

A Sailor ain't a Sailor

By Tom Lewis. Bunting Tossers is Royal Navy slang for the junior officers who set and hoist signal flags. Although dating from the period of signalling by flags, it has survived as a general term for naval signallers. Black Tot Day (31 July 1970) was the last day on which the Royal Navy issued sailors with a daily rum ration. In 1655 the daily rum ration was a half pint per man.

My father often told me when I was just a lad,
A sailor's life was very hard the food was always bad.
But now I've joined the Navy aboard a man of war.
And now I find a sailor ain't a sailor anymore.

Chorus

*Don't haul on the rope, don't climb up the mast.
If you see a sailing ship it might be your last.
Just get your civvies ready for another run ashore.
A sailor ain't a sailor ain't a sailor anymore.*

O'Keely of the mess, he says we've got it soft.
It wasn't like this in his day when he was up aloft.
We like our bunks and sleeping bags, but what's a hammock for?
A swinging on the deck or a lying on the floor?

They gave us an Aldis lamp so we could do it right,
They gave us a radio to signal day and night.
We know our codes and ciphers but what's a semaphore.
A bunting tosser doesn't toss the bunting anymore.

They gave us an engine, the first went up and down,
With some more technology it soon went round and round.
We know of steam and diesel but what's a mainsail for.
A stoker ain't a stoker with a shovel any more.

Two cans of beer a day and that's your bleeding lot.
They gave us an extra one since they stopped the tot.
So put on your civvy clothes and we'll find a pub ashore.
A sailor's still a sailor, just like he was before.