

Why Go To Sea (II) ?

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My Dad was one of the pioneers of Outward Bound Singapore, so I had plenty of exposure to the sea and at a young age. I then realize that I do not get sea sick like many others. The love of the sea made my want to be a Marine Engineer but the irony of it was that I could not get a place due to my grades. The next closest thing was to join Nautical Studies in Singapore Poly. I went to sea and qualified as a Master Mariner.

The irony is I have found the sea to be a pleasant place to work in and had decided to leave in 2006 to get a shore job!

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One of the reasons I took up Marine Engineering in 1973 was that at that time, NS was deferred so long as you were sailing. Alas, half way through the course, they reversed that policy. "Kena" conned. I graduated in 1977 and served 2 ½ years NS.

After our BMT, we were posted to the Navy. After a few weeks, we were all posted out to the infantry units. Someone decided that marine boys should no longer serve in the Navy. So we became the 1st batch of marine boys to serve in the infantry.

After my army, I went to sea. I did not like sea life but sailed for close to 2 years. I enrolled for my 2nd class, passed it on my 1st attempt and immediately found a shore job at a local shipping company. My 2nd class certificate was my contingency in case I could not make it ashore.

In the early 1980s, there were too many ships chasing too little cargo. The marine business then was considered a "sunset industry" by a local prominent politician. I decided to exit the marine industry as I was still young and can re-tool myself. I had an opportunity to go into the clean room industry and seized it in early 1984. This made me one of the earliest in my batch to exit the marine industry.
