

# “WARM WORK, HARDY!”

## Naval action in the Napoleonic Wars

The game is played on a squared surface, with squares a little larger than the ships. Each Player needs a handful of normal, six-sided dice (D6s). Start off with 2-3 ships a side until you are used to the rules and you can handle bigger fleets.

### BEFORE THE GAME

Make a **record strip or card** for each ship (see examples in Diagram B, below ) showing the **Name, Rating, Nationality, Number of masts** standing, boxes for Battle **Damage** and its **Gunnery Score** on each broadside (calculated as its notional number of guns at the start of the battle (ignore any over 90) divided by 10 minus its Rate. Eg a 74 gun Third Rate has a Gunnery of  $7.4 - 3 = 4.4$ , which is rounded up to 5 if the ship is British, or down to 4 if French or Spanish. (See section 4.2).

The Gunnery score will go down as overall combat effectiveness is reduced by enemy action.

*Note that the Gunnery calculation means Frigates are useless in a battle involving ships of the line. (since a 38 gun 5th rate would have a negative gunnery score  $(3.8 - 5)$ ! This is deliberate! They were expected to keep well away from such serious affairs. But for an action that just involves Frigates or smaller vessels do not subtract the Rate when calculating a ship's Gunnery score.*

### SETTING UP

Set up the two fleets, sailing in line ahead along the opposite long sides of the table and a couple of squares in. Dice for who wins the weather gage – the British fleet wins a draw. The winner has the wind blowing from their side of the table and gets the first move of the game.

### PLAYING THE GAME

#### The Turn Sequence (Alternate turns – IGO/UGO)

*There are three phases in each turn.*

- 1. Manoeuvre.** Move your Ships. British ships move individually and can do any manoeuvre, subject only to the usual restrictions due to wind and heading (see diagram “C”). The French and Spanish normally manoeuvre as a fleet (ie all ships follow the leading ship) but if you roll a 6 at the start of a manoeuvre phase then one ship may act individually for the rest of the battle.
  - 2. Combat** – Work out the Firing from your ships, one at a time.
  - 3. Boarding** – Resolve any Boarding actions involving any of your ships.
- 1. Manoeuvre Phase** (see diagram ‘C’ for further explanation of the movement rules)
    - 1.1 Diagram “C” shows the maximum and minimum moves (in squares) under **Fresh Winds**. Minus 1 on the maximum move for every 2 damage points suffered by a ship and another minus 1 for each mast lost. *Note this means ships choosing to make less than the maximum move (for example, under “fighting sails”) will not be affected by some initial damage.*
    - 1.2 Adjust for wind strength. **Strong Winds** = -1 (Close Hauled), +1 sailing Large, no change on other headings. **Light Winds** = -1 (Close Hauled and sailing Large), -2 (on the Quarter and Before the Wind)
    - 1.3 A ship can turn 1 compass point at the start of a move and then by 1 extra point after each square moved. Ships may only cross the wind by Wearing or Tacking (see Diagram D). A ship needs all 3 masts to wear **or** tack. To tack roll a **Control Dice**: (+1 for British Ships) and get a total of 4 or more to succeed. A ship with **more than 1** damage point can't tack.
    - 1.4 If a ship ever moves into or through the same square as another test for a **Collision**. For two friendly ships roll 2 D6. Roll an extra D6 if the two ships are enemies, and for each Spanish ship involved. If any double is rolled the two ships collide, the moving ship ends its move and both ships lose 2 damage points (see 2.2) or 3 points for any treble. In any turns after a collision you must roll a double on two dice to break off contact and move **out** of the collision square.

## 2. Combat Phase

### 2.1 Gunnery (ships fire only in their own turn)

1. See the Diagrams at E below for arcs of fire, ranges, the special rule for firing at "Random Shot" and the worked example of firing in Diagram F.
2. Normally, ships fire just one of their broadsides in a turn but British ships may fire one at full effect and the other at half effect – they need to roll 5 or 6 on a D6 each turn to do this.
3. Only British ships may split their targets. Otherwise ships always fire the nearest enemy.
4. Firing takes place after movement except for any rakes, which are done as soon as they happen in the manoeuvre phase. Work out the Target Score for each ship :
5. Target Score = Current broadside Gunnery minus the range deduction (Diag. E). Adjusted for:
  - a) **Position** : Stern Rake +2, Bow Rake +1. (to count as a rake the firing ship's broadside must be at 90° to the target's bow or stern and within 2 squares of it) See Diagram "F".
  - b) **Quality** : Add 1 to the score for British ships, minus 1 for Spanish. Add 1 for a ship's first shot. The final Target Score gives the number of dice (D6s) to roll.

*So, an undamaged, British, Third Rate firing a Stern Rake at Musket range would roll 5 (Gunnery), with no deduction for Range, plus 2 (for a Stern Rake) plus 1 (British ship) = 7 dice*

### 2.2 Damage

**Any 5s and 6s rolled are hits** at Gun Shot and under. **See Diagram E for firing at Random Shot.**

**Only broadsides count – firing from bow-chasers and stern guns is ignored in this game.**

**6s:** inflict 1 **Damage Point** on the target. This represents hits to spars and rigging, affecting a ship's manoeuvrability. A ship can take up to 4 damage points – lose 1 square off the maximum move for each 2 points lost. After that any single 6s rolled are wasted but if a target takes two 6s or more from firing in one turn it loses a mast. Roll another dice 1/2 = Foremast, 3/4 = Main, 5/6 = Mizzen. If this mast has already been lost the hit is wasted. For each mast lost take 1 further square off the ship's maximum move. If this means a ship cannot move it is treated as a hulk – it is dead in the water and will simply drift one square downwind, each turn.

**5s:** take 1 point off the target's opposing broadside **Gunnery Score**. This represents hits on guns and crew. 1 hit in 3 each turn passes through the decks and is taken off the target's far broadside. Rakes are split between broadsides (if not divisible by 2 the firing Player allocates the odd hit).

If you ever roll **two or more 1s** then some shot has passed over the target – inflict 1 point of damage on any ship (friend or foe!) that is in line of fire and not more than 6 squares away.

## 3. Boarding Phase

- 3.1 Ships must be in the **same** square. The target must be stationary (eg after a collision) or moving at no more than one square. Roll D6 vs D6. The boarder must win or draw to grapple and stop the enemy attempting to break off (see 1.4) when it is his turn to move.
- 3.2 Next, for each ship take the Gunnery score on its **weaker** broadside minus 2 for each mast lost and add the score from one D6 (+1 British, -1 Spanish). If the boarder wins the enemy strikes his colours immediately. A draw means the two ships remain grappled together and the fight continues next turn. If the boarder loses no fresh attempt may be made.
- 3.3 The ships involved in a boarding action may fire only at each other and will do so for so long as the fight is unresolved. They fire at "Pistol Shot", (no deduction for range) but only 5s hit as they are too close to hit anything except their hulls and many of the crew are busy fighting.
- 3.4 After a successful boarding the two ships must stay locked together for the rest of the battle.

## Surrender

Ships cannot be sunk by gunfire in battle – instead, they are just reduced to helpless hulks.

Even though a ship may have taken enough hits to render it ineffective it will only strike its colours either a) when it is successfully boarded OR b) when it has lost at least 1 mast (or all 3 for a British ship) AND an enemy ship moves into a position to rake it.

### 4. Optional Extra Rules *(introduce these once you are used to the basic rules)*

#### 4.1 Wind Direction and Strength

Work this out at the start of the game by choosing a sea area and checking the current BBC Shipping Forecast online. Alternatively, roll a dice :-

1 = A Fresh wind blowing from the North, 2 = East, 3 = South, 4 = West.

5 = Light Wind (roll again for direction), 6 = Strong wind (roll again for direction).

To start off, it's easiest if the wind stays the same throughout the battle, unless you have a special scenario in mind. But if you want to introduce some unpredictability in the weather roll 2 dice at the end of each turn after firing has started.

On a roll of 11 or 12 the wind changes. Roll again 1, 2, 3 = it drops one level, 4 = it veers 1 point clockwise, 5 = it backs 1 point anti-clockwise, 6 = it rises one level. No fighting is possible at anything above "Strong" force winds. *(It was noted at the time that wind often dropped once fleets were engaged – supposedly due to a "concussion of the air" – hence the greater likelihood here of the wind dropping).* After any change of wind the British fleet has the option of moving 1st or 2nd on the next turn.

Allow only one wind change per game, else things will get silly ...

#### 4.2 Ship Classifications

For the purposes of this game, British ships are reckoned to be better than their French and Spanish opponents. This is thanks to their greater firepower (more carronades, and superior gun drills) and generally higher level of seamanship and fighting spirit after years of active service at sea. The French and Spanish fleets spent much of their time blockaded in port and so lacked the same experience. In addition, Spanish ships, though they were finely constructed vessels, usually suffered from serious under-manning and so they are penalised accordingly. *If you are uncomfortable with these historical facts, or want to have an entirely evenly-balanced game, simply ignore any rule that gives a bonus or penalty according to nationality.*

You can always make adjustments for special cases. For example, at Trafalgar the French *Redoutable* might get a +1 for Boarding to reflect the special training in this tactic by the aggressive *Capitaine* Lucas.

Although it never fought a fleet action in this period, the contemporary United States Navy displayed a high level of seamanship and fighting ability. So if fighting a Frigate action from the War of 1812, American ships should have all the same bonuses as British.

Ships of other countries should be rated like the French.

#### 4.3 Gunnery Doctrine

The **French and Spanish** tended to favour long range disabling shots. So, at Gun Shot as well as Random Shot only their 6s hit, causing damage points to the target's yards & rigging. Ignore any 5s rolled. The **British** generally preferred firing at the hulls of enemy ships so they may declare at the start of a battle that **all** of their 5s and 6s at Point Blank and under will always be inflicted on a target's broadside. They were discouraged from firing at beyond Point Blank.

## A Note on Command and Control

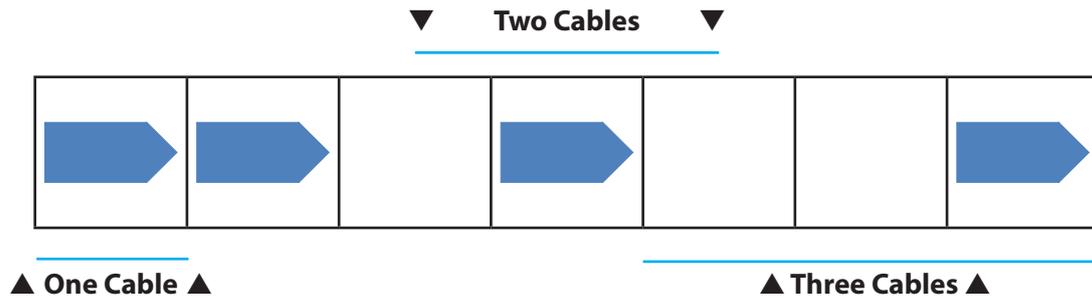
These rules are a simplified extract from a more complete set which adds the essential extra dimensions of fleet manoeuvres and signalling to wargaming battles at sea in the Age of Sail. It is almost impossible for us today to understand the limited means of communication available to Admirals of earlier times, but without some effort to put oneself in their shoes it is equally impossible to fully appreciate the tactics they were forced to employ.

My full rules try to do this. Contact me at [andy.callan@ntlworld.com](mailto:andy.callan@ntlworld.com) if you are interested.

*Andy Callan*

## A. Distances in Line

The normal distance between 2 friendly ships in line of battle is two cables



## B. Ship Records

You will need some method of showing mast losses, damage points and gunnery hits on each ship to remind you of how their movement and firing is affected. Rather than spoiling the look of the game by littering the table with chits or any other flotsam, this could be either

- a) in the form of a simple strip, glued to each ship's base, with hits marked off in pencil

ST	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<	‡	‡	‡	□	□	□	□	Damage	
PO	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

OR

- b) each Admiral should use ship Record Cards to keep track of any hits. Then the only way to judge the effectiveness of your shooting will be to see how enemy ships manoeuvre and fire back. This requires scrupulous honesty on behalf of the Players, of course, but if you have the luxury of an Umpire, then all the record keeping can be left to him.

### Example Ship Record Card

Add damage points and cross out gunnery boxes and masts as hits are suffered

<b>HMS Hornblower (74 guns) (3rd rate) Ship No. ( 1 )</b>													
<b>British</b>	<b>French</b>	<b>Spanish</b>	<b>Starboard</b>	<b>Broadside</b>	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	[8]	[9]
			<b>Port</b>	<b>Broadside</b>	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	[8]	[9]
<b>Damage</b>	[X]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
			<b>Foremast</b>	<b>Mainmast</b>				<b>Mizzen</b>					

## C. Wind and Movement Diagram

The rules use a squared playing surface and the ships move on headings which correspond to the eight principal points of the compass (N, NE, E, SE, S, SW, W, NW).

Copy this diagram and put on your playing surface, aligning the wind direction with the squares.

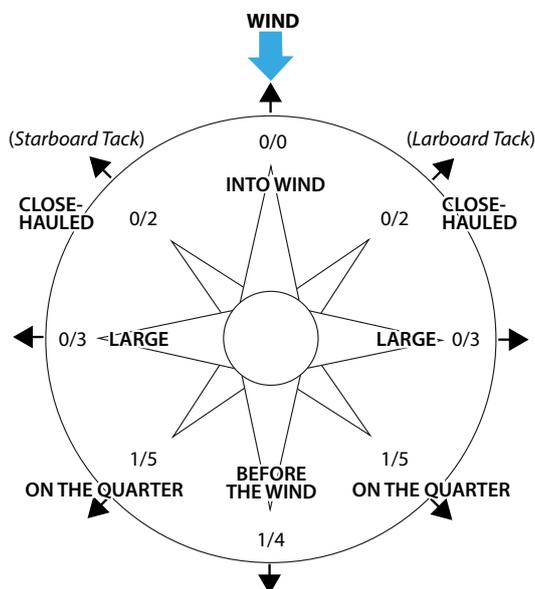
The numbers show the maximum move in squares (under full sail) and minimum move (under reduced or fighting sails) for the principal points of sailing under **Fresh Winds** (Beaufort Scale 4-5).

**In Strong Winds** (6-7) = minus 1 from the maximum if Close Hauled, plus 1 sailing Large, no change on other headings (as ships would reduce sail in these conditions unless fleeing the enemy). **In Light Winds** (1-3) = minus 1 (Close Hauled & Large), minus 2 (running before the wind and with the wind on the Quarter).

A ship can increase or reduce its rate of sailing by no more than 2 squares in a turn. So, a ship with the wind on the Quarter under easy sails making 3 squares, could go up to 5 or down to 1 next move, so long as it was signalled to do so or passed an Initiative Test (see 5.5). However, since a ship has no brakes (!) it can't come to an immediate stop, so even if making only 1 or 2 knots a ship's momentum means it must always move at least one square before it can heave-to (come to a standstill).

A ship that changes heading during the course of a move counts any squares moved on one heading towards the maximum allowed on another. So, a ship that moves 1 square Close Hauled and then turns to sail Large can only move 2 squares (3-1) on the new heading. If it moves 2 squares sailing Large and then turns to sail Close Hauled it gets no move on the new heading this turn, since it has already moved the maximum allowed (2 squares) if Close-Hauled.

A ship's movement is not affected when it has taken only 1 point of damage. But for every 2 points it loses 1 square of movement off its maximum (so, sailing Large, a ship with 4 points of damage – and no ship can take more than 4 – would lose 2 squares and so have a maximum speed of only 1 square). Lose 1 further square off the maximum movement for each mast lost. Note that limited damage will not affect a ship doing less than the maximum rate (eg under "fighting sails").



## D. Wearing and Tacking

A ship needs **all its masts** to do either of these complicated manoeuvres.

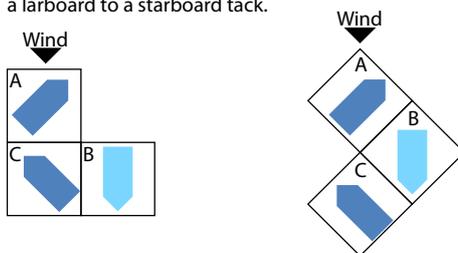
**WEARING** is slow but safe. Note loss of ground to Leeward

A = start of move 1

B = end of move 1

C = end of move 2

This example shows a change from a larboard to a starboard tack.

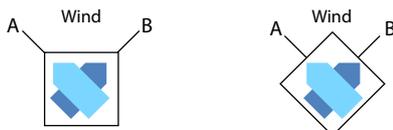


**TACKING** is faster but riskier than wearing. Ships must test for 'Missed Stays'.

A = position at the start of a move.

B = position at the end of the move.

This example shows a change from a starboard to a larboard tack.



**Wearing** is slow but safe. Note loss of ground to leeward.

**Tacking** is a real test of seamanship. Roll a dice for each ship attempting this manoeuvre (+1 for British ships, -1 for Spanish -1 for all ships in Light Winds). You need to score 4 or more to succeed. If a ship fails its roll then the tack is unsuccessful, the ship "misses stays" and ends up "in irons" – pointing directly into the wind. Next move it must begin to wear instead.

A ship which has taken **more than one Damage Point** cannot tack.



## E. Arcs of Fire and Ranges

The use of a squared grid does some strange things to Arcs of Fire, especially on the diagonals, but since this is the same for both sides it shouldn't be a problem once Players get used to it ... !

The arrow represents the firing ship, heading in the direction shown and the target is in one of the lettered squares, positioned on any heading. Photocopy the diagrams, re-sizing them so the squares are the same as on your playing surface. Then stick them on card to serve as gaming aids.

**Only broadsides count. Any fire from bow- and stern-chasers is disregarded in this game.**

Ships which are in the same square as each other fire at **Pistol Shot** with no deduction for range.

**M = Musket Shot** : 1 square across from broadside on (no deduction for range)

**BQ & SQ = Bow Quarter & Stern Quarter**. 1 across and 1 up/down. No deduction for range but count only half the Gunnery score (round up for Good ships). Usual adjustments for quality apply.

**PB = Point Blank** : 2 across and 1 up/down and 3 across and 2 up/down

(minus 1 or 2 off the firing ship's Gunnery Score)

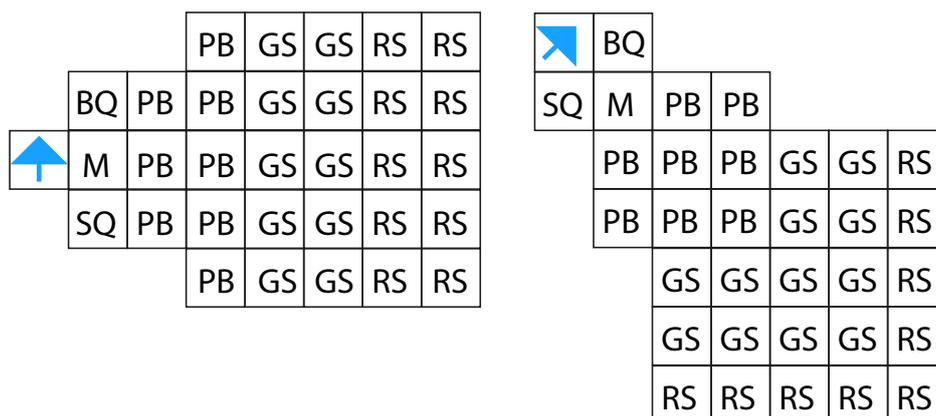
**GS = Gun Shot** : 4 across and 2 up/down and 5 across and 2 up/down (3 up/down diagonally) (minus 3 or 4 off the firing ship's Gunnery score)

*Note that at Gun Shot and shorter, the range deduction is always the same as the number of empty squares between the firer and the target.*

**RS = Random Shot** (extreme range)

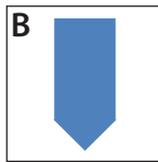
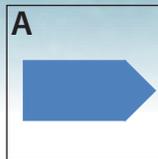
All Good & Average ships (of any Rate) roll just 1 dice and hit on a 6.

### Orthogonal and Diagonal Arcs of Fire Diagrams





## F. Gunnery Example



HMS *Ajax* (A) is firing at the French *Bucentaure* (B).

The British captain has skilfully manoeuvred his ship so she is firing her first broadside of the battle into the enemy's stern at very close range (Musket Shot).

Work out the Target Score from her Starboard broadside.

The basic Gunnery Score for a British 3rd Rate, is 5 (74 divided by 10 = 7.4, rounds up to 8 for a British ship, minus 3 for a 3rd Rate). This is adjusted as follows :-

There is no range deduction as there are no empty squares between the firer and the target.

Add 2 for a Stern Rake

Add 1 for a British Ship

Add 1 for her first shot of the battle

**Giving a final Target Score of 9.**

So, *Ajax* rolls 9 dice this turn.

Say the rolls are 1,2,2,3,4,5,5,6,6. Only the 5s and 6s count, giving a total of 4 hits.

The British Fleet has chosen to use the Optional Gunnery Doctrine Rule (see 4.3) so all the hits are inflicted on the target's hull.

Hits from a rake are split equally between a target's two broadsides, so the unfortunate *Bucentaure* (an 80-gun Third Rate) sees its initial Gunnery Score of 5 (80 divided by 10 = 8, minus 3) now reduced to 3 on each of its broadsides.