

## **Sayings about Sailors and the Sea (Part 2)**

### **(Story words: captain, battle)**

Sometimes ships had to get out of a storm and make an unexpected stop at a port to wait for a storm to pass. As you might expect, sailors would not complain about these ports for minor reasons. The phrase, “any port in a storm,” is used to express the idea that one is grateful to find any good spot or plan to escape from a big problem or crisis.

Speaking of storms and problems, sailors knew that after a big storm the air is often clear and fine. People use the phrase, “clearing the air,” to mean that sometimes having a frank talk or even an argument has the benefit of getting rid of stress later. A person might say, “My brother and I cleared the air about the unfinished yard work.”

The leader of the ship is the captain. A captain who demands that all chores are done and the ship stays “shipshape” is said to run a “tight ship.” Someone might say, “I spent the whole weekend sorting through the junk

in the basement and now everything feels shipshape.” Or, “It’s a good thing we have Beth directing the play because she runs a tight ship.”

The big steering wheel that steers a boat or ship is called the helm. You will sometimes hear people say that someone is “at the helm” when they lead a big project or effort.

Sometimes ships were used for battle. To be prepared for a skirmish at sea, sailors would first “clear the decks” so that nothing would get in the way during the battle. People now use the phrase “clear the decks” to describe the idea of getting chores done in order to be prepared to start a big project: “Jane spent the afternoon clearing the decks by sorting her mail and paying bills.”