

GURPS

Fourth Edition

*Supporting Cast:*TM **Age of Sail Pirate Crew**TM



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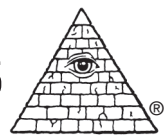
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It is, it is, a glorious thing to be a pirate king.
 – W.S. Gilbert, *The Pirates of Penzance*

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INTRODUCTION

5th day of April in the year of our Lord 1716.

Forty-five days out of Bristol and my life changed forever. Our merchant brigantine was today captured by the pirate sloop *Adventurer's Revenge*. I fear I may never see England again.

The two ships came together with a jarring crash. We had made a good race of it, spreading all sails, even the flying jib and the tiny studding-sails, but the pirate sloop chasing us must have had a clean bottom and a skilled master.

The first pirate to board was terrifying. Fully a foot taller than me, the man was dark, like the African porters you see working in the Wapping docks. He leapt from ship to ship wielding a boarding pike and roaring in a foreign tongue. Around his neck he wore the strangest adornment: small pieces of shriveled leather on a thin lace.

"Hell's teeth!" said Captain Malin. "Those are ears. Men's ears."

I nearly retched as my eyes confirmed the truth. What kind of man wears human flesh for decoration?

More pirates flowed onto the deck. The black man advanced, and we shrank back.

"That will do, mister." A short, rotund man with a florid face and a brace of pistols in his belt limped forward. Unlike the other pirates, he was dressed in ordinary seaman's clothes with none of the ribbons or sashes that festooned many of the crew.

"Who's the master here?" he demanded.

Captain Malin took a deep breath and stepped forward. "I am."

The backhand blow took him by surprise, and he staggered backward. "That's for making us chase you."

Malin straightened. "Sir, I beg you. We surrendered without a fight. Your crew are unharmed, and the vessel is yours. But please sir, do not harm the crew. I appeal to you to be merciful. As one gentleman to another."

The change in the pirate captain's demeanor was instant and shocking. His face flushed and turned a deep puce. On his left temple, a vein stood proud, throbbing with each beat of his heart. Without a word, he reached to his belt, pulled both pistols, and fired them at our hapless captain. Malin was dead before he hit the deck.

"I am no gentleman," he said to the empty air.

— From the journal of Will Deakin

The year is 1716. The trading routes of the Atlantic and Caribbean have reopened after the War of the Spanish Succession. Merchant vessels sail from Europe to Africa to sell cloth and manufactured goods in exchange for slaves. The slaves are sold across the Atlantic, in the Caribbean or on the Eastern Seaboard of the American colonies. The merchants travel home laden with the wealth of the New World: sugar, indigo, cacao, tobacco, silver, gold, precious stones.

If they make it past the pirates.

Adventurer's Revenge is a small ocean-roving sloop with a tight-knit crew based in the Caribbean Sea. With a skilled captain and vicious quartermaster, the fast, agile craft has had a successful career preying on small merchantmen and fishing boats. The captain of *Adventurer's Revenge* has built a reputation among seafarers: generous to sailors, vicious to ship's masters, and with a legendary temper. Ships that surrender swiftly are well-treated, but woe betide the merchant vessel that flees or, even worse, tries to fight. Retribution is rapid and ruthless.

Adventurer's Revenge and its crew are intended as an NPC party of pirates. With a little modification, it could be transported to space, the present day, or any era and region where piracy was rampant. The ship and crew could even be

used as the kernel of a PC group.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nicholas Lovell is a writer and entrepreneur. He has contributed to *Pyramid* on topics ranging from Age of Sail privateers to a how-to guide on money laundering. He is the founder of gamesbrief.com, a blog on the business of computer games, has written a book called *How to Publish a Game* and was most recently CEO of GameShadow. He owns a sailing boat, *Tripitaka*, which he keeps in Mallorca in the Mediterranean and runs a sailing website at sailinmallorca.com. He lives in London with his wife, baby, and two cats. The cats appear to have adjusted to life with a baby. He hasn't.

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CHAPTER ONE

A PIRATE'S LIFE FOR ME

6th day of April in the year of our Lord 1716.

The pirates herded us into a tight knot in the waist of the ship. I thought I saw a friendly face among the ruffians, a blond youth not much older than me with two pistols stuck in the girdle around his waist. He caught my look and glowered at me, brandishing his cutlass. He turned and moved aside as a thickset man pushed his way through the throng.

"Right now, lads. 'Ere's how the wind's a-blowing." I recoiled in horror from the speaker, who was terribly disfigured. The left side of his face was a patchwork of scars and welts. Deep fissures ran across his cheek all the way to the back of his skull, and red, livid pockmarks covered the deformed visage. Half his hair was missing, unable to grow on that blasted landscape. His single eye of deepest azure regarded us, while on the other side of his face, the sunken, misshapen, empty socket filled me with dread and foreboding.

"You're all aback on a lee shore, and no mistake," he growled. "The captain may 'ave the niceties of the Navy – when 'e's not accused of being a gentleman, o' course – but on board **Adventurer's Revenge**, it's the quartermaster whose word is law, and don't you forget it." The scarred quartermaster punctuated each statement with a jab of his cutlass.

"So 'ere's the rub. We're a bit short o' crew, so we are, and you lucky swabs 'ave the chance to join us. Of course, the captain, 'e thinks you should 'ave a choice," sneered the quartermaster, "so we'll offer one, won't we, lads?" The ruffians jeered and catcalled, like the mob at a hanging at Tyburn.

"So your choice: Join with us, sign the Articles, and become a freebooter." The quartermaster's face turned dark, and the empty eye socket seemed to bear down on me like the baleful stare of a creature of Satan. "Or spend eternity in Davy Jones' locker."

– From the journal of Will Deakin

The modern romantic image of a pirate is of a happy crew of loveable cutthroats, their lives a heady mix of wonderful weather, rum, wenching, and the occasional vicious sea battle leading to plunder and booty.

In reality, pirates had a terrible life. They were ill-fed, lived in cramped conditions, and had appalling mortality rates from accidents and disease (not to mention fighting). If caught, they could expect a swift fall with a hemp noose around the neck, their bodies exhibited in an iron gibbet as a warning to all. It may have had the illusion of freedom (compared to the life of a merchant sailor it involved much less physical labor), but it was still a hard and brutal existence.

THE PIRATE CREW

Pirate ships were an early and sophisticated democracy. The crew would decide on the officers. They agreed upon rules for working together (see *Ship's Articles*, pp. 5-6). They discussed the destination at the start of each voyage. They chose whether to attack each ship they saw or village they passed.

The crew elected the captain of the ship, who could gain their respect through his prowess in battle, whether tactical seamanship or personal bravery, as well as through charisma and leadership. The captain only had *absolute* authority when the ship was in action: fighting, pursuing a quarry, or being chased by a more powerful ship. At other times, he was simply a first among equals, and he could be voted out of office if the crew no longer had faith in his abilities.

Perhaps surprisingly, being a good seaman was not a prerequisite for being a captain. Most pirate captains were sailors. However, records exist of gentleman pirates who had no seafaring experience. They instead relied on the quartermaster or other experienced hands to sail the ship.

The crew also elected a quartermaster, who was charged with the smooth running of the ship, except in times of danger (battle, pursuit, or flight), when the captain took over. The quartermaster acted both as a civil magistrate overseeing discipline and punishments and as the crew's representative to the captain. He was expected to lead the attack when boarding. He also took charge of all booty, from its initial capture to its transit and storage aboard the pirate ship, to its disbursement to the crew. There was frequently tension between the captain and the quartermaster, and it was not unknown for their places to be reversed if the captain was not successful.

An experienced sailor would take the role of bosun, responsible for rigging, sails, cordage, and anchors. He was generally an experienced and respected sailor with a deep knowledge of seamanship.

The carpenter was another necessary job. This man was responsible for the hull, masts, and spars of a ship.

The title “carpenter” and the common nickname “Chips” are somewhat misleading. The carpenter was often the most skilled crew member of a naval or merchant vessel, an experienced shipwright who had served his apprenticeship in a naval or civilian dockyard before going to sea. As well as maintaining the ship (see *Careening*, p. 14), the carpenter and his crew were vital in repairing shot holes below deck during battle, particularly those between “wind and water,” which could lead to serious flooding.

All pirate vessels had a cook and a sailmaker, even if they were not particularly skilled and simply drawn from the ranks of the crew. Well-crewed ones would also have a gunner, surgeon, navigator/master, and cooper (who maintained cargo barrels). These roles were sufficiently prized by pirate crews that any skilled hand in a captured vessel could expect to be pressed into pirate service. Specialist crew members rarely led or partook in boarding raids because they were too valuable to risk in a fight – or to let them have an opportunity to escape.

SHIP’S ARTICLES

Pirate crews typically held a council before embarking on their voyage. They drew up a set of Ship’s Articles by which all crew members were bound and were required to sign (or make their mark for those who were illiterate.) Anyone “recruited” from other ships during the voyage would also sign the Articles.

The imperatives contained in the written articles varied from ship to ship. They set out the basic rules for shipboard life, the punishments for those who broke those rules, and the compensation payable in the event of injury in battle. For example, the code of conduct set out in Exquelemin’s *Buccaneers of America* (first published in 1678) specifies payments of 600 pieces of eight for the loss of a right arm, 500 for the loss of a left arm or a right leg, 400 for the loss of a left leg, and 100 gold pieces for the loss of an eye or a finger.

The Articles also dictated how the loot would be split. Generally, the total plunder would be divided into “shares.”

Each ordinary seaman got one share, with officers receiving more than one. If the captain provided the ship, he would receive additional shares, perhaps five to six shares in addition to his personal share. Specialists might also receive fixed payment. Sources show carpenters and sailmakers who had mended and rigged the ship before the expedition getting 100-150 pieces of eight and the surgeon earning 200-250.

Pirate crews were extremely concerned with fairness. They forced all members to swear a solemn oath that they would not conceal any treasure from the crew. Anyone who was found breaking this rule was marooned: left on an uninhabited island, usually with a gun, a few shot, a bottle of water, and a flask of powder.

On board *Adventurer’s Revenge*, the crew subscribe to a code of conduct very similar to that of the notorious pirate Bartholomew Roberts (below).

Bartholomew Roberts’ Articles (1720)

This is an actual code of conduct agreed upon by Bartholomew Roberts’ crew as reported in Captain Johnson’s *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pirates*, published in 1724.

I. Every Man has a Vote in Affairs of Moment; has equal Title to the fresh Provisions, or strong Liquors, at any Time seized, and may use them at pleasure, unless a Scarcity makes it necessary, for the good of all, to Vote a Retrenchment.

II. Every Man to be called fairly in turn, by List, on Board of Prizes because, (over and above their proper Share) they were on these Occasions allowed a Shift of Clothes: But if they defrauded the Company to the Value of a Dollar, in Plate, Jewels, or Money, MAROONING was their Punishment.

III. No Person to game at Cards or Dice for Money.

IV. The Lights and Candles to be put out at eight o’Clock at Night: if any of the Crew, after that Hour still remained inclined for Drinking, they were to do it on the open Deck.

V. To keep their Piece, Pistols, and Cutlass clean and fit for Service.

VI. No Boy or Woman to be allowed among them. If any Man were to be found seducing any of the latter Sex, and carried her to Sea, disguised, he was to suffer Death.

VII. To Desert the Ship or their Quarters in Battle, was punished with Death or Marooning.

VIII. No striking one another on Board, but every Man’s Quarrels to be ended on Shore, at Sword and Pistol Thus: The Quartermaster of the Ship, when the Parties will not come to any Reconciliation, accompanies them on Shore with what Assistance he thinks proper, and turns the Disputants Back to Back, at so many Paces Distance. At the Word of Command, they turn and fire immediately, (or else the Piece is knocked out of their Hands). If both miss, they come to their Cutlasses, and then he is declared the Victor who draws the first Blood.

IX. No Man to talk of breaking up their Way of Living, till each had shared one thousand pounds. If in order to this, any Man should lose a Limb, or become a Cripple in their Service, he was to have eight hundred Dollars, out of the publick Stock, and for lesser Hurts, proportionately.

X. The Captain and Quartermaster to receive two Shares of a Prize: the Master, Boatswain, and Gunner, one Share and a Half, and other Officers one and Quarter.

XI. The Musicians to have Rest on the Sabbath Day, but the other six Days and Nights, none without special Favor.



THE REALITY OF THE PIRATE CODE

That Articles set out a code of conduct on board many pirate ships is not disputed. What is less clear is how closely they were followed.

Any historian will tell you that a law that keeps being passed is a law that is being flouted. The same may be true for the Articles. For example, there were well-known female pirates such as Mary Read and Anne Bonny, who would have fallen foul of Article VI of Captain Roberts' code of conduct, and boys similar to Will Deakin (see p. 18) were certainly found on some pirate vessels.

Similarly, gambling and fighting among the crew were not uncommon. Thus, the GM should feel free to treat the Articles less as rules and more as guidelines.

PIRACY ON THE HIGH SEAS

Pirates fought on the principle of "no prey, no pay." They aimed to threaten and intimidate their prey, avoiding shooting and fighting. This had two purposes: to reduce the risks to the pirates, and to minimize the damage to the loot.

The first objective was to get the quarry to stop. A pirate ship might simply approach a smaller merchant ship, pirate flag flying, and fire a shot or two across its bow. A tactic used by pirates (and naval forces) was to fly a false flag, which would enable them to get close to their prey before the ship's master saw through the *ruse de guerre*. Often, particularly if the pirates held the *weather gage* (p. 8), the merchant ship would heave-to, rather than flee or fight.

Broadside attacks were rarely used, because of the enormous damage they did to hulls, masts and rigging. Pirates were after loot, not glory. However, they were extremely effective: a full broadside at close range was a deafening, explosive, destructive force and the crew of a merchant or fishing vessel would frequently be completely demoralized by a single volley.

Boarding was the second objective. It could be accomplished either by crashing the pirate ship into its prey or by sending a boarding party in small boats. Ferocity characterized boarding parties, as the pirates sought to intimidate their enemy as much as kill them.

A pirate ship in the 18th century was not a hit-and-run vessel in the style of modern pirates. In an age before radio, communication was only as fast as the fastest ship. In many parts of the world, the pirate ship itself could be the swiftest vessel in the area, meaning that authorities would be long in showing up, if ever. Records show pirate crews spent as much as 48 hours looting a ship fully.

Once they had gained control of a vessel, pirates would ransack it from stem to stern. Contrary to popular belief, they were not only interested in doubloons, piastres, pieces of eight, and Spanish dollars. The basic necessities of life at sea – such as spars, cordage, powder, shot, salted pork, and casks of rum – were all in short supply for a pirate vessel that could not enter

a harbor for resupply and refit. It was common for a merchant vessel to be stripped entirely of its stores before the pirates turned their attention to cargo.

Pirates often tortured captured crews to maintain their reputations and to find hidden valuables. Punishments included simple beatings; holding lighted slow match between the fingers and letting it burn down; or truly inventive torments (see *Pirate Tortures*, below).

Merchant and fishing ships were important sources of new recruits to replace crewmen lost by disease, accident, or combat. Specialists such as surgeons, coopers, and carpenters were particularly prized, as were gunners, navigators, armorers, and sailmakers. Any merchant crewman or passenger with these specialist skills could expect to be forced to join the pirates.

Pirate Tortures

Pirates were feared not just because they killed sailors; stories of pirates reveling in the torture of their prisoners were rife.

Henry Morgan was rumored to smear grease on the faces of his prisoners before holding them in front of a fire. Other pirates practiced the strappado (in which the victim's arms were tied behind his back and he was then dropped from a height repeatedly until his arms or shoulders were dislocated) or woolding (in which a rope was tied around the victim's head and tightened until his, or occasionally her, eyes popped out).

Montbars of Languedoc was reported to have cut open the stomach of one of his prisoners, removed one of his intestines, nailed it to a post, and then beaten the victim back with a burning log, compelling him to run around the post, wrapping his intestines around as he ran.

Sometimes, the victim was not expected to survive the torture, or even to talk. The pirates would muster the crew and pick a man at random who they then tortured to death. They would ask the surviving crew for information while threatening them with the same fate as their luckless former crewmate.

Ordinary seamen were sometimes offered the choice of whether to join. Since the alternative could be death, many chose to sign the pirate Articles. They were probably surprised to find that the life of pirate, except for the outlaw status, was in many ways much easier than that of a merchant seaman: There were more crew members meaning much less individual work to do, they had a democracy of sorts, and a tyrannical captain would rarely last long. It is perhaps not surprising that so many merchant sailors were quick to adopt the life of piracy.

WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

Nearly all sources describe pirates as heavily armed. Pirates often carried more than one pistol because black-powder flintlock firearms (see p. B278) had only a single shot and could be unreliable, especially at sea. Moreover, a heavily armed boarding party is intimidating.

Some pirates wore fine or gaudy clothes, although many dressed like ordinary sailors. Over this, they often sported a sash of silk or other fine material, which doubled as a weapons belt. They attached two or three pistols by thin cords or ribbons to the sash, and stashed a sword or dagger in their belts. Cutlasses (short swords about 2' in length; see p. B273) were easy to wield on a crowded deck. They thus were the hand weapon of choice.

Pirates also used boarding axes (which could be used to cut through ropes, boarding nets, and hatches) or boarding pikes

(which were pikes with their hafts cut down to about 6' to 10' in length). Treat a boarding pike as a long spear (see p. B273), while a boarding axe is simply an axe (see p. B271).

Belaying pins could be pressed into service as improvised weapons. Often arranged in racks along the edges of the main deck, they were used on board ship to secure halyards, sheets, and other ropes in the running rigging. A belaying pin was club-shaped, about 1' to 2' in length; treat as a baton (see p. B273).

Grenadoes, or powder flasks (see p. B277), were early forms of hand grenades in common use by pirates (and the navies that fought them) by 1700. A typical grenado was a hollow ball weighing about 2 lbs. They were made of iron (but sometimes wood, glass, or ceramic) and filled with gunpowder. The fuse was lit, and the entire device was hurled onto the deck of the quarry where its fearsome explosion would cause death and injury. A handful of grenadoes could be enough to encourage a merchant crew to surrender.

GEOGRAPHIC RANGE

Pirates are found throughout the world, but during the Golden Age of piracy that occurred after the end of the War of Spanish Succession in 1714, three primary areas of activity existed: the Caribbean and the Spanish Main (the mainland coastline of the Caribbean Sea, particularly Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, Central America, and the north coast of South America); the Eastern Seaboard of North America; and West Africa. At the center of this activity was the so-called Transatlantic Slave Triangle:

- The *outward passage* carrying manufactured goods from Europe to Africa.
- The *middle passage* carrying slaves and commodities from Africa to the Caribbean and the Eastern coast of the American colonies.
- The *homeward passage* carrying New World treasure and commodities (such as sugar, rum, tobacco, cacao, and rice) back to Europe.

The Triangle was immensely profitable on all three legs, and pirates intercepted merchant vessels on all passages of the trip.

The Caribbean and Spanish Main

The Caribbean and Spanish Main were an ideal hunting ground for pirates. It was a thinly populated region filled with islands and coves where pirates could anchor for shelter or to careen their boats. It was right at the end of supply lines from Europe, so it had little government. Navies were thus spread thinly across the entire region. Perhaps most importantly, it contained the fabled wealth of the Spanish Americas.

The Spanish Main referred to the mainland coastline of the Spanish colonies in the Americas. It included Florida, Mexico, Central America, and the northern coast of South America. It was a source of great wealth, including spices, hardwoods, gems, gold, and silver from the great mines at Potosí in modern-day Bolivia.

Each year, the Spanish treasure fleet gathered in two convoys. The Manila Galleons carried cargo from the Spanish colonies in the Philippines to Acapulco in Mexico from where it was transported overland to Vera Cruz.

Firing the Great Guns

Firing a ship's cannon (such as those in the table on p. 9) was an involved process. Each cannon was mounted on a four-wheeled wooden carriage and secured to the hull of the ship by ropes and pulleys known as the gun tackle. To prepare the gun for firing, a cartridge of powder was loaded into the bore. This was followed by a wad of old rope or canvas, a cannon ball, and another wad, all of which were pushed home using a long rammer. The gun was then run out through the gun port by men pulling on the gun tackle until the carriage was tight up against the side of the ship. The gun captain could train the gun by using handspikes to maneuver the carriage from the left to right or could change the elevation by using wedges, or "quoins."

At the rear of the barrel was a touchhole. This would be primed, either with loose powder placed in a shallow depression or with a quill (made from a feather or even a real porcupine quill) containing powder, which was jammed through the touchhole until it pierced the cartridge.

The gun captain held a piece of lighted slow match (or match cord). When he judged that the moment was right – taking into account the motion of both his own ship and the target – he would jam it down on the touchhole.

The priming ignited the cartridge, which fired the gun. The entire barrel and carriage would leap backward until it was stopped by the breech rope. A crewmember could be severely injured if he was careless enough to get in the way.

The hot barrel was then swabbed out with a wet sponge to ensure that there were no burning embers that might prematurely ignite the next charge. Then the whole process would start again.

Then the Spanish Caribbean fleet (consisting of ships from Cartagena, Porto Bello, Vera Cruz, and other ports throughout the Spanish Main) rendezvoused at Havana before crossing the Atlantic to Spain. While treasure fleets were rarely captured, the tales of their wealth were enough to draw privateers and pirates to the region, where they found plenty of other attractive targets among the merchants, traders, and outposts of the Spanish Main and the Caribbean islands.

The Caribbean was a melting pot of cultures, languages and peoples. Many pirates could communicate with sailors from all across Europe, with Indian tribes in the Caribbean, or (for those who traveled the middle passage) with the myriad of African tribes who traded slaves, gold, and ivory on the west coast of Africa.

The Weather Gage

Sailing ships were dependent on the wind for propulsion and maneuvers. Tactics in battle revolved around getting the best position relative to the wind, and a skilful captain could run rings around his opponent. The primary objective of a sailing captain in battle was to gain and maintain the *weather gage*.

If a ship had the weather gage, it meant that it was in a position to control the battle. It could choose to run away, and the opposing ship would have to tack up into the wind to catch it. It could maneuver to bring its opponent to battle and would be able to shift position to maximize the damage done by a broadside or to grapple and board.

The speed of a sailing ship changed radically with the wind conditions. Wind strength played a part, but the direction of the wind was equally important. In game terms, represent this with a Quick Contest of Shiphandling skill (modified by each ship's Handling) every minute between the two captains. The winner's ship enjoys an effective Move increase for the sole purpose of determining combat advantage. Add (20% × margin of victory) to effective Acceleration and Top Speed; the maximum bonus cannot exceed the margin. Drop fractional Top Speed.

Example: The captain of a caravel with Move 0.1/6 wins by 5, so he adds 100% to Move when determining combat advantage. This would give his ship an effective Move 0.2/12. However, his margin was 5, so his bonus to effective Acceleration and Top Speed can't exceed +5. Thus, his ship's effective Move is actually 0.2/11.

Note that this Move bonus is an abstraction representing relative advantage in a battle or chase between two sailing ships. It may be relied on when outmaneuvering, catching up to, or escaping an opponent. It should not be used for the purpose of calculating travel times.

The African Coast and the Slave Routes

The major slave-trading zone of Western Africa stretched from Senegal and Gambia through the Gold, Ivory, and Slave Coasts in the Bight of Benin down as far as the coasts of Congo

and Angola. For Westerners, slaving was primarily a trading activity; the majority of slaves were purchased from other Africans at the great slaving ports such as Lagos and Whydah (Ouidah). Pirates and other Western merchants generally avoided traveling into the interior of Africa due to a fear of disease and native warriors.

Purchasing slaves was expensive, and slave brokers had to ship manufactured goods from Europe to use in bartering. European goods (by approximate trading proportions) included textiles, such as woolen and linen cloths and clothing (50%); alcohol (11%); manufactured goods (11%); guns and gunpowder (8%); tobacco (6%); and bar iron (3%).

Slaving ships were generally small and fast. They carried their human cargo in cramped conditions with between five and eight square feet of space allocated to each slave. An average vessel might carry 200-300 slaves packed tightly on two or three low decks. Mortality in the middle passage – a journey that took two to three months – ran at about 15% for slaves and a similar percentage for crew, mainly as a result of gastrointestinal diseases (such as dysentery) and fevers (such as malaria and yellow fever).

The role of black men and former slaves in pirate ships is unclear. The democratic nature of pirates and their defiance of the usual customs of the day have led to suggestions that they may have freed slaves and welcomed them as partners on board.

Certainly, a considerable number of men on pirate ships were black. A report of a pirate raid led by Bartholomew Roberts in 1721 describes Roberts having two ships: one crewed by 180 white men and 48 French Creole Negroes; the other by 100 white men and 40 French Negroes. Many other such examples exist.

However, it's debatable whether they were equal partners, lesser partners, or even still slaves. Some sources make it clear that many pirates regarded slaves as commodities to be bought and sold. The seamen tasked them with hard and menial jobs: working the pumps; going ashore for wood and water; washing and cleaning; and acting as servants to the captain. Blacks were reported as being a share of the booty, and Henry Morgan left 109 slaves in his estate when he died in Jamaica.

Pirate attitudes to slaves thus seem to have been similar to that of society as a whole. A wholly realistic campaign might confine Africans to second-class status. In a more romantic campaign, pirates might emancipate slaves and make them members of the crew, with particularly brave or fierce ones becoming equal partners.

When pirates stitched together their black flag, the antinational symbol of a gang of proletarian outlaws, they "declared War against all the World."

– Marcus Rediker, Villains of All Nations

CHAPTER TWO

THE CREW OF ADVENTURER'S REVENGE

14th day of April in the year of our Lord 1716.

The captain has decided that if I am to ship with him, I must become a seaman.

"I'll not have it said that a servant of mine is no sailor," he said. "Bosun, take young Will and show him the ropes."

So I spend hours each day learning the strange language of the sea. Halyards and sheets. Starboard and larboard. Yards, spars, and gaffs. The bosun has taught me how to splice and whip. I never knew there were so many knots – and so many names! – in all the world.

I am forced to go aloft with the able seamen, too. Barney has shown me how to climb the ratlines to the maintop and edge out along the yards to loose sail or take in a reef. He warned me about looking down at first. I paid him no heed and emptied my stomach on the deck far below as the yards gyrated and pitched me in great sweeping arcs across an empty sky.

Tomorrow, the quartermaster will school me on the great guns. I wish it were not so, for I am mortal afeared of him. But the captain insists I am to learn it all.

I think he means to make a pirate of me yet.

– From the journal of Will Deakin

The *Adventurer's Revenge* is a 10-gun Bermuda sloop with a single mast. Bermuda sloops were particularly prized for being fast and capable of sailing close to the wind. She is 60' long with a beam of 18' and a draft of 9'.

Unlike a modern sloop that would be entirely fore-and-aft rigged, *Adventurer's Revenge* carries a mainsail, main topsail, and main topgallant on square-rigged yards. She has a gaff-rigged fore-and-aft spanker that helps her sail close to the wind. She also carries three foresails on a bowsprit that juts forward from the bow. (See *Glossary*, pp. 25-26, for definitions of ship terms).

In addition to the sails, *Adventurer's Revenge* has eight oarports cut in her hull below the line of the gun ports. These enable the crew to use oars to move the sloop even when she is becalmed. Rowing a vessel of this size is back-breaking work and slow. Even a full crew can barely move her at a knot and half (Move 0.01/0.8). Thus, oars are only used in a flat calm in an attempt to capture a particularly attractive prize or to evade a pursuing warship.

She has a raised quarterdeck under which sits the captain's cabin. A two-pound swivel-gun is mounted on either side of the quarterdeck rail.

Adventurer's Revenge

TL Vehicle	ST/HP	Hnd/SR	HT	Move	Lwt.	Load	SM	Occ.	DR	Range	Cost	Loc.	Draft
4 Bermuda Sloop	156†	-3/4	12c	0.2/5	95	65	+7	30	5	–	\$350K	M	9

Notes

Occ.: 30 is the typical complement of the *Adventurer's Revenge*; see p. 10. The navy might crew a vessel of similar size with as many as 70 souls, as noted for the comparable sloop of war in *GURPS Low-Tech Companion 2*.

Cost: This doesn't include the price of cannon or mounts (see below).

TL Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	ST	Bulk	Rcl	Cost	Notes
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GUNNER (CANNON) (DX-4 or other Gunner-4)

4 Ship's Gun, 9-lb.	6d×4 pi++	2	310/2,400	2,900/16.5	1	1(60)	50M†	-14	2	\$39,000	[1]
4 Swivel-Gun	6d+1 pi++	1	90/900	140/2.5	1	1(20)	27M†	-8	3	\$1,900	[2]

Notes

[1] Mounted on a truck carriage (\$770, 3,600 lbs.); requires a man to fire, and four *extra* men to load.

[2] Mounted on a pintle (\$1,300, 65 lbs.); requires one man to load and fire.

The main armament of the *Adventurer's Revenge* consists of 10 nine-pounder guns carried on the main deck. Each of the nine-pounders requires five men to operate at its full rate of fire. After an initial broadside, the crew will be likely to either fire each of the guns at different rates as they are reloaded, or maneuver away so that the gunners have time to

reload. For a discussion of using the cannon, see *Firing the Great Guns* (p. 7).

Her typical crew complement is 30 (see below), but she may carry more if new hands were recently pressed or she started a new voyage. (It might be reduced if she is short-handed, perhaps due to crew deaths from recent battles or disease.)

Crew Roster of *Adventurer's Revenge*

Name	Role	Home Port	Page	Notes
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Elected Officers

Alan Cutler	Captain	Bristol, England	11	[1]
Elijah Swift	Quartermaster	London, England	12	[2]

Skilled Crew

Arthur Williams	Bosun	New York, New York	13	[3]
Joop van der Rijk	Carpenter	Amsterdam, Netherlands	14	[4]
Zaccheus Smith	Surgeon	Boston, Massachusetts	15	[4]

Sailors

Barney Goodman	Able Seaman	Boston, Massachusetts	15	
Huw Evans	Able Seaman	Cardigan, Wales	15	[5]
Peter le Fevre	Able Seaman	St. Helier, Jersey	15	[5]
Ettrien Gilliot	Able Seaman	Marseilles, France	15	[5]
Cuthbert Goss	Able Seaman	Lyme Regis, England	15	[5]
Richard Hardy	Able Seaman	Salem, Massachusetts	15	[5]
Bjorn Naslund	Able Seaman	Malmö, Sweden	15	[5]
John Rimer	Able Seaman	Charlestown, Carolina	15	[5]
Esteban Balbi	Old Seaman	Bilbao, Spain	16	[5]
Robert Birdson	Old Seaman	Edinburgh, Scotland	16	[5]
Jean le Breton	Old Seaman	Brest, France	16	
Geret de Haan	Old Seaman	Rotterdam, Netherlands	16	[5]
Rence Thoby	Old Seaman	La Rochelle, France	16	[5]
Antonio Vasconcellos	Old Seaman	Lisbon, Portugal	16	[5, 6]
Edward Watts	Old Seaman	Chatham, England	16	[5]
Cornelius Yeo	Old Seaman	Watchet, England	16	[5, 7]

Unskilled Crew (Landsmen)

John Evans	Boarder	Port Royal, Jamaica	17	[5, 8]
James Groet	Boarder	Delft, Netherlands	17	[5]
Conor Murphy	Boarder	Cork, Ireland	17	[5]
Obadiah	Boarder	Whydah, West Africa	17	
James Peterson	Boarder	Bridgetown, Barbados	17	[5]
Billy Sale	Boarder	Newport, Rhode Island	17	[5]
David Simpson	Boarder	Fishguard, Wales	17	[5]
Will Deakin	Ship's Boy	Bristol, England	18	
Thomas Johnson	Ship's Boy	Annapolis, Maryland	18	[5]

Notes

- [1] In charge whenever the ship is fighting, chasing, or being chased. Also fulfils the role of master (navigator).
- [2] An elected officer who acted as disciplinarian and crew representative. He was subordinate to the captain only when the ship was fighting, chasing, or being chased. Also fulfils the role of gunner.
- [3] An experienced sailor who would likely be in command in the absence of the captain or quartermaster.
- [4] No command responsibility.
- [5] Full character sheet not provided; the page reference is for the role's general abilities.
- [6] Also assigned the role of sailmaker (*Specialists*, p. 13).
- [7] Also assigned the role of cooper (*Specialists*, p. 13).
- [8] Also assigned the role of cook (*Specialists*, p. 13).

ELECTED OFFICERS

The captain was the most important position aboard the ship. Historically, the quartermaster was less important, but aboard *Adventurer's Revenge*, tradition and strong personalities have elevated the quartermaster to a rank second only to the captain.

In the democratic world of a pirate ship, the two men's roles overlapped (and occasionally clashed). Both the captain and the quartermaster knew that they retained their positions through the trust, respect, and fear of the crew, and avoided direct confrontation with each other. See p. 4 for descriptions of the roles of the captain and the quartermaster.

He makes a habit of killing the captain of every ship he captures that resists or attempts to escape him. He then will either release the crew or, if he is short of men, press them into his own ship. He figures that if a crew of a ship that he is chasing knows that they will be spared if they are captured, they will be unlikely to fight. On several occasions, he has boarded a vessel to find the captain tied to the foremast by his own crew.

The captain maintains contacts with respectable people in the port of Nassau on the island of New Providence in the Bahamas: Deputy Governor Thomas Walker, and Richard Travers, a merchant who fences the crew's booty at a reasonable price (20-40% of market value). The captain uses a fictional persona (as English trader Adrian Collett) and avoids attacking ships in the vicinity of the port to maintain this valuable safe harbor for maintenance and trading.

The captain of *Adventurer's Revenge* dresses in ordinary seaman's clothes, with a broad red sash running from shoulder to hip. The sash holds a cutlass and two flintlock pistols tied with short cords. He suffers a limp as a result of a wicked pike thrust received in a boarding action a decade ago.

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 12 [40]; **IQ** 13 [60]; **HT** 11 [10].
Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 13 [0];
Per 13 [0]; FP 11 [0].
Basic Speed 5.75 [0]; Basic Move 4 [-5]; Dodge 8;
Parry 9 (Shortsword).
5'8"; 190 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 4 [0].
CF: Western European [0].
Languages: Arawak (Accented/None) [2]; Dutch (Broken) [2]; English (Native) [0]; French (Accented/Broken) [3].

Advantages

Alternate Identity (English trader Adrian Collett; Illegal) [15]; Contact (Bahamas trader Richard Travers; Merchant-15; 12 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [4]; Contact (Deputy Governor of Providence Thomas Walker; Administration-21; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [4].

Perks: Penetrating Voice. [1]

Disadvantages

Bad Temper (15) [-5]; Code of Honor (Pirate's) [-5]; Enemy (Royal Navy; Hunter; 9 or less) [-20]; Intolerance (Gentlemen) [-5]; Reputation -1 (Pirate; To seafarers) [-3]; Reputation -2 (Pirate; To naval authorities) [-3]; Reputation -4 (Pirate; To merchant captains) [-6].

Quirks: Minor Handicap (limps on left leg); Refers to ship-board officers as Mister; Refuses to dress like a gentleman. [-3]

New Traits

Many of the pirates in this supplement make use of the Born Sailor Talent. They were created with a fairly realistic setting in mind, but in a more cinematic game, some or all of their knowledge may be represented by the far more versatile Pirate! wildcard skill. Other adventurers may wish to take the Naval Training perk to eliminate penalties from fighting aboard ship.

New Talent: Born Sailor

5 points/level

This Talent (p. B89) gives +1 per level to Boating, Knot-Tying, Meteorology (or Weather Sense), Navigation (Sea), Seamanship, and Shiphandling. *Reaction bonus:* all sailors.

New Wildcard Skill: Pirate!

DX

Some people are just natural swashbucklers. They can sail any ship, fight any enemy, scamper through rigging, and subdue a merchant crew with a glance. This wildcard skill (p. B175) replaces Acrobatics, Boating, Brawling, Climbing, Gunner (Cannon), Guns (Pistol), Intimidation, Jumping, Knife, Knot-Tying, Seamanship, Shiphandling, and Shortsword.

New Perk: Naval Training

1 point

You've trained at fighting on a rocking ship or boat. You may ignore the -2 to attack and -1 to defend for bad footing under those circumstances.

THE CAPTAIN: ALAN CUTLER

150 points

The captain of *Adventurer's Revenge* is a former officer who quit the Royal Navy when it was made clear to him that he did not have the right breeding to pass as a "gentlemen." He harbors a deep hatred of those who believe that their status offers them protection, and a plea for mercy "from one gentleman to another" may lead to a bloodthirsty outburst from the normally controlled captain.

Skills

Area Knowledge (Bristol Channel) (E) IQ [1]-13; Area Knowledge (Caribbean) (E) IQ+1 [2]-14; Area Knowledge (East Coast of the Americas) (E) IQ [1]-13; Area Knowledge (English Channel) (E) IQ [1]-14; Astronomy/TL4 (Observational) (A) IQ [2]-13; Boating/TL4 (Sailboat) (A) DX [2]-12; Boating/TL4 (Unpowered) (A) DX [2]-12; Brawling (E) DX+1 [2]-13; Current Affairs/TL4 (Caribbean and the Spanish Main) (E) IQ+1 [2]-14; Disguise/TL4 (A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Engineer/TL4 (Sailing ship) (H) IQ-2 [1]-11; Gunner/TL4 (Cannon) (E) DX+1 [2]-13; Guns/TL4 (Pistol) (E) DX+2 [4]-14; Heraldry (A) IQ [2]-13; Intimidation (A) Will+1 [4]-14; Knot-Tying (E) DX+1 [2]-13; Leadership (A) IQ+1 [4]-14; Mathematics/TL4 (Applied) (H) IQ-2 [1]-11; Merchant (A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Navigation/TL4 (Sea) (A) IQ+1 [4]-14; Seamanship/TL4 (E) IQ+2 [4]-15; Shiphandling/TL4 (H) IQ+1 [8]-14; Shortsword (A) DX+1 [4]-13; Swimming (E) HT [1]-11; Tactics (H) IQ [4]-13; Weather Sense (A) IQ [2]-13.

THE QUARTERMASTER: ELIJAH SWIFT

150 points

The quartermaster on board *Adventurer's Revenge* is a fearsome man. He was grotesquely disfigured when a cannon he was handling exploded during a lengthy stern chase. Shards of red-hot iron sliced into his face, costing him his eye and the hearing in his left ear, as well as leaving his cheek and forehead a mass of puckered scar tissue and livid flesh.

Elijah has been at sea for many years, but he has not gained the knack of handling a ship that marks a born sailor. Instead, he maintains his position through his iron will and intimidating manner, together with a sadistic streak that he works to keep in check. Any crew member who breaks the rules may well get the worst of the quartermaster's nature, a fact that helps keep order on board the ship.

He is a sneaky fighter, deadly with any of the three daggers he keeps hidden about his person, and a frequent winner of bar brawls (helped by a small blackjack he always carries).

ST 12 [20]; **DX** 12 [40]; **IQ** 12 [40]; **HT** 11 [10].
Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 29 lbs.; HP 15 [6]; Will 16 [20]; Per 12 [0]; FP 11 [0].
Basic Speed 5.75 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0]; Dodge 9*; Parry 11* (Brawling).
5'6"; 140 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 4 [0].
CF: Western European [0].
Languages: Dutch (Broken/None) [1]; English (Native) [0]; Portuguese (Accented/None) [2].

Advantages

Combat Reflexes [15]; Luck [15]; Resistant to Disease (+8) [5].
Perks: Alcohol Tolerance; No Hangover. [2]

Disadvantages

Appearance (Ugly) [-8]; Code of Honor (Pirate's) [-5]; Enemy (Royal Navy; Hunter; 9 or less) [-20]; Hard of Hearing [-10]; One Eye [-15]; Reputation -1 (Pirate; To all seafarers) [-3]; Sadism (12) [-15].

Quirks: Despises men who get drunk; Dislikes heights; Removes his eye patch before battle; Treats his captain with exaggerated courtesy. [-4]

Skills

Area Knowledge (Caribbean) (E) IQ+1 [2]-13; Area Knowledge (West Coast of Africa) (E) IQ [1]-12; Astronomy/TL4 (Observational) (A) IQ [2]-11; Boating/TL4 (Sailboat) (A) DX [2]-12; Boating/TL4 (Unpowered) (A) DX-1 [1]-11; Brawling (E) DX+2 [4]-14; Carousing (E) HT+1 [2]-12; Climbing (A) DX [2]-12; Fast-Draw (Knife) (E) DX+3 [4]-15*; Gunner/TL4 (Cannon) (E) DX+1 [2]-13; Guns/TL4 (Pistol) (E) DX+2 [4]-14; Heraldry (A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Interrogation (A) IQ+1 [0]-13; Intimidation (A) Will [2]-16; Knife (E) DX+1 [2]-13; Knot-Tying (E) DX+1 [2]-13; Leadership (A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Navigation/TL4 (Sea) (A) IQ [2]-12; Seamanship/TL4 (E) IQ+2 [4]-14; Search (A) Per [2]-12; Shiphandling/TL4 (H) IQ-1 [2]-11; Shortsword (A) DX+1 [4]-13; Thrown Weapon (Knife) (E) DX+2 [4]-14; Weather Sense (A) IQ [2]-12.

* Includes +1 from Combat Reflexes.

† Default from Intimidation.

A frequent brawl winner.

SKILLED CREW

19th day of June in the year of our Lord 1716.

Will I ever get used to the sound of the great guns?

The deck of a ship in a battle is a place of dread and terror. The guns belch flame like some demonic beast. They leap back as if alive until caught, protesting, by the stout breech ropes.

The men, stripped to the waist and streaming with sweat and grime, caper and laugh as they toil to swab, load, and run out the guns to spew forth once more.

"You there! Boy!"

"Me, sir?"

"Mais oui. You. Get us more cartridges. Vite, vite."

After the glare of the noonday sun, the 'tweendecks were dark and cool. I hurried down the companionway to the magazine hidden behind a thick leather curtain deep in the bowels of the ship. I seized a bucket-load of cartridges and hastened back.

"Watch your step!"

I stopped sharply as the friendly face of Barney Goodman appeared in the gloom, his blond hair tousled and dirty. I was too shocked to see him to ask what he was doing skulking below decks.

"Our good doctor has left another of his projects lyin' around. You don't want to go stepping in another man's lights, do ye?"

Bile filled my mouth as I saw the half-eviscerated corpse that lay askew on the deck. My bare feet had missed landing in his entrails by scant inches.

Barney grinned at my discomfiture. "Jump along smartly now, lad. Get back to the guns, or the quartermaster will flay your hide from your back as quick as you like."

I scampered onto deck and took deep breaths of fresh, sea air. On deck or below, there is no respite on board *Adventurer's Revenge*.

– From the journal of Will Deakin

Handling a large ship during the Age of Sail required knowledge, skill, and experience. Successful pirates sought to have several highly capable seamen in the crew. Two of the most important were the boatswain (pronounced and often spelled "bosun") and the carpenter. See pp. 4-5 for descriptions of the bosun and the carpenter.

THE BOSUN: ARTHUR WILLIAMS

125 points

The bosun of *Adventurer's Revenge*, Arthur Williams, has served under the captain since his days in the Royal Navy. He is a thoroughgoing seaman and looks the part, with his burly arms and shoulders, rolling gait and a pigtail that stretches to the small of his back. His stamina is legendary among the crew. During storms, he stays on deck for days on end, ensuring the safety of the ship even as the tempest rages around him.

He was frequently in trouble in the navy for drunkenness. Life as a pirate has, if possible, made his alcoholism worse. He is rarely without a flask of punch (rum mixed with lemon juice, water, and sugar). Once he starts carousing, he won't stop until he has danced the hornpipe dozens of times and drunk himself into a stupor.

ST 12 [20]; **DX** 12 [40]; **IQ** 11 [20]; **HT** 13 [30].
Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 29 lbs.; HP 12 [0]; Will 11 [0]; Per 11 [0]; FP 16 [9].
Basic Speed 6.25 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0]; Dodge 9; Parry 9 (Shortsword).
5'5"; 200 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 4 [0].

CF: Western European [0].

Languages: Arawak (Broken/None) [1]; English (Native) [0]; French (Broken/None) [1].

Advantages

Acute Hearing 2 [4]; Born Sailor 3 [15]*; Less Sleep 2 [4].

Disadvantages

Alcoholism [-15]; Code of Honor (Pirate's) [-5]; Enemy (Royal Navy; Hunter; 9 or less) [-20];

Fat [-3]; Gluttony (12) [-5]; Reputation -1 (Pirate; To all seafarers) [-3]*.

Quirks: Always dances the hornpipe when drunk; Carries a flask of punch at all times; Is convinced that every sea creature he sees is a mermaid; Won't stop drinking once started. [-4]

Skills

Boating/TL4 (Sailboat) (A) DX+3 [2]-15†; Boating/TL4 (Unpowered) (A) DX+3 [2]-15†; Brawling (E) DX+1 [2]-13; Carousing (E) HT [1]-13; Climbing (A) DX [2]-12; Dancing (A) DX [2]-12; Engineer/TL4 (Ships) (H) IQ-1 [2]-10; Gunner/TL4 (Cannon) (E) DX+1 [2]-13; Guns/TL4 (Pistol) (E) DX+1 [2]-13; Knot-Tying (E) DX+5 [4]-17†; Mathematics/TL4 (Applied) (H) IQ-2 [1]-9; Seamanship/TL4 (E) IQ+6 [8]-17†; Shortsword (A) DX+1 [4]-13; Weather Sense (A) IQ+3 [2]-14†.

* His net reaction modifier is +2 from sailors and -1 from other seafarers.

† Includes +3 for Born Sailor.

Specialists

A sailing vessel needed many specialist crew members to keep it functioning at peak efficiency, and a pirate ship was no exception. *Adventurer's Revenge* carries a skilled surgeon (p. 15), while old seamen (p. 16) double for some of the other key roles.

Adventurer's Revenge does not have a master (responsible for navigation) or a gunner (responsible for the great guns). The captain takes the role of master, and the quartermaster acts as the gunner.

If the pirates find a ship that carries any of the specialists that they need, they will not hesitate to force him to join the crew of the *Adventurer's Revenge* on pain of death.

Cook

John Evans is, at least temporarily, the ship's cook. The primary cooking on board *Adventurer's Revenge* is preparing the salted pork and beef that was the staple diet of a sailing crew. The meat must be thoroughly soaked in fresh water before cooking and is then boiled in a large vat in the ship's galley. Evans is no cook (he operates on his default skill of 6), and several members of the crew have approached Jean le Breton (p. 16) to cook for them instead. So far, Jean has refused.

Cooper

Cornelius Yeo looks after the ship's barrels in his role as cooper. Coopers were specialist carpenters who were critical for sailing ships that relied on large barrels to store food and water. He reports to the carpenter (pp. 14-15). In addition to the abilities of an old seaman (p. 16), he has Carpentry-13.

Sailmaker

Antonio Vasconcellos fulfills the role of sailmaker. There are half a dozen sails in use on *Adventurer's Revenge* at any one time, plus a range of spares, including heavy-weather sails, canvas suited to light airs, and replacement sails for use after a storm or a fight. The sailmaker is responsible for the repair and maintenance of all of them. He reports to the bosun (above). In addition to the abilities of an old seaman (p. 16), he has Sewing-13.

THE CARPENTER: JOOP VAN DER RIJK

125 points

The carpenter on board *Adventurer's Revenge* is extremely skilled. He learned his craft in the shipyards of Amsterdam where his natural aptitude and almost-supernatural ability to find flaws in lumber by touch alone gained him a high reputation. He joined the crew of a Dutch naval frigate, but after a decade aboard, his failing eyesight and desire for a quiet life led him to resign his commission and join a Dutch merchant enterprise. When this ship was captured by *Adventurer's Revenge*, he was immediately pressed by the pirates who remain in awe of his technical skills. Privately, both the captain and the quartermaster admit that their success owes much to the carpenter's ability to maintain *Adventurer's Revenge* at the peak of efficiency.

Physically, the carpenter is stooped and balding with a perpetually worried expression on his weather-beaten face.

ST 12 [20]; DX 12 [40]; IQ 12 [40]; HT 10 [0].
Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 29 lbs.; HP 12 [0]; Will 12 [0]; Per 12 [0]; FP 10 [0].
Basic Speed 5.50 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0]; Dodge 8; Parry 9 (Axe/Mace).
5'7"; 180 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 4 [0].

CF: Western European [0].

Languages: Dutch (Native) [0]; English (Native) [6]; French (Broken) [2]; Portuguese (Broken) [2].

Advantages

Acute Touch 3 [6]; Artificer 2 [20]; High Manual Dexterity 2 [10].

Careening

12th day of May in the year of our Lord 1716.

I have never been so tired in all my born days.

I awoke afore dawn as usual and hurried to bring the captain his morning meal. He was already on deck in discussion with the carpenter.

"That inlet looks a likely place, Chips," said the captain, as I brought him tea fresh from the galley.

"Aye, it does" said the carpenter. "Give me a week and I'll have her bottom spanking new."

Adventurer's Revenge glided up the channel under mere scraps of canvas. All hands waited for the jolt as the sloop ran aground on the hard-packed sand

"All right, you lubbers!" roared the bosun. "Time to work."

We turned to with a will. The great guns were loaded into a pinnace and rowed ashore, where men threw up earthworks around a primitive fort. The bosun rigged a veritable cats-cradle of ropes from the top of the mast to the base of a monstrous tree and back to the capstan, while another crew roused out the stores and sent them ashore in the longboat.

*"Heave hearty, now lads." We took our places at the capstan and with a stamp and heave, we laid *Adventurer's Revenge* on her beam-end in the glistening sand.*

The carpenter, a lugubrious Dutchman, clambered onto the hull, a rope secured around his waist. From his expression when he returned, I feared he had found a terrible wound in the ship's bottom, a catastrophe that would have left us marooned on this deserted isle.

"Three strakes are rotten, Captain, and there is a great abundance of weed and barnacles." He shook his head. "I don't know if I can set her aright."

"That's what you said last time," laughed the captain, clapping him on the shoulder. "And the time before that. It's nothing that a few days scrubbing, some new planks, and the vigorous application of tallow and brimstone won't solve."

*And vigorous was the word. For three days, I scrubbed and scraped, painted and primed. Now *Adventurer's Revenge* floats, pretty as a picture and fleet as a hound.*

And I must take to my bedroll, to sleep for a week.

– From the journal of Will Deakin

On board a pirate ship, the carpenter (see pp. 4-5 and above) would take charge of the critical task of careening, or cleaning and repairing the hull. The warm waters of the Caribbean Sea and the Indian Ocean were breeding grounds for weeds and barnacles that clung to the underside of the hull. The growth had a substantial impact on the speed of the ship which could be disastrous for pirates, who relied on their speed both to catch prey and to evade naval vessels. An even bigger threat was the teredo worm, which lived in and fed on wooden structures in the sea. The Spanish, who maintained substantial fleets in the Caribbean, considered that the galleons that traded with the Spanish Main had a useful life of only 10 years due to the depredations of the teredo worm.

Careening is a crucial part of a ship's maintenance (p. B485). A ship operating out of the Caribbean must be careened every three months; those in cooler, less worm-riddled areas only need to be careened annually. Realistically, failure has a significant effect on the ship's speed. At the GM's option, every point of HT lost due to lack of careening also reduces the ship's Move by a cumulative 10% (to a maximum reduction of 50%) until repaired.

To careen, the pirates would find a deserted cove. The ship would be anchored and warped close in to the shore. The great guns and other major stores would be loaded into boats and taken ashore where an impromptu fort was constructed. A hawser was taken from the top of a mast to a secure point on shore. Using the capstan, the ship would be heaved down on one side so that the crew could get at the underside to scrape away the growth and worms. The hull would be treated with an anti-fouling mixture of tallow, oil and bitumen. The whole exercise was repeated on the other side and then the ship was refloated and reloaded.

Disadvantages

Bad Sight (Nearsighted) [-25]; Code of Honor (Pirate's) [-5]; Enemy (Royal Navy; Hunter; 9 or less) [-20]; Reputation -1 (Pirate; To all seafarers) [-3].

Quirks: Carries a piece of cut glass that he claims (incorrectly) improves his eyesight; Muttered to himself while working. [-2]

Skills

Axe/Mace (A) DX [2]-12; Brawling (E) DX [1]-12; Carpentry (E) IQ+5 [8]-17*; Climbing (A) DX-1 [1]-11; Engineer/TL4 (Ship) (H) IQ+3 [8]-15*; Gunner/TL4 (Cannon) (E) DX [1]-12; Guns/TL4 (Pistol) (E) DX [1]-12; Knot-Tying (E) DX+1 [2]-13†; Leatherworking (E) DX+1 [2]-13†; Machinist/TL4 (A) IQ+2 [2]-14*†; Mathematics/TL4 (Applied) (H) IQ-1 [2]-11; Seamanship/TL4 (E) IQ+1 [2]-13; Sewing/TL4 (E) DX+1 [2]-13†.

* Includes +2 for Artificer.

† Often gains +2 (not factored in above) from High Manual Dexterity.

THE SURGEON: ZACCHEUS SMITH

125 points

How Zaccheus Smith came to sail with the captain is a mystery to the crew. He has the manners of a gentleman of breeding and the education to prattle in any number of foreign tongues, even the strange language of the natives. Some believe that the surgeon saved the captain's leg when he acquired his limp; others, that he holds some secret power over the captain.

Either way, the crew are grateful to have the surgeon aboard and yet are deathly afraid of him. The surgeon is highly skilled and has stitched the wounds or cured the ailments of almost every man aboard. He also is obsessed with proving that you can tell the mettle of a man by the shape of his internal organs. To this end, he is keen to dissect specimens of all manner of man: high-born and low, European and native, the brave and the cowardly. Worse, he has a disturbing habit of leaving his dissections in unexpected areas of the ship. In the gloomy confines of the 'tween decks, men must watch their step just in case the surgeon has left his latest project lying on a companionway.

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 11 [20]; **IQ** 15 [100]; **HT** 11 [10].
Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 15 [0]; Per 15 [0];
FP 11 [0].
Basic Speed 5.50 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0]; Dodge 8; Parry 8 (Rapier).
5'8; 150 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 4 [0].

CF: Western European [0].

*Languages**: Algonquian (Native/None) [2]; Dutch (Accented) [2], English (Native) [0], French (Native) [4]; Greek (Accented) [2]; Latin (Native) [4].

Advantages

Language Talent [10]; Reputation +1 (Natural Philosopher; To other Natural Philosophers) [1].

Disadvantages

Absent-Mindedness [-15]; Code of Honor (Gentleman's) [-10]; Enemy (Royal Navy; Hunter; 9 or less) [-20]; Obsession (Prove his organ theory) (12) [-10]; Odious Personal Habit (Leaves his "projects" lying around) [-10]; Reputation -1 (Pirate; To all seafarers) [-3].

Quirks: Always looks disheveled; Often carries pickled human body parts in his pockets. [-2]

Skills

Diagnosis/TL4 (H) IQ [4]-15; Expert Skill (Natural Philosophy) (H) IQ [4]-15; First Aid/TL4 (E) IQ+1 [0]-16†; Guns/TL4 (Pistol) (E) DX [1]-11; Knife (E) DX+2 [4]-13; Naturalist (H) IQ-2 [1]-13; Pharmacy/TL4 (Herbal) (H) IQ [4]-14; Physician/TL4 (H) IQ+1 [8]-16; Physiology/TL4 (H) IQ+1 [8]-16; Rapier (A) DX [2]-11; Surgery/TL4 (VH) IQ-1 [4]-14.

* All costs modified for Language Talent.

† Default from Physician.

SAILORS

Most of the sailors who crewed pirate vessels were skilled seamen, many of whom had been at sea since birth. Physically, sailors throughout the Age of Sail were short. On board *HMS Bellerephon* in the early 19th century, the average height of the crew was 5'5". Not one crew member was over 6', and several men were shorter than 5'.

Able Seaman

Able seamen were young, nimble sailors who worked aloft in the rigging. They would raise and lower the mainsail, main topsail, and topgallant; rig the topmasts, and take reefs in the sails in heavy weather.

An able seaman would typically be younger, lighter, and more dexterous than old seamen (p. 16) or the skilled crew (see pp. 13-15). As a job template, the able seaman costs 95 points.

ST 11; **DX** 13; **IQ** 11; **HT** 11.

Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 11; Will 11; Per 11; FP 11.
Basic Speed 6.00; Basic Move 6; Dodge 9; Parry 9.
SM 0; 4'10" to 5'9"; 90 to 150 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Pirate's); Enemy (Royal Navy; Hunter; 9 or less); Language (Any) (Broken/None); Reputation -1 (Pirate; To all seafarers).

Skills: Boating/TL4 (Sailboat)-13; Boating/TL4 (Unpowered)-13; Brawling-14; Carousing-11; Climbing-14; Gunner/TL4 (Cannon)- 13; Guns/TL4 (Pistol)-14; Jumping-14; Knife-13; Knot-Tying-14; Seamanship/TL4-12. • *One* of Axe/Mace-12, Shortsword-12, Spear-12.

Sample Able Seaman: Barney Goodman

100 points

Barney Goodman, a native of Boston, was pressed into the pirate crew from a Nantucket whaler. With his weather-beaten face and open demeanor, he is popular aboard ship. He is renowned among the crew for his dancing and his astonishing agility in the rigging. Barney is, however, terrified of fighting.

So far, he has managed to occupy himself in the rigging or below decks during hand-to-hand fighting, but given that the Articles specifies death or marooning for cowardice, he lives in fear that one day the quartermaster will force him to join a boarding party.

Like many sailors, he can't read or write.

ST 11 [10]; **DX** 13 [60]; **IQ** 11 [20]; **HT** 11 [10].
Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 11 [0]; Will 11 [0]; Per 11 [0]; FP 11 [0].
Basic Speed 6.00 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0]; Dodge 9; Parry 9 (Shortsword).
5'4"; 110 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 4 [0].

CF: Western European [0].

Languages: Dutch (Broken/None) [1]; English (Native/None) [-3]; French (Broken/None) [1].

Advantages

Perfect Balance [15].

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Pirate's) [-5]; Cowardice (12) [-10]; Enemy (Royal Navy; Hunter; 9 or less) [-20]; Reputation -1 (Pirate; To all seafarers) [-3]; Skinny [-5].

Quirks: Congenial; Whistles sea shanties because he can't remember the words. [-2]

Skills

Acrobatics (H) DX+1 [4]-14*; Boating/TL4 (Sailboat) (A) DX [2]-13; Boating/TL4 (Unpowered) (A) DX [2]-13; Brawling (A) DX+1 [2]-14; Carousing (E) HT [1]-11; Climbing (A) DX+2 [4]-15*; Dancing (A) DX [2]-13; Gunner/TL4 (Cannon) (E) DX [1]-13; Guns/TL4 (Pistol) (E) DX+1 [2]-14; Jumping (E) DX+1 [2]-14; Knife (E) DX+1 [2]-14; Knot-Tying (E) DX+2 [4]-15; Seamanship/TL4 (E) IQ+1 [2]-12; Shortsword (A) DX-1 [1]-12.

* Includes +1 for Perfect Balance

Old Seaman

These experienced, older sailors were not expected to climb the rigging like the young able seaman (p. 15). They worked on deck, handling the sails and yards, steering the ship, and undertaking the myriad skilled roles of a sailor. As a job template, the old seaman costs 95 points.

ST 11; **DX** 12; **IQ** 11; **HT** 11.
Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 11; Will 11; Per 11; FP 11.
Basic Speed 5.75; Basic Move 5; Dodge 8; Parry 9.
SM 0; 4'10" to 5'9"; 90 to 150 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Pirate's); Enemy (Royal Navy; Hunter; 9 or less); Language (Any) (Broken/None); Reputation -1 (Pirate; To all seafarers).

Skills: Area Knowledge (any)-12; Boating/TL4 (Sailboat)-13; Boating/TL4 (Unpowered)-13; Brawling-13; Carousing-11; Climbing-13; Gunner/TL4 (Cannon)-14; Guns/TL4 (Musket)-12; Guns/TL4 (Pistol)-13; Jumping-13; Knife-13;

Knot-Tying-14; Seamanship/TL4-13; Weather Sense-12.

• *One of* Axe/Mace-12, Shortsword-12, Spear-12.

Sample Old Seaman: Jean le Breton

100 points

Jean le Breton hails from the port of Brest in Brittany. A born sailor, he shipped on board a French privateer as cook (the investors thought that having a good chef on board would help them attract high-quality crew). The privateer had moderate success but was wrecked on an uncharted island in the Bahamas. Jean and a number of crew members were stranded for several months living off coconuts, turtle eggs, and what few fish they could catch before they were rescued by a foraging party from *Adventurer's Revenge*.

When he first arrived on board, Jean was thin and emaciated. He ate so much in his first days on board that only his congenial manner and clear sailing talent prevented the crew from marooning him again simply to conserve their stores.

Jean is one of the most skilled sailors on board *Adventurer's Revenge*. He is an accomplished chef, so he picks over the stores of any captured ship for herbs, spices, wine, and fine foods. He is far too lazy to volunteer for the role of the ship's cook. Thus far, the crew has seen the value of keeping his sailing know-how on deck.

ST 11 [10]; **DX** 12 [40]; **IQ** 11 [20]; **HT** 11 [10].
Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 11 [0]; Will 11 [0]; Per 11 [0]; FP 11 [0].
Basic Speed 5.50 [-5]; Basic Move 5 [0]; Dodge 8; Parry 9 (Shortsword).
5'7"; 200 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 4 [0].

CF: Western European [0].

Languages: English (Accented) [4]; French (Native) [0].

Advantages

Born Sailor 3 [15]*.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Pirate's) [-5]; Enemy (Royal Navy; Hunter; 9 or less) [-20]; Fat [-3]; Gluttony (12) [-5]; Reputation -1 (Pirate; To all seafarers) [-3]*.

Quirks: Avoids work wherever possible; Congenial; Loots captured ships for personal stores. [-3]

Skills

Area Knowledge (Channel Coast of France) (E) IQ [1]-11; Boating/TL4 (Sailboat) (A) DX+4 [4]-16†; Boating/TL4 (Unpowered) (A) DX+4 [4]-16†; Brawling (A) DX+1 [2]-13; Carousing (E) HT [1]-11; Connoisseur (Food) (A) IQ [2]-11; Connoisseur (Wine) (A) IQ [2]-11; Cooking (A) IQ+2 [8]-13; Gunner/TL4 (Cannon) (E) DX+1 [2]-13; Guns/TL4 (Pistol) (E) DX+1 [2]-13; Knife (E) DX+1 [2]-13; Knot-Tying (E) DX+5 [4]-17†; Seamanship/TL4 (E) IQ+6 [8]-17†; Shortsword (A) DX [2]-12; Weather Sense (A) IQ+2 [1]-13†.

* His net reaction modifier is +2 from sailors and -1 from other seafarers.

† Includes +3 from Born Sailor.

UNSKILLED CREW

17th day of July in the year of our Lord 1716.

Today I learned how to carouse.

The heat of the day had passed, and the moon was rising low on the larboard bow. The crew gathered on the foredeck. The quartermaster rolled out a barrel of Madeira. He pulled a belying pin from the rack by the lee chains and stove in the top of the barrel.

"Ere ye go, me 'earties. The finest Madeira, courtesy of our young Will." And he made an extravagant bow in my direction. I guess the barrel must have been the last of the cabin stores of poor Captain Malin.

By the time the last faint tendrils of daylight disappeared from the sky, the crew were roaring drunk. Some whittled pieces of driftwood or whalebones into fancy shapes. Others played knucklebones. From somewhere, a penny-whistle and fiddle appeared, and men drank and danced, clapped and cheered.

"The bosun!" someone roared. "A dance from the bosun!"

The call was taken up till it seemed every man was chanting. "The bosun! The bosun!"

He came rolling aft, his portly frame wobbling in a seafarer's gait. The musicians redoubled their efforts and as the bosun reached the foredeck, he exploded into activity. For a man of his bulk, he was light on his feet, leaping and capering like a man possessed. All eyes were on the bosun as he twirled and kicked, transporting us with his art.

All eyes but one pair.

"You cheat!" The bosun stumbled as a pirate was thrown bodily into him. "You cheat!" yelled Obadiah a second time. He grabbed the pirate again and they staggered about the deck in the flickering light of the lanterns.

The pirate broke free and ran for the rail. Obadiah tackled him and both men plunged over the side into the dark waters of the Caribbean. Amid gales of laughter, the quartermaster appeared.

"Throw 'em a line. Both of them, the scurvy dogs. He should have known better than to go a-gamblin' with Obadiah."

— From the journal of Will Deakin

Even these unskilled sailors are extremely important to the operation of the ship, where many tasks require (or are made easier by) a great deal of manpower.

BOARDER

A sailing vessel has huge need for muscle power to raise anchors, hoist sails, load cargo, and handle the cannon. The boarders are therefore a combination of fearsome fighters who lead the attack on a prize, and active (albeit unskilled) members of the pirate crew. As a job template, the boarder costs 95 points.

ST 12; **DX** 13; **IQ** 10; **HT** 12.

Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 29 lbs.; HP 12; Will 10; Per 10; FP 12.

Basic Speed 6.525; Basic Move 6; Dodge 9; Parry 10.
SM 0; 5'1" to 5'11"; 110 to 175 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Pirate's); Enemy (Royal Navy; Hunter; 9 or less); Language (Any) (Broken/None); Reputation -1 (Pirate, To all seafarers).

Skills: Boating/TL4 (Unpowered)-12; Brawling-15; Carousing-12; Gunner/TL4 (Cannon)-13; Guns/TL4 (Musket)-13; Guns/TL4 (Pistol)-14; Jumping-14; Knife-14; Knot-Tying-13; Seamanship/TL4-10. • One of Axe/Mace, Shortsword, or Spear at skill-14. • Another one of the previous choices at skill-13.

Sample Boarder: Obadiah

100 points

Obadiah was once a renowned warrior in his native village in the Kingdom of Whydah. Raiders from the neighboring Oyo Empire mounted frequent forays into the kingdom seeking slaves to sell to European traders. On one such raid, Obadiah was knocked unconscious, captured, and sold to a French slaver.

He survived the middle passage but the slave ship was boarded by the crew of *Adventurer's Revenge*. Obadiah broke his chains and killed three of the slaver crew during the boarding. The remaining crew, fearing a slave uprising, surrendered to the pirates. The main cargo of slaves was sold by the pirates, but Obadiah impressed the quartermaster so much that he persuaded the captain to let Obadiah join the crew.

Obadiah knows very little about ships, but he is a fearsome and intimidating fighter with a traditional spear and shield he crafted himself. He towers over the other crew

members who treat him warily, especially if they ever gamble with him (itself a violation of the ship's Articles), as he hates to lose.

ST 14 [40]; **DX** 13 [60]; **IQ** 10 [0]; **HT** 13 [30].

Damage 1d/2d; BL 39 lbs.; HP 17 [6]; Will 10 [0]; Per 10 [0]; FP 13 [0].

Basic Speed 6.50 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0]; Dodge 9; Parry 10 (Spear); Block 10 (Shield).
6'6"; 230 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 2 [-10].

CF: West African (Native) [0]; Western European [1].

Languages: English (Accented/None) [2]; Yoruba (Native/None) [-3].

Advantages

High Pain Threshold [10].



Disadvantages

Bad Temper (12) [-10]; Bloodlust (12) [-10]; Code of Honor (Pirate's) [-5]; Enemy (Royal Navy; Hunter; 9 or less) [-20]; Odious Personal Habit (Collects the ears of slain enemies to wear as a necklace) [-15]*; Reputation -1 (Pirate; To all seafarers) [-3]*; Social Stigma (Second-Class Citizen) [-5]*.

Quirks: Hates to lose when gambling; Never wears footwear; Practices with his spear and shield every day; Slouches except when he wants to intimidate. [-4]

Skills

Area Knowledge (Whydah) (E) IQ [1]-10; Axe/Mace (A) DX [2]-13; Boating/TL2 (Unpowered) (A) DX-1 [1]-12; Brawling (E) DX+2 [4]-15; Gunner/TL4 (Cannon) (E) DX [1]-13; Guns/TL4 (Pistol) (E) DX [1]-13; Intimidation (A) Will [2]-10; Jumping (E) DX+1 [2]-14; Knife (E) DX+1 [2]-14; Knot-Tying (E) DX [1]-13; Running (A) HT [2]-13; Seamanship/TL2 (E) IQ [1]-10; Shield (Buckler) (E) DX+1 [2]-14; Spear (A) DX+2 [8]-15; Survival (Plains) (A) Per [2]-10; Thrown Weapon (Spear) (E) DX+1 [2]-14†; Tracking (A) Per [2]-10.

* His total reaction modifiers when wearing his necklace of men's ears is -5.

† Only usable with normal spears; a boarding pike cannot be thrown.

Animals

At any time, the *Adventurer's Revenge* is likely to be carrying a menagerie of animals. For food, sailors would ship hens and goats to provide eggs and milk, and pigs, sheep, and even cows to give fresh meat.

Rats were ubiquitous on wooden ships, so many vessels had cats, dogs (particularly small terriers), or even pythons to keep the numbers down. Parrots and monkeys were also popular, both as pets and to trade in the ports of the Old World.

On board *Adventurer's Revenge*, John Rimer owns an African Grey parrot and Conor Murphy keeps a macaque monkey acquired in Whydah.

SHIP'S BOY

It was not unusual for naval vessels to carry boys as young as 12 with the rank of midshipman. In pirate ships, ship's boys would act as servants to the captain and be general drudges, even though their presence was often against the Articles. In battle, they would carry powder to the great guns, and water to the crews. As a job template, the ship's boy costs 35 points.

ST 10; **DX** 12; **IQ** 10; **HT** 11.

Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10; Will 10; Per 10; FP 11.
Basic Speed 6.00; Basic Move 6; Dodge 9; Parry 8 (Shortsword).
SM 0; 4'6" to 5'7"; 75 to 120 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Pirate's); Enemy (Royal Navy; Hunter; 9 or less); Reputation -1 (Pirate; To all seafarers).

*Fifteen men on the dead man's chest
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!*

– Robert Louis Stevenson,
Treasure Island

Skills: Climbing-12; Guns/TL4 (Pistol)-12; Jumping-12; Knife-12; Knot-Tying-12; Seamanship/TL4-10; Shortsword-11.

Sample Ship's Boy: Will Deakin

100 points

Will Deakin is the son of a successful merchant in Bristol. After the death of his mother, Will's father remarried a young girl barely older than Will. Determined to secure her position, she persuaded Mr. Deakin to send Will to the colonies "to learn his trade."

Will had an education suitable for a wealthy family. He studied Classics, learned to ride horses, and is naturally gifted as an artist. Like many earnest young men, he takes himself seriously. He views himself as a man of honor, something he finds difficult to reconcile with his newfound status as a pirate. On board *Adventurer's Revenge*, Will acts as the captain's servant.

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 12 [40]; **IQ** 12 [40]; **HT** 12 [20].

Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 12 [0]; Per 12 [0]; FP 12 [0].

Basic Speed 6.25 [5]; Basic Move 6 [0]; Dodge 9; Parry 8 (Shortsword).
5'3"; 95 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 4 [0].

CF: Western European [0].

Languages: English (Native) [0]; Greek (None/Accented) [2]; Latin (Accented) [4].

Advantages

Gifted Artist 2 [10]; Patron (Father, a powerful London merchant; 6 or less) [5].

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Pirate's) [-5]; Enemy (Father's second wife; 6 or less) [-2]; Enemy (Royal Navy; Hunter; 9 or less) [-20]; Reputation -1 (Pirate; To all seafarers) [-3]; Skinny [-5]; Vow (Always keep your word) [-5].

Quirks: Chivalrous toward women; Has bouts of guilt about being a pirate; Keeps a journal. [-3]

Skills

Artist (Calligraphy) (H) IQ+1 [2]-13*; Artist (Drawing) (H) IQ+1 [2]-13*; Climbing (A) DX [2]-12; Guns/TL4 (Pistol) (E) DX [1]-12; Jumping (E) DX [1]-12; Knife (E) DX [1]-12; Knot-Tying (E) DX [1]-12; Merchant (A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Riding (Horse) (A) DX [2]-12; Seamanship/TL4 (E) IQ [1]-12; Sewing/TL4 (E) DX+2 [1]-14*; Shortsword (A) DX [1]-11; Writing (A) IQ-1 [1]-11.

* Includes +2 from Gifted Artist.

CHAPTER THREE

ADVENTURES

AHOY!

6th day of August in the year of our lord 1716.

I fear I am undone.

At first, I could tell myself I was a pirate through force. I had to sign the Articles or be heaved overboard.

Today, I acted the pirate by choice.

We were making fine speed in a topsail breeze. I was in the top with Barney, scanning the horizon for vessels.

"Sail ho!" yelled Barney.

"Where away?" cried the captain from the quarterdeck.

"Three points fine on the starboard bow."

"Whaddya make of her?" he shouted.

"A merchant, Cap'n. A fine, plump merchant, or I'm a Dutchman," Barney replied.

"All hands, make sail! Look lively, lads. Look lively!"

Men swarmed up the ratlines to loose the topsail and the topgallant. I swung my legs around the backstay and slid down to the quarterdeck. There I stayed for hour after hour as we closed on the chase.

"Break out the Jolly Roger!"

The black flag, with its death's head and crossed bones, flew from the mainmast.

"E's gonna make a fight of it," growled the quartermaster.

"Aye, that he is," said the captain. "But he'll never weather yon headland."

*The captain was right. The merchant ship saw that it was headed into a lee shore and wore to try to weather the cape. **Adventurer's Revenge** steered straight and true. The captain brought her crashing home against the merchant's rear quarter.*

"Boarders away!" he yelled. He picked up a cutlass from the rack by the wheel and handed it to me. "You, too, lad. Away ye go."

I hefted the unfamiliar steel in my right hand and joined the throng. With a roar in my throat and my brethren by my side, I vaulted the rail and stormed the merchant vessel.

The crew I found there were pale with fright. They shook and quivered as we boarded, with no vim or vigor. Compared to my fellow crew members, they were a feeble bunch, and I despised them.

"Who's the master here?" demanded the captain.

A tall man with dark hair tied in a short queue stepped forward. "I am."

As I'd seen before, he staggered backward in surprise at the backhand blow. "That's for making us chase you."

One of the merchant crew started forward, and I was first to react. I swiped my blade along his forearm and crimson blood sprayed across the deck. He yelped with fear and shrank back and, God help me, I knew the feeling of power that comes from bending a man to your will.

May God have mercy on my soul.

– Final entry in the journal of Will Deakin

*Singing continues at eight bells,
attack and repel boarders notwithstanding.*

– Howard Waldrop, "Avast, Ahaft!"

Adventurer's Revenge can serve as the backdrop for an entire campaign (with the PCs as crew), make for a one-off encounter, or anything in between.

MAKING ADJUSTMENTS

While many campaigns will be ready for this ship as-is, she may require a bit of fine-tuning in others. This advice can be used to adapt *Adventurer's Revenge* to an existing game, or to inspire the GM looking for a fun setting for a game of high-seas excitement.

ALTERNATIVE PIRATES

The seas offer many ways to stay alive and in coin, especially for those of questionable moral character. Here are some options, any one of which could redefine the goals of the *Adventurer's Revenge* crew.

Privateers

The difference between a privateer and a pirate was very fine, but the distinction was crucial as it could prevent a man from being hanged.

Privateers were granted "a letter of marque and reprisal" by a sovereign nation that authorized them to attack and seize the vessels of a hostile nation. The letter of marque generally named a specific country as the enemy, and it contained limits on the actions of a privateer, such as requiring them to refrain from attacking neutral shipping and to hand their prizes over to an admiralty court to be valued.

Although privateering was legal, not all countries recognized its legitimacy. Spain, for example, treated all privateers as pirates, and even in England, the law could be capricious: Captain Kidd, who sailed under a letter of marque, was hanged as pirate in a London, the victim of political maneuvering as well as his own bad temper.

Adventurer's Revenge could easily be converted to a privateer. The quartermaster would take the role of first lieutenant or first mate and would have to rein in his Sadism, but otherwise the crew would remain unchanged. While the ship would no longer be the target of the Royal Navy, it would still have a formidable Enemy in the form of the fleets of the hostile nation, and the Reputation of its crew members may change to Reputation -1 (Privateer; All sailors of the hostile nation) [-1].

Smugglers

Smugglers were some of the most skilled and knowledgeable sailors afloat. Like pirates, their most valuable asset was a

swift ship with a clean bottom. Unlike pirates, they were only interested in escaping from naval and customs vessels, not chasing prey.

Indirect taxation was a critical way for governments to raise revenue in the 18th century. They imposed tariffs on the import of many foreign goods, including wine, currants, tobacco, and sugar. The smugglers sought to evade the taxes by using superior seamanship, local knowledge, and small, fast vessels. In many places (such as the English Channel and the eastern seaboard of America), smugglers knew the creeks, rivers and estuaries so intimately that they could easily give the authorities the slip or even draw them into shoals where they would run aground.

Blockade Runners

Commerce raiding was an established practice during the Golden Age of Piracy, whether by national navies or through privateers operating under a letter of marque.

Customizing the Crew

The able seamen (p. 15), old seamen (p. 16), boarders (p. 17), and ship's boys (p. 18) are given only basic statistics in Chapter 2, which leaves a great deal of room to flesh them out as the GM sees fit. It is important to remember that – while they all fulfill different roles on board *Adventurer's Revenge* – they are, first and foremost, pirates.

Advantages

Appropriate advantages for any pirate include Acute Hearing [2/level], Acute Vision [2/level], Alcohol Tolerance [1], Ambidexterity [5], Combat Reflexes [15], Danger Sense [15], Daredevil [15], Less Sleep [2/level], Luck [15], Night Vision [1/level], No Hangover [1], Penetrating Voice [1], Resistant to Disease (+3) or (+8) [3 or 5], and Resistant to Seasickness (+3) or (+8) or Immunity to Seasickness [1, 2, or 5].

Note that Wealth is rarely suitable. Few pirates were rich, and when they did come into riches, they were quick to spend it on drink, women, and carousing.

In a cinematic or silly campaign, Appearance (Attractive or Handsome) [4 or 12], Charisma [5/level], Extraordinary Luck [30] or Ridiculous Luck [60], Rapier Wit [5], and Serendipity [15/level] would all be fitting advantages.

Able seamen might also have Fit [5] or Very Fit [15], Flexibility [5] or Double-Jointed [15], or Perfect Balance [15]. The Skinny [-5] disadvantage is fairly common.

Old seamen often have the Born Sailor Talent (p. 11). Physically, they might be Fit [5] . . . though some are Fat [-3] instead.

Boarders could benefit from Fearlessness [2/level], Hard to Kill [2/level], Hard to Subdue [2/level], or High Pain Threshold [10].

Disadvantages

Suitable disadvantages include Addiction [Varies], Alcoholism [-15], Appearance (Unattractive, Ugly, or Hideous) [-4,-8 or -16], Bad Temper [-10*], Berserk [-10*],

Bloodlust [-10*], Bully [-10*], Callous [-5], Compulsive Carousing [-5*], Compulsive Gambling [-5*], Compulsive Spending [-5*], Greed [-15*], Impulsiveness [-10*], Lameness (Missing Leg) [-20], Lecherousness [-15*], Missing Digit [-2 or -5], Odious Personal Habit [-5 to -15], One Eye [-15], One Hand [-15], Sadism [-15*], and Selfish [-5*]. (Point costs with a * assume a self-control number of 12. People who are more or less susceptible will pay a different cost; see pp. B120-121.)

All crew members of *Adventurer's Revenge* have the disadvantages Code of Honor (Pirate's) [-5] and Enemy (Royal Navy; Hunter; 9 or less) [-20]. In other settings, the enemy may be different but pirates usually have *someone* who is out to get them; see *Enemies of the State* (p. 21) for more ideas. In addition, being a pirate carried a negative Reputation, although only a few pirates were famous enough to be known individually.

Skills

All pirates should be skilled with a pistol. While a cutlass was the usual weapon of choice, some crew members would use boarding pikes or axes. These weapons require Shortsword, Spear, and Axe/Mace, respectively. Other combat skills that might be useful include Fast-Draw, Guns (Musket), Knife, and Throwing.

Sailors often would have skills from their lives before they went to sea or gained in specialist roles on board ship. Practical skills might include Armoury, Carpentry, Cooking, Freight Handling, Fishing, Heraldry (to recognize the flags of many nations), Sewing (a prerequisite for a sailmaker), Smith, and Survival (Beach/Island). Hobby skills might include Artist (particularly sketching and whittling), Dancing, Gambling, Musical Instrument, or Singing.

Surprisingly few sailors could swim. Contemporaries argued that a quick death by drowning was better than a slow one waiting for exhaustion to set in or for circling sharks to become brave enough to attack.

A full blockade of a port was difficult and costly to enforce, so smuggling vessels that could sneak or run past the blockading vessels would find sky-high prices for their goods. If the port was well-known for its exports, the smugglers could similarly generate substantial profits from slipping past the blockade on the way out.

Slave Raiders

Throughout much of this period, inhabitants of coastal regions were at risk of enslavement. Areas of particular danger were the west coast of Africa and the Mediterranean (where both Christians and Muslims captured and traded in slaves).

While most slavers traded for their human cargo, a few undertook inland raids with the express intention of capturing slaves. To be successful, they needed to mount an amphibious operation swiftly and with the element of surprise. It could be a highly profitable operation (provided the captives could be kept alive on the way to market), but the complexity and hazards meant that most slave raiders were equally happy acting as pirates or privateers, with raids only undertaken when the opportunity was right.

ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS

While Chapter 1 suggests the Spanish Main (pp. 7-8) and the African coastline (p. 8) as default settings, piracy can exist almost *anywhere*.

The Mediterranean

Corsair was the term given to Mediterranean pirates, particularly those who were based on the Barbary Coast of North Africa from ports such as Algiers, Tripoli and Tunis. Supported by the Muslim governments, the corsairs were encouraged to raid Christian shipping. They were a major threat from as early as the Crusades until as late as the 19th century.

The corsairs operated from oared galleys, often rigged with a lateen sail. They were able to point higher into the wind than traditional square-rigged vessels, thus helping them get the weather gage (p. 8). Their oars made them both highly maneuverable and able to make headway even in a dead calm.

The primary objective of the corsairs was to capture slaves. Whole communities were enslaved: The entire populations of Lipari (1544), Gozo (1551), and Baltimore, Ireland (1631) were taken. Any Christian territory in the Mediterranean was at risk and the corsairs harassed the Atlantic seaboard, too, even reaching as far as Iceland.

Muslims were not the only raiders. The Knights of St. John, also known as the Knights Hospitaller, were Christian knights who, after the Christians were expelled from the Holy Land, carried on their Crusade by sea. Initially from Rhodes, and after 1522 from Malta, they mounted audacious long-distance raids on Muslim shipping. While the Knights considered themselves to be on a holy quest, the Ottoman rulers considered them nothing but pirates. Regardless, the Knights certainly looted and captured merchant vessels and carried out a thriving trade in non-Christian slaves from Malta.

Enemies of the State

Someone's always hunting pirates! The -20-point Enemy disadvantage common to the crew in Chapter 2 represents a single Royal Navy ship, equivalent to the *Adventurer's Revenge* in capability and tasked with piracy patrol. At the GM's option, this can be replaced with a different Enemy and/or frequency of appearance. An upgraded ship crewed by an aggressive commodore would be a -30-point Enemy; an entire squadron would be worth -40 points (but would remain a -20-point disadvantage if reduced to appearing on a 6 or less).

The tone of the campaign should influence the GM's choice of Enemy:

Realistic: In distant waters (e.g., the Caribbean), only the most successful (or unluckiest) pirates will come to the attention of the Royal Navy. For example, two sloops under the command of Lieutenant Maynard were dispatched to hunt down Blackbeard, while countless minor pirates remained free. In more civilized areas (e.g., the Mediterranean), the Navy is likely to appear in larger numbers *and* more frequently.

Cinematic: In most pirate fiction, encounters with the Royal Navy are treated as a fairly even match. It is usually most appropriate to keep the Enemy as a single vessel, perhaps under a commander who has a personal and professional reason to hunt down the *Adventurer's Revenge*.

Pirate-centric: In some movies and other fiction, the assumption is that *pirates* rule the waves, with the Royal Navy treated as little more than an obstacle to rampant looting! In such a case, the Navy (whether a ship or a squadron) should only appear on a 6 or less. In fact, a rival *pirate crew* may make more sense as an Enemy, with the Navy showing up only as an occasional plot point.

The Indian Ocean

Pirates gathered wherever trade flourished. If there were suitable locations for careening and resupplying, so much the better. The Indian Ocean offered it all: rich merchant ships carrying spices, fabrics, gold, and coffee; pirate havens such as Madagascar; and a known trade route, as all merchant vessels headed for Europe had to round the Cape of Good Hope at the bottom of Africa.

In 1695, Henry Avery captured the *Ganj-i-Sawai* (also known as the *Gunsway*), the largest of the trading ships in the fleet of the Great Mogul, ruler of the Mogul Empire in India. It was one of the richest hauls any pirate ever made, including over 500,000 gold and silver pieces. Word of Avery's success spread rapidly, and the Indian Ocean became thick with pirates. Pirate colonies were established on Madagascar, the huge island off the southeast corner of Africa. Traders soon set up shop to supply the pirates with food and drink in exchange for the fruits of their raids, which were shipped to New York and sold.

Armed vessels of the East India Company and from powerful rulers such as the Great Mogul plied the ocean, protecting convoys and seeking out pirates. Local tribes on Madagascar warred against each other and sought out pirate crews as powerful allies.

The English Channel

While pirates were rare in the English Channel, privateers and smugglers were not. France, England, the Netherlands, and Spain were at war with each other so often that there was usually at least one country that would license privateers to prey on merchant shipping. Privateers could be based in almost any port that could shelter a small, fast, armed vessel, but they were particularly associated with Dunkirk in Flanders and St. Malo in France.

South China Sea

Western pirates did not make substantial in-roads into the South China Seas, but the region was awash with pirates. From the vast fleets of pirate junks operating from the Chinese mainland to Malays and Dyaks operating out of untamed Borneo, the merchants bringing the wealth of the Philippines to Manila or traversing the Straits of Malacca were at great risk from piracy.

In the modern era, the Straits of Malacca gained a reputation as the most pirate-stricken region of the world. That reputation has recently moved to the Somali coast (*Modern Day*, below)

Inland Piracy

Pirates do not only inhabit the wide-open oceans. Piracy has existed on lakes and rivers for as long as men have inhabited their shore lines (although some purists argue that an attack needs to occur on the high seas for it to be true piracy). There are accounts of pirates on the Great Lakes and on major American rivers such as the Ohio. On any body of water where it is feasible for a reasonable size vessel to evade

*Now and then we had
a hope that if we lived and
were good, God would
permit us to be pirates.*

– Mark Twain, *Life on
the Mississippi*

the authorities, a crew similar to that of *Adventurer's Revenge* could be found.

ALTERNATIVE TIMES

As long as humanity retains a spark of greed and violence, piracy is unlikely to ever disappear altogether.

Modern Day

Piracy is often thought of as a product of a bygone era. Yet it remains a significant problem for maritime trade, particularly in areas where there are heavily trafficked shipping lanes close to land, such as the Straits of Malacca, the Gulf of Aden and Somali Coast, and the Niger Delta.

The primary target of modern day pirates is the contents of the ship's safe: cash used to pay for crew wages, port fees, and other incidentals. However, the ongoing anarchy in Somalia has led Somali pirates to become significantly more aggressive. In 2008, they attacked and captured a number of vessels including a Ukrainian freighter carrying tanks to Kenya and the Very-Large Crude Carrier (VLCC) *Sirius Star* transporting two million barrels of oil. The hijacked vessels are taken to Somali ports such as Eyl or Harardhere. The pirates demand ransoms for the safe release of the vessels and their crews, and some estimates suggest that over \$150 million was paid in 2008 alone.

The pirates launch their attacks in fast speedboats, each carrying crews of up to a dozen men armed with assault rifles (predominantly AK-47s), rocket-propelled grenades, semi-automatic pistols, machetes, and knives. Since some of the attacks take place hundreds of miles offshore, the Somali pirates are believed to be using "mother-ships," vessels disguised as fishing trawlers that can travel the shipping lanes waiting for appropriate targets. NATO, Russia, India, and a variety of other countries have dispatched naval forces to the region to combat the pirate threat, and the Indian Navy has reported that it has sunk at least one alleged mother-ship.

The crew of *Adventurer's Revenge* could become modern day pirates in any of the high-risk regions. Alongside their nautical and small-arms skills, the crew would need to gain technology skills (for communicating their ransom demands), while social skills to conduct complex negotiations would be valuable.

Inspirational Sources

Those looking for further fun with pirates have several options. The gaming choices range from low-tech like *GURPS Swashbucklers* to the more high-tech *Sid Meier's Pirates!* video game from Take Two Interactive. In addition, the following were fundamental to the creation of this book.

Barrie, J.M. *Peter Pan* (CreateSpace, 2010).

Cordingly, David. *Life Among the Pirates: The Romance and the Reality* (Abacus History, 1996).

Klein, Herbert S. *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Johnson, Captain Charles. *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pyrates* (Lyons Press, 2010). First published in London in 1724.

Konstam, Angus. *The Pirate Ship 1660-1730* (Osprey Publishing, 2003).

Rediker, Marcus. *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (Beacon Press, 2005).

Rodger, N.A.M. *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (W.W. Norton and Company, 1996).

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Treasure Island* (CreateSpace, 2010). First published in London in 1883.

Space Pirates

A key element of the Age of Sail was that news could only travel as fast as the fastest ship. In space, faster-than-light travel may mean that ships are as fast as long-distance telecommunications, opening up a range of possibilities for swashbuckling raids and pirate shenanigans.

There is nothing so desperately monotonous as the sea, and I no longer wonder at the cruelty of pirates.

– James Russell Lowell

ADVENTURE SEEDS

If the campaign revolves around the PCs as pirates, most adventures will focus around their latest target. Using *Adventurer's Revenge* and its crew as a hook in an existing game can prove more of a challenge, however. For that, the following adventure seeds should prove useful.

RESCUE

Will Deakin's father was distraught to discover that his only son had been lost to pirates in the Caribbean. He hires a group of adventurers to track down and rescue Will from his kidnapers. The only problem is that when they find him, the PCs discover that Will is quite happy as a member of his pirate crew.

PLUNDERING THE SPANISH GALLEONS

The Deputy Governor of Providence has received secret intelligence that a Spanish merchant plans to evade the Spanish monopoly by shipping the wealth of a ransacked Aztec temple to the Old World. The vessel plans to touch briefly at Havana before crossing the Atlantic, carrying a fortune in precious metals and gems. Only *HMS Martin*, a sloop very similar to *Adventurer's Revenge* and crewed by PCs, is on station. The governor issues a letter of marque to *Adventurer's Revenge*, to cooperate with *HMS Martin* capturing the untold wealth of the Aztecs for the English crown.

A SECRET TREASURE

One of the PCs (or a Dependent or Ally) harbors a secret: Not only is he a former pirate, he was one of a dozen men who helped the notorious Captain Balfour bury the accumulated loot of 30 years of piracy. One of the crew drew a secret map of the location. When Balfour found out, he flew into a rage. He tore the map into pieces and killed four of the men before he was cut down. The surviving crew members each took a fragment of the map and fled.

Now word comes that two of the pirates are dead. The crew of *Adventurer's Revenge* is tracking down each of the eight map

The crew of *Adventurer's Revenge* could be transferred wholesale to a space setting with only a few tweaks for modernization. In particular, a new class of specialist in communications and electronics would be needed, as well as upgrading the carpenter to be chief engineer, perhaps alongside the bosun, and converting low-tech skills to their high-tech equivalents.

owners so they can find the fabled treasure of Captain Balfour. It is only a matter of time until they find the PCs.

THE MAGNIFICENT FEW

Scratching out a living in a new colony is hard at the best of times; when pirates raid every few months taking away everything the colonists have worked for, it's close to impossible.



The New World offers endless opportunities for colonization. Deserted islands, wooded coves, and river estuaries all offer land, water, food and shelter. Colonists – including English Puritans, French Huguenots, escaped slaves, and former pirates – attempt to build a new life in these fertile lands.

Adventurer's Revenge is a thorn in their side. Every few months, she anchors off the colony and the boats put ashore. The crew take what they want – food, tools, sometimes even women – and promise they'll be back.

This time, the colonists have had enough. They scrape together enough money to hire a band of mercenaries to protect their colony. It's a small enough band but with surprise, and luck, maybe they can teach the pirates a lesson.

*Will Turner: You didn't beat me.
You ignored the rules of engagement.
In a fair fight, I'd kill you.*

*Jack Sparrow: That's not much
incentive for me to fight fair, then, is it?*

*– Pirates of the Caribbean:
The Curse of the Black Pearl*

ONE OF OUR SHIPS IS MISSING

An Old World trading concern (such as the Spanish government, Dutch merchants, the Merchant Venturers of Bristol, etc.)

has been losing shipments of cargo to pirates as they leave the Caribbean. Reports from survivors suggest that just one ship, *Adventurer's Revenge*, is responsible for all of the attacks.

The investigators are hired to find out how the pirates are getting such good intelligence to enable them to catch so many ships. Perhaps they have an agent in the overseas trading posts. Perhaps the Deputy Governor of Providence is sending them information in return for a cut of the profits. Or perhaps the pirates have some secret method of tracking ship movements.

Whatever the reason, the PCs have to track down and remove the source of the merchants' woes, before the pirates drive them out of business.

SHIPWRECK

They call them Century Storms – tempests so powerful that no man will see more than one in his lifetime. For landlubbers, it is a time of fear, when ancient oaks fall and houses are leveled by the elements.

For seafarers, it might as well be Judgment Day.

The PCs are the only survivors of a storm that shattered their sailing vessel and cast them ashore on a low-lying island. There is food – coconuts, turtle eggs, fish in the lagoon – and a small spring. Perhaps, the survivors think, they can make a go of it.

The second evening after the shipwreck, as the storms abate, the pirates rampage through the survivors' makeshift camp. They take food and supplies and retreat to the other side of the island.

So two ships were wrecked on the same island. Will the pirates and survivors fight until one (or both) groups are destroyed? Or will they find a way to cooperate in the face of the common need for survival?

Associating With Pirates

It was common for pirates to band together into squadrons, and *Adventurer's Revenge* could make a useful Contact Group or Patron. The crew could provide intelligence, assistance in taking away prizes to be sold or looted, and invaluable assistance in combat.

Even a nonpirate, such as a merchant or trader, might have a partnership with the pirate crew to attack his enemies and spare his own ships. A governor may have given the captain a letter of marque to attack the king's enemies. If the PCs were the ones who had arranged for the letter of marque, Captain Cutler might be very grateful indeed. A stuffy naval captain having to work in partnership with the ruffians on *Adventurer's Revenge* would make for an interesting conflict of attitudes, ideas, and approaches.

The reverse could occur as well, with one of the key members of the crew – or even the whole ship! – becoming the Enemy of one of the heroes.

Captain Cutler is a pragmatic man who does not court enemies. However, the officers who spurned him as “no gentleman” and forced him out of the Royal Navy would

get very short shrift. If they were posted to the Caribbean, the captain *would* go out of his way to make their miserable.

The captain also values his contacts in Nassau on New Providence in the Bahamas. Any group of PCs making life difficult for the deputy governor or the pirates' tame merchant might make him (or even the whole crew) into an Enemy.

Quartermaster Swift would make a dangerous Enemy, as he likes nothing more than to inflict pain and suffering on his foes. In the democracy of a pirate ship, the quartermaster could persuade the crew to pursue any group if there is the slightest chance of booty and loot.

It would also be possible to turn the whole crew into an Enemy during play. During the Golden Age of Piracy, pirates would often lose their ships and survive to tell the tale. They would then have to revert to piracy from small boats until they were able to capture a replacement. If the PCs were responsible for their loss, they certainly might harbor a grudge.

GLOSSARY

abaft: Nearer the *stern* of the vessel (“The cannonballs are stored just abaft the mast”).

abeam: Alongside, or at right angles to the side of the vessel.

aft: Toward the rear, or *stern*, of the vessel.

astern: Past the rear, or *stern*, of the vessel.

backstay: A rope running from the *stern* of the ship to the masthead to support the mast.

beam: The width of the vessel.

belaying pin: Club-shaped pins located on the main deck to secure *running rigging*.

boom: A *spar* that runs along the bottom of a sail.

bow: The front of the vessel.

bowsprit: A heavy *spar* pointing forward from the *stem* or front of the vessel.

brace: A rope used to control the angle of a *yard* to the wind.

broadside: Firing all of the guns on one side of a vessel at once.

capstan: A large winch turned by many crew members. Ropes could be taken around the capstan to perform a range of tasks such as raising the anchor, loading cargo or launching boats.

careen: To heel the vessel over in order to clean the bottom of weeds and barnacles. See p. 14.

cordage: A collective word for ropes.

draft: The depth of a vessel below the waterline. The verb is “to draw.” Thus: “What’s her draft?” “She draws 11 feet.”

forecastle: The forward part of the ship, often raised.

fore-and-aft: A sail plan in which the sails run from the front to the back of the vessel, in contrast to a *square-rigged* vessel.

forestay: A rope that supports the mast, running from the *bow* to the masthead.

forward: Usually pronounced “for’ard.” Toward the front of the vessel. Opposite of *abaft*.

gaff: A *spar* that runs along the top of some *fore-and-aft* rigged sails.

grog: An alcoholic drink made of rum and water, often with the addition of sugar and lemon or lime juice. Grog was introduced in the Royal Navy in 1740; before that date, it is more accurate to refer to it as a punch.

halyard: A rope used to raise a sail or *yard*.

hawser: A heavy rope or cable.

heave-to: To stop a sailing vessel by turning her into the wind and backing the sails (filling them from the other side).

knot: A measure of speed at sea. A knot is one *nautical mile* per hour and is approximately equivalent to 1.1 mph. In the Age of Sail, the speed of a vessel was determined by dropping a triangular piece of wood (the log) – weighted so it sits upright in the water – over the side and measuring how much line ran out in a fixed period of time. The line was marked at precise intervals with a knot, which gave rise to the name.

larboard: The left-hand side of the vessel when the viewer faces forward.

lateen sail: A large triangular sail mounted on a long *fore-and-aft spar* common in Mediterranean vessels

letter of marque and reprisal: A document authorizing a *privateer* to attack and loot ships of a specific nation, usually granted by governments during time of war. The possession of a letter of marque marked the distinction between legal privateering and illegal piracy, although some countries (notably Spain) refused to accept the legality of letters of marque.

lee: The side sheltered from the wind.

leeward: Downwind.

*It is when pirates count their booty
that they become mere thieves.*

– William Bolitho

maintop: A platform above the head of the lower mainmast.

master: A generic term for the captain of a sailing ship. Also an officer with primary responsibility for navigation.

maroon: To abandon on an uninhabited island. A common punishment for theft from within the ranks of the pirate crew.

nautical mile: A nautical mile is approximately 2,000 yards. It is divided into 10 cables of 200 yards each. A *knot* is one nautical mile per hour.

pinnace: A small, single-masted sailing vessel with a *fore-and-aft* rig particularly used in the Caribbean.

privateer: An armed vessel issued with a *letter of marque and reprisal* authorizing its crew to capture merchant shipping of a specific nation. Could also refer to any member of the crew of a privateering vessel.

piece of eight: A silver coin minted in New Spain and the most common coin in the Caribbean and the Spanish Main. Also known as a Spanish dollar and worth approximately \$20 in **GURPS** terms.

port: See *larboard*. Larboard was the preferred term until around the middle of the 19th century.

quarterdeck: A raised deck covering the rear portion of the vessel from which the captain and officers control the vessel.

quartermaster: An elected officer on board a pirate ship, responsible for discipline and punishment.

ratlines: Small lines fastened across the *shrouds* to make ladder rungs.

reef: To reduce the amount of sail area, which makes the vessel easier to control in heavy winds.

running rigging: The ropes and lines used to operate the sails and *yards*, including *halyards*, *sheets*, and *braces*.

sheet: A rope or line used to control the angle of a sail to the wind.

shroud: A rope that is used to support a mast from *larboard* to *starboard*, running from masthead to the edge of the deck. Part of the *standing rigging*.

sloop: A sailing vessel with a single mast, typically with a *fore-and-aft* rigged mainsail. Pirates often used sloops with *square-rigged* topsails above the mainsail.

spar: A stout wooden pole used as a mast, *yard*, *boom*, or *gaff*.

slow match: Cord soaked in saltpeter to produce a fuse that burned at a rate of approximately 1' per hour.

spanker: A small sail rigged from the *aft* lower mast of a sailing ship.

splice: To join the ends of two ropes together by interweaving the strands.

square-rigged: A sail plan where the sails are set at right angles to the length of the boat, opposite to a *fore-and-aft* rig.

standing rigging: Fixed ropes and lines that supported the mast, specifically, *shrouds* and *stays*.

starboard: The right-hand side of the vessel when the viewer faces forward.

stay: A rope that supports the mast fore and aft.

stem: The front of the vessel.

stern: The back of the vessel.

tack: To change the direction of a sailing vessel's course by turning its *bow* through the wind such that the wind blows on the other side.

teredo worm: A small, saltwater clam that eats waterlogged wood. A real threat to wooden sailing ships that was primarily treated either by *careening* the ship regularly or, after 1761, by sheathing the ship's bottom in copper.

topgallant: A *square-rigged* sail mounted above the topsail.

topsail: A sail mounted above the lowest sails and below the *topgallants*

waist: The middle part of the ship between the *forecastle* and the *quarterdeck*.

warp: A mooring rope. To maneuver a vessel by use of mooring ropes.

wear: To change the direction of a sailing vessel's course by turning its *stern* through the wind such that the wind blows on the other side.

weather gage: A sailing vessel that held the weather gage was closer to the wind than its opponent and could control the course of the battle. See p. 8.

whip: To tie twine around the end of a rope to prevent it from fraying.

yard: A *spar* that holds the top of a *square-rigged* sail.

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