

## OFFICERS

Overall the bearing of officers is some 176, or 2.2% short of the requirement at 1 April 1986. Although this figure has changed little in the past year, bearing forecasts show that it should decrease in 1986/87 and be overcome within the next 5 years. Such statements hide many problems, however. Typically:

- a. Will the change of bearing occur at the correct level or will the recovery be made up of new recruits not employable in the areas of greatest shortage?
- b. Is the data on which the forecast is based sound or will some of the variables change? For example, an accurate assessment of wastage trends is crucial in the forecast calculation.

In fact there is no doubt that a prediction of full strength is precarious. Inevitably, the global picture will disguise, as it does today, areas of surplus as well as acute shortages. But improvement should be apparent across the broad spectrum, since the advances in automatic data processing of manpower management techniques which are now available make it possible to take more accurate and effective action where it is most needed. Thus there is no severe shortage category at present which is not being fully addressed, and it may not be long before we are able to reach the ideal situation when we will be able to foresee and take action to avoid shortages before they occur.

Assessing the rates of voluntary retirement is thus very important. In the short term, losses can be estimated with a fair degree of accuracy by consideration of the current voluntary retirement application rates – these will represent the likely exit rate in 12 months time. However, it is more important that the underlying causes of Premature Voluntary Retirement are identified and, where possible, rectified so that training loss and investment can be minimised and maximised respectively. Studies have been done, and are continuing, into the reasons why people leave the Service and where possible measures are in hand to alleviate the problem.

The present rate of Premature Voluntary Retirement, which has been increasing since 1982, is likely to continue for another year. Although there are some signs that the rate of increase overall may be levelling out, it is already too high and within the overall trend there are particular areas where the outflow in the next year gives cause for concern.

## **RATINGS**

Rating retention has not been as good as we need. The pressures of sustaining all the recent commitments (including the South Atlantic force level) have undoubtedly left their mark. High sea service categories – mostly in the Operations Branch – are a particular cause for concern.

### **Second Open Engagement**

432 active service ratings were selected this May at the first annual selection board for service on a "Second Open Engagement" (20E) to complete 32 years. Most of these men have yet to complete their first (22 year) pensionable engagement but can now look forward to a full career – including eligibility for promotion – to age 50 or thereabouts. The 20E will ultimately provide for the retention, on the most attractive terms we could hope to offer, of much of the skill and experience that we tend to lose at age 40 today. During the transition, however, a very close eye is being kept on the advancement and promotion prospects of the younger men. Projections of the effect of 20E selections on future career factors, and sensible containment of the problem, have been subjected to special computer modelling techniques set up by the consultants working with the Director of Naval Manpower Planning.

## OFFICERS

In BROADSHEET 85, an improvement in officer recruiting was reported and 1985/86 has been an even better year – Dartmouth has been kept very busy. 80 more officers entered the RN, RM and WRNS than last year; a total of 732, which is 92% of the target. The only real shortages were of Engineers and Instructors with technical degree qualifications – both areas of national shortage. Some excellent young men and women are applying, although competition from industry, commerce and the City for those above-average people who will be the Commanders and Captains of the future is intense. There have been some changes since last year in that certain ex-merchant navy deck officers who wish to join the Royal Navy may be given recognition for their skills and qualifications on joining and WRNS officers may now study for a B Eng degree at RNEC Manadon before becoming a Weapons or Air Engineering Officer for service ashore.

The Director of Naval Recruiting has continued to receive splendid support from serving and retired officers in the quest for good quality officer candidates. We hope that retired officers have found the pull-out sheet from last year's BROADSHEET on recruiting facts and figures useful. We intend to replace it every two years.

The officer recruiting targets for 1986/87 are similar to last year's at a total of 780; the outlook is favourable and priority will be placed on finding the 150 engineering officers we need.

## **RATINGS**

22,910 young men and women applied to enter the naval service in 1985/86, an 8% reduction on the previous year. Recruiting targets were achieved in virtually all categories, including Artificer Apprentices (500) and Royal Marines (1,023) which were both anticipated to be difficult targets. This year we are aiming for an increase in virtually all categories, including the WRNS. However, there is a steadily decreasing number of school leavers (our main source of recruits) between now and 1992 and this, coupled with the declining application rate, will make the rating recruiting task increasingly difficult. Certainly we must not assume that we can make good any shortage merely by opening the recruiting tap wider.

It is therefore most important that, not only must the Careers Service continue to concentrate its efforts in schools and colleges, but also the whole "Naval Family" must do its level best to encourage young men and women to join the service. And so, the message of last year holds good; recruiting is the business of all of us, and we in the office would be grateful for your continuing and energetic support in spreading the word.

## **THE MANPOWER DILEMMA**

Manpower in the Royal Navy has now become a more precious commodity than ever and is subjected to a rigorous ceiling control of numbers. Our overall strength is currently 68,600 and by 1993 we must reduce to 63,000. However, our total requirement (the sum of all Schemes of Complement) is in excess of the reducing ceiling. The priority is to the front line and direct support of ships and aircraft, resulting in problems for shore bases who inevitably bear most of the brunt of shortages. In the coming years we will have additional requirements that will exacerbate the problem. These include the overlap of Polaris with the introduction of Trident, the new EH 101 helicopter and the Type 23 frigate. Obviously, firm control of priorities will need to be exercised if we are to keep manpower within budgeted numbers.

The manpower cake is divided among eight Tasking Areas (CINCFLEET, CINCPAC, FONAC, CGRM, ACNS, 2SL, CFS and CofN). Each tasking area has freedom to reallocate its resources within an allocated budget specified by the Director Naval Manpower Planning, but is tasked with seeking efficiency measures aimed at reducing the overall requirement. This is by no means an easy task; to provide a forum for policy input into this management function, the Director General Naval Manpower and Training chairs the Naval Manpower Management Executive Committee (NMMEC) which draws its members from all the tasking areas. Stringent measures by the NMMEC over the last year have resulted in many billets being surrendered and a list of possible candidates for contractorisation has been drawn up in addition to the contract catering exercise in shore establishments which is already under way. Such measures, including the disbanding of the Royal Navy Display Team, are not taken lightly. We are not out of the woods yet and there will be painful decisions to be taken on the employment of uniformed manpower over the coming years.

Management of the manpower itself is the other half of the challenge. The ceiling includes New Entry Trainees as well as the trained strength. Stringent economy is needed both to minimise the trainee requirement and to avoid wasteful mismatches between skills and jobs in individual sub-branches. To help correct the latter a voluntary Premature Release scheme (on terms similar to the 1982 Redundancy programme) has been run for two successive years for particular groups of ratings where some 600 overbearings have been identified which natural wastage would not erode sufficiently quickly.

## **HELP ON THE WAY**

Whenever people mention computers, the chances are that the imagination conjures up images of technology which is, if nothing else, brand new. However, the computer programs that support the drafting and manpower planning in HMS CENTURION are some 11 years old and can no longer be patched and maintained to respond to the needs of the 1990s especially with the reduced manpower available to run the manpower! As a result, a new computer system is being introduced which will be accessible from the desks of drafters, appointers and planners in Gosport and in London. It will be called the Naval Manpower Management Information System (NMMIS) and should see us through into the next century.

The system is the first UK military application of fourth Generation Language (4GL) technology. There are a handful of large UK commercial applications of similar 4GL software systems, but these are in the very early stages of development

and none provide such extensive update and enquiry facilities as ours. This RN initiative is ambitious and will place about 250 terminals on the desks of manpower managers in Gosport and Whitehall during a planned implementation starting in November of this year. Work to date has been extremely encouraging and the system is expected to bring about a more effective and economical use of naval manpower, including a reduction in training costs and ultimately a greater number of round pegs in round holes. Later stages of the project will see a tailor made redeployment and mobilisation system, modelling of manpower trends and better forecasting of requirements. No plans exist to extend the system to individual units but the Navy as a whole will benefit as the manpower managers are given better tools and improved information.

In spite of this, there are no plans to remove the current requirement for drafters and appointers to undergo a forked tongue transplant prior to taking up the job.

## **ELECTRONIC CHIEF GIs**

Quite separately from NMMIS, plans have now been laid for a reorganisation of the administrative task to exploit computer potential. Over the next 5 years computers will be installed in ships and establishments to carry out the detailed work of manpower control and to record the many changes of detail during a man's career. In conjunction with the centralised bank payment system, these changes will allow a significant reduction in the workload onboard and ashore, and thereby ease the stretch which many administrative staff are experiencing.

## **THE TRAINING SCENE**

### **ENHANCEMENT OF TRAINING**

There are two areas where it has been found necessary to enhance the training of officers – basic training and the RN Staff Course.

In 1984, the Commanders in Chief voiced their concern at the standard of young Seaman officers' Bridgeman'ship. As a result, the entire training syllabus is being reviewed from Day 1 at Dartmouth through the Dartmouth Training Ship, Fleet time and OOW Course. Fleet training time and the OOW Course, when officers under training come ashore for their final course before joining the trained strength of the Navy, are now being extended to give more time for the officers to assimilate their basic knowledge.

All Seaman, Engineer and Supply officers will undergo a common package of training in ships of the Fleet, leading to their Fleet Board. Thereafter, the training becomes centred around the individual specialisation with seaman officers going back to the Fleet for 8 months consolidation (4 months more than previously), before coming ashore for their 16 weeks (previously 13 weeks) OOW course. Supply officers will return to sea for 4 months before their Junior Supply Officers Course and Engineers will go straight to Manadon.

## ENHANCED STAFF COURSE COMPLETES THE CIRCLE

The MOD reorganisation has re-emphasised the importance of staff skills to senior officers and in particular the "purple" need for inter-service understanding.

The RN Staff Course was first established at Greenwich in 1919. The present course is run twice a year and lasts 6½ months – considerably shorter than the other single service staff courses (Camberley 9 months, Bracknell 10 months). It is a demanding and intensive course which seeks to cover a lot of ground in what is generally considered to be too short a time. In particular it is too constrained to fit in the 20% joint service training with the other two colleges that the Chiefs of Staff deem necessary.

The staff course will now run once a year from mid-March to mid-December and will be attended by more Lieutenant Commanders selected for promotion and newly promoted Commanders than hitherto. Final numbers and composition have yet to be decided but the first course, starting in March 87 will total 88 – a slight reduction from the previous two courses combined. The main constraint on total numbers is the physical capacity of the college.

## **ARMED SERVICES YOUTH TRAINING SCHEME**

In common with the other services, the RN participates in the Youth Training Scheme. Since the start of the scheme 448 young men and women have joined for a year's service. Of these 179 have transferred to regular engagements.

In 1986/87 we have 300 places to offer and in parallel with the civilian schemes the period for which the 16-year-old school leaver may participate is being increased from one to two years.

Candidates apply through RN Careers Information Offices and have to meet the same entry standards as their regular counterparts.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH TRAINING

The training of Foreign and Commonwealth personnel continues as a busy facet of Naval life. Each year approximately 2,000 students from 55 countries attend courses covering the whole range of Royal Navy training. This very large commitment fully exploits all spare capacity in training resources and gains considerable influence for the Royal Navy and the U.K. In addition it earns a large amount of money each year for our budget. The courses range from the prestigious Royal Naval Staff Course to the practical one day firefighting courses and include both operational training and

engineering degree courses. Every training establishment is involved.

Much of the training is in support of Defence Export Services (as the old Defence Sales Organisation is now more appropriately called) such as the recent sales of Type 81 Frigates to Indonesia and HMS HERMES to India.

A new trend is now apparent in that some Old Commonwealth countries are setting up more of their own training facilities and their places on Royal Navy courses are being taken by developing Middle Eastern countries who are building up their navies and acquiring more modern ships.