

THE EAST COAST SEA SCHOOL

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AN ARTICLE in September's GAZETTE by the Commanding Officer of the Marine Barracks, Navy Yard, Norfolk, Virginia, described in general the duties of Marines at sea and the necessity of selecting only the best type of men for service with the Navy. As Commanding Officer of the East Coast Sea School, I should like to tell in detail what is taught a recruit during his instruction period and how he is finally selected for sea.

The authorized course allowed by Marine Corps Headquarters is three weeks. This period would be sufficient provided a man was under instruction the entire time. However, when Saturday afternoons and Sundays, holidays, time for athletic tests, ceremonies, and other post activities are taken out the actual school hours are materially reduced. It is, therefore, the policy of the Sea School to hold a man four weeks if possible before giving him his final examination. This also permits a recruit to make up lectures lost while performing guard duty, mess cooking, and fatigue work.

Recruits arrive from Parris Island Thursday mornings at the rate of ten per week. Too great care cannot be taken in the selection of these sea-going Marines, as Colonel Davis emphasized in his recent article. Big men are preferred, although intelligence and soldierly bearing carry equal weight. Careful selection of only the best men from the recruit companies of Parris Island enables the Sea School to concentrate its instruction on the more advanced drill and special sea-going subjects. Otherwise valuable time is lost, as has happened occasionally in the past, in the perfecting of a recruit's elementary training.

Upon the arrival of a detachment of recruits they are immediately placed in charge of a corporal instructor and assigned to a barrack room. These instructors live in the room to which they are assigned and are held directly responsible for the men in their charge. The first morning is spent in drawing clothing. Each man's blue and khaki uniforms are fitted with the utmost care. In cases where stock fits are poor the recruit is required to immediately take the article to the post tailor, who makes the necessary alterations for a very nominal charge. In order to prevent a man from overdrawing his clothing allowance, which so often occurs his first year at sea, the Sea School allows a recruit to have on hand only a minimum amount of clothing. The afternoon of the first day is devoted to scrubbing clothes, cleaning gear, rolling packs and learning to make a bunk and stow a locker in the prescribed manner.

The next day, Friday, the non-commissioned officer instructor teaches his men how to press their clothes, shine buttons, polish shoes, belts, and waist plates. Rifle stocks and bayonet grips are next scraped and turned

over to a member of the permanent detachment, who rubs in a preparation of olive oil and orange shellac. By applying six coats of each of these the grain of the wood is brought out and gives the stock a gloss-like finish. The reason for having an experienced man of the permanent detachment perform this work is that all stocks are then done alike and, being skilled in the art, he can do a much better job than a recruit trying it for the first time. Oil is kept in all barrack rooms so that by additional applications each recruit soon has a splendid-looking rifle. The bayonet grips are finished up in a similar way. The leather slings and bayonet tips are also required to be polished a uniform color. That afternoon a lecture is given on "Life in the Sea School and Aboard Ship" and "Saluting, Military Courtesy, Service Customs and Etiquette."

Saturdays all men stand by for room and locker inspection of equipment one week, and clothing the next, particular attention being paid to proper marking. Recruits are not granted liberty over the first week-end in order that this time may be used for whatever cleaning up remains to be done.

As a majority of recruits joining the Sea School, after the first of the month, are without funds, a dollar's worth of cleaning gear purchased from the Post Exchange by money advanced from the Company Fund is issued to each man. This consists of a button board, non-com button polish, jewelers' rouge, button brush, bottle of white liquid polish for waist belt, a blitz rag, black and tan shoe polish and a brush. Recruits are required to keep themselves supplied with these articles during their stay in the Sea School.*

By Monday these new recruits are sufficiently oriented and cleaned up to begin regular instruction with the other Sea School men. The schedule of instruction is as follows:

DRILL SCHEDULE

Monday

- .0845 Quarters for muster and inspection.
- .0915 Inspection of quarters.
- .0930-1015 Foot movements and manual of arms.
- .1030-1130 Squad and platoon drill.
- .1300-1355 Orderly instruction (Captains, Commanders and communication orderlies).
- .1400-1455 Rank and Insignia of Officers.
- .1500-1630 Instruction by squad room Non-commissioned officer in cleaning and taking care of clothes and equipment.
- .1630 Inspection of clothes and equipment on bunk.

Tuesday

- .0800-0830 Physical drill under arms.
- .0830-1000 Prepare for inspection.
- .1000 Commanding Officer's inspection and review.
- .1100 Lecture on First Aid.
- .1300-1355 Ranks and Insignia, Enlisted men.

* The Commandant has recently granted permission to the post exchange to give a two dollar (\$2.00) credit for cleaning gear to recruits upon their arrival at the Sea School.

- 1400-1455 Lecture and practical instruction in Signal Flags and lights. (B.J.M., U.S.N.-1918). Pages 434-446 and 610-630.
 1500-1555 Marlin Spike Seamanship. (B.J.M., U.S.N.-1919). Pages 259-269.
 1600-1630 Semaphore drill.

Wednesday

- .0845 Quarters for muster and inspection.
 .0915 Inspection of quarters.
 .0930-1015 Foot movement and manual of arms.
 1030-1130 Squad and platoon drill.
 1300-1355 Five inch gun drill (Nomenclature of piece, sightsetting, casualties, etc.).
 1400-1455 Hammock nomenclature and instruction (how to sling, lash, stow, and air).
 1500-1555 Instruction in small arms (pistol, automatic rifle and machine gun).
 1600-1630 Physical drill without arms.

Thursday

- .0845 Quarters for muster and inspection.
 .0915 Inspection of quarters.
 .0930-1015 Foot movement and manual of arms.
 1030-1130 Extended order drill.
 1300-1500 Practical instruction on *North Dakota* in:
 (1) Deck Seamanship (B.J.M., U.S.N.-1918). Pages 288-296.
 (2) Ship nomenclature.
 (3) General Quarters and Emergency drills.
 1500-1600 Instruction in small boats, names, sizes and nomenclature (Navy Yard Boat Shop). (B.J.M., U.S.N.-1918). Pages 238-255. When weather permits practical instruction on the river will be given.
 1600-1630 Semaphore drill.

Friday

- .0845 Quarters for muster and inspection.
 .0915 Inspection of quarters.
 .0930-1015 Foot movement and manual of arms.
 1030-1130 Squad and platoon drill.
 1300-1355 Five inch gun drill loading machine, etc.
 1400-1455 Orderly instruction (Time, Telephone, Brig and Life Buoy Posts.) *General Orders*.
 1500-1555 Lecture by Instructors:
 (1) Ship's Routine (B.J.M., U.S.N.-1918). Pages 143-162.
 (2) Salutes and Naval customs (B.J.M., U.S.N.-1918). Pages 105-115.
 (3) General features of ships of the Navy of different classes. (B.J.M., U.S.N.-1918). Pages 137-139.
 (4) *The Compass*. Degree's bearing true and relative. Reporting ships and lights, etc.
 1600-1630 Physical drill without arms.

Saturday

- .0800-0830 Physical drill under arms.
 .0830-1000 Prepare for inspection.
 1000 Commanding Officer's inspection of quarters equipment and clothing. (Uniform field service).
 The first Saturday of every month Heavy Marching Order inspection will be held on the field.
 1100 Fire drill.
 1300 Liberty to those rating it.

In formulating the above course, the requirements that had to be met were, that it be as thorough as possible for the allotted time, that it be simple and practical, and that it be so planned that it may be regularly followed. Since all instruction is oral, it has been found that by one lecture or demonstration a subject is not thoroughly impressed on a man's mind. In other words, he must be drilled in his class-room work as he is on the drill field. This is especially true of orderly duty, ship nomenclature and gun drill. Therefore, it is necessary to review the principal subjects two or three times so that the salient features may become indelibly impressed on the recruit's mind. As the average young Marine has only a grammar-school education, his mind is not capable of grasping new ideas and subjects as rapidly as a person who has had more schooling. It is also a well-known fact that anyone will remember a thing far better by seeing it rather than hearing about it. Therefore, care had to be taken not to make the course too difficult or advanced and to have as many practical demonstrations as possible.

The difficulty in the course being regularly followed lies in the fact that the Sea School receives a weekly quota of recruits, and men are detached irregularly and often very suddenly. In view of the limited number of instructors, class-rooms, equipment, varying numbers, etc., it was found impractical to arrange a course whereby a certain number of men would enter as one class and progress together throughout the entire term. It was therefore necessary to formulate the course so that a recruit joining would be able to begin at any point and continue with the rest of the class. After careful consideration it was decided to combine as many important subjects as possible into a one-week course with a three-week variation of the minor subjects. It is believed that the present Sea School course meets all the above requirements.

A class can enter at any time and immediately begin with the others ahead of them. By repeating each important subject at least three times a recruit should absorb enough to familiarize himself with it. If for some reason a half day is missed one week, the class is sure to get these subjects at least two other times. This system is also a help to men on guard, on the sick list temporarily or absent for other reasons.

As the Training Schedule shows, troop is held daily at .0845 in "Blues" and each man is thoroughly inspected. He then goes into his squad room and stands by his locker which is also inspected. The remainder of the morning is spent in close order drill, one day a week being devoted to extended order. During summer months recruits are given instruction in swimming twice a week in place of the second close order drill period.

The afternoon instruction is carried out in the Gun Shed of the Old Officers' School. The building is equipped with five-inch, three-inch and three-pound guns, several drill guns (loading machines), a set of signal flags, sample rank insignia and rating badges of officers and enlisted men of the Navy and Marine Corps, a ship's bell and other sea-going gear.

The afternoon is divided into fifty-five-minute class periods. Each non-commissioned officer instructor has several subjects which are his special-

ties. The greatest attention is paid to orderly instruction and gun drill. Recruits are drilled in carrying correctly various messages using nautical phraseology and they are also taught the customary ship's reports to the Officer of the Deck, Captain and Executive Officer. In gun drill they are drilled in each position of a gun crew. Crews are formed and loading drill held, the principal casualties being carefully explained. They are also trained in pointing, training, and sightsetting with lectures on the nomenclature and operation of a battery. In addition to ship's gunnery, a lecture and elementary training is given in the use and safety precautions of the automatic rifle, pistol and machine gun. One period a week is devoted to the international code pennants, flags and lights a Marine should know. (Easy, Baker, Five-flag, Guard-flag and various lights.) The Sea School is fortunate in having the use of the old *North Dakota*, which is out of commission in the Navy Yard. One afternoon a week is spent aboard her and ship nomenclature is taught. The class is also taken through the Navy Yard Boat Shop, where the various types of boats are shown and instruction given in small-boat nomenclature. During the summer months two afternoon periods are spent on the river in pulling boats, and every man is taught to pull an oar. In order to develop the young recruit as much as possible daily physical drills are given with and without arms. An hour a week is also given to semaphore drill. Formal inspection and review is held every Tuesday by the Commanding Officer, followed by an inspection of barracks and lockers.

As part of the instruction course the Sea School maintains the Marine Barracks guard of five posts. Men who have been in school the longest are used for this duty. Although these posts are a part of the regular Navy Yard Guard and under the Officer of the Day they are visited regularly by the instructors of the Sea School in order to thoroughly train recruits in their general and special orders and other guard duties.

As each group of recruits finish the prescribed course they are given an examination by the senior instructor. The examination is as follows:

EXAMINATION

I. Messages (10 points)

A. Candidate must carry one of the following messages:

From the Navigator to the Captain.

Report to the Captain that we are making 145 revolutions, steering on course 296 degrees true bearing, that the visibility is 20,000 yards, and there is a ten mile wind blowing from the North East.

B. From the Captain to the Gunnery Officer.

Report to the Gunnery Officer that the enemy's fleet has been sighted bearing 135 degrees relative. Have General Quarters sounded immediately. After testing out have main battery stand by and secondary battery go into reserve.

C. From the Captain to the Officer of the Deck.

Tell the Officer of the Deck that the Admiral will leave the ship at 1530. Have his barge alongside with six side boys but never mind the guard and band, and notify the Engineer Officer that the Admiral wishes him to accompany him.

D. From Officer of the Deck to the Captain.

Report to the Captain that the fire main has sprung a leak in Compartment C-206.

The Chief Engineer requests permission to secure the pressure on the main until this leak can be repaired. The estimated time for its repair is about two hours.

E. From Engineer Officer to the Captain.

Report to the Captain that the oil cooling pump has lost its suction within the last fifteen minutes and the temperature of the main bearings has risen to 148 degrees. Request permission to reduce speed to 5 knots. We have a hose playing on all the bearings in the engine room to get temperature again to normal.

2. Signals (10 Points)

A. Candidate must know names and uses of following international code flags and where they fly from. (5 Points).

Powder Flag.

Meal Pennant.

Senior Officer present.

Absentee Pennant.

Admiral's Flag.

Guard Flag.

Man Overboard and Breakdown Flag.

Preparatory.

Ensign.

Jack.

B. Candidate must know the following lights and where shown. (3 Points).

Running Lights.

Flag Ship Lights.

Absentee Lights.

Man-o-war Lights.

Guard Light.

Man Overboard Light.

Anchored Lights.

C. Speed cones and Flags. (2 Points).

What are speed cones, and flags? When and where are they used?

3. Orderly Duty (10 Points)

A. Candidate must know officers' rank markings in the Navy and Marine Corps. (3½ Points.)

B. Must know rating of enlisted men in the Navy and Marine Corps. (3½ Points.)

C. Candidate must be able to strike time on ship's bell. (3½ Points.)

4. Seamanship (10 Points)

A. Nomenclature of ship. (3½ Points.)

B. Small boat nomenclature and types. (3½ Points.)

C. Nautical terms and boat courtesy. (3½ Points.)

5. General Orders (10 Points)

A. Must recite General Orders without hesitation.

6. Hammocks (10 Points)

A. Be able to sling, lash and stow a hammock. (5 Points.)

B. To tie five different knots and be able to tell the use of each. (5 Points.)

7. Gunnery (10 Points)

A. Nomenclature of a 5 inch gun. (5 Points.)

B. Proficiency in sight setting. (2½ Points.)

C. Proficiency in loading drill. (2½ Points.)

8. *Semaphore* (10 Points)

- A. Candidate must know semaphore code and be able to send and receive four words a minute.

9. *Drill* (10 Points)

- A. Proficiency in close and extended order drill and manual of arms. (5 Points.)
B. Proficiency in and knowledge of automatic rifle, pistol and machine gun. (3 Points.)
C. Proficiency in Physical drill under arms. (2 Points.)

10. *Military Appearance* (10 Points)

- A. Personal appearance and military bearing. (5 Points.)
B. Neatness of Locker and Bunk in squad room. (5 Points.)
Total points, 100.

Each candidate in order to graduate from the Sea School must make a grade of 75 per cent. on the above examination. If the recruit qualifies, an entry to that effect is made on page 14 of his S/R book and his name is placed on the list as available for sea. However, he continues to attend classes and perform the regular duties of the Sea School, so that the things he has learned may be more firmly impressed on his mind.

The recruits who fail to pass the above examination are given a second examination with next class, and if they fail again are transferred to the Post Barracks Detachment. Men are also transferred who have been spotted during the course as being unfit for sea duty.

Just prior to leaving the Post upon transfer of each detachment to sea, they are given a final inspection by the Commanding Officer of the Sea School. Each man is also paid in full on a special money requisition and all debts incurred while in the Sea School are required to be settled.

By careful selection at Parris Island of the men sent to the Sea School and by a more careful weeding out here of the undesirables, those that remain should be able to fit into any ship's guard without very much readjustment. It is the mission of the East Coast Sea School to coöperate as closely as possible with the Detachment Commanders of the ships of the Scouting Force and Special Service Squadron and to send the officer afloat the best sea-going Marines that can be produced.