

SHIP LIGHT INSTALLATION

by Don Dressel

This is a short article on a method of putting lighting into a wooden sailing ship model without damaging the model when using the lights. Neon lamps are used which burn cold (they give off no heat) and use a very small amount of current. In addition, neon lamps give off a realistic "orange" candle-like light which is not very bright. This adds to the realism of an early sailing ship model.

Neon lamps are not very expensive and can be bought at any good electronics store such as Lafayette Radio Electroniss (neon lamps may be called neon glow lamps). Make sure you obtain the necessary resistors which must be used with the neon lamps (the man at the electronics store can get you the right size resistor).

Do Not buy the neon lamp which has a built-in resistor as this will give off heat which is to be avoided.

Also, obtain the other things necessary which are several lug-type terminal strips, an on-off switch (a small toggle switch is fine), a fuse block and fuse (1/2 or 1/4 amp), and a wall plug with cord.

The above articles were used on my pirate brig. The basic circuit for my ship is drawn out here to show how easily lights can be incorporated into a ship model. Each light requires one wire plus a separate wire for ground. Thus for two lights you will need three wires. These wires were run under the main deck and up the bulkhead to come out just below the beam which supports the upper deck. As shown in Figure 1, two lights are installed between the deck beams. Eyebolts were used to attach the lamps to the beams and to solder the wire to the lamps. The upper deck was then planked over, thus hiding the wire and lamps from view.

The three wires were run through the bottom of the ship, through the ships stand and out underneath the bottom of the ship case board. A square hole was cut in the bottom of the ships case board which is hidden by the ships stand. In this square hole the resistors, fuse, switch and the rest of the circuit were hooked-up as shown in Figure 2. Thus the heat, what little there is, is dissipated in the resistors which are at the bottom of the ships case board and can get plenty of air. The ship can be cased with no fear of wood warpage from lamp heat.

Some hints: While doing preliminary work on the ship be careful not to bend the wire protruding from the bulkhead as it may break off. Also, install a piece of reflecting aluminum between each neon lamp and the upper deck which is to be planked or light will show through the deck where the lamp is located.

If anyone needs any help in his effort to install light in his ship model I will be glad to offer any help I can.

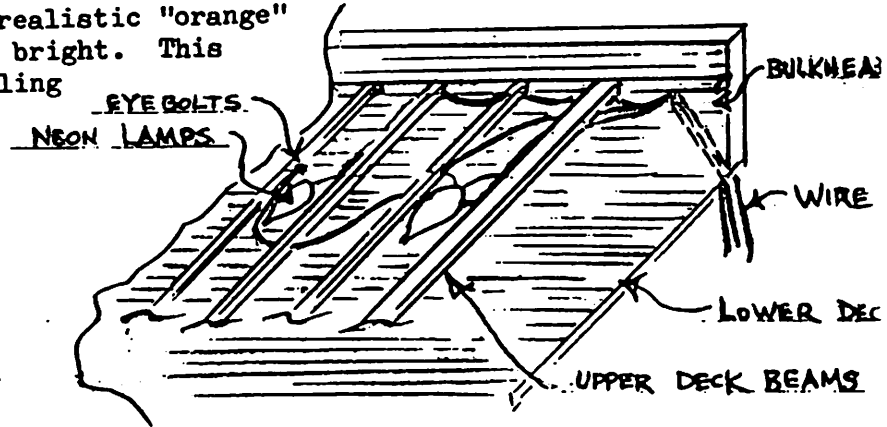


FIGURE 1

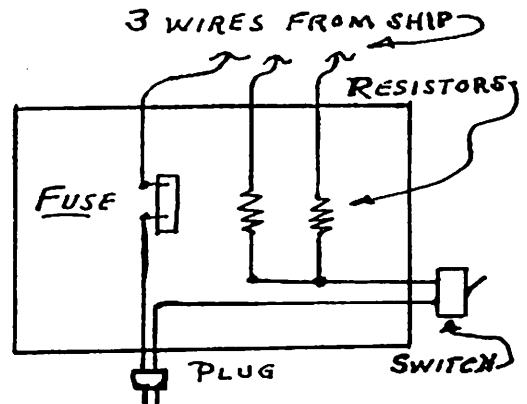


FIGURE 2.