

Inside the Basic Division Officer Course, Part 2

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Editors note: The following blog from Ensign Glaser was as of March 1st.

Welcome back fellow readers and surface warfare enthusiasts. For those of you just tuning in, I am Ensign Glaser giving an update in all things about my SWOS BDOC experience.

First off, BDOC is no joke. It is a challenging course and the pace is much faster than I anticipated. From day one it has been a continuous fire hose of information. So far our wardroom has covered engineering, damage control, and maritime warfare. Engineering and maritime warfare have been the most challenging so far due to the sheer volume of information and level of knowledge required. We are scheduled to do Rules of the Road in the coming weeks and, in speaking to the other wardrooms, it seems to easily be the hardest module. BDOC staff helps students by providing resources aimed at helping us learn material, such as practice quizzes and lesson handouts.



BDOC also coordinates ship tours to reinforce what has been taught in the classroom – put a “face with a name” of the systems, concepts and terminology we have learned. To date, we have visited USS Pinckney (DDG 91) and USS Princeton (CG 59). As most of us ensigns had never been on a ship before, these tours were very eye opening. In addition to the ship tours, BDOC also has static displays that help us visualize the systems, such as damage control systems and the CIWS [close-in weapon system].

Going into BDOC, I was looking forward to working with the COVE [Conning Officer Virtual Environment] simulators; from the previous limited exposure we had at OCS, I am not disappointed. COVE is an excellent learning tool. It allows you to challenge your ship handling skills in various situations that would not be practical [from a training aspect] if done at sea. For instance, transiting at night in a high-traffic shipping lane. The fact that the trainer is high fidelity, provides no safety concerns to actual ships, and can be stopped and reset makes it an invaluable tool for junior SWOs to try, most likely fail due to the level of challenge and safely learn. Also, the COVE session is setup so that the student-to-instructor ratio is four to one. This allows the instructors to clearly focus on each student’s performance, give advice, help us understand mistakes and provide guidance on how to improve.

I know that everything we learn at BDOC is just the tip of the iceberg, but, thanks this course, I think I am getting a better understanding on what I need to know to be a better naval officer on my ship, and of course a better surface warfare officer. I don’t expect the pace of the course to slow down going forward; if anything, I expect it will increase. I’ve been told by prior graduates that ship life is also fast paced so I’m glad I’m getting used to it now. Only one more month left of BDOC until graduation. At that time, I’ll be back to give my final thoughts on the SWOS BDOC experience. Until next time.

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