



Chesapeake Tartan 30 Association

HERE'S LOOKIN' AT YA', KID!

Brad Armendt, T-30 #282, *Emprise*. May 1994*

The head on a T-30 is — *hmmm* — a bit cramped. But you can make it *seem* bigger by using the same trick architects use to make bathrooms bigger. That is, cover one wall with mirrors! The factory-supplied head mirror on *Emprise* was an 8" x 11" frame with a stainless steel reflecting surface, which corroded rather badly after several years. We replaced the SS plate with a piece of plate glass, which gave an excellent reflection, but still only big enough to powder your nose. Later, to give the head a really spacious look, we covered the entire aft bulkhead above the sink with a mirror.

For safety's sake, we used 1/8" thick reflective plastic, obtained from a plastics company in Baltimore. In 1990 it cost under \$5 per square foot. Since the plastic is never perfectly flat, the reflection is always a bit distorted. But this is most apparent when viewed from some distance, and you just can't *get* very far away in the T-30 head, so it's not a problem.

The first step is to remove the teak trim all around the aft bulkhead over the sink. On the bottom and inboard pieces of trim, mark the surface that would go up against the mirror when it is in place. Take these pieces to the mill shop at your nearby lumber yard and have them cut 5/32" off the marked surfaces, to make room for the mirror; this allows use of the original screw holes.

Make a pattern for the new mirror using kraft paper, and cut the plastic sheet to shape. Be sure to leave 1/8" clearance on all sides to allow for expansion (the expansion coefficient of the plastic is *much* greater than that of the fiberglass and wood around it). Otherwise, when the summer heats up, you'll find your mirror cracked.

To mount your new mirror, use foam mounting tape (the stuff that's sticky on both sides), but *don't overdo it*. Because the edges will be held down by the teak trim, the mirror isn't going anywhere. All you need are three short pieces about 3" long to hold the center area of the mirror close to the bulkhead. If you use too much mounting foam, you could have a problem when you place the plastic mirror.

I recommend that you take the extra time to temporarily remove the head light fixture before attempting to place the mirror. It's hard to work a bulkhead-size mirror around the light fixture without prematurely contacting the foam mounting tape. If you mess up and touch it before things are lined up correctly, about all you can do is break up the plastic mirror to get it out, and then start all over.

Our head mirror has been in place for four years and looks as good as new.

Another application for the mirror plastic: Mount a piece on the inside of the hanging locker door frame. The mounting foam is not enough in this case (because doors get slammed); use six mirror mounting clips. Now the first mate can just open the locker door and there's a half-length mirror she can use to check the fit of her jeans, or something. Anyhow, it's handy sometimes.

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