

OPEN ENGAGEMENT

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An effort has been made to reduce the complexity of the RN rating engagement structure. There were nine different forms of engagement previously available. The new Open Engagement was introduced in September 1982 and it is hoped that this will also encourage ratings to sign on for a full 22-year pensionable enlistment which includes the right to give 18 months' notice after 2½ years trained adult service. It is hoped that experienced men who might otherwise leave the Service at the end of a shorter engagement, because they had failed to make a conscious decision to re-engage, will now stay for longer. And because the offer promises a full career it is hoped it will prove especially attractive to potential recruits. Encouragement to stay in the Service is also the aim of the Open Engagement Bonus Scheme. It replaces committal pay for those with less than 9 years service, by a payment of £1000 at 4½ years adult service; and the same again after 7½ years to those who have not given notice at that time. Serving personnel will be able to volunteer to transfer to the Open Engagement. The Royal Marines, QARNNS and WRNS may also consider introducing it when they have had a chance to assess its impact in the RN.

TRAINING

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Training patterns continue to evolve — due in some degree to policy decisions which have or are closing some establishments, with a relocation of tasks to other schools. Essentially this entails rationalisation rather than a reduction of training. In part it means that some training previously done ashore, will be done at sea — mainly some Part II and Part III training, pre-joining training and career courses for Operations Branch Leading Ranks.

The introduction of Batch Drafting and an Initial Training Period, should help to provide better trained men by the time a ship becomes operational. So far as possible, men will be “typed” to ships and first sea drafts adjusted to Batch Drafting intervals. Ideally, and in order to harmonise manning with both upkeep and operational cycles, first sea drafts should be 3 years long, with 18 month Batch Drafting intervals. It remains to be seen how closely the ideal is approached. The aim of Batch Drafting and Typing will be to build up and consolidate a man’s professional skills and thus improve the operational effectiveness of the Fleet.

The initial training period is likely to be 4 weeks, during which time the ship will be regarded as non-operational to enable her, with assistance, to train the ship’s company in all aspects of her role. The provision of sophisticated shipborne trainers and simulators will greatly assist the Command in this task. On completion of this period, the ship will proceed to Portland for Basic Operational Sea Training in the normal manner.

SEAMANSHIP – OPERATIONS BRANCH

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Many of our venerable ex-colleagues — and some not so venerable! — and some who are still serving and old enough to remember, will be delighted that the RN is to concentrate again on basic seamanship training, to re-establish some of the skills which have been fading. We have got to get back something of the training at Ganges, St. Vincent and Raleigh. Ever since the introduction of the Operations Branch concept, seamanship has tended to take second place to the warfare skills, with a consequent drop in standards. In 1973, 1977 and 1979, working parties considered the problem and, following the last Working Party Report, the present Seamanship Sub Branch was formed at senior rate level.

Although those currently forming this Branch are providing a first-class service to the Fleet, it is nevertheless clear that the present system of training is not producing ratings with enough knowledge and experience of seamanship to retain the present form of Seamanship Branch in future. The reserve of knowledge and experience is currently vested in a rapidly dwindling group of senior ratings, many of whom were trained under the former system of Boy entry, with long periods at HMS GANGES, ST. VINCENT and RALEIGH. A strong emphasis was placed on seamanship in these establishments, followed by a career structure which emphasised it as an advancement requirement. For some years ratings have not had this thorough grounding in seamanship. To arrest and, if possible, reverse the decline in standards, seamanship in future is to be treated as a three-level skill. All new entries, regardless of Branch, will receive enough training to teach them the basic rudiments (Level One). Most Operations Branch men will receive more training and experience to a semi-skilled level (Level Two), and a small specialist branch will be created to form a skilled nucleus by expanding the present Seamanship sub-specialisation downwards to take in Leading Rates (Level Three).



QARNNS -Males in their midst and WRNS

GOODBYE NURSING SISTER

The term "nursing sister" became a name of the past when Chief Medical Technician Ragendrasen Purusram became the first of five naval Medical Technicians to be promoted as QARNNS Nursing Officers this year. In addition, over forty other naval ratings have taken the opportunity to transfer as nurses in the service. They will all continue to wear naval uniform with the appropriate QARNNS insignia. QARNNS training has also taken on a new look with the New Entries now joining HMS RALEIGH for their initial Naval General training. Subsequent professional training has also changed with the Royal Naval Medical Staff School combining

some teaching elements with the District School of Nursing at the Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth. The professionalism and value of the service was highlighted by the special contributions of QARNNS personnel who served with the Task Force during the Falklands campaign. The hospital ship SS UGANDA was staffed with forty-one QARNNS officers and ratings who played a major part in the treatment and recovery of both British and Argentinian casualties. The Falkland experiences have enabled interesting and valuable presentations to be made by QARNNS personnel to Service and National Health colleagues.

WOMEN TAKE FIRST PRIZES

Some notable successes during the last year have done much to endorse the decision that the WRNS should continue as an independent service with its own Commandant. These successes are timely during a period of some concern after the 1981 Defence Review, when some feared that the WRNS may be in jeopardy. WRNS officers won trophies for the first time when Third Officer Greta Millard was judged the best Junior Supply Officer under training and Third Officer Sarah Kahn displayed the most potential leadership of all the first term cadets at Dartmouth in July.

The continuing policy of wider job opportunities for WRNS officers and integration with the Royal Navy wherever sensible, is seen with the appointment of Second Officer Margaret Chapman as first WRNS Officer-in-Charge of a naval COMCEN, and the FOST Operations Room gaining an entirely female watchkeeping team.

That the WRNS is an integral and vital part of the Royal Navy in both peace and war was made clear by their involvement in the Falklands campaign. Although not involved in the actual hostilities, the Service provided a nucleus of trained personnel to fill important shore jobs so releasing the men to go to sea, and four special contributions were recognised in the Falklands Honours List.



Senior Nursing Officer Ragendrasen Purusram.

HMS Temeraire

A NEW TEMERAIRE

The ageing PT school (HMS TEMERAIRE) at Pitt Street, Portsmouth is to be replaced by a comprehensive complex at Burnaby Road, which it is hoped to be completed by 1987.

The new Temeraire will have indoor and outside facilities for most sports and for spectators. This is particularly good news for RN sport generally and for physical fitness in particular.

The Director of Physical Training and Sport (DNPTS) has moved back to Portsmouth after a gap of 12 years. Although the Directorate will be accommodated in the new Temeraire, it will remain a MOD Directorate with the PT school under CinCNavhome's Command.

Cadets and Armed Forces Youth Training Scheme AFYTS

Third Officer Greta Millard receives her prize from Lady Lyddon.



CADETS

The Navy continues to support the boys and girls of the Combined Cadet Force and Sea Cadets Corps in many ways. It has recently been possible to arrange the purchase of extra motor boats and, with an eye on the Cadet championships at Bisley, some 260 new target rifles. The TS ROYALIST, the SCC's 'Tall Ship', continues to give invaluable training experience for about 800 cadets a year, between March and November. The Royalist makes 30-40 cruises annually, normally for a week, to the Channel Isles, France and the Baltic, taking 22 cadets and 4-5 adults.

AFYTS

Other young people who will be experiencing the Navy life will be the volunteers for the 500 odd places the RN is making available for the 16-18 year olds under the Armed Forces Youth Training Scheme. They will be subject to the same discipline as regular ratings and after a full Part I training at HMS RALEIGH some will receive further instruction in specialist skills, amongst them Communications, Engineering and Medical. Others will be employed on general duties in establishments. It is unlikely that any will serve at sea, though they may go to sea on occasions on Acquaints or Adventurous Training. It is not a recruiting exercise but it is a good opportunity to assess those who might seek a RN career.