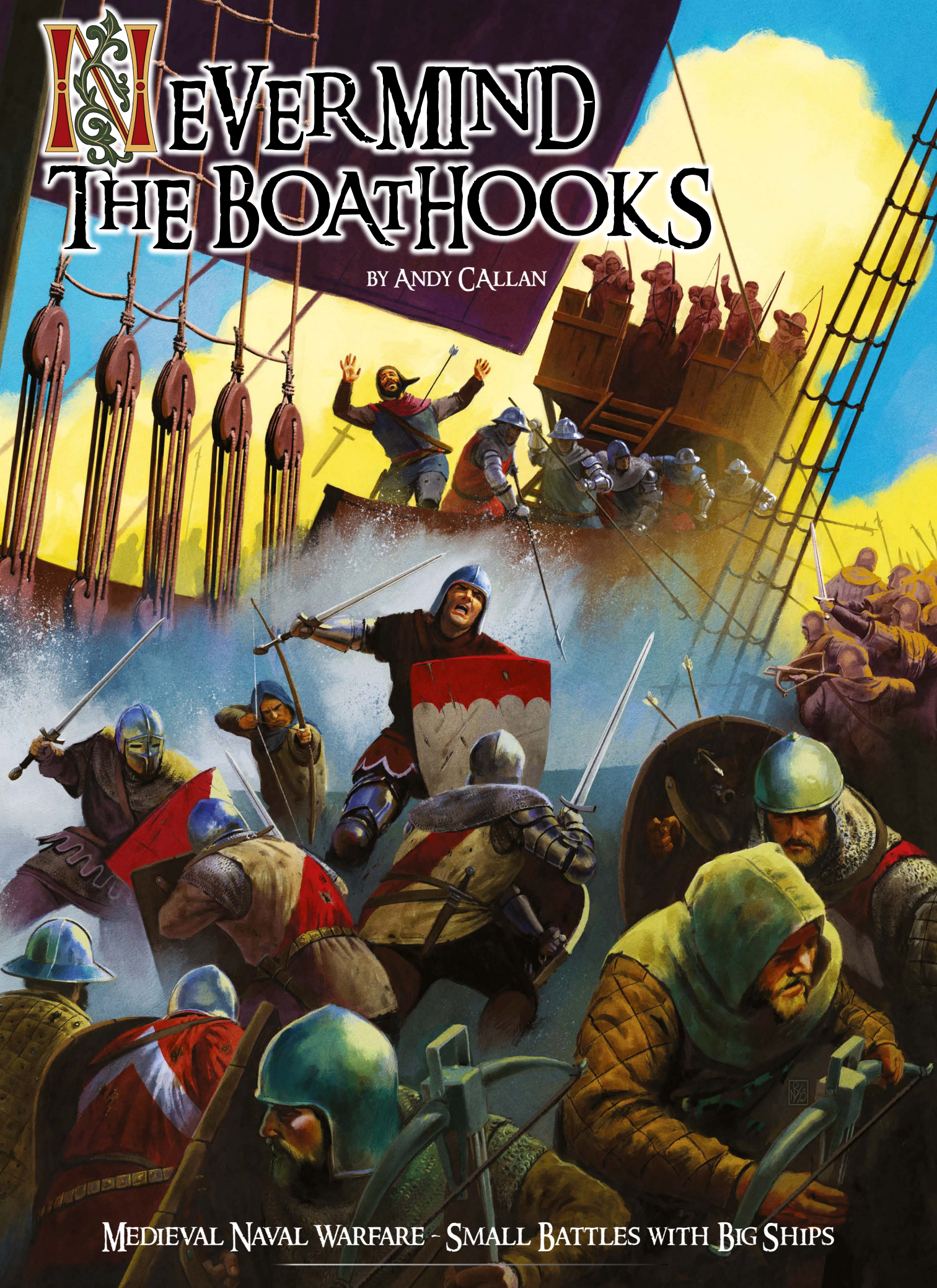


NEVER MIND THE BOATHOOKS

BY ANDY CALLAN



MEDIEVAL NAVAL WARFARE - SMALL BATTLES WITH BIG SHIPS

INTRODUCTION

It's a bit of a cliché that Medieval naval battles were just like land battles at sea, but what if you take a successful set of medieval land battle rules and set them afloat? Much to my surprise, my Never Mind the Billhooks rules took to the new environment like (yes, you guessed it) a duck to water, and, apart from needing some essential changes to the movement and morale sections, pretty much all the key game mechanisms of Billhooks seem to work just as well on sea as they do on land.

Boathooks, like its land-based predecessor, is a light-hearted card and dice driven game, where clever tactics count for little against the twists and turns of fortune. It is very much a game rather than a simulation, so the emphasis is on the spectacle of the thing rather than the minutiae of trying to recreate historical events of which, in truth, we know very little.



CREDITS

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All models are from the collection of Andy Callan and Steve Wood.

Special thanks to Steve Wood for his help with playtesting and model making.

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CHAUCER'S TALE

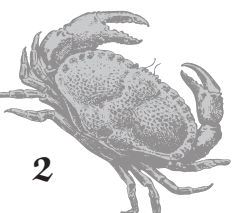
I came across this interesting contemporary description of a medieval naval battle by Geoffrey Chaucer, which I would like to share:

Up goth the trompe - and for to shoute and shete,
And peynen hem to sette on with the sonne.
With grisly soun out goth the grete gonne,
And heterly they hurtlen al at ones,
And fro the top doun cometh the grete stones.

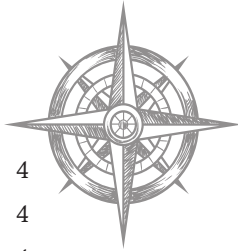
In goth the grapnel so ful of crokes
Among the ropes, and the shering-hokes.
In with the polax presseth he and he;
Behind the mast beginneth he to flee,
And out agayn, and dryveth him over-borde;
He stingeth him upon his speres orde;
He rent the sail with hokes lyke a sythe;
He bringeth the cuppe, and biddeth hem be blythe;
He poureth pesen* upon the hacches slider;
With pottes ful of lym** they goon to-gider.

* peas (hard and dried) strewn on the decks to make the enemy slip and fall!

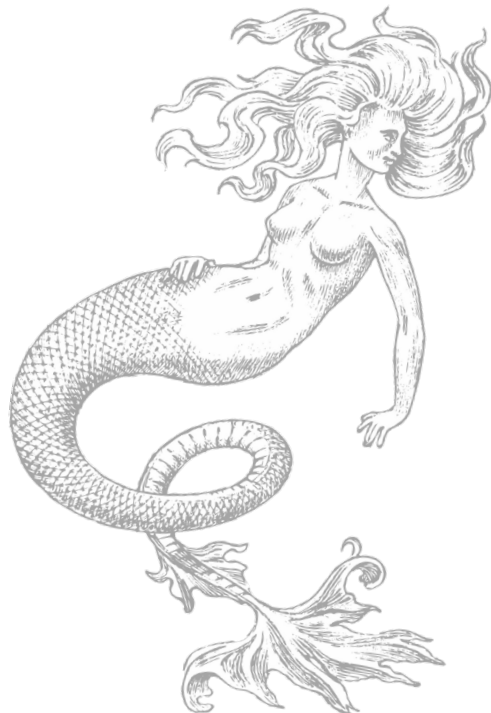
** Chemical warfare!



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MODEL SHIPS AND SYNTHETIC SEAS

WHAT ELSE IS NEEDED TO PLAY

The models and playing surface required for a game of Boathooks.

"You will not, we suppose, be so lost to all feeling as to represent your units by counters, blocks of wood or cards."

Brigadier Peter Young.

Typically, naval wargames use small ships and record damage on paper, and you could go that way here. But to get the full spectacle of Boathooks you need 'big' ships capable of taking 20 or more 28mm figures, with a tabletop free of clutter.

Suitable 1/72 scale (28mm compatible) model vessels are available in plastic and wood, as well as 28mm scale MDF and paper models. You will find more pointers and discussion regarding medieval ship models in the June 2023 issue of Wargames Illustrated magazine (*Wi426*) and on the Never Mind the Billhooks website.

Make sure all ship models you use are clearly marked so you always activate the right one when its card is drawn. Matching a ship's name (e.g., the *Red Lion of Dartmouth*, or the *White Hart of London*) to its flags and banderoles (streamers) or to the colour of its Fighting Top are two ways of doing this.

Two fleets are required for the game, one for each player, English and French. Each fleet should contain at least three Warships, plus Support Vessels. The model ships will need to accommodate between six (small Support Vessels) and 36 (Great Ships) 28mm figures.

For the main playing surface a plain blue cloth, or carpet tiles is an easy option. Commercially produced water/sea gaming mats and cloths are also readily available, should you want to splash the cash (pun intended!). About 6' x 4' is big enough for a small, two-player game.

Whatever playing surface you choose will need to be divided by markers to form a grid. Make the grid as subtle or obvious as your taste for aesthetics (and eyesight!) desires. Token or small 'dot' stickers can be used for this purpose.

The grid should be formed of 25x25cm squares (roughly 10"), although if your model vessels are too large to fit in a single square, these dimensions should be increased. Normally, only one Warship will occupy a square, except when boarding.

DESIGNER'S NOTE: THE PROS AND CONS OF GRIDS

The use of a gridded playing area in this game admittedly does strange things to distances - you can shoot or move further diagonally than orthogonally. But it has the great practical advantage of avoiding the sort of petty arguments over the use of tape measures and wind arcs, which can be the bane of many more 'serious' naval games.

All the cards, markers, and other accessories required for the game.

Figures: To man your vessels you will need between 80 and 120 individually based medieval figures. See Troop Types 5.

Lots of ordinary six-sided dice (D6s): about 12 per player. Plus, one small/micro D6 for each Warship to track ammunition.

Cards: Three decks: Play, Bonus, and Special Events. **Plus** (unlike Billhooks) four Order Cards (see page 9).

Four sets of tokens or markers: Daunted, Damaged, Boarded, and Fleet Morale.

A Wind Arrow and Strength Marker.

Cards, tokens, and quick reference sheets for each fleet can be downloaded from the Never Mind the Billhooks website (nevermindthebillhooks.com).

Fire Markers: to indicate that a vessel is on fire. Coloured cotton wool is ideal for this.

THE OPPOSING FORCES

We refer to the two opposing fleets in the game as English and French throughout. However, for your games you might want to play Lancastrians against Yorkists, Burgundians versus Castilians, or whatever takes your fancy. These rules are generic late medieval (14th - 15th Century), and generally themed around sea battles in Northern European waters. Beyond that, please feel free to devise your own combatants - simply replace the terms English and French for whatever you are using in the game.

HOW THE BATTLE/GAME IS WON

What players need to do to rule the seas:

- Capture the enemy's Flagship.
- The enemy's Flagship goes off the table.
- A player claims a Fleet Morale Token and their opponent has none left. See page 15.
- The enemy player concedes.

VESSELS AND FLEET ORGANISATION

Of ships and other seacraft.

There are two types of vessels recognised and used in the game: Warships and Support Vessels. The different types of ships, their crew, and Points Values are detailed next.

WARSHIPS

There are two kinds, below you will find the gaming details of both. All Warships need to be commanded by a captain (a distinctive Leader figure).

Players need to assign one of their Warships as the fleet's Flagship - if a player loses their Flagship, they lose the game.

Cog

A single-masted sailing Warship. The most typical Warship seen in northern waters during the medieval period.

Fighting Crew: 24 figures. Made up of:

a) Marines (Melee Specialists): These can be Men-at-Arms or Spearmen.

Marines start the game on the deck.

b) Shooters: Maximum 12 figures. These can be Crossbowmen, Archers (English only), or Gunners.

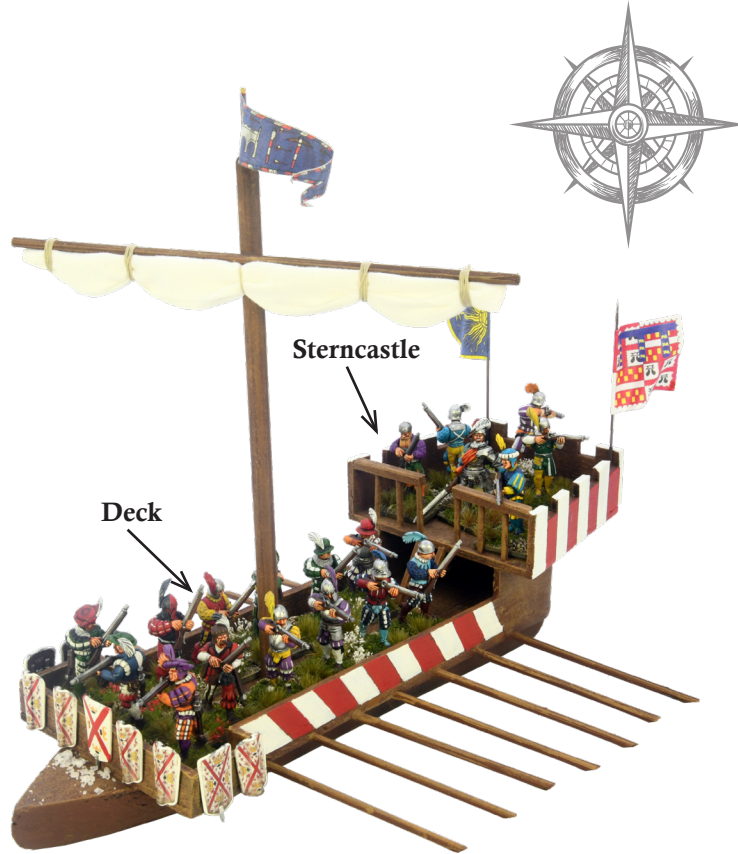
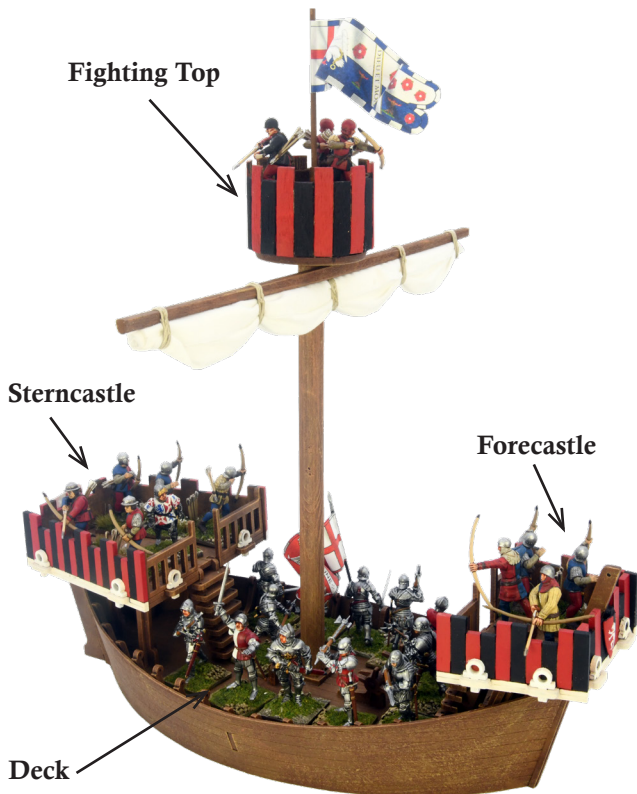
Shooters start the game in the Forecastle, Sterncastle (up to 6 men in each) or Fighting Top (up to three men).

An English Cog may have an all-Archer Fighting Crew.

Note: Shooters may be made up of different troop types, e.g. eight Crossbowmen and four Gunners.

Artillery: Small breechloaders/swivel guns. No more than two guns per ship. Two Gunners each (they count towards the Shooters total).

Points: Three, including the Fighting Crew; four if the Marines are Men-at-Arms instead of Spearmen).



GALLEY

An oared Warship, either Lateen-rigged Mediterranean (used by the French and her allies) or Square-rigged Northern-style (derived from earlier Viking designs) - sometimes called a Row Barge.

Fighting Crew: 12 figures. These can be Marines (Spearmen only) and/or Shooters in groups of six in any combination.

Points: Two, including the Fighting Crew.

GREAT GALLEY (a large Galley with one or two castles)

Fighting Crew: 18 figures (Men-at-Arms, Spearmen, or Shooters in groups of six in any combination).

Points: Three, including the Fighting Crew.

TROOP TYPES AND OTHER BILLHOOKS CONVENTIONS

Never Mind the Boathooks uses several rules conventions taken from Never Mind the Billhooks. However, you don't need a copy of Billhooks to play Boathooks. Just bear in mind the troop types available to man your vessels are, potentially: Captains (each warship has one - a distinctive figure) and their Fighting Crew divided into a) Shooters (Crossbowmen, Handgunners, Archers, and Artillerymen) and b) Marines (Men-at-Arms or Spearmen, the latter being armed with any pole weapon).

SUPPORT VESSELS

Operating as a sort of marine skirmisher, or to ferry reinforcements to Warships. They have no castles or Fighting Tops.

PINNACE (or Skiff, or Ballinger)

A generic term for any small, oared, Support Vessel.

Fighting Crew: Six figures. These can be Spearmen or Shooters only.

Points: 0.5, including Fighting Crew.

MORE ADVANCED VESSELS

For advanced games, players might like to expand the range of ships available to include:

Carrack: A multi-masted sailing ship (late 15th Century). Higher in the water and more manoeuvrable than a Cog, but with the same Fighting Crew. Up to four guns. Points: four.

Merchantman: Fighting Crew 12. No castles or Men-at-Arms. Points: Two.

Great Ship: Fighting Crew: 36 figures, including at least 12 Men-at-Arms. Points: Six.

PREPARE FOR BATTLE, FLEET POINTS AND TOKENS

Before the battle begins players should make the following preparations regarding the card decks and placement of their models.

1) Muster your fleets up to an agreed points total.

Each fleet must spend at least half of its points on Warships and no more than one-fifth on Support Vessels. For example: An 18 point fleet might have a Great Ship (six points) two Cogs (six points), two Galleys (four points) and four Pinnaces (two points).

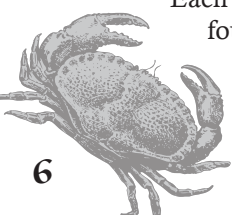
2) Draw as many Fleet Morale Tokens as you have Fleet Points (See page 15, Fleet Morale Tokens) **excluding** any points you spent on Pinnaces. So, 16 tokens out of 18 points in the example above.

3) Prepare the three card decks: Play Deck, Bonus Deck, and Special Events Deck (see page 8).

One Warship Card is required to represent each corresponding Warship model in a player's fleet.

Once players have written the name of the vessel, its type (eg. Cog) and name of the Captain on the appropriate card (see page 8) the Warship Cards should be added to the Play Deck, and all decks should then be shuffled and placed face down on or near the playing surface.

Each player also requires four Fighting Order Cards.



Deck



4) Location. One short edge of the tabletop must be a Northern (English) or Southern (French) coastline - these battles were not fought on the open sea.

Dice-off to see which player is battling on home seas and which is on foreign seas. The highest-scoring player is at home.

The home player lays out any offshore rocks or shoals at their discretion. Players then dice-off for the choice of ends (long table edge). The home player wins if the roll is tied.

5) Wind. Dice for the initial Wind direction:

- 1 - 2: Northerly - blowing **from** the North (from inland on an English coast, or seaward on a French coast).
- 3 - 4: Southerly - blowing **from** the South (from inland on a French coast, or seaward on an English coast).
- 5: Easterly (blowing **from** the East).
- 6: Westerly (blowing **from** the West).

Roll for Wind strength:

- 1: Flat/Calm (re-roll by mutual agreement)
- 2 - 5: Light
- 6: Fresh

Place the Wind Arrow and Strength Marker on the table edge from which the wind is blowing.





LEADERS - CAPTAINS AND ADMIRALS

Captains perform a vital role in the game; they issue Orders to their Fighting Crews and influence other aspects of play.

Each player requires one Captain figure onboard each of their Warships.

The Captain of the Flagship is known as the Admiral.



COMMAND CLASS

Leaders can be Heroes, Dolts, or something in between.

All captains and Admirals have a Command Class of 1, 2, or 3. Their Command Class dictates a) the number of Orders they can issue; b) the number of Hits they add as a bonus during Melee; c) how many Wounds they can take before being killed.

Assume every Leader is Command Class 2 unless players want things a bit more unpredictable, in which case roll 1D6 per Leader the first time his card is drawn from the Play Deck and consult the chart below:

6: Class 3 (**Hero**). Three Orders. Adds three Hits in Melee. Three Wounds.

2 - 5: Class 2 (**Commander**). Two Orders. Adds two Hits in Melee. Two Wounds.

1: Class 1 (**Dolt**). One Order. Adds one Hit in Melee. One Wound.

THE FIRST TURN (INITIAL SHIP PLACEMENT)

The all-important first turn of the game.

Begin by turning the cards from the top of the Play Deck.

When a player's Warship card is drawn from the Play Deck that player can put that model on one of their own baseline (table edge) squares on the playing surface. **Galleys** can deploy up to one square in from their baseline. Any vessel can choose to defer its entry and not enter this turn.

Ignore Bonus cards and Support cards **and the last Warship card** left at the end of the turn.

Support Vessels cannot enter until turn two.

For normal operations, players can have only one Warship or two Pinnaces/Support Vessels in the same square.

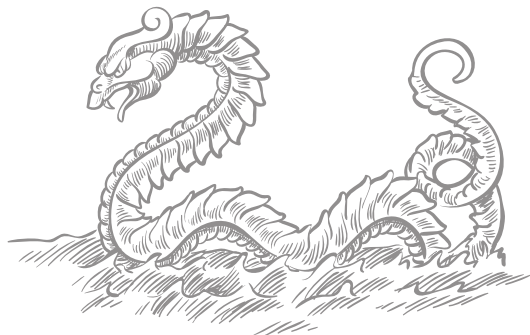
Note: Sailing ships cannot begin the battle facing directly into the wind, unless they are anchored.

TURN SEQUENCE

How the game progresses after the first turn.

After game turn one the order of play in each turn is determined by drawing cards from the Play Deck.

Note: The last card left in the pack is never played, so either one Warship or the Supports will miss their turn. Tough luck if it's the Flagship!



UNDERSTANDING THE CARDS

THE PLAY DECK

Consists of: One **Warship Card** representing each Warship in the two forces. Two **Supports & Artillery Cards** (representing the Support Vessels and Support Weapons) - one for each side. Two **Bonus Cards**.

Warship and Supports & Artillery Cards

Each Warship is activated when its card is drawn from the Play Deck. ALL Support Vessels (Pinnaces) are activated when their side's Supports and Artillery card is drawn.

As well as activating Support Vessels, all that side's Artillery can be fired when the Supports & Artillery card is drawn.

Note: Shuffle all the cards in the Play Deck before starting a new turn.



THE BONUS DECK

Consists of five cards. When a Bonus Card is drawn from the Play Deck, players dice-off to see who then draws a card from the Bonus Deck. **Dice off:** both players roll 1D6, the highest wins. Nobody gets the card if the scores are tied.

The winner can either play the Bonus Card immediately or save it and interrupt the run of play later in the turn.

If it is not used during a turn, it must be returned to the bottom of the Bonus Deck at the end of the turn - use it or lose it!

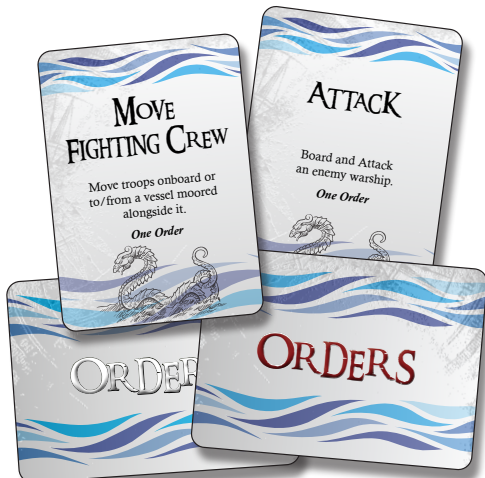
Each card describes the effect/s of the Bonus.



SPECIAL EVENTS DECK

Consists of nine cards, most of which relate to wind or sea conditions. When the Special Event Bonus Card is drawn the player must draw a card from the Special Events Deck and play it **immediately**.

No more than two Special Events can ever be played in a game, so remove the Special Event Card from the Bonus Deck (leaving just four cards) after it has been drawn for the second time.



ORDERS DECK

There are four of these for each player: Control Shooting, Move Fighting Crew, Attack, and Special Order. They are placed next to a ship model to show that its Fighting Crew are engaged in the corresponding action.

All the Never Mind the Boathooks cards can be downloaded from nevermindthebillhooks.com

COMMAND AND CONTROL

Players issue Orders to their vessels and troops to get them to perform actions.

When a Warship's card is drawn from the Play Deck it can be given both **Sea Orders** and **Fighting Orders**.

SEA ORDERS

The ship's Master and the ship's crew of sailors are not represented by figures, but they perform the vital task of working the ship.

Two Sea Orders can be performed by each vessel each turn, in any combination. These are:

FOR MOVEMENT UNDER SAIL

(Cogs, Merchantmen, Great Ships, and Carracks)

1) **Move** - by Beating, Reaching or Broad Reaching, and Running. By default, this is one square in any direction, but it depends on the Wind. See page 10 for more details. Any move can begin OR end with a free change of heading by one point (e.g. from East to South-East).

2) **Work to Windward** by Tacking. See page 10 for more details.

3) **Drop anchor**.

4) **Raise anchor**. Takes **two Sea Orders**.

5) **Warp 45°** (change heading while at anchor). Takes **two Sea Orders**.

Free additional Action when Running or Broad Reaching (see page 10): move one extra square (or two in Fresh Winds) as a free, optional extra move.

FOR MOVEMENT UNDER OARS

(Galleys, Great Galleys, and Pinnaces)

1) **Move** - by one square in any direction including a change of heading by any number of points. If moving directly into the Wind, roll 1D6: 1 - 3: Vessel cannot move; 4+: Move as normal.

2) **Back Oars** - move one square backwards. Takes **two Sea Orders**.

3) **Fix towline** (see page 11).

FIGHTING ORDERS

The Captain issues a number of Orders to his Fighting Crew, depending on his Command Class (see page 7). When ordering their Fighting Crew, a player should place one of their Fighting Crew Order Cards next to the corresponding vessel to signify an Order that has been issued. These Orders are:

1) **Move Fighting Crew** - from one part of a ship to another e.g., to/from Forecastle and Sterncastle; or to/from any friendly vessel lashed alongside in the same square.

2) **Attack** - Grapple and board an enemy vessel (see pages 11 - 13).

3) **Control Shooting** - Order Shooting to take place at any time **after** the start of the vessel's turn and/or pick a target and/or Shoot an 'Arrowstorm' (see pages 11 - 12).

4) **Repair Damage** (see page 11).

5) **Special Order**: Use Incendiary weapons (see page 11) or do anything else that comes up which is not covered above (use your imagination!). Takes **two Fighting Orders**.

Notes:

1) A captain who is engaged in a Melee gives one Order less than his Rating.

2) Fighting Crew who have already fought in a Melee **this turn** cannot be given Orders (they are too busy!).

3) If a captain is killed - his crew may fight on (if they pass a Morale Test - see page 14), but now have nobody to give them any Fighting Orders.



DESIGNER'S NOTE: INSPIRATION

Way back in May-June 1979, there was a two-part article in *Military Modelling* titled Wargaming Medieval Warfare in the Channel, by Lance Railton. I kept it 'just in case', only to dig it out again more than 40 years later when I had the idea of converting Billhooks into Boathooks. It still made excellent reading and it gave me a flying start in writing these rules.

MOVEMENT OF VESSELS

Vessels move around the playing surface in order to engage with the enemy or get out of their way!

MOVEMENT UNDER SAIL

(Cogs, Merchantmen, Great Ships, and Carracks)

Movement under sail is dependent on a vessel's heading relative to the Wind. In order to move in certain directions players will need to perform certain manoeuvres and may need to make successful dice rolls. Consult the Sailing Diagram (see page 10) and the rules below when attempting to move under sail.

Sailing directly into the Wind (Wind icon, red): A Sailing Ship can never sail/move directly into the Wind. It can only face into the Wind if it is anchored.

Beating (orange): This is the art of sailing at as slight an angle as possible into the Wind. In order to attempt to do this with a Cog, players must roll 1D6:

1 - 3: Fail. The vessel cannot Move this turn.

4+: Success. The vessel can Move one square on its intended bearing.

A Carrack can always make a Beating move without rolling for it.

A vessel cannot make two Beating moves in a single turn.

Reaching (blue): When Reaching, the Wind is coming across the boat. Vessels can move one square, unrestricted.

Broad Reaching (light green) and Running (green): Here, the Wind is filling in the ship's sails. Vessels may move one extra square per turn (or two in Fresh Winds) as a **free Move Order**.

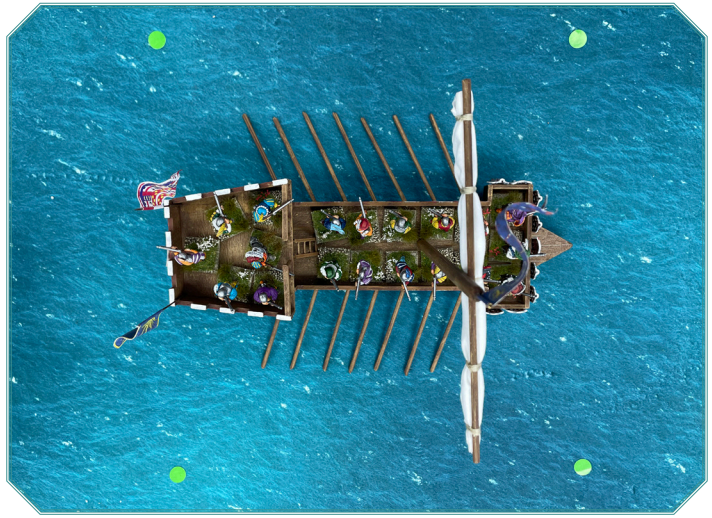
WORKING TO WINDWARD

Tacking: The single-masted ships of this period struggled to tack (or, in the game, Move from one Beating heading to another, e.g. from NE to NW on a Northerly Wind). To do so in the game, players must roll 4+ on 1D6 to succeed. If the roll fails, the vessel is 'taken aback' and drifts one square downwind. A Carrack can always re-roll a failed tack (once).

Notes:

1) Sailing ships have no brakes (!) so unless they are anchored, grappled, or Beating, vessels must make a **compulsory move** of one square on their current heading if they are given no other Move Order. If this takes a vessel off the table, it misses the next turn (or two turns if it went off downwind), before coming back in a square adjacent to the one where it went off, in the following turn.

2) In Fresh Winds, **grappled ships** drift one square downwind when the first Bonus Card is drawn.



TROOP MOVEMENT FROM VESSEL TO VESSEL

It is possible to move men between ships during the game.

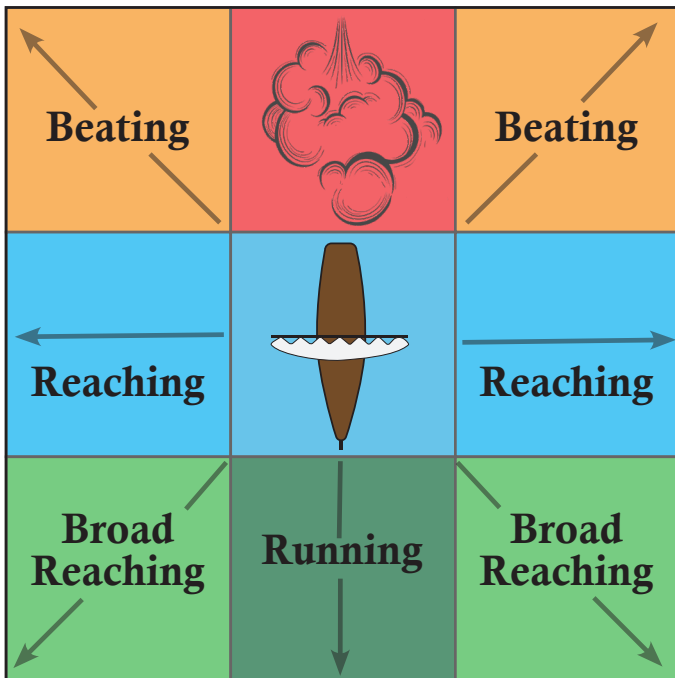
Figures can be moved between friendly ships in order to reinforce/replace Fighting Crew. This can even be done during the course of a Melee.

In order to switch figures from one friendly vessel to another, both vessels must be in the same square at the same time and lashed together.

The transferred troops increase the Fighting Strength of their new berth, but cannot exceed its original maximum.

A Pinnacle or Galley can always move to, lash alongside, and transfer troops into another vessel in the same turn. Other vessels must tie up on one turn (see Grappling) and then transfer troops (on either captain's order) on the next.

Note: Refer to the rules on Collisions below - an occupational hazard of two vessels being in the same square.



Note: The ship icon is shown running downwind.

MOVEMENT UNDER OARS (Galleys and Pinnaces)

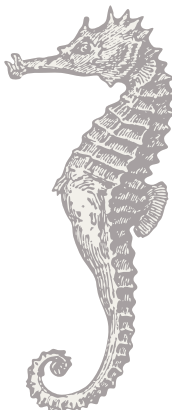
Oared vessels can move unrestricted up to two squares per turn in any direction, except:

- When moving directly into the Wind in Fresh Winds players must roll 1D6:

1 - 3: Fail. The vessel cannot move this turn.

4+: Success. The vessel can move as normal.

- When 'backing oars' (reversing). Vessels can move only one square.

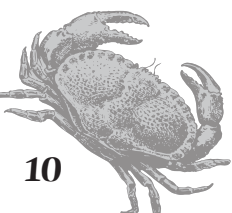


DESIGNER'S NOTE: WHEN THE WIND BLOWS

These rules are unapologetically a gross oversimplification of the complicated art of medieval sailing, designed for game purposes and to make it relatively easy for landlubbers (like this author) to remember them in the heat of battle.

The use of a gridded sea - with the Wind blowing only North, South, East, or West, and ships moving along the eight principal compass points - avoids arguments about angles to wind and points of sailing.

The easiest way to 'get your head round' Wind in Boathooks is to think of it as a very steep slope. It's too hard to climb straight uphill so you have to zig-zag; you need to take it easy moving across the slope, and you go fastest downhill.



TOWING

Pulling other vessels along by a rope or chain.

A Galley or two Pinnaces (only) can tow another vessel:

- One square in any direction in Calm conditions.
- One square in any direction except into the wind in Light Winds.
- One square any direction except into the Wind or Beating in Fresh conditions.

It takes one Sea Order to fix a towline to a ship in the same square.

COLLISIONS

Crash! Bang! Wallop! Moving a Warship into the same square as another Warship or a Galley (to come alongside a friend or to close with an enemy) risks collision damage to one or both vessels. Pinnaces cannot instigate collisions, but they may be collided into.

Roll a D6 for each Warship as soon as it is in the same square as another vessel:

1 - 2: Collision! A **Cog** takes one Damage Marker. A **Galley** suffers broken oars, unless it is striking the other vessel at 90° amidships (*Note*: Medieval galleys were not equipped with rams).

On a D6 roll of 1, any crew in the vessel's Fighting Top/s fall overboard and are lost.

A **Pinnacle** sinks immediately upon collision - with all hands lost.

Note: A Great Ship or Carrack will only take collision damage on a D6 roll of 1.

3+: The vessels manage to avoid damaging each other. Grappling may take place.

Notes:

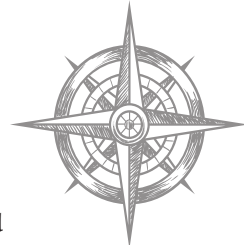
- 1) Sailing Ships cannot be damaged by oared vessels.
- 2) A **Galley or Pinnacle** can avoid being struck by a Sailing Ship by making an emergency move of one square in any direction. If it is already grappled to another vessel, it cannot get out of the way in time; it suffers serious damage and will sink immediately (Pinnacle), or in D6/2 turns (Galley).
- 3) If a Sailing Ship is struck at 45° on, or head-on at its bow or stern, both vessels end up alongside each other and touching. In the case of a bow or stern collision, roll 1D6 for which side of the enemy vessel the attacker ends up on: 1 - 3: port side; 4+: starboard.
- 4) If a Warship is struck by another at 90° amidships, the attacker's prow is automatically entangled against the defender's deck, and grappling has (effectively) occurred.

DAMAGE AND REPAIR

A damaged vessel cannot move Under Sail, but (unless anchored or grappled) it must make a compulsory move - drifting one square downwind.

It takes a full turn (not including the turn in which the collision took place) for a sailing Ship to repair collision damage, and it can only be done while the vessel is not engaged in Melee.

Broken oars cannot be repaired - a damaged Galley now moves only one square per turn.



GRAPPLING

To board an enemy vessel a successful grapple must first take place.

Once having entered the same square, one (or both) vessel/s may attempt to grapple. Roll 1D6 for each grappling vessel:

1 - 2: Fail. The grappling iron/rope misses its mark.

3+: Success! The vessels are locked together.

Notes:

- 1) Friendly ships can lash/grapple themselves together freely, without having to roll for it.
- 2) In Fresh Winds, **grappled ships** drift one square downwind when the first Bonus Card is drawn.

SHOOTING

Shooters and Artillery loose or fire their missiles at the enemy according to the rules below.

Unless the Captain gives a Control Shooting order to do otherwise, figures **always Shoot** at the start of their turn (before their vessel moves) and must target the nearest enemy Shooters.

Dice are rolled to score Hits against the target:

Warships and Pinnaces: 1D6 is rolled for each Shooter figure.

Artillery (Warships only): 2D6 per Gunner.

In order to score a successful Hit, different troop types require different dice scores. Consult the Shooting Chart for the score required and the range of the weapons being used.

TROOP TYPE	SHORT RANGE	TO HIT	LONG RANGE	TO HIT
Archers	0 - 2 Squares	5+	3 Squares	6
Crossbows	0 - 2 Squares	5+	-	-
Artillery*	0 - 3 Squares	6*		

*Artillery Misfire: When rolling to Hit with Artillery, if a player rolls 3 x 1s the gun blows up and is out of action for the rest of the game. If the roll is any 4 of a kind, the gun explodes and starts a fire onboard.

SHOTS PER TURN

All Shooters can Shoot once per turn. English Archers on a Warship (not a Pinnacle) can be ordered to Shoot an Arrowstorm - counts as two shots in a turn.

DESIGNER'S NOTE: THE FRIGGIN' RIGGIN'

Shooters in castles have their Arcs of Fire obstructed by their own ship's sails, masts and rigging, even if these are not modelled!

LINE OF SIGHT AND ARC OF FIRE

For figures to be targeted they must be within the Line of Sight and Arc of Fire of the figures trying to Shoot them.

Line of Sight is always possible between two Cogs, but a Cog blocks the line from Shooting any further, so players can't Shoot past one Cog to Hit another vessel.

Galleys and Pinnaces do not block Line of Sight for Shooters on a Cog, so Cog Shooters can Shoot over these smaller vessels.

Players cannot risk Shooting into a Melee.

The Arc of Fire depends on where the Shooters are located.

LOCATION	ARC OF FIRE
Fighting Top	360°
Deck	45°
Castle	270°

AMMUNITION

Warships only carry enough ammunition for six rounds of Shooting by arrow or bolt.

Track shot expended by placing a micro/small dice next to the vessel. The dice begins the battle displaying a '6', and the number is reduced by one each time its Archers or Crossbowmen shoot.

When reduced to zero, Shooters on that vessel can no longer Shoot.

Support Vessels and Artillery do not need to track their ammunition supply - they have unlimited ammo.



HANDGONNES AND GRETE GONNES

Although we don't list Handgunners as a troop type feel free to include them using the same stats as Crossbowmen. Big Guns were not tactically significant at sea before the late 15th Century, so I have ignored them. But if you want to use some, allow two on a Carrack and only one on other Warships. Range: 4 squares, dead ahead (Galley), or abeam (Sailing Ship). Three crew. All 6s are kills. 3 x 6s = 3 kills and a damaged target. 3 x 1s = the gun explodes. Any extra 6s or 1s start a fire. Big guns take a full turn to reload.

SHOOTING SAVING THROWS

To avoid Hits becoming Kills the defending player takes all the successful Hit dice scored against them and rolls the dice again in an effort to 'Save' their troops from becoming casualties. Consult the chart below to see what dice score will Save or Kill.

The score required to Save depends on the Armour Class (e.g., Medium Armour) of the target being Hit.

Special rules for Artillery. Any Hits caused by Artillery are automatic Kills (armour is no use against this powerful new technology!).

ARMOUR CLASS AND TROOP TYPE	SCORE	RESULT
Heavy (Men-at-Arms)	1 - 2	Kill
	3+	Save
Medium (Spearmen)	1 - 3	Kill
	4+	Save
Light or None (Shooters)	1 - 4	Kill
	5+	Save

SAVING THROW ADJUSTMENTS

1) If the targets are **in a castle or are higher up** than the Shooters (e.g., on a Cog when shot at from the deck of a Galley or Pinnacle, or in a Fighting Top shot at from anywhere except an enemy Fighting Top) they move **up one** Armour Class for Saving Throws, e.g. Spearmen go up to Heavy Armour. *Note: We know this makes no difference for Men-at-Arms, but they have no business skulking in cover!*

2) **Men-at-Arms:** Armour Class is reduced to Medium when hit by Crossbows

3) When shooting at a target with mixed troop types divide the Hits in proportion to the mix, with any leftovers falling first on the worst-armoured type.

APPLYING CASUALTIES/KILLS

Remove all the casualty figures that suffer Kills from their vessels - they are heading to Davy Jones's Locker!

INCENDIARY MISSILE WEAPONS

Resorting to these was always reckoned to be a desperate measure!

Flaming arrows or firepots may be shot or hurled by **three Shooters from one Warship, but only once per game, by either fleet and only by a Special Fighting Order (two orders) of the Captain**, using the following rules:

The Shooters' ship must be in a square next to the target.

Roll 1D6 per Shooter. If at least one of the rolls is a 6 they have successfully started a fire onboard the target vessel. See Fire! (page 14).

But if more than one of the rolls is a 1... calamity! The incendiaries have started a fire onboard their own vessel! See Fire! (page 14).

MELEE

Hand-to-hand, sword-to-sword, and boathook-to-skull fighting - the cut and thrust of medieval naval warfare. This is how players board their opponent's vessels, fight, and win the game!

To enter Melee, a player's Warship must move into the same square as that of an opponent and grapple with the enemy vessel, after which the attackers may attempt to board, and Melee takes place. See the rules for Grappling and Collisions on page 11.

BOARDING - FIRST ROUND OF MELEE

Attackers with a Control Shooting Order and Defenders who have not already shot this turn Shoot once at Short Range just before contact. *Note:* Always check Arcs of Fire - not all combatants may be able to hit!

1) Total up the number of troops/figures fighting. Make the following adjustments:

- Count all the figures in a Pinnacle.
- Count up to 12 figures in a Warship.
- Count any figures in a Fighting Top - they can join in by throwing gads (iron javelins) and dropping heavy objects (**only** in this first round).

Once it has been established how many figures can fight (based on the procedure above), determine how many dice should be rolled to Hit by consulting the information below:

- Men-at-Arms: 1.5D6 per figure, i.e., three dice for two figures.
- Spearmen and Shooters in a Fighting Top: 1D6 per figure.
- Shooters: 1D6 per two figures.

2. Now roll the total number of dice (halves are rounded up).

3. Rolls of **4+ are all Hits**.

4. Roll all Hits again for Saving Throws (see below).

MELEE HITS ADJUSTMENTS

Boarders re-roll any dice scores of 1 (once). If this second roll is a 4+ add it to the Hit total. But if it is a 1 (or a 1 or 2 in Fresh Winds, or the vessel being boarded is higher in the water - e.g., from a Galley to a Cog, or if the figure is a Man-at-Arms), a man falls overboard, and the figure is removed from play.



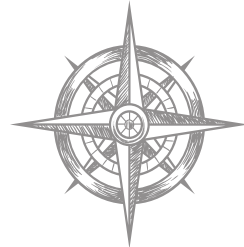
Leaders

In combat a captain adds extra Hits to the total scored by any group he is attached to (no need to roll), depending on his Rating:

Hero: 3 extra Hits.

Commander: 2 extra Hits.

Dolt: 1 extra Hit.



MELEE SAVING THROWS

As with Shooting, the defending player takes all the successful Hit dice scored against them and rolls the dice in an effort to 'save' their troops from becoming casualties. Consult the chart below to see what dice score is required to Save or Kill.

The score required to Save depends on the Armour Class (e.g., Medium Armour) of the target being Hit.

ARMOUR CLASS AND TROOP TYPE	SCORE	RESULT
Heavy (Men-at-Arms)	1 - 2	Kill
	3+	Save
Medium (Spearmen)	1 - 3	Kill
	4+	Save
Light or None (Shooters)	1 - 4	Kill
	5+	Save

APPLYING CASUALTIES/KILLS

Remove all the casualty figures that suffer Kills from the game - they are heading to Davy Jones's Locker.

LEADERS

During a Melee, if more than three Kills are suffered by any group of figures that contain a captain, there is a risk he will be injured.

Roll a 1D6 for each Kill scored on the group above 3. The Captain is wounded for every 1 rolled. Remember a hero has/can take three Wounds before dying, a Commander can take two, and a Dolt can take only one (the first Wound kills him).

If the Captain is the 'last man standing' after a Melee, he is captured and held to ransom.

WINNING AND LOSING THE MELEE

1) Count the total number of Kills from the Melee (including any lost overboard but not those from Shooting) - the player suffering the most Kills is the loser of this round of combat.

2) The loser must make an immediate Morale Crisis Test (see page 14).

3) If the Attacker wins the first round of a boarding action, they put down a Boarded Marker (such as a flag) to represent what has happened (this is more practical than mixing up crews on a deck!).

4) If the Attacker clears an enemy vessel by wiping out all its Defenders, the Attackers can claim their prize and occupy it with their own troops.

5) If the Defender wins, they can a) remove any Boarded Marker; b) attempt to cut the grapples: roll 1D6: 1 - 3: Fail. 4+: Success.

DESIGNER'S NOTE: ONCE MORE UNTO THE BREACH!

Melees are fights to the death, so careful 'feeding-in' of reinforcements is a key tactic in this game.

CONTINUING MELEES

Fought when the first Bonus Card is drawn in a subsequent turn.

Melee continues using the same rules as the first round, but:

- Count up to 18 of a Warship's Fighting Crew (apart from any in the Fighting Top).
- Only dice scores of 5+ are hits.
- The Attacker adds two extra Hits for any Boarded Marker on the enemy deck.

Melees continue from turn-to-turn until a vessel is captured or the grapples are cut.

MULTI-SHIP MELEES

Troops that have already fought in a Melee this turn and are attacked by Troops from another enemy vessel later in the turn can count only half their number against this new attacker, and only Hit on a 5+. A ship's captain cannot fight more than once in the same turn.

DESIGNER'S NOTE: FIRE DOWN BELOW

The use of fireships in this game is too horrible to contemplate so there are no rules for it. Feel free to make up your own...

FIRE!

A fire may be caused by a Special Event or the successful use of an incendiary missile (arrows or firepots).

EXTINGUISHING A FIRE

A fire can be extinguished immediately by rolling to Save on a D6:

1 - 3: Fail to Save. The vessel catches fire! Place a fire marker on the vessel **in the area which was affected**. E.g., the deck or Castle of a Cog or Great Galley. *Note:* There is only one area on a Galley or Pinnace. See below.

4+: Success. The fire is extinguished before it catches.

Another attempt at extinguishing the fire can be made by making a second Save roll (it needs a 5+ this time) when the first Bonus Card is drawn on the next turn.

FIRE RAGES

If the fire is not extinguished at the second attempt, it rages!

- Place a Daunted Token onboard the vessel - the crew are now Daunted.

In subsequent turns when the first Bonus Card is drawn (unless the fire is extinguished by rolling a 6):

- The fire spreads to an adjacent area of the vessel (e.g. from the deck to a castle) OR if all areas are already ablaze it spreads to any vessel grappled or moored alongside.

When a fire has spread to all areas of a vessel it is out of control and the crew abandons ship. The vessel is destroyed (see Claiming Fleet Morale tokens, page 15).

MORALE

"...battles on the sea are more dangerous and fiercer than the battles by land, for on the sea there is no retreating or fleeing, there is no remedy but to fight and abide fortune..."

Jean Froissart

At certain times during a game, vessels will be required to take a Morale Crisis Test. If the vessel passes the test, it sails/rows/fights on without restrictions. If it fails, there will be negative repercussions.

WHEN SHOULD A VESSEL TAKE A MORALE CRISIS TEST?

1. IMMEDIATELY

- a) **Lost Melee:** when it loses a round of Melee.
- b) **Leader killed:** when a Warship's captain is killed.

2. AT THE END OF THE TURN

- c) **Depleted:** if it has less than half of its Fighting Strength remaining, and it is not engaged in a continuing Melee.

Note: The **Fighting Strength** of a vessel is its original number of Fighting Crew (of all types), excluding the Captain. For example: a typical Cog = 24, Great Galley = 18, Galley = 12, Pinnace = 6.

MAKING THE TEST

Warships roll 2D6. Pinnaces roll 1D6: Daunted vessels always re-roll a 6.

Double 1: Catastrophic Fail. If involved in a Melee, the panicked crew jump overboard or beg (in vain) for quarter... Remove all figures from the vessel. Otherwise, the crew mutinies (see page 15).

1 - 4: Fail. See below.

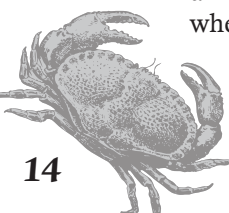
5+: Pass. The vessel and crew are made of stern stuff and suffer no ill effects.

An admiral or hero captain can re-roll one result of 1, but never a double 1 (the Dice Goddess has spoken!).

EFFECTS OF A FAILED MORALE CRISIS TEST

A Pinnace flees the battle. Remove the model from the game.

A Warship's Fighting Crew become **Daunted** - place a Daunted Token on the vessel.



DAUNTED CREWS

The effects on a Daunted crew are as follows:

- They count only half numbers for Shooting or Melee.
- Any boarders/attackers Daunted by losing a fight on an enemy vessel retreat back to their own vessel.
- Daunted troops that are fortunate enough to win a round of Melee lose their Daunted Token.
- **Mutiny!** Already Daunted troops who fail another Morale Crisis Test cannot rout or surrender (*there is nowhere to run to, and no quarter was given at sea*), but if the vessel is **not engaged in a Continuing Melee**, the crew will mutiny.

To quell a mutiny: A captain (excluding a Dolt) can try and quell the mutiny immediately by arresting the ringleaders. He succeeds if the player rolls a 6 on a D6 (or a 5+ if the Captain is a hero, or an admiral, or if he has at least six Men-at-Arms still standing). But if the player rolls a 1, the Captain is overpowered and thrown over the side. Lose one Fleet Morale Token (see below).

If the Captain fails to quell the mutiny: The mutineers tie him up and haul down the colours. The player should turn the vessel away from the fighting. Next time the vessel's card is drawn from the Play Deck it is removed from play.

FLEET MORALE TOKENS

Although it is possible to win a game of Never Mind the Boathooks by capturing the enemy's Flagship or driving it off the table, most games are won by breaking your opponent's Morale.

Morale is represented by Fleet Morale Tokens. Players begin the game with a pile of Fleet Morale equal to the original points value of all the warships in the fleet (excluding Support Vessels/Pinnaces).

CLAIMING FLEET MORALE TOKENS

Players claim Fleet Morale Tokens from their opponent throughout the game, in the following circumstances:



- When they capture an opponent's Warship: Claim double the vessel's Points Value in tokens. A warship is captured when the enemy is on board and it has no fighting crew left standing (ignore any in the Fighting Top - they have nowhere to go!)
- When they capture or kill an opponent's captain: One Token.
- When an opponent's Warship is destroyed by fire or stranded on your own shore: Claim the vessel's Points Value in Tokens.
- When there is a mutiny on an enemy vessel: Claim half its Points Value in Tokens.
- When an enemy Warship is stranded on its home shore or goes off-table: Claim half its Points Value in Tokens.

Notes:

- 1) Halves always round up (so if a three point ship mutinies, a player loses two Tokens).
- 2) The loss of any Pinnaces has no effect on Fleet Morale.
- 3) If a player re-captures a vessel or it comes back on table, they can claim back the Token(s) lost.
- 4) Any Fleet Morale Tokens you claim go into a common 'dead pool' - you don't add them to your own stash!
- 5) It's up to you to claim Tokens off your opponent - don't forget!



NEVER MIND THE BOATHOOKS - CRIBSHEET

VESSEL STATISTICS

VESSEL	POINTS	FIGHTING CREW	NOTES
Pinnace	0.5	6	Spearmen or Shooters
Galley	2	12	Spearmen and/or Shooters (in groups of 6)
Great Galley	3	18	Any troop types (in groups of 6)
Merchantman	2	12	Spearmen or Shooters
Cog	3	24	12 Marines and 12 Shooters (4 points if Marines are Men-at-Arms)
Great Ship	6	36	At least 12 Men-at-Arms

SHOOTING AND MELEE SAVING THROWS TABLE

ARMOUR CLASS AND TROOP TYPE	SCORE	RESULT
Heavy (Men-at-Arms)	1 - 2	Kill
	3+	Save
Medium (Spearmen)	1 - 3	Kill
	4+	Save
Light or None (Shooters)	1 - 4	Kill
	5+	Save

MELEE TABLE

TROOP TYPE	DICE PER FIGURE	TO HIT
Men-at-Arms	1.5	All Hit for 4+ in 1st round, 5+ in later rounds
Spearmen	1	
Shooters	0.5	

Add 2 automatic extra Hits for a Boarded marker on the enemy deck.

RANGE TABLE

TROOP TYPE	SHORT RANGE	TO HIT	LONG RANGE	TO HIT
Archers	0 - 2 Squares	5+	3 Squares	6
Crossbows	0 - 2 Squares	5+	-	-
Artillery*	0 - 3 Squares	6*		

*Artillery Misfire: When rolling to Hit with Artillery, if a player rolls 3 x 1s, the gun blows up and is out of action for the rest of the game. If the roll is any 4 of a kind, the gun explodes and starts a fire onboard.

MOVEMENT SUMMARY

UNDER SAIL

Tacking (working to Move Windward from one Beating heading to the other, across the red zone): Roll 4+. Carracks may re-roll once.

Beating (Orange): 1 square maximum per turn. Cogs and Great Ships must roll 4+.

Reaching (Blue): 1 square per Sea Order.

Broad Reaching (Light Green): 1 square per Sea Order (plus 1 extra per turn, 2 in Fresh Winds).

Running (Dark Green): 1 square per Sea Order (plus 1 extra per turn, 2 in Fresh Winds).

All sailing vessels may start OR end their move with a one point (45°) change of heading.

UNDER OARS

1 square in any direction except backwards or Into Wind (One Sea Order).

1 square backwards (Two Sea Orders).

1 square Into Wind, roll 4+ (One Sea Order).

All oared vessels may end their move facing in any direction.

SAILING DIAGRAM

