

NAVAL TERMS DICTIONARY

Third Edition

by

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United States Naval Institute, Annapolis, Maryland

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Preface to the Third Edition

As in the previous editions, the primary consideration in selecting terms for inclusion in this edition of *Naval Terms Dictionary* has been current usage. A number of Old Navy expressions have, however, been included in recognition of the fact that old sailors never die and the lore of the sea by which they are living is being perpetuated even in these modern days of nuclear power and guided missiles. Old terms sometimes appear in current naval literature and their definition should be useful.

One of the other important considerations for this edition has been the ever-growing relationship between science, industry, and business on the one hand, and contracting, budgeting, appropriations, and the government on the other. Their composite effect on the Navy has, of course, been massive, as these pages reflect.

The U.S. Naval Institute has recently published the *Dictionary of Naval Abbreviations* (DICNAVAB), wherein will be found the acronyms, code names, and abbreviations not included in this edition of *Naval Terms Dictionary*. This book and DICNAVAB provide comprehensive coverage of terms and abbreviations in use in today's Navy.

In using this dictionary, it is helpful to know that words or phrases in italics indicate terms that are cross-referenced elsewhere in the book. Five appendices also add to the usefulness of this new edition.

Appendix A lists all ship types in the Navy. Appendix B explains the enlisted rating structure, lists the various rates, and shows the relationship of the several petty officer designations. As with ships, only those enlisted ratings presumed to be of greatest interest to the greatest number of persons have been defined in the body of the text.

The letters for classification, modified mission, basic mission, and series, as well as design number, are explained in Appendix C, Aircraft Designation System. A listing of popular names for aircraft is also found, with model designation and cognizant service. An individual aircraft is listed in the body of the dictionary under its popular name instead of its basic designation.

The missile designation system is treated in the same manner in Appendix D. The electronics nomenclature system, often referred to as the AN system, is covered in Appendix E. The kind of installation, the type of equipment, and its purpose are presented.

Because of the wide interest shown in the compilation of this dictionary, the list of contributors has grown to the point where they must be unnamed and unnumbered — but certainly not unappreciated. Our thanks to the many patient people who have helped.

The Authors

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TERMS

A

Abaft:

To the rear of.

Abandon ship:

To leave the ship in an emergency such as sinking.

ABC Air Standardization Agreement (ABCAIRSTD):

Agreement among the American, British and Canadian governments for standardization of aircraft equipment and fittings.

Abeam:

In approximately the same horizontal plane of the observing ship or aircraft, *Bearing* 90° away from its heading or course.

ABLE:

Alfa.

Able Seaman (AB):

Merchant and civil service marine rating above an ordinary seaman. Also known as able-bodied seaman, from which the colloquial term "AB" is derived.

Aboard:

In a ship or on any activity such as a naval station. See *Close Aboard*.

Abort:

Failure to accomplish a mission for any reason other than enemy action.

Abreast:

By the side of; side by side. See *Abeam*.

Absence indicator:

Pennant flown by a ship to indicate absence of Commanding Officer or embarked flag or staff officer. Also called *Absentee*.

Absence without leave (AWOL):

See *Unauthorized absentee*.

Absentee:

Man missing at a muster. Slang for *Absence Indicator*.

Abyssal-benthic zone:

Subdivision of the deep-sea system of the *Benthic division* including waters deeper than 1000 meters.

ACADEME:

Model designation: TC-4C; cognizant service: Navy.

A commercial Grumman (Gulfstream I) aircraft modified as a bombardier/navigator trainer. Prop-jet.

Accepting authority:

The officer designated to accept a ship for the government, usually a Naval District Commandant or his representative.

Access, classified material:

The ability and opportunity of an individual to gain knowledge or possession of classified material.

Accommodation ladder:

Portable steps from the gangway down to the waterline. Sometimes incorrectly called *Gangway*.

Accountability:

The responsibility and obligation imposed by law on military personnel for keeping accurate records of property or funds and for submitting periodic reports thereon. See *Responsibility*.

Accountable officer:

One detailed to duty involving personal pecuniary responsibility for government funds.

Ace:

Pilot who has shot down 5 or more enemy aircraft.

Ace High:

Tropospheric forward scatter communications system.

Acey-deucey:

Nautical version of backgammon.

Acknowledge:

To inform originator by special message that his message has been understood.

ACORN:

Unit of administrative personnel and material needed to establish and operate an advanced naval air base.

Acoustic Data Analysis Center (ADAC):

Computerized library of data on underwater sound characteristics maintained at Naval Research and Development Center, Carderock, Maryland.

Acoustic dispersion:

Sound speed changes caused by frequency changes.

Acoustic mine:

One detonated by sound. See *Mine*.

Acoustics:

The science of sound dealing with its propagation, transmission, and effects.

Acoustic scattering:

Dispersion of sound waves caused by irregular reflection, refraction, etc.

Acoustic torpedo:

Torpedo guided by sound. Active versions emit sounds and home on their echo, passive types home on sound emanations of target itself. See *Torpedo, Mark 37*.

Action Data Automation System:

British version of Naval Tactical Data System, NTDS.

Action port (starboard):

Command to gun and missile crews to indicate direction of enemy attack.

Action report:

Detailed report of combat with the enemy.

Activation:

The process, work and fitting out required to prepare a ship of the reserve fleet for transfer to the active fleet.

Active acoustic torpedo:

Torpedo which homes on reflected sound which it emits. See *Acoustic torpedo*.

Active duty:

Full-time service as distinct from inactive, retired, or reserve duty.

Active sonar:

Equipment which provides information on distant underwater objects by evaluation of reflections of its own sound emissions. See *Passive sonar*.

Activity:

Organizational unit of the Navy established under an officer-in-charge or a commanding officer.

Adapter:

Coupling or similar device that permits joining fittings of different size.

Addressee:

Activity or individual to whom a naval message is directed for action or information.

Adiabatic phenomena:

Changes in material state (volume or pressure) occurring without a gain or loss of heat.

Administration:

The management of all phases of naval operations not directly concerned with strategy or tactics.

Administrative Command:

Command without operational functions; only concerned with logistics, maintenance, etc.

Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO):

Contracting officer assigned to administer a contract at the contract administration office.

Administrative lead time:

Interval between start of a procurement action and the actual contracting or ordering.

4 Admiral

Admiral:

The highest rank in the Navy, equivalent to General. An officer of four-star rank. A Rear Admiral wears two stars, a Vice Admiral three. Fleet Admiral, a special rank bestowed by Congress on WW II naval leaders, had five stars; but no officers of this rank survive. Sometimes called "full Admiral" to distinguish from other admirals, inasmuch as the title of "Admiral" is loosely used to refer to all. A *Commodore* wears a single star and is equivalent to a Brigadier General, but this rank is not used in the Navy in peacetime. Commodores and Admirals are *Flag Officers* since they are authorized to fly a flag with stars to denote their rank.

Admiral's March:

Ceremonial music for flag officers and officials of equivalent rank. The number of ruffles and flourishes preceding the ceremonial tune denotes the number of stars authorized for the individual honored.

Admiralty law:

Body of law that deals with maritime cases.

Adrift:

Loose from towline or moorings; scattered about; not in proper stowage.

Advance:

Distance gained in the direction of the original course when turning a ship, measured from the point at which the rudder is put over to the point where the ship has changed heading 90°. See *Transfer*.

Advanced Development Objective (ADO):

Prepared by CNO outlining an experimental system of still untested military usefulness, technical feasibility and financial acceptability prior to preparation of a Specific Operational Requirement.

Advanced Sea Based Deterrent (ASBD):

CNM program to develop follow-on to the *POLARIS POSEIDON* missile system for use in the late 1970-80 era.

Advanced Surface Missile System (ASMS):

CNM development effort to produce a successor to the *TARTAR*, *TALOS* and *TERRIER* missiles for use in the 1970s.

Advance force:

Task force preceding the *Attack Force* in an amphibious assault, conducting preparatory minesweeping, bombardment, and reconnaissance.

Advance Material Requirements (AMR):

List of materials requisitioned in advance of actual shipbuilding construction, conversion or repair.

Advancement in rating:

Promotion of an enlisted man to a higher *Rate*.

Advection fog:

Fog formed when warm air passes over cold water.

AEOLUS:

Small meteorological sounding rocket.

Aerial mine:

See *Mine*.

AEROBEE:

Research Rocket.

AERO COMMANDER:

Model designation: U-4 or U-9; cognizant service: Air Force.

High-wing cantilever monoplane for administrative use. 2-crew, 4-passengers. Propeller-driven.

Aerographer:

Warrant officer advanced from *Aerographer's Mate*.

Aerographer's mate (AG):

Petty officer trained in weather forecasting. See Appendix B.

AEROSCAR:

Experimental rocket under study for the HYDRA program.

Affirmative:

Communications term meaning: Yes; permission granted; authorized; approved; recommended approve; etc.

Afloat:

Supported by the water. Also, at sea, as in "forces afloat."

Aft (after):

Pertaining to the stern or towards the stern of a ship or aircraft.

After body:

The section of a ship or boat hull abaft the center. The detachable portion of a torpedo, immediately abaft the energy storage compartment (air flask or battery compartment), which contains the propulsive and guidance mechanisms.

After bow (quarter) spring:

Mooring line leading aft from the bow (quarter) of a ship to the pier.

Afterburner (AB):

Part of a jet engine into which fuel is injected and ignited by exhaust, to increase thrust for short periods.

Afterburning:

The process of fuel injection and combustion in the exhaust jet.

Afterleech:

The downwind *Leech* of a *Fore-and-aft* sail. The edge opposite the *Luff*, or *Fore Leech*.

Aftermost:

Nearest the stern.

Afternoon effect:

Thermal gradient caused by sun's warming of the sea's surface. Effect is a possible reduction in sonar effectiveness.

Afternoon watch:

1200-1600 watch.

Agency:

Any independent portion of the Executive Branch of the government, including corporations wholly or partially owned which are government instrumentalities but excluding the District of Columbia. Loosely used, however, to designate subordinate organizational parts of the Defense Department and the military departments.

Aground:

Fast to the bottom. A ship runs aground or goes aground.

Ahead:

Forward of the bow.

Ahead-thrown weapon:

Missile projected by rocket power or fired from a launcher ahead of a ship, used against submarines.

Ahoy:

A distinct nautical hail. Supposedly once the dread war cry of the Vikings.

Aide:

Officer assigned as administrative or personal assistant to a flag officer or senior civilian official. An aide wears *Aiguillettes*.

Aids to navigation:

Buoys, markers, lights, bells, fog horns, radio and loran stations, any similar device to assist navigators. Most aids to navigation are in fact piloting aids, as distinguished from aids to navigation offshore such as Loran.

Aiguillette:

The badge of office of a personal aide to an officer entitled to an aide. The aides to the President of the United States wear their *aiguillettes* on the right shoulder. Aides to all other senior officers and dignitaries wear them on the left shoulder. Dress *aiguillettes* are extremely ornate—braided loops terminating in two devices resembling pencils and, in fact, so called. Service *aiguillettes* are merely simple loops pinned over the shoulder, but distinguish the rank of the officer aided: e.g., four loops for officers of four star rank and above, otherwise a number of loops equal to the number of his stars. Presidential aides wear *aiguillettes* of solid gold. Aides to other officers wear blue and gold braid if Navy, or red and gold if Marine Corps or Army. One theory of the origin of *aiguillettes* is that the aide-de-camp of a superior officer carried the rope and pegs for tethering his superior's horse, and generally, for convenience, carried them around his shoulder. Thus the rope and pegs became a distinguishing mark. A variant theory is that the pegs were indeed pencils intended to write the leader's orders.

Slang: *loafers loops, chicken guts*.

Aileron:

Movable control surface of an aircraft wing, used to impart rolling motion to the aircraft.

Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO):

An organization composed of Marine and Navy personnel specially qualified for shore control of naval gunfire and close air support.

Air bedding:

Aboard ship, to bring bedding topside for exposure to sun and fresh air.

Airborne early warning (AEW):

The extension of radar detection range by means of airborne search radar and relay equipment to provide early warning.

Airborne Radiation Thermometer (ART):

A device used to measure ocean surface temperature by radiation.

Air bunting:

Hoisting signal flags to dry them.

Air cock:

Valve placed at the highest point of a boiler to release entrapped air.

Air control center:

A space that is set aside for control of aircraft.

Air controller:

One who directs aircraft by means of radar, radio, electronic plot, etc.

Air controlman:

A petty officer who stands watches in air-control stations ashore and afloat.

Air control ship:

A ship detailed responsibility for air defense.

Air corridors:

Restricted air routes of travel specified for use by aircraft.

Aircraft (AC):

Vehicle designed to travel through the atmosphere supported by its own buoyancy or by lift developed by an airfoil.

Aircraft Accident Report (AAR):

Required on the occurrence of any type of aircraft accident.

Aircraft antisubmarine attack:

Classified by submarine position at time ordnance is launched: blind, submarine fully submerged not visible; early, submarine surfaced or diving with part exposed; late, submarine submerged from 10 to 20 minutes; tardy, submarine in dive less than 10 seconds; visible, submarine submerged or snorkeling, but visible.

Aircraft carrier:

Major offensive ship of the fleet whose chief weapon is its aircraft.
See Appendix A.

Aircraft designation system:

See Appendix C.

Aircraft division:

Two sections of aircraft of same type.

Aircraft Equipment Requirement Schedule (AERS):

Delivery schedule for government furnished equipment in the Master Configuration List.

Aircraft Maintenance Delayed for Parts (AMDP):

Code to indicate reason an aircraft is not operational (parts unavailable).

8 Aircraft

Aircraft Not Fully Equipped (ANFE)

Code used to indicate that restrictions are placed on aircraft for lack of equipment.

Aircraft Out-of-Commission for Parts (AOCP):

Code used to indicate reason for aircraft not being operational.

Aircraft section:

Basic tactical unit of 2 aircraft of same type.

Aircraft squadron:

Two or more divisions of aircraft.

Aircraft system:

Any aircraft, including its airframe, propulsion machinery, armament, electrical, electronic, and mechanical equipment. See *System*.

Aircrew Survival Equipmentman:

Petty officer who tests and repairs parachutes, survival gear, and flight clothing.

Airdale:

Jocular term for a naval aviator.

Air defense:

All measures designed to nullify or reduce effectiveness of hostile aircraft or guided missiles after they are airborne.

Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ):

Airspace above specified area in which ready recognition and control of aircraft are required.

Air defense warning conditions:

Degree of air raid probability: air defense warning yellow—attack probable; air defense warning red—attack imminent or is taking place; air defense warning white—attack is improbable.

Air ejector:

Device using the suction created by steam flowing through a nozzle to remove air and other noncondensable gases from a condenser or other part of the return-feed system. The purpose is to enable the condenser to maintain a better vacuum, thus promoting efficiency of the steam cycle, and to reduce corrosion by reducing oxygen content.

Airfoil:

Surface designed to produce lift from the air through which it passes. See *Foil*.

Airframe:

Generic term including all parts of an airplane except power plant, armament, and electronic gear.

Air group:

The aircraft of an ASW carrier, made up of squadrons. See *Air Wing*.

Air intelligence (AI):

Activity formerly known as Air Combat Intelligence. Deals with intelligence aspects of naval air operations.

Air lock:

A double door giving access to and preserving air pressure in a fireroom or similar space under pressure.

Airman (AN):

An enlisted man in paygrade E-3 who performs aviation duties. See Appendix B.

Air officer:

Officer responsible for aviation matters in an aircraft carrier. Heads the Air Department.

Air operations (air plot):

Air operations control center aboard a carrier.

Air Pilots:

Printed guides similar to *Coast Pilots* but of interest mainly to aviators, published by the U.S. Navy.

Air port:

A round window in a ship's side, fitted with a lens frame and a metal cover called a *Battle Port*. *Air Scoops*, screens and ventilating *Deadlights* are an airport's removable fixtures. Commonly called "porthole." See *Port*.

Air Refueling

Process of refueling aircraft in the air.

Air register:

A device in the casing of a boiler for regulating the amount of air for combustion.

Air scoop:

A sheet metal device fitted into an *Air port* for catching a breeze.

Air Search Attack Team (ASAT):

Aircraft ASW team consisting of a search aircraft and one or more attack aircraft.

Air Search Attack Unit (ASAU):

Tactical designation given one or more ASW aircraft assigned to locate and destroy submarines.

Air speed:

Speed of aircraft through and relative to the air, distinct from *Ground speed*. Indicated air speed is an uncorrected reading of the air-speed indicator. Calibrated air speed is the indicated air speed corrected for instrument errors. True air speed is corrected for altitude and temperature.

Air stabilizer:

A parachute-type tail stabilizer for aerial torpedoes to slow them down before impact with the water.

Air Strike:

Fighter attack aircraft assigned an offensive mission against specific objectives. It may consist of several tactical organizations under a single command in the air.

Air support:

See *Close Air Support*.

Air surface zone:

Restricted ocean area for antisubmarine operations.

Air Systems Command:

Functional command replacing Bureau of Naval Weapons in 1966 Navy Department reorganization. Component of *Naval Material Command*.

Air-to-Surface Missile (ASM):

Former designation of missile launched from an aircraft against a surface target. See Appendix D for new designations.

Air-to-Underwater Missile (AUM):

Former designation of missile launched from aircraft against underwater targets. See Appendix D for new designations.

Air Traffic Control Radar Beacon System (AIMS):

Chief of Naval Material project in cooperation with civilian agencies to permit positive identification of every plane airborne over the United States at any time.

Air Transportable Sonar (ATS):

Sonar Equipment designed for aircraft use.

Air Transport Group:

A task organization of transport aircraft units organized to transport amphibious troops to the objective area, or for logistic support.

Air wing:

The aircraft of an attack carrier, made up of squadrons.

See *Air group*.

ALBACORE:

Experimental submarine developed in connection with high-speed hull design.

ALBATROSS:

Model designation: HU-16; cognizant services: Navy, Coast Guard, and Air Force. High-wing, all-metal amphibious aircraft with fixed-wing floats. For search and rescue missions. 4-crew, 10-passengers. Propeller-driven.

Aldis lamp:

A portable signal light used in ships and aircraft.

Alert, dusk or dawn:

Special precautions, normally all hands to *Battle stations*, at time when attack is most likely prior to first light and at sunset.

ALFA:

RUR-4A rocket-boasted depth charge formerly known as Weapon Able. Also phonetic word for letter A, formerly *Able*.

Algae:

A group of marine plants ranging in size from single cell varieties to the large kelps.

Alidade:

A telescopic device used with a gyro repeater for taking bearings.

Align:

Electronics: to adjust two or more resonant circuits. Gunnery, to adjust guns and the fire control equipment that controls them to the same plane of reference, and to line up all aiming devices and bearing transmitters.

All hands:

All those aboard ship (except, under certain circumstances, those on watch). Name of a call on *Boatswain's Pipe*.

All hands parade:

A designated assembly place for all hands on board ship. Used for such events as change of command ceremony.

Allied Administrative Publication (AAP):

Group name used to identify administrative publications written for use by the U.S. and its allies. Normally followed by a specific identification number.

All night in:

A full night's sleep with no watch.

Allotment:

Portion of a man's pay or of an appropriation or fund, regularly assigned to a specific account.

Allowance:

Authorized personnel on a peacetime level, reduced from the wartime *Complement*, based on peacetime operations, habitability, budgetary considerations, and upkeep requirements. See *Complement*, also *Manning level*.

Allowance list:

A listing of repair parts, equipage, and consumable supplies authorized and required to be on board a ship or in a naval activity.

Alluvium:

Silt, sand, gravel or other material deposited by running water.

All-weather air stations:

Designated air station to which single pilot aircraft may be cleared under IFR.

Almanac (nautical and air):

Naval Observatory publications providing astronomical data needed for navigation.

Aloft:

Up high, as on a mast, or, "strong winds aloft."

Alongside:

Near the side of the ship.

Altars:

Steps in the side of a *Graving dock*.

Alteration:

Any change in equipment or machinery which involves a change in design, materials, number, location, or relationship of the component parts of an assembly.

Alternating light:

Navigational light showing color variations. May be flashing, group flashing, occulting, or fixed.

Altimeter:

An *Aneroid barometer* which measures in feet, yards, or meters an aircraft's elevation above a given reference plane, such as sea level. Must constantly be corrected for barometric pressure on the ground.

Altitude:

The height of an aircraft above a reference point. True altitude is height above sea level, corrected for temperature. Absolute altitude is height above ground.

ALUMINAUT:

Aluminum submarine developed privately for deep ocean research.

ALUSNA:

U.S. Naval Attache, normally followed by name of city, or nation in which stationed--AL in communication serves only to differentiate from USNA (U.S. Naval Academy.) See *Naval Attache*.

ALVIN:

Deep-submergence vehicle for oceanographic research.

Ambient noise:

Sound produced in water by sources external to the measuring equipment.

American British Canadian Standardization Agreement (ABC):

Joint agreement by these nations for the standardization of military equipment to make it useable in material of each nation.

Amidships:

In or toward the middle of a ship.

Ammo:

Slang: *Ammunition*.

Ammunition:

Shells, powder, missiles, rockets, etc., designed for firing from guns or launchers.

Amphibian:

An airplane designed to operate from land or water.

Amphibious:

Capable of operating on land and sea.

Amphibious assault ship (LPH):

Ship designed to transport and land troops, equipments, and supplies by means of embarked helicopters.

Amphibious Construction Battalion (ACB):

Naval unit organized to provide and operate ship-to-shore fuel systems, pontoon causeways, transfer barges and tugs, and to provide salvage and beach improvement capability to a Naval Beach group.

Amphibious control group:

Personnel, ships and craft designated to control the water-borne ship-to-shore movement in an amphibious operation.