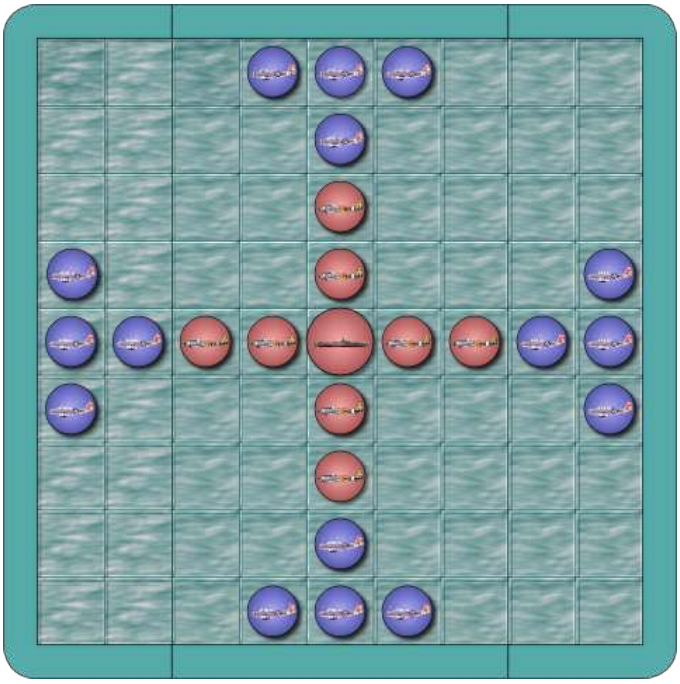
Sea Battle Tafl



It is 1943. A Japanese aircraft carrier has become detached from its fleet, and is steaming to catch up. Suddenly, out of the clouds, a squadron of U.S. bombers appears. Whether the encounter is by design or by chance, the bombers' opportunity to sink the carrier is too good to miss. The bombers form up to approach the carrier from four directions.

But the carrier, despite being separated from its fleet, is not defenceless. Its complement of fighters takes to the air in order to defend their ship. The fighters are outnumbered, but their task is easier: to protect the carrier as it makes its escape and rejoins the rest of the Japanese ships nearby.

This is a setting for hnefatafl, designed by the Vikings. It is a modern variant called "sea battle tafl", which is elegant and well balanced. Normally, sea battle tafl is assumed to depict longships protecting a precious cargo ship from pirates. But here, a more modern setting illustrates how versatile hnefatafl is for adopting different themes. The game has been used to represent everything from a Viking seige to battles at sea, from a Lord of the Rings scenario to an escape from prison and even an alien invasion in space!

This print-and-play file is designed to be printed by a colour printer on A4 sheets of card and paper. A black and white printer can be used, but some extra step will be needed to ensure the pieces can be distinguished from one another. The game can also be printed on U.S. Letter paper.

Assembly Instructions

Page 1, this page, is the story and instructions. You may print it or not as you please. *Pages 2 and 3* contain the area of sea over which the battle will be fought. This is unmarked, as no square in sea battle tafl is more important than any other. *Page 4* contains the pieces, in the form of shields: a large red one for the aircraft carrier, eight small small red ones for the fighters, and sixteen blue ones for the fighters. This page also contains reminder cards, one for each player. *Pages 5 and 6* contain the rules leaflet for the game of sea battle tafl.

1. If printing the front page, paper is sufficient and a black and white printer will do.

2a. If you wish to laminate the board, print pages 2 and 3 on paper or card. Laminate the sheets with good quality laminating pouches: poor quality pouches may stick only at the edges. Then cut out the board parts with scissors or a craft knife.

2b. If gluing the board to backing card, then print pages 2 and 3 on paper, glue the paper to thick card, and when dry, cut out the board sections with a craft knife.

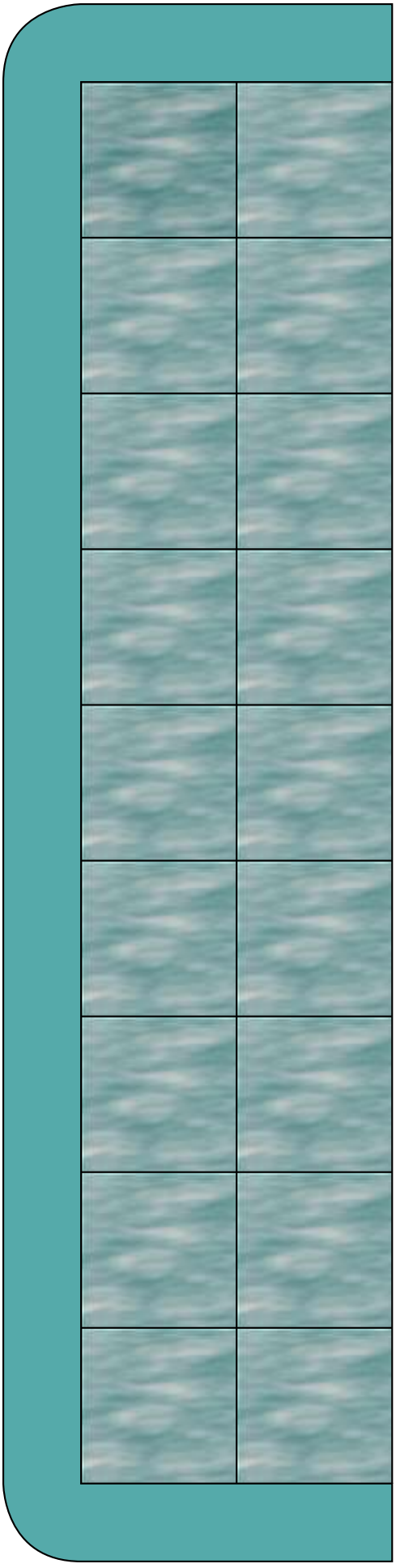
2c. Alternatively, you can print pages 2 and 3 on card as thick as your printer can handle, and cut out the board sections using a craft knife.

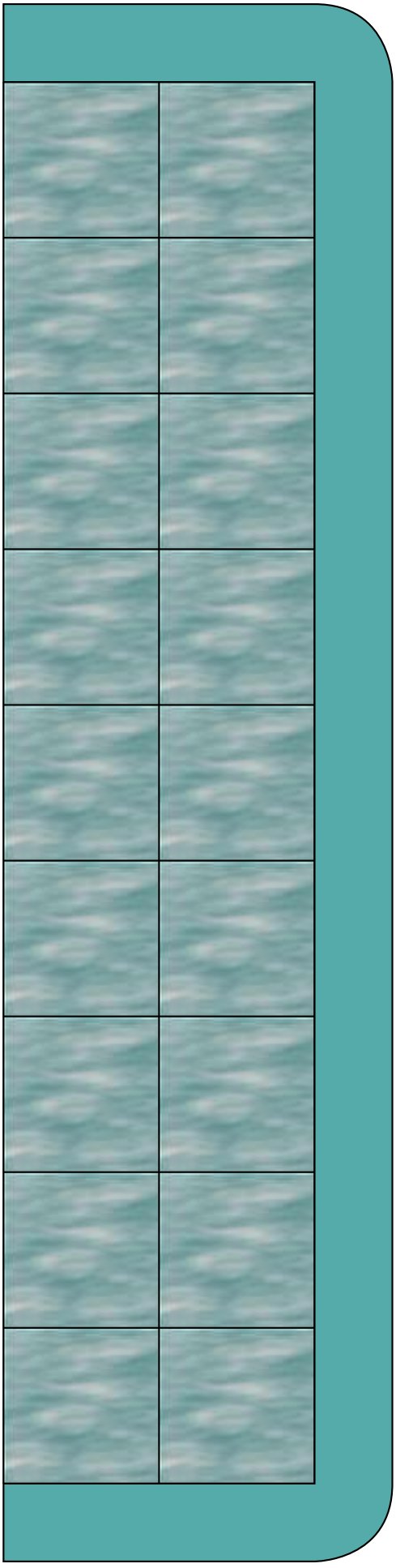
3. You can print out page 4 for the pieces and reminder cards, and finish and cut it in the same ways as the board and reminder cards; gluing onto thick backing card is recommended. Alternatively, you can print a first copy for the reminder cards, and a second copy onto transparency or an A4 sticker sheet, cut the pieces out and fix onto wooden discs of 1 inch (25mm) for the carrier, and $\frac{3}{4}$ inches (19mm) for the other pieces. A colour printer really is needed for these, unless (i) you want to stick transparencies onto coloured wooden discs, or (ii) you want to print page 5 twice, on to two different coloured sheets of card or paper, in order to supply forces of the relevant colours.

4. Print pages 5 and 6 onto the two sides of a single sheet of A4 paper. Fold this in half to create a 4-page A5 rules leaflet. Be careful when printing the second side; ensure the inside of the booklet isn't upside down after printing!

The Web Site

Much information about the game of hnefatafl is available on our web site, *Hnefatafl: the Game of the Vikings*. The site is arranged in sections about the game's history, its rules, and strategic hints and tips. You can also play the game on-line, and there is The Hnefatafl Shop, from which you can buy games and other merchandise. The address of the site is *http://tafl.cyningstan.com/*.





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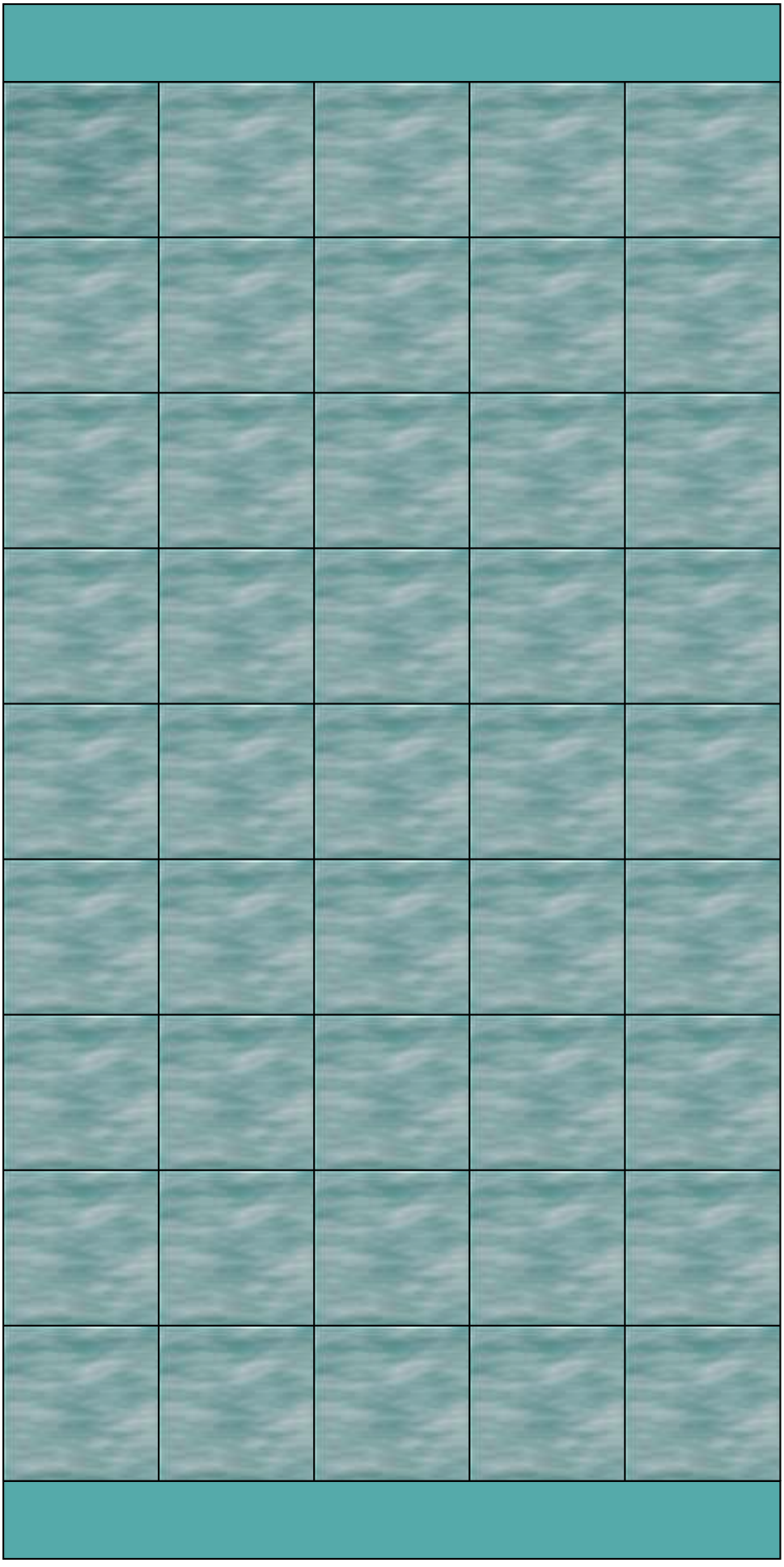

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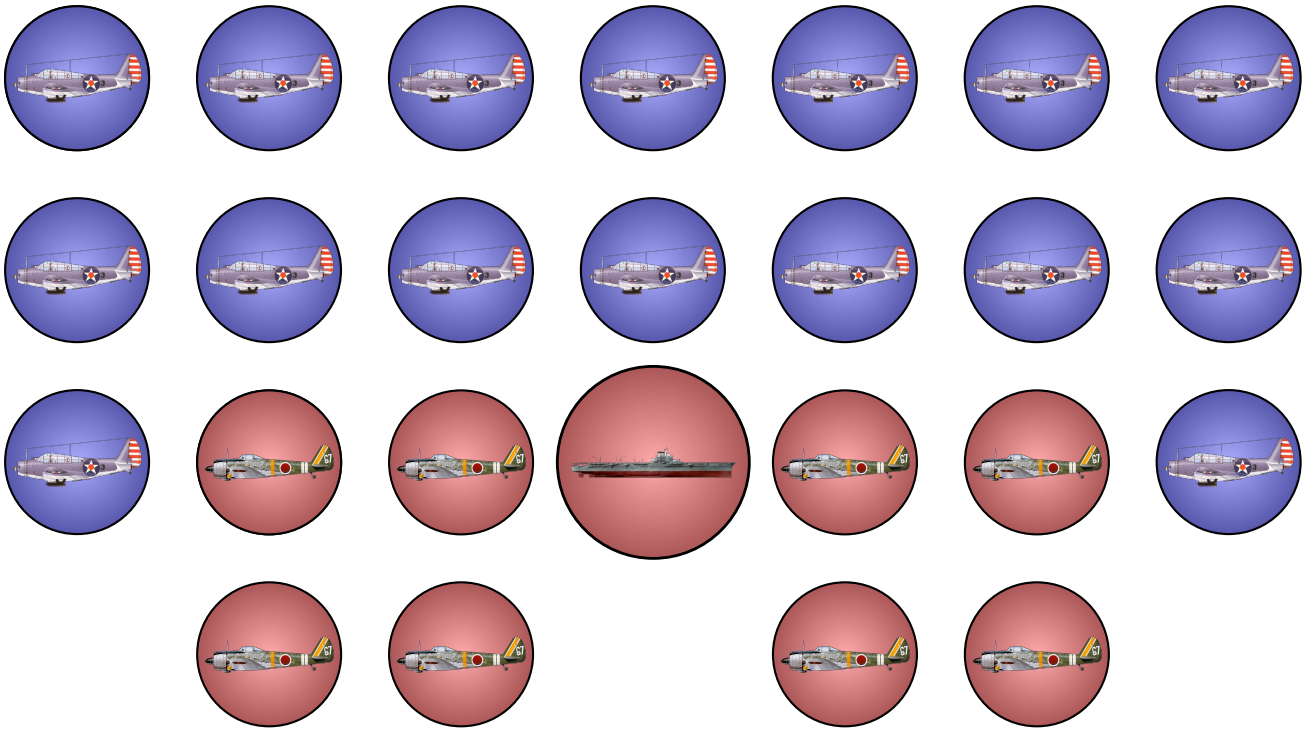
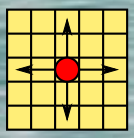
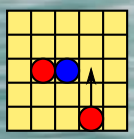


Reminder Card

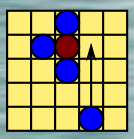
See the rules booklet for full details.



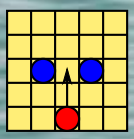
Movement: the fighters move first. All pieces move the same way: as far as they wish along a row or column.



Capture: fighters and bombers are captured by surrounding on opposite sides. The carrier may *not* take part in capturing.



Carrier: the carrier is captured by surrounding it on four sides by bombers, when it loses. It wins by reaching the board edge.



Safety: it is safe to move between two enemies voluntarily. One of the enemies must move away and back again to capture.

Reminder Card

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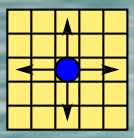
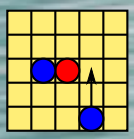
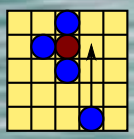


Movement: the fighters move first. All pieces move the same way, as far as they wish along a row or column.



Capture: fighters and bombers are captured by surrounding on opposite sides. The carrier may *not* take part in capturing.



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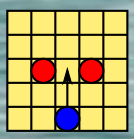

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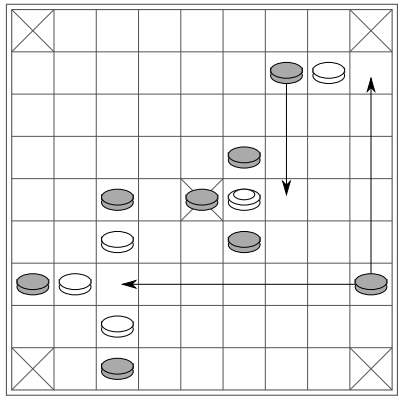

Figure 3: The white pieces may be captured by any of the moves shown. Note that the three white pieces at the bottom left can be captured at once.

CYNINGSTAN

HNEFATAFL: THE GAME OF THE VIKINGS

SEA BATTLE TAFL

Introduction & History

Hnefatafl is a game invented by the Norse, often referred to as the Vikings. A king at the centre of the board, with his band of faithful defenders, faces a horde of attackers twice their number, who are lined up at the edges ready to attack from all sides. The king must escape from the board, while the attackers must capture him.

It was first played in the first millennium; boards and pieces from that era have been found in all parts of Scandinavia. As the Norse raiders, adventurers and settlers spread further afield, the game was introduced to other cultures: the Sami in the north, and the English, Scots, Welsh and Irish in the west. Norse traders took the game east with them to Russia and Ukraine.

From the east, however, hnefatafl would have come face to face with another game, one that would eclipse it and drive it from fashionable tables in all the lands it had invaded. By the twelfth century, chess had replaced hnefatafl in Scandinavia itself. Only in remote lands did the game survive, in Wales till the sixteenth century, and in Lapland till the eighteenth century.

Sea Battle Tafl is an elegant modern variant of the game. It re-enacts a battle between a cargo ship and its defending longships, and a larger fleet of piratical longships which are trying to seize its cargo. The cargo ship is difficult to capture, but cannot itself help to capture other ships. It is reasonably well balanced and therefore suitable to tournament play.

How to Play

1. The game is played with a cargo ship and a convoy of eight defending warships, against sixteen pirate warships. They start the game laid out as shown in Figure 1.
2. The defending player takes the first turn.
3. In each turn, a player may move a piece as far as desired along a row or column, as shown in Figure 2.
4. Pieces may not jump over each other, nor can one piece land on a square already taken by another.
5. The cargo ship is captured by surrounding it by pirate warships on all four sides along a row and column.
6. Any other piece is captured by surrounding it on two opposite sides along a row or column by two enemies.
7. It is possible to capture two or three enemy pieces at once, if all become surrounded against separate enemies in the same move. These methods of capture are illustrated in Figure 3.
8. A pirate ship is *not* captured when sandwiched between the cargo ship and a defender; the cargo ship may not be used to capture pirates.
9. The defenders win the game when the cargo ship reaches any square on the edge of the board.
10. The pirates win the game when they capture the cargo ship.

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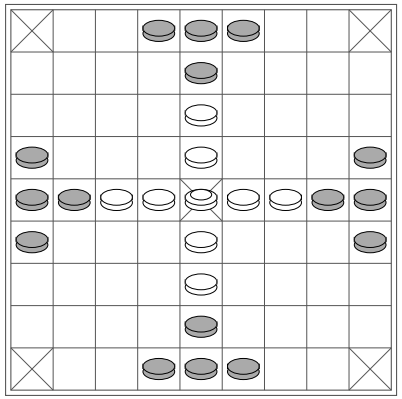

Figure 1: The intial layout for sea battle tafl.

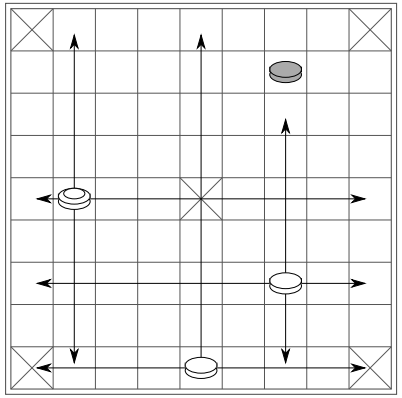

Figure 2: Examples of movmement for the king and defenders.