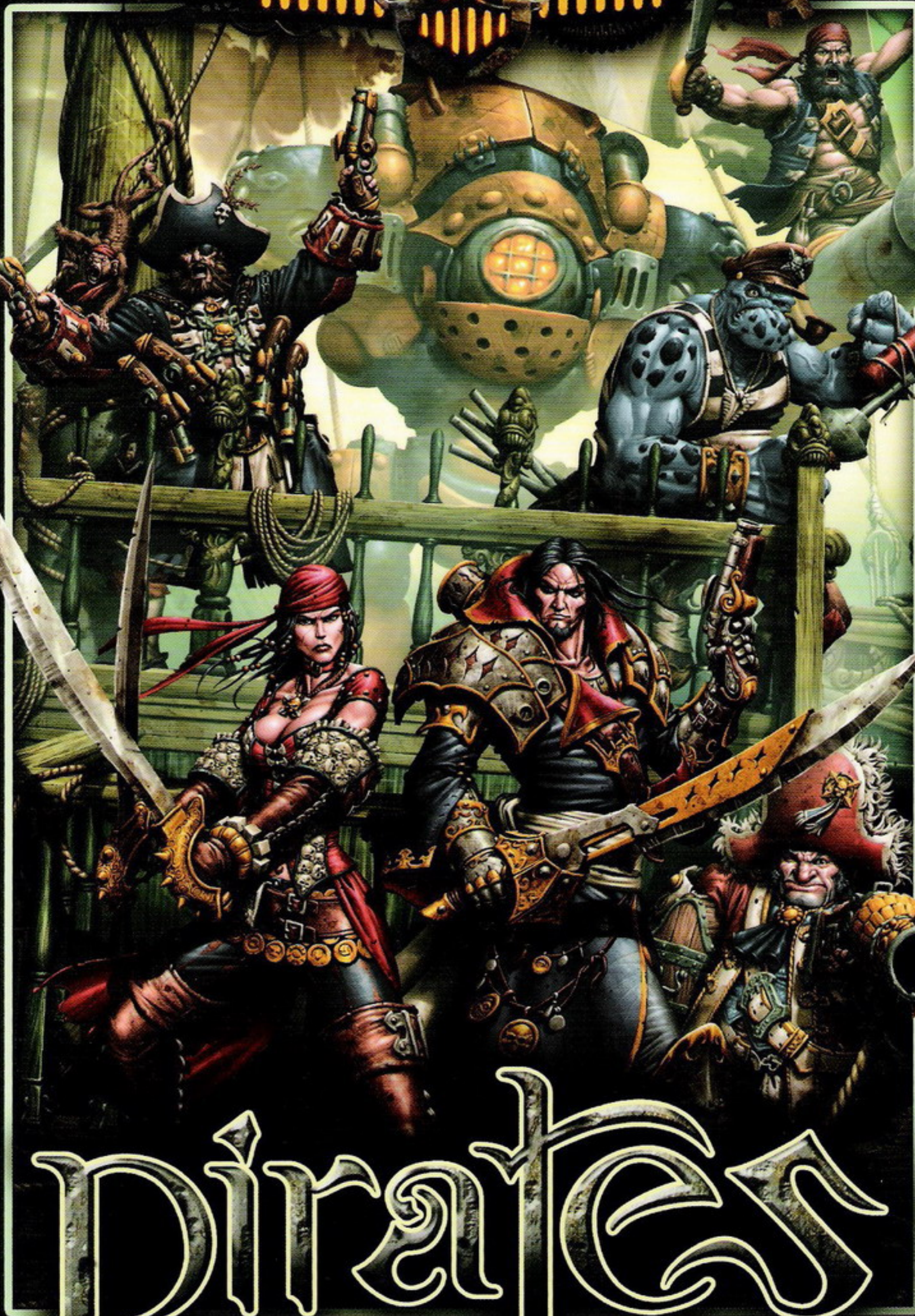


FORCES OF

WARMACHINE



pirates
of the Broken coast

THE BETTER PART OF VALOR

ACT I

Wherein a pirate and a privateer captain learn of an opportunity for profit and revenge

The sleek, predatory vessel *Talion* exchanged cannon fire with its prey before sliding alongside. Grapples arced between the ships, and the two hulls cinched tight with a grinding protest of wood and metal. The battle-ready crew filled the air with yells and pistol fire as men leapt across, cutlasses in hand, to cut down any defenders.

Captain Phinneus Shae strode to the *Talion's* rails to find, with satisfaction, the initial boarding of the Mercarian League vessel *Lasting Promise* well underway. Shae drew his pistol and took a bead on a League gunner crouched behind the railing on the poop deck. A squeeze of the trigger sent the man tumbling and his rifle clattering to the lower deck. Shae holstered his pistol and drew his mechanikal saber Squall.

First Mate Hawk appeared at his side, blades ready, and they shared a look that did not require words. They grabbed ropes and soared across to the deck of the enemy vessel. A shout went up from the *Talion's* crew as the pair waded in. Hawk landed three quick thrusts for every one of Shae's powerful cuts. Shae signaled back to the *Talion*. A crewman operating its crane swung out a dangling Mariner warjack on a creaking cable and dropped it to the deck of the *Lasting Promise*. It landed deftly despite its size, crushing deck boards under its feet. Shae touched its cortex and mentally urged the 'jack into the thickest knot of the defenders. Its anchor swept in an arc and shattered Mercarian League marines like dolls.

The advancing 'jack and warcaster drained the will to fight from the rest of the defenders. Many threw down their arms and immediately surrendered. A few officers made a fighting retreat toward the aft decks, but Shae knew it was over. He and Hawk advanced toward the last holdouts.



After years of capturing Mercarian League vessels, the *Talion* crew had developed a rather involved but quite effective routine for taking what they most needed from their prisoners: information. They invariably started with the captain and rarely had to proceed further. They could not predict what a given captain might know, but usually they could find something useful, such as reports of other League ships carrying lucrative cargo, recent sightings of Cygnaran Navy vessels, or the location of hidden stashes.

This drama required the crew to bring the surrendered captain to Shae and Bosun Grogspar for interrogation, and then Shae left to deal with a fabricated dispute. Grogspar would express his delight at the sudden opportunity to indulge his appetite for torture. When the captain started to sweat at the thought of what Grogspar might do, Quartermaster Walls would barge into the cabin. The quartermaster would try and fail to keep the trollkin in check, and then he would plead with the captive to cooperate for his own good. The routine lacked subtlety, but invariably the browbeaten captain would give up whatever information he thought might keep him alive.

On this particular occasion, while Grogspar and Walls played their parts, Captain Shae stood in the corridor debating with the expedition financier, a peg-legged dwarf named 'Lord' John Rockbottom. "This leaky tub has to be worth *something*."

Rockbottom shook his head. "The closest port where we could sell it is too far. Just seize the cargo and leave 'em. Navy patrol might come through any time." Sea dogs hurried around them looking for anything remotely valuable enough to pry loose, toss in a sack, or drag behind them. Aside from any treasure so acquired, the great reward of piracy lay in the claiming of

PRIVATEER OR PIRATE?

A hazy distinction exists between pirate and privateer in western Immoren. A number of wanted pirates call themselves privateers, and some produce convincingly forged letters of marque. Equally common, authorized privateers often dabble in a little lucrative piracy and try to disguise these misdeeds by selling their stolen booty on the black markets.

The distinction between labels carries significant legal repercussions. A legitimate privateer captain bears a letter of marque, also known as a "reprisal and privateering commission", that authorizes him to conduct acts of aggression against vessels of hostile

foreign powers, including seizure of ships and their cargos. Privateers captured by enemy navies can expect treatment as prisoners of war rather than immediate hanging as pirates. When interacting with authorities of Khador, Ord, or Cygnar, privateers have better odds of survival and greater opportunities to plead for freedom. Such status means nothing in Cryx and the Protectorate of Menoth.

Ownership of a legitimate letter of marque does not guarantee safety, depending on the political climate. Some privateers find themselves cut loose during the transition from one sovereign to another.

THE BETTER PART OF VALOR

small vessels. Whenever possible, the *Talion* crew would capture a ship and take it as a prize while setting the captain and officers adrift in the nearest launch. Shae frowned at the dwarf and prepared a rebuttal.

Grogsparr emerged from the cabin and interrupted by clearing his throat. "Cap'n?"

Shae glanced toward the cabin. "Is he singing already?"

The trollkin packed his pipe philosophically, stuck it back in his mouth, and raised a flint-striker to light its leaves. "He thinks we picked him up for a reason. Ain't got a clue what he's ranting on about. Ye might want to give a listen."

Horrified, Shae and Rockbottom followed Grogsparr and found Mr. Walls waiting with his agitated monkey Stubs perched on his shoulder. Surrounded by the splinters of broken furnishings, slumped the Mercarian League captain. His once fine uniform was crumpled and torn, and his posture conveyed defeat.

Rockbottom's peg leg made a staccato rhythm on the floorboards. "Tell us what you know," he said. The dwarf managed to convey menace despite his ridiculous attire. His enormous sidearm, a weapon ornamented so its bore resembled the open mouth of a scaled monstrosity, doubtless helped.

"Look, I already told the trollkin. I don't know anything about Fort Lamis. We just stopped there for supplies, I swear!" He was clearly a young captain probably with his first command. His wispy beard trembled piteously.

Rockbottom looked at Shae. "Ever heard of Fort Lamis?" Shae silently shook his head.

Rockbottom lifted his weapon and set it against the man's shoulder. "This is 'Fire Breather'. Ignites anything it touches. It'll take your arm clean off and burn the stump to a husk, saving us the trouble of watching you bleed out. Ever left a pig's head roasting too long? The smell is..."

"Stop, stop! I don't know anything. It's a supply fortress, one of many. I have no idea why so many ships and soldiers are there!"

Rockbottom glanced around, found a crumpled chart among the detritus on the floor, and jammed it into the captive captain's hands. "Whereabouts would we find this little fortress?"



Cook Killingsworth, ship's surgeon and cook, served "meat stew" that evening for supper. Over the meal, the *Talion's* officers watched uncomfortably as Lord Rockbottom and the captain argued.

"You want us to pillage a fortress?" Shae had hardly touched his wine, a sign of his mood. "Want to besiege Highgate next?" he asked. His sarcasm was heavy.

The intensity of Rockbottom's words belied his apparent calm. "When we signed our charter, we agreed that one of the things

Favored Pirate Targets

The rise of commercial interests in Cygnar, Ord, and Khador provides many juicy piracy targets.

Berck Imports (controlled by Mercarian League)
spices and rare exotics from Zu, wines, liquors

Mercarian League Shipping
textiles, silver & gold serving ware, canned perishables, and firearms from Clockwork Arms and Crucible Arms

House Mateau Shipping
food delicacies, silk, fine woods, luxuries

Blaustavya Shipping & Rail
furs, coats, expensive machined parts

that bound us was vengeance against the Mercarian League. Have we gotten too comfortable? Have we lost sight of our goals?" He spent some time trying to slice a tenacious piece of gristly meat in his stew.

"What does that have to do with anything?"

"The League does not expend political influence or wealth idly. If this fortress is well guarded, whatever they have must be valuable. Therefore, it should be important to us." He punctuated his words by impaling an indeterminate vegetable with his fork.

"We're in the middle of a job," Shae countered. "We've already jeopardized our deadline. We can't afford another delay or we won't get paid. *You* were the one harping on about our money woes."

"If I might be forgiven for buttin' in, I come down on the side o' caution," Mr. Walls ventured. The one-eyed quartermaster was far more demure in conversation than in boarding actions. His monkey sat on the table directly next to his plate eating a good portion of his meal. Attempts to evict the animal from the captain's table had long ago proven futile. "We be light on crew. Could use a few more hands afore sticking the ones we got in the lion's mouth, so t'speak."

Rockbottom's face flushed red. "Fewer hands mean less dividing the spoils. Look here, I'm not speaking purely from a thirst for revenge. If the League is guarding something that well, we can be damned sure it's a lucrative haul! Could be a bullion run. The League took charge of the Bullion Exchange when Leryn fell to Khador. Might be the treasury of Ord in that fortress."

"Treasury of Ord?" Grogsparr snorted. "What's that, fifteen potatoes and a bucket of fish?"

THE BETTER PART OF VALOR

"Or a payroll shipment," Rockbottom continued, pointedly ignoring the trollkin. "Why not check it out? If the risk looks bad, we'll leave."

Hawk spoke for the first time. "Isn't that the region that Broadsides Bart is roaming? This is just the sort of idiotic maneuver he would try to pull off." Clearly she intended to counter the dwarf, but Rockbottom's eyes gleamed as he looked at Shae. The two warcasters' rivalry often prompted foolish bravado.

Shae took a sizable swallow from his wine and mulled things over before speaking. "It wouldn't hurt to investigate." He avoided Hawk's smoldering glare.



There was no other ship like the *Calamitas*. Captain Bartolo Montador had commissioned it in Berck, Ord's famed port city, and rebuilt it to his exact specifications from the frame of a massive retired naval galleon as the ultimate floating arsenal. Berck's shipwrights had all balked on seeing the plans. Every one insisted that such a monstrosity would never float let alone move under its own power, but Montador had found and bribed the best of them enough to make it work eventually.

Multiple steam engines, each large enough to power a colossal, drove three paddlewheels combined with four masts thick with sails. When given time to build up momentum, the *Calamitas* achieved impressive speeds under full steam and sail. The ship certainly took its time making turns, but Montador considered it an acceptable trade-off for raw firepower.

A first-rate Ordic or Cygnaran sailing ship of the line boasted three gun decks stretched from prow to stern. Khador had largely switched to squat, flat ironhulls but still sailed a few war galleons outfitted with four gun decks—overkill for any regular engagement. Montador designed the *Calamitas* with five gun decks to provide concentrated fire against an enemy ship from waterline to sail. The ship boasted heavier guns toward the prow, two turrets on the main deck, dozens of smaller deck guns on swivels, and a forward cupola of mid-range guns with wide fields of fire. If all this proved insufficient, the ship's concave prow, reinforced by a spiked plow, could cleave through lesser vessels without slowing.

Altogether the *Calamitas* boasted more firepower than any privateer or pirate needed. Its size did have drawbacks however, and they were largely compensated for by its two smaller and more versatile escorts, the steam-brig *Ill Fortune* and the much smaller but nimble schooner *Stiletto*. Unfortunately this day, as the *Calamitas* bore down on its chosen prize, both of those vessels were away on errands elsewhere.

The stout warcaster captain stood near the wheel, spyglass in hand, appraising the situation while consulting with Master Gunner Dougal MacNaile. The ship's pilot Lupo

Tavora manned the wheel and awaited his captain's commands. He occasionally yanked a lever by his left hand to send orders to the engine room or to raise a flag for the forward deck officers to adjust the rigging or sails.

"We've only got one shot. That boat'll veer starboard and we'll never catch it," said the master gunner. "The forward guns are too strong. Need to turn into the wind and catch it with the center turret."

"We'll just scare her a bit, slow 'er down, and come alongside." Montador eyed the distant boat with a squint, a small schooner he recognized as a gemstone courier out of Mercir, and his gambler's mind calculated the odds. "Fire now or we'll lose our chance. Gods be damned! Where is the *Stiletto* when I need her?"

Dougal sighed but dutifully instructed the pilot to turn twenty degrees to starboard. Eschewing levers or flags, Dougal cupped his hands to his mouth and shouted a command. "Fire starboard prow guns in fifteen! Above the waterline!" The forward gunner's mate repeated the command, subtracting the seconds to account for the delay, and again to another mate standing by the hatch above the cannons below the foredeck. "Care to wager?" Dougal asked his captain with a sour expression on his scarred face.

The usually jovial Montador grunted without humor. His face bore the scowl of a man who hated to lose any gamble no matter how trivial. Dougal had spent decades at sea mastering the arts

Bounty: Phinneus Shae



The Mercarian League posts this offer for Phinneus Shae. Phinneus Shae stands accused of multiple acts of piracy against Mercarian League vessels, leading the unlawful mutiny aboard the M.L.S. Exeter, the murder of League officers, and destruction of property. We offer a sum of no less than 250,000 gold crowns for the capture of this scoundrel or no less than 150,000 gold crowns for confirmed proof of his demise.

Ethan Starke

Baron Ethan Starke
Chief Alderman of the Mercarian League

Waldron Gately

Duke Waldron Gately of Southpoint
representing the Cygnaran Royal Assembly

TALION CHAIN OF COMMAND

- Captain Phinneus Shae - owner and commander
 - First Mate Hawk - ship's master & master-at-arms
 - Lord John Rockbottom¹ - expedition financier, paymaster, ship co-owner
 - Bosun Balasar Grogsparr - sailing master, second mate, ship repairs
 - Master Gunner Rafaldo 'One-ear' Scoriani - cannon master, third mate
 - Quartermaster Walls - senior quartermaster
 - Chief Engineer Quinn Corcorian - maintains steam engines, repairs 'jacks
 - Quartermaster Mates Higgins and Larvado - assistants to the quartermaster
 - Arm's Mate Milo Tolbert - assistant to the master-at-arms
 - Bosun's Mate Argan Grath - assistant to the bosun
 - Engineer's Mate Evlin Corcorian - assistant to the chief engineer
 - Creb 'Doc' Killingsworth - ship surgeon, chief cook, steward
 - Gunner's Mate Wain - assistant to the master gunner
- ¹ Rockbottom's status is unofficial, but the crew defer to his commands when they do not contradict First Mate Hawk

of precisely packing powder charges and calculating accurate cannon volleys. His predictions rarely went wrong.

The powerful blast of two of the large forward guns blew black smoke over the prow. Montador raised his spyglass and counted down the seconds until impact. Both shots hit true and Montador saw a dramatic explosion of wooden planks. Within a few moments the vessel listed, floundered, and sunk beneath the waves with all hands and cargo.

"By Thamar's wicked teats!" Montador barely stopped himself from hurling the expensive spyglass onto the deck. He saw Dougal smirking sardonically and growled, "Not a word from you!"

THE BETTER PART OF VALOR

An hour after this debacle, the crow's nest spotted the *Ill Fortune* and *Stiletto*. The crew erupted into a fit of activity swabbing the decks, polishing the brass, and making the ship as presentable as possible. No one questioned this familiar tradition; the ship always looked its best when the mistress of the *Ill Fortune* came aboard, or swabs would feel the bosun's lash.



Montador waited at the quarterdeck near his quarters as the *Ill Fortune's* launch came alongside and its passengers boarded. An uncomfortable formality always prevailed when the woman known as Fiona the Black stepped aboard the larger vessel. The whole crew went quiet and adopted their best behavior. Given they were a rowdy assortment of pressed sailors and cast-off misfits, this primarily meant less spitting at the deck boards and fewer wolf-whistles.

Fiona soaked in the attention as an expected homage. Her warcaster armor, cleverly engineered to protect every inch of her body without restricting her graceful movements, only accentuated her shapely form as she stepped on deck. Her cloak, black with sumptuous purple accents, caught the wind and swept out behind her. Ternion Brands, the three downward barbed arrows symbolizing the Dark Goddess Thamar, embellished her attire. Fiona had pulled her red hair back in a lengthy braid, which loaned an austere cast to her otherwise appealing features. One hand held the haft of her mechanical weapon Viper like a walking stick. Its sharpened triple tines sometimes twitched spasmodically as if they were alive and hungry to bite flesh.

Fiona's presence dominated the deck, and the *Calamitas* seemed like her ship for that moment. Her retinue went almost unnoticed but included the *Ill Fortune's* thin-as-a-rake captain Calvar Santoni and a particularly hulking Khadoran bosun named Dragash Garanovich. Recognized throughout Montador's small fleet as Fiona's bodyguard, he glowered murderously at crewmen on either side of their walkway, daring them to act out of line.

Montador gave her a roguish smile and ran his fingers through his beard as she approached, not bothering to hide his admiring gaze as it traveled from her boots to her face. "Fiona, a pleasure as always. What news from shore?"

She smirked more than smiled. Glancing about her with typical conspiratorial suspicion, Fiona nodded to Montador's cabin door. "Inside."

The entourage moved to follow but Montador interposed. He gave them an icy stare and put his mechanical hand against Dragash's chest. The Khadoran growled but looked down at the mouth of the telescoping cannon set within the metal palm and took a step back. Montador's voice remained polite and even warm. "You lads wait here."

THE BETTER PART OF VALOR

He closed the door behind them and turned to face the woman. She asked him, "Afraid they'll murder you in your own cabin?"

Montador chuckled and spread his hands, one living and one mechanikal. "Any time I get alone with ye is too precious to let chaperones ruin it. Tell me what happened."

"Nothing untoward." Her eyes flashed mischievously. "My rumor-mongers have been busy. Something special is happening at the Lamis supply fortress just north of here. Something the Mercarian League and the Cygnaran Navy don't want anyone to know about."

He frowned. "But we're going south."

She answered with a true smile. "Not for long. Trust me, we want in on this."

He ran his fingers through his beard again. "I'd just as soon not tangle with the Cygnaran Navy. Them boys at Highgate are watching fer me. They think I was involved in sinking the *Island Protector*." He said the last in a vaguely offended tone despite the fact that he had indeed sunk that patrolling vessel two months earlier.

"Very well." She turned and made for the door but stopped with her fingers on the handle. "My source says Captain Phinneus Shae learned of this target several days ago. It will be a difficult temptation for him to resist, I think."

The large privateer raised an eyebrow. "Really?" He laughed and shook his head. "That man be a born scapegoat. Fine, let's see if we can find the *Talion*."



With its lanterns doused, the crew scolded to keep to whispers, and relying solely on the wind, the *Talion* ran nearly invisible at night, particularly close to shore. Their cautious approach proved fortuitous as they drifted closer. "Look at 'em."

Grogspar mumbled in what passed for a trollkin whisper. "That ain't good."

Rockbottom borrowed the bosun's spyglass and peered out. The overcast sky and darkness made it difficult to discern details. Fortunately, the Cygnaran Navy ships had their lanterns lit, likely to avoid collisions. He counted no fewer than five vessels anchored near the opening to the inlet, two of them most certainly second-class fighting ships. The others looked small, dangerous, and predatory. They did not sit quite as low on the water as the *Talion*, but they boasted similar firepower and the capacity to carry large crews. "Those two on the far right might not be navy ships, hard to tell. Could be League brigs." It was as much optimism as the dwarf could manage. Beyond the ships the sheer face of the cliffs extended into the sky on either side of the narrow opening, suggesting that they would find no landward approach.

Grogspar glared at the Rhulic financier and bit harder on the stem of his unlit pipe. He turned to a sailor standing nearby. "Go wake the cap'n."



The swab sent back was a relatively new recruit named Finly, but the crew called him Frogfoot for his limp. As he approached the captain's cabin, one of his peers cleared his throat loudly to catch Finly's attention. He saw the man shaking his head and making several emphatic but incomprehensible gestures. Finly decided to ignore them. "I got my orders."

Before he could knock on the door it suddenly opened. Finly snapped to attention but then lost all composure when Captain Hawk stepped out of the cabin adjusting her blouse. His eyes opened wide enough to roll out of his head. All the color in the first mate's face drained away, and her eyes narrowed with sudden rage. Finly began to stammer as he saw her reach for her waist, but her groping hand found only air. "Um...um..." Grogspar asked for the cap'n, sir!"

She leveled a finger at his nose. "If you speak of this or show me when I come back out, I'll gut you." She returned to the cabin, and Finly had a sudden vision of her paired cutlasses. Praying to every divinity he could remember, Frogfoot fled as quickly as his limp allowed.



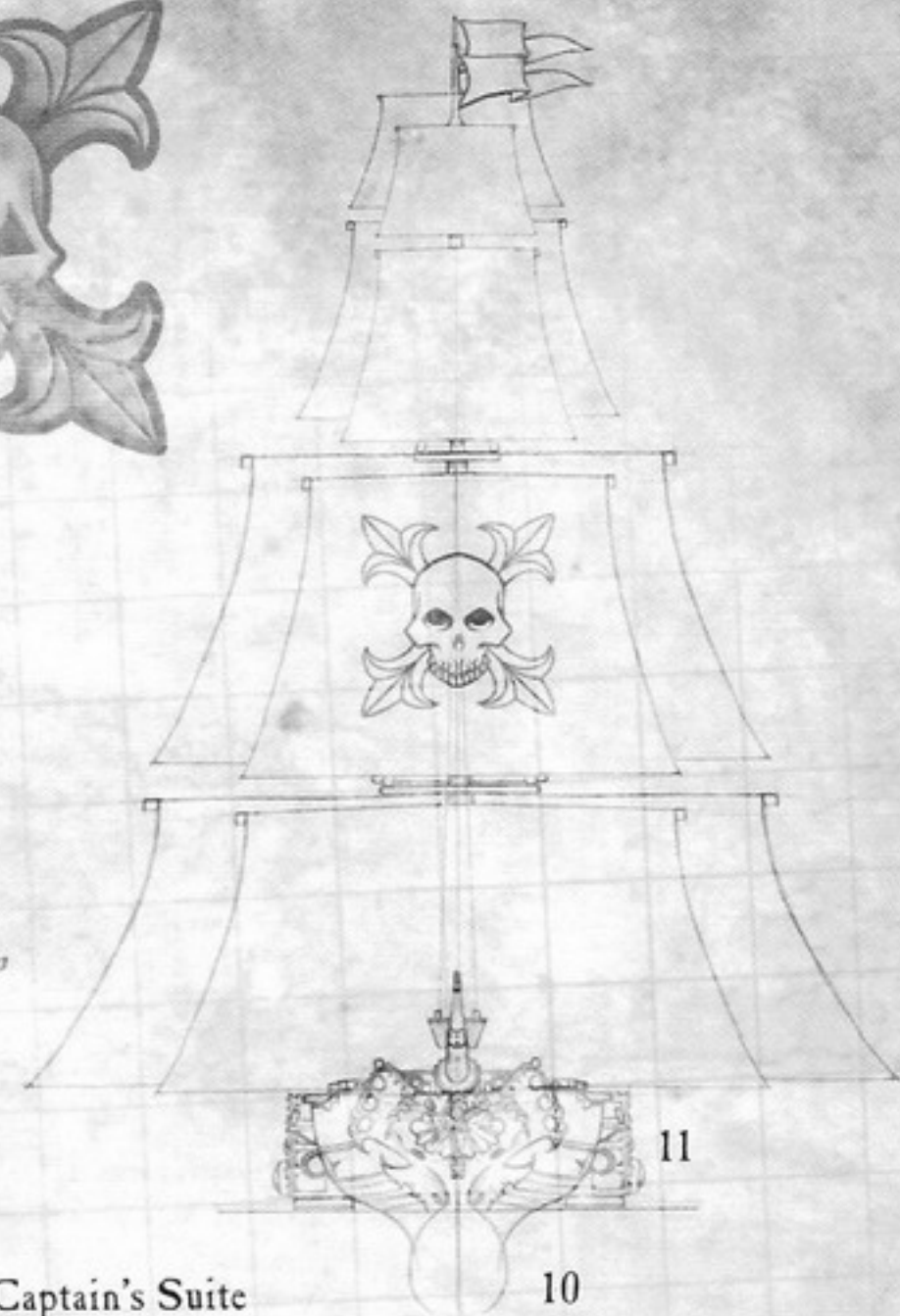
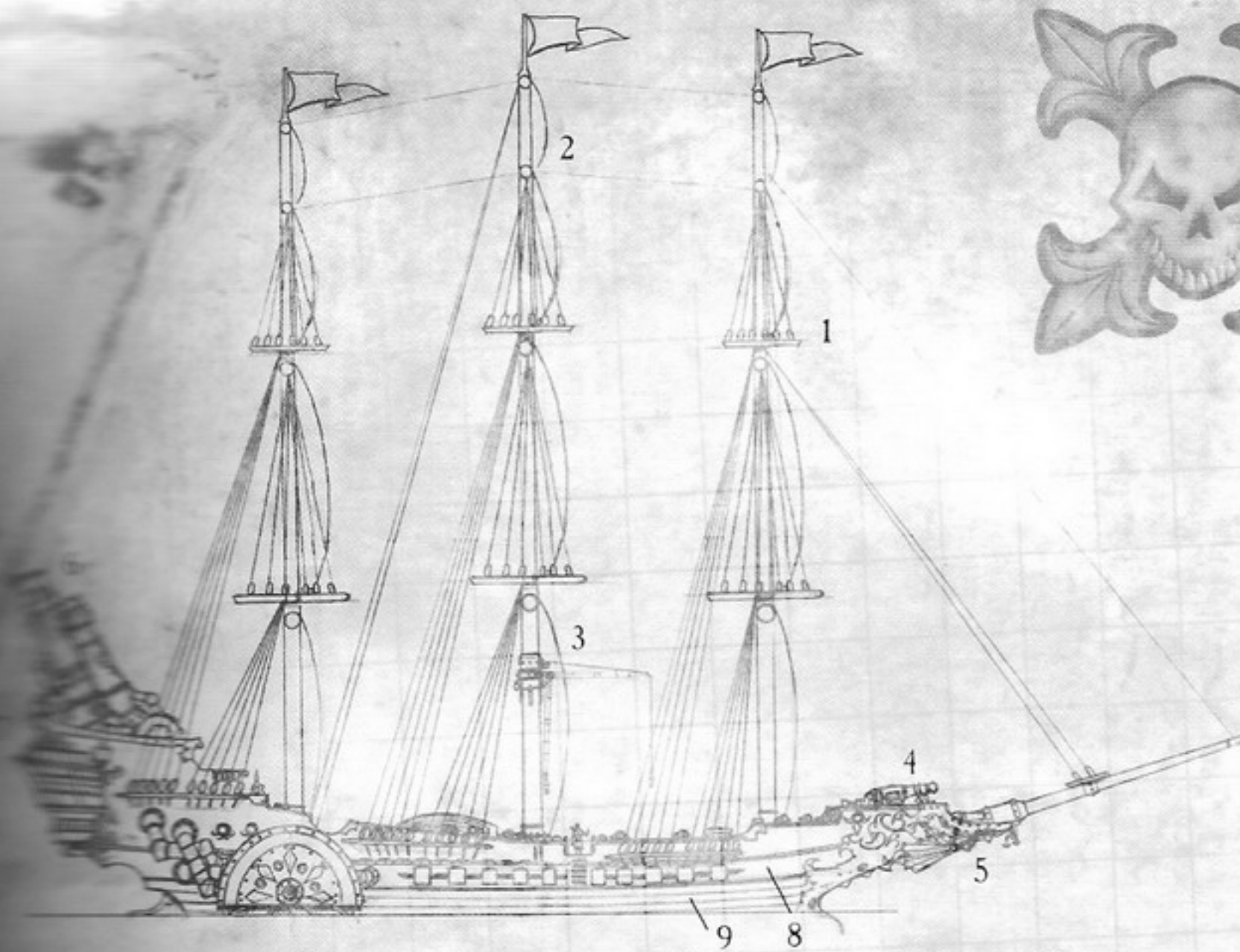
Captain Shae inspected the situation, frowned, and reluctantly gave the order to turn about and put some distance between the *Talion* and the cove before dawn revealed them. He mumbled something about wanting to consider his "tactical options." Both Hawk and Walls looked smug but knew better than to rub it in. Shae did not order them to resume their previous circumspect course around the Mercarian Hook and on to Clocker's Cove, however. Rockbottom and Shae disappeared into the captain's cabin to deliberate, and Hawk paced the deck disciplining any sea dogs she spotted loafing around. The severity and creativity of her punishments impressed even Grogspar.

A sudden shout came from the crow's nest, "Sails approaching! hoy! Dead to port, sails approaching!"

Shae and Rockbottom rushed out as sailors moved quickly to prepare the ship for maneuvers. Not wanting to better their position with a plume of smoke, they waited to start the engines. Shae's question, "Navy?" passed up to the nest.

"Skull on crossed guns." Came the cheerful reply after long minutes. "It's the *Calamitas*!"

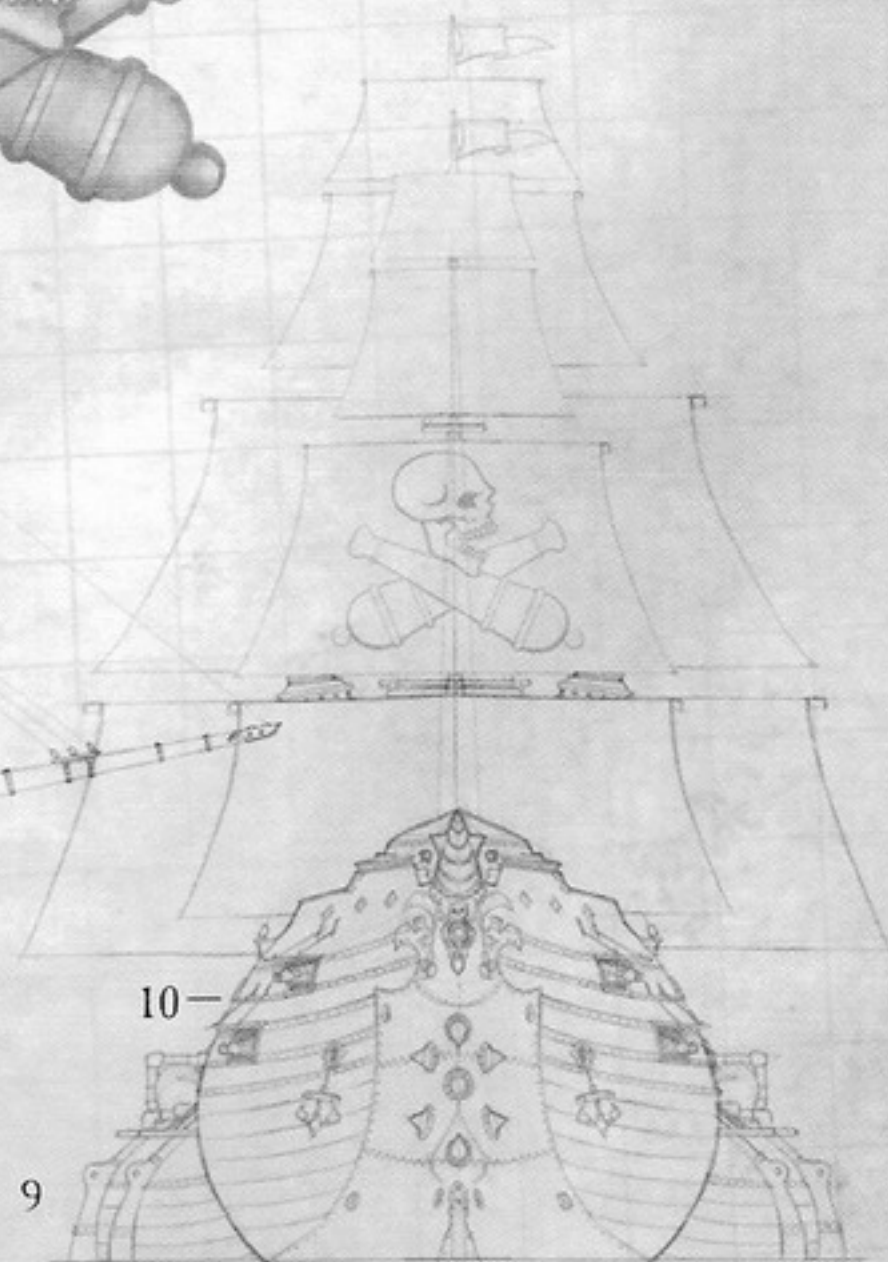
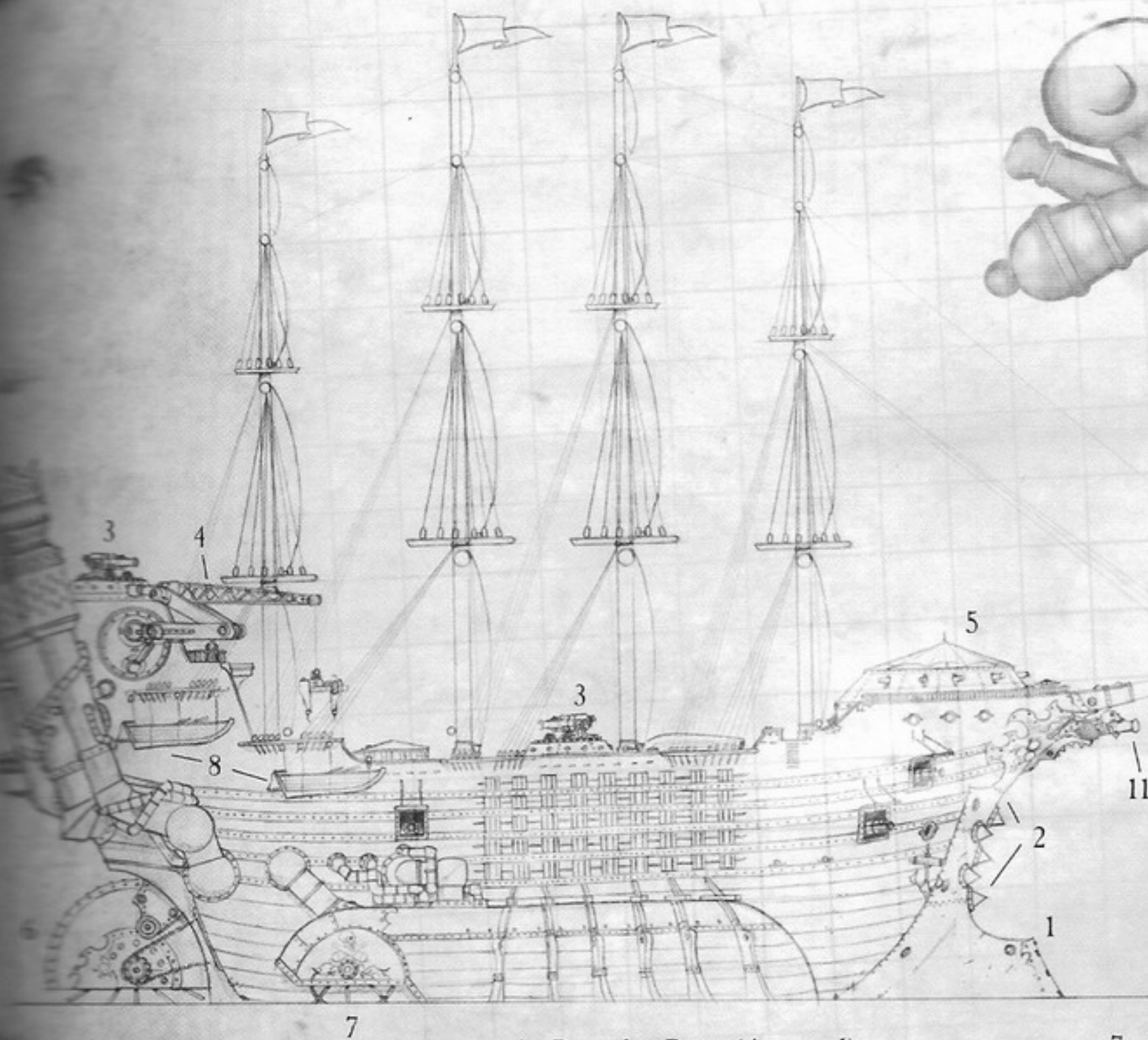
Hawk and Shae shared a look. "You should talk to him," Hawk suggested in a voice low enough no one else would hear. "That could work to our advantage."



THE TALION

- 1 - Crow's Nest
- 2 - Mainmast
- 3 - 'Jack Crane
- 4 - The Commodore
- 5 - "Lady of Retribution"
- 6 - Angled Stacks

- 7 - Captain's Suite
- 8 - Main Gun Deck
- 9 - Hold & Crew Quarters
- 10 - Shallow Draft
- 11 - Armored Sidewheel Paddle Housing



THE CALAMITAS

- 1 - Ramming Prow (Armored)
- 2 - 5 Gun Decks
- 3 - Rotating Turrets
- 4 - Powered Crane
- 5 - Gun Cupola
- 6 - Primary Paddle Wheel

- 7 - Secondary Paddle Wheel (Starboard & Port)
- 8 - Launches
- 9 - Pontoons
- 10 - Heavy Prow Cannons
- 11 - "Death's Shout"

THE BETTER PART OF VALOR

Shae scowled. "He might just be here to claim the bounty on my head."

"He's had opportunities for that before. Just ensure he's more motivated to keep you alive."

He made a dismissive gesture. "We don't need him."

"Don't be an ass. The firepower he brings might be just what we need. If your pride is worth killing yourself over, maybe I'm on the wrong ship." Seeing her grim expression and the way she folded her arms stopped his retort.



Soon the vessels drew close enough for shouted salutations. The *Calamitas* loomed over the *Talion* as if prepared to swallow the smaller vessel. The *Ill Fortune*, closer to the *Talion's* scale, approached on their port side while the *Stiletto* sailed behind. The crews endured considerable posturing as each captain offered the others hospitality that none of them seemed willing to accept. Shae eventually proved the most stubborn.

For added spite, Shae had turned the imposing Commodore royal-weight cannon toward the opening in the rails, which made its yawning mouth the first thing the visitors saw as they came aboard. The skeleton of the man who had given the cannon its name, attired in a moldy, scorched, and torn Mercarian League uniform, dangled below the bore. No one manned the cannon, so it posed no threat, but a number of the guests did flinch at the sight to the petty amusement of both Shae and Grogsparr.

Fiona the Black stepped aboard first. She appeared quite comfortable and ran her hands along a rail admiring the carved skulls decorating its surface. She approached Shae with a warm smile and touched his arm in a familiar fashion. "Captain Phinneus Shae. Always a pleasure to see you. It has been too long." She pointedly ignored Hawk silently glaring from a few feet away. They ignored the *Ill Fortune's* actual captain Calvar Santoni and the commander of the *Stiletto* Master Blake Donovan, a quietly competent but unremarkable officer.

Bartolo 'Broadsides Bart' Montador and his entourage boarded last. "Here comes the admiral," Shae noted sarcastically as they watched the oversized launch, actually a single-masted boat nearly forty feet long adorned with polished brass flying Montador's colors, approach. The bearded Tordoran stepped on the deck, put his hands on his hips, and looked around as if his surroundings greatly displeased him.

Megan 'Dirty Meg' Melroane immediately upstaged him. She boarded after Bart's Chief Mate, 'Ol' Stony' Bowan and Master Gunner MacNaile, but elbowed her way in front. "Well, tits on a monkey! Haven't seen you lot in a long while." She hooked a thumb toward Montador. "He tried to keep me from tagging along, but I'd have none of it." As usual grease and grime

covered her skin and clothes in contrast to the others who had taken pains to dress.

The *Talion* officers enthusiastically greeted Meg first, which made Montador bristle. Meg was a popular visitor to Bottomton, the island town and smuggler's refuge which served as the second home for the *Talion* crew, and her mechanical skills had proven invaluable, particularly after notably difficult scraps had nearly wrecked most of Shae's 'jacks.

Montador's deep voice cut them short. "Thamar's teeth, people. Can we get to the business at hand?"

The lot of them moved to Shae's dining room, ignoring Montador's quips about it being "a tiny closet". Montador spoke first after they were seated. "We all know why we're here, so let's cut through the usual nonsense. We all want the same prize. My hunch says there's enough for everyone."

Shae glared at Montador. "We got here first."

"And turned right back around again," Montador countered. He raised a hand to forestall an angry rebuttal. "Not that I blame ye, seeing what ye faced. That's a tough line."

"We had a plan." Rockbottom protested feebly.

"A plan aided by adding three vessels, including one with enough cannons to break the walls of Caspia," Montador suggested. "Consider how many battle-ready lads we have altogether. I can't imagine you can hold many 'jacks in this little boat."

Shae cleared his throat. "Three Mariners, a Freebooter, and one Buccaneer. Two, if we could get the other one running." He gave Dirty Meg a wink.

"Not bad," Montador allowed in a condescending tone. "Considering what we're facing, we're better off working together. Fiona and I could have made for the line and broken our way through, but we decided to include ye, given our old friendships."

Hawk spoke with a voice thick with derision. "You know damned well that cove is too shallow for any of your ships to land except the *Stiletto*. You'd have to offload men in rowboats, which the fortress would blast out of the water before you reached the pier. You need the *Talion*."

The blustering warcaster chuckled and wagged a finger at her with unfeigned admiration. "Well said, well said. We need ye for the landing, and ye need us to break through the line."

Rockbottom squinted at their visitor. "I'm surprised you'd tarnish your sterling reputation tangling with the Cygnaran Navy. You're talking about shooting up five of their ships."

"Are we pirates or simpering dandies?" Montador laughed. "Large profits require spilling blood. This is the life we lead."

"You speak rather freely of being a pirate for a man who hides behind a letter of marque." This remark finally got under the larger man's skin, and he bristled at Shae.

Letter of Marque

In pursuance with my sovereign power as bearer of the Dragon Sword and Crown of Ord on this the first day of the week honoring Donard in the month of Cinten, the year five hundred ninety and two, I commission the private galleon Calamitas, mounting ninety carriage guns, hereby authorizing Captain Bartolo Montador and his officers to seize any vessel, public or private, found within the waters of Ord or elsewhere on the high seas which is deemed a likely or imminent threat to the growing wealth and prosperity of this kingdom. Captain Montador is authorized to seize all vessels and effects, to whomsoever belonging, liable thereto according to the laws of Ord, and to bring the same within some port of

Ord so that due proceedings may be had thereon. This commission to continue in force so long as it pleases the King of Ord.

Given under my hand and the seal of Ord in the city of five fingers

Baird Cathor II

King Baird Cathor II,
Sovereign of Ord



Fiona had silently watched but chose this moment to speak. "Enough. We know we must cooperate. Let's decide the shares assigned to the plan."

The boggling came down to Rockbottom and Montador behaving like fishmongers. The others remained silent and stared across the length of table at one another. Shae noticed Fiona's gaze lingering upon him with an inviting smile, and he shifted uncomfortably. At her side, Captain Santoni's face turned bright red as he attempted to conceal his jealous outrage. Shae pretended interest in Rockbottom's wheedling and avoided catching Hawk's eye.

Working out the plan of attack proved faster and simpler, given their limited options. They would use the *Stiletto* and *Ill Fortune* as distraction to pull as many ships as possible from the cove. Once they committed, the *Calamitas* and *Talion* would make for the cove. The heavy ship would break through or engage as necessary. The smaller vessel, loaded with as many sea dogs and weapons as it could hold, would make for a landing and slip through the fortress defenders. They would seize whatever they could and escape. Communications between the ships relied on signals passably familiar to each of them from coordinated actions in the past.

As they left, Fiona made an unexpected announcement. "I'll stay on the *Talion*." She added, "You'll want me here. A little added support during the landing could make all the difference." She and Captain Montador shared a look. The burly privateer nodded almost imperceptibly.

ACT II

Wherein an outpost receives uninvited guests

"This is why wasting time tongue-waggin' on plans is stupid," Grogspar remarked standing next to Hawk, Fiona, and Shae. He peered out at the horizon with his arms folded across his ample stomach. Even without spyglasses, they could see the largest navy vessels and one of the smaller ships had set sail to the west, away from the cove.

"Think the *Ill Fortune* could have gotten there ahead of schedule?" Shae asked.

"Not a chance, not with this wind." Grogspar opined, and the two women agreed.

It was still early dawn. They had made their approach keeping as close to the sheer cliffs of Cygnar's imposing Wyrmwall Mountains as possible. At this angle, the cliffs loomed like a wall of towering stone fangs and made it obvious how they had gotten their name. The dawn's light spread shadows from the cliffs out onto the water large enough to hide even the bulk of the *Calamitas*. The other two ships had taken a wider course to approach from a different angle.

"Where in blazes are they going?" Shae's tone was suspicious.

"What does it matter? This is our chance!" Fiona's voice carried a throaty undertone suggesting she derived a disturbing degree of pleasure from violence.

IRON KINGDOMS PIRATE GLOSSARY

Balelight - *n. or adj.* Any greenish light, considered to be associated with ghost ships, an ill omen.

Bilge - *n.* Lowest part of a ship within the hull; also term for water collecting there.

Broadside - *n. or adj. or adv.* Lengthiest portion of a ship; also refers to the simultaneous firing of all of a ship's cannons on one side.

Crow's nest - *n.* Small platform, sometimes enclosed, near the top of a mast, used by a lookout.

Deckjack - *n. informal.* Term for any steamjack capable of maneuvering on a ship's deck at sea without endangering itself or others.

Draft - *n.* The depth of a vessel's keel below the water line, especially when loaded; the minimum water depth necessary to float a ship.

Fathom - *n.* Unit of length equal to six feet, used in the measurement of marine depths.

Full sail, full stoke - *int.* Command given on ships with both sails and steam engines to gain maximum speed and power from both wind and coal. Commonly used only during ship-to-ship battle as this status is inefficient for long-range travel.

Grog - *n.* Alcoholic drink comprised of rum diluted with water.

Hardtack - *n.* A hard biscuit or bread made from flour and water baked into a rock to prevent spoilage. Needs to be broken and soaked in water before eating.

Dirge flag - *n.* Flags of various designs, generally fearsome, used by pirates or privateers to encourage a ship to surrender rather than fight.

Keel - *n.* The underside of a ship, often covered by barnacles after extended sailing, which slows the vessel.

Keelhaul - *v.* To punish someone by dragging them under a ship, across the keel, and therefore across the barnacles gathered there. Often fatal.

Lubber - *n.* Short for "landlubber", a person unfamiliar with the sea or seamanship.

Lee - *n. or adj.* The side away from the direction from which the wind blows.

No prey, no pay - *phrs.* Common pirate and privateer policy whereby the crew receives no regular wages but rather shares of any loot seized.

Port - *n. or adj.* Left side of the ship when facing the prow; sometimes also called "larboard".

Rigging - *n.* System of ropes, chains, and tackle used to support and control the masts, sails, and yards of a sailing vessel.

Rope's end - *phrs.* Another term for flogging, used as a disciplinary measure often enforced by the bosun.

Rutters - *n.* Detailed navigation instructions listing everything known about a place or sailing route.

Scurvy - *n.* Disease caused by a dietary deficiency, prevented by consumption of limes, lemons, or similar fruit. Prompts sluggishness and can lead to loss of teeth and open sores.

Scuttle - *v.* To sink a vessel by means of a hole in the ship's hull.

Sea legs - *n.* The ability to adjust one's balance to the motion of a ship, particularly in rough seas.

Spin at point - *phrs.* Maneuver utilized by steam ships in which paddlewheels on either side of the ship spin in opposite directions, allowing for faster turns or turning when dead in the water.

Starboard - *n. or adj.* Right side of the ship when facing the prow.

Steamo - *n. informal.* Anyone who works on steam engines.

Strike colors - *v.* To lower a ship's flag as a signal of surrender.

Swab - *v. or n.* To clean the decks of a ship; disrespectful term for a junior seaman.

THE BETTER PART OF VALOR

They heard a rumbling so powerful they could feel it as a tangible pressure. The gigantic pistons driving the *Calamitas'* paddlewheels thumped, audible even from this distance, and great plumes of smoke rose from tremendous stacks as the ship came to full steam. Its rear paddlewheel dug into the ocean and the ship itself visibly rose up on the wide pontoons attached to the lower hull. These pontoons enabled the *Calamitas* to achieve good speed by lifting the ship higher in the water than otherwise possible for its tonnage.

The *Talion* quickly unfurled its own sails and cranked its paddlewheels to life. Captain Shae seemed the only one suspicious of the way the navy ships had sailed away. "Seems a bit lucky," he noted to Grogspar.

Fiona interjected. "Thamar is a lucky goddess, and I have her favor." She grinned smugly, clearly enjoying his distaste for the topic.

"Thamar can keep her luck. I hear it comes at a steep price."



As the *Talion* moved toward the two remaining Cygnaran vessels, the officers spotted the *Ill Fortune* and *Stiletto* approaching according to their original plan. The vessels guarding the entrance to the cove proudly flew two flags. One represented the Cygnaran fleet stationed at Highgate, and the other bore the triple anchors and waves of the Third Army. One ship, a mid-sized two-masted steam brig with a stout hull and heavily stacked gun decks, proved slow to realize its peril. Its sails unfurled and its wheels cranked into motion to line up a broadside just as the *Calamitas* and the accelerating *Talion* moved out of the cliff's shadows to engage. Its companion vessel looked like a small and nimble sloop-of-war that carried too few cannons to pose much of a threat.

Captain Montador grinned with hungry enthusiasm as he watched the naval ship trying to catch its wind and bellowed orders to his crew. He felt the thrum of the wind above him and the vibration of his ship's engines through the soles of his boots. He had craned four mariners with loaded cannons onto the upper deck and stationed them at strategic points along the port side. Montador reached out with his mind and directed their awareness to the smaller vessel and prepared to direct their fire with his will. Meanwhile Dougal MacNaile sent the order to ready the ship's main guns for a broadside. The smaller ship worried Montador. He could not afford to have it escape and take word to the Cygnaran authorities.

The *Calamitas* plunged through the towering waves like a juggernaut, and Montador felt the battle-lust fill his veins. For a moment, he considered risking everything to ram the naval vessel. Nothing satisfied him more than the explosion of shattered timber under the prow of his ship. Ultimately he judged the angle of approach wrong. "Hard to starboard! Prepare to fire!" He gestured to his officers with his weighty

cutlass Red Tide, and they conveyed the required instructions to the decks below.

The navy ship managed to align itself, and its cannons fired with flashes of orange and red. The sound of their small thunder quickly reached the ears of those aboard the *Calamitas*. Sea dogs closest to the railing took cover as several shots splintered through the rails and others impacted below with the crunch of timber. Screams erupted on deck from men lacerated by splintered debris. Despite a few casualties most of the hastily fired volley had no effect. The weight of their guns could not penetrate the stout hull.

Montador laughed, raised his sword, and roared the command, "Fire!" A few seconds thereafter he felt in his bones a sound like the gods tearing off the roof of the sky to bellow into the world. A thrum of concussive power shook the hull and the air split with a deafening roar. The port side of the ship lifted with the broadside's force, and the ship swayed to starboard even against the buoyancy of the pontoons.

The naval vessel literally disintegrated as four thousand pounds of iron tore through its sails, masts, decks, and hull, obliterating everything. Its outline vanished in erupting geysers of spraying water, splintered wood, and collapsing sails that blazed with brief flickers of fire before the waves consumed them. Not even enough of the vessel remained to sink. There was just an unrecognizable assortment of blood-frothed flotsam dispersing across the water.

Montador rushed to the rails and scanned for the second vessel, which as expected had veered off to run perpendicular to the wind. Knowing it would take too long to align for another volley, Montador urged the Mariners standing at the prow to fire. The four cannons discharged almost in unison. It was a difficult shot at the outer edge of their effective range, but he poured energy into the effort to guide the cannonballs by sheer force of will. Two plumes erupted wide to the right, but one slammed into the deck and the last hit true, shattering the small ship's mainmast. This bought time for a turret to swing round and deliver the killing shot, letting the *Meredius* swallow the small ship at last.



A great shout went up aboard the *Talion* as the *Calamitas* obliterated both Cygnaran vessels. Many of the men currently on deck had come from Montador's fleet and had mixed uncomfortably with the ship's regular crew. Two fights had already erupted, prompting Hawk and Grogspar to enforce discipline. The outsiders had been told to stay out of the way and to stand armed and ready for landing, but the density of unwashed sailors on the *Talion* put everyone on edge.

Cutting sleekly through the morbid debris of a once proud Cygnaran Navy vessel, the *Talion* sailed through the wide

THE BETTER PART OF VALOR

opening of the cove and steered toward the fortress set back from the small stretch of sandy beach opposite. The water in the center of the cove seemed reasonably deep, but it quickly flattened to shallows near a short jetty extended to receive smaller landing vessels.

The fortress itself, stout but not particularly large, consisted primarily of a squat stone keep and two small fortified outbuildings connected by walkways. Soldiers rushed about on the pier and upper battlements reacting to the sound of the *Calamitas'* broadside. Explosions from the fortress proved it had its own cannons, and shots plunged into the water near the approaching vessel. Shae's Mariners stood topside with cannons primed, as did crews manning the forward deck guns. "Fire on the upper battlements!" Shae ordered. Sprays of rock and debris from exploding crenellations did not do much damage but kept the fortress gun crews distracted. The Commodore scored the best shot that washed an entire section of the upper battlements in flaming oil and silenced three cannons as their crews lost heart and fled below.

Rifle fire pinged on the decks and whizzed into the nearby waters. Grunts of pain preceded sea dogs falling to the deck. Shae's own riflemen in the nests on the masts returned fire although the swaying of the vessel challenged their accuracy. As expected, once blood began to flow, Shae spotted 'Doc' Killingsworth up and about. The large man in his dirty apron and battered hat checked for injuries and put his knives to use digging bullets out of the wounded before the injuries could fester. He often had to wrestle and pin down his unwilling patients.

Shae did his part to interfere with the enemy by summoning a shifting phantasm of ghostly light and fog to play over the decks. The position of the ship itself became difficult to discern as shimmering shapes leapt across the nearby waves and presented solid-seeming mirrors of the *Talion* while masking its true form behind hazy mirages. This bought time to slide neatly alongside the extended pier. Soldiers hunkered down behind improvised barricades of supply crates and sacks of vegetables fired at the approaching pirates. Anchors plunged into the water, and sea dogs leapt to the quay to tie the ship close for the gangplanks. One of Shae's Buccaneer 'jacks lashed out with its gaff to haul the ship against the wood. Bullets ricocheted off its metal frame, but they did not slow it from cinching a rope to help secure the vessel. Sea dogs tossed planks across the gap, rushed down, and fired pistols to clear the way.

Shae drew his blade and pistol. He knew without looking that Hawk stood just behind him. He could see Mr. Walls at the forefront of his own men shouting angrily at the gaggle of disordered crew borrowed from the *Ill Fortune* who had gone ahead without orders. Shae had intended to send several 'jacks forward to clear the way, but the pier had clogged with men making a bloody advance. He caught up with Fiona just behind the initial wave of attackers. "This wasn't what I told you to do!"

She looked back with mock surprise. "Captain Shae, everything is in order. We've taken the pier. The fortress will fall just as quickly."

He growled. "My way would have saved a few lives, but you don't care about that."

She laughed, clearly amused by Shae's assessment. She waved a hand in the direction of the enemy and he felt a ripple of strange power. On the opposite end of the pier a Cygnaran Navy marine suddenly tensed and turned to swing his broad-bladed sword straight into the neck of his superior officer who toppled before he could register surprise. Fiona's eyes sparkled bright with malice and grim humor as she leapt onto the pier, *Viper* in hand, and spoke other words of power. The grim-faced members of her personal escort chanted profane syllables in some incomprehensible tongue as they clustered protectively around her. They had a fevered shine to their faces that made Shae feel distinctly uneasy.

A cluster of long gunners huddled down below a low stone outcropping just off the main path where they picked off sea dogs with precise fire. Suddenly as Fiona pointed at them, they erupted into screaming blazes of black and purple fire. As they burned, the dark fire seemed to pour up out of their eyes and stream from their gaping mouths as if their souls were lit ablaze to suffer past death.

Shae shook his head and advanced, selecting targets for his pistol and trying to ignore the dying screams. He had seen Fiona in action before, so her seemingly inexhaustible manifestations of sorcery did not surprise him. She had raw power to burn from a natural deep wellspring of unholy energy, and she had no need for careful artifice when unleashing her arcane strength. Shae refused to be distracted and focused on the fortification. He brought his Mariners up through the advancing men while bellowing for them to clear the way. A Cygnaran Sentinel warjack, commanded by a harried officer who bore the marks of a marine lieutenant, guarded the door. Its chain gun spit bullets that chewed through the sea dogs foolish enough to advance on it. Others leapt to the side seeking cover.

Shae gave Fiona a look and closed on the Sentinel, opening his hand as its chain gun swung in his direction. Primal energy surrounded him as wind whipped across the pier and became a fist-like knot of storm that exploded against the machine, sending it flying into the reinforced iron doors and toppling to the ground. A resounding boom echoed from the Commodore on the fore of the ship, and the fallen warjack exploded into countless pieces. Cannon fire echoed as the advancing Mariners blew the doors apart. The fortress was breached.



Shae had learned the hard way that Cygnar's Third Army and its associated fleet did not break easily. Seizing the fortress lost them more swabs than he liked, and they had to kill most of the

THE BETTER PART OF VALOR

officers before the rest surrendered. Shae had seen enough battle to harden him against killing and death, but the sheer volume of bodies left an unpleasant taste. He felt no particular guilt or sadness, just a sense of waste. Likely this Cygnaran tenacity came from training to stand against Cryx. They did not expect mercy, so surrender had less appeal than heroic death. Shae admired their resolve but thought it foolish. The less resolute Mercanian League mercenaries surrendered more readily.

Howling and yelling men rushed inside eager to find spoils. Shae, Hawk, and Fiona kept to the front alertly scanning for anything that looked like a vault. Hawk stepped close to Shae and hissed to him, "Keep an eye on her. She's here to find the man before we do. On Montador's orders, I'd reckon." She looked pointedly at Fiona who was certainly rushing ahead.

Blackbottom tried his best to keep up with them, limping along on his peg leg, but they ignored his shouts and quickly left him

behind. Mr. Walls had gone ahead with the first attack group and eventually rushed back. The one-eyed quartermaster and the monkey on his shoulder were half-covered in blood, but little of it looked to be their own aside from a rather nasty gash along Walls' left temple. "Think we found what we be lookin' fer, cap'n." He pointed off down a side passage.

Fiona noticed them breaking off immediately and rushed to catch them along with her grim-faced escort, which included Bosun Dragash Garanovich. "Not trying to lose me, are you Phinneus?"

Shae gave her an insincere smile and said nothing. Soon they came to a heavily barred and locked metal door with bodies liberally strewn around. Pools and sprays of blood covered both the floor and walls. Several sea dogs scrambled through nearby boxes and crates for anything useful, but the door had deterred

PIRATE RANKS AND SHARES

Every pirate and privateer vessel runs differently, as the needs of a tiny vessel crewed by a handful of men differ dramatically from one boasting a crew sizable enough to handle a first class ship of the line. No single hierarchy of ranks and positions applies to every ship in this profession. Due to the haphazard nature of these crews certain positions have more clout than their counterparts on a formal navy vessel. For example, on a

large pirate ship expecting to remain at sea for a lengthy period of time, the quartermaster takes on particular importance due to the difficulty of provisioning a large crew, and this post has great impact on morale. Thus, a captain might afford his quartermaster a surprisingly large share as a precaution to help guarantee loyalty and forestall mutiny.

Rank	Function	Shares
Captain	Commander of the vessel and crew	3
Ship's Master	Sailing master, runs the boat day-to-day	2
Bosun	Ropes, cables, anchors, sails, rigging, and flags	1 3/4
Master Gunner	Oversees all cannons and powder, advises helmsman in battle	1 3/4
Master-at-arms	Trains crew for combat, controls armory (pistols, blades)	1 1/2
Quartermaster	Stowage of food, rum, other supplies, maintain watch, divides spoils	1 1/2-2
Carpenter	Maintains hull, decks, masts	1 1/4
Ship's Pilot	Navigation, oversees the helm	1 1/4
Other Officers	Various ¹ , includes mates of officers as well as specific functions	3/4-1
Sailors	Regular able-bodied seasoned crew	1/2
Swabs	Inexperienced or maimed crew, delegated undesirable tasks	1/2
Cabin boys/ powder monkeys	Youths working as servants, running supplies, powder	<1/4

¹ Other significant posts which might receive more than a single share include a ship's surgeon, if one exists, sailmaker, coxswain, etc.

Talion Book of Accounts

<i>Month's accounting aboard the Talion, Trineus, 607 AR</i>	
<i>Estimated worth stockpiled assets (Bottomton only)</i>	29,044 crowns
<i>Acquired assets (after liquidation, see detailed cargo inventories)</i>	
<i>2-Mast vessel Bride of Southpoint (seized, scuttled)</i>	2,537 cr.
<i>Cargo: pickled fish, silver, wheat grain (rotted)</i>	
<i>Seized 3-mast vessel Triumphant Bellow (seized, sold)</i>	17,066 cr.
<i>Cargo: blasting powder, rifles, porcelain statuary, Rhulic liquors</i>	
<i>Paddlewheel steamer Long Hauler (seized, rented, sold)</i>	25,411 crowns
<i>Cargo: Mercarian League payroll lockbox, cigars, hooaga, fine liquors</i>	
<i>Miscellaneous seizures, contracts, extorted payoffs</i>	9,618 crowns
<i>Total acquired assets (minus standard financier fees)</i>	48,076 crowns
<i>Total Stockpiled and Acquired Assets</i>	77,120 crowns
<i>Liabilities and payments (abridged)</i>	
<i>Crew shares (spoils minus supplies, bribes, ship repairs)</i>	22,436 crowns
<i>Salted fish, meat, other food</i>	1,410 crowns
<i>Rum, ale, wine, misc. Supplies</i>	2,905 crowns
<i>Crucible Arms powder shipment</i>	5,775 crowns
<i>Bribes (Ordic & Cygnaran port authorities)</i>	3,250 crowns
<i>Bribes (Ordic Navy)</i>	2,600 crowns
<i>Bribes (Five Fingers High Captains, fences)</i>	5,500 crowns
<i>Ship repairs</i>	1,740 crowns
<i>Jack repair, parts, Mariner cortex replacement</i>	26,630 crowns
<i>Additional port expenses</i>	915 crowns
<i>Miscellaneous fines</i>	2,090 crowns
<i>Total liabilities and payments</i>	75,211 crowns
<i>Stockpiled assets after liabilities (minus currency exchange)</i>	507 crowns

Blasted Shae! WE ARE PRANKS!

them. "Checked the soldiers here for keys or what-have-you, but didn't find 'em," Walls explained. "The door has a fancy lock and a geared dial."

Hawk squinted at the door with a frown. "We're not getting that thing open anytime soon."

"Where's Grogspar?" Shae looked back up the corridor and saw Rockbottom and the bosun hastening to catch up. "Grogspar! How much explosives you got?"

The trollkin caught Shae's meaning at once and grinned around his pipe. "Should be enough. Might want to get back a ways."



Even with explosives the door proved difficult, and they finally brought a Freebooter over to rip the door off its hinges. After hurrying into the lantern-lit chamber, the group's excitement turned to confusion. They found a few heavy crates, but otherwise the room stood open. It looked like some kind of improvised living quarters. Two cots, rumpled blankets, even what appeared to be the remains of a recent meal lay on the floor. Toward the back of the chamber, Shae gave a groan and wrinkled his nose as he discovered a partitioned area with an improvised latrine.

THE BETTER PART OF VALOR

"This be a prison, or I'm a monkey's uncle," Mr. Walls asserted, ignoring the bemused stare this bought him from Fiona. Rockbottom seemed more interested in the various crates and boxes in the room and found a tool to start prying them open. As yet, they saw no sign of any great stash of wealth.

"Where are the prisoners?" Hawk asked. "This food isn't even cold."

"Prisoners? I thought we were expecting gold bullion," Shae groused.

Rockbottom's explorations turned up little of particular value. The dwarf cursed and stomped out of the chamber with the pry-bar in his hand and murder in his eyes. He looked ready to tear open any box he could find or any person in his way.

Shae stood, inspected the room closely, and noticed a strange shimmer in the air as Grogspar walked by smoking his pipe. The smoke moved oddly and the warcaster caught the telltale sight of something blurry and indistinct trying to slip around them toward the doorway. His pistol was in his hand in an instant, and its pinlock was cocked as he pointed its large barrel at the shimmering figure. "Hold it!" It so happened that Fiona, at that moment, stood on the other side of the shimmer. She looked at Shae with a hiss of startled anger.

"What is the meaning of this?" she demanded, but her voice faded as another female voice spoke.

"Do not fire. We are unarmed." Suddenly two new figures stood in front of the surprised pirates as whatever sorcery concealed them faded. One, a slender, refined looking man wearing dark spectacles, had short but disheveled black hair and wore a rumpled but otherwise immaculately clean blue and white greatcoat trimmed in gold with a high collar. The speaker proved an even stranger sight: an attractive woman with strikingly white hair whose pointed ears marked her as an Iosan. She dressed as one accustomed to wealth, wearing expensive silks and a red cloak of supple, shimmering fabric. Large red stones set in gold dangled from the dainty lobes of her pointed ears.

"What the bloody—" The Iosan cut Shae's demand short as she hastened to reply. She held up a delicate hand and gave him an entreating look with eyes of a startling almost golden shade.

"We are prisoners. We only seek to escape from here. Can you help us?"

Fiona stepped close to Shae and said with a sneer, "We have no time for this. We should grab what we can and go."

"I'm not looking for passengers right now," Shae said at the same time. He thought furiously about their presence. "Are you the reason for all the soldiers here? Why would the League need the Cygnaran Navy to watch two prisoners?"

"I am Lady Aiyana, formerly of Ios, and my companion is Master Holt. As to why we have been so well guarded, well..." The hint of a blush touched her fair cheeks. "I may have given

them the impression I was an ambassador of Ios. Completely a fabrication, I assure you, but it seemed prudent given that they were not thrilled at our having stumbled upon one of their clandestine meetings. Look, there is no time to explain. I believe there was a hue and alarm earlier this morning. Word came of Cryxian vessels in the vicinity coming this way. They dispatched some ships, but they could return at any time. We really should go—"

A sudden commotion outside distracted them. A wave of exclamations reverberated through the various sea dogs pillaging the fortress. "The *Atramentous*! The *Atramentous* is coming!"

This prompted something very close to panic, which Shae later described as a hasty retreat. He turned to speak again to the Iosan with the strangely compelling voice, but the mysterious duo had vanished. He cursed but had no time to track them down.

Grabbing whatever they could seize, sea dogs made their way to the pier where the *Talion* waited. While they had dealt with the fortress, the *Ill Fortune* had moved into the cove and sent a couple small boats to the pier to recover their crew. Some of their sailors headed for these craft, but it became a confusing jumble with swabs winding up on whatever vessel their feet found first, regardless of actual point of origin. The hulking *Calamitas* drifted in the deepest part of the cove, taking a sentry position where the navy ships had once blockaded the entrance.

Shae and the others did their best to control the panic and arrange for an orderly retreat. It took some effort to get Rockbottom to follow since he had apparently found something interesting and wanted more time to investigate. He had to satisfy himself with piling several boxes onto Grogspar before rushing after.

The departing group missed a peculiar sight in the room just outside the once sealed vault. A slender, unmolested box that had been tipped over at the far end of the room righted itself. A small key appeared in its lock, and the lid opened to reveal a pair of pistols nestled within red silk folds. The ornate sidearms had long slender barrels, polished wooden grips, and wicked sharpened blades attached beneath. The pistols rose into the air and vanished.



The panic of the men steadied when they spotted the warcasters and officers hurrying back although every mate standing along the pier tried to give the details to Shae at once. "Silence! Get aboard, *now*!" Shae made sure someone trustworthy manned the controls of the crane to load his 'jacks before turning to the nearest salt, the *Talion*'s master gunner 'One-ear' Scoriani. "Are we sure it's the *Atramentous*?"

"I heard them lads on the *Stiletto*." He jabbed with his pipe stem toward the smaller vessel picking up speed moving away from

THE BETTER PART OF VALOR

the pier. "Th'accursed ship be comin', no question. They seen the balefires." Fear laced his voice despite his reputation as one of the most stalwart men with whom Shae had ever sailed.

"Weigh anchor! Fire engines! Raise sails!" Shae shouted. Hawk went forward to ensure their departure was executed properly. Shae turned to young Gunner's Mate Wain who had the unwanted task of keeping a head count. "All accounted for?"

The youth gave him a guilty look. "No sir, can't get a count! Between them that died, others getting on other boats, people pushing past me...Didn't see Creb come aboard, for one."

"Doc?" Shae's eyes narrowed in surprise, and he looked around the deck where injured crewmen were lying about, few getting any proper attention. Some of the older mates did their best to wrap wounds with torn cloth.

Grogspar spoke from where he loaned his strength to the capstan raising the main anchor. "Saw him on a rowboat headed to the *Calamitas*. Crazy fool got on the wrong ship."

"Well, nothing to be done now. Let's be off and see if we can get out of this alive."

ACT III

Wherein pirates learn discretion is the better part of valor

The *Calamitas*' captain and foremost officers stood tensely at the wheelhouse, each staring out at the horizon with their glasses. The *Stiletto* had given them good warning, but the enemy ship closed rapidly. "Looks to be other ships behind it," Dougal noted.

Montador grunted. He had not seen them yet, but he trusted the master gunner's keener eyes. "Think we can block them off?" His scope stayed squarely on the dreaded ship. Unholy fires burned across its sails, and its decks visibly glowed green even at this distance.

"We can guarantee one or two good broadsides. Could maybe move to intercept," the chief mate Ol' Stony said, sucking a tooth. "I'd pit this ship 'gainst anything, anything but the *Atramentous*. T'aint natural."

"Keep the engines at full pressure and be ready to move, but keep us steady as long as possible. Until my signal." Montador gritted his teeth. He looked to the *Talion*, which seemed to be taking its sweet time leaving the pier. "Whatever they got damned well better be worth it."

Onward sped the king of ghost ships, the dread *Atramentous*, whose name meant death and damnation to any sailing the Meredius over the last sixteen centuries. All sailors knew its reputation, the hopeless despair of defeating its immortal crew who could continually rise in death. Still Montador watched it come with a strange smile on his lips. He felt the lure of a worthy challenge. He leaned upon the nearest rail and felt the power of his vessel below his feet. He could almost sense the

industrious movement of his gunners packing powder and shot into the hungry maws of their cannons. He thought of the triumph and eternal glory that would be his if he could put an end to the balefire-wreathed flagship of the ghost fleet.

The tremendous vessel approached with quite unnatural speed. Rather than maneuvering to fire its own cannons, the *Atramentous* steered directly at them, thereby presenting the smallest target. The *Atramentous* did not rely on weather or its tattered sails for motion. It tapped a spectral wind of its own.

The *Calamitas* heaved as the explosion of its massed broadside sent forth a great volley that deafened the crew but had little other effect. Though the shot was accurately fired, the profile of the enemy ship presented too little to allow a meaningful impact, and its prow, set with iron teeth and engineered to cut through enemy vessels, carried as much armor as the *Calamitas* itself. The undead ship seemed to rise up across the surging waves like a charging beast eager for the kill.

The ghost ship's green fires glowed clearly to the naked eye, yet Montador felt compelled to peer through the spyglass and study the repellent but hypnotizing peculiarity of the almost living vessel. No other ship like her sailed Meredius; it was a remnant of a forgotten age. The lines of the ancient Dirgenmast funeral ship, among the proudest heritage of Montador's Tordoran mariner ancestors, could still be seen in the twisted horror. Toruk had baptized this hull in dragonfire. Upon its charred timbers dead hands had bolted curved sheets of sooty iron, and boney spikes protruded like tusks across its length.

Balefire danced in swirling spirals and funnels as the decks swarmed with the ever-rotting but industrious bodies of the damned. Undead pirates crawled over every exposed surface and climbed the impossibly burned and rotted rigging. Their numbers seemed as thick as maggots on a bloated corpse. They were more eager to kill and slay than any living pirates and were emboldened by their proven invincibility. Amid them lurked nightmarish forms of Deathrippers, Nightwretches, Leviathans, Harrowers, and more constructs. At the wheel on the aft-deck, dressed in blasphemous and rotting finery and standing like a pirate king of ancient days, waited the ship's master Captain Rengrave, first citizen of the Cryxian Empire.

Montador tore his eyes away and strode down from the pilot's deck yelling orders and moving his men and warjacks into better positions. "Hold fire until they are nearly upon us!" he yelled to Dougal, who nodded and passed word below to stop the gunner's mates before they fired uselessly again. "Get us moving hard to port! Do not let that damned thing ram us!"



From the *Talion*'s upper deck, Captain Shae had a good view of the imminent clash between those two great ships. He let Grogspar and Hawk handle the men while he concentrated on their angle of approach and getting his warjacks to the best

position for the upcoming battle. He saw the *Calamitas* begin to move, too slowly, too ponderously, trying to slip and turn to the side to dodge the unavoidable *Atramentous*.

At the last moment the *Atramentous* leaned to its starboard just as the *Calamitas* turned to port with its great spinning wheels churning the water. The *Atramentous* did not break off entirely, but it did not hit at center mass. Its angle drove it into the aft section of the *Calamitas* with a sound of cracking lumber and the screech of bending iron. Captain Shae winced and wondered if the large ship's rear paddlewheel would survive.

They had other things to occupy their attention. As the ships' hulls scraped together, revenants hurled grappling hooks to the higher deck of the *Calamitas* and began to pour across by the dozens. Some slipped and fell in the water but most made it. At least one Harrower dug its pointed legs into the curved section of the upper hull and pulled itself up toward the deck.

CALAMITAS FLEET CHAIN OF COMMAND

THE CALAMITAS, Tordoran war-galleon

Captain Bartolo 'Broadside Bart' Montador
Ship's Master 'Ol Stony' Colm Bowan - chief mate
Master Gunner Dougal MacNaile - second mate
Bosun Gillian Degratte - third mate
'Colonel' Warbiter - press gang master
Chief Engineer Megan 'Dirty Meg' Melroane
Quartermasters Duffock, Kaviarty, Hitch, and Briarford
Chief Steward Dexter Hasvard
Ship Surgeon Vidor 'Lazy Eye' Atwood
Coxswain Ian Groyle - pilots the captain's barge

THE ILL FORTUNE, 30-gun steam brig

Fiona the Black - commander (not captain)
Captain Calvar Santoni
Bosun Dragash Garanovich
Quartermaster Jonas Zaleso - boarding leader

THE STILETTO, 20-gun schooner

Master Blake Donovan - ship captain
First Mate Kade Tobot - master gunner
Bosun Paddy Gafneagh - master of the watch

At that moment, with the ships fully exposed along their sides, the *Calamitas* at last unleashed the full fury of its broadside, deafening everyone aboard the *Talion*. They saw the side of the larger vessel light up with nearly blinding flashes of exploding powder. It was a sight of pure violent beauty as the *Atramentous* tore apart from cannonballs shattering through its blackened and armored hull and exploding through entire sections of its outer surface. For several seconds the roll of cannon fire seemed as if it would never end. Montador's topside Mariners and deck guns added their clamor as new breaches opened to them, and they fired their own freshly loaded ordinance through thickened beams and planks.

The ghost ship sagged visibly and its entire side slipped into the water. Decks flooded as if the ocean hungered to devour the ship finally and extinguish its fires. A great cheer rose from the crew above the sounds of cracking timber. Similar cheers rose from the *Ill Fortune* and *Stiletto* as they raced ahead, turning to steer around the far side of the faltering Dirgenmast ship and lay on their own cannon fire. Shae called his men to take what shots they could as they also slipped past. The *Atramentous* groaned, and a dry wind erupted from it like an exhalation, bringing choking ash and a noise like the dying of an ailing beast as it slowly began to sink.

The shouts and cheers from the crew at this spectacle ended as the *Talion* slid almost directly alongside the ghost ship to make the opening of the cove. Revenants targeted its decks with gunfire and leapt onto the ship, oblivious to returning rifle and pistol fire.



Before the collision, Captain Montador yelled for everyone to brace for impact. He gritted his teeth and waved his mechanical hand in an arc. A swirling circle of glowing runes shimmered around his body and manifested around each of his warjacks as he seized them and affixed their metal feet to the decks. His boots gripped into the wood as if planted there, and runes of power swept through the hull as well to strengthen beams and close loose hatches. As his teeth rattled from the bone-grinding impact, this measure prevented the Mariners at the rail from tumbling off during the jarring lurch prompted by the *Atramentous* colliding with their stern. The largest exhaust piping bent and crumpled as wood flew from the rear section. Soon thereafter his guns tore open the enemy ship and a shout went up from the men.

Despite the effectiveness of the broadside, Montador had his hands full as revenants took to the decks. Pistols rang out on both sides. Green-glowing rounds of necrotite-poisoned ammunition zipped through the air to tear apart living and dead flesh. Montador had the presence of mind to yell to one of his nearby officers, "For the love of Morrow, someone let Bradigan out of the brig!" The sailor shouted an affirmation and ran below.

THE BETTER PART OF VALOR

A Harrower climbed over the rails, swept a scything claw through several of the nearest sea dogs, and aimed its glowing cannon directly at Montador. This did not worry him, given the number of people brawling in the space between him and the hellish construct, until with a grating shriek the weapon fired and the luminous shot streaked straight through everything between them to blast into Montador's side. The explosion burned his flesh and knocked several nearby men to the planks. His armor's power field took the edge off its impact, but it was a painful wound all the same.

"Clear the way!" Montador yelled in a booming voice. He raised Red Tide and charged across the blood-slicked deck. He clove into a revenant locking blades with one of his senior mates, strode forward to decapitate a second with a brutal back-sweep, and then stepped up to the Harrower. He shattered the armored plating of its clawed arm, broke through its joint as a man might crack a crab's leg for supper, and called a nearby Mariner to his aid. It leveraged its weight into the Cryxian helljack to send it flying over the deck and into the waves.

Montador leaned for a moment against the rail to catch his breath and inspected his bleeding side and burnt jacket. He looked up to see the surprising sight of none other than Creb Killingsworth coming toward him with sharpened knives in hand. Chomping a cigar, the man paused to sink his cleaver deep into the skull of a nearby revenant before approaching the warcaster. "Let me check that."

"Where in Urcaen did you come from?" Too surprised at seeing the *Talion's* cook to protest, the captain just watched as Doc began to inspect Montador's injuries. The sight of Dirty Meg fighting alongside one of his Freebooters, however, distracted him as she directed it to hurl a nearby revenant quartermaster off the ship. "Meg! Get the hell out of here! I need you below! Let us handle this!"

She glared back and he thought she might stubbornly disobey, but after giving him a rude gesture she and her 'jack made for the aft stairs. A large knot of revenants blocked her way, having seized that section of the decks to make a stand. Before Montador could deal with the lot of them, a bare-chested maniac burst into their midst from behind. The warcaster smiled as he saw 'Bloody Bradigan', armed with nothing but his fists and a broken bottle, tear into the undead. He hurled revenants out of his way and leapt upon the nearest quartermaster. Bradigan dragged him to the deck before tearing out great chunks of rotted flesh with the bottle. Meg slipped past them to the stairway.

Montador pushed Doc away. "Go help someone worse off than me. There are dead things that need killing."



The *Talion* defenders might have quickly swept aside the revenant boarders if not for their habit of rising again. Shae

had fought revenants before and knew to prioritize eliminating their officers, but he found it more difficult in execution than in theory. He chased after the nearest revenant quartermaster, who made a tactical retreat toward the aft rail while firing his pistol, when a sudden bullet from above cut short Shae's pursuit by tearing off the revenant officer's head. Shae turned to salute the rifleman he presumed had landed the killing shot but saw instead Master Holt atop the poop deck.

Shae gave the man a bemused salute, but the distraction almost killed him. Shae blinked as the stranger raised the pistol in his left hand and aimed toward the warcaster. The bullet flew over Shae's shoulder, close enough that he felt its passage, and cut down a revenant charging at his back with a heavy cutlass.

By concentrating Shae could now spot the indistinct form of Lady Aiyana near the pistoleer. She focused on the revenants while chanting syllables in an exotic but melodic tongue as her hands glowed with power. Shae had no time to ponder what he witnessed and he turned back to the fight. The next time he looked for the pair, they were gone.

Shouts of dismay and the sight of his terrified men pointing made him put the mystery of the duo aside. Arriving at the rails he saw that the *Atramentous*, sinking moments before, had somehow reversed that motion. Its lopsided deck leveled with a creaking and groaning as charred timbers reformed before the warcaster's eyes. One of the broken masts righted itself and its green-fired sails returned. Water, pumped by some unseen agency, poured out from holes along its lower hull before the holes closed.

A voice spoke near his ear. "The *Atramentous* can't be killed as easily as that." He turned to see Fiona whom he had forgotten amid the chaos. "The ship will persist as long as its captain, and Rengrave cannot be killed if the ship endures." She smiled as if this paradox pleased her. "Toruk is clever. Wouldn't you agree, Phinneus?"

Shae ignored her for the moment and watched the ominously recovering ghost ship. He shouted at the top of his lungs, "Full sail full stoke!" The order broke the rest of the crew from their trance and into a burst of motion. The *Talion* swept forward with renewed speed as the recovering Dirgenmast ship turned to follow.

Shae gripped the rails. "Come on and give me some speed." He slumped as he wondered if they had pushed their luck too far. He stood straighter and put on a good face for his crew. He looked up to catch Hawk's eye as she kicked revenant bodies into the water. He joined her and leaned forward to speak in her ear. "We have stowaways." She did not seem surprised and gave only a curt nod. "Stay sharp, but don't get jumpy. They helped me in the fight, so I'm inclined to give them some slack."



The *Talion* quickly outpaced the *Calamitas* heading into the open water. Despite unfavorable winds, the smaller vessel's

THE BETTER PART OF VALOR

steam engines possessed the power to push the ship to a good speed quickly. The other ships pursuing the *Atramentous* appeared now, and both Shae and Grogspar identified them as most likely the remnants of the Cygnaran Navy vessels that had earlier left the cove. They seemed too far away for concern but closed gradually.

The obvious trouble with the *Calamitas*' engines or paddlewheels seemed a more pressing issue. The *Ill Fortune* and the *Stiletto* lagged back, circling their flagship. Fiona stood at the stern of the *Talion* and stared silently. Mr. Walls approached her after the men finished scraping undead off the decks and gave her a paternal smile. "Longing fer yer ship, lass?"

She glared at him with a cold stare as if weighing the merits of burning him alive. Mr. Walls took a step back. "I'm calculating our odds of survival. I judge them to be poor. The *Atramentous* will come for us once it deals with Montador."

Captain Shae peered at the other approaching vessels. "Well the Cygnaran Navy might lend a hand. Looks as if the elf was right. They left to chase Cryxians."

Fiona smirked and pointed at the thick plume of smoke rising from one of them. Where three had left, only two had come limping back. "It doesn't appear it went well for them. The *Atramentous* rarely sails alone. I expect the navy tangled with smaller ghost ships while Rengrave pressed ahead for the real prize."

Tension tightened Shae's frame as he examined the situation. "The *Calamitas* isn't getting up to speed. They aren't going to make it."

Fiona turned her cold eyes on him. "I don't know if we're going to make it. The *Atramentous* is faster than we are."

"I'm not so sure of that." Shae sounded defensive. "She's a big ship. We can sail better close hauled into the wind."

"The *Atramentous* needs neither wind nor fuel. Its crew suffers not hunger, thirst, nor fatigue," Fiona explained as if speaking to a child. "You cannot outrun her. Tell me you are not seriously considering going to help the *Calamitas*?"

Shae brooded. "I thought Montador was your partner. And what of the *Ill Fortune*?"

The redheaded sorceress shrugged dismissively. "I can always find another partner," she said and gave him a significant look, "or another ship. Turning around would be suicide."

Shae nodded as if in agreement and then turned to Bosun Grogspar. "Bring us about, back toward the *Calamitas*. Keep the engines at full and watch the sails! Prepare to tack." He noticed several of the crewmen nearby, including Hawk, eyeing him strangely. He offered unconvincingly, "Doc's stuck back on that ship. We can't just leave him." They looked at him with clear disbelief, but no one said a word in protest. Shae followed his own odd moral compass, and the crew had long since learned not to question it.

Fiona stepped close to him. Her eyes conveyed some breed of cruel humor. "This is a mistake. Do not force me to take your ship from you."

He found it difficult to discern if she was in earnest, but a hungry edge lurked in her voice for which Shae did not care. He remembered the look she had shared with Montador. "You can try," he suggested, smiling back and giving a significant look behind her. Fiona turned to follow his eyes and saw Hawk standing tense and ready, her hands on her hilts. "But if you commit, make sure you can finish what you start." He pushed past Fiona without another look.



Aboard the *Calamitas*, Megan Melroane stood up to her hips in wood debris, grease, and broken metal leveraging her wrench against a tightly wedged connection while subordinate engineers and any sea dogs she could enlist hammered or sawed at her

LEGEND OF THE ATRAMENTOUS

Before ships bore cannons, the *Atramentous* reaped death among the waves. The ghost ship began as a Dirgenmast, a massive funeral vessel of old Tordor built to deliver its king to his rightful watery grave past the horizon. One man, his life forfeit to deliver his lord, stood strapped to the wheel to steer it into the sunset.

A vile pirate named Rengrave and his crew beset the ship, murdered the helmsman, and plundered the funeral treasures. They denied the king his burial by lashing him to the ship's prow, and some say this cursed them to their horrible fate. Soon thereafter the Dragonfather Toruk found the ship. He bathed its decks with His green fire and damned its crew and captain. Rengrave and his men embraced their eternal unlife and gleefully obey the Dragon's bidding to pillage in His name.

The ship's crew still sails despite millennia of blades, bullets, and broadsides. Sometimes when the fog comes thick and the breeze dies, the *Atramentous* appears riding a spectral wind. Other ghostly ships follow—the captured crews and vessels of its victims—with more joining this damned fleet every week. Sailors pray never to see the infamous vessel lit by its own green fires.

THE BETTER PART OF VALOR

orders. "Get something wedged up under that," she shouted and pointed to where one set of pipes had sagged dangerously and threatened to break loose. An ogrun crewman managed to lever his bulk under it, pressed upward, and yelped as the hot metal singed his hands. "You big baby! Here." She crammed a broken beam under the pipes. The ogrun let go and inspected his blistering palms. She went back to work on the broken connection between a crankshaft and a series of oversized gears with interlocking teeth large enough to chew a man apart.

One of the mates yelled down from above. "Meg, we need this working now! They're closing on us! How long? If we can't turn to fire, we're done for."

"Tell him not to engage the rear wheel! Compensate with the secondary paddles!" She despaired at the thought of her shouted instructions changing as they passed from one officer to another up through the enormous ship. "He's going to engage this thing and kill me, I know it," she muttered. She grabbed another tool and jumped up between the drive shafts. Meg nearly had a heart attack when she felt the ship lurch, but she relaxed as she identified it as the complaint of the outer engines pushed past their limits. "Thank Cyriss for small miracles."



The *Talion* came about and, with the wind now in its favor, made good speed in the opposite direction. The *Atramentous* had not yet entirely recovered from its earlier pummeling, but it nonetheless crept inexorably toward the *Calamitas* still struggling to make speed. The two Cygnaran navy vessels moved to intercept, and the ghost ship took a moment to turn and deal with them. The flame of cannon fire flashed from both sides. Their engagement created the perfect opportunity for the *Talion* to escape if Shae had been so inclined.

Shae's eyes remained alert to any trace of his stowaways. The crowded upper deck had only a few places they could stand without someone walking into them, and eventually he spotted a shimmer higher up the poop deck. He went there and spoke quietly to the air. "Would these Cryxians have anything to do with the pair of you?"

There followed a pause before an accented female voice responded. "There is a distinct possibility of that, yes. I strongly suggest that you hasten in the other direction."

"That seems to be the prevailing opinion," Shae noted sardonically. "I imagine there are some interesting stories behind why the Mercarian League had you prisoner, why the Cygnaran Navy was helping, and why Cryx is coming for you now?"

"Yes. We do not have the time to indulge in them now."

"Fair enough. If we live through this, I'll need some answers."

He did not wait for a reply but walked down to where he had men hooking a Freebooter to the crane. Hawk and Fiona

approached with such similar scowls that he found it difficult not to laugh. Hawk looked ready to murder him, so he restrained the impulse. "What in blazes do you think you're doing?" she demanded.

"I'm going to take care of the *Atramentous*."

"I'm not going to let you kill yourself," Hawk insisted.

"I have no intention of killing myself. I need you to look after the ship until I get back." He gave a significant look to Fiona whom he addressed in turn. "You, on the other hand, I need you to kill anything that moves that doesn't look like me." He glanced at the ghost ship, which had turned to target one of the approaching Cygnaran navy vessels. Its previously quiet cannons erupted to life, and the smaller ship soon floundered as its sails collapsed. From this distance the cannons sounded like crackling thunder.



As the *Talion* made its approach, the upper decks of the *Calamitas* did not stay idle. Sea dogs fired whatever cannons they could direct at the ghost ship. The large privateer ship stood at its weakest firing point with the *Atramentous* directly astern, only able to bring a few weapons to bear. The *Ill Fortune* fared better until it got too close to the revenant vessel, at which point boarders overran the ship. Smoke and fires from that smaller ship indicated the fight went poorly. The port side of the undead vessel, obliterated not long before, looked nearly restored, and the ghost ship quickly picked up speed.

Shae had the tremendous Commodore up front alongside his Mariners readied on the starboard. "Shoot for the decks and clear the way! Grapeshot, chain shot, whatever we have left. You will get boarders, so be ready to repel them." He nodded to Hawk, who looked away with a frown and turned to lead the men. Quartermaster Walls offered a casual salute and drew pistols. Shae turned to Bosun Grogspar. "Trail out the rope. A lot of rope." Rockbottom stood nearby with Fire Breather resting on his hip. Shae gave them all a quick look and then grabbed the cable line from the crane, standing on the toes of the hulking Freebooter. "Raise it up!"

The crane borrowed power from the ship's engines to pull them into the air, swaying in the wind. They closed quickly on the *Atramentous*. Its decks swarmed with the dead and ghastly green fires. "Fire!" Shae bellowed, and the *Talion's* decks erupted with explosions. Cannonballs, incendiary shells, grapeshot, rifle, and pistol fire raked across the decks and tore revenants apart.

In the resulting brief moment of relative peace, the *Talion's* crane arm swept the Freebooter and Shae out in a wide arc. Shae slashed upward with Squall and severed the cable as they hit the outer edge of their arc. He pushed off and tumbled away from the falling 'jack before they both hit the charred deck. Despite his roll, the impact from the long, hard fall knocked the wind

THE BETTER PART OF VALOR

from Shae's lungs, and he nearly lost his sword as he rolled just inches from the flickering lick of an unnatural green fire. With another roll he narrowly evaded a revenant cutlass descending toward his head. The Freebooter managed to keep its feet and pulled itself loose from exploded deck boards before turning to put aside the nearest revenants.

Leaping to his feet, Shae caught sight of his target just up the fire-lit back stairs to the great wheel of the ship. Saber in hand, he sliced his way through several revenants as the Freebooter charged alongside him. The air, choked and hot, caused him to cough painfully, and his vision blurred as his eyes watered. Ahead of him stood Captain Rengrave, the dread lord of this dread ship. A dead crow perched on his shoulder with coldly gleaming eyes. Rengrave laughed at the sight of Shae, and his crew joined in the mockery with a shrill caw. The revenant captain raised his own pistol and fired, but Shae twisted to the side and the bullet grazed passed him.

"You cannae kill me, fool." Rengrave's ghostly voice came across the decks clearly despite the chaos and noise. Green fires lit deep within the revenant's eyes blazed with the promise of eternal torment and centuries of slaughter. Countless revenants closed around them in renewed strength as if the initial cannon volley had never taken place.

"I don't mean to." The revenants in Shae's path erupted suddenly with purple and black flames. It was a gift from Fiona at the rails of the *Talion* as it swept past. Swirling runes of power surrounded Phinneus Shae and his Freebooter as he summoned a burst of arcane speed. Shae charged forward but turned his attack at the last second. He used Squall to block Rengrave's cutlass but then barrelled into the revenant captain and carried him over the rails.



DISREPUTABLE PORTS

Every pirate must periodically find a berth to offload stolen goods, convert booty to coin, or to repair and resupply. Those earning a living by spoils at sea prefer some ports to others, particularly those where a captain can bribe dockside officials to look the other way.

Blackwater - Many pirates fear this vile Cryxian port, but the brave find it the best place to offload disreputable cargo. Buyers exist for anything in Blackwater, including slaves and corpses.

Carre Dova - Less lively than the nearby Five Fingers, Carre Dova boasts skilled shipwrights specializing in small and swift vessels.

Clocker's Cove - Considered Cygnar's own "Little Five Fingers", Clocker's Cove is the friendliest port to vessels of dubious origins in the Gulf of Cygnar.

Five Fingers - The notorious Ordic pirate haven is also popular for its abundance of gambling halls and cheap dockside taverns.

Ramarck - Located deep within a marsh, Cygnar's Ramarck is unapproachable by large ships but ideal for shallow-draft boats favored by small-time pirates and smugglers.

The Freebooter's gears ground as its jury-rigged engine pushed the machine past its normal limits to follow them. Rengrave and Shae plunged into the waves, and the Freebooter crashed in just above their heads. The 'jack, sinking quickly through the water, reached out to clamp onto Rengrave's chest and gripped him tightly. The undead pirate managed one good swipe at Shae's left arm that opened a deep gouge before he sank out of reach. At Shae's mental command, the 'jack released the valves which normally protected its heartfires and extinguished its engine as it disappeared into the dark depths with Rengrave locked in its grip.

The power field emanating from Shae's armor had been specially engineered and customized to provide buoyancy, and this allowed him to swim quickly back to the surface. He swam as fast as he could after the *Talion's* wake, alarmed until he spotted the end of the trailing rope. His groping hand narrowly reached it before the final knot slid past. He let it pull him away as necrotite shot splashed into the water around him. He looked back to see his ploy had worked. The *Atramentous* gave up the chase and slowed to stand dead in the water. A Leviathan tumbled into the ocean, clearly sent to recover the ship's master. Shae hoped the recovery would take a long time.



As sea dogs reeled Captain Shae in, the *Talion* executed a fast leaning turn and headed back toward open water. It seemed their gambit had bought the *Calamitas* the time required to repair its paddlewheel, and it rapidly gathered momentum.

Shortly thereafter came the thundering boom of cannons, and he turned to see the last remaining Cygnaran Navy vessel bearing down on the ghost ship. For the first time in recent

memory, Shae felt grateful at the sight of the blue and gold Cygnus. As the *Calamitas* maneuvered behind the *Talion*, the Cryxian vessel moved to face this new foe. A cheer went up from the decks of the pirate crews as a very wet and disheveled Captain Phinneus Shae came back aboard.

Shae saw Hawk looking irate and standing very near to Fiona. Hawk had one of her swords drawn, and its tip dug into the deck planks while the first mate curled her fingers loosely on its pommel. "Anything untoward happen while I was gone?" Shae asked casually.

"Caught one of the *Ill Fortune's* mates whittling with a large knife rather close to your rope line."

Fiona shrugged with a small smirk. "Can't blame a woman for trying. This really is a fine ship, Captain Shae." She once again ran her hand along the nearest rail.

Shae took this evidence of treachery calmly. "I think I know why Montador preferred to loan you a ship rather than provide you a berth on the *Calamitas*."

Fiona's hurt expression lacked sincerity. "Men are such suspicious creatures."



They pushed on an extra day and night at full speed, heedless of the coal consumed, before finally breathing easier and taking a moment to stop and get the crews in order. Despite considerable losses, the *Ill Fortune* had managed to limp away and rejoin them. Fiona seemed almost reluctant to return to her own vessel although her departure relieved many of the *Talion's* crew, not least Captain Shae. Hawk's decidedly unfriendly demeanor improved once the Thamarite departed, but the swordswoman

refused to speak about it. 'Doc' Killingsworth returned without incident to some quiet grouching among the crew, but never to his face. The man who had run the galley in his absence went missing a few days later, and no one was brave enough to discuss his fate except to note he might have "moved things around" in a fashion displeasing to Killingsworth.

They finally persuaded their newest passengers to stop invisibly lurking around. Grogspaw seemed eager to take them to the ring and beat some answers out of them, but Shae refused. The captain cornered the duo personally when the opportunity presented itself.

"Is there somewhere we should be dropping you two off?"

Aiyana and Holt shared a look from which Shae judged that the outcome of some earlier debate or decision regarding this topic did not entirely please the pistoleer. Aiyana measured her words as she spoke. "Actually, Captain Shae, I had hoped to entreat you to allow us to remain here. For my particular...studies...I intend to stay in this region, and it would be better if I kept in motion. I think the *Talion* might be ideal."

"We are not a passenger ship, Lady. Everyone here earns his way. I have to know I can count on everyone aboard when battle is joined. It also occurs to me that carrying you two may be creating a whole new type of trouble."

"You've seen that we can hold our own in a fight, Captain. I assure you that we do not mean to stand idly by. It may take time for you to come to see it, but you will be getting the better part of this bargain. We require no shares. You will not find a better shot than Master Holt." She touched his arm. "And offering a few useful skills of my own. Do you know another pirate captain who can claim access to the arcane lore of Ios?"

Shae appraised the pair of them with a seasoned eye. It began to dawn on him that perhaps he had not come away from that Mercarian League fortress empty handed after all.



Before their ships went their separate ways, Montador caused a commotion when he forced his way aboard. Red in the face and yelling threats, he remained convinced the *Talion* had cut him out of the 'treasure haul' they must have found in the fortress, heedless of the fact that Fiona had corroborated their story.

Shae demonstrated surprising restraint in humoring the blustering warcaster. He let Montador search the holds until he conceded that Shae had no hidden stash. Shae sensed a certain tension as Montador departed and the *Talion's* captain got the feeling that the long-bearded Tordoran was weighing the merits of collecting a certain lucrative Mercarian League bounty. Palpable relief settled over the crew when the great *Calamitas* broke off to sail toward some unknown destination.

Rockbottom acted even more furtive and secretive than usual until a few days later he came to Shae bearing several leather-

bound books. His eyes had a gleam that concerned Shae. "I have decided to forgive you for throwing away that Freebooter despite the woeful state of our treasury," Rockbottom began with a regal wave of his hand.

"Very magnanimous of you. What is the occasion for this charitable gesture?" Shae queried as he poured the dwarf a glass of wine.

"The occasion is that I seem to have acquired something of value from our little expedition after all." He tapped the books proudly before seizing the offered glass and taking a hearty swallow.

"Quality literature?" Shae asked.

"These, my good friend, are rutters showing certain Mercarian League trade routes in exacting detail. Including, but not limited to, a set of notes explaining what might be a safe passage to the hitherto inaccessible and largely untapped southern continent of Zu."

As oblivious as he pretended to stay to nautical concerns, Shae had sailed long enough for the rutters to impress him. "Those are priceless—"

"Priceless things are worthless things. I guarantee that these have a price." The dwarf looked smug and a ruddy glow colored his cheeks. "If there is one treasure more than any other the Mercarian League has endeavored to keep to itself," he tapped a cover, "it is this." He lifted the wine glass. "To vengeance!" he proclaimed as he drained the contents of his glass. "Retribution is at hand!" With these ominous words, the dwarf and his peg leg stumped out of Shae's cabin.

The pirate captain watched him go. "Should I be glad or afraid?" Shae finally asked. After a moment's pause with no reply forthcoming, he shouted at the dwarf's retreating back, "We are *not* sailing to Zu! Do you hear me?"



CAPTAIN BARTOLO MONTADOR, AKA BROADSIDES BART

MERCENARY PRIVATEER WARCASTER CHARACTER

I like my women like I like my cannons, big, loud, and full of fire!

—BARTOLO MONTADOR

Focus 6 Cmd 8

SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM
6	7	7	5	15	16



Ace

RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
SP	1	—	12



Red Tide

SPECIAL	POW	P+S
Quenched	7	14

Damage	17
Field Allowance	C
Victory Points	5
Point Cost	71
Base Size	Small

FEAT: TYPHOON

Captain Bartolo Montador has sent his ship through the worst storms the Meredius has to offer, heading straight into the grinding waves. He has learned to draw on those experiences while in battle and uses his power to summon unrelenting tempests. He engulfs his enemies in a typhoon of howling wind and sheets of blinding rain, within which no man can keep his feet for long.

Enemy models that end their normal movement in Bart's control area are immediately knocked down. While in Bart's control area, enemy models suffer -3 to attack rolls. Typhoon lasts for one round.

MERCENARY

Broadsides Bart will work for any faction.

BART

OVERTAKE - When Bart destroys an enemy warrior model with a melee attack, after resolving all other effects resulting from the destruction of the model, Bart may immediately move up to 1".

ROUSE - When Bart hits an enemy model with a charge attack, warjacks in his battlegroup currently in his control area gain +2 to attack rolls and can charge without spending a focus point this turn.

TOUGH - When Bart suffers sufficient damage to be destroyed, his controller rolls a d6. On a 5 or 6, Bart is knocked down instead of being destroyed. If Bart is not destroyed, he is reduced to one wound.

VICTORY HOWL - When Bart destroys an enemy model with a melee attack, enemy models/units within 6" of him must pass a command check or flee. Victory Howl may be used once per turn.

RED TIDE

BLOOD-QUENCHED - Bart gains a cumulative +1 STR and ARM for each living enemy model he destroys with a melee attack during his activation. This bonus lasts for one round.

In another age and under a different king, this Ordric warcaster would hang from the nearest yardarm, but Bartolo 'Broadsides Bart' Montador has managed to win fame and admiration rather than infamy. His booming voice and infectious lust for life rouse the fighting spirit in the men and women making up his sizable crew. All ports open their arms with a warm welcome for Captain Montador and even his enemies speak of him with envious admiration. Few captains walk the delicate line between pirate and privateer with as much style as Broadsides Bart.

SPELL COST RNG AOE POW UP OFF

Batten Down the Hatches	3	Self	CTRL	-		
Models in Bart's battlegroup currently in his control area cannot be knocked down and gain +3 ARM but suffer -2 SPD and DEF. Affected models can only move or be moved during their activations. This spell lasts for one round.						
Broadside	3	Self	CTRL	-		
Models in Bart's battlegroup currently in his control area may immediately make one normal ranged attack. Attacks gained from Broadside do not count against a weapon's ROF. This spell can be cast once per turn.						
Crow	2	6	-	-	-	X
Target friendly model/unit gains Loud and Terror. While in melee with a model with Loud, enemy models cannot give or receive orders. Enemy models/units in melee range of a model with Terror and enemy models/units with a model with Terror in their melee range must pass a command check or flee.						
Deadweight	2	8	-	12		X
When a living or undead model is destroyed by Deadweight, Bart's controller chooses an enemy model within 2" of the destroyed model. The model chosen must forfeit its movement or action and cannot run during its next activation.						
Hot Shot	2	6	-	-	-	X
Target model in Bart's battlegroup gains boosted ranged attack damage rolls. Double the number of damage points a structure takes from a ranged attack made by the affected model.						
Powder Keg	4	10	5	14		X
On a critical hit, models hit lose their initial attacks and cannot perform special attacks for one round.						

Montador gladly loads the dice in his favor and cheats to ensure victory. He lost his arm as a younger man in the card halls of Five Fingers after getting caught with cards up his sleeve. Years later when he could afford to do so he replaced his missing limb with a mechanical one containing a concealed, powerful cannon that serves as his new 'Ace'.

Broadsides Bart advocates a doctrine of superior firepower. He has built his reputation sailing one of the largest and most heavily armed ships on the seas. Shipwrights at Berck harbor rebuilt the *Calamitas* on the frame of a massive old Tordoran galleon. Retrofitted with enormous steam engines and triple paddle wheels, this floating juggernaut sits heavy in the water even without pillaged cargo. Weighted down by guns, kegs of blasting powder, and battle-ready warjacks, the *Calamitas* can match even a first-class ship of the line. To compensate for the ponderous movement of this floating arsenal, Broadsides Bart has acquired smaller and swifter vessels as escort. He takes this fleet to the seas and hires his services out for battles on land, all in the unashamed pursuit of wealth.



CAPTAIN PHINNEUS SHAE

MERCENARY PRIVATEER WARCASTER CHARACTER

*I follow no kingdom's flag, fear no ship on the sea, and bow to no master.
Blood calls for blood, and I will spill much more in the days to come.*

—CAPTAIN PHINNEUS SHAE

Focus 6 Cmd 8

SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM
6	6	7	5	16	14



Hand Cannon

RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
12	1	—	12



Squall

SPECIAL	POW	P+S
Beat Back	6	12

Damage	16
Field Allowance	C
Victory Points	5
Point Cost	67
Base Size	Small

FEAT: GODSPEED

Those who fight alongside the warcaster Phinneus Shae are the recipients of unusual luck and good fortune. On the battlefield he can quickly assess the standing of his men and loan them a sudden burst of speed for disengaging to fire pistols or clearing a lane to make way for a thundering cannonball to fire past and into the midst of the enemy.

Friendly models currently in Shae's control area may immediately move up to 3". During this movement, affected models ignore movement penalties from rough terrain and cannot be targeted by free strikes.

MERCENARY

Shae can only be included in mercenary contract armies that specify him as an eligible participant.

SHAE

AMPHIBIOUS ARMOR - Shae can voluntarily enter deep water and does not suffer damage due to ending his activation in deep water. While within deep or shallow water, Shae can move without penalty and can run or charge. While within deep water, Shae cannot be targeted by ranged or magic attacks, his DEF is not reduced, he can give orders, and he can make melee attacks against other models in deep water.

DODGY - When Shae is directly hit by an enemy attack, he may move up to 2" immediately after the attack has been resolved.

FIELD PROMOTION - Once per activation, Shae may promote a Swab in a friendly Sea Dog Crew unit that has had its Mate destroyed or removed from play. That Swab must be within Shae's command range. Replace the promoted model with a Mate model. Effects, spells, and animi on the replaced Swab are applied to the new Mate.

GROUND WORK - While knocked down, Shae is not automatically hit by melee attacks, and his DEF is not reduced.

SWASHBUCKLER - When Shae makes a Squall melee attack during his activation, his front arc extends 360° and he may make one melee attack with Squall against every enemy model within melee range. Completely resolve each attack individually and apply the targets' special rules immediately as each attack is resolved. A model is ineligible to be hit if it has a special rule preventing it from being targeted or if the attacker's line of sight is completely blocked by terrain.

SQUALL

BEAT BACK - When Shae makes a successful melee attack against a model, his target may be pushed 1" directly away from him immediately after the attack is resolved. Immediately after all Swashbuckler attacks have been resolved, Shae may move up to 1" directly toward the center of a pushed model.

SPELL COST RNG AOE POW UP OFF

Blow the Man Down 3 8 - 15 X

A model damaged by Blow the Man Down is knocked down. On a critical hit, the model is slammed d6" instead of suffering a normal damage roll. If the slammed model collides with another model with an equal or smaller-sized base, that model suffers a POW 15 collateral damage roll.

Coup de Main 3 Self CTRL -

Friendly models/units currently in Shae's control area may charge at SPD +5" without spending focus points or being ordered to do so. Coup de Main lasts for one turn.

Phantasm 2 6 - - X

When target friendly model/unit is targeted by a ranged attack, the attack suffers -5 RNG.

Scurvy 2 10 - - X X

Target living non-warcaster/warlock enemy model/unit suffers -2 CMD and cannot give or receive orders. The affected model/unit must make a command check before its normal movement. If the check fails, the model/unit forfeits its movement. When the affected model/unit ends its normal movement, it must make a command check before taking actions. If the check fails the model/unit forfeits its action.

Storm Rager 2 6 - -

Target friendly warrior model gains +2 STR, MAT, and ARM and cannot be targeted by Combined Ranged Attacks or Combined Melee Attacks for one round.

Torrent 3 8 4 - X

When Torrent is cast, Shae's controller places a 4" AOE anywhere completely within Shae's control area. The AOE then moves up to 8" directly toward the nearest enemy model, stopping only once centered on that model. During each of Shae's controller's Maintenance Phases, the AOE moves up to 8" directly toward the nearest enemy model. Enemy models within the AOE cannot make ranged or magic attacks. Enemy models outside the AOE cannot draw LOS to anything beyond the AOE.

Phinneus Shae has carved his place in the world with a sword's edge. He uses wind and storm to pursue his prey across the waves, filling his sails while his enemies flounder becalmed and confounded. He invokes phantasms to distract foes and adapts to the unpredictable swells of warfare as easily as he walks a deck amid a storm at sea.

Shae was not born to a life of piracy. Raised by wealthy parents outside the southern city of Mercir, his sorcerous powers earned him a commission to the prestigious Strategic Academy, selected for warcaster training. Shae resented the constraints of military life and earned a reputation as a troublemaker. Phinneus left the Academy before completing his training.

Given the rarity of warcasters, Shae did not lack for opportunities. He sold his services as escort to a number of merchant ships and earned enough to maintain his expensive lifestyle. He developed a unique style of nautical battle magic and soon joined the Mercarian fleet flagship *M.L.S. Exeter*. Shae proved his deadly skill against Cryxian raiders, merchant rivals, and independent pirates.

Shae formed a bond of respect with members of the *Exeter's* crew, particularly the Rhulic financier Joln Rockbottom. Unknown to Shae, this influence earned him the paranoid enmity of the *Exeter's* unpleasant captain Laross Fargen. In a fit of irrational rage, Fargen had Shae thrown overboard on suspicion of conspiracy. Surviving by dint of his warcaster armor and the assistance of the ship's bosun, Shae vowed revenge and orchestrated a mutiny, sweeping up those among the crew who looked up to him. After defeat at Shae's hands the foolish captain caused an explosion in the *Exeter's* powder room, sinking the ship and forcing the survivors ashore. So began Shae's life as a fugitive.

Hard years followed the mutiny. The League brought all of its financial influence to the task of harassing the families of the individuals reputedly involved. The League singled out Phinneus Shae as the leader and decided to make an example of him by placing an exorbitant bounty on his head. While enduring these indignities, Captain Shae and his crew found work as mercenaries, taking whatever jobs they could find until they could scrape together the funds to buy a ship and return to sea.

With his new ship the *Talion*, Captain Shae now pursues his agenda with a ruthless enthusiasm. He takes any prize that crosses his path but reserves his focused wrath for ships of the Mercarian League. Shared hardships have forged lasting bonds of loyalty between members of his crew and taught Shae a sense of responsibility for their lives. He has no family but the men and women of the *Talion*, and they would gladly follow him into the depths of the Sea of a Thousand Souls.

TACTICAL TIP

DODGY: Shae may be targeted by free strikes during Dodgy movement.

TORRENT: An enemy model can see into or out of the AOE but not through it.





FIONA THE BLACK

MERCENARY PRIVATEER THAMARITE WARCASTER CHARACTER

*They say she has Thamar's own luck, but believe me she earned it.
Even death will not claim her until she is good and ready to make the trip.*

—CAPTAIN CALVAR SANTONI OF THE *ILL FORTUNE*

Focus 7						Cmd 8
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	
6	5	6	4	16	14	
						Viper
						SPECIAL POW P+S
						Multi 6 11
Damage						15
Field Allowance						C
Victory Points						5
Point Cost						63
Base Size						Small

FEAT: DARK OMEN

The dark goddess Thamar smiles on those who serve her best, and Fiona the Black can invoke her patron's power to twist the odds in her favor. Raising a hand to draw a black arcane sigil in the air, Fiona curses those who oppose her with an omen of ill fortune that brings all their plans to ruin.

While in Fiona's control area, enemy models roll one fewer die when making

attack and damage rolls. Dark Omen lasts for one round.

MERCENARY

Fiona the Black will not work for the Protectorate.

FIONA

ANIMOSITY - Fiona the Black cannot be included in an army that includes Morrowan models.

CULTISTS - One Sea Dog unit included in an army with Fiona may be Cultists. Cultists are Thamarite models that never flee. Fiona gains one additional focus point if she is within 1" of one or more friendly Cultists during her controller's Control Phase.

SEA LEGS - Fiona cannot be knocked down.

VIPER

KHORVA'S BLESSING - When resolving Viper attacks, ignore unspent focus on models with the Focus Manipulation ability. Damage from Viper attacks cannot be transferred. A model hit by Viper loses the Tough ability for one turn.

REACH - 2" melee range.

WHIPLASH - When an enemy model misses Fiona with a magic attack, that model is automatically hit by the attack instead. AOE attacks that miss are centered on the attacking model. Fiona is the point of origin for these attacks.

An unabashed Thamarite, Fiona brazenly displays her devotion to that widely loathed goddess and takes pride in having liberated herself from quaint conventional notions of morality and justice. Fiona the Black has found a home among the pirates and privateers of the Broken Coast, where skill and ambition bring ample rewards, and folly and stupidity invite destruction.

At night she stands at the prow of the *Ill Fortune*, a ship "loaned" at the behest of Bartolo Montador, staring out in moody silence over the dark waves and restlessly anticipating the next engagement. Her enthusiasm for conflict and her courage in the face of impossible risks has inspired the adoration of a worshipful cabal who obediently follow her. The *Ill Fortune's* crew forms the core of this cult and demonstrates

SPELL	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
Affliction	3	8	-	-	X	X
When a damage roll resulting from a direct hit fails to exceed the ARM of a model in target model/unit, the model directly hit suffers one damage point.						
Discord	1	10	-	-	-	X
Fiona's controller takes control of target enemy non-warcaster, non-warlock warrior model and immediately makes one normal melee attack then Discord expires. When making this attack the affected model's front arc extends 360°.						
Nonokrion Brand	2	6	-	-	X	-
Target friendly model/unit ignores intervening models when making attacks. Attacks made by affected models may damage models only affected by magic attacks. Affected models may charge incorporeal models. A model/unit damaged by an affected model must pass a command check or flee. The destruction of an affected model never provides a soul token.						
Roth's Mercy	2	6	-	-	X	-
When a model in target friendly living unit is destroyed, another living model in the unit may be destroyed instead. When another model is destroyed, the model that was originally destroyed is reduced to one wound.						
Sigil of Nivara	2	6	-	-	X	-
Target warjack in Fiona's battlegroup gains +3 DEF versus magic attacks. When the affected warjack is directly hit by an enemy spell, immediately after the attack roll, the casting model suffers d3 damage points. Enemy models cannot upkeep spells on the affected warjack or models friendly to it, in base-to-base contact with the affected warjack. While in base-to-base contact with the affected warjack, friendly models gain +3 DEF versus magic attacks.						
Soulfire	2	10	-	12	-	X
When a living model is destroyed by Soulfire, Fiona gains one focus point.						
Telgesch Mark	2	6	-	-	X	-
While target friendly model is in Fiona's control area, Fiona may measure her spells' ranges from the affected model instead of Fiona. Fiona must have LOS to her target. All modifiers are based on Fiona's LOS.						

a degree of discipline and coordination that other pirates find unsettling. While Fiona leaves direction of nautical matters to the ship's captain Calvar Santoni, one of her most devoted admirers, the decks are unquestionably her domain. Even Montador requests permission before boarding.

Fiona mastered her sorcery as an impetuous youth in the streets of Ceryl. The Fraternal Order of Wizardry dominates that city's arcane community, and after unpleasant run-ins with members of this group and local religious figures, Fiona developed an aversion to authority and an appetite for rebellion and disobedience. These predilections

made her a natural target for recruitment by the city's subversive Thamarites, who helped her refine her power.

Never content to follow, Fiona soon came to loathe the cowardly Thamarites for skulking in the shadows. She learned all she could from the sept in Mercir before answering the call of the sea, becoming a pirate while refining her powers over men and warjacks. As "Fiona the Black" her notoriety outstripped that of the pirate captains she joined on pillages, and she quickly became an eagerly sought asset. She drifted from ship to ship until at last discovering a peer she could respect in Captain Bartolo Montador, who proved strong-willed enough to resist her manipulations.

The nature of Fiona's strange and complicated, but mutually beneficial, partnership with Broadside's Bart remains a mystery. Fiona eagerly enters battle to personally press the attack and has shown no hesitation in tackling ships twice the *Ill Fortune's* size while coordinating actions with the *Calamitas*. Her daring and success has bestowed a reputation of being untouchable.

With little effort Fiona can seize control of lesser minds and force them to lash out against those nearest to them. Amid the chaos of battle this prompts riots as one friend turns on another. As she spreads chaos, Fiona coldly picks off the most fearsome of her enemies using bursts of fire that consume them from within, all while directing her devoted followers to attack.

TACTICAL TIP

TELGESH MARK: If you have Telgesh Mark on a model in play, you cannot cast it again and measure the range of the spell from the previously affected model. As soon as you declare you are casting Telgesh Mark again, the one in play expires.





Nothing can outrun a Buccaneer once the net comes down.

—JENKIN HADDERIN, GUNNER'S MATE ABOARD THE *TALION*

HEIGHT/WEIGHT: 9'8"/3.15 tons
ARMAMENT: Gaff (right arm), Net (left)
FUEL LOAD/BURN USAGE: 300 lbs, 8 hours general, 1.4 hrs combat
INITIAL SERVICE DATE: 584 AR
CORTEX MANUFACTURER: Fraternal Order of Wizardry
ORIG. CHASSIS DESIGN: Rohannor Steamworks (Berck)

BUCCANEER

ASSAULT - As part of a charge, after moving but before performing its combat action, the Buccaneer may Assault. When making an Assault, the Buccaneer makes a single ranged attack targeting the model charged. The Buccaneer is not considered to be in melee when making the Assault ranged attack, nor is the target considered to be in melee with the Buccaneer. If the target is not in melee range after moving, the Buccaneer must still make the Assault ranged attack before its activation ends. The Buccaneer cannot target a model with which it was in melee at the start of its activation with an Assault ranged attack.

SEA LEGS - The Buccaneer cannot be knocked down.

NET

TANGLED - Instead of suffering a damage roll, a model hit by the Net has its base DEF changed to 7 for one round and must forfeit its movement or action during its next activation.

GAFF

REACH - 2" melee range.

REEL 'EM IN - If the Gaff hits a target with a small or medium-sized base, that model may be moved up to 2" directly toward the Buccaneer, stopping short only if it contacts another model, an obstacle, or an obstruction. During this movement the model cannot be targeted by free strikes.

A nimble and sure-footed combatant, the Buccaneer can charge across heaving decks during a storm, ram its gaff into adversaries, or sweep them into the ocean. Its weighted net entangles enemies to set up an easy kill for its own weapon or the sailors fighting alongside it.

Buccaneers began as heavily modified Seafarers, an older but popular laborjack chassis built in the Ordic city of Berck. The Seafarer suffered from an inferior movement system, resulting in poor performance on difficult waters, and the 'jack was always at risk of pitching overboard in high seas. Engineers solved this on the Buccaneer with an ingenious redesign of the feet and legs to incorporate pneumatic pistons and by modifying the cortex to react to heaving decks.

A small fishing concern first rigged the Buccaneer with both a gaff and a weighted net and found these accoutrements served as well against hostile boarders as against hull grinders. The 'jack has since enjoyed wide popularity, including among pirates seeking a nimble warjack to keep its feet in the midst of turbulent brawls on a ship's deck.



—LORD ROCKBOTTOM

Despite its penchant for extreme violence, the Freebooter handles cargo with amazing care in even the roughest seas. Watching the machine move deftly at its work, many crewmen find it hard to imagine the mechanical mayhem the 'jack can unleash.

HAMMERFIST - Roll an additional damage die against knocked down targets.

ORIG. CHASSIS DESIGN: Engines West (Ceryl)





MARINER

MERCENARY HEAVY WARJACK

We thought we had the Talion dead to rights. Then I spied that warjack striding the deck and leveling its cannon at us with fuse burning.

—HERDWELL MATHERS, FORMER LOOKOUT FOR THE M.L.S. *BOUNTeous*, NOW SUNK

SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM
5	10	5	4	12	17

L		Ship Gun			
		RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
		15	1	3	14

R		Anchor		
		SPECIAL	POW	P+S
		Multi	5	15

1 2 3 4 5 6

	L			R	
L	L	M	C	R	R
	M	M	C	C	

Field Allowance	U
Victory Points	3
Point Cost	110
Base Size	Large

HEIGHT/WEIGHT: 13'1"/5.89 tons

ARMAMENT: Anchor (right arm), Ship Gun (left)

FUEL LOAD/BURN USAGE: 300 lbs, 6 hours general, 1 hr combat

INITIAL SERVICE DATE: 590 AR

CORTEX MANUFACTURER: Fraternal Order of Wizardry

ORIG. CHASSIS DESIGN: Engines West (Ceryl)

MARINER

AMPHIBIOUS - The Mariner can voluntarily enter deep water. The Mariner's furnace is not extinguished by deep or shallow water. While within deep or shallow water, the Mariner can move without penalty and can run or charge. While within deep water, the Mariner cannot be targeted by ranged or magic attacks, its DEF is not reduced, and can make melee attacks against other models in deep water.

LASH - Friendly warrior models in base-to-base contact with the Mariner cannot be knocked down.

SEA LEGS - The Mariner cannot be knocked down.

SHIP GUN

LOADER - The Mariner must be in base-to-base contact with a friendly warrior model to make a Ship Gun ranged attack.

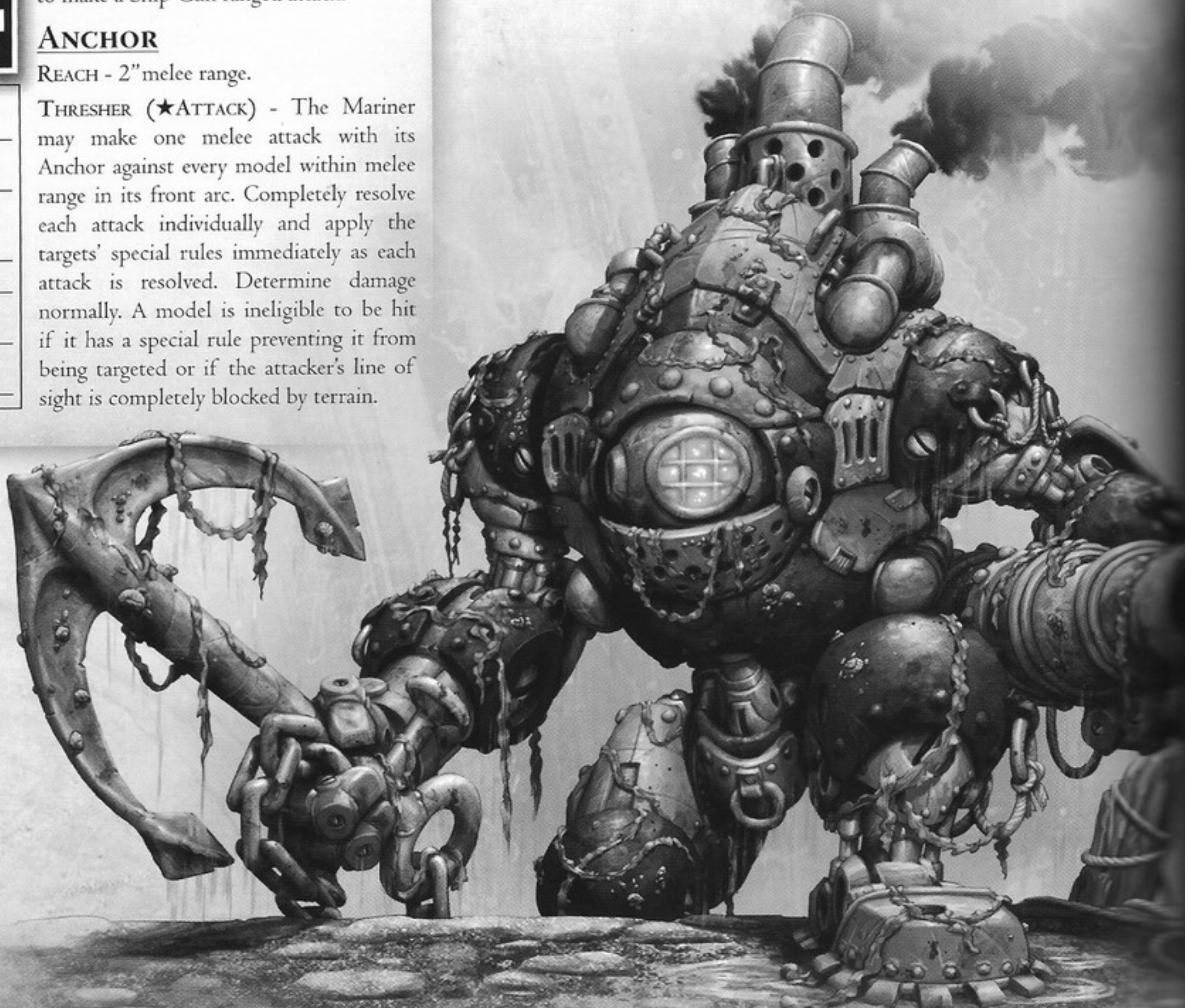
ANCHOR

REACH - 2" melee range.

THRESHER (★ATTACK) - The Mariner may make one melee attack with its Anchor against every model within melee range in its front arc. Completely resolve each attack individually and apply the targets' special rules immediately as each attack is resolved. Determine damage normally. A model is ineligible to be hit if it has a special rule preventing it from being targeted or if the attacker's line of sight is completely blocked by terrain.

The Mariner ranks among the heaviest steamjacks modified for nautical warfare. An undisputed king of battle at sea, it can keep up continuous fire on an enemy vessel with its ship gun while its own ship maneuvers for a proper broadside. When the ships close in and boarding begins, a Mariner can clear an entire deck of defenders with a single sweep of its deadly anchor.

Heavy modifications perfectly adapt the Mariner to its role at sea. Based on an innovative laborjack designed to work completely underwater for limited periods, its chassis includes watertight seals, exhaust valves, and a special boiler and piping system that cycles air from internal spaces into the engine while immersed. An ingenious stabilization compensator integrated into the machine enables it to endure the roughest seas without toppling over. The Mariner has proven so reliable in difficult waters that crews have taken to strapping themselves to its chassis during storms.



PRESS GANGERS

MERCENARY PRIVATEER SEA DOG UNIT

Nothing to it; a slow man is a volunteer, a quick man is a coward. A crack to the head starts a fresh life at sea for both.

—BOARDING MASTER HADGIS BLAY



Many captains in the Iron Kingdoms, particularly pirates and privateers, view impressing sailors into service as a practical and time-honored tradition. Sometimes, with good recruits hard to come by and not always willing to volunteer, the hardened men and women of the press gangs must see to it that a ship does not lack for crew. They take sadistic delight in waylaying strangers and "inviting" them to a new career at sea by way of a weighty club to the back of the head.

Traditionally a press gang might frequent seedy dockside bars or taverns to pick up those passed out from drinking, but in a pinch the press gang will brave the battlefield alongside other sea dogs to waylay any adversaries that stumble into reach and impress them on the spot. Only particularly callous and mean-spirited individuals excel at this type of work, and they generally rank among the least popular—albeit warily respected—sea dogs on a given vessel.

MERCENARY

Press Gangers will work for any faction.

BOARDING MASTER

LEADER

LASS

RUSE - After her unit's normal movement but before performing her combat action, the Lass may use Ruse. Target living enemy warrior model in her melee range must pass a command check or turn directly away from the Lass.

UNIT

ADVANCE DEPLOYMENT - Place Press Gangers after normal deployment, up to 12" beyond the established deployment zone.

GANG - Models in this unit gain +2 to attack and damage rolls when making a melee attack targeting an enemy model in melee range of another model in this unit.

SHANGHAI - Small-based living enemy warrior models in melee with 2 or more models in this unit may be shanghaied. When a shanghaied enemy model suffers sufficient damage to be destroyed as a result of an attack made by a Press Ganger, it is removed from play. The Press Ganger's controller may add a Swab to a friendly Sea Dog Crew unit within 12" of the attacking model. The model must be placed in formation and may activate normally this turn.

TOUGH - When a Press Ganger suffers sufficient damage to be destroyed, his controller rolls a d6. On a 5 or 6, the Press Ganger is knocked down instead of being destroyed.

WAYLAY - An enemy warrior model hit by a Press Ganger completely in its back arc is knocked down.

Boarding Master Cmd 8

SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM
6	6	6	4	13	12

Swab & Lass Cmd 6

SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM
6	6	5	4	13	12

Hand Weapon	SPECIAL	POW	P+S
	—	3	9

Field Allowance	2
-----------------	---

Victory Points	2
----------------	---

Leader, Lass, & 4 Troops	51
--------------------------	----

Up to 4 Additional Troops	8ea
---------------------------	-----

Base Size	Small
-----------	-------





SEA DOG CREW

MERCENARY PRIVATEER UNIT

Nice thing about our men is it don't take a lot of drillin', marchin', and speech makin' to get them riled up proper, just a slug of warm rum before the fight.

—MR. WALLS, QUARTERMASTER OF THE TALION

Mate						Cmd 7
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	
6	5	6	5	13	12	
Swab						Cmd 5
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	
6	5	5	4	13	12	
						Pistol
		RNG	ROF	AOE	POW	
		8	1	—	10	
						Hand Weapon
		SPECIAL	POW	P+S		
		—	3	8		
Field Allowance						U
Victory Points						2
Leader and 5 Troops						59
Up to 4 Additional Troops						9ea
Base Size						Small

MERCENARY

Sea Dog Crew will work for any faction.

MATE

LEADER

UNIT

GANG - Models in this unit gain +2 to attack and damage rolls when making melee attacks targeting an enemy model in melee range of another model in this unit.

POINT BLANK - A model in this unit may make a melee attack with his Pistol targeting a model in melee range. Use the attacking model's current MAT when resolving this attack. If the attack succeeds, the target suffers a damage roll equal to the POW of the Pistol. The model does not roll an additional damage die on Pistol charge attacks. The model cannot make free strikes with his Pistol.

amid strangers at sea. Such men are an unruly, difficult, and surly handful known to be disrespectful of authority. Convincing such men to act in concert requires stern oversight.

Loyalty is a rare commodity among sea dogs as each man looks out only for himself. Despite this, the desire for self-preservation and lust for wealth can inspire such sailors to fight with surprising ferocity. Some sea dogs have "Thamar's luck", as the saying goes, and survive the most unlikely misfortunes with nothing more than a few scratches or bruises. They have a reputation for exploiting any numerical advantage to overwhelm their enemies and deliver the killing blow. A simple and universal strategy among sea dogs involves rushing forward as a motley gang screaming howls of battle and curses of creative invectives. These unsubtle tactics prove surprisingly effective, and enemies have learned to fear the sight of a gang of unwashed pirates rushing in, firing guns, and brandishing axes or cutlasses with wild abandon.

There is a freedom and liberty to life at sea, despite the generally harsh discipline aboard ship, which has undeniable appeal to many men and women. Even those initially impressed against their will can be swept up in the sea dog traditions and soon forget about their pasts. While every sea dog must endure a tedious period as a lowly swab, some make their mark and become respected mates. These veteran salts form an invaluable link in the tenuous chain of command that keeps every privateer and pirate ship functioning.

Those with ambition and courage can earn the sweet rewards of ample spoils. A well-run pirate or privateer vessel can take a king's ransom in lucrative cargo in a relatively short time, earning its crew a bounty far in excess of any profits they could expect to see toiling in fields, hauling fishing nets, or other "hard, honest" labor. These tremendous rewards often vanish in nights of wild excess in taverns and gambling halls across a variety of port towns. Just as these men work hard and fight hard aboard ship, they earn the right to play hard when given a few days of reprieve before the next trip out to sea. A few will take the chance to flee and disappear, never seen again, during each shore leave, but the press gangs quickly shore up their numbers with new recruits just as unsavory and ready for bloodshed.

Motley pirates mustered together from disreputable coastal taverns and wharves, barely kept in check by grizzled mates and hungry for spoils, the sea dogs put their swords and pistols to the service of any master offering a big enough share of the take. What they lack in training and manners they make up for with frightening bluster, enthusiastic avarice, and drunken debauchery. They arise from diverse backgrounds and many have nothing in common aside from a shared life of fighting and dying for the chance at plunder.

Men like these haunt coastal ports from Uldenfrost to Sul, but congregate in those places where people would rather smuggle than trade and rather settle disputes with blades than words. A number of disreputable ports have traditionally sheltered such men, including places like Dreggsmouth, Five Fingers, Clocker's Cove, and Blackwater. Sea dogs often begin as brigands, cutthroats, and men seeking escape from gambler's debts or other criminal obligations. Sometimes they are simple sailors or fishermen waylaid by press gangs who awaken to find themselves

Every privateer ship has those who rise to the notice of their captains to gain privileged and coveted posts. Ambitious sea dogs long to eventually stand as first mates, pilots, or quartermasters, enjoy greater shares of the plunder, and earn the respect of legendary pirates and privateers. Some of the veteran sea dogs on the *Talion* actually mutinied with Captain Phinneus Shae aboard the *Exeter*, and their seniority earns

them greater status and a larger share of the spoils. They relate tales of their captain to the new recruits, continuing the legacy and adding to their captain's legend. These old salts keep the younger ones on task to a point, as each takes a fierce pride in his freedom. After all, they embraced this life to avoid answering to other men for their actions.





SEA DOG DECK GUN

MERCENARY PRIVATEER SEA DOG WEAPON CREW UNIT

Given a choice between running up waving a sword like a ninny or staying here and firing a cannon in their faces, I'll take the latter.

—JARVER PRAULY, GUNNER ABOARD THE TALION

Gunner Cmd 6

SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM
2	5	5	4	13	12

Crewman Cmd 6

SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM
4	5	5	4	13	12



Deck Gun

RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
14	1	3	13



Hand Weapon

SPECIAL	POW	P+S
—	3	8

Field Allowance 2

Victory Points 1

Gunner and Crewman 23

Crewman Base Size Small

Gunner Base Size Large

MERCENARY

The Sea Dog Deck Gun will work for any faction.

CREWMAN

RANGE FINDER (★ACTION) - The Gunner gains +2 RAT when attacking with the Deck Gun this activation. The Crewman must be in base-to-base contact with the Gunner and not be engaged to use Range Finder.

UNIT

GANG - Models in this unit gain +2 to attack and damage rolls when making a melee attack targeting an enemy model in melee range of another model in this unit.

WEAPON CREW - This unit is made up of a Gunner and Crewman. The Gunner is mounted on a large base with the Deck

Gun. While larger cannons employed aboard ships usually stay there when the crew takes the fight ashore, deck guns have the benefits of portability combined with deadly punch at short range, which lets them serve adequately as mobile artillery. Aboard a ship they offer the advantage of rapid repositioning and quick aiming, as opposed to the ship's primary cannons that fire en masse with only the ship's orientation to guide them. Deck guns fire into the massed crew of enemy vessels before boarding, seeking to maximize casualties before melee begins.

Gunners often start their career as "powder monkeys" when younger, running powder between the lower and upper decks in the heat of battle. Many swabs prefer duty on deck guns, as they would rather take shots at the enemy from a distance than fight on the front line. In truth, an enemy often prioritizes cannons before worrying about lesser targets, making the difference in the degree of risk debatable.

Gun. Models in this unit cannot run or charge. The Gunner gains +2" of movement per Crewman with whom he begins activation in base-to-base contact. If the Gunner is destroyed or removed from play, a Crewman in this unit within 1" can take the destroyed Gunner's place immediately and become the new Gunner. Remove the Crewman from the table instead of the Gunner. Effects, spells, and animi on the damaged Gunner expire. Effects, spells, and animi on the removed Crewman are applied to the new Gunner.

DECK GUN (GUNNER ONLY)

LIGHT ARTILLERY - The Deck Gun cannot be used to make ranged attacks if the Gunner moves. The Gunner does not receive an aiming bonus for forfeiting movement when attacking with the Deck Gun.



SEA DOG RIFLEMAN

MERCENARY PRIVATEER SEA DOG CREW SPECIAL WEAPON ATTACHMENT

Bet ye ten crowns I can give that rig's watchman a third eye afore he even notices our ship creepin' up behind 'em.

—GAST LARTIGLER, RIFLEMAN OF THE TALION



Any sea dog worth his salt can lay claim to an old pistol, but swabs highly prize those boasting an accurate long rifle for the ability to lay down fire at nearly twice the distance. Such shots from atop the crow's nest or the ship's prow can make all the difference by picking off enemy officers and boarders before the ships close to grapple. Some riflemen boast at being crack shots, but in truth most have little training. Like other sea dogs they rely on laying down a concentrated barrage from as many guns as possible.

Pirate and privateer captains know the deadly effectiveness of good rifle fire during engagements, but aboard a lean ship these guns remain scarce. Given the short, at best, life expectancy of most sea dogs it falls to individual privateers to buy and maintain such weapons. This also means the rifles frequently change hands in the heat of battle as a rifleman's nearest friend "inherits" the gun when its previous owner suffers an unfortunately fatal wound. Only cutthroat sea dogs survive long, and such men enthusiastically embrace these opportunistic windfalls as an expected part of life at sea.

While each rifleman owns his own gun, quartermasters are notoriously frugal about supplying powder from the ship's stores. Quartermasters must reserve most of the powder aboard for the cannons and cannot have the men firing

RIFLEMAN

COMBINED RANGED ATTACK - Instead of making ranged attacks separately, two or more Sea Dog Riflemen in the same unit may combine their attacks against the same target. In order to participate in a combined ranged attack, a Rifleman must be able to declare a ranged attack against the intended target and be in a single open formation group with the other participants. The Rifleman with the highest RAT in the attacking group makes one ranged attack roll for the group and gains +1 to the attack and damage rolls for each Rifleman, including himself, participating in the attack.

GANG - Models in this unit gain +2 to attack and damage rolls when making melee attacks targeting an enemy model in melee range of another model in this unit.

TAKE UP - When a Rifleman is destroyed or removed from play, a Swab in his unit within 1" of him may take up his arms. Remove the Swab model from the table and replace it with the Rifleman model. Effects, spells, and animi on the replaced Swab are applied to the new Rifleman model. Effects, spells, and animi on the destroyed Rifleman expire.

Rifleman					Cmd 5
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM
6	5	5	4	13	12
	Long Rifle				
	RNG	ROF	AOE	POW	
	14	1	—	10	
	Hand Weapon				
	SPECIAL	POW	P+S		
	—	3	8		
Field Allowance					U
Victory Points					+0
1 Rifleman					11
Up to 2 Additional Riflemen					11 ea
Base Size					Small

willy-nilly at every passing sea bird or shark. Crewmen caught firing haphazardly can expect a thorough flogging. While they stay in the good graces of the officers, however, a rifleman who shows talent might receive a small bonus share as well as extra rum for each kill.





MR. WALLS, THE QUARTERMASTER

MERCENARY PRIVATEER CHARACTER SEA DOG CREW UNIT ATTACHMENT

Come a fight, he's the last one to worry about. Seen' him take four bullets in the gut without flinching and keep on firing.

—'Doc' KILLINGSWORTH

Mr. Walls				Cmd 8	
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM
6	6	7	4	13	12
		Hand Cannon			
		RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
		*	1	—	12
		Hand Cannon			
		RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
		*	1	—	12
Damage					5
Field Allowance					C
Victory Points					+1
Point Cost					22
Base Size					Small

MR. WALLS

GANG - A model in this unit gains +2 to attack and damage rolls when making a melee attack targeting an enemy model in melee range of another model in this unit.

MONKEY BITE - Living enemy models suffer -2 to melee attack rolls while in melee with Mr. Walls.

NO QUARTER - Once per game during his unit's activation, Mr. Walls may use No Quarter. This round models in his unit that charge do so at SPD +5", may charge across rough terrain and obstacles, and gain Fearless and Terror. A Fearless model never flees. Enemy models/units in

melee range of a model with Terror and enemy models/units with a model with Terror in their melee range must pass a command check or flee.

OFFICER - Mr. Walls is the unit leader.

ONE EYED - At the start of this unit's activation, determine the range of Mr. Walls' Hand Cannons. His Hand Cannons have a range of d6 +6". Roll once for both Hand Cannons. Mr. Walls never gains an aiming bonus.

PISTOLIER - Mr. Walls has a melee range of 1/2".

POINT BLANK - Mr. Walls may make a melee attack with his Hand Cannons targeting a model in melee range. Use Mr. Walls' current MAT when resolving this attack. If the attack succeeds the target suffers a damage roll equal to the POW of the Hand Cannon. Mr. Walls does not roll an additional damage die on Hand Cannon charge attacks. Mr. Walls cannot make free strikes with his Hand Cannons.

TACTICS: ADVANCED DEPLOYMENT - Models in Mr. Walls' unit gain Advance Deployment. Place models with Advance Deployment after normal deployment, up to 12" beyond the established deployment zone.

TOUGH - When Mr. Walls suffers sufficient damage to be destroyed, his controller rolls a d6. On a 5 or 6, Mr. Walls is knocked down instead of being destroyed. If Mr. Walls is not destroyed, he is reduced to one wound.

Even on a ship boasting more than its share of toughened and battle-hardened old salts, some men rise to special prominence. Mr. Walls, the senior quartermaster of the *Talion*, boasts more combat experience than anyone on the ship's crew including Captain Shae. Ten years the captain's senior, Walls earned a reputation for leaping to the fore of any altercation with pistols blazing and rarely carries less than three braces of hefty, well-oiled firearms on his person. Mr. Walls always has his pet monkey Stubs, a prize from a trip to the continent of Zu, on his shoulder. The quartermaster tolerates no mistreatment of the monkey and spoils Stubs with food from his own table and a portion of his rum rations.

Mr. Walls displays two distinct demeanors. On the one hand, he is a stern taskmaster accepting no excuses from his men. On the other hand, he often intercedes on his crew's behalf with other officers and always stands ready to fight alongside them in a scrap. This soft spot has occasionally gotten him in trouble over the years as he sometimes bends the rules for his men. Aboard the *Exeter* Mr. Walls did what he could to reduce the impact of "Commodore" Laross Fargen's cruelties and draconian punishments. He visited the men in the brig as often as he could and risked his own hide to sneak them extra shares of bread and water.

This concern led Mr. Walls to take a key role in the infamous mutiny, a fact not widely known. He informed Phinneus Shae of the treatment of Joln Rockbottom, which prompted the warcaster to confront the former captain. That this confrontation got Shae thrown overboard and nearly left for dead is a fact Mr. Walls still remembers with a keen sense of guilt.

Perhaps this sense of obligation has prompted him to watch over the men, particularly those who survive from the original mutiny. When stopping at port he often spends most of his share buying the crew rounds at local taverns. Despite his

generosity, the pirate life has hardened Walls into a grim, unforgiving man. He knows that sizable bounties have lured many hunters after the *Talion* and that they risk their lives every time they put to sea. He accepts that they must take whatever work they can get and tries not to dwell on the fate of those they inevitably leave drowning in the deep. He focuses on his loyalty to Shae and his duty to keep his men alive and in line.

Mr. Walls does not talk about the loss of his eye, but Doc relates the story whereby Walls took a bullet in the face during a boarding action against raiders out of Blackwater.

The quartermaster fell to the deck as the Scharde who shot him, thinking him a corpse, stepped past. The monkey Stubs leapt on the man and bit him with such force it bought Mr. Walls the time to stand and finish him with a shot to the neck. Mr. Walls continued fighting for another half hour before he passed out from blood loss. He has never shot straight since and finds himself subject to piercing headaches. He has not allowed this to dampen his enthusiasm for pistols, allowing only that he has better luck when he gets up close and personal before firing both barrels square into the face of the enemy.





THE COMMODORE CANNON & CREW

MERCENARY PRIVATEER SEA DOG CHARACTER UNIT

Ye ain't a sea dog until ye been deafened by the Commodore, yer ears ringing as ye see a ten-ton warjack knocked on its arse by a ball bigger than yer head.

—MR. WALLS, QUARTERMASTER OF THE TALION

Commodore Cmd —

SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM
0	0	—	—	5	18

Crewman Cmd 7

SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM
6	5	5	4	13	12



Commodore

RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
*	1	*	*



Pistol

RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
8	1	—	10



Hand Weapon

SPECIAL	POW	P+S
—	3	8

Commodore's Damage 10

Field Allowance C

Victory Points 2

Commodore and 3 Crewmen 43

Crewman Base Size Small

Commodore Base Size Large

MERCENARY

The Commodore Cannon & Crew can only be included in mercenary contract armies that include Captain Phinneus Shae.

COMMODORE (COMMODORE ONLY)

AMMO TYPES - Each time the Commodore is used to make a ranged attack, choose one of the following ammunition types:

- **Canister Shot** - Canister Shot uses a spray template. The attacker gains +2 to Canister Shot attack rolls. Models hit suffer a POW 20 damage roll.
- **Cannon Ball** - Cannon Ball is RNG 20. On a direct hit, instead of suffering a normal damage roll, the Commodore's target is slammed d6" directly away from the Commodore and suffers a POW 16 damage roll. If the slammed model collides with another model with an equal or smaller-sized base, that model suffers a POW 16 collateral damage roll. If the model directly hit by the Commodore cannot be slammed, it suffers a POW 16 damage roll.

- **Incendiary Shot** - Incendiary shot is RNG 16, AOE 4, POW 12. Models in the AOE suffer Fire. Fire is a continuous effect that sets the target ablaze. A model on fire suffers a POW 12 damage roll each turn during its controller's Maintenance Phase until the fire expires on a d6 roll of 1 or 2. Fire effects are alchemical substances or magical in nature and are not affected by water.

ARTILLERY - The Commodore is not a living model and is not a warrior model. It does not activate but may be moved up to 1" for each Crewman in base-to-base contact with it at the beginning of the unit's activation. If the Commodore is moved during its unit's activation, a Crewman in the unit cannot make a Fire! special attack. The Commodore is never in melee and cannot engage or be engaged. The Commodore is automatically hit by melee attacks. The Commodore cannot be knocked down or made stationary and never flees. Ignore the Commodore when determining unit formation.

CREWMAN

CROSS TRAINED - A Sea Dog Swab ending his normal movement within 3" of a friendly Crewman model may join the unit if one or more Crewmen in the unit have been destroyed or removed from play. If all Crewmen have been destroyed, a friendly Sea Dog Swab within 3" of the Commodore may become a Crewman. There can never be more than 3 Crewmen in this unit as a result of Cross Trained. Replace the Swab model with the Crewman model, then the replaced model's activation ends. Effects, non-upkeep spells, and animi on the replaced Swab are applied to the new Crewman. The new Crewman is now part of the Cannon Crew unit and not his original Sea Dog unit.

FIRE! (★ATTACK) - A Crewman makes a ranged attack with the Commodore. The Commodore may be fired once per turn. To fire the Commodore, a Crewman must be in base-to-base contact with the Commodore and not engaged. A Crewman firing the Commodore never gains an aiming bonus. When firing the Commodore, both the cannon and the Crewman must have LOS to the target. The Crewman ignores the Commodore when determining LOS. When the Cannon is fired, the attack's range and all modifiers are based on the Commodore.

GUNNERY (★ACTION) - A Crewman may make a special action to give the Crewman firing the Commodore a cumulative +1 RAT on his attack roll this activation. The Crewman must be in base-to-base contact with the Commodore and not engaged to make a Gunnery special action.

One personality aboard the *Talion* is neither alive nor a person although sometimes the gunners speak to it like another member of the crew. A special legacy of the *Exeter* mutiny, the 'Commodore' is a massive royal-weight cannon such as those typically found only on first-class ships of the line. Combined with a healthy store of varied types of deadly ammunition, the Commodore has proven a tremendously versatile weapon. With a single deafening roar it can change the entire course of a battle.

The weapon's nickname comes in sardonic tribute to Captain Laross Fargen of the Mercarian League Ship *Exeter* who once demanded his crew address him as Commodore. His skeleton hangs from the cannon's wide barrel as proof of the morbid humor of the surviving mutineers. At the end of the mutiny, Captain Fargen accidentally set off an explosion in the powder room that broke the *Exeter's* back and doomed the ship to destruction.

After dragging the man ashore, Bosun Grogspar strapped him to the cannon and fired it repeatedly until the captain's organs burst and his skin burned and sloughed from his bones. The crew still whisper about this grisly execution, which only serves to reinforce Grogspar's intimidating reputation. Furthermore this tale has given rise to a number of stories that the restless spirit of Captain Fargen haunts the cannon. Some swabs claim to have spotted his ghostly specter lingering and brooding near the cannon as it sits

quietly between battles, although others discount these tales as nothing but rum-sodden and superstitious poppycock.

The mutineers have carefully maintained this massive gun over the years and used it as a formidable piece of field artillery in countless battles both ashore and at sea. Even after acquiring the *Talion*, Shae takes pains to bring this weapon along for land engagements. The warcaster views the Commodore as an oversized good luck charm and remains convinced he will never suffer defeat so long as it remains loaded and ready.

Royal-weight cannons cost a small fortune. Despite the name, a cannon requires more than size to qualify as "royal-weight". True royal-weight cannons represent the height of Cygnaran naval gunnery. They incorporate advances in metallurgy and casting techniques to craft barrels that can endure particularly heavy powder loads and lengthy repeated firing without risk of damage. When manned by a skilled crew, this allows for both tremendous accuracy and extended range.

The navy ordinarily reserves the exclusive right to deploy such weapons on their premiere vessels. Duke Waldron Gately of Southpoint, the most influential noble backer of the Mercarian League, advocated in the Cygnaran Royal Assembly to grant a special dispensation for the *Exeter*. If the other charges against Phinneus Shae did not guarantee his infamy forever, his ownership of this specifically proscribed cannon would. Its seizure during the mutiny technically constitutes an act of war against Cygnar, although no one has yet successfully enforced this fine point of maritime law. Certainly Shae has accumulated enough counts of piracy not to worry himself with this particular crime.

The *Talion* crew considers it a special privilege to serve as a gunner or gunner's mate for the Commodore. The cannon's crew often suffer alarmingly high casualty rates, however, as Shae's enemies make neutralizing this gun a priority. Given how often the crew use smaller cannons, both aboard the ship and ashore, Shae expects every sea dog asked to join an engagement to know his way around the essential implements of the Commodore and to stand to task as a gunner if needed.

Other mercenary and privateer outfits have approached Lord Rockbottom and Shae with generous offers to buy the Commodore. Interested buyers have included two of the notorious high captains of Five Fingers. All have come away disappointed. The ability to combine ordinance like shredding canister rounds of fist-sized iron balls at close range, longer range incendiary ammunition that can set entire squads ablaze, or single enormous cannon balls capable of knocking down warjacks, grants the Commodore a quite literally priceless degree of deadly versatility and lets the *Talion* stand toe-to-toe against any regular military in the west.

TACTICAL TIP

ARTILLERY: The Crewmen can flee, but the Commodore never does.

CROSS TRAINED: If the Crewmen flee, the best way to get the Commodore firing again is to kill the cowards and replace them with new Sea Dogs. Of course if the unit has activated this turn, it cannot activate again even if all the Sea Dogs in the original unit have been destroyed.

FIRE! Don't forget to save a Crewman to fire the Commodore.





LADY AIYANA & MASTER HOLT

MERCENARY PRIVATEER CHARACTER UNIT

The air about them is thick with secrets, but who doesn't have something to hide?

—LORD ROCKBOTTOM TO CAPTAIN SHAE

Aiyana							Cmd 9
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM		
6	4	5	4	15	11		
Holt							Cmd 8
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM		
6	5	5	8	15	12		
							Hand Cannon
							RNG ROF AOE POW
							12 1 — 12
							Hand Cannon
							RNG ROF AOE POW
							12 1 — 12
							Gun Blade
							SPECIAL POW P+S
							— 3 8
							Gun Blade
							SPECIAL POW P+S
							— 3 8
Aiyana's Damage							5
Holt's Damage							5
Field Allowance							C
Victory Points							2
Point Cost							43
Base Size							Small

MERCENARY

Lady Aiyana & Master Holt will not work for Cryx.

AIYANA

LEADER

MAGIC ABILITY (AIYANA ONLY)

As a special attack or action, Aiyana may cast one of the following spells during her activation. Determine the success of magic attacks by rolling 2d6 and adding Aiyana's Magic Ability score of 8. If the roll is equal to or exceeds the target's DEF, the attack succeeds. Aiyana cannot make additional attacks after making a magic attack.

- **Ayisla's Veil (★Action)** - Aiyana gains Invisibility. While Holt is in base-to-base contact with her, he also gains Invisibility. While invisible, a model cannot be targeted by ranged or magic attacks, cannot be charged or slammed, and gains +4 DEF against melee attacks. While invisible, a model does not block line of sight or provide screening. Ayisla's Veil lasts for one round.

- **Glyph of Nyrra (★Action)** - While within 10" of Aiyana, enemy models cannot cast spells or use feats. The Glyph of Nyrra lasts for one round.
- **Kiss of Lyliss (★Attack)** - Kiss of Lyliss is a RNG 10 offensive spell. A model hit by Kiss of Lyliss suffers Harm. When a model suffering Harm suffers a damage roll as a result of an attack, the attacker rolls an additional damage die. Kiss of Lyliss lasts for one round.
- **Lurysar's Touch (★Action)** - Lurysar's Touch is a RNG 8 spell. Melee and ranged attacks made by target friendly model are considered magic attacks. The affected model can charge incorporeal models. Lurysar's Touch lasts for one round.

A stranger pair would be hard to imagine. Everything about this duo lends them an air of the irregular, even among sea farers noted for their peculiarities. The first and most obvious oddity lies in the fact that the Iosan Lady Aiyana has inexplicably chosen the human pistoleer Master Holt to accompany her as a bodyguard.

Iosans, regarded far and wide as aloof and arrogant, have grown increasingly rare outside their insular kingdom. Therefore it comes as a pleasant surprise when people find Lady Aiyana warm and affable. She clearly realizes her physical attractiveness and shows no qualms about using it to her advantage. Those

HOLT

CHAIN ATTACK - PIN DOWN - If Holt hits the same enemy warrior model with both initial Hand Cannon attacks during the same activation, after resolving the attacks he may immediately make an additional ranged attack against the target. If the attack hits, the target suffers no damage and is immediately moved up to 2" by the enemy model's controller who is then knocked down.

CRACK SHOT - Holt's targets do not benefit from being screened.

THE JOB - When targeting an enemy model in melee with Aiyana or an enemy model who damaged her in the current or previous turn, Holt gains boosted attack and damage rolls. When targeting an enemy model in melee with Aiyana, Holt does not suffer the Target in Melee penalty. When he misses a model in melee, do not include Aiyana when randomly determining which model is the new target of the attack.

QUICK DRAW - When Holt or Aiyana is targeted by a ranged attack made by an enemy model within 12" of Holt and in his LOS, Holt may make a Hand Cannon attack against that model before it makes its attack roll. If Holt's ranged attack hits, the enemy model suffers no damage, but its attack automatically misses.

VIRTUOSO - Holt can make melee and ranged attacks during the same combat action. When Holt makes his initial attacks he can make both his initial Gun Blade and initial Hand Cannon attacks. He may make Hand Cannon attacks targeting models in his melee range. These attacks do not suffer the Target in Melee penalty to the attack roll and cannot hit another combatant if they miss their intended targets. Holt does not get an aiming bonus when targeting a model in his melee range. Holt may perform free strikes with his Hand Cannons.

HAND CANNONS & GUN BLADES (HOLT ONLY)

who converse with her, however, find it difficult to recollect any useful information. A master of misdirection and small talk, Aiyana politely deflects probing questions into flirtatious banter that leaves would-be interrogators both charmed and clueless regarding her purposes. She betrays none of her people's infamous loathing of humanity, although it is unclear whether this is a convincing facade or if she has spent enough time away from other Iosans to have adapted.

While seemingly reticent to bloody her hands, Aiyana has proven an adept spell-caster who calls on formidable magic unknown outside the vales of Ios. Her invocations carry almost sacred power, and the reverence with which Aiyana holds her vanished and ailing gods shines through when she unleashes her spells. Holt, a refined pistoleer, takes advantage of Aiyana's mystical veils to bring death in a hail of gunfire to any who threaten them. Against the rare enemy able to close on him, he wields the blades of his pistols as graceful tools of murder. The cool and dispassionate efficiency with which he ends lives can chill the blood of even hardened killers.

The odd pair inevitably attracts questions, but Master Holt has proven an evasive man of few words. At most he humors such inquiries with the clipped insistence on his role as paid bodyguard, nothing more. An alert fox of a man, the keen eyes behind Holt's spectacles miss nothing. The speed of his reactions to any perceived threat to Lady Aiyana suggests that more than gold motivates the gunslinger. The way they communicate in fragmented sentences and gestures hints at a longer partnership, as do their quarrels.

Whatever his nature, Master Holt is in all ways clearly consummate professional. Outside of battle he displays an almost obsessive attention to detail, seen in the cleanliness of his person and his preference for careful plans and contingencies. The free spirited pirates with whom the pair travels do not always appreciate such habits, and Master Holt makes few friends.

The pair just recently joined the *Talion* and have only begun to find their place among the crew. Lady Aiyana has insisted they remain, over Holt's objections, and she clearly believes her own goals have a better chance of success alongside the pirate warcaster and his rag-tag army. While a number of *Shade's* officers remain wary of the pair's unspoken secrets, they have proven their ability to handle a crisis. During boarding actions the pair prefers to take to a higher deck, allowing Aiyana a better vantage to focus her powers while Holt picks off officers and key targets.

This tight-lipped pair has a deeply rooted ability to maintain their secrets. While none of the *Talion's* crew would suspect it, each belongs to an elusive cabal not ordinarily associated with the conflicts of the Broken Coast. Lady Aiyana is a member of the Seekers, an Iosan religious sept, and considers it her sacred obligation to investigate any trace of the missing elven gods. Her mission for the Seekers has brought her west to investigate Cryx. Master Holt has equally enigmatic affiliations. Cygnaran authorities have begun to suspect that he is an agent of the Unseen Hand, a highly organized and secretive group of spies whose greater agendas remain unclear. Whatever the goals of their respective organizations, some deeper bond ties these two together. Their shared future remains as veiled as their respective pasts.

TACTICAL TIP

CHAIN ATTACK – PIN DOWN: The target is knocked down whether or not it moved. If it does move, it can be targeted by free strikes.





BLOODY BRADIGAN

MERCENARY PRIVATEER SEA DOG CHARACTER SOLO

To see a man commit to a skull-crushing, bone-snapping, merciless terror of a beating, just wait until Bradigan gets his blood up!

—QUARTERMASTER DUFFOCK ABOARD THE CALAMITAS

Bloody Bradigan Cmd 4

SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM
6	8	7	3	13	13



Wrapped Fist

SPECIAL	POW	P+S
—	1	9



Wrapped Fist

SPECIAL	POW	P+S
—	1	9

Damage 10

Field Allowance C

Victory Points 1

Point Cost 24

Base Size Small

MERCENARY

Bloody Bradigan will work for any faction.

BRADIGAN

BERSERK - Every time Bradigan destroys another model with a melee attack, he must immediately make one melee attack against another model in his melee range, friendly or enemy.

FEARLESS - Bradigan never flees.

GANG FIGHTER - Bradigan rolls an additional attack and damage die when making melee attacks targeting an enemy

model in melee range of a friendly Sea Dog model.

SEA LEGS - Bradigan cannot be knocked down.

STUMBLING DRUNK - When Bradigan is hit by an enemy attack, after resolving the attack he moves d3" in a direction determined by the deviation template. Bradigan stops moving if he contacts an obstacle, obstruction, or another model. After this movement, Bradigan's controller chooses Bradigan's facing. Bradigan cannot be targeted by free strikes during this movement.

TOUGH - When Bradigan suffers sufficient damage to be destroyed, his controller rolls a d6. On a 5 or 6, Bradigan is knocked down instead of being destroyed. If Bradigan is not destroyed, he is reduced to one wound.

ULTRAVIOLENCE

After hitting an enemy model with an initial Wrapped Fist attack, Bradigan's controller may choose one of the following effects:

- **"I'm Gonna' Cut You"** - Roll an additional die on the Wrapped Fist damage roll.
- **One-Two** - Bradigan gains an additional attack.
- **Trounce** - The model hit is pushed 1" directly away from Bradigan immediately after the attack is resolved. Immediately after the model is moved, Bradigan may move up to the distance the pushed model was moved directly toward the pushed model.

Many men have foul tempers, but the term 'berserker' is reserved for men like Torc Bradigan. Better known as 'Bloody Bradigan', this half-mad sea dog seeks after violence as other men hunger for wealth or women. A man so inclined to murderous rage that his quartermasters keep him constantly drunk and numb, or locked away like a maddened gorax in a cage, Bradigan only finds happiness in the rush of jumping into the fray when ships collide and boarders leap across the gap to capture their prize. Then his shipmates let him loose to hammer his chain-covered fists through wood and steel, seize any sharp object at hand to slash throats, or use his chains to strangle those foolish enough to threaten his mates.

Bradigan's comrades have seen him endure wounds that would kill a lesser man, including one notable fight where he took a cutlass so deep into his left shoulder blade that the edge stuck on the bone and disarmed his opponent. Shortly thereafter, Bradigan head-butted the stupefied pirate and caved in the man's skull like a ripe melon. It takes time for Bradigan to cool after a good brawl, and those who know him steer well clear until he gets some drink in his system.

Even with Captain Montador's indulgence, Bradigan's penchant for "accidentally" breaking the necks or shattering the ribs of his peers in drunken scraps puts him in the brig more days of the year than he walks free. All restraints come off when ships collide and bloodshed is afoot. On more than one occasion he has torn the brig's bars from their mountings when not released quickly enough. With an incoherent scream of unbridled rage he leaps headfirst into the largest mass of the enemy, bloodshot eyes bulging. Even fighting almost naked except for the chains dangling from his massive arms and holding only the broken bottles of alcohol consumed moments earlier, Bradigan leaves behind him a trail of fresh corpses and the piteous groans of the wounded.

Bradigan's story began in Five Fingers' where his natural inclinations served him as a street enforcer. His life irrevocably changed when he choked the life out of the wrong man during a back-alley brawl. His all-consuming rage drowned out the cries from his friends who recognized his victim as a low captain in the employ of Velter Waernuk. Soon thereafter men with clubs broke into Bradigan's home and dragged him before High Captain Waernuk who forced Bradigan to pay his debt by shedding blood in Five Fingers' notorious fighting pits. Bradigan thrived on the violence, shattering the skulls, arms, and legs of any sent against him.

One night, while the crew of the *Calamitas* enjoyed the town's entertainments, Captain 'Broadsides Bart' Montador saw one of Bradigan's matches. During a bout of high stakes gambling with Waernuk afterward, Montador remembered the maddened pit fighter and suggested adding the gladiator to the pot. A lucky hand passed Bloody Bradigan to his new "master" and started a life at sea. For Montador, Bradigan's dismal skills as a sailor pale beside his ferocity in battle. Montador likes to say he gave the man his freedom, an odd boast given how much time Bradigan spends in the brig.

Too many blows to the head and his constant drinking have certainly unhinged Bradigan's brain. Bradigan is not always angry—his moods swing rapidly from cheerful enthusiasm to melancholy brooding and back to barely

restrained aggression. What is most frightening is the speed with which he will shift from one extreme to the other. One moment he is singing a chantey alongside his mates and dancing a jig to the reed pipe, but the slightest incident jogs the loose cog in his brain and tilts him into a fighting rage. Even in sleep he thrashes about, punching holes in the walls of his berth while dreaming of battle.

The crew of the *Calamitas* is glad Bloody Bradigan is comfortable sleeping in the brig. Despite his obvious gratitude toward Montador, Bradigan does not speak regretfully of his days in Five Fingers. His drunken recollection of the gory details of every match fought can unnerve the freshly pressed crewmen who endure these blubbery reminiscences. Sometimes Bradigan takes up a fighting stance, throwing convincing jabs and uppercuts into the air a hair's breadth from the face of the poor swab he chooses as his audience.

TACTICAL TIP

ONE-TWO: Additional attacks gained from One-Two are taken after both of Bradigan's initial attacks.





BOSUN GROGSPAR

MERCENARY PRIVATEER TROLLKIN CHARACTER SOLO

Listen to the bosun. Do what he tells ye or expect to land in the sea like a fish not worth guttin' fer supper.

—MATE'S ADVICE TO A NEW SEA DOG RECRUIT

Grogspar Cmd 8

SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM
5	8	6	5	13	15



Harpoon Gun

RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
10	1	—	12



Giant Hook

SPECIAL	POW	P+S
Heave Ho	4	12

Damage	8
Field Allowance	C
Victory Points	1
Point Cost	26
Base Size	Medium

MERCENARY

Bosun Grogspar will work for any faction.

GROGSPAR

COMMANDER - Grogspar has a command range equal to his CMD in inches. Friendly mercenary models/units in his command range may use Grogspar's CMD when making command checks. Grogspar may rally and give orders to friendly mercenary models in his command range.

FLYING STEEL - Grogspar may make d3 initial attacks with his Giant Hook each activation.

NO SLEEPING ON THE JOB - Grogspar and friendly Sea Dog models within his command range cannot be knocked down or made stationary.

TOUGH - When Grogspar suffers sufficient damage to be destroyed, his controller rolls a d6. On a 5 or 6, Grogspar is knocked down instead of being destroyed. If Grogspar is not destroyed, he is reduced to one wound.

HARPOON GUN

SLOW BURN - A model hit by the Harpoon Gun suffers the Slow Burn continuous effect. A model suffering Slow Burn cannot run or charge. Slow Burn expires in the model's controller's Maintenance Phase on a d6 roll of 1 or 2. When Slow Burn expires or if the model is destroyed, the harpoon explodes. When the harpoon explodes, center the 4" AOE template on the model. The model suffering the Slow Burn continuous effect when it explodes suffers a POW 13 blast damage roll. Other models in the AOE suffer POW 7 blast damage.

GIANT HOOK

HEAVE HO - On a successful hit targeting a model with a medium or smaller-sized base, Grogspar may throw the target rather than make a normal damage roll. The target is thrown d6" and suffers a damage roll equal to Grogspar's current STR plus the POW of the Giant Hook. Do not make a deviation roll when determining the thrown model's point of impact. If a thrown model contacts another model with a smaller or equal-sized base, that model suffers a collateral damage roll of 2d6 plus Grogspar's current STR.

The *Talion's* bosun is a veteran sea-salt named Balasar Grogspar, although no one ever refers to him by his first name. The cantankerous trollkin enforces discipline aboard the ship with the simple expedient of hurling worthless lubbers over the rail with his hook. The trollkin himself eventually reels in those he thinks worth saving, particularly anyone showing some skill in battle, after letting them flounder in terror for an appropriate amount of time. Such men quickly find themselves at the front of the next boarding party, and Grogspar sheds no tears if they take a bullet to the gut or drop screaming into the waves between ships. Some have made the mistake of thinking this stern demeanor an act and attempted to call the bosun's bluff. Such idiots rarely get the chance to repeat their blunder.

Grogspar has a bit of a cruel streak, evidenced in his enjoyment of delivering cut-rate explosives on the end of a wickedly sharp harpoon. Few things make him smile like watching an enemy explode and take down a few of his mates for good measure. He has a deserved reputation for going to similarly imaginative extremes when executing shipboard justice against any crew caught severely neglecting their duties.

Grogspar has a strong personal attachment to his ship, whatever ship he happens to serve on, and sees any attack on the vessel as a personal affront. Each time a cannonball strikes the hull, decks, sails, or railings, his frown deepens, his eyes narrow, and his teeth clench his pipe a bit tighter as he works himself into a proper rage for battle. This makes for a fearsome sight when unleashed against those who have harmed his vessel. Grogspar takes sadistic pleasure in watching a wounded adversary plead for his life as the fuse on the bosun's explosive harpoon burns toward its fatal terminus.

The bosun has a strong sense of duty and was the most reluctant of the original mutineers who followed Captain Shae to take over the *Exeter*. It was actually Mr. Walls who eventually persuaded him, and even to this day Grogspar speaks of the "incident" with a grumble of resentment. Most likely the trollkin would have joined the other side if he had any inkling that the mutiny would result in the

unfortunate destruction of the *Exeter*. When reminiscing about that ship, Grogspar falls into a melancholy state which the death of his living peers never inspires. Fools have often found mentioning the shattering of that ship a far better provocation for a fight than insulting his family. Grogspar eventually forgave Shae only because the ship's captain Laross Eargen actually caused the explosion responsible for sinking that vessel. Grogspar personally oversaw the cruel and brutal execution of the ship's former master by way of strapping him to the Commodore and repeatedly firing the cannon.

Grogspar's responsibilities go well beyond his title. The trollkin has never paid much heed to those above his station and rarely speaks against anything he considers a "fool idea". Shae

tolerates this impertinence and even outright insubordination with good humor, perhaps remembering that Grogspar fished him out of the water when the *Exeter's* captain cast the warcaster overboard to drown. Most days Grogspar functions as undisputed master of the ship, serving wherever needed most, whether as pilot, carpenter, or master of the watch. The only individual to whom he readily defers is First Mate Hawk, and even she occasionally receives a cynical aside if he disagrees with her assessment of a situation. By and large this is accepted without complaint, as Grogspar boasts decades of hard-earned experience running the ropes aboard dozens of ships. He is as skilled a sailor as the *Talion* could hope to find and one of the few crewmembers deemed nearly indispensable. The fact that he is also an unholy terror in battle certainly helps.





FIRST MATE HAWK

MERCENARY PRIVATEER CHARACTER SOLO

I once saw her cut a man's sword hand off at the wrist, then bid him draw a knife with his good hand so he might not feel helpless when she took that too.

—CAPTAIN PHINNEUS SHAE

Hawk						Cmd 8
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	
7	5	7	5	15	13	
Cutlass						
SPECIAL						POW P+S
—						4 9
Cutlass						
SPECIAL						POW P+S
—						4 9
Damage						5
Field Allowance						C
Victory Points						1
Point Cost						30
Base Size						Small

MERCENARY

First Mate Hawk will work for any faction.

HAWK

ACROBATICS - Hawk may move through other models if she has enough movement to move completely past the models' bases. Hawk cannot be targeted by free strikes. Hawk ignores intervening models when declaring a charge.

COMMANDER - Hawk has a command range equal to her CMD in inches. Friendly mercenary models/units in her command range may use Hawk's CMD when making a command check. Hawk may rally and

give orders to friendly mercenary models in her command range.

FEARLESS - Hawk never flees.

KILLING SPREE - When Hawk destroys an enemy model with a melee attack during her activation, she may make an additional melee attack.

OBJECT OF DESIRE - Friendly Sea Dog units in Hawk's command range gain Fearless, Show Off, and Swordmaster but lose Gang. A Fearless model never flees. When resolving Hand Weapon attacks, a Sea Dog with Show Off doubles his STR. A model with Swordmaster may make one additional melee attack.

SEA LEGS - Hawk cannot be knocked down.

SUCKER! - When Hawk is directly hit by an enemy ranged attack, Hawk's controller chooses a friendly living warrior model within 2" of her to be directly hit instead.

SWORDMASTER - Hawk may make one additional melee attack.

TOUGH - When Hawk suffers sufficient damage to be destroyed, her controller rolls a d6. On a 5 or 6, Hawk is knocked down instead of being destroyed. If Hawk is not destroyed, she is reduced to one wound.

WEAPON MASTER - Hawk rolls an additional die on her melee damage rolls.

Responsible for keeping the sea dogs ready for action, Captain Shae's First Mate Hawk suffers neither foolishness nor sloth. A living legend, considered the most deadly bladeswoman to walk a deck on the western seaboard, Hawk earned her reputation as a peerless killer well before joining the *Talion* or even the *Exeter*. Some claim she has killed more men than rip lung. Hawk's nimble acrobatics and blinding speed make her nearly impossible to defend against. She moves through battle like her bird of prey namesake, blithely ignoring inconsequential threats to leap across the deck and strike when and where she pleases. Her speed and grace has

taken many adversaries by surprise, particularly those who underestimate the killing power of this slender woman.

Considerably less comfortable in social situations, Hawk only feels at home on a ship's deck or in melee. Her taciturn and even abrasive manner gives her a particular and unbreakable kinship with her chosen captain Phinneus Shae. Whenever Shae and Hawk fight together, whether back-to-back or separated by half a ship, they move as a perfectly coordinated team and require no communication beyond a gesture or shouted word. Her example fires the men, who go to great lengths to catch even the slightest nod of her approval.

One cannot overstate Hawk's standing among the *Talion's* crew. While all admire Captain Shae and offer him due respect, they look to Hawk first and last, go silent when she passes, and hang on her every word. It is not entirely an exaggeration to say that Captain Shae commands only because Hawk stands at his side. Some call this the lusty nature of sailors far from port, but the crew's regard for Hawk runs deeper. They desire her, but also live in awe and terror of her skill.

The fact that so many have died taking bullets meant to end her life only enhances her reputation. Those who can overcome this infatuation notice Hawk's often cold-blooded attitude about the men around her. She quite willingly spends their lives to buy her survival. Only a chosen few have gotten close enough to consider her a friend and even those in this select company cannot claim to know her mind.

The details of Hawk's past remain a mystery, and none know her given name. A darkness she will not speak of lurks in her youth and adds fire and fury to her eyes. She has lived aboard ships as long as anyone remembers; legend has it she was born at sea and has never truly left the water. Certainly she learned her craft as a child, for her fingers unconsciously perform the complex knots and ties required of sailors. Rumors say she began as a knife-fighter par-excellence and later mastered the cutlass. She claims to have never felt the slightest qualms about killing to defend her ship or to seize spoils. Even as a legitimate sailor aboard Mercarian League vessels she had an ominous reputation as an untamable, dangerous woman too valuable and skilled not to employ.

She served aboard the *Exeter* as master-at-arms and trained the sailors and marines in melee combat. She had her own reasons for joining the mutiny, but she seems to have participated because she saw Captain Fargen as a threat to her crew and felt a proprietary right to intervene in their defense. It seems just as likely that she had a particular axe to grind with the unpleasant Mercarian League officer, who had ample opportunities to

earn her wrath! She has hinted that, if Shae had not acted to instigate the mutiny, she would have rescued Joln Rockbottom herself. Her interest in the dwarf's well being clearly stems from pragmatic reasons rather than any particular affection. Rockbottom remains in Hawk's debt and she has informed him that he "does not have permission" to die before she can collect.

Hawk has a tense, enigmatic, and not well-understood relationship with Shae. It seems quite likely that they are lovers, but no one has the courage to delve into the particulars. The reluctance of sailors to speak of this matter on a ship notorious for rumormongers and gutter-mouths testifies both to Hawk's reputation as a killer and the unique esteem in which the crew holds her and Shae both. The crew knows only that Shae trusts Hawk above

all others on the *Talion*. She boasts complete liberty to do as she wishes with or without orders, and acts in Shae's stead whenever the situation requires an executive decision. More often than not Hawk serves as acting captain when at sea to free up the warcaster for other matters. Whenever an adversary threatens Shae in battle, Hawk arrives instantly at his side.

TACTICAL TIP

KILLING SPREE: Even when Hawk destroys an enemy model with an attack she gained from Killing Spree, she gains another additional attack.

SWORDMASTER: This is one additional attack, not one additional attack per Cutlass.





DOC KILLINGSWORTH

MERCENARY PRIVATEER CHARACTER SOLO

*Get up and walk it off, son. You don't want him cutting on you.
Those knives have seen more use than a Five Fingers madam.*

—LORD ROCKBOTTOM TO AN INJURED SEA DOG

Doc		Cmd 7				
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	
5	7	6	5	12	13	
		Dirty Throwing Knives				
		RNG	ROF	AOE	POW	
		6	1	—	2	
		Meat Cleaver				
		SPECIAL		POW	P+S	
		—		4	11	
Damage						8
Field Allowance						C
Victory Points						1
Point Cost						19
Base Size						Small

MERCENARY

Doc Killingsworth will work for any faction.

DOC

AMATEUR SURGEON (★ACTION) - Doc removes d6 damage points from himself or a friendly living warrior model in base-to-base contact with him. On the roll of a 6 the affected model is also knocked down.

ANATOMICAL PRECISION - If Doc's melee damage roll fails to exceed target living model's ARM, the target automatically suffers one damage point.

BACKSTAB - Doc rolls an additional die for his back strike damage rolls.

FEARLESS - Doc never flees.

NO, I'M FINE - Friendly Privateer models with the Tough ability within a number of inches of Doc equal to Doc's current CMD are not destroyed on a Tough roll of 4, 5, or 6.

PARTING BLOW - When Doc is hit by an enemy model with a melee attack, he may immediately make a melee attack targeting the model that hit him. If he hits with this attack, the damage roll is boosted. Doc still suffers the damage roll even if he destroys the model that attacked him with this attack.

SOUP'S ON - When Doc destroys an enemy warrior model with a melee attack, enemy models/units currently within a number of inches of him equal to his current CMD must pass a command check or flee. Living friendly Privateer models currently in this area gain +1" of movement this turn but cannot end their movement closer to Doc than they began.

TOUGH - When Doc suffers sufficient damage to be destroyed, his controller rolls a d6. On a 5 or 6, Doc is knocked down instead of being destroyed. If Doc is not destroyed, he is reduced to one wound.

DIRTY THROWING KNIVES

POISON - After a successful attack against a living model, roll an additional damage die.

THROWN - Add Doc's current STR to the POW of his Dirty Throwing Knives ranged attacks.

Creb 'Doc' Killingsworth finds his talent with sharp knives useful in his roles as both ship's cook and surgeon. Doc's patients do not share his enthusiasm for practicing "medicine" and often the mere threat of "treatment" convinces them to fight on. Unlike some other cooks or surgeons, Doc has no qualms about strapping on as many knives as he can gather and wading into the midst of battle. While he rarely finds himself on the front line, he is an enthusiastic scrapper and has accumulated an impressive tally of kills over the years. The sight of his cheerful butchery and apparent disregard for pain and injury can break the morale of lesser adversaries.

Doc sees his participation in combat as a proactive measure. He reduces his potential workload by killing a few enemies himself, and he knows the wounded will come his way eventually regardless of where the battle takes him. Long practice hurling cutlery at the elusive rats aboard ship has made him a deadly throw. Those at the receiving end of his filthy knives often find themselves in excruciating pain from the old gore, spices, and foul sauces staining these blades.

Doc's background remains uncertain. He has variously claimed to be an Arjun from near Mercir, a Morridane from Corvis, a Sinari from Five Fingers, or a "black Tordoran" from Berck, although none of the Ordic crew have heard of the latter. On a ship boasting its share of eccentric personalities, most agree that Doc is seriously bent if not actually insane, although few have the courage to say such a thing to his face. The man strikes an intimidating figure when striding the decks wearing his blood-spattered apron and bearing an enormous meat-cleaver. His perpetual scowl combined with his habit of brandishing knives gives the impression he could murder anyone, friend or foe, at any given moment should the mood strike him.

Creb apparently drifted from ship to ship over the years following his peculiar destiny, more often deciding where he wanted to work rather than having any captain formally hire him. Once aboard, each new crew has found themselves stuck with him as he supplants the previous cook and takes over the galley. Since a ship's cook is often a man too badly injured to serve usefully elsewhere, few ever raised any objection. Sailors accept occasionally unusual meals as their lot in life and most have a pragmatic attitude toward the food they eat. Given Creb is often seen hunting down rats throughout the ship, it surprises only the freshest swabs that these creatures often make their way into the ever-cooking pot of stew in the galley. If one trusts the testimony of his shipmates, Doc puts on a surprisingly tasty spread, whatever its source. Even officers on the *Talion* prefer not to ask questions, and rumor has it Creb is sensitive to criticism.

More vital to the crew is Doc's role stitching up injuries, a task he tackles with no less enthusiasm. Doc has no formal training in anatomy or surgery and came by his skills through years of bloody practice on deck. He claims cutting apart meat or people amounts to more or less the same thing. He has never shown the slightest qualms about immersing himself in gore up to his elbows if required, chomping on a lit cigar all the while.

While his gleeful hand at surgery makes the men queasy, Captain Shae and his officers have learned that Doc knows his business. His lack of concern over cleaning his knives—often coming fresh from the day's lunch or supper to cut out a bullet—makes patients understandably reluctant. Despite this apparent disregard for cleanliness, Doc has saved the lives of every officer on the *Talion* at least once, including Lord Rockbottom. Doc saved Joln from a painful death by removing his gangrenous left leg just before the mutiny on the *Exeter*.

Many crewmembers have similarly lost fingers, hands, feet, eyes, or entire arms, and yet survived to tell the tale of a terrifying time in Doc's care. Crewmen have also seen Doc carving up enemies during battle and stuffing "choice morsels" in his pockets. While no one can confirm that Doc's soup includes human remains, most would not put it past him. Many veteran salts stick to stale bread directly after a large melee in preference to the meat dishes Killingsworth cobbles together.

TACTICAL TIP

NO, I'M FINE: Doc himself does not benefit from No, I'm Fine.

SOUP'S ON: Soup's On does not work on Doc.

Talion Stew (Serves 100)

15 pounds fresh meat (any kind)

10 pounds aged peppered meat
(any kind); remove maggots

5 cups olive oil, butter,
bacon grease, or lard

120 cloves garlic

1 barrel meat stock or
previous stew-pot leavings

Two hands-full spices
and/or dried leaves

1 sack chopped potatoes

1 sack chopped onions

Chopped carrots, tomatoes, vegetables
not rotted through (mold okay)

Top pot with weak ale or cheap
wine (not Five Fingers water!)

Cook at least 12 hours;
keeps indefinitely over low fire





MASTER GUNNER DOUGAL MACNAILE

MERCENARY PRIVATEER CHARACTER SOLO

Show me a gunner with the nerve to walk the decks barefoot and I'll show you a man who's got iron poured in his veins or a plate in his skull, or maybe both.

—KADE TOLBOT, MASTER GUNNER OF THE *STILETTO*

Dougal Cmd 8

SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM
5	5	6	7	14	13



Grenade

RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
6	1	3	12



Quad-Iron

RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
10	1	—	10



Cutlass

SPECIAL	POW	P+S
—	4	9

Damage 5

Field Allowance C

Victory Points 1

Point Cost 28

Base Size Small

MERCENARY

Dougal MacNaile will work for any faction.

MACNAILE

ARTILLERIST (★ACTION) - MacNaile's controller selects a friendly Mercenary model in his command range. That model gains +2 on AOE ranged attack rolls. When AOE attacks made by the model deviate, it may re-roll the direction and/or distance of deviation. Each roll can only be re-rolled once due to Artillerist. Artillerist lasts for one turn.

COMMANDER - MacNaile has a command range equal to his CMD in inches. Friendly Mercenary models/units in his command range may use MacNaile's

CMD when making command checks. MacNaile may rally and give orders to friendly Mercenary models in his command range.

DOUBLE POWDER RATION - Once per game during his activation, MacNaile can use Double Powder Ration. Ranged attacks made by friendly Mercenary warjacks currently in MacNaile's command range gain +2 RNG and POW. Double Powder Ration lasts for one turn.

FIELD OFFICER - An additional Sea Dog Deck Gun may be fielded over normal Field Allowance if MacNaile is included in the army.

HIT THE DECK! - MacNaile does not suffer damage from AOE attacks. When MacNaile is hit by an AOE attack, he is knocked down. While MacNaile is knocked down, ranged attacks targeting him automatically miss.

TOUGH - When MacNaile suffers sufficient damage to be destroyed, his controller rolls a d6. On a 5 or 6, MacNaile is knocked down instead of being destroyed. If MacNaile is not destroyed, he is reduced to one wound.

GRENADE

CUMBERSOME - MacNaile cannot make Grenade and Quad-Iron attacks during the same activation.

QUAD-IRON

MULTI FIRE (★ATTACK) - After resolving a successful attack with the Quad-Iron, MacNaile may immediately make an additional Quad-Iron attack targeting the last model hit or another model within 2" of the last target hit. MacNaile may make up to four Quad-Iron attacks during his activation.

To hear the crew of the *Calamitas* talk one might expect Dougal MacNaile to be a man possessed, as they claim he was born from a cannon and that he breathes blasting powder rather than air. He has been firing guns longer than anyone else on the ship, and some would say longer than anyone alive on the *Meredius*.

Many crewmen covet the commission of master gunner without understanding the unforgiving and dangerous nature of the position. All sailors know to take care with the volatile blasting powder, but daily contact always runs the risk of something going terribly wrong. When a mistake occurs with wrapping powder charges or packing cannons, a gunner rarely gets a second chance. The lucky ones only lose a couple of fingers, an impairment men can learn to work around, but all too often such an incident proves fatal. Even those who avoid blasting themselves apart might quickly lose their hearing amid the thunderous explosions surrounding them day in and day out.

Dougal has defied the odds and entered the realm of the legendary to become something of a patron saint of gunners throughout the western seaboard. While he does often ask his peers to repeat themselves, his hearing seems otherwise intact, and he happily lays claim to all his fingers and toes. So brazen is this master gunner that he walks the deck barefoot. The fact that witnesses to at least a dozen ship-to-ship battles have seen Dougal survive near misses that should have killed him only adds to his mystique. Each time the dust clears, Dougal jumps to his feet with a whoop before turning to exhort his deck gunners to load up the next round and deliver some payback.

Dougal would be hard pressed to find a better post than serving Broadships Bart on the *Calamitas*. The ship, widely acknowledged as the best-armed privateer vessel sailing the waters, boasts as many cannons as a first-class ship of the line, and the master gunner ranks as one of the vessel's most important officers. Responsible not only for coordinating multiple gun decks and the ship's massive blasting powder stores, Dougal also leads artillery teams for mercenary jobs on land.

Dougal is a first class artilleryman quite skilled at gauging the direction and strength of the wind, elevation to the target, and other pertinent factors to call down pinpoint fire on his targets. Despite his rank, he often stands alongside a Mariner to reload its cannon, and his willingness to do whatever is required of him in a pinch has ensured his standing with both the crew and Captain Montador. Dougal can often land a cannonball on target in even the worst of circumstances, a crucial skill when an entire battle can hinge on a single well-placed shot.

While at his best coordinating the teams firing the guns on the *Calamitas*, the master gunner's personal prowess in battle is not to be underestimated. After decades of service aboard aggressive ships he has survived more battles than most army veterans. He has proven a passably decent hand with a cutlass but he certainly prefers the sound of gunfire, particularly his own. A number of years ago he paid a small fortune in Clocker's Cove for a customized heavy quad-iron pistol, by which he has made short work of boarding parties. Dougal may be aging, and he can be heard complaining at times of aches in his back and joints, particularly during storms, but this has done nothing to diminish his icy resolve and steady aim amid desperate firefights.

TACTICAL TIP

ARTILLERIST: You can re-roll either and decide whether or not to re-roll the other.





DIRTY MEG

MERCENARY PRIVATEER CHARACTER SOLO

Never get on the bad side of a woman whose friends weigh six tons and carry cannons.

—'BROADSIDES BART' MONTADOR

Dirty Meg						Cmd 8
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	
5	6	6	5	13	13	
						Junker
	RNG	ROF	AOE	POW		
	10	1	—	12		
						Great Wrench
	SPECIAL	POW	P+S			
	—	3	9			
Damage						5
Field Allowance						C
Victory Points						1
Point Cost						23
Base Size						Small

MERCENARY

Dirty Meg will not work for Cryx.

DIRTY MEG

BODGE (★ACTION) - Dirty Meg performs minor repairs to a friendly Mercenary warjack in base-to-base contact that has been damaged or disabled. Remove one damage point from anywhere on the warjack's damage grid.

'JACK MARSHAL (I) - Dirty Meg may start the game controlling one Mercenary warjack. Dirty Meg has a marshalling range equal to her CMD in inches. If a controlled warjack is in Dirty Meg's

marshalling range, it can run, charge, or boost an attack or damage roll once per activation. If Dirty Meg is destroyed or removed from play, the warjack under her control does not become inert. Dirty Meg may reactivate one friendly inert Mercenary warjack per turn in the same manner as a warcaster. The reactivated warjack comes under her control unless she already controls one other warjack.

TOUGH - When Dirty Meg suffers sufficient damage to be destroyed, her controller rolls a d6. On a 5 or 6, Dirty Meg is knocked down instead of being destroyed. If Dirty Meg is not destroyed, she is reduced to one wound.

DRIVES

Dirty Meg may attempt to Drive a warjack under her control in her marshalling range. To Drive a warjack, Dirty Meg must make a command check at any time during her activation.

- **Off Road** - If the check succeeds, the warjack charges during its activation this turn. When charging, the warjack ignores movement penalties from, and can charge across, rough terrain and obstacles. If the check fails, the warjack does not benefit from 'Jack Marshal this turn.
- **Power Attack** - If the check succeeds, the warjack gains +2 on melee attack rolls and may make a power attack during its activation this turn. If the check fails, the warjack does not benefit from 'Jack Marshal this turn.

JUNKER

SYSTEM LOCK - A warjack hit by Junker suffers System Lock. When the warjack is hit, Dirty Meg's controller chooses one of the warjack's systems to be locked. That system suffers the effects of being disabled for one round. The warjack may not be disabled as a result of System Lock.

While many retrofitted sailing ships boast a mechanic who knows her way around a steam engine, Meg is different. She boasts a natural aptitude with 'jacks and machinery others would train a lifetime to achieve. Employed by a warcaster infamous for running his 'jacks hard, Meg knows quite well the value of her skills and enjoys throwing her weight around walking the decks like a terror. "Dirty Meg" fits right in among the crew, giving as good as she gets. She has earned a reputation the envy of every swab on the ship for creative cursing and invectives. No one pushes her around, even the captain, and anyone standing in her way is liable to lose teeth as her wrench, or be heaved overboard by the nearest Freebooter.

Those who have earned Megan Melroane's grudging friendship know that she once worked as a member of the Ceryl Dock Workers' Affiliation, who attend to countless crates of cargo shipped through Cygnar's second largest city. Meg proved a top-notch labor 'jack handler, but received a pittance. She eventually had enough and began moonlighting by stealing from her employers for local smugglers. Access to 'jacks proved particularly useful, allowing her to move purloined goods with a speed none of her competitors could match.

A lucrative job selling stolen labor 'jacks to one Captain Bartolo Montador attracted the attention of Mercarian League enforcers. When mercenary thugs came to question her, she got indignant at their accusations. One man lost his cool and made the mistake of laying a hand on her, at which point a nearby Freebooter moved up and tore the man in two. Meg evaded capture but became a wanted fugitive accused of murder.

She arranged for a berth on the first vessel leaving Ceryl in the middle of the night, a smuggling ship bound for Five Fingers. Meg moved from one ship to the next working in a variety of holds nursing leaky steam boilers and patching tangles of pipes. She kept her ears open for the *Calamitas* and bided her time. Eventually she caught up to the privateer captain in a tavern and elbowed her way into his dice game, demanding on the spot that he give her a job, calling it her just due given that he had lost her the last one.

Captain Montador dismissed her to storm off with a scowl. The next morning he awoke to find one of his 'jacks disassembled and lying in a pile in front of his door. Dirty Meg stood calmly

by with wrench in hand. She explained he could have his 'jack reassembled as soon as she had the job. Meg joined the *Calamitas* that same day. She quickly acclimated to life amid the sea dogs and the massive arsenal of Montador's vessel, its hold filled with rusty 'jacks, steam engine parts, and dubious machinery.

Maintaining the steam engines and 'jacks of both the *Calamitas* and the *Ill Fortune* has kept Meg up to her elbows in grease and grime with barely enough time to sleep. She has also become a frequent visitor to pirate havens such as Bottomton, the island town where Captain Phinneus Shae's *Talion* makes its berth. Both Rockbottom and Shae have attempted to

steal her away from Montador by outbidding him, but Meg will hear none of it. Besides, she gets double or triple normal wages when doing emergency 'jack repairs on the island.

While working on machinery keeps her busy, Meg really loves to enter battle alongside six-ton, steam belching 'jacks. She relies on her custom-built mechanical cannon that seizes up gears or shorts out conduits with a jolt of energy. While designed to impair 'jacks, this weapon's electrical charge is quickly fatal to people. Meg has proven as grim and pragmatic in battle as any of her mates, and they can always find her in the heat of combat by the sound of her cursing over the grinding of gears.

TACTICAL TIP

DRIVES: Remember, Meg can use both drives during the same activation.





LORD ROCKBOTTOM, EXPEDITION FINANCIER

MERCENARY PRIVATEER RHULIC CHARACTER SOLO

That dwarf can make a coin sit up, spin, even dance.

We don't ask where the coins come from, so long as he keeps 'em coming.

—MR. WALLS, QUARTERMASTER OF THE TALION

Rockbottom Cmd 6

SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM
4	6	6	6	12	14

Fire Breather			
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
SP	1	—	12

Cullass			
SPECIAL	POW	P+S	
—	4	10	

Damage	5
Rockbottom's Coins	5
Field Allowance	C
Victory Points	1
Point Cost	21
Base Size	Small

FEIGN DEATH - Rockbottom cannot be targeted by ranged or magic attacks while knocked down.

PAY MASTER - Anytime during his activation, Rockbottom may affect one friendly Sea Dog unit within a number of inches of him equal to Rockbottom's current CMD with one of the following incentives. After using an incentive, mark one of the five coin boxes on his card. After all five boxes have been marked, no more incentives may be used.

- **Money Shot** - Affected models gain +2 to ranged attack and damage rolls. Money Shot lasts for one round.
- **Pay Day** - Affected models gain boosted melee attack rolls. After destroying a model with a melee attack, an affected model may immediately move up to 2". Pay Day lasts for one turn.
- **Walk It Off** - Affected living models gain Tough. Walk It Off lasts for one round.

TOUGH - When Rockbottom suffers sufficient damage to be destroyed, his controller rolls a d6. On a 5 or 6, Rockbottom is knocked down instead of being destroyed. If Rockbottom is not destroyed, he is reduced to one wound.

FIRE BREATHER

FIRE - Models hit by Fire Breather suffer Fire. Fire is a continuous effect that sets the target ablaze. A model on fire suffers a POW 12 damage roll each turn during its controller's Maintenance Phase until the fire expires on a d6 roll of 1 or 2. Fire effects are alchemical substances or magical in nature and are not affected by water.

MERCENARY

Lord Rockbottom will work for any faction.

ROCKBOTTOM

BOUGHT LOYALTY - When a friendly mercenary model/unit fails a CMD check within a number of inches of Rockbottom equal to his current CMD, Rockbottom's controller may mark one of the five coin boxes on Rockbottom's card to cause the model/unit to pass the failed roll. After all five boxes have been marked, Bought Loyalty can no longer be used.

COIN - Rockbottom gains +1 CMD for each unmarked coin box on his card.

Few aboard the *Talion* present a more striking appearance than the Rhulic "Lord" Joln Rockbottom. He stands at attention in the forecandle wearing a well-tailored, bright red jacket with polished brass buttons and a tremendous bicorn hat perched atop his head whenever the ship enters port. Comical though he may appear to outsiders, none who have sailed for long on the *Talion* would dare comment or even so much as chuckle where he could hear it. The dwarf has a position of singular importance among the crew and boasts a deadlier hand with his weapons than appearances suggest.

His combat prowess, however, does not restrain the men. Lord Rockbottom acts as the *Talion*'s treasurer, keeping all of the ship's finances and paying the crew. His dizzying proliferation of contacts and business associates keep the *Talion* working, and his bribes and negotiations cloud the legal status of both vessel and crew. While they have a reputation as pirates in many ports, Rockbottom works to obscure these charges and arrange an air of legitimacy. Without Rockbottom, the *Talion* could not maintain its aggressive posture and find any welcome ports.

Rockbottom takes offense to characterizations of Rhulfolk as greedy meddlers. He insists most Rhulfolk are good-hearted and focus on their families and refining their respective crafts. Joln has chosen to master the "craft" of speculative finance, a sacred calling emulating Great Father Ghrd, the patron of wealth. Joln Rockbottom will not explain the exact conditions whereby he came to leave Rhul or the status of his "lordship". Rumors persist regarding a dispute with the Moot of the Hundred Houses over a breach in the Edict of Ownership. Apparently the Moot lacked sufficient evidence to execute or brand Joln, but some speculate he chose a life at sea in an attempt to obey their dictates to stay as far from Rhul as physically possible. He still has friends in both the Glass Peaks and Cygnaran dwarven conclaves as well as an ally or two in the Searforge Commission.

At first glance Rockbottom's former association with the cutthroat Mercarian League seemed a perfect match. However, his own greed and penchant for constructing webs of delicate alliances eventually caught up with him and soured his relationship with the organization. No one knows the full extent of Rockbottom's dealings, but he has kept company with Cryxian smugglers, Khadoran kayazy, and Caspian inventors, sometimes all in the same day. He

believes that a well-placed coin can solve nearly all of life's financial or legal difficulties. This philosophy backfired in his position as paymaster and financier for the *Exeter* and put him at cross-purposes with her captain. Rockbottom was guilty of many of the charges leveled against him, excepting only insurrection; Rockbottom prefers to let others lead and influences men indirectly by the promise of coin.

The efforts put forward to save Rockbottom's life while incarcerated in the *Exeter's* brig genuinely moved Joln, and he holds no grudge against Doc for removing his gangrenous

leg. Most of the crew place Rockbottom on an equal footing with Captain Shae, and he may be the lynchpin that holds the *Talion* together. His financial prowess and political acumen perfectly complement Shae's courage and tactical brilliance. Rockbottom is at ease aboard the pirate vessel among comforts and luxuries he has earned through pillage at sea. No one aboard the *Talion* resents that Rockbottom never lifts a hand to help with mundane tasks. They would never expect it of him, and to those aboard the ship his "lordship" is never in question.



Talion Charter

We gather on this, the 15th of Octesh, eighth month of the year marked 604, to form a solemn brotherhood. This being three years, one month, and two weeks since the erstwhile crew of the MJS Exeter overthrew that vessel's tyrannical master, the survivors of which present their signatures below.

We swear our oath upon this new vessel the ship dubbed Talion hosting the Lady of Retribution, symbol of our unbreakable fidelity. We swear to fight ably alongside one another against any and all threats to our safety or liberty, avowing that an enemy of one is an enemy of all. We vow vengeance upon the Mercarian League, which has unfairly blackened our names and devoted its treasury to our ruin.

We promise furthermore to obey the orders of our captain first, giving unto him triple the shares of any booty. Each man must also heed the officer or officers placed above him in turn, including the Ship's Master, receiving two shares, the Bosun, Quartermaster, and Master Gunner, receiving one and three-quarters shares, and various other important officers receiving either one and a half or one and a quarter shares, as is their due.

We avow to lend our strength and cunning against any vessel or adversary named by our captain or his proxies, heedless of peril or the threat of the law. Aboard the Talion the captain's word is law, and we sever ourselves from the laws of the mainland. In the end may the ocean take us into her embrace, and let us leave this world remembered as true and steadfast to the bitter end.

TALION CHARTER SPECIAL RULES

THIS FORCE MAY ONLY INCLUDE

- ANY MERCENARY PRIVATEERS
- ANY MERCENARY WARJACKS
- CAPTAIN PHINNEUS SHAE

CROW'S NEST - THE TALION CHARTER'S CONTROLLER GAINS +1 TO THE STARTING ROLL TO DETERMINE THE ORDER OF DEPLOYMENT AND PLAY.

UNPREDICTABLE - AFTER BOTH PLAYERS COMPLETE DEPLOYMENT BUT BEFORE THE FIRST PLAYER TAKES HIS TURN, THE TALION CHARTER'S CONTROLLER MAY REDEPLOY ANY ONE OF HIS MODELS/UNITS. THE REDEPLOYED MODEL/UNIT MUST BE PLACED ON THE TABLE IN A LOCATION IN WHICH IT COULD HAVE BEEN PLACED DURING DEPLOYMENT INITIALLY.



Lord John Rockbottom *Phinneus Shae*
WALLS *KILLINGSWORTH* *HAWK*
Quinn Corcorian *Rafael de Scoriano* *Bat*
Hollan Wain *Milo Torbert* *Evlin Corcorian*
ARGAN GRATH *ELIAS / ARVADO*



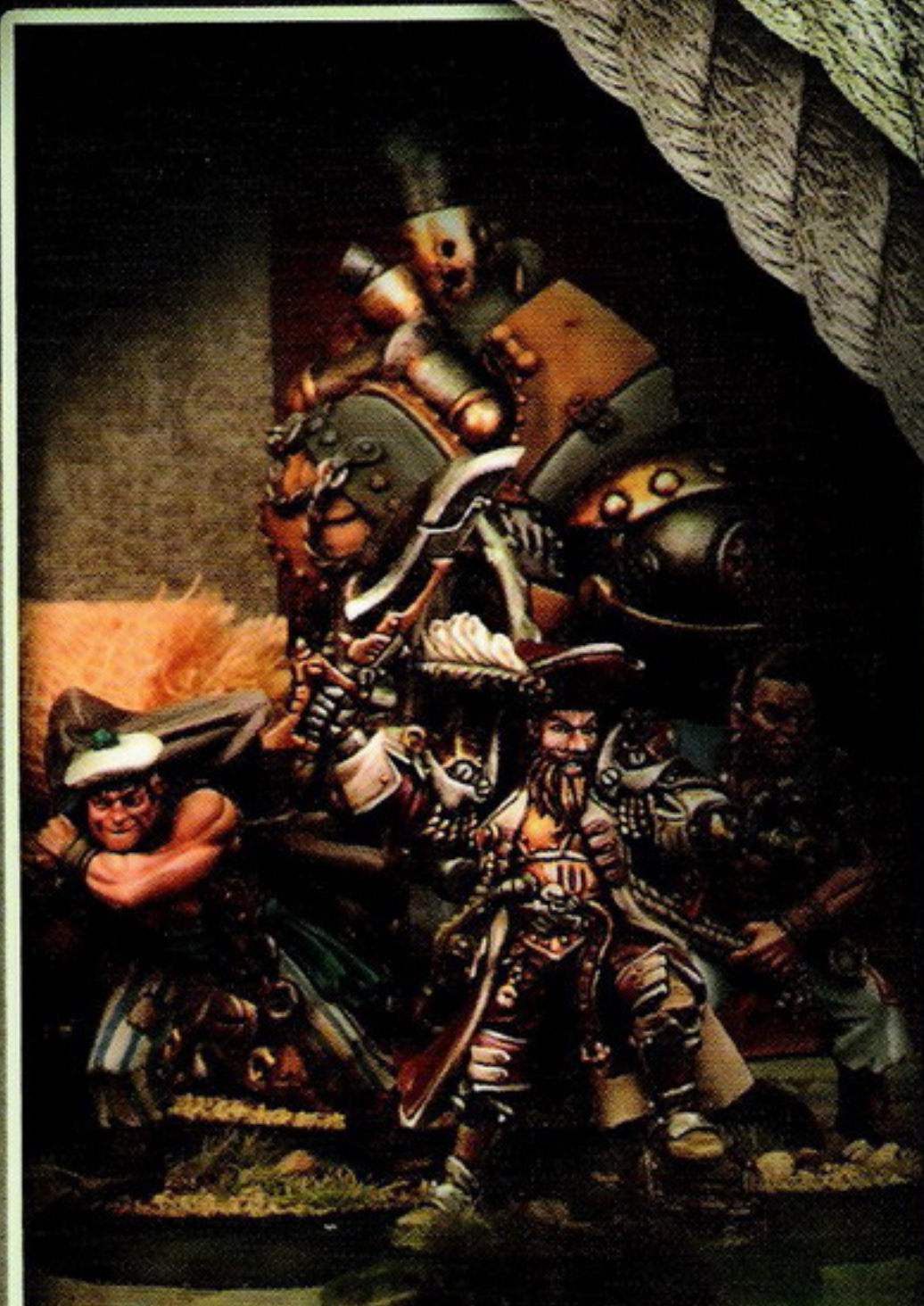
FORCES OF WARMACHINE

Pirates of the Broken Coast™

BEWARE THE SCOURGE OF THE BROKEN COAST!

The terrors of the high seas are now yours to command! Presented in this book is a rogue's gallery of ruthless sea dogs and notorious personalities drawn from the darkest dens and seediest seaports of the Iron Kingdoms. Prepare to assault your enemies with lightning-fast tactics and deadly combos the likes of which they have only heard about in bone-chilling tales.

Forces of WARMACHINE: Pirates of the Broken Coast™ includes all the warcasters, units, solos, unit attachments, and warjacks you need to field all-Privateer armies of every description, as well as all the rules to integrate these mercenaries into existing faction and mercenary contract armies. Brand new fiction throws you into the world of these bloody buccaneers and adds new dimensions to the Iron Kingdoms storyline. Time to gather your crew of cutthroats and bring a new brand of terror to the battlefield!



ISBN: 978-1-933362-24-3



9 781933 362243

52199



Play WARMACHINE
against



ISBN: 978-1-933362-24-3 PIP 1013 \$21.99

www.privateerpress.com