"I charge you, as Athenians who know by experience what landing from ships on a hostile territory means, and how impossible it is to drive back an enemy determined enough to stand his ground and not to be frightened away by the surf and the terrors of the ships sailing in, to stand fast in the present emergency, beat back the enemy at the water's edge, and save yourselves and the place."

Demosthenes speech to the Athenians prior to the Battle of Pylos

Historical Background

A small force of Athenians led by Demosthenes is fortifying a position on the headland of Pylos in Spartan territory. The Spartans respond by sending a fleet of 44 ships to block the harbour, occupy the island of Sphakteria and land troops to attack the relatively weak seaward facing fortifications. Anticipating the Spartans will attack where his fortifications are weakest, Demosthenes takes a body picked hoplites supported by archers from the fortifications to oppose a Spartan amphibious landing on the beach.

The approach to the beach is constricted by the narrow Sikia channel which only allows two Spartan ships to pass through at a time into the Bay of Navarino The Athenians hold off the piecemeal Spartan landings until relieved by an Athenian fleet which defeats the Spartans and forces the surrender of those occupying Sphakteria. This surrender shatters the myth of invincible Spartan courage.

The numbers of troops involved were small. Demosthenes had only a little over 100 hundred hoplites. The picked unit deployed on the beach was 60 strong. His remaining Athenian hoplites had been reinforced by 40 Messenians. Many of his troops were sailors armed with improvised weapons. The Spartans had more men but their numbers are not known. For purposes of the game each hoplite unit is assumed to represent around 60 men, psiloi units 20 men and each Spartan ship represents seven.

The scenario

The game recreates the Spartan amphibious landings in an attempt to dislodge the outnumbered Athenian defenders on the beach and take the fortifications behind. It makes for an ideal two-player game but you could add another player on the Spartan side. Very few troops are involved but the scenario is relatively complex which makes for an interesting and exciting game with a small number of units.

You will need at least a 6' x 4' table to accommodate the sea, beach and fortifications. A larger table will give more scope for manoeuvre. The map on the following page is for an 8' x 6' table and is gridded in 1' squares. If using a smaller table take out up to 1' from each edge.

In laying out the table it is important to have enough sea room so that most of the fighting will take place near the centre line. Otherwise the Athenian player may have to stretch to reach the action.

Forward movement for formed hoplites may drift 22 ½° either to right or left.

No penalty for psiloi shooting at unformed hoplites even if frontally.
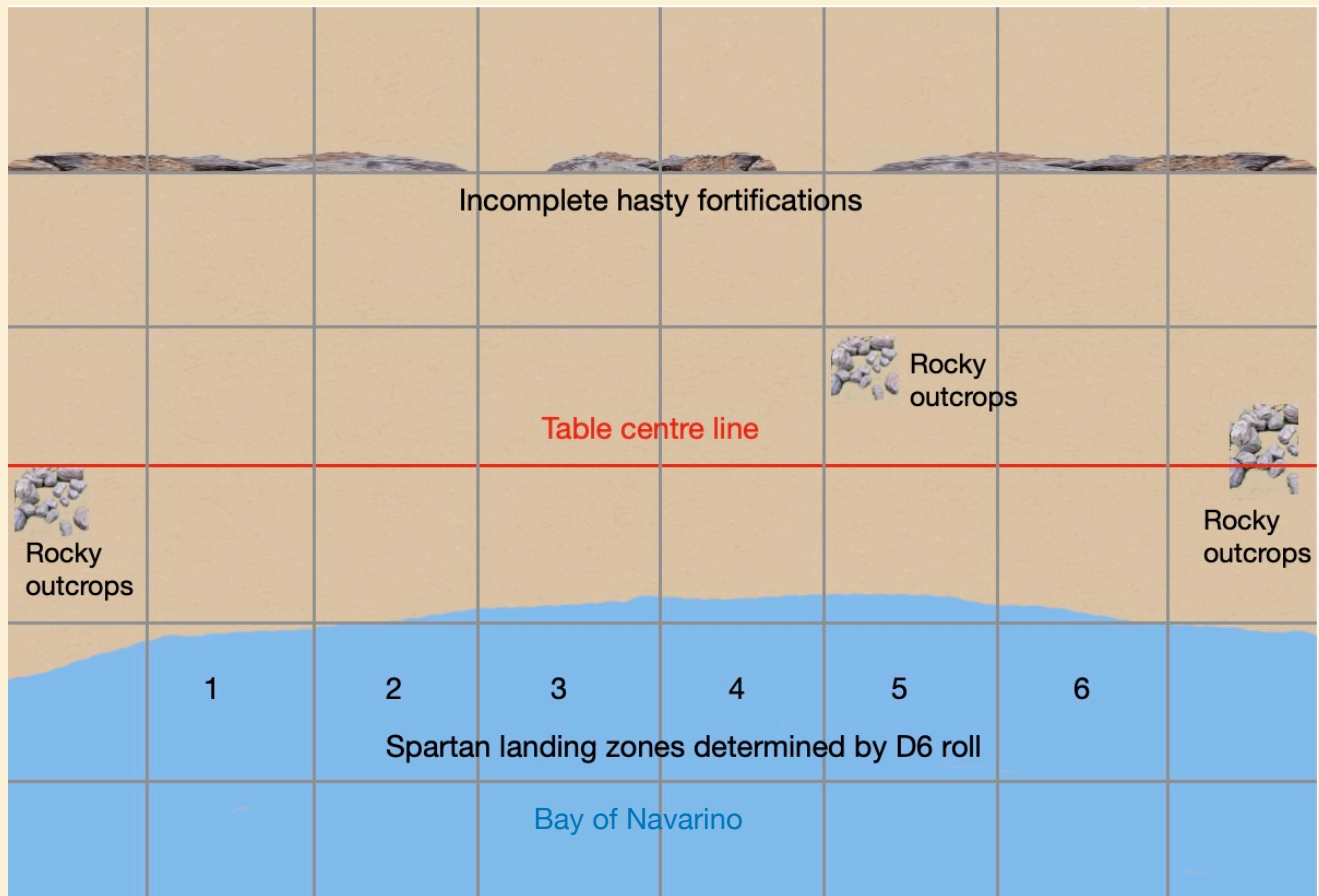
Table layout gridded in 1 foot intervals. Rocky outcrops and sea shallows (out to 2") count as difficult terrain. Sea beyond 2" from shore is impassable. Units may only leave or enter the hasty fortifications through the gaps, becoming unformed to do so. Due to difficult navigation Spartan ship landings are determined by a die roll (see Spartan deployment)

Athenian order of battle & deployment

Leader — Demosthenes (AvD for CPs, re-roll 2 once only)

The following are initially deployed behind the incomplete fortifications:

> One unit of Messenian & Athenian hoplites C Grade

> Two units of armed sailors (peltasts)

The following are initially deployed anywhere on the beach behind the red table centre line:

> One unit of picked Athenian hoplites B Grade (Demosthenes attached)

> Two units of archers (psiloi)

Athenians deploy their units on the beach keeping those behind fortifications out of sight until first Spartan ship has landed. Then deploy troops behind fortifications (this will keep the Spartan player guessing). All have formed up aggression and no DPs.

The Athenians do not need to signal the advance to move against enemy.

Note: *in order for troops behind fortifications to move they will need to take a control test unless Demosthenes is within 4" of the hoplites (sailors will always need to take a control test). None of these troops may attempt to move before the first Spartans have entered the bay. They may only exit the fortifications through the gaps, becoming unformed to do so. Demosthenes may take a command action to leave the picked Athenians (moving 6" per turn) to join the Messenians & Athenians should he wish to.*

Gods may be consulted until the first Spartan ship enters the bay.

The Enemy

All Spartans are on board ships on their table edge (beyond the bay). Spartan ships may only enter the bay one every second turn due to the constricted channel. Once in the bay they may attempt to land troops. The seas are rough and the shore rocky so landing will not be a simple matter.

Spartan order of battle & deployment

All Spartans are initially on board ships on their table edge with formed up aggression and no DPs. Ship templates which may be copied, printed and cut-out are on the last page (courtesy of Peter O'Toole's *War against the Spartans*).

Thrasymelidas (Admiral and commander in chief) AvD for CPs

On board his flagship controlling the fleet. Once his flagship enters the bay, remaining ships will need to take a control test to sail into the bay, so the Spartan player may wish to hold him back. Should he chose to land he may then join any hoplite unit on shore.

Brasidas (leader of the landing party) AvD for CPs , re-roll 2 once only

On board one of ships 1-4 and may land with it.

> Ship 1. One unit of Spartiates A (Spartan citizen hoplites)
>
> Ship 2. One unit of Perioikoi B (non-citizen hoplites)
>
> Ship 3. One unit of Skiritai B (lightly equipped non-citizen hoplites from Skiritis)
> *Alternatively they could be 2 units of peltasts*
>
> Ship 4. One unit of Neodamodes C (freed helots serving as hoplites)
>
> Ship 5. Two units of Helots (psiloi)
>
> Ship 6. Admiral's flagship, no troops. May not enter the bay

Spartans place ships on their table edge in order of sailing from left to right. Helots may only land once hoplites are on shore (otherwise they will simply run away). Decide which ship contains Brasidas. Place leader markers and a figure or two from each unit on their ships for identification of who is on which ship. The Athenian player should not know that the Admiral's flagship does not contain further troops for landing (place a hoplite figure on board to do this).

Leaders may raise aggression for troops on their ship or an adjacent one (in order of sailing). It takes 1 extra CP to raise aggression of troops on an adjacent ship. The admiral's flagship may be positioned anywhere in the line (to aid aggression increases). It does not block the next ship from sailing.

Signal to advance must be given by Thrasymelidas. That means that Spartan ships may begin to attempt landing — 1 ship every other turn in the order of sailing.
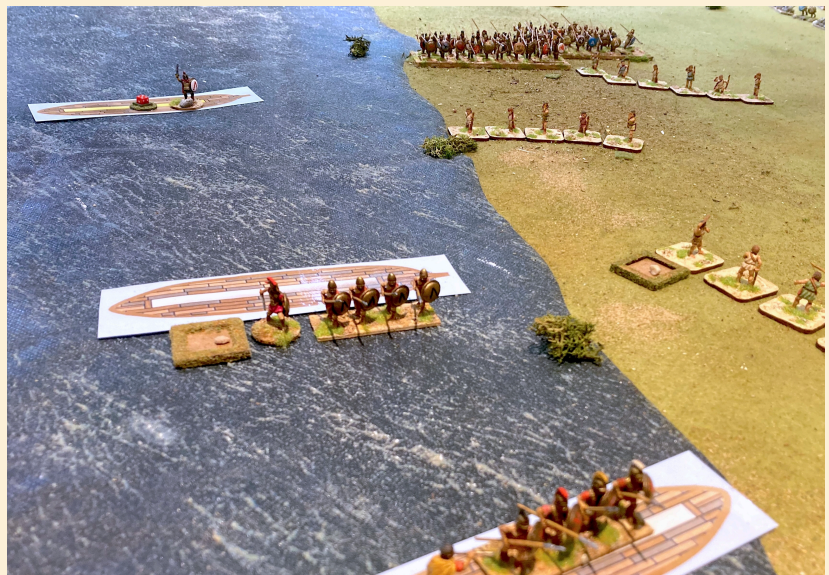
Gods may be consulted until the signal to advance is given. Aggression may not be further raised after signal to advance given except by Brasidas when on shore for units also on shore.

Additional God Cards

Sacrifice to Poseidon x2
or - 1 to any one ship die roll. May be retained to play later.

If the **Cerberus' Bite** card is drawn the hound of hell may join any hoplite unit instead of cavalry.

Landing Troops

Signal to advance must be given by Thrasymelidas. That means that Spartan ships may begin to attempt landing — 1 ship every other turn in the order of sailing. Take control test for ships if Thrasymelidas' flagship no longer on table edge.

Historically only 2 ships at a time could pass through the narrow Sikia channel to enter the bay — each game ship represents seven.

Gods may be consulted until the signal to advance is given. Aggression may not be further raised after signal to advance given except by a leader on shore for units also on shore.

It takes 1 full turn for a ship to enter the bay. It may attempt to beach and disembark its men on the following turn.

Roll 1 D6 to determine if the landing is successful. +1 to roll for Brasidas' ship and Flagship

> **1. Heavy seas abort landing.** Ship returns to Spartan table edge and becomes last in order of sailing. Men on board drop 1 aggression level.

> **2-3. Ship grounded 2" from beach.** Men may disembark unformed with 1 DP and drop one aggression level.

> **4-6. Ship beaches successfully.** Men may disembark unformed.

For ships grounded or beaching roll 1D6 to determine where they land (see map landing zones 1-6).

Ships that have successfully disembarked their troops without grounding may pull away the following turn to free that disembarkation zone. Grounded ships block that zone.

If a later ship rolls a blocked landing zone it may land on an adjacent zone (including the unnumbered ones). If all are blocked it must bear away to return to Spartan table edge and become last in order of sailing.

Disembarkation

Troops disembark unformed. It takes 1 full turn for the ship to beach and disembark men. Then 1 turn for men to re-form once on land.

Alternatively they may remain unformed to fight, hitting on a 6 only.

Units from grounded ships must first move (max 1 AvD for move) to make it to the beach before re-forming.

Victory Conditions

The game ends 15 turns after the first Spartan unit lands.

If at that point the Spartans have at least one hoplite unit of more than ½ strength inside the Athenian fortifications they have won. Anything else is an Athenian victory.

It will be a only a marginal Athenian victory if they no longer have at least one unshaken hoplite unit on the table.

Spartan Ships

On the following page are templates for the Spartan ships which can be printed off and cut out. They are scaled down to suit the game, given that each ship represents seven actual ships.

These are from Peter O'Toole's *War Against the Spartans*, copied with permission. This excellent scenario book is available at: https://tinyurl.com/4axxaxzm