



OSTS Notes



Newsletter of the United States Naval Academy
Offshore Sail Training Squadron

DIRECTOR'S CUT

by Renee Mehl



Congratulations to everyone who participated in our successful summer training! We met our goal of sending 30 sorties out over three training blocks, with five boats visiting each of the following ports: Stamford, CT, Bristol, RI, Mystic, CT, Boston, MA, Freeport and Port Jefferson, NY. We had five midshipman, one Army cadet, one USMC 2nd LT and seven Navy TAD Ensigns as Skippers and XO's, providing peer, or near-peer leadership to our 240 midshipmen crew, along with our outstanding cadre of volunteers. Thank you all for donating your time and talent, whether it was on the water during a block, during ground school, as an extra instructor for the local week of sailing, and for check rides. This program excels because of all of you. For active duty military, we appreciate your commands supporting the mission.

Midshipmen built strong teams and friendships over the summer. They experienced successes and were allowed failures. Instructors provided guided reflection and leadership lessons, along with lessons learned. Crews learned a new skill set and standard operating procedures. The uncontrollable forces of nature instilled the need to mitigate risk and implement controls when storm cells crossed the paths of our squadrons. Contact management in restricted waterways, in the fog and at night built situational awareness. Teams observed whales, sea turtles and dolphins in their natural habitat, and swam in the Atlantic Ocean. Midshipmen represented the Navy in remote ports and got to experience small town hospitality or big city culture. These are all the hallmarks of a successful summer cruise.

Our boats were in great shape, thanks to the **CAPT Dave Jackson's** Cutter Shed staff and the Small Craft Repair Division (SCRD) experts, who fixed any issues that came up, or provided technical support while the boats were at sea or in their remote port. Bravo Zulu to **LT Matt Vernam** and **LT Jordan McCullough**, who both participated in summer blocks, and provided great support to the volunteers, all while keeping things running smoothly in the office, along with our TAD junior officers.

We look forward to starting up our training cycle for new

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volunteers. If you know of anyone who might be interested, available and an asset to the program, please send them our way. Midshipmen: we need more leaders – come talk to us and we'll get you started on the road to having your first command at sea!

We look forward to seeing everyone back on the water.

FLEET CAPTAIN NOTE

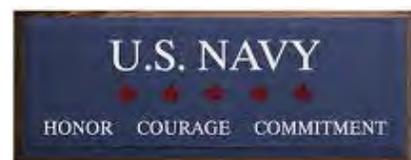
by John Formisano



Skipper John Formisano

Rather than try to describe the successes of our 2019 summer sailing Blocks, I thought I would let your pictures show what success looks like. Thank you to everyone who contributed to making 2019 so successful, and a special thanks to those skippers and XO's who shared your photos for your time with the midshipmen.

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/UMN7Yhrbvn3H5C4b6>



MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR NOTE

by CAPT David Jackson, USN (ret)



What a great summer! Thank you for taking such good care of the boats; they held up well and are ready for the Fall racing and training season. A few observations from this summer's Block sails for your consideration:

- *Marine sanitary systems.* The good news is that we did not have any clogged heads this summer. We did have issues with clogged tank tenders. The only way that happens is if the holding tank is filled to the top and then some. Please make sure you use the macerator while offshore. It will just ensure there's room in the tank when you gotta go...
- *Fresh Water Systems.* There were issues with valve alignments this summer. Two separate issues to highlight:
 - *Day tank tender is maxed out.* The cause for this is having one or both wing water tank valves open, so the day tank is reading the level of a tank that is higher than it. The fix is to shut the valves, pump some water out of the day tank and then read the day tank tender again
 - *Galley or Head fresh water faucet does not work.* First step is to ensure all faucet valves are shut (including the cockpit shower) so that air is not being drawn into the system. If the faucet still does not work, ensure the valves in the cabinet going to the faucet are open.

As we get ready for the winter maintenance period, please drop me a note if you have anything that you think needs to be done to the boats. We plan to replace all main sails and start a phased replacement of refrigerators, main bilge pumps, faucets and overhaul the travelers.

For those just starting out or even our experienced Skippers, feel free to stop by anytime if you want to go through boat systems.

NEW VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

A New Volunteer information meeting was held on Tuesday, August 27th at the Robert Crown Sailing Center. To recap this orientation for those that could not attend, we're looking for volunteers who can work with our Midshipmen during the summer of 2020. The job is mentally and physically challenging, but the rewards of working with our future leaders is well worth it. We need active duty or retired military with leadership and some navigation background, who we will teach how to sail, and civilians with sailing experience, preferably offshore sailing, who we will teach military procedures. Midshipmen are encouraged to sign up for training, this is the ultimate in experiential and peer leadership opportunities. 1/C Midshipmen who are interested in working with us as TAD Ensigns and 2nd LTs are welcome to join the XO training pipeline. The information brief is located at this link:

https://www.usna.edu/SailingTeam/files/documents/2019_OST_S_Documents/2019_Fall_Volunteer_Information_Brief_2.pdf

ON-THE-WATER TRAINING BEGINS IN SEPTEMBER

Navy 26 (B-Qual) Fall training will begin in September and Navy 44 (D-Qual) starts in October. For our new volunteers and coaches, the Navy 26 course is designed to either teach you how to sail if you're a beginner or teach you Navy standard operating procedures (SOP) if you already know how to sail. This will get everyone on a more level playing field before you get on board the Navy 44s, so we want you to start this first. Midshipmen who just completed a summer block as crew are not required to obtain their B-Qual onboard the Navy 26. The SOPs are available in written and video format, it's recommended to review these before starting.

<https://www.usna.edu/SailingTeam/Proficiency/index.php>

The B-Qual process consists of up to 10 Navy 26 sailing lessons, a check-ride and a written test. Once you master the sailing skills and the SOPs that are specific to the Navy 26, you will get a recommendation to take the check ride. You only need to do this B-qualification once for OSTs. If you are an active volunteer and want to check the Navy 26 out for proficiency sailing, you will need to keep your B-qualification current (annual basis). All new volunteers (except active duty) must sign a Volunteer Service Agreement prior to getting underway. Contact **LT Jordan McCullough** at jmccullo@usna.edu for the form. To sign up for the Navy 26 training please use the following link:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15N4Ax-xK56yQ8RPSpdNT3hv02B4aiv928G2tOpe8E5A/edit#gid=0>

You can view the training schedule and sign up now for the Fall Navy 44 D-Qual training using the following link:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15HQfMtvqy76Y6skWVsdIDY0EhQUf5Q7dLoRdcvkHS7k/edit#gid=1940938673>

Recommended reading for the Navy 44 sail training is on our Navy Sailing website under references at the link below. A good place to start before getting on board are the standard commands in the SOP, Chapter 8, and the checklists in Chapter 9.

<https://www.usna.edu/SailingTeam/osts/index.php>

Navy 44 Fall Instructor-trainers can sign up at:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15HQfMtvqy76Y6skWVsdIDY0EhQUf5Q7dLoRdcvkHS7k/edit#gid=1940938673>

Weather permitting, we have scheduled advanced Navy 44 instructor sailing sessions for the afternoons of September 17th (Tues) and 18th (Weds). Instructors can sign up using the previous link and selecting the "Instructor Sailing" tab.

SUMMER BLOCK DEBRIEFS

Thanks to everyone who has sent their post cruise reports in. We are in the process of reading all of them and compiling your



lessons learned. We will hold debriefs for all Skippers and XOs in September, by block. Dates are September 23, 24, and 25. They will be from 1600-1730 in Luce Hall. We will email room numbers to participants.

Results from the midshipman end-of-block surveys have been tabulated and broken down by boat and block. We will be emailing the results to each individual Skipper and XO as a 360-degree feedback and for personal reflection. OSTs staff is also available if you would like to discuss the results. We'll pull some lessons learned from the midshipmen comments to discuss as part of our block debriefs and will have an executive summary of the cumulative results available in the next newsletter.

Our OSTs staff is always striving for incremental changes to improve the program, and we appreciate all the feedback from instructors and midshipmen.

MIDSHIPMEN CRUISE AWARDS

Skippers and XOs please do take the time to nominate deserving Midshipmen from your crews who went above and beyond to contribute to a safe and successful Block sail.

- **RADM Robert W. McNitt Award.** The RADM McNitt Award is presented to the outstanding 1/C or 2/C midshipmen XO's who best demonstrate leadership, seamanship, navigation skills, and moral courage.
- **LTGEN Robert C. Taber Award.** The LTGEN Taber Award is presented to the 1/C midshipman skipper who best demonstrates outstanding leadership and command skills during their cruise.
- **Captain Robert D. McWethy Award.** The CAPT McWethy Award is presented to the midshipman crew member (3/C, 2/C or 1/C) who shows outstanding seamanship ability.
- **Bing Simpson Maintenance Award.** The Bing Simpson Maintenance Award will be selected on the basis of the material condition (cleanliness, preservation, and stowage) of the STC as observed at the end of the cruise block, and for exceptional maintenance performed while underway.

Please put some thought into your nomination letter. The more detail, the better the chance your nominee has of winning the award. There are examples posted on Blackboard. There will be an Awards Dinner in late November or early December that is shared with the Varsity Offshore Sailing Team. We will invite finalists from each category and their Skipper to the ceremony.

YARD ACCESS

A reminder that you will need to have a CAC card, military ID, or a Defense Biometrics ID System (DBIDS) visitor card to drive onto the Naval Academy Yard. DBIDS is a fairly new system and replaces the blue paper passes. *If you currently have a valid blue paper pass, you can continue to use that until it expires.* All renewals and new access requests will have to apply for a DBIDS card. That requires filling out an application (do NOT email your

social security number on the form), sending the form to **LT Matt Vernam**, and then calling **LT Vernam** with your SSN or other personal info. When your application is approved, you'll need to go to the visitor center at Gate 1, Monday through Friday (except Federal holidays) between 0700 and 1330 to get fingerprinted and your photo taken. They will issue you a card that you will need to present to the gate guard when you drive into the Academy.

The security office at USNA has been extremely backed up due to multiple construction projects on the Yard. Due to these projects, DBIDS applications are taking upwards of 2-3 weeks to turn around. Please let **LT Matt Vernam** know ASAP if you need a Yard parking pass so he can get your DBIDS application to the security office early for processing.

If you already have a pass, check the expiration date.

Don't park in any spaces marked 1/C, F/S (faculty/staff) or GMEIS. Parking can get a little tight here due to construction projects or special events like home football games, parades, or physical fitness tests. We will endeavor to notify you of any parking restrictions or gate closures that may affect OSTs training.

EXISTING D-SKIPPER QUAL PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS

A reminder for our existing D-Skippers, your qualification proficiency is valid for a period of *one* (1) year from the date of your highest qualification, or the date of your most recent proficiency determination. In order to maintain your qualification proficiency on a year-to-year basis, or regain your proficiency status if lapsed, the following requirements must be achieved within the periodicity indicated:

1. Successfully pass an annual "Rules of the Road" (COLREGS) examination with a score of 90% or better;
2. Every three months after passing the annual COLREGS exam, successfully pass the quarterly "Rules of the Road" quiz with a score of 90% or better when actively participating in a given sailing year.
3. Successfully pass a bi-annual (i.e., every 2 years) Navigation Practical Examination with a score of 70% or better;
4. Maintain current cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and basic first aid certifications from schools approved by US Sailing.
5. Every three (3) years, complete and pass with a score of 70% or better the D-Skipper qualification proficiency section examinations.
6. Participate in a summer program cruise block, or portion thereof, as an Executive Officer (XO), Skipper, or Coach at least once in any three (3) year period.
7. Attend a U.S. Sailing Safety at Sea Seminar within the past five (5) years.

You can check your qualification proficiency status by logging into Blackboard and reviewing the OSTs Proficiency Tracker sheet or contacting **LT Jordan McCullough**. Remember, it is your responsibility to maintain your qualification proficiency. Contact **LT Jordan McCullough** at jmccullo@usna.edu should you have any questions, corrections, or updates.

EXTRA CREDIT READING

The following link was taken from the Scuttlebutt electronic newsletter. The article contains leadership lessons from the world of professional sailing. These tips can help you as a Skipper or XO, and are excellent lessons to teach your midshipmen. They apply equally to offshore training and racing, and contain many of the same leadership principles that are taught to the midshipmen in their academy classes.

https://www.sailingscuttlebutt.com/2019/03/21/vital-lessons-in-leadership-and-teamwork/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Scuttlebutt%205291%20%20March%2022%202019&utm_content=Scuttlebutt%205291%20%20March%2022%202019+CID_d9e05d0af00b4dedaf0e914f2764a9ac&utm_source=Email%20Newsletter&utm_term=Read%20on#more

FREE! CCA OCEAN WEATHER VIDEO SERIES

Understanding marine weather, sea state, and all associated forecasts is a life or death skill that ocean sailors must master. Ocean sailing and racing is exciting, challenging, and safe when done with a well-prepared boat and a properly trained crew.

The Cruising Club of America (CCA) recently sponsored a full-day presentation with expert meteorologists and oceanographers covering:

- Marine Weather Fundamentals
- 500mb Surface – Significance and Analysis
- Ocean Currents, Waves, and Sea State
- Ocean Forecasting – Process and Products
- Weather Windows and Routing
- Weather Communications
- Navigator’s Weather Watch

Access the full program for FREE here.

<https://cruisingclub.org/news/weather-course-video-available-viewing>

OSTS FACEBOOK PAGE



OSTS has its own Facebook Page! In addition to this newsletter, we will post important information about the program to this Facebook page. Please “Like” us so you have the program information as it is released. We have 408 “likes” to date and growing every month. Help us get to “500” likes in 2020. Please encourage your midshipmen to send photos and video from their spring training sails and summer block sortie. Anyone can post to our Facebook page. We are generating a good following of OSTs family and friends that are following your sailing experiences. Do not be shy and please post!

Please “Like” us at:

<http://www.facebook.com/USNAOffshoreSailTraining>.

EMAIL OPT-OUT

If you are on this email newsletter and would like to be taken off, please let us know. If you have any articles or information you would like to share through this newsletter please email to richard.robey@gmail.com. As always, thank you for your support of OSTs.

THANK YOU!

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