

Coast Guard Cadets Take to New England Waters

A cadet gives his account of the cruise as watch captain.

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By Elaine Lembo and Bill Cambell

On July 13, 2010, second-class cadets from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy made landfall aboard four Luders 44s at Harbour Court, summer station of the New York Yacht Club, and were treated to a bbq by the Coast Guard Foundation. Among its many ongoing projects, the Foundation has launched a campaign and raised more than half of \$6.4 million needed to fund design and construction of a new fleet of sail-training sloops.

Here's a first-person account of the cruise by cadet Bill Campbell, one of the crewmembers who sailed aboard the boats:

I'm a junior at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut, and a management major. When school isn't in session, I take part in a summer-long training program. For two weeks, I was aboard the *Blue Goose*, one of four Luders 44 yawls acquired by the Academy in 1966. Right now, I'm sitting in my room in Chase Hall, our dormitory, and am looking back on the experience.



Elaine Lembo

Cadets from the fleet of Luders 44 yawls exploring New England waters on an annual sail-training cruise came ashore to enjoy food and drink as guests of the Coast Guard Foundation at the New York Yacht Club in Newport, Rhode Island. Cadet junior Bill Campbell, who wrote about the trip, is pictured, far right.

The two days that stick out the most to me were the times I stood as watch captain, or the highest ranking cadet, for the day. Before the trip even started, I did a tremendous amount of planning. The first leg I was responsible for took us from Block Island, Rhode Island, to Menemsha, on Martha's Vineyard. While the rest of the crew was on liberty, I spent my evening pouring over NOAA charts and selecting the best route. I had Eldridge open for tidal information and the WX channel was on the radio. The next morning, I briefed the crew and our safety officer on what I had in mind—I planned to take us south of Block, breaking from the other boats, and head northeast to the Chop so as to maximize our time under sail.

I steered us out of Great Salt Pond on Block Island and headed south. Trying to take fixes at a regular interval using only an electronic position and a chart became a problem. The air and rocking belowdecks soon made everyone who went there seasick! We moved the location of the chart to the deck, and I ended up popping my head below just long enough to get a lat and long. We soon hit fog and an incredible sight appeared off the port beam—Southeast Light suspended in midair! In truth, it was an optical illusion caused by the fog covering up the cliff. For a moment though, I was at a loss.

Later in the day, while close-hauled and heading northeast, a perfect rainbow in the shape of a ring formed around the clouds covering the sun. It was a beautiful sight to behold. After many hours of sailing, *Blue Goose* moored at Coast Guard Station Menemsha. A few days later, the same pier was engulfed in flames visible to us miles away on Cuttyhunk, in the Elizabeth Islands (www.mvtimes.com/marthas-vineyard/article.php?id=1551).

The trip from Newport, Rhode Island, to Stonington, Connecticut, was a success, though there were many challenges along the way. I was much more comfortable with navigational planning and had the entire morning to finalize it. Rain prevented us from heading out until 1200 and when *Blue Goose* finally was under way, eight-foot swells starting hitting the boat. On top of this, an error caused the GPS to conk out. Helmsman and navigators became a rotational position and our handheld GPS became invaluable. Fortunately, our boat arrived safely in Stonington and returned the next day to New London. I had an awesome two weeks.

To learn more about the academy's [Coastal Sail Training Program, click here](#).

To read *CW's* coverage of the fundraising campaign to build a fleet of eight new cutter-rigged sloops, [click here](#).