



The Maritime Academy Of Toledo

Rank And Promotion Handbook for Cadet Seaman

Rank of Seaman		Nautical/Maritime Terms	Nautical/Maritime Definition	Maritime Academy Terminology
1.	Seaman	GEAR	A general term for ropes, blocks, tackle and other equipment.	School Supplies
2.	Seaman	GRAB RAILS	Hand-hold fittings mounted on cabin tops and sides for personal safety when moving around the boat	Stairway Handrails
3.	Seaman	GUNWALE	The upper edge of a boat's sides.	Exterior Walls Of The School
4.	Seaman	HASHMARKS	Chevrons or stripes worn on the sleeve to signify years of service. In the Navy, each stripe signifies four years.	Rank Insignia and/or Badges
5.	Seaman	HEADWAY	The forward motion of a boat. Opposite of sternway.	Making Progress
6.	Seaman	HELM	The wheel or tiller controlling the rudder. HELMSPERSON - The person who steers the boat. A tiller or a wheel generally installed on the bridge or wheelhouse of a ship to turn the rudder during maneuvering and navigation. It is in fact the steering wheel of the ship.	Front Desk
7.	Seaman	IRISH PENNANT	1) Any dangling or loose thread on a uniform, or lines left adrift or dangling from the upper works or rigging of the ship. 2) "Irish pennants" & "Dutch pennants" are both 'untidy ropes hanging from aloft', according to Granville's Dictionary of Sailor's Slang.	Unkempt Uniform (Loose Threads)
8.	Seaman	JUNK	Old rope no longer able to take a load, it was cut into shorter lengths and used to make mops and mats. Land-side, junk is all that stuff in your garage you know you'll need right after you throw it away. Worn-out rope, or old salted meat that looked and tasted like it. Junk rigging was sold by the mate to a "junkman."	Good For Nothing Items Ready To Be Junked
9.	Seaman	LADDERWELL	Ships Stairways or Ladders	Ladderwells (School Building Stairwells)
10.	Seaman	LONG SHOT	A modern gambling term with an old nautical origin. Because ships' guns in early days were very inaccurate except at close quarters, it was only an extremely lucky shot that would hit the mark at any great distance, hence the inference of "luck" in the gambling term.	Luck

11.	Seaman	LUCKY BAG	The so-called Lucky Bag was really a huge locker in which articles lost aboard ship were deposited. Once a month these articles were produced and handed back to their respective owners. But there was a catch to it... each lucky recipient of a lost article was then given three strokes from the cat-o'-nine tails to teach him not to lose anything again. In these modern days, it's a compartment or locker maintained by the Chief Master at Arms where gear adrift is stored. Personnel can retrieve gear adrift items by working off Extra Military Instruction. If after a period of time the items are not claimed, they are sold with the funds going to the Recreation Fund. 2) A compartment or locker where masters-at-arms stow articles of clothing, bedding, and other items left adrift. Originally, articles were placed in a bag called the "lucky bag" which was in the custody of the master-at-arms. In a narrative of a cruise in the USS Columbia in 1838, the writer relates that the bag was brought to the mainmast once a month, and the owners of the articles "if their names are on them, get them again, with a few lashes for their carelessness in leaving them about the deck." The term "lucky" in this case is a bluejacket's twisted humor. One wag suggested another definition is "a sailor's wife."	Lost And Found
12.	Seaman	MAIN DECK	The main continuous deck of a ship running from fore to aft; the principle deck; the deck from which the freeboard is determined.	Main Floor/Lower Deck of Work Stations in the School
13.	Seaman	MAROONED	This old punishment for mutineers consisted of placing them on an island with musket, cutlass, and a breaker of water; and leaving them to their fate. It got its name from certain maroon Indians who had been transplanted in the West Indies as cheap labor and, deserted by their Spanish masters, had been left to starve to death. The famous Captain Drake discovered them in a pitiable condition and gained the Indian's lasting gratitude by returning them to their far-off home.	Time Out Or Ordered Onto A Work Detail As Punishment
14.	Seaman	MIND YOUR P'S & Q'S	Mind Your P's & Q's There are few of us who at one time or another have not been admonished to "mind our P's and Q's," or in other words, to behave our best. Oddly enough, "mind your P's and Q's" had nautical beginnings as a method of keeping books on the waterfront. In the days of sail when Sailors were paid a pittance, seamen drank their ale in taverns whose keepers were willing to extend credit until payday. Since many salts were illiterate, keepers kept a tally of pints and quarts consumed by each Sailor on a chalkboard behind the bar. Next to each person's name, a mark was made under "P" for pint or "Q" for quart whenever a seaman ordered another draught. On payday, each seaman was liable for each mark next to his name, so he was forced to "mind his P's and Q's" or he would get into financial trouble. To ensure an accurate count by unscrupulous keepers, Sailors had to keep their wits and remain somewhat sober. Sobriety usually ensured good behavior, hence the meaning of "mind your P's and Q's."	Behave
15.	2	NAVY COLORS	27 August 1802 the Secretary of the Navy signed an instruction which set a pattern for the dress of the U.S. Navy in Blue and Gold.	School Colors

16.	Seaman	PEA COAT	<p>1) Sailors who have to endure pea-soup weather often don their pea coats, but the coat's name isn't derived from the weather. The heavy topcoat worn in cold, miserable weather by seafaring men was once tailored from pilot cloth — a heavy, coarse, stout kind of twilled blue cloth with the nap on one side. The cloth was sometimes called P-cloth for the initial letter of "pilot" and the garment made from it was called a p-jacket — later, a pea coat. The term has been used since 1723 to denote coats made from that cloth. 2) The word peacoat (the usual form, though pea coat is also common) refers to a short double-breasted coat made of heavy, coarse wool, that was originally worn by sailors. The word is a classic example of a folk etymology. The original form was pea jacket, referring to the same garment. In both cases, the word pea does not represent our pea 'round green edible legume'. Rather it is ultimately from a Dutch or Frisian word that referred to a type of coarse cloth. A pea jacket was just a jacket made of pea. In English, pea, found in various spellings, is recorded as far back as the fifteenth century and in compounds in the fourteenth. Its ultimate history is obscure. It is unclear whether pea jacket is an English coinage based on pea and jacket, or if it is a borrowing of a Dutch or Frisian word such as pijekkat in the same sense. But the modern spelling with pea, and the general belief that it has something to do with the legume, is what gives it its folk etymological flavor. Pea jacket is first recorded in the early eighteenth century; peacoat in the late eighteenth.</p>	Uniform Outer Clothing
17.	Seaman	PILOT	A person who is qualified to assist the master of a ship to navigate when entering or leaving a port. In most ports pilotage is compulsory.	Administrator-In-Charge when Captain is away
18.	Seaman	PIPING HOT	Originally, meals were announced aboard ship by piping (blowing a call on the boatswain's pipe). If a meal is piping hot, it has just been served and is therefore hot.	Hot Lunches
19.	Seaman	PORT HOLE	<p>1) The word "port hole" originated during the reign of Henry VI of England (1485). King Henry insisted on mounting guns too large for his ship and the traditional methods of securing these weapons on the forecastle and aftcastle could not be used. A French shipbuilder named James Baker was commissioned to solve the problem. He put small doors in the side of the ship and mounted the cannon inside the ship. These doors protected the cannon from weather and were opened when the cannon were to be used. The French word for "door" is "porte" which was later Anglicized to "port" and later went on to mean any opening in the ship's side, whether for cannon or not. 2) King Henry VI of England ordered his shipbuilder, James Baker, to install heavy guns on his ships. Too heavy to be stable on the upper decks, Baker pierced the sides of his ships and used the French idea of mounting watertight doors over them to close the openings when the guns were not in use. This door was called a port. Later on, it was discovered that round holes distributed the strains of a ship's motion evenly around it, rather than making weak points at the joints and corners.</p>	Window

20.	Seaman	QUARTERS	Accommodation on a ship, i.e. crew quarters; The sides of a boat aft of amidships.—the two after parts of a ship, behind the mainmast on each side of the center-line were referred to as the "quarters". It was where the officers and wealthy passengers had their living spaces. It also became a rough method of telling direction by dividing a ship in four parts from its center. Thus, when the wind was blowing "from the port quarter", it meant the wind was blowing from about 225 degrees relative, or 45 degrees away from 180 degrees relative, which is dead astern.	Cadet Homerooms
21.	Seaman	RAIN LOCKER	Shower on a ship.	Shower
22.	Seaman	RANK AND FILE	The generic men and women in ranks. Comes from the terms for a military formation, where a rank is a row (crosswise) and a file is a column (lengthwise) within the formation.	Forming Rows And Columns In Formation
23.	Seaman	ROLL CALL	From the days of King Edward III of England. He conquered much of Scotland and forced the Scottish nobles to swear obedience, fealty and allegiance to him, personally. They signed their names on individual sheets of parchment that were delivered to each one of them, which were then taken back to London. Once there, they were all sewn together to form a scroll, or 'roll' ('Calling the roll', or 'Roll call' derives from this).	Sound Off For Roll (Daily Attendance)
24.	Seaman	S.O.S.	Contrary to popular notion, the letters S.O.S. do not stand for "Save Our Ship" or "Save Our Souls". They were selected to indicate a distress because, in Morse code, these letters and their combination create an unmistakable sound pattern.	Distress Signal
25.	Seaman	CHIT	One tradition carried on in the Navy is the use of the word "chit." It is a carry over from the days when Hindu traders used slips of paper called "citthi" for money, so they wouldn't have to carry heavy bags of gold and silver. British sailors shortened the word to chit and applied it to their mess vouchers. Its most outstanding use in the Navy today is for drawing pay and a form used for requesting leave and liberty, and special requests. But the term is currently applied to almost any piece of paper from a pass to an official letter requesting some privilege.	Hall Passes And/Or Permission Slips