Skies of Arcadia Ship Battles Mini-FAQ

by Mike Pureka   Updated to v1.5 on Dec 8, 2000

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                    Skies of Arcadia, Ship Battles Mini-FAQ
                                 Version 1.0




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     let you know.

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     Version History:

     12/08/2000, 1.5 - A lot of small corrections, expanded info on the "Crew"
             command.  LOTS of additional clarifications on how to beat one of the
             battles that people keep asking questions about.  General clean up.

     11/21/2000, 1.0 - First releasable version. Fixed some misconceptions I had,
             learned a bit more about some of the weapons, got a chance to play
             with the "Crew" Command.

     11/20/2000, 0.5 - Beta version. I haven't even finished the game yet, but I
             wanted to put something together to help people who are baffled by the
             ship battle system - I know I was at first.  Input is welcome.

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1.0 Introduction

Skies of Arcadia (Eternal Arcadia in Japan) is a new RPG brought to us by
Sega and Overworks, featuring an immersive 3D environment, likable characters
and a thoroughly engaging storyline. Skies of Arcadia also features two
different types of battles - personal combat, and ship to ship combat - it
is the latter of these which is the focus of this FAQ.

While ship to ship combat uses many of the same menu commands as personal
combat, most of these commands function in very different ways. The
documentation in the manual is vague and confusing on many counts, and leaves
some areas completely unexplained. The goal of this FAQ is provide
information and clarification on how ship to ship combat works, and some
tactics to help you get through the trickier parts of the game. I assume a
certain amount of familiarity with the game such that I don't need to explain
such concepts as the Spirit gauge and how to select menu items.

2.0 The Ship Battle Display

When you first enter into Ship to Ship combat, you'll find yourself presented
with a strange looking grid in the center of your screen. Believe it or not,
this grid is all the information you get with which to plan your actions for
the next few rounds (How many rounds depends on how many characters are in
your party.) The grid looks something like this:

```
    +---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+
    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+
| A |   |   |   |   |###|###|###|###|
+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+
| B |   |   |   |   |###|###|###|###|
+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+
| C |   |   |   |   |###|###|###|###|
+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+
| D |   |   |   |   |###|###|###|###|
+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+---+
```

(The above grid is for a 4 person party. If you have only 3 characters in your
party, Columns 4 and 8, and Row D will be missing)

In Boxes A,B,C and D are small portraits of your characters. Boxes 1-8 are
colored Green, Yellow, or Red, and may contain additional icons as well. On
top of all this Boxes 5-8 may be 'flipping' between two different sets of
colors. You will also have the familiar combat icons, and a few others, from
which you choose the actions of each character in your party.

This all probably seems more than a little confusing - don't worry. Once you
know how to read it, it's pretty straightforward. I will try to make things
as clear as possible.

2.1 How to Read the Combat Grid

Refer to the diagram above. The boxes labeled 1-4 and 5-8 represent the danger

level for your ship, and the enemy's ship in the 4 rounds of combat. 1-4 are
your danger levels for this turn, 5-8 are for the next turn. Each of these
boxes is colored green, yellow, or red. There may be an additional icons in
the boxes as well, but the background of that icon will still be green,
yellow, or red.

Box 1 is the first round of this turn, Box 2 is the second, etc.

The empty boxes will contain your characters' actions for each round once you
are finished inputting them.

The boxes filled with # signs are always 'hidden' - they represent next turn's
actions. You can't place an action in one of these boxes, but certain
actions, such as firing secondary cannon, may spill over into the next turn.
More on this later.

2.2 Your Threat Levels

Boxes 1-4 represent how much danger you are in during a given round. They can
also contain information about your options.

Green Square: Safe. A green color means you are relatively safe from attack
        during that round. Your opponent may fire, but if they should hit you
        during a 'green' round, you will take relatively little damage. (Note
        that this can still be substantial)

Yellow Square: Caution. A yellow color in one of these boxes indicates that
        you are relatively vulnerable. Your opponent will probably fire, and
        damage will be higher than in a green round.

Red Square: Danger. A red colored square means that you are very vulnerable
        in that round - enemy ships will try to concentrate fire here, and
        bosses will probably fire their special weapons. Even ordinary
        attacks will do more damage - doing 200% or more of the damage they
        would do in a "green" round.

"Chance" Icon (Looks like a C! with a triangle under it): A "Chance" icon
        indicates an opportunity for you - usually to do damage, but sometimes
        to take some other sort of action that will influence the course of
        battle. Generally, you should try to concentrate fire in "Chance"
        rounds.

Special Cannon Icon: This icon (Which looks like a smaller version of the
        "fire special cannon" menu icon) indicates that you may fire your
        special cannon during that round. Special cannons eat up a lot of
        spirit points, but do a LOT of damage and can influence the further
        course of combat - i.e. what your next turn is may hinge on whether
        or not you fired your special cannon this turn.

2.3 Your Next Turn

Boxes 5-8 show your danger levels for the next turn. Use this information to
plan your strategy - if you see a "special cannon" icon over there, build up
your spirit. If you see a lot of yellow and red danger levels, repair yourself
in preparation for the onslaught.

Also, sometimes, boxes 5-8 will be "flipping" - displaying one set of colored
boxes and then switching to another set. Generally, one of these sets will

display "chance" icons and/or a special cannon icon. By your actions during
the course of your current turn, or by a dialogue choice at the end of the
turn, you determine which of these "potential" next turns you will receive.

3.0 Commands

Many of the commands available in ship to ship battle are the same as those
available in regular battle, but some are different, and some operate in
different ways. Also the process of inputting commands is slightly more
complex in Ship Battle Mode.

3.1 Inputting Commands

In Ship to Ship combat, each character in your party is presented with a list
of commands. Upon selecting one, its icon appears next to the character's
portrait in the grid, in the first empty column. You may then use the D-pad
or analog controller to move the action left or right into any empty column;
this selects which round the character will take that action in. Pressing A
will lock that action into that round, simultaneously filling in all the other
rows in that column. As a result, no other characters in your party will be
able to take action during that round. Note also that if a character has
stretched secondary cannon fire into the current turn from the previous one,
they will not be able to act until they are done firing.

You might ask why it matters which character does what, since all actions are
being done by and done to your ship. Well, the abilities of each character
still represent themselves in their actions. Characters with strong physical
attacks will do more damage with Standard cannons, while characters with
strong magical attacks will do more damage with those, and focusing with a
character with a higher spirit score will recover more spirit than one with a
lower score, etc.

3.2 Command Descriptions

Here follows a description of each of the Ship Battle Commands, and a little
bit of information about the uses of each.

Run - This commands works much the same as it does in personal combat. You
        will attempt to retreat from combat. You don't always succeed, and
        it's not even an option against bosses. Not recommended.

Use Item - Similar to personal combat, there are a number of different items
        that you can use in Ship to Ship combat, including Bombs, which damage
        the enemy without consuming Spirit, and Repair Kits, which repair
        damage done to your ship. There are also items which restore spirit
        and perform other functions. Note that unlike personal combat, you
        cannot change your ship's equipment in mid-battle.

Evasive Action - Similar to Guard in personal combat. You will take less
        (about 50%) damage during a round in which you select evasive action.
        A good choice during those "Red" danger level rounds.

Attack - When you choose Attack, you are then asked to select the weapon your
        character will fire. There are three types of weapons: Standard
        Cannons, Secondary Cannons and Torpedoes. Each of these three weapons
        functions a little bit differently. Also, unlike personal combat,

attacking in Ship to Ship combat drains the Spirit Gauge; the amount
of spirit a given weapon uses is listed after the weapon's name. Each
weapon may only be fired once a turn, so if you want to be able to
fire, say, a Heavy Cannon twice in a turn, you'll need to have two of
them mounted on your ship.

Standard Cannons - These are the simplest weapons aboard your ship,
and also the mainstay of your weaponry. You simply pick the round
in which you wish to fire the cannon, and the cannon will fire and
deal damage during that round.

Secondary Cannons - Generally less powerful than primary cannons,
these weapons also require less spirit to fire - and can also be
fired multiple rounds in a row. To do this, select the round in which
to fire the cannon, press A, and then push the controller to the right.
An arrow will extend from the cannon icon into the column for the next
round, and possibly beyond. In fact, it is possible to extend
secondary cannon fire into the next turn! Press A again to confirm
your selection. The cannon will then fire in all of the rounds the
arrow crosses, in addition to any other actions taken in those round,
allowing you to concentrate fire by firing multiple weapons in the
same round, or to repair yourself while still firing. Note that these
cannons consume spirit each round they fire, so stretching secondary
cannon fire across 3 or 4 rounds of combat can be hard on your spirit
guage.

Torpedoes - When you select to fire a torpedo, you first select the
round in which you wish to fire it, and then move the 'hit' icon to
the round in which you would like the torpedo to hit the enemy vessel.
Some Torpedos have a longer range than others - allowing them to hit
further in the future. Using Torpedoes in addition to primary and
secondary cannon can allow you to land a powerful 1-2-3 punch in a
round in which your opponent is vulnerable. Of course, during the
round in which a Torpedo is fired, you may take no other action.
Torpedos also generally have a lower hit percentage than other
weapons.

Magic - By selecting this command, you have the character in question cast
magic. At first, the only spells which may be cast are those which
affect your characters, most notably the Increm spells, which are
just as effective in Ship to Ship combat as personal. Once you
acquire the Magic Cannon however, you may fire magically charged
cannon shots at your opponents, using any spell that normally causes
damage, and some that cause effects (Sylenis or Driln, for example)
Magical damage can, against the right targets, can do extreme damage.
Against the wrong targets, it can be completely ineffectual. Also
note that it is possible to miss with a Magic Cannon shot, and that
firing magically charged cannon fire costs 1 MP per shot, just as
casting spells in personal combat does.

Focus - As in personal combat, a character can focus to recharge the Spirit
Bar. This is especially crucial in ship to ship combat because all
attacks consume spirit, and it is generally a very good idea to
maintain a good spirit charge in case the chance arises to fire your
special cannon. As in personal combat, the higher the Spirit stat
of the character, the more spirit will be regained by focusing
(Though in Ship to Ship combat, the spirit regained is actually
greater than the character's spirit stat) It is also worth noting
that in the mid to late game, items become available that make
focusing less important.

Special Cannon - Use this command to fire your ship's Special Cannon. This
        option is only available in rounds in which the "special cannon" icon
        appears in the top row. Try to keep enough spirit in reserve to fire
        your special cannon should the opportunity arise, and if you should
        see a special cannon icon in the next round, attempt to charge your
        spirit gauge to the point where you will be able to capitalize. Also,
        you may only fire your special cannon once a turn, even if you have
        spirit available, and the special cannon icon appears more than once.

Crew - The crew command lets you use the special skills of your various crew
        members in combat. Selecting the Crew icon brings up a list of your
        active crewmen and allows you to select the one you wish to have act.
        Some crewmen are "passive" however, and appear as greyed out in the
        list. These crew members are always "active", and have an effect on
        your ship's performance. Other crew members may be called into active
        service via the Crew command. Each crewman has a spirit cost to use,
        and may only be used once per combat.

3.2.1 Crew Effects

The following is a brief list of the assorted Crewmen and their effects. For
more information, such as crew locations, there are other FAQs which you can
reference.

In the following chart, the "Crew Member" column is the crewman's name, the
"Post" column is their job on board your ship (You may only have one person
doing a given job at a given time), "Effect" is what effect they have on your
ship, and "Active/Passive" indicates whether the crewmember is passive (their
effect is "always on") or Active (They must be used with the Crew command in
order to have their effect.) if a crewman is active, his/her spirit cost is
also listed in this column.

Crew Member	Post	Effect	Active/Passive
Lawrence	Helmsman	+30 Quickness	Passive
Don	Helmsman	+15 Dodge	Passive
Khazim	Gunner	Increases Main Cannon Damage	Passive
Belle	Gunner	Increases Sec. Cannon Damage	Passive
Domingo	Lookout	Increase Critical Hit Chance	Active (6 SP)
TikaTika	Lookout	Increase Torpedo Hit %	Passive
Ryu-kan	Craftsman	Increase Attack & Defense briefly	Active (15 SP)
Ilchymis	Craftsman	Increase Ship's Attributes Briefly	Active (? SP)
Osmon	Merchant	Increase Chance of Finding Expensive items	Passive
Kalifa	Merchant	Increase Chance of Finding Rare Items	Passive
Marco	Sailor	Double Spirit regen for one turn	Active (8 SP)
Robinson	Sailor	Reduces Spirit use for one turn	Active (? SP)
Hans	Engineer	+20 Magic Defense	Passive
Brabham	Engineer	+20 Defense	Passive
Pow	Jester	Increase Chance of Acting 1st	Active (4 SP)
Merida	Jester	Increases your ship's value	Passive
Izmael	Builder	Increases Moonstone Cannon Damage	Passive
Kirala	Builder	Completely repairs all damage to your ship.	Active (? SP)
Polly	Cook	Restores one character's MP	Active (6 SP)
Urala	Cook	Fills spirit guage to max!	Active (15 SP)
Moegi	Delegate	Protects you from all magic damage	Active (10 SP)

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                          for one turn
Pinta         Delegate       Protects you from all cannon      Active (? SP)
                            damage for one turn
```

4.0 Tactics

Most of what you'll find in this section is common sense, but if anyone wants
to submit any strategies, please feel free to contact me.

Concentrate Fire: Use Secondary Cannons (And Torpedoes, once you have them) to
bring as much firepower as possible to bear in the rounds when you have a
"chance". If someone ever says "We need to concentrate fire" this is what
they mean.

Stay supplied: Keep a good supply of repair kits on hand at all times. These
little devices are what give you a lot of your edge over enemies, who
generally have no means of repairing damage.

Stay Well Repaired: If you have a moment's breathing room, use a repair kit to
patch yourself up. If you're nearly fully repaired, you're in a better
position to capitalize on your opponent's vulnerabilities because you can
afford to tough it out and get hit a few times during a "yellow" round in order
to return maximum fire in a "chance" round.

Keep your Spirit Charged: Try to always have enough Spirit remaining to fire
your Special Cannon. Opportunities to use this weapon arise only
infrequently, so you don't want to miss one due to lack of spirit.

Play it Safe: Don't assume that just because your threat level in a given
round is low that you won't take any damage. Also, in the dialogue choices,
try not to let your opponent do what he wants to.

Use Defensive Magic: Casting Increm (Or using Apa/Apo Wax) not only gives you
a 25% boost to your attack (which is always nice) but also gives you a 25%
boost to you defense, which can be quite decisive (especially since this is
not a 25% decrease in damage, but a 25% increase in defense. So if your
defense is 400, it will go up to 500, so if your enemy's attack is 450...)
Also, you can use Driln to decrease the amount of damage an enemy ship can
do to you.

Get Good Crewmen: Certain crewmembers, both active and passive, can have a
serious impact on the course of your battles.

4.1 Specific Boss Tactics

*** WARNING!!! SPOILERS AHEAD! ***

If you don't want anything revealed about the plot of the game, do not read
this section. It contains specific strategies for defeating some of the
"scripted" battles in the game. I suggest only reading this if you're stuck.

<Spoiler Space Begins>

Recumen (Red Gigas): A seemingly indestructible opponent, the key to
        defeating the Red Gigas is to not die. At first, this seems more
        difficult than it sounds. The trick here is to knock him off balance.
        In each round where your danger level is red, he will fire the Red
        Ray, which does terrific amounts of damage. However, if you hit
        him with enough firepower in that round, the beam shot will miss
        and you will take no damage. To do this, fire your secondary
        cannon the round before, and stretch the shot into the round he
        fires. Then fire the Standard Cannon in the round he attacks. The
        combined firepower will keep you from getting hit.

        Update: I am getting a lot of questions about this battle. It's really
        not that hard given the information provided above, but it seems like I
        need to spell a few things out.

        First of all, you NEED a secondary cannon to use the tactic above. And
        the Little Jack does NOT start with any. You MUST have purchased a 3"
        cannon at the Sailor's Isle Ship Parts shop, after you rescued your
        family from Valua. If you didn't buy this cannon, your only option is
        to just guard everytime the Gigas attacks, and use lots of Sacri and
        Repair kits to keep from being destroyed. It is possible to "win"
        without a secondary cannon, but it's painful and not very fun.

        Now, assuming you DO have the 3" Cannon, the following table is an
        EXACT spoiler of what you need to do to avoid being hit. If you still
        can't do it, there's nothing I can do to help you. Here is what you
        do:

        Stand means "Fire the Standard Cannon"
        3"can means "Fire the 3" Cannon"
        >>>>> indicates stretching Fire from the 3" cannon into the next round

                +-----+-----+-----+-----+
                |Green|Green|Green| Red |
        +-------+-----+-----+-----+-----+

```
|Vyse   |#####|#####|#####|Stand|
+-------+-----+-----+-----+-----+
|Aika   |#####|Focus|#####|#####|
+-------+-----+-----+-----+-----+
|Fina   |Focus|#####|#####|#####|
+-------+-----+-----+-----+-----+
|Drachma|#####|#####|3"can>>>>>>|
+-------+-----+-----+-----+-----+
```

The Lynx (Admiral Baleza's ship): The first opponent you meet armed with
        a magic cannon. She casts Increm in the very first round of the
        battle, so use this either to get ahead in damage or store up
        spirit - or cast an Increm of your own. It's also suggested that
        you equip any items you might have found that give your ship
        extra magic defense. Make sure to have enough spirit to fire the
        Harpoon Cannon when the chance arises and she shouldn't be too hard.

The Chameleon (Admiral De Loco's Ship) 1st Battle: This is a fairly standard
        fight, but you can, if you are fast enough, combine fire into the
        round where he's going to fire the flamethrower, and knock him off-
        balance, causing him not to fire it. (I think. Has anyone actually
        ever seen him MISS with this weapon?) To have an easier time getting
        your shots in before he fires, use Quika to increase your speed.

The Chameleon (Admiral De Loco's Ship) 2nd Battle: A fairly standard battle.
        The Test Cannon is a lot less impressive than it looks. Just use
        Evasive Action in the round when he fires it, and you should be okay.

Grendel (Green Gigas): Grendel, like the Red Gigas, attacks in any round where
        your danger level is yellow or higher. It does not appear to be
        possible to knock him off-balance like the you did with the Red Gigas
        (Can anyone clarify on this?). Fortunately his attacks don't do the
        huge damage that the Red Beam does (Although they all LOOK really
        painful). After a while of fighting and chipping away at him, he'll
        start acting weird and clutching his head. Do not make the mistake of
        thinking this means he's going to stop attacking. In actuality, he is
        MUCH more dangerous now, and his attacks do around 5K damage. Stay
        alive for two turns and hit him with the Harpoon Cannon to knock him
        into the canyon and claim the win.

??? (Admiral Gregorio's Ship): To dodge the Hull Ram, cast Quika on yourself
        during the turn before the attack. You will get a Special Cannon
        shot and the battle should be over in short order.

??? (The Creature in the Dark Rift): Not much interesting here. Don't back off
        just keep holding your position and pounding away. When it emerges
        from the rift, give it everything you've got.

The Draco (Admiral Viggoro's Ship): No big deal here either. The Moonstone
        cannon far outstrips the damage he can do with his "big gun" so just
        store up your spirit, and blast away.

Bluheim (Blue Gigas): Another pretty standard battle. Keep yourself in good
        repair, and evade when you feel in danger of being attacked. You are
        also supposed to "go into a defensive posture" before being hit with
        the wind attack. I never managed to do this, so I don't know what
        effect is has. Anyone?

Raja (The Deep Sky monster): This fight is pitifully easy, but I figured I'd
        put in a little tactic for taking these things down FAST. During the
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first round of combat, cast Increm.  Raja will Assess Damage. During
the next round, have Vyse fire your main cannon (I had a Yamato Spirit
at the time.)  That should be all the damage you need to dispose of
him.

I haven't found that any of the other battles in the game required any
particularly unsual tactics. If there's a battle you're having trouble with,
and it's not listed here, feel free to write me and I'll add info on that
battle to the FAQ.


5.0 In Closing
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This FAQ is now in a pretty good basic form, but I'd like to continue to add
to it.  There's a lot of game in Skies of Arcadia, and even though this FAQ
only covers a small portion of it, there's a good deal that can still be here.

5.1 Credits
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Herefollows a (currently rather short) list of people who deserve thanks for
various reasons related to this FAQ. ;)

Logan Run (logans69@hotmail.com) for some clarifying info about the battle
        with Admiral De Loco (the first time)

Sega & Overworks for making this game. Hot dang. :)

Sega of America for actually having a clue and bringing us a pretty darn good
        translation. May this trend continue in the future. :)

5.2 Information I Still Need
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In order to make this FAQ the best resource it can be, I need help from all
you folks out there - especially anyone who's still in the process of beating
the game.  Anything you can contribute is welcome, but most specifically I
need:

Any additional Tactics.

Clarifications on any of the questions I asked in the Specific Boss Tactics
section.

The spirit costs of the crew members who have a ? there right now.

Info on Weapons and "Accessories" - if I can put together enough of this,
I'll compile a complete list of these, with statistics and locations. I'd
love for anyone who could take the time to write down the stats of any weapons
in terms of Attack, Hit%, Spirit Cost, Limit (if any) and where you got it to
send me that info.

ANY corrections on incorrect info or just places where I'm not clear.

Please, if you have any info, send it to me at mpureka@wesleyan.edu.  I'll
include your information in the next version of this FAQ, and credit you for
the addition. Thank you.