

Corvus

Version 2

Introduction

“Corvus” is a game intended for fighting ancient sea battles using either 1/650 or 1/1,200 scale models of ancient ships. It was designed with the First Punic War in mind, but may be used for other ancient naval wars.

You need two fleets, a pair of ordinary six-sided dice (d6), a tape measure and somewhere to play.

Corvus is a fast-play game. It simplifies or ignores much of what would be important to each individual ship. You play the admiral, not the captain.

Corvus seeks to avoid book keeping. On-table markers are useful for any but the smallest fleets. A suggested marker scheme is included.

Although the suggested squadron lists contain only a few ships, Corvus can easily be played with three or four dozen ships per side.

To maintain simplicity I have ignored the include effects of currents. Fleets tended not to fight if at a disadvantage. I have not taken into account “heavy” ships (ships that have been at sea long enough for their timbers to become waterlogged, slowing them).

Version 2 includes more ship types to make use of the wide range of 1/1,200 models available. With misgivings (I tend to treat army lists and points systems with caution even when devised by people much more knowledgeable than myself) I have also included an optional points system and suggested “squadron” lists to help new players get a flavour of ancient naval battles.

Other than that, Corvus Version 2 has not changed substantially from Version 1. In some places I have re-worded rules to make them clearer.

Changes include there is now no crossing the path of other moving ships. You may now only grapple in your own bound. If involved in a collision or a ramming incident your ship stops immediately. The biggest change to the main rules is the addition of flagships, which fight a little harder in close combat but cause moral difficulties if lost.

Units

For 1/650 or 1/600 scale models movement, distance shoot range etc are quoted in inches. For 1/1,200 scale models use centimetres instead.

Playing Area

For “squadron” battles using 1/650 scale models an area of about 3 feet square is fine. Larger battles should easily fit on a 6 x 4 feet table.

When using 1/1,200 scale ships a playing area of approximately 50 x 75 cm (20 x 30 inches) is suggested, depending upon the number of ships.

Corvus - the Rules

Play Sequence

Set up game (both players dice; highest places ships, other places theirs, highest takes first bound)

Each alternate bound: Movement (including shearing, grappling and ramming)

Distance shooting (enemy bound only)

Close Combat

Morale Check

Note: In a single bound each ship may attempt only one of:

1. Extinguish fire (own bound)
2. Distance shooting (enemy bound)
3. Ramming (in own bound) or being rammed (in enemy bound)
4. Sheering (own bound)
5. Grappling (own bound).

Movement (in inches for 1/650 ships or centimetres for 1:1200 ships)

Ship Type	Halting	Normal	Turn and Ram	Ram, no Turn
Trireme	2	4 to 8	2 to 4, then 4 to 8	4 to 16
Roman Bireme or Quadreme	2	3.5 to 7	2 to 3.5, then 4 to 7	4 to 14
Quinquireme without corvus, Pentecoster, Lembus	1.5	3 to 6	1.5 to 3, then 4 to 6	4 to 12
Quinquireme with corvus, six or seven bank ship, Hermiola	1.5	2.5 to 5	1.5 to 2.5, then 4 to 5	4 to 10
Eight bank or larger including Deceres	1	2 to 4	1 to 2, then 4 exactly	4 to 8

- Halting – unless rammed, ramming, in collision, grappled or successfully grappling -move half the normal minimum distance before stopping. (Takes one bound.)
- Reversing, moving of from halt, sheered, (re)-captured ship – move at minimum normal speed.
- Ships may not cross paths in same bound if a collision would have occurred had the ships been moving simultaneously.
- Direction change - (e.g. forward to reverse) - halt first (see above).
- Turning - May turn in a 2 ship length diameter turning circle if not ramming.
- May split move into halves – may turn during the first half then ram in the second. (See above.)

Sheering

Passing another ship broadside to broadside or beyond within $\frac{1}{8}$ inch attempts to sheer it's oars.

Sheering causes the ship to move to a halt in it's next bound. It then may only move at minimum normal speed. Throw a d6. An even score sheers the oars. A second sheer immobilises the ship.

Grappling and Boarding

Ships must be within 1/8 inch. Throw a d6. A successful grapple halts both ships.

One ship without a corvus wants to grapple, other resists	6 only
Both ships without corvus want to grapple	4 or more
Ship using corvus wants to grapple (corvus can grab one ship at a time)	3 or more, 1 sinks own ship

Ramming and Collisions

To ram, a ship must be already moving forward with no restrictions upon it's movement. The ship must attain ram speed by moving straight ahead for at least 4 units, and then hit the target ship. Both the ship that rams and it's target stop immediately. See below for resolution.

All other impacts are collisions. Each ship involved stops immediately. For each ship throw a d6. A score of 6 sheers it's oars.

Distance Shooting Ramming and Combat Resolution

Distance shooting needs a clear line of sight bow and stern to bow and stern. Wrecks can be fired over unless they are on fire. Maximum effective range is 12 units. You can not shoot if either the target or the ship that wants to shoot is in contact with enemy. Some ships, such as triremes don't shoot; their factor is for defence only. If more than one ship shoots at the same target one ship is the attacker, count the other ship(s) as modifying factors.

Close combat occurs after grappling, starting in the same bound as a successful grapple. Add all the linked ships' combat factors of each side together.

For both sides throw a d6. Add the relevant factor for the ship, then any additional factors. Compare the 2 total scores and check the results table.

Ship	Can Shoot	Shooting	Ramming	Close Combat
Pentecoster, Lembus or Hermiola	No	1	1	0
Roman Bireme	No	1	2	1
Trireme	No	2	3	2
Quadreme	Yes	2	3	3
Quinquireme without corvus	Yes	4	4	4
Quinquireme with corvus	Yes	4	3	6
Six or 7 Bank Ship	Yes	5	5	7
Deceres, also Eight and Nine Bank Ships	Yes	6	7	8
Ships Larger than Deceres	Yes	7	8	9

Additional Factor	Shooting	Ramming	Close Combat
Admiral's flag ship	-	-	1
Captured or re-captured ship	-3	-3	-3
Ramming to hit oar bank	n/a	3	n/a
Ramming to hit rear	n/a	1	n/a
Target already rammed this bound (per previous attack)	n/a	1	n/a
Additional Quinquireme, Quadreme, 6 or 7 bank ship firing (per ship)	1	n/a	n/a
Additional Deceres or other ship 8 banks or larger firing (per ship)	2	n/a	n/a

Difference in Final Score	Effect
4 or more	Rammed ships sink, Close combat captures ship, Distance shooting sets ship on fire
3	Rammed ships sink, Close combat captures ship
0	Ship doing the ramming sinks

- **Hulks** - Sunk or wrecked ships remain a hazard. Use a marker or overturn model.
- **On Fire** - next own bound move to halt if moving. Throw a d6. Even score puts the fire out, otherwise wrecked and burning.
- **In Contact with Burning Ship/Wreck** - At start of each own bound throw d6. '6' sets you on fire.

Morale, Winning and Losing

Ships sunk, wrecked or captured count as losses. Ships captured from the enemy are gains, which are offset against losses.

If you are not using the optional points system, count anything 8 banks or larger (including deceres) as 3 ships each. Count the flagship as 2 extra ships. When you are down to $\frac{2}{3}$ of your original ship points, flee.

The player remaining on in undisputed possession of the playing area is the winner. If both players are reduced to $\frac{2}{3}$ or less of their ship points in the same bound then the game is a draw.

Optional Features

Example Marker System

<u>Direction</u> -	troop marker at front or rear	<u>Halted</u> -	no troop marker
<u>Sheered</u> -	1 blue marker over oars	<u>Immobilised</u> -	2 blue markers over oars
<u>Grappled</u> -	flat marker between ships	<u>On Fire</u> -	cotton wool marker
<u>Re/Captured</u> -	1 troop marker in centre	<u>Wrecked</u> -	cardboard marker
<u>Flagship</u> -	2 troop markers in centre (if not readily distinguishable from the other ships)		

Points System

1 point - Pentecosters, Hermiolas, Lembi	+14 Points to be the flag ship
2 points – Roman Biremes	as above
3 points – Triremes	as above
4 Points - Quadrimas, Quinquiremes	as above
6 Points – 6 or 7 bank ships	as above
12 Points – Deceres and 8 or 9 bank ships	as above
14 Points – 11 and greater bank Ships	as above

“Squadron Game”

The “Squadron Game” is based upon 60 point fleets that include a flagship. Use a 3 foot square table for 1/650 models and deploy within 4 inches of the edge; for 1/1,200 scale models use a playing area of about 40 cm square and deploy within 5 cm of the edge. Here are some lists:

Roman Squadron – 60 points

- 1 x Quinquireme Flagship with corvus – 18 points
- 9 x Quinquiremes with corvus – 4 points each – 36 points
- 2 x Triremes – 3 points each – 6 points

Carthaginian Squadron – 60 points

- 1 x Quinquireme Flagship without corvus – 18 points
- 9 x Quinquiremes without corvus – 4 points each – 36 points
- 2 x Triremes – 3 points each – 6 points

Hellenistic Squadron – 60 points

- 1 x Deceres Flagship – 26 points
- 4 x Quinquiremes without corvus – 4 points each – 16 points
- 6 x Triremes – 3 points each – 18

Western Mediterranean Greek Squadron – 60 points

- 1 x Quinquireme Flagship without corvus – 18 points
- 14 x Triremes – 3 points each – 42

Successor State Squadron – 60 points

- 1 x Deceres Flagship – 26 points
- 2 x Deceres – 12 points each – 24 points
- 1 x Quinquireme without corvus – 4 points
- 2 x Triremes – 3 points each – 6 points