

Why Go To Sea ?

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Lo Pui Sang - who graduated with a Diploma in Marine Engineering in 1973. He was the 8th batch of students who took the "old" course i.e. 5 years - comprising 2 years of study, 12 months of workshop practice and 12 to 18 months at sea.

Preamble: Cheng Huang Leng

I have heard of men born in the 1900s to 1920s who went to sea to escape the law, loan sharks, hunger and probably impossible wives! A few were shanghaied – A common practice in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The men are mostly the parents of my generation i.e. those born in the 1940s and 1950s. Naturally, they would not encourage us to follow their footsteps. Yet many of us chose sea careers and for various reasons.

Pui Sang and Choon Kin, both from the 1968 batch, share their reasons for going to sea. What's your reason for going to sea? Do let me know!

Lo Pui Sang's Account

There was only ONE simple reason for taking up Marine Engineering during my time. My father needed only to pay for my first 2 years of full time study while other courses required 3 years. After Phase 1 study at the Poly, I could support myself during Phase 2 i.e. Cadetship. I could then save my cadet's pay to fund Phase 3 study at the Poly. With this plan, I was supposed to join the 3rd Batch (in 1968) but could not afford to do so - my father died during that year.

We were a poor family and I was forced to work to save enough money if I want to study further. My results were not good enough to qualify for any scholarship. However, I managed to save the money needed and I joined the 8th batch as the oldest student in class! The class then were mostly 17 year olds. I envied them as they had fathers to support them.
