

Eight Bells

Rules For Sailing Ships in the Age of Sail

by

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Version 1.0

Introduction

These rules are intended to fight naval actions in the age of sail and cover small actions of a single vessel a side up to the larger battles like Trafalgar with many ships aside.

The timeframe for these rules is 1660 through to 1860 Which have been split into two sub periods which are (Early) 1660 to 1760 and (Late) 1760 to 1860.

The main rules have been written for the period 1760 to 1860 with the earlier period covered in the optional rules section.

They have designed to be a mostly point and select set of rules with very little or no typing needed to set up and play or explanations needed to explain how they work.

We hope the game will provide many hours of fun and enjoyment as you learn to sail and maneuver your ships across the high seas.

Items required to play

A small number of D6 per player ideally 3 per player.

The App has an automatic die roller for those who wish not to roll the dice through you will have to put your die scores into the program at certain points , some parts of the rules will require you to roll a few dice.

A tape measure marked in centimeters.

A ship angle indicator

A wind direction arrow.

A “N” marker to indicate north on the table.

A compass rose.

A set of markers for special effects.

A play area of 1 meter square for smaller actions of 1 or 2 ships aside.

A number of ship models.

Some cotton wool to indicate when a ship has fired a broadside.

A set of sequence cards, 3 red and 3 blue

Order markers and ship damage markers.

We have supplied a number of items which you may wish to print out at the end of the rules.

Scales

The rules are designed for 1:1200 scale models. The ground scale is 1 mm = 1 yard.

The time scale is 1 move = 2 minutes.

A move is a set of 6 sequence cards.

Ship Construction

All aspects of ship and fleet construction please refer to the eight bells app document.

Shore Batteries (optional)

These are classed as the relevant number of guns according to a ship however they will not suffer any sail damage and will not move.

Their broadside angle will be determined by the specific scenario.

Floating Batteries (optional)

Floating batteries are the same as shore batteries but their broadside angle will be the same as a normal ship.

Note :-

For shore and floating batteries you will need to add an equivalent ship and manually edit them in the app for the game. refer to the app document on how to do this.

Start of Game

Both players roll 1d6 the higher score determines the wind direction the lower score decides which table edge to start from and places his ships on the table.

The other player then places his ships on the table and no closer than extreme range and in any direction however no ships may be placed with their wind to the fore (pointing into the wind).

Before the start of the first turn each ship may be given an order counter, this is placed face down next to the relevant ship

A general fleet order counter may be given to the fleet as a whole

Any ship order counter will override the fleet order.

The sequence cards are then shuffled ready for the first turn

Weather

This is part of setting up the game you decide the wind speed and direction.

You may see an alert box pop up during play asking you to check for wind direction and wind speed change at the start of the next command card drawn.

There is more information on this in the app document.

Weather Change

The player who draws the next command card during the game which maybe at the start of the turn or part way through the turn rolls 1d6 wind speed change.

On the roll of a 6 the wind speed changes which will increase in strength by one band On a roll of a 4,5 or 6 or decrease in strength by one band on a roll of 1,2 or 3.

The opposing player now rolls 1d6 for wind direction change. On the roll of a 1 the wind direction will change by one compass point.

A roll of 1,2 or 3 the wind will change by 1 point clockwise or on a roll of 4,5 or 6 counter clockwise.

All ships which have been effected by the wind change must use this new wind direction on their next action card.

This may mean the ship is now facing into the wind, in which case the ship must on its next action card turn with the wind 1 point regardless of damage that it might have suffered during the game.

If the wind is calm then ships will not move except those being towed by boats being rowed or rowed them selves at a maximum move of 1d6.

if the wind is a light air the maximum speed will be 2d6 from their movement speed.

Playing the game

Turn sequence

A turn is the turning and acting upon a set of six cards.

once all cards have been acted upon the turn is over and a new turn is started with the shuffling of the cards.

Each fleet has a set of 3 cards, these together with the opposing fleets cards are shuffled together to make a turn deck for next turn

The first card drawn is for that fleets command, repairs, signaling, and boarding actions The second card may be the same for the opposing fleet or an action card for that fleet.

As an example the cards drawn may turn out like this for this turn but maybe totally different for next turn.

Example:-

red command , red actions , blue command , blue actions , blue actions , red actions

On an action card each may do any or all the following move, fire, work out collisions however you may only fire each broadside of a ship only once during the turn.

Once all cards have been drawn and acted upon the turn has finished and the cards are then re shuffled and a new turn begins

Orders and Signaling

Each fleet may have one or more admirals for each of its squadrons.

A squadron may be any number of ships that the players wish.

These commanders may issue orders to an individual ship or their squadron in the command card phase of their turn but they may not issue orders to only part of their squadron

The orders are for the following turn and will be received only if the sender and receiver of the orders are visible to each other and within medium range. There must be a full line of sight between ships.

A set of pre defined orders have been listed but you can make your own if you wish.

1. Increase Sail
2. Decrease Sail
3. Engage the Enemy
4. Disengage from the Enemy
5. Come To Heading (n, s, etc) (compass point direction)
6. Fire as Your Guns Bare (if not ordered ships cannot rake an enemy ship)
7. Fire at Hull
8. Fire at Sails

These orders will be supplied as counters that you can print out if you wish. It is not intended to keep track of orders on the computer.

If a ship has not received an order it will follow the ship in front and try to keep the same distance between it and the ship in front.

If it has previously received orders it will continue with those orders.

Damaged ships must try to keep up this may mean increasing sail more than what the other ships are set at if the damaged ships cant keep up they will drop out of line but still try to head in the general direction of the fleet.

Sailing

Please see the app document on how to use the sailing screen.

Ships will generally roll 3d6 and chose either the total of the 3d6 and select the relevant scores on the app or the highest d6 and select that score in the app , the other scores being a 1 in the app. This then gives the relevant speed for that ship at that time during the game.

If the ship is damaged then some movement will be deducted

Ships are only allowed to turn up to 2 compass points in each action card phase which may or may not be at the same time.

If you have finished moving all your ships then you have finished this action card

Slow or fast ships are handled by the player/GM there is nothing in the app for these options.

Ship Attitude indicator

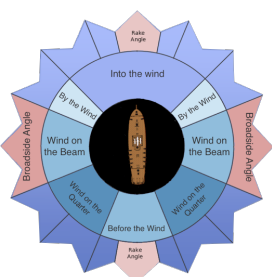
You will need a ship attitude indicator which you use for determining the ships attitude to the wind and gunnery angles.

By determining the ships attitude to the wind a number of d6 are rolled to see how much movement that ship has to make.

A ship may choose the total of the d6 or the highest d6 rolled to determine its move which must be put into the program to determine the ships actual move.

The ships attitude to the wind at the start of that ships action card determines that's ships move for that action card

ship attitude indicator is supplied at the end of the rules



Sail settings

There are 6 sail settings a ship may use. These may only be increased or decrease by 1 level in each action card drawn and which will be set during the command card phase for that fleet.

A ship may if it wishes “Let Fly” its sails. This means it has set its sails to the lowest setting and can only increase the sail setting once per turn.

A ship which “Lets Fly” will only drift with the wind 1d6.

Ships which suffer sail damage will have their sailing speed reduced.

Crew Quality Sailing

Poor crews 1 turn to raise sails by 1 setting

Average crews 1 turn to raise sails by 2 settings

Good crews 1 turn to raise sails by 3 settings

Veteran crews 1 turn to raise sails by 4 settings

Elite crews 1 turn to raise sails by 5 settings

Tacking

This requires 2 complete action cards in the same turn and the ship must be on a beam wind.

On the first action card the ship is turned directly into the wind and on the second action card the ship is moved into the opposite beam wind.

During this maneuver the ship remains stationary and does not drift.

The player must also announce this intention to all players before any other actions are performed by the ship, the ship may fire during this maneuver.

Special Ships (optional)

Bomb / Fire vessels

Once these vessels have been set they will continue on their course until they have collided with a ship,

They may not change speed or direction as it is assumed they have either no or very little crew which will abandon ship at the last possible moment.

When the bomb/Fire vessel has collided with a ship the this vessel will ignite the struck ship with a small fire.

the target ship must try to move away from the bomb vessel in the next action card for its turn or have a fresh small fire start each turn

This will need to be put out when the next command card is drawn for that sides turn.

The bomb/fire vessel will drift with the wind 1d6 each action phase of the fleet owners turn and will remain on fire for the rest of the game. however it may not alter course except to respond to wind changes.

Slow Ships (optional)

Some ships by their design were inherently slow those ships may not roll a 3rd d6 for their movement.

Fast Ships (optional)

these ships are smaller than 40 guns , they also will need to have veteran or elite crew.

they are allowed to add an additional 6cm move to their move only if they are quartering or before the wind , they also need to be at full sail.

This category also applies to the latest ships laid down just before the widespread introduction of steam.

Towing

Ships that require towing can only launch or recover their boats in the command phase.

Gunnery

Please see the app document on how to use the gunnery screen

The gunnery ranges are as follows:-

Musket 0 - 7cm

Close 8 - 20cm

Medium 21cm - 35 cm

Long 36cm - 60cm

Extreme 61cm - 100cm

Ammo

Ball may be fired at any range.

Double shot is only effective at close or musket range.

Chain is effective at musket , close or medium range at sails but not very effective at the hull.

Triple shot is only effective at close or musket range at the hull.

All angles and ranges are measured from the ships main mast to the targets main mast.

Once you have finished a ships actions you may not return to that ship to perform additional actions.

If a ship wishes to fire at another the firing ship the target must be inside the broadside angle.

You may also see an alert box indicating some sort of special damage.

Gunnery is performed at any point during that ships move.

you will need to apply the result or this shooting effect will be not be applied to the target ship.

Raking (Bow or Stern)

To rake a ship from either the bow or stern the shooting ships broadside must be in the angle and in the angle of the targets rake angle and must be at medium range or better.

The orders received by that ship must be “Fire as Guns Bare”.

No turning that action card phase for good crews and below.

Veteran crews 1 turn a phase if wanting to rake.

Elite 2 turns a phase if wanting to rake.

Hull or Sails

Select which you wish to fire at.

If a player selects an ammo type that does not have the range then a zero effect will result.

Some damage inflicted on the ship will also effect other areas

Line of sight

In order for a ship to fire at an enemy ship is must have an uninterrupted gap the length of that ships base to the target ship.

The target ship must have all of its base visible to the firer

Small Ships

Ships which have 20 guns or less may fire out of their bow rake arc. (There were a number of ships in action on the great lakes that had a large single gun mounted on the bow).

Ships of 10 guns or less may row , these ships must not have any sails set and they only move 1d6 and they may turn up to 4 compass points per action card.

Special Effects

All special effects are notifications only, they require the player to roll the dice to perform the repairs during the command card phase.

At sometimes an alert box may pop up to give a special effect.

Fires

These start as small and require a roll on 1d6 of a 4 , 5 or 6 to put out.

if the crew fail to put out the fire it then grows to medium fire which require a 5 , 6 to put out in the following command phase for that ship.

If the ship fails to put out a medium fire then the fire grows to large fire requiring a 6 to put out in the following command phase for that ship.

If a fire burns uncontrollably then eventually the ship explodes on another roll of a 6 on a 1d6 which again is rolled in the command card phase for that fleet and every turn till the end of the game.

Any ship sailing within musket range of a burning ship will catch fire on a 1 or 2 on a d6 which is rolled as soon as the ship comes into range of the fire

A ship on contact with a burning ship will catch fire at the time of contact. This will start as a small fire.

Fallen masts

This requires the ship cut the fallen mast away, while doing this the ship can only drift with the wind 1d6, a 4 , 5 or 6 is required to cut the fallen mast away.

Once cut away the ship will sail normally.

Rudder/wheel

If a ship has suffered a large amount of hull damage then it may have its wheel or rudder hit

if the ship cannot turn until the rudder or wheel has been repaired on a roll of 5 or 6 on a 1d6.

The effect of rudder damage is that a ship cannot turn but does not drop off a point.

The effect of wheel damage is that the fall off 1 point with the wind.

Running aground

If a ship runs aground it cannot move for the duration of the game without re floating the ship.

This requires a 6 on a d6 and the ship starts with no sails set so after re-floating the ship can only drift with the wind

Explosion

There is a chance of an instant explosion if the ship is bow raked.

Captain killed

Life was dangerous aboard ship , just think of Nelson!

Boarding

These actions will take place when the side that initiated the boarding action draws their command card the boarding round is acted upon

Up to 3 attempts may be made to take a ship depending on the size.

If at the end of these attempts the boarders fail to take the ship the target ship may sail away in its next action card phase.

Each ship is either a 3 , 2 or single Decker

Above a 74 gunner will be classed as a 3 Decker and below a 44

gunner will be classed as a single decker all other ships will be classed as 2 Decker's.

The number of decks determines how many attempts it takes to defeat a ship.

The ship is marked as loosing a round of boarding with a counter.

Counters are accumulated until one of the ships gets to the level of its decks

then it immediately surrenders and is marked with a strike counter and takes no further part in the action.

Once a ship strikes it may only sail, it may not fire on any ship.

Collisions, Running Aground

If any ships base touches a base of another ship a collision may result on a roll of 4 ,5 or 6 on 1d6.

This is determined if the moving ships bas passes through the broadside angel on the ship which is about to be hit

If outside this angle then a glancing blow is suffered and no damage is taken

If the ship has run aground , it's base has touched some part of the terrain.

the ship must try to re-float by rolling in its fleet's command card is drawn , this requires a roll of a 6 on 1d6.

While the ship is aground it may not perform any moves , it may do other repairs and may shoot its broadsides if it wishes.

Note:-

The effect of a ship crashing into rocks is out of the scope of these rules but it will be generally noted that this would be fatal to the ship.

Rules For 1660 through to 1700

There are new range bands:-

Close = 0 to 99mm

Medium = 100mm to 249mm ,

Long = 250mm to 500mm

No Ships over 100 guns in size

Ships may not sail in the “by the wind” angle they may only tack through this angle.

Only ball may be shot from the guns

It takes a ship from this period an extra action card to complete a tack

A ship from this period may not fire while tacking

Ships may only turn 1 point into the wind or 2 points with the wind

Deduct 1 from all sailing dice rolls

No Veteran or Elite crews

No fast Ships

Rules For 1700 through to 1760

All Later rules apply except for no shooting extreme range allowed.
No chain or triple shot allowed.

Sunk Ships (Optional)

Any ship which has suffered 100% of hull damage will sink on a roll of a 6 on 1d6 This roll is made when any card is turned for that fleet.

In the early period any shot from close range will cause a rotting timbers test on a roll of a double 1 on 2d6 the ship will breakup and sink instantly.

Strike

The app may also indicate a strike has occurred

If a ship has lost a set of boarding actions it will strike immediately.

This roll is made when the opposing player has finished with his current card and just before another card is drawn.

The struck ship is then part of the opposing fleet and is moved in that fleets action card phase.

A struck ship may be recaptured by boarding that ship with a ship of at least half the number of guns as the struck ship.

Pirates

Pirate ships will generally be of a smaller nature and have better crews than their foe so make them at least veteran status.

The pirate fleet will always set the wind direction and deploy after the opposing fleet. They may deploy up to within medium range.

Pirate ships may not fire at the hull or rake a ship.

The pirate ship will never strike it will have to be boarded and captured.

Merchant Ships

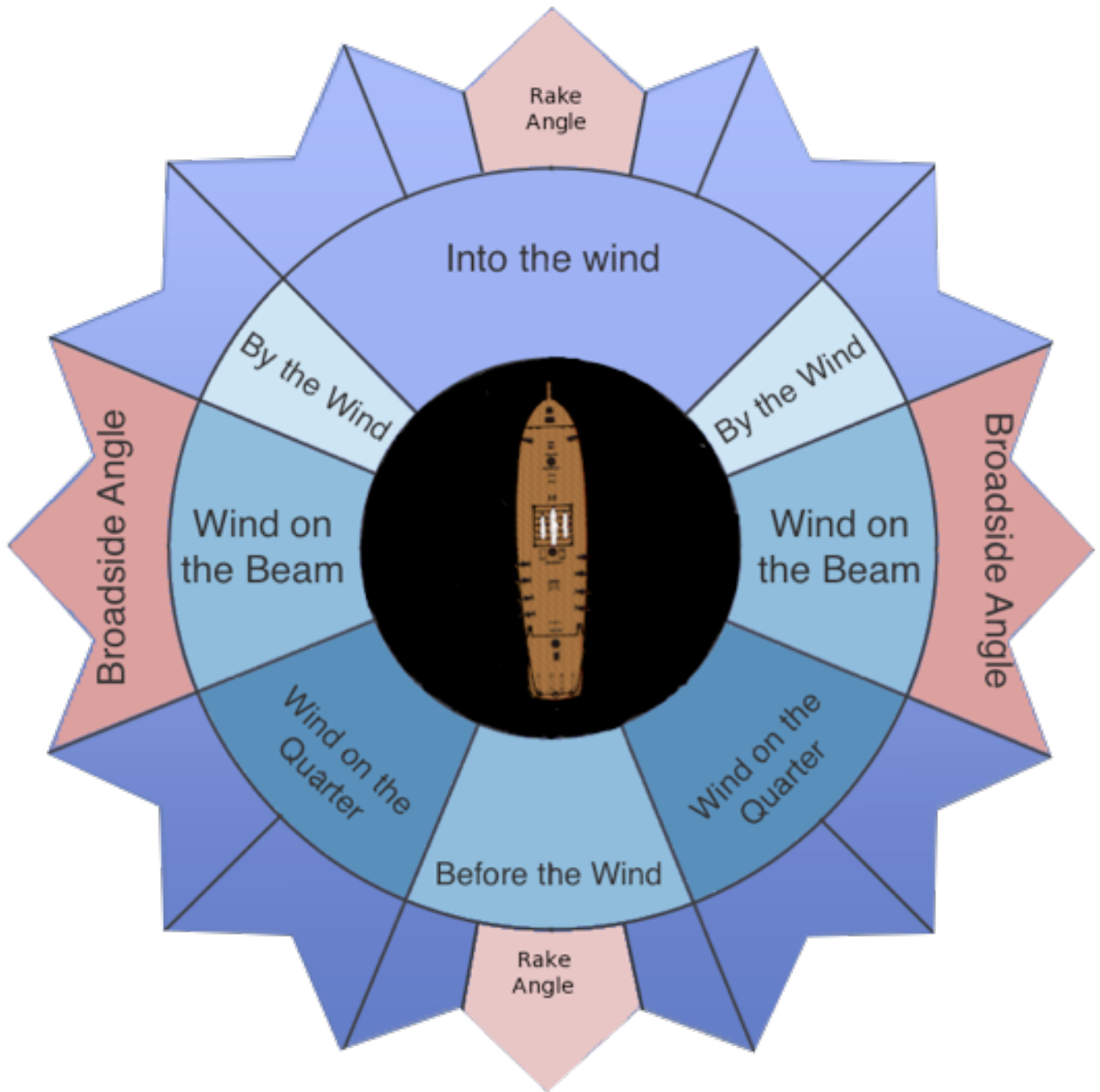
These ships had a generally low number of guns and a crew rating of good or less.

They may only fire at medium range or less and only with ball. They will use the pre 1700 movement options.

They are not effected by the rotting timbers rule.

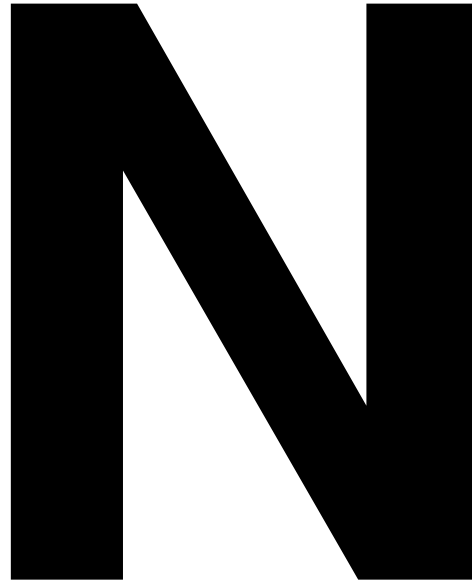
Printouts

Ship Attitude
indicator



Wind Direction

North Marker

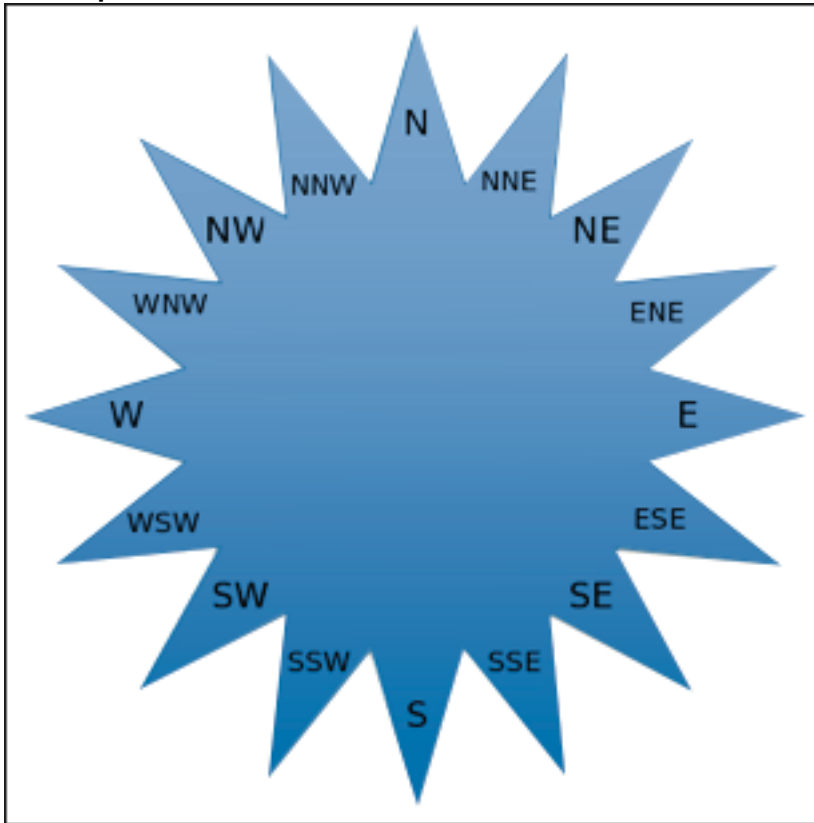


Order Counters

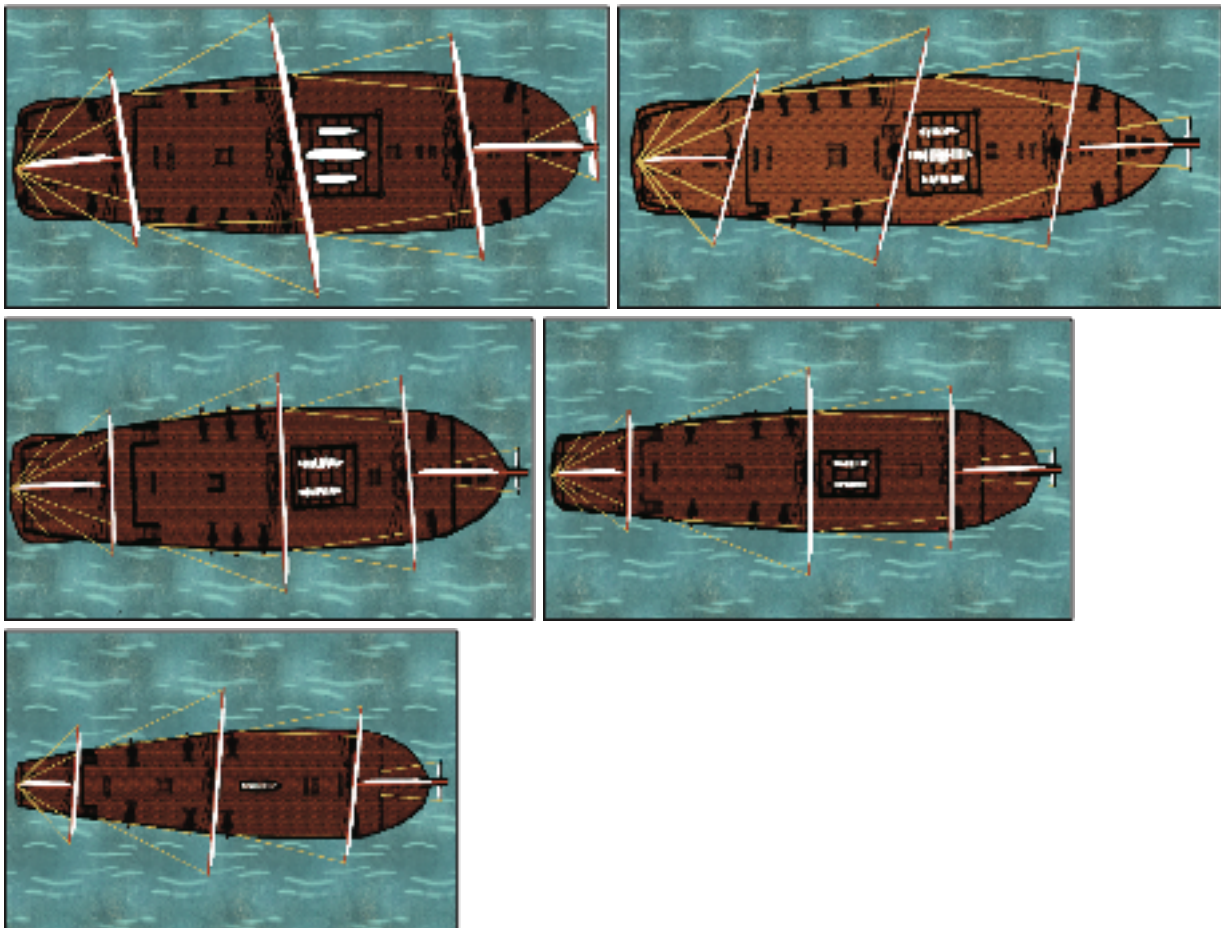
Increase Sail	Decrease Sail	engage the Enemy	Disengage from the Enemy	Come To Heading
Fire as Your Guns Bore	Increase Sail	Decrease Sail	engage the Enemy	Disengage from the Enemy
Come To Heading	Fire as Your Guns Bore	Increase Sail	Decrease Sail	engage the Enemy
Disengage from the Enemy	Come To Heading	Fire as Your Guns Bore	Increase Sail	Decrease Sail

Engage the Enemy	Disengage from the Enemy	Come To Heading	Fire as Your Guns BERT	Increase Sail
Decrease Sail	Engage the Enemy	Disengage from the Enemy	Come To Heading	Fire as Your Guns BERT
Increase Sail	Decrease Sail	Engage the Enemy	Disengage from the Enemy	Come To Heading
Fire as Your Guns BERT	Increase Sail	Decrease Sail	Engage the Enemy	Disengage from the Enemy
Come To Heading	Fire as Your Guns BERT	Increase Sail	Decrease Sail	Engage the Enemy
Disengage from the Enemy	Come To Heading	Fire as Your Guns BERT	Increase Sail	Decrease Sail
Engage the Enemy	Disengage from the Enemy	Come To Heading	Fire as Your Guns BERT	Fire at Hull
Fire at Hull	Fire at Hull	Fire at Hull	Fire at Hull	Fire at Hull
Fire at Hull	Fire at Hull	Fire at Hull	Fire at Hull	Fire at Hull
Fire at Hull	Fire at Sails	Fire at Sails	Fire at Sails	Fire at Sails
Fire at Sails	Fire at Sails	Fire at Sails	Fire at Sails	Fire at Sails
Fire at Sails	Fire at Sails	Fire at Sails		

Compass



Sample Ship Tokens



Special Effects

Mast Down	Mast Down	Mast Down	Mast Down	Mast Down
Mast Down	Mast Down	Mast Down	Mast Down	Mast Down
Mast Down	Mast Down	Rudder Damaged	Rudder Damaged	Rudder Damaged
Rudder Damaged	Rudder Damaged	Rudder Damaged	Wheel Damaged	Wheel Damaged
Wheel Damaged	Wheel Damaged	Wheel Damaged	Wheel Damaged	Small Fire
Small Fire	Small Fire	Small Fire	Small Fire	Small Fire
Medium Fire	Medium Fire	Medium Fire	Medium Fire	Medium Fire
Medium Fire	Large Fire	Large Fire	Large Fire	Large Fire
Large Fire	Large Fire	Captain Dead	Captain Dead	Captain Dead
Captain Dead	Captain Dead	Captain Dead	Strike	Strike
Strike	Strike	Strike	Strike	Boarding Lost

Boarding Lost	Boarding Lost	Boarding Lost	Boarding Lost	Boarding Lost
Boarding Lost	Boarding Lost	Boarding Lost	Boarding Lost	Boarding Lost
Boarding Lost				

Blue Card	Blue Card
Blue Card	

Red

Card

Red

Card

Red

Card