

Sea Dogs

Caribbean Tales

❖ Contents ❖

2. The Main Menu	4	5.3 Dialogue Interfaces	29
2.1 Starting a New Game	5	5.3.1 Taverns	29
2.2 Profiles and Saved Games	8	5.3.2 Shipyards	30
2.3 Performance Options	9	5.3.3 Stores	32
2.4 The Escape Menu	10	5.3.4 Buying and Selling	33
3. Default Controls	11	5.4 Missions	33
4. The Interface	13	5.5 Smuggling	34
4.1 The Character Interface	13	6. Hand-to-Hand Combat	35
4.1.1 Passengers	13	6.1 Types of Attack	36
4.1.2 Player Character Information	14	7. Sea Dogs!	37
4.1.3 Experience and Rank	15	7.1 Fast Commands	37
4.1.4 Skills	16	7.2 The Global Map	38
4.1.5 Abilities	17	7.3 Sailing Mode	40
4.1.6 Reputation	17	7.4 Direct Ship Control	41
4.1.7 Career	18	7.5 Communicating with Other Ships	41
4.1.8 Officers	18	7.6 Squadron Control	42
4.2 Ships	20	7.7 Naval Combat	42
4.2.1 Captain	21	7.8 Boarding Parties	44
4.2.2 Crew	21	8. Colonies	46
4.2.3 The Ship's Hold	24	8.1 Capturing Colonies	46
4.3 The Logbook	26	8.2 Colony Management	48
5. Landlubbers!	27	9. Credits	52
5.1 Movement on Land	27		
5.2 Talking to People	28		



2. The Main Menu

The main menu contains the following options:



- New Game** – Start a new game from the beginning.
- Load Game** – Load a previously saved game.
- Options** – Adjust video and sound options; define your own keys.
- Multiplayer** – Host your own network game, or connect to a game currently in progress.
- Credits** – The scurvy dogs responsible for bringing you this Caribbean masterpiece.
- Exit** – Quit to the desktop.

The screenshot shows the 'Character Selection' menu in Final Fantasy VII Remake. On the left, a vertical list of character icons and names is visible: Aerith, Barret, Cloud, Red XIII, Don Corneo, Tifa, Yuffie, and others. The central part of the screen displays two character portraits side-by-side, with a 'Compare stats' button below them. The right side of the screen features a list of character abilities and their descriptions, such as 'Aerith's Song', 'Barret's Gun', 'Cloud's Sword', etc. At the bottom, there are icons for different character types (Normal, Warrior, Mage, Thief, Monk, Ninja, Samurai, Bard, Summoner, Beastmaster, Dragonmaster, Warrior of Light) and a 'Compare stats' button. The top of the screen has a 'Character Selection' title bar.

From here, there are several things to do before you can get on with your life of high adventure; create a player profile and have a look at the game's options and technical parameters.

Create Profile.

Create a unique name under which saved games and options will be stored. (See 2.2 "Profiles and Saved Games").

Nation selection

Your choice of allegiance here will determine both your starting location and how the other nations feel about you at the beginning of the game.

Game Options.

Appearing down the left side of the screen, these allow you to tailor different aspects of the game experience to your liking:

- ◆ **Nation aggression.**

Defines how often nations will move against colonies, and how mercurial they are in their dealings with each other.

- ◆ **Nation progress rate.**

Defines the speed of AI colony development.

- ◆ **Starting colony state.**

Defines how well developed colonies are at the beginning of a new game. Higher levels of development make colonies richer, but also that much harder to capture.

- ◆ **Relations with player.**

Defines how many nations are at war with you at the beginning of a new game:

No enemies – All nations, as well as the Coastal Brotherhood, consider you to be friend, and welcome you at their ports with pleasure.

Normal – You are at peace with the majority of the nations, but there are still some governors who wouldn't mind seeing you swinging from the yard arm....

All enemies – All nations and free captains - except for your own - consider you to be a hostile target, and will actively hunt you down. Beware!

Note: If you are at war with a nation, its ports will be closed to you, and its fort's guns will open fire at your approach. However, the city of the Coastal Brotherhood is always open to you, irrespective of your relationship with pirates.

- ◆ **Encounter frequency**

Determines the number of random encounters you'll meet when at sea.

- ◆ **Event frequency**

Determines the frequency of random events, such as epidemics, colonist movement, etc.

Difficulty Options.

Appearing down the right hand side of the screen, these allow you to tailor the level of challenge:

• Sailing settings

Faster sail setting/striking – Your ships will change speed more quickly.

Increased ship speed – Ships sail at an increased speed that accelerates the game and adds dynamism to naval combat.

• Firing settings

Faster cannon reloading – Your cannons are reloaded more quickly.

Improved cannon accuracy – Increases fire control and accuracy of your gunners. This does not influence your accuracy when aiming manually.

Damage settings

• **Melee combat damage reduction** – Enemies deal less damage hand-to-hand.

• **Naval combat damage reduction** – Enemy ships deal less damage to your own ships, and you suffer less crew losses as a result

AI settings

• **Simplified land artificial intelligence** – Enemy soldiers are less likely to use feints and blocks, and move around less.

• **Simplified sea artificial intelligence** – Enemy ships change ammo type less often, and are tactically less flexible.

Overall difficulty

The four difficulty levels influence many different aspects of the game. In general, the higher the difficulty level, the stronger your opponents on land and at sea will be. Your Command Experience points will accumulate more slowly, and crew morale will be quicker to fall. It will also be harder to hire professional officers in taverns. From 'Boatswain' level and above, the Fast Command 'Sail To' is unavailable. (See 7.1 "Fast Commands").

2.2 Profiles and Saved Games

Profiles

Each time you start a new game, you must enter a name for the profile under which your saved games and options will be stored. Profiles allow several people to store saved games independently from each other, or for you to experiment with different playing styles.

Load game

To load a previously saved game, choose "Load game" from the main menu or from the "Escape Menu" (*See 2.4. "The Escape Menu"*). You will then be presented with the "Profile list" menu.



- **Load a profile** – Load the selected profile.
- **Delete** – Delete the selected profile.
- **Exit** – Return to the previous menu.



After loading a profile, you will see the load/save game screen:

There is no limit to the number of games that you can save. Use the scroll bar on the right to view all your games. Information on the officers present in that saved game is displayed along the bottom of the screen.

- **Profile** – Choose another profile.
- **Load game** – Load the selected game.
- **Delete** – Delete the selected game.
- **Exit** – Return to the previous menu.

Saving the game

The save game option is only available from The Escape Menu (*See 2.4 "The Escape Menu"*). The interface is similar to the Load Game interface, but the "Load game" button is, perhaps unsurprisingly, replaced by a "Save game" button. To save your game, choose a free cell and click the "Save game" button. If you choose a cell in which a game is already present, you will be asked whether you wish to overwrite it.



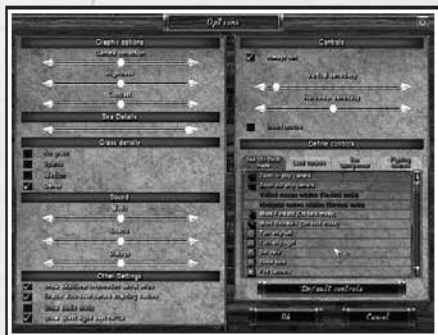
2.3 Performance Options

Graphic options – Click and drag the button on the sliders to adjust gamma correction, brightness and contrast.

Sea details – Click and drag the button on the slider to alter the level of detail in the sea. Increasing the detail makes the sea look more realistic, but puts more of a strain on your computer and may decrease your frame rate.

Grass density – Defines grass density on land. Switching off grass altogether takes some pressure off your computer and may improve your frame rate.

Sound – Click and drag the button on the sliders to adjust the volume of music, effects and dialogue. Let the cannons roar!



Other settings

- **Show additional information about ships** – Turns on and off a 3 colour display bar above other ships that indicates: hull damage, sail damage, and crew complement.
- **Enable auto-save before boarding battles** – Game will be automatically saved before every boarding battle.
- **Show battle mode** – When engaged in combat at sea, the edges of the screen will flash red. Just so you know.
- **Show quest signs over NPCs** – NPCs who have missions or business for you will have special icons hovering over their heads.

Control – Various movement and mouse sensitivity options. Be nice to your mouse, here. Define controls – Here you can redefine the controls for both land and sea movement. To change a key, double-click it (or select it and press the "Space bar") and then press the new key you wish to bind to that action.

Default controls – Returns all controls to their default settings. Try them, they're not bad!

To save any changes, click "OK". To cancel any changes, click "Cancel".

2.4 The Escape Menu

The "Escape menu" contains most of the options found on the main menu, and can be called up at any time by pressing - you guessed it - the "Escape" key.



From here you can save your game, load a previously saved game, or fiddle around with any of the options. Bringing up the Escape Menu also has the effect of pausing the game, allowing you a moment's respite from the non-stop excitement.

Note: You can save your game at any time except during boarding battles or fort captures. Which always makes things more exciting.



3. Default Controls

At Sea, "On Deck" mode

Zoom In ship camera	Mouse scroll wheel Down
Zoom Out ship camera	Mouse scroll wheel Up
Move Forward (On Deck mode)	Left Mouse button
Move Backward (On Deck mode)	Right Mouse button
Turn ship Left	[A]
Turn ship Right	[D]
Set sails	[W]
Strike sails	[S]
Fire cannons	[Spacebar]
Switch between On Deck and Third-Person modes	[Tab]

Use/ Zoom In/ Out Spyglass	[G]
Open Game Interface	[J]
Open Main Menu	[Esc]
Open Fast Commands menu	[F4]
Zoom In Mini Map	[E]
Zoom Out Mini Map	[F]
Use Current Fast Command	[J]
Load balls	[1]
Load grape	[2]
Load chain-shot	[3]
Load bombs	[4]












At Sea, "Third-Person" mode

Zoom In ship camera	Mouse scroll wheel Down
Zoom Out ship camera	Mouse scroll wheel Up
Steer ship Left	[A]
Steer ship Right	[D]
Set sails	[W]
Strike sails	[S]
Fire cannons	[Spacebar]
Switch between On Deck and Third-Person modes	[Tab]
Open Game Interface	[J]






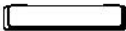










Open Main Menu	[Esc]
Open Fast Commands menu	[F4]
Zoom In Mini Map	[E]
Zoom Out Mini Map	[F]
Use Current Fast Command	[J]
Load balls	[1]
Load grape	[2]
Load chain-shot	[3]
Load bombs	[4]



Land controls

Use	
Walk forward	
Walk backward	
Strafe left	
Strafe right	
Run modifier	
Draw/Sheathe Weapon	
Open Game Interface	
Open Main Menu	
Open Fast Commands menu	
Use Current Fast Command	

Fight controls

Step Forward	
Step Backward	
Strafe left	
Strafe right	
Run modifier	
Block	
Slash	Left Mouse button
Thrust	Right Mouse button
Parry	
All-round Attack	
Fierce Attack	
Feint	
Draw/Sheathe Weapon	
Fire Pistol	
Open Game Interface	
Open Main Menu	
Open Fast Commands	
Use Current Fast Command	

4. The Interface

4.1 The Character Interface



The character interface is the most versatile interface in the game. From here, you can inspect all the characters cooperating with you on your adventure, including yourself and any of your officers. The interface can be brought up by pressing the default "F2" function key.

This interface contains information on: your character's national affiliation, their rank,

health, current experience and the amount of experience needed to reach the next level, fame and current funds.

You can also see a list of possible skills, the amount of skill points put into them, any additional abilities known by the character, weapons and equipment currently held, and their relations with the nations and factions of the archipelago. You can also estimate career opportunities from here, and plan future moves.

4.1.1 Passengers

A list of all characters in the player's squadron. All possible posts that you can assign your officers to, are also represented in this list. There are four types of character in the game:

- **Passenger** – Characters that you were asked to transport somewhere. Officers that you've hired but haven't yet assigned to a post, are also listed as passengers.
- **Officer** – An officer assigned to a specific post in your squadron. Companion – If you agree to escort a merchant ship, the merchant becomes your companion for the duration of the journey. Officers whom you assign as captains to other ships in your squadron also become 'companions'.
- **Prisoner** – This character is being held on your ship against his will. Prisoners are obtained either as the result of a mission that requires you to capture a person, by imprisoning one of your existing passengers, or by forcing a ship to surrender, in which case you may imprison her captain. You can release any non-mission prisoners at any of their nation's colonies for a ransom. Don't expect flowers afterwards though.

NETHERLANDS ANTILLES

ARUBA
Discovered

CURACAO

BONAIRE

Willemstad



Roques

RI

A context-sensitive button below the character list changes, depending on who is highlighted:

- **Passenger** - The button changes to "Imprison". Imprisoning a passenger will strongly spoil your relations with his nation.
- **Companion** - The button is unavailable; you can't do anything to them.
- **Unassigned officer** - The button is unavailable; you can't do anything to them.
- **Assigned officer** - The button changes to "Unassigned". You can remove an officer from his post by clicking the button.
- **Free post** - the button changes to "Appoint". If you have no unassigned officers, the button will be disabled. If you do have unassigned officers, pressing the button will bring up a menu where you can select an officer to assign to a post.

4.1.2 Player Character Information

Information about the character is located under their portrait:

- **Nation** - The flag of their affiliated nation appears in the top left corner of their portrait.
- **Rank** - Your character's rank determines the type of weapon they're able to use, any penalties on your control of the ship, and also your chances of promotion when in service to a nation. Your rank increases by one point with each new level gained.
- **Health** - The amount of punishment a character is able to withstand. This increases naturally with each level gained, but can also be increased by putting points in various skills and abilities (See sections 4.1.4 and 4.1.5).
- **Current experience** - The amount of experience points accumulated thus far.
- **Next level** - The amount of experience points you need in order to ding the next level.
- **Reputation** - How others in the archipelago feel about you. Useful for avoiding - or perhaps finding - trouble!
- **Salary/Reward/Ransom** - This figure varies, depending on who you're currently looking at, and indicates either how much they expect from you for that month's salary, or how much they're going to pay you upon conclusion of your business with them. Salary figures appear in red (important!); rewards, payments and ransoms in green.
- **Loyalty** - How that character feels about you. If it doesn't look good, perhaps it's time to lay off the cat o' nine tails and make free with the grog?

Note: Your own character will always display '0' for Salary, and 'Maximum' for Loyalty. You hardly need to pay yourself, since you're the one with the death-grip on all the booty anyway. And hey, you are the bravest, most dashing captain on the high seas. What's not to love? Arrr!





The three large icons under the character information panel indicate which items that character is currently equipped with. Press the "Items" button underneath to look through that character's inventory and mess with their equipment. You'll see the screen on the left here pop up.

Characters usually only ever need three items - a spyglass, a sabre and a pistol. To equip the item, select it from their inventory and click the "Use" button. If the character is already equipped with a similar item, it will automatically be returned to their inventory. To remove

an item from the character, select it and click the "Remove" button.

Item management is possible only for your own character, and officers. You are not allowed to fiddle with items belonging to passengers and companions.

Note: In order to actually use an item, the character must hold a rank equal to or greater than the rank of the item you wish to equip them with. Otherwise, it isn't going to happen. Well, would you give a cack-handed cabin boy a custom-made cutlass?

4.1.3 Experience and Rank

You gain experience by fighting at sea or on land, and carrying out missions. After gaining a certain amount of experience, your character will go up a level. When you hire officers, they automatically get 10 % of your experience.

This number can be increased with additional abilities. Characters who accompany you temporarily- such as merchants and passengers- do not receive experience. Also, with each new level gained, your character's health increases, they receive a new rank, and gain one more skill point. Every three levels gained, they have the opportunity to learn a new ability.

4.1.4 Skills



Skills	
Leadership	3 / 3
Navigation	3 / 3
Tactics	2 / 2
Fencing	2 / 2
Pistols	2 / 2
Cannons	3 / 3
Accuracy	3 / 3
Boarding	3 / 3
Defense	3 / 3
Repair	3 / 3
Trading	10 / 10
Lock	3 / 3

Skills known to the selected character are located to the right of their portrait. The efficiency of your crew, your adroitness in ship operations, and many other things besides, all depend on these skills.

Note: To see precisely how much influence each skill has on your ability to boss around your men, right-click it with the mouse.

The figure to the right of the word "Skills" at the top shows the number of skill points available for distribution. At the beginning of a game you have two free points to distribute right away. Then, with each new level gained, you will receive another skill point. All skills are initially equal to one, and won't go below this value. The maximum level a skill can be is ten.

The figures to the right of the line show your base skill level, the figures to the left show the skill level of any officers attached to that skill. The higher of the two is always the 'active' value. For example, your Carpentry Officer has a skill of '6' in Repairs, so '6' is the value used when making your own repairs.

To distribute free points, choose the necessary skill. A small gold crosshair symbol will appear near the skill value. To increase that skill, click the crosshair. Each click will increase the skill value by one point.

Note: Distribution of skill points is an irreversible process. So lay off the rum whilst you're doing it, ok?

A word about rank and skill modifiers.

Operating a ship above your rank will incur a penalty on such skills as "Navigation", "Accuracy", "Defence", "Boarding" and so on. At the beginning of the game you can only operate Class 6 ships without suffering penalties. Each two character ranks gained allow you to operate a ship of a higher rating. See 4.2 "Basic Ship Characteristics" for more on this. As discussed previously, if ever a skill penalty is imposed, the afflicted skill value will appear red. The greater the difference between your rank and the ship's, the greater the penalty, but even so, remember that a skill can not go lower than One. To see the exact value of the penalty, right click the relevant skill.

4.1.5 Abilities



Abilities are additional aspects of your character that allow you to specialise in certain areas. You can become a master duellist by improving your fencing ability, operate ships more effectively with abilities like "Windcatcher" and "Sail Master", or learn how to spiel the spielers with the always-handy "Merchant" ability. At the start of the game, you have enough smarts to learn one additional ability. With every three experience levels gained thereafter, you can learn another ability. The list of abilities known to your character appears in the top right corner of the character interface screen. To see a description of each ability, right-click it. To actually learn an ability, click the "Add" button at the bottom of the list. In the screen that

appears, choose the ability you want to learn. To see a description of it, again, right-click it. Some abilities are not available straight away, as they require you to have already learnt another ability. For example, you can only learn "Sail Master" after first having learned the "Windcatcher" ability.

4.1.6 Reputation

Reputation is an important factor for your character. The loyalty of the officers that you can hire in taverns depends greatly on your reputation with this or that nation. If an officer's loyalty is low, he will be quite happy to jump ship at a moment's notice. Officers - like dogs. Treat them well, and you'll be rewarded beyond all expectation.

The simplest way of increasing your reputation is by carrying out missions given to you by the peoples of the archipelago. For governor-granted missions, your reputation will grow even quicker. If you fail a mission, it will lower your reputation a little. Attacking another nation's ships or assaulting its colonies and forts will see your reputation dropping faster than a drunken sailor, ear-lye in the morn-in'. If your reputation with a nation falls below neutral, they will declare war on you.

Military ships will aspire to catch you at sea and forts will attack you as soon as you appear within range of their cannons.

The prices you buy goods for in the shops and stores also depends on your reputation among the merchants and traders. To increase your reputation with the buy-and-sell crowd, consider running a few errands for them. Finally, the price you get for your contraband and other less than kosher cargo, depends on your reputation amongst smugglers. Reputation here depends on how often you do business with them.

4.1.7 Career



This button is available only to your own character. Clicking it opens the "Career" screen

Clicking on a flag will reveal useful information about your career with that nation. Here you'll see your rank, monthly salary and time spent in their service. Below all that, you'll see the number of missions taken from them, and the number you've borked up. Your rank with that nation will increase as you successfully complete more missions. Any

letters of marque obtained from that nation appear at the very bottom. (*For more about these exciting- sounding things, see 5.4 "Missions: Letters of Marque"*).

4.1.8 Officers

As we mentioned briefly in section 4.1.4, if your own character is lacking in a particular skill, you can hire an officer who knows more about it to complement the deficient area. Which is not to say that he'll stand there telling you how well you steer the ship, when in fact a blind, deaf monkey could do a better job. No, let's say, for example, that you've put a lot of points in trade and defensive skills; your medical and gunnery talents might then be lacking. So the clever captain will at this point try to hire a couple of officers skilled in shooting things and stopping people bleeding.

The hired officer increases your skill by the difference between your and his levels. E.g. your navigation skill is 4, and the officer's is 7. Therefore, your skill in navigation will be increased by 3. Simple eh? When an officer complements your skill in this way, it will appear in green:

Note: Ship control penalties are applied to your base Navigation skill, regardless of compensation from having a skilled Navigation Officer. In other words, you can't teach a chicken to fly.



Being the Captain, you can assign officers to the posts of Navigator, Boatswain, Gunner, Surgeon, Quartermaster, Carpenter and Fighter. Each officer can

increase only the skills relevant to him. So you don't have to worry about the gunner being a better swordsman than you.

- **Navigator** – Helps you to control the ship. Uses the "Navigation" skill.
- **Boatswain** – Raises crew discipline and overall skill. Uses the "Boarding" skill.
- **Gunner** – In charge of the cannon decks. Uses the "Cannons" and "Accuracy" skills.
- **Surgeon** – Treats the wounded and helps organise defences during battle. See him about having peg legs and/or hooks fitted. Uses the "Defence" skill.
- **Quartermaster** – Does the book-keeping, helps with trading operations and other tedious duties involving reams of numbers. Uses the "Trading" skill.

- **Carpenter** – Increases the efficiency of repair teams. Uses the “Repair” skill.
- **Fighter** – Accompanies you on boarding parties, and also protects you in cities. It’s possible to have up to three officers assigned to covering your ar aft.

More about Fighters.

As you can see, your officers have very specific duties. Navigators navigate, Gunners blow things up and Surgeons tend to the sick and wounded. Also as discussed, these officers make use of specific skills. If you’re clever, you’ll hire officers on the basis of them knowing more about something than you do. Skilled, efficient officers and a happy, loyal crew will mean your ship runs like the proverbial clockwork.

So, bearing all that in mind, who would you rather have watching your back in a brawl? The Quartermaster? The Carpenter? No, as handy with a quill or a chisel as they may be, the people you really want at your side when the bilge hits the fan, are the Fighters. Whether it’s a boarding party, a daring attack on a colony, or just a good ol’ fashioned street fight, make sure you’ve got officers with good “Fencing” and “Pistols” skills assigned as Fighters, and you’ll greatly raise the odds of your emerging victorious. Oh, and make sure they’re equipped with decent weaponry.

Hiring and assigning officers.



To assign an officer to a post, you first need to hire one. Usually officers spend their free time in taverns, hanging out, getting drunk and bragging about their skills. The barmen and tavern owners know most of these guys by name and will point out likely candidates to you if you ask them. See 5.3.1

“Dialogue Interfaces: Taverns” for more about this.

After you’ve hired an officer, he will appear in your character list as a Passenger. You can leave him like that if you’re planning on making him a governor of one of your colonies, or the captain of a ship in your squadron. Lucky dog!

Whatever you decide to do with him, use the context-sensitive button we discussed in 4.1.1 to “Assign” him a post. A more detailed Officer list will

appear. All unassigned officers appear at the top of the window and can be selected by clicking the arrows either side of their portrait; their skills appear down the left side, and their desired monthly salary at the bottom (who are they trying to kid?). Remember, make your choice of assignments based on who has the skills most suited to a particular position. When you’ve decided who you want to assign, click the “Assign” button and a list of free positions will appear. Click the one you want your man to attend to, and the selected officer will crack on with his new duties.

Pay rises.

Like most crazy people, when an officer gains a rank, he'll want an increase in his salary. The very next time you enter coastal waters, he'll appear in your cabin and suggest to you that giving him a pay rise is a good thing. At this point you're free to either agree with him or tell him what to do with his suggestions. Either way, the officer might decide to jump ship anyway, depending on his loyalty to you.



4.2. Ships

The ship interface allows you to monitor the condition of any and all ships in your squadron, the morale and experience of their crews, and type and quantity of cargo, food rations and cannon ammunition carried. At the left of the screen is your squadron ship roster. Any ships you're temporarily working with, such as those under your protection

or those aiding you in combat, also appear here. Click a ship's portrait to see more detailed information about it.

Technical parameters of the selected ship are listed below it's portrait.

Name

This can be changed to anything you like by clicking it, deleting the existing name, typing a new one and pressing the default "Enter"/"Return" on your keyboard. By the way, the very first *Enterprise* was sailing Mediterranean waters around 1705... Go on, just one...

Technical parameters

- **Type** – Type of ship.
- **Class** – The effectiveness with which you operate a ship depends on its class. For every two of your ranks, you'll be able to operate a higher rated ship. The lowest rating is Sixth, the highest is First.
- **Hull** – Displays the hull's current / maximum hit points.
- **Sails** – Displays the sails' current / maximum hit points.
- **Cannons** – Displays the current functioning / maximum number of cannons on deck.
- **Calibre** – The current calibre of your cannons
- **Max. Calibre** – The max. allowable calibre of cannons available for this class of vessel.

- **Speed** - Displays the ship's current maximum speed / maximum speed unloaded.
- **Turn rate** - Displays the ship's current manoeuvrability / manoeuvrability unloaded. This figure is calculated by the game using highly complex equations. Probably.
- **Hold** - Displays the current / maximum cargo capacity of your ship
- **Crew** - Displays the current / maximum crew capacity of your ship.

Ship modification icons

Just as characters have three big icons under their stats showing what they're equipped with, so too do ships. These icons represent the types of hull, sails and cannons currently fitted. Clicking on the icon for the sails allows you to change them; right-clicking any icon will show you more information on that aspect of the ship.

Change sails

You may at any time change the colour of your sails and the emblem that appears upon them. To do so, click the "Change Sails" button. A sub-window will appear from which you can select new colours and designs. To cancel the whole operation and leave your sails as they are, click "Cancel." You could just close your eyes and hope it goes away by itself, but clicking is easier.

4.2.1 Captain

When you're examining a ship other than your own, this tab dishes the dirt on the captain of that tub. His rank, skills, and loyalty to you all appear here.

4.2.2 Crew

The crew tab applies to all ships in your squadron, including your own. Here you'll find all the details of the limey bilge rats scurrying about your decks. Crews are composed of four parts: Sailors, Soldiers, Musketeers and Gunners.

- **Sailors** - More sailors equals faster setting and striking of the sails.
- **Soldiers** - The grunts to your Officer Fighters. Nothing they like better than a good boarding party. Especially if there's cheese and wine.
- **Musketeers** - As above, but these guys come packing heat.
- **Gunners** - More gunners means your cannons reload faster. Which is handy.



Experience

Your crew's experience is one of the most important factors in the game. Skilled seamen reload cannons and deal with the sails more quickly. A few skilled fighters can make more of a difference in a fight than

a whole pack of greenhorns. The star icon represents the crew's experience level. The larger it is, the more experienced they are. There are 10 gradations of experience for crew, all the way from young, inexperienced sailors, right up to your proper, big-bearded, sun-baked, gold-toothed old veterans. Arrr! For every day at sea, the crew gain 1 'experience dot'. Every 10 'dots' of experience increases their actual experience level by 1. It might sound odd, but keep an eye on the star graphic and you'll see what we mean. Success in sea battles and boarding parties increase you crew's experience dots significantly.

To replace lost crew or simply bolster their numbers (more Gunners! more Gunners!), have a word with the barmen in the taverns. They know all these louts. (*See section 5.3.1 "Dialogue Interfaces: Taverns."*)

Note: Not only does your crew's experience affect how well they fight, but it also determines how many enemy sailors will see sense and come over to your side. After all, would you rather be fighting the best, or fighting with the best? Exactly.

Morale

The prospect of glittering booty, a good fight, and dodgy port-side entertainment always lifted spirits on long voyages. But even so, too much time at sea and morale would gradually start to sink. Your crew's morale is represented by the flag icon. You can probably guess where this is going; but the lower the flag, the lower their morale, and vice versa.

Low morale can lead to dissent and mutiny, while the opposite brings happiness and increased efficiency. The rate at which morale fluctuates depends on your "Leadership" skill. Also, employing a good Boatswain will greatly ease management of crew morale. Everyday factors that influence it include victory in battle against stronger opponents. A well-fought battle with minimal losses can raise morale up to the maximum. Alternatively, a quick click of the "Raise Morale" button on the Crew Sheet will cross the unhappy sailor's palms with silver, thus ensuring their loyalty a little while longer. One consequence of neglecting your crew's morale is - drum roll please - mutiny! Or as it's also known as, "Revolt". This is covered on page 24.

Salary

The division of booty aboard Corsair's ships occurred according to strict rules. The first part of it belonged to the king or queen of the country the captain was affiliated to, and was taken as payment for the Letters carried by the captain. Once they had received their share, the remaining loot was divided equally between the officers and members of the crew, in relation to their services in battle and any losses they had suffered - there were also strict rules of compensation for any man who was injured or maimed in battle.

In our game, we use a similar - albeit greatly simplified - system for the division of spoils. At the end of each month, your crew will expect to receive a certain percentage of that month's net profit. 12.5% for the crew, 50% for you, the captain. Your net profit is the amount difference between your money at the beginning of the month, and that at the end of the month, come pay time.

For these purposes though, the cost of purchasing a new ship that month does not come out of your net profit. E.g. you start the month with 100,000 Piastres, and then buy a ship for 50,000 Piastres. The crew will still expect their share to come from the 100,000. This is because, well, a ship is a ship, is a ship, and without one you wouldn't have the 100,000 in the first place.

By the same token, repairs made to the ship, or purchase of goods essential to her running, reduce the sum you pay to your crew. They understand that a leaky ship with holes in the sails and empty cannons can not possibly hope to yield a profit. Finally, any officers you have employed receive a fixed salary, and in our system don't depend on your profits.

Epidemic

Medical epidemics were a frequent phenomenon in the Caribbean at the time, and spread like wildfire between whole colonies via the constant flow of marine traffic. If you visit a colony in which epidemic rages, you and your men stand every chance of becoming infected too. It will negatively impact crew morale, drain their experience, and even kill the poor bastards. Access to Medicine, which can be bought at any un-affected colony, will speed the epidemic on its way, especially if you're already carrying it when you're stricken down. Finally, spreading the sickness about amongst colonies is not going to win you any favours. Expect your rep to suffer.



Revolt

If it's just not your day, and the scurvy dogs are determined to mutiny, you will have to suppress it personally. When they do finally confront you, a warning will appear on screen. At this point, you may heave a disappointed sigh and draw your steel. Mutiny suppression plays out like a boarding raid, only this time it's your own men you're fighting. If you survive, the remaining crew will be greatly impressed and their loyalty will

shoot back up. You'll probably have a few vacancies to fill though.

If a mutiny occurs aboard a companion's ship and he manages to deal with it unaided, you'll be informed as such. The dead dogs aboard the companion's ship will, of course, also need replacing.

If the companion failed and the mutiny was a success, you'll be informed of the event and given two choices: "Scotch the mutiny" and "Sail away". If you choose the former, you will engage in combat with the rebel ship. You can try boarding and re-taking it again, and re/attaching it to the squadron (if you have a free officer). If you choose "Sail away" the rebel ship will leave your squadron and bugger off over the horizon, lock, stock and barrel. And good riddance to 'em too, mutinous scum. Arrr!

4.2.3 The Ship's Hold

Right, back to the boats. The contents of the ship's hold for the selected vessel are displayed in the panels below the "Captain" and "Crew" tabs. This handy list tells you how much of what you've got in your hold, how much it cost you, how much it weighs and where, as far as you know, the best price can be had for that item.

At the beginning of the game, that column will be empty, since you've no idea yourself. Once you start cruising around, wheeling and dealing, data will start to filter in here. Beware though, the market changes all the time and information listed here may not always be totally fresh. Even so, in time it will become an invaluable tool for the profit chasers among you.

Cargo weight and ship speed

Description of Goods	In hold	Bought at	Weight	Good price at
Cannon balls	810	0	82	Unknown
Grapes	310	0	30	Unknown
Maggon	810	0	81	Unknown
Sand	810	0	115	Unknown
Salt	45	4	123	Unknown
Black	102	0	423	Unknown
Food	325	1	325	Unknown

The speed of a ship is directly related to the amount of cargo she's carrying. A completely stuffed hold will slow the ship down to a mollusc-like pace. This is where the big slider at the bottom of the list comes in useful. By selecting an item in your hold and adjusting the slider, you are determining how much cargo to jettison overboard. The "Discard" figure and the item's values

in the cargo list will change accordingly. As you play with the slider, the information on your current speed and manoeuvrability in the ship's parameters list will change dynamically, allowing you to precisely balance the cargo/speed ratio. Click the giant 'tick' button to actually heave it all over the side. Make sure you really mean it though, as goods dumped overboard in this manner will float around on the surface for a little while before sinking down to Davey Jones' Wholesale Goods Emporium.

Note: Do not underestimate the efficacy of dumping cargo as a tactic to escape even the fastest brigs.

Food

Swinging from the rigging with a cutlass between your teeth, dodging grapeshot is always best done on a full stomach. You can replenish your ship's stores at any colony or from captured ships. Keep an eye on how much "Food" you have in your hold's main list, and how long it'll last from the green figure at the bottom of the panel. A good supply of food is essential to the happy and safe running of a ship, so keep an eye on them at all times.

4.3 The Logbook

There are three sections in your logbook- Quests, Rumours and Relations. Click each one to call up the relevant information.

Missions



This section of the logbook lists any missions you have undertaken and any relevant information. Unfinished business appears first in the list, and is question marked. Completed missions appear downstream and are marked with a tick. Click a mission to see the full story, and return to the main list with the "Esc" key. See section 5.4 "Missions" for more about this.

Rumours



During your travels around the Caribbean, you will doubtless hear many rumours. Likely most of it will be pointless gossip, but amongst the bilge, titbits of important information may lurk. Any rumours you hear will appear here for you to sort through at leisure. If any of them have any bearing on your missions, they'll appear in violet.

Relations



This interface allows you to evaluate the current political climate. The icon in the centre of the screen represents you, and all those around it, the other nations and factions within the game.

The coloured lines radiating from one to the other represents that party's feelings:

- Green** – Friendly
- Dark Blue** – Allied
- Red** – Enemy
- Grey** – Neutral

5. Landlubbers!

Terra firma in the game consists of eighteen real Caribbean islands, three of which are uninhabited, and one of which belongs to the pirates (the infamous Tortuga!). Movement between the islands is accomplished using the Global Map (See 7.2 "The Global Map"). Each island is home to one colony, some islands have more; Hispaniola for example, has three.

As it is everywhere else in the world, colonies are the main hubs of life in the Caribbean. At colonies you can repair ships, hire officers and sailors, buy and sell goods, tangle with national governors, make business deals, loiter around taverns and generally get up to all sorts of mischief.

5.1 Movement on Land

Movement on land is executed with the traditional W, A, S, D / Mouse combination, although you can of course redefine the controls if you're a total newbie, or some sort of non-traditionalist. W and S move you backwards and forwards, whilst A and D turn you left and right.



Screen layout

Health and Energy bars for you and any Fighters accompanying you appear in the top left corner (full description in 6. "Hand-to-Hand Combat"), whilst the date and your current location appear in the box top right.

Entering buildings

In AoP, we use a simple system of opening and closing doors to get in and out of buildings. You might be familiar with this method already. When you're close enough, an icon will appear just to the left of the location box. If the door is locked, a locked padlock icon will appear. If it's open, an unlocked padlock icon will appear (as in the screenshot above). Press the default "F3" or the "Space bar" on your keyboard to enter. There are several different places within a colony that you may wish to visit:

- **Governor's Residence** – Luxury homes, usually in or near the centre, where the nation's representatives - the governors - reside. Catch a glimpse of the luxury life here, and pick up a mission or two as well.
- **Tavern** – Investigate the latest rumours or hire sailors and officers. You'll usually also find people wanting to employ your services in one form or another, or merchants looking for escorts for their ships.
- **Store** – Here you can buy and sell goods. Of course. If there's anything you can't buy or see in a store, most likely there's already a market for it somewhere else with the local smugglers.... Store owners might also have work for you.
- **Shipyard** – The place to repair or upgrade your ship, or even buy a new one. Not all shipyards are large or busy enough to make the better- rated vessels, so head to the big colonies for the big toys.
- **Church** – The place to repair or upgrade your soul. Remember though, even absolution isn't free.

5.2 Talking to People

To talk to someone, approach them and press the "Space bar" to open the dialogue interface. Click the arrows to choose your answer, and press the "Space bar" again to confirm. If the person you're talking to has lots to say and all day to say it, a small arrow will appear in the bottom right corner. Pressing ye olde "Space bar" will prompt them to carry on with their Oscar-winning dialogue.

5.3 Dialogue Interfaces

Merchants, Innkeepers, shipyard owners, and various other more 'interesting' people have further dialogue options accessed from the initial interface. Read on for more!

5.3.1 Taverns

The tavern interface (pictured left) consists of three tabbed parts: Crew, Officers and Rumours.



Crew

From here you can hire crew for your ships.

At the top is the list of all ships in your squadron.

Cycle through them by clicking the arrows.

A ship's crew consists of four parts: Sailors, Soldiers, Musketeers and Cannoneers. See 4.2.3 "Crew" for a reminder of each.

When you have the maximum complement of Sailors or Gunners, your Sail operations and Reloading times will be at their fastest.

The figures on the left show the current / maximum number of that crew type currently aboard your ship. The figures to the right show how many men of that type you can

hire in the tavern. Experience and morale icons - for both standing and available crew - are displayed beneath the figures. Beneath them you have dynamic gold and food figures too.

To hire new crewmembers, select the desired type and use the left/right arrows either side of their name to adjust the number you wish to hire. The enormous, in-your-face 'tick' and 'cross' icons above will confirm your selection and complete the process. Your new whipping-boys will proceed to the ship without further ado.



Officers

From the Officer tab, you can hire your... officers!

There are never more than three officers in a tavern. Why? No one knows, and the officers aren't saying. It's an 'officer thing', probably. If there are no officers in the tavern, then you won't be able to access this interface.

Having selected an officer's portrait from the top of the window, his name, rank, desired monthly salary and an overview of his skills will appear.

To hire the officer, click the 'tick' icon next to his name. The hired officer then becomes a free, or

'unassigned' officer in your crew list. To assign him to a post, use the character interface (see 4.1.4 "Officers" for a reminder).

Rumours

The rumours tab is short and sweet, and was covered briefly in 4.3 "The Logbook". To actually hear something, you'll have to slip some money to the rumour monger in question before they'll unseal their lips.

Anything you do hear is then listed in the main pane of the rumours panel and, as in the rumours section of your logbook, will be highlighted in violet if it has any bearing on your current business.



5.3.2 Shipyards

Speaking to shipyard owners or employees yields the Shipyard Interface. From here you can repair and upgrade your ship/s, assign a free officer to a ship, or even buy a new one. A list of all ships in your squadron sits at the top of the screen. Information on the selected ship appears on the left side, with the Hull, Sails and Cannons icons nestled beneath its portrait. Here you can see her



upgrades, quantity of cannons, speed, turning rate and so on. Ships available for purchase are listed in the middle, with the selected vessel's characteristics mirrored on the right. There are three small buttons below your own ship's details. The first two are the "Repair" and "Upgrade" controls for your ships, and the third let's you assign captains to new vessels.



✕ Repair ship

To repair the currently selected ship, click here. (If the button is greyed-out, no repairs are necessary). In the window that opens, use the arrows to determine how much damage should be repaired, or hold the "Shift" key on your keyboard to jump straight to 100%.

🔧 Upgrade ship

You can upgrade your ship with thicker hulls, better quality sails, and more powerful cannons. Use the "Hull", "Sails" and "Cannons" tabs to

flick between the three and select the desired upgrade for each. Two levels of upgrade from the base material are possible for each area, as follows:

Hulls: Wooden – Standard.

- **Copper-plated** – Increases hit points by 5 %, reduces maximum speed and manoeuvrability by 5 %.
- **Bronze-plated** – Increases hit points by 10 %, reduces maximum speed and manoeuvrability by 10 %.

Sails: Canvas – Standard.

- **Cotton** – Increases speed and manoeuvrability by 2.5 %, but increases damage received by 5 %.
- **Silk** – Increases speed and manoeuvrability by 5 %, but increases damage received by 10 %.

Cannons: Copper – Standard.

- **Bronze** – Reduces the chance mishaps and cannon explosions by 20 %.
- **Iron** – Reduces the chance of mishaps and cannon explosions by 40 %.

Furthermore, there are two types of armament for your ships:

- **Cannons** – Cause more damage, but are short range and have long reloading times.
- **Culverins** – Cause less damage, but have a faster fire rate and shorter reloading times.

You can't equip a ship with weapons of greater calibre than that class of ship normally allows. To check the maximum allowable calibre of a ship, right-click it's name in the ship list. To upgrade an area, click it with your mouse and then hit the "Change" button. If it's greyed-out, then that upgrade has already been fitted. When you've finally finished fitting, or to quit the upgrade window without making any changes, click "Exit".

Buying a new ship

A list of ships available for purchase from that shipyard comprises the middle part of the interface. The selected ship's portrait and parameters appear on the right side of the screen. An enormous "Buy" button floats temptingly at the bottom. To buy a new ship for yourself, it is first necessary to either sell your current one, or give it to an unassigned officer. Once that's done, feel free to stab that big fat "Buy" button!

Finally, remember that new ships take a good two weeks of game time to build, and that shipyards only stock one of each. You'll have to come back in a fortnight if you want to buy the same type of ship more than once.

Note: As soon as you sell your own ship, it will be replaced by a Tartane – a small 8-cannon vessel only capable of moving between islands. This is just so you're not completely boat-less.

Expanding your squadron

You can increase the number of ships in your squadron by promoting free officers to captain. Either buy a new ship for your officer, assign him to a captured ship, or give him your old one when you buy yourself a new vessel. If you wish to buy a ship for one of your officers, first choose the new ship he'll be captaining, and press the "Buy" button. If the button appears greyed-out, then your "Tactics" skill is insufficient. Once the ship has been purchased, use the third small icon next to "Repair" and "Upgrade" to bring up the officer assignment window.

To learn how to transfer an officer to a captured ship, see 7.8 "Boarding Parties". However you decide to do it though, be aware that good captains will have high "Navigation", "Accuracy", "Cannons" and "Defence" skills.

Note: Remember, your "Tactics" skill determines your squadron size. Every two points in this skill allows you to add one more ship to your squadron.

5.3.3 Stores



Pillaging other vessels for their goods and selling them on to 'innocent' merchants is half the fun of the piracy game. When you talk to a merchant or storekeeper, the screen on the left will appear. Goods are listed down the middle, with the merchant's prices for those items on the right. The contents of the hold of the ship you've selected from the top of the screen appear on the left side of the goods column.

To buy or to sell goods use the scroll-bar on the right to cycle through the list, select an item by clicking it, and adjust the quantity to buy or sell by clicking the appropriate arrow either side of the goods' name. A summary of your potential transaction appears above the now-familiar 'tick'

and 'cross' icons. Which, obviously, you'll use to confirm or cancel the deal. Pressing the "CTRL" or "Shift" keys while clicking the amount arrows will drastically change the quantities. "Ctrl" increases the amount of goods per click by 10, while "Shift" allows you to go from none to all in the blink of an eye. An eye not covered by a patch. Arrr!

5.3.4 Buying and Selling



The hustle and bustle of a city marketplace in the afternoon makes a welcome change from the croaking of gulls and the splash of the waves. At the marketplace, you can buy new weapons and items and sell any unwanted junk you've accumulated.

Talking to a trader brings up this screen. The list of characters you can equip or whose items you can sell sits across the top. The selected character's skills and equipment appear below that. Right-click any item to see more information about it. The bottom part of the screen is a scrollable list of all the items you can buy or sell.

Buying and selling from traders works the same way as it does with storekeepers: you select the item you're interested in and use the arrows either side of its name to make it a purchase or a sale. The summary of your transaction sits above the 'tick' and 'cross' icons, which, as you should know by now, confirm or cancel the transaction.

5.4 Missions

Most people you meet will have some sort of business opportunity for you, whether it's escorting a merchant ship, a cargo run, passenger transfer or even an order for slaves. Governors can give you missions, but first you have to have a letter of marque (or 'patent') from them.

People with potential missions for you have a yellow exclamation mark above their head. Talk to them to find out what it is and if you accept it, the mission and all relevant information about it will appear in your logbook, and the exclamation mark will change to a grey question mark.

Once you've successfully met all the mission requirements, the question mark will turn yellow. A dark blue exclamation mark above a person's head indicates that they can offer you help with various game features and so on. Think of them as your 'Little Tutorial People'.

Letters of Marque

Before you can accept missions from a governor, you need to get a letter of marque from him. Talk to the governor at that nation's main colony. At the start of a new game, these colonies are:

- Bridgetown (Barbados Island) for England.
- Guadeloupe (Guadeloupe Island) for France.
- Santiago de la Vega (Jamaica Island) for Spain.
- St. Martin (St. Martin) for Holland.

Once he's given you the letter of marque, the governor will start giving you missions. Successful performance of these missions will lead to promotion. The higher your rank, the more complicated - and better paying - the missions you will receive. Eventually, you might even earn the rank of Vice-King of the Archipelago.

You cannot have more than one letter of marque at a time. If you take one from another nation's governor, your existing letter will be cancelled, and your reputation with that nation will go right down the privy. Moreover, you'll never be able to work for that nation again (see note). Think carefully when dealing with governors, they're not people to be messed about.

All information concerning your rank, salary, and number of missions completed and failed can be found in the "Career" interface (see 4.1.7 "Career").

Note: Sshhh! Come closer. It actually is possible to mend damaged national relations. As long as you have a bit of cash and know the right person to talk to...

5.5 Smuggling

Some goods you find on captured ships are considered to be contraband. Such goods will be marked in red. You can't sell this stuff in 'normal' stores, however there's always someone willing to pay you good money for it...

Uninhabited islands are havens for smugglers. Approach one, and any ships you see there are more than likely theirs. Talk to them and choose the "Trade" option from the dialogue window, from which you'll be able to off-load all your dodgy gear at exceedingly good rates.

Be warned though, the European nations are clamping down on the smuggling of contraband goods. As such, you might occasionally be attacked by Navy ships after concluding such deals. Learning the "Watcher" or "Invisible Squadron" abilities will help you out here.

6. Hand-to-hand Combat

As a free captain of the Caribbean seas of the 17th century, you will likely face more than your fair share of hand-to-hand fights. Not the least of which will occur at sea. As such, you'll be doing a lot of fighting on deck with enemy crew and captain during your numerous boarding parties. Besides boarding fights, you should expect to be drawing blood during the defence and attack of colonies, when encountering patrols in hostile cities, and every time some hairy old sea dog in the tavern thinks you looked at him strangely.

Health

Your health in the game is represented by a red bar around your character portrait when on foot, and consists of a number of hit points that increases as you gain levels or certain abilities. As you take damage, the bar decreases, and won't refill whilst you're still in combat. Refer to the illustration on page 27 to see what the health and energy bars look like.

Energy

Even Errol Flynn couldn't fight forever, and you're no exception. Your stamina, or 'energy', is the blue bar on the other side of your portrait. Each blow you strike in combat consumes a small amount of energy, so try to plan your attacks carefully. Unlike your health, your energy will slowly recharge throughout combat, so try to block or parry a few attacks to give it a chance to refill. Certain abilities will help you to manage your energy more efficiently.

Fighters

If you've assigned any officers as fighters, their portraits, health and energy bars will be listed under yours. Fighters will automatically appear when you engage in combat.

Enemy Health and Energy

Your enemies' health and energy bars appear above their heads. Every time you score a hit on one, you'll see the red health bar go down, and the amount of hit points you just sliced off will also briefly appear.

6.1 Types of attack

The melee combat system in AoP consists of four attacks, two feints, recoil, blocks, and a pistol attack. Mastering the blade and the pistol will greatly increase the odds of your survival.

- **Thrust** – Fast attack causing little damage, using little energy.
- **Slash** – Lashes out, causing more damage than a Thrust. Takes longer to execute but uses less energy.
- **Fierce Attack** – Consumes more than half of your total energy, but causes heavy damage and almost always gets past a block.
- **All-round attack** – Demands a third of your total energy and causes slight damage to all surrounding enemies. Any opponents lucky enough to dodge this are forced back.
- **Parry** – Knocks aside the enemy's blade, leaving him open. No energy required.
- **Feint** – Looks like a Fierce Attack. Time it for when an enemy makes his move and you'll intercept his blade and immediately hit back.
- **Block** – Blocks all strikes except for the Cutting strike. Each blocked strike uses up a small amount of energy.
- **Strafe** – Dance around the enemy, making it harder for him to hit you.
- **Fire Pistol** – Pistol fire causes damage to the enemy and forces him back.

Note: You can't reload your pistol during a fight; you'd be chopped liver by the time you did. To compensate for this, we have Quad-Charge pistols. These beauties fire four shots. Each shot deals a little less damage than one 'normal' pistol shot, but being able to peg four enemies one after the other is pretty good. Remember this when you're storming forts, boarding large ships, and queuing at the bar.

7. Sea Dogs!

It's all very well running around the islands talking to people, trading goods and picking up work for you and your crew, but we all know the real fun is to be had out at sea. After all, you're not going to carry the cargo from Island A to Colony B are you? No, so here we're going to discuss perhaps the most important aspect of the game - life on the ocean waves. Arrr!

7.1 Fast Commands

The Fast Command menu, pictured below, is a user-selectable series of commands that make life easier and more intuitive for the would-be captain. Pressing the default "Enter" key whilst in Sailing Mode (discussed shortly in 7.3), will bring up the Fast Commands menu. To select a Fast Command, use the default "Left" and "Right" Arrow keys on your keyboard to move the indicator, and hit "Enter" when it's sitting under the desired icon to select it. By default, the Enter / Exit icon remains on-screen most of the time. Just hit "Enter" on your keyboard to bring up the full menu.



Left to right, the Fast Commands are:

- **Enter / Exit** – Open and close the menu.
- **Moor** – Selecting this will dock your ship and put you ashore. Appears automatically when you're near a friendly port.
- **Sail To** – Allows you to quickly sail to a fort, city or another ship that you select from a list of known destinations. In "Boatswain" or "Captain" difficulty modes, "Sail to" is unavailable during combat.
- **Map** – Switch to Global Map view, if circumstances allow.
- **Reload** – Reloads the cannons with ammunition chosen from the sub-window.
- **Sails** – Changes the position of your sails to whatever you select from the sub-window.
- **Talk** – Talk with the captains of other ships.
- **Board** – Board the enemy ship. Appears automatically when the enemy ship is at a suitable distance for boarding.
- **Sneak** – Stealthily enter hostile areas. Appears automatically when you are near hostile islands.

Fast Commands are context-sensitive, and the appropriate icon will often appear automatically, depending on the situation. In that case, you can just hit "F3" to activate the command. For example, when approaching an island, the "Moor" icon will appear. When you get close enough to an enemy vessel, the "Board" icon will appear, and so on.

There are more Fast Commands specifically for controlling your squadron. They'll be discussed soon in 7.6 "Squadron Control".

Note: You can't directly control the ship when you are in Fast Command mode, so make it snappy. It's embarrassing to be sunk because you were playing around with colourful icons...

7.2 The Global Map



To get a gull's-eye-view of the world, use the "Enter Global Map" Fast Command.

The Global Map view is ideal for sailing between islands. You steer the ship with the now-legendary W, A, S, D keys. The mouse wheel will zoom in and out. Information on your ship; the condition of her hull and sails, is in the left top corner. The red strip represents your hull integrity, the blue strip the sails. The number in the white oval beneath the ship's portrait is the number of crew aboard that vessel. The dots above the ship's portrait represent it's rating, from one to six. Remember, the lower the rating, the bigger the ship. A six- dot vessel is less of a threat than a one- dotter.

The time and date sit top right of the screen. The large arrow above that indicates Wind Direction, and the grey bar beneath that indicates Wind Speed. The more the bar fills up, the faster (and stronger) the wind is blowing. The speed and direction of the wind have a direct effect on the speed of your ship. Crew morale is the coloured line beneath the time and date. The greener it is, the happier they are. Finally, the number below that is the number of days left before your food stores run out.

Random encounters

You're not alone out there of course. The Caribbean Sea is a busy place, full of merchants, patrol ships, military escorts and pirates, all with their own agenda. The sails of ships in the Global Map view corresponded to the flag of their nation. Pirate ships sail under the now-legendary 'Jolly Roger'. Ships with

green sails are free captains, seeking their fame and fortune in whatever way possible. When a ship appears, an icon will appear above the food stores number top right of your screen. This icon will give you a good idea of that ship's intentions:



This ship is hostile and will undoubtedly attack you.



A peaceful merchant, ally, or military ship of a friendly nation.



More than one ship engaged in combat amongst themselves.



When you do encounter other ships at sea, call up to your Watchman in the crow's nest by pressing "F3" on your keyboard. He'll shout back down to you and report what he sees. Based on this information, you can decide to either "Attack" or "Sail away".

It's a good idea to check with him as soon as possible, as ships that sail too close to you may decide to attack first. If that happens, you'll lose the option to "Sail

away" and will have to man the cannons.

Note: The more distance there is between you in the Global Map, the more there will be when you enter Sailing Mode, which is where combat actually takes place. As such, attacking first will provide you with a distance advantage, allowing you more room to manoeuvre in to a good position.

There are two other icons that will appear from time to time:



Storm

Storms are frequent natural phenomena on the Caribbean seas. In the Global Map view, heavy, dark clouds are a sure sign of trouble ahead. If you get too close to a storm, you'll be dumped into Sailing Mode where you'll have to fight your way out.



Islands

The Island icon appears when you get close to an island, at which point you'll appear in it's coastal waters in Sailing Mode.

Paper map

Use the paper map to chart your position in the Caribbean as a whole. Press the default "U" key on your keyboard to bring it up. Cities are indicated on the map with national flags, indicating ownership. To see more information on a city, right-click it with your mouse. The window that appears will give you information on any structures built there, and an approximate time to reach it. This information is dynamic, and will refresh itself every time you view it.

7.3 Sailing Mode

All sea battles, fort attacks and storm encounters - amongst other things - take place in Sailing Mode. This is where you actually get your hands dirty wrestling with the wheel and manning the rigging. In Sailing Mode, you can switch between two views:



- **Third Person view** – View your ship from the outside. Moving the mouse changes your view, and the mouse wheel zooms in and out.
- **On Deck mode** – Stand on deck and crack the whip personally. Move about using the W, A, S, D keys and the mouse to look around you.

Ship / Squadron status

At-a-glance information on you and any ships in your squadron appears top left, as described in 7.2.

Other ship's status

If the "Show Additional Information About Ships" option is switched on in the Game Options, coloured indicators will appear above any other ships in the vicinity. Like yours, the red bar indicates their hull integrity, the blue bar the sails', and the white bar the number of able crewmen. Under these coloured bars is a triangle, the colour of which signifies that ship's relationship to you: Red – hostile, Green – friendly, Gray – neutral.

Mini Map

The Mini Map in the top right corner shows your heading, with your ship's cannons firing arcs represented by the surrounding silhouette. Other ships are colour coded (as above), with the addition of wrecks in Blue. The box below the Mini Map indicates the time and date, with the top two icons representing your speed and the position of your sails (more on that next, in 7.4 "Direct Ship Control"). The bottom icon represents the type of ammunition currently loaded, and how much of it is left. The ranks of green dots represent your cannons. Once fired, the dots change from green to red whilst they're re-loading. Damaged or destroyed cannons are indicated by permanently red dots. More on this in 7.7. "Naval Combat".

Spyglass

As long as you have a spyglass equipped about your person, you can use it to inspect other ships. The amount of information you get depends on the quality of the Spyglass. Better 'glasses also see further. You can only use your Spyglass in the "On Deck Mode".



Press "Ctrl" on your keyboard to whip it out and have a look. Information about the ship you're viewing appears at the bottom of the screen. On the left is it's portrait and status, national flag, the number of cannons she's carrying, her speed and ammunition type. With the really top quality 'glasses, you'll also get some information on the captain of the ship, as pictured above.

7.4 Direct Ship control

You steer your ship with the default A and D keys, and by setting and striking the sails with the W and S keys respectively. Sails set in three positions:

- **Full Sails** – Large sail area allowing the ship to catch the most wind and move at full speed. Full sails suffer more damage from knippel fire.
- **Battle Sails** – Less sail area reducing damage taken to them during battle. However, your ship's turn rate increases and your maximum speed is reduced by half.
- **Furled Sails** – Receive almost zero damage from enemy fire, but leave you dead in the water.

The speed of your ship depends on its direction relative to the wind. Ships with straight sails manage great speeds with the wind. Ships with fore and aft sails can manage great speeds at an acute angle to the wind, but loose speed sailing directly with the wind.

For example, a schooner can easily come abreast of a galleon sailing against the wind, but the galleon will leave the schooner behind when sailing with the wind. Ships that have both straight and fore and aft sails have more unique characteristics. You can improve the speed of your ship by installing different types of sails or by learning certain abilities.

7.5 Communicating With Other Ships

If there are other ships nearby, you can speak with their captains, whether hostile or not. If they're close enough, engage the "Talk" Fast Command, and you'll see the following screen (pictured left). Available options are:

- **Get news** – Catch up on current events. Of course, it's hard to verify this stuff when you're out at sea, so any news you hear will be recorded in the "Rumours" section of your Logbook.
- **Trade** – Opens the Trade interface. You can do business with your fellow captains from here. A useful way of replenishing lost or damaged mission-essential goods before you reach your destination and have to explain how a cannon ball wiped out half someone's stock of coffee beans. These sort of details don't impress merchants. But what do they know eh?



If you start a conversation with the captain of a hostile ship, three more options will appear:

- **Demand Ransom** – If the hostile captain fears a kicking from you, he'll offer you a ransom, after which his ship will become neutral to you. You can demand ransom from any hostile ship.
- **Demand Surrender** – If the hostile captain has more cannon balls than brains and you give him a sound thrashing in combat, you can demand his surrender, upon which the "Pillage" interface will appear. See 7.8 "Boarding Parties" for more on this.
- **Offer Gold** – Works the opposite way from 'Demand Ransom', and might save you a good beating in exchange for a bit of the ol' glittery.
- **Continue Voyage** – This option is always available.

7.6 Squadron Control

To issue orders to other ships in your squadron, you use the "Fast Command" menu. You can switch between Fast Command of your ship and other ships in your squadron using the "Up" and "Down" Arrow keys on your keyboard.



Left to right, the Fast Commands for Squadron Control are:

- **Enter / Exit** – Open and close the menu.
- **Attack** – The selected ship will attack your current target until one of them sinks. Also appears automatically when hostile ships come into range.
- **Board** – The selected ship will fire Grapeshot at your current target before boarding it. Also appears automatically when hostile ships come into range.
- **Defend** – The selected ship will defend your current target.
- **Sail Away** – The selected ship will withdraw from the scene of battle.
- **Strike Sails** – The selected ship will strike sails and await further orders.

7.7 Naval Combat

You win battles at sea by either sinking or capturing the enemy ship. 17th century ship design placed the cannons along the boards of the ship, which is why ships need to be roughly parallel to each other to score good hits. However, some ships also mounted cannons at the stern, which were useful for dissuading pursuers. Also, certain canons were mounted on swivels, allowing for some degree of accuracy whilst coming about.

Ship's weapons

As mentioned in 5.3.2 "Dialogue Interfaces: Shipyards", there are two types of armament for your ship; cannons and culverins. Cannons are short range, high impact weapons with long reloading times. Culverins are long range, low impact weapons with shorter reload times. The calibre of your weapons also determines how much damage they're capable of, with higher calibre guns being more powerful.

Types of ammunition

There are four types of charges for your ship's weapons: Cannon balls, Bombs, Knippel and Grapeshot:

- **Cannon balls** – Simple lead balls. Cannon-balls have the longest range, but cause less damage. Well-armoured ships and forts laugh at cannon balls.
- **Bombs** – A lead ball filled with gunpowder that explodes on contact with the enemy ship, causing large amounts of damage to both hull and crew.
- **Knippel** – Two small balls or pieces of metal junk connected by a chain. Knippel slices through sails and rigging like the proverbial hot knife.
- **Grapeshot** – Absolutely horrific stuff. A good shot from close range can wipe out half the crew in one go. The napalm of it's day.

To switch between the four charges, use the default 1, 2, 3 and 4 keys on your keyboard. Reloading with the selected charge occurs straight away, so it's best to wait until you've just fired a shot off.

Targeting

In the Third Person view, targeting is automatic. You just need to manoeuvre your ship until the enemy is in range of your cannons, and then hit the default "Space bar". Your chance to hit the enemy depends on your "Accuracy" skill.

In the On Deck mode, you aim the cannons manually. A cross-hair indicates their vertical angle of fire; therefore the higher you aim, the farther the shot will fly. The cross-hair will turn red when the angle is likely to yield a hit. The direction of fire is tied to your view.

Obviously your shots are not instantaneous, so take into account the speed of the enemy ship.

Note: Targeting a friendly ship will turn the cross-hair green. The red 'good to fire' cross-hair triggers off the enemy ship's hull. To target his masts and sails, aim a little higher.

Cannon explosions

Damp or low-quality gunpowder, inexperienced gunners and cheap cannons often lead to miss-fires and explosions. The probability of this happening to you depends on your "Cannons" skill and the quality of cannon you've equipped. See 5.3.2 "Dialogue Interfaces: Shipyards" for a reminder of the different types of cannons available. Of course, a direct hit from enemy fire will also put your cannons out of commission. Replacements can only be obtained from shipyards.

7.8 Boarding Parties

If you thought ship-to-ship combat was the height of excitement, wait until you're blasting seven shades of sugar out of each other and swinging across to engage the enemy hand-to-hand. That's exciting. To board an enemy ship, you need to manoeuvre as close as possible to it so that your crew can throw their grapples across. The distance they can do this at is determined by your "Boarding" skill and various additional abilities.

As soon as you're able to board a ship, the "Board" Fast Command icon will appear. Use the shortcut "F3" key on your keyboard to begin the attack. You can be boarded too, of course, in which case you'll have to repel all boarders before you can escape. Arrr! Rip them apart!

Whoever's hosting the boarding party, there are rules about the number of invitations sent. There can never be more than fifteen per side, including Fighter officers. For example, if you have 100 men and true in your crew, and the enemy has 150, then your party will consist of 10 men, and his, 15.

When the last enemy sailor falls and your men sheathe their weapons, you'll still have to face the enemy captain, mano-a-mano. Catch your breath, then hit "F3" again. You'll find yourself in his cabin, ready for the final confrontation...

Now, not every foe you face on the high seas will be as tough as they'd like to think, and occasionally they'll surrender to you without a fight, or much of a fight anyway. If this is the case you will see the "Pillage" interface. The probability of the enemy surrendering to you depends on the differences between the two crew's numbers, experience and morale.



Pillaging a ship

If the enemy ship surrenders without a fight you will have the power to decide her fate. Her captain can be killed or imprisoned. If you imprison him, a ransom amount and the nation who will cough it up appear to the right of his portrait. Drop him off at one of that nation's cities to claim the money.

After that mangy dog has been dealt with, you'll have to decide what to do with his former crew.

If needed, you can replenish your crew from his, but this will have a negative effect on their general experience and morale. Otherwise, you can either kill or enslave them. Alternatively, leave them aboard their ship, thus providing a ready-made crew for any free officer you wish to captain it.

After you finish with the crew and captain, you'll be presented with the Pillage interface. If the enemy ship refused to surrender, and you killed every last man-jack aboard, the Pillage interface will appear immediately.



Information on your ship is on the left and the captured ship, on the right. Right-click a ship portrait for more information. Use the scrollbar or mouse wheel to cycle through the list of goods, and the now-familiar arrows either side of the goods' name to transfer it between ships. A summary of your operations appears in the usual place, along with the 'tick' and 'cross' icons for confirming or cancelling your actions. As always the "CTRL" and "Shift" keys will radically alter the amounts in question when used with the amount arrows. "Ctrl" increases the amount of goods per click by 10, while "Shift" takes it to the max. To skip the faffing around with quantities, click the "Take all" button to grab everything at once. To the victor, the spoils!

Beneath the "Take all" button you'll see information on the current speed, manoeuvrability and upgrades of both ships, allowing you to make a more informed decision about whether or not you want to keep the ship and add it to your squadron.

There are two ways of doing this. The first is to use the "Swap ship" button. This will swap your own ship for the conquered enemy vessel. You can then assign a free officer to captain your old tug. The second option is the "Capture Ship" button. As long as you have a free officer, clicking this button will simply add the ship to your squadron, whereupon you must assign her a captain. Officers assigned as captains should have good "Navigation", "Accuracy", "Cannons" and "Defence skills". Of course, if you just plan to sell the ship at the nearest port, then any old officer will do. Perhaps that grinning idiot on the cannon decks with no eyebrows, one leg, two hooks and an inability to say anything other than 'boom!'.

Note: Remember that any operation involving assigning officers as captains to other ships, or adding ships to your squadron, depend on you a) having a free officer, and b) having an appropriate "Tactics" skill- 2 points of tactics = 1 more ship for you and your merry band.

NETHERLANDS ANTILLES

ARUBA

Discovered

CURACAO

BOINAIRE

Willemstad



Rogues D

RI

8. Colonies

As the game progresses, the colonies of the Caribbean grow and expand naturally. As they grow, they become richer and more interesting places to visit; the number of skilled sailors and officers for hire increases, merchants stock more and better goods, and shipyards begin building better ships.

Of course, a busy, growing colony will have a busy, growing treasury too, making them valuable targets for anyone with ambition and a bit of gunpowder to back it up. But as they grow, so too do their defences: the fort at a new or poorly developed colony might only be armed by thirty-forty cannons. At a rich, well-developed colony, the number of cannons can shoot up to two hundred, including mortars! Not to mention the hordes of angry soldiers garrisoned there too.

You can set the overall growth rate at the start of a new game from the Game Options menu.

Enemy Colonies

If you're enjoying hostile relations with a nation, you'll be barred from it's ports. Inevitably though, the point will come when you have to enter an enemy colony in order to carry out a mission. Rather than go in all-cannons blazing, your best bet is to moor off the coast of the island somewhere, swim ashore and use the "Sneak" Fast Command to get into town (more on "Fast Commands" in 7.1).

Whilst on enemy territory, try to be as cool as possible. Don't approach anyone - they'll raise the alarm before you can say 'Ahoy!'. Definitely avoid the guards - they're usually well-armed and well-trained and have the advantage of numbers. Just conclude your business as soon as you can and get out again. You have been warned.

8.1 Capturing Colonies

This is always an ambitious and daring business, fraught with insane amounts of danger and risk. Not to mention explosions. Big explosions, as you take on the huge stone Forts that protect the colonies. These forts are invariably bristling with literally hundreds of cannons superior in every way to ship-board weapons, backed up by legions of well-trained, experienced men keen to see what your guts would look like hanging off the end of their sabres.

Still feel like taking on an entire colony? Good, then read on. Capturing a colony basically means overpowering it's Fort and all the men garrisoned therein. The madness is two-fold:

Stage 1: Attack The Fort

From an off-shore position, you must use the weapons of your entire squadron to destroy all of the fort's cannons. Once you've done this, a Fast Command icon will appear under your Mini Map to take you ashore for Stage 2. However, after destroying the cannons you can - and probably should - let rip with the Grapeshot, to soften up the men inside, who will by now be so apocalyptic with rage that they'd happily kill their own mothers to get their hands on you. Stage 2 gives them this opportunity.

Stage 2: Engage The Garrisoned Soldiers Hand-to-Hand

Once you're ready to go ashore and make the arse-kicking truly personal, hit the Fast Command icon. Storming Forts in this manner works in much the same way as a Boarding Party, except this time you'll have up to two thousand enraged gorillas to cut your way through before you can plant your flag and retire for tea and crumpets. Or rum and tack. Or whatever it is you prefer to indulge in at such times.

Once the last man has fallen, the Fort will surrender and you'll be presented with this screen:



In this interface, you are tasked with deciding the colony's fate. You have three choices:

Pillage

Pillaging the place earns you a ransom equal to 50% of the colony's treasury. Several buildings will also be destroyed in the process, and inevitably the population will take a dent too.

Raze

Razing the colony yields its entire fortune to you. It also entails the total destruction of the place and the wholesale slaughter of most of its populace. It takes a looong time for a colony to recover from a razing.

Capture

You can take a colony in your own name, or in the name of the nation you serve, although that can only happen when you've been directly ordered to do so by a governor. As long as you have a free officer to confer governorship on, you can take the colony for yourself. Be warned though; once you start 'liberating' colonies in this manner, all nations will turn against you, and you'll have to pay attention to your colonies' defence.

After you've made your choices here, all ships in your squadron will automatically put to and be repaired to full operating efficiency.

Ransoming Governors

If you attack and successfully occupy a nation's main colony, its governor will try to escape. The lily-livered goat will board his personal ship and make for the nearest of his nation's own colonies. On the Global Map (see 7.2 "The Global Map") his ship will be marked by a red sails icon. If you capture the governor, you can be sure of a fat ransom for his freedom.

8.2 Colony Management

Now that you've overcome the odds and captured a colony for yourself, you need to assign a free officer to run the place. Once you've done that, it's time to roll up your sleeves and get to grips with the Colony Management interface:



On the left side of the screen is the traditional list of all the colonies you own, with names and governor names. Under the main governor portrait are the vital statistics on the colony:

- **Governor** – That's him, that's the gov'nor.
- **Level** – Higher levels allow for more buildings.
- **Population** – Some buildings require the colony to reach a set population before they can be built.
- **Gold** – How much of the good stuff there is in the colony's treasury.
- **Morale** – General morale of the population.
- **Loyalty** – Some buildings require the colony to be of a certain loyalty before they can be built.
- **Sailors** – Number of employable sailors you'll find hanging around the taverns.
- **Garrison** – Number of soldiers garrisoned in the local fort.
- **Aggression** – Monitors threats to the colony from other nations.
- **Epidemic** – Monitors the status of epidemics within the colony.

The right side of the interface shows you what buildings and improvements can and have been built in that colony. The names of the improvements are colour coded thus:

- **Red** – You cannot build it.
- **Green** – You can build this one.
- **Grey** – You've already built it.

Right-clicking a portrait will bring up a list of the materials and pre-requisites needed to start work on that building/improvement.

Types of buildings and improvements

There are various different structures to be found in colonies, and all of them have tangible benefits to being built:

- **Fort** – forts protect a colony from attack, and can be upgraded up to four times. Each upgrade gives the fort better weapons, as follows:
 - **Fort** – Guns up to 32 pounds.
 - **Bastion** – Culverins and cannons up to 36 pounds.
 - **Citadel** – Culverins, mortars and cannons up to 42 pounds.
 - **Castle** – Culverins, mortars and cannons up to 48 pounds.
- **Shipyard** – The better the shipyard a colony has, the bigger and better the ships it can build. Shipyards can be upgraded up to three times:
 - **First upgrade** – 6th and 5th rated ships can be built.
 - **Second upgrade** – 4th and 3rd rated ships can be built.
 - **Third upgrade** – 2nd and 1st rated ships can be built.

The Fields, Fishing Harbour, and Windmill improvements increase the amount of food in the colony. Harvested food is kept in the city stores, where you can purchase it for your ships.

- **Barracks** – Gives bonus experience to soldiers garrisoned in forts, and allows the training of experienced sailors and officers.
- **Storehouse** – Increases food storage capacity.
- **Church** – Increases the morale of the colony's citizens.
- **Naval Academy** – Sailors and officers in taverns will be more professional, and any soldiers garrisoned in forts get an experience bonus.
- **Expedition** – A one-off event. The Expedition sends a team to explore the depths of the island in search of gold or silver veins for mining:
 - **Silver mine** – Increases funds to the colony.
 - **Gold mine** – Further increases funds to the colony.

If your colony starts running out of money, you can always subsidise it from your own stash. Click the "Gold in Treasury" button on the Colony Management screen, and use the familiar 'Big Slider' to specify the amount you wish to transfer to the colony. In the same way, you can also leech-err, borrow funds from the colony.

Governor

When appointing an officer to the post of Governor of a colony, he should ideally be well-versed in the following skills:

- **Leadership** – Influences the overall speed of the colony's development.
- **Trading** – Influences the speed at which the colony generates money.
- **Cannons** – Influences the reload speed of the colony's fort's cannons.
- **Accuracy** – Influences the accuracy of the colony's fort's cannons.
- **Fencing** – Improves the experience of the colony's soldiers, increasing their chance of successfully defending the place from attack.

You can replace your governors at any time. For this purpose press the "Assign Governor" button, which is accessible only if you have free officers. In the window that appears next, select the new candidate, click "Assign", and the incumbent fat-cat will be booted out in favour of the fresh blood. It's one of those things that games do so much better than real life...

Colony defence

Enemy nations can and will attack your colony. When this happens, a message will pop up informing you which colony is being harassed, and how long it has left before it succumbs to the aggressors. The amount of time a colony can hold out before you get there to help defend it, depends on several factors:

- **Governor capability**
- **Colony Loyalty**
- **Colony Morale**
- **Experience of garrisoned soldiers**
- **Fort's Upgrade status.**

If you're confident that your colonists can handle the situation, then fine. They may well repulse the attack on their own. It's up to you to decide if it's worth the risk. If you do rush to their aid though, the battle will be over when the last enemy ship has been sunk. If however, having engaged the aggressors, you leave the coastal waters of the island, then the colony will surrender to the enemy. Bah!

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