



Personnel: An Overview of the Year

The Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent, the Director of Naval Personnel Strategy Commodore Charles Montgomery, Deputy Director Naval Life Management Captain Chris Richards, and Head of Branch Development Captain Chris Osborne discuss the year's key themes and challenges, with a focus on leadership and change.

Leadership: Meeting the Challenges

by The Second Sea Lord

The Royal Navy has excellent leaders at all levels. Operation Telic in Iraq demonstrated our full range of skills and capabilities, while our training programmes and promotion structures continue to foster strong leadership.

However, I believe that leadership within the Royal Navy faces some significant challenges: too much emphasis on management rather than leadership; the fast tracking of senior rates; the knock-on effects of the 'black hole' ban on recruitment in the mid-1990s; and the impact of wider social changes. This is how I believe the Royal Navy is responding to each of these challenges.

Management vs Leadership

Our divisional system suffers from too much management and not enough leadership – training sometimes focuses on process at the expense of commanding, leading and managing, and divisional officers spend more time at their laptops than they do out and about. In my view, Field Marshal Viscount Slim was right when he said:

'When you command a platoon you ought to know each man in it better than his own mother does. You must know which man responds to encouragement, which to reasoning and which needs a good kick in the pants. Know your men.'

I have gained tri-Service agreement to make it mandatory to comment on leadership performance and potential in the new joint officers' and ratings' annual reports. I have also instructed promotion boards to adopt a broader definition of merit, including the candidate's potential as a leader at the next highest rank or rate.

Safeguarding Our Expertise

In the operations room of a Leander Class frigate, the ratio of junior rates to senior rates was 8:1; in an Astute Class submarine it will be less than 1:1. This trend is also apparent in other specialisations where technology is replacing junior rates and demanding a higher level of skill from senior rates. With more senior rates being 'fast tracked' into position (as is already happening with Artificers and in the air engineering specialisation), we are in danger of losing the immense leadership experience of the non-Artificer senior rates such as Warfare and Logistic Chief Petty Officers and Chief Stokers. We are therefore looking carefully at how we prepare fast track senior rates and leading hands to take on leadership responsibilities.

The 'Black Hole'

The 'black hole' is shorthand for the recruiting ban concurrent with post-Cold War redundancies, which stopped 2,000 people joining the Service in the mid-1990s. The knock on effects mean there is now a shortage of over 20 per cent of leading hands at sea; in five years this will translate into a 20 per cent (or greater) shortage of Petty Officers. We are working to alleviate this by fast pull through from able rate to leading hand, extensions of service, using the full-time Reserve Service and trying to improve retention. I also want to rebuild the command and leadership role of leading hands, through the P2D - prepare, promote and develop - Programme.

Social Change

The Royal Navy continues to recruit, retain and reward truly excellent people. However, the capabilities and outlook of our recruits are affected by wider social trends, such as less emphasis on team skills, less participation in competitive sports at school, changes in attitudes to parenting and the endless media criticism of leadership. A visit to any of our training establishments or Fleet units will testify to our ability to develop the skills of every individual who joins us; but these trends provide another compelling argument for focusing on leadership development throughout all our ranks.

Developing Themes

My team, Commodore Charles Montgomery, Captain Chris Richards and Captain Chris Usborne, have each contributed their own overviews of the year's key events and developments to this year's Broadsheet. Inevitably these touch on and, in some cases develop more fully, themes I have already discussed here. I believe this demonstrates just how important these themes are to the future of the Royal Navy.

Full Article

At the Forefront of Change

by Commodore Charles Montgomery

The Royal Navy has always embraced change. From the building of HMS Warrior, the first ocean-going, ironclad, armoured warship, in the 1860s to the introduction of HMS Ark Royal with its angled flight deck, mirror landing system, steam catapults and side lifts nearly a century later, we have a history of finding innovative solutions to challenging situations. Today, that tradition of innovation is as strong as ever. The past year has seen more significant changes: in our equipment; in the way we manage information; in the structure of our organisation; and in our approach to personnel.

New Equipment, New Capabilities

The first of our new, larger aircraft carriers is scheduled to enter service in 2012. These new ships will help us reduce 'flash to bang' time by giving us a true carrier strike capability, provided by the Joint Combat Aircraft. To fully exploit this capability, we also need to 'fight smarter'. Network enabled capability will join us together and help us manage large amounts of information.

Managing Information

Managing information effectively is also vital in non-combat roles. The new Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) System will transform Service personnel administration by providing a single, authoritative online source for all military personnel information, and pulling together the separate Services' terms and conditions of service. The business case has been endorsed, and the Royal Navy is taking the lead in developing a harmonised and simplified allowances scheme, and management information system processes.

Streamlining the Organisation

The top level budget merger will bring together Fleet and Second Sea Lord headquarters staff. The merger, scheduled for April 2006, will create a more agile organisation and enable tighter control of the tactical management of manpower.

The Personnel Change Programme

The Navy Board's Personnel Change Programme (PCP) is an all-embracing change programme aimed at preparing Royal Navy personnel to cope with the needs of the Future Navy. The Second Sea Lord has published his Strategic Intent for Personnel, which will ensure that this complex change agenda is managed alongside other initiatives and routine business. For more detail about the PCP, see Captain Chris Usborne's summary below.

[Full Article](#)

Leadership Today

by Captain Chris Richards

At a time when we are promoting people earlier than before and relying on an ever-smaller pool of leading hands and senior ratings, good leadership is more important than ever. We therefore need to ensure that our command, leadership and divisional system can effectively manage the aspirations and career development of each individual sailor and marine. This piece examines our existing divisional structure, and looks at how the Royal Navy is tackling issues such as the shortage of leading hands. It also outlines the steps the Royal Navy is taking to ensure all individuals are valued and respected.

Assessing the Divisional System

Two years ago, my predecessor launched a Divisional Review in response to criticisms that the divisional system was irrelevant and outdated. The review found that although the system was still sound, it had become overly bureaucratic. Divisional officers were spending too much time locked to their computers finalising appraisal reports instead of 'walking their patch', learning about and leading their men and women. There were also many cases where divisional officers were no longer line managing their divisions, while increasing use of Royal Navy personnel in agencies, dockyards and squads at sea meant that individuals were seeing less of their own divisional officer.

Valuing our Leading Hands

Leading hands are, and will remain, in short supply. Bringing the most able rates from all branches forward earlier requires careful preparation, timely promotion and ongoing development. In my view, the leading hand really is the first superior officer – a fact that many appear to have overlooked in recent years. We need to reinstate, formalise and enhance the role, and reinforce the 'contract' between commanding officers and leading hands. Commanding officers should set key development targets and offer accountable employment; while leading hands must be seen to set standards, earn the respect of their peer group and superiors, and demonstrate the leadership expected of an embryonic senior rating.

Valuing Individuals

As well as developing leaders, we need to show all our people that we respect and value them as individuals. The Navy Board has taken a significant step towards achieving this with its commitment to ensuring that almost all groups within the Service spend no more than 660 days away from their families over a rolling three-year period. Other initiatives include the huge investment in

accommodation ashore, the implementation of 'pay as you dine' from 2005, and the rolling out of high quality education and e-learning facilities. I will continue to strive to improve the Operational Welfare Package, which is already giving families and partners at home improved access to information.

Full Article

Branch Development

by Captain Chris Usborne

To stay abreast of changes in warfighting and technology, the Royal Navy needs new structures and new skills. The Navy Board's Personnel Change Programme (PCP) aims to create sustainable manpower structures for the Future Navy and improve job satisfaction by reducing multi-skilling and increasing specialist skills. This piece looks in detail at a major project endorsed by the Navy Board in May 2004 as part of the PCP, which involves significant branch development in the Warfare, Engineering and Air Engineering branches.

Warfare Branch Development

In the mid-1990s, the Warfare Branch merged Seaman Operators and Weapons Engineering Mechanics. At the time, this was a common-sense response to the increasing automation and reliability of electronic systems. However, Operator Mechanics now feel that they are doing too much multi-tasking, while WE senior ratings no longer have the continuous support they need to complete routine maintenance.

The carrier and Type 45 operations rooms of the future will be manned by fewer people, who will focus on weapon, sensor and information management. Although this vision will not be fully realised for ten years, we need to start tackling our skills shortages now if we are to make it a reality. The Warfare Branch will be made up of:

- 'Seaman specialists', a cadre of experienced seamen who will undertake all visual signaling and fleet manoeuvring tasks;
- Communications and information systems specialists; and
- A core warfare specialisation with EW (electronic warfare) and AWT (radar) forming the core elements in the operations room (dealing with action information management), and AWW (gunner) and UW (sonar) focusing on weapon delivery tasks.

Selected maintenance tasks will move to the Engineering Branch,

providing better support for Weapons Engineering Department senior ratings.

Engineering Branch Development

Rapid advances in ship system technology and the merging of weapons and marine engineering technologies, combined with the need to tackle the shortage of Artificers, have led to a fundamental review of the Engineering Branch. The new branch structure includes:

- A single career path through an all-technician structure with provision for accelerated and normal progression to Petty Officer; and
- Competence-based training aligned to requirements so that the Petty Officer Engineering Technician (PO(ET)) is the main rate for delivery of operational capability.

We are also looking at introducing the role of 'Platform Engineer Officer', but this is still under discussion.

Air Engineering Branch Development

Air Engineering Branch development is also under way. In the new two-stream branch, Artificers will be called 'Technicians' – a label that is better understood in the civilian world and that is recognised by professional institutes. This means that an Aircraft Maintainer, for example, will no longer join as an Artificer. Instead, he or she will come in as an Air Engineering Technician (Mechanical or Avionics) and could even progress to become a Chartered Engineer.

Other Personnel Projects

Two other projects were also endorsed in May. The first will create a two-stage career path for officers and warrant officers, comprising platform-based expertise such as warfare, engineering or logistics and competence-based work in areas such as operations, human resources, information systems, acquisition or policy plans and programmes. The second will look at developing more flexible career structures, which might include 'made-to-measure' engagements, greater flexibility between regulars and reserves (including the use of full-time Reserves) and career breaks for family or personal development.

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[Back to Homepage](#)