

# Plank owner

A "**plank owner**" (or **plankowner**) is an individual who was a member of the crew of a ship when that ship was placed in commission. Originally, this term applied only to crew members that were present at the ship's first commissioning. Today, however, plank owner is often applied to members of newly commissioned units, new military bases and recommissioning crews as well.

## In U.S. military

"Plank owner" is not an official United States Navy term, and has consequently been variously defined by different units. The origin of the term is the implication that a crew member was around when the ship was being built and commissioned, and therefore has bragging rights to the "ownership" of one of the planks in the main deck.

Historically, a plank owner in the United States Navy and United States Coast Guard, or his widow, could petition the Naval Historical Center's Curator Branch for a piece of the deck when the ship was decommissioned.

Sailors who are plank owners at their current command often have the word "PLANKOWNER" embroidered on the back of their uniform ball cap to denote this designation. A plaque is placed aboard the ship with the crew names. When in port, the arrival and departure of a plank owner is announced on the 1MC with a bell-ring, as <clang, clang> "Plank owner, arriving".