

# Sea Scouts in the Maritime Industry

A common question asked by the maritime community today is: "Where are the mariners of tomorrow?" A potential answer: the Sea Scout program. In taking a quick workplace survey, you may be surprised to find the number of people who served in the Scouts.

Sea Scouting is the nautical branch of the Boy Scouts, and it's a worldwide program. It first got started in England in 1910 and then in America in 1912. The three Aims of Scouting is to instill good character, teach good citizenship, and promote physical fitness. The Sea Scouts embody all of these aims with the addition of teaching valuable maritime skills. These are all desirable traits in our maritime workforce, but just what types of nautical skills that are taught within this program are unknown by most people. Specialized training always starts with the basics. The first advancement rank for a 14-year-old Sea Scout recruit is the Apprentice rank. It consists of learning some basic shipboard safety rules, swimming skills, good attendance, and of course what all good Scouts learn- knot tying. The advancement structure then goes to Ordinary and then to Able. The highest crew rank is the Quartermaster. It is often thought of as being even more difficult to achieve than the more famous Eagle Scout Award. To achieve a Quartermaster the youth must plan and conduct all aspects of a long cruise on one of our vessels.

Sea Scout vessels have been as large as the 180 ft. ship that cruised from

Baltimore, Md., to Stockton, Calif., via the Panama Canal. As a matter of fact, the Scouts have planned and taken some great training cruises with young future mariners. Some of these cruises have started in San Francisco Bay and sailed to Canada or Mexico. One cruise up the Columbia River was taken to give the Sea Scouts canal and lock experience. That particular cruise was on the 90 ft. Sea Scout Ship Chaser out of Napa, Calif. Many times, the 125-ft. Sea Scout Ship Morris has left San Francisco bound for Alaska. These larger vessels more commonly cruise from Northern California toward more exotic Southern ports of call such as Santa Catalina Island. The 63-ft. Santa Cruz ship called Steeves even cruises to Hawaii.

Cruising affords Scouts the opportunity to experience what it's like to stand a watch at the helm or as the lookout. They are also taught how to stand engine room watches, too. Let's not forget galley duty. Planning menus, creating shopping lists, and preparing meals underway all while staying under budget is an accomplishment in itself. There are also drills of every type imaginable to conduct during this valuable sea time.

Man overboard, fire, collision, and abandon ship drills may be the ones that come to mind, but there are many more to learn as well. The Scouts practice convoy cruising maneuvers, signal flag communications, underway replenishment of vessels, steering casualties, medical emergencies, and helicopter ops to name a few more; even maritime

security drills. The Scouts also receive some instruction from the Coast Guard on defense from modern pirates and forced boarding techniques at our Safety@Sea events. Skipper Paul Hirsh of the 102-ft. SSS Northland based out of Richmond, Ca. has been instrumental in creating MARSEC manuals for the Scout fleet.

Classroom time is often spent at the weekly ship meetings. There is navigation and piloting to learn before the Scouts go anywhere. There are also nautical competitions between ships called regattas that teach even more skills. Some specialized training events such as the ever popular Safety@Sea provide hands on learning for our Scouts. That's where U.S. Coast Guard and adult Sea Scout personnel instruct and observe as crew members don full body immersion suits and swim in them. Sea Scouts practice damage control skills, put out real fires, and shoot off live pyrotechnics there. When not at training events, there are also repairs and maintenance of the vessels.

This type of experience — including repairs to diesel engines — is the type of experience that often gives them the confidence to attend a maritime academy and work in the industry.

Sea Scouts can be found in the Coast Guard, Navy, and Marines. They are in the Merchant Marine too like the three San Francisco Bar pilots and the three Alaska pilots. You name the type of vessel, and there will probably be a former Sea Scout on it.

## About the Author



Capt. Marc Deglino is a professional Sea Scout instructor. An expert witness for the courts, he holds a 200-ton near coastal masters license. He has served on barges, container ships, tugs, research vessels, passenger vessels, and training ships. He has an associate science degree in Administration of Justice. Contact him at tel: (559) 358-6708; Email: seascoutwizard@gmail.com

Sea Scouts have a background that makes it easier and faster for them to learn job specific skills within certain companies and organizations. Sea Scouts itself is a maritime organization that needs a constant flow of new youth and funds.

If you know of any interested teenagers that want to learn some great skills all while having fun and adventure, then call your local Boy Scout council and ask for a Sea Scout ship near you, or visit [www.seascout.us](http://www.seascout.us). Get involved and help sponsor a ship too. Feed the Sea Scouts and the Sea Scouts will feed you.

Sea Scouts teach in a real-world environment many of the skill sets desperately needed in the modern marine industry.



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