



# 13-year-old Navy Sea Cadet on life aboard the Grayfox, 'You're not just sitting around being a bum playing video games'

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**Cadets on board the Navy Sea Cadet ship Grayfox on the Annual Port-of-Call tour in Bay City.**

**Navy Sea Cadet ship Grayfox comes to Bay City gallery (11 photos)**

**BAY CITY, MI** — Last year, 13-year-old Amy Abel needed a milk crate to stand on while steering the 120-foot long U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Ship Grayfox.

Today, Abel is able to fulfill the duty of helmsman sans milk crate. She is a member of the Grayfox's 21-cadet crew, which worked together to bring the ship from Port Huron to Bay City on Sunday.

"The best part of the Naval Sea Cadet Corps is that you get to learn by doing," Abel said. "You're not just sitting around being a bum playing video games."

The goal of the Naval Sea Cadet Corps is to help young men and women gain skills in basic seamanship. The crew performs all ship operations under the supervision of volunteer Sea Cadet officers and civilian instructors.

"The cadets are divided into the port and starboard section to handle responsibilities," said Lieutenant JR Adam Glaysher. "One section is on duty while the other has a break."

While the Grayfox is underway, cadets swap roles on the bridge as quarter master, helmsman, and a communicator. There is also a forward and afterwatch while the ship is moving, where cadets scan the water for hazards or men overboard.

"We run over drills constantly," Glaysher said. "We have a dummy, Oscar, who we occasionally throw over to make sure the crew isn't sleeping."

The port and starboard sections compete with each other on timed tasks.

"They compete for privileges," Glaysher said. "They might get to be first in the chow line or not have to do a watch."

There are four officers, four crew members and one captain in addition to the cadets. The cadets arrived in Port Huron last Friday and had a several days of maritime training before departing for the 12-hour trip to Bay City.

For 14-year-old Zach Blizzard, this is the fifth or sixth time he has worked aboard the cruise from Port Huron to Bay City. This time, he is performing engineering responsibilities on the ship.

"I get to run the engines, switch over from shore power to generator power, operate the pumps and refill the fuel," Blizzard said. "On this trip, we had a leak in the shower that I had to fix, and I learned how quickly the engine room heats up."

While anchored here, the Grayfox crew — made up in part of Naval Sea Cadets ages 14-18 and Navy League Cadets ages 11-13 — is offering tours to the public and two-hour cruises to underprivileged youth and various organizations, said Mike Kegley, president of the Saginaw Valley Naval Ship Museum, which is hosting the visit.

Kegley said that the public is welcome to come aboard the ship during off hours, typically after 3 p.m. into the evening. Tours are free, but donations are suggested.

The Grayfox is the largest Sea Cadet training vessel in the United States. It was built in 1984 and served time in the Caribbean and Hawaii as a recovery vessel during torpedo drills.

This visit to Bay City marks the fourteenth year that the Grayfox has made the trip. It is scheduled to leave Bay City on July 8 to return to its home port of Port Huron.

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