

**A STUDIO7A PRODUCT**

**SUFFREN**

**VS.**

**HUGHES**

**FEBRUARY 1782 ~ JUNE 1783**

**BEING A WARGAME MINI-CAMPAIGN  
FOR THE “ENGLAND EXPECTS...”  
NAVAL WARGAMES RULE SYSTEM**

**BY  
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# Suffren vs. Hughes, 1782 ~ 1783

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## Suffren vs. Hughes, 1782 ~ 1783

### INTRODUCTION

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This scenario is based upon the protracted hostilities between Britain and France in India over the course of two years during the time of the American War of Independence.

There were five battles of note during this period, fought between the French admiral Bailli de Suffren and the British admiral Sir Edward Hughes in the Indian Ocean between February 1782 and June 1783.

Each battle is designed for 1 to 3 Players per side.

### BACKGROUND TO THE CAMPAIGN

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France entered the American War of Independence in 1778, and Britain declared war on the Dutch Republic in late 1780 after the Dutch refused to stop trading arms with the French and the Americans. The British had rapidly gained control over most French and Dutch outposts in India when news of these events reached India, spawning the Second Anglo-Mysore in the process.



The French admiral Bailli de Suffren was dispatched for military assistance to

## Suffren vs. Hughes, 1782 ~ 1783

French colonies in India, leading a fleet of five ships of the line, seven transports, and a corvette to escort transports from Brest in March 1781. Suffren was involved in a small battle with a British fleet at Porto Praya in the Cape Verde Islands in April. In October, he left reinforcement troops at the Dutch-controlled Cape of Good Hope to assist with colonial defense. Suffren added some ships to his fleet and sailed on *toile de France*, arriving at Port Louis in December.

After further additions at Port Louis, Suffren's fleet sailed for India under the command of the elderly Navy Brigadier General Thomas d'Orves, accompanying transports carrying nearly 3,000 men under the command of the Comte du Chemin. D'Orves died in February 1782, shortly before the fleet arrived off the Indian coast, and Suffren once again took command.

Suffren first sailed for Madras, hoping to surprise the British stronghold there. Encountering the fleet of Sir Edward Hughes anchored in Madras on 15 February 1782, Suffren turned south. He intended to land troops at Porto Novo, march up the coast and recapture French and Dutch holdings on the way. Hughes raised anchor and sailed after Suffren.



## Suffren vs. Hughes, 1782 ~ 1783

### 1. BATTLE OF SADRAS

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Fought on 17 February 1782 near present-day Kalpakkam, the battle was tactically indecisive, but the British fleet suffered the most damage. Under Suffren's protection, French troop transports were able to land at Porto Novo.

#### SADRAS: THE BATTLE

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Suffren was hampered with protecting his troop convoys from Hughes, whose goal he presumed was to prevent the troops from landing. Detaching one corvette to protect the convoy and detailing another to watch the British fleet, Suffren attempted to draw Hughes away. However, under cover of night Hughes managed to slip between Suffren's squadron and the convoys. The signal was raised on the morning of 17 February, and Suffren gave chase to force battle.

When the fleets closed for action around 15:30, some of Suffren's ships had not properly formed the line of battle. Only five of the French ships engaged at first. Of the remaining six, only two joined the action later, with the other four apparently violating Suffren's orders and hanging back. Suffren, leading in Héros, exchanged a broadside with Exeter before targeting Hughes' flagship Superb. The battle lasted for over three hours, with Exeter sustaining the worst