We just wrapped up a successful session of fall on-the-water training. Despite Hurricane Joaquin chasing all of our boats to their hurricane moorings for a weekend, we were able to flex and add some extra sailing to the schedule. Our original goal was to finish up before it got too cold, but the intrepid souls who went out on their overnight October 17-18 had to endure a pretty chilly evening. Thanks to all our OSTS Volunteers who came out as Instructor-Trainers, and welcome to all the new people who have joined the program. We have a solid group of Midshipmen, Active Duty from the Yard and DC, an ever growing faction from the Pentagon Sailing Club, and sailing members of our own community as the Volunteer class of 2015. We’ll take a short break during the upcoming holiday season and dive back into training in January.

We’ve had some good debrief sessions from last summer, reviewed all the Midshipman feedback and just wrapped up a successful meeting with our sailing advisory committee (Fales Committee) so we are working to put together some new and improved aspects into our winter training. That schedule will come out in the next newsletter.

Our goal next summer is to get as many boats on the water as we can (27-30), based on the number of available instructors. We’ll set up a Google Docs to ask our existing Skippers, XOs and new trainees what they are able to support next summer, which will be emailed separately. We work with the scheduling office here at the Academy, and need to tell them how many Midshipmen we can support for summer training by mid-January.

Thanks to all of you for your support, we couldn’t run this program without the time and talent donated by all of you!

**D-Skipper Training Program**

As you move through the different levels of your qualification process, whether it’s senior crew to watch captain, or XO to Skipper, you’ll need to get your PQS book signed off by your assigned Skipper or XO, and the Program Director and DNAS for Skipper. Please review your qual book, add up the hours in the log section, make sure you have all the signatures required, and bring your PQS book in to LT Osei Asante, our training officer, for processing. Please round your time on the water in hours, including any portion of an hour rounded off to the nearest 15 minutes (1.5 hours for 90 minutes, 1.25 hours for 75 min, etc.) Time recorded for overnights should be the amount of time you spend on watch during one day, so if you’re on watch from 0200-0600, 1000-1400 and 1800-2200, that’s 12 hours, and at this time of year, 9 hours sailing at night, and 3 hrs during the day assuming it gets light at 0500 and dark at 1800.

New volunteers will be added to the Academy Blackboard account. Blackboard is a web based program that hosts all our D-qual exam sections, and useful information for summer blocks. The Skipper paperwork section has fillable forms of all the documents you’ll need to submit for upcoming Delmarvas in the spring, and summer blocks. You will get an email from Osei with instructions on how to sign on.

Please note that the Rules of the Road test must be taken annually AND there is a quarterly refresher test. You’ll need to go into the D-qual tests to do the full test, the refresher test is on
The following midshipmen awards nomination no later than November 9 so she can work on excusals, and send us your haven’t sent the form yet, please email Gabby with the name of save the date if you nominated anyone, invitations are conjunction with the Varsity Offshore Sailing Team (VOST). Nominees and their Skippers are invited.

We had a great summer wrap up dinner at the home of Maureen and Larry Burt for the volunteers who supported the program last summer. It was a great fall evening and fun to get people together.

**Fall Midshipmen Awards Ceremony**

Midshipmen crew, Skippers and XOs who were nominated by their Skippers for any of the four OSTS Awards will be honored and the winners announced at the Fall Awards Ceremony on December 2nd. We have this dinner in conjunction with the Varsity Offshore Sailing Team (VOST) and JVOST. Nominees and their Skippers are invited. Please save the date if you nominated anyone, invitations are forthcoming. If you were planning on nominating someone but haven’t sent the form yet, please email Gabby with the name of the Midshipman so she can work on excusals, and send us your nomination no later than November 9th.

The following midshipmen awards are given after each season:

The **Taber Award** is presented to the outstanding 1/C Midshipman serving as a Skipper or XO who best demonstrates outstanding leadership and command skills while participating in the SAILTRAMID Summer Cruise Program.

The **McNitt Award** is presented to the 1/C or 2/C Midshipman demonstrating exemplary leadership as an XO while participating in their OSTS summer cruise block. Recipients’ performance in seamanship, navigation, leadership, and sailing skills set them apart from their contemporaries during their cruise block. Can award one per block.

The **McWethy Award** is presented to an outstanding 2/C or 3/C Midshipman participating in the SAILTRAMID Summer Cruise Program for seamanship.

The **Bing Simpson Award** is presented annually to the 2/C or 3/C Midshipman who distinguished their self as the best engineer. Items considered as a basis for this award include periodic maintenance checks, cleanliness of the sail training craft and the administrative accuracy of engineering logs and records.

**Huntington Steele Regatta**

Every year, the Sailing Center has a year-end fun regatta before the boats get hauled out for winter. It’s a short race on the Navy 44s, and will take place on Tuesday November 10. Various groups put teams together; the IC team, a couple of VOST midshipmen teams, a VOST volunteer team, an OSTS volunteer team, a maintenance team… you get the idea. We only have 8 boats this year and space is filling up fast. We already have a full OSTS boat, but there may be space on other boats if you are interested, please contact Gabby. GO TEAM OSTS!

OSTS CLOTHING STANDARDS

Volunteers can purchase the Navy Sailing blue polo shirt, NASS burgee belt, sailing gloves and shorts at the MidStore. In the past we issued cards or had a limited time frame to purchase these items. New policy is that they have a list of all our volunteers, kept at one specific register. If you walk in the front doors, go up the stairs and turn left in the clothing section, the register is all the way back, at the wall by the exit to the tunnel. Volunteers are not required to have the shirt and belt until summer, but if you would like to purchase them before then, your name is on the list.

**NAVY DRESS CODE FOR CIVILIANS**

Can be misleading! If you receive an invitation for a military event here at the Academy, the dress code is as follows:

Civilian Casual – khakis and polo shirt or casual women’s wear.  
Civilian Informal – business attire/jacket and tie.  
Civilian Formal – black tie.

**SUMMER VOLUNTEER POT LUCK DINNER**

We had a great summer wrap up dinner at the home of Maureen and Larry Burt for the volunteers who supported the program last summer. It was a great fall evening and fun to get people together.
SUMMERWIND

You may have noticed the 1929 100’ Alden schooner in Santee Basin. She is hard to miss! Summerwind is our most recently donated boat. She arrived in early October, and we competed in the Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race as the shakedown cruise. OSTS Volunteer CAPT (ret) Jim Maitland was the Skipper (he was CO of a sistership, the Freedom, when he was at USNA as a Midshipman), along with the crew of volunteers Bill Erickson, Rick Steer, Ned Ross, NASF Executive Director Les Spanheimer, Deputy DNAs Laurie Coffey, Jon Wright, Renee Mehl, former crew member Kurt Sowa and Sailing ECA (Extra Curricular Activity) Midshipmen 1/C Jonathan Fleming and MIDN 2/C Billy Rudiger.

A commissioning ceremony for Summerwind was held in the Sailing Hall of Fame on October 28th, attended by donor Mr. Jim Grundy, his family and friends, Sailing staff, Midshipmen and volunteers.

COACHING CORNER: REEFING

We’ve seen and heard of a couple of different techniques for taking and shaking a reef, regarding what point of sail you want to be on. The optimal point of sail is between a beam and close reach when you are sailing with a jib or genoa up. That allows you accomplish a few things, 1) use your trimmed headsail as your “engine” for forward propulsion, which will ensure you have steerageway throughout the maneuver and 2) allows you to luff the mainsail, taking tension off so you can easily lower or raise the sail and get tension on the reef line. If you go head to wind, you’ll lose steerageway unless you get the reef in very quickly or have the engine on. Remember that things always take longer than you think they will in a training evolution. You also have novice helmsmen, so the boat can also “auto tack” if you’re head to wind, and you may not have crew manning the jib sheets if you’re sailing with watch sections. Trying to take a reef when the wind is aft of a beam reach doesn’t work very well, because by the time you get the mainsail eased enough, it’s probably plastered up against the rig, making it difficult to lower or raise the sail.

In order to use the reef line as anouthaul, make sure the line tied around the boom is either directly below or slightly aft of the cringle on the leech of the sail. If it’s too far forward, you will have a full foot, and more power than you want in the foot of the sail. Moving the reef line aft on the boom will flatten and depower the sail.

There was also a good basic article in Scuttlebutt Newsletter recently about sail trim using telltales:

http://www.sailingscuttlebutt.com/2015/10/26/telltale-tech-talk/
This answer was not about the conquest of an inanimate object - the mountain. It was about the human need to gain a perspective of his own ability and to challenge where he fits into the puzzle of life and the world around him. William Hazlitt wrote “Man is the only animal that laughs and weeps, for he is the only animal that is struck by the difference of what things are and what they ought to be”. Unless you push yourself, how will you ever know the difference!

Before Joseph Conrad wrote “Lord Jim” and “The Heart of Darkness” he served as a merchant seaman for 16 years. His struggles with the ocean gave him the perspectives of man against nature that are so profoundly interwoven into his novels. Conrad wrote “If you want to know the age of the universe all you have to do is look into the face of an angry sea”.

So what does OSTS offer the Midshipmen? Perhaps nothing more than participating in one of the oldest tests of time; an opportunity to interact with the forces of nature, and a chance to better understand their own humanity. What could be better?

A REAL TIME STORY:

OSTS Block 3A prepared for their return transit on Monday 10 August. The pre-sail weather forecast was for local showers and thunderstorms with winds 15-25 gusting to 30 knots and visibility 1-3 miles. In the early morning hours of Tuesday 11 August winds were exceeding 47 knots (sustained) out of the south. Earlier storms off of Cape Hatteras added extra seas headed northward. We were now challenged by bad weather right on the nose.

My watch section had only 3 midshipmen. With the navigator down below keeping a watchful eye on navigation and communications, as we were just south of the New York Harbor area, there were only 2 midshipmen on deck. Taking the helm as XO, I had the watch go forward and place the first reef into the main as blue water rolled over the foredeck. Shortly thereafter, with strengthening winds, they went forward again and added the second reef. In storm conditions, with heavy rain, limited visibility, mounting seas, and strengthening winds the midshipmen performed their duties flawlessly – the intense training given the midshipmen in the weeks leading up to our excursion at reefing the mainsail now paid dividends.

After the double reefed main came a headsail change. The #3 had to come down, and the #4 was called up from below. As one midshipman maintained the helm, I looked at the other midshipmen and said “you are coming forward with me”. Without hesitation, this 3rd classman who had never before been offshore, and with only 2 weeks of sailing experience on the 44 STC, fighting the effects of sea sickness and in the thick of a storm at night, responded with an immediate “Yes Sir”!

In that one moment I realized how special these midshipmen were. How proud they made me to be part of this adventure, to be part of a moment in their lives that they will remember – forever! So what does OSTS offer the Midshipmen? In this case, maybe more than we will ever know. One thing for sure, these fine young men and women were given an opportunity to train and to test that training in a real world situation. They faced new obstacles and overcame them, together as a crew, together as a team! This wasn’t a simulation, this was real – GO NAVY!

**Chronicles of a First-Time Offshore Sailor**

*By MIDN 3/C Michelle L. Tran*

My OSTS experience begins the same as most midshipmen. Thanks to a few clicks and substitutions in the Training Office I was placed in the hands of the Navy Offshore Sailing program in lieu of my first choice. I reported to USNA as instructed and after a week of ground school and another week of offshore training, it became quite clear that sailing required the skills that I lacked: hand eye coordination, good vision, and situational awareness. Being the studious type, I have not spent much time behind the steering wheel. If you place me at the helm of a sailboat, I wish the best of luck to all souls onboard. Throughout my summer I kept record of my experiences in a journal, and this unique training opportunity provided ample material for reflection.

The following are real-time excerpts of the transit to Rockport, liberty in Rockport, and the transit back to Annapolis:

**08 Jul 2015:** Right now we are Day 3 of 4 on our way to Rockport, Massachusetts and I’m on a boat, smaller than LHD-6, for sure, but a boat nonetheless... I’d like to say that YP’s is to OSTS as Best Western is to Camping. I haven’t had a good shower in three days. Perspiration lingers below decks while moist sea wind leaves skin clammy topsides.

I am so bad at sailing, you don’t even understand. I’m pretty sure this XO is disappointed with me. Everyone else is so good at this. Not me, not me at all. But I’m learning, slowly, but surely. Don’t have tacking down yet, but I’m working on it. Don’t even get me started with jibing. I believe I’m decent at line handling. As lookout I definitely let the boat’s anchor spit get demolished by the concrete as we docked for refueling.

Despite all that’s happened today, being on the water is incredible. I don’t know if there is a more supreme feeling than being surrounded by the sea. The 0200-0600 watch is tough, but you get to see the sun rise on one side and the moon on the other. And the reflections they leave on the water is something out of a Monet painting. If you overcome fatigue you realize how quiet and cool it is when the waves are low, stars try to fill in the blackness of night. It’s amazing and surreal. I wouldn’t trade that sight for the world. My 2/C said that OSTS was awful, but this isn’t so bad.

**09 Jul 2015:** So here we are on Day 4. It seems like I can’t speak in terms of hours or minutes, but in sunrises and sunsets. Why? Because that’s all there is to see.
I’m in my foul weather gear, whose odor seems to be true to its name. I’m sitting in the cockpit when I should probably be getting my crew rest. Oh well. I just made crepes on a boat so I’m all jazzed up. We’re eating pretty well. We even had a birthday celebration with some pound cake and Betty Crocker frosting… It’s starting to get cold now, so I think should sleep now.

For the record, no noticeable changes have occurred with regard to my seamanship.

10 Jul 2015: In Rockport. I wish you could see this. I’m sitting on the stone laden patio overlooking Loblolly Cove on my left, this quaint Thatcher Island on the right, and the Atlantic Ocean right at the tip of my nose. You can tell the water is teeming with lobster life, the little white buoys bobbing violently as powerboats motor by. I’m so happy.

12 Jul 2015: This morning we caught the sunrise at 0530. Cori and I reclined on the red rocks outside, completely surrounded by rock and ocean and hardly anything else. Subliminal to say the least. Later that morning, all the midshipmen had a pancake breakfast with the people of Rockport. I sat at this little table with Russell and Jill. Russell, a Navy man, was 90 years old and married Jill just three years ago. He owned a boat for most of his life so we talked about sailing for a bit. I think I surprised myself, the sailing jargon and all. I learned Russell was aboard the USS Nelson during WWII and after an attack, he survived on the half of the ship that managed to stay afloat. He said that the Salvation Army came in a tug to rescue them and how he’s been donating to them ever since.

13 Jul 2015: It was sad departing. I remember Rockport’s lights reducing to a dim glow on the horizon of dark ocean and darker night. But at the same time I felt a bit more comfortable to be back on the boat. I stood at the bow wielding a big flashlight, making sure our track was free of lobster pots… We have to do this on our own now, don’t we? At this point Skipper and XO take a step back and are just safety observers. Well, we’re too far in the game so “Challenge Accepted.”

14 Jul 2015: This morning I took a shower. Oh my gosh. Perhaps the greatest shower yet. Now it’s about 0647 and the sun is shining absolutely and the cockpit is cool and the breeze is slowly drying my hair. I’m going to miss waking to just the hum of the engine and popping up my head to see only water every which way. Subliminal to say the least. Later that morning, all the midshipmen had a pancake breakfast with the people of Rockport. I sat at this little table with Russell and Jill. Russell, a Navy man, was 90 years old and married Jill just three years ago. He owned a boat for most of his life so we talked about sailing for a bit. I think I surprised myself, the sailing jargon and all. I learned Russell was aboard the USS Nelson during WWII and after an attack, he survived on the half of the ship that managed to stay afloat. He said that the Salvation Army came in a tug to rescue them and how he’s been donating to them ever since.

Also, for the record, I completed my first successful tack around 2200. “Slowly, but surely.”

We’ve only had strong winds twice since we started sailing. The second time was in Cape May, which was pretty exciting as waves crashed onto the bow as we changed headsails. As XO says, “sporty weather.” Fun but I’d rather not be helm with winds like that.

15 Jul 2015: Today I helmed during 25 knot winds. It was pouring; my feet are still pruned after wearing those galoshes for a few hours. It was again very sporty and thrilling, besides the fact that I knocked over XO with my accidental gybe… I think I’ve come to the conclusion that helm might not be my strength, but instead of shying away from the opportunity to helm, I’ve got to just do it. And I did.

Finality kind of hangs over us on our last day sailing. This will be the last time experiencing fatigue, relief, joy, frustration with this particular crew, under this particular leadership. And it kind of bothers me because this whole time, life is contained within the confines of the boat. You live in a sort of bubble where your concerns revolved around chow and sleep and you measure time with all those sunrises and sunsets.

The crew of NA-35 Valiant returned safely to Santee Basin the next day, which is good because that means I didn’t make any severe missteps. Thanks to the support of everyone onboard, I did end up learning a thing or two because I received my Watch Captain qualification shortly after the conclusion of the block.

Overall, there really isn’t theme that unites these entries. There’s a bit of courage, a lot of hesitation, serendipity, self-evaluation, and numerous encounters with those ubiquitous sunsets. These encounters simply exist as they happen, which is a sort of collateral theme of OSTS. There is no doubt this program develops small-unit leadership skills, but we already know that. There is a reason why these journal entries lack the problem-solution and lessons learned stories we are so accustomed to seeing. Yes, leadership encompasses all of those moments, but I contend that what happens in between those large evolutions make up the bulk of experiential leadership. These “in between” moments matter because they can leave an impression on us, they can mean something more. I wrote them down because they moved me in some way and because a journal is, after all, a collection of defining moments. A kind of metaphor for experience.

PHOTO CONTEST

Last call for photos from the summer sailing blocks! Please submit your best 2014 or 2015 sailing season pictures, with captions, to Rick Robey at richard.roby@gmail.com. You can also post your photo entries on our Facebook page. The top 3 photos will be selected and announced in the December OSTS Notes. Winning photographers will receive the coveted NASS burgee.

OSTS FACEBOOK PAGE

OSTS has its own Facebook Page! Please “Like” us at: http://www.facebook.com/USNAOffshoreSailTraining.
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 175 “likes” to date and growing every week. Help us get to “500” likes by the end of the year. Please encourage your midshipmen to send photos and video from their summer block. 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!

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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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