

# A Retrospective Projection?

By Admiral Sir John Brigstocke KCB ADC

**L**ike most people I find it difficult to resist looking back over the course of my most recent appointment and, as I reach the closing weeks of my time as Second Sea Lord and Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command, I believe there is plenty to think about.

As in all areas of the Ministry of Defence, the last couple of years in the people business has seen unprecedented upheaval and change as we have relentlessly examined personnel policy to ensure that it meets a trumvirate of needs - those of the individual and his/her dependants, the operational requirement, both planned and unplanned; and the fact that every last penny of expenditure has to be used as cost effectively as possible. It would help if these three areas were all mutually supportive, but all too often they seem to be pulling in opposite directions. As we have grappled with the very real problems of today, we have had to keep in the forefront of our minds the need to ensure that the policies we develop and implement now are relevant to the aspirations and requirements of tomorrow's sailors and marines, all in a world in which jointery, interoperability and legislative changes are key drivers, as never before.

Just keeping the whole show on the road has often seemed a pretty tall order but as I pause to consider just what has been achieved for the men and women in the Naval Service over the last 20 decades, I am reassured by my conclusion that there is a good story to tell. In this article I can only skim the surface so the totality of change in the people area has been listed on pages 53-62. Whilst I know that the manning situation is not universally good and that there are pockets of real pain, the balance between strength and requirement is now on a steady and improving track and, pending any changes to the predicted rates of PVR, we should realise the target of manpower balance by 2002. With the acceptance of a pan-Navy corporate responsibility towards the recruiting effort and the best recruiting achievement for the last 5 years we can rightly claim that the Royal Navy and Royal Marines present a very attractive career option to today's youth. What is more, against the huge political pressure for all areas of the public sector to improve dramatically recruitment from the ethnic minorities, we have more than doubled our numbers and the trend continues to rise. Meanwhile, in career management terms we have introduced the 3 ber commission for officers;

the ending of zoned promotion for officers (no longer are people passed over); the phased introduction of promotion entirely on merit for ratings; greatly enhanced opportunities for promotion from the Lower Deck; a complete overhaul of ratings/DRs records and reports; the abolition of the Ordinary Rate; the introduction of the Short Engagement (Seaman), the start of a Continuity Drafting Trial aimed at keeping people in their Base Port area for 5 years at a time, if that is their wish; and most recently the reduction in notice period for both officers and ratings to 12 months.



*I conclude my reflections with gratitude for the great privilege of having had the opportunity of representing the interests of the finest people of any of the Armed Forces in the world.*

But making progress in manning and career management is only one half of the story because unless we get terms and conditions of service right, people will rightly vote with their feet. 1999 saw the first unstaged pay award since 1995 resulting from sustained lobbying and pressure. We also achieved a tax rebate on laundry charges for all ratings retrospectively from 1993 and, with the introduction of the Get You Home (Stability Assistance) allowance, we have at least managed to get a 'foot in the door' in our aspiration for more parity in allowances for single and married personnel. The introduction of the free confidential Support Line to augment existing welfare support services has been very successful while the Service Families Task Force, designed to ensure dependants are not disadvantaged by a mobile lifestyle in such matters as education and health, is beginning to reap real concessions from other Government Departments. Meanwhile, education for those in the Service has been greatly enhanced by the adoption of Through Life Learning, bringing the award of NVQs and other civilian award accreditation and the establishment of Standard Learning Credits which provide each individual with up to £175 per year to spend on education courses. With initiatives such as e-mail linkage between ships at sea and families at home, through private computers or via those now installed specifically for the purpose in HIVEs (Information & Advice Centres), and with Navy Board recognition that standards of accommodation both ashore and

at sea must be given a much higher priority for funding, the life of the sailor and manna over the next 20 years should be one of sustained and real improvement.

I was privileged this year to meet the 82-years young, ex Chief Communications Yeoman George Andrews. George wrote to remind me that the Second Sea Lord's Personnel Liaison Team had been in existence for over 40 years - and as the person who conceived the idea, and who sold it to Admiral Sir Charles Lambé, he was uniquely placed to tell me how it all started. The PLT has since become an integral part of our business - '2SL Gets the Message' as the Navy News recently described it. It is still by far the best means of obtaining the collective view of our people and, increasingly, of their families. It proved fascinating to go back over previous PLT reports and discover what has troubled sailors over the years. In 1963 for example, there were rumblings over the staging of the 1962 pay rise and there was a lot of interest in developments in air conditioning, bunk sleeping, mess-deck grouping and centralised messing. In the following year attention switched to family separation, the effects of drafting turbulence, length of time away from the UK,

lack of stability during periods of UK-based service and the high cost of weekend travel when separated. Moreover, ratings were very critical of the overall standard of shore accommodation. In 1972 senior ratings were pointing out the reasons for poor retention in the MEM branch and the Spring 1988 report was dominated by calls for the introduction of Pay As You Dine.

We could be forgiven for thinking that nothing has changed. But this must teach me and my fellow Navy Board members and all the Sea Lords of the future, the lesson that we simply have to listen to what our people tell us. We have to adjust to the normalities of people policies being developed on a tri-Service basis, and to a changed culture in which some current taboos will become both accepted and unremarkable to the country and Europe at large. And if we are not to continue to suffer shortages in key categories, we must ensure the policies we adopt are capable of responding much more quickly to fluctuations in both the Service and civilian labour market.

With the new Type 45 Destroyer we have the opportunity of getting on board accommodation right from the outset - we must do the same with our single living accommodation ashore. We must get the Pay system right and continue to seek greater equity of allowances for married and single people and, having paid and accommodated everyone, we

must ensure they have the right kit to do their jobs and can replace it in the right size and the right colour whenever they need it - and new items must not take years to introduce just because we've grown used to the fact that this is what normally happens.

It will all take money but the long overdue move to commercial accounting has already highlighted that the capitalisation of the training estate of my Command - covering land and building only - is a staggering £378M. Annual depreciation and interest on capital of 8% per annum (part of Resource Accounting and Budgeting) on this figure comes to well over £30M. With a reducing manpower requirement, we have now completed a critical examination of whether we have more training capacity and real estate than we need; the answer is that we have and to an extent far greater than can be justified by the regeneration requirement. The more we can save on land and buildings, the more we will have available to fund further improvements in career management, training equipment and single living accommodation. The next few years will therefore, see a further major reduction in the number of our shore training establishments. Considerable tri-

Service rationalisation is also likely particularly in the engineering field.

So overall, I sense a real shift in emphasis over the last 2 years to a situation where the claim that the man or woman is the 'greatest single factor' will no longer be greeted by hollow laughter. From the Government down there is a growing recognition that if we don't get the people part of the Defence equation right, there is little point in bothering with the rest of it. The change won't happen overnight and the battle for funding will continue long after I have hung up my uniform for the last time (there is still an absurd belief that unlike improvements to ships, tanks, aircraft or weapons overall conditions of service for people can be achieved on a cost neutral basis), but I genuinely believe that we are now established on the right road. As I prepare to hand over the reins as the Principal Personnel Officer of the Naval Service, I conclude my reflections with gratitude for the great privilege of having had the opportunity of representing the interests of the finest people of any of the Armed Forces in the world.



Centre picture: 2SL's School of Management staff, Colin Hazeldine and Jacky Coats discuss the Equal Opportunities Management Strategy document.

# Recent Achievements for People

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## RECRUITING

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### BEST RECRUITING FIGURES FOR 5 YEARS

Recruiting in 1999 was the healthiest seen for 5 years. All Branches will be full except for some persistently difficult areas. However, even these are responding to extra money secured for marketing and new recruiting initiatives so that a much improved performance is expected. In time, this will reduce gapping and we are on track to achieve manpower balance by 2002.

### SHORT ENGAGEMENT (SEAMAN)

An initiative to improve recruiting and relieve gapping. First recruits are now in the Fleet. Two year engagement open to those aged 17-32 with the opportunity to transfer to longer engagement by mutual agreement at any time during their Short Engagement.

### ETHNIC RECRUITING IN ACTION

Significant improvement in recruiting from ethnic minority communities as a result of high priority given to current campaign. In FY 98/99 the Naval Service doubled its Rating/Other Ranks intake from ethnic minority groups, a larger percentage increase than either of the other Services. Officer recruiting also made the same improvement with applications 10% up on the previous year.

## PROMOTION & ADVANCEMENT

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### OFFICERS PROMOTION

With the introduction of the Three Tier Commission (3TC), the length of promotion zones have been greatly expanded so that officers may be promoted at any time up to the point at which they retire.

### RATINGS PROMOTION

Advancement Rosters are to be abolished. This will mean that ratings will no longer be advanced on a system based on time served and merit. In future they will be promoted on merit alone. Selection Boards will now sit at all levels in the non-technical branches and for promotion to Charge Chief Artificer/Technician. First board for Petty Officer was in Jul 99 and for Leading Hand will be Apr 00.

### PROMOTION TO OFFICER CORPS

Promotion to the officer corps has been streamlined. Upper age limit increased to 46. It is now possible to transfer to the officer corps at almost any time during a rating's career. The changes came into effect 1 Apr 99.

### AB/O/RD RANK MERGER

Junior rank structure strengthened with future advancement and promotion based on attainment of skills, rather than age or length of service. 'Junior' rate abolished and the ranks of Ordinary Rate and Able Rate merged on 1 Apr 99. Similar changes for the RM. Junior, Marine II and Marine I replaced by the single rank of Marine.

## PAY & ALLOWANCES

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### UNSTAGED PAY AWARDS

For the first time in four years, this year's pay award was not staged. The Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB) had lobbied the Government extensively, highlighting the damaging effect staging was having on morale. The average award of 3.5% was above the rate of inflation and sent a very strong and positive message to servicemen and women that they are valued.

### GET YOU HOME (EARLY YEARS)

This allowance (4 Warrants per year) was introduced on 1 Apr 99 as part of the new UK leave travel scheme. It recognises the needs of personnel embarking on military careers to maintain links with their families during the first 3 years of their service before they become eligible for other allowances.

### GET YOU HOME (STABILITY ASSISTANCE)

This allowance (3 Warrants per year) was specifically targeted at personnel who had served over 3 years and although had not physically moved on posting, retained a permanent base away from their place of duty. The allowance is available to those who elect not to, or cannot, take advantage of the Relocation Package.

### ATPL

This scheme which I designed to aid the retention of Pilot aircrew allows individuals to undertake training leading to a commercial Airline Traffic Pilots' Licence in return for signing up for a further Return of Service.

### LAUNDRY REBATE

Tax relief on laundry costs achieved for all ratings and ORs in the Naval Service back dated for 6 years to give a tax credit of about £200. For future years the tax relief will be applied through an increased tax code.

## VDP FOR CHARITY

The VDP scheme was introduced in November 1999 and will enable serving Naval Service personnel to donate either a half a day's pay per year or a nominated fixed sum to support Naval Charities, eg the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust, the RN & RM Children's Trust and the Royal Naval Benevolent Society for Officers.

## NOTICE GIVING

The notice period for officers, ratings and other ranks to be reduced to a maximum of 12 months with effect from June 2000.

## SUMMARY TRIAL FOR OFFICERS

Agreement in principle for a procedure to allow for the Summary Trial of Officers by their Commanding Officer to be included in the next Armed Forces Bill.

## ALCOHOL IN SHORE ACCOMMODATION

With effect from Jan 4 99 the restrictions on possession and consumption of alcohol in mess decks and cabins ashore has been relaxed at Commanding Officers discretion for the majority of Service Personnel. As a general rule those not allowed this privilege are under initial training.

## WELFARE TELEPHONE ALLOWANCE

The weekly allowance of free telephone calls for personnel deployed on operations has been increased from 3 minutes to 20 minutes. The allowance can be saved while at sea and then used once alongside in foreign ports.

## RECOGNITION OF HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE - RN FITNESS TESTING

1 Apr 99 saw the introduction of a rolling programme of compulsory fitness testing which aligns the RN with the other Services and most importantly, recognises the importance of a healthy lifestyle to the individual and the workforce.

## WARFARE BRANCH MOVES INTO NVQs

In line with the Strategic Defence Review recommendation of achieving civilian recognised accreditation for Service courses the National Vocational Qualification scheme has now recognised RN training in weapon engineering. More resources are being provided this year to assist with NVQs across the board which will add to the 10 000 courses that already receive a National Qualification.

## MORE FLEXIBILITY FOR DRAFTING - CONTINUITY DRAFTING TRIAL

Trial started Apr 1 99 for Warfare Department Able Rates of the Sixth Frigate Squadron, aimed to reduce turbulence by giving ratings 5 year drafts to the Squadron and to give a swifter reaction to local and personal circumstances as well as improving career management for ratings.

## APPROVAL OF SATELLITE TV

Money has been approved to carry out a trial on delivering non-real time satellite TV to SCOT fitted ships. A trial took place in November 1999 and the results will be used to establish a business case to seek approval to fit all SCOT ships with this system. Funding has been identified and planning is now progressing on upgrading the communication infrastructure in HMNB Portsmouth and Devonport so that SKY and terrestrial television is available to all ships and submarines alongside.

## INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

It is anticipated that all units under 2SL's command will be accredited by the end of 1999.

## CONTINUITY DRAFTING TRIAL

One aspect of Ratings' career management the Continuity Draft trial launched last April, is proving a real boon. The ability to access a local point of contact to discuss career issues and future development has been embraced wholeheartedly by the pilot group of Warfare Branch ratings within the Sixth Frigate Squadron based in Devonport. The trial is recognised as a real step forward in the professional management of the rating corps and as a 'retention positive' measure, with clear potential to expand the initiative into other branches and port areas.

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## FAMILIES & WELFARE

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### RN AND RM FAMILIES GIVEN A STRONGER VOICE

The formation of the RN and RM Families Association provides a channel between Service families and the MOD at an official level. Acting as a recognised focus for spouses and families in relation to Service matters, the Association will complement existing structures particularly the volunteer information and advice centres.

### E-MAIL AFLOAT

E-mail facilities are now lifted to all ships with Navy Link that is all ships down to Frigates and Destroyers and a growing number of Minor War Vessels. Take up varies enormously depending on employment and connectivity. Carriers can receive up to 1000 messages a week and Frigates and Destroyers on deployment in the area of 50 - 80 messages. It has been well received and a growth in usage is anticipated.

### E-MAIL IN HIVES

Internet facilities have now been installed in all the Royal Navy and Royal Marines HIVEs (families drop-in centres), Community Centres and Sailors and Families Advice Bureaux (SAFABs). It is now possible for the families of service personnel to exchange e-mails with their relatives who are serving on HM ships that have an e-mail facility.

### NAVAL SERVICE SUPPORT LINE

Started in April 1998 and staffed by trained civilian operators, this provides a free-phone facility (0800 09 26292)

from midday to midnight 7 days a week for serving personnel and their families. It has dealt with a wide spectrum of personal concerns from those seeking information to those who are highly stressed with nowhere to turn.

#### SERVICE FAMILIES TASK FORCE

The Task Force is working with other Government Departments to tackle those problems which result from Service life but are outside the direct control of the Armed Forces to make sure that Service families are not disadvantaged. It is concentrating on the three key areas of education, health and employment and has already provided improvements in other guidance and instructions issued by other Government Departments.

#### VETERANS ADVICE UNIT

Established to help all former members of the Armed Forces and their dependants, the VAU (08456 02 0302) takes over 7500 calls a year on subjects as varied as pensions and medals to Old Comrades Associations. The Unit provides a sign-posting service to those authorities and agencies that can assist.

build today is capable of meeting the aspirations of our personnel for the next 25 years. The Naval Service is very much alive to the needs of its' people and future new builds and major refurbishment will look to move on from the old standard of multiple occupancy rooms with communal ablutions, to more emphasis on single en-suite facilities for all. There will, of course, be occasions where circumstances such as the physical layout of a building or by virtue of it being listed prevents the single en-suite design being applied. It may also be the case that operational groupings prefer their people to be accommodated on a section or sub-group basis. However, the general aim will be for en-suite facilities for all.

Our efforts to improve accommodation are not restricted just to those ashore. Accommodation in ships also requires significant improvement and considerable effort is being applied to ensure that the new generation of ships are designed with a high standard of accommodation and appropriate recreational facilities.

### Family Quarters

1999 has seen the Defence Housing Executive achieve Agency status. Apart from improving the standard of those Family Quarters for which the Services have a long term requirement, they have concentrated on making significant reductions in the number of 'Void' properties still retained in the MOD estate for which there is no long term requirement. Currently some 13,000 properties (over 20% of the stock) are in this category with a cost to the Agency which would be better spent on upgrade programmes. This increasing surplus appears to be caused by a combination of reduced manpower requirements, manning levels below this requirement, re-deployment of units, and a move towards private ownership. However, now that the effects of the Strategic Defence Review are becoming clearer, the disposal programme is gathering pace and between now and 2002 the Agency is planning to dispose of nearly 7000 properties and bring the voids rate down to about 13%.

Last year it was predicted that it would take some time for the benefits of the cultural changes promised by Agency and its planned upgrade programme to work through the system. This is proving to be the case and having surveyed the total estate, the Agency has had to delay the completion date for their upgrade programme by 2 years until November 2005. Nevertheless, significant qualitative improvements are steadily being achieved. At Faslane the upgrade of 470 Family Quarters on the Colgran and Churchill Estates will be completed on schedule by the end of March 2000 (despite the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds delaying some work while house martin chicks hatched!) In Portsmouth, work on 200 properties on the Stamshaw Estate begins in November 1999 with completion in early 2001. All these are being brought up to the Agency's Standard 1 for Condition incorporating modern building and energy saving standards. As far as new build programmes are concerned, 165 new Family Quarters are being built at Yeovilton to accommodate the move of personnel from the Royal Naval Air Station Portland. Half of

## MODERNISING AND IMPROVING CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

### Single Living Accommodation

**T**he standards of Single Living Accommodation across the Naval Service range from poor to excellent and are primarily dependent upon when funding was last provided for refurbishment. However, improving this accommodation is not just about providing funding. It is vital that the standard and style of the accommodation that we

Below: New Senior Rates living accommodation at HMS NELSON



These are being built by the MOD to normal scales, while the other half are being built under a Private Finance Initiative the first of which was handed over in early July 1999. The whole new build programme will be completed in mid 2000. In the longer term, a build of 70 new properties is planned in Portsmouth and 266 at Abbeywood (Bristol) both of which currently have a significant shortfall in officers' Family Quarters.

## Alcohol in Single Servicemen's Accommodation

As part of an ongoing review of alcohol policy within all three Services and with the emergence of more In-Service establishments and operational theatres it became clear that RN rules on possession of alcohol in cabins and messdecks ashore was at variance with that of the other two Services. Although it has traditionally attempted to align customs and practices ashore and afloat in order to ease the transition either way, it is increasingly clear that RN personnel have been subject to considerably greater restriction than their equivalents in the Army and RAF and indeed their contemporaries in civilian life in relation to alcohol. Accordingly, in December 1998 the Second Sea Lord announced that from January 1999, and apart from those undertaking new entry training at HMS RALEIGH BRNC or CTCRM Lymington, the restrictions on the possession of alcohol in shore establishments had been lifted. In essence this move was inspired by the feeling that in the modern Navy, in which the Management makes increasingly complex demands on very junior personnel, this should be matched by treating them as responsible citizens off duty. The new regime has only been in effect for just a few months but the initial indications are that it is not only a popular and overdue move but that it may have contributed to better disciplinary standards and fewer offences of drunkenness ashore but time will tell! The current restrictions on the consumption of alcohol at sea remain in place.

## The Naval Supportline

The Naval Supportline, which has been operating since 28 April 1998, is a confidential and impartial listening service for all Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel and their families on any issue which may be causing concern, personal distress or crisis at home or at work.

Staffed by specially recruited civil servants who have received specific training, the role of the staff is to listen to callers, issues and discuss options for the caller to consider. The Supportline staff do not take any action themselves but 'signpost' callers to where they may be able to resolve their situation or gather information. This may include the divisional system, the specialist welfare organisations (Naval Personal and Family Service or Royal Marines Welfare) or appropriate

civilian organisations. In many cases merely being able to talk over the situation with an impartial listener is enough.

Confidentiality is assured for all callers who can remain completely anonymous and the only information recorded is of a general nature for statistical purposes. If callers do identify themselves or omit no details are kept in the first year of operation similar numbers of serving personnel and their families used the Supportline - no issue is too trivial. The Supportline is open midday to midnight seven days a week.

Contact numbers	FREEPHONE	0800 99 26282
	MIL	9366 26282
	BT	01705 726282

## The Association for Royal Naval and Royal Marine Families

In line with the Army and the Air Force, an organisation was established in March this year to represent the views of families of those serving in the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines.

About three years ago a group of Plymouth spouses made a representation to the Navy urging the formation of such an organisation. The Spouses Continuous Attitude Survey also indicated that there was a demand for the creation of an independent body. In addition to this, there was an increase of instances where representation from all three Services families was required and with the formation of the Service Families Task Force (an initiative from the Strategic Defence Review) it became clear that the establishment of a Naval association to represent families would be of considerable benefit.

The Navy Board and the Minister for the Armed Forces gave their approval and an Association for Royal Naval and Royal Marine Families was formed. This is run from an office in Plymouth and its role is to represent the concerns and wishes of Service families on matters of policy affecting Service life and conditions. It is the first navy-wide Families Association and the Navy is keen to work with the newly formed Association and offer its full support. A Charter was developed in harmony with both parties and was signed by the Second Sea Lord and the first Chairman of the Association in April 1999. Membership is open to whomever the serving person deems his/her family to be and a letter has been sent from the Association to all serving personnel outlining the intentions of the Association and detailing how family members may join. Response so far has been encouraging.

The contact telephone number for the Association is 01752-789444 and their address is 22 Talfour Road Plymouth PL6 5DQ. They are also on e-mail [assocrnmfamilies@lineone.net](mailto:assocrnmfamilies@lineone.net)

## Voluntary Deduction from Pay Scheme

An ageing population and a more forthright younger population has resulted in an increasing demand on Naval Charities to provide support to serving and former members of the Naval Service and their dependants. Generally in the charity sector there has been a drop in the level of donations from the public by one third, in real terms, since 1993. Traditionally, members of the Naval Service have supported charities through fund-raising projects, children's parties on board ship, fun runs, hospital visits and sponsored activities. There will always be a role for this spontaneous type of donation.

However, charity sector professionals recognise that the most efficient way for the sector to raise money is by planned giving. The charities tax regime is currently being reviewed and one of the proposals is to introduce incentives for Payroll Giving Schemes. Such schemes already allow voluntary donations to charities from pay before PAYE tax is deducted and, in effect, add a 'government contribution' to the individual's donation.

The Navy Board is very aware of the extent of the support, to serving and former members of the Naval Service, by the Naval Charities and has endorsed the introduction of a Voluntary Deduction from Pay Scheme in support of these charities.

The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust, The Royal Naval and Royal Marines Children's Trust, The Royal Naval Benevolent Society for Officers are some of the charities which exclusively support our people. Other charities, such as The Royal Star and Garter Home, St Dunstan's and the British Limbless Ex-Servicemen's Association include our people amongst their beneficiaries. All these charities and others will be helped by the Navy's Voluntary Deduction from Pay Scheme.

The scheme will be introduced early in 2000 and serving personnel will be invited to donate either a half day's pay or a fixed sum of money which will be deducted monthly (before



Above: Instruction on the latest Microsoft software packages at HMS NELSON

Below left: E-mail communications to and from ships at sea

the deduction of PAYE tax). The proceeds will be distributed, via King George's Fund for Sailors, to nominated charities and the monies used exclusively for the support and relief of need of serving and former members of the Naval Service and their dependants.

## Satellite TV in Ships, improved TV reception, e-mail and uplift in Commanding Officer's Fund

As our Ships and their Companies continue to work hard to meet the operational programme we are always seeking initiatives to improve Conditions of Service for the seagoer. This year has seen progress in several areas. A twin track approach has been used to establish the feasibility of providing TV reception to ships at sea; real time using a satellite and non real time using the SCOT systems. The real time option is extremely expensive and it is likely that the aircraft carriers will still be the only units to receive real time TV programmes in the near future. The non real time approach is more likely to succeed and will provide taped TV programmes to ships fitted with the SCOT system. This will be under trial towards the middle of 2000 when a taped TV programme will be transmitted over the Broadcast.

Long awaited improvements to TV reception for ships alongside in Devonport and Portsmouth are also being planned. £3 million has now been allocated to improve the dockside infrastructure so that ships will have the facility to plug into the dockyard cable TV system when alongside. This



work will complete in the next three years and will be complementary to the preliminary system already in place at Faslane

Film nights have also seen improvements. The RN Film Corporation has arranged for the replacement of the 16 mm Ektacolor projector with a new state of the art video projector. This is capable of producing a first class picture using video cassettes and will ultimately be able to project films in DVD format

E-mail has proved to be a popular means of improving communications and it is now possible for families of Service personnel to send e-mails to their relatives who are serving on HM ships that have an e-mail facility. The Naval HIVEs, the three Sailors and Families Advice Bureaux in Plymouth, Portsmouth and Helensburgh and the majority of naval community centres are now on line with e-mail and offer a service whereby sailors can access Hot Mail to send their personal messages. Hot Mail affords the user complete privacy with only those knowing the individual's password being able to access the message. It is a welcome step forward which will give an opportunity to families who are not on e-mail at home to be able to communicate easily with their relatives at sea.

It has also recently been announced that the Commanding Officer's fund which exists to enable Commanding Officers to spend a limited amount of money in any way and on any object calculated to increase the efficiency of his or her ship or unit has been increased from £1 per man per year to £4 per man

per year for the next 4 years. This increased amount will enable Commanding Officers to be more imaginative and flexible when deciding how the money should be spent.

## The Royal Navy Fitness Test - a requirement for the service of today

Although Service life continues to move increasingly towards computerisation and automation, there are still essential naval duties that demand degrees of physical fitness in support of combat effectiveness. Tasks such as damage control, fire fighting and disaster relief operations are physically demanding especially when conducted in temperature extremes. The ability of individuals to perform duties in such adverse conditions depends to a large degree on their level of personal fitness. Therefore, the need to have men and women who are physically fit and capable of completing their roles in both peace and war, is as strong now as it has ever been.

Since the introduction of the fitness test in April 1999 (for those under 25) most personnel have had little difficulty in achieving the standards required and early results indicate a pass rate of approximately 80%. The test is a positive initiative and brings the Royal Navy into line with both the Army and RAF as well as other NATO navies. Although only encompassing those under 25 at the moment, its staged introduction over five years will mean that by 2003 everyone



under the age of 50 will be involved. Of course 'fitness' does not recognise an individual's rate or rank and therefore the test will apply equally to the most senior officers as well as the most junior ratings. Indeed at the recent press launch of the test on board HMS FEARLESS the then Minister for the Armed Forces, Mr Doug Henderson passed the test comfortably. It perhaps goes without saying therefore that if the man in charge can pass, the rest of us should be able to follow suit with just a little extra effort!

It has been specifically designed to test our stamina as well as our power and strength. The first phase of tests presently examine stamina and consists of the 2.4Km run or the multi-stage shuttle run (bleep test). The standards for this element of the test are age and gender fair and have been designed to measure the individual's general level of fitness. In order to be able to do this for all personnel, the physiological differences between men and women and the decline in performances associated with age have been taken into account.

The second phase will be to judge power and strength and this will be task related, simulating the work required for such generic tasks as damage control, fire fighting and casualty evacuation. This part, which will be age and gender free, is currently being developed at the Institute of Naval

Medicine and is due to be introduced in 2000.

The Royal Navy Fitness Test is an important and long awaited development that will undoubtedly contribute greatly to the overall efficiency and professionalism of the service. It is here to stay and all of us will need to recognise and embrace the changes in routine and lifestyle needed to achieve the standards set. We have a duty of care to ensure our personnel are fit to undertake any task given to them. Equally personnel also have a duty of care to ensure they are capable of achieving those tasks under any conditions. The test will help us all to achieve this, whilst providing the tools necessary to enable us to monitor both our combat effectiveness and increase our long term productivity.

## Learning Forces

It is essential that the Naval Service should provide opportunities for personnel to obtain nationally recognised qualifications from Service education and training courses and from their employment. Civilian recognition makes a Naval career more attractive to potential recruits and materially assists with retaining those already in the Service. It benefits the Navy by ensuring that people are competent to national standards to carry out their functions. Qualifications provide a measure of success and the currency by which individuals achieve progression within education and employment.

The prime purpose of Service training is to produce personnel capable of meeting operational requirements. However much of this training develops competence, comprising skills, attitudes and critical knowledge, which may be transferred to civilian life. The Service aims to negotiate, from civilian Awarding Bodies, the highest levels of recognition for these competencies. In principle, all employment and education and training courses should lead to a full or partial qualification for successful candidates. At the very least, those attending courses should be able to produce proof of newly acquired skills and knowledge in a format acceptable to the appropriate Awarding Body. The only exceptions should be where the content is purely military or no suitable accreditation is currently available. The aim is to develop a structured qualification matrix for each specialisation/branch and rank/rate, both trade and generic, with the opportunity to gain additional qualifications on a through career basis.

Progress in most branches has been good, in particular with the additional funding provided by the Strategic Defence Review Learning Forces package (which was front loaded to encourage recruits). The majority of branches will be offering NVQs at Level 2 (or their equivalent) to new entrants within 3 years of joining. They are also well advanced in providing mechanisms for achieving accreditation on a through career basis within the various trades. Attention is currently being directed at the following:

#### **Opportunities to Achieve NVQ at Minimum of Level 2**

Aimed to provide an opportunity to all non-commissioned personnel to reach a minimum of NVQ Level 2 in an appropriate discipline within 3 years of joining (NVQ Level 2 is equivalent to achieving about 5 GCSEs). By April 2000 over 85% of all new entrants will be eligible for civilian accreditation at a minimum of NVQ Level 2, or appropriate academic qualification, within 3 years of joining.

#### **Raise the Key Skills of Service Personnel**

Aimed to provide opportunities for Service personnel to enhance their Key Skills and gain accreditation at a minimum of Level 2, within 3 years of joining, in: Communication, Application of Number, Information Technology, Working with Others, Improving One's Own Learning and Performance, and Problem Solving. Key Skills are about applying and demonstrating competence in real-time situations and they have been identified by employers as being essential for an effective, competitive workforce.

#### **Learning Credits**

Learning Forces proposes a new approach to the provision of financial sponsorship to individuals for personal improvement. Historically, the Individual Refund Scheme paid 80% of course fees up to a maximum of £140 per year. This scheme was replaced on April 1 by the first tier of a 2-tier scheme called Learning Credits. The first tier is known as the Standard

Learning Credit, and operates on similar lines to Individual Refund Scheme but the value of it is 25% higher, at £175 per year. This can be used to support virtually any academic or vocational course leading to a nationally recognised qualification. Further, it can be used to cover the cost of credit transfer fees, accreditation of prior learning, examination fees or even the costs of specialist training for learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

The second part of Learning Credits will be known as the Enhanced Learning Credit and is due to be launched on April 1 00. Details of the scheme are still being finalised. The concept is that individuals should commit themselves to the scheme early in their career and save a contribution through a special saving account over a period of at least 3 years. Once a minimum period of service has been completed, the individual will be entitled to claim funding in any three years either during service or for up to 10 years after leaving. Personnel in-service when the scheme is launched may join during an initial window of 12 months but may only claim credits on the basis of time in scheme - previous service will not count.

#### **Improving Learning Facilities**

Aimed at improving the facilities that support individual learning in establishments and units. Planning is going ahead to update and revitalise establishment education centres, where they exist, and introduce new facilities where they do not. Emphasis will be placed on the use of IT and communications technology to give individuals access to learning courses both on-site and through on-line technology. Consideration will be given to the opportunity of linking these centres with the University for Industry proposals for a national network of learning centres.

#### **Personal Development Record**

Many Naval schools and units have commissioned individual training and experience records over the years and its introduction to the Naval Service will provide for a consistent approach to individual training and experience records. However it will be more than a record of qualifications and experience as it will also underpin a process of recording, reviewing and action planning to encourage individuals to take a greater interest in their own professional development. It will be issued to all new entrants from April 1 00 and a copied to all in-Service personnel by September 1 00.

#### **Equal Opportunities**

The Naval Service is alive to the benefits of embracing diversity. As such we offer genuine equality of opportunity with all serving personnel fully aware that advancement is based on ability, performance and aptitude for work. We make every effort to ensure that our people are treated fairly and that

recruitment, selection, training, promotion and career management decisions are based solely on objective and job related criteria. However, we must reflect better the society we exist to defend

7% of the recruiters target population is of minority ethnic origin this is a growing segment of the UK which is not adequately represented in the Service. Currently only 1% of the Navy is non-white, an unsustainable position which reflects badly on us

Improving representation from minority ethnic communities requires the Navy to broadcast attractive employment opportunities and conditions. It also requires new approaches to recruiting. Although there is considerable racial integration in this country it is still true that white salesmen tend to attract white customers and vice versa. Thus the Director of Naval Recruiting has generated three Ethnic Minority Liaison Teams and two liaison officers to increase the awareness in both the recruiting field force and the minority ethnic communities. Local recruiters are building their own contacts with community leaders and opinion formers and the Navy is increasing its presence at a variety of new events. We are learning a great deal and becoming more effective and attractive to our target audience

The Navy met 94% of its recruiting target last year and doubled the intake of ethnic minority ratings. Officer applicant numbers are growing fast and will feed through to entrants in

normal course. Taken as a whole Royal Navy and Royal Marine recruiting is dynamic and successful. The Service is getting to grips with recruiting in a multicultural society. The Ethnic Press and Commission for Racial Equality have publicly recognised that considerable progress has been made and a great deal has been done to raise our profile and increase racial equality awareness. The Royal Navy is now winning national awards for minority ethnic recruiting excellence and boosting employment potential. New ideas are constantly being developed which improve main stream recruiting as well

In our quest to continue to attract high calibre people into the Naval Service we must practise what we preach. Education and leadership are the keys to that success. To this end a major equal opportunities awareness training initiative is underway. This is not about Political Correctness. The need to treat people with respect and dignity is nothing new, but a few individuals, sometimes unwittingly, still allow prejudice and ignorance to affect their professional conduct. This has a corrosive effect on team spirit and thus weakens fighting effectiveness and it undermines the positive work being carried out by the majority of personnel. Equal opportunities, quite rightly, has support at every level within the Royal Navy. We will be judged by our success in recruiting and retaining high calibre people, regardless of race, ethnic origin, religion, gender or social background.

# Pay 2000

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**A**s a result of recommendations in the Independent Review, and in response to the views of the Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB) the MOD has developed a new pay structure for the Armed Forces known as Pay 2000. Ministers and the AFPRB have endorsed the new system that sees the first fundamental changes in the structure of Armed Forces pay since the introduction of the Military Salary in 1971.

The new pay structure aims to introduce a remuneration system which is fairer, simpler, more transparent and responsive to meet the recruitment and retention needs of the Armed Forces into the 21st century. In parallel the current Additional Pay system which provides extra remuneration for personnel employed in specialist areas of work (e.g. Flying Pay, Diving Pay) has also been reviewed. Again, the aim is to provide a simpler and more flexible system capable of targeting key shortage areas to aid recruitment and retention.

Pay 2000 will offer a modern approach that links pay more closely to both job content and weight. Ratings and Other Ranks will move away from All of One Company rates and be allocated to one of two pay ranges based on the Job Evaluation score for their trade. Current spot rates of pay will be replaced by annual increments intended to motivate personnel and provide greater incentive to increase experience and qualifications - a feature long sought by Service personnel themselves. Progression up an incremental scale will be based on three criteria: experience, rank, qualifications and

satisfactory performance. For the moment all officers, up to and including the rank of Commodore, will be paid on one pay range.

Transition arrangements have been developed whereby personnel transfer to the new structure on the closest incremental level above their existing rate of pay such that no individual's pay will be reduced as a result of the new system.

The same pay arrangements will be introduced across the three Services, and will include flexibilities to meet individual Service requirements. In this way, the unique nature of work in each Service will be recognised. The new structure will make the AFPRB better able to deliver pay rates which are broadly comparable with pay levels in civilian life.

Pay 2000 was planned for introduction in April 2000, but implementation of the system has proved to be a more complex activity than originally anticipated and the MOD has decided to delay it for 12 months. That delay will allow for full confidence testing to ensure personnel move onto the new pay structure without introducing the risk that inaccurate payment might result.

In the meantime the current pay system will remain in place and the Armed Forces Pay Review Body will make their recommendations for the April 2000 pay award in exactly the same way as they have done in the past.

# Promotion - What now the Quota System?

By Commander D Pound RN (Ret d)

## Officer Promotions

**I**n 1937, instructions for the Naval Assistant to 2nd Sea Lord stated 'We now come to a subject which touches us all very closely I mean the method of selection for promotion. As you know, each CinC sends in his recommendation for the half yearly promotions in order of merit. When all these lists are in, the Naval Assistant to the 2nd Sea Lord, the Commander and the Senior Civil Servant decide on those who are obviously out of the running and weed them out - in actual practice these are very few. They then put down the names of all officers in zone in their batches - each officer having a Page to himself, whereon is put a précis of his reports, his age and number in the order of merit. Four of these books are made up and one is given to each Sea Lord. Each Sea Lord then makes out his own list of promotions. When all four lists have been completed, they are gone through by the Naval Assistant and another list is made out of every officer who has received a vote. This final list is then considered by all four Sea Lords together and they then pick the final promotion list.'

In a period of constant change, it is somewhat refreshing to come across principles which have actually changed little over the last half century. No, no-one is weeded out now and selection board membership has been spread much wider. But zones, batches and Station Lists have been very much a part of the whole selection process - until this year.

Zones and batches - the old Quota system - had one major drawback. It was extremely fair in calculating promotion quotas when manpower remained constant - but it could not respond rapidly enough when the Service was faced with changes in manpower levels. Further, the Officers Study Group Report of 1993 concluded that the List system

(General, Special Duties and Supplementary List) should go and future promotion numbers would be to Requirement. And to ensure that we always promoted the best officers, all those in zone would be in competition with each other. As a result, the Quota system with its batches died in early 1999 and the promotions announced on June 30 1999 were selected with all General, Special Duties and Supplementary List officers in competition with each other. And how did the selections

compare with past years? No significant difference. Authorised numbers were very similar to previous years with officers genuinely earning their selections.

And for the future? Selective promotion is now being established for all officers to the rank of Lieutenant Commander/Major RM and above, and also for the new substantive rank of Commodore/Brigadier. With the zones also being extended to 3 years before retirement, officers will be in Zone far longer than they are Under or Over Zone with all the advantages that that brings.



## Open Reporting

Those 1937 instructions also state 'Contrary to general ideas there is no special organisation for watching the list of engagements in 'The Times' so that an officer, on becoming engaged, can be sent to the Persian Gulf or West River before he is able to be married'. Later, it also states 'the only people who are allowed to see confidential reports are the Sea Lords and it would be quite wrong to increase the number who have access to them'. Not even the officer saw them (well, not legally). Reports are still guarded most carefully by an officer's appointer and by Promotion Section within Victory Building, but no longer is it acceptable to keep reports from the individual. Not only is it Government policy to encourage complete openness but it is also vastly better man management that an officer or rating should know precisely what is written about him or her.

With the introduction of a newly designed computer based form in 1997 (which retained many of the features of the old form but also included some new and useful aspects), came the requirement for officers to be shown their reports and to sign that they had done so. Officers can now also comment on

***The Quota and Batch system for officer promotions was designed by Admiral Pound in 1933. As Promotion Co-ordinator, I now watch my grandfather's work pass into history. Rather sad - but it is good to know that his work lasted so long!***

points of fact in the report which they believe are wrong. They did not, however, see the fully completed form with senior officer's comments included, but from July 1999, copies of all those reports written since July 1998 are being returned to the individual for their retention and use. And what of the 'limsy'? It has gone - and officers must now look to the copy of their reports as an official record of their service in a particular appointment.

The rating corps also has full open reporting and all ratings sign their reports confirming that they have seen it. The Ratings and Other Ranks Reporting System is a fundamentally different report, is also computer based, and is currently being brought into service. It will provide a more efficient method for selecting ratings for higher rate or rank. No more points and rosters; selection will eventually be by merit and merit alone.

**Above: High quality training for high quality people**

## Promotion to the Officer Corps

Opportunities for promotion to officer have been 'opened up' and procedures streamlined so that potential officer candidates can be identified earlier and placed before the Admiralty Interview Board far more quickly. Rules on age for Upper Yardmen and Corps Commission candidates are unaltered at age 26 but those over the age of 26, now known as Senior Upper Yardmen, have the opportunity to attain commissioned rank up to the age of 46. This will allow the wealth of talent on the lower deck to be fully utilised and several RN Warrant Officers and senior Chief Petty Officers, who were previously excluded because of the previous upper age limit of 34, have already been selected and undertaken training at the Britannia Royal Naval College.

As a footnote, the Quota and Batch system for officer promotions was designed by Admiral Pound in 1933. As Promotion Co-ordinator, I now watch my grandfather's work pass into history. Rather sad - but it is good to know that his work lasted so long!