

California School Ship

A Chronological Log Showing the Progress to Date in Developing the California State Nautical School



J. C. Rohlfs.

J. C. Rohlfs, manager of the Marine Department of the Standard Oil Company (Calif.) and chairman of the California State Nautical School Board, speaking at the Nautical School luncheon of the Propeller Club reported the progress of the school ship to date in the form of the following chronological log.

Plans started
May 22, 1930. Steamship Henry County delivered by Shipping Board to Navy at Norfolk Navy Yard to undergo outfitting and some alterations to make the vessel ready for its trip to the Pacific Coast.

July 12, 1930. Partial repairs completed at Norfolk Navy Yard and vessel sailed with cargo of naval supplies for delivery to San Pedro and Mare Island Navy Yard.

August 18, 1930. Vessel arrived at Mare Island Navy Yard to undergo general inspection and survey by Navy Department and be decommissioned.

Plans completed
September 8, 1930. Board of Inspection and Survey report submitted by local board to Navy Department at Washington. They estimated sum of \$244,360 necessary to repair and rebuild interior of vessel. This work necessary inasmuch as vessel was built as a cargo ship and therefore had no accommodations for cadets or suitable arrangements for schoolship purposes.

October 2, 1930. Board of Governors wrote Secretary of Navy requesting that Navy approve expenditure of funds necessary for completion of work as set forth in plans and specifications approved by local Board of Inspection and Survey.

October 18, 1930. Secretary of Navy advised that although they approved work as recommended no money was available to carry out same.

October 29, 1930. J. C. Rohlfs, while in Washington, made contact with naval authorities in touch with schoolship situation and was again advised that no money was available to do any work on the schoolship due to the fact that the President had issued a direct order to the Navy Department to economize. He also talked to members of the Navy Department and U. S. Shipping Board relative to securing California City as a shore base for the California Schoolship, which idea was favorably received by the aforementioned parties. They later advised that they were waiting recommendations from Admiral W. C. Cole of the 12th Naval District prior to granting the State a license for the use of said property and equipment. Arrangements were made with the Naval Appropriation Committee to include the sum of \$200,000 for the California Nautical School in order to satisfactorily fit the ship for active commission.

November 5, 1930. Rohlfs, on his return, contacted the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce who sent telegrams to the California Delegation at Washington, D. C., urging them to give their active support by wiring the Secretary of the Navy, requesting him to approve the expenditure of sufficient funds to place the schoolship in immediate operation. The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce also gave its support and urged representatives at Washington to use their best efforts.

January 13, 1931. General information and entrance applications mailed out to applicants to California Nautical School.

January 29, 1931. Entrance examinations held throughout state, over one hundred boys taking the test.

February 10, 1931. California City turned over to State of California by Navy Department under temporary license agreement, thereby providing an admirable shore base for schoolship purposes. Has healthy climate, accessible to San Francisco, 50 acres of ground, water (both salt and fresh), gasoline and oil storage, rigging loft, splicing tools, complete machine, blacksmith, forge, boiler, and foundry shops, electric light plant, wharf in good condition, necessary buildings for housing cadets and shore staff.

February 12, 1931. House of Representatives approved \$235,000 appropriation for California Schoolship including annual \$25,000 reimbursement to State.

February 28, 1931. Senate approved \$235,000 schoolship appropriation.

February 28, 1931. President signed Naval Appropriation Bill. Inasmuch as these funds will not be available until July 1st of this year no work can be undertaken until that time. It is thought that all necessary work on the schoolship will be completed (if started July 1) so that the ship can take its first cruise in October.

In the meantime the California State Nautical School is in session at its shore base with a competent and able staff or faculty and 56 cadets who are busily engaged in absorbing the theoretical aspects of navigation and marine engineering in preparation for their first practical cruise this fall. California is now definitely launched on her school ship career with a fine shore base actually operating and a modern up-to-date school ship in the offing.