Victory by Any Means: Fire As She Bears! Edition

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Based on *Fire As She Bears! Second Edition* by Phil Fry

Forward from Starboard Tack Press

I have run "Fire As She Bears!" scenarios dozens of times (both at convention and with my local gaming club). In most cases, our tabletop "admirals" fight out the battle as if it as to be the last of their career. There is no grand strategic vision, no worry about standing before an Admiralty Board to explain your actions, and certainly no concern about throwing a good ship at the enemy just because the last turn of the scenario has arrived. Obviously "one off" games don't truly place players in the roll of an admiral concerned about the future of his fleet.

Consider the "Glorious First of June", a battle fought between French and British fleets during 1794. The French were escorting a grain convoy from their American colonies to feed the starving masses during the French Revolution. The convoy's arrival was critical. Although the battle ended in a "technical" British victory (they took six prizes and sank the Vengeur du Peuple), the French also claimed success, as the food stores reached Europe unharmed. In strategic terms, the "Glorious First of June" was indeed a French victory. Oddly, it is the British that call 1 June 1794 "Glorious".

A campaign system (especially one with an active Campaign Moderator) allows players to think and act on a whole new level. Concerns for the total well being of the nation now come into play. For many of us a detailed, yet playable, campaign system is the Holy Grail of gaming. We can now thank Jay, Steve, Tyrel, and a host of playtesters for providing us with VBAM-FASB. Whether you play out the resulting battles with FASB (as I hope you will), or fight them out using the quick system contained in this package, Age of Sail gaming will never be the same. The ultimate goal, of course, is victory by any means.

"Now about your actions at Cape Trafalgar, Admiral Waschak…"

Fair Winds,
Phil Fry
Starboard Tack Press
Toledo, Ohio

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1.0 Overview: Victory by Any Means: Fire As She Bears! Edition

Welcome to the latest chapter in the VBAM Series: the *Victory by Any Means: Fire As She Bears! Edition*. In these source materials we explore the exciting world of naval combat at the height of the Age of Sail. It is a time when England's "Wooden Walls" kept her commerce alive and the armies of Napoleon at bay. A time when tall, proud warships prowled the vast waterways of the world, and such ships as the *U.S.S. Constitution* were to earn their place as legend.

For those of you who are new to either Victory by Any Means or Starboard Tack Press products, welcome! This game is modeled after the popular Victory by Any Means: Campaign Guide, and has been carefully developed and tested to fit the unique feel of the Age of Sail. By using the Origin Award (2005 Vanguard) winning Fire As She Bears! game as our tactical system, we can finally give gamers a fluid product that lets you worry about important decisions and planning of the Admiralty.

For this latest source, the VBAM team has worked with Phil C. Fry, the author of the popular Napoleonic tactical naval game *Fire As She Bears!* to bring you a supplement which enables you to fight the war at sea as the Admiralty of a nation, subject to the whims of the crown and to generate gritty battles where sailing skills and cunning decide the fate of the battle.

This is a stand alone book that requires no other VBAM Games products to play, although Starboard Tack Press' *Fire As She Bears! Second Edition* is highly recommended for a complete Age of Sail experience.

1.0.1 CM-Less Version

It is quite likely that our Age of Sail (AoS) variation of the basic VBAM Campaign System will be played without a campaign moderator (CM). This enables a quicker, more wargame-like version when playing this game.

1.0.2 CM Version

Albeit less common, there is no reason that a campaign moderator cannot be utilized to run this type of campaign. In fact, many great opportunities exist to create story-driven campaigns or ones heavily rooted in history that need the full attention of the CM. Some of these ideas will be noted in the body of these rules.

1.1 Required Material

In addition to basic materials like d6, d10s, pencils, paper and this book, we highly recommend the use of the *Fire As She Bears!* (FASB) tactical system produced by Starboard Tack Press. Although not required, it will make for a more enjoyable overall experience. FASB is specifically designed to easily resolve the large battles that VBAM: FASB will be likely to generate.

1.2 Basic Terms for VBAM: Fire As She Bears! Edition

AoS: Age of Sail; referring to the time period when the large, wind powered sailing warships were common and ruled the seas.

Attrition: Actually units of damage to a ship during combat are tracked in these points. A ship that has reached its DV in attrition is crippled, and two times its DV is destroyed.

Broadside Factor: This edition of FASB will be using Broadside Factor (BF) instead of the VBAM standard Anti-Ship (AS) statistic.

Campaign Guide: The original VBAM Campaign Guide, here known as the CG for reference purposes, is the foundation of this edition.

Campaign Moderator: A CM, as they are commonly called, is the person who runs the story or hidden elements of the game. FASB campaigns can be run with or without a CM.

Commander Sheet: A new addition to this supplement is the Commander Sheet. It is a simple means of tracking the elite and unique officers that were so important to this era.

Commerce: A new term for FASB Edition. Located on the Land Asset Sheet, it is used to determine the profitability of ports' trade.

Crew Rating: This is used to define the quality of the crew aboard the vessel. It is also used interchangeably between the CSCR stat and FASB. See 3.5.3 Sea Combat Phase for details.

Crew Point: The actual crew units are called Crew Points. These are the physical quantity of crew on the ships.

CSCR: The Campaign Sea Combat Resolution (CSCR) is VBAM's system for quickly resolving

battles players may not have time to resolve in FASB.

Division: Instead of the modern term Task Force, we use Division to discuss fleet deployment.

Intrigue: This term is used interchangeably with Intel. This is only a semantic change; the actual Intrigue system utilized throughout this book and the VBAM Campaign is essentially the same. This term simply better captures the feel of the AoS.

*Land Asset Shee*t: This sheet replaces the Planet Asset from the main game and contains all the information about port, construction, and other land based assets.

Nimble: This defines a ship that is of a faster design. Special rules apply to these vessels to characterize their usual function as interceptors and raiders. They move and operate differently than the Ships-of-the-Line. Their specific qualities are described later in this text.

Port: In the FASB Edition, a port is the place where all ship business is done. Construction, commerce, and everything else relevant to keeping an operational navy depends on them.

Rate: SOL were often categorized in terms of rate. 1st Rate Ships were those of 100 or more guns, such as the *HMS Victory*. 2nd Rate Ships were less than 100 Guns but had more than 80 guns. Ships of the 3rd Rate were the typical standards of the period, and were between 68 and 80 guns. Ships of the 4th Rate were more common in the earlier part of the 18th Century and included ships between 50 and 66 guns.

Historical Note: It is very important to note for historical reasons that the "rate" system was of British origin. For simplicity's sake, it is used in this product. Outside of the British Rate system, the Dutch used "charters", and the French "rangs". To the south in Venice, a 70 Gun vessel was considered a 1st Rate. So while we use the British Rating system here, it was not universal.

Sea Zone: Instead of the normal jump lanes found in VBAM, FASB Edition uses sea zones to determine what areas are accessible to your navies.

SOL: Ship-of-the-Line, the large, heavily gunned sailing ships of the AoS. The 74-gun SOL was the standard for most of the period, but both smaller and much larger versions existed. These vessels formed a navy's line of battle.

Turn: In FASB Edition, each turn represents one month.

Zones Dependencies: The zones required for that port to be clear (and protected) for all of the Commerce Income points to be received and added to the point pool.

2.0 Before the Game

Players will need to decide who, when, and where they will be playing before the campaign begins. You will be picking nationalities instead of alien empires, and probably one of the gameplay styles outlined below.

2.1 Gameplay Selection

There are several forms of gameplay that change the overall feel of the game. To start with, there are games that conform to a historical situation, or a variation on historical situation. These have been modeled on the actual Orders of Battle and objectives from history. But these rules can be taken out of the confines of history to any map we provide, or you decide to create for you and your friends.

Historical: This is the largest and most sweeping in scope in terms of gameplay. It uses a historically predetermined setup during an exact point in Age of Sail history on the largest map provided. In this source we have included scenarios from the Indian Theatre during the American Revolution, and the French Revolutionary Wars of 1793.

Historical Variation: Although the setup is very similar to the previous one, this scenario type adds a twist or two. This is best depicted as the quintessential "what if" scenario using the same maps from the Historical setup. In this source, we use the historical maps and setups provided, but include rules to add other nations to the conflict, such as a Dutch Fleet in the Indian Theatre to support the French Navy under Admiral Suffren.

Pitched Game: A game played in this manner is removed from historical confines and maybe even nationalities. Players simply select ports on a pre-existing and non-historical map, and build ships to start the game. We included a fictional island map with several generic starting points for your use.

Note: Of course, you are encouraged to create your own historical or fictional setting to use the system. These are only used as guides to setting up some very enjoyable games quickly. See section 6.3 for notes on creating your own scenario!

2.2 The Map Style

Although the map does not look like a traditional node-based map as is seen in a normal VBAM campaign, the map is divided in such a way that the traditional node map rules still work. For purposes of fleet control, there are sea zones that connect to only a certain number of other sea zones. Within these sea zones may be land elements, such as ports, that are interacted with by assets in the fleet zones.

The various sea zones on the map are relevant to fleet and commerce tracking as well. On each map there will be arrows indicating any prevailing winds which impact a fleet's ability to move about. Unless specified by a scenario, the only land elements of concern to the admiralty are the ports. Players familiar with VBAM will
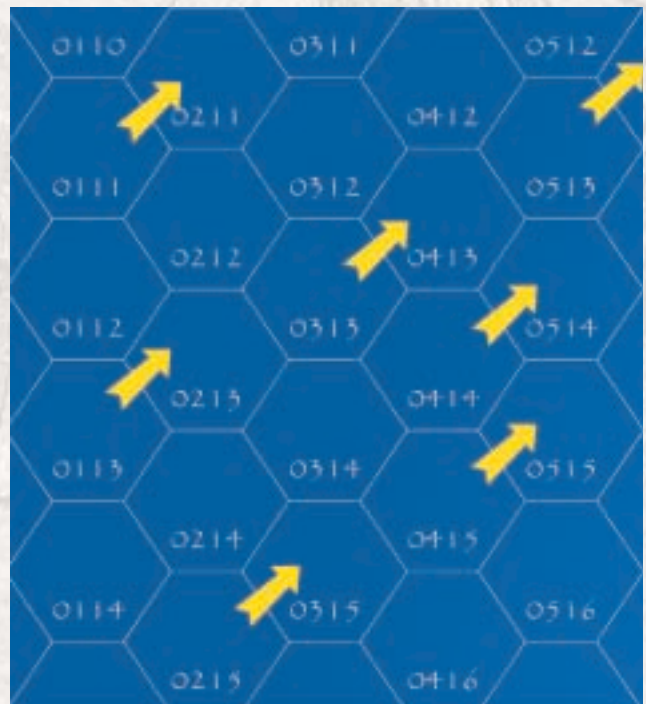
notice remarkable similarities to the "system" elements we use there. Ports are represented as a dot that is attached to a sea zone.

2.3 Setting up the Game

Now that everyone has made the basic setup choices, such as when they are playing and what historical factors may be involved, it is time to actually set up the game. Using maps from this product, our website, or one of your own design or choosing, determine which ports and land areas fall under each nation's control. You do not need to place fleets, as their movements may be considered hidden. This will mean some minor movement record keeping to check for encounters each turn with the other players.

3.0 Sequence of Play

(3.1) Income Phase

(3.2) Turn Orders Phase

(3.3) Intrigue Phase

(3.4) Movement Phase

(3.5) Combat Phase

(3.5.1) Supply Phase

(3.5.2) Encounters Phase

(3.5.3) Naval Combat Phase

(3.5.4) Shore Bombardment Phase

(3.5.5) Troop Combat Phase

(3.6) Construction Completion Phase

(3.7) Update Asset Phase

(3.8) End of Turn Phase

3.1 Income Phase

The Income Phase is when the empire's revenues are calculated, expenses subtracted, and profits are added to the point pools for spending during the 3.2 Turn Orders Phase.

3.1.1 Income for the Turn is Calculated

Fans of the original VBAM rules will recognize that this version has a familiar method of calculating the total resource points available to the player.

(Total Naval Production + Commerce/ Miscellaneous Income) – Maintenance/ Miscellaneous Costs = Income

Add this Income value to the player's point pool. This, plus the amount of economic points already in the point pool, is the amount of economic points available for the player to use in this turn's Turn Orders Phase.