

Troop 49 – The Pathfinders
Battleship Cove Overnight and day trip to the USS Nautilus Submarine
Fall River, MA & Groton, CT
January 15-16, 2011

Saturday, January 15

Our trip to Battleship Cove, in Fall River, Massachusetts got underway at 8AM on Saturday, January 15. It was a cold morning with clear skies. The troop rallied, and soon discovered that 2 scouts were not coming, after they did not show up and phone calls were made to their homes. Sheets with directions and driver cell phone numbers were distributed. Following the Guide to Safe Scouting, all were instructed to avoid caravanning, and meet up at the destination. After a couple of last minute carpool arrangements were worked out, the troop departed.

Interstates 287 and 95 were traffic free, which helped us make great time en route to Fall River. In Mr. Burns' mini-van, passengers were entertained with watching episodes of the TV show "Baa Baa Blacksheep", keeping in the theme of the World War II history that we were about to be surrounded by.

Upon arrival to Battleship Cove, the troop lined up with the other groups there. There was a fair amount of Cub Scout packs in attendance on this weekend. Scouts and parents were greeted by a staff member, and escorted aboard the Battleship Massachusetts. Our berthing area was located in the aft of the ship, portside. We were very close to the compartment which is dedicated to scouting (Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts), two compartments behind the Student Orientation Room.

SPL Mike Z took roll call, reviewed the safety rules, itinerary of the day, and then invited siblings and parents to claim bunks first, and instructed all with the time to be back in the berthing area for the fire drill and dinner. After this, scouts claimed bunks in rank order, and all were set up. The troop immediately went on deck and lined up for a troop photo.

Scouts and parents split up in groups, and went to explore the ships. There are 6 different ships located at Battleship Cove. In addition to the Battleship Massachusetts, there is also the USS Joseph Kennedy (Destroyer), named for John F. Kennedy's older brother, who was killed in WWII, the USS Lionfish (Submarine), a Soviet built frigate which was obtained from East Germany after the fall of the Soviet Union, and two PT boats, which are dry docked in a building on the pier.

The area inside the lower decks of the battleship is open to explore all night, so the focus before dinner was to explore the other ships at the cove. In addition to learning about the ships, scouts also had fun kicking the chunks of ice off the side of the ships, and seeing how far they would slide across the frozen cove. With the troop having recently completed the Signaling Merit Badge, one group paid special notice to the light signaling devices that each of the ships had mounted on the deck. These devices were used to 'flash' Morse code to nearby ships during the night under the cover of radio silence.

The troop rallied in the berthing area for the fire drill, and participated. Our berthing area was in section C, so that we were the third group to eat. Before dinner, we went to the Student Orientation room, where we were entertained by a movie about the ship. The scouts learned about the history of the battleship, and were honored to have an actual veteran who served on the ship be available to answer questions. Scouts found out that this veteran was in charge of the supplies for the ship. He also let scouts know that his favorite place on board was the ice cream parlor.

After the program, we were escorted by a staff member to the chow line. The troop weaved around the lower deck, and emerged up a ladder that leads into the wardroom / snack bar area. Each scout was given a nutritious meal of chicken, corn, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, milk, and pudding. After dinner, there were a number of programs going on that the scouts all went to participate in. Some scouts went to the movies to see some WWII era movies. Other scouts went to the PT boat museum (just on the starboard side of the area we were staying in) and learned about WWII era soldiers from two staff members who do reenactments.

A number of adults and scouts went to explore the ship's lower decks. The one area which most found amazing was the insides of the turrets. To get there, one needs to go about 5 decks below, and then climb through a small door, and then head back up into the turret. The round room was fascinating with all of the ammunition, gun powder rooms, and machines to move everything to the right place so that the ship could function.

Upon returning to the berthing area, many scouts and adults went to the wardroom to play cards. About the same time, we discovered that there had been an accident with one of our scouts who slipped on the wet metal floor in the area where you come down off the main deck. He headed home with his family, who were also on the trip. Lights out occurred at 11PM, and all went to sleep rather quickly.

Sunday, January 16

At 6AM was reveille. All woke and got ready for the new day. After getting packed up, we were lined up for breakfast at 7AM, and went through the same chow line, and had a breakfast of pancakes, sausage and cheesy tater tots. We returned to the berthing area, cleaned up, and packed up.

Battleship cove gives each participant a bag lunch for Sunday, and these are ready at 9AM. Several of the senior scouts went up to the mess hall and picked up these lunches. After returning with the lunches and dividing them up, we finished gathering our belongings, tied up a few loose ends, and headed out.

Stopping over at Groton is an easy side trip off I-95 on the way home. There is no entrance fee to the USS Nautilus, so all had the option to stop or press on towards home. Most decided to stop, and got the experience of visiting a submarine museum, which includes historical artifacts and models for the visitors to explore. Scouts got to see what it was like to sit in an early submarine, and also view the different types of torpedoes and missiles which submarines have carried throughout the ages. The

highlight of the visit, though, is getting to tour the USS Nautilus, which is docked in the river. Each participant is given a telephone type wand, which has an audio function. As you approach a display on the boat, there's a corresponding number which you key into the wand. When you put the wand to your ear, you hear the facts about that area.

After completing the tour, we exited, ala Disneyworld (through a gift shop), and got back in our cars for the ride home.

Submitted by: Mr. Dente

Lessons learned:

(1) Due to the early reservations required for this trip, deposits were collected early. There were some scouts who canceled after signing up and never paid the deposit, and some that signed up and paid the deposit. The troop committee will review the policies toward signup and payment

(2) Cancelations need to be directed to the SM in Charge, because that is the person who ultimate is responsible for payments.

(3) When an injury occurs, get the SIC involved as soon as possible, to take care of any paperwork needs, file an incident report, etc.

(4) Request if we can get our "brown bag" lunch on Saturday next time. Most were more interested in getting on the road Sunday morning rather than wait until 9AM to get the brown bag lunch.

