

Fire Ship

Sixteenth Century Naval Strategy



Board Game Instructions

Fire Ship

Sixteenth Century Naval Strategy

Introduction

Armada Model Design's board game 'Fire Ship' takes a number of features from 16th century naval warfare and applies them equally to both English and Spanish protagonists to create a balanced contest – see the historical note at the end of these instructions.

Definitions used in these instructions

Go – a player's turn usually involving the movement of up to two vessels.

Move – the manoeuvring of a single vessel.

Travel – the passage of a single ship from one square to another.

Situation

It is 1588. Soldiers loyal to Queen Elizabeth I have been helping Protestants in Holland battle Spanish occupying forces. Now, Phillip II, King of Spain, amasses the greatest invasion fleet of all time. His aim: to purge the world of Elizabeth's English "Pirates" by conquering England.

During the ensuing naval battle, the English unleash a terrifying weapon; the Fire Ship, a vessel deliberately set ablaze and placed amongst the enemy fleet to spread panic and promote disarray.

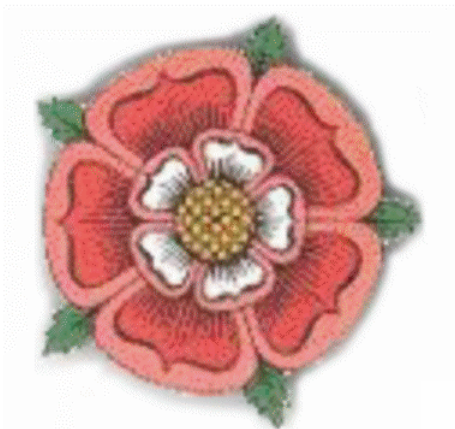
Mission

This is a game for two players. The aim is invasion. The Spanish must invade England while the English must land in continental Europe to counter the Spanish threat there.

Each side tries to get a minimum invasion force - 3 vessels (or 5 for a longer game) to enemy territory. Enemy home territory is represented by one of the corners of the hexagonal playing board.

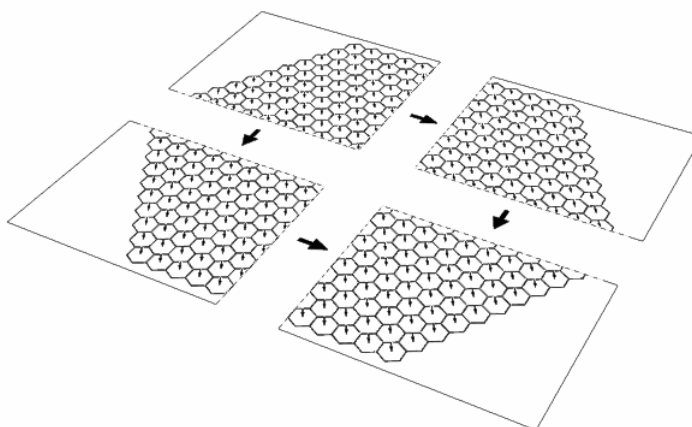


Preparation

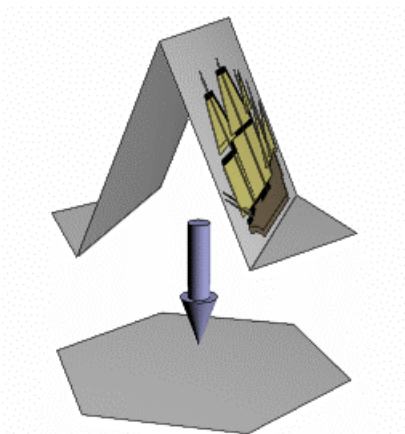


The playing board is based on a thinly veiled Tudor Rose; the ubiquitous symbol of England from the late fifteenth century to the early seventeenth.

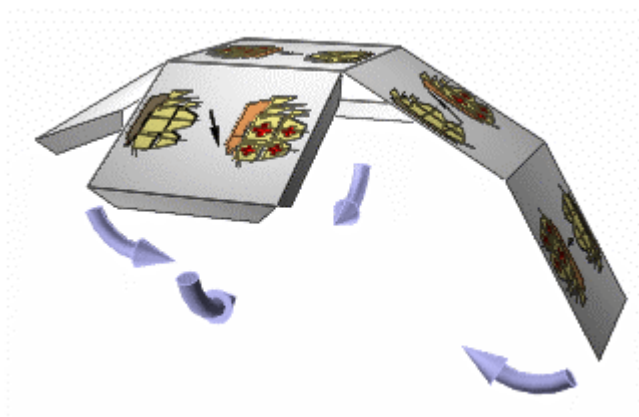
The playing area comes in four sections, which are best printed on paper, cut out and glued to a stout board.



The ships and single die can be printed on paper but are best printed on card (approximately 160 g/m²). There are two fleets, one English and one Spanish. There are 22 ships in each fleet (the spanish ships are denoted by a cross on their sails).



There are some spare ships on each sheet, in case of loss, and there are some special ships, denoted by their flames. These are the fire ships. Each ship is made up of two compononets as shown on the left.



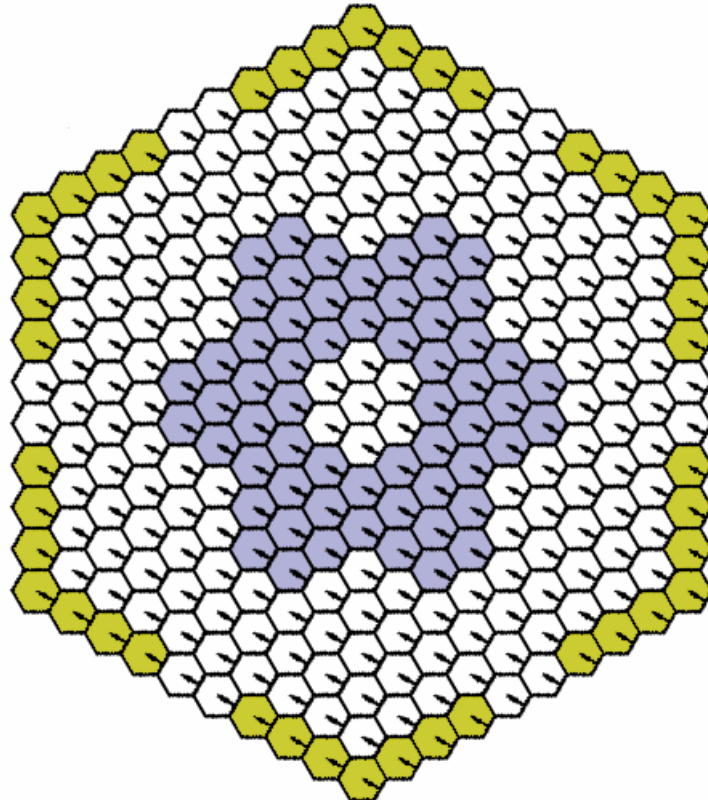
These are cut out, scored and glued together. Similarly, the die is cut out, scored and assembled using glue (PVA adhesive, used sparingly, is ideal).

Fire Ship

Sixteenth Century Naval Strategy

Execution

As previously mentioned, the board is hexagonal. First of all you need to decide who will play as the Spanish and who will play as the English.



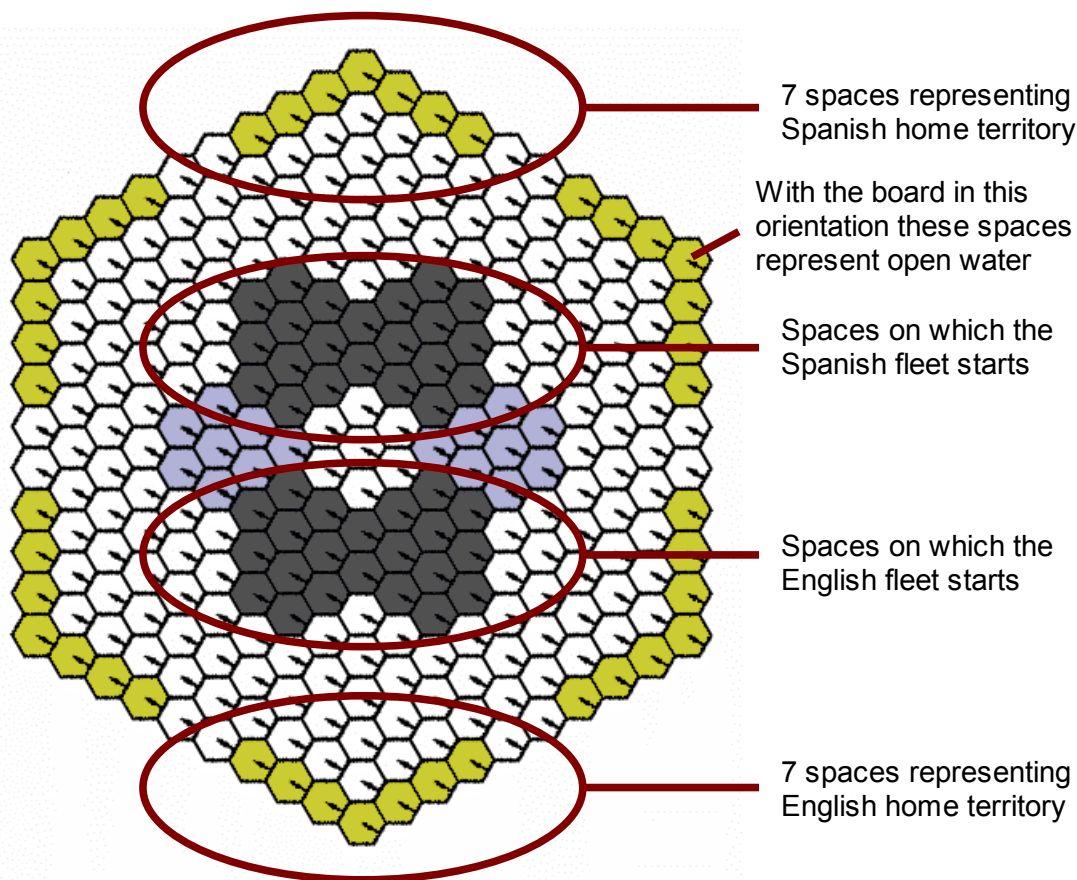
The performance of sailing ships was dominated by the wind and therefore an arrow on each space indicates the wind direction. To decide on the wind direction at the start of the game, the die is rolled.



There are six possible wind directions:

1. Directly towards the Spanish
2. Diagonally towards the Spanish (left to right)
3. Diagonally towards the Spanish (right to left)
4. Directly towards the English
5. Diagonally towards the English (left to right)
6. Diagonally towards the English (right to left)

The board is orientated according to the die. For example, if the die is thrown as shown above, the board is laid out as illustrated on the next page.



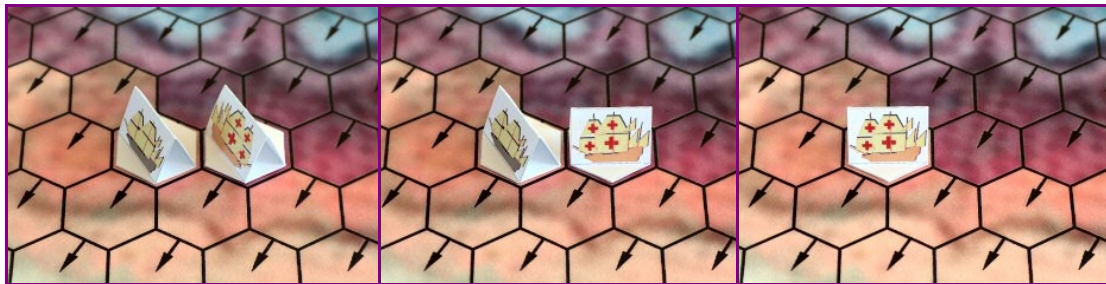
The ships are positioned, 22 in each fleet, facing each other. The dark patches in the illustration above represent the spaces on which they sit. To decide who goes first, roll the die a second time. With this roll, whomever the arrow points away from goes first.

Rules of Engagement

1. Players take turns to have their go.
2. During each go a player can make up to two moves.
3. The two moves must correspond to two separate ships.
4. A move involves controlling a single vessel.
5. Each vessel can travel up to two spaces during its move.
6. Ships must be pointing in the direction they are going to travel.
7. Ships can move in one of 5 different directions (not directly into wind).
8. Rotating a ship onto any heading counts as one space travelled.
9. One ship defeats another by travelling onto the space occupied by the enemy ship. The enemy ship is then removed from the board (see image sequence overleaf)
10. When a ship is taken, that completes the move for the attacking vessel, whether it has travelled 2 spaces or not.

Fire Ship

Sixteenth Century Naval Strategy



11. Setting light to a ship counts as one move. This is done by exchanging the ship for a “fire ship” playing piece.



12. On subsequent goes, the fire ship drifts with the wind (by one space each turn) irrespective of the direction it was facing when it was set light to. It continues to do this until it has left the board.
13. The fire ship's moves are in addition to the 2-vessel limitation.
14. Each side can use a maximum of 2 fire ships per game.
15. The aim of the fire ship is to create panic and cause a fleet to disperse. Fire was a real danger amongst wooden ships filled with gunpowder! Any vessel in a space next to a fire ship is removed from the board.
16. Sometimes fire ships get forgotten on the playing board, in the heat of battle. To avoid this always move fire ships at the beginning of the go, before any other vessel.
17. When a vessel has 'invaded' enemy home territory it can no longer move. Neither can it be destroyed (this would be a pointless exercise in any case, as in reality it is assumed that its troops would have already disembarked).
18. Friendly ships can sit in, or move about, their own home territory (harbour). Enemy ships can attack them there and once the 'home' ship is defeated the enemy ship can land (to disembark its troops).

To help clarify these rules, here are some possible moves during a player's go. At the start of every go, move any existing fire ships then make up to 2 moves. A move could involve:

1. moving a vessel up to two spaces in the direction it is facing
2. turning a vessel
3. turning a vessel then moving it one space
4. moving one space then turning
5. taking another vessel (by moving up to 2 spaces to reach it)
6. setting a vessel ablaze by exchanging it for a fire ship.

BE CAREFUL NOT TO TURN A SHIP INTO WIND - IT WON'T BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING BUT CHANGE HEADING AGAIN.

Historical Note

Naturally, it is not possible for a simple board game involving the discrete movement of individual playing pieces to model in detail the fluid motion of a fleet of vessels in combat. For that reason Armada's Fire Ship game is selective in what it chooses to represent of 16th century naval warfare. This historical note seeks to put the game into context.

The 2 fleets in the game are equal in size. Neil Hanson, author of "The Confident Hope of a Miracle", explains that, contrary to popular belief, the English fleet actually outnumbered the Spanish fleet. Ironically, the English owed a debt of gratitude to Philip II of Spain who, as Dr Simon Adams of Strathclyde University points out, played a direct role in initiating a major naval rebuilding programme in England while he was married to Mary Tudor.

The game allows both sides to use fire ships, however, in reality only the English used them. The fire ship was a desperate measure, employed to break up the formation of an enemy fleet and scatter it into smaller groups that could be dealt with more easily.

In contrast to modern naval warfare, a 16th century fleet was at the mercy of the wind and indeed, the final annihilation of the Armada was brought about by a hurricane. However, even under normal conditions a galleon could not sail directly into wind, instead it would have to "tack", sailing a zig-zag pattern to make progress upwind.

Although the aim of the Armada was indeed to invade England, the English had no similar plans to invade continental Europe. The English did, however, assist Protestants in Holland to fight against the Spanish and in subsequent years sea-borne assaults were made by both the Spanish and the English, although none of these had any decisive effect. The Anglo-Spanish war was to all intents a stalemate.

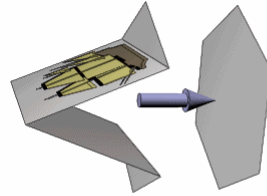
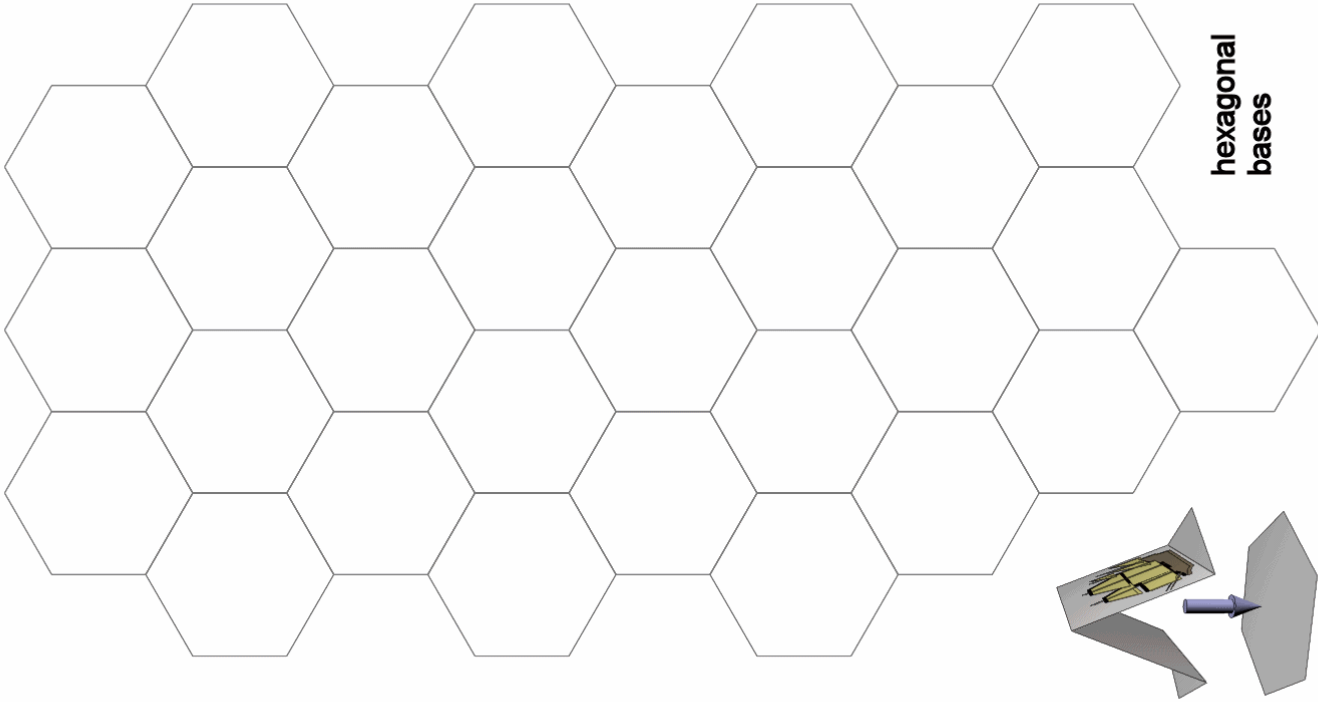
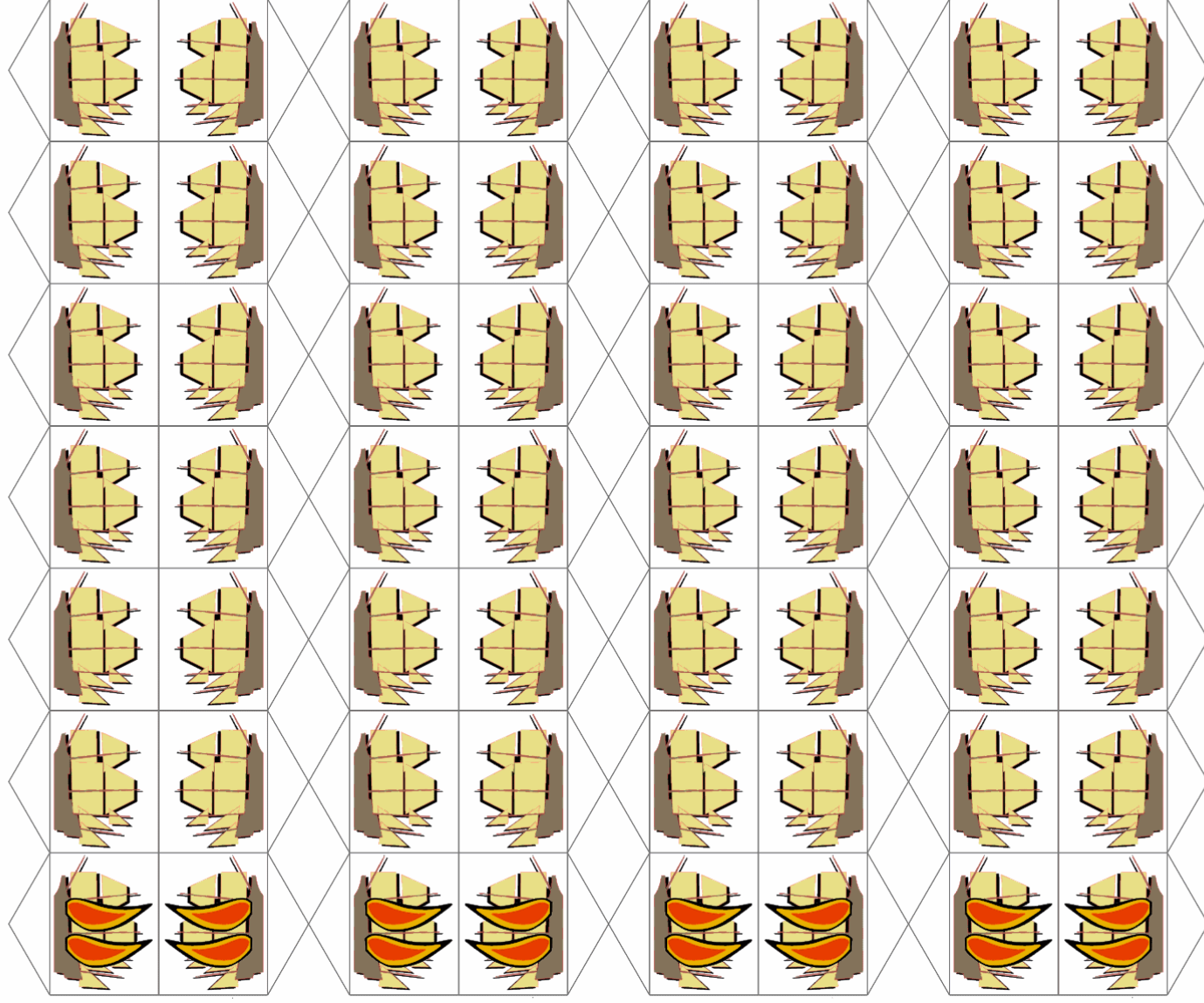
Only in England has the Spanish Armada of 1588 been held up as a great English military victory, the rest of the world has always understood that Spain was defeated by a terrible storm. However the idea of Drake's little ships harrying the giant Spanish galleons fitted the mythic narrative of 'Britain the Underdog': England triumphing against the odds, the country that produced its greatest victories when its back was against the wall.*



* John O'Farrell – The Utterly Impartial History of Britain or 2000 Years of Upper Class Idiots in Charge

FIRESHIP (SM02B)

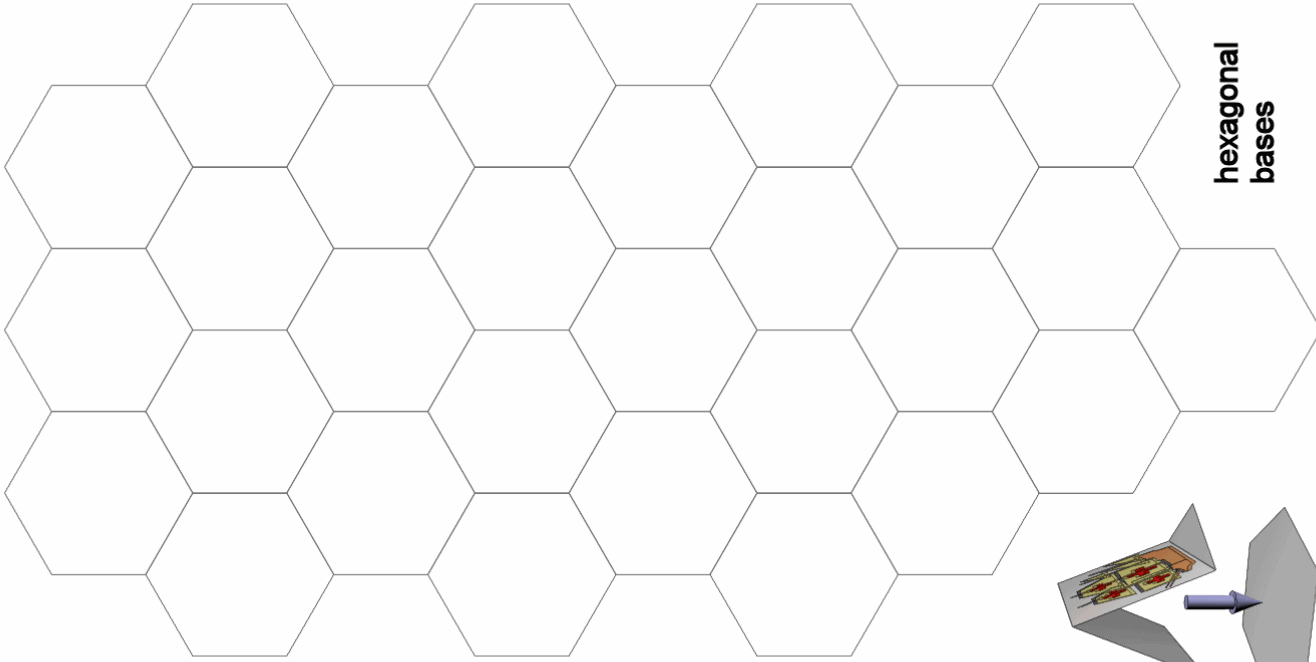
English ships



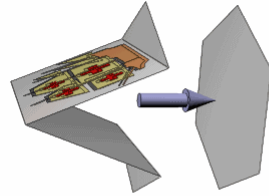
hexagonal
bases

FIRESHIP (SM02B)

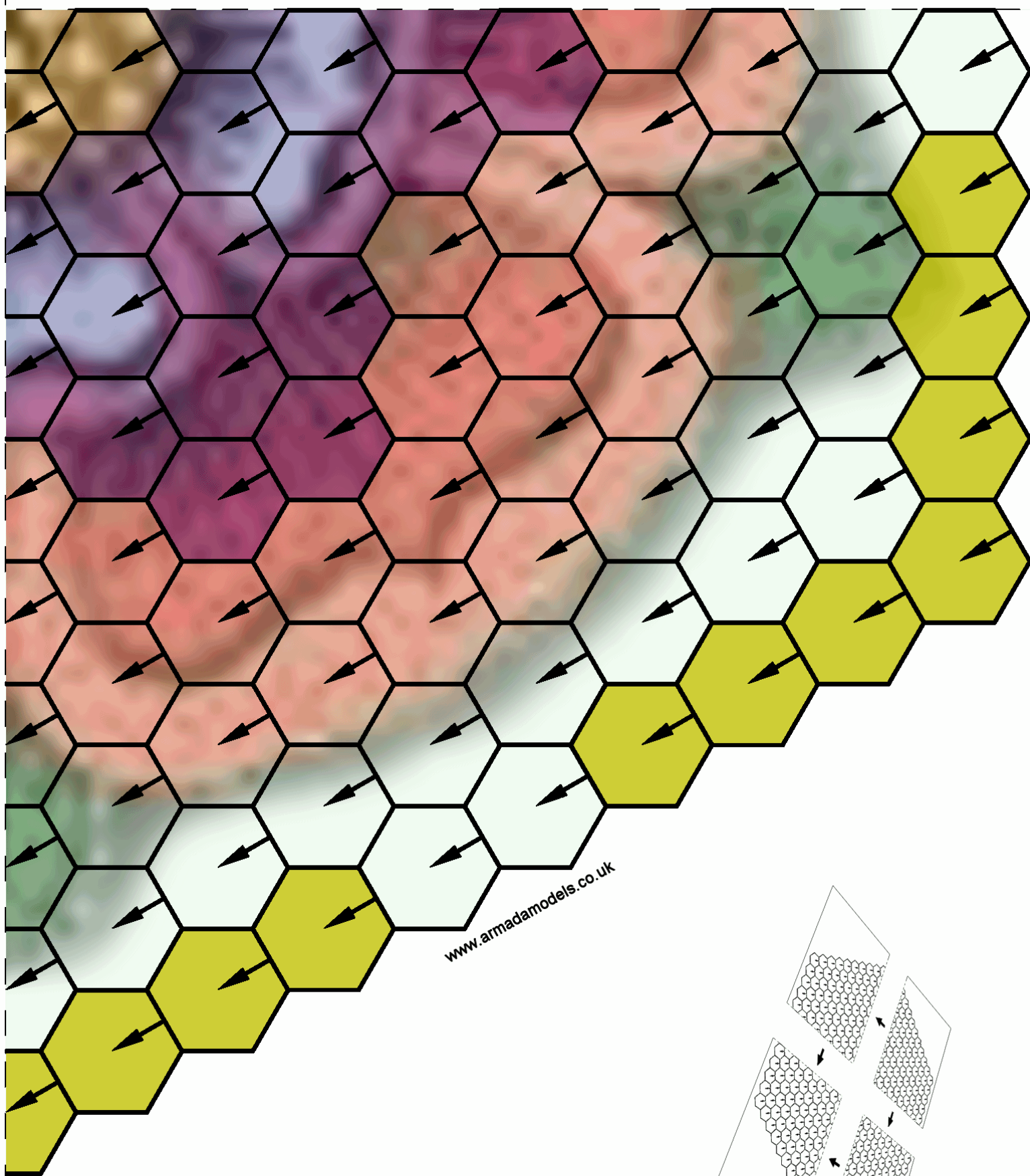
Spanish ships



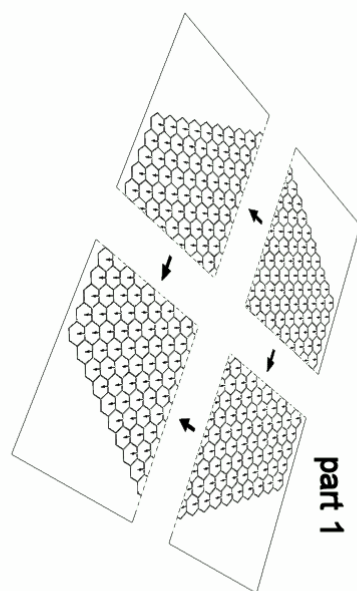
hexagonal
bases

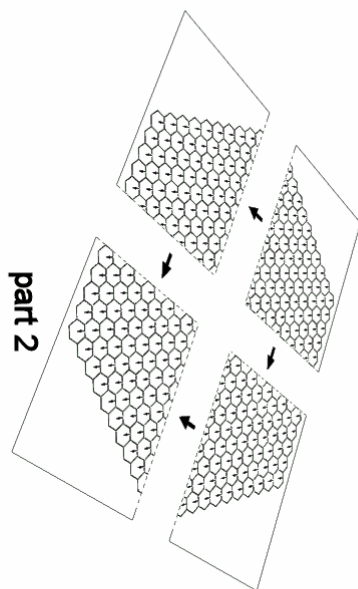
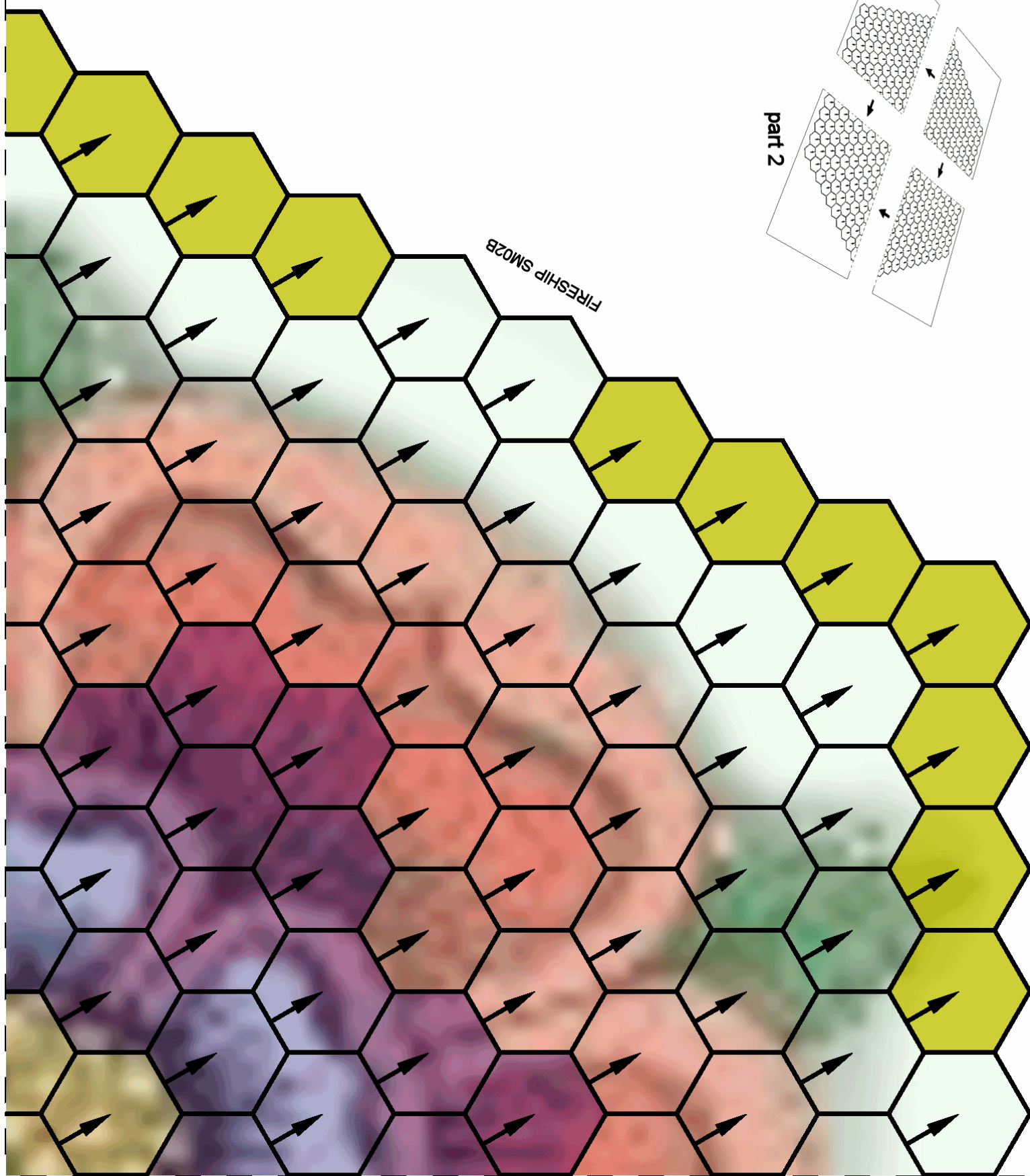


← cut to these lines



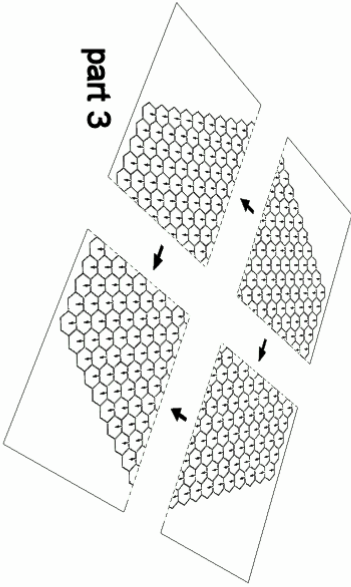
www.armadamodels.co.uk



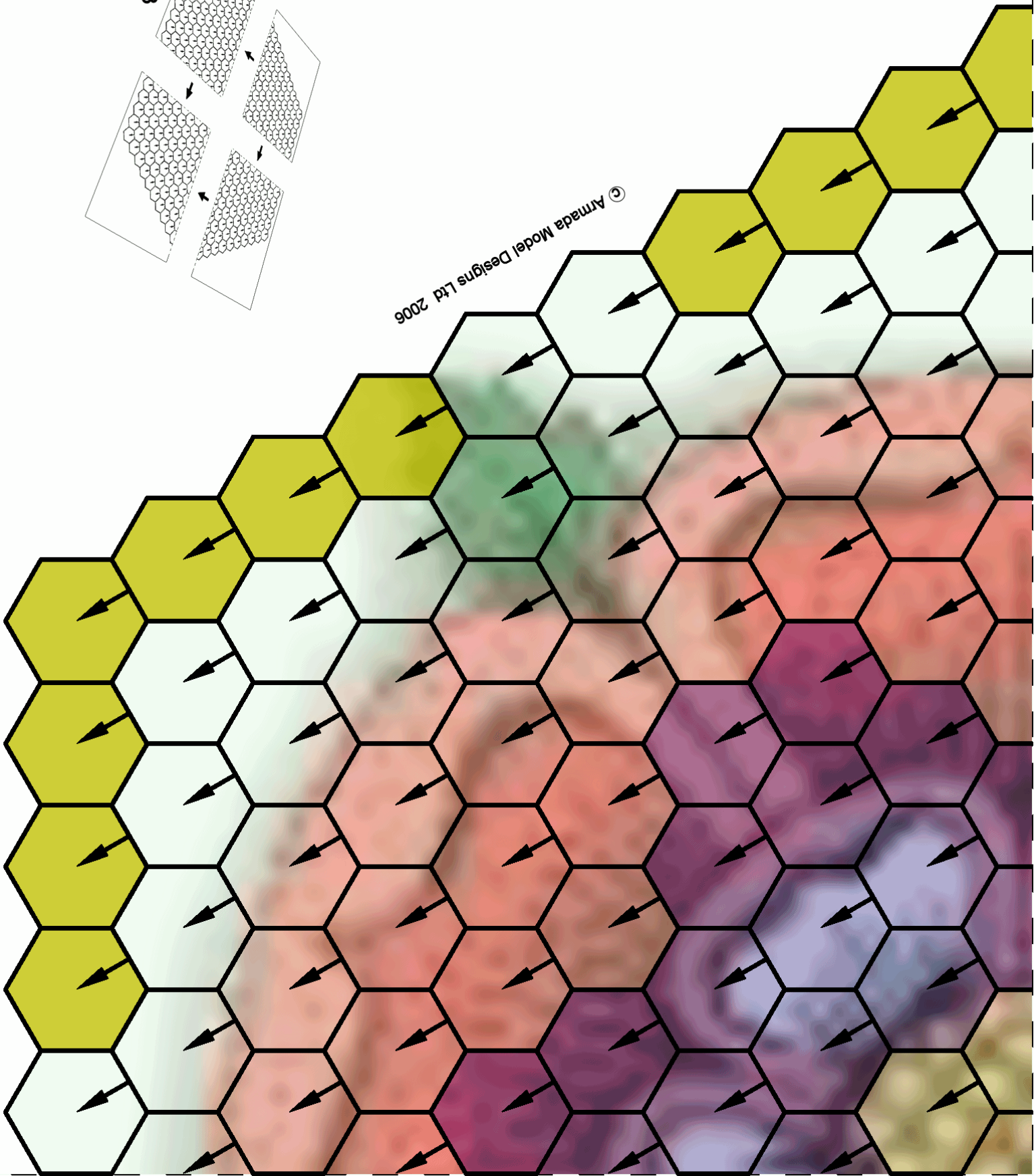


← cut to these lines →

part 3

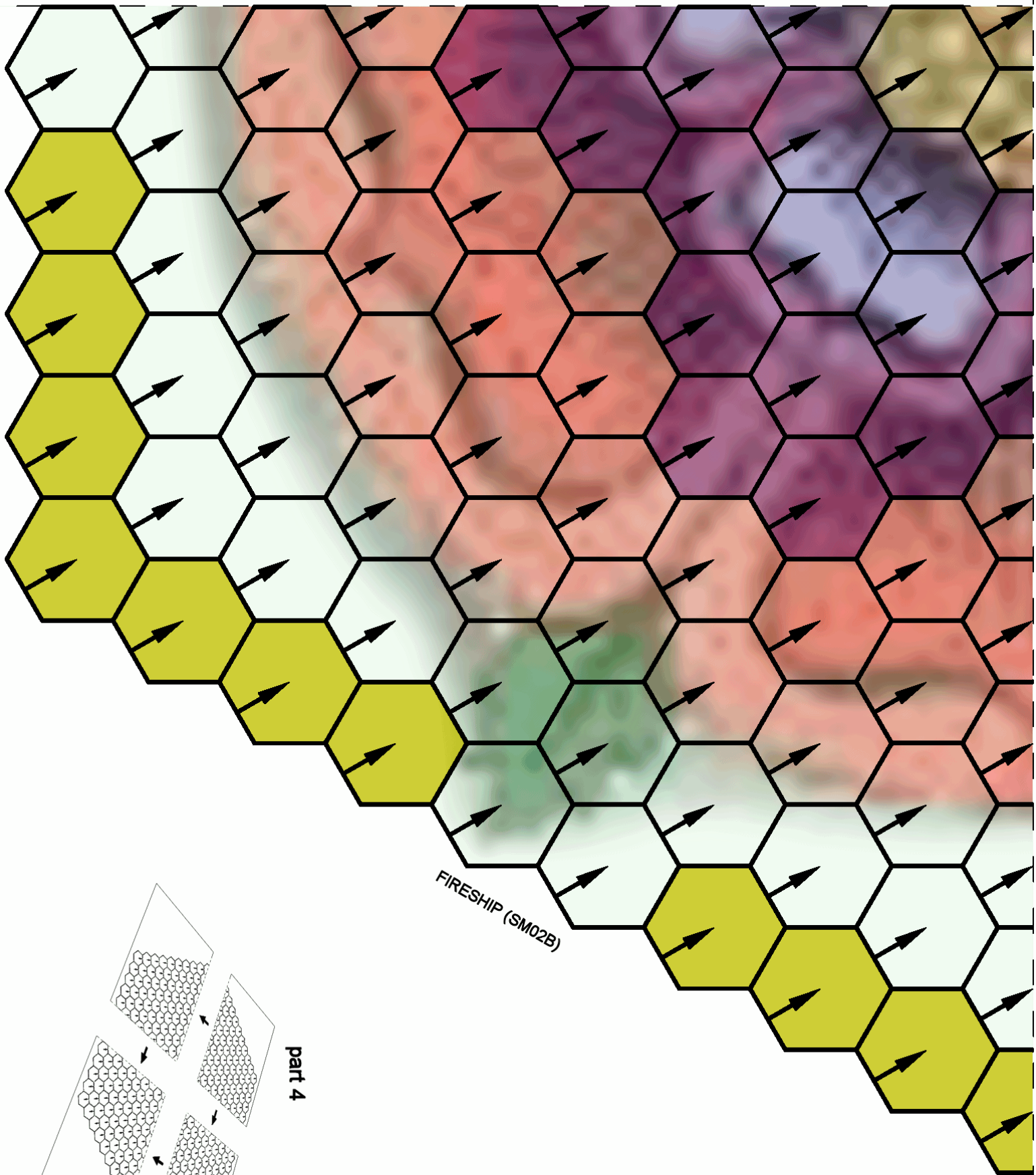


© Armada Model Designs Ltd 2006

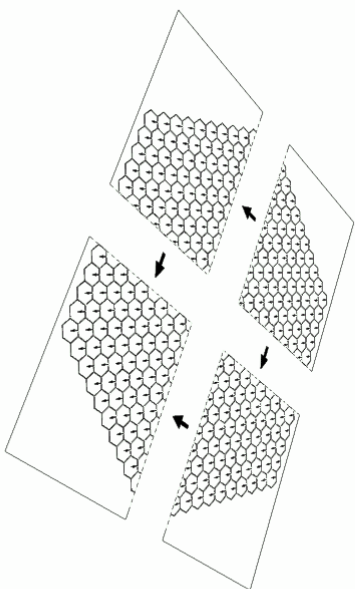


cut to these lines →

cut to these lines →



FIRESHIP (SM02B)



part 4