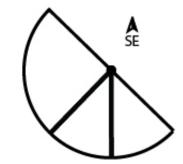The flavortext hints that this puzzle involves "flagging"... aha! Perhaps it uses flag semaphore codes.

The thing to notice when at the bench in person is that there are 7 segments of the bench, divided by 8 radial supports underneath it. Each encoded line contains a cardinal direction, and a pair of indices. The indices are between 1 and 8 and correspond to the 8 bench supports, labeled clockwise from 1, as indicated by the blueprints. The special case is 4.5, which corresponds to the middle of the center bench segment, halfway between supports 4 and 5.

The two blueprints specify the orientation of the solver with respect to the class of 1897 bench: one should lie down face up, with your head pointing "north" towards the center of the semi-circular bench. To decode each line, point your arms at the two segments indicated. Draw these on the given "top view" blueprint, then rotate the page so the given cardinal direction is aligned to north. You can then read out a character in flag semaphore.

Example for the line **SE (3, 4.5)**:

Doing this for each encoded line gives the final answer: **SEAPLANE**.