



## "Sabby the Lingo?" Maritime Language - XXIII

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As noted prior, each discipline has a language and that language conveys competency to the listener. This column is part of a series of maritime vocabulary words. So you can sound like the salty ol' mariner you are... We'll run enough of these to get the major concepts and phraseology from Alpha to Zulu in front of you!

### S - Sierra

**International Meaning:** Moving astern.  
**Navy Meaning:** Conducting flag hoist drill.  
**Meaning in a Sailing Regatta:** Shorten Course.  
**Steep Seas** - Tall and short waves caused by water current and wave directions being opposite to the direction of the wind.  
**Stem** - The forward edge of the bow. On a wooden boat the stem is a single timber.  
**Stem, to** - A term indicating that a vessel is holding her own against a contrary current.  
**Step the Mast** - Erecting the mast on the boat. The Mast Step is a fitting which supports the bottom end of the mast at the deck or keel.  
**Stepped** - A mast that is in place is stepped.  
**Stern** - The back (aftermost) part of a boat.  
**Stern Line** - A line running from the

stern of the boat to a dock or pier when moored.  
**Stuffing Box** - A fitting around the propeller shaft to keep the bearing lubricated and to keep water out of the boat.  
**Superstitions** - Here are a few old superstitions of seamen: (1) When a ship was launched or about to sail on a long voyage, a libation was offered to the gods of the sea by pouring wine upon the deck so that good fortune would accompany the ship. (2) Flowers carried on board were destined to form a wreath, indicating death. (3) To hear bells at sea is a sign of oncoming death. (4) It is bad luck for a ship to begin a voyage on a Friday. (5) Women on board were considered to be a sign of bad luck (6) Gales and high winds would subside if a naked woman appeared before them (hence many figureheads depicted a woman with a naked breast). (7) In a calm, whistling will bring wind, but whistling while the wind is blowing will bring a gale.  
**Swallow the Anchor** - To retire from a life at sea and settle ashore.  
**Swamp** - To fill with water, but not settle to the bottom.  
**Swell** - Succession of long and unbroken waves that are not due to meteorological conditions in the vicinity. Generally due to wind or storms at a distance from the position.

### T - Tango

**International Meaning:** Keep clear; engaged in trawling.  
**Navy Meaning:** Do not pass ahead of me.  
**Tachometer** - A gauge that measures engine revolutions per minute.  
**Tacking** - To change a boat's direction, bringing the bow through the eye of the wind.  
**Tackle** - [image] A purchase where two or more blocks are used to increase mechanical advantage, or the power exerted on a line. (pronounced "tayk-le")  
**Tar** - (1) Old nickname for a sailor, who would treat his canvas coats and hats with tar as a protection against the weather. (2) The distilled residue of gum extracted from pine trees, used for preserving many things.  
**Taut** - Stretched tight with no slack.  
**Telltails** - Ribbon, yarn, or other lightweight material attached to rigging or sails to indicate wind action or direction. Proper use of the telltales can help sailors improve their sail trim.  
**Tender** - (1) Describing a boat that lacks stability. (2) A small dinghy or launch used to transport crew and equipment from shore to a larger boat (3) One who serves as a precautionary standby, such as a line tender  
**Tether** - A line attached between a safety harness and a secure part of the boat.  
**The Hard** - Land

**Three Sheets to the Wind** - A phrase with a nautical derivation, meaning a man under the influence of drink or unsteadiness through drink.  
**Thwart** - A seat or brace running laterally across the width of a rowing boat.  
**Thwartships** - Across the width of a boat. Also Athwartships.  
**Tidal Current** - The horizontal movement of the water due to tide  
**Tidal Range** - The difference in depth between high and low tide.  
**Tide** - The predictable, periodic regular rising and lowering of water in some areas due to the pull of the sun and the moon. Tidal changes can happen approximately every 6 or 12 hours depending on the region.  
**Tide Rip** - Short waves or ripples made by a tide as it ebbs or flows over an uneven bottom, or where two currents meet at sea.  
**Tide Table** - A publication predicting the time and height of high tide and low tide.  
**Tiller** - A bar or handle for turning a boat's rudder or an outboard motor, thereby steering the boat.  
 More in the weeks ahead...!  
 BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at [JoinUSCGAux2008@aol.com](mailto:JoinUSCGAux2008@aol.com) or go direct to Lisa Etter, who is in charge of new members matters, at [FSO-PS@emcg.us](mailto:FSO-PS@emcg.us) and we will help you "get in this thing..."

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