

Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps Centurion A Sailors Dictionary



A Sailor's Dictionary

Abaft	Further aft than; never use the term "Aft of"
A'cock-bill	Anchor clear of the hawse pipe, up and down and ready for letting go
Adrift	Absent, late
Aft	In the direction of the stern
Ahoy!	A call for attracting attention between nearby ships or boats
Aloft	Above
Athwartships	In a direction from side to side in a ship
Avast	An order to stop
Awash	Level with the surface of the sea
Back up	To assist in holding
Batten down	To secure closed or shut
Beach	Shore or ashore
Beam end	When a ship is completely on her sides; confusion
Bear a hand	An order to assist
Below	Down
Berth	A place to sleep or for a ship to secure to
Between decks	Any space below upper deck and inside a ship
Bilae	The very bottom of a ships hull; also nonsense
Bitter end	Inboard end of ships anchor cable
Board	The old name for the side of a ship. To board and enter means to enter a ship (forcibly) "Inboard" means inside the ship, "Outboard" outside the ship, "Starboard" means right side and "Larboard" (Port) means left side.
Boot topping	The black band around the ship at the waterline
Brick	A shell (in gunnery)
Brightwork	Polished metal fitting, often brass
Broach	To unintentionally swing the ship around broadside to a wave
Broadside	The full side of the ship
Brow	A gangway between two ships or from ship to shore
Capsize	To overturn
Carried away	Removed or lost due to sea or wind action breaking items from the ship

Cast off	To let go
Check away	To pay out a rope or wire under control
Chock-a-block	Full, no room to put anything else in
Clean	To change from one type of dress to another
Cleat	A piece of metal or wood with two horns, around which ropes are made fast
Crest	The highest point of a wave
Derelict	A ship, abandoned by her crew, but still afloat
Dhobey	Laundry-and hence DHOBWALLAH-Person doing the ship's laundry
Easy	Carefully or slowly
Eyes of the ship	The extreme forward end
Fair	Favourable or unobstructed
Fake out	To lay a wire or rope on the deck in a wide zigzag pattern, so that it is free for running
Fathom	Nautical measure, 6 feet
Fiddle	Fitting on a table to keep mess utensils from sliding in bad weather
Fleet	A general term meaning the ships of a navy
Flotsam	To sink
Handsomely	Slowly, carefully
Haul taut	To pull tight
Holiday	A gap or space; area missed when painting
Irish pennants	Rope yarns or loose stray rope ends
Jetsam	Stores or equipment deliberately thrown over side to lighten ship
Jettison	To cast overboard
Junk	Old rope
Jury rig	Temporary, make shift device
Killick	Leading Seaman
Landfall	First sight of land after a sea passage
Lay Up	To take a ship out of service; (storage)
Lee	Opposite side to that upon which the wind is blowing
Make and mend	Time set aside to repair and replace kit

Mess traps	Food utensil kit
Overhaul	To overtake; to examine and repair; to haul apart the blocks of a tackle
Port	A viewing window or opening in the ships side
Proud	Sticking out, not in line
Refit	To repair
Roundly	Rapidly or fast
Sculling	To leave lying about or unattended
Scuttle	A round port hole
Secure	To make fast; to stop work
Shipshape	Neat and tidy
Sister ships	Ships of the same class
Silent hours	Hours between lingts out and calling the hands, only emergency pipes are made
Skulk	To avoid duty-usually in the sense of hiding
Snug	Properly secured; tight
Spell	Period of time
Spindrift	Spray blown from the crests of waves
Square one's own yardarm	To put oneself in the right without regard to others
Stanchion	A supporting post for a guardrail, etc.
Stone frigate	A Navy shore establishment (ship on land)
Stow	To put away
Strike	To haul down
Sullage	Wet garbage
Swallow the anchor	Retire from the navy or sea going life
Taut	Tight; to haul taut
Trick	A short spell of duty on a particular job
Work ups	To exercise the officers and crew of a ship in all their duties

Edited by the Navy League of Canada-Kanata Branch President Mike Mackay January 28, 2018