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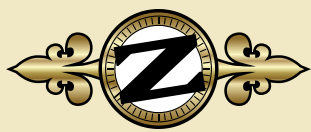
SEAS OF ZEITGEIST

Naval Combat Quick-Play Rules for Use with the World's Most Popular Roleplaying Games

by Ryan Nock
with Valuable Contributions from
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ZEITGEIST Rules Supplement
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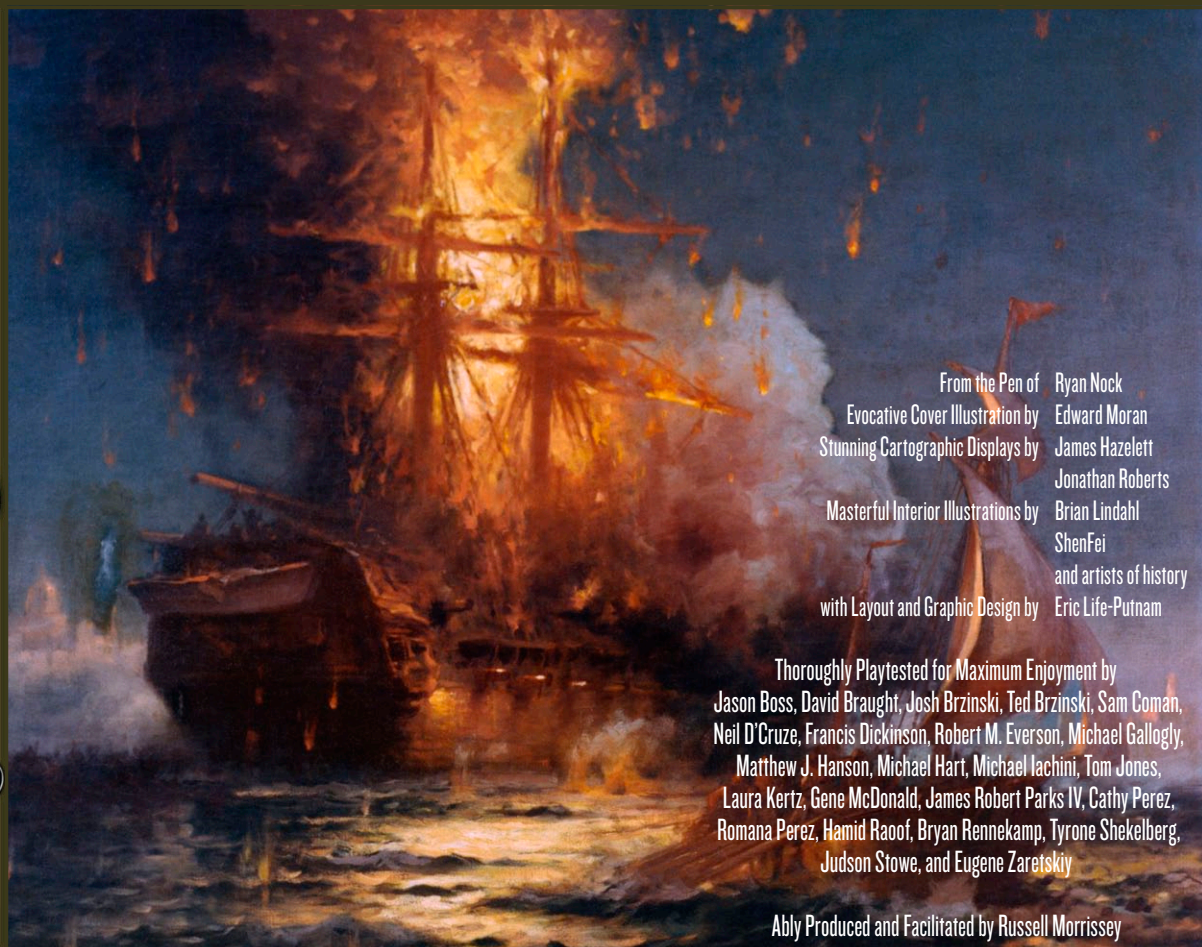
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SEAS OF ZEITGEIST

E.N. Publishing's naval supplement *Admiral o' the High Seas* has a full set of rules for adventures at sea, but herein we present enough rules to handle basic naval combat between two ships. If your group particularly likes ship encounters, your DM can use the additional material in *Admiral o' the High Seas* to spice up nautical engagements.

THE BASICS

When ships are closing for battle, but still too far away to fight hand-to-hand, action occurs in **naval combat**. Time and distance are a little flexible, but rounds are generally somewhere between one minute and five minutes long, during which a ship might travel hundreds or even thousands of feet. Once within range of boarding actions, the game switches to **tactical combat**, which are the normal 6-second rounds.

Officer Roles.

During naval combat, each PC chooses one **officer role**, which lets them contribute to the battle:
- **Captain** has final authority.
- **Bosun** directs the crew.
- **Navigator** aids maneuvers.
- **Gunner** aids attacks.
- **Engineer** repairs damage.
- **Look-Out** warns of danger.

A character can change his role each round, with some restrictions. *A ship cannot benefit from more than six officers at a given time.* Characters might also spend their turn as an **attacker**, using their weapons or spells against an enemy crew; this doesn't count against the six-officer limit.

The Naval Turn.

A naval turn consists of five phases—**maneuvers**, **location**, **terrain**, **bearing**, and **attack**. Some of these phases require the captain of each ship to make a **Command** check (see sidebar) to determine who gets the upper hand. Officers can choose to handle some of these tasks, rolling in the captain's stead, typically with a bonus. Different tactics and maneuvers can grant a bonus in one stage in exchange for a penalty in another.

Wind and the Weather Gage.

Being upwind of an enemy, known as holding the *weather gage* (or windward gage), is of great value in battles between vessels reliant on sails. While this system tries to keep location somewhat abstract, at the start of each encounter, determine the relative positions along the flow of the wind for each ship.

A ship that holds the weather gage against its opponent gains a +2 bonus to Command checks in the Location and Bearing phases. The captain may choose to instead gain a +5 bonus to Command checks for a round, but in so doing he exchanges positions with his foe, granting

them the weather gage the following round.

It is never possible to hold the weather gage against a ship that doesn't rely on sails for movement. If a sailing vessel and a steam vessel engage, being downwind (on the *leeward gage*) is no disadvantage for the steamship, so the sailing ship gains no bonus. However, if the steamship is upwind, the sailing ship's options are limited, so the steamship does gain the bonus for holding the weather gage.

Normally wind is steady during a given naval encounter, but magic might change it, and battles near landforms can mean that in different stages of battle, the wind flows different directions.

Multiple Ships.

If more than two sailing ships engage, resolving weather gage is a bit more complicated. During Location and Bearing phases, each captain rolls normally with no modifier for weather gage. First compare just the two highest results, then apply the bonus for weather gage to whoever is upwind, then let the winner choose the result of his roll. Then compare the next two highest remaining ships, apply weather gage bonus, then resolve. Repeat until all the ships are taken care of.

Initiative.

All ships act simultaneously during a naval round. Damage and negative conditions don't take effect until everyone has acted. The closest thing to initiative is that a ship's look-out can try to determine what maneuver an opposing ship is taking. Whichever ship has a better look-out can react to the other ship, giving it an informational advantage. The maneuvers themselves still occur simultaneously.

Round Phases.

A naval round consists of five phases—**maneuver**, **location**, **terrain**, **bearing**, and **attack**.

Maneuvers.

Each ship's look-out makes a Perception check. The captain of the ship with the lower result has to choose maneuvers first. It is not necessary to choose a maneuver. A captain who wishes to sacrifice the weather gage for a +5 bonus for the turn must choose to do so during this phase.

Basic maneuvers include:

- ✦ **Evasive Maneuvers.** You take a –5 penalty to attack rolls this round and gain a +2 bonus to Defense.
- ✦ **Full Speed Ahead.** You take a –5 penalty to Command checks for Bearing this round and gain a +2 bonus for checks for Location.
- ✦ **Hard About.** You take a –5 penalty to Command checks for Location this round and gain a +2 bonus to checks for Bearing.
- ✦ **Steady Aim.** You are less concerned with dodging than letting your crew line up the perfect shot. You take a –5 penalty to Defense this round and gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls.

Location.

Naval battles occur over various **stages**, each about 500 to 1000 feet across. If both ships intend to fight, start combat with the ships in adjacent stages. If one flees, see Stern Chases below.

Each captain makes a Command check and adds his ship's **speed** rating. The winning captain chooses one of the following options, followed by the losing captain.

A captain whose ship is leeward (downwind) can choose to take a –5 penalty to his Command check this stage. If he succeeds, he can claim the weather gage from the opposing ship, gaining its benefits next turn.

- ✦ **Change Location.** Your ship moves to an adjacent stage.
- ✦ **Hold Position.** If you're content where you are, or if you're being blocked, you can stay put.
- ✦ **Block Enemy.** Choose one ship whose Command check you beat, either in this stage or an adjacent one. If that ship tries to enter or leave the stage you're in, you can choose to prevent its movement.
- ✦ **Approach Enemy.** If you are in the same stage as another ship, and you beat that ship's Command check by 5 or more, you close to short range. If the ship moves to another stage this round, you follow it. In the next round, begin tactical combat with that ship.
- ✦ **Drive Enemy.** If you are in the same stage as another ship, and you beat that ship's Command check by 5 or more, you force that ship to either choose to change location to a stage of your choice, or hold position in the current stage. If it moves, you move to the same stage. If it holds position, its captain takes a –5 penalty to his Command check for this round's Bearing phase.
- ✦ **Pursue Ship.** If there is a ship in a stage adjacent to you, and you beat that ship's Command check by 5 or more, you enter that ship's stage. If it changes location this turn, you can move to the same location.
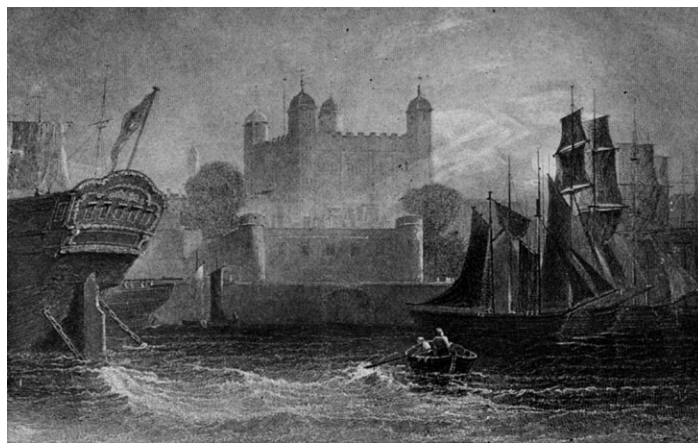
Terrain.

Most dangers of sea terrain (if any are present) require the captain to make a Command check and add the ship's **maneuverability** rating. Size and stability may help (+2 per size category above Tiny to resist choppy seas) or hinder (an equivalent penalty to avoid sandbars). Basic terrain options include:

- ✦ **Catch Hazard.** Ice, sandbars, kelp, water bubbling with gaseous upwelling, and swarms of marine animals. Make a Command check (sparse hazards DC 15, dense DC 20, and if there are only a handful of safe paths DC 25). Failure means the ship is briefly snagged. Its maximum speed is reduced to 2 during next round. Fail by 5 or more, and the ship is trapped. Until it breaks free it cannot make any Command checks to move. An engineer can free a trapped ship.
- ✦ **Chop.** Choppy seas, whirlpools, or kraken thrashing a vessel. Make a Command check (DC 15+). Failure means each crewman on the maindeck must make a Dexterity check (DC 8) to avoid being washed overboard. [[In Pathfinder, they make a Reflex save (DC 10).]] Failure by 5 or more is as above, plus the ship lists (page 68) from an impact. If the ship is already listing, a further failure by 5 or more capsizes the ship.

  Additionally, regardless of the result of the captain's check during the Terrain phase, a ship in chop has its speed and maneuverability ratings reduced by a quarter, or worse in heavy chop.
- ✦ **Visibility.** Fog, darkness, intense rain, or swarms of locusts. Each side rolls twice for Command checks and shipboard attack rolls. Take the worse result.

  A ship's look-out can spend his round to make a Perception check during the Terrain phase. If successful, he lets the ship ignore the penalty. Thin fog might be DC 15, thick fog or starlight DC 20, and complete black-out DC 30, though factors like ambient noise and reference points could adjust the DC.
- ✦ **Winds.** High winds typically create chop, and they impose a –2 penalty to attack rolls. Ships that attempt to fire toward a target leeward (downwind) of them take a –5 penalty instead, because the wind tends to rock the ship and point its guns downward, shortening their range.

  Low winds halve the speed of wind-powered vessels. Some areas have no winds at all, immobilizing sailing ships unless they can use oars or kedging to move. Unfavorable winds may provide a –2 to –5 penalty to sailing ships' attempts to avoid other terrain hazards. The lee side of a cliff can often endanger a ship because the only winds are those that blow toward the cliff face.

Bearing.

Relative facing determines what weapons a ship can bring to bear, and what weapons it is vulnerable to in a counterattack. This phase determines the best angle a ship is able to get on its opponent over the course of the round. Remember, this phase just determines orientation, not distance.

Each captain makes a Command check and adds his ship's **maneuverability** rating. The winner chooses one of the following options, based on how much he succeeded by. Generally you want to point your broadside (strongest weapons) at their aft (typically unarmed).

Partial Success (win by 1 to 4). You can point your bow at their bow or broadside. Or your broadside at their broadside. Or your stern at any edge of their ship.

Success (win by 5 to 9). You can point your broadside at their bow or broadside. Or you can point your bow or stern at any edge of their ship.

Critical Success (win by 10+). You can point any edge of your ship at any edge of their ship.

Attack.

Each ship can make one attack, using only the weapons available in the appropriate firing arc. The captain rolls 1d20 + ship's attack bonus vs. enemy ship's Defense. A successful attack causes one **strike**, plus an additional strike for every 5 points by which the attack roll beats the target's Defense. Attacks that do not cause strikes might still hit the target, but fail to damage anything vital. Even blowing holes in the outer hull doesn't do much if you hit above the water line.

If an attack roll is a natural 20, it is a critical hit. The first location hit takes two strikes instead of one.

Attacks at Medium (same stage) range use the full attack bonus. Attacks at Short (just before initiating tactical combat) range gain a +5 bonus. Most ship weapons cannot fire at Long range (adjacent stages), but those that can take a −10 penalty to the attack roll.

For each strike, roll on the table below to determine the location struck. This table is just a guideline, and circumstances of ship design, environment, and tactics might change the odds of hitting a given component.

1d10 Roll	Location
1−2	Hull Integrity
3−4	Propulsion
5−6	Armaments
7−10	Miscellaneous (crew quarters, special ship component, etc.)

Most components are damaged after one strike, broken after a second, and destroyed after a third. If the rolled component is already destroyed, or if the ship doesn't have the listed component, the ship takes 1 point of Hull Integrity damage instead. For instance, strikes to weaponry deal Hull Integrity damage if the ship has no weaponry, or at least no weaponry on the side of the ship struck.

Effects of hits are detailed in Ship Damage below.

Aftermath.

If two or more ships have closed to short range, begin a tactical combat encounter with those vessels. Place the ships on the battle map in an orientation determined during the Bearing phase. The ship that won in the Bearing phase determines the starting distance, from adjacent to 25 ft. apart. If the ships begin adjacent, each ship is immobilized on the first round of the tactical combat, due to the grinding together of the hulls.

If ships end up separated by more than one stage, begin a stern chase.

RAMMING.

If you end the Bearing phase at short range with another ship, and your bow is pointed toward that ship, and you beat that ship's Bearing check this round, you can ram during the Attack phase. Even if your bow faces their bow, you can ram them at a slight angle so that they aren't ramming you back. If your Bearing checks tie, however, both ships ram each other.

Ramming requires an attack roll, using an attack bonus equal to the ship's Defense minus 5.

Relative speed is also a factor in the attack roll. If the rammer attacks point to point, add the two ships' speed ratings together. If the attack is point to tail, determine how much faster the ramming ship is than the target (minimum 0). If the attack is point to side, just take the rammer's speed. Then, for every 5 points of effective speed, add +1 to the attacker's roll.

The results of a strike are the same as with normal shipboard weapons, though unless the ships are vastly different sizes, or if one ship can get above another, rams cannot damage rigging.

The rammed vessel makes an identical attack against the rammer, but uses its Defense minus 10 instead of Defense minus 5.

Officer Roles

Each round, a PC can choose a role and provide one of the listed benefits for the ship. NPCs can also fill officer roles. You can have multiple characters in the same role, except for captain. Remember, *a ship can benefit from a maximum of six officers at a time.*

Most roles let characters add to the captain's Command checks for a specific action. A character must choose whether to aid before the captain rolls, so it is ideal for the officers to decide their tactics at the beginning of the naval round, before they start making rolls.

Captain.

The captain's role is to decide maneuvers and order the rest of the crew. His actions are typically limited to those detailed above in the Round Phases section. The rest of the crew augments his decisions by filling in the details and giving the captain more time to focus on the big picture. It's the difference between the captain giving specific orders ("Set a course at 15 degrees North Northeast at twelve knots") and the captain providing general goals and trusting his crew to carry them out ("Cut them off so we can bring our port guns to bear").

Bosun.

The bosun relays orders to the crew and direct thems while working alongside them. Once per round, the navigator can choose one of the following:

- ✦ Roll a Command check in the Location, Terrain, or Bearing phase, adding his Charisma modifier to the captain's Command score. This replaces the captain's normal Command check for that phase.
- ✦ Add his Charisma modifier to a shipboard weapon's attack roll, or to an engineer's check to repair or tweak the vessel.

A bosun trained in Diplomacy or Intimidate can either add 2, or add 1 + his ability score modifier, whichever is higher. So a bosun with an 8 Charisma who has the right training could add +2, while a high-level bosun with a 22 Charisma and the same training could add +7.

[[In Pathfinder, a bosun gains this benefit with at least 1 rank in Diplomacy, Intimidate, or Profession (sailor).]]

Engineer.

Once per round, the engineer can attempt to repair the hull or a damaged component, or can try to tweak the ship's performance. To do so, first he must have a number of crew at his disposal equal to the ship's Minimum Crew rating. Then he chooses one of the following effects, and makes an Intelligence check:

[[In Pathfinder, an engineer makes a Knowledge (architecture and engineering) or Profession (sailor) check, but increase the DC by 5.]]

- ✦ **Fight Fire (DC 20).** Put out a fire in one section.
- ✦ **Repair Component (DC 15).** One damaged component is restored to full order. A check that beats DC 20 can repair a disabled component to being just damaged. A check that beats DC 25 can repair a destroyed component to being disabled. If the component is magical, the engineer takes a –5 penalty to this check if he's not trained in Arcana. [[In Pathfinder, he needs at least 1 rank in Knowledge (arcana).]]
- ✦ **Repair Hull (DC 20).** Repair 1 point of Hull Integrity damage the ship has taken. Each success increases the DC of further repairs by 5, even between encounters. The DC only resets if the ship can undergo proper repairs in a safe harbor.
- ✦ **Right a Listing Ship (DC 20).** Restore a listing ship to be upright.

Shuffling Crew.

Certain actions require crew to assist. If the ship has enough men to spare, it might still maintain a Full Crew. Otherwise, the ship will take penalties as if it had Minimum Crew. Sometimes this is a fair trade-off, such as to put out a fire before it spreads.

- ✦ **Slow Sinking (DC 15).** Reduce the rate of the ship's sinking by one step, from immediate to quick to slow to stable.
- ✦ **Give Her All She's Got! (DC 10).** Increase the ship's Maneuverability or Speed rating by one 1 for this round, plus an additional 1 for every 10 you beat the DC by.

Gunner.

One PC can act as Gunner per firing arc, as long as the battery has sufficient crew. Once per round, the gunner can choose one of the following:

- ✦ Roll for an attack with a shipboard weapon, adding his Intelligence or Dexterity modifier to the normal attack bonus. Similar to with the bosun above, a gunner trained in Perception can either add 2, or add 1 + his ability score modifier, whichever is higher.

  [[In Pathfinder, a navigator gains this benefit with at least 1 rank in Perception or Profession (sailor).]]
- ✦ Choose the location of the first hit with shipboard weapons, instead of rolling on the hit chart.

Look-Out.

During the Maneuvers phase, the look-out makes a Perception check to determine the order ships choose their maneuvers for the round.

Additionally, once per round the look-out can choose one of the following:

- ✦ Make a Perception check to reduce the impact of poor visibility.
- ✦ Roll any necessary Command checks in the Terrain phase, adding his Wisdom modifier to the captain's Command score. This replaces the captain's normal Command check for that phase.
- ✦ Grant a bonus equal to his Wisdom modifier to the ship's Defense against one attack from a vessel he can see.
- ✦ Grant a bonus equal to his Wisdom modifier to the defenses and saves of the crew against attacks coming from a vessel he can see. This bonus applies to personal attacks, not shipboard weapons.
- ✦ Choose one section where the crew takes damage from an enemy's shipboard weapons. Reduce the damage done to each creature in that area by the same bonus as above.

When he would add his Wisdom modifier, a look-out trained in Perception can either add 2, or add 1+ his Wisdom modifier, whichever is higher.

[[In Pathfinder, a navigator gains this benefit with at least 1 rank in Perception or Profession (sailor).]]

Navigator.

Once per round, the navigator can roll a Command check in the Location or Bearing phase, adding his Dexterity, Intelligence, or Wisdom modifier to the captain's Command score. This replaces the captain's normal Command check for that phase. (Dexterity represents fast piloting as helmsman, while Intelligence or Wisdom fits for plotting courses).

A navigator trained in Nature can either add 2, or add 1+ his ability score modifier, whichever is higher.

[[In Pathfinder, a navigator gains this benefit with at least 1 rank in Knowledge (nature), Profession (sailor), or Survival.]]

Attacker.

Each naval round lasts a minute or more, but sometimes players will want to take actions that can be accomplished in a few seconds. Performing the other officer roles takes the full round, but if a character would prefer to unload a *wand of fireballs* or a quiver of arrows, use these guidelines.

Attacker is an officer role, just like captain or bosun, and a character who's busy doing another officer role doesn't have time to fire off a ranged attack on the.

Ships spend most of their turn hundreds of feet away from each other, and rocking of waves, gusts and vortices of winds, and the great speeds of ships make it difficult to aim ranged attacks accurately. Likewise, most ships that expect combat are enchanted with some sort of eldritch defense or mundane countermeasure that ameliorates magical attacks.

An attacker is usually better off waiting for the right opening and making a single attack, instead of futilely watching arrows fly off course, or fireballs be snuffed by an eldritch aura.

Range and Defenses.

Attacks need to be able to reach 300 ft. if the target is in the same stage, or 800 ft. if the target is in an adjacent stage.

As a first mundane defense, most crew on deck have cover thanks to rigging and railing, while those inside have total cover, or possibly superior cover if there's an open cannon port.

Second, look-outs can help the crew avoid some incoming attacks.

Weapon Attacks.

A character who wants to use traditional ranged attacks can, over the course of a naval round, make one tactical round's worth of attacks. This might represent firing a volley of arrows, or waiting for just the right lull in wind to fire a single deadly shot.

Alternately, the character can make ten rounds worth of attacks, but he takes a penalty equal to the target ship's Maneuverability or Speed, whichever is higher. (These penalties do not apply during tactical combat, since the ships are closer.)

Spells.

When confronted by a ship with an eldritch defense, a character can look for a temporary weakness or fluctuation in the magic. He spends the naval round to make an Arcana check [[or Knowledge (arcana) in PATHFINDER]] (DC 10 + half the target ship's level), and if successful can cast one tactical round's worth of spells that bypasses the target ship's eldritch defense.

As above, there's always the option of taking ten tactical rounds' worth of actions, but suffering the full penalties from the target's eldritch defenses, which typically redirect spells harmlessly to a figurehead.

Damaging a Ship.

Realistically, a couple of arrows won't do much to a 100-ft. long ship. Even a rowboat isn't going to sink just because you shot it a dozen times. Likewise, chopping a greataxe into the deck of a ship isn't going to cause it to take on water. However, with a well-aimed attack that deals enough damage, it is possible for a character to deliver a strike to a ship.

First he must hit the ship in a vulnerable spot, which requires an attack roll against an AC equal to the ship's Defense. His attack takes a penalty equal to the target ship's Maneuverability or Speed, whichever is higher. This penalty does not apply during tactical combat, since the ships are closer.

The ship's eldritch defenses might reduce the damage of a magical attack. Then, unless the attack is specially designed to damage objects, halve the damage it deals. Then, if that damage exceeds the ship's Defense score, it causes one strike on a random location. For each multiple the damage is of the target ship's Defense, it inflicts another hit. Energy attacks might give a component the burning condition instead of causing damage right away.

Yes, in PATHFINDER a low-level *fireball* (dealing an average of 17.5 damage, halved to 8.75) probably won't set a ship's sails on fire. However, if a *disintegrate* spell (dealing an average 77 damage, not halved) manages to hit the right spot on a Gargantuan ship with 30 Defense, it will deal 2 strikes, unless the ship has an eldritch defense.

STERN CHASES

When one ship pursues another and they are out of range of each other's weapons, a chase might take hours.

Simple Pursuit.

Track relative distance as a sort of tug-of-war. Each "round," the captains of the two vessels both make Command checks and add their ships' Speed ratings. Whoever wins gets a success. If the other ship already has a success, the winner instead negates one of his opponent's successes. The pursuit ends when one side or the other gets three successes.

The number of successes either side has determines how close the two ships are at the end of that round, and how long the next round is. For instance, if the pursuer has one success at the end of the round, the two ships are about a mile apart, and the next round will represent about 30 minutes of sailing. If during that round the quarry succeeds, you'd move down one row on the table; the ships would end up about 3 miles apart, and the next round would cover an hour of sailing.

Stern Chase Distances.

Successes	Approximate Distance	Next Round Length
Pursuer 3	One stage (i.e., 500 ft.)	1–5 minutes (i.e., naval combat)
Pursuer 2	Quarter-mile	10 minutes
Pursuer 1	1 mile	30 minutes
Tied	3 miles	1 hour
Quarry 1	10 miles	4 hours
Quarry 2	30 miles	12 hours
Quarry 3	Out of sight	n/a

Chase Results.

If the pursuer gets three successes, he manages to catch up. Start a naval combat with the two ships in adjacent stages. The pursuer gets a +5 bonus to his Command checks during the first turn's Location phase (page 63).

If the quarry gets three successes, it manages to sail beyond sight of the pursuer and gets away.

Based on how far apart the ships are at the start of the chase, one side might begin with successes. For instance, if two ships come around an island and spot each other at a distance of a quarter mile, you can start a chase, but the pursuer would effectively start with two successes.

Decisions Matter.

Of course a good chase needs to have decision points, or else it just comes down to who's faster or luckier.

Where To?

The quarry usually has the benefit of being able to choose where to go. They might head for reinforcements, in which case it's important to determine how far away allies are, and how far the quarry sails per round. Generally you take a ship's speed rating and divide by 2 to get the miles it sails per hour, but this can vary based on factors of wind and currents.

The quarry might choose to head into dangerous terrain, hoping their pursuer gets damaged or stranded (see Terrain and Hazards, page 63). It might head for terrain that offers a lot of hiding places, and the navigator could make a Stealth check opposing the pursuing ship's look-out's Perception check, trying to get out of sight, and perhaps even set up an ambush. Or it might simply try to keep its distance until it can effect repairs and come about for battle.

Crew vs Crew.

Various crew roles can help during a stern chase, much as they would during naval combat. Bosuns can add their Charisma to the captain's Command check. Engineers can roll each round to squeeze a little more speed out of the sails. Look-outs and navigators can help avoid hazardous terrain.

And of course any number of magical options can change things dramatically.

SHIP DAMAGE

Being complex devices, ships do not simply have one pool of hit points. Attacks can damage various components, kill crew, or weaken the hull to the point that the ship is no longer seaworthy. As components are damaged, certain areas might become difficult or blocking terrain. Sufficient hits might even knock holes in walls and floors big enough for creatures to move through, at the GM's discretion.

For most components, a single strike damages it, a second disables, and a third destroys. The rigging of a huge ship technically does take just as many strikes to destroy as a small one, but because larger ships have higher Defenses, it requires more firepower to achieve the same result. Still, with a few lucky shots, a lightly armed ship could take out the sails of a much larger vessel.

Crew Damage.

If the text below says that a strike to a given area causes damage to creatures, those creatures can make a Dexterity check (DC 15) to negate the damage. [[In Pathfinder, they make a Reflex save (DC 15).]]

GMs should use their judgment to determine how large an area should be affected, but remember often these attacks are made with volleys of cannons or deadly supernatural weapons, so it's not unreasonable for half a deck to be at risk for damage.

Conditions.

Various effects can cause the following conditions.

Burning.

Some attacks can add the burning condition either in place of or in addition to normal damage. Each naval round, for each ship section (hull, propulsion, armament, and miscellaneous) that is on fire, make a ship saving throw (captain's Charisma check vs. DC 10). On a success, the fire doesn't cause any significant damage. On a 20 or higher, the fire either burns itself out or is extinguished, but only for that particular section; fires elsewhere continue.

A failed save means that the burning component takes another hit. If you fail a save by 5 or more, roll an additional location to see where the fire spreads.

Simply having the burning condition is not enough to make a part of the ship unusable. Only once a save is failed has the area actually 'caught fire' to the point of being hazardous. In tactical combat, a burning ship should have scattered areas of flames and large swaths concealed by smoke.

Capsized.

A ship that is completely turned over, usually the result of strong waves, is immobilized and starts to sink slowly.

Immobilized.

An immobilized ship automatically fails Command checks. It cannot move or change stages unless physically pushed. Shipboard weapons gain a +5 bonus to hit it.

If some other effect reduces a ship's Speed or Maneuverability to 0, such as damage to propulsion or some special maneuver, it is immobilized.

Listing.

Whenever a ship fails a save to avoid sinking, it has a 25% chance of listing to port, 25% of listing to starboard, and 50% of being stable. A listing ship is immobilized. Attacks might be unable to hit certain components due to the ship's angle.

During tactical combat, a listing ship has one side sloping toward the sea. Any creature that cannot hold onto a railing or other support treats all movement as difficult terrain. A creature that is knocked prone slides 2 squares toward the water.

Sinking.

At regular intervals, a sinking ship must make a ship saving throw to avoid its decks being flooded. A slowly sinking ship rolls every ten minutes. Quickly sinking ships roll every minute, or once per naval round. A ship that is immediately sinking goes under right away during naval combat, or makes a saving throw once per round during tactical combat.

A successful save means the ship is temporarily stable. A roll of 20 or higher means the ship's descent slows one step. If it's only sinking slowly, it stabilizes, and will not sink unless damaged further.

A failed save means the ship goes down about 10 feet, or the depth of one deck. If a deck with open gunports becomes submerged, the ship's sinking accelerates by one step, from slow to quick to immediate.

If a ship has failed any sinking saves, it is immobilized. Once a ship's main deck is submerged, it automatically fails future saves and cannot stabilize.

Hull Integrity.

Strikes that hit in the right spot can reduce a ship's Hull Integrity. Crew in an area at or below the waterline might be injured by this strike, taking 1d6 damage.

If strikes reduce a ship's Hull Integrity to 0 or less, it begins to sink slowly. If it is reduced to –2, it sinks quickly. If reduced to –5, it sinks immediately.

Propulsion.

Whatever it is, there must be something makes a ship move. This can be the rigging on a sailing ship, the engine room on a steam-powered vessel, oars on a rowed boat, bound elementals, or some other odd power

source for magically-propelled vehicles. It can also include rudders, the ship's wheel, propellers, and flippers or wings of a living vessel.

The first strike damages the propulsion, reducing the ship's Maneuverability and Speed by 5 each, to a minimum of 0. Creatures in or near the damaged propulsion component take 2d6 points of damage.

A second strike disables propulsion and immobilizes the ship, and deals a further 2d6 damage to creatures in the area. A third strike destroys the propulsion, often with great collateral damage. Masts collapse, boilers explode with steam, and eldritch engines unleash deadly warping energies. Creatures in exposed areas take 6d6 damage.

Armaments.

When a strike hits armaments, it disables one particular battery and deals 2d6 damage to each creature operating that battery. A second strike destroys the battery, deals another 2d6 damage to creatures in the area, and may, depending on the nature of the battery, cause damage to the ship.

Miscellaneous.

The strike can either hit a component, such as a magical figurehead, a sick bay, or a crow's nest, or just hit an open part of a deck where crew are. When you roll this result, choose any component you're aware of. If you aren't aware of any, the GM may choose one at random.

The first strike to a given area disables any components there—shattering a crow's nest, scattering tools in a sick bay, or knocking a figurehead loose. It also deals 2d6 damage to creatures in the area. A second strike destroys the component and deals another 2d6 damage.

Sample Ships

- ✦ **Rowboat.** Suitable for dinghies, canoes, and the like.
- ✦ **Cutter.** A basic sailing vessel. Including the *Audacious*, a famed and beloved excise cutter.
- ✦ **Steam Cutter.** A basic steam-powered vessel. Also the *Inevitable*, a ship whose first crew died in a boiler explosion.
- ✦ **Schooner.** The classic large multi-masted sailing ship. Also *Roscommon*, a schooner blessed by a fey queen.
- ✦ **Steamship.** A sturdy turret-armed patrol boat. Also *Khalundurrin*, a bold dwarven scout ship.
- ✦ **Frigate.** The iconic warship of the golden age of sail. Also the *Impossible*, an extreme clipper faster than anything on the sea.

Rowboat,

No, it's not glamorous, but sometimes you need stats for a rowboat.

Rowboat	Level 0 Vehicle
Tiny Vehicle	50 gp
Hull Integrity 1	**Command** —
Defense 8	**Full Crew** 1
Maneuverability 2	**Minimum Crew** 1
Speed 0–3 (see below)	**Total Complement** 6
Design	

Length 15 ft. Beam 5 ft. Six people can travel safely in a rowboat. Up to twelve can squeeze in, but they cannot effectively fight or defend themselves.

Oar Power

The rowboat has a speed rating of 1 for every two rowers, to a maximum of 3. Rowers with the Expert Sailor feat count double.
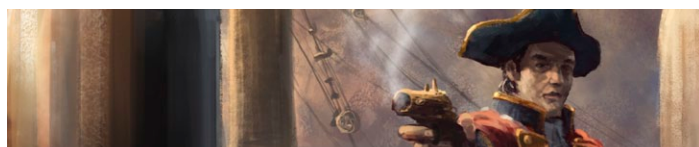
Cutter.

The traditional fore-and-aft rig of a cutter has a single mast supporting a mainsail and two or more headsails attached to a bowsprit. The *Audacious*, an excise cutter used by the Royal Homeland Constabulary to patrol Flint Harbor, uses more advanced rigging and sails.

Cutter	Level 5 Vehicle
Small Vehicle	1,000 gp
Hull Integrity 2	**Command** —
Defense 10	**Full Crew** 4
Maneuverability 10	**Minimum Crew** 1
Speed 6	**Total Complement** 10

Design

Length 30 ft. Beam 15 ft. One mast, 40 ft. high.

Total Cost 1,000 gp

Hull (base level 2, sails, improved speed ×2, Level 5): 1000 gp

***Audacious*, Excise Cutter**	Level 6 Vehicle
Small Vehicle	2,800 gp
Hull Integrity 2	**Command** —
Defense 10	**Full Crew** 4
Maneuverability 10	**Minimum Crew** 1
Speed 8	**Total Complement** 10

Design

Length 30 ft. Beam 15 ft. One mast, 50 ft. high.

Beloved

While the ship is in full repair, crew on board gain a +1 bonus to saving throws.

Armaments

A pair of forward-facing light cannons.

Crew: 1. Attack: +2, forward only.

Total Cost 2,800 gp

Hull (base level 2, sails, improved speed ×3, Level 6): 1,800 gp

Armaments (tiny, prow, Level 5): 1,000 gp

Steam Cutter.

Steam cutters can more easily travel against the wind, but are louder and must rely on fuel, which somewhat limits their long-distance uses. The *Inevitable*, the RHC's other harbor patrol ship, is slower than the *Audacious*, but more heavily-armed.

Steam Cutter	Level 5 Vehicle
Small Vehicle	1,000 gp
Hull Integrity 2	**Command** —
Defense 10	**Full Crew** 2
Maneuverability 10	**Minimum Crew** 1
Speed 4	**Total Complement** 10

Design

Length 30 ft. Beam 15 ft. Steam engine, single screw. Carries fuel for 500 miles.

Total Cost 1,000 gp

Hull (base level 2, engine, improved speed, Level 5): 1000 gp

***Inevitable*, Steam Cutter**	Level 5 Vehicle
Small Vehicle	2,680 gp
Hull Integrity 2	**Command** —
Defense 10	**Full Crew** 2
Maneuverability 10	**Minimum Crew** 1
Speed 4	**Total Complement** 10

Design

Length 30 ft. Beam 15 ft. Steam engine, single screw. Carries fuel for 500 miles.

Daunting

The first attack roll against the ship each combat takes a −5 penalty. Hostile creatures entering the ship's space treat the first square they enter as difficult terrain.

Ramprow

A steel awl can be lowered into the water to pierce enemy hulls just beneath the surface.

When your ship rams, prevent the first strike the rammed ship would deal to you.

Armaments

A pair of forward-facing light cannons.

Crew: 1. Attack: +2, forward only.

Total Cost 2,680 gp

Hull (base level 2, engine, improved speed, Level 5): 1,000 gp

Armaments (tiny, prow, Level 5): 1,000 gp

Ramprow (Level 3): 680 gp

Schooner.

The schooner is one of the lightest types of vessels used for oceanic voyages. Its nimbleness makes it ideal for blockade-running and surveillance, but if cornered by an actual warship it must rely on the skill-at-arms of its crew, since it cannot mount many weapons. The RHC fields the *Roscommon*, a schooner blessed by a fey queen.

Schooner	Level 10 Vehicle
Large Vehicle	8,400 gp
Hull Integrity 3	**Command** —
Defense 15	**Full Crew** 16
Maneuverability 6	**Minimum Crew** 4
Speed 8	**Total Complement** 40

Design

Length 90 ft. Beam 25 ft. Three masts, 70 ft. high. Two decks.

Armaments

A small array of light cannons, five to either broadside, more for deterrence than offense.

Crew: 15. Attack: +7, broadsides only.

Total Cost 8,400 gp

Hull (base level 6, sails, improved speed ×3, Level 10): 5,000 gp

Armaments (medium, broadsides, Level 8): 3,400 gp

***Roscommon*, Fey-Pact Schooner**	Level 10 Vehicle
Large Vehicle	19,240 gp
Hull Integrity 3	**Command** —
Defense 15	**Full Crew** 16
Maneuverability 6	**Minimum Crew** 4
Speed 8	**Total Complement** 40

Design

Length 90 ft. Beam 25 ft. Three masts, 70 ft. high. Two decks. Beautiful fey woman figurehead.

*Beloved but Petulant * Trait*

As long as the ship and figurehead are in full repair, the ship completes its journeys in 10% less time than usual, and the crew gets +1 to saving throws. If either is damaged, the benefit goes away.

Armaments

A small array of light cannons, five to either broadside, enchanted for elven precision. The mounting for each is carved from lightning-struck wood, threaded with white streaks.

Crew: 15. Attack: +9, broadsides only. Option to fire shocking ammunition, which only damages enemy crew, not the vessel.

Dryad Figurehead

The beautiful woman blushes when complimented, and sometimes disappears when mistreated. Occasionally trinkets go missing and are found decorating her wooden locks.

The figurehead functions as a flagbearer, redirecting hostile spells originating beyond 50 feet away to herself. She has 50 hit points, and ignores the first 10 points of damage from any attack.

Jaunter

Once per naval round, the captain standing at the head of the ship can ask the favor of the queen's figurehead. If the captain is in good favor with the fey spirit within the figurehead, the ship teleports a short distance. This can grant a +5 bonus to the ship's Maneuverability for the purpose of avoiding obstacles or for the Bearing phase, but only relative to a hostile ship at short range.

   In tactical combat, this requires a standard action and can be done once every five minutes. The Roscommon and everyone aboard teleports 50 ft. (10 squares) to an unoccupied space. It maintains the same heading and speed.

Total Cost 19,240 gp

Hull (base level 6, sails, improved speed ×3, Level 10): 5,000 gp

Armaments (medium, broadsides, Level 10): 5,000 gp

Shocking ammunition (Level 8): 3,400 gp

Figurehead flagbearer (Level 4): 840 gp

Jaunter fey step (Level 10): 5,000 gp

Steamship.

Early steam-powered vessels took a long time to evolve into the modern iteration of a heavily-armored warships traveling in large fleets, each ship having a differentiated role. This early iron-hulled patrol boat was meant to serve as a workhorse: fast enough to chase down tiny smugglers, sturdy enough to keep larger hostile ships busy until reinforcements can close. It mounts a forward turret of two cannons, giving it decent firepower without requiring a lot of crew.

The forward turret is accessed by a hatch on its roof. The roof level of the turret has high protective walls. Normally two sailors load and fire the cannons, a third on top passes down ammunition and feeds them targeting information, while three in the lower deck operate the rotational mechanism. The designers thought larger cannons would be infeasible, but crew find the current guns too weak.

A central bridge rises above the main deck. This is topped by the pilot's cabin, which offers a valuable high vantage despite being exposed at that height. Heavy armor protects the cabin, however, and its size makes it difficult to strike intentionally. In the main bridge cabin, the crew can operate safely behind thick iron walls. A hatch in the ceiling can access the pilot's cabin when it's not safe to go outside.

The lower deck serves as berth and hold. Vents lead up from the engine level, allowing fresh air to circulate, and heat to dissipate. And, of course, the smoke stack rises aft of the pilot's cabin, trailing steam and soot behind the vessel.

The RHC makes use of *Khalundurrin*, a captured Drakran naval steamer. Arcanists who examined the ship postulate that some manner of spirit might inhabit its steam engine. Crew who serve on it sleep easily and speak of dreams filled with bold imagery like something out of a dwarven opera.

Steamship	Level 10 Vehicle
Large Vehicle	8,400 gp
Hull Integrity 3	**Command** —
Defense 15	**Full Crew** 8
Maneuverability 6	**Minimum Crew** 2
Speed 6	**Total Complement** 25

Design

Length 85 ft. Beam 25 ft. Steam engine, three decks.

Armaments

A pair of heavy cannons in a turret.

Crew: 15. Attack: +4, forward or broadside.

Total Cost 8,400 gp

Hull (base level 6, engine, improved speed ×2, Level 10): 5,000 gp

Armaments (medium, forward turret, Level 8): 3,400 gp

Khalundurrin, steamship	Level 10 Vehicle
Large Vehicle	19,440 gp
Hull Integrity 3	**Command** —
Defense 15	**Full Crew** 8
Maneuverability 6	**Minimum Crew** 2
Speed 6	**Total Complement** 25

Design

Length 85 ft. Beam 25 ft. Steam engine, three decks. Runes etched along the hull.

Bold and Aggressive

When the ship is sailing toward a foe, its speed increases by 2 and its captain gains a +2 bonus to Command checks during the Location stage. The ship gets a +2 bonus to Defense against attacks from ships at short range.

Armaments

A pair of heavy cannons in a turret, inscribed with dwarven battle runes.

Crew: 6. Attack: +6, forward or broadside.

Ramprow

Khalundurrin takes 1 fewer strike when it rams.

Ironclad, Tar and Brimstone Sheathing

The crew has cover against attacks made from outside the ship. Whenever a creature within 30 ft. of the hull attacks the underside of the ship, that creature takes 10 fire damage.

Shield Defense

A diamond embedded in the ramprow charges runes etched across the hull. These generate a protective shield, and any spell that originates more than 50 feet away from the ship deals 20 less damage to creatures aboard *Khalundurrin*.

Total Cost 19,440 gp

Hull (base level 6, engine, improved speed ×2, Level 10): 5,000 gp

Armaments (medium, forward turret, Level 10): 5,000 gp

Ramprow (Level 3): 680 gp

Ironclad (defensible, Level 1): 360 gp

Tar and brimstone sheathing (Level 8): 3,400 gp

Shield defense (Level 10): 5,000 gp

Frigate.

Frigates are the most powerful warships of the age of sail, carrying one or more full gundecks, plus additional cannons on the maindeck. They carried hundreds of sailors to be able to load and fire both broadsides while still sailing.

Roughly equivalent in size is the clipper ship, designed purely for speed. The R.N.S. *Impossible* is an extreme clipper, carrying minimal weapons and only deployed when speed is worth the risk of traveling undefended.

Frigate	Level 17 Vehicle
Huge Vehicle	110,000 gp
Hull Integrity 4	**Command** —
Defense 25	**Full Crew** 32
Maneuverability 4	**Minimum Crew** 8
Speed 14	**Total Complement** 200

Design

Length 170 ft. Beam 35 ft. Three masts, 100 ft. high. Four decks.

Armaments

To each broadside, eleven light cannons on the maindeck and a dozen full cannons on the gundeck. In a chase, the crew moves and turns the cannons on the maindeck to fire forward or aftward.

Crew: 100. Attack: +17 to broadsides, or +14 fore or aft.

Total Cost 110,000 gp

Hull (base level 11, sails, improved speed ×5, Level 17): 65,000 gp

Armaments (huge, boards and chasers, Level 16): 45,000 gp

***Impossible*, extreme clipper**	Level 17 Vehicle
Gargantuan Vehicle	234,000 gp
Hull Integrity 4	**Command** —
Defense 25	**Full Crew** 64
Maneuverability 4	**Minimum Crew** 16
Speed 22	**Total Complement** 120

Design

Length 250 ft. Beam 45 ft. Four masts, 150 ft. high. Three decks.

Armaments

Eleven light cannons on the maindeck to each broadside. Useless against a ship of the same size, but enough to deter small foes.

Crew: 40. Attack: +11 to broadsides, or +8 fore or aft.

Total Cost 110,000 gp

Hull (base level 12, sails, improved speed ×8, Level 21): 225,000 gp

Armaments (large, boards and chasers, Level 11): 9,000 gp

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