SUBMARINES

THE ROSM

by Commander C.W. Williams, R.N.

Background

In 1972/73 the manpower planners were aware of three potential problem areas in the submarine service:

(a) Although in certain circumstances E.W. had become a main sensor it was frequently manned by the RP and not the (W) who was often employed in Communication duties. No (W) senior rate was employed in his (W) capacity in any submarine. For the (W) these factors greatly reduced job satisfaction and made for an unsatisfactory career pattern within the S/M service.

(b) When qualifying for advancement the 'C' ratings serving in submarines had to learn several equipments and techniques which did not apply to a submarine.

(c) There were insufficient (W), (G) or (RP) ratings in submarines to support a career structure for each sub branch separately within the S/M service. In the case of the RP this meant that a proportion had to return to general service if they were to realize advancement prospects similar to those of their general service contemporaries. However it was becoming very clear that the then RP2 and above was fast becoming almost unretainable (economically) in surface fleet systems.

Solution

The solution to all three of these problems was seen as being the evolution of a "new man" who would be an amalgam of a submarine service (G), (W) and (RP). Hence the birth of the ROSM.

Advantages

The major advantages of the ROSM concept are:

(a) The creation of a branch structure from ORD to FCPO entirely within the S/M service. This now has the added advantage of the SD S/M outlet.

(b) Potentially increased job satisfaction and hence better career patterns and prospects and retention of personnel.

(c) Potentially an increase in flexibility in S/M Communications and AIO manning.

(d) The ROSM as a Communicator is available to man shore Commcens when ashore e.g. Hong Kong, Gibraltar and Europe; in a nutshell "Sunshine *and* S/M pay".

Disadvantages

The main disadvantages are:

(a) A considerable increase in the training load during the transition phase.

(b) The somewhat radical nature of the solution.

This has produced considerable conservative opposition.

Progress to date

The scheme got off to a slow start due to a severe shortage of (G) (W) and RP rates in submarines. This has prolonged the transition phase and was in danger of delaying advancement. The manpower situation is rapidly improving and arrangements have been made to ensure that advancement is comparable to that in General Service. The first direct entry (as opposed to converted) ROSM completed training in October 1975 and it is far too early to make a sensible assessment of their full capabilities at sea.

The Way Ahead

There is no doubt that the ROSM concept is in the best interest of the ratings concerned as far as career prospects and job satisfaction in submarines are concerned. However it is not necessarily the complete solution and it is quite likely that further adjustments will be made once this branch has been firmly established.

Footnote: For those interested in further reading the ROSM is covered by the following DCI's RN. S114/74 Part IV and S198/74.

A TALE OF WOE (beware the ROSM)

by RO1 Parfit

As we all know, the amount of ex RPs converting to ROSM and actually passing out are few and far between but some of them have made it. We have a couple working here in *Defiance* (2nd SM Sqdn) and they seem to have picked up the task of the Communicator fairly quickly. However, once they are back in a running boat it

NOT DIVISIONS - Just a breathing space.

seems they are farmed off into their old jobs as RPs and not as a new 'sparker'. And such is their training, when they arrive on-board it is as much as some of them can do to read the FAB, which means that they finish up being used in the main as Broadcast Operators simply because they cannot be left on their own in the office. This means a lot of extra work and watches for the rest of the operators. Why therefore cannot they be drafted to a 'boat' as additional and not drafted into a billet as is happening at present. If this was done, the new ROSM would be able to double bank and learn much quicker - the standard of operating in submarines would also not drop. At present it is even a risk to let a ROSM do signalman duties! Training results have proved that their plotting, CEP and ECM results are well above those of us 'sparkers' who have not done the conversion yet, but in morse and typing they are well below the required percentage.

Most of us have come to accept the ROSM because it appears that he is here to stay but a large percentage of the older, more experienced, operators have decided that they do not like it and have taken drastic action to avoid getting caught up in it. Most of them would have signed on or remained in submarines had not the ROSM reared its head! It has also been noticed that many ROs with perhaps only eighteen months left to do have been sent to convert to ROSM and having converted have such a short time left to do that they do not get to sea as a ROSM. Surely this should not happen. Doing this means that some courses are filled with men who are simply blocking the way for the longer serving submariners.

The ROSM at sea leaves much to be desired. I know one who, after fifteen months in a 'boat', could not set up the broadcast equipment and is not capable of keeping a watch by himself. True, this problem stems in part from a lack of training in the submarine concerned but even so, one would expect a new ROSM capable of doing the basic tasks without constant supervision. Age is another problem. We find that the 'baby' ROSM is far too young to settle down to the responsibilities of submarine life and need at least two years before they are useful and cease to be a liability.

The ex RP ROSM is also a bit of a problem, suffering from the same inability to hold down a watch by himself.

Enough about the ROSM.....now for a change of subject. *Defiance* is still going strong. It is headed by Lieut Rogers who is backed up by CRS Fullalove, RS Truman, CY Jones and RS Williams. The troops are LROs Potts, Ferry, Norman, Jones, Kenyon, Aitken, Hall, Pope, Sparkes and Runham. Bringing up the rear of the SM2 'sparkers' is RO1 Parfit (that's me). *Defiance* staff are RO1s Goodier, Ward, Jones, Raven, Charles and Brent.

We are sorry to say that we are going to lose one of our best loved CRSs in submarines namely, CRS Fullalove. He is soon to retire and there will be a big 'booze up' at his place. Volunteers please send their names to me if they want an invite. Here is a message for the MERCURY CLUB Committee. The next time you have an end of term dance please do not forget us submariners. We tend to get out of touch in boats and dare I say *forgotten* by our signal school.

DO YOU THINK YOU COULD QUALIFY FOR ROSM – TRY OUR TEST PAPER

RO (SM) Conversion (or – Mission Impossible)

STANDARD RESCRUB EXAM

Time Allowed. (Bag meals will be provided)
Books Allowed. Two go on an adventure
Noddy's picture book of animals
Ladybird picture book on ships
Andy Pandy and his Teddy
Guinness book of records.

Question		Mark
1	Write your name on each piece of paper.	5
2	Write clearly.	10
3	Answer questions in numberical order (ie. 1, 2, 3 etc.)	10
4	Using the crayons provided, draw a picture of one of the following: (a) A Submarine	10
5	Where is Noddies bell alarm situated	10
6	Spell the following – Secret, Seven, Acknowledge & Authority	10
7	'Crypto' is – (a) Something to do with communications (b) Superboys dog.	10
8	Match the following Dit Dah (a) Highway code 30 mph (b) Morse code 16 wph (c) Speed limit	15
9	Where do you find details of the drafting responsibilities. (a) RNCP 9 (b) Centurian	10
10	You will find the opsig 'zip' on – (a) A broadcast setting watch signal (b) A broken american lighter (c) The front of your trousers.	10
		100
	+ 10% VAT	10
	+ Bonus	90
		200

FEEDBACK QUESTIONS

11	Do you feel any remorse because you've failed.	10
12	Did you enjoy doing that exam. (Answer Yes or No).	10
13	How long did it take you to do the exam. (Answer to the nearest day)	10
14	Did you understand all the questions. (If you do not understand this question mark you answer 'X').	10
15	Answer 'Yes' to the following question. Were the books allowed of any use to you during the exam.	10
16	Have you any constructive remarks to make regarding the ROSM conversion course. Answer in the space provided. ☐	10
17	Would you have found the 'crib' to the exam of any use to you during the exam. (Half marks will be awarded for those who don't know).	10
18	Hand your answer sheets to the instructor. (No answer required)	10
19	Shake him again, if no response inform the sick bay and the padre.	10
20	Do you now feel able to proceed to sea as a communicator. (No answer expected)	10
	(Passed mark to be fixed at a later date)	300%

SUBMARINES

THE ROSM BY FOSM

RO1 Parfit's article in the Spring edition demands some response.

The problems facing the ex RO/RP convert to ROSM, and the New Entry ROSM are separate. It is on the success of the New Entry, and his ability when he reaches Leading Rate and Petty Officer Rate that the scheme depends. Conversions had to be made to supply the experience and expertise at these levels during the changeover phase; a phase that will last several years.

The original idea was to man submarines with complete ROSM complements as they come out of refit. For a variety of manning and training reasons this has not been possible in most cases. When it is not possible to man fully with ROSMs, efforts are made to supply ROSMs in even numbers to facilitate job rotation, thereby allowing the necessary experience to be built up. Everyone in the Submarine Command is aware of the temptation to put ex ROs into RO type billets; this temptation has to be resisted both for the good of the man and the scheme. Rotation between jobs during a watch should be the aim.

It would be ideal if New Entries could be given some taste of service at sea, particularly in submarines before filling complement billets. Regrettably this is just not possible for reasons of accommodation alone. It has to be accepted that the JROSM is an inexperienced man who will need on board training, continual encouragement and supervision to reach the right standards. General Service has been faced with this problem for sometime, and also has to cope with Reduced Manning Standards which we in submarines do not. Our experience of Juniors to date is that they are well motivated and keen to progress and it is to the credit of those submarines with largely ROSM complements that they are making it work.

The morse ability of ROSMs has been the source of much discussion at all levels, and it still continues. It is an irrefutable fact that submarines use morse a great deal (over 40% of all messages transmitted on Ship-Shore) and that therefore morse standards need to be kept at a high level. At the same time it is the single most difficult skill to acquire. We have recently had another good look at this and some changes will be made to the training programme which will hopefully make the learning easier.

Everyone in "Head Office" is keen to make the scheme work but advancement and continuation training, upon which the scheme depends, are ultimately the responsibility of the individuals concerned. A recent question paper designed by Captain Submarine Sea Training for LRO(SM), aimed at helping in obtaining knowledge and stimulating interest only received 16 responses from the 50 issued.

The problems facing converts, and those yet to convert are well recognised and a great deal has been done to alleviate many of the advancement/career ones, DCI S 56/76 is relevant.

The new ROSM sub-branch has, principally due to the low intakes of 1973/4 had a difficult birth. However, numbers are building up now and the Conversion programme continues. 1976 must be regarded as a year of training and consolidation for the better time ahead. The ROSM has a big and important job to do both at sea and ashore and the increased flexibility his presence will give should in time make the submarines more effective.

RUGBY RADIO STATION

(Anonymous)

(Editors note): This short article is condensed by one of our staff writers from various Post Office features and in particular from a historical survey written by M. Johnston).

Rugby radio station, well known throughout the world, and not least by the Royal Navy is 50 years old this year. The actual Golden Jubilee of GBR took place on 2nd January, 1976. Whilst the station is internationally known, it is mostly

"WHERE'S YOUR SUBMARINER HUSBAND?"

by people on the receiving end. These few lines then are intended to be a brief resume of the last 50 years with a writers eye view of the size of the place.

But the story starts long before 1926. That year marked the completion and bringing into service of the station who's introduction had started 16 years before, in 1910 when the newly formed Marconi Company approached the Colonial Office for licences to build 18 wireless stations throughout the world. This was the start of 16 years negotiation, consultation with Dominion governments, the first World War and several different British Governments. But at last on 5 March 1923 Mr Bonar Law announced in Parliament that the project would go on and the Post Office bought 920 acres of land at Hillmorton. The site was chosen to accommodate sixteen masts each placed one quarter of a mile apart. Each mast is 820 feet tall and 27 miles of copper cable were used in forming the aerial. To give you some idea of the size of the masts, some comparable heights are:

Rugby Masts	820'
GPO Tower	620'
Blackpool Tower	520'
St. Pauls Cathedral	365'

Thus, when the stations opened in 1926 it made history as the worlds most powerful transmitter using thermionic valves and providing world wide radio telegraph communication throughout 24 hours of the day. The high powered VLF transmitter operated at a frequency of 16 khz with an aerial power of 350,000 watts. The valves were water cooled. This necessitated the building of two reservoirs with a total capacity of half a million gallons of water. Each mast, complete with stays, weighs about 200 tons and a sway of 10 feet at the top is possible. And the stays were not renewed until 1956.

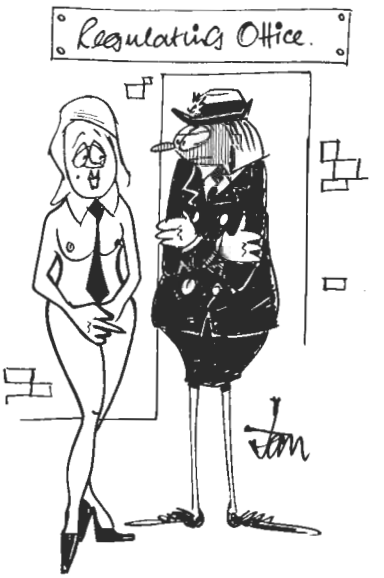
In 1928, a short wave radio telegraph channel was opened to the USA on 16 and 32 metres, and this increase led to an additional building being constructed in 1929.

With the advent of war in 1939 most of the overseas commercial services were suspended and the majority of the stations functions given over to use by the Armed Forces. GBR itself was of vital importance to the Royal and Merchant Navy during those dark days. In 1943 the main station building was severely damaged by fire. Started without warning when the woodwork on the roof of the main station housing the VLF transmitter ignited due to the radiation effect from GBR. At this time, Criggiory VLF station was nearing completion, having been built against just such a contingency and so service was carried on almost uninterupted.

In 1954 a third building was added to the complex and in 1966, after forty years of service, the station was modernised by a programme of building.

The site now exceeds 1600 acres. It contains over 140 directional HF aerials, mostly shombico, in addition to the LF and VLF aerials suspended from the 820' masts. The three buildings contain one VLF, two LF and 54 HF transmitters giving a total peak output in excess of 2 million watts.

This then is a very brief history of the station and its facilities. What of its future? VLF and LF are likely to be with us for many years yet but the Post Office find that the use of HF radio services are beginning to diminish as more and more traffic is switched to cable links or satellite paths. But there seems every possibility that by 2026 GBR will still be on the air and the twelve tall masts still a dominant feature of the landscape. But the Golden Jubilee gives us a chance to congratulate our colleagues in the radio station of the Post Office for 50 years of a job well done, and to express thanks, on behalf of all Royal Navy Communicators for all the help, service and assistance we have received during this time.



"IT'S NOT NEGATIVE TIES AGAIN TODAY IS IT ?"