



TENDING THE SIDE

A U.S. NAVY TRADITION

“HOIST AWAY”

The tradition of sideboys harkens back to the age of sail, when guests were hoisted aboard in a system of pulleys attached to a board known as the boatswain’s chair.

Naval Ceremonies, Customs and Traditions, Fifth Edition, by Mack and Connell

When visitors were hoisted aboard the boatswain’s mate coordinated the procedure calling the order to “hoist away” or “avast heaving,” on his call (pipe).

Naval History and Heritage Command

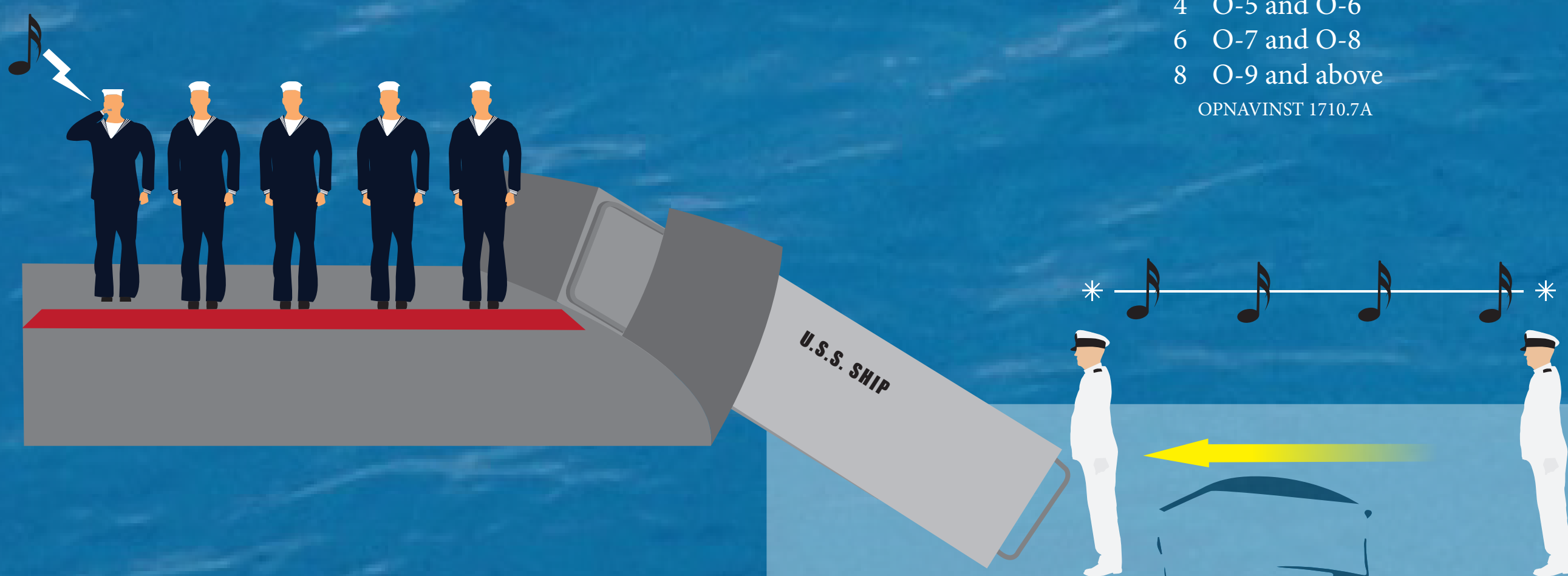


RANK/ORDER

People of higher rank or privilege tended to eat better and were therefore heavier. As a result, more sideboys were needed to get them aboard. The tradition carries on to this day.

| SIDEBOYS | RANK |
|----------|---------------|
| 2 | O-4 and below |
| 4 | O-5 and O-6 |
| 6 | O-7 and O-8 |
| 8 | O-9 and above |

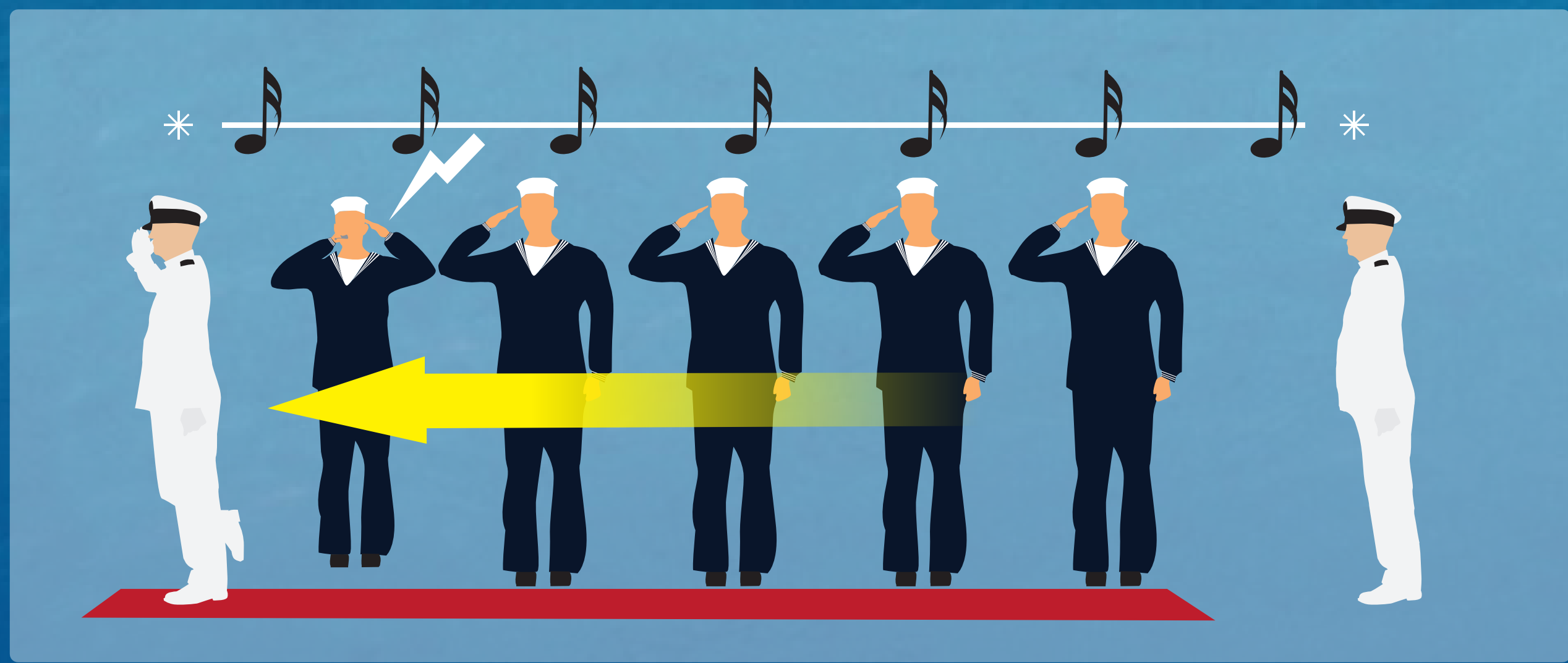
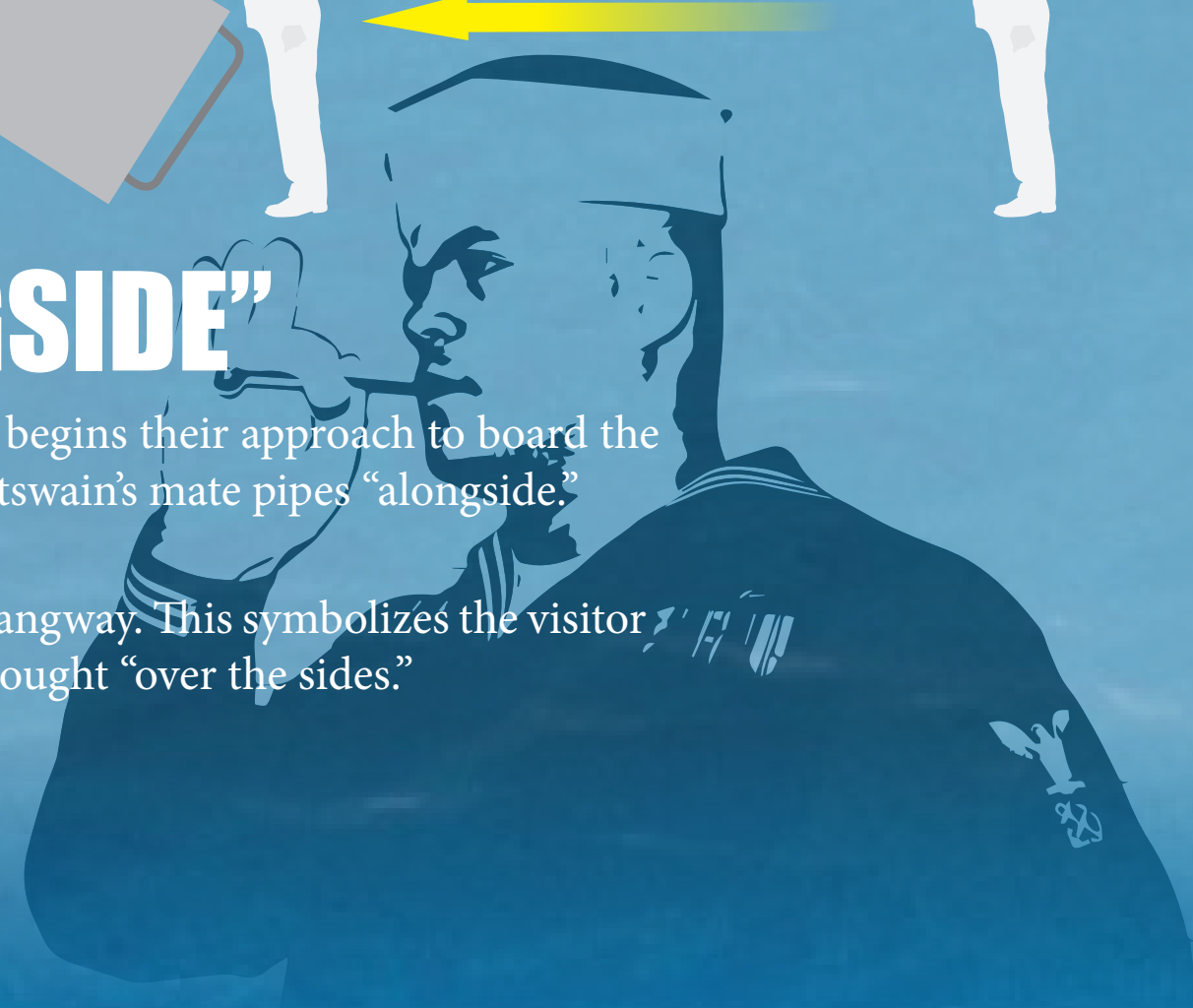
OPNAVINST 1710.7A



“ALONGSIDE”

When the visitor reaches a predetermined point, and begins their approach to board the ship, sideboys are called to attention, and the boatswain’s mate pipes “alongside.”

The call ends when the visitor reaches the foot of the gangway. This symbolizes the visitor is alongside the ship and is ready to be brought “over the sides.”



“OVER THE SIDE”

When the visitor reaches a designated point on the brow, the boatswain’s mate initiates the command for him to come aboard.

The sideboys and all others on the quarterdeck then salute as the boatswain’s mate pipes “over the side.” When the visitor departs the process is repeated in reverse.

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RAINBOW SIDEBOYS

When dignitaries arrive aboard ship via aircraft, the custom is carried out by Sailors wearing their various colored flight deck jerseys. In this event, sideboys are known as “rainbow sideboys.”

“A Guide to Color-coded Jerseys on an Aircraft Carrier.”



BOATSWAIN’S MATE

The boatswain’s mate is positioned behind the outboard sideboy in the forward row.



The boatswain’s mate is permitted to salute left-handed if he uses his right hand to hold the call (pipe).

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