

Cadet Temple

Annapolis Division Sea Cadets

Coast Guard Training (JAMES RANKIN)

I had the great privilege for my Coast Guard training to go on the JAMES RANKIN, a Coast Guard buoy tender, the Keeper Of The Bay, a roughly 175ft flat bottom boat with a big crane.

My training was 8 day's long and my uniform for the training were BDU's, I got their in Pensacola Florida where FS2 picked me up at the airport. From there we did not go to the boat. We went groceries shopping! We spent a whopping \$2000 on food. From there I knew this was going to be a fun training. Open galley 24/7. When we got to the boat, we unloaded 8 groceries carts full of food to the galley; the other shipmates helped us along. I had never been on a ship like this; sure I have been on museum ships in the Baltimore harbor, but never an active duty Coast Guard ship. I was shown my berthing, a Petty Officer Second Class berthing. It has a flat screen TV, and roomy bunks. I had top bunk, they were stacked two high. There were curtains because people liked to use their phone or laptop after taps. I did not think the berthing's would be so cold. They had AC pumping all day, and all night long. I wore shorts and a T-shirt. I froze every night. There was a head in every berthing. The stern of the ship was the smoking area, also people liked to call other people on the stern.

The first three days we stayed in port because the tropical storm had to pass. So many people went out to the E club, or out to the mall, or to the NEX. My shipmates treated me as if I were a shipmate of theirs. While I was there I went to the movies two times, went to the flee market, and went to the NEX.

I could be found on the bridge, all day long. At first I would study my helmsman, and lookout on the bridge, but then I became very sick due to motion sickness. Not Seasickness. I had to go down in the Galley and study. I asked a lot of questions, and they were very happy to answer. I even talked to BM2, and BM1 about leadership. I learned helmsman, and lookout while I was there, that includes spotting contacts, using alidades, reporting contacts, rudder commands, relieving the watch, man overboard, sound signals, day shapes, etc. That is a lot to learn, but I managed to do it. I got all of my WQS's filled out, and passed my online tests, I only needed to take my board then I would be qualified for helmsman and lookout, but I ran out of time.

While we were out at sea, we found an immigrants raft! There were empty water jugs, boots, and a cap on the makeshift raft, but no immigrant.

I got to drive the ship; well I got to use the state of the art Z drives, which coast 1million dollars each. I was given a course, and I had to stay on it. It was very fun, and anyone can drive a boat fast, it takes a skilled person to drive a boat slow. I was very nervous having the XO gives me commands.

Speaking of being nervous, we all went out to dinner. I had to use the head, so as soon as we got their I went to use the head; everyone from our ship was there, including another Captain. The other Captain was paying for everyone's meal. I came back to see that everyone was already seated. I looked at all the tables. Three tables, one Officer Table, and two Enlisted tables. One of the enlisted tables are filled up, no more seats. The

other Enlisted table is filled up no more seats, please let the Officers table be filled up too. But no, the Officers table had one seat open! I kindly asked XO If I could sit at that table, he said sure. He got up and let me in, while this was happening a couple Enlisted giggled at my having to sit at the Officers table. Can anyone say awkward? To my right was XO, to my left was a Captain of another ship, directly in front of me was a 30 year Navy vet, and current member of the Auxiliary, to the left of his was Senior Chief, and to the right of the Navy vet was the Captain of our ship. I did not speak unless spoken to.

I can speak about this training for days, this was an absolutely amazing training, I would not trade this experience for anything. If you have a chance of going underway, or being able to go to a training where you are the only Sea Cadet, take it! I thank you Chief Moon for making this possible.

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