

"Board the Fort on the Run in a Seaman-like Way"

US Naval Landing Party for Sharp Practice (playtesting version)

This represents a small detachment from one or two ships, landing to conduct a raid, capture a spy or smuggler, rescue loyal Unionists or liberate slaves on the Atlantic Coast or in the rivers.

As there were as good as no boarding actions during the American Civil War, sailors wouldn't be accustomed to fighting in close quarters. There was at least one occasion when they did attack enemy lines with close combat weapons (the ill-fated assault on Fort Fisher), but most of the time it seems that they preferred to shoot at the enemy from a distance. Admiral Dahlgren's instructions from August 8, 1864 state that "skirmish drill" is most appropriate for sailors. In a similar fashion, during landing operations US Marines seldom operated in regular line formations and mostly were deployed as light infantry. Shooting practice, however, was encouraged and they seemed to have been good marksmen.

Most of the sailors were armed with the Plymouth musket (Whitney Model 1861) and the use of buckshot at short range was recommended by Dahlgren. Some .52 cal. Sharps and Hankins rifles were also in circulation. Pistols and cutlasses were certainly used. The Marines were armed with the Springfield rifle musket (M1855).

US Naval Landing Force

Leader Status III (9 pts)

Three Groups of Marines, Rifled Muskets (33 pts)

Leader Status I (3 pts)

One Group of Sailors, Rifled Muskets (9 pts)

Leader Status I (3 pts)

One Group of Sailors, Rifled Muskets (9 pts)

Leader Status I (3 pts)

One Group of Sailors, Rifled Muskets (9 pts)

Leader Status I (3 pts)

Dahlgren Light Boat Howitzer (5pts)

=86pts

US Marines				Type	Skirmishers
Points	11	Weapon	Rifled Muskets		
Formation	First Fire	Controlled Volley	Crashing Volley	Step Out	Drill
Always	Yes	No	3	2	-
					Characteristics

US Sailors					Type	Irregular Skirmishers
Points	9	Weapon	Rifled Muskets			
Formation	First Fire	Controlled Volley	Crashing Volley	Step Out	Drill	Characteristics
No	Yes	No	-	2	-	Buck&Ball, Aggressive

Dahlgren Light Boat Howitzer					Type	Light Gun with 5 Crew
Points	5	Weapon	Muskets			
Formation	First Fire	Controlled Volley	Crashing Volley	Step Out	Drill	Characteristics
No	No	No	-	2	-	

DAHLGREN LIGHT BOAT HOWITZER					
Weapon	Dice	Reload Actions	Canister	0-100cm	100+cm
Light gun	10	2	30cm	5+	6+
Crew of 5, deploys like line infantry. An artillery crew of 4 or more can move the gun as walking -1 pip but must use both actions to move. A crew of 3 or less can move the gun rolling two dice and discarding the lower dice.					
Only five rounds of ammunition (determine before the game how many are canister).					

Sources

It is difficult to get detailed information on the operations of naval landing parties. I'm very grateful to Mr Chuck Veit, President of the reenactment group 'U.S. Naval Landing Party', who patiently answered my questions and generously shared his research. His [website](#) is a treasure trove of information, while his book [A Dog Before a Soldier](#) contains many ideas for scenarios.