
Definitions

Source text

Royal Canadian Navy Trade Manual: Signalman Trade Group One (First edition – 1960)

See Chapter 1: Introduction.

Audience Profile

The intended audience for these definitions is new members of the Navy. As a complement to their basic training, these sailors have been ordered to learn specialized communications skills for sending and receiving messages as required by the Royal Canadian Navy. The training includes Morse code, semaphore, flagging, two-way radio and other methods of communication. Successful completion of the training, including an understanding of the definitions provided, will earn the sailor the role of Signalman.

Definitions

- **Bridge** is a raised platform or compartment located amidships where the crew directs the vessel according to the instructions of the Captain.
- **Discharged** is a military human resources protocol that occurs when an individual leaves the service.
- **Flags** communicate visually between naval ships using brightly coloured rectangles or triangles of fabric each with a pre-determined meaning.
- **Naval stores** provide permanent and consumable supplies needed for a sailor to complete assigned tasks.
- **Rank** is a hierarchical set of nineteen designations that indicate the relative seniority of members of the Navy from Ordinary Seaman to Admiral.
- **Salt spray** is a corrosive moisture that rises from the surface of the ocean as a mist and has the potential to rust exposed metal on ships.
- **Signal halyards** are ropes used to raise or lower one or more communication flags.

Expanded Definition

Flags are used to communicate between ships within line-of-sight. They are made of brightly coloured, sturdy fabric. To work effectively, each Signalmen is required to know the location of all flags, even in the dark. The sailor must maintain the flags in their care with prompt repairs to tears, frays and stains. Replacements must be ordered from naval stores if the damage is beyond repair. Both identifying and signaling flags must be maintained and ready for use.

All Royal Canadian Navy ships fly two *identifying flags*, in keeping with the British naval tradition started in the 15th century. The Naval Jack flies on the bow (front) of the ship to identify nationality. Simultaneously, the Naval Ensign flies on the stern (rear) to identify the branch of military service.

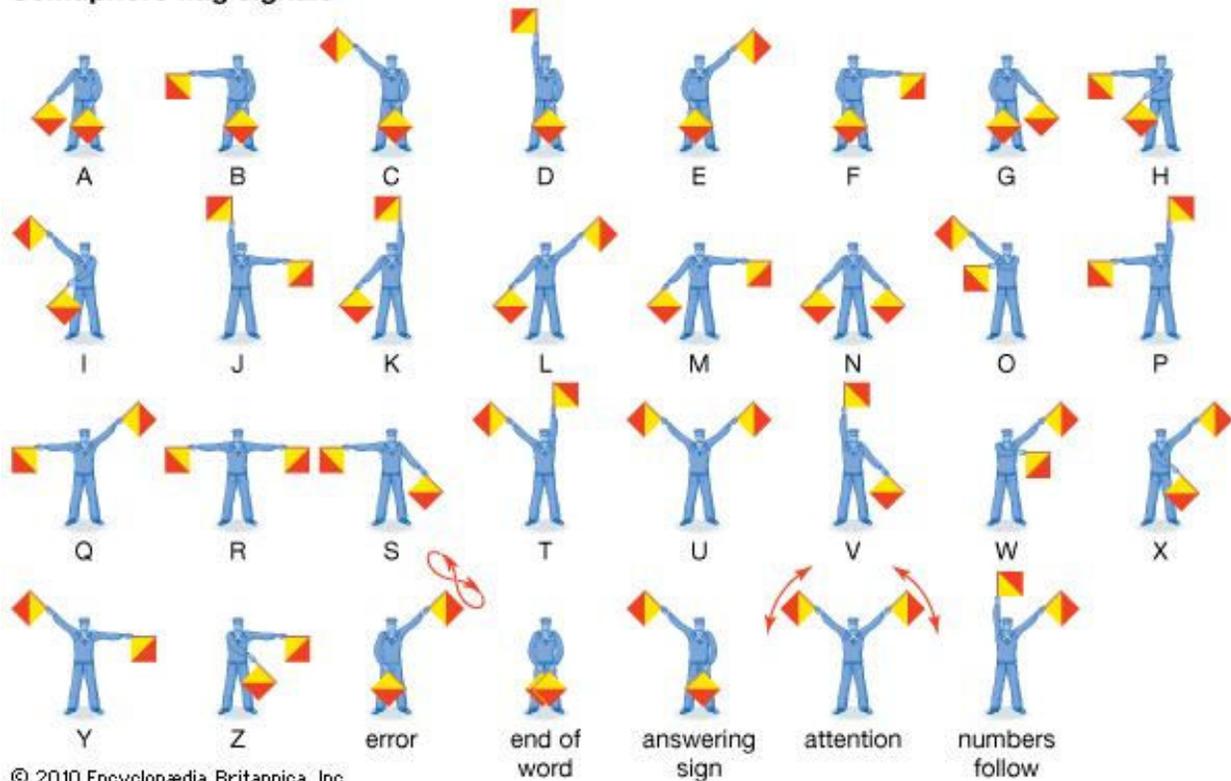
Signaling flags allow sailors to send and receive customized messages. Messages can be published with signal flags raised on signal halyards or with handheld semaphore flags. Each signal flag has a single meaning and many also have an international meaning as well as an alphabetical or numerical value. (See Figure 1.) Semaphore flags are held by the Signalmen in specific positions to communicate alphabetical or numerical values. (See Figure 2.) Both signal flags and semaphore flags can be used to spell out a message.

Figure 1

FLAGS AND PENNANTS SINGLE & INTERNATIONAL MEANINGS			
A  Divers/Friendly underwater demolition personnel down. Intn'l - Diver down. Keep well clear at slow speed.	K  Personnel working aloft. Intn'l - I wish to communicate with you.	T  Time indicator. Intn'l - Keep clear of me I am engaged in pair trawling.	3  Boat signal. (Steer away)
B  Weapons practice. Fuelling or transferring explosives. Intn'l - Taking in, discharging or carrying dangerous goods.	L  Rad haz/Hero warning. Intn'l - You should stop your vessel instantly.	U  Anchoring, Mooring & Weighing. Intn'l - You are running into danger.	4  ASW Exercises.
C  Affirmative. Intn'l - Yes. (Affirmative)	M  Medical/Dental Guard Duty ship. Disregard my movements. Intn'l - My vessel is stopped.	V  Streaming/Recovering towed sonic devices - not including minesweeping equipment. Intn'l - I require assistance.	5  Breakdown.
D  Degaussing. Intn'l - Keep clear. I am manoeuvring with difficulty.	N  Your movements not understood. Not keeping Visual watch. Intn'l - No (Negative)	W  Flag Hoist information addressee. Intn'l - I require medical assistance.	6  Act at your discretion.
E  - Intn'l - I am altering my course to Starboard.	O  Man overboard. Intn'l - Man overboard.	X  Evolution or Exercise completed. X-ray tack (Signal). Carry out for Exercise the meaning of the signal. Intn'l - Stop carrying out your intentions & watch for my signals.	7  AAW Action Table.
F  Flight operations. Intn'l - I am disabled. Communicate with me.	P  General recall. Position indicator. Intn'l - Recall. All persons to repair onboard. Vessel about to sail.	Y  Acknowledge. OTC's Location. Visual Communication Duty Ship. Intn'l - I am dragging my anchor.	8  Boat signal. (Steer towards)
G  Guide. Intn'l - I require a pilot.	Q  Boat recall - own boats or those addressed. Intn'l - Vessel is healthy. Request free pratique.	Z  - Intn'l - I require a tug.	9  Torpedo Action Table.
H  Helicopter operations. Intn'l - I have a pilot onboard.	R  Going alongside for Replenishing/ Transfer/Fuelling at sea. Ready Duty ship. MCM Operations. Intn'l -	1st  Absentee Indicator - Flag Officer or Sqn Commander.	PENNANT ONE 
I  Going alongside in Port/Anchor. Intn'l - Altering my course to Port.	S  Flag Hoist Drill signal. Intn'l - My engines are going full speed astern.	2nd  Absentee Indicator - Chief of Staff.	PENNANT TWO 
J  Semaphore message. Intn'l - I am on fire. Dangerous cargo, keep well clear.		3rd  Absentee Indicator - Commanding Officer/X. O.	PENNANT THREE 
		4th  Absentee Indicator - Civil or Military Official.	PENNANT FOUR 
		1  ASW Action Table	PENNANT FIVE 
		2  Surface Action Table	PENNANT SIX 
			PENNANT SEVEN 
			PENNANT EIGHT 
			PENNANT NINE 
			PENNANT ZERO 
			CODE or ANSWER  Acknowledgement. Fractions. Use INTERCO.
			CORPEN  Stop the turn.
			DESIG  Plain Text. Proceeding to Station/Berth. Daylight Signalling Lantern. Acknowledge DSL*.
			EMERGENCY  Signal(s) flying are to be obeyed as soon as understood.
			FORM - ATION  Refuse Boat is required.
			INT  Signals not understood.
			NEGATIVE  Negative. Flag Hoist Exempt Addressees.
			PREPARATIVE  Replenishing (Receiving Vessel). Colours & Sunset. Preparative.
			PORT  Indefinite turn to Port. Out of Routine.
			SCREEN  -
			SPEED  -
			STAR - BOARD  Indefinite turn to Starboard SCOPA.
			STATION  Take proper or assigned station.
			TURN  Water barge is required.
			FLOTILLA 
			SQUADRON 
			DIVISION 
			SUB DIVISION

Figure 2

Semaphore flag signals



References

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- <http://www.navyjack.info/history.html>
- Image: flags and pennants
http://www.hkshipsupplies.com.hk/image/data/product/others/flags/SIGNAL_FLAG_FU_LL.jpg
- Image: semaphore positions <http://media-1.web.britannica.com/eb-media/41/133741-004-BEE9F230.jpg>