

# New Sea Cadets Patterned After Seabees

**MILITARY** standards, traditions, organization and instruction, without military obligations; this is the Sea Cadets Corps' program. The Sea Cadets are young men from 14 to 17 years of age who perform much like their older counterparts in the regular Navy. They are screened by committee members from their sponsoring Navy League chapter, given a Navy physical and then tested with the same battery of exams given to the regular Navy men.

Ben Morris, Sea Cadet committee chairman, and one of the founders of the new "Ben Moreell battalion" of the Sea Cadets, says that only one in three pass the written examination.

On January 27, 34 boys and seven adult leaders were commissioned as the first Sea Cadet Corps Battalion. This is the first Sea Cadet group to be organized around the special skills of the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Forces.

Billis Whitworth, a retired Navy commander, took the oath as commander of the new Sea Cadet Battalion from the group's namesake, Adm. Ben Moreell, the 79-year-old former commander of all Navy Seabee operations during World War II.

As the young men stood at attention, ranking representatives from the Port Hueneme Construction Battalion Center (the cadets' home base), and the Navy's Pacific Seabee command, joined in the commissioning ceremonies.

**HEAR ADM.** Foster M. Lalor, recently relieved as commanding officer at the Seabee base, said that the creation of the Sea Cadet battalion was his most rewarding experience in

the 21 months he was stationed at CBC.

Of the 34 boys who make up the newly commissioned cadet battalion, nearly half are from non-military families. The Ventura County chapter of the Navy League backs the group financially. The Sea Cadet program is supported by the Navy, therefore, when available Navy facilities are utilized by the cadets. Logistic support is given to the cadets by the Navy to help make their program more effective.

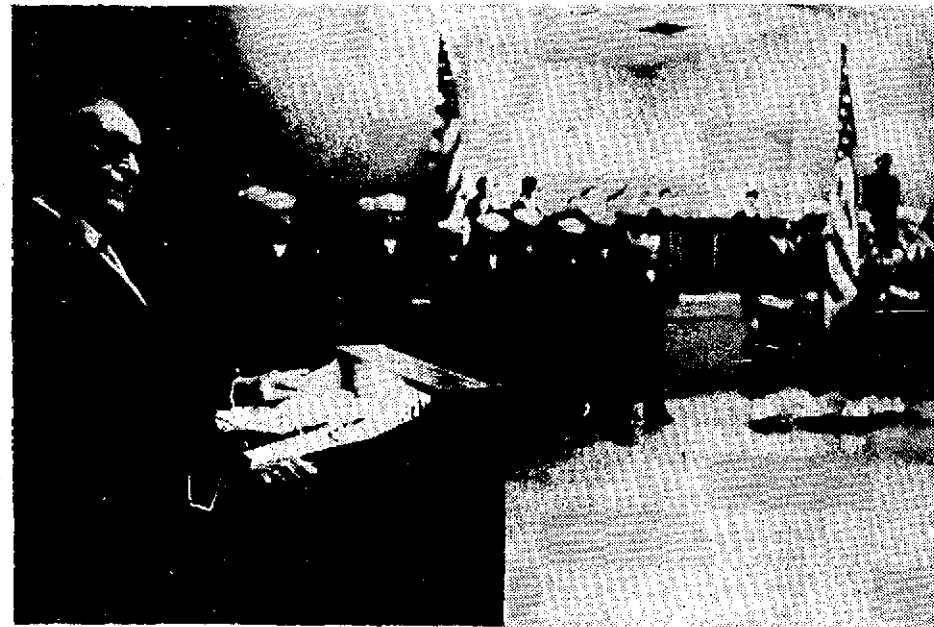
Great care is given to the selection of the adult leaders in the Cadet organization, according to Morris. First the applicants are screened by the Sea Cadets Corps' national headquarters, then the recommendations are passed on to the Navy's personnel office for final approval. "It's not just a rubber stamp," Morris said. "We've had some turned down by the Navy." The adult leaders are all volunteers with many being active duty or retired Navy personnel. Both enlisted men and officers fill the adult leadership ranks.

**AFTER** successfully completing the Sea Cadet program, the 18-year-old cadet is eligible to enlist in the Navy at an advanced rate, bypassing the basic training program required for other enlistees.

The newly formed Sea Cadet battalion, which started recruiting boys in October 1970, will build its program around the skills and traditions of the construction battalion forces, utilizing the talent and personnel of the 31st Naval Construction Regiment, stationed at Port Hueneme. The regiment, along with the Naval Schools Construction, has been tasked

with the responsibility of giving a helping hand to the new cadets.

On the night of the commissioning a young cadet and his mother were looking through a picture album of the cadets' induction activities. Thumbing through the pages, the boy pointed at a picture of himself taken some weeks earlier. There he stood, waiting for his physical, with shaggy hair, slumped shoulders, and a blank stare. The mother looked up, smiled, and said, "My God! Was that you?"



Young Bill Dumas, 14, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Dumas of Port Hueneme, raises his right hand, top photo, along with his fellow cadets to affirm his oath as an upstanding member of the newly-formed Sea Cadet Battalion at the Seabee Center, Port Hueneme. Adm. Ben Moreell, 79, known as the "King Bee," tells the young men during commissioning ceremonies that they must return to the basics of good citizenship and wholesome living as a means of achieving high goals in their later years. In photo at left, Adm. Moreell chats with Nicholas Acordi, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles J. Acordi of Oxnard, while others gather around to hear what the retired admiral has to say.

Photos and Story

By Ted Nauman