

50 Nautical Terms in General Use

By Mark Nichol

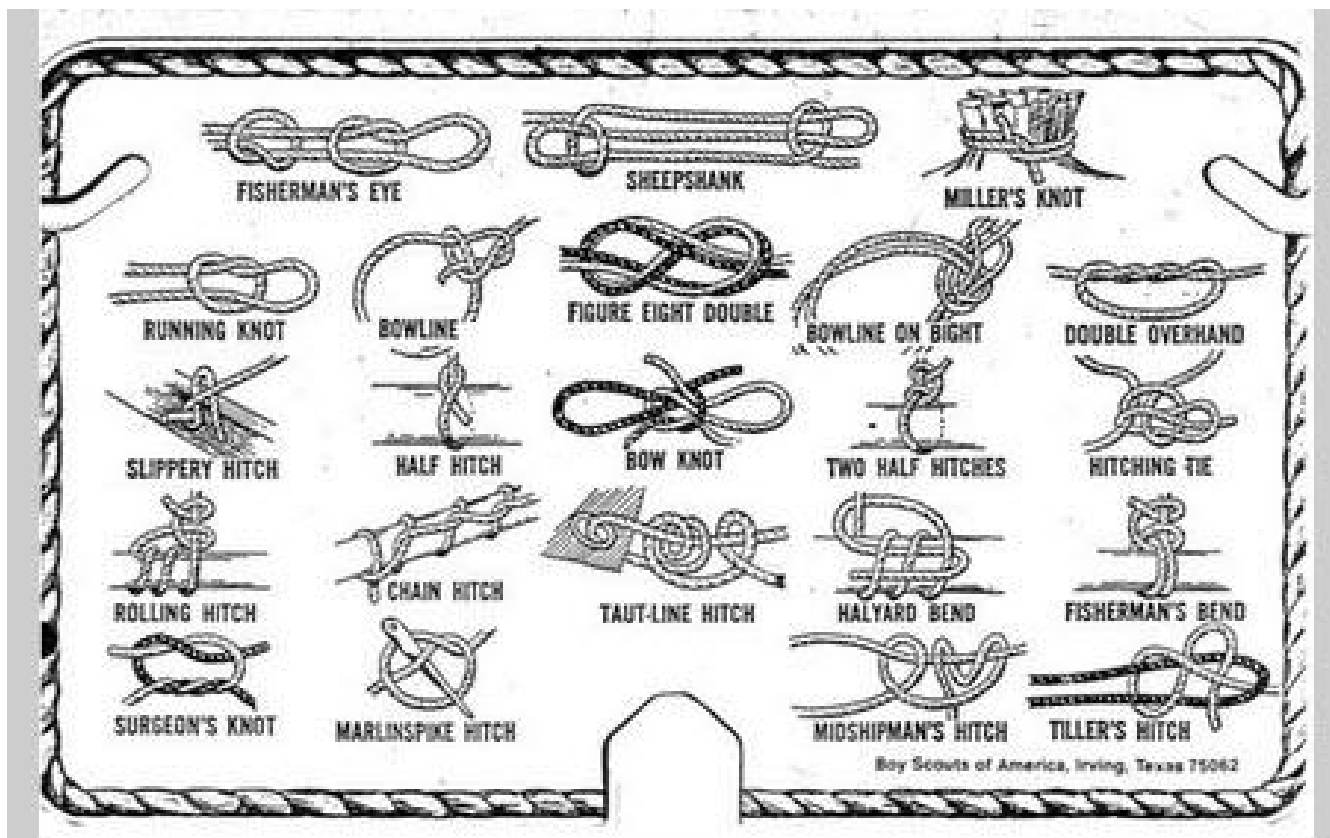
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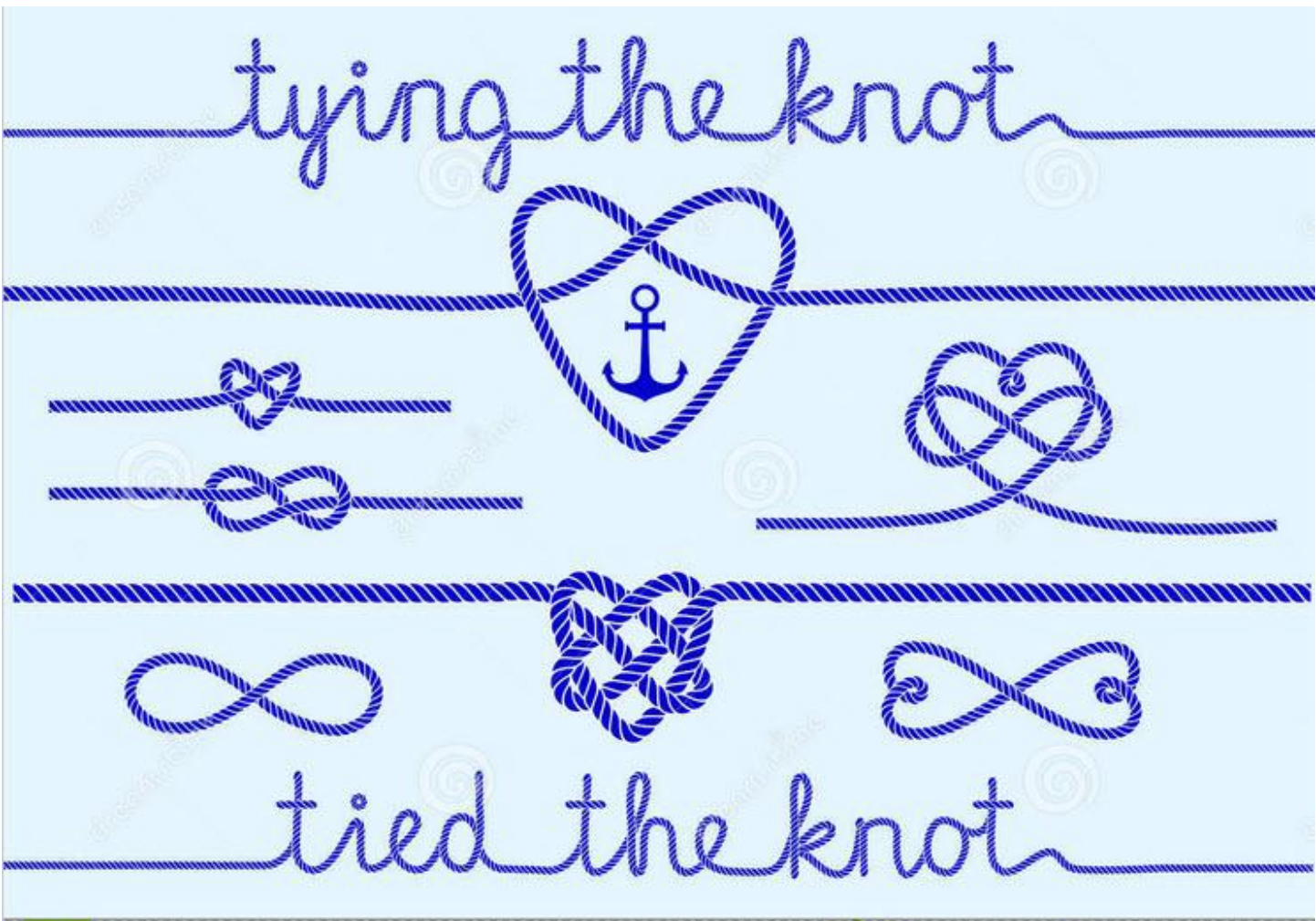
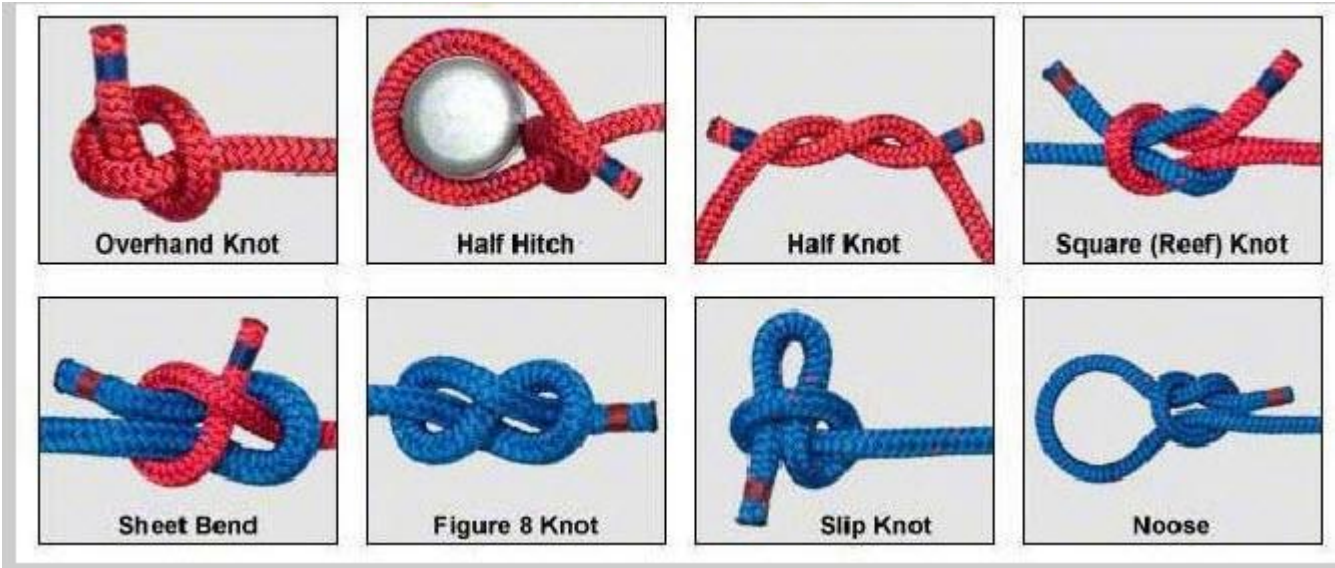
The vocabulary of sailing has enriched the English language with the development, by analogy, of new senses for nautical terms. Here are fifty such words with their original meanings and their landlubber connotations.

1. **Aboard:** on a vessel (assisting or in sympathy with)
2. **Aboveboard:** above the deck (out in the open, honest)
3. **Adrift:** not tied or secured (acting or living without purpose)
4. **Aground:** resting on the seafloor on shore (halted by circumstances)
5. **Anchor:** a heavy object that holds a vessel in place (a person or thing that figuratively keeps another person or thing steady)
6. **Awash:** water level with or slightly covering the deck (overwhelmed)
7. **Bail:** to throw out seawater or rainwater that has collected in a vessel (to help, or to abandon)
8. **Ballast:** stabilizing weights placed in the hull of a vessel (something that steadies or weighs down)
9. **Beachcomber:** a sailor without a berth or a shipboard assignment (a person living on or near a beach or the shore or one who searches such areas for salvage, or both)
10. **Bearing:** one's position (posture or deportment)
11. **Becalm:** to come to a stop because of a lack of wind (to halt progress)
12. **Berth:** a sailor's assignment, or a sailor's bunk (a position or placement, in a location or in rankings)
13. **Bilge:** the lowest part of a hull (outdated or useless comments or ideas)
14. **Capsize:** to overturn (to ruin or interfere)
15. **Chart:** a navigational map, or to map a course (a display of graphical information, or to set a course)
16. **Cockpit:** a steering or berthing compartment (the pilot's compartment in an airplane, or a place for cockfighting or location notorious for violence)
17. **Course:** the direction a ship is sailing (a procedure or a way of acting)
18. **Current:** a movement of water (the prevailing mood or tendency)
19. **Heading:** the direction a ship is sailing (one's course)
20. **Headway:** progress or rate of progress in sailing (progress in general)
21. **Helm:** steering apparatus, or to operate such equipment (a position of leadership, or to lead)
22. **Jury rig:** to rig makeshift equipment (to make a quick fix using available materials)
23. **Keel:** the backbone of a vessel, running along the center of the hull (balance, as when someone is on an even keel)
24. **Keelhaul:** to drag a sailor underneath the ship along the hull as punishment (to punish severely)
25. **Leeway:** sideways movement of a vessel because of current or wind (flexibility)
26. **Log:** originally, a length of wood attached to a line and tossed overboard to measure speed, then a device with the same function; also, a record of operation (an accounting of any activity or progress)
27. **Lookout:** a sailor standing watch (someone keeping watch, or the position from which the person does so)
28. **Manhole:** an opening in to a compartment (a hole providing access underground or into a structure)
29. **Mooring:** securing with anchors or lines, or a place where mooring occurs (a stabilizing influence)
30. **Navigation:** the operation of a vessel (direction for traveling or movement through a virtual area, as on a website)
31. **Overhaul:** to ready equipment for use (to rebuild or repair)
32. **Pilot:** a steersman, or to steer a vessel (an operator of an aircraft or spacecraft, or to operate such a craft or to direct an operation or procedure, or a business or organization)
33. **Quarantine:** temporary sequestration of a vessel because of the possibility of spreading disease, or the location

- of the sequestration (enforced isolation, especially because of contagion, or the place of isolation)
34. **Quarters:** assigned living areas or workstations on a vessel, or an assembly of all crew members (lodging)
 35. **Rudder:** an immersed blade of wood, metal, or plastic attached to a vessel and turned remotely to change its direction (a quiding force)
 36. **Salvage:** to rescue or save a ship and/or its cargo, or the compensation for doing so; also, the property salvaged (saving something from being destroyed or discarded, or what is saved)
 37. **Scuttle:** to sink a vessel by cutting a hole in the hull (to ruin something by abandonment or sabotage)
 38. **Scuttlebutt:** a cask for holding drinking water and, by extension, the idle talk exchanged while drinking from it (gossip)
 39. **Seaworthy:** in condition to be operated (solid or valid)
 40. **Ship:** to send cargo or passengers by sea (to transport or distribute)
 41. **Shorthanded:** lacking enough crew members (not having enough people to perform a task)
 42. **Sounding:** a measurement of the depth of water (seeking an opinion or a statement of intention)
 43. **Stow:** to put away and, by extension, to keep one's opinion to oneself (to arrange, load, or store)
 44. **Swamped:** submerged (overwhelmed)
 45. **Tack:** to change a vessel's direction, or the new direction (to shift one's viewpoint, as in "take a new tack")
 46. **Tide:** the change of surface level of a body of water because of gravitational fluctuations (a fluctuating or rising phenomenon)
 47. **Under way:** in motion (in progress)
 48. **Wake:** the visible track of a vessel through water (aftermath)
 49. **Waterlogged:** filled or soaked with water but afloat (full of or saturated with water)
 50. **Watertight:** capable of preventing water from entering (solid, flawless)

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