

## PASSING ORDERS

### Piping and the Boatswain's Call

Piping is a naval method of passing orders, especially routine orders, and every seaman should know how to use a "boatswain's call" and how to pipe an order. Orders thus passed are known as "pipes."

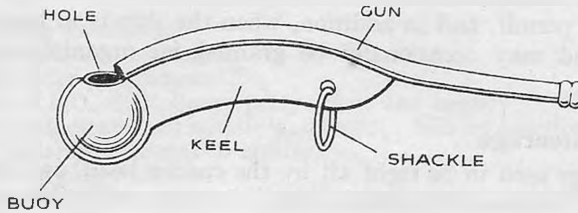
The use of the boatswain's call in English ships can be traced back with certainty to the days of the Crusades, A.D. 1248. In former days it was worn in English ships and fleets as an honoured badge of rank, probably because it had always been used for passing orders. As long ago as 1485 it was worn as the badge of office of the Lord High Admiral of England, and by his successors in office up to 1562. Thereafter it was used throughout the English fleets for passing all orders, and since about 1671 it has always been known as the boatswain's call. Nowadays, the boatswain's call and chain are the badge of office of the Chief Boatswain's Mate, quarter-masters and boatswain's mates.

The expression "to pipe" means, generally, to make the sound of the boatswain's call and to give the spoken order which may qualify it. Many pipes, however, are orders in themselves and do not require any verbal addition afterwards.

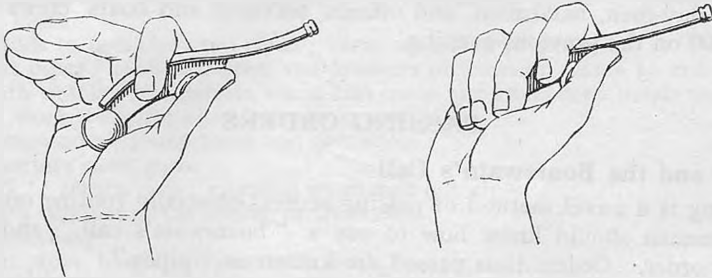
A boatswain's call (Fig. 66 (i)), can be tuned by scraping away and enlarging the wind edge of the hole in the "buoy," until it will sound if the mouth of the "gun" is held directly into a moderate wind.

The boatswain's call is held between the index finger and thumb, the latter being on or near the "shackle" (Fig. 66 (ii)). The side of the buoy rests against the palm of the hand, and the fingers close over the gun and buoy hole in such a position as to be able to throttle the exit of air from the buoy to the desired amount. Care must be taken that the fingers do not touch the edge of the hole in the buoy, or of the hole in the end of the gun, otherwise all sound will be completely choked.

A great variety of notes and tones may be obtained with the boatswain's call by manipulating the fingers and varying the breath blown into the mouth of the gun, but certain notes and tones are only used in piping in the Royal Navy, and these, together with the method of producing them, are described below.



(i) The boatswain's call.



(ii) How to hold the boatswain's call

Fig. 66.

There are two main notes, the "low" and the "high," and there are three tones; these tones are the "plain," marked on the chart (Fig. 67) with a steady line, the "warble," marked with a wavy line, and the "trill," marked with a cross-hatched line.

The plain low note is produced by blowing steadily into the mouth of the gun with the hole of the buoy unobstructed by the fingers. The plain high note is produced by throttling the exit of air from the hole of the buoy; this is done by closing the fingers around the buoy, taking care not to touch the edges of the hole or the end of the gun. Intermediate notes can be obtained by throttling to a greater or lesser degree.

The warble is produced by blowing in a series of jerks, which results in a warble similar to that of a canary.

The trill is produced by vibrating the tongue while blowing, as in rolling the letter "R."

The chart shows the various "pipes" used in the Royal Navy today. The figures at the top of each diagram represent seconds of time. The nature, continuity and tone of the notes are indicated by the various lines, and the degree of their slope indicates the speed of ascent or descent of the notes.

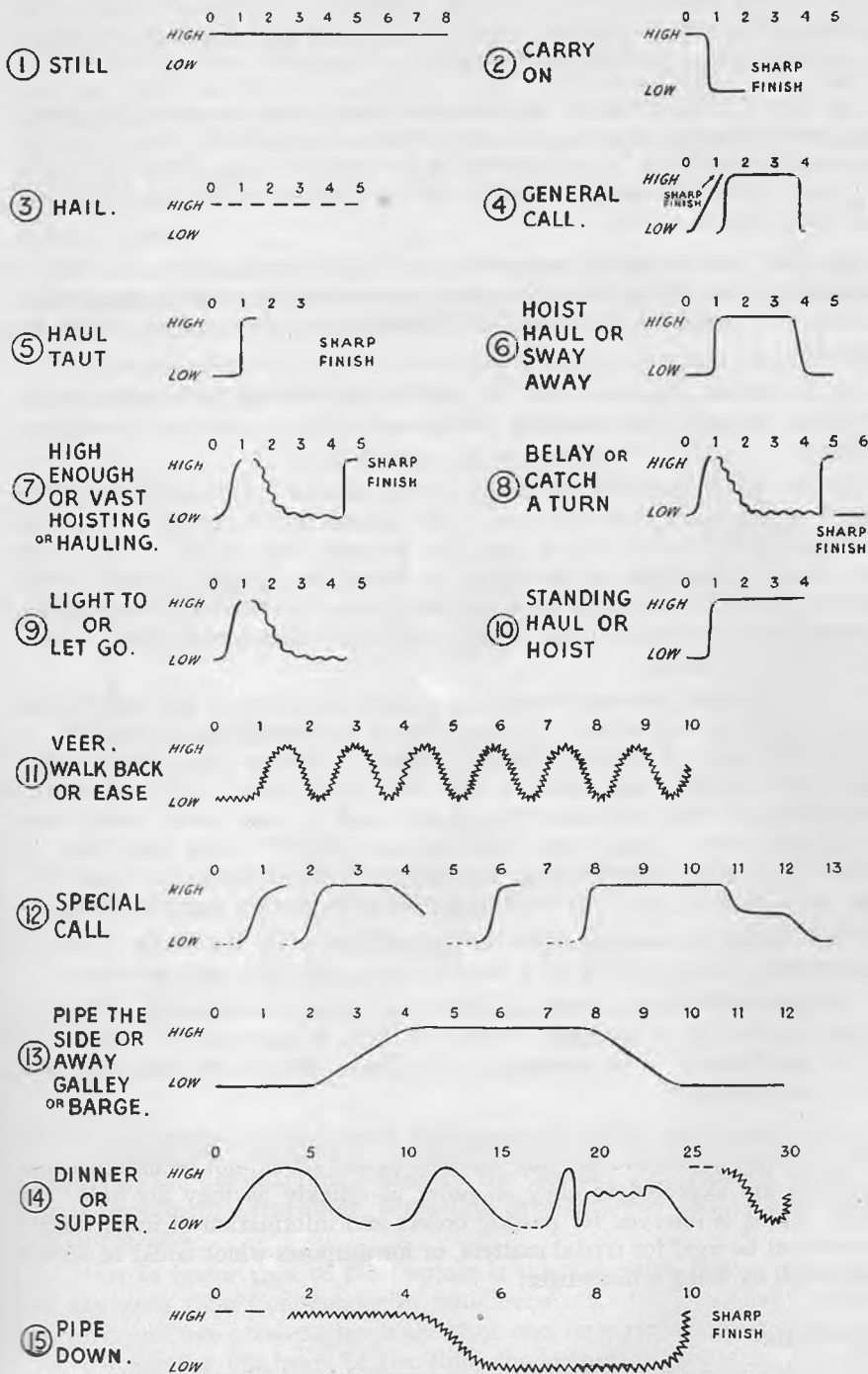


Fig. 67.—Pliping chart

## PIPES

(1) Except for Nos. 3, 4, 12 and 13, the pipes are an order in themselves and require no verbal addition; *e.g.*, it is incorrect and superfluous to follow the pipe for dinner by the words "Hands to dinner."

(2) The "Still" is used to call all hands to attention as a mark of respect, or to order silence on any occasion, or to stop all work in the vicinity in order to prevent an accident. It is followed at the required interval by the "Carry on", and, in the last example, usually not until verbal orders have been given to remedy what was wrong.

(3) The "Hail" was formerly used to call all boatswain's mates, but is used nowadays to attract the attention of a particular person in an unobtrusive manner, the coxswain of a boat or a member of the gangway staff, for example.

(4) Particular attention must be paid to the hoisting and hauling pipes. These can be used when manning purchases or falls, or working the capstan by hand.

(5) No. 4 pipe precedes any routine order such as "Up spirits" or "Out pipes," or any short order such as "Able Seaman Smith lay aft"; it draws attention to the order. No. 4 pipe also precedes the calling away of any boat's crew, except that of the barge for which No. 13 pipe is used. With the exception of the barge the crew and not the boat is referred to when piping, examples of the relevant pipes being "Awa-a-a-y first motor boat's crew," and "Awa-a-a-y barge."

(6) No. 12 pipe precedes the calling of the hands and is followed by the order "Lash up and stow." In practice it is customary considerably to amplify this pipe, a typical example being: "Heave out! Heave out! Heave out! Show a leg! Show a leg! Lash and carry! Lash and carry! Rise and shine! Rise and shine! Heave out, lash up and stow! Heave out, lash up and stow! Heave out, lash up and stow!", and this may be followed by a short description of any adverse weather such as: "Gale and rain," or "Ice and snow," to warn those below to put on suitable clothing.

When calling the watch at night the pipe is followed by the words "A-a-a-ll the (requisite) watch," given in a low but clear voice and repeated once.

This pipe also precedes some out-of-routine order or information of general interest to the ship's company, which in turn is preceded by the words "D'ye hear there!"; for example, "D'ye hear there! The last mail will close at noon today."

(7) A routine pipe and its accompanying order is not repeated; the words "at once" or "at the double" are superfluous and should not be used because all seamen are expected to obey an order as quickly as they are able. In general, piping is reserved for passing orders and information of importance; it should not be used for trivial matters, or for purposes which could be served equally well by using a messenger.