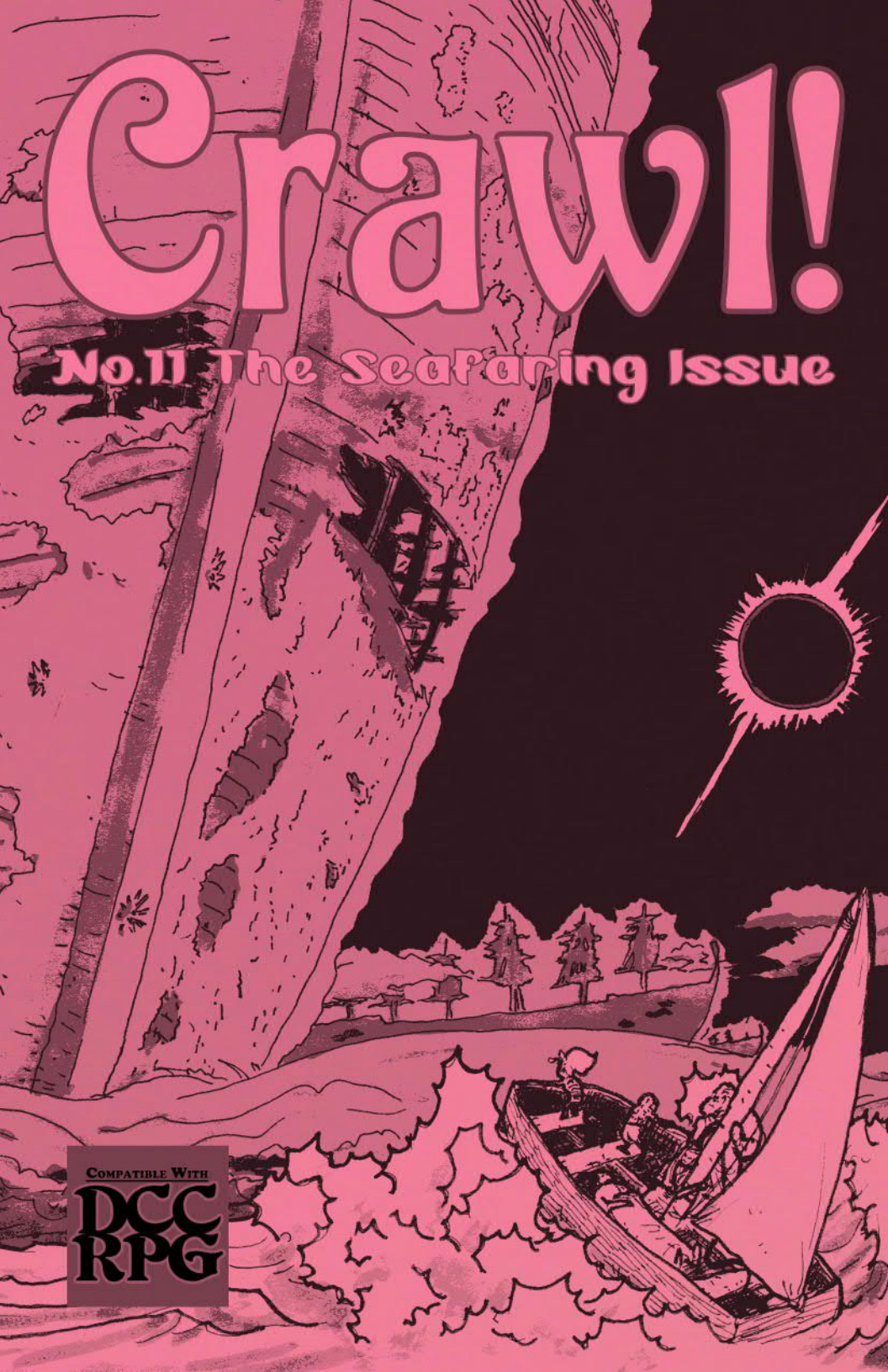


# Crawl!

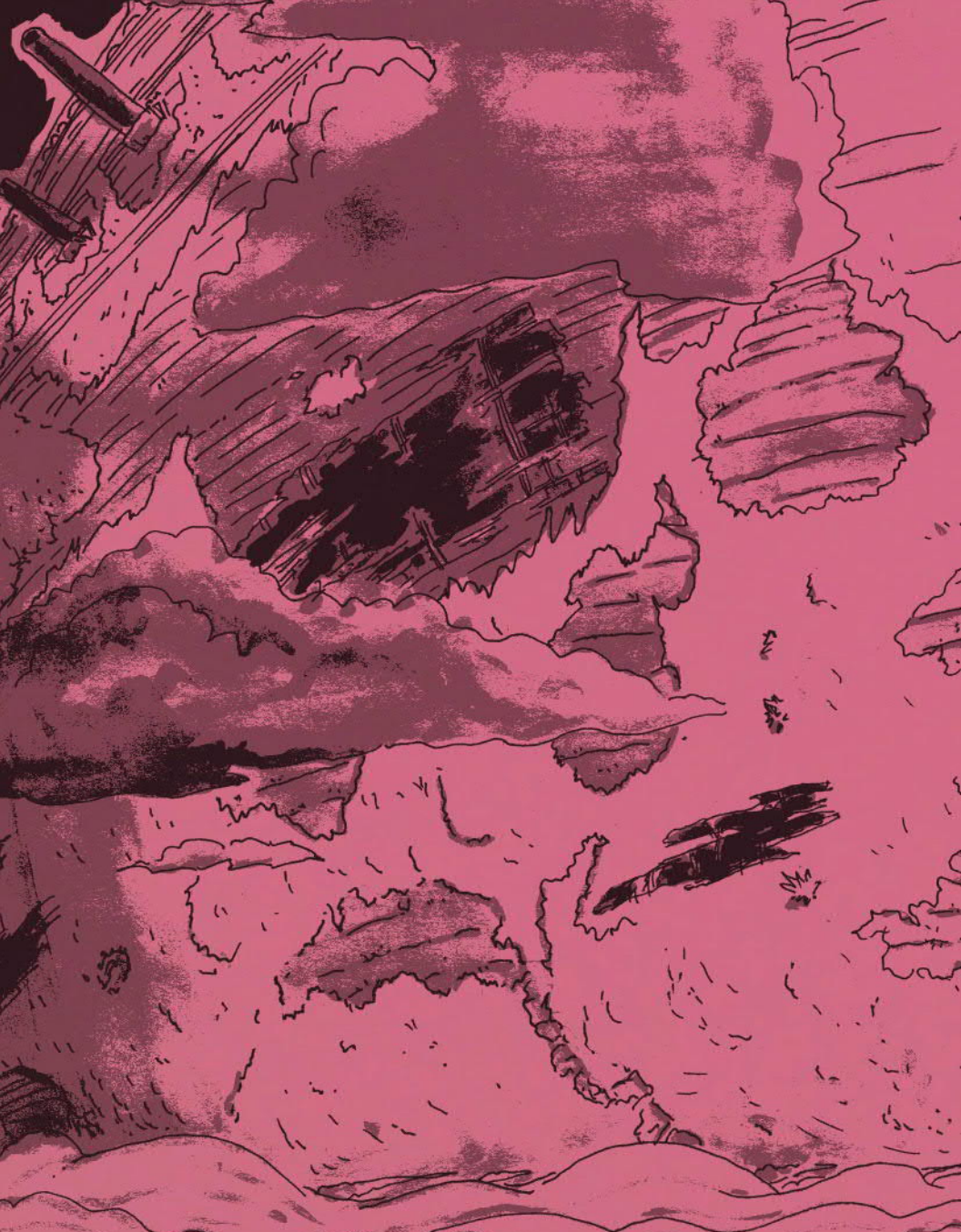
No.11 The Seafaring Issue



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# Crawl!fanzine

**No. 11**

Digital Edition

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# Ahoy! So, here it is...

The long awaited waterborne, maritime, nautical themed issue, or as I've decided to call it, *The Seafaring Issue* is now yours and it's loaded! We have *Naval Warfare for Ocean Crawlers!* Quick and simple rules for basic ship to ship combat by the **DCC RPG** community's resident Pirate expert, Bob Brinkman! He also brings us a bunch of *nautical and pirate themed Mighty Deeds of Arms* for your water warrior. Then we have a collection of *fantastic forms of ship propulsion*, from sunlight to moonlight, skeletons to songs, atypical power sources that emphasizes what makes fantasy fun, by making the mundane wonderful and weird. We include the stats for some Wind Wraiths while we're at it. The unstoppable Daniel J. Bishop joins us again, this time he brings us *The Deep Elders*, an ancient water dwelling species that survives by controlling and dominating their victims, all in the name of the ancient one, Dagon. Finally, Sean Ellis returns with some fun *rules and random events for life on these treacherous and endless seas*. Crew morale and wind speed all come to play to make life on the ship a miserable one or possibly glorious. No life vests included.

Sail on!

Reverend Dak  
(Dungeon) Master in Chief



**Correspondence, Concerns and/or Criticism?**

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## **Submissions!**

Original submissions are welcome. Everything that gets published will belong to the author, artist, and creator. For art submissions, send a link to some samples. We prefer old-school "D&D" style black and white line-art with hatching or halftone. Smaller, incidental fantasy themed pieces are always needed. If you have a brilliant idea or proposal, we want to see it, but make sure you use a short and informative subject line. Include a quick blurb or sample text in the email. Don't send attachments until requested. All contributors will get a free print copy of the zine.

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# Naval Warfare for Ocean Crawlers

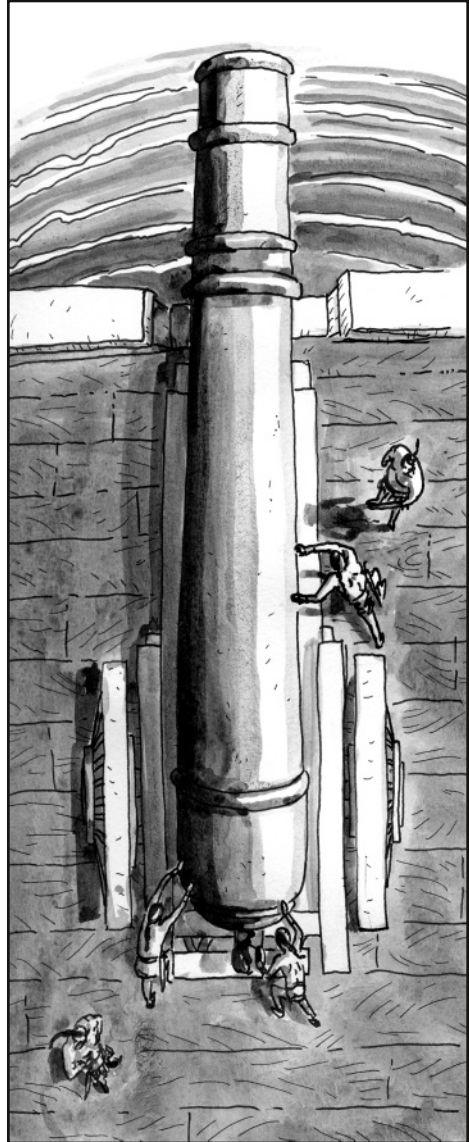
by Bob Brinkman

The type of ships one finds at sea in a *DCC RPG* session is only limited by the imagination. Whether the judge chooses to use medieval and earlier vessels (such as longboats, junks, dhows, and biremes), the more familiar vessels of the age of sail (clippers, galleons, sloops, or Xebecs), something more modern (steamships), or even futuristic, there are some basic similarities that can be used for any form of naval combat. One only need know the ship's stats and then be good to go. We will first look at ship stat descriptions, then look into specific examples before we move on to how they may be used.

## Ship Stats

**Type** – Other than the name of the vessel, the first thing a judge needs to know is what type of vessel the ship is. This allows the judge to fully describe the ship to the players and firmly put the image into their minds with as much detail as wished. Contrary to popular belief, all ships are not the same and most sailing vessels were not very large. Once the ship type is chosen, much of the other ship stats will fall into place. In most cases, ship types from the age of sail can get very confusing for someone not nautically minded, as many ship types refer to rigging styles or mast placement. A good illustration can make things clear for the players very quickly.

**Size** – While there are a number of measurements for ships, length and beam (the ship's width) taken at the deck is the simplest to use as most action will take place above deck. In addition, the depth of the ship's keel, the "draught", is important if entering shallow water, maneuvering reefs, or navigating inland channels.



**Crew** – The average crew size needed to manage the ship. Some vessels, such as pirate ships, would load on as much as two to three times the normal crew for advantage in boarding. Crew size can also be viewed as the ship's stamina. The more crew a ship loses to combat or other reasons, the less the crew can do, and the slower it is to take action. When a ship falls beneath its minimum crew compliment (half), all shipboard actions take twice as long. Should a ship fall beneath one quarter of its crew compliment it will begin to founder (see Handling).

A crew is normally made up of a wide variety of “ratings and positions”. Three such sailor types are listed below by way of example. A judge is free to crew a ship with any number (including one) of crew types.

**Ordinary Seaman:** Init +0; Atk belaying pin (as club) +0 melee (1d4) or punch +0 melee (1d3); AC 10; HD 1d4; MV 30', Act 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; AL Any.

**Able Seaman:** Init +0; Atk cutlass (as short sword) +0 melee (1d6) or punch +0 melee (1d3); AC 11; HD 1d4; MV 30', Act 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +0; AL Any.

**Rated Seaman:** Init +1; Atk boarding axe (as battleaxe) +1 melee (1d8) or punch +0 melee (1d3+1); AC 12; HD 1d5; MV 30', Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AL L.

Despite the image of all sailing captains being towering men of action, most were simply sailors with a better grasp of mathematics and people skills. There are exceptions (Lord Nelson), but most are average.

**Propulsion** – The type of propulsion for the ship not only sets the tone for the adventure or battle, it also is important in terms of combat and combat maneuvers. Ships that use oars can be highly maneuverable in close quarters, while ships that use sails are much swifter and can place distance between themselves and pursuing ships. Both forms of propulsion also have their own weaknesses.

**Top Speed** – A ship's speed is generally measured in knots (which are nautical miles per hour); however that gets a bit unwieldy. Knots are thus estimated to be approximately seven 4 mile hexes per day while traveling or one 15' hex per round while in combat.

**Hit Points** – Hit points are used to measure how much damage the ship may take until it is no longer sea-worthy. Here is where there is a bit of “crunch”. When creating a ship, the hit points are  $[(\text{Length} \times \text{Beam}) / 2]$ .

**Damage Reduction** – Unlike a living being, merely hitting a ship will not significantly damage the hull; no number of arrows is going to sink a ship. (An

## Ship Examples

Ship Name: **Pinta**

Ship Type: Caravel

Length: 62'      Beam: 17'      Draught: 10'

DR: 10      HP: 527

Propulsion: Sails

Top Speed: 6 knots (six 15' hexes/round)

Crew: 26

Armaments:      4 x 8 pounders

Ship Name: **Santa Maria**

Ship Type: Carrack

Length: 62'      Beam: 18'      Draught: 10'

DR: 10      HP: 558

Propulsion: Sails

Top Speed: 6 knots (six 15' hexes/round)

Crew: 40

Armaments:      4 x 16 pounders

1x 12 pounder

Ship Name: **Adler von Lübeck**

Ship Type: Galleon

Length: 257'      Beam: 48'      Draught: 17'

DR: 20      HP: 6168

Propulsion: Sails

Top Speed: 9 knots (nine 15' hexes/round)

Crew: 350 + 650 marines

Armaments:      138 cannon

Bronze guns-      8 x 48 pounders

6 x 24 pounders

26 x 10 pounders

4 x 5 pounders

8 x 3 pounder

Iron Guns-      10 x 6 pounders

40 x 1½ pounders

36 x small calibre





Ship Name: **Mardöll**

Ship Type: Skeid (Viking Longship)

Length: 98'      Beam: 8'

Draught: 3'

DR: 4

HP: 392

Propulsion: Oars

Top Speed (oars): 15 knots (fifteen 15' hexes/round)

Propulsion: Sails

Top Speed (sails): 20 knots (twenty 15' hexes/round)

Crew : 70

Armaments:      None

Ship Name: **Gungnir**

Ship Type: Snekkja (Viking Warship)

Length: 57'      Beam: 8'

Draught: 3'

DR: 8

HP: 228

Propulsion: Oars

Top Speed (oars): 5 knots (five 15' hexes/round)

Propulsion: Sails

Top Speed (sails): 12 knots (twelve 15' hexes/round)

Crew: 30

Armaments:      None

From these examples, you can see that larger ships certainly can be far more resilient. Once cannon enter the fray, things can get quite deadly. When one looks at the damage resistance and hit points given to some vessels, it can be quite intimidating, but considering the damage cannons can do, those numbers come into perspective pretty quickly.



example would be the USS Constitution, “Old Ironsides”. During battle with the HMS Guerriere many incoming shots simply rebounded from her hull.) The ship’s Damage Reduction reflects the amount of damage required to pierce the hull and physically damage the vessel. Certain weapons, such as axes, can lower the damage resistance of a specific area through prolonged use.

A ship with a damage resistance of 0 is no longer sea-worthy and immediately begins to sink. The ship will be completely submerged in 1d5 turns.

**Armor Class** – (Not shown) For purposes of targeting, all ships at sea have an AC of 15 for any projectile weapon. Hand-to-hand weapons, at melee distance, cannot miss.

## ***Handling***

While a vessel at sea is fairly easy to maintain in a relatively straight direction, vessels cannot simply turn in place. In combat and moving forward, a ship under sail may side-slip one hex to port or starboard once per four hexes moved forward. It may change its facing once per round.

In combat and moving forward, an oar-powered vessel may side-slip one hex to port or starboard for every two hexes moved forward. It may change its facing twice per round and, if stationary, may rotate in place.

**Aground** – Running aground can have devastating effects to a sailing ship. The ship stops near immediately with the resulting shock causing 5 x knots damage to the ship. A vessel aground cannot maneuver and often requires the high tide to float her off. For combat purposes, the ship will remain stuck (barring magical aid) until the end of the combat.

**Foundering** – More dangerous than running aground is a ship no longer under effective control. Without crew to keep the helm steady the ship is in dire danger of beginning to sink. A ship with one quarter or less its crew capacity must make a Luck check each round to avoid beginning to sink.

## ***Armaments***

To avoid too much “crunch” we are going to skip gun crew sizes and the like. Naval combat should flow as smoothly as regular combat in *DCC RPG*.

**Cannon** – Cannons came in a variety of sizes or “pound ratings” (#). That rating was the weight of the projectile(s) fired by the cannon. There were also guns of bronze and guns of iron. Bronze guns were longer, safer, and more reliable (+1 to hit bonus). Iron guns were far less expensive, but prone to explode into deadly shrapnel on a misfire. The largest guns ever mounted aboard ship in the age of sail were 48 pounders, but such a thing was very rare and guns that size were usually used for coastal batteries. Common ratings were 6-pounders, 8-pounders, 9-

**Table 1-1: Armaments & Ammunition**

Weapon	Damage	DR	Range	RoF	Cost
Cannon, bronze	1d10/#	1 DR/#	60'/# (4 hexes)	1/10 rnds	1000/#
“Long 9”	9d10	9 DR	900' (60 hexes)	1/10 rnds	9500
Cannon, iron	1d10/#	1 DR/#	60'/# (4 hexes)	1/10 rnds	500/#
Catapult*	4d8	2 DR/hit	600' (40 hexes)	1/4 rnds	500
Fire-Thrower	2d10+burn	1 DR/rnd	45' (3 hexes)	1/2 rounds	400
Ammunition	Cost in GP				
Ball-shot (iron)	1/#				
Ball-shot (stone)**	5sp/#				
Catapult Stone	5				
Chain-shot	2/#				
Grape-shot	5sp/#				
Greek Fire	25gp				
# Pound rating					
*Catapults may use improvised ammunition, reducing the action die by 1d on the dice chain.					
**Ball-shot (stone) increases gun misfire chance by 1.					

pounders, 12-pounders, 18-pounders, 24-pounders, and 36-pounders. In addition, some vessels used a single “Long 9” bow or stern chaser that had an extended barrel and greater range. Due to the fragility of those areas aboard ship, nothing larger could be used.

Hits from cannon, even small bore cannon, are not survivable by normal men. A direct hit from a cannon is a fatal hit. However, cannon at sea are not so accurate as to allow for them to be aimed at an individual without the use of the Precision Shot or similar mighty deed.

Damage from cannon is figured as 1d10 per “poundage”, rounded to 5 points for those not wanting to roll massive amounts of dice. Damage from cannon fire reduces the ship’s DR by 1 for each pound rating of the gun. Remove one crew for every 25 points of damage, rounding up. PCs on deck must make a Luck check or roll on **Table 1-5: Brutal Injuries**.

The effective range of a cannon is (poundage x 60’). Range increments are 300’

each, with each increment reducing the damage by 1 die and a maximum additional range of 900'.

The rate of fire for cannons is set to the high-average British naval broadside rate of three broadsides in five minutes or, in game terms, once every ten rounds.

## ***Variations***

**Chain Shot** – Fired to dismast ships, chain shot is used at 1 hex or less. The ammunition is very inaccurate, due to the tumbling nature of its flight (incurring a -3 penalty). Each successful hit reduces the top speed of a sailing ship by 1 knot (15'/round).

**Double loading** – Cannons may be double loaded with solid shot. This halves the range, but doubles damage. PCs on deck must make a Luck check or roll on **Table 1-5: Brutal Injuries**.

**Grape Shot** – Grape shot may be used to sweep the decks while at ½ effective range. This reduces damage to half, which is then split between the vessel and the crew. Remove one crew for every 4 points of damage, rounding down. PCs on deck must make a Luck check or roll on **Table 1-5: Brutal Injuries**, adding one to the table result.

**Catapults** – As early as 100BC, and as recently as the 1300s, shipboard catapults were used to target other vessels. Due to their arcing fire, catapults were useless against anything within 100' of the ship. These light catapults fire projectiles that do 4d8 damage with a rate of fire of 1 shot every 4 rounds and have a range of 2 hexes. This weapon cannot crit.

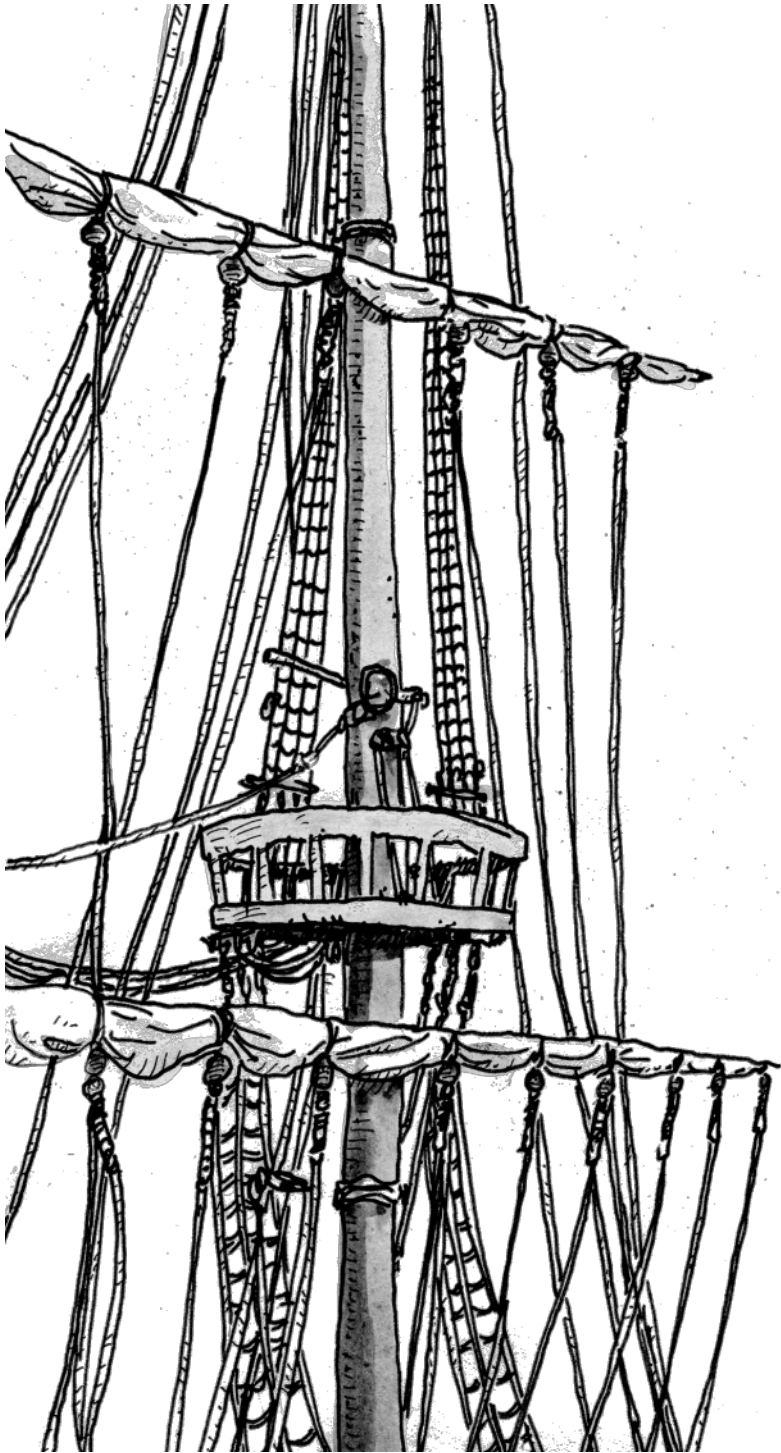
**Fire-Throwers** – Used as late as the 11th century, naval fire-throwers were short range weapons that emitted streams of Greek fire. A spray from a fire-thrower does 2d10 points of damage, ignoring the DR of wooden ships. The fire reduces the ships DR by 1 and continues to lower it by one per round until extinguished. The fire continues to burn for half damage until extinguished by smothering the blaze with sand, vinegar, or the like. Short of being completely submerged, water will NOT extinguish Greek fire. Shooting forth a fiery spray of over 1,000 °C at a close range of 45', this is a weapon that could easily turn the tide of battle, if it didn't explode. This weapon fumbles on a 1-2 (see **Table 1-4: Fire-Thrower Fumbles**).

## ***Special Combat Manuevers***

**Boarding** – A ship may close side by side to allow crew to board. The ship must be in the same hex, and traveling in the same direction, as the target vessel. 4 crew per 10' of target length may board each subsequent round.

**Crossing the T** – A ship may attempt to cross the bow of a pursuing vessel and bring their guns to bear without fear of a return broadside from their target. As





they sail across they may fire a rolling broadside down the length of the enemy ship. The attacking ship must be within a minimum of 150' of the target to attempt this maneuver.

**Ramming** – Heedless of the cost, a vessel may ram another as an act of desperation. This causes great damage to both vessels, often tangling them together in a horrid mass of grinding timber and wailing wounded. The attacking ship must be in the same hex as the target ship. The target ship takes damage equal to ten times the attacking vessels DR, while the attacking vessel takes half that in superstructure damage. For such an attack there is a 50% chance (the roll for which can be modified by PCs spending luck in either direction) that the two ships become entangled for 1d5 turns, bringing the ships to a halt.

## ***The PCs***

While all this nautical combat is going on, it can be expected that the PCs are not standing idly by waiting to be killed. PCs should be free to attack the opposing ship or crew at will and by any means mundane or magical that they can work out. Treat magical attacks as having DR reduction of 1 per spell level. Weapons such as battle axes and war hammers are capable of reducing the DR of a portion of the ship by one with each hit. This vulnerable area is represented by a DR reduction for the incoming fire of one weapon. Of course, being at such close range can be very hazardous. Of course, no PC should think that they can single-handedly sink an enemy vessel with an axe but the information is included because, frankly, someone will try.

## ***Drowning***

Swimming was not a popular pastime until the 1800s and, as such, swimming is not a common skill. In fact, you'll note that most character careers have nothing to do with swimming. Even common sailors don't know how to swim. This means that going overboard is bad, very bad. PCs may hold their breath for a number of turns equal to their stamina. After that, they begin to drown. Once drowning begins they must make a DC 15 Fortitude save, each round, or black out and begin to sink into the depths.



# Tables: Cannon Crits, Fire-

**Table 1-2: Cannon Crits**

1	Hit at Waterline	Ship takes on water, reduce speed by half.
2	Steering Damaged	Ship no longer able to turn.
3	Captain Killed	Ship unable to act other than continuing straight for 3 rounds.
4	Shrapnel	Shards of wood kill 5 crew, PCs on deck make luck check or roll on brutal injury table.

**Table 1-3: Cannon Fumbles**

1	Misfire	Gun must be brought back to bear, miss next shot.
2	Gun Dismounted	Gun jumps its mountings, lose one crew and next 2 shots.
3	Serious Misfire	Lose 4 crew and next 4 shots.
4	Cannon Destroyed	Bronze cannon destroyed/Iron guns explode causing half damage to surrounding crew. PCs on deck must make a luck check or roll on the Brutal Injury Table.

**Table 1-4: Fire-Thrower Crits**

1	Sails Ablaze	Movement reduced by half.
2	Sweep the Deck	Deck swept for crew damage. Reduce crew by 1 for every 4 points of damage.
3	Fire at Waterline	The side of the vessel is hit. The fire CANNOT be extinguished without extraordinary means, such as magic.
4	Captain/PC Immolated	Captain of NPC vessel is killed. The ship is unable to act for the next three rounds other than to sail straight. On PC vessel, PC with lowest luck is caught in the blaze for 1d10 points of fire damage. The fire will continue burning at half damage until extinguished (as per Fire-Thrower).



# Thrower Fumbles & More!

**Table 1-5: Fire-Thrower Fumbles**

1	Misfire	Attacking ship hit by spray, takes 2d10 damage from Greek fire.
2	Blazing Misfire	Spray of Greek fire washes across the deck. Ship takes 4d10 damage from Greek fire and loses 1 crew for every 10 points of damage.
3	Explosion	Ship takes 10d10 points of damage from Greek fire and immediately begins to sink. Lose 1 crew for every 5 points of damage. PCs aboard must make a luck check or be hit for 1d10 points of fire damage. The fire will continue burning at half damage until extinguished (as per Fire-Thrower).

**Table 1-6: Brutal Injuries**

Naval combat is deadly. Beyond the incoming gunnery fire, there is the added dangers of flying “splinters” (often several feet long), falling masts and spars, entangling ropes, and more. Simply standing on a deck during a combat is asking to be killed...

1	Broken shards of wood pierce your abdomen. Take 1d8 points damage.
2	Falling timbers crush your leg, permanently reducing your movement by 10'. Take 2d4 damage
3	Falling timbers crush both of your legs, reducing their movement by 20'. Movement reduced to zero reflects paraplegia. Take 2d8 damage.
4	An explosion of wood severs a leg. Take 2d4 points damage + 1 HP per round until the bleeding is staunched.
5	Falling timbers crush and sever your off-hand. Take 1d6 points damage.
6	Felling timbers crush and sever your dominant hand. PC must use off hand (see two-handed combat). Take 1d6 points of damage.
7	Splinters fly into your eyes. Character is blind for 24 hours and must make a fort save against the attack roll. On a failure one eye is permanently gouged from their head. Take 1d4 points of damage.

# Nautical Mighty Deeds

By Bob Brinkman

## *Mighty Deeds of Boarding*

- 3 The Warrior is able to board an enemy ship within range (leaping or swinging).
- 4 The Warrior is able to board an enemy ship within range (leaping or swinging), and knocks an enemy crewman overboard. Reduce opposing crew by 1.
- 5 The Warrior is able to board an enemy ship within range (leaping or swinging), wresting control of the ship's steering for 1d4 rounds.
- 6 The Warrior is able to board an enemy ship within range (leaping or swinging), and wrest control of one ship's weapon. If loaded, the weapon may be fired. (Cannons may be turned inwards.)
- 7+ The Warrior is able to board an enemy ship within range (leaping or swinging) and immediately engage the enemy Captain.



## ***Mighty Deeds of Gunnery (Cannon)***

- 3 The Warrior's skillful gunnery targets the steering of the enemy vessel. The target vessel may only sail in a straight line for 1d5 Turns
- 4 The Warrior is able to pick out a single target and fire directly at them with the guns. Target makes a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid being killed.
- 5 The Warrior's precision targets an enemy gun crew, destroying the weapon and doing an additional die of damage to the vessel.
- 6 Warrior's cannon shot strikes the target vessel below the waterline. The ship's speed is reduced by half and the vessel will sink in 1d16 turns. Additional waterline hits decrease this time by 1d4 turns.
- 7+ The Warrior's gunnery skill is so great that it inspires the gun crews to super-human speed. Reduce reloading time of ship's weaponry by 1 round.

## ***Mighty Deeds of Piracy***

- 3 The Warrior is able to reduce enemy morale through bloodcurdling shouts and screams. Enemies within 20' must immediately make a morale check or flee their station.
- 4 The Warrior is able to reduce enemy morale through bloodcurdling shouts and screams. Enemies receive a -1 penalty to morale checks for the rest of the round while the warrior receives a +1 attack bonus as he drives his foes back towards the sea.
- 5 The Warrior's attacks are so fierce that, rather than fight him, 1d4 crew will immediately mutiny and turn to fight by his side.
- 6 So fearsome is the Warrior's visage, so fierce his attacks that he seems to be a creature from the pit. All enemies within sight must make a moral check or flee before him.
- 7+ Like the most legendary of pirates, the Warrior is able to so reduce enemy morale that, failing a morale check, they strike their colors and surrender.

# Pantastic Forms Of Sea Ship Propulsion And Their Congenital Complications

by Rev. Dak J. Ultimak

- 1      **Sunjets** - The sun's light is captured by mirrored parabolas that funnel the power out the stern, like glowing jets, propelling the ship forward. The jets don't work at night or on cloudy days.
- 2      **Starsails** - Starlight fills the sails at night, propelling the craft in any direction. During the day, the sails will only fill, and only partially, when the starboard side of the ship is facing east from morning until just before noon. And when the starboard side is facing west in the afternoon. For 2d10 minutes before and after high-noon, the star sails won't function.
- 3      **Moonsails** - Moonlight fills the sails, even when the sun is out. But they won't fill otherwise. Your moon's planetary orbit may vary.
- 4      **Eel-ship** - Two-rows of open seating straddle a giant eel. The eel-minder stands at the fore, one foot on the eel's head, holding stirrups to steer. They'll need to be fed and tended to regularly or they may get sick or even die. They're also fish food for the larger fish in the sea.
- 5      **Turtle Ship** - The ship is built-out in the shells of carefully bred giant turtles. Mostly found in military navies and pirate ships. They must be fed regularly or they may seek out their own food, down in the deeps which risks drowning and suffocation for the passengers.
- 6      **Musicship** - Some time in the past, mortals made a deal with the Goddess of the Sea, if they sing her a song, she'll bless boats with



perfect waves to push the craft forward. This has created the need of a steady stable of ship-singers. For as long as there is beautiful singing, the ship will move. Unfortunately the Gods of the Wind, Sky and Storms are jealous, and chances of bad weather increases by 25%.

7 **Skeleton Crews** - Necromancers have found seafaring a profitable endeavor, becoming skippers of sea ships rowed by undead skeletons. Clerics of Lawful Deities may cause discomfort and possibly aggression from the otherwise never ending rowers.

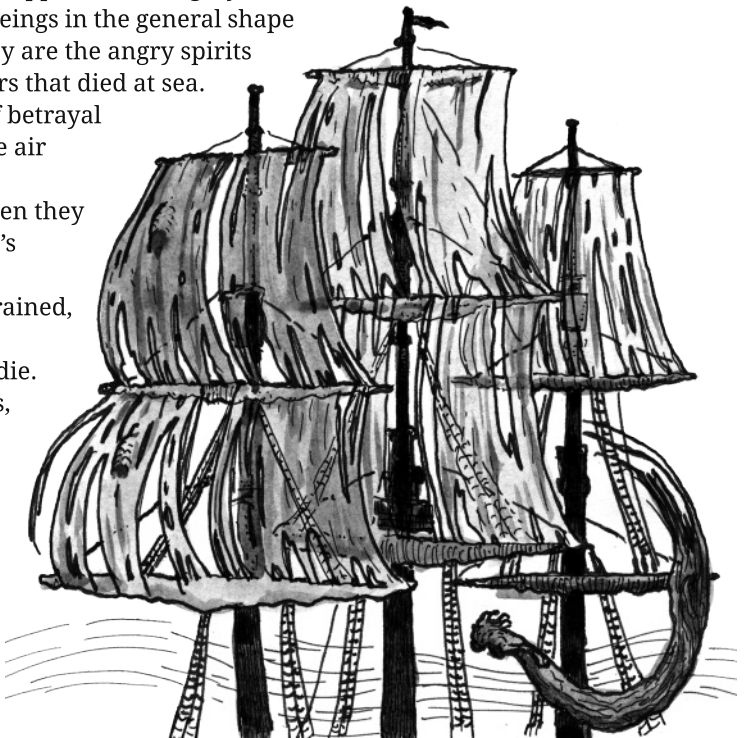
8 **Wind Wraiths** - Wraiths fill the web-like sails. As with undead rowers, clerics of Lawful deities may aggravate the wraiths. Even the most powerful necromancer-skipper may have trouble controlling an angry wraith.

**Wind Wraith:** Init +5; Atk life drain +6 melee (1d3 temporary Stamina loss); AC 16; HD 5d8; MV fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP incorporeal, immune to non-magical weapons, spawn, undead traits; SV Fort +4, Ref +8; Will +7; AL C.

Wind Wraiths appear as dark grey incorporeal beings in the general shape of a man. They are the angry spirits of bitter sailors that died at sea.

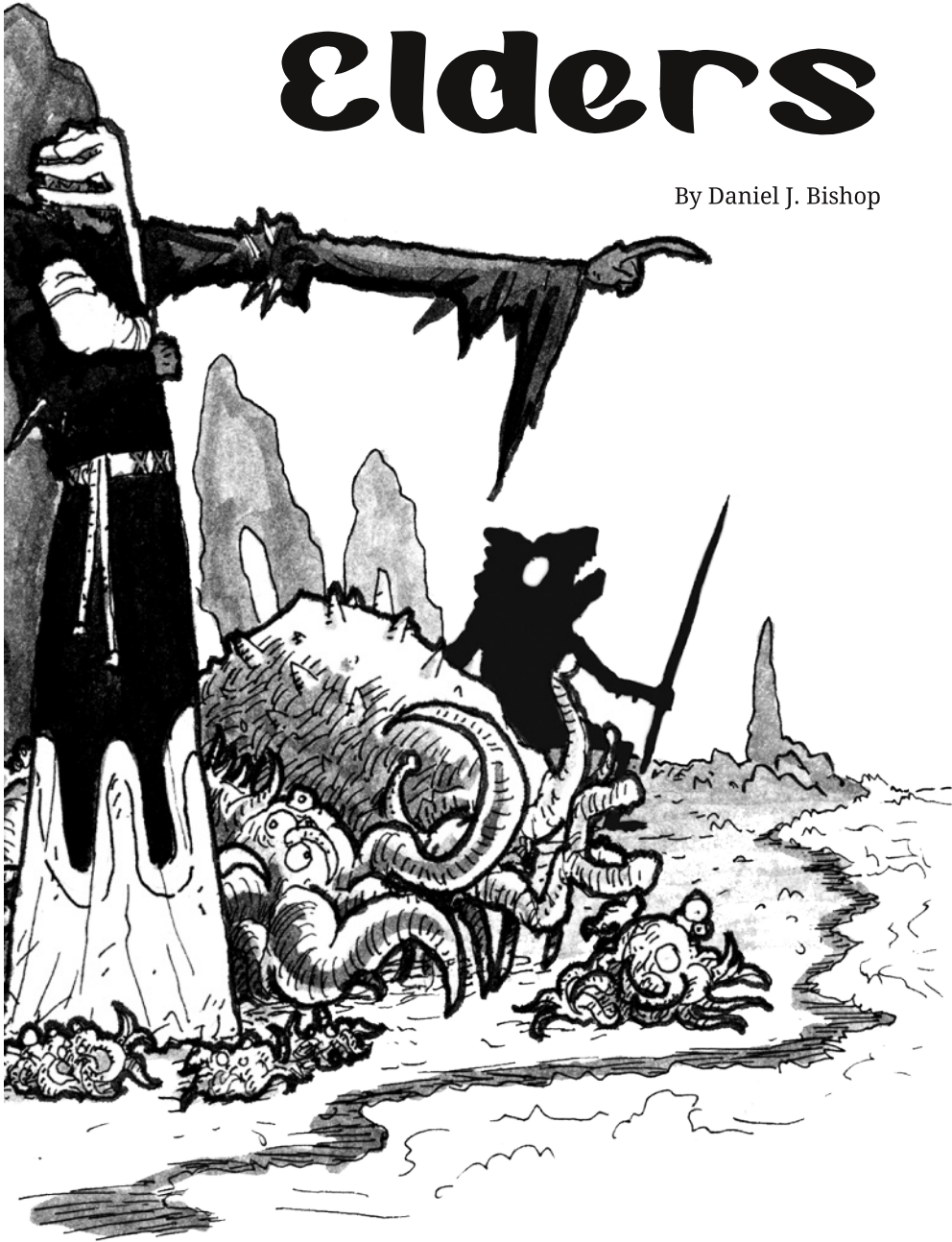
The feeling of betrayal permeates the air around them, especially when they attack. If a PC's Stamina is completely drained, the PC will immediately die.

In 1d3 rounds, the darkened spirit will rip from the corpse, becoming a wind wraith enslaved by its creator.



# The Deep Elders

By Daniel J. Bishop



In Portsmouth, sailors whisper of the deep elders, though few have ever met them.

These creatures appear to be glowing starfish whose “arms” branch out again and again to form a complex lacework of fibers seven feet in diameter. They are said to live in palaces of mottled green stone and porphyry beneath the deepest part of the oceans, but they can come to the surface, dancing beneath the waves, or even hover above the waters for up to an hour before descending again to the waves’ embrace. Some have seen them appear before storms, and view them as good luck – warning against dangers to come. Others have attempted to flee from them, only to discover that the deep elders can easily match the swiftest ship, whether they float within the water or above it. Those who have learned the truth do not tell tales.

The deep elders are servants of Dagon, able to “tether” themselves psychically to any vessel, maintaining their relative positions without visible effort. Each deep elder glows (1d5; 1-2 blue, 3-4 green, or 5 a soft yellow,) and has abilities depending upon its aura.

Blue elders are able to cast weather control once per week, with a +7 bonus to the spell check. They use this power to create and enhance maritime storms, seeking thereafter to come upon sailors alone in the dark and driving rain. The elder does not suffer disapproval on a failed check.

Green elders can enthrall a single target once per week, which must succeed on a DC 15 Will save or do nothing for 2d6 rounds after being enthralled. A target who fails this save cannot defend itself against the green elder that enthralled it, although it can defend itself against others.

Yellow elders can cast ray of enfeeblement once per week with a +4 bonus to the spell check and no spellburn required. The elder does not suffer misfire or corruption on a natural “1” on this check. It uses this ability to weaken lone watchmen on ships or docksides before attempting to possess them.

All deep elders can attempt to possess any living creature through any orifice it comes into successful contact with (requiring a melee attack roll at +4 to hit, which causes no damage). Unless the creature is

enthralled, it can attempt to resist each round with a DC 15 Strength check. The contest ends when the target fails a third Strength check or manages to slay or drive the deep elder away. A deep elder will flee if reduced to 5 or fewer hit points.

### ***Possessed Characters***

There is no reason why a player must relinquish a possessed character. The judge may simply allow her to continue on, keeping the possession secret, while obeying judge-derived mandates to aid in Dagon's insidious plans for the surface world. Adjust the character using the following steps:

Keep the character's Strength, Agility, and Stamina.

Reroll Intelligence using 4d6 (max 18) and Personality using 2d6 (min 3).

Reroll Luck using 3d6.

Maintain the character's current hit points, save modifiers, and attack roll bonus.

The elder-possessed character cannot access Deed Die, spells, or skills (including thief skills).

The character can access the elder's special color-based ability, as described in the main text.

Treat the character as a 0-level character and start a new XP total at 0. At 10 XP, the elder can choose a class (or begin to gain levels in its demi-human class). The bonuses for this class stack with the starting hit points, save modifiers, and attack roll bonus.

If the elder ends possession for whatever reason, the character's original Intelligence, Personality, and Luck are restored. The character regains access to old class abilities and loses access to class abilities gained by the elder. However, the character gains ½ the XP earned by the elder during possession, and may gain new levels in his original class thereby or the class used by the elder.





A deep elder who successfully possesses a creature wears it like a suit. The creature remains aware of all that occurs, but has no control of its body. Unless the creature has some form of psychic powers, it is effectively helpless to resist the elder's control. A cleric may silently beg for divine intervention (DC 10) or a wizard for his patron's aid (DC 15 Personality check) once each day to throw the deep elder out of its body, but with each failure the DC increases by +2.

Once in a body, a deep elder can survive outside the ocean indefinitely. They retain the ability to make any part of their host body glow with an aura of the appropriate color, effectively illuminating a 5' radius. In addition, they continue to enjoy their color-based special powers within the host body – save that a yellow elder's body can suffer corruption on a natural “1” for its ray of enfeeblement spell check (but any misfire is ignored).

Deep elders usually possess humanoids, but may possess any creature the size of a cat or larger. Dagon has plans for the world of the surface-dwellers, and the deep elders are His hidden agents, acting out His will even far from the sea. They may act to destabilize governments, start wars, assassinate individuals, or carry out raids on opposing cultists. Some simply observe, carrying news of the surface lands to other agents of Dagon as the Scaly God commands.

Possession may be ended by means of a banish spell, a Turn Unholy check (Lawful or Neutral cleric) of 25+ aimed at the possessed being, or a successful binding. An evicted deep elder must find a new host or reach the ocean within one hour, or it will die.

*FT 2: The Portsmouth Mermaid* (Purple Duck Games) includes intrigue between the cults of Cthulhu and Dagon. Judges are encouraged to use this information on deep elders to enhance that (and other) adventures. Not every citizen of Portsmouth is exactly as he appears to be. Nor, for that matter, is every stray dockside mongrel or albatross wheeling in the sky.

**Deep Elder:** Init +0; Atk touch +4 melee (initiate possession) or lash +6 melee (1d5); AC 14; HD 4d8+4; MV 10' or swim 30' or fly 20'; Act 1d20; SP psychic tether, possession, color-based magical attack; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +8; AL C.

# Life Aboard

by Sean Ellis



In *Crawl!* #7, Kirin Robinson recommends an unorthodox method for running adventures in labyrinths. Rather than have the game-master map a maze and count on the PCs to correctly record and navigate it, Robinson invites the judge to serve clues to the PCs and use dwindling resources as a ticking time bomb to encourage quick thinking. Once these clues are solved, so is the labyrinth. And if starvation and wandering monsters have caused a loss of Stamina or hit points, then so be it!

That, to me, is the epitome of old-school gaming: a linear objective (rescue the princess) complicated by random obstacles (dice rolls, traps, wandering monsters). I use a similar procedure for water voyage. Older fantasy RPGs have no deficit of charts and tables indicating that a journey is blown X degrees off course or whatever, but our underlying goal is a fun adventure. Let's face it, unless the judge has planned a side adventure, we basically want the PCs to arrive at their goal. We just want to see them challenged and engaged along the way. So, first things first. Where are we going?

## *Time and Distance*

A judge should calculate the distance of the trip, and then calculate how long it will take to get there. According to page 308 of the *DCC RPG rulebook*, water speeds range from five miles a day with a raft to 96 miles a day with a galley. Assume that the captain has stockpiled twice the food necessary to get his crew there. Now the challenge is to get to the objective with the allotted resources.

Divide the journey into either days, weeks, or months. This is your **Time Increment**. Realistically winds can shift hourly. For the sake of brevity, we will be rolling for an average of wind speeds over the time increment you have selected.

## *Ship Morale*

First, let's see what life is like aboard the ship. Roll 1d20 on *Table 5-1: Ship Morale*. Rolls that affect life aboard the ship already represents the best efforts

of a ship's captain and crew, and therefore Luck cannot be burned to affect this roll.

This roll provides more than color. A properly motivated crew gets bonuses for all checks to remain on-course, is much kinder to any landlubbers aboard, and is more efficient overall. **Wind Adjustment** (Wind Adj.) modifies the wind speed roll below.

**Table 5-1: Ship Morale**

Roll	Morale	Wind Adj.	Crew Die
0 or less	Mutinous	-3d	1d10
1-3	Hostile	-2d	1d8
4-9	Laggardly	-1d	1d7
10-14	Indifferent	0	1d6
15-18	Motivated	+1d	1d4
19-20	Dedicated	+2d	1d3
21+	Crack	+3d	1d2

Depending on the crew's mood, an event may be handled with more or less skill or attention. Whenever an event is rolled on **Table 5-3: On-board Events**, you may also need to roll the **Crew Die**. See individual the events to see how the die comes to play.

**Wind Speed**

We start rolling wind speeds with a d20, adjusted up or down a die or more according to the **Wind Adjustment**. A more motivated and optimistic crew tends to get more out of their rigging and wind. So a motivated crew rolls have a chance at better winds.

**Table 5-2: Wind Speed**

Roll	3 or less	4-7	8-14	15-17	18+
<b>Wind Speed</b>	In Irons 0	Light Airs d% of SP	Moderate Airs Normal	Heavy Airs SP+d%	Gale Winds 2x SP

**In Irons:** There is no wind, and the only progress can be made by rowing (if possible). If a crew is required to row more than one week, those additional weeks have their speed reduced by 25% due to fatigue, and boat morale takes a shift to the worse unless a DC 10 Personality check is made by the captain.

**Light Airs:** Roll percentiles. This is the percent of the boat's given speed that the ship makes in this wind (if a 25 is rolled, the ship is 25% slower, if 00 is rolled, the ship is still). The wind-chasing takes a toll on the crew. DC 10 Personality check is made by the captain, failure worsens ship morale.

**Moderate Airs:** Normal speed is made. DC 10 Personality check is made by the captain, success improves ship morale.

**Heavy Airs:** Roll percentiles. This is the percent of extra speed the ship makes in this wind (if a 25 is rolled, the ship is 25% faster, if 00 is rolled, the ship twice as fast). The crew must roll at or under morale to prevent damage to the ship (an indifferent crew must roll under fourteen, a laggardly under nine). If the crew is not attentive enough, the boat must spend a time increment in repair, or else move at half of what is indicated on the next wind speed roll.

**Gale Winds:** Gale winds are dangerous. The ship moves at twice regular speed, but the The crew must roll at or under morale to prevent damage to the ship. If the crew is not attentive enough, the boat must spend a time increment in repair, or else move at half the speed rolled the next week.

In its way, the wind speed roll also simulates accuracy of navigation: if extra time is spent on the water because of a bad wind roll, this can instead be attributed to a misread compass or being blown off course. In any case, the end result is the same, so why build another table?

### ***On-board Events***

The following table, **Table 5-3: On-board Events**, is a list to roll on for every time increment spent aboard the vessel. Roll for an On-board Event after a Wind Speed roll. Roll a d18. Don't have one? Then your dice chain is broken. Order one from Impact Miniatures in Indianapolis immediately! Natural 1s and 18s count as no event for that increment.

### ***Health aboard the Vessel***

**Seasickness:** Before someone gets their sea legs, the rocking of the ship often causes some discomfort. Roll a DC 10 Fortitude check. Failed checks may be re-rolled every 24 hours, and new checks must be rolled every time the wind changes. Failure means the character is painfully nauseated and drowsy, suffers a -1d to all skill checks and combat rolls, and must make a DC 10 Will save in order to do anything other than sleep or perform basic responsibilities. After returning to land, the sickness fades in 2d4 hours.

**Starvation:** Each time increment equal to a day or more that is spent without supplies causes morale to take one step to the worse. Additionally characters at at -1d to all rolls and suffer 1d2 Strength and Stamina loss for each time increment, and no healing is possible until supplies are replenished.



## Table 5-3: On-board Events

- 2 **Riot** – Tensions on-board have reached a boiling point. A group of sailors have decided to split some heads. Roll a Crew Die. The result is the amount of sailors looking to fight. In the case of an *Indifferent* to *Crack* crew, the rioters may just be interested in a tussle. *Laggardly* to *Mutinous* crews may be out for more severe violence.
- 3 **Strange Stars** – Effects of the lower atmosphere have confused the night helmsman. -4 to the next Wind Speed check.
- 4 **Church Service** – Some of the sailors have gone religious and are hosting a strange religious service on the deck. If the PCs wish to attend, roll a Luck check. Success means the PC is blessed with a +1 to all attacks for their next combat round.  
  
Failure means that participating in the perverted rite results in a disapproval check using the current Crew Die. Try and apply religious penalties to non-clerics in the most sensical way: if the disapproval result reduces casting efficacy, reduce a character's class ability instead. If an atheist character rolls a result that requires him/her to convert someone to their deity may simply require a good deed instead.
- 5 **Doldrums** – Winds are strangely calm. The next time a Wind Speed roll is required, receive the In Irons result instead of rolling.
- 6 **Halfling Bumboat** – Some enterprising halflings have managed to find your boat and are selling goods. This is an opportunity to buy more supplies for the ship and basic equipment for the PCs! At twice the normal price, of course. Roll the Crew Die, add the roll to 10. This is the DC of the Personality check needed to tolerate the greed of the halflings long enough to buy anything.
- 7 **On a Run!** - The wind is to your back, and the sails are full. The next time a Wind Speed roll is required, receive the Heavy Airs result instead of rolling.
- 8 **Visions in the Water** – Perhaps it is sunstroke or malnutrition, but visions of the future appear in the still water around the boat. If a PC watches the images, they must roll a DC 15 Intelligence check. Success means that they understand a vision of the future and are at -1d on the next Luck check when an ally is recovering their body (pg. 93, *DCC RPG rulebook*).
- 9 **Red Skies at Night...** – Sailing conditions are perfect! The next time a Wind Speed roll is required, receive the Moderate Airs result instead of rolling.



10 **Care to Wager?** – A dice game rages in the holds of the ship. A PC who spends a day gambling can roll a d7. Refer to the *Loot!* tables in *Crawl! Issue #2* to determine the amount won or lost. Lucky items are discussed in the same issue. Consider the boat's morale in allowing a landlubber to win any money from them.

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 1   | <b>You lose badly!</b> - Loss of Coins x2 and Currently held weapon. |
| 2   | <b>Bad luck</b> - Loss of Coins +1.                                  |
| 3-5 | <b>Not so bad</b> - The PC breaks even.                              |
| 6   | <b>Fortune smiles</b> - Gain Coins +1.                               |
| 7   | <b>You're rich!</b> - Gain Coins x2 plus a Lucky Item!               |

11 **Taking on Water** – Either by sabotage or lazy bilge maintenance, the ship is weighted down by excess water. The next time a Wind Speed roll is required, receive the Light Airs result instead of rolling.

12 **Typical Sailors** – The next rum ration is doled out tomorrow, so the crew drinks the week's remainder today! Roll the Crew Die. The result is the amount of rations consumed in the bacchanal.

13 **Storm** - The next time a Wind Speed roll is required, receive the Gail Winds result instead of rolling.

14 **High Seas** – Huge winds and choppy seas batter the vessel. Roll Crew Die and add that number to a DC of 10. The result is the DC of the Agility check that the helmsman must make to avoid damage to the vessel. Failure means a Crew Die's worth of time increments lost to repairs after the storm.

15 **Surprise Winds** – Nasty puff coming! Add 4 to the next Wind Speed roll.

16 **Flux** – Close quarters, parasites, and old foodstuffs have caused disease to spread amongst the crew. Roll the Crew Die. This is the amount of time increments lost due to lacking manpower. During the time increment of the flux, characters are at -2 to Strength and Stamina.

17 **Fire** – A lightning strike, careless smoking, or sabotage causes a fire to rage through the ship. Roll the Crew Die. This result is the time increment worth of food and supplies lost in the fire.

