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翻译

TRANSLATIONS

**How to Achieve a "Soft Landing"
for New Recruits Joining Companies**



中国海事研究所
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How to Achieve a “Soft Landing” for New Recruits Joining Companies

News Observation on an Eastern Theater Command Navy Group’s Innovative Education of New Recruits¹

By Cai Qingjian, Miao Pingyi, and Special Correspondent Bao Hanliang

With expectations, dreams, and curiosity, in mid-June the new sailors who had enlisted this spring joined their companies. Saying goodbye to boot camp and moving to new posts, some new sailors experienced "acclimatization issues" in the unfamiliar environment. How can we help new comrades smoothly get through the "second adjustment period"? Each unit must carefully monitor the characteristics of the new sailors in addition to guiding and educating them. This issue's “Pathways of Youth” special edition brings you the stories and experiences of naval units as they work to effectively manage the integration of new sailors into their companies.



Talent sharing session

¹ 蔡庆坚 [Cai Qingjian], 苗平毅 [Miao Pingyi], 包涵亮 [Bao Hanliang], 兵下连如何实现“软着陆”——东部战区海军某大队创新新兵教育的新闻观察 [“How to Achieve a ‘Soft Landing’ for New Recruits Joining Companies—News Observation on an Eastern Theater Command Navy Group’s Innovative Education of New Recruits”], 人民海军 [People’s Navy], 13 July 2022, p. 4.



Visiting the honors room

How to uncover the essential characteristics of new sailors, how to cultivate their will to fight, how to deepen ideological and political education... At the height of summer, as another batch of new sailors joined their companies, helping them take the "first step in their military journey" has become an important task for units. To guide new sailors in quickly adapting to the new environment and becoming competent in their new positions, an Eastern Theater Command Navy survey ship group (侦察船大队) has started by inspiring a sense of honor, belonging, and responsibility. It has also combined a series of measures to fasten the "first button" of new recruits' lives in their companies.

Let New Sailors with Special Skills Take the Stage

One day in early July, a barracks gate riot control and emergency response cultivation and training session was underway at the group's training grounds. Surprisingly, the speaker was not one of the core group of squad leaders, but new recruit Zheng Juncheng.

The session included not only theoretical knowledge, but also practical demonstrations, as well as "unexpected tricks" such as evasive postures and grappling techniques. Zheng Juncheng's one-hour lecture occasionally earned rounds of applause from his comrades.

"After graduating from university, Zheng Juncheng worked in the public security system for a period of time, serving as the leader of a counter-terrorism assault team in the police force. He is an expert in counter-terrorism and riot prevention!" Seeing this author's puzzled expression, the detachment leader, Huang Youbin, took the initiative to explain: "In recent years, there have been more and more university-graduate sailors with 'special skills.' As soon as new sailors join their companies, we conduct questionnaires, review personnel files, and have heart-to-heart talks with them to fully understand and investigate their hobbies and characteristics. We organize activities such as 'new sailors at the podium' and 'storytelling sessions' to guide them in showcasing their talents and motivating their comrades, while also contributing to the improvement of their units."

"Squad leader, when doing neck stretching exercises, place your hands on your hips, pull in your abdomen, lower your shoulders, and slowly lift your head to the highest point. Pause briefly, and you'll feel the muscles being stretched..." Not long ago, new recruit Zhao Haocheng was leading his comrades in stretching exercises. After completing a set of movements, although everyone was sweating profusely, they all exclaimed with satisfaction: "My muscles are completely relaxed, this set of exercises is really effective!" In conversation, the authors learned that Zhao Haocheng had a sports career for 12 years and has obtained a national second-class athlete certificate. He has rich, specialized knowledge of sports rehabilitation and fitness. The group set up a "physical fitness mini-classroom" especially to make use of Zhao Haocheng's expertise, inviting him to serve as a "technical instructor." With his help, many comrades' physical fitness scores improved from passing to excellent.

New recruit Lin Haoliang studied computer technology at university and is very skilled in mathematical logic. He is often seen in the "sailor night school" helping new comrades by explaining theories. Wu Jiahao is studying pharmacy at university, and Huang Youbin arranged for him to give lessons on medications that, for instance, prevent disease heatstroke. Xu Zuhuang, who has studied broadcasting and hosting, is eloquent, and instructor Chen Xu encouraged him to organize a sitcom among the new recruits, which immediately brought them closer together... In this group, new sailors with special skills never worry about "not having a place to use their skills."

"When new sailors first join the military, they face unfamiliar environments and long-serving soldiers, which can easily lead to 'social anxiety.' We focus on using new recruits' hobbies and strengths as entry points to guide them in enhancing their senses of self-efficacy in familiar fields, so that everyone can more quickly and effectively integrate into their units." The group's leadership told the authors that in recent years, the average score of new recruits in their pre-billet operational training has been above 90 points, and their conversion rate into core personnel has been increasing each year.

Guiding New Recruits to Zero in on Their Values by Using Role Models

New recruit Zhang Weijian never expected that the first thing he would do after joining his company would be visiting the group's honor room.

"This is the first nautical chart of New China, obtained by the older generation of marine surveyors at the cost of their lives! They braved dangerous shoals, explored hidden reefs, and landed on isolated islands, routinely enduring hardships out in the wild while braving wind and rain. To achieve the perfect joining of the land-sea junction on the chart, they relied on their own legs to reach the shorelines and mudflats where small ships could not go, and went to places where ordinary people dared not go. Although we cannot personally experience that harsh environment, we must never forget the struggles and selfless dedication of our predecessors!"

Gazing at the yellowed nautical charts and listening to the stories of past struggles, the new sailors' eyes were particularly determined. Standing at the "starting point" of their military careers, a vivid military history course allowed them to experience the power of those role models and set the direction for their advancement.

"History is the best textbook. Only by understanding history, entering history, and touching history can new sailors comprehend the revolutionary spirit, strengthen their ideals and beliefs, and boost conscious action." Chi Minghui, director of the group's Political Work Department, told the authors that in order to help new conscripts integrate as quickly as possible into their new positions and environments, as well as to assist them in swiftly passing through the "second adaptation period," they have made learning and understanding the group's glorious history and heroic battle spirit the first lesson after the new sailors arrive. This allows new comrades to feel the spirit of their predecessors who established themselves in their posts and advanced together, and the lesson's deeply moving stories of struggle inspire a heroic ambition within the new sailors to dedicate themselves to the journey of strengthening the military.

The glaring sun scorched the coastal mudflats. Four marine surveyors, wearing white shirts, secured with safety ropes, and carrying large wooden boards on their backs, used all of their strength to set up measuring rods. They used their bodies to block wave after wave, trudging across the mudflats with difficulty as the mud reached past their knees... Looking at this photo in the military history gallery showing sailors back then surveying the coast from Xiangshan to Zhoushan, new recruit Chen Zhixin from Zhoushan had tears in his eyes. "I grew up by this sea, and I can relate to how difficult it is to walk the seemingly short distance in the picture. Our predecessors spent six months measuring it step by step while dancing with the wind and waves, walking together with loneliness as a companion. This indomitable quality is the most important thing to learn in my military career!"

During interviews, the authors learned that, in addition to utilizing the military history resources of the unit itself, the group's leaders also held a "let me tell a coastal defense story" speech contest and a recitation of revolutionary martyrs' family letters, so that new sailors could remember history and strengthen their original aspirations. They invited old heroes and battle veterans to talk about history and traditions over videoconference, guiding new sailors to find their own core military values through exemplary models.

Not long ago, at a "tell Red stories, be Red successors" sharing session that the group organized, new recruit Chen Junyi took the stage to tell the story of his grandfather joining the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea²: "Eating frozen potatoes and wearing thin cotton clothing, grandpa and his comrades overcame all difficulties and, with repeated charges and victories, fulfilled their oaths as revolutionary soldiers..." Deeply moved, many new recruits shed tears of great emotion.

Family Teaching Assistants Revitalize New Recruits' Education

Fu Yi, a political instructor for the group's coastal survey squadron, shared an interesting story with the authors: not long ago, an ordinary family communication led to a good period of cooperation between the military and the local government.

"Jia Shu is doing well here in the navy. It's just that this is his first time being away from home for so long, and he especially misses you."

² **Translator's note:** This is the PRC name for the Korean War.

"Little Zhao has performed very well recently. He is usually very interested in Party and military history, but due to COVID-prevention requirements, we are unable to go out for visits and study."

After a round of communication, Fu Yi reached a consensus with the parents of the new recruits, and a plan to expand the "circle of friends" for ideological and political education began to take shape: inviting the relatives of officers and sailors to give remote lectures, either sharing their own work experiences and inspiring stories or acting as "online tour guides" to lead officers and sailors on virtual tours of Red [i.e., communist] education sites. This formed a collaborative teaching assistant system drawing on national pride, hometown affection, and family bonds.

In a political education class not long after, the first batch of instructional videos filmed by new recruits' families came to the squadron from all directions.

In the study room, when new recruit Zhao Zunhao saw the figure of his mother Wang Qiuyan appear on the screen, his eyes couldn't help but widen. "Hello everyone, I'm currently at the former residence of Chen Wangdao,³ located in Fenshuitang Village, Yiwu City. You can see the first edition of the 'Communist Manifesto' displayed in the glass showcase. It doesn't have exquisite binding or high-quality paper, but in that era, it was like a banner guiding revolutionaries forward..." Through the historical presentations, physical objects, and pictures in the video, the new sailors sitting in front of the screen learned about the life and deeds of Chen Wangdao. As they did so, their belief in bearing arms for the Party and rooting themselves in the military became even stronger.

"I was once an army reconnaissance soldier. Our basic training subjects were stalking, precise sniping, and weighted cross-country marches. Crawling through jungles, climbing cliffs, and wading through mud were all commonplace. I remember once, during a simulated confrontation drill, the Blue Force didn't show up for a long time, and my comrades and I stayed motionless in the grass, camouflaged, for more than six hours. When we got up, there were little bugs all over our pants and in our boots." Listening to Lin Jiashu's father recount his own military experiences, the officers and sailors felt deeply moved as they learned, discussed, and reflected. Some lamented: "This spirit of hard work and enduring hardship is something all our officers and sailors need to learn!" Others reflected: "Last time I was on sentry duty, I kept moving because a mosquito was buzzing in my ear. Thinking about it now, I really shouldn't have..."

"Nothing moves the heart like emotion." The group's leadership explained that in recent years, they have focused on the actual situation of new sailors, striving to leverage the role of familial affection in the education of new sailors. After the new sailors arrive at their companies, they maintain communication with their families, and learn about new sailors' backgrounds, personalities, and habits, and create individual personnel files. This approach turns family members into "staff officers" and "assistants" in the education and management of new sailors. They have launched special educational support activities such as "hometown storytelling

³ **Translator's note:** Chen Wangdao was an early member of the Chinese Communist Part known for translating the *Communist Manifesto* into Chinese.

sessions," incorporating the families of new sailors into the classroom's "circle of friends" to enhance the quality and effectiveness of ideological and political education.

Unearthing the essential characteristics of new sailors, highlighting the focal points of military history, seizing the points of interest in education... The group's series of practical measures that resonate with the sailors' hearts and attract people's attention have laid a solid ideological foundation for the new sailors, strengthened their sense of responsibility, and ignited their drive to advance, constructing a good environment in which they can serve with peace of mind. Now, the new sailors are all focused on the training grounds, wholeheartedly honing their military skills and capabilities while charging towards their personal goals.