

Sailing Terms

- **Aback:** The position of the sails when they press against the masts.
- **Abaft:** Toward the stern of the ship. Used relatively, as in "abaft the beam" of a vessel.
- **A-box:** When the yards are braced in opposite directions.
- **About:** On the other tack.
- **A-lee:** Position of the helm when placed in the opposite direction from that in which the wind is blowing. To leeward.
- **All at aunt:** Fully rigged, all masts and yards aloft, everything in good order.
- **All in the wind:** When too close to the wind so that the sails shake.
- **Amidships:** In or toward the middle of a vessel.
- **Apeak:** When the cable is hove taut to bring the vessel over its' anchor.
- **Athwart-ships:** At right angles to the keel.
- **Avast:** To hold fast (Stop). Hence the term: avast heaving.
- **A-weather:** When the helm is placed in the direction the wind blows.
- **Baggywrinkle:** Chafing gear, on stay or shroud, made by wrapping with old rope yarns.
- **Bear up:** To keep further away from the wind.
- **Beating:** Tacking towards the direction of the wind.

- **Belay:** To secure a running rope used to work the sails. Also to disregard.
- **Belaying pin:** A fixed pin used aboard ship to secure a rope fastened around it.
- **Broach to:** Coming suddenly up into the wind.
- **By the wind:** Sailing as close to the wind as possible.
- **Cable:** A strong, thick rope to which the ship's anchor is fastened. Also a unit of measure equaling approximately one-tenth of a sea mile, or two hundred yards.
- **Claw to windward:** Beating gradually to windward. To claw off a lee shore.
- **Close-hauled:** Sailing close to the wind.
- **Counter:** The portion of a ship's stern extending from the water line to the extreme outward swell.
- **Course:** The sail that hangs on the lowest yard of a square-rigged vessel.
- **Dog vane:** A small vane made of feathers or bunting attached to the weather shroud to show the direction of the wind.
- **Fathom:** Six feet in depth or length.
- **Fife rail:** a rail around the mast or along a ship's sides with holes for belaying pins, used to secure the running rigging.
- **Flat aback:** When the wind takes the sails well on the wrong side.
- **Flemish horse:** a foot-rope on a square rigged ship that is found at the extreme outer end of the yard.

- **Fly up in the wind:** When a vessel comes up quickly head to wind.
- **Full and bye:** Sailing close to the wind but keeping all sails full.
- **Go about:** To tack.
- **Gripe:** To carry too much weather helm.
- **Hawse bag:** A bag of oakum used to plug the hawseholes in heavy seas.
- **Hawsehole:** Opening in the hull through which mooring lines are run.
- **Helm's a-lee:** The helm put right over leeward.
- **Hove to:** Remaining stationary.
- **Irons:** A vessel is said to be in irons when up in the wind but will not pay off on either tack.
- **Lee:** The side of a ship, land mass, or rock that is sheltered from the wind.
- **Luff:** To bring a vessel close to the wind.
- **Manger:** A small triangular area in the bow of a warship in which animals are kept.
- **Oakum:** Loose fiber obtained by untwisting old rope, used esp. in caulking wooden ships.
- **Ratlines:** Small lines fastened horizontally to the shrouds of a vessel, used to climb up and down the rigging.
- **Reeve or Rove:** To pass (a line or rope) through a block (pulley), ring, or hole.
- **Shiver:** To luff up so far as to cause the sails to shiver.

- **Slack is stays:** Slow in tacking.
- **Top-gallent:** The third sail or yard above the deck.
- **Topsail:** The second sail above the deck, set above the course or mainsail.
- **Tumble-home:** The inward curve of a ship's upper sides. Allows the ship's upper deck to be narrower than the lower decks.
- **Veer:** Wind is said to veer when it shifts with the hands of a watch, and to "back" when it shifts against the hands of a watch (It is the reverse way in the Southern Hemisphere). Also to pay or ease out cable.
- **Warp:** To move (a vessel) by hauling on a line that is fastened to or around a piling, anchor, or pier. (in the books they also warp a ship by towing it with smaller boats)
- **Wear:** To make (a sailing ship) come about with the wind aft. To come about with the stern to windward.
- **Windward:** Facing the wind or on the side facing the wind.
- **Yard:** A cylindrical spar slung across a ship's mast for a sail to hang on.
- **Yardarm:** The outer extremity of a yard.
- **Yaw:** When a ship does not steer a straight and steady course and the head "yaws" from one side to the other.