

STANDARD NAVY STOCK NUMBER G24-H-10

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By

Commander Richard W. Mindte, U.S.N.

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STANDARD NAVY STOCK NUMBER G24-H-10

FS/L8(692H)
Ser 690-2925

From: Chief, Bureau of Ships
To: Commandants, All Naval Districts
Commanders, All Naval Shipyards
Commanders, All Continental Naval Bases
All Supervisors of Shipbuilding, USN and Naval
Inspectors of Ordnance
All Industrial Managers
Commanding Officers and Prospective Commanding
Officers, subject ships

Subj: Bureau of Ships Allowance List, All Surface Ships
and Service Craft - Canvas Hammocks; deletion of

Ref: (a) Buships ltr FS/L7-1-(1).....
(b) BUSHIPS INST 4441.2A
(c) BUSHIPS INST 4441.20A

1. Reference (a) is hereby cancelled.
2. Bureau of Ships allowance list preparing and maintenance activities are requested to amend the subject Bureau of Ships Consolidated, Revised Individual and Type Allowance Lists by deleting hammocks, standard Navy stock number G24-H-10, from Part II, Group S33-3 in accordance with either reference (b) or (c), whichever is appropriate.
3. The Commanding Officers are advised that the hammocks should be turned in to the nearest naval stocking activity for disposal.
4. The Bureau of Ships Revised Master Allowance List will be modified accordingly.

By direction

I

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Thus, in cold, matter of fact official phraseology was another romantic element of the American Navy relegated to the realm of tradition and sentiment.

Born in the jungle fastness of the New World and introduced to the Old World by the crews of Christopher Columbus, the hammock has been an integral part of the life on a Man-o-War through all the years since Columbus returned with his fantastic tales of the strange new lands.

The Navies of the world took to the hammock as the ideal berthing solution for the large crews that were required to man a fighting ship. The gun decks of a Man-o-War were crowded with guns and tackle. The holds and compartments were crammed with stores that are required only for fighting. Thus the hammock, which could be tightly lashed and stowed in an out-of-the-way space, soon became standard in all naval vessels.

Some reference to hammocks may be found in accounts of merchant vessels but it is rare. Herman Melville writes of the dirty, dingy, crowded bunkrooms in the whalers but when he writes of White Jacket, or Life in a Man-o-War, he refers to hammocks throughout the book. Joseph Conrad and Jack London rarely mention hammocks in their epics of life in merchant vessels. So it is well evident that the hammock was strictly a Naval institution.

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The crews who manned the guns for Drake, Hawke, Hood, Frobisher, Askew, Von Tromp, De Ruyter, D'Estaing, Cooke, Bligh, John Paul Jones, Nelson, Decatur, Truxtun, Lawrence, Perry, Wilkes, Farragut, Dewey, Schley, Evans, Jellicoe, Redman, Beatty, Von Scheer and many other reknown sea warriors all slung their hammocks at night and lashed and stowed in the morning.

How many thousands of oak-hearted Jack Tars have been sent to their last sleep in the very hammock that cradled them in their boisterous and adventurous life on this earth ?

How many disastrous leaks have been stemmed by the piling and cramming of hammocks into the breach ?

Not too many years ago a standard Collision Drill Station in our larger combat vessels was at the Hammock Nettings. I faintly remember that the Hammock Nettings were Fire Drill Stations also but for the life of me cannot remember whether we were to throw the hammocks on the fire to suppress it or to heave them overboard to prevent the spreading of the fire !

Many of us who still live with the memories of the "Old Navy" can remember a most delightful hour of the day in tropical waters. "HAMMOCKS" sounds on the bugle and all hands stand by the Hammock Nettings in silence, facing aft. The huge orange sun has flattened on the shimmering horizon. On the opposite beam a few faint stars are flickering. The swish

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of the sea along the armor plate is the only break of the silence but even that is a part of the quietness. Why we were kept there in silence so long I will never know, but now I like to think of these moments as a reverential salute to the fading day.

Of course there were cases of broken limbs and a few cracked skulls incurred by careless or reckless sleepers. There were even actual cases of men obtaining permanent shore duty and some rare cases when men were discharged from the naval service because the medics reported that certain men could not maintain their equilibrium in a hammock !

The old time Master at Arms will tell you though that the combination of a taut hammock and the night stick was the perfect augmentation to Reveille !

0600 SCRUB CANVAS - on the Plan of the Day. What a bustle on the bleached and burnished teakwood decks ! Kiyis, scrubbers, salt water soap, bare feet and cool tingling salt water gurgling through the deck hoses! A mad scrambling of arms and deck scrubber handles and then; hammocks, seabags and awnings triced up high overhead.

Some Tars were lazy, others provident. The lazy ones payed 50¢ (half a day's pay) to have their hammocks scrubbed. The provident ones had a good liberty in their favorite port.

I have a very keen and personal memory of two provident Radiomen in the last of our Armored Cruisers scrubbing 136 hammocks one delightful tropical morning ! The hammocks belonged to Radiomen, Yeomen and other ratings well reknown throughout the Fleet for their aversion to manual labor. The collection on Pay Day subsequently financed two rollicking liberties in Santo Domingo City, Dominican Republic and Ponce, Porto Rico. ^H But a few days after the scrubbing the First Lieutenant was deluged with requests for new hammocks. Brass grommets and hammock clews had been popping and parting at night and there had been a few bad spills. Perhaps it was due to the rapid and unburdensome method of scrubbing devised by the labor-hating Radioman - - - - - a can of lye in each bucket of soapy water ! ! !

Was there anything saltier looking than a lad in Blue stepping out of a motor launch or motor dory, shouldering his tightly lashed, immaculately white seabag and hammock and then rolling down the dock ?

In the final analysis we must all admit that bunks were better to sleep in, but the Old Timers will continue to brag about the "Old Navy" and the times when we slept in hammocks.

Now that hammocks have succumbed as did the wide, salty flat hat and the thirteen button pants we sentimental ones must wipe away a tear.

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Farewell Old Shipmate ! Many of us will always feel that the Navy was not bettered by your gradual and finally unpublicised demise. We will miss you but will spin yarns of our years of companionship until we drop our hook in Snug Harbor.

Richard W. Mindte,
Commander, U.S. Navy

FOURTH NAVAL DISTRICT
DISTRICT STAFF HEADQUARTERS
U. S. NAVAL BASE, PHILADELPHIA 12, PA.

MEMORANDUM

18 May 1955

From: CDR R. W. Mindte, USN
To: Reserve Coordinator

Subj: Naval Tradition, plea for maintenance of

Ref: (a) Verbal Statement, Capt. John Paul Jones,
23 September 1778
(b) Verbal Statement, Capt. James Lawrence,
U.S.S. Chesapeake, 11 September 1813
(c) Verbal Statement, Adm. David Glasgow Farragut,
U.S.S. Hartford, 5 August 1864
(d) Verbal Statement, Commodore George Dewey,
U.S.S. Olympia, 1 May 1898
(e) Verbal Statement, Cdr. J. K. Taussig, 4 May 1917
(f) Verbal Statement, Cdr. Howard Gilmore,
U.S.S. Growler, 1943
(g) Bluejackets Manual
(h) Watch Officers Guide
(i) Your Navy, NAVPERS 10600

1. References (a) through (f) are so well known that they need not be repeated in this correspondence. They are, however, elements of traditional inspiration that have endured through all of the years of our Navy's existence and will continue to endure as an inspiration to those of us who have chosen the Navy as a profession and life work.

2. References (g), (h) and (i) while not of the same inspirational character as the foregoing references contain the Naval phraseology that has clung to the Naval service from the time of its earliest conception. This in spite of many attacks by newcomers, scoffers and unifiers.

3. The true seafarer or man-o-warsman takes pride in these bits of custom and usage that set him apart as uniquely different from people of other professions or followings.

4. In the interest of preserving in full, the inspiration and esprit de corps that are to a great extent based on the heartfelt appreciation of the Navy's customs and traditions, it is requested that the newly painted sign on the door to Room 216, Bldg 4 be replaced by one more appropriate to the phraseology of the sea service.

5. Let not this or any of our distinctive Naval terms be weakened by unlearned and unfeeling attacks, or we will again experience an unhappy loss as we did when we lost Sailmaker, Coxswain, Signalman, Navy Day, Flat hats and 13 button pants.

R. W. Mindte
R. W. MINDTE

Code 14pl
A17
7 June 1955

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on CDR R. W. Mindte, USN, memo. of 18 May 1955

From: Reserve Coordinator

To: ~~Building Manager, Bldg. 4~~ *CDR MINDTE*

Subj: Naval Tradition, plea for maintenance of

1. ~~Readdressed and forwarded.~~ *Returned*

2. It is noted that paragraph 5 of the basic memorandum refers to the loss of flat hats. The Reserve Coordinator feels that this is not strictly true, as flat hats (albeit not as flat as those worn fifty years ago) are still worn by enlisted men while in cooler climes. The Reserve Coordinator would like to add that it is his hope the reduction in flatness of the hats reflects a reduction in the flatness of the heads thereunder.

3. The Reserve Coordinator has analyzed the statements referred to in references (a) through (f) to ascertain their significance, impact, and effect. The conclusion arrived at is that if the right words are used at a time or place where they will be remembered, no headaches should result concerning Naval Traditions. Fitting this to the basic correspondence:

a. Utilizing standard Naval phraseology when a decision is to be made, invariably insures more accurate movements of (and within) bodies of Naval personnel, particularly when the head man of the group is forceful in his execution. The proper heading is necessary to keep any ship or, for that matter, any Naval person on a safe course that will eventually lead to an honorable discharge.

b. If the particular phraseology was utilized when referring to the door to Room 216, Building 4, this certainly avoids misconceptions in the heads of needy Naval officers.

4. In view of the above, I feel certain that corrective action in this case will head us so that we will win the battle of Building 4. *Due to the budgetary adjustments and policy fluctuations, immediate action is predicated upon future developments.*

J. W. GOLINKIN

Copy to:
CDR R. W. Mindte, USN

13 September, 1955.

MEMORANDUM

From: Cdr. R.W. Mindte, 72895/1615, USN.
To: Building Superintendent, Building Four.
Via: Deputy Chief of Staff for Naval Reserve.
Subj: Naval Tradition, plea for maintenance of.
Ref: (a) My memo, same subject, dated 18 May, 1955 .
Enc: (1) Copy of reference (a).

1. The present state of progress on the painting contract in the West passageway, second deck of Building Four presents an opportune occasion to remedy the sacrilege perpetrated by the Naval Base painters on the door to Room 216 last May.

2. It is strongly recommended that the action indicated in paragraph 4 of the first endorsement to the reference be taken at this time and that a firm stand be taken to prevent similar inroads to our Glorious Naval Tradition.

Very Respectfully,

R.W. Mindte

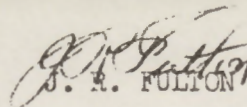
cc: Asst.C/S Personnel

Code 47
L9
15 Sep 1955

From: Building Manager, Bldg #4
To: Commander R. W. MINDTE, USN
Via: (1) Assistant Chief of Staff for Personnel, 4ND
(2) Deputy Chief of Staff for Naval Reserve

Subj: Naval Tradition, maintenance of

1. Your basic memorandum with addenda has been referred to me for information and appropriate action.
2. As a student of Navy Customs and Traditions, I agree that each and every one of us should preserve in full the naval phraseology that is part of the naval service and usage.
3. I am most happy to inform you that the indignity wrought upon us at the time of last painting of Building No. 4 will be corrected. The present contract painters have been directed to change the erroneous phraseology on the door to Room 216 from "Officers Lavatory" to the true traditional wording; namely, "Officers Head". I am sure this correction will keep all naval officers on a safe, true course.


J. R. FULTON

Code 10
15 Sept 1955

From: Assistant Chief of Staff for Personnel
To: Building Manager, Building #4

Subj: Naval Tradition, plea for maintenance of

Ref: (a) R. W. Mindte (CDR, USN) memo, same subject of 18 May 1955
(b) R. W. Mindte (CDR, USN) memo, same subject of 13 Sept 1955

1. Basic letter and addenda are noted.

2. It is with the gravest concern and a feeling of alarm that I stand helplessly by and watch the inroads made by uninformed personnel on the customs and traditions of the Navy, and hence I must add my plea to that of the originator that in this small but important matter a stop be made now to this threat, and a return to the tried and true phraseology of the NAVY be directed.

W. H. SUBLETTE

copy to:
Deputy C/S for NavRes

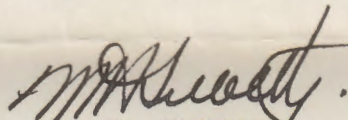
Code 10
L9
15 Sep 1955

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on Building Manager, Bldg. #4 ltr, Code 47, L9 of
15 Sep 1955

From: Assistant Chief of Staff for Personnel, 4ND
To: Commander R. W. MINDTE, USN
Via: (1) Deputy Chief of Staff for Naval Reserve

Subj: Naval Tradition, maintenance of

1. Forwarded with pleasure.
2. It appears that at long last the trend toward vulgar disregard of Naval usage has been stopped, at least in Building #4, and it is hoped that this example will serve to promote further efforts in this regard.
3. It is considered that Commander MINDTE deserves a mark of appreciation for his extended efforts in this matter.


W. H. SUBLETTE

copy to:
RADM J. R. Fulton,
Bldg. Manager, Bldg. #4

Navy Reviving Nautical Language

By Fred Hiatt

Washington Post Staff Writer

11/84

Now hear this!

Secretary of the Navy John F. Lehman Jr. has ordered all hands to abandon the bureaucratese that became prevalent in the 1970s, more commonly known in the Pentagon as the decade of neglect, and return to the "nau-

tical lexicon" that made the Navy great. Mess decks, which earlier naval bureaucrats tried to turn into "enlisted dining facilities," will again be mess decks, serving food prepared in galleys, not "kitchens." The brig will be a brig, not a Navy correctional facility.

And unaccompanied officer personnel housing, with its unwieldy initials (UOPH), reverts to the time-honored BOQ—bachelor officers'

quarters, Lehman said. Lehman, a Naval Reserve flight officer as well as the Navy's civilian leader, explained yesterday that the "modern" terminology "is something that's been sticking in my craw for some time, and also in Jim Watkins'." Adm. James D. Watkins is chief of naval operations, the Navy's top man in uniform.

"Nautical terminology is inherent in our special Navy heritage," Lehman wrote in a Nov. 1 "ALNAV"—a bulletin to all naval facilities. "As part of the many personnel and

administrative changes undertaken in the 1970s, several traditional Navy terms were discontinued in favor of less nautical substitutes," he wrote.

"These official changes led, in turn, to an increasing laxity in proper use of standard Navy terminology."

Lehman said the bureaucratic translations were "vestiges of the era when people were 'human resources' to be managed instead of people to be led."

See NAUTICAL, A22, Col. 3

Naval Bureaucratse Yields To Old Nautical Terminology

NAUTICAL, From A1

He said they reflected an attempt to democratize the Navy, to make it less distinct from the civilian world and to pander to volunteers instead of challenging them.

"You remember the ads, 'The Army wants to join you,' " he said. "That was the whole approach:

" 'We're really not so bad. We'll let you wear long hair. We'll let you wear uniforms that make you look like bus drivers or something instead of sailors.

"We'll let you sleep in unaccompanied enlisted personnel housing instead of barracks, and we'll let you eat in enlisted dining facilities instead of mess decks.' "

In addition to the formal changes in names, Lehman said in his message that "continued emphasis should be placed on everyday use of Navy terminology such as ladder, topside, deck, passageway, etc."

Even in the Pentagon, Navy personnel are supposed to talk about decks instead of floors and passageways instead of corridors.

Lehman said he officially reclaimed the word "brig" in an order last year. All other changes are to take effect Jan. 1.

Some of the changes in terminology date from Adm. Elmo Zumwalt's tenure as chief of naval operations, but most came later in the 1970s, Lehman said. He said that many of Zumwalt's humanizing changes made sense but that "the bureaucracy just kept tearing down that same old rut."

He acknowledged that many of

the changes have never taken hold colloquially. Most people still talk about "barracks" and "BOQs," for example.

But signs have been repainted to say "UOPH" all over the world, Lehman said.

"When you write a letter to a BOQ, it won't get there," he said. "The bureaucracy doesn't recognize them any more."

Lehman said the repainting and redesignating will cost "as much as it cost last time."

He said that cost is minimal because most signs will not be replaced with new terminology until the old signs wear out.

