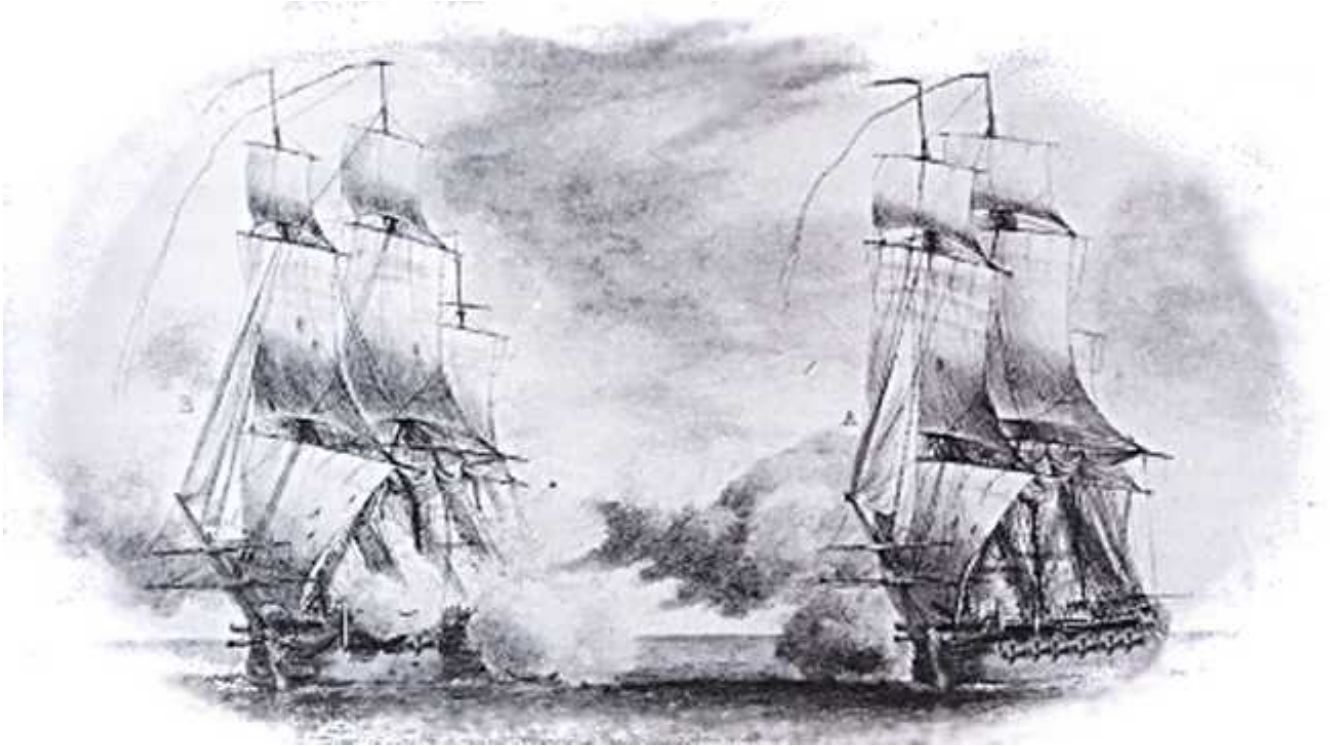


Captains Bold

A Game of Dueling Frigates



Gloriana's with her fathers, and her captains bold are sped
Who sailed beyond the sunset, who bartered, fought and bled
They went in trim-built frigates and clippers swift and tall,
The pride of Clyde and Mersey and the glory of Blackwall.
They fought with Turkish galleys and corsairs of Algiers,
And yelling painted savages and saucy privateers;
Gloriana's with her fathers, but the breed she knew remains,
While go the ships of Britain down all the long sea-lanes.

from *The Queen's Delight* (A ballad of Master Mariners)
Cicely Fox Smith

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I. INTRODUCTION:

Captains Bold is a game in which the players take the part of a frigate Captain involved in ship-to-ship combat during the height of the Age of Fighting Sail. In the process of playing the game, the players consider the types of tactical decisions made by their historical counterparts and explore the ways in which those decisions may have affected the outcome of single ship combats of that time.

The movement and combat systems in the game have been deliberately kept simple and somewhat stylized, in order not to distract the player from the commander's decision-making process with details and decisions that would typically have fallen within the purview of his subordinates. Likewise, the specifications of the vessels themselves have been abstracted to avoid making the game too much about the hardware.

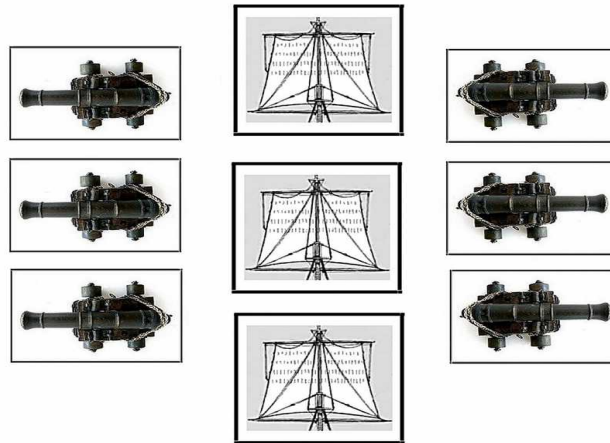
The game takes place on a playing area consisting of hexagonal tiles which have a triangular grid superimposed upon them, with lighter colored dots at the vertices. The ships are represented on the playing area by counters, flats or miniatures, and move from dot to dot (referred to in the rules as "points") along the gray lines of the grid.

Most of the components of the game are included in the files which comprise the game, but the players will need to provide several ordinary six-sided dice (a dozen or so should be sufficient) and about a dozen small markers of some kind; cardboard counters or coins will work just fine. Suggestions for printing out and mounting the game components are in Appendix C.

II. DEFINITIONS

Starboard and Larboard: These were the words used during the Age of Sail to indicate the right (starboard) and left (larboard) sides of the ship, as seen when facing towards the bow. ("Port" was gradually substituted for "Larboard", to avoid confusion between the two very similar sounding words when giving directions to the helmsman, but "larboard" did not disappear from the sailor's lexicon until well into the nineteenth century.)

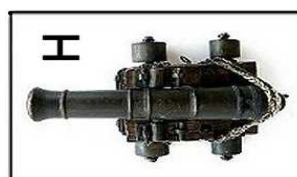
Ship: Each player's command is a single sailing frigate, represented on the playing area by a counter, a flat, or a miniature. Additionally, the ship's characteristics are displayed by an arrangement of markers called the Ship Display, kept off to the side of the playing area, which typically looks something like this (See Appendix A for more examples):



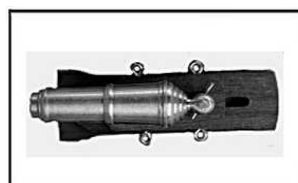
In addition to the Gun and Sail Markers called for by the type of frigate each Captain is commanding, place a blank counter, coin or marker of some kind on the guns in each battery to indicate that they have not yet fired. This marker will be removed when that battery fires its first broadside.

Gun Marker: The ship's battery is represented by 2 to 5 markers on each side of the display, with each marker representing a number of guns of a certain type. The larboard battery (left side of the ship as you face the bow) is on the left of the display, and the starboard battery (right side) is on the right. The two batteries are invariably identical at the start of the game.

Heavy Guns: Some frigates were equipped with guns heavier than their opponents, which gave them an advantage in range and destructive power. The exact caliber of the guns is not relevant to the game, but if one frigate's guns are designated as being heavier than its opponent's then they are represented by Gun Markers with an "H" in the corner, thus:



Carronades: Some ships, especially during the later Napoleonic wars, were equipped with short barreled, large bore artillery called carronades. While they were lighter to carry, and used smaller powder charges and crews, they had the offsetting disadvantage of having very short ranges. Ships armed with carronades will have Gun Markers that look like this:

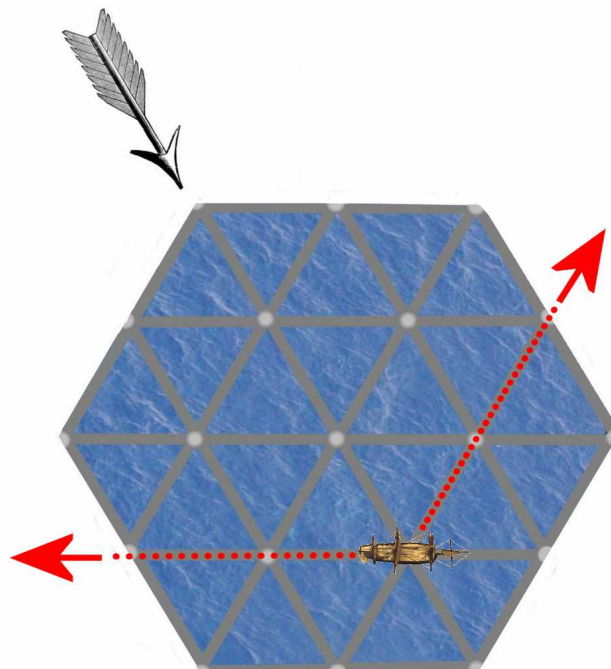


Sail Marker: Each ship begins the game with three Sail Markers, representing its movement capability. The markers begin the game face up, but the number that are face up may be adjusted by the player during the game to allow the ship to control the effect of the wind on its movement. Having all the markers turned face down would be the equivalent of "hove to", or having the sails braced in opposition to hold the ship in position. Just one marker face up corresponds roughly to sailing under reefed topsails, or just enough sail for the ship to keep under way without taking full advantage of the wind. Two markers face up indicates plain sail, usually topsails and topgallants. This sail setting, with the courses hauled up on the brails to keep them away from the activity on the upper deck, was typically used in battle because it combined a good amount of sail to maintain the ship's speed, with ease of manageability. All three Sail Markers turned up indicates a ship under full sail, which makes the most use of the wind and yields the most speed. On the other hand, it also puts extra stress on the ship's spars and rigging, which may result in additional damage during combat.

Turning Sail Markers face up is also used in the game to simulate the ship gaining speed after a maneuver (like tacking or backing sail), which temporarily halts its forward movement.

The Weather Gauge: A ship which is upwind of an opposing ship is said to hold the "weather gauge". This position gives the upwind ship a distinct advantage in influencing subsequent events. A player whose ship has the "weather gauge" of his opponent's ship decides which player will act first in the Wind and Sail Adjustment steps of the Wind Phase.

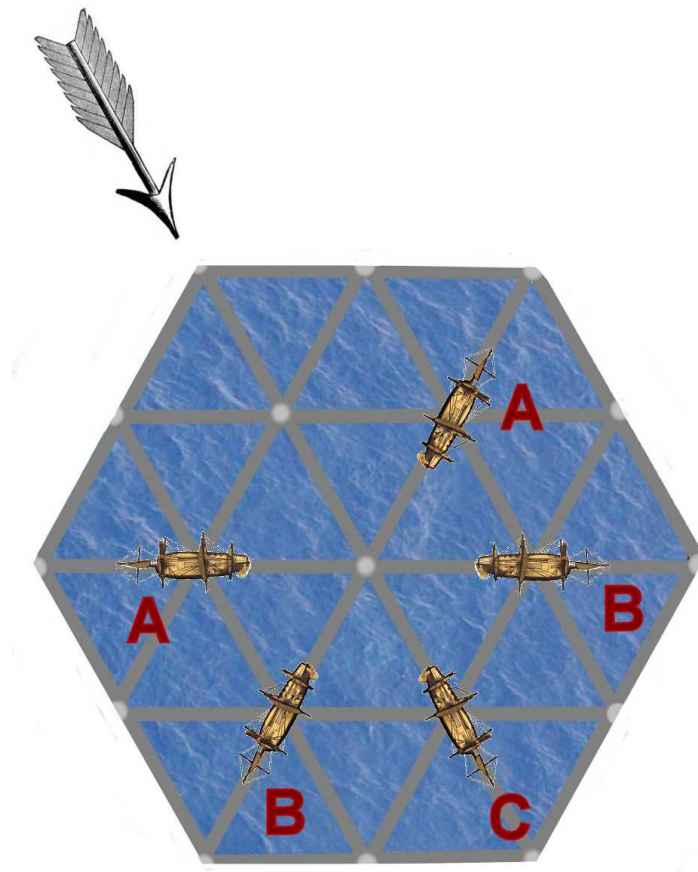
In the following illustration, the black arrow indicates the direction of the wind, and the ship graphic shows the position of the downwind ship. The red dotted arrows indicate the part of the play area relative to the opposing ship (the line of the red arrows and the entire area upwind of the arrows, inclusive) in which a ship must be located in order to have the "weather gauge".



Wind Points: At the beginning of each turn, in the Wind Step, each ship accumulates "Wind Points". The number of points accumulated depends upon how much sail the ship has set and upon its attitude to the wind.

If all of the ships Sail Markers are turned faced down, it will accumulate no Wind Points. If a player's ship has just one Sail Marker turned up, it will accumulate Wind Points each turn according to the following procedure:

In the illustration below, the black arrow indicates the direction of the wind. The ship graphics show the various attitudes to the wind that each ship may have. The ships marked with the letter "A" have the wind coming across the starboard or larboard bow, and are considered to be "close hauled". A ship in this attitude will accumulate 1 Wind Point each turn. The ships marked with the letter "B" have the wind coming across the starboard or larboard quarter, and are considered to be "sailing large", or on a "broad reach". This is the best point of sailing, in which a sailing vessel could make the most efficient use of the wind. Ships in this attitude will accumulate 3 Wind Points each turn. The ship marked with the letter "C" is considered to be "running before the wind". Ships in this attitude will accumulate 2 Wind Points each turn. Ships facing directly into the wind get no Wind Points.

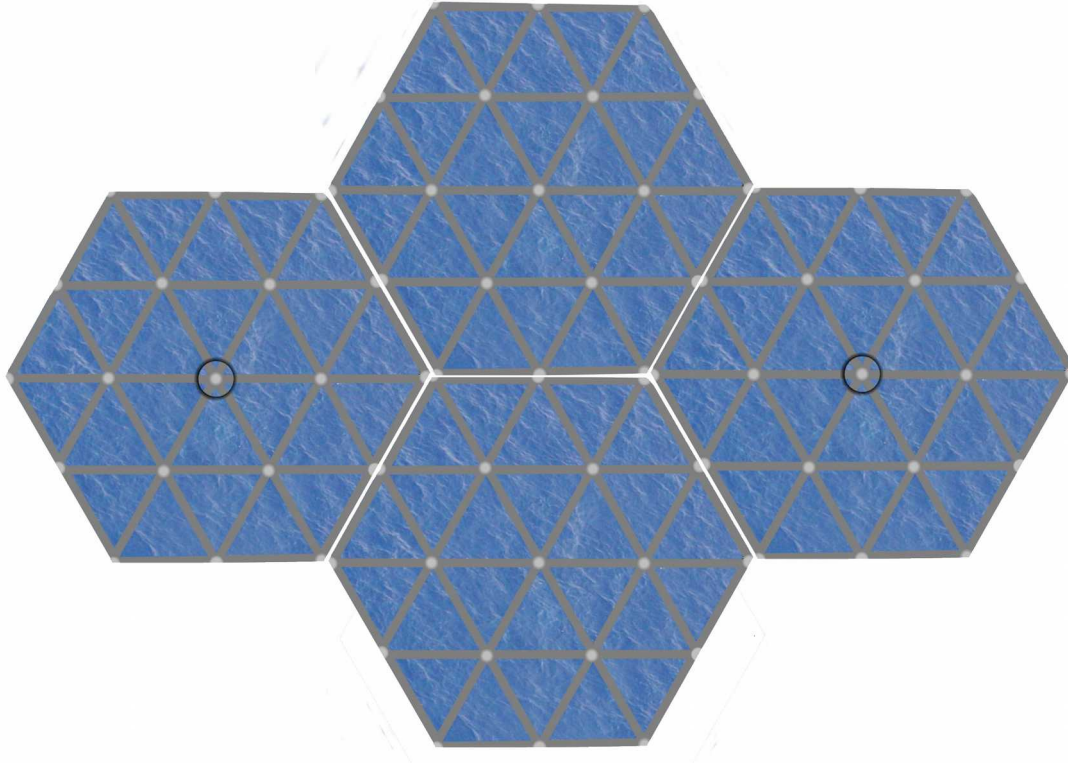


If a player's ship has two Sail Markers turned up, it will accumulate one extra Wind Point each turn, in addition to the above. If it has all three Sail Markers turned up, it will accumulate two extra Wind Points.

III. SETUP

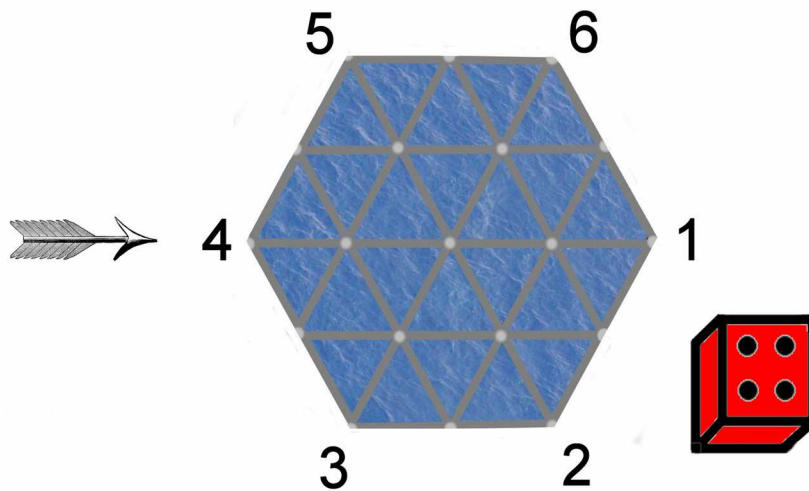
First, the players should decide what types of frigates they want to command for the game. Equally matched frigates were very common in ship-to-ship actions, but mismatched ships can provide some interesting tactical problems to solve (see Appendix B).

To begin, lay out four hexagons of the playing area as shown, with one of the players' ships on each of the points indicated by black circles:



The players may place their ships facing any of the six points adjacent to the one on which they start . . . during the game, the ships will always be kept facing an adjacent point, lined up with the gray lines connecting them. To determine which direction the wind is blowing (a critical factor in this type of combat!) one player will indicate one vertex of a hexagon in the playing area, and the other will roll a die. The vertex indicated by the first player is the direction from which the wind is coming if the die roll is a 1; if the roll is higher than a 1, then count clockwise around the hexagon until the vertex is reached that corresponds to the die roll. Place the wind indicator adjacent to the playing area, pointing in the direction the wind is blowing.

For example, if the player indicated the vertex on the right (marked with a 1 in the following illustration), and the die roll was 4, the wind would be coming from the left:



Place Sail Markers and Gun Markers to form a Ship Display for the type of frigate each player will be commanding (see the Appendices for descriptions of the types of frigates). All markers in the Ship Display begin the game facing up.

IV. TURN SEQUENCE:

1. Sail Phase
 - a. Wind Step
 - b. Movement Step
 - c. Sail Adjustment Step
2. Gunnery Phase
 - a. Fire/Reload Step
 - b. Damage Step

STEP 1a. In the Wind Step, each player calculates how many Wind Points his ship will acquire, adds that number to the total Wind Points remaining from the previous turn, and adjusts the ship display to reflect the new total. The total number of Wind Points may be indicated by a stack of markers, or a small die placed near the ship display with the total number of Wind Points indicated by the number of pips showing, or by keeping track of the total on a small card or piece of paper.

STEP 1b. In the Movement Step, any ship that has three or more Wind Points must make a movement. If both ships are moving, the player whose ship has the weather gauge may choose whether to move first, or to allow his opponent to move first. If neither ship has the weather gauge, an initiative roll is made: each player rolls a die (re-rolling ties), and the player with the higher roll moves first. A normal move consists of advancing the ship to the next point ahead and then optionally turning to face one point to the left or right of its current heading. An additional turn may be made as long as the ship's bow does not come up into the wind (changing to attitude "A" in the illustration of "Wind Points" in the Definitions, or facing directly into the wind). The moving ship's Wind Points total is reduced by three. Ships which still have three Wind Points remaining after the move will make a second move. If both ships are making a second move, the order in which they move is determined in the same way as for the first move.

Exceptions to the normal move may occur when the ship is either "close hauled" or facing directly into the wind:

1. When the ship is "close hauled", the player may choose to "back sail" instead of making a normal move. This maneuver was executed by bracing the yards around so that the wind would strike the front of the sails, killing the ship's forward momentum and bringing the ship to a near halt. If the player chooses this option, remove all of that ship's Wind Points and turn all of its Sail Markers face down. The ship does not move.
2. When the ship is "close hauled", it may be turned so that it is facing directly into the wind (this is called "tacking", and was a technique used to bring a ship quickly to the opposite side of the wind, as opposed to "wearing" which was turning away from the wind through a long arc until the wind was on the opposite side of the ship). The player may only choose this option if his ship still has all three of its Sail Markers. If the player chooses this option, remove all of that ship's Wind Points and turn all of its Sail Markers face down. Tacking ships may not have any of their Sail Markers face up; they must remain face down until the Sail Adjustment Step of the following turn. In the following turn, the only move a tacking ship may make is to turn one point ("pay off") either to starboard or larboard.

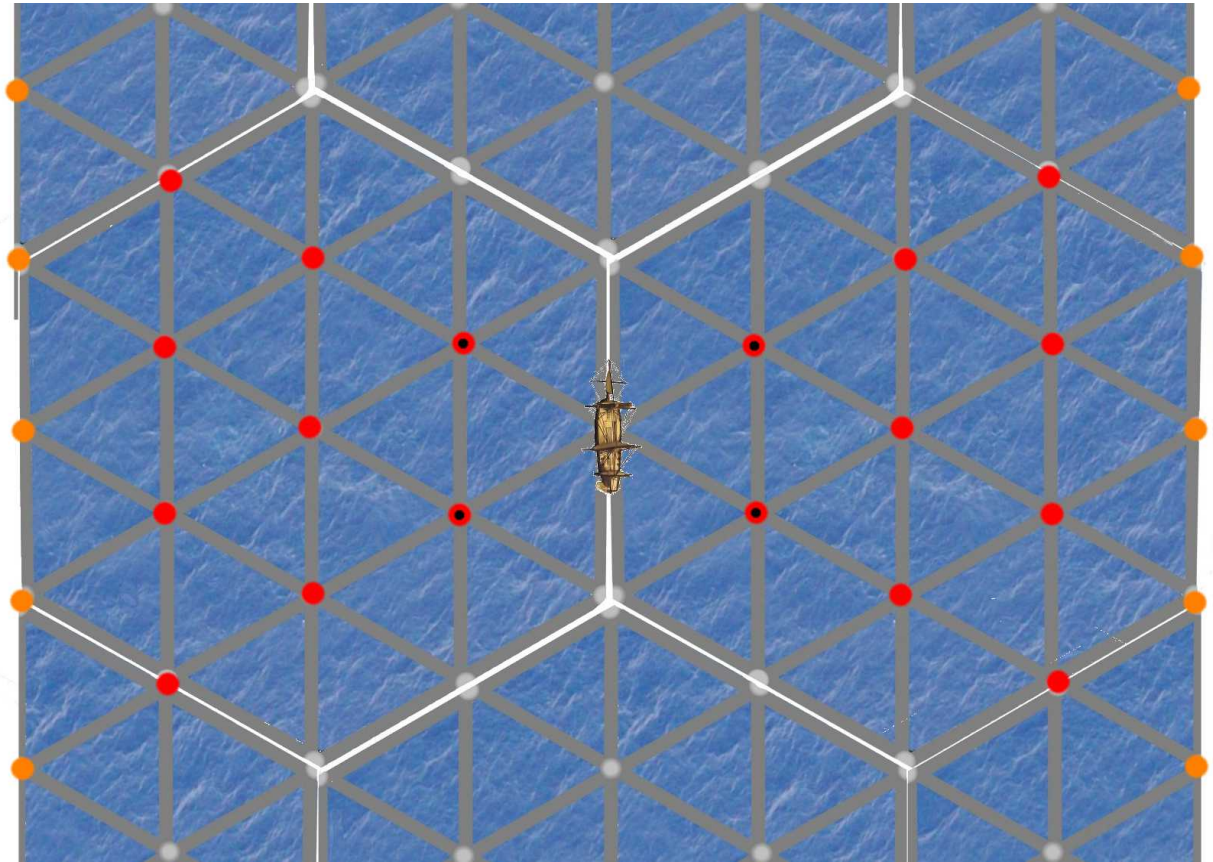
During the game, whenever a ship moves to the edge of the playing area place one of the unused hexagons ahead of it to extend the playing area in that direction. Slide the entire playing area over, if necessary, to keep it near the middle of the table.

Anytime one of the ships moves onto the same point as the enemy ship, a boarding action is initiated. (Many ship-to-ship battles ended with one ship boarding the other.) The boarding action is resolved as follows: each player takes the total number of Gun Markers remaining on his Ship Display (both batteries) and adds the result of a single die roll. The player with the lower total loses a Gun Marker; it doesn't matter which battery the Marker is taken from, since the boarding action will end the game. If the totals are equal then both players lose a Gun Marker, unless both players have only one left, in which case the tie is rerolled. The process is repeated until one player has no remaining Gun Markers, and his opponent wins the game.

STEP 1c. In the Sail Adjustment step, each player may turn one of their ship's Sail Markers face up or face down. The order in which they do so is determined in the same way as the order of movement. If the player turns all of his Sail Markers face down, any accumulated Wind Points are discarded.

STEP 2a. In the Fire/Reload step, the player may either fire or reload one of the batteries of guns on his ship.

In order to be eligible to fire, the ship must have the opposing ship in the arc of fire of the guns on one side of his ship or the other. In the following illustration, the colored circles indicate the points on which the target ship must be in order to be fired upon. The red circles indicate the points that normal long guns may fire at; the orange circles indicate the additional points that may be fired upon by Heavy Guns. Carronades may only fire at targets on the two points adjacent to each side of the ship, which are indicated by red circles with a black dot in the center.



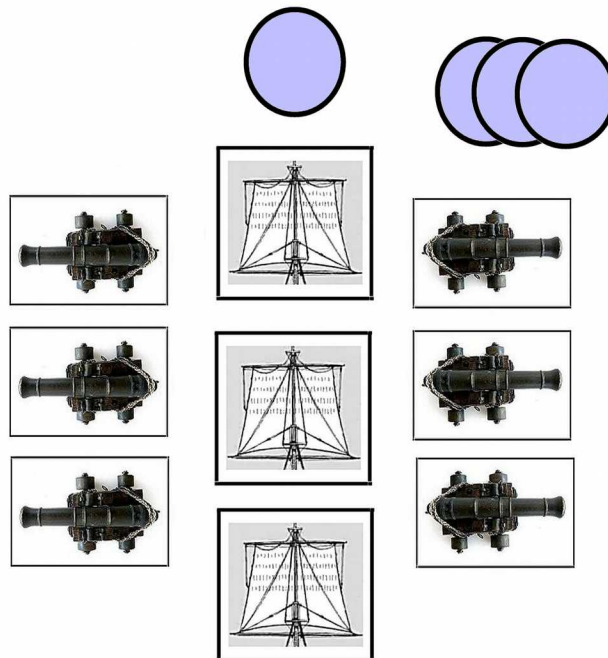
Before firing his guns, the player announces whether he will be firing high (on the up roll, trying to damage the enemy's masts and sails) or low (on the down roll, trying to damage the guns and crew). To execute gunnery, the player turns all the Gun Markers of the battery which is firing (the one which is facing the opposing ship) face down to indicate that they will need to be reloaded, and rolls one die for each Gun Marker in the battery. (This is for normal gunnery. In certain situations, more than one die for each Gun Marker will be rolled; see the Special Cases listed below.)

Any die roll that exceeds the distance between the ships by at least 2 scores a hit. (Again, there are certain situations in which the number to roll in order to score a hit may be modified; see the Special Cases listed below.) The distance is determined by counting the number of points in as straight a line as possible from the firing ship to the target.

Each die that scores a hit is re-rolled to determine the location of the hit(s). If the player fired high, a 1 scores a hit on the battery of the target ship facing the firing ship, and a 2-6 scores a hit on the sails. If the player fired low, a 1-5 scores a hit on the battery, and a 6 scores a hit on the sails. If the battery of the target ship facing the firer has no Gun Markers left, any hit(s) on it are marked on the opposite battery. Mark the hits above the damaged area on the Ship Display with counters, coins or markers of some kind.

A battery which has its Markers turned face down may not fire, and needs to be reloaded. If the player chooses this option, he simply turns the Markers face up and they will be available to fire on the subsequent turn.

In this sample Ship Display, the player has marked one hit on his ship's sails and three on his starboard battery. He will have to remove one Gun Marker from his starboard battery in Step 2b because it has accumulated three hits.



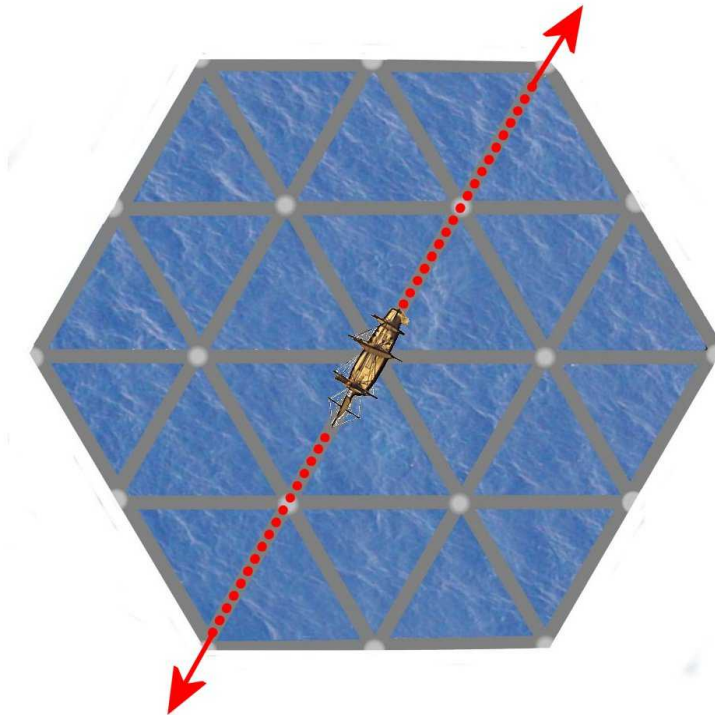
Gunnery takes place and any damage is applied to the opposing ships simultaneously.

Special Cases: In certain situations the resolution of gunnery will be modified, as described below.

1. **Initial Broadside:** The first broadside fired by each battery in a given action is typically more devastating than subsequent broadsides, by virtue of the guns having been loaded and aimed more carefully and the gunners not being as distracted by powder smoke and opposing fire. When a battery fires its initial broadside, add 1 to each of the dice rolled to determine the number of hits. Remove the counter that was placed on that battery during setup to indicate that it had not yet fired.
2. **Carronades:** If the firing ship is armed with carronades and is close enough to the enemy to use them, the player will roll two dice for each Carronade Marker.
3. **Heavy Guns:** The guns of a ship armed with Heavy Gun Markers will not only reach farther than normal long guns, but they will do more damage. Dice rolled for hits from Heavy Guns need to exceed the distance between the ships by 1 in order to score a hit.
4. **Full Sail Damage:** When a ship under full sail takes sail damage, additional damage may occur. If the opposing ship scores any hit on the sails of a ship with all three of its Sail Markers turned face up, re-roll the dice that scored the hit(s). Any result(s) high enough to have scored a hit in the initial roll scores an additional hit on the target ship's sails.

5. Rake: If the firing ship is located on a point directly behind or in front of the target ship, the player will roll two dice per Gun Marker because of the extra damage done by round shot passing down the length of the target ship. Hits to the battery of a target ship that is being raked are distributed randomly between the two batteries: re-roll the low hits and apply the odd results as hits to the larboard battery and even results to the starboard battery.

In the following illustration, the red dotted lines ending in arrows indicate the points on which an attacking ship must be located, relative to the target in order to get the benefit of raking gunnery.

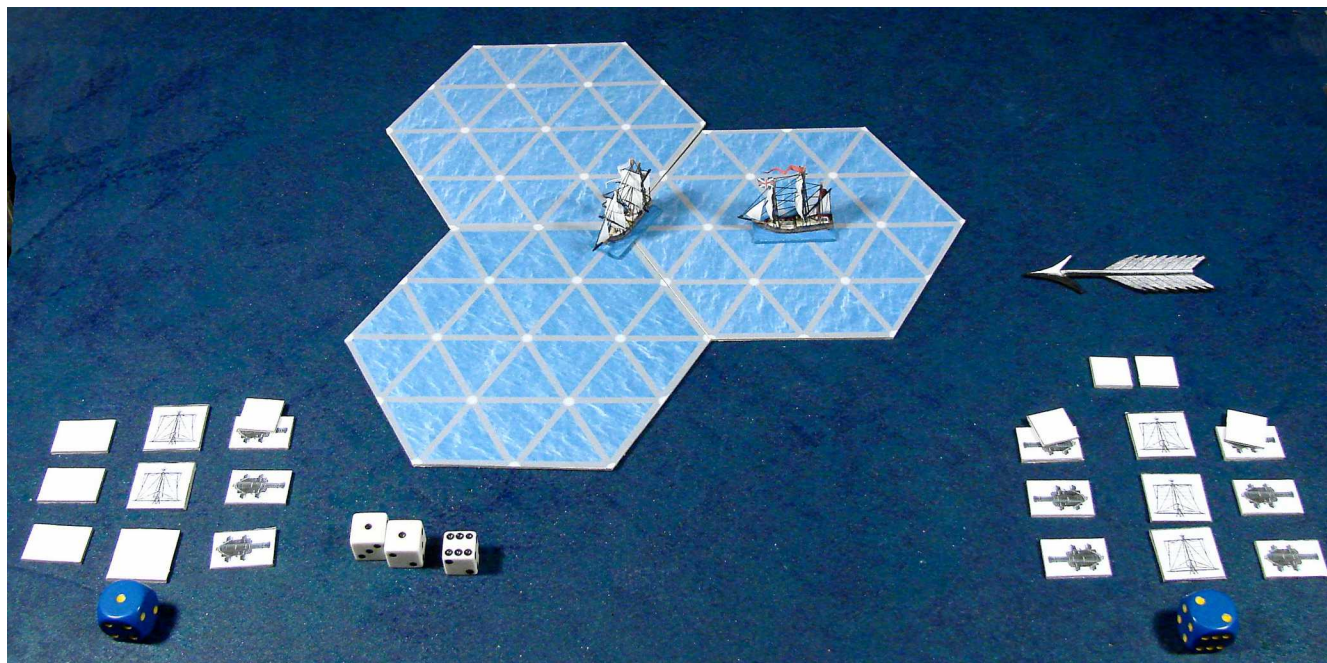


These modifications are cumulative; that is, more than one may apply simultaneously to the same gunnery attack. For example, a carronade-armed ship raking its opponent with its initial broadside would roll four dice for each carronade Gun Marker, and add 1 to each die. (Hint: don't let this happen to you!)

STEP 2b. In the Damage Step each player loses a Marker from each column for every three hits that have been marked on it. If the ship is a sloop or small frigate, it will lose a Marker for every two hits, to reflect the fact that their structural components were not as heavily built as larger vessels, and thus more easily damaged. To represent the difficulty of causing damage to the very stoutly built American Heavy Frigate, which had timbers and spars of similar dimensions to a ship of the line, remove a Marker for every four hits.

When the Marker is removed, also remove the hit markers that caused the damage from that column of the Ship Display. If there is more than one type of gun in the battery, roll a die: on a result of 1 or 2, remove a Carronade marker, and on a result of 3 or more remove a long gun Marker. If the damaged ship has both face-up and face-down Sail Markers, remove a face-up one.

When all the steps have been completed, begin again with Phase 1, Step 1a.



A game of "Captains Bold" in progress.

Stand to your guns! my hearts of oak,
Let not a word on board be spoke,
Victory soon will crown the joke;
Be silent and be ready.

Ram home your guns and sponge them well,
Let us be sure, the balls will tell,
The cannon's roar shall sound their knell,
Be steady, boys, be steady.

The white waves heaving high, my boys!
The good ship tight and free;
While the hollow oak our palace is,
Our heritage the sea.

- sea chantey, ca. 1804

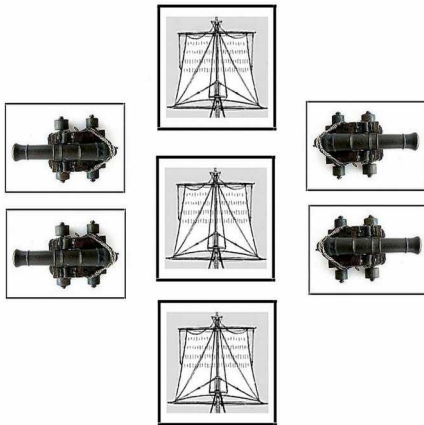
V. APPENDICES

Appendix A - Ship Displays

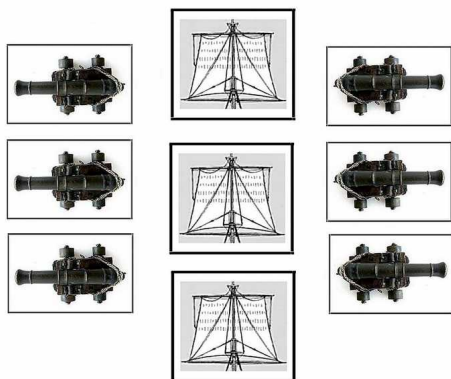
This section shows Ship Displays that can be used to represent various types of frigates in use during the golden age of fighting sail.

For the purposes of this game, we will divide the era into an "early" and a "late" period. The dividing line between the two we will set at about 1780, around which time several refinements to the ships that had dominated the oceans of the world for almost two centuries raised them to their peak of deadly efficiency (the replacement of the lateen mizzensail with a gaff, the use of copper plates to reduce the fouling of the hull, and the introduction of the carronade, for example). The first five are typical frigates of the period, representing the main types used by most European nations. The last two are specialized types developed later in the period by the United States Navy.

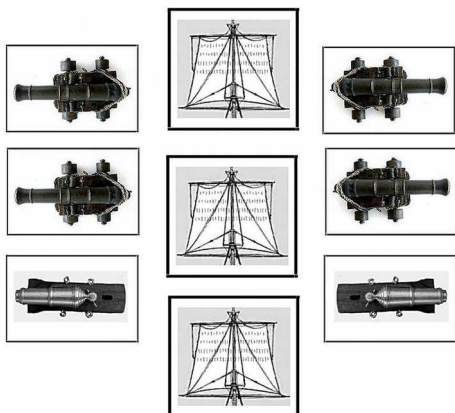
Early large sloop/small frigate, 20-28 guns (Seven Years War, American War of Independence, Fourth Anglo-Dutch War)



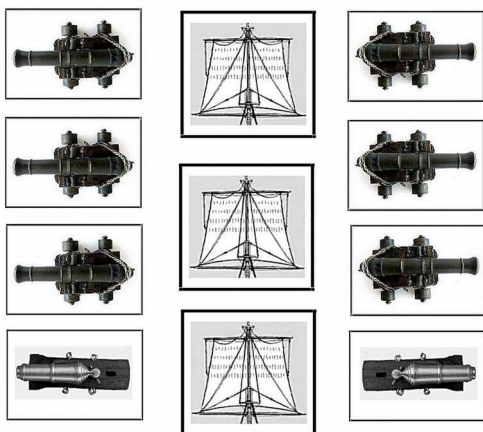
Early 32-38 gun frigate (Seven Years War, American War of Independence, Fourth Anglo-Dutch War)



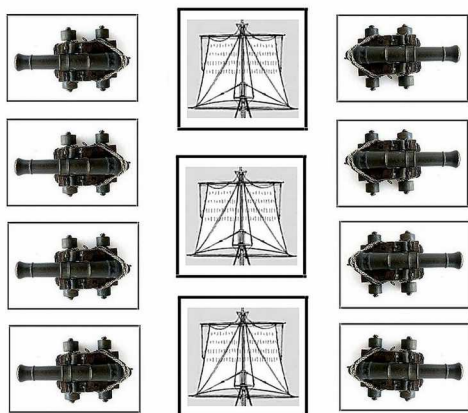
Late large sloop, small frigate, 20-28 guns (Napoleonic Wars, War of 1812)



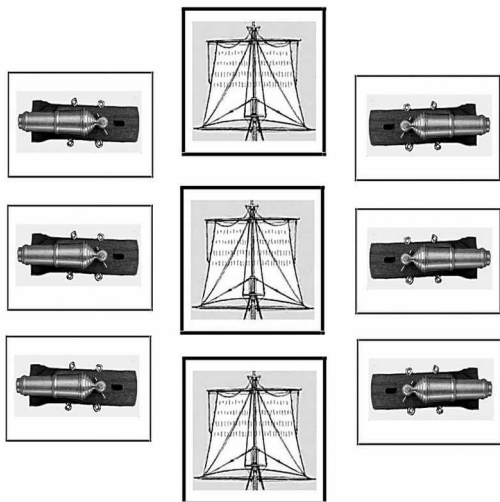
Late 32-38 gun frigate (Napoleonic Wars, War of 1812)



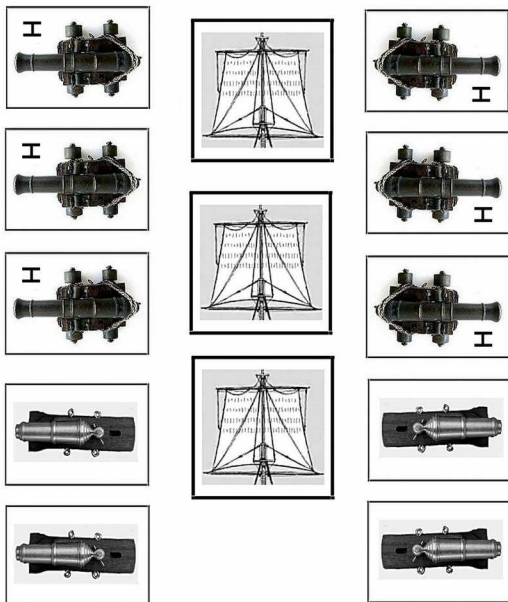
Large 40-44 gun frigate (typically used by France, Spain and allies throughout the period)



Carronade-armed frigate (USS Essex - Napoleonic Wars, War of 1812)



American heavy frigate (USS Constitution - Napoleonic Wars, War of 1812)



Appendix B - Matchups

Most single ship actions took place between ships that were roughly equal in force. This is because a Captain whose ship was outgunned by a potential opponent would generally flee rather than face almost certain defeat. The act of avoiding combat with a more powerful opponent did not reflect any dishonor on the Captain or crew of the outgunned vessel, but occasionally a Captain would accept single combat at a disadvantage if he thought his command was up to the task (or if he had misjudged his opponent's force).

Most games of *Captains Bold* will be between ships of equal force, but some interesting games can be had by matching ships of differing capabilities against each other. Pitting a typical frigate against a carronade-armed frigate will illustrate why frigate Captains preferred a mix of weapons on board their ship. Matching up an American heavy frigate with a typical late frigate will show why the Americans were so successful in single ship actions during the War of 1812.

There were instances where a larger frigate took on two smaller opponents. Having one player command the larger vessel, and either one or two players command the two smaller ones will present the participants with some interesting tactical problems.

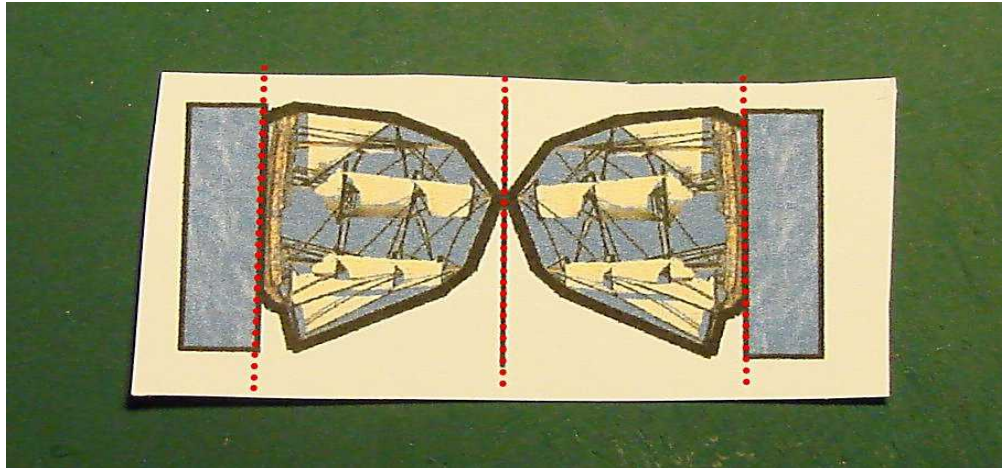
Appendix C - Making the Game Components

A separate file is provided with all the graphics needed to construct the components for the game. Print this file out on a sheet of heavy cardstock (65 to 90#, or 175 to 250 gsm work best). You will need to print out the page of hexagons used for the playing area more than once; there are two hexagons on the page, and a minimum of six will be needed to assure the smooth transition of the moving ships from one hexagon to another during the game. After printing, spray the sheets with a matte varnish or fixative to protect the surface while they are being mounted, and during play.

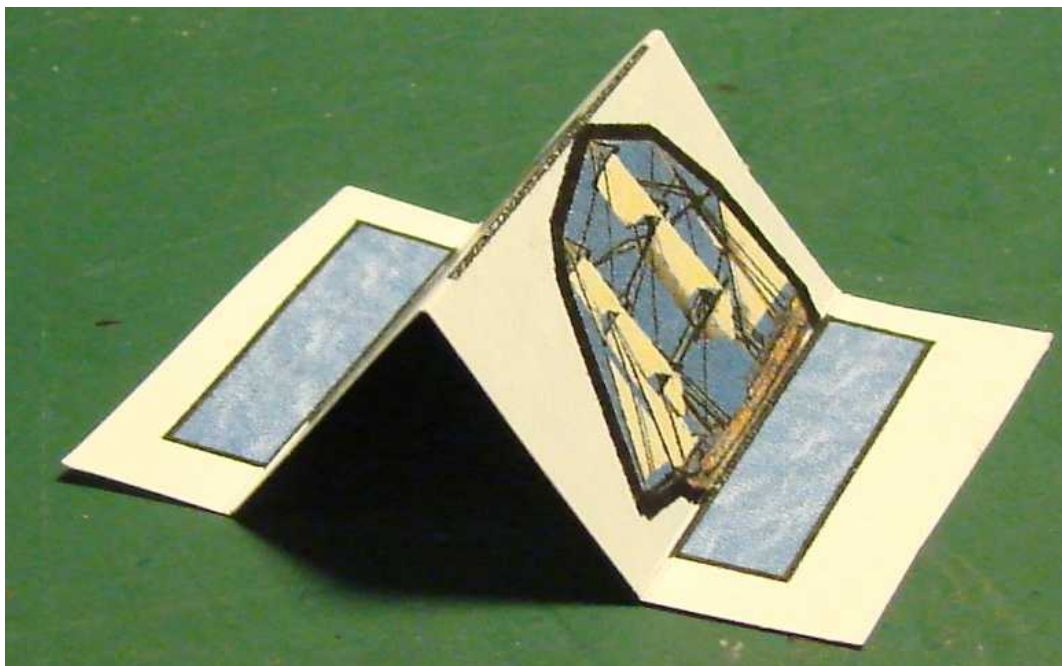
The hexagons should be glued to illustration board, foamcore or something similar, and then cut out carefully along the outlines. Spray adhesive works well for this, or you can dry mount them using rubber cement. Alternatively, they can be printed out on self-adhesive paper and then stuck to the board. A sharp hobby knife and metal straightedge will work best for cutting them out. Several even, shallow cuts will work better than trying to cut all the way through with a single cut. Instead of spray varnish or fixative, you may wish to laminate them (before cutting them out) to make them more durable. Clear lamination is available in rolls or sheets from office or art supply stores. The section of the page with the counters and markers should be mounted in the same way.

There are counters included to represent the ships on the playing surface, but the visual aspect of the game can be improved by using flats or miniatures. The sample combat on the website uses cardstock miniatures from War Artisan's Workshop, scaled down to fit the playing area. (Specifically, I used the 1:900 scale frigate model, but printed it out at 66% making it nominally 1:1350.) A 1:2000 scale (Valiant) model would work well, or one of the smaller frigate models from one of the 1:1200 scale lines (Skytrex, GHQ, or Langton). Larger models could be used if the playing area hexagons are printed out at a larger size.

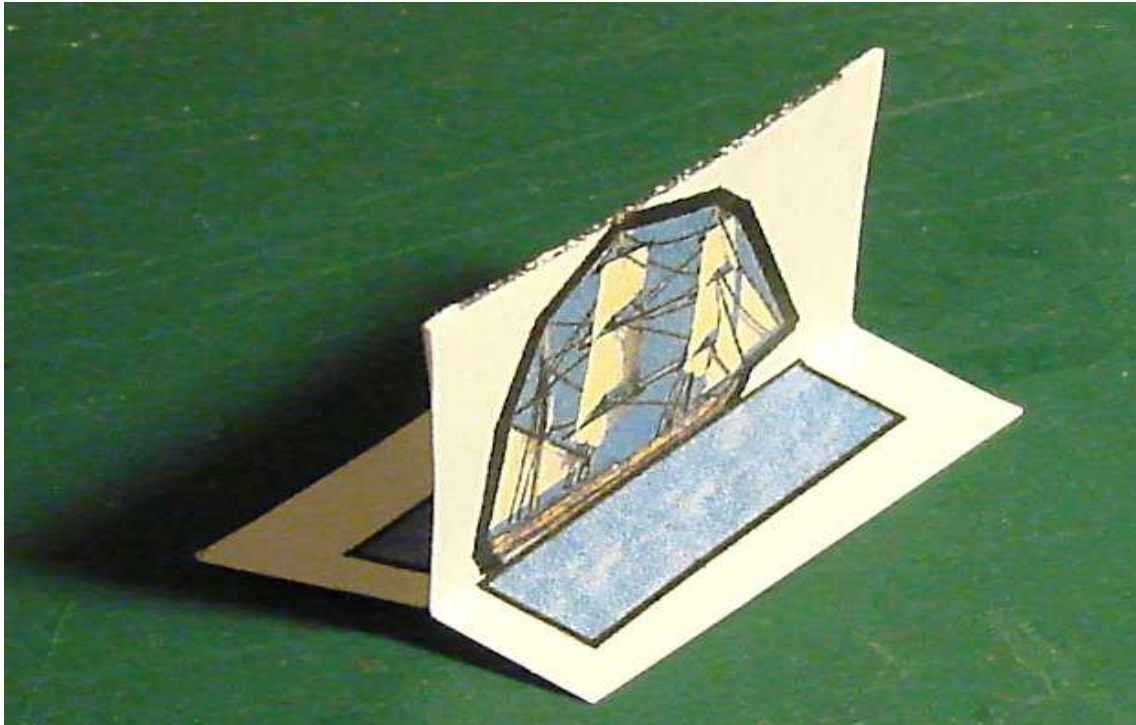
To construct the flats included on the components sheet, cut out the parts for the flats as shown and score the part along the lines indicated by dotted red lines.



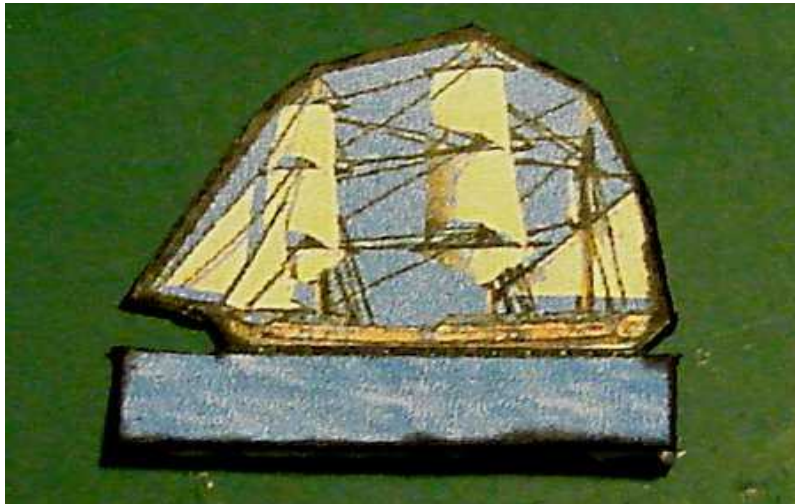
Fold the part into the shape shown in the photo.



Spread a thin layer of glue onto the back of one of the ship outlines, being careful not to get any on the rectangular base portion of the flat. Hold the two sides of the flat together for a few seconds.



When the glue is dry, fold the part flat again, and trim it along the heavy black outlines. Tint the edges with a felt tip marker to disguise the cut edges.



Glue the rectangular base parts to a piece of heavy cardboard (like illustration board) or thin, soft wood (like balsa or basswood). When the glue has dried, cut it out along the black outline.

Fold the rectangular flaps on the bottom of the ship flat outward and glue them down to the base. This will help the flat stand upright and add a little weight to keep it from moving around on the playing area.



Ready to play! The flats are shown here on one of the playing area hexagons.



For a walk-through of a complete game, with turn by turn illustrations and commentary, see the Rules page at www.warartisan.com/rules.

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