

Bob Kaye *Californian* Climbing Training Guide

Safety First

Self

You must feel 100 % well to climb

Prevent dehydration-surreptitiously degrades physical and mental performance

Sun protection-sun block, sunglasses, and a hat if you desire. All equipment must be secured with a lanyard.

Clear pockets of all unsecured objects. Remove watches and personal jewelry.

Generally, one hand for the ship, one hand for your work. Always have 3 points of support

Equipment

Harness-no frayed stitching, belt tight, thigh supports adjusted properly

Lanyard-cover intact, looped through central loops of harness, carabiner function smooth

Shoes/laces-need proper design, laces need to be tight, laces can get caught in rigging

Recommend having knife and marline spike with lanyards available when climbing

Ship

Braces-belayed securely before climbing aloft

Position of yards-square or braced no more than 2 points

Rigging-check for deterioration, loose seine twine, chaffing

Beware of sharp points- safety wires, cotter pins

Crew

Communication- listen for commands from captain and mate, stepping on/off, let fall calls,

Movement- avoid sudden or jerky movements, look out for each other

General

Learn the names for parts of a yard (yard, yardarm, jackstay, footrope, Flemish horse, and stirrups.) Learn the names for the parts of a square sail (foot, leech, clew, reefs, earring, robands, lizards, boltropes.) Make sure you know the running rigging used to control the square sails (braces, sheets, clews, reef lines, and bunts.)

Unlike on the *Star of India*, there are no dedicated points to clip onto with your lanyard.

There are two jackstays on the top yard. Normally one clips into the aft one.

For those going up to the t'gallant yard, consider purchasing a small diameter runner-also known as a sling or loop-to make it easier to disconnect your carabiner from the yard once the sail is furled. Securely connect to carabiner or lanyard. The sail covers the jackstay and makes access difficult.

Keep your center of gravity as close to the centerline of the ship when climbing. Beware that the upper shrouds have a tendency to twist, even on the windward side.

Look down to where you are placing your feet before applying weight. You need to avoid standing on sail, gaskets, and lifts.

Be aware that footropes on the top yard are really close to the shrouds. Stay alert to climbers on the shrouds so you do not kick someone in the head.

Check to make sure that fife rail crew has hauled the reefs and clews to their limits before you start furling the topsail. Call down to the deck to have adjustments made if they are not in proper position. Learn how to make these calls.

Going aloft

Commanded by mate.

Crew assigned higher sails climb first; crew destined to be outboard climb before those who will be inboard.

Make sure you are clear above before going across futtock shrouds.

Cross over points: 1) at cross trees, 2) at cap of foremast.

Putting squares in their gear

Mate will command "Topmen lay aloft and put the squares in their gear"

Only requires two topmen per yard; one on port and one on starboard

Position yourself and clip in

Cast off the gaskets from sail; gently push sail forward as you work

Save second outboard gasket from the mast for last. Support sail from below with your hand or with the gasket draped beneath the sail and hanging forward of the sail.

Highest, upwind topman issues the command "On the fore let fall". This is partly for guest enjoyment so speak loudly. Release the sail/gasket and let the sail fall.

Make sure both ends of each gasket are behind and clear of the t'gallant sheet and topsail reeflines that run beneath or behind the top yard or clew line on t'gallant yard

Make up the gaskets in the usual fashion*

Last topman on the yard on each side checks to make sure no running rigging is trapped by gaskets before they climb off the yard

Don't forget to unclip before you climb off the footrope

Lay to the deck and make sure the mate knows you are back on deck

Furling Squares

Mate will issue command "Topmen lay aloft and furl"

Topmen prepare to furl the squares by making adjustments to the rigging at the fife rail before they climb. Topsail: Make sure the bunts are tight then add about 18 inches of slack and re-belay. T'gallant: Make sure bunts are tight and put in about 18 inches of slack. Take the t'gallant sheets off their belaying pins and leave them slack.

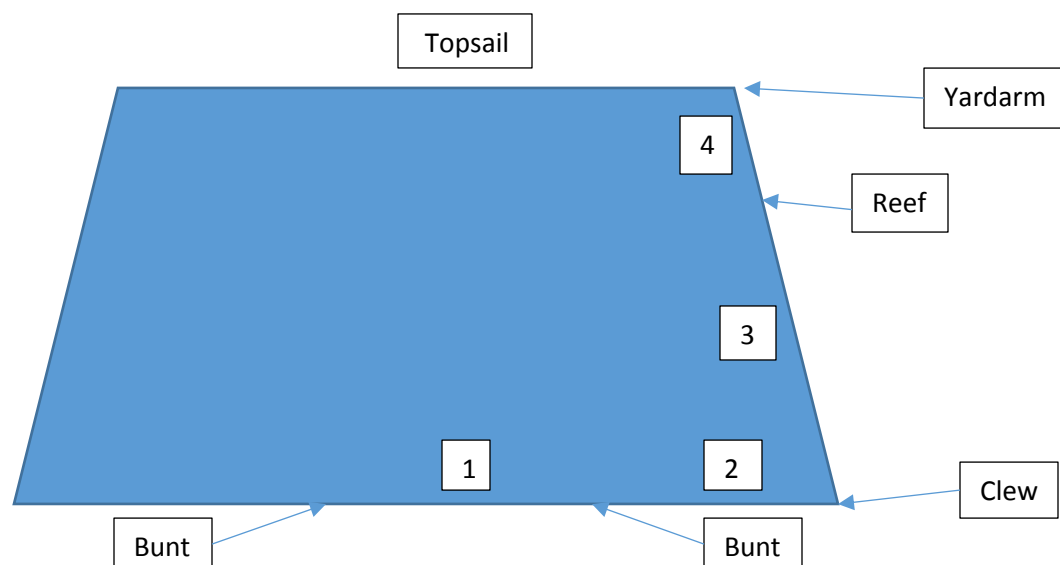
Climb to assigned positions. Prepare gaskets for securing the sails. Pass long limb of gasket from aft forward between bottom of yard and reef lines and t'gallant sheets on the top yard or t'gallant clew lines on the t'gallant yard.

Start Furling:

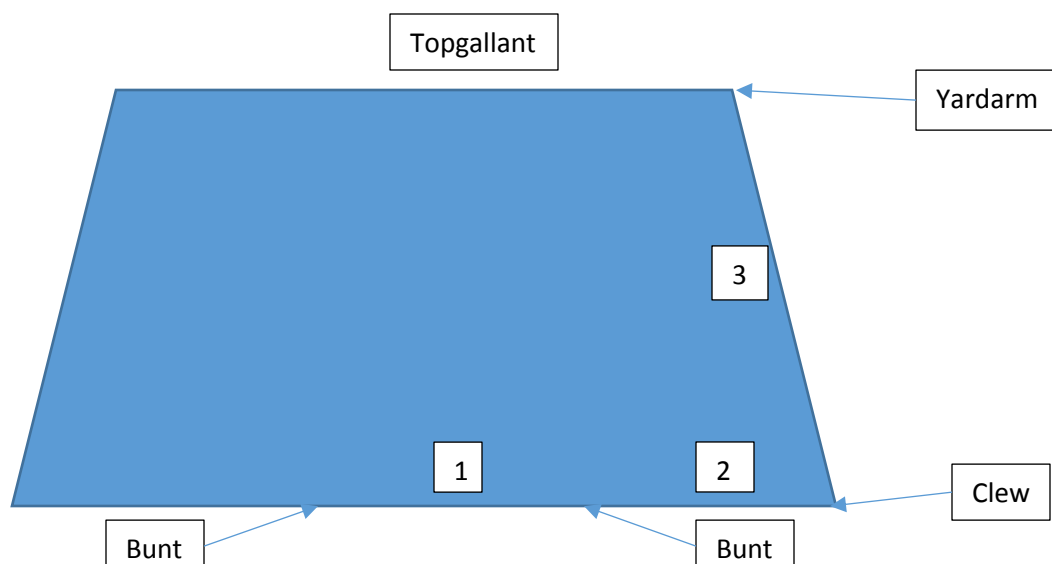
The initial part of the furling task is performed the same on both yards. The portion of the sail between the bunts is furled first. Topmen will need to position themselves depending on the sail being furled and the number of Topmen available. In an ideal world there would be 4 topmen for the topsail and 2 topmen for the t'gallant. For the topsail, one crewman would stand on the footrope close to the mast and the second would stand just outboard of the buntline. On the t'gallant, both top men position themselves just outboard of the bunts.

The first step is to bring the foot bolt rope up to the top of the yard and trap it with you belly. Folds of sail are then brought up progressively to the top of the yard working from the foot to the head of the sail. Tuck the reef points into the folds when you reach these short lines sewn into the sail (topsail only.) Continue until you reach the sun cover (easily identified by its associated transverse seam.) Smoothly tuck the folds of sail into the pouch formed between the yard and the sun cover. Tuck in the edge of the sun cover. Then with all top men on the yard working together, roll the furled portion of the sail up on top of the yard. Secure with the inner gaskets. Often these are made temporarily and then revised after the outer portion of the sail is furled.

Continue furling: Here the technique of furling the two squares on the *Californian* diverge. The clews and sheets on the topsail are drawn upward and inward into the mast below the crosstrees when the topsail is doused. This is necessary because of the large size of the topsail and the disproportion of the length of the foot (much longer) compared to the head of the sail. On the t'gallant, hauling on the clew lines raises the clews (and sheets) more vertically, directly to the yardarm.



Topsail: There are four segments of sail to consider: Bunt to bunt (1), bunt to clew (2), clew to reef grommet (3), and reef grommet (cringle) to yardarm (4). Crew move outboard on the yard. The outer Topman must be able to reach the yardarm and reef point cringle. The inner Topman should be just outboard of the bunt. Find the boltrope for the foot at the attachment point for the bunt (buntline hitch through grommet marks this point.) Dealing with the bunt to bunt segment was addressed above in the first step. Next, the inner Topman should find the foot boltrope at the bunt cringle. Bring the boltrope up on top of the yard. Push outboard until the foot doubles back on itself to the clew and this segment becomes taut. Keep this loop on top of the yard by trapping it with your abdomen. The outer topman identifies the small segment of leech boltrope from reef cringle to yardarm and brings it up on top of the yard and traps it in place. At the other side of the reef cringle identify the segment from reef to clew. Bring the boltrope in the leech up to the top of the yard and make a loop or s-turn until the segment is taut. The two topmen then work together to pull folds of sail up to the yard. Constantly push sail material outboard and make the folds as smooth as possible. Both crew members should arrive at the sun cover at the same time. Tuck all the folds into the pouch between the yard and sun cover. Make sure you capture all the lines at the reef points. It is not seaman-like to leave Irish pendants behind. Coordinate rolling the outer portion of sail onto the top of the yard. Finish by applying and tying the remaining gaskets. Do not trap the t'gallant sheet or topsail reef line.



T'gallant: The t'gallant does not have a reef so there are only 3 segments to consider when furling the sail. Segment 1 is addressed like the topsail and is described above. Often the third segment is also addressed at this point by bringing the leech boltrope up to the yard, finding its center and pulling this point inboard as a fold that one traps under the first segment. The innermost gasket on each side is used to secure this part of the sail.

The outer portion of the sail is furled in smooth folds. The bulk of each half of the sail (segments 2 and 3) is packed into the pouch between the yard and sun cover and is rolled up on top of the yard. The remaining gaskets are wrapped around the sail and tied. Do no trap the clewline beneath the yard.

If the crew on the top yard need help lay to that yard after you finish your work on the t'gallant. Otherwise, lay to the deck. Last one down reports "topmen on deck" to the mate.

Notice: The information contained within is not sanctioned by the Maritime Museum of San Diego. It is meant to assist with training of new crewmembers but is my creation only. It may be used by others as an unofficial reference source. Robert A. Kaye, September 2018.