

CLASSIS

Ancient Naval Fleet Rules

Version 3.0

By George Arnold
(originally published in Lone Warrior 187)

1. Setting Up the Game

1.1 To play the game, use a board of hexes drawn to the same size as those used in the Commands and Colors series of games. (Opposite sides of the hexes are about 2 1/8 inches -- 54mm -- apart.) Currently, my board for smaller actions is made up of a sheet of blue poster board that is marked with 14 such hexes across and 12 hexes deep. A board for larger actions is 29 hexes across and 10 hexes deep. The board should have appropriate land and reef features for the scenario being played. Remember, most ancient sea battles were fought near shore.

1.2 Select a scenario, or set up a game that is part of a campaign, or choose a one-off game. Assign the ships to each side as called for in the scenario, or by some other method when setting up campaign or one-off games (random selection based on the nationality of the fleets involved, perhaps).

1.3 Each ship is identified by numbers or letters that quantify the following (for factors for each type of ship, see **Ship Factors Chart** below):

Ship size
Ramming Factor
Boarding Factor
Speed
Turning Capability
Crew Quality
Assigned Squadron

Ship Factors Chart

| Vessel Type | Ramming Factor | Boarding Factor | Speed | Turning Capability (in hex sides per speed point) |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------|-------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Lembi | 1 | 1 | 5 | 3 |
| Pentekonter | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 |
| Hemiolia | 3 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Bireme | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| Liburnian | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Trireme | 6 | 4 | 3 | 3 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----|----|---|---|
| Triemiolia | 6 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| Ct. Trireme | 7 | 6 | 3 | 3 |
| Quadrireme | 7 | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| Quinquireme | 7 | 6 | 2 | 2 |
| Ct. Quadrireme | 8 | 7 | 2 | 2 |
| Ct. Quinquireme | 8 | 8 | 2 | 2 |
| Six* | 9 | 12 | 1 | 1 |
| Seven* | 9 | 15 | 1 | 1 |
| Eight* | 10 | 20 | 1 | 1 |
| Nine* | 10 | 30 | 1 | 1 |
| Ten* | 11 | 40 | 1 | 1 |
| Larger Polyremes* | 12 | 50 | 1 | 1 |

*Each ship sized Six and above (all are cataphracts) is automatically equipped with 2 towers (1 fore, 1 aft) and two engines (1 fore, 1 aft).

Artillery: Each engine on a ship must be mounted in the bow or stern (so a maximum of 2 engines per ship).

- Only cataphract ships can carry engines.
- Each engine is worth this number of points per ship type:

| <u>Ship type</u> | <u>Engine points</u> |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 3, 4 or 5 | 1 |
| 6 – 10 | 2 |
| Larger Polyremes | 3 |

- Enemy boarding factors are reduced by the number of opposing engine points in boarding battles.

Towers:

- Only cataphract ships can add towers.
- Each tower adds 4 points to a ship's boarding factor.
- A ship cannot have more tower points than it has original boarding factors though. Example: A ship with an original boarding factor of 7 could only add one tower (worth 4 more boarding points) for a total boarding factor of 11.

1.4 Determine the crew quality for each ship. If the quality is not specified (not part of a set scenario, for example), use the following **Crew Quality Chart** to determine the crew rating for each ship by rolling a 1d12:

Crew Quality Chart

1-3 Green
4-9 Average
10-12 Expert

1.5 On the **Commander Quality Chart**, roll up squadron commanders for each side with a 1d12. Each squadron is usually made up of 2 to 10 ships, and fleets will typically be made up of 3 squadrons. (All those numbers can vary, depending on the circumstances, the scenario and the gamer's wishes.) Create enough commanders to lead the fleet's squadrons. The first roll is for the fleet admiral, who also commands a squadron in the battle. The remaining squadron commanders (commodores) are then rolled up and can be assigned as desired once squadrons are formed.

Commander Quality Chart and (Numerical Rating)

1-3 Below Average (2)
4-9 Average (3)
10-12 Above Average (4)

The numerical rating equals the commander's command radius, or ability to control the ships in his squadron, expressed in hexes. For example, an average commander (3) has a command radius of 3 hexes. Any of his squadron's ships that are within his command radius are under his control and can sometimes be activated together. Any of his squadron's ships that are outside his command radius are out of command and must always take any actions individually, not as part of the command.

In addition, whenever a squadron flagship is engaged with the enemy, all ships in the squadron are out of command.

Command is automatically restored whenever an out-of-command ship gets back in the commander's command radius. The commander's command radius is also restored when the flagship becomes disengaged from an enemy ship, although not if the flagship has been captured or sunk.

1.6 Assign each ship to a squadron commander. Each squadron must contain at least 2 ships.

1.7 The numerical ratings of the squadron commanders are also used to set up the activation system that determines the order in which the game is played.

To set up the system, place chits (counters) in some sort of **container** (an old coffee mug will work). The chits should be colored differently for each side in the battle. Then, each squadron commander has chits identified by his squadron placed in the container. The number of chits per commander is equal to the commander's numerical rating above.

For example, let's say that one side's chits are colored yellow; the other side's are colored red. Yellow's squadron commanders are 1 Below Average, and 2 Average. Therefore, the yellow side should place 2 chits marked for the Below Average commander's squadron in the container, and 3 chits each for the Average commanders' squadrons, 3 marked for one squadron, and 3 for the other.

1.8 Now, for each ship in a fleet, an appropriate model is placed on a base that also includes identifying information for the ship. An attached label will show the ship size and which opposing side the ship belongs to (small, colored adhesive circles work well to identify the opposing sides; obviously, use different colors for each). The same, or a separate, label will show the ramming factor, boarding factor, speed (in maximum hexes allowed per move), and turning capability.

One counter also must be placed on each base at the start of the game, identifying the squadron to which the ship is assigned – for example, A, B or C.

A second counter will show the crew quality – Green or Expert. (Average crews get no counter.)

In addition, if the ship is a flagship of the fleet or a squadron, a counter with that commander's capability is added to the base. More counters may be added as the game progresses, such as Crippled, Grappled or Out of Command counters.

(Yes, the counters can pile up. That is the bane of this type of galley game. The larger hexes on the game board are my current way of providing adequate space for the necessary labels and counters without hindering playability too much.)

1.9 If using wind direction rules, determine the direction of the wind by assigning a number from 1 through 6 to each side of a hex on the game board, then rolling a 1d6. The side of the hex that correlates to the die roll is the direction from which the wind is blowing.

1.10 Set up each fleet on opposite sides of the board, at least 1 move away from each other (based on the speed of the fastest ship on either side) unless there are other specific setups for the scenario being played.

2. Overview of How the Game Is Played

2.1 With the game set up, play begins by drawing a single chit from the container (1.7 above). If the chit identifies a squadron on either side, that squadron is **activated** and may take **actions**, such as movement, repair, various methods of attack, etc. (Other chits may be added to indicate other actions to be taken by all ships in the game, not just ships in a certain squadron. One End of Turn chit **must** be added to the container at the beginning of any turn. A Morale Check chit will be added for each side the turn after that side loses its first ship to sinking or capture. See the **Morale Check** procedure below.)

2.2 The activated squadron then rolls a 1d6. The resulting number is the maximum number of actions the squadron can take upon this activation.

2.3 The activated squadron performs its actions as allowed.

2.4 When the activated squadron's actions allowed on this chit are completed, the chit is put aside (not returned to the container), then another chit is drawn and the squadron identified follows the same procedure as the previous squadron (steps 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4).

2.5 Play continues in this way until all chits have been drawn from the container, or until the turn ends by the draw of the single chit marked End of Turn. At either point, all chits are returned to the container, then are shaken up and play resumes as explained in 2.1 above. The entire process repeats until a victory is achieved by one side or the other.

3. Rules of Play

3.1 Terms and Definitions

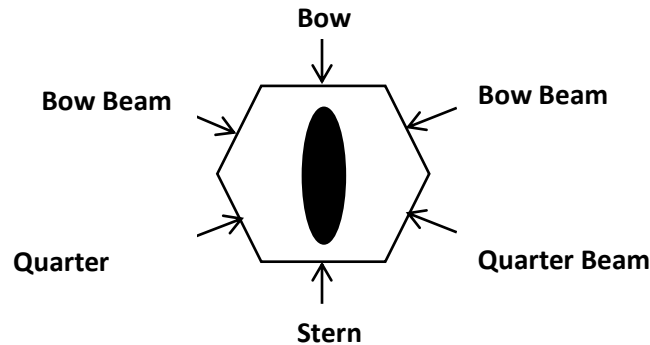
3.1.1 **Activation:** The squadron that has just drawn its own chit during a turn is considered activated. (2.1)

3.1.2 **Initiative:** The squadron that is activated is considered to have the initiative. It then rolls a 1d6 and receives that many points to use in taking that many actions while activated. When those initiative points are expended or the squadron declines to or cannot use any remaining initiative points, this round of activation ends. (2.2)

3.1.3 **Actions:** These are the specific activities that initiative points can be used for during the current activation. (See the explanations of various Actions below.)

3.1.4 **Engaged:** Ships are considered engaged or “in contact” when one moves from an adjacent hex to enter a hex already occupied by an enemy ship. (I indicate this by moving the bow of the engaging ship slightly onto the hex containing the target ship.) This must be done as the first part of attempting any type of attack action, such as ramming, grappling, oar raking, etc.

3.1.5 Angles of Attack:



3.1.6 **Crippled:** The speed and turning capability factors of any ship that becomes crippled are each immediately reduced to 1 and any boarding factor is halved (rounded down, but can be no lower than 1). Crew quality is reduced by one level, but can fall no lower than Green. A second Cripple result, while a first is still in effect, means that the crippled ship immediately breaks up and sinks.

3.1.7 **Captured:** Ships are captured when a boarding action against them succeeds. The original marine contingent of the captured ship is lost, and no capturing marines from the capturing ships remain on board. So, the captured ship has a boarding factor of 0 from then on. The captured ship can be recaptured by the original owning side by attempting to grapple. If the grapple is successful, there is no boarding action and the captured ship is recaptured automatically. Captured ships' speed and turning capability factors are permanently reduced to 1 and crew quality falls to Green.

3.1.8 **End of Turn:** A turn ends when all of the chits in the container have been drawn and acted upon or when the single End of Turn chit is drawn. At either point, all chits are replaced in the container and a new turn begins. (2.1)

3.2 Actions

The following actions are permitted:

3.2.1 **Move** -- May move up to full speed. Can be done by whole commands (if each ship moving is in command) or by individual ships, at a cost of one initiative point per command or per individual ship.

3.2.2 **Backwater Move** – To make a backwater move, all ships must move straight backward 1 hex, which ends the action. Ships attempting to break off contact from a ram must make a backwater move to do so. Backwater moves can be done by whole commands (if each ship moving is in command) or by individual ships, at a cost of one initiative point per command or per individual ship.

3.2.3 **Ram** – Must be done by individual ships, not whole commands, at a cost of one initiative point per ram. The ramming ship must already have moved into contact (engaged) with the target ship. See below for ramming procedure.

3.2.4 **Follow-up Ram:** Must be done by individual ships, not whole commands, at a cost of one initiative point per follow-up ram. Either ship in a ram from a previous turn, in which neither ship has sunk, may

perform this action. The effects of a follow-up ram are considered to be the accumulating effects of the initial ram. Use the same procedure as for ramming, below.

3.2.5 Oar Rake Attempt – Must be done by individual ships, not whole commands, at a cost of one initiative point per attempt. The ship attempting to rake oars must already be in contact with the enemy's bow or quarter beam. See below for oar rake procedure.

3.2.6 Grapple Attempt – Must be done by individual ships, not whole commands, at a cost of one initiative point per attempt. The ship trying to grapple must already be in contact with the ship it is trying to grapple. See below for grappling procedure.

3.2.7 Degrapple Attempt – Must be done by individual ships, not whole commands, at a cost of one initiative point per attempt. A ship trying to degrapple must already be grappled with the ship from which it is trying to degrapple. See below for degrappling procedure.

3.2.8 Board Attempt – Must be done by individual ships, not whole commands, at a cost of one initiative point per attempt. A ship trying to board must already be grappled to the ship it is trying to board. See below for boarding procedure.

3.2.9 Repair Attempt – Must be done by individual ships, not whole commands, at a cost of one initiative point per attempt. The ship attempting repairs must be crippled. See below for repair procedure.

3.2.10 Morale Check – This is an action that happens automatically; it cannot be chosen as an action. When a Morale Check chit comes up in the container (it's placed there on the next turn after a side loses any ship, either by sinking or boarding loss to the enemy), compare the side's number of ships lost with the enemy's. If the friendly side's total is lower, ignore this morale check. If the friendly number is higher, the friendly fleet commander rolls a 1d6 (Below Average -1; Above Average +1). The resulting total must be more than the number of ships his fleet has lost. If he fails or if he has been lost (his flagship sunk or captured), the fleet fails the morale test and concedes defeat.

3.2.11 Multiple Actions per Ship -- Individual ships may be able to perform several actions on each activation. The number of actions performed by a single ship is limited by the number of initiative points the actions require and the number of points available. In addition, any individual actions may not be repeated during this activation. So, on a single activation, a ship could, for example, move into contact with the enemy, attempt to grapple the enemy and try to resolve a boarding action if the grapple succeeds, all at the cost of 3 initiative points (assuming those points are available this activation). But the ship could not move into contact more than once, try to grapple more than once, or try to resolve a boarding action more than once.

3.3 Resolving Actions

Use the following procedures to resolve certain actions:

3.3.1 Resolving Rams and Follow-up Rams

Each ship:

- Takes basic ram factor.
- Adds 1 for each level of difference between crew quality levels, if higher.
- Subtracts ½ the ram factor, if crippled.
- Adds 1, if ramming a bow beam.

- Adds 2, if ramming a quarter beam.
- Adds 3, if ramming the stern.
- Adds result of a 1d6 roll for a random factor.

Results for either ship:

- -4 or more: Sunk.
- -3 or -2: Crippled.
- -1 to +1: Each rolls a 1d6; crippled on 1, 2 or 3.
- +2 or higher: No effect.

3.3.2 Resolving Oar Rakes

Attack must be on a bow beam or a quarter beam.

Each ship:

- Takes basic ram factor.
- Adds 1 for each level of difference between crew quality levels, if higher.
- Adds result of a 1d6 roll for a random factor.

Higher result wins. If defender wins, there is no effect. If attacker wins, defender is crippled.

3.3.3 Resolving Grappling Attempts

Each ship rolls a 1d6. Add the difference in levels of crew quality to the ship with the better crew. If the ship trying to grapple is equipped with any form of “iron hands,” add 2 to its roll. The attempt succeeds on any result that is higher for the ship trying to grapple.

3.3.4 Resolving Degrappling Attempts

Each ship rolls a 1d6. Add the difference in levels of crew quality to the ship with the better crew. A higher result by the ship trying to degrapple means the attempt has succeeded. Degrappling after capturing an enemy ship is automatic on payment of the standard initiative point for the effort.

3.3.5 Resolving Boarding Attempts

Each ship:

- Takes current boarding factors.
- Subtracts points for engine fire from opposing ship(s).
- Adds points for towers on own ship.
- Adds results of a 1d6 for random factor.

If either ship’s total is 2 or higher than the enemy, the enemy is captured. Otherwise, no result.

Captured ships: See 3.1.6 above.

3.3.6 Resolving Repair Attempts

Each ship attempting to recover from cripple effects rolls a 1d6:

- 1 – Ship sinks.
- 2 – Permanently crippled. No further repair attempts allowed.

- 3-4 – No effect.
- 5-6 – Ship recovers from cripple effects.

4. Victory and Defeat

The first side to lose one-third of its ships (or one-third of its original ramming factors) loses the game. Defeat can also come as a result of a Morale Check (see 3.2.10 above).

