A quick guide to military acronyms

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Ever since my husband joined the military, his vocabulary has changed. Acronyms started appearing out of nowhere and words began to take on new meanings. Naturally, he assumed that I would understand what he was talking about. Sometimes, I feel like Marlin from Finding Nemo when he exclaims: "It's like he's trying to speak to me, I know it. Look, you're really cute, but I can't understand what you're saying," after Squirt tells him how to leave the East Australian Current.

I know he doesn't always mean to confuse me—although there are times he specifically uses a new term just to irritate me—it just happens. The new jargon is insidious and my husband unconsciously slips it into the conversation. But, whenever I'm feeling particularly frustrated, I remind myself that he too had to learn the lingo.

Once, when he was in his Basic Military Officer Qualification, an instructor rambled off an acronym-filled sentence to him and a bunch of other recruits. Then when they asked the instructor for clarification, he simply remarked "Yes, the military does like their TLAs." When the recruits' blank looks didn't go away, the instructor realized that they wouldn't know what that meant either, and explained all of the acronyms he just used. For the record a TLA is a "three-letter acronym." Like I said, they don't mean to do it, but when you are surrounded by people who do understand it's easy to assume that everyone else will too. However, since that's not true, I've decided to compile a list of terms my husband throws out at me.

Not all of them are difficult to understand. I do know what a deck is, and that port is left and starboard is right. I can figure out that the deck-head is the ceiling. But then there is the heads. For those of you who don't know, it means the bathroom. While I am sure there is some reasonable explanation as to why the heads means the bathroom, it seems like some people felt as though they were too good to call it the bathroom, the restroom, the powder room, the john, or any of the terms we don't use in polite company.

In addition to the previously mentioned terms, here are some other ones I've encountered:

For: Forward or Front
Aft: After or Back
ULO: University Liaison Officer
F&E: Furniture and Effects
1IC: First in Command
2IC: Second in Command
BOR: Base Orderly Room
CO: Commanding Officer
HHT: House Hunting Trip
MFRC: Military Family Resource Centre
PSP: Personnel Support Programs
DND: Department of National Defence
CAF: Canadian Armed Forces
VTC: Video Teleconferencing
DC School: Damage Control School
OOD: Officer of the Day
OOW: Officer of the Watch
Recce: Reconnaissance
MARS: Maritime Surface and Sub-Surface [officer], also an affectionate title for the head of the MARS department.
AMARS: The assistant to the head of the MARS department.
HOD: Head of Department
GIB: Guy in Back (In an armoured group, the GIB sits on the back of armoured reconnaissance vehicles allowing him/her to quickly hop off and check around corners.)
Bladed: Getting someone in trouble unnecessarily.

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