

## Sea Cadets drop anchor in Garden City

For Edward Brennan, moving the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet program from Ferndale to Garden City has been a dream come true.

The James M. Hannan Division had been meeting at the Royal Oak Recreation Center in Ferndale for two years before finding a new home at the Henry Ruff School in Garden City. On Saturday, the cadets in their dress whites held their first drill in their new home, a classroom at the former [elementary school](#).

“It was an old building, it had a lot of problems,” said Brennan, the division's executive officer. “We were looking around for something new and found this. We moved in on July 1.”

The Hannan Division is the oldest continuously serving sea cadet unit in the state, and Brennan believes the second oldest unit in the United States. It got its start almost 48 years ago, offering youth ages 11-18 the “unique opportunity to experience what it's like to be in the military without making a four-year commitment.”

The unit called the Broadhead Armory in Detroit home for 40 years until it closed. It then moved to Redford Presbyterian Church for five years until it closed because

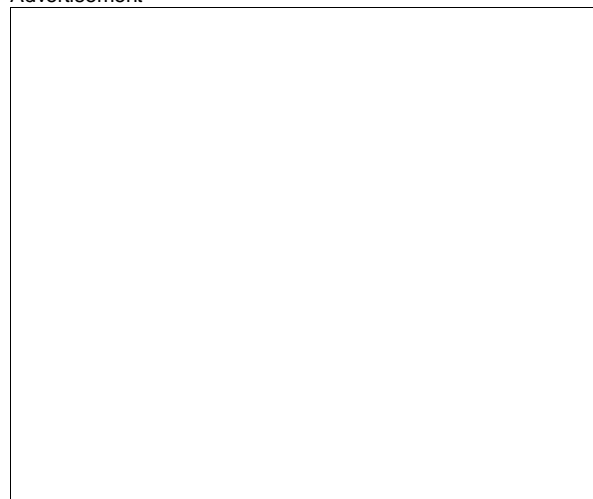
of declining membership and has been based in Ferndale for two years. It will mark its 48th year of operation in October.

The [U.S. Navy](#) Sea Cadet Corps is a federally chartered non-profit educational organization sponsored by the Navy League of the U.S. and supported by the Navy Department and U.S. Coast Guard. The Sea Cadet Corps has two units: The League Cadet Corps, supported entirely by the Navy League, for youth ages 11-13 and the Sea Cadet Corps for 13-18-year-olds.

The Hannan Division meets twice a month — 8:15 a.m. to 4 p.m. the second and fourth Saturdays. The cadets learn about naval history and customs, seamanship, close order drill, naval terminology, decision making, personal responsibility and physical fitness.

The cadets have to complete basic training at the Great Lakes Naval Station in Illinois before they can take the advance training — 53 one- to three-week programs

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sponsored by the U.S. Navy and the U.S. CoastGuard.

"It's a 10-day miniature boot camp," Brennan said. "It's taught by the Navy, and all cadets have to take it before they go on the programs. The cadets do 10 days, Navy recruits do 16 weeks."

This summer, the division has cadets taking advanced training with the Navy SEALs in Virginia, attending submarine school in New England, taking master at arms classes at Central Michigan University and doing aviation training on the West Coast.

There's also the opportunity to take a two-week cruise aboard the USS Greyfox, a 120-foot former naval ship that cadets run, from steering it and cooking the food to plotting the courses, standing watches and learning what it's like to sail on a Navy ship. Brennan said.

And cadets can also take part in an exchange program with 16 other countries. They can spend two, three or four weeks in countries like Russia, Japan, England and Scotland.

The Hannan Division serves southeast Michigan and has about 40 cadets from throughout the metropolitan area — Detroit, Downriver, Warren, Howell, Ypsilanti, Dearborn and Dearborn Heights. Brennan, who lives in Milford, hopes the new location will help grow the program.

He's been involved in the Sea Cadets for 10 years. He served in the Navy during the

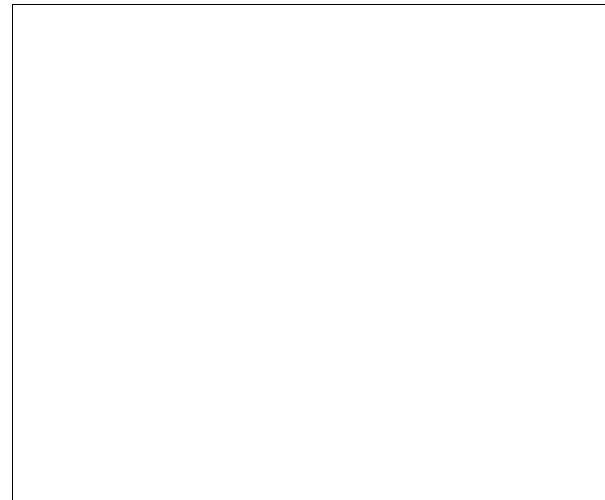
Korean War and was active in the Boys Scouts as an adult. He lost that connection but found out about the Sea Cadet program after moving to Milford.

"Sea Cadets is one the best kept secrets in the world," said Brennan who holds the rank of lieutenant and is the unit's recruiting office, executive officer and administrative office. "I stumbled on the program, joined and I've never looked back. Imagine a kid spending three weeks with the Navy SEALs, it's an experience of a lifetime."

Parents and youth who want to see what the Sea Cadet program is all about can stop by Henry Ruff School during the drill. The school is at 30300 Maplewood, east of Merriman, in Garden City. They can also call Brennan at (248) 685-9568.

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