



# **USNSCC PARENT'S HANDBOOK**

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## Welcome Aboard

This booklet is provided as a guide for parents during their child's involvement with the U.S. Naval Sea Cadets or Navy League Cadet program. Most parents pick up and read this booklet because their son or daughter has joined or is interested in joining either the Navy League Cadet or the U.S. Naval Sea Cadets program.

Over the next few months, your family will be introduced to the regulations and customs of the Naval Sea Cadet Corps. We strive to instill a sense of personal honor, patriotism, courage, self-reliance, and confidence in an anti-drug, anti-alcohol, anti-tobacco, and anti-gang environment.

Many things about the Naval Sea Cadet Corps may be new, especially for parents who have had no previous experience in the naval services. It is not unusual for parents of a new Cadet to feel "lost". If so, remember while this is all new to you, we have an open door policy with all parents. If after reading this booklet, you have additional questions or concerns, talk to your son or daughter's Commanding Officer.

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### Benefits of Membership

The U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps is a nationwide organization dedicated to helping American youth realize personal success and achievement through a nautically oriented training program. There are over 300 Sea Cadet units in the United States, with units in nearly every state as well as Puerto Rico and Guam.

Through Sea Cadet leadership, your son or daughter will learn skills in basic seamanship and its naval adaptations, while also learning the value of patriotism, courage, self-reliance, teamwork, and accountability.

Membership in the Sea Cadets allows teenagers to sample military life with no obligation to join any branch of the armed forces. Should cadets decide to enlist in the Navy or Coast Guard, their training may allow them entry at an advanced pay grade. Many Sea Cadets receive scholarships and appointments to military academies. But membership in the NSCC does not imply any guarantees to these scholarships or selection to a service academy.

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## **Eligibility Requirements**

The Naval Sea Cadet Corps affords equal opportunity for participation to all young Americans regardless of race, color, religion or gender. To qualify for the U.S. Naval Sea Cadets, your son or daughter must be between 13 and 18 years of age. Youth age 11-12 can apply for the Navy League Cadet program. In both cases, your child must be a citizen of the United States. Applicants must successfully pass a physical examination very similar to that required of a regular Navy enlistee. They must be unmarried and a full-time student in good academic standing and of good moral character.

All prospective cadets must have parent consent in addition to being interested in the program and must be prepared to attend drills regularly. Cadets need to be ready to have fun and be willing to learn new things.

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## **Costs**

While there is a standard enrollment fee for membership in Sea Cadet and the League Cadets, the actual cost of participation could vary by unit and individual cadet depending upon the activities and training planned. Each U.S. Naval Sea Cadet unit has an annual operating budget. The budget may be larger or smaller depending upon the size of the unit, fund raising activities and donations by unit sponsors. To find out more about the specific costs for your local unit, contact the Commanding Officer.

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## **Parental Support**

Parents need to keep in mind that if their son or daughter decides to join either the U.S. Naval Sea Cadets or Navy League Cadets, they have to some degree joined too. The U.S. Naval Sea Cadets is a non-profit, volunteer organization that relies heavily on parents to support the efforts of volunteer officers and instructors working with your children.

- Encourage your child to be respectful of officers and adult volunteers.
- Praise your child for his or her accomplishments.
- Remind your child to listen and obey directions.
- Be punctual in dropping off and picking up your child from functions.

Parents who are interested in volunteering with unit activities and responsibilities are encouraged to read the section on Volunteer Opportunities on page 10.

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## Surfing the Web

Parents who are new to the program will find both the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps web site (Adventure of a Lifetime <http://www.seacadets.org> ) and your unit web site helpful in answering frequently asked questions. A parent can get a good idea for what the total program is about and click on links of interest to sea cadets including links to individual unit web sites.

The information contained on each unit's web site is unique to that unit. The more information parents have access to, the better feel parents have for the program. Most parents do not want surprises and the web site is a good place to go if you need information and cannot reach a unit officer or instructor. Parents can find information about meeting times and locations, upcoming events, awards and recognition within the unit, and often photographs of cadets participating in unit events.

## Our Navy Heritage

Your cadet will be exposed to many Naval customs and traditions including the use of a vocabulary based on a long and rich history of ships and the sea (and which is often baffling to landlubbers). Shipboard terms are often used at reserve centers and other land-bound facilities where cadets drill to avoid confusion between ship and shore terminology that could interfere with a sailor's ability to perform their sea duties.

The unique language and jargon used by a group identifies the members, promotes cohesiveness, and sets them apart from those who are not in that profession, sport, club, etc. This is especially so with the sea services. A short glossary of nautical and military terms used by Navy and Coast Guard you may hear in the vocabulary of your cadet is located on page 14.

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## The Three Core Values of the U.S. Navy

U.S. Naval customs and traditions have developed and evolved since 1776 when the Continental Congress authorized the creation of the Continental Navy. Naval customs and traditions help keep discipline and order in a military organization. Many of the customs include acts or expressions of respect such as the hand salute or considerations of the three core values of the U.S. Navy.

**HONOR** - "I will bear true faith and allegiance..." Accordingly, we will conduct ourselves in the highest ethical manner in all relationships with peers, superiors and subordinates. We will be honest and truthful in our dealings with each other and with those outside the Navy. Illegal or improper behavior will not be tolerated. We are accountable for our professional and personal behavior.

**COURAGE** - "I will support and defend..." Accordingly, we will have courage to meet the demands of our profession and the mission when it is demanding, or otherwise difficult. Courage is the value that gives us the moral and mental strength to do what is right, even in the face of personal or professional adversity.

**COMMITMENT** - "I will obey the orders..." Accordingly, we will demand respect up and down the chain of command. We will care for the safety, professional, personal and spiritual well being of our people. And we will show respect toward all people without regard to race, religion, or gender...

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## **Government Support of U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps**

Cadets are authorized by the Secretary of the Navy to wear Navy uniforms duly modified with the Naval Sea Cadet insignia. In recent years, the U.S. Congress has allocated funds to help subsidize the cost of Boot Camp and advanced summer training. Cadets who have successfully completed a two-week boot camp, are eligible to train aboard U.S. Navy ships and Coast Guard ships, as well as participate in shore activities.

There have been reported instances about parents behaving inappropriately toward active duty and reserve personnel or complaining about the facilities and procedures when visiting a facility hosting a sea cadet event or function. Please keep in mind that it is a privilege to be allowed to continue to use these facilities for sea cadet functions, especially since the attack on the World Trade Center. We consistently find that military personnel are respectful and courteous of civilian guests and their inquiries. However, their primary mission is service to and security of our country. Parents and cadets are expected to demonstrate appropriate decorum and respect.

## **Cadet Training**

While Sea Cadet units are organized along military lines, their main purpose is to foster good citizenship and an interest and appreciation of our nation's maritime services. Cadets study a broad range of subjects in different settings such as:

- Classroom Training
- Hands-On Training

Some training is designed to help sea cadets become better adult citizens; others teach them the importance of strong maritime skills such as seamanship, maritime history, damage control, fire fighting, customs and traditions. They also study subjects which would help their chances for

promotion should they decide to join one of the sea services. Sea cadets are instructed by qualified adult leaders willing to devote their time and knowledge to this worthwhile activity.

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## Boot Camp

First-year sea cadets are required to attend a two-week summer recruit training at a “boot camp” located on military bases throughout the country. Sea cadets are permitted to choose a training period during the summer months that will not interfere with summer employment arrangements. Prior to attending boot camp, sea cadets must pass a physical fitness test.

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## Advanced Summer Training

Having successfully completed recruit training, cadets participate in additional training in advanced subjects during succeeding summers. These one or two-week training periods offer a varied program of activities in addition to valued instruction of a maritime nature. Sea Cadets are eligible to attend advanced training aboard naval vessels. They may also attend advanced orientation courses such as Airman's School, Music School, SeaBee Indoctrination, Underwater Demolition/Seal Team training, and Submarine Orientation. They may also attend other courses designed to prepare cadets for leadership, either within the Sea Cadet organization or in other fields.

## Drills

Every unit is required to conduct a specific number of drills each year. Typically, units drill once a month. Each unit has an established drill schedule, often posted on their unit web site. Units seldom deviate from their scheduled drills.

Drills end on time and parents are asked to pick up their cadet within 10 minutes of the scheduled end of drill. Units discourage parents from picking up cadets early and disrupting the discipline of the drill routine. However, parents are always welcome to observe drills and final muster. The Commanding Officer (CO) is usually available at the end of each drill to talk with parents.

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## What to Bring

Each U.S. Sea Cadet Corps unit has its own, unique drill routine. Sea Cadets should always wear the appropriate uniform of the day and carry their Sea Cadet ID card. The officers and instructors of your son or daughter's unit will establish any other requirements for meals, snacks, special equipment or course material. Most times this type of information is communicated through a Plan of the Month or Plan of the Day.

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## Plan of the Month

Every good team must know how to communicate. The way that sea cadet officers communicate with parents and cadets each month is through the Plan of the Month (POM). The POM gives the months drill dates, what uniforms you need to wear and lists any special requirements for activities and events. Some units also communicate promotions, special events and other information in the Plan of the Month.

**It is very important that parents and cadets read the POM as soon as it is received. There is no excuse for not knowing the information in the POM.** Parents and cadets typically begin receiving the POM beginning the month following the cadet's enrollment into the Corps. If a POM is not received, notify your son or daughter's Commanding Officer

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## Attendance

Attendance at drills is one of the Annual Inspection criteria for each unit so many units require Cadets to attend 75% of the squadron's regular drills.

The cadet or parent should call the Division Officer (DO), when it is necessary to miss a drill. If you are not able to reach the DO, go up the chain of command (see page 8) to the next person until someone is reached. If a cadet misses too many drills or does not call when he/she is going to be absent, the cadet could be put on probation or expelled from the unit.

## Proper Appearance

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### Uniforms

The unit will issue surplus Navy uniforms to cadets, typically for a reasonable fee or deposit. Cadets are issued uniforms, to the best of our ability and within the uniform supply available to the program from the U.S. Navy. Typically, uniforms may be exchanged throughout the cadet's participation in the program at no additional cost. Remember that these uniforms are used uniforms and not all sizes are available. Parents are responsible for alterations as needed. If the cadet leaves the program, they must return their uniforms. Not all required items may be issued. White hats, black socks, second shoes, second name tapes are among the items which the cadet may be required to purchase.

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## Nametapes and Flashes

Nametapes and sea cadet flashes are sewn onto uniforms to identify the cadet and that they are part of the U.S. Sea Cadets Corps. Nametapes are strips of material with the cadet's name embroidered on it. Sea cadet flashes are a special patch sewn on each uniform sleeve. The flash must be one inch from shoulder seam to top of flash and centered on the sleeve.

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## Personal Grooming

Good grooming and personal appearance instills pride and self-confidence in U.S. Naval Sea Cadets. All cadets are expected to be clean and well groomed at all times. Uniforms are expected to be clean and pressed with all patches and nametapes attached securely in the proper position. Your cadet will be taught grooming customs and traditions early so they may move into the regular unit with as little disruption as possible. You can help by being aware of the following grooming standards and reminding your son or daughter that these are the grooming expectations while in uniform.

**Son:** Hair must be short, above ears, no sideburn and no facial hair. Nails trimmed even with end of finger and clean. No earring to be worn, a religious medal may be worn if it is not visible.

**Daughter:** Hair must not fall below the bottom of the collar. If long, it must be put up and pinned flat against the head. Ponytails and braids are not allowed. Hairpins should match the hair color. Makeup should be light and natural looking if worn and jewelry should be one pair of silver ball earrings only. A religious medal may be worn if not visible. Fingernails may not be more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch past the end of finger. The use of light natural nail polish is acceptable.

## Chain of Command

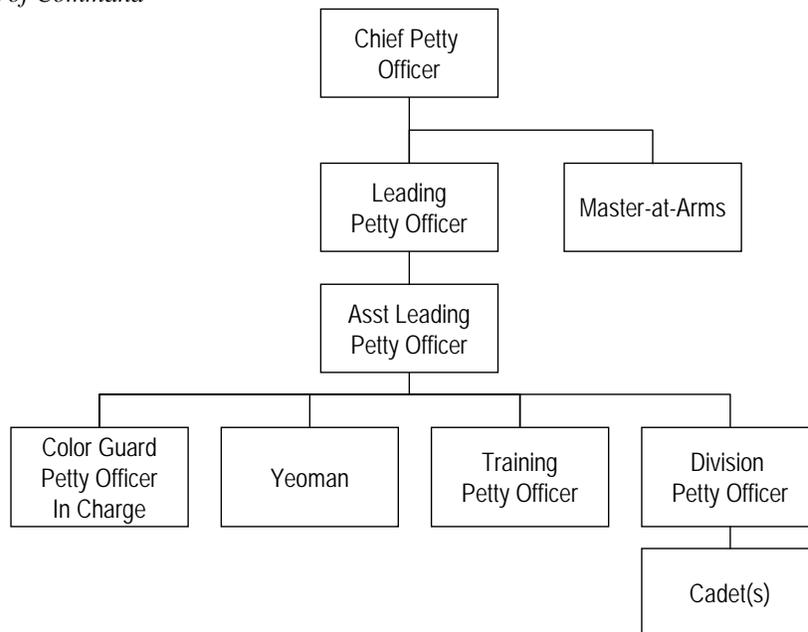
Everyone in the military has someone to whom they are responsible. Even the President of the United States has to answer to someone... the American people. The people between the cadet and the Commanding Officer are the chain of command. Both cadets and their parents need to understand the importance of the chain of command and following the chain of command to resolve questions or problems in an orderly, disciplined, and professional manner.

## Cadet Chain of Command

Think of the cadet as the first link in a chain. The cadet is the beginning because the cadet does not supervise anyone yet. The next person, or link in the chain, may be another cadet who has some leadership responsibility. Instilling leadership skills is one of the benefits of having your son or daughter involved in the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps program. Leadership responsibilities help teach your cadet accountability and the appropriate use of power when working with others.

The following diagram illustrates an example of a chain of command within the cadet ranks. Not all sea cadet units have the same chain of command structure so the cadet chain of command for your son or daughter may be quite different from this example.

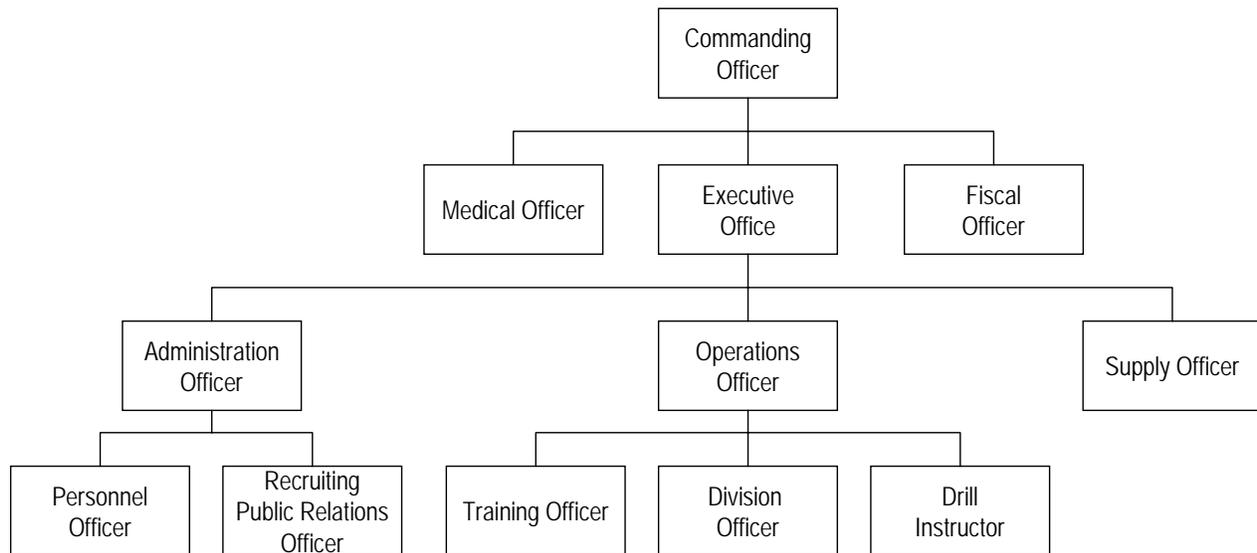
Figure 1. Cadet Chain of Command



## Officer Chain of Command

The following diagram illustrates an example of a chain of command among the Officers and Instructors of an U.S. Sea Cadet Corps unit. Not all sea cadet units have the same chain of command structure so the Officer Chain of Command for your son or daughter may be quite different from this example. The chain of command will differ because of the size of the unit, the availability of adult volunteers, or the skills of those who do volunteer.

Figure 2. Officer Chain of Command



## Other Important People

There are many people who could be “in charge” of something, but are not in the chain of command. Parents may volunteer to issue uniforms, collect money, chaperone an event, etc. or serve as an officer or instructor in the program. Cadets are expected to treat all adult volunteers and guests with respect and courtesy. Parent volunteers sometimes have a tendency to ask cadets to help in a work effort. If these requests interrupt a cadet who is acting under the direction of an order or request from someone within the chain of command, the cadet is in an awkward position. Consequently, parent volunteers are asked to be courteous and respectful of the cadets as well. This might include confirming the cadet is available and able to help, answering cadet questions when they can and always encouraging cadets to seek out resolution through the chain of command.

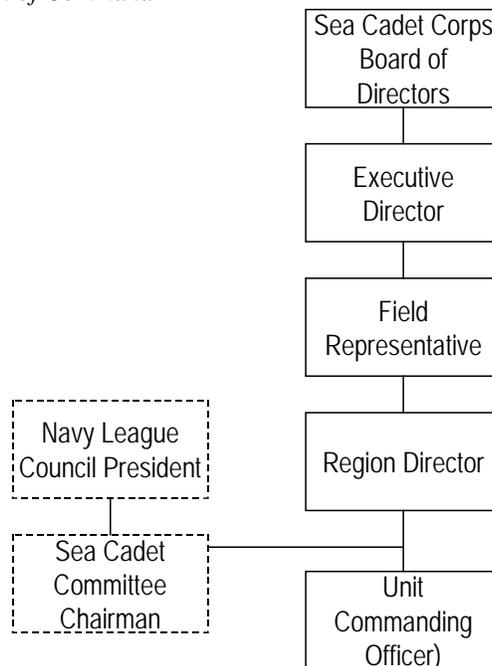
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## Mutiny: Resolving Unit Conflicts

Sadly, one Navy custom and tradition that we would like to caution parents about is mutiny. If you have been involved with other youth programs, you may have previously experienced this phenomenon. It occurs when parents and/or adult volunteers can't get along, have interpersonal conflicts, and often have very strong differences in how things should run. In these cases, the chain of command may temporarily break down at the unit level.

During these times of strife, parents need to remember the importance of setting a good example for their son or daughter. They should follow the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet chain of command to resolve questions or problems in an orderly, respectful, disciplined, and professional manner. If you have questions about the chain of command illustrated in Figure 3, discuss them with your son or daughter's commanding officer and ask that these people be involved if necessary.

Figure 3. U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Chain of Command



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## Our Facility Hosts

You will notice that the chain of command in Figure 3 does not indicate any relationship between the U.S. Naval Sea Cadets and those military personnel that host sea cadet units in their facilities. This is because there is no direct chain of command relationship. The unit Commanding Officer is expected to maintain a positive working relationship with their facility host and to utilize the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet chain of command to assist with any difficulties.

There have been reported instances where parents have gone directly to facility hosts with complaints about their sea cadet unit or how their cadet is treated. Parents may have used this approach because they were unaware of the chain of command however; getting active duty military personnel involved in this way is inappropriate.

## Adult Volunteer Opportunities

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### Parent Volunteers

Some units have a formal Parents Organization that helps the unit in many ways. They operate independent of, but with guidance from the Commanding Officer. These organizations are made up of parents that want to be involved and help but do not have time to commit to every drill weekend.

Sea Cadet units can always use help making phone calls, sending emails, providing transportation, helping with fund raising, or serving as chaperones. **Parents can be as involved as their schedules permit. Units need help on several fronts. If all parents would give just a little bit of time to the unit it would not become an overpowering job for just a few. Please, GET INVOLVED!**

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### Officers and Instructors

Officers and instructors are adult volunteers who have made the commitment to become a member of the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps and to support a local unit with a greater level of involvement. These volunteers are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the unit and drills. They are expected to attend training programs designed specifically for sea cadet officers.

Many sea cadet officers have previous military experience. Some are currently serving in active or reserve duty in one of the armed services. However, this is not a requirement. Any parent can complete an application to become an officer or instructor. All applicants are subject to a security screening or background check.

## Dual Parent and Officer Roles

As an officer, parents of cadets need to separate their role as parent from their role as a unit Officer. Having the dual role of parent and officer is frequently difficult for both the parent and the cadet. Parents' bias can get out of hand. Consequently, parents of active cadets do not always make the best officers. Those that are successful in separating their dual role of officer and parent follow these basic rules of conduct.

<b><i>Do's...</i></b>	<b><i>Don't...</i></b>
Use the Navy greeting of rank and last name when addressing your son or daughter.	Use your child's first name or a pet name like "Princess" while at Sea Cadet functions.
While at drill, respond to your son or daughter only when they address you by your rank and last name.	Respond to your child during a drill if they refer to you by "mom" or "dad".
Treat your son or daughter the same as all other cadets at all times.	Give special privileges that have not been earned or set higher expectations of behavior.
Request other officers and instructors to work directly with your son or daughter whenever possible.	Ask or expect to always be assigned to be with the same group of cadets as your son or daughter.
Utilize other officers and instructors within the chain of command to intervene in any reprimand or discipline of your son or daughter, if needed.	Publicly reprimand or discipline your son or daughter in excess of the situation or outside the context of the chain of command.
Be sensitive to peer pressure your son or daughter may be faced with because you serve as an officer or instructor in the unit. Adapt your behaviors or enlist the support of others in the chain of command to balance any conflict among cadets.	Take sides or ignore conflict among the cadet ranks that could stem from accusations of parent bias.

## Supplementary Material

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### Unit Handouts or Orientation Packet

Each unit may have supplementary material specific to their unit that they provide to parents including, but not limited to the following:

- Welcome Letter to Parents
- Local Unit Policy Statement or Handbook
- Local Unit Costs
- Parent Organization Information
- Local Web Site Address
- Plan of the Month
- Unit Chain of Command and Contact Information
- Drill Calendar
- Contract of Understanding for Applicant and Parent
- Local welcome Letter to Cadets
- Cadet Handbook or Cadet Qualification Standard

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### Web Links on Naval Heritage / Core Values

- <http://www.navy.mil>
- <http://www.chinfo.navy.mil/navpalib/mcpon/readguide.html>
- <http://www.history.navy.mil/nhc11.htm>
- <http://www.history.navy.mil/trivia/trivia01.htm>

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## Glossary of Nautical Terms

*Gear adrift piling up around your son or daughter's rack?*

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<i>All hands</i>	The entire ship's company - everyone in the unit.
<i>Aye, aye</i>	The traditional and expected response to an order. "Yes, sir" (or Ma'am) is not an acceptable substitute.
<i>Belay</i>	To cancel an order or stop an action, as in "Belay the small talk!"
<i>Binnacle List</i>	Those excused from drills or activities because of illness are said to be on the binnacle list. This list is named from the practice in the age of sail of keeping such a list handy in the binnacle, the housing for the compass located near the ship's wheel.
<i>Bulkhead</i>	A vertical partition, i.e., a wall.
<i>Colors</i>	The morning or evening ceremony of hoisting or lowering the U.S. flag.
<i>Compartment</i>	A room. Sailors sleep in berthing compartments in a ship. A small compartment housing officers is called a stateroom. The compartment where the Captain lies is called the cabin. It is the only cabin in a naval vessel.
<i>Cover</i>	Head gear, such as the cadet's whit hat or ball cap.
<i>Division</i>	A local unit of the Sea Cadet Corps in which the training involves general seamanship topics. Sea Cadet Squadrons concentrate on aviation while Sea Cadet Battalions study SeaBee construction subjects.
<i>Door</i>	Oddly enough, the nautical term for a door—an opening in a bulkhead (wall)--is "door." It is not a hatch. A hatch is an opening in a deck.
<i>Drill</i>	A training period scheduled for the unit. Commonly on a regularly scheduled weeknight or weekend, it can also include special training events, parades, etc.
<i>Field Day</i>	A general clean up of the facility involving all hands.
<i>Galley</i>	The kitchen.
<i>Gear Adrift</i>	Items, such as personal gear, not properly stowed.
<i>Head</i>	The bathroom or, more specifically, the toilet, so named because in the days of sail it was a simple seat over a hole cut in the overhand of the bow in the foremost part (head) of the ship.
<i>Ladder</i>	Doesn't necessarily mean something with rungs, it also means stairs. A stairwell is called a ladderwell.

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<b><i>Midshipman</i></b>	An adult, typically a former cadet or college student, appointed by the National Chairman to a position of leadership in the Naval Sea Cadet Corps (including the Navy League Cadet Corps), under the age of 21.
<b><i>Muster</i></b>	To assemble the cadets for a roll call.
<b><i>Officer</i></b>	An adult appointed by the National Chairman to a position of leadership in the Naval Sea Cadet Corps (including the Navy League Cadet Corps). In order of precedence officer ranks include: Warrant Officer, Ensign, Lieutenant (junior grade), Lieutenant, Lieutenant Commander. By custom, it is common to address a Lieutenant (junior grade) as “Lieutenant” and a Lieutenant Commander as “Commander.”
<b><i>Overhead</i></b>	The ceiling. The deck forms the overhead of the compartment below it.
<b><i>Quarter-deck</i></b>	The area of the ship or training facility, commonly the entrance, set aside for ceremonial purposes.
<b><i>Rack</i></b>	Common slang for bunk or berth where the cadet sleeps.
<b><i>Rate</i></b>	The rank of a cadet, sometimes expressed as the equivalent Navy pay grade (E-1 through E-7) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit (E-1)</li> <li>• Seaman Apprentice (E-2)</li> <li>• Seaman (E-3)</li> <li>• Petty Officer Third Class (E-4)</li> <li>• Petty Officer Second Class (E-5)</li> <li>• Petty Officer First Class (E-6)</li> <li>• Chief Petty Officer (E-7)</li> </ul>
<b><i>Scuttlebutt</i></b>	Drinking fountain (from the old term for the cask where fresh water was kept handy for the crew on sailing vessels). The term also refers to rumors or gossip, which was exchanged around the scuttlebutt.
<b><i>Wardroom</i></b>	Named for the compartment on the ship where officers take their meals and socialize. It also refers to the entire complement of sea cadet officers in the unit.
<b><i>Watchstanders</i></b>	Sailors or cadets on duty for a certain period of time, such as the Petty Officer of the Watch or the Messenger usually stationed at the quarter-deck.