

ULTIMATE PIRATES, PRIVATEERS AND PLUNDER GUIDE



ULTIMATE PIRATES, PRIVATEERS AND PLUNDER GUIDE

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MYL10401 Ultimate Pirates, Privateers and Plunder Guide

1st Edition October 2013

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PRIVATEERS, PIRATES AND PLUNDER

Pierre crouched low on the high, flat platform suspended forty feet in the air. A two foot box of wood surrounded him, a pitiful defense against the battle raging below. He reloaded his rifle as quickly and accurately as possible, pouring the powder from his pouch before jamming in a bullet and setting the ignition caps. He tried to keep calm as men screamed below in anger, pain or death. His weapon loaded, he sat up and looked for a proper target. He was greeted with a loud whoosh as a bullet flew by his ear and crashed into the mast behind him. Pierre followed the bullet's trajectory and saw a marksman on the rival ship curse and reload his rifle. "Fucka'" Pierre yelled over to him. He could return the favor and eliminate the treat, but that wasn't what he was here for. No, his brothers below needed him to be more selfless than that. He looked below at the organized chaos.

His ship, The Maiden's Virtue, had sailed the waters around Port Royal for two years now, taking many valuable prizes. But The Maiden was no warship; she was an armed sloop, fast and maneuverable with just enough firepower to be a real threat. Her captain was a good man who knew the waters well, issued out fair punishment and upheld the spirit of the charter. They'd chased this particular prize for two days before catching her. "The Headless Man" seemed like an easy merchant target; she flew Spanish colors and lay deep in the water, indicating heavy, full stores. It turns out those heavy stores were full of armed troops, waiting in ambush. Spain was getting crafty in its efforts to combat privateering. The ship had feigned surrender and once the boarding lines were set, Spanish troops burst out from below deck. Now, the crew was in a life and death struggle to repel their own boarders. "Damn Spanish", he thought.

He looked down as uniformed Spanish troops pushed against his brothers wearing tattered clothing pilfered from a dozen conquests. He watched a man named Jamison get slashed across the arm and drop to the deck. Jamison was smart and tossed himself overboard into the sea before his assailant's bayonet could take his life. Another boy, Labash, he remembered the name, worked furiously to cut the boarding lines only to take a musket blast to the chest and fall back, coughing up blood. Pierre had enough and searched the crowd for his target. Another shot blasted into the mast near him from somewhere, but he did his best to ignore it. At this range most men would need a small miracle to hit him. Pierre's muzzle moved to and fro frantically until he found his target. The officer was smart; he'd removed his officer's hat and donned a normal black one. However, he had failed to remove the small metal rank insignia on his collars. Pierre took aim and steadied his breathing. One, two, three, four; he slowly squeezed the trigger and watched with satisfaction as the officer dropped to the ground, a bullet lodged somewhere in his head.

Satisfaction turned to training and Pierre fell back behind his limited cover to reload. He received several more shots during the reload, but none found their mark. Pierre rolled back over and searched for another prime target. His crew was slowly being pushed back and it wouldn't be long before the troops took possession of his ship. After that, court martial and hanging for most of them. He searched through his sight for anyone calling out orders. Anyone who could be, and then he found him, standing like a coward behind a railing. It wouldn't be an easy shot, but maybe. He took aim and began the count; one,

two, BANG! The shot rang out and Pierre felt a blistering hot pain in his leg. He looked back and saw a gruesome wound on his left leg. "Damn," he thought. He'd probably lose that leg now. "Fuckas!" he yelled again. He pushed the pain out and began his count again; one, two, three, four, pull. The musket ball screamed out of its barrel; it crossed through the enemy sail, missing several pieces of rigging and traveled just under another man's chin before lodging itself in the ship captain's chest. The captain clutched his chest and tried to hold back blood that began pouring from the wound. The fellows around him tried to get the captain below deck before news spread, but bad news has a tendency to spread like wildfire. One by one the attackers lost their nerve as their commander was down and one by one boarding lines were cut. When the final line was cut and the ships began to drift apart, a wild cheer went up amongst his brothers. Pierre was reloaded by this point and put a bullet into the leg of a rival sharpshooter when the man stood, thinking the range too far for an accurate hit.

Scattered musket fire erupted from the enemy ship, but at this distance none found any targets. Pierre stood and smiled, happy to have proven his worth. He began to cheer when his keen eyes fell to the horizon. He strained his eyes and took out the captain's spyglass, lent to him for such an occasion. He peered through and saw a Spanish frigate, heavily armed and heading their way. Pierre looked around at the damaged rigging and judged the distance to the frigate. They might be able to get the ship under full sail before the frigate arrived, but it would be close. Favoring his uninjured leg he practically slid down the rigging to the deck below.

Men were patting him on the back and cheering his shot. "Well done, kid!" the captain cried, coming up and giving him a massive bear hug. "Best shot in the water, didn't I tell ya!" he screamed to the man next to him.

Pierre didn't have time for any of this. "Ship, sir. Frigate, heading right for us."

"Where?"

"To port, sir." He handed the captain his spyglass and hobbled with him over to the side.

The captain took a long look through his telescopic instrument and his face turned sour. "Ready the sails, men! Get on that rigging. I want full sail, now!" The men hesitated for a second. "Now!" the crew jumped into action scaling up the rigging and trying desperately to repair the sails and get the ship moving once again. Pierre could see the ship clearly now even without the spyglass. "It will be close." He muttered.

HISTORY

Throughout history the term privateer and pirate were as closely related as freedom fighter and rebel. That is, depending on which view one looks from, the distinction is not always apparent. This was never truer as during The Age of Sail. This period was a time of plunder and prize, heroes and villains. The rise and fall of nations could be determined by the intrepid sailors who brought back treasures from the New World or stole those same treasures as they journeyed home. Naval dominance didn't always go to the biggest or best armed. Speed, skill, determination and grit were just as powerful a force as an extra barrage of cannon.

Presented here is a comprehensive history of the pirates, privateers and raiders during the ocean's most glorious time: The Age of Sail. This era is formulated in the west as roughly the time period between the 16th and 19th centuries when naval warfare and trade were completed at large with ships of sail. This time period witnessed epic naval battles such as Terheide, Trafalgar and Gravelines mingled with legends such as Black Bart, Barbarossa and Blackbeard. Of course to understand a concept, it is best if we go back to the beginning.

ANCIENT PIRACY

Piracy in the form of raiding coastal towns from the sea first appeared in written records from Ancient Egypt. Although it is unknown where precisely these sea raiders originated, it remains the oldest known form of piracy starting from 1350 BCE. A further detailed account of "Sea People" appears during the reign of Ramses II in the Nile Delta region. This raiding was so severe it would often destroy entire villages.

Pirate bases or outposts during this time appeared as small, coastal fortifications close to shipping lanes isolated from law or authority. Highly concealed coves or inlets were ideal locations. The lawless pirates could ambush and sweep down on their prey before they had time to escape. During this time pirates operated almost exclusively in galleys with slave propelled oars as the primary mode of locomotion.

If pirates operated near several small, independent states, they would take bribes to spare the city's merchants, fought as mercenaries for the right price and even fought as auxiliary forces, for the right price, during times of war.

Away from the Mediterranean, Norse raiders operated along the coast and navigable seaways of northern Europe. Utilizing their cunning longships, these pagans hit soft targets like monasteries and remote villages. There was a great deal of glory in raiding or adventuring within the Norse community and it was seen as an honorable endeavor. The first recorded raids of the British Isles started around 800 CE on the west coast of present day Scotland. Survivors were either sold for ransom, into slavery or killed. By the end of the 9th century the Norse had plundered and raided so fiercely that they were forced to go further and further inland. Paris, Bordeaux and Toulouse were all plundered and taken successfully. Eventually, the Franks would begin to pay enormous sums of bribes to keep the Viking raiders at bay.

MEDIEVAL PIRACY

During the Medieval period piracy continued in earnest and privateering took a giant step forward. For most medieval rulers, ships were an expensive luxury they could afford. As such, ships were hired from merchants and other naval sources to defend the land. Trade and large fishing vessels were converted to ships of war and the local nobility could then field a reasonable navy without having to pay for a standing navy. Many merchants would apply for privateering licenses and strike out against rival ships in the name of their local noble. Additionally, some coastal cities, especially in Brittan, were designated as “Cinque Ports”. These ports, such as Hastings or Dover, would provide ships when needed and patrol the local waters in exchange for privileges such as exempt tax status and the right to seize local shipping.

During this same time numerous Germanic cities joined together to form the Hanseatic League with the express purpose of defending themselves from pirate activity. The League set up measures like sailing in convoy and carrying armed troops to prevent ship seizure.

During the Hundred Year’s War various Germanic states hired pirates to act as privateers against whatever force they were arrayed against. When not employed, many of these pirates made their home on the island of Gotland.

Privateering and pirating continued to grow as naval trade increased. As the shipping lanes increased across the Atlantic with the discovery of the New World, pirates had a new home to exploit. Economic power based on naval trade began to exude dominance during the 16th and 17th centuries, which led to an increased need to control the shipping lanes.

AGE OF SAIL

The Age of Sail ran from about 1570 through 1860. This period is defined as the period when large, wooden ships, powered primarily by sail, dominated the seas. Cannons were a new and terrible weapon that evened the odds between lighter and heavier ships. Much of this conflict was spurred by the Treaty of Tordesillas, a document authored by Pope Alexander VI which divided the New World up between Spain and Portugal. This left England and France powerless lest they suffer the wrath of the Pope. In response, French and English privateers were given legal ability to practice their trade on other nations, especially Spain and Portugal who were sending back vast treasures from the New World. This in turn led to the Golden Age of Piracy. This period is generally divided into several specific eras.

The Buccaneers Period began around 1650 with the growth of the Atlantic sea trade. Tortuga was a large base of pirate activity along with French buccaneers.

Around 1700 pirates began attacking based on the naval course known as The Pirate Round. English and English colony pirates worked in force during this period targeting mainly Spanish trade vessels and colonies.

The final era was immediately after the Spanish Succession War, where France, England and Spain were at general peace. Out of work privateers turned to piracy.

The end of the Golden Age occurred for two key reasons. First, cities began to turn away pirate trade and presence which resulted in a lack of safe port for many pirates. Without

a home or place to trade their ill-gotten goods, pirates began to disappear from the region. Secondly, the major nations began to extend their naval capacity and stationed large, powerful warships in heavily pirated areas. Pirates rarely attacked war ships and often could not match their firepower or manpower.

TIMELINE

800	First recorded raid by Norse Vikings
1494	The Treaty of Tordesillas
1538	Battle of Preveza
1585-1604	Anglo-Spanish War, Sea Dogs
1650	Buccaneering Period
1652-1654	First Anglo-Dutch War
1688-1697	Nine Years War
1700	Pirate Round Period
1701-1714	War of Spanish Succession
1708	Cruisers and Convoys Act: Allocating regular warships to the defense of trade.
1740-1748	War of Austrian Succession
1744-1748	King George's War
1798-1800	Quasi-War, a brief conflict between France and the United States, fought largely at sea, and to the Royal Navy's procuring Bermuda sloops to combat the French privateers.
1808-1833	Spanish American wars of independence
1812- 1815	War of 1812



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

A man at sea could live or die by his ship and the tools of his trade. What follows is a comprehensive list of equipment available to men and women on the high seas. It is broken down by sections with the first section being devoted to personal arms, armor and everyday goods and the second section listing different types of ships as well as ship-born weapons. A small preamble of ship terms is presented while a longer lexicon can be found at the end of the book.

PERSONAL WEAPONS

Personal weapons are those small enough to be used by a single individual. These include melee, ranged and thrown weapons.

Blunderbuss: Typically filled with grape-shot rounds and weighing between ten and sixteen pounds. They are two to three feet in length with a large barrel bore. A blunderbuss is flared outward at the end like a funnel and exhibits a wide shot pattern. Damage is 3d6 at short range, 2d6 at medium range and 1d6 at long range.

Boarding Axe: A small hand axe utilized in combat and for boarding vessels. It is roughly two to three feet in length. It can easily be used to destroy barrels, doors, and ropes in a pinch.

Boarding Pike: A long spear of about four to six feet in length, it's used in boarding fights and to repel invaders.

Broadsword: A straight, long, two-handed blade with a double edge, it's rarely used due to confined space available on ships.

Caltrops: Small, pointed nails or spikes which, when thrown on the ground, can pierce an individual's protective footwear and impede their movement. Caltrops are small and generally used in large quantity over an area to be effective.

Crossbow: A handheld projectile weapon that uses tension to fire bolts over long

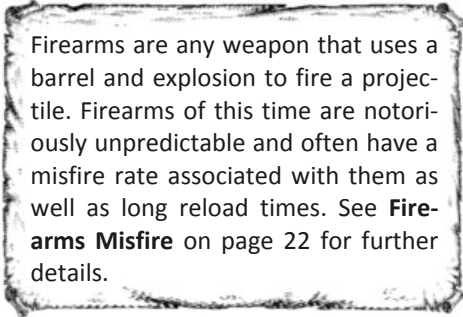
distances. The crossbow is an ideal weapon for ship combat due to being compact and requiring little skill to use. It's reloaded by pulling back a string or winding a winch to establish tension on the trigger mechanism.

Cutlass: A short, one handed weapon with a curved blade. The hilt usually had a basket guard.

Dagger Dirk: A small bladed weapon of twelve to eighteen inches in length, it's easily concealed and can even be used to cut ropes, eat food and trim sails.

Flintlock Pistol: The flintlock pistol is a favored weapon among pirates. Because it's a single shot pistol, many pirates carry several rather than reloading. They are often tied to the belt with silk cords.

- Small flintlock pistol – four pounds and six to ten inches long with less range and damage.
- Large flintlock pistol – five pounds and twelve to eighteen inches in length with increased range and damage.
- 2-barrel flintlock pistol – each barrel fires separately or at the same time (with a (-2) Shooting penalty). Both shots are resolved separately, but do the same amount of damage. If both barrels are fired at the same time, it misfires when a 1 is rolled on both the Shooting and Wild Die.



Firearms are any weapon that uses a barrel and explosion to fire a projectile. Firearms of this time are notoriously unpredictable and often have a misfire rate associated with them as well as long reload times. See **Firearms Misfire** on page 22 for further details.

- **4-barrel flintlock pistol** – each barrel fires separately or at the same time (with a (-2) Shooting penalty). All shots are resolved separately, but do the same amount of damage. If all barrels are fired at the same time, it misfires when a 1 is rolled on either the Shooting or Wild Die.

Grenade: Grenades are ceramic balls with a fuse weighing approximately two pounds and are four inches in diameter. They are filled with gunpowder and small metal objects and fragment on impact, causing an explosion of small metal objects.

Javelin: Javelins are short spears used for throwing. Although they have a short range, they can be very effective at short distance and are used as an opening to a boarding party or to repel boarders.

Long Bow: The larger cousin to the shortbow, the longbow is much taller, often five to eight feet in height, and can fire an arrow at a longer range. However, the weapon requires a large space to draw the bow back and is not ideal for ship-based combat where space is limited.

Musket: Muskets are flintlock fired long range sniping weapons with smooth barrels. They are four to five feet in length and weight twelve to eighteen pounds.

Musketoön: Musketoons are shorter, shoulder-fired versions of muskets. They are less accurate, but easier to use in cramped quarters. They weigh ten to fifteen pounds and are two to three feet in length. They can be used as a shingle-shot weapon or as a spread attack, exhibiting the same characteristics as a blunderbuss.

Pistol Club: A spent pistol used as a club.

Pocket Pistol: These are very small pistol that can be concealed easily, but do little damage and have a short range.

Rapier: A long, straight, thin blade typically 45 to 60 inches long, they are used for piercing and a favored dueling weapon.

Shortbow: Shortbows are hand projectile weapons used to fire arrows over a long distance using potential energy as its primary force. This shorter version is easier to hold one-handed (although the second hand is still needed to fire). It is more common on ships than the longbow as it takes less room to draw and fire.

Shortsword: A small, one handed bladed weapon used for either thrusting or slashing. Seamen usually prefer weapons with curved blades such as cutlasses for faster rope cutting. The hilt is primarily supported with a straight guard. A small hand held weapon of about 30 to 40 inches long.

Volley Pistol: Volley pistols are 2- or 4-barreled flintlock pistols designed to be fired together, incurring no Shooting penalty. The volley pistol version misfires when the Shooting roll fails, and the cost is doubled.

HAND WEAPONS

Type	Dmg	Cost	Wt	Notes
Boarding Axe	Str+d6	210	3	+1 Climbing wooden objects
Boarding Pike	Str+d8	400	25	Reach 2, 2 hands
Broadsword	Str+d10	400	12	Parry -1, 2 hands
Cutlass	Str+d4	180	3	Parry +1
Dirk	Str+d4	25	1	
Pistol Club*	Str+d6	-	-	
Rapier	Str+d4	150	3	Parry +1
Shortsword	Str+d6	200	4	

**A pistol can be used as a club in a pinch and has the same weight and cost as the pistol. There is a 10% chance the pistol breaks and is in need of repair if used this way.*

RANGED WEAPONS

Type	Range	Dmg	RoF	Cost	Wt	Min Str	Notes
2-barrel pistol*	5/10/20	2d6+1	2	300	4		Reload 3 actions
4-barrel pistol*	5/10/20	2d6+1	4	500	6		Reload 4 actions
Blunderbuss*	10/20/40	1-3d6	1	300	12	d6	Reload 2 actions
Caltrops	1/2/4	1	1	100	1		Reduce Pace 50%
Flintlock Pistol	5/10/20	2d6+1	1	150	3		Reload 2 actions
Grenade	5/10/20	3d6-3	1	100	1		MBT
Javelin	3/6/12	Str+d6	1	100	5	d6	
Longbow	15/30/60	2d6	1	200	5	d8	
Long Flintlock	10/20/40	2d8	1	250	4		Reload 2 actions
Musket	15/30/60	2d8	1	350	12	d6	Reload 2 actions
Musketoon*	10/20/40	1-3d6	1	350	10	d6	Reload 2 actions
Pocket pistol	2/4/8	2d6-1	1	400	2		Reload 2 actions
Shortbow	12/24/48	2d6	1	250	2		
Volley Pistol	Per weapon			x2			

**See their description for further details.*

SHIP TERMINOLOGY

Commanding a ship in the Age of Sail isn’t enough; you have to know the language of the seas. Although this list can be very long, here’s a snapshot of terminology related to ships.

- Aft:** Rear of the ship; generally to the rear of the main mast.

Amidships: The middle section of a ship.

Bow: The front section of a ship.

Castle: The upper part of a ship either *fore* or *aft*, specifically called a Forecastle or Aftcastle. These castles have several platforms for archers and gunman as well as defensive positions against boarding actions. An officer’s quarter is typically below the Aftcastle while the Forecastle houses storage and everyday supplies. The Aftcastle is typically larger than the *fore* and combat actions are directed from here.

Fore: Front of the ship; generally forward of the main mast.

Hull: The body or frame of a ship.

Mast: A tall pole set vertically on the ship to hold the sail and rigging in place. If there are more than one masts on a ship, they are named the Main, Fore and Mizzen for the center, forward and rear masts respectively. The height of the masts depends dramatically on the ship in question.

Port: Left of the ship when facing towards the bow.

Ram: A prolonged portion of the ship's bow that forms into a "beak" typically six to fourteen feet in length. Much of the ram was under water and could be driven into an enemy's hull to damage the receiving ship. Ram warfare was very popular in the

classical era, but mostly fell out of favor with the advent of firearms.

Rigging: The equipment used to hold a sail to a mast. In the Age of Sail, most rigging is square. That is, it would hold large sails square to the keel of the ship.

Sail: The fabric stretched between rigging used to gather wind; it's the primary mode of transportation during the Age of Sail. Most ships have numerous sails attached to the rigging on one, two or three masts.

Starboard: Right of the ship when facing towards the bow. Considered the "senior" side and used more often by officers.

Stern: The rear of a ship.

SHIP TYPES

A ship is a man's home on the sea. Although there are several different "types" of ships, no two are exactly the same as the crew of these floating homes customize, alter and specialize in whatever manner they so choose. Following the ship types is a list of standard armaments during the Age of Sail and how they are best used.

Brigantine: A medium ship with two masts, the forward mast being square rigged. Early on they were smaller and had oars when operating in the Mediterranean. They are used as military and merchant vessels with around sixteen 32-pound guns and built for speed for scouting and recon work. They are 110 ft long and house a crew of 100 – 120.

Brig: A small ship with two square masts. They are fast and maneuverable and historically used in numerous roles including warship and trade vessel. Their length varies between 23 and 50 meters and they carry between ten and eighteen guns.

Brigs are rare among Caribbean and American Pirates and require a large crew to handle the rigging (12 – 16 to sail). They can handle up to 480 tons and travel at speeds over 11 knots. They are 198 ft long with an average crew of 155, 40 being the absolute minimum.

Caravel: Small, maneuverable ship developed in the 15th century in Portugal with a shallow keel. Lateen sails give high speed when sailing windward. Used for exploration during the 15th and 16th centuries, they can sail up river in shallow coastal waters and much nearer the wind. They have limited room for cargo and crew and two or three masts, larger ones have four masts. They are 12 – 18m in length, weigh 40 – 50 tons and can carry around 250 tons.

Carrack: Three or four mast sailing vessels from the 15th century with a large aft and forecastle. They are square rigged on the foremast and mainmast and lateen-rigged on the mizzenmast. They have large cargo holds and can hold approximately 1,000 tons. Unusually high castles in the bow and stern make it very difficult to sail close to the wind.

Frigate: A term used for several types of warships built for speed and maneuverability, they are generally too small to stand in the line of battle and instead used for patrolling and escort duty. They are square-rigged on all three masts and have all guns mounted on a single, upper deck. They can be used to attack cargo ships as well and hold blockades.

Frigates are able to carry six months of supplies and it's considered poor etiquette for a ship of the line to fire on a frigate that had not first fired upon it. They carry 32 – 33 long guns from 8 to 24 pounds plus a few carronades. They are 212 feet long and can carry a crew of 815 during times of war.

Fuste: Light and fast with a shallow draft, they are powered by oars and a single lateen sail. 12 to 18 two-man rowing benches align each side alongside 2 – 3 guns. They are favored by corsairs of the Barbary Coast.

Galiot (16th Century): An oared ship also known as a half galley with two masts, sixteen ranks of oars, 2 – 10 cannons and between 50 and 150 men. They are primarily used by Barbary pirates in the Mediterranean.

Galiot (17th Century): A flat bottom trade ship popular in the Baltic that is able to sail in shallow waters.

Galiot (18th century): A French bomb vessel war ship that carries one or more mortars, for shelling coastal towns and fortifications, and a few cannons for self-defense. The entire ship has to be turned to aim the mortars.

Galleon: A large, multi-deck sailing ship used from 16th to 18th centuries, usually carrying less than 500 tons. A change from the Caravel by dramatically lowering the forecastle made it more maneuverable, faster and steadier. They are powered entirely by wind with three masts, larger ones

with four. Their most common gun used is the demi-culverin, though gun sizes up to the demi-cannon are possible.

Galley: A ship propelled primarily by rowers, they have been used throughout the Mediterranean for warfare, trade and piracy since the 8th century BCE. They have two decks and early vessels contained between 15 and 30 pairs of oars in the single galley. Two rows of oarsmen exist in ships called biremes and three rows in ships called triremes. They can use small harbors and beaches from precise navigation allotted with rowers.

Starting in the 13th century, a single square sail became common. Castles were added to either end for warfare and cannons were used starting in the 14th century. They are highly maneuverable, but low hull sides make the ships vulnerable to rough waters. They are typically 40 meters long and 5 meters wide, but sizes can vary dramatically. In 16th century, they carried one 50-pound gun at the bow and four smaller guns on swivel platforms and have mounted ram heads. They have a cruising speed of 7 to 8 knots and an upper limit of 10 knots.

Longship: The traditional Viking ship used for warfare, exploration and trade, they are long, narrow and light and built similar to a traditional galley. Longships can easily navigate rivers and land on beaches with their shallow draft. They are powered by oars and square sail. Longships usually travel between 5 and 10 knots with a maximum speed of 15 knots. They typically have a 7:1 ratio length to width and are 17 to 30 meters long. They have no benches as the crew sits on sea chests.

Man-of-war: British expression for a powerful warship, it refers to a ship armed with cannons and sail driven. They are 3-masted, each with 3 to 4 sails. They are up to

200 feet long, carry up to 124 guns, have a maximum speed of 8 to 9 knots and have a cannon deck.

Ship of the Line: A naval warship from the 17th through 19th centuries big enough to take part in a line battle. They have lower fore and aft castles as navies now pummeled each other from a distance with less hand to hand fighting. They need 64 guns to participate in a line maneuver, although

bigger ships have 98 to 140 guns. Most ships carried 74 guns.

Sloop: A sail boat with a single mast, a fore and aft rig and large sails. They are very maneuverable and fast in the proper winds. They are 50 to 75 feet in length and have a speed around 12 knots. Later sloops have three masts.

Sloop-of-war: A 17th and 18th century sloop designed for war and piracy, especially escort duties, they contain around 20 guns.

SHIPS

Type	Acc/TS	Stab	Toughness	Crew	Cost	River Use	Cargo	Notes
Brigantine	3/10	3	18 (4)	20+100	\$175K	Deep	4	HA, 16 guns
Brig	2/9	3	20 (4)	40+120	\$225K	Deep	10	HA, 18 guns
Caravel	2/9	3	20 (4)	40+100	\$200K	Shallow	6	HA, 12 guns
Carrack	1/6	4	24 (4)	40+100	\$250K	None	20	HA, 32 guns
Frigate	2/7	5	24 (6)	80+200	\$350K	None	8	HA, 32 guns
Fuste	3/8	2	16 (4)	20+60	\$150K	Shallow	2	HA, 2 guns
Galiot (16th)	2/6	3	18 (4)	40+100	\$200K	Deep	4	HA, 8 guns
Galiot (17th)	2/6	3	18(4)	20+80	\$200K	Shallow	12	HA, 8 guns
Galiot (18th)	2/6	3	20(4)	20+80	\$200K	Deep	4	HA, 6 guns
Galleon	3/9	4	20 (4)	20+80	\$300K	None	10	HA, 42 guns
Galley	2/7	1	16 (4)	20+100	\$150K	Shallow	2	HA, 5 guns
Longship	4/12	2	12 (2)	10+50	\$100K	Shallow	1	HA, 0 guns
Man-of-war	2/7	5	22 (6)	60+500	\$475K	None	6	HA, 98 guns
Ship of the Line	2/6	5	28 (8)	60+600	\$525K	None	12	HA, 74 guns
Sloop	3/10	3	20 (4)	40+120	\$200K	None	8	HA, 16 guns
Sloop-of-war	3/9	3	22 (4)	40+160	\$225K	None	6	HA, 20 guns

Acc/TS: Acceleration and Top speed in squares for battle map use.

Stab(ility): Base stability in an ocean setting. See rules for storm and ocean use.

Toughness: Vehicle's base durability armor has been figured into its toughness.

Crew: Skeleton crew and full crew for a ship. This is variable as some ships have fewer cannons and sail rigging than others. A ship's crew and passengers is highly dependent on its supply chain.

Cost: Basic cost.

River Use: The ship's ability to enter rivers of various depths.

Cargo: How many squares of cargo the ship can hold in a traditional vessel of its type. (See **Ship Construction** on page 18.)

Notes: HA (Heavy Armor); the average number of gun ports.

ARTILLERY

Artillery is a generic term for any weapon attached to a ship. Before the advent of cannons this usually meant crossbows, javelins or catapults. Some enterprising nations, like the Byzantines, fielded jets of flame as their primary artillery. During the Age of Sail artillery generally refers to anything that goes boom. Cannons, demi-cannons, culverins and carronades are all examples of possible ship artillery.

Canister Shot: Effectively large cans full of musket balls that explode upon leaving the cannon barrel and scatter. This creates a huge shotgun-like effect particularly effective against enemy personnel.

Cannon: A generic piece of artillery that fires a projectile towards its target. Cannon sizes are classified on the weight of projectile they fired. A 32 pounder was a large cannon that fired a 32-pound shot while a 8 pounder was a smaller cannon capable of firing only an 8-pound shot. The common cannon sizes are 42, 32, 24, 18, 12, 9, 8 and 6 pounders.

Carronade: A cannon with a larger weight, but shorter barrel, so range and accuracy is reduced. Commonly referred to as “smashers” they are powerful, light weight, short-range anti-ship and anti-crew weapons.

Catapult: A mounted platform to hurl projectiles using leverage and mechanical advantage. Common types of catapults included ballista, mangonel, onager and trebuchet. Although nearly completely out of favor during the Age of Sail, they are a viable form of offense when guns are not available.

Chain-shot: Chain-shot consists of two iron balls connected with a large, iron chain. This is directed at enemy sails and shreds through the sail fabric rendering them useless. The chain spins and whirls like a giant bola causing much greater damage to sails than the traditional round shot.

Culverin: The earliest form of field artillery, it relies on gunpowder to project shots at

its target. The culverin is more primitive than the cannon and fires typical shots of 14, 17 and 20 pounds. The trajectory for these artillery pieces is relatively long and flat.

Demi-cannon: A cannon with a shorter bore that typically fires 32-pound shots. Demi-cannons have a much shorter range and are far less accurate than cannons, but their damage output is larger.

Demi-culverin: A smaller form of the culverin that fire shots of 9 and 10 pounds.

Double Shot: Two round shots stuffed into the same barrel and fired together. Double shot is extremely inaccurate as each shot affects the other's trajectory, but if both hit a cannon's damage is effectively doubled. They are very useful at close ranges.

Grapeshot: Similar to canister shot, grapeshot consists of wrapped packages of smaller round shot. This is more effective against personnel and has the ability to damage hulls and structures.

Gun: Gun is a generic term for any ship born artillery. If a ship is said to have 72 guns, the 72 guns in question can be comprised of any type of artillery in any combination.

Long Nine: A cannon with a very long bore that fires a standard 9-pound shot. It was often mounted exclusively on the bow or stern of a ship to pursue or flee enemies. It has a longer range than most standard cannons and is often affixed in such a way that it can't be aimed except by turning the entire ship.

Round: Round shot is the typical cannon ball. Made of a sphere of cast iron it is effective at damaging hulls and fortifications alike.

Shot Type: A shot refers to the projectile used in a piece of artillery. There were five main types of shot and each had its own specific purpose.

ARTILLERY

Type	Range	Damage	Reload	Notes
Cannons				
8 lbs	40/80/160	2d6	1 Action*	AP 3, HW
12 lbs	45/90/180	3d6	1 Action*	AP 3, HW
18 lbs	50/100/200	3d6+1	1 Action*	AP 4, HW,
24 lbs	50/100/200	4d6	1 Action*	AP 5, HW
32 lbs	55/110/220	4d6+1	1 Action*	AP 5, HW
42 lbs	55/110/220	4d6+2	1 Action*	AP 6, HW
Carronade	20/40/80	3d6+1	1 Action*	Medium Burst Template
Catapult	25/50/100	2d6	1 Action*	AP 2, HW
Culverin	60/120/240	2d6+2	1 Action*	AP 3, HW
Demi-Cannon	25/50/100	4d6+2	1 Action*	AP 5, HW
Long Nine	75/150/300	2d6+1	1 Action*	AP 3, HW
Ram	-	5d6/2d6	-	AP 5, HW****
Shots				
Round	As weapon	As weapon	As weapon	
Canister	25%	2d6		As weapon, see notes in Deluxe Edition, loses HW
Chain-Shot	50%	**		Damages ships sails, loses HW
Double Shot	25%	As weapon	As weapon	***
Grapeshot	As weapon	3d6		As weapon, Medium Burst Template, loses HW

* With a crew of 4

** Chain-shot can shred a ship's sails. Every hit from chain shot reduces a sail's integrity by 25%.

*** Roll twice at a (-2) and apply the results as two separate hits.

**** The ramming ship takes the second listed damage, although with no AP applied. Once hit, the two ships are engaged with one another until one of the pilots makes a successful Boating check.

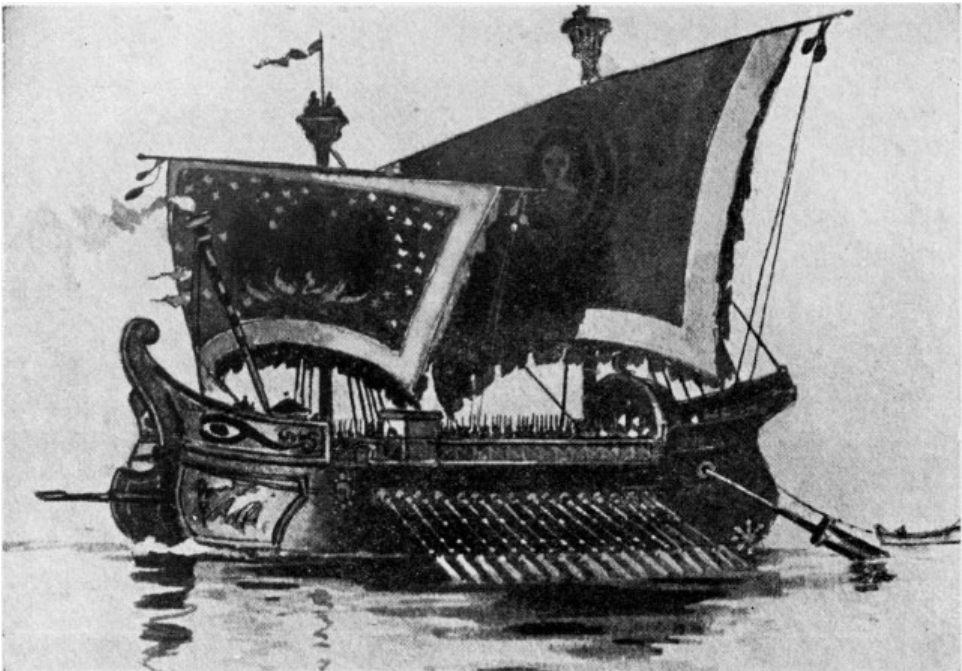
SHIP CONSTRUCTION

A ship is more than a mere vessel or instrument of war. A ship is a home and a livelihood, a mistress and companion. It can save your life or take it away without proper care. Presented here are rules for modular shipbuilding.

Each module can be attached to an existing ship, retrofitted onto an old vessel, or added to a new build. Modules provide benefits, but require costs and may introduce drawbacks. Several common ship builds are presented as well.

Start by choosing a hull size providing the maximum number of modules allowed for that ship. A module is a roughly square, 10 ft. x 10 ft. room outfitted in a specific way. This is never precise, but fits ship creation well. The only required module is a Bridge Module, but this can be placed anywhere on the ship. After that, fill up the remaining modules with whatever types of holds you find appropriate for your ship. If you desire a fast, highly maneuverable ship, add Mast or Oar Modules, although keep in mind this requires more crew to operate effectively. If you want a lumbering behemoth go deep on multiple Cannon Modules spread out over several decks. The choice is yours and, when complete, your ship will be exactly as you see fit.

Modules should be laid out in a streamlined, seaworthy fashion, but can comprise several decks. If you want your vessel to be clunky, create it like an “L” or “O”. Your GM is free to impose speed or stability penalties on a vessel with this configuration. It is a good idea to talk through your plans before construction.



HULL DESCRIPTIONS

Deep Vee: Like a Shallow Vee, these ships are hybrids. However, unlike the Shallow Vee, the Deep Vee has a very dramatic angle with its hull. This hull is relatively easy to build, but is less stable than the Shallow Vee and also has less cargo space.

Flat: The hull of the ship is completely flat. This makes the ship easy to navigate in rivers and on calm waters, but very dangerous to use in choppy waters such as out at sea, especially during storms. A barge and gondola are examples of flat bottom ships.

Round: A completely rounded hull. This hull is difficult and more expensive to build, but allows for maximum cargo space. The displacement of a round hull rarely makes river travel possible, but makes sea travel much safer.

Shallow Vee: A hybrid of flat and round hulls, the Shallow Vee is created with straight planks of wood that join together to form a V with a gentle angle. It is relatively cheap to build and often can be used on deep rivers. However, the angle of the hull leads to less cargo space.

HULL

Type and Size	Base Size	Stability	Cost	River Use	Decks
Deep Vee, Small	3	4	\$100K	Shallow	1
Deep Vee, Medium	10	4	\$200K	Deep	1
Deep Vee, Large	20	5	\$400K	No	2
Deep Vee, Huge	40	5	\$800K	No	3
Flat, Small	3	2	\$50K	Shallow	1
Flat, Medium	6	2	\$100K	Shallow	1
Flat, Large	16	3	\$200K	Deep	2
Flat, Huge	36	3	\$400K	Deep	3
Round, Small	6	5	\$200K	Shallow	1
Round, Medium	18	5	\$400K	No	1
Round, Large	36	6	\$800K	No	2
Round, Huge	60	6	\$1500K	No	3
Shallow Vee, Small	4	3	\$100K	Shallow	1
Shallow Vee, Medium	12	3	\$200K	Deep Rivers	1
Shallow Vee, Large	24	4	\$400K	No	2
Shallow Vee, Huge	48	4	\$800K	No	3

Base Size: The base superstructure of the hull. Additional squares added over this amount will cost 50% over the listed price.

Stability: How stable the ship is in rough waters on the open ocean. During rough waters a ship must roll equal to or over this number on a d6 or begin to take on water. (See **Swamping** later.)

Cost: The base cost of the used ship, not outfitted and in today's price for reference.

River Use: Indicates if the ship can be navigated in rivers or lakes. Shallow use indicates roughly 10 feet of water and Deep roughly 20 feet.

Decks: How many vertical decks a ship of this size typically comes with.

HOLD

Type	Size	Cost	Effect
Ammunition, Small	1	\$10K	A special hold for ammunition and powder, it must be built specially to protect the ammunition and powder from the elements. Also protects the ship’s powder from igniting and destroying the ship. Holds ammo for 4 cannons or 5 engagements and powder bots lived here as well.
Ammunition, Large	3	\$30K	As above, but with cargo space for 18 guns and 5 engagements.
Birth, Small	1	\$10K	A small hold used for crew quarters equipped with hammocks and sea chests. Can house 20 men.
Birth, Large	3	\$30K	A large hold used for crew quarters equipped with hammocks and sea chests. Can house 85 men.
Bridge	1	\$20K	A hold with a navigational wheel and small castle, that rises above the main deck, used for command and defense. Can mount 3 pieces of artillery.
Castle	1	\$10K	A castle with no lower hold that rises above the main deck. It has defensible positions and can mount 3 pieces of artillery.
Galley	1	\$10K	A hold designed and intended for cooking, fully fitted with everything needed to prepare meals.
General, Small	1	\$10K	A small, empty hold which can be used for any purpose
General, Large	3	\$20K	A large, empty hold which can be used for any purpose
Gun, Small	1	\$10K	A gun hold with gun ports and moorings. Has room for 4 cannons, but only 2 to a side.
Gun, Large	3	\$30K	A large gun hold with gun ports. Has room for 18 gun ports, 9 to a side.
Mast	1	\$10K	A large, section of ship occupied by a mast and its sails with no cargo space and can only be placed on top decks; no holds may be placed above them. Masts, along with their corresponding sails, provide speed, but require 10 crewmen per mast to be fully functioning.
Oar	1	\$10K	A set of oars for each side of the ship as a ship must have an oar set on each side to function. Fully manned oars require 30 men providing speed and maneuverability. There is limited cargo space, sea chests are allowed and a skeleton crew of 10 men is possible, but with reduced effectiveness.
Officers, Small	1	\$10K	A crew quarter designed for 1 – 4 higher ranking or VIP passengers. Each individual has a bunk, chest and changing area. Additional furniture can be added.
Quarterdeck, Large	3	\$30K	As above, but can house 1 – 15 individuals.

All ships start with ACC/TS of 2/6. Every 10 squares (rounding up) reduces this by -1/-1. For every 10 squares, a ship needs one mast module to make any progress. Additional modules can be added to increase top speed and acceleration. Mast modules increase ACC/TS by +1/+1. Oars increase ACC by +3, reduced by -1 for every 10 squares of the ship (rounded up). Thus a 15 square ship with three mast squares would have ACC/TS of 3/7 (2/6, -2/-2, +3/+3). If this same ship added an oar set it would become 4/7. (6/7 – 2 ACC for the 15 squares)

EXTRAS

Type	Cost	Effect
Ammunition store, small	\$12K	Supply for 10 cannons at 5 engagements
Ammunition store, large	\$22K	Supply for 30 cannons at 5 engagements
Cannons		
8 lbs	\$10K	Every 25 guns reduces a ship's TS by 1
12 lbs	\$15K	
18 lbs	\$20K	
24 lbs	\$30K	
32 lbs	\$40K	
42 lbs	\$50K	
Carronade	\$20K	
Catapult	\$10K	
Culverin	\$20K	
Demi-cannon	\$20K	
Long Nine	\$15K	
Navigation Instruments /Charts	\$2K	
Ram	\$12K	Ram added to front of ship
Rations, 1 week, 10 crew	\$200	
Rigging, 1 unit	\$500	Repair of one mast's rigging
Sail, large	\$10K	
Sail, small	\$5K	
Sail, Supplemental	\$4K	

EXAMPLE: HILL'S VENGEANCE

Captain Nord is commissioning his first ship in order to set out on a privateering expedition. He wants a fast, maneuverable vessel that is sturdy at sea, but also has enough firepower to be a threat to merchant ships. He doesn't plan on tackling heavily armed warships and hopes to outrun or avoid them. He looks through the lists and settles on a sloop of war. He could buy a used sloop and convert it for \$225K, but he decides he wants a fresh ship that he designs himself.

He settles on a Medium Shallow V hull (12 Squares) for \$200K. With this ship he can enter large rivers and straights to hide if need be. He settles on making his ship a roughly 20 x 60 vessel and begins outfitting the vehicle with modules. Below is what he adds to the ship.

- 1 Large gun hold (size 3) \$20K
- 1 Small gun hold (size 1) \$10K
- 1 Bridge (size 1) \$20K

- 1 Large Birth (size 3) \$30K
- 1 Small birth (size 1) \$10K
- 1 Small officer’s deck (1) \$30K
- 2 Small, General holdings (2) \$20K
- 3 Masts on the top deck. \$30K

With this he is able to employ up to 22 guns and house a crew of 105 crewmen and 4 officers. His masts require 30 crewmen to maintain and his guns 88 to operate effectively. He will be hard pressed for crew space, but plans on implementing a rotating crew quarters schedule so crew members will have to share birthing. His overall ACC/TS is 3/7; [2/6, +3/+3 (for masts), -2/-2 (for 12 squares)]. During his adventures he plans on altering the ship to allow more squares for storage, crew and ammunition safety. His total cost before purchasing equipment is \$370K. From here he outfits the ship, hires a crew and christens the ship, *Hill’s Vengeance*.

FIREARM MISFIRES

Misfires can add an element of fun and anxiousness to a game involving firearms (especially black powder weapons). Given their nature as superior distance weapons, it’s nice to give these weapons a type of disadvantage. Whenever a critical failure is rolled with a firearm, have the player roll a d12 and determine the result on the following table. This table serves as a template and you are encouraged to come up with your own table or a collaborative table with your players. The result shouldn’t be devastating, but enough of a hindrance that a critical failure is a substantial unforeseen consequence. If you find critical malfunctions are interfering with the course of the game, don’t be afraid to omit them. These misfires can be used for any firearm from personal hand guns all the way though to 42 lbs. cannons. However, you might rule that especially well-crafted or magical weapons do not suffer critical misfires.

d12	RESULT
1	Explodes: Weapon explodes inflicting damage to the user equal to the weapons normal damage rating. The weapon also becomes unusable until it is repaired. This repair should require someone specialized in firearm repair.
2-3	Jammed: The weapon becomes jammed and requires 1d4 rounds to remove the jam.
4-5	Barrel Failure: Due to residue in the barrel, or just poor barrel manufacture, the weapon can’t fire properly. It can still be used normally, but each shot is at a (-4) to hit. This can be repaired by cleaning and aligning the barrel which takes about an hour.
6-7	Poor Ammo: The weapon’s ammunition is poor and fails. It needs to be reloaded.
8-9	Ignition Failure: The weapon does not fire due to an ignition failure. It can be fired normally the next round.
10-12	Normal Miss: No malfunction.

SAILING CAREERS

A ship during the Age of Sail was as important as the crew manning it. During game-play, mechanics can be incorporated to make the ship as important as the PCs. Here are several ways to make that connection.

SWAMPING

Storms and massive swells are as much a danger to an ocean life as cannons and swords. Whenever the GM calls for it, a ship makes a stability check. Common causes for stability checks are dangerous storms, collisions with massive objects and dangerous winds. To make a check, the player rolls a d6 and compares it to this ship's stability rating. If it is equal to or higher than the stability rating, there are no ill effects. If the roll fails, the ship's pilot rolls their Boating skill. The GM may impose penalties to this check if the severity of the danger is great enough. If the Boating roll is successful, the pilot has recovered the ship and there are no negative effects. If the Boating roll fails, the ship begins to take on water. If a ship fails three times during the same threat encountered, it begins sinking. The GM is free to determine how many checks are needed during a given danger and if enough time has passed between dangers to properly repair the vessel.

INCREASING TOP SPEED

A great captain can perform remarkable acts with his skills. A captain may roll his Boating skill to successfully increase the ship's Top Speed. Success increases TS by 1 for that day. Failure decreases it by 1 as the captain tries to sail his ship too close to the wind. Every raise allows him to raise the ship's TS by an additional 1. During chases, captains should make opposed Boating rolls. The winner gains the advantage of speed. If a character has a large advantage, like the weather gage, he may add a +2 to his roll.

MASS BATTLES

An epic duel at sea between a Ship of the Line with 120 guns and 2 Frigates armed with 50 guns each, every ship having over 100 men between crew and PCs, would take hours to resolve making every roll. As such, the rules for Mass Combat work well for combat at sea. Follow the rules for Mass Combat except establish relative strength ranged attacks with cannons and other guns by comparing the number of workable guns on each ship. Keep in mind to function effectively each cannon requires 4 crewmen. Less than four increases reloading times considerably. Additionally, one side will start with a large advantage by having the weather gage (the advantageous position while at sea). After the first round of combat, contested Boating rolls should be made between ship's pilots to determine who has the weather gage each round. Having the weather gage grants that ship a +2 to his side's Knowledge (Battle) roll.

KNOWLEDGE (BATTLE) MODIFIERS

Type	Modifier
Armor	+1 per 2 extra points of armor on the ship*
Controlling the weather gage	+2
Crew gunnery experience	+1 - +4 (See Gunnery below)
Faster ship	+1 per ACC over enemy ship
Gang Up	+1 per applicable ship
Heavy waves or storm	-1 for smaller ship

**Apply this against only the highest armored ship. For instance if a 26 Armored ship is fighting 2 ships with 23 and 21 armor, only the difference of 3 is relevant for calculations.*

Example: The HMS White is about to be engaged in combat with two French privateers, The Amee and Persephonee. The Privateers are smaller sloops with 40 cannons each while the Ship-of-the-Line has 100 guns. During set-up, the English side receives 10 tokens and the French side 8. Once boarding actions begin, you can start a new Mass Battle with tokens equal to the amount of manpower on each side.

The French have the weather gage and higher acceleration over the British. However, the Ship-of-the-Line has an armor of 28 and the sloops 22, giving the British a +3 bonus. The French gun crews are Seasoned while the British are Novice giving an additional +1 bonus to the French. (See **Crew Experience** below) Finally, the French receive a +1 Gang Up bonus.

The French receive a total Knowledge (Battle) modifier of +5 [+2 Weather Gage, +1 Speed, +1 Crew Experience, +1 Gang Up]. The British also receive a total Knowledge (Battle) modifier of +5 [+3 Armor, +2 gun tokens]. During combat, if the English ship gains the weather gage, the modifiers become unbalanced. Additionally, as crew or ships are damaged, fewer cannons will be functioning which might upset the balance further.

CREW EXPERIENCE

Crew Experience is one of the most important aspects of a ship’s ability to perform. As such, tracking ship experience for a nautical campaign is just as important as tracking an individual character’s experience. It is recommended that the GM award ship experience after successful encounters or long periods of training.

There are four categories a ship can train in (experience points awarded to the ship, not the characters) and each category can level up for specific boons as indicated by the number of XP necessary in the chart below. Experience should be awarded to each ship category according to how that category performed. The GM is free to rule certain aspects cannot be leveled up at any point due to inexperience at that particular agenda.

Note: Modifiers only apply when the crew is aboard their home ship.

CREW FIGHTING

Novice	(0 XP)	No additional benefits
Seasoned	(5 XP)	Crew aboard the ship are always considered armed, +1 to Knowledge (Battle) rolls during boarding actions.
Veteran	(10 XP)	The ship counts as an ally for gang up bonus outside of Mass Battles and receives a +1 to Knowledge (Battle) rolls during boarding actions.

Heroic	(15 XP)	All crewmen gain a +1 Fighting bonus; +3 to Knowledge (Battle) rolls during boarding actions.
Legendary	(25 XP)	All crewmen gain +1 Toughness; +4 to Knowledge (Battle) rolls during boarding actions.
GUNNERY		
Novice	(0 XP)	No additional benefits
Seasoned	(5 XP)	Weapons ranges increased 10%; +1 to Knowledge (Battle) rolls during ranged attacks.
Veteran	(10 XP)	Reload times halved; +2 to Knowledge (Battle) rolls during ranged attacks.
Heroic	(15 XP)	Ammunition lasts 25% longer; +3 to Knowledge (Battle) rolls during ranged attacks.
Legendary	(25 XP)	All weapons +1 AP; +4 to Knowledge (Battle) rolls during ranged attacks.
REPAIR / MAINTENANCE		
Novice	(0 XP)	No additional benefits
Seasoned	(5 XP)	Repairs at half speed, +1 bonus to Morale.
Veteran	(10 XP)	Repairs take half as many materials to complete; +2 bonus to Morale.
Heroic	(15 XP)	Adding squares to ship does not incur 50% cost increase; +3 bonus to Morale.
Legendary	(25 XP)	Ship immune to Swamping; +4 bonus to Morale.
SAILING		
Novice	(0 XP)	No additional benefits
Seasoned	(5 XP)	Ship +1 TS; +1 bonus to Boating.
Veteran	(10 XP)	Ship's sails need half the number of crewmen to utilize; +2 bonus to Boating.
Heroic	(15 XP)	Ship +1 ACC; +3 bonus to Boating.
Legendary	(25 XP)	All crew gain a +1 bonus to Climbing, Swimming, and Boating.

It should be noted that ship experience represents a total collection of crew experience. If a large portion of the crew is lost to death, disease or the law, the ship's corresponding experience should fall as well. The GM is free to adjust this based on the above outlined provisions. Likewise, if a large number of seasoned gunners are recruited, the ship's Gunnery level may increase automatically.

TACTICS

Ship based combat tactics have changed with emerging technologies of the time. In the ancient and middle ages, missile fire formed the bulk of the combat with castles both fore and aft providing protection and elevation from which to fight. During this time oars were the standard and open sea warfare was rare. Ramming ships with rams was the other type of typical combat. Pirates and primitive privateers during this time would rarely attack in the winter, preferring to raid during festivals or other holidays when possible.

Later in the 16th and 17th century and the Age of Sail, technology once again limited how combat took place. Most ships of this time had a hard time sailing into the wind. They were generally limited to sailing about no further than 70 degrees from the headwind. Oars could compensate for this, but were becoming rarer as sea going vessels took precedence over galleys and flat bottom, shallow draft vessels. As such, holding the weather gage, or being upwind from an opponent was a huge advantage and could often decide between victory and defeat. Ramming especially was only useful with a good head wind. Additionally, communication was a problem as large fleets or even small ships separated by distance were unable to effectively communicate with one another. Signal flags attempted to compensate for this, but were of only limited success.

Pirates and privateers would join forces to form small fleets that could assault convoys of ships. When these convoys were well protected, the faster ships lured guard ships away while heavier armed vessels would sneak in and assault the slower, treasure ships. Cannons, although very inaccurate, could render a ship helpless in a manner of minutes. Once a ship was helpless, vessels surrendered before boarding actions were even attempted. It was generally understood that resistance against boarding meant death; being defeated while surrendering would elicit an amount of mercy in the form of recruitment or abandonment on the nearest plot of land.

When navies fought against one another or when chasing down pirates, ships generally drew up into lines and faced off against one another with naval bombardments. A pirate or privateer captain who allowed his ship to become the target of a broadside from a royal vessel was in for a great deal of pain. A single, close broadside was enough to cripple any sloop-sized vessel. When faced against warships, the pirate had to rely on their ship's speed and maneuverability to survive. The British Royal Navy had the best trained crews of their time, but even they could only load and launch cannons two or three times in five minutes. This gave ample opportunity for a maneuverable ship to slip in or out of a warship's firing arc.

Ship navigation was more an art than a science. Generally ships would navigate by "Running down the latitude." This meant that a ship would sail north or south utilizing charts and maps to find a specific latitude line that would bring them to their destination. These latitude lines were established based on geographic landmarks and star charts. Once a latitude line was established, a ship would simply sail west or east towards its intended destination. Regular course corrections would be made during the course of the journey. But, with prevailing winds and currents, exact location was nearly impossible. Additionally, a navigator had to be aware of local weather patterns and attempt to maneuver around any especially hostile storms or areas of concern.

Doldrums were wide areas often up to 150 miles wide where there was little wind and the weather was hot and humid, where storms would spring to life in a manner of minutes. Ships caught in doldrums moved at a very low rate of speed, if at all. Areas above and below doldrums were lanes of high winds known extensively as trade winds. These trade winds made ship movement much faster and easier and were turned into established shipping lanes. However, the tradeoff was that pirates and privateers relatively knew where cargo ships would be, becoming prime hunting grounds. "Westerlies" were established, strong winds closer to the poles while "variables" were unreliable winds between the westerlies and trade winds.

Accurate tools for charting navigation were of utmost importance for a ship. Sea maps and charts were essential for navigating both open waters and coastal waterways. Without them, a ship was effectively sailing blind and had to rely on experience and memory. Compasses were developed in the early 13th century and used extensively for directional diagnosis. The octant was developed in the 1730's and utilized reflecting mirrors and angular geometry to determine quadrant turns. Thirty years later, the sextant was developed which performed the same functions in principal, but measured the angular distance between two visible objects, such as a star, the moon, or even the horizon. The astrolabe, used heavily during the Age of Sail, could be used to determine a ship's latitude by comparing the sun's noon day altitude or that of a known star in the evening. Finally, a spyglass was a handheld telescope that made identifying distant objects possible. A navigator had to be an expert in each of these instruments in order to effectively navigate a ship.

As technology developed and ships began to become larger and larger, especially within country navies, a line tactic developed. Essentially, these large vessels would form up in long lines and bombard each other with broadsides. These broadsides were crew intensive and even the best trained crew could only fire once every 2-3 minutes. Even so, the sheer volume of attacks made these vessels extremely dangerous from the side, but vulnerable from the bow or stern. When faced against one of these behemoths, most pirates or privateers would elect speed and flight to even a single broadside. Between official forces, it was considered poor form for a massive frigate to fire unprovoked upon a smaller vessel.

It should be noted that pirates and privateers rarely came across their prey randomly. While some ships did simply patrol heavily used sea lanes, most went about their business very methodically. Taverns, coffeehouses and brothels were great places to gather intelligence about specific ships and their cargo. Additionally, captured passengers and crew were always interrogated about potential targets. Once a vessel was selected, the pirate's ship would lay in wait along the potential sea lane. In good visibility, a lookout could see about 15 miles in any direction. Keen eyes were appreciated and the lookout who spotted a ship first received a bonus.

Once the ship was sighted, the chase was on. The pirate would sail along a parallel course with the target ship to determine speed and direction. If the pirate ship was faster, it would make a series of tacks toward the target ship. In all cases the ship tried their best to keep the weather gage for potential engagements. This chase often occurred over the course of several days until the ships were close enough to bring the cannons to bear. Once close, the larger pirate crews could also "man the sweeps", or employ supplemental oars in order to overtake the target ship.

A pirate ship was at its best when it was light and fast and able to sail close to the wind. If possible, a ship would be taken with just intimidation and threat. Cannon bombardment was dangerous and could ruin a potential prize, not to mention that resupplying for a ship potentially outside the law was not always easy. Indeed, taking powder, cannons, ammunition and rations was as much of a prize as gold, silver and valuable cargo.

LIFE AS A SAILOR

Life as a sailor could vary quite significantly depending on where you're from and who you pledge loyalty to. From an in-game standpoint, this could significantly alter how players design their characters or how their travels play-out throughout the course of a campaign. What follows is a collection of historical means of presenting where a ship originates.

BRITAIN

England during the Age of Sail was one of the big players on the block. Starting in the mid-16th century the new Queen Elizabeth I began to expand their maritime program. During this time England colonized much of North America and the Caribbean while pursuing trading routes with the Far East through the north Atlantic. As her trading posts and colonies began to flourish, the royal navy began to take on an expanded role to defend her oversea possessions and raid enemy shipping lanes, especially Spain. This led to the inevitable build up between the two nations and Britain's eventual epic victory over the Spanish Armada at the Battle of Gravelines.

The years following the battle were spent maximizing profits from overseas trading posts while cutting out other nations from that same trade. The three Anglo-Dutch Wars dominated a great deal of English maritime movements and set a precedent for increased reliance on the Royal Navy. Charles I rapidly expanded the Royal Navy, which came in handy during the coming wars with France, Spain and their breakaway colonies in North America. Later, during the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars, Britain's dominance in the sea was complete and the Royal Navy was able to effectively blockade ports and engage its rivals at will.

ENGLISH CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The English crown standardized their naval forces in 1677. Although the specifics of the classifications changed from time to time, they remained relatively consistent. The ratings consisted of 1st through 6th rate ships with 1st rate being the largest.

- 1st rate ships, also called Ships-of-the-Line, were massive and supported three decks of guns. To be considered a 1st rate ship, the vessel had to support at least 120 guns.
- 2nd rate ships were also referred to as Ships-of-the-Line, but were smaller and supported from 80-119 guns.
- 3rd rate ships had at least 64 guns, but no more than 79. They, like the rest of the ships, were considered too small to fight in line during line-based naval battles.
- 4th rate ships supported approximately 50-60 guns. These were the largest ships, for a time, and thus considered Ships-of-the-Line, until around the mid-1750s when they were considered too small to stand in formation.
- 5th rate ships had approximately 36 to 50 guns.

- 6th rate ships had around 20-28 guns and were generally used as convoy escorts or for blockade duties
- Any smaller combat vessels were considered unrated and given roles outside the normal functions of the Royal Navy.

The Royal Navy was a constant thorn in the side of pirates. They vigorously hunted pirates at every opportunity. However, England was known to sponsor privateers and was generous when it came to giving out letters of marque. Sir Francis Drake, Henry Morgan and George Clifford were all famous privateers who flew under the English flag.

BRITISH NAVY RANKS

Below are the ranks in the British navy for use in campaigns. Most nations used a very similar rank system, but with subtle name differences based on local dialect. The ranks range from least to most in seniority.

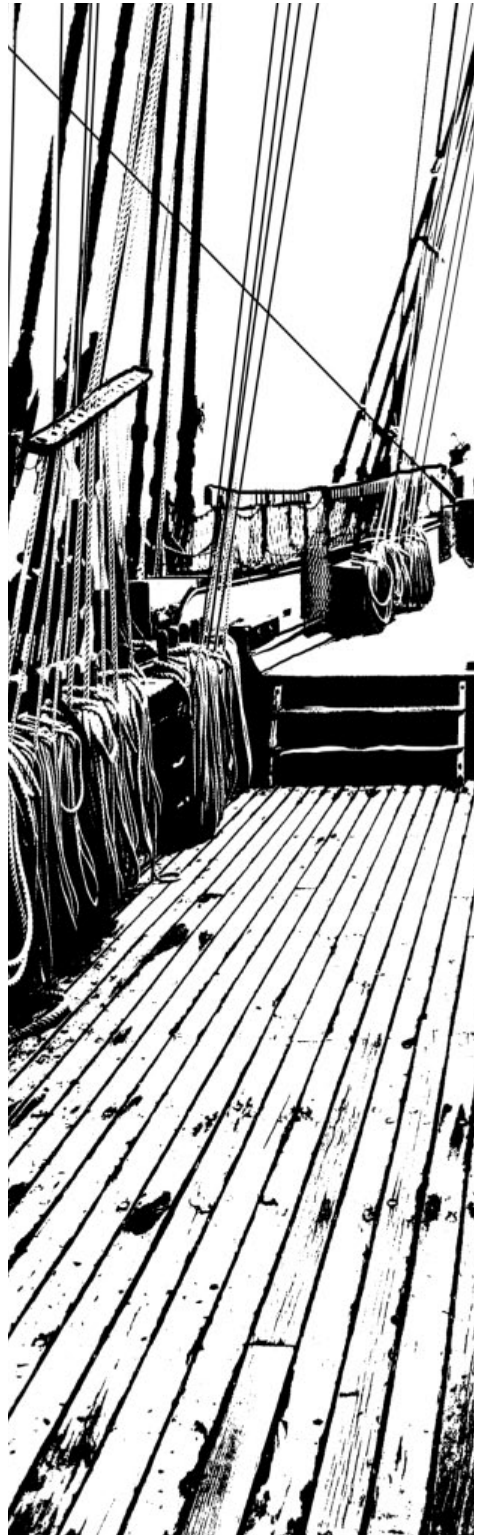
Acting: An acting rank was appointed in the field when the main rank was unable to perform their role, usually via death. Thus, an acting-commodore would be promoted from the ship's crew to captain the vessel if the commodore was killed or incapacitated in some way. These commissions were generally only temporary unless the individual performed in an outstanding manner that warranted continued service.

Crewman: A crewman with no specific officer training

Midshipman: An officer in training.

Master's Mate: An officer serving under a master, such as a master gunner, master sailor, etc.

Master: An officer specifically qualified for his field. Master gunner, sailor, navigator, etc.



Lieutenant: Ship's lieutenant; minor officer

Lieutenant Commander: A lieutenant, but given command of a small vessel.

Master and Commander (Usually abbreviated to 'Commander'): The captain of a larger vessel, but usually not large enough to be a Ship-of-the-Line.

Post-Captain: An officer in charge of a large vessel, often a Ship-of-the-Line. This post was only given after a captain had proven themselves in combat.

Commodore: A senior captain often in charge of large and important ships.

Rear Admiral: A ship's captain who led the squadron of ships in the back of a fleet.

Considered a less dangerous command and reported to the fleet admiral.

Vice Admiral: A ship's captain who led the squadron in the front of a fleet. Considered a more dangerous command as combat usually initiated here and reported directly to the fleet admiral.

Admiral: A fleet commander who led from the center and served directly by the rear and vice admiral.

Admiral of the Fleet: The senior most admiral once the fleet became large enough to encompass multiple admirals for each squadron.

FRANCE

The French navy was never equal to its neighbors. Sandwiched between the naval juggernauts of Spain and England and having to contend with the strong naval presence of the Dutch, the French army was France's military strongpoint. As such, their naval investments were usually lacking when compared to Britain and Spain. In response to this, the French government issued numerous privateering writs. These men became known as Corsairs and raided the enemies of the crown in privateering actions. A percentage of taken income was set aside for the crown while the rest went to compensate the men on ship.

SPAIN

The royal Spanish navy was the other big kid on the block. Along with Britain, she had the largest navy relying extensively on overseas possessions for income and expansion. Unlike the typical naval forces of Britain, privateers were used to support the royal navy as independent, supplemental forces. The Spanish navy was ill-prepared to protect the vast fleet of large merchantmen carrying vast silver, gold and other valuable cargo from the New World needed to be protected. The privateer could act as a bulwark against rival privateers, although their usual course was to avoid confrontation with well-armed targets unless supported by a ship of the royal navy.

UNITED PROVINCES

The United Provinces was a confederation of Dutch states that began to dominate trade in the West Indies during the Age of Sail. They brought back spices, porcelain, tea, sugar and a host of other specialties rarely seen in Europe. As such, they quickly became rich and were able to stand up even to mighty Britain. Dutch privateers typically prayed on

enemy shipping alongside the navy and especially in support of the West and East India Companies.

PORTUGUESE

The Portuguese state had a massive overseas empire, primarily located around South America. Privateers of the Portuguese supported the state and dealt extensively in the slave trade. These buccaneers had numerous ports, especially in the Caribbean.

UNITED STATES

The early United States offered writs of privateering to help support its young fleet. These ships raided enemy shipping in the Caribbean and along the eastern sea coast. They also raided enemy shipping during conflicts such as the American War of Independence and Spanish-American War.

NATIONALISTIC

Regardless of what country a ship operated out of, the actual crew of these ships was often a cosmopolitan composition of men and women from around the world. Nationalism as we view it today did not really exist in the same manner during the Age of Sail. The French Revolution was one of the first conflicts to use a nationalistic sentiment to drive countrymen to war. Before that, a person's identity was more founded in their immediate, local area. An individual's city or county area defined them more than their country. As such, men and women would fight for or against their countrymen. The ship's officers and who was patronizing the voyage mattered more in regard to which side a ship supported. This was especially true when a specific monarch was issuing the writ of privateering.

PIRATE SHIP'S CREW

Ship's crews, whether they were pirate or privateer, were strikingly similar. The main difference was the captain of the vessel and how the ship got its start. A privateering ship was usually funded by the crown of a state or wealthy individuals for a share of the spoils. A pirate ship was usually stolen, either taken at sea or stolen while in port. A rare few purchased their ship.

Once a ship was secure, the crew would create a council to draw up a code of conduct. This code was adhered to by all, and none were above the code, even the ship's captain. This code of conduct is the basis of the rhetoric of a "pirate's code". After the code was established, the crew would elect officers to fill various roles. These officers were selected from amongst the most experienced or capable men. This stands in stark contrast to most posts during this time period which would usually go to a wealthy or noble family, regardless of merit. In a sense, these pirate and privateering ships were very much a form of merit based democracy.

CAPTAIN

The captain of a vessel was selected based on some well-defined attributes. First, the captain must be someone every man on ship respected. Additionally, he needed to know how to fight well, navigate effectively and sail. Pirates favored men who were bold, strong, cunning and intelligent. Privateers, when not already assigned a captain, did like-wise; however, most privateer captains were chosen upon inception of the privateering charter. Captains were not above being replaced and a captain who failed his responsibilities was demoted by the men and a new captain assigned. Captains received the largest share of loot taken, usually receiving 1 1/4 - 2 shares.

QUARTERMASTER

The quartermaster was one of the highest officer ranks and had command of all aspects of the deck. The quartermaster in effect put the captain's orders into effect. He selected boarding parties and was expected to be the first man onto an enemy ship. Additionally, they mediated arguments on ship and were responsible for tracking payment, rations, spoils and ship stores. He received generally the same loot as the captain and took command of any captured vessels.

LIEUTENANT

The lieutenant was an officer with no specific function other than to assist the quartermaster in implementing the captain's orders. Additionally, he took command of the ship during battle if the captain was ever killed. Like most officers, he generally received about 1 1/4 shares of all taken loot.

SAILING MASTER

The sail master oversaw all aspects of navigation and sail setting. This could be quite extensive given multiple masts and multiple sails per mast.

BOATSWAIN

The boatswain was responsible for maintaining the ship. He also supervised day-to-day functions and dispersed rations to the men.

MASTER GUNNER

The master gunner was in charge of all the ship's guns. He trained the ship's gun crews and powder boys and made sure the guns were being used to peak effectiveness. On ships with multiple gun decks a gunner would be in charge underneath the master gunner to supervise the guns on his deck.

SHIP DUTIES

Specific specialties developed on ships that individuals would be assigned to. They would hone these skills and serve as their primary duty.

Carpenter: Repaired masts and hulls, especially after combat.

Cook: The man in charge of making meals. This position was often given to an older or injured crew member.

Crew: The regular crew had a host of duties to perform. Cleaning, rigging, sailing, fighting and a hundred other duties laid waiting for a ship's crew. Gunning and rowing, when applicable, were especially crew intensive as cannons and oars took a great many men to use effectively. However, given the code of conduct of a ship, each individual was equal

to each other. The captain and other officers might be in charge, but they shared equal respect to each man.

Every man received an equal share of the loot taken, despite his crew position. Crewmen saw themselves as part of a brotherhood, even setting up rules in the code of conduct to compensate crewmen and families for injuries and death. These injury compensations would come out of the main take before any spoils were divided. In this way, pirate charters really were revolutionary social charters of their day.

Musicians: A musician was entertainment for the ship, but also played during battles to demoralize rival crews. Like the surgeons, these men were rarely professionals, but picked up minor skills from practice.

Surgeon: Surgeons treated diseases and mended injuries. Because they were a rarity, they were typically crew members who picked up the profession from learning bits here and there, or were pressed into service from a taken ship.

EVERYDAY LIFE

The life of a pirate or privateer wasn't all glory and action. Most days were full of the monotony of ship upkeep and training. Disease and disaster were constant companions with the threat of vicious storms and disease ridden vermin.

DRESS

Privateers, pirates and even members of royal navies were not issued uniforms. Individuals were expected to provide their own clothing, usually consisting of two full sets of dress. Common apparel included short jackets, breeches and boots. Small, brimmed hats were essential during long days in the sun and bandannas and handkerchiefs were commonly worn. Of course, most pirates operated in one specific geographic area and many privateers were restricted to local areas as outlined in their letter of marque. These areas would widely dictate what clothing was used as local weather patterns and cultures heavily influenced the seamen. However, clothing was often plundered from victims if one was fortunate enough to find a set that fit and accessories from victims were always useful and common place. As with all taken loot, clothing was gathered by the quartermaster and either divided as a share of loot or auctioned off with the purchase price being added to the taken spoils to be divided.

SUPPLY

Food and drink aboard a pirate vessel was always an adventure. With few friendly ports, rations were strict and anyone violating the charter by taking more than his fair share was dealt with harshly. Gambling away one's daily rations was usually forbidden and luxury food was a scarcity. The main way a pirate ship restocked its supplies was by theft. Taking a ship for food and wine was often a necessity, although ports and coastal cities could be raided as well. When not active on ship seamen could supplement their diet by fishing. Sea Turtles and their eggs were a delicacy while fish takes could provide additional calories.

Alcoholic beverages were extremely popular with seamen and a good amount of a share of one's loot often went to their purchase. On ship a rum mixture called bombo was

popular as it had a lower price point than other fine spirits, although beer, sherry, port and brandy were often imbibed in large quantities as well.

Pirates and privateers relaxed like most seamen. They gambled with dice and cards and frequented friendly ports. Chewing tobacco was the norm on ship as a spoiled pipe could quickly damage a large, wooden vessel.

WOMEN

Women were a rarity on ship. When they did appear it was because they were either in secret or were tough, witty or smart enough to compete with a ship of men in a time dominated by men. It was considered poor form to “make merry” with a woman on ship. Instead, ports of call frequented by sailors of all ilks were havens for prostitutes and any business that forwarded the oldest profession. Taverns, brothels, inns and hostels flourished by offering discreet lodging for a sailor at port. Wives were especially uncommon for privateers and pirates. Limited data from the era put the number of married pirates at roughly 3%. That being said, women were found in all manner of businesses and could either be vital allies or bitter enemies.

RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships between individuals form the background of any campaign. How members of society reacted to pirates or privateers was integral to a seaman’s life. Patrons were men or women with considerable wealth who were able to back a privateer or pirate venture for a share of the loot. Essentially, they operated as a private bank in exchange for a large influx of money if the venture was successful. States would fund privateers while individuals or individual corporations would fund the illicit pirate activity.

Merchants were a huge boon to pirates. Most ports of call were inaccessible to the traditional pirate as their business was frowned upon, but a wealthy merchant could act as a fence for stolen goods. These merchants would take a bit of risk when associating themselves with pirates, but would stand to make great profit as they could pay much less than a committee’s normal price. Merchants could also act as a primitive form of money laundering by buying goods or precious metals and selling them to contacts.

Government officials were both a potential source of trouble and shelter for a pirate or privateer. An allied government official could provide clemency from arrests or credible witnesses during a trial. On the flip side, an official who actively pursued pirate activity could request imperial or state ships from a homeland to patrol or actively hunt pirates. Still others could be corrupted to provide any service for monetary compensation.

Pirate hunters made their living hunting down notable pirates for monetary reward. States would place a high bounty on a specific pirate or ship. Pirate hunters would stalk their pray in the same manner pirates hunted cargo ships. Many of these pirate hunters were retired or relieved naval personnel or former pirates who knew their ways and could think like them. Colonial governors were well known for their love of employing local pirate hunters to combat local pirates.

Victims and their families formed the most dramatic relationships with pirates. Some victims were pressed into service, others could be held for ransom, while family members might hold grudges or fund pirate hunting expeditions of their own to avenge a fallen loved one. Preachers were especially vehement in their desire to reform pirates before they died and some would join pirate crews with the express purpose of converting pirates away from the life.

DISEASES

Disease was a constant companion for any ship venture. Rats, weevils, lice, cockroaches and other vermin went unchecked aboard ships. Livestock was commonplace, which only compounded the issue. Provided here is a short list of common diseases for the era and how they impacted the pirate life. Ships' surgeons often had only a limited understanding of these diseases and would treat the disease with home remedies or superstition.

CHOLERA

Cholera is an infection that spreads typically through contaminated food and water. The main source of contamination comes when an infected individual's feces comes in contact with food or water. The main symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea and dehydration. This can eventually lead to death in some cases.

MALARIA

Malaria is a mosquito-borne disease that is transmuted when an infected mosquito comes in contact with a host. In humans, malaria can take on a vast number of symptoms such as fever, headache, organ shutdown and even death. As it is transmitted by mosquitoes, it is prevalent in tropical and subtropical regions.

MEASLES

Measles is a viral infection of the respiratory system. Symptoms include red eyes, fever and cough. It is highly contagious, but rarely lethal, and spread through face to face contact between people.

PLAGUE

Plague is a disease spread primarily by infected fleas which inhabit small rodents. Common symptoms include gangrene of extremities, fever, seizures, chills and general pain. Bubonic plague, the worst of the variants, kills notoriously fast, within 4 days of infection and at over a 60% mortality rate.

SCURVY

Scurvy is a human-borne disease that occurs from a lack of vitamin C. It is common onboard ships as fruits and vegetables, the most likely source of vitamin C, are highly perishable and rarely found on extended journeys. It manifests itself as spotty skin, bleeding gums and lethargy. Eventually this can lead to loss of teeth, fever and even death. Among sailors it has caused more deaths than all other diseases and combat combined.

SMALL POX

Small Pox, often called the Red Plague, or just shortened to Pox, is a uniquely human virus. It appears as small rashes on the skin. This is followed by nausea, vomiting and fever. Transmission is especially notorious as it is usually airborne transmitted from face to face contact.

SYPHILIS

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection. It appears at first as a skin ulceration or rash, often on the palms or feet. These can eventually develop into lesions which had a high rate of infection. Syphilis was rampant aboard a pirate ship where prostitution was commonplace.

YELLOW FEVER

Another mosquito-borne disease, Yellow Fever, or Yellow Jack, outbreaks are common in tropical and subtropical regions. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, chills, anorexia, headache and muscle pain which can eventually lead to death.

PLUNDER

In most games, rewards come in two fashions: experience and loot. For a pirate or privateer, a successful plunder could make a man wealthy overnight. When you consider that a single Spanish doubloon was roughly equivalent to 6-7 week’s pay for a legitimate sailor, it is not hard to understand the allure of the pirate life. Thus a single share from a taken vessel could still make men rich. As previously mentioned, a captured ship’s cargo was integral to keeping a pirate or privateer ship well stocked and functioning properly. If a ship could be taken with little damage, the target ship could serve as additional loot to be sold or operated as an additional vessel.

Once a ship was taken, everything was looted. Passengers were looted for valuables as well as valuable information on future targets. Gold, silver and jewelry were the most sought-after treasures, but medicine was equally of value, as were the ship’s cargo stores full of valuable fabric, tobacco, porcelain, spices, sugar and other goods. Finally, gun powder and ammunition were extremely valuable as these items were hard to buy on the limited market available for pirates. A table of possible loot exists below along with a random generator for ship’s cargo. The actual value of the cargo is highly dependent on your individual campaign. Additionally, you may rule that finding food stuff in a ship’s stores would allow the sailing vessel to remain at sea longer or give a crew a morale bonus if they’ve had a steady diet of wine, rum, or other delicacies.

RANDOM PASSENGER (INDIVIDUAL) LOOT			
d100	Loot		
1-2	Gold idol	39-40	Silver coins
3-4	Silver idol	41-42	Barrel of wine
5-6	Rough jewels	43-44	Copper coins
7-8	Gold necklace	45-46	Barrel of rum
9-10	Jeweled Hairpin	47-48	Master crafted weapon
11-12	Silver cross	49-50	Silk robe
13-14	Bejeweled reliquary	51-52	Peal string
15-16	Lacquered snuff box	53-54	Gold bar
17-18	Rough sapphires	55-56	Silver bar
19-20	Bejeweled dagger	57-58	Ship in a bottle
21-22	Ceremonial short sword	59-60	Prominent passenger
23-24	Ornamental fan	61-62	Gold pocket watch
25-26	Medicine kit	63-64	Marble statue
27-28	Bejeweled pendent	65-66	Canvas painting
29-30	Gold ring	67-68	Treasure map
31-32	Bejeweled ring	69-70	Gold plates
33-34	Fancy clothing	71-72	Silverware
35-36	Sturdy clothing	73-74	Rare book
37-38	Gold coins	75-76	Ivory statue
		77-78	Ceremonial mask
		79-80	Silver chalice

81-82 Gold compass
 83-84 Spyglass
 85-86 Bejeweled hourglass
 87-88 Musical instrument
 89-90 Sea charts
 91-92 Navigation instrument
 93-94 Pearl comb
 95-96 Silver earring
 97-98 Gemmed idol
 99-00 Fur coat

RANDOM SHIP CARGO STORES

d100 Cargo

1-2 Silk fabric
 3-4 Nutmeg
 5-6 Pepper
 7-8 Cinnamon sticks
 9-10 Indigo
 11-12 Tobacco
 13-14 Sugar
 15-16 Tea leaves
 17-18 Coffee beans
 19-20 Olive oil
 21-22 Slaves
 23-24 Wine
 25-26 Rum
 27-28 Porcelain
 29-30 Exotic animal
 31-32 Rare flowers
 33-34 Ammunition
 35-36 Gun powder
 37-38 Furs
 39-40 Cotton

41-42 Crates of rations
 43-44 Barrels of fresh water
 45-46 Cocoa
 47-48 Wool
 49-50 Empty hold
 51-52 Fruit store
 53-54 Salted fish
 55-56 Finished lumber
 57-58 Spare sailing cloth
 59-60 Barrels of flour
 61-62 Barrels of beans
 63-64 Stores of cheese
 65-66 Barrels of pork
 67-68 Ivory
 69-70 Gold ingots
 71-72 Silver ingots
 73-74 Copper ingots
 75-76 Converted passenger hold (empty)
 77-78 Converted passenger hold (passengers)
 79-80 Raw metal
 81-82 Armory (melee weapons and a few firearms)
 83-84 Captives
 85-86 Wife's quarters (prostitute's quarters)
 87-88 Casks of flour
 89-90 Galley (cooking preparation items)
 91-92 Incense
 93-94 Opium
 95-96 Perfumes
 97-98 Religious artifacts
 99-00 Salt stores

MAJOR EVENTS

Wars and events provide a much needed background for campaigns. Provided below is a short list of historically important events that revolved around sail or a water based campaign. Use them as reference or inspiration for conflicts in your own campaign.

~800: FIRST RECORDED RAID BY NORSE MEN (VIKINGS)

Three ships from Norway sailed into the bay at Dorset, ushering in the age of Scandinavian raiders. A few years later the monastery on the island of Lindisfarne off the eastern coast of England is pillaged and the monks murdered in the sea. 65 Years later a large army led by Ivar the Boneless attacked and sacked York, settling it as Jorvik. From henceforth, Viking raiders and settlers became a permanent fixture in the British Isles.

1494: THE TREATY OF TORDESILLAS

The Tordesillas Treaty was a papal-based document that effectively divided the newly discovered oversea lands between Portugal and Spain. The Spanish born Pope was responding to conflicts between Portuguese colonized South America and the Spanish flagged Caribbean. In response, he divided the new world at the 370 league Meridian, with the west going to Spain and the east going to Portugal. This had enormous repercussions for other colonial powers such as England and France who were effectively left out of the arrangement. The agreement prompted an increased use of privateers against the legalized colonies. After a while it was apparent the two nations couldn't effectively explore, establish or colonize such a large area and the treaty was mostly ignored by other continental powers.

1538: BATTLE OF PREVEZA

The great fleets of the gods assembled against one another off the coast of northern Greece in the Ionian Sea. The Christian Alliance was organized by Pope Paul II and included ships from Venice, Spain, Genoa, the Papal States and more. They were organized against attacks by the Ottoman Empire against islands and coastlands controlled by Christian forces. The large, bulky Christian ships relied on a great deal of wind to be completely effective. However, Barbarossa engaged the Christian commander Andrea Doria as the wind becalmed and was able to outmaneuver and board the poorly maneuverable Christian vessels.

The Christian fleet lost about 12% of their forces during the initial fray while the Ottomans suffered no ship losses and about 10% loss of manpower. However, due to the politics of the fleet commanders, the Christian fleet retreated despite still having numerical superiority. Unable to pursue due to severe damage, the Ottomans let the Christian fleet retreat and instead consolidated their power base in the region by taking several key ports and expanding the Ottoman influence in the area.

1585-1604: ANGLO-SPANISH WAR, SEA DOGS

The 1st Anglo-Spanish war witnessed the famed Spanish Armada's defeat at the hands of English vessels. The conflict arose as England was supporting Protestant forces in the Netherlands, then under Spanish control. During this conflict, the English relied heavily on privateers, even raising one of them, Francis Drake, to knighthood and vice admiral of the fleet during the engagement with the Spanish Armada. The conflict was mostly inconclu-

sive and after twenty years of trading each other's treasury, both sides signed a peace treaty, each gaining small strategic victories. The conflict was important as it showed the power of the privateers on overseas raiding as well as fleet support.

1650: BUCCANEERING PERIOD

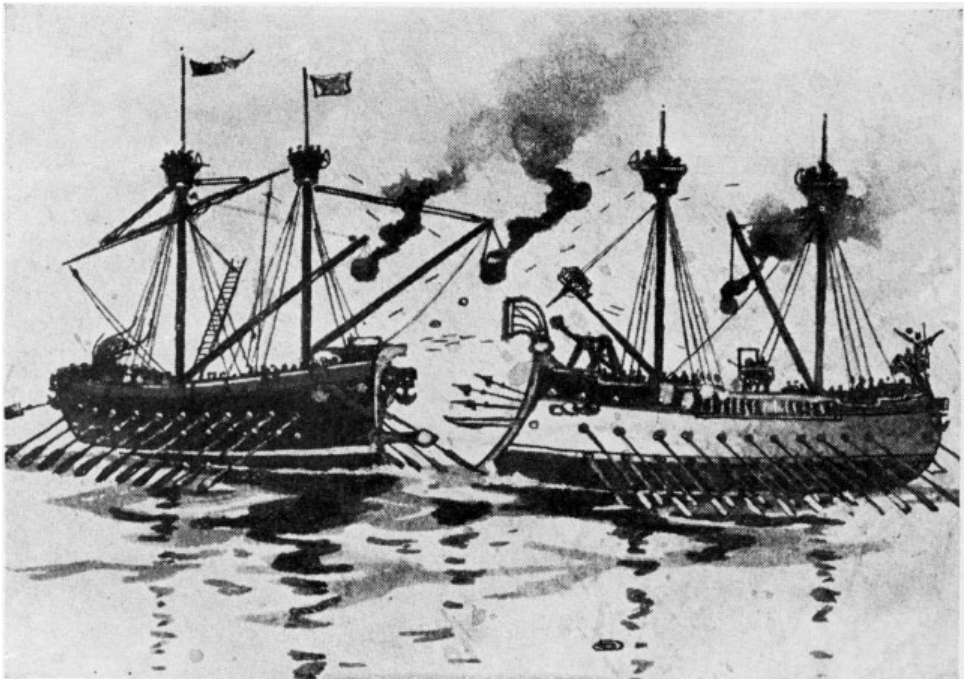
The Buccaneering period was an era of time between roughly 1650 and 1730 when privateering and piracy reached its peak. Spurred on by the English capture of Port Royal in Jamaica, the English began issuing Privateering Writs at an amazing clip and treasure from the new world was being transported back to Europe at a massive rate.

1652-1654: FIRST ANGLO-DUTCH WAR

One of the first European conflicts to be fought entirely at sea, the 1st Anglo-Dutch war was a conflict between England and the Dutch Republic over trade disputes and political maneuvering. The war saw several naval battles, the largest which was the Battle of Scheveningen (below). In the end, peace was achieved with little hope for a permanent settlement. England once again dominated the Dutch commercially, but saw any hopes for a political joining destroyed.

1688-1697: NINE YEARS WAR

The Nine Years War was the War of the Grand Alliance in which France was pitted against the combined might of England, Spain, the Dutch Republic, the Holy Roman Empire, Sweden and others. The conflict came about due to religious tensions as France tried to impose a unified religion within its borders. This, together with minor territorial ambitions, led to a massive coalition against the French crown. France's massive army fought well on all fronts, but its navy was unable to secure a passageway to an invasion of England. Minor territorial changes occurred, but after an exhausting war, all parties agreed to peace with little gain.



1701-1714: WAR OF SPANISH SUCCESSION

The War of Spanish Succession occurred to determine who would rule Spain after the passing of Charles II. The French backed Phillip V and the Coalition backed Archduke Charles. The war lasted over a decade and saw bloody battles on both sides. The French / Bavarian Alliance succeeded in recognizing their claim of Phillip V, but in return he had to give up French claims, thus avoiding a merging of the two kingdoms. It's interesting to note that this war was fought based solely on the will of succession based on an individual who was still firmly alive and well. It shows how closely politics and war went hand in hand during the age of successive Monarchies.

1708: CRUISERS AND CONVOYS ACT: ALLOCATING REGULAR WARSHIPS TO THE DEFENSE OF TRADE

Piracy was so bad by the beginning of the 18th century that navies began allocating warships, generally used only for naval combat between states, to trade defense. This allowed especially centralized states to develop large convoys of prize ships that could be escorted by warships. This had the effect of better protection, but slower transit times, as ships of this era were notoriously difficult to standardize. Even after this, pirates developed new tactics to lure off escorts or pick off slower vessels.

1740-1748: WAR OF AUSTRIAN SUCCESSION

This war began after the death of Charles VI as his only heir was a woman, Maria Theresa. The elevation of a woman to the Habsburg throne was a great excuse for France and some of the German states to declare war on and curb Austrian power. Austria was joined by England and the Dutch as was common for the time. The war had a dramatic effect on the American continent as French, English and Spanish colonies fought one another in the name of their motherland. It was concluded with the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle which Confirmed Maria Theresa's status in exchange for minor territorial exchanges.

1798-1800: QUASI-WAR

The Quasi-War was an undeclared conflict between the United States and France. It started when the U.S. declared it would no longer pay back its debt to its revolutionary ally, France, as that debt was owed to the French Empire and not the French Republic. In response, French ships and privateers seized hundreds of American ships and prompted a rebuilding of the American navy. It ended after heavy American shipping losses, although few naval losses, when France and England made peace at the Convention of 1800.

SAMPLE BATTLES

Provided here are two examples of large scale naval combat during the Age of Sail. While your individual campaign will most likely revolve around small scale battles and boarding actions, a look at how these two battles took place provides a unique insight on the nuances of naval battle during this period.

The first is the Battle of Scheveningen. This was the last naval battle during the First Anglo-Dutch War. The principle action involved over a hundred ships on each side and although very few ships were lost, the threat of loss and tactical maneuvering ended the war straight out. The second is the legendary Battle of Trafalgar where the English fleet dominated the combined French and Spanish fleets to secure its safety and place as primary naval authority of the age.

BATTLE OF SCHEVENINGEN

August 1653

Off the coast of Dutch mainland

England (Commonwealth)	United Dutch Provinces
General at Sea George Monck	Lieutenant-Admiral Maarten Tromp
120 ships	100 ships
Vice-Admiral Witte de With	
27 ships	
2 ships sunk, 250 dead, 700 wounded	12-14 ships sunk, 2000 dead or taken

During the first Anglo-Dutch war, the English Fleet successfully blockaded the Dutch ports. Being a trading nation, the Dutch economy could not survive very long under full blockade and needed to break the English fleet to allow free flow of commerce into her ports. The Dutch commander, Lieutenant-Admiral Maarten Tromp, set sail with 100 ships toward the island of Texel where Vice-Admiral Witte de With and his 27 ships were prevented by the English from rendezvousing with the fleet. The Dutch plan was to break the blockade and thus allow de With's fleet to join in a main assault on the English blockade. Ships on both sides ranged from roughly 38 to 88 guns, with most of the vessels averaging around 50.

Due to wind and terrain the Dutch fleets were able to outmaneuver the English and rendezvous out in the open water. They took a position to the north of the English fleet and began battle in the early morning, having the wind gage. The Dutch fleet sailed south into the English lines. Very early on in the battle the Dutch commander Tromp was hit by a sniper from an English rigging and mortally wounded. None-the-less, the Dutch fleet continued its assault into the English squadrons. Both fleets made several passes with one another launching furious broadsides into each other's ranks. The lighter armored Dutch ships were heavily damaged, although there was very little time or effort made in boarding actions. The battle lasted until mid-afternoon when the wind shifted in the English favor. At that time the Dutch began an organized retreat and headed back to home port badly damaged.

The battle losses were minor on the English side and notable, although not critical, on the Dutch side. Several high ranking officers were lost on each side and both fleets were severely damaged. The English retreated home for repair after the engagement. Both sides claimed victory; the English due to their tactical win in sinking over a dozen Dutch ships while losing only two, and the Dutch a strategic victory by breaking the English blockade. The losses at Scheveningen directly led both sides to peace negotiations and hostilities ended early the next year.

BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR

21 October 1805

Cape Trafalgar, Spain

English Fleet (United Kingdom)
Lord Horatio Nelson
Cuthbert Collingwood
33 ships (27 ships of the line)
1,700 dead or wounded
10,000 wounded or captured

French Empire, Spain
Pierre-Charles Villeneuve (France)
Federico Gravina (Spain)
41 ships (33 ships of the line)
20 ships captured or destroyed

The Battle of Trafalgar was an epic engagement fought during the Napoleonic Wars between England and the French Empire, along with France’s Spanish puppet government. France was primarily a land-based military with limited naval power. However, in order to force Britain out of the alliance formed against her, France needed to launch a successful invasion onto British soil. To do that, they had to contend with the royal navy. France mobilized its limited navy, along with that of its supporter Spain, off the coast of Spain. The Franco-Spanish fleet consisted of mostly Third Raters with another 4 First Raters. The English fleet had 7 larger First and Second raters and the rest Third Raters. Each side also had a half dozen or so smaller vessels that wouldn’t qualify as Ships-of-the-Line. Both sides’ First Raters were monsters of the day boasting over 100 guns each.

The English fleet moved to engage their enemy and at 11:45 AM, Admiral Nelson ordered his men forward with the famous line, “England expects every man will do his duty.” The Franco-Spanish fleet was larger in both vessel size and numbers, drawn up in a traditional battle arc. Nelson, on the other hand, ordered his fleet into two straight columns and headed straight into the French fleet. Nelson’s *Victory* led one column while his other 100 gun First-Rater *Royal Sovereign* led the other. Winds were low and the English fleet took heavy fire for over an hour before being able to return fire. However, once engaged, the English ship concentration allowed them to severely cripple and capture numerous ships before the Franco-Spanish front and rear could get into position to assist. The French flagship was taken and as more and more English ships brought their guns to bear, the Franco-Spanish confederation of ships turned and conceded the day.

The French losses were staggering due to Nelson’s bold, unorthodox attack strategy. Nelson was killed from gunfire in the early battle and his flagship undertook so much damage that a French boarding party nearly took her, only to be denied by a timely attack from English reinforcements. The battle was a great win for the British navy and cemented their hold of the seas. The naval battle had little diplomatic effect on the War of the Third Coalition as Napoleon broke the coalition’s army at the Battle of Austerlitz in two months. However, the French navy would never again threaten invasion.

CHARACTER OPTIONS

ARCHETYPES

While *Savage Worlds* is a system with lots of flexibility, it lacks standard archetypes. However, some players may wish to skip parts of character creation and jump right into a game. To facilitate this, here is a list of archetypes of pirates and privateers as well as their crew for quick play or creative reference.

BASIC CREWMAN (PIRATE / PRIVATEER)

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Charisma: -2, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 5, **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Boating d8, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Gambling d4, Notice d4, Repair d6, Shooting d6, Swimming d6

Hindrances: Greedy (Minor), Mean (Minor), +1 Major

Edges: Sailor's Blood, Extraction or Quick, +1 additional Edge

BASIC CREWMAN (ROYAL NAVY)

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Charisma: 0, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 2, **Toughness:** 6

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Gambling d6, Notice d6, Repair d6, Shooting d8, Swimming d6

Hindrances: Enemy (Minor), Big Mouth (Minor), +1 Major

Edges: Alertness, Rapid Reload, +1 additional Edge

MARINER

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Charisma: -1, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 5, **Toughness:** 6

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d8, Fighting d6, Shooting d6, Swimming d6, Taunt d6, +2 additional Skill Points

Hindrances: Habit (Minor), Overconfident (Major), +1 Minor

Edges: Sailor's Blood, Connections, +1 additional Edge

NAVIGATOR

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Charisma: 0, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 4, **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Boating d4, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Navigation) d10, Notice d8, Swimming d4, Tracking d8.

Hindrances: Phobia (Major), +2 Minor

Edges: Navigator, Privateering Loyalty, +1 additional Edge

SHIP OFFICER

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Charisma: 0, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 5, **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Boating d8, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6, Streetwise d4, Swimming d6

Hindrances: Poverty (Minor), Code of Honor (Major), +1 Minor

Edges: Sailor's Blood, Pirate Allure, +1 additional Edge

GUNNER

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Charisma: 0, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 5, **Toughness:** 3

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d6, Notice d8, Repair d6, Survival d6, Swimming d8

Hindrances: Small (Major), +2 Minor

Edges: Rapid Reload, Quick, +1 additional Edge

PORT MERCHANT

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Charisma: 0, **Pace:** 5, **Parry:** 2,

Toughness: 5

Skills: Gambling d8, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Mercantile) d8, Persuasion d8, Streetwise d8

Hindrances: Obese (Minor), Stubborn (Minor), +1 Major

Edges: Rich, Jack-of-all-Trades, +1 additional Edge

COLONY OFFICIAL

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Charisma: 2, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 5,

Toughness: 5

Skills: Fighting d6, Gambling d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Regulations) d8, Persuasion d6, Taunt d8

Hindrances: Greedy (Major), +2 Minor

Edges: Attractive, Noble, +1 additional Edge

PIRATE HUNTER

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6 Vigor d8

Charisma: 0, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 6,

Toughness: 6

Skills: Boating d8, Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Shooting d8, Swimming d6, Tracking d6

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty

Edges: Sailor's Blood, Rapid Reload

REPAIR SPECIALIST

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Charisma: 0, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 2,

Toughness: 5

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Gambling d4, Notice d8, Repair d8, Shooting d6, Swimming d6

Hindrances: Bad Luck (Major), +2 Minor

Edges: McGyver, Sailor's Blood, +1 additional Edge

NEW HINDRANCES

PRIVATEERING LOYALTY (MINOR)

The character is loyal to his homeland, especially if under a privateering charter. He sets aside a quarter of his wealth as donation to the crown and must present this wealth to a government official at the first opportunity. In exchange, the privateer is looked favorably upon by certain nobles.

VULNERABILITY (MINOR OR MAJOR)

The character is especially vulnerable in some way. This vulnerability can take many forms. Perhaps the character has an Achilles heel; a body part that is especially vulnerable to damage. Or maybe the character is constantly sick, allergic, or hobbled. It may even extend to a vulnerable family which can be exploited against the character.

As a Minor Hindrance, this vulnerability is mostly harmless or is at least very difficult to exploit. As a Major Hindrance, it affects the character quite often and can hinder them during encounters. The GM should decide on an appropriate penalty for the vulnerability chosen by the player.

WATERLOGGED (MAJOR)

The character is absolutely horrible in the water. No matter how much she practices or learns, she is just no good in the drink. The character receives a (-2) penalty to Swimming and can only hold her breath for half the usual time. This is a Major Hindrance for settings that frequently include water.

NEW EDGES

NAVIGATOR (PROFESSIONAL)

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d10

The character is apt at navigating on the open water. In unfamiliar waters she still requires charts and instruments to perform

effectively (requiring a Knowledge (Navigation) roll), but can still make basic navigational decisions based on current, winds and stars. In familiar waters she needs no instruments and can navigate effectively with just landmarks, current and wind (no roll necessary).

PIRATE ALLURE (SOCIAL)

Requirements: Novice, Charismatic, Spirit d8

The character has a mysterious allure that is difficult to resist. She increases her Charisma by 2 and can attract the opposite sex with ease. When in her home port, the character can expect favors and unexpected boons.

RAPID RELOAD (COMBAT)

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8

The character is especially adept at reloading firearms. He reduces the number of actions required to reload by 1, to a minimum of 1. If manning a cannon, the character counts as an experienced crew when reloading and firing.

SAILOR'S BLOOD (COMBAT)

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8

The character is at home on the rolling waves of the sea and has spent his life there. When on any ship (or other platform in the water), the character ignores the Unstable Platform penalty when fighting. Additionally, he receives a +2 bonus to Pace when fighting on deck or in a ship's rigging.

TRAINING CAPTAIN (PROFESSIONAL)

Requirement: Novice, Command, Common Bond

This ship's officer is apt at training his crew in a faster method than normal. Every time a ship's crew gains experience, it may gain a bonus experience point in another, applicable category. The GM determines which of the ship's categories applies. This Edge can only be applied once per ship crew.

PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS

RAGNAR THE BOLD

Ragnar is a seasoned veteran sailor and privateer and makes his home aboard the sloop of war *Hill's Vengeance*, a privateering vessel of French origin. He has been a crewman for over five years, but has thus far turned down multiple officer positions, preferring to be "Just one of the boys." Ragnar was raised on ships and even he doesn't know what country he was born in. He jests that he was probably born on deck and started swabbing shortly after he severed his umbilical cord with a hatchet. He loves adventure and the lure of the sea and hopes to live and die there.

Personality: Ragnar is quiet and reserved when met, defying the logic of his large frame. However, in combat he is a beast, ripping into men with savage ferocity. He defends his fellow crewmen like a mother bear and her cubs and is not averse to killing a man in a gruesome manner just to deter other attacks.

Mannerisms: Ragnar is obsessed with knots and spends much of his time trying and perfecting new ones. His weapons hang from quick release knots and he keeps several yards of rope attached to his body for down time.

Distinguishing Features: Ragnar is a behemoth of a man, standing nearly seven feet tall and weighing in at well over 300 pounds. His hair is always a tangle of black locks and is

rarely combed. He favors dull grays for his clothing and wields a huge, oversized cutlass when in combat.

Environment: Ragnar spends the majority of his time aboard the sloop *Hill's Vengeance* on deck. He sleeps on deck on all but the hottest or coldest nights. He favors night watch and most night personnel look to him for guidance. When not aboard ship he can be found in taverns, brothels and inns at various ports of call.

Adventure Seeds: Ragnar always accompanies his captain during negotiations or dangerous situations. He also takes pleasure in meeting others of especially large stock and interacts with such individuals favorably.

RAGNAR THE BOLD (VETERAN)

Ragnar is a seasoned veteran sailor. He is large and intimidating, yet has a good heart and likes to make friends despite his reserved demeanor.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 7; **Charisma:** 0

Skills: Boating d4, Climbing d8, Fighting d10 (+2 with Cutlass), Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Repair d4, Shooting d10, Swimming d8

Armor: None

Weapons: Oversized Cutlass (Str+d8, Parry +1)

Items: Rope, knots, sailor's clothing, backpack, average wealth

Edges: Block, Brawny, Dodge, Fleet-footed, Sailor's Blood, Trademark Weapon (Oversized Cutlass), Improved Trademark Weapon (Oversized Cutlass)

Hindrances: Curious, Habit (Ties knots)

DELICANCE LE NORD

The captain of *Hill's Vengeance*, Captain Nord is a Frenchman who couldn't give a rat's arse about the crown of any nation. He sails under a French Privateering license, but freely attacks French shipping if the target is juicy enough. Captain le Nord was elected to the captain post five years ago and since then has led a most impressive pirating career having taken over forty ships. He is a wealthy man, but lives a modest life, having stashed his wealth somewhere off ship.

Captain Nord's success can be attributed to two key factors; he is as cunning as a fox, and he takes care of his crew. Crew comes first in his eyes and his is one of the few ships where officers receive just one share of taken treasure, the same as every crewman. His cunning takes the form of a superb sailor and he has outrun faster vessels just by superior seamanship and wind use.

Personality: Captain le Nord is loud and boisterous. He oozes charisma and makes friends with just about everyone he meets. Legend tells of how he once lost everything he owned in a game of cards, and then proceeded to retrieve all his lost possessions plus more by befriending the young chap who had won the goods. He loves a good joke and tells freely that there has never been a woman he couldn't love, at least for a night.

Mannerisms: Captain le Nord is always smiling and has a hard time keeping his gleaming white teeth hidden. *Hill's Vengeance's* first mate has forbid him from stealth missions on more than one occasion over concerns that his bright smile would give them away in the dark. Additionally, he loves to hug and hugs both men and women when meeting or parting.

Distinguishing Features: Captain le Nord is 5' 7", thin, wiry and nimble. In a fight he relies on firearms and speed to dispatch his foes. He is always dressed in the latest fashion from some far off place and spends a great deal of his wealth on new clothing and accessories.

Environment: Captain le Nord is home aboard *Hills Vengeance*, but is just as likely to be out on the town recruiting new men to his cause, bedding interesting women or conning his way into a fortune.

Adventure Seeds: Captain le Nord is always recruiting men he would "have fun with" on ship. Due to his increased pay rate, his crew is nearly always full and much more loyal than traditional crews. Due to his nature with women, nearly every port has a jealous lover, a trusted consort or a cuckolded husband.

DELICANCE LE NORD (SEASONED)

Captain Nord is a young officer elected to captain the sloop Hill's Vengeance. He is cocky, suave and charismatic. He has a reputation for being fair and skilled as a sea captain.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5; **Charisma:** 4

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Gambling d8, Investigation d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d8, Streetwise d6, Swimming d8

Armor: None

Weapons: Rapier, Flintlock pistol x2, Knife

Items: Superior wealth, fine clothing, officer's clothing

Edges: Attractive, Command, Pirate's Allure, Sailor's Blood

Hindrances: Overconfident

TIMBAR (MAST BREAKER) MCGRAW

Timber McGraw, also known as "Mast Breaker," is first mate aboard *Hill's Vengeance*. He takes his position seriously and has saved his captain's life on dozens of occasions. As first mate he is responsible for implementing the captain's orders and does so with a harsh tongue and stinging right hook.

He received his nickname during an ill-fated boarding attempt. A small advance crew had boarded a Spanish galleon via the top ropes when the galleon suddenly repaired its main mast and lurched off. Damaged, the *Hill's Vengeance* could not follow and the small boarding party was threatened with quickly becoming overwhelmed. Timbar realized the danger and bull rushed the main mast, knocking it over and toppling the main sail. The galleon's crew surrendered after that.

Personality: McGraw is diligent and hardworking, expecting the same from his crew. Although he comes off harsh, he is very forgiving. However, it's his job to make his captain look good and he does the job well. Despite his gentle character, he is very impatient and demands quick action.

Mannerisms: McGraw runs around deck with his right arm cocked, ready to deliver a blow to the head of anyone too slow in performing their duties. He is partial to oiling his bald head and likes to wear expensive perfumes.

Distinguishing Features: McGraw shaves his head completely and rarely wears a shirt outside of port. Even then, he usually just borrows, or takes, one from a crewmember. He fights with a pair of punching daggers and takes pride in his muscular upper body.

Environment: McGraw is typically found onboard *Hill's Vengeance*. However, if a ship is taken, he takes command of the new vessel with a small crew. He is the first aboard during a boarding action and is usually found in the company of the captain when at port.

TIMBAR MCGRAW (NOVICE)

Timbar is first mate on Hill's Vengeance and treats his crew harshly, but fairly. He demands perfection from and trains them relentlessly. His hard demeanor hides a soft core that cares profoundly for each man under his command.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6; **Charisma:** 0

Skills: Boating d4, Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Shooting d6, Swimming d6, Taunt d6

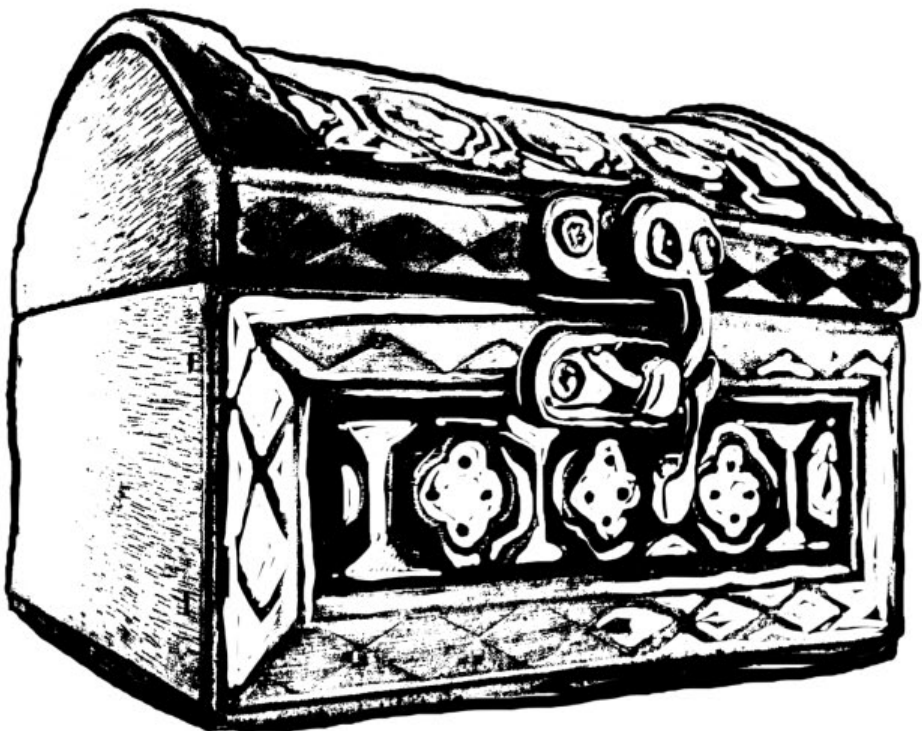
Armor: None

Weapons: Punching Daggers

Items: Moderate wealth

Edges: Command, Dodge, Sailor's Blood, Sweep

Hindrances: Arrogant



LEGENDS AND LEXICON

FAMOUS PIRATES

BARTHOLOMEW “BLACK BART” ROBERTS

Black Bart was the most successful pirate during the Age of Sail, taking over 450 prizes in his lifetime. A Welsh pirate, he operated in the early 18th century and preyed mostly on shipping in the Americas. He started his career in the navy and quickly soured against the establishment’s predilection for birthright and limited wages. He soon sailed on his own ship and fully embraced the articles of piracy that made each man equal. His adventures were the stuff of legend until he was killed by a broadside from an English warship.

CALICO JACK RACKHAM

Calico Jack was an English pirate that sailed the Caribbean near the end of the Age of Piracy. He was noted for designing the notorious “Jolly Roger” flag as well as allowing female crew members aboard his ship. He was originally pardoned for his piracy, but the lure was too strong and he returned to the sailor’s life the next year. He operated for less than a year after his pardon before being captured and hung by a pirate hunter near Port Royale.

EDWARD “BLACKBEARD” TEACH

The famed Blackbeard sailed the West Indies in the early 18th century. He adopted a fearsome persona and relied on that fear to capture vessels, rather than through brute force. During his career, he worked as an English privateer and took many spoils. He was eventually hunted down and killed by a pirate hunter, refusing to give in until after he took five shots and over twenty cuts.

STEDE BONNET

Also known as the “Gentlemen Pirate,” Stede Bonnet was a wealthy English landowner before turning to piracy. In 1717 he raised a crew and ship and began his career of piracy. He worked with Bartholomew Roberts’ fleet and the two took several ships together. The next year he began privateering for the North Carolina governor, but wasn’t very successful. Captured and tried, he was hung after his noble friends refused to testify for him.

THOMAS TEW

The Rhode Island pirate was the first one to establish what would eventually be known as the Pirate Round. He operated in the late 17th century out of Newport, Rhode Island. He sailed on only two ventures, dying on the second, but showed how incredibly wealthy an individual could become after just one stint of privateering.

WILLIAM FLY

An English pirate, William Fly raided the shipping off the coast of New England in 1726. He took five ships before being capture and hanged in Boston Harbor. He was noted for his actions on the hanging platform where he chastised the hangman for his noose tying skills, retied the knot and placed it around his neck himself.

ANNE BONNY

One of the few pirate women to sail during the Age of Sail, Anne Bonny was an Irish woman who took to piracy when she married a pirate named James Bonny. She spent a half dozen years in piracy, consorting with Calico Jack Rackham, with whom she bared a son. Her crew was captured in 1720 and most of them hung. She was given a stay of execution due to pregnancy before disappearing to time. Speculation remains of her eventual fate, although it is assumed her wealthy father ransomed her from jail before execution.

MARY READ

A companion to Anne Bonny, Mary Read was another one of the few women that sailed as a pirate. In her early life she served in the English and Dutch navy disguised as a male. This ruse worked for several years until she took to privateering as so many seamen did. Eventually, she joined up with the crew of Calico Jack and Anne Bonny. In their service, she revealed herself as a woman and the three became good friends with Captain Jack, allowing Mary to serve openly as a woman. She was captured and died in prison of complications with childbirth when their ship was taken.

FAMOUS PORTS

MADAGASCAR

Not a single city, but rather an island with dozens of English and French trading ports and colonies, Madagascar quickly became a home port for pirates and privateers of all ilks. The trading ports offered easy access to the riches of the Indian Ocean to the east and a way point around the Cape of Good Hope, up the African coast, into the Caribbean. Merchant vessels were usually manned by low paid seamen who had little incentive to resist the better armed and much feared pirates. As such, loot was plenty and the risk small.

PORT ROYAL

The principal city of Jamaica at the time, Port Royal was the center of privateering against the Spanish Habsburg Empire since the early 1600s. The city was used as a main base for pirates and privateers alike and was, along with Madagascar, the pirate haven of the sea. Originally a Spanish town, the city was captured by English forces in 1655. The city's entire economy relied upon trade with privateers and pirates and under that guise it flourished. It was ideally located to prey on Spanish shipping as well as settlements. At its peak, the city had one tavern for every ten citizens of the city and brothels were as common as food stores. Seamen were known to splurge when at port and Port Royal was one of their favorite destinations.

LEGENDARY SHIPS

ADVENTURE GALLEY

The English sailing galley known often simply as *Adventure* was commissioned and captained by the privateer William Kidd. The ship was a typical square-rigged sailing vessel, but a heavy set of oars were added to both sides. This gave the vessel unparalleled speed and maneuverability when at sail and oar. It was designed and built in 1695 as a pirate hunter after Kidd secured funding for his expedition from wealthy patrons. Howev-

er, after three years at sea, the vessel had failed to find any targets, so Kidd instead turned his vessel on merchant ships, thus turning to piracy. The ship captured several ships before Kidd sunk it off the coast of Madagascar. It seems the ship was poorly constructed and after only three years at sea had become nearly unseaworthy.

QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE

The flagship of the famed pirate Blackbeard, Edward Teach's ship was a 40-gun English built frigate. It was lost in combat to the French and then again to pirates, which is how the command fell into Teach's possession. The ship sailed between the west coast of Africa to the Caribbean and preyed on whatever nation's ships he happened upon in the shipping lanes. It was eventually run aground near North Carolina.

REVENGE

The English galleon *Revenge* was "race-built," which simply meant it was built for speed, most commonly by removing one of its decks and giving it a more sleek design. The ship boasted 46 guns and was captioned by Francis Drake for his career at sea. In order to secure such a heavy armament on a smaller vessel, guns were placed anywhere they could fit. It was not uncommon to find a few pieces of artillery in the birthing decks where sailors slept. Under Drake, the ship took part in the wars with Spain and helped defeat the first Spanish Armada at the Battle of Gravelines.

The ship's last mission took place under the command of Richard Grenville. A Spanish fleet of 53 ships approached *Revenge*. Grenville could have sailed off and outraced the fleet, but instead he decided to sail into the Spanish center and engage the fleet 53:1. *Revenge* managed to sink one ship and severely damage two others before being captured. Its crew fought off multiple boarding attempts until very few men were left uninjured. However, *Revenge* and several Spanish ships were lost in storms in the Azores on the return trip to Spain.

USS ARGUS

The *Argus* was an American ship launched in 1803 as a 34-gun frigate for the young US Navy. She took place in the blockade of Tripoli as well as the War of 1812. She was lost to a British frigate during the opening stages of the war.

LEXICON

Act of Grace / Act of Pardon: A sovereign's decree which expunged all past pirating or illegal activities of an individual for their vow to cease illegal activity. Used mostly for individuals of royal or high birth.

Afore: The front of a vessel

Aft: The portion of a vessel behind the middle of the ship.

Ahoy: A call used to draw attention to something. Often preceded with what one was trying to draw attention to, such as "Ship Ahoy, or Land Ahoy."

All Hands: Every individual crew member on a ship, injured or not.

Bearing: The direction towards a specific location a ship was moving.

Beat to Quarters: Prepare for a fight.

Belay: A naval term indicating an activity or command should be ceased.

Booty: Generic word for treasure taken. Originally derived from a word meaning to divide plunder.

Buccaneer: A generic word for a pirate originating from French individuals on Hispaniola.

Captain's Daughter: A barbed whip used by the ship's captain to issue judicial punishment aboard a ship. "Sleeping with the captain's daughter" was a phrase that invoked painful memories with many a sailor.

Company: The host of a ship's men was often referred to as a company.

Corsair: A term derived from privateers of the Ottoman Empire, the term was eventually used for any pirates in the Mediterranean.

Dance the Hempen Jig: A seaman's term for hanging.

Dead in the Water: A term used to indicate a ship wasn't moving and was stalled in the water.

Dead Men Tell No Tales: Pirate euphemism which meant that killing captives was often better than leaving them alive as a live individual could testify against the pirate or privateer.

Flank: The maximum speed of a ship.

From the Sea: This is how many pirates answered a hail from a foreign ship when asked which country they sailed for. It meant the crew had no national loyalty.

Gangplank: Movable bridges used for boarding actions. A ship typically had one principal gangplank for boarding and departing at shore.

Harden Up: Sail closer to the wind.

Jack: Generic term for a ship's flag.

Jury Rig: Cobbling together damaged sails to make a useable, although not ideal, sailing model.

Kaper: A Dutch privateer.

Know the Ropes: A sailor who is skilled at proper rigging of a ship's sails and the knots required to rig them.

Loose Cannon: A cannon not properly set in its moorings which could cause considerable damage to a ship's interior and hull. Came to be used for volatile individuals.

Mainmast: The largest, usually center most mast on a ship.

Mizzenmast: The mast to the aft of the primary mast. Usually one of the smallest masts.

No Purchase, No pay: A pirate and privateering saying which meant that a crew received no pay unless it took a ship. Often used to prompt activity with a hesitant ship's captain.

No Quarter Given: A hail which meant that no prisoners would be taken once the ship was boarded. This command was highly unusual due to how valuable ship's passengers could be in ransom or as a pressed crew.

Pirate Round: The typical trade route that brought a pirate ship from Madagascar to the Indian Ocean, to North American ports. This route was heavily traveled by pirates with a stop in between at Madagascar where illegal wares could be purchased and taken ships and cargo sold.

Pirateer: A ship or individual that was issued a letter of marque, but did not restrict their activity to legalized privateering and instead indulged in piracy.

Port: The left side of a vessel as one faces the bow.

Punch House: A brothel.

Purchase: The seized cargo and treasure of a ship was often referred to as purchase.

Reaching: Sailing across the wind.

Scurvy: A disease from a lack of vitamin C. However, the term became a nautical phrase used to describe someone vile or evil.

Sea Dog: A ship's term used to describe an experienced and tough sailor.

Shoal: Shallow water which could run a ship aground.

Soft Farewell: The term used to describe one pirate crew slipping off in the night before treasure was divided when two or more crews worked together to take a prize. Although pirate crews were loyal to themselves, that loyalty did not extend to other crews. However, a crew that used this tactic often was seen as untrustworthy and would find few friends in the waters.

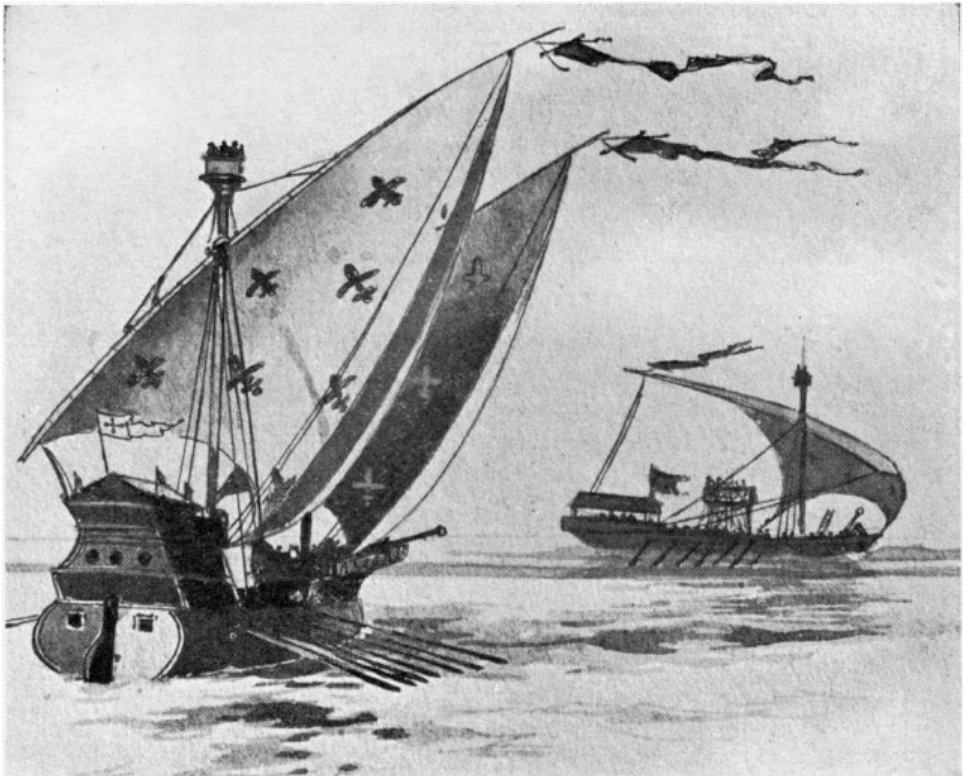
Starboard: The right side of a ship as one faces the bow.

Stern: The rear portion or back of a ship.

Swashbuckler: An individual seaman who was skilled in fighting and virtuous in practice.

Tacking: Sailing in a zigzag order in an effort to sail directly into the wind.

Tenths: The percentage of a privateer's take that belonged to the royal crown once it was deemed as legal. France, England and Spain universally set the King's take at about ten percent.



SAVAGE TALES

Provided here are two micro-adventures intended to give the GM ideas for games set during the Age of Sail. Details are not provided to allow the GM to tailor the adventures for any level of play or insert them into an existing campaign. They are intended to be run over the course of one evening of play.

A SHIP OF OUR OWN

THE PREVIEW

The PCs are hired as guards to help defend a merchant ship on its return journey from the East. The ship is attacked by a powerful pirate ship and captured. They are offered a choice: imprisonment and ransom, or join the crew. If they choose ransom and imprisonment, their adventure is over, but if they chose to join the crew temporarily, their adventure has just started. As a member of the crew, they are exposed to all aspects of pirate life and help to escape a heavily armed enemy vessel. Perform well and they could be promoted to officers or choose to leave the pirate's employment after their successful mission.

THE PLAYERS

JEESE VANCLEVE

Vancelve, a young man in his mid-twenties, was appointed to captain by the merchants backing him due to his wealth and high birth. He has very limited sailing experience, but feigns knowledge and competence. He excels at relying on others' advice for his own actions while taking credit for those ideas.

DUNGE' LE PORT

The French captain of *The Hangman*, LePort is in his late forties and wears all black clothing except for a faded yellow bandana. He wields a rapier and is a fair fighter, though his true strength lies in his guile and wits. He fights only when it is in his favor and firmly believes in the pirate code, treating everyone aboard his ship as equals.

PAT NULFAR

The first mate (and later captain of *The Gluttonous Pig*), Nulfar is annoyed by incompetence and demands respect from every crewman. He is a brute through and through and often lets his temper get in his way. He is bald, wears tattered clothing and yields a nasty looking scimitar. He dislikes the characters initially as they were not original crewmembers. If they refuse to sign the charter, he never trusts them, but if they sign, they may work their way into his good graces with superior skills.

THE PLOT

The PCs have been employed by a group of merchants as added muscle for the merchant ship *The Gluttonous Pig*. The ship will be making a cargo run to the East Indies and back. Everything goes smoothly until about two weeks off the west coast of France. Laden with cargo, and still two weeks from friendly ports, the ship's lookout (could be a PC) spots a French sloop off in the distance and closing fast. Captain Vancleve gathers the PCs and

insists the ship is hostile and takes suggestions on what they should do. Their options include: dump some of the cargo and make a run for it, stay coarse and try to defend themselves or turn back and head back to a friendly port. The third option will cut their profits by 20% due to scheduling issues and the first option will cause them to lose 30% of their goods. The captain is completely out of his element and takes whatever option the PCs suggest. If the PCs do nothing, they are attacked in two days. If they turn back, they are attacked in four days, but will receive assistance in the fight against the pirates. If they drop cargo, they are still not fast enough and are attacked in seven days. If they elect to drop their cargo and turn back (a 50% profit loss), they arrive in a friendly port without incident and their adventure is over. The GM is encouraged to have the PCs meet the players from *The Hangman* in a friendly port sometime.

If the PCs are attacked, *The Hangman* comes within attack range soon and the captain again looks for assistance. Captain LePort offers refuge if the ship surrenders without a fight, but death if they offer resistance. The GM should make it clear that *The Hangman* is well armed and could decimate them with cannon fire before boarding. If they fight, the ship's crew offers limited resistance as the pirates are much better skilled. Cannon fire rips much of the ship apart before a second chance to surrender is given. *The Gluttonous Pig* has no defensive armaments.

If the ship returned to a friendly port and dropped some cargo, a friendly British Brigantine comes to assist. In this case, *The Hangman* still engages, confident in its chances over the smaller ship. A fierce naval combat ensues, with *The Hangman* getting the upper hand due to its superior number of cannons and crew ability. However, it does give *The Gluttonous Pig* time to flee, unless her captain decides to try to help. Of course, like all things, he leaves that decision up to the PCs.

If boarded, Captain LePort gives everyone an option: sail with him on one mission and they can then leave freely, or be imprisoned until someone can pay their ransom and lose all their current possessions. Captain Vancleve jumps at the chance to keep his possessions and signs up. Pat Nulfar, the first mate onboard *The Hangman*, offers the pirate charter to sign. The PCs might be surprised to find it a very legal document that describes fair practice, equal shares of treasure and punishment for infractions. If the PCs sign, they are given more leeway than if they don't.

Once *The Gluttonous Pig* is taken, the two ships sail together for Port Royal. At Port Royal the ship and cargo are sold and the crew paid. The PCs receive no compensation as they were not part of taking the ship. While at port, the captain drinks and converses with them. The PCs are free to flee the pirates at this time, but they become marked by all pirates if they signed the charter. (The PCs should note how wealthy each of the pirates become before blowing it on wine and women.) While at port, if the PCs are present, the captain, first mate and some crew get into a brawl with a rival pirate gang. If the PCs help and perform well (without lethal force), the crew looks favorably on them. At the end of the fight, if there have been no fatalities, both pirate crews drink together.

The next day, *The Hangman* sails for a new prize. They are three weeks out in the shipping lanes when they spot a fat Spanish merchantman. The PCs and crew engage in combat. Captain LePort is hesitant to use his cannons as he doesn't want to damage the spoils. They and the PCs should attempt to grapple the ships once they are close enough and board the ship.

THE PRIZE

The rewards the PCs receive depend greatly on the route they take. If they run back to port and don't engage the pirates at all, they receive only half their original agreed upon compensation. If they fight and decide to be imprisoned and ransomed, they lose all possessions on them before being discarded by the pirates. If they fight for the pirates and take the Spanish merchantman, they each receive a share of the taken loot, which is considerable. Additionally, they make friends amongst the crew and officers and have earned a great deal of renown in the pirate community. This can lead to further adventures and dangers as their renown grows in the lawful community as well. A government may offer them a privateering charter if they ever advance far enough to own their own ship.

FIRE!

THE PREVIEW

This adventure serves to introduce the characters to ship-based mass combat. The PCs are serving aboard the frigate *HMS White* and are pirate hunting. They catch two pirate sloops boarding a British merchantman and move to engage. Normally the sloops would be able to break and outrun the larger ship, however, the captain of *HMS White* has painstakingly set about making his ship look like it is greatly damaged, hoping to lure the pirates to attack.

The pirates spot the ship and turn to engage. The cannons ring out and damage each ship as the pirates do their best to board the *HMS White*. Once aboard, the PCs can counter board and damage the pirate ships as much as possible, perhaps even taking one of them in combat. If successful, one of the sloops falls into their hands and the captain transfers the PCs and a crew over to the faster sloop to chase down the fleeing pirate.

THE PLAYERS

CAPTAIN JAMES THOMAS

Captain Thomas is a grizzled old veteran of several wars at sea. He knows his ship and knows his men. In combat he relies on the experts to do their duty while he issues orders from deck, drinking his tea. He is heavy of beard and has a thick northern English accent. He respects the PCs reputation and allows them nearly free reign of the ship.

MARIO KLATT

Mario is the gun master aboard the *HMS White* and excels at training his crew. Unfortunately, most of his crew is fresh and he hasn't had much time to train them. He believes cannons are the end all and be all of ships and doesn't understand how any ships with an advantage in cannon numbers could lose to a lesser vessel without severe bad luck. He recognizes skill in leadership and appoints his best leader to man the second gun deck.

THE PLOT

The PCs have taken, for gainful employment, a job aboard the *HMS White*, a frigate out of Portsmouth set up for pirate hunting. The ship is well armed and their expertise at the sail and in fighting is a great asset to the ship. After a few weeks out at sea, the lookout spots an English merchantman under attack by two pirate sloops who have boarded her.

The captain sets full sails and tells all hands ready. Gunners are moved to positions and the guns preloaded, repair crews are stationed and ready and boarding and repelling parties eagerly wait just out of sight.

Make sure the PCs know it looks like the sloops will be able to take the weather gage from them. If one of the PCs is skilled in Boating, he can attempt to take over the piloting duties and perform an opposed Boating check against the other ships. The other ships' Boating skill is d8+1. If the PCs do nothing, the pirates receive the weather gage. The ships then launch volley after volley at each other for four rounds. The rounds are actually several minutes long, so PCs are free to perform other actions while this occurs. The range is such that small arms fire is all-but impossible and a waste of ammo.

During this time, the PCs are free to assist gunnery crews, prepare to board or do anything else useful. After four volleys, the ships are close enough to grapple and lines fly from both sides. The PCs are free to lead attack parties, defend the ship or perform any other actions they feel necessary. Once joined, the GM should recalculate Mass Battle based on normal Mass Battle rules. PC actions are covered under those rules, but the GM can add bonuses or penalties based on how effective they rule the action to be. Remember to calculate based on any losses each side has already taken.

If the PCs and their allies are clearly winning, one of the pirate ships, the *Albatross*, breaks off and attempts to run. It is faster and shouldn't have a problem leaving the battle scene. After this, the other pirate ship, the *Yardon*, surrenders. If the PCs are losing, they need to do everything they can to push their forces over the top or they'll be captured.

It's important to note that the cannons can't effectively be used when the ships are grappled. The gun crews are engaged in fighting and any hit to the enemy ammo stores will cause a chain reaction that causes both ships to explode. If any PCs are captured, the GM is encouraged to create an encounter similar to that in "A Ship of Our Own" where they are given a chance to join the pirate crew.

If the PCs are successful, the captain orders them and a large portion of the crew to repair and man the *Yardon* to chase down the escaped *Albatross*. The *Albatross* is damaged and won't be able to run or fight effectively. As such, it can be chased down in six hours. The pirates feign surrender and, once boarded, fight aggressively. Numbers should be sufficiently small for the PCs to fight this one out. They have to deal with nine pirate crewmembers to be successful. If they win, the crew divides again and all three ships limp back to a friendly port for repair.

SHIP COMPARISONS FOR KNOWLEDGE (BATTLE) ROLL

Trait	HMS White	Yardon, Albatross	Modifier
Weather Gage			+2
Speed	2/7	3/10	+1 pirate
Crew Gunnery Exp	Seasoned	Novice	+1 PC
Gang up Bonus		2 ships	+1 pirate
Armor	24	20	+2 PC
Cannons (Ranged)	64	22 guns each	+2 PC
Crew (Melee only)	200	100 each	+/- 0

THE PRIZE

If successful in taking all the ships, the PCs are rewarded with a small bonus for capturing the ships and pirates, although the lion's share goes to the crown. Additionally, they have made friends high up in the admiralty and can expect preferred treatment and favors. However, as legal, paid servants of the crown, their compensation is laughingly small compared to most takes by pirates and privateers.

The ship's surgeon dressed Pierre's wounded leg as best he could and Pierre was out on deck with a walking stick doing what he could to help. Around him men raced to and fro repairing damaged sails, retying fayed rigging and loading cannons. The Spanish ambush galleon was long ago left behind as they were content to lick their wounds and let the frigate decimate the sloop with its 72 guns. Pierre spent a lot of time up on his firing platform readying it for the fight to come. It was mostly likely a waste of time as the frigate could bring down her masts before getting close enough for him to get off a clean shot, but it felt good to have something to do rather than wait.

At 5:00 PM, the frigate came close enough to see individual men on board. Their crew was stoic and silent in pursuit, a far cry from the undisciplined masses around him. But, these men had the edge on morale. The Spanish frigate was full of sailors who were paid a pittance and ordered around by men of high birth, regardless of skills. For Pierre's crew, his brothers were only paid if they came together and captured a prize. Even then each man was paid the exact same share, save the officers who received slightly more. Additionally, each member of the crew was expected to be treated exactly like the next. From the captain to the powder boys, each man was shown respect and, if they showed extraordinary skill, could easily be voted to an officer position. As such, these men had more to fight for and would defend their way of life to the last breath.

The sloop raced through the wind, the captain doing his best to sail as close to the wind as possible; the larger frigate would have a harder time sailing close to the wind. But, running on about 70% sail, it was only a matter of time. As the sun hung low on the horizon, Pierre went to his firing platform high above the deck and waited for the inevitable. The frigate, "The Lion" as it was named, came within shouting distance and he could see gun ports open on either side of her. "Stand down and prepare to be boarded!" came a rough cry in broken English. Pierre chuckled a bit. He was French, the captain was Dutch, the first mate Russian and the crew scattered from all around the world, but the Spanish used English to communicate. It didn't matter what they said, the response would be the same.

"Fire!" came the halted shout from the captain. In response a young gunner let loose a blast from the rear mounted culverin. The shot fell short by about a hundred yards. It was expected to, but had the effect of a proper response to the Spanish. Death by cannon shot was just as good as death by hangman's noose. "Get those damn sails up ya scurvy bastards!" the captain called over the low crash of the waves. Crewmen scurried about, hasted on by the imminent threat behind them.

"The Lion" pulled off to the leeward side of the wind and coasted towards the Virtue's side. The captain pushed the ship farther into the wind, trying to keep as little of the ship exposed to The Lion's flank as possible. Pierre cringed at the move; if he put the ship too close to the wind, the ship would run directly into the wind and become becalmed. It would

all be over then. But, the wind cooperated and the ship sailed on, close to the wind with its limited sails. At that moment there was a furious BOOM from The Lion and Pierre braced for impact as three dozen guns exploded their wares toward his possession. Smoke billowed up from The Lion and cannon balls fell harmlessly into the drink several yards in front of them. Pierre smiled, the Spanish captain was obviously inexperienced. Worried he would never get a better shot sailing so close to the wind, he'd emptied the broadside too early and given them a temporary reprieve. It would be three to four minutes before they could reload and even longer if she wanted to try to turn.

The Virtue lurched forward and Pierre noticed the main sail catch wind, fully repaired. A cry of joy went up amongst the crew and Pierre couldn't help but join them. His smile faded as he noticed The Lion turn violently into the wind and spin toward them. The captain of the vessel was inexperienced, but it was obvious the gunner wasn't. He'd noticed The Virtue's repair and was spinning into the wind for one final broadside with its starboard side, which was still loaded. The movement would cripple the frigate's speed for a long while, but would allow them to get off a second devastating round. "Hard to starboard!" the captain yelled. The ship lurched again and spun directly toward the frigate. The captain was hoping to put the ship directly into the cannon's path thus exposing less of the ship to fire. Unfortunately, it would only take one or two cannon balls to rake across the entire length of the ship and inflict series damage. The Lion lined up her shot and a second wave of cannons erupted. Pierre held onto the mast and crouched low as cannon balls whizzed all around him. One ball exploded in the forecastle and sent three men flying to their deaths, another struck the aft railing and sent shrapnel flying. But, the damage was largely contained and not crippling in the least. They should be able to make a clean get away.

Pierre smiled and said a silent prayer to Jupiter. It was silly, but he still clung to the ancient traditions. He waited for The Virtue to turn and make its escape, but no turn came. He looked down and instantly knew the captain's mind. He was going to get in and loose his own broadside before the other ship could reload. At pointblank range the effect would decimate the frigate's fighting ability. The danger was that the frigate could reload and fire before they sailed away from their firing arc. The Virtue sailed boldly toward the frigate and turned when they were less than 100 yards away.

At this rate they could see men cleanly and small arms fire erupted from both vessels. It was still too long a range for much aim and musket balls fell mostly harmlessly to the sea. They sailed directly parallel to the massive vessel and the captain shouted, "Give 'em hell!" In response, the vessel lurched and a broadside slammed into The Lion's flank. Men went sailing into the air and wood splintered all around. The main mast came crashing down and the command deck took several shots. For all intents she was dead in the water. The Virtue sailed off and made wind towards the west. A lesser experienced captain would turn and try to finish the vessel off. But, even as damaged as she was, the frigate could still deliver most of its cannons on an enemy ship. Sailing to its flank would be a death sentence to the smaller sloop. Pierre relaxed for the first time in two days and set his eyes to the horizon. A large reward awaited him if he was the first to spot a prize ship, well worth the sleepless nights. He leaned back against the mast and smiled, knowing his adventure was just getting started.

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Throughout history the term privateer and pirate were as closely related as freedom fighter and rebel. That is, depending on which view one looks from, the distinction is not always apparent. This was never truer as during The Age of Sail. This period was a time of plunder and prize, heroes and villains. The rise and fall of nations could be determined by the intrepid sailors who brought back treasures from the New World or stole those same treasures as they journeyed home. Naval dominance didn't always go to the biggest or best armed. Speed, skill, determination and grit were just as powerful a force as an extra barrage of cannon.

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