

Don't Give Up the Ship

Rules for the Great Age of Sail

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Don't give up a ship by *Arneson, Gyax & Carr* is a classical among naval wargames. I have the revised and expanded 2nd edition 1975 from TSR Games. The game is well laid out with a comprehensive table of contents including:

- Standard Game, Basic rules
- Training Game Rules
- Advanced Optional
- Single Ship Rules
- Fleet Action Rules
- Single Ship Actions of the War of 1812

- General Historical Actions
- Bibliography
- And Tables

Introduction

"Don't Give Up The Ship!" is a game designed to allow players to recreate naval warfare of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic eras. They are presented in hopes of encouraging the play of naval sailing ship miniatures, and these rules are designed to be realistic yet reasonably playable in attempting to simulate, ship-to-ship, and such combat.

Those of you who have yet to fight your first naval engagement would be well advised to peruse the following, acquainting yourself with the terms, and obtaining a general knowledge of the rules. You can then proceed to the simplified training game immediately following these Basic Rules. The training game limits some of the complicating factors of the Basic Game, and will allow you to easily learn the mechanics of play.

A number of actual historical actions of the period are included so that players are assured of a variety of different battles to fight according to their choice and or preference. Although the rules are well suited to single-ship actions, they are just as easy to use in squadron actions given more time and more players.

Equipment and Space Needed

Here is a rundown of equipment needed for play:

Pencils and paper (an ample supply will be helpful for recording ship specifications, battle damage, computations, etc.)

Dice (several different types differentiated by size or color/will be most helpful)

Rulers (these serve as measuring sticks for moving and firing, and one should be provided for each player; 12 and 18 inch rulers are recommended, and tape measures are likewise useful)

Protractor (this will be very helpful in determining movement and firing angles. Clear plastic protractors are best, but any will suffice)

Wind Direction and Force Indicator (this can be simply a piece of tape affixed to the playing surface for easy reference, or any other means you find most convenient)

Ship Models (these should be close to 1:1200 scale ships)

Space - Playing space may vary from a small tabletop (say 9 sq. ft.) for single-ship actions to a large area of floor space (100 or more sq. ft.) for fleet engagements

Turn sequence, playing scale and gun range

What I really like about this game is the fact you can write down your orders showing direction and length of move. Your firing orders will include your target and whether you aim high or low. Movement is simultaneous and its firing and damage are determined along with morale if checked if losses warranted. You can also choose any boarding operations if conducted.

Each turn of play is 5 minutes in scale time and 1" is considered to be approximately 100 yards. The scale ranges are given for long guns and carronades. Ships are rated in 5 main classes; Class 1 are Brigs and gunboats up to 300+ tons, Class 2 Sloops and Corvettes up to 500 tons, Class 3 ships and Frigates up to 1000 tons, Class 4 Large Frigates, Razes, and small ships of their line to 1500 tons, and Class 5 Ships of the line greater than 1500 tons as well as merchant ships plus transports.

There are rules for loss of sails and masts, wind direction and force, movement as well as subtleties like determining values for guns, crew and sails. There is a great section on cannon fire, range, and damage with range charts aiming high and low.

The section on boarding, moral, and melee is superb even giving a list of a few countries as belligerents with saving throws. The aforementioned section is to my liking and extensive. For a rule set of a cost of \$5.00 at the time of inception it was well worth every penny.

What's really excellent in my mind is they offer a training game to learn the rules for newbies. The standard game, optional rules are first rate which includes a great section on sighting and burning ships. There is an advanced optional section for the purist which takes the game to a higher level and separates the men from the boys. Being a solo war gamer the single-ship action rules is what first drew me to this set of rules which includes a special damage table.

There's a section on fleet action rules to play the big battles like Trafalgar. This section has all you need to know which includes all the general ship actions and a little ship movement chart to line up and play the game. A bonus is a single ship action section for the war of 1812. The authors also cite a bibliography for further research.

Also included are charts for crew factor conversions, gunnery index, shot weight chart, and burning ship cutaways. These rules were well thought out for the revised edition in 1975, easy

to lean and play and by no means cumbersome. They are available on the web as a free download and I highly recommend them if your fancy is; a ship of the line engagement, a solo excursion, or a duel during the War of 1812.

Conclusion

If you are looking for a naval game that is easy to learn, fun to play, and has room for a lot of expansion then "Don't Give Up The Ship!" is a game you'll want to learn how to play. As well, an easy way to get into it without a great deal of expense, plus time regarding playing with physical ship models is; purchase, or make up some board game markers to start out with.

The rules for the game can be downloaded off of Google for free in a PDF format.



Above a nice model for fighting the War of 1812 campaign courtesy of Board Game Geek