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# **MECHANICAL TRAINING INSTRUCTION IN THE SEA CADET CORPS**

by

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Probably not many engineer officers have had occasion to mix with the Sea Cadet Corps. Thus it may mean little to them to know that a scheme of mechanical training has recently been introduced in the Corps, in the development of which their voluntary services would always be appreciated.

The object of the following notes is to explain the principal features of the Sea Cadet Corps, and show how engineer officers who are willing to do so can help the Corps with its mechanical training.

## **Aim of the Sea Cadet Corps**

The Sea Cadet Corps is a voluntary youth movement. It deals exclusively with boys. Its objects are to create good citizens through the medium of sea training, and to encourage those boys who wish to make a career in the Navy. Boys may join as sea cadets at the age of 14 years and can remain in the Corps until their 18th birthday. The knowledge gained in the Sea Cadet Corps naturally encourages the majority of its boys to enter, eventually, either the Royal Navy or the Merchant Navy though there is no obligation to follow a sea career if a boy elects otherwise. Recently a Commanding Officer of a Royal Naval establishment training S.S. and C.S. entries reported that on the average 20% of his trainees were ex-cadets. It was usual for sea cadets to prove themselves better recruits than boys who have not had the benefit of Sea Cadet Corps experience.

## **Strength of the Corps**

At present there are over 28,000 sea cadets in more than 400 'open' units. These numbers are on the increase. There are also over 1,000 sea cadets in 50 'closed' units or naval sections of the combined cadet force.



FIG. 1.—SEA CADETS' INSTRUCTION IN ENGINEERING DRAWING

### **Open Units and Closed Units**

Each 'open' unit is the ward of its town or district, being formed initially and partly financed by a local committee of prominent citizens. The Navy League provides further financial backing by grants or loans, which are of particular assistance in fitting out adequate headquarters. Closed units are restricted to the members of certain schools being mostly naval sections of the combined cadet force. The ensuing remarks refer to open units unless expressly endorsed otherwise.

### **The Navy League**

The Navy League deserves all credit as the creator and fairy godmother of the Sea Cadet Corps. The League is a voluntary, patriotic, non-party association which has stood since 1895 as a sentinel to resist all attempts to reduce the Royal Navy below the safety limit for the British Commonwealth of Nations.

### **Current Organization of the Corps**

The Board of Admiralty through the Admiral Commanding Reserves controls the training of the Sea Cadet Corps, whilst the Navy League assists in the administration of the Corps and provides social and welfare services, including recreation and sport. The Sea Cadet Council decides detailed policy within this framework. It consists of representatives of the Admiralty, Navy League, Merchant Navy and Sea Cadet Unit Committees. The Headquarters of the Sea Cadet Corps are at 37/41 Gracechurch Street, London, E.C.3 (near the Monument). The individual units are organized in eight areas, each of which has an Area Officer who is responsible to Admiral Commanding Reserves, through the Corps Headquarters, for the training and efficiency of the units in his area. Capitation grants for each efficient cadet within authorized establishment are paid to units by the Admiralty.

### **Attraction of the Sea Cadet Corps**

The Corps' romantic appeal to boys of an island race cannot fail so long as it continues to provide for three main incentives. The first of these is a boy's ambition to join the Royal Navy or Merchant Navy ; the second is the desire to become intimate with boats, ships, and the sea, and the third is search of companionship and adventure. A powerful auxiliary incentive in these post-war days is that sea cadets who are liable for National Service are given preferential entry into the Navy, provided they have passed for either leading or petty officer rate. The Navy's National Service quota is small, however, at present.

### **Consequences of Sea Cadet Corps Membership**

The making and developing of character is a complex matter. The smallest thing may prove the main factor. A boy without "character" may lack it only because of his background. The Sea Cadet Corps can provide him with new experiences which may bring about the development desired.

Perhaps he may have a little responsibility for the first time, or perhaps he learns something in which he is vitally interested, or for which he has special aptitude. Perhaps he meets a pal—a real pal—for the first time ; perhaps he is inspired by example, by ceremony, or by a success. Perhaps he is really encouraged.

The training includes such subjects as citizenship, hygiene and health, recreation, physical training, social activity, and the ever-present encouragement of education. These subjects cannot really be divorced from each other ; all pull together to bring about the development of character, fitness, cleanliness, and pride of accomplishment and unit. Sports, games, and welfare play their supporting part. They are all part and parcel of the training of a sea cadet ship's company.

### **Scope of Training**

The training syllabus is straightforward and practical ; seamanship and boat-work, signals, buzzer and W/T, squad and rifle drill, physical training, shooting, swimming, sea history and talks on current affairs, are the principal subjects forming the syllabus, while every unit is encouraged to take part in all forms of sport which culminate annually in national tournaments in football, boxing, swimming, shooting, and in area boat-pulling and athletic competitions. More recently, mechanical training has been added as a voluntary specialist course which units may organize for their members with a mechanical bent.

The whole of the training is based on a progressive syllabus, periodical advancement examinations for able, leading, and petty officer rate being held at regular intervals in each unit. Provided that a cadet who joins his unit at the age of 14 years is able to attend his unit parades regularly and has attained the necessary standard at each examination, he should be able to become a cadet petty officer at the age of about 16½ years. In addition, cadets may obtain the non-substantive rate of signalman, telegraphist, seaman-gunner or, in the future, mechanic, as a result of special courses undertaken within the unit or in certain naval training establishments. Bugler, good shooting, and P. and R.T. badges may also be awarded as a result of tests or examinations.

### **Local Headquarters and Parades**

The whole scheme of Sea Cadet Unit training and social activities is centred in its local headquarters or ship. Where units are situated in seaside town



FIG. 3.—THEORETICAL INSTRUCTION IN ELECTRICITY

Finally, the M.T.E. Chatham squeezes in periodical I.C.E. courses of two weeks' duration for 25 sea cadets at a time, utilizing its excellent Diesel School instructional equipment. H.M.S. *Ausonia* nearby provides congenial and convenient accommodation for the purpose. These Diesel School courses have proved popular, and the results achieved show what a potential ability is available among the sea cadets.

#### **Current enthusiasm for Mechanical Training Instruction**

By mid-1948, 85 different units involving 1,090 sea cadets stated they had made a start with mechanical training in spite of shortages of equipment; 70 further units wish to do so. The largest mechanical training class is reported at Whitehaven with 50 trainees, and four units in the London area (Beckenham, Bermondsey, Deptford and Dulwich) have over 20 mechanical training enthusiasts each.

#### **Naval Aviation Instruction**

In 1949 it is planned to start naval aviation instruction in sea cadet units as an essential part of the general training syllabus. Instruction in units can naturally deal in broad outline only with this subject, and it will be supplemented by courses at selected R.N. air stations. R.N. air stations at Yeovilton and Arbroath give popular air engineering courses during the weekly summer camping periods.

#### **Empire Units**

The Sea Cadet Corps flourishes in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Southern Rhodesia. The Navy League periodically arranges an interchange of units between Empire and Home units.

#### **Sea Scouts**

A junior youth organization with very similar objects to the Sea Cadet Corps is the Sea Scouts. At present there are 86 recognized troops containing 4,000 boys. The capitation grant is 3s. 6d. and the Admiralty arranges for their annual inspection.

### **Sea Cadets (Closed Units)**

No article on the Sea Cadet Movement would be complete without some reference to the Sea Cadet (Closed Units). These units were started during the last war with the object of providing officers for the Fleet, and since the war have been carried on with the object of ensuring that not all this material is swallowed up by the other two Services. They are administered for all purposes by the Admiral Commanding Reserves and in this respect differ from the open units in that they receive no financial or other assistance from the Navy League.

The total number of cadets in these units does not at present exceed 1,100 but it is hoped that this will increase shortly, when the four types of Service cadets in schools are amalgamated into a Combined Cadet Force. There are over 25 units at present including such well-known schools as Harrow, Marlborough, Sherborne, Haileybury, Radley, Dulwich, and Glenalmond.

One of the main reasons for schools not being able to combine closely with the open units of the Sea Cadet Corps is that schools carry out their pre-entry training in the afternoons, whereas the open units meet in the evenings due to a large number of their cadets being at work during the day.

The training syllabi of the two types of Sea Cadet Units are similar but differ from the point of view that open units teach citizenship whereas the school cadets are expected to receive this training at the school.

In other respects the two types are very much the same, and co-operation between them is encouraged.

All pre-entry training units in schools keeping boys up to the age of 17 and over have been invited to amalgamate their Corps into a Combined Cadet Force in which all cadets will be basically training to the standard of Army Certificate "A" Part I, and thereafter will join the specialist section of the Service of their choice. It is not, however, compulsory for schools to join this new Force, so that there will in all probability still remain certain schools with Sea Cadet Corps Units.

### **Encouraging the Mechanical Bent**

It has frequently been observed that in the United States boys seem to know all about automobiles and aeroplanes at an earlier age than their British opposite numbers. However true that generalization may be, in the start of mechanical training in the Sea Cadet Corps lies a means of attracting some of the best youths to the naval engineering profession. "Si jeunesse le savait, si vieillesse le prouvait." It is as well to start young. So anyone with the necessary engineering qualifications, who feels like lending a hand enlivening mechanical training in the Sea Cadet Corps is invited to approach the local unit, or if more travelling with the area organization is preferred, then volunteer direct to Sea Cadet Headquarters, 37/41, Gracechurch Street, London, E.C.3. A rejuvenating experience is assured either way !