

# PERSONNEL

## MANPOWER PLANNING

As a consequence of Defence for the 90s the Service manpower requirement is steadily diminishing, ironically at the same time as the economic recession is drastically reducing the numbers volunteering to leave prematurely. This greatly complicates the task facing the planners to reduce Naval manpower by some 8000 between 1992 and the middle of the decade. A variety of regulators must be brought to bear to match the forecast of future strength branch by branch, to the reducing requirement. While all normal manpower regulators (recruitment, re-engagement, extended service, advancement and promotion) are being applied, in some cases this has been insufficient and has regrettably involved the RN in a selective redundancy programme. The first redundancy phase involved around 320 ratings and 80 officers from categories forecast to be overborne and those selected will leave the service before April 93. A second phase has been announced which will involve around 700 ratings and 450 officers and these will leave between April 93 and November 93. Fortunately the majority of those selected in phase one were volunteers although regrettably some compulsory redundancies were necessary. It is very much hoped that the majority of those selected in the second phase will also be volunteers. As early a return as possible will be made to managing Naval strength by more traditional means although it is highly likely that a third phase of redundancy will be necessary next year.

## HELP FOR REDUNDEES

The Navy is doing all in its power to offer extra resettlement assistance to prepare redees for return to civilian life. In practical terms additional money has been made available to fund extra resettlement courses and Job Search Briefings have been specifically designed for the redee. These briefings, presented by professional recruitment consultants, concentrate on acquiring self-marketing skills and translating Service skills, qualifications and experience into civilian employer requirements. Redees serving abroad can receive funding for a return flight to the UK for resettlement training in their last 6 months of service. Additionally, funding is available for personnel and spouse to return to UK in order to look for a job, a house or schooling for children.

## TRAINING CAPACITY

Redundancy has unfortunately been a necessary yet onerous regulator and the longer term approach is to match recruiting to the now slimmer Navy. This is being done with significantly reduced recruiting targets for the next few years which in turn will have a considerable impact on the new entry and specialist training establishments. The ability to retain the capacity to deal with higher throughputs should, ideally, be maintained but this needs to be balanced against further possible reductions in Service numbers in the years ahead. The Navy will still need

to recruit good quality men and women to meet the challenge of the 90s.

## NEW MANAGEMENT STRATEGY: COMPLEMENTING

On a different note New Management Strategy (NMS) is playing an important part in manpower planning with the major Budget Holders getting to grips with their new found complementing powers. While placing the complementing firmly in the hands of those responsible for carrying out their task more efficiently, this will need to be balanced against the Navy-wide requirement to maintain overall branch structures and adequate sea shore ratios.

## PAY

In 1971 the Government appointed a Review Body to oversee Armed Forces pay and recommend the levels of annual pay awards. For the last 21 years the Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB) has proved its worth, being realistic and fair to the tax payer, while recognising the peculiarities of Service life and the needs of the Serviceman and Servicewoman. The AFPRB's recommendations have always been accepted in full although on three occasions the Government of the day has staged the award for economic reasons.

The Review Body is made up of 8 or 9 civilian volunteers, appointed personally by the Prime Minister for a term of three years. Some members are asked to complete more than one term to provide an element of experience and continuity. Review Body members are from a wide range of backgrounds and include Company Directors, a Trades Unionist and a retired senior Service Officer - currently a General. The Chairman of the AFPRB is also a member of the Top Salaries Review Body. AFPRB appointments are unpaid and extremely time consuming, members can spend up to 40 days each year visiting ships and establishments in the UK and abroad, attending meetings with their Secretariat at the Office of Manpower Economics, and reading the papers provided by the MOD as evidence.

How do they work? The pay year for the AFPRB begins each March when they start their round of visits. This year, their RN programme started with a Command Brief at Northwood, followed by further visits to HMS YORK on Armilla Patrol (in hot and humid June), HM Ships CHATHAM, EDINBURGH and QUORN as well as establishment visits to HMS COCHRANE and RNAS Culdrose. Having spoken to hundreds of sailors, soldiers and airmen, the Review Body then ask for factual evidence from the MOD; this they consider along with the concerns that have been voiced on their visits. In addition, MOD provides evidence on each form of additional pay on a strict rotational basis, as well as up-to-date manning figures. Having studied this evidence, the AFPRB have an opportunity to discuss their views with the Principal Personnel Officers



HM The Queen, heading HMS LANCASTER from Jersey

PPOs) of the three Services, for the Royal Navy the PPO is Second Sea Lord.

Having made their recommendations on Service Pay for the coming year, the AIPRB report goes to the Prime Minister normally in early January for approval and announcement; the cycle then starts again. In 1971 the pay of a Commander was £4,103, now it is £37,000 but all things are relative. A Gieves suit in 1969 cost £33, less than 4% of today's price of £89, and it was only 3p for a Gin and Tonic.

## RECRUITING

**Officers.** 1991-92 was a buoyant year for officer recruiting with enquiries up by over 10% and applications by a most 20%. There is no doubt that the recession is the principal driving force behind these increases. The final targets, which were amongst the lowest since 1982-83, were achieved comfortably except in the specialist areas of doctors, dentists and chaplains. On the whole, the quality was very satisfactory with a crew and Royal Marines being particularly strong. We are now aiming for up to one-fifth of our intake to be female. In some specialisations we are getting close although very few so far are aircrew and like

their male counterparts these days few seek Full Career Commissions.

**Ratings.** It is not surprising in a recession that rating recruiting has also been successful with 97.5% of the overall target met. The only current areas of difficulty are in WRNS engineering categories and QARNNS.

Despite the recession however, it is clear that a number of factors are still working against the Services recruiting interests: a continuing decline in the image of the Armed Forces as a career following the collapse of the threat; the much publicised shrinkage of the Services; the national trend for people to stay in education longer and the well-known decline in the numbers of school leavers are all acting to reduce the available pool of potential recruits. This effect is only partially offset by the unemployment situation. As a result rating enquiries dropped by 5% and applications by just over 10%.

We now face 2 or 3 lean years for recruit numbers, as the Navy reduces to its post Options level. This year we are only looking for just over a third of the number of recruits we took last year and competition for entry is therefore fierce, with a corresponding rise in the quality of recruit.

## TRAINING STRATEGY

In line with the recently revised RN Training Strategy we will now train just enough, just in time. The definition of just enough will be determined through ongoing work to implement the Training Strategy and will ensure that personnel are given only the training necessary to achieve their task. Just in time is the principle whereby in order to keep training costs as low as possible, training will be conducted during a person's career when it is most cost-effective to do so. There is an increasing role for all forms of simulation training at sea and ashore, commonality of equipment would generate training savings and future Defence Procurement will take full account of evolving technology where it can offer cost-effective solutions.





