong Wind.

#### DEAD WIND

In a Dead Wind, a ship with the “Sail-Powered” property is considered to have a Speed Unit of 0, as there are no winds to blow into its sails.

#### LIGHT WIND

A Light Wind is considered to be the default wind condition that most ships travel in. The wind intensity is just enough to allow a Sail-Powered ship to gain the normal benefits of its “Sail” Crew Actions, with no added benefits or drawbacks.

**Mechanically, Light Winds have no Wind Speed.**

#### MEDIUM WIND

This wind is one favoured by ships seeking to travel quickly. Moving at a healthy speed, this wind blows into a Sail-Powered ship’s sails, allowing it to travel faster when tacking with the wind. **There are no drawbacks to this wind condition, aside from those that arise when travelling against the wind direction.**

#### HEAVY WIND

Representing extreme squalls and zephyrs, the Heavy Wind can provide a ship with extremely fast movement but can easily destroy a ship crewed by inexperienced sailors. **Along with the normal benefits of movement speed granted by travelling with the wind, a Sail-Powered ship must use all of its movement speed (including the bonus granted by facing with the wind) at the end of each turn, or suffer 1 Hull Dice of damage per 10 feet of residual movement left at the end of its turn.** In addition, anytime a crew member fails a Sail Crew Action on a Sail-Powered ship, their ship also suffers bludgeoning damage equal to one of their Hull Die. This damage ignores the ship’s Damage Threshold.

### DETERMINING WIND

The DM is free to declare the condition, speed, and direction of the wind, or they can generate it based on the tables below. First, determine whether the weather of that area is **medium** or **heavy** and roll on the appropriate table (Dead Winds and Light Winds have no Wind Speeds and thus do not need to be rolled for). Finally, roll 1d8 to determine **wind direction**.

#### MEDIUM WIND

2d6	Speed
2	50 feet
3	40 feet
4	30 feet
5	20 feet
6	10 feet
7	0 feet
8	10 feet
9	20 feet
10	30 feet
11	40 feet
12	50 feet

#### HEAVY WIND

2d6	Speed
2	110 feet
3	100 feet
4	90 feet
5	80 feet
6	70 feet
7	60 feet
8	70 feet
9	80 feet
10	90 feet
11	100 feet
12	110 feet

#### WIND DIRECTION

1d8	Direction
1	North
2	North-East
3	East
4	South-East
5	South
6	South-West
7	West
8	North-West

## HAZARDOUS TERRAIN

---

Rocky outcroppings, coral reefs (for larger ships), and sunken wrecks hidden in the surf have been the downfall of more than one seasoned vessel. Any solid, immovable object in the waters can be considered **Hazardous Terrain** and poses extreme dangers to ships that are not aware of it. A ship that attempts to move into a space occupied by Hazardous Terrain loses all movement speed and suffers bludgeoning damage equal to one of its Hull Dice for every 5 feet of movement it moved that turn before hitting the Hazardous Terrain. This damage ignores the Damage Threshold of the ship.

## DIFFICULT TERRAIN

---

Difficult terrain functions in the same way on the waters as it does on land; attempting to move over difficult terrain costs 1 extra foot of movement per foot travelled. Examples of difficult terrain in oceanic settings include but are not limited to: seaweed beds, coral reefs (for smaller ships), and layers of thin ice.

## FOG

---

Fog is a common occurrence in the open sea, especially in areas of high humidity and colder waters. **Light Fog** causes the area it covers to be lightly obscured, while **Heavy Fog** causes the area to become heavily obscured.

## WATER CURRENT

---

While the direction and intensity of the waves at sea are usually just an extension of the wind (and thus are just lumped in with the rules for wind above), water currents in rivers flow independently.

All **water currents** have a direction and a speed as determined by the DM. At ship initiative count 10, all creatures and objects (including ships) in a body of water with a water current are moved in the direction of the water current a distance equal to the water current speed. In addition, a ship's speed is reduced by an amount equal to the water current's speed when attempting to move in the opposite direction of the water current.

## EXTREME COLD

---

Particularly frigid environments can interfere with both the wellbeing of the crew and the seaworthiness of a vessel. A ship that travels in an environment below freezing point for more than 3 hours may find that its equipment becomes icy and frozen over, and the deck of the ship slippery and treacherous. At this point, the base threshold DC for a successful Sail Crew Action is raised by 5.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

An **Environmental Challenge** is any hazard that poses a prolonged and consistent danger to a ship and its inhabitants. More than just a simple squall or angry wave, Environmental Challenges will often threaten to sink a ship, unless its crew does something to escape or overcome the challenge. These challenges may be presented as encounters in and of themselves or can be laid on top of ship combat in order to make them more interesting and difficult.

While the name "Environmental Challenge" may imply that these rules are designed to simulate hazards posed by nature (such as severe storms), this is not all they can be used for. These rules can be used to simulate any encounter with a hazard that is consistent, prolonged, and relatively stationary. Such things like island fortresses, seaborne traps, and even titanic, carnivorous, semi-sentient aquatic flora fall well within the purview of these rules.

## DESCRIBING AN ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE

---

Ship based Environmental Challenges are heavily inspired by the "Complex Traps" outlined in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything* (Page 118, Chapter 2). Features of Environmental Challenges are as follows:

**Description:** A basic explanation and background of the Environmental Challenge. Includes a quick rundown of the types of dangers it poses, as well as describing its size and any special locations within it.

**Initiative:** All Environmental Challenges feature their own initiative score which determines when they take their "action" in a round. Some Environmental Challenges have more than one initiative score which denotes that they take more than one action in a round.

There are also two types of initiative score: Character and Ship. **Character initiative** denotes that the action is undertaken during the Character Phase, while the **Ship initiative** denotes that the action is undertaken in the Ship phase. Environmental Challenges are not restricted to having just Character initiatives or just Ship initiatives, they may have any number of initiative scores (and actions) in any combination of the two.

Environmental Challenges always act after creatures and ships that share the same initiative.

**Active Elements:** On an Environment Challenge's turn, it produces specific effects that are detailed in this part of its description. The Challenge might have multiple active elements, a table you roll on to determine its effect at random, or options for you to choose from.

**Dynamic Elements:** A dynamic element is a threat that arises or evolves while the Environmental Challenge is present. Usually these involve changes at the end of each of the Challenge's turns or in response to character's actions.

**Constant Elements:** An Environmental Challenge poses a threat even when it is not taking its turn. These are passive effects that impose certain limitations or dangers to the crew and ship until the challenge has passed.

## RUNNING AN ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE

Often times, the best way to overcome an Environmental Challenge is to simply move out of the area they are affecting. This is easier said than done, as most Environmental Challenges will involve elements that hamper the movement of ships and the actions of their sailors, all the while damaging them with all of the wrath that nature can provide.

There is a key difference between running an Environmental Challenge and running a Complex Trap. Whereas Complex Traps by their nature attempt to hide information in order to surprise their players, characters undergoing an Environmental Challenge are presumed to be fully aware of their surroundings. As such, at the start of each round, the Dungeon Master should disclose the elements that will occur over the coming round, including their effects and initiative counts. In addition, some Environmental Hazards involve “choosing an area of X to be affected” by a certain element. The DM is to choose and disclose this area at the start of the round. The difficulty of an Environmental Challenge lies not in “solving” it, but in optimising the resources available to survive it.

## EXAMPLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

The following Environmental Challenges can be used to challenge characters or to inspire your own creations. Some ships are listed with the encounter. It is suggested that these challenges be used against these ships, as they tend to have the right properties/stats to be able to overcome these challenges while still facing some risk.

### THE TEMPEST

*(Any medium or larger ship)*

**Description:** The waters of the Sapphire Sea are known for their localised, but extreme tempests. These violent storms test the mettle of every sailor that passes through them, and green recruits aren't considered to have earned their sea-legs until they've survived at least one of these. What makes them even worse is the fact that truly desperate pirates like to use them as opportunities to strike at ships when they are at their most vulnerable, closing in while their prey tosses on the tides.

The Tempest forms itself in a 350 foot radius area of the DMs choosing. In the centre of the Tempest is a 50 foot radius area known as the Eye of the Tempest. Ships in this area are immune to the effects of the Active, Dynamic and Constant Elements of the Tempest.

**Initiative:** The Tempest acts on initiative count 20 (Character Phase), initiative count 20 (Ship Phase), and initiative count 10 (Ship Phase)

#### Active Elements:

**Tidal Wave (Character Initiative 20):** The violent waves of the Tempest are infamous for washing over even the mightiest ships, threatening to drag them or their crew into the depths of the ocean. All characters on board a ship in the Tempest must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity or Strength saving throw (character's choice) or be knocked prone. If a character was on the open deck of the ship and failed this throw by 5 or more, they are also pushed over the edge of the ship and into the ocean.

**Lightning Strikes (Ship Initiative 20):** Any ship in the Tempest is hit with a +6 attack, dealing 22 (4d10) lightning damage on a successful hit. This attack is rolled with advantage against ships composed primarily of metal.

**Squall (Ship Initiative 10):** A particularly violent gust of wind blows through the Tempest, one strong enough to tear sail and capsize ships. At the start of the round, the DM designates a line in the Tempest that is up to 80 feet long and 20 feet wide. Upon this initiative count, any ship inside this line takes 44 (8d10) bludgeoning damage.

#### Dynamic Elements:

**Nature in Motion** The Tempest itself moves along with the winds. At the end of each round, move the entire Tempest 60 feet in the current direction that the wind is blowing. If there was no established wind beforehand, determine the direction by rolling 1d8. 1 corresponds to north, 2 north-east, 3 east, and so on in that fashion. Note that the Tempest moving will also change the location of the Eye of the Tempest.

#### Constant Elements:

**Destructive Winds:** The wind in the Tempest is stronger than usual winds. The wind is always set at Heavy Wind within the Tempest. In addition, the first time in a round that a ship attempts to turn while in the Tempest, the character who took the Helm Crew Action must succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Water Vehicles) check. Failure on the check causes the ship to suffer 18 (4d8) bludgeoning damage as the wind assaults the sails and mast.

### HOWLING BLIZZARD

*(Longship)*

**Description:** The glacial waters of the Crystal Passage are simultaneously beautiful and unnerving. Icebergs float along, clear and solid like mountains made of diamond, on waters still and reflective as a mirror. The beauty masks a more sinister environment however. Behind the glaciers are the wrecks of foolhardy ships that were unprepared to challenge this desolate place, their frozen crews trapped forever in the frigid depths.

While many captains have experience with traversing glacial passages, few truly appreciate the capricious Howling Blizzards of the Crystal Passage that strip the flesh from sailors and freeze their oars to their hands. Survivors have even spread tales of the local arctic-adapted Sahuagin population who use the Howling Blizzard as a cover for their deadly ambushes. The Howling Blizzard can come at any time while in the Crystal Passage, but while they are severe, they are also short and localised. The main method for surviving a Howling Blizzard is to either make it out to the other side or just wait it out.

The Howling Blizzard affects a 300 foot radius area as chosen by the DM, and lasts for only half a minute in total, after which the Howling Blizzard and all of its effects ends immediately.

Once either outside the Howling Blizzard's area, or after the designated half minute, all effects of the Howling Blizzard ends.

**Initiative:** The Howling Blizzard acts on initiative count 20 (Character Phase) initiative count 10 (Character Phase), initiative count 20 (Ship Phase), and initiative count 10 (Ship Phase).

### Active Elements:

**Squall (Character Initiative 20):** All creatures within the Howling Blizzard and not within full cover, must roll a DC 15 Strength saving throw. Upon a failure, they are knocked prone.

**Hail (Character Initiative 10):** All creatures within the Howling Blizzard and not within full cover, must roll a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. Upon failure, they suffer 9 (4d8) bludgeoning damage and 14 (4d6) cold damage, or half that on a successful save.

**Wind Change (Ship Initiative 20):** Due to the capricious and unpredictable nature of the Howling Blizzard, the winds inside can change at a moment's notice. The DM is to reroll the wind conditions as outlined in the "Environment" section. The wind inside the Howling Blizzard is always considered a Heavy Wind.

**Iceberg: (Ship Initiative 10):** All icebergs inside the Howling Blizzard move in the direction that the wind is currently blowing. Icebergs move at twice the rate that the wind is blowing and stop if they collide with a ship or a non-moving piece of terrain. A ship that collides with an iceberg suffers 98 (15d12) bludgeoning damage.

### Constant Elements:

**Cold Snap:** The weather inside the Howling Blizzard is always considered Extreme Cold. Any creature that starts their turn within the Howling Blizzard must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or suffer a point of exhaustion. Creatures with resistance or immunity to cold damage or adapted to cold climates are immune to this effect. Either of these effects are negated if a source of significant heat

(such as from a large open flame) is within 5 feet at the time of making the saving throw or Crew Action.

## VOLCANO OF KAU'MATU'I

*(Sloop, carrack, warship)*

**Description:** The lost island of Kau'matu'i is an ancient and isolated island, named after the god that made it his home. Tropical trees and dense foliage cover the land, with a single towering volcano rising up from the centre of it all. Rumours abound of treasure and secrets galore buried on the island however the waters surrounding it are filled with the wreckages of ships that provoked the wrath of the ancient force slumbers beneath the volcano.

While ships are able to make landfall on Kau'matu'i, leaving is a much harder proposition. The island's god sleeps in the volcano and awakens it when anyone attempts to escape his domain. The Volcano of Kau'matu'i is capable of affecting the area up to 650 feet out from the shoreline, and ships are not safe until they leave this area.

The area affected by Kau'matu'i is divided into three concentric circles. Starting from the shore, the **first circle** radiates out from the island for a distance of 200 feet, and this area is relatively free from hazards. The **second circle** radiates out for 150 feet after the first area and is where the Volcanic Vent hazards are located. Beyond that is the **third and final circle**, which radiates out for another 300 feet, and is where the Volcanic Debris lands.

**Initiative:** The Volcano of Kau'matu'i acts on initiative count 20 (Ship Phase) and initiative count 10 (Ship Phase).



TSAI 030505

### Active Elements:

**Tsunami (Ship Initiative 20):** Triggered by the seismic activity of the volcano, the angry waves of Kau'matu'i barrage escaping ships, bringing them back into the grasp of the island god. Any character helming a ship within the area of effect of the volcano must roll a DC 15 Strength (Water Vehicle) check. On a failure, their ship is pushed 50 feet back towards the shore as they are carried back by the tsunami. A ship that does not have a character taking the Helm Crew Action is automatically pushed back.

**Volcanic Vent (Ship Initiative 10):** The eruption of the volcano activates the thermal vents under the seabed, which now erupt violently, threatening to damage the ships above it. The Volcanic Vents attack any creature in the second radius, with a +7 bonus to the attack, and dealing 22 (4d10) acid damage on a hit. If all characters on board the ship are blinded, this attack is rolled at advantage.

**Volcanic Debris (Ship Initiative 10):** At the start of the round, the DM declares three, 20 foot by 20 foot areas within the third circle to be assaulted by a piece of flaming Volcanic Debris which lands upon this initiative count. Any ship within one of these areas takes 28 (8d6) bludgeoning damage and 18 (4d8) fire damage. If all characters on board the ship are blinded, the DM does not have to declare where the Volcanic Debris will land.

Volcanic debris remains in the water after it lands, becoming Hazardous Terrain (see page 15) until destroyed or when it sinks at the start of the next Volcanic Debris turn. Volcanic debris has 14 AC and 20 HP.

### Dynamic Elements:

**Increased Activity:** At the end of the round, the Volcano increases in activity, increasing the number of 20 foot by 20 foot squares hit by Volcanic Debris by one, up to a maximum of eight squares. Additionally, the radius affected by the Ash Cloud increases by 100 feet.

### Constant Elements:

**Ash Cloud:** The eruption of the volcano has resulted in a massive cloud of ash that races across the island and out across the water surface. The Ash Cloud begins at the shoreline. The area inside the Ash Cloud is heavily obscured. Any creature that starts its turn inside the Ash Cloud must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be forced to spend their action choking and coughing.

**Acidic Waters:** The volcanic activity has also released underwater gas vents, turning the ocean acidic. While the acid is not strong enough to corrode a ship, any character that ends their turn in the ocean suffers 7 (2d6) acid damage.

## BRINEBEARD'S FORTRESS

*(Sloop, carrack, galley, warship)*

**Description:** The very name of Brinebeard once struck fear into the heart of every sailor that traversed the open water. This pirate admiral had plundered so much booty that he built a magically automated island fortress just to protect it. Brinebeard's fortress now stands on Tesoro Island, daring anyone brave or foolish enough to claim its rewards.

Tesoro Island is a small rocky island, with sheer cliff walls and a semi-circular bay on its north side, in which Brinebeard's Fortress is built. **The bay has a radius of 300 feet and is ringed by high rocky walls, except for the 60 foot wide mouth on the north side.**

The fortress itself is built out of the cliffside on the straight southern side of the bay. **It is 600 feet long and 80 feet high.** Spread out every 60 feet along the fortress' façade are 8 cannon batteries. Cannon batteries are 60 feet above the ground, aiming out through window slots in the wall. The cannon batteries are completely autonomous, having been granted animation via magical enchantments.

The entrance to the fortress is a large rectangular **45 foot tall by 60 foot wide hole** in the middle of the southern cliff wall that leads into a cove. The entire hole is barricaded by a heavy steel door that is currently closed. The opening mechanism is on the opposite side of the door. **The door has 18 AC, 150 HP and a damage threshold of 10.** It also has immunity to psychic and poison damage. Next to the door, protruding from the water line, is a smaller 20 foot wide hole from which the Steel Urchin is released.

Embedded directly above the door is an enchanted conch shell that is 15 feet tall. The conch shell plays a recording of a siren once captured by Brinebeard, and is activated when the fortresses defences are triggered. **The conch has 15 AC and 30 HP.**

**Initiative:** Brinebeard's Fortress acts on initiative count 20 (Character Phase) initiative count 20 (Ship Phase), and initiative count 10 (Ship Phase).

### Active Elements:

**Siren Recording (Crew Initiative 20):** The enchanted conch shell placed above the cove entrance activates, echoing a song sung by a siren once captured by Brinebeard. All creatures in the bay that can hear the song must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed. On their turn, charmed creatures must take the Dash action to move as close as possible to the siren call source, taking the most direct route possible. If such a movement would cause that creature harm (such as falling off the side of a ship), the creature may repeat the saving throw. The creature can also repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the effect ends on it. The effect also ends if the song ceases, or the creature is no longer able to hear it. A creature that successfully saves against the Siren Call is immune to its effects for the next 24 hours.

**Fortress Defence Systems (Ship Initiative 10):** The round after an uninvited ship comes within 100 feet of the mouth to the bay, the fortress' main defence systems activate on this initiative. This effect activates only once, the first time it is triggered.

A thick chain is raised by an underwater mechanical pulley system. The chain is 60 feet long and stretches across the mouth of the bay. The chain is considered Hazardous Terrain.

Secondly, the Cannon Batteries, Siren Recording, and the Steel Urchin activate.

**Cannon Batteries (Ship Initiative 10):** All functioning cannon batteries in Brinebeard's Fortress open fire upon any enemy ship within range. Cannon Batteries attack on a +8 and deal 45 (10d8) bludgeoning damage. They have a range of 600/2,400 ft, but cannot target anything outside of the bay. Cannon Batteries automatically reload themselves, but it takes a full turn for them to do so. Cannon Batteries can be destroyed. They have 17 AC and 40 HP and are immune to psychic and poison damage.

### Dynamic Elements:

**Steel Ball Swim:** The Steel Urchin moves with increasing speed, slowing only when it hits a target. After it has moved, if the Steel Urchin has not successfully hit a target, it gains 20 movement speed, +1 to its attack bonus, and its damage increases by 5 (1d10). The Sea Urchin may only gain these benefits up to a maximum of 3 times. The benefits apply until the Sea Urchin successfully hits a target, after which the values return to normal.

### Constant Elements:

**Steel Urchin:** Released from a hole next to the door when the fortress defences are activated, the Steel Urchin is a 20 foot wide magically enchanted, buoyant, metal sphere covered in wicked spikes that make it resemble its namesake. The Steel Urchin locks onto any intruder ships in the bay, and at the end of the Ship Phase, moves its movement speed directly towards its target. If the Steel Urchin tries to occupy the same space as a target, it makes an attack against that target with a bonus of +6 and dealing 33 (6d10) piercing damage on a successful hit.

The Steel Urchin begins with 20 feet of movement speed. The Steel Urchin has an Armour Class of 19, 70 HP, and is immune to psychic and poison damage. If the Steel Urchin is destroyed, it is no longer able to move, and sinks to the bottom of the bay.

## DESIGNING AN ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE

Environmental Challenges can be difficult to create, especially due to the many combinations of player level, crew, equipment, and ship that can tackle it. Using the following guidelines should be able to help you design your own.

**Purpose:** What do you want this Environmental Challenge to achieve mechanically? Is this challenge designed to be dangerous on its own, or did you want to use it to spice up a relatively ordinary encounter? What kind of ships did you want it to challenge? How deadly do you intend the challenge to be?

**Origin:** Think about why this Environmental Challenge is arising here, what may have triggered it, and what kinds of dangers it would pose. Is it an extreme weather pattern in a notorious stretch of sea? Is it a manmade structure designed to protect a patch of the open ocean? Answering these questions should help provide you with the inspiration to create the rest of the challenge.

**Map:** Because most Environmental Challenges involve either moving out of their range, or racing towards some point, it tends to be a good idea to map out your Environmental Challenge, even if only for your own benefit during the design process. Because Environmental Challenges can also take up quite a large amount of space, consider the scale of the map along with the intended ship in order to use your space efficiently.

**Initiative:** Environmental Challenge act repeatedly, but unlike characters and monsters, Environmental Challenges don't roll for initiative. Instead, they have regular effects that act out in a predictable manner. This predictability allows the crews of those ships to plan and prepare accordingly.

The different initiative counts tend to serve different purposes in an Environmental Challenge; and understanding these purposes will help you to design your own.

- **Initiative 20 (Character).** Effects that take place on Initiative Count 20 in the Character Phase tend to be an effect that imposes difficulties for characters to perform Crew Actions. Examples are tidal waves that wash crew members overboard, powerful winds that knock them over, or other disorienting effects.
- **Initiative 10 (Character).** Effects that take place on Initiative Count 10 in the Character Phase tend to be effects that directly deal damage to the crew members on board the ship. These effects can be particularly punishing and should only be used when designing a very difficult challenge.
- **Initiative 20 (Ship).** Effects that take place on Initiative Count 20 in the Ship Phase tend to be effects that impose difficulties on the way a ship will act on that turn, such as extreme wind conditions.
- **Initiative 10 (Ship).** Effects that take place on initiative count 10 in the Ship Phase tend to have particularly devastating effects. The upside however is that they are very telegraphed and seen from a long way away. In general, well co-ordinated ships should be able to raise their initiative high enough to be able to circumvent or intercept these actions. However, crews that have fallen prey to the earlier hazards of the Environmental Challenge may find it difficult to marshal the manpower necessary to overcome this effect.

**Dynamic Elements:** In order to avoid having your encounter run stale, you are encouraged to slowly increase the difficulty, or raise the stakes using Dynamic Elements. A common way to use the Dynamic Effect is to place an implicit timer on the Challenge; if the ship does not get out of danger before the Dynamic Element builds up too much, then they will stand little chance of surviving.

**Constant Effects:** Due to being part of the actual environment, Environmental Challenges usually also pose some sort of continuous hazard that the ship must deal with. These are often ever-present conditions that either change the tactics that players usually use when controlling their ship, or a constant threat that greatly punishes failure.



# CHAPTER 5: ENCOUNTERS

The following are 6 sample encounters that utilise many of the rules, ships and equipment outlined in this module. The easier encounters are a good way to familiarise your players with the new rules, while the harder ones are more exciting and help demonstrate the variety of tactics that can be utilised in ship combat.

It is recommended that for each fight, you bring at least a ship of the same size as well as a comparably sized crew, with comparable CR's. Encounters are balanced around parties of 4-6 players. Many of these encounters can easily be used as plot hooks for high seas adventure, or simply thrown in as a random event while traversing the waves.

For the sake of these encounters, all crew members in these encounters are assumed to be proficient with Water Vehicles unless stated otherwise.

## LIZARDS OF THE COAST

### (RECOMMENDED LEVEL 3-4)

They appear between the crests of waves, sharp sails and rough-hewn hulls. They raise their bone clubs and wooden spears to the skies and utter a guttural battlecry. In stolen boats, they close in on their prey, their cold reptilian eyes doing nothing to betray the pure excitement they feel in the throes of a successful hunt. They are: **The Lizards of the Coast**.

This band of Lizardfolk raiders have recently taken over a small stretch of coast, harassing fishermen for their harvests and preying on any ship trying to trade with the villagers. More often than not they simply take what their boats can carry and then escape before proper defences can be mounted. However, they have become emboldened recently with the arrival of their vicious new queen, **Rattletail**. Under her leadership, The Lizards of the Coast have stepped up their raids, sometimes now even taking human captives to satisfy their savage hunger.

### EQUIPMENT

The Lizards of the Coast have no equipment on board their ship.

### CREW

- 1 **lizard queen** (Queen Rattletail)
- 1 **lizardfolk shaman**
- 9 **lizardfolk**

### TACTICS

While the Lizardfolk are often assumed to be little more than primitive savages, chasing after prey with little planning or thought, their beast-like nature belies a cunning intelligence.

Rattletail leaves her shaman and 4 Lizardfolk a small way up the beach with their catamaran, while she takes the rest of the raiding party to wait in the waters for a potential target. Once they have spotted one, Rattletail sends one of her scouts back to alert their members on the beach, who ready the boat and sail out to hunt their prey. Meanwhile Rattletail and her party begin to stalk the enemy ship underwater, waiting for the moment to strike.

## CATAMARAN

*Small ship (30 feet long by 5 feet wide)*

**Armor Class** 15  
**Hit Points** 32 (4d8)  
**Damage Threshold** 0  
**Weapon Slots** 0

Initiative	Sail Stations	Speed Unit	Max Speed
+8	4	15 ft.	60 ft. (50 ft.)

**Crew Members** 1/5  
**Passengers** 6  
**Tonnage** 1/2

### Properties

**Mixed Propulsion (Oars).** A Mixed Propulsion ship is one that can use sails during windy conditions but has an alternate propulsion method (listed in brackets next to the property) in calmer weather. Mixed Propulsion ships act like Sail Powered ships when their sails are unfurled. However, even when their sails are furled or they are in a Dead Wind, they still retain their normal speed unit.

**Agile.** Agile ships are particularly manoeuvrable and easy to pilot. They are able to turn on the spot, instead of needing to move while turning as most other ships do. Turning does not take up any extra movement speed.



The boating party sails out to intercept the target ship, attempting to make as much noise as possible to provide a distraction for their queen. The Lizardfolk shaman is particularly adept at using ranged spells to distract and harass. Once the prey has become thoroughly engaged in a battle with a seemingly small band of Lizardfolk, Rattletail leads her party in an ambush and boards the enemy, wreaking havoc on the surprised sailors. The Lizardfolk on the catamaran remain at range, using their javelins and spells to heckle their enemy from afar.

The Lizards of the Coast are vicious in battle, but will flee if the battle turns, diving into the ocean to escape any pursuers. If victorious, they loot whatever resources and prisoners they can, stealing the boat if they are able to sail it, scuttling it if they cannot.

### QUEEN RATTLETAIL

The Lizards of the Coast originally made their homes further inland, in the swampy ruins of an ancient temple to Semuanya. They lived peacefully but in isolation back then, hunting the local game and wildlife. Their numbers were considerably higher than the pitiful band they possess now, but their lives were shattered when a group of adventurers arrived to raid and loot their home. With many of their kin killed and their home left uninhabitable, the survivors had no choice but to move to the coast and survive by raiding the local fishermen.

As the survivors gathered at night around their camps and their dismal bounties, they sent prayers to anyone who could hear them for the chance at revenge. At first, the prayers simply evaporated into the cosmic void, but one day, when their hopes were all but extinguished, she appeared. If Lizardfolk have a collective idea of perfection, it would be Rattletail. Agile, cunning, and with a distinctive wrapping of animal bones around her tail, Rattletail emerged to lay claim to the survivors, her new followers instantly throwing themselves at their new leader.

Little did the survivors know however, Rattletail was not sent by Semuanya, but by the reptilian demon Sess'inek. Rattletail did away with any sense of cowardice or mercy in her group. Refocusing her band, she drew up battle plans and ambush spots, doubling their spoils from each raid and even capturing prisoners to be consumed or sacrificed, their bones added to her tail wrap as an homage to her dark patron.

## GUNBOAT DIPLOMACY

### (RECOMMENDED LEVEL 5-6)

It seems to be an illusion at first. On the horizon are two ships, identical even down to the grinning Dwarves captaining from the helm. However, as they draw closer, they both fire their bow guns, and the resulting shock of two cannonballs striking your hull clears all doubt; this is no trick of the light.

With a manoeuvre perfected through rigorous drilling, the two boats split, flanking and encircling you like wolves around a wounded deer. Dodging cannonfire, they find their positions on either side, and prepare to smash your ship between their barrages. Just before the flash of the guns that blow you into the water, you see the names written on the two ships: **"Hammer"** and **"Anvil"**

### EQUIPMENT

Both of the gunships: "Hammer" and "Anvil" have the same set of equipment on board.

- 3 cannons (1 bow, 1 port, 1 starboard)
- 20 cannonballs
- 10 grape shots
- 10 chain shots

## GUNBOAT

*Medium ship (60 feet long by 20 feet wide)*

**Armor Class** 15

**Hit Points** 150 (15d10)

**Damage Threshold** 10

**Weapon Slots** 3

Initiative	Sail Stations	Speed Unit	Max Speed
+8	6	20 ft.	120 ft. (90 ft.)

**Crew Members** 2/10

**Passengers** 15

**Tonnage** 30

### Properties

**Agile.** Agile ships are particularly manoeuvrable and easy to pilot. They are able to turn on the spot, instead of needing to move while turning as most other ships do. Turning does not take up any extra movement speed.

**Sail Powered.** A ship with the "Sail Powered" property uses the power of the wind to blow through their sails in order to move. Ships with this property have a speed unit of 0 in a Dead Wind. They also may suffer additional penalties and/or bonuses in other wind conditions. On its turn, a Sail Powered Ship that has had at least half of its Sail Stations successfully used that round may furl its sails instead of using its movement speed. A ship that has furled its sails is not considered Sail Powered and has a speed unit of 0 until the sails are unfurled again. In order to unfurl its sails, half of the ships Sail Stations must have been successfully used that round.

**Helmsman Required.** A ship with the "Helmsman Required" property usually have some sort of rudder or steering system on board that works independently of the ship's main locomotion method. These ships can only move in a straight line, unless a crew member takes the Helm Crew Action that round.

## CREW

The crew is split evenly amongst the two gunboats

- 2 **captains** (Hamgrim and Angar) (See Appendix C)
- 18 **swashbucklers** (Volo's Guide to Monsters)

## TACTICS

The twins adopt a simple flanking strategy in order to take down their foes. Approaching straight on to enemy ships to avoid their broadside fire, they pepper their enemy with shots until they are able to get in close. Afterwards, they split off, and use their agility to avoid the sides of their enemies that contain the most weapons. Quite often, large ships find themselves unable to contest the two gunboats darting in and out of their range and slowly succumb to their constant fire.

## HAMGRIM AND ANGAR IRONWATER

The twins **Hamgrim** and **Angar** seem so identical that even their own mother can't tell them apart. Inseparable, the two signed up for service on a ship and became the fastest cannon crew in the whole navy. Their skills and commitment to work let them rise through the ranks quickly until they shared command of a large ship.

One night while on shore leave, the port they were stationed at came under attack by the notorious Steelhull pirates. The pirates had launched a stealth sortie beforehand to sabotage the brothers' ship, seeing it as the only ship capable of fighting their own vessel. The brothers were not deterred however, and instead split their crew to man two small gunboats, sailing them out to meet their foes.

The pirates had superior firepower, but were unprepared for the coordinated assault of the twins. They acted instinctively as a single unit, not needing to even signal each other in their manoeuvres to flank their lumbering target. Unable to bring their firepower to bear against such an agile assault, the pirates were defeated swiftly, their ship smashed between the two small gunboats.

Impressed with the brothers' skills and resourcefulness, the navy granted them the two commandeered gunboats to use as their own. They now tend to be stationed at smaller ports and islands, tasked with sailing out to meet threats and destroy them before they can make landfall.

## FOR WHOM THE SHIP'S BELL TOLLS

### (RECOMMENDED LEVEL 5-6)

All salty dogs that have been on the sea for some time know the tale, and it is one they only dare tell after finishing their night of grog. It always starts the same: a green fog, a shape in the dark, and the incessant tolling of an unseen bell. They say it causes madness in any sailor that hears it; screaming at the sight of a rotting ship, swiping at shadows, and then jumping into the sea.

As the fog clears, so does the veil over the survivor's minds. Those who manage to regain their senses quickly, lean over the rails to catch a glimpse of a ship, decayed with age, and as decrepit as its crew. Though the ship fades with the rising of the sun, the memory stains a black mark in the mind of all who encounter it, for none can forget the ghost ship: **The Drowned Maiden**.

## DESCRIPTION

The Drowned Maiden is a ghost ship that haunts the ocean, trawling for wayward sailors the way fisherman hunt schools of fish. Appearing on moonless nights, it extends a thick green fog over its prey before its ghastly crew swarms over the abyss to kill their unfortunate victims.

The Drowned Maiden is based off of the design of a sloop. Due to its ghastly nature however, the wood has completely rotted and taken on a waterlogged, green tinge. The sails are nothing more than rags, and the rigging twists in the wind like worms on the seabed.

The Drowned Maiden has 3 cannons split among its bow, port, and starboard sides. All guns are located on the main deck and the helm is located towards the stern end of the ship. The Drowned Maiden requires no actual sailors to move. It is powered purely by the will of **Captain Chainedheart** who merely needs to stand at the helm and take the Helm Crew Action to move the ship. It has a central main mast from which its signature ship bell hangs. The distinctive fog that travels with the Drowned Maiden emanates from the bell and ceases if the bell is destroyed. The ship bell is a **medium size object, has 15 AC and 30 HP**. It is immune to psychic and poison damage.

If Captain Chainedheart is destroyed, the Drowned Maiden loses its ghostly nature, dropping to 0 Hull Points instantly and enters the sinking condition.

## EQUIPMENT

All equipment on board the Drowned Maiden shares the Obscured Etherealness trait as described above. In addition, all equipment and ammunition are refreshed upon the next appearance of the Drowned Maiden.

- 3 cannons (1 bow, 1 port, 1 starboard)
- 2 grappling hooks (1 port, 1 starboard)
- 20 chain shots



# THE DROWNED MAIDEN

Medium ship (80 feet long by 20 feet wide)

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 200 (20d10)

Damage Threshold 0

Weapon Slots 7

Initiative	Sail Stations	Speed Unit	Max Speed
+9	0	0 ft.	150 ft. (150 ft.)

Crew Members 1/20

Passengers 20

Tonnage 50

## Properties

**Independent Propulsion (150 ft.).** A ship with Independent Propulsion has a propulsion method that requires nothing but someone at the helm to activate the controls. When on a ship with this property, a character taking the Helm crew action automatically grants the ship a base movement speed shown in the parenthesis. Any Sail Crew Actions taken are added to this base movement speed.

**Agile.** Agile ships are particularly manoeuvrable and easy to pilot. They are able to turn on the spot, instead of needing to move while turning as most other ships do. Turning does not take up any extra movement speed.

**Travelling Fog.** The Drowned Maiden constantly emits a greenish, opaque fog in a 150 foot radius around itself (the point of origin starting from the ship's bell). This fog travels with the Drowned Maiden. The fog can be temporarily blown away by a moderately strong magical wind (such as one created by Gust of Wind) or dispersed when exposed to bright light. It is constantly produced however, so any attempt at dispersal must be continuous to have a practical effect. The crew members of the Drowned Maiden are not affected by the fog. The Drowned Maiden loses this property if the ship's bell is destroyed.

**Obscured Etherealness.** The Drowned Maiden has resistance to any non-magical damage or any damage from non-silvered weapons while it is within the Travelling Fog.

**Forced Servitude.** The crew of the Drowned Maiden cannot leave the boundaries of the fog willingly. A crew member of the Drowned Maiden that starts its turn outside of the fog suffers 11 (2d6) radiant damage. Any humanoid creature that dies within the fog is bound in servitude to the Drowned Maiden and rises the next moonless night on board the ship as a spectre. As a spectre, they are forced into the crew and must obey the orders of Captain Chainedheart until they, Captain Chainedheart, or the Drowned Maiden is destroyed.

## CREW

- 1 **wraith** (Captain Chainedheart)
- 10 **spectres**
- 2 **poltergeist variant spectres**

## TACTICS

The Drowned Maiden appears on moonless nights in the same patch of ocean it disappeared in previously. It travels around until it notices a potential target and then chases them down relentlessly. It only breaks off the chase if its target displays an ability to easily disperse the fog.

The Drowned Maiden does not use cannonballs in its cannons. Instead, they exclusively fire chains at their prey in order to slow them down to catch them in the fog.

Once the Drowned Maiden has caught up to its prey, its crew of spectres flies over the gap between ships and boards the enemy. Once the spectre crew have boarded, the poltergeists utilise their telekinetic thrust to try and force people off the ship to drown like they did to their captain many years ago. If an enemy boards the Drowned Maiden however, the crew focuses all of their attention on protecting their captain as well as the bell, attempting to remove the intruder by any means necessary.

The Drowned Maiden disappears upon the rising of the sun. Any damage to the ship and crew is repaired upon its next appearance.

## CAPTAIN CHAINEDHEART

The captain of the Drowned Maiden is Captain Chainedheart, a wraith with hair like rotten seaweed, broken chains on her wrists, and dressed in the torn rags of the dress she was drowned in. In life, Captain Chainedheart was Lady Annabelle de Vire, the wife of Lord Malcolm de Vire, the original captain of the ship when it was still known as the "Expedition." Despite his crew's superstitious protests about the misfortune that comes with bringing a woman on board, Lord de Vire had been adamant about bringing his wife on his latest voyage across the seas.

Halfway through their journey, the Expedition became caught in a deep fog that the crew could not seem to escape and were hopelessly lost. The crew were certain that Lady de Vire was the cause, and that their captain had betrayed them all by not heeding their warnings. In a desperate attempt to lift the fog, the crew of the Expedition staged a mutiny, killing Lady de Vire's husband in front of her before tying her up and throwing her into the ocean.

Unfortunately, while she did drown, Lady de Vire did not stay at the bottom of the ocean like the crew had hoped. Her rage caused her to rise again as the wraith: Captain Chainedheart. Killing the mutinous crew, she bound their spirits to the vessel, transforming it into the Drowned Maiden, its polished boards rotting away and the sails decaying under the necrotic energies. Despite having her revenge, the new wraith was still left hollow and hungry for more targets of her wrath. And so, taking the fog with her, she disappeared into the night, her dark hunt beginning.

# BACK GALLEY BRAWL

## (RECOMMENDED LEVEL 6-8)

The creaking of massive timbers. The splash of mighty oars. The sound of drums. All who travel too close to the Arkelios Archipelago know these sounds and know to beware.

Created from the parts of its defeated enemies, the **Floating Fortress** is exactly what its name implies. A towering hulk of a ship, manned by dozens of Hobgoblins rowing massive oars, the Floating Fortress protects and enforces the sovereignty of the Arkelios Archipelago. Ships that see the Floating Fortresses towering castles appear over the horizon have three choices: pay tribute, fight, or run.

## THE FLOATING FORTRESS

*Large ship (120 feet long by 30 feet wide)*

**Armor Class** 15  
**Hit Points** 360 (30d12)  
**Damage Threshold** 15  
**Weapon Slots** 10

Initiative	Sail Stations	Speed Unit	Max Speed
+5	15	5 ft.	75 ft. (55 ft.)

**Crew Members** 10/30  
**Passengers** 50  
**Tonnage** 80

### Properties

**Helmsman Required** A ship with the “Helmsman Required” property usually have some sort of rudder or steering system on board that works independently of the ship’s main locomotion method. These ships can only move in a straight line, unless a crew member takes the “Helm” Crew Action that round.

**Inbuilt Drawbridge** The centre 15-foot stretch of hull on both the port and starboard sides of the Floating Fortress has actually been converted into a drawbridge, allowing the rowers to board the enemy ship directly from the gallery. The drawbridge is dropped by a lever next to it in the rowing gallery. Once lowered, it takes a minute to rewind the chain pulley attached to it to bring it back up. The drawbridge is capable of bridging a 15 foot gap. The drawbridge has 16 AC, 50 HP and it immune to psychic and poison damage.

### DESCRIPTION

The Floating Fortress is based off of the design of the galley. The Floating Fortress is quite tall, with the top deck usually standing at least 20 feet above the waterline. Two sets of stairs are located on the bow and stern sides of the ship leading down to the rowing gallery. In the rowing gallery, line after line of overworked Hobgoblins sit, rowing the massive oars that move the massive ship. The steering oar acts as the ship’s rudder and is located at the stern of the ship. Admiral Calvin remains back here, piloting the ship.

Being the flagship of a Hobgoblin navy, the Floating Fortress has had extensive defensive modifications made. The most significant addition is the three 10 foot by 10 foot wooden castles spaced out in the middle column of the top deck. These castles are 15 feet tall and have ladders that lead down into the rowing deck. Rowers from below can swarm into these castles and fire their longbows at enemies from the safety of cover.

The other modification is offensive, but much harder to notice. On both the port and starboard sides, the centre stretch of hull has actually been converted into a drawbridge. The drawbridge is 15 feet wide and 15 feet long and allows the rowers to stream directly out from the gallery to board their foe.

The ship also has a thick plating of iron spikes around its hull, preventing opponents from climbing the sides of the ship.

### EQUIPMENT

- 6 ballistae (3 port, 3 starboard)
- 2 grappling hooks (1 port, 1 starboard)
- 50 bolts
- 30 flaming bolts
- 4 boarding planks
- Naval ram
- Spiked hull

### CREW

- 1 **hobgoblin warlord** (Admiral Calvin)
- 4 **hobgoblin captains**
- 1 **hobgoblin devastator**
- 20 **hobgoblins**

### TACTICS

The Floating Fortress has two different strategies, depending on its intention with the enemy. If the goal is to simply eradicate their foe, the Floating Fortress attempts to keep its distance while using its ballistae to sink its foe. The Hobgoblin Captains stay on the top deck shooting flaming bolts while the Devastator hurls fireballs to turn the enemy into ash on the water.

If the goal is to raid the enemy ship however, the plan looks very different. In this case, the ship devotes all of its energy into speed; the Hobgoblins row their oars as fast as possible, under the command, drums, and whips of their captains. The ultimate aim is to close the gap in order to begin boarding actions. Once the enemy ship is immobilised through either ramming or grappling hook, the Floating Fortress prepares for boarding actions. If the Floating Fortress is next to its target, it drops its drawbridge to create a bridge, otherwise it simply uses the bow of the ship as the bridge.

Either way, once their target is boardable, the crew springs from below and swarms onto the enemy deck, with only a few left behind to man the castles and pester the enemy with longbows from afar. Calvin, his captains, and the devastator wait however until their pawns have fully engaged the enemy before entering the fray. They single out the most capable combatants on the enemy ship and challenge them to combat.

## ADMIRAL CALVIN

The conqueror of Arkelios. The breaker of the Cortillian Armada. The scourer of the Gorian Sea. Yes, the Hobgoblin **Calvin Gorschar** has had many titles, but the one he cherishes the most is simply: Admiral.

Calvin hails from the Arkelios Archipelago, a series of islands inhabited by splintered legions of Hobgoblins. These legions would fight each other as often as they would fight outsiders, hoping to claim each other's islands for their own.

As a child, the future admiral's island fell prey to the ambitions of its neighbour, losing a crucial naval battle that subjugated his clan, wiped out their ships, and tossed the wannabe sailor into the sea. He would have drowned that day, had he not managed to cling to a piece of driftwood and be rescued by a passing merchant ship. The captain of the ship was impressed by the boy's tenacity and decided to add him to his crew, despite his fearsome race. The crew found his goblinoid name difficult to pronounce however and decided instead to rename him: Calvin.

As he grew older, Calvin became both a skilled sailor and a fierce fighter. He hopped from one ship to another, saving his pay, and learning the new naval technologies and tactics that had been developed outside of his small chain of islands. After many years abroad, he finally returned home.

Using his acquired skills and knowledge, Calvin quickly managed to free his island from their subjugators. Taking no time to celebrate, Calvin rallied his people and embarked on a massive ship building endeavour, using the new designs he had seen during his exile. The new ships were faster, stronger and more durable than their neighbours' glorified fishing boats and granted Calvin complete naval dominance over the island chain. As his fleet swept over the archipelago, he offered his rivals a simple choice: join him or die. Most chose the former.

Now as the first being to ever unite the Arkelios Archipelago, the self-appointed Admiral sails the waters around his domain protecting it and exacting tribute from any that wish to traverse its passages. Those that have visited the central islands however return with rumours that Calvin's ship building aspirations are not over. His seemingly passive nature right now belies an even loftier ambition, as he builds a grand fleet that he will one day unleash upon the whole ocean.



## SMOKE ON THE WATER (RECOMMENDED LEVEL 10-12)

**Captain Drake** - a name once lauded by civil society, but now only spat on by those he once called friend. Formally a famed adventurer in the royal navy, the captain of the **Torchrunner** braved uncharted waters and returned to delight soirees and drawing rooms with exotic goods, mysterious treasures, and daring tales. His expeditions brought him fame and fortune, but one day he left on another adventure, and disappeared. Months passed, society mourned, the navy honoured him, and he eventually passed into memory.

But just as the people had finished moving on, the Torchrunner reappeared in the horizon of a port, not just unharmed, but transformed; red scales plating the hull, and an iron dragon head mounted on her bow. However, as a navy vessel sailed out to greet the returned captain, a jet of flames burst forth from the dragon head, burning the ship and all of its crew to cinders. To the horror of those watching from the pier, the Torchrunner burned their imperial flag and then unfurled Captain Drake's new colours: a red dragon wrapped around a burnt skull. Captain Drake had returned, not as a celebrated hero, but as a bloodthirsty pirate.

Nobody knows why Captain Drake surrendered his noble navy career for a life of wanton raiding, pillaging, and burning. The only clue comes from the stories told by survivors found clinging to the charred shells of their former ships. Each tells of a mysterious crew member, a red Dragonborn priestess, wreathed in silks and incense, who never leaves the side of the disgraced captain. They say she whispers in his ear, her words dripping down his ear like honey, compelling him to each act of violence he commits. But whether she serves him, he her, or both an even higher power, none can say for sure.

## THE TORCHRUNNER

*Large ship (120 feet long by 30 feet wide)*

**Armor Class** 18

**Hit Points** 360 (30d12)

**Damage Threshold** 15

**Weapon Slots** 12

Initiative	Sail Stations	Speed Unit	Max Speed
+6	15	10 ft.	150 ft. (120 ft.)

**Crew Members** 8/30

**Passengers** 30

**Tonnage** 100

### Properties

**Independent Propulsion (50 ft.).** A ship with Independent Propulsion has a propulsion method that requires nothing but someone at the helm to activate the controls. When on a ship with this property, a character taking the Helm crew action automatically grants the ship a base movement speed shown in the parenthesis. Any Sail actions taken are added to this base movement speed.

## DESCRIPTION

The Torchranner is based off of a carrack that has had extensive modifications performed on it, due to the tampering of the cult of Tiamat. Its hull has been reinforced with red dragon scales, a dragon's breath weapon attached to the bow, and an independent engine installed in the hold. These upgrades cause the Torchranner to resemble a dragon swooping across the waves whenever it moves to intercept its prey.

The engine in the hold is magical in nature and takes up about half of the hold space. Powered by an unquenchable dragon fire, the engine enchants the ship, allowing it to move at a medium pace without the need for the sails.

Besides its recent upgrades, the Torchranner's most distinctive trait from its days as a navy vessel remains: the many alcoves, hooks and shelves on the ship, from which are hung dozens of torches and lanterns. Captain Drake keeps these lit, even though they alert enemy ships whenever he approaches. Despite the forced conversion and his new status as a zealous pirate, Captain Drake's desire for recognition and celebration remains.

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 Dragon head
- 6 cannons (3 port, 3 starboard)
- 2 grappling hooks (1 starboard, 1 port)
- 60 cannonballs
- 15 grape shots
- 20 smoke bombs
- 6 boarding planks

## CREW

- 1 **champion** (Captain Drake) (Volo's Guide to Monsters)
- 1 **priest** (Shara Raelor)
- 14 **sailors** (Appendix A)
- 4 **swashbucklers** (Volo's Guide to Monsters)
- 3 **half-red dragon veterans**
- 2 **guard drakes** (Volo's Guide to Monsters)

## TACTICS

When the Torchranner spots a potential target, it immediately pursues it with all speed that it can muster, with the eventual aim to get in close and use its Dragon Breath weapon. If the enemy ship instead chooses to engage, the Torchranner uses its smoke bombs to create a wall of cover, and then attempts to close the gap. However, the Torchranner prefers to not sink the enemy and instead board them in order to take any treasure on board.

Once the Torchranner has used all charges of its Dragon's Breath weapon, it begins an attempt to grapple the enemy ship and then board. This is the only time that Shara allows Captain Drake to leave her side, opting to let him join the boarding party while she stays at the helm with her two guard drakes in relative safety.

All crew members of the Torchranner fight to the death in a mad zeal. Any prisoners taken are either asked to convert to Tiamat or be killed. Any treasure on the enemy ship is taken back to the Torchranner to be used as an offering to Tiamat later on. Once there is nothing else of value remaining on the enemy ship, the crew sets it aflame and leaves.

## CAPTAIN JONATHAN DRAKE

Captain Jonathan Drake, the captain of the Torchranner, was once the most lauded officer in the entire royal navy, having led multiple expeditions into uncharted waters and territories. Boisterous, yet charming, he dazzled both high society and the common folk with the tales of his daring and the exotic goods he brought back from his travels.

On one trip however, his luck seemed to run out. Caught in a ferocious storm, Drake was shipwrecked on the coast of an uncharted island. The crew of the Torchranner would have died right there on that beach, had it not been for the Red Dragonborn High Priestess: Shara Raelor. Whether through stroke of fortune, or twist of fate, the island was not deserted but in fact populated by a cult of Tiamat, and their opportunistic high priestess had plans for the strangers that had just washed up on her shore.

Taking them in, the cult nursed the injured and delirious crew back to life, while at the same time reshaping them into the perfect pawns for their plans. Exposure to hallucinogenic smokes, mind-bending herbs, and mystical chanting slowly brainwashed the crew, including their captain. Shara chipped away at their senses of chivalry, honour, and loyalty, and replaced them with nothing but bloodlust, greed, and treachery.

Several weeks later, the crew finally awoke from their trances back on a newly repaired Torchranner. Drake never questioned how his ship had not only been fixed, but also upgraded with new weapons and defences; nor did he question the appearance of the strange new woman who never left his side and whose incense left him dizzy and stuporous. Completely oblivious to his manipulation, Captain Drake gave the order to set sail. Instead of the noble navy officer he once was however, he now sailed as a notorious pirate. His once celebrated flair and panache now corrupted into arrogance and zeal. He seeks only to pay homage to his beloved Dragon Queen: by burning anyone that strays into his path.



# THE MAGICAL SEAS

## (RECOMMENDED LEVEL 15-18)

It appears on the horizon shining white and gold, like a vision from the heavens. Gliding over waters the way an eagle glides through the air, it pulls serenely into port, its lifelike Deva statue figurehead only adding to its almost divine eminence.

The **Magus Navigium** is an immense warship used as a merchant vessel for an exclusive clientele. Kings, merchant lords, and arch-wizards contract this ship exclusively whenever they need to transport anything too valuable to entrust to any ordinary vessel. Equipped with magical parts beyond counting, the Magus Navigium is considered virtually unsinkable and undefeatable, and even the bravest raiders give it a wide berth.

If you are brave enough to try to loot this legendary ship, the direct approach may not be the best. But remember, that even if you manage to sneak on board and make away with the valuable treasures within, you may still need to face the wrath of its previous owners, who will not be happy that their possessions did not reach the harbour they intended.

### DESCRIPTION:

Faster than any ship its size has any right to be, combined with a hull thicker than a dragon's hide, the Magus Navigium is a marvel of magical artificing. It's moniker, "The Cloud on Water," was earned due to the almost serene way it glides across the ocean, its mother of pearl embossing and gilded rails literally glowing in the open sun. Its figurehead is an extremely realistic statue of a Deva in full flight, adding to the heavenly aesthetic.

Despite the Magus Navigium being based off and built out of a warship, it is far from a conventional ship. Beyond just its otherworldly appearance, the ship boasts a number of magical improvements that set it beyond any mundane vessel.

The first concerns its helm. Located on the top deck towards the stern is a large purple crystal set into a metal frame. This crystal serves as the helm of the ship, and a creature need only to touch it in order to mentally helm the ship. Using the crystal also allows a creature to power the magical sails that are able to generate their own winds to propel the ship.

The Magus Navigium is also outfitted with all manners of magical defences in order to protect its invaluable cargoes. The hull is reinforced with a magical shielding that makes it impenetrable to all but the strongest of assaults and even some magical attacks. Four Batteries of arcana-tillery line both the port and starboard sides of the ship, along with one extra located on the bow of the ship. The rest of the ship's weapon slots are occupied with cannons.

Finally, it is equipped with numerous features to ensure its cargo is delivered safely and on time. The hold is lined with lead (after all, the boat floats via magic, not by buoyancy) in order to shield its contents from magical prying eyes. Various enchanted instruments near the helm also ensure that the ship never loses its course.

### EQUIPMENT

- 5 arcana-tillery (1 bow, 2 port, 2 starboard)
- 8 cannons (4 port, 4 starboard)
- Crystal helm (See Magical Helm property)
- 1 magic mesh
- 100 cannonballs
- 20 smoke bombs
- 50 grape shots
- 50 spell shots

### CREW

- 1 **champion** (Captain Enzo Aureleus) (Volo's Guide to Monsters)
- 6 **mages** (MM)
- 2 **priests** (MM)
- 5 **knights** (MM)
- 15 **sailors** (Appendix A)
- 10 **swashbucklers** (Volo's Guide to Monsters)

## THE MAGUS NAVIGIUM

*Huge ship (200 feet long by 50 feet wide)*

**Armor Class** 18

**Hit Points** 600 (30d20)

**Damage Threshold** 20

**Weapon Slots** 18

Initiative	Sail Stations	Speed Unit	Max Speed
+4	20	10 ft.	200 ft. (170 ft.)

**Crew Members** 10/40

**Passengers** 70

**Tonnage** 500

### Properties

**Independent Propulsion (50 ft.).** A ship with Independent Propulsion has a propulsion method that requires nothing but someone at the helm to activate the controls. When on a ship with this property, a character taking the Helm crew action automatically grants the ship a base movement speed shown in the parenthesis. Any Sail Crew Actions taken are added to this base movement speed.

**Magical Helm.** The magical helm of the Magus Navigium is so responsive and simple to use, that helming the ship virtually feels like an extension of one's own body. Any character taking the Helm action on the Magus Navigium automatically succeeds on any ability check or saving throw required to manoeuvre the ship through difficult environments or conditions.

**Overdrive.** By taking the Helm action, a character can activate all of the Magus Navigium's velocity spells at once, giving it an extremely high burst of speed. On the ship's next turn, it may, as an action, move 100 feet in the direction it is currently facing. Once used, this ability cannot be used until the next dawn.

## TACTICS

The Magus Navigium is one of, if not the strongest ship in the whole ocean. Enchanted down to the last nail, the Magus boasts more magical defences and weapons than an Arch-Lich's lair. As such, the Magus' tactics are very simple: absorb any assault on its thick hull, and then use its batteries of arcane and regular cannons to blow its enemies to smithereens.

If a foe wishes to take down this legendary ship (and get to the valuable loot within), they will most likely need to adopt a more stealthy approach, utilising small vessels and subterfuge to gain access to the ship, and take it down from within.

Being a merchant vessel, the Magus does not actively hunt pursuers, or have any need to take captives. As such, they rarely engage in boarding tactics, and will actively try to keep its distance from any foe that gets too close, using its Overdrive ability to boost away in an emergency. On rare occasions however, the Magus can act very successfully as an aggressor. This usually only occurs when it has been contracted to hunt down a large aquatic monster to be used in an ambitious mage's experiments.

## CAPTAIN ENZO AURELEUS

The Gnomish captain, **Enzo Aureleus** is referred to by those who know him as "The Miracle Maker," for he truly did achieve the impossible: he managed to get several wizards to actually work together on something.

For there's a reason that the Magus Navigium is a one-of-a-kind ship. Even though the magic required to make such a wonder is theoretically possible, it requires the cooperation of so many wizards, artificers, and enchanters (who by their nature are notoriously capricious and jealous of their works) that such a feat was never thought possible.

That's where Enzo came in. When he was just the captain of a merchant vessel, Enzo had come across a treasure map, ostensibly with directions to a priceless artefact, somewhere out in the sea. And while such a tantalising treasure may be enough to satisfy the dreams of lesser men, Enzo saw an even bigger prize.

Enzo made a pilgrimage to every magical university, institute and conclave he could get access to. To each one, he made the same deal: he would sail out and recover the missing artefact for them, if they would simply provide an enchantment or piece of magical equipment to his ship to help make the journey possible. Temporarily dulled by avarice, everyone he met with agreed to the terms readily, and by the time he left to actually find the artefact, his ship was virtually unrecognisable. Thus, Enzo decided it needed a new name: The Magus Navigium.

When Enzo returned with the artefact and revealed his duplicity to his sponsors, they were understandably furious. Unfortunately, none of them could do anything about it; trying to claim the artefact for themselves would risk accusations of theft from every other sponsor. Even worse, the various enchantments and spells cast over the ship had become so interwoven, that trying to reclaim one's own would destroy the work of everyone else's, which would likely further agitate their colleagues.

Of course, this is exactly what Enzo had planned. With a cocky grin he made one more proposal to his sponsors: since he had a debt to pay to each of them, and since the ship could not be reclaimed fairly, he would have to use the ship in service of them instead. He would facilitate trade between all of his sponsors, transporting cargoes of books, magical items, and reagents; everything too valuable to trust to an ordinary vessel. And thus, Enzo became the captain and owner of the one of the most powerful vessels in the world; all without spending a single copper.

Despite his considerable debt, Enzo managed to pay it off quickly. His sponsors' cargoes did not tend to be very bulky, and thus he was able to transport several extra loads on his travels, charging a premium for the security and speed his magical ship could offer. And what happened to the artefact in the end? Well you can see it now, whenever the Magus appears on the horizon, attached to the bow as the figurehead of the ship.



# CHAPTER 6: EQUIPMENT

A good ship is designed to take you safely from one port to another. However, without the right equipment, your ship may very well just end up being your tomb. Just like an adventurer needs their sword, shield, armour and all matters of adventuring gear, so too does a ship need equipment. The following chapter contains a list of the common weapons, hull upgrades, and other items you may need on your high seas voyages.

Some of the following equipment can also be found in the Core Rulebooks, however many have been rebalanced in line with this module. The DM has ultimate discretion in which of the following equipment they wish to include in their campaign and setting.

## WEAPONS

Unless you plan to end all of your engagements through boarding actions, you are going to need a weapon on your ship (and even if you do, it would still be a good idea). The section below details the most common weapons found on ships as well as their: Armor Class, HP, Damage Immunities/Vulnerabilities/Resistances, how many weapon slots they take up, their base damage, and any special properties they may possess.

All ship weapons are considered martial weapons.

## WEAPON DAMAGE

Most ship weapons act similar to normal weapons in terms of damage in that they have an inherent damage value listed in their description. Others however do different amounts of damage depending on the ammunition that is loaded into them. In these cases, the total damage is listed under the ammunition's description.

### VARIANT RULE: CREW MEMBER DAMAGE

While most ship weapons are dangerous enough to the ships they aim at, they also have the potential to tear through the crew members manning them. Under this optional rule, whenever a ship weapon scores a critical hit against a ship, the user of that weapon may decide to also incapacitate or kill a crew member on that ship. The targeted crew member must have less maximum hit points than the damage dealt by the ship weapon attack.

## AMMUNITION

Some ranged weaponry can fire specialised different types of ammunition other than their standard types. These ammunitions have their own descriptions which includes ranges, weapon damage and on hit effects when fired using their proper weapon.

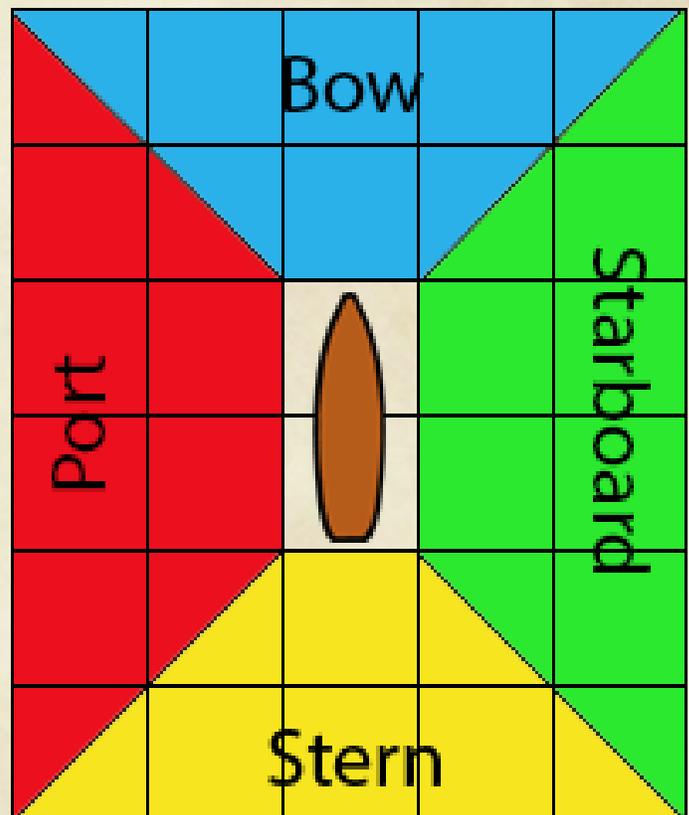
## WEAPON SLOTS

This number reflects how big and heavy a ship weapon and its ammunition is. In general, the larger the weapon, the more weapon slots it takes. A ship cannot load a weapon if it causes the total number of occupied weapon slots on the ship to be larger than the number of weapon slots it has.

## GUN PLACEMENT AND AIMING

When preparing a ship, it is important to note which sides the weapons are placed. This is because most weapons may only target things in their side's "target quadrant." Target quadrants break down the area around a ship into four zones. The lines are drawn at 45-degree angles from the "corners" of a ship and show where in relation to the ship a target must be in order to be shot by the weapons on the bow, port, starboard, or stern. A ranged weapon can target anything so long as it is within the weapon's range and falls within its respective target quadrant.

As well as that, both the bow and the stern have a limit of one weapon each, although there is no limit to how many weapon slots that weapon may take up (e.g., you may have a Dragon Head on the bow of your ship, but not two cannons, even though both options would use only 2 weapon slots). The port and starboard sides of the ship however can have as many weapons as could reasonably fit, so long as the limit on Weapon Slots is adhered to.



## RANGED WEAPONS

Ranged weapons are the standard ship weapon on most vessels. They are designed to fire specialised ammunition to destroy their foes from afar. It can always be assumed that the ammunition for these weapons are kept close at hand to the weapon for easy reloading.

## CANNONS

*Large object*

For most ships, cannons are the staple of their offensive capabilities. Utilising gunpowder as a propellant, the cannon can fire projectiles at high velocities to destroy its targets. While the most common ammunition used are heavy iron cannonballs, other types can be fitted into a cannon as well, each one with a specific use in mind. Each ammunition has different damages, ranges, and effects. No matter which ammunition is used however, the cannon is always considered a ranged martial weapon.

It takes a character's entire action to load the cannon before it is ready for another character to take the Operate Crew Action with it.

**Armor Class:** 19

**HP:** 55

**Damage Immunities:** poison, psychic

**Weapon Slots:** 1

**Cannon Ammunition:**

**Cannonball.** The standard ammunition used in a cannon. It is a large iron ball designed to smash through the enemy ship's defences at high speeds.

*Ranged Weapon Attack:* range 600/2,400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 44 (8d10) bludgeoning damage.

**Chain.** While chains are less effective at damaging a ship's hull than a cannonball, they are extremely effective at disabling more sensitive areas of a ship, like their rigging or oars. Unfortunately, its lack of aerodynamics makes it difficult to use beyond short ranges.

*Ranged Weapon Attack:* range 100/150 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage, and one of the ship's Sail Stations is unusable until one of their crew members succeeds on a DC 10 Repair Action to fix it. This repair spends a Hull Die as normal, but does not restore any Hull Points.

**Grapeshot.** Instead of a single large cannonball, grapeshot is a multitude of small cast iron balls, designed to spread out and cause casualties among crew members. Unfortunately, the range is quite poor due to its high spread.

When you fire a grapeshot round, choose a point within 80 feet. All creatures in a 10 foot radius sphere of that point suffers 14 (4d6) piercing damage or half that on a successful DC 13 Dexterity Saving throw.

**Smoke Bombs.** A compact sphere of dyes, chemicals and explosives inside a fragile shell designed to burst on impact and create a large cloud of opaque smoke. These bombs are particularly useful when trying to close a gap between you and an enemy ship, by providing an opaque screen of cover.

You may fire a smoke bomb at a targetable point within 1,000 feet. Upon landing, the smoke bombs bursts open, creating an opaque cloud of smoke with a radius of 30 feet that heavily obscures the area it is in. This cloud of smoke is dispersed after 1 minute. A medium wind disperses the smoke in 4 rounds; a heavy wind disperses it in 1 round.

## BALLISTA

*Large object*

A ballista is a massive crossbow that fires heavy bolts. Before it can be fire, it must be loaded and aimed. It takes one action to load and ready the ballista before it is ready to be used in an Operate Crew Action.

**Armor Class:** 15

**Hit Points:** 30

**Damage Immunities:** poison, psychic

**Weapon Slots:** 1

**Ballista Ammunition:**

**Bolt.** The standard ammunition used in a ballista. It is a large crossbow bolt that deals devastating damage to less armoured ships.

*Ranged Weapon Attack:* Range: 120/480 ft., Hit: 17 (3d10) piercing damage.

**Flaming Bolt.** Instead of a traditional arrow head, this bolt has a piece of flammable material, designed to set alight an enemy's ship.

*Ranged Weapon Attack:* range 120/480 ft., *Hit:* Set the target ship on fire if it is made of wood or another flammable material. At the start of the ship's turn, it suffers 7 (2d6) fire damage, and the fire spreads, causing subsequent fire damage to increase by another 1d6. Subsequent successful flaming bolt attacks also increase the fire damage by 1d6. A crew member may spend their action attempting to reduce the damage of the fire by 1d6. When the fire damage reaches 0, the fire is extinguished and the ship no longer suffers fire damage at the start of its turn.

## CATAPULT

*Huge object*

The ship catapult is designed to throw heavy objects in high trajectories, but still be light enough to be seaworthy. While it is usually used to throw heavy stones, just about any type of ammunition can be loaded onto its head, making it a very versatile weapon. In order for a crew member to use the Operate Crew Action on the catapult, it must be loaded first as another action.

**Armor Class:** 15

**Hit Points:** 70

**Damage Immunities:** poison, psychic

**Catapult Stone.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* range 200/800 ft., (can't hit targets within 60 feet of it) one target. *Hit:* 27 (5d10) bludgeoning damage.



## GRAPPLING HOOK

*Huge object*

A grappling hook is a large four-pronged hook mounted on a ballistae-like system. It is designed to latch two ships together, usually to initiate boarding. Unfortunately, due to the weight of the hook and the strong chains it carries, it does not have a large range and is meant to be used to ensure that quarries cannot flee from a close combat encounter.

**Armour Class:** 15

**Hit Points:** 50

**Damage Immunities:** poison, psychic

**Weapon Slots:** 2

**Grappling Hook.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* range 20/30 ft., one target *Hit:* 16 (3d10) piercing damage. Target is considered grappled until either the hook is removed or the rope/chain it is attached to is broken. A chain has 15 AC, 30 HP, immunity to poison and psychic damage, and a damage threshold of 10.

If the grappled ship is at least one size smaller than the grappling ship, a character can, as an action, winch the chain to pull the grappled ship closer. Upon a successful DC 15 Strength check, the grappled ship is pulled 5 feet closer to the grappling ship. This action can only be taken once per round.

## SALAMANDER

*Large object*

A fearsome salamander head, cast in bronze, mounted to the bow of a ship. This audacious weapon is connected to a pump and oil system that allows it to issue forth a stream of fire from the salamander's mouth, setting both ship and enemy crew alight. This efficient weapon requires only one crew member to work the pumps in order to ready the weapon. The salamander can be used three times before needing to refuel. Refuelling is an extremely delicate and tedious process and requires 10 minutes to perform. The salamander can only be installed into the bow of the ship.

**Armour Class:** 15

**Hit Points:** 25

**Damage Immunities:** poison, psychic

**Weapon Slots:** 1 (Can only be attached to the bow of the ship)

**Salamander Fire.** A 40-foot cone of fire streams from the salamander. Any target caught within this stream suffers 28 (8d6) fire damage, or half that on a successful DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. In addition, a ship made of wood or another flammable material is set on fire. While on fire, the ship suffers 7 (2d6) fire damage at the start of its turn, and subsequent fire damage increases by 1d6. A crew member may spend their action to reduce the damage of the fire by 1d6. When the fire damage reaches 0, the fire is extinguished, and the ship no longer suffers fire damage at the start of its turn.

## DRAGON HEAD

*Huge object*

A scaled-up version of the salamander, the dragon head is a cast iron dragon head mounted to the bow of a ship. With a larger pumping system, the dragon head is capable of creating even larger jets of flames that reduce other vessels to cinders. Unfortunately, due to its larger size, proper operation of the oil pumps requires two crew members to use the Operate Crew Action for the dragon head to be used. The dragon head can be used three times before needing to refuel. Refuelling is an extremely delicate and tedious process and requires 10 minutes to perform. The dragon head can only be installed into the bow of the ship.

**Armour Class:** 17

**Hit Points:** 45

**Damage Immunities:** poison, psychic

**Weapon Slots:** 2 (Can only be attached to the bow of the ship)

**Dragon Fire.** A 60-foot cone of fire streams from the dragon head. Any target caught within this stream suffers 42 (12d6) fire damage, or half that on a successful DC 16 Dexterity saving throw. In addition, a ship made of wood or another flammable material is set on fire. While on fire, the ship suffers 10 (3d6) fire damage at the start of its turn, and subsequent fire damage increases by 1d6. A Crew Member may spend their action to reduce the damage of the fire by 1d6. When the fire damage reaches 0, the fire is extinguished, and the ship no longer suffers fire damage at the start of its turn.



## ARCANA-TILLERY

### *Large object*

Crafted by skilled magical artificers in order to turn a ship's mage into an artillery piece in and of themselves. These cannons are the only weapons compatible with spell-shots, magically sensitive cannonballs designed to hold magic and release them upon impact with an enemy.

In order to use the arcana-tillery, the user must first cast a spell onto a spell-shot. Spell-shots may contain any level of spell cast into them, but only one spell at a time, and no spell that requires an attack roll of any kind or a spell that has a target of self. After a spell has been cast into it, a spell-shot may be loaded into an arcana-tillery and fired in the same way as a normal cannonball. A spell-shot will then release the spell held within upon a successful hit.

A spell-shot is destroyed upon release of its spell. A spell-shot automatically releases its spell if not used within 1 minute of a spell being cast into it. While a spell is inside the spell-shot, the caster of the spell must maintain concentration on the spell using the same rules as "Readying a spell" on page 193 of the Players Handbook. If the caster's concentration breaks, the spell dissipates harmlessly, and the spell-shot is rendered useless. Similarly, if the initial ranged weapon attack fails, the spell inside is wasted and the spell-shot rendered useless.

**Armour Class:** 17

**Hit Points:** 55

**Damage Immunities:** poison, psychic

**Weapon Slots:** 2

**Spell-shot.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* range 600/2,400 ft., *Hit:* 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage, and the spell held within the spell-shot is activated successfully, releasing the magical energy held within. When this happens, the spell inside the spell-shot is considered to have been cast with the landing spot of the spell shot being used as the point of origin of the spell (the caster may choose which direction the area of effect is pointing, if applicable). If the spell stored in the spell shot requires a target(s), the caster may choose a target(s) within range of the spell-shot's landing location (note that any visibility requirements still apply to the caster).

## CREATURE LAUNCHER

### *Large object*

This unique cannon was created by a rather eccentric Gnomish laboratory and used only by those with a death wish. Instead of cannonballs or bolts, this unique cannon uses creatures as ammunition. With specialised internal mechanics, along with a few magically inscribed runes, the creature launcher is able to propel its living payload a great distance, mostly unharmed.

In order to use it, a medium or smaller creature must spend at least half of their move speed to insert themselves into the creature launcher. Once loaded, another creature may use the Operate Crew Action on the creature launcher to fire the loaded creature at a point within range.

**Armour Class:** 17

**Hit Points:** 55

**Damage Immunities:** poison, psychic

**Weapon Slots:** 2

**Living Ammunition.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* range. 300/600 ft., the loaded creature is fired at a point within range. Upon a successful hit, the creature lands at the intended target.

Upon a miss, the creature instead lands 1d100 feet away from its intended target. Determine the direction by rolling 1d8, with 1 being north, 2 being north-east, etc. Creatures launched from the creature launcher do not take fall damage due to a short-lived enchantment placed on them, but the force of the launch causes them to take 3d6 force damage.

## MELEE WEAPONS

More commonly found on smaller and more primitive ships, melee weapons tend to be upscaled versions of regular weapons. They tend to be built as part of the ship and use various mechanisms to allow them to be used by normal sized creatures. Unless stated otherwise, all melee ship weapons are considered heavy, two-handed, martial weapons.

## OAR BLADE

### *Large/Huge object*

These specially crafted oars are designed for the particularly efficient marauder. Built with a sturdier shaft and with a wickedly sharp blade on the edge of the paddle, the oar blade allows sufficiently strong sailors to both move their ship and slice at their enemies in a single stroke.

The oar blade replaces one Sail Station instead of occupying a Weapon Slot. When a crew member takes the Sail Crew Action with the oar blade, they may also immediately take an Attack action using the oar blade as their weapon. However, due to the larger weight and unwieldiness of the oar blade, the DC of the "Sail" action taken with the oar blade is raised to 15. The oar blade may also be used as a regular weapon without requiring the Sail Crew Action. The oar blade can only be installed into the port or starboard sides of the ship.

**Armour Class:** 15

**Hit Points:** 25

**Damage Immunities:** poison, psychic

**Weapon Slots:** 0 (Replaces a Sail Station instead)

*Melee Weapon Attack:* reach equal to half of the width of the ship it is equipped on (minimum of 5 feet). *Hit:* 14 (4d6) slashing damage.

## AUROCH RAM

This ram with a head reminiscent of that of an auroch, is hidden in a special compartment just below deck in the bow of a ship. Supported by a series of pulleys and ropes inspired by the rigging of modern sailing ships, this heavy ram is capable of dealing heavy damage to enemy ships despite only needing one person to wield it. The auroch ram is considered to be a two-handed, heavy weapon. The auroch ram can only be installed in the bow of the ship.

**Armour Class:** 15

**Hit Points:** 40

**Damage Immunities:** poison, psychic

**Weapon Slots:** 0

*Melee Weapon Attack:* reach 10 ft., *Hit:* 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage.

## HULL UPGRADES

Hull Upgrades are parts designed to be attached to the hull of the ship. Generally, these parts increase the defensive capabilities of the ship, but others may provide more utility. A ship may not have more than one Hull Upgrade attached at any one time.

**Spiked Plates** Spiked plates attached to your ship greatly hamper attempts by enemies to climb the sides of your ship. A creature climbing the side of your ship suffers 7 (2d6) piercing damage for every 5 feet they attempt to move.

**Magic Mesh** A special lattice of inks, metals, and crushed gemstones, woven into the hull of a ship by skilled artificers, all converging into a large control rune usually branded into the middle of the top deck of the ship. Once activated from the control rune, this magically reactive mesh provides a ship with a degree of protection against harmful spells.

As an action, a character may stand at and activate the ship's magic mesh rune. Until the start of that character's next turn, the ship does not instantly fail Strength or Dexterity saving throws imposed by magical effects. Instead, the character that used the control rune may roll the saving throw for the ship, by rolling a d20 and adding their arcana proficiency bonus (if available). The character must be capable of succeeding on Strength and Dexterity saving throws at the time of the roll in order to use this ability.

**Spell Shielding** Spell shielding is a revolutionary (and extremely expensive) development in the field of enchanted shipbuilding. Using tars and paints mixed with magically imbued pigments, the hull of a ship can harden itself when exposed to arcane energies.

As an action, a crew member aboard a ship with spell shielding can expend a spell slot of any level to grant a bonus to their ship's AC equal to their proficiency bonus. This effect lasts for a number of minutes equal to the level of the spell slot used.

## MISCELLANEOUS

These are various pieces of ship equipment that don't fall into any of the above categories. Some of them may be attached to your ship, while others may just be items carried on board. Either way, unless otherwise stated, there is no limit to how many of these you can carry on your ship other than restrictions on space and tonnage.

## NAVAL RAM

A prolonged piece of sturdy material usually attached underwater to the bow of the ship to form a beak. The naval ram is designed to puncture the hulls of enemy ships during ram attacks.

When you have the naval ram attached, your ship takes no damage after performing a successful ram attack, and only half of the targeted ships maximum hull points on an unsuccessful ram attack. In addition, as the attacking ship, you may choose to not be grappled following a ram attack.

You may only have one naval ram equipped to your ship. Equipping the naval ram does not prevent you from having a bow weapon however.

## BOARDING PLANK

While extremely basic, the boarding plank is one of the most important tools in a ship's arsenal. Simply a 20-foot-long by 10 foot wide board of reinforced wood, the boarding plank provides a platform allowing boarding parties to charge onto an enemy ship. It takes a creature a full action to place down a boarding plank securely.

The boarding plank has 15 AC and 22 HP. It is immune to psychic and poison damage and vulnerable to fire damage. The boarding plank weighs 60 pounds and can carry up to 800 pounds of weight before breaking.

## NAVAL MINES

A self-contained explosive device planted in water that can take many forms including floating metallic balls and gunpowder filled barrels. Regardless of how they are built, they are designed to do the same thing: detonate upon being struck by a ship and hopefully cause irreparable damage.

To use the naval mine, a crew member merely has to use the Operate Crew Action to prime the mine and drop it in the water. The next object to move into the same space as the Naval Mine will detonate it. A naval mine will also detonate prematurely if it is reduced to 0 Hit Points. A detonating naval mine deals 28 (8d6) fire damage in a 10 foot radius around itself and is then destroyed.

Naval mines can also be extremely hard to spot amongst the crashing of the waves. After being placed, a naval mine is considered hidden, and can only be spotted upon a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check.

A naval mine may be disarmed upon a successful DC 15 Dexterity Check. A disarmed naval mine may be primed again like a normal mine afterwards.

**Armour Class:** 10

**Hit Points:** 10

**Damage Immunities:** poison, psychic



# APPENDIX A: SHIP LIST

## SMALL SHIPS

### ROWBOAT

The humble rowboat is in general, not something you would find in the middle of a fierce naval engagement. Small, fragile and slow, the rowboat tends to be used more for transporting people from their ship to the beach, or for a pleasant trip down a river. The only time they may appear in naval warfare would be when they are used launch stealthy sorties onto enemy ships in the dead of night.

### LIFEBOAT

The sturdy lifeboat is not designed for battle, if anything it is designed for the opposite. Able to be carried on larger ships, the lifeboat is simply a reliable ship that allows evacuees of a ship to escape a sinking vessel.

### CATAMARAN

The catamaran is a double hulled ship, usually made by lashing two canoes together with a central mast. Alternately powerable through the rowing of its crew or the wind in its sail, the catamaran makes for a relatively speedy and agile vessel for short aquatic jaunts.

### ROWBOAT

*Small ship (10 feet long by 5 feet wide)*

**Armor Class** 15  
**Hit Points** 24 (3d8)  
**Damage Threshold** 5  
**Weapon Slots** 0

Initiative	Sail Stations	Speed Unit	Max Speed
+10	2	10 ft.	20 ft. (15 ft.)

**Crew Members** 1/2  
**Passengers** 2  
**Tonnage** ¼

### Properties

**Agile.** Agile ships are particularly manoeuvrable and easy to pilot. They are able to turn on the spot, instead of needing to move while turning as most other ships do. Turning does not take up any extra movement speed.

### LIFEBOAT

*Small ship (30 feet long by 10 feet wide)*

**Armor Class** 15  
**Hit Points** 32 (4d8)  
**Damage Threshold** 0  
**Weapon Slots** 0

Initiative	Sail Stations	Speed Unit	Max Speed
+6	4	10 ft.	40 ft. (35 ft.)

**Crew Members** 2/4  
**Passengers** 12  
**Tonnage** 1

### Properties

**Agile.** Agile ships are particularly manoeuvrable and easy to pilot. They are able to turn on the spot, instead of needing to move while turning as most other ships do. Turning does not take up any extra movement speed.

### CATAMARAN

*Small ship (30 feet long by 5 feet wide)*

**Armor Class** 15  
**Hit Points** 48 (6d8)  
**Damage Threshold** 5  
**Weapon Slots** 0

Initiative	Sail Stations	Speed Unit	Max Speed
+10	4	15 ft.	60 ft. (50 ft.)

**Crew Members** 1/5  
**Passengers** 6  
**Tonnage** ½

### Properties

**Agile.** Agile ships are particularly manoeuvrable and easy to pilot. They are able to turn on the spot, instead of needing to move while turning as most other ships do. Turning does not take up any extra movement speed.

**Mixed Propulsion (Oars).** A Mixed Propulsion ship is one that can use sails during windy conditions but has an alternate propulsion method (listed in brackets next to the property) in calmer weather. Mixed Propulsion ships act like Sail Powered ships when their sails are unfurled. However, even when their sails are furled or they are in a Dead Wind, they still retain their normal speed unit.

## MEDIUM SHIPS

### LONGSHIP

The longship is the iconic vessel of the Vikings: a thin ship, manned by rows of men with oars, and a tall mast with a square sail. The ship is not designed to carry heavy guns or armaments, and favours either boarding tactics or merely as a reliable transport boat.

### SLOOP

While generally one of the smaller ships in a navy, the two-masted sloop is not to be underestimated. Favoured in situations where speed was more important than firepower, the sloop often served as “cutter ships,” ships that “cut” through enemy blockades and ship lines to either smuggle supplies or communicate with the outside world. Even then, clever captains can use the sloop’s swiftness and still respectable weaponry to defeat larger ships.

### FLUYT

The fluyt is a merchant ship, designed to hold large cargoes and be staffed by as few people as possible. While it will succumb quickly if caught in an engagement, the fluyt is still appreciably swift, and can escape most larger enemies.

### MANA CLIPPER

The mana clipper is a marvel of modern arcane engineering and virtually sails itself. Powered by a large mana crystal kept in the depths of its hold, the mana clipper requires only a helmsman at its wheel for it to move. The only thing keeping the mana clipper from revolutionising the maritime world is its exorbitant cost (giant mana crystals don’t grow on trees).

### GUNBOAT

The gunboat could be considered the “infantry” of a nation’s navy. While small and fragile, the gunboat is agile in combat, and cheap to crew. A swarm of gunboats can easily surround, overwhelm, and ultimately sink even the mightiest of warships.

## LONGSHIP

*Medium ship (60 feet long by 10 feet wide)*

**Armor Class** 15  
**Hit Points** 150 (15d10)  
**Damage Threshold** 10  
**Weapon Slots** 1

Initiative	Sail Stations	Speed Unit	Max Speed
+6	10	10 ft.	100 ft. (85 ft.)

**Crew Members** 5/15  
**Passengers** 15  
**Tonnage** 6

### Properties

**Agile.** Agile ships are particularly manoeuvrable and easy to pilot. They are able to turn on the spot, instead of needing to move while turning as most other ships do. Turning does not take up any extra movement speed.

**Mixed Propulsion.** A Mixed Propulsion ship is one that can use sails during windy conditions but has an alternate propulsion method (listed in brackets next to the property) in calmer weather. Mixed Propulsion ships act like Sail Powered ships when their sails are unfurled. However, even when their sails are furled or they are in a Dead Wind, they still retain their normal speed unit.

**Helmsman Required.** A ship with the “Helmsman Required” property usually have some sort of rudder or steering system on board that works independently of the ship’s main locomotion method. These ships can only move in a straight line, unless a crew member takes the Helm Crew Action that round.

## SLOOP

*Medium ship (80 feet long by 20 feet wide)*

**Armor Class** 15  
**Hit Points** 200 (20d10)  
**Damage Threshold** 15  
**Weapon Slots** 5

Initiative	Sail Stations	Speed Unit	Max Speed
+7	10	20 ft.	200 ft. (170 ft.)

**Crew Members** 5/16  
**Passengers** 20  
**Tonnage** 50

### Properties

**Sail Powered.** A ship with the “Sail Powered” property uses the power of the wind to blow through their sails in order to move. Ships with this property have a speed unit of 0 in a Dead Wind. They also may suffer additional penalties and/or bonuses in other wind conditions. On its turn, a Sail Powered Ship that has had at least half of its Sail Stations successfully used that round may furl its sails instead of using its movement speed. A ship that has furled its sails is not considered Sail Powered and has a speed unit of 0 until the sails are unfurled again. In order to unfurl its sails, half of the ships Sail Stations must have been successfully used that round.

**Helmsman Required.** A ship with the “Helmsman Required” property usually have some sort of rudder or steering system on board that works independently of the ship’s main locomotion method. These ships can only move in a straight line, unless a crew member takes the Helm Crew Action that round.

## FLUYT

Medium ship (80 feet long by 20 feet wide)

Armor Class 14  
Hit Points 150 (15d10)  
Damage Threshold 10  
Weapon Slots 0

Initiative	Sail Stations	Speed Unit	Max Speed
+7	10	20 ft.	200 ft. (170 ft.)

Crew Members 3/15  
Passengers 20  
Tonnage 100

### Properties

**Sail Powered.** A ship with the “Sail Powered” property uses the power of the wind to blow through their sails in order to move. Ships with this property have a speed unit of 0 in a Dead Wind. They also may suffer additional penalties and/or bonuses in other wind conditions. On its turn, a Sail Powered Ship that has had at least half of its Sail Stations successfully used that round may furl its sails instead of using its movement speed. A ship that has furled its sails is not considered Sail Powered and has a speed unit of 0 until the sails are unfurled again. In order to unfurl its sails, half of the ships Sail Stations must have been successfully used that round.

**Helmsman Required.** A ship with the “Helmsman Required” property usually have some sort of rudder or steering system on board that works independently of the ship’s main locomotion method. These ships can only move in a straight line, unless a crew member takes the Helm Crew Action that round.

## MANA CLIPPER

Medium ship (80 feet long by 20 feet wide)

Armor Class 15  
Hit Points 200 (20d10)  
Damage Threshold 15  
Weapon Slots 6

Initiative	Sail Stations	Speed Unit	Max Speed
+8	0	0 ft.	100 ft. (100 ft.)

Crew Members 1/10  
Passengers 20  
Tonnage 50

### Properties

**Agile.** Agile ships are particularly manoeuvrable and easy to pilot. They are able to turn on the spot, instead of needing to move while turning as most other ships do. Turning does not take up any extra movement speed.

**Helmsman Required.** A ship with the “Helmsman Required” property usually have some sort of rudder or steering system on board that works independently of the ship’s main locomotion method. These ships can only move in a straight line, unless a crew member takes the “Helm” Crew Action that round.

**Independent Propulsion (100).** A ship with Independent Propulsion has a propulsion method that requires nothing but someone at the helm to activate the controls. When on a ship with this property, a character taking the “Helm” crew action automatically grants the ship a base movement speed shown in the parenthesis. Any “Sail” actions taken are added to this base movement speed.

## GUNBOAT

Medium ship (60 feet long by 20 feet wide)

Armor Class 15  
Hit Points 150 (15d10)  
Damage Threshold 10  
Weapon Slots 3

Initiative	Sail Stations	Speed Unit	Max Speed
+8	6	20 ft.	120 ft. (90 ft.)

Crew Members 2/10  
Passengers 15  
Tonnage 30

### Properties

**Agile.** Agile ships are particularly manoeuvrable and easy to pilot. They are able to turn on the spot, instead of needing to move while turning as most other ships

do. Turning does not take up any extra movement speed.

**Sail Powered.** A ship with the “Sail Powered” property uses the power of the wind to blow through their sails in order to move. Ships with this property have a speed unit of 0 in a Dead Wind. They also may suffer additional penalties and/or bonuses in other wind conditions. On its turn, a Sail Powered Ship that has had at least half of its Sail Stations successfully used that round may furl its sails instead of using its movement speed. A ship that has furled its sails is not considered Sail Powered and has a speed unit of 0 until the sails are unfurled again. In order to unfurl its sails, half of the ships Sail Stations must have been successfully used that round.

**Helmsman Required.** A ship with the “Helmsman Required” property usually have some sort of rudder or steering system on board that works independently of the ship’s main locomotion method. These ships can only move in a straight line, unless a crew member takes the Helm Crew Action that round.

## LARGE SHIPS

### GALLEY

The older brother of the longship. The galley is a massive oar-powered ship, operated by banks upon banks of rowers below the main deck. While the galley can carry an appreciable amount of weaponry, boarding tactics are a favourite of the galley, their scores of rowers becoming an infantry unit once contact is made with the enemy.

### CARRACK

A large and solid, jack-of-all-trades ship. Large without being unwieldy, well-armed without sacrificing speed, the carrack is used by merchants and navies alike for its reliability. These ships are particularly suited to long journeys due to their large cargo capacities and ability to defend themselves when coming under attack.

### CARRACK

*Large ship (120 feet long by 30 feet wide)*

**Armor Class** 16  
**Hit Points** 396 (33d12)  
**Damage Threshold** 15  
**Weapon Slots** 10

Initiative	Sail Stations	Speed Unit	Max Speed
+6	15	10 ft.	150 ft. (130 ft.)

**Crew Members** 8/30  
**Passengers** 50  
**Tonnage** 100

### Properties

**Sail Powered.** A ship with the “Sail Powered” property uses the power of the wind to blow through their sails in order to move. Ships with this property have a speed unit of 0 in a Dead Wind. They also may suffer additional penalties and/or bonuses in other wind conditions. On its turn, a Sail Powered Ship that has had at least half of its Sail Stations successfully used that round may furl its sails instead of using its movement speed. A ship that has furled its sails is not considered Sail Powered and has a speed unit of 0 until the sails are unfurled again. In order to unfurl its sails, half of the ships Sail Stations must have been successfully used that round.

**Helmsman Required.** A ship with the “Helmsman Required” property usually have some sort of rudder or steering system on board that works independently of the ship’s main locomotion method. These ships can only move in a straight line, unless a crew member takes the Helm Crew Action that round.

### GALLEY

*Large ship (100 feet long by 20 feet wide)*

**Armor Class** 15  
**Hit Points** 360 (30d12)  
**Damage Threshold** 15  
**Weapon Slots** 8

Initiative	Sail Stations	Speed Unit	Max Speed
+5	15	5 ft.	75 ft. (60 ft.)

**Crew Members** 10/30  
**Passengers** 50  
**Tonnage** 80

### Properties

**Helmsman Required.** A ship with the “Helmsman Required” property usually have some sort of rudder or steering system on board that works independently of the ship’s main locomotion method. These ships can only move in a straight line, unless a crew member takes the “Helm” Crew Action that round.

## HUGE SHIPS

### WARSHIP

Also known as a “Ship-of-the-line”, the warship is the pride of any nation’s navy. Heavily gunned and heavily armoured, the warship sails into battle and makes quick work of the enemy. Its only downside is its unwieldiness, something that more agile ships can exploit to their advantage.

### STEAM SHIP

The steam ship revolutionised maritime travel. No longer were ships restricted by the winds, instead they could travel where they wanted, limited only by how much coal they could carry. With its more powerful propulsion system, the steam ship was capable of adding thicker armour and carrying more guns, easily outclassing any wooden ship. It however, still required crews below deck to stoke the furnaces, an exhausting and endurance requiring task.

### BATTLESHIP

The hulking, fuel powered symbols of naval dominance, the battleship is one of the mightiest engines of war ever made by man. Fielding devastating firepower, nigh-impenetrable hulls, and a propulsion method independent of a sailing crew, few ships can claim to be the battleship’s superior in combat.

## WARSHIP

Large ship (160 feet long by 40 feet wide)

Armor Class 18  
Hit Points 500 (25d20)  
Damage Threshold 20  
Weapon Slots 15

Initiative	Sail Stations	Speed Unit	Max Speed
+3	20	10 ft.	200 ft. (160 ft.)

Crew Members 10/40  
Passengers 60  
Tonnage 500

### Properties

**Sail Powered.** A ship with the “Sail Powered” property uses the power of the wind to blow through their sails in order to move. Ships with this property have a speed unit of 0 in a Dead Wind. They also may suffer

additional penalties and/or bonuses in other wind conditions. On its turn, a Sail Powered Ship that has had at least half of its Sail Stations successfully used that round may furl its sails instead of using its movement speed. A ship that has furled its sails is not considered Sail Powered and has a speed unit of 0 until the sails are unfurled again. In order to unfurl its sails, half of the ships Sail Stations must have been successfully used that round.

**Helmsman Required.** A ship with the “Helmsman Required” property usually have some sort of rudder or steering system on board that works independently of the ship’s main locomotion method. These ships can only move in a straight line, unless a crew member takes the Helm Crew Action that round.

**Cumbersome.** Ships with the Cumbersome trait are particularly difficult to sail. The base DC threshold to perform a successful Sail Crew Action is raised by 5, and attempting to turn requires the ship move forward two Speed Units worth of distance instead of one.

## STEAM SHIP

Large ship (200 feet long by 40 feet wide)

Armor Class 20  
Hit Points 600 (30d20)  
Damage Threshold 20  
Weapon Slots 20

Initiative	Sail Stations	Speed Unit	Max Speed
+3	20	20 ft.	400 ft. (300 ft.)

Crew Members 15/50  
Passengers 80

Tonnage 1,000

### Properties

**Helmsman Required.** A ship with the “Helmsman Required” property usually have some sort of rudder or steering system on board that works independently of the ship’s main locomotion method. These ships can only move in a straight line, unless a crew member takes the Helm Crew Action that round.

**Cumbersome.** Ships with the Cumbersome trait are particularly difficult to sail. The base DC threshold to perform a successful Sail Crew Action is raised by 5, and attempting to turn requires the ship move forward two Speed Units worth of distance instead of one.

## BATTLESHIP

Large ship (300 feet long by 60 feet wide)

Armor Class 21  
Hit Points 800 (40d20)  
Damage Threshold 25  
Weapon Slots 30

Initiative	Sail Stations	Speed Unit	Max Speed
+4	25	5 ft.	125 ft. (105 ft.)

Crew Members 20/60  
Passengers 150  
Tonnage 1,500

### Properties

**Helmsman Required.** A ship with the “Helmsman Required” property usually have some sort of rudder or steering system on board that works independently of the ship’s main locomotion method. These ships can only move in a straight line, unless a crew member takes the “Helm” Crew Action that round.

**Cumbersome.** Ships with the Cumbersome trait are particularly difficult to sail. The base DC threshold to perform a successful “Sail” Crew Action is raised by 5, and attempting to turn requires the ship move forward two Speed Units worth of distance instead of one.

**Independent Propulsion (60).** A ship with Independent Propulsion has a propulsion method that requires nothing but someone at the helm to activate the controls. When on a ship with this property, a character taking the “Helm” crew action automatically grants the ship a base movement speed shown in the parenthesis. Any “Sail” actions taken are added to this base movement speed.

# APPENDIX B: PRICES

You may use the following tables as a reference for the prices of various equipment and ships. You are free to change these prices as it befits your own campaigns. The price of installation is included for any piece of equipment that would require extensive modifications to the ship. If you are able to install these items yourself, the price is reduced by 10%.

## SHIPS

### COOKIE TASTINESS

Ship	Price (GP)
Rowboat	50
Lifeboat	80
Catamaran	150
Longship	4,500
Sloop	11,000
Gunboat	7,000
Fluyt	10,000
Mana Clipper	40,000
Galley	20,000
Carrack	25,000
Warship	40,000
Steam Ship	50,000
Battleship	100,000

## AMMUNITION

Type	Price (GP)
Cannonballs	8
Chain	5
Grapeshot	5
Smoke Bombs	20
Bolt	3
Flaming Bolt	5
Catapult Stone	3
Grappling Hook	50
Salamander Fuel (3 charges)	200
Dragon Head Fuel (3 charges)	300
Spell Shot	100

## EQUIPMENT

Weapons	Price (GP)
Cannon	2,000
Ballista	1,000
Catapult	600
Grappling Hook	1,200
Salamander	3,000
Dragon Head	4,500
Arcana-tillery	6,000
Creature Launcher	4,000
Oar Blade	130
Auroch Ram	100
<b>Hull Upgrades</b>	<b>Price (GP)</b>
Spiked Plates	3,000
Magic Mesh	8,000
Spell Shielding	10,000
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>Price (GP)</b>
Naval Ram	100
Boarding Plank	6
Naval Mines	30

# APPENDIX C: SAMPLE STATBLOCKS

## GENERIC CREW MEMBERS

The following statblocks can be used in to make a basic crew for either an NPC or PC ship. The sailor works well to fill up any vacancies on the ship, while the captain can be hired to helm a ship that the PC's may have acquired but are inexperienced in running.

### SAILOR

The basic seaman, trained in basic ship maintenance and sailing techniques. While unskilled in the finer points of navigation and leadership, the sailor is still a strong back to work the sails and oars, or a pair of hands when trouble brews on the seas. Hiring a sailor to work your shop costs **2 gp per day**. This does not include the cost to supply them.

### CAPTAIN

A trained naval officer who knows how to work a ship, the art of navigation, and the flow of combat. While most captains already have a ship of their own, some of the more transient ones go from port to port, selling their services as mercenaries able to command any vessel their client asks of them. They cost **5 gp per day** to hire. This does not include the cost to supply them.

### SAILOR

*Medium humanoid (any race), unaligned*

**Armor Class** 12 (Leather Armour)  
**Hit Points** 14 (3d8)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

**Saving Throws** Str +3, Dex +3  
**Skills** Athletics +4, Perception +3  
**Senses** passive Perception 13  
**Languages** Any one language  
**Challenge** ½ (100 XP)

**Seafarer.** The sailor is considered proficient in Vehicles (Water) and Martial Ranged Weapons.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The Sailor makes 2 cutlass attacks.

**Cutlass.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

### CAPTAIN

*Medium humanoid (any race), unaligned*

**Armor Class** 16 (Breastplate)  
**Hit Points** 63 (14d8)  
**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

**Saving Throws** Str +6, Dex +5  
**Skills** Athletics +6, Perception +4, History +5, Insight +4, Persuasion +6, Survival +4  
**Senses** passive Perception 14  
**Languages** Any one language  
**Challenge** 5 (1800 XP)

**Salty Dog.** Due to their great experience on the open waters, captains have swim speeds equal to their movement speed. They are also considered proficient in Vehicles (Water) and have advantage on checks made to help a ship during turbulent weather.

**Mentorship.** As a bonus action, the captain may grant a non-hostile creature advantage on the next Crew Action ability check that it takes before the start of the captain's next turn. A creature must be able to hear and understand the captain in order to receive this benefit.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The captain makes 3 rapier attacks.

**Rapier.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit* 7 (1d8 + 1) slashing damage.

**Leadership (Recharges After a Short or Long Rest).** For 1 minute, the captain can utter a special command or warning whenever a non-hostile creature that it can see within 30 feet of it makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand the captain. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the captain is incapacitated.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

*"I don't think that [X] is very realistic/reflective of history."*

When making these rules, I did my best in attempting to simulate real naval combat. However, there were several times when I had to make the choice between realism and rule simplicity/speed and in these situations I always chose the latter. As stated at the beginning of this ruleset, you are free to change and adjust any of the rules, stats or numbers that you like. I just found that in my own games, this combination of rules, stats and numbers worked best and prevented any significant delays or confusion among players.

*"Can these rules be used for Airship combat?"*

Yes, the large majority of the rules listed here work just as well for aerial airship combat as they do for conventional naval combat. You may need to tinker with a few of the rules, stats, and weapons to accommodate the fact that you are in the air however (for example, the rules for Sinking damage may need to be reconfigured into a time limit to repair your Airship before it hits the ground)

*"Why didn't you make maps for the ships/what is ship [x] supposed to look like?"*

I didn't make maps for the ships because I felt that they were largely unnecessary. I would prefer to leave it up to the individual DM and/or player to design the deck of their ship as they see fit, rather than provide a single standard ship that may or may not work out to everyone's vision for what their ship should look like. Furthermore, I didn't want players to become bogged down in the distance between things like the helm, the sails and the cannons when trying to figure out which Crew Actions they can take that turn. Working it in theatre of the mind is much easier and more fun.

The same applies for the ships given in the encounters section. I've listed a few things on each ship that must be present and where they may be, but otherwise the DM is free to decide the layout of the ship on their own.

*"Why do ships have no momentum in your rules?"*

This was a difficult decision to make, and yet again it has come back to the decision between realism vs simplicity. While it would be more realistic for ships to not be able to stop on a dime, playtests found it to add too much record keeping, and served little entertainment purposes.

*"Why are there no rules for traveling/exploring?"*

I wanted this book to focus more on action and combat than anything else. Furthermore, I feel that traveling is very dependent on the moods of the individual table. Some greatly enjoy random encounters, and plenty of hardship when moving from one location to another. Others just want to skip straight to the action. I will maybe provide such rules in a future expansion, if reception is good of this ruleset.

*"How can I contact you?"*

You can reach me at [driftersgameworkshop@gmail.com](mailto:driftersgameworkshop@gmail.com) or follow me on Twitter "[@DrifterWorkshop](https://twitter.com/DrifterWorkshop)". I am glad to hear of any comments, feedback, or complaints you have about this product.