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WofUN
STARTERPACK RULES

TRAFALGAR

1805



by **Andy Callan**

BATTLE
BOX
in a

illustrations by **FLORIAN RICHTER**

War-gaming on a tabletop battlefield with miniature figurines is an attractive and absorbing hobby. But until now, it has always presented a newcomer with the daunting prospect of spending weeks, if not months, in painting the armies before they are ready for action. As a result, many people lose interest before they ever get to play a game.

WoFun miniatures now offer a revolutionary solution to this problem. The figurines come ready-printed in full color, and all you have to do is simply press them from their sprue and slot them into their bases. No paints, no glue – all the hard work has already been done for you!

Best of all, a ready to use 28mm WoFun regiment costs less than a similar number of unpainted hard plastic miniatures and is far cheaper than metal castings. The 18mm scale troops are even more economical.

So now you can buy affordable, battle-ready armies and get straight down to wargaming action.

As someone who has spent more than fifty years of his life enjoying war-gaming – painting armies, fighting battles and writing my own rules – I was interested to learn about this brilliant technical breakthrough which could open up the hobby to a new audience.

So, I was very happy to be asked to contribute to the WoFun project by writing a series of rules for download by customers. They are aimed specifically at gamers who have never played a historical wargame before and are designed as a simple introduction to the hobby, to get players used to the idea of battlefield manoeuvres and rolling dice to decide combat.

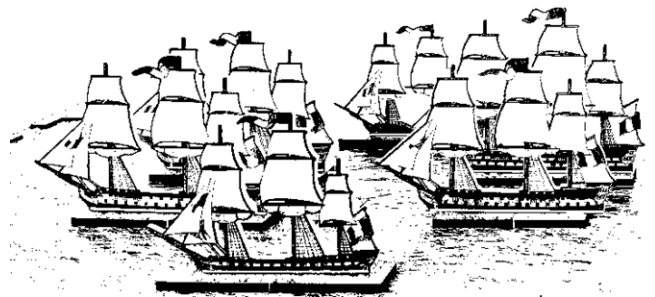
Trafalgar was the last great battle between large fleets of sailing warships, putting an end to a style of naval warfare that had prevailed for more than a hundred and fifty years.

Conventional naval tactics led to engagements between fleets sailing in lines parallel to each other, thus maximizing their broadside firepower (sailing ships move forward but fire sideways!). Nelson's tactics at Trafalgar were revolutionary, because he deliberately attacked in a column, against an enemy fleet deployed in line. This was potentially very risky and would have been suicidal against a better-trained opponent but it was based on a shrewd assessment of

the relative tactical abilities of the two fleets. Nelson realized that the risk was worth taking to bring on his desired “pell-mell battle” in which superior British gunnery and seamanship would be sure to win the day. Since the demise of the old Royal French Navy following the Revolution, the British had got the better of their opponents in every way. They had won every fleet action fought on the high seas against the French and Spanish and were successful in the overwhelming majority of ship to ship actions.

My rules reflect these historical realities, so you should not expect the fleets to be evenly matched. They have been designed for use with the WoFun Florian Richter Signature Edition Trafalgar range. There is a Starter game, followed by some more advanced rules for more experienced players.

I have made the movement and firing mechanisms as simple as I can while still being true to at least some of the technicalities of war at sea. But since sailing ships were at the mercy of the winds some complexity is unavoidable! Take your time to study these rules carefully and start with a small action with just one ship on each side. This will help you to get used to the movement and gunnery rules before you move on to larger and more complicated battles.



Starter Pack Battle

The game is designed to be played on a squared playing surface. This makes movement and the measuring of ranges easier and less open to dispute. Remember that big fleets take up a lot of space, so don't be over-ambitious – the seascape will still have to fit on your table unless you are prepared to crawl around on the floor. But if, in the course of a game, a ship appears to be about the sail off the edge simply add another battle-board, or move both fleets back the same number of squares towards the middle, so that the relative positions of all the ships are maintained.

This is loosely based on an action that took place two weeks after Trafalgar, when Admiral Demeanor's Squadron, which had escaped the battle, was engaged and defeated in the Bay of Biscay by a British force under the command of Captain Richard Strachan. In the real thing, the French ships were outnumbered and had already suffered significant storm- and battle-damage. Here the forces are more evenly matched, with 6 ships on each side.



Ship Movement

I have made the movement and firing mechanisms as simple as I can while still being true to at least some of the technicalities of war at sea. But since sailing ships were at the mercy of the winds some complexity is unavoidable! Take your time to study these rules carefully and start with a small action with just one ship on each side. This will help you to get used to the movement and gunnery rules before you move on to larger and more complicated battles.

The fleets

In this Beginner's level version of the game, each Player controls a small fleet of ships:

The British fleet consists of:

Third Rates: Tonnant (80-flagship), Bellisle, Achille, Conqueror (74s);

Frigates: Phoebe (36), Sirius (32);



The Tonnant has a gunnery rating of 6, the other 74s have a rating of 5. The two Frigates each have a rating of 2.

The French fleet consists of:

Third Rates: Formidable (80-flagship), Duguay-Trouin, Mont Blanc, Scipion (74s);

Frigates: Cornелиe, Hortense (40s);



The Formidable starts with a gunnery rating of 5, the 74s have a rating of 4. Because of earlier storm-damage all French line of battle ships move one square less than normal when sailing in any direction.

The two Frigates each have a gunnery rating of 2 and sail normally.



1. Set up the game

Lay out 4 of the battle boards in a 2x2 rectangle. Set up the two Squadrons with the French Third Rates in line ahead, flanked by their frigates, in one half of the battle area and the British following them in the other.

The wind is fresh and blowing from the South and will not change during the course of the action. This means the British have the advantage of the Weather Gauge. During the game, if any ships are about to sail off the edge of the playing area add on one of the spare battle boards or move all ships back the same number of squares to maintain their positions relative to each other.

Prepare a record card for each ship, using the information below and the examples on page 7.

2. Before the game

Make a record card for each ship (see example in Section B, page 7 below) showing the Name, Rating, Nationality, Number of masts standing, boxes for Battle Damage and its Gunnery Score on each broadside (calculated as its notional number of guns at the start of the battle - ignore any over 90 - divided by 10 minus its rate. E.g: a 74 gun Third Rate has a Gunnery of $7.4 - 3 = 4.4$, which is rounded up to 5 if the ship is British, or down to 4 if French or Spanish. (See section 4.2).

In the case of Frigates and smaller ships always take two off the ship's Gunnery score. The Gunnery score will go down as overall combat effectiveness is reduced by enemy action.

Note that the Gunnery calculation means any ships smaller than Frigates are useless in a battle involving ships of the line (since an 18 gun sloop would have a zero-gunnery score $(1.8 - 2)$! This is deliberate! They were expected to keep well away from such serious affairs. But for an action that just involves Frigates or smaller vessels do not subtract two when calculating a ship's Gunnery score. For an explanation of Ship Ratings see Section G (below).

3. Playing the game

The Turn Sequence (there are three phases in each turn):

- a) **Manoeuvre:** Move your Ships. The British player can always choose whether to move first or second. British ships may move as a fleet or squadron (i.e. all ships follow the leading ship) or individually once within Gunshot (see Section E, page 8 below) and can do any manoeuvre, subject only to the usual restrictions due to wind and heading (Section C, page 7 below). The French and Spanish normally manoeuvre only as a fleet but if they roll a 6 at the start of a manoeuvre phase then one ship may act individually for the rest of the battle. These rules reflect the fact that British signaling and ship handling was much more efficient and Royal Navy captains were allowed to show greater initiative in action once the signal "engage the enemy more closely" was made.
- b) **Gunnery:** Work out the Firing from your ships, one at a time. British ships always fire first.
- c) **Boarding:** Resolve any Boarding actions involving any of your ships.

4. Manoeuvre

(see Section C for further explanation of the movement rules).

4.1. The diagram in Section C shows the maximum and minimum moves (in squares) under **Fresh Winds**. Minus 1 on the maximum move for every 2 damage points suffered by a ship and another minus 1 for each mast lost. *Note this means ships choosing to make less than the maximum move (for example, under "fighting sails") will not be affected by some initial damage.*

4.2. Adjust for wind strength.

Strong Winds = -1 (Close Hauled), +1 sailing Large, no change on other headings.

Light Winds = -1 (Close Hauled and sailing Large), -2 (on the Quarter and Before the Wind).

4.3. A ship can turn 1 compass point at the start of a move and then by 1 extra point after each square moved. Ships may only cross the wind by Wearing or Tacking (see Section D). A ship needs all 3 masts to wear or tack. To tack roll a **Control Dice**: (+1 for British Ships) and get a total of 4 or more to succeed. A ship with **more than 1** damage point cannot tack.

4.4. If a ship ever moves into or through the same square as another, test for a **Collision**. For two friendly ships roll 2 D6. Roll an extra D6 if the two ships are enemies, and for each Spanish ship involved. If any double is rolled the two ships collide, the moving ship ends its move and both ships lose 2 damage points (see 2.2), or 3 points for any treble. In any turns after a collision you must roll a double on two dice to break off contact and move **out** of the collision square.

5. Combat

5.1 Gunnery (ships fire only in their own turn)

1. See the Diagrams at E below for arcs of fire, ranges, the special rule for firing at "Random Shot" and the worked example of firing in Diagram F.

2. Normally, ships fire just one of their broadsides in a turn but a British ship may fire one at full effect and the other at half effect – they need to roll 5 or 6 on a D6 each turn to do this.

3. Only British ships may split their targets. Otherwise ships always fire the nearest enemy. 4. Firing takes place **after** movement except for any rakes, which are done as soon as they happen during the manoeuvre phase. Work out the Target Score for each ship.

4. Target Score = Current broadside Gunnery minus the range deduction (Diagram E). Adjusted for:

a) **Position**: Stern Rake +2, Bow Rake +1. (to count as a rake the firing ship's broadside must be at 90° to the target's bow or stern and within 2 squares of it) See Diagram "F".

b) **Quality**: Add 1 to the score for British ships, minus 1 for Spanish. Add 1 for a ship's first shot. The final Target Score gives the number of dice (D6s) to roll.

So, an undamaged, British, Third Rate firing a Stern Rake at Musket range would roll 5 (Gunnery), with no deduction for Range, plus 2 (for a Stern Rake) plus 1 (British ship) = 7 dice.

5.2 Damage

5s and 6s are hits at Gun Shot and under. See Section E for firing at Random Shot.

Only broadsides count – firing from bow-chasers and stern guns is ignored in this game.

6s: inflict 1 **Damage Point** on the target. This represents hits to spars and rigging, affecting a ship's maneuverability. A ship can take up to 4 damage points – lose 1 square off the maximum move for each 2 points lost. After that any single 6s rolled are wasted but if a target takes two 6s or more from firing in one turn it loses a mast. Roll another dice 1/2 = Foremast, 3/4 = Main, 5/6 = Mizzen. If this mast has already been lost the hit is wasted. For each mast lost take 1 further square off the ship's maximum move. If this means a ship cannot move it is treated as a hulk – it is dead in the water and will simply drift one square downwind, each turn. **5s**: take 1 point off the target's opposing broadside **Gunnery Score**. This represents hits on guns

and crew. 1 hit in 3 each turn passes through the decks and is taken off the target's far broadside. Rakes are split between broadsides (if not divisible by 2 the firing Player allocates the odd hit).

If you ever roll two or more 1s then some shot has passed over the target – inflict 1 point of damage on any ship (friend or foe!) that is in line of fire and not more than 6 squares away.

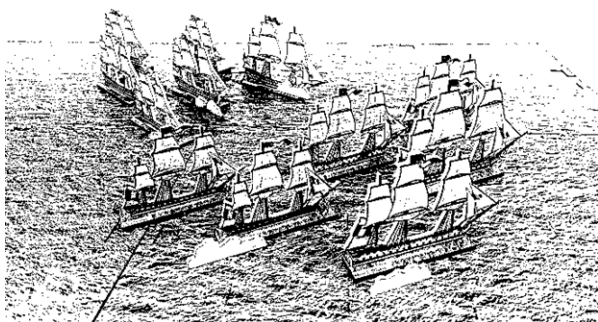
6. Boarding

6.1 Ships must be in the **same** square. The target must be stationary (eg after a collision) or moving at no more than one square. Roll D6 vs D6. The boarder must win or draw to grapple and stop the enemy attempting to break off (see 1.4) when it is his turn to move.

6.2 Next, for each ship take the Gunnery score on its **weaker** broadside minus 2 for each mast lost and add the score from one D6 (+1 British, -1 Spanish). If the boarder wins the enemy strikes his colors immediately. A draw means the two ships remain grappled together and the fight continues next turn. If the boarder loses no fresh attempt may be made.

6.3 The ships involved in a boarding action may fire only at each other and will do so for so long as the fight is unresolved. They fire at "Pistol Shot", (no deduction for range) but only 5s hit as they are too close to hit anything except their hulls and many of the crew are busy fighting.

6.4 After a successful boarding the two ships must stay locked together for the rest of the battle.



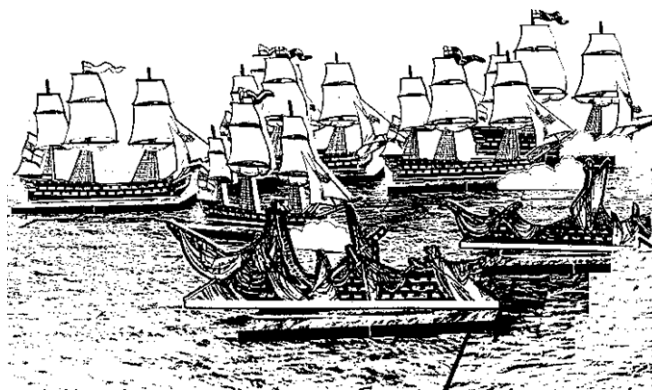
7. Surrender

Ships cannot be sunk by gunfire in battle – instead, they are just reduced to helpless hulks. Even though a ship may have taken enough hits to render it ineffective it will only strike its colors either:

a) when it is successfully boarded

OR

b) when it has lost at least 1 mast (or all 3 for a British ship) AND an enemy ship moves into a position to rake it.



Advanced Rules

Once you have played the basic rules a few times you may wish to try something a little more challenging. The rules are the same as before but now you also have to deal with changes in the weather, extra ship types, issuing orders and some special tactics.

1. Wind Direction and Strength

Work this out at the start of the game by choosing a sea area and checking the current BBC

Shipping Forecast online. Alternatively, roll a dice:

1 = A Fresh wind blowing from the North; **2** = East; **3** = South; **4** = West; **5** = Light Wind (roll again for direction); **6** = Strong wind (roll again for direction).

To start off, it's easiest if the wind stays the same throughout the battle, unless you have a special scenario in mind. But if you want to introduce some unpredictability in the weather roll 2 dice at the end of each turn after firing has started.

On a roll of 11 or 12 the wind changes. **Roll again 1, 2, 3** = it drops one level, **4** = it veers 1 point clockwise, **5** = it backs 1 point anti-clockwise, **6** = it rises one level. No fighting is possible at anything above "Strong" force winds. *(It was noted at the time that wind often dropped once fleets were engaged – supposedly due to a "concussion of the air" - hence the greater likelihood here of the wind dropping).* After any change of wind the British fleet has the option of moving 1st or 2nd on the next turn. Allow only one wind change per game, else things will get silly...



2. Ship Classifications

For the purposes of this game, British ships are reckoned to be better than their French and Spanish opponents. This is thanks to their greater firepower (more carronades, and superior gun drills) and generally higher level of seamanship and fighting spirit after years of active service at sea. The French and Spanish fleets spent much of their time blockaded in port and so lacked the same experience. In addition, Spanish ships, though they were finely constructed vessels, usually suffered from serious under-manning and so they are penalized accordingly.

If you are uncomfortable with these historical facts, or want to have an entirely evenly balanced game, simply ignore any rule that gives a bonus or penalty according to nationality. You can always make adjustments for special cases. For example, at Trafalgar the French Redoubtable might get a +1 for Boarding to reflect the special training in this tactic by the aggressive Captained Lucas.

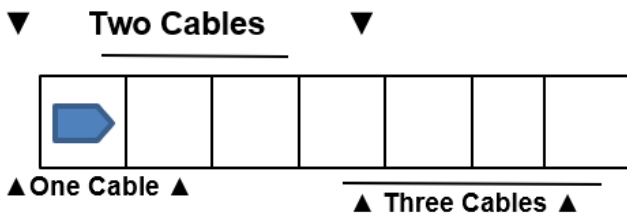
3. Gunnery Doctrine

The French and Spanish tended to favor long range disabling shots. So, at Gun Shot as well as Random Shot only their **6s** hit, causing damage points to the target's yards & rigging. Ignore any **5s** rolled. The British generally preferred firing at the hulls of enemy ships so they may declare at the start of a battle that all of their **5s** and **6s** at Point Blank and under will always be inflicted on a target's broadside. They were discouraged from firing at beyond Point Blank.

Explanatory Diagrams

A. Distances in Line

The normal distance between 2 friendly ships in line of battle is two cables.



B. Ship Records

You will need some method of showing mast losses, damage points and gunnery hits on each ship to remind you of how their movement and firing is affected. Rather than spoiling the look of the game by littering the table with chits or any other flotsam, each Admiral should use a ship Record Cards to keep track of any hits.

Then the only way to judge the effectiveness of your shooting will be to see how enemy ships man oeuvre and fire back. Marking hits requires scrupulous honesty on behalf of the Players, of course, but if you have the luxury of an Umpire, then all the record keeping can be left to him.

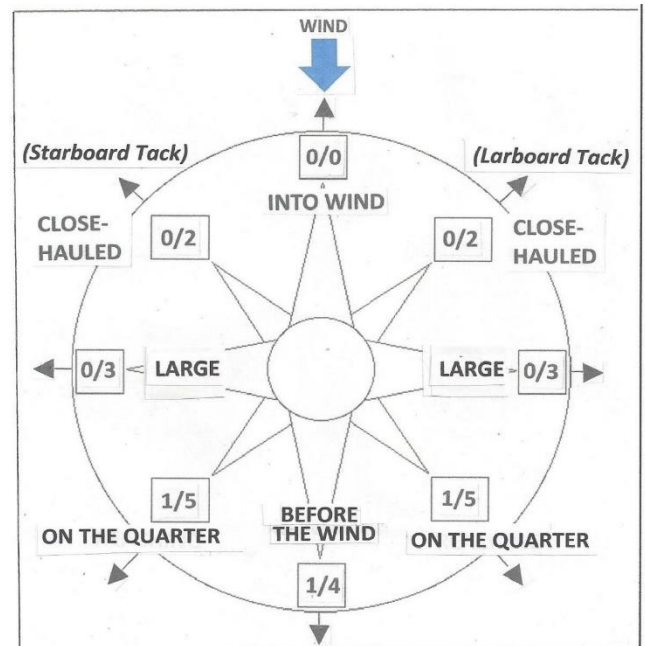
Example of ship record card

Add damage points and cross out gunnery boxes and masts as hits are suffered.

HMS HORNBLOWER (74 guns) (3 rd rate) Ship No. (1)													
British					Starboard Broadside								
French					[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	[8]	[9]
Spanish					Port Broadside								
					[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	[8]	[9]
Damage [X][][][][]			Foremast		Mainmast			Mizzen					

C. Wind and Movement

The rules use a squared playing surface and the ships move on headings which correspond to the eight principal points of the compass (N, NE, E, SE, S, SW, W, NW). Copy this diagram and put on your playing surface, aligning the wind direction with the squares.



The numbers show the maximum move in squares (under full sail) and minimum move (under reduced or fighting sails) for the principal points of sailing under **Fresh Winds** (Beaufort Scale 4-5).

In Strong Winds (6-7) = minus 1 from the maximum if Close Hauled, plus 1 sailing Large, no change on other headings (as ships would reduce sail in these conditions unless fleeing the enemy). **In Light Winds** (1-3) = minus 1 (Close Hauled & Large), minus 2 (running before the wind and with the wind on the Quarter).

A ship can increase or reduce its rate of sailing by no more than 2 squares in a turn. So, a ship with the wind on the Quarter under easy sails making 3 squares, could go up to 5 or down to 1 next move. However, since a ship has no brakes (!) it can't come to an immediate stop, so even if making only 1 or 2 knots a ship's momentum means it must always move at least one square before it can heave-to (come to a standstill).

A ship that changes heading during the course of a move counts any squares moved on one heading towards the maximum allowed on another. So, a ship that moves 1 square Close Hauled and then turns to sail Large can only move 2 squares (3-1) on the new heading. If it moves 2 squares sailing Large and then turns to sail Close Hauled it gets no move on the new heading this turn, since it has already moved the maximum allowed (2 squares) if Close-Hauled.

A ship's movement is not affected when it has taken only 1 point of damage. But for every 2 points it loses 1 square of movement off its maximum (so, sailing Large, a ship with 4 points of damage - and no ship can take more than 4 - would lose 2 squares and so have a maximum speed of only 1 square). Lose 1 further square off the maximum movement for each mast lost. Note that limited damage will not affect a ship doing less than the maximum rate (eg under "fighting sails").

D. Wearing and Tacking

A ship needs **all of its masts** to do either of these complicated manoeuvres.

Tacking is a real test of seamanship. Roll a dice for each ship attempting this manoeuvre (+1 for British ships, -1 for Spanish -1 for all ships in Light Winds). You need to score 4 or more to succeed. If a ship fails its roll then the tack is unsuccessful, the ship "misses stays" and ends up "in irons" – pointing directly into the wind. Next move it must begin to wear instead.

A ship which has taken **more than one Damage Point** cannot tack.

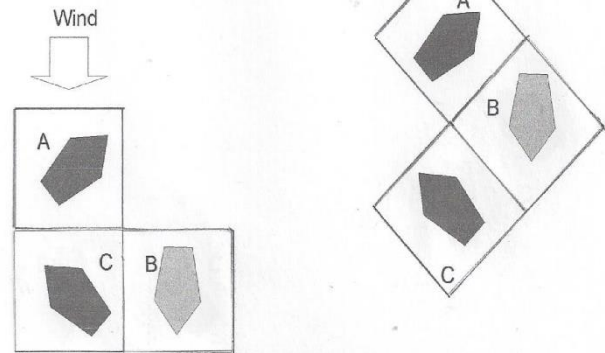
WEARING is slow but safe. Note loss of ground to Leeward

A = start of move 1,

B = end of move 1

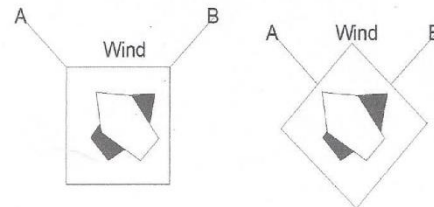
C = end of move 2

This example shows a change from a Larboard to a Starboard tack



TACKING is quicker but riskier than wearing. Ships must test for "Missed Stays". A = Position at the start of the move.

B = Position at the end of the move. This example shows a change from a Starboard to a Larboard tack.



E. Arcs of Fire & Ranges

The use of a squared grid does some strange things to Arcs of Fire, especially on the diagonals, but since this is the same for both sides it shouldn't be a problem once Players get used to it...!

Note that ships of this era had very narrow broadside arcs of fire. The arrow represents the firing ship, heading in the direction shown and the target is in one of the lettered squares, positioned on any heading. Photocopy the diagrams, then stick them on card to serve as gaming aids.

F. Gunnery

Only broadsides count. Any fire from bow- and stern-chasers is disregarded in this game.

Ships which are in the same square as each other fire at **Pistol Shot** with no deduction for range.

M = Musket Shot : 1 square across from broadside on (no deduction for range)

BQ & SQ = Bow Quarter & Stern Quarter. No deduction for range but count only half the Gunnery score (round up for Good ships). Usual adjustments for quality apply.

PB = Point Blank: Minus 1 or 2 off the firing ship's Gunnery Score

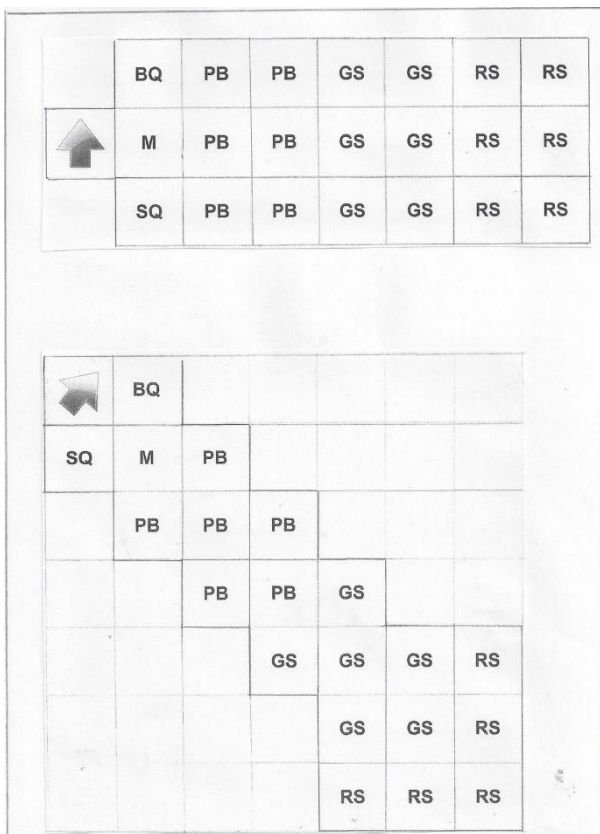
GS = Gun Shot: Minus 3 or 4 off the firing ship's Gunnery score.

Note that at Gun Shot and shorter, the range deduction is always the same as the number of empty squares between the firer and the target.

RS = Random Shot (extreme range)

All ships (6th rate Frigates to 1st rate flagships) roll just 1 dice and hit on a 6.

Orthogonal and Diagonal Arcs of Fire Diagrams



HMS Ajax (A) is firing at the French *Bucentaure* (B).

The British captain has skillfully manoeuvred his ship so she is firing her first broadside of the battle into the enemy's stern at very close range (Musket Shot – one square away).

Work out the Target Score from her Starboard broadside.

The basic Gunnery Score for a British 3rd Rate, is 5 (74 divided by 10 = 7.4, rounds up to 8 for a British ship, minus 3 for a 3rd Rate). This is adjusted as follows:

- There is no range deduction as there are no empty squares between the firer and the target.
- Add 2 for a Stern Rake.
- Add 1 for a British Ship.
- Add 1 for her first shot of the battle.
- **Giving a final Target Score of 9.**
- So, *Ajax* rolls 9 dice this turn.

Say the rolls are 1,2,2,3,4,5,5,6,6. Only the 5s and 6s count, giving a total of 4 hits. The British Fleet has chosen to use the Optional Gunnery Doctrine Rule (see 4.3) so all the hits are inflicted on the target's hull.

Hits from a rake are split equally between a target's two broadsides, so the unfortunate *Bucentaure* (an 80-gun Third Rate) sees its initial Gunnery Score of 5 (80 divided by 10 = 8, minus 3) now reduced to 3 on each of its broadsides.

G. Types of Warship

The table below shows the ship rating system in use by the Royal Navy in Nelson's time.

Type	Rate	Guns	Gun decks
Ship of the Line	1st Rate	100 to 120	3
	2nd Rate	90 to 98	3
	3rd Rate	64 to 80	2
	4th Rate	48 to 60	2
Frigate	5th Rate	32 to 44	1
	6th Rate	20 to 28	1
Sloop-of-War	Unrated	16 to 18	1
Gun-brig or Cutter		6 to 14	1

First rates were the biggest and most heavily armed ships. They were expensive to build and operate (because of their large crews) so there were not many of them. They were usually reserved for fleet admirals. **Example:** H.M.S Victory (104)

Second rates were powerful ships and made a useful and cheaper alternative as a flagship. **Example:** H.M.S Temeraire (98)

Third rates were the most popular size of ship of the line for all navies. They were easier to handle and cheaper to operate than a 1st or 2nd rate, but still had plenty of firepower. **Example:** H.M.S Bellerophon (74)

Fourth rates, although they had two decker's and were called ships of the line, by this period they were reckoned to be not strong enough to serve in the line of battle. The few that remained were did service as convoy escorts, or as flagships in colonial waters. **There were no 4th rates at Trafalgar, in either fleet.**

Fifth and Sixth rates were Frigates. They could serve a scouts for a fleet, as independent cruisers or as convoy escorts. They sometimes operated as squadrons against enemy frigate forces. **Examples:** H.M.S Euryalus (36), Cornelie (40)

Smaller Ships such as Sloops, Brigs and Cutters sometimes acted as scouts or dispatch vessels but were too weak to fight in a major battle. **Examples:** Pickle (8), Furet (16)





Duguay-Trouin

