

## **FUTURE OF THE NAVAL ESTATE IN THE PORTSMOUTH AREA - PINS**

Following the 1981 Defence Review the Navy drew up plans to reshape its structure and to preserve the "front line" Fleet-at-Sea by a series of measures including, inter alia, closures of support and training bases and a shift of training from the training establishments to ships at sea. This plan aimed (in the Portsmouth area) to close VERNON, EXCELLENT and the NBCD School at Phoenix. The training facilities contained in these schools were to be fragmented and dispersed to new locations, mostly in Portsmouth, while the accommodation

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and support tasks would largely go to the Royal Naval Barracks HMS NELSON.

A number of changes have since affected the basic concept: for instance, the predicted shift of training from shore to sea has not proved entirely feasible and following the Falklands operations the training task has changed and grown in certain respects, e.g. in NBCD, Firefighting and Sea Survival.

As a result the Portsmouth Island Naval Requirements Study (PINS) was set up to match the foreseeable naval requirements in the area against the estate currently available.

Over some 12 months the study has considered the possible options in great detail, and put proposals to the Admiralty Board late last year. The Admiralty Board have now approved a broad strategy for the future.

**HMS EXCELLENT (Whale Island).** The key element of the strategy is the retention of Whale Island allowing the development and collocation of a number of training facilities. In the short term, the EXCELLENT accommodation will be used for the overflow requirements on Portsea Island. The lodger units already there will remain on site, at least in the short/medium term and other facilities are planned to move there.

**HMS MERCURY.** The closure of HMS MERCURY and the transfer of the training tasks now carried out there is an early requirement. This will avoid the need for major expenditure to bring accommodation up to standard in this establishment. A further study of the future locations for these training tasks is now underway. The manpower saved in closing HMS MERCURY will help to man the retained estate at Whale Island and assist the overall reductions in manpower required by the Defence Review.

**HMS VERNON.** The intention remains to collocate RN and Army Diving Training in an enclave consisting of 45% of the VERNON site. The reduced area of VERNON will remain in use until the facilities it contains are reprovided elsewhere. This will depend on the availability of resources and is not expected before 1996/7.

**HMS NELSON.** HMS NELSON will continue in its role of an Accommodation and Support Centre and, and in the short to medium term, will administer and support the VERNON enclave and the accommodation centre at Whale Island. The plan to modernise and redevelop much of the NELSON accommodation (both office and living) is still current, but can be given effect only as and when resources allow.

**HMS DRYAD.** Planned development of facilities and accommodation will continue.

**Phoenix.** Phoenix will close, its functions being taken on by EXCELLENT and relocated in Whale

# SMOPS TODAY

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Over 100 years ago training in Fighting Efficiency was made the responsibility of HMS EXCELLENT. In 1974 it was decided that the individual arms of warfare in the surface fleet had become so interdependent that all training in Warfare should come under one umbrella. Thus the School of Maritime Operations was born in HMS DRYAD, assuming responsibility for Training in anti-submarine, anti-surface, anti-air and electronic warfare from an elementary stage to the most advanced levels.

Warfare training concentrates on the development of practical skills using advanced computer-based teaching aids and simulators, and students are trained to work as a team. Classroom teaching is kept to a minimum but must be included to ensure that all trainees have a thorough understanding of the theory on which their skills depend.

## OFFICERS

Officers first attend SMOPS as Sub Lieutenants on the Officer of the Watch Course to round off their initial Fleet training and to prepare them for their first complement appointments. Emphasis is placed on the safe conduct of navigation in coastal waters and on a thorough but elementary knowledge of the principles of Maritime Warfare.

The Principal Warfare Officers's (PWO) Course is the prime career course for Surface Warfare Seamen Officers and is undertaken by Lieutenants and junior Lieutenant Commanders between the ages of 25 and 31. Initial technical training at the Royal Naval Engineering College, Manadon, in Plymouth is followed by general warfare training and then by specialist training in Anti Submarine Warfare, Above Water Warfare or Communications. The PWO at sea is the Captain's watchkeeping warfare adviser, controller and manager of sensors and weapons. He needs quick reactions, a thorough and instinctive knowledge of own and enemy capabilities, a sound understanding of the effects of the ever changing environment and the mental ability and stamina to make sound tactical decisions under pressure. These skills are developed throughout the course which includes 3 weeks at sea in frigates. The product of the "streamed" PWO course is eliciting favourable reports from the Surface Flotillas on the

increasing professionalism of the Principal Warfare Officer. Selected Officers return to SMOPS to obtain additional qualifications in preparation for specialist appointments in Navigation, Anti Air Warfare or Electronic Warfare.

Those Commanders and Captains selected to Command at Sea attend a general refresher Course. At all levels maximum use is made of simulators to ensure that officers are thoroughly prepared for their wartime task - 'fighting' their ships.

## **RATINGS**

Ratings of the Operations Branch all have similar career training patterns. Basic training at the age of 17-18 aims to prepare young men to become skilled operators of particular types of equipment - Radar, Sonar, Electronic Warfare, Missile/Gun and Communications systems. After experience at sea further training as Leading Seamen and Petty Officers not only enhances their professional skills to a high degree but also provides opportunities to develop supervisory and leadership qualities; formal leadership training for Leading Seamen and Petty Officers is conducted at HMS ROYAL ARTHUR.

## **COMMAND TEAM TRAINING**

Operations Rooms Teams of all major surface units of the Fleet spend periods of training at SMOPS in replicas of their own ship's Operations Rooms. These replicas, known as "models", are controlled by computers, and provide realistic training. This is known as Command Team Training and is geared to ships maintenance and sea training cycles and often precedes Task Group Deployments. Thus SMOPS plays a vital part in ensuring the operational effectiveness of the Fleet.

## **FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH TRAINING**

Officers and Ratings of Foreign and Commonwealth Navies regularly attend courses at SMOPS. Where security clearances permit, students join with Royal Navy Career Courses, but a wide variety of special training is also available, including participation in Command Team Training periods for Navies which operate ships of similar classes to those of the Royal Navy.

## **PRACTICAL TRAINING**

SMOPS facilities available cover the 3 levels of training necessary to ensure the highest levels of operation, supervision and co-ordination of weapons and sensors, and the development of sound tactical decision making.

Computer based introductory trainers teach men about their basic equipments and how to inject information into and extract information from a computer.

Skill Trainers are based on operational equipment and enable men to learn and practise the skills they will use at sea.

The Command Team Trainer brings these skills together in realistic scenarios. It is the most advanced of its type in Europe and consists of exact replicas of the Operations Rooms of 6 classes of RN Ships, all linked to a central processor capable of simulating all friendly and enemy sensors and weapons and most environmental conditions which ships may meet at sea.

A large twenty cubicle Action Speed Tactical Trainer provides training in tactics for Commanding Officers and Senior Staff Officers. The cubicles can be made to represent ships, submarines, aircraft or Shore Headquarters.

The most recent addition to the SMOPS training facilities is the new Lewin Building at HMS DRYAD, officially opened by Admiral of the Fleet The Lord LEWIN on 1 May 1985. It houses the Underwater Warfare Faculty (recently moved from HMS VERNON), the Fleet Recognition Centre and the Wren Analyst, Electronic Warfare, Missile/Gunnery and Operational Intelligence elements of the Abovewater Faculty.



## **OFFICER RECRUITING**

The recruiting of officers into the Royal Navy and Royal Marines in 1984/85 showed improvement, and the total of 650 officer recruits was 100 more than the previous year. 34% of entrants were graduates, and a further 20% or so should obtain degrees during their training. The total, however, still represents a shortfall of 12%, which occurred in Seaman, Engineers, Instructors and -surprisingly - Royal Marines. On the plus side were good Aircrew entries (although we still struggle to persuade young men that the Observer is just as important as the Pilot) and a most promising Scholarship and Reserved Place competition, the fruits of which we will reap in 2 years time.

The overall improvement can be attributed to the success of the measures reported in BROADSHEET 84, and a more general awareness that recruiting is the business of the whole of the Officer Corps - both serving and retired. DNR is most grateful to those retired officers who have provided names of suitable lads or who have passed on the information to their young acquaintances.

However, there are no grounds for complacency as the officer recruiting target has been raised again to the large figure of 800: the increases over last year's Royal Navy achievements will need to come primarily in the Seaman and Engineer branches. So there can be no slackening in our efforts to point out that there are wide opportunities for bright young men in the Service, and to attract the best so that we can live up to Professor Michael Howard's description (in his Times Literary Supplement review of Ziegler's biography of Mountbatten) of the Royal Navy's Officer Corps as "Now the nearest approach to a classless elite that one will find anywhere in the country".

In order to help retired officer play their part in the recruiting process, a sheet of facts and figures is enclosed with their BROADSHEET. You may wish to keep it in your back pocket as a handy aide memoire.

## **RATING RECRUITING**

The application rate for 1984/85 was about 10% down in comparison with the previous year. A total of 24,469 young men and women applied to enter

the Naval Service, and the targets were achieved in all categories which was particularly satisfying in respect of Artificer Apprentices. However, there was a worrying trend in that there was a 22% reduction in the application rate for Artificer Apprentice entry. Although we met the Artificer target in the past year, there are increasing signs that this category will again become more difficult in coming years. We will continue to advertise in the national press. Another difficult area for the coming year will be RM recruiting.

With the exception of Royal Marines, the targets for 1985/86 are lower than last year - the WRNS target being down by almost 50% - a consequence of the drive to shift emphasis from tail to teeth. It is of course a great pity that we are having to turn away high quality applicants among the girls which creates the false impression that there are no WRNS vacancies.

The contrary is the case and the message, as last year, is that the Royal Navy is recruiting, particularly officers. Recruiting is the business of us all, and we would be grateful for your continuing and energetic support in spreading the word.

## **LONGER CAREERS FOR RATINGS**

Last year's Broadsheet mentioned longer careers as one of the measures being considered to help make the most effective use of manpower. Much work has been done on this in the past year and a new scheme - to be known as the Second Open Engagement - is being introduced from 1 Jan 1986. This will allow progressively larger numbers of senior ratings to serve for 32 years instead of the present 22.

The intention is that 32 years' service, which will take most men to age 50, should be the normal RN career in the future.

The system will of course have to be selective. All senior ratings with 17 or more years' adult service will be eligible, but the rating's annual report will in future indicate whether he wishes to be considered for the Second Open Engagement and whether his reporting Officer considers him suitable. An annual selection board will consider all those in the field and select the numbers required to meet a carefully determined quota for each branch.

Major Changes in engagement patterns take time to work their way through the system. But ultimately the Second Open Engagement should allow us to retain larger numbers of skilled and experienced men for longer and reduce both the numbers under training and the effort we need to devote to it.

## **COMBINED CADET FORCE (CCF)**

The total strength of Naval CCF Sections is now about 6000 spread over 136 schools and colleges. A new addition in September 1954 was the Naval Section at Eton College.

Another successful CCF Open Day was held at RNAS Portland this year and for the first time one was held at HMS DOLPHIN enabling cadets to learn about submarines. Enjoyable Open Days were also held in both Rosyth and Portsmouth by the mine countermeasures and fishery protection Squadrons who also provided many welcome sea trips during the year. 12 RM detachments attended a weekend skills and leadership competition at Winchester for the Sir Steuart Pringle Trophy and in addition over 100 courses and camps were held at Establishments during the Easter and Summer holidays.

In all, over 4000 Officers and Cadets have been able to gain first hand experience of life in the RN and RM. These activities together with a special purchase of sailboards for RN Sections and the gradual introduction of officer style trousers have greatly helped to improve the standing of the RN Sections of the CCF.

## **THE ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE (RNR)**

This is undoubtedly the year of the expanding RNR! In increasing its strength by over 40% to 7,800 in the next few years, there will be many more opportunities for the right young men and women to train to be part of this essential arm of the total Royal Naval and NATO Force. There will also still be room for those who have left the RN and who aren't too far "over the hill" (ie under 40!) - especially Seamen, Communicators, Pilots and Divers.

More people - and new Ships: by the end of 1985, 7 of the RNR's 11 new River Class Fleet Minesweepers - HM Ships WAVENEY, CARRON, DOVEY, HUMBER, ITCHEN, HELMSDALE and ORWELL will be in commission, and all of them will be in service in mid - 1986. The first of the 10 new P2000 Patrol Craft for the RNR was delivered in July 1985 and mid 1986 will see the remainder, providing excellent opportunities for navigation, seamanship and Junior Officer training.

To show off some of their new ships, nearly 300 RNR members took part in Exercise MAPLEHAUL 85 in June and July, at Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick in Canada.