

2009

Partnership Guide for Divisions

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*Our Memorandum of Understanding with DND
and what it means for Division*



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NEW MOU WITH D.N.D. AND RESPONSIBILITY MATRIX

GUIDANCE TO DIVISIONS

INTRODUCTION

1. The MOU and Matrix have been developed to clarify areas of responsibility and commitments between the two sponsoring parties supporting the Sea Cadet program. In implementing the new MOU between DND and the NLOC, the main role of the Division is to help their Branches achieve a productive partnership with their respective Corps' CIC officers. For this purpose, the Division must have the necessary people to provide all the Branches under their jurisdiction with timely support in normal as well as in extraordinary circumstances. This can be a daunting task and clearly beyond the work capacity of the lone VP for Sea Cadets, especially in large divisions with branches established in all corners of their province. For this purpose, most Divisions –large and small - already have a regional organization in place; this decentralization of authority in large organizations is absolutely vital if the Division is to play a meaningful role. Of course, Divisions are interested in having Branches perform effectively in all aspects of NLOC operations and not only in the Sea Cadet program. The key therefore is to have a *functional* and *effective* regional organization with members of the Division Executive in the various regions able to react quickly to assist Branches located in their territory, while keeping all parties, including the Division President and the rest of the Executive, informed.



2. At the same time, the Division Executive must establish good relations with the designated RCSU in the province or region and maintain regular contacts with the Commander and his staff. A good partnership with DND must also work effectively at this level; this is clearly where the VP for Sea Cadets can be most useful. The object is to exchange timely valuable information and, when problems develop, to jointly explore solutions. Here again, the power game is useless and trying to defend turf is almost always a bad tactic. If the other party does not want to cooperate, then the matter must be resolved at

the regional Command level or at the Navy League national level. In this short guide, we are interested in making the partnership with DND work at all levels: local, regional and national. To do so, Divisions should examine their own *organizations* and be prepared to take both *proactive* and *reactive* measures to help their Branches.

ORGANIZATION

3. We have already established that most Divisions must have a regional organization with the Division's territory being divided in districts capturing a few Branches with reasonable distance between them. To ensure that the spirit and intent of the MOU and the Matrix are followed a member of the Executive should visit his Branches on a regular basis, assess their effectiveness, report to the Executive as a whole and, if necessary recommend improvements or remedial action. To make this work properly, here are some concrete suggestions for consideration:

- ✚ Get acquainted with the Regional Cadet Support Commander and key members of his staff.
- ✚ If possible, recruit experienced (and successful!) former Branch presidents to be District representatives. They will invariably be known by most of the volunteers in the District and their good reputation should stand them in good stead with the Branches. Without mutual respect and trust, the organization will not work.
- ✚ Take the time to write down guidelines, terms of reference, etc. so that all participants understand how the organization is meant to work. District reps. should have the necessary clout and be delegated the authority to act on behalf of the Division Executive. The rapport between them and Branch volunteers should be positive, not adversarial.
- ✚ Require that District reps visit their Branches at least twice during the training year (e.g. once in the fall and once in the winter) and to submit a written report so that the results of their visits can be reviewed and, if required, swift corrective action taken well before the end of the training year. To do this they will require a reasonable travelling budget.
- ✚ Have regular Executive committee meetings (by teleconference if necessary) as often as possible during the training year. Ensure that District operations and visits are a standing item on the agenda and give plenty of time to your representatives to comment on their reports. On completion, decide on any required follow-up.
- ✚ At your AGM, or at any time when the whole Division Council meets, allow the Branches to comment on how the organization works in their District. Be open to constructive criticism at any time.

PROACTIVE MEASURES

4. The more proactive you are in promoting good partnership with D.N.D., the fewer problems you are likely to face with RCSU or your Branches. We have already made the case for a fruitful association with the RCSU and for an effective District organization. Below are some more concrete suggestions for proactive action:

- ✚ Ensure that the RCSU Commander and the senior officers on his staff have a chance to meet the key members of your Executive (at a minimum: Your First Vice, your VP Sea Cadets, your treasurer and your Executive Director if applicable). Invite the RCSU Commander and the navy staff at your AGM or Divisional Council meetings so that he can also meet your District Representatives. At these meetings allow D.N.D. representatives to give a briefing or make a presentation if they wish.
- ✚ Both partners share an interest in having Branches and Corps working harmoniously together for the greater benefit of the Cadets; therefore you should work with the RCSU to produce a protocol by which you can share valuable information about Sea Cadet Corps and Branches in your Division and agree to act jointly if necessary when local problems or conflicts arise.
- ✚ Consider calling on the Regional Commander and brief him on your organization. Ensure that he understands that you are doing your best to work with your D.N.D. opposites
- ✚ On every occasion when you have a number of Branch presidents and volunteers together try to organize workshops for their benefit especially in areas dealing with the partnership at the local level. Do not miss any opportunity to train your volunteers; on the contrary, try to create as many as you can afford.
- ✚ Within the Division Executive, develop strategies to come to the assistance of the Branches in cases of problems or conflict within the Branch organization or between the Branch and the Corps officers. Ensure that the district representatives are kept up-to-date with the results. If you can create a reactive cell of experienced negotiators who can be deployed in the field as a last resort.
- ✚ Your VP for Sea cadets should be in the District Representatives loop with regards to problems and contentious issues affecting Sea cadets in your Division. When applicable, he/she should raise these issues at meetings of the National Sea Cadet Committee. He/She should attend all Teleconference meetings of the committee and report decisions to the Division Executive (even though the RODs of each meeting are widely distributed).

REACTIVE MEASURES

5. Of course, things don't always go as smoothly as we like. When problems arise on the local scene, Divisions must get involved sooner rather than later. There has been a tendency of late to refer difficult situations to the national office early on in the problem-solving sequence, well before local and regional initiatives have a chance to play out. While it is prudent to keep National informed of such problems and of the action taken, Divisions must not shirk their responsibility to act promptly and decisively within their area of responsibility. Here are some concrete suggestions on reactive measures you might take once it is clear that you must intervene:

- ✚ If the problem involves both the Branch and the Sea Cadet Corps, CIC officers and NLOC volunteers, etc. get in touch with the RCSU Commander and make sure that you get all sides of the story.
- ✚ Speak to the Branch president and ascertain what measures he/she has taken to contain the problem. Ask the Branch how the Division can be of assistance.
- ✚ If the problem or conflict cannot be resolved locally, alert your District representative, brief him/her and ask that he/she become involved as soon as possible. Ask for progress reports. Keep RCSU informed if necessary. If conflict resolution between individuals is required, the new MOU (Section) mandates that CCM conflict resolutions be used and the Division and D.N.D. must act together to resolve the issue.
- ✚ If the problem is an internal NLOC issue, then it can be resolved solely by the joint action of the Branch and the Division.

CONCLUSION

6. The Board of Directors expects Divisions to keep the Sea Cadet program operating at a high level of efficiency and effectiveness. It is impossible to describe every possible problem that can confront Divisions in dealing with Branches or even D.N.D. The measures outlined above will help Division volunteers to improve the collaboration between them, their uniformed partners and local NLOC volunteers. In all our dealings with other people involved in the Sea cadet movement Division representatives and facilitators should show patience, respect and a great deal of understanding; Even if there is strong disagreement, they should set the example and maintain civility during discussions until the conflict is resolved.

Remember: it is all about the Cadet program!