

ROYAL MALAYSIAN NAVY



NAVAL TERM



KD SULTAN IDRIS I

KAPAL DIRAJA SULTAN IDRIS I

PRAKATA

Buku Naval Term ini diterbitkan oleh pegawai-pegawai Fakulti Asas KD SULTAN IDRIS I dengan kerjasama para peserta Kursus Aplikasi Pegawai Muda (KAPM) Siri 13/20. Pegawai yang terlibat dalam penghasilan buku ini adalah seperti berikut:



KEPT PULENDREN A/L PARAMASIVAM TLDM
PEGAWAI MEMERINTAH



KDR KAMAL RUL AZRUL BIN KAMAL AZMIR TLDM
KETUA JURULATIH



LT KDR MUHAMMAD NOR AZRIL BIN MAJID TLDM
KETUA FAKULTI ASAS



LT KDR NUR SUHANA BINTI KASIM BAKRI TLDM
KETUA BAHAGIAN THANA



LT KDR FARIZ HEDRY LING BIN FIRDAUS HEDRY LING TLDM
KETUA BAHAGIAN ZAIN



LT KDR HAFIZ BIN HUSSEIN TLDM
PEGAWAI PEMBANGUNAN SAHSIAH



LT KDR RAJA KHAIRUL AFNIZAN BIN RAJA ZAINAL ABIDIN TLDM
PEGAWAI JURULATIH KEJURUTERAAN



LT KDR NIK MUHD AIZAT AMZAR BIN MOHD NOOR TLDM
PEGAWAI PENGAJIAN PEPERANGAN MARITIM B (NAVIGASI)



LT KDR NURHIDAYAH BINTI ZAILAN TLDM
PEGAWAI JURULATIH BEKALAN



LT MOHD NAZAR BIN BAHRIL TLDM
PEGAWAI PENGAJIAN SAINS NAUTIKA (GUN)



LT ARIFF MUZAKKIR BIN ALI SYABANA TLDM
PEGAWAI BAHAGIAN THANA

CONTENTS

ALPHABETICAL LETTERS

A.....	4
B.....	5
C.....	13
D.....	21
E.....	25
F.....	25
G.....	29
H.....	32
I.....	36
J.....	37
K.....	38
L.....	39
M.....	42
N.....	46
O.....	48
P.....	49
Q.....	54
R.....	54
S.....	57
T.....	67
U.....	70
V.....	70
W.....	71
Y.....	74
Z.....	74

**A & AS**

Alterations and additions to the structure, rigging and equipment of a warship.

A.B.

Able-bodied seaman. It denotes a man who is technically qualified and fit to carry out a seaman's duties, both aloft and on deck.

ALL FAIR AND ABOVE BOARD

A commonly used expression of nautical origin meaning "Utterly fair nothing hidden". Things "above board" were on or above the upper deck and so open for all to see.

ALL AT SEA

Confused, at a loss

ACID

Sailors' slang for sarcasm used in the phrase "Don't come the old acid".

ACKERS

Naval slang name for any foreign currency. The word comes from Egypt, where beggars use it when pleading for baksheesh (Piastres).

ACTING RABBIT

Baked meat pie.

ADMIRAL

The word itself is of Arabic origin (Emir-el-Bahr means Lord of the Seas). It came to us through the French and first appears in English records at the end of the 13th Century. Vice-Admiral came into use with the British about 1550, Rear-Admiral about 1600 and Admiral of the Fleet at the end of the 17th Century, apparently first being mentioned in an Order in Council of 1693, dealing with the pay of Flag Officers.

ADRIFT

Absent, late for muster or an appointment.

AHOY!

The seaman's hail to call attention.

ALL STANDING

To bring a person or thing up "ALL STANDING" is to bring him or it to a sudden, unexpected stop.

TO SWALLOW THE ANCHOR

To leave the Navy for good - implying that one has no further use for the implement one has for so long trusted.

ARISINGS

Pieces of material or metal left over from a job which are of value. They are collected and may be sold, melted or made up again.

ATHWART

Across, as in 'athwart the hawse', 'athwart the tide'.

AVAST

Avast! means Hold! Enough! Finish! It comes from the Italian word "Basta".

AWASH

Level with the surface of the sea.

AWNING

- (a) Canvas cover over quarter-deck and other open spaces in ships as protection against the sun.
- (b) Sailor's slang name for the pastry top to a pie.

AYE AYE

The derivation of this is generally thought to be unknown, but some experts think it may possibly come from the German "Eiey!" - an exclamation of astonishment or admiration.

B**BACKING AND FILLING**

A common expression - of maritime origin - for constantly changing ground in a decision or argument.

BAGGYWRINKLE-

The service on standing or running rigging to prevent chafing where one rope crosses another.

BANYAN PARTY

- (a) An old Naval name for a picnic party.
- (b) A rare example of the good things in life being remembered better than the bad things!

BAR

A shoal or spit formed by the action of the tides at the mouth of a river or harbour.

BARRATRY

Fraudulent claim for compensation, as when a ship is deliberately wrecked or scuttled (which see) to obtain her insurance money.

BARE NAVY

When member of a mess who feed safety on service rations.

BARE POLES

A sailing vessel is said to be under bare poles when she is under way and has no sails set.

BARGES

A cargo carrying coastal sailing vessel. In the Royal Navy, the boat of a Flag Officer.

BARRACKS

The Marines' mess deck in a warship called the Barracks.

BARRACK STATION

Man who served for a long period in a Naval barrack or shore establishments.

BARREL

A measurement of volume for liquids particularly in the petroleum industry; one-barrel equals 0.152 cubic metric.

BARRICOE

A small water barrel carried in boats. The word comes from the Spanish "Barrica" - a cask.

BATTEN DOWN

To close all openings in the weather decks or superstructure of a ship, or to close all openings in one of her compartments.

BATTLE ENSIGN

In action, a ship wears extra "battle ensigns" in any convenient position. This has been done for years, to ensure that the colours remain flying whatever the damage received.

BAYONET

Bayonets were first used in Bayonne in 1641. During a battle the soldiers ran out of ammunition, stuck knives into the muzzles of their guns and charged the enemy.

BEACH**ON THE BEACH**

Naval slang expression normally, and originally, meaning retired from the Service, but of recent years sometimes used to describe an appointment to a shore establishment.

BEAM ENDS

A ship is said to be on her beam ends when she is lying over on her side, with her beams and decks perpendicular. The expression is used colloquially to describe a precarious position.

BEAR A HAND

An order to hasten, or to do something smartly, quickly.

BEAR UP!

A sailing expression, meaning to bear the tiller up to windward in order to keep the vessel's head away from the wind. It is in common use, with the metaphorical meaning of "Keep your spirits up!"

BECKET

A piece of rope, each of whose ends is secured - e.g. rope handle of a wooden bucket. The "slots" on the top of a pair of trousers or on a raincoat through which a belt is passed are beckets. In Naval slang, Beckets mean pockets.

BELAY

To encounter and an order.

BELOW THERE!

A hail from a man aloft to anyone below him.

STRIKING THE BELL TO DENOTE THE TIME

The origin of this custom is obscure, but records show that this method of denoting the time was in use as early as the 13th Century. The method of keeping time, i.e. the approximate time, was by means of a half-hour glass (similar to an egg-timer), the bell being struck every time the glass was turned. Half hour glasses were in use in the Royal Navy until after 1850 and at this period it was common to hear time being expressed in glasses, e.g. "We should finish the job in about three glasses", meaning one and-a-half hours.

ROUND THE BEND

General Navy slang for "half-witted".

BERTH

The allotted place or position for a ship or a man. 'To give a wide berth' is to keep well clear of anything. 'To shift berth' is to change position.

BETWEEN-DECKS

A general term applied to the space or the decks between the upper deck and the lowest deck of a ship.

THE BILBOES

Old Naval slang name for leg-irons (referred to in the phrase "clapped him in irons").

BILGE OR BILGE WATER

Common slang word of nautical origin for rubbish or nonsense. Bilge water is the water which collects in the bilges of a ship - if left, it soon acquires an offensive colour of corruption.

BILL

A certificate or a written agreement, such as a 'Bill of Health', 'Bill of Lading' or 'Bill of Exchange'.

BITCH

The sea 'To Dirch' is to throw overboard.

NAVY BILL

A Bill of Exchange drawn by a ship's Purser on the Accountant General of the Navy at three days' sight. In effect, it is the Navy's form of cheque.

BIRTHDAY

It used to be the custom for the wine to be passed, after the Royal Toast, at dinner on an officer's birthday in order that his messmates might have wine (at his expense) wherein to drink his health. Nowadays, the more usual custom is for the birthday officer to stand drinks all round before lunch.

(THE) BISH

Officers' slang name (abbreviation of Bishop) for the Chaplain.

BLACK-COATED WORKERS

Common slang name for stewed prunes.

BLEAT

A Naval slang word for a grumble, used as both noun and verb.

BLEED

To drain a buoy of water. To bleed the monkey-to extract the contents of a rum barricoe by boring a small hole in it.

THE BIGGEST BLOCK IN THE SHIP

Is the butcher's block (Old Naval catch question).

THE BLOKE

Slang for the second in command of a ship.

BLOCK-AND-BLOCK, TWO-BLOCKS

These terms describe the state of a tackle when its standing and moving blocks are hauled close together. Colloquially they are used to describe the position of two objects which are close together.

BLOW THE GAFF

To divulge information you have learnt confidentially, to give away a secret. Its origin probably lies in a ship revealing her identity by hoisting her colours at the peak of her gaff.

BLUE

Soldier's slang name for a sailor.

BLUE-JACKET

A seaman of the Royal Navy (from the short blue jacket he used to wear).

BLUFF

A headland with a broad, perpendicular face. Hence, 'bluff-bowed'- a ship with broad, perpendicular bows.

TILL ALL'S BLUE

Derived from sailing across the ocean until in blue (coastal) water again.

BOARD

(a) The old name for the side of a ship, from which the following terms also are derived: 'to go on board'-to enter a ship; 'to board'-to enter ship by force or authority; 'boarders' or 'boarding party'- a body. of men detailed to board a ship; 'inboard'-between the sides of the ship; 'outboard'-

outside the ship; 'on board'-anywhere in the ship; 'to go by the board'-to fall over the ship's side; 'board and board'-alongside, side by side and touching; 'close aboard'-close, to the ship's side; 'star-board'-the side on which the steering oar or steer-board was formerly shipped (the right-hand side when in the ship or boat and facing forward); 'larboard'-the opposite side to starboard, over or through which the cargo was embarked or disembarked (originally spelt 'ladeboard').

- (b) The distance made good by a sailing vessel between two successive tacks when beating to windward.

BOATSWAIN (PRONOUNCED BO'SUN)

In sailing ships, the Boatswain was the officer responsible for the rigging, sails and sailing equipment. The Bo'sun looks after the general working of the ship, especially with regard to anchors, cables, blocks and tackles. He takes his orders from all officers. All ropes and hawsers are under his charge. He is in charge of endless stores, such as rope, wire, wash-deck gear and canvas, and he examines and passes men for higher "rating".

BOBSTAY

The rope or chain used to confine the bowsprit downwards to the stem.

BOLLARD

Metal or stone "stumps" around which ropes are belayed.

BOLSTER

A pad or cushion of canvas or leather used to prevent chafe between ropes, or a piece of wood or metal used to give a fair lead to, or prevent a bad nip in, a rope. (See 'scotchman' and 'baggywrinkle'.)

BONE

TO BONE

Slang for to pilfer, steal or scrounge. The word comes from the name of a Boatswain in Admiral Cornwallis's Flag Ship, who was notorious for making good deficiencies in his stores by stealing from other ships. The Admiral is reported to have said to the Boatswain on one occasion: "I trust, Mr. Bone, you will leave me with my anchors".

BONNET

Any small cover or hood, of canvas or metal, used to cover or protect a small fitting or opening.

BOOMKIN

BUMPKIN

A small boom.

BOOT-TOPPING

Properly the operation of scraping marine growths from the waterline, but also the name for the painted band, one to one-and-a-half metres wide in a large ship, extending from stem to stern of the ship along her waterline; the paint is usually of a different colour from that of the sides and bottom, and is of special composition designed to prevent the growth of marine organisms, which otherwise always form between wind and water.

BOTH SHEETS AFT

Naval phrase descriptive of a sailor with his hands in his pockets.

BOTTLE

a reproof or admonishment (contracted from a dose from the foretopman's bottle, which was a cure for all evils).

BOTTOMRY

A system of pledging the hull of a ship as security for a loan.

BOUND

- (a) Restrained, tied, fettered, as in 'weather-bound', 'wind-bound', 'tide-bound'; and 'iron-bound coast' used to describe a rocky and dangerous coast with no shelter.
- (b) Ready to go to a destination, or on the way to a destination, as in 'outward bound', 'homeward bound'.

BOWSE

To haul on a rope; 'bowse down'-to tauten a rope or a lashing.

CROSSING THE BOWS OF A SENIOR OFFICER

It is the custom in the Royal Navy for ships at sea never to cross the bows of a senior officer without asking permission to do so.

AS HONEST AS A BOW OAR

The bowmen of launches were the most easily spared members of a boat's crew and were usually the biggest scoundrels in the ship. When attending yardarm executions, it was the bowmen of the attending boats who provided the party on the whip hauling the condemned man to the yardarm. Notorious rogues were given the bows oar duty so that, by their active participation in an execution, they might receive a severe warning of what might come their way unless they turned over a new leaf. Thus "as honest as a bow oar" is a picturesque way of saying "very little".

TO PART BRASS RAGS

Naval ratings used to share bags in which polishing rags were kept. Thus, the friend with whom you shared a bag was your "Raggie" and, when you fell out, you parted brass rags with him.

BRASS MONKEY WEATHER

Slang expression for bitterly cold weather.

BREADCRUMBS

The order given in the gun room by the Sub-lieutenant, denoting that Junior Midshipmen present were to stop their ears with their fingers, so as to be unable to hear the conversation of their seniors. Similarly, "Fishbones" meant "Close your Eyes" and "Matchboxes" meant "Close your Mouth and Keep Quiet".

BREADTH (OF FLAGS)

Naval flags are measured in breadths. A breadth is nine inches (i.e. thumb tip to little finger tip when the hand is outstretched). The measurement is made up (or down) the side of the flag nearest the mast (called the head, the opposite side is called the fly; upper and lower edges have not specific names). A 6-breadth ensign measures 4ft 6ins by 9ft. Standards, Ensigns and Jacks are twice as long as wide. Admirals' flags are in the proportion 2 x 3. Signal flags are very nearly square.

BREAK BUL

To start unloading a full hold.

BREAK SURFACE

To wake up or come to life (has its origin in a submarine 'breaking surface' after being submerged).

BREAKER

A small wooden barrel, primarily used for holding water supplies in boats. The day's rum ration for mixing into grog is kept in a special breaker, under a sentry's charge, until mixed into grog. Some years ago the synonym "Barricoe" was invariably pronounced "breaker."

BRICK

Naval slang name for a gun projectile or shell.

BRIGHT WORK

Polished metal fittings in a ship.

BROACH

To break into, or open for the first time, a cask, package or similar receptacle.

BROACH TO

When applied to a vessel running before the sea, is to slew round inadvertently broadside-on in the trough of a wave.

BROCKY**GROG BLOSSOM**

A slang adjective sometimes applied to a man with acne or pimples.

BROKEN WATER

Surf caused by breaking waves.

BUBBLY

Naval slang for grog.

BUFFER**THE (CHIEF) BUFFER**

Naval nickname for the Chief Bo'sun's Mate. As he is the First Lieutenant's right-hand man and the one by whom he passes orders to the Captain of Tops, he is considered to be the buffer between officer and ratings.

BULL A CASK

Formerly the practice of putting a small quantity of water in a n empty rum cask and leaving it until it became grog.

BULLOCKS

The name formerly given to the Royal Marine Artillery because of their magnificent physique.

BULLSEYE

- (a) A light built into a bulkhead between adjacent compartments so that it illuminates both.
- (b) A thimble made of hardwood and usually inserted in the end of a lizard, or used as a small leading block.

BUM-BOAT

A shore boat carrying fresh provision or small merchandise for sale to ships in a harbour. 'Bum-boatman' – the owner of such a boat, or of her stock in trade.

BUN-WORRY (OR BUN-FIGHT)

An old Naval officers' slang name for a tea-party, with ladies, ashore.

BUNDLEMAN

A married man. (Originates from the days when men could buy ship's provisions for their families, and the married man could then be distinguished when going ashore by the bundle of provisions he carried.)

JIMMY BUNGS

The old Naval nickname for the Cooper rating.

BUNG UP AND BILGE FREE

Naval expression meaning "Everything correct".

BUNT

Naval name for the belly of a sail and the middle of a yard.

BUNTS

Naval slang name for a Signalmans - abbreviation for bunting-tosser.

BURDEN

The carrying capacity of a merchant vessel expressed in tons of cubic capacity, i.e. the net register tonnage.

BURGOO

Sailors' slang name for porridge.

BUTT END

The largest end of a spar or any similarly shaped object.

BUZZ

Rumour.

BY HOOK OR BY CROOK

By any possible means necessary.

BY THE HEAD

A vessel trimmed more deeply forward than aft.

BY THE STERN

A vessel trimmed more deeply aft than forward.

CABLE

A cable equals one-tenth of a sea mile - 608 ft. The length of a ship's hempen anchor cable was formerly 101 fathoms. 100 fathoms = 1 cable 10 cables = 1 nautical mile (very nearly).

CAD**CAD'S CORNER**

Unofficial name given to that part of the wardroom dinner table (as far distance from the Mess President as is practicable) where the younger and/or more exuberant spirits are wont to gather for dinner, there to sail as close to the wind in their conversation and general behaviour as they dare.

CAKE**CHINESE WEDDING CAKE**

Sailors' slang name for rice pudding with currants or raisins in it.

CALLIANTI**THE CALLIANTI STROKE**

A long, slow rowing stroke, in which the rowers rise from their thwarts with each stroke.

CAMEL

A tank secured to the hull of a ship to provide her with extra buoyancy, used mainly in salvage work.

CANISTER**CANISTER SHOT**

Iron or tin cylinders, with iron, tin or wood tops and bottoms, filled with bullets packed in sawdust. Formally used as one form of ammunition for muzzle-loading cannon. The fore-runner of "Shrapnel", it was also known as Case Shot.

CANTEEN**CANTEEN MEDALS**

Naval name for stains down the front of jumper, jacket or coat caused by food or drink.

CAPFUL OF WIND

A puff of wind on a calm day, but of sufficient strength to fill a vessel's sails.

CAPTAIN

Originally, the Captain of a warship was a courtier or Army officer who embarked in the ship with his soldiers to do the fighting, the sailing of the ship being in the hands of the Naval crew under the Master and the Boatswain. This was changed in the Elizabethan era, when the long sea voyages undertaken made it necessary for the Captain to have a real knowledge of ship handling and not of fighting only.

CAPSIZE

To overturn, to turn bottom upwards.

CARRY AWAY

To break away, or to part.

CAST

To pay a vessel's head off on a course, or on a new tack.

POST CAPTAINS

Where captains of ships of the first six rates only, the commanding officers of which ships were of the substantive rank of Captain: lesser ships had Commanders or Lieutenants in command, who were naturally (and correctly) called Captain while in that job. Thus, a Post Captain is a Captain by rank or by job.

CAPTAIN OF THE HEADS

The rating in whom is vested the responsibility for the cleanliness of the ratings' latrines.

CAPTAIN OF THE FLEET

A Captain of the Fleet is the senior administrative adviser in a Fleet formation.

**CAREEN
TO CAREEN**

To beach a ship and list her so as to expose her bottom for the marine growth to be scraped off. The word comes from an old French word "Carine" meaning the bottom of a ship.

**CARVEL
CARVEL-BUILT**

A "carvel built" boat is one on which the planks of the sides are laid close together without any overlap; in a "clinker-built" boat the planks overlap.

**CASK
CASKS IN THE NAVY**

The chines of a cask are the projection of the staves beyond the head. Rum casks have their chines painted red; lime juice casks have their chines lime green; Vinegar casks have their chines white. The bung of a cask is always directly in line with the rivets of any two opposite hoops and so can easily be found in the dark. The belly of a cask is called its bilge. Contline is the space between the bilges of casks stowed side-by-side. The "Beds" on which casks are stowed is a gantry; casks properly stowed on the gantry are "Bung up and bilge free", i.e. bungs uppermost and the bilges - thanks to the gantry - clear of the deck. To "bull" a cask is to put a small quantity of fresh water in an empty rum cask, with the aim of thereby obtaining a week grog.

**CASUAL
CASUAL PAYMENT**

A payment of wages made to an officer or rating at a time other than a routine payment time; Commonly known as a "casual". Casual payments are recorded in the pay ledger in red ink; routine payments in black.

ROOM TO SWING A CAT

Common slang expression meaning the space required for any particular job. This does not refer to the domestic animal, but to the Naval cat-o'-nine' tails.

CAT, CAT-O-NINE-TAILS

A former instrument of punishment in the Navy. It was originally made of nine lengths of cord, with three knots at the end of each, spliced to a short length of thick rope to form a handle. No room to swing a cat means that there is insufficient space in which to wield a cat-o-nine-tails.

CAT IS OUT OF THE BAG

Common slang expression, meaning "The secret is out". From the practice of keeping the Naval cat o' nine tails in a red baize bag and not removing it until the offender was secured to the gratings and there was no possibility of a reprieve.

CATSPAW

A light puff of wind on a calm day, just strong enough to ruffle the surface of the water; usually the forerunner of a sailing breeze.

CAULK

- (a) To drive oakum into the seams of wooden deck planking etc., to make the whole watertight. After being caulked, deck seams are "paid" with hot pitch.
- (b) Colloquially, to "caulk" is to have a nap; from the fact that a man who had had a nap on the hot deck could be identified by the pitch marks on his clothes.

CHAFFER**TO CHAFFER UP**

To smarten up, make extra tidy or "tiddly". The expression comes from the shipwrights' bench, where it means to take off the sharp edge of a piece of wood with a chisel.

CHAIN**CHAIN-SHOT**

A form of artillery projectile common in sailing ship days. It consisted of two cannon-balls connected by a short length of iron chain and was used to destroy the rigging of ships. A split single cannon-ball whose two halves were connected by chain was called ANGEL-SHOT.

THE CHAINS

The name given to the platforms projecting from the projecting from the upper deck of a warship either side, abreast the bridge, on which the leadsman stood when heaving the lead.

CHAPLAIN**THE CHAPLAIN**

The Chaplain is usually referred to by rating as the Padre; officers usually refer to him officially as either the Chaplain or the Padre. In the wardroom.

CHARLIE NOBLE

The funnel of a galley or a stove when sheathed in brass and polished.

CHATS

Chatham.

CHATTY

An old Naval slang word for dirty, untidy. Most often met in the expression "Happy and chatty".

CHEEKS

An old nickname (now quite obsolete) for the Marines, derived from the looping up of the tails of their coats.

CHEER

On all formal occasions, the Navy cheers HOORAY, not HURRAH, and the cheers are called for with three HIPS.

CHEF

Sailors' nickname for the senior Cook rating on board.

CHEW**TO CHEW THE FAT**

Naval slang expression for to talk volubly. It is possibly derived from the considerable jaw work involved in chewing the old-time ration meat before the days of refrigerators or canned meat.

CHIPS**CHIPS, CHIPPY, CHIPPY-CHAP**

The inevitable traditional Naval nickname for a Shipwright, both officer and rating.

CHOCK**CHOCK A BLOCK, CHOCKER**

Chock-a-block is an old Naval expression, meaning "Complete" or "Full up"; synonyms were "Two blocks" and "Block and block". Modern slang has corrupted the expression to "Chocker", meaning "Fed up".

CHOCOLATE

Customary naval slang for praise, usually fulsome; its antonym is a Bottle. The words Velma Suchard (rarely any other trade-name) are sometimes satirically used in this connection.

CHOKED

A block is said to be choked if its fall jams in the swallow. 'To choke the luff' is to choke the block of a tackle by leading the bight of the hauling part across the swallow of the block and jamming it between the swallow and the hauling parts, thus preventing the tackle from overhauling.

CHOPS OF THE CHANNEL

Maritime name for the western entrance to the English Channel.

CHOPPY SEA

A short, steep and usually confused sea.

CHOPS OF THE CHANNEL

The entrance to the English Channel (derived from 'chap' or 'chop', meaning jaws).

CHOW

Chinese word for food; often to be met on the lips of officers and men who have at one time served on the Far East Station.

CHUCK

Naval slang for a demonstration of applause. Enthusiastic supporters of a ship's regatta boat's crew form a chucking-up party. The expression may originate from the practice of throwing hats in the air when excited. An early form of this word was CHUCKER UP.

CHUM
CHUMMY SHIPS

Two ships whose crews have struck up a particular friendship for each other.

CIVVY
CIVVY STREET

Common slang expression meaning civilian life.

CIVVIES

Common slang name for non-uniform clothes - a word seldom used in the Navy.

CLAKKER

Old Naval slang name for the pastry top to a pie; synonyms are CLAGGER and AWNING.

CLEAN

- (a) To dress in the 'rig' (suit of clothing ordered), or to change from night clothing or working rig into a clean rig.
- (b) Or white. Descriptive of **the** cargo of a tanker carrying refined oil products, namely aviation spirit, motor spirit, kerosenes and some grades of gas oil.

CLEAR

Good visibility, as in 'clear weather', or in a clear sky, meaning that it is cloudless; free from shipping or obstructions, as in 'clear horizon' and 'clear channel'.

CLEWS

The small cords which support the head and foot of a hammock.

TO FIT DOUBLE CLEWS

Naval slang expression meaning to get married. A synonym is "to get spliced".

TO CLEW UP

Naval slang expression meaning to bring to an end. In a square-rigged ship. to 'clew up' is to haul up the lower corners of the sails by means of the clew-lines preparatory to furling the sails.

CLINCH
OUT TO A CLINCH

A rope is said to be 'out to a clinch' when all the free part of the rope has run out, only its extreme end remaining inboard, but that end duly secured. A CLENCH is the stout fitting securely attached to the ship's structure to which the inboard end of a cable or hawser is shackled. Metaphorically, to be 'out to a clinch' means that one has reached the limit of one's resources in the field denoted by the context.

CLINKER
CLINKER-BUILT

A 'Clinker-built' boat is one the planks of whose sides overlap one another: in a 'Carvel-built' boat, the planks are laid close to each other with no overlap.

CLOAK**CAPTAIN'S CLOAK**

A reference to the 43rd article of the Naval Discipline Act which, from its very general wording, gives wide scope to the Commanding Officer. The 43rd Article includes the words - "any act, disorder or neglect to the prejudice of good order and Naval discipline".

BOAT CLOAK

Optional item of uniform for Naval and Marine officers; lined with white satin for Naval, crimson satin for Marine officers. N.B. The cloak properly is a combined coat and cape but this is nowadays very seldom seen and the name is now commonly applied to the cape only.

CLOTH**LOSING THE CLOTH**

If contention arose between master and crew in old days the master was required to remove the tablecloth three times, as a warning, before he turned any or all of the crew off the ship. As there was only one real meal a day then, this appears to have been equivalent to giving three days' notice.

COASTER

A vessel which applies between the harbours of a particular coast or adjacent coasts, usually in pilotage waters and seldom out of sight of land.

COAT**BLACK COATED WORKERS**

Common slang name for Stewed Prunes.

COCK**A'COCK BILL**

An anchor is said to be "a'cock bill" when it is hung up and down ready for letting go.

COCKTAIL**SICK BAY COCKTAIL**

Naval slang name for a draught of sal volatile given to a person who faints which receiving treatment in the sick bay; or, more often, for any form of medicine issued in the sick bay.

COLOURS**HOISTING AND LOWERING COLOURS**

The present ceremony of hoisting colours (Union Jack at the jackstaff, and White Ensign at the ensign staff) each morning, with a guard and band paraded, was instituted by Lord St. Vincent in 1797 after the mutinies at Spithead and the Nore. At this time, it was the routine for colours to be hoisted at sunrise, but in 1844 the time for this ceremony was changed to that now in use - in home waters 0800 from 25th March to 20th September, 0900 from 21st September to 24th March: at 0800 abroad. If an H.M. ship is in a foreign port, or if a foreign warship is in company, the National Anthem of the country or ship concerned is played immediately after the British National Anthem. Colours are lowered at actual sunset time (unless in extreme northern waters where an arbitrary time may be fixed); guard and band are not paraded at sunset unless it is an occasion of special ceremony when the "Ceremonial Sunset" (an exquisite bugle concerto) may be played.

At sea the Union Jack is not flown (unless the ship is dressed) and the ensign remains flying day and night. At "Colours" and "Sunset", all officers and ratings on the upper deck face aft (i.e. to the ensign, not to the jack) and officers salute.

**COMMANDING
COMMANDING OFFICER**

The officer in command of one H.M. ships, whatever his actual rank, is addressed as "The Commanding Officer" (not "Officer Commanding").

COME UP!

An order to slack off rope.

COME UP WITH A VESSEL

To overtake her.

COMPANION LADDER

A ladder or staircase leading from the poop or upper deck of a merchant ship to the saloon or main cabin.

COMPLAIN

A block is said to complain when its sheave squeaks.

COMPLETED: BUILT

Ships are built until they are launched: thereafter they are completed.

CORKSCREW

An old gunroom drink - lime-juice cordial (with water) flavoured with a dash of Angostura bitters. The bitters being "on the house" gave this drink an air of "something for nothing" which appealed to its consumers.

COMMANDER

A large mallet used in rigging work, or a hammer or specially shaped striker stowed a Jacent to an important slip to ensure there is always an implement available to release the slip.

COPPER

COPPER-BOTTOMED

An old Naval slang word meaning of high quality. The bottoms of wooden ships were sheathed with copper to protect them from attack by marine parasites; this was expensive and so could only be afforded by the really well-to-do shipping companies and the Royal Navy.

CORPSE

SEWING UP A CORPSE FOR BURIAL AT SEA

It is the custom when sewing up a corpse previous to burial at sea for the sailmaker (or other rating doing this job) to put the last stitch through the nose of the corpse. This is done to make certain that the body is indeed a corpse, since it happened once that when the sailmaker inadvertently put his needle through the nose of the body, the alleged corpse suddenly made a move to sit up, the shock of having his nose pierced being sufficient to revive him from his state of catalepsy.

CORTICENE

Naval linoleum.

COW

COW JUICE

Naval slang for Milk.

COXSWAIN

Originally the officer ("Sweyne") in charge of a COG - i.e. the Cog's Sweyne.

CRAB

A small hand capstan.

CRACK**CRACKING ON**

Navalese for increasing speed; it is an old sailing ship expression meaning to speed more sails.

CRACKING IT DOWN

Sailors' slang for having a nap.

GET CRACKING

A modern common slang expression directing the importance of haste; possibly derived from the old sailing ship expression "Cracking on".

CRANK

A ship is said to be crank when she heels readily to one side or the other and returns sluggishly to the upright.

CROWFOOT. CROW'S FOOT

Three or more lines or small ropes radiating from the end of a whip or pendant, so that its support or pull is spread and divided between them. The lines are kept apart by an 'euphroe'.

CROW'S NEST

A small shelter for the masthead lookout.

CRUSHER

A member of the ship's police.

CUDDY**THE CUDDY**

Old Naval name for the Admiral's or Captain's cabin in a warship. It was originally the Master's cabin in a sailing ship.

CUT AND RUN

To escape or quit. (Derived from the days when a ship cut her hemp cable and left her anchor on the bottom to enable her to put to sea quickly in emergency; also, in similar circumstances, when she set her sails by cutting their gaskets, so unfurling them at the run.).

CUT-WATER

The stem of a ship. In sailing vessels with bluff bows it was a false stem.

D**DADDY****SEA DADDY**

An experienced seaman detailed to instruct youngster applied to the officer in charge of the Midshipmen.

DEAD MARINE

An empty bottle, which 'has done its duty and is ready to do it again'.

DEEP

A depression in the sea bed.

DERELICT

A ship afloat but abandoned by her crew.

DEVIL**BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA**

Common metaphorical expression meaning "in a quandary". In a wooden ship, the "devil" is the top plank or strake immediately below the sheer strake, and a person working over the ship's side below this plank was working in a very uncertain position.

DHOBEYING

Washing clothes (derived from the Indian word 'dhobey', a washerman).

DICKY

A naval; diminutive adjective; e.g., a "Dicky run ashore" is a short spell of shore leave, a "Dicky flannel" is the short flannel (or vest) worn by seamen with blue uniform in the summer.

DIG**DIG IN**

Common slang for "Help yourself" (to food).

DIG OUT

Common slang for "Work hard", "Get down to it".

DINGHY

A small boat; the name comes from the Bengali word for small boat carried in, or attached to, a larger vessel.

DIP

To lower partially and temporarily. As slang this is used for disrating, forfeiting a good conduct badge, or failing an examination.

PUSSER'S DIP

Old naval name for a candle. From the old method of making candles, whereby a wick was dipped in molten fat or wax until a candle was obtained of the required thickness.

DIRK

The Midshipman's sword, just under 2 feet long, the dirk was officially introduced in 1833 for Volunteers; Midshipmen were not given dirks until 1856. They were slung from waist belts (which came in about 1825). Their disappearance from the Navy dates from 1939.

PUSSER'S DIRK

Sailors' slang name for the clasp-knife, part of the compulsory kit of all seamen ratings, as obtainable from the Clothing Store.

DISH**DISH UP**

In the Navy this expression refers to clearing and washing up after a meal, not to serving food before the meal.

DITCH

Naval slang for the sea when used as a nouns for to throw away when used as a verb.

DITTY**DITTY-BOX**

A small wooden box which was issued to seamen as a receptacle for their small personal effects. In 1938 it was replaced by an attached case but this is not now issued.

DIVISIONS

Daily "Divisions", when the men fall in before being put to various jobs in the ship, was introduced by Kempenfelt in 1780.

DODGE**TO DODGE POMPEY**

An old naval expression meaning to evade doing a job of work.

DODGER

A canvas screen laced to guardrails to provide shelter from wind or spray. In the Royal Navy a slang term for a messdeck sweeper.

DEVIL-DODGER

One of several slang nicknames for the Chaplain - or for any ardent church goer.

DOG**DOGS OF WAR**

An old gun room collective name for the junior members of the mess when directed by the Sub Lieutenant to expel someone from the mess.

DOGGY**DOGGIEF**

Naval name for the Midshipman detailed to attend the Captain or Commander.

DOGSBODY

Common slang name for someone of very little importance.

DONKEY

Naval slang name for the chest in which an artisan or artificer keeps his tools.

DONKEY'S BREAKFAST

An old naval name for a hammock-mattress.

**DOUBLE
DOUBLE-BANKED**

Technically, two rowers pulling on the same oar (or two rowers, with separate oars, using the same thwart), this expression is used generally to denote 'doubling-up', i.e., sleeping two in a single cabin, two sittings for meals, etc.

DOUBLON

An old Spanish gold coin, originally worth two pistoles.

**DOWSE
DOWSE, or DOUSE**

Normally to extinguish a light; where the association of ideas permits this verb can be applied to other objects - e.g., to lower a sail, to close a scuttle.

DRAG

To haul a grapnel (which see) or some similar instrument along the sea bed to recover something lost.

**DRAUGHT
DRAUGHT MARKS**

On H.M. ships, draught marks are in Roman figures; the figures are six inches high, the bottom of the figure indicating the draught.

DREDGE

To deepen a channel by excavating it.

**DRESSING
DRESSING SHIP**

Decorating a ship with flags as a sign of rejoicing goes back to the earliest times. Until 1889 each ship devised her own scheme for the arrangement for her flags but this is now rigidly standardised in order that by no stretch of the imagination could the flags be construed into any message. H.M. ships in commission may dress either "overall" or "with masthead flags only": H.M. ships not in commission do not wear colours or dress ship. H.M. ships not under way dress overall unless otherwise ordered: H.M. ships never dress overall when under way - they then dress with masthead (including jackstaff and ensign staff) flags only. H.M. Ships dress with the white ensign (or the red or blue per their Admiral's colors) at their mastheads except that in flagships the Admiral's flag takes the place of the white ensign at the appropriate masthead. A foreign warship dressing ship in British waters, or in British honour, wears the white ensign at her mainmast head: similarly, an H.M. ship dressing ship in foreign waters, or in foreign honour, wears the ensign of that country at her mainmast head.

**DRINK
THE DRINK**

Maritime slang name for the Sea. Synonyms are the Ditch, the Pond, the Oggin.

DRIP

To grumble or complain.

DROWN

To drench or immerse. To drown a boat is to fill her with water by removing her plug when she is afloat, and is done to swell her planks and make her seams tight.

DRUMMER

Naval name for a Marine bugler (drummer), for whom the traditional nickname is "Sticks".

DUE**FULL DUE**

Naval slang expression meaning "for all time".

DUFF**FIGGY DUFF**

Naval name for any kind of steamed suet pudding, whether or not it contains figs.

DIFF NIGHT

An old naval slang name for Ward room guest night.

DUMMY**DUMMY RUN**

The naval name for a trial or practice in which all the motions are gone through but nothing else. E.g., in a gunnery dummy run all the motions of laying, setting, loading and firing are gone through meticulously but the gun is not actually fired. The expression is therefore freely used in the Navy to mean a rehearsal.

DUNNAGE

Technically, packing material used to protect or wedge in cargo or stores; maritime slang for a person's clothes and/or baggage.

JACK DUSTY

Traditional nickname for a junior member of the victualling staff, also known as "Dusty-boy".

DUTCHMAN**A DUTCHMAN**

Old maritime name for a German (i.e. Deutsch) ship; a Dutch ship was referred to as a "Hollander".

THE DUTCHMAN'S ANCHOR

An old naval synonym for anything that has been left behind. The expression derives from an apocryphal Dutch captain who explained after his ship had been wrecked "Oh yes, I had an excellent anchor: unfortunately I left it at home that voyage".

DUTCHMAN'S LOG

A simple method of measuring speed in slow moving ships. An object which will float is throw overboard and the time it takes to float to abreast a mark 47 feet 3 inches further aft is noted: 28 seconds for this distance equals one knot - 14 seconds equals 2 knots.

**EASY**

Go or haul carefully, slowly.

EDDY

A swirl in the water made by a fast-moving current passing over a rock or a hollow in the bottom; the swirl made by a current on the leeside of a rock or the buttress of a bridge, and the backwash of a current at the sides of a channel. Also a circular movement of the air.

**EIGHT
PIECES OF EIGHT**

The Piece of Eight was an old Spanish silver coin - the piastre or dollar - equal in value to eight reals. In its day the real was worth about sixpence. It seems possible that from the 8 of the Piece of Eight comes the S sign.

ELEPHANT

A common slang name for a laxative.

**END
THE BITTER END**

The extreme end. The inboard end of the hempen anchor cable which was secured to the bits.

END FOR END

To turn anything end for end is to reverse its position.

FAG END**FAG**

To 'fag' is to separate or tease out the strands of a rope; thus the fag end is the extreme end. This expression has no original connection with cigarettes.

ENSIGN

Pronounced "ENS'N" in the Royal Navy.

**FAIR**

Favorable, unobstructed, the reverse of 'foul' (which see); as in 'fair wind', 'fairlead' and 'fairway'.

FAIRWAETHER FRIEND

One who is a friend only for so long as it suits his own ends.

FAKE

A coil in a coiled rope.

FANCY WAISTCOATS

A "matter of fancy waistcoats" is a nicety of detail of no importance to the major issue.

FATHER

An affectionate familiar name for the Admiral Commanding; sometimes for the Captain in command, but he is more usually referred to as the OLD MAN. A staff officer refers to his Admiral as "Master". The word SKIPPER was and is seldom used in the Navy.

FATHOM

A nautical measurement of six feet; it was the distance between the tips of middle fingers when the arms are outstretched sideways to their fullest extent (the word comes from the Danish FAVN meaning "arms extended"). 100 fathoms = 1 cable; 10 cables = 1 mile; 3 miles = 1 league.

FEND

To fend a boat or ship is to prevent her striking against any quay, jetty, vessel or any object which may endanger her; hence a fender is an object used to soften the blow.

FETCH**TO FETCH**

The orthodox naval verb, of considerable antiquity, meaning to arrive at.

FIDDLES

Wooden frameworks fitted on dining tables to keep crockery etc. in place in rough weather.

FIRE**ST ELMO'S FIRE**

This was aromatic superstition associated with the electrical phenomenon which appears on the trucks of the masts and at the yard-arms in the form of faint glowing balls of light during an electric storm. In addition to St Elmo's Fire, it was known among sailors as "Corposant" and "Jack-o' Lantern". The common belief was that it warns sailors of an approaching storm and is sent by St Elmo in gratitude for his having been saved from drowning by a ship which, in heavy weather, was hove-to and the saint taken from the water. The legend is said to have originated in Brittany.

FISHES' EYES

Sailors' slang name for tapioca pudding.

FLAGADMIRALS' FLAGS

The rank of the Admiral was indicated by the masthead at which his flag was flown in his flagship, viz: rear-admiral at the mizzen, vice-admiral at the fore, admiral at the main. When 3-masted ships disappeared, admirals' ranks were indicated on their flags by the inclusion of red roundels in the cantons of the flag nearest the mast - two for a rear-admiral, one for a vice-admiral, none for an admiral. In 2 masted ships, the flag of a full admiral (or of a Commander-in-Chief, whatever his actual rank) is flown at the mains: that of a vice - or rear-admiral (not being a Commander-in-Chief) at the fore.

FLAGS

The inevitable general naval nickname for a Flag-Lieutenant (Signal Officer).

FLAGS - JACK AND ENSIGN SIZES

The actual size of jacks and ensigns worn by HM Ships is directed by the Commander-in-Chief, either in his standing orders or by daily signal. Broadly speaking, the objective is solely a pleasing appearance; the sizes can therefore be expected to vary in ships of different classes and sizes. It is generally

considered that a 10-breadth jack, a 16-breadth ensign and a 12- breadth admiral's flag look well together.

All union flags in the Navy, whether as jacks or flags, are in the proportion of 2:1; flags ashore (e.g., on churches and public buildings etc.) are 5:3. In some other navies and services a more square-shaped jack is met (e.g., a Regimental Colour is 5:4).

FLANNEL

A term describing a long-winded or meaningless speech; also applied to nonsense or rubbish.

FLARE

The upward and outward curve of a ship's sides at the bows.

FLIMSY

When a Midshipman or an officer leaves any appointment, his Commanding Officer is required to give him a certificate as to his conduct, &c. This certificate is on thin ("flimsy") paper. When a Midshipman is before the Board for examination for Lieutenant, he is expected to produce his past flimsies for examination by the Board as evidence of his previous good character and leadership.

FLAT

FLOATERS IN THE SNOW

A sailors' slang name for Sausages and mashed potatoes.

FLEET

'The fleet' is a general name given to the Royal Navy as a whole; a fleet is a number of men-of-war under one overall command, and it can be sub-divided into squadrons, flotillas and divisions.

FLOTILLAS

Formerly a number of small warships under one command but nowadays the name applied to the main grouping of ships in the Fleet.

FLOG

FLOGGING

- (a) The punishment, see CORPORAL.
- (b) A common slang verb of modern introduction for the selling of any article either illegally obtained or through illegal channels. Though often in fact used purely as a synonym of 'to sell', the use of this slang word gives the transaction an aura of impropriety.

FLOGGING THE CAT

The naval conversational synonym of the common expression 'crying over spilt milk'.

FLOGGING THE MONKEY

An old naval expression for the obtaining of an illicit (and insipid) drink by rinsing out an empty rum barrel with water; the old type rum tub was called a Monkey.

FLOTSAM

Floating cargo etc., freed from a wreck or thrown overboard to lighten the ship. It remains the property of the owners; if not claimed it becomes the property of the Crown.

FLUNKEY

The inevitable sailors' nickname for an Officers' Steward or a Marine acting as a Ward Room Attendant.

FLUTE

Ownership of a flute, and proficiency thereon, was at one time regarded in a ship as the prerogative of the Marine officer.

FORE**FORE AND AFTER**

Old officers' slang name for the uniform cocked hat.

FORE FOOT

The lower end of the stem where it meets the keel.

FORE PEAK

The compartment or space between decks in the bows of a ship.

FORESHORE

The beach below high water mark.

FORK**FORK IN THE BEAM**

An old gun room custom was the thrusting of a fork from the table into an overhead beam, by the Sub-Lieutenant, as a sign that junior members of the mess were to leave the gun room without delay.

FOUL

Entangled, obstructed or dirty.

FOUNDER

To sink.

FRAP

To blind with lashing.

FREE**FREEBOARD**

The height of the weather deck above the water line.

FRIEND**THE SAILOR'S FRIEND**

Old Naval instructors' description of a hammock.

FRIGATE**STONE FRIGATE**

Naval slang name for any naval shore establishment. Although built of bricks and mortar on shore sometimes miles from the sea - all naval shore establishments have to bear the name of a ship and there must be, somewhere near, an actual vessel bearing that name.

FROCK COAT AND SWORD

Prior to 1939 officers making formal calls on their Admirals in the course of their duty - or when sent for by the Admiral - wore frock coats and swords. The expression is therefore often applied metaphorically to an affair which must be handled very officially by higher authority.

FROCKERS AND COCKERS

Pre-1939 officers' slang name for frock coat and cocked hat uniform.

FURL

To fold up or roll up and stop a sail or an awning.

FURLOUGH

The Army name for leave, never used in the Navy.

G**GALLEY****GIG**

- (a) The kitchen in a ship.
- (b) A single-banked six-oared pulling boat, otherwise known as a GIG. Until 1949 one of the boats was provided in most of the bigger HM ships as the Captain's gallery; the companion boat provided in a flagship for the use of the Admiral was known as the Admiral's Gig.

The name Galley may be a corruption of GILLIWATTE which was the name of the Captain's boat in the 1600 period; another possible corruption of the word Gilliwatte is Jolly Boat.

GALLEY PACKET

Maritime slang name for Rumour, from the time honoured belief of rumours starting in the galley.

GANGWAY

Any recognised entrance to or passage way used as an order or warning to make way.

GAMMIES

Old sailor's slang name for Raisins.

GARLAND

A strop or rope sling round a mast or spar with which to lift or hoist it.

GASH

Rubbish or remnants of a metal.

GASKET

A stop used for lashing up a furled sail or awning.

**GAUNTLET
TO RUN THE GAUNTLET**

An old naval expression meaning to take a risk of receiving severe punishment. It comes from the old naval punishment awarded to men convicted of theft, when the offender made his way between two ranks of men each of whom was provide with a rope's end with which to belabour him; the offender was prevented from running too quickly by the Master-At-Arms holding a sword to the offender's breast.

GEN

Common slang name for official information. Originally a naval slang word (derived from General Signal).

GENS

In earlier days this slang word invariably meant General Leave; now it more often means General Drill or General Quarters.

GENDER

GENDER OF HM SHIPS

Ships are always feminine, whatever their names. The classical author, Plautus (second century BC), wrote: "If a man is looking for trouble he only has to buy a ship or take a wife; both of them will always need trimming".

GHOSTING

A sailing vessel or boat is said to be ghosting, or ghosting along, when she is making good way in a very light breeze.

GIBBY

Old sailors' along (now obsolete) for a spoon.

GILT

TO KNOCK THE GILT OFF THE GINGERBREAD

A common expression of nautical origin meaning to spoil the best part of a thing or story. In the old days in Germany, gingerbread was always on sale at the country fairs and traditionally was splashed with gilt to make its appearance more attractive. From this custom, the gilded and painted carvings at the bows, stern and entrance ports of sailing ships of war came to be known as "gingerbread work". To knock the gilt off this gingerbread not only incurred the displeasure of the ship's captain but often, owing to the age and condition of the ship, damaged the best part of the vessel.

GIRT

GIRDED

Bound. A vessel is said to be girt when she is moored so tautly that she is prevented from swinging to wind or tide by fouling her cables as she swings round. Also said of a tug when she is inadvertently hauled broadside on her towrope, in which position she is powerless and must slip the tow or be capsized. To 'under-gird' is to bind the hull of a vessel with ropes or chains to strengthen it

GLIM

A light.

GLORY

THE GLORY HOLE

In the Navy, any repository for general untidiness's.

GLOVES
OFFICERS' GLOVES

The wearing of brown leather gloves was the norm for our period, rather than the white gloves now in abeyance.

GRABBIES

A sailors' slang name for Soldiers.

GRACE

Grace before and after dinner in the wardrooms of HM ships and naval establishments is invariably said by a Chaplain if present; if no Chaplain is present, the mess president says grace. Grace is not normally said before or after other meals in the Navy. No one form of wording is any more usual than another.

GRAIN

An old (XVII century) word for the line of water ahead of a ship along which she will pass: the opposite to WAKE.

GRANNY
GRANNY KNOT

A reef knot incorrectly tied (strands crossed the wrong way); but this knot is correct when tying two pieces of small chain together.

GRAPE
GRAPE SHOT

A series of layers of iron balls kept in place round a central spindle by holes in (or indentations in either side or) circular iron plates which would just fit the bore of the appropriate cannon. When the shot was fired the balls freed themselves from their retaining plates and scattered. Also known as TIER SHOT.

GRAPNEL

Although a grapnel is indeed an iron-clawed instrument thrown, on the end of a rope, to seize an object, a boat's grapnel in the Navy is the length of rope used in a boat as a bow-rope or 'painter'.

A Creeper is a grapnel used for dragging the sea-bottom.

GREEN
JIMMY GREEN

Naval slang name for a greenhorn.

GREENIE

A technician rating (WE).

GROUNDWELL

A heavy swell caused by a distant storm or by one that has passed; it may also be caused by a submarine earthquake.

GUMPERS

Sailors' slang (ephemeral) for sentimental.

GUTS

It is an old naval saying that "Midshipmen have guts, ward room officers have stomachs, but flag officers have palates"!

GUN**COURT-MARTIAL GUN**

The Court-Martial gun (known unofficially as the "Rogue's Salute" or a "One-gun salute") is the signal gun fired at 'Colours' on the morning of the day on which a naval court-martial has been ordered to assemble. A Union flag is flown from the peak halliards (at the yard arm in a single-masted ship) while the Court is sitting.

In bygone days it was customary to fire a gun to muster on deck all hands in all ships present to witness a yard-arm execution; a yellow flag was hoisted and kept flying until the sentence has been carried out. When keel-hauling was a recognised punishment, a single gun was fired over the head of the malefactor as he was about to emerge from the water, 'which is done as well to astonish him the more with the thunder thereof, which much troubles him, as to give warning unto all others to look out and beware of his harm'.

THE GUN ROOM

The usual name for the 'young gentlemen's' mess in the old days was the "Midshipmen's Berth" (or Berths, for there were usually several of these in a large ship). The newest joined lads were sometimes put in charge of the Gunner and lived in his sanctum, known as the Gunroom, where pistols, muskets, etc., were stored; the lads moved thence to a Midshipmen's Berth when they were rated midshipmen.

Later, all junior officers messed in the Midshipmen's Berth(s) and Lieutenants in the Gunroom (right aft, beneath the Captain's cabin).

SON OF A GUN

Although frequently used as meaning a "good fellow", this is really an old naval expression casting aspersion on a man's parentage. In the days when women were allowed on board during a ship's stay in port, the gun decks were often the scenes of debauchery; and if a male child was born, he was called a Son of a Gun. An old description of such is "he was begotten in the galley and born under a gun: every hair a rope yarn, every finger a fish-hook, every tooth a marline spike and his blood right good Stockholm tar"; he would be christened "Tom Bowline" or "Bill Backstay" or some such name. Tom Bowline was a famous character who died of wounds in 1790 and was buried at Haslar; he went ashore once in seventeen years.

GUNWHALE

The name (pronounced GUN'L) given to the uppermost line of planking of a boat's sides. In the old ships the upper tier of guns used to fire over the top planking which was therefore specially strengthened by "whales".

H**HALF****BETTER HALF**

Common slang name for a wife; she is sometimes referred to as one's "improper fraction", but usually in the ward room as one's Madam.

THE HALF DECK

The lobby space or 'flat' (between decks) giving access to the Captain's cabin.

HALF DECK SENTRY

The sentry posted over the ship's main keyboard which is sited in the half-deck. He also has charge of the rum breaker between the breaker being filled and the grog issued.

THE OTHER HALF

Common slang name for a return drink. This is an expression seldom used in the ward room, where one has or is offered a drink, not another drink.

HALF PAY

Half the rate of full pay in issue on the day before an officer is placed on Half-pay, together with half the rate of Marriage Allowance and Flying Pay which has then in issue. The rate of half-pay for an officer who held acting rank is half his substantive rank's pay, not half his acting rank's pay. This procedure covers all classes of officers. Officers are only placed on half pay for disciplinary reasons, e.g. after dismissal from ship by sentence of Court-Martial.

HAMBONE

Nautical slang name for a Sextant.

HAMMOCK

Just as his rifle is described as a soldier's best friend, his hammock is described as a sailor's best friend. When properly lashed up, a sailor's hammock will support a man in the sea for 24 hours.

It is said that the use of the hammock on board ship was introduced by Aloibiados, who commanded the Athenian fleets war in about B.C. 450; Christopher Columbus is also credited with the introduction, having found (in 1493) that the natives at San Salvador slept in cotton nets (called 'hamaca') suspended between two trees. Hammocks were introduced into the Royal Navy in about 1600.

HAMMOCK LADDER

A naval mythological item.

TIME TO SLING ONE'S HAMMOCK

"Time in which to sling one's hammock" is the naval way of describing the period of time - usually 24 hours - given to many officers and ratings in which to find their way about on joining a ship or taking up a new appointment.

UP ALL HAMMOCKS

Many people may have thought it strange that, in the morning when hammocks are required to be taken down, the pipe is "Up all hammocks" and in the evening when hammocks are to be up on the hooks or bars, the pipe is "Down all hammocks". This order originates from the days when hammock nettings (storages) were situated on the upper deck, along the bulwarks between the quarter-deck and the forecastle. Therefore hammocks had to be taken up on deck to be stowed and brought down to be hung up.

HAND

Sailors on board are usually referred to as "The Hands" - in the singular as "One Hand". This is said to come from the expression "One hand for yourself and one for the King" used to men working aloft in the days of sail.

HANDY**HANDY-BILLY**

Naval name for a small general-purpose tackle.

HANKY
HANKY PANKY

Brandy (or whisky) and ginger wine - a comforting drink when one has a cold.

HANDSOMELY

Naval word meaning slowly or with caution, the opposite to ROUNDLY.

HANGER

A Hanger was a light sword about 2 feet long worn slung from a leather belt over the right shoulder. It was the official weapon of the Midshipman from about 1790, before the introduction of the proper dirk. see DIRK.

HARMONY
HARMONG ROW

The name in the Navy for the row of houses in or near a naval dockyard provided as official residences for the principal officers (naval and civil) of the dockyard.

HARNESS
HARNESS CASK

The tub in which salt meat was soaked before being cooked in order to extract the brine in which the meat had been pickled; also known as STEEP TUB. The tub was in the charge of the cook whose duty it was to take adequate precautions for its safety on the onset of bad weather. The name is said to have been introduced by cynics of early days either because they felt the harness was the only part of the horse not in the tub, or else from the leathery nature of the meat.

HARRY FREEMAN

Free of charge, a gift, or something obtained for nothing. The origin of this term is obscure.

HAWSE
TO COME UP THROUGH THE HAWSE PIPE

An old naval slang expression meaning promotion from the lower deck. Officers so promoted were sometimes known as Hawse Pipe Officers.

HEAD
THE HEAD

Naval name for latrines.

HEAVER

A lever, handspike.

HOG
TO HOG OUT

A naval expression meaning to scrub or clean thoroughly. It comes from the name (hog) of the special brush made of birch twigs provided in bygone days for cleaning a sailing ship's bottom.

HOGGING AND SAGGING

Unfair strains and stresses are set up in a ship's structure when part of her hull is unsupported. When waves are supporting the bows and stern of a ship but not her amidships part (i.e., when the hull tends to assume a concave shape), the ship is said to be sagging: when the amidships part is supported but not the extremities (i.e., when the hull tends to become convex), the ship is said to be hogging.

HOLIDAY

An area on a ship's side left unpainted.

HOLYSTONES

Blocks of sandstone that were used for scrubbing decks, so-called because their use entailed kneeling down. Medium-sized holystones were called bibles, and small ones prayer books.

HOOKIE

A leading hand (wears symbol of anchor).

HOOK ROPE PARTY

A party of men detailed to give the decks a final clear-up just before an inspection.

HONKYDONKS**MARINES' HONKYDONKS**

A sailor's name for the shore service boots worn by Marines; his own he refers to as "Pussers crabs". Similarly he may describe a Marine's boots, but not his own, as "Beetle-crushers".

HOOP**TO GO THROUGH THE HOOP**

To go through the hoop is to undergo an ordeal. From the old practice in some ships of passing hammocks through a hoop gauge to check that they were of uniform size and appearance before allowing them to be stowed in the hammock nettings.

HOORAY**CHEERING**

The Navy cheers Hooray not Hurrah.

HORSE**HORSE BOX**

The general naval name for the mess on board a ship where the Sergeant-Major R.N. and other Marine Sergeants mess.

FLOGGING A DEAD HORSE

Flogging or working a dead horse is doing something for nothing. It is a merchant navy term, a 'dead horse' being a slang term used to refer to an advance of pay given to seamen before commencing voyages in order that they may buy clothing etc., required on the trip. Thus, 'working a deadhorse' meant working for the first month without pay since that had already been drawn and spent. At the expiration of the first month of the voyage it was at one time customary to hoist in the rigging a canvas effigy of a horse.

HORSE'S NECK

Brandy and ginger ale; if rum is used instead of brandy, the name is LION'S NECK - an old name for this drink was W.O's Champagne.

SALT HORSE

Naval slang name for an executive officer who has not specialised in gunnery, navigation, TAS, signals, etc.

**HOUSE
THE MAD HOUSE**

Officer's slang name for the Admiralty offices in Queen Anne's Mansions, London.

HOUSEWIFE

The wallet containing needles, thread, buttons, pins, etc., included in every sailor's (optional) kit. Housewives can be brought from the Purser. Pronounced (and sometimes spelt) HUSSIF.

**HUGGER
HUGGER-MUGGER**

An old naval word meaning slovenly, confused, muddled.

HULK

A vessel condemned as unfit for sea service, and used in harbour for some purpose such as a store ship or an accommodation ship.

HULL A SHIP

To penetrate the hull of a ship with shot or shell.

**HURRAH
CHEERING**

The Navy cheers Hooray not Hurrah.

HURRAH'S NEST

An old naval name for a tangle of ropes and gear.

**IDLER
IDLERS**

A name formerly given to ratings excused night watches; they turned out when "Guard and Steerage" hammocks were piped up. Known as DAYMEN in the modern RN.

**INSULT
FORTNIGHTLY OR MONTHLY INSULT**

Naval slang name for the money paid to individuals on pay day (ratings are paid fortnightly; officers monthly).

**IRISH
IRISH PENDANTS
DEAD MEN**

Naval name for stray ropes' ends hanging in the rigging.

!

**JAWBATION**

An old naval slang word for a reprimand, a telling off.

JETTISON

To cast overboard.

**JEW
JEWING**

Naval nickname for tailoring. This may have originated from the fact that tailoring is a popular profession among Jews, or "J" was substituted for "S".

JEWING FIRM

A sailor on board whom in his spare time does tailoring for others.

**JEWING BAG
BUNDLE**

The bag in which a sailor keeps his sewing gear.

**JIB
CUT OF HIS JIB**

A maritime phrase descriptive of a person's facial appearance. It comes from the days of sail when a ship's nationality could be told at a distance by the cut of her sails.

**JIMMY
JIMMY-THE-ONE**

Naval nickname for the First Lieutenant of a ship. In the early days he was referred to as the "First Luff". Usually nowadays abbreviated to JIMMY and known as NUMBER ONE.

**JOLLY
H M JOLLIES**

Another general nickname for the Marines.

JONAH

A bringer of bad luck.

JOSS

Luck (Chinese).

JOSSMAN

A modern corruption of JAUNTY (qv).

**JUDAS
HANGING JUDAS**

Said of a rope when insecurely made fast or belayed, i.e. false and unreliable as was Judas.

JUNK

Old rope set aside for picking.

JURY

As an adjective, this prefix means "temporary" - e.g. Jury-mast.

K**KAGG****KAGG****CAGG**

To discuss, to argue.

KEELHAULING

Keelhauling seems to have survived until the middle of the XVIII century. This barbarous punishment consisted of a rope being rove beneath the ship's bottom, the unfortunate wretch under punishment being by this means dragged under the ship from side to side. It is certain that if he survived this lengthy immersion, his clothes were torn to ribbons and his flesh excoriated by the barnacles on the ship's bottom.

KEG

A small cask.

KID

A small tub.

KILLICK

A small anchor. A slang term for a Leading Rating, because he wears an anchor as a distinguishing badge.

KING**KING'S HARD BARGAIN**

Naval slang name for a general nuisance without whom the Navy could get along very well - a "bird", or "fowl": often abbreviated to K.H.B.

KIT**SELLING KIT**

Custom has ordained that the sale of a rating's kit is to take place at the mainmast. It is made in the presence of an executive officer and a report of the Purser. When the kit is that of a dead man, the proceeds of the sale go to the next of kin of the deceased - and it is usual for the ship's company to make high bids for the various articles which, in most cases, are thrown back for resale. Such a sale, which usually takes place during the dinner hour, may last several days before the kit in question is completely sold.

In the case of the kit of a "run" man (one who has deserted), the proceeds of the sale revert to the Crown, and bidding is low, the articles of ten being purchased at far below their proper value.

KNOT

One seamile per hour. The word comes from the knots marking the log line, the speed being worked out from the number of knots that run out during the time measured by a sand-glass.

A KNOT is a spend, not a distance - thus to refer to "so many knots an hour" is wrong. The log line referred to in the first paragraph above is, of course, the original log-line, i.e., a piece of rope whose length was marked by knots in the rope, to the end of which was attached some form of sea-anchor (e.g. bucket) which would keep the end of the line stationary relative to the ship and so enable the distance run during the time of the sand glass to be computed by counting the knots. The modern log-line computes speed by revolving (and so is made on a special plaited rope).

KYE

Naval slang name for Cocon

**LABOUR
TO LABOUR**

A ship is said to labour when she pitches and rolls heavily in rough weather.

**LADY
THE LADY OF THE GUNROOM**

The name given to the man (originally the Gunner's night watchman in the gun room, who also kept the gun room tidy) who assisted the gun room steward as pantry-hand. In early days, the lady's storeroom was beneath the gun room, and was known as the "Lady's ...".

LAGOON

An area of water enclosed, or nearly enclosed, by a reef or atoll.

LANDFALL

First sight of land after a passage in the open sea.

LAND LOCKED

Surrounded by land.

**LARGE
BY AND LARGE**

A nautical expression, now in common use, meaning "Broadly speaking". Nautically it means to sail a boat by the wind (i.e. to weather), but large (i.e., not very close to the wind).

**LASH
LASH UP**

- (a) Verb - naval slang for to stand treat - from the old expression of friendship by lashing up a friend's hammock for him.
- (b) Adjective - naval slang applied to something extemporised.

LAY UP

To take a ship out of service. To twist the strands of a rope together.

**LEAD
RED LEAD**

A sailors' slang name for tinned tomatoes.

LEAGUE

An obsolete measurement of three nautical miles.

**LEATHER
LEATHERNECK**

Another naval slang name for a Marine; it is derived from the small piece of leather sewn in the collar of the Marines' dress tunic. A synonym is "Bootneck".

**LEE
TO GET TO LEEWAY OF**

To get on the wrong side of someone.

LEE-BOARD

A board lowered down into the water on the lee side of a sailing vessel to prevent her making lee-way when close-hauled or reaching.

LEE SHORE

A shore towards which the wind is blowing.

LEE-TIDE

A tidal stream running in the same direction as the wind.

**LEG
SHOW A LEG**

In the days when women used to be allowed to sleep on board they were allowed to lie in and the call "Show a leg" was made to see that it really was a woman who was enjoying the privilege.

The old cry was "Show a leg or else a purser's stocking".

LET RUN

To let go a rope, chain or other flexible object so that it runs out of its own accord.

LIBERTY

Leave of less than 24 hours.

LIEUTENANT

The first reference to a naval Lieutenant is in 1580 when one was born in each ship as the Captain's understudy.

The word is pronounced L'TENANT in the Royal Navy, LEFTENANT in the Army, and LOOTERNANT in the U.S. Navy.

SUB-LIEUTENANT

Not in use during our time period, being a rank introduced in May, 1861, to supersede that of Mate for Midshipmen passed for Lieutenant. But in December, 1804, an Order in Council authorised it as a post title for the second in command of all Brigs commanded by a Lieutenant.

LIGAN

Sunken cargo or gear which has been thrown overboard and buoyed. It remains the property of the owners: if not claimed it becomes the property of the Crown.

LIGHT**ADMIRALS' STERN LIGHTS**

All-round lanterns mounted in the poop or after part of the flag-ship to indicate the presence on board of an Admiral. Flagship of a Rear-Admiral shows 1 light; of a Vice-Admiral 2 lights; of an Admiral an Admiral of the Fleet, or the Monarch, 3 lights.

NORTHERN LIGHTS

The Aurora Boralis.

SOUTHERN LIGHTS

The Aurora Australia.

LOAFING

Malingering or anything lying around.

LOGGERHEADS**TO BE AT LOGGERHEADS**

To be at loggerheads is to be bad friends even if not actively quarrelling. The expression comes from the instrument used for heating pitch for paying the seams of a ship's decks - two large iron spheres one at each end of an iron bar. One of the spheres was heated and then put in the pitch bucket to melt the pitch. Thus, the two loggerheads were always apart, and, also, a hot loggerhead was a thing to keep away from.

LONG-HAIRED CHUM

A sailors' name for a girl-friend.

A LONG SHIP

An officers' slang expression applied to a lengthy interval between drinks or to slowness in showing hospitality.

LONG TOM

A paint brush lashed to the end of a long pole, used for painting places difficult of access.

LOOKSTICK

A slang name for a Telescope; a synonym sometimes heard is a "Bring 'em near".

LOSING**LOSING THE NUMBER OF YOUR MESS**

An old naval expression meaning to die.

LOT**LOT'S WIFE**

Sailors' slang name for table-salt (from Genesis XIX.26).

LUBBER
LUBBER'S HOLE

The opening or hatchway in the deck of the tops on sailing ships' masts, provided as a means of access to the tops for those 'lubbers' afraid to climb up via the futtock-shrouds.

LUBBER'S LINE

The mark on the binnacle which is brought to meet the desired point on the compass-card. So called because a 'real' seaman can do without it.

LURK
TO LURK

Originally, to 'lurk' someone was to impose on his kindness to do something for you. Nowadays the word is merely a naval synonym for to 'detail' someone for a job, though it implies that the job is one for which no volunteers are forthcoming.

LURK BOOK

A record kept in some wardrooms of official parties, etc., and the officers who have attended them; kept with the basic idea of apportioning unwelcome duties fairly.

LUSH UP

To stand treat. Lush is sometimes used to mean abundant liquor, or the condition of being drunk.

M

MADAM

The most usual way in which the average naval officer refers to his own or another officer's wife - e.g. "My Madam", "Your Madam".

MAJOR
(THE) MAJOR.

But to a Marine 'other rank', the title MAJOR primarily refers to the Sergeant-Major. SPUNYARN MAJOR.

MAKE
MAKE A SIGNAL

Naval signals are made not sent.

MAKE-AND-MEND

Half working day

The official naval name for a half-holiday. It comes from the old pipe "Hands to Make and Mend Clothes", the traditional occupation for the hands when no official ship's work is to be carried out.

"Make-and-mend pud" is a slang name for a stodgy pudding which should assist its eaters to sleep heavily after lunch.

MAKING

Tides are said to be 'making' during the period between neaps and springs when their height progressively increases.

TO MAKE UP LEEWAY

To make up that which has been lost. Leeway is the drift which a ship makes away from the direction from which the wind is blowing.

MANNING SHIP

A ceremonial mark of salutation, originally as showing your peaceful intentions (like the raising of a knight's visor) in that with all hands on deck you could have no guns manned. The present method of manning ship - along the sides of the upper deck - was introduced in 1873, replacing the manning of yards and rigging which by then had largely disappeared.

MARRY**TO MARRY THE GUNNER'S DAUGHTER**

An old naval expression meaning to be laid over a gun to receive a thrashing.

MARQUE**LETTERS OF MARQUE (MART)**

A commission granted by the Admiralty to the master of a merchant ship or privateer to attack the ships of an enemy.

MARTINGALE

A stay which prevents a boom, spare or strut from topping up. Originally the stay leading down from the job-boom of a sailing ship to the ship's stem.

MASTER

Captain of a merchant vessel.

MASTER AT ARMS

The chief of the ship's police.

"MASTER OF THE FLEET"

Is the senior adviser on navigation to a Flag Officer He is usually a Captain.

MATE

In the old days Midshipmen who had passed their examinations for promotion to the rank of Lieutenant often awaited that promotion for many years. Some qualified as Master's Mates for the sake of the immediate increase in pay that gave them. Master's mates died out early in the XVIII century and thereafter Midshipmen passed for Lieutenant were often known as Mates though this rank was not actually introduced till 1840 (Order-in-Council of 10.8.1840). Mates messed in the gunroom with Midshipmen. The rank title was abolished in 1861 when the title of Sub-Lieutenant was introduced: it was revived in 1913 for officers on promotion from the lower deck and remained in use for this purpose until 1931 when it was replaced by Sub-Lieutenant.

MATELOT**MATELOT or MATLOW**

The sailor's name for himself. From the French.

MATEY**MATEY or DOCKYARD MATEY**

The navy's affectionately offensive name for a dockyard workman.

MATIES

Dock yard workmen.

MEDICAL**NAVAL MEDICAL OFFICERS**

Surgeon and Assistant Surgeon were the only ranks in the naval medical branch until 1840 when Medical Inspector of Hospitals and Fleets was introduced. The rank titles introduced in 1860 (Fleet Surgeon in 1875) and those to which they were changed in 1918 were Inspector General of Hospitals and Fleets (Surgeon Rear-Admiral), Deputy Inspector General of Hospitals and Fleets (Surgeon Captain), Fleet Surgeon (Surgeon Commander), Staff Surgeon (Surgeon Lieutenant-Commander), Surgeon (Surgeon Lieutenant) and Assistant Surgeon. Only Fleet Surgeons, Staff Surgeons and Surgeons served afloat before 1918. Surgeons were originally Warrant Officers, but were given ward room status in 1805; Assistant Surgeons left the gun room for the ward room in 1851. In the XVIII century, the Surgeon's assistant was known as the LOBLOLLY BOY.

In the navy, the senior medical officer in a ship or establishment is invariably addressed and referred to as the PMO (officially, he is the SMO (Senior Medical Officer), but this title is seldom used outside his on department); familiarly the junior medical officer is DOC or YOUNG DOC. Ultra-familiar nick-names are (THE) QUACK, PILLS or (THE) SAWBONES.

MESS

The unit of community life as lived in one of HM ships; hence, the place where each unit lives and eats; hence also, the naval verb for both inhabiting and eating. The context must show whether living or eating is referred to.

MESS TRIPS

Knives, forks, spoons, crockery, etc., for officers' messes.

MESS TRAPS

Food utensils for a naval officers' mess.

MESS UTENSILS

Knives, forks, spoons, crockery, etc., for ratings' messes. This is the technical (storekeeping) name: the expression MESS GEAR (or the technically incorrect MESS TRAPS) is more often used.

MIDSHIPMAN

The oldest slang name for a Midshipman, REEFER, has died out but SNOTTY remains; this name is said to have originated, about 1870, from the story that the three buttons on the cuffs of Midshipmen's round jackets were put there to prevent the lads from wiping their noses on their sleeves. This story cannot actually be true because buttons on the cuffs of all naval officers' jackets were uniform long before this period; in fact, buttons were actually being removed from the cuffs of working jackets at about this time.

The Midshipman is the last old-time gunroom officer to retain his original rank-title - clerks, surgeon's mates, master's mates, etc., have all disappeared.

Midshipmen have been defined within the Service as "the lowest form of life" and as "a medium of abuse between officers of unequal seniority". Officers usually refer to Midshipmen as SNOTTIES: ratings - and many civilians - as MIDDIES: Midshipmen frequently refer to themselves as MIDS.

An excellent book on this subject is "Young Gentlemen" by CF Walker (1938).

MILE**THE NAUTICAL MILE**

The international nautical mile is 6076.1 feet.

MISSMUSTER**MISSMUSTERS**

Men who for any reason have failed to attend a general occasion or 'parade' - such as payment, medical inspection, etc. - attend at a later session, specially arranged for them, as "Missmusters", because they have missed the original muster.

MONEY FOR OLD ROPE

Something for nothing, simple.

MONKEY

An adjective formerly used afloat to describe any small place or article, e.g., monkey jacket (i.e. abbreviated frock coat), monkey island, monkey boom, etc.

BLACK DOG FOR A WHITE MONKEY

To "give a black dog for a white monkey" is an old naval way of expressing a fair exchange - a quid pro quo.

MOURNING**HALF-MASTING COLOURS**

The flying of a black flag or the setting of black sails has been a sign of mourning at sea from the very earliest times. The ship that came annually to Athens to collect the tribute from Aegeus to Minos of 7 youths and 7 maidens who were sacrificed to the minotaur carried black sails as a sign of national mourning, and when Theseus forgot to lower them after killing the minotaur, Aegeus, in grief at the supposed death of Theseus, threw himself over the cliffs into the sea that still bears his name. This may be a myth but the part about the black sails is certainly founded on fact and the practice spread out of the Mediterranean into the surrounding seas as ships explored the growing trade routes.

The black sail was superseded by the black flag, probably because it was a nuisance to have to carry black sails for use only on special - and rare - occasions, and also because the flag was gradually recognised as a simpler and more efficient method of transmitting news at sea.

The earliest record of the lowering of the flag to half-mast to signify a death was an occasion in 1612 when the master of the HEART'S EASE (William Hall) was murdered by Eskinos while taking part in an expedition in search of the north-west passage. On rejoining her consort, the vessel's flag was flown trailing in the water over her stern as an improvised mark of mourning. On her return to London the HEART'S EASE again flew her flag draped over the stern and the sorrowful aspect of it was accepted as an appropriate gesture of mourning.

After the HEART'S EASE episode, the half-masting of colours was probably recognised as a more fitting indication of mourning than the black flag. It seems probable that it was the position where a flag was flown attracted attention rather than its colour: at a distance colours are difficult to distinguish but a flag at half-mast is at once recognisable as such from its position.

It was the practice after the restoration of King Charles II in 1660 for ships of the Royal Navy to wear their flags at half-mast on anniversaries of the execution of King Charles I (30 January 1649) and it is from that custom that apparently the present practice of announcing a death by flying a flag at halfmast arose.

Other suggestions, more or less plausible, are

- (i) On board a ship, a flag not fully hoisted gives a token appearance of slovenliness and untidiness the crew in their grief have abandoned normal routine; sailing ships used to leave ropes trailing and scandalise their yards.

- (ii) Following the custom of saluting with flags (ships dip their ensigns; regimental colours are placed on the ground) the national flag of the deceased is lowered in salute at his passing.
- (iii) It is customary in chivalry for the victor's banner to be hoisted above that of the vanquished; in the cause of a death it is suggested that space is left above the dead man's flag for Death to fly his invisible flag superior to that of the vanquished. This, of course, is in line with the old custom of hoisting the ensign of a prize inferior to one's own ensign.

The position for a flag at half-mast is not laid down in Admiralty instructions but the convention is that the centre of the flag should be half-way down the visible portion of the mast - i.e. that portion which is clear of such obstructions as awnings, etc. This in fact amounts in most cases to about one third down.

**MOUSE
TO MOUSE A HOOK**

To mouse a hook is to pass turns of twine round the bill of the hook and its shank to prevent the hook unhooking or the line on the hook coming off the hook. Pronounced MOWZ.

MULOT

The traditional and orthodox word used in the Navy for a fine against a man's pay, used as both a noun and a verb. The word comes from the Latin *Mulota*, a fine.

MUNDUNGUS

A word used in the Navy to refer to any useless or unwanted material (like GUBBINS, WIFFIN etc.). It is, in fact, the correct name for the dust of unmanufactured tobacco leaves.

**MUNJY
MUNGY**

A sailors' slang name for food: perhaps from the French Manger but more probably from the Maltese *Mangiare* (to eat).

**MUSTER
TO MUSTER YOUR BAG**

A naval metaphorical expression meaning to be seasick.

MUZZLER

A gale blowing from right ahead.

N

**NASTYFACE
JACK NASTYFACE**

The nom-de-plume of a sailor who published pamphlets in 1805-35 about the evils of the press-gang and naval life generally. He had fought at Trafalgar.

The name is still sometimes applied to a habitual grouser.

NATIVE

Naval name for an officer or rating whose home is in the port where the ship is lying.

NAVY

Sailors' nickname for the ship's navigating officer; officers refer to and address him as "Pilot".

NEATERS

Naval slang name for the rum issued to Petty Officers (as opposed to grog issued to rates).

NEW**NEW NAVY**

The old naval man's term of contempt for any innovation.

NIBBY

An old naval name for a ship's biscuit - something to nibble.

NIPCHEESE

An old-time naval nickname for the ship's Purser (or after our period, Paymaster); usually prefaced by "Mr." to give flavour to the approbrium.

NIPPER

A stop or strop used temporarily to seize two ropes together.

NO**N.O.**

The naval officer's slang name for himself.

NOBLE

An old English gold coin.

NOREASTER

Naval slang name for an empty pay packet - from the letters N.E. (meaning "Not Entitled") which are written in the pay ledger and read out at payment in respect of any man who has no pay to come this payday.

NORTHERN**NORTHERN LIGHTS**

The Aurora Borealis.

NORWESTER

Old naval slang name for rum and water in equal parts.

NUMBER**TO MAKE ONE'S NUMBER**

Naval expression for to Call on, to make oneself known to - from the custom of hoisting flags denoting the ship's identity (i.e. pendant numbers) when meeting another ship and on entering and leaving a naval harbour.

NUMBER NINE

Slang name for a laxative pill.

A SOFT NUMBER

Slang name for a sinecure or an easy job.

NUMBER ONE

Naval slang name for the First Lieutenant or executive officer.

NURSE**SNOTTIES' NURSE**

Naval name for the executive officer of a ship in charge of the welfare and instruction of midshipmen.

NUTS**MIDSHIPMENS' NUTS**

Old naval slang name for broken pieces of ship's biscuit, eaten after a meal to round it off. An allusion to the proverbial midshipmen's indigence and their ingenuity in finding substitutes for what they cannot afford.

NUTTY

Naval slang name for chocolate, whether or not it contains nuts.

O**OAKUM**

Unravell'd tarred rope used for packing seams and caulking. A prisoner in the ship's cells is required to pick two pounds of tarred hemp (or 6 lbs of tarred sisal) into oakum daily, Sundays excepted, the material to be weighed in his presence morning and evening.

OFF**OFF AND ON**

Old naval expression meaning occasionally. The expression originally denoted keeping close to the shore by sailing off and on it.

OFFING**IN THE OFFING**

Old naval expression meaning near at hand; originally it meant a distance from the shore - i.e., towards the horizon.

OLD**OLD MAN**

The C.O.

OPPO

A friend in the same, or in another, ship.

OPPOSITE NUMBER

A man having the same station or duties as your own; e.g the opposite number of a man in the port watch is the man in the starboard watch who carries out the same duties.

OVERHAUL

- (a) To overtake.
- (b) To examine carefully and repair where necessary.
- (c) To haul the blocks of a tackle apart to the full scope of the fall.

OWNER**THE OWNER**

Naval slang name for the Commanding Officer - much more used in the Merchant Navy (whence the R.N. borrowed it) than in the R.N.

OYSTER**BOMBAY OYSTER**

An old maritime name for a laxative draught consisting of a double dose of castor oil in a glass of milk; a more modern name for such a laxative would be "elephant-rouser".

P**PRAIRIE-OYSTER**

A morning-after reviver composed of port wine, worcester sauce, red pepper, mustard and the unbroken yolk of an egg.

PARCEL**PARCELLING**

Parcelling a rope consists of binding it with strips of tarred canvas, applied in the direction of the lay of the rope. A rope, or part of a rope, is wormed, parcelled and served to protect it from chafe, to make it less liable to chafe other ropes, and, with a wire rope, to protect the hands of men handling it.

The old rhyme goes -

"Worm and parcel with the lay,
Then turn and serve the other way".

PASS THE WORD

To relay an order or a summons.

PAY

To give a coating to a surface.

PAY A SEAM

To pour molten pitch into a seam.

PAY AWAY

To slacken a rope.

PAY OFF

To fall away from the wind. Also to place a ship out of commission (in former times the ship's company were then paid their wages and discharged).

PAY OUT

To ease out by hand.

THE DEVIL TO PAY AND NO PITCH HOT

Usually shortened to "The devil to pay", this means "difficult times are imminent", and so "trouble is brewing". Caulking and paying the side of a wooden vessel from devil to waterline was a very difficult and arduous job; unless the supply of pitch was really hot it was made all the more arduous.

PEGGY

Old naval name for the rating detailed to work as the Petty Officers' mess steward.

PENDANT

Though spelt PENDANT in the Royal Navy, this word is always pronounced PENNANT.

PERKS

Naval abbreviation of the word "Perquisites", referring to allowances, either in money or in kind, given with any particular office or appointment.

PETTY**PETTY OFFICER**

First defined in the regulations of 1808, though they were in existence many years before this. In 1827 they were ordered to wear a single anchor with crown above.

CHIEF PETTY OFFICER

Not a part of our period, as was introduced 1853 with original badge of crown and anchor surrounded by laurel wreath.

PIDGIN

The word "Pidgin" is Chinese for "Business"; thus "Pidgin-English" means "Business English" and the expression "Not my pidgin" means "No concern of mine".

PIER**PIER AND JUMP**

Picturesque naval expression meaning an unexpected immediate draft, usually to sea.

PIPE

The use of the Boatswain's Pipe, whistle or 'Call', for salutes and passing orders is one of the oldest naval customs and its origin is almost lost in antiquity. We know that the galley slaves of Greece and Rome kept stroke to the sound of a flute or whistle (much as the crews of pinnaces or launches in the all-comers race in naval pulling regattas kept stroke to the sound of a big drum). The Lord High Admiral wore a gold whistle as a badge of rank: this was of silver; it was used for passing orders and has been known as the "Call" since about 1670.

Certain routine orders on board (e.g., Dinner, Attention, Carry On, Pipe down, etc.) are passed by piping their respective 'tunes' and are not qualified by any verbal message; other orders are preceded by the pipe 'Attention' and the words "D'you hear there": they are followed by the pipe 'Carry On'.

To be academically accurate "piping" is the act of producing the sound, the "call" is the sound produced.

PIPES

Old slang name for Macaroni pudding.

PIPE DOWN

Last routine of the day, be quite, shut up, go to sleep.

PIPING THE SIDE

This form of salute is a nautical honour reserved expressly for certain officers when in uniform, a list of whom is given in King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions, Article 1302.

The side is piped between the hours of colours and sunset, except in the case of foreign officers who are piped at all hours when coming on board and leaving any of Her Majesty's ships, or when visiting naval establishments.

In the days of sailing warships, when captains were frequently summoned on board the flagship when at sea to receive special orders and the weather was too rough to permit the use of sea gangways, it was customary for the captain to enter and leave his boat seated in a bos'n's chair made fast to a yardarm whip. As the chair was hoisted out or hoisted in, the necessary orders were passed to the hands manning the whip by piping "Hoist" on a bos'n's call. The "Hoist" is still the pipe used in "piping the side", although for reasons of ceremony it is much more drawn out. No military officer, consular officer or civil dignitary is entitled to this form of salute.

One sometimes hears of a lord mayor or mayor holding the office of "Admiral of the Port" being piped over the side on visiting a man-o'-war. This procedure is incorrect although it is often done as a courteous gesture. By the custom of the Service the corpse of any naval officer or rating is piped over the side when leaving the ship for interment.

PLAIN**PLAIN CLOTHES**

The naval name for civilian clothes as opposed to uniform. The word MUFTI is never used in the Navy; CIVVIES rarely, and then not by officers.

The wearing of plain clothes by officers when going ashore on leave or returning on board from leave is a long-standing privilege.

PLUSHERS

The residue, particularly of food or drink, caused by over-issue or by the distribution of short measures. Previously applicable to the residue of the grog ration of a mess.

POINT**POINT BLANK**

Extreme short range. "Blank" was the old name for the bullseye on an archery target: "point" is understood to have meant "aim".

POKE**TO POKE CHARLIE**

A common slang expression meaning to treat anyone or anything with derision - to make fun of.

POMPEY

The sailors' name for Portsmouth. Said to have originated from the inarticulate pronunciation of "Portsmouth Point" by inebriated sailors. Portsmouth Point was the place at which ships' boats landed and embarked libertymen before the dockyard was a going concern.

TO DODGE POMPEY

To evade doing a job of work.

PONGO

A sailor's slang name for a soldier.

POODLE**POODLE-FAKER**

Wardroom slang name for an officer who pays polite social calls ashore – one of the "social tits". Often also known as a "Bun-Worrier".

PORT**PORT AND STARBOARD**

In the earliest ships there was no rudder and the ship was steered by a "Steer-board" (large oar or sweep) sited over the right-hand side of the stern; hence that side of the ship came to be known as the Starboard side. The other side of the ship was in consequence used for going alongside for embarking or disembarking cargo through the 'load ports ports'; the left hand side of the ship therefore became known as the "Loadboard" side, then "Larboard". As the use of this latter word inevitably caused confusion with the word Starboard, the word Port came to be used instead.

By some authorities, the Venetians are given the credit for the origin of the words - 'board' comes from the Italian 'borda': the other side was 'Quella borda'; these two expressions would rapidly become adapted into Starboard and Larboard.

POSTIE

The inevitable nickname for the ship's Postman.

POTMESS

Common slang word meaning a Muddle or Confusion; in the Navy it is generally qualified by the epithet "proper". The word probably comes from the kitchen: the biblical expression "mess of pottage" is akin.

POZZIE

Old sailor's slang name for Jam or Marmalade.

PREVENTER

Any rope, chain or fitting backing up or limiting the movement of rigging, spars, cable, etc.

PRIZE**HOISTING THE ENSIGN OF A PRIZE**

It has long been the custom for the ensign of any captured ship to be hoisted inferior to (below) that of its captor. In old prints a prize is often shown being towed into harbour with the two ensigns hoisted as stated above.

PROCEED**PERMISSION TO PROCEED**

It is the custom for H.M. ships, when about to leave a harbour in which a senior officer is present, to ask for "permission to proceed". This custom is carried out in spite of the fact that the officer to whom the request is addressed may have no authority to refuse.

There is one incident recorded in which an officer who was discourteous enough to proceed without asking permission was ordered to return to the anchorage, the senior ship going to "Action Stations" and threatening to open fire unless the junior obeyed the order. The senior ship was commanded by an officer of the same rank and only a few days senior to that of the other commanding officer, but that was sufficient to entitle him to act as he did.

PUDDING

A rope fender, cylindrical in shape and sometimes with the ends tapered; generally used on the bows of tugs and harbour launches, also on the griping spar of radial davits.

PUNT**COPPER PUNT**

The name given to the raft used by the Side party for work about the ship's water line. The name originates from the days when ships were sheathed with copper, the raft being used by shipwrights for making repairs to the sheathing. The raft is often also called the Balsa Raft since this latter life-saving raft was replaced by Carley Floats.

PURSER

The officer in a merchant ship responsible to the Master for the catering and accommodation of passenger. Formerly the officer in a ship of the Royal Navy charged with her provisions and clothing stores was called the purser.

PUSH**TO PUSH THE BOAT OUT**

Old navel expression meaning to stand drinks all round.

PUSSER

The supply officer of a man-of-war.

PUSSER BUILT

Naval slang description of an officer or rating who abides closely to the letter of the regulations.

PUSSERS

An adjective used to describe any article of service stores, especially clothing, to differentiate it from the similar article bought from civilian sources.

PUSSERS CRABS

Naval slang name for boots bought from the slop room.

PUSSERS CRABFAT

Naval slang name for Admiralty pattern grey paint.

PUSSERS DIRK

Naval slang name for the uniform clasp-knife, part of every seaman's kit.

PUSSERS TALLY

Naval slang for a false name, such as may be given by a malefactor to the patrol or on other occasions when the concealment of a man's own name seems desirable.

PUSSERS VINOLIA

Naval slang name for soap, particularly for Admiralty pattern hard yellow soap.

PUTTY

The general nickname for a ship's Painter rating - i.e., the man who mixes and/or prepares the paint and has charge of the paint store.

ON THE PUTTY

Naval slang expression for Aground.

Q**QUACK**

Officers' slang name for the Medical Officer.

QUARTER**THE QUARTERDECK**

The built-up parts, bow and stern, of old sailing ships were called (and resembled) Castles - the Fore castle and the After Castle. Forecastle as a name still remains, abbreviated to FX; after castle as a name has given way to Quarter-deck, but the initials indicating that part of the ship are still seen as AX more often than as QD (AX is infinitely easier to carve in wood than QD). It is said that the quarter-deck originally extended for one quarter of the vessel's length.

The custom of saluting the quarter-deck is said to have come from the practice of having a crucifix on the quarter-deck and paying it the normal mark of respect, originating from the old universal custom of making the sign of the Cross on passing any wayside crucifix.

EVENING QUARTERS

Carried out for two special reasons –

- (a) A complete muster of the hands, especially necessary in the larger ships where it is possible for a man to be locked in a compartment or a confined space where he has been working; and
- (b) To see that all decks are thoroughly cleared up and tidy on completion of the day's work. Formerly (and now, when a state of war exists) the ship's company was summoned to Action Stations or General Quarters before dark, to clear away the guns, and see everything in a state of preparedness for immediate action. Until very recently the bugle (drum) call for Evening Quarters was the same as that for General Quarters.

QUEEN'S HARD BARGAIN

A lazy, incompetent man.

R**RABBITS**

Any article made or converted from ship's stores for private use.

RAGGIE

Friend or chum. Formerly seamen provided their own cleaning gear, and if two men shared their cleaning rags it was a sign of trust and friendship. 'To part brass rags' is to dissolve a friendship.

RAKE**TO RAKE**

- (a) To lean or incline from the perpendicular.

- (b) To fire into a ship along her length.

RANGE

To lay out (usually applied to rope or cable).

RATLINE**RATLINES****RATTLINGS**

The ropes secured horizontally between the shrouds of a sailing vessel to form a ladder (always secured by a clove hitch). hence the expression "to rattle down" meaning to fit ratlines to the shrouds in this manner.

RATTLE

Having committed an offence and being placed in the Captain's or Commander's report, a naval rating will say that he is "in the rattle" or he has "scored a rattle" - possibly from the meaning of the word rattle, "to rail at in a noisy manner", as a defaulter supposes the Captain or Commander will do.

REASONS**REASONS IN WRITING**

When a (junior) officer commits a peccadillo, his Captain may call upon him to submit "his reasons in writing" for what he has done. This calls for a detailed written explanation, worded in very official language - and often closes the incident.

TO BE IN THE RED

Naval slang expression meaning to be in debt to the Crown; debtor balances are recorded in the naval pay ledger in red ink.

REFIT

To repair, put in order, recondition.

RIGGER

- (a) Former (pre-1939) official title of ratings serving in the Royal yacht Service.

- (b) Official name for certain dockyard employees.

RIGHT**RIGHT OFF THE REEL**

Naval expression meaning to go free without any obstruction, like a rope or log-line from its reel.

RIGOL

Official name for the curved metal fitting on the ship's side above a scuttle to deflect water running down the ship's side from entering the scuttle. Sometimes unofficially called "eyebrows", for obvious reasons.

RISK**TO RISK THE RUN**

An old naval expression signifying to sail in war time unescorted.

ROAD**ROADSTEAD**

An exposed or offshore anchorage.

**ROCK
THE ROCK**

Common name for Gibraltar.

ROCKIE

An officer or man of the Royal Naval Reserve.

ROCK SCORPION

Naval name for a resident of Gibraltar - originally a Gibraltar policeman only but the meaning has widened; the first word is often omitted.

ROGUE'S YARN

A coloured thread laid up in the yarns of a rope, both to label it as naval property (hence the name) and to identify its place of manufacture.

**ROUND
ROUND THE BEND**

Naval along for Half-witted.

TO GO ROUND THE BUOY

Naval expression for coming up, usually surreptitiously, for a second helping of food.

ROUNDLY

Naval word for Quickly: the opposite to handsomely.

**ROUSE
ROUSE AND SHINE**

The traditional naval morning awakening cry; often improperly quoted as "Rise" and Shine.

RPC

Entertainment signal (= "Request the Pleasure of your Company") to which the reply is either WMP (= "With Much Pleasure") or MRU (= "Which Regret Unable").

**RUB
THE RUB**

Naval expression meaning the Blame or Responsibility.

A RUB OR RUBBER

Naval slang word for a Loan.

A RUB OF THE GREEN OR A GREEN RUB

Naval slang expression for an unfortunate mishap.

RUMBO

Condemned rope.

RUMBO LINE

Rope made from old rope, such as stage lashing.

**RUN
TO RUN**

Naval official word meaning to Desert; a man who has deserted is marked R or RUN in official records.

RUN DOWN

To ram a vessel, either on purpose or by accident.

TO RUN LIKE A RIGGER

To run at a considerable speed. This is a corruption of "running a rig", a trick practised by pirates of running away from a more powerful vessel and, when out of sight, quickly altering the appearance of the ship.

RUNNERS

Smugglers.

S**SAIL
SAILCLOTH**

The specification for naval sailcloth in 1794 (the heyday of sailing ships required the material to be made of the best flax, unbleached, with a small admixture of hemp. NAMES OF PARTS OF BOATS' SAILS

Head ... upper edge (Peak to Throat).
 Luff ... foremost edge (Throat to Tack).
 Leach ... after edge (Peak to Clew).
 Foot ... lower edge (Clew to Tack).
 Roach ... curve in the foot or leach.
 Throat (or Knock) ... upper foremost corner (between Head and Luff).
 Peak ... upper after corner (between Leach and Head).
 Tack ... lower foremost corner (between Luff and Foot).
 Clew ... lower after corner (between Leach and Foot).

SAILS

The inevitable general nickname for a Sailmaker rating.

NEAR ENOUGH FOR A SAILING SHIP

Naval expression meaning as near as makes no odds = Approximately. Sailing ships, unlike steam ships, are unable to forecast their time of arrival in port to a minute, being dependent on the vagaries of the weather, and so have to leave generous margins.

**SALUTE
THE NAVAL SALUTE**

Saluting with the hand was introduced into the Navy by Queen Victoria to take the place of uncovering the head as a mark of respect. Saluting with the left hand, alternatively to the right hand, was abolished in 1923 out of deference to India. When going on board an H.M. Ship it is customary to salute when going over the side whether the gangway leads to the quarter-deck or not.

ROGUE'S SALUTE

Naval slang name for the single gun fired at "colours" on the day of a court-martial.

**SALTASH
SALTASH LUCK**

Old maritime expression meaning No Success at All. It is said to be derived from the many anglers who sat on the bridge at Saltash for hours and caught nothing but colds.

SCANTLINGS

Standard dimensions for the various parts of a ship's structure; they vary with the type or class of ship.

SCEND

The vertical movement of the sea's waves, or of a ship or boat because of it.

SCHOONER ON THE ROCKS

Old sailors' slang name for a roast joint of meat with roast potatoes round it.

SCORP

The customary abbreviation of (Rock) Scorpion.

SCOTCHMAN

Any piece of metal, wood, leather, canvas, etc., used to prevent chafe or wear.

**SCRAN
THE SCRAN BAG**

A bag (nowadays usually a cupboard or locker) in which all articles of clothing found lying about on the mess decks are put; to redeem these articles a fine of one inch of bar soap is (was) levied. The scran bag is usually in the charge of the Petty Officer of the Messdecks or one of the Regulating staff; the soap is used to supplement the official issue for cleaning various compartments of the ship. Scran is a general slang name for food; the original scran bag was probably a bag in which unwanted food was put, for re-use, to prevent waste.

**SCRATCH
SCRATCH or THE SCRATCHER**

Officers' slang name for the Clerk - Captain's normally but very occasionally Admiral's.

**SCRUB
TO GET SCRUBBED or RECEIVE A SCRUBBING**

Naval slang for receiving a reprimand.

SCUD

Low, fast-moving clouds. A sailing ship is sometimes said to be scudding before a gale when she is running before it.

SCULLING

To leave something sculling is to leave it lying about or unattended.

SCUPPER SCUPPERED

Naval slang for Killed. In the days of sail, if a man on deck was washed into the lee scuppers by a heavy sea he was almost certain to sustain at least serious injury.

SCUTTLE

To cut a hole in a ship's bottom or to open her seacock.

SCUTTLE DRILL

A gun room evolution wherein junior midshipmen are stationed one at each gunroom scuttle when the ship is at sea to open the scuttles to admit ventilation into an otherwise very fuggy gunroom, and, most important, to close and secure them when a wave is seen approaching.

SEA LAWYER

Naval name for a sailor who is fond of arguing and would have one believe that he knows all the regulations. Usually an excellent example of a little learning being dangerous.

SEA-LEG

A man is said to have 'got his sea-legs' when he can move about his ship without losing his balance when she rolls or pitches heavily.

SEAMAN BAG

A bag where item left loafing are kept.

FACE LIKE A SEA-BOOT

Naval expression for a man's face devoid of any expression - or a woman's face devoid of beauty.

SERVE**SERVING**

Serving a rope consists of binding it with close turns of spunyarn, with a special "Serving Mallet", in the opposite direction to the lay of the rope. A rope, or part of a rope, is wormed, parcelled and served to protect it from chafe, to make it less liable to chafe other ropes and, with wire rope, to protect the hands of men handling the rope.

SERVICE**DIVINE SERVICE**

Attendance of officers and ratings at Divine Service in our period was mandatory. It is now voluntary, but persons under the age of 17 years may be ordered to attend unless they have obtained formal permission to be absent on grounds of religious scruples. Voluntary attendance was introduced in the latter part of 1946.

SEWED

(pronounced 'sued'), a ship is said to be sewed when she has been grounded on a falling tide, either intentionally or accidentally, and can only be refloated by the rising tide; the difference between the actual level of the water and the level to which it must rise to refloat her is the distance by which she is sewed. She can also be described as being sewed to a certain point, e.g. if the water was level with the bilge keel she would be 'sewed to the bilge keel'. The term is also used to describe the condition of a ship in this respect during the operations of docking and undocking in a dry dock. The term derives from the old verb 'to sew', meaning to drain.

SEVEN**TO KNOCK SEVEN BELLS OUT OF A MAN**

An old naval expression for the giving of a sound thrashing (the nautical equivalent of "Knocking a man for six"); presumably to knock all eight bells out of a man would be to kill him!

**SEWN
SEWN UP**

Said of a man who is completely drunk and incapable - so much so that he might just as well be sewn up in his hammock and tripped over the side.

**SHAKE
THE SHAKE BOOK**

The book in which is recorded the names and whereabouts of ratings requiring an early shake in the mornings (e.g., the duty cook who turns-to long before the hands are called).

SHAKY

Expressed of anything in which there is a suspicion of short measure. e.g., a rating may say that he received a shaky tot, meaning that he thinks his rum ration was of short measure.

**SHALLOO
JACK SHALOLOO**

Old naval name for a boaster, or braggart. As an epithet applied to a ship it denotes slackness.

**SHEER
SHEER NASTY**

Naval slang for Sheerness - often described affectionately as "The last place God made".

**SHEET
SHEET ANCHOR**

A third bower anchor formerly carried by all big ships. The sheet anchor was the same size as the bower anchors - kept as a reserve anchor for use in extreme necessity.

SHIP

Correctly, a "ship" is only a three-masted sailing vessel, square rigged on all three masts.

SHIP'S COMPANY

All the personnel of a man of war other than her officers.

SHIPSHAPE

Seaman like appearance, tidy and neat.

**SHOOT
TO SHOOT A LINE**

To boast or to tell a bragging (or 'tall') story.

SHOT MAT

A heavy rope mat used to protect anything, especially the deck, from heavy weights dropped on it (originally to protect the deck in the event of cannon shot being dropped on it). Now known as a paunch mat.

**SHOVE
TO SHOVE ONE'S OAR IN**

Old naval expression meaning to interrupt, to break into someone else's conversation.

SHOVEWOOD

A word often used in naval circles in circumstances when a civilian might refer to a "Do-hickey", a "What-not", a "What-do-you-call-it".

SICK**SICK BAY**

The ship's hospital.

SICK BAY SHACKLE

Sailors' slang name for a Safety-pin.

SIDE**MANNING THE SIDE**

It is customary for the officer-of-the watch to order "Man the Side" when receiving certain officers on board. At this order, the quartermaster, corporal of the watch, sideboys, and quarter-deck messengers fall in on the quarter-deck athwartships at the top of the gangway, to "receive" the visiting or returning officer.

This custom originated in the days when ships were fitted with sea gangways which were used by junior officers and all ratings for entering and leaving the ship in harbour, and by everyone at sea. This gangway consisted of narrow wooden steps permanently secured to the ship's side, each alternate step being longer than the ones either side of it; on these longer steps stood the sideboys and to these they clung when ordered to man the side for passing the manropes into the hands of the person boarding the ship. In doing so, the sideboys were clear of the gangway and were literally manning the side (literally being sideboys, too). Sea gangways continued to be fitted in H.M. Ships built up to 1905.

SILK**THE "SILK"**

The sailor's black silk "handkerchief" worn round the throat, is of far great antiquity than as a sign of mourning for Lord Nelson. Originally it was worn in action either round the brow to prevent sweat running into the eyes, or as a general purpose sweat rag, or as a pad to cushion the body against hard knocks or chafe. Nowadays it is only a traditional piece of uniform clothing.

Commonly known as a "Silk", it was, until 1935, a square of black silk 36" square, worn with two diagonally opposite corners knotted together (the knot being worn at the back of the neck beneath the collar, and bight (known as a "Duff Bag") being secured in the tapes of the jumper), so that a drowning man's rescuer would have an efficient handgrip.

SINK**RATS DESERT A SINKING SHIP**

Although disliking rats on board ship, most sailors believe that if rats leave the ship before sailing, bad luck will overtake the ship and she will be lost.

SISTER SHIPS

Ships built to the same design.

SIXTEEN**STRIKING SIXTEEN BELLS**

Midnight 31st December/1st January is marked by the striking of 16 bells – 8 for the old year and 8 for the new. The youngest officer on board has the privilege of doing this. It used to be a custom to play practical jokes on this officer, such as smearing the bell-rope with marmalade (but not jam), or even connecting up electricity so that the lad got a mild shock when he grasped the bell-rope.

SKATE

A man always in trouble or mischief.

SKIPPER

Master of a fishing vessel or a small trading vessel.

SKULK

To avoid duty.

SKYLARK

The official naval word, verb and noun, for Frolic, Playing about, Ballyragging. In sailing ship days the order "Hands to dance and skylark" was sometimes given; this was probably as a form of physical training, to liven the crew up after a period of dullness, the 'skylarking' perhaps referring to races run in the rigging.

SLEEPING ON WATCH

Always a reprehensible habit, in the time of King Henry VIII, "If any man within a ship had slept upon his watch four times and so proved, this shall be his punishment: the first time he shall be headed at the main mast with a bucket of water poured upon his head. The second time he shall be armed, his hands held up by a rope and two buckets of water poured into his sleeves (In Nelson's time, this was known as Grampussing). The third time he shall be bound to the main mast with gun chambers tied to his arms and with as much pain to his body as the Captain will. The fourth time being taken asleep he shall be handed to the bowsprit end of the ship in a basket with a can of beer, a loaf of bread and a sharp knife, and choose to hang there until he starve or cut himself into the sea".

SLOPS

Naval name for any article of clothing (ready-made) which can be purchased from the ship's clothing store. Slops were introduced into the Navy in 1623. The compartment in a ship where slops are kept and issued is called the SLOP ROOM. The intending purchaser indents for his requirements on an established form called a SLOP CHIT; this name has come to mean metaphorically the amount of work a man has to do or responsibility he assumes, in the phrase "It's on your slop chit now".

SLUSH**SLUSHY**

Old sailors' nickname, now obsolete, for the ship's Cook.

SMART**SMART TICKET**

Old name for a Hurt Certificate, given to any officer or rating who suffers injury during his service career, and which he produces subsequently if wishing to claim any form of disability pension. This name was used officially at the end of the 18th century.

SNOB

Naval name for a boat-repairer.

SNOW**FLUATERS IN THE SNOW**

Sailors' slang name for Sausages and Mashed Potatoes.

SNOTTER

A strop supporting the heel of a swinging boom, derrick or sprit (which see). A rope or chain stopper used to hold the lifts of derricks. A type of rope or chain sling.

SNOTTIE

Midshipmen.

SNOWBALL HITCH

Slippery hitch, hitch that will slip under strain.

SNUB

When applied to a rope or a cable, means to stop suddenly.

SNUG

Properly secured; 'snugged down'-prepared to meet a gale.

SOFT**A SOFT NUMBER**

Common slang expression meaning a Sinecure - an easy job.

SOLDIER**(THE) SOLDIER**

The common wardroom nickname for the Marine Officer. At one time by custom a Lieutenant H.M. was referred to and addressed as SOLDIER and a Captain H.M. as (the) Major. The nickname JOBY is affectionately given to any H.M. officer (though seldom to his face!) If 2 Lieutenants in a ship the junior one is referred to as Young Joe.

SOUTHERN LIGHTS

The Aurora Australia.

SPEAK**TO SPEAK A SHIP**

Old navalease for to communicate with another ship, or with a shore signal station, by visual signalling methods. In this context the verb needs no preposition after it - i.e., one speaks such-and-such a ship, not to it.

SPELL

A period of continuous work, such as 'a spell at the pumps'; or a period of leisure, such as 'a spell on deck'. 'Spell ho!' is sometimes used as the call for a relief.

SPINDRIFT

Spray blown from the crests of waves.

SPIT**TO SPIT BROWN**

An old naval slang expression implying that the person referred to is an old-time sailor who chewed his tobacco instead of smoking it.

SPITCHER

Naval slang work meaning "Finish" - used as either a verb or a noun. From the Maltese word of that meaning.

SPITHEAD**SPITHEAD PHEASANT**

Old-time naval slang name for a Kipper; sometimes also called a "One-eyed steak".

SPITKID

A large saucer-shaped receptacle about one foot in diameter used as a cigarette ash-tray. Originally wooden spittoons, they are now made of galvanised iron.

SPLICE**SPLICE THE MAINBRACE**

An extra issue of one-eighth of a pint of rum to each officer and man of an over the age of 20 who desires to take the rum: lemonade to others. The rum is mixed with water into grog for all ratings below Petty Officer. Ratings marked "T" in the ship's books may draw rum or grog or lemonade when the main brace is spliced; no money payment in lieu is allowable. The order to make this extra issue may be given only by the Sovereign (or a member of the Royal Family) or by the Admiralty. Splicing the main brace is the only occasion when officers may be issued with service rum.

The name arose from the reward customarily given in sailing ships to men who carried out the task of splicing the main brace. As the main brace had to be led through blocks, a long splice (as opposed to a short splice or a knot) had to be made in it when repair was necessary, and the ship had to remain on the one tack until the job was completed. Thus, the work had to be done at great speed and in whatever conditions prevailed at the time since the ship could not be steered effectively with a broken main brace. The ship's best Able Seamen normally were chosen to do the work under the supervision of the Boatswain. The VICTORY's main brace was of 5?" hemp.

SPLIT**EVERYTHING ON A SPLIT YARN**

Old naval expression meaning 'in every respect ready'. From the practice of having gear all ready and secured in place by a piece of thin twine, or a split yarn, which could be easily and swiftly broken or out, thus releasing the gear at once all ready for immediate use.

SPRING PIPE

A short pipe running through bulwarks and used as a fairlead for hawsers.

SPONSON

A platform built out from the side of a ship.

SPROG

Naval nickname for a New Entry. The word is often therefore used by a man when referring to his own small son.

SQUEEGEE

A form of broom with a rubber edge, used for sweeping water from a deck.

STAND

To sail in a certain widely defined direction, e.g. 'to stand in to the shore', 'to stand southward'.

STARBOARD**PORT AND STARBOARD**

In the earliest ships there was no rudder and the ship were steered by a "Steerboard" (large car or sweep) sited over the right-hand side of the stern; hence that side of the ship came to be known as the Starboard side. The other side of the ship was in consequence used for going alongside for embarking or disembarking cargo through the 'loed-ports'; the left hand side of the ship therefore became known as the "Loadboard" side, the "Larboard". As the use of this latter word inevitably caused confusion with the word Starboard, the word Port came to be used instead. By some authorities, the Venetians are given the credit for the origin of "the word" - 'board' comes from the Italian 'Borda' meaning side; the side with the steering oar was 'Questa borda': the other side was 'Quella boarda'; these two expressions would rapidly become adapted into Starboard and Larboard.

STARBOARD LIGHT

Wardroom nickname for Creme de Menthe, otherwise known as "Sticky Green".

STATION

A man's place or post for a specific duty, e.g. 'station for leaving harbour'; or the allotted position of a ship at sea with a fleet squadron or flotilla. 'To station' is to allot a place or duty to a man or a ship.

STEERING ORDERS

Until 1933, steering orders given to the helmsman gave, by long established custom, the direction in which the tiller was to be moved, i.e., the opposite direction to that in which the ship's head (and the rudder) was to move. On 1st January, 1933, direct steering orders were introduced in the Royal Navy, with a six months' transitional period in which the words "wheel to" were to be included in the order.

STEEVE

The upward inclination of a sailing ship's bowsprit.

STICKS

Nicknames for a Marine bugler. See DRUMMER.

STICKY

Dockyard slang name for a sailmaker - from the sticky concoction of beeswax and tallow which he rubs on his twine before sewing with it.

STOKER

An engineering rating (ME).

STOP**STOP A GLASS RINGING**

It is an old tradition that a 'ringing' glass must be silenced without delay; the old saying is "Stop a glass ringing to save a sailor drowning".

STOW**A HARBOUR STOW**

An old naval expression signifying something which would not be disturbed for a long time. It comes from the normal naval practice of making up the sails tightly and neatly, with sail covers on, preparatory to a period in harbour.

STRATEGY**STRATEGY AND TACTICS**

The aim of naval strategy is the manipulation of naval forces for the control of sea lanes and the denial of these lanes to the enemy. Tactics is the art of disposing and handling forces in contact with the enemy.

STRIP**TO TEAR OFF A STRIP**

Naval slang expression for the giving of a reprimand. Possibly derived from the raucous sound made by tearing a strip of calico.

STRIP TO A GANTLINE

To strip a ship of all her rigging, leaving on gantline rove to the masthead with which to begin refitting the rigging when required.

STRONGERS

A bucketful of strong soda water, used for cleaning paintwork, etc. Usually referred to as a drop of strongers.

STROP**JACK STROP**

An old naval expression used to mean a good hand in the mess or in a public house, but of little use at his work.

STROPPIY

Slang for Obstreperous.

SUCK**TO SUCK THE MONKEY**

According to Captain Marryat ("Peter Simple"), working parties of naval men on shore in Jamaica used to buy coconuts from the local inhabitants and suck the milk there from to refresh themselves. The real coconut milk had however already been extracted by the natives and rum inserted in its place. The officer in charge of the working party was puzzled to find his men so affected by coconut milk!

SULLAGE

Garbage, rubbish. 'Sullage lighter'-the lighter which, in some ports, is sent to ships to collect their sullage so that it is not ditched overboard, thus preventing pollution of the harbour.

SUPPLY**SUPPLY OFFICERS**

From the XIV century to the middle of the XIX century, Supply officers in H.M. Ships were called PURSERS (as they still are in the merchant navy). Originally, they drew no official pay but feathered their nests out of their office; on certain commodities they were allowed to claim one eight (thus a "passer's pound" was 14 ounces only, and hence the old nick-name of "Mr. Nipcheese"). No examination as to qualifications was required before 1813 but a surety had to be lodged - as much as -1200 for a big ship. Pursers were Warrant Officers till the latter part of the XVIII century; in 1814 their status was fixed as "with but after" Lieutenants. Until 1824, the pay of a Purser depended on the class of his ship, but from 1824 to 1852 all pursers drew -7 per month. The rank-title of Paymaster was introduced in 1852.

SURGE

The lateral movement of a stationary vessel caused by a swell or the wash of a passing ship.

SWEEPER

The man responsible for the cleanliness of a compartment - not solely with the aid of a brown. His nickname is "Dodger."

SWING**SWING IT**

Slang naval expression meaning "Don't worry about it", "postpone" or "cancel".

SWING THE LEAD

Naval slang for to Malinger. Derived from the leadsman in the chains going through the motions of taking soundings without actually sounding.

I**TACK****HARD TACK**

Old slang name for ship's biscuit.

SOFT TACK

Old slang name for bread.

ON THE WRONG TACK

Naval expression meaning doing things incorrectly or pursuing the wrong line in an argument. A sailing ship makes progress towards the direction from which the wind is blowing by tacking; so a ship on the wrong tank is progressing in the wrong direction. It has been suggested that a ship on the wrong tack is one on the port tack, whose responsibility it is to give way to a ship on the starboard tank.

TACKLE

In the Navy when this noun refers to an outfit of pulley-blocks and rope it is pronounced TAY-KLE.

TACTICS**STRATEGY AND TACTICS**

The aim of naval strategy is the manipulation of naval forces for the control of sea lanes and the denial of these lanes to the enemy. Tactics is the art of disposing and handling forces in contact with the enemy.

TAIL**TAIL END CHARLIE**

Naval slang name for the last ship in the line.

TAILORMADES

Naval slang for professionally manufactured (as opposed to homerolled) cigarettes.

TAKE**TO TAKE CHARGE**

Said of ships' fittings or furniture which break away from their fastenings in bad weather and are thrown about by the motion of the ship.

TALLY

Slang word meaning Name; hence, Death-tally (identity). The word comes from the tally-stick used in checking cargo in the old days (hence the phrase "tallying the cargo"); these were wooden batons on which the checkers cut notches - just as early cricket scorers kept their sides' scores (whence the expression "notching the runs").

TANKY

Rating who looks fresh water on board man-of-war, midshipmen assisting the Navigating Officer.

TAR**TAR AND FEATHERS****JACK TAR**

An old civilian name for a sailor. One theory explains the word JACK as a diminutive of Jacket (i.e. meaning a short jacket), the TAR referring to the old sailors' practice of waterproofing their clothes with tar.

TARPOT

A naval slang name for an elderly seaman.

TAUT**A TAUT HAND**

A good all-round seaman whom everyone respects.

TEAK**PACING TEAK**

Naval officers' slang expression referring to walking the quarter-deck as officer-of-the-watch; a relic of the days when teak was used for deck-planking.

TELL OFF

To detail men for work.

TELL THAT TO THE MARINES

A seaman's repartee to an improbable story.

TEN**TEN-A**

The old official name for the authorised naval punishment (2 hours' extra work or drill) awarded for minor offenses.

TEN-A MATCHES

Only safety matches are permitted on board HM ships; non-safety matches therefore often led to awards of No 10-A punishment and so acquired this slang name.

TICKET**BLUE TICKET**

Officers' slang name for the official intimation received by a senior officer that he is to be placed on the retired list. These notices were originally written on blue paper.

PINK TICKET

The metaphorical card of permission obtained by a married officer from his wife to enable him to join in an evening entertainment at which she will not be present.

TIDDLEY

Neat, smart.

TIDDLY

Naval adjective meaning Stuart. Possibly it originates from "tidily".

TIDE**NEAP AND SPRING TIDES**

Neap tides are those which, twice a lunar month, rise least and fall least from the mean level. Spring tides are those which, twice a lunar month, rise most and fall most from the mean level.

TIFFY

The inevitable slang abbreviation of the rank-title 'Artificer'.

TINGLE

A small patch, usually of copper sheet with a waterproof lining, applied as a temporary repair to a small hole in the hull of a boat.

TOM**LONG TOM**

A paint brush lashed to the end of a long pole, used for painting inaccessible places.

TOOFER

Ward room slang name for a cigar; said to be derived from the cynical suggested price of the cigars - "Two for Sixpence"! The verb associated with a toofer is to push - e.g. "He was pushing a toofer".

TOOT

- (a) A grouse or complaint. The verb associated with this form of Toot is to have.
- (b) A minor drinking party, in the expression "On the toot".

TOP**EVERYTHING ON TOP AND NOTHING HANDY**

An old naval expression used to describe a badly stowed compartment or locker. It originates from the traditional description of the old-pattern midshipman's sea chest in which were kept his clothes.

TOUCH**TOUCH AND GO**

An expression commonly used to mean uncertainty. It is of maritime origin and refers to a ship touching the sea-bottom and then slipping off.

TRICK**A TRICK**

The naval name for a spell of duty, a watch, particularly as coxswain at the steering wheel.

TWELVE**ROLL ON MY TWELVE**

The naval man's heart-cry when depressed, implying literally that he will be so relieved when the end of his 12-year engagement in the Navy comes that it cannot come too quickly for him. The remark should almost never be taken literally!

U**ULLAGE**

- (a) That which remains in a cask (or box) when some of the contents have been removed; i.e., an incomplete package.
- (b) Slang - a person of low intelligence or value; i.e. with something missing from his make-up.

UNLUCKY DAYS

Sailing on a Friday, or on the 13th day of the month, has never been popular with sailors.

UPPER YARDMEN

Ratings picked out as suitable for training and advancement direct to officer rank. In the days of sail, the men who manned the upper yards were generally regarded as the smartest men in the ship.

V**VANJON****VANJOHN****VANTY**

Ward room names for the card game of "Vingt-et-un" or "Pontoon".

VICAR**THE VICAR**

A familiar name for the Chaplain on board.

VICARAGE

An unofficial name for the chaplain's cabin on board.

VINE**VINE STREET**

Unofficial slang name for the office of the Master-at-Arms on board – from the well-known London police station.

THE GRAPE VINE

Slang expression for the wonderful way in which a rumour spreads.



WAISTER

This word, now often but incorrectly spelt W-A-S-T-E-R, comes from the fact that only the best hands in a sailing ship were employed aloft in the rigging: the others were employed in the waist of the ship. Thus, the name "waister" came to be implied reproach on a man's efficiency or experience. Even as late as 1900 the word still appeared in the quarter-bills of H.M. Ships - referring to stewards, bandsmen and artificers whose action stations were in the waist of the ship, armed with boarding pikes ready to repel boarders or to board an enemy ship.

WAKE

The line of water astern of a ship through which she has just passed: the opposite to GRAIN (q.v.).

WARDROOM

The Naval officers' mess in a ship or Naval establishment, except in ships carrying a sufficient number of subordinate officers to justify the provision of a separate junior officers' mess, known as the GUNROOM (q.v.). The name is said to derive from WARDROBE - the space below decks in the after part of the ship where booty was stored. The ship's officers' personal cabins opened on to this space and they used to foregather in it for conversation. Later - about 1750 - the Wardrobe became the officers' mess (hitherto they had eaten in their cabins) and the name eventually became WARDROOM.

WARM

WARMING THE BELL

FLOGGING THE GLASS

Old Naval synonyms for being early for an appointment or doing anything earlier than had been arranged.

WART

A word commonly used by officers when referring to Midshipmen - "the lowest form of life, excrescences on the face of the earth".

WASH

WASH-OUT

- (a) Naval (now common) slang for "Erase" or "Cancel". From the use of slates on which signals were recorded before the introduction of pencils and signal-pads.
- (b) An officer's cabin which, through someone's inefficiency with the scuttle, has suffered flooding by sea-water, is said to have been "washed out", not "flooded out".

WATCHES

Watches in the Royal Navy today do not start at the same time as our period. Ours starts at midnight.

The "Relieve Decks" is worked by the Officer(s) of the Watch only from 11:30 PM to 12:00 AM. Each watch is of four hours, except the "dog watches" which have two hours. A bell is rung every half hour, and the total number of bells in a watch (except the "dog watch") is therefore eight. Eight bells announces the end of a watch. One bell announces that half a watch has passed, and so on to its end. Members of a watch can then tell, from the number of bells sounded, just how much of their watch has passed.

DOG WATCHES

The name probably comes for DODGE WATCH: by making in this way a total of seven watches to the day, men would be enabled not to keep the same watch each day. The suggestion that the name DOG comes from a dog watch being a watch cur-tailed is too frivolous to be authentic. A dog watch being

two hours long while all other watches are of four hours' duration gives rise to the common Naval expression of derision to a junior: "You've only been in the Navy a dog watch". The custom of striking 1-2-3-8 bells in the last dog watch, instead of 5-6-7-8, is said to have originated in 1897; the mutineers at the Nore has time their mutiny to start at "five bells in the dog watches" on 13th May, 1797, but the officers got to hear of this and directed that five bells should not be struck then. Since then, one bell has been struck at 6.30pm. Some foreigners still carry out the old routine, but most have come into line with us. In the Royal Navy, the two Dog Watches are the "First" and the "Last" not the "First" and the "Second".

IN EVERYONE'S MESS BUT NOBODY'S WATCH

An old Naval expression used to describe a man who talks a lot but avoids actual work as much as he can - a good hand in the canteen but never available when there is work to be done.

WAY TO GET UNDER WAY

A Naval expression meaning to get moving. "Way" means progress - of a ship, therefore, movement through the water. A ship is said to be "under way" when her anchor is free of the sea bed. The word is not to be confused with Weighing the anchor, which is the physical operation of hoisting the anchor from the sea bed to the hawse pipe.

WEB WEBS

Sailor's slang name for his feet.

WEDDING NAVAL WEDDING CUSTOMS

Bridegroom in bluejacket rig wears white silks tapes to his jumper; best man and other officials may do the same. Garland is hung between the masts of a ship one of whose officers is being married that day.

WEED TO HAVE A WEED ON

Sailor's slang for having a grievance and dilating on it.

WEIGH WEIGH OFF

Naval slang for awarding punishment. Clearly this use of the word comes from the idea of the scales of Justice.

WEEP

To leak slightly; a weeping cask, or joint in a pipe, for example.

WET

Adjective - common slang for stupid.

WHARF

A lading-place for shipping.

WHALES

Sailors' satirical slang name for Sardines.

WHIPPING

A binding of twine round a rope, normally to prevent the end unravelling. The Common Whipping has its ends worked inside the whipping: in the American Whipping the ends are tied together in the centre of the whipping in a reef knot: the turns of a West-Country Whipping are half-knotted each side of the rope and finished off in a reef knot: in a Sailmaker's Whipping the twine is passed through the strands of the rope.

WHISTLING

Whistling in a warship has always been strongly discouraged and as late as 1910 was a punishable offence in Training Establishments. The reason is fairly obvious - in the old days not only were all orders passed by means of a bosun's pipe (or whistle) and so whistling could lead to confusion, but also was a superstition that whistling brought wind which was not always welcome. Even nowadays, when becalmed in a sailing boat, an old sailor will stick his knife in the mast and whistle "for the wind". There was one occasion when whistling was allowed, even encourage: custom ruled that a cook of the mess should whistle when stoning raisins or prunes when preparing a pudding, &c., to show that he was not eating them, but with the disappearance of cooks-of-the-mess, this too has lapsed. It still applies to our period.

WIFE**LOT'S WIFE**

Sailor's slang name for domestic salt (from Genesis xix, 26).

WIND**TO PUT A WIND****FAIR WIND, BEHIND....**

The request at a Naval dining table to "put a wind (or a fair wind) behind the butterdish" is a request that the butter should be passed.

SOUTH WIND

A receptacle that is empty is sometimes said to "have a south wind in it".

BETWEEN WIND AND WATER

A vital spot. The part of a sailing ship's sides which, normally above the water line, is beneath the waterline when the ship is heeled over on a tack; this one of the worst possible places where a ship's side could be perforated by a cannon ball.

WINDWARD**TO GET TO WINDWARD**

Naval expression meaning to gain an advantage. In the days of sailing ships, warships when going into action would try to get the windward position, as that was the most advantageous for a squadron, fleet or ship in that it gave freedom of action. In sailing races, the vessel to windward has an advantage over her opponent. Also termed the Weather Gauge.

WINGER

Any young rating who has been 'adopted' as his particular friend – taken under his wing - by a senior rating. The word was not a complimentary one, though with the passage of time its original insinuation is probably nowadays seldom appreciated.

W.M.P.

Entertainment reply signal meaning "With Much Pleasure"; the alternative reply is M.R.U. (= Much Regret Unable). These two replies are to the invitatory signal R.P.O. (= Request the Pleasure of your Company); to reply N.C.D. (= No Can Do) is not polite: to reply "Regret N.C.D." is verbose: to reply "Regret M.R.U." is tautological.

BLACK-COATED WORKERS

Common slang name for Stewed Prunes.

WORK UP

To train the officers and ship's company of a newly – commissioned ship to an efficient state.

WORM**WORMING**

Worming a rope consists of filling in the spaces between the strands with lengths of spunyarn or small stuff laid along the lay of the rope. A rope, or part of a rope, is wormed, parcelled and served to protect it from chafe, to make it less liable to chafe other ropes, and, with a wire rope, to protect the hands of men handling the rope.

Y**YARD****THE SUN IS OVER THE YARDARM (OR FORE YARD)**

Naval officers' expression meaning "It is time for a drink", it is bad form to have a drink on board before sun is over the yard arm, i.e. approaching noon. The last word of this phrase is more correctly FOREYARD that YARDARM.

YARD ARM CLEARING

To clear one's yard, or yard arm, is to clear oneself of blame, either before or after an incident has occurred. Thus, an order which puts responsibility on someone else is known as a YARD ARM CLEARER.

YARN**TO YARN****TO SPIN A YARD**

Naval expression meaning to tell a tale. The expression originates from the day when rope was made and re-made on board ship; men repairing the rope yarns could do this and chat at the same time (and did).

YOUNG**(THE) YOUNG DOG**

The universal wardroom sobriquet for the junior medical officer when more than one is borne on board. He is often familiarly known also as The Poisoner.

YOUNG GENTLEMEN

Midshipmen.

Z**ZIZZ**

Naval officers' slang word for sleep (either verb or noun) - from the method adopted in comic strip cartoons to denote a person sleeping. The more nautical expression is to (have a) caulk.

ZOB

- (a) Naval work meaning to gabble volubly - from the Maltese word "xop" pronounced zob.
- (b) A wardroom method of "cutting" for drinks. The two contestants, after preliminary gestures, simultaneously display their right hands with fists clenched, or with all fingers outstretched, or with only two fingers outstretched, representing stone, paper and scissors respectively. Stone blunts scissors but is wrapped up by paper: paper wraps up stone but is cut by scissors: scissors cut paper but are blunted by stone. The contest is usually of three rounds and the loser pays for the drinks.

IN THE ZONE

Naval officers' expression referring to eligibility, by service, for promotion. Often used satirically as an explanation for extra keen and zealous conduct.

ROYAL MALAYSIAN NAVY

BERILMU. MEMIMPIN. BERKORBAN

KAPAL DIRAJA SULTAN IDRIS I