Admiral of the High Seas

Naval Combat Supplement for Use with the World's Most Popular Roleplaying Games

by Ryan Nock

with Valuable Contributions from
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ADMIRAL OF THE HIGH SEAS

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EN PUBLISHING

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PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

For use with the 4th Edition
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS
ROLEPLAYING GAME
Requires the use of the D&D Player's Handbook,® Monster Manual,® and Dungeon Master's Guide® Player's Handbook® 2, Monster Manual® 2, Adventurer's Vault™ core rulebooks, available from Wizards of the Coast, LLC

INTRODUCTION

It would be far too easy to start this book with a weak nautical reference, like "Set Sail for Adventure!" Instead, let's start with an indisputable truth: Caribbean pirates fighting time-traveling Nazis would be amazing, and any game system that doesn't cover ramming your schooner into a U-Boat's conning tower is incomplete.

It is our opinion that the current naval rules for the main D20-based rulesets (the Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game and Dungeons & Dragons® 4th Edition) do not lead to elegant gameplay. Our goal in this book is to give you rules that handle actions at sea quickly and dramatically. If you're looking for a historically-accurate wargaming simulation, other systems do a better job. Our rules are designed with the understanding that D&D® and Pathfinder have highly developed tactical skirmish rules, so we want it to be easy to get from first spotting to boarding actions.

Of course, all of this is pointless if the game is just combat. A boat has a soul, and you've got to *do* something if you want to call yourself an adventurer. Thanks in no small part to the recommendations of our Kickstarter™ backers, we have a wide assortment of naval lore, famous ships, and renowned captains—friendly and hostile—to give you inspiration.

BACKER CONTRIBUTIONS

Our amazing and incredible backers helped us immensely with the following suggestions, which we made sure to work into the book.
- AjarKeen—Zeppelins and aerial combat.
- Andrew—Sea chanties, sea mythology, observances of the gods of the sea and air.
- Dawn Sabados—Captain Raja Doake.
- Franz—Captain Lysander Moriz.
- James Lewis—Famous lost ships, ghost ships, and ship wrecks. Interesting ports.
- James Walker—Ramming, burning, chain shot, and in general, more options for more granularity.
- John Cmar—Environmental oddities.
- John Rogers—The ships *Khalundurrin* and *Roscommon*.
- Kenneth Kruse—More detailed and personalized officers.
- Laura Kertz—Admiral Robert Jameson III, Lord of Parks.
- Patrick Pittman—Dictionary of appropriate nautical terms.
- Wayne Reid—Weary Enid, sea hag captain.

FOR THE RECORD

Whales apparently don't have tonsils, so even if you do get the opportunity to climb inside one and use it as a vessel, remember that you do not steer it from the inside by grabbing hold of tonsils and yanking on them.

Whales certainly don't have uvulas.

- ✦ **Chapter One: Rules of the Sea** presents the basics for running seafaring adventures, including navigation, nautical terrain, weather, and chases.
- ✦ **Chapter Two: Boarding & Broadsides** lets you run naval combat, helps you spice up ship-to-ship tactical combat, and explains the nature of a ship's eldritch defenses.
- ✦ **Chapter Three: Port Register** showcases a variety of ships.
- ✦ **Chapter Four: Legend, Lore, and Infamy** gives you inspiration to populate the seas of your campaign.
- ✦ **Chapter Five: Shipyard** introduces rules for creating your own vessels.

A Note About Settings

This book is intended for use in whatever setting your home game takes place in. Rules for unarmed galleys and carracks of a pre-gunpowder medieval-esque fantasy world or for frigates bristling with cannons in the Age of Sail can work just as well for sandskiffs on a dune sea, windships of war adorned with lightning cannons, astral chariots drawn by dream whales, or steam-powered ironclads hammering each other with long guns.

The DM needs to determine three main things before handing the tiller over to the party.

First, can ships have weapons? Do you want all naval combats to become boarding actions? Do a handful of powerful and prominent vessels have devastating weapons? Or does every fleet have dozens of warships able to sink foes without ever getting close enough for the PCs to swing over on ropes?

Second, what technology level is available? Primitive sails usually needed to be augmented by cramming in a hundred slaves to row oars. Five trained sailors can handle the rigging of a well-designed three-masted ship as long as weather is fair. However, it takes just a single engineer to keep a steam engine (or its eldritch equivalent) running and navigate around the world solo.

Third, what level of magic is available? Are flying ships possible but rare? Does every vessel have a charm to resist fires? Is a sunken city, like Atlantis, a key part of the campaign—must big ships be capable of safely diving to undersea cities?

We offer guidelines throughout the book on what options to disallow or that need a rules- or cost-tweak for different settings. In general, we adopt a rules-light approach, where the mechanics are balanced for fun encounters, and general enough that you can easily use the flavor descriptions appropriate to your setting. A hit for 3 points of hull damage might be trebuchets cracking timbers in a hull, cannon tearing loose rivets and plating in an ironclad steamship, or arcane fusillades disintegrating the crystalline shell of an aethership.

As a last note before we start, if you have any questions, you can ask at the E.N. Publishing forum at the website EN World.

Why Not Just Teleport?

Once an adventuring party gets access to long-range teleportation magic, what incentive do they have to sail around? Indeed, if civilizations can create permanent teleportation circles, why bother with boats at all?

The cultural side of the equation is yours to decide—perhaps fear of invasion prevents even the most enlightened nations from using teleportation circles for trade, or perhaps merchant guilds threaten wizards who compete with their shipping—but there are many advantages a ship offers that teleportation magic does not.

First is manpower. An adventuring party with forty sailors, a couple cooks, and a few look-outs have a lot of options when they reach their destination. It creates a slightly different playstyle than typical games where the party is wholly independent, and the change of pace might excite your players. A ship can be a mobile home base and safe haven, filling the role a keep might fill in landlubber games. Plus, what's a more impressive place to store your treasure: in a bland *bag of holding*, or in the hold and cabins of a mighty trade galleon, in which you sail from port to port seeking adventure?

Second, some adventures might require ships to battle other ships. If a villainous fleet is ransacking merchant vessels, simply scrying the hold, teleporting on board, and trying to kill a hundred sailors in hand-to-hand combat might not go so well. Depending on the ship's type of eldritch defense (see page 68), it might not even be possible. Adding new tools to the battlefield doesn't make old tools necessarily useless. In fact, in the real world, there exist nuclear missiles that can destroy anything, but nations maintain armies and navies anyway.

Third, sometimes you just have to explore the unknown.

The Albatross in the Room

We do our best to present rules that work in Dungeons & Dragons and Pathfinder to create fun naval adventures, but we need you to work with us. The issue, simply, is magic.

Many magical things can potentially ruin the day of a ship. Magical fire (sails burn), conjured barriers (ships don't have brakes), and aquatic creatures (cannons don't shoot underwater) are some of the biggest threats. We have tried to postulate common countermeasures that sailors in a fantasy setting would have concocted, many of which are presented in Chapter Three: Port Register.

If you want a game that allows both wooden sailing ships and *fireballs*, you're also going to have to accept that magic exists to reduce the ability of one wizard to annihilate another ship and its crew from 800 feet away or more. If someone had suddenly introduced fireballs into the 14th century Mediterranean, sure, crews would have died *en masse*. Some ships would have caught fire. But people would have cut down on sailing until someone figured out a way to stop those shenanigans.

In 4th Edition, this is less of a problem, because the distances of ranged attacks have been shortened significantly, but it's still possible for high-level PCs to flex their muscles against weaker vessels. If a high-level party goes up against an equally-powerful set of foes at sea, eldritch defenses keep ships from being depopulated by a single spell. We're generally alright, though, with massive destruction at short range, when the other side has a chance to fight back.

As we said above, a ship has a soul, and if you don't like the idea of ships subtly protecting those who serve aboard them, well, you might want to also get rid of *fireballs*.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

DM: You're sailing upstream, and you can just barely see the gleaming light of the crashed airship through the drizzle, maybe a quarter mile away. The floods have swollen the river to the point that you could sail through the forest that used to be on the shore. More oddly, the river to starboard is dark, while to the port it's a lighter brown, and churning faster.

Margaret (Navigator): What's up with that? I make a Nature check {a Knowledge (nature) check}. (*rolls*)

DM: You remember this river. Two rivers merge here. Just up ahead, the cool and slow Black River flows into with the swifter and warmer Solomon River. They run parallel for about a mile before they're finally indistinguishable. Based on that, the airship must have crashed on the peninsula where the two rivers meet.

Angela, make a Perception check.

Angela (Look-Out): (*rolls*) How bad's this rain?

DM: Not so bad that you can't see the shapes of two ships approaching. They're cutting through the flooded forest off to port. One is long and low, barely visible over the surface. It's a nautilus, with an eldritch turret mounted on the prow. The other looks like an oversized galleon, bristling with cannons, and crowned by a fiery pentagram burning on the topsail of its mainmast.

Lucius (Engineer): Wait, the galleon: that's the *Nergal*! The topsail's a brand. Oh we're screwed. Are they within range?

DM: Long range, but they've got more sail and are gaining on you. They're about five hundred feet away, so that's an adjacent stage. And it's fifteen hundred feet—three stages—between you and the crash site. The closer you get, the more debris in the river, so you'll need to be careful.

Bruce (Gunner): Should we turn to fight?

James (Captain): Against two of them? No way. You said the Black River is slower, so less of a current to sail against? Margaret, take us into those waters. We're not going for any fancy sailing, so full speed ahead. Lucius, can you get us extra speed?

Lucius (Engineer): (*rolls poorly*) Crap. I just managed to get us 1 extra.

DM: Okay, the crew scramble to obey your orders for full speed up the river, so you're getting +2 to your Command check during the Location phase, but that'll give you −5 during the Bearing phase. Lucius wrangles 4 of the crew into adjusting the rigging to be optimal for these conditions, so that's +1 Speed for this round. Also, I'll give the enemies a −2 penalty to their Command check because they haven't figured out the river and are sailing in the faster current side.

James, make your Command check to see if you can outpace them. The *Nergal* rolls 22, and the nautilus gets a 16.

James (Captain): So I rolled 4, plus my Command score makes that 10. I add our ship's speed, 8, and the +2 full speed ahead bonus, and Lucius's +1? I get a 21.

DM: The *Nergal* beats you, but not by enough to catch up. You can hear the *Nergal's* demon captain barking orders at his crew to run you down. He moves into your stage, but can't manage to cut you off. I'm guessing you choose to keep sailing upstream?

James (Captain): You're damned right. Now we're two stages away, and we're still at long range.

DM: The nautilus is just barely managing to keep up. No real change in relative position. Now it's the Terrain phase, so see if you can avoid the

half-submerged trees and debris rolling down the river from the flood.

Angela (Look-Out): I'm going to aid the cap'n.

DM: Alright, so *you* roll the Command check, using James's Command score, and you add your Wisdom modifier. That's your action for this round. DC 15 this round. Next round it'll be DC 20 as you get closer and the water choppier.

Angela (Look-Out): (*rolls*) 17!

DM: Good enough. Up in the crow's nest, Angela warns the crew to break around a copse of trees just under the surface. To your aft, the two ships aren't yet into the rough terrain, so they don't have to make a check.

The Bearing phase this round doesn't matter because you're clearly sailing straight, so it's your aft to their prows. You do have aft chase guns, but they're out of range.

Margaret: Bruce and I haven't actually acted this round, have we? We can try to attack them. I know they're at Long range, but Bruce, get on deck and see if you can peg an arrow into whoever's aiming the *Nergal's* brand.

Bruce (Look-Out #2): I'd never hit from this range. Can I double-up as look-out, and help reduce the damage the crew might take when they shoot us?

DM: Sure thing. You'll reduce the damage to each crewman in one section by 2. Margaret? What are you doing?

Margaret (Attacker): They're within range of my *telekinesis* spell! I've got a plan. (*whispers to the DM*)

DM: Excellent. Alright, during the Attack phase, remember everything is simultaneous. So the *Nergal's* crew tack their topsail to aim it, and a bright light sweeps across the river, until finally they hit their target: you. The light flares brilliantly, and flames spit forth from the pentagon brand.

(*rolls*) Damn. It's a powerful weapon, and got a 28. That's three strikes. Let's see where it hits.

(*rolls three times*) Your hull is burning, and the crew on the main deck take 2d6 fire damage (minus the two thanks to Bruce warning them to cover their faces), and the sails are burning. Now, that just means the fire has caught, but it won't actually spread and damage the components until the end of next round, so you have a chance to fight the fire.

Now it's time for the nautilus to fire its deck eldritch turret…but I'll let Margaret do the explaining, and the rolling.

Margaret (Attacker): Right, as he is about to fire, I want to use *telekinesis* to spin the turret so he fires on the *Nergal*. In particular, I want to hit their mainmast, or at least the brand on their topsail. I can roll for the attack? (*the DM nods yes; Margaret rolls*) 15. Just one strike, but I get to choose where I hit, right? If I hit the mainmast, can I also disable their weapon?

DM: Hm. You haven't actually damaged the brand itself, just jostled what it's mounted on. Just as the nautilus gunner gives the command word, telekinetic force spins the turret out of his grip. It tracks to the *Nergal's* mainmast. Arcane energy blasts upward, striking crew in the rigging and cracking the huge wooden beam. Lines snap, sails flutter without control, and the crew panics to try to get their ship under control They've still got two masts, so they'll just be slowed until they can get that fixed, but I'll say they won't be able to fire the brand for one round.

James (Captain): One round's all we need. Lucius, I don't care if the deck's on fire; or the sails. We're going hand-to-hand. Bring us about, and take aim for the nautilus. Give me ramming speed.

Chapter One: Rules of the Sea

The party's ship is like a character itself, and the personalities and tactics of hostile vessels deserve as much attention as those of a villainous NPC. When the players care about a ship, it becomes more than just a conveyance between adventures. It becomes an ally, an icon of the party, and worthy of mourning if it were to be destroyed.

The Short Short Version

The party hops on a ship and travels, resting every so often, until they get where they're going. Occasionally sea monsters or pirates or something will attack, at which point you'll open to Chapter Two: Boarding & Broadsides, and read The Short Short Version entry there (see page 13).

Ship Statblocks

Each vessel has the following entries in its statblock. Chapter Three: Port Register (page 28) describes how to determine these entries for your own vessel.

Name, Level, Size, and Price

These entries convey basic information about the ship, including its total price according to the build rules in Chapter Five: Shipyard (page 62).

Hull Integrity

This is the amount of damage the ship can take from shipboard weapons before it begins to sink. See the Attacker role (page 19) for details of how individuals can damage ships.

Defense

Attacks from shipboard weapons must equal or beat this score to damage the ship. In tactical combat, ships usually have a 0 in all their Defenses. [In Pathfinder, they have a touch AC of –3, and a +0 bonus to their saves, though as objects they're immune to most effects.]

Maneuverability

This modifier applies to some Command checks the captain makes. In tactical combat, it determines how quickly the ship can turn.

Speed

This modifier applies to some Command checks the captain makes. It is roughly how many knots (nautical miles per hour) the ship travels. In tactical combat, it can cruise at a speed equal to this many squares (or 5 ft. times the speed rating), and can reach a maximum speed of twice that fast.

Command

This entry is usually excluded on sample ships. When a ship has a specific crew and captain, however, its Command rating is listed here. Benefits from crack crew and other bonuses are highlighted with the components, later in the stat block.

The Command Check

Various actions in naval adventuring call for a Command check, to see how well he is directing his crew. For a Command check, a character rolls 1d20 + his Command score.

A character's Command score is equal to half his level plus the highest bonus among his Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. So a 6th level character with an 18 Intelligence would have a +7 Command score.

Different ship and crew traits can grant bonuses to Command in specific circumstances.

Ship Saving Throw

Some effects call for a ship saving throw. This is normally just an unmodified d20 roll vs. DC 10. The ship's captain, if any, can add his Charisma modifier to the roll, reflecting the ineffable bond between captain and ship.

These saves are usually to determine if a ship can weather some danger, like flooding or fire. Often a result of 20 or higher not only prevents the situation from getting worse, but actually improves circumstances.

Sample Stat Block

The schooner is one of the lightest types of vessels used for oceanic voyages. Its nimbleness makes it ideal for blockade-running and surveillance, but if cornered by an actual warship it must rely on the skill-at-arms of its crew, since it cannot mount many weapons.

Schooner	Level 10 Vehicle
Large Vehicle	8,400 gp
Hull Integrity 3	**Command** —
Defense 15	**Full Crew** 16
Maneuverability 6	**Minimum Crew** 4
Speed 8	**Total Complement** 30
Design	
Length 90 ft. Beam 25 ft. Three masts, 70 ft. high. Two decks.	
Armaments	
A small array of cannons, five to either broadside, more for deterrence than offense.	
Crew: 15. *Attack:* +7, broadsides only.	
Total Cost 8,400 gp	
Hull (base level 6, sails, improved speed ×3, Level 10): 5,000 gp	
Armaments (Medium, broadsides, Level 8): 3,400 gp	

Full Crew

This is the number of crew required for the ship to maneuver at peak efficiency. It does not include any crew required to fire shipboard weapons.

Minimum Crew

This is the minimum number of crew required for the ship to maneuver at all in combat.

Total Complement
This is the total number of crew on the vessel.

Attack Bonus
This is what the ship rolls for its attacks. Ships often have multiple entries for different angles of fire. If a given angle is not listed, the ship cannot attack in that direction.

Components
Noteworthy components are each given an entry.

AFFAIRS OF THE OCEAN
The DM and players should determine how realistic they want their sailing adventures. This book's baseline is generally "story level": things get rules if they're dramatic enough to devote time to in a story. True, a single loose belaying pin could set off a chain of events that would kill off a whole crew horribly, but we imagine that groups generally will gloss over the niggling details of running a ship. Those matters are painted in broad strokes, while more attention is paid to action and conflict.

It's up to your group to decide how much attention they want to pay to details. However, we assume that, just as few players actually have studied real medieval swordfighting, or practiced casting spells, or learned to ride pegasi, likewise few players actually understand the complexities of sailing ships. Even a steamboat handles very differently from the cars or motorcycles players are most likely to be familiar with.

That said, here are some broad strokes that the group will likely be interested in deciding upon.

Whose Boat?
Does the party hire a boat, purchase one, or serve as part of a crew?

Ship for Hire
If the party just needs a ride somewhere the ship's already going, typically they can buy passage for 1 sp per person per mile, or 2 sp for horses and other larger creatures.

Chartering a ship for a route it would not normally take is much more expensive. Merchant ships need to sell goods to pay for crew and maintenance. The prices here can vary wildly, but the minimum price is typically ¹⁄₁₀₀ the cost of the ship (see page 62) for each day of the journey. Price is usually negotiated up front, and the captain will usually give a high estimate of the time it will take.

This presumes the ship's captain doesn't view the party as a particular annoyance, in which case the captain might charge 10 times as much, or simply refuse. Likewise, if the journey itself would be hazardous, or lead to a dangerous location, the captain will try to gauge how much trouble he's getting into, and price accordingly.

Hazard Pay
The table below has prices listed by "level," meaning what level encounter is likely to befall the ship during the trip. This represents an abstraction of the captain's best guess of the dangers entailed. While character levels and Challenge Ratings aren't real, a captain would know to charge more for sailing past the lair of the Dread Serpent Vindicus than for simply going past waters controlled by hostile natives in canoes.

This price can vary wildly by circumstance, such as if the party is trusted by the captain, if he endorses their mission, if the party looks desperate, and so on. For instance, if the captain has an inaccurate sense of the danger (such as if the party has misled him), he might work for a much lower price.

Add the price below to the cost for chartering the ship, using the perceived threat level. In some cases, it might be cheaper to buy their own boat than to try to drag another crew into danger.

Hazard Pay Rates

Level	Cost	Level	Cost
1	360	11	9,000
2	520	12	13,000
3	680	13	17,000
4	840	14	21,000
5	1,000	15	25,000
6	1,800	16	45,000
7	2,600	17	65,000
8	3,400	18	85,000
9	4,200	19	105,000
10	5,000	20	125,000

Owning a Ship
Ships have prices based on their hull, maneuverability and speed, their armaments, and any special traits they have, as detailed in Chapter Three: Port Register (page 28). Most merchant ships are paid for by groups of investors who share the profits, but it's possible wealthy adventurers could afford a ship of their own.

From a metagame standpoint, if the DM wants to run a game with ships as a focus, it might be easiest to simply supply the party with a vessel and let them trade up occasionally, so that they aren't behind the rules' expected "character wealth" for personal gear. In a more sandbox style game, it can be a choice for the PCs whether to invest in a ship. If they're poor but ambitious, they might decide to try to capture one instead.

Reporting for Duty
Perhaps the characters are members of the navy, or have been press-ganged into service. Most *players* prefer being in control of their destinies, so make sure your group is alright serving as subordinates before you provoke a mutiny among your gaming group.

As crew, perhaps the party will be sent on missions to explore islands or sabotage enemy vessels in port. In naval combat they might be stuck belowdecks, firing cannons, rowing, or repairing damage, while people up on deck repel boarders in more traditional combat. It's an unorthodox way to run a game, though.

Navigation
A ship's listed speed is its usual top speed in knots in normal conditions. With favorable winds, calm seas, or magical aid, ships can briefly go faster, while choppy seas or poor winds can dramatically slow a ship down. For the sake of determining travel time, though, multiply a ship's speed rating by 10. That's the number of miles it can reliably travel in a day.

Yes, it's about 35% of what the ship could accomplish at full speed (see the sidebar on the next page). It improves with an able navigator at the wheel, and truly excellent conditions can double a ship's daily speed.

There are three steps to navigating for a voyage: Determine Hazards, Plot a Course, and Follow the Course.

Determine Hazards

First, the navigator must anticipate hazards like bad weather, shoals, cursed currents, and sharktopus breeding grounds. Any number of characters can make a Nature check to predict when the ship is likely to run afoul of bad seas, weather, and other natural hazards; and a History check to recall more active threats in the area, like pirates and sea monsters. These checks are generally DC 10 in safe seas, but might be higher in areas with more densely arrayed dangers, or whose dangers are less well known.

⸤In Pathfinder, make Knowledge (nature) or Survival checks for the first, and Knowledge (history) checks for the second. Alternately, make Profession (sailor) checks.⸥

A success ensures the navigator is informed of possible dangers. A failure means the navigator might unwittingly guide the ship into peril.

Plot a Course

Next, the navigator must plot a course. This requires an Intelligence check, which only a single character can make. No more than two allies can Aid Another for his attempt.

The check is DC 0 if the route hugs a coast, DC 5 if the ship leaves sight of land but never for more than a day at a time, and DC 10 if the ship goes out of sight of land for more than a day. Poor charts might increase the DC by 5, while sailing an uncharted sea increases the DC by 10.

⸤In Pathfinder, make a Knowledge (geography) check, and increase the DCs by 5. Alternately, make a Profession (sailor) check.⸥

Special circumstances might increase the DC by 2 or 5, such as if the navigator is trying to avoid an expected storm, if the captain wants to take the ship on an unusual route to avoid pursuit, or if the ship needs to hit multiple specific ports, or if the navigator is trying to hit a moving target that he has a schedule for, like an island on the back of a turtle with a regular migratory pattern, or a heavily-laden treasure ship delivering a tithe to a church.

A success means the course is accurate and will get the ship where it wants to go, barring unforeseen circumstances. A check that succeeds by 5 or more makes good use of currents and winds, which decreases the duration of the trip by 20% (from 17 days to 14 days, for instance).

A failed check sets the ship on the wrong course. Even if the navigator is using a sextant or magic to know his location perfectly, that doesn't help if he thinks the destination is in a different spot than where it actually lies. Unless the ship happens across some sort of landmark that shouldn't be on the route the navigator erroneously plotted, the ship will keep sailing and perhaps end up hundreds of miles off course.

Follow the Course

Finally, the ship actually has to follow the course. The navigator makes a Wisdom check (DC 10). As with plotting the course, up to two allies can Aid Another for this check. ⸤In Pathfinder, the navigator makes a Survival check (DC 15). Alternately, make a Profession (sailor) check.⸥

If the navigator succeeds, the ship arrives on time and avoids all the hazards the navigator was aware of when he plotted his course, though the ship might encounter hazards he did not know to avoid. A failure means the ship drifts off course, which might lead into a hazard, and in any event increases the journey's time by 10%. The navigator must then make another check, and further failures keep increasing the journey's duration by 10%.

Meanwhile, the captain or one of his officers makes a Command check (DC 15) to keep the crew in order. If the ship has a crack crew, the captain gets a +5 bonus to his checks. If the ship has less than full crew but at least minimum crew, instead he takes a –5 penalty. A skeleton crew imposes a –10 penalty.

If the captain succeeds, the ship travels at its average speed. For every point he beats the DC by, decrease the trip's duration by 1%. If he fails, increase the trip's duration by 1% for every point he failed the DC.

Supplies

Most games probably won't need to track supplies, since they're bundled in with the crew commission fee (page 10). Only if ships are in hostile territory or open water for long periods of time would they be unable to resupply. Even then, food can usually be acquired from the sea. The most precious commodity is fresh water, followed closely by alcohol and a variety of foods needed to stave off ailments like scurvy.

A ship usually carries enough supplies for the expected length of the trip, plus another 50%. You can load your ship with more supplies, just at the expense of a little space. Combat, sabotage, or poor maintenance (rats!) might damage or foul supplies, forcing the crew to half or no rations.

NAUTICAL HAZARDS

Often encountering a hazard will be accompanied by some additional threat, like monsters or pirate ships. More detailed rules are presented in Chapter Two for the use of hazards in naval combat, but sometimes a ship simply steers into bad weather or dangerous terrain.

If a hazard is fairly small, just make the ship roll once to avoid it. If a large swath of the trip is hazardous, like if the ship is trying to navigate a frozen sea in winter, the ship has to make a check for every day it spends in the hazardous area.

Catch Hazard

Ice, sandbars, kelp, water bubbling with gaseous upwelling, and swarms of animals can catch a ship and stop it from moving. Make a Command check and add the ship's maneuverability rating. Sparse hazards might be DC 15 and dense hazards DC 20; if there are only a handful of safe paths, the DC might rise as high as 25.

If the hazard is something that can be pushed aside (like an ice floe), add +2 to the roll for each size category the ship is above Tiny, to a maximum of +10 for a Gargantuan ship. If the hazard would be worse for larger ships (like sandbars, since bigger ships tend to have deeper drafts), instead apply this as a penalty.

Success means the ship avoids being trapped. Failure means the ship is briefly snagged, and a few hours must be added to the journey as the crew frees the ship from the hazard. Fail by 5 or more, and the ship is trapped sufficiently well that freeing it requires a day of work.

> ## NAVIGATING WITHOUT SAILS
>
> The 35% rate (see "Navigation") works for sailing vessels, which often contend with unhelpful winds, or have to tack indirect courses.
>
> For ships that use engines, oars, or leviathan movement like fins and tentacles, while they aren't much faster in a straight line, over longer periods of time they can typically maintain straighter courses. For such vehicles, multiply their speed rating by 20, instead of 10. This is still just 70% of ideal conditions, since captains don't want to strain their ships in everyday circumstances.

LINE OF SIGHT

The distance at which an object disappears below the horizon is approximated by the formula $D = 1.22 \times \sqrt{H}$, where D is the distance to the horizon in miles, and $\sqrt{H}$ is the square root of the viewer's elevation in feet.

To determine whether an object is in line of sight over the horizon, use the formula for that object, and add the distance to the horizon for both the viewer and the object. So a 6 ft. tall person can see the horizon from 2.98 miles away, and has line of sight to another 6 ft. tall person from 5.96 miles away. Two look-outs who are 150 ft. up in the crow's nests of ships have line of sight to each other at about 30 miles away.

Of course, atmospheric conditions can alter this greatly. Generally, if a ship gets more than 30 miles away, you won't be catching up anyway.

Chop

Choppy seas, whirlpools, or turbulence for airships can slow vessels, knock crew overboard, or even capsize a boat. Make a Command check with a +2 bonus for each size category the ship is larger than Tiny, to a maximum of +10 for a Gargantuan ship. The DC for light chop is 15, for heavy chop is 20, and for severe chop is 25.

Success means the ship escapes any dangers from the chop. Failure means a wave crashes across the maindeck, and each crewman there must make a Dexterity check (DC 8) to avoid being washed overboard. ⟦In Pathfinder, they make a Reflex save (DC 10).⟧ This might trigger a rescue mission.

Failure by 5 or more is as above, plus the ship lists (page 21) from an impact. Make an additional Command check to see if the crew keeps the situation from getting worse (taking into account that many might be overboard, leading to Minimum or Skeleton Crew). If this second check fails by 5 or more, the ship capsizes.

Crash Hazard

Small rocky islets, wrecked ships, partially-submerged towers, or even the legs of a titanic beast are a steering danger. These hazards seldom are a threat outside of combat, because they can be spotted from afar. But if the ship intentionally takes a dangerous route as a shortcut, or if visibility is impeded by darkness or storms, the ship might crash.

Make a Command check and add the ship's maneuverability rating, but take a –2 penalty for each size category the ship is above Tiny. A few scattered obstacles might be DC 15, copious obstacles DC 20, and narrow straits or a fleet of ships DC 25.

Success means the ship avoids crashing. Failure means the ship takes 1 point of Hull Integrity damage.

Fail by 5 or more, and the ship collides hard. It takes 2 points of Hull Integrity damage, and is briefly snagged, requiring minutes or hours to get the ship to a spot where it can sail again.

Strike Hazard

Some terrain can damage anywhere on the ship, such as sails or decks full of crew, not just the hull. Make a Command check and add the ship's maneuverability rating. A single hazard like a blasting geyser might be DC 15, cloudy banks of searing embers might be DC 20, and an active sea battle with huge crossfires DC 25.

Success means the ship avoids damage. On a failure, roll a random location for a strike, just as if another ship's attack had hit. Fail by 5 or more, and roll for two strikes instead. Based on the damage type, the component struck might be burning instead of taking immediate damage.

Visibility

Be it by fog, darkness, intense rain, or swarms of locusts, limited visibility impairs the ability to maneuver relative to your opponent, often forcing you to guess. If there is limited visibility, whenever you would roll a Command check, instead roll two and take the worse result.

Ships whose crew can ignore the poor visibility, like a crew of drow on a sunless sea, don't suffer this penalty. A ship's look-out can make a Perception check to let the ship ignore the penalty. Thin fog might be DC 15, thick fog or starlight DC 20, and complete black-out DC 30, though factors like ambient noise and reference points could adjust the DC.

STERN CHASES

When one ship pursues another and they are out of range of each other's weapons, a chase might take hours in game.

Abstract Pursuit

Each "round," the pursuer and quarry make Command checks and add their ships' Speed ratings. Whoever wins gets a success. If the other ship already has a success, the winner instead uses his success to negate one of his enemy's successes.

The pursuit ends when one side gets three successes. If the pursuer wins, he catches up. Start a naval combat with the two ships in adjacent stages. The pursuer gets a +5 bonus to his Command checks during the first turn's Location phase (page 15). If the quarry wins, it manages to sail beyond sight of the pursuer and gets away.

Based on how far apart the ships are at the start of the chase, one side might begin with successes. The table also gives you a sense of how far apart the ships are over the course of the chase. As ships get farther apart, it's less likely either side will make much distance over the other, so each round takes longer.

Stern Chase Distances

Successes	Distance	Round Length*
Pursuer 2	Quarter-mile	1 minute
Pursuer 1	1 mile	4 minutes
Tied	3 miles	15 minutes
Quarry 1	10 miles	1 hour
Quarry 2	30 miles	4 hours

*Rough approximation.

Complexity and Complications

Of course a good chase needs to have decision points, or else it just comes down to who's faster or luckier.

Where To?

The quarry usually has the benefit of being able to choose where to go. They might head for reinforcements, in which case you'll want to track how far the chase goes. Generally you take a ship's speed rating and divide by 2 to get the miles it sails per hour, but this can vary based on factors of wind and currents, giving the DM a fair bit of wiggle room.

The quarry might choose to head into dangerous terrain, hoping their pursuer gets damaged or stranded (see Terrain and Hazards, page 24). It might head for terrain that offers a lot of hiding places, and the navigator could make a Stealth check opposing the pursuing ship's look-out's Perception check, trying to get out of sight, and perhaps even set up an ambush. Or it might simply try to keep its distance until it can effect repairs and come about for battle.

Crew vs. Crew

Various crew roles can help during a stern chase, much as they would during naval combat. Bosuns can add their Charisma to the captain's Command check. Engineers can roll each round to squeeze a little more speed out of the sails. Look-outs and navigators can help avoid hazardous terrain.

If a chase will cover a long distance, navigators also need to follow the rules for Navigation (page 5). Failure by one side might grant the other a bonus of +2 to +5. Perhaps a pursuing navigator could take a –2 penalty to one round's check to gain a +5 bonus to the next round's by trying a shortcut.

And of course various magical options can change things drastically.

Complications

If one side is having too easy a time and you want to increase the tension, foul wind might slow each ship to half speed, giving the pursuer more time to catch up before the quarry can reach a safe haven. Another ship might get involved, perhaps prompting a naval combat that will slow down one side or the other. Storms might wash someone overboard, creating a tension of whether to rescue the man or continue the chase.

FANTASY WORLD DEFENSES

While actual magical components to protect against hostile spells are detailed under Eldritch Defenses (page 68), there are a few tactics any ship can use when endangered by magic and monsters unseen in the real world.

Counterspell Defense

Prerequisite: A ship's mage.

If you have a ship's mage (page 10), he is assumed to be able to cast a variety of minor counterspells. Three times per day he can create a brief ward affecting the ship and all its crew on board, which reduces the damage from an incoming spell or magical attack by 10 points.

This is an abstraction for ease of play. A spellcasting PC with the right assortment of magic—or an NPC that you want to specifically stat out—can provide even greater protection than this.

Dinner Plate Defense

Prerequisite: A ship's mage and a Look-Out.

A look-out and a ship's mage with *mage hand* can use levitating dinner plates to protect against magical attacks that have physical projectiles, like *fireball* and *disintegrate*. When a hostile spell comes in, the spotter makes a Perception check (DC equal to 10 + the hostile caster's level), and if successful directs the mage to "catch" it on the plate, 25 feet or more away from the deck. Spells like rays or *fireballs* are blocked, though this typically destroys the dinner plate.

Mundane Defense

Prerequisite: Four crew and a Look-Out.

This poor-man's defense has the crew can lash together long gaff hooks to create four 20-ft. poles. Then they attach a pole to each corner of a sail. With the aid of a spotter, four men hold the sail out beyond the side of the ship. This defense functions like Dinner Plate Defense, but can block only one attack per naval round.

Sea Serpent Deterrence

Prerequisite: Allied ship with special hooked anchors.

In a fantasy world, nobody in their right mind would try to fend off predatory sea beasts with just harpoons. When traveling through waters known to be home to sea serpents, kraken, or other giant monsters, ships in a fantasy setting travel in groups, sharpen spare anchors or carry specially-designed barbed metal hooks, and at a sign of a sea monster they attach these giant fishhooks to anchor lines (or, ideally, chains).

When the monster attacks one ship, the other ships sail close and trail the hook, hoping to snag the beast. Optimally, two or more vessels can coordinate their movements so they approach from opposite directions and are thus able to pull the beast two ways at once.

In naval combat, the trawling ships approach to short range, drop the lines, and during the Attack phase have a Look-Out make a Perception check (DC 5, +5 per size category smaller than Gargantuan* the creature is) to aim the chains. On a success, the creature is hooked. A single hooked line can snag creatures up to Small size. Multiple lines or a single chain can get a Large creature. Multiple chains are required for Huge or Gargantuan creatures. An insufficient tether will snap or tear free with little effect.

   Use ship sizes, not normal creature sizes. A 30-ft. whale is the size of a Small ship.

If only a single ship managed to hook the target, during the Location phase, the creature and the ship that caught it are free to move closer to each other to fight. Whichever side is smaller cannot change stage, whereas the larger side pulls the smaller side along when it moves.

If two ships have hooked a single creature, they must remain in the same stage, unless they coordinate to move to a new stage. During the Attack phase they can pull in opposite directions. First, have each ship involved make a Command check (DC 20). On a failure, the ship messes up the maneuver and applies too much force, so that either the hook tears free of the beast or the line snaps free of the ship.

If at least two ships succeed, make a single attack roll, 1d20 vs. the creature's Defense, and for each ship add +5 for each size category that ship is larger than Tiny. So two Medium ships would roll 1d20+20. A hit inflicts one strike, plus an additional strike for every 5 points the attack beats the target's defense by.

This trick can theoretically also work against hostile vessels, but usually the enemy crew can just pull the hook loose.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

Nearly any vessel can eventually be put into motion by a single patient sailor who knows what he's doing, but at the slightest trouble the ship could be imperiled. A skeleton crew of 5 or 10 men might be able to get a massive ship to its destination, but they won't be able to keep it at sea for long. And certainly, in combat, they wouldn't be able to maneuver well enough to avoid an attacker.

A well-trained crew is necessary for maintaining the operational capacity of a vessel, and for dealing with monsters, storms, and hostile ships. Without regular maintenance, ships fall into disrepair, become dangerous to those aboard, and might eventually become unsailable. Scrubbing the deck daily, for instance, helps prevent crew from getting splinters in their feet, and cleans up tar that might leak from between timbers. Sails untended become threadbare and capture less wind, and ropes rigged up too long can snap under stress.

Military vessels often carried marines in addition to the regular crew, filling their berths with as many soldiers as they could for the extra edge in battle. At the height of the Age of Sail, warships might have five hundred men aboard.

Crew Complement

Every ship has three crew entries. **Full Crew** is the number of crew needed for typical performance. Expertly trained crewmen can provide small benefits, or can fill in when the crew is slightly under full complement.

Minimum Crew is how many people are needed to operate the ship with any useful efficiency. A ship with fewer than full crew but at least minimum crew imposes a –5 penalty to its captain's Command checks. If the ship has fewer than its minimum crew, it has a **skeleton crew**. This might be enough to get it moving at a crawl, but its captain takes a –10 penalty to Command checks.

Total Complement is the maximum number of crew who can comfortably live aboard the ship. The specifics of over-crowding are too varied for exact rules, but it slowly degrades morale and depletes supplies.

Most ships want enough crew to have one 8-hour shift of full crew to handle anything challenging, plus two shifts of minimum crew who make sure everything runs smoothly otherwise. A ship with fewer crew can get by, and then call all hands on deck in the case of emergency.

Crack Crew

Anyone can learn the basics of operating a ship with a few days training by someone who knows what they're doing. However, some ships have a **crack crew**. To meet this requirement, the ship must have a full crew, and a quantity of them equal to the minimum crew rating must have the feat Expert Sailor.

A captain with a crack crew gets a +5 bonus to his Command checks, and the ship gains a +2 bonus to its Defense.

Hiring and Acquiring

On larger ships the captain is typically the final authority, but often he defers to the quartermaster on matters of acquiring crew and paying their wages. For ease of book-keeping, we give each crew member a cost in gold pieces, a sort of "commission fee." This commission fee represents the resource outlay necessary to provide for the crewman and keep his services indefinitely, including food, water, and other daily necessities. Even if the crewman dies, the commission fee covers hiring an equally-skilled sailor to replace him at the next suitable port.

We assume most groups don't care enough about tracking every silver piece, and are willing to handwave some commerce or other means of monetary acquisition happening off screen. You can assume that the party, in the course of their adventures, acquires enough money to pay for crew supplies without digging into the money they would spend on "special purchases" like magic items or new ships. When the party comes across treasure or is paid by an employer, just figure that the money they can add to their character sheets is how much is left after paying the ship's upkeep.

Unless otherwise noted, crew are all level 1 humanoids with no useful combat skills.

FEATS

Characters might take these feats, or you might grant them to characters with sufficient training.

ELITE OFFICER

You're familiar enough with the workings of a ship to fill two officer roles at once. During naval combat, you can choose two officer roles per turn, or take two actions related to a single role. These actions must be something you can accomplish in the same location, so usually you can't be both look-out and gunner.

EXPERT SAILOR

You perform your shipboard duties with brisk assuredness. If a ship has crew equal to its Full Crew entry, and has a number of Expert Sailors at least equal to its Minimum Crew entry, it counts as having a crack crew. A captain with a crack crew gets a +5 bonus to his Command checks, and the ship gains a +2 bonus to its Defense.

SKILLS

This book is intended for use with both PATHFINDER and DUNGEONS & DRAGONS 4TH EDITION, which have different skill lists and rates of skill progression. So when the rules require a skill check, we'll list the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS mechanics first, then the PATHFINDER mechanics in fancy brackets.

PATHFINDER characters have the option to take the skill Profession (sailor), which can stand in for many other checks required in seafaring. We think it's a fair trade for a character who picks a comparably less-useful skill like Profession to be able to use it in multiple situations. A character who's good at navigating in the wilderness, as described in the Survival skill, can do decently navigating at sea, but a sailor is specifically trained for this.

CAMPAIGN TIPS: HERE THERE AREN'T DRAGONS

Remember, not every sea can be full of monsters, or else no one would use ships. Think of a rationale for why some areas are safe and others chock full of kraken. Do the aboleths have an ancient pact with mankind, albeit with a terrible, forgotten cost? Did early priests of the gods of the sea bless certain trade routes, leaving other passages incredibly perilous? If we could drive whales nearly to extinction for their oil in the real world, what wonders might one find within the innards of tojanida (and is that why they never showed up in Fourth Edition)?

Standard Crew Commission

Crew Member	Cost (gp)
Slave	15
Sailor	50
Sage	200
Ship's Mage	500
Soldier	500
Supernatural	500
Surgeon	500
Unseen Servant Crew	50
Expert Sailor	+50
Commissioned Officer	1,000
Elite Officer	1,500

Slave

A slave serves unwillingly, and is more likely to mutiny if he perceives the chance. Slaves are generally not paid; their commission represents the cost of feeding them and keeping them healthy enough to work.

Sailor

Sailors know how to handle a ship.

Sage

Sages provide useful knowledge, typically with a +10 bonus to two skills.

Ship's Mage

A ship's mage is a level 3 spellcaster, typically trained with a few spells useful for tending and defending a ship, including minor counterspells. They count as "sorcerous crew" (page 27).

Soldier

A soldier is a level 3 warrior. They count as "militant crew" or perhaps "scoundrel" or "resilient," depending on their equipment and training (page 27).

Supernatural

Supernatural crew are somehow magical or monstrous, roughly equal in power to a level 3 NPC, and though not necessarily more deadly than a normal person, are rather hard to kill. They might be lycanthropes, skeletons, or automatons, and count as "resilient crew" (page 27).

Surgeon

A ship's doctor is a level 3 character with some sort of healing abilities. During a given naval combat, up to five times when a crewman would die, instead the crewman is just knocked out commission, and will be back to fighting shape in a couple days. Surgeons seldom get into battle themselves.

Unseen Servant Crew

For the same price as a normal crewman you can get the ship enchanted to have a permanent *unseen servant* perform the tasks of one crewman. This is a mixed blessing. The servant cannot mutiny or be killed in combat and doesn't need food, but it also can't fight, be inspired by a bosun, spot stowaways, or leave the ship.

If more than a quarter of the ship's crew are unseen servants, halve the benefit a bosun would grant (page 18). If more than three-quarters

are unseen servants, the bosun has no effect. This is just a guideline, so if the ship's gunnery crew are all servants, but the rigging crew are people, the bosun can help with piloting, but not shooting.

For the purpose of dispelling or similar effects, the unseen servants are treated as multiple individual magic items with caster level equal to half the ship's level, rounded down. They can be suppressed, but usually not outright dispelled.

Expert Sailor

A crewman who has the Expert Sailor feat, be he sailor, slave, or sage, can demand more payment or resources for his services. Likewise, a variant *unseen servant* specially designed for sailing (in short, one that incorporates the benefits of the feat) costs more.

Commissioned Officer

Usually the PCs will serve as officers of the ship—captain, bosun, engineer, gunner, look-out, and navigator. Sometimes the party will want someone else to fill a specific role, and so they can hire an NPC: a commissioned officer.

For each commissioned officer, choose one of the six officer roles. The officer has a 16 in one ability score appropriate to that role, plus skill training in whatever skills are necessary to perform it. Each officer ought to have a distinct personality, and while you might not need exact stats, they will generally be level 3 characters.

Elite Officer

As above, plus the officer has the Elite Officer feat.

Morale

It's difficult to mechanically track all the possible factors that can affect crew morale. You can just estimate crew morale, or use the following guidelines.

Morale Spectrum

Rating	Demeanor	Effect
100	Devoted	+2 bonus to Command checks and ship defenses, crew resilience
80–99	Helpful	+2 bonus to Command checks and ship defenses
60–79	Friendly	+2 bonus to Command checks
40–59	Indifferent	—
20–39	Unfriendly	−2 penalty to Command checks
0–19	Hostile	−5 penalty to Command checks, risk of mutiny

If the ship has both commissioned and enslaved crew, track their morale ratings separately. If the crew have been well treated and haven't suffered any casualties lately, commissioned crew's morale defaults to 80. Enslaved crew's morale defaults to 40. Then add the captain's Command score.

A ship with both commissioned and enslaved crew uses the lower morale entry to determine modifiers to Command checks and ship's defenses. If the commissioned crew has 100 morale, they have resilience (see below), even if the enslaved ones don't. Likewise, enslaved crew might consider (not to mention plot and prepare for) mutiny while the commissioned crew is still loyal.

Effects can raise or lower morale for a few days or weeks, but generally between adventures Morale will return to its default of 80 (or 40) + the captain's Command score.

Minor Positive

Each of these increase morale by 10; multiples of the same event don't stack. A battle with no crew dying. The presence of one or more good omens. A feast or celebration. The captain or officers risking their lives to save a crewman. Completing a mission and arriving safely at a port. Having a talented bard on board.

Special

If the crew's commission is paid again, this adds 25 to their morale, to a maximum of 80.

Minor Negative

Each of these reduce morale by 10. A battle resulting in more than 10% of the crew perishing. Having to flee battle. The ship being slightly off course. The presence of one or more bad omens. The captain or his officers abuse a crewman (this is highly subject to the crew's interpretation). Having an untalented bard on board.

Major Negative

Each of these reduce morale by 25. Being forced to take limited rations. A battle resulting in more than 25% of the crew perishing. The ship being decidedly off course or actually lost.

Severe Negative

Each of these reduce morale by 50. Having no rations. The ship being stranded, crippled, or lost in dangerous waters. A battle resulting in more than half the crew perishing (if multiple battles have occurred, track how many have died in all the battles combined).

Crew Resilience

If the crew's morale is of 100, they're bolder in battle. They start each combat with 5 temporary hit points. If you're using the Crew as Terrain option, instead the first time an attack hits a crewman, reduce the damage dealt by the crewman's level.

Mutiny

If the crew's morale is under 20, they'll consider mutiny. Barring no further negative circumstances, the crew will keep serving for about a week, grumbling more and more. Each day thereafter, the captain must succeed a Diplomacy or Intimidate check (DC 20) to maintain control over his crew. If another negative event occurs, the captain must make a check immediately to maintain control, and the DC increases by a cumulative +5.

Of course, the crew won't mutiny if they're certain they can't win. Most ships with impressed crew make sure to keep at least as many commissioned crew, and to keep those crew happy, to deter mutiny by the wretches. A captain with supernatural powers need only show off his powers occasionally to make it clear to the crew that they're better off suffering than dying. Some crew might still try to steal boats or jump ship at the first opportunity.

NPC Officer Templates

When you set the party against a hostile ship, you can use the Simple Crew option, make the whole cast of NPC captain, officers, and crew, or you can choose one of these quick templates.

OPTIONAL RULE: SHIP SHAPE

Normally you can assume that a ship is kept in proper working order. However, many things can go wrong if the crew get lax in tending their vessel. Cannons can roll loose when waves toss a ship. Old rigging lines can snap under pressure. Seals between hull planks can leak. Even the deck might give you splinters if it hasn't been scrubbed properly.

A ship's **Condition** starts at 10. Various strains will reduce a ship's condition, and are cumulative. So if a ship has a skeleton crew, its condition drops to 7 (−1 for less than full, −2 for less than minimum). Some factors should only affect a ship's condition after enough time has passed for problems to build up, but damage in combat worsens the condition immediately.

What Condition Your Condition is In

Situation	Condition Modifier
Less than full crew	−1
Less than minimum crew	−2
Morale under 40	−1
Morale under 20	−2
Ship left untended for weeks	−2
Ship at sea more than 6 months	−2
Any damage taken	−2
Hull Integrity reduced below 0 (lasts until proper repairs)	−4
Ship is cursed	−5

At the end of any naval round during which a ship is under strain, have the captain roll 1d20 + the ship's condition. The check is DC 5 for light strain (mild chop, maneuvering for battle), DC 10 for heavy strain (rough waters, performing a special maneuver, having an engineer tweak the ship's capabilities), and DC 15 for severe strain (taking fire, giant waves, a collision).

On a failure, something goes wrong. A crewman might take damage, or the ship might take a −2 to Command checks or its attack roll next round as the crew is distracted fixing what went wrong.

Fail by 5 or more, and something goes catastrophically wrong. An explosion might strike a whole compartment of the ship, or shipworms pop a hole in the hold and cause the ship to start slowly sinking, or those termites that have been eating the mast finally cause it to snap.

Simple Crew

Give the captain a Command score of 4 + ½ level of his ship. Don't bother with tracking the actions of the ship's other officers. The slightly higher-than-average Command score represents the bundled efforts of all the officers.

Average Crew

Command 2 + ½ level of ship. All officers have a 14 in the appropriate ability scores, and are trained enough in the appropriate skills to get a total of +7 to those rolls.

Merchant Crew

Command 1 + ½ level of ship. The Navigator and Look-Out have prime stats of 16 and +9 to key skills. The Bosun, Engineer, and Gunner have 12 and +5.

Naval Crew

Command 3 + ½ level of ship. All officers have prime stats of 16 and +9 to key skills. The ship has a crack crew, granting the captain an extra +5 bonus to Command checks and +2 to the ship's Defense until the ship goes under its Full Crew rating.

Pirate Crew

Command 2 + ½ level of ship. Bosun, Gunner, and Look-out have prime stats of 16 and +9 to key skills. Engineer and Navigator have 12 and +5.

Supernatural Crew

Choose any of the above. Additionally, all the crew are some sort of supernatural entity, making it harder for your crew to harm them.

Wretched Crew

Command 0 + ½ level of ship. All officers have prime stats of 12 and +5 to key skills.

CAMPAIGN TIPS: ASSEMBLING A CREW

Over the course of a campaign, keep an eye out for opportunities to introduce potential crewmen to the party. Don't get too wedded to any NPC because the party won't necessarily take to them, but when they enter taverns, maybe there's a drunken surgeon who'll work for cheap. When they defeat a pirate ambush, maybe they find a beleaguered prisoner in the brig who used to be a first mate before he was captured and his thumbs were cut off. Maybe a blacksmith's daughter longing for ocean adventures has been voraciously reading accounts of naval tactics and tries to persuade the PCs she can help. Perhaps a goblin they think ran away actually shadows them and stows away aboard ship, thinking of them as his new war-boss. Or perhaps a disgraced naval officer sees working for the PCs as a way to expunge the sins of the past.

Chapter Two: Boarding & Broadsides

A ship-to-ship encounter has many of the same elements as traditional RPG combat, but a few variables can lead to wildly different battles. Much greater line of sight, slower reaction time, and superior speed of vehicles over swimming characters mean that you have to approach naval combat with a slightly different philosophy.

"Random encounters" and "ambushes" at sea might take an hour of in-game time, rather than a minute, and the potential is much higher for stalemate. Ships offer a much improved opportunity to run away from an unwanted fight, which you'll want to bear in mind when you first introduce naval combat in your game so the first few clashes at sea don't turn out a disappointment. But when things work out right, few things can beat the thrill of two ships crashing into each other and sailors leaping between decks, trying to seize the enemy vessel as a prize.

The Short Short Version

If you just want the simplest of naval fights, and need to get two ships close enough for them to brawl, and neither side has any shipboard weapons, have each side make opposed Command checks, then use the rules in the Bearing section below to determine how the ships are oriented when tactical combat begins.

Then, assume that each side slows to a crawl so they can try to board each other. The two ships might drift forward slowly, but everyone is too busy to try any fancy maneuvering. See the Crew in Combat section to help manage the large numbers of people on each side.

A More Detailed Overview

When ships are closing for battle, but still too far away to fight hand-to-hand, action occurs in **naval combat**. Time and distance are a little flexible, but rounds are generally somewhere between one minute and five minutes long, during which a ship might travel hundreds or even thousands of feet. Once within range of boarding actions, the game switches to **tactical combat**, which are the normal 6-second rounds.

Generally there's no need for a gridded battle map of the seas for naval combat, but DMs are encouraged to create varied environments with a collection of different benefits and dangers that lead to meaningful decisions. At the DM's discretion, the players might be allowed to suggest aquatic terrain features that they can try to move the battle to.

Combat between two vessels is easy to track, but the more vessels you include in a fight, the more complex it can become to track them. At high level, you might simply treat an ongoing engagement between two fleets as just a crowded, hostile type of terrain, through which magically-empowered warships sail with relative impunity.

Encounter Design

If you want to create a full, engaging ship-to-ship combat that climaxes in a fierce melee between the PCs and an enemy force, follow these guidelines.

Historical Example

Though fleet-on-fleet battles are usually more famous, they're astoundingly complicated. However, there are many instances of ship duels which gamers can draw upon to get into the mindset of naval combat.

Traditionally, whoever has better ranged weapons wanted to keep their distance as long as possible and wear down their enemy. If two sides were fairly matched, battles could last hours as ships stayed out of range, waiting for an opening to take advantage of. But once ships get within range, mere minutes might pass before one side strikes its colors, lowering the ship's flag as a symbol of surrender.

In 1812, the *USS Constitution* spotted the *HMS Guerriere*. *Guerriere* fired an extreme range broadside that fell short. It then proceeded to run before the wind for three quarters of an hour, occasionally firing inaccurate broadsides that did no real damage.

Once the range had closed to within a few hundred yards, *Constitution*'s captain ordered extra sail set, and she quickly closed distance. The two ships began exchanging broadsides, with the *Constitution* to starboard and *Guerriere* to port. After fifteen minutes of this exchange, during which *Guerriere* suffered far more damage than the *Constitution* due to the latter's larger guns and thicker hull, *Guerriere*'s mizzenmast fell overboard to starboard, acting like a rudder and dragging her around. This allowed *Constitution* to cross ahead of *Guerriere*, firing a raking broadside which brought down the main yard. *Guerriere*'s bowsprit became entangled in the rigging of *Constitution*'s mizzenmast.

On both ships, boarding parties were summoned, while musket fire broke out from each ship. Only the narrow bowsprit provided a way between the ships, and in the heavy sea, neither side could venture across it. Some of the gunners aboard *Guerriere* fired at point-blank range into *Constitution*'s stern cabin, setting the American ship on fire briefly. The two locked ships slowly rotated clockwise until they broke free. The *Guerriere*'s foremast and mainmast both then fell by the board (in other words, snapped off at deck level), leaving her helpless and rolling heavily.

The *Constitution* ran downwind for several minutes, repairing damage to its rigging, before once again wearing and beating upwind to return to battle. As *Constitution* prepared to renew the action, *Guerriere* fired a shot in the opposite direction from *Constitution*.

Sensing that this was an attempt to signal surrender, *Constitution*'s captain ordered a boat to take a lieutenant over to the British ship. When the lieutenant walked onto the *Guerriere* and asked if *Guerriere* was prepared to surrender, the British captain responded, "Well, Sir, I don't know. Our mizzen mast is gone, our fore and main masts are gone. I think on the whole you might say we have struck our flag."

Motivation

First, give one side or both a reason to board, rather than simply sink their enemy from afar. They might simply want the prize of the ship, or might be trying to capture a villain who knows something vital. Perhaps the ship has some treasure their opponents need, or a hostage to be rescued. Of course this isn't necessary, but at least for your first few naval battles you might want to make sure neither side wants to run, which can lead to an anticlimax.

Setting

Make sure to include interesting locations for combat, each with different conditions. An encounter near a port offers crowded docks where other ships provide cover against ranged attacks, calm harbor waters, shoals at the edge of the bay where a ship might run aground, and choppy water in the open sea. A variety of locations are presented below.

At high level, you might even count a fleet of lower-level enemies as a hazardous location, rather than a collection of hostile ships.

Combat

It might help to think of the actual naval engagement as a separate encounter that simply determines how advantageous a position the party is for the primary combat encounter. A weak enemy force with a strong ship will still be a weak challenge in close combat even if they manage to cripple the party's ride.

Aftermath

Finally, remember that a ship is treasure. If the party seizes a ship and keeps it for later adventures, you might not need to worry about its cost, but if they get into the habit of capturing and selling ships, you'll need to adjust what other treasure the party acquires. Also, have some plans for what to do if everyone's ships sinks and the PCs are stranded at sea.

Campaign Tips: Booty!

You just captured a ship. How many gold pieces do you find on board? A few, sure, but who ships gold pieces? Maybe you ship nuggets, but more likely you're shipping rare foods, fine spices and fabrics, dignatories, settlers, slaves, furniture, high-quality lumber, poorly-crafted religious icons, a hundred pounds of catgut for violins, or those empty spellbooks that wizard will be very annoyed to learn won't be arriving after all.

Naval Combat

During naval combat, each PC chooses one **officer role**, which lets them contribute to the battle, such as by acting as **captain**, directing the crew as **bosun**, aiding maneuvers as the **navigator**, aiding attacks as **gunner**, repairing damage as **engineer**, or warning of danger as **look-out**. A character can change his role each round, with some restrictions. *A ship cannot benefit from more than six officers at a given time.* Characters might also spend their turn as an **attacker**, using their own weapons or spells against an enemy crew, which doesn't count against the limit.

A naval turn is a few minutes long, and consists of five phases—**maneuvers**, **location**, **terrain**, **bearing**, and **attack**. Some of these phases require the captain of each ship to make a **Command** check (d20 + his Command score) to determine who gets the upper hand. Different tactics and maneuvers can grant a bonus in one stage in exchange for a penalty in another. If you prefer, NPC captains can simply Take 10 on their Command checks to speed things up.

Each encounter has multiple **stages**, which are areas in the sea (or sky for airships) roughly 500 to 1,000 feet across. Ships can fight for position in a given stage, or try to flee or force their foes into adjacent stages that might grant different tactical advantages.

Shipboard weapons have three ranges—short, medium, and long—and most are ineffective beyond medium range. Any ship in the same stage as you is at **medium** range; ships in an adjacent stage are at **long** range. Ships can approach to **short** range (roughly 25 feet apart), close enough to board or ram. Once ships gets this close, though, usually the naval encounter ends and traditional tactical combat begins.

Because of their size, ships do not have hit points like creatures. Rather, attacks can damage **components** (weapons, sails, crew compartments, etc.), damage **crew**, or damage **hull integrity**. Damaged components usually incur penalties to maneuvers and change the environment when tactical combat begins (smoke and fires, collapsed rigging, listing deck, etc.). Enough hull integrity damage can cause a ship to start sinking.

Setup

The DM should have stats for each vessel and details of their crews. If you're using miniatures, you'll need maps of all ships. Place miniatures for all prominent characters; you might simply use tokens or coins to represent crew, especially on larger ships. Generally 80 or 90 percent of a ship's crew will be on deck or in the rigging during naval combat, not counting those needed to man shipboard weapons.

Most NPC vessels simply have a Command score that combines their leadership ability and the talents of their officers and crew into a single score, for faster gameplay. If you desire, though, noteworthy NPCs on opposing vessels might be able to fill officer roles just like PCs do.

The DM should describe the environment and starting location, then list notable stages the encounter might move to. Ships might travel thousands of feet in a naval round, so a general map can be useful for helping everyone keep track of where they are. Precise distances, though, aren't important.

NAVAL ROUND

At the start of each naval round, one character must choose to act as captain. Other characters can decide which officer roles they're filling in the course of the turn, since there's usually enough time for someone to scurry down from the crow's nest and rush to try to repair a hole that's taking on water, switching from look-out to engineer for the round.

A ship without a captain rolls d20−10 for any required Command checks. This happens most often if the crew is too preoccupied below-decks for anyone to take control, or if a mutiny leaves the ship with no clear captain.

A ship with less than full crew but at least minimum crew takes a −5 penalty to Command checks. With less crew than minimum but at least skeleton, it takes −10. A ship with less than a skeleton crew can't maneuver at all.

Initiative

All ships act simultaneously during a naval round. Damage and negative conditions don't take effect until everyone has acted. The closest thing to initiative is that a ship's look-out can try to determine what maneuver an opposing ship is taking. Whichever ship has a better look-out can react to the other ship, giving it an informational advantage. The maneuvers themselves still occur simultaneously.

Round Phases

A naval round consists of five phases—**maneuver**, **location**, **terrain**, **bearing**, and **attack**.

Maneuvers

Maneuvers are chosen at the start of the round, and affect your rolls throughout the rest of the round. Simple maneuvers let you trade a −5 to one roll for a +2 to another, like Full Speed Ahead, which gives you −5 to your Command check during the Bearing phase, but +2 to your check during the Location phase.

During this phase, each ship's look-out makes a Perception check. Going in order from lowest check to highest, those ship's captains choose any number of maneuvers, though some are incompatible with each other.

See Naval Maneuvers (page 23) for the full list of maneuvers.

TECHNOLOGY, RANGE, AND TIME

For the sake of gameplay, ranges and time are a little abstract in naval combat. Short range is when personal weapons start to become feasible. Medium range is about as far as shipboard weapons are effective. And long range is beyond the range of all but a few shipboard weapons.

Generally, the higher a ship's technology level, the farther its weapons can shoot and the faster it can travel. We set the ranges in a typical medieval fantasy game to 25, 300, and 800 feet. In a setting with steam engines and rifles, those might double to 50, 600, and 1,600. In a Bronze Age game with primitive sails and bows, it might be 25, 150, 400.

The intent is to end a typical encounter in a ship-to-ship melee. Maneuvering and ranged attacks will provide some noteworthy advantage, but generally won't be enough to finish a fight without melee engagement. Likewise, speeds are meant to be fast enough for two ships to reach each other in a couple minutes if both sides want a fight. However, the rules do also handle situations when two ships keep their distance and try to win with ship weapons alone.

Location

Naval battles occur over various **stages**, which are locations roughly 500 to 1,000 feet across. Encounters usually start with ships in adjacent stages (about 1,000 feet apart).

Each captain makes a Command check and adds his ship's **speed** rating. Going in order from highest Command check to lowest, each ship chooses one of the following options. These are of course guidelines; if two ships are engaged in a chase, the rear ship won't be able to block the other ship unless it can first catch up.

- ✦ **Approach Enemy.** Choose one ship in the same stage whose Command check you beat by 5 or more. For the rest of this round you are at short range. If it moves to another stage this round, you follow it. At the end of the round, begin tactical combat with that ship.
- ✦ **Block Enemy.** Choose one ship whose Command check you beat, either in this stage or an adjacent one. If that ship tries to enter or leave the stage you're in, you can choose to prevent its movement.
- ✦ **Change Location.** Your ship moves to an adjacent stage.
- ✦ **Drive Enemy.** Choose one ship in the same stage whose Command check you beat by 5 or more. This round that ship chooses either to change location to a stage of your choice, or hold position. If it moves, you move to the same stage. If it holds position, its captain takes a −5 penalty to his Command check for this round's Bearing phase.
- ✦ **Hold Position.** If you're content where you are, or if you're being blocked, you can stay put.
- ✦ **Pursue Ship.** Use this if your ship is chasing another. Choose a ship in an adjacent stage whose Command check you beat by 5 or more. You enter that ship's stage, and if it changes location, you can move to the same location.

If a captain's Command check beats the checks of two enemies by 10 or more, he can choose to block or drive both enemies. Likewise, if he beats three enemies by 15 or more, or four enemies by 20 or more, etc., he can block or drive all of them. If driving, all the ships are driven to the same stage.

If ships end separated by more than one stage, this may require tracking multiple encounters at once, or switching to the Stern Chases rules (page 7).

For example, ships *Arrow* and *Buckler* engage the ships *Yeti* and *Zombie* in open waters surrounded by a deadly whirlpool on one side, and a haunted ship graveyard on the other. The Command checks are *Arrow* 25, *Yeti* 14, *Zombie* 10, and *Buckler* 7.

Arrow beat *Yeti* and *Zombie* by enough that the captain decides to drive them both into the whirlpool. *Yeti* obliges, and *Arrow* follows him into the whirlpool. *Zombie* decides to hold position. Even though *Zombie* beat *Buckler*, *Arrow's* success limits *Zombie's* options. *Buckler* could escape by moving to the haunted ship graveyard, but it decides to stay and engage *Zombie*, which maneuvered itself into a disadvantageous position in order to avoid being forced into the whirlpool.

Terrain

The various dangers and options terrain offer are dealt with during this phase. In open seas you can skip it. See Terrain and Hazards (page 24) for details.

Bearing

Relative facing determines what weapons a ship can bring to bear, and what weapons it is vulnerable to in a counterattack. Over the course of a naval round, ships jockey for optimal position, perhaps taking pot-shots while trying to line up a devastating broadside volley. Damaged or unarmed ships might try to stay in their enemy's wake to avoid attacks. This phase determines the best angle a ship is able to get on its opponent over the course of the round.

Each captain makes a Command check and adds his ship's **maneuverability** rating. Going in order from highest Command check to lowest, each captain chooses one ship in the same stage. Based on how much it beat the other ship by, it can choose one of the following options.

Again, these are just guidelines. If one ship is chasing the other in a straight line (the pursuer is definitely abaft the other), it makes no sense for the pursuing ship to be able to hit the chased ship's prow.

- ✦ **Failure (tied or below).** You can point your bow at their broadside or your stern at their bow or broadside. If a ship has already set its bearing relative to you, you can't pick this option. This option is only here for large encounters, where the highest-rolling ship might ignore the second-highest ship in order to get a better angle on a lower-rolling ship.
- ✦ **Partial Success (win by 1 to 4).** You can point your bow at their bow or broadside. Or your broadside at their broadside. Or your stern at any edge of their ship.
- ✦ **Success (win by 5 to 9).** You can point your broadside at their bow or broadside. Or you can point your bow or stern at any edge of their ship.
- ✦ **Critical Success (win by 10+).** You can point any edge of your ship at any edge of their ship.

If you beat the checks of two ships by 10 or more, you can instead choose a partial success against each of them. Succeed by 15 or more, and you can choose a success against both. Succeed by 20 or more, and you can choose a success for three, or a critical success for two.

You can never attack more than one ship in a single round with the weapons from a given side of your ship. However, multiple ships can attack a single ship. If there are more than four ships involved in an encounter, it can be helpful to use tokens to represent the various ships and their relative positions. Remember, this phase just determines orientation, not distance.

For example, the ships *Arrow* and *Buckler* engage the ships *Yeti* and *Zombie*. The Command checks are *Arrow* 21, *Yeti* 14, *Zombie* 10, and *Buckler* 7. First *Arrow* could choose a success against *Yeti* or a critical success against *Zombie*. It chooses to aim a broadside at *Zombie's* aft.
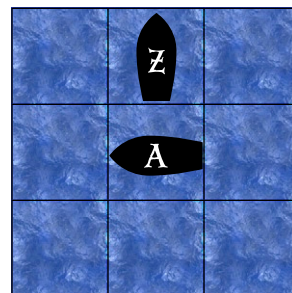
not to scale

SHORT-RANGE CHASES

Stages are an abstraction meant to help track relative positioning on the open waves, but they don't work as well when the terrain options are linear like a river or a channel, or if one ship is just trying to make its best possible speed and run away. If the two ships are in the same stage, just use the normal rules, but if two ships are involved in a chase in adjacent stages, use these modifications to the naval combat rules.

Determine the starting distance between the two ships, usually 1,000 feet. During the Location phase, don't make Command checks for ships engaged in the chase. Instead, compare the speeds of each ship: for every 1 point by which one ship beats another, it gains 100 feet on that ship. Engineers aboard each ship might compete to see who can squeeze out another point of extra speed, and captains are still useful for guiding the crew around hazards. If there is a tie in speed, have the captains make opposed Command checks; the winner gains 100 feet.

During the Bearing phase, there is no need to make Command checks. Normally the quarry ship is pointed away from the chasing ship, and the chaser is pointed at the quarry. If either side chooses to turn broadside to the target, they take a −5 penalty to their Command check during the next turn's Location phase, because they have to sacrifice forward speed. If the chaser turns his back, or the pursuer turns to point at his pursuer, they take a −10 on the next turn.

As long as the ships are more than 500 feet apart, skip the Bearing phase, but ships can still try to attack each other, albeit at long range. When if a ship gets within 500 feet of its quarry, the chase ends with the two ships are in the same stage.

For example, the *Nergal* and a nautilus are chasing *On Silver Sails* down a river; the pursuers start 1,000 feet from their quarry. *Nergal's* speed is 10, *On Silver Sails'* is 8, and the nautilus is 6. If neither side manages to squeeze out any extra speed, after one round, *Nergal* is 800 feet behind *On Silver Sails*, and the nautilus is 1,200 feet away. After the second round, the *Nergal* is 600 feet away and the nautilus 1,400. After the third round, *Nergal* reaches 400 feet and is considered in the same stage, while the nautilus has fallen to 1,600 feet away, and would be considered not even in an adjacent stage, but two stages away.

Then *Yeti* can choose either a failure against *Arrow* or a success against *Buckler*. It decides to aim a broadside against *Buckler*'s prow.
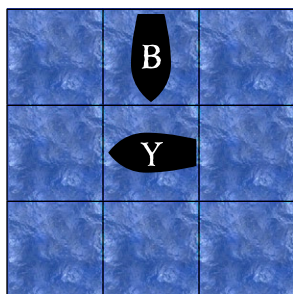
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Finally *Zombie*. It knows it has *Arrow* attacking it from behind, so it cannot choose one of the failure options there. But it can still choose a partial success against *Buckler*. It decides to go broadside to broadside against *Buckler*. Taking all the results into account, we end up with an arrangement looking roughly like this.
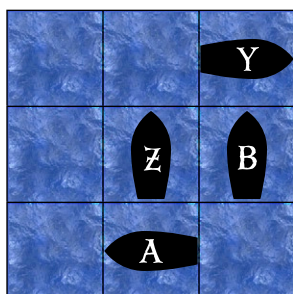
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ATTACK

For each of its firing arcs, a ship can make one attack against a target in that arc (1d20 + its attack bonus vs. enemy ship's Defense). A successful attack causes one **strike**, plus an additional strike for every 5 points by which the attack roll beats the target's Defense. Attacks that do not cause strikes might hit the target but fail to damage anything vital. Blowing holes in the outer hull doesn't do much if you hit above the water line.

Attacks at Medium range use the full attack bonus. Attacks at Short range gain a +5 bonus. Most ship weapons cannot fire at Long range, but those that can take a –10 penalty to the attack roll. A few rare weapons are more accurate at Long range.

For each strike, roll on the table below to determine the location struck. This table is just a guideline, and circumstances of ship design, environment, and tactics might change the odds of hitting a given component.

Location Struck

1d10	Location
1–2	Hull Integrity
3–4	Propulsion
5–6	Armaments
7–10	Miscellaneous

Most components are *damaged* after one strike, *broken* after a second, and *destroyed* after a third. If the rolled component is already destroyed, or if the ship doesn't have the listed component, the ship takes 1 point of Hull Integrity damage instead. For instance, strikes to armaments deal Hull Integrity damage if the ship has no weapons on the side of the ship struck (or no weapons at all).

Effects of hits are detailed in Ship Damage, below.

Critical Hits

If an attack roll is a natural 20, and the attack would hit the target's defense, it is a critical hit. The first location hit (either randomly rolled or chosen by a gunner) takes two strikes instead of one.

Aftermath

If two or more ships have closed to short range, begin a tactical combat encounter with those vessels. Place the ships on the battle map in an orientation determined during the Bearing stage. The ship with the higher Command check determines the starting distance, from adjacent to 25 ft. apart. If the ships begin adjacent, each ship is immobilized on the first round of the tactical combat, due to the grinding together of the hulls.

If there are still other ships active, after 10 rounds of tactical combat, resolve one naval round. If the captain and sufficient crew kept sailing a ship in tactical combat, it can participate in the naval round. Otherwise ships in tactical combat are helpless during the naval round. A ship can't take an action in naval combat that doesn't correspond to what it did in tactical combat.

See Boarding Actions (page 26) for details on resolving attacks from other vessels in tactical combat. If ships end up separated by more than one stage, see Stern Chases (page 7), though usually a ship cannot safely give chase if it's being attacked by another ship.

OFFICER ROLES

There are six officer roles. Each round, a PC can choose a role and provide one of the listed benefits for the ship. NPCs can also fill officer roles, and most ships of significant size will have multiple people with the right skills for each position.

You can have multiple characters in the same role, except for captain. Also, *a ship can benefit from a maximum of six officers at a time.* Any spare characters can fill the Attacker role, which doesn't count against the limit.

Characters can switch roles between rounds as long as the character can realistically reach an appropriate location to perform the duties of that role. Since naval rounds are one to five minutes long, it's usually possible to get anywhere on even the largest ship in that much time. However, a character can only take one officier role-based action per naval round (two if he has the Elite Officer feat, page 9).

Finally, most roles let characters add to the captain's Command checks for a specific action. A character must choose whether to add a bonus before the captain rolls, so it is ideal for the officers to decide their tactics at the beginning of the naval round, before they start making rolls.

The officer roles are:

✦ **Captain.** Decides ship's movement.
✦ **Bosun.** Manages the crew and can grant small bonuses in various roles.
✦ **Engineer.** Repairs damage, or adjusts ship components to improve performance.
✦ **Gunner.** Aims shipboard weapons.
✦ **Look-Out.** Helps avoid hazards and tricks.
✦ **Navigator.** Plots courses or pilots ship to grant bonuses for maneuvers.
✦ **Attacker.** Uses own attacks against enemies.

Captain

The captain's role is to decide maneuvers and order the rest of the crew. His actions are typically limited to those detailed above in the Round Phases section. The rest of the crew augments his decisions by filling in the details and giving the captain more time to focus on the big picture. It's the difference between the captain giving specific orders ("Set a course at 15 degrees North Northeast at twelve knots") and the captain providing general goals and trusting his crew to carry them out ("Cut them off so we can bring our port guns to bear").

Bosun

The bosun relays orders to the crew and direct thems while working alongside them. Once per round, the navigator can choose one of the following:

- ✦ Roll a Command check in the Location, Terrain, or Bearing phase, adding his Charisma modifier to the captain's Command score. This replaces the captain's normal Command check for that phase.
- ✦ Add his Charisma modifier to a shipboard weapon's attack roll, or to an engineer's check to repair or tweak the vessel.

A bosun trained in Diplomacy or Intimidate can either add 2, or add 1 + his ability score modifier, whichever is higher. So a bosun with an 8 Charisma who has the right training could add +2, while a high-level bosun with a 22 Charisma and the same training could add +7.

⸨In Pathfinder, a bosun gains this benefit with at least 1 rank in Diplomacy, Intimidate, or Profession (sailor).⸩

Engineer

Technically, most ships don't have engines, so a more accurate name might be "shipwright." But everyone loves Mr. Scott, so we'll use the name "engineer" for the "character in charge of fixing things" role.

Once per round, the engineer can attempt to repair the hull or a damaged component, or can try to tweak the ship's performance. To do so, first he must have a number of crew at his disposal equal to the ship's Minimum Crew rating. Then he chooses one of the following effects, and makes an Intelligence check.

⸨In Pathfinder, an engineer makes a Knowledge (architecture and engineering) or Profession (sailor) check, but increase the DC by 5.⸩

- ✦ **Fight Fire (DC 20).** Put out a fire in one section.
- ✦ **Repair Component (DC 15).** One damaged component is restored to full order. A check that beats DC 20 can repair a disabled component to being just damaged. A check that beats DC 25 can repair a destroyed component to being disabled. If the component is magical, the engineer takes a –5 penalty to this check if he's not trained in Arcana. ⸨In Pathfinder, he needs at least 1 rank in Knowledge (arcana).⸩
- ✦ **Repair Hull (DC 20).** Repair 1 point of Hull Integrity damage the ship has taken. Each success increases the DC of further repairs by 5, even between encounters. The DC only resets if the ship can undergo proper repairs in a safe harbor.
- ✦ **Right a Listing Ship (DC 20).** Restore a listing ship to be upright.
- ✦ **Slow Sinking (DC 15).** Reduce the rate of the ship's sinking by one step, from immediate to quick to slow to stable.
- ✦ **Give Her All She's Got! (DC 10).** Increase the ship's Maneuverability or Speed rating by one 1 for this round, plus an additional 1 for every 10 you beat the DC by.

IMPROVISATION

Characters might also perform a spell with a long casting time, set up some sort of trick, or take any variety of other action. It's impossible to cover every tactic, but usually you can rule that an effort grants a bonus or penalty to some other aspect of the rules already detailed.

Weather magic might aid a Command check in the Location stage, or create choppy waters as detailed under Terrain and Hazards. Feigning damage to lure an enemy in might require a Bluff or Stealth check against the Perception check of the other ship's look-out, and if successful could give +5 to a Command check in the Bearing stage, but only if the enemy decides to approach to short range.

SHUFFLING CREW

Certain actions require crew to assist. If the ship has enough men to spare, it might still maintain a Full Crew. Otherwise, the ship will take the penalties for having Minimum Crew. Sometimes this is a fair trade-off, such as when putting out a fire before it spreads.

Gunner

One PC can act as Gunner per firing arc, as long as the battery has sufficient crew. Once per round, the gunner can choose one of the following:

- ✦ Roll for an attack with a shipboard weapon, adding his Intelligence or Dexterity modifier to the normal attack bonus. Similar to with the bosun above, a gunner trained in Perception can add either 2 or 1 + his ability score modifier, whichever is higher. ⸨In Pathfinder, a navigator gains this benefit with at least 1 rank in Perception or Profession (sailor).⸩
- ✦ Choose the location of the first hit with shipboard weapons, instead of rolling on the hit chart.

Look-Out

During the Maneuvers phase, the look-out makes a Perception check to determine the order ships choose their maneuvers for the round.

Additionally, once per round the look-out can choose one of the following:

- ✦ Make a Perception check to reduce the impact of poor visibility. See Visibility (page 7).
- ✦ Roll any necessary Command checks in the Terrain phase, adding his Wisdom modifier to the captain's Command score. This replaces the captain's normal Command check for that phase.
- ✦ Grant a bonus equal to his Wisdom modifier to the ship's Defense against one attack from a vessel he can see.
- ✦ Grant a bonus equal to his Wisdom modifier to the defenses of the crew against attacks coming from a vessel he can see. This bonus only applies to personal attacks, not shipboard weapons.
- ✦ Choose one section where the crew takes damage from an enemy's shipboard weapons. Reduce the damage done to each creature in that area by the same bonus as above.

When he would add his Wisdom modifier, a look-out trained in Perception can add either 2 or 1+ his Wisdom modifier, whichever is higher. ⸨In Pathfinder, a navigator gains this benefit with at least 1 rank in Perception or Profession (sailor).⸩

Navigator

Once per round, the navigator can roll a Command check in the Location or Bearing phase, adding his Dexterity, Intelligence, or Wisdom modifier to the captain's Command score. This replaces the captain's normal Command check for that phase. (Dexterity represents fast piloting as helmsman, while Intelligence or Wisdom fits for plotting courses).

A navigator trained in Nature can add either 2 or 1+ his ability score modifier, whichever is higher.

⎡In Pathfinder, a navigator gains this benefit with at least 1 rank in Knowledge (nature), Profession (sailor), or Survival.⎤

Attacker

Each naval round lasts a minute or more, but sometimes players will want to take actions that can be accomplished in a few seconds. Performing the other officer roles takes the full round, but if a character would prefer to unload a *wand of fireballs* or a quiver of arrows, use these guidelines.

Attacker is an officer role, just like captain or bosun, and a character who's busy filling another officer role doesn't have time to directly attack an opposing ship.

Ships spend most of their turn hundreds of feet away from each other, and rocking of waves, gusts and vortices of winds, and the great speeds of ships make it difficult to aim ranged attacks accurately. Likewise, most ships that expect combat are enchanted with some sort of eldritch defense that weakens magical attacks, or else have mundane countermeasures.

An attacker is usually better off waiting for the right opening and making a single attack, instead of futilely watching arrows fly off course, or fireballs be snuffed by an eldritch aura.

Range and Defenses

Attacks need to be able to reach 300 ft. (60 squares) if the target is in the same stage, or 800 ft. (160 squares) if the target is in an adjacent stage.

As a first mundane defense, most crew on deck have cover thanks to rigging and railing, while those inside have total cover, or possibly superior cover if there's an open cannon port.

Second, look-outs can help the crew avoid some incoming attacks.

Third, see Eldritch Defenses (page 68) for various defenses ships have. The most common variety at high level reduces damage from magic that originates outside a ship's protective aura. When two ships enter each other's protective auras (i.e., they get within short range), this protection goes away.

Weapon Attacks

A character who wants to use traditional ranged attacks can, over the course of a naval round, make one tactical round's worth of attacks. This might represent firing a volley of arrows, or waiting for just the right lull in wind to fire a single deadly shot.

Of course, there's always the option of just firing a lot and taking the full penalty, in which case the character can take ten tactical rounds' worth of attacks. However, in addition to normal modifiers for distance, ranged attack rolls against targets on another ship take a penalty equal to the target ship's Maneuverability or Speed, whichever is higher. (These penalties do not apply during tactical combat, since the ships are closer.)

If the two ships moved to short range this turn, for the majority of the naval round the vessels are still far enough apart that the usual penalties apply. However, the attacker can make a single attack as if the target is only 100 ft. (20 squares) away, and with only half the above penalty.

Spells

When confronted by a ship with an eldritch defense, a character can look for a temporary weakness or fluctuation in the magic. He spends the naval round to make an Arcana check (DC 10 + half the level of the target's highest level component), and if successful can cast one tactical round's worth of spells that bypasses the target ship's eldritch defense.

As above, there's always the option of taking ten tactical rounds' worth of actions, but suffering the full penalties from the target's eldritch defenses.

Damaging a Ship

Realistically, a couple of arrows won't do much to a 100-ft. long ship. Even a rowboat isn't going to sink just because you emptied a quiver into the gunwale. Likewise, chopping into the deck of a ship with a greataxe isn't going to cause it to take on water. However, with a well-aimed attack that deals enough damage, it is possible for a character to deliver a strike to a ship.

First the attack must hit the ship in a vulnerable spot, which requires an attack roll against an AC equal to the ship's Defense. The attack takes a penalty equal to the target ship's Maneuverability or Speed, whichever is higher. This penalty does not apply during tactical combat, since the ships are closer.

The ship's eldritch defenses might reduce the damage of a magical attack. Then, unless the attack is specially designed to damage objects, halve the damage it deals. Then, if that damage exceeds the ship's Defense score, it causes one strike on a random location. For each multiple the damage is of the target ship's Defense, it inflicts another hit. Energy attacks might give a component the burning condition instead of causing damage right away.

So, for example, in Pathfinder, a low-level *fireball* (one dealing an average of 17.5 damage, halved to 8.75) probably won't set a ship's sails on fire. However, if a *disintegrate* spell (dealing an average 77 damage, not halved) manages to hit the right spot on a Gargantuan ship with Defense 30, it will deal 2 strikes, unless the ship has an eldritch defense.

SHIP DAMAGE

Being complex devices, ships do not simply have one pool of hit points. Attacks can damage various components, kill crew, or weaken the hull to the point that the ship is no longer seaworthy. As components are damaged, certain areas might become difficult or blocking terrain. Sufficient hits might even knock holes in walls and floors big enough for creatures to move through, at the DM's discretion.

For most components, a single strike damages it, a second disables, and a third destroys. The rigging of a Huge ship technically does take just as many strikes to destroy as a Small one, but because larger ships have higher Defenses, it requires more firepower to achieve the same result. Still, with a few lucky shots, a lightly armed ship could take out the sails of a much larger vessel.

Crew Damage

If the text below says that a strike to a given area causes damage to creatures, those creatures can make a Dexterity check (DC 15) to negate the damage. ⁅In PATHFINDER, they make a Reflex save (DC 15).⁆

DMs should use their judgment to determine how large an area should be affected, but remember often these attacks are made with volleys of cannons or deadly supernatural weapons, so it's not unreasonable for half a deck to be at risk for damage.

Conditions

Various effects can cause the following conditions.

Burning

Some attacks can add the burning condition either in place of or in addition to normal damage. Each naval round, for each ship section (hull, propulsion, armament, and miscellaneous) that is on fire, make a ship saving throw (page 4). On a success, the fire doesn't cause any significant damage. On a 20 or higher, the fire either burns itself out or is extinguished, but only for that particular section; fires elsewhere continue.

A failed save means that the burning component takes another hit. If you fail a save by 5 or more, roll an additional location to see where the fire spreads.

Simply having the burning condition is not enough to make a part of the ship unusable. Only once a save is failed has the area actually "caught fire" to the point of being hazardous. In tactical combat, a burning ship should have scattered areas of flames and large swaths concealed by smoke.

Capsized

A ship that is completely turned over, usually the result of strong waves, is immobilized and starts to sink slowly.

Restoring a capsized ship to level is a massive undertaking, requiring other ships, powerful telekinesis, or aid from big, strong creatures, and in any case the ship's contents are likely ruined by immersion in water.

Immobilized

An immobilized ship automatically fails Command checks. It cannot move or change stages unless physically pushed. Shipboard weapons gain a +5 bonus to hit it.

If some other effect reduces a ship's Speed or Maneuverability to 0, such as damage to propulsion or some special maneuver, it is immobilized.

ARCHERY VOLLEYS

Ships often have crew to spare, particularly if your setting does not allow for cannons. A simple solution would be to just reskin a ship's armaments as the crew firing tons of arrows or other projectiles. They could use the same rules as cannons—attack bonus vs. ship's Defense, inflicting various strikes—perhaps with some restrictions, like not letting attacks damage any internal components.

For those who prefer more granular realism in their games, use these rules when the crew pulls out their bows and starts raining arrows upon the other side.

For every twenty archers you have, you can fire one "volley" per naval round, which involves launching hundreds of arrows. This functions similarly to having a PC act as an attacker, trading the higher skill of the typical high-level PC officer for the sheer number of attacks. Individual arrows never will deal enough damage to cause strikes against another ship, but they can injure opposing crew.

For each volley, choose a 20-ft. radius burst on the deck of the target ship, and make an attack roll with an attack bonus of +0 against each creature in the area. Apply normal modifiers for range and cover, but do not include the penalty an individual attacker suffers due to the target ship's Speed or Maneuverability. The archer volley isn't relying on accurate aiming, but instead fills the air with projectiles.

On a hit, the volley does normal damage (usually 1d8). If archers in the group deal different amounts of damage, use the most common damage amount.

If multiple volleys concentrate on the same area, for every twenty extra archers, increase the attack bonus by +5 and increase the damage by +2. One hundred sailors working together, for instance, would make an attack (d20+20), dealing 1d8+8 damage.

The individual skill of the archers does not affect the attack roll for a volley. The attack roll just represents the threat of being struck, akin to the attack roll made against you when you fall into a spiked pit trap. Also, note that we use "archer" and "arrow" for ease of reference, but these rules can apply just as easily to any thrown or projectile weapon.

SIMPLIFIED CREW DAMAGE

If you don't use battle maps, or simply don't want to track the location and hit points of crew, these rules let you keep track of the overall condition of the crew.

At the start of an encounter, note the total number of crew (that is, anyone not important for you to care about them individually). That number equates to 100% **crew health**. Whenever a strike would deal damage to crew in a given area, instead that strike reduces the crew health by the same amount. So a random cannon strike on the main deck, rolling 2d6 and dealing 7 damage, reduces crew health from 100 to 93. (PCs in affected areas take damage as normal.)

At the end of the encounter, take that percentage and determine how many crew are left unharmed. Any others were knocked out. A quarter of those knocked out die.

So if you originally had 40 crew, and your crew health was reduced from 100 to 28, then only 28%, or 10, crew came through unscathed. The other 30 were knocked out, and 7 of those died.

Though this *is* a dramatic simplification, since attack ferocity scales generally with ship durability, ship size, and crew requirements, it all tends to balance out in the end.

In the rare situation where multiple immobilized ships are supposed to make Command checks (such as to determine relative bearing), just adjudicate based on what would realistically happen to an immobile ship (e.g., they stay in the same position they were last round).

Listing

Whenever a ship fails a save to avoid sinking, it has a 25% chance of listing to port, 25% of listing to starboard, and 50% of being stable. A listing ship is immobilized. Attacks might be unable to hit certain components due to the ship's angle.

During tactical combat, a listing ship has one side sloping toward the sea. Any creature that cannot hold onto a railing or other support treats all movement as difficult terrain. A creature that is knocked prone slides 2 squares toward the water.

An engineer can restore a ship to level.

Sinking

At regular intervals, a sinking ship must make a ship saving throw (page 4) to avoid being flooded. A slowly sinking ship rolls every ten minutes. Quickly sinking ships roll every minute, or once per naval round. A ship that is immediately sinking goes under right away during naval combat, or makes a saving throw once per round during tactical combat.

A successful save means the ship is temporarily stable. A roll of 20 or higher means the ship's descent slows one step. If it's only sinking slowly, it stabilizes, and will not sink unless damaged further.

A failed save means the ship goes down about 10 feet, or the depth of one deck. If a deck with open gunports becomes submerged, the ship's sinking accelerates by one step, from slow to quick to immediate.

If a ship fails a sinking save, it is immobilized. Once a ship's main deck is submerged, it automatically fails future saves and cannot stabilize.

After combat, it's a very involved ordeal to recover a partially-sunk ship, requiring hours of patching, bailing, and pumping. Sometimes perfectly seaworthy ships are at risk of sinking, such as if they're caught by a strong wave.

CAMPAIGN TIPS: WHAT DO YOU MEAN, THEY BOTH SANK?

Your ship caught fire, but you were too busy performing a boarding action to put it out. Guess what else is flammable? Your enemy's ship, the one you needed to get back home, now that yours has sunk. Nice job breaking it, hero. Do you cling to timbers and paddle for land? Maybe you should have made friends with those locathah instead of chopping them up. Just don't let the sun and isolation drive you mad, okay?

Hull Integrity

Strikes that hit in the right spot can reduce a ship's Hull Integrity. Crew in an area at or below the waterline might be injured by this strike, taking 1d6 damage.

If strikes reduce a ship's Hull Integrity to 0 or less, it begins to sink slowly. If it is reduced to –2, it sinks quickly. If reduced to –5, it sinks immediately.

Propulsion

This is the rigging on a sailing ship, the engine room on a steam-powered vessel, oars on a rowed boat, bound elementals, or some other odd power source for magically-propelled vehicles. It can also include rudders, the ship's wheel, propellers, and flippers or wings of a living vessel.

The first strike damages the propulsion, reducing the ship's Maneuverability and Speed by 5 each, to a minimum of 0. Creatures in or near the damaged propulsion component take 2d6 points of damage.

A second strike disables propulsion and immobilizes the ship, and deals a further 2d6 damage to creatures in the area. A third strike destroys the propulsion, often with great collateral damage. Masts collapse, boilers explode with steam, and eldritch engines unleash deadly warping energies. Creatures in exposed areas take 6d6 damage.

If a ship has multiple types of propulsion, such as sails and oars, or a steam engine and sails, the first strike only partially damages propulsion, reducing Maneuverability and Speed by 2. The second strike does normal damage, the third disables, and the fourth destroys.

Armaments

When a strike hits armaments, it disables one particular battery and deals 2d6 damage to each creature operating that battery. A second strike destroys the battery, deals another 2d6 damage to creatures in the area, and may, depending on the nature of the battery, cause damage to the ship. See Shipboard Weapons (page 65) for information.

Miscellaneous

The strike can either hit a component, such as a magical figurehead, a sick bay, or a crow's nest, or just hit an open part of a deck where crew are. When you roll this result, choose any component you're aware of. If you aren't aware of any, the DM may choose one at random.

The first strike to a given area disables any components there—shattering a crow's nest, scattering tools in a sick bay, or knocking a figurehead loose. It also deals 2d6 damage to creatures in the area. A second strike destroys the component and deals another 2d6 damage.

Naval Maneuvers

You can choose one or more of these maneuvers at the start of your turn. You are not automatically aware of what maneuver another ship is attempting, but your look-out can provide warning so you don't fall prey to some of these gambits. These maneuvers won't work in all situations. Obviously you can't steal the wind from the sails of a steam-powered ship.

Basic Maneuvers

You can choose these maneuvers during the Maneuver phase.

Evasive Maneuvers

You take a –5 penalty to attack rolls this round and gain a +2 bonus to Defense.

Full Speed Ahead

You take a –5 penalty to Command checks for Bearing this round and gain a +2 bonus for checks for Location.

Hard About

You take a –5 penalty to Command checks for Location this round and gain a +2 bonus to checks for Bearing.

Reduce Speed

Often useful in tight terrain, a ship can reduce its speed rating to as low as 0 for the entire turn. At speed 0, however, the ship is immobilized. It might not crash into anything, but it won't be able to maneuver to avoid enemies.

Steady Aim

You are less concerned with dodging than letting your crew line up the perfect shot. You take a –5 penalty to Defense this round and gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls.

Steal Their Wind

You sail down the wind directly at another ship, diverting the wind from its sails. You take a –5 penalty to checks for Bearing this round, but you only have to beat a ship's Location check to approach to Short range, instead of beating it by 5 or more. This maneuver only works if your sails are approximately the same size as theirs; so generally, your ship can't be more than one size category smaller than theirs.

Three-Dimensional Combat

In aerial, aquatic, or astral combat, ship maneuvers must also take elevation into account. Flying no more than 15 degrees off the horizontal plane doesn't really have much effect on combat, and unless otherwise noted, ships are assumed to battle at roughly the same elevation. However, going higher or lower limits what weapons you can bring to bear, and what you can be targeted with.

During the **Location** phase, different elevations are different stages. If the combat is mostly ground- or sea-based, then you just need to track if the ship is in the same stage (close enough to attack, and just flying slightly above everyone else), in an adjacent stage (flying high enough—maybe 100 feet up—that most attacks can't get an angle on the vessel), or out of range (flying well above everyone else).

If there are multiple flying vessels, any elevation difference of 100 or 200 feet should be a separate stage.

During the **Bearing** phase, in addition to the normal options, if you achieve a partial success you can choose to be slightly elevated or slightly below the other ship. On a success you can choose to be directly below the other ship. A critical success lets you be directly above the other ship.

During the **Attack** phase, you gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls and to Defense against a ship you are slightly above. If you are slightly below, you take a –2 penalty to attack rolls and Defense, so this is not usually advantageous, but some situations might make it useful. Normally ships cannot attack directly up or down.

Situational Maneuvers

You can choose these maneuvers during other phases.

Crossfire

During the Bearing phase, you can take a –5 penalty to your Command check. If you end up with two ships on opposite sides of you, you maneuver so that they might shoot each other.

When either of those ships attacks you this turn, note the natural result of its d20 attack roll, not counting bonuses. Subtract that number from 10, then add the ship's attack bonus. Use that as an attack against the ship on the opposite side of you.

For instance, *Yeti* and *Zombie* flank *Arrow*. *Yeti*'s attack is d20+15, and it rolls a natural 17, for a total of 32 against *Arrow*. Then it subtracts 17 from 10 to get –7, and adds its attack bonus (+15), for a result of 8, which likely won't harm *Zombie*.

But then *Zombie*'s inept crew fires, rolling d20+15, and gets a natural 1. The result of 16 doesn't hurt *Arrow*, but then it subtracts 1 from 10 to get 9, and adds its attack bonus (+15), for a result of 24 as an attack against *Yeti*.

Force Collision

If the stage's terrain has a crash hazard (page 25) and an enemy ship is at short range, you can try to force it into a collision. You take a –5 penalty to your Command check for Bearing this round. Then you can choose to take a –2 or –5 penalty to your Command check to avoid a collision, and force the enemy ship to take the same penalty.

Interpose Cover

During the Bearing phase, if the terrain of your stage is appropriate, you can try to keep cover between you and an enemy. If you get a partial success or better, you can choose a bearing from one step lower than normal, but gain cover, which adds +5 to the Defenses of each ship against attacks from the other. If you get a success or better, you can choose a result from two steps lower than normal and gain total cover, negating all attacks between the two ships, barring any that can fire indirectly above the blocking terrain.

You usually cannot interpose cover between ships that are at short range.

Ram

If you end the Bearing phase at short range with another ship, and your bow is pointed toward that ship, and you beat that ship's Bearing check this round, you can ram during the Attack phase. Even if your bow faces their bow, you can ram them at a slight angle so that they aren't ramming you back. If your Bearing checks tie, however, both ships ram each other.
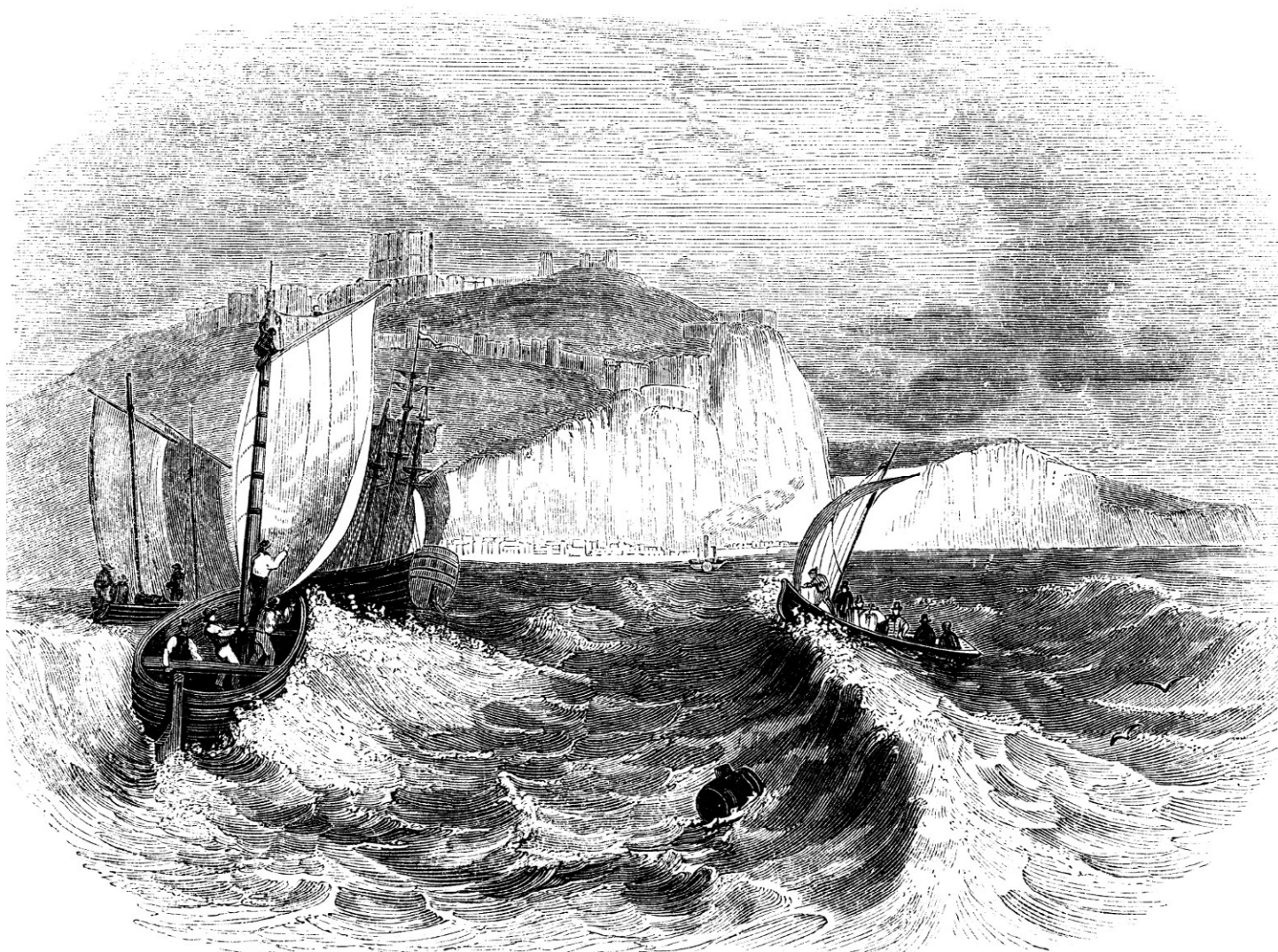
Ramming requires an attack roll, using an attack bonus equal to the ship's Defense minus 5.

Relative speed is also a factor in the attack roll. If the rammer attacks point to point, add the two ships' speed ratings together. If the attack is point to tail, determine how much faster the ramming ship is than the target (minimum 0). If the attack is point to side, just take the rammer's speed. Then, for every 5 points of relative speed, add +1 to the attacker's roll.

The results of a strike are the same as with normal shipboard weapons, though unless the ships are vastly different sizes, or if one ship can get above another, rams cannot damage rigging.

The rammed vessel makes an identical attack against the rammer, but uses its Defense minus 10 instead of Defense minus 5.

Ramming Oars

An oared ship that is broadside to broadside with an enemy oared ship can choose to try to destroy the enemy's oars. Each ship makes attack rolls for ramming as normal, but strikes will damage only oars. Additionally, because a moving ship can swerve away after a glancing strike, if the attacker gets multiple strikes, it can choose to deliver fewer than the full number of strikes. Each strike it gives up reduces the number of strikes it suffers from the rammed vessel by one.

Terrain and Hazards

A battle on the open sea is interesting enough, but dramatic environments add dynamic and exciting options to a naval combat. Usually an encounter will have multiple stages with different terrain elements. Most terrain will catch, conceal, or crash a ship, or can injure the crew or provide cover.

A given stage might have one or more types of terrain. If so, resolve each independently, but handle visibility first.

Terrain might be sparse or dense. If the terrain is sparse, it only fills part of a stage, so a ship can simply avoid it, though that limits its maneuverability. During the Terrain phase, a ship can choose to avoid any sparse terrain, but it takes a –5 penalty to its Command check during the Bearing phase. Dense terrain fills the whole stage and cannot be avoided.

For instance, a storm might have limited visibility and choppy seas all over, but in one stage there could be a few rocky islets making up a sparse crash hazard, as well a sunken lighthouse that constantly is struck by lightning, making it a sparse strike hazard.

Catch Hazard

Ice, sandbars, kelp, water bubbling with gaseous upwelling, and swarms of animals can catch a ship and stop it from moving. During the Terrain

phase, make a Command check and add the ship's maneuverability rating. Sparse hazards might is DC 15, dense DC 20, and if there are only a handful of save paths DC 25.

If the hazard is something that can be pushed aside (like an ice floe), add +2 for each size category the ship is above Tiny. If the hazard would be worse for larger ships (like sandbars, since bigger ships tend to have deeper drafts), instead apply this as a penalty.

Success means the ship avoids being trapped. Failure means the ship is briefly snagged. Its maximum speed is reduced to 2 during next round. If tactical combat begins at the end of this naval round, the ship is immobilized on the first round.

Fail by 5 or more, and the ship is trapped. Until it breaks free it cannot make any Command checks to move. An engineer can free a trapped ship.

Chop

Choppy seas, whirlpools, or turbulence for airships can slow vessels, knock crew overboard, or even capsize a boat. A ship in chop has its speed and maneuverability ratings reduced by a quarter in light chop. Heavy chop reduces them by half, while severe chop reduces them to a quarter.

During the Terrain phase, the ship must make a Command check with a +2 bonus for each size category the ship is larger than Tiny, to a maximum of +10 for a Gargantuan ship. Light chop might is DC 15, heavy chop DC 20, and severe DC 25.

Success means the ship escapes any dangers from the chop. Failure means a wave crashes across the maindeck, and each crewman there must make a Dexterity check (DC 8) to avoid being washed overboard. ⎰In Pathfinder, they make a Reflex save (DC 10).⎱

Failure by 5 or more is as above, plus the ship lists (page 21) from an impact. If the ship is already listing, a further failure by 5 or more capsizes the ship.

Crash Hazard

Small rocky islets, wrecked ships, partially-submerged towers, or even the legs of a titanic beast are a steering danger. Even if there's enough space that ships can navigate safely, in the heat of battle a vessel might run the risk of colliding.

Make a Command check and add the ship's maneuverability rating, but take a –2 penalty for each size category the ship is above Tiny. A few scattered obstacles might be DC 15, copious obstacles DC 20, and narrow straits or a fleet of ships DC 25.

Success means the ship avoids crashing. Failure means the ship takes 1 point of Hull Integrity damage.

Fail by 5 or more, and the ship collides hard. It takes 1 point of Hull Integrity damage, and its maximum speed is reduced to 2 during next round. If tactical combat begins at the end of this naval round, the ship is immobilized on the first round.

Strike Hazard

Some terrain can damage anywhere on the ship, such as sails or decks full of crew, not just the hull. Make a Command check and add the ship's maneuverability rating. A single hazard like a blasting geyser might be DC 15, cloudy banks of searing embers might be DC 20, and an active sea battle with huge crossfires DC 25.

Success means the ship avoids damage. On a failure, roll a random location for a strike, just as if another ship's attack had hit. Fail by 5

or more, and roll for two strikes instead. Based on the damage type, the component struck might be burning instead of taking immediate damage.

Visibility

Be it by fog, darkness, intense rain, or swarms of locusts, limited visibility impairs the ability to maneuver relative to your opponent, often forcing you to guess. In a stage with limited visibility, each side rolls twice for Command checks and takes the worse result. It does likewise for shipboard attacks.

Ships whose crew can ignore the poor visibility, like a crew of drow on a sunless sea, don't suffer this penalty. A ship's look-out can spend his round to make a Perception check during the Terrain phase. If successful, he lets the ship ignore the penalty. Thin fog might be DC 15, thick fog or starlight DC 20, and complete black-out DC 30, though factors like ambient noise and reference points could adjust the DC.

Winds

High winds typically just create effects similar to chop. Low winds, however, halve the speed of wind-powered vessels. Some areas have no winds at all, immobilizing sailing ships unless they can use oars or kedging to move.

You might also treat unfavorable winds as a –2 to –5 penalty to sailing ships' attempts to avoid other hazards. The lee side of a cliff can often endanger a ship because the only winds are those that blow toward the cliff face.

BOARDING ACTIONS

Now that we've handled naval combat, it's time for tactical combat. In tactical combat, ships are basically giant pieces of terrain that can be moved if enough characters spend their actions to do so. The results of naval combat may give one side or the other an advantage or a time pressure, but only seldom will the ships be maneuvering or shooting much once tactical combat begins.

Ship Movement in Tactical Combat

Ships aren't that complicated in theater-of-the-mind style gameplay, but they're a pain in the ass if you want to use miniatures and battlemaps. Because ships don't turn 90 degrees at a time, but battle grids are square based, you have to kludge things a bit. Given the size of ships and the size of an average game table, it's often infeasible to draw a map and move ships around like giant miniatures. Typically it's easier to keep the ships generally in the center, and move the terrain based on how the ships move.

If both sides want a fight, you can easily just stick two ship maps next to each other and run a normal fight, just using our few extra guidelines here to handle classic shipboard stunts. However, if there is some advantage to be gained by moving—if one side wants to get away, or if there are sharp rocks that might destroy the ship if no one is willing to take a break from swordfighting in order to steer—things become much more complicated.

Close Combat Maneuvers

The normal rules for Full Crew and Minimum Crew still apply in tactical combat, so if everyone draws swords for battle, no one will be maneuvering. Keep track of how many crew are spending their turns to control the ship as opposed to fighting.

The captain can spend a standard action to direct the crew and make a Command check and add his ship's Maneuverability rating (with appropriate modifiers if he has less than Full Crew). If during the course of a round a ship's captain does not do this but the ship still has a crew, roll 1d20−10 for the ship's Command check.

The captain can also choose to set his ship's speed at any pace up to its full speed.

Results

At initiative count 0, whichever ship won determines which way the faster ship moves. Determine the difference in speed rating between your two ships. If your ship is going faster, move twice that many squares forward. If your ship is slower, move the other ship twice that many squares forward.

For example, if a clipper with a speed of 12 and a galleon with speed 6 are maneuvering in close combat, their difference in speed is 6 knots, so the clipper will pull ahead by 12 squares each round unless its captain decides to cut back on their speed.

If You Want to Adhere to the Grid

When moving ships, they can go either straight forward or diagonally forward.

Keep track of the number of rounds in a row your ship has won. Compare that to this chart. If you have succeeded enough times, you can rotate either their ship or yours 90 degrees at any point during the

movement. Propellered ships typically use the rear of the ship as the axis. Sailing ships with multiple masts can generally use any mast or the rear of the ship as an axis.

Grid Based Maneuvers

Maneuverability	Rounds Needed to Turn
1	Six
2	Five
3	Four
4–6	Three
7–15	Two
16+	One

If You Want to Ignore the Grid

Ships can only move straight forward, not diagonally. However, at any point during this movement, you can turn either your ship or their ship slightly. How much you can turn depends on your ship's maneuverability.

Non~Grid Based Maneuvers

Maneuverability	Angle of Turn
1–3	15 degrees
4–6	30 degrees
7–9	45 degrees
10–12	60 degrees
13–15	75 degees
16+	90 degrees

Yes, this means the ship won't align to a proper grid. Movement on the ship is easy, and movement off the ship is easy. When moving between or measuring distances, just round the distance up to the nearest 5 feet.

Withdrawing

If two ships are ever separated by more than 150 feet, switch back to naval combat.

Ship Terrain

Many spaces on a ship will be difficult terrain, crowded with spare lines, barrels of supplies, and the various tools used to keep ships in working order. Characters should be encouraged to use these in improvised attacks.

Rigging can be entered from any space adjacent to the edge of the ship. For ease of play, assume that characters can occupy any space above the ship, up to the maximum of the rigging's height.

Falling overboard is a great risk, so most ships have railings along their edges. If forced movement would take a creature through the railing and off the ship, that creature gets a +5 bonus to its saving throw to avoid being thrown overboard. ⎰In Pathfinder, a creature that would be pushed off the side can make a Reflex save (DC 10) to catch himself on the railing and remain on the ship. However, he falls prone.⎱

Crew in Combat

Most crew on larger ships will be low-level and not as deadly in combat as PCs. You can usually get away with having a single set of stats for each member of the crew. Depending on how much effort you want to put into tracking the actions of each side's crew in a large melee, decide which of the following options you want to use.

Full Rules

Each crewman acts as a normal creature. This potentially means tracking the initiative and hit points of dozens or hundreds of NPCs on larger ships, but it's possible.

Crew as Terrain

At higher levels, it's often easier to just treat the normal sailors as background, brief obstacles the heroes can force their way through. Crewmen never take actions on their own. Each crewman occupies a space, which counts as difficult terrain for hostile creatures. Whenever a creature enters the space of a hostile crewman, it takes 5 damage.

They have completely average baseline defenses, AC/Fort/Ref/Will of 10 ⎰or, in Pathfinder, AC 10, and +0 to Fort/Ref/Will saves⎱. If a crewman takes any damage, it is out of the fight. It probably is just injured and withdraws, but if the damage is more than 15, it dies. Injured crewmen recover with a day's rest.

A character can spend a standard action to order any four crewmen within earshot to move (usually traveling 30 ft. or 6 squares). If two crewmen from opposite sides move adjacent, they each deal 5 damage to the other. This will usually take both crewmen out.

Crew Templates

Some crew have templates, based on their nature. See Hiring and Acquiring (page 9) for the costs of these crew. Each templated crewman has 10 Hit Points. If they take 10 damage or more from a single hit, they go down right away. Otherwise, any damage "bloodies" them, after which any more damge takes them out.

An easy way to track this is to put pennies under each normal crewman, and higher denominations under templated crew. Heads is full, tails is bloodied. Or just use coins in place of minis altogether.

Crew Template~Militant

When a character commands military crewmen, he can move them as usual. Then if all four are adjacent to a single target, the target takes 5 damage from their combined assault.

Crew Template~Scoundrel

Scoundrel crewmen help their allies flank and overwhelm foes with tricks. When an attack or spell deals damage to a hostile creature adjacent to a scoundrel crewman, the target takes an extra 2 damage.

Crew Template~Sorcerous

When a character commands sorcerous crewmen, instead of moving them he can have the group focus their power to cast a minor spell. When you gain sorcerous crew, choose one of the following options for them to know:

✦ The group telekinetically pushes one creature within 30 ft., moving the target 5 ft.
✦ The group deals damage equal to their level to one creature within 30 ft.
✦ The group casts one cantrip.

Crew Template~Resilient

Resilient crewmen include undead, lycanthropes, or other magically resilient creatures, or just heavily armored marines. Choose one of the following that fits the nature of the crewman:

✦ Prevent the first 5 damage the crewman would take each turn. This makes them more vulnerable to PCs than other crew.
✦ The first time the crewman goes down, they get back up a turn later but are bloodied. (Remove their coin to show they've used up their resilience.) This makes them more vulnerable to other crew, since even if PCs hit hard, they'll have to attack twice.
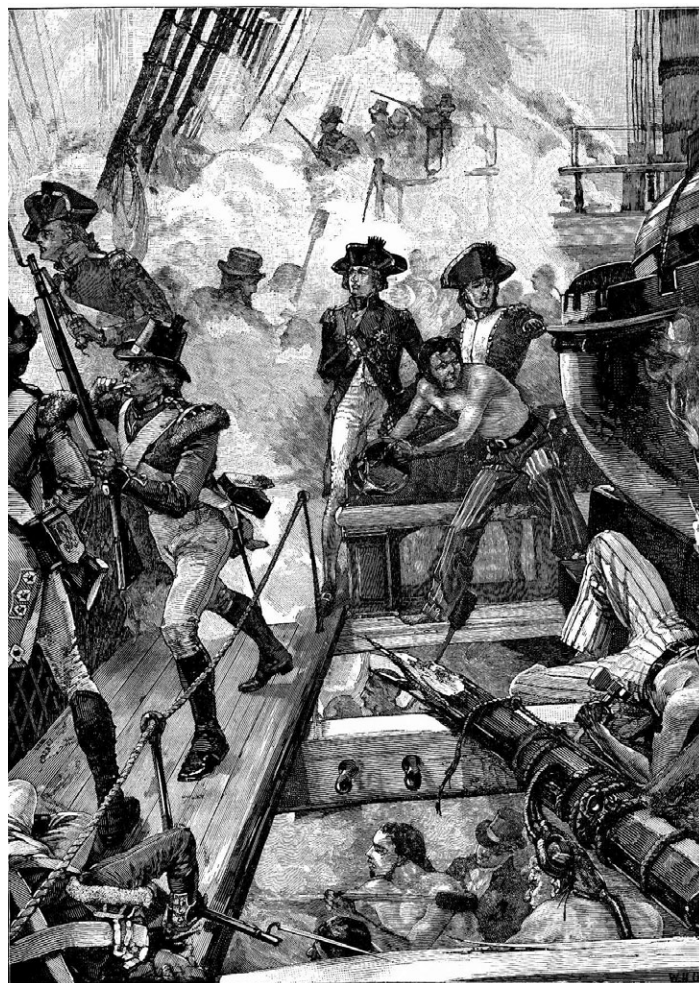
Chapter Three: Port Register

This chapter presents a variety of sample vessels, both "realistic" versions that match actual historical ships, and "fantastic" versions that add magic. All these ships follow the construction rules in Chapter Five: Shipyard (page 62), which you can use to design your own ships or to enhance the stock ships below with a bit of personality.

Every ship has a level entry, as well as a price. The level represents the typical level at which PCs might gain access to such a ship, though of course these are just guidelines. The price is the cost to acquire, and also covers the necessary financial outlay to handle long-term upkeep and repairs. Command checks for ships that don't have captains listed are left blank, since these depend on who's in command.

Sample Ships

+ **Rowboat.** Suitable for dinghies, canoes, and the like.
+ **Cutter.** Basic sailing vessel.
+ **Steam Cutter.** Basic steam-powered vessel.
+ **Windskiff.** Small airship. Also *Glorious Revolution*, an elemental windskiff built for dragon hunting.
+ **Caravel.** Standard medieval sailing vessel. Also *Sea Mare*, owned by privateers famed for stealing whole ships in the dead of night.
+ **Longship.** Viking-style rowed sailboat. Also *Stone Valkyrie*, for when you need to plunder further inland.
+ **Galleon.** Medieval warship built for close combat. Also *Nosey Anna*, captained by Lysander Moriz, one of the greatest explorers in the multiverse.
+ **Schooner.** Classic large multi-masted sailing ship. Also *Roscommon*, a schooner blessed by a fey queen.
+ **Steamship.** Sturdy turret-armed patrol boat. Also *Khalundurrin*, a bold dwarven scout ship.
+ **Trireme.** Massive rowed warship of the Greek style.
+ **Submarine.** Experimental steam ramship named *Cachalot*.
+ **Frigate.** Iconic warship of the golden age of sail. Also *Serenity*, a warship tasked with an impossible pursuit.
+ **Windship-of-War.** Huge aerial assault vessel.
+ **Zeppelin.** Rigid-body dirigible.
+ **Leviathan.** An elder kraken and an undead whale crewed by ghoul cutthroats.
+ **Coaltongue.** The arcanoscientific flagship of the Risuri fleet in the world of *Zeitgeist: The Gears of Revolution*.
+ **Grand Frigate.** The largest of sailing warships, including *In Lucis Excusus*, a grand frigate enhanced by steam technology, to show the primacy of science over magic. Also *Ire of Veles*, avatar of a god of seas and the underworld.

Rowboat

No, it's not glamorous, but sometimes you need stats for a rowboat.

Rowboat	Level 0 Vehicle
Tiny Vehicle	50 gp
Hull Integrity 1	**Command** —
Defense 8	**Full Crew** 1
Maneuverability 10	**Minimum Crew** 1
Speed 0–6 (see below)	**Total Complement** 12
Design	

Length 15 ft. Beam 5 ft. Six people can travel safely in a rowboat. Up to twelve can squeeze in, but they cannot effectively fight or defend themselves. While loaded with more than 6 crew, the boat's maneuverability is reduced by 4.

Oar Power	

The rowboat has a speed rating of 1 for each rower, to a maximum of 6. Rowers with the Expert Sailor feat count double.

Cutter

The traditional fore-and-aft rig of a cutter has a single mast supporting a mainsail and two or more headsails attached to a bowsprit. A common variant, excise cutters, use more advanced rigging and sails to travel at Speed 8.

Cutter	Level 5 Vehicle
Small Vehicle	1,000 gp
Hull Integrity 2	**Command** —
Defense 10	**Full Crew** 4
Maneuverability 10	**Minimum Crew** 1
Speed 6	**Total Complement** 10
Design	

Length 30 ft. Beam 15 ft. One mast, 40 ft. high.

Total Cost 1,000 gp	

Hull (base level 2, sails, improved speed ×2, Level 5): 1,000 gp

Steam Cutter

Steam cutters can more easily travel against the wind, but are louder and must rely on fuel, which somewhat limits their long-distance uses.

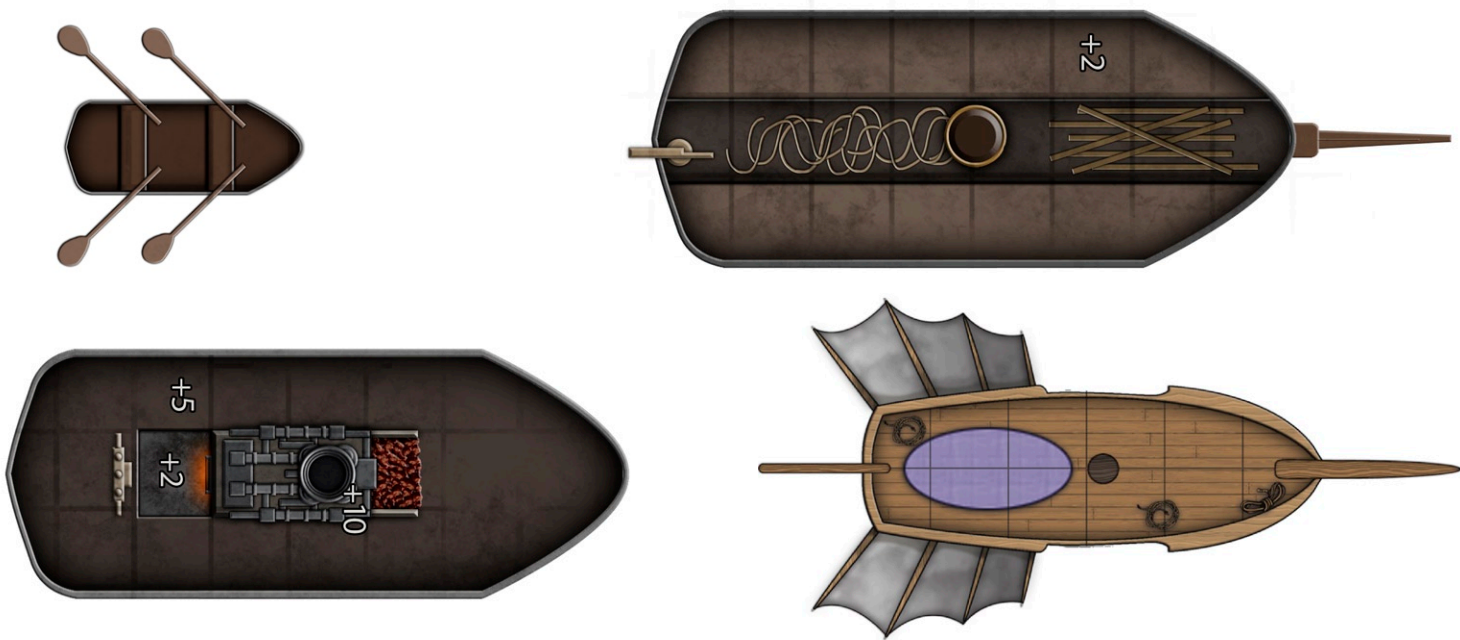| Steam Cutter	Level 5 Vehicle
Small Vehicle	1,000 gp
Hull Integrity 2	**Command** —
Defense 10	**Full Crew** 2
Maneuverability 10	**Minimum Crew** 1
Speed 4	**Total Complement** 10
Design	

Length 30 ft. Beam 15 ft. Steam engine, single screw. Carries fuel for 500 miles.

Total Cost 1,000 gp	

Hull (base level 2, engine, improved speed, Level 5): 1,000 gp

Windskiff

The windskiff serves as an invaluable scout and short-distance courier between floating islands or mountain peaks. With so much being spent on flight magic, the ship itself is nevertheless fragile, relying on speed to avoid threats, rather than confront them.

Windskiff	Level 17 Vehicle
Small Vehicle	70,000 gp
Hull Integrity 2	**Command** —
Defense 10	**Full Crew** 4
Maneuverability 10	**Minimum Crew** 1
Speed 16 (flight)	**Total Complement** 12

Design
Length 30 ft. Beam 10 ft. One mast, 30 ft. high.

Flight—Airship ✦ Installed
The windskiff can fly at any altitude.

Total Cost 70,000 gp
Hull (base level 2, sails, improved speed ×7, Level 10): 5,000 gp

Flight—airship (Level 17): 65,000 gp

CAMPAIGN TIPS: ABANDON SHIP

Usually ships won't sink during combat, but during climactic battles at sea, don't be afraid to put a few extra guns on the opposing side to make the party nervous. If it actually does go under, they'll remember their fallen ally forever. But if you're going for a heroic, narrative campaign akin to a TV or novel series, try not to sink the party's ship more than once.

Glorious Revolution, Elemental Windskiff

By divine birthright, Caliph Ahm-Kazzab controls all the elemental spirits in his nation of Kequalak. As a symbol of his supremacy and infallibility, the caliph commissioned a swift windskiff, borne aloft by bound air elementals, from which he could hunt dragons on his idle days.

Glorious Revolution, Elemental Windskiff	Level 20 Vehicle
Small Vehicle	233,000 gp
Hull Integrity 3	**Command** —
Defense 20	**Full Crew** 4
Maneuverability 10	**Minimum Crew** 1
Speed 16 (flight)	**Total Complement** 12

Design
Length 30 ft. Beam 10 ft. One mast, 30 ft. high.

Celestial Cloud Conveyance ✦ Installed
The *Glorious Revolution* can fly at any elevation.

Also, any friendly passenger or crew gains a fly speed of 30 ft. (6 squares) while on the ship. As long as the creature ends its turn within 30 ft. of the edge of the vessel, when the ship moves the character moves with it, retaining the same relative position. If the character moves beyond this distance, the fly speed lasts until the end of his or her next turn, and thereafter the character featherfalls to the ground.

Salvation of the Noble Salamander
Wispy fire spirits snuff flames that threaten the ship. The ship has a +5 to saving throws against the burning condition.

Selfless Sacrifice of the Virgin Sylph
Whenever a spellcaster more than 50 feet away from the ship casts a spell that targets the ship or anyone on board it, the spell is redirected to target one of the myriad sylphs that carries the ship. This protection ends once it has absorbed 100 damage. A strike that hits the sylphs deals 50 points of damage.

Unchallenged Grasp of His Supreme Majesty Caliph Ahm-Kazzab
The ship's engineer can target an inanimate object by making a Command check (DC 10 at short range, DC 20 at medium, DC 30 at long). If the object you target is smaller than your ship, you can grab it. Your ship and the target cannot move farther apart from each other until you either choose to release the grab (a standard action during tactical combat), or this component become damaged. If you are grabbing a ship, you gain a +10 bonus to Command checks when closing to short range.

Total Cost 233,000 gp
Hull (base level 8, sails, improved speed ×7, Level 16): 45,000 gp

Flight—skyship (Level 20): 125,000 gp

Greater fire charm (Level 12): 13,000 gp

Greater flagbearer (Level 10): 5,000 gp

Tractor beam (Level 16): 45,000 gp

Caravel

A caravel is a small, highly maneuverable sailing vessel, bearing lateen sails that gave her speed and the capacity for sailing to windward.

Caravel	Level 8 Vehicle
Medium Vehicle	2,600 gp
Hull Integrity 3	**Command** —
Defense 10	**Full Crew** 8
Maneuverability 8	**Minimum Crew** 2
Speed 8	**Total Complement** 20
Design	

Length 60 ft. Beam 15 ft. Two masts, 60 ft. high. Two decks.

Total Cost 2,600 gp	

Hull (base level 3, sails, improved speed ×3, Level 7): 2,600 gp

Sea Mare, Privateer Caravel

The *Sea Mare* was commissioned specifically as a privateer vessel, and granted to Aodhan Lesterman and his elite squad during the third war in the Yerasol Archipelago. Enchanted to be piloted by the barest minimum of crew, the ship is excellent at hit-and-run attacks and boarding actions.

Sea Mare, Privateer Caravel	Level 11 Vehicle
Medium Vehicle	25,300 gp
Hull Integrity 3	**Command** +2
Defense 17	**Full Crew** 8
Maneuverability 10	**Minimum Crew** 2
Speed 10	**Total Complement** 30
Design	

Length 60 ft. Beam 15 ft. Two masts, 60 ft. high. Two decks.

Spectral Crew	
Unseen servants pilot the vessel.	

The ship has 8 unseen servants that perform piloting duties. It cannot benefit from a bosun, and the servants cannot be given other tasks. However, they count as a crack crew, granting +5 to Command and +2 to Defense (detailed above).

Armaments	

The rearing horse figurehead trails fire from its eyes and nostrils when the gunner gives the command word. With an eerie neigh, the figurehead claps its hooves together and launches a flaming bead at the target.

Crew: 1. Attack: +8 to prow. A strike inflicts the burning condition instead of immediate damage.

Shroud of Fog	
Mists conceal your approach.	

The engineer can spend his naval round to call forth fog to conceal the ship on the next round, blocking line of sight to and from the ship. While the fog is up, you roll twice for Command checks and take the worse result. Gunners must succeed a Perception check to aim targets by sound, which might be easy (DC 10) if it's firing cannons, or nearly impossible (DC 30) if it's running silently. Even if you do target properly, you roll two attack rolls and take the worse.

Other ships must do likewise for shipboard weapons. If two ships are at short range, the shroud does not affect their attack rolls against each other.

Total Cost 25,300 gp	

Hull (base level 5, sails, improved maneuverability, improved speed ×4, Level 11): 9,000 gp

Armaments (Medium, prow mounted, Level 11; flaming, Level 10): 14,000 gp

Unseen servant crew (6 normal, 2 elite): 1,300 gp

Shroud (Level 5): 1,000 gp

Longship

Popularized by the Vikings, longships are narrow and swift, relying on sails and oars to outrun nearly every vessel of their day. Their main use was traveling to foreign lands to plunder villages on land, and they were not designed for ship-to-ship combat. Warriors can mount their shields along the sides of the ship to gain cover.

Longship	Level 8 Vehicle
Medium Vehicle	2,600 gp
Hull Integrity 2	**Command** —
Defense 10	**Full Crew** 8
Maneuverability 4	**Minimum Crew** 2
Speed 8–16	**Total Complement** 40
Design	

Length 60 ft. Beam 10 ft. One, 60 ft. high. Needle ship (halves maneuverability, increases max speed).

Oars and Sails	

The longship travels at speed 8 under sail. Often the warriors on board row, and for every 4 rowers, increase the ship's speed by 1, to a maximum of 16 with 32 rowers. Most ships only have 26 oars.

Total Cost 2,600 gp	

Hull (base level 3, sails, improved speed ×3, Level 7): 2,600 gp.

Stone Valkyrie, inland pillager

By decapitating a frost giant, mounting its head on her prow, and smearing its blood on the keel of her ship, captain Hræðelgeu Beorning imbued her vessel with the ability to sail on land, letting it pillage further inland.

Stone Valkyrie, inland pillager	Level 12 Vehicle
Medium Vehicle	16,440 gp
Hull Integrity 2	**Command** —
Defense 10	**Full Crew** 8
Maneuverability 4	**Minimum Crew** 2
Speed 8–16	**Total Complement** 40
Design	

Length 60 ft. Beam 10 ft. One, 60 ft. high. Needle ship (halves maneuverability, increases max speed).

Oars and Sails	

The longship travels at speed 8 under sail. Often the warriors on board row, and for every 4 rowers, increase the ship's speed by 1, to a maximum of 16 with 32 rowers. Most ships only have 26 oars.

Landship	

The ship can travel on land as if it were water, and can travel up grades as steep as 30 degrees. It ignores most catch and crash hazards unless they're of immense size. While traveling through land, its speed and maneuverability are reduced by half.

Decapitated Whipping Boy	

Whenever a spellcaster more than 50 feet away from the ship casts a spell that targets the ship or anyone on board it, the spell is redirected to the severed frost giant head on the prow. This protection ends once it has absorbed 50 damage. A shipboard weapon strike that hits the head deals 25 points of damage.

Total Cost 16,440 gp	

Hull (base level 3, sails, improved speed ×3, Level 7): 2,600 gp.

Landship (Level 12): 13,000 gp.

Flagbearer Defense (Level 4): 840 gp.
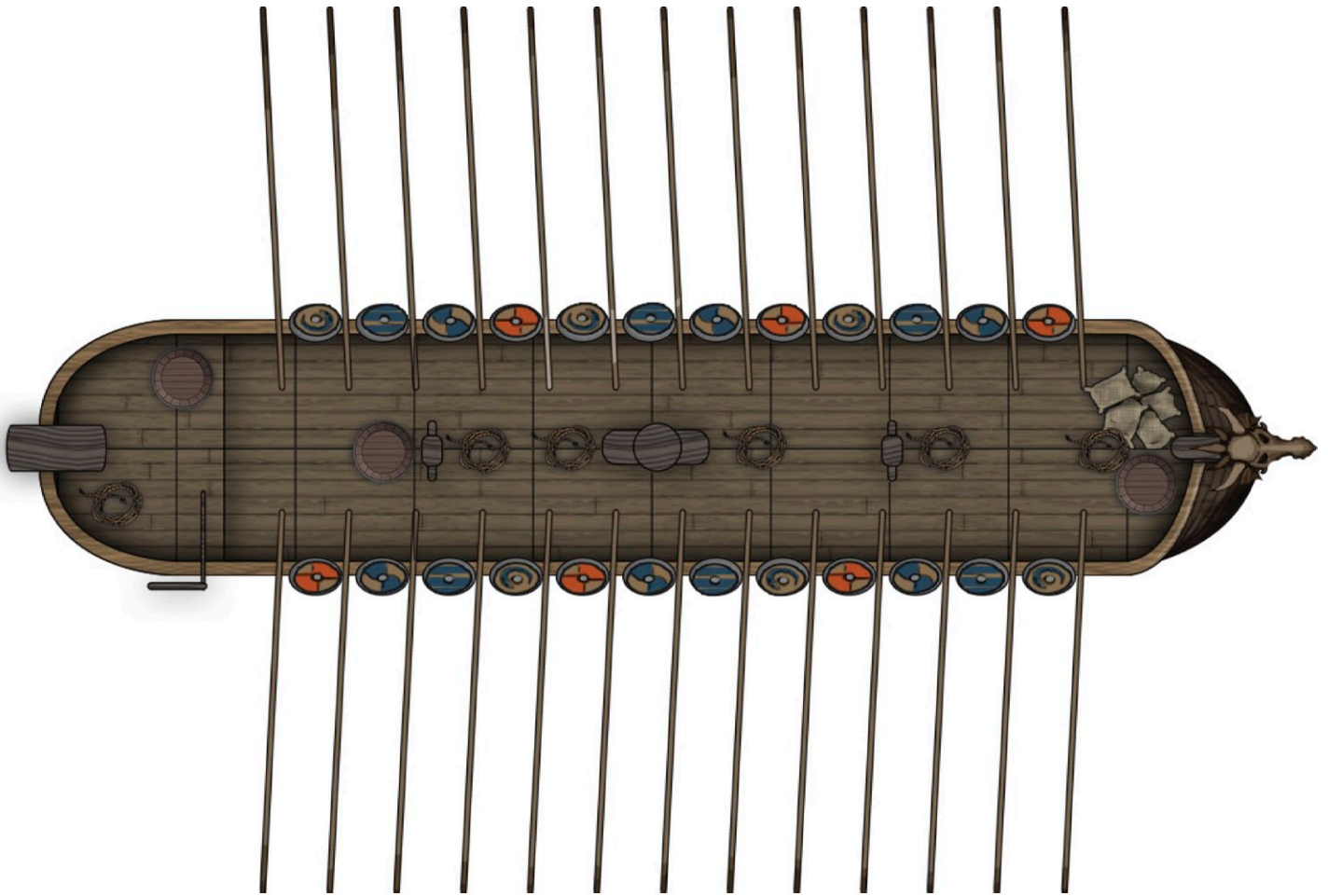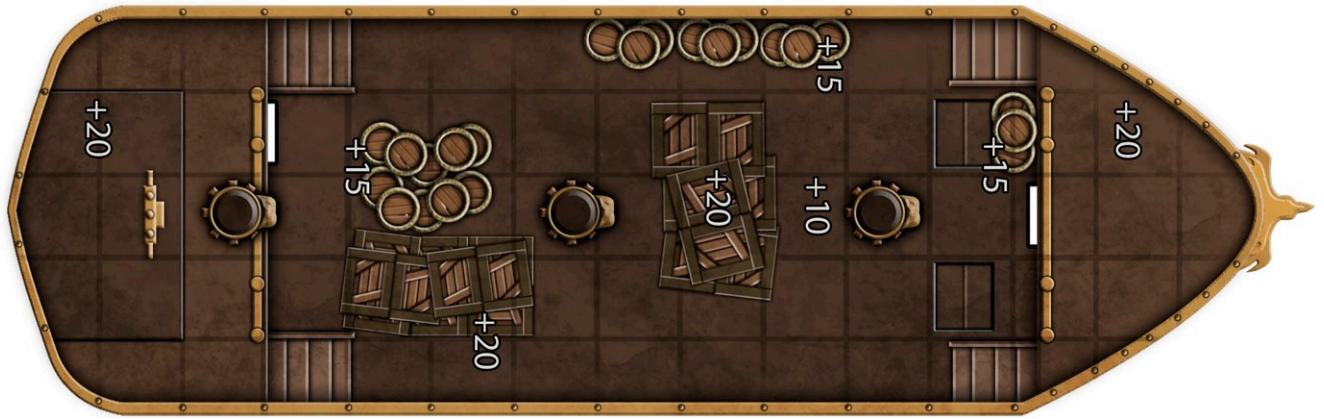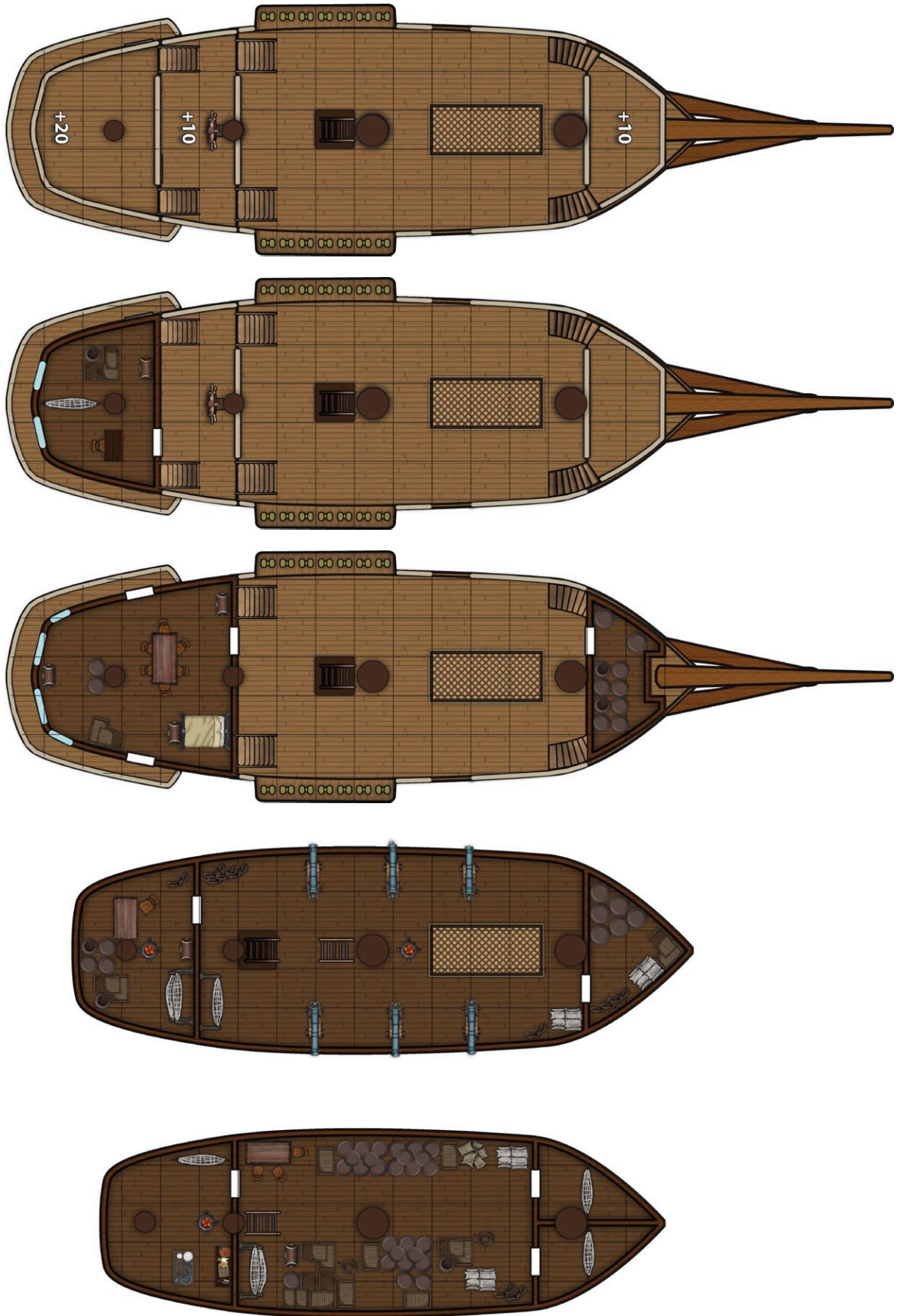
Galleon

Galleons are of a similar class to schooners, but of a more primitive design. Built for an era when cannons were just coming into use, these slow vessels often carried many marines and had high castles to better defend against boarding actions. Their squatter shape made them more maneuverable, handy when trying to present the proper side during a ship-to-ship assault.

Galleons came from an era where sail design limited ships to a speed rating of no more than 8. Some larger galleons were built with rowing decks.

Galleon	Level 10 Vehicle
Large Vehicle	7,960 gp
Hull Integrity 3	**Command** —
Defense 15	**Full Crew** 16
Maneuverability 8	**Minimum Crew** 4
Speed 6	**Total Complement** 60

Design

Length 90 ft. Beam 25 ft. Four masts, 70 ft. high. Three decks, plus a forecastle and a two-tiered aftcastle.

Defensible

The high castles help defend the crew, but crowd out room for weapons.

The crew has cover against attacks made from outside the ship.

Armaments

A small array of cannons, three to either broadside.

Crew: 10. Attack: +5, broadsides only.

Total Cost 7,960 gp

Hull (base level 6, sails, improved maneuverability, improved speed ×2, Level 10): 5,000 gp

Armaments (Small, broadsides, Level 7): 2,600 gp

Defensible (Level 1): 360 gp

Schooner

The schooner is one of the lightest types of vessels used for oceanic voyages. Its nimbleness makes it ideal for blockade-running and surveillance, but if cornered by an actual warship it must rely on the skill-at-arms of its crew, since it cannot mount many weapons. These stats can represent any typical sailing ship not meant for war.

Schooner	Level 10 Vehicle
Large Vehicle	8,400 gp
Hull Integrity 3	**Command** —
Defense 15	**Full Crew** 16
Maneuverability 6	**Minimum Crew** 4
Speed 8	**Total Complement** 30

Design

Length 90 ft. Beam 25 ft. Three masts, 70 ft. high. Two decks.

Armaments

A small array of light cannons, five to either broadside, more for deterrence than offense.

Crew: 15. Attack: +7, broadsides only.

Total Cost 8,400 gp

Hull (base level 6, sails, improved speed ×3, Level 10): 5,000 gp

Armaments (Medium, broadsides, Level 8): 3,400 gp

Roscommon, Fey-Pact Schooner

Roscommon, named after the region in Risur that provided most of its material, mounts a three-masted square-topsail rig. Her lower deck could accommodate as many as thirty, and she typically sails with twenty-two crew, a cook, and some small elite complement of officers or specialists.

Laid down in 417 A.O.V., when it was nearing completion its designer had a druid deliver a replica to a fey circle near the town of Roscommon. The model ship delighted the local fey queen Medb, and the next morning when the designer returned to work, the ship's figurehead had been replaced by a beautiful faerie woman carved from living wood.

***Roscommon*, Fey-Pact Schooner**	Level 10 Vehicle
Large Vehicle	19,240 gp
Hull Integrity 3	**Command** —
Defense 15	**Full Crew** 16
Maneuverability 6	**Minimum Crew** 4
Speed 8	**Total Complement** 30

Design

Length 90 ft. Beam 25 ft. Three masts, 70 ft. high. Two decks. Beautiful fey woman figurehead.

Beloved but Petulant ✦ Trait

As long as the ship and figurehead are in full repair, the ship completes its journeys in 10% less time than usual, and the crew gets +1 to saving throws. If either is damaged, the benefit goes away, and the crew suffer −5 morale from the figurehead's sad or disappointed expressions.

Armaments

A small array of light cannons, five to either broadside, enchanted for elven precision. The mounting for each is carved from lightning-struck wood, threaded with white streaks.

Crew: 15. Attack: +9, broadsides only. Option to fire shocking ammunition.

Dryad Figurehead

The beautiful woman blushes when complimented, and sometimes disappears when mistreated. Occasionally trinkets that go missing and are later found decorating her wooden locks.

The figurehead functions as a flagbearer, redirecting hostile damage spells originating beyond 50 feet away to herself. She has 50 hit points. Strikes to this component deal 25 damage to her.

Jaunter

Once per naval round, the captain standing at the head of the ship can ask the favor of the queen's figurehead. If the captain is in good favor with the fey spirit within the figurehead, the ship teleports a short distance. This can grant a +5 bonus to the ship's Maneuverability for the purpose of avoiding obstacles or for the Bearing phase, but only relative to a hostile ship at short range.

In tactical combat, this requires a standard action and can be done once every five minutes. The Roscommon and everyone aboard teleports 50 ft. (10 squares) to an unoccupied space. It maintains the same heading and speed.

Total Cost 19,240 gp

Hull (base level 6, sails, improved speed ×3, Level 10): 5,000 gp

Armaments (Medium, broadsides, Level 10): 5,000 gp

Shocking ammunition (Level 8): 3,400 gp

Figurehead flagbearer (Level 4): 840 gp

Jaunter fey step (Level 10): 5,000 gp

Steamship

Early steam-powered vessels took a long time to evolve into the modern iteration of a heavily-armored warships traveling in large fleets, each ship having a differentiated role. This early iron-hulled patrol boat was meant to serve as a workhorse: fast enough to chase down tiny smugglers, sturdy enough to keep larger hostile ships busy until reinforcements can close. It mounts a forward turret of two cannons, giving it decent firepower without requiring a lot of crew.

The forward turret is accessed by a hatch on its roof. The roof level of the turret has high protective walls. Normally two sailors load and fire the cannons, a third on top passes down ammunition and feeds them targeting information, while three in the lower deck operate the rotational mechanism. The designers thought larger cannons would be infeasible, but crew find the current guns too weak.

A central bridge rises above the main deck. This is topped by the pilot's cabin, which offers a valuable high vantage despite being exposed at that height. Heavy armor protects the cabin, however, and its size makes it difficult to strike intentionally. In the main bridge cabin, the crew can operate safely behind thick iron walls. A hatch in the ceiling can access the pilot's cabin when it's not safe to go outside.

The lower deck serves as berth and hold. Vents lead up from the engine level, allowing fresh air to circulate, and heat to dissipate. And, of course, the smoke stack rises aft of the pilot's cabin, trailing steam and soot behind the vessel.

Steamship	Level 10 Vehicle
Large Vehicle	8,400 gp
Hull Integrity 3	**Command** —
Defense 15	**Full Crew** 8
Maneuverability 6	**Minimum Crew** 2
Speed 6	**Total Complement** 20

Design

Length 85 ft. Beam 25 ft. Steam engine, three decks.

Armaments

A pair of heavy cannons in a turret.

Crew: 15. Attack: +4, forward or broadside.

Total Cost 8,400 gp

Hull (base level 6, engine, improved speed ×2, Level 10): 5,000 gp

Armaments (Medium, forward turret, Level 8): 3,400 gp

CAMPAIGN TIPS: INDEPENDENCE

A ship is a symbol of freedom, of the ability to go anywhere, but realistically most navies won't be too happy if a gang of adventurers show up in a heavily-armed warship, even if they are friendly. Power structures don't like individuals with their own floating fortresses. You can avoid this being a problem by having the party be privateers or personally endorsed by the king, or by having nations with weaker navies so any help is welcome, or by simply encouraging the party to pick smaller, more discreet ships.

Of course, you can always let them can be pirates, masters of their own fate, going where the wind takes them, with their own ports of call… facing danger and adventure without recourse to letters of marque or any other kind of aid. You know, like the vast majority of adventuring groups on land.

Khalundurrin, Bold Dwarven Steamship

The *Khalundurrin* joined the Drakran navy at the tail end of the Fourth Yerasol War. Risuri forces captured it when the ship strayed too close to an ongoing naval battle between the Risuri and Danorans. Its captain claimed that he tried to avoid the fight, but his ship had changed course when he wasn't looking, like it wanted to get into combat.

Arcanists who examined the ship postulate that some manner of spirit might inhabit its steam engine. Crew who serve on it sleep easily and speak of dreams filled with bold imagery like something out of a dwarven opera.

Khalundurrin, Steamship	Level 10 Vehicle
Large Vehicle	19,440 gp
Hull Integrity 3	**Command** —
Defense 15	**Full Crew** 8
Maneuverability 6	**Minimum Crew** 2
Speed 6	**Total Complement** 20

Design

Length 85 ft. Beam 25 ft. Steam engine, three decks. Runes etched along the hull.

Bold and Aggressive

When the ship is sailing toward a foe, its speed increases by 2 and its captain gains a +2 bonus to Command checks during the Location stage. The ship gets a +2 bonus to Defense against attacks from ships at short range.

Armaments

A pair of heavy cannons in a turret, inscribed with dwarven battle runes.

Crew: 6. Attack: +6, forward or broadside.

Ramprow

Khalundurrin takes 1 less damage when it rams.

Ironclad, Tar and Brimstone Sheathing

The crew has cover against attacks made from outside the ship. Whenever a creature within 30 ft. of the hull attacks the underside of the ship, that creature takes 10 fire damage.

Shield Defense

A diamond embedded in the ramprow charges runes etched across the hull. These generate a protective shield, and any spell that originates more than 50 feet away from the ship deals 10 less damage to creatures aboard *Khalundurrin*. When two ships enter each other's protective auras (i.e., they get within short range), this protection goes away.

Total Cost 19,440 gp

Hull (base level 6, engine, improved speed ×2, Level 10): 5,000 gp

Armaments (Medium, forward turret, Level 10): 5,000 gp

Ramprow (Level 3): 680 gp

Ironclad (defensible, Level 1): 360 gp

Tar and brimstone sheathing (Level 8): 3,400 gp

Shield defense (Level 10): 5,000 gp

Trireme

This ancient galley derives its name from its three rows of oars per side, with one man per oar. In a period of relatively primitive sail technology, triremes were the fastest, most agile warships on the seas.

A common tactic in large fleet maneuvers was for a trireme to close and ram another ship's rudder at an angle, or shear off its oars. This would cripple the ship and let the trireme move on to other targets, or board with advantage. The rowers were often expert warriors, trained to have the endurance to row for hours, though outside of combat normally only a third of them would be actively rowing.

Trireme	Level 15 Vehicle
Huge Vehicle	27,480 gp
Hull Integrity 4	**Command** —
Defense 20	**Full Crew** 32
Maneuverability 4	**Minimum Crew** 8
Speed 4–10	**Total Complement** 200
Design	

Length 150 ft. Beam 40 ft. Two masts, 50 ft. high. Three decks. Ram prow.
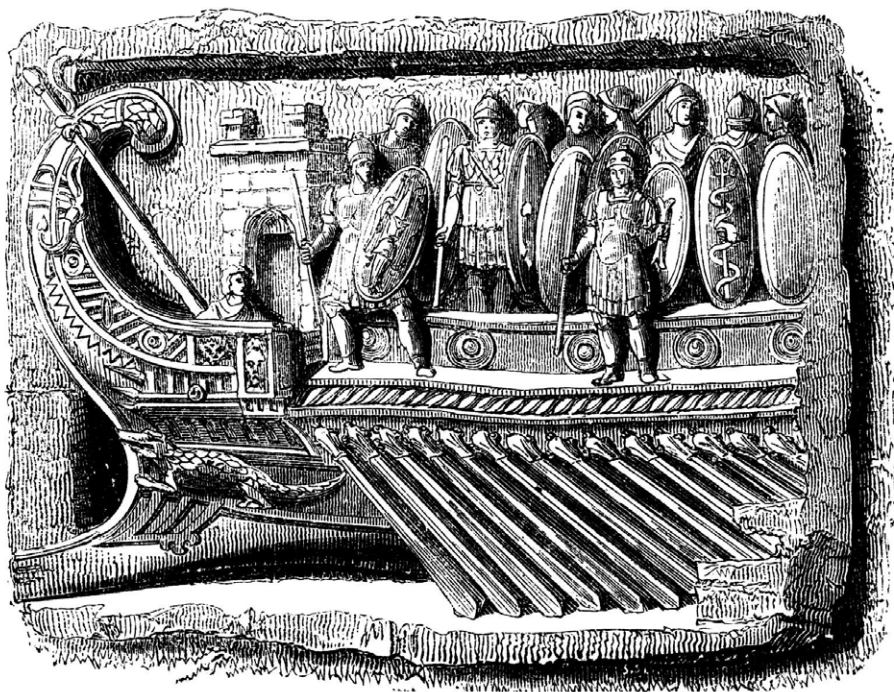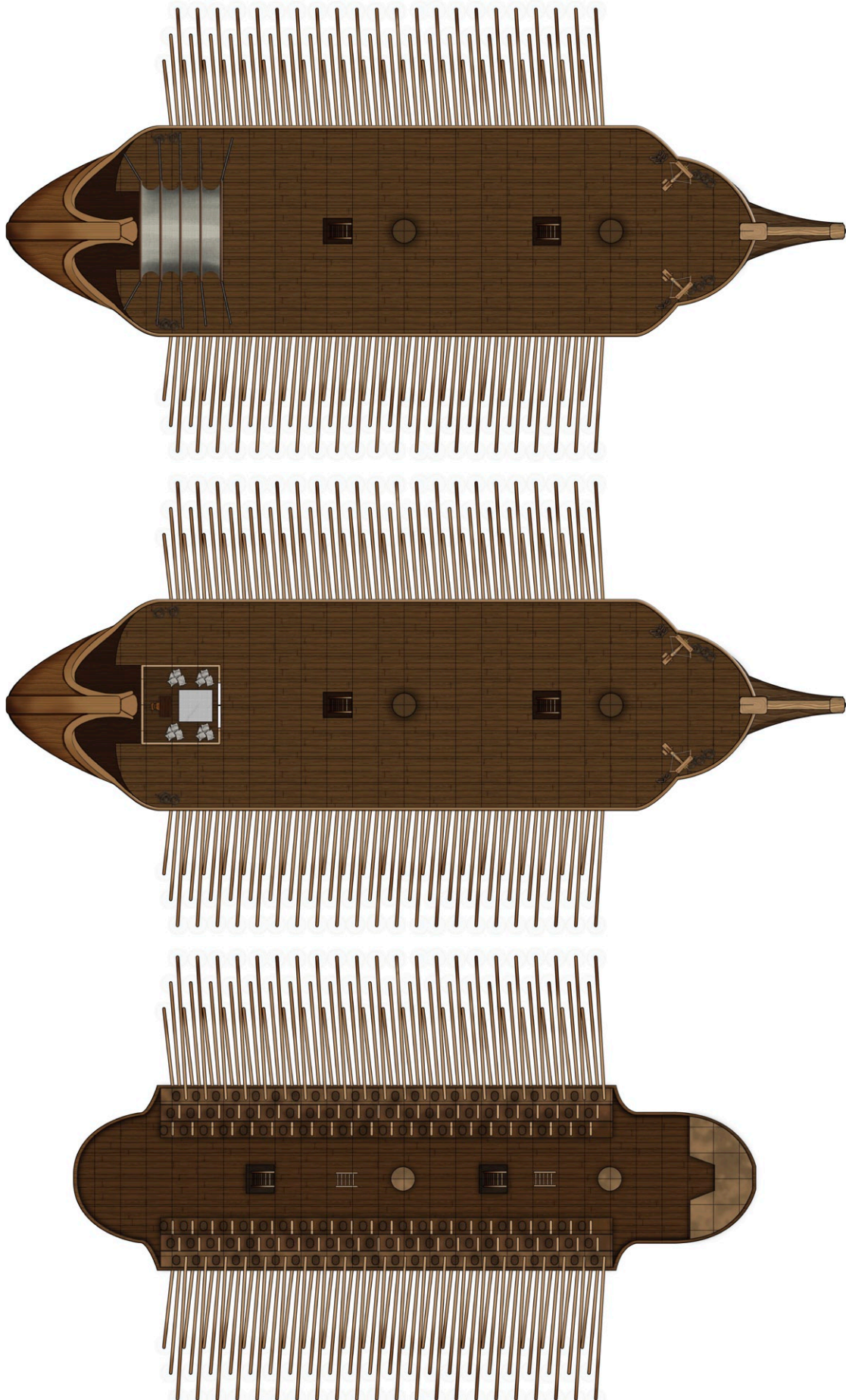
Oars and Sails	

The trireme travels at speed 4 under sail. It also has three rowing decks, with seats for as many as 132 rowers. For every 4 rowers, increase the ship's speed by 1, to a maximum of 10 with 120+ rowers. Expert sailors count double and can reach speeds as high as 16.

Armaments	

A pair of heavy ballistae, less useful against ships than against their crews.

Crew: 2. Attack: +2 to forward or broadsides.

Ramprow	

When the trireme rams, prevent the first strike the target would deal back to it.

Total Cost 27,480 gp	

Hull (base level 9, sails, rowing deck ×3, Level 15): 25,000 gp

Armaments (Tiny, forward turret, Level 6): 1,800 gp

Ramprow (Level 3): 680 gp

Additionally, the ship usually requires 120 expert sailor warriors (550 gp apiece, total 66,000 gp).

Submarine

While the *nautilus* enchantment allows any sort of vessel to submerge, a few ships function primarily underwater. Primitive industrial submarines used compressed air for propulsion while underwater, and had steam engines for the surface, using spare power to refill the compressed air tanks.

Some truly rudimentary submarines used hand-cranked screws—effectively "oars"—which admittedly did avoid the noise of an engine, but at the expense of drastically cutting speed because so few men could fit inside.

These vessels were mostly useful for breaking blockades or surreptitiously delivering bombs to the undersides of hostile ships. An early method used a spar torpedo—a spiked prong mounted on the bow of the submarine, which would stick into the underside of a hostile vessel. Once the submarine had withdrawn to a sufficient distance, the torpedo would explode, hopefully sinking the target.

Cachalot, Steam Submarine

One experimental vessel, the *Cachalot*, mounts a special shock-absorbing ramhead, allowing it to smash ships from below. It has an airlock along each side, with access to tiny submersibles used much like runabouts on normal ships. During combat, engine crew control the twin screws, while crew near the central machine manipulate ballast and air tanks to adjust depth. Two hand-cranked fans on the forward half of the ship can cycle air when the ship is on the surface. A periscope at the prow allows for observations from a depth of as much as 30 feet, which is the ship's maximum depth.

The attached submersibles are not normally that useful offensively.

Cachalot, Steam Submarine	Level 13 Vehicle
Huge Vehicle	36,360 gp
Hull Integrity 4	**Command** —
Defense 20	**Full Crew** 16
Maneuverability 4	**Minimum Crew** 3
Speed 8	**Total Complement** 16
Design	

Length 150 ft. Beam 30 ft. Steam engine, one deck, sealed hull accessible by central hatch. Forward storage compartment in ramprow.

Ramprow	

When *Cachalot* rams another, prevent the first strike the rammed ship would deal to it.

Charged Hull	

When activated, the hull gains a charge for one minute. Any creature on the surface of your ship or in the water within 30 feet takes 2d6 points of damage each tactical round. In naval combat, if a leviathan is at short range, make an attack 1d20 + 10 and add your ship's level.

Triggering is a standard action during tactical combat and can be done for free during the Attack phase in naval combat. It takes an hour for this component to recharge.

Nautilus	

The *Cachalot* can submerge to a depth of 30 feet, and holds up to four hours of air with full complement. A periscope allows a crewman to act as look-out while inside the hull.

Total Cost 36,360 gp	

Hull (base level 9, engine, improved speed ×2, Level 13): 17,000 gp

Ramprow (Level 3): 680 gp

Charged hull (Level 10): 5,000 gp

Standard nautilus (Level 12): 13,000 gp

Periscope (farseer, Level 3): 680 gp

Hand-Crank Submersible	Level 10 Vehicle
Tiny Vehicle	5,200 gp
Hull Integrity 1	**Command** —
Defense 10	**Full Crew** —
Maneuverability 10	**Minimum Crew** —
Speed by oars	**Total Complement** 6
Design	

Length 10 ft. Beam 5 ft. Propelled by handcrank (treat as oars; speed 1 per rower, maximum speed 6). Accessible via dorsal hatch or aft airlock clamp.

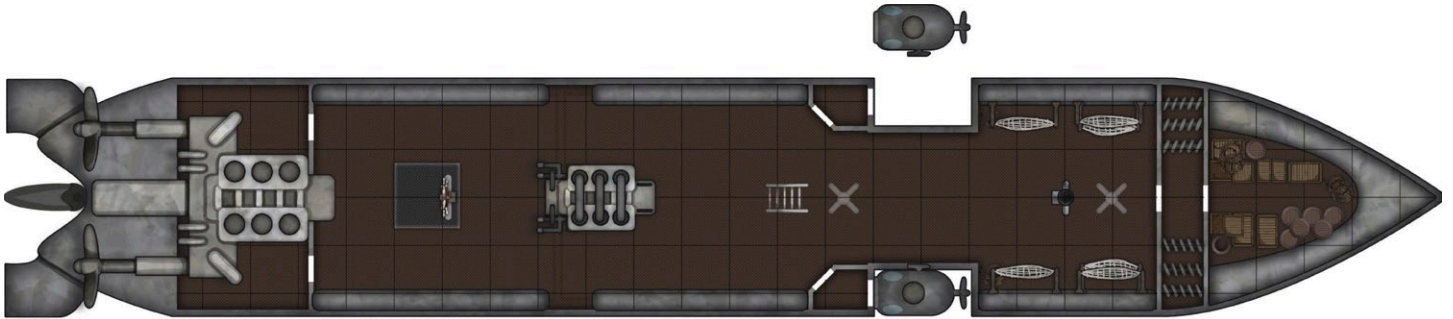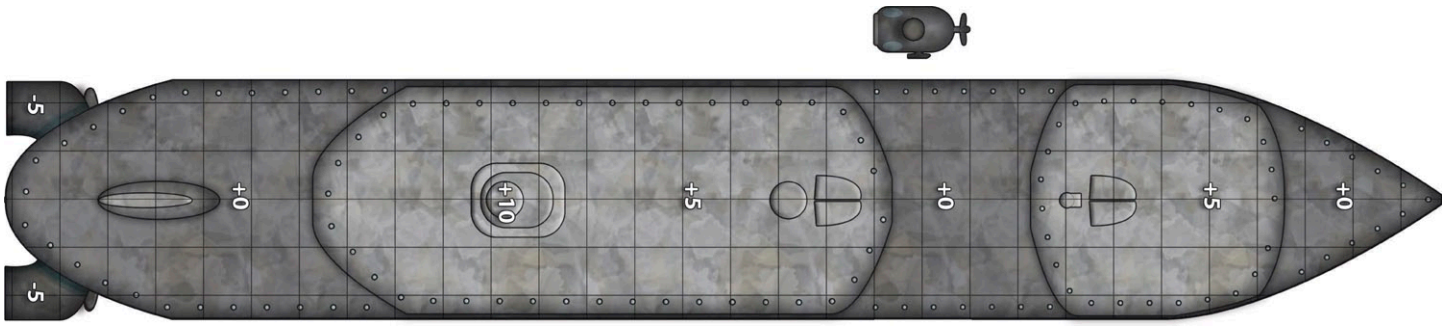| *Lesser Nautilus*	

The submersible can detach and stay submerged to a depth of 30 feet for a single naval round, after which it must surface for two rounds before submerging again.
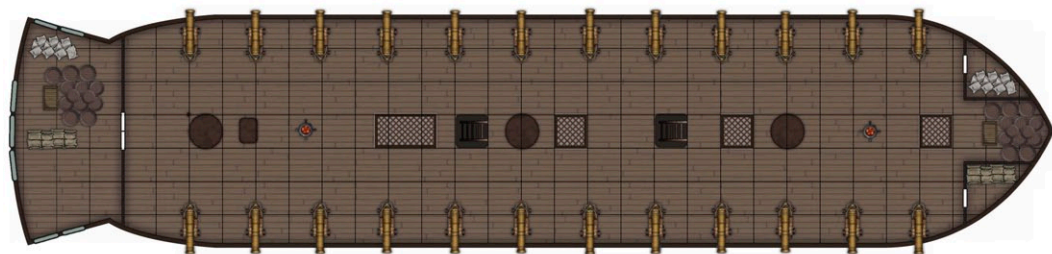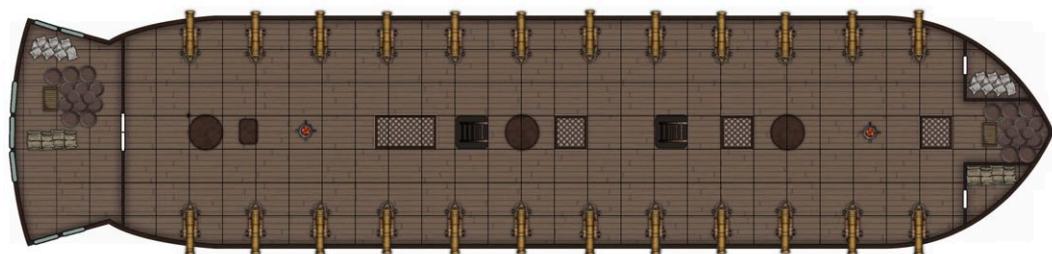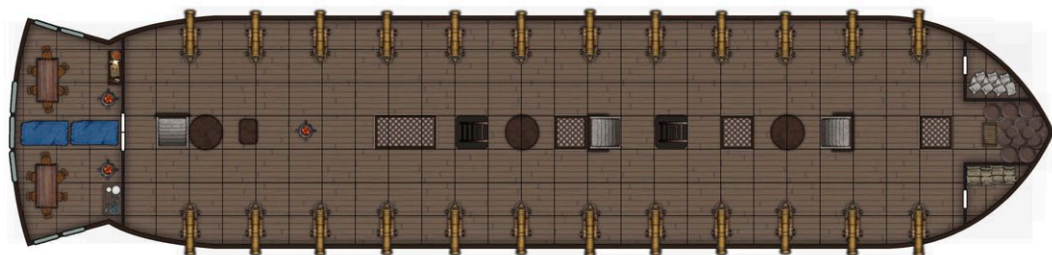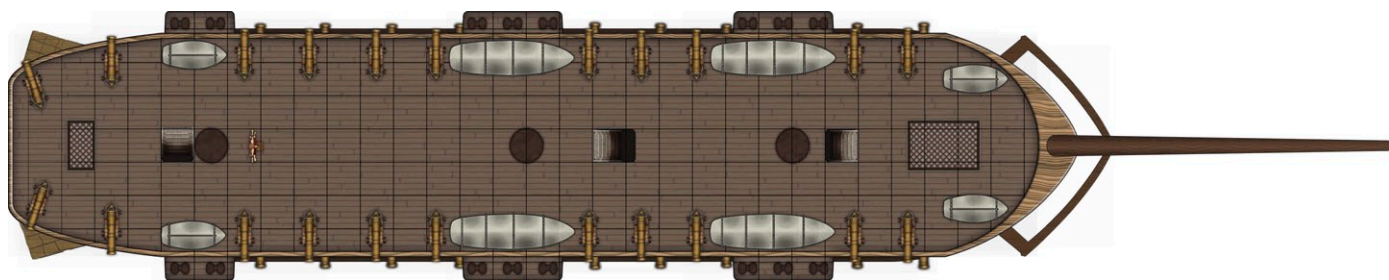
Total Cost 5,200 gp	

Hull (Tiny, oars, Level 0): 200 gp

Lesser nautilus (Level 10): 5,000 gp

Frigate

Frigates are the most powerful warships of the age of sail, carrying one or more full gundecks, plus additional cannons on the maindeck. They carried hundreds of sailors to be able to load and fire both broadsides while still sailing.

Frigate	Level 17 Vehicle
Huge Vehicle	110,000 gp
Hull Integrity 4	**Command** —
Defense 25	**Full Crew** 32
Maneuverability 4	**Minimum Crew** 8
Speed 14	**Total Complement** 200
Design	
Length 170 ft. Beam 35 ft. Three masts, 100 ft. high. Four decks.	
Armaments	
To each broadside, eleven light cannons on the maindeck and a dozen full cannons on the gundeck. The maindeck cannons can also fire fore or aft.	
Crew: 100. Attack: +17 to broadsides, or +14 fore or aft.	
Total Cost 110,000 gp	
Hull (base level 11, sails, improved speed ×5, Level 17): 65,000 gp	
Armaments (Huge, boards and chasers, Level 16): 45,000 gp	

Extreme Clipper

Clippers are roughly the same size as frigates, but are built for speed, not battle, serving a role similar to oversized schooners. The simplest clippers would just use frigate stats with lower armaments and fewer decks. The extreme clipper, however, is the epitome of a swift sailing vessel, capable of sustaining speeds of over 20 knots.

Extreme Clipper	Level 17 Vehicle
Gargantuan Vehicle	234,000 gp
Hull Integrity 4	**Command** —
Defense 25	**Full Crew** 64
Maneuverability 4	**Minimum Crew** 16
Speed 22	**Total Complement** 120
Design	
Length 250 ft. Beam 45 ft. Four masts, 150 ft. high. Three decks.	
Armaments	
Eleven light cannons on the maindeck to each broadside.	
Crew: 40. Attack: +11 to broadsides, or +8 fore or aft.	
Total Cost 110,000 gp	
Hull (base level 12, sails, improved speed ×8, Level 21): 225,000 gp	
Armaments (Large, boards and chasers, Level 11): 9,000 gp	

Windship-of-War

During the height of the Seven Kingdoms, seven windships-of-war were launched into the skies, guarding the countries' borders and cowing neighboring nations that might have considered attack. Each of these massive skyships carried a crew of hundreds and three dozen arcane fusils that could lance silvery death down from the clouds. The largest fusils required three men to aim, as well as a wizard to charge and fire.

Though not particularly fast, they were extremely nimble for their size, ensuring they could always bring their strongest weapons to bear in battle, or simply hover directly over a hostile ship. The special undercastle of the windship-of-war gave it the unique ability to attack straight down.

Each windship-of-war was escorted by a fleet of windskiff scouts and lesser aerial warships. It was almost unthinkable that one would be destroyed, but the proud sky navy was defeated by its own hubris. One skyfleet was dispatched to scout and rain destruction upon the savage sub-men tribes of the wilderlands, but unexpected aberrant storms struck the flagship with frozen lightning. While the crew struggled to free the ship from the flashfreeze, a sub-men warband climbed the pillars of glowing ice, boarded the vessel, and slaughtered the crew.

The war leader proceeded to turn the ship's unrivaled might against the rest of the fleet. And soon his bloodthirsty army had taken control of those ships that they did not simply crash to the sands below.

Then, rather than leading his people on a brilliant, futile assault against the Seven Kingdoms, the warchief turned the whole continent against itself. Keeping the false flag of the skyfleet, the sub-men flew over a dozen cities, struck from the skies, and fled. Convinced the Seven Kingdoms had attacked without provocation, a dozen nations went to war. Only once the war had exhausted the various sides, and the other skyfleets were crashed or crippled, did this grand warchief land and lead his armies to pick through the ruins.

Windship-of-War	Level 20 Vehicle
Huge Vehicle	376,000 gp
Hull Integrity 4	**Command** —
Defense 30	**Full Crew** 32
Maneuverability 10	**Minimum Crew** 8
Speed 8	**Total Complement** 200
Design	
Length 175 ft. Beam 50 ft. Two lower wing sails, two stabilization sails. Four decks.	
Armaments	
Five light arcane fusils and four full fusils to each broadside, a lower deck with six heavy fusils per side, and an undercastle with six light fusils. The light fusils are on articulated mounts and can fire up or down with ease. Each fusil fires an eldritch blast of shining magical force.	
Crew: 100. Attack: +20 to broadsides, or +17 forward, aft, up, or down. The weapons can strike at long range, with a −10 penalty.	
Shields	
The windship-of-war has a traditional shield eldritch defense.	
Favored by the Winds ✦ Installed	
Enchantments swaddle the ship in a field of wind and levitation.	
The ship can fly at any elevation and has maneuverability beyond what's normally possible for a ship its size.	

Also, any friendly passenger or crew gains a fly speed of 30 ft. (6 squares) while on the ship. As long as the creature ends its turn within 30 ft. of the edge of the vessel, when the ship moves the character moves with it, retaining the same relative position. If the character moves beyond this distance, the fly speed lasts until the end of his or her next turn, and thereafter the character featherfalls to the ground.

Total Cost 376,000 gp	
Hull (base level 14, sails, improved maneuverability ×3, improved speed ×2, Level 20): 125,000 gp	
Armaments (Huge, aerial array, long range, Level 20): 125,000 gp	
Favored by the winds (agile, Level 5; skyship, Level 20): 126,000 gp	
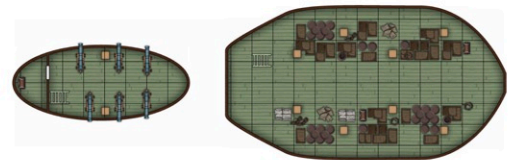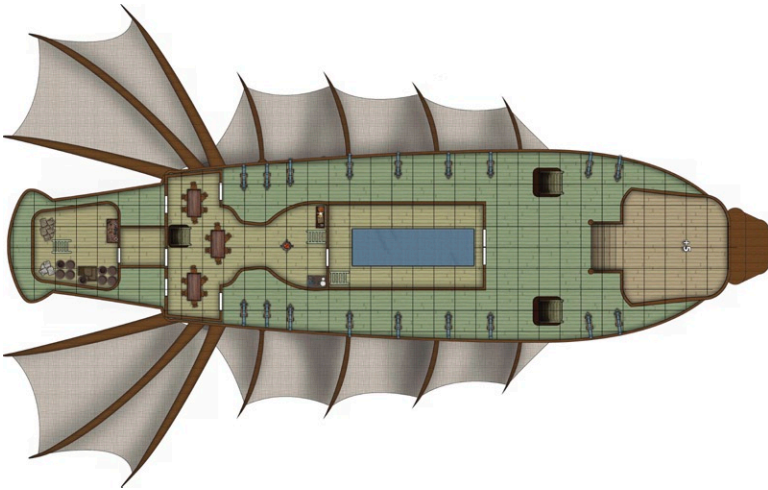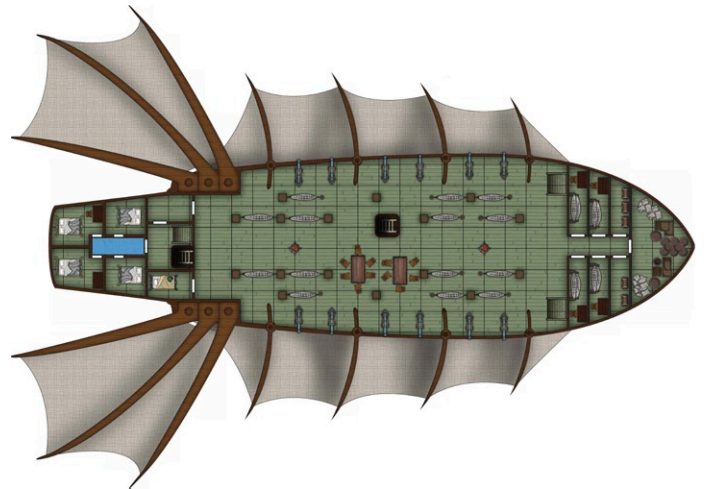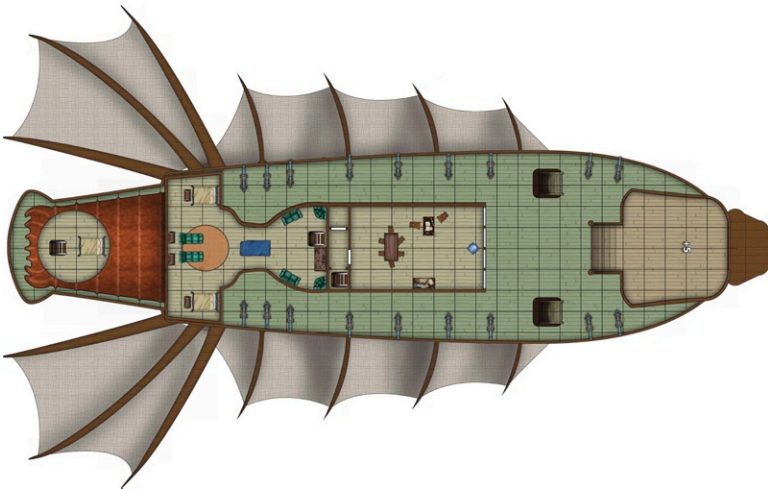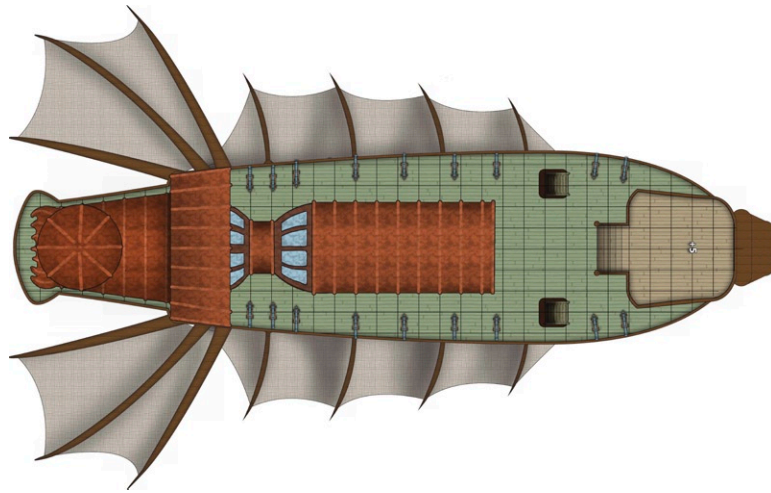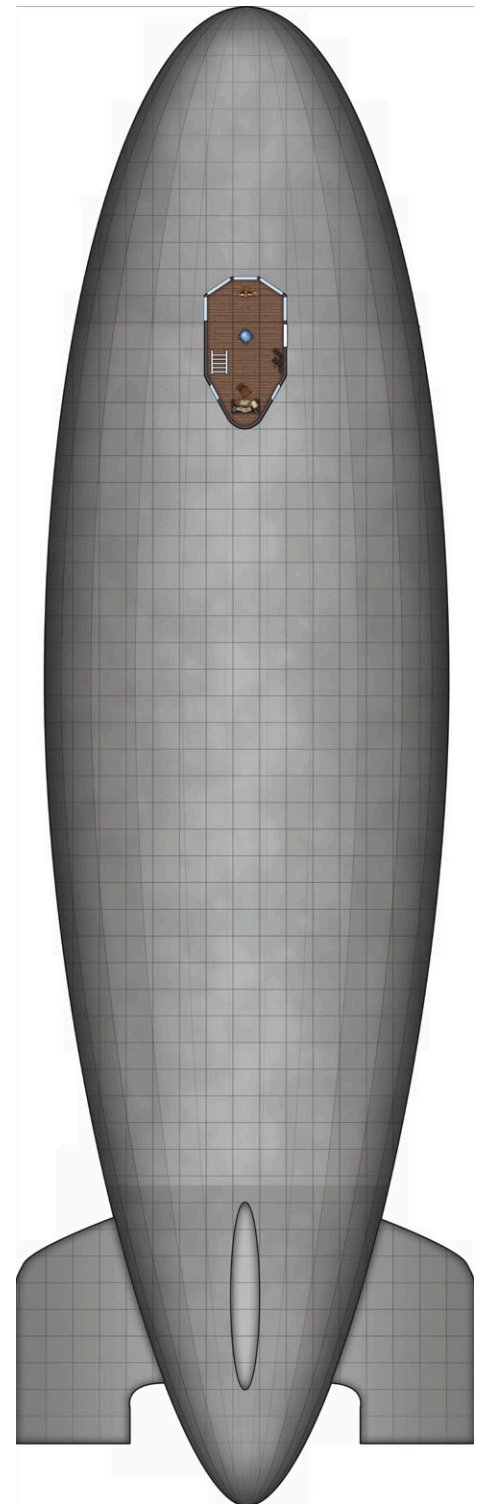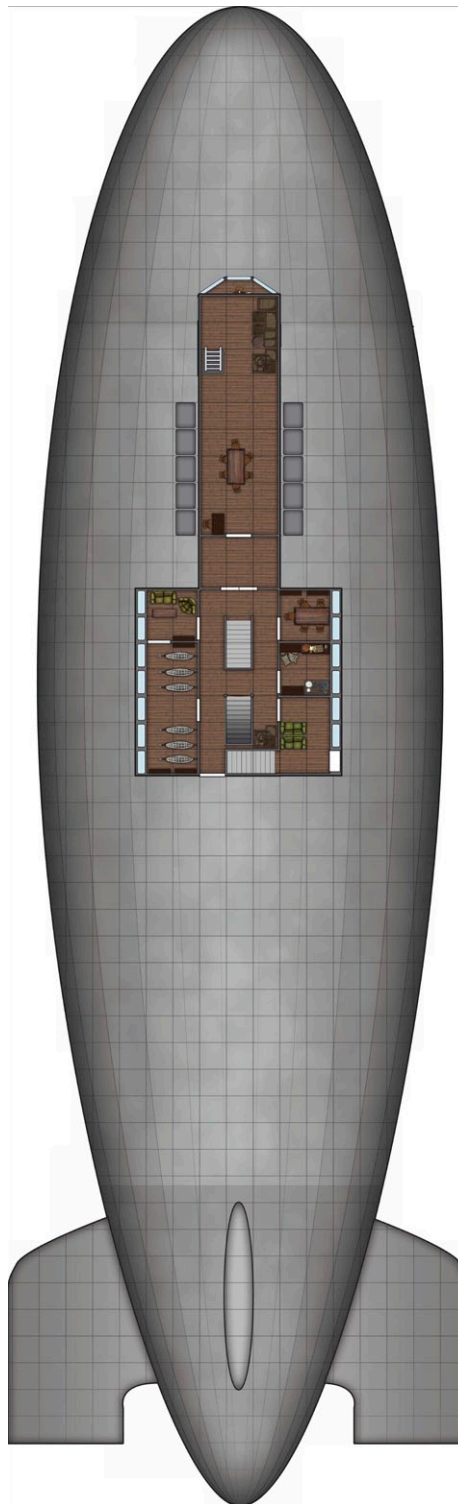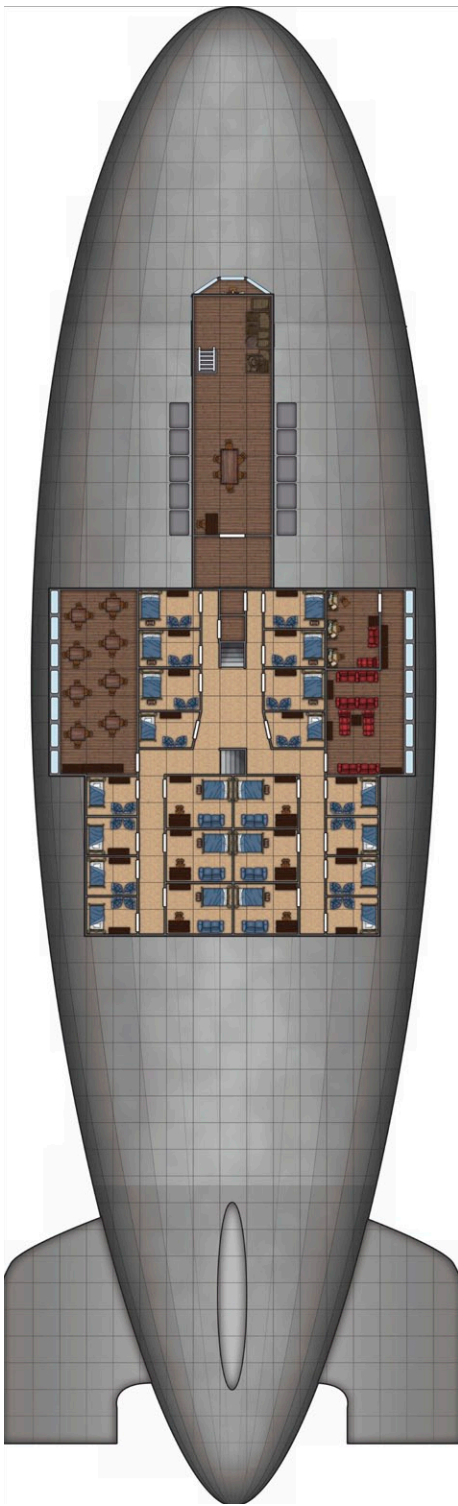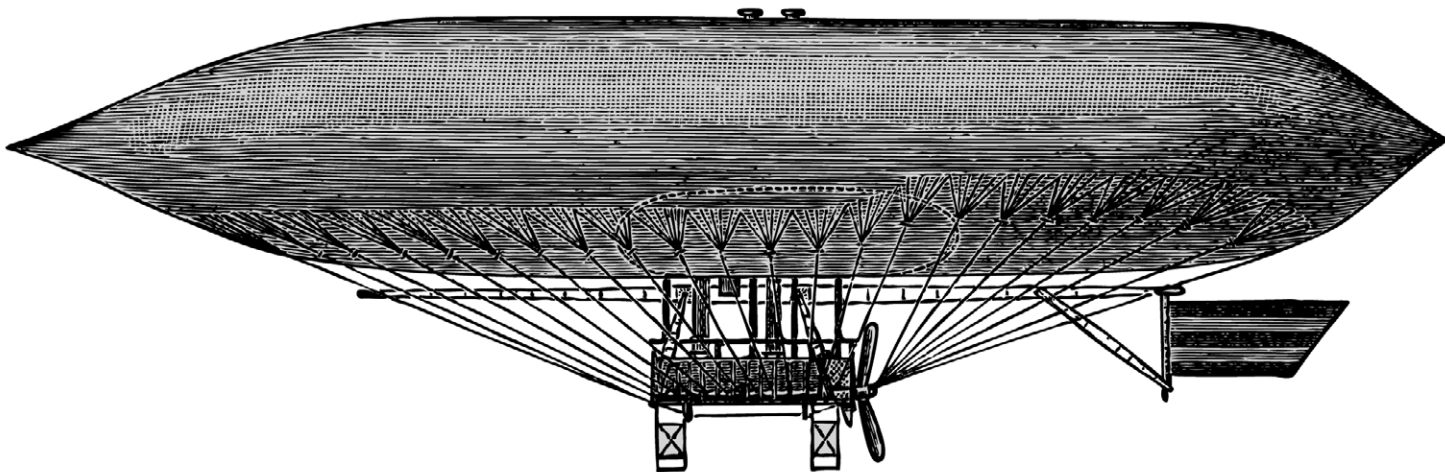
Zeppelin

Rigid-body dirigibles are named Zeppelin after their inventor, who wouldn't be the same in a fantasy setting, but "zeppelin" is much more fun to say than "dirigible."

Well, maybe not. They both have their merits.

Though the cylindrical body—consisting of several hydrogen- or helium-filled chambers—could reach 500 feet long (making them Gargantuan), the actual usable portion of the ship was much smaller, so these ships are statted as just being Huge. Despite the impression of them being hollow and thus fragile, they were actually rather sturdy, and because the "balloon" consisted of multiple chambers, damage to just one does not cripple the ship.

Real zeppelins used aluminum or magnesium alloys for their internal structure, and layers of goldbeater's skin—supremely thin oxen intestine, often 80,000 oxen worth for one vessel—for the gas bags. Their fantasy equivalents could make use of mithral or exotic enchanted crystal spires for the rigid structure, and dragon viscera or doppelganger corneas for the outer surface.

Early in their existence, zeppelins provide a phenomenal advantage, as they make excellent spotters and couriers, and can even be used to drop bombs. Normal weapons could seldom create enough heat to ignite a lift chamber, and the airships had excellent endurance since they only needed to expend fuel to travel, not to stay airborne.

But eventually opposing forces will develop effective countermeasures, and the size and slow speed of a zeppelin becomes a liability, particularly as faster fixed-wing aircraft are introduced. In a fantasy setting, though, airplanes might never be possible, and the only large airships might be held aloft by phlogiston and propelled by dozens of clockwork-cranked propellers.

We present two zeppelins, one fit for passengers, the other filled with soldiers and armed with arcane fusils and firebombs.
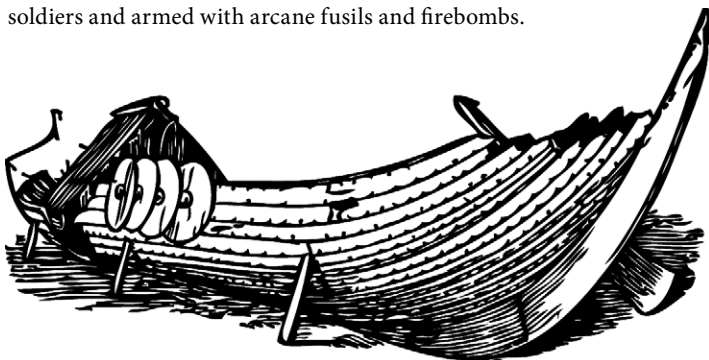
Zeppelin	Level 17 Vehicle
Huge Vehicle	130,000 gp
Hull Integrity 4	**Command** —
Defense 20	**Full Crew** 16
Maneuverability 4	**Minimum Crew** 3
Speed 16	**Total Complement** 100

Design

Lifting body can be 500 feet or longer. Internal compartment is 120 ft. long and 65 ft. wide, with an upper passenger deck, an aft lower crew deck, and a forward lower cockpit.

Lifting Body ✦ Installed

The zeppelin can fly as high as 13,000 feet.

Total Cost 130,000 gp

Hull (base level 9, engine, improved speed ×6, Level 17): 65,000 gp

Flight—airship (Level 17): 65,000 gp

ZLS Windreaper	Level 17 Vehicle
Huge Vehicle	260,000 gp
Hull Integrity 4	**Command** —
Defense 20	**Full Crew** 16
Maneuverability 4	**Minimum Crew** 3
Speed 16	**Total Complement** 100

Design

Lifting body can be 500 feet or longer. Internal compartment is 120 ft. long and 65 ft. wide, with an upper passenger deck, an aft lower crew deck, and a forward lower cockpit.

Armaments

Nineteen window-mounted light fusils, each requiring one crewman, plus two light fusils in the cockpit. Bombing bays can drop fiery explosives, though not with much precision.

Crew: 40. Attack: +14 to broadsides, or +10 forward, aft, or down. The weapons cannot attack upward, but in exchange they can be used on targets directly below regardless of distance. Attacks made straight downward are with flaming weapons.

Lifting Body ✦ Installed

The zeppelin can fly as high as 13,000 feet.

Total Cost 260,000 gp

Hull (base level 9, engine, improved speed ×6, Level 17): 65,000 gp

Armaments (Large, aerial array, Level 15): 125,000 gp

Flaming weapons (Level 10): 5,000 gp

Flight—airship (Level 17): 65,000 gp

Flagships

Every large navy from the high age of sail and beyond has fielded grand warships that serve as the focus of their fleet. Most in history were titans bedecked with a hundred cannons or more, each fairly similar to every other in design. But in a world with magic, these flagships can have a bit more personality.

First, a baseline grand frigate, of the sort Great Britain possessed in the early 19th century.

Grand Frigate	Level 19 Vehicle
Gargantuan Vehicle	250,000 gp
Hull Integrity 4	**Command** —
Defense 30	**Full Crew** 64
Maneuverability 2	**Minimum Crew** 16
Speed 18	**Total Complement** 500
Design	

Length 250 ft. Beam 55 ft. Three masts, 150 ft. high. Six decks.

Armaments

Twelve light cannons on the maindeck, fifteen full cannons on each of two gundecks, and fifteen heavy cannons on the third gundeck.

Crew: 300. Attack: +23 to broadsides, or +20 forward or aft.

Total Cost 250,000 gp

Hull (base level 14, sails, improved speed ×5, Level 20): 125,000 gp

Armaments (Gargantuan, boards and chasers, Level 20): 125,000 gp

RNS Coaltongue, Risuri Arcanotech Warship

After decades of lagging behind the technological progress of their enemies in Danor, the nation of Risur has finally launched a weapon that will turn the tide in favor of the side of magic. Though built on a foundation of steam and steel, the *R.N.S. Coaltongue*—named for a mythical warlord said to breathe smoke and fire—is girded with arcane defenses and armed with supernatural weapons far more powerful than anything in the fleets of Danor.

The *Coaltongue* has a wooden hull sheathed with 5-inch thick iron armor plating, engraved with subtle magical icons of defense and power. Dozens of cannons fire to either broadside, and the ship mounts two massive guns on a forward turret. All the lower decks have sections of grated floor panels to help circulate air, and giant stacks cough steam and smoke into the sky.

The gunports, windows, and main deck are all ringed by a thin inlay of gold wire, which prevents teleportation across the barrier.

On the maindeck sits an elaborate glass frame, reinforced by magic to be as strong as steel, and shaped in a half-cylinder and inlaid with silver. While its design is partially aesthetic, this innovative structure is Risur's greatest trump card against Danoran warships: a magical capacitor. Excess energy from the steam engine is stored in this arcane focus. Even while storing its full power, the interior of the capacitor is perfectly safe to walk through, and its expansive windows let it serve as venue for ceremonies and celebrations.

The primary purpose of the capacitor is to power attack spells of the ship's warmages, represented by the huge variety of gunnery components the ship possesses, which are actually spells that ship mages cast through the capacitor. Additionally, the ship is equipped with a Brand—so named because it burns an image into any surface it strikes—which fires a massive blast of pyromantic energy from the ship's gleaming prow, often enough to outright destroy a smaller vessel and cripple a larger one.

RNS Coaltongue	Level 26 Vehicle
Gargantuan Vehicle	1,500,440 gp
Hull Integrity 4	**Command** —
Defense 30	**Full Crew** 32
Maneuverability 8	**Minimum Crew** 4
Speed 18	**Total Complement** 200
Design	

Length 205 ft. Beam 50 ft. Two level central bridge. Steam engine with two propellers. Five decks.

Armaments

Crew: 100. Attack: +25 in any firing arc. Can use acidic, chain shot, flaming, freezing, and shocking attacks, but no more than one in any given round in a single firing arc.

Eldritch Defenses

The ship gains a +5 bonus to saving throws against the burning condition. Any spells that originate more than 50 feet from the ship deal 26 less damage to targets within that area. Teleportation cannot enter or leave the ship.

Total Cost 1,500,440 gp

Hull (base level 14, engine, improved maneuverability ×2, improved speed ×7, Level 26): 1,125,000 gp

Armaments (Huge, forward turret, Level 22): 325,000 gp

Gunnery components (acidic, Level 8; chain shot, Level 4; flaming, Level 10; freezing, Level 8; shocking, Level 8): 16,040 gp

Eldritch defenses (greater fire charm, Level 12; shield defense; Level 10; tar and brimstone sheathing, Level 8; teleportation ward, Level 12): 34,400 gp
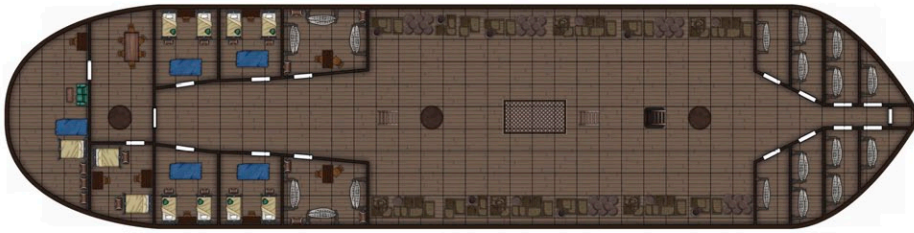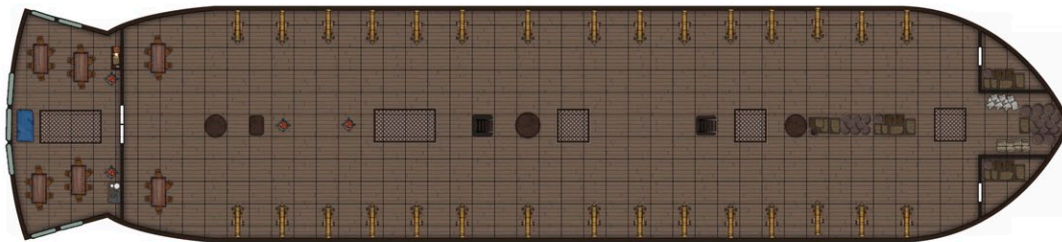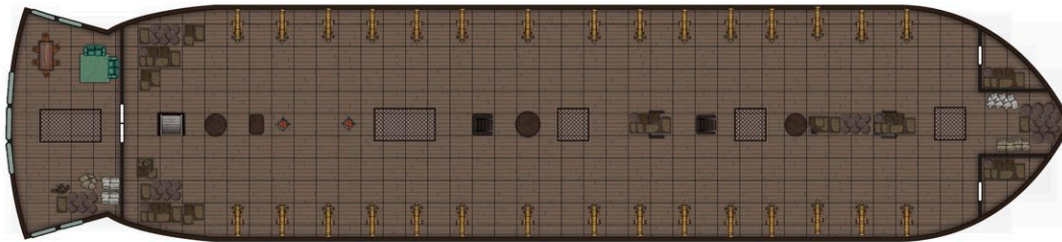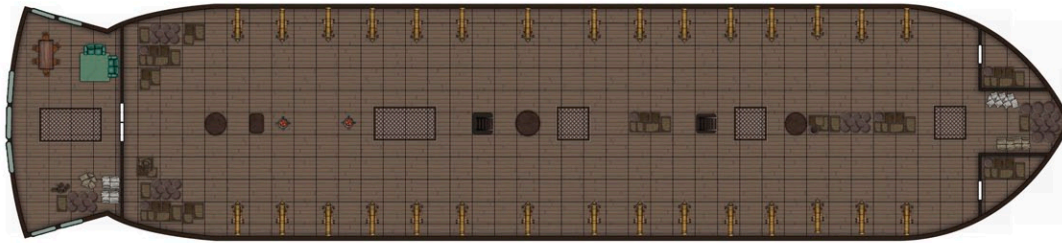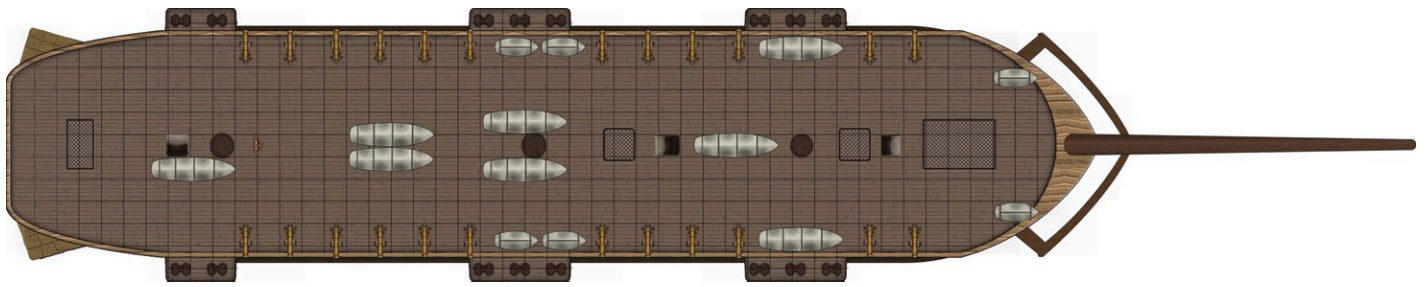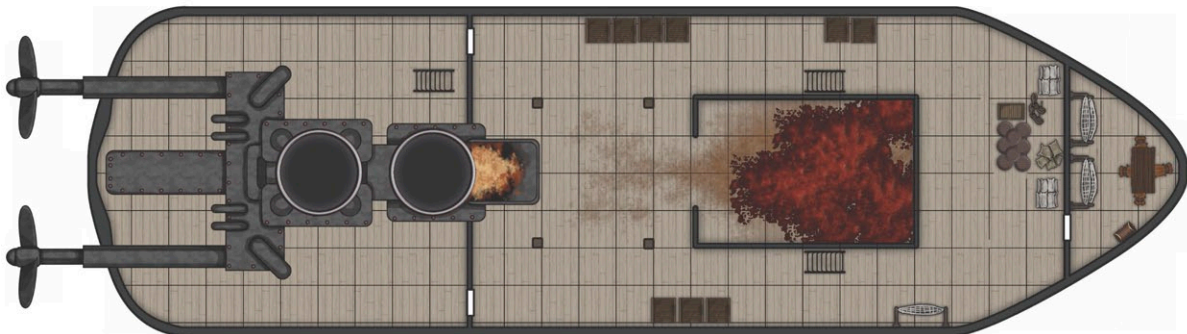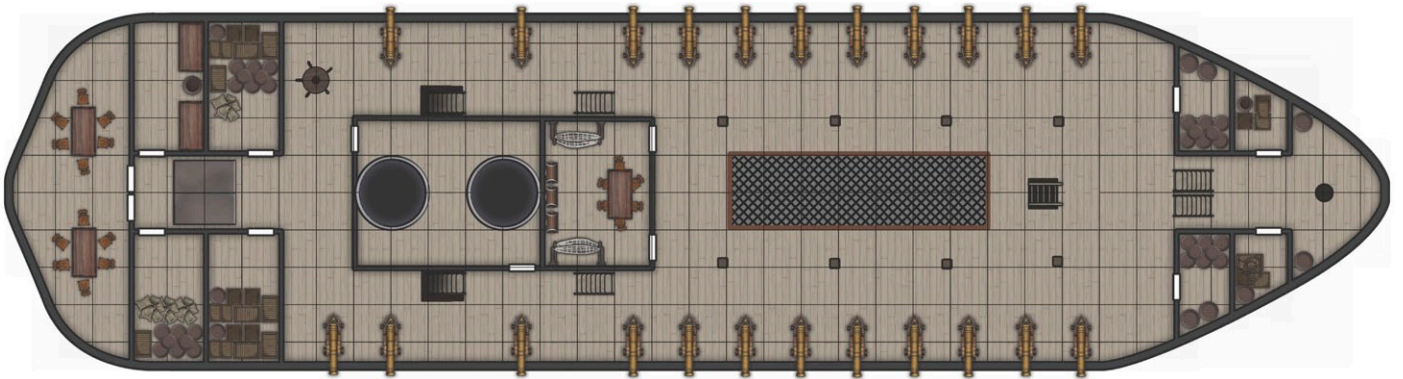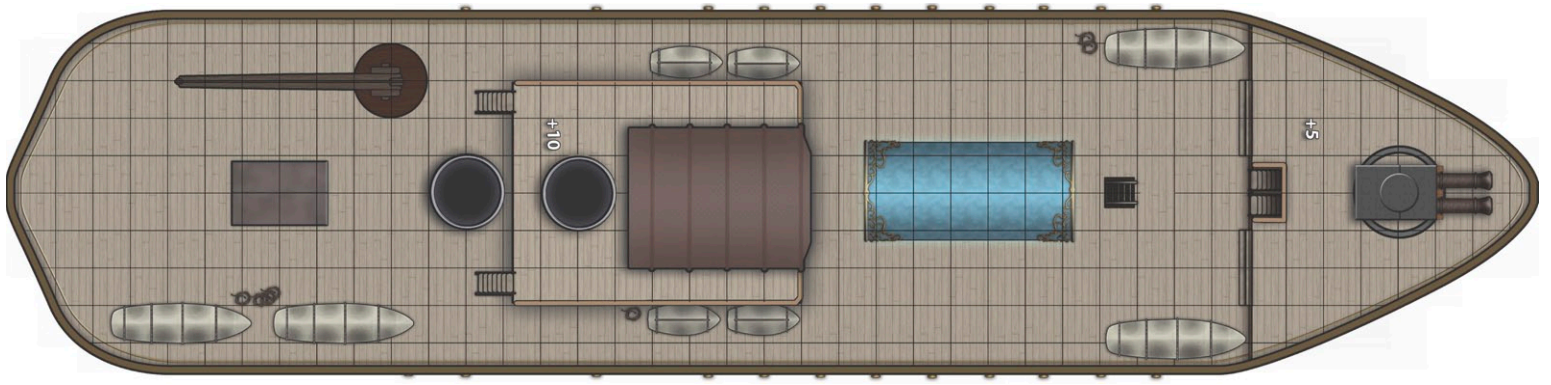
In Lucis Excusus, Danoran Grand Steam Frigate

This massive warship, whose name translates to *Forged in Light*, serves as the nation of Danor's bold statement about the supremacy of technology over magic and superstition.

In Lucis Excusus	Level 20 Vehicle
Gargantuan Vehicle	237,640 gp
Hull Integrity 4	**Command** —
Defense 25	**Full Crew** 96
Maneuverability 2	**Minimum Crew** 20
Speed 18*	**Total Complement** 520

Design

Length 250 ft. Beam 55 ft. Three masts, 150 ft. high. Steam engine with two propellers. Six decks.

Dual Propulsion

The vessel relies primarily on sails, but can use its steam engine in unfavorable winds, or when it needs a bit of extra speed.

Sails require crew 64/16, and grant speed 16. Engine requires crew 32/4, and grant speed 6. Together, with crew 96/20, the ship travels at speed 18.

Armaments

Twelve light cannons on the maindeck, fifteen full cannons on each of two gundecks, and fifteen heavy cannons on the third gundeck.

Crew: 300. Attack: +22 to broadsides, or +19 fore or aft.

Eldritch Defenses

Tiefling skulls worked into the outer decoration provide a fire ward. And while the flag of Danor flutters overhead, the ship is resilient against foreign hostile magic. Copper sheathing along the keel protects the ship from other magics.

The ship gains a +2 bonus to saving throws against the burning condition. Any spells that originate more than 50 feet from the ship deal 20 less damage to targets within that area. The lower hull is immune to magic that would warp wood, and thwarts *passwall* and similar effects.

Total Cost 237,640 gp

Hull (base level 12, sails, engine, improved speed ×5, Level 20): 125,000 gp

Armaments (Gargantuan, boards and chasers, Level 19): 105,000 gp

Eldritch defenses (fire charm, Level 4; shield defense; Level 10; copper sheathing, Level 6): 7,640 gp

Leviathan

The sea is full of monsters, but few are large enough to threaten an entire ship. Those that do typically prefer to feed on other beasts of the sea. But sometimes these creatures venture to the surface or are enslaved by surface creatures.

Kraken

Sailors fear the mighty kraken, which strikes from below without warning and is seemingly invulnerable to any weapons the crew might field. If the party chooses to use personal attacks against it and you want to use a normal monster stat block simultaneous to a ship encounter, HP will vary based on your system of choice, but every time it loses one-fourth of its HP, its Hull Integrity drops by one; likewise, for each point of Hull Integrity it loses, reduce its HP by one quarter.

Kraken	Level 19 Leviathan
Huge Leviathan	230,400 gp
Hull Integrity 4	**Command** +9
Defense 20	**Perception** +9
Maneuverability 8	Blindsense
Speed 14	

Dimensions

Body 55 ft. x 20 ft. Tentacles 55 ft. Feeding tentacles extend an extra 80 ft.

Leviathan

The kraken is a living creature, acting on its own and requiring no crew. After an extended rest, it heals all damage as long as it has at least 1 Hull Integrity. It can breathe underwater and swim at its full speed to a depth of over a mile.

Tentacles

The kraken lashes out with its two feeding tentacles, then pulls itself close and grasps with the other eight. Slowly, unstoppably, it crushes, until even steel bends within its coils.

When the kraken rams, it stops 25 feet from its target and takes no damage from the collision. The target cannot move until the tentacles take damage or the kraken releases its grip.

Crush and Bite

*Crunching from beneath the water line is followed quickly by an alien ululation. from belowdecks. Crew members issue horrified screams about a massive beak, inhuman eyes, grasping tendrils lined with barbs, and snapping jaws.*

The kraken bites and crushes as a weapon with a +19 attack bonus (effectively +24 due to range), which can only attack at short range.

Ink Cloud

Upon taking fire, the kraken spasms, and the sea and air fills with a stinking cloud of black ink. A moment later, you can only guess where the beast is.

When damaged, the kraken can release an ink cloud upon a ship at short range. During the next naval round, the ink blocks line of sight to and from the inked ship.

Total Cost 230,400 gp

Hull (base level 9, improved maneuverability ×2, leviathan, improved speed ×5, Level 19): 105,000 gp

Tentacles (as farslayer ram, Level 12; as claws, Level 8): 16,400 gp

Bite (Huge, prow, point-blank, Level 17): 65,000 gp

Living Ship (Level 5): 1,000 gp

Farseer blindsense (Level 13): 17,000 gp

Shroud variant (Level 5): 1,000 gp

Nautilus (Level 15): 25,000 gp

Shouting "SUMMON THE KRAKEN!": Priceless.

While krakens in the mortal realm are horrifying, in the far realms of the planes, a greater beast lurks, occasionally slipping into the astral sea to feed on the terror of crews as it strikes their ships and leaves them floating, stranded in the void. The astral kraken annihilates ships that ply these psychic routes, then floats among the wreckage, letting all the survivors watch as it devours their former crewmates one by one.

Astral Kraken	Level 24 Leviathan
Gargantuan Leviathan	

Hull Integrity 4	**Command** +12
Defense 30	**Perception** +12
Maneuverability 6	Blindsense
Speed 16	

Dimensions

Body 110 ft. x 40 ft. Tentacles 110 ft. Feeding tentacles extend an extra 160 ft.

Leviathan

The astral kraken is a living creature, acting on its own and requiring no crew. After an extended rest, it heals all damage as long as it has at least 1 Hull Integrity. It can fly at any altitude.

Tentacles

When the kraken rams, it stops 25 feet from its target and takes no damage from the collision. The target cannot move until the tentacles take damage or the kraken releases its grip.

Crush and Bite

The kraken bites and crushes as a weapon with a +25 attack bonus (effectively +30 due to range), which can only attack at short range.

Psychic Invisibility

The astral kraken exists partially in another plane, vulnerable to attack but normally invisible. Only when it strikes does it reveal its horrid appearance to its prey.

The astral kraken is completely invisible. When it attacks, it immediately becomes visible, and it cannot turn invisible on the next naval round.

Total Cost 914,400 gp

Hull (base level 14, improved maneuverability ×2, leviathan, improved speed ×5, Level 24): 525,000 gp

Tentacles (as farslayer ram, Level 12; as claws, Level 8): 16,400 gp

Bite (Gargantuan, prow, point-blank, Level 21): 225,000 gp

Living Ship (Level 5): 1,000 gp

Farseer blindsense (Level 13): 17,000 gp

Cloak (Level 17): 65,000 gp

Flight (Level 17): 65,000 gp

Chapter Four: Legend, Lore, and Infamy

So you've got rules. You've got a ship, and a crew. What do you do with them? There aren't many heroic tales that focus on efficient triangle trade. When you find adventure at sea, what does it look like? And not just monsters, villains, or tempests: players expect the folklore, the ritual, the unique salty flavor of long nautical traditions, real and imagined.

Marine Superstitions

Oceans are vast and mysterious, and sailors hear many tales that seem inexplicable, so they can be understandably superstitious. Here are some common traditions and beliefs among real-world sailors, and a few that might crop up in a fantasy setting.

Captain Goes Down with the Ship

A sea captain holds ultimate responsibility for both ship and his passengers. Tradition holds that in an emergency the captain should not abandon his post until everyone is safe. The actual adage only appeared in the early 20th century, and probably developed from the protocol of "women and children first," tied to a Victorian ideal of chivalry.

This tradition is not necessarily held around the world, but if you want to handily paint an enemy captain as a scoundrel, have him abandon his ship without concern for the rest of the crew.

Line-Crossing Ceremonies

The line-crossing ceremony commemorates a sailor's first crossing of the equator, intended to invoke good luck on the new sailor, especially on naval vessels. Similar ceremonies are also sometimes carried out for passengers' entertainment on civilian ships.

The two-day event (evening and day) is a ritual in which previously indoctrinated crew members (**Trusty Shellbacks**) are organized into a "Court of Neptune" to indoctrinate the "**Slimy Pollywogs**" into "the mysteries of the Deep." Each Pollywog is expected to endure a standard initiation rite in order to become a Shellback. After crossing the line, Pollywogs receive subpoenas to appear before **King Neptune** and his court, usually including his first assistant **Davy Jones**, her **Highness Amphitrite**, and often various dignitaries, who are all represented by the highest ranking seamen. This is often preceded by a beauty contest of men dressing up as women. Afterwards, some wogs may be interrogated by King Neptune and his entourage, having "truth serum" (the most disgusting drink they can manage, like hot sauce and aftershave) and whole uncooked eggs put in their mouths.

The Pollywogs undergo a number of increasingly embarrassing ordeals, like wearing clothing inside out and backwards; crawling on hands and knees on decks; being swatted with short lengths of firehose; being locked in stocks and pillories and pelted with mushy fruit; being locked in a water coffin of salt-water; crawling through chutes or large tubs of rotting garbage; and so on, largely for the entertainment of the Shellbacks.

Once the ceremony is complete, a Pollywog receives a certificate declaring his new status. Other rare statuses are the **Golden**, **Emerald**, or **Diamond Shellback**, a person who has crossed the Equator at the 180th meridian or Prime Meridian.

These, of course, are the more modest modern traditions. Historical ceremonies sometimes involved brutal pain and—occasionally—the death of the wogs. Simpler traditions involve such things as baptisms in equatorial waters for first-time crossers of the Equator.

Fantasy Variants

When airmen first cross the equator in a flying ship, they might be tarred and feathered and pressed against the keel with nothing to hold them on but the stickiness of the tar, or be forced to jump between planks set out to broadsides above the clouds. Kinder crews might blindfold the victims and just skim the ship forty feet above water so no fall is fatal. Some dangle wogs by a line and fill their pockets with chum, then drag them through the water while the ship flies low.

Sailors might actually have to perform these rituals to appease real entities whose agents take the amusement as payment for passage. Those who refuse will find their ships holed and plundered, or captured in doldrums that never cease until the undersea kings are sufficiently entertained.

Nautical Terms

- **Advance Note.** Advance wages, generally given to experienced sailors to have one last bash before setting sail and/or to buy personal gear.
- **Aftcastle.** The below-deck portion of a ship at the back of the ship, often containing the master's cabin and the wardroom.
- **Albatross.** A coast-dwelling bird, similar to a seagull, often viewed by sailors as a sign of good luck (indicating that land is near). Killing an albatross is considered very bad luck.
- **Aldis Lamp.** A signaling device made of a hollow metal cylinder (wide and shallow) set on end, in which a light source is placed, used to flash signals in code. A lever affixed to the lamp opens and closes shutters on one end of the cylinder, creating the light pulses that are used to signal.
- **All Standing.** To have all sails flying.
- **Almanac.** A book that contains a listing of the relative locations of heavenly bodies for the time of the year, used in conjunction with a sextant to determine location on the seas.
- **Amidships.** In the middle of the ship.
- **Articles.** A written agreement to serve aboard a ship.
- **Ballast.** Weights (generally rocks or lead) placed in the bilge to aid the ship in keeping vertical.
- **Batten.** To secure loose objects, as in "batten down the hatches."
- **Bearing.** The direction of a ship's movement, relative to north, as described on a compass.
- **Belay.** To secure a rope.
- **Belaying Pin.** A 10–12 inch long heavy wooden pin that can be secured into holes on the deck or rail to tie off ropes. A belaying pin can also serve as a makeshift club-like weapon.
- **Bilge.** The lowest portion of the ship, filled with ballast.
- **Bilge Pump.** Bellows and tubing, used to pump standing water out of the bilge.
- **Binnacle.** A lighted housing that contains a ship's compass, located near the wheel.

Luck

No need to have mechanics for these. If your PCs don't get tattoos, you're justified in having bad things happen to them.

Things that are Good Luck

- Sighting an albatross.
- Pouring wine on the deck before leaving port (libation for the gods).
- Black cats on board a ship.
- Swallows seen while at sea.
- Dolphins swimming with the ship.
- Starting a voyage the day after you have your hair cut.
- Smashing a bottle against the hull of a ship upon its first launch.
- Tattoos.
- Throwing an old pair of shoes overboard just after launch.
- Having a child born on board a ship.
- Touching the collar of a sailor.
- Stepping onto a ship with your right foot first.

Things that Are Bad Luck

- Killing an albatross.
- Black traveling bags on a ship.
- Red-heads on board a ship. But the bad luck can be averted if you speak to them before they speak to you.
- Stepping onto a ship with your left foot first.
- Flowers on board a ship, since they can be used in funerals.
- Looking back once the ship has left port.
- A dog seen near fishing tackle.
- Killing a dolphin that is swimming with the ship.
- Handing a flag through the rungs of a ladder or shroud.
- Losing a mop or bucket overboard.
- Repairing a flag on the quarterdeck.
- Cutting your hair or nails at sea.
- Saying the word "drowned" at sea.
- Naming a ship with a word ending in "a."
- To have the bottle not break when used in the launch ceremony.
- Changing the name of a ship.
- Rats leaving a ship.
- Whistling on board a ship.
- Crossing an area where another ship sank.

Omens, Charms, and Curses

- A stolen piece of wood mortised into the keel makes a ship faster.
- A silver coin placed at the base of a mast ensures a successful voyage.
- Sacrificing a bull before a voyage appeases the sea gods.
- Throwing stones into the sea will bring great waves and storms.
- A stone thrown over a vessel that is putting out to sea ensures she will never return.
- Women and/or clergy on board a ship make the sea angry.
- A naked woman on board a ship will calm the sea (this is the reason for bare-breasted figureheads).
- St. Elmo's Fire around a sailor's head means he will die within a day.
- If the clothes of a dead sailor are worn by another sailor during the voyage he died, misfortune will befall the entire ship.
- If the rim of a glass rings, stop it quickly or there will be a shipwreck.
- The caul of the head of a newborn child is protection against drowning and will bring the owner luck.
- The feather of a wren slain on the first day of the year will protect a sailor from dying in a shipwreck.
- A shark following a ship is a sign of inevitable death.
- Horseshoes on a ship's mast turn away storms.

Fantasy Variants

- Talking animals—parrots, familiars, or well-trained animal companions—are good luck. Originated perhaps because they remind sailors of druids, who can calm bad weather.
- Wearing metal armor causes the hull to rot faster.
- Melted candles represent fires that have already burned out, so they won't catch on the ship. Also handy in case of sirens. Half-melted candles sometimes flicker to life a few seconds before a hostile wizard casts a fire spell.
- Dwarves slow a ship down, if for no other reason than that they complain too much. Can be avoided by bringing small rock slabs instead of hammocks for each dwarf.
- Elves make poor captains, good look-outs, and excellent figure-heads. Sailors like to try to mock drown unfamiliar elves, to make sure they're not sea elf spies.

- **Boom.** An angled, rotating structural member affixed to a mast (at the "gooseneck"), to which triangular sails are attached. Typically, only the mizzenmast sports a boom, called the "mizzenboom." These sails can be used in conjunction with the rudder to steer the ship.
- **Bosun.** A truncation of the word "boatswain," the chief petty officer, who is in charge of the rigging and day-to-day running of the ship. The bosun is the "foreman" of the crew, giving orders and making sure the ship functions properly. The bosun receives a set salary and answers to the captain and mate.
- **Bow-Chaser.** A small cannon on the prow of a ship, located on the foc's'le deck.
- **Bowls.** A simple game that involves rolling cannon shot at a series of upright-placed

"pins" (typically 8-inch tall rectangular pieces of wood). Often involves heavy gambling.
- **Bowsprit.** An angled mast projecting forward from the bow of a ship. Jibs are attached here, running back to the nearest mast behind.
- **Braces.** A generic term for the rope and tackle of a ship. "Hauling on the braces" describes a sailor who is pulling ropes, tightening/adjusting sails, etc.
- **Bring About.** Turn the ship. Also "come about."
- **Bring About Hard.** Turn the ship quickly and abruptly, often involving sail changes and even dropping the anchor, often to bring the ship to a stop. Also "come about hard."
- **Bumboat.** A small rowboat used by people in harbor to shop their wares on the piers.

- **Caulker.** A sailor skilled in plugging holes on a ship.
- **Capstan.** A large, drum-like winch set on the deck around which rope or chain is collected by means of turning the capstan with removable handles set in the side, requiring multiple sailors to operate. Typically, there is one capstan for the main sails and another for the anchor.
- **Cathead.** A heavy bulk of wood on one side of the prow of a ship to which the anchor is "catted" (affixed), to provide support for the weight of the anchor.
- **Chain Locker.** A room at the front of the ship, below the cathead, where the ship's anchor chain is deposited when the anchor is weighed.

continued...

- Halflings are lucky, because the gods mistake them for children and don't want to hurt them.
- Orcs think red ships go faster, and blue ones go slower. They shouldn't be allowed to touch the figurehead, or else a human woman will give birth to a half-orc in the next port.
- Tieflings awake at night help keep evil spirits away, because they don't want to fight one of their own.
- Gold coins visible on the deck will tempt dragons. Throwing a gold coin across another ship invites sea monsters to attack it.
- A sailor who encounters a talking fish that grants wishes must be allowed to have the first wish wholly for his own. Any who fight over the talking fish will be cursed and must be cast overboard immediately. Any extra wishes, though, go first to the captain, then to the cook, for sparing the fish.

Red Sky

Red sky at morning, sailor take warning. Red sky at night, sailor's delight.

The rhyme is a rule of thumb for weather forecasting, dating back over 2,000 years, based on the reddish glow of the morning or evening sky, caused by haze or clouds related to storms in the region. Because the Earth rotates west to east, storm systems tend to travel eastward.

A reddish sunrise, caused by particles suspended in the air, often foreshadows an approaching storm, which will be arriving from the west, within the day. Conversely, a reddish sunset often indicates that a storm system is on the east side (opposite the sunset), travelling away from the viewer. A similar movement is noted all around the world, in both the northern and southern hemisphere.

Weddings at Sea

In the modern day, captains cannot actually perform marriages (unless they happen to be certified otherwise). It's unclear where the notion came from or if it was based on actual traditions; it may simply stem from a captain's authority aboard ship. Generally, the law accept that if two people thought they got married, then they got married (though they still need to file the official paperwork as soon as possible).

It's an enjoyable tradition, and gives a perk to whoever serves as a ship's captain, but on many small pleasure craft one can find plaques that read, "Any marriages performed by the captain of this ship are valid for the duration of the voyage only."

Nautical Anomalies

Every sailor has seen freak waves, or heard of hidden reefs that seem to reach up and grab the hull. Currents near cliffs can either stop a ship dead, or blast it away from the rocks, almost miraculously saving the vessel. But some areas are even stranger.

Encontro das Aguas

In the Brazilian rainforest near the city of Manaus, the fast, warm, and turbulent *Rio Solimões* flows in from the west, and meets the *Rio Negro*, a dark, calm, cool river from the northwest. Known as *Encontro das Aguas* or Meeting of the Waters, for miles the two currents continue to flow independently, the *Solimões* flows 3 miles an hour faster and 10 degrees warmer. The shear of the currents mix the brown and black waters into vivid whorls, and today boats take tourists out to marvel at the aquatic oddity that gives birth to the Amazon River.

Similar but more severe parallel flows might come from an island that is threaded with channels. The water flowing around it might be swift and warm in the sun, while the currents that flow through dark caves could create turbulence and interesting tactical options for ships battling around the island. Even more bizarrely, a cursed river might pour sickeningly warm blood out into the sea, or an eldritch laboratory could churn out torrents of necromantic oil that cut black slices along the surface of a river flowing past.

Sargasso Sea

The Sargasso Sea is legendary for its thick growths of seaweed, which sailors were instructed to avoid lest their ships become entangled in plant matter. In reality, the quite ordinary seaweed that floats on the surface of the Sargasso Sea is not nearly thick enough to endanger shipping, and tales of it trapping ships are likely exaggerations of actual trouble with the calm winds of the horse latitudes.

A fantastic Sargasso might be thick enough for a man to walk across, and could form a labyrinth dozens of miles across. Ships could be tempted to sail through, trusting to their agility to avoid being mired, and potentially saving days of time if successful. Seaweed might coil like ivy up the masts of vessels that become stuck, and clans of crustacean humanoids nest in their hulls and eagerly assault any newly trapped crews.

Perhaps the Sargasso itself is a creature, roving through the ocean, inhabited by sirens who draw sustenance to it. Not a plant at all, its green

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- **Complement.** The total number of crew and passengers that a ship can comfortably accommodate.
- **Cotton.** A generic name for sails.
- **Counter.** The overhanging part of a ship's stern, above the rudder. The davit is mounted here.
- **Crackerhash.** Hard biscuits crushed with water and sweetened, forming a paste, baked in the galley oven. A staple of sailors.
- **Crow's Nest.** A small, bucket-shaped structure, attached to a mast above the yardarms, in which sits a lookout.
- **Davit.** A hoist and cradle for small boats, generally mounted on the quarterdeck (specifically, on the counter).
- **Dead Calm.** A condition where the sea and winds grow completely calm. A sailor's worst nightmare, stranding the ship unless it has an on-board means of propulsion (such as oars).
- **Doldrums.** An area of the sea where wind seldom blows.
- **Donkey's Breakfast.** A simple straw mattress upon which a sailor sleeps when he doesn't have access to a hammock.
- **Drink the Coin.** Referring to a man who agrees to become a sailor on a vessel by drinking to the bottom of his cup, in which has been placed a gold coin (which he can use to buy more drinks and/or prepare for the voyage).
- **Faithful Lover.** Tobacco carried in the ship's hold, for use by the sailors.
- **Fathom.** A nautical term of measurement equal to six feet, generally only used to mark depth below the surface.
- **Fife Rail.** A light railing that surrounds the base of a mast to keep objects from rolling into it.
- **Foc's'le Deck.** A truncation of the words "forecastle deck," pronounced ("fock-sul deck"). A raised, open deck atop the forecastle, located at the front of the ship.
- **Foot.** The bottom of a mast or sail.
- **Forecastle.** The below-deck portion of the ship at the front of the ship, often containing quarters for some of the ship's crew, especially the ship's officers.
- **Foremast.** The mast located in front of the mainmast, usually sporting one or two yardarms and square sails.

tentacles seek to cover the entire planet and ululate across the stars to beckon the Great Old Ones. Crews of elderly, deaf paladins might voyage out to it every decade to try to hew it to a smaller size, keeping the monster from overwhelming the sea but tempting treasure hunters with the promise of heirloom armors and swords.

The Maelstrom

The Moskstraumen is an area of tidal eddies and whirlpools off the coast of Norway, thought to be the inspiration for several 19th century tales of a massive vortex that could pull ships to the bottom of the sea. Again reality fails to live up to popular conception: in truth, the unique terrain of the ocean might create a depression about 3 feet deep, spanning about 150 feet. That's legitimately hazardous, but not fantastic.

Fantasy whirlpools might be caused by the periodic collapse of a seafloor that has the consistency of Swiss cheese. When the surface collapses, the vacuum could down water with enough force to annihilate ships that happened to be nearby; *earthquake* spells don't become useless just because you're on a boat.

Perhaps a tunnel to the aboleth's Sunless Sea constantly draws water down from the center of the ocean, or a dead fire god fell from the heavens, and so the sea swirls around him all the way to the continental shelf. Some fool might have created a permanent *teleportation circle* inside an underwater tower that eventually flooded, creating a new river and a very odd addition to the planet's water cycle. Or the Maelstrom might be the literal bottom of the world—it is flat, after all, but when water drains through this spigot, it sprays up in a geyser on the other side and eventually rains back to the surface.

Vile Vortices

In 1972, Ivan Sanderson published "The Twelve Devil's Graveyards Around the World," an article asserting that a dozen "vortices" are responsible for some of the most infamous disappearances of people and ships throughout history. These vortices are spread evenly across the surface of the globe, and line up on opposite sides of the planet, with the two poles connecting, the Bermuda Triangle linking to a spot of similar mysterious occurrences in the Indian Ocean, and so on.

A whole raft of conspiracy and fringe science theories tie into the concept of the Vile Vortices, and they even got a nod in the TV show *Lost*, with polar bears showing up on a Pacific island and then eventually making their way to the desert of Tunisia. Of course, the reality is that Vile Vortices are junk science, and areas where ships seem to disappear uncommonly often are usually explained by the presence of frequent bad weather (the poles) or lots of traffic (the Bermuda Triangle).

But in a fantasy world, perhaps there are actually gigantic tunnels that run the length of the planet. Or perhaps the ley lines of certain regions are sympathetic to the planar magic of astral horrors that abduct and experiment on mortals. Or maybe confluences of magnetic force cause compasses to go haywire, causing people relying on them to become hopelessly lost. Or there may be natural methane deposits in the sea floor that occasionally bubble up, turning ordinary sea water into a hollow foam into which a ship can literally fall. Whatever the explanation, a fantasy world might feature regions in which ships sink for no apparent or well understood reason, and where even flying vehicles will spiral out of control in the bizarre atmosphere.

PORTS OF NOTE

The island of **Tortuga** was a stronghold for pirates for over fifty years, and the various attempts to capture it by the English, French, and Spanish never took, not even when a French governor imported 1,650 prostitutes in a bid to calm the rowdy buccaneers.

Port Royal, a few hundred miles away, was by contrast a focus for the establishment, where pirates were hired as defense against the Spanish fleet. It earned the title *Sodom of the New World* before eventually Governor Henry Morgan managed to make the place unfriendly to pirates, which was much appreciated by the wealthier, more upstanding citizens (some of whom, no doubt, profited greatly from pirate activities).

Where piracy is rare, commerce thrives. Many major ports, like that of **Shanghai**, benefit from deep water harbors that allow the largest vessels, and slow broad rivers that facilitate barge traffic upstream. The port of Shanghai actually is fed by three different rivers, making it the busiest port region in the modern world. In the 18th and 19th centuries, London's was the busiest port in the world, with wharves extending continuously along the Thames for eleven miles.

Some ports only become viable with the development of railroads. For instance, the beautiful and deep bay of **Rio de Janeiro** is not actually fed by any rivers, and the **Los Angeles** River (especially today) is too shallow for merchant traffic.

+ **Furole.** Glowing electrical fireballs often seen by sailors on watch, also called St. Elmo's Fire. Caused by luminous plasma, created by a coronal discharge from a sharp or pointed object in a strong electric field in the atmosphere (such as those generated by thunderstorms or created by a volcanic eruption). Often witnessed with religious awe, but because it is a sign of electricity in the air and interferes with compass readings, sailors also regarded it as an omen of bad luck and stormy weather.

+ **Gaff.** A short, fixed, angled structural member on a mast, located above a boom, to which triangular sails are attached.

+ **Gaff Hook.** A 6-inch metal hook set perpendicularly into a wooden handle or onto a 2-foot wooden rod, a simple tool on board ship, used to grab fish and sometimes to haul ropes and tackle or to grab the deck or rails in rough sea. A gaff hook also often serves as a makeshift weapon on deck.

+ **Galley.** The kitchen of a ship, usually consisting of a small space sporting a simple stove, food storage space, and a place for the ship's cook to sleep.

+ **Gooseneck.** A pivoting apparatus affixed to a mast, to which a boom is attached, allowing the boom to rotate relative to the mast.

+ **Grappling Ramp.** A narrow wooden plank on a movable, pivoting base, used to board adjacent ships.

+ **Grog.** Rum mixed with water, commonly provided in specific quantities to sailors at the end of each shift as partial payment for that day's work. Typically it's not used to get drunk, but instead to help a sailor get to sleep on a moving ship.

+ **Gunwale.** The top edge of the side of the hull, below the rail, particularly on the main deck.

+ **Halyard.** A rope running vertically up a mast, to which flags are attached.

+ **Head.** The top of a mast or sail.

+ **Heave.** To pull ropes, a common command. Also, when a ship tips forward due to waves, wind, or obstructions.

+ **Heave To.** To adjust the sails to bring the ship to a stop without dropping anchor and without turning into the wind. When sails are pulled up, the ship will often "heave" forward a bit as the sea slows the ship.

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Then there's **Venice**, sited on 118 islands connected by bridges and criss-crossed by canals, nestled in a lagoon between two rivers. It was the capital of a mighty Mediterranean republic, a wealthy hub of trade and culture, and launching point of the Fourth Crusade. It sported wondrous architecture that blended Gothic, Byzantine, and Arabic styles, and despite being home to many iconic Christian works of art was actually a rather accepting city for foreign religions. The Venetian Arsenal, a complex of shipyards and armories, was one of the earliest large-scale industrial enterprises in history, and allowed the city to field over three thousand merchant ships and a hundred war-galleys.

When the party sails into port, their first stop needn't be the generic tavern. They might have to board a pirate ship guarding the bay to arrange a wharf, or be inspected by the mercenaries of merchant princes to make sure they haven't been branded. Small boats might zip out and offer to pay extra if they dock at *their* river instead of *that other one*. They might be sent upriver seven miles, past rows of other ships, only to find their assigned dock taken. The harbor might actually be too shallow for them to enter, or they could see a dozen ships careened on sandbars, their crews hard at work patching damage from a recent attack. And yes, they might sail between buildings down narrow canals, listening to jaunty music coming from houses and catching flowers thrown by welcoming maidens leaning out their windows to catch a peek at rugged sailors.

Fantasy Ports

Over the centuries, **Seaquen** rose from a fishing village to a sorcerous port, then was annihilated at least twice, each time rebuiult and restored by magic-users who desired the natural arcane currents flowing up from beneath it. The waters around the city are riddled with cracked ruins from various upheavals that altered the shoreline. It once even moved whole-cloth, traveling a thousand miles to avoid a fiery cataclysm. It is said that the legendary Wayfarer's Theater Ship once called Seaquen its home, but that it too was lost to the ages. Shipyards here offer expensive, custom magic components, and the city's academy trains the most respected ship's mages in the world.

The nobles of **Mu Lsi** maintain their status by crafting the most beautiful or deadly beasts with their magic. Some take shortcuts and try to summon monsters, and one such summoning led to the Banned Hellgate. This one-way portal from the Nine Hells once opened into a

golden tower on an island just off the city's coast, but the tower has since crumbled, leaving the rift a flickering red beacon in the sky. Today black-cloaked smugglers from rival Paung-Cieth run the blockades around the island to pick up the most infernal of contraband, paid for by souls and ordered direct from the pits of Hell. Not many make it out, though, for the seas here are patrolled by the king's own jade sea serpents.

Paladin's Point projects out not into an ocean, but into the ethereal flux that connects the planes of the multiverse. When ships are lost to the whims of storm gods or to the predations of sea monsters, the watchtower of Paladin's Point offers one final beacon of hope. This outpost might float in Limbo, or be a manifest incursion of reality into the madness of the Far Realm, but to the senses of mortals it appears an aged fortress with a towering sea wall, from beyond which roar the screams of unseen beasts and nightmarish storms. Nets cast by the paladins catch wrecked ships as the sea carries them in from an impenetrable bank of fog, before they can tumble over the impossible edge of reality on a plunge to the Abyss. The holy order serves selflessly, known only to the few whom they can save, and to the reckless astral merchants who will risk intentionally crashing their ships—counting on the paladins to catch them—in order to resupply the knights in their endless duty.

Sea Shanties

A shanty is a type of work song that was once commonly sung to accompany labor on board large merchant sailing vessels. Before the 19th century, such ships apparently relied just on simple "one, two, *three*!" chants to keep rhythmic work steady, such as turning a capstan or pulling on a windlass, but the shanty became popular and eventually spread across much of the world before steam engines made the form no longer useful.

Shanties were notably influenced by songs of African-Americans, such as those sung whilst manually loading vessels with cotton in ports of the southern United States. Shanty repertoire borrowed from the contemporary popular music enjoyed by sailors, including minstrel music, popular marches, and land-based folk songs, which were adapted to suit musical forms matching the various labor tasks required to operate a sailing ship. Such tasks, which usually required a coordinated group effort in either a pulling or pushing action, included weighing anchor and setting sail.

- **Heel.** When a ship tips backward due to heavy winds/waves or abrupt maneuvers. When sails are raised quickly, the ship will often "heel" back a bit as the water catches the ship.
- **Hidegild.** A fine paid in lieu of flogging, common among well-to-do sailors who have broken the local law.
- **Jib.** A triangular sail mounted from the bowsprit back to the next mast behind it.
- **Jury.** Describing a temporary, makeshift item, such as jury rigging, a jury rudder, or jury shot.
- **Keel.** A downward-pointed fin on the bottom of a ship, below the mainmast, that helps keep the ship vertical.
- **Keelhaul.** To tie a person with rope and drag him under the ship from one side to the other, often used as a punishment. Usually results

in the victim being cut up by barnacles on the underside of the ship, or death by drowning.
- **Kiss the Gunner's Daughter.** A punishment where the victim is bent over one of the ship's cannons and flogged.
- **Kiss the Lady.** A practice of sailors when leaving port, where they kiss the figurehead at the prow of the ship, so as to ensure good luck on the voyage. Public health professionals do not endorse this.
- **Lash Up 'n' Stow.** A term for folding and tying up any loose cloth material, such as sails or hammocks.
- **League.** A nautical unit of measurement equal to three miles.
- **Letter of Marque.** A written document given to a privateer crew that outlines the specific

actions they are allowed to take without fear of reprisal.
- **Mainmast.** The main, tallest mast of a ship, generally located in the center of the ship, usually sporting two or more yardarms and square sails.
- **Mate.** The first officer of the ship, beholden only to the captain, receiving a set salary, not dependent upon work done.
- **Mess.** Generic term for food on board a ship.
- **Mizzenmast.** The mast located behind the mainmast
- **Oilskins.** A set of heavy garments rubbed with oil to keep them waterproof.
- **Packet.** A ship that sails regularly between two locations.

Form

All shanties had a chorus of some sort, in order to allow the crew to sing all together. Many shanties had a "call and response" format, with one voice (the shantyman) singing the solo lines and the rest of the sailors bellowing short refrains in response.

The following example, a verse of the shanty "Boney" (in reference to Napoleon), shows the call and response form and the interplay between the voices of the shantyman and the crew. When working, hands on the line would synchronize their pulls with the last syllable of each response.

   Shantyman (*solo*): Boney was a warrior,
   **All** (*refrain*): Way-ay-*ya*,
   Shantyman (*solo*): A reg'lar bull and tarrier,
   All (*refrain*): John Fran*çois!*

Any good bard aboard a sailing ship should know a few dozen shanties, making them excellent bosuns, perhaps even granting a slight extra benefit when inspiring and guiding the crew. Then there are "sea songs," distinct from shanties in that they were sung for leisure and entertainment while off duty, while shanties accompanied work. Sea songs often were accompanied by instruments, which would be impossible while hauling ropes or lugging cargo.

More Information

Obviously a book is not the best medium through which to experience songs, but you can find plenty of information and examples online or, at the risk of sounding old-fashioned, your local library.
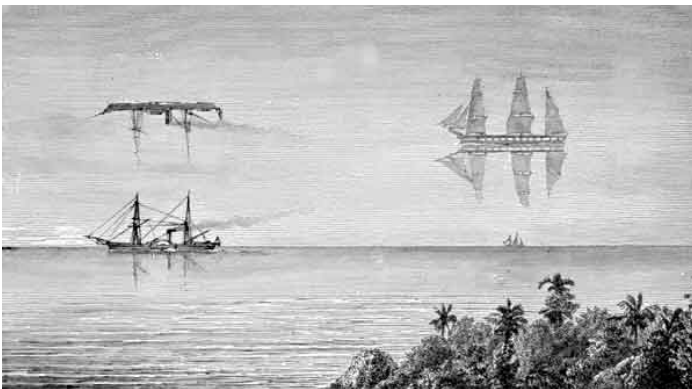
SHIPWRECKS AND GHOSTS

Your look-out calls that he's spotted a ship, its sails limp, headed generally in your direction. Wary for a trap, you order your ship to close, but there is no ambush. There is no crew, no sign of where they went, only the vaguest clues where this ghost ship came from and where it was bound before everyone on board vanished.

Here we present a handful of lost vessels, real and fantastic, both as adventure seeds and as examples to help you narrate when things go disastrously wrong on a ship.

Flying Dutchman

A legendary ghost ship that can never make port, the *Flying Dutchman* is doomed to sail the oceans forever. Folklore dates back to the 17th century, and sightings in the 19th and 20th centuries reported the ship to be glowing with ghostly light. If hailed, the crew of the *Dutchman* will try to send messages to land, or to people long dead. The vessel is never seen without foul weather about her, and the sight of this phantom ship is a portent of doom.

Seventeenth-century Dutch captain Bernard Fokke may have been the model for the captain of the ghost ship. Fokke was renowned for the speed of his trips from Holland to Java and was suspected of being in league with the Devil. Modern scholars suspect the tales of a flying ship were tied to the Fata Morgana optical illusion.

"The news soon spread through the vessel that a phantom-ship with a ghostly crew was sailing in the air over a phantom-ocean, and that it was a bad omen, and meant that not one of them should ever see land again. The captain was told the wonderful tale, and coming on deck, he explained to the sailors that this strange appearance was caused by the reflection of some ship that was sailing on the water below this image, but at such a distance they could not see it. There were certain conditions of the atmosphere, he said, when the sun's rays could form a perfect picture in the air of objects on the earth, like the images one sees in glass or water, but they were not generally upright, as in the case of this ship, but reversed—turned bottom upwards. This appearance in the air is called a mirage. He told a sailor to go up to the foretop and look beyond the phantom-ship. The man obeyed, and reported that he could see on the water, below the ship in the air, one precisely like it. Just then another ship was

✦ **Paychest.** A strong wood or iron chest with a sturdy lock that holds the pay for the crew, usually kept in the ship's office or master's cabin.

✦ **Place the Black Spot.** To mark a sailor for death. Sometimes, to simply accuse a sailor of a serious crime on board ship.

✦ **Press-Gang.** A gang of sailors who roam the streets to "recruit" new sailors for their ship, often by force, "pressing" them into service.

✦ **Privateer.** A sailor who functions something like a pirate, but with the backing of a monarch or high-ranking noble. A privateer is beholden to prosecution by enemies if captured, but receives leniency from his home government when performing actions approved by his sponsor.

✦ **Privy.** The bathroom on board a ship, sometimes also called the "head."

✦ **Quarterdeck.** A raised, open deck atop the aftcastle, located at the rear of the ship, upon which sits the wheel and often a davit.

✦ **Ratline.** A tie that secures a shroud to the deck.

✦ **Rattoner.** An exterminator, particularly one who excels in removing rats (especially on ships).

✦ **Ride the Knife.** The act of cutting the sail and riding a knife/dagger/sword down a sail from a yardarm to the deck - a sail cut in this way must either be replaced or sewn up while in place.

✦ **Rigging.** The ropes and ties which stay put, as opposed to the running gear, which moves while the ship is sailing.

✦ **Running Gear.** The ropes and ties which move, as opposed to the rigging, which stays put.

✦ **Sail Locker.** A room below deck that houses reserve sails, as well as additional ropes and tools.

✦ **Salt Horse.** Salted beef or pork that has gone over and dried hard in the sun, often used by sailors for carving to pass the time.

✦ **Sargasso.** Thick masses of floating seaweed, so dense that a man can potentially cross them on foot.

✦ **Scrimshaw.** Etchings on bone or whale teeth.

✦ **Scupper.** An opening in the rail on either side of the deck that runs water overboard to keep the deck dry.

seen in the air, only this one was a steamship, and was bottom-upwards, as the captain had said these mirages generally appeared. Soon after, the steamship itself came in sight. The sailors were now convinced, and never afterwards believed in phantom-ships."

—Round-about Rambles in Lands of Fact and Fancy, *by Frank R. Stockton*

Mary Celeste

This American brigantine was discovered abandoned in December of 1872, still under sail and headed for the Strait of Gibraltar. Its life boat was missing, and a rope line trailed in the water, but the ship had six months worth of food and water on board.

Personal belongings had been left behind, including valuables and the captain's logbook. Three and a half feet of water was found in the hold, and two of the ship's three pumps had been disassembled. The compass was destroyed, and its sextant and marine chronometer were missing, but nearly two thousand barrels of alcohol in the hold were untouched. There were no signs of a struggle or any violence.

The whole crew had just vanished—seven sailors, the captain, his wife, and his two-year-old daughter.

SS Austria

SS Austria was a German steamship which sank in 1858, in one of the worst transatlantic maritime disasters of the nineteenth century, claiming the lives of 449 passengers and crew.

Around noon on September 13, a decision was made to fumigate steerage by dipping a red-hot chain into a bucket of tar; the chain became too hot for the boatswain to hold, and it was dropped onto the deck, which immediately burst into flames. Although the ship was traveling at only half speed it was impossible to stop the engines as the engine crew had become asphyxiated. When the helmsman abandoned the wheel, the ship swung into the wind, spreading the flames down the length of the ship, racing through the mahogany veneer and varnished bulkheads, as passengers jumped into the sea. As the blackened hulk was left to sink, all but 65 of 538 passengers were lost.

SS Minnow

You've probably already heard this one.

Tempest

In the latter months of the War of the Burning Sky, a warlord took to the skies in a mile-long leviathan known as *Tempest*. Wreathed in storms, brimming with armies, crewed by biomantic horrors, the titanic shark-like warship laid waste to several cities before setting course for the wizard's academy at Seaquen.

The defenders of Seaquen launched a desperate assault, teleporting their own forces onto the ship before it could come close enough to fire its deadly central eye weapon. While two armies clashed within the leviathan's living hallways, a strike force targeted the beast's many hearts, slicing open its vulnerable internal organs and nearly driving the ship to faint. As *Tempest* foundered in the sky, the strike team took out its master—in the process tearing open a rift to a distant fiery dimension that would eventually force the abandonment of Seaquen anyway. They evacuated as many as possible, and the titan plummeted into the sea a few miles off Seaquen's coast.

Storms still flare up with eerie power around the crash site, and divinations tell of wondrous magical treasures trapped inside the leviathan's rotted flesh, which has long-since been filled with coral reefs. Though many have tried to plunder these treasures, the few who return speak of horrible monsters that have turned the shipwreck into both warren and charnel house.

Vasa

This Swedish warship foundered and sank after sailing less than a mile into its maiden voyage in 1628. *Vasa*, one of the first ships constructed with two gundecks, and because it tried to serve as both a proto-ship-of-the-line with heavy cannons, and as a boarding vessel with a defensible high stern, it was built top-heavy. Once launched, the first wind stronger than a light breeze made it heel over to the point that water poured through its open gunports.

After it sank, its valuable cannons were recovered via a primitive diving bell, but the wreck itself sat barely 100 feet down on the sea floor,

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- **Scuttle-Butt.** Rumor on board a ship.
- **Sextant.** A complicated tool used to determine a ship's position by measuring the angle formed by the sun/stars and the horizon and then compared to the information in an almanac.
- **Shroud.** A rope net (10 ft. wide at the bottom and 5 ft. wide at the top) that stretches up at an angle from the edge of the deck up to a mast, used as a means to climb up the mast, often to the "top."
- **Slipped His Rope.** A sailor who died.
- **Snake's Tail.** An unsecured rope or tie, flailing about on the deck.
- **Spanker.** A triangular sail mounted between a boom (below) and a gaff (above), all affixed to the rearmost mast. Primarily used to help steer the ship, spankers are generally only employed on larger vessels and are affixed to the mizzenmast.

- **Spar.** A pole, typically one to which sails are attached. For square sails, the headspar is secured to the yardarm and the footspar is attached only to the sails and can be drawn up with running gear to "raise" the sail, making it ineffective. In this position, the sail can then be lashed up and stowed.
- **Stay.** A rope that serves to support a mast, running from the top of the mast forward to the bow, sideways to the edge of the deck, or backwards to the stern. "Stays" are named according to the mast to which they are affixed: a *forestay* runs from the foremast to the front of the ship, a *mainstay* runs from the mainmast to the side of the ship, etc.
- **Stuns'l Boom.** A light, movable beam, attached to the end of a yardarm, that can be extended through brackets to extend the yardarm breadth, so as to mount additional sails on the yardarm.

- **Suttlery.** A shop where ship equipment is purchased. The suttler is the owner of the shop.
- **Swab.** To clean, as in "swab the deck" or "swab the (cannon) bore."
- **Wardroom.** The room where the captain, ship's officers, and passengers take their meals. It also serves as a drawing room or parlor for the officers and passengers of the ship.
- **Wassail.** A beverage made from sweetened ale or wine, flavored with spices and roasted apples, drunk to the health of loved ones. A delicacy at sea, particularly on long voyages.
- **Weigh Anchor.** To pull up the anchor - the phrase "anchor a-weigh" is used when the anchor is being pulled up.
- **Yardarm.** A fixed, horizontal structural member, mounted to a mast, to which the headspar is attached, often abbreviated as "yard." A yard is often referred to by the mast to which it is attached, such as a mainyard or a foreyard.

such that the flags and masts were still visible on the surface. One attempt was made to lift it—two large hulks were anchored to either side of the ship, ropes were sent down and attached, the hulks were partially flooded, the ropes tightened, and then pumps emptied the hulks, lifting them and the wreck below. While the technique had worked on some other ships, *Vasa* was mired in mud and could not be pulled free.

It languished for 333 years, until more advanced technology returned it to the surface in 1961. Now restored, it sits in a museum for the public to see.

LEGENDS OF THE SEA

The party might cross paths with these ships and their captains, or you might use them as inspiration for allies and foes of your own design. The ships below use the construction rules presented in Chapter Five: Shipyard.

Nosey Anna

Captain Lysander Moriz commands this ancient and mythical galleon, his discovery of it simultaneously the culmination of a lifetime of exploration and the start of a new quest onward to unparalleled vistas.

Driven by early wanderlust, Moriz pledged himself to the merchant fleet of the Sea Lords, which was blessed by the God of Commerce himself. Moriz sailed beyond the edge of charted waters, expanding the trading horizons of already rich men, but when he learned of the atrocities his "benefactors" were inflicting upon the natives of the lands he had delivered them to, Moriz refused to serve them. He tricked one of the cruelest merchant heirophants into seeing these new business opportunities personally. Then, after the priest refused a chance to undo the wrongs he had committed, Moriz marooned the man on an island that had been stripped bare by the merchants' greed of every tree, every beast, and every drop of fresh water.

Incensed at the defiance of a mere sea captain, the God of Commerce swore that no harbor where his priests held sway would ever admit Moriz and vowed to dog the man to the ends of the earth; when Moriz died, he would pay any price necessary to claim his soul as a trophy. So Lysander Moriz set sail, determined to voyage *beyond* the ends of the earth.

Over decades he journeyed to a thousand shores never even dreamed of by the mapmakers of his homeland. He crossed the Windless Ocean, cracked the frigid barrier of the Everice Sea, traded with crescent dragons in the Yerasol Archipelago, and lured a fleet of assassins to their dooms in the Eye of Zuma. With every stop, he brought something needed—food, information, succor from tyranny, tales of hope beyond the horizon, or sometimes just a bold bluff and a wave of his wand.

But his enemies—for he had earned himself far more than just the merchant fleet—were tightening a noose around him. Finally they cornered him, in the sunken ruins of a wizard's academy beneath a burning sky. As the massive fleet blockaded him and waited to sink him, he explored the ruins and learned of the mythical *Wayfarers' Galleon*, lost millennia earlier when the rift to the plane of fire consumed the one port it had ever called home.

Still, he was trapped, unable to reach the rift a mile overhead. But the God of Commerce offered him a deal: hand over the charts of all his journeys, opening up those lands to trade and profit and exploitation, and Moriz would be spared. Moriz countered by offering the charts to the highest bidder, provoking first a bidding war, and then a shooting war among a hundred ships.

Soon their sails were alight, the sea below burning hotter than the fiery rift above. As the smoke and heat billowed into the sky, Moriz bid his crew good luck, sliced free a sail, and swung it into the air like a kite, riding the thermal draft. But he was not rising fast enough, and so he began to fling aside all the weight he could—weapons, treasure, boots—until finally he tore apart his charts and hurled them into the pyre beneath him. The fire flared for an instant, and he was carried the last few feet through the rift.

He landed beyond on the shores of a lake of fire, alone and penniless, but within sight of the fabled ship. He boarded her, explored her illogically vast interior and, not one to let things get too serious, renamed the mythic vessel *Nosey Anna*, since he sensed the ship was too curious for its own good. Then, deciding he could make himself new charts, he activated the ship's teleportation magic and jaunted on to his next new horizon.
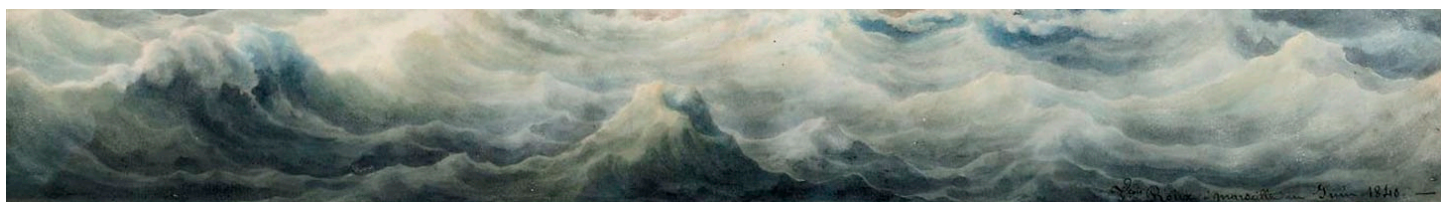
Nosey Anna, **Wayfaring Galleon**	Level 25 Vehicle
Large Vehicle	777,777 gp
Hull Integrity 4	**Command** —
Defense 30	**Full Crew** 16
Maneuverability 8	**Minimum Crew** 4
Speed 10	**Total Complement** 60

Design
Length 90 ft. Beam 25 ft. Four masts, 70 ft. high. Three decks, plus a forecastle and a two-tiered aftcastle.

Curious ✦ Trait
The navigator takes a −5 penalty to his checks to plot or follow a course to a place the ship has already been, and a +5 bonus when heading to new locations. Whenever the navigator fails to plot a course or the ship becomes lost, it will always ends up some place interesting.

Bigger on the Inside
The interior holds an entire theater, still full of props and sets from its last play. The captain only ever uses a portion of the space, and sometimes loses valuables. It's easier to navigate an ocean at night than to find your way through here.

The interior of the ship is as big as a mansion, a thousand feet on a side and with multiple levels and basements.

Defensible
The high castles help defend the crew, but crowd out room for weapons.

The crew has cover against attacks made from outside the ship.

Fireproof
Fiery designs of red and gold adorn the hull, protecting the ship from fire.

The ship has a +5 bonus on saving throws against the burning condition.

Shields
The galleon has a traditional shield eldritch defense.

Planeshifter
You must have personally drawn the map or sea chart from a location you have traveled. You place it upon the table in the center of the captain's cabin, then adorn it with ten rubies, focusing the magic. Fire rises around the vessel, and then it teleports in a burst of flame.

Once per naval round, the captain can teleport the ship a short distance. This can grant a +5 bonus to the ship's Maneuverability for the purpose of avoiding obstacles or for the Bearing phase, but only relative to a hostile ship at short range.

In tactical combat, this requires a standard action and can be done once every five minutes. The Nosey Anna and everyone aboard teleports 50 ft. (10 squares) to an unoccupied space. It maintains the same heading and speed.

Additionally, once per day, the ship can teleport anywhere it has even traveled before. This takes a while to charge up, so once activated (requires a naval round), the ship teleports at the end of the next naval round.

Finally, once per week the ship can shift to another plane.

Total Cost 777,360 gp
Hull (base level 14, sails, improved maneuverability, improved speed ×4, Level 20): 125,000 gp

Greater extradimensional hull (Level 11): 9,000 gp

Defensible (Level 1): 360 gp

Eldritch defenses (greater fire charm, Level 12; shield, Level 10): 18,000 gp

Planeshifter (Level 25): 625,000 gp

417 gp worth of decorations

Serenity

Captain Raja Doake came into command of his vessel at a far younger age than the average officer. While some resented his early promotion, his tactical genius and uncompromising character have earned him the trust of his superiors and respect of his fellow captains.

By now most captains would have moved higher in the ranks, but though he possesses a keen mind, often his successes have come through disobeying direct orders. Though his gambits have always paid off, a few admirals have not taken well to him one-upping them, and believe Doake thinks he's smarter than them. This suits the captain fine, as he prefers the rhythm of the open seas on his single ship, the *Serenity*, to the logistics of running an entire fleet.

He commands his men with a quiet strength occasionally mistaken for indulgence by other captains. His own men are fiercely loyal and trust him with their lives. They may revel louder and longer than other crews, but only well away from active engagements. Those who underestimate him eventually meet with either his brig or his pistol, and his crew say he's a fine enough shot that if he fires and you don't die, it's because he intended to keep you as prisoner.

Serenity's supplies always include more variety and higher quality ales than one would expect from a naval vessel. Rumors in the navy tell he keeps a share in a brewery in every port. Such luxuries might not last much longer, however. In his last fleet action, *Serenity*'s sister ship *Blackwood* caught fire after an incendiary fell from the sky. A look-out spotted a long cylinder nearly concealed in the clouds overhead, and Captain Doake ordered evasive maneuvers as more bombs struck the sea around him, devastating ships on both sides. He managed to salvage an escape by sailing adjacent and downwind of the *Blackwood*, using the smoke of the other ship's conflagration to feign being destroyed.

Captain Doake managed to escape and save most of the *Blackwood's* crew, as well as some from enemy ships, who claimed they had no idea about the identity of the aerial raider. Upon returning to port, Doake immediately requested permission to pursue the airship and, after loading *Serenity*'s gundeck with custom cannons, and loading her stores with as many casks of ale as could fit, he set out on an impossible mission: to pull down this corsair the sky.

Serenity, Zeppelin Hunter	Level 17 Vehicle
Huge Vehicle	110,000 gp
Hull Integrity 4	**Command** —
Defense 25	**Full Crew** 32
Maneuverability 4	**Minimum Crew** 8
Speed 14	**Total Complement** 200

Design

Length 170 ft. Beam 35 ft. Three masts, 100 ft. high. Four decks.

Fire Charm

The ship has a +5 to saving throws against the burning condition.

Armaments

A normal frigate's array, supplemented by a battery of custom-enchanted light cannons that can gimbal and tilt skyward.

Crew: 100. Attack: +16 to broadsides, or +13 forward, aft, or skyward. Can shoot at long range with a −10 penalty. Have the option to fire harpoon shot, grabbing a target struck.

Total Cost 143,000 gp

Hull (base level 11, sails, improved speed ×5, Level 17): 65,000 gp

Armaments (Huge, aerial array, long range, Level 17): 65,000 gp

Harpoon shot (Level 12): 13,000 gp

Greater fire charm (Level 12): 13,000 gp

Enid's Lament, Undead Whale

A pregnant woman, stranded on a rocky island in winter. A horrible act of cannibalism. A whale carcass, washed ashore as a woman's sanity is annihilated, torn asunder.

Though the story varies in the telling, these three images remain constant in the story of Weary Enid. Enid, driven mad, formed a pact with the dark forces of the sea to become a hag with the power to reanimate corpses with a touch, kindling the horrid soul of undeath within them. She thus animated the whale carcass and rode it into the sea, seeking the ship that had doomed her. Its crew became hers, transformed into lacedons, the ghouls of the sea.

Over time, the whale rotted and was hollowed out, but magic held its outer skin intact enough to act as a submersible ship for Weary Enid and her wretched crew. They gather treasure as offerings to the dark power that granted Enid her revenge, and tend to be drawn to ships carrying pregnant women.

Enid's Lament, Undead Whale	Level 15 Leviathan
Large Leviathan	93,520 gp
Hull Integrity 3	**Command** +7
Defense 15	**Full Crew** 0
Maneuverability 6	**Minimum Crew** 0
Speed 14	**Total Complement** 40
	Perception +7
	Blindsense

Dimensions

Length 100 ft. from nose to tail. Width 30 ft. across fintips. However, the hollow interior of the whale corpse's body is only 50 ft. by 10 ft.

Leviathan

The whale is an undead creature, following the telepathic order of its bonded captain, a sea hag known as Weary Enid. After an extended rest, it heals all damage as long as it has at least 1 Hull Integrity. It can swim at its full speed in the darkest depths of the sea, without concern for pressure or cold.

The Drowned and the Hungry

Every beast and foolish sailor the ghoulish crew has fed to their ravenous vessel must serve the leviathan. At the gunner's command, a swarm of humanoid specters and wraithlike sharks manifest around the Enid's Lament *and ravage a hostile vessel.*

Crew: 0 (leviathan-controlled, gunner-directed). Attack: +13 in any direction, even up or down

Total Cost 93,520 gp

Hull (base level 6, leviathan, improved speed ×6, Level 15): 25,000 gp

Leviathan (nautilus, Level 15): 25,000 gp

Living Ship (Level 5): 1,000 gp

Farseer blindsense (Level 13): 17,000 gp

Armaments (Large, sphere of fire, Level 15; necromantic, Level 2): 25,520 gp
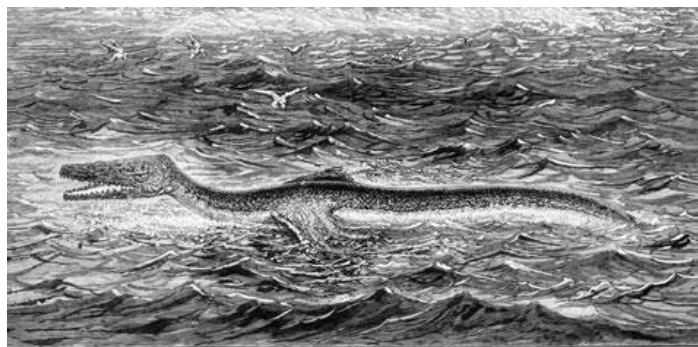
Ire of Veles

Tyrant of the earth, the sea, and the underworld, lord of dragons, magic, music, wealth, and trickery, supreme foe of the thunderous entity known as Perun—Veles was one of the mightiest of the primordial entities that ruled the world before the ascent of mortals. In his natural form he was a massive ram-horned serpent with the face of a man and a beard that brought virility to any male creature it touched; but the master of trickery was himself tricked into assuming the form of a massive forest in a bid to trap the most beautiful fey queen. Once he had transformed himself, Veles lost all track of time, and he lay dormant for thousands of years.

Ten years ago, Risuri ship-builders sought a fresh source of lumber for a new flagship, and they began to fell an ancient, pristine forest in the region known as Parks. Sometimes the ground would shift beneath their feet, and the lumberjacks were beset by serpents that coiled in the roots of the trees. But eventually enough lumber was acquired for the

flagship, originally titled the *R.N.S. Kelland*. The construction was rife with accidents, and as the ship neared completion a diviner was brought in to see if the vessel was cursed. The builders learned the true nature of their ship's origin, but concealed it and slew the diviner so their contract would not be endangered.

After its launch, the *Kelland* performed disappointingly in battle and seemed to kill more of its own sailors than its enemies. Its crew were regularly scandalized for their bawdy behavior at every port, and after a year every female crewman was pregnant and every male crewman was being hounded by mothers of their illegitimate children. The ship was put into dock and effectively abandoned for three months.

Then that winter the shipyards of Shale came under assault by the Danoran navy. Hours into the attack a storm rolled in and prevented the Danorans from withdrawing, so what had been planned as a brief strike turned into a protracted and bloody battle. Every ship was called into service, all save the *Kelland*, since sailors balked at boarding the vessel.

But a bold mocking voice sounded from the storm, insulting anyone who wasn't man enough to join the fray. Commodore Robert Jameson III had just returned from the mouth of the harbor, having exhausted his ammunition, and his mockery was not directed at the sailors but at the ship itself.

Commodore Jameson had served in the Risuri navy for seventeen years and sailed with some of the most prestigious commanders of the fleet. His duties had taken him to every nation across the Avery Sea and several beyond, and in his travels he had come to question the traditional folk religion of his homeland. For a time he studied the divine magic of the Clergy, learning to wield some of its power for himself, but he eventually returned to the faith that had raised him.

This broad understanding of the nature of gods and divinity served him well in the Battle of Shale, for when he insulted the ship that had been crafted from the body of a primordial, he awoke something of that being's spirit. The vessel's figurehead transformed into the face of Veles, and it spoke to the commodore, demanding to know who he was to give orders to a god.

Commodore Jameson recognized Veles from his ancient iconography, and responded that he'd prayed to many so-called gods, and that while none of them had talked back before, all of them—and he named several, including Perun, Veles's ancient rival—had been more useful than this ship was. The ship's spirit responded to the goading just at the commodore expected, and he could barely get a crew on board before the ship set out for battle.

By dawn, the Danoran assault had been broken. By the end of the month, the commodore had been promoted to Vice-Admiral and granted title to Parks, thus maintaining a respectful control over the warship, which was renamed *Ire of Veles*. Now several years later, Admiral Robert Jameson III, Lord of Parks commands his fleet from aboard the vessel, and few can dispute who is the mightiest Admiral of the High Seas.

A Ship and an Avatar

Despite its size and mighty cannons, *Ire of Veles*'s greatest powers are those of the god that lives within it. Though it has no steam engine, it commands the waves themselves and can move with greater speed and agility than any other vessel at sea.

To keep Veles content, certain ancient ceremonies must be performed upon the ship. Though he has cut back a bit on driving the virility of the crew, on every full moon at least one pair of lovers must couple aboard the ship. Given Admiral Jameson's forceful charisma—and his poor track record of staying with the same woman for more than a month—this is seldom a problem.

Ire of Veles, Avatar and Warship	Level 28 Vehicle
Gargantuan Vehicle	2,568,540 gp
Hull Integrity 4	**Command** —
Defense 30	**Full Crew** 96
Maneuverability 10	**Minimum Crew** 20
Speed 22*	**Total Complement** 520

Design
Length 250 ft. Beam 55 ft. Three masts, 150 ft. high. Six decks.

Virile but Afraid of Storms * Trait
The captain takes a −2 penalty to Command checks in rough weather, but will have good fortune in romance, if not necessarily long-term relationships.

Armaments
Twelve light arcane fusils on the maindeck, fifteen full fusils on each of two gundecks, and fifteen heavy fusils on the third gundeck.

Crew: 300. Attack: +25 to broadsides, or +22 fore or aft.

Eldritch Defenses
The spirit of Veles protects those on board from magical harm. Any spell must first disable the figurehead of Veles's face.

The ship gains a +2 bonus to saving throws against the burning condition. Any spells that originate more than 50 feet from the ship is redirected to the figurehead, which has 100 hit points. The lower hull is immune to magic that would warp wood, and thwarts passwall and similar effects.

Greedy Godling
Tempted by the possibility of plunder and treasure, Veles commands the ocean to grab an enemy ship.

The ship's engineer can target an inanimate object by making a Perception check (DC 10 at short range, DC 20 at medium, DC 30 at long). If the object targeted is Huge or smaller, Ire of Veles can grab it. Neither ship can move farther apart from each other until you either choose to release the grab (a standard action during tactical combat), or this component become damaged. If you are grabbing a ship, you gain a +10 bonus to Command checks when closing to short range.

Living Ship
Until the forest of Parks is felled, Ire of Veles will forever replenish any damage with fresh wood.

As long as it has at least 1 Hull Integrity, Ire of Veles heals all damage after an extended rest.

Trick of the Light
An entity of many forms and powers, Veles conceals himself as harmless merchant vessel, as a pod of dolphins, or as nothing at all.

The engineer can spend his naval round to cloak the ship, making it completely invisible, or to make it appear as a different ship. When the attacks, or if anyone on board it attacks a target off the ship, the illusion immediately ends, and the ship cannot use this power on its next naval round.

Total Cost 2,568,640 gp
Hull (base level 14, sails, engine, improved speed ×7, improved maneuverability ×4, Level 28): 2,125,000 gp

Armaments (Gargantuan, boards and chasers, Level 21): 225,000 gp

Eldritch defenses (fire charm, Level 4; flagbearer defense; Level 10; copper sheathing, Level 6): 7,640 gp

Veles powers (tractor beam, Level 16; living ship, Level 5; cloak, Level 17): 111,000 gp

Chapter Five: Shipyard

In this chapter we present the mechanics for designing custom ships. These rules can be a little complicated, so be forewarned. Often it's just easier to take an existing ship and add a few components to give it personality. All of these options are just at the DM's discretion.

In Chapter Three: Port Register (page 28) we present over a dozen different classes of ships, plus one or two noteworthy variants thereof. You might use one of these ships as-is in your game, or tweak a ship by adding traits, eldritch defenses, or components that enhance its piloting or gunnery abilities.

Ship Design

Ships have several components—hull, armament, and various traits—which are priced independently. Each component has a "level" entry, which is a guideline for roughly what level the PCs should get access to such a component. The component's level determines its price. Higher-level ships will often have numerous lower-level components. As it turns out, these prices work pretty well in both D&D and Pathfinder.

Component Prices

Level	Cost (gp)	Level	Cost (gp)
0	50	11	9,000
1	360	12	13,000
2	520	13	17,000
3	680	14	21,000
4	840	15	25,000
5	1,000	16	45,000
6	1,800	17	65,000
7	2,600	18	85,000
8	3,400	19	105,000
9	4,200	20	125,000
10	5,000	21+	(level−5 cost)×5

The most basic ship is a Level 0 (200 gp) boat, fifteen feet long, that relies on rowers for propulsion, with a top Speed of 6, a Maneuverability of 10, and no weapons. But if you wanted a 175-ft. long sailing frigate with Speed 18 and Maneuverability 8, that would be Level 19 (105,000 gp). Arming it with enough cannons to grant it a +20 attack bonus on its broadsides and +17 forward and aft would be an additional level 16 component (45,000 gp). If you wanted it to also be able to dive underwater, the *nautilus* enchantment is a level 12 component (13,000).

Generally it's up to you to describe what form a given component takes, as long as the flavor matches the mechanics. Often simply adding an extra component can let the same basic mechanic represent a huge variety of options. A +10 attack bonus is normally a volley of cannons, but if you add the *noxious* and *unmanned* components, your ship suddenly can instead fire blasts of poison gas from dragon heads carved along the outside of the hull. The *flight* trait might be mechanical steam-powered wings, pure levitation, or bound djinn that carry the vessel aloft.

Interesting flavor might grant the occasional benefit or drawback, at the DM's discretion, but don't try to game the system.

Hull

The hull is the physical space of the ship, determining both how sturdy it is and how much can fit aboard. The hull's level determines its maximum size, defenses, and hull integrity. Generally higher-level ships are larger, but you can choose to have a ship be smaller than the normal size for its level, with the DM's approval.

For instance, a Small cutter's base hull level might be 14 because it has been magically treated to be as strong as that of a Gargantuan warship (Defense 30, Hull Integrity 3). Such a ship would sacrifice capacity for agility and lower crew requirements.

Once you've chosen the hull's base level, determine the ship's speed and maneuverability, which add to the hull's total level. These extra levels do not increase the ship's Defense, Hull Integrity, or Maximum Size.

Hull Characteristics

Level	Defense	Hull Integrity	Maximum Size
0	8	1	Tiny
1	10	2	Tiny
2	10	2	Small
3	10	3	Medium
4	12	3	Medium
5	15	3	Medium
6	15	3	Large
7	17	3	Large
8	20	3	Large
9	20	4	Huge
10	22	4	Huge
11	25	4	Huge
12	25	4	Gargantuan
13	27	4	Gargantuan
14	30	4	Gargantuan

Sealed Hull
0 Levels

Most ships have an open deck, so that crew can see or attack other ships. Some ships are sealed (typically leviathans and engine-powered ships), and crew do not normally go on top of the ship, so they cannot attack, but cannot be easily boarded. The choice is up to the designer and does not add to the cost, but unless a sealed ship is equipped with a Farseer (page 69), it must be piloted blindly, rolling twice for Command checks and attack rolls and taking the worse result.

A sealed ship cannot have sails, and so might be impossible based on the propulsion options available in a setting.

Ship Size

Ship size determines the maximum dimensions of the decks (not counting extensions like spars, figureheads, or oars) and the maximum number of full decks. A ship can have fewer decks than the max, or can have some additional space in aft or forecastles. If you want more space, you'll need to add the *extradimensional hull* trait.

Ship Sizes

Size	Max Dimensions (ft.)	Max Decks	Max Speed
Tiny	15 × 5	1	6
Small	30 × 15	1	8
Medium	60 × 30	2	10
Large	100 × 40	3	14
Huge	175 × 55	5	18
Gargantuan	No maximum	No maximum	No maximum

Maneuverability

A ship's Maneuverability rating is roughly equivalent to how many 45-degree increments it can rotate in the course of a minute, while also factoring in some elements of how quickly it can adjust its turning angle, accelerate, or come to a stop.

A ship's hull size determines its base and max Maneuverability.

Maneuverability Ratings

Size	Base Maneuverability	Max Maneuverability
Tiny	10	20
Small	10	18
Medium	8	16
Large	6	12
Huge	4	8
Gargantuan	2	4

Improved Maneuverability
1 Level.

Add 1 to the hull's level, and increase its Manueverability rating by 2. You can choose this enhancement multiple times.

Needle Ship
0 Levels; Prerequisite: Tiny, Small, or Medium.

Your ship is about one-third as wide as a normal ship as its size and very shallow. Reduce its maneuverability to half normal. Its top speed is 12 if Tiny, 14 if Small, and 16 if Medium.

Speed

Every ship needs some form of propulsion. Choose one or more of the following options.

Engine
2 Levels.

Add 2 to the hull's level. Your ship has an engine that powers propellers or paddles, so the ship is not reliant on the wind. However, the engine relies on fuel, whether it's coal, diesel, or powered by magic stones, so the ship typically cannot operate for more than a month without refueling. Also, the engine's noise and smoke from its stacks gives other ships a +2 bonus to Perception checks to detect it.

SPEED LIMITS?

Thanks to games and Hollywood, we might have the expectation that smaller vehicles are faster than larger ones. In reality, though, it takes a large hull to mount the largest sails, engines, or rowing decks. Also, ships create waves at their bow and stern, and the faster they go, the deeper the waves, until eventually a ship will get caught in the trough between the two waves. That's the "hull speed," the fastest speed a ship can reach in normal conditions. Longer ships have shallower troughs at any given speed, and so can go faster. Because of these factors, a properly-designed Gargantuan ship can easily outpace a smaller vessel.

However, smaller ships are more nimble, and can avoid hazards or go into shallow water more easily. And since this is a fantasy game, well, magic doesn't care what physics dictates. With the right magical components, ships can bypass this speed limit. We present the rules with a baseline that obeys reality, though, for those games where the group prefers lower magic.

Alternately, a magical engine might pull water past the ship, and its arcane energies can be detected from afar.

Engine Characteristics

Size	Base Speed	Full Crew	Minimum Crew
Tiny	2	1	1
Small	2	2	1
Medium	2	4	1
Large	2	8	2
Huge	4	16	3
Gargantuan	6	32	4

Leviathan
2 or 3 Levels.

Add 3 to the hull's level (2 if it is a Small or Tiny ship). Your ship is some sort of creature that moves by its own flippers, wings, or other type of limbs. It need not be alive; it could be a giant tortoise, a zombified whale carcass, or a castle borne aloft by seventy-seven dragon wings. Inherent to this type of "ship" is some connection between the captain and the creature, so it knows its orders. No crew is necessary to pilot or fire its weapons, though it likewise cannot have a "crack crew."

If the ship is an animated object, it cannot take any sort of actions on its own. If it is a living creature it can operate on its own, but the ship has its own morale and must be kept content. The cost of a leviathan might be the price of constructing and enchanting it, or possibly of training and feeding it.

If you want your vessel to be able to heal, you must also choose the Living Ship component (page 69). Operating on its own, a living leviathan has a Command rating of ½ the level of its most expensive component, and a Perception of 10 + that amount.

Leviathan Characteristics

Size	Base Speed	Full Crew	Minimum Crew
Tiny	2	0	0
Small	2	0	0
Medium	2	0	0
Large	2	0	0
Huge	4	0	0
Gargantuan	6	0	0

Oars

0 Levels; Prerequisite: Tiny, Small, or Medium.

A Tiny, Small, or Medium boat can be rowed without needing any special "rowing decks." Each rower simply fills half a square.

A ship has a speed of 1 for every 1 rower if it is Tiny, for every 2 rowers if it is Small, and for every 4 rowers if it is Medium. Rowers with the Expert Sailor feat count double. Small-sized creatures typically count as one-fourth of a Medium creature, whereas Large creatures count as four. You can squeeze up to four Medium creatures or one Large one into a 5-ft. square. If the ship is a Needle Ship (see above), double its rowed speed.

Rowing Deck

1 Level; Prerequisite: Large, Huge, or Gargantuan.

Add 1 to the hull's level. Your ship has the seats, mounts, and oars for rowers. Rowed ships aren't dependent on wind, but have the highest crew requirements.

A rowed ship's size determines the number of rowers needed per 1 point of Speed, and the number of seats available for rowers, which together determines its normal maximum speed. Its max speed is limited by size like every other ship, but you also need sufficient rowers. For instance, a typical Large rowed ship has 48 seats, enough to reach speed 6, but if it only has 24 rowers it can only reach speed 3.

Again, expert sailors count double, but a crew entirely of expert rowers is often prohibitively expensive. In reality, rowing decks fell out of favor as sailing technology improved. Games will usually only feature them in settings with Bronze Age-style societies.

Rowing Characteristics

Size	Rowers Per 1 Speed	Base Seats	Typical Rowed Speed
Large	8	48	6
Huge	20	120	6
Gargantuan	50	300	6

Sails

1 Level.

Add 1 to the hull's level. Your ship has sails to catch the wind, one of the most efficient propulsion forms. But you are reliant on the wind and have fairly high crew requirements.

The number of masts a ship mounts is largely an aesthetic choice in the game. Countless complex factors make different mast and sail plans valuable in different circumstances, but for the ease of gameplay all that matters is whether the sails are intact, damaged, or destroyed. A sailing ship needs at least one mast, and generally caps out at three. If a big ship has a high maneuverability, that's probably because it has extra masts that can mount specialized sails.

In tactical combat, sailing ships with multiple masts can generally use any mast or the rear of the ship as an axis when turning.

Sail Characteristics

Size	Base Speed	Full Crew	Minimum Crew
Tiny	2	2	1
Small	2	4	1
Medium	2	8	2
Large	2	16	4
Huge	4	32	8
Gargantuan	6	64	16

Additional Rowing Decks

1 Level; Prerequisite: Rowing Deck.

You add 1 to the hull's level, and add extra seating to your ship equal to twice the "Rowers Per 1 Speed" entry for your ship's size (32 for a Gargantuan ship, 2 for a Tiny or Small ship). This effectively increases your ship's typical rowed speed by 2. You can choose this option multiple times.

Improved Speed

1 Level; Prerequisite: Engine, Leviathan, or Sails.

You add 1 to the hull's level. Increase your ship's maximum speed by 2 when using either engine or sails. You can choose this option multiple times.

Multiple Propulsion Types

If a ship has two types of propulsion, it can use them independently (such as if one is damaged, or if you don't have sufficient crew for both), just using the stats for one type at a time. Or it can use them together, in which case you take the better speed of the two, then add 2 for the extra propulsion the other provides. It still cannot go above the speed limit for its size.

For example, a Large ship has both a steam engine (Speed 2, 8 crew) and sails with improved speed ×2 (Speed 6, 16 crew). When using both together, it's slightly faster (Speed 8, 24 crew), and it has redundancy in case one type of propulsion is damaged.

ARMAMENTS

Shipboard weapons typically consist of cannons of various sizes, but could take the form of enchanted fusils—like horizontally-mounted wizard's staves, charged with destructive force—or dragon heads that spew wads of acid, or clouds of wrathful spirits that hammer opposing vessels, or burning firebrands mounted on a ship's topsail that can incinerate an enemy in a single strike.

Shipboard Weapons

The level of a ship's armaments—and thus their cost—depends on four factors:

- ✦ Attack bonus
- ✦ Size
- ✦ Firing arcs
- ✦ Range

Though a ship might have multiple batteries, its armaments are treated as a single component with one unified cost. Additional components can enhance a ship's armaments, but do not add to the armaments' level.

Attack Bonus

This represents the overall destructive power of your weapons. Whether it's one single super-weapon, or dozens of cannons firing over and over, during the Attack phase of naval combat you just make one attack roll in any given firing arc.

Size

Obviously, a 30-ft. cutter can't mount the same weapons as a 250-ft. grand frigate, but in a world of magic it is possible for a Small vessel to carry supernatural weapons that are as devastating as a fusillade of cannons. Fitting the same firepower onto a smaller ship costs more, however, raising the level of a ship's armaments.

On the chart below, look at the ship's size and the attack bonus you want, which determines the level of your armaments. Then add modifiers

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SETTING CONSIDERATIONS

Traditional fantasy settings do not have firearms, so cannons would be unavailable. At the DM's discretion, other more magical types of weapons might take their place. Maybe in the setting, ships can only mount one weapon, so it is usually forward facing, like an actual firebreathing dragon figurehead, or a sail inscribed with profane sigils that melt the eyes of all who gaze upon it.

Perhaps no shipboard weapons are available. Similar to the real world before the 16th century, ship-to-ship combat would consist of boarding actions. Siege weapons like catapults might be deployed against enemy fleets, but they could only be mounted on the largest vessels, and would be of little use against mobile single targets.

SHIPBOARD WEAPON RARITY

Perhaps the DM doesn't want cannons in the setting, *does* want some ship weapons, but does not think supernatural armaments are appropriate for a low-level game. In this situation, simply disallow armaments packages of level 10 or lower.

Do *not* simply raise the level cost of armaments. If you do that, ships will never damage each other because they'd only be able to afford weapons sufficient to threaten lower-level vessels.

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based on what firing arcs the weapons can target.

Each battery size requires number of squares they take up. These squares are usually placed along the edge of the ship that matches the battery's firing arc, and cannot be more than 10 ft. (2 squares) deep. A turret of heavy cannons might be on the center of the main deck, while an arcane lightning cannon could have a single firing square on the prow and a huge magical capacitor in the lower decks.

- ✦ **Tiny** batteries take up only a single 5-ft. space (1 square), and can basically be mounted anywhere. They require just 1 crew to fire, who can be the ship's Gunner.
- ✦ **Small** batteries take up 10 squares, and require 5 crew.
- ✦ **Medium** batteries take up 20 squares, and require 15 crew.
- ✦ **Large** batteries take up 50 squares, and require 40 crew.
- ✦ **Huge** batteries take up 100 squares, typically across multiple decks, and require 100 crew.
- ✦ **Gargantuan** batteries take up 200 squares, typically across multiple decks, and require 300 crew.

A big ship can carry smaller batteries. For instance, no matter the size of a ship's hull, a weapons battery with a +1 attack bonus will only ever be Tiny, thus requiring only a single crewman. Also, the maximum attack bonus for shipboard weapons is +25.

Attack Bonus by Size and Level

Level	Tiny	Small	Medium	Large	Huge	Gargantuan
4	+1	—	—	—	—	—
5	+2	—	—	—	—	—
6	+3	+4	—	—	—	—
7	+4	+5	—	—	—	—
8	+5	+6	+7	—	—	—
9	+6	+7	+8	—	—	—
10	+7	+8	+9	+10	—	—
11	+8	+9	+10	+11	—	—
12	+9	+10	+11	+13	—	—
13	+10	+12	+13	+14	—	—
14	+11	+13	+14	+15	+16	—
15	+12	+14	+15	+16	+17	—
16	+14	+15	+16	+18	+19	—
17	+15	+16	+17	+19	+20	—
18	+17	+18	+19	+20	+21	+22
19	+18	+19	+20	+21	+22	+23
20	+20	+21	+22	+23	+24	+25
21	+21	+22	+23	+24	+25	—
22	+22	+23	+24	+25	—	—
23	+23	+24	+25	—	—	—
24	+24	+25	—	—	—	—
25	+25	—	—	—	—	—

Firing Arcs

Choose one of the following options. Some options increase the level of your armaments in order to give you a broader field of fire. This increases the cost, but not the attack bonus.

- ✦ **Prow-Mounted.** Your weapons can only fire forward. Determine the attack bonus as if your ship were three size categories smaller, due to the reduced space available. If your ship is Tiny, Small, or Medium, use the normal Tiny ship attack bonus. (You could also use these stats for weapons that can only fire to the aft, but almost no ship would ever want that.)

- **Broadsides.** Your weapons are mounted on each broadside. You cannot attack forward or aft.
- **Boards and Chasers (+1).** Your primary weapons are mounted on each broadside. Your ship can also attack forward or aft; determine the attack bonus for those arcs as if your ship was three size categories smaller.
- **Forward Turret (+1).** You have a weapon that can fire forward or to either broadside. Determine the attack bonus for all those arcs as if your ship was two size categories smaller.
- **Full Coverage (+2).** Use your full attack bonus in any arc.
- **Aerial Array (+2).** Your weapons can primarily fire broadsides, with a few specialized batteries that can fire forward, aft, or vertically. Use your full attack bonus to broadsides, and the attack bonus of a battery three sizes smaller for any other direction.
- **Sphere of Fire (+3).** Your vessel uses its full attack bonus in any direction, including directly up and down.

Range

By default, shipboard weapons gain a +5 to hit when the target is at Short range, and cannot attack at Long range.

- **Long Range Weapons (+1).** Increase the level by 1. Your weapons can attack at Long range with a −10 penalty.
- **Extreme Range Weapons (+2).** Increase the level by 2. Your weapons can attack at Long range with a −5 penalty.
- **Point-Blank Weapons (−2).** Reduce the level by 2. Your weapons can only attack at Short range, but still gain the normal +5 bonus to hit at that distance.

Crew Requirements

If a ship needs to fire when it has less than the full gunnery crew, determine how many crew the ship has to spare for gunnery, then consult the table below. For each step lower the available crew is compared to the full gunnery crew, reduce the ship's attack bonus by 3.

Yes, if there's one gunner left on a ship that normally requires 300, you can still attack with some small chance of success. The gunner probably won't be able to reload, but he can still fire any cannons that are already loaded, and it will take him a while to fire them all.

Diminished Gunnery Crew

Crew Available	Effective Battery Size
1	Tiny
5	Small
15	Medium
40	Large
100	Huge
300	Gargantuan

If you want to be extra realistic, when you want to fire at multiple firing arcs in the same round, you can determine how the crew is split between them, which might yield different attack bonuses. Remember, the Unmanned component (page 72) let you create armaments that don't require crew.

Benchmark Weapon Batteries

A +2 attack bonus might result from mounting one or two light cannons, or a weak arcane fusil.

A +5 bonus could represent a battery of six light cannons, one or two normal cannons, or a light eldritch figurehead.

A +10 bonus could be a short deck of a dozen cannons, a pair of enchanted light cannons, or a powerful weapon that fires a lance of light.

At +15, you might have a whole deck of normal cannons, an enchanted lightning generator the size of a small house, a pair of heavy cannons that require a half dozen men apiece to use, or a flaming topsail known as an eldritch brand, so named because when it fires, it burns an image into its target like a giant branding iron.

A +20 attack bonus likely entails multiple decks of cannons, some of them so large it takes a dozen men with ropes and pulleys to move them. It could be a brand paired with a deck of cannons, or a ward of glowing runes lining every deck, where sailors chant holy verse to command damned souls as flying weapons.

A +25 attack bonus might be a ship bedecked with enchanted cannons loaded with alchemical munitions, or a tower from upon which a gunner can conjure forth whirlpools and freak waves, or simply the psychokinetically devastating wrath of the dead god that slumbers in the ship's bilge.

ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS

Components include everything from raised fore- and aft-castles to have an advantage in close ship-to-ship battles, to enchantments that let a ship fly, swim, or teleport. Components need not actually be physical objects added to a ship; they might simply alter the nature of the ship, such as the *living ship* component, which lets your vessel heal.

Each component has a level rating, which determines its cost. It might also be listed as an **installed component**, which means that it takes up some actual space on the ship and can be damaged or destroyed. Other components are considered inherent to the ship—some sort of enchantment or aspect of design that is not localized enough to actually target it. Some components are part of other components. For instance, if you destroy a ship's armaments, it obviously cannot use its flaming weapons.

Some components reference your ship's level. For this, use the highest level component of anything on your ship. Typically this will be the hull, but sometimes dinky ships have very expensive components on them.

Component	Level	Price
Eldritch Defenses		
Fire Charm	4	840
Fire Charm, Greater	12	13,000
Flagbearer Defense	4	840
Flagbearer Defense, Greater	10	5,000
Shield Defense	10	5,000
Shield Defense, Null Shield	21	225,000
Teleportation Ward	12	13,000
General Components		
Charged Hull	10	5,000
Claws	8	3,400
Combination Ship	15	25,000
Defensible	1	360
Defensible, Efficient Defense	5	1,000
Extradimensional Hull, Lesser	5	1,000
Extradimensional Hull, Average	8	3,400
Extradimensional Hull, Greater	11	9,000
Extradimensional Hull, Grand	14	21,000
Farseer	3	680
Farseeer, Darkseer	9	4,200
Farseer, Blindseer	13	17,000
Folding Boat	11	9,000
Folding Boat, Modular	12	13,000
Living Ship	5	1,000
Portal Pad	17	65,000
Ramprow	3	680
Ramprow, Farslayer Ram	12	13,000
Sheathing, Copper	1+	360+
Sheathing, Tar and Brimstone	8	3,400
Shroud	5	1,000
Shroud, Greater	11	9,000
Shroud, Cloaking	17	65,000
Shroud, Greater Cloaking	21	225,000
Tractor Grab	16	45,000
Gunnery Components		
Acidic	8	3,400
Aquatic	15	25,000
Chain Shot	4	840
Freezing	8	3,400
Harpoon	12	13,000
Heated	4	840
Heated, Flaming	10	5,000
Necromantic	2	520
Shocking	8	3,400
Unmanned	Special	Special

Component	Level	Price
Piloting Components		
Agile	1+	360+
Flight, Airship	15	25,000
Flight, Windship	17	65,000
Flight, Skyship	20	125,000
Ghost Ship	13	17,000
Landship	12	13,000
Nautilus, Lesser	10	5,000
Nautilus, Standard	12	13,000
Nautilus, Greater	15	25,000
Seaborn	6	1,800
Teleportation, Jaunter	10	5,000
Teleportation, Wayfarer	20	125,000
Teleportation, Planeshifter	25	625,000
Teleportation, Time Machine	31	5,625,000

Eldritch Defenses

Most high level ships possess some variety of eldritch defense to protect against hostile spells.

Fire Charm

Level 4.

Your ship gains a +2 to saving throws against the burning condition.

Greater Fire Charm. Level 12.

The bonus is +5.

Flagbearer Defense

Level 4, Installed.

The ship's figurehead, masthead, or flag is enchanted to draw magic to itself. Whenever a spellcaster more than 50 feet away from the ship casts a spell that targets the ship or anyone on board it, the spell is redirected to target the "flagbearer." If the spell normally has an area, it just affects the flagbearer. Even if the spell normally couldn't affect an inanimate figurehead (like *baleful polymorph*), the spell's target is redirected.

As an object, the flagbearer takes half damage from most attacks and is immune to mind-affecting effects. It has 50 hit points. A strike that hits it deals 25 points of damage.

A ship can only have one flagbearer, and cannot have both a flagbearer and a shield. Mending magic can repair the flagbearer over the course of a few hours.

Greater Flagbearer. Level 10.

As above, but it has 100 hit points. A strike that hits it deals 50 points of damage.

Shield Defense

Level 10, Installed.

The ship's figurehead, masthead, or flag is enchanted to create an aura that dampens hostile magic from without. Any spell that originates more than 50 feet away from the ship has any damage it deals to creatures aboard the ship reduced by two times the level of the ship's most expensive component. When two ships enter each other's protective auras (i.e., they get within short range), they effectively merge into one larger aura. The two ships can then affect each other, but are still protected from without. A ship can only have one shield, and cannot have both a flagbearer and a shield.

Null Shield. Level 21, Installed.

An invisible aura surrounds the vessel to a distance of 50 feet. No magic from outside the aura can come inside. As above, if two ships enter each other's protective auras (even if one is a standard shield), their auras merge. Each ship can affect the other with magic, but has its own shield's defenses against spells from without.

CAMPAIGN TIPS: RECALIBRATE THE SHIELD HARMONICS

Consider the aesthetics of fantasy sailing. Is there arcanobabble akin to science fiction technobabble? Does the engineer have to manipulate levers or run balms on gemstones to keep the ship's magical enhancements functioning? Are your players more comfortable with "realistic" ships, where any sort of eldritch defense is subtle? Or would you rather ships have plot armor, so that neither side does things that break the suspension of disbelief?

OPTIONAL RULE: TRAITS

If you want a quick way to make a ship feel distinctive, give it one or two of these minor traits. These are assumed to be simple quirks of the ship's design or minor blessings, curses, or "personality traits" the ship has picked up in its time in service.

- **Beloved.** While the ship is in full repair, crew on board gain +5 morale and a +1 bonus to saving throws.
- **Bold.** When the ship is sailing toward a foe, its speed increases by 2 and its captain gains a +2 bonus to Command checks during the Location stage.
- **Curious.** The navigator takes a −5 penalty to his checks to plot or follow a course to a place the ship has already been, and a +5 bonus when heading to new locations. Whenever the navigator fails to plot a course or the ship becomes lost, it will always end up some place interesting.
- **Daunting.** The first attack roll against the ship each combat takes a −5 penalty. Hostile creatures entering the ship's space treat the first square they enter as difficult terrain.
- **Eerie.** The ship completes all its journeys in 10% less time than expected, as if it's traveling by unseen paths. Its crew takes a −5 penalty to morale from all the odd happenings.
- **Hulking.** The ship gains a +2 bonus to Command checks whenever being big would help, like to resist waves or to ram.
- **Resilient.** The ship gains a +2 bonus to saving throws to avoid sinking, and its engineer gets a +2 bonus to checks to repair or stabilize it.
- **Scrappy.** The ship gets a +2 bonus to Defense against attacks from ships at short range.
- **Troublemaker.** The ship's Defense is reduced by 1 from all the fights it has been in, but its Look-Out gets a +2 bonus to Perception checks.

Teleportation Ward

Level 12.

A variety of wards around the ship prevent teleportation onto or off of the ship. Teleportation within the ship is still effective.

General Components

These elements don't apply to the ship's armaments or propulsion.

Charged Hull

Level 10.

Typically used by sealed ships with no exposed decks, this component can be triggered to release a powerful electric charge across the skin of your ship. Triggering is a standard action during tactical combat and can be done for free during the Attack phase in naval combat. It takes an hour for this component to recharge.

The hull gains a charge for one minute. Any creature on the surface of your ship or in the water within 30 feet takes 2d6 points of damage each tactical round. In naval combat, if a leviathan is at short range, make an attack 1d20 + 10 and add your ship's level.

Claws

Level 8, Installed.

This component could also represent teeth or tentacles. Somehow your ship is capable of grabbing another and keeping it from getting away.

When you ram another vessel, prevent the first strike the rammed ship would deal to you. Additionally, if the ship you hit is one size category larger than your ship, the same size, or smaller and you deal at least one strike, you manage to grab that ship. Your two ships cannot move apart from each other until you either choose to release the grab (a standard action during tactical combat), or this component is damaged.

Combination Ship
Level 15.

Your ship can split into smaller vessels, either magically shapeshifting, or physically detaching individually seaworthy craft. Usually there are five component vessels, but when you gain this component you can choose any number from two to six.

Design each component vessel's new stats, using the base vessel's total cost (not counting this component) as the total value that can be spent for all the smaller vessels. The smaller ships might even have some components the base vessel does not.

Usually the split must be activated by the captain, but different designs might let specific officers choose to detach. Detaching takes two full rounds in tactical combat. In naval combat, when a ship detaches, it enters the combat at the start of the next naval round. Note that this component is not the same as simply having smaller vessels like dinghies on board.

Defensible
Level 1.

Your ship has unusually large railings or rampants on the maindeck, or perhaps high aftcastles from which the crew can defend more easily. The crew has cover against attacks made from outside the ship, but because of the space they take up, the ship counts as one size smaller for determining the size of weapon batteries it can mount.

Efficient Defense. Level 5.

Clever design like special iron shutters or perhaps unidirectional magic forcefields let the crew on the maindeck benefit from cover while still allowing normal weapons to be mounted there.

Extradimensional Hull
Lesser. Level 5.

The ship's interior is larger than it appears from the outside. The interior appearance can vary wildly; larger versions of this trait might even contain independent buildings with landscaping. Typically there is only a single entrance, but if the ship has gunports they might appear on the edges of this demiplane. Other extradimensional spaces (like those inside a *bag of holding*) are inaccessible from within this hull.

This interior space can be as large as a large house (40 × 40 × 20 feet).

Average. Level 8.

It can be as large as a small mansion (200 × 200 × 100 feet).

Greater. Level 11.

It can be as large as a full mansion (1,000 × 1,000 × 200 feet).

Grand. Level 14.

It can be as large as a mile across.

Farseer
Level 3, Installed.

Mounted at the ship's highest point, this component connects to a viewing pane located elsewhere on the ship, effectively allowing a character to act as look-out without being exposed to enemy fire. This might simply be a periscope in a submarine, or a glassy orb etched to resemble an eye, which turns atop the ship's mainmast and lets an officer adjacent to the ship's wheel spot and quickly relay information to the captain.

Only one look-out can use a given farseer at a time, but a ship can have multiple farseers.

Darkseer. Level 9, Installed.

The farseer grants its user darkvision, negating penalties for darkness. This benefit does not extend to the rest of the crew.

Blindseer. Level 13, Installed.

The farseer grants its user blindsense, negating penalties for any type of concealment. This benefit does not extend to the rest of the crew.

Folding Boat
Level 11.

By speaking a command word you cause the ship to collapse to a fraction of its normal size over the course of a minute, until it is small enough to carry in one hand. It might take the form of a ship in a bottle, a stone engraved with the ship's image, or a paper boat. Another command word restores it to its full size if it is some place it could fit safely. The ship cannot be shrunk if any creature is inside it, but objects inside it are stored safely.

A folding boat cannot also have an *extradimensional hull*.

Modular. Level 12.

Some folding boats have an intermediary stage that can be achieved with a third command word. Create another smaller version of your main ship, which cannot have any components the main ship doesn't already have.

Living Ship
Level 5.

As long as it has at least 1 Hull Integrity, the ship heals all damage after an extended rest.

Portal Pad
Level 17, Installed.

There is a location on your ship where you can stand and teleport onto another ship in the same stage. Up to 8 creatures can teleport at a time, after which time it takes five minutes for the portal pad to recharge. Arrival takes a brief moment, so creatures cannot ready their actions to strike the moment they appear; effectively, once you teleport in just roll initiative as usual.

Activating and targeting the teleportation requires an engineer to make an Arcana {in PATHFINDER, a Knowledge (arcane)} check, with a DC equal to the target ship's Defense. On a success, the portal pad activates at the end of the naval round (giving various officers time to reach it after taking their officer actions), and you arrive at a location visible from the deck (or crow's nest) of your ship. A character using clairvoyance, however, might allow teleportation to the interior of another ship.

Ramprow
Level 3, Installed.

When your ship rams another, prevent the first strike the rammed ship would deal to you.

Farslayer Ram. Level 12, Installed.

Your ship can magically deal ramming damage without actually colliding. When you ram, your ship takes no damage (unless the other ship also has a *farslayer ram*), and you begin tactical combat up to 25 feet apart.

Sheathing, Copper
Level 1+.

The bottom of the hull is sheathed in copper mixed with iron that keeps shipworms from burrowing and barnacles or seaweed from attaching to the wood. It also protects the lower hull from the effects of magic that would warp wood, and thwarts *passwall* and similar effects. The level of this component is 1 + 1 per size category the ship is larger than Tiny (6 for Gargantuan). This component cannot be applied to metal-hulled ships.

Sheathing, Tar and Brimstone
Level 8.

The bottom of the hull is sheathed in an alchemical mixture including slag, tar, and brimstone, and is infused with the faintest trace of elemental fire. This has the same protective properties as copper sheathing. Additionally, attacks against the underside of the hull trigger the release of a brief burst of fire that often deters aquatic attackers.

Whenever a creature within 30 ft. of the hull attacks the underside of the ship, that creature takes 10 fire damage. If a leviathan rams or attacks from below at short range during naval combat, it takes 1 point of hull damage.

Shroud
Level 5, Installed.

The ship's engineer can spend his naval round to call forth a magical shroud to conceal the ship on the next round. Each shroud creates a specific type of concealment—shadows, a bank of fog, bright light, or a glassy reflection—typically about three times as big across as the ship itself. The shroud blocks line of sight to and from the ship, making it hard for other vessels to see what you're up to, but likewise impairing your navigation and attacks.

While the shroud is up, you roll twice for Command checks and shipboard weapon attack rolls, and take the worse result. Other ships targeting you likewise roll twice on attacks and take the worse. If two ships are at short range, the shroud does not affect their attack rolls against each other.

Greater Shroud. Level 11, Installed.

As above, except the engineer can choose total concealment. The ship still rolls twice and takes the worse result for Command checks and attack rolls. Also, to target through the shroud, a ship's look-out or gunner must succeed a Perception check (DC 10 at short range, DC 20 in the same stage, and DC 30 in an adjacent stage; modified by ship noises and local conditions).

Cloaking. Level 17, Installed.

As above, except the engineer can choose total concealment. Moreover, the ship is not simply shrouded by cover, it is completely invisible, and any wake it would normally have in the seas is nearly imperceptible.

However, when a cloaked ship attacks, or if anyone on board it attacks a target off the ship, the vessel immediately becomes visible, and the cloak cannot be re-engaged on the next naval round.

Greater Cloaking. Level 21, Installed.

As above, except the ship can remain cloaked while attacking. However, if it has a flagbearer or shield eldritch defense, those are disabled while the ship is cloaked.

Tractor Grab

Level 16, Installed.

You can somehow grab a ship or other similar object from a distance, perhaps by launching hooked chains or invoking powerful telekinesis. The ship's engineer can target an inanimate object by making a Perception check (DC 10 at short range, DC 20 at medium, DC 30 at long). If the object you target is smaller than your ship, you can grab it. Your ship and the target cannot move farther apart from each other until you either choose to release the grab (a standard action during tactical combat), or this component become damaged. If you are grabbing a ship, you gain a +10 bonus to Command checks when closing to short range.

Gunnery Components

These components enhance your armaments. Typically only one such enhancement can be applied to an attack at a given time, but a ship can have several and cycle between them at the gunner's direction.

Note that the cost to enchant a single cannon on a Small ship is effectively the same as enchanting hundreds on a grand frigate, but the cannons themselves are the bulk of the cost. The soul of the ship makes it easier to affect all its weapons at once, and means that weapons removed from the vessel quickly lose their enchantment.

Reskinning

You can make a huge variety of flavorful weapons if you are flexible in how you describe a given game mechanic. The Aquatic gunnery trait, for instance, might represent launching torpedoes instead of cannonballs, or it might be a vortex generator that tries to tear ships apart in a whirlpool, but the attack use the same mechanics. Likewise, Flaming weapons might shoot actual burning cannonballs, or conjure a dread stormcloud that rains cinders, or spit tiny fireballs.

Sometimes these descriptions will require a bit of adjudication—cinder rain can ignore obstacles between you and the target, but could be dispersed with weather magic, or impeded by thick, cold fog.

Acidic

Level 8.

Your cannons spray conjured acid, or fire hollow shot filled with acidic alchemicals that sear crew near where they strike. Creatures in or near a component struck by an acid attack take an extra 2d4 damage. These weapons are ineffective against submerged foes.

Aquatic

Level 15.

You can fire down into the water or up out of the water without penalty. This might represent torpedoes, enchanted cannons, or hydroblasts that smash targets with the sea itself. (Normally attacks through the water function at short range without the normal +5 bonus, and are completely ineffective beyond short range.)

Chain Shot

Level 4.

You can load special cannonballs, made of two hemispheres connected by internal chains. When fired they split apart and can easily tear rigging and cripple masts. If an attack with chain shot strikes a sailing ship's propulsion, it causes one extra strike to that component. Because of their poor aerodynamics, however, you ignore the first strike they would deal to any component other than the propulsion.

Freezing

Level 8.

Your attacks coat the target with ice. Strikes that damage crew also create swaths of ice on the deck, usually requiring skill checks to move safely across. Strikes that deal hull integrity damage create ice that slows the vessel (assuming the ship is in the water), reducing its Speed on the next naval round by 2 per strike. Strikes against propulsion coat sails or jam rudders, and so likewise reduce the target's Maneuverability on the next naval round by 2 per strike.

Harpoon

Level 12.

Your weapons somehow connect your ship to the target ship, perhaps by trailing chains or conjuring threads of indestructible force. If the ship you hit is one size category larger than your ship, the same size, or smaller, and you deal at least one strike, you manage to grab that ship. Your two ships cannot move farther apart from each other until you either choose to release the grab (a standard action during tactical combat), your armaments become damaged, or the target ship's engineer manages to remove the harpoons.

While the grab persists, you gain a +10 bonus to Command checks when closing to short range.

Heated

Level 4, Installed.

You can load a couple cannons with shot heated in a portable furnace or infused with elemental fire by an eldritch pedestal. Using this component requires 10% more crewmen, who are responsible for handling the furnace. If an attack with heated shot causes two or more strikes to the hull, you can convert one of those strikes into the burning condition. Fiery projectiles lodge into the wood and smolder, setting fires if they're not dealt with quickly.

If this component is struck, it is destroyed and creates the burning condition inside the ship's hull.

Flaming Shot. Level 10.

Your attacks inflict the burning condition instead of immediate damage. Crew in the struck area immediately take 2d6 fire damage, in addition to whatever damage they might later take from the burning condition. This might be a figurehead that spits fire, cannons that blast burning pitch, or a fiery topsail that sears a sigil into enemy hulls like a sizzling brand. Obviously these weapons are ineffective against submerged foes.

Necromantic
Level 2.

By unleashing spirits or the raw energy of unlife, your attack only harms crew. When using this component, you cannot damage components of ships other than leviathans or living ships. Strikes still deal damage to crew in affected areas. This type of weapon is useful for superior forces seeking to claim ships as prizes.

The same mechanics could apply to psychic-themed attacks.

Shocking
Level 8.

Shocking attacks blast electricity that debilitates living creatures but is less impressive against solid objects. Against living vessels, shocking weapons gain a +2 to their attack roll. Against unliving vessels, determine where the first strike hits, then ignore the damage it would do to the ship or its components. However, any crew in the area struck still take damage. Additional strikes deal damage as normal.

Against any type of vessel, crew that take damage from a shocking strike take an additional 1d6 points of damage. Shocking weapons are excellent for capturing a ship by killing the crew with minimal damage to the vessel.

Unmanned
Special.

This component simply adds the cost of the necessary number of *unseen servant* crew (page 10) to the cost of a ship's weapons. So if a battery normally requires 6 crew, you could increase its cost by 300 gp to have it fire on its own. The ship still needs a captain to choose targets, and a gunner can still guide the attacks.

A ship with unmanned weapons often won't have actual cannons, but will instead mount some manner of magical weaponry, like a fire-spitting figurehead, or a giant eye that fires necrotizing energy beams. Enemy attacks that strike unmanned weapons deal damage to the gunner (if any), but otherwise seldom harm the crew).

WEIRD GUNNERY OPTIONS

Some types of weaponry that show up in fiction don't fit the basic rules.

BLAST

If you want an attack that hits a wide swath but only at close range, such as the breath weapon of a draconic figurehead, select the Point-Blank Weapons trait (page 66).

THE BIG GUN

When fired, this weapon leaves the ship defenseless for a period of time. When the captain orders it to be activated, it takes one round to charge. Then the weapon *must* fire on the ship's next naval round. On the round after the big gun fires, the ship is immobilized, it cannot fire any weapons, and its magical components are deactivated.

Piloting Components

The components enhance the movement options of a vessel.

Agile
Level 1+.

Due perhaps to advanced rigging, the favor of elementals, or an installed wind machine, your ship's maneuverability is not limited by its size. The level of this component is 1 + 1 per size category the ship is larger than Tiny (so level 6 for Gargantuan).

Flight
Airship. Level 15.

The vessel can fly at an altitude of 100 feet or less. Because it does not rely on water for levitation, its speed is not limited by its size.

Windship. Level 17.

As above, but the vessel can fly at any altitude.

Skyship. Level 20.

As above, plus the vessel creates an aura of flight around it. Any friendly passenger or crew gains a fly speed of 30 ft. (6 squares) while on the ship. As long as the creature ends its turn within 30 ft. of the edge of the vessel, when the ship moves the character moves with it, retaining the same relative position. If the character moves beyond this distance, the fly speed lasts until the end of his or her next turn, and thereafter the character *featherfalls* to the ground.

Ghost Ship
Level 13.

Your ship and those aboard it can glide through solid objects like a ghost. Each turn, the engineer chooses whether the ship is incorporeal or manifested. If manifested, it functions normally. If incorporeal, it takes a −5 penalty to its attack rolls, and attacks against it take the same penalty. Additionally, the incorporeal ship ignores catch and crash hazards (see page 24 and page 25).

Landship
Level 12.

Your ship can travel on land as if it were water, and can travel up grades as steep as 30 degrees. It ignores most catch and crash hazards unless they're of immense size. While traveling through land, its speed and maneuverability are reduced by half.

Nautilus
Lesser. Level 10.

Your ship can travel underwater, either by having a sealed hull, a bubble of air that surrounds the deck as it dives, or simply granting waterbreathing to everyone aboard. It can only stay submerged for about five minutes (approximately one naval round), after which it must remain on the surface for at least twice as long.

Some form of propulsion allows it to maneuver underwater—sails are propelled by water currents instead of wind, while other propulsion modes function normally. Since the ship doesn't rely on displacement to float, it no longer has a maximum speed based on its size (page 63).

The main bulk of the vessel cannot go deeper than 30 feet beneath the surface, which means it can still be struck by surface weapons. On some types of ship, certain areas may remain above the surface. The ship usually has no line of sight to things beyond short range, unless the crew has darkvision or blindsense (or a farseer with those powers). Shipboard

weapons fired from underwater or at a target underwater grant no bonus at short range and do not function beyond short range. The ship can ram without penalty, however.

Standard. Level 12.

As above, but the ship can spend up to four hours submerged.

Greater. Level 15.

As above, plus the ship can dive at least 100 feet underwater, (or however deep the campaign needs it to dive) and remain submerged indefinitely.

Seaborn

Level 6.

Some magic grants your ship favorable waves, so its speed is not limited by its size due to hull speed.

Teleportation

Jaunter. Level 10.

Once per naval round, the captain can teleport the ship a short distance. This can grant a +5 bonus to the ship's Maneuverability for the purpose of avoiding obstacles or for the Bearing phase, but only relative to a hostile ship at short range.

In tactical combat, this requires a standard action and can be done once every five minutes. The vessel and everyone aboard teleports 50 ft. (10 squares) to an unoccupied space. It maintains the same heading and speed.

FALLING AND CRASHING

In most settings, a damaged windship component causes the vessel to be unable to gain altitude. A disabled component causes the ship to lose altitude at a rate of 10 feet per round (effectively falling one stage per naval round, but not fast enough to damage the ship). A destroyed component causes the vessel to plunge at normal speed, which is usually enough to destroy the ship entirely from any height greater than 30 feet. Unless ships are at truly magnificent heights, they'll crash before any repairs can be effected.

If flying ships are the norm in a given setting, though, flight need not be added as a component, and likewise cannot be damaged. In a world of cloud cities, crashing isn't appropriate thematically.

Wayfarer. Level 20.

Additionally, once per day, the ship can teleport to any place it has ever previously traveled. This takes a while to charge up, so once activated (requires a naval round), the ship teleports at the end of the next naval round.

Planeshifter. Level 25.

Additionally, once per week the ship can shift to another plane.

Time Machine. Level 31.

Time's arrow roams, delighting in sailing.

—The ocean is cold and lonely. (And I have a coconut.)

Ship Name _____

Level ∫ Size _____

Dimensions _____

Total Cost _____

Senses ∫ Perception _____

Command Rating _____

Hull Integrity _____

Defense _____

Maneuverability _____

Speed _____

Traits

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Components
Damaged ☑
Destroyed ☒

_____ ☐
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_____ ☐
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Armaments
Damaged ☑
Destroyed ☒

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Captain   *Command Check* [ ]
Notes

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Bosun   *Bosun Check* [ ]
Notes

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Engineer   *Engineer Check* [ ]
Notes

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Gunner   *Gunner Check* [ ]
Notes

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Look~Out   *Look~Out Check* [ ]
Notes

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Navigator   *Navigator Check* [ ]
Notes

_____
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_____

Attacker   *Attacker Check* [ ]
Notes

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Crew   *Full* [ ]   *Minimum* [ ]   *Total* [ ]

Allocation

Rigging ⁄ Propulsion

Main Deck

Gunnery

Miscellaneous

Casualties   Wounded [ ]   Dead [ ]

Notes

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APPENDIX A:
ADMIRAL LORD NELSON

Horatio Nelson, 1st Viscount Nelson, 1st Duke of Bronté, KB (29 September 1758–21 October 1805) was a flag officer famous for his service in the Royal Navy, particularly during the Napoleonic Wars. He was noted for his inspirational leadership and superb grasp of strategy and unconventional tactics, which resulted in a number of decisive naval victories. He was wounded several times in combat, losing one arm and the sight in one eye. Of his several victories, the best known and most notable was the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, during which he was shot and killed.

Nelson was born into a moderately prosperous Norfolk family and joined the navy through the influence of his uncle, Maurice Suckling. He rose rapidly through the ranks and served with leading naval commanders of the period before obtaining his own command in 1778. He developed a reputation in the service through his personal valour and firm grasp of tactics but suffered periods of illness and unemployment after the end of the American War of Independence. The outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars allowed Nelson to return to service, where he was particularly active in the Mediterranean. He fought in several minor engagements off Toulon and was important in the capture of Corsica and subsequent diplomatic duties with the Italian states. In 1797, he distinguished himself while in command of *HMS Captain* at the Battle of Cape St Vincent.

Shortly after the battle, Nelson took part in the Battle of Santa Cruz de Tenerife, where his attack was defeated and he was badly wounded, losing his right arm, and was forced to return to England to recuperate. The following year, he won a decisive victory over the French at the Battle of the Nile and remained in the Mediterranean to support the Kingdom of Naples against a French invasion. In 1801, he was dispatched to the Baltic and won another victory, this time over the Danes at the Battle of Copenhagen. He subsequently commanded the blockade of the French and Spanish fleets at Toulon and, after their escape, chased them to the West Indies and back but failed to bring them to battle. After a brief return to England, he took over the Cádiz blockade in 1805. On 21 October 1805, the Franco-Spanish fleet came out of port, and Nelson's fleet engaged them at the Battle of Trafalgar. The battle was Britain's greatest naval victory, but during the action Nelson was fatally wounded by a French sniper. His body was brought back to England where he was accorded a state funeral.

Nelson's death at Trafalgar secured his position as one of Britain's most heroic figures. Numerous monuments, including Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square, London, have been created in his memory, and his legacy remains highly influential.

Assessment

Nelson was regarded as a highly effective leader, and someone who was able to sympathize with the needs of his men. He based his command on love rather than authority, inspiring both his superiors and his subordinates with his considerable courage, commitment, and charisma, dubbed "the Nelson touch." Nelson combined this talent with an adept grasp of strategy and politics, making him a highly successful naval commander. However, Nelson's personality was complex, often characterized by a desire to be noticed, both by his superiors, and the general public. He was easily flattered by praise, and dismayed when he felt he was not given sufficient credit for his actions. Despite his personality, he remained a highly professional leader and was driven all his life by a strong sense of duty.

Nelson's fame reached new heights after his death, and he came to be regarded as one of Britain's greatest military heroes, ranked alongside the Duke of Marlborough and the Duke of Wellington. On the BBC's *100 Greatest Britons* program (2002), Nelson was voted the ninth greatest Briton of all time.

Nelson's influence also continued long after his death, and saw periodic revivals of interest, especially during times of crisis in Britain. A number of monuments and memorials were constructed across the country to honor his memory and achievements, with work beginning on Dublin's monument to Nelson, Nelson's Pillar, in 1808. In Montreal, a statue was started in 1808 and completed in 1809. Others followed around the world, with London's Trafalgar Square being created in his memory in 1835 and the centerpiece, Nelson's Column, finished in 1843.

Appendix B: The Kraken Caper

The shortest possible adventure we could fit into this book. For any RPG system. (Seriously, this adventure includes no stats, other than references to stats elsewhere in this book.)

The Hook

Risur and Danor are at war. Risur wields magic, while Danor has limited magic due to an old curse. But Danor has invented steam ships, and now they're about to launch *In Lucis Excusus* (page 48), a mighty hybrid steam-and-sail grand frigate. Risur has offered an equally mighty bounty to whoever can capture the warship.

The party owns the *Sea Mare* (page 31), a ship perfect for this type of fool-hardy mission.

The Line

The party has contact with a Danoran engineer who's willing to give them info for the right price. Danor is performing a test run of their new warship with a skeleton crew, just outside the harbor of the city of Cherage, then back to dock. The crew will head off to an evening party, leaving the ship barely guarded.

The party could try to board the ship out in open waters, relying on maneuverability to avoid being annihilated by cannons. Alternately, the party could slip in concealed by fog while the crew is at their soiree, kill the guards, and take control of the ship. Since *In Lucis Excusus* is the only steam-powered warship in the harbor, if the party can calm the winds (with a druid in the party, or just some sort of magic item), they can steam away while the other warships float passively in the water.

The Sinker

When the party attacks, a Danoran cook who remained on board hides in a larder for a few hours, then sneaks out and sabotages the engine. With sails alone the warship can't outrun the Danorans, who are assuredly chasing it, and without sufficient crew it stands little chance in a fight in open water. The only land within sight is the Beshela Archipelago, seven cursed islands where only madmen would sail.

In the archipelago the PCs see a beached shipwreck: a pirate sloop that appears to have been crushed by mighty tentacles. They also spot smoke from a bonfire about a mile inland. The party can try to recruit the marooned pirate crew, who'll gladly fight the Danorans for a chance to escape. But the islands are ruled by a sea fey named Beshela, who commands a kraken (page 48) and will not let any vessel leave her waters.

The party can delve to Beshela's sea cave, parley with or defeat her, and trade her life for brief control of her kraken minion. With the Danoran fleet on the horizon, the party and their pirate crew sail into a climactic battle with a kraken at their command.

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Run a blockade. Hunt a sea dragon. Capture a zeppelin. Become a pirate (just not of this book).

You've got a magic sword? That's great. I've got 80 cannons and an iron-plated hull. Good luck stabbing that.