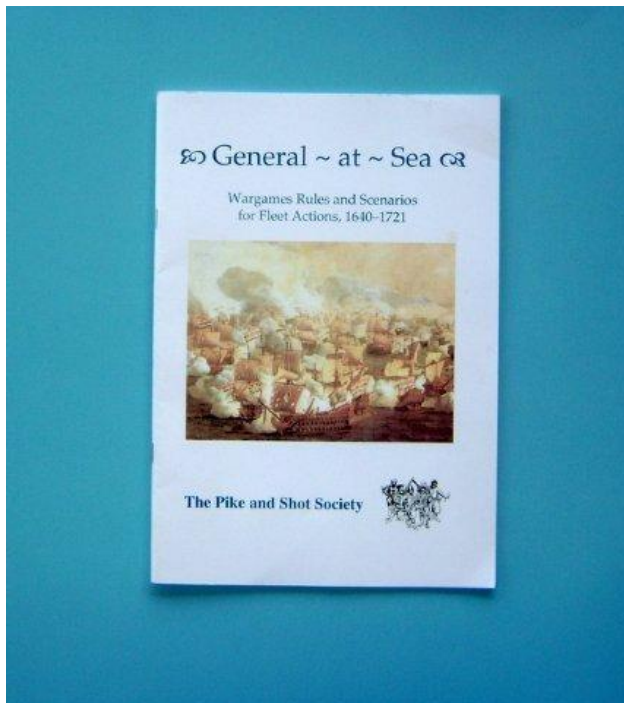


# **‘General at Sea: Wargames Rules and Scenarios for Fleet Actions, 1640-1721’**

**by Iain Stanford**

**Review by Mike Crane**

*General at Sea: Wargames Rules and Scenarios for Fleet Actions, 1640-1721* is a set of rules for sailing ships which contains a concept that deserves serious consideration by all sailing ship wargaming enthusiasts. Battle between individual ships is replaced by combat between stands containing ships of various sizes and number. Each ship rating is given a value and the values of the individual ships are totaled to determine the overall combat value of the stand. The advantages of this system appear to be manifold: (1) many ships can be controlled by one player; (2) large battles may be conducted in a smaller space; (3) more ships on the board is visually pleasing and historically accommodating; (4) and, the game may be quicker than the traditional one-on-one contests between large numbers of ships.



Although these rules are specifically written for the period of time that includes the Anglo-Dutch Wars of the Pike and Shot era, minor adjustments are suggested on page 36 which allow them to be extended through the Napoleonic Wars.

*General at Sea* was written by Iain Stanford and published by The Pike and Shot Society. The copyright date is 2003 and the ISBN is 1-902768-16-4. The 42-page paperback book is approximately 8" x 11.75" with 17 pages of rules and 22 pages presenting 16 historical scenarios. The book is well-illustrated with 22 pictures of battles and commanders and the illustrations on the front and back of the cover are in color. Each scenario is accompanied by a helpful schematic map for the preliminary placement of the ships.

*General at Sea* was designed to be used with 1/2400 and 1/3000 scale models, but 1/1200 ships may be used by changing the movement from centimeters to inches. Standard six-sided dice are used and a handy pull-out rules chart is provided. There are two loose pages of printed markers to indicate the condition or action of the stands.

Movement is determined by the weather and wind. Command and Control of the fleets is a key element to the game. Combat Results are largely determined by the Combat Values of the stands involved and will have one of several outcomes: (1) No Effect; (2) Control Test; (3) Levels of Damage; or (4) Scattered out of Command Control.

Victory is determined by totaling the points derived from the condition of each fleet's stands at the end of the battle. Different scores are designated for stands that are surrendered, scattered, removed, or damaged.



I admit that I was unaware of the significance of the Anglo-Dutch Wars — except for the English capture of New Amsterdam and the Hudson River territory which later became New York City and the state of New York. What a surprise to learn that there were many large sea battles from 1640 to 1721 involving fleets of English, Dutch, French, Spanish, Danish and Swedish sailing ships.

The scenarios included in the rules are as follows:

The Battle of Leghorn, March 4, 1653

The Battle of Dover, May 19, 1652

The Battle of Kentish Knock, September 28, 1652

The Battle in the Channel, August 28, 1652

The Battle of Dungeness, November 30, 1652

The Battle of Gabbard, June 2-3, 1653

The Battle of Lowestoft, June 3, 1665

The Battle of Oxfordness, July 25, 1666

The Battle of Sole Bay, July 28, 1672

The Battle of Texel, August 11, 1673

The Battle of Bantry Bay, May 1, 1689

The Battle of Beachy Head, June 10, 1690

The Battle of Velez-Malaga, August 13, 1704

The Battle of Colberger, July 1, 1644

The Battle of the Sound, October 29, 1658

The Battle of Kjöge Bay, June 30, 1677

The first scenario, The Battle of Leghorn, has the fewest number of ships involved and is used to introduce the player to the rules.

You can buy the book for £10 from The Pike and Shot Society. Their website address is [www.pikeandshot.org](http://www.pikeandshot.org). Scroll down to the bottom of the website page to the paragraphs entitled “Payment, Postage and Packaging” and “PayPal Online Purchase Options” to find specific buying details.

This set of rules is different from others in that four or five ships are placed on a stand and combat is between the stands instead of individual ships. Below is a set of paper ships that can be printed and used to play the rules without laying out a huge sum of money. A rectangular metal base or a metal washer can be glued to the bottom of the model and the ship can be placed on a stand (or base) covered with magnetic sheet painted blue.

