



First a little background information on the school. The National Maritime School of Peru (Escuela Nacional de la Marina Mercante de Perú) is in Callao, Lima's port city. The school was founded in the early 1970s, previously the merchant marine academy was part of the naval academy. The school is under the direction of the Peruvian Navy and the Peruvian Ministry of Defense so naval officers run the school. The Superintendent (directór) is a Captain (Capítan de Navío) in the Peruvian Navy. The entire school is contained in one building. There is a central courtyard where formations are held, similar to VMI. Reveille is at 0530 every day with PT or cleaning parities until 0630. From then on the schedule is very similar to Kings Point with

lunch muster at 1300. After classes at 1625 everyone forms by sports teams and sports are held until 1830.

Another muster is held at 1900 and everyone eats dinner together.

After dinner there is a break until 2015 and mandatory study period is held until 2155. There is very little free time. However the entire schedule is subject to the whim of the CDO and the naval officers who run the school. So while it appears at first glance they have a strict schedule every thing is subject to change.

For me personally some of the highlights have been the following. In my first two weeks we were sent out on a training cruise on the BAP (Buque Armada de Perú) Pisco which was a US troop transport ship built in the late 40s. The main engine died in the middle of rough weather so that was an adventure. We were all berthed down in a hold with bad ventilation and with the bunks stacked four high. I can't highly recommend the food on the ship either, one cadet found a cockroach in his biscuit, but it really let me experience what life on ships was like 50 or 60 years ago. On the 27 of



September, the navy sponsored a half marathon that the school ran in. I'm not sure of my place exactly but I was the first one to finish for the school. On October 8th I participated in the Peruvian Navy's annual 8 de Octubre ceremony and parade. The 8th of October 1884 is when the Peruvian national hero ADM Grau, died fighting the Chileans in the War of the Pacific. For some reason as soon as I came here I was placed on the Cadet Commanders Staff, so I marched as part of the battalion staff, out in front of the marching detail with a MGP 9mm submachine gun. The president, his council of ministers, Congressman, clergy, ambassadors, the head of the navy and all the high ranking military officers were present. So there I was not yet two months in Peru, goose stepping past the reviewing



stand at eyes right looking Presidente de la Republica Alan Garcia right in the eyes, screaming out the Himno de Grau at the top of my lungs.

I was also there when the first class had to renew their STCW Aquatic Survival Competencies. I expected it to be something like Kings Point where we are in Gumby Suits in a swimming pool. Well their test takes place in the ocean in PT gear. We split into several groups and each group huddled together for 30 minutes while the instructors splashed us and waved smoke canisters in our faces to simulate waves and fire. It was probably the coldest I have ever been. One cadet in my group then went into stage two hypothermia, he became drowsy and movement was difficult. So the instructors pulled him into the life raft, but they wouldn't let him go ashore. After 30 minutes we had to swim underneath the life raft and crawl in on the other side. So we managed to squeeze about 35 of us into the life raft and sat there shivering as we got a lecture on lifeboat safety from the instructor who swam around in short shorts and a hoodie. Then one by one he tossed us out of the lifeboat and we had to swim ashore in groups. It was funny to see everyone straggle out of the water onto

shore where we all collapsed and tried to get warm. Then the next day we went to fire fighting school. We did not have full suits and respiratory devices but only heat resistant ponchos. The hose team had to duck walk back and forth towards a pretend fire while the instructor sprayed us all down with another hose. We also put out two real fires. The last fire was in a small structure and after putting out the fire we had to duck walk in, stand up and breathe the fumes, then drop to the deck and stay there for several minutes. We were all chocking and coughing. While these experiences were tough they were also a lot of fun, really created a sense of camaraderie, and drilled the basics into our heads.



I had heard before going that military schools in foreign countries are much stricter and this is very true. Everything is more formal and there is a procedure to every interaction with officers. For example, every time an officer walks by you have to yell "Firmen con todos los movimientos" and everyone comes to attention. Then the highest ranking cadet has to run six paces in front of the officer, who always keeps on walking, and requests to carry on. This is done any time an officer walks by including into the mess hall while we are eating. The first class has absolute control over all other cadets and all lower classes are treated like plebes at KP. Any cadet has the authority to IT or stick anyone below him. Any friendly interaction between members of different classes is considered fraternization. This creates strong class unity but decreases the opportunities for leadership. In fact, there is almost no emphasis on leading but instead on maintaining strict discipline. I miss the sense of general camaraderie, opportunities that exist at Kings

The discipline system "stick" upperclassmen who in underclassmen. The cadet fills the offense and turns it in to the the week demerits are tallied and position, but a certain cadet to stay until 1800 on mean all weekend. For larger commandant (sub-director) is certain amount of days he must stated there is not a whole lot of loyalty outside of the class so cadets have no problem with placing lower ranking cadets on report. I have been encouraged on numerous occasions to place other cadets on report but I haven't been able to bring myself.



not to mention the learning Points. is based on demerits. Officers turn are expected to "stick" out a small piece of paper with discipline office. At the end of and posted. It varies by class amount of demerits forces the Saturday while higher amounts offenses a meeting with the held and the cadet is given a remain at the academy. As

Meals are very different from Kings Point as well. Everyone stands at attention until ordered to sit by the highest ranking cadet. First class sits, then second class etc. Lower classman pass out cloth napkins and drinks. The cloth napkins are not actually used, we just place them on our laps and use paper napkins folded into triangles by the underclassmen. Meals consist of an appetizer and a main course always consisting of a scoop of rice, a slice of potato and some kind of meat almost always chicken. There is also a soup course and beans at lunch. Breakfast is three different kinds of rolls. The food is already at each place on each place when we are seated. Table manners are very important and underclassmen have to offer cadets more drink, sauces etc. as well as asking permission to begin each course. If a first classmen does not particularly like his serving, he or she can switch it out with any underclassmen's plate. The meal concludes when the highest ranking cadet, with permission from the CDO, dismisses us by class. You stand up cross your self, as Catholicism is the official religion of the Navy, and all the lower ranking cadets yell "Buen provecho cadete."

However after spending some time here I have realized that this system is easier then it might seem because the cadets only "sleep" at the school, they really don't "live" there. In Peru everything is centered around Lima. It is expected that all cadets are from or have family in Lima. So while the discipline can be oppressive, on the weekends the cadets return home to their real lives, their homes, their families, their friends. For example, two days before the 8 de Octubre parade we were all sent home so our mothers could wash our uniforms. They don't seem to understand, unless I pull out a map, that for us, the academy is really our home

for four years. Also cadets from different classes are friendly outside of school, and yes, frat in the more romantic sense still very much exists.

The school is a five year program with four years of schooling and the fifth year spent out at sea. To meet STCW requirements and to be competitive in the industry the cadets must learn basic as well as technical English. Additionally there is no separation between academics, regiment, and athletics. This is in part because



the whole school is in one building and also because naval officers hold all administrative positions and the academic dean is a retired admiral. Classes are constantly interrupted and sports are often cancelled or changed at the whim of the officers. While I definitely prefer our schedule as it is more flexible and allows us to do more, I would say we spend 30 min to an hour each day simply waiting in formations, I have been very impressed with the attitude of the Peruvian cadets. They are enthusiastic about their professional training, are much tougher and overall have positive attitudes with minimal complaining. I heard someone say they wanted to produce people who were dedicated to their careers by choice not obligation. For example on the *BAP Pisco* everyone made the best of an

uncomfortable situation and tried to learn as much as they could, there was minimal complaining. I almost laughed when I thought of what kind of response you would get if you put Kings Pointers on that ship. I believe this is a positive effect of the strong discipline and tough plebe year. When during Indoc, you wake up in the morning at 0530 and are forced to swim in the freezing cold ocean; being on a 10 day training cruise doesn't seem so bad. The strong discipline and IT builds mental and physical toughness as well coping strategies. By setting high standards initially, the school builds tough disciplined individuals. I can't help but wonder if there is a connection between PT gear being allowed in Delano, the canceling of Tattoo, and the sense of entitlement felt by our midshipman, say, when the liberty policy is changed. Additionally the rigorous Indoc and Plebe Year sets high standards and lets cadets know right away that they are there to work.

Overall the experience is constantly challenging me. For example, usually liberty uniform is SDBs for all classes, but one time they told the first class to leave in civvies. So I changed into jeans and a collared shirt, I thought I looked very nice. Well I come down for formation and everyone was wearing a tailored suit and tie. I had to run back up to my room and change. As you can see I often times have no idea what is going on. I have to learn new songs, a new way to fold my socks, new Regs, a new discipline system all over again. Adapting to a new culture, military, and academy is exactly like being a Plebe all over again. This is going to be a very tough year, at times very frustrating, but it is also very rewarding.



There is a website for the Escuela Nacional de la Marina Mercante de Perú

<http://www.enamm.edu.pe/>

The test is all in Spanish. There are several photo albums showing activities at the school.