



Commissioners and Sea Scouting

By Rick Hillenbrand and National Sea Scout Commodore Charles Wurster

Q. What type of units do commissioners serve?

A. Packs and troops, teams and crews, posts and clubs, and SHIPS ... oh my. And ships? And ships. Perhaps because they can be few and far between in some parts of the country, Sea Scout ships have frequently (to use a nautical term) “fallen off the radar” for some commissioners. In theory, commissioners at all levels are supposed to serve ALL* units, and while there are many examples of how commissioners in some councils DO serve their Sea Scout ships, even in the best of councils ships may get lost in the process.

(* Ideally, Exploring units (posts and clubs) are provided unit service by Exploring Service Team members, but commissioners have been asked to provide interim unit service for Exploring units until such time that there are sufficient Service Team members to adequately execute this responsibility.)

Some Scouters have no knowledge of Sea Scouting, but Sea Scouting has been around for more than 100 years. Lord Baden-Powell wrote a booklet titled *Sea Scouting for Boys* in 1911, and a year later Sea Scouting was founded in America.

Sea Scout ships (units) provide opportunities in character development, teamwork, leadership, and seamanship in a high-adventure maritime environment. Sea Scouts are involved in all sorts of activities in, on, under, and around the water—sailing, motor boating, paddle sports, swimming and lifesaving, scuba diving, nautical traditions, STEM, service projects, and more. Sea Scouting is a coed program for youth who are 14 years old, or 13 and have completed the eighth grade.

The Sea Scout program incorporates three main elements—the advancement emphasis of Boy Scouts, the high-adventure aspects of Venturing, and the career investigation of Exploring—all in one package. Sea Scouting is founded on the Scout Oath and Law and the Sea Promise.



Because of the program Sea Scouting offers, there are some unique challenges when it comes to providing commissioner services. Some councils have only a few Sea Scout ships, or none at all. In many councils, the chair of the Sea Scout Committee, who holds the traditional title of Commodore, provides commissioner-like services.

National Commissioner Charles Dahlquist and his staff have decided to formally enable the assistance of Sea Scout Commodores. Accordingly, Sea Scout Commodores are encouraged to dual-register as assistant commissioners at the appropriate level—national, regional, area, or council. This registration will empower their work and provide them access to Commissioner Tools. As an administrative task, ANYONE who registers as a commissioner NEEDS to get trained as a commissioner (if they have not already done so); see the Commissioner Position Trained Requirements found on pages 3 and 4 of this issue of *The Commissioner*.

For those not certain where to find Sea Scout ships (units) in the Organization Navigator (the vertical list of units on the left-hand side in the suite of *my.Scouting* tools that includes Commissioner Tools, Member Manager, Training Manager, and more), have no fear; you don’t need to know how to operate a sextant or use a compass. Sea Scout units are found at the bottom of the list, or you can search on “ship” in the search box. (Units are listed in the following order: packs, troops, teams, crews, posts and clubs, and ships).



Commissioners, field professionals, and Service Team members can now make entries into Commissioner Tools.

Learn more about Sea Scouts in the *Sea Scout Manual*, No. 33239, and at SeaScout.org.

